150 Years after Dillmann's Lexicon:
Perspectives and Challenges of Gaʾaz Lexicography
150 Years after Dillmann’s Lexicon: Perspectives and Challenges of ṭəəz Studies

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with assistance from
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A part of speech tag set for Ancient Ethiopic*

SUSANNE HUMMEL and WOLFGANG DICKHUT, Universität Hamburg

In this article, we would like to share the results obtained to date in the course of establishing a comprehensive part of speech (PoS) tag set to be used for the linguistic annotation of Gǝʿǝz texts. Questions regarding the editions used, including necessary adjustments or corrections, will not be considered here.¹

General presentation of the tag set

The annotation used here presupposes a tokenization of complex graphic units which cannot be done on the Ethiopic script (fidal). By graphic unit we mean the sequence of characters separated by a word divider (֓) or a punctuation mark (֔). Due to the syllabic script, the process of tokenization can only be done on the transliteration.² The GeTa tool provides an automatically generated transcription, in which the elimination of the shwa (ǝ) and the gemination of consonants have to be corrected manually, e.g.:

Mt 1:18 ֔שֹּׂלָה ֓כֹּתֵר ֔שֹּׂלָה ֔שֹּׂלָה ֔שֹּׂלָה

automatic transcription:  tarakbat  donosta 'manfas qaddus.

corrected transliteration:  tarakbat  donosta ʾmanfas qaddus.

tokenized:  tarakbat  donosta ʾmanfas qaddus.

‘she was found with child of the Holy Ghost’³

We annotate the transliterated and tokenized texts in two ways: firstly, by way of a basic annotation (e.g. marking named entities) which is not the topic of our paper; secondly, by using a fine-grained tag set, resulting in a detailed linguistic annotation.

The criteria for annotating are, of course, mainly, but not exclusively, morphological. For example, the morphologically identical forms of the ac-

¹ The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the EU Seventh Framework Programme, grant agreement no. 322849.

² Variant readings, misprints, etc. are accounted for in the process annotation by using the commenting function of the GeTa tool. On the GeTa annotation tool, see Cristina Vertan’s essay in this volume.

³ The tokenization cannot be applied on the Ethiopic script. For example, the graphic unit A.R.T.h  lidatu is composed of three letters corresponding to the three syllables A la, ṭa and tu, but it has to be tokenized as lidat-u ‘his nativity’.

³ Note that when the proclitically used preposition ʾǝm is followed by a word beginning with m, like manfas, we will often find only a single ʾm (m[afa]) written, which is then geminated (mm[afa]). The examples are drawn from the so-called A-text of the Gospel of Matthew, as edited in Zuurmond 2001.
Table 1. Parts of speech and relevant features.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Subclass</th>
<th>Tag</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Features</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominals</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>NCom</td>
<td>Common Noun</td>
<td>Gender, Number, Case, State</td>
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<td>Gender, Number, Case, State</td>
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<td>no features</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>PObj</td>
<td>Object Pronoun Base</td>
<td>no features</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>PPoss</td>
<td>Possessive Pronoun Base</td>
<td>Gender, Number, Case, State, Logogram</td>
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<td>Demonstrative Pronoun</td>
<td>Gender, Number, Case, State</td>
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<td>Existentials</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>ExNeg</td>
<td>Negative Base</td>
<td>no features</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Parts of speech and relevant features.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Subclass</th>
<th>Tag</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adverbs</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Aint</td>
<td>Interrogative Adverb</td>
<td>no features ( \lambda\vdash t ) where: ( \lambda\vdash t ) how many?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Other Adverb</td>
<td>no features ( \lambda\vdash t ) where: ( \lambda\vdash t ) how many?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preposition</td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>Preposition</td>
<td>State (nominal and pronominal state)</td>
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<td>Conjunction</td>
<td>Conj</td>
<td>Conj</td>
<td>Conjunction</td>
<td>no features</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interjection</td>
<td>Int</td>
<td>Int</td>
<td>Interjection</td>
<td>State (nominal and pronominal state)</td>
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<td>Further Particles</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PartAcc</td>
<td></td>
<td>Accusative Particle</td>
<td>no features ( \lambda\vdash t ) yes indeed, certainly!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PartAff</td>
<td></td>
<td>Affirmative Particle</td>
<td>no features ( \lambda\vdash t ) yes indeed, certainly!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PartDec</td>
<td></td>
<td>Imperative Particle</td>
<td>no features ( \lambda\vdash t ) yes indeed, certainly!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PartNeg</td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative Particle (Base)</td>
<td>no features ( \lambda\vdash t ) yes indeed, certainly!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PartPres</td>
<td></td>
<td>Presentational Particle Base</td>
<td>no features ( \lambda\vdash t ) yes indeed, certainly!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PartQuot</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quotative Particle</td>
<td>no features ( \lambda\vdash t ) yes indeed, certainly!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PartVoc</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vocative Particle</td>
<td>no features ( \lambda\vdash t ) yes indeed, certainly!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PartOth</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other Particles</td>
<td>no features ( \lambda\vdash t ) yes indeed, certainly!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Material</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>For example ( \lambda\vdash t ) yes indeed, certainly!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>Punct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no features ( \lambda\vdash t ) yes indeed, certainly!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
cusative and the construct state have to be separated into (a) accusative, (b) construct state, (c) accusative and construct state, e.g.:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Mt } 2:11 & \quad \text{םֶנֶזֶלֶו} + \text{וֹתֶב} : \quad \text{wa-bawi’omu beta} \\
\text{Mt } 4:5 & \quad \text{ךֶתֶב} + \text{נֶזֶלֶו} : \quad \text{diba ma’zonta beta maqdas} \\
\text{Mt } 8:14 & \quad \text{םֶנֶזֶלֶו} + \text{נֶזֶלֶו} + \text{תֶב} : \quad \text{wa-bo’a ‘iyasus beta petros}
\end{align*}
\]

‘and when they came into the house’

‘on a pinnacle of the temple’

‘and Jesus came into Peter’s house’

In the same way, we mark whether and in which way the gender of a noun is determined by the context (i.e. by syntax, not morphologically), for example by the corresponding verb (see below).

Apart from the present authors’ own experience of reading Ethiopic texts, the proximate sources of the tag set were (1) other tag sets (for general considerations) and (2) the standard reference grammars, namely those of Dillmann and Tropper. On that basis we established a preliminary tag set which we then improved and refined during the first stages of the annotation process.

To disambiguate morphologically identical forms which have different meanings and are thus different PoS we take syntax and semantics into account. Disambiguation is necessary already at the level of tokenization, as in \text{שֶזֶלֶו} + \text{מוּת}, ‘they died’ or \text{מוּת} + \text{עֶזֶל} ‘his death’, depending on context. The same is true of ambiguous forms like \text{שֶזֶלֶו} + \text{גֶבֶר} with the function of a verb ‘he worked’ or of a common noun in the accusative or the construct state ‘slave, servant’; the graphic unit \text{שֶזֶלֶו} + \text{גֶבֶר} can be read as ‘שמש ‘mother’ or ‘שמח ‘from’.

Other examples of similar phenomena:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{שֶזֶלֶו} + \text{עֶזֶל} & \quad \text{can be read as ‘שמיש ‘mother’ or ‘שמח ‘from’).} \\
\text{שֶזֶלֶו} + \text{הָבָא} & \quad \text{as ‘here’ or ‘towards’;} \\
\text{שֶזֶלֶו} + \text{קָמָא} & \quad \text{as ‘as’ or ‘like’).
\end{align*}
\]

The same is true of many composed expressions, for example:

\text{שֶזֶלֶו + בָּקָמָא, Prep-Conj or Prep-Prep, as in}

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{שֶזֶלֶו + בָּקָמָא} & \quad \text{gabra ba-kama (Prep-Conj) ‘azzaz-o ma’aka ‘gozi’a baher} \\
& \quad \text{Joe did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him’}
\end{align*}
\]

\text{For example, earlier versions of Zeldes and Schroeder 2016.}

\text{Dillmann 1899, 1907; Tropper 2002.}
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Mt 16:27  ḳӧл ֓ ҒӚъ ֓ յԿҕћ ֔

‘he shall reward every man according to his works’

Note also that adverbial expressions which are the accusative forms of a common noun are tagged accordingly, for example:

Mt 1:19  יabdara yǝḫ ǝd āṣǝmmita (NCom + acc)

‘[Joseph] was minded to put her away privily’

As a general rule, all the information contained in the annotation should be based on internal evidence, without enforcing predetermined rules. In cases where combinations of forms have received a relatively stable meaning of their own, we have accepted Dillmann’s Lexicon as a guide in deciding whether the components should be annotated separately or an entire compound should be treated as one unit. The same applies to infinitives used (and categorized by Dillmann) as common nouns, e.g. ḳӧл: ‘a’maro ‘knowledge’. It goes without saying that the authority given to Dillmann in this way is only relative, and his decisions can be modified if appropriate.

Another case in which a reasonable predetermined rule can be applied is the distinction between the preposition ba- + suffixes, and the same combination expressing the ‘affirmative existential’ (‘there is’), which very frequently gives a possessive meaning (‘he has’), for example:

Mt 27:42  ۆ man b-ottu

‘and we shall believe in him’

Mt 12:11  za b-ottu ʾahata baggʾta

‘who shall have one sheep’

The complete set of PoS with their correspondent features is represented in Table 1. In the following we would like to focus on the more complex annotation of nouns.

Annotation of nouns

We divide nouns into common nouns and proper names. The tag set does not distinguish between nouns and adjectives since they have the same mor-

6 Other instances include, for example, ʼהנה (vel ʼהנה) ‘charisma vel munus prophetiae, prophetia, vaticinium’; ʼחפ (vel ʼחפ) ‘stridor, frendor [dentium]’;

7 The examples given are drawn from the ḳebra nagst, as edited in Bezold 1905.
Susanne Hummel and Wolfgang Dickhut

Phonological properties. For example, the forms \( \text{ḥǝyāw} \) ‘living’ or \( \text{ḥǝmr}: \text{madrāsi} ‘earthly’ can have both functions, namely of an adjective and of a noun. Nevertheless, since nouns in the function of adjectives play a role in the annotation process (whenever syntax has to be considered), the term adjective is also used here to describe the annotation scheme.

While, as a rule, common nouns are morphologically built up according to the Semitic root-pattern system, many proper names are of foreign origin and thus lie outside this system. Besides, Ethiopian personal names generally consist of several, two or three, common nouns, often in a genitive construction, like \( \text{Takla Håymånot} \) or \( \text{Gabра} \) Manfas Qodđus. Each element of an Ethiopian personal name is annotated as an (inflected) common noun on the morphological annotation level (with each element tagged as ‘part of a proper name’) and linked to the respective lemma in the dictionary, while the entire name is annotated as one named entity at the basic annotation level and linked to a prosopographic database.

We assign the following features to nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Unmarked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>m</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>unm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nature or Pattern and/or Syntax

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sg</td>
<td>pIn, pEx, pp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattern:</td>
<td>sg</td>
<td>pl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax:</td>
<td>pEx</td>
<td>unm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Absolute State</th>
<th>Construct State</th>
<th>Pronominal State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nom</td>
<td>acc</td>
<td>conSt</td>
<td>pronSt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The feature of ‘state’ does not apply to proper names. In all examples below, abbreviated forms of features are given in the following sequence: Gender-Number-Case-State.

Gender

The nominal feature of ‘gender’, with its three values ‘masculine’, ‘feminine’ and ‘unmarked’, is one of the most complex within the whole tag set. The values ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ are specified according to different criteria by which a noun’s gender is marked. We annotate whether the gender is marked by morphology (i.e. noun formation through a certain ‘pattern’) or
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by semantics (‘nature’), and/or whether it is identifiable within a clause or sentence by syntactic agreement (‘syntax’). The specified value ‘syntax’ may be applied alone or together with either ‘pattern’ or ‘nature’. We formulated several rules (i–ix) to consistently apply these further specifications.

**Pattern or Nature**

i) The gender of a noun is determined by pattern or nature if there exists a binary opposition between a masculine and a feminine nominal form, either on morphological or on lexical grounds. Thus, we distinguish binary pairs having the same root (determined by pattern) and pairs existing only on the lexical level, originating from different roots (determined by nature). Typical examples for binary pairs by pattern are ׃Validators:/bɔsi ‘man’ — ׃Validators:/bɔsit ‘woman’, ׃Validators:/qaddus ‘saint(ly)’ masculine — ׃Validators:/qaddast ‘saint(ly)’ feminine or ׃Validators:/sallim ‘black’ masculine — ׃Validators:/sallam ‘black’ feminine; patterns with morpho-phonological alternations like ׃Validators:/wald ‘son’ — ׃Validators:/walatt ‘daughter’ are also distinguished. If the gender of a noun is determined by pattern, we ignore a possible natural gender in order to distinguish strictly between the two specifications.

Consequently, for example when an apparently feminine form (from the point of view of Semitic noun formation) is employed for abstract nouns (e.g. ׃Validators:/tǝwlǝdd ‘generation’), we do not treat it as feminine by pattern, since there is no opposition between a masculine and a feminine noun form. This is in line with the scope of the linguistic annotation, i.e. drawing data from the texts and not limiting the annotation to general principles of noun formation.

ii) Some nouns have only one plural form for both masculine and feminine. In such cases, the gender is not marked in the plural form (i.e. ‘unm.’), though it is marked by ‘pattern’ (i.e. ³) in the singular form; for example ׃Validators:/adg (m⁴.sg⁴), ‘donkey’ masculine, ׃Validators:/adgaṭ (f⁴.sg⁴) ‘donkey’ feminine and ׃Validators:/a’dag (unm.pIn) ‘donkeys’.

iii) Classic examples of binary pairs defined by nature and not by pattern are ׃Validators:/ab ‘father’ — ׃Validators:/am ‘mother’ or ׃Validators:/gabr ‘servant’ — ׃Validators:/amṭ ‘maid’, whereas nouns like ׃Validators:/malak ‘messenger’, ‘angel’, are considered as unmarked for gender by pattern (but may be determined by syntactic agreement).

iv) The gender of most personal names is determined by nature as is obvious in the examples, ׃Validators:/màrý ‘Mary’ and ׃Validators:/iyasus ‘Jesus’.

**Syntactic agreement**

While the specifications of pattern and nature are mutually exclusive (if pattern applies, nature is ignored), the specific value ‘syntax’ is available for
both. We apply this specific value if the gender can be deduced from agree-
ment with verbs, pronouns or adjectives within the same clause or sentence
as the following examples demonstrate:

1) ṭeš-ā reš-ā
   ‘and all his doing’
   wa-š rol-u        gibr-u
   Conj:PTot:nom:PSuff:3m.sg       NCommvg:sg.nom.pronSt:PSuff:3m.sg

2) ṭeš-ā reš-ā
   ‘so that you shall tell your children’
   ṭeš-ā la-daqqā-ka
   V:subj:2m.sg:PSuff:3m.pl       Prep:nomSt:NCommvg:sg.pl:nom.pronSt:PSuff:2m.sg

3) ḫiṣ-š ṭaš-š ्yš-š: riš-š
   ‘I thought about this matter’
   ṭeš-š bašma-za      nagar
   V:perf:1c.sg        Prep:nomSt:PDem:sg       NCommvg:sg:nom.absSt

Taking syntactic agreement into account significantly adds to the complexity
of the whole annotation process. We therefore established special rules to
facilitate a homogenous annotation.

v) We do not consider the relative pronoun h: za (masculine, singular) or
the independent personal pronoun ṭiš-š ṭu (third person, masculine,
singular) in determining syntactic agreement since both are commonly used
for all genders and numbers.

vi) A pronominal suffix attached to the existential base refers to the pos-
sessor and thus marks its gender when the possessor is mentioned, as in the
sentence:

4) ṭeš-š h: bāšb za-šāl-b-ō
   ‘we are people without law’
   h: bāšb       za-šāl-b-ō
   PPers:1c.pl     NCommvg:sg:nom.absSt       PRelm:sg:ExNeg:PSuff:3m.sg
   h: bāšb
   NCommvg:sg:nom.absSt

In existential clauses, a pronominal suffix attached to the existential base does
not indicate syntactic agreement:

5) ṭeš-š h: bāšb za-šāl-b-ō
   ‘there is no lie in your word’
   ṭeš-š basat   ṭeš-š
   Conj:ExNeg:PSuff:3m.sg       NCommvg:sg:nom.absSt       Prep:nomSt
   ṭeš-š
   NCommvg:sg:nom.pronSt:PSuff:2m.sg
vii) Only the immediate context is significant when identifying syntactic agreement. If a series of elements stands in agreement with one (other) single element, we assume that the determiner determines only that element which is closest to the subject:

6) 

‘And God gave order to Moses and Aaron’

Conj-V:perf.3m.sg.PSuff3m.pl NPropm5s.unmSt nomSt PrepnomSt-NPropm5s.unmSt nomSt

In example (6), the gender of the proper name muse (masculine by nature) is treated as syntactically marked, while the gender of the name ’aron is considered as determined only by nature.

7) 

‘And all cattle and animals perished with them’

Conj-V:perf.3m.sg PreppronSt-PSuff3m.pl Ptot-nom.-PSuff3m.sg

In example (7), only the first noun, ’onsasa, is treated as syntactically marked.

In the synthetic genitive construction, only the head in the construct state is marked for gender:

8) 

‘on Mount Zion, where you have dwelt’

PrepnomSt-NComf5s.nomSt nomSt NProp-umSt nomUmSt nomSt

Cases like the following one are no exception. In 

‘and with his son Jesus’, we do not mark the syntactic gen-
der for 'Jesus' (masculine by nature) even if in this precise case 'iyasus is in apposition to wald 'son', which in turn is masculine by pattern.

ix) The rule for apposition also applies to a nominal predicate because a masculine subject can have a female predicate (and vice versa). The nominal predicate is not marked syntactically; in the phrase šaši : nām : wa-konba baqla ‘and the mule came into being’, the gender is not marked. However, the predicate adjective is a different case since it modifies the subject; in the clause šaša : liq : baqiwa kanā'|āna|ān-nša šaši an ‘and the sons of Canaan were seven strong (men)’, the collective noun daqiq is not only marked by pattern (masculine) but also through syntactic agreement with the noun šaši an (masculine by pattern).

Number

Gēṣz has both singular and plural. The plural is formed either by the attachment of the suffixes -ān (masculine) or -āt (feminine) to the singular and is referred to as 'external plural', or by a specific pattern change which is referred to as 'internal plural'. The suffix -āt can also be attached to an already formed plural, i.e. 'plural of plural'; for example nā : liq (sg.) — nā : liqān (pEx)— nā : liqānāt (pp) or nā : liqān : 'albās (pIn)—nā : liqānāt : 'albāsāt (pp).

We further specify whether number is marked morphologically ('pattern') and/or syntactically ('syntax'). Nouns are treated as marked by 'pattern' either when a singular or a plural form is attested or when the pattern is able to produce a plural form. Otherwise number is unmarked by pattern. Independently of the morphological form we assign number according to syntactic agreement. The following examples—concerning nouns that can behave as collective nouns—demonstrate our approach:


‘and when the sons of Israel’s dignitaries saw’

wa-soba ṛṇ'yu daqīqa
Conj-Conj V:perf.3m.pl NCommtś.sg.pā.nom.conSt
šaši bāyāyānsa 'Israel' nCommtś.pā.nom.conSt
NCommtś.pā.nom.conSt
NProp:unm[gender].unm[number].nom


‘and the wickedness of the children of Cain increased’

wa-bazha ṛkay-omn la-daqīqa
Conj-V:perf.3m.sg NCommtō.sg.pāpāsuff.3m.pl Prep:nomSt. NCommtō.sg.pā.nom.conSt
qāyan
NProp:unm[gender].unm[number].nom
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11) እመ።ፋTwig: እነጠር እጠር : ከጠር እጠር : ከጠር እጠር

‘when God killed the firstborn of Egypt’

’a‘ma qatala ‘xgi‘abher
Conj V:perf.3m.sg NPropm3.sg.nom
baks‘amu እጠር
NCom unm(grade),sg"acc.pronSt-Psuff:3m.pl PrepnomSt-NPropm3.pl.nom

In many cases there is no syntactic reference to number in a clause or sentence, as in the following examples:

12) እልፋ Twig: እንጻም እንጻም እ

‘against the sons of Adam’
l’a‘la daqiqa ‘addām
PrepnomSt NCom m.sg.nom.conSt NPropm3.unm.unm.nom

13) እውመTwig: እመመ‘አ እ

‘and with them he defeated his enemy’
wab‘omu yomawwā dar-o
Conj PrepronSt Psuff3m.pl V:impf.3m.sg NCom unm(grade),sg"acc.pronSt-Psuff:3m.sg

Nouns that have no morphological plural (like ሚለን።‘ስበ‘‘people’) are annotated as unmarked by pattern, and their number can be deduced from syntactic agreement.

14) እለውTwig: እለው

‘I will become man’

‘akawwān sab‘a
V:impf.1c.sg NCom unm(grade),unm.unm.absSt

15) እታRaises Twig: እጠር እጠር : እጠር እጠር

‘so that they pursue the people of Ethiopia’

wa-yosddaw-o la-sab‘a
Conj V:subj.3m.pl P:Psuff:3m.sg PrepnomSt NCom unm(grade),sg1.nom.conSt

bāhira ‘ityopya
NCom unm(grade),sg2.nom.conSt NProp unm(grade),unm.unm.unm.nom

16) እታRaises Twig: እታRaises እለን።‘ስበ‘‘people’

‘how the people of Ethiopia rejoiced’

ba‘anta za-tafasāḥu
PrepnomSt PRelm.sg-V:perf.3m.pl

sab‘a ‘ityopya
NCom unm.p.sg.nom.conSt NProp unm(grade),unm.unm.unm.nom

State and Case

Go‘az has three cases (nominative, accusative and vocative) and three states (absolute state, construct state and pronominal state) for which nouns may
or may not undergo vowel changes. The suffix -о marks the vocative. The suffix -а marks the accusative as well as the construct state and appears in both singular and plural. Nouns ending with -и turn into the ending -е in both the accusative and the construct state, as in ւղա՞ձ : բառի 'man'—վղա՞ձ : բառե. Nouns ending with -е, -о, -а have identical forms in the nominative/absolute state and the accusative/construct state, as ՞ձե : սարե 'flower', հարա : հարե 'army'. For such nouns case and state opposition does not surface. Therefore, many forms are morphologically ambiguous and can only be analysed by taking syntax and semantics into consideration.

Consequently, we assign the features 'case' and 'state' when a noun is not overtly marked for accusative and/or construct state; we do so on the basis of syntax and semantics:

1. He wished to build the House of God
   faqada kama շահենս beta 'sahiz, 'abber
   V:perf.3m.sg Conj V:subj.3m.sg NComum(предл,sg).acc.conSt NPropm.sg.nom

The same rule applies with the pronominal state. A noun stands in the pronominal state when it attaches a pronominal suffix (see also examples above). If a noun takes a pronominal suffix, its case can only be deduced from second person suffixes or from the suffix of the third person masculine, as in 'his house' եր : bet-ո (nominative) or եր : bet-ո (accusative). Nouns with all other suffixes (first person and all the other third person suffixes) are not overtly marked.
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Proper names, which cannot stand in the construct state, either have the same form in the nominative and the accusative (here in accusative: ṭele’atālem ‘and she reached Jerusalem’), or form an accusative by suffixing the accusative particle -ba (‘iyarālem-ba).

References


