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**A FIRST STRUCTURAL GRAMMAR OF DEMOTIC**
*0. Preliminary*

0.1 The book under review is structured as follows:

Presentation of the texts, previous work on them, features of the corpus; the structure of nominal phrases (bases, determiners and quantifiers, their lexical expansions; clausal expansions, the augens, number and gender, adjectives; partitive, genitival and appositive constructions). Special types of noun (PNs, numbers, verbal nouns). Verb phrases and verb clauses (bases and their expansions; the tenses; auxiliaries); the durative system (with discussion of subjects and predicates, negation, conversion, aspect and existential patterns). Predication and emphasis (esp. Nominal Predications and the Second Tenses). Appendices include Tables (demonstrative, determinators, quantifiers, pronominals, converters); the texts and their translation. Bibliographical references and Indexes (passages discussed, words discussed, other texts quoted). Individual sections are structured as follows: Form (morphology, orthography, palaeography); "Function" (grammatical status and role, patterning and construction); "Content" (semantics).

0.2 This work is wondrously attractive in presentation, to a linguist, especially a 'linguist of later Egyptian'. I must say, at the onset, that I find the book a splendid achievement. I must also personally and subjectively confess to an especially festive feeling, under the enticing sensation of Demotic as 'Egyptian-encoded Coptic', a sensation intensified and enhanced by carefully perusing the present work. Demotic, and especially early Demotic, is still the least familiar of all phases of Egyptian; and that not least due to this very same enigmatic balance between the Coptic-type and 'pre-Coptic Egyptian'-type phenomena. In fact, Demotic has a special value for the typological diachrony of Egyptian: its conception as an in-between phase between the (analyzing) LE to the (agglutinating in resynthesizing) Coptic must stand or fall by precise structural information, such as is offered by this painstaking work. For instance, the Second Tenses and focalization; the perfect vs. preterite opposition; the Nominal Sentence; the aorist (atemporal) tense category; the future, the causative form-constructions — these are all features that pattern and inform the unbroken history of Egyptian, the longest unbroken evolution of any language in our experience.

This work is a non-generative, truly descriptive, methodologically impeccable grammar. It sets out to evaluate and criticize prior research as well as collect and consolidate new evidence. Its statements are clearly and convincingly expounded, offering coherent interpretations, firmly grounded in source material, and many *mises en question*, with a wealth of detailed information. Indeed, it is the first Demotic grammar since Lexa's work of 1940-1951 (Janet Johnson's account of the verbal system in Roman Demotic [1976] comes nearest to being a comprehensive grammar, and of course covers much more extensive ground, corpus-wise).

0.3 The corpus at the base of Simpson's work is of a textemic genre very much *sui generis*. The author himself is fully aware of the limited corpus and ensuing incomplete picture of grammatical systematization (58). We have here a case of *Kanzleistil* - archaic, formal, formulary; arguably not

a style but a genre, even a *texteme*. (A blend of Leviticus with a 'Vita Monachorum' preceptive genre comes to a Coptologist's mind). In this corpus, the documentation of the tenses is very partial (note esp. the absence of non-converted forms. The use of the future is restricted; no modal future is attested. The prospective form is almost exclusively grammaticalized as a causative exponent). In this sense, the work is an instance of corpus-based textemic grammar. It is however only fair to observe that Simpson offers as a rule documentation from a broad range of other corpuses (cf. pp. 60, 90, 91, 93, 128, 130f., 153ff. etc.), effectively giving his statements the validity of a comprehensive grammar. When the canvas is as large and varied as in Demotic (the differences between phases are complex and rich, often comparable to those between Old and Middle Egyptian), this has a real advantage. The Index Locorum is thus especially welcome; yet one misses a Subject Index.

The Bibliography (with the discussion of grammatical opinion in the text) constitutes no less than a full resumé of the Demotic (and to a considerable extent Egyptian and Coptic linguistic) literature of the last century (from Griffith's *Stories of the High Priests* [1900] onwards).

0.4 Non-attestation, ever an important problematic issue in dead-language linguistics, to be resolved only structurally, acquires an urgency still more acute in a *Spezialgrammatik*, and all the more so in a genre so special as the present one. In this context, the dilemma of the authenticity of the Demotic (in the sense of 'linguistic validity as uninfluenced by a Vorlage text') acquires a special meaning (22ff. - Relation of demotic and Greek texts'). On this question, I would suggest a *parallel composition* of the texts, with an ongoing accommodation of the Demotic to the Greek version. The validity of the Demotic as a *testo di lingua* is in any case beyond doubt.

*1. Methodology. Grammatical Terminology and Conceptualization*

1.1 I wish to dwell here on certain specific points and aspects of the work's method and theory, on points made and stands taken. Simpson's rigorous analysis fully merits such close reading, and I believe methodology to be an especially important issue in Egyptian linguistics. For in pre-Coptic Egyptian we have virgin ground, where we can disentangle ourselves from, or avoid grappling with, received terminology and resulting ethnocentric (Indo-European or Semitic 'squinting') associations; yet this isn't such an esoteric case (as, for instance, Pacific or Amerindian) as to have a categorization so different from that of the relatively familiar part of the global linguistic terrain as to render familiar models totally useless. It is not yet too late, after hardly a century of linguistic treatment, to redress such facile terminological importations as have taken place. There are thus two good reasons for the author's terminologically careful practice: first, in order to get the concepts as right as possible from the start; second, since the comprehension of quite a few features is as yet partial, to avoid biasing, distortion and obfuscation as early as possible in the descriptive process.

1.2 Simpson's grammar is a breakthrough and an opportunity well taken advantage of in several methodological respects. On the entirely personal level, I fear I risk a general lifting of eyebrows in the serene and reserved company of British Egyptologists amongst which the young author of this work is to be counted, if I say that this aspect of the book has

made me particularly happy. For this book is a first structural systematic scientific grammar of any pre-Coptic phase of Egyptian; it is also a unique modern ‘bridging grammar’ between Coptic and Demotic (indeed, it is in my opinion the first theory-valid component of a historical grammar of Demotic). A Coptologist would expect some sort of contrastive reflection on the Coptic relevance of the Demotic findings: is the impression of many features common to Demotic and Bohairic, as against Sahidic, corroborated by a more precise structural view of the former (cf. p.29, 90, 125f.)?

This is, as pointed out, a corpus-based grammar, and it is truly amazing that the author has managed to extract and distil from a relatively limited and *sui generis* corpus such a richly varied, full-fledged comprehensive grammatical description. Still on that personal level, I hope I may be forgiven some slight tone of personal satisfaction, even relief. In thirty years of teaching Coptic and Egyptian grammatical analysis (the author was among my students in two courses of Late Egyptian and Structural Analysis for Egyptologists, given at the Oriental Institute, Oxford in 1984-5), this is the first memorable ‘seepage’ of structuralism into pre-Coptic Egyptian grammatical thought. Another ‘first’ to its credit, is that the work breaks the distorting preoccupation of most Egyptian grammars with the verb and verb clause (a clear Indo-European ethnocentric squint).

1.3 Simpson’s grammar is structuralist in model and in methodological approach and principles - structural in the sense of the European and European-American, Saussurean and post-Saussurean Structuralist Schools. The approach is sophisticated in its overall conception of grammar, even if one senses a certain *naïveté* or innocence, probably associated with what I see as the only serious methodological shortcoming of the book, that it by and large ignores the implications for and achievements of general and non-Egyptian linguistics. It is one of the most urgent goals of modern Egyptian Linguistics, to put Egyptian (and Coptic!) back as a central or leading case in linguistic typology, as it used to be until the first decades of the century: I am afraid this looks sadly improbable just now.

Recurring tell-tale terms and names for concepts of the remarkable structuralist sophistication of the analysis in this work — and indeed the entirely fresh, at times revolutionary approach to Demotic grammar — are ‘opposition’ and ‘neutralization’, ‘conditioning’, ‘significant’ (in the sense of the terminological ‘pertinent’), ‘signalling’, ‘zero’, ‘exclusion’, ‘rection’ and ‘valency’, paradigmatic ‘categories’, and so on, and so forth.

## 2. A systematic scanning of specific issues or features of importance

2.1.1 The First and Second Part of Simpson’s Grammar, almost half the descriptive part of the work, treat nominal syntagmatics (27ff.). This is in itself a revolutionary approach (for traditional Egyptian and Coptic grammatical literature is verb-oriented and verb-centered) and sheds much-needed light practically on the entire system.

The author makes a both powerful and subtle case for the nuclear standing of determinator/ quantifier a most consequential insight: “bases in nominal phrases” (p.27ff.): I would certainly prefer ‘nucleus’ to ‘base’, if only because of the various verb-morphology and word-formational associations of the latter term.

2.1.2 In this context, I beg to differ with the formal analysis of delocutive personal pronouns as nuclei (27, 31f., 33). Although there certainly is a justification for presenting the pronominals together, their syntactic distribution is so variegated — in fact, these all-important, most hard-working (to adopt a Humpty-Dumpty-an metaphore) grammemes are spread all over the network of syntactic roles. Only in one or two slots the pronominals are truly nuclear (although they may often be seen as actualizers of lexemes!). In his summary (32ff.) S. offers some valuable observations. A less than satisfactory formulation is (33) “the π- /τ-/ν- series occurs without expansion as the theme or subject in certain types of nominal sentence, where the delocutive pronouns are excluded”: πε etc. are the (thematic) delocutive pronouns, in that special nexus type, exactly as cε- (and the q-/c- commuting with †, cε- etc.) is the thematic delocutive plural in the presental nexal pattern. (Simpson’s comparative observation on the source of definite articles in Indo-European also needs some correction: they evolved from *demonstratives*, not delocutive personal pronouns, and thus it is misleading to say they “originated in pronouns which could be or were normally found without associated nouns, and could have either demonstrative or simply delocutive sense...” (33). Obviously, the appositive, actualizing coupling of demonstrative with noun is the historical essence of the evolution of the article — this is almost tautological: the expanded demonstrative *is* invariably, to some degree and partly by definition, the definite article (although for Romance and Germanic the scenario seems to be more complicated than this, and intricately enmeshed in dialectological features). The truth is, in Indo-European and Semitic, and possibly in Egyptian too, that there is (at least glottogonically) no delocutive personal pronoun; the elements ‘filling in’ this functional slot are demonstratives.

One wonders, why is the pronominal theme *p3y* etc. included in the definite bases? (30) — incidentally, it cannot be “theme [or ‘copula’]”!

And one last remark at this point: the postposed demonstratives are arguably not bases, but satellital expansions (‘demonstrative adjectives’) — unlike at least one of the two postpositive *nb* elements.

2.1.3 Simpson’s account of the non-phoric definite article (34f.) is well presented, and sheds light also on the Bohairic π- series, which is arguably not ‘definite’ at all. The non-phoric definite article and the anaphoric definite base and cataphoric reference (34ff.) are similarly well described (although their *cohesive* text-grammatical significance is unfortunately underplayed). Some points in the author’s view of non-phoric pronouns are open to discussion (37): for instance, the pronouns in the passive construction are arguably not semantically empty, since they express a ‘seventh person’, while cases like the ‘neutric’ masculine with *hpr* may be cataphoric).

2.1.4 A substantial contribution is Simpson’s discussion of the *zero* article and subsequent references to this (38ff., 61 etc.). This is one of the most complicated features of nominal syntax in any language; our understanding of the Demotic picture has been truly advanced in this work. The distinction of *zero* vs. *nil* could have benefited the structural presentation: the case of ‘no determination’ in denominal compound verbs (39) is arguably *nil*, not *zero*, like a Greek ‘stem’ before deriving verbal suffixes: πολεμ-ίζω/έω (*ir.f w<sup>c</sup>b* “he served as priest, he became priest”? - 40). *Zero* and *p-* (Boh. π-)

express distinct types of genericity (see also 34f.), such as are currently identifiable, say, in English, where practically all determiners and both numbers express different types of genericity. The important issue of the resolution, in the ‘no determiner’ *signifiant*, between *zero* and *indefinite* determinator, as well as the functional demarkation of *zero* and *w<sup>c</sup>* are again very well treated (40ff.; the partitive construction, treated elsewhere, 65ff., is relevant here too). This is of considerable diachronic interest, in view of the existence in Coptic of both zero and indefinite articles (with subtle dialectal differences). The general literature on the essence of the indefinite determination grading (which may be either specific [‘a certain...’] or non-specific, and is usually homonymic with the ‘one’ quantifier) is as vast as that on the definite article and its evolution, although by ‘evolution of the article’ the definite article is usually meant. (I must quarrel with the author’s statement, that “the distinction [of specific:non-specific] is completely neutralized [in quantification, negative, possessive constructions; with abstract, uncountable and collective nouns; A. S.-H.]; the result is that here a simpler system is used, which does not distinguish specificity by determination” (40): this is a *non sequitur*. The fact that the indefinite article is excluded in some environments does entail different values, but not complete cancelling of the specificity category.

Two other analytical points well made in this context are determiners and quantifier combined (45ff.); and nominal categories, especially gender (62ff.).

2.1.5 The adjectives (50ff. 63f.) and their relationship to the *n*-attributes constitute one of the most intriguing topics in later Egyptian, in view of the sharp contrast between the Egyptian “morphological” adjective (an Semitic-like situation) and the Coptic “syntactical attribute”, uncontestedly one of the prime typological distinctions of this language. What exactly is the Demotic adjective (it is certainly not a participle any more)? Unfortunately, because of the restricted corpus we cannot get a conclusive answer as to whether the lexemic adjectives constitute an open, semi-open or closed inventory. At any rate, Simpson does well to treat the adjectives with the nominal attributes; his distinction of primary and secondary expansions is very much to the point and has far-reaching implications for deciding the status of adjectives (63f.).

2.1.6 “Clausal expansion” (53ff.) as a combined heading for adnominal/adclausal satellites containing a nexus (relative, circumstantial, conjunctive) is useful. However, the individual discussion of the relative constructions (“Form; Resumption” 54) is not among the best in the book: “long” and “short forms” are hardly acceptable as a syntactical definition or even a general description; the constructions are too complicated to accommodate vaguely quantificative terminology. The formulation here is somewhat cumbersome, and Simpson mixes in his discussion forms that do not really belong together. The conversion morphotactics, here especially intricate, ought to have been put in sharper focus, and a tabular schematic presentation would have made the statements clearer. On the other hand, Simpson’s words on “content”, rejecting the a priori dichotomy of restrictive vs. non-restrictive relative, are very welcome and sum up the situation admirably (55). The special affinity of the relative with definite nuclei is a deeply Egyptian, not a particularly Demotic typological trait (55); a formulation in terms of relative vs. circumstantial (functionally, attributive vs. adnexal) opposi-

tion in the specific-environment adnominal paradigm would have been structurally more to the point. Simpson’s account of the conjunctive as expansion form is very good (57f.); well placed in the exposition and well described are also the augmentia (58ff.), adverbials with a rhematic component and a built-in pronominal cohesion factor.

2.1.7 The NOUN + (PRO)NOUN determinative phrases, *alias* “genitive constructions”, constitute one of the synchronically and diachronically most difficult and most intriguing issues of Egyptian (and one that probably most tempts a generative approach — a trap not avoided even by H.J. Polotsky in his latter days). They are deservedly assigned ample space and careful detailed consideration (67ff.). The term ‘genitive’ itself, repeatedly used here, is infelicitous (even if used for lack of a better name; Simpson himself seems to sense its awkwardness). In the “form” section, I cannot see why the *p3y=* series is not determinatorial (67f.); in “function”, I have reservations concerning the wording of the relationship between the different possessive constructions, not the basic assignation. I must further disagree with Simpson’s rejection (68) of “pronoun” and “article” for the nuclear possessives on the grounds (if I understand him rightly) that pronouns and articles imply “single elements”: surely pronouns and articles may, like other linguistics signs, be simple or complex (cf. the French or Welsh possessive articles, with striking similarities to the Egyptian-Coptic feature; or the French and Italian so-called partitive article, all clearly analyzable into component parts). Well pointed out, and put in a fresh perspective, is the compelling affinity between the relational (*‘nota relationis’*) constructions and the relative (71f.), already noted by H. Steinthal in his famous 1847 dissertation “*De pronomine relativo...*”. The question of identifying the *nota relationis* (*/n/* is the most polyfunctional morphoneme in Coptic: it carries several homonyms, from Demotic onwards) occupies an important section, opening new ground (72f.). I would have put the discussion of the “Direct Genitive” (80ff. once again, a less than happy term) immediately in or near the other sections dealing with determinative or relational noun phrases (67ff.): the immediate, *n*-less constructions are certainly kindred to compounding (52f.), a topic which also belongs structurally together with the relational phrases. To the discussion of composition I would then also attach the participles (93f.) (Note that all cases of the “zero-based rectum” (82f.), of the type *h3t rnt*, and many of the *nb-* compounds, have Proper-Name status; also that inalienability — an equally gradient property of nominals, one that is equally signalled by the conjuncture of environmental syntactic features, and that has clear affinities with “nominal properness” — witness the roles of the Bohairic Coptic π- article — is also signalled by the immediate juxtaposition of nominal and (pro)nominal.

2.1.8 The Proper Name is studied under a number of syntactical aspects and headings (73f.; 77ff.); the attention given its syntax is another pioneering contribution of Simpson’s work. Calling for special mention are the sections on PNs and lexemes (80f.: Demotic constructions support the scalar view of “properness” and “appellativity”).

2.1.9 Equally novel is the discussion of the Verbal Noun (86ff.). Here, in the matter of the infinitive, I would take issue with the terminological and conceptual distinction of “non-verbal” and “verbal” (“non-articular”) infinitive (86ff.). The former is substantival, and so clearly marked e.g. by the article; but the latter group is really a mixed bag. The “bare

infinitive”, the infinitive after prepositions, the infinitive as rectum (87ff.) have nothing particularly verbal about them, and are in part cases of zero-determined “nominal” infinitives (the case of constructions like *p3 hrw n ms=w nt-jw.w r jr.f* [89f.] may be “more verbal” only in the sense of “implicit clause” as used in Romance, especially in Italian syntax. Simpson’s suggestion, that here is a way of finitizing the infinitive, is certainly insightful, as is also his whole discussion of actor-expressions with the infinitive, 92ff.). However, the status of the “durative infinitive”, the natural centerpiece of the exposition, which I hold to be *adverbial* in Demotic and Coptic — that is to say, not an infinitive at all, but a gerund or (to use the Turkological term, now rapidly gaining a general-linguistics diffusion) a *converb*: a grammaticalized finite or non-finite adverbial verb-form — ought to have been put in special focus at this point. Another query I would have expected to be addressed here, one especially poignant in a ‘watershed’ linguistic system, is whether the Demotic infinitive is, as in Coptic, a verb-lexeme, or a special morphological form.

2.2 The Third Part of Simpson’s grammar is a discussion of “Verbal Phrases and Predications”. The nuclear conjugation bases of Coptic, rhematic pro-verbs governing the infinitive verb lexeme as their object, belong to a system probably not yet fully developed in early Demotic. It is therefore not clear to me how the suffix-conjugation conforms to the verbal base system (I would also refrain from using the term “prefix conjugation” for the bases, confusing in conjunction with the pronominal thematic suffixes of the “suffix conjugation”) (97ff.).

2.2.1 I wholly concur with Simpson’s reservations (98) concerning the alleged symmetry of affirmative and negative bases and the subordinative conception of the formally distinct “clause conjugations” (also, very cogently, 118), reservations which show true sensitivity and awareness of the need for a text-grammatical, not sentence-grammatical perspective on syntactic definition. Unfortunately not attempting a special discussion of text-grammatical issues (e.g. narrative grammar), the author nevertheless shows this macrosyntactic awareness elsewhere too (cf. 113, 150).

2.2.2 The discussion of verb valency is clear and entirely new (106ff.).

2.2.3 Simpson’s treatment of the Temporal (118ff.) is excellent (I find his reservations concerning the terminology and conventional implications of the term “Clause Conjugations” extremely well put).

2.2.4 The discussion of individual tenses is also very good. It is a pity (though instructive in itself) that almost all are attested in the corpus only in converted forms (so e.g. the preterite, aorist, future). The future tense — another point of interest for the Coptic linguist for its diachronic and dialectological perspectives — is only once attested unconverted: in this locus it is “divine-fatidical”, much like the typical Bohairic *ερεσωτεμ*; the converted cases are far less significant from these points of view (Simpson’s statements on the semantics of the future, 117, are rather naïve, in view of the *Problematik* and controversy involved even in the very definition of “future tense”). The traditional modal formal categories include the famous Egyptian prospective *sdm.f* (120ff.), almost fully formalized and non-pertinent in the corpus studied, especially in various causative and factitive form-syntagms, which are of very early documentation in Egyptian; and the jussive or causative imperative (123 — this

is a causative imperative not only “historically speaking”!). The conjunctive — in my opinion, the most intriguing of all Egyptian verb-forms — is well described (124ff.); I find of great interest the early Demotic attestation of its adnominal status, of its *finalis* role (once again, cf. Bohairic Coptic!), of the conjunctive expanding a generic relative present (and generally referable to a relative conversion form), of a possibly jussive conjunctive — all well attested in Coptic.

2.2.5 Under the heading “Exceptional Verbs” (127ff.) Simpson discusses the special morphological class known as in Coptic grammar as “Adjective Verbs”, and grammaticalized (auxiliaries) *hpr*, *jr* and some others. The latter are not “exceptional” in any sense of the word (I believe it would have been advisable to devote a special chapter to *auxiliation* in Demotic).

2.2.5.1 The new information on *n3*-verbs (“verbs compatible with *n3*”) is not a good name: it is cumbersome, and *n3*- is after all not an established entity outside these verb forms) is interesting and particularly revealing. First, the fact that all occurrences are of converted forms; all verbs attested but one are known from Coptic. Then, the attestation of *n3-nfr* in causative syntagm-forms, as dependent upon *t* yet with no marking of inclusion. Also, the occurrence of these verbs in narrative, again without any characterization for tense. Simpson’s structural functional appreciation of this group (128) amounts to a restatement of this feature, and also raises a typological-teleological problem: Coptic uses them allegedly also to “cope with” the problem of translating Greek adjectives; what is the systemic pressure at the basis of their emergence and proliferation in Demotic, and how is their existence related to the reduction atrophy of the adjective class?

2.2.5.2 The discussion of copular and periphrastic *hpr* (128ff.) calls for a few critical remarks. First, the absence of some words on the theoretical and typological significance of “copula” in “is”-less Egyptian (the auxiliary evolution from *wmn* to *hpr* is after all an important trait of Egyptian diachronic typology). Second, suppletion ought to have been presented as a general structural phenomenon in Demotic as it is in Egyptian generally. Third, the account of *hpr* and *jr* leaves something to be desired: the existence of non-suppletive (*Aktionsart*-marking) *hpr* is known from Sahidic Coptic (*εψαρωπε ερητ ντοοτα νογον νιμ ερασωογ* “as soon as he gets to aid anyone, he is lightened” Shenoute ed. Chassinat 203; *ψαιρωπε ειρωωτ εβολ ζητογ* “I acquired the habit of watching out for them” Shenoute ed. Amélineau II 278), and is also relevant for the *converb* (“durative infinitive”) feature in Demotic. Then, the case of *hpr* with no (or rather with *zero*) actor is not “bare”. It would have also been worth while trying to trace the two homonymous, structurally distinct *εipe* auxiliaries in Coptic, deriving and copular, to Demotic. The double asterisk on the bottom of p.129 is a slip into generative notation, wholly uncalled for, unnecessary, unpleasant, unexpected and undeserved in an otherwise consistent *decoding* analysis of Demotic grammatical system.

2.2.6 The Durative System has, deservedly, a chapter all to itself (137ff.). This pattern (or rather pattern set) is difficult, throughout the history of Egyptian, in formal and functional principle and in morphosyntactic details; its difficulty is only matched by its pivotal importance (in ME, it is the matrix mold for virtually all verb predication). Now Simpson’s very first statement here is for me totally unacceptable

and calls for a fundamental theoretical correction. The durative (“statal-adverbial nexus” would be a viable name) is *not* “comparable to the use of the participle as a predicate in most Semitic languages” (137), since the Semitic (and Egyptian) participles are predicated in a Nominal (or Adjectival) Sentence nexus, whereas the durative is essentially, diachronically and in respective synchronic phases of grammar, up to and including Coptic, an *adverbial-rheme predication* pattern — and that also in its verbal “present-tense” role: [*hr* + INFINITIVE] is a *synchronic* datum: the “adverbial infinitive” or *converb* is not a paradox, but a very nice show-piece for two prime methodological principles, namely the danger of *superstition de la forme* and the synchronically significant imprint of diachrony. The Egyptian *converb* is structurally best definable holographically, in the joint perspective of its history and synchronic profile. Simpson’s discussion of the “durative infinitive” (144f.) reveals the real difficulties of breaking free of biasing factors. The statement that “the infinitive is a primarily nominal form” (144) is in fact tautological: we call the non-finite, often lexematic basic verb form “infinitive” when and because we identify a grammatically operative verbal noun.

2.2.7 The corroboration of the existence of a *non-actual (generic) present*, by documentation and well-argued phrasing of descriptive statements, is in my opinion one of Simpson’s most important achievements and for me of the most gripping sections of the book, with sensitive and painstaking analysis of instructive evidence (141-156). Some of the author’s statements here are of the utmost importance; the discussion calls for some remarks. It is not exact to say that “When] a verb possesses both an infinitive and a qualitative” — a verb does not *possess* verbal forms! — “they are usually commutable in the durative system” (144): this is a slip into an unstructural way of thinking. It is the *opposition* between the “adverbial infinitive” (i.e. *converb*; or — to phrase it as applicable to Egyptian as a whole — “converbal event or progress form”, e.g. the *converb sdm.n.f* in Middle Egyptian) and the qualitative that counts. For verbs of movement, posture etc., this opposition is cancelled, in favour of the qualitative. Often, Simpson’s semantic-role assignment of a form seems at least partly due to the requirements of the English translation (e.g. 149, the distinction between “stative” and “perfective” infinitives). In the same context, Simpson offers the clearest account to date of the Demotic reflection of the “Stern-Jernstedt Rule” syndrome, in his and other corpuses (151-156). This is, in Coptic as in Demotic probably the most compelling argument of the structurally distinct identity of the *converb*, as disparate from the “nominal infinitive”. In Simpson’s corpus and in the documentation he adduces from outside the corpus, we encounter the strongest evidence yet for the generic or non-actual present, its infinitival rheme not subject to “Jernstedt’s Rule” (152); this may well account for the famous case of inapplicability of “Jernstedt’s Rule” (or rather of the mediate object) with *zero*-article substantives, which combine with the said generic (non-actual) present (153, 155 etc.; compare the inversely diagnostic value of the Russian imperfective vs. perfective aspects for deciphering the specificity grading of their object). As for *wh3* “want, love” (155), I suggest we really have a pair of */wh3/* homonyms, resolved by their differing syntax, and not two meanings of a single lexeme (cf., *mutatis mutandis*, the two “love” homonyms in English, of which the “emotional” one is excluded of the

converbal-rheme progressive periphrasis, whereas the “physical” one isn’t).

2.2.8 The existential patterns (157-9) are of course much more important in later Egyptian than for the existential statement alone. I wouldn’t consider *wn* a “particle” (but would reserve this term for actual discourse-signalling “sentence particles”), and — more importantly — would call their following nominal “existant”, not “subject”, since nexal theme-rheme structure does not apply to existential statements: they are in fact *pre*-predications, introducing nominals into discourse and thus preparing predicational terms of reference; in this respect they resemble and are kindred to presentative deictics. In the existential possessive pattern (158), we witness the compatibility, hence the structural distinctness of the already grammaticalized possessive *mtw=* and preposition *mtw=* “with”. (The predicative possessive pattern “independent pronoun + *possessum*”, a very old Egyptian pattern, is arguably continued in Coptic by the Nominal Sentence πωϞ πϞ. The *nty-mtw-Pr* Ϟ construction recalls Bohairic once again: in referring to “the Coptic possessive οϞντα=” and especially “Coptic forms like οϞνταϞϞου, with affixed pronominal ‘objects’”, Simpson slips into the old error of taking Sahidic, not Bohairic, as the representative of Coptic *vis à vis* pre-Coptic Egyptian (incidentally, Shenoute, not the Scripture, is by now, and ever since V. Jernstedt and A. Elanškaja, “the backbone of Coptic grammatical research” (24)).

I find felicitous Simpson’s term, “extended existential pattern”, for the always perplexing, partly overlapping combination of the existential statement (non-specific existant) with the adverbial-rheme nexal one (non-specific theme) (158f.). However, it is difficult to envisage the Demotic and Coptic, and to a degree Late Egyptian statives (qualitatives) as expansions, seeing they do not occur as non-rhematic adjuncts (the preposition + infinitive gerundial adjunct is a different matter). We should, I believe, also consider the possibility that what *wn-lmn* assert in this case is *the existence of an entire nexus* — not of the theme alone — in the way that a presentative (e.g. Sahidic Coptic εϞϞηητε) presents a nexus as a whole. *Wn-lmn* would then be neither “markers of non-definiteness” nor copula (the famous controversy about the “existential chicken” and the “copular egg” in Indo-European and general grammar is still being furiously waged).

2.3.1 “Predication and Emphasis” occupy the last part of the book, a part that is a mixed bag of syntactic features. I would, for instance, present noun predication (“Nominal Sentence”) patterns separately, in a section of their own, preferably with the noun syntagm, and let Part Five cover *mise en relief* and focussing, with “Predication and Emphasis” (163f.) generally introductory. Simpson’s discussion of predication, and nexus and information structure is somewhat simplistic for this extremely intricate issue, full of quicksands, and surely the most difficult of syntactic concepts. Some remarks: negation may refer, not only to a nexus (163), but to its constituents, including its rheme or focus: the affinity of negation to focussing is often commented upon. Not only predications are binary (163): nucleus — satellite interdependences are binary too, and compatible with the theme-rheme binarity. And terminology again: “subject” and “predicate” are faulted by its Indo-European ethnocentric verb-clause associations (it is precisely this “force of tradition” (164) that makes them unusable!); I suggest “theme” and “rheme” should replace them as the terms of nexus. “Topic” has today differing connotations in different

schools: in Prague School terminology, which I personally adopt, it is the (con)textual element which the predication is about, usually represented in the clause by the theme. Consequently, I cannot see the grounds for distinguishing “thematic” from “topical” structures, unless it be that the former is clause-oriented, the latter text-oriented. (The so-called “Functional” varieties of syntactic analysis take “topic” as more or less coextensive with the Aristotelian “arguments of the verb” — a logic-based conceptualization that I reject for being, like the Parts-of-Speech model, not germane to grammatical analysis at all).

2.3.2 Nominal Sentences are surely the pampered topic of Egyptian grammar; yet there are still many uncharted areas and many mysteries in this special nexus pattern set, in all phases of the language. Simpson treats the Demotic NS relatively briefly (165-167), since this type is extremely scarce in the corpus. Note only two points of critical remark: the theme pronoun in *šm p3y* and similar constructions is not non-phoric (166), but probably endophoric (to the zero-article of *šm* or to *šm* as a Proper Name), as it certainly is in Coptic. (“Non-phoric or endophoric” [167] is a contradiction in terms). T36 ...*nty-jw p3-nty-jw.w twtw...* (166) does not require emendation and the addition of <*p3y*>: the hermeneutical *ετε*+RHEME is a well-known case of optional theme zeroing in Coptic too; this applies to R.23 too (167), and to Rph.M 24 (166): the theme-zeroing following “say” too is attested from Late Egyptian onwards.

2.3.3 On the other hand, the nominal-focus Cleft Sentence, which I believe to be in matrix an endophoric Nominal Sentence, gets here ampler attention (167-171). Relative Cleft Sentences (168) are rare yet attested in Sahidic Coptic (New Testament and Shenoute), albeit in more or less specialized roles: Mark 5:41 is hermeneutical; Shenoute Amélineau I 232.12f. *ΝΘΕ ΟΝ ΕΤΕ-ΑΜΝΤΕ ΠΕΤΝΑΚΛΗΡΟΝΟΜΕΙ ΝΝΕΤΝΑΜΟΥ ΖΡΑΙ ΖΗΝΝΕΥΝΟΒΕ* “conjunctive”, following *ΝΘΕ; ΤΣΟΦΙΑ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ...ΤΑΙ ΕΤΕΡΕ-ΤΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ ΝΗΥ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΖΗΤΣ*, appositive (‘amplificative’) relative. The seeming Cleft Sentences which “cannot be analysed in this way, because they do not have a (focus+topic) structure” (169) should indeed be seen as distinct patterns. A comparative study of #[*T*’s] SUBSTANTIVE + RELATIVE VERB# clauses in Egyptian-Coptic, Celtic and Romance point (a) to the existence of homonymous, structurally quite different — in fact, non-focussing — patterns, and (b) a subtle functional spectrum of the Cleft Sentence itself, resolvable only by a careful study of text grammar and message structuring. Incidentally, Greek is indeed an eminently “Cleft-Sentence-avoiding” language; one cannot but agree here with Simpson’s view (170).

2.3.4 The Second Tenses are among Simpson’s most tangible contributions to the understanding of the late Egyptian system of grammar (111f., 140f. etc.); this feature had not hitherto received attention worthy of its importance and complexity. It would have been advisable to start changing the terminology for this pan-Egyptian formal/functional category from pre-Coptic Egyptian: and since “emphatic” is in vogue from Old through Late Egyptian, Demotic would be the best phase to start from (in Demotic, these forms are not “Doppelgänger” of unconverted clause forms, as in Coptic. This form is in a sense more difficult to name in Demotic, where its functional essence is as yet not entirely clear. “Focalizing Conversion” is Bentley Layton’s suggestion, in his new structural grammar of Sahidic Coptic (in the press),

but this would be less apt for Demotic in which non-adverbial foci are virtually excluded). I confess I am not happy with any descriptive appellations that offer themselves; “Thematic Verb Conversion” would perhaps be an acceptable provisional name.

Simpson handles well the peculiarly Demotic predicament of the Second Tense enigmatic profile: both (“Clause?”) conjugation form and a converter, both a residual “that” form (as in the conditional-temporal protasis) and a purely thematic verb form. In functional details too Simpson’s treatment is more than satisfactory, and a worthy chapter in the historical grammar of this, perhaps the most striking phenomenon of Egyptian verbal grammar. One remark: a “double-nexus structure” can and probably must apply also to construction with rhematic, non-adverbial foci and even autofocal ones: “It is there that he is”; and, in the Coptic (Sahidic) *εσνκοτκ* case (“It’s asleep she is” = “She’s *asleep*”), the rhematic converbal infinitive in focus. I fully concur with Simpson’s identification of the protatic-temporal second tense (172-4): in fact, this is another of the important contributions of the work. There are many more examples, from other corpuses, to support the thesis and thirst of Simpson’s argument, namely the opposition of this protasis-form to the “proper” conditional(s). Simpson puts cogently forward (173f.) the objections to Janet Johnson’s thesis, that these cases of the Second Tense combine the focalizing with protatic roles. The decisive structural argument must be that these two roles are paradigmatically related, i.e. incompatible. But there is no special difficulty to account for the protatic status of a “that” form, in any language (174). As for the injunctive Second Tense (174-6): this too is an important role which, since it can be proven to exist, has considerable syntactic and structural implications, diachronic as well as synchronic. It is not entirely clear to me what Simpson means with “...possess injunctive force simply as satellites of the future” (175): injunctive (or at least modal) *αφνα-* is now attested in very early Scripture Bohairic (e.g. in the Vatican Twelve Prophets, B74 dialect), and of course in Nitrian Bohairic (*αφνα-/εφνα-*) and (*εφνα-*) in Sahidic; as for Bohairic, note that this is one of the very few “unorthodox” Second Tense constructions in this dialect, that is, extensions of the historical adverbial-focus-second Cleft Sentence pattern. The Second Tense in Evolution Mode (“foreground”) narrative, extremely rare in Scripture Coptic (but again attested in Nitrian Bohairic — yet another instance of “Egyptian” quality of this dialect), is well attested in different phases of Demotic; but Simpson’s examples (176) are all Comment Mode “Narrator’s Channel” ones, also familiar from Coptic (consider Joh.19:36 *ΝΑΙ ΓΑΡ ΑΥΩΠΙ ΖΙΝΑ ΝΤΕ-†ΓΡΑΦΗ ΧΩΚ ΕΒΟΛ* or Shenoute ed. Leipoldt III 96 *ζωσ εωχε-ΝΤΑΥΠΩΩΣ ΝΖΗΤ — ΝΤΑΥΠΩΩΣ ΓΑΡ* — (the second Second Perfect: “...and indeed they did become distracted”). Further exploration of this field remains to be carried out.

2.4 **Conversion.** Here is another issue where the work under review contributes new insights to late Egyptian grammar. Simpson’s systemic and particular observations (99f. on the mechanism and nature of this eminent typological feature of the latter half of the Egyptian evolution span (Late Egyptian to Coptic — perhaps even in part *jw.f* in Middle Egyptian?) reveal insight and sensitivity.

Some specific observations, in brief:

The Circumstantial expanding demonstratives (Can.13/46 p.29) recalls Nitrian Bohairic usage.

