Have=be+Prep(osition): New evidence for the preposition incorporation analysis of clausal possession

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‘HAVE’ = ‘BE’ + PREP(osition): New evidence for the preposition incorporation analysis of clausal possession

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Freeze (1992) and Kayne (1993, 1994) present a uniform syntactic analysis for the crosslinguistically well attested similarities between locative and possessive sentences, in which possessive ‘HAVE’ is transformationally derived by incorporating a dative-benefactive or locative-comitative preposition into an existential copular verb ‘BE’. Here we focus on possessive constructions in Coptic Egyptian, which provide first-hand evidence for the ‘HAVE’/‘BE’ alteration. The Coptic evidence also shows that clausal possession cannot fully be accounted for by a mechanical application of the preposition incorporation analysis.

1. Introduction

In this paper we explore a configurational analysis for the connection between locative (‘BE’ + PREP(osition)) and possessive (‘HAVE’) sentences on the one hand, and possessive noun phrases on the other hand. That there is, indeed, such a relation – both crosslinguistically and within languages – has been extensively documented in Freeze (1992). Based on newly disclosed evidence, we will derive the transparent semantic relations between clausal and nominal possession from a shared predication structure (viz., a *small clause*).

The idea that there is a common syntactic source for possessive and locative predication goes back to classic work by Benveniste (1966, section 15). Kayne (1993, 1994), elaborating on Freeze (1992), presents a decompositional analysis of ‘HAVE’ as the lexicalization of the copular verb ‘BE’ plus a dative-benefactive (‘TO’) or locative-comitative (‘WITH’) preposition.

Crucial to this analysis is the co-occurrence of an existential copular verb ‘BE’ and a dative-benefactive or locative-comitative preposition in existential-locative as well as possessive sentence constructions. Prior to

now, no language has been documented where the possessive verb 'HAVE' is formed by a transparent 'BE' + PREP(osition) complex. As we will see in this paper, Coptic Egyptian is such a language.[1] To be more precise, the possessive verb *wənte* 'to have' and its negative counterpart *mənte* 'to have not' can be decomposed into a form of the copular verb *wən* 'to be' and *mən* 'not to be' and a locative-comitative preposition *ənte* 'with'. But the preposition *ənte* is also used as a linkage device in complex noun phrases, where it marks the possessor noun. For this reason, Coptic possessives provide *prima facie* evidence for the syntactic relatedness of possession in noun phrases and in clauses.

On the other hand, the Coptic facts also show that the preposition incorporation analysis of 'HAVE' needs to be revised in two respects. First, possessive 'BE' in the 'BE' + PREP(osition) complex must be analyzed as a functional category, since it displays substantial differences from the existential copular verb BE. Second, something more has to be said about the reassignment of Cases in the course of *wənte* 'HAVE' formation: the erstwhile prepositional object of *ənte* 'with', which designates the possessor, becomes the clausal subject which is assigned nominative Case, while the erstwhile subject becomes the direct object of *wənte* 'to have' and is assigned objective Case.

The syntactic derivation of possessive 'HAVE' sentences proceeds in a cyclic fashion or *phases* in the sense of Chomsky (2000, 2001). Sentential possession starts out from DP-internal possession. Since the syntactic derivation of possessive noun phrases is accomplished by interacting movement operations, nominal possessives are the clearest cases for the DP Phase (Svenonius 2004). To express possessive relation at the clausal level, the DP phase must be further embedded into a CP phase, which is brought about by the incorporation of the preposition *ənte* into the unaccusative 'BE'-copula *wən*.

The organization of the paper is as follows. Section 2 discusses the theoretical background assumptions that underlie our analysis of Coptic possessives. Section 3 reviews the evidence for the correlation between existential-locative and possessive sentences in several Afro-asiatic languages. Section 4 discusses the main descriptive facts concerning clausal possession in Coptic Egyptian, which provides *prima facie* evidence for a decompositional analysis of the possessive auxiliary 'HAVE'. Section 5 examines working of copula support in Coptic sentences with indefinite subjects. Section 6 discusses the syntactic and semantic differences between existential and possessive 'BE' in the language. Section 7 examines DP-internal possession, which supports

the view of the parallel structure of nominal and clausal possession. Section 8 summarizes the main results of the paper.

2. A decompositional analysis of possessive 'HAVE'

Before entering the empirical discussion on Coptic possessives, this section reviews the key issues concerning the syntax of the possessive auxiliary verb 'HAVE'. Extending Benveniste's (1966) influential analysis of possessive 'HAVE', Freeze (1992: 585–589) and Kayne (1993: 6–7, 1994: 102) take the structural similarities between locatives and possessives as point of departure for a syntactic derivation of possessive sentences from existential 'BE' constructions. On this analysis, 'HAVE' sentences are underlyingly 'BE' sentences, with a syntactic element being incorporated into 'BE'. For Kayne, the incorporated element is considered to be a D(eterminer) head, which originates from a possessive nominal expression that forms the core of possessive sentences.

The idea that possessive DPs and 'HAVE' sentences have a common source goes back to Szabolcsi's (1983, 1994) extant work on Hungarian possessive constructions. In possessive noun phrases, the agreement between the possessor and the possessed item is registered by morphological markers that are by and large identical to subject-verb agreement inflection in transitive clauses with definite direct objects. Both possessor and subject-verb agreement is obligatory. Thus, consider (1 a–b), in which the first person singular subject agreement marker *-m* appears in both possessive noun phrases and clauses.[2]

(1) a. *az én vendég-e-m* (*Hungarian*)
the I guest-POSS-1SG
'my guest'

b. (*Én*) *alud-t-am.*
I sleep-PAST-1SG
'I slept'

Consider next the corresponding third person singular examples, in which agreement has a null form.

(2) a. *Mari vendég-e*
Mari guest-POSS(-3SG)
'Mari's guest'

b. *Mari alud-t.*
Mari sleep-PAST(-3SG)
'Mari slept'

Based on the parallelism between possessor and subject-verb agreement, Szabolcsi (1983, 1994) argues that the structure of possessive noun phrases mirrors clausal structure. This analysis is taken a step further by deriving possessive sentences transformationally from DP-internal possession: the possessor (POSS-or) DP in 'HAVE' sentences originates from the possessor position of a possessive DP. The first step of the syntactic derivation involves the extraction of the POSS-or DP from the possessive DP. Due to locality, extraction requires that POSS-or land in Spec, DP, which serves as an escape hatch for movement. The Spec, DP position is associated with dative Case, witness the obligatory dative Case of the subject in possessive sentences.

(3) *Step 1: the derivation of possessive DPs*

$[_{DP}$ *Marinak*$_i$ $[_{D'}$ a $[_{AgrP}$ t_i Agr^0 [*vendég-e*]]]]
Mari-DAT the guest-POSS(-3SG)
'Mari's guest'

The second derivational step involves the formation of possessive sentences from DP-internal possessives. The possessed (POSS-ed) DP agrees with and receives Case from an existential verb 'BE' after the POSS-or DP has been extracted out of the nominal possessive configuration. Since the main verb of possessive sentences is existential *van* 'to be', its subject (the POSS-ed DP) can only be indefinite. This is why the determiner that is obligatory in (3) must be missing in (4). Definitely determined subjects render the possessive sentence ungrammatical (**Marinak van a vendége*, Mari-DAT is the guest, 'Mari has the guest').

(4) *Step 2: the derivation of possessive 'HAVE' sentences*

Marinak van $[_{DP}$ t'_i D^0 $[_{AgrP}$ t_i Agr^0 [*vendég-e*]]]
Mari-DAT is guest-POSS(-3SG)
'Mari has a guest'

Crucial to the Szabolcsi-Kayne approach to possessive 'HAVE' is the assumption that clausal possession originates from an existential structure in which the unaccusative copular verb 'BE' selects a possessive DP as its

complement. Subsequently, the D^0 head of the possessive DP moves to and incorporates into the initial copula 'BE', which thus becomes complex. In Kayne's system, the incorporation of the D^0 head licenses the movement of the POSS-or DP into subject position [Spec, 'BE'], saving the derivation from improper movement violations. Keeping the case-assigning potential of Hungarian D^0 in view, the corresponding incorporating D^0 in English is said to be prepositional in nature. This preposition is covert in English, yet can assign dative Case to the possessor to its left and incorporate into 'BE' just like a D^0 head. The derived 'BE' + D^0/P^0 complex is spelled out as a separate lexical item 'HAVE' in English. See the diagrams in (5a–b) for further illustration.

(5) *The Szabolcsi-Kayne incorporation analysis of 'HAVE'*

a. … 'BE' $[_{DP}\ [_{D'}\ D^0 [_{AgrP}\ DP_{POSS\text{-}or}\ [_{Agr'}\ NP_{POSS\text{-}ed}\ ]]]]$
b. $[DP_{POSS\text{-}or,j}$ 'BE' + $D^0_i [_{DP}\ [_{D'}\ t_i [_{AgrP}\ t_j [_{Agr'}\ NP_{POSS\text{-}ed}\ ]]]]]$

Although den Dikken (1995, 1997) generally agrees with the Szabolcsi-Kayne analysis of clausal possession, he takes a different stance on the construction of the DP-internal structure: the incorporation of the dative preposition into 'BE' is coupled with an additional step of predicate inversion that reverses the order of the POSS-ed and the POSS-or DPs, which represent the subject and the predicate of a possessive relation.

(6) *Predicate inversion in the derivation of possessive DPs*

a. … 'BE' $[_{AgrP}\ DP_{POSS\text{-}ed} [_{Agr'}$ Agr $[_{PP}\ P_{DAT}\ DP_{POSS\text{-}or}\ ]]]$
b. $[_{pp}\ t_j\ DP_{POSS\text{-}or}\ ]_i\ P_i$ + 'BE' $[_{AgrP}\ DP_{POSS\text{-}ed}\ [_{Agr'}\ t_j\ t_i\ ]]$

While Coptic possessives provide empirical support for the 'HAVE'/'BE' alteration, they cannot fully be accounted for by the mechanical application of the preposition incorporation analysis, since existential and possessive 'BE' show distinctive morpho-syntactic behaviour.

3. Copula support in possessive sentences

The empirical evidence adduced for the decompositional analysis of possessive 'HAVE' as a 'BE' + PREP composite comes from languages where the copula BE and a locative preposition express clausal possession, but occur as distinct syntactic elements. Yet, in several of the Afro-asiatic languages

we discuss here, the presence of such a 'BE'-copula is by no means obligatory. Rather, a copula is introduced to support tense distinctions. The notion of possession therefore hinges entirely on the selected dative or locative preposition.

3.1. The dative-benefactive pattern

In Classical and Modern Standard Arabic, the preposition *li-* 'to, for' is widely used for the expression of clausal possession. As we can see from the contrast between examples (7a) and (7b), the dative-benefactive pattern may designate permanent as well as temporary possession (see, among various others, Fischer 2002: 157, §295; Badawi, Carter and Gulli 2004: 190, §2.6.10)

(7) a. *wa-hiyya waħad-hā la-hā* (*Standard Arabic*)
and-she alone-POSS.3F.SG to-3F.SG
šakl-un xāṣṣ-un mumayyaz-u-n.
appearance-NOM-INDEF special-NOM-INDEF peculiar-NOM-INDEF
'and she alone has a special distinguished face.'
(Badawi, Carter and Gulli 2004: 190)

b. *ʔal-ban-āt-u la-hunna šuġl-u-n kaθīr-u-n.*
the-girl-F.PL-NOM to-3F.PL work-NOM-INDEF much-NOM-INDEF
'The girls have much work.' (Cowan 1958: 52)

In present tense sentences, the dative-benefactive pattern lacks an overt copula. By contrast, the auxiliary verb *kāna* 'to be' must appear in the past or future tense contexts (Badawi, Carter and Gulli 2004: 404, §3.16.3.1). The dative preposition *li-* does not overtly incorporate into the auxiliary *kāna*, whose sole purpose is to import temporal semantics. Thus, the copular verb 'BE' has no role at all in bringing about the possessive reading.

(8) a. ***kāna*** *li-l-ʕabd-i ħimar-u-n.*
be.PERF.3M.SG to-the-servant-GEN donkey-NOM-INDEF
'The servant had a donkey.' (Fischer 2002: 157)

b. *wa-li-ðālika* ***sa-takūnu*** *la-hum ul-ʔawwaliyyat-u.*
and-for-this FUT-3F.SG.IMPERF.be for-3M.PL the-priority-NOM
'Therefore, they will have priority'
(Badawi, Carter and Gulli 2004: 404)

The decompositional approach of possessive 'HAVE' as a syntactically derived 'BE' + PREP composite would be strengthened empirically, if a language could be found where the possessive verb 'HAVE' still shows the effects of preposition incorporation. According to Ouhalla (2000), the auxiliary verb *all-ä* in Amharic is just that, namely a copula verb BE plus an incorporated dative preposition *lä-* 'to'. The possessive use of *all-ä* 'there is' is exemplified in (9a). On his analysis, the ungrammaticality of (9b) follows from economy considerations: since the auxiliary *allä* already contains the dative preposition *lä-*, the marking of the possessor noun with another instance of that preposition is redundant and therefore excluded.

(9) a. *Aster* ***ɨhɨt*** ***all-ä-at***. (*Amharic*)
Aster sister there.is.PERF-3M.SG-3F.SG
'Aster has a sister.' (Yimam 1997: 628–629)

b. **lä Kassa däbtar* ***all-ä-w***.
to Kassa notebook there-is-PERF-3M.SG-3M.SG
'Kassa has a notebook.' (Adapted from Ouhalla 2002: 223)

However, there is no 'BE'-type copula *al* in the language that could serve as a host for preposition incorporation. The Amharic auxiliary *all-* has Classic Ethiopian and Tigre cognates with the root √*hlw* 'to exist, be present'. As expected, it functions as copular verb in existential sentences (Leslau 1995: 527–528, §§83.1–83.2).

(10) *bä-gäbäya bəzu säw* ***allä***.
in-market many man there-is
'There are many people in the market.' (Leslau 1995: 528)

Moreover, the auxiliary *all-* has present tense reference. In past tense contexts, the auxiliary *näbbar-ä* 'there was' must be chosen, which has a cognate root in Classic Ethiopian √*nbr* 'to sit' (Yimam 1997: 621–626).

(11) *Aster gänzäb* ***näbbär-ä-at***.
Aster money there.was.PERF-3M.SG-3F.SG
'Aster had money' (Yimam 1997: 624)

See Leslau (1995: 531, §83.12) and Yimam (1997: 628–634) for relevant discussion on the appearance of accusative/dative clitics of the auxiliary verb *all-*.

3.2. The comitative-locative pattern

For Moroccan Arabic, Ouhalla (2000: 227ff.) argues that the locative-comitative pattern has a possessive interpretation only if the POSS-ed subject is indefinite, as in (12a). The possessive reading is no longer available when the POSS-ed subject is a definite noun phrase, as in (12b). In this case, the locative-comitative pattern describes temporary possession. (The corresponding English sentences have the same properties.)

(12) a. *Nadia ʕnd-ha ktab.* (*Morrocan Arabic*)
Nadia with-3F.SG book
'Nadia has a book.' (Ouhalla 2002: 228)

b. *Nadia ʕnd-ha l-ktab.*
Nadia with-3F.SG the-book
'Nadia has the book.' (Ouhalla 2002: 228)

Akin to Moroccan Arabic, possessive sentences in Hausa (Chadic, Nigeria) are formed with a locative preposition *dà* 'with', but unlike Modern Standard and Moroccan Arabic, the presence of the imperfective auxiliary is obligatory. Moreover, the subject of the resulting construction designates the POSS-or and the DP object of *dà*, the POSS-ed noun (Newman 2000: ch. 33).

(13) a. *yārinyà* ***tanà*** *dà zōbè.* *(Hausa)*
girl 3F.SG.IMPERF with ring
'The girl has a ring.' (Newman 2000: 222)

b. ***kanà*** *dà mōtá?*
2M.SG.IMPERF with car
'Do you have a car?' (Jaggar 2001: 470)

This brief typological review has shown that an overt 'BE'-copula is not an indispensable part of clausal possession. In Arabic, such a copula only supports temporal and aspectual semantics. In Amharic, copula support in possessive clauses is mandatory, but does not necessarily involve 'BE'.

4. The Coptic *wənte-* 'HAVE' construction

The Coptic *wənte* 'HAVE'-construction provides the 'missing link' for the decompositional approach to the 'HAVE'/'BE' alteration. The possessive

auxiliary verbs *wənte* 'to have' and *mənte* 'to have not' consist of the copular items *wən* 'to be' and *mən* 'not to be' and the comitative preposition *ənte* 'with' (e.g., Layton 2000: 305, §308). Thus, compare the existential-locative in (14) with the corresponding possessive sentence in (15). In (14), the 'BE'-copula *wən* precedes the partitive *wh*-phrase *wɛr ən-oeik* 'how many (loaves) of bread', while the locative-comitative phrase *ənte-tɛutən* 'with you (plural)' appear in clause-final position.

(14) ***wən*** *wɛr* *ən-oeik* ***ənte-****tɛutən?*
BE how.many LINK-bread with-2PL
'How many (loaves) of bread do you have (literally 'are there with you')?' (Matthew 15: 34)

By contrast, the copula *wən* and the preposition *ənte* form a single word *wənte* in possessive sentences like (15).

(15) *ne-**wənte*** *p-ərro* *salpigks sənte ən-nuβ* *ən-tšatšəh.*
PRET-HAVE DEF.M.SG-king trumpet two LINK-gold LINK-refined
'The King had two trumpets of refined gold.' (Eudoxia 60: 13)

In Coptic, possessive predication is computed on the basis of existential-locative predication: HAVE (*wənte*) = 'BE' (*wən*) + WITH (*ənte*). Further evidence for the locative source of possessive predication comes from the optional presence of the locative expletive *əmmau* 'there' (Reintges 2004: 400, §10.2.3; see also Freeze 1992: 581–582).[3]

(16) *nai* *de* *e-**mənt-u*** *nune* *<u>əmmau</u>*
DEM.PL PCL REL-HAVE.NOT-3PL root there
'But as for them, who have no root' (Luke 8: 13)

In possessive 'HAVE' sentences, the incorporated preposition *ənte* is adjacent to the BE-element *wən-* and appears, as a consequence, to the left of the possessor subject and the possessed direct object. The resulting VSO structure involves a departure from the canonical SVO word order (Layton 2000: 306, §373; Reintges 2004: 401, §10.2.3.2).

(17) *Verb* *Subject* (POSS-or) *Object* (POSS-ed)
wənte *nə-halate* *ən-t-pe* *ne.u-mah.*
HAVE DEF.PL-birds LINK-DEF.F.SG-sky DEF.PL.3PL-nest
'And the birds of the sky have their nests.' (Luke 9: 58)

To accommodate the VSO word order of possessive clauses, two types of analyses may be envisaged, which are schematically represented in (18a) and (18b). On one analysis, the incorporation of the preposition *ənte* 'with' into the copular verb *wən* and the raising of the POSS-or DP to the postverbal subject position are two distinct though related movement operations. Alternatively, one could derive the surface order from the PP-fronting of the entire *ənte*-phrase in front of the copula *wən* without applying further movement operations that would break up the structure.

(18) a. *Preposition incorporation and possessor DP raising*
[… ['BE'-*ənte* [[DP] …]]]]

b. *PP-fronting of the ənte-phrase*
[… ['BE' [$_{PP}$ *ənte* [DP]] …]]]]

The PP-fronting analysis in (18b) looks more economical than the competing preposition incorporation analysis in (18a) above, since it involves a single movement operation. Despite its conceptual appeal, the PP-fronting analysis is, however, not viable. If there were, indeed, a phrasal boundary between the copula verb *wən* and the locative-comitative preposition *ənte*, one might expect to find examples with material intervening between these elements. Such examples are, however, systematically absent in our documentation of Coptic Egyptian. The strict adjacency requirement that holds between *wən-* and *ənte* can readily be explained under the preposition incorporation analysis. Moreover, prepositional phrases appear either clause-finally after the verb and its complements or clause-initially, preceding both the tense-aspect-mood marker and the subject. The preposed placement of locative phrases is exemplified in (19), where the PP *ənnahrən p-nūte* 'before God' precedes both the existential verb *əmmən* 'not to be' and the indefinite subject *laau ən-at-k^{y}om* 'anything impossible'.

(19) *ənnahrəm* *p-nute* *de* ***əmmən*** *laau* *ən-at-k^{y}om.*
before DEF.M.SG-god PCL BE.NOT any LINK-NEG.PFX-power
'Before God, (there) is not anything impossible.' (Matthew 19: 26)

Finally, an alternative word order pattern can be observed if the POSS-or subject is a DP and the POSS-ed object an enclitic pronoun. As we can see from (20), the POSS-ed pronoun 3rd SING feminine -s 'it' cliticizes to the right of the preposition *ənte*. As a result, it precedes the POSS-or *pa-eiɔt* 'my father'.

(20) *ənka nim [ete* ***wənte-s*** *pa-eiɔt]*
thing every C_{REL} HAVE-3F.SG DEF.M.SG.1SG-father
'everything that my Father has' (John 16: 15)

Since *ənte* originates from the POSS-or DP, we can be sure that it moves to the position adjacent to *wən-* 'BE' by itself, i.e. independently of the POSS-or DP.

5. Copula support and the definiteness restriction

Our point of departure for the analysis of Coptic possessives is existential and existential-locative sentences of the kind in (21) and (22). In both existential constructions, the copular verbs *wən* 'to be' and *mən* 'not to be' appear to the left of an indefinite subject. The main difference between 'bare' existential in (21) and existential-locative constructions in (22) is that existentials have an implicit locative adjunct, whereas existential-locative sentences contain an overt locative phrase.

(21) a. ***wn*** *aggelos.*
BE angel
'Angels exist.' (Acts 23: 8)

b. ***mən*** *laau.*
BE.NOT someone
'(There) is no one (here).' (V. Pach. 1: 7)

(22) a. *ne-**wən** hen-šoos de həm p-ma et-əmmau.*
PRET-BE INDEF.PL-shepherd PCL in DEF.M.SG-place that
'(There) were shepherds in that place.' (Luke 2: 8)

b. ***mən*** *laau n-rɔme m-pei-ma nəmma-i.*
BE.NOT someone LINK-man in-DEM.M.SG-place with-1SG
'(There) is noone here with me.' (Mena 14b: 29–31)

What interests us here is that both types of existentials demonstrate a 'definiteness restriction', meaning that only indefinite subjects are licensed in the post-copular subject position (see, among various others, Milsark 1977; Heim 1987; McNally 1998). Significantly, the copulaless version of English *a book is under the table* is unavailable in Coptic. Instead, an existential-locative construction with the 'BE'-copula is used. That copula support is,

indeed, contingent on the definiteness restriction is evident from locative sentences with definite subjects in which copula support no longer applies.

(23) *ta-me* *mən* *pa-na* *nəmma-f.*
DEF.F.SG.1SG-truth and DEFM.SG.1SG-mercy with-3M.SG
'My truth and my compassion (are) with him.' (Psalm 88: 24)

Copula support is not confined to existential-locative sentences, but also applies to Present tense and Near Future sentence constructions with indefinite subjects. As expected, copula support is blocked in the context of definite subjects, as shown by the corresponding b-examples.

(24) a. *mɛ* ***wən*** *meewe* ***polymei*** *nəmma-k?* *(Present)*
Q BE thought fight(-INF) with-2M.SG
'Are (there) any thoughts troubling you?'
(AP Chaîne no. 181: 44, 16–17)

b. *eye* *ere* *ne.tən-šɛre* ***nutše*** *eβol* *hən* *nim?*
Q REL(-PRES) DEF.PL.2PL-son cast(-INF) PCL in who?
'In whom are your sons casting out (demons)?' (Luke 11: 19)

(25) a. ***wn*** *u-mnt-ebeiɛn* *na-**taho**-u.* *(Future)*
BE INDEF.SG-NOMINAL-misery AUX-come.upon-3PL
'A misery will come upon them.' (V. Pach. 90: 28–91, 1)

b. *se-na-**tsaβo*** *ero-f* *ənkʸi* *ən-eβol*
3PL-AUX-teach(-2SG.F) about-3SG.M FOC DEF.PL-out
hən ta-phylɛ.
from DEF.SG.M.1SG-tribe
'The people of my tribe will inform you about it (the tomb).'
(Eudoxia 58: 25–26)

In other tense-aspect-mood conjugations, for instance the Perfect, the presence of an indefinite subject does not trigger copula support.

(26) ***a*** *u-son* *tšne* *Apa* *Sarapion* (…) (*Perfect*)
PERF INDEF.SG-brother ask(-INF) Apa Sarapion
'A brother asked Apa Sarapion (…)' (AP Chaîne no. 28: 5, 24)

At present stage of research, we do not have an explanation to offer for the restriction of copula support to present and future tense contexts. However,

it is clear that in these contexts the copulas *wən* and *mən* no longer function as existential verbs, since there is a verbal predicate. Possessive sentences provide yet another context, in which the 'BE'-copulas are deprived of their existential semantics. In not showing definiteness effects, they differ, however, systematically from both existential-locative and Present tense sentences.

6. Asymmetries between possessive and copular 'BE'

The Coptic *wənte-* 'HAVE' pattern is of considerable theoretical interest, showing that the preposition incorporation analysis alone cannot accommodate the semantically and syntactically contrastive behavior of existential and possessive 'BE'.

6.1. No definiteness restriction

While underlyingly similar, existential and possessive sentences display striking differences, most notably, the absence of the definiteness restriction on the postverbal subject. Thus, consider:

(27) a. *p-hof* ***wənte*** *te.f-matu* *ne.s.ši.*
DEF.M.SG-snake HAVE DEF.F.SG-venom DEF.PL.3F.SG-limit
'As for the snake, its venom has its limits.' (Sh.*Chass*. 28: 24–26)

b. *hoson* ***wənte****-tən* *p-woein* (…)
C HAVE-2PL DEF.M.SG-light
'As long as you have the light (…)' (John 12: 36)

In existential-locative sentences, the indefinite subject cannot undergo subject-verb inversion or clitic-left-dislocation, because such discourse-driven reordering processes would require the insertion of a co-referential resumptive pronoun in the subject position and hence, violate the definiteness restriction (Reintges 2004: ch. 10). Since the definiteness restriction is not operative in possessive sentences, their subject has a greater positional freedom. The inversion of the possessor *pə-šɛre əm-pə-rɔme* 'the Son of Man' is shown in (28), in which the new information status of the inverted subject is indicated by the focus particle $nk^{y}i$.

(28) ***wntə-f*** *eksusia əmmau* <u>*nk*^{y}*i*</u> <u>*pə-šɛre*</u>
HAVE-3M.SG authority there FOC DEF.M.SG-son
əm-pə-rɔme e-ka noβe eβol.
LINK-DEF.M.SG-man to-put(-INF) sin PCL
'The Son of Man has authority to forgive sins.'
(Mark 2: 10, ed. Quecke)

If we were to derive possessives from the incorporation of a locative preposition into existential BE, the loss of the definiteness restriction in the resulting possessive construction would be mysterious. We thus conclude that the *wən-* 'BE' component of *wənte* 'HAVE' has a different specification and syntactic distribution than the copula *wən-* 'BE' in existential-locative sentences.[4]

6.2. Optional deletion of the *wən-*'BE' element

The contrastive behavior between existential and possessive 'BE' are the result of categorial reanalysis of the erstwhile existential verb as a functional element in the *wənte* 'HAVE'-construction. More specifically, possessive *wən-* expresses tense and finiteness, while the locative-comitative preposition *ənte* is the predicator. On this analysis, we understand why it is possible to delete possessive *wən-* from the surface structure of possessive clauses, while *ənte* cannot be so elided.

(29) *ənka nim [et-**ənta**-f]*
thing every C_{REL}-WITH-3M.SG
'everything that he has' (Matthew 13: 44)

The possibility of deletion becomes available because the relative complementizer *et-* itself is endowed with tense and finiteness features. The encoding of these features by means of *wən-*component is therefore not strictly necessary.

6.3. Objective Case and 'HAVE' raising

While the copular verbs *wən* and *mən* in existential-locative constructions are *bona fide* unaccusative verbs, the possessive counterparts *wənte* and *mənte* are transitive verbs that are capable of assigning objective Case to

the POSS-ed DP. There are two objective Cases in Coptic, accusative and oblique case, where accusative Case requires strict adjacency. For this reason, the clause-internal negation adverb *an* 'not' in (30a) comes after the transitive verb *tənnu* 'to send' and the direct object *pe.f-šɛre* 'his son'. No such adjacency requirement is at work in the oblique Case pattern, where the direct object is marked by the semantically vacuous preposition *ən-*. As seen in (30b), the negation *an* intervenes between the verb *soof* 'to defile' and the oblique object *m-pə-rɔme* 'the man' (Reintges 2001).

(30) a. *ənt-a p-nute gar tənneu pe.f-šɛre an*
REL-PERF DEF.M.SG-god PCL send DEF.M.SG.3M.SG-son not
e-p-kosmos (…)
to-DEF.M.SG-world
'God has not sent his son to the world (…)' (John 3: 17)

b. *e-wom de ə-mpe-k-ja tootə-k sɔɔf*
to-eat PCL REL-NEG.PERF-2M.SG-wash hand-2M.SG defile
an əm-pə-rɔme.
not PREP-DEF.M.SG-man
'To eat without having washed your hands does not defile the man.' (Matthew 15: 20)

The possessive auxiliary *wənte-* 'HAVE' is compatible with both accusative and oblique Case (cf. also Bach 1967; Freeze 1992; Moro 1997). The accusative object *u-sɔne* 'a sister' in (31a) appears to the left of the locative expletive *əmmau* 'there', whereas the oblique object *n-u-mɛɛše n-khrɛma* 'a lot of money' in (31b) appears to its right.

(31) a. *ne-**wnte** p-ərro Kɔstantinos u-sɔne əmmau*
PRET-HAVE DEF.M.SG-king Constantine INDEF.SG-sister there
əm-parthenos.
LINK-virgin
'King Constantine had a virgin sister.' (Eudoxia 50: 3–4)

b. *ne-**wənta-**f mmau n-u-mɛɛše n-khrɛma.*
PRET-HAVE-3M.SG there PREP-INDEF.SG-mass LINK-money
'He had a lot of money.' (Mena 13a: 8–10)

In contradistinction to run-of-the-mill transitive verbs, there is no adjacency requirement between the possessive verb and the direct object, given that possessive clauses have VSO order. Moreover, discourse particles may

intervene between the POSS-or subject and the accusative case-marked POSS-ed object (e.g., Layton 2000: 310, §309a). At present, it is not clear which factors underlie the selection of accusative and oblique case marking in possessive sentences.

(32) *ne-wənte t-šorəp men hen-dikaiɔma ən-šəmše.*
PRET-HAVE DEF.F.SG-first PCL INDEF.PL-rules LINK-worship
'The first one had regulations for worship.' (Hebrews 9: 1)

While lexical verbs never leave the IP domain, the possessive verb *wənte* occupies a pre-IP position, which can be identified with Rizzi (1997)'s FIN(inteness) Phase. As a result, *wənte* is in complementary distribution with other tense/aspect/mood markers that occupy the FIN^0-node.[5]

6.4. Interim Summary

In the previous sections we studied the morphosyntax of Coptic possessive constructions in the clausal domain. We observed the following facts and properties:

(i) The possessive verbs *wənte* 'to have' and *mənte* 'to have not' transparently reflect the incorporation of a locative-comitative preposition *ənte* into a copula element *wən* 'to be' and *mən* 'not to be'. This incorporation step involves the preposition alone rather than the entire prepositional phrase.

(ii) There exist some surprising asymmetries between existential and possessive 'BE', most notably the disappearance of the definiteness restriction and the availability of objective Case in the latter.

In the following section, we will outline a syntactic analysis for the observed facts, in which the connection between nominal and clausal possession plays a crucial role.

7. The configurationality of clausal possession

Our path towards a configurational analysis of possessive sentences leads us through DP-internal possession. This is because possession in noun phrases and in clauses share important structural properties in the languages

we study. The exact nature of the relatedness between nominal and clausal possessives is controversial. That there exists, indeed, such a derivational relationship between both types of possessives is challenged Ouhalla (2000), who argues that even the semantic relation between the possessor and the possessed DP is different in each of the two constructions. Our findings support the Szabolcsi-Kaynean view that clausal possession is syntactically derived from nominal possession. This is, we think, a warranted result, since it offers a principled syntactic explanation for the semantic similarities between nominal and clausal possessives, both of which express the notional category of 'possession'.

For the configurational analysis of clausal possession we combine two strands of current minimalist research. On the one hand, we assume a locality theory along the line of Chomsky (2000, 2001), according to which syntactic derivation proceeds successively through distinct cyclic domains or 'phases'. Phases represent relatively autonomous derivational units, containing propositional content. Given the conception of the phase as a propositional unit, possessive DPs are perhaps the clearest instances of the DP-phase, since the relation between the POSS-or and the POSS-ed DP is one of predication (Svenonius 2004). Following den Dikken (1995), we assume that possessive DPs are built around a small clause kernel with proposition-like qualities. We furthermore follow den Dikken and Singhapreecha (2004) and den Dikken (2006) in carefully distinguishing linkers from relators. While relators are predicative expressions, linkers are void of semantic content and merely signal the application of a DP-internal movement operation ('predicate inversion').

7.1. DP-internal possession and linkers

We include attributive modifiers in our discussion of DP-internal possession, since one type of possessive DPs employs the same linking device, viz. the proclitic particle *ən-*/*əm-*, as seen in (33a) and (33b). The other type of complex possessive DPs uses the by now familiar locative-comitative preposition *ənte* 'with', whose use in possessive noun phrases is exemplified in (33c) (Reintges 2004: 90–96, §§3.1.3–3.1.4).[6]

(33) a. *t-diathɛkɛ* *ən-βərre* (attributive *ən-*/*əm-*)
DEF.F.SG-covenant LINK-new
'the new convenant' (Matthew 26: 28)

b. *t-epsitolɛ* *m-p-rro* (possessive *ən-*/*əm-*)
DEF.F.SG-letter LINK-DEF.M.SG-king
'the letter of the king' (Hilaria 10: 32)

c. *nife* *ənte* *p-nute* (possessive *ənte*)
breath WITH DEF.M.SG-god
'breath of God' (2 Timothy 3: 16)

Following den Dikken and Singhapreecha (2004) and den Dikken (2006), we analyze the linker *ən-* as a semantically void linker, whose presence signals the application of predicate inversion inside the DP. The inverted order AP *ən*-NP is retained in examples of the following kind.

(34) *p-nok*^{y} *ən-nute* (attributive *ən-*/*əm-*)
DEF.M.SG-great LINK-god
'the great God' (Titus 2: 13)

That the adjective has, indeed, undergone predicate inversion is also evident from postnominal attributives that appear without any such linker (see Borghouts 1980 for the pre-Coptic precursors of possessive *ənte-*).

(35) *t-šeere* *šɛm*
DEF.F.SG-girl little
'the little girl' (Matthew 9: 24)

To arrive at the canonical order DP *ən*-AP like *t-diathɛkɛ ən-βərre* 'the new convenant' in (33a) above, we, again, follow den Dikken and Singhapreecha (2004: 20ff.) in assuming that the modified DP moves past the inverted attributive modifier to the specifier of a higher functional projection, whose head is instantiated by the linker *ən-*.

The syntactic derivation of the different *ən*-marked attributive constructions is schematically represented in (36). The structure in (36b) corresponds to the more marked order with pre-nominal attributes AP *ən*-DP (as in (34)), while structure in (36c) describes the canonical post-nominal order DP *ən*-AP (cf. (33a–b)). Granted that nominal possessives have an underlying small clause structure with the possessor as the predicate, the syntactic derivation of nominal possessives of the form DP *ən*-DP in examples like *t-epsitolɛ m-p-rro* in (33b) above therefore runs entirely parallel to the one of attributive modification.

(36) *Deriving modification with the linker* ən-

a. [$_{SC}$ NP AP]
merging functional structure F_1P; AP-to-Spec,F_1P (predicate inversion), spelling out F^0 as *ən-* →

b. [$_{F1P}$ AP_i [$_{F1'}$ *ən-* [$_{SC}$ NP t_i]]]
merging another functional FP; NP-to-Spec,F_2P, *ən-* head moves to F_2 →

c. [$_{F2P}$ NP_j [$_{F2'}$ *ən-* [$_{F1P}$ AP_i [$_{F'}$ t_{link} [$_{SC}$ t_j t_i]]]]]

Unlike the linker *ən-*, the preposition *ənte* 'with' does not appear with attributive modifiers. Although the contrastive behavior of the linker *ən-* and the preposition *ənte* needs more research, it generally seems to hold that the linker *ən-* is selected when the POSS-or and the POSS-ed agree in definiteness, as in (33b) above, while the preposition *ənte* is chosen when there is a mismatch in definiteness, as in (33c) above. When both *ən-* and *ənte* are combined, *ən-* appears in a higher structural position.

(37) *hah* *n-remao* *nte* *t-polis*
many LINK-rich.man WITH DEF.F.SG-city
'many rich men of the city' (KHML I 72: 1)

The DP-internal markers *ən-* and *ənte* are fundamentally different categories: the former is a functional category that signals inversion, while the latter is a relational category with locative semantics. Therefore, possessive DPs with *ənte* contain a prepositional small clause, with the possessor as complement to P^0 head.[7]

(38) [$_{PP}$ DP/NP $_{POSS\text{-}ed}$ [$_{P'}$ *ənte* [DP $_{POSS\text{-}or}$]]]

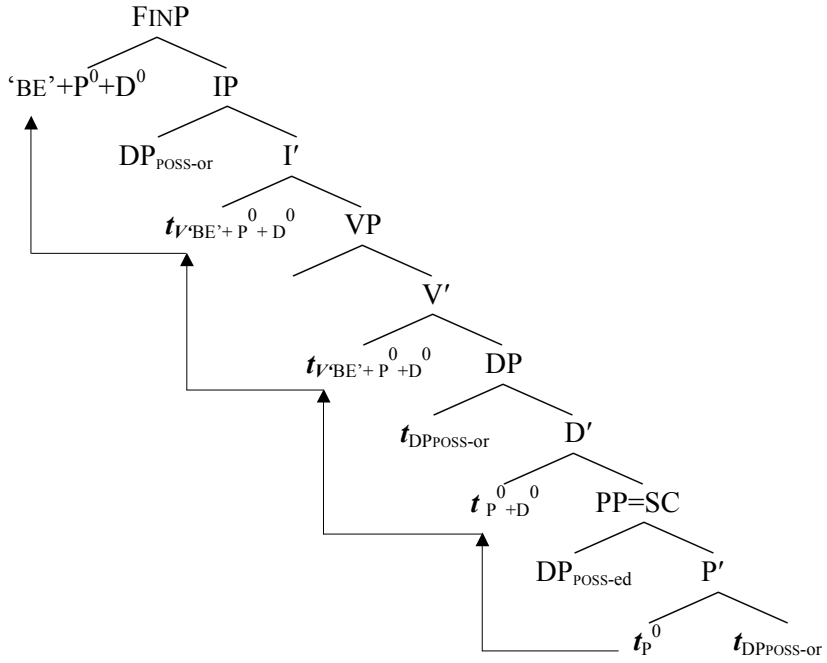
Clausal possession was shown to be derived by preposition incorporation. Since the 'BE'-component of *wənte* 'HAVE' does not qualify as an existential verbal predicate, one may plausibly assume that the preposition *ənte* constitutes the semantically meaningful predicate of the possessive clause. Since the linker *ən-* has no such relational or predicative meaning, it couldn't possibly contribute semantic content to the BE-copula to turn it into a predicate.

7.2. Deriving clausal possession from DP-internal possession

The derivation of clausal possession basically involves the construction of a CP phase on top of a DP phase. The DP phase starts out from a small clause configuration with the locative-comitative preposition *ənte* as its head. On top of the small clause/PP, there is a DP-layer which serves as the complement of the copula element 'BE'. Within this DP phase, minimally two movement operations must be synchronized. On the one hand, there is the raising of the POSS-or nominal from the complement position of the *ənte*-PP to the Spec, DP. On the other hand, there is the raising and subsequent incorporation of the small clause head *ənte* into the D^0 head. Both movement steps are required, because the possessor and the preposition will move out of the DP, into the higher clausal structure. To allow the derivation to proceed further, both elements must move to the edge of the DP phase. The derivation proceeds further by merging the copula 'BE' in a V^0-node on top of the DP-structure.[8] Subsequently, 'BE' provides a host for the raised $P^0 + D^0$ complex. For us, this derivational step is what distinguishes clausal from nominal possession in this language. The newly created 'BE' + P^0 + D^0 composite has Case-assigning potential, yet differs from lexical transitive verbs in that it does not stay in-situ in the IP-domain, but rather moves to the FIN^0-node, which constitutes the lowest left-peripheral heads on top of the IP domain (see Rizzi 1997 and much related research). In this position, 'BE'+ P^0+D^0 is in complementary distribution with other pre-IP tense/aspect/mood markers. Akin to such markers, the possessive auxiliary *wənte* 'have' does not show any definiteness restrictions. The derivation of possessive 'HAVE' from preposition incorporation is indicated by the arrows in the following tree diagram.

The tree structure in (39) also captures the additional movement operations in possessive clauses, which are motivated by Case-requirements. The POSS-or always moves to the subject position Spec,IP to receive nominative Case. In this position, it appears to the right of the 'BE' + P^0+D^0 complex in Fin^0. For the DP residue containing the POSS-ed DP, there are two Case assigning possibilities, viz. accusative and oblique Case (see, above, section 6.4). When assigned accusative Case, the DP residue moves to the Spec,VP position. When the possessed DP remains in-situ in the specifier of the small clause, the semantically vacuous locative preposition *n-* is introduced into the structure to avoid a Case Filter violation.

(39)



A question remains with respect to the Case role of the incorporated preposition *ənte*. Since this preposition incorporates into 'BE', and thus provides 'BE' with case-assigning capacities, its trace in the small clause kernel is case-impaired. Therefore, the erstwhile prepositional object, the possessor DP is forced to move to the Spec,IP position for gaining nominative Case.

8. Concluding remarks

The Coptic language facts shed new light on the relation between existential-locative and possessive sentences. The possessive verb *wənte* 'HAVE' comprises a 'BE' element *wən* and a locative-comitative preposition *ənte* 'with' and thus bears *prima facie* evidence for Szabolcsi's (1983, 1994) and Kayne's (1993, 1994) decompositional approach to the 'HAVE'/'BE' alteration. Yet, the Coptic evidence also shows that existential-locative and possessive constructions differ systematically from one another with respect to the operativeness of the definiteness restriction. We have shown that next to incorporation, the prerequisite for deriving possessive 'HAVE' from

'BE+WITH' is the semantic bleaching of existential 'BE' into a functional category. In agreement with the Szabolcsi-Kaynean view, we argued that Coptic clausal possession cannot be derived from an existential-locative construction. Rather, it represents a CP structure that is built on possessive DP structure, with a 'BE'-element mediating between the DP and the CP phases.

Notes

1. Coptic Egyptian is the indigenous language of late-antique and early medieval Christian Egypt (from about the third to the eleventh century CE) and represents the final development stage of Ancient Egyptian (Afro-asiatic). Coptic Egyptian is actually a dialect cluster with at least six regional varieties, two of which gained supra-regional importance: Sahidic Coptic, the vernacular of Upper Egypt, and Bohairic Coptic, the vernacular of Lower Egypt. The data in this article are taken from Sahidic Coptic, which due to its early records and rich literature represents the main reference dialect for Coptic Egyptian. For the textual sources of the Sahidic Coptic examples, see Reintges (2004: 597–600).
2. The following abbreviations are used in the glosses: AGR 'agreement'; CAUS.INF 'causative infinitive'; C 'subordinating complementizer'; C_{REL} 'relative complementizer'; COND 'conditional'; CONJ 'conjunctive'; DEM 'demonstrative article'; IMPERF 'imperfective'; INF 'infinitive'; LINK 'linker'; NEG.PFX 'negative prefix'; OBL 'oblique Case'; PCL 'particle'; PERF 'perfect'; POSS 'possessive'; PREP 'preposition'; Q 'yes/no question particle'; REL 'relative marker'. Glosses are given in parentheses for morphemes that have no surface-segmental shape.
3. Similar facts have been reported for Italian, where possessive 'HAVE' constructions may include the expletive pronoun *ci* 'there' (Moro 1997: 236–242). Although *ci* can be omitted at a high stylistic level, as seen in (ia), it becomes obligatory when the object of *avere* 'to have' is cliticized, as seen in (ib). Crucially, *ci* cannot occur with the possessive verb *possedere* 'to possess'.

   (i) a. *i professori (c')-hanno molti libri* (*Italian*)
   the professors there-have many book
   'Professors have many books'

   b. *i professori ??(ce)-li*$_i$ *hanno* t_i
   the professors there-them have
   'Professors have them'

   c. *i professori* (**ci*) *possiedono molti libri*
   the professors there have many book
   'Professors have many books' (Moro 1997: 237 (50))

   See Moro (1997: ch. 2; 2000: 109ff.) for further discussion of the syntax of *ci*.

4. Further support for the distinctiveness of possessive 'BE' from existential 'BE' comes from the availability of two locative arguments (not adjuncts). Consider the possessive sentence in (i), in which both the POSS-or and the POSS-ed DP appear in the complement position of a locative preposition, viz. the comitative preposition *ənte* 'with' and the directional preposition *e-* 'to, against'. It is hard to imagine what this sentence would mean if the BE element was still a fully-fledged existential verb, given that asserting the existence of a location is semantically anomalous. (Consider, for instance, the ungrammaticality of **There is in the garden*).

   (i) *BE* *PREP$_1$* *POSS-or* *PREP$_2$* *POSS-ED*
   ne-wə(n)- ***nte-*** *u-danistɛs* ***e-*** *rɔme snau* *pe*
   PRET-BE- WITH INDEF.SG-debtor TO man two COP
   'A certain creditor had two debtors.' (Luke 7: 41)

   Layton (2000: 306, §383) posits an implicit indefinite pronoun denoting the unexpressed possessed item, corresponding to the paraphrase 'A creditor had something against two people'. The problem with this analysis is that in Coptic indefinite pronouns are never pro-dropped. Our understanding of this passage is different. For us, the POSS-ed DP is encoded as a directional phrase to express the idea that the possessive relationship has a negative effect on its referent, i.e. he designates a negatively affected entity designated by POSS-ed DP. On this analysis, the 'BE'-component of *wənte-* 'HAVE' has by itself no existential force but rather provides a syntactic host only for the raised preposition.
5. For British English, den Dikken (1997: 131) observes that possessive *have* can raise past a negation or a subject, as seen in (i a–b). It thus behaves differently from non-possessive *have*, as seen in (ii a–b):

   (i) a. John hadn't the faintest idea.
   b. Have you a daughter?

   (ii) a. *John hadn't Mary throw up on him.
   b. *Had John Mary throw up on him?
6. Complex possessive noun phrases with the linker *ən-* lack the inverted alternant DP POSS-or *ən-* DP POSS-ed. We can safely assume that attributive modifiers the linker *ən-* are not compounds, because such compounds involve the phonological reduction of the modified head noun, e.g. *ɛrp ən-as* 'old wine' vs. *ərp-as* 'vintage' wine (Layton 2000: 90, § 112).
7. Den Dikken (2006) argues that *any* predication relationship involves a RELATOR element between the subject and the predicate. The RELATOR is a functional category, which permits either the subject or the predicate to occupy its specifier or complement position. This RELATOR therefore constitutes the head of the small clause. Our view of predication is not formulated in terms of a 'RELATOR phrase'.
8. See Moro (1997: 241) for a related view. In Moro's system, the possessive verb *avere* 'to have' is analyzed as an auxiliary verb, as in our proposal, but

not further decomposed into a 'BE' plus a preposition. Rather, he regards the auxiliary *essere* 'to be' as support for the V^0 that incorporates into a single agreement node, while *avere* 'to have' is support for V^0 that incorporates into two AGR nodes.

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