On the following pages, we propose to present and discuss our database for some features of Coptic, deviating from the “canonical” picture as seen in the grammars, from L. Stern’s to B. Layton’s, and in the grammatical literature generally. These are Lexefrüchte, and the treatise more of a work-note than a conclusive and systematic discussion; it is meant to attract attention, but also a description of environment and function. A historical dimension is of the essence in these cases, and will be addressed in some detail, for a diachronic cycle may here be in evidence, and an appeal to pre-Coptic Egyptian linguists is envisaged; also, a methodological perspective – pointing out the flimsiness of our comprehension of Coptic grammar, as well as its “canonical” nature, which is the main reason for the impulse for editorial condemnation and emendation. Finally, this essay is an homage to the syntactical sensitivity and analytic intelligence of W. E. Crum, not to be eclipsed by his lexicographical genius. In Ludwig Stern’s words, Coptic cannot easily be “erlernt”: of its terra incognita patches, our notes pick one verbal, one non-verbal feature.

**I** The Circumstantial Stative

The starting point of this study was the discovery of a series of three unexpected successive Statives in Shenoute’s Canon 8 (see below, example 8). Trying to find corroboration and an explanation (in the sense of syntactical basis), we present here some assorted instances of “Strange Statives”. There can be no doubt that more examples can and probably will be found. The occurrences we list may be classified in two main categories, specified below. Some cases remain uncertain; however, we have listed them here, with the idea that they would be corroborated and clarified some day by other instances. Finally, two cases of apparent variation of Infinitive and Stative of the same verb, seemingly in similar function, may be related to the question of an “adjectival” Static.

(a) Adnexal (approx. = adverbial and thematic) Stative

(1) sebākē pekēscōyōt an, they will not let your trouble be in vain (O.Med.HabuCopt. 141 verso, 4).
(2) oyiNTal sebākēra taLny ēptat, I have bandages mounted on the loom (P.Mon.Epiph. 10–12).
(3) oyiNTal oyiakalalay osyn, I have a waggon located… (O.Crum 316, 3).
(4) ἄπρο πεκενή γοσε, Do not let your heart be troubled (O.TT29 763, 9–10).
(5) epoṇxyahnyôn hēptatē koosyn, ... that they leave the doors of the prison open (Hyvernat, Les Actes des Martyrs I, p. 131.3/4). (Example supplied by E. Grossman).
(6 & 7) teṇnalpemyôṣ bōyōt an allal naRōyērōkomn hîptosos ptoyhxα̣lμαν] θερ̣ c̣ apo] et~at] noz2, We shall not let his trouble be in vain: let them decorate the sanctuary and have the whole chandelier hanging without oil (Vie de Jean Kolobos, ed. by Amélineau 1894, p. 386.2/3 et 3/4; reed. by M. S. A. Mikhail & T. Vivian 2010, p. 184).

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1 The edition of this work is in preparation by Anne Boud’hors.
Examples 1 to 7 are instances of adnexal Stative, predicative complement of κω + definite or οὐντα + indefinite. Usually, one would expect the Stative to be the theme of a circumstantial Present. The occurrence in (1) had embarrassed the editors, who give no translation. In his review of O.Med.n.Hab.Copt., W. Till proposed to reconstruct εφ- before γωείτ, in order to reach the translation: “They will not let your trouble be in vain (and they will thank you).” Although the translation is apt, the reconstruction is unnecessary, as shown by the other examples from Thebes (2–4) and the exactly similar context in (6). Crum (example 2) was not at all troubled by the construction, and did not bother to comment on it.

This construction in Coptic raises interesting historical issues. As is well known, the Egyptian ancestor of the Coptic Stative was (at least in Old and Middle Egyptian) not restricted to the Present, but operated as a versatile finite verb. This versatility was drastically reduced by Late Egyptian, and even more so in Demotic. However, it was never absolutely cancelled, as has hitherto been the consensus about Coptic. The evidence presented here shows traces of this pre-Coptic feature; indeed, in Late Egyptian and Demotic the most prominent case of Stative outside the Present is the object-adnexal one, with auxiliary or thematic verbs (see Erman, Neuägyptische Grammatik, § 339ff.; Černý-Groll, A Late Egyptian Grammar, p. 200f.). Put differently, the analyticity of the Stative verb (as circumstantial converter + Present), hitherto deemed absolute, is revealed to have its exceptions. In still different terms, the Coptic Stative, whose morphological identity (as an entity opposed to the Infinitive) is almost the only grammatical information forthcoming, while the thematic slot in the Present pattern has hitherto been its only recognized formal-distributional datum, now has a different look: the syntactical career of this verb-form is revealed to be manifold, and the morphology/syntax profile complex. This concerns primarily the adverbiality of the form; it is now no longer inertly paradigmatic, but fully, actively converbal.

Note that the cliché of (1) and (6) could be an echo of 1 Cor 15,58: έτετοιοῦν χείριστης γωείτ ἄν γίμηκεν. So far, occurrences of this construction are attested in Theban Sahidic and Nitrian Bohairic; however, no conclusion can be drawn from this, as attestation in other dialects could also be found in the future.

N. B. A morphologically different case, but one of definite relevance to the phenomenon of the “Circumstantial Stative”, is the Bohairic John 19:6 (consensus) άνόκ γαρ ητέξχεν-ζαν ητίτα θεπόκ αν “For as for me, I do not find any guilt pertaining to him”.

Here we have, not the Stative, but the Dynamic Converb (so-called infinitive; in fact, an adverbial homonym thereof) in a role that is usually played by the circumstantial conversion. That is, synchronically, the Dynamic Converb adnominally to ζαν (indefinite, thus nucleus to an adverbial form); diachronically, this converb emerged, and was grammaticalized, from a preposition + infinitive syntagm. The implication of this is striking (and further exx. may be expected), not least for the structural differentiation of this converb from the “true” (i.e. substantival) infinitive. Note that θεπόκ has here arguably a stative value.

(b) ‘Adjectival’ Stative

The occurrences listed below raise in fact only one component of a much larger question, which is the want of a clear-cut category of “adjective” in Coptic, and the constructions and environments “reviving” it. Morphologically speaking, a possible correlation between the existence of a deverbal adjective (such as μετάφρ) and “absence” (i.e. systemic non-attestation) of a Stative form, must be investigated. The cases reported here, which are most certainly token instances for a wide-spread phenomenon, are arguably participial; the important Egyptian participle, virtually extinct as such (i.e. as a morphological verbal category) in Coptic, is still traceable in these “adjectival” Staticives. (Incidentally, they all seem to be intransitive).
(8) Shenoute, Canon 8, XO 179–180:

Shenoute, Canon 8, XO 179–180:

Parlez ainsi, vous qui êtes chagrinés et vous qui proférez cette plainte: “C’est éprouvant que des vêtements qui ne sont pas larges doivent devenir larges sur lui, étroits s’ils ne le sont pas, courts s’ils ne le sont pas, fins s’ils ne le sont pas, de sorte qu’il soit satisfait par un assemblage unique sur lui : celui de leur étroitesse et celui de leur largeur, celui de leur petitesse et celui de leur longueur, celui de leur finesse et celui de leur épaisseur” (transl. A.B.).

The surprise of this text lies in the three Statives, which ‘ought not’ to be governed by a preposition. In our opinion, this use is anything but erroneous or negligent, since the whole passage displays a sophisticated stylistic variation (there is a chiasm, but the mirror structure is not completely symmetrical):

circ. + Infinitive … e- + Infinitive
circ. + Stative … e- + Stative
circ. + Stative … e- + Stative
circ. + Stative … e- + Stative

circ. + Stative … e- + Infinitive

circ. + Infinitive … e- + Infinitive

circ. + Stative … e- + Stative

The Statives here have an adjectival function, while replacing the infinitive. This is all the more perceptible, as the concerned verbs are stative ones, where the semantic difference between Infinitive and Stative is sometimes small in Coptic. One suspects that this could have to do with the circumstantial constructions analysed by A. Shisha-Halevy in JEA 1976. Does the Stative share the “participial” nature of the circumstantial Present, in the sense of “one who…”?

(9 & 10) σοφοις ὁμοίωσις ἐνεμικαλ εὐρεσθῶς οὕτω εἰπραφε … σοφοί εἰπραφορὰς λόγος. “A food”. A few moistened onions, a sufficient measure … Take a light (?) sacramental loaf … (P.Ryl.Copt. 110, 1 & 3).

This text is a recipe for preparing a (medical?) dish. οὕτω is the “established” Stative of ἔφη, “to measure”.

According to Crum’s translation, λόγος must be the Stative of λόγος, “to be soft, fresh”, although the usual form is λόγος (λόγος is not attested in Crum’s Dictionary). Crum comments briefly both on οὕτω (“As in λόγος, below, the prefix appears to be omitted”) and on the translation “a sufficient measure” (“Cf. τὸ ἀρκοῦν, Parthey, Zwei Zauberpap., n° 2, 10”).


This is again a recipe, the instruction how to produce purple-like dye stuff.

Both texts (9–10) and (11) are late, and belong to the same category of magical or medical recipes (with many Arabic words in the first case). Syntactically, they are not exactly alike; in (11), the Stative has a clearly attributive function, marked by the construction with n- 4. It is also remarkable that in both texts, “lonely” Statives occur side by side with Statives in the circumstantial Present, which indicates that the alternation is not random or meaningless.

(12) ψωρί, “changed, disguised person, hypocrite” (cf. Crum, CD 552a). This use of the Stative as a noun/adjective is exclusively Bohairic. Consider the use of κατημ, “chosen”, as a noun/adjective, homonymous with the infinitive (cf. Crum, CD 365b).

This comment could apply only to εἰπραφε. 3

As commented by Richter: “Verwendung des Sta-

tiv als Attribut”. 4

2 XO is the siglum of the manuscript as given in the database “Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari”. More context may be needed: in the foregoing passage, Shenoute has been announcing that he will abandon the spoiled and bloody garments (metaphorical for the bad and recidivist monks). Then he introduces the theme of the measures of the garments, a topic already mentioned and dealt with several times in other parts of Canon 8, and always difficult to understand, because one never knows whether he is speaking of real garments, woven for him by the nuns, or talking metaphorically, or both.
Perhaps nxot (cf. Crum, CD 246b, IIb). It is difficult to know whether this, in constructions like nxot or xennxot, means “trustworthy, faithful” or “trust” (noun).

(c) Miscellaneous

Perhaps nxot (cf. Crum, CD 246b, IIb). It is difficult to know whether this, in constructions like nxot or xennxot, means “trustworthy, faithful” or “trust” (noun).

Both documents are written by the same scribe. (14) is a contract of sale (prasis), (15) the result of an arbitration (dialusis).

In Rechtssemantik, T. S. Richter quotes these two occurrences and translates: “ich sagte: ‘So ist es in Ordnung!’” It is tempting to postulate an haplography for je(s)mont, especially in comparison with other texts concerning documents whose names are feminine:

P.KRU 66,64:

(14) mnnesa nai de throu auoys eroi

asranai aijoof jesmont

nteixe aitajros

mmntre xikompleusis

(P.KRU 15.91–93).

(15) mnnsa nai auoys eron ansotmes

asranan anjoof jesmont

nteixe antajros

mmarturos xikompleusis

(P.KRU 48.57–59).

In the entire P.KRU corpus there is but a single instance of the Infinitive ouwn, used metaphorically: apnoute pagacos nnaht ouwn epaxht etranoujpakoui nlupton

(P.KRU 106.51).

In contrast, the Stative ouhn is very frequent, and occurs mostly in the following formula: pma eterepro naucentes ouhn erof

(P.KRU 1.64 & passim).

Therefore, it is tempting to explain the following unexpected forms of Stative as a kind of attraction or analogy:

(17a) auw pro naryaion e¥arepro ouhn erof

(P.KRU 21.40 & 42.28).

(17b) ntepro mpoumeros ouhn enxht

(P.KRU 45,31/32).

Such an explanation would however be unsatisfactory. In fact, the Stative in the non-durative environment occurs several times also in the circumstantial Absolute Future, in the Bohairic Pentateuch (BnF Copte 1). Thus, this may be a more widespread phenomenon.

One could suggest that in all these cases, the Stative has again an adjectival function.

Another explanation would be that ouhn is a (sporadic?) dialectal by-form of the Infinitive called “Varia” (more information about the manuscripts and works of Shenoute is to be found in S. Emmel, Shenoutes’ Literary Corpus, Louvain 2004).
This is corroborated by the occurrence of P.Mon.Epiph. 247.15: ἡπετοὺην οὐ ἴπτο.

(d/2) Variation εὐαί/χιχι in P.KRU

These documents were written by the same scribe, who also uses οὐν in the non-durative Conjugation (see d.1., ex. 17 above).

Contrast with the parallel formula in P.KRU 48.53, 63, written by another scribe:


We may be reaching here the limit of our investigation and the beginning of another one, which would consist in examining the grammatical features of a given corpus with attention to possible individual scribal practices. Indeed, all the examples of sections b–d (except for Shenoute’s text) have a non-standard character. They merit attention because they reveal possibilities of variations according to age, provenance and genre of the documents.

(II) Neutric τέ in Nominal Sentence Patterns

The irregularity encountered in a case of apparent discord between masculine or plural nominal elements and a medial feminine τέ was first reported by W. E. Crum, The monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes (1926), but noted by him decades earlier. In Epiphanius vol. I, p. 250, he says, somewhat opaquely: “An enclitic -τέ has been commented upon in 338n. To which, if to any of those cited there – apparently explicative – is related in the glossary CO 434 (better republished by Pellegrini in Sphinx X 152) re-


The evidence

(a) Non-referential, copular τέ – in specification of property boundaries in sales, wills and so


Unlike the homonymous thematic pronoun, the copula is prosodically not enclitic (pace Crum), but proclitic to the pattern-final theme (Shisha-Haleyv, Coptic Grammatical Categories: Structural Studies in the Syntax of Shenoutean Sahidic [1986], 34ff., 161f., n. 36). In the much attested boundary-specifying construction in P.KRU, this is especially striking with the theme ηαί (usually cataphoric): ητωφ... τέ/νέ ηαί is typical. Consider for instance 8.7 ητωφ ζηαί τικη ηντίκη αγία τέ ηαί.

11 Shisha-Haleyv, Categories, Chapter Five.
on their Theban (the P.KRU corpus: Crum and Steindorff, Koptische Rechtsurkunden des achten Jahrhunderts aus Djême (Theben)). The copular Nominal Sentence pattern.

Note the contiguity of te with the essential pattern-constituent rhematic demonstrative nai, cataphoric or anaphoric, which mediates between the pattern and the often diffuse actual boundary definition. The theme is the plural to¥ "boundaries".

4/40 ntoy te nai mpixwrma threq: …
8/7 ntoy nipang tihq ethnay te nai: …
8/9 ntoy te nai npenheros nach tihq (anaphoric)
10/37 ntoy te nai npenhmasypenhoros mpikas ethnay
11/31 ntoy te nai nphatrion-heros nkaq
14/45 ntoy te nai npheri ethnay ncaca nih
15/43f. ntoy te nai: …
41/52 ntoy te nai nphi thiq ethnay ncaca
43/49f. nentoy te nai ncaca nih
46/143f. nentoy te nai npheri nih…
47/34 nentoy te nai ncaca nih eykarte

All these fluctuate with the ne copula concording with the theme in:

7/25 nentoy ne nai: …
23/20 ntoy nipang tihq ethnay ne nai: …
24/1 ntoy ne nai
46/10 ntoy nipang ethnay ne nai: …

The copular pattern arguably alternates with the expanded delocutive Nominal Sentence pattern, where we encounter the thematic pronoun ne; the demonstrative nai is in this case either postposed theme, and anaphoric.

12/27f. ntoy nenhi ethnay ne nai
18/23 neftoy ne nai eykarte
23/23 neftoy ne nai ncaca nih
24/50,56,58 ntoy niphi ethnay ne nai: …
ntoy niphi ethnay ncaca nih …
ntoy on niphi ethnay ne nai ncaca nih

Or it may be rhematic, but a theme very different macrosyntactically from the theme of the copular pattern – a true alternant in this case, for this occurs in the relative conversion:

12/25f. … etenai ne ntoy nenhi ethnay nai ne
14/42 … etenai ne ntoy:
15/40 prosc-neftoy eykarte etenai ne: …
23/21: … etenai ne eykarte: …

Or (and the syntactical markedness must somehow be equivalent) following the presentative eis-, nai cataphoric:

2/26, 3/29f. eis-nai ne ntov ntoya nkaq
eis-nai ne neftoy also 9/4514, 16/31f., 35/41f.,
74/63.67.

A zero copula (in various patterns) occurs in
6/41, 13/26, 43/42,46, 46/10.

(b) te copular, between lemma and gloss, in a Greek-Coptic glossary; fluctuation with ne and probably ne.


This is a special, formalized application of the copular Nominal Sentence; the lemma-gloss


13 This pattern, with distinct prosodic contour, concord, macrosyntactic properties and theme/rheme constituency is often, perhaps mainly, hermeneutic; in the P.KRU corpus it occurs in naming or rather identification-by-name role, remarkably unconverted, "τοξικα τε Χ" (e.g. P.KRU 15/5f., 50/4 etc.). Here the copula is almost always feminine, with no fluctuation; a rare exception, unequivocally neutric, is P.KRU 68/96 τοξικα τε Χαριά. Some referentiality may be in evidence. Clearly, we are dealing with a copular set of subpatterns, rather than with a single pattern.

14 The remarkable feminine singular τοξ in P.KRU 9/45: eis nai ne testoy eykarte and 45/34: prosc eteimoumporontes testoy eis etenai ne (both uncollated) may be explained by the interference of our formulaic copular te. As Sebastian Richter notes in a personal communication, it is strange that Crum did not mark these instances by "sic" or any other way.

15 In 31/2, the environment of nai ne ntoy niphi thiq ethnay is uncertain.
dependence is nexal in a peculiar, textemically defined sense. The copula variation is at least partly an alternation.

recto

ψηφισθείσα τε πρώτη ἥμαρτα
ἀρχισιών τε πρώτης ἡμέρας
μαρτίς τε πρώτης ημέρας
φανερός τε πρώτης ημέρας
εὐεγερία τε ἐνθυρετή
ἀοίμα τε ἐνθυρετή

verso

φιλοξένος τε πνεύμονε
φιλοξενία τε φιλοξενία
πνεύμονε τε πνεύμονε

(c) Epistolary Self-Presentation (Fayyumic)

Crum, Coptic Manuscripts from the Fayyum (1892), No. XXXVI, recto line 1:

(1) ἄνακ τε παλατί οἰκίσθηλα

Crum’s note (on παλατί) “The preceding τε is quite certain and is either an error, for πε, which the formula requires, or παλατί is fem. [skeptical reference]. Besides, I do not know that υἱός can, in such cases, be = ‘daughter’”.

We have here the typical Fayyumic epistolary opening. It is not easy to define the status of τε here, except that it is non-referential; this or a comparable element, in the kindred divine or royal proclamatory/acclamatory Nominal Sentence, seems again to be non-referential, a formal affix to the locutive signature name. So too:

(2) P.Lond.Copt. I 614 fgt F (Or. 4720 (55) BM Cat. p. 290 ἄνακ τε Μάρκος

Crum does not comment on the construction.

(d) Situational-anaphoric or thetic “it’s”? Zoega’s No. 217: Shenoute quoted, in an encomium of Athanasius and Shenoute by Constantine of Siut (ed. and translated by T. Orlandi as CSCO 349–350; see Orlandi’s introduction, p.xv, albeit with no comment on the Borgia reading). Zoega gives the following text:

νοει̂ αὐτοπροφήτης χορὸς ἄγω ετοιμασθαν εἰς ἑαυτοῦ τε καταιγραφῆναι ταῦτα (lege ταύτα) ετεύραν γίγνεθαι οὐκέτωσαι γαρ ναός τε

The Morgan parallel (M 579) has οὐκέτωσαι γαρ πε. Zoega’s note 3, p. 539: “neque τε hic loco suo stare videtur, sed irresipisse pro πε vel οὐ”. In fact, πε (which we actually have in the Morgan parallel) would not have specifically referred to any element in the text; οὐ, unattested, could refer to παν and γίγνεθαι; however, παν γίγνεθαι is probably not the referate in our case, but a representant icon of or code word for any number of reasons for self-glorification.

(e) Difficult: τε anaphoric/cataphoric delocutive thematic pronoun? Endophoric “it’s”?

(1) British Library Or. Ms. 3581B(69) verso (BM Cat. No. 489, p. 231ff.) – Colophon. The copier thanks his master:

πεντάποτε νυχτή (i.e. in the book) οὐερολ γντεκροβ τε ετοιμας λαν πενταποτεην ουερολ γιατοντο πε

Is this a hybrid construction – οὐερολ γιατοντο – combined with the endophoric τεκροβ τε?

(2) Monastery of Epiphanius (ed. Crum) No. 338 ...Χοιροί Ναυ Χε-παν τε πενηπὶ ἀν εταίντη

Crum translates “this wine is not ours which I brought…” The position of the negation is irregular, and may be associated with our τε.

(f) Δὲ = copular τε?

In a passage of the Bohairic Gospel of Matthew (13:37 Horner, consensus) we may have two occurrences of our copular τε disguised, in a hermeneutic copular Nominal Sentence:


16 Shisha-Halevy, Topics, p. 265ff. The immutable theme πε in Nominal Sentence patterns (Topics, p. 262ff.) may be seen as another case of “neuter”, but one that is unmarked, rather than the fluctuation-signified one.
One wonders, whether similar cases, lightly passed over as instances of the connector *de*, are not hidden away in apparatuses.

(g) Diachronic notes (A. Shisha-Halevy, see also above, Ia)

(1) Coptic invariable *ne* following – but not constituent in – nexal patterns (clauses) is well known, but not really understood, and still largely unresearched. Most familiar as discontinuous morpheme is *ne- ... ne*; also the apodotic superordinative FUTURE + *ne*, observed by H. J. Polotsky in his review of Crum’s Dictionary. Following converted forms, *ne* is still entirely enigmatic. The referentiality (and indeed pronominality) of these cases are high-level textual or text-situational, thus neutric. This recalls ME *sdm.f pw*, with a *mrr.f* “that form” rheme and text-situational theme; differently, *pw* in a presentational ‘Cleft Sentence’, preceding a converb: *ink pw sdm.n.i etc.*

(2) So far as we know, similar instances of the non-referential or copular neutric feminine pronoun in the Nominal Sentence or Cleft Sentence are not forthcoming. However, we are confident they do exist, but are ‘hidden’ in the huge mass of evidence, still confused and largely unresolved, for the various patterns of Nominal Sentence/Cleft Sentence.

A possible Demotic instance of similar has been suggested by Robert Rittner of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago (written communication of May 4, 2011): “a text written in hieratic, but in proto-Demotic grammar” – Urkunden VI (ed. Schott), 63 line 5 (line 10 of the text, ME and LE/proto-Demotic bilingual: *iw n-nswt ltm ti m r.i.ty n.i* “while it is the children of Atum at the two sides of me” (transl. Rittner, who notes that “No one previously has tried to account for the *t*”). Here we have a formal, non-referential theme in the Cleft Sentence topic (“glose”). Normally in Coptic and Demotic, the core pattern of the Cleft Sentence is either the endophoric or the immutable-theme Nominal Sentence, both non-referential albeit in different ways; thus, a non-referential “feminine” in the Cleft Sentence topic is not surprising. The text-referential neutric feminine is of course familiar in all phases of Egyptian as it is in Coptic.

Summary

This study, more suggestive than conclusive, presents and briefly discusses cases of “unorthodox” syntax in some dialects of Coptic, including Shenoutean Sahidic:

(Ia) The Stative form as adjunct and/or adnexal expansion, where we rather expect the circumstantial Present with Stative theme. This recalls the “synthetic” Stative of Old and Middle Egyptian.

(Ib) The Stative in what seems deverbal adjective roles.

(II) The element *te*, well-established as a non-referential copular constituent in certain Nominal Sentence patterns; also *te* in situational-anaphoric orthetic roles. Some of these constructions were first observed by W. E. Crum in his early editions, especially of Theban and Fayyumic sources.

Keywords

adjective – adnexal – Coptic and Egyptian – neuter gender – nominal sentence – Stative form

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17 Shisha-Halevy, Topics, Chapter One, §1.1.3 (c).