

Dotawo ►
A Journal of Nubian Studies

2014 #1



Dotawo ▶
A Journal of Nubian Studies

2014 #1

Edited by
Angelika Jakobi
Giovanni Ruffini
Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei



Dotawo ▶ A Journal of Nubian Studies

Editors-in-Chief Giovanni Ruffini
Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei

Editorial Board Julie Anderson
Anna Boozer
Angelika Jakobi
Anne M. Jennings
Robin Seignobos
Ahmed Sokarno Abdel-Hafiz
Jay Spaulding
Alexandros Tsakos
Kerstin Weber
Petra Weschenfelder

Design Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei
Typeset in 10/12 Skolar PE, with Adobe Arabic, Antinoou,
Lucida Sans Unicode, and Sophia Nubian.

Cover image Nuba Mountains, courtesy of
Gertrud Schneider-Blum

Editorial correspondence
Giovanni Ruffini, Classical Studies/History, Canisius Hall 314,
Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT 06824, USA.
Email: gruffini@fairfield.edu; vincent@vangervenoiei.com
URL: <http://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/djns/>

For submission guidelines please see our website.

ISBN-13 978-069222914-9
ISBN-10 0692229140
ISSN 2373-2571 (online)

Dotawo: A Journal of Nubian Studies is published once a year by
DigitalCommons@Fairfield & punctum books, Brooklyn, NY, under
a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0
Unported License.
URL: <http://www.punctumbooks.com>

© 2014 by the editors and authors.

Dotawo ►

1. A medieval Nubian kingdom controlling the central Nile Valley, best known from Old Nubian documents excavated at Qasr Ibrim and other sites in Lower Nubia.
2. An open-access journal of Nubian studies, providing a cross-disciplinary platform for historians, linguists, anthropologists, archaeologists, and other scholars interested in all periods and aspects of Nubian civilization.

1. ΟΥΝΔΕΝΝΑ, ΔΟΤΑΪΤΟ ΝΟΠΑΝ ΖΙΡΙCΤΙΑΝΟCΝ ΟΡΚΙ ΞΕΡΑ ΜΕΝΟ. ΤΑΡ ΑΜΑΝ-ΙΡΚΙΝ ΓΑCΚΟΚΚΑ ΜΟΥΡΤΑ ΔΑΓΙ ΚΕΝΟ. ΔΟΤΑΪΤΟΓ ΑΥΡΙΚΙΡ ΙΡΠΕCΑ ΟΥΝΔΕΝ ΝΟΠΑΝ ΦΔΙΙΤΤΙ ΞΕΚΚΟΥΛΟΓΟ, ΜΑΝ ΙΠΡΙΜΙΝ ΚΑCΑΛΛΑ ΕΛΔΑCΦΟΛΛΑΤΩΝΑ, ΙΔΝ ΑΓΑΡ ΙΒΕΙΚΚΩΥΛΛΑ, ΜΑΝ ΝΩΥΠΑΝ ΤΑΪΤΟ ΕΛΔΑCΦΟΛΛΑΤΩΝΑ.

2. ΙCΑΚΚΑ, ΔΟΤΑΪΤΟ ΥΩΠ ΥΩΠΙΝ ΚΙΝ CΙΓΕΡΙΝ ΕΡΡΙ ΞΕΡΑ ΑCΦΟ. ΔΟΤΑΪΤΟ, ΝΟΠΑΝ ΚΟΥΛΙΤΤΙ ΜΑΛΛΕΛΛΕΚΙΝ ΚΑΪΤΑΦΙ. ΔΟΤΑΪΤΟ, CΑΜ ΞΕΚΚΑ ΠΔCΚΕ, ΚΟΥΛΙΤΤΙ ΙΒΕΙΚΚΩΥ ΔΑΜΜΙΚΑΒΒΑΛΙΑ. ΙΝ CΑΜΙΚΚΟΝΙ, ΟΥΝΔΕΝ ΚΟΥΛΛΕΚΑΤΤΙΚΚΟ, ΤΑΜΕΝ ΚΟΥΛΛΕΚΑΤΤΙΚΚΟ, ΠΙΡΠΕΝ ΚΟΥΛΛΕΚΑΤΤΙΚΚΟ, ΜΟΥΓΜΑΡΙΝ ΚΟΥΛΛΕΚΑΤΤΙΚΚΟΝΑ ΑCΦΙ. ΞΙΔΑΓΩΝΙ, ΔΟΤΑΪΤΟ, CΑΜ ΔΑΪΤΙ ΞΕ ΦΑ ΑCΦΙ, ΚΟΥΛΛΕΚΑΤΤΙ ΙΒΕΙ ΜΑΛΛΕΝΑ. ΜΑΝ ΚΟΥΛΛΕΚΑΤΤΙ ΜΑΛΛΕ, ΝΟΠΑΝ ΔΙΦΦΙΚΚΙΝ ΚΙΝΝΙΓΩΥΚΚΟΝ, ΓΑΡΚΩΥΓΩΝ ΚΟΥΛΛΙΝΝΑΝCΑ ΦΙΡΓΙ.*

1. Ammiki Nuba–n sirki Tungula–n Bahar aal poccika anda kannim, ne poccika an ammikin Nuba–n kitaaba an Kasr Ibrimiro poon isshi Nuba aro–n ammiki ir kar əəl koran əəllooyanero poccikare əəl oddnooyim.
2. Ele ne Nuba poccikan muǰallayane, aal poccika yaa əərngaanyatn, taariikiro, aallo, elekon poon ammik(i) ir ayin ir kanniyam pirro, poon ammik(i) aallo, elek(i) aallo poccikaa yaa əərngaanyatn.**

* Translation into Nobiin courtesy of Mohamed K. Khalil.

** Translation into Midob Nubian courtesy of Ishag A. Hassan.

<i>Grzegorz Ochała</i> Multilingualism in Christian Nubia: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches	1
<i>Alexandros Tsakos</i> The <i>Liber Institutionis Michælis</i> in Medieval Nubia	51
<i>Birgit Hellwig & Gertrud Schneider-Blum</i> Tabaq: In a State of Flux	63
<i>Kerstin Weber & Petra Weschenfelder</i> Reflections on Old Nubian Grammar	83
<i>Marcus Jaeger</i> Coordination with <i>goon</i> and Bisyndetic = <i>gon</i> in Dongolawi and Kenzi Proverbs	93
<i>Angelika Jakobi & El-Shafie El-Guzuuli</i> Semantic Change and Heterosemy of Dongolawi <i>ed</i>	121
<i>Jade Comfort</i> Verbal Number in the Uncu Language (Kordofan Nubian)	145
<i>Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei</i> Remarks toward a Revised Grammar of Old Nubian	165
<i>Adam Łajtar</i> Old Nubian Texts from Gebel Adda in the Royal Ontario Museum	185
<i>Suzan Alamin</i> Noun Phrase Constructions in Nubian Languages: A Comparative Study	203
<i>Giovanni Ruffini</i> Idiom and Social Practice in Medieval Nubia	221

From the Editors

Nubian studies needs a platform in which the old meets the new, in which archaeological, papyrological, and philological research into Meroitic, Old Nubian, Coptic, Greek, and Arabic sources confront current investigations in modern anthropology and ethnography, Nilo-Saharan linguistics, and critical and theoretical approaches present in post-colonial and African studies.

The journal *Dotawo: A Journal of Nubian Studies* brings these disparate fields together within the same fold, opening a cross-cultural and diachronic field where divergent approaches meet on common soil. *Dotawo* gives a common home to the past, present, and future of one of the richest areas of research in African studies. It offers a crossroads where papyrus can meet internet, scribes meet critical thinkers, and the promises of growing nations meet the accomplishments of old kingdoms.

We embrace a powerful alternative to the dominant paradigms of academic publishing. We believe in free access to information. Accordingly, we are proud to collaborate with DigitalCommons@Fairfield, an institutional repository of Fairfield University in Connecticut, USA, and with open-access publishing house punctum books. Thanks to these collaborations, every volume of *Dotawo* will be available both as a free online PDF and in online bookstores.

This first volume of *Dotawo* is the outcome of a Nubian panel within the Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium held at the University of Cologne, May 22–4, 2013. Organized by Angelika Jakobi, the Nubian panel was attended both by specialists of the modern Nubian languages and scholars working on medieval Nubia and its languages, particularly Old Nubian. We are indebted to the Fritz Thyssen Foundation at Cologne for generously sponsoring the organization of the Nubian panel and the invitation of the participants.

Since many invited participants from Sudan were unable to get visas due to the shutdown of the German Embassy in Khartoum at that time, the Fritz Thyssen Foundation also funded the organization of a second venue of specialists on modern Nubian languages. This so-called “Nubian Panel 2” was hosted by the Institute of African & Asian Studies at the University of Khartoum on September 18–19, 2013. The proceedings of that venue will be published in the second volume of *Dotawo*.

We look forward to planning future volumes with scholars from all fields of Nubian studies. To that end, we invite submissions on all topics and we welcome suggestions for future themed volumes. We currently plan two such themed volumes, for which the calls for papers can be found on the back cover.

Multilingualism in Christian Nubia: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

1

Grzegorz Ochała*

1. Introduction

From the beginning of interest in studies on Christian Nubia, the question of multilingualism has been one of the most frequently debated issues. Many scholars who dealt with written sources originating from the Middle Nile Valley and dated between the sixth and fifteenth century expressed their opinion on the use of as many as four different languages (Greek, Coptic,¹ Old Nubian, and Arabic) or at least made some remarks on the others' opinions.

The first to touch upon the question of the simultaneous existence in Nubian funerary epigraphy of Greek and Coptic was Hermann Junker in his classic article on Nubian grave stelae published in 1925.² But it was only in the 1960s, during the Great Nubian Campaign, that sources of various types in all four languages started to come to light in substantial numbers, on the one hand allowing for a better understanding of the phenomenon and on the other posing even more perplexing questions. Two archaeological sites were particularly important in this respect: Qasr Ibrim and Faras, producing

* The present article has come to life as result of my postdoctoral fellowship in 2013/14 in the Unité de l'Égyptologie et de Copte of the University of Geneva in the framework of the Scientific Exchange Programme NMS-CH granted by the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (Sciex-Project 11.239: 'LangNub: Language and literacy in Christian Nubia'). I would like to express here my utmost gratitude to Philippe Collombert and Nathalie Bosson for hosting me in Geneva and creating perfect conditions for scholarly work. I would also like to thank Nathalie Bosson and Adam Łajtar for reading and commenting upon a draft of this article.

1 Here and throughout the present article the term 'Coptic' designates the Sahidic dialect of this language, as the only one attested in Nubia.

2 JUNKER, "Die christlichen Grabsteine Nubiens," pp. 144–6.

hundreds of texts and thus allowing the scholars dealing with them to form their views on the multilingualism of the Nubian society.³

However, despite this apparent interest in the subject, only one study (not very substantial, to be frank) has appeared so far devoted solely to the question of using different languages in Christian Nubia: this is an article by Peter Shinnie published in 1974.⁴ Needless to say, although the number of sources available at that time had already been significant, nowadays scholars have at their disposal a far larger assemblage of texts, acquired thanks to both the ongoing and new excavations and the publication of previous finds. This alone seems to be a sufficient reason to reapproach the question of Nubian multilingualism.

Another reason, perhaps even more important, is that no one has ever made an effort to count all the attestations of particular languages in the Middle Nile Valley. The only calculations that were made pertained to the two above-mentioned sites, Qasr Ibrim and Faras. General theses concerning the whole territory were based on rough estimates or general impressions. This is completely understandable, as there exist no corpuses of Christian Nubian sources, and even comprehensive publications of particular museum collections, categories of texts, or textual finds from one archaeological site are something of a rarity; a great many texts are available only in the form of photographs (very often of poor quality), tracings, or plain descriptions included in archaeological reports, accounts of travels, various articles, etc.

Now, thanks to the creation of the Database of Medieval Nubian Texts, gathering instances of Nubian literacy in one place, this task is possible.⁵ However, the reader must always remember that the DBMNT is far from being complete and thus the numbers presented below are only tentative. The database in its present stage contains 2926 records, which are almost exclusively items available in publications, be they editions of texts, descriptions, mentions, photographs, or drawings. A great many texts, perhaps as many as another

3 For Faras, see JAKOBIELSKI, *A History of the Bishopric of Pachoras on the Basis of Coptic Inscriptions*, pp. 14–15; id., “Inscriptions,” pp. 281–2; and KUBIŃSKA, *Inscriptions grecques chrétiennes*, p. 74. For Qasr Ibrim, see PLUMLEY, “The Christian period at Qasr Ibrim,” pp. 103–4; ADAMS, *Qasr Ibrim: The Late Medieval Period*, pp. 219–22; and id., *Qasr Ibrim: The Earlier Medieval Period*, pp. 243–5.

4 SHINNIE, “Multilingualism in medieval Nubia.”

5 The idea of creating the Database of Medieval Nubian Texts (DBMNT, available online at <www.dbmnt.uw.edu.pl>) first occurred six years ago, when I started to prepare my doctoral dissertation. At first, the database included only the sources that contained dating elements, but it had been designed with the intention to grow to finally become the ultimate source of reference for all texts ever written in Christian Nubia (see OCHAŁA, *Chronological Systems of Christian Nubia*, pp. 26–7, quoted further as *cscn*). Thanks to my postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Geneva, I have been able to increase the number of records from the original 730, used as source material in *cscn*, to nearly 3000. Hopefully, by the time this article is published, a major online update of the DBMNT will have already been launched.

er 3000, remain unpublished, like, for example, Coptic manuscripts and documents from Qasr Ibrim, Old Nubian wall inscriptions from Faras, documents from Gebel Adda,⁶ etc. Some of these groups, although important in themselves, should not have any significant impact on the figures presented below and their interpretation. Others, however, like over a thousand wall inscriptions from Banganarti and Dongola,⁷ 150 rock inscriptions from Gebel Maktub, on the outskirts of Qasr Ibrim,⁸ or over 100 manuscripts found on the Island of Sur,⁹ will certainly change our view on the typological and topographical aspects of the Nubian literacy. Nevertheless, it seems worthwhile to present some general statistics drawn from the current state of the DBMNT and to try to test the existing common opinions about Nubian multilingualism against raw numbers and charts.

This is in fact the main purpose of this article. The other purpose, no less significant, is to show the richness, diversity, and complexity of Nubian literary culture, not always apprehended and rightly evaluated, especially outside Nubian studies.

2. Methodological problems

However, the task at hand is not free from difficulties. I have already mentioned the question of the incompleteness of the database, which may have some impact on the results. Other problems pertain to individual sources, their identification, classification, and, essential for the present article, the recognition of their language.

First and foremost, labelling a text as 'Nubian' is not always as obvious as it may seem.¹⁰ There is, of course, no doubt in the case of sources written in Old Nubian, be they found in Nubia or in Egypt,¹¹ but some texts, or even some categories of sources, are not unproblematic, even if they were discovered on Nubian soil. The most obvious cases are, for example, two famous texts found at Qasr Ibrim, both originating from Egypt: the letters testimonial of Bishop Timotheos in Bohairic Coptic and Arabic¹² and the Arabic letter from a governor of Egypt to a king of Makuria.¹³ On the other hand, serious doubts arise as to the provenance of Coptic literary manuscripts

6 The Coptic material from Qasr Ibrim is studied by Joost Hagen, Old Nubian inscriptions from Faras by Adam Łajtar and myself, and the Gebel Adda texts by Adam Łajtar (ŁAJTAR, this volume).

7 Both in preparation for publication by Adam Łajtar.

8 In preparation for publication by Adam Łajtar and Jacques van der Vliet.

9 In preparation for publication by Alexandros Tsakos.

10 See CSCN, pp. 23–4.

11 CSCN, pp. 46 and 50 (note that the two Arabic documents from Edfu mentioning King Siti were wrongly taken as being in Old Nubian [see MONNERET DE VILLARD, *La Nubia Medioevale* I, p. 23]).

12 PLUMLEY, *The Scrolls of Bishop Timotheos*.

13 Id., "An Eighth-Century Arabic Letter to the King of Nubia."

found at the same site. The palaeography of many of them seems to point to Egyptian scriptoria, but we can also imagine that the Nubians had their own skillful scribes copying manuscripts on the spot.¹⁴ The attribution of wall inscriptions – a more secure issue, it would seem – also poses some difficulties. For example, a group of legends to the earliest paintings in the Faras cathedral (beginning of the eighth century) may have been the work of a non-Nubian artist¹⁵; also some visitor's inscriptions may have been executed by foreigners during their pilgrimage to a holy place, as is proven by a Provençal graffito discovered in Banganarti.¹⁶ As most of these doubts are unsolvable, I have decided to exclude from the DBMNT only the most evident cases.

Secondly, the identification of many texts poses difficulties, in most cases caused by technical issues: the state of preservation, the quality of photographs, or the inability of persons preparing the drawings to render exactly the shape of letters.¹⁷ Another factor is our still insufficient knowledge of the Old Nubian language, a fact that makes many texts, especially wall inscriptions, at least obscure if not completely incomprehensible. This is reflected in a high percentage of sources labelled as 'unidentified,' circa 11% of the whole collection.

Thirdly, the typological assignment of certain texts is quite troublesome. While creating the DBMNT, I tried to come up with as plain a typology as possible, including only a limited number of general categories, those that are attested at least several times. In some cases, I have introduced subcategories facilitating the identification of sources. The result is the following list of text types:

- alphabet
- catalogue¹⁸
- colophon
- commemorative inscription
- date
- dedicatory inscription
- document (economic, legal, letter, list, official)
- epitaph
- foundation inscription

¹⁴ There are also examples of Coptic manuscripts written in what appears to be a 'Nubian' hand (personal communication of Joost Hagen).

¹⁵ HÄGG, "Some Remarks on the Use of Greek in Nubia," p. 103. Cf. JAKOBIELSKI, "Inscriptions," pp. 284–5.

¹⁶ ŁAJTAR & PŁÓCIENNIK, "A Man from Provence on the Middle Nile." Cf. HÄGG, "Some Remarks," p. 104.

¹⁷ This pertains mainly to old publications, like GAUTHIER, *Les temples immergés de la Nubie*; SAYCE, "Inscriptions et papyrus grecques d'Égypte"; or even, to some extent, LEPSIUS, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien*.

¹⁸ The term is used here in its epigraphic meaning, denoting lists of different types inscribed on durable writing materials.

- invocation
- legend
- literary (apocryphal, biblical, hagiography, homiletic, patristic)
- liturgical (hymn, lectionary, prayer)
- name
- name of divine entity (i.e. God the Father, Jesus Christ, archangels)/saint
- official inscription
- other¹⁹
- owner's inscription
- private prayer
- subliterate (horoscope, magical)
- school exercise
- tag
- unidentified
- visitor's inscription.

However, the choice of a category is not always easy and sometimes has to be made arbitrarily. Some sources have an ambiguous character and could be ascribed to two different types. For example, alphabets may be classified, depending on their context, as either 'subliterate: magical' or 'school exercise'; monograms and cryptograms of Archangel Michael, so frequent in the Middle Nile Valley, classified by me as 'name of divine entity/saint,' may as well be interpreted as 'subliterate: magical.' It is especially difficult to classify inscriptions consisting only of personal names, occurring frequently on walls and rocks as well as on pottery: for example, inscription from Musawwarat el-Sofra reading 'Merkourios' (DBMNT 1468) could be classified as 'visitor's inscription' left by a certain Merkourios,²⁰ or 'name of divine entity/saint,' referring to St Merkourios, known to have been venerated in Nubia.²¹ Of course, the problem does not pertain to apparently Nubian names, like Phōsipa (DBMNT 1701) or Kosmakouda (DBMNT 2154 & 2155),²² but as far as universal Christian names derived from biblical figures or various saints are concerned, we are practically helpless.

A special case of inscriptions consisting only of names are monograms and cryptograms, of which the Nubians appear to have been particularly fond: while the latter were used exclusively for holy names, the former seem to have been used for both personal (e.g.

19 This category includes texts hard to assign to the remaining types and those attested only once or twice.

20 The name is not very frequent but it is attested as personal name in nine texts (DBMNT 32, 67, 97, 197, 531, 628, 744, 1037, 2849); once as Merkouriosphoros (DBMNT 557).

21 See, e.g., his paintings in Abd el-Qadir (MONNERET DE VILLARD, *La Nubia medioevale I*, p. 216, no. 20) and Tamit (ibid., p. 157, no. 28), with legends (DBMNT 1715 & 2327, respectively).

22 Although a shadow of a doubt always remains as to whether we are not dealing with local Nubian saints in such cases.

the monograms of Bishop Georgios from Dongola [DBMNT 1498] and Bishop Pilatos from Faras [DBMNT 1822]) and holy ones. However, besides the easiest and the most obvious ones, Nubian monograms remain undeciphered. Although they could be interpreted otherwise, they are conventionally classified as 'names' in the DBMNT.

Another type of source meriting attention is visitor's inscriptions. It is sometimes very hard to distinguish between them and other types of texts inscribed on walls and rocks. One such situation has already been mentioned and concerns inscriptions consisting only of a personal name: by default, even if the name is ambiguous (that is, it could belong to both a private person and a saint), it is treated as visitor's inscription in the DBMNT, unless archaeological context or presence of other texts indicate different interpretation. Two examples can be cited: a graffito from the church at Sabagura reading '† Senouth' (DBMNT 1049) most probably refers to St Shenoute, who is the addressee of three, and possibly even four, private prayers incised on the walls of the same building (DBMNT 993, 1048, 1052, 1057); a dipinto reading 'Petros' (DBMNT 2603) from room 34 of site R-8 at Debeira West in all likelihood denotes Peter the Apostle, because it is executed in white paint²³ and is accompanied by other inscriptions of religious character, a monogram of the Archangel Michael (DBMNT 2604) and a decorative cross.²⁴ Although in some cases monograms containing names may be interpreted as visitor's inscriptions, unless their meaning is completely clear, I refrain from classifying them in this way.²⁵

Somewhat less troublesome, but far from being an easy choice in many cases, is distinguishing between visitor's inscriptions and private prayers. How to classify a dipinto from Wadi el-Sebua (DBMNT 1397) consisting of a prayer to St Peter in Old Nubian followed by a subscription in a mixture of Greek and Old Nubian identifying the author of the inscription as one Petro, a priest, who prays for himself? Because of the extent of the prayer and the fact that the inscription was painted, which positions it higher than typically scratched or incised visitor's inscriptions, the text has been identified as a

23 There are other instances of white-painted inscriptions from Nubia. All of them come from apparently secular buildings (or at least buildings not explicitly identified as churches) and all of them are of religious character (Trinitarian formulae, names of Archangels and saints). The list includes 10 inscriptions from Kulubnarti (DBMNT 1183–92), 15 from Meinarti (DBMNT 1226–9, 1231–4, 1236–8, 1256, 1260–2), 1 from Soba (DBMNT 1892), 1 from the island of Kulme (DBMNT 2444), and 3 from Debeira West (DBMNT 2603–4, 2609). They most probably fulfilled apotropaic functions.

24 The building to which this room belonged was used in later period for domestic purposes, but its primary function is unknown. However, judging by the quality of architecture, it could have been a public or religious edifice (SHINNIE & SHINNIE, *Debeira West*, pp. 6–7). It is impossible to state whether the decoration belonged to the original decoration of the room or was added later.

25 All the names and monograms followed by a description of function (deacon, priest, cleric, etc.) are naturally treated as visitor's inscriptions.

private prayer.²⁶ The same arguments could be also valid for a dipinto from the Faras cathedral with a prayer for King Ioel (DBMNT 734) and perhaps for another Faras dipinto executed by priest Chael beginning with the invocation of the Virgin Mary (DBMNT 1863). In the remaining cases, however, the basic distinction between the two categories is the formula employed by the scribe: the texts containing the phrase 'I so-and-so (have written this)' are classified as visitor's inscriptions and those with the formula 'hear, help, guard, etc. so-and-so' as private prayers.

Finally, the question of language of the texts, which is one of the most difficult issues in dealing with Christian Nubian sources. There is obviously no problem with monolingual texts. Similarly the bilingual ones in which parts written in different languages are clearly distinguishable hardly cause any doubts. Among the most evident examples one can name the Greek/Old Nubian epitaph of King Georgios from Wadi el-Natrun (DBMNT 558), fragments of Greek/Old Nubian psalters from Qasr Ibrim (DBMNT 1002, 1003, 1009, 1010), the Greek/Coptic epitaph of one Elisabeth from Sakinya (DBMNT 178), or the fragment of a Greek/Coptic liturgical typikon from Qasr Ibrim (DBMNT 2769).

Similarly, all the texts containing meaningful phrases in other languages, even if it is one short sentence, are classified as bilingual²⁷: Greek/Coptic, Greek/Old Nubian, and Coptic/Old Nubian.²⁸ Hence, Greek epitaphs with dating formulae and/or formulae stating the age of the deceased in Old Nubian (e.g. DBMNT 5, 6, 533) are considered Greek/Old Nubian; a fragmentary Greek epitaph from Qasr Ibrim with the insertion of 'he died' in Coptic (DBMNT 673) is Greek/Coptic; the Coptic document from Kulb starting with the Trinitarian formula in Greek (DBMNT 2395) is Greek/Coptic; Old Nubian documents from Qasr Ibrim beginning in the same manner or including the address in Greek (Trinitarian formula: DBMNT 2827; address: e.g. DBMNT 592, 1017, 1019) are Greek/Old Nubian, and so on.

A real difficulty is to indicate the language of a text into which words from another language are inserted in the middle of phrases, without a clear division into meaningful parts. Such instances of 'code-switching' are abundantly represented in the corpus of Christian Nubian sources.

It has been pointed out many times that the Greek epitaph of (I)stephanou also called Eñitta from Dongola (DBMNT 74), dated to

²⁶ I owe this suggestion to Adam Łajtar.

²⁷ So far, I have been able to identify only two trilingual texts from the Middle Nile Valley, a dedicatory inscription with a prayer for one Mariankouda (DBMNT 716), and the list of bishops of Faras (DBMNT 97), both from the Faras cathedral.

²⁸ There are only two instances of the last category, both most probably originating from Egypt (DBMNT 1148 and 1395).

797, is the first appearance of Old Nubian, with its use of the words $\epsilon\iota\varphi\tau\tau\alpha$, $\mu\alpha\rho\alpha\varphi\alpha$, $\chi\omicron\iota\alpha\kappa\overline{\omega}\omega\lambda$, $\delta\omicron\kappa\eta\alpha\overline{\omega}\omega\lambda$, and $\rho\omicron\gamma\omega$. While this is demonstrably the first attestation of the Old Nubian alphabet, with its characteristic enchoric letters, the first Old Nubian word ever to occur in writing is $\varsigma\alpha\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$, attested in the Coptic foundation inscription from Dendur (DBMNT 517), dated to the second half of the sixth century.²⁹ But does this fact make these texts bilingual? The answer must be negative, because the words are inserted in otherwise Greek and Coptic phrases, which do not bear even the slightest traces of Old Nubian syntax. Moreover, those words belong to two very specific categories of nouns: personal names (Eiñitta and Maraña) and names of offices/titles (*choiakīššil*, *joknaiššil*, *samata*),³⁰ and it was clearly impossible for the redactors to use Greek/Coptic substitutes for them.³¹ Therefore, all the texts in which inscriptions consist of words designating personal names, offices, titles, toponyms, or the like are classified as monolingual in the DBMNT.

As may be expected, in this respect the visitor's inscriptions are the hardest to tackle. A typical visitor's inscription is formed according to the model³²:

29 Since the word does not contain any of the Nubian enchoric letters, it cannot be treated as the evidence of the existence of the written form of Old Nubian already in the sixth century. The situation may be compared, however, to the development of the Coptic writing system which in its pre-Old Coptic state (3rd c. BCE–2nd c. CE) used only Greek letters to transcribe Egyptian words (QUAEGEBEUR, "Pre-Old Coptic"). One can easily imagine that the redactor of the Dendur inscription, who was most probably an Egyptian, decided to transcribe the native word unknown to him in the familiar alphabet. Cf. MILLET, "Writing and literacy in ancient Sudan," p. 54, who supposes that the invention of the Old Nubian script might have taken place around CE 600, when the inhabitants of the Middle Nile Valley could still read and understand Meroitic. The evidence of the inscription from Dendur, so far unnoticed, may thus be seen as a 'missing link' in his theory of development.

30 The only exception is the word $\rho\omicron\gamma\omega$. Its exact meaning is unclear, but it appears that it could designate both 'week' and a particular day of the week (see *CSCN*, pp. 332, 335). Interestingly, the Greek word for 'week,' $\acute{\epsilon}\beta\delta\omicron\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$, is nowhere attested in the corpus of Christian Nubian sources in a dating context (it may exist, however, in literary texts, but at present I am unable to verify this). Could this clear preference to stick to the native form (even if it was derived from the Sahidic Coptic $\rho\omicron\gamma\omega\omega$; see *ibid.*, loc. cit.) suggest a different understanding by the Nubians of the conception of the week? The evidence is too scarce to allow any speculations, however.

31 According to our knowledge, the titles *choiak-* and *joknaiššil* never had Greek/Coptic counterparts (cf. RUFFINI, *Medieval Nubia*, pp. 46–56). As for the title *samata*, much later sources (12th–13th c.) show that this title was equivalent to the Greek term $\delta\omicron\mu\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$. Judging from the fact that the redactor of the Dendur inscription was able to successfully employ other Greek and Coptic terms to describe other persons' functions, it would seem that either he was unaware of the existence of such an imperial office matching the native function (this, however, would require the assumption that he was a Nubian) or the *samata*'s duties were so distinct that none of the imperial titles was appropriate at that time and only later were they changed to fit those of the *domestikos*.

Another apparently early attestation of Old Nubian is an inscription on a 6th–7th century plate from Dongola (DBMNT 1316), containing only one word, 'God,' Old Nubian $\tau\lambda\lambda\text{[]}$. The inscription, however, may be later than the vessel itself.

32 The following analysis is the extension of the discussion in LAJTAR, "Wall Inscriptions in the Banganarti Churches," pp. 140–1.

'(I) + name (+ son of + name) (+ office/title) (+ have written)'

1 2 3 4 5 6

From among these elements personal names and names of offices/titles (2, 4, and 5) can be excluded right away as indicators of language.³³ As for the remaining elements, they can take different forms in different languages:

- ▶ (1) – the 1st person singular pronoun can be expressed by the Greek forms ἐγώ, μέ, ἐμέ, μου, ἐμοῦ, μοί, ἐμοί, κάμέ, κάμου, the Coptic ⲁⲛⲟⲕ (once as ⲁⲛⲓⲣ' [DBMNT 2055]),³⁴ and the Old Nubian ⲁⲓ, ⲁⲉⲓ, and ⲁⲓⲟⲩ³⁵;
- ▶ (3) – the patronymic can be introduced by the Greek οἰός, written Ⲯⲥ, as if it were a *nomen sacrum*,³⁶ or two Old Nubian genitive phrases -ⲛ ⲧⲟⲧ and -ⲛ ⲉⲁⲗ; once the Coptic phrase ⲛⲟⲩⲛ is attested (DBMNT 2265);
- ▶ (6) – the verb is normally expressed either by forms derived from the Greek γράφω³⁷ (occasionally attested as the 1st person singular of aorist active ἔγραψα [e.g. DBMNT 451, 554], but more often as forms apparently meaningless from the point of view of Greek conjugation, like γράφα [e.g. DBMNT 563], γράφου [e.g. DBMNT 1580], or, most frequently, γράψον³⁸ [e.g. DBMNT 1437, 1703, 1848, 2166, 2173]) or by the Old Nubian ⲛⲁⲉⲓⲉⲗⲟ, from the verb ⲛⲁⲣ-, 'to write, inscribe'; in two instances (DBMNT 92 and 980) the Coptic verb ⲉⲣⲁⲓ, 'to write,' is attested.

As can be seen from the above, Coptic is relatively rarely attested in visitor's inscription. It needs to be added, however, that one can sporadically identify some non-lexical Coptic elements within the structure of inscriptions.³⁹ For example, in a graffito from the so-called Anchorite's Grotto in Faras (DBMNT 1673) one Petrou identifies himself as ⲁⲓⲁⲕⲓⲛⲓⲥ ⲙⲉⲣⲁⲭⲱⲡ[---], 'deacon of (the church of) Jesus of Pachoras,' the two 'of's being represented by the Coptic genitive phrase.⁴⁰

33 Toponyms, which not infrequently occur in visitor's inscription, are obviously excluded too.

34 Adam Łajtar informs me that the visitor's inscriptions from Gebel Maktub frequently start with the Coptic pronoun.

35 See also ŁAJTAR, "The Greek of Late Christian Inscriptions from Nubia," p. 759.

³⁶ The abbreviation through contraction is normally limited to *nomina sacra* in Nubian sources. In secular words, on the other hand, the abbreviation through suspension is the most common method. It would thus seem that the abbreviation 𐩦𐩣 originally referred to Jesus as the Son of God, and only later did it start to be employed in filiation.

37 Other verbs are attested occasionally, for example *τάττω* and *χαράσσω*

38 LAJTAR, "The Greek of Late Christian Inscriptions from Nubia," p. 760, suggests that this form can be explained on the grounds of normative Greek grammar as created by adding the endings of Greek historic tenses to the stem of the sigmatic aorist with the simultaneous disappearance of the augment.

39 See JAKOBIELSKI, *A History*, p. 15.

40 Note that the graffito starts with the Greek pronoun ἐγώ.

There are, of course, many inscriptions that go beyond this simple model. They may contain a variety of invocations, acclamations, and prayers in all three languages, in which case the identification of language is easier.⁴¹

10

As a matter of fact, assigning visitor's inscriptions, especially the short ones, to any language group is highly doubtful, because the fact that someone uses a Greek or Coptic pronoun does not mean that he knows anything more than that about these languages.⁴² The abundance of 'un-Greek' forms of the verb γράφω is especially eloquent in this respect. This phenomenon most plausibly resulted from the Nubian epigraphic habit, where the choice of particular forms was deeply rooted in the tradition and it certainly does not reflect command of a given language.

One may therefore argue that in such instances the language should be labelled as 'unidentified.' However, for the sake of the statistics, I have decided to indicate all instances of the use of Nubian languages, even in highly fossilised and sometimes even unintelligible forms. This not only serves to show the extent of the phenomenon, both spatial and chronological, and its cultural significance in terms of numbers, but also may help us to understand the reasons behind such an outstanding persistence of Greek and, to a lesser extent, Coptic, even after their disappearance from other categories of Christian Nubian written sources.

To close this methodological section, one more explanation is due. I have mentioned above that I distinguish three categories of bilingual sources: Greek/Coptic, Greek/Old Nubian, and Coptic/Old Nubian.⁴³ Such a labelling is purely arbitrary and must not be taken as designating the predominance of the first language in the pairs. Hence, for example, both Greek epitaphs with dating formulae in Old Nubian and Old Nubian letters with addresses in Greek are labelled as 'Greek/Old Nubian,' regardless of the proportion of the languages. The decision was also motivated by the fact that in some texts, like Greek/Old Nubian psalters or visitor's inscriptions, no language can be indicated as predominant, making the choice completely impressionistic. Such a classification also allows us to avoid multiplying the categories and makes the statistics more lucid. Besides, the question of the proportion of the languages in par-

41 Although those elements may also be written in a mixture of languages.

42 This, of course, does not pertain to more substantial texts, such as epitaphs, which bear information at least about the redactor's level of knowledge about the grammar and vocabulary of a given language.

43 There are also three texts in the DBMNT labelled as 'Old Nubian & Arabic': DBMNT 1197 (unpublished Arabic document with one line of Old Nubian, from Kulubnarti), 1218 (unpublished theological [?] text with unknown proportions of the languages, from Qasr Ibrim), 2829 (Old Nubian letter with one line in Arabic, from Qasr Ibrim). In both unpublished texts the content and interrelation of fragments in both languages are unknown; in the third example, the line in Arabic remains undeciphered.

ticular sources seems rather marginal for the present article. This, of course, does not mean that it is unimportant for the study of the Nubian multilingualism. Quite the contrary, but the proper understanding of this phenomenon requires a case-by-case analysis of bilingual Nubian sources, which certainly exceeds the scope of this paper.⁴⁴

11

3. Nubian multilingualism in numbers

3.1 *Media and types of texts*

For the time being, the DBMNT contains 2926 Nubian texts,⁴⁵ which are classified according to two main categories: ‘medium,’ that is the vehicle on which the text was written, and ‘type of text.’⁴⁶ The two tables below present a general distribution of sources in these categories.

medium	number of texts	percentage
stela/plaque	980	33.49%
wall & rock ⁴⁷	938	32.05%
pottery	382	13.05%
manuscript ⁴⁸	296	10.12%
architectural element & stone block	98	3.35%
ostrakon	80	2.73%
lamp	51	1.74%
sepulchral cross	27	0.92%
stamp	19	0.65%
brick	16	0.55%
small objects ⁴⁹	16	0.55%
tablet	8	0.27%
mudstopper	8	0.27%
textile	7	0.24%

Table 1. Nubian written sources according to medium.

⁴⁴ When available, the precise information about the proportion of languages in each bilingual text can be found in the DBMNT.

⁴⁵ The total number of records is 2930, but three of them, DBMNT 496, 500, and 538, must be excluded, because they are most probably not Nubian (contrary to what I believed while preparing the CSCN volume in 2011) and the fourth one, DBMNT 475, has been recently identified as identical with DBMNT 474 (it was published by LEFEBVRE as two separate objects,

I. Lefebvre 609 and 610). Nevertheless, the records have not been deleted from the database in order to retain the continuity of catalogue numbers and their consistence with the CSCN.

⁴⁶ The texts are also divided according to the material and technique of execution, but these divisions are marginal from the point of view of this article and their detailed description is thus omitted.

⁴⁷ Because of their typological proximity, ‘wall’ and ‘rock’ as well as ‘architectural element’ and ‘stone block’ are counted together.

⁴⁸ Under this heading I include all the texts written on non-durable writing materials (papyrus, paper, parchment, leather), be they documentary, literary, or subliterate.

⁴⁹ Under this heading I include several smaller categories: jewellery (5 objects), figurine (3 objects), metal object (2 objects), cross (2 objects), coin weight (1 object), other (including all identifiable objects not belonging to the remaining groups; so far only 1 find has been thus classified, a leather case with an impressed monogram from Abkanarti [DBMNT 2459]), and unidentified (2 objects).

Table 2. Nubian written sources according to type of text.

12

type of text	number of texts	percentage
epitaph	995	34.01%
name of divine entity/saint	331	11.31%
unidentified	326	11.14%
visitor's inscription	278	9.50%
document	192	6.56%
literary	133	4.55%
legend	129	4.42%
owner's inscription	116	3.96%
private prayer	70	2.39%
subliterary	70	2.39%
name	65	2.22%
liturgical	59	2.02%
commemorative inscription	38	1.30%
invocation	27	0.92%
school exercise	19	0.65%
dedicatory inscription	17	0.58%
foundation inscription	14	0.48%
alphabet	10	0.34%
other ⁵⁰	10	0.34%
date	9	0.31%
catalogue	8	0.27%
tag	5	0.17%
official inscription	3	0.10%
colophon	2	0.07%

It comes as no surprise that the tables confirm the existing opinions about the character of Nubian literacy: the commonest media are stelae and the surface of walls and rocks, both bearing the most popular types of texts, namely epitaphs, visitor's inscriptions, legends, and a repertoire of holy names.⁵¹ However, while the number of stelae and epitaphs in the DBMNT should most probably be considered as nearly complete, since all the major collections have already been published and the probability of discovering a large cemetery with a considerable assemblage of tombstones is very low, the number of wall and rock inscriptions is going to increase significantly with the publication of the material from, for example, Banganarti and Faras. It is estimated that their number will at least double, completely changing the proportions.

⁵⁰ To this group belong all the texts whose contents is identifiable but hard to classify.

⁵¹ It should be kept in mind that the media and types of text do not always overlap. It is true that the lion's share of epitaphs was executed on stelae, but there are also examples of tombstones painted on the walls or incised on the surface of a rock. On the other hand, not all of the stelae are epitaphs, as we know several inscriptions of official character.

But the tables also bring to light the importance of a category so far underestimated, neglected, or even completely ignored, namely inscriptions on pottery.⁵² It appears that this medium is the third most popular in the Middle Nile Valley, with almost 400 attestations. Moreover, although the DBMNT collects all instances of inscribed vessels available in publications, it may be expected that many objects still remain unpublished, hidden in the store-rooms of museums and archaeological missions.⁵³ This situation most surely results from the fact that this is a very difficult material to study, very often completely unintelligible. Yet, if taken en masse, it shows the Nubians' respect for the letters almost as forcefully as the epitaphs and visitor's inscriptions do. The most numerous types of text connected with this medium are holy names and owner's inscriptions.

The fourth most popular medium are the manuscripts, containing various types of texts: documentary, literary, liturgical, and subliterary.⁵⁴ These texts are obviously connected with the religion, economy, and administration; there is a relatively low number of documents of private character, like private letters, but in most cases they either deal with economic matters or are exchanged between state and church officials.⁵⁵ This makes the Church and the state the main producers of the written sources on the one hand, and the main consumers of the writing materials on the other. This is nothing new, indeed, but it seems worthwhile to take a closer look at the statistics of use of particular writing materials (graph 1).

Although graph 1 reflects mainly the situation in Qasr Ibrim, whence the bulk of our sources comes (232 out of 295), the manuscripts from other places appear to fit the tendency already observed for that site.⁵⁶ Hence, the use of leather (mainly from gazelle, but occasionally also from crocodile) is restricted to documentary texts, but only those of a legal character (land sales, manumissions, loans, etc.).⁵⁷ Parchment, on the other hand, was used almost exclusively for the production of religious texts, both literary and liturgical. In addition, the fact that the vast majority of literary and liturgical texts are most probably loose pages from codices makes parchment

52 But see WELSBY, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, p. 238.

53 For example, Adam Łajtar informs me that around 100 such objects are in the storeroom of the Polish mission at Dongola.

54 The number of manuscripts in the DBMNT will increase significantly after the Coptic and Arabic texts from Qasr Ibrim have been published. Also, a substantial collection of texts from the island of Sur (personal communication of Alexandros Tsakos) will certainly contribute to changing the proportions.

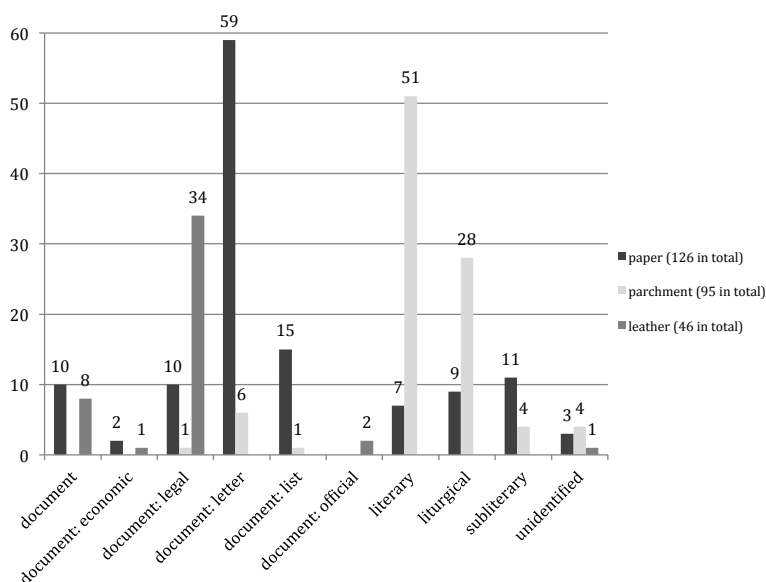
55 For examples of such a correspondence, see p. QI III and IV. Another category of private documents are magical texts serving for personal protection, but their number is low, with only 12 examples registered as manuscripts in the DBMNT.

56 PLUMLEY, "The Christian period," pp. 103–4; ADAMS, *Qasr Ibrim: The Late Mediaeval Period*, p. 219, t. 14; id., *Qasr Ibrim: The Earlier Medieval Period*, p. 242.

57 Observed already by PLUMLEY, "The Christian period," p. 104.

Graph 1. The use of non-durable writing materials.⁵²

14



the main material for the production of books. And as for paper, it is the only material found in similar proportions throughout most of the categories. This may indeed be linked to its popularisation in the late period (13th–14th century) and the gradual replacement of other writing materials,⁵⁹ but its outstandingly predominant use for the production of letters should rather be explained otherwise, for example in economical terms.

While it is rather doubtless that leather was a ‘native’ Nubian writing material,⁶⁰ no sources, be they written or archaeological, give us any hint as to whether the Nubians could produce paper and parchment themselves. It is therefore safer to assume that both materials were imported. We obviously have no idea what the prices of the writing materials were, but based on the quantitative and typological diversification of their uses we may assess their relative value: paper appears to have been the cheapest medium, used for private letters or amulets without much concern; parchment was

⁵⁸ Papyrus is lacking from the graph, because only 3 instances of its use have so far been registered in the DBMNT (1395, 2453, 2640). However, ADAMS, *Qasr Ibrim: The Earlier Medieval Period*, p. 242, with t. 11, reports 73 papyrus fragments found at Qasr Ibrim dating from the early Christian period (6th–9th c.), including 8 Greek, 59 Coptic, and 6 unidentified texts. None of these texts have been published. It is also uncertain how many of the paper (28), parchment (53), and leather (6) documents listed by Adams remain unpublished.

⁵⁹ ADAMS, *Qasr Ibrim: The Late Mediaeval Period*, p. 219; p. 220, t. 11, where the impressive number of 630 texts on paper is given, of which only a small portion has been published so far.

⁶⁰ A Trismegistos survey reveals that there are only 31 leather texts from Egypt dating between the 6th and 15th century. However, among them there are as many as 13 Blemmyan (hence, not exactly Egyptian) texts from Gebelein.

certainly more expensive (perhaps even much more expensive), out of reach of most private persons and accessible almost exclusively for the Church; finally, a limited number of texts on leather suggests that this medium was the most valuable. On the other hand, the clear association of the last two media with particular kinds of sources may point to their possible symbolic significance: parchment as the only material appropriate for religious writings, and leather as the sign of prestige through which legal acts gain importance or even become valid.

Provided the above reasoning is credible, it is somewhat surprising that ostraka, being the cheapest possible writing material, did not earn popularity in the Middle Nile Valley. One would expect their omnipresence, if only because of close contacts with Upper Egypt, where ostraka were a regular means of communication. Interestingly, the largest Nubian collections of ostraka with documentary texts, the ones from Debeira West⁶¹ and Abd el-Qadir,⁶² are most probably a direct result of Egyptian-Nubian contacts. It is even possible that their authors were Egyptians.⁶³ This would explain the almost complete absence of such texts from other places in the Middle Nile Valley: the Nubians did not feel the need to (or did not have to) record on potsherds all these smaller and bigger texts so commonly produced by the Egyptians.⁶⁴

3.2 *Chronological distribution of sources*

A general problem with any chronological consideration of Christian Nubian written sources is that a huge majority of texts cannot be precisely dated. In fact, only 163 texts (5.6%) contain dating formulae establishing their annual date.⁶⁵ For a further 298 sources (10.2%) a date within a single century can be established. As many as 461 texts (15.7%) can be dated more or less precisely within two centuries and 588 within three centuries (20.1%). For the remaining 1416 texts (roughly a half of the assemblage) only a broad dating, extending throughout four or more centuries, can be proposed, which is why they will not be taken into consideration in this section.⁶⁶

In order to get a clearer perspective on the chronological distribution of sources, the four groups mentioned above are presented in four separate graphs.

61 SHINNIE & SHINNIE, *Debeira West*, pp. 95–101.

62 RUFFINI, "Nubian Ostraka from the West Bank Survey."

63 CSCN, pp. 114, 159–60. See also OCHAŁA, "The Era of the Saracens in Non-Arabic Texts from Nubia," pp. 154–5.

64 Adam Łajtar informs me that there is a collection of ostraka, mainly literary, from Dongola and several magical ostraka from Gebel Adda.

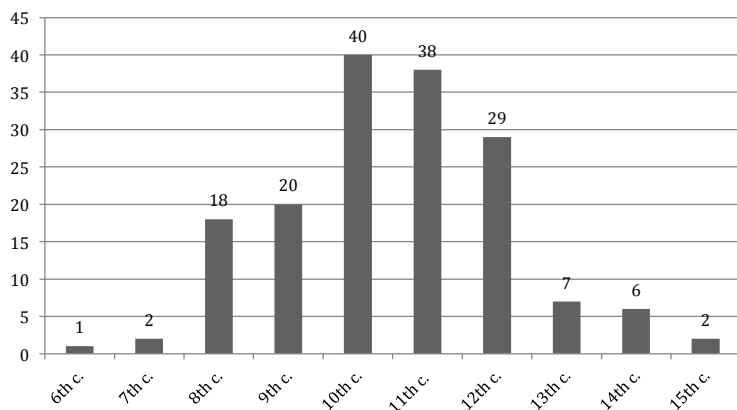
65 See CSCN, pp. 7–23 with t. 4.

66 It is to be hoped that the future study of Christian Nubian palaeography will give us means for greater precision in establishing the age of Nubian sources.

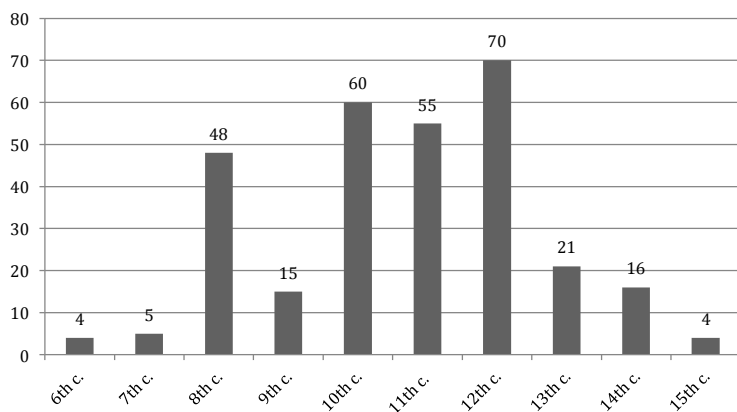
Graph 2.
Chronological
distribution of
precisely dated
texts.

16

Ochała



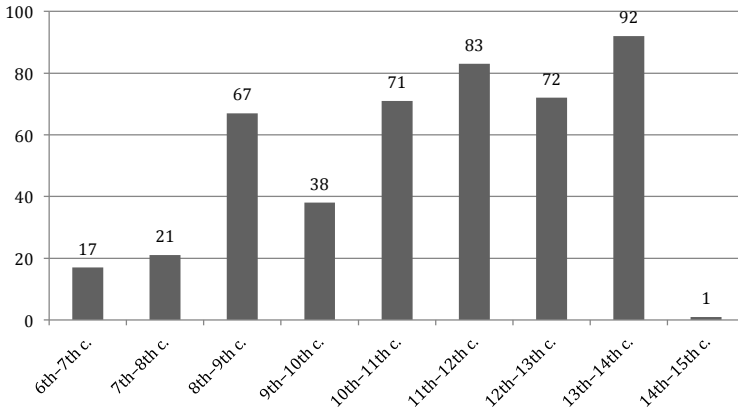
Graph 3.
Chronological
distribution of
texts dated within
one century
(except those in
graph 2).



Graphs 2 and 3 display a strikingly similar pattern, with a sudden outburst of production of texts in the eighth century,⁶⁷ after two centuries scarce in written sources. The high rate of production seems to have been retained in the ninth century, but the following three hundred years, from the tenth to the twelfth century, are the peak of Nubian literacy, which starts to die out in the thirteenth century. A similar situation may be deduced from graph 4, with a remarkable difference in the period of the thirteenth–fourteenth century. This is caused by the increased production of visitor’s inscriptions, especially at the sites of Banganarti and Sonqi Tino. As for graph 5, although the tendency for later centuries is less clear, the rapid increase of text production in the eighth century is ap-

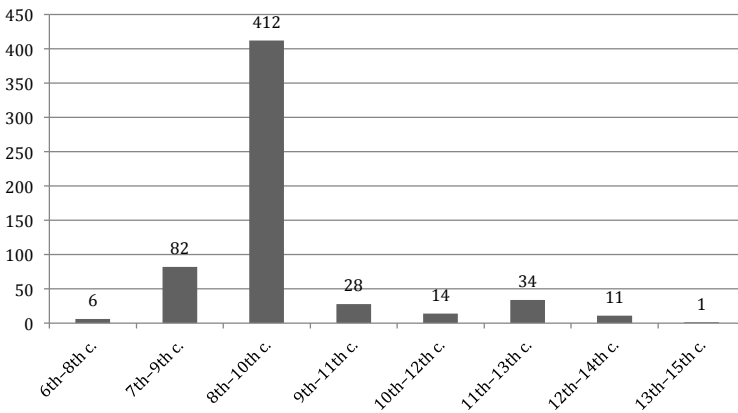
⁶⁷ One has to admit, however, that most of the texts dated to the 8th century (graph 3) come from Faras, 38 in total, from among which as many as 29 come from a single place, the famous Anchorite’s Grotto on the outskirts of the city.

Multilingualism in Christian Nubia



Graph 4.
Chronological
distribution of
texts dated within
two centuries.

17



Graph 5.
Chronological
distribution of
texts dated within
three centuries.

parent in the columns representing the seventh-ninth and eighth-tenth centuries.⁶⁸

Of course, these particularities may be explained by the state of preservation of sources, the state of their publication, or the state of archaeological investigations, but the correspondence between the graphs is too striking to blame it all on such factors. Instead, the explanation should most probably be sought in the political and cultural history of the Middle Nile Valley.

The first period of increased production of written sources, in the eighth-ninth century, should most probably be viewed as reflecting political changes in the state. This is the time of two powerful kings of Makuria, Merkourios (696/7-after 710) and Kyriakos (746/7-after

⁶⁸ It must be remembered, however, that from among 82 texts in the 7th-9th century range as many as 54 come from the cemetery of Ginari, and from among the 412 dated to the 8th-10th century, as many as 307 come from Sakinya; cf. *cscn*, pp. 20, 45-46.

770). The former appears to have initiated great changes in both the Makurian Church and the administration of the kingdom, to the extent that he was dubbed the 'New Constantine' by contemporaries.⁶⁹ As for the latter king, he continued the reforms of his predecessor, reinforcing the country; he was even the first Makurian ruler to be able to invade Egypt.⁷⁰

Those reforms must have created a perfect environment for the rapid development of text production, and perhaps even incited them. This is clearly seen in the typological diversity of sources present in table 3, where the types of sources attested in the sixth and seventh centuries are juxtaposed with those appearing in the eighth.

Table 3.
Typological
diversity of
dateable Nubian
sources according
to periods (only
the figures from
graphs 2, 3, 4, and
5 are taken into
account).

type of text	6th– 7th c. ⁷¹	8th– 9th c. ⁷²	10th– 12th c. ⁷³	13– 15th c. ⁷⁴	total	% of all texts of type ⁷⁵
alphabet	–	–	1	1	2	20%
catalogue	–	–	–	1	1	13%
colophon	–	1	1	–	2	100%
commemorative inscription	7	1	20	2	30	79%
date	–	–	5	–	5	56%
dedicatory inscription	1 ⁷⁶	–	12	–	13	76%
document	1 ⁷⁷	22	113	14	150	78%
epitaph	5	99	158	2	264	27%
foundation inscription	8	4	1	1	14	100%

69 According to John the Deacon, quoted by Severus of el-Ashmunein, *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria* III, ed. EVETTS, p. 140 (available online at <http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/severus_hermopolis_hist_alex_patr_o3_part3.htm>, accessed 28 January 2014; cf. translation in VANTINI, *Oriental Sources Concerning Nubia*, p. 40). For a comprehensive assessment of Merkourios' policy and achievements, see GODLEWSKI, "The Rise of Makuria," pp. 65–7.

70 For his rule, see GODLEWSKI, "The Rise of Makuria," pp. 67–9.

71 Figures include the first two columns of graphs 2, 3, and 4.

72 Figures include the third and fourth columns of graphs 2, 3, and 4.

73 Figures include columns five through seven of graphs 2, 3, and 4, as well as column five of graph 5.

74 Figures include columns eight through ten of graphs 2 and 3, eight and nine of graph 4, and eight of graph 5.

75 The last column of the table serves to show the difficulty in precise dating of certain categories of texts. Regrettably, the rate is particularly low in the most numerous types: epitaphs, legends, literary and liturgical texts, names of divine entities/saints, owner's and visitor's inscriptions. Had we the means to assign dates to them more accurately, the image presented here could change, a caveat that has to be kept in mind constantly.

76 This is a bronze vessel with an inscribed dedication in Coptic (DBMNT 1457). It was reportedly found in Soba but it seems probable that it was imported from Egypt.

77 This is a papyrus in Fayumic Coptic and Old Nubian (DBMNT 1395), containing a list of names and the beginning of a letter. Its provenance is unknown: it may have been written down by a Nubian travelling in Egypt (Fayum?) as well as by an Egyptian travelling in the Middle Nile Valley.

type of text	6th– 7th c. ⁷¹	8th– 9th c. ⁷²	10th– 12th c. ⁷³	13– 15th c. ⁷⁴	total	% of all texts of type ⁷⁵
invocation	–	–	4	2	6	22%
legend	–	12	34	1	47	36%
literary	–	28	32	7	67	50%
liturgical	–	2	20	2	24	41%
name	1	3	6	1	11	17%
name of divine entity/saint	10	4	25	8	47	14%
official inscription	–	1	–	–	1	33%
other	3	–	–	1	4	40%
owner's inscription	2	2	29	1	34	29%
private prayer	1	5	8	25	39	55%
school exercise	–	–	1	4	5	26%
subliterary	–	7	19	6	32	45%
tag	–	–	2	–	2	40%
unidentified	7	12	23	17	59	18%
visitor's inscription	4	3	18	54	79	28%
total	50	206	532	150	938	

Especially striking is the appearance in the eighth-ninth century, and already in substantial number, of documentary and literary texts, respectively representing the secular and religious spheres of life. This came, most obviously, as a result of the above-mentioned changes in the administration of the state and the Church.

On the other hand, the radical increase in the number of epitaphs suggests that the changes did not affect only the more official elements of the Nubian life. Perceived as the means to express private piety, they show that Nubian society as a whole became more religiously conscious or richer or, simply, its methods of expressing personal piety changed.

The beginning of the second period of increased production of written sources, in the tenth century, coincides with a supposed great administrative reform, elements of which were the introduction of Old Nubian as the official language of the kingdom of Makuria,⁷⁸ the final formation of the so-called 'official Nubian protocol,' and the complete change of the dating practices.⁷⁹ It is in this period that Makuria flourished and became the most powerful in its history. Makurian kings were able to conclude a personal union

⁷⁸ See GRIFFITH, "Christian documents from Nubia," pp. 17–18; KHALIL & MÜLLER, "Das unternubische Rechtswesen im Mittelalter," p. 18.

⁷⁹ CSCN, *passim*, esp. pp. 347–9.

with Makuria's southern neighbour, the kingdom of Alwa, which most probably took place in the first half of the eleventh century. In this way one strong political organism was created in the Middle Nile Valley. Undoubtedly, peaceful relations with the Fatimids in Egypt contributed to the economic and cultural development of the state.⁸⁰ Therefore, it is hardly surprising that this development was accompanied by such a high rate of text production.

Finally, the late period in the Christian Nubian history (13th–15th century) is marked by a drastic decrease in the number of written sources. This is caused, on the one hand, by an apparent change of burial customs, which no longer demanded funerary stelae,⁸¹ hence the total disappearance of this type of texts from the material in the second half of the thirteenth century. On the other hand, the political situation is again at stake: the second half of the thirteenth century was the starting point for constant power struggle within the Makurian royal family, fuelled by the Mamelukes and used by the Arab tribes to gain influence.⁸² Admittedly, the administration of the kingdom somehow made it through the hard times, which is confirmed by the existence of two legal documents (DBMNT 644 & 700) dating to the very end of the fifteenth century and enumerating all of the most important state and Church officials, but it was no longer able to execute its influence or work as efficiently as in the 'golden age.' An economic factor may also underlie the decrease in text production: one can easily imagine that the state of permanent war (or at least conflict) must have led to periodic limitation or even cessation of foreign trade, which, as has been pointed out earlier, seems to have been the only source of non-durable writing materials in the Middle Nile Valley. In such conditions only a limited number of sources on paper and parchment could be produced. Notably, of the six literary texts dated to this period, five are on ostraka and one is a wall inscription; similarly, of the four subliterate texts, two are on ostraka and two on textile. The only group that was consistently written on paper and leather are the documents (there is only one ostrakon from among the 33 texts of this period).

It is also worth noting that although (sub)literary and documentary production diminished in the final centuries, less representative genres, such as visitor's inscriptions, private prayers, and holy names seem to have retained or even increased their rate. Especially if we think about all the unpublished wall inscriptions from Baganarti and other places dating to this very period. Adam

80 For the political history of this period, see GODLEWSKI, "Introduction to the Golden Age of Makuria"; and id., "Bishops and Kings."

81 The latest securely dated epitaph is from 1257 (DBMNT 614); see CSCN, p. 44.

82 For the history of the period, see, e.g., WELSBY, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, pp. 242–5. See, however, RUFFINI, "Newer Light on the Kingdom of Dotawo," for a critical approach to the question of the 'Kingdom of Dotawo.'

Łajtar has observed that the inscriptions from Banganarti bear only very slight allusions to the current political troubles, presenting an image of a peaceful and prospering society and giving an impression of a strong and secure state.⁸³ Sources from other places, even the two latest documents mentioned above, appear to confirm this impression.

Indeed, the religious character of those texts may reflect a generic human behaviour expressed in the Polish proverb 'When in fear, God is dear,' even if the authors do not allude to troubled waters of their time. But such an explanation seems too simplistic, especially in view of the fact that since the beginning of the Christian period the Nubians had demonstrated a high reverence for all the divine entities and saints. Therefore, the phenomenon of a late 'popular' literacy should rather be perceived in terms of a deeply rooted tradition and a belief in the religious and/or magical power of letters, which evolved thanks to a long period of developed literary culture, and cultivated in spite of the decline of the literature of a higher register.

3.3 *Topographical distribution of sources*

It is equally interesting to take a closer look at the topographical distribution of sources. The task is as difficult as it is worthwhile. A comprehensive archaeological map of the Middle Nile Valley in the Christian period is still lacking and the available publications and the Internet are of little help in some cases. Because the precise location of many sites remains beyond my reach for the time being, the lists and maps presented below should be understood as provisional. It should be added here as well that in contrast to the number of texts registered in the DBMNT, the list of sites with textual finds seems to be complete or nearly complete: to the best of my knowledge, the unpublished material still lacking in the database comes only from the sites that are otherwise present in the DBMNT.

Judging by the number of sources (see t. 4), it appears that the northern part of the Middle Nile Valley up to the Third Cataract, corresponding to the territory of Nobadia, was more developed in terms of literacy than the south, the heartland of Makuria between the Third and Fifth Cataracts.⁸⁴ Still farther to the south, in Alwa, the rate of production of written sources appears to have been even lower. Such a situation is plausibly explained by historical circumstances, because it was northern Nubia that was most exposed to

83 ŁAJTAR, "Late Christian Nubia through Visitors' Inscriptions from the Upper Church at Banganarti," p. 326.

84 The exact extent of the kingdom is unknown, but for the sake of convenience the Fifth Cataract may be assumed to be its southern border. See EDWARDS, *The Nubian Past*, pp. 223-4, for a summary of archaeological evidence on the extent of the kingdom of Alwa.

the cultural influence of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, with its highly developed tradition of writing in Greek and subsequently in Coptic.⁸⁵

22 Table 4.
Topo-
graphical
distribution
of sources.

region	no. of texts	%	no. of sites with textual finds	%
Nobadia	2064	70.54%	84 ⁸⁶	60%
Makuria	674	23.04%	46 ⁸⁷	33%
Alwa	140	4.78%	8	6%
outside Nile Valley ⁸⁸	2	0.07%	2	1%
Egypt ⁸⁹	9	0.31%	n/a	n/a
unknown	37	1.26%	n/a	n/a

However, such a large disproportion between the regions seems to result mainly from the state of archaeological research in particular parts of the Middle Nile Valley: because of and, however controversially this sounds, thanks to the flooding of Lake Nubia, which engaged hundreds of archaeologists, the territory of Nobadia remains the most extensively studied Nubian region, the function of which is the number of textual finds. How important this factor is for our analysis has been recently shown during an analogous undertaking connected with the erection of a dam on the Fourth Cataract: the region extending upstream from Merowe that had previously been considered as archaeologically barren provided tons of data, completely changing our view.⁹⁰ These data also include some texts, 38 in total.⁹¹ This may seem very small a figure in comparison to the extent of the archaeological work, which covered some 200 km of the Nile Valley on both banks. However, if one takes into account the fact that before the salvage campaign the region was considered completely devoid of written sources, the number appears to be significant, if not impressive.

Another important factor, but pertaining almost exclusively to non-durable writing materials (papyrus, parchment, leather, wood, textile), are the natural conditions. Hence, at Qasr Ibrim the dry cli-

⁸⁵ This was already observed by JUNKER, "Die christlichen Grabsteine," p. 145.

⁸⁶ In addition, there is a group of 25 texts that on various grounds are identified as 'Lower Nubian,' i.e. Nobadian.

⁸⁷ There is also a group of 3 texts whose provenance is described as '4th Cataract,' without pinpointing their exact findspots.

⁸⁸ Two apparently Nubian texts have been found outside the Nile Valley: an Old Nubian rock graffito from Gebel Abu Negila in Kordofan (DBMNT 690) and an inscribed brick from Goz Regeb, located on the Atbara river, north-west of Kassala (DBMNT 2368).

⁸⁹ For the question of identifying texts from Egypt as Nubian, see CSCN, pp. 23–24, 46 and 50; see also above, pp. 3–4.

⁹⁰ For results of this research, see, e.g., NÄSER & LANGE, *Proceedings of the Second International Conference on the Archaeology of the Fourth Nile Cataract*.

⁹¹ To them one should add over a hundred manuscripts found on the island of Sur, in preparation for publication by Alexandros Tsakos.

mate and the absence of termites, consuming everything that contains cellulose, allowed the preservation of a quantity of sources written on such media incomparable with any other Nubian site.⁹² On the other hand, the fact that Dongola, the capital of the Kingdom of Makuria, has scarcely yielded any such texts is most probably due to the natural conditions, including the presence of insects.⁹³

If we now look at the number of sites with textual finds, we will notice that the disproportion in these figures is much less striking: Nobadian sites are slightly less than twice as numerous as Makurian ones. This reflects the state of investigation: until the salvage campaign at the Fourth Cataract, excavations at Christian sites in the heartland of Makuria were a real rarity. In fact, some findspots are represented only by stray finds and others are stated as places of acquisition of particular objects; in both cases no regular works have ever been carried out there (for example, el-Khandaq, Amantogo, or Khalewa, all located not too far north of Dongola, where Christian settlement must have been substantial). But these figures also seem to bring us a bit closer to the truth as far as the commonness of writing is concerned, showing that the rate of text production could have been more or less the same in both regions, since even such seemingly godforsaken places as villages and islands deep in the Fourth Cataract were inhabited by people who knew how to read and write.⁹⁴

For the reader's convenience, I present here a full list of sites found in the DBMNT. The sites are arranged topographically, from the north to the south. I have been unable to verify the location of the toponyms accompanied by a question mark; therefore their position on the list should be considered tentative.

Nobadia	no. of texts	Makuria	no. of texts	Alwa	no. of texts
Biga	3	Hannek	1	el-Usheir	2
Debod	1	Mushu	15	Bauga	1
Kertassi	1	Koya	1	Meroe	2
Hindawi	1	Kudi	1	Begrawiya	2
Ginari	54	Qasr Wadi	1	Musawwarat	15
		Nimri		el-Sofra	
Tafa	17	el-Khandaq	2	Soba	114
Bab Kalabsha	3	Nawi	1	Geteina	3
Kalabsha	26	Amantogo	1	Abu Haraz	1

Table 5. List of Nubian sites with textual finds, arranged from the north to the south.

92 WELSBY, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, p. 241.

93 However, the citadel of Dongola (the so-called Kom A) still remains largely unexplored, and it cannot be excluded that archaeological work will one day bring to light a more substantive number of sources of this kind.

94 Cf. HÄGG, "Some Remarks," p. 104, for the distribution of Greek sources in Nubia.

Nobadia	no. of texts	Makuria	no. of texts
Nag' Marsa Kuleig	1	Khalewa	1
Nag' el-Gama	1	Sheikh Arab Hag	1
Dendur	2	Hambuklol	7
Sabagura	21	Gebel Ghaddar	1
Hamadab	1	Dongola	183
Dakka	1	Banganarti	76
Ofedunia (Maharaqa)	1	Tangasi Island	2
Ikhmindi	2	Selib	7
Nag' el-Sheikh Sharaf	4	Abkur	2
Nag' el-Sheima	18	Goshabi	1
Nag' el-Oqba	3	Ganetti	2
Sheima Amalika	7	el-Arak	1
Wadi el-Sebua	13	Gebel Audun	1
Amada	20	Bakhit	1
Derr	7	el-Zuma	14
Karanog	1	Debeiba	1
Masmas	2	Merowe	1
Aniba	3	Ghazali	256
Qasr Ibrim	426	Umm Ruweim	3
Sinesra	1	Gebel Barkal	6
Kolotod	2	Nuri	2
Sakinya	315	4th Cataract	3
el-Ramal	7	Kasingar	1
Tokor	1	Suegi	2
Arminna	45	Turkab	1
Tamit	68	Umm Usher island(?)	2
Gindinarri	1	Dar el-Arab	2
Abdallah-n Irqi	33	el-Doma	9
Abu Oda	20	Kenisa	1
Gebel Adda	22	Kirbeka	5
Qasr el-Wizz	12	Boni island	1
Qustul	1	Umm Qatatia (?)	4
Sheikh Gebel	5	Us island	6
Faras	465	Sur island	1

Nobadia	no. of texts	Makuria	no. of texts
Adindan	1	el-Ganaet(i)	1
Aksha	12	Gebaliya island	1
Serra	15	Mograt island	4
Ashkeit	5	Karmel	1
Debeira	36	el-Koro	30
Komangana	5	Khor Dam el-Tor	7
el-Donga	1		
Argin	1		
Nag' el-Arab	4		
Sahaba	3		
Wadi Halfa	4		
Abd el-Qadir	43		
Meinarti	72		
Kor	1		
Abkanarti	7		
Figirantawu	1		
Qasr'antawu	1		
Tunkid (?)	1		
Attiri	1		
Shirgondinarti island	1		
Diffinarti	1		
Semna	9		
Sunnarti	4		
Sonqi Tino	37		
Ukma	6		
Akasha	1		
Kulb	18		
Kulubnarti	47		
Kulme island	1		
Amara	1		
Sagiet el-Abd	2		
Missiminia	2		
Sai	46		
Toshkei	1		
Nilwatti island	1		
Sedeinga	2		
Tondi	1		
Gebel Gorgod	1		
Gebel Noh/ Kajbar	1		

Nobadia	no. of texts
Nauri	1
Fagirinfenti	1
Masida	2
Lower Nubia	25

It is also interesting to investigate how the topographical distribution of sources changed over time. Regrettably, only a limited number of sources can be dated with a relative precision (see the previous section), which makes the picture largely incomplete. For the reasons already stated above, only the texts that can be dated within a maximum of two and occasionally three centuries are taken into account. Thus, a number of sites for which only a broad dating is possible are lacking from the maps, but trying to ascribe them to a particular century or even period would only obscure the picture. In presenting the material, I follow the periodisation established in the previous section (map 1: 6th–7th c., map 2: 8th–9th c., map 3: 10th–12th c., map 4: 13th–15th c.; all overleaf).

Looking at these maps, two things become immediately apparent. Firstly, the topographical distribution of texts appears to depend on the intensity of their production: maps are densest for the eighth and tenth–twelfth centuries, the two periods characterised by the most developed culture of writing. Secondly, the three most important cities of the Middle Nile Valley, Qasr Ibrim, Faras, and Dongola, are present on each map, a fact that underlines their leading position in the region.⁹⁵ It is therefore most natural to consider them centres of production of written sources, whence the tradition diffused to other places. Other than that, the maps do not reveal any particular pattern of development of writing in the Middle Nile Valley.⁹⁶

3.4 *Languages of Christian Nubia*

Table 6 below presents the general statistics of the use of languages in Christian Nubia, as shown by the 2926 texts from the DBMNT. They are arranged according to the number of attestations of particular languages and their possible combinations.

Table 6. Language of Nubian written sources.

language	no. of texts	percentage
unidentified	928	31.7%
Greek	892	30.5%
Coptic	662	22.6%

⁹⁵ Although Soba, the capital of Alwa, must have been a very important centre as well, we still know too little about its political and cultural role in the region.

⁹⁶ Cf. HÄGG, "Some Remarks," p. 104, for the distribution of Greek sources in Nubia.

language	no. of texts	percentage
Old Nubian	232	7.93%
Greek/Old Nubian	117	4.00%
Greek/Coptic	45	1.54%
Arabic	43	1.47%
Old Nubian/Arabic	3	0.10%
Coptic/Old Nubian	2	0.07%
Greek/Coptic/Old Nubian	2	0.07%

In order to simplify the graphs and tables, texts written in combinations of languages are not included in the attestations of particular languages. This, however, should not influence the general picture, because the number of bi- and trilingual texts is relatively low (169 examples = 5.77%). Moreover, the nature of particular types of sources in these two groups (e.g. epitaphs, documents, visitor's inscriptions) and, not infrequently, of individual texts requires a case-by-case analysis of the code-switching, to which another study will be devoted.

In the following subsections the three most important languages, Greek, Coptic, and Old Nubian, are compared from the point of view of their typology, chronology, and topographical distribution. The number of Arabic sources is so low that a characterisation of its usage will not be provided.⁹⁷

Let us first take a quick look at the opinions concerning the status of the languages. Nubian Greek is usually perceived as the language of the Church or, more broadly, of religiousness, be it official or private.⁹⁸ Some authors believe that it was also spoken at least by a part of the population (e.g. by the clergy).⁹⁹ Finally, some scholars believe that Greek was the official language of the court at Dongola.¹⁰⁰

Coptic in Nubia, on the other hand, was until quite recently perceived as the language of literary works, especially, or even exclusively, biblical and homiletic.¹⁰¹ This view, however, has started to change thanks to a more thorough investigation of the Coptic ma-

97 See, however, *cscn*, pp. 165–76, for the general character of Arabic sources from Nubia dated according to the Era of the Hegira.

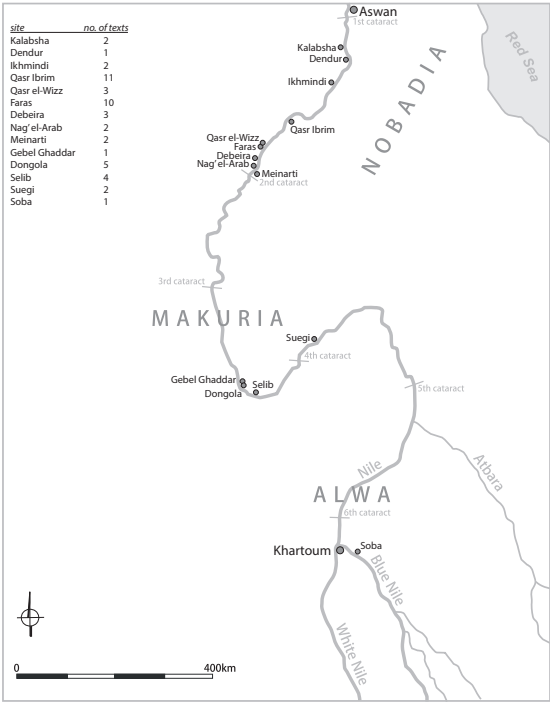
98 Thus, e.g., SHINNIE, "Multilingualism," pp. 45–6; ADAMS, *Qasr Ibrim: The Late Mediaeval Period*, p. 220; id., *Qasr Ibrim: The Earlier Medieval Period*, p. 243; HÄGG, "Uses of Greek in the Nubian Kingdoms," p. 756.

99 E.g. JAKOBIELSKI, *A History*, p. 15; KUBIŃSKA, *Inscriptions*, p. 74; SHINNIE, "Multilingualism," p. 46; WELSBY, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, p. 238; BURSTEIN, "When Greek was an African Language," pp. 57–8. But see ADAMS, *Qasr Ibrim: The Earlier Medieval Period*, p. 243, who excludes such a possibility.

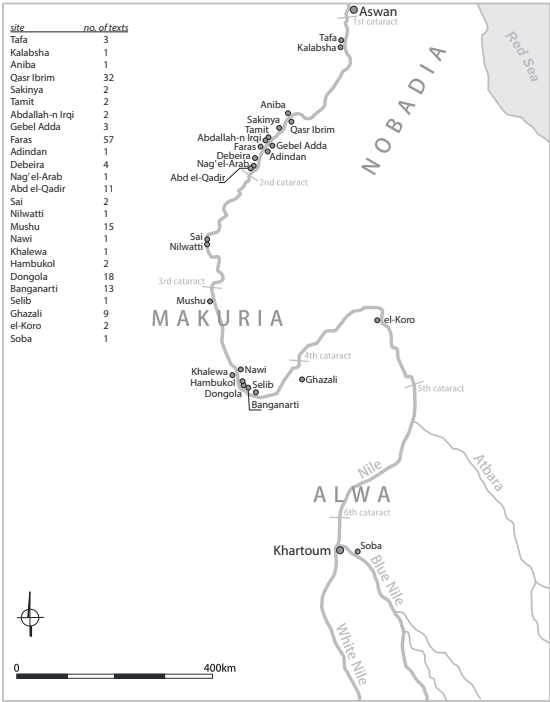
100 JAKOBIELSKI, *A History*, p. 15; id., "Inscriptions," p. 281; KUBIŃSKA, *Inscriptions*, p. 74; ŁAJTAR, "Greek Funerary Inscriptions from Old Dongola," p. 238; BURSTEIN, "When Greek Was an African Language," p. 56.

101 PLUMLEY, "The Christian period," esp. p. 104.

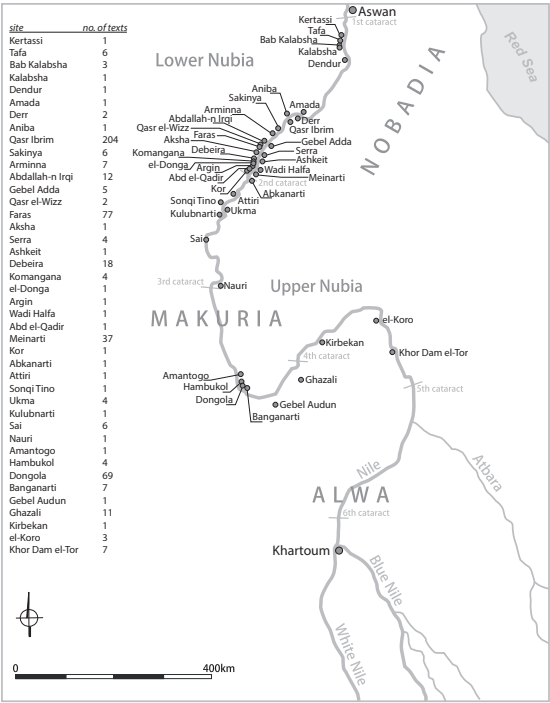
Map 1. Sites with textual finds from 6th–7th century (all maps digitally prepared by Szymon Maślak, Grzegorz Ochała, and Dobrochna Zielińska).



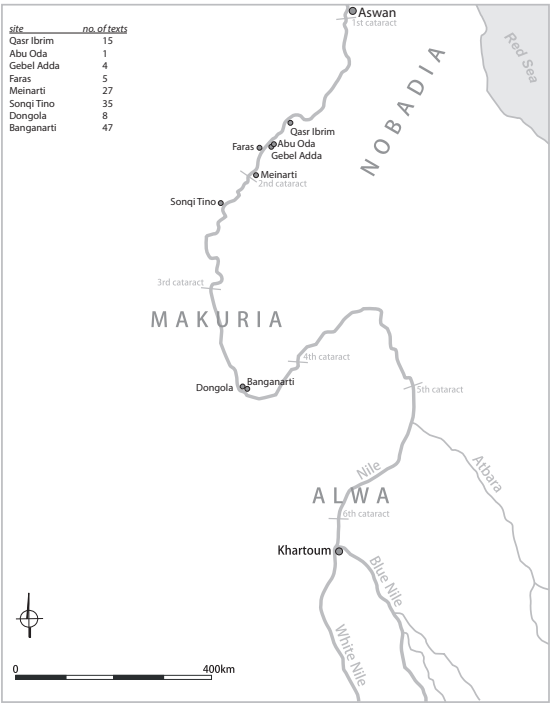
Map 2. Sites with textual finds from 8th–9th century.



Multilingualism in Christian Nubia



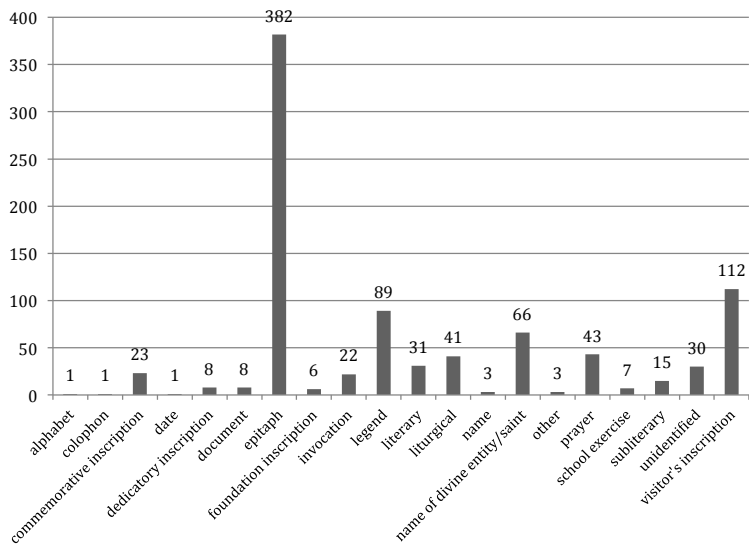
Map 3. Sites with textual finds from 10th–12th century.



Map 4. Sites with textual finds from 13th–15th century.

Graph 6.
Typological
diversification
of Greek sources
from Nubia.

30



terial from Qasr Ibrim.¹⁰² According to this new insight, it appears that it is justified to call Coptic a documentary language as much as literary one. The alleged literary status of this language in Nubia constituted the foundation of the common opinion that, unlike Greek, Coptic had never been a spoken language in the Middle Nile Valley; moreover, its occurrence is often associated with the presence of Coptic-speaking migrant groups of Egyptian origin, especially with monks.¹⁰³

The case of Old Nubian seems to be the least problematic. It appears that from the moment of its popularisation (or even its institutionalisation, see above, p. 19) at the turn of the tenth century, it started to be employed without distinction in both religious and secular texts¹⁰⁴ to become a ‘principal medium of written communication.’¹⁰⁵

Could all these statements be verified by the means of numbers? Let us first consider the typological diversification of Nubian sources. Table 7 below presents general statistics for the three languages (multilingual and Arabic texts are excluded). The figures from par-

102 HAGEN, “A City That Is Set on a Hill Cannot Be Hid”; and VAN DER VLIET, “Coptic as a Nubian Literary Language.”

103 JUNKER, “Die christlichen Grabsteine,” p. 146; JAKOBIELSKI, *A History*, p. 15; PLUMLEY, “The Christian period,” p. 104; ADAMS, *Qasr Ibrim: The Late Mediaeval Period*, p. 222; WELSBY, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*, p. 238; EDWARDS, *The Nubian Past*, p. 239. But see VAN DER VLIET, “Coptic as a Nubian Literary Language,” p. 766, for opposite opinion.

104 ADAMS, *Qasr Ibrim: The Earlier Mediaeval Period*, p. 245.

105 Id., *Qasr Ibrim: The Late Mediaeval Period*, p. 222.

ticular columns are subsequently repeated in graphs 6, 7, and 8, in order to better visualise certain relations.

type of text	Greek	Coptic	Old Nubian
alphabet	1	6	–
catalogue	–	–	3
colophon	1	1	–
commemorative inscription	23	3	1
date	1	–	–
dedicatory inscription	8	1	–
document	8	37	92
epitaph	382	477	1
foundation inscription	6	5	–
invocation	22	2	3
legend	89	–	1
literary	31	61	26
liturgical	41	3	6
name	3	–	–
name of divine entity/saint	66	2	2
official inscription	–	3	–
other	3	1	1
owner's inscription	–	3	–
private prayer	43	6	11
school exercise	7	2	–
subliterary	15	8	9
tag	–	–	2
unidentified	30	17	40
visitor's inscription	112	24	34
total	892	662	232

Table 7.
Typological
diversification
of Nubian
languages. 31

As can be observed in table 7 and graph 6, among the 892 Greek sources only a handful appear to be not connected with religion. Among the possibly 'secular' types of sources are documents, dates, foundation inscriptions, and school exercises. Let us now consider them one by one:

- The Greek documents present in the graph are exclusively written on ostraka and are kind of accounts connected with deliveries of corn. Seven of them (DBMNT 625, 695–8, 711, 1280) come from Abd el-Qadir, a site that might have served as an entrepôt.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, the palaeography of the texts, especially five of them written by a single scribe, Markos (DBMNT 625, 695–8), suggests that they were written by an Egyptian or at least a Nubian edu-

¹⁰⁶ ADAMS, *The West Bank Survey from Faras to Gemai*, pp. 182–3.

cated in Egypt.¹⁰⁷ The eighth ostrakon (DBMNT 2618) belongs to the collection of nineteen such objects from Debeira; this is the only Greek text, the remaining are in Coptic (15) and in Arabic (3). The character of those texts, as well as a number of other factors, strongly suggest that the town was a place of commercial activities between Egyptians and Nubians.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, it cannot be excluded that the authors of at least some of those texts were Egyptians.¹⁰⁹

- ▶ The only date in this assemblage (DBMNT 88) is the name of the month inscribed on the wall of the Faras cathedral and therefore most probably expresses either the date of a pilgrim's visit to the church or the date of a religious feast.
- ▶ Foundation inscriptions are in fact the only official texts from Nubia written in Greek. Notably, three of them (DBMNT 67, 68, and 531) concern the erection of churches and one the foundation of a town (DBMNT 458); the purpose of the remaining two (DBMNT 739 and 740) is unknown.
- ▶ Of the six school exercises in Greek, at least two (DBMNT 975 and 2734) are religious in character, comprising a list of Christian virtues and an invocation of the Archangel Michael, respectively; and two more are lists of words known from the Bible (DBMNT 2308 and 2732). Moreover, none of the remaining can be verified as 'secular.'

Thus, even the majority of texts that seem secular at first sight turn out to be connected one way or another with religion and/or its institutions. This seems to result from the fact that the art of writing was the domain of clergymen. It is certainly not accidental that seventeen out of nineteen school exercises (this is the total number of such texts; see above, table 2) have been found inside or on the walls of monasteries and churches. This makes the Nubian Church not only the main producer and user of texts but also the disseminator of literacy.¹¹⁰

On the other hand, the real secular texts, the documents on ostraka, cannot be unquestionably verified as Nubian: they appear to be a product of an Egyptian community in the Middle Nile Valley or at least to be inspired by close contacts with this community.

This makes the foundation inscription of the town of Ikhmindi (DBMNT 458) the sole certain example of a non-religious official

¹⁰⁷ RUFFINI, "Nubian Ostraka," p. 232; and CSCN, p. 114, where another indicator of the Egyptian character of the ostraka is given, namely the use of the 'numeral + indiction' pattern, characteristic for Egyptian documents and virtually absent from Nubia (ibid., pp. 111–15).

¹⁰⁸ SHINNIE, "Multilingualism," pp. 44–5.

¹⁰⁹ See above, p. 15.

¹¹⁰ Cf. JAKOBIELSKI, *A History*, p. 15.

Nubian source in Greek.¹¹¹ But it must be emphasised that the text dates from the sixth century and mentions a king of Nobadia, a fact that leaves Makuria without a single official document in this language.¹¹² In fact, only three texts known to date can be directly related to the court at Dongola: two royal decrees (DBMNT 581 [12th century] and 642 [14th century]) and an official letter to the Coptic patriarch (DBMNT 610 [12th century]). The first two are in Old Nubian and the last one is essentially¹¹³ in Coptic. In this light, the hypothesis of the official status of Greek in the Kingdom of Makuria is hard to defend. The evidence, although very meagre, suggests that in the tenth–eleventh century Old Nubian became the official language of the court in internal matters.¹¹⁴ In foreign affairs, on the other hand, Coptic was used as well as, most probably, Arabic.¹¹⁵ But until earlier documents of Makurian origin have been discovered, the question of the official language of the Dongolese court prior to the eleventh century will remain unsolved.

The hypothesis of Greek's official status originates at least partly from the fact of the total predominance of this language in Makuria (except the monastic milieu, see below), especially in Dongola and its vicinities, which can easily be noticed in tale 9b. There is no evidence, however, that the use of Greek was governed by any top-down directives of the court and/or the Church.¹¹⁶ Instead, in view of the character of the sources, this should rather be interpreted in terms of a deeply rooted attachment to Greek as the 'holy' language of the Scriptures and the liturgy, an attachment that survived beyond the thirteenth century, when the last more substantial Greek sources came to existence, in wall inscriptions employing very often formulaic and fossilised but certainly not meaningless Greek words and phrases.¹¹⁷ The extraordinary prestige of the language might have been indirectly reinforced by the absence of Coptic

111 One cannot exclude, however, that the foundation of a town included a religious ceremony, but the text mentions only civil officials (king, exarch, curator) as if no ecclesiastic was present during the event.

112 Cf. ADAMS, *Qasr Ibrim: The Earlier Medieval Period*, p. 243, who notes the total absence of 'secular communications in Greek from the Christian period' at Qasr Ibrim.

113 Note, however, that the document contains two Greek subtitles on the recto, being in fact a very elaborate form of address: the so-called '1st Greek subscript' states that the addresser is King Moïse Georgios and the '2nd Greek subscript' contains the addressee, Patriarch Mark III (see the translation of the text in ADAMS, *Qasr Ibrim: The Late Mediaeval Period*, pp. 228–9). This appears to correspond very well with the habit of addressing Old Nubian documents in Greek (cf. above, p. 7).

114 See CSCN, p. 348, and above, p. 19.

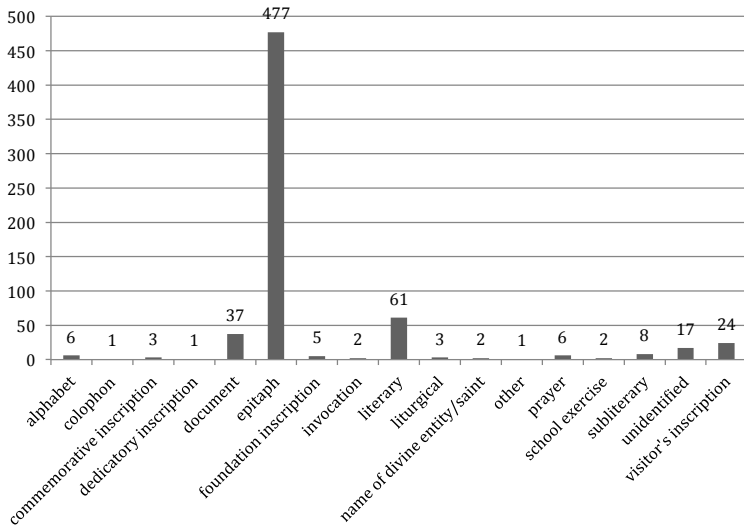
115 This is indicated by the letter from a governor of Egypt to a king of Makuria (PLUMLEY, "An Eighth-Century Arabic Letter"). Regrettably, we know no Arabic correspondence in the opposite direction, from the king to the governor, but it can be assumed rather safely that there were persons able to read and write in Arabic in the royal chancery.

116 The use of Greek and Coptic can by no means be associated with the Dyo- and Monophysite denominations, respectively (see VAN DER VLIET, "Coptic as a Nubian Literary Language," p. 767, pace JAKOBIELSKI, *A History*, p. 15).

117 LAJTAR, "The Greek of Late Christian Inscriptions from Nubia," *passim*.

Graph 7.
Typological
diversification
of Coptic sources
from Nubia.

34



(see below) resulting from the distance from the Egyptian border¹¹⁸ and the putative isolation of Makuria from external cultural and economic influences.¹¹⁹

Unlike Greek, Coptic in Nubia presents a relatively limited spectrum of uses, as can be seen in table 7 and graph 7. Moreover, for many text types, particularly those connected with expressions of private piety, Coptic is attested by a single example or a couple of them at most (commemorative and dedicatory inscriptions, invocations, holy names). In two other categories, prayers and visitor's inscriptions, the disproportion between the Greek and Coptic attestations is similarly striking. This testifies that Coptic, although present in one form or another in private religiousness, had never gained any significance in this field in the Nubian society. The only category connected with this sphere of life in which Coptic outnumbers Greek are the epitaphs. This, however, results mainly from the fact that as many as 245 Coptic grave stelae come from a single site, the cemetery of Sakinya. But this may not be as decisive a factor as it would seem at first sight, because when one compares the rate of Coptic and Greek tombstones from various Nubian cemeteries, it appears that in many of them (Ghazali, Qasr Ibrim, Faras, Sai, Arminna) the former language was predominant.¹²⁰ At the present

¹¹⁸ See ŁAJTAR, "Greek Funerary Inscriptions," p. 116. Cf. also JUNKER, "Die christlichen Grabsteine," p. 146; and EDWARDS, *The Nubian Past*, p. 240.

¹¹⁹ Known from the account of an Arab traveller, Ibn Selim el-Aswani, transmitted by Maqrizi (books XXX–XXXIV and XXXVI–XXXVII of Maqrizi's *Khitat* [translation in VANTINI, *Oriental Sources*, pp. 601–54]).

¹²⁰ OCHAŁA, "Multilingualism in Christian Nubia."

state of research, it is impossible to explain this phenomenon in terms other than that of personal preferences or local customs.¹²¹

Setting aside the doubtful question of epitaphs, let us now consider two remaining predominantly Coptic categories of sources, namely literary and documentary texts. As for the former, the numbers (61 Coptic¹²² to 30 Greek and 26 Old Nubian examples) appear to confirm the hypothesis that Coptic was a literary language. Interestingly, when one compares the contents of these literary works (t. 8), it occurs that the use of Greek was limited to only a few literary genres and that it was indeed Coptic that covered the widest spectrum of texts, which further supports this statement. After its disappearance in the eleventh–twelfth century, this role was evidently taken over by Old Nubian. In fact, this function of Coptic must have been so prominent that the language also forced its way into the sphere of Nubian wall painting, which was otherwise the domain of Greek (see ‘legend’ in t. 7). While legends to paintings were almost exclusively executed in the latter language,¹²³ biblical quotations occasionally accompanying the depictions were sometimes written in Coptic.¹²⁴

contents	Greek	Coptic	Old Nubian
Old Testament	10	5	–
New Testament ¹²⁸	7	18	11
hagiographic	4	18	3
patristic	–	1	4
homiletic	–	3	2
apocryphal	–	1	1

Table 8. Language of different genres of Nubian literary texts.¹²⁷

As for the position of Coptic as a documentary language, the situation is not so clear. It is true that the number of Coptic documentary texts is far larger than their Greek counterparts, but it must be pointed out that among them are fourteen ostraka from Debeira and

¹²¹ See *ibid.* for a discussion of the prevalence of Coptic in the monastery of Ghazali.

¹²² It must be noted, however, that as many as 19 of them were written on the walls of the Anchorite’s Grotto in Faras.

¹²³ Occasional intercalations in Coptic are attested in four cases, all from the Faras cathedral (DBMNT 1840–2, 2103).

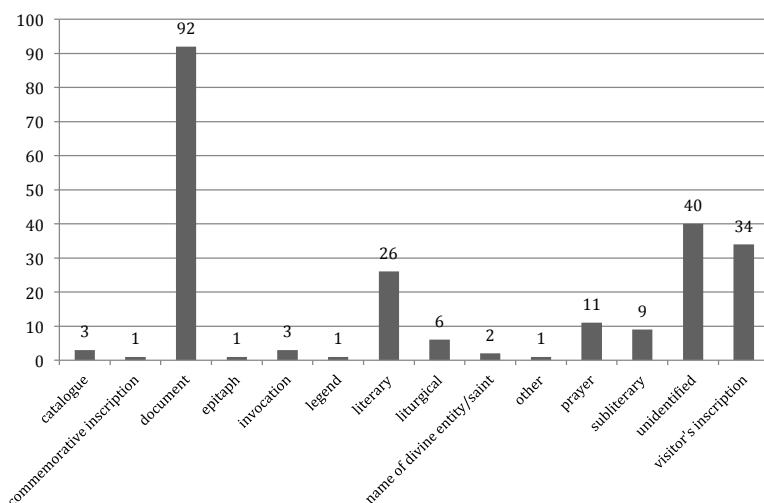
¹²⁴ See JAKOBIELSKI, “Some Remarks on Faras Inscriptions,” p. 30. Three such examples are recorded in the DBMNT: John 20:27 accompanying the painting of Christ and doubting Thomas (DBMNT 1825), John 1:1–2 written on the pages of an open codex held by the enthroned Christ (DBMNT 1843), both from Faras, and John 1:1 accompanying the same representation in Tamit (DBMNT 2323). The only Greek example is John 1:1–5, 21:25, accompanying a bust of Christ found in house A at Dongola (DBMNT 2006).

¹²⁵ The table includes only those texts that can be identified and ascribed to particular genres.

¹²⁶ The number of Old and New Testament fragments is lower here than in reality, because it does not include the passages found in Nubian liturgical books (lectionaries, psalters); for Nubian lectionaries, see OCHALA, “Kalendarz liturgiczny Kościoła nubijskiego w świetle zachowanych fragmentów nubijskich lekcjonarzy”; and HAGEN & OCHALA, “Saints and Scriptures for Phaophi.”

Graph 8.
Typological
diversification
of Old Nubian
sources.

36



two from Abd el-Qadir, sites that are suspected of strong Egyptian presence and influence (see above, p. 31). The remaining twenty-one documents are undoubtedly Nubian; they all come from Nobadia and are dated in the period between the eighth and eleventh centuries. It is certainly not their number but rather the total absence of Greek texts of this kind that has led to the supposition that Coptic might have been the official language of Nubia prior to the introduction of Old Nubian in the eleventh century.¹²⁷ While the force of such an *argumentum ex silentio* is rather low, one cannot deny that Coptic appears at least as the language of law and business in the northern part of the Middle Nile Valley.¹²⁸ Moreover, as the example of the Egypto-Nubian community from Debeira shows, it might have even fulfilled the role of a *lingua franca* in the region.¹²⁹

As can be seen from table 7 and graph 8, the role of Old Nubian was certainly not as specialised as was the case of the other two languages. The native language of the Middle Nile Valley¹³⁰ appears to have entered the most important spheres of the Nubian life¹³¹: religious, both official (literary and liturgical sources) and private (prayers, visitor's inscriptions), and civil activities (legal, economic, official documents). Also, for the first time in their history we see the Nubians communicating with one another by means of private

¹²⁷ CSCN, p. 349.

¹²⁸ See also, Sijpensteijn, "Multilingual Archives and Documents in Post-Conquest Egypt," pp. 115–16 (non vidi); Van der Vliet, "Coptic Documentary Papyri after the Arab Conquest."

¹²⁹ Ochała, "The Era of the Saracens," pp. 154–5; CSCN, pp. 159–60.

¹³⁰ I do not differentiate here between ancient dialects of Nubian, traces of which can be seen in the material: the most numerous are attestations of the ancestor of modern Nobiin, but there is also evidence of ancient Dongolawi, as well as of a dialect of Alwa.

¹³¹ Or, more correctly, the more visible from the perspective of the written sources.

letters. Thus, Old Nubian completely took over the most distinctive functions of Coptic and found its place beside Greek in the types of texts so far apparently reserved for it.

Having discussed the status of the three languages, it is time to take a closer look at their topographical and chronological distribution, as such an analysis may also help understand their position in the Middle Nile Valley.

Table 9a–c below presents in topographical order all the sites for which written sources are attested.¹³² When one compares the occurrences of Greek and Coptic throughout the Middle Nile Valley, it comes as no surprise that the former language is omnipresent in the region and the latter is largely limited to its northern part, a fact noticed already by Hermann Junker in 1925 on the basis of Nubian grave stelae.¹³³ One could even risk setting the border of the common use of Coptic at the island of Sai¹³⁴ or perhaps a bit farther south, at Mushu, right after the Third Cataract. South of the cataract, the language is extremely rare but certainly not unknown, which finds confirmation in its attestations in the region of the Fourth Cataract and Soba. A special case is the monastic cemetery of Ghazali, the only Makurian site where Coptic is overwhelmingly more popular than Greek, but this reflects the tendency of this milieu to use this particular language rather than any general pattern.¹³⁵ As has already been noted above, the absence of Coptic in Makuria and even to a higher degree in Alwa must have been caused at least partly by the distance between them and Egypt and the low percentage of Coptic users in comparison with Nobadia.

And as for Nobadia, although Coptic occurs there far and wide, it seems to concentrate in the region between Qasr Ibrim and Faras, while Greek appears as more evenly distributed. Notably, the northernmost part of Nobadia appears to be devoid of Coptic, which may be explained by the fact of the long occupation of the territory of the Dodekaschoenos first by the Ptolemies then by the Romans. The prolonged presence of a Greek-speaking population could have exerted influence on the local people, realised in the attachment to the language of the occupiers. Also to the south of Debeira Coptic texts become progressively rarer (with the exception of Sai). In view of such a distribution of sources, one could argue that the Qasr Ibrim/Faras region was indeed a cultural centre in Nobadia, where the use of Coptic, concentrated and whence it spread to other areas.

132 The list does not include the sites from which come only texts in unidentified language; it also omits bi- and trilingual texts.

133 JUNKER, "Die christlichen Grabsteine," pp. 144–6. See also HÄGG, "Some remarks," p. 104.

134 Cf. TSAKOS, "Medieval Funerary Inscriptions from Sai Island," p. 329.

135 OCHAŁA, "Multilingualism in Christian Nubia"; it certainly has nothing to do with the presence of Egyptian monks in the monastery (*I. Khartoum Copt.*, p. 104).

It is hard to say anything conclusive about the topographical distribution of Old Nubian sources, because their number is much lower than that of the remaining two languages. Nevertheless, it seems that the use of the native Nubian language was fairly widespread and its attestations can be found throughout the Middle Nile Valley.

38

Table 9a.
Topographical
distribution of
languages in
Nobadia, from the
north to the south.

site	Greek	Coptic	Old Nubian
Biga	3	–	–
Debod	1	–	–
Ginari	54	–	–
Tafa	7	–	–
Bab Kalabsha	3	–	–
Kalabsha	16	6	–
Nag' el-Gama	–	–	–
Dendur	–	1	–
Sabagura	3	1	5
Hamadab	–	1	–
Dakka	1	–	–
Ofedunia (Maharaqa)	–	1	–
Ikhmindi	1	1	–
Nag' el-Sheikh Sharaf	1	1	–
Nag' el-Sheima	2	8	–
Nag' el-Oqba	–	1	1
Sheima Amalika	–	2	–
Wadi el-Sebua	2	2	–
Amada	2	3	2
Derr	1	3	–
Karanog	1	–	–
Masmas	–	2	–
Aniba	1	–	–
Qasr Ibrim	86	93	114
Kolotod	1	–	–
Sakinya	65	245	–
el-Ramal	2	4	–
Arminna	7	12	–
Tamit	25	5	5
Gindinarri	–	1	–
Abdallah-n Irqi	10	6	–
Abu Oda	5	–	6
Gebel Adda	4	4	7
Qasr el-Wizz	2	2	–
Sheikh Gebel	–	1	–
Faras	166	80	17
Adindan	1	–	–

Multilingualism in Christian Nubia

site	Greek	Coptic	Old Nubian
Aksha	–	2	–
Serra	3	–	4
Ashkeit	1	–	–
Debeira	5	16	–
Komangana	2	–	–
el-Donga	1	–	–
Argin	1	–	–
Nag' el-Arab	2	1	–
Sahaba	2	–	–
Wadi Halfa	1	1	1
Abd el-Qadir	23	2	4
Meinarti	25	4	4
Kor	1	–	–
Abkanarti	–	–	1
Figirantawu	–	–	1
Qasr'antawu	–	1	–
Shirgondinarti island	–	1	–
Semna	3	1	3
Sunnarti	1	–	2
Sonqi Tino	23	–	6
Ukma	3	1	–
Akasha	–	1	–
Kulb	1	–	–
Kulubnarti	25	–	5
Kulme island	1	–	–
Sagiet el-Abd	1	–	–
Missiminia	–	2	–
Sai	5	18	–
Nilwatti island	–	1	–
Gebel Gorgod	–	1	–
Nauri	–	–	1
Masida	1	–	1
Lower Nubia	7	17	–
total	611	556	190

site	Greek	Coptic	Old Nubian
Mushu	–	6	–
Koya	1	–	–
Kudi	1	–	–
Qasr Wadi Nimri	1	–	–
el-Khandaq	2	–	–
Nawi	1	–	–

Table 9b.
Topographical
distribution of
languages in
Makuria, from the
north to the south.

site	Greek	Coptic	Old Nubian
Amantogo	1	–	–
Khalewa	1	–	–
Sheikh Arab Hag	1	–	–
Hambukol	7	–	–
Dongola	87	5	11
Banganarti	40	–	14
Tangasi island	1	–	–
Selib	6	–	–
Goshabi	1	–	–
Ganetti	1	–	–
el-Arak	1	–	–
Gebel Audun	1	–	–
Bakhit	1	–	–
el-Zuma	2	–	2
Debeiba	1	–	–
Merowe	1	–	–
Ghazali	34	75	–
Umm Ruweim	1	2	–
Gebel Barkal	3	–	–
Nuri	2	–	–
4th Cataract	–	1	–
Kasingar	1	–	–
Umm Usher island(?)	2	–	–
Dar el-Arab	1	–	–
Kenisa	1	–	–
Kirbekan	4	–	–
Gebaliya island	1	–	–
Mograt island	3	–	–
el-Koro	22	7	–
Khor Dam el-Tor	6	–	–
total	243	96	27

Table 9c.
Topographical
distribution of
languages in Alwa,
from the north to
the south.

site	Greek	Coptic	Old Nubian
el-Usheir	1	–	–
Bauga	1	–	–
Meroe	1	–	–
Begrawiya	–	–	2
Musawwarat el-Sofra	1	–	4
Soba	11	2	3
Abu Haraz	1	–	–
total	21	7	4

The final issue that will be discussed here is the chronology of the use of the Nubian languages. The three graphs overleaf (9–11) show the linguistic change that Nubian literacy underwent over time. Again, only sources written in a single language have been taken into consideration and only those whose dating can be established within two centuries at most.

The graphs appear to confirm what has been noticed already long ago and has so far been repeated many times in scholarly literature. While Greek was present, with varying intensity, throughout the whole Christian period in the Middle Nile Valley, Coptic and Old Nubian had distinct periods of usage, only slightly overlapping in the eleventh–twelfth century. Having in mind the fact that in the mid-eleventh century Coptic stopped to be used as ‘a living language of written communication,’¹³⁶ one wonders how this fact could be connected with the subsequent extinction of the language in Nubia.¹³⁷ Did the fact that Coptic lost importance in the north trigger the rise of Old Nubian as the official language of Makuria, or vice versa, did the introduction of Old Nubian into literary and documentary texts cause the decline of Coptic in the kingdom?

As a matter of fact, both these hypotheses are probable. Moreover, they are not mutually exclusive and could each have their part in the process. As Jacques van der Vliet has recently put it, by way of becoming the language of the liturgy in eleventh-century Egypt, ‘in opposition to Arabic, Coptic had become the marker of a distinctive religious identity, symbolizing adherence to Egypt’s glorious Christian tradition.’¹³⁸ This ‘patriotic’ value of Coptic was obviously absent in Makuria; nothing suggests that the language could have served as a means of personal identification, be it religious or national.¹³⁹ Quite the contrary, the typological differentiation of Coptic Nubian sources points to its more ‘practical’ employment, especially when one acknowledges the role of Coptic as a *lingua franca* in Nubadia in the preceding centuries. Thus, it would seem natural that when Egypt started to run out of Coptic users, there was no longer a need in Nubia to cultivate the knowledge of this language.¹⁴⁰ On the other hand, it is perhaps not accidental that Old Nubian emerged as a literary and documentary language in this very period; analogous phenomena can be observed in other regions, most notably in the West, where vernaculars started to substitute Latin in the eleventh

¹³⁶ ZAKRZEWSKA, “A bilingual language variety’ or ‘the language of the pharaohs?’”

¹³⁷ VAN DER VLIET, “Coptic as a Nubian literary language,” pp. 768–9.

¹³⁸ VAN DER VLIET, “Coptic documentary papyri”; see also ZAKRZEWSKA, “‘A bilingual language variety’ or ‘the language of the pharaohs?’”

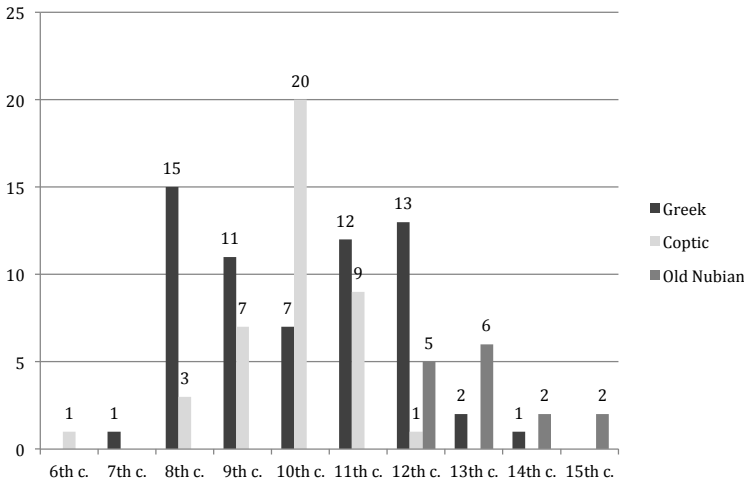
¹³⁹ See above, p. 33, n. 116. Cf. CSCN, pp. 76–81, esp. p. 79, for a discussion on the emergence of the Era of the Martyrs in Egypt and Nubia in the 10th–11th century and its religious connotations.

¹⁴⁰ The only exception was the official correspondence of the highest authorities, as exemplified by the letter of King Moïse Georgios to Patriarch Mark III (see above, p. 33, n. 113).

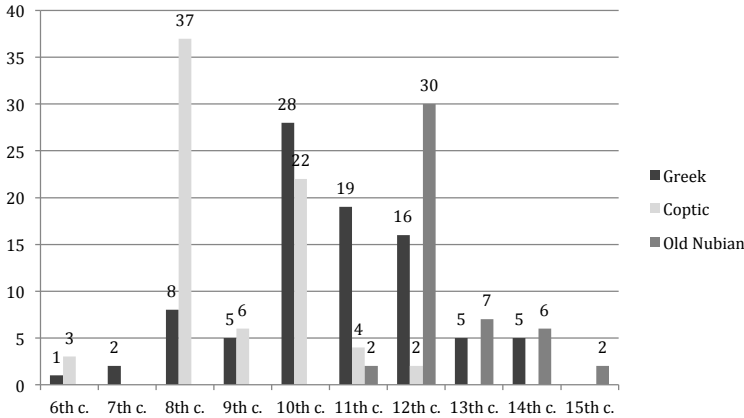
Ochała

Graph 9.
Chronological
distribution of
Nubian languages
in precisely dated
texts.

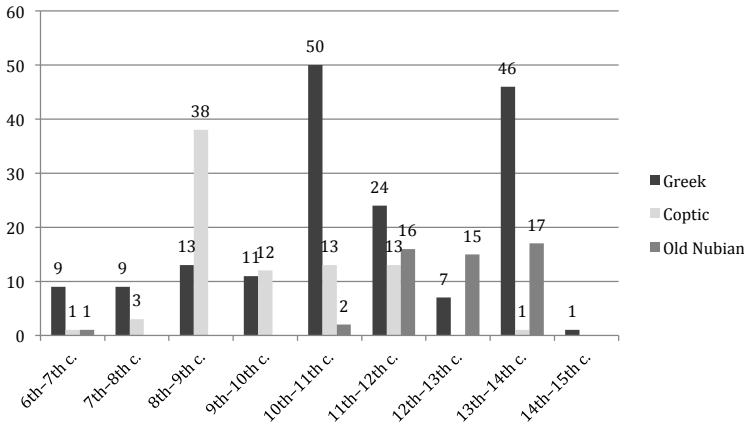
42



Graph 10.
Chronological
distribution of
Nubian languages
in texts dated
within one
century.



Graph 11.
Chronological
distribution of
Nubian languages
in texts dated
within two
centuries.



century. This emphasis on the development of the indigenous language, possibly incited by a broader phenomenon and most surely strongly supported by the Makurian authorities, combined with the radical change of status of Coptic in Egypt lead to a quick decline of the latter language in the Middle Nile Valley.

The above discussion, provided the reasoning is credible, may bring us a bit closer to understanding the difference between status of Greek and Coptic in Nubia. While it would seem that Nubian Coptic could not exist without the support of Egyptian Coptic, Nubian Greek apparently managed to survive even though the language had already been obsolete in Egypt (apart from literature and liturgy) for a few centuries.¹⁴¹ This, on the one hand, seems to confirm the different statuses of those languages (Greek as a 'sacred,' 'magical,' or 'divine' language and Coptic as a more 'practical'/'human' one) and on the other may bring us a step further. If Coptic in Nubia indeed needed a Coptic-using population to sustain its existence, one might risk an opinion that it was a living language understood and written¹⁴² by at least a part of the Nubian society.¹⁴³ The fact that the persistence of Greek in Nubia appears to be totally independent of external influence, indicates, in turn, that it was a 'dead' language used only because of its prestige and symbolic value.¹⁴⁴

However, such considerations are purely hypothetical and must not be pushed too far, because of the very nature of the Greek and Coptic written sources that we have at our disposal, which are as a rule very formulaic.¹⁴⁵ Admittedly, enough examples exist showing that some Nubians had an active command of Greek with a decent knowledge of the Greek grammar and rich vocabulary, at times even displaying classical literary overtones,¹⁴⁶ which enabled them to create more or less sophisticated texts from outside of the standard repertoire or variations of the existing patterns.¹⁴⁷ There are, how-

141 It is true that Greek was still a living language in the Eastern Empire. While the Nubians could indeed retain contacts with Byzantium (see, e.g., ROSTKOWSKA, "The Visit of a Nubian King to Constantinople in AD 1203"), it is impossible to verify if and to which degree this could have influence Nubian Greek.

142 See ZAKRZEWSKA, "A bilingual language variety' or 'the language of the pharaohs?'" for the opinion that Sahidic Coptic was an artificial construct used in writing for prestigious purposes but never spoken as a vernacular.

143 The existence of a fragmentary typikon from Qasr Ibrim, where the rubrics are in Greek and the quotations from the Scriptures in Coptic strongly suggests that the liturgical readings could have been read in the latter language so that the faithful could better understand them (HAGEN & OCHALA, "Saints and scriptures for Phaophi," pp. 279–80).

144 Note, however, a Greek postscript by Bishop Athanasios of Qus in the Coptic scroll of Bishop Timotheos dated to the 14th century. The will of the Egyptian bishop to express himself in this language, otherwise obsolete in Egypt, could suggest that Greek was still actively used in the Nubian Church (PLUMLEY, *The Scrolls of Bishop Timotheos*, pp. 24–5).

145 DONADONI, "Les inscriptions grecques de Nubie," p. 591; LAJTAR, "The Greek of Late Christian Inscriptions from Nubia," p. 759.

146 See, e.g., I. *Khartoum Greek* 18, ad l. 16; and LAJTAR, "The Greek of Late Christian Inscriptions from Nubia," p. 761.

147 Ibid., p. 759.

ever, no traces of any colloquial or idiomatic expressions characteristic of a living tongue.¹⁴⁸

4. Conclusions

44

The present article does not bring any revolutionary changes in our understanding of the Nubian multilingualism, but this is not its purpose. Quite the contrary, this is one of the basic studies still surprisingly lacking in Nubiology, aimed at systematising the existing knowledge about the Christian kingdoms of the Middle Nile Valley. Instead of building sophisticated theories about the sociocultural and, to a lesser degree, historical reality of Nobadia, Makuria, and Alwa, very often impressionistic and intuitive, one should rather concentrate on constructing a set of basic tools and studies allowing more efficient research in more complicated subjects, tools that are normally and successfully used in studying, for example, classical or Egyptian antiquity.

The quantitative and qualitative approaches employed in this preliminary study of the Nubian multilingualism have helped verify the existing common opinions about the status of the three Nubian languages. As has been demonstrated, most of those theories should be considered valid. Also, earlier arguments appear to be generally correct. Nevertheless, thanks to a meticulous survey of the Nubian sources, much more precision can be obtained, introducing nuances that have so far gone unnoticed. Moreover, the article adds some new arguments to the already existing explanations, thus reinforcing previous judgements.

The three Nubian languages can therefore each be characterised in three areas, typological, topographical, and chronological:

1. Greek:
 - ▶ language of official religion and private piety,
 - ▶ used throughout the whole territory of the Middle Nile Valley,
 - ▶ used throughout the Christian period;
2. Coptic:
 - ▶ language of literature and documents; possibly also language of written (and oral?) communication with Egyptians on both private and official levels,
 - ▶ commonly used only in Nobadia, but not totally unknown in Makuria and Alwa,
 - ▶ functioning only until the twelfth century;

¹⁴⁸ The argument first put forward by OATES, "A Christian Inscription in Greek from Armenna in Nubia," pp. 170–1, that the orthographic errors in Greek sources from Nubia reflect current standards in the pronunciation of this language means no more than that: it would have been pronounced in this way as either a spoken or written/read language (pace SHINNIE, "Multilingualism," p. 46).

3. Old Nubian:

- language of literature, documents, official religion, and private piety,
- used throughout the whole territory of the Middle Nile Valley,
- written form developed already in the eighth century, but commonly used only from the tenth–eleventh century.

Yet, it must constantly be kept in mind that the study presents only a tentative state of research. The Database of Medieval Nubian Texts is still largely incomplete; it is estimated that even as many as 3000 sources remain unpublished, a statistically significant figure. The speedy publication of texts is therefore a *desideratum* without which further progress is impossible. Another, no less important *conditio sine qua non* is the development of palaeographic studies, necessary for achieving a greater precision in dating Nubian texts, which would also markedly enhance our abilities in examining Nubian multilingualism as well as other unclear questions of Christian Nubian history.

Bibliography

- ADAMS, W.Y. *Qasr Ibrīm: The Late Mediaeval Period* [= *Egypt Exploration Society, Excavation Memoir* 59]. London, 1996.
- . *The West Bank Survey from Faras to Gemai, III: Sites of Christian Age* [= *Sudan Archaeological Research Society Publication* 14], London, 2005.
- . *Qasr Ibrim: The Earlier Medieval Period* [= *Egypt Exploration Society, Excavation Memoir* 89]. London, 2010.
- BURSTEIN, S. "When Greek Was an African Language: The Role of Greek Culture in Ancient and Medieval Nubia." *Journal of World History* 19 (2008): pp. 41–61.
- DONADONI, S. "Les inscriptions grecques de Nubie." In *Cultura dell'antico Egitto: Scritti di Sergio F. Donadoni*. Rome, 1986. (Originally published in *Graeco-Arabica: First International Congress on Greek and Arabic Studies* III, edited by M. PAPATHOMOPULOS. Athens, 1984): pp. 583–96.
- EDWARDS, D.N. *The Nubian Past: An Archaeology of Sudan*. New York, 2004.
- EVETTS, B.T.A. (ed.). *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria* III [= *Patrologia Orientalis* 5.1]. Paris, 1910.
- GAUTHIER, H. *Les temples immergés de la Nubie: Le temple d'Amada*. Cairo, 1913.
- GODLEWSKI, W. "Introduction to the Golden Age of Makuria (9th–11th Centuries)." *Africana Bulletin* 50 (2002): pp. 75–98.
- . "The Rise of Makuria (Late 5th–8th centuries)." In *Nubian Studies 1998: Proceedings of the Ninth Congress of the International Society of Nubian Studies, August 21–26, 1998, Boston, Massachusetts*, edited by T. KENDALL. Boston, 2004: pp. 52–73.
- . "Bishops and Kings: The Official Program of the Pachoras (Faras) Cathedral." In *Between the Cataracts: Proceedings of the 11th Conference for Nubian Studies, Warsaw University, 27 August–2 September 2006*, 1 [= *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean Supplement Series* 2.1], edited by W. GODLEWSKI & A. ŁAJTAR, pp. 263–82. Warsaw, 2008: pp. 263–82.
- GRIFFITH, F.L. "Christian documents from Nubia." *Proceedings of the British Academy* 14 (1928): pp. 117–46.
- HAGEN, J.L. "A City That Is Set on a Hill Cannot Be Hid': Progress Report on the Coptic Manuscripts from Qasr Ibrim." In *Between the Cataracts: Proceedings of the 11th Conference for Nubian Studies, Warsaw University, 27 August–2 September 2006*, 11.2 [= *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean Supplement Series* 2.2/2], edited by W. GODLEWSKI & A. ŁAJTAR. Warsaw, 2010: pp. 719–26.

- HAGEN, J.L. & G. OCHAŁA. "Saints and Scriptures for Phaophi: Preliminary Edition of and Commentary on a Typikon Fragment from Qasr Ibrim." In *ΣΥΝΑΞΙΣ ΚΑΘΟΛΙΚΗ: Beiträge zu Gottesdienst und Geschichte der fünf altkirchlichen Patriarchate für Heinzgerd Brakmann zum 70. Geburtstag* [=Orientalia - Patristica - Oecumenica 6/1-2], edited by D. ATANASSOVA & T. CHRONZ. Münster, 2014: pp. 269-90.
- HÄGG, T. "Some Remarks on the Use of Greek in Nubia." In *Nubian Studies: Proceedings of the Symposium for Nubian Studies, Selwyn College, Cambridge, 1978*, edited by M.J. PLUMLEY. Cambridge, 1982: pp. 103-7.
- . "Uses of Greek in the Nubian Kingdoms: Church and State." In *Between the Cataracts: Proceedings of the 11th Conference for Nubian Studies, Warsaw University, 27 August-2 September 2006*, II.2 [=Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean Supplement Series 2.2/2], edited by W. GODLEWSKI & A. ŁAJTAR. Warsaw, 2010: pp. 755-7.
- JAKOBIELSKI, S. "Some Remarks on Faras Inscriptions." In *Kunst und Geschichte Nubiens in christlicher Zeit: Ergebnisse und Probleme auf Grund der jüngsten Ausgrabungen*, edited by E. DINKLER. Recklinghausen, 1970: pp. 281-312.
- . *A History of the Bishopric of Pachoras on the Basis of Coptic Inscriptions* [=Faras III]. Warsaw, 1972.
- . "Inscriptions." In K. MICHAŁOWSKI, *Faras: Wall Paintings in the Collection of National Museum at Warsaw*. Warsaw, 1974: pp. 281-312.
- JUNKER, H. "Die christlichen Grabsteine Nubiens," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 60 (1925): pp. 111-48.
- KHALIL, M. & C.D.G. MÜLLER. "Das unter nubische Rechtswesen im Mittelalter." *Nubica* 4/5 (1999): pp. 15-23.
- KUBIŃSKA, J. *Inscriptions grecques chrétiennes* [=Faras IV]. Warsaw, 1974.
- ŁAJTAR, A. "Greek Funerary Inscriptions from Old Dongola: General Note." *Oriens Christianus* 81 (1997): pp. 107-26.
- . "Wall Inscriptions in the Banganarti Churches: A General Note after Three Seasons of Work." *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 33 (2003): pp. 137-59.
- . "Late Christian Nubia through Visitors' Inscriptions from the Upper Church at Banganarti." In *Between the Cataracts: Proceedings of the 11th Conference for Nubian Studies, Warsaw University, 27 August-2 September 2006*, I [=Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean Supplement Series 2.1], edited by W. GODLEWSKI & A. ŁAJTAR. Warsaw, 2008: pp. 321-31.
- . "The Greek of Late Christian Inscriptions from Nubia: The Evidence from Banganarti and Other Sites." In *Between the Cata-*

- racts: *Proceedings of the 11th Conference for Nubian Studies*, Warsaw University, 27 August–2 September 2006, 11.2 [= *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean Supplement Series 2.2/2*], edited by W. GÓDLEWSKI & A. ŁAJTAR. Warsaw, 2010: pp. 759–63.
- ŁAJTAR, A. & T. PŁÓCIENNIK. “A Man from Provence on the Middle Nile: A Graffito in the Upper Church at Banganarti.” In *Nubian Voices: Studies in Christian Nubian Culture* [= *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement Series 15*], edited by A. ŁAJTAR & J. VAN DER VLIET. Warsaw, 2011: pp. 95–119.
- LEPSIUS, C.R. *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien*. Berlin, 1849–1859.
- MILLET, N.B. “Writing and Literacy in Ancient Sudan.” In *Studies in Ancient Languages of the Sudan: Papers Presented at the Second International Conference on “Language and Literature in the Sudan” Sponsored by the Sudan Research Unit, 7–12 December 1970*, edited by Abdelgadir Mahmoud ABDALLA. Khartoum, 1974: pp. 49–58.
- MONNERET DE VILLARD, U. *La Nubia medioevale I*. Cairo, 1935.
- NÄSER, C. & M. LANGE (eds.). *Proceedings of the Second International Conference on the Archaeology of the Fourth Nile Cataract*, Berlin, August 4th–6th, 2005 [= *Meroitica 23*]. Wiesbaden, 2007.
- OATES, J.F. “A Christian Inscription in Greek from Armenna in Nubia (Pennsylvania–Yale Excavations).” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 49 (1963): pp. 161–71.
- OCHAŁA, G. “The Era of the Saracens in Non-Arabic Texts from Nubia.” *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 39 (2009): pp. 133–60.
- . *Chronological Systems of Christian Nubia* [= *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement Series 16*]. Warsaw, 2011.
- . “Kalendarz liturgiczny Kościoła nubijskiego w świetle zachowanych fragmentów nubijskich lekcjonarzy” [Liturgical Calendar of the Nubian Church: The Evidence of Nubian Lectionary Fragments], *U schyłku starożytności – Studia źródłoznawcze* [Late Antiquity – Studies in Source Criticism] 12 (2013): pp. 183–232.
- . “Multilingualism in Christian Nubia: Case Study of the Monastery of Ghazali.” Paper held at the 27th International Congress of Papyrology in Warsaw in 2013, to be published in the proceedings of the conference.
- PLUMLEY, J.M. “The Christian Period at Qasr Ibrim: Some Notes on the mss Finds.” In *Nubia: Récentes recherches. Actes du colloque nubologique international au Musée National de Varsovie*, 19–22 juin 1972, edited by K. MICHAŁOWSKI. Warsaw, 1975: pp. 101–7.
- . *The Scrolls of Bishop Timotheos: Two Documents from Medieval Nubia* [= *Egypt Exploration Society, Texts from Excavations 1*]. London, 1975.

- . “An Eighth-Century Arabic Letter to the King of Nubia.” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 61 (1975): pp. 241–5.
- QUAEGEBEUR, J. “Pre-Old Coptic.” In *The Coptic Encyclopedia* VIII, edited by A. ATIYA. New York, 1991: pp. 190–1.
- ROSTKOWSKA, B. “The Visit of a Nubian King to Constantinople in AD 1203.” In *New Discoveries in Nubia: Proceedings of the Colloquium on Nubian Studies, The Hague, 1979*, edited by P. VAN MOORSEL. Leiden, 1982: pp. 113–16.
- RUFFINI, G.R. “Nubian Ostraka from the West Bank Survey.” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 175 (2010): pp. 231–8.
- . *Medieval Nubia: A Social and Economic History*. Oxford, 2012.
- . “Newer Light on the Kingdom of Dotawo.” In *Qasr Ibrim: Between Egypt and Africa. Studies in Cultural Exchange (NINO Symposium, Leiden, 11–12 December 2009)* [= *Egyptologische Uitgaven – Egyptological Publications* 26], edited by J. VAN DER VLIET & J. L. HAGEN. Leiden, 2013: pp. 179–91.
- SAYCE, A.H. “Inscriptions et papyrus grecques d’Égypte.” *Revue des études grecques* 7 (1894): pp. 284–304.
- SHINNIE, P.L. “Multilingualism in Medieval Nubia.” In *Studies in Ancient Languages of the Sudan: Papers Presented at the Second International Conference on “Language and Literature in the Sudan” Sponsored by the Sudan Research Unit, 7–12 December 1970*, edited by Abdelgadir Mahmoud ABDALLA. Khartoum, 1974: pp. 41–7.
- SHINNIE, P.L. & M. SHINNIE, *Debeira West: A Medieval Nubian Town*. Warminster, 1978.
- SJPESTEIJN, P. “Multilingual Archives and Documents in Post-Conquest Egypt.” In *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt, from the Ptolemies to the Abbasids*, edited by A. PAPACONSTANTINOU. Farnham & Burlington 2010: pp. 105–24.
- TSAKOS, A. “Medieval Funerary Inscriptions from Sai Island.” In *Fouilles sur l’île de Saï (Soudan) 2005–2010* [= *Cahiers de recherches de l’Institut de papyrologie et d’égyptologie de Lille* 29], edited by F. DOYEN & D. DEVAUCHELLE. Lille, 2011: pp. 297–330.
- VANTINI, G. *Oriental Sources Concerning Nubia*. Heidelberg & Warsaw, 1975.
- VAN DER VLIET, J. “Coptic as a Nubian Literary Language: Four Theses for Discussion.” In *Between the Cataracts: Proceedings of the 11th Conference for Nubian Studies, Warsaw University, 27 August–2 September 2006*, II.2 [= *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean Supplement Series* 2.2/2], edited by W. GODLEWSKI & A. ŁAJTAR. Warsaw, 2010: pp. 765–72.
- . “Coptic Documentary Papyri after the Arab Conquest,” main paper delivered at the 27th International Congress of Papyrology,

Warsaw 2013, to be published in *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 43.

WELSBY, D.A. *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia: Pagans, Christians and Muslims along the Middle Nile*. London, 2002.

ZAKRZEWSKA, E. "A Bilingual Language Variety' or 'The Language of the Pharaohs'? Coptic from the Perspective of Contact Linguistics." In *Linguistic Borrowing into Coptic. Proceedings of the Conference Leipzig 2010*, edited by E. GROSSMAN & T.S. RICHTER. Leipzig, forthcoming.

The *Liber Institutionis Michælis* in Medieval Nubia

51

Alexandros Tsakos

1. Introduction

The 11th Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium (NSLC) was dedicated to the study of Nubian languages with a special panel on Old Nubian. This was the first NSLC after the passing away in 2004 of the renowned scholar in Old Nubian, G.M. Browne, and it is no surprise that there were high expectations about new input on various aspects of Old Nubian grammar, translations from mainly Greek *Vorlagen*, lexicography and vocabulary, Old Nubian in the frame of multilingual Christian Nubia, as well as the paleography and codicology of Old Nubian manuscripts. With many more texts in Old Nubian at hand to work with, and a century of experience gained since the first publications on the Old Nubian language, the group that gathered at Cologne formed, in my opinion, a diverse and dynamic panel. We used interesting examples from the corpus of religious literature and documentary texts in Old Nubian and discussed issues that went beyond the natural focus of the NSL colloquium on linguistics.

In my own contribution, I presented some first results of a study of one of the literary works preserved in Old Nubian, namely the *Liber Institutionis Michælis*.¹ The Nubian corpus of the *Liber Institutionis Michælis* illustrates several of the main problems of the current state of affairs in the study of Old Nubian language and literacy: inaccuracies in the related bibliography; a unique case of a Greek *Vorlage* of an Old Nubian literary text; thought-provoking observations about the codicology of Nubian manuscripts; unpublished textual material belonging to the literary corpus about the archangel

1 I would like to thank the organizers of the colloquium and of the panel on Old Nubian for their kind invitation, warm hosting and fruitful discussions. Moreover, I would like to thank Robin Seignobos and Henriette Hafsaas Tsakos for comments during the preparation of this paper.

Michael; and concrete examples of the way modern research can identify Nubian agency behind the creation of religious literature in Nubia in languages other than Old Nubian, namely Greek.

My empirical basis consists of five manuscripts discovered at four sites in Lower Nubia:

1. A fragment of a parchment sheet from Qasr Ibrim with an Old Nubian version of the *Liber Institutionis Michælis*.²
2. A fragment of a parchment sheet found at Serra East with a Greek text identified as the Vorlage of the Qasr Ibrim Old Nubian version of the *Liber Institutionis Michælis*.³
3. An almost complete parchment sheet found at Qasr el Wizz, inscribed in red letters on only one side and containing a Greek text dealing with the naming, the election, and the establishment of Michael.⁴
4. A fragment of a parchment sheet that preserves a Greek text on four pages. It was discovered at Qasr el Wizz and it deals with the creation of Michael and his receiving of the Spirit of the Trinity.⁵
5. Three pages of a parchment codex from the site of Attiri. The Old Nubian texts remain unclear to me and I cannot identify the literary work (or works?) that they preserve. The topic, however, surely concerns the archangel Michael.⁶

Studying the first two fragments, I noticed an anomaly in the references concerning the *Liber Institutionis Michælis* in Nubia, and this anomaly led me to address problems of bibliography regarding Old Nubian in general. The two fragments from Wizz relate to the identification of the literary sources upon which the *Liber Institutionis Michælis* has been compiled, as well as to the way scholarly work can identify Nubian agency behind the particularities in a given text of a 'foreign' language in Nubia – such as Greek. In this paper, I will focus on the last issue. Finally, the pages from Attiri enlarge the corpus of works on the archangel Michael, but since the content cannot be identified, they are for the time being only interesting because of the paleographical and codicological information that they have preserved for us. This information provides some ground for an intriguing hypothesis.

2 BROWNE, "A Revision of the Old Nubian Version of the *Institutio Michælis*"; Ibid., *Literary Texts in Old Nubian*, pp. 60–2; Ibid., "An Old Nubian Version of the *Liber Institutionis Michælis*"; Ibid., "Old Nubian Literature", p. 382; Ibid., "Miscellanea Nubiana (II)", pp. 453–4.

3 BROWNE, "A Revision of the Old Nubian Version of the *Institutio Michælis*"; TSAKOS, "The texts from Cerra Matto."

4 TSAKOS, "The texts from Qasr el Wizz."

5 Ibid.

6 The manuscripts from Attiri have been photographed by the author at the Sudan National Museum, their provenance identified and a preliminary edition prepared. After contacting David Edwards, who is responsible for the publication of the material from that site, the author has put the manuscripts online where they can become the object of a cooperation between all the participants of the Old Nubian panel at Cologne.

2. The *Liber Institutionis Michælis* in Nubia and problems of bibliography regarding Old Nubian

The *Liber Institutionis Michælis* is attested in two Coptic manuscripts from Hamouli in Egypt (one complete in Sahidic and one incomplete in Fayumic)⁷; in two bifolia from the IFAO-Cairo collection of Coptic manuscripts written in Sahidic and probably coming from the White Monastery⁸; in a single parchment fragment with a text in Old Nubian discovered at Qasr Ibrim⁹; and in another parchment fragment from Lower Nubia, namely from Serra East – renowned for the discovery of the longest text in Old Nubian (a praise of the cross by Pseudo-Chrysostom)¹⁰ – preserving a Greek text, which matches, almost word for word, the text of the Old Nubian Qasr Ibrim version. The Greek manuscript from Serra East has therefore been considered as the Vorlage of the Old Nubian Qasr Ibrim text.

Until now, this unique coincidence has not been exploited to its maximum potential, in matters of either content or form. For example, Michael is often called in both the *Liber Institutionis Michælis* and in other sources as ἀρχιστράτηγος. This Greek word appears in the Greek text from Serra and is translated in the Old Nubian text from Qasr Ibrim as cōcōc ḏaḡpa. This is the Old Nubian term used in documentary sources to describe the Greek word ἑπαρχος, the title of the head of the Makurian administration of the former kingdom of Nobadia. To what extent can we use this significant choice of words in the translation from Greek to Old Nubian, in order to understand better the (military?) role of the representative of the Makurian state in Lower Nubia?

Furthermore, the manuscript remains officially unpublished, because Bożena Rostkowska, who first identified it, never proceeded to a complete edition, in spite of the fact that Browne (then married to Rostkowska) did produce a parallel edition of the Old Nubian and of the Greek fragments in an article from 1988.¹¹ A researcher unfamiliar with the variety of venues where these studies were presented or published would be unable to trace the scholarly input on such a topic, since the first identification of the Old Nubian Qasr Ibrim version was presented during the Warsaw Congress of Coptic Studies in 1984, the proceedings of which were only published in 1990 without a reference to the above-mentioned 1988 article, in which the relation between the Old Nubian Qasr Ibrim and the Greek Serra East manuscripts was analyzed. Positive developments in the direc-

7 MÜLLER, *Die Bücher der Einsetzung der Erzengel Michael und Gabriel*.

8 TIBET, *The Investiture of Michael*.

9 BROWNE, "An Old Nubian Version of the *Liber Institutionis Michælis*."

10 Ibid., *Chrysostomus Nubianus*.

11 Ibid., "A Revision of the Old Nubian Version of the *Institutio Michælis*."

tion of updated and searchable reference lists have taken place over the last years, thanks mainly to the Database of Medieval Nubian Texts (DBMNT) prepared by Grzegorz Ochała.¹²

3. Religious literature in Greek about the archangel Michael discovered at Qasr el Wizz

54

The Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition's excavations at Qasr el Wizz in the 1960s unearthed two manuscripts in Old Nubian and four in Greek among more than two hundred manuscript fragments in Coptic.¹³ Two of the four Greek manuscripts belong to religious literature relating to the archangel Michael with specific affinities that link them closely to the *Liber Institutionis Michælis*. These manuscripts have the registration numbers 65-10-59 and 65-11-99.¹⁴

3.1 Ms. 65-10-59

This manuscript is a parchment leaf discovered in the fill of the floor of a room in the monks' quarters. It was inscribed on only one side and exclusively with red ink. The text narrates the naming (ll. 3-5), the election (ll. 6-7), and the creation (ll. 8-10) of the archangel Michael, and I suggest that it is preserved almost complete with only a couple of lines with an introductory phrase missing. There are a couple of interesting remarks regarding the content of this manuscript: First, there is the dating of the election and creation of Michael to the 12th of the month Choiak, a hitherto unattested commemoration; and second, the event of Michael's creation is placed together with the creation of many other angels. Leaving aside for the moment details of language that will be discussed in the last section, it should be stressed that the closest parallel to this textual tradition is none other than ms. 65-11-99 discovered in another archaeological context of the monastic site at Qasr el Wizz.

3.2 Ms. 65-11-99

This manuscript is a fragment of a bifolium found in the storage facility coded 11-R. The main preserved text consists of an explanation

¹² The DBMNT can be accessed online at <<http://www.dbmnt.uw.edu.pl/>>

¹³ For preliminary reports on the excavations, see SCANLON, "Excavations at Kasr el Wizz: A Preliminary Report I"; Ibid., "Excavations at Kasr el Wizz. A Preliminary Report II"; SEELE, "University of Chicago Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition: Excavations between Abu Simbel and the Sudan Border, Preliminary Report."

¹⁴ These are the registration numbers of the two manuscripts. They mean that one was the 59th find to be registered from the University of Chicago Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition (OINE) digs in October 1965 and that the other the 99th from November of the same year, the only two months that OINE worked at Wizz. Earlier in 1964 a reconnaissance visit and dig were conducted under the direction of Seele. The full edition of these manuscripts will appear in the 14th volume of the OINE series where the entire archaeological record from the site will be published by a team of researchers headed by Dr. Artur Obłuski from the University of Warsaw.

that Jesus is giving to his disciples about the creation of the archangel Michael. The closest literary parallel to this text is the *Liber Institutionis Michælis*, but there are variations between the manuscript from Wizz and the versions known from Hamouli (in Sahidic and Fayumic), the White Monastery (Sahidic) Qasr Ibrim (in Old Nubian), and Serra East (in Greek). The variations in the content can be summarized in the following two points: first, the creation of the angels in the *Liber Institutionis Michælis* starts with the creation of Saklataboth or Mastema, the one to become the fallen angel, and continues with Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and the rest, while in the Wizz manuscript the creation of all the angels is narrated together, only to be later focused on the creation of Michael; and second, the creation of the angels and of Michael is precisely dated as taking place on the 12th of Choiak, while in the *Liber Institutionis Michælis* there is no distinction of day between the creation of the angels and the rest of the events narrated, culminating in the Fall of Mastema (on the 11th of Hathor) and the Enthronement of Michael (on the 12th of Hathor).

The lack of any parallels to these two variations among the literature relating to Michael in Egypt indicates that these were Nubian creations.¹⁵ Thus, the question arises whether it is possible to identify the ethno-linguistic identity of the individuals responsible for the creation of such a textual tradition. In order to achieve that, we will turn to a couple of details of the language used in the manuscripts from Wizz.

3.3 The language of mss. 65–10–59 and 65–11–99

It seems superfluous to suggest that deviations from the norms of medieval Greek koiné would indicate the non-Greek ethnic origins of a given scribe, since the use of Greek was widespread in the entire Eastern Roman Empire and the ethno-linguistic background of the peoples inhabiting these regions varied significantly. The use of Greek as the language of administration, high culture or religion did not stop the local population from using their own languages, as the example of Egypt clearly shows. Similarly, the use of Greek and Coptic in Christian Nubia should not be understood as an indication that these were the every-day languages used by the Nubians themselves. It is rather the inscribed material in Old Nubian that should be considered as the closest attestation to what the language used in Christian Nubia would have sounded like. Although variations would surely exist between dialects, regions, social classes, and so

¹⁵ However, it is worth investigating further the relation between the dating of the creation of Michael on the 12th of Choiak and the fact that the ancient Egyptian Khoiak festival was traditionally beginning on the 12th day of the fourth month after the Nile floods, which is precisely the 12th of the month Choiak.

on, there were surely linguistic norms surrounding the structure of the Old Nubian language in both its oral and written forms.

One such norm is the word order in a sentence. Old Nubian belongs to the category of *sov* languages,¹⁶ whereas Greek is mainly *svo*, although other word orders appear as well. The difference between *sov* and *svo* languages means that a transposition of the object in phrases of a given text can reveal the ethno-linguistic origins of the author. So, a Nubian scribe composing a text in Greek may tend to set the object between the subject and the verb, while someone closer to the Greek language would rather keep the word order *svo*, unless special reasons prevent him or her from doing so. For example, the object of a sentence in Greek is positioned as the first constituent of a given phrase for reasons of topicality.

There is one such case in ms. 65-10-59, where the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτον is placed before the verb so as to make explicit that it is the archangel Michael who is the main topic of the following phrase too. More interesting is another case from ms. 65-11-99, where two verbs, namely ἐνεφύσαμεν and ἐνεπλήσαμεν, have the same subject, namely ὁ πατήρ μου καὶ ἐμοῦ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα ἁγίων – in other words, the Holy Trinity. The object of both verbs is the nominal phrase τῷ πνεύμα ἐμῶν, complemented by the prepositional phrase εἰς τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ. However, this seems to fit only with the first verb, since the second verb (ἐνεπλήσαμεν) needs a direct object in the accusative (τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ) and an indirect object in the dative (τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν). Interestingly, although as a subject the Holy Spirit is preceded by the definite article in the nominative/accusative form (τό), when it is used as an object, it is preceded by the article in dative (τῷ). This awkward sharing of objects between the two sentences, as defined by the two verbs, indicates that the scribe did not feel very much at home with this syntactical difficulty and allowed patterns of his/her own language to intrude into the structure of his/her phrase. In a Nubian context, it might therefore be legitimate to suggest that the scribe was not simply copying a text before him (or her), but was rather compiling a text by memory based on knowledge of a literary tradition stemming from the one to which belonged the *Liber Institutionis Michælis* as preserved in Sahidic and Fayumic Coptic. Thus, the Nubian scribe may in fact be identified as the author of the text at hand.

The positioning of the object in the case study of the previous paragraph is an observation that only weakly illustrates the point that I am trying to make, namely that the author of the Wizz manuscripts about Michael was a Nubian. It is possible that such an awkward solution to the difficult problem of linking two verbs with

the same object but needing different cases in each instance might have been the result of the influence of some other colloquial tradition, in Egypt or in other regions of the Eastern Christian world; perhaps even the result of a corruption of the text independent of influences ‘foreign’ to Greek, but inherent in the evolution of the language itself.

Another example from the same manuscript might help us identify the ethno-linguistic origins of the author better. To achieve this, we should turn attention to the way the Holy Trinity is defined: ὁ πατήρ μου καὶ ἐμοῦ καὶ το πνεῦμα ἁγίων. In the passage preserved in the bifolium from Wizz, Jesus Christ is addressing his disciples. Therefore, the collective reference to the Trinity is made with the verbs in the first person plural. Consequently, when the reference is to the Father, the possessive pronoun is the genitive of the first person singular, and one would expect that Jesus is referring to himself by using the nominative of the first person personal pronoun. Nevertheless, the personal pronoun used is the genitive of the first person, namely ἐμοῦ. The use of ἐμοῦ instead of ἐγώ is a trait characteristic of many graffiti registered on the walls of secular or religious buildings in Nubia, as for example at Banganarti.¹⁷ There, the people mentioned in the graffiti more often than not have a Nubian name. Of course it is an open question whether the person named in a graffito and the scribe are the same, but it is more than probable that at 14th century Banganarti, a person with a Nubian name or a scribe working at and for the religious institution there was a Nubian.

One more example that strengthens the idea that the ethno-linguistic identity of the author of the texts in the two manuscripts from Wizz is Nubian is a case of peculiar subject/verb syntax. The verb is ἀγαλλιάσεις and the subject is τό πνεῦμα μου. While the verb is clearly a second person singular, the subject would normally be followed by a verb in the third person singular. In that case, the verb should have been ἀγαλλιάσσει. Although this variation may well be accounted among the innumerable cases of debased Greek grammar in medieval literacy, it is striking that one of the most marked characteristics of Old Nubian is precisely the use of the same ending for the 2nd and 3rd person singular of the verb.¹⁸

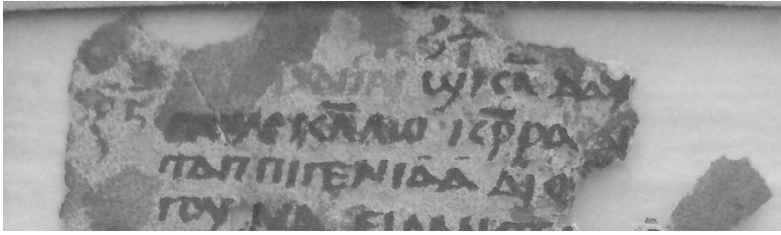
With these three case studies, I have demonstrated that it could be fruitful to examine similar phenomena in other Greek (and Coptic?) texts found in Nubia, with the purpose of identifying the origin of the scribe, his/her independence from any originals during the creation of a literary work, and eventually the degree to which such

17 LAJTAR, “Late Christian Nubia through visitors’ inscriptions from the Upper Church at Banganarti,” p. 322, fig. 1; p. 327.

18 BROWNE, *Introduction to Old Nubian*, p. 24.

Fig. 1: Detail from a ms. about the archangel Michael from Attiri (Sudan National Museum, SNM 23045)

58



Nubian literates were not just scribes but in fact authors of religious literature that during some specific period of Nubian Christianity was written and read in Greek rather than Coptic or Old Nubian.¹⁹

4. The unpublished manuscripts from Attiri: From the *Liber Institutionis Michælis* to Nubian literature about Michael

Fourteen manuscript fragments have been unearthed at Attiri.²⁰ At least three of them seem to belong – on the basis of content, paleography and codicology – to one or more works relating to the archangel Michael. If one looks closer at the illustrated detail of one of the manuscripts from Attiri (fig. 1), we see that in the margin to the left of the first line of text, two letters and traces of a third one have been written. The two letters still visible clearly have a supra-linear stroke and this indicates that they are numbers in the ancient Greek numeral system. They form the number 66 and if the reading of the letter preserved very partially as a P (*rhō*) is correct then the number is 166. What is the significance of this?

First of all, it should be pointed out that this is not the pagination of the manuscript because this can be seen on the top of both pages of this fragment (pp. 64 and 65). Moreover, it cannot be the numbering of the quires in which the codex was bound, because it is impossible to get 64 or 65 pages in 166 quires (or even 66 if, for the sake of the argument one would like to doubt the reading of P before the other two letters). Luckily, such notes of numbers have been found in the margins of the text in another Nubian manuscript, specifically the manuscript preserving the Old Nubian version of the *Liber Institutionis Michælis* identified by Browne among the manuscripts from Qasr Ibrim.²¹ There, two numbers can be discerned: 136 and 137, on the same page and with 9 lines of distance between each other, in both cases left from a line where the name of the archangel Michael has been written. Browne suggested that the scribe was number-

19 A major inspiration for this type of work has been the presentation by ŁAJTAR, “The Greek of late Christian inscriptions from Nubia.”

20 For a short introduction to the site, see TSAKOS, “Miscellanea Epigraphica Nubica III,” pp. 243–4.

21 BROWNE, “A Revision of the Old Nubian Version of the *Institutio Michælis*,” p. 78.

ing each instance that the name of the archangel appeared in the text,²² which would mean that by page 65 the name of Michael had appeared 136 times.

This explanation fits the instance observed in the Attiri manuscript in two ways: First, in the only instance where the left margin is preserved next to a line where the name of Michael is written, the number 166 appears exactly next to this line. The left margin is unfortunately not preserved next to the other lines where the name of the archangel is written. And second, the name of the archangel seems to have been written with a nearly similar, albeit not identical, frequency in the two codices, since in 63 pages of the Attiri codex there would have been 165 occurrences, while in 65 pages of the Ibrim codex no more than 135.

These observations have two additional implications. First, that all the works in the two codices were in one way or another related to Michael; and second, that these works were not the same – or not arranged in the same sequence – in the two codices. An intriguing hypothesis for the reconstruction of both codices appears: if we are to suppose that a complete codex would contain at least 300 pages,²³ then the 64th, 65th, and 66th pages are to be placed between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{5}$ of the entire volume of the hypothetical codex.²⁴ Then, if we again suppose that the occurrences of the name of Michael are to a certain degree evenly distributed, then by the end of the codex we would expect to have seen 4 to 5 times 151 occurrences (the average of 136 and 166) of the archangel's name. In total, this means 675 occurrences. This number comes very close to number 689, the value of the cryptogram XIIΘ used as the 'magical' cipher of the name of Michael (M=40, I=10, X=600, A=1, H=8, and Λ=30, so $40+10+600+1+8+30=689=XIIΘ$).

Thus, we arrive at the following plausible conclusions: based on Browne's suggestion that the numbers in the margins kept track of the number of occurrences of the name of Michael and on the different numbering appearing in the margins of pages with coinciding page numbers in the two different codices from Ibrim and Attiri, we can suggest that there was a tradition of compiling codices with works related to Michael, but either not necessarily the same works or not necessarily ordered in the same sequence. And based on a hypothetical average volume of a codex and a guess as to the distribution of the occurrences of writing the name of the archangel in such a volume, we can surmise that the total number of occurrences was

22 BROWNE, "Old Nubian Literature," p. 382.

23 TURNER, *The Typology of the Early Codex*, pp. 82-4.

24 This is against the idea of Browne in "Old Nubian Literature" that the fragments from Ibrim and Serra come from the middle of the original codices and therefore were the ones preserved.

689, equalling the cryptogrammatic value of the name of Michael and thus imbuing the entire codex with the powers of the archangel as would be expected to appear when the 'mystical' number was formed, the cryptogram was written, and the archangel's apotropaic powers were invoked.

60

5. Conclusions

The present paper has opened with a brief discussion of the problems relating to the organization of the data available about literature in Christian Nubia. This discussion was inspired by my study of the literary tradition in Nubia about the archangel Michael, and more precisely the work, obviously very important for the Nubians, of the *Liber Institutionis Michælis*. The identification among the texts discovered at the monastery at Qasr el Wizz of two manuscripts in Greek belonging to the tradition of the *Liber Institutionis Michælis* offered the opportunity to recognize the Nubian origin of the scribes of texts in Greek discovered in the Middle Nile Valley. The richness of the Nubians' literary traditions and the creativity of their erudite work upon these has been illustrated by a codicological reconstruction of compilations of works on Michael, based on the manuscripts found at the site of Attiri. Although preliminary, the observations presented in this paper constitute a valuable first approach to ideas about religious literacy in Christian Nubia that have not previously attracted the attention of the scholarly community working with the literary traditions of the Christian communities along the Middle Nile Valley.

Bibliography

- BROWNE, G.M. *Chrysostomus Nubianus: An Old Nubian Version of Ps. Chrysostom, In venerabilem crucem sermo* [= *Papyrologica Castroctaviana* 10]. Rome & Barcelona, 1984.
- . “A Revision of the Old Nubian Version of the *Institutio Michælis*.” *Beiträge zur Sudanforschung* 3 (1988): pp. 17–24.
- . *Introduction to Old Nubian* [= *Meroitica* 11]. Berlin, 1989.
- . *Literary Texts in Old Nubian* [= *Beiträge zur Sudanforschung – Beiheft* 5]. Vienna, 1989.
- . “An Old Nubian Version of the *Liber Institutionis Michælis*.” In *Coptic Studies: Acts of the 3rd International Congress of Coptic Studies*, Warsaw, 20–25 August 1984. Warsaw, 1990.
- . “Old Nubian Literature.” In *Études Nubiennes: Conférence de Genève, Actes du VIIe Congrès international d’études nubiennes*, 3–8 septembre 1990, I: *Communications principales*, edited by Ch. BONNET. Geneva, 1992.
- . “Miscellanea Nubiana (II).” *Orientalia* 64 (1995): pp. 450–9.
- ŁAJTAR, A., “Late Christian Nubia through visitors’ inscriptions from the Upper Church at Banganarti.” In *Between the Cataracts: Proceedings of the 11th Conference for Nubian Studies*, Warsaw University, 27 August–2 September 2006, I [= *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean Supplement Series* 2.1], edited by W. GODLEWSKI & A. ŁAJTAR. Warsaw, 2008.
- . “The Greek of late Christian inscriptions from Nubia: The evidence from Banganarti and other sites.” In *Between the Cataracts. Proceedings of the 11th Conference of Nubian Studies*, Warsaw University, 27 August – 2 September 2006, II.2: *Session Papers* [= *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean Supplement Series* 2.2/2], edited by W. GODLEWSKI & A. ŁAJTAR. Warsaw, 2010.
- MÜLLER, C.D.G. *Die Bücher der Einsetzung der Erzengel Michael und Gabriel* (CSCO 225–226 [Copt. 31–32]). Louvain, 1962.
- SCANLON, G.T. “Excavations at Kasr el Wizz: A Preliminary Report I.” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 56 (1970): pp. 29–57.
- . “Excavations at Kasr el Wizz: A Preliminary Report II.” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 58 (1972): pp. 7–42.
- SEELE, K.C. “University of Chicago Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition: Excavations between Abu Simbel and the Sudan Border, Preliminary Report.” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 33.1 (1974): pp. 1–43.
- TSAKOS, A. “Miscellanea Epigraphica Nubica III: Epimachos of Attiri: a Warrior Saint of Late Christian Nubia.” *Collectanea Christiana Orientalia* 9 (2012): pp. 239–57.

———. “The texts from Cerra Matto.” *Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition Series*, vol. 12. In preparation.

———. “The texts from Qasr el Wizz.” *Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition Series*, vol. 14. In preparation.

TIBET, D. *The Investiture of Michael: A Diplomatic Edition of the Coptic Text of P. IFAO ff. 145–148*. Master thesis, Macquarie University, 2009.

TURNER, E.G. *The Typology of the Early Codex*. Philadelphia, 1977.

Tabaq: In a State of Flux

Birgit Hellwig & Gertrud Schneider-Blum

1. Introduction

Tabaq – or ṭààṇī nfēē [ṭààṇī mbēē], as is the emic expression – is one of several languages of the Kordofan Nubian language group.¹ It is the ancestral language of roughly 1800 people who call themselves ṭààṇī, sg.: ṭààṇīḍù, and who speak the language to varying degrees of fluency. Their original settlement is in the north-western area of the Nuba Mountains of Sudan, an area they call ṭààṇ or ṭààṇī nkùḷḍùḍ [ṭààṇī ṇḡḷḍùḍ], i.e. ‘mountain of the Tabaq people’ (see fig. 1). During the past decades, virtually all Tabaq people have left their homeland and moved to different parts of the country. Nowadays we find groups of varying sizes not only in their homeland and Dillinj, but also in El Obeid, Kosti/Rabak, Khartoum, Gedaref, and Port Sudan.²

Many Tabaq people who are nowadays living in the Nuba Mountains are homecomers, i.e., they have spent considerable time away from Tabaq before returning there. Their close contact with the outside Arab world has left its cultural traces, possibly in the way they now construct their compounds and in the variety of food preparation. Their closest neighbors in former times lived at Kakada Mountain – called kēēḍē nkùḷḍùḍ [kēēḍē ṇḡḷḍùḍ] by the Tabaq – to the north of the Tabaq area. It is not known which language the Kakada people spoke at that time. By now, they have left their land and have merged with the Tabaq people, speaking Tabaq. The events that led to the integration of the two groups are part of Tabaq

1 Tabaq is an under-described language, and the data for this paper comes from our fieldwork conducted since 2011 with Tabaq speakers in Khartoum. This fieldwork was done within a larger documentation project whose team members also include Khalifa Jabreldar and Khaleel Bakheet Khaleel (see their separate contributions forthcoming in future volumes of this journal). We would like to take the opportunity to sincerely thank ELDP (Endangered Languages Documentation Programme) for funding this project, and the following speakers of the Tabaq community for their various contributions to the project: Nasraldeen Hamad Khaleel Ismail, as well as Abdallah Shuuna Deliima, Aghbash Ragayag Ali Hamad, Barsham Ali Abdalbein, Birra, Gabir Ibrahim Daldoum Gabir, Gadim Alnour Karko, (the late) Khamees Bakheet Khaleel, Mahanna Kambo, Omar Awad Saboon Ali, Salman Khaleel Ismail, and Zireiga Mahmoud Dood. We also like to thank the participants of the Nilo-Saharan Conference for their fruitful discussion and are indebted to Angelika Jakobi for her critical comments.

2 See JABRELDAR's forthcoming study for a sociolinguistic profile of Tabaq.

Fig. 1: Location of
Tabaq in Sudan

64



oral history, and we have recorded several accounts told by different Tabaq elders. These events are presented as having happened in the distant past, beyond living memory, but further investigation is needed to verify and date these events.

For many generations, the Tabaq – and the Kakada – have had intensive relationships with the Arabic cattle nomads who regularly pass through the area. It is likely that this contact influenced methods of cattle farming: rural Tabaq people have so-called house cows, i.e. dairy cows staying near the house that give easy access to fresh milk. The Tabaq community claims that before this contact, all cattle were kept far away from the settlements, but further historical and ethnographic research is needed to examine the extent of such cultural influence. Linguistically, we can say that the terms for cows in their different stages are borrowed from Arabic, e.g., *maḍmūn* ‘two year old cow,’ *jaḍaṣ* ‘three year old cow,’ *ṭén* ‘four year old cow.’

This history of contact with the outside world, and especially with speakers of Arabic, has also impacted on the Tabaq language. In particular, this sociolinguistic situation has had two types of influence. On the one hand, the language has changed through borrowing from

Arabic. These borrowings are largely on the lexical level: Tabaq uses many Arabic words (which tend to not be adapted phonologically to the Tabaq sound system), but so far we have not found evidence for grammatical borrowing, or for the borrowing of sounds into native Tabaq vocabulary. On the other hand, Tabaq shows signs of attrition. Our sociolinguistic study shows evidence for the language being severely endangered,³ and even those who are still able to speak Tabaq rarely do so.

As a consequence, speakers feel exceptionally insecure when discussing their language, and elicited and natural recordings show considerable signs of variation. For example, in the area of phonetics and phonology, there is variation in the realization of vowel quality and length, tones, and consonants. This observation reflects an instability that goes beyond expected, 'normal,' language change: Tabaq is in a constant state of flux, not to say it is caught in a deadly undertow. Virtually all older Tabaq people are bilingual, with Arabic being the main means of communication and *ṭààní nfě̀ě* only being used rarely. The youngest generation hardly speaks Tabaq at all.

This contribution has two aims: to give an overview of Tabaq phonology and tonology, and to exemplify the instability of the underlying system, which we consider a sign of language attrition, as there is no evidence for a convergence towards Sudanese Arabic phonology or stress patterns. We describe the consonants (section 2), vowels (including vowel harmony and vowel length) (section 3), and tones (section 4), and then conclude with a few remarks (section 5). Consonantal and tonal realizations show variation between different speakers as well as within the speech of a single speaker, but it is within the vowel system that Tabaq's "state of flux" is most striking. We have therefore singled out section 3 in order to illustrate and explore in detail some of the variation and instability that affects the Tabaq language.

2. Tabaq consonants

The Tabaq language has, to our knowledge, 19 consonantal phonemes. Apart from the four nasals /m, n, ɲ, ŋ/, the three liquids /r, ʀ, l/ and the glides /j/ and /w/, these are stops – voiced /b, ɗ, d, ʒ, g/ and unvoiced /t̪, t, k/ – and fricatives /f, s/.

3 See JABRELDAR, *A Sociolinguistic Study of Tabaq*.

Table 1: Tabaq consonant phonemes

66

		Labial/ Labiodental	Dental/ Alveolar	Post- alveolar/ Retroflex	Palatal	Velar
Stop	vl		t̪	ʈ		k
	vd	b	d̪	ɖ	ɟ	g
Fricative	vl	f			ʃ	
Nasal	vd	m	n		ɲ	ŋ
Trill	vd		r			
Flap	vd			ɾ		
Lateral	vd		l			
Glide	vd	w			j	

The evidence for some of the phonemes is weak, and requires further investigation. The palatal plosive /ɟ/ is attested in a handful of cases only, and may eventually prove to be an allophone of /j/. The retroflex flap /ɾ/ arose diachronically from the /-lɖ-/ and /-lʈ-/ sound combinations, and these original pronunciations are still attested synchronically in some idiolects. We nevertheless posit /ɾ/ as a phoneme on the basis of some words such as kʷákárá ‘hyena,’ where no synchronic variation is attested and where the current state of our morphological knowledge would rule out an underlying form such as *kʷákáldá or *kʷákáltá. Finally the glides /w/ and /j/ constitute phonemes, but with a restricted distribution, and with predictable occurrences in some environments.⁴ Note also that the obstruents can occur labialized (as in kʷákárá ‘hyena’), and it is not yet entirely clear whether or not these labialized consonants should be analyzed as phonemes.

A certain asymmetry in the system lets us suspect that the fricatives used to be stops in the first place. Our motivation for this assumption is the absence of voiceless counterparts for /b/ and /ɟ/. We find some evidence in noun phrases consisting of two nouns that are combined by a genitival linker N, a homorganic nasal. The general rule is that the genitival linker causes the following consonant to become voiced, as illustrated in the table below with examples for each voiceless consonant.

Table 2: Genitival constructions

	1st noun	2nd noun	genitive
t̪	d̪ítú ‘sleep’	t̪úú ‘place’	[d̪ítú n̪d̪úú] ‘sleeping place’
t̪	ʈààn̪i̪ ‘Tabaq’	t̪úú ‘home’	[ʈààn̪i̪ n̪d̪úú] ‘Tabaq home’
k	d̪ítú ‘sleep’	kúú ‘house, hut’	[d̪ítú ŋgúú] ‘sleeping room’
f	ʈùùl̪d̪ù ‘desert date’	fúú ‘tree’	[ʈùùl̪d̪ù mbúú] ‘desert date tree’

4 See HELLWIG & SCHNEIDER-BLUM, *Towards a Grammar of Tabaq*.

1st noun	2nd noun	genitive
ʃ tɪí 'cow'	ʃúú 'udder' [tɪí nʒúú]	'cow's udder'

After the genitival linker, the voiceless plosives /t, ʈ, k/ are realized as the voiced plosives [ɖ, ɖ, g], thus neutralizing the voicing contrast in this environment. The voiceless fricative /f/, however, contrary to our expectation, does not become the voiced fricative [v] after the linker, but changes its manner of articulation and is realized as the voiced plosive [b]. Since the voiceless equivalent of /b/ is /p/, it is possible that historically there was a */p/ in the language that has been weakened to /f/.

The situation with regard to the voiceless fricative /ʃ/ is different: it becomes the voiced fricative [ʒ], as expected, not the voiced plosive [ɟ]. Note that [ʒ] is not part of the phonemic system, since it only occurs in predictable environments. Unlike the case of /f/, there is thus no synchronic evidence to prove that /ʃ/ originated from */c/. At the moment, the only language-internal suggestion for such a diachronic origin is the asymmetry in the consonantal system: the voiced stop /ɟ/ does not have a synchronic voiceless counterpart */c/. There is evidence in the related languages Kudur and Kururu⁵ that their fricative /ʃ/ originated from */c/. It is thus possible that future historical-comparative research will find comparable evidence for the diachronic origins of Tabaq /ʃ/.

The phone [ʒ] also occurs in the combination [ɲʒ], which is an allophone of /ɲ/, occurring in free variation with it for some speakers. There is furthermore the lateral voiceless fricative [ɬ] that occurs in free variation with the voiced lateral in utterance final position, as in [ʃi:ɬ] ~ [ʃi:l] 'chief', or the velarized lateral [ɬ̠] that is occasionally attested after the open-mid back vowel occurring before the suffix -ɖu, as in [kúɬ̠ɖu] ~ [kúɬ̠ɖu] 'eye.'

The contrast between voiceless and voiced obstruents is neutralized in consonants following the homorganic nasal (as in the case of the genitive linker above). Also, the multi-functional suffix -ɖu provokes a regressive voicing assimilation:

Base	Singular	Plural
búké 'stealing'	bùgédù 'thief'	bùkèrí 'thieves'
ʃùlké 'cowardice'	ʃùlgédù 'coward'	ʃùlkérì 'cowards'

Table 3:
Neutralization of
voicing

Not considered here are those consonants that entered the language via loanwords from Arabic, like /x/, /h/, etc. Note that Arabic loanwords tend to be integrated morphologically (e.g., they receive Ta-

5 See JAKOBI, *Kordofan Nubian*; for Kururu (Tagle) see also IBRAHIM & HUTTENG, "The Phoneme System of Tagle," p. 106.

baq plural markers or TAM inflectional morphemes), but not phonologically: they tend to be pronounced as they are in Arabic.

3. Tabaq vowels

68 The vowel inventory of Tabaq consists of seven vowels that are divided into three front and three back vowels plus one central vowel. The phonetically occurring [ə] is not considered a phoneme, as its occurrence is predictable.⁶

Table 4: Tabaq vowel phonemes

	Front	Mid	Back
Close	i		u
Near-close	ɪ		ʊ
Open-mid	ɛ	ɔ	
Open		a	

The front and back vowels are exemplified with some words below (note that true minimal pairs are rare because of tonal differences):

Table 5: Tabaq front and back vowels (exemplified)

Front vowels	Gloss	Back vowels	Gloss
qíí	‘drink’	kúúɪ	‘bull’
qíí	‘work’	kúúɪ	‘house’
qèè	‘is lying down’	kóóɪ	‘well/hole’
kʷíí	‘magician’	qúú	‘shelter’
kʷíí	‘horse’	qùù	‘leather’
kʷèè	‘April dance’	qóó	‘slaves’

The existence of numerous minimal and especially near-minimal pairs proves beyond doubt that Tabaq has 7 vowel phonemes. However, Tabaq’s “state of flux” is nowhere clearer than in the actual realization of these vowel phonemes. Different speakers tend to produce different realizations, and even the same word pronounced by the same speaker at different occasions often yielded differences in pronunciation and perception. Vowels intruded into the acoustic space of other vowels, thus blurring the boundaries between them. There are some tendencies, though: recording minimal pairs produces a more distinctive articulation than recording the same word in a non-contrastive context, long vowels are more target-like than short vowels (i.e., they come closer to the intended or expected re-

6 The vowel [ə] occurs in two environments. First, it is a free variant of all short vowels in unstressed syllables, compare e.g. [ákùr] ~ [ákər] ‘inside,’ [dèèrìm] ~ [dèèrəm] ‘sleep!’ or [kʷákárá] ~ [kʷákórá] ‘hyena.’ Second, it occurs as a free variant breaking up sequences of obstruents and liquids, e.g., [kàmblà] ~ [kàmbəlà] ‘camel’ or [kùfà] ~ [kùfərà] ‘lung.’ Given the predictability of its occurrence, we consider [ə] to be not phonemic.

alization), and short root vowels in turn are more target-like than short suffix vowels (and other final short vowels).

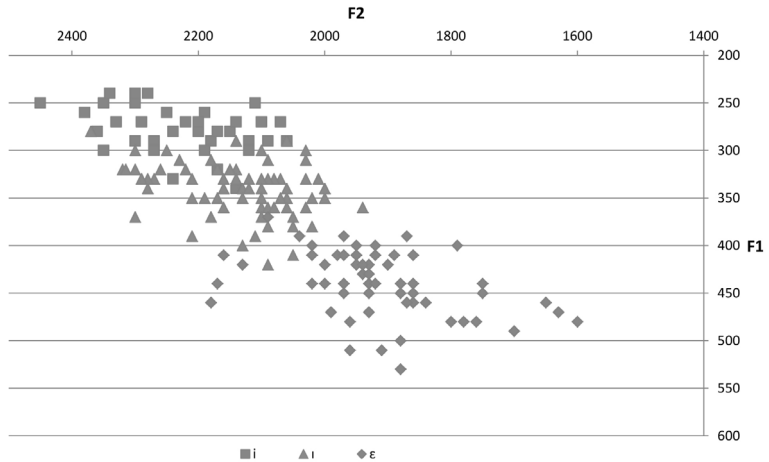
However, these tendencies also mean that, in many cases, vowel quality is difficult to determine and open to interpretation. The word for 'snake' is a good case in point: it is recorded roughly 20 times. Most of the recordings have the high back vowel [u] occurring twice, i.e. the word is pronounced [kúŋgú]. However, several of the recordings show the word with the near-close vowel [ʊ], i.e. the word is pronounced [kúŋgʊ], and we even have recordings with two different vowels, i.e., [kúŋgú]. In the absence of minimal pairs, how can we interpret such variation? We have approached this challenge in the following way. One source of information was frequency information, assuming that the more frequent pronunciation tends to reflect the underlying phoneme (/kúŋgú/ in this case). This was coupled with our developing knowledge of Tabaq phonotactics: short vowels have a tendency to become centralized, not peripheral (i.e., we can easily explain [kúŋgʊ] as a centralized realization of the underlying /kúŋgú/, but not the other way round). These two sources of information allow us to make a fairly confident interpretation of the underlying quality of the first vowel. For the second vowel, however, there is an additional complication: it is often realized extra-short, and its quality is very difficult to ascertain. In fact, its interpretation depends on whether or not we can assume that Tabaq has vowel harmony. We will investigate this question, and the different options, further below.

Given the considerable variation in the realization of vowels, we decided to systematically note their first and second formants. This enabled us to visualize the acoustic space for each vowel phoneme (excluding the uncontroversial vowel /a/), thus gaining a better understanding of their typical distribution and boundaries. We started with listing the formants of long vowels, as their quality was easier to determine. Most of the words were recorded several times, and we included between 1 and 3 realizations of each word. We compared the realizations of different speakers, but for this paper, we restrict ourselves to showing variation within the speech of one speaker only. The speaker is NHK, an elderly male (born in 1948) who lives in Khartoum. The chart below illustrates the acoustic space for his long front vowels.⁷ Visible are three more or less distinguishable

7 This graph is a visual representation of the first (= F1) and second formants (= F2), which are bands of frequencies (measured in Hertz). Plotting these two formants against each other gives us information about the quality of a vowel (see table 4 for a comparable, but more abstract, representation of the vowel space). F1 on the y-axis represents the open/close axis, i.e., it gives us information about the relative openness/closeness of the mouth. More open vowels (such as /ε/ in this chart) have a higher F1 than close vowels (such as /i/ in this chart). And F2 on the x-axis represents the front/back axis, i.e., it gives us information about the position of the tongue relative to the front or back of the mouth. Front vowels (such as /i/ in fig. 2) have a considerably higher F2 than back vowels (such as /u/ in fig. 3), but even among

Fig. 2: Speaker
NHK, front vowels
(long)

70



fields that correspond to the high front vowel /i/ (square), the near-close vowel /ɪ/ (triangle), and the open-mid vowel /ε/ (rhombus) (see fig. 2).

It is notable that each vowel occupies a large area: there is no central area for any of the vowels within which the majority of its realizations would occur. Furthermore, we can observe overlapping zones, i.e., first, an area where close and near-close front vowels both occur, and, second, an area where near-close and open-mid vowels occur. These overlapping zones create a practical problem for analyzing those words that occur only infrequently in our database, and for which we do not have a minimal pair that contrasts in vowel quality: if their realization in our few recordings happens to fall into the zone of overlap, how can we determine their vowel quality?

A similar picture emerged when we charted the formants for the long back vowels: note that the area for the high back vowel /u/ (square) is clearly distinguishable (at least for this speaker), but there is considerable overlap between the areas for the near-close back vowel /ʊ/ (triangle) and the open-mid back vowel /ɔ/ (rhombus) (see fig. 3). Again, it is noticeable that the acoustic space for each vowel is fairly large.

As a next step, we looked at the formants of short root vowels. We only illustrate the back vowels here, because we intend to compare them to back vowels occurring in suffixes (see section 3.1). But first, compare the realization of long back vowels (fig. 3) with that of short back vowels (fig. 4). Although it is still possible to differentiate

the front vowels there are differences: a vowel like /i/ is produced more to the front than a vowel like /ε/, and thus has a higher F2.

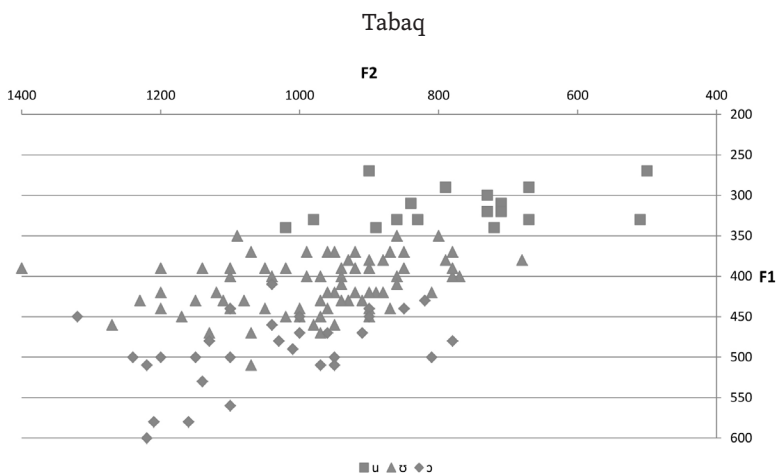


Fig. 3: Speaker NHK, back vowels (long)

71

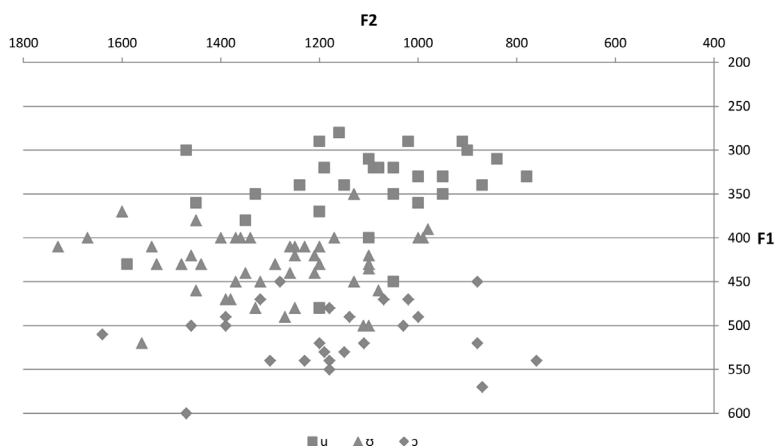


Fig. 4: Speaker NHK, back vowels (short, root)

three zones, the picture is even less clear than for the long vowels: all vowels extend over a larger acoustic space, and the boundaries between them are fuzzier (see e.g. the outliers of /u/ realized far outside the expected zone).⁸ We also note another phenomenon: the F2 of the short vowel phonemes shows considerable centralization (encroaching into the acoustic space of true central vowels such as [ə]).

3.1 Vowel harmony

Many languages of the Nuba Mountains have a system of vowel harmony, where the vowels within a word harmonize in terms of Advanced Tongue Root (e.g., Kordofanian languages, also attested

⁸ The occurrences of [kúŋgú] vs. [kúŋgú] 'snake' are not incorporated here.

for the Kordofan Nubian languages Kudur and Kururu⁹), or vowel copying (attested, e.g., for the Kordofan Nubian language Karko¹⁰). Vowel harmony affects roots (which tend to contain vowels from one set only) and affixes (which tend to have two allomorphs, depending on the set of vowels that occurs in the root they attach to). Given these areal and genetic patterns, our initial assumption was that Tabaq would also exhibit such a system. Investigating this assumption, however, proved trickier than expected. We will outline the issues and challenges with the help of the multi-functional affix -ḡu.¹¹ When listening to words with this suffix, we thought we detected instances of vowel harmony, i.e., we sometimes heard this suffix as -ḡu after roots containing the close vowels /i/ or /u/, but as -ḡu after roots containing any other vowels (as is the case with the words listed in table 6). However, there were many other cases where we heard -ḡu regardless of the quality of the preceding root vowels. Such perceptual differences even occurred for multiple instances of the same word (comparable to the variation in [kúŋgú], [kúnḡú] and [kúnḡú] ‘snake,’ introduced in section 3 above). We therefore decided to explore the phonetic realizations of such suffix vowels in more detail, which eventually allowed us to pinpoint the source of our confusion: suffix vowels are usually short and occur in unstressed syllables, and this is an environment where Tabaq speakers inevitably centralize vowels (discussed in this section) and realize them extra short (see section 3.2).

Table 6:
Questionable
vowel harmony of
the suffix -ḡu/-ḡu

Root-suffix	English gloss
[úḡú-ḡú]	‘friend’
[íl-ḡù]	‘rat species’
[túún-ḡú]	‘blind person’
[tɔ̀ɔ̀-ḡù]	‘child’
[úŋḡú-ḡú]	‘elephants’
[íl-ḡú]	‘woman’

We divided the roots into those containing close vowels (/i/ or /u/) and those containing other vowels. Then we measured the formants of the vowel in the suffix -ḡu. Fig. 5 illustrates the result: the squares represent the realization of -ḡu after close vowels, and the triangles represent its realization after other vowels. As was the case for short root vowels (see fig. 4), all vowels are centralized. But the resulting pattern with regard to vowel height is somewhat inconclusive. On

9 Angelika Jakobi, p.c.; IBRAHIM & HUTTENG, “The Phoneme System of Tagle,” pp. 107f.

10 Angelika Jakobi, p.c.

11 It marks the singular or singulative, the plural or plurative, the diminutive or collective; double marking is also possible (cf. also DIMMENDAAL, “Number Marking and Noun Categorization in Nilo-Saharan Languages.”).

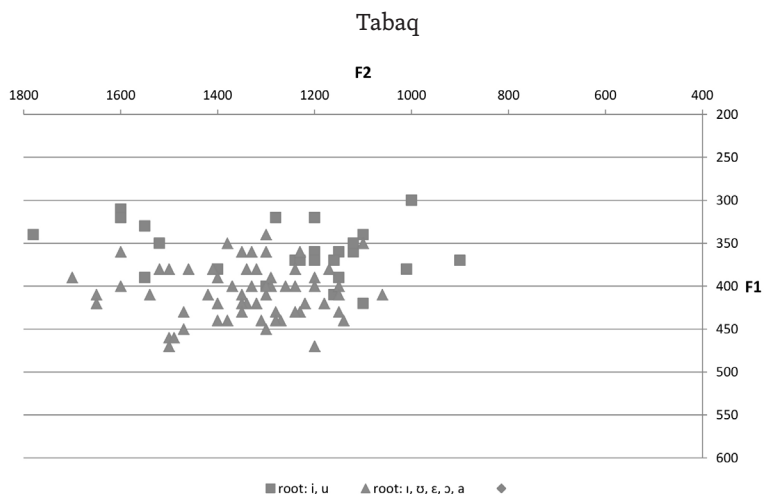


Fig. 5: Speaker NHK, back vowels (short, suffix)

the one hand, we observe that F1 tends to be lower when -*ɖu* comes after close vowels. This would argue for the existence of vowel harmony (i.e., -*ɖu* would have an allomorph -*ɖu* that occurs after close vowels). On the other hand, however, we observe that this is only a tendency: there is a considerable area of overlap, with many realizations not having the expected lower F1. And when comparing fig. 5 to fig. 4, we see that these realizations extend well into the acoustic space of the short vowel /*ʊ*/. This finding would argue against the existence of vowel harmony.

We then approached the issue of vowel harmony from another angle. There are reasons to believe that the suffix -*ɖu* is related to the synchronic word *ɪɖu* ‘person.’ This form is still attested in a number of words, especially in a large number of ethnonyms. For example: [kùùlɪɖu] ‘Hijerat person’; [mííɾɪnɪɖu] ‘Miri person.’

These words probably originated in a genitival construction of the form: ethnonym + genitival linker N- + *ɪɖu* ‘person’ (literally, ‘person of ethnonym’). Synchronically, however, the form (n)*ɪɖu* ‘person (of)’ is a suffix. This suffix is disyllabic, and – impressionistically – its vowels seemed less prone to phonetic reduction than was the case with -*ɖu*. We again divided the roots into two sets (those with the close vowels /*i*/ or /*u*/, and those with other vowels), and we then measured the formants for both the front and the back vowel in the suffix (n)*ɪɖu*. The results are shown in fig. 6 (for the front vowel) and fig. 7 (for the back vowel): the squares represent the suffix after a close vowel, the triangles the suffix after another vowel.

Both vowels are centralized (as shown by their F2), while their height (as shown by their F1) corresponds to the heights of [*i*, *ɪ*] (for the front vowel) and [*u*, *ʊ*] (for the back vowel), with a concentration of tokens in the [*ɪ*] and [*ʊ*] heights, respectively. More strikingly,

Fig. 6: Speaker NHK, front vowel (name + genitive + -ı̇du/-ı̇du)

74

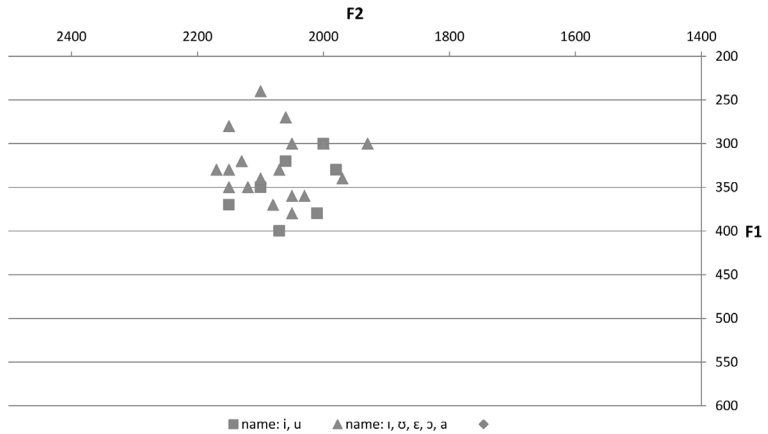
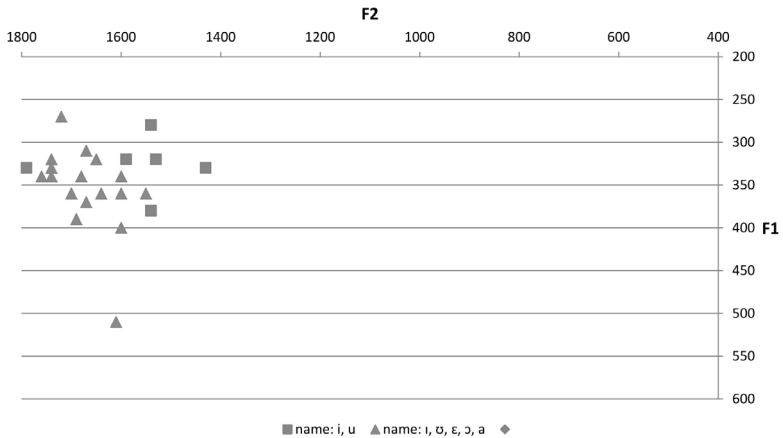


Fig. 7: Speaker NHK, back vowel (name + genitive + -ı̇du/-ı̇du)



though, there is no recognizable distribution pattern with respect to the two sets of roots: the F1 of vowels following the close vowels /i/ or /u/ is not lower. This means that there is no evidence for vowel harmony, and that the suffix should be analyzed as -(n)ı̇du (in the case of ethnonyms and some other nouns) and -du (in the case of most nouns), independent of the vowels in the preceding root. Note that the diachronic source ı̇du ‘person’ contains the close front vowel /i/, while the suffix -(n)ı̇du ‘person (of)’ contains the near-close vowel /ɪ/. This change is triggered by the process of grammaticalization: most suffixes now occur in unstressed positions, which trigger the centralization of vowels.

Assuming that there is no synchronic vowel harmony, we still need to explain those cases where we perceived the occurrence of close front vowels (as in the words in table 6 above) or the higher

likelihood for a close vowel to occur after a root containing close vowels (as depicted in fig. 5). It is possible that these constitute remnants of an earlier vowel harmony system. However, in the present-day language, the assimilated pronunciations occur in free variation with their non-assimilated counterparts. This free variation is even attested in carefully articulated speech, i.e., it would be difficult to argue that there is an underlying vowel harmony system that becomes neutralized in fast speech.

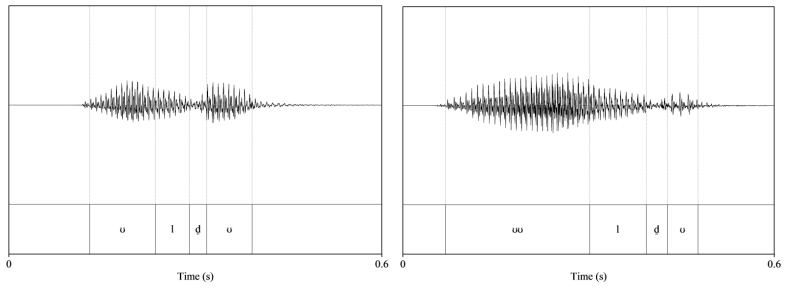
Furthermore, there are two additional observations that are of relevance to this discussion. First, we observe cases of an unexpected assimilation of root vowels to suffix vowels (whereas in a vowel harmony system, it would be the suffix vowel that should change in accordance with the root vowel). For example, the benefactive suffix -ndí has a close vowel, and it triggers the sporadic assimilation of vowels in the preceding root, e.g., the root fí ‘say’ is realized with either its phonemic near-close vowel (as [fí-ndí]) or with an assimilated close vowel (as [fí-ndí]) in this context. And second, we observe that front vowels tend to be raised when they follow a palatal consonant, e.g., ṭṣṣṣṣ ‘children’ can alternatively be realized as [ṭṣṣṣṣ] or as [ṭṣṣṣṣ]. Both observations cannot be explained easily as cases of vowel harmony, but rather as local phenomena where adjacent sounds assimilate to each other. For the present-day language, we thus assume that all assimilations in vowel height constitute such ad hoc assimilations or local phenomena, not remnants of an earlier vowel harmony system.

3.2. Vowel length

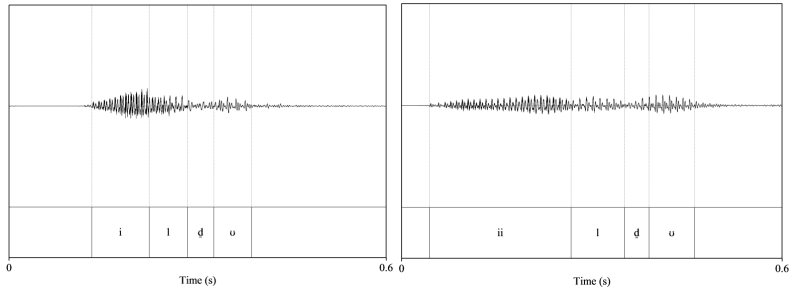
Our investigation into vowel quality and vowel harmony led us to realize that final short vowels (usually suffix vowels, but also root vowels) are not only centralized, but also extra short. Before discussing this phenomenon, we introduce the issue of vowel length. Tabaq distinguishes phonemically between short and long vowels, as illustrated by means of the (near) minimal pairs in figs. 8 and 9. These charts visualize typical length differences between short and long vowels. They illustrate a spoken word (visualized as a waveform) as it unfolds over time (along the horizontal axis). We have extracted exactly 0.6 seconds for each uttered word (to make the lengths more easily comparable), and segmented and labeled each sound underneath the waveform. The boundaries between sounds are indicated by means of dashed vertical lines. Even without measuring the time, it is obvious that the long vowels take up considerably more time than the short vowels. And when measuring the time, it can be seen that long vowels are about twice as long as short

Figs. 8a, b:
Contrastive
vowel length,
exemplified with
úḏú 'breast' vs.
úḏúḏ 'mouths'

76



Figs. 9a, b:
Contrastive
vowel length,
exemplified with
íḏú 'rat species'
vs. íḏúḏ 'bodies'



vowels: the short first vowel in úḏú 'breast' and íḏú 'rat species' is 0.09 seconds long, while the long first vowel in úḏúḏ 'mouths' and íḏúḏ 'bodies' is 0.18 seconds long.

While differences in vowel length are clearly phonemic in polysyllabic nouns, length is mostly neutralized in monosyllables. Here the vowel is always realized long, as in e.g. [bùḏi] 'dog' or [qḏòm] 'thorn.' With the help of suffixes, however, their phonemic length becomes visible, e.g., the plural forms of these two words are bùḏi 'dogs' and qḏòm 'thorns,' respectively. This different behavior suggests that [bùḏi] 'dog' has an underlying short vowel, while [qḏòm] 'thorn' has an underlying long vowel.

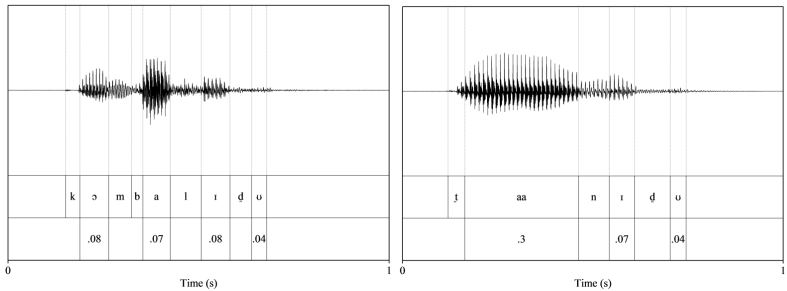
On the phonetic level, we find more than two vowel lengths. Consider e.g. kómbáḏú 'Kambal person' and ṭààníḏú 'Tabaq person' and pay special attention to the length of the final vowel.

In both cases, the final vowel is realized much shorter than any preceding short vowels. It is also not uncommon for a speaker to drop the final vowel altogether,¹² giving us many variant realizations such as [kḏú] ~ [kḏ] 'door.' As a general rule for Tabaq, we can state that vowels in word final and unstressed syllables are realized extra short, or sometimes dropped altogether.

Most vowels in this position are suffix vowels, and this fact has had repercussions for our investigations into vowel quality and vow-

¹² Dropping of the final vowel is common in the closely related language Karko; cf. HAMDAN & JAKOBI, "Number marking on Karko Nouns."

Tabaq



Figs. 10a, b:
Phonetic vowel
length

el harmony. Assuming that Tabaq had a system of vowel harmony in the past, the extremely short duration of suffix vowels presumably did not leave speakers time to reach the target values, and is thus responsible for their centralization, and their clustering in the [ɪ] and [ʊ] areas (as reported in section 3.1). However, this is only a speculation: synchronically, we cannot recover any vowel harmony system, since short duration, centralization and convergence in the areas of the near-close vowels are attested even in careful speech.

4. Tone

This final section introduces the tonal system. Tabaq has two level tones (high H, low L) that can be combined in one syllable to give a falling (HL) or rising (LH) contour. Note that such contour tones tend to be attested on long vowels only. Some minimal pairs are given below:

H(H)	HL	L(L)	LH
kúɪú ‘fish’	kùɪù ‘stick’	kùɪù ‘porridge’	
ákú ‘stay’	ákù ‘inside’	àkù ‘sit down’	àkú ‘be sitting’
kélé ‘write’	kélè ‘red’		kèlé ‘coloured’
kɪ́tù ‘door’		kɪ̀tù ‘fruit type’	
wá ‘sing’		wà ‘want/like’	
kúú ‘maternal clan’	kùù ‘shelter/fence’		
kʷíí ‘open’	kʷîî ‘kujuur’	kʷîî ‘go up’	

Table 7: Tonal
minimal pairs

There are a number of processes that affect the realization of an inherent lexical tone in the case of those words where the tonal melody is HL or LH: these melodies only surface in specific environments, but are realized as level tones in other environments. This section illustrates the most pervasive of these processes. There is a large group of mono- and disyllabic words that have an underlying HL

Table 8: Contexts of tonal change

Context 1 = HL		
in isolation	úṭì	‘water’
as final member of a noun phrase	kálé núṭì	‘tears (lit. eyes GEN.water)’
as direct object	tí úṭì kúúlèṃ	‘she boiled the water’
with instrumental/ directional suffix -kà	tí kùbààj úṭìkà ìṛṇèṃ	‘he filled the glass with water’
Context 2 = HH		
as non-final member of a noun phrase	úṭí núṭì	‘well area (lit. water GEN.mouth)’
as subject	úṭí kúúlèṃ	‘the water boiled’
with locative suffix -(u)r	tí tìkàà úṭír bárgùṃ	‘he pushed him in the water’

The vast majority of HL words follow the above pattern. However, there are a few exceptions; and the largest group of exceptions are those Arabic loanwords that receive a HL pattern in Tabaq, e.g., fáàj ‘tea’ or gálàm ‘pen’: these loanwords tend not to alternate, and are usually realized HL in both contexts.

Phonetically, the HH variants of these words are either realized HH or extra-HH, in free variation. Because of this extra-HH realization, some contexts reveal an apparent three-tone system, as illustrated below with the help of the frame íṇ X kééṇ ‘this X is good.’

Table 9: Phonetic realization of underlying tone

Phonemic tone	Example	Gloss	Realization
LL	kùlù	‘porridge’	íṇ kùlù kééṇ
HH	úmṭú	‘flower’	íṇ úmṭú kééṇ
HL	kúlù	‘stick’	íṇ kúlù kééṇ ~ íṇ kùlù kééṇ

This extra-HH realization is a reflection of the underlying HL melody: in careful speech across word boundaries, HL patterns tend to start at a much higher pitch than level H tones. Fig. 11 illustrates such a typical pitch contour for the noun kúlù ‘stick.’ It is a visual representation of the recorded sentence ú kúlù súméṇgáṛú ʃʷá ‘you threw a stick and it is now located there,’ as it unfolds over time (along the horizontal axis). We have segmented and labeled each word, and the boundaries between the words are indicated by means of vertical

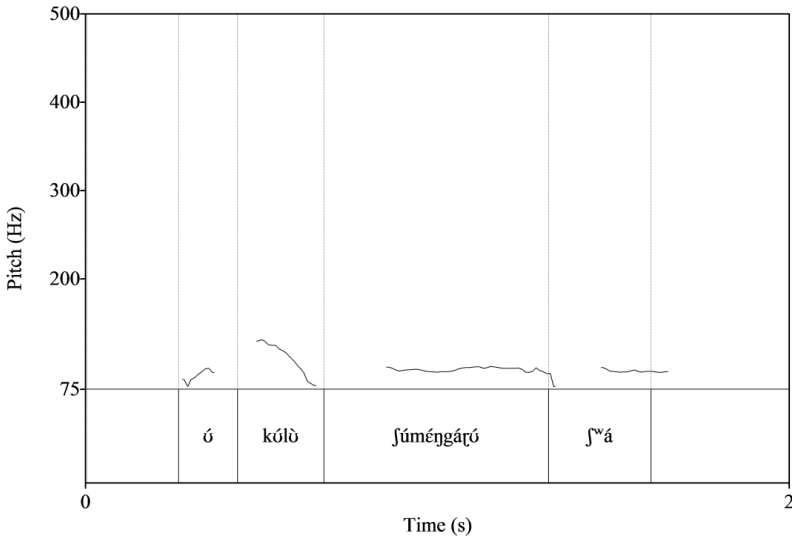


Fig. 11: kúlù 'stick' in object position

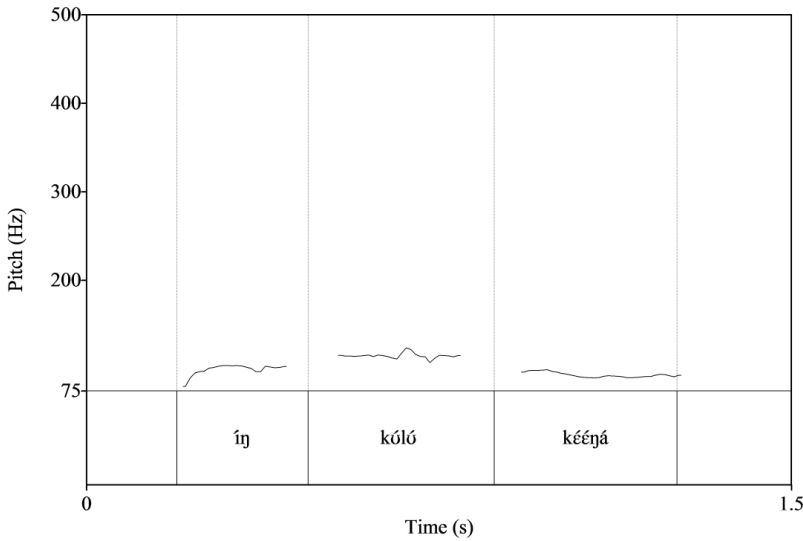


Fig. 12: kúlù 'stick' in subject position

lines. Above each word, we have extracted the pitch contour (measured in Hertz). The word kúlù 'stick' occurs in direct object position (where it retains its HL pattern): it is preceded by the H-toned subject 2SG pronoun ú, and followed by the H-toned verbs fúmégáɾú 'having thrown down' and ʃʷá 'it is located.' Note that the HL pattern starts at a considerably higher pitch (when compared to that of the level H tones) to yield [kúlù].

Now compare this to fig. 12: here, kúlù 'stick' occurs in the subject position (where it becomes HH) of the sentence íɲ kúlù kééɲá [íɲ

kǔlǔ kéǎǎ] ‘this stick is really good.’ It is preceded by the H-toned proximal demonstrative íŋ ‘this,’ and is followed by the H-toned non-verbal predicate kéǎǎ ‘it is really good.’ Despite the fact that all elements carry H tones, we see a marked raise in the pitch of kǔlǔ ‘stick,’ i.e., its realization in this particular example reflects its underlying HL pattern.

We have presented here a discussion of the underlying tonal system as attested in the speech of older speakers. But in actual spoken language, tones tend to merge: the intervals are only well established in careful speech in short utterances, and they tend to get blurred in longer utterances. This is true even for older speakers. Furthermore, when we compare recordings from older and younger speakers of the same words and utterances, we notice quite a few tonal differences. It is presently not clear whether the differences reflect a re-analysis of the tonal system by the younger speakers, or whether they reflect a decline of the language and the advent of a semi-speaker variety of Tabaq.

5. Concluding remarks

This paper has introduced the consonants, vowels, and tones of Tabaq. It has focused on the vowel system in order to exemplify a pervasive aspect of the language: the fact that Tabaq is an endangered language that shows signs of deterioration. The vowel system consists of 7 vowel phonemes, but the variation in their pronunciation is considerable, and phonemic contrasts are not necessarily reflected in the actual phonetic realizations. We assume that these are all signs of language attrition. Note that this situation has analytic consequences, as it is often difficult to determine the vowel quality beyond any doubt. In fact, it is necessary to resort to a number of strategies to determine vowel quality: to record contrastive words rather than words in isolation (as this often triggers a more careful articulation), and to have a large number of recordings of a word (as this allows us to resort to information about frequencies).

It is likely that the general situation of the Tabaq people, as outlined in the introduction, is responsible for the language being in a state of flux, having a long history of migration, interacting and socializing with Arabic speaking people most of the time, and thus adopting Arabic as the main means of communication. Nevertheless, the Tabaq people feel as one big family and identify themselves as a close-knit society, although – as one elder said – you will not be able to find two speakers of Tabaq who speak the language alike.

Bibliography

- DIMMENDAAL, Gerrit J. "Number Marking and Noun Categorization in Nilo-Saharan Languages." *Anthropological Linguistics* 42.2 (2000): pp. 214–61.
- HAMDAN, Ahmed & Angelika JAKOBI. "Number marking on Karko Nouns." Forthcoming.
- HELLWIG, Birgit & Gertrud SCHNEIDER-BLUM. *Towards a Grammar of Tabaq*. In preparation.
- IBRAHIM, Gumma & Piet HUTTENG. "The Phoneme System of Tagle, a Kordofanian Nubian Language." In *Advances in Nilo-Saharan Linguistics: Proceedings of the 8th Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium. Hamburg, August 22–25, 2001*, edited by Doris PAYNE & Mechthild REH. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe, 2007.
- JABRELDAR, Khalifa. "An initial report on Tabaq knowledge and proficiency." Forthcoming.
- . *A Sociolinguistic Study of Tabaq*. PhD Thesis, University of Khartoum. In prep.
- JAKOBI, Angelika. *Kordofan Nubian: A Synchronic and Diachronic Study*. To appear.
- KHALEEL, Khaleel Bakheet. "Tabaq Kinship Terms." Forthcoming.

Reflections on Old Nubian Grammar

83

Kerstin Weber & Petra Weschenfelder

Recent approaches to the Old Nubian language try to go beyond the analysis of classical biblical texts. Instead they divert their attention to judicial documents to find out more about everyday life in medieval Nubia.¹ The potential of these texts is great, our means to understand them, however, is still quite limited due to wide ignorance of Old Nubian's linguistic structure. Our contribution will analyze the problems in our approaches so far and provide suggestions for a comprehensible and comparable analysis that hopefully proves easier to grasp.

Earlier works from Francis Ll. Griffith,² Fritz Hintze,³ or Gerald M. Browne⁴ try to provide a comparative analysis based on different texts. Among those works the editions of Browne have the highest impact on our approaches to the texts today. Even though Browne did an impressive job dealing with Old Nubian texts, his work can only be a starting point for the work to come. Yet even as a starting point several issues must be addressed, issues concerning Browne's terminology. First of all, Browne's revelations are scattered around in several different publications with differing content while indices are mostly missing. Even if you find your way through the jungle of publications, Browne changed his terminology for some phenomena or often does not even give an exact definition of his terms. The meaning of these terms is simply not inherent in the terms itself; consider, for example the 'predicative copulative.'⁵ Furthermore one term might encompass several different phenomena, as it is the case with the term 'predicative.'⁶ Especially when new to the field of

1 Cf. for example RUFFINI, *Medieval Nubia*.

2 GRIFFITH, *The Nubian Texts of the Christian Period*.

3 HINTZE, "Beobachtungen zur altnubischen Grammatik I & II."

4 BROWNE, *Introduction to Old Nubian*. In the following we will refer to Browne's revised edition *Old Nubian Grammar*.

5 *Ibid.*, *Old Nubian Grammar*, 62.

6 To illustrate our point we refer to *ibid.*, *Old Nubian Grammar*, 36f.

Old Nubian studies one has to cope with a seemingly unmanageable mess of single facts, cross references and abbreviations. This shall be illustrated here by a discussion of a translation taken from the Miracle of St. Mena.

84

The text was purchased by the British Museum in 1908 and photographs were published by Budge already in the following year. In 1909 a first grammatical analysis was published by Griffith, who re-edited it in 1913. Further analysis was presented by Browne in the 1980s and recently by Vincent van Gerven Oei. The text deals with a miracle performed by St. Mena, who was and is one of the major saints of the Coptic Church. In our text a childless woman hears about the miracles of St. Mena and promises to adopt the Christian faith when this results in her motherhood.

The following sentence can be found on page 1, lines 8-10 of the manuscript:

M. 1.8-10

ἮΑΡΟΝ ΜΙΡΑ ΔΓ'ΕΝΔΕ ΟΥΝΝΑΡΑ ΜΕΝΝΑΛΩ' ΓΑΚΕΝΔΕ ΔΚΕΝΔΕ'

We want to discuss the syntactical analyses and translations by Browne⁷ and Van Gerven Oei.⁸

Browne gives the translation:

ἮΑΡ-ΟΝ ΜΙΡ-Α ΔΓ(Δ)-ΕΝΔΕ ΟΥΝΝ-ΑΡΑ ΜΕΝΝ-Α-ΛΩ'

ΓΑ-Κ-ΕΝΔΕ ΔΚ-Κ-ΕΝΔΕ'

'And she, being barren, did not bear either son or daughter.'

Browne's grammatical analysis can only be constructed from his commentary:

mir-a 'being barren,' adjunctive of *mir-*. [...] *ag-(a)* adjunctive (for the elision § 2.5.1b) of *ag-*, *ak-* 'to sit,' here used to indicate habitual action, [...] similarly in modern Dongolese Nubian (Armbruster 1960, §§ 3831-3843) as well as in Nobiin (Khalil 1999, 103); *-ende...ounnara mennalo* 'she did not bear,' the negative element *-ende* reinforces the negative verb *men-* (§ 3.9.5a) [...] *ounnara* is the predicative of the preterite I verbid [...] joined with *men* in the predicative periphrastic construction. *men-nalo*: present indicative, reinforced with emphatic *-lo*; (§ 3.10; it is here topicalizing, according to Satzinger 1990, § 22); here presumably the preterite notion is conveyed by the tense of *ounnara*, though with the negative verb *men-* we frequently find the present when the preterite is expected [...] In all the ex-

7 BROWNE, *The Old Nubian Miracle of St. Menas*, pp. 5, 24f.

8 EL-GUZZULI & VAN GERVEN OEI, *The Miracle of Saint Mina*, pp. 21; 64-7.

amples now known, the emphasizing postposition *-lo* is attached to the verb. (§ 3.9.7c): see e.g. 2.1-2 *konmennalo* ‘she did not have.’

In contrast to this at the first glance rather eclectic analysis, Vincent van Gerven Oei presents a new approach. His interlinear glossing enables the reader to follow the analysis. You find the following morphological parsing⁹:

85

ṬAP-ON	ḥIP-Δ	ΔΓ-ḐNΔḐ	OḠNN-ΔPA
3SG-C	be.barren-PRED	remain-NEG	bear-PT1.PRED
ḤENN-Δ-ΛΩ	ḐΔ-K-ḐNΔḐ	ΔḐ-K-ḐNΔḐ	
NEG-PRED-FOC	SON-ACC-NEG	daughter-ACC-NEG	

Van Gerven Oei translates: ‘And she bore neither son nor daughter, remaining barren.’

His further commentary states:

ag- ‘to remain’: with negative suffix *-ende*, dependent on the negation *men-*. The construction *mir-a ag-* is a common ‘light verb’ or ‘adjunctive’ construction, in which *ag-* supports the semantic content of *mir-*. Following Browne, *ag-* should be interpreted here as a habitual [...] In Dongolawi and Nobiin, the adjunctive usage of this verb has developed into a habitual prefix *aag-* (Werner 1987, § 6.2.4; Bechhaus-Gerst 2011, p. 163); [...] It seems that *men-* is always marked with *-lo* (ONG § 3.9.7c); [...].

While the last example is far more comprehensible, the comparison of the two approaches reveals differences in the applied terminology which again further complicates the understanding of the analysis.

To illustrate that point, we get into further detail by turning to some specific grammatical questions that derive from the two approaches. In his commentary from 1994, Browne analyses *mira* and *ag-(a)-ende* as two adjunctives and further specifies the use of *ag-* ‘to sit’ indicating a habitual action like in modern Nubian languages. The negative suffix *-ende* connects the expression with the negative verb *mennalo*. The preterite I predicative *ounnara* and the present

9 Glossing abbreviations: 1 – first person; 2 – second person; 3 – third person; ADJC – adjunctive; ALL – allative; ATTR – attributive; CONJ – conjunction; DEM – demonstrative; DIR – directive; EMPH – emphatic; JV – juncture vowel; LOC – locative; MC – main clause; NEG – negative; P – plural (verbal forms and pronouns); PART – partitive; PL – plural; PLOBJ – plural object; POSS – possessive; PRED – predicative; PRS – present; PST – past/preterite; PTCP – participle; REFL – reflexive; REL – relative marker; S – singular (verbal forms and pronouns); SC – subordinate clause; SUBJ – subject. Additional abbreviations employed by Browne and/or Van Gerven Oei: ACC – accusative; C – conjunction; FOC – focus marker; IND – indicative; PT – preterite; SG – singular.

indicative *mennalo* form a ‘predicative periphrastic,’ topicalized by the suffix *-lo*.

Like Browne, Van Gerven Oei sees *ag-* with the negative suffix *-ende* depending on the negative verb *men-*. He identifies *mira agende* as a ‘common light verb’ or ‘adjunctive construction.’

86

Even though Van Gerven Oei glosses *mir-a* as a predicative he nevertheless identifies it as an adjunctive, following Browne’s commentary. The morphological analysis of *agende* identified by Browne as a second adjunctive is not addressed. Browne, even though identifying both forms as adjunctives, translates them as ‘predicative periphrastic.’ This shows on the one hand a rather uncommon generalization of the term ‘predicative.’ On the other hand it demonstrates how grammatical phenomena are applied more and more precisely until their meaning is no longer understandable without further study of the term itself. To understand it, one needs a background in specialized linguistics. For someone who just started to get into the language it is mostly impossible to understand how the translator worked out his translation.

To solve this problem we want to propose several steps. The first one is that we start to discuss a universally valid terminology. To be able to do so the analytical tool of glossing as introduced by Van Gerven Oei is promising. But to be sure that we are talking about the same grammatical phenomena we should refer to the same consistent glossing tool. The Leipzig Glossing Rules developed by the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology and the Leipzig University Department of Linguistics are already an internationally accepted standard. They provide rules for interlinear glosses and a standardized list of glossing abbreviations of category labels that we could further develop according to our requirements.¹⁰ Which requirements these exactly are and what category labels need to be added to the list, we should all discuss together. As a platform for this discussion we suggest the medieval Nubia website of Giovanni Ruffini and Grzegorz Ochała.¹¹

Our second point addresses the issue of terminology. As stated before Browne’s term ‘predicative’ clearly encompasses very different phenomena. It incorporates nominal phrases, converbs¹² or adjunctives as well as ‘verbal nouns.’¹³ Under the label ‘verbal nouns’

10 Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Department of Linguistics: The Leipzig Glossing Rules – Conventions for interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses. <<http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php>> (Accessed May 2013).

11 The Medieval Nubia Homepage. <http://www.medievalnubia.info/dev/index.php/Main_Page> (Accessed December 2013).

12 A converb is a not fully marked finite verb. In the sentence ‘He stepped out of his house, walked down the road and met his friend,’ the verb ‘he stepped out’ is fully marked, while the converbs ‘walked down’ and ‘met’ are lacking the pronominal subject.

13 Cf. WEBER & WESCHENFELDER, “The polyvalent *-a*.”

Browne again includes not only the ‘predicative’ but also something he calls the ‘verbid.’

Further analyzing the use of both forms our research group in Berlin proposes the ‘predicative’ form to apply to the main statement of the sentence. The verbid would thereby apply to the participle of the subordinate clause. Based on this idea we propose a simplified synopsis of the Old Nubian verbal system (see table 1 overleaf¹⁴). For the moment we suggest giving up the term predicative and to address the forms subsumed as main clause participles in different tempora instead. This of course needs to be further tested against comparative morphological analysis of all available Old Nubian texts.

We would like to demonstrate the positive side effects of this approach in analyzing another part of the Menas text, a sentence that encompasses several different aspects of a complex structure:

ΟΥΚΡΙΓΟΥΛΩ ΟΥΕΛΛΟΕΙΟΝ ΜΑΝ ΕΤΤΛ ΧΡΙΣΤΑΝΟC[Ι]ΓΟΥΝ ΕΙΛΗΥΓΟΥΛ ΠΕCΡΑΝ Μ. 2.10-3.1
 ΟΥΛΓΡΑ· ΤΩΕΚΑΓΟΥΕCΝ ΕCCOY ΜΗΝΑΝΑ ΜΑΡΕΩΤΝ ΚCCEΛΑ ΑΥΟΛΓΟΥΚΑ
 ΤΑΡΙΔ ΠΕCСNA

At first the structure of the sentence appears to be rather complex. Yet by structuring it in the proposed way according to main and subordinate clause structure it becomes easier to grasp.

ΟΥΚΡ-Ι-ΓΟΥ-ΛΩ	ΟΥΕΛ-ΛΟ-ΕΙΟΝ	ΜΑΝ	ΕΤΤ-Λ
day-JV-PL-PART	one-LOC-CONJ	DEM	woman-SUBJ
ΧΡΙCΤΑΝΟC[Ι]-ΓΟΥ-Ν			
Christian-(JV)-PL-POSS ¹⁵			
ΕΙΛΗΥ-ΓΟΥ-Λ		ΠΕC-ΡΑΝ	
marshland inhabitants ¹⁶ -PL-SUBJ		talk-3P.PRS	
ΟΥΛΓΡ-Α·	ΤΩΕΚΑ-ΓΟΥ-Ε-CΝ		
hear-ADJC	miracle-PL-PRED-REL		

14 This table is a tentative result of the work in the Old Nubian research group in Berlin (2003-7) and is based on an idea of Frank Kammerzell.

15 The gloss corresponds to Browne’s ‘genitive.’ To avoid a mix-up with Indo-European case-endings we prefer the term ‘possessive.’ We keep ‘directive’ instead of ‘accusative’ as well.

16 This translation follows KHALIL, “ΕΙΛΗΥ.” He argued against ZYLAHRZ, *Grundzüge der nubischen Grammatik im christlichen Frühmittelalter*, 133. Zyhlarz translated ΕΙΛΗΥΓΟΥΛ as ‘women’ and proposed a root *il* for ‘woman’ referring to supposed modern Nubian parallels *el-de*, pl. *wede* and *édu*, pl. *éli* by arguing for the same relation as the word ΕΤΤΛ. Khalil argues instead that the word ΕΙΛΗΥΓΟΥΛ derives from the Greek loanword οἱ ἐλεῖοι that refers to the people of the coastal strip between the Meroitic and the Serbonidic Lake. In the form it is used in the text it refers to the inhabitants of this marshland. Since this is the setting of the Menas legend we consider this a fitting translation of the term.

Table 1 Synopsis of the Old Nubian verbal system

	Participle	1 S	2 S	3 S	1 P	2 P	3 P
Present SC	-i ʎ*	-ipɪ		-in		-ipoy	-ipɔn
Present MC	-ipɔ	-ipɛ		-inɔ		-ipo	-ipɔnɔ
Preterite 1 SC	-oʎ	-ɔpɪ		-ɔn		-ɔpoy	-oʎɔn
Preterite 1 MC	-ɔpɔ	-ɔpɛ		-ɔnɔ		-ɔpo	-oʎɔnɔ
Preterite 2 SC	-icɪʎ	-icɪ		-icɪn		-icoʎ	-icɔn
Preterite 2 MC	(-icɪ[pɪ]ɔ)†	-icɛ		-icɪnɔ		-ico	-icɔnɔ
Future SC	-ɔɔɔɔ	-ɔpɪ		-ɔn		-ɔpoy	-ɔpɔn
	-ɔɔɔ	-ɔpɛ		-ɔnɔ		-ɔpoy	-ɔpɔnɔ
Future MC	-ɔpɔ	-ɔpɪ		-ɔnɔ		-ɔpo	-ɔpɔnɔ
	-ɔpɔ	-ɔpɛ		-ɔnɔ		-ɔpo	-ɔpɔnɔ
Admirative Present		-inɛ		-inɔ	-inɔ		-inɔnɔ
Admirative Future		-ɔɔɔɔ		-ɔɔɔɔ	-ɔɔɔɔ		-ɔɔɔɔnɔ
Finalis		-ikoʎɔɔ		-ikonnoɔ		-ikoʎɔɔ	-ikonnoɔ
Conditional		-ikoʎɔ		-ikonno		-ikoʎɔ	-ikonno
Imperative				-ɛ(cɔd)	-ɔnɔ(cɔd)		-ɔnɔ(cɔd)
Vetitive				-ɔɔɔɔ(H)		-ɔɔɔɔ(cɔd)	
Jussive Present				-ɔn(H)			
Jussive Preterite 1				-ɔnɔ(cɔd)			
Jussive Preterite 2							-oʎɔnɔ(cɔd)
							-icɔnɔ(cɔd)

* Note the frequent replacement of /i/ by /e/ and of /o/ by /a/.

† -isira is not demonstrably attested and the short form -isa appears only in attributive constructions as BROWNE stated in *Old Nubian Grammar*, p. 50 n. 49.

ĒĊĊ-ŌY holy-ATTR	MHNA-NA Mena-POSS	MAPEŪT-Ō Mareotis-POSS	KĊĊE-ΛA church-LOC
AY-Ō-Ā-ŌY-KA make-PLOBJ-PTCP.PRS-PL-DIR		TAṖ-ΛĀ 3S-ALL	PEĊ-CNA say-3S.PST2.MC

The analysis reveals that the main clause is ‘that woman while hearing said to herself,’ with ‘that woman’ marked by a subject marker. Yet there is a second subject marker denoting ‘Christian marshlanders.’ The verbal structure associated with that subject by the plural form, however, shows that it should be analyzed as the subject of the subordinate clause, thereby revealing the object of ‘that women hearing.’ The next analytical step thus produces: ‘That woman, while hearing Christian marshlanders talk, said to herself.’ The remaining information of the text provides further detail on the subject of the Christian marshlanders talk – ‘the miracles St. Mena performed in the church of Mareotis’ – which is marked by a directive clause marker. Thereby the whole sentence is to be translated as:

‘On one of those days that woman, while hearing Christian marshlanders talk about the miracles which St. Mena performed in the church of Mareotis, said to herself.’

What is marked here as subordinate forms Browne also called subjunctive, yet in the current state of the art we simply do not know enough to presume any modal qualities of this form and should not use such a pre-judgmental philological term. Without further systematical analysis of all records to clarify the distinction between the forms we should not use terms that transfer further interpretive meanings. Our proposal uses more neutral terms referring to the sentence structure instead. Thereby we get a simpler verbal system of main and subordinate clauses free from preconceived opinions. Of course this verbal system can and should be improved by further analysis.

Bearing this in mind we want to return back to our initial Menas sentence and provide a new analysis for the verbal forms. For better comparison we reconstruct glosses for Browne’s analysis based on his commentaries.

Browne:

TAṖ-ON 3SG-CONJ	MIṖ-Δ be.barren-ADJC	ΔΓ(-Δ)-ENΔE sit-ADJC-NEG (hab. action)	ŌYNN-ΔPA bear-PT1.PRED (pred. periphras.)
--------------------	-------------------------	--	---

ḤEN-NA-ΛΩ	ΓΑ-Κ-ΕΝΔΕ	ΔC-Κ-ΕΝΔΕ
NEG-3SG.PRS.IND-EMPH	SON-DIR-NEG	daughter-DIR-NEG

‘And she, being barren, did not bear either son or daughter.’

90

Van Gerven Oei:

ΤΑΡ-ON	ḤIP-Δ	ΔΓ-ΕΝΔΕ	ΟΥΝΝ-ΔΡΑ
3SG-C	be.barren-PRED	remain-NEG	bear-PT1.PRED

ḤENN-Δ-ΛΩ	ΓΑ-Κ-ΕΝΔΕ	ΔC-Κ-ΕΝΔΕ
NEG-PRED-FOC	SON-ACC-NEG	daughter-ACC-NEG

‘And she bore neither son nor daughter, remaining barren.’

Taking the aforementioned *mira agende*, with Browne, as an adjunctive form standing in ellipse means separating both complexes with regard to the content. Further parallels in the text illustrate that construction.

On page 12 of the Menas text (M. 12.3–7), for instance, a sequence of adjunctives is translated by: ‘[the egg – this one which he had eaten –] suddenly became a living fowl, came out from under him, stood up and immediately squawked.’

Bearing this in mind one would have to translate our problematic passage as: ‘And she, barren and staying (so).’ Nevertheless, Browne translates it a composite verb and thereby analyses it as a periphrastic construction. However, his own previous analysis of verbal structures stated that such periphrastic forms are constructed by a verbid, predicative or indicative preceding *ein-* or its equivalents.¹⁷ Yet in this case two adjunctives are reconstructed to form a periphrastic construction and moreover, the last of the adjunctives again should be linked to the following periphrastic construction.

Instead of supposing an elided adjunctive our approach considers the *-en* in *agende* as part of the verbal ending of a subordinate clause verbal form and not, contra Browne and Van Gerven Oei, as a negative suffix *-ende* referring to *mennalo*:

ΤΑΡ-ON	ḤIP-Δ	ΔΓ-ΕΝ-ΔΕ
3S-CONJ	be.barren-ADJC	remain-3S.PRS-CONJ
ΟΥΝΝ-ΔΡΑ	ḤEN-NA-ΛΩ	
bear-PTCP.PST1.MC	NEG-3S.PST1.MC-EMPH	

17 BROWNE, *Old Nubian Grammar*, pp. 59–62.

ⲉⲁ(ⲗ)-ⲕ(ⲁ)-ⲉⲛⲗⲉ
son-DIR-CONJ.NEG

ⲁⲕ-ⲕ(ⲁ)-ⲉⲛⲗⲉ
daughter-DIR-CONJ.NEG

Furthermore, unlike van Gerven Oei, we do not see the *-a-* in *mennalo* as a predicative but like Browne as a finite verbal form constructed with a suffix *-na* since the second *-n-* would otherwise remain unanalyzed. Even though our analysis implies a reconstruction of a finite preterite form, we also acknowledge the possibility of a present form. The elided initial vowel of the verbal ending prevents a final decision. This is however another topic which needs to be examined by comparative studies.

Since we identify *ounnara mennalo* as a main clause construction, the main statement of the sentence is now ‘She did not bear, neither son nor daughter,’ and is further supported by the subordinate statement ‘while she remained barren.’ The whole sentence is thereby reconstructed as

‘And she, while she remained barren, she did not bear, neither son nor daughter.’

Thanks to the internet and initiatives like the development of the Medieval Nubia homepage we are now able to immediately discuss and exchange ideas. Yet as already stated this is only productive if we understand what we are talking about. To illustrate our point we want to refer to Plisch’s comparison of the major linguistic approaches to Sahidic-Coptic grammar¹⁸ according to which what Till called Optative was referred to by Shisha-Halevy as Causative Imperative while what Shisha-Halevy called Optative was referred to by Till as Futur III. Since our analytic approaches to Old Nubian grammar are just beginning, we still have the opportunity to avoid such confusion and we should take it.

18 PLISCH, *Einführung in die koptische Sprache*, p. 113.

Bibliography

92

- ARMBRUSTER, Charles H. *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960.
- BECHHAUS-GERST, Marianne. *The (Hi)story of Nobiin: 1000 Years of Language Change*. Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 2011.
- BROWNE, Gerald M. *Introduction to Old Nubian Grammar*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1989.
- . *Old Nubian Grammar*. Munich: Lincom 2002.
- . *The Old Nubian Miracle of Saint Menas*. Vienna: Mödling, 1994.
- GRIFFITH, Francis Ll. *The Nubian Texts of the Christian Period*. Berlin: Verlag der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1923.
- EL-GUZUULI, El-Shafie & Vincent W.J. VAN GERVEN OEI. *The Miracle of Saint Mina*. The Hague & Tirana: Uitgeverij, 2012.
- HINTZE, Fritz. "Beobachtungen zur altnubischen Grammatik (I-II)." *Berliner Beiträge zur Ägyptologie und Sudanarchäologie: Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Ges.-Sprachw. R.* 20.3 (1971): 287-293.
- KHALIL, Mokhtar M. "ⲉⲓⲏⲏ: ein verkanntes griechisches Wort im Altnubischen." In *Nubia et Oriens Christianus: Festschrift für C. Dettlef G. Müller zum 60. Geburtstag*, edited by Piotr SCHOLZ & Reinhard STEMPEL. Cologne: J. Dinter, 1987: pp. 161-2.
- . *Wörterbuch der nubischen Sprache (Fadidja-Maḥas-Dialekt)*. Warsaw: NUBICA, 1996.
- PLISCH, Uwe-Karsten. *Einführung in die koptische Sprache*. Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1999.
- RUFFINI, Giovanni. *Medieval Nubia: A Social and Economic History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- SATZINGER, Helmut. "Relativsatz und Thematisierung im Altnubischen." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 80 (1990): 185-205.
- WEBER, Kerstin & Petra WESCHENFELDER. "The polyvalent -a: the wild-card in Old Nobiin Grammar?" In *Nubian Voices: Studies in Christian Nubian Culture*, vol. II, edited by A. ŁAJTAR, G. OCHAŁA & J. VAN DER VLIET. Warsaw: Raphael Taubenschlag Foundation, forthcoming.
- WERNER, Roland. *Grammatik des Nobiin (Nilnubisch)*. Hamburg: Buske, 1987.
- ZYLAHRZ, Ernst. *Grundzüge der nubischen Grammatik im christlichen Frühmittelalter*. Leipzig: Kraus, 1928.

Coordination with *goon* and Bisyndetic =*gon* in Dongolawi and Kenzi Proverbs

Marcus Jaeger*

1. Introduction

Both Dongolawi¹ and Kenzi² are Nile-Nubian languages, belonging to the Nubian language family. Along with Tama, Nyima, Nara, and the extinct Meroitic language, Nubian represents the Northern branch of the Eastern Sudanic language group.³ This group is ultimately part of the Nilo-Saharan language phylum.

The Dongolawi language area is situated around the town of Dongola in Northern Sudan, the Kenzi language around Aswan and Kom Ombo, both in southern Egypt. In spite of being 800 km apart from each other, the Dongolawi and Kenzi languages show significant similarities to each other in all linguistic aspects. There are

* My British friends Geoffrey Sutton and Derek Cheeseman improved the English grammar and spelling of the paper. Dr Angelika Jakobi read different versions of the paper and commented on them in her usual very detailed way. Prof Ahmed Sokarno Abdel-Hafiz discussed some aspects of *goon* with me. He impresses me by staying and working in his Nubian village environment which occurs rarely among Nubian scholars.

Most of the thanks for this research belongs to the Kenzi and Dongolawi Nubians who sat with me for endless hours, inviting me for lots of cups of tea (and coffee and karkade and meals and...), teaching me their language, patiently answering my questions and making me feel at home with them. Among them I want to mention especially the Dongolawi El-Shafie El-Guzuuli from Khannaag. Some of the time writing the article I stayed with him using the opportunity to ask many questions, getting honest answers. Muhammad Hassan from Tura' explained many of Hāmid Khabir AlShaich's collected proverbs. Among the Kenuzi 'Abdel-Rahman 'Awwad and Khālid 'Awwad from Siyaala, Fathi 'Abdel-Sayid from Dakka and Thābit Zāki Mukhtar from Ombarkaab were especially helpful.

- 1 'Dongolawi' is a term used by outsiders. The speakers call their language 'Andaandi' (meaning 'which belongs to us') but do not give a specific name to themselves. 'Oshkir' is another outsider term applied by Nobiin speakers. I use the term 'Dongolawi' as in other academic papers.
- 2 'Kenuzi' as an ethnic group and 'Kenzi' as a language name are also terms used by outsiders. The people call their language and their ethnic group 'Mattokki' (with different interpretations of the term). In order to stay consistent with the term 'Dongolawi' I use the terms 'Kenuzi' for the speakers and 'Kenzi' for the language.
- 3 RILLY, "The Linguistic Position of Meroitic."

different theories about the reason for that closeness depending on historical assumptions.

The early development in classification of the Nile Nubian languages is summarized by Herzog:

94

Die vor 1879 gedruckten Abhandlungen schwanken ausnahmslos nur zwischen zwei oder drei Gruppen, je nachdem, ob der Author die Kenuzi und Danagla als Einheit betrachtete.⁴

In the 20th century due to the similarities between the two languages most Western scholars and their publications regard Dongolawi and Kenzi as one single language.⁵

The latest edition of the *Ethnologue* regards Dongolawi and Kenzi as separate languages, for sociolinguistic reasons.⁶ Many speakers of Dongolawi and Kenzi believe that they speak different languages⁷ although they also realize that their languages are closely related. In the following I distinguish between Dongolawi and Kenzi providing evidence of some linguistic differences between both languages.

The most important study on the Dongolawi Nubian language in the 20th century is the grammar by Armbruster⁸ with other grammars written earlier. On Kenzi Nubian spoken in southern Egypt in the 20th century there are grammatical studies by Massenbach and the Kenzi mother-tongue speaker Abdel-Hafiz.⁹

This paper looks at coordination¹⁰ with *goon* and bisyndetic =*gon*¹¹ in the context of adversative and contrast marking in both Dongolawi and Kenzi.

4 HERZOG, *Die Nubier*, p. 24. Translated: "Studies published before 1879 vacillated without exception between only two or three [language] groups, depending on whether the writer regarded the Kenuzi and Danagla as a single entity." The third language group Herzog talks about are the Nobiin.

5 Cf. WERNER, *Grammatik des Nobiin*, p. 15; BECHHAUS-GERST, *Sprachwandel durch Sprachkontakt am Beispiel des nubischen im Niltal*, p. 19; BENDER, "Nilo-Saharan," p. 45, and editions of the *Ethnologue* earlier than the 17th edition. The *Ethnologue* is a reference guide to all known languages of the world.

During my travels I have never heard 'Dongola' used as a language name by any speakers of the language. Dongola plainly is the name of the most important town in the Dongola reach with Old Dongola being the capital of former Old Nubia and modern day Dongola being the seat of the present governorate.

6 LEWIS ET AL, *Ethnologue*. Paul Lewis, p.c.: "This is the first edition of the *Ethnologue* where Dongolawi is named 'Andaandi'."

7 A common exclamation among Kenuzi when listening to Dongolawi is: "That sounds like Fadidja Nubian." Fadidja Nubian is the other Egyptian Nile Nubian language.

8 ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*, based on data collected in the 1910s

9 MASSENBACH, *Wörterbuch des nubischen Kenuzi-Dialektes*; ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*. Abdel-Hafiz continues publishing topics relating to the Egyptian Nile-Nubian languages unfortunately mainly in journals with limited availability, cf. ABDEL-HAFIZ, "Nubian Relative Clauses." His most recent publication is ABDEL-HAFIZ, "Coordinate Constructions in Fadicca and English."

10 HASPELMATH, *Coordinating Constructions*, p. 4: "A coordinating construction consists of two or more coordinands."

11 In our case =*gon* occurring once in each of the two coordinands.

Besides conjunction and disjunction adversative coordination is one of the main types of coordination. Crystal defines **adversative** as follows:

IN GRAMMAR and SEMANTICS, a form of construction which expresses an antithetical circumstance. Adversative meaning can be expressed in several grammatical ways (as 'adversatives'), such as through a CONJUNCTION (*but*), ADVERBIAL (*however, nevertheless, yet, in spite of that, on the other hand*), or PREPOSITION (*despite, except, apart from, notwithstanding*).¹²

95

Crystal's definition is restricted to the English language. Other scholars look at the notion of adversativity from a typological perspective and suggest more refined terms and concepts of adversativity.

Both, Malchukov and Haspelmath¹³ begin with a general definition describing adversative coordination simply as 'but'-coordination.

Haspelmath considers the term **concessive** and its conceptual proximity to adversative: "In English, [...] concessive clauses with 'although' are often roughly equivalent to 'but' coordinations."¹⁴ That corresponds with Malchukov's observation: "Many authors use the terms concessive and adversative interchangeably to refer to the function of denial of expectations,"¹⁵ adding later "that the adversative meaning is more general than the concessive."¹⁶

A paraphrase of adversativity is presented by Zeevat: "The content has been suggested to be false in the context."¹⁷ exemplified by German 'doch.' I.e. adversativity challenges a previous assumption, corresponding to Malchukov's 'concessive.' Further terms used to describe the concessive are "frustration"¹⁸ and "countering."¹⁹

In the following I use 'adversative' in a general meaning with 'concessive' in a restricted notion, as Malchukov above.

A further category is **contrast** denoting "The new content addresses the old topic with its polarity inverted."²⁰ Malchukov²¹ emphasises the many similarities and few differences between the two propositions which make up the contrast. The contrast itself is established between one or more of the differences.

12 CRYSTAL, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, p. 14.

13 MALCHUKOV, "Towards a Semantic Typology of Adversative and Contrast Marking," p. 179.

HASPELMATH, "Coordination," p. 2.

14 HASPELMATH, "Coordination," p. 28

15 MALCHUKOV, "Towards a Semantic Typology of Adversative and Contrast Marking," p. 179.

16 Ibid., p. 180.

17 ZEEVAT, "Particles," p. 100.

18 LONGACRE, "Sentences as combination of clauses," p. 385.

19 LEVINSOHN, *Self-Instruction Materials on Narrative Discourse Analysis*, p. 91.

20 ZEEVAT, "Particles," p. 100.

21 MALCHUKOV, "Towards a Semantic Typology of Adversative and Contrast Marking," p. 183.

Sometimes the term ‘contrast’ is used in a wider sense similar to the adversative in its general definition.²² In order to distinguish between ‘contrast’ in its general and its specific meaning Malchukov also speaks of “semantic opposition”²³ and Levinsohn of “prototypical contrast.”²⁴

I use ‘contrast’ in its specific meaning. One way to test for specific ‘contrast’ in the English meta-language is to add ‘in contrast’ to the second coordinand.

Further categories of adversativity are

- ▶ ‘mirative’ dealing with new, unexpected, surprising, yet not necessarily unintentional information.²⁵ A good way for testing is to add the word ‘suddenly.’ It is related to the concessive and until recently not distinguished from it;
- ▶ ‘restrictive’ meaning “[...] the second conjunct refutes the inference that the event referred to in the first conjunct has been (completely and successfully) realized.”²⁶ For Longacre²⁷ ‘restrictive’ and ‘contrastive’ belong together, as indeed sometimes only the context makes a statement ‘restrictive’ or ‘contrastive’;
- ▶ ‘correction’ meaning “the content was denied in the common ground”²⁸; or defined as “not x, but y.”²⁹ Correction eliminates an assumption which usually is not made explicit.³⁰

As specific data regarding mirative, restrictive and correction are limited, in the following I do not include it. That takes me closer to Horn³¹ whose work on negation dates earlier than the other referenced works on adversativity and shows more limited differentiation, like regarding correction as part of the concessive. That leaves two kinds of adversativity I deal with:

- ▶ concessive³² / denial of expectation;
- ▶ contrastive³³ / semantic opposition.

22 Cf. BLAKEMORE, *Relevance and Linguistic Meaning*, p. 54: ‘... it [‘but’] encodes the information that there is some kind of contrast. The problem is that the nature of the contrastive relation seems to vary across contexts.’

23 MALCHUKOV, “Towards a Semantic Typology of Adversative and Contrast Marking,” p. 183.

24 LEVINSOHN, *Self-Instruction Materials on Narrative Discourse Analysis*, p. 92.

25 MALCHUKOV, “Towards a Semantic Typology of Adversative and Contrast Marking,” p. 187, based on DeLancy.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 180.

27 LONGACRE, “Sentences as combination of clauses,” p. 378.

28 ZEEVAT, “Particles,” p. 100.

29 MALCHUKOV, “Towards a Semantic Typology of Adversative and Contrast Marking,” p. 192.

30 HORN, *A Natural History of Negation*, p. 404.

31 *Ibid.*, pp. 404, 409.

32 As used by MALCHUKOV, “Towards a Semantic Typology of Adversative and Contrast Marking,” p. 179. I do not employ the term ‘adversative’ in order to avoid misunderstanding. An English example sentence is: ‘Although I like Beethoven, my daughter does not enjoy any classical music.’ (I.e. I had expected that my daughter would like at least some classical music.)

33 An English example sentence is: ‘While I like Beethoven, you like the Beatles.’

By looking at only two kinds of adversativity I have to rely less on context and intuition which varies across contexts.³⁴

In concessive and contrastive sentences there are two coordinands (coordinate clauses) which are coordinated by a marker³⁵ (in the English meta-language 'but,' 'although,' 'however,' 'while'). With changed intonation English concessive and contrastive sentences can be uttered without a marker, too.

While not excluding, Zeevat and Malchukov do not specifically include the discourse level. Whereas with most proverb collections proverbs are written down in isolation they belong to an oral discourse which needs to be taken into consideration.

For adversativity in the sense of 'adversative passive' and 'malefactivity' which "expresses an event that happens to the detriment of the subject argument" I refer to Payne.³⁶

The adversative markers discussed in this paper will be 'monosyndetic' (occurring once) or 'bisyndetic' (occurring twice). If sub-/coordinators are omitted one speaks of 'asyndetic' coordination which is "especially [used] in order to achieve an economical or dramatic form of expression."³⁷ As proverbs are economical, asyndetic coordination is to be expected wherever possible.

Another reason for the existence of asyndetic coordination is provided by Levinsohn, speaking of a 'connective' instead of a marker:

If two propositions are in a countering relation, many languages do not mark the relation between them by means of a connective unless other conditions are fulfilled.³⁸

In the above mentioned Nubian grammars³⁹ the term 'adversative' or any other related terms do not occur.

In Armbruster⁴⁰ a Dongolawi coordinator expressing 'but, on the contrary' is listed under the heading 'The Infix Conjunction.' Un-

³⁴ Intuition in the related field of contrast and (non-)truth conditional meaning is discussed in BLAKEMORE, *Relevance and Linguistic Meaning*, p. 37.

³⁵ In this paper 'marker' means an explicate coordinator and subordinator. HASPELMATH, "Coordination," and others prefer the term 'coordinator' to 'marker.' However as its derivation 'coordination' includes constructions without a marker, I apply the term 'coordinator' when this paper branches out to adversative coordination without markers. – In the beginning 'coordination' includes subordination. The distinction between a coordinative and subordinate function in Dongolawi and Kenzi is developed step by step.

A general definition of coordination is found in CRYSTAL, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, p. 110: "A term in grammatical analysis to refer to the process or result of linking linguistic units which are usually of equivalent syntactic status [...]."

³⁶ PAYNE, *Describing Morphosyntax*, p. 208. See also TSUBOI, "Malefactivity in Japanese."

³⁷ CRYSTAL, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, p. 450. For the definitions of these terms see also HASPELMATH, *Coordinating Constructions*.

³⁸ LEVINSOHN, *Self-Instruction Materials on Non-Narrative Discourse Analysis*, p. 29.

³⁹ ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*; MASSENACH, *Wörterbuch des nubischen Kunuzi-Dialektes*; and ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*.

⁴⁰ ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*, §§ 4484, 6093.

der the heading ‘The Single Positive Verb-Concretion’⁴¹ one finds a few clauses with adversative meaning without discussing their adversativity. In the chapter ‘Co-ordinate Sentences’⁴² there is no mentioning of any coordination I call adversative.

When looking at Kenzi grammatical structures representing German ‘obgleich’ (‘although’) Massenbach begins with the remark “Eigentümlicher Gebrauch.”⁴³ She leaves it with two example sentences and one grammatical comment.

Abdel-Hafiz talks about ‘concession’ as part of ‘Adverb Clauses.’⁴⁴ Just a little bit more detailed than Massenbach there are three example sentences and some short explanations.

In another publication Abdel-Hafiz looks at “Coordinate Constructions in Fadicca and English” with Fadicca or Fadidja being a Nile-Nubian language. A third of a page is dedicated to “adversative coordination”⁴⁵ introducing Fadidja *tan* as “coordinator” of “a concession subordinate clause.”⁴⁶ In one example sentence *tan* is interpreted as suffix, in another one as separate word. No other function of *tan* is introduced. The paper does not research whether there are Fadidja “concession subordinate clauses” without *tan*.

The same paper also talks about “contrastive coordination”⁴⁷ meaning disjunction and not including the propositional level.⁴⁸

Adversative and related coordinate constructions analyzed in this paper are taken from Dongolawi and Kenzi proverbial data collected from 2009 onwards. Currently the corpus consists of about 225 Dongolawi proverbs⁴⁹ and a similar number from Kenzi with *goon* and bisyndetic =*gon* occurring regularly.⁵⁰ In the following Dongolawi proverbs will be marked by DP and a running number; Kenzi proverbs by KP and a running number.

41 Ibid., §§ 5731–7.

42 Ibid., §§ 6237–44.

43 MASSENBACH, *Wörterbuch des nubischen Kunuzi-Dialektes*, p. 136 §21C7. Translated: ‘strange usage.’

44 ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 269.

45 ABDEL-HAFIZ, “Coordinate Constructions in Fadicca and English,” p. 6.

46 Cf. *ibid.*, I name the marker of a subordinate clause ‘subordinator.’

47 Ibid., pp. 7, 8.

48 Adversativity is not included in Werner’s *Grammatik des Nobiin*.

49 In this paper I do not distinguish between proverbs and wise sayings.

50 Except for a proverb collection by a Dongolawi from Xannaag village (Hāmid Khabir AlShaich, *حكم و امثال نوبية من دنقلا*; about 125 proverbs) and another much smaller one from a Dongolawi from Magaasir Island (Taha A. Taha, “Proverbs in a threatened Language Variety in Africa”; about 10 proverbs) no published material was used. Some Nubians (the Dongolawi El-Shafie El-Guzuuli also from Xannaag village, the Fadidja Maher Habboob and the Kenzi Mekki Muhammad from Maharaqa village) presented their own handwritten collections of proverbs to me. All these proverbs were checked and discussed with Dongolawi and Kenzi mother tongue speakers especially in order to discover their meanings and write them down according to orthographical rules (based on EL-GUZUULI & JAEGER, “Aspects of Dongolawi Roots and Affixes” and JAEGER & HISSEIN “Aspects of Kenzi-Dongolawi Phonology Related to Orthography”) leading the co-investigators to remember further proverbs.

Finnegan observes some difference between proverbs and day-to-day speech:

[...] it is clear that *some* sort of heightened speech, in one form or another, is commonly used in proverbs: and that this serves to set them apart from ordinary speech.⁵¹

99

In our case where Dongolawi and Kenzi exhibit a strong Arabic influence, proverbs being more conservative may enable us to recognize certain Nubian grammatical features more clearly. Therefore keeping in mind that proverbs

- represent non-narrative text;
- employ a restricted amount of grammar only;
- have a tendency to be more conservative linguistically,

proverbs still provide a beneficial starting point of investigation into linguistic analyses and especially into adversativity. Proverbs contradict, challenge, convince, correct, and eliminate existing assumptions. Proverbs with 'but' coordinator point to a wider argumentative discourse as described by Reagan when discussing Shona proverbs: "The free use of *tsumo* [Shona proverbs] is the accepted way of winning an argument."⁵²

Therefore it is expected to encounter adversative coordinating among proverbs at least as frequently as among average narrative texts.

The next section reviews insights into adversativity from non-English/non-Nubian languages of different language phyla. Afterwards I deal with clauses coordinated by *goon* and bisyndetic =*gon*, followed by clauses without any marker, i.e. 'juxtaposed clauses' and a summary. That allows some insight into the use and non-use of these two coordinators. Where available, results from proverbial data are compared with narrative texts.⁵³

2. Adversative in non-Nubian languages

In the Nile-Nubian languages any reference related to adversativity is sparse, as König laments in general:

Any attempt to give a cross-linguistic characterization of concessive relations and the way they are expressed in the world's languages is constrained by the fact that we do not have enough relevant information from a representative sample of languages. ... Conces-

51 FINNEGAN, *Oral Literature in Africa*, p. 403.

52 REAGAN, *Non-Western Educational Traditions*, p. 64.

53 Taken from MASSENBAACH, *Nubische Texte im Dialekt der Kunūzi und der Dongolawi*.

sive relations have always aroused less interest than conditional or causal ones.⁵⁴

Fortunately since 1988 research into adversative and related coordination in languages besides English has been increased and published.⁵⁵

While working on non-Indo-European languages the terminology for adversative functions has been refined from formerly two (concessive and contrastive) to the ones described in the preceding section.

Kibrik worked on the Upper Kuskokwim Athabaskan language in interior Alaska, belonging to the Eyak-Athabaskan language phylum. Its main adversative marker *'edinh*⁵⁶ “tends to appear at the clause boundary, but in terms of intonation it may belong either to the first [placed at the end] or to the second clause [placed at the beginning].”⁵⁷

Malchukov starts with Russian which has different markers for denial-of-expectation and semantic opposition, while semantic opposition and additive have the same marker, using Malchukov's terminology. Further language material is presented from Altaic-Tungusic languages from Eastern Russia:

- ▶ Manchu has different markers for the (non-adversative) additive and adversative (concessive), with contrast unmarked.
- ▶ Even uses the same marker for the whole spectrum of additive, contrastive and adversative.

The opposite of Even is Koryak (far Eastern Russia), a Chukotko-Kamchatkan/Paleosiberian language where different markers are used for the additive (non-adversative), the contrastive and the adversative.

Longacre worked on Ibaloi (Philippines), belonging to the Austronesian language phylum,⁵⁸ and on Wojokeso⁵⁹ (alternatively Safeyoka, Papua New Guinea) belonging to the Trans-New Guinean language phylum. Regarding Ibaloi he writes:

54 KÖNIG, “Concessive connectives and concessive sentences,” p. 145.

55 KIBRIK, “Coordination in Upper Kuskokwim Athabaskan”; MALCHUKOV, “Towards a Semantic Typology of Adversative and Contrast Marking”; HASPELMATH, “Coordination”; LONGACRE, “Sentences as Combination of Clauses”; LEVINSOHN, *Self-Instruction Materials on Narrative Discourse Analysis*; and *Ibid.*, *Self-Instruction Materials on Non-Narrative Discourse Analysis*. While LONGACRE, “Sentences as Combination of Clauses” does not speak explicitly about adversative, he deals “with underlying but relations. [...] the notion of contrast requires paired lexical oppositions” (p. 378).

56 KIBRIK, “Coordination in Upper Kuskokwim Athabaskan” glosses it as ‘but.’

57 *Ibid.*, p. 549.

58 Language examples: LONGACRE, “Sentences as combination of clauses,” pp. 390, 392.

59 Language examples: *Ibid.*, p. 409.

The most characteristic conjunction in the Ibaloi antithetical sentence is *nem* 'but.' A further conjunction *jeŷ* 'while, but' is also used here, and there is occasional absence of conjunction (juxtaposition).⁶⁰

The coordinator *nem* occurs at the beginning of the second co-ordinate clause. In the example sentences it marks contrast yet not concessive.

Levinsohn illustrates the 'countering connective'⁶¹ through language examples from the Niger-Congo language phylum. He exemplifies adversativity on discourse level by the marker *ka* from Lobala (Democratic Republic of Congo).⁶² *ka* is a marker of 'counter evidence' indicating "a backward countering relation between two utterances,"⁶³ occurring in narrative discourse:

ka always occurs in sentence-initial position. It never occurs midsentence between two clauses. As a result it never functions as a straight contrast marker. [...] *ka* commonly introduces narrator comment into the flow of action.⁶⁴

Its effect is that the hearer is constrained "to access two optimally relevant assumptions that counter each other."⁶⁵

Some of the above references describe where within the same function adversative markers are employed and where not. I.e. some adversative sentences are juxtaposed, others not, depending on the context. As Levinsohn observed in Kalinga (Philippines, Austronesian language phylum), the marker *yakon* "but [...]" is not used in hortatory texts" and "in narratives [...] is used only when the countering proposition is important or relevant to what follows."⁶⁶

Even more complex rules of adversative marking are found in Bariai (Papua New Guinea, Austronesian language phylum) and Dungra Bhil (India, Indo-European language phylum).⁶⁷

Contrastive coordination does not necessarily occur through special markers. It also employs syntactic devices. In Mono (Dem-

60 Ibid., p. 390.

61 In LEVINSOHN, *Self-Instruction Materials on Narrative Discourse Analysis*. His 'countering connective' corresponds to the concessive.

62 Ibid., p. 92, based on data from MORGAN, "Semantic Constraints on Relevance in Lobala Discourse."

63 MORGAN, "Semantic Constraints on Relevance in Lobala Discourse," pp. 125, 137.

64 Ibid., p. 138.

65 Ibid., p. 125.

66 Both quotes from LEVINSOHN, *Self-Instruction Materials on Non-Narrative Discourse Analysis*, p. 30.

67 Both in *ibid.*, 31.

ocratic Republic of Congo) the ‘prototypical contrast’ is achieved through left-dislocation.⁶⁸

3. Clauses coordinated with *goon*

102

Two markers used for coordinating or subordinating Dongolawi and Kenzi proverbs consisting of at least two propositions are *goon* and *=gon*. Non-proverbial Dongolawi sentences with *goon* are⁶⁹:

duulen goon, meedigi unyurmun. – Although he is old, he knows nothing.

nog buun goon, elkori. – While walking, I found it.

In Kenzi one hears:

oddin goon, jellir juusu. – Although he was ill, he went to work.

boodbuun goon, digirsu. – While running, he fell down.

goon ends the first of two coordinated clauses. The same marker is used for adversative and non-adversative coordination. In the first example *goon* denotes concessive (rendered as ‘although’), in the second non-adversative temporal simultaneity (rendered as ‘while’).

While Massenbach’s and Abdel-Hafiz’s Kenzi grammars gloss *goon* as one morpheme, Armbruster⁷⁰ interprets it as two suffixes: The object marker⁷¹ followed by *-on*. Armbruster writes *gi+on* as *gon* with short vowel. In Dongolawi conversation I hear both, long⁷² and short vowel. Altogether the vowel-length is difficult to determine as in spoken Dongolawi the final *on* (if long vowel) or final *n* (if short vowel) is dropped frequently. In Kenzi when pronounced properly, there is always a long vowel however the final *on* is dropped even more regularly than in Dongolawi leading Abdel-Hafiz to write *go*.⁷³ As Kenzi always has long vowel and Dongolawi varies between long and short vowel I standardize and write *goon* in both.

68 LEVINSOHN, *Self-Instruction Materials on Narrative Discourse Analysis*, p. 92. His ‘prototypical contrast’ corresponds to the contrastive.

69 Dongolawi example sentences are provided by El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, p.c., also the following example sentences marked by DS. Kenzi example sentences from Abdel-Hafiz, p.c.

70 ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*, §5731, and *ibid.*, *Dongolese Nubian: A Lexicon*, p. 162.

71 While otherwise I interpret *=gi* as accusative suffix when discussing Armbruster’s writings I employ his terminology (e.g. object). – Armbruster divides other suffixes beginning with *g* similarly, e.g., for him *=ged* also begins with an object marker followed by *-ed*.

72 As among speakers from Khannaag.

73 ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, pp. 267, 269.

In the following I distinguish the polarity of coordinated clauses; i.e. whether a proposition is in the affirmative or in the negative; ‘affirmative’ defined as ‘type of sentence or verb which has no marker of negation’⁷⁴ or ‘absence of negation’⁷⁵ and ‘negative’ being the opposite, resulting in at least four cases of polarity. I am aware that that distinction may not be sufficient:

Perhaps we simply need better criteria for distinguishing denials of truth from assertions of falsity.⁷⁶

Additionally I distinguish whether the subject remains or changes.

3.1 Affirmative–affirmative propositional order with same subject⁷⁷

ΓΆΛΟΝ ΑΤΤΙΡ ΒΟΪΝ ΓΟΝ, ΕCЦИN ĒPΓEΔ ΔΙΝ. DP1
gaalon attir buun goon, essin eerked diin.

<i>gaalo=n</i>	<i>attir</i>	<i>buu-n</i>	<i>goon</i>
jar=GEN	near	STAT-2SG	SUB
<i>essi=n</i>	<i>eer=ged</i>	<i>dii-n</i>	
water=GEN	desire=INS	die-2SG	

“**Although** you are near the [water] jar, you die from thirst.”

ΟΥΡΚΕΔ ΒΟΪΝ ΓΟΝ, ΟΥCΟΥΔΚΕΔ ΙΜΒΕΛΙΝ. DP2
urked buun goon, usudked imbelin.

<i>ur=ged</i>	<i>buu-n</i>	<i>goon</i>
head=INS	STAT-3SG	SUB
<i>usud=ged</i>	<i>imbel-in</i>	
anus=INS	stand.up-3SG	

“**Although** he rests with the head, he stands up with the anus.”

⁷⁴ CRYSTAL, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, p. 15.

⁷⁵ HORN, *A Natural History of Negation*, p. 32. While this definition is very short on p. 30 he goes into more detail about contrasting affirmative and negative: “[...] the closest equivalent of the negative proposition within this system is predicate denial, in which a predicate [...] is denied of a subject s.”

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 399. An alternative way would have been to distinguish between adversative coordinated clauses occurring simultaneously and occurring one after the other. However a quick run-through showed that results would show less consistency.

⁷⁷ There are no example sentences where the subject is stated explicitly. Abbreviations used in the analysis of the proverbs are based on the Leipzig glossing rules: 1, 2, 3 – 1st, 2nd, 3rd person; ACC – accusative; ALL2 – allative with =gir; CAUS – causative; COND – conditional; CONJ – conjunction; COORD – coordinator; COP – copula; DEF – definite; DUR – durative; FUT – future; GEN – genitive; IMP – imperative; INS – instrumental; INT – intensifier; LOC – locative; NEG – negation; NEUT – marker of the so-called present tense; NR – nominalizer; PASS – passive; PCPT – participle; POSS – possessive; PRT1 – preterite with -ko(o); PRT2 – preterite with -s; PL – plural; PST – with participles, the so-called past tense; REPT – repetitive; SG – singular; STAT – stative; SUB – subordinator; SUBJ – subject.

- KP1 TINGĀRPO TĒBIN GŌN, MALTIṬPNA ŽABĀPKEΔ Ā ICCIFI.
tingaarro teebin goon, maltirna habarked aa issigi.

tingaar=ro teeb-in goon
west=LOC stop-3SG SUB

malti=ro=na habar=ged aag issig-i
east=LOC=GEN news=INS DUR ask-3SG
 “**Although** he stops at the west [bank], he asks for the news of the east [bank].”

- KP2 *eddigi aa nallan goon, tenna ettirgi aa tigma.*
 “**Although** they see the hyena, they trace its footprint.”

3.2 Affirmative-negative propositional order with different subject

- DS4⁷⁸ BERTI ΔIDI KŌL GŌN, TENN BITĀNI KALGI EΛMOYNAN.
berti diji kool goon, tenn bitaani kalgi elmunan.

berti diji=i kool goon
goat five=PL having SUB
tenn bitaan=i kal=gi el-mun-an
3SG.POSS child=PL food=ACC find-NEG-3PL
 “**Although** he owns five goats, his children do **not** find enough to eat.”

- KP4 TEP BĒPBŌYN GŌN, TENNA Ī ECCIFI Δ NAKKIMNOY
ter beerbuun goon, tenna ii essigi aa nakkimnu.

ter beer-buu-n goon
3SG.SUBJ satisfied-STAT-3SG SUB
tenna ii essi=gi aag nakki-munu
3SG.POSS hand water=ACC DUR drip-NEG
 “**Although** he is satisfied, his hand does **not** drip water.”

3.3 Negative-affirmative propositional order with same subject

- DP5 ŽANOYGI ΔĀNMEN GŌN, KOŚIPGI KOKKIN.
hanugi jaanmen goon, kojirki kokkin.

hanu=gi jaan-men goon
donkey=ACC buy-NEG SUB

⁷⁸ While here *goon* is optional it is necessary in the following Kenzi proverb.

kojir=gi *kokki-n*
peg=ACC *knock-3SG*
 “Although he has **not** bought a donkey, he hammers a peg.”⁷⁹

ΚΑΜΓΙ ΔΑΝ ΜΕΝΙΝ ΓΟΝ, ΙΡΡΙΓΙ Δ ΔΑΝCOY.
*kamgi jaan*⁸⁰ *meenin goon*, *irrigi aa jaansu*.

KP5

105

kam=gi *jaan* *meen-in* *goon*
camel=ACC *buy* *be.not-3SG* *SUB*
irri=gi *aag* *jaan-s-u*
rope=ACC *DUR* *buy-PRT2-3SG*
 “Although he had **not** bought a camel, he bought a bridle.”

hanugi egir meenin goon, *ossigi aa walagi*.
 “Although he does **not** ride the donkey, he shakes the leg.”

KP6

tii jaan meenin goon, *irrigi aa kaashra*.
 “Although they do **not** buy a cow, they search for the rope.”

KP7

ϞΙΒΙΛΛΕ ΟΥΩΕ ΜΕΝΙΝ ΓΟΝ, ΑΡΙC ΔΑΔΙΝ ΑΔΕΜΙΓΙ ΔΓ ΟΓΙΔΡΙΝ.
shibille uwemeningon, *aris dājin ademig āgogjirin*.

MS:K2⁸¹

shibille *uuwe* *meen-in* *goon*
kite *call* *be.not-3SG* *SUB*
ariis *daaji-n* *adem=i=gi* *aag*
groom *roam-3SG* *man=PL=ACC* *DUR*
ogij-r-in
invite-NEUT-3SG
 “Although he did **not** call the kite, he roamed around inviting the men.”

With some of the above proverbs the subject remains (or is related), the verbs and possible accusatives are related to each other with at least one item being contrasted using the proverbial stylistic features of parallelism through synonyms and antonyms. That speaks in favour of contrastive coordination. In my rendering I have decided for concessive coordination, with the assumption being challenged not made explicit, as that is nearer my co-investigators’ ren-

79 A wooden (sometimes metal) peg is hammered into the ground in order to tether the donkey.

80 One Kenzi speaker said *jaanin*, conjugating the first verb, too. However, I stick with the standard form.

81 Taken from a narrative text in MASSENBAACH, *Nubische Texte im Dialekt der Kunūzi und der Dongolawi*, p. 22. For the example sentences I use Massenbach’s orthography. In the current orthography the second word would be *uuwe meenin goon*.

dering. In all the above Dongolawi proverbs *goon* is not optional, it is required.⁸²

In the Kenzi proverbs *goon* occurs negated as *meenin goon*⁸³ in the same position as *goon* (i.e. at the end of the first clause) and with the preceding verb in the neutral tense like in a serial verb construction where only the last verb is inflected. Therefore *meenin* is interpreted as the last verb of a serial verb construction with *meen* being a kind of verb of negation meaning ‘not to be’ or ‘not to happen now’ as in:

106

KP8 KALLĒ ENNA Ī MĒNELGI Ā BĒPKIΔMOYNOY.
kallee enna ii meenelgi aa beerkidmunu.

<i>kallee</i>	<i>enna</i>	<i>ii</i>	<i>meen-el=gi</i>
droppings	2SG.POSS	hand	be.not-PCPT.PST=ACC
<i>aag beer-kiddi-munu</i>			
DUR	be.satisfied-CAUS-NEG.3SG		

“He is **not** satisfied by the droppings of your hand.”

Inflection of tense-aspect is left to the verb in the second clause.

I conclude that in constructions with *goon*

- ▶ *goon* is a subordinator with the first clause subordinated to the second main clause;
- ▶ *goon* is always placed at the end of the subordinate clause (i.e. postpositive), following its verb.

In the proverbs *-in* and *-n* before *goon* represent 2/3SG or 3PL. In spoken Dongolawi and even more in Kenzi the final personal suffix consonant *n* is dropped clause-finally, however pronounced before *goon*. Therefore a possible interpretation of *-in* and *-n* would be as genitive marker, especially as other Dongolawi subordinators as *bokkon* and *illar* are preceded by the genitive clitic =*n*. There are two reasons against that interpretation:

- ▶ Dongolawi and Kenzi roots ending in a consonant and followed by a genitive marker are frequently contracted which is not observed before *goon*.
- ▶ The Kenzi genitive clitic before a following consonant is =*na*. However in both, Dongolawi and Kenzi, there is only *n* before *goon*, **na* is not possible.

⁸² El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, p.c.

⁸³ MASSENBAACH, *Wörterbuch des nubischen Kunuzi-Dialektes*, p. 136 §21C7, writes it as *ménkin-gon*. However I have never heard the *k* sound. Abdel-Hafiz does not discuss it at all. On the strength of Old Nubian data like *ir* ‘to give birth’ and *mir* ‘to be infertile’ *meen* could be analyzed as a negation prefix *m* plus the verb *en* ‘to be.’

Regarding Fadidja Abdel-Hafiz offers an alternative explanation which could also be applied to Kenzi:

In Fadicca subordination, the clitic (-*n*) introducing the subordinate clause is attached to the verb at the end of the clause. The clitic is often preceded or followed by clause markers.⁸⁴

107

However, in order to standardize Kenzi with Dongolawi where the verb final -*n* is uttered more frequently I do not follow Abdel-Hafiz's interpretation.

In a non-literal translation the literal adversative rendering of Kenzi *meenin goon* as 'although ... not' is rendered as temporal sequential/consecutive 'before' or sometimes as 'without' as my Kenzi co-investigators did, i.e.:

"Before he buys a camel, he bought a bridle." / KP5
 "Without buying a camel, he bought a bridle."

"Before he rides the donkey, he shakes the legs." KP6

"Before they buy a cow, they search for the rope." KP7

The Kenzi co-investigators prefer the temporal sequential rendering to the adversative one when translating a proverb into Arabic. However, in sentence MS:K2 which has the same order 'although ... not' cannot be replaced by 'before' as that would change the meaning.

The Kenzi construction *meenin goon* comes closest to Dongolawi *goon* with preceding negation suffix -*men*⁸⁵ as in DP5. However, in rendering it behaves like MS:K2 with rendering -*men goon* as 'before' being excluded.⁸⁶

goon is **rendered temporally** in the following proverbs⁸⁷:

3.4 Affirmative-affirmative propositional order with same subject

ΟΥΣΚΙΔ ΟΓΙΡΡΟ Δ ΤΔ, ΤΟΥΓΟΥΡΙΝ ΓΟΝ, Δ ΝΟΓΙ. KP9
uskid ogirro aa taa, tugurgirin goon, aa nogi.

84 ABDEL-HAFIZ, "Coordinate Constructions in Fadicca and English," p. 22. If one changes the analysis of the last of the four example sentences (i.e. 56d) where -*n* as subordinator follows the noun instead of the verb that theory makes sense. It would be possible to make -*n* follow the verb, too.

85 See ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*, §5743.

86 El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, p.c.

87 For a discussion in Kenzi grammars see MASSENBAACH, *Wörterbuch des nubischen Kunuzi-Dialektes*, p. 169, and ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 267.

uskid *ogir=ro* *aag* *taar-Ø*
 birth lap=LOC DUR come-3SG
tugur=gir-in *goon* *aag* *nog-i*
 shroud=ALL2-COP.3SG SUB DUR go-3SG
 “The birth comes in the [mother’s] lap, **while** he is in a shroud, he goes.”

3.5 Affirmative-affirmative propositional order with different subject

KP10 ΤΟΥΒΑΡ ΕΝ ΓΟΝ, ΤΟΥΒΟCΡΟΥ.
tuubar en goon, tuubosru.

tuub-ar *e-n* *goon* *tuub-os-r-u*
 wade-NR be-3SG SUB wade-DEF-NEUT-1/2PL
 “**While** it is the ‘wading’ / *tuubar* season, you (pl.) wade indeed.”

KP11 *jugrin goon, farte!*
 “**While** it is hot, take [it] out!”

MS:K4⁸⁸ ΒΟΥΡΩΙ ΔΓΡΑΝ ΓΟΝ, ΔΓ ΤΟΔΟΥΝ.
burwi āgrangon, atōjun.

buru-i *aag-r-an* *goon* *aag* *too-ij-un*
 girl-PL sit-NEUT-3PL SUB DUR enter-INT-3SG
 “**While** the girls are sitting, he enters (completely).”

KP12 consists of a conditional imperative with four coordinands where the first proposition has affirmative-affirmative, the second one affirmative-negative propositional order while the subject remains unchanged:

KP11 ΔΓΙΝ ΓΟ ΟΠΙΔΚΙΝ, ΤΕΒΙΝ ΓΟΝ ΟΠΙΔΜΙΝΟΥ!
aagin goon wirijkin, teebin goon wirijminu!

aag-in *goon* *wirij-ki-n*
 stay-2SG SUB naked-COND-2SG
teeb-in *goon* *wirij-minu*
 stop-2SG SUB naked-NEG.IMP
 “If **while** sitting you are naked, **while** standing do not be naked!”

I interpret both *goon* as non-adversative temporal simultaneous.

88 MASSENBAUGH, *Nubische Texte im Dialekt der Kunūzi und der Dongolawi*, p. 31. In the current orthography the second word is *aagran goon*.

Dongolawi proverbs with *goon* and non-adversative function have not been attested that far. That goes along that *goon* as temporal marker is missing in Armbruster. However there is one Dongolawi sentence from a narrative text with negative-affirmative propositional order with same subject:

AMBĀB BEΔPĪP ELΓON ĒNGI EΔMEN GOON NOYΓΔIFI ΔΓ TĀΔEPĒKON. MS:D1⁸⁹
ambāb bédriṛ elgon ēngi edmengon nugdigi atājerēkōn.
ambaab bedrir elgon
 1SG.POSS.father early not.yet
een=gi ed-men
 wife=ACC marry-NEG
goon nugd-i=gi aag taajere-ko-n
 SUB slave-PL=ACC DUR trade-PRT1-3SG
 “My father, earlier, **while** he had not yet married the woman, he traded with slaves.”

In conclusion, *goon* marks concessive and temporal coordination however it is not always necessary. In Kenzi proverbs *goon* occurs much more frequently (12 times) than in Dongolawi ones (3 times only). In Kenzi proverbs concessive and temporal coordination is nearly always expressed by *goon*, in Dongolawi it is mixed. The difference cannot depend on the kind of co-investigator as both in Dongolawi and in Kenzi I worked with a broad variety of different speakers. Could it be that either Kenzi is more explicit or that there are cases where Kenzi employs and Dongolawi does not employ *goon*?

A final note regarding orthography: While *goon* cannot be separated from the preceding verb and in uttering is always connected to the verb-final consonant *n* I interpret *goon* as an orthographic word as readability after a verb and its verbal suffixes without word boundary would become difficult.

4. Clauses coordinated with bisyndetic =*gon*

The clitic =*gon* and its allomorphs =*kon* and =*ton* also cover adversative and non-adversative functions. Like *goon* Armbruster considers =*gon* as a complex morpheme composed of the object marker =*gi* plus the suffix *-on*.⁹⁰

I write =*gon* and its variants with short vowel, both in Dongolawi and in Kenzi. While Massenbach writes it with a long vowel: *gôn*,

89 Ibid., p. 100. In the current orthography the fifth word is *edmen goon*.

90 ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*, §§ 4389, 4398, and ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Lexicon*, p. 161.

kôn, similar as Ahmed Sokarno Abdel-Hafiz,⁹¹ I hear the short vowel in Kenzi, too.

=*gon* can be monosyndetic and bisyndetic. Bisyndetic =*gon* occurs on phrase (i.e. connected to two conjoined phrases) and clause level (i.e. connected to conjoined clauses). The typical use of bisyndetic =*gon* on phrase level is shown in the following proverb:

110

DP13 TOPBAΛ KOYBN Γ̃ΑΡΓON T̃ABIA T̃OỸPKON MENIΛΛO NĒΩEMOYNOY.

torbal kubn gaargon tabid tuurkon menillo neewemunu.

<i>torbal</i>	<i>kub=n</i>	<i>gaar=gon</i>	
farmer	boat=GEN	side=CONJ	
<i>tabid</i>	<i>tuur=gon</i>	<i>menillo</i>	<i>neewe-munun</i>
smith	inside=CONJ	except	rest-NEG.3SG

“The farmer does not rest except [at] the side of the boat **and** inside [the house of] the smith.”

=*gon* joins similar noun phrases (in this case the two locations where a farmer finds rest) within a clause together. As =*gon* is attached to phrases and not to words I interpret it as a clitic.

In the following I look at bisyndetic =*gon* connecting clauses, not phrases. Bisyndetic =*gon* on clause level is missing in Armbruster’s, Massenbach’s and Ahmed Sokarno Abdel-Hafiz’s grammars.

4.1 Affirmative–affirmative propositional order with different subject

DP14 OYCKEΛNΔIGON T̃OΔIP Γ̃ΑΡΙN, T̃ONΔIGON BEPPO Γ̃ΑΡΙN.
uskelndigon toodir gaarin, toondigon berro gaarin.

<i>uski-el-ndi=gon</i>		<i>tood=ir</i>
give.birth-PCPT.PST-POSS=COORD		child=LOC
<i>gaar-in</i>		
embrace-3SG		
<i>tood-ndi=gon</i>	<i>ber=ro</i>	<i>gaar-in</i>
child-POSS=COORD	wood=LOC	embrace-3SG

“**While** the one who gave birth embraces the child, he [the child] embraces the wood belonging to the child.”

DP15 *deski tabbelgon densir anin, katregi tabbelgon katre anin.*
“**While** the one who touched the fat, becomes full of goodness; the one who touched the wall, he becomes a wall.”

91 MASSENBACH, Wörterbuch des nubischen Kunuzi-Dialektes, p. 169, and ABDEL-HAFIZ, A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian, p. 265. The latter uses a slightly different notation: *go:n*, *ko:n*.

jagaddi, kashi weerkon inded widin, intille weerkon kiddigirin. DP16
 “The weak [person], **while** one stalk swims and carries [him], one needle makes [him] drown.”

MEWƆGON ǻ OYCKI, TEKƆON ǻ TǻǻI. KP14
meewgon aa uski, tekƆon aa taaji.

111

<i>meew=gon</i>	<i>aag</i>	<i>uski-Ø</i>
pregnant=COORD	DUR	give.birth-3SG
<i>ter=gon</i>	<i>aag</i>	<i>taaj-i</i>
3SG.SUBJ=COORD	DUR	cry-3SG

“**While** the pregnant woman gives birth, he [her husband] cries.”

ingon bahti kinyima, weeri bahtigon kulugi aa toog. KP15
 “**While** this one is without good luck, others [who have] good luck break the stone.”

Tǻǻ ǻOYǻGON MOǻǻMMEǻ ƆǻTIP Ɔǻ ƆMǻN, KINNǻGON MOǻǻMMEǻ MS:K6⁹²
 ƆǻTIP ƆT TǻǻIIB.
Tǻd dūlgon Mohammed Shātir el Emīn, kinnagon Mohammed Shātir et Tayyib.

<i>tood duul=gon</i>	[...]	<i>kinna=gon</i>
son big=COORD		small=COORD

“The older son (was named) Mohammed Shātir el Emīn, **and** the younger one Mohammed Shātir et Tayyib.”

In the above proverbs and the narrative sentence *=gon* is exclusively attached to an explicit subject noun / noun phrase with animate referent. The two events occur simultaneously. Both *=gon* are rendered by a single English word, ‘while.’⁹³

Frequently in the above proverbs the contrastive function is realized through antithetical lexical items which are typical for proverbs. In DP14 (‘parent’ – ‘child’) the antithetical lexical items are explicit, in KP14 (‘pregnant woman’ – ‘non-pregnant relative’) implicit.

There is one Kenzi sentence where as the subject is implicit both *=gon* are attached to the object with the object showing no accusative marker as Massenbach observes: “Sehr oft fehlt es (*gi*) hinter *gôn*.”⁹⁴

92 MASSENBACH, *Nubische Texte im Dialekt der Kunūzi und der Dongolawi*, p. 61.

93 Of course, ‘while’ is also a temporal clause marker. However, here *=gon* is used adversatively. A similar case from Upper Kuskokwim Athabaskan is discussed in KIBRIK, “Coordination in Upper Kuskokwim Athabaskan,” p. 550.

94 MASSENBACH, *Wörterbuch des nubischen Kunuzi-Dialektes*, p. 116. Translated: ‘Most times *gi* after *gon* is missing.’

4.2 Affirmative-negative propositional order with same subject

MS:K6⁹⁵ ZŌLI MALLĒGON ŌYŌEΔ TĀCOYM, ŌIBILLĒGON ŌYŌEKŌMNOYN.
Zōli mallegon ūwedtāsum, shibillegon ūwekōmnun.

112 zooli malle=gon uuwe-ed taa-s-um
 people all=coord call-CPL come-PRT2-3SG
 shibille=gon uuwe-koo-mnun
 kite=COORD call-PRT1-NEG.3SG
 “He invited everybody, (only) the kite he did not invite.”

In all the above proverbs and narrative sentences bisyndetic =gon expresses the contrastive (except narrative sentence MS:K1 where it is restrictive). There is one Dongolawi proverb where the two clauses connected by bisyndetic =gon are additive:

DP17 aP̄GON BI ΔΔEM ΔNΔOY, ŌELLIGON aP̄PI BI ŌYKKIPAN.
 argon bi adem andu, welligon argi bi uukiran.

ar=gon bi adem an-d-u
 1PL=COORD FUT man become-NEUT-1PL
 wel-li=gon ar=gi bi uukki-r-an
 dog-PL=COORD 1PL=ACC FUT bark-NEUT-3PL
 “We will become a [rich, important] man, and the dogs will bark at us.”

That indicates that like *goon* bisyndetic =gon only in specific contexts gains a contrastive meaning. Both markers are not adversative markers by themselves. However it also demonstrates that in contrast to *goon*, =gon is a coordinator: While the subordinate clause with *goon* does not carry tense and aspect, both clauses are inflected in bisyndetic =gon constructions.

5. Juxtaposed clauses

As proverbs aim to be short and precise, economical and dramatic, proverbs with asyndetic coordination are presumed. I begin by looking at juxtaposed clauses which have adversative character similar to coordinated clauses with *goon*, e.g. they present a **concessive**, yet without a marker. For the purpose of rendering denial-of-expectation I add ‘but’:

95 MASSENBACH, *Nubische Texte im Dialekt der Kunūzi und der Dongolawi*, p. 22. When El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, p.c., rendered MS:K1 in Dongolawi it was unmarked.

5.1 Affirmative–affirmative propositional order with different subject

kā TENΔI ωαϕϕIN, IPINΔIGI NŌȲPKIPIN. DP18
kaa tendi wanyinyin, irindigi nuurkirin.

<i>kaa</i>	<i>tendi</i>	<i>wanyinyi-n</i>	113
house	3SG.POSS	be.without.roof-3SG	
<i>iri-ndi=gi</i>		<i>nuur-kir-in</i>	
people-POSS=ACC		roof-CAUS-3SG	

“His house is without a roof, [but] he roofs the [other] people’s [houses].”

δōΓελ āGIN, ΔΟΥΚΚΕΛΓΙ ΕΔΚΟΡΑΝ. DP19
joogel aagin, dukkelgi edkoran.

<i>joog-el</i>	<i>aag-in</i>	
grind-PCPT.PST	stay-3SG	
<i>dukki-el=gi</i>		<i>ed-ko-r-an</i>
bake-PCPT.PST=ACC		marry-PRT1 ⁹⁶ -NEUT-3PL

“She who ground [the flour], stays [unmarried]; [but] they married the one who baked [the bread from the flour].”

Note that in DP19 even without concessive *goon* only the second clause carries the tense marker.

5.2 Affirmative–negative propositional order with same subject

TENN KāΔ BŌΔIN, ΓΟΥΤΔ̄ΡΚΙ ΔΟΥΚΚΙΜΟΥΝ. DP20
tenn kaj boodin, gutaarki dukkimun.

<i>tenn</i>	<i>kaj</i>	<i>bood-in</i>
3SG.POSS	horse	run-3SG
<i>gutaar=gi</i>		<i>dukki-mun</i>
sand.storm=ACC		extract-NEG

“His horse runs, [but] it does **not** make a sand storm.”

fooja kalin, kuru anmun. DP21
 “The sparrow eats [a lot], [but] it does **not** become a turtle dove.”

96 I gloss -*ko* and -*r* as separate morphemes, cf. ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*, §2975ff: “The stem of the perfect is formed by adding -*ko*- to the simple stem. I realize that alternatively both morphemes could be glossed as one suffix. As this paper deals with the adversative I leave the decision regarding glossing of tense-aspect markers to further research.”

- DP22 *tekki shegin, geewgi ettamun.*
 “He pierces him, [but] he does **not** bring the blood.”

114

In each proverb with affirmative-affirmative propositional order the two subjects change, in each proverb with affirmative-negative order the two subjects remain. While with all proverbs with affirmative-affirmative propositional order *goon* cannot be added, with all proverbs with affirmative-negative propositional order from a purely grammatical point of view *goon* is optional and could be added at the end of the first clause without changing its meaning.⁹⁷

No juxtaposed Kenzi proverb with concessive function has been found thus far. Alternatively I present one Kenzi sentence with concessive function from a narrative text:

- MS:K3⁹⁸ $\Delta\text{NNA } \text{I}\Delta \Delta\text{EM } \Delta\text{NOCCOYM}, \bar{\Delta}\Gamma \text{B}\Delta\text{FNMOYNOYN}.$
anna id adem anossum, aa banymunum.

<i>anna</i>	<i>id</i>	<i>adem</i>	<i>an-os-s-um</i>
1SG.POSS	husband	man	become-DEF-PRT2-3SG
<i>aag</i>	<i>bany-munum</i>		
DUR	speak-NEG.3SG		

“My husband became a human being, [but] he does not speak.”

That example indicates that creating the concessive function in Kenzi without *goon* is possible.

Next I look at juxtaposed clauses which are similar to the coordinated clauses with bisyndetic =*gon* as discussed in the preceding section, e.g. they present a **contrastive**. There is only one example from Dongolawi. For the purpose of rendering I add ‘but.’

5.3 Affirmative-negative propositional order with different subject

- DP23 $\omega\text{I66}\bar{\text{I}}\text{PN } \bar{\text{I}}\text{P } \Delta\Delta\text{BIN}, \text{B}\Delta\text{F}\Phi\text{I}\Delta\text{N } \bar{\text{I}}\text{P } \Delta\Delta\text{BMOYNOY}.$
wicciirn iir dabin, banynyidn iir dabmunu.

<i>wicciir=n</i>	<i>iir</i>	<i>dab-in</i>
stick=GEN	mark	disappear-3SG
<i>banynyid=n</i>	<i>iir</i>	<i>dab-munun</i>
talking=GEN	mark	disappear-NEG.3SG

97 El-Shafie El-Guzuuli, p.c. However proverbs do not do it as thereby they would become less economical.

98 MASSENBAACH, *Nubische Texte im Dialekt der Kunüzi und der Dongolawi*, p. 30. There is a similar construction on p. 46: *Zölanossu abainmunu*. (‘Although he became a human being, he did not speak.’)

“The mark of the stick disappears, [but] the mark of talking does not disappear.”

Besides concessive, *goon* expresses **temporal simultaneity** as shown above. For the purpose of rendering juxtaposed proverbial clauses having non-adversative temporal simultaneity I add temporal ‘while’:

115

Affirmative-affirmative propositional order with different subject

saale dessen togoor aagiru, tenn baram addo tub toon.

DP24

<i>saale</i>	<i>desse=n</i>	<i>togoor</i>	<i>aag-r-u</i>
sant.acacia	green=GEN	under	stay-NEUT-1PL
<i>tenn</i>	<i>baram</i>	<i>ar=do</i>	<i>tub</i>
3SG.POSS	blossoming	1.PL=LOC	sweep

toor-n

enter-3SG

“[While] We stay under the green acacia tree, its blossoming sweeps and enters [falls] on us.”

Note that Kenzi proverb KP10 and narrative sentence MS:K4 which have the same order do not omit *goon*.

Negative-negative propositional order with same subject

Both Dongolawi and Kenzi have one proverb where both verbs in both main clauses are negated; additionally the Kenzi proverb has both verbs in both clauses in the past tense. In order to express the additive function ‘neither’ instead of ‘not’ is used in the rendering:

ΚΑΛΤΙΓΙ ΚΑΛΜΟΥΝ, ΕΣΣΙΓΙ ΝΙΜΟΥΝ.

DP25

kaltigi kalmun, essigi niimun.

<i>kalti=gi</i>	<i>kal-mun</i>	<i>essi=gi</i>	<i>nii-mun</i>
food=ACC	eat-NEG	water=ACC	drink-NEG

“He does **not** eat the food, **neither** does he drink the water.”

ΜΙCΙCΙ ΝΑΛΚΟΜΝΟΥ, ΟΥΛΟΥΓ ΓΙΔΙΡΚΟΜΝΟΥ.

KP25

missi nalkoomnu, ulug gijirkoomnu.

<i>missi</i>	<i>nal-koo-munu</i>	<i>ulug</i>
eye	see-PRT1-NEG.3SG	ear

gijir-koo-munu
hear-PRT1-NEG.3SG

“The eye did **not** see, **neither** did the ear hear.”

Note that in KP25 both clauses carry the preterite tense. This corresponds with bisyndetic =*gon* constructions and is different to DP19.

116

6. Summary

The example sentences of the last three sections are gathered and presented in tables in order to support analysis:

Concessive

1st prop.	2nd prop.	subj.	realized by	source
aff	aff	same	<i>goon</i>	DP1
			<i>goon</i>	KP1
aff	aff	different	X ⁹⁹	DP18
aff	neg	same	X but <i>goon</i> possible	DP20
			X	MS:K3
aff	neg	different	X but <i>goon</i> possible	DS4
			<i>goon</i>	KP4
neg	aff	same	<i>goon</i>	DP5 ¹⁰⁰

Contrastive

1st prop.	2nd prop.	subj.	realized by	source
aff	aff	different	= <i>gon</i> = <i>gon</i>	DP14
			= <i>gon</i> = <i>gon</i>	KP14,
				MS:K6
aff	neg	different	X	DP23

Non-adversative temporal simultaneity

1st prop.	2nd prop.	subj.	realized by	source
aff	aff	same	<i>goon</i>	KP9
aff	aff	different	X	DP24
			<i>goon</i>	KP10,
				MS:K4
neg	aff	same	<i>goon</i>	MS:D1
neg	neg	same	X	DP25,
				KP25

99 X means that propositions are juxtaposed. A missing marker is confirmed by DP26.11 and two further proverbs not listed; i.e. four proverbs altogether.

100 In this row I do not list the Kenzi proverbs with same order and *meenin goon*, as co-investigators tended to render it temporally.

Non-adversative additive

1st prop.	2nd prop.	subj.	realized by	source
aff	aff	different	= <i>gon</i> = <i>gon</i>	DP17

Note that in contrast to the collection of Dongolawi proverbs, in Massenbach's Dongolawi narrative texts *goon* and bisyndetic =*gon* realising adversative aspects have not been discovered,¹⁰¹ the same as in Dongolawi narrative texts I collected myself. Kenzi concessive *goon* has also not been discovered in Kenzi narrative texts. Either the adversative is much less used in narrative texts or the behaviour of *goon* and bisyndetic =*gon* correspond the Kalinga marker *yakon* 'but' which "is not used in hortatory texts" and "in narratives [except] when the countering proposition is important or relevant to what follows."¹⁰²

117

The concessive function is usually marked by postpositional *goon* after the first clause. In a few propositional orders there is no marker.

The contrastive function is marked by bisyndetic =*gon* when the propositions are affirmative-affirmative, otherwise it stays unmarked.

The non-adversative temporal simultaneity ('while') is marked in a similar way as the concessive (as far as data are available). In Dongolawi the affirmative-affirmative proposition with different subject is not marked in both, concessive and temporal simultaneity. There is one difference: In juxtaposed clauses the preterite tense-aspect marker occurs in both clauses in opposition to the concessive clauses. The affinity between the concessive function and temporal simultaneity is interpreted as *goon* putting the emphasis more on simultaneity which is also present in proverbs with concessive function, than on adversativity.

The non-adversative additive ('and') is marked in a similar way as the contrastive (as far as data are available). As in Dongolawi and Kenzi, in Russian contrast and additive have the same marker.

goon and bisyndetic =*gon* are not the only markers used in 'but' coordination in Dongolawi and Kenzi. Further markers are borrowed from Arabic. I leave a discussion of non-indigenous adversative markers and adversativity on discourse level for a further paper.

101 Gertrud von Massenbach did not get the opportunity to visit the Dongola area herself, she worked with Dongolawi living in the Kenzi area. Therefore Kenzi may have had some influence. However I checked the data with El-Shafie El-Guzuuli.

102 LEVINSOHN, *Self-Instruction Materials on Non-Narrative Discourse Analysis*, p. 30.

Bibliography

- ABDEL-HAFIZ, Ahmed Sokarno. *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*. PhD Thesis, State University of New York, Buffalo NY, 1988.
- . “Nubian Relative Clauses.” *Journal of the Arts Faculty. Assiut University*, 1989.
- . “Coordinate Constructions in Fadicca and English.” *Languages in Contrast* 10.1 (2010): pp. 1–28.
- ARMBRUSTER, Charles Hubert. *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960.
- . *Dongolese Nubian: A Lexicon: Nubian–English, English–Nubian*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965.
- BECHHAUS-GERST, Marianne. *Sprachwandel durch Sprachkontakt am Beispiel des Nubischen im Niltal: Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer diachronen Soziolinguistik*. With an English summary. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe, 1996.
- BENDER, M. Lionel. “Nilo-Saharan.” In *African Languages: An Introduction*, edited by Bernd HEINE & Derek NURSE. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- BLAKEMORE, Diane. *Relevance and Linguistic Meaning: The Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse Markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- CRYSTAL, David. *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. 5th edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2003.
- EL-GUZUULI, El-Shafie & Marcus JAEGER. “Aspects of Dongolawi Roots and Affixes: Related to Orthography.” In *Unity and Diversity of Nubian Languages: Toward a Standardized Writing System of Nubian Languages*, edited by Muhammad J. HASHIM & Abdel Rahim Hamid MUGADDAM. Cape Town: CASAS, 2012.
- FINNEGAN, Ruth. *Oral Literature in Africa*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- HĀMID KHABĪR AlShaich. *Nubian Wisdom and Proverbs from Dongola*. Khartoum: Nader, 2007.
حكم و امثال نوبية من دنقلا: جمعية دنقلا للثقافة و التراث النوبي
- HASPELMATH, Martin. E., ed. *Coordinating Constructions*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publisher, 2004.
- . “Coordination.” In *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*, vol. II: *Complex Constructions*, edited by Timothy Shopen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- HERZOG, Rolf. *Die Nubier: Untersuchungen und Betrachtungen zur Gruppengliederung, Gesellschaftsform und Wirtschaftsweise*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957.
- HORN, Laurence Robert. *A Natural History of Negation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

- JAEGER, Marcus & Kamal HISSEIN. "Aspects of Kenzi-Dongolawi Phonology Related to Orthography." In *Unity and Diversity of Nubian Languages: Toward a Standardized Writing System of Nubian Languages*, edited by Muhammad J. HASHIM and Abdel Rahim Hamid MUGADDAM. Cape Town: CASAS, 2012.
- KIBRIK, Andrej A. "Coordination in Upper Kuskokwim Athabaskan." In *Coordinating Constructions*, edited by Martin HASPELMATH. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publisher, 2004.
- KÖNIG, Ekkehard. "Concessive Connectives and Concessive Sentences." In *Explaining Language Universals*, edited by John HAWKINS. Oxford: Blackwell, 1988.
- LEVINSOHN, Stephen H. *Self-Instruction Materials on Narrative Discourse Analysis*. SIL International, 2012. <<http://www.sil.org/~levinsohns/narr.pdf>> (Accessed November 4, 2013)
- . *Self-Instruction Materials on Non-Narrative Discourse Analysis*. SIL International, 2012. <<http://www.sil.org/~levinsohns/non-narr.pdf>> (Accessed November 4, 2013)
- LEWIS, M. Paul, Gary F. SIMONS & Charles D. FENNIG, eds. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 17th ed. Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2013. Online version: <<http://www.ethnologue.com>>, esp. <<http://www.ethnologue.com/language/dgl>> (Andaandi) and <<http://www.ethnologue.com/language/xnz>> (Kenzi) (Accessed February 27, 2013)
- LONGACRE, Robert E. "Sentences as combination of clauses." In *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*, vol. 11: *Complex Constructions*, edited by Timothy Shopen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- MALCHUKOV, Andrej L. "Towards a Semantic Typology of Adversative and Contrast Marking." *Journal of Semantics* 21 (2004): 177–198.
- MASSENBACH, Gertrud von. *Wörterbuch des nubischen Kunuzi-Dialektes: mit einer grammatischen Einleitung*. Jerusalem: Syr. Waisenhaus, 1933.
- . *Nubische Texte im Dialekt der Kunūzi und der Dongolawi: mit Glossar*. [= *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft: Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 34.4]. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1962.
- MORGAN, David. "Semantic Constraints on Relevance in Lobala Discourse." In *Discourse Features of Ten Languages of West-Central Africa*, edited by Stephen H. LEVINSOHN. Dallas TX: SIL, 1994.
- PAYNE, Thomas E. *Describing Morphosyntax: A Guide for Field Linguists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- REAGAN, Timothy. *Non-Western Educational Traditions: Indigenous Approaches to Educational Thought and Practice*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

- RILLY, Claude. "The Linguistic Position of Meroitic." *ARKAMANI Sudan Electronic Journal of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 2004. <<http://www.arkamani.org/arkamani-library/meroitic/rilly.htm>> (Accessed June 10, 2011)
- TAHA A. Taha. "Proverbs in a threatened Language Variety in Africa." *California Linguistic Notes* 36.1 (2011). <<http://hss.fullerton.edu/linguistics/cln/pdf/2011/W11%20PDF/Taha-DN%20proverbs.pdf>> (Accessed August 19, 2011)
- TSUBOI, Eijiro. "Malefactivity in Japanese." In *Benefactives and Malefactives*, edited by Fernando ZÚÑIGA & Seppo KITILÄ. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publisher, 2010.
- WERNER, Roland. *Grammatik des Nobiin (Nilnubisch): Phonologie, Tonologie und Morphologie*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske, 1987.
- ZEEVAT, H. "Particles: Presupposition Triggers, Context Markers or Speech Act Markers." In *Optimality Theory and Pragmatics*, edited by R. BLUTNER & H. ZEEVAT. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Semantic Change and Heterosemy of Dongolawi *ed*

Angelika Jakobi & El-Shafie El-Guzuuli*

1. Introduction

In many languages, lexical verbs expressing directed motion or transfer undergo a functional and semantic change. As a result of this change these verbs come to function as grammatical morphemes. To illustrate this phenomenon, let us look at two examples, English *go* and French *venir* ‘come.’

- ▶ English *go* is a lexical verb expressing motion towards a goal, as seen in *I am going to London*. Apart from this function and meaning, English *going to* is also used as a grammatical device expressing an event in the future, as seen in *the ladder is going to fall*. In this last example, *going to* no longer designates motion through space towards a goal. Rather *going to* expresses the approaching of an event in the future.
- ▶ French *venir* ‘come’ is another example of the evolution of a grammatical morpheme originating in a lexical verb. French *venir* expresses motion away from a place towards the deictic center, as shown in *je viens de Paris* ‘I come from Paris.’ Additionally, *venir* has come to be used as a marker expressing immediate past: *je viens de manger un sandwich* ‘I have just eaten a sandwich’ (where *viens* ‘I come’ is an inflected form representing the 1st person singular present tense of *venir*).

Thus, while English *go* and French *venir* continue to be used in their original function as lexical verbs, they have additionally acquired grammatical functions as a modality or tense/aspect marker, respectively. The change of the morphosyntactic context facilitates the acquisition of a new grammatical function, as can be seen from the examples. In *I am going to London* the subject has an animate ref-

* We would like to thank Gertrud Schneider-Blum and Marcus Jaeger for reading and commenting on a draft of our paper.

erent who moves through space towards a goal. But in *the ladder is going to fall*, the subject has an inanimate referent and the meaning of going to is metaphorically extended to express motion through time towards an event in the future. So the grammatical category to which *go* belongs – either lexical verb or modality marker – is determined by the morphosyntactic context. Moreover, lexical items used as a grammatical device often lose phonological substance and internal structure. For instance, *going to* is used as a single grammatical device to express the approach to a future event. At least in spoken English it is often realized in the phonologically reduced form *gon-na*, as illustrated by *I'm gonna be a doctor*.

According to Lichtenberk, grammaticalization is defined “as the development of a grammatical element from an erstwhile lexical element, either directly or through one or more intermediate stages.”¹ This process is often associated with changes involving the “reinterpretations of lexemes, affecting the morphosyntactic, semantic and phonological status of words or morphemes.”²

Although processes of grammaticalization are very common in languages, the details are often not very well understood. The present paper is a case study focusing on the grammaticalization of Dongolawi *ed* ‘take.’ We will argue that this verb is the source of three distinct grammatical morphemes, the completive aspect marker *-ed*, the instrumental case marker *-g-ed*, and the causal clause marker *-g-ed*. Furthermore, we will attempt to highlight the distinct morphological contexts in which these morphemes are used and also trace the semantic changes involved in the functional extensions of *ed*.

When morphemes with distinct grammatical functions and distinct morphosyntactic properties derive from a common historical source, the relationship between these morphemes is known as heterosemy. Thus heterosemy results from the functional extension of lexical items.³

The paper is arranged as follows. In section 2 we provide some typological background information on Dongolawi. In section 3 we account for the grammatical interpretation of *ed* in previous studies of the Nile Nubian languages. In section 4 we focus on the question of how the grammatical morphemes originating in *ed* are used. In section 5 we explore the semantic motivation of their specific grammatical functions. Finally, in section 6 we will summarize our findings and suggest a semantic map visualizing the assumed grammaticalization path that originates in the lexical verb *ed* ‘take.’

1 LICHTENBERK, “Semantic Change and Heterosemy in Grammaticalization,” p. 477.

2 DIMMENDAAL, *Historical Linguistics and the Comparative Study of African Languages*, p. 123.

3 LICHTENBERK, “Semantic Change and Heterosemy in Grammaticalization,” pp. 480, 499.

2. Background

Dongolawi is spoken in the Nile Valley of Sudan roughly between Debba on the bend of the Nile and the Third Cataract. 'Dongolawi' is an Arabic term based on the name of the town of (Old) Dongola on the eastern side of the Nile, which was the centre of Makuria, the Christian kingdom that existed since the 6th century until its collapse in the 14th century. Today's Dongola on the western side of the Nile was founded in the 19th century. Dongolawi speakers refer to their language by the term *Andaandi* (*an-daa-n-di*) '[the language] of my/our home.' This term is also used in the online version of *Ethnologue*.⁴

123

As for its genetic affiliation, Dongolawi is a Nubian language. The language most closely related to Dongolawi is Kenzi (also known as Kunuz or Kunuzi) spoken in the Nile Valley of southern Egypt. Although Kenzi and Dongolawi are closely related they are geographically about 800 km apart from each other, being separated by Nobiin, another Nile Nubian language.

The Nile Nubian languages and the western Nubian languages of southern Kordofan and Darfur jointly constitute the Nubian language family. The relationship between the languages spoken in the Nile valley is debatable. Bechhaus-Gerst argues that Nobiin and Old Nubian form a distinct subgroup and that Kenzi and Dongolawi form another subgroup along with the Kordofan Nubian languages and Birgid of Darfur.⁵ By contrast, Rilly presents evidence of a Nile Nubian subgroup comprising Old Nubian, Nobiin, Kenzi, and Dongolawi.⁶

Nubian is classified as part of the larger northern East Sudanic group. Other languages of this group are Taman of Darfur, the Nyimang group spoken in the Nuba Mountains, Nara of Eritrea and the extinct Meroitic language.⁷ Ultimately northern East Sudanic is considered to be a subgroup of the Nilo-Saharan phylum.

In typological perspective, Dongolawi has *sov* constituent order in a transitive clause and *sv* in an intransitive clause.⁸ The subject constituent is unmarked for nominative case regardless of transi-

4 <<http://www.ethnologue.com/language/dgl/>>

5 BECHHAUS-GERST, "Nile Nubian Reconsidered."

6 RILLY, *Le Méroïtique et sa famille linguistique*.

7 Ibid.

8 Abbreviations: * - unattested; 1, 2, 3 - 1st, 2nd, 3rd person; A - ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*; ABL - ablative; ACC - accusative; AUX - auxiliary; COM - comitative; CPL - completive; DEF - definite; FUT - future; GEN - genitive; IMP - imperative; INS - instrumental; Lex - ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Lexicon*; LOC - locative; M - MASSENBAUGH, *Nubische Texte im Dialekt der Kunūzi und der Dongolawi*; NEG - negation; PASS - passive; PRED - predication; PT - preterite; PL - plural; Q - question; R - marker of the so-called present tense; SG - singular; Sh - El-Shafie El-Guzuuli; sov - constituent order subject-object-verb; STAT - stative; sv - constituent order subject-verb.

tivity. The semantic-syntactic roles of other constituents are indicated by postpositions or, more precisely, clitic case markers. They comprise the following morphemes, the accusative marker =*gi* (encoding both the direct and indirect object), the genitive marker =*n*, the instrumental =*ged*, the comitative =*gonon*, allative 1 =*gaddi*, allative 2 =*gir*, the locative =*r* (or one of its allomorphs *ir*, *ro*, *lo*, *do*), the adessive =*nar*, ablative 1 =*rtoon*, ablative 2 =*nar-toon*, and the similitive =*nahad*.⁹

The composition of case markers appears to be an areal feature. It is also attested in a number of languages of Ethiopia, e.g. in the Cushitic languages Maale,¹⁰ K'abeena,¹¹ and Alaaba,¹² and in the Omotic language Haro.¹³ Dongolawi has an agglutinating morphological structure; it employs suffixes rather than prefixes. An inflected verb may comprise a string of several suffixes marking valency, tense/aspect/modality, person, number, and a final question suffix. The inflected verb in clause-final position may be preceded by one or more lexical verbs. In such multiverb constructions the verbs preceding the clause-final verb often occur as a bare verb root or as a verb root extended by an aspect marker such as *-ed* or *-os*. However, person and number marking is absent on these non-final verbs. The person and number values of the inflected verb have scope over the preceding verbs, as illustrated in examples 2, 4, and 7.

3. The grammatical conception of *ed* in previous studies

Before providing a brief review of previous studies concerned with the grammatical development of *ed*, we will first look at its lexical source, the verb *ed* 'take.' In the Dongolawi language of today it has two rather specific meanings, 'take a wife, take in marriage, marry' and – in a fixed expression with *aas* – 'get news,' as illustrated in examples 1 and 2, respectively. (The lexical item *aas* is often replaced by the Arabic loanword *akhbaar*.)

- | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------|
| 1 | <i>ahmed</i> | <i>tumsa=gi</i> | <i>bu</i> | <i>ed-in</i> |
| | Ahmed | Tumsa=ACC | FUT | marry-3SG |
| | 'Ahmed will marry Tumsa.' | | | |

⁹ JAKOBI & EL-GUZUULI, "Heterosemy of Case Markers and Clause-Linkers in Dongolawi."

¹⁰ AMHA, *The Maale Language*.

¹¹ CRASS, *Das K'abeena*.

¹² SCHNEIDER-BLUM, "Alaaba."

¹³ WOLDEMARIAM, "Haro."

<i>ju</i>	<i>tinn</i>	<i>aas=ki</i>	2
go	3PL.GEN	news=ACC	
<i>ed-ed</i>	<i>ta</i>		
get-CPL1	come.IMP.2SG		
'Go and get their news!'			

125

Furthermore, the lexical verb *ed* is attested in the compound verb *etta* 'bring, fetch' which is composed of *ed* 'take' and *ta* 'come.' Literally, *etta* may be rendered in English as 'take (and) come.'

<i>in=gi</i>	<i>ter=nartoon</i>	<i>etta</i>	3
this-ACC	3SG=ABL2	bring.IMP.2SG	[A]
'Bring this back from him.'			

[A]

The assumed semantic shift of *ed* 'take' to the more specific meaning of 'take a wife, take in marriage, marry' is attested in Kenzi and Nobiin, too. Massenbach, in her Kenzi-German dictionary, for instance, provides two entries, the verb root *ed* "nehmen" ('take') and the same verb root *ed* "heiraten" ('marry').¹⁴ Similarly, Werner in his Nobiin grammar provides the verb *édîr* (in the 1st person singular form) with two glosses, "nehmen, heiraten" ('take, marry').¹⁵ However he also points out that 'take' is usually expressed by the lexical verb *dúmmîr* whereas *édîr* is used to render 'marry.'¹⁶

We assume that 'take' is the original meaning of *ed*. Our assumption is supported by the fact that the verb *ed* is rendered as 'take' in Browne's Old Nubian dictionary.¹⁷ As is common for Old Nubian, the verb 'take' is rendered in several graphemic variants including ɛΔ, ɛΔ̄, ɛT, ɛTT, ɛIT, ɛT̄.

The main question we address in this section is whether other scholars have considered the grammaticalization of the verb *ed* and whether they have accounted for its development as a verbal aspect suffix, case marker, and causal clause marker.

In contrast to the morphologically complex case marker and the causal clause marker *-ged*, the use of *ed* as a verbal suffix is recognized in all previous grammatical studies of the Nile Nubian languages. It is often discussed in connection with the verbal suffix *-os* since *-ed* and *-os* have a partially overlapping aspectual function. We will consider the studies concerned with *-ed* (and *-os*) in chronological order of their publication, starting with Reinisch's grammar *Die Nuba Sprache*, in which he is concerned with Kenzi, Dongolawi,

¹⁴ MASSENBACH, "Wörterbuch des nubischen Kunûzi-Dialektes," p. 160.

¹⁵ WERNER, *Grammatik des Nobiin*, p. 181.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 182

¹⁷ BROWNE, *Old Nubian Dictionary*, pp. 65, 78.

and Nobiin (Fadidja and Mahasi) considering them as dialects of one language.¹⁸

Reinisch claims that all verbs can take *-ed* and *-os*, their function being the “tatsächliche vollzugsezung einer handlung” (‘actual completion of an activity’) or the intensification of the basic meaning.¹⁹ He also observes that with some verbs *-ed* is preferred over *-os* and vice versa and that some verbs may take *-ed* and *-os*, as attested by *nal-ed* and *nal-os* ‘have seen’ in Nobiin.

Lepsius, in the dictionary attached to his Nobiin grammar, provides two entries, one for *ede* “nehmen” (‘take’) and one for *ede* “heirathen, eine Frau nehmen” (‘marry, take a wife’).²⁰ He considers both Nobiin *oose* and *ede* as being used as extensions of the verb stem (the final *-e* being a nominalizing suffix). Although he points out that the inflection of the verb extended by *-oos* is the same as the inflection of the verb *oose* ‘drive out, bring out’ he denies that this verb and the extension have anything to do with each other.²¹ As for *-ed*, however, he suggests that this extension originates in the verb *ede* ‘take.’²² He claims that *-oos* and *-ed* can be used as verbal extensions with almost any verb without changing the meaning of that verb. The only instance of a semantic difference is suggested by *jaan-ed-e* ‘buy’ and *jaan-oos-e* ‘sell,’ but Lepsius points out that not all examples attest to this alleged semantic distinction.²³ Moreover, in the same section one finds the verb *merr* which is attested with *-oos* and *-ed* without, however, provoking a semantic distinction, as both *merr-ed* and *merr-oos* are glossed as “abhauen,” i.e. ‘cut off.’²⁴

According to Almkvist, *-os* expresses a completed action, particularly referring to the recent past whereas verbal forms employing *-ko-r* express the remote past.²⁵ For this reason, he claims that the latter is used in narratives while *-os* rather occurs in conversations. He also very briefly mentions the extension *-ed* expressing “Verstärkung” (‘intensification’) of the completed action.

When editing a narrative from Ermenne (Arminna), Abel makes some interesting grammatical observations concerning *-ed* and *-oos* in Nobiin.²⁶ He states that verbal extensions in *-ed* may occur on almost any verb without triggering a noticeable change in meaning. More importantly, he notices that a verb extended by *-ed* plus *aag* ‘sit’ renders a resultative reading. He describes this construction as having “[...] die Funktion [...] eine Handlung zu bezeichnen, deren

18 REINISCH, *Die Nuba-Sprache*.

19 Ibid., p. 53.

20 LEPSIUS, *Nubische Grammatik*, pp. 156-8.

21 Ibid., p. 156.

22 Ibid., p. 292.

23 Ibid., p. 157.

24 Ibid., pp. 156-7.

25 ALMKVIST, *Nubische Studien im Sudan*, pp. 73, 82.

26 ABEL, “Eine Erzählung im Dialekt von Ermenne,” pp. 30.

Ergebnis in der Gegenwart [...] noch andauert,” i.e. it has the function of designating an activity whose result still persists in the present.

Exactly this function is also attested in Dongolawi, as we will show below. As for -oos, Abel points out that it occurs mostly on verbs having a syntactic object.²⁷ This observation again coincides with the function of Dongolawi -os which may indicate a higher degree of transitivity (see section 4.1 below).

127

In her Kenzi grammar, Massenbach traces the extension -*ed* and -*os* back to the verbs *ed* ‘take’ and *os* ‘take out.’²⁸ She claims that -*ed* often appears with verbs of taking. Although she does not connect the discussion of -*ed* with the discussion of -*os*, she attributes similar functions to these extensions. She suggests that -*os* expresses that “die Handlung ganz ausgeführt wird” (‘the action is completely carried out’). In respect to *ed*, she describes its meaning as “vollendete Handlung” (‘completed action’) when it appears in combination with the preterite. Thus, according to Massenbach, there is no difference in meaning between *ed*- and *os*-marked verb forms.

Surprisingly, in Abdel-Hafiz’s Kenzi grammar -*ed* is not mentioned at all.²⁹ Only -*os* is discussed within the chapter on derivational morphology. Choosing ‘definite’ as label for -*os*, Abdel-Hafiz claims that “[t]he definite indicates a definite or particular (as opposed to a general) object that is known to both the speaker and the hearer.” Commenting on the examples *kal-os-s-i* ‘I ate it’ and *ny-os-s-i* [sic!] ‘I drank it’ he writes that these expressions can be used “if the situation requires an answer to a question of the following type: ‘Who ate the chicken?/Who drank the milk?’ That is, the object (the chicken) is a shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer.”³⁰ This meaning which is associated with a higher degree of transitivity is also attested in Dongolawi (see the comments on example 6 below).

Armbruster, in his impressively detailed Dongolawi grammar, deals with -*ed* and -*os* together. He recognizes that -*ed* originates in the verb *ed* ‘take’ and that -*os* (with a short o) originates in the verb *oos* ‘cause to issue, send out, bring out.’³¹ Also he points out that -*ed* can be replaced by -*os* with some verbs, for example, *nal-os*, *nal-ed* ‘see (on a given occasion).’³² Moreover, he observes that the suffixes -*os* and -*ed* are not used on the verbs *aag* ‘squat,’ *buu* ‘lie,’ *daa* ‘exist,’ *e* ‘say, be.’³³ However, this statement is only true if these verbs are used as grammaticalized aspect morphemes. We will come back to

27 Ibid., 71.

28 MASSENBACH, “Wörterbuch des nubischen Kunûzi-Dialektes,” pp. 132–4.

29 ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, pp. 122–3.

30 Ibid., p. 123.

31 ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*, § 3802.

32 Ibid., § 3789.

33 Ibid., § 3790.

this point in section 4.1 below. Armbruster uses the term ‘definite stems’ for verbs extended by *-ed* or *-os*, describing their function as rendering the meaning of the verb to be “more precise, definite and exact.”³⁴ Moreover, according to Armbruster, verbs extended by *-ed* or *-os* express notions like Latin *iam* or German *schon*,³⁵ i.e. notions associated with the anterior.

Werner in his Nobiin grammar realizes that *ed* is both used as a lexical verb and as a verbal extension which appears in the present tense and preterite.³⁶ Werner does not identify the function of *ed* in the present tense but for the preterite he cautiously points out that *ed* might express the completion of an action (“Vollzug der Handlung”) and thus might imply the anterior.

Browne in his *Old Nubian Grammar* provides the following rather cryptic note on *-ed* and *-os*, “ⲉⲓⲧ- ‘to take’ enters into formal contrast with ⲟⲥ- [...] in the opposition of ⲃⲁⲛ-ⲉⲓⲧ- ‘to buy’ and ⲃⲁⲛ-ⲟⲥ- ‘to sell’ [...]”.³⁷ He provides the meaning of *oc-* as ‘to take out.’ This is the only example suggesting a semantic distinction between a venitive form marked by *-ed* and an andative form marked by *-os*.

In her comparative study of modern Nobiin and Old Nubian (which she calls “Old Nobiin”), Bechhaus-Gerst devotes a whole chapter to the suffixes *-os* and *-ed*.³⁸ Like most of her predecessors she considers these suffixes to originate in the verbs *oos* ‘pull out, take out, bring out’ and *ed* ‘take, marry.’ She provides a number of examples drawn from Old Nubian texts and Abel’s Nobiin texts from Ermenne (Arminna). In contrast to previous scholars, however, she claims that these suffixes are marking ‘directionality,’ more specifically she claims that *-os* expresses motion away and *-ed* motion towards the deictic center. (Such morphemes are usually known as andative and venitive.)

Unfortunately, she bases her hypothesis on a single pair of Nobiin verbs, *jan-ed* and *jan-(o)os*, attested both in Old Nubian and in Lepsius’ Nobiin grammar. While Lepsius discusses these verbs as instances of a possible semantic distinction between ‘buy’ and ‘sell,’ carefully pointing out that one of his examples contradicts this assumption,³⁹ Bechhaus-Gerst ignores this counter-example.⁴⁰ She makes a far-ranging assertion, claiming that *jan-ed* and *jan-os* are “remnants of the erstwhile directional function” which allegedly existed in Old Nubian and Nobiin grammar.⁴¹ She even ‘recon-

34 Ibid., § 3802.

35 Ibid.

36 WERNER, *Grammatik des Nobiin*, p. 183.

37 BROWNE, *Old Nubian Grammar*, p. 65.

38 BECHHAUS-GERST, *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*, pp. 147–57.

39 LEPSIUS, *Nubische Grammatik*, pp. 156–8.

40 BECHHAUS-GERST, *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*, p. 151.

41 Interestingly, the same reading is rendered by Dongolawi *jaan-ed* and *jaan-os*. However, as seen in example 25, the reading ‘buy’ can also be rendered without *-ed*.

structs' a putative grammaticalization path that comprises three stages, starting with the "directional" from where first the "definitive" and then the "resultative" have emerged. Due to the lack of convincing evidence, however, this path of grammaticalization is highly improbable.

Studies in grammaticalization, for instance, Heine and Kuteva, rather attest that transfer verbs such as 'take' often develop into aspect morphemes expressing completive notions.⁴² Apart from that, 'take' may be the source of other grammatical functions, such as causative, comitative, future, instrument, patient, and HAVE-possessive. The instrumental function is, in fact, attested by Dongolawi *-ged* which, as we will argue in more detail below, is a clitic case marker morphologically composed of the accusative *-g(i)* plus *ed* 'take.' We will also try to show that the Dongolawi instrumental marker *-ged* has even developed further, emerging as causal clause marker. This continued grammaticalization is, however, not considered in Heine and Kuteva's study.

As for the grammaticalization of *ed* resulting in the instrumental case marker and the causal clause marker *-ged*, it is worth mentioning that Armbruster is again the only scholar who has recognized the morphological complexity of *-ged* originating in the 'objective' (i.e. the accusative) case marker *-g(i)* plus *ed*.⁴³

4. The use of *ed* as a grammatical morpheme

Section 4 focuses on the various grammatical functions of *ed* which depend on the morphosyntactic context. When *ed* is attached to a verb root it functions as an aspect-marking suffix. When *ed* is combined with the accusative *-g(i)* the resulting morpheme *-ged* is employed as a clitic case marker on a noun phrase. Combined with the accusative *-g(i)* the resulting morpheme *-ged* attaches to finite verbs and assumes the function of a causal clause marker.

We will also account for the morphological composition of *-ged* and other nominal morphemes based on the accusative case marker.

4.1 *The use of ed as completive aspect marker*

In the following we will provide evidence of these various grammatical functions starting with the use of *ed* on verb roots. Example 4 displays a multiverb construction comprising two verbs of which only the final verb, *nog-ko-n*, is fully inflected for person and number. The values of the inflectional suffix *-n*, i.e. 3rd person singular have scope over the preceding verb, *nal-ed*, which lacks person and

42 HEINE & KUTEVA, *World Lexicon of Grammaticalization*, pp. 267–88.

43 ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*, §§ 4334, 4341, 6203.

number markers. This non-final verb is, however, extended by *-ed* which renders the completive meaning, i.e. the visiting is completed before the departure.

- 130 4 *nal-ed* *nog-ko-n*
 visit-CPL1 go.along-PT1-3SG
 ‘S/he visited him/her [and] left.’

To differentiate *-ed* from *-os* we gloss them as CPL1 and CPL2, respectively. When combined with the preterite 1, both aspect markers refer to the recent past, but there appears to be a subtle distinction between *-ed* and *-os*, as examples 5 and 6 suggest. In ex. 5 the *-ed* suffix places the eating process in the recent past. However when *-ed* is replaced by *-os*, the eating process is not only placed in the recent past but additionally conceived of as relating to a specific item known to both the speaker and the hearer. This suggests that *-os* is associated with a higher degree of transitivity.⁴⁴

- 5 *ay* *kal-ed-kor-i*
 1SG eat-CPL1-PT1-1SG
 ‘I have just eaten./I have finished eating.’
- 6 *ay* *kal-os-kor-i*
 1SG eat-CPL2-PT1-1SG
 ‘I have just eaten it [a specific item known to both the speaker and the hearer].’

In contrast to the verb forms in exx. 5 and 6, which refer to specific situations, the verb form *kal-kor-i* (without the extension *-ed* or *-os*) renders a general perfective meaning, ‘I have eaten.’

The completive aspect marker *ed* may be combined with the stative aspect marker which originates in the lexical verb *aag* ‘sit, remain, stay.’ In contrast to *ed* which is a verbal suffix, *aag* is an inflected auxiliary verb. The construction involving *ed* and *aag* expresses a state reached after the completion of a process. In linguistics, this aspect is commonly called the resultative. Thus, *esmaan shaygi niied aagin* may be literally rendered as ‘Osman is in a state of having drunk tea,’ as in ex. 7.

- 7 *esmaan* *shay=gi* *nii-ed* *aag-in*
 Osman tea=ACC drink-CPL1 STAT1-3SG
 ‘Osman has [already] drunk tea.’

44 The concept of transitivity as a scalar value is here adopted from HOPPER & THOMPSON, “Transitivity in Grammar and Discourse.”

While ex. 7 attests the completive *-ed* combined with *aag* in the present tense form, ex. 8 shows the completive with *aag* in the preterite 1 form.⁴⁵ The literal meaning of ex. 8 is ‘Were they in a state of having [already] heard [it]?’

<i>tir</i>	<i>gijr-ed</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>aag-kor-an</i>
3PL	hear-CPL1	PRED.Q	STAT1-PT1-3PL
‘Had they [already] heard [it]?’			

8

131

The aspect markers *-ed*, *-os*, and *-ed...aag* encode processes with an inherent terminal point. They are attested on lexical verbs, such as *nii* ‘drink,’ *nal* ‘see,’ *gijir* ‘hear,’ *ta* ‘come’ expressing “a process that leads up to a well-defined terminal point beyond which the process cannot continue.”⁴⁶ A detailed analysis of the distributional restrictions and the aspectual functions of *-ed*, *-os*, and *-ed...aag* is beyond the scope of this paper.

The morphemes *-ed* and *-os* are not only used with verbs referring to past processes. They are also attested with imperative forms. In this context *-ed* and *-os* express polite requests whereas imperative forms without *-ed* or *-os* are interpreted as strict orders. Interestingly, in combination with an imperative form, *-os* again refers to a specific item known to both the speaker and the hearer, whereas an imperative form combined with *-ed* does not render this meaning. Example 9 provides the imperative singular and plural forms as well as the forms extended by *-ed* and *-os*. Due to progressive assimilation, the adjacent consonants *dw* and *sw* are assimilated to be realized as *dd* and *ss*, respectively, as shown in the brackets.

	‘eat!’	‘please eat!’	‘please eat [it]!’
SG	<i>kal</i>	<i>kal-ed</i>	<i>kal-os</i>
PL	<i>kal-we</i>	<i>kal-ed-we</i> [kaledde]	<i>kal-os-we</i> [kalosse]

9

The following table summarizes the three verbs whose functional extension has given rise to distinct aspect markers. This list is not exhaustive, however. There are several other verbs that have undergone grammaticalization processes which have resulted in morphemes with various aspect marking functions.

Lexical verb	Gloss	Function	Aspect marker
<i>ed</i>	take	completive (suffix)	<i>-ed</i>
<i>oos</i>	bring/send out	completive (suffix)	<i>-os</i> (short vowel)

Table 1: Aspect markers originating in lexical verbs

⁴⁵ When suffixed to *gijir* ‘hear, listen,’ the suffix *-ed* triggers a change of the syllable structure. The root *gijir* changes its *cvcvc*-structure to *cvcc* and is realized as *gijr*.

⁴⁶ COMRIE, *Aspect*.

Lexical verb	Gloss	Function	Aspect marker
<i>aag</i>	sit, stay, remain	stative (aux)	<i>aag</i>
<i>ed + aag</i>	take + stay	resultative (suffix + aux)	<i>-ed aag</i>

132

A complete list of lexical verbs having developed aspectual functions would be much longer. Apart from the verbs in table 1, it would also include *aag*⁴⁷ ‘sit, stay, remain,’ *buu* ‘lie,’ *daa* ‘go, exist,’ *dol* ‘desire, want,’ *e* ‘say, be,’ *koo* ‘have,’ *teeb* ‘stand,’ *teeg* ‘squat.’⁴⁸

4.2 The use of *-ged* on noun phrases and finite verbs

Before providing evidence of the use of *-ged*, we want to consider the morphological composition of this morpheme. Following Armbruster, we assume that *-ged* is composed of two morphemes, *-gi* and *-ed*, the first morpheme being represented by the accusative case marker.⁴⁹ This marker has an allomorph, *-g*, which is selected when a vowel follows. Our assumption of *-ged* being morphologically based on the accusative is supported by our previous finding that most of the Dongolawi case markers are morphologically complex and that four of them have an initial velar *g*, suggesting that they are based on the accusative.⁵⁰ As shown in table 2, these case markers comprise the instrumental *-ged*, the allative 2 *-gir*, the allative 1 *-gaddi*, and the comitative *-gonon*, where **-ab* and **-don* are reconstructed morphemes. The morphological composition of these morphemes is commented on elsewhere and therefore need not be repeated here.⁵¹

Table 2: Case markers based on the Accusative *-g(i)*

Function	Case marker	Morphological components
Instrumental	<i>-g-ed</i>	< ACC <i>-g</i> + <i>-ed</i> < <i>ed</i> ‘take’
Allative 2	<i>-g-ir</i>	< ACC <i>-g</i> + LOC <i>-ir</i>
Allative 1	<i>-g-addi</i>	< ACC <i>-g</i> + <i>-addi</i> < <i>*-ab</i> + LOC <i>-ir</i>
Comitative	<i>-g-onon</i>	< ACC <i>-gi</i> + COM <i>*-don</i>

When the instrumental case marker *-ged* is attached to the final constituent of a noun phrase it assigns the role of instrument to that noun phrase, as seen in example 10, where *-ked* is an allomorph of *-ged*.⁵²

47 The verb *aag* has developed into two grammatical morphemes. i) The inflected auxiliary *aag* marks the stative (STAT1) when following a lexical verb. ii) The uninflected morpheme *aag* or *aa* marks continuous or habitual processes and precedes the lexical verb.

48 See also ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*, pp. 262–5.

49 Ibid., §§ 4334, 4341, 6203.

50 JAKOBI & EL-GUZUULI, “Heterosemy of Case Markers and Clause-Linkers in Dongolawi.”

51 Ibid.

52 The auxiliary *buu* (glossed as STAT2) is a marker for intransitive stative verbs. By contrast, the stative marked by the auxiliary *aag* (glossed as STAT1) is attested on transitive stative verbs, as seen in exx. 7 and 8.

kushar=ked kob buu-n
key=INS shut STAT2-3SG
 'It is locked with a key.'

10

However, as we show in section 5, the instrumental is not the only semantic role that *-ged* may encode.

133

As a result of a further functional extension, the instrumental case marker *-ged* acquires the function of a causal clause subordinator suffixed to the final verb of these clauses, as illustrated in example 11.

[sand-in]-ged iig=n atti=r teeg-in 11
fear-3SG-INS fire=GEN beside=LOC sit-3SG
 'Because s/he is afraid s/he sits by the fire.'

In the preceding section we have provided evidence of the use of *ed* as a lexical verb and of *-ed* as a grammaticalized morpheme used in various contexts. As a lexical verb Dongolawi *ed* has the meaning 'marry, take in marriage, take a wife.' Also, in a fixed expression with *aas* or *akhbaar* 'news,' *ed* is used in the sense of 'get news, get information.' Moreover, *ed* is attested in the verbal compound *etta* 'take (and) come, bring, fetch.' We therefore assume that the original meaning of *ed* is 'take,' as still attested in Kenzi and Old Nubian.

Apart from its function as a lexical verb, *-ed* is attested as a grammatical morpheme in distinct morphosyntactic contexts and functions.

1. When *-ed* is employed as a suffix on inflected or uninflected lexical verbs it marks the completive aspect.
2. When *-ed* is employed as a suffix on an uninflected lexical verb and when this verb is followed by the inflected auxiliary verb *aag* this construction marks the resultative aspect.
3. When *-ed* is combined with the accusative case marker *-g(i)* it is realized as *-ged* (or its allomorph *-ked*). As a clitic case marker *-ged* is attested on noun phrases having an instrumental role and several related semantic roles.
4. Again in combination with the accusative case marker *-g(i)*, the suffix *-ged* is attested on clause-final verbs where it functions as a subordinator of causal clauses.

In the following section we will try to identify the semantic factors that have contributed to the grammaticalization process of *ed* acquiring distinct grammatical functions.

5. Semantic factors motivating the functional extension of *ed*

134

The following analysis of the semantic factors motivating the grammaticalization of *ed* is inspired by Lichtenberk's seminal paper 'Semantic Change and Heterosemy in Grammaticalization.' In this study he explores the functional extension of directional verbs of motion such as 'go,' 'come,' and 'return' in some Oceanic languages.

The motion verb 'come,' for instance, basically designates a movement to the deictic center from a location more or less distant from it. As Lichtenberk argues, this general meaning of 'come' comprises several semantic components including motion away from a source, motion towards a terminal point, approach to a destination, and spatial distance. When 'come' is used as a grammatical morpheme, one or several of these semantic components may be given prominence. The component 'motion away from a source,' for instance, may be the source of a marker of distance from the deictic center, whereas the component 'approaching a destination' may give rise to an inchoative or ingressive marker. This suggests that some semantic components of the original meaning persist when a lexical element acquires distinct grammatical functions.

Explaining why directed motion verbs often develop various grammatical functions, Lichtenberg points out that space and motion through space are fundamental human experiences coining our conception of the world. Language users form a connection between different conceptual domains comprising the conception of space and motion, the conception of the semantic components of motion verbs and the conception of linguistic forms reflecting these connections. He assumes that specific grammatical functions of motion verbs develop because language users perceive a commonality or similarity between the semantic components of motion verbs and these grammatical functions. According to Lichtenberk, the main cognitive devices that are used to establish this conceptual connection are metaphor and metonymy.

Common metaphors motivating the grammaticalization of motion verbs are TIME IS SPACE, a subtype of this metaphor being MOVEMENT IN TIME IS MOVEMENT IN SPACE. Another frequent metaphor is STATES ARE LOCATIONS.

In order to demonstrate how the various functional extensions of the transfer verb *ed* 'take' are motivated, it will be necessary to identify the relevant components of this verb and the conceptualizations involved. The verb *ed* basically designates the removal of a figure or object away from a location to a destination. This process implies the following semantic components:

- caused motion;
- a causer or agent-like force moving the figure;
- point of origin;
- destination;
- movement away from the source;
- movement towards/to the destination;
- change of place/location.

135

5.1 *The emergence of ed as an aspect marker*

Of these semantic components, ‘destination’ appears to be the prominent element that gives rise to the functional extension of *ed* to a completive aspect marker. That is, the concept of a spatial destination is extended to the temporal domain resulting in the concept of a terminal point in time. Thus the concept of destination is metaphorically connected with ‘terminal point,’ resulting in the metaphor TERMINAL POINT IS DESTINATION which is a subtype of the metaphor TIME IS SPACE. Since a terminal point is a notion closely related to the concept of completion we assume that this relationship has motivated the functional extension of *ed* to develop into a completive aspect marker whose function is to emphasize the terminal point of a process.

The grammaticalization of ‘take’ as completive aspect marker is also attested in other African languages. Hyman and Magaji provide two examples from Gwari, a (Niger-Congo) language of Nigeria.⁵³ In this language there are two lexical verbs denoting ‘take’; *lá* requires a singular object and *kú* requires a plural object. These verbs have developed the grammatical function of a completive aspect marker (glossed as CPL).

<i>wó</i>	<i>lá</i>	<i>shnamá</i>	<i>si</i>	12a
he	CPL	yam	buy	Gwari
‘He has bought a yam.’				

<i>wó</i>	<i>kú</i>	<i>à-shnamá</i>	<i>kǔ</i>	12b
he	CPL	PL-yam	buy	
‘He has bought some yams.’				

5.2 *The emergence of -ged as an instrumental case marker*

In section 4.2 we have accounted for the morphological composition of *-ged* which is made up of the accusative marker *-g(i)* and *ed*. Whereas the development of *-ed* as a completive aspect marker is conceptually related to the semantic component ‘destination,’ the emergence of *-ged* as an instrumental case marker appears to be

53 HYMAN & MAGAJI, *Essentials of Gwari Grammar*, pp. 63f.

related to the semantic component ‘change of place/location.’ The relevant metaphor is A CHANGE OF STATE IS A CHANGE OF PLACE which is a subtype of STATES ARE LOCATIONS. The concept of taking is not only connected with a change of place/location but also with an instrument or agent bringing about this change. However, as Blake has pointed out, there is a difference between an agentive causer and an instrument, since causers are typically animate but “instruments are typically inanimate.”⁵⁴ This is reflected by the restriction of *-ged* to noun phrases having inanimate referents. There are, however, two exceptions, which will be addressed in section 5.3.

The semantic and functional extension of the verb *take* as instrumental case marker is not only attested in Dongolawi but also in other African languages (and in Jamaican creoles based on West African languages).⁵⁵ In Fon, for instance, a West African Niger-Congo language, there are serial verb constructions with ‘take’ preceding a noun. This construction serves to render an instrumental reading of that noun.⁵⁶ So ‘take knife’ has the reading ‘with a knife,’ see example 13. The same construction is attested in Nigerian Pidgin English,⁵⁷ as illustrated in example 14.

13	kòkú	só	jiví	mà	kwíkwí
Fon	Koku	take	knife	cut	banana
	‘Koku cut the banana with a knife.’				

14	a	tek	knife	cut	di	bread
Nigerian Pidgin English	1SG	take	knife	cut	DEF	bread
	‘I cut the bread with the knife.’					

These examples suggest that it is quite conceivable that the Dongolawi verb *ed* ‘take’ after its morphological merger with the accusative case marker *-g(i)* has become a case marker for noun phrases with the semantic role of instrument.

5.3. Polysemy of the instrumental case marker *-ged*

Although example 10 illustrates *-ged* marking the semantic role of instrument, this semantic role is not the only one which *-ged* may encode. In fact, *-ged* is a highly polysemous case marker encoding a wide variety of semantic roles, comprising a metaphorical instrument or tool, a means of transport, a location, a point in time, a period of time, a route or path of motion, a direction, a source of

54 BLAKE, Case, p. 69.

55 Ibid., 166) observes, “[v]erbs meaning ‘take’ often come to mark instruments. A construction that is literally ‘X taking axe chopped wood’ becomes reinterpreted as ‘X with axe chopped wood.’”

56 McWHORTER, *Towards a new Model of Creole Genesis*, pp. 21–39.

57 DIMMENDAAL, *Historical Linguistics and the Comparative Study of African Languages*, p. 223.

motion, a material, a manner, a rate or price, a reference, a belonging/affiliation, a cause, a passive (inanimate) agent, and a language. The specific semantic interpretation strongly depends on the context, particularly on the basic meaning of the noun phrase to which *-ged* is attached. A noun phrase denoting a place, such as *tingaar* 'westbank' in ex. 17, is assigned the role of location when it is *-ged* marked. However, in the context of verbs of directed motion, as in exx. 13 and 15, *-ged* assigns the role of route or source.

137

As mentioned in section 5.2, most of the referents of *INS*-marked noun phrases are inanimate. However, this is not valid for animals used as means of transport, see ex. 16, and for family members one lives with, see ex. 28, where *-ged* assigns the role of belonging or affiliation to a noun representing a kinship term. (Apparently this role differs from accompaniment which is encoded by the distinct comitative case marker *-gonon*.)

Metaphorical instrument/tool

<i>meryem</i>	<i>enn</i>	<i>erri=ged</i>	<i>ay=gi</i>
Mary	2SG.GEN	name=INS	1SG=ACC
<i>tagir-os</i>			
cover-CPL2.IMP.2SG			
'Mary, please protect me by your name!'			

15

[Sh]

Means of transport

<i>ay</i>	<i>kaj=ked</i>	<i>bi</i>	<i>juu-r-i</i>
1SG	horse=INS	FUT	go-R-1SG
'I shall go on horseback.'			

16

[Lex 143]

Location

<i>tingaar=ked</i>	<i>bel-ko-n</i>
west.bank=INS	get.out-PT1-3SG
'S/he got out [of the boat] on the west bank.'	

17

[M 104]

Point in time

<i>ay</i>	<i>abaag=ked</i>	<i>bi</i>	<i>nal-l-i</i>
1SG	end=INS	FUT	see-R-1SG
'I will look at it later'			

18

[A]

Period of time

<i>awad</i>	<i>door</i>	<i>weer=ked</i>	<i>doha=r</i>
Awad	week	one=INS	Doha=LOC
<i>bi</i>	<i>taa-n</i>		
FUT	come-3SG		
'Awad will come to Doha for one week.'			

19

[Sh]

20 *Route or path of motion*

- [A] ay urdi=*ged* taa-gor-i
 1SG urdi=INS come-PT1-1SG
 ‘I came via Urdi.’

138

Direction

- 21 medresa=gi an kaa=n kannee=*ged*
 [Sh] school=ACC 1PL.GEN house=GEN north=INS
 gony-kor-an
 build-PT1-3PL
 ‘They built the school north of our house.’

Source of motion

- 22 isaay=*ged* daa-n
 [A] where=INS come-2SG
 ‘From where are you coming?’

Material

- 23 kaarti=gi kinisse=*ged* aaw-ir-an
 [Sh] fence=ACC thorn=INS make-R-3PL
 ‘They make the fence with thorns.’

Manner, when -ged is attached to an abstract noun

- 24 mursi=*ged* nal-ko-mun e-n
 [Sh] lie=INS see-PT1-NEG.3SG say-3SG
 ‘Falsely he says he did not see [him/her/it].’

Rate or price

- 25 in=gi girish=n toorti=*ged* jaan-kor-i
 [Lex 62] this=ACC girish=GEN half=INS buy-PT1-1SG
 ‘I bought this for half a girish.’

Reference

- 26 an-een=n erde=*ged* ed-kor-i
 [Sh] 1PL.GEN-mother=GEN satisfaction=INS marry-PT1-1SG
 ‘I married to the satisfaction of my mother.’

Cause or reason

- 27 milaarya=*ged* dii-go-n
 [Sh] malaria=INS die-PT1-3SG
 ‘S/he died of malaria.’

Belonging or affiliation

<i>man=do</i>	<i>tenn</i>	<i>een=ged</i>	<i>aag-in</i>	28
that=LOC	3SG.GEN	wife=INS	live-3SG	[Lex 62]
'He lives over there with his wife.'				

Passive agent

<i>ann</i>	<i>ii</i>	<i>kinisse=ged</i>	<i>barij-katti-go-n</i>	29
1SG.GEN	hand	thorn=INS	scratch-PASS-PT1-3SG	[Lex 62]
'My hands were scratched by (the) thorns.'				

Language

<i>arabi=ged</i>	<i>banynyi-r-an</i>	30
Arab=INS	speak-R-3PL	[Lex 62]
'They speak in Arabic.'		

5.4 The instrumental case marker *-ged* as a marker of causal clauses

We assume that the evolution of the instrumental case marker is an intermediate stage from which the causal clause marker has developed. This assumption is corroborated by our study of Dongolawi case markers of which several are additionally used as subordinate clause markers.⁵⁸ The accusative marker *-gi*, for instance, marks object complement clauses, and the locative *r* marks temporal clauses.

The functional extension of *-ged* as a causal clause marker has probably been motivated by the semantic component 'change of location' which is metaphorically connected with a CHANGE OF STATE. Since changes are conceptualized as being caused, it is conceivable that the notion of cause has contributed to the development of *-ged* as a subordinator of causal clauses.

[<i>ay oddi-r-i</i>]- <i>ged</i>	<i>jelli=r</i>	<i>nog-ko-mun</i>	31
1SG sick-R-1SG-INS	work=LOC	go-PT1-NEG.1SG	[Sh]
'Because I am sick I did not go to work.'			

Furthermore, the distinct morphosyntactic context of *-ged* on clause-final verbs rather than on noun phrases contributes to changing its semantic and grammatical function.

6. Summary of findings

Our paper is a case study of the functional extension of *ed* 'take.' We have tried to show that *ed* has given rise to three distinct grammatical morphemes each used in a particular morphosyntactic context. Whereas the source item *ed* is a lexical verb, the completive aspect

58 JAKOBI & EL-GUZUULI, "Heterosemy of Case Markers and Clause-Linkers in Dongolawi."

marker *-ed* is a verbal suffix, and the instrumental case marker *-ged* can be identified as a morphologically complex clitic attaching to the final constituent of a noun phrase. The causal clause marker *-ged*, in turn, is a clause subordinator suffixed to the finite verb of that clause.

Having a common historical source but different morphosyntactic and semantic and functional properties, the morphemes based on *ed* provide an example of a semantic and functional change known as heterosemy.⁵⁹

The evolution of functional elements from a lexical source is possible “[s]ince meanings are not unanalyzed wholes” but are structured.⁶⁰ The basic meaning of *ed* ‘take’ has several identifiable semantic components of which ‘destination’ and ‘change of location’ appear to have motivated the evolution of the completive aspect marker *-ed* and the instrumental case marker *-ged*, respectively. The causal clause marker *-ged* is a functional extension of the instrumental case marker which has served as an intermediary stage.

The conceptual connection between the semantic components of the lexical source and the grammatical meaning of the extensions is established by metaphors. The semantic component ‘destination,’ for instance, is metaphorically conceived of as a terminal point. In other words, the connection between these two concepts, destination and terminal point, is established by the metaphor **TERMINAL POINT IS DESTINATION** which is a subtype of the more general metaphor **TIME IS SPACE**. Another aspect that may be involved in the semantic and functional extension of *ed* is the fact that a terminal point is often associated with a telic situation and the completion of a process. Therefore it is conceivable that *ed* has emerged as a completive aspect marker, particularly on verbs designating processes with a terminal point.

The development of the instrumental case marker appears to be motivated by the semantic component ‘change of location.’ The concept of change of location is metaphorically connected with a change of state, the metaphor **CHANGE OF STATE IS A CHANGE OF LOCATION** being a subtype of the more general metaphor **STATES ARE LOCATIONS**. A change of location and a change of state is commonly brought about by an instrument or agent causing the change. While an agentive causer is typically animate, an instrument is inanimate. This latter property is apparently a conceptional part of *-ged* which – apart from two exceptions, see section 5 – commonly occurs on noun phrases having inanimate referents. Because of the connections between the concepts ‘change of location,’ ‘change of state’ and

59 LICHTENBERK, “Semantic Change and Heterosemy in Grammaticalization,” p. 480.

60 Ibid., p. 505.

‘instrument’ it is quite conceivable that *-ged* has developed into a case marker encoding the semantic role of instrument and that it has further developed into a causal clause marker.

The following semantic map is a device to visualize the relationship between the source item *ed* and its functional extensions. The path leading to the instrumental case marker and further to the causal clause marker is motivated by the semantic component ‘change of location’ which is metaphorically viewed as change of state. The other path towards the completive aspect marker is motivated by the semantic component ‘destination’ which is metaphorically conceived as terminal point of a process.

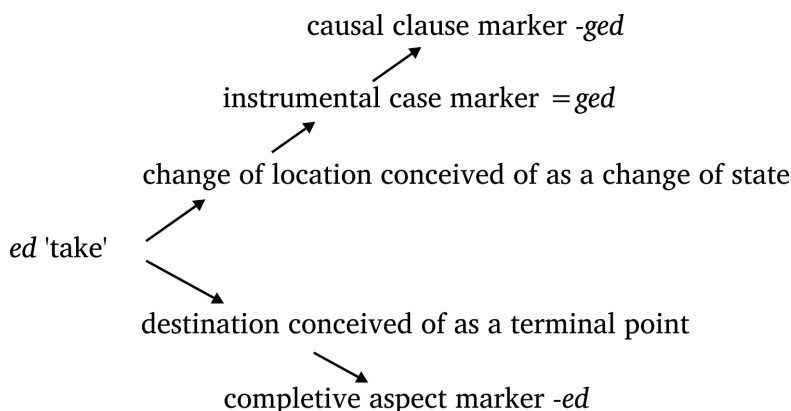


Diagram 1:
Semantic map
visualizing the
grammatical-
alization paths
of *ed*

The functional extension of *ed* has mainly involved two processes, i) the re-analysis of the lexical verb *ed* resulting in the emergence of three grammatical forms, the verbal aspect suffix *-ed*, the clitic case marker *=ged*, and the suffixed subordinator *-ged*; and ii) metaphorical shifts from concrete to abstract, e.g. from destination in space to terminal point in time, from change of location to change of state.⁶¹ Thus the development of the three grammatical morphemes from the lexical source *ed* ‘take’ corroborates the unidirectionality hypothesis which says that a grammaticalization path leads from a lexical source to grammatical forms (rather than in the reverse direction).

61 BÖRJARS & VINCENT, “Grammaticalization and Directionality.”

Bibliography

142

- ABDEL-HAFIZ, Ahmed Sokarno. *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*. PhD Dissertation. Buffalo: State University of New York, 1988.
- ABEL, Hans. "Eine Erzählung im Dialekt von Ermenne (Nubien)." *Abhandlungen der philologisch-historischen Klasse der königl. sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften* 8 (1913): pp. 1–96.
- ALMKVIST, Herman. *Nubische Studien im Sudan 1877–78 aus dem Nachlass Prof. Herman Almkvist's herausgegeben von K.V. Zetterstéen*. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1911.
- AMHA, Azeb. *The Maale Language*. Leiden: Research School CNWS, 2001.
- ARMBRUSTER, Charles Hubert. *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960.
- . *Dongolese Nubian: A Lexicon: Nubian–English, English–Nubian*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965.
- BECHHAUS-GERST, Marianne. "Nile Nubian' Reconsidered." In *Topics in Nilo-Saharan Linguistics*, edited by L. BENDER, pp. 85–96. Hamburg: Buske, 1989.
- . *The (Hi)story of Nobiin: 1000 Years of Language Change*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2011.
- BLAKE, Barry J. *Case*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- BÖRJARS, Kersti & Nigel VINCENT. 2011. "Grammaticalization and Directionality." In *The Oxford Handbook of Grammaticalization*, edited by H. NARROG & B. HEINE, pp. 163–76. Oxford University Press.
- BROWNE, Gerald M. *Old Nubian Dictionary*. Leuven: Peeters, 1996.
- . *Old Nubian Grammar*. Munich: Lincom Europa, 2002.
- COMRIE, Bernard. 1976. *Aspect*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- CRASS, Joachim. *Das K'abeena: Deskriptive Grammatik einer hochland-ost-kuschitischen Sprache*. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe, 2005.
- DIMMENDAAL, Gerrit J. *Historical Linguistics and the Comparative Study of African Languages*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2011.
- HEINE, Bernd & Tania KUTEVA. *World Lexicon of Grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- HOPPER, Paul J. & Sandra A. THOMPSON. "Transitivity in Grammar and Discourse." *Language* 56 (1980): pp. 251–99.
- HYMAN, Larry M. & Daniel J. MAGAJI. *Essentials of Gwari Grammar*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan, Institute of African Studies, 1971.
- JAKOBI, Angelika & El-Shafie EL-GUZUULI. "Heterosemy of Case Markers and Clause-Linkers in Dongolawi (Nile Nubian)," Manuscript.

- LEPSIUS, Richard C. *Nubische Grammatik mit einer Einleitung über die Völker und Sprachen Afrika's*. Berlin: Hertz, 1880.
- LEWIS, M. Paul, Gary F. SIMONS, & Charles D. FENNIG (eds.). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 17th edition. Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2013. Online version: <<http://www.ethnologue.com>>
- LICHTENBERK, Frantisek. "Semantic Change and Heterosemy in Grammaticalization." *Language* 67 (1991): pp. 475–509.
- MASSENBAACH, Gertrud von. "Wörterbuch des nubischen Kunûzi-Dialektes." In *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen* 36.3 (1933): 99–227.
- . "Eine grammatische Skizze des Dongolawi." *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* 8.2 (1961): pp. 229–323.
- . *Nubische Texte im Dialekt der Kunûzi und der Dongolawi*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1962.
- MCWHORTER, John H. *Towards a New Model of Creole Genesis*. New York: Peter Lang, 1997.
- REINISCH, Leo. *Die Nuba-Sprache*. Wien: Braumüller, 1879.
- RILLY, Claude. *Le Méroïtique et sa famille linguistique*. Leuven: Peeters, 2010.
- SCHNEIDER-BLUM, Gertrud. "Alaaba." In *Coding Participant Marking*, edited by Gerrit J. DIMMENDAAL, pp. 55–96. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2009.
- WERNER, Roland. 1987. *Grammatik des Nobiin (Nilnubisch)*. Hamburg: Buske.
- WOLDEMARIAM, Hirut. "Haro." In *Coding Participant Marking*, edited by Gerrit J. DIMMENDAAL, pp. 97–122. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2009.

Verbal Number in the Uncu Language (Kordofan Nubian)

Jade Comfort

1. Introduction

The Uncu Language is part of the Nubian language family in the Eastern Sudanic branch of Nilo-Saharan. It is part of the Kordofan Nubian language continuum along with Abu Jinuk, Kasha, Kaakmbee (Karko), Kujurria, Fanda, Wali, Kwashi (Kudur), Warkimbee (Dilling), Dabri, Dabatna, Kadaru, Taglennaa (Kururu), and Dair. The Uncu Language is spoken in a number of villages in the area between Dilling and Kadugli in the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan, Sudan. The language itself seems to have two major speech varieties that roughly correspond to the clans of Nama, Ninya, Terda, and Katang in the east and Moriny, Sigida, and Kurgul in the west. The data for this paper were gathered from speakers of Moriny (henceforth, *M*) and Nama (henceforth, *N*), with special thanks to Widaa Suleman [*M*] and Abdulbagi Daida [*N*].¹

The aim of this paper is to describe the different ways of marking verbal number in the Uncu language. I have divided the paper into two sections: participant number and event number. The number of the object or subject of a verb determines participant number. Event number is determined by the frequency or repetition of an event. In the following sections I will discuss how each of these types of plurality are used and marked on the verb. The nature of number marking on verbs is such that there are nuances in meaning due to

1 Abbreviations: * – ungrammatical; 1PL, 2PL, 3PL – 1st, 2nd, 3rd person plural; 1SG, 2SG, 3SG – 1st, 2nd, 3rd person singular; CONJ – conjunction; COP – copula; DIM – diminutive; DSC – different subject converb; FOC – focus; FUT – future tense; GEN – genitive case marker; IMP – imperative; INS – instrumental case marker; INTR – intransitive; LOC – locative case marker; NEG – negation; NMZ – nominalizing suffix; NMZA – nominalizing agent suffix; ACC – accusative case marker; O – object; PAST – past tense; PL – (nominal) plural; PLR – plurative: plural object with transitive verb, plural subject with intransitive verb; POSS – genitive linker; PRES – present tense; PSSC – purposive same subject converb; REP – plural action; S – subject; SG – (nominal) singular; SNG – singulative: singular object with transitive verb, singular subject with intransitive verb; SSC – same subject converb; TR – transitive;

the inherent semantics and temporal structure of the verb which can be lost in glossing. For this reason I have included speaker comments in this paper to clarify how certain verb forms would be used in normal speech.

2. Participant number

2.1 Description of different devices of marking participant number on the verb

In most cases when the object of a transitive verb is plural, the extension *-er*² is added to the root of the verb before the person/tense inflection markers, as shown below for the verb ‘to open.’

1	kītú	kūj-ōón
[M]	door.SG	open-PAST.2SG
	“You (SG) opened a door.”	
2	kītú	kūj-ūúŋ
[M]	door.SG	open-PAST.2PL
	“You (PL) opened a door.”	
3	kīní	kūj-ēr-ōón
[M]	door.PL	open-PLR-PAST.2SG
	“You (SG) opened doors.”	
4	kīní	kūj-ēr-ūúŋ
[M]	door.PL	open-PLR-PAST.2PL
	“You (PL) opened doors.”	

The same *-er* extension is usually added to the root of intransitive verbs when the subject is plural.

5	ŋāj-ōón
[M]	walk-PAST.2SG
	“You (SG) walked.”
6	ŋāj-ēr-ūúŋ
[M]	walk-PLR-PAST.2PL
	“You (PL) walked.”

2 Here and throughout this paper I do not write the *-ATR* mid vowels [ɛ] and [ɔ] since they are phonologically conditioned allophones of [e] and [o] which occur only through *ATR* harmony if the word contains a *+ATR* high vowel, that is [i] or [u]. The plural extension then could have either a *+ATR* or *-ATR* vowel depending on the *ATR* of the root to which it is being attached.

The chart below shows the usual imperative³ paradigm for transitive and intransitive verbs with the -er extension appearing for plural objects of transitive verbs and plural subjects of intransitive verbs.

s	o	‘blow’	‘burn’
SG	SG	úúb-í	wàf-í
PL	SG	úúb-é	wàf-é
SG	PL	úúb-ér-í	wàf-èr-í
PL	PL	úúb-ér-é	wàf-èr-é

Table 1. TR verbs with -er extension for PL O 147

s	‘walk’	‘urinate’	‘laugh’
SG	ṇāj-í	ōrk-î	q̣it-í
PL	ṇāj-ēr-é	ōrk-ér-è	q̣it-èr-é

Table 2. INTR verbs with -er extension when for PL S

Some transitive and intransitive verbs have a suppletive form which is used in cases of participant number rather than the -er extension. Usually the suppletive form has a -k or -f extension or involves a change in vowel quality. Note that in the case of ‘sell’ and ‘be heavy’ the suppletion is tone.

s	o	‘sell’	‘eat’
SG	SG	fàn-í	kōl-í
PL	SG	fàn-é	kōl-é
SG	PL	fàn-î	kàm-î
PL	PL	fàn-ê	kàm-ê

Table 3. TR verbs with suppletive forms for PL O

s	‘perspire’	‘disappear’	‘be heavy’
SG	ùr-î	kwàb-î	ṭil-í
PL	ùrk-ê	kwàkk-ê	ṭil-ê

Table 4. INTR verbs with suppletive forms for PL S

There are some verb cases where the -er extension is used for all numbers of subjects and objects such as those below.

s	o	‘breastfeed’	‘deceive’
SG	SG	ūl-ér-ì	kàf-èr-î
PL	SG	ūl-ér-è	kàf-èr-ê
SG	PL	ūl-ér-ì	kàf-èr-î
PL	PL	ūl-ér-è	kàf-èr-ê

Table 5. TR verbs with -er extension for SG+PL O

3 I have chosen to compare verbs in the imperative form since it has simple, clear morphology and makes it easy to highlight the extension. The extension is present however in all tense and aspectual forms of the verb.

Table 6. INTR verbs with -er extension for SG+PL S

s	'bark'	'swim'	'stutter'
SG	bōg-ér-ì	òbùk-ér-ì	tùrm-èr-ì
PL	bōg-ér-è	òbùk-ér-è	tùrm-èr-é

148

One's first instinct would be to look for a semantic motivation within this group. Many of the intransitive verbs in this category have an event-internal plurality (e.g. to stutter, to bark, to cough, to trot, to swim), which could hint toward an explanation for their morphologically marked plurality. Other verbs however are harder to explain (e.g. to stretch, to pray, to wait). Similarly within the transitive verbs, as one would expect, many of the verbs that fall into this category are verbs that always require a plural object (e.g. to build with branches, to add, to collect, to join, to winnow) but there are also many cases that are not easily explained (e.g. to sharpen, to curse, to choke, to name).

Finally there are very few verbs where the form for plural objects is the same as for singular objects and there is no -er extension.

Table 7. TR verbs with same form for SG+PL O

s	o	'grind'	'fight'
SG	SG	kàrî	ũjî
PL	SG	kàrê	ũjê
SG	PL	kàrî	ũjî
PL	PL	kàrê	ũjê

I think the verbs in this category are all inherently plural, much like the suppletive plural forms I discussed above in table 3, and therefore do not require any additional plural marking. Most of these verbs would usually have a plural object and indeed for many of these verbs it is ungrammatical to use a singular object (e.g. 'to collect,' 'to sow,' 'to scoop out,' 'to sing,' 'to grind') though this does not apply to all of them (e.g. 'to take smth off,' 'to let smth remain,' 'to fight').

SPEAKER COMMENT: You can say 'sing songs' but you can't say 'sing something.' You can say 'sing these' but you can't say 'sing this.'

It is interesting to note that the -er extension may also have other uses beyond marking participant number. For example, the -er extension is also used to construct the passive and antipassive which are morphologically identical and semantically distinguished by context.

s	o	'cook (porridge)'	'shave'	'sew'	'grind'	'eat'
SG	SG	màrt-î	kāñ-í	qūj-î	kār-î	kōl-í
PL	SG	màrt-ê	kāñ-é	qūj-ê	kār-ê	kōl-é
SG	PL	màrt-èr-î	kāñ-ēr-í	qūj-ér-ì	kār-î	kām-î
PL	PL	màrt-èr-ê	kāñ-ēr-é	qūj-ér-è	kār-ê	kām-ê
SG	-	màrt-ér-ì	kāñ-ēr-í	qūj-ér-ì	kār-ér-ì	kām-ér-ì
PL	-	màrt-ér-è	kāñ-ēr-é	qūj-ér-è	kār-ér-è	kām-ér-è

Table 8. TR verbs with -er extension for PL O & (anti-) passive forms

149

ĩ ⁴	wāl	kàl=gì	màrt-èé	7	
1SG	yesterday	porridge=ACC	cook-PAST.1SG	[M]	
“I cooked porridge yesterday.”					
ĩ	wāl	kàlì	óra	màrt-ér-èé	8
1SG	yesterday	porridge.PL	two	cook-PLR-PAST.1SG	[M]
“I cooked two porridges yesterday.”					
ĩ	wāl	màrt-ér-èé			9
1SG	yesterday	cook-PLR-PAST.1SG			[M]
“I cooked yesterday.”					
ì	ōrtí	kāñ-ūr-é			10
1SG	sheep.SG	shave-SNG-PRES.1SG			[M]
“I am shaving the sheep.”					
ì	ōrtíl	kāñ-ēr-é			11
1SG	sheep.PL	shave-PLR-PRES.1SG			[M]
“I am shaving sheep (PL).”					
ì	kāñ-ēr-é				12
1SG	shave-PLR-PRES.1SG				[M]
“I am shaving /I am being shaved.”					

This is not however exactly the same as the object plural/subject plural form of the verb, and, as you can see above with the verb 'to cook,' the antipassive form often has a different tone pattern than the plural form. Nonetheless it is interesting that these extensions have the same form and that this extension is used for the antipassive and passive even in cases where it is not used to construct the plural participant form as is the case with 'to sow' in examples 13–15

4 The 1sg pronoun has a rising tone when followed by a low tone and a low tone when followed by a high or mid tone.

below. For the moment this is just an observation which calls for a more in-depth study in the future.

13	ĩ	wǎl	wì=gì	tír-èé
[M]	1SG	yesterday	sorghum.PL=ACC	SOW-PAST.1SG
150		“I sowed sorghum yesterday.”		
14	ĩ	wǎl	tír-èr-èé	
[M]	1SG	yesterday	SOW-PLR-PAST.1SG	
		“I sowed yesterday.”		
15	wì	wàl	tír-èr-àán	
[M]	sorghum.PL	yesterday	SOW-PLR-PAST.3PL	
		“The sorghum [seeds] were sown yesterday.”		

Uncunwee also has a very productive system of forming causative/inchoative verbs from nouns and adjectives using -*ɲ* and these verbs always take the -*er* extension regardless of the number of their subject or object. For example from the adjective ‘red’ (SG: *kélè*, PL: *kǐlé*) one can build the following verbs.

Table 9. Causative verbs from adjective with -*er* extension

S	O	‘make something red’
SG	SG	<i>kélé-ɲ-ér-ì</i>
PL	SG	<i>kélé-ɲ-ér-è</i>
SG	PL	<i>kǐlé-ɲ-ér-ì</i>
PL	PL	<i>kǐlé-ɲ-ér-è</i>

Table 10. Inchoative verbs from adjective with -*er* extension

S	‘become red (e.g. to blush)’
SG	<i>kélé-ɲ-ér-ì</i>
PL	<i>kǐlé-ɲ-ér-è</i>

2.2 Description of how participant number marking is used

In the following examples the verbs ‘to eat’ and ‘to run’ are used to demonstrate how plural participant marking is used with transitive and intransitive verbs. Both of these verbs have suppletive roots for plural participants rather than using the -*er* extension.

The verb ‘to eat’ has the root *kol* for singular participants and the suppletive root *kam* for plural participants.

16	yě	kùkúr=gì	kōl-ēé
[N]	1SG	chicken=ACC	eat.SNG-PAST.1SG
		“I ate a chicken.”	

yě	kùkúr-i=gì	kàm-èé	17
1SG	chicken-PL=ACC	eat.PLR-PAST.1SG	[N]
“I ate chickens.”			

If the object is unspecified then the antipassive construction uses the plural root kam in combination with the plural participant extension.

151

yě	wǎl	kàm-ér-èé	18
1SG	yesterday	eat.PLR-PLR-PAST.1SG	[N]
“I ate yesterday.”			

If the number of chickens is specified the plural form of ‘to eat’ is still used.

yě	kùkúr-i	órà=gì	kàm-èé	19
1SG	chicken-PL	two=ACC	eat.PLR-PAST.1SG	[N]
“I ate two chickens.”				

If the subject is plural and the object is singular ‘to eat’ does not take a plural root.

ǎ	kùkúr=gì	kōl-ōó	20
1PL	chicken=ACC	eat.SNG-PAST.1PL	[N]
“We ate a chicken.”			

ǎ	kùkúr-i=gì	kàm-òó	21
1PL	chicken-PL=ACC	eat.PLR-PAST.1PL	[N]
“We ate chickens.”			

If the object is plural via a conjunction the plural root kam is used.

yě	kùkúr-ôŋ	ōgūd-óŋ=gì	kàm-èé	22
1SG	chicken-CONJ	goat-CONJ=ACC	eat.PLR-PAST.1SG	[N]
“I ate a chicken and a goat.”				

The intransitive verb ‘to run’ has the root qurɿ for singular participants and the suppletive root qwarɿ for plural participants.

ĩ	wǎl	qúrɿ-èé	23
1SG	yesterday	run.SNG -PAST.1SG	[M]
“I ran yesterday.”			

24	ǎĩ	wàl	q̣wārf-óó
[M]	1PL	yesterday	run.PLR-PAST.1PL
	“We ran yesterday.”		

152

Even if the adverbs ‘a lot’ or ‘twice’ are included, if the subject is singular the singular form of ‘to run’ is still used.

25	ĩ	wàl	ɲúr-kò	q̣úrf-èé
[M]	1SG	yesterday	big-INS ⁵	run.SNG-PAST.1SG
	“I ran a lot yesterday.”			

26	ĩ	wàl	óra-kò	q̣úrf-èé
[M]	1SG	yesterday	two-INS	run.SNG-PAST.1SG
	“I ran twice yesterday.”			

With a coordinated subject the plural root of ‘to run’ is still used.

27	ĩ	tòndú-òŋ	q̣wārf-óó
[M]	1SG	boy-CONJ	run.PLR-PAST.1PL
	“The boy and I ran.”		

28	fíkíté-òŋ	fántù-òŋ	q̣wārf-áán
[M]	shikite-CONJ	shantu-CONJ	run.PLR-PAST.3PL
	“Shikite and Shantu ran.”		

It is interesting to note that even when the verb ‘to run’ is in a context where it is not inflected for person or tense, as is the case for the converbs below, it still selects a different root for ‘to run’ depending on the number of the subject.

29	ĩ	wǎl	q̣úrf-ù-fìi	wār-èé
[M]	1SG	yesterday	run.SNG-SNG-PSSC	want-PAST.1SG
	“I wanted to run yesterday.”			

30	ǎĩ	wǎl	q̣wārf-ú-fìi ⁶	wār-óó
[M]	1PL	yesterday	run.PLR-SNG-PSSC	want-PAST.1PL
	“We wanted to run yesterday.”			

31	ĩ	dũrf-í	ōgúd=dí	tigg-úr-èé
[M]	1SG	run.SNG-SSC	goat=ACC	stop-SNG-PAST.1SG
	“I ran and stopped the goat.”			

5 The instrumental case marker is also used to encode adverbs and simultaneous events, as seen in exx. 35 and 37.

6 Note that here since there is a suppletive root for the plural subject it is not necessary to mark this plurality twice in the language and therefore the singular form of the verbal extension is used.

aĩ	dwārf-í	ōgúd=dí	tīg-g-úr-òó	32
1PL	run.PL-RSSC	goat=ACC	stop-SNG-PAST.1PL	[M]
“We ran and stopped the goat.”				

3. Event number (iterative, habitual, frequentative, etc.)

153

3.1 Description of different methods of marking event number on the verb

In the previous section I have discussed number marking on verbs, which is determined by the number of the subject or object of that verb. Additionally, approximately 15% of the verbs that I have collected have a special derivational habitual/frequentative/iterative form. Take for example the verb ‘to puncture’ which has the simplex root *fērg* and the repeated event root *fērk*.

Simplex verb with a singular object

ĩ	qòtù=gì	fērg-ēé	33
1SG	watermelon=ACC	puncture-PAST.1SG	[M]
“I stabbed the watermelon.”			

Simplex verb with a plural object

ĩ	ùljé	òná	fērg-ēr-ēé	34
1SG	ear.PL	1SG.GEN	puncture-PLR-PAST.1SG	[M]
“I pierced my ears.”				

Repeated event verb with a singular object

ĩ	kūmé=nàá	ūrtál=gí	wār-í-kò	35
1SG	rat=GEN	exit-hole=ACC	search-SSC-INS	[M]
tób=gí	fērk-éé			
ground=ACC	puncture.REP-PAST.1SG			
“Searching for the rat exit-hole I poked the ground repeatedly.”				

Repeated event verb with a plural object

ĩ	kēlé=gí	kīŋ-é-ſīi	36
1SG	tattoo.NMZ=ACC	make-PLR-PSSC	[M]
īdānú	ƿērƿk-ér-èé		
person.PL	puncture.REP-PLR-PAST.1SG		
“To make tattoos I cut people repeatedly.”			

There is not one specific extension that is always used to construct the repeated event form of a verb but there are a few endings that commonly occur. Some common extensions are -k, -f which, as shown in tables 3-4, are also commonly found in suppletive plural participant forms.

Table 11. Verbs with plural event extension -f

S	O	‘circumcise’	‘circumcise (repeatedly)’
SG	SG	bìr-í	bìr-f-í
PL	SG	bìr-é	bìr-f-ê
SG	PL	bìr-èr-í	bìr-f-ér-ì
PL	PL	bìr-èr-é	bìr-f-ér-è

154

Table 12. Verbs with plural event extension -k

S	O	‘give birth’	‘give birth (repeatedly)’
SG	SG	īr-í	īr-k-í
PL	SG	īr-é	īr-k-ê
SG	PL	īr-ēr-í	īr-k-ér-ì
PL	PL	īr-ēr-é	īr-k-ér-è

Table 13. Verbs with plural event extension -k

S	O	‘pinch’	‘pinch (repeatedly)’
SG	SG	fùn-ìØ-í	fūn-ūk-í ⁷
PL	SG	fùn-ùg-é	fūn-ūk-ê
SG	PL	fùn-èØ-èr-í	fūn-ūk-ér-ì
PL	PL	fùn-èØ-èr-é	fūn-ūk-ér-è

In addition it is very common for repeated event forms to be constructed with the extension -t + ug or by reduplicating part of the simplex verb followed by the extension -ug. For some speakers the intervocalic /g/ is deleted resulting in a long vowel. This is a common phonological process in the Uncu language that is also found in other contexts.

Table 14. Verbs with plural event extension -t + -ug

S	O	‘destroy’	‘destroy (repeatedly)’
SG	SG	q̣wāj-í	q̣wāj-ìt-ùg-í ~ q̣wāj-ìt-ìØ-í ⁸
PL	SG	q̣wāj-é	q̣wāj-ìt-ùg-é ~ q̣wāj-ìt-èØ-é
SG	PL	q̣wāj-ēr-í	q̣wāj-ìt-ùg-ér-ì ~ q̣wāj-ìt-èØ-ér-ì
PL	PL	q̣wāj-ēr-é	q̣wāj-ìt-ùg-ér-é ~ q̣wāj-ìt-èØ-ér-è

Table 15. Verbs with plural event reduplication + extension -ug

S	O	‘weave’	‘weave (repeatedly)’
SG	SG	fàrt-í	fàrt-àrt-ùg-í ~ fàrt-àrt-ìØ-í
PL	SG	fàrt-é	fàrt-àrt-ùg-é ~ fàrt-àrt-èØ-é
SG	PL	fàrt-ér-ì	fàrt-àrt-ùg-ér-ì ~ fàrt-àrt-èØ-ér-ì
PL	PL	fàrt-ér-è	fàrt-àrt-ùg-ér-è ~ fàrt-àrt-èØ-ér-è

As is shown in the examples above, the repeated event form of a verb can also take the extension -er for plural objects that I discussed in

7 Here the extension -k fuses with the final /g/ of the simplex root.

8 Sometimes there is an epenthetic vowel before the verbal extension to avoid a consonant cluster which is not permitted in the language, as is the case here.

the previous section of this paper. For intransitive verbs it is almost always the case that the -er extension will be present both for singular and plural subjects of repeated event verbs.

s	‘perspire’	‘perspire (repeatedly)’
SG	úr-í	úr-úk-k-ér-í ⁹
PL	úr-k-ê	úr-úk-k-ér-é

Table 16.
INTR plural
event verb
with -er
extension for
SG+PL S

155

For transitive verbs, on the other hand, a larger proportion of the repeated event verbs will use the same form for plural objects that they use for singular objects and do not add the -er extension, as is the case with the verb ‘to wind rope’ below.

s	o	‘wind rope’	‘wind rope (repeatedly)’
SG	SG	kàràbb-í	kārb-ārb-ūg-í ~ kārb-ārb-īØ-í
PL	SG	kàràbb-ê	kārb-ārb-ūg-é ~ kārb-ārb-īØ-é
SG	PL	kàràbb-ér-ì	kārb-ārb-ūg-í ~ kārb-ārb-īØ-í
PL	PL	kàràbb-ér-è	kārb-ārb-ūg-é ~ kārb-ārb-īØ-é

Table 17. TR
plural event
verb without -er
extension

For verbs with both a transitive and intransitive form it is common that in the repeated event paradigm the -er extension will mark the intransitive verb.

s	o	‘take smth down’	‘take smth down (repeatedly)’
SG	SG	ǰúǰ-íØ-írì	ǰūǰ-ūg-g-í
PL	SG	ǰúǰ-úØ-úrè	ǰūǰ-ūg-g-é
SG	PL	ǰúǰ-éØ-érì	ǰūǰ-ūg-g-í
PL	PL	ǰúǰ-éØ-érè	ǰūǰ-ūg-g-é

Table 18. TR
plural event
verb without -er
extension

s	‘go down self’	‘go down self (repeatedly)’
SG	ǰùǰ-írì	ǰūǰ-ūg-g-ēr-í
PL	ǰúǰ-úrê	ǰūǰ-ūg-g-ēr-é

Table 19. INTR
plural event verb
with -er extension

In many cases when the simplex verb has a suppletive plural participant root, the repeated event form of the verb is built from this suppletive root. For example with the verb ‘to shoot’ below both the plural participant and the repeated event verb form have the -c extension and they are only distinguished by tone.

9 This is probably underlyingly ur-ur-k-er-i with the reduplicated r assimilating and becoming a geminate k in the surface form.

Table 20. TR verb with plural event extension based on plural object extension

S	O	‘shoot’	‘shoot (repeatedly)’
SG	SG	jìl-í	jìl-c-î
PL	SG	jìl-é	jìl-c-ê
SG	PL	jìl-c-î	jìl-c-ér-ì
PL	PL	jìl-c-ê	jìl-c-ér-è

156

In the case of the verb ‘to understand’ the -f extension appears first for plural objects of the simplex verb and then is reduplicated to form the repeated verb.

Table 21. TR verb with plural event extension based on reduplication of plural object extension

S	O	‘understand’	‘understand (repeatedly)’
SG	SG	ìr-èrî	ìr-f-ìf-ìØ-í
PL	SG	ìr-èrê	ìr-f-ìf-èØ-é
SG	PL	ìr-f-î	ìr-f-ìf-ìØ-í
PL	PL	ìr-f-ê	ìr-f-ìf-èØ-é

Similarly for the intransitive verb ‘to sleep’ the -k extension appears first for plural subjects of the simplex verb and then in the repeated event verb form.

Table 22. INTR verb with plural event extension based on plural object extension

S	‘sleep’	‘sleep (repeatedly)’
SG	jèr-î	jēr-ēk-ēr-í
PL	jèr-k-ê	jēr-ēk-ēr-é

In fact, for nearly every intransitive verbs which has a repeated event form, the corresponding simplex verb has a suppletive plural participant form. In the case of the verb ‘to steal’ there is a suppletive tone pattern for plural objects of the simplex verb, which is then found again in the repeated event verb form.

Table 21. TR verb with plural event extension based on plural object tone

S	O	‘steal’	‘steal (repeatedly)’
SG	SG	bòrg-í	bòrk-î ¹⁰
PL	SG	bòrg-é	bòrk-ê
SG	PL	bòrg-î	bòrk-î
PL	PL	bòrg-ê	bòrk-ê

All of this suggests that there is some relationship between the two number marking systems since the extensions look similar and both have a number marking function.

3.2 Description of how event number marking is used

The non-repeated form, or simplex verb is not exclusively used for single events. The examples below show that one can say I missed

¹⁰ Here the extension -k fuses with the final /g/ of the simplex root.

the hare(s) once, twice, three times, or again and again all using the non-habitual form of ‘to miss.’

yě	ūdúlán-nú=gì (órà-kò, tójùk-kò, kúnàṅkúnàṅ)	37
1SG	hare-DIM=ACC (two-INS, three-INS, again and again)	[N]
ábìj-èé		
miss-PAST.1PL		
“I missed the hare (twice, three times, again and again).”		

yě	ūdílí-ní=gì (órà-kò, tójùk-kò, kúnàṅkúnàṅ)	38
1SG	hare.PL-DIM.PL=ACC (two-INS, three-INS, again and again)	[N]
àbìj-èé ¹¹		
miss.PL-PAST.1PL		
“I missed the hares (twice, three times, again and again).”		

With the habitual form of ‘miss’ one is able to use the adverb ‘again and again’ but definite counting adverbs like twice or three times are not permitted.

yě	ūdúlán-nú=gì (*órà-kò, *tójùk-kò, kúnàṅkúnàṅ)	39
1SG	hare.SG-DIM.SG=ACC (*two-INS, *three-INS, again and again)	[N]
ābìcc-éé		
miss.REP-PAST.1PL		
“I missed the hare repeatedly.”		

yě	ūdílí-ní-gì (*órà-kò, *tójùk-kò, kúnàṅkúnàṅ)	40
1SG	hare.pl-dim.pl=acc (*two-INS, *two-INS, again and again)	[N]
ābìcc-ér-ēē ¹²		
miss.REP-PLR-PAST.1PL		
“I missed the hares repeatedly.”		

SPEAKER COMMENT: Maybe there is one rabbit that is always deceiving you. Maybe you are able to shoot other animals but rabbits have always gotten away.

On the other hand the adverb *boon*,¹³ meaning something like ‘usually,’ can only be used grammatically with the repeated event form of a verb and not with the simplex form.

¹¹ Note the tone change on the verb is due to a suppletive plural participant form.

¹² Note that in addition to being a habitual form there is also an -er plural participant extension because of the plural hares.

¹³ *boon* = *ba* + *on* where *ba* is something like ‘just’ and *on* is an adverbializer.

- 41 bólí bóòŋ=gí ǐlí=gí
 [M] dog.PL usually=FOC woman.PL=ACC
 āj-êŋ¹⁴
 bite.REP-PRES.3PL
 “Dogs usually bite women.”

- 42 kwàlà bólí ǐlí=g
 [M] EXC dog.PL woman.PL=ACC
 āj-êŋ
 bite-PRES.3PL
 “Look! The dogs are biting the women!”

If a verb does not have a special repeated event form then when that event is done repeatedly the repeated event is expressed by the simplex form of the verb. For example the verb ‘to harvest’ does not have a designated repeated event form. In examples 43–6 one can see the simplex forms for a singular or a plural subject. Finally in example 47 in a repeated event construction with the ‘usually’ adverb the same simplex form of the verb ‘to harvest’ is used.

Simplex verb with singular object

- 43 ǐ wǎl kàtù bārf-ēé
 [M] 1SG yesterday field harvest-PAST.1SG
 “I harvested a field yesterday.”

Simplex verb with plural object

- 44 ǐ wǎl kàni órà bārf-ēr-ēé
 [M] 1SG yesterday field.PL two harvest-PLR-PAST.1SG
 “I harvested two fields yesterday.”

Simplex verb in antipassive form

- 45 ǐ wǎl bārf-ēr-ēé
 [M] 1SG yesterday harvest-PLR-PAST.1SG
 “I harvested yesterday.”

Non-repeated event construction

- 46 ǐ kàtù bètàn bārf-ēé
 [M] 1SG field once harvest-PAST.1SG
 “I harvested the field once.”

14 It would be ungrammatical to use the simplex form āj-êŋ.

Repeated event construction

ì	bòṇ=gí	tómmólí	kàtù	bārf-ēé	47
1SG	usually=ACC	harvest-season	field	harvest-PAST.1SG	[M]
“I usually harvested the field in the harvesting season.”					

The type of repetition described by the repeated event form varies depending on the inherent semantics and temporal structure of the verb and the context in which it is used which is shown in the following examples 48–66. First in examples 48–56 I have given some cases in which, when the repeated event verb is used, it has an iterative meaning.

159

yè	bírg-ùr-è	48
1SG	turn-SNG-PRES.1SG	[N]
“I am turning around.”		

yè	bīrgīrg-ēr-é	49
1SG	turn.REP-PLR-PRES.1SG	[N]
“I am turning around and around and around (iterative).”		

kēlé=gí	bêrbêr=ǒṇ	īrfīf-īí	50
write.NMZ=ACC	oneone=ADV	understand.REP-IMP.2SG	[M]
“Understand what is written one piece at a time (iterative).”			

nò	íd	òrí=gí	fūrd-úṇ	51
this	person	rope=ACC	pull-PRES.3SG	[M]
“This person is pulling a rope.”				

nò	íd	òrí=gí	fūrt-úṇ	52
this	person	rope=ACC	pull.REP-PRES.3SG	[M]
“This person is pulling and pulling a rope (iterative).”				

SPEAKER COMMENT: If you were talking about pulling a bucket from a well you would use the repeated event verb form because you have to pull again and again (iteratively) to raise the bucket.

ì	īnīr	ójà-ṇàl=gí	táṇṇ-úúr-èé	53
1SG	today	oja-POSS.porridge=ACC	taste-SNG-PAST.1SG	[M]
“Today I tasted Oja’s porridge.”				

ì	īnīr	fùlú=r	kàlí	54
1SG	today	festival=LOC	porridge.PL	[M]
ìnjírì=gì	táṇṇ-éér-èé			
many=ACC	taste-PLR-PAST.1SG			
“Today I tasted many porridges at the festival.”				

- 55 ì ɪ́nǐír ɲàlè ɲáítú ɲél-cǐí
 [M] 1SG today dough bitterness see-PSSC
 kàl=ìì tǎɲík-éeé
 porridge=ACC taste.REP-PAST.1SG
 “Today I tasted the porridge repeatedly to check the bitterness of
 the dough (iterative).”
- 56 ì ɪ́nǐír fùlú=r kàlí ɪ̀nǐrí=gì
 [M] 1SG today festival=LOC porridge many=ACC
 tǎɲík-ér-èé kàl kén ɲál-cǐí
 taste.REP-PLR-PAST.1SG porridge good see-PSSC
 “Today at the festival I tasted many porridges repeatedly to find the
 best one (iterative).”

Examples 53-56 show the four-way contrast between participant number and event number. In 53 the participant and event are both singular; one porridge is tasted once. In 54 the porridges are plural but the event remains singular since each porridge is only tasted once. In 55 the porridge is singular but since it is tasted repeatedly the plural event extension is used. Finally in 56 many porridges are being tasted repeatedly and therefore both the plural participant and the plural event extensions are used together.

At other times the repeated event verb form can have a habitual meaning as it is in examples 57-62.

- 57 ì jǐr-ūr-é
 [M] 1SG sleep-SNG-PRES.1SG
 “I am sleeping.”
- 58 kwálél tâ-né ì jērēk-ēr-é
 [M] night come-DSC.3SG 1SG sleep.REP-PLR-PRES.1SG
 “Whenever the night comes I sleep (habitual).”
- 59 ʈǒ gǐrgǔlú=gí à ʈì-mà?
 [M] 3SG money=ACC 2SG.ACC give-INT.PAST.3SG
 “Did he give you money?”
- 60 ʈǒ gǐrgǔlú=gí à=g ák-kà?
 [M] 3SG money=ACC 2sg=ACC give.REP-INT.PAST.3SG
 “Did he give you money often (habitual)?”
- 61 kǐnǐ kūj-ēr-ōón
 [N] door.PL open-PLR-PAST.2SG
 “You (sg) opened doors.”

kīnī	kūjūrg-ōōŋ	62
door.PL	open.REP-PAST.2SG	[N]
“You (SG) opened doors (habitual).”		

SPEAKER COMMENT: You would use the repeated event form if, for example, you were a doorman in the past and it was your job to open the door(s).

161

For certain verbs the repeated event form could have either a habitual or an iterative meaning depending on the context.

ĩ	àkòdú=r	āk-ēé	63
1SG	chair=LOC	sīt-PAST.1SG	[M]
“I was sitting on the chair.”			

ĩ	àkòdú=r	ākāk-ēr-ēé	64
1SG	chair=LOC	sīt.REP-PLR-PAST.1SG	[M]
“I was sitting on the chair (repeatedly).”			

SPEAKER COMMENT: You would use the repeated event form for example if the seat was very uncomfortable for some reason so you kept getting up and then sitting on it again or if you were old and carried a seat around with you so that you could always sit on it after walking a short while.

I also have one example where the repeated event form of the verb can also suggest a distribution in space.

ĩ	wàl	índù	dīl-ēr-ēé	65
1SG	yesterday	person.PL	gather-PLR-PAST.1SG	[M]
“I gathered (the) people yesterday.”				

ĩ	wàl	índù	dīltùg-èé	66
1SG	yesterday	person.PL	gather.REP-PAST.1SG	[M]
“I gathered (the) people yesterday (repeatedly, or from many different locations).”				

SPEAKER COMMENT: I would use the repeated event form for example if I was going to have a meeting and I told people to come at 10am, and then the meeting was canceled and I told them to come at 1 and then the meeting was canceled again and I asked them to come at 5. Or I could also use the repeated event form if one person was in Cairo and another person was in Khartoum and another person was in Angarko and I had to go from place to place to collect them.

If a verb does have a derived repeated event form then the verbal noun corresponding to that verb is usually based on the root of the repeated event verb form, not the simplex verb form. For example looking at the verb ‘to jump’ examples 67 and 68 show the simplex root and 69 and 70 show the root for repeated events which is then again used in example 71 as the root of the verbal noun.

- 67 ì târ-èé
[M] 1SG jump-PAST.1SG
 “I jumped (once, twice, a lot).”
- 68 àì târ-óó¹⁵
[M] 1PL jump-PAST.1PL
 “We jumped (once, twice, a lot).”
- 69 ì tãāt-ér-èé
[M] 1SG jump.REP-PAST.1SG
 “I jumped (repeatedly).”
- 70 àì tãāt-ér-òó
[M] 1PL jump.REP-PAST.1PL
 “We jumped (repeatedly).”
- 71 tãāt-é kén-gín
[M] jump-NMZ good-COP.PRES.3SG
 “Jumping is fun (in general).”

SPEAKER COMMENT: In the case of we jumped repeatedly, if we each jumped once you could not use the repeated event verb form, you can only use this if we both jumped many times.

Similarly, agents are often formed from the repeated event verb root rather than the simplex root.

- 72 ǎì wàl bōr-ōó
[M] 1PL yesterday migrate-PAST.1PL
 “We migrated yesterday.”
- 73 àì bíl bótt-èr-òó
[M] 1PL past migrate.REP-PLR-PAST.1PL
 “We migrated in the past (habitual).”

15 Suppletive plural subject tone.

bòtt-àâr

migrate-NMZA

“A nomad or a migrant.”

74

[M]

4. Conclusion

163

In conclusion, I have shown in this paper that in the Uncu language there are various ways of marking participant number and event number on a verb. The number of the object or subject of a verb determines participant number. Participant number is usually marked with the extension -er and occasionally with a suppletive root for transitive verbs with a plural object or intransitive verbs with a plural subject. Event number is determined by the frequency or repetition of an event and it is typically used when the speaker wants to express that a certain action is performed iteratively or habitually. Event plurality is marked by many different extensions (-t, -ug, -k, -ʃ, -c) and partial reduplication of the root. The plural event form is incompatible with discreet adverbs like “twice” or “three times” but instead is used with adverbs like “again and again” or “usually.” These two number marking systems for participant number and event number can be used in combination allowing speakers to precisely illustrate many different plurality scenarios.

Remarks toward a Revised Grammar of Old Nubian

165

Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei*

o. Introduction

This paper makes a number of brief proposals on pending issues in Old Nubian linguistics. I will argue that in order to advance Old Nubian studies toward a comprehensive grammatical description of the language,¹ it is necessary to adopt a point of view that moves beyond the classicist perspective that has dictated much of the field of Old Nubian studies so far, and to eschew the traditional categories that apply within philological investigations of Greek, Latin, or Coptic sources. Not only are the terminological conditions of this classicist tradition, such as for example a clear distinction between nominal and verbal functions and strong reliance on established textual traditions, less applicable to the Old Nubian context, their active imposition onto this non-Indo European language obscures its grammatical particularities.² However, this does not mean that Old Nubian would require its own idiosyncratic terminology, at a remove from universally recognized grammatical categories such as case, person, or number marking. Any grammatical description of the language will need to balance, on the one hand, an elegant de-

* I would like to thank Giovanni Ruffini and Marcus Jaeger for their valuable comments to different drafts of this text.

1 Previous grammars and grammatical sketches of Old Nubian include, most notably: ZYHLARZ, *Grundzüge der nubischen Grammatik im christlichen Frühmittelalter*; HINTZE's series "Beobachtungen zur altnubischen Grammatik I–VI"; BROWNE, *Old Nubian Grammar* (henceforth, *ONG*).

2 Old Nubian is considered to be a member of the Nubian language group, including Nobiin, Kenzi, and Dongolawi (Andaandi), which falls under the Nilo-Saharan phylum. There is some scholarly debate on whether Old Nubian is a direct ancestor to Nobiin (as argued by BECHHAUS-GERST, "Nile Nubian' Reconsidered"; id., *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*), or whether the differentiation between Nobiin, Kenzi, and Dongolawi (Andaandi) occurred in the period following the extinction of Old Nubian (as suggested by RILLY, *Le Méroïtique et sa famille linguistique*, p. 165). For the purposes of this paper it is not necessary to make a decision either way, although the fact that Old Nubian dialectology remains thoroughly understudied suggests that much prudence as regards this question of parentage and heritage is needed.

scription of grammatical features that does justice to the linguistic characteristics that are unique to it as well as those which it shares with its linguistic neighbors, and, on the other hand, universally established descriptive standards.

In order to do so I think it is first of all necessary to incorporate the study of modern Nubian languages into Old Nubian grammatical research, instead of emphasizing supposedly parallel Greek or Coptic texts. Although previous grammatical outlines of Old Nubian have incidentally referred to the extant Nubian languages, the recent book by Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst, *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*, sets promising precedent in the sense that it takes the relation between Old Nubian and Nobiin as point of departure. This approach, however, is not always feasible due to the disappearance of certain morphological features of Old Nubian, such as the determiner $\text{-}\lambda$,³ the predicative marker $\text{-}\alpha$,⁴ and several emphatic particles.⁵ In these cases a thorough (inter)textual analysis of Old Nubian research remains our only recourse. This type of comparative research necessarily includes the extant Old Nubian materials beyond the well-studied literary texts. Initiatives such as the Medieval Nubia website by Giovanni Ruffini⁶ and Grzegorz Ochała's Database of Medieval Nubian Texts⁷ are indispensable to gain a definitive overview of these materials.

In what follows I would like to flesh out these remarks into a number of more concrete investigations, namely: 1) the state of the extant text editions and their underlying methodology; 2) terminology in the case system; 3) the organization of verbal suffixes; and 4) the question of documentary texts. As you may gather from the enormous amount of work that still remains to be done in these four areas, I can address them only briefly, and therefore only in an introductory and generalizing manner.

1. Editorial situation

We are familiar with the fact that Gerald Browne edited and published the majority of the extant Old Nubian textual material and that we still take these editions to be authoritative. Moreover, they form the basis for Browne's *Old Nubian Dictionary* and his *Old Nubian Grammar*. Many of Browne's editions are characterized by Greek and/or Coptic retrotranslations that may seem to be only a peculiarity of his own academic background, a certain pleasure somehow to

3 See VAN GERVEN OEI, "The Old Nubian Memorial for King George," pp. 256ff.

4 See VAN GERVEN OEI, "The Old Nubian Morpheme $\text{-}\alpha$ in Nominal and Verbal Predicates."

5 See BECHHAUS-GERST, *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*, pp. 103–4.

6 <<http://www.medievalnubia.info/>> (Accessed April 25, 2014).

7 <<http://www.dbmnt.uw.edu.pl>> (Accessed April 25, 2014).

recreate a historical and philological context of which a certain text would have been part. This habit, however, becomes problematic at the moment it diverts our attention from the particulars of the Old Nubian texts and starts to obscure mismatches between the phantasmatic *Vorlage* and the extant Old Nubian text. Let me give one short, telling example, namely a fragment from Rev. 14.13 published as P. Q1 1.9 and discussed in Browne's article "Old Nubian Philology"⁸:

167

ΟΥΛΓΡΙΚΟΝ | ΕΙΝΙCΕ ΧΚΑ ΖΑΡΗΛΑ ΠΕCΗ ΔΙΓ'ΛΛΕ' | ΠΑΕCΟ ΔΓΕΝΔΕΓΟΥΕΛΟ
ΔΛΓΟΥΛ ΔΙΡΑ|ΓΟΥΕCΗ ΕΟΛΛΟΚΩ ΔΙΕΙΓΟΥΛ ΕΛΕΚ|ΚΑΝ ΑΛΟ ΠΕCΝΑ CΕΓΑΡΤΛ'
ΤΑΝ ΚΟΡ|ΠΑΘΟΙΓΟΥΛΟ ΠΑΘΑ ΓΕCΑΚΚΟΑΝ'ΝΟΔ' | ΓΕCΕΡΑΝΝΟΔΟΥΝ' ΤΕΝ
ΓΕΕΙΓΟΥΛ|ΛΟΝ ΤΕΚΚΑ ΕΡΓΙΘΟΝΑ ΖΑΡΗΚCΚΛ'

P. Q1 1.9.ii.11-18

Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης μοι, “Γράψον, Μακάριοι οἱ νεκροὶ οἱ ἐν Κυρίῳ ἀποθνήσκοντες ἀπάρτι· ναί, λέγει τὸ Πνεῦμα, ἵνα ἀναπαύσωνται ἐκ τῶν κόπων αὐτῶν· τὰ δὲ ἔργα αὐτῶν ἀκολουθεῖ μετ’ αὐτῶν.”

Textus Receptus

And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

King James Bible

In this article Browne begins with the corresponding Greek *Textus Receptus*⁹ of the Old Nubian Revelation fragment as, parenthetically, “a convenient point of departure,”¹⁰ without citing the entirety of the Old Nubian text. Then, without looking at the Old Nubian passage as a whole, Browne begins by analyzing the “translation” of the *Textus Receptus* wording ἵνα ἀναπαύσωνται (meaning “that they may rest”) in the Old Nubian text, where it is rendered *gesakkoanno* *geserannojoin*. I give a tentative glossing of the Old Nubian and the Greek passage in question below:

8 See for a different discussion of the same passage, VAN GERVEN OEI, “The Disturbing Object of Philology.”

9 The *Textus Receptus* is the lineage of Greek texts, first compiled by Dutch humanist scholar Desiderius Erasmus and used as a translation basis for many New Testament translations in the West, including the King James Bible and Martin Luther's German Bible. The Nestle-Aland edition of the Greek New Testament has in the meantime mainly replaced the *Textus Receptus*, and differs only slightly in its rendering of Rev. 14.13 as used by Browne: Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης· γράψον· μακάριοι οἱ νεκροὶ οἱ ἐν κυρίῳ ἀποθνήσκοντες ἀπ' ἄρτι· ναί, λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα, ἵνα ἀναπαύσωνται ἐκ τῶν κόπων αὐτῶν, τὰ γὰρ ἔργα αὐτῶν ἀκολουθεῖ μετ' αὐτῶν. <<http://www.nestle-aland.com/en/read-na28-online/text/bibeltext/lesen/stelle/76/140001/149999/>>

10 Browne, “Old Nubian Philology,” p. 292.

1a	τὰν <i>tan</i> 3SG.GEN ἤεε-ἀκ-κοᾶν'νο-ᾶ <i>hes-ak-koanno-a</i> rest-TR-COND.3PL-PRED	κορπαῳῳ-γοῦ-λο <i>korpajji-gou-lo</i> labor-PL-LOC ἀναπαύ-σωνται rest-AOR.CONJ.MED.3PL	παῳ-α <i>paj-a</i> cease-PRED ἤεε-εραν-νοῳῳν <i>hes-eran-nojoun</i> rest-PR.3PL-LOC.because ¹¹	
1b	ἵνα that κόπ-ων labor-GEN.PL	ἀναπαύ-σωνται rest-AOR.CONJ.MED.3PL αὐτ-ῶν DET-GEN.PL	ἐκ from	τῶν DET.GEN.PL

Based on the repeated verbal root *hes-* Browne concludes that the scribe must have given two alternatives based on different variations of the Greek *Vorlage* that he was familiar with, a “hitherto-unattested but hardly surprising combination.”¹² He decides to ignore other anomalies in the Old Nubian rendering of the passage from Revelation, such as the addition of *dieigoul*, “many,” the erroneous spelling of “their” as *tan*, and the addition of *harmikiskil*, “up to heaven,” in the last line. Browne then continues his argument that the line *hesakkoannoa heserannojoun* would be evidence for an Old Nubian philological practice, but what actually has happened is that elementary features of the Old Nubian text are glossed over under the pretext of discovering authorial intention.

Browne’s intention to find evidence for an Old Nubian philological practice and his argument that Old Nubian scribes may have used large volumes of Greek commentary to construct their translations are in fact indicative of Browne’s own tendency to rely solely on reconstructed *Vorlages* that retroactively validate emendations and corrections.¹³ This practice becomes problematic at the moment these types of concerns impede a correct analysis of the Old Nubian

¹¹ Glossing abbreviations: 1, 2, 3 – 1st, 2nd, 2rd person; ACC – accusative; AOR – aorist; C – complementizer/connective; COND – conditional; CONJ – conjunctive; CONSUE – consuetudinal; DAT – dative; DET – determinate pronoun; DIST – distal; FOC – focus; GEN – genitive; IMP – imperative; INSTR – instrumental; J – juncture vowel; LOC – locative; MED – medio-passive; NEG – negative; OBJ – object; PASS – passive; PR – present; PROX – proximal; PT1 – preterite 1; PT2 – preterite 2; PRED – predicative; PL – plural; PST – past; PTC – participle; QUOT – quotation marker; SG – singular; TR – transitive; VOC – vocative.

¹² Browne, “Old Nubian Philology,” p. 292.

¹³ See for example the enormous work undertaken to reconstruct the entire Greek *Vorlage* for the Old Nubian “Bible” in Browne, *Bibliorum Sacrorum Versio Palaeonubiana*. Cf. also the comments in *The Old Nubian Miracle of Saint Menas*, p. i: “I have also printed my attempt at reconstructing the Greek *Vorlage* which the Nubian translator may be presumed to have followed. I am certain that not all of my retroversion will be accepted, but in making it I have learned much about the text[.]” and in his edition of Griffith’s *Old Nubian Lectionary*, p. 10: “After much hesitation I have decided to juxtapose to the Nubian text what could have been its Greek model, but I must urge extreme caution in making deductions from it.” However, this caution disappears at the moment the Greek is authoritatively cited in *OND* and *ONG* without any such caveats.

material at hand. Let us attempt a more prudent approach, starting from the Old Nubian text itself, aiming to produce a translation that best reflects the Old Nubian sentence structure.

ΟΥΛΓΡΙΚΟΝ | ΕΙΝΙΣΕ ΉΚΑ ΖΑΡΜΛΑ ΠΕΣΗ ΔΙΓΛΛΕ· | ΠΑΕΣΟ ΔΓΕΝΔΕΓΟΥΕΛΟ
ΔΛΓΟΥΛ ΔΙΡΑ|ΓΟΥΕΣΗ ΕΟΛΛΟΚΩ ΔΙΕΙΓΟΥΛ ΕΛΕΚ|ΚΑΝ ΔΛΟ ΠΕΣΣΝΑ ΣΕΥΑΡΤΛ·
ΤΑΝ ΚΟΡ|ΠΑΘΔΙΓΟΥΛΟ ΠΑΘΑ ΓΕΣΑΚΚΟΑΝ'ΝΟΔ· | ΓΕΣΕΡΑΝΝΟΔΟΥΝ· ΤΕΝ
ΓΕΕΙΓΟΥΛ|ΛΟΝ ΤΕΚΚΑ ΕΡΓΙΟΝΑ ΖΑΡΜΙΚΣΚΛ·

169

I took a voice to my ear from heaven that said to me: Write, blessed are the many dead who die in the Lord, they say. Yea, said the Spirit, so that they cease and rest from his (*sic*) labors because they rest, and their works followed (*sic*) them up to heaven.

The beginning of the passage already features an interesting construction that is not very well rendered by “I heard.” The Old Nubian construction suggests something like “I took a voice to my ear,” with a double accusative object (see section 2 below), with an attributive clause *pesin aigille* to *elka* instead of a participle as in the *Textus Receptus*. In ll. 13–14 we find *dilgoul* [...] *dieigoul*, “the many dead” instead of simply νεκροί. This is followed by the verb *elekkan* in ll. 14–15 which is absent in the *Textus Receptus*, supposedly related to l. 12 *ilka*. We then encounter the erroneous pronoun *tan* “his,” ostensibly translating αὐτῶν. This may be a common type of error,¹⁴ although we find a similar agreement mismatch in l. 18 where *ergijona* is singular whereas the subject *ten neigoullon* is plural. Moreover, *ergijona* is preterite I, whereas the Greek clearly has a present tense. To this we may then add Browne’s observation about the double occurrence of the verb *yes-* and the final addition of *harmikiskil*, “up to heaven.”

All in all, considering the doubtful grammatical decisions and many additions this particular scribe has made to the text, I have my reservations about Browne’s suggestion that we are dealing here with a philologically motivated and mildly desperate scribe. It is impossible to determine without much speculation why or how these errors (or emendations) were made. We simply know too little about Old Nubian scribal practices or typical errors, especially because in absence of a general grammatical description of the language that would somehow allow separating correct from erroneous practices (whatever they may turn out to be) such a distinction is impossible to make. Instead we first need to establish a grammatically faithful interpretation of the Old Nubian textual material, before we can venture into categories of correctness and error.

¹⁴ Greek cases were often interpreted erroneously by Nubian scribes, cf. the observations of Eajtar in *I. Khartoum Greek*, p.24.

2. The morpheme -ka

170

A typical question concerning terminology is posed by the Old Nubian case system. As it would take us too far to pose an overview of the entire case marking apparatus, I suggest that we take as a sample one particular morpheme that is generally recognized to be some type of case marker, and does not seem to appear elsewhere with a different function: the morpheme -ka. Zyhlarz describes it as follows: “Zum Ausdruck des Hinweises auf ein Nomen als direktes oder indirektes Objekt dient das Suffix -ka.”¹⁵ Browne groups the ka-morpheme under “case inflection” (between inverted commas), signaling however in a footnote that the term “inflection” should be loosely understood, in the sense that Old Nubian is not an inflecting language.¹⁶ He follows Zyhlarz in his terminology, calling the ka-morpheme “directive” (ONG §3.6), with a similar usage: as a marker of the direct or indirect object (ONG, §3.6.3a) or used in temporal expressions (ONG, §3.6.3c).¹⁷ Bechhaus-Gerst refers to the same morpheme with the term “objective,”¹⁸ whereas Smagina uses “Akkusativ.”¹⁹

If we look at grammars of modern Nubian languages,²⁰ we encounter clearly related morphemes with similar syntactical functions. In his grammar of Nobiin Lepsius speaks about the morpheme -g(a) as the “Objektiv,”²¹ whereas in Werner’s grammar we find the term “Objektkasus,” that is, the case marking of the direct or indirect object of a verb.²² Abdel-Hafiz, in his grammar of Kunuz (Kenzi) speaks of the accusative case allomorphs -g(i) and -k(i), indicating “the object or the entity that is acted upon.”²³ The accusative in Kunuz is used for both direct and indirect objects.²⁴ El-Guzuuli and Jakobi employ the same terminology in their work on Dongalowi (Andaandi).²⁵

We thus find three different terms referring to the same morpheme, “objective,” “directive,” and “accusative.” No matter their name or whether they are called “inflection,” “marker,” or “suffix,”

15 ZYHLARZ, *Grundzüge der nubischen Grammatik im christlichen Frühmittelalter*, p. 38.

16 ONG, p. 32, n. 14.

17 Although generally acknowledged as a secondary function of the accusative in modern Nubian languages, there is no space in the present article consider its precise temporal function.

18 BECHHAUS-GERST, *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*, p. 35.

19 SMAGINA, “Einige Probleme der Morphologie des Altnubischen,” p. 393.

20 Unfortunately, I was unable to consult ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar and Massenbach*, “Wörterbuch des nubischen Kunûzi-Dialektes.”

21 LEPSIUS, *Nubische Grammatik*, p. 35.

22 WERNER, *Grammatik des Nobiin*, §3.1.10.2.

23 ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, 103.

24 Ibid., 242.

25 See JAKOBI & EL-GUZUULI, this volume, and EL-GUZUULI & VAN GERVEN OEI, *The Miracle of Saint Mina*, pp. 129ff.

the different variants of this morpheme all behave similarly, both morphologically (e.g. the plural morpheme always precedes case marking) and syntactically (e.g. always marking (in)direct objects). As we know from comparative research, case does not necessarily manifest itself as a “Latin” type inflection in the sense of showing syncretic forms combining case and number into one inflectional morpheme. Case in Old Nubian is always analytical, and clearly separable from number morphology. So how do we decide between these different terminologies in our description of the Old Nubian language?

If we were to align the Old Nubian terminology with the standard linguistic terminology, we first have to figure out the behavior of the Old Nubian case marked by the $\kappa\alpha$ -morpheme under the diagnostic tests developed to determine specific case structures and properties. In standard case theory there is distinction between structural and non-structural case,²⁶ with non-structural case often divided into lexical and inherent case.²⁷ The accusative is generally shared under the structural or “core” cases²⁸: “The accusative is the case that encodes the direct object of a verb. It will encode both the objects where there is a double-object construction[.]”²⁹ Considering the fact that Smagina, Abdel-Hafiz, and El-Guzuuli and Jakobi identify the $\kappa\alpha$ -morpheme (and its counterparts in other Nubian languages) with this term it would make sense to submit the Old Nubian $\kappa\alpha$ -morpheme to a series of tests to determine whether what is called “directive” or “objective” in fact behaves precisely as a common accusative case is supposed to behave, as I strongly suspect. This would then give us strong support for the usage of the term “accusative” for the Old Nubian $\kappa\alpha$ -morpheme.

One of the most well-known diagnostic tests is checking whether case is preserved under A-movement, e.g. in passive constructions. Non-structural cases will not change when an active sentence is transformed into a passive one, whereas structural cases will. For example, in an accusative language,³⁰ the patient of a transitive verb in an active sentence will be marked by the nominative case when the sentence is transformed into passive, whereas the agent of an active sentence will receive a non-structural case once the sentence

26 CHOMSKY, *Lectures on Government and Binding*, p. 170. Chomsky refers to non-structural case as “inherent.” Nowadays, inherent case is considered only one type of non-structural case.

27 See e.g. WOOLFORD, “Lexical Case, Inherent Case, and Argument Structure.”

28 BLAKE, *Case*, p. 33.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 133.

30 It is generally assumed that Old Nubian is an accusative and not an ergative language, i.e., the subjects of transitive and intransitive verbs are both marked with the same case, the nominative. The nominative in Old Nubian, like in other Nubian languages, is expressed by a zero morpheme, cf. WERNER, *Grammatik des Nubiin*, p. 97; ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 102. See VAN GERVEN OEI, “The Old Nubian Memorial of King George,” p. 261, for a brief discussion of the nominative case in Old Nubian.

is transformed into passive voice. As Old Nubian is a dead language, we can unfortunately no longer ask an informant to perform such a transformation. However, we can look at the distribution of cases in active and passive sentences and see whether they match the predicted distributions for an accusative language. This would give us the first indirect evidence of the existence of a structural accusative case in Old Nubian. I give here two examples with the transitive verb “to call.”

- 2 ἘῤῥῥΟΥ ΜΗΝΑΕΙΟΝ | ΜΑΝ ΕἲΤῚΝ ΕΟΥΛΟ ΒΟΡΑ | ΚΙΑ ΘΑΑΚΚΑ ΚῒΜΑ ὀ῀ΚῤῥῥΝΑ³¹
M. 12.13–6
- | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| <i>ḡiss-ou</i> | <i>mēna-eion</i> | <i>man</i> | <i>eitt-in</i> |
| holy-J ³² | Mina-C | DEM.DIST | woman-GEN |
| <i>ḡog-lo</i> | <i>jor-a</i> | <i>ki-a</i> | |
| house-LOC | go-PRED | come-PRED | |
| <i>šaak-ka</i> | <i>kimm-a</i> | <i>ook-ir-sna</i> | |
| door-ACC | hit-PRED | call-TR-PT2.3SG.PRED | |
- “Saint Mina went to that woman’s house, knocked on the door, and had her called.”
- 3 ΟΥΕΛΕΝΔΕΕΙΟΝ ΟΥΡ|ΡΩ ΣΟΚΚΑ ΕΟΚΚ ΕΤΗΕΝΚΕΡΑΛΟ Τῤ|ΛΙΛΩΣΩἈ
L. 105.2–4 ΟΚΤΑΚΟΛΕΝΚΩ
- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------|
| <i>ouel-ende-eion</i> | <i>our-rō</i> | <i>sokk-a</i> | <i>ḡok-k</i> |
| one-NEG-C | 3SG-LOC | take.up-PRED | honor-ACC |
| <i>et-men-ke-ra-lo</i> | | <i>tilli-lō-jōa</i> | |
| take-NEG-CONSUE-PR.PRED-FOC | | God-LOC-by | |
| <i>ok-tak-ol-enkō</i> | | | |
| call-PASS-PT1.PTC-but | | | |
- “And no one is to take honor on himself but the one called by God.”

In both examples we find the verb *o(o)k*-, “to call.” In ex. 2, an active sentence, we find a nominative subject and agent of the verb, *ḡissou mēna*- “Saint Mina,” and in ex. 3 we find that the agent of the verb, *tillilōjōa* “God,” is no longer marked by the nominative but has instead become an adverbative phrase marked by the postposition “by,” as we would expect. That the Old Nubian accusative case is not preserved under A-movement, and is therefore structural, is corroborated by evidence from contemporary Nubian languages, such as Kunuz:

31 Most of the following examples will be from *M.*, *L.*, and *St.*, as these are the texts for which I have already been able to prepare a full morphosyntactical analysis.

32 I have glossed as a juncture vowel what is elsewhere known as the “appositive” (*ONG* §3.6.5). Pending a full analysis of the different occurrences of this morpheme, I can say that it appears to occupy the slot that would otherwise be filled with case morphology, that is, in case of adjectives, but also in the case of relative clause constructions and close coordination, as below in ex. 8.

<i>ay</i>	<i>ka:-g</i>	<i>goy-s-i</i>	4
I	house-ACC	build-PST-1SG	
“I built the house.”			

<i>ka</i>	(<i>ay-gen</i>)	<i>goy-takki-s-u</i>	5
house	I-INSTR	build-PASS-PST-3SG	
“The house was built (by me).” ³³			

173

If we now turn to the behavior of the presumed accusative morpheme -*ka*, we expect another type of behavior that has been generalized as A-movement, namely the possible transformation of direct object-indirect object constructions into double object constructions, cf. the English “I gave the book to John” and “I gave John the book.”

ṬḶḶ ḲṚḲḲḲ ḲṚḲḲḲ ṬṚḲ ḲḲḲḲḲ ṬṚḲḲḲḲḲ			
ṬḶḶ ḲṚḲḲḲ ḲṚḲḲḲ ṬṚḲ ḲḲḲḲḲ ṬṚḲḲḲḲḲ			
<i>tan</i>	<i>orōse-n</i>	<i>šok-ka</i>	6
3SG.GEN	praise-GEN	book-ACC	St. 12.12–13.1
<i>pei-a</i>	<i>kisse-la</i>	<i>tij-j-ar-enkan</i>	
write-PRED	church-DAT	give-PL.OBJ-PT1.PRED-when(?)	
“When(?) he wrote books of its praise and gave them to the church.”			

In ex. 6 we find that the direct object of *tij-*, which coincides with the direct object of the verb *pei-*, is marked with the accusative case and a plural object marker -*j*, whereas the indirect object of *tij-*, *kissela*, is marked by the dative (or allative). Double object constructions, in which both the patient and the recipient are marked with accusative case, are however much more common:

ḡḲṚḲḲḲ ḲḲḲḲ ḲṚḲḲḲḲ ḲṚḲḲḲḲ ḲṚḲḲḲḲ ḲṚḲḲḲḲ			
ḡḲṚḲḲḲ ḲḲḲḲ ḲṚḲḲḲḲ ḲṚḲḲḲḲ ḲṚḲḲḲḲ ḲṚḲḲḲḲ			
<i>magirkonende</i>	<i>ein</i>	<i>koumpou-k-on</i>	7
but	DEM.PROX	egg-ACC-C	M. 6.13–15
<i>ai-ka</i>	<i>din-esō</i>		
1SG-ACC	give-IMP.2SG		
“But give me this egg.”			

Thus it seems that Old Nubian conforms to the general case pattern of accusative languages, and that, moreover, the *ka*-morpheme consistently functions as what is commonly called an accusative case marker. Nonetheless, Browne rightly observed that Old Nubian case

33 From ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 237. See also id., “Raising to Subject and Object in Kunuz Nubian,” pp. 22f.

marking worked different from for example Latin case inflection. Different from Indo-European languages, Old Nubian has no concordant case; case is only marked once on the right edge of the noun phrase, cf. ex. 2 [*man eitt*]-in; ex. 3 [*tan orōse*]-n; ex. 7 [*ein koumpou*]-k-. This is most visible in the case of relative clauses.³⁴

174

8 ἔλον παπο εἶροϋ αἰκα ἑοκοϋ δινεσσ \ | εἰριόθρω ἑοκοϋ κοσμοσα
L. 107.1-3 τοϋσοϋ | εἰριότσω δοϋνηκοϋσσικα \

<i>el-on</i>	<i>papo</i>	<i>eir-ou</i>	<i>ai-ka</i>	<i>ηok-ou</i>
now-C	father.VOC	2SG-J	1SG-ACC	glory-J
<i>eir-iō-orō</i>		<i>ηok-ou</i>	<i>kosmos-la</i>	<i>tousou</i>
2SG-LOC-with		glory-J	world-DAT	before
<i>eir-io-tjō</i>		<i>doun</i>	<i>kou-ssi-ka</i>	
2SG-LOC-with		be-PTC.PR? ³⁵	have-PT2.1SG-ACC	

“Now father give you and me glory, the glory with you that I had being with you before the world.”

In this sentence we find that the entire attributive sentence to *ηok-* has been extraposed to the right edge of the sentence, with a repetition of *ηokou*.³⁶ The accusative case marking follows completely at the end of the attributive clause, after the verb.³⁷ So we may conclude that although in morphological terms, the Old Nubian κα-morpheme behaves differently from Indo-European accusative inflection (no syncretism, no concordance), on a syntactical level it completely conforms to what we expect an accusative case marker to do. There is therefore no necessity to invent divergent terminology.

3. Verbal System

As one of the consequences of thinking about Old Nubian from out of its context within other Nubian languages, we have to resist the temptation to formalize its grammar into paradigms. This does not mean that there are no rules or regularities in Old Nubian grammar, nor should any claim that its grammar is less “developed” or more “primitive” than the elaborate systems of classical languages ever be warranted. What I mean is that the paradigm as such is the response of a very specific, particularly Indo-European linguistic situation, namely that its case and tense morphemes are not always

³⁴ See SATZINGER, “Relativsatz und Thematisierung im Altnubischen.” See Abdel-Hafiz, “Nubian Relative Clauses” for an analysis of relative clauses in Kunuz Nubian.

³⁵ We would expect something like *doul*, perhaps with assimilation l>n before k.

³⁶ However, this does not seem to be always necessary, cf. *elka* [...] *pesin aigille* in ex. 1.

³⁷ Contrast this with for example the spreading of accusative case across the entire relative clause, as in Panyjima. See BLAKE, *Case*, p. 117, ex. 54.

analyzable, i.e., they are often syncretic.³⁸ For example, no separate element in the Greek verbal form *eluthē* tells me that it is aorist, passive, indicative, or third-person singular. Nor does any individual element of the Latin ending *-um* in *patrum* tells me that it is plural, masculine, or genitive. Moreover, forms are often ambiguous, e.g. *-um* in *patrum* and *manum*. In absence of clear one-to-one relations between form and meaning, the paradigm was invented to teach these syncretic forms by means of examples, by means of analogy, organized in the characteristic table form.³⁹

175

The imposition of paradigmatic structures on an agglutinative⁴⁰ language such as Old Nubian, however, leads to a very unwieldy grammatical description. If we for example inspect the sections on the verbal paradigm in Browne's *Old Nubian Grammar*, we are immediately struck by the fact that the entire paradigm is completely imaginary, or at least idealized into a certain classical paradigmatic format. As Browne states himself, "The paradigm presented [...] is an idealized schematization based on the ON corpus and is meant to be merely illustrative."⁴¹ The problem is that this descriptive, illustrative table contains the very core of the prescriptive strategy inherited from classical philology that Browne continuously applies. The morphemes that participate in constructing verb phrases are never articulated and analyzed individually, but are always already included in predetermined categories such as "indicative" or "verbid." Yet if we were to believe the footnotes, there are untested forms that have been included,⁴² as well as several – but not even close to all – phonological variations that have been excluded from this idealized scheme or not accounted for⁴³; a paradigmatic approach simply cannot account for the phonological variation that occurs along the edges of different morphemes.

In agglutinative languages, certain sets of morphemes occur – from our Indo-European perspective – cross-categorically, while at the same time the large amount of available suffixes potentially destabilizes any attempt to categorize all possible combination of forms paradigmatically.

ΟΥΚΚΟΥΤ-ΤΑΚΚ-ΕΝ
oppress-PASS-PR.3SG

9
L. 102.3

³⁸ BLAKE, *Case*, p. 19.

³⁹ Starting with PLATO, *Statesman*, 277d–278d.

⁴⁰ ZYHLARZ, *Grundzüge der nubischen Grammatik*, p. 4, insists that "Nubisch keine agglutinierende Sprache ist," but see HINTZE, "Beobachtungen zur Altnubischen Grammatik VI," p. 287.

⁴¹ ONG, p. 52.

⁴² ONG, p. 50, n. 49

⁴³ ONG, p. 50 nn. 45–6, 50–6.

10 ḥḏīk-ḏp-īc-n-ḏ
M. 2.4 be.afflicted-TR-PT2-3SG-PRED

11 ꞗꞗꞗ-īḡ-ḏḏ-ḡn-kḏ
St. 4.2 judge-PL.OBJ-FUT-3SG-ACC

176

For example, we can see in exx. 9–11 the second/third person singular personal suffix *-in/-en/-n* in three different contexts but in all three cases it is clearly recognizable. The same holds for the so-called predicative suffix, which again occurs cross-categorically (exx. 12–14).⁴⁴

12 ꞗꞗꞗꞗꞗ-ḡ-ḏ
St. 14.5 believe-PR-PRED

13 ꞗꞗꞗ-ḏ-ḏ-ḏ
L. 111.9 holy-PRED-QUOT-FOC

14 ḥḏīk-ḏp-īc-n-ḏ
M. 2.4 be.afflicted-TR-PT2-3SG-PRED

If we want to make any progress in the analysis of the Old Nubian verbal system we therefore need to move away from the idea of a paradigm and start thinking in terms of classes, sets of morphemes. Comparative evidence from Nilo-Saharan languages should be adduced as the main evidence for the organization of the Old Nubian morphological system. Greek or Coptic parallellisms, which depart from paradigmatic person and tense marking and a series of so-called “periphrastic” elements, have less explanatory force.

Let me give an example of what such approach might look like. My suggestion would be to start from the right edge of the verbal complex and work our way toward the left, up to the lexical core of the grammatical form. I will do so by passing through a number of morphological classes. This list is by no means intended to be exhaustive, and we will skip, for reasons of brevity, the nominal material, such as case marking (see ex. 8), that may cluster to the right of the verbal complex. Note also that all following examples are intransitive verbs, even though I have not yet observed any strong categorical difference between transitive and intransitive verbal morphology.

15 ꞗḏḡ-ḡp-ī
M. 13.11 divide-PR-1SG

44 See for a more extensive analysis VAN GERVEN OEI, “The Old Nubian Morpheme *-a* in Nominal and Verbal Predicates.”

$\text{OYNN-}\underline{\text{IN}}\text{-NO}$ bear-2/3SG-FOC	16 <i>L. 100,3</i>
$\text{T}\bar{\text{M}}\text{M-}\underline{\text{AP}}\text{-OY}$ assemble-PT1-1/2PL	17 <i>St. 3,7-8</i>
$\text{ELAP-IC-}\underline{\text{AN}}\text{-}\underline{\text{A}}$ keep-PT2-3PL-PRED	18 <i>L. 107,7</i>

177

Upon entering the verbal part of the verbal complex from the right we first encounter a set of person markers, which are well attested in other Nubian languages (exx. 15–18).⁴⁵ They appear either with or without the predicative marker. The bare forms are usually deployed in non-declarative contexts, whereas the forms marked with the predicative marker correspond to what we call the finite verb of a main clause. But it is misleading to dub the forms with and without the predicative suffix as belonging to the respectively “indicative” and “subjunctive” paradigm. Within the Old Nubian context, these terms are properly meaningless.

$\text{PA}\bar{\text{G}}\text{-}\underline{\text{EP}}\text{-I}$ divide-PR-1SG	20 <i>St. 13,11</i>
$\text{T}\bar{\text{M}}\text{M-}\underline{\text{AP}}\text{-OY}$ assemble-PT1-1/2PL	21 <i>St. 3,7-8</i>
$\text{ELAP-IC-}\underline{\text{ANA}}$ keep-PT2-3PL-PRED	22 <i>L. 107,7</i>

In Browne’s paradigmatic approach, tense and person are conflated into one portmanteau form. This is understandable in the context of his background in classical philology, in which Greek person and tense can never be analyzed into separate parts. However, in Old Nubian the verbal forms appear to be synthetic. It is possible to distinguish between two or three separate tense morphemes, depending on the analysis of the underlying forms. Owing to a lack of evidence, this issue remains to be decided.⁴⁶ I give here an analysis with three separate morphemes (exx. 20–2). Both forms of the preterite have survived in modern Nubian languages. The precise distinction in usage between the two forms, however, remains to be fully articulated⁴⁷; in Nobiin, both past tense suffixes have collapsed

⁴⁵ Ibid, §3.9.6.

⁴⁶ See WESCHENFELDER AND WEBER, this volume.

⁴⁷ ZYHLARZ, *Grundzüge der nubischen Grammatik*, p. 63, referred to the two past tenses “Aorist” and “Präteritum,” respectively. According to ONG §3.9.7a, “The difference between

into a single paradigm,⁴⁸ whereas in Kunuz Nubian only the second preterite has survived.⁴⁹

- 23 ⲟⲗⲗ-ⲉⲓⲡ-ⲓⲙⲉⲛ-ⲁ-ⲓⲥⲁⲛ-ⲁ-
P.QI. 17.ii.16 hang-TR-NEG-FUT-PT2-PRED-

178

Browne's inclusion of the "future" tense in the temporal paradigm should be rejected, first because the morphological variation of the future suffix suggests that it follows another class of morphemes which include the inchoative, transitive, and causative suffixes, and second because there are in fact attestations of verbal forms with both the future suffix and a tense morpheme (ex. 23).⁵⁰ Apropos Nobiin, Bechhaus-Gerst notes that the future tense has a distinct modal aspect,⁵¹ and the same may be inferred for Old Nubian, and the fact that many contemporary Nubian languages have an innovative future form, suggests that a semantically distinctive future tense had been lacking previously.⁵²

Inchoative suffix

- 24a ⲁⲡⲟⲩ-ⲁⲥ-ⲓⲛ
St. 16.11 protect (lit. rain)-INCH-3SG
- 24b ⲕⲓⲡ-ⲓⲥⲓ-[ⲟⲛ]ⲛⲟ-[ⲁ]
L. 108.11 come-INCH-COND.3SG-PRED
- 24C Ⲅⲟⲩⲛⲧ-ⲟⲩⲧ-ⲁⲡⲡ-[ⲁ]
L. 100.2 pregnant-INCH-FUT-PRED
- 24d ⲧⲟⲩⲓⲥ-ⲧ-ⲁ
St. 28.10 be.secure-INCH-PRED

preterite I and preterite II appears to be aspectual in the indicative, where I tends to be either a descriptive imperfect or a resultative perfect, and II is regularly a punctiliar past." BECHHAUS-GERST, *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*, p. 79, moreover notices that "this distinction is already in the process of disappearing," and that "in the subjunctive [...] preterit I is adverbial, preterit II is adnominal."

48 BECHHAUS-GERST, *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*, p. 83.

49 ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 150.

50 Cf. ONG, p. 51, "There is also a rare future preterite." That the combination of different temporal and modal suffixes may extend beyond this example is suggested by the example adduced by LAJTAR, this volume, p. 199: ⲁⲗⲩⲉⲣⲉⲗⲟ, which seems to have both the preterite 2, and present tense 1SG suffix.

51 BECHHAUS GERST, *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*, p. 86.

52 In Kunuz the future tense is formed by the circumfix *b(i)- -r*, with the *-r* element clearly reminiscent of the Old Nubian future suffix (ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 154), whereas Nobiin has the prefix *fa(a)-* (BECHHAUS-GERST, *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*, pp. 157ff; WERNER, *Grammatik des Nobiin*, p. 151).

Causative suffix

ΠΟΟΓ-ΓΔΡ-Δ 25a
raise-CAUS-PRED L. 106.10

ΔΕΚΚ-ΙΓΡ-ΜČ-ČΕ-ΛΟ 25b
be.concealed-CAUS-NEG-PT2.1SG.PRED-FOC St. 6.3 179

ΟΥΛ-ΓΟΥΔ-Δ-ΕΡΟΥ-Λ 25c
ear-CAUS-FUT-PR.1PL-DET St. 29.9

ΟΥΛ-ΓΡ-ΕΝ 25d
ear-CAUS-PR.3SG L. 113.9

Transitive suffix

ΕΙΤ-ΔΡ-ΙČ-[Δ 26a
take-TR-PL.OBJ-PRED L. 114.6

ΟΛΛ-İΡ-ΕČΑΝ|Ν-ΟΝ 26b
hang-TR-PT2.3PL-C St. 8.12

ΕΟΥΡ-ΟΥΔ-Δ-ΝΔ 26c
shade-TR-FUT-PR.3SG St. 12.3

ΤČČ-Ρ-Δ-ΔΕΝΟΥ 26d
hate-TR-PRED-C L. 101.4

Next we may inspect the four “modal” suffixes in Old Nubian, which are not separately listed by Browne: the aforementioned future suffix (ex. 23); the inchoative, which signals the onset of an action (exx. 24a–d); the causative, which turns a transitive verb into a ditransitive verb (exx. 25a–d); and the transitive suffix (exx. 26a–d), which is not clearly marked by Browne, but is present in many lemmata in his *Old Nubian Dictionary*.⁵³ Its function in Old Nubian is to transform intransitive verbs into transitive verbs. As may be clear, these suffixes have a full form with the vowel *a*, forms with the reduced vowels *i* and *u*, and fully phonologically reduced forms without vowels.

It may well be possible that this group of suffixes has developed out of the final verbal suffix class that I would like to discuss, namely a series of verbs that are often used in so-called “adjunctive constructions”⁵⁴ and have often become proper verbal suffixes

53 BECHHAUS-GERST, *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*, p. 113, refers to this form as the “old causative,” even though it is still productive in for example Kunuz, cf. ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 118.

54 ONG, §3.9.19.1.

in modern Nubian languages. These types of grammaticalizations, which start with the semantic bleaching of a verb, a constriction to certain syntactical environments, and phonological reduction, still have not been properly studied,⁵⁵ but considering that the extant Old Nubian material stretches across several centuries, it might be possible to use the frequency of the occurrences of grammaticalized (i.e. “modern” forms) for the relative dating of texts. But this must remain pure speculation.

4. Documentary material: The final frontier

On a last note, I would like to address the problematic issue that most of our knowledge of Old Nubian grammar is based upon the major literary texts, such as the ones I just cited. In general, Old Nubian literary material is more easily accessible to research because Browne has already prepared most of the editions, the language is less condensed, and in a considerable number of cases we have Greek or Coptic texts that allow for interlinguistic comparison. However, this is not the case with documentary texts, whose language is usually more compact and colloquial, and more difficult to interpret and/or interpolate due to the largely unknown context in which these materials were produced. Yet their study is indispensable to a complete analysis of the Old Nubian language and its grammar during the period of its currency, for which I have argued in this paper.

Although a considerable amount of documentary evidence has been collected in the Qasr Ibrim editions (P.QI 1–3 and P.QI 4, forthcoming), there is still a sizeable number of letters, sales, and contracts that remain unpublished to date. This situation does not only give us a distorted image of the written tradition of Old Nubian, the documentary evidence also confronts us with quite a gap in our actual knowledge of Old Nubian grammar. A grammatical analysis of the Old Nubian documentary material, and reflection of that analysis in our grammatical description of the language, would potentially solve many issues, not only in the documentary texts themselves, but also in the many unexplained details of the already published literary documents.

I would like to close with an illustrative example. In the spring of 2010, Joost Hagen, with whom I first delved into Old Nubian texts at Leiden University, sent me images of two letters by email, one of them shown on the next page, asking me to have a look at them. I know nothing of the provenance of this material, except that it appears to be written in Old Nubian, comes from Qasr Ibrim and is

55 However, see BECHHAUS-GERST, *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*, pp. 137–67; JAKOBI & EL-GUZUULI, this volume.

currently housed in the British Museum. I have produced a first transcription of the first page of the text below.⁵⁶

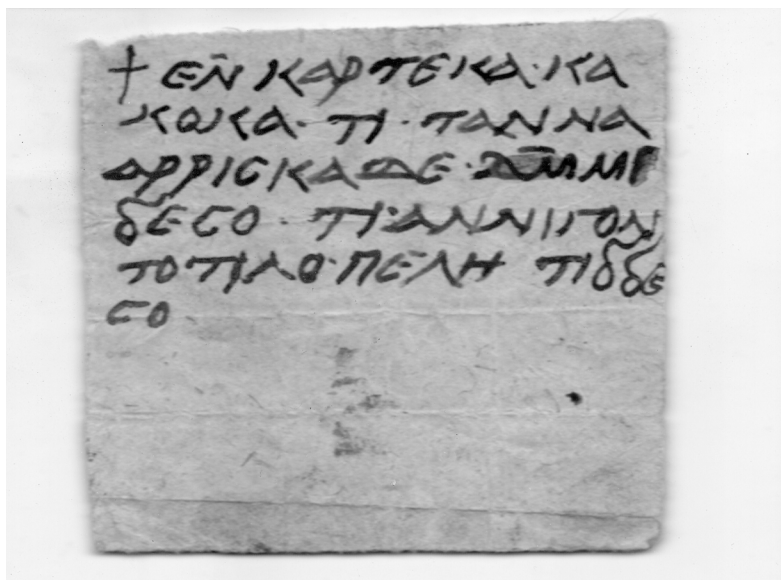


Fig. 1 An Old Nubian letter from Qasr Ibrim

181

- 1 † ēn karteKa · Ka
KaKa · Ti · TanNa
arriKaΔε · Δ̄imi
ōeso · Ti · anniton
- 5 totilo · pelh tiōōe
co

First, we may observe that the interpunction seems to separate distinct phrases. We may also notice that the text contains two verbs, both in the imperative and with a plural direct or indirect object (ll. 3–4 *dimmijeso*; ll. 5–6 *tijjeso*). It seems logical that the object of the first imperative *dimmijeso*, “hand over,” is *ein karteKa*, “this letter,” in which case the indirect object must be plural. Indeed we find two accusative marked constituents coordinated in l. 3 with the suffix *-de*. The first term of the coordinated couple would be *kako*, whose meaning is unknown (perhaps a personal name?), the second term would be *tanna*, “his,” *arris*, which also may or may not be a personal name and seems to have been attested as such elsewhere. The meaning of the constituent *ti* remains mysterious, as it is neither a morpheme nor an attested word. Moreover it is repeated in the second

56 Qasr Ibrim, unknown find number. Stored in the British Museum Qasr Ibrim Archive in the same glass frame as the forthcoming P.QI 4 74.

sentence without any clear relation to the surrounding material. *Anniton totilo* should mean “and my son,” and is probably marked by a focus morpheme *-lo*. But this leaves the morpheme *-(i)t-* unexplained. The imperative *tijjeso*, whose plural object marker probably has the same referent as the first imperative *dimmijeso*, is preceded by the adjunctive verb *pele*. According to Bechhaus-Gerst,⁵⁷ this adjunctive verb developed into a prefix for the future tense in modern Nubian languages, but the distribution or development of similar prefixes such as the habitual remains to be studied.

Even this short letter, with its minimal content, offers us the entire range of lexical, morphological, and syntactical issues that remain to be solved. So fellow nubilogists, *encore un effort!*

⁵⁷ BECHHAUS-GERST, *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*, p. 158.

Bibliography

- ABDEL-HAFIZ, Ahmed Sokarno. "Raising to Subject and Object in Kunuz Nubian." 1985. <<http://www.sfu.ca/~gerdts/teaching/Abdel-HafizNubianRaising.pdf>>
- . "Nubian Relative Clauses." *Bulletin of the Sohage Faculty of Arts* 8.1 (1989): pp. 39–51.
- . *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian: A Nile Nubian Language Spoken in Egypt*. Berlin: Verlag Dr. Müller, 2009.
- ARMBRUSTER, Charles H. *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960.
- BECHHAUS-GERST, Marianne. "'Nile Nubian' Reconsidered." In *Topics in Nilo-Saharan Linguistics*, edited by M.L. BENDER. Hamburg: Buske, 1989.
- . *The (Hi)story of Nobiin: 1000 Years of Language Change*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011.
- BLAKE, Barry J. *Case*, 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- BROWNE, Gerald M. *Griffith's Old Nubian Lectionary* [= *Papyrologica Castroctaviana Studia et Textus* 8]. Rome & Barcelona, 1982.
- . "Old Nubian Philology." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 60 (1985): pp. 291–6.
- . *Bibliorum Sacrorum Versio Palæonubiana*. Louvain: Peeters, 1994.
- . *The Old Nubian Miracle of Saint Menas* [= *Beiträge zur Sudanforschung Beiheft* 7]. Vienna, 1994.
- . *Old Nubian Dictionary*. Louvain, 1996.
- . *Old Nubian Grammar*. Munich: Lincom Europa, 2002.
- EL-GUZZULI, El-Shafie & Vincent W.J. VAN GERVEN OEI. *The Miracle of Saint Mina*. The Hague & Tirana: Uitgeverij, 2012.
- HINTZE, Fritz. "Beobachtungen zur altnubischen Grammatik I–II." *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Ges.-Sprachw. R.* 10.3 (1971): pp. 287–93.
- . "Beobachtungen zur altnubischen Grammatik III." *Altorientalische Forschungen* 2 (1975): pp. 11–23.
- . "Beobachtungen zur altnubischen Grammatik IV." *Nubia: Récentes recherches* (1975): pp. 65–9.
- . "Beobachtungen zur altnubischen Grammatik V." *Altorientalische Forschungen* 5 (1977): pp. 37–43.
- . "Beobachtungen zur altnubischen Grammatik VI." *Nubische Studien* (1986): pp. 287–93.
- LEPSIUS, R. *Nubische Grammatik*. Berlin: Wilhelm Hertz, 1880.

- MASSENBAACH, Gertrud von. "Wörterbuch des nubischen Kunûzi-Dialektes." In *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen* 36.3 (1933): pp. 99–227.
- PLATO. *Statesman, Philebus, Ion*, translated by Jeffrey Henderson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- RILLY, Claude. *Le Méroïtique et sa famille linguistique*. Louvain: Peeters, 2010.
- SATZINGER, H. "Relativsatz und Thematisierung im Altnubischen." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 80 (1990): pp. 185–205.
- SMAGINA, Eugenia B. "Einige Probleme der Morphologie des Altnubischen." *Nubische Studien*. Mainz am Rhein, 1986.
- VAN GERVEN OEI, Vincent W.J. "The Old Nubian Memorial for King George." In *Nubian Voices: Studies in Christian Nubian Culture*, edited by Adam ŁAJTAR & Jacques VAN DER VLIET [= *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement* xv]. Warsaw, 2011.
- . "The Disturbing Object of Philology." *Postmedieval* 5.4 (forthcoming, 2014).
- . "A Note on the Old Nubian Morpheme -a in Nominal and Verbal Predicates" In *Nubian Voices: Studies in Christian Nubian Culture*, vol. II, edited by A. ŁAJTAR, G. OCHAŁA & J. VAN DER VLIET. Warsaw: Raphael Taubenschlag Foundation, forthcoming.
- WERNER, Roland. *Grammatik des Nobiin (Nilnubisch): Phonologie, Tonologie und Morphologie*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag, 1987.
- WOOLFORD, Ellen. "Lexical Case, Inherent Case, and Argument Structure." *Linguistic Inquiry* 37.1 (2006): 111–30.
- ZYHLARZ, Ernst. *Grundzüge der nubischen Grammatik im christlichen Frühmittelalter (Altnubisch): Grammatik, Texte, Kommentar und Glossar*. Leipzig: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1928.

Old Nubian Texts from Gebel Adda in the Royal Ontario Museum

Adam Łajtar

In a paper read during the 12th International Conference for Nubian Studies in London in August 2010 I gave a survey of Christian textual finds made in the 1960s by the Mission of the American Research Center in Egypt on the site of Gebel Adda and now kept in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.¹ Here I would like to concentrate on the Old Nubian part of the material.

The collection of Old Nubian texts from Gebel Adda kept in the Royal Ontario Museum consists of 29 items. One text is bilingual Old Nubian-Greek (a Greek text was added to the original Old Nubian). In 12 cases, the language remains undeterminable (either Old Nubian or Greek) due to either the lack of clear language traits, e.g. when the text consists only of names, or the object's bad state of preservation.

The texts are inscribed on parchment, paper, ceramics, textiles, and wood. From the point of view of the contents they may be divided into three groups: literary texts, subliterary texts, and documentary texts. Some texts cannot be ascribed to these three groups because they are too fragmentarily preserved for any conclusion to be drawn.

Literary texts, all written on parchment, are six in number. Four of them I would like to present with some details.

ROM acc. no. 973.24.960 (fig. 1): This is most probably a leaf from a codex. It preserves one side margin and perhaps also the top margin; nothing seems to be lacking at the top. The text is written with black ink with the occasional use of red to reinforce horizontal strokes marking /i/. A continuous reading of the text is impossible

1 ŁAJTAR, "A Survey of Christian Textual Finds from Gebel Adda Kept in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto."



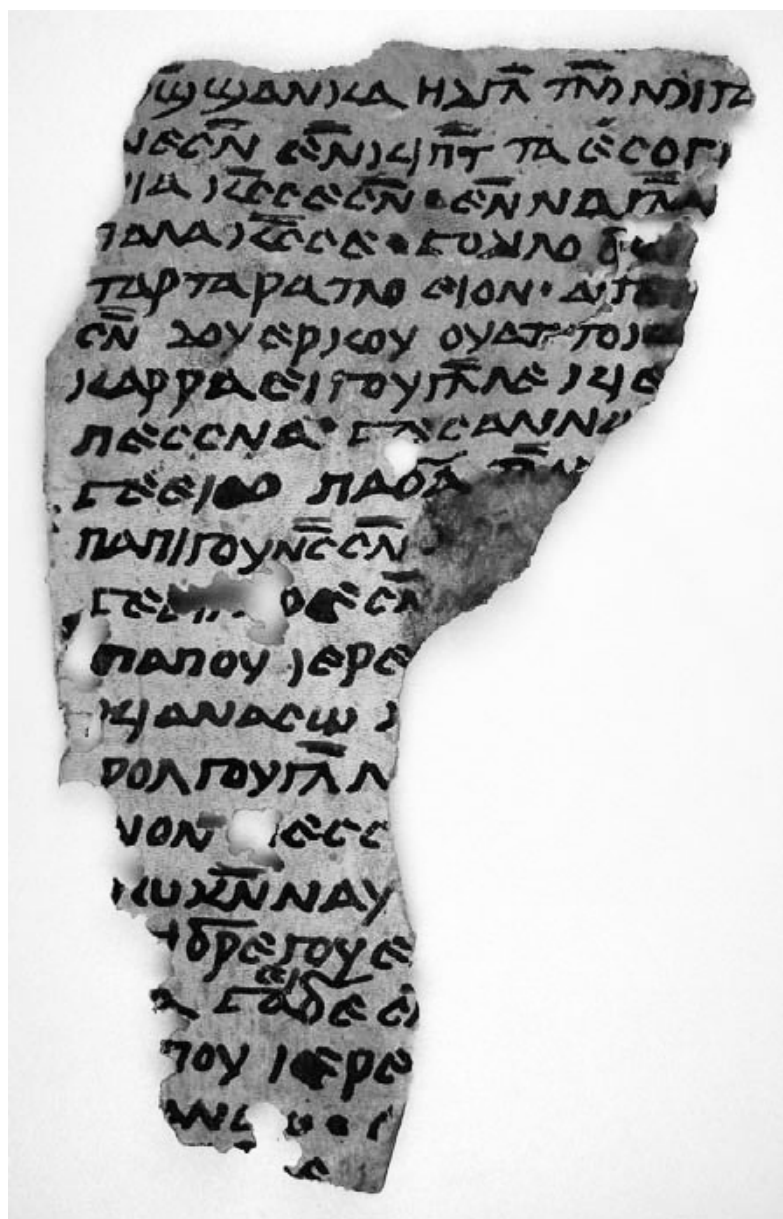
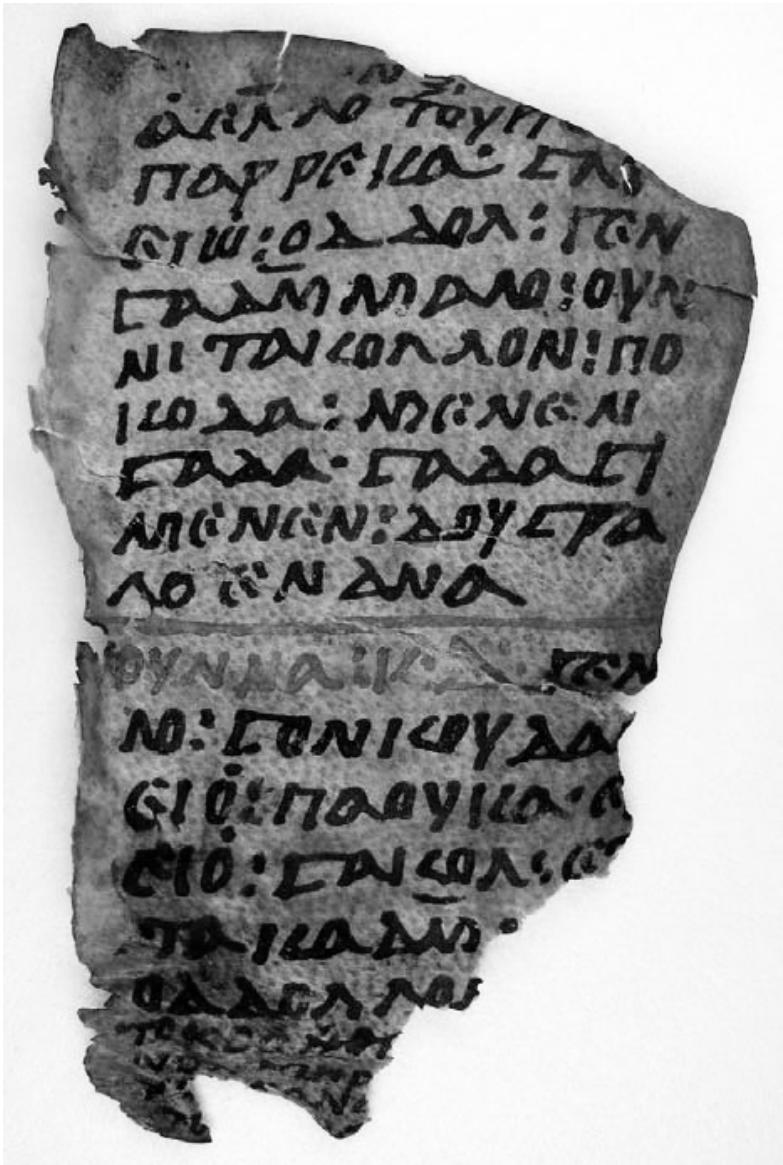


Fig. 1 ROM acc. no.
973.24.960
recto: hair side
verso: flesh side



Fig. 2 ROM acc. no.
973.24.889
recto: hair side
verso: flesh side



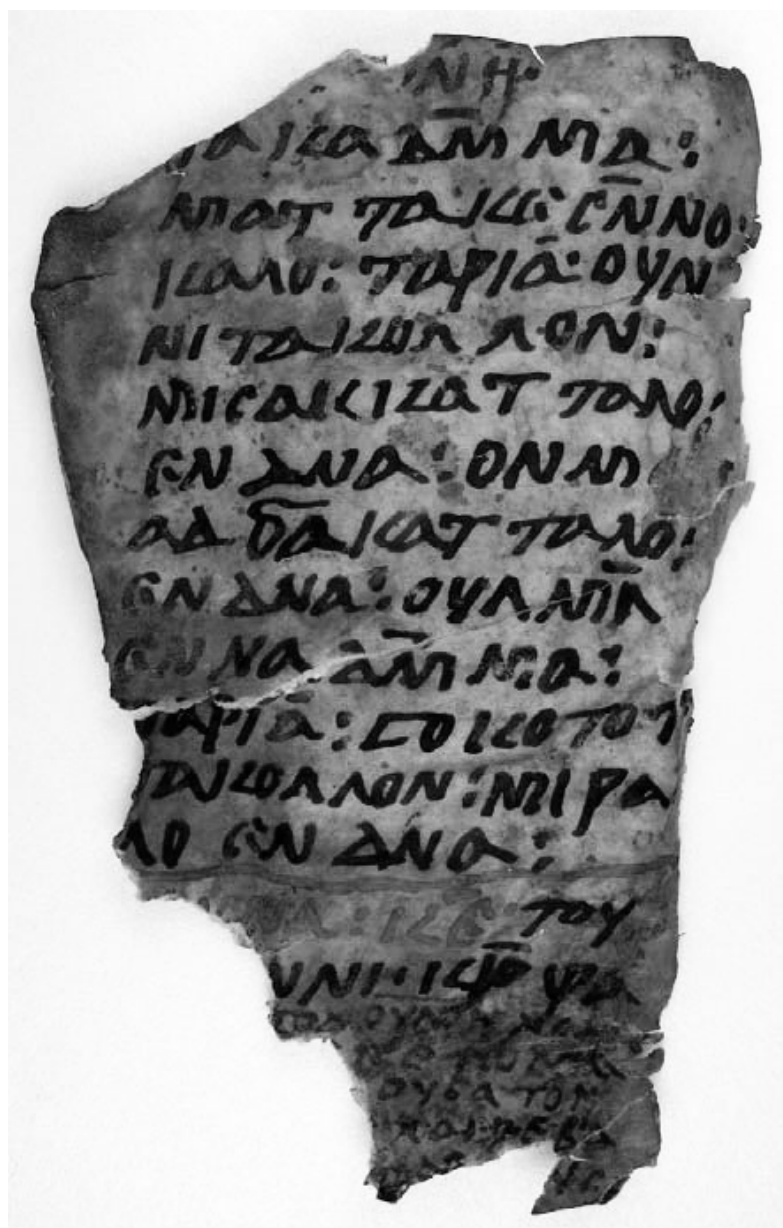


Fig. 3 ROM acc. no.
973.24.1185
recto: hair side
verso: flesh side

at this stage of my work on it; however, I can venture a hypothesis about its contents. The text mentions the prophecy of the “father Jeremiah” (παποϋ ιερειῶσι) three times, the “children of Israel” (ισραηλῖν τοϋφιγοϋν) once, and the “people of Israel” (ισραηλῖν κηϋτ) once. There is also a question of a king who may be the king of either Israel or Judah, or of a foreign people. All this suggests that we are dealing with a text with an Old Testament subject: either an Old Testament book or a later work based on the Old Testament. Unfortunately I was unable to identify it.

ROM acc. no. 973.24.889 (fig. 2): This is undoubtedly a leaf of a codex as it preserves pagination on one side (p. 17). The leaf is complete at the top and perhaps also at the bottom. Unfortunately both side margins are lacking, which impedes a continuous reading considerably. Nevertheless there is actually no doubt that the text speaks about the birth of Jesus, but in a theological rather than a narrative way, as typical narrative elements like the stable, animals, shepherds, a star, angels, magi, etc., are lacking. The birth is mentioned explicitly in line 2 of the hair side (οϋννικ). Besides, there appear such key-words as “maiden” (παρθενος), “miracle” (εοκορρ), Jerusalem, “the son of Mary” (μαριανεαλ), and “saviour” (αφδ). Jesus’s birth is apparently presented as food that came for us today, fulfillment of what was said by a prophet, joy for human hearts and guidance for those who went astray (τεγκαρροϋ). Two observations may be of interest from the linguistic point of view: “food” (figuratively the new-born Jesus) is rendered as τοϋκκλ. That word is known so far only from legal texts from Qasr Ibrim as a designation of a kind of food or beverage served during the ceremonies accompanying legal actions.² The literary parallel yielded by the text under consideration suggests that τοϋκκλ may be a kind of bread. The word “prophet” has the form εῳκκλαῳ against εῳκκλαῳτ known so far. The substitution of /s/ for /t/ may be dialectal, the more so as it is attested several more times in the Gebel Adda texts. I am unable to identify the text in this stage of my work; I suspect that it is a composition of Patristic times.

ROM acc. no. 973.24.993: This is another leaf of a codex, of which two side margins are lost, thus impeding a continuous reading. The text mentions: 24 rams (αοϋαδιλγοϋ κῶ), the number 24 with a word for “the most high” (αοϋολαοϋλ κῶ), the word “throne” with the word “seven” (κολοτοϋ ερονοςῶ), Jesus Christ (ισοϋσι χριστοσι), “the one who has the faith” (πῳτεγεῳτκολ), and “kings” (οϋρ[ο]ϋεγο[ϋ]). The portion of the text starting with the words “Jesus Christ” very much resembles Rev. 1.5, but the entire text surely is not an Old Nubian translation of the Book of the Revelation of Saint John. It rather

2 For references, see BROWNE, *Old Nubian Dictionary*, s.v., and add p. 91 4 69.24.

looks like a composition based on Saint John's Revelation. Perhaps the text is an encomium on the 24 Elders of the Revelation. One has to remember that 24 Elders (and generally all angelic beings) enjoyed a vivid cult in Christian Nubia.³

ROM acc. no. 973.24.1185 (fig. 3). The text appears on a leaf of a codex with pagination preserved (57 on one side of the leaf, 58 on the other). Each side is divided in two parts by a horizontal line executed in red paint. Under the division lines, there are titles, also written in red, reading: ΟΥΝΝΑ ΚΑ, "in the lunar month (day) 24" (p. 57) and ΟΥΝΝΑ ΚΕ, "in the lunar month (day) 25" (p. 58). This shows that we are dealing with a text segmented according to days of the lunar month. The text seems to deal with benefits mankind received (ΓΕΝΕΑ ΔΗΜΑΛΟ, literally "took good things") through the holy birth (ΟΥΝΝΙΤΑ ΚΟΛΛΟΝ). They go to the lame (ΠΟΚΟΔ) and the blind (ΔΟΥΓΕΤ), to the one who is estranged (ΜΙΣΑΚΚΑΤΤ) and to the liar (ΜΑΔΔΑΚΑΤΤ). One category of beneficiaries is not recognizable because the word designating it (ΟΥΛΜΙ ?) seems not to have been attested so far. The text seems to run continuously, which makes one wonder why it was segmented under the heading of consecutive days of the lunar calendar. Perhaps it was destined for reading in this way. If so, this would be the only example of liturgical observance connected with the lunar calendar and not the civil one.

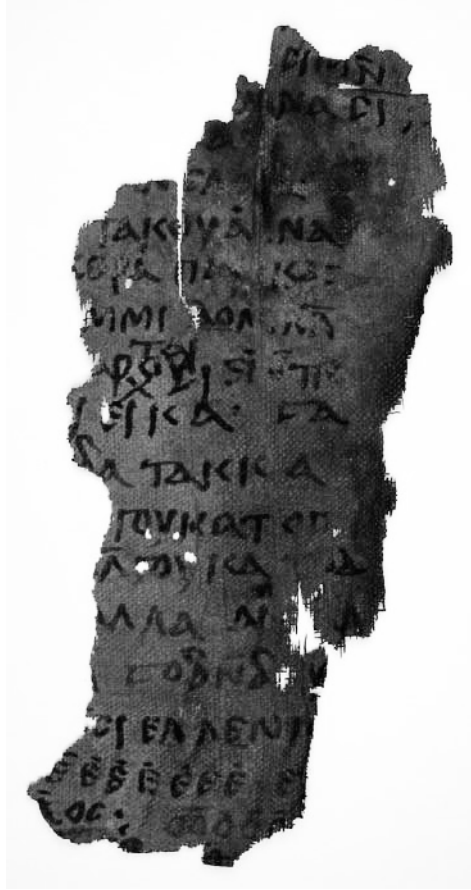
Subliterary texts are represented by only one item, a linen shroud found wrapped over the body buried in tomb 1039 (ROM acc. no. 973.24.2708; fig. 4). The shroud is in a lamentable condition, broken in numerous small fragments difficult to arrange with each other. They carry different parts of a long inscription in black ink. The largest fragment of the text preserves in its lower part rows of vowels, which show that we are dealing with a magical or apotropaic inscription destined to protect the person wrapped in the shroud.⁴

Documentary texts are by far the largest group among the Gebel Adda inscribed finds in Old Nubian. They are written mostly on paper and also on pottery. Unfortunately the state of preservation of these finds leaves much to be desired. Many of them have reached us as scraps with only a few letters, enabling us to recognize the language but hardly anything more. The two best preserved

3 A proof for that are inscriptions from Meinarti with the names of the 24 Elders, for which see ŁAJTAR, "Varia Nubica x-xi," pp. 107-13. Four different lists of 24 Elders making together what is designated as a "seal of Solomon" are found in a Greek inscription on the north wall of a burial vault under Room 5 of the Northwestern Annex to the monastery on Kom H at Dongola. The inscription remains unpublished; preliminarily see ŁAJTAR & VAN DER VLIET, "Wall Inscriptions in a Burial Vault under the Northwestern Annex of the Monastery on Kom H." Twenty-four Elders were probably represented in the scene of Maiestas Crucis on the north wall of the mosque building at Dongola (information provided by Dobrochna Zielińska).

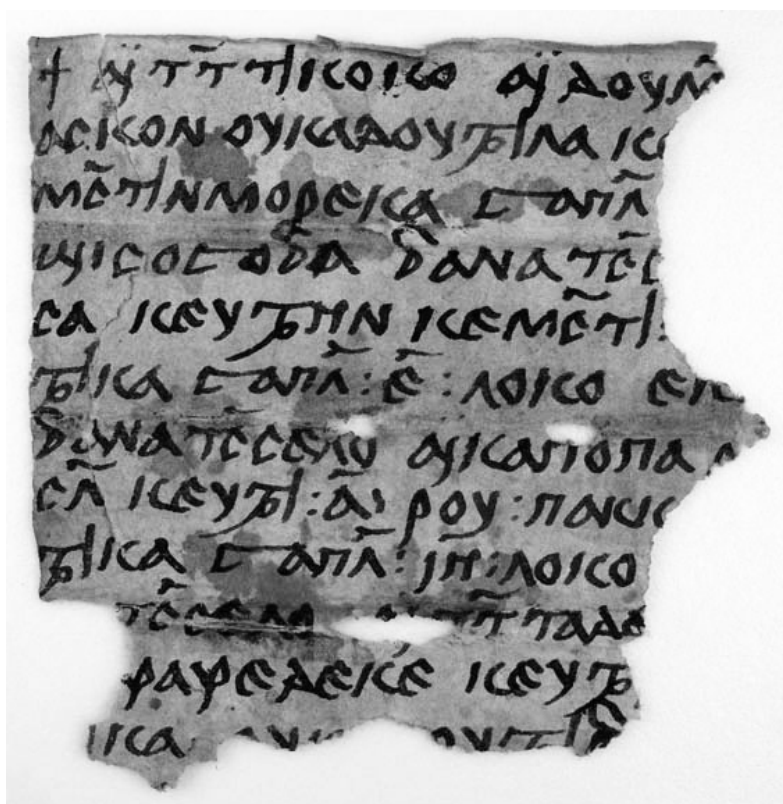
4 An inscribed shroud from Qasr Ibrim (RUFFINI, "Qasr Ibrim's Old Nubian Burial-Shroud.") has precisely the same ending indicating the same sort of text.

Fig. 4 ROM acc. no.
973.24.2708



items were presented in my London paper. They are a letter from Marianou, eparch of Nobadia, to the anteparch (“vice-eparch” or “deputy eparch”) Mena concerning fugitive slaves (ROM acc. no. 973.24.936), and a list of slaves, which originally could have been attached to this letter (ROM acc. no. 973.24.2916).

Here I would like to present another document, which bears more than statistical value (fig. 5). The text is inscribed on a sheet of paper (ROM acc. no. 973.24.2915), the preserved dimensions of which are: h. 9.7 cm, w. 9.5 cm. The upper and the left-hand edges are original. The right-hand and the lower edges are torn. The original text in Old Nubian is found on only one side. After the sheet had been inscribed it was folded. The uninscribed back side of the sheet was later used as vehicle for a text in Arabic that mentions *sanjag al-sultan mamlūk*, “district of the Mamluk sultan.” The date of the original text in Old Nubian is unknown; it may originate from the 12th-13th century.

Fig. 5 ROM acc. no.
973.24.1185

195

- † αἱ τῆτικοκο αἱ δογλῆ[τα -----]
 ασκον ογκα δογῆλα κ. [-----]
 μῆτιν moreκα γαπῶ [-----]
 4 ωι σογοδα δανα τῆσελο. αἱ -----]
 σα κεγῆτην κεμῆτι [----- ει]-
 ῥικα γαπῶ : ἑ : λοκο ε. [-----]
 δανα τῆσελο. αἱ καποπα ς [-----]
 8 ελ κεγῆτι : ἁ : ρογ : πακκ[αταλο --- ει]-
 ῥικα γαπῶ : ιη : λοκο [----- δα]-
 [να] τῆσελο. αἱ τιττα δε [-----]
 [να]ραφεδεκε κεγῆτι [-----]
 12 [.] κα. γ. [1-2] ογτιδ [-----]
 [...]. [-----]

1-4. *I Tittikoko, I Doulista [- - -], and/after the daughter/asti seeking us, [- - -] and the price I received [from/through - - -]shi Songoja (is) five mor of mist (?), gold [- - -].*

4-7. *[I NN - - -] and the price I received (is) one fourth of a cubit [- - -] grain, five pieces of gold [- - -].*

7-9. *I Kapopa [- - -] and the price I received (is) one and half cubit of [- - -], grain, 18 pieces of gold [- - -].*

9ff. *I Titta [- - -] and Maraṇe [and the price I received (is)] cubit [- - -].*

The text lists four different contracts of sale recognizable through the expression $\delta\alpha\lambda\alpha$ $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\epsilon\lambda\omicron$ ("the price I received"). All contracts have the form of a first person declaration made by the seller stating that he/she received the price, a declaration well known from the Qasr Ibrim material.⁵ The sellers are: in the first contract, two women with the names Tittikoko and Doulista⁶; in the third contract, a certain Kapopa, undoubtedly also a woman⁷; and in the fourth contract, Titta (a name of indeterminate gender).⁸ In the second contract, the information about the seller has not been preserved, unless $\text{I}\alpha$ at the beginning of line 5 is the ending of his/her name, which in that case may have read $\text{I}\alpha\text{I}\alpha\alpha$ or something similar.

The document as now preserved does not inform us what was sold in each case⁹; information about the buying parties is also lacking except for contract number 1. Since it is difficult to imagine a sale contract deprived of these pieces of information, however, we have to assume that they were contained in the lost right-hand part of the document. The prices are pretty high. As a rule they consist of pieces of gold (preserved are the numbers 5 and 18), something that was measured in cubits ($\kappa\epsilon\chi\tau\iota$), and grain. The first contract also mentions five $\mu\omicron\rho$ of $\mu\epsilon\tau$, most probably a dry good.¹⁰ An interesting

⁵ RUFFINI, *Medieval Nubia*, pp. 22–31.

⁶ The proper name $\tau\iota\tau\tau\iota\kappa\omicron\kappa\omicron$ seems not to have been attested before. It belongs to a larger group of compound names with $-\kappa\omicron$, "having," here connected with $\tau\tau\tau$, "gift, grace," hence "having grace." Names in $-\kappa\omicron$ ($\text{I}\mu\sigma\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\kappa\omicron$, $\text{I}\mu\alpha\text{I}\alpha\kappa\omicron$, $\text{I}\mu\tau\epsilon\lambda\omicron\sigma\kappa\omicron$, $\text{I}\mu\chi\alpha\text{I}\eta\kappa\omicron$, etc.) apparently were borne only by women. $\Delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\iota\sigma\tau\alpha$ (written $\Delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\sigma\tau\alpha$) is found in Qasr Ibrim (P.QI 3.44.10) and as the name of the mother of an unnamed bishop of Faras (VAN DER VLIET, "Exit Tamer, Bishop of Faras"). The name could possibly mean "root," as noted by *ibid.*, p. 191.

⁷ $\kappa\alpha\text{I}\omicron\mu\omicron\alpha$ undoubtedly is related to $\kappa\alpha\text{I}\omicron\mu\omicron$, Old Nubian for "pearl." The latter is attested as a female name in Old Nubian documents from Qasr Ibrim; for references, see BROWNE, *Old Nubian Dictionary*, p. 240, s.v.

⁸ The name $\tau\tau\tau\alpha$ is common in Qasr Ibrim; for references, see BROWNE, *Old Nubian Dictionary*, p. 245, s.v. Among eight attestations of this name altogether, two refer to women. In the remaining six cases, the sex of the person is unknown.

⁹ Based on the parallels from Qasr Ibrim and the size of the prices, one can suppose that the object of the sales was land or slaves.

¹⁰ $\mu\omicron\rho$ is attested in Old Nubian documents from Qasr Ibrim; for references, see BROWNE, *Old Nubian Dictionary*, p. 120, s.v., where the word is rendered as "artab." $\mu\epsilon\tau$ is unknown. One should observe that the latter word may lack the beginning placed at the end of line 2 of the text. It is rather improbable to read $\kappa\epsilon\text{I}\mu\epsilon\tau\eta$, "of one fourth," as the genitive is inexplicable in that case.

element of the first contract is that the two sellers declare they were led to make the sale by another person, either a daughter of one of the two or an official called “asti.” A similar clause is found in one of the Qasr Ibrim documents being a contract of donation of gold pieces by one person to another at the request of a Church of Mary.¹¹

One wonders what the purpose of this document is. It cannot contain the texts of the actual selling/buying contracts; the latter, as we can learn from the Qasr Ibrim material, were much longer and drafted according to a firm scheme, which is not present here. If these are not real contracts, they may however be summaries of the contracts, edited in a rather peculiar manner with a direct citation of the most important statement from the real contracts (“I NN received”). Accepting this hypothesis one can suppose that the document under consideration is a register of selling/buying contracts concluded in a certain place at a certain period.

Registers or summary lists of contracts were well known in Graeco-Roman Egypt, where they were called *anagraphai*.¹² As a rule they were compiled at the end of a given time-span, most frequently a three-month period, in an appropriate office (either the *agoranomion* or the *grapheion*), and give names of the parties involved, information about the object of sale, the price, and a note to the effect that a tax for registering the contract was paid.¹³ In spite of formal similarity between our document and the Egyptian *apographai*, I strongly doubt that the former is a Nubian counterpart of the latter. Even in Christian Nubia an official register of contracts must have been document of a considerable length, most probably recorded in a codex, whereas the document under consideration was written on a single sheet of paper, which apparently is complete on all sides but the right. What is more, the paper was folded to be sent as a letter.

This leads us to the conclusion that the document we are dealing with is an official letter, or an attachment to a letter, by which a notary office informs a higher official about contracts concluded in it recently, e.g. on a single day.¹⁴ That a notary office in Christian Nubia could have attended more than one contract a day is demonstrated by two documents from Qasr Ibrim’s Archive III, otherwise unconnected with one another, which largely have the same lists of witnesses.¹⁵ The notary office which compiled and sent the document could have been that of Gebel Adda and the addressee an official of the Kingdom of Makuria responsible for the economic and fiscal

¹¹ P.QI 3.43.

¹² For notarial practices in Graeco-Roman Egypt, see WOLFF, *Das Recht der griechischen Papyri Ägyptens in der Zeit der Ptolemäer und des Prinzipats*, pp. 8–56, esp. pp. 35–45.

¹³ The best examples come from the notary office (*grapheion*) in Tebtynis in the Fayum oasis and are edited in P.Mich. v.

¹⁴ Information like this could have been used later in preparing a true register of contracts.

¹⁵ P.QI 3.37 and 43.

Fig. 6 ROM acc. no.
973.24.2912



198

Fig. 7 ROM acc. no.
973.24.2935



matters, perhaps the eparch of Nobadia or *domestikos* of Faras, both residing probably in Qasr Ibrim (or in Faras).¹⁶ Another possibility is that the document was drafted in a notary office outside Gebel Adda and sent to Gebel Adda to a higher official. One should observe that Gebel Adda was probably the seat of the anteparch (“vice-eparch” or “deputy eparch”) of Nobadia, as suggested by the letter from the eparch Marianou to the anteparch Mena concerning fugitive slaves already mentioned above. If the above conclusion is correct one has to assume that the Kingdom of Makuria had a well-organized and well-functioning bureaucratic system close to the models known from the Mediterranean world.¹⁷

The letter of the eparch Marianou to the anteparch Mena concerning fugitive slave, the list of slaves, and the register of contracts may have several parallels in the Gebel Adda material. Unfortunately, the documents in question are so badly preserved that very little can be said about their contents. It is then more for the sake of completing the picture than for their intrinsic value that I would like to mention three such documents. One is a piece of paper cut as a

¹⁶ If this was the case one has to assume that the letter did not leave Gebel Adda for some reason.

¹⁷ This is a conclusion reached also by RUFFINI, *Medieval Nubia*.

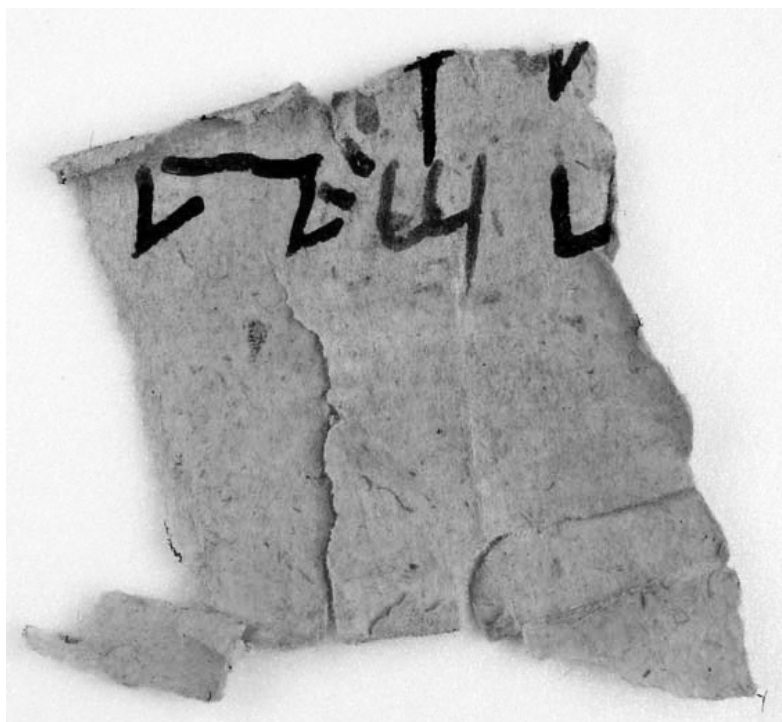


Fig. 8 ROM acc. no.
973.24.2926

crocodile (ROM acc. no. 973.24.2912) and preserving the Trinitarian formula (“In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen”), most probably the beginning of a document of some kind (fig. 6). The second, a scrap of paper inscribed on both sides (ROM acc. no. 973.24.2935), seems to come from a letter, either official or private, recognizable through the word $\Delta\Delta\gamma\epsilon\pi\epsilon\lambda\omicron$, “I have greeted (you)”¹⁸ (fig. 7). The third (ROM acc. no. 973.24.2926) preserves the word $\pi\epsilon\omega\omega$, designating a state official in the kingdom of Dotawo, mentioned in the protocols of documents from Qasr Ibrim (fig. 8).

All remaining documentary texts from Gebel Adda (leaving aside fragments) seem to belong to a single, well-defined group of lists of provision. The documents in question are written on paper, although one appear on a piece of pottery. They list persons, mostly if not exclusively men, and amounts of foodstuffs, including wine measured in $\mu\omicron\pi\iota\eta\alpha$, something that was measured in $\pi\alpha\pi\epsilon\alpha\tau\tau$, and something that was measured in $\mu\alpha\omega\epsilon$. In two cases, the provisions are listed by days. Thus the list ROM acc. no. 973.24.2914 lists provisions for days 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 2x of the month of Khoiak, day

¹⁸ The form $\Delta\Delta\gamma\epsilon\pi\epsilon\lambda\omicron$ is peculiar. It combines the $\pi\tau_2$ suffix $-\epsilon\pi$ and the $\pi\tau_1$ suffix $-\lambda\omicron$. Similar combined forms are attested in Old Nubian. I owe this information to Vincent van Gerven Oei.

2 of a following month (Tybi?) and two days of a preceding month (Hathyr?), and the list ROM acc. no. 973.24.2930 lists provisions for day 30 of an unnamed month and several days of a following one. It should be observed that, in the lists arranged according to the calendar, the provisions can occur without the name of persons.

200

The lists of provisions from Gebel Adda have parallels in the form of wall inscriptions in the churches in Faras and Sonqi Tino, and documents on paper from Qasr Ibrim. This material was studied by Grzegorz Ochała in his paper for the London Nubian Studies Conference.¹⁹ His conclusion was that it actually is impossible to state whether the lists register what was received by the state or the Church from the individuals, or was distributed to them. One has to observe that the fragment ROM acc. no. 973.24.2936 has in its line 2 the word ΔΟΥΜΜΑ, “took, handed over,” which rather advocates for the first interpretation, the more so as one of the persons listed in this document is a king, obviously the king of Dotawo.

Summing up: Gebel Adda yielded the second largest collection of texts in Old Nubian after Qasr Ibrim. The texts enrich our knowledge of the literary culture of Christian Nubia and add important elements to our understanding of the functioning of the Nubian Christian kingdom of Dotawo.

19 OCHAŁA, “Old Nubian Lists of Goods and Money.”

Bibliography

- BROWNE, G.M. *Old Nubian Dictionary* [= *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* 556, *Subsidia* 90]. Leuven: Peeters, 1996.
- ŁAJTAR, A. "Varia Nubica x-xi," *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 36 (2006): 105-23.
- . "A Survey of Christian Textual Finds from Gebel Adda Kept in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto." In *Proceedings of the 12th International Congress of Nubian Studies, London*, edited by D.A. WELSBY & J.R. ANDERSON, forthcoming.
- ŁAJTAR, A., & J. VAN DER VLIET. "Wall Inscriptions in a Burial Vault under the Northwestern Annex of the Monastery on Kom H (Dongola 2009)." *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 21 (2012): 330-6.
- OCHAŁA, G. "Old Nubian Lists of Goods and Money: A Preliminary Presentation." In *Proceedings of the 12th International Congress of Nubian Studies, London*, edited by D.A. WELSBY & J.R. ANDERSON, forthcoming.
- RUFFINI, G.R. *Medieval Nubia. A Social and Economic History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- . "Qasr Ibrim's Old Nubian Burial-Shroud." In *Nubian Voices: Studies in Christian Nubian Culture*, vol. II, edited by A. ŁAJTAR, G. OCHAŁA & J. VAN DER VLIET. Warsaw: Raphael Taubenschlag Foundation, forthcoming.
- VAN DER VLIET, J. "Exit Tamer, Bishop of Faras (SB v 8728)," *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 37 (2007): 185-91.
- WOLFF, H.J. *Das Recht der griechischen Papyri Ägyptens in der Zeit der Ptolemäer und des Prinzipats*, II. *Organisation und Kontrolle des privaten Rechtsverkehrs* [= *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft. Rechtsgeschichte des Altertums* v/2], Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1978.

Noun Phrase Constructions in Nubian Languages: A Comparative Study

Suzan Alamin

1. Introduction

Most of historical-comparative studies of Nubian languages deal with sound correspondences and lexical similarities in order to reconstruct the Proto-Nubian sound system and lexicon, Proto-Nubian being the assumed ancestor of the Nubian languages.¹ The present paper attempts to reconstruct the Proto-Nubian noun phrase. According to Payne, “noun phrases are traditionally thought of as consisting minimally of a head noun, together with any number of noun phrase modifiers”² such as an adjective, numeral, quantifier, determiner, possessive adjective, genitive, and/or a relative clause. (Note that relative clauses are not included in this study). This study investigates noun phrases in the Nubian languages, that is, to find out which elements may modify noun phrases and how these modifiers are distributed within a noun phrase (hereafter NP). Also number agreement between the noun and its modifiers is considered. The ultimate aim is to infer from the comparison of NP constituent order in the various modern Nubian languages what the constituent order of the Proto-Nubian NP looks like.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 gives a short background of the Nubian language classification, data sources, the aim of the study, and the method of data analysis. In addition, some typological features of modern Nubian languages are presented. Section 3 describes the internal structure of NPs including NPs represented by a personal pronoun, determiner, or quantifier, and NPs

1 Cf. JAKOBI, “The Loss of Syllable-Final Proto-Nubian Consonants”; ZYHLARZ, “Die Lautverschiebungen des Nubischen”; BECHHAUS-GERST, “‘Nile-Nubian’ Reconsidered”; id., *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*; RILLY, *Le Méroïtique et sa famille linguistique*.

2 PAYNE, “Noun Phrases,” p. 714.

represented by a noun with or without modifiers. It includes nominal modifiers of the head noun: possessive adjectives, determiners, adjectives, numerals, quantifiers and nouns in genitive constructions. Section 4 presents some more complex forms of Nubian NP constructions.

2. The Nubian languages

The Nubian languages are scattered over a vast area comprising eastern Darfur and the northern Nuba Mountains of Sudan, and the Nile valley of northern Sudan and southern Egypt.³ Nubian is part of the Eastern Sudanic branch of the Nilo-Saharan phylum.⁴ According to Rilly, Nubian – along with Taman, Nyimang, Nara and the extinct Meroitic language – belongs to the northern branch of the Eastern Sudanic family.⁵

Nubian is a cluster of closely related languages. The Nubian language family is thought of as having three geographically defined subgroups, Nile Nubian, Kordofan Nubian, and Darfur Nubian. Nile Nubian is spoken in the Nile Valley roughly between the First and the Third Cataract. It consists of two languages, Nobiin and Kenzi-Dongolawi. Nobiin includes the dialects Halfawi, Sukkoth, and Mahas, which are all spoken in Sudan, and Fadija spoken in Egypt. Old Nubian is a Nile Nubian language, too. Bechhaus-Gerst considers Old Nubian to be ancestral to modern Nobiin.⁶ The second language of the Nile Nubian subgroup is Kenzi-Dongolawi (Dongolawi and Kenzi are two dialects of the same language, Kenzi being spoken north of Nobiin in Egypt and Dongolawi being spoken south of Nobiin in Sudan).

The second subgroup is Kordofan Nubian, spoken in the Nuba Mountains. It consists of a number of dialects. It is also referred to as Ajar language.⁷ The dialects include Ghulfan, Dilling, Karko, Tabaq, Kadaru, Al-Hugeirat, Dair, Wali, Kasha, Kujurja, Fanda, Abu Jinuk, Kudur, Kururu, Dabatna and Debri.⁸ In this paper, data are provided from Tabaq and Ghulfan. The extinct language of Jebel Haraza was not spoken in the Nuba Mountains but 300 km west of Khartoum. Despite its proximity to the Nile it is considered to be more closely related to the Kordofan Nubian languages than to the Nile Nubian languages. Haraza data are not included in this paper because they comprise only about 30 lexical items.

3 JAKOBI, "The Loss of Syllable-Final Proto-Nubian Consonants."

4 GREENBERG, *The Languages of Africa*.

5 RILLY, *Le Méroïtique et sa famille linguistique*, p. 401.

6 BECHHAUS-GERST, *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*.

7 THELWALL, "The Linguistic Settlement of the Nuba Mountains," p. 221.

8 JAKOBI, *Kordofan Nubian*.

The third subgroup is Darfur Nubian spoken in the Darfur region. It comprises Midob and Birgid. Birgid is considered to be a nearly extinct language and is poorly documented. In fact, the only published studies are MacMichael's and Thelwall's Birgid vocabulary of 1918 and 1977, respectively. So this is the reason why examples of Birgid NPs are mostly unavailable.

2.1 Data sources

All examples and data used in this comparative study have been taken from published and unpublished sources. The Dongolawi data are taken from Armbruster⁹ and Satti,¹⁰ the Nubian data are from Ayoub,¹¹ the Nobiin data are from Werner¹² and Mohamoud,¹³ the Midob data are from Werner,¹⁴ Alamin,¹⁵ Thelwall,¹⁶ and an unpublished manuscript prepared by Werner on Midob sentences.¹⁷ The Kenzi data is from Abdel-Hafiz.¹⁸ In addition, the Kordofan data are taken from unpublished sources and ongoing research from Williams and Comfort (Ghulfan documentation project), and Hellwig and Schneider-Blum (a documentation project on Tabaq). The paper focuses on NPs in the modern Nubian languages. Thus, Old Nubian NP constructions are not considered.

2.2 The aim of this study

The study aims at moving a step ahead in the description and the analysis of the internal structure of the NPs in the Nubian languages. The main research questions of this study are: 1) how are the modifiers distributed in relation to the head noun and in relation to each other and 2) is there number agreement between the head noun and its modifiers? The outcome is to set out rules for Nubian NP constructions from a synchronic point of view as well as setting rules for Proto-Nubian NP constructions. The outcome of this paper is a reconstruction of the Proto-Nubian NP constituent order at a syntactic level.

2.3 Method of data analysis

The NP constructions are compared throughout the paper in the various Nubian languages in respect to the order of constituents in a NP. This method helps to find out about common constituent or-

9 ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*.

10 SATTI, *Grammatical Analysis of Dongolese Phrases and Clauses*.

11 AYOUB, *The Verbal System in a Dialect of Nubian*.

12 WERNER, *Grammatik des Nobiin*.

13 MOHAMOUD, "Grammatical Properties of Nouns and Adjectives in Nobiin."

14 WERNER, *Tidn-aal*.

15 ALAMIN, "Midob Nominal Structure."

16 THELWALL, "Midob Nubian."

17 Werner, ms.

18 ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*.

der patterns and about deviations from these common patterns. The findings from this simple comparison allows us to assume that the common constituent order patterns attested in all Nubian can be of great help in reconstruction of the Proto-Nubian language.

206

2.4 Some typological features of the modern Nubian Languages

This paragraph shows some common typological characteristics of the modern Nubian languages. *sov* is the basic word order in all Nubian languages. A tonal system has been found in Mahas,¹⁹ Dongolese,²⁰ Kordofan Nubian,²¹ and in Midob,²² whereas stress is found in Kenzi.²³ As for number marking on nouns, the Nubian languages have different systems. While the Nile Nubian languages and Midob employ plural suffixes, Birgid and Kordofan Nubian have a more complex number marking system, involving singular and/or plural suffixes. There is no grammatical gender distinction. The Nubian languages are characterized by postpositions rather than prepositions. The case markers, for example, are postpositions that are placed at the end of the NP, as can be seen in the examples below.

3. The internal structure of the NP

It is worth mentioning here that there are basically two types of NPs in Nubian: a) NPs consisting of a noun with or without nominal modifiers, as shown in section 3.2 and b) NPs consisting of a single person pronoun, determiner or even a single quantifier which cannot take any nominal modifiers, as illustrated in section 3.1.²⁴

3.1 NPs represented by a person pronoun, determiner or quantifier

1	əy	na	say-re	kəl-m
Midob	1SG	3SG	morning-LOC	see-PST.3SG
	'I saw him in the morning' ²⁵			
2	suttee	tek-ki	wart-a	
Dongolawi	quickly	3SG-ACC	cut-let	
	'let him cut (it) quickly' ²⁶			

19 BELL, "The Tone System of Mahas Nubian."

20 SATTI, *Grammatical Analysis of Dongolese Phrases and Clauses*.

21 JAKOBI, *Kordofan Nubian*.

22 WERNER, *Tidn-aal*.

23 ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 21.

24 Abbreviations: 1 - first person; 2 - second person; 3 - third person; ACC - accusative; CAUS - causative; DET - determiner; GEN - genitive; IMP - imperative; INS - instrumental; LOC - locative; NP - noun phrase; PL - plural; PN - Proto-Nubian; PRED - predicate; PROSP - prospective; PRS - present; PST - past; SG - singular.

25 WERNER, ms.

26 SATTI, *Grammatical Analysis of Dongolese Phrases and Clauses*. p. 91.

Examples 1 and 2 represent a type of NP that presents personal pronouns (1SG and 3SG) only without any modifiers. This type of NP is referred to as a minimal NP, i.e. a simple NP. It fills the slot and takes the place of the NP that contains a noun plus other modifiers. Other examples of the single NP in Nubian languages are shown in examples 3–5, where the determiners can fill the slot of an NP by themselves without any modifiers. This case occurs when the determiners are used elliptically.

in	nal-s-u	3
DET	see-PST-3SG	Kenzi
'this (one) did see [him/her]' ²⁷		

in-gi	sunde	4
DET-ACC	smell.IMP.2SG	Dongolawi
'smell this' ²⁸		

an-e		5
DET-bound morpheme		Midob
'that one' ²⁹		

The bound morpheme -e in example 5 above is added to the determiners when it is used independently.³⁰

Quantifiers can be used independently and in this case, they can represent a simple NP, as shown in (6) and (7).

malle	taa-s-a	6
all	come-PST-3PL	Kenzi
'all came' ³¹		

weeri	taa-s-a	7
some	come-PST-3PL	Kenzi
'some came' ³²		

3.2 NPs represented by a noun with or without modifiers

The second type of Nubian NP involves a noun with or without nominal modifiers. These modifiers can involve possessive adjectives, determiners, adjectives, numerals, quantifiers and another noun in a genitive construction.

27 ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 206.

28 JAKOBI & EL-GUZZULI, "Perception Verbs and their Semantics in Dongolawi," p. 208.

29 WERNER, *Tidn-aal*, p. 38.

30 WERNER, *Tidn-aal*.

31 ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 210.

32 Ibid.

The following examples show the NPs that appear as a single noun without modifiers, irrespective of their syntactic function as a subject or an object. The single NPs below are underlined.

208	8 Kenzi	<u>elum</u> crocodile 'the crocodile is at the river' ³³	essi-r river-LOC	da exist.3SG
	9 Dongolawi	<u>aru</u> rain 'rain is about to cause that wall fall down' ³⁴	man DET	katre-gi wall-ACC
	10 Nobiin	<u>Nura</u> Nura 'Nura hit the drum' ³⁵	taar-ka drum-ACC	nall-o(n) hit-PST-3SG
	11 Ghulfan	<u>tono</u> boy 'the boy is burning the wood' ³⁶	or-gi wood-ACC	lil-in burn-PRS.3SG
	12 Midob	<u>əi</u> 1SG	<u>əəci</u> water	tiiwa drink.1SG 'I drink water' ³⁷

3.2.1 Possessive adjective + noun

Nubian possessive adjectives are derived from the personal pronouns by adding the genitive linker -n, as shown in table 1.³⁸

Table 1. Nubian possessive adjectives

	Kenzi/ Dongolawi	Nobiin	Kordofan Nubian/ Tabaq	Darfur Nubian/ Midob
1SG	an/ann	ayiin	an	əən
2SG	ən/enn	iriin	ʊn	nan
3SG	tən/tenn	tariin	tən/tan	nan
1PL	an/ann	uuiin	ʊn	aŋan (incl.)/ adin (excl.)
2PL	in/inn	uriin	wun	uŋun
3PL	tin/tinn	teriin	tin	aŋŋan

33 ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 204.

34 JAKOBI & EL-GUZUULI, "Perception Verbs and their Semantics in Dongolawi," p. 196.

35 MOHAMOUD, "Grammatical Properties of Nouns and Adjectives in Nobiin," p. 175.

36 Williams & Comfort, p.c.

37 THELWALL, "Midob Nubian," p. 109.

38 Kenzi data are from ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 82; Dongolawi data are from ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*, p. 172; Nobiin data are from Werner 1978, p. 118; Tabaq data are from Hellwig and Schneider-Blum, p.c.; and Midob data are from Thelwall 1983, p. 107.

In table 1, the possessive adjectives in Kenzi and Dongolawi seem to have two forms in each case. This is phonologically conditioned. The possessive adjectives with a single *n* are used when the following noun starts with a consonant as in examples 13–15 below, whereas the other possessive adjectives with double *nn* are used when the following noun starts with a vowel as in 16–18. Notice that the nasal *n* of the possessive adjective in example 13 is assimilated to the labial stop /*b*/ of the following noun, and then the nasal is realized as labial *m*.³⁹

am	bes	13
1SG.GEN	brother	Kenzi
'my brother' ⁴⁰		
tɛn	dung(i)	14
3SG.GEN	money	Dongolawi
'his/her money' ⁴¹		
an	daa-n-di	15
1SG.GEN	home-GEN-appertaining.to	Dongolawi
'[the language] of my home/our home' ⁴²		
ann	id	16
1SG.GEN	husband	Kenzi
'my husband' ⁴³		
ann	ossi	17
1SG.GEN	leg	Dongolawi
'my leg' ⁴⁴		
tɛnn	ed	18
3SG.GEN	tongue	Dongolawi
'his tongue' ⁴⁵		

Midob in table 1 has a distinction with regard to the 1PL. On the one hand, it has an inclusive possessive adjective *aŋan* which includes both the speaker and the listener. On the other hand, it has an exclusive possessive adjective *adin*, which excludes the listener. Midob is the only Nubian language that has this distinction for 1PL.

39 ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 35.

40 Ibid., p. 83

41 ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*, p. 172.

42 JAKOBI & EL-GUZUULI, "Perception Verbs and their Semantics in Dongolawi," p. 193.

43 ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 83.

44 ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*, p. 172.

45 SATTI, *Grammatical Analysis of Dongolese Phrases and Clauses*, p. 74.

The examples above show the position of possessive adjectives in the NP. They are always placed before the head noun. Other Nubian languages also display the same constituents order for possessive adjectives that precede the head nouns in the NP as shown in 19–21.

210	19	ayiin	noog
	Nobiin	1SG.GEN	house
		'my house' ⁴⁶	
	20	an	uudo
	Tabaq	1SG.GEN	goat
		'my goat' ⁴⁷	
	21	əən	əd
	Midob	1SG.GEN	house
		'my house' ⁴⁸	

The rule for the above examples is **personal pronoun + genitive linker -n + noun**. Across the Nubian languages, the possessor is consistently marked by the genitive linker and it precedes the possessed. Therefore, we can assume that the same is true for Proto-Nubian: ***personal pronoun + genitive linker -n + noun**.

It has been found in the Nobiin data that it is also possible for the possessive adjective to follow the head noun in the NP, as shown in example 22.

22	noog	anni
	house	1SG.GEN
	'my house' ⁴⁹	

Moreover, in Nobiin there is number agreement between the possessive adjective and the head noun. Compare example 22 above with example 23 below.

23	noog-ri	anni-ri
	house-PL	1SG.GEN-PL
	'my houses' ⁵⁰	

3.2.2 Determiner + noun

3.2.2a Determiners in the Nubian languages

⁴⁶ Werner, *Grammatik des Nobiin*, p. 118.

⁴⁷ Hellwig & Schneider-Blum, p.c.

⁴⁸ WERNER, *Tidn-aal*, p. 37.

⁴⁹ MOHAMOUD, "Grammatical Properties of Nouns and Adjectives in Nobiin," p. 180.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

	Kenzi/ Dongolawi	Nobiin	Kordofan Nubian/ Tabaq	Darfur Nubian/ Midob
this	in	in	iŋ	nen
these	in-gu	in-gu	ɛnɛ	neen
that	man	man	waŋ	an
those	man-gu	man-gu	wanɛ	aan

Table 2. Nubian determiners

211

In Nubian, determiners precede the head noun in an NP, as seen in the following examples.

in	id	24
DET.SG	man	Kenzi
'this man' ⁵¹		
in	essi	25
DET.SG	water	Dongolawi
'this water' ⁵²		
in	buru	26
DET.SG	girl	Nobiin
'this girl' ⁵³		
iŋ	dul	27
DET.SG	granary	Tabaq
'this granary' ⁵⁴		
ŋo	moz	28
DET.SG	banana	Ghulfan
'this banana is rotten' ⁵⁵	wajat-iŋ rotten-PRS.3SG	

The rule is **NP** → **determiner** + **noun**. This rule suggests a similar syntactic pattern in Proto-Nubian: ***NP** → **determiner** + **noun**.

3.2.2b Noun + determiner

It is noticeable that there is no number agreement between the head noun and the determiner in Nubian as shown in examples 29–31. However, the Nubian determiner can be inflected for number when it is used elliptically or in a predicate position only as in example 32.

⁵¹ ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 206.

⁵² SATTI, *Grammatical Analysis of Dongolese Phrases and Clauses*, p. 74.

⁵³ MOHAMOUD, "Grammatical Properties of Nouns and Adjectives in Nobiin," p. 180.

⁵⁴ Hellwig & Schneider-Blum, p.c.

⁵⁵ Williams & Comfort, p.c.

212	29	in	wel-i	mushindili
	Dongolawi	DET.SG	dog-PL	ugly
		'these ugly dogs' ⁵⁶		
	30	in	burw-i	
	Nobiin	DET.SG	girl-PL	
		'these girls' ⁵⁷		
	31	nen	ir-eti	
	Midob	DET.SG	man-PL	
		'these people' ⁵⁸		
	32	in-gu	Nuba	amena
	Nobiin	DET-PL	Nubians	PRED.3PL
		'these are Nubians' ⁵⁹		

3.2.3 Noun + adjective

In Nubian, adjectives always occur after the head noun they modify. Examples are:

	33	id	adel
	Kenzi	man	good
		'the good man' ⁶⁰	
	34	buru	ashri
	Nobiin	girl	beautiful
		'a beautiful girl' ⁶¹	
	35	birke-tu	ʃer-du
	Ghulfan	worm-SG	short-SG
		'short worm' ⁶²	
	36	ir	dujur
	Midob	man	blind
		'a blind man' ⁶³	

The rule is **NP** → **noun + adjective**. Accordingly, we can assume that this was also the case in PN: ***NP** → **noun + adjective**.

56 SATTI, *Grammatical Analysis of Dongolese Phrases and Clauses*, p. 110.

57 MOHAMOUD, "Grammatical Properties of Nouns and Adjectives in Nobiin," p. 180.

58 ALAMIN, "Midob Nominal Structure," p. 53.

59 MOHAMOUD, "Grammatical Properties of Nouns and Adjectives in Nobiin," p. 181.

60 ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 207.

61 MOHAMOUD, "Grammatical Properties of Nouns and Adjectives in Nobiin," p. 180.

62 Williams & Comfort, p.c.

63 Werner, ms.

It has been found in the data that this rule does not apply in Midob. The adjective in Midob precedes the head noun. The rule is **NP** → **determiner + adjective + noun**. This order of NP as consisting of determiner + adjective + noun in Midob is unusual in comparison to the common noun + adjective order but it has been found in Midob in a number of examples; compare example 65 below.

213

nen	tiinin	əcci	37
DET.SG	dead	donkey	Midob
'this dead donkey' ⁶⁴			

nen	imannir	iddi	38
DET.SG	young	man	Midob
'this young man' ⁶⁵			

3.2.4 Noun + numeral

Numerals in Nubian follow the head noun. Consider the following examples.

kitab	wər	39
book	one	Dongolawi
'one book' ⁶⁶		

kaj	wee	40
donkey	one	Nobiin
'one donkey' ⁶⁷		

idu	bəra	41
person	one	Tabaq
'one person' ⁶⁸		

ir	parci	42
man/person	one	Midob
'one man/person' ⁶⁹		

The rule for this NP construction is: **NP** → **noun + numeral**. The same constituent order can be true for PN: ***NP** → **noun + numeral**.

When the numeral refers to several entities the head noun is not marked for plural, as illustrated in examples 43–8.

64 WERNER, *Tidn-aal*, p. 72.

65 Ibid.

66 ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*, p. 179.

67 AYOUB, *The Verbal System in a Dialect of Nubian*, p. 37.

68 Hellwig & Schneider-Blum, p.c.

69 Werner, ms.

214	43	id	owwi	
	Kenzi	man	two	
		'two men' ⁷⁰		
	44	kaj	uwwo	
	Nobiin	donkey	two	
		'two donkeys' ⁷¹		
	45	id	kemso	ka-s-a
	Nobiin	man.SG	four	come.PL-PST-3PL
		'four men came' ⁷²		
	46	ʊʊdu	kimɪn	kɔɔ
	Tabaq	month	four	HAVE.3SG
		's/he has four months' ⁷³		
	47	urgɪ	əddɪ	
	Midob	shoulder	two	
		'the two shoulders' ⁷⁴		
	48	nen	kuud	əddɪ
	Midob	DET.SG	ox	two
		'these two oxen' ⁷⁵		

3.2.5 Noun + quantifier

Nubian quantifiers occur after the head noun they modify. The examples are:

	49	burw-i	digri
	Kenzi	girl-PL	many
		'many girls' ⁷⁶	
	50	wel-i	weer
	Dongolawi	dog-PL	some
		'some dogs' ⁷⁷	

⁷⁰ ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 209.

⁷¹ AYOUB, *The Verbal System in a Dialect of Nubian*, p. 37.

⁷² MOHAMOUD, "Grammatical Properties of Nouns and Adjectives in Nobiin," p. 181.

⁷³ Hellwig & Schneider-Blum, p.c.

⁷⁴ WERNER, *Tidn-aal*, p. 138.

⁷⁵ Werner, ms.

⁷⁶ ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 210.

⁷⁷ SATTI, *Grammatical Analysis of Dongolese Phrases and Clauses*, p. 110.

kiira	taani	kutεε	fıındin	51	
kujuur	Tabaq.people	all	tell	Tabaq	
'then the kujuur would tell all the people' ⁷⁸					
ir	pocici			52	
man	all			Midob	215
'all men/people' ⁷⁹					
uud	poccici-r			53	
day	every-LOC			Midob	
'every day' ⁸⁰					

The rule is **NP** → **noun + quantifier**. The data at hand show that the quantifiers in Nubian always follow the head noun. Therefore, we may assume that the syntactic pattern of this construction in PN is ***NP** → **noun + quantifier**.

3.2.6 Genitive construction: noun + genitive linker + noun

Concerning the genitive, Nubian always employs the genitive linker -n. It links two nouns by -n, the first noun having the role of possessor and the second one having the role of possessed. Thus, the genitive in Nubian precedes the head noun of the NP. The examples are:

een-n	agil	54	
woman-GEN	mouth	Kenzi	
'the woman's mouth' ⁸¹			
illee-n	urti	55	
wheat-GEN	flour	Nobiin	
'wheat flour' ⁸²			
afa-n	ildu	56	
father-GEN	wife	Tabaq	
'father's wife' (i.e. mother's co-wife) ⁸³			
əd-n	ardi	57	
house-GEN	friend	Midob	
'friend of the house' ⁸⁴			

78 Hellwig & Schneider-Blum, p.c.

79 ALAMIN, "Midob Nominal Structure," p. 53.

80 WERNER, *Tidn-aal*, p. 117.

81 ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 205.

82 AYOUB, *The Verbal System in a Dialect of Nubian*, p. 201.

83 Hellwig & Schneider-Blum, p.c.

84 WERNER, *Tidn-aal*, p. 82.

58	aale-n	ur
Birgid	rain-GEN	head
	'sky' ⁸⁵	

216

The rule is **NP** → **possessor** + **genitive linker** + **possessed**. The PN reconstruction for this construction would be ***NP** → **possessor** + **genitive linker** + **possessed**.

4. Complex NP constructions

The Nubian NPs can be complex when they consist of more than one modifier, as illustrated in the examples below.

59	id	doro	gele	kemis
Kenzi	man	fat	red	four
	'four fat red men' ⁸⁶			

The rule is **NP** → **noun** + **adjective of size** + **adjective of color** + **numeral**

60	wel	mushindili	owwi
Dongolawi	dog	ugly	two
	'two ugly dogs' ⁸⁷		

The rule is **NP** → **noun** + **adjective** + **numeral**.

61	in	hage-gi	wart-e
Dongolawi	DET.SG	maize-ACC	cut-IMP.2SG
	'please cut this maize' ⁸⁸		

The rule is **NP** → **determiner** + **noun** + **case marker**.

62	buru	geele-gi	nall-e
Dongolawi	girl	red-ACC	look.at-IMP.2SG
	'please look at the red girl' ⁸⁹		

The rule is **NP** → **noun** + **adjective** + **case marker**.

85 THELWALL, "A Birgid Vocabulary List and its Links with Daju," p. 205.

86 ABDEL-HAFIZ, *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*, p. 209.

87 SATTI, *Grammatical Analysis of Dongolese Phrases and Clauses*, p. 110.

88 Ibid., p. 85.

89 Ibid., p. 71.

ay	wilid	kuduud	uus-ka	nas-s	63
1SG	boy	little	bad-ACC	see-PST.1SG	Nobiin
'I saw the bad little boy' ⁹⁰					

The rule is **NP** → **noun + adjective of size + adjective of quality + case marker**

217

ene	jaaldu	wate	uru	kenre	64
DET.SG	house.SG	big	two	are.nice	Tabaq
'these two big houses are nice' ⁹¹					

The rule is **NP** → **determiner + noun + adjective of size + number**.

aanyir	keel	keeci-re	əd	konnyiyum	65
people	red	grass-INS	house	build.PRS.3PL	Midob
'people build the house with red grass' ⁹²					

The rule is **NP** → **adjective + noun + case marker**.

According to the complex construction of NPs in Nubian, there is some evidence that adjectival modifiers expressing size precede adjectival modifiers expressing quality or color; see examples 59 and 63. Moreover, numerals always occur at the end of the NP as in examples 59, 63, and 64. Concerning the syntactic functions of NPs, they are marked by the accusative -gi in example 62 or the instrumental -re, as in example 65. The case marker attaches at the last element of the NP. It positions at the end of the whole NP, i.e. at the last element of the NP as shown in examples 61–3.

5. Conclusion

The paper concludes with the following findings about the Nubian NP construction. Nubian NPs may be simple or complex. They are simple when they are represented by a single person pronoun, determiner or quantifier. These simple NPs cannot be modified. By contrast, complex NPs contain a head noun that can be modified by possessive adjectives, determiners, adjectives, numerals, quantifiers and another noun in a genitive construction. The classification of Nubian NPs depends on the position of the head noun in an NP construction. Thus, the NPs in Nubian languages are classified as having both pre-modifiers and post-modifiers; the pre-modifiers⁹³ include possessive adjectives and determiners, while the post-

90 AYOUN, *The Verbal System in a Dialect of Nubian*, p. 25.

91 Hellwig & Schneider-Blum, p.c.

92 Werner, ms.

93 PAYNE, "Noun Phrases."

modifiers comprise adjectives, numerals and quantifiers. There are very few variations in the NP constituents' order in the Nubian languages. The only deviation from the common constituent order is attested in Midob. In this language the adjective precedes the noun rather than having the order noun + adjective, as is common in the other Nubian languages.

Bibliography

- ABDEL-HAFIZ, Ahmed Sokarno. *A Reference Grammar of Kunuz Nubian*. PhD Dissertation. Buffalo: State University of New York, 1988.
- ALAMIN, Suzan. "Midob Nominal Structure." In *Unity and Diversity of Nubian Languages: Toward a Standardized Writing System of Nubian Languages*, edited by Mohammed Jalal HASHIM & Abdel Rahim Hamid MUGADAM. Cape Town: The Centre of Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS), 2012: pp. 51-64.
- ARMBRUSTER, Charles H. *Dongolese Nubian: A Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965.
- AYOUB, Abd Al-Rahman. *The Verbal System in a Dialect of Nubian*. [= *Linguistic Monograph Series 2*]. Khartoum University, 1968.
- BECHHAUS-GERST, Marianne. "Sprachliche und historische Rekonstruktionen im Bereich des Nubischen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Nilnubischen." *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 6 (1984/5): pp. 7-134.
- . "Nile-Nubian' reconsidered." In *Topics in Nilo-Saharan*, edited by M.L. BENDER. Hamburg: Buske, 1989: pp. 85-96.
- . *The (Hi)story of Nobiin: 1000 Years of Language Change*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2011.
- BELL, Herman. "The Tone System of Mahas Nubian." *Journal of African Languages* 7 (1968): pp. 26-32.
- GREENBERG, Joseph H. *The Languages of Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963.
- JAKOBI, Angelika. "The Loss of Syllable-Final Proto-Nubian Consonants." In *Insights into Nilo-Saharan Language, History and Culture*, edited by Al-Amin ABU MANGA, Leoma GILLEY & Anne STORCH. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe, 2006: pp. 215-28.
- . *Kordofan Nubian: A Synchronic and Diachronic Study*, to appear.
- JAKOBI, Angelika and El-Shafie EL-GUZUULI. "Perception Verbs and their Semantics in Dongolawi (Nile Nubian)." In *Perception and Cognition in Language and Culture*, edited by Alexandra Y. AIKHEN-VALD & Anne STORCH. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2013: pp. 193-215.
- MOHAMOUD, Isamedin Mohamed. "Grammatical Properties of Nouns and Adjectives in Nobiin." In *Unity and Diversity of Nubian Languages: Toward a Standardized Writing System of Nubian Languages*, edited by Mohammed Jalal HASHIM & Abdel Rahim Hamid MUGADAM. Cape Town: The Centre of Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS), 2012: pp. 173-89.
- PAYNE, J.R. "Noun Phrases." In *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, 2nd ed., edited by Keith Brown. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2006: pp. 712-20.

- RILLY, Claude. *Le Méroïtique et sa famille linguistique*. Leuven: Peeters, 2010.
- SATTI, Nasir *Grammatical Analysis of Dongolese Phrases and Clauses*. Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Khartoum, 2008.
- THELWALL, Robin "A Birgid Vocabulary List and its Links with Daju." *In Gedenkschrift Gustav Nachtigal 1874-1974*, edited by H. GANSLMAYR and H. JUNGRAITHMAYR. Bremen: Übersee-Museum, 1977: pp. 197-210.
- . "Linguistic Aspects of Greater Nubian History." *In The Archaeological and Linguistic Reconstruction of African History*, edited by C. EHRET & M. POSNANSKY. Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1982: pp. 39-52.
- . "The Linguistic Settlement of the Nuba Mountains." *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 5 (1983): pp. 219-31.
- . "Midob Nubian: Phonology, Grammatical Notes and Basic Vocabulary." *In Nilo-Saharan Language Studies*, edited by M. Lionel Bender. Chicago: African Studies Centre, University of Michigan, 1983: pp. 97-113.
- WERNER, Roland. *Grammatik des Nobiin (Nilnubisch): Phonologie, Tonologie und Morphologie*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske, 1987.
- . *Tidn-aal: A Study of Midob (Darfur Nubian)*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1993.
- ZYHLARZ, E. "Die Lautverschiebungen des Nubischen." *Zeitschrift für Eingeborenensprachen* 35 (1949/50): pp. 1-20, 128-46, 280-313.

Idiom and Social Practice in Medieval Nubia

221

Giovanni Ruffini*

The study of Old Nubian depends on the literary evidence. The fragments of Old Nubian biblical and other theological texts for which source texts or comparisons exist provide the foundation for our knowledge of the language. One consequence of this fact is that documentary Old Nubian is something of an ugly stepchild. The archaeologists who study medieval Nubia refer to that documentary evidence, but rarely make detailed analyses of it. Gerald Browne himself produced editions of the documentary evidence that were minimalist in their linguistic commentary. Indeed, he published fragmentary, even incomprehensible, documents as early as volume two of his editions of texts from Qasr Ibrim.¹ This gives the impression that when it comes to documentary Old Nubian, we have already scraped the bottom of the barrel.

In fact, quite the opposite is true. We have much left to learn from the Old Nubian documents, particularly those from Qasr Ibrim. The forthcoming *Old Nubian Texts from Qasr Ibrim* IV will double the number of Old Nubian texts published in this series, and will provide a substantial corpus of new material for the linguistic analysis of Old Nubian.² Because legal documents and financial accounts tend to be formulaic, Old Nubian personal letters are the closest thing we have to spoken medieval Nubian. One consequence of this fact is that Old Nubian letters tend to be much harder to understand. The problem is not limited to the predictable obscurity of references to daily affairs. Rather, the problem is compounded by Nubian idiom. Pub-

* I would like to thank the participants and audience members of the Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium's Old Nubian Panel, several of whom are thanked by name in references below, for their feedback on my paper. I would also like to thank the draft readers of P.Q1 4 (see note 2 below) for their suggestions, several of which improved the readings and translations presented in this volume. Citations herein employ the standards proposed in the "Guide to the Texts of Medieval Nubia" at <www.medievalnubia.info>.

1 Consider for example the fragmentary letters P.Q1 2.27 and 2.29.

2 Ruffini, *The Bishop, The Eparch and The King*.

lished and unpublished correspondence contains phrases, formulae and verbal habits which make little to no sense when taken literally or when considered in isolation. When taken as idiom, vernacular or slang, these features of Nubian correspondence reveal an otherwise hidden world of medieval social practice. Even minor details of grammar and spelling begin to reveal the nature of Nubian literacy and education.

Let us begin with several obscure but repeated phrases, starting with a mundane example regarding the nature of letters. There is now evidence indicating that letters frequently accompanied the shipment of goods, and that the letters themselves included verification systems for the delivery of those goods. We have two published letters containing some variation of the phrase “There is no empty letter,” i.e. *kart(e) sout(a) ment(alo)* in *P.QI 2.28.19-20* and *kart() soum()* in *P.QI 3.59.5*. In the unpublished texts, we now have another four examples.³ Why should a letter writer protest that a letter is not empty? What does it even mean for a letter to be empty? The context of *P.QI 4.96* seems to provide the best hint. There, the letter – which, if correctly understood, was delivered by a slave – continues with a further remark from the author, saying “I send one *komi* of wine.”⁴

Is the insistence that a letter is not empty intended to tell the recipient that something else accompanied it? If so, this phrase may in essence indicate proof of shipment for an item or message traveling with the main letter. The ending of letter *P.QI 4.95* is similar, but less explicit, making reference to an empty letter and two units of wine, the implication presumably being that the letter is not empty, as two units of wine accompany it.⁵ The ending of letter *P.QI 4.101*, although couched in unfamiliar vocabulary, may be similar.⁶ If understood correctly, it makes a reference to an empty letter and giving three units of an unknown commodity. In letter *P.QI 4.93*, if the reference to *kidealö* is understood correctly, we have similar reference to an accompanying commodity.⁷ This is perhaps indicative of potential difficulties with delivery and trustworthy letter-carriers, perhaps drinking or selling the wine on the way. We may have here a medieval system of trust but verify. Alternatively, this stock phrase may be a way for the sender to indicate to the recipient that the letter-carrier has already been paid for providing the delivery, and that no further gift or payment is required.⁸

3 *P.QI 4.95.v.1, 96.r.5, 101.24-25 and 104.v.8; P.QI 4.94.14* appears to be a comparable if incomplete use of the phrase.

4 *P.QI 4.96.r.5-6: kart(e) soumt() orpi | komi alo enirra outira eiterelo.*

5 *P.QI 4.95.v.1-2: kart(e) sout(amenalo) orpidaue|ki blo.*

6 *P.QI 4.101.r.24-25: kart(e) | soutamentama attra poui glo.*

7 *P.QI 4.93.r.14: karte soutaminna kidealö.* In the translation to the ed.princ., I take *kidealö* as “1 *gide*,” where *gide* is a known unit of food. Vincent Laisney (p.c.) suggests that *gide* might instead be *kitt-*, a previously attested Old Nubian word for “garment.”

8 A suggestion raised at the Cologne conference in May, 2013.

Another often repeated phrase sheds light on religious attitudes. In P.QI 3.55, a letter from Ièsou the priest to Eiongoka, part of the first line reads *tillillo oukka genno kounna*, which Browne rendered as “God is good to you [plural]. He has (or: you [singular] have) it.” The “it” here is implied, and what “it” might be is not at all clear. In this isolated instance, a papyrologist might simply assume that this is another irritating example of two correspondents knowing full well what “it” was, and leaving the modern reader in the dark. But two more examples now challenge that assumption. Unpublished letter P.QI 4.98 reads in line 2 *til eikka genno kounnalo*, “God is good to you [singular]. He has (or: you [singular] have) it.” And again, unpublished letter P.QI 4.124 reads *tillillo eikka genno kounna*, which is essentially the same phrase, with the singular used in both cases.

We thus have three different authors in three different texts using the same greeting. Clearly, *kounna* (“he has (or: you have) it”) is not referring to a concrete commodity known to the correspondents but unstated in the text. Instead, the verb must amplify on the meaning of the previous statement, “God is good to you.” It may be that “God is good to you” was often followed by “you will have” God’s (implied) goodness as a generic expression of goodwill. Perhaps even more abstractly, “you will have” whatever it is that you want, because “God is good to you.” Either interpretation allows us to resolve the grammatical ambiguity in *kounna* and take it as a 2nd person rather than a 3rd person form. Alternatively, but less likely, we may suppose it to be a 3rd person form, and take all three examples to mean, in essence, “God is good to you, and He (God) has” it, where “it” might be God’s goodness. Either way, the implication is clear: isolated verbs yielding little to no concrete sense may hide social or religious tropes, as we see in this case.

Analogous examples suggest themselves from the correspondence. In an earlier publication, I noted the Old Nubian *tillil ein jemilika dieigramê* (“May God increase your years”) and described it as a Nubian verbal tick.⁹ We have three unpublished letters in which the phrase appears twice per letter, with no apparent connection between the phrase itself and its immediate context.¹⁰ This repetition of “May God increase your years” and “God is good to you; you will have it” is a sure indication that both phrases must have been as ubiquitous in medieval Nubian as, say, *inshallah* is in modern Arabic. It is also possible to imagine “May God increase your years” as a transitional phrase in correspondence, a way for the letter-writer

9 RUFFINI. “May God Increase Your Years”

10 P.QI 4.93, 4.95 and 4.101. The phrase also appears in P.QI 4.114, but only once, as far as the surviving state of the text allows us to tell.

to indicate to the recipient that he is changing topics and moving on to something else.¹¹

We may also use the Old Nubian documentary evidence for a new glimpse into medieval Nubian concepts of time. Grzegorz Ochała has studied the myriad ways in which medieval Nubians recorded the date at a formal level.¹² Three unpublished letters now give us a glimpse into a more idiomatic conception of time. In P.QI 4.93, an eparch of Nobadia asks his correspondent, *aïou astiko dipilogo tillika \eiddo/ okiriseinna*, “Do I call to God for you, at dawn and dusk?” In P.QI 4.115, the letter-writer instructs his recipient, *diploko astiko ton-nijeso*, “Seek (it?) at dusk and dawn.” In the final, striking example, P.QI 4.113, no less than King Mouses Georgios describes, in a fragmentary context, the actions of *diplokô astoukon eiti*, “a man at dusk and dawn.” Presumably these are not references to be taken literally. Rather, the phrase “at dawn and dusk,” perhaps rendered as “in the morning and in the evening,” could perhaps be seen as a medieval idiomatic way of indicating recurring action, of saying “repeatedly” or “again and again” or “for a long time.”

Next, I would like to draw attention to the terms for rejoicing, in letter P.QI 4.97: *êk|ka ñaddirelo*, “I rejoice for you”; and in letter P.QI 4.107: *kourre pkkon*, “After he has caused himself to rejoice” (which, in context, seems to mean “After he has satisfied himself”). We have different verbs, to communicate essentially the same idea, and presumably chosen in deliberate preference to the most common verb “to rejoice,” *piss-* or *pies-*. That verb for its part appears in five different documents: letter P.QI 2.23.6-7 *mor | m koni pieseso*, “be glad that you have 40 artaba”; land sale P.QI 3.36.13 *eiril pissil*, “(I, Kapopi...) rejoicing and exulting”; letter P.QI 4.89 *touñilo | pelin pisseso*, “rejoice when you come out to your children”; and letter P.QI 4.123 *pisseso* and *pissiselo*, “Rejoice” and “I rejoiced.” In letter P.QI 4.119 *pisseso* appears no less than three times, and there we have a particularly interesting pattern. In all three cases the imperative to “rejoice” is followed by an explanatory clause based on a predicative verb and linked to the imperative with the copulative *-sin*. Thus, rejoice for x is happening; rejoice for y is happening; rejoice for z is happening.¹³ The English “rejoice” may itself constrain our translations: the verb in any of these cases may mean “enjoy” or “be glad” or any of a number of possibilities.

Since the stem *piss-* is used for Biblical occurrences of Greek forms related to *chairō*, we may wonder if the scribe is simply trying to sound biblical. Indeed, the last example (P.QI 4.119) has Biblical

¹¹ I would like to thank Vincent Laisney (p.c.) for this suggestion.

¹² OCHAŁA, *Chronological Systems of Christian Nubia*.

¹³ P.QI 4.119.1-3, 5: *pisseso ñodannil ineiakir|rasin pisseso eitl eišketieia eitl|kirasin... pisseso piskanesisin*.

parallel in Philippians 4:4: *ouelsin pesiresin pissanasô* (“again I say: rejoice” in P.QI 1.5), a passage we know from Qasr Ibrim. Thus the decision to choose *piss-* over other possible stems may be a result of scribal training based on or lived experience with Old Nubian biblical texts. This is plausible, but does not explain how to differentiate between multiple words rendered the same way in English. Why choose *piss-* or *kour-* or *ḡadd-*? I can only offer a negative conclusion, that lexicography is not an exact science and can succeed only with a large supply of sample sources. Put another way, we must accept the possibility that much in our dictionary of Old Nubian is inexact, or even potentially incorrect.

From subtle distinctions between apparently identical words, we can turn to a series of cases in which words do not appear to have – or in fact, cannot have – their literal meaning. First, gulping. When is gulping something not really gulping it? In my study, *Medieval Nubia: A Social and Economic History*, I drew attention to a pattern of food vocabulary and food consumption in legal contexts, and suggested that “gulping dates” (*petika ḡola*) might indicate some social practice for completing a legal transaction.¹⁴ But in text P.QI 4.89, a letter from Apapa to Ioannes the Great Bishop, I find use of the verb “to gulp” in which food cannot be at stake. Twice, Apapa instructs Ioannes to gulp: first, *eidña ḡola dineso* (“give, gulping and keeping”) and next *eidña ḡoleso* (“gulp, keeping”).

In the first case, *tereke* (a key) is the direct object. In the second case, no direct object is present. Clearly, you can gulp without having anything in particular to gulp. What could this mean? The general context of this letter involves grain shipments and deposits. Browne rendered *ḡol-* as “gulp” on the basis of comparisons to modern Nubian languages, where *gol* appears as “swallow.” This may make sense when dates are at stake, but it cannot apply to every appearance of the term. Perhaps we have here something closer to “finish” or “put away,” in which the term indicates the completion of some transaction, business or exchange.

Second, sitting. When is sitting not really sitting? Bechhaus-Gerst’s study of the history of Nobiin talks about how *ak-*, *ag-* (“to sit” in Old Nubian) is “being desemanticized and developing into a function word.”¹⁵ It is coming to no longer mean “to sit” but “could be ascribed the function of marking a habitual action.” Thus she is able to correct Browne’s translation of P.QI 3.36.ii.6: Mashshouda is not “sitting in assembly” with his Elders, but is in “a continuing situation... [of] belonging to a circle of elders.”¹⁶

¹⁴ RUFFINI, *Medieval Nubia*, pp. 98–102.

¹⁵ BECHHAUS-GERST, *The (Hi)story of Nobiin*, p. 164.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 168.

She is certainly right, and this is not the only place where we can correct Browne's translations. Consider P.QI 2.26 and its two instructions to sit: "do not be dejected (?), for I shall go. Sit together (?) and don't lose (?) heart when I go. Sit together: for (otherwise) I shall not sleep" (lines 3-7: *odño êattan|ke aisin jououresin touja | akana an jôen aekon | osatanke allijil akana|so aiou ȝerimendresin*). In Browne's commentary, he notes that *touj-* may be taken as "to be secure." Thus, if *akana* and *akanaso* mark habitual actions, these phrases might instead be better translated as: "do not be dejected, for I shall go. Continue to be secure [or: remain secure] when I go and don't lose heart, continue to be secure [or: remain secure], for (otherwise) I shall not sleep." Consider also P.QI 2.21, in which Israel sits for two months after gulping dates. It is hard to imagine what this could mean, taken literally. But figuratively (or habitually), it may indicate that Israel took two months to complete the transaction, or that whatever he was doing after he completed the transaction took two months.¹⁷

Finally, when is getting dressed not really about getting dressed? P.QI 4.109 is an anonymous account containing several characteristics of a personal letter, including an extended first-person narrative of various financial transactions. This narrative includes references to *amiska kidditaka*, *kidditaka kamiaka*, and *amsitoron kidditaka*. The verb appearing in all three cases, *kidditaka*, is the verbal stem *kit(a)r-*, *kit(t)ir*, *kidd-* ("to cause someone to dress, to cause someone to put on; to be dressed") with the passive formant *-tak-* and a predicative ending. We would thus appear to have "the judgment being dressed," "the camel being dressed," and "Amsitoro's (?) being dressed." In context, this presumably has nothing at all to do with clothing, and seems much more likely to mean "being prepared" than "being dressed." True, a camel may be saddled or harnessed, and thus dressed,¹⁸ but the ultimate sense is the same: the camel is now ready, as is the judgment, and as is something – we do not know what – having to do with someone named Amsitoro.

Getting away from these abstractions and turning towards concrete conversational and cultural practices, we turn to letter P.QI 4.89, once again Apapa writing to the Great Bishop Ioannes, where we see the question *airon minka mañikoskaneka aouadona*. I take this to mean, "And you will give whom an evil eye?" The crucial abstraction is *mañikoskaneka*, a directive-case compound from *mañ-* ("eye") and *kos(s)-* ("evil"), with the abstract-substantive formant *-kane-* attached. As far as I know, this is the first attestation of the age-old cultural concept of the evil eye in Old Nubian. But apotropaic magic

17 We may have a comparable situation with Browne's translation of P.QI 2.25, which includes the phrase "I... sitting (with her) examined her." Here, *tik-*, *ting-* is the verb for "sitting," but it may have a comparable meaning: "I was in the process of examining her."

18 An observation I owe to Vincent Laisney (p.c.).

texts are widely known from medieval Nubia, and from Qasr Ibrim more specifically.¹⁹ So the presence of this concept is not surprising. But why is the question addressed to a bishop? Is the letter-writer asking whether the bishop cast the stink eye on someone? Unlikely, I hope. Maybe the letter-writer is asking whether the bishop himself wrote one of these apotropaic texts. Did Ioannes write a magic talisman of protection against the *mañikoskane*, and if so, for whom? This seems like a plausible shorthand: we call the eye-shaped amulets designed to protect us from the evil eye, in moments of imprecision, the evil eye. Medieval Nubians may have made the same leap. This sort of shorthand or telescoping may have been one of the features of medieval conversational Nubian.

Finally, a word about the greetings sent between the senders and recipients of these texts. In P.QI 3.54 we see the phrase “I greet David the priest.” In P.QI 4 we see variations of this in surprising numbers: “I greet the priest” three times; “I pay homage to the priest” twice; “I greet the deacon” once; “I pay homage to Ezekias, the chief’s priest” once.²⁰ In a few cases the anonymous priests are the same individual, but identifications across all cases are unlikely, if not impossible. So it is striking how often Old Nubian letters instruct the recipient to greet unnamed third parties on the assumption that the recipient knew which person was meant. It is also striking how many of the anonymous greetings in the correspondence are directed at religious figures. Only rarely do we see the non-religious described by their titles or, on one occasion, by an ethnonym, “I greet the Sulu.”²¹

This habit of circumlocution or name avoidance is not limited to greetings; note P.QI 2.28, “You do not know what the son of Doue is like. May he not come and ruin you.” Why name Doue, but not his son? We see the same phenomenon in P.QI 4.106, in which Staurous-ingkitol, writing to Iêsoua, makes two references to *anen totil*, Ane’s son. Why name Ane, but not his son? And why refer to the priests, and not give their names? What can explain this peculiar pattern in some of these letters of not naming people by name? I think that there are two plausible explanations for the deliberate circumlocution we have here.²² The first is rooted in what we would consider a primitive superstition. The thing that can be named is a thing that can be killed. The anonymous greetings and anonymous references in so many of these letters may be analogous to the anonymity of

19 See RUFFINI, *Medieval Nubia*, pp. 225–30 with footnotes ad loc. for discussion of Nubian magic, including references to unpublished apotropaic texts.

20 I greet the priest: P.QI 4.87, 4.117 and 4.122; I pay homage to the priest: P.QI 4.119 and 4.123; I greet the deacon: P.QI 4.102; I pay homage to Ezekias, the chief’s priest: P.QI 4.114.

21 P.QI 2.26. For Sulu as an ethnonym see WESCHENFELDER, “The *coγλoγ* in Old Nobiin Documents.”

22 In addition to the proposals I give here, Vincent Laisney (p.c.) suggests that such circumlocutions could suggest the influence of or be analogous to Arabic usage, in which someone might typically be described as “the son of” or “ibn So-and-So.”

Nubian magical scrolls. So often in those texts, the beneficiary of the magical protection is referred to only obliquely, as the son or daughter of so-and-so.²³ The habit may carry over into documentary texts produced for people in religious contexts. Alternatively, we may be witnessing here a culture of humility, in which it was considered impolite to draw attention to religious figures by name, in which religious figures may have considered anonymity more pious in the eyes of the Lord.²⁴ It may also be the case that “the priest” may simply refer by default to one’s local or parish priest,²⁵ and that greeting the recipient’s local priest was a standard politeness, even if the sender did not know that priest by name.

So far I have been focused on social practice at the higher levels of grammar and meaning in full phrases. We must also look at a lower, more basic level, that of spelling. Variable orthography in documentary evidence tells us about Nubian scribal practice and education. We may approach this question from two different directions. First, we have “non-standard” spelling, or spelling deviating from what appears to be the statistical norm. Second, we have scribes who do not adhere to their own standards, and produce multiple variations from one line to the next. In the first case, we see many predictable variations: gamma for kappa, upsilon for the *ou* diphthong, the diphthong *ei* for more the common epsilon, a terminal *ēta* for terminal alpha in genitive endings, and so on.²⁶ To my knowledge, no one has ever suggested any explanation for these variations beyond their phonetic equivalence. But the variations tell us something about Nubian education. We learn correct spelling by reading correct source texts.²⁷ The more narrow the statistical range of consistent spelling in Old Nubian, the more narrow the range of source texts in Nubian education must have been. Put another way, their duties required Nubian scribes to spell beyond their educational range on a regular basis.

But this does not explain the second case, of scribes who are internally inconsistent. Consider text *P.QI* 4.97, a letter from Mousi to Mashshouda, with erratic orthography: this letter produces several spellings for the second-person singular personal pronoun in the directive case; both *arou* and *irrou* for “one”; and *ēitiresau*, *ēitireso* and *ēitireso* for “send.” And the visual impression of the text is equally striking: the scribe shows awkward ink control and a poor sense of the amount of space needed for the required text. Consider also text

²³ See n. 18 above.

²⁴ I would like to thank Adam Łajtar (p.c.) for the initial suggestion leading to this proposal.

²⁵ A suggestion I owe to Vincent Laisney (p.c.).

²⁶ See BROWNE, *Old Nubian Grammar*, pp. 15–20, and, in the unpublished material from Qasr Ibrim, note particularly *P.QI* 4.64, 4.67, 4.74. 4.93 and 4.97.

²⁷ I have suggested elsewhere that some of the ostraka from Meinarti are precisely such source texts. See RUFFINI, “The Meinarti Phylactery Factory.”

P.QI 4.117, a letter from Souksapa the Great Eparch to Dauti the *thel()* of Kaktine. This text spells the standard Old Nubian *daoummelo* greeting no fewer than three different ways in three lines.

We must suppose that this greeting – present in so many of the letters from medieval Nubia – came early in scribal training. The same is true of the common pronouns and verbs we see in the letter from Mousi. And yet we have scribes for high-ranking officials who do not produce it the same way twice. There are two ways to analyze this phenomenon. On the one hand, it may suggest a thin level of education for Nubian scribes, or – equally revealing – the possibility of career advancement without completion of the full level of education available to other scribes in your peer group. On the other hand, we may have a glimpse into a different concept of spelling and its purpose. We may be catching Nubian scribes deliberately employing various alternative spellings of a single word for variety's sake, to make a text more interesting.²⁸

To summarize: unpublished letters give us a more nuanced picture of language, literacy, idiom and society in medieval Nubia. One aspect of documentary Nubian's repetitive nature – the insistence on unempty letters – may reveal a method of communication and goods transfer in medieval Nubia. Other aspects of documentary repetition – God's goodness to us, and his increase of our years – likely mimic medieval Nubian conversational patterns. One aspect of documentary Nubian's obscurity – the tendency to avoid naming names – may reflect religious practice or superstition. Another aspect of documentary Nubian's obscurity – the orthographical variants hiding otherwise familiar forms – may reflect the relatively narrow range of medieval Nubian education or a concept of orthographical purpose very much unlike our own. Documentary contexts in which simple words – gulping, sitting or getting dressed, for example – do not seem to have their expected meaning may reflect hidden legal or social practices, or the slow process of language in motion, the birth of modern Nubian in its medieval cradle.

28 I would like to thank Claude Rilly (p.c.) for this idea.

Bibliography

- BECHHAUS-GERST, Marianne. *The (Hi)story of Nobiin: 1000 Years of Language Change*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011.
- BROWNE, Gerald M. *Old Nubian Grammar*. Munich: Lincom Europe, 2002.
- OCHAŁA, Grzegorz. *Chronological Systems of Christian Nubia* [= *Journal for Juristic Papyrology Supplement* xvi]. Warsaw, 2011.
- RUFFINI, Giovanni R. *Medieval Nubia: A Social and Economic History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- . "The Meinarti Phylactery Factory: Medieval Nubian Ostraka from the Island of Michael." *Journal for Juristic Papyrology* 42 (2012): pp. 273–300.
- . *The Bishop, The Eparch and The King: Old Nubian Texts from Qasr Ibrim IV* (forthcoming in the *Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement Series*).
- . "May God Increase Your Years: Unpublished Old Nubian Correspondence from Qasr Ibrim." Forthcoming.
- WESCHENFELDER, Petra. "The ⲥⲟⲩⲗⲟⲩ in Old Nobiin documents: Evidence for Service Nomadism in Christian Nubia?" In *Nubian Voices: Studies in Christian Nubian Culture*, vol. II, edited by A. ŁAJTAR, G. OCHAŁA & J. VAN DER VLIET. Warsaw: Raphael Taubenschlag Foundation, forthcoming.

Call for Papers

#3 Nubian Women ► We seek articles for a volume on Nubian women, whether they be about ancient Nubian women (i.e. Napatan or Meroitic Kandake; God's Wife of Amun; non-royal women; or even the worship of Isis, Hathor, or Nubian goddesses in ancient times); about medieval women (as church and property owners or as political players such as the Queen-Mothers); or about the roles and status of women in more modern times (before or after the various dams; education; tourism; village art; urban networks). We welcome contributions that analyze the different theoretical issues as regards the concepts, roles, languages, and functions of women and femininity in these specific periods. Contact: Anne M. Jennings (jenningsee@aol.com)

#4 Nubian Place Names ► Place names in Nubia have only received limited attention. The need for such study leads us to dedicate a volume of *Dotawo* to Nubian place names and place naming in Nubia. Place names are from their nature dynamic and may shift over the course of centuries. Therefore, toponymy is particularly appropriate for the diachronic study that *Dotawo* hopes to foster. Moreover, place names offer fertile ground for multi-disciplinary analyses. For these reasons we embrace the widest possible time frame (from the beginning of recorded history until today) and welcome contributions from all fields of Nubian studies, to promote the closer collaboration of specialists working with all sorts of theoretical and methodological tools on successive periods of Nubian history.

We invite submissions on Nubia in its widest definition, including both the Middle Nile Valley (from Aswan to the Gezira) and the peripheral regions in contact with Nubia, i.e. the Eastern Desert, Kordofan, Darfur etc. Submissions may address macrotoponyms (designating both Nubia and certain parts of it, including administrative districts as well as religious territorial units); microtoponyms (both rural – such as villages, local sanctuaries etc. – and urban – such as market names, streets etc.); elements of the natural landscape (streams of water, mountains, deserts, wadis etc.); and those linked with human activities (cultivated fields, pasturage fields, paths, ruins etc.). Possible topics cover a wide spectrum, from problems of identification and localisation in the tradition of historical geography, to approaches that take into consideration the input of social sciences, of cultural history and of anthropology. Contact: Robin Seignobos (robin.seignobos@orange.fr) or Alexandros Tsakos (atsakos@gmail.com)





Dotawo: A Journal of Nubian Studies 1

van Gerven Oei, Vincent W.J.; Jakobi, Angelika;
Ruffini, Giovanni

punctum books, 2014

ISBN: 9780692220863

<https://punctumbooks.com/titles/dotawo-volume-1-2014/>

<https://www.doi.org/10.21983/P3.0071.1.00>