

**A Synchronic and Diachronic Analysis of
Aspects of Middle Egyptian and Coptic Syntax**

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Abstract:

This essay examines Egyptian syntax at two points in the language's history, Middle Egyptian and Coptic. Each chapter discusses a different sentence type: nominal sentences, sentences with adverbial adjuncts, infinitival sentences, stative constructions, and verbal sentences. Within each chapter, the syntax of Middle Egyptian and Coptic is analyzed separately, and, at the end of the chapter, I compare and contrast the syntax at these two stages.

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0. Introduction.

The goal of this essay is to explore the syntax of the different sentence types in Middle Egyptian and Coptic and to compare and contrast these two stages. Linguists do not have an involved history with Egyptian, and therefore a formal linguistic study of the language's syntax has never been undertaken. The goal of this essay is to be original in its aim, which is bringing linguistic terminology and theory to Egyptian, and in its use of crosslinguistic parallels in order to place Egyptian constructions within the scope of the world's languages and their syntactic properties.

In the first chapter, I will present an overview of the Afroasiatic language family, in which the Egyptian branch is placed, followed by a history of the Egyptian language. The second chapter is a short recapitulation of the literature relevant to Egyptian linguistics. Chapters three through seven examine the various sentence types in Middle Egyptian and Coptic. Each of these chapters begins with a short description of the sentence type, continues with an inspection of the sentence type in first Middle Egyptian and then Coptic, and finishes with a short comparison of the sentences type in the two stages of the language. The third chapter concerns nominal sentences, in which two NPs are equated. Sentences with adverbial compliments are discussed in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter presents the infinitival construction, which employs its verb in the infinitive. The stative construction, which employs a specially inflected form of the verb, is considered in the sixth chapter, and verbal sentences, which employ an inflected form of the verb, comprise the seventh chapter¹. The eighth and final chapter is a short conclusion of the essay.

¹ The vast majority of Egyptian sentences are verbal sentences.

The texts chosen as examples for the various sentence types were gathered from a variety of texts. The Middle Egyptian examples come from stelas, papyri, and other sources, while all of the Coptic examples are taken from either books of the Bible or texts attributed to the monk Shenoute. All of the examples, whether they are Middle Egyptian or Coptic, are accompanied by an abbreviation for text identification, the list of which is found on page 59.

1. Egyptian: Related languages and language history.

1.1. Related Languages.

As Loprieno (1995) writes, Egyptian itself constitutes a branch of the Afroasiatic language family, also known as Hamito-Semitic. The Afroasiatic family has six branches in all, which we will explore below.

The Semitic branch, with more than 370 million speakers, is the most popular branch of the Afroasiatic family, and it is spoken throughout northern Africa and the Middle East. It is also the most thoroughly studied branch. Bennett (1998: 19) notes that ‘the strong similarities between Hebrew, Chaldee², Syriac, and Arabic (all Central Semitic languages) had been recognized at least since the Middle Ages,’ and Semitic scholarship has continued well into the twenty-first century.

‘La langue berbère,’ Chaker (1995: 7) writes, ‘se présente actuellement sous la forme d’un nombre élevé de dialectes et de parlers, répartis sur une aire géographique immense, et souvent très éloignés les uns des autres.’ Chaker argues that the Berber branch of the Afroasiatic family truly consists of one language, whose five million speakers, spread over the Sahara Desert, use different varieties of the language. The absence of pervasive media, printed and aural, has rendered this language without a standard dialect. This theory, however, is not accepted by all Afroasiaticists; Loprieno (1995) and many other linguistics argue that the various Berber languages are simply very closely related.

Chadic’s membership in the Afroasiatic family is long-standing; ‘data from Chadic languages, especially Hausa, have been cited in general comparative work on

² Chaldee is the language of ‘various rabbinic writings,’ which, ‘like Syriac, are now identified as forms of Aramaic’ (Bennett 1998: 19).

Afroasiatic since at least the turn of the century,' Schuh writes (1976: 2). Spoken by thirty million people in the area just south of the Sahara Desert, this branch is most famous for Hausa, which is spoken natively by over twenty million people and is a 'langua franca' for much of the surrounding regions.

'The geographical area in which Cushitic is spoken,' Lamberti (1988: 22) explains, 'extends from Erythrea, embracing all Ethiopia, Somalia..., Kenya...as far as Tanzania.' This branch of the Afroasiatic family is spoken by fifteen million people.

Some controversy surrounds Omotic, another branch of the Afroasiatic family, which is spoken by one million people. Because of its close similarities to Cushitic and its geographical placement in Ethiopia near the Sudanese and Kenyan borders some linguists believe it is merely a branch of Cushitic (Lamberti 1988). Hayward (1990: x), however, argues that, even though some linguists may group Omotic together with Cushitic, the unity of Omotic itself 'is not disputed.... But in more recent work concentrating on the reconstruction of the sound system of Ancestral Omotic, and of aspects of its morphology and lexicon, the methodology has been the time honored 'comparative' one; and, significantly, the unity of the family continues to emerge unscathed.'

1.2. Language history.

The Egyptian branch of the Afroasiatic family contained only one language, which is documented in five separate stages between 3000BC and 1300AD. Let us look

at these five stages. Unless otherwise noted, all information in section 1.2 comes from Loprieno's *Ancient Egyptian* (1995).

The first stage of Egyptian, Old Egyptian, was written between 3000 and 2000BC. Its grammar is slightly more straightforward than Middle Egyptian, but the two are very close grammatically. In fact, with the exception of one narrative construction (which may have been limited simply to writing), sentence syntax is nearly identical³. It was written a hieroglyphic (which uses pictures) or hieratic (which is a cursive form of said pictures) script, both of which continued into Late Egyptian.

Middle Egyptian was probably spoken between 2000 and 1300BC, but, like Latin in Europe, it was used as a written language for much longer. This stage also witnessed a wealth of written literature, which gave this era the name 'Classical Egyptian' and also influenced the subsequent stage of the language.

Used between 1300 and 700BC, Late Egyptian is markedly different from Middle Egyptian. Philologists usually group Old and Middle Egyptian together, and Late Egyptian, Demotic, and Coptic together, because many syntactic and morphological changes occurred between Middle and Late Egyptian. As Middle Egyptian literary and historical texts were so influential, however, a hybrid of Middle and Late Egyptian can be seen in such texts; this is often called 'Literary Late Egyptian.' Administrative texts and personal letters, on the other hand, provide insight into what colloquial Late Egyptian was like, free of Middle Egyptianisms.

Demotic was spoken between 700BC and 400AD. Here, the language drops its hieroglyphic and hieratic scripts in favor of the Demotic script, which is also a cursive

³ This narrative construction allows a non-focalizing or non-emphasizing verb to appear in initial position.

form. Although written dissimilarly from Late Egyptian and Coptic, Demotic is closely related, and, in many cases, shows little difference in grammatical forms.

Coptic, the final stage of the Egyptian language, was used between 400 and 1300AD. The language of Egyptian Christians, it commandeered the Greek alphabet⁴. Here, vowels are written for the first time. Coptic, under pressure from Arabic, died out, but it remains in use as an unproductive language in the Coptic Church.

⁴ Six letters, whose phonetic values were unrepresented in the Greek alphabet, were borrowed from the Demotic script.

2. Literature relevant to Egyptian linguistics.

Linguists have just recently begun to look at and study Egyptian as a language to which linguistic theory can be applied. Until the mid-nineteen-nineties, Egyptian was studied only by Egyptologists; their goal was to understand the language/grammar in order to translate texts correctly. The first work to change this was Loprieno's *Ancient Egyptian* (1995), which gave, in addition to the history of the language itself and its scripts, a comprehensive account of the phonetics, phonology, morphology (somewhat), and syntax of the language through all of its five stages, although focusing mainly on Middle Egyptian. *Ancient Egyptian* is foundational inasmuch as it is the first account of the language which claims to place linguistic theory and application in the fore; all other grammars place central importance on reading comprehension.

Although (or, perhaps, because) little linguistic literature exists with regard to Egyptian linguistics, philological accounts of the language and reference grammars are an important source of grammatical forms and their attestations. For Middle Egyptian, Gardiner (1957), Grandet and Mathieu (1997), and Manassa and Sargent (forthcoming) prove to be most helpful with regard to clarity and wealth of examples. Layton (2004) is the foremost reference grammar for Coptic. With regard to the changes in constructions between Middle Egyptian and Coptic, Junge (2001) and Johnson (1976 and 1986) provide key insights into syntactic and morphological shifts.

3. Nominal sentences.

Nominal sentences are sentences whose subjects are equated to their predicates. Like in the mathematical question $x = y$, these sentences simply link two entities—in this case, two noun phrases. While the concept of a nominal sentence is straightforward, the actual constructions in the world's languages are incredibly different. An important element in nominal sentences is the copula, which, in the above mathematical equation, functions like the equal sign (=). In an English nominal sentence, a copula is mandatory and takes the form of the verb *to be* conjugated to agree with the subject. In the sentence 'Murder is a felony,' the copula *is* agrees with *murder*, the third person singular subject.

Copulas are by no means mandatory in all languages. In some languages, copulas are ungrammatical. Consider the following example from Maori, which forbids copulas in nominal sentences:

- (1) He taariana, te hoiho
INDEF stallion DEF-SG horse
'The horse is a stallion.'

(Rosén 1996: 2.2)

Note that a copula is not inserted between the predicate and the subject in the Maori sentence.

Some languages are not bound to always employing or never employing copulas in their nominal sentences. In Russian, for example, copulas are omitted in the present tense, but are required in past or future tenses. Consider the following Russian examples, paying attention to copular usage:

- (2) а. Ильяна студентка
Илуана.nom student.nom
'Ilyana is a student.'

- b. Ильяна была студенткой
 Ilyana.nom was student.instr⁵
 'Ilyana was a student.'

Note that the copula is omitted in the first Russian example because it is in the present tense, while the second Russian example includes a copula because it is in the past tense. Interestingly, Russian, like English, employs the verb *to be* as its copula.

In the following sections, we will explore nominal sentences in Middle Egyptian and Coptic. We will focus not only the syntax of these sentences, but also on the use and position of their copulas.

3.1. Nominal sentences in Middle Egyptian.

Consider the following examples of Middle Egyptian nominal sentences whose subjects are either first- or second-person pronouns:

- (3) a. *ink wsir*
 I Osiris
 'I am Osiris.'
(CT III, 321c)
- b. *ntk itti n nmhw*
 you.m.sing father to orphans
 'You are father to the orphans.'
(Peas. B1, 93)
- c. *ntt mw.t (=i)*
 you.f.sing mother(=my)
 'You are my mother.'
(CT V, 399g, B2L)

⁵ Once in the past tense, the predicate of a nominal sentence in Russian takes the instrumental case.

It is important to note that the subjects of the above examples are either first- or second-person. The syntax is invariably SP, where S signifies the subject and P signifies the predicate. Note also that the above examples do not express copulas; copulas are ungrammatical in first- and second-person nominal sentences.

Middle Egyptian nominal sentences whose subjects are third-person are less straightforward than those whose subjects are first- or second-person. They fall into two groups, which we will consider separately. First consider the first group of third-person nominal sentences, whose subjects are third-person pronouns:

- (4) a. *hmrw pw*
wretches they
‘They are wretches.’

(*B. Äl. i.*, p. 285)

- b. *r^c pw*
Re he
‘He is Re.’

(*Urk.*, v. 10)

As the above examples demonstrate, third-person subject pronouns behave radically differently from first- and second-person subject pronouns in nominal sentences. Third-person subject pronouns appear following their predicates, whereas first- and second-person subject pronouns precede their predicates. Note also that there is only one third-person subject pronoun in Middle Egyptian: *pw*. This pronoun can refer to any number or gender.

What is also interesting about the position of third-person subject pronouns in nominal sentences is that they do not have to follow the entire predicate, but can insert themselves within the predicate NP as long as at least one element of predicate precedes

it (namely, the subject). Consider the following example in which the subject *pw* is embedded in the predicate NP:

- (5) *hm.t w^cb pw n r^c*
 wife priest she of Re
 ‘She is the wife of a priest of Re.’

(Westc. 9, 9)

The above example shows that *pw* is not required to follow the entire predicate; rather, it must simply follow at least one element of the predicate. This process is not unique to Egyptian, however; consider the following example from Maori, whose adverbial sentence syntax is predicate-subject:

- (6) *kei roto ngā tamariki i te whare kura*
 at.PRES inside DEF.PL children at.NEUT DEF.SG house school
 ‘The children are in the school building.’

(Bauer 2004: 24)

In the above example, the subject *ngā tamariki* is inserted in the predicate *kei roto i te whare kura*. This is exactly what occurred in the previous Middle Egyptian, when the subject *pw* is inserted in the complex predicate.

Now let us turn to the second group of third-person nominal sentences; these are sentences whose subjects are *not* subject pronouns. Consider the following examples of third-person nominal sentences whose subjects are not third-person pronouns:

- (7) a. *spt b3 šw*
 Sepi soul Shu
 ‘Sepi is the soul of Shu’ or ‘The soul of Shu is Sepi.’

(CT II, 19a, B, C)

- b. *hknw pw rn=f*
 Hekenu cop. name=his
 ‘His name is Hekenu.’

(CT IV, 196/197 c, B, P)

- c. *bw.t=i* *pw hsw*
 abomination=my cop. excrements
 'The excrements are my abomination.'

(CT III, 75i, S10C^a)

First, let us address the use of the copula⁶. The first example in the set does not include the copula, while the second and third examples do. This, however, does not demonstrate that the copula *pw* is optional in third-person nominal sentences. Copulas can only be omitted with certain nouns, like proper names and kinship terms, for example.

Now let us examine the syntax of the above examples. For sentences without a copula, it is unclear which element is the subject and which element is the predicate. Above, I have given both translations, and context, for most instances, will help to discern the two pieces. Formally, however, third-person nominal sentences whose subjects are not third-person pronouns and which do not have copulas do *not* have concrete syntax with regard to subject and predicate. For sentences which do have copulas, the first element is the predicate, and the second element is the subject. Now I will examine how this construction's syntax evolved, beginning with a cross-linguistic parallel.

Let us consider the Chinese word *shi*, which is another example of grammaticalization of a demonstrative into a copula. Originally, *shi* was solely a demonstrative, which we see in the following example:

- (8) *zi* *yu shi ri ku*
 Confucius at this day cry
 'Confucius cried on this day.'

⁶ It is no coincidence that the third-person subject pronoun and the copula are the same word; they derived from the same root: the masculine demonstrative *pw*. In Old Egyptian, the feminine demonstrative *tw* and the plural demonstrative *nw* could also be used as subject pronouns or as copulas (Edel 1964: 489-90); however, by Middle Egyptian, only the masculine demonstrative *pw* was used as a subject or as a copula.

(Whitman 2000: 234)

Here, *shi* was merely a demonstrative. However, as Whitman writes, it could also be used as ‘a resumptive pronominal subject with a nominal predicate’ (2000: 234). He then gives the following example:

- (9) fu yu ui shi ren zhi suo yu ye
riches and honour this men 's NOMINALIZER desire ptcl
‘Riches and honour, this is what men desire.’

(Whitman 2000: 234)

The example above shows how a demonstrative could easily have become a copula. The demonstrative *shi*, because it is redundant as a resumptive pronominal subject, could have been reinterpreted as a copula, linking two NPs: *fu yu gui* and *ren zhi suo yu ye*. Observe the following interpretations:

- (10) a. [fu yu gui]_i [[shi]_i ren zhi suo yu ye]_{TP}
[riches and honor]_i [[this]_i men's desire]_{TP}
b. [fu yu gui]_{NP} shi_{COP} [ren zhi suo yu ye]_{NP}
[riches and honor]_{NP} shi_{COP} [men's desire]_{NP}

In the first interpretation, *shi* resumes a topicalized NP within the TP. In the second interpretation, *shi* is reinterpreted to as a link between to NPs. In this example, we see what Kuryłowicz describes as ‘an increase of the range of a morpheme advancing from...a less grammatical to a more grammatical status’ (1966: 52). The demonstrative *shi*, already a grammatical element as a demonstrative becomes an even more functional element, a copula. The result is an equally accurate translation involving a copula: ‘Riches and honor are what men desire.’

The same process can be applied to Egyptian. First, the demonstrative *pw* would have evolved into the third-person subject pronoun and juxtaposed against the predicate

the way a first- or second-person pronoun could⁷. From there, *pw* could have been interpreted as a resumptive pronominal subject just like the Chinese demonstrative *shi*. In example 7b., *hknw pw rn=f*, *his name is Hekenu*, the pronoun *pw* within the core sentence [*hknw pw*] could resume the extraposed NP *rn=f*. At this point, *pw*, because it now loses its semantic value by resuming another NP, could be reinterpreted as a copula, linking two separate NPs in a nominal sentence. Let us look at this sentence in brackets similar to the Chinese example above:

- (11) a. [*hknw [pw]_i*]_{TP} [*rn=f*]_i
 [*Hekenu [this]_i*]_{TP} [*his name*]_i
- b. [*hknw*]_{NP} *pw*_{COP} [*rn=f*]_{NP}
 [*Hekenu*]_{NP} *pw*_{COP} [*his name*]_{NP}

Note that *pw* evolves from a demonstrative to a resumptive pronoun to a copula in the same way that the Chinese *shi* does.

The only aspect of the nominal sentence in Middle Egyptian that has not been explored or explained is the difference in word order between first- and second-person subjects and third-person subjects. Loprieno posits that *pw* must be an enclitic particle (1995: 104); as an enclitic particle, it cannot appear sentence-initial, but must follow at least one other constituent. Without access to native speakers, it is impossible to determine definitively whether *pw* is an enclitic particle or not, but the fact that *pw* can appear anywhere in a nominal sentence *except* in initial position, including within the predicate itself, is good evidence to support Loprieno's claim. Therefore, because the subject's enclitic nature forbids that it come in first position, the SP word order, which is

⁷ More on its unusual predicate-subject syntax will come in the following paragraph.

used in nominal sentences with first- and second-person subjects, cannot surface in nominal sentences with third-person subjects.

3.2. Nominal sentences in Coptic.

Consider the following examples of Coptic nominal sentences whose subjects are either first- or second-person pronouns:

(12) a. $\bar{\text{N}}\bar{\text{T}}\bar{\text{E}}\bar{\text{T}}\bar{\text{N}}\text{-}\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{Y}}\text{-}\bar{\text{K}}\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{T}}$ $\bar{\text{N}}\bar{\text{T}}\bar{\text{E}}\text{-}\bar{\text{N}}\text{-}\bar{\text{N}}\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{Y}}\bar{\text{T}}\bar{\text{E}}$
 you.pl- a-building of-the-God
 ‘You are a building of God.’
(1 Cor. 3:9)

b. $\bar{\text{A}}\bar{\text{N}}\bar{\text{T}}\text{-}\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{Y}}\text{-}\bar{\text{C}}\bar{\text{Z}}\bar{\text{I}}\bar{\text{M}}\bar{\text{E}}$ $\bar{\text{N}}\text{-}\bar{\text{C}}\bar{\text{A}}\bar{\text{M}}\bar{\text{A}}\bar{\text{R}}\bar{\text{I}}\bar{\text{T}}\bar{\text{H}}\bar{\text{C}}$
 I-a-woman of-Samaritan
 ‘I am a Samaritan woman.’
(John 4:9)

c. $\bar{\text{E}}\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{X}}\bar{\text{E}}\text{-}\bar{\text{N}}\bar{\text{T}}\bar{\text{K}}\text{-}\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{Y}}\text{-}\bar{\text{P}}\bar{\text{I}}\bar{\text{N}}\bar{\text{A}}$ $\bar{\text{H}}$ $\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{Y}}\text{-}\bar{\text{A}}\bar{\text{I}}\bar{\text{T}}\bar{\text{E}}\bar{\text{A}}\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{C}}$
 if-you.m.sg-a-spirit or an-angel
 ‘If you are a spirit or an angel...’
(ShIII 38:18-19)

It is important to note that the subjects of all of the above examples are either first- or second-person. Like in Middle Egyptian, the syntax of these sentences is invariably SP, where S signifies the subject and P signifies the predicate. Note also that the above examples do not express copulas; copulas are ungrammatical in first- and second-person nominal sentences.

Also like in Middle Egyptian, Coptic nominal sentences whose subjects are third-person are less straightforward than those whose subjects are first- or second-person.

They, too, fall into two groups, which we will consider separately. First consider the first group of third-person nominal sentences, whose subjects are third-person pronouns:

- (13) a. ΠΕΝ-ΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΕ
 our-god he
 'He is our God.'

(John 6:20)

- b. ΟΥ-ΡΕΩΠΝΟΒΕ ΤΕ
 a-sinner she
 'She is a sinner.'

(Luke 7:39)

As the above examples illustrate, third-person subject pronouns behave radically differently from first- and second-person subject pronouns in nominal sentences. Third-person subject pronouns appear following their predicates, whereas first- and second-person subject pronouns precede their predicates. Note also that, unlike Middle Egyptian, the third-person subject pronouns agree in number and gender with the predicate. These pronouns derive from Late Egyptian demonstratives: the set *p3y, t3y, n3y* (Junge 2001: 163). It is interesting to note that *pw*, also a demonstrative, was discarded in favor of a semantically identical set of lexical items.

What is also interesting about the position of third-person subject pronouns in nominal sentences is that, also like Middle Egyptian, they do not have to follow the entire predicate, but can insert themselves within the predicate NP as long as at least one element of predicate precedes it. Consider the following example in which *πε* is embedded in the predicate NP:

- (14) ΠΕΙ-ΡΩΜΕ ΟΥ-ΩΗΡΕ ΠΕ Ν-ΝΟΥΤΕ
 [this-man]_i a-child he_i of-God
 'As for this man, he is a child of God.'

(Mark 15:39)

After discarding the topicalized NP **πει-ρωμε**, we see that the subject pronoun **πε** is imbedded in the predicate **ου-ωηρε ν̄-νουτε**. Because the third-person subject pronoun can appear anywhere in a nominal sentence except first-position, I would extend Loprieno’s claim that the Middle Egyptian *pw* is an enclitic particle to cover the Coptic pronouns **πε**, **τε**, and **νε** (1995: 104). This would help explain why the syntax of third-person nominal sentences (predicate-subject) is different from first- and second-person nominal sentences (subject-predicate)⁸.

Now let us turn to the second group of third-person nominal sentences; these are sentences whose subjects are *not* subject pronouns. Consider the following examples of third-person nominal sentences whose subjects are not third-person pronouns:

- (15) a. **ου-λυπη δε ν̄-τετ-μαλυ πε ου-ωηρε ν-αθητ**
 a-grief ptcl to-his-mother cop. a-son of-foolish
 ‘A foolish son is a grief to his mother.’
 (Prov. 10:1)
- b. **ιωζαννης πε πετ-ραν**
 John cop. his-name
 ‘His name is John.’
 (Luke 1:63)
- c. **ωλοτ πε χοο-γ**
 disgrace cop. to.speak-them
 ‘To speak to them is a disgrace.’
 (ShAm I 228:7)

First, let us address the use of the copula⁹. A copula appears in each of the examples above, and indeed, copulas are required for third-person nominal sentences which do not

⁸ For more on this word order, read the last paragraph of section 3.1.
⁹ Note that although the above examples only employ **πε**, the copula can be either **πε**, **τε**, or **νε**, agreeing, therefore, in gender and number with the subject. Agreement, however, is not required, in which case **πε** is the default.

have third-person subject pronouns. This differs from Middle Egyptian, whose sentences can take a copula or can simply, with certain nouns, juxtapose two NPs.

Now let us examine the syntax of the above examples. The syntax is invariably predicate-copula-subject. This is a continuation from Middle Egyptian; a resumptive pronoun is reinterpreted as a copula between two NPs. Consider the following bracketed examples, from the sentence $\text{I}\omega\zeta\text{ANNHC } \text{PE } \text{PEQ-PA}\text{N}$:

- (16) a. $[\text{I}\omega\zeta\text{ANNHC } [\text{PE}]_i]_{\text{TP}} [\text{PEQ-PA}\text{N}]_i$
 [John [this]_i]_{TP} [his name]_i
- b. $[\text{I}\omega\zeta\text{ANNHC}]_{\text{NP}} \text{PE}_{\text{COP}} [\text{PEQ-PA}\text{N}]_{\text{NP}}$
 [John]_{NP} PE_{COP} [his name]_{NP}

From these examples, we see how a resumptive pronoun, which originated as a demonstrative, is reinterpreted as a copula¹⁰.

3.3. Comparison of nominal sentences in Middle Egyptian and Coptic.

Although nominal sentences in Egyptian are syntactically diverse, Middle Egyptian and Coptic demonstrate almost exactly the same syntactic structures. For first- and second-person nominal sentences, the subject and predicate are juxtaposed without a copula, and the word order is invariably subject-predicate. Third-person nominal sentences can be divided into two groups: those with pronominal subjects and those without pronominal subjects. The first group exhibits the word order predicate-subject; this differs from first- and second-person nominal sentences, Loprieno argues, because the subjects $pw/\text{PE}/\text{TE}/\text{NE}$ are enclitic pronouns (1995: 104). Underlyingly, the word

¹⁰ A more detailed analysis of this interpretation can be found in section 3.1.

order could be subject-predicate, but, because an enclitic particle must affix itself *following* an element of prosodic weight, it surfaces after (or within) a predicate. The second group exhibits the word order predicate-copula-subject. This arose from a core sentence from the first group whose subject pronoun resumes an extraposed NP which follows said core sentence. The only difference between Middle Egyptian and Coptic in this sentence type is that Middle Egyptian, with certain nouns, can juxtapose two third-person NPs to create a nominal sentence, while Coptic must link the two NPs with a copula. With all other nouns, however, Middle Egyptian must employ a copula like Coptic.

4. Sentences with adverbial complements.

Another type of sentence in Egyptian that does not contain a verb is a sentence with an adverbial complement. Only two phrases may occupy the adverbial complement position: a prepositional phrase or an adverbial phrase. These phrases simply give the subject a spatiotemporal position.

4.1. Sentences with adverbial complements in Middle Egyptian.

Consider the following examples in which noun phrases, the subjects, are followed by adverbial complements:

- (17) a. *iw šd.w=k m šht*
Ptcl field-plots=your in country
'Your field-plots are in the country.'
(Peas., B2, 65)
- b. *dqrw nb hr htw=f*
fruits all on trees=its
'All kinds of fruit were on its trees.'
(Sin., B83)
- c. *rm.w im hn^c 3pd.w*
fishes there and birds
'Fishes were there, together with birds.'
(Sh.S. 50-51)

In the first two examples, prepositional phrases, 'in the country' and 'on its trees,' are the adverbial complements which act as predicates for their subjects. In the third example, the adverb 'there' is the adverbial complement. The syntax for these sentences is invariable NP-XP, where NP is the subject and XP, the predicate, can be either a

prepositional phrase or an adverbial phrase. Also note that, like many (but not all) nominal sentences, the copula is absent. In fact, a copula would be ungrammatical.

One preposition used to begin an adverbial complement, *m* ‘in’ or ‘as,’ can take on a certain predicative/copular nuance in this sentence construction. Here, the NP c-commanded by P⁰ is equated to the subject, just like a nominal sentence. Consider the following example in which we see the ‘*m* of predication’:

- (18) *mk tw m mniw*
 Ptcl you as shepherd
 ‘Look, you are a shepherd.’

(*Peas.* B1, 208)

Note that the preposition *m* is almost acting like a copula. However, it is decidedly not a copula because it has a nuance of meaning ‘in the capacity of.’ The sentence in the example could be translated as ‘you are in the capacity of a shepherd’ or ‘you are employed as a shepherd’; it does not have the timeless quality or the equative sense of a nominal sentence¹¹.

4.2. Sentences with adverbial complements in Coptic.

Consider the following examples in which noun phrases, the subjects, are followed by adverbial complements:

- (19) a. *ΟΥΝ-ΟΥ-ΠΗΓΗ Ν-ΩΝΣ ΖΝ-ΝΕ-ΖΙΟΥΕ Ν-Τ-ΣΟΦΙΑ*
 Ptcl-a-fountain of-life in-the-ways of-the-wisdom
 ‘A fountain of life is in the ways of wisdom.’

(*Prov.* 13:14)

¹¹ The Welsh preposition *yn*, described in depth in section 5.1.1, can function in a similar way. For a discussion on this preposition and its parallels to Egyptian, see chapter five.

- b. †-N̄M̄M̄A-CI ʒN̄-TECI-ΘAIFIC
 I-with-him in-his-affliction
 'I am with him in his affliction.'

(Ps. 90:15)

- c. EIC-N-OYEPHTE N̄-N-ENT-A-Y-TOMC N̄-ΠOY-ʒAI
 PtcI-[the-feet of-the.pl_i-rel.-past-they_i-bury DOM-your-husband]_j
 CE-ʒIP̄-Π-PO
 they_j-at-the-door

'Behold, the feet of those who buried your husband are at the door.'

(Acts 5:9)

In the all three examples, prepositional phrases, 'in the ways...', 'with him...', and 'at the door,' are the adverbial complements which act as predicates for their subjects. In Coptic, only prepositional phrases can be adverbial complements: adverbs cannot. Most true adverbs die out by the time of Coptic and are replaced by prepositional phrases. Let us look at the breakdown of two Coptic 'adverbs':

	<u>Surface form</u>	<u>Breakdown</u>
(20) a.	M̄M̄AY 'there'	M̄ M̄AY to place
b.	ʒN̄OYME 'truly'	ʒN̄ OY ME in a truth

Only a handful of true Egyptian adverbs survive into Coptic, like ON 'again' and TENOY 'now.' These adverbs, however, do not appear in this construction because they do not work semantically in such a construction; rather, they modify VPs in verbal sentences.

The syntax for these sentences is invariably NP-PP, where NP is the subject and PP is the predicate. Also note that, like many (but not all) nominal sentences, the copula is absent. In fact, a copula would be ungrammatical.

4.3. Comparison of sentences with adverbial compliments in Middle Egyptian and Coptic.

The syntax of sentences with adverbial compliments did not change between Middle Egyptian and Coptic; it remains NP-XP, where NP is the subject and XP is the adverbial compliment. A copula is not permitted to intervene between these two parts. One difference between Middle Egyptian and Coptic is what can constitute the adverbial compliment. In Middle Egyptian, both prepositional phrases and adverbial phrases are acceptable, while in Coptic only prepositional phrases are allowed because the handful of surviving adverbs do not work semantically with this sentence type.

5. The infinitival construction.

In traditional Egyptian grammars, the term ‘pseudoverbal construction’ refers to two separate constructions: [subject + preposition + infinitive] and the stative¹². This arose because both constructions employ verbs, but these verbs are not, with regard to Middle Egyptian, suffixally conjugated, which is the case for the vast majority of Middle Egyptian sentences. The construction [subject + preposition + infinitive] uses the infinitive, and the stative uses, in Middle Egyptian, the verb with a concatenative ending, and, in Coptic, the core consonantal root of the verb with a different internal vowel structure in order to distinguish it from the Coptic infinitive¹³.

Henceforth, the term ‘infinitival’ will signify the construction [subject + preposition + infinitive]¹⁴. I make this decision because the construction [subject + preposition + infinitive] does not have a simple, grammatical name like the stative does. This title is not ideal because many other forms in Coptic use the infinitive, but, as this term seems the most neutral and appropriate for both Middle Egyptian *and* Coptic, I will use it hereafter¹⁵.

5.1. The infinitival construction in Middle Egyptian.

The infinitival construction, as I explain above, consists of a subject, a preposition, and a verb. Only three prepositions are available for this construction: *m*, *hr*,

¹² The stative was formerly known as the old perfective (Gardiner 1957). The entire sixth chapter of this essay is devoted to the stative construction.

¹³ Most likely, the Middle Egyptian stative also experienced vowel changes within its core consonant structure, but, because Middle Egyptian scripts did not express vowels, this is impossible to determine.

¹⁴ In Coptic, however, the preposition is lost.

¹⁵ Forms with conjugation bases employ the infinitive.

and *r*. Consider the following simple examples in which the aforementioned prepositions introduce the verb, paying close attention to the progressive aspect associated with this sentence type:

- (21) a. *m̄t wi m h3i.t r km.t*
 Ptcl¹⁶ I *m* to-go to Egypt
 ‘Look, I am going down to Egypt.’
 (Peas. R1. 2-3)
- b. *ḥt.w ḥr gm gm t3 ḥr mn mn*
 trees *ḥr* to-crack earth *ḥr* to-shake
 ‘The trees were cracking, and the earth was shaking.’
 (Sh.S. 59-60)
- c. *ib n ḥm=k r qbb n m33*
 heart of majesty=your *r* to-be-refreshed to to-see
 ‘The heart of your Majesty will be refreshed to see.’
 (Westc. 5, 4)

The syntax for the infinitival construction is invariably SVO. Objects follow the verb; consider the following example:

- (22) *iw s nb ḥr ḥtm ʿ3=f*
 Ptcl man every *ḥr* to-close door=his
 ‘Everyone is closing his door.’
 (St. BM 1671, 9)

Let us now examine each of the three prepositions separately.

Consider the following examples of the infinitival construction with the preposition *m*:

- (23) a. *iw=f m ii.t*
 Ptcl=he *m* to-come
 ‘He was coming.’
 (Sh.S. 62)

¹⁶ Although particles feature strongly in this sentence type (especially *iw*, which can be seen in examples [22] and [23] a.), they do not have any bearing on aspect.

b. *iw nb ʕnh wd3 snb m iw.t r*
 Ptcl lord may-live may-prosper may-be-health *m* to-come to

ʕnh-sn-wsr.t m3ʕ-hrw
 Ankh-Senwosret true-voice

‘The lord, l.p.h.¹⁷, was coming to Ankh-Senwosret, true of voice.’
 (*Kah.*, 33, 33-34)

c. *mtn ih.w m wd.y*
 Ptcl cattle *m* to-stray
 ‘Look, the cattle are straying!’

(*Adm.*, 9, 2)

As Loprieno (1995) writes, the Berlin School, a major school of Egyptology, has long argued that Egyptian did not assign specific tenses to sentences, but rather specific aspects¹⁸: ‘...the fundamental reference of Egyptian verbal forms is aspectual, i.e. that they present a predication according to its contextual completeness (perfective aspect), or lack thereof (imperfective), regardless of the temporal location vis-à-vis the speaker’ (1995: 75). Loprieno, however, claims that the Egyptian tense forms can, in fact, be assigned tenses.

It is clear that many sentence constructions have assigned tense; the *sdm.n=f* form (see Manassa and Sargent [forthcoming]) and the infinitival construction with *r* (see below) are definitively past and future tenses, respectively. However, many verb forms, including the infinitival construction with *m* above, are ambiguous with respect to tense. The translation for ‘he was coming’ could easily be ‘he is coming’; context clears up any uncertainty.

While the infinitival construction with *m* is ambiguous to tense, it is not ambiguous to aspect: it denotes a progressive (or imperfect or durative) aspect. Another

¹⁷ The abbreviation ‘l.p.h.’ is an acronym used by Egyptologists to truncate the common phrase, ‘May he/she/you live, prosper, and be healthy.’

¹⁸ Coptic, on the other hand, assigns a specific tense to its sentences.

interesting facet of this construction is that *m* is only followed by verbs of motion. This is the only difference between the infinitival construction with *m* and with *hr*; the verbs which follow these two prepositions are mutually exclusive with regard to verb class. Verbs of motion follow *m*, while all other verbs follow *hr*.

Consider the following examples of the infinitival construction with the preposition *hr*:

- (24) a. *tw mš^c pn n nswt hr m33*
 Ptcl army this of king *hr* to-see
 'This army of the king's was watching.'
 (Hamm. 110, 5-6)
- b. *tw hmwt.w š3.w hr qd=f*
 Ptcl craftsmen many *hr* to-built=it
 'Many craftsmen were building it.'
 (Sin., B 296-297)
- c. *tw=i hr iri.t imi.t-pr n hm.t=i*
 Ptcl=I *hr* to-make inventory for wife=my
 'I am making an inventory for my wife.'
 (Kah., 12, 7)

Notice that the infinitival construction with *hr*, like the construction with *m*, is ambiguous with regard to tense (either present or past), but explicit with regard to aspect. This construction also denotes progressive action. Notice also that verbs of motion are not used in conjunction in this construction; verbs of motion, in the infinitival construction, follow the preposition *m*.

Consider the following examples of the infinitival construction with the preposition *r*:

- (25) a. *tw=i r iti.t =k*
 Ptcl=I *r* to-take=you
 'I am going to take you.'

- b. *mk sw r hb.t*
Ptcl he *r* to-tread-out
'Look, he is going to tread out (the grain)!' .

(Peas., B1 43)

- c. *ʿw.wt ḥ3s.t r sw(r)i hr itrw n.w km.t*
animals desert *r* to-drink on river of Egypt
'The desert animals are going to drink from the river of Egypt!'

(Nef., 35-36)

Unlike the constructions with *m* or *hr*, the infinitival construction with *r* does have a concrete tense: the future. Gardiner, in his grammar, refers to this facet of the preposition *r* as 'the *r* of futurity' (1957: 97). Here, aspect is second to tense, and this construction, along with oftentimes the subjunctive and the prospective, is one of the only concrete ways to denote the future tense.

One of the main points I would like to make in this section is that the prepositions *m*, *hr*, and *r* became grammaticalized from prepositions into aspect (or, in the case of *r*, tense) markers. In the next section (5.1.1), I will present a similar scenario in Welsh, where the preposition *yn* became grammaticalized into an aspect marker. The goal of 5.1.1 is twofold: first, it will help to illustrate a process that happened in Egyptian, and, second, it will demonstrate that grammaticalization of this nature is not unique to Egyptian. The subsequent section (5.1.2) will compare these two processes.

5.1.1. A crosslinguistic parallel to the infinitival construction.

In order to demonstrate that the grammaticalization of the Middle Egyptian prepositions *m*, *hr*, and *r* into aspect markers is not an isolated or unprecedented

occurrence, let us look at the Welsh preposition *yn*, which, too, has become an aspect marker. Gensler (2002) and Willis (2003) have written extensively about this preposition and its grammaticalization into an aspect marker. In this section and section 5.1.2., I will examine the history of *yn*, investigate its current usages, and argue that Egyptian's grammaticalization of *m*, *hr*, and *r* into aspect markers arose from comparable circumstances and for similar purposes.

Gensler (2002) classifies *yn* into three separate groups, based on both grammatical function and consonantal mutations¹⁹. One group (labeled 'c' below) is comprised of two different structures, but their similarities in consonantal mutation and histories require that they be treated together. Below is a reproduction of his chart delineating these differences:

A. Basic spatiotemporal (nasalization ²¹ : <i>d > n</i>)	[yn + N]	<i>mae Huw yn Nulyn</i> ²⁰	'Huw is in Dulyn' (Dulyn = Dublin)
B. Verbal periphrastic (no mutation)	[yn + VN]	<i>mae Huw yn dysgu</i>	'Huw is learning' (VN = Verbal- Noun ²²)
C1. Predicative (lenition ²³ : <i>d > dd</i>)	[yn + N/Adj]	<i>mae Huw yn ddysgwr</i> ' ' ' <i>yn dda</i>	'Huw is a learner/ is good'
C2. Adverbializer (lenition: <i>d > dd</i>)	[yn + Adj]	<i>rhedeg yn dda</i>	'to run well (goodly)'

(Gensler 2002: 711)

¹⁹ Celtic languages are renowned for their consonantal mutations (Borsley 1999). These mutations arise from the juxtaposition of two lexical items: one item changes the initial consonant of the following word or another word changes the final consonant of the preceding word. In this instance, the preposition *yn* affects—or, in the case of B., does *not* affect—the following noun, verbal noun, or adjective.

²⁰ Three of these four sentences employ the same surface syntax. The first word *mae* is the copula 'be,' which is followed by the subject 'Huw,' a Welsh name.

²¹ In this case of consonantal mutation, *yn* forces the following consonant to nasalize. [d] → [n]

²² Verbal-nouns in these Welsh constructions can be equated to English gerunds (Raney 1985).

²³ In this case of consonantal mutation, *yn* forces the following consonant to lenite. [d] → [ð]

Now I will look at these three separate *yn* constructions, focusing on B., the verbal periphrastic use of *yn*. This form, I will argue, is the variety that resembles the Middle Egyptian infinitival construction.

The construction [*yn* + N] in Gensler's chart above (labeled A) is the basic spatiotemporal preposition, equivalent to the English preposition 'in.' Gensler abbreviates this form as **ynPrep**, and I will do the same henceforth. Consider the above example:

- (26) *mae Huw yn Nulyn*
 BE Huw in Dublin
 'Huw is in Dublin.'

(Gensler 2002: 711)

We find that *yn* in the form *ynPrep* denotes placement in space or time. It takes as its complement a noun phrase. What distinguishes it from the predicative *yn* (labeled C1 above), which also takes as its complement a noun phrase, is its consonantal mutation. *ynPrep* causes the first consonant of the noun phrase to nasalize, while the predicative *yn* causes the first consonant of the noun phrase to lenite.

The Egyptian prepositions *m*, *hr*, and *r* also have this spatiotemporal semantic value (see section 4). Consider the following examples in which the prepositions retain their semantic value:

- (27) a. *tw šdw =k m šht*
 Ptcl fields=your in country
 'Your fields are in the country.'

(Peas. B2, 65)

- b. *dqrw nb hr htw =f*
 fruits all on trees=its
 'All kinds of fruits were on its trees.'

(Sin. B 83)

- c. *m̄t sw r wnmw*
 Pctl it for food
 'Look, it is for food.'

(*Th. T. S.* ii, 11)

Gensler classifies the constructions [yn + N/Adj] and [yn + Adj] in his chart above (labeled C1 and C2, respectively) together because of their parallel consonant mutations. Moreover, in addition to their morphophonological similarities, these two forms essentially accomplish the same semantic goal: expressing the state of an object or action. Gensler argues just this in his article. He writes, 'The predicative examples presented in 1, *Huw is a learner/Huw is good*, could thus be paraphrased semantically as *Huw is in (the state of being) a learner / in (the state of being) good...*' (727). Furthermore, one could argue the same about the adverbial example *rhedeg yn dda*. Just as *Huw is good* can be translated as *Huw is in the state of being good*, so could *running well* be translated as *running—as an action—in the state of being good*. Therefore, though translated differently into English, these forms express the same semantic state, and this similarity is reflected in its identical syntactic and morphophonological properties.

Along the same lines, ynLen as a predicative can be seen through the same semantic lenses. Consider the following examples from Gensler's article:

- (28) a. *mi a af yn gyuarwyd* (NounPred)
 I Pctl I.go yn guide
 'I shall go as a guide'

(Gensler 2002: 723)

- b. *ac erchych hynny ... yn gyuarws* (NounPred)
 and you.ask that yn gift
 'and ask that ... as a gift'

(Gensler 2002: 724)

We can argue the same semantic ‘state of being’ may apply to these sentences. *I shall go in (the state of being) a guide* and *ask that in (the state of being) a gift* convey the same semantic information, while *yn* can at the same time denote predication. This predicative nuance of the Welsh *yn* is interesting because it parallels the Middle Egyptian *m* of predication:

- (29) *iw =f m nhnw*
 Ptcl=he *m* child
 ‘He is a child’

(*Urk.* VII, 49, 14)

Here we find a further parallel: not only do the Egyptian *m* and the Welsh *yn* become grammaticalized into aspect markers, they can also signify predication.

Gensler, in his above chart, denotes the construction [*yn* + VN] (labeled B) as the verbal periphrastic preposition. He argues that verbal noun, equivalent to the English gerund (Raney 1985), constitutes a noun phrase which is a compliment to the preposition. He also demonstrates that *yn* is not the only preposition in Welsh to function in this way; consider the following examples in which other prepositions construct tense just like *yn* constructed the present progressive tense²⁴:

- (30) a. *wedi*²⁵ ‘after’: *mae Huw wedi dysgu* ‘Huw (has) learned’
 (lit. ‘Huw is after learning’)
 b. *yn* ‘in’: *mae Huw yn dysgu* ‘Huw is learning’
 (lit. ‘Huw is in learning’)
 c. *am* ‘for’: *mae Huw am ddysgu* ‘Huw wants to learn’
 (lit. ‘Huw is for learning’)
 d. *ar* ‘on’: *mae Huw ar ddysgu* ‘Huw is about to learn’
 (lit. ‘Huw is on learning’)

²⁴ *yn* used to denote the present progressive tense; it currently denotes the simple present tense (Willis 2003: 22). For more information on this tense shift, read further in this section.

²⁵ Willis (2003: 23) argues that *wedi* has been come grammaticalized into an aspect marker like *yn* has. Due to time constraints, I will be unable to delve further into this preposition.

Note that *yn* is the only preposition above that does not incur consonantal mutation.

Willis (2003) illustrates that form “to be” + subject + aspect marker + verbnoun’ is not unique to Welsh, but is shared by the other two Brythonic languages, Breton and Cornish. Consider the following example from Middle Breton²⁶:

- (31) ...*yuez ez guelsont anaelez ouz onygnamentaff he gouliou...*
also PRT saw-3P the-angels *ouz* anoint-VN her wounds
‘...they also saw the angels anointing her wounds...’

(Willis 2003: 22)

Note that the Middle Breton preposition/aspect marker *ouz* instates the progressive aspect just like the Welsh *yn*. This example demonstrates that *yn* is not unique in this function, but has related forms in related languages.

One interesting shift in Welsh’s history is in the construction [BE + subject + *yn* + VN] from denoting the present progressive tense to the simple present. The first discussion of this is found in Gruffydd Roberts’ *Gramadeg Cymraeg* (1567):

GR. *yn gyntaf peth rhaid yu guybod nad oes un ferf yn y gymraeg, (odiethr y ferf syluedaul. s. uyf, uyt, buum, s. sum, es. fui.) ai hol amserau genthi, heb diphig orhynnleiaf, yr amser presennaul arni, yn y mod managaul, a’r darfodedig amherphaith hefyd.*

MO. *onid oes nod i glyttio hynn odiphig mal y galler cael ymadrod yn y gymrag cyfattedbaul i’rheßum ladin le bo’r ferf o’r amser presennol, ne darfodedig amherphaith yndo, megis amo, amabam?*

GR. *oes, truy gynhorthuy y ferf syluedaul a chyph y ferf ihunan gida hi, ag, yn, oflaen y cyph mal: amo uyf yn caru, amabam, oedunn yn caru (Roberts 1939: 144).*

GR[UFFYDD]: The first thing one must know is that no Welsh verb, with the exception of the substantive verb, i.e., *wyf, wyt, buum*, i.e., ‘sum,’ ‘es,’ ‘fui,’ has all its tenses, without lacking, at least, the present in the indicative and also the imperfect.

²⁶ *ouz* is the Middle Breton equivalent of the Welsh *yn*.

MO(RYS): Is there no way to substitute for this lack, so that one can have a Welsh expression corresponding to the Latin phrase with the verb in the present or the imperfect tense, such as *ano*, *amabam*?

GR[UFFYDD]: Yes, there is, with the help of the substantive verb and the verbal noun of the verbs itself with it and *yn* before the verbal noun, as in ‘amo’ *wyf yn caru*, ‘amabam’ *oeddyn yn caru*.

(Pope 1996: 122)

Between Middle and Modern Welsh, the present tense shifted to become the future tense (Pope 1996). This left a gap in the grammar for a present indicative; the construction [BE + subject + *yn* + VN] bridged this gap, and it currently denotes this tense *solely*.

Let us examine the typology of the Welsh *yn*. Gensler (2002) argues that *yn* is a preposition because it takes as its complement a noun phrase—namely, the verbal noun which is semantically a verb, but syntactically a noun. Willis (2003: 22) assumes that *yn* is an aspect marker, but does not present any evidence to support this, other than to remark that ‘the aspect marker has arisen historically from preposition, which in the analyses of modern languages are generally treated as aspectual heads.’ In this section, I will give evidence to support the notion that *yn* has become grammaticalized.

Hopper and Traugott (1993) write that ‘grammaticalization is the study of grammatical forms, however defined, viewed as entities undergoing processes rather than as static objects.’ When a form becomes grammaticalized, its role evolves, from a word of semantic content to grammatical functionality—or from one aspect grammatical functionality to another sphere of functionality. In the instance of the Welsh *yn*, I argue that *yn* becomes grammaticalized from a preposition to an aspectual marker. Above, I have presented two pieces of evidence to support this.

Firstly, *yn*, when used as *ynVN*, as opposed to *ynPrep* and *ynLen*, does not incur consonantal mutation. Consonantal mutation, however, continues in both *ynPrep* and

ynLen. This shows that ynVN is treated differently than its prepositional counterparts. Grammaticalization from a preposition into an entirely different functional element explains this loss of morphophonological change.

Secondly, *yn* undergoes a tense shift. In Middle Welsh, the construction [BE + subject + *yn* + VN] denoted the present progressive tense. This interpretation was derived from a literal meaning of *yn* as the spatiotemporal preposition 'in.' Therefore, early in Welsh's history, the translation of *mae Huw yn dysgu* ('Huw is learning') as 'Huw is in learning' accurately demonstrates its derivation. That the ynVN construction came to denote the present progressive tense is evidence of grammaticalization, but even more substantial proof is that this present progressive tense morphed into the simple present tense. Welsh *yn* must have lost any semblance with or connection to the spatiotemporal preposition 'in' in order to designate the simple present tense. Therefore, *yn* was definitely grammaticalized into an aspect marker because, not only did it develop to denote a specific tense, it changed further into a completely tense and became, therefore, a tense marker.

Now that we have seen that *yn* was grammaticalized from a preposition into an aspect marker, let us compare this transformation with a similar change in the Middle Egyptian infinitival construction.

5.1.2. Comparison between the Welsh *yn* and the Egyptian *m*, *hr*, and *r*.

Above, I argued that the Welsh preposition *yn* became grammaticalized in an aspect marker, and I provided two pieces of evidence: the first piece was a change in its

original morphophonological properties, and the second piece was its tense shift. In the same vein, I will argue that the prepositions in that the infinitival constructions in Middle Egyptian became grammaticalized into aspect markers (for *m* and *hr*) or tense markers (for *r*).

For the grammaticalization of *m* and *hr* into aspect markers, I offer two pieces of evidence. First, although *m* and *hr* served the same purpose for the grammar—i.e., they denoted the progressive tense—they became specialized with respect to which type of verbs could follow. Verbs of motion do indeed constitute a separate class of verbs in many languages, but the difference between the prepositions *m* and *hr* semantically (between ‘in’ and ‘on’) does not immediately point to a one-to-one match-up between verbs of motion (or non-motion verbs) and *m* (or *hr*). If the decision to choose which prepositions went with which verbs was not semantically based, then the decision was arbitrary, and therefore these prepositions must have lost their semantic value. I believe that these prepositions lost their semantic value (in the instance of the infinitival construction, not as spatiotemporal prepositions) in order to become grammaticalized into aspect markers.

Second, these two prepositions began to drop out altogether. Junge (2001: 112) notes that the preposition *hr* is written only selectively in Late Egyptian, and Johnson (1986: 33) writes that the writing of the prepositions *m* and *hr* in the infinitival construction is lost by the time of Demotic. If they dropped out of the language, then they must have first lost all semantic value. Indeed, they became grammaticalized into

aspect markers, aspect became associated with the sentence construction itself, and the prepositions disappeared because they no longer served any purpose²⁷.

In order to demonstrate that *r* became grammaticalized, we must look ahead to Coptic. We will see that *r* collapses into a conjugation base that denotes only tense. First, let us look at a chart of the sentence ‘he will hear’ from Middle Egyptian to Coptic:

<u>Middle Egyptian</u>	<u>Late Egyptian</u>	<u>Demotic</u>	<u>Coptic</u>
<i>iw=f r sdm</i> ²⁸	<i>iw=f r sdm</i>	<i>iw=f(r) sdm</i>	<i>εqe-cwrm</i> ²⁹

As we see in footnote 28 below, every morpheme in the Middle Egyptian example is found in its Coptic equivalent. The Coptic form, known to Coptologists as the optative (another term for ‘future’), consists of two parts: the conjugation base (in this case, the optative conjugation base) and the verb in the infinitive³⁰. The optative conjugation base, like all conjugation bases, has two forms: the prepersonal state (used in conjunction with a personal pronoun) and the prenominal state (used in conjunction with a noun phrase). The prepersonal base is *ε=ε*, in which the personal pronoun is infix between the two epsilons (see the example above). The prenominal base is *εpe*³¹. Consider the following examples—which are identical to the above examples, except ‘he’ is replaced by ‘the mother’:

²⁷ In truth, starting in Late Egyptian, the language began to favor tense as well as aspect. The infinitival construction came to denote the present tense, and this continues into Coptic. See above for more on this conversion from progressive aspect to present tense.

²⁸ In this example, *iw* is a particle, *f* is the subject ‘he,’ *r* is the preposition in question, and *sdm* is the verb ‘to hear.’

²⁹ In this example, *iw* collapsed into the first *ε*, *f* is the same subject pronoun as *q*, the preposition *r* collapsed into the second *ε*, and *sdm* is the same verb as *cwrm*.

³⁰ The optative conjugation base is also known as the third future conjugation base. Information on the evolution of conjugation bases and their syntactic features is included in chapter seven.

³¹ This base came from the morphemes *ir*. The morpheme *ir* replaced *iw* in sentences with nouns—as opposed to pronouns—as the subject. The noun directly follows the conjugation base.

Middle Egyptian

iw=mw.t r sdm

Late Egyptian

ir=mw.t r sdm

Demotic

ir=mw.t (r) sdm

Coptic

ⲉⲣⲉ-ⲙⲁⲁⲩ ⲥⲠⲐⲙ

The grammaticalization of the preposition *r* is similar to that of *m* and *hr*. The sentence pattern, in both the prepersonal and prenominal forms, loses the preposition *r* because the syntax and morphology are different from every other sentence pattern. Futurity, therefore, is attached to the sentence pattern and *not* the preposition now. Although the preposition came into use because of its semantic value (meaning ‘toward’), it became grammaticalized into a morpheme indicating futurity, and when it became obsolete, it was dropped. If the preposition still carried a semantic meaning, it would have been retained into Coptic, and therefore its loss indicates that it had only a grammatical value for Middle Egyptian.

5.2. The infinitival construction in Coptic.

At the beginning of this chapter, I explain that the term ‘infinitival construction’ is my own creation for Egyptian: in Middle Egyptian, it refers to the construction [subject + preposition + infinitive]. Above, I show that the preposition *m* and *hr* drop out of the language. The construction with *r*, though similar in structure and history, grouped with suffixally conjugated verbal sentences and became a conjugation base. Therefore, the infinitival construction in Coptic is a remnant of the Middle Egyptian infinitival construction with the prepositions *m* and *hr*; the mutual element that links these two stages is the use of the verb in the infinitive.

Consider the following examples of the infinitival construction in Coptic:

- (32) a. $\Pi\text{-}\text{NOYTE } \Delta\epsilon \text{ COOYN } \bar{\text{N}}\text{-}\text{NET}\bar{\text{N}}\text{-} \text{ZHT}$
the-God ptcl to-know DOM³²-your:PL-heart
‘But God knows your hearts.’
(Luke 16:15)
- b. $\dagger\text{-}\text{NEX-}\Delta\text{AIMONION } \text{EBOA}$
I- cast-demon out
‘I am casting out demons.’
(Luke 13:32)
- c. $\dagger\text{-}\text{ME } \bar{\text{M}}\text{MO}=\text{K}$
I-love DOM=you
‘I love you.’
(John 21:16)

Note that the syntax with respect to the subject and verb is identical to the Middle Egyptian form: SVO.

Unlike the equivalent construction in Middle Egyptian with the preposition *m* and *hr*, however, the infinitival construction in Coptic is not marked for aspect—only for the present tense. As mentioned above, Coptic does not entertain ambiguity with regard to tense, and context determines aspect³³.

5.2.1. The morpheme *-na-*.

The infinitival construction in Coptic deviates from its strict present tense sense in only one instance: the morpheme *-na-*. Consider the following examples:

³² The acronym ‘DOM’ stands for ‘direct object marker.’ Originally prepositions, these words mark direct objects. Silverman (1980) argues that this developed from a way to emphasize the direct object in a nominal sentence, which was reserved in earlier stages of Egyptian for adverbial adjuncts.

³³ Many languages require that context determine aspect. Consider the following French sentence: ‘je cours.’ This sentence can mean either ‘I (habitually) run’ or ‘I am running,’ and context alone will disambiguate the meaning.

- (33) a. ΑΥΘ ΑΝΟΚ †-ΝΑ-ΤΟΥΝΟC-Ϟ Ἰ-Π- ΖΑΕ Ἰ-ΖΟΥΥ
 and I_i I_i-will-raise- him on-the-last of-day
 ‘And as for me, I will raise him up on the last day.’
(John 6:40)
- b. ΟΥἸ-ΖΑΖ ΓΑΡ ΝΑ-ΕΙ ΖἸ-ΠΑ-ΡΑΝ
 Ptcl-many for will-come in-my-name
 ‘For many will come in My name.’
(Mark 13:6)
- c. ΤΕ- ΝΑ-ΒΩΚ ΕΠΕCΗΤ ΨΑ-ΑΜἸΤΕ
 You:FEM-will-go down to-Hades
 ‘You will go down to Hades.’
(Matt 11:23)

The morpheme **-ΝΑ-** came from the Egyptian verb *n^c*, which means ‘to go’ (Vycichl 1984). Its history is similar to that of English and French in the sentences ‘I am going to sit’ and ‘je vais m’asseoir.’ The verbs ‘to go’ and ‘aller’ have become grammaticalized into future tense markers (usually with a connotation of intent) and have lost any semantic sense of motion. Similarly, *n^c* lost its semantic meaning and came to denote the future tense in the Coptic morpheme **-ΝΑ-**.

5.3. Comparison of the infinitival construction in Middle Egyptian and Coptic.

In this chapter, we have seen that the syntax of the Egyptian infinitival constructions did not change between Middle Egyptian and Coptic; it remained SVO. However, the fate of the prepositions *m*, *hr*, and *r* was different. The preposition *r* grouped with the verbal sentences with conjugation bases in Coptic, while *m* and *hr* simply dropped from the paradigm, leaving the construction the same.

6. Stative constructions.

As mentioned above, another construction which Egyptologists classify along with the infinitival construction under the umbrella term of 'the pseudoverbal construction' is the stative construction. What distinguishes this construction from other verbal sentences, aside from the syntax, is how the verb functions. While verbs in other verbal constructions describe an action which the subject undertakes, verbs in the stative construction describe the state, as the name would suggest, in which the subject is.

6.1. Stative constructions in Middle Egyptian.

Consider the following examples of the stative construction in Middle Egyptian, paying special attention to the word order and the agreement morphology:

- (34) a. *ist mni.wt nb.t sspd.w m h.t nb.t nfr.t*
Ptcl ports all supply.3pl with thing(s) all good
'Meanwhile, all ports were supplied with all good things.'
(*Urk.* iv. 719)
- b. *iw=s gp.t(i) m sb3.wt*
Ptcl=it.fem scatter.3sfem in stars
'It is scattered with stars.'
(*Mo.*, v., α, 3)
- c. *iw=i 3tp.kw hr m3ir*
Ptcl=I load.1s under misery
'I am laden with misery.'
(*Disp.*, 127-28)

On a very basic note, the stative construction provides the only example of concatenative morphology in Middle Egyptian; verb endings agree in person, number, and, in some instances, gender with the subject. In the first example, we note that the

third person plural ending is *.w*; in the second example, we note that the third person singular feminine ending is *.ti*; and in the third example, we note that the first person singular ending is *.kw*.

The function of the stative construction, as stated above, is to render the subject within a state³⁴. In the first example, ‘all ports’ are in the state of being ‘supplied.’ This allows lexical items that are normally adjectives to take on a verbal quality and receive stative endings. Consider the following example and examine the ‘verbs’ with stative endings:

(35) *špss.kw* *ʿ3.kw*
 wealthy.1s great.1s
 ‘I was wealthy, and I was great.’

(B.M. 614, II)

Here we see that the adjectives ‘wealthy’ and ‘great’ act as verbs in the stative construction to connote the states the subject is in³⁵. Akkadian, however, takes this one step further and allows nouns to occupy this position. The noun *šarrum* ‘king’ can be given a stative ending and can emerge as *šarr-āku*³⁶ ‘I am king,’ or, literally, ‘I am in the state of being a king’ (Buccellati 1968: 1). While Middle Egyptian cannot use the stative as widely as Akkadian can, it is interesting to note the similarities.

Let us now examine the syntax of the stative construction. The word order in Middle Egyptian is invariably SVO³⁷. This is exactly the same as the infinitival

³⁴ Verbs of motion, however, can be rendered in the stative construction without a truly ‘stative’ connotation. Given the scope of this essay, though, this avenue will not be explored further.

³⁵ In this case, the states of being ‘wealthy’ and ‘great.’

³⁶ Note the similarities between the Egyptian first person singular stative ending *kw* and the Akkadian (a Semitic language) *āku*.

³⁷ Because of the nature of the stative construction, the vast majority of sentences do not contain a direct object. However, the first person singular stative can retain its transitive function and can take direct object. The scope of this essay, though, does not permit any further discussion on transitive statives.

construction above, and their shared word order is another reason why they have been grouped together under the name ‘pseudoverbal.’

6.2. Stative constructions in Coptic.

Consider the following examples of the stative construction in Coptic, noting the word order and its nonconcatenative morphology (to be explained later):

- (36) a. ΠΕΤḢ-CA-N-ḢΟΥΝ ΔΕ ΜΕḢ Ḣ-ΤΩΡΠ Ḣ-ΑΚΑΘΑΡCΙΑ
 Your-inside ptcl fill of-extortion and-uncleanness
 ‘But your insides are full of extortion and uncleanness.’
 (Prov., 15:28)
- b. ΧΙΝ-ΤΕΝΟΥ ΔΕ Π-ΚΕΛΕΒΙΝ ΚΗ ḢΑ-Τ-ΝΟΥΝΕ Ḣ-Ḣ-ḢΗΝ
 Since-now ptcl the-axe lay to-the-root of-the-trees
 ‘And from this time forth, the axe is laid to the root of the trees.’
 (Matt 3:10)
- c. Π-ΡΩΜΕ ΕΤΕΡΕ-ΤΕC-ḢΙΧ ḢΟΥḢΟΥ
 the-man; rel-his;-hand wither
 ‘The man whose hand was withered...’
 (Luke 6:8)

The first noticeable difference between the Middle Egyptian and Coptic statives is the loss of the agreement morphology in Coptic. The stative forms in Coptic apply to all persons, numbers, and genders. What distinguishes the stative from the infinitive, however, is nonconcatenative morphological change. Let us examine the verbs in the above examples in both their stative and infinitival forms:

<u>Stative</u>	<u>Infinitive</u>
ΜΕḢ	ΜΟΥḢ
ΚΗ	ΚḢ
ḢΟΥḢΟΥ	ḢΟΥCΕ

What separates the stative from the infinitive is internal vowel mutation. While internal vowel mutation is not limited to the stative construction—similar change occurs with verbs with directly affixed direct objects—the stative form is unique in its specific mutation.

The syntax of the Coptic stative construction is SV. With the exception of particles, most of which must be placed in second position, nothing may come between the syntactic subject³⁸ and the verb.

6.3. Comparison of stative constructions in Middle Egyptian and Coptic.

One of the major changes in the stative construction between Middle Egyptian and Coptic is in verbal morphology. In Middle Egyptian, the verb contains an ending which agrees in person, number, and gender with the subject. Johnson (1986: 32) points out that agreement morphology in Demotic became inconsistent. In Coptic, as we have seen, the endings have eroded completely, and the stative is distinguished from the infinitive by internal vowel mutation. It is likely that the Middle Egyptian stative verb also experienced vowel mutation, but, because vowels were not written in Middle Egyptian, this is impossible to determine. The syntax, however, did not change and remained SV(O) between Middle Egyptian and Coptic³⁹.

³⁸ Oftentimes in Coptic, the semantic subject is preposed and resumed with a personal pronoun, which fulfils the role of the syntactic subject.

³⁹ As written in footnote 37, some stative constructions allowed direct objects. This is impossible in Coptic.

7. Verbal sentences.

Thus far, we have seen two types of sentences with verbs: infinitival sentences and sentences with the stative construction. While these two forms employ verbs, they only make up a small percentage of Egyptian sentences; the majority of Egyptian sentences are verbal sentences, whose syntax is distinct from all other sentence types and which employs inflected forms of the verb.

7.1. Verbal sentences in Middle Egyptian.

Consider the following verbal sentences, paying special attention to the word order of the subject and verb:

- (37) a. *iw in.n=i ddi*
Ptcl. bring.perf.=I Djedi
'I have brought Djedi.'

(*Westc.* 8, 8)

- b. *ḥ^c.n rd.n sr pn wd.t m hr=i*
Ptcl. give.perf. official this order to face=my
'Then this official gave me an order.'

(*St. L.* C12, 5)

- c. *mk in.tw n=k wd pn n nsw*
Ptcl. bring.pass to=you order this of king
'Look, this royal order was brought to you.'

(*Sin.* B 181)

Middle Egyptian verbal sentences place the verb before the subject. The above examples exhibit VSO word order, which is the basic word order for Middle Egyptian. Clitic pronouns can skew this word order slightly; in the following example, note that the clitic

object pronoun clings to the verb and consequently wedging itself between the verb and the subject:

- (38) *iw h3b.n w[i] nb(=i)...*
 Ptcl send.perf me lord(=my)
 ‘My lord sent me...’

(*Hamm.* 114, 10)

Although the overt syntax for this sentence is VOS, the object (‘me’) comes between the verb (‘send’) and the subject (‘my lord’) only because it is a clitic. Furthermore, clitic PPs, comprised of *n* ‘to’ and a clitic pronoun, can also intervene between the verb and its subject. Consider the following example, paying particular attention to the placement of the dative element:

- (39) *ḥḥ.n 3w.n n=f s3-nswt hr-dd=f ḥ.wy=fy*
 Ptcl. stretch.perf to=him son-king Hordedef arm.dual=his
 ‘Then Prince Hordedef stretched out his arms to him.’

(*Westc.* 8,1)

In this example, the clitic PP ‘to him’ attaches to the end of the verb ‘stretch,’ coming between the verb and the subject ‘Prince Hordedef.’ This breaking up of the verb-subject word order is only possible because the PP ‘to him’ is a clitic and must attach to the verb.

Another interesting thing to notice about the three verbal sentence examples above is that they all begin with a particle. The presence or absence of this particle and, accordingly, the position of the verb—whether it is in initial position or not—help to determine the sentence type. A verb-initial sentence, for example, can denote a prospective or subjunctive tense/mood⁴⁰; it can also denote specific writing styles (like the narrative infinitive, in which a string of sentences all begin with infinitives). Perhaps

⁴⁰ Due to length restrictions, I cannot investigate these tenses/moods any further.

the most interesting type of sentence without an initial particle, however, is what I will call the focalizing sentence.

The focalizing sentence is identical to the above examples in many ways. For example, their word order is overtly VSO; also, they do not mark tense, but rather mark aspect. The difference, in part, lies in the absence or presence of certain initial particles (like *ʔw*), and the absence gives a sentence the ability to throw emphasis on any adverbial adjunct in the sentence or on a subsequent sentence. These focalized sentences are also characterized by features other than syntax; for example, some verbs undergo consonantal gemination. Therefore, while syntax is not the only way to distinguish between a focalizing and non-focalizing sentence, it is an important one feature and will receive attention in this essay. Consider the following examples of focalizing sentences and note, in the translation, which part of the sentence is focalized:

- (40) a. *sqdd t3 hft wd=k*
 sail world though command=your
 ‘It is *through your command* that the world sails.’
 (Peas. B1, 298-99)
- b. *in.n.tw n=f imi-prw nb*
 bring.perf.pass to=him testaments all
 ‘It is *to him* that all testaments are brought.’
 (Urk. IV 1111, 6-7)

Notice that the only way to render a focalized sentence in English is to put it within a cleft sentence: *It is ___ that ___*. While English speakers must imbed a sentence within a cleft sentence in order to throw emphasis on one part of it, Middle Egyptian speakers

needed only to employ a verb-initial sentence⁴¹, in addition to other verbal morphological changes.

The ability to emphasize one element of a sentence, usually a PP or another IP, owing largely to the sentence's own syntax, in not employing a sentence-initial particle, is unique to Egyptian. The closest example of a similar construction is the Arabic particle '*innamā*' (Polotsky 1971). Consider the following Arabic example:

- (41) '*innamā hiya kharqā'u hamqā'u*
'*innamā* she slovenly stupid
'She is a slovenly, stupid (woman).'

(Fischer 2002: 170)

An Arabic sentence with the particle '*innamā*' is like an Egyptian focalizing sentence in that emphasis is thrown on some element of the sentence. Unlike Middle Egyptian, the Arabic '*innamā*' can emphasize any element of the sentence, not just an adverbial adjunct or a subsequent sentence. Furthermore, '*innamā*' must be part of a two-clause sentence, juxtaposing the two clauses; it is from this juxtaposition that the reader/listener gathers which element is juxtaposed. For example, in the sentence 'She is beautiful '*innamā* she is slovenly and stupid,' the emphasis is on 'slovenly and stupid' because that is the contrasting information. However, in the sentence 'He is clean and intelligent '*innamā* she is slovenly and stupid,' the emphasis can be on either 'she' or 'slovenly and stupid' because either can be interpreted as new, contrasting information.

Obviously, '*innamā*', with its limited usage and requirements, can hardly be compared to the Egyptian focalizing sentence. However, it is the closest cross-linguistic

⁴¹ These verb-initial sentences, named 'nominal sentences' by Egyptologists, can function in other ways (e.g., the Wechselsatz); the length of this essay, however, prevents me from exploring these other avenues.

example insofar as it emphasizes an element of the sentence without changing the overall structure of the sentence.

7.2. Verbal sentences in Coptic.

Verbal sentences went through considerable changes between Middle Egyptian and Coptic. A handful of verbs retained the verbal sentence construction from Middle Egyptian (delineated in section 7.1), while the majority of verbs changed constructions entirely. Let us begin with the first group, whose structures are identical to Middle Egyptian; consider the following examples⁴²:

- (42) a. $\bar{\text{I}}\bar{\text{C}}$ $\Delta\epsilon$ $\text{ΠΕΧΑ-}\bar{\text{Q}}$ $\chi\epsilon$ - ΔNOK $\text{Π}\epsilon$
 Jesus_i ptcl say-he_i quot.-I it
 ‘And Jesus said: It is I.’

(*Mark* 14:62)

- b. $\text{ΠΑ-}\bar{\text{I}}\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{T}}$ $\text{ΝΑΛΛΑ-}\bar{\text{Q}}$ $\epsilon\rho\text{O-I}$
 my-father_i great-he_i comp.-me
 ‘My father is greater than I.’

(*John* 14:28)

- c. $\text{ΝΑΝΟΥ-Π}\epsilon\bar{\text{T}}\bar{\text{N}}\text{-OYPO}\bar{\text{T}}$
 excellent-your-zeal
 ‘Your zeal is excellent.’

(*ShIII* 27:5)

As the above examples show, a limited number of verbs in Coptic retain the original Egyptian word order: VSO. Because of their small minority, Copticists refer to them as ‘verboids,’ as though they are not true verbs. Ironically, these ‘verboids’ are more

⁴² First, note that although the verbs in the last two examples are translated as adjectives, they are true verbs in Coptic.

historically founded with regard to structure than the rest of the verbal sentences, described in the following paragraphs.

Let us now examine the vast majority of Coptic verbal sentences: sentences with conjugation bases. The system of conjugation bases began as *do*-support in Late Egyptian. Here, a form of the verb *to do* is followed by the subject and then the semantically relevant verb (Junge 2001: 96). The verb *to do*, as opposed to verb with semantic value, came to carry information for tense, negation, and mood so that, by Demotic and Coptic, the dummy verb became reinterpreted as a conjugation base: a verbal morpheme that *precedes* the subject and carries all tense, negation, and mood information. The following chart, modeled after one in Junge (2001: 96), illustrates the syntax of verbal sentences in Middle Egyptian, Late Egyptian, and Coptic, demonstrating the shift from a VSO grammar to a SVO one:

Middle Egyptian	semantic verb	subject	∅
Late Egyptian	to do	subject	semantic verb
Coptic	conjugation base	subject	semantic verb

Because the conjugation base has been completely grammaticalized from a productive verb to a gamut of functional morphemes encoded with tense, negation, and mood information, it can no longer be interpreted as a verb. However, the conjugation base, although it is not a verb, is syntactically important because of carries data for tense, negation, and mood; it has aux-like properties and head-like properties. It would not be overreaching to posit that Coptic conjugation bases are auxiliaries in head-C position; however, because no element intervenes between the conjugation base, which is probably a clitic, and the subject, it cannot be determined. Therefore, we can claim that Coptic probably exhibits aux-SVO word order.

Consider the following examples of sentences with conjugation bases, paying particular attention to the order of the conjugation bases, subjects, and verbs:

- (43) a. ϠΑΡΕ-ΟΥ-ΩΗΡΕ Ν-ΣΟΦΟΣ ΕΥΦΡΑΝΕ Ν-ΠΕΦ-ΕΙΩΤ
 C.B.⁴³ - a-son of-wise make-glad DOM-his-father
 ‘A wise son makes his father glad.’
(Prov. 10:1)
- b. ΝΠΑΤΕ-ΤΑ-ΟΥΝΟΥ ΕΙ
 C.B.- my-hour come
 ‘My hour has not yet come.’
(John 2:4)
- c. ΝΑΡΕ-Φ-ΡΟΥΟΕΙΝ ΝΟΙ-ΠΕΤΝ-ΟΥΟΕΙΝ
 C.B.- it_i-shine SM⁴⁴-[your-light]_i
 ‘Let your light shine.’
(Matt 5:16)

Note that each of the sentences has a unique value for tense, negation, and mood: all of this information is inherent in the conjugation base. The verbs, in their infinitive state, do not provide any of this material. Also note that the word order is invariably aux-SVO.

Like Middle Egyptian, Coptic has the ability to emphasize some element of the sentence. This property is encoded in a focalizing conversion base: a verbal morpheme affixed to the conjugation base. Because the focalization process is not syntactically driven, like it is in part in Middle Egyptian, it will not be explored further in this essay.

7.3. Comparison of verbal sentences in Middle Egyptian and Coptic.

Verbal sentences represent the most significant change in Egyptian syntax. Middle Egyptian verbal syntax is underlyingly VSO. The presence or absence of certain

⁴³ C.B., henceforth, will stand for ‘conjugation base.’

⁴⁴ SM, subject marker, resumes the syntactic subject with a semantic referent.

sentence-initial particle, in addition to other verbal morphological changes, determines whether a sentence is focalizing or not; this process of focalization emphasizes an adverbial adjunct or the following sentence. Coptic word order, on the other hand, is aux-SVO. In Late Egyptian, the semantic verb in the VS combination was replaced by the verb *to do*—a process called *do*-support. The semantic verb was moved to a position after the subject. By Demotic, the verb *to do* became grammaticalized into an aux-like verbal morpheme that denoted tense, negation, and mood. Because it lost all productivity, it ceased to function as a verb; therefore, the syntax could be reinterpreted as aux-SVO.

8. Conclusion.

The goal of this essay was to explore the syntax of different sentence types in Middle Egyptian and Coptic and to compare and contrast these two stages. In the third chapter, we examined nominal sentences. For first- and second-person nominal sentences, the subject and predicate are juxtaposed without a copula, and the word order is invariably subject-predicate. Third-person nominal sentences can be divided into two groups: those with pronominal subjects and those without pronominal subjects. The first group exhibits the word order predicate-subject; this differs from first- and second-person nominal sentences, Loprieno argues, because the subjects *pw/pe/te/ne* are enclitic pronouns (1995: 104). Underlyingly, the word order could be subject-predicate, but, because an enclitic particle must affix itself *behind* an element of prosodic weight, it surfaces after (or within) a predicate. The second group exhibits the word order predicate-copula-subject. This arose from a TP from the first group whose subject pronoun resumes an extraposed NP which follows said TP. The only difference between Middle Egyptian and Coptic in this sentence type is that Middle Egyptian, with certain nouns, can juxtapose two third-person NPs to create a nominal sentence, while Coptic must link the two NPs with a copula. With all other nouns, however, Middle Egyptian must employ a copula like Coptic.

The syntax of sentences with adverbial compliments, studied in the fourth chapter, did not change between Middle Egyptian and Coptic; it remains NP-XP, where NP is the subject and XP is the adverbial compliment. A copula is not permitted to intervene between these two parts. One difference between Middle Egyptian and Coptic is what can constitute the adverbial compliment. In Middle Egyptian, both prepositional

phrases and adverbial phrases are acceptable, while in Coptic only prepositional phrases are allowed.

In the fifth chapter, we saw that the syntax of the Egyptian infinitival constructions did not change between Middle Egyptian and Coptic; it remained SVO. However, the fate of the prepositions *m*, *hr*, and *r*, which intervened between the subject and the verb in Middle Egyptian, was different. The preposition *r* grouped with the verbal sentences with conjugation bases in Coptic, while *m* and *hr* simply dropped from the paradigm, leaving the construction the same between Middle Egyptian and Coptic.

One of the major changes in the stative construction between Middle Egyptian and Coptic, which was outlined in the sixth chapter, is in verbal morphology. In Middle Egyptian, the verb contains an ending which agrees in person, number, and gender with the subject. Johnson (1986: 32) points out that agreement morphology in Demotic became inconsistent. In Coptic, as we have seen, the endings have eroded completely, and the stative is distinguished from the infinitive by internal vowel mutation. It is entirely likely that the Middle Egyptian stative verb also experienced vowel mutation, but, because vowels were not written in Middle Egyptian, this is impossible to determine. The syntax, however, did not change and remained SV(O) between Middle Egyptian and Coptic.

In the seventh chapter, we examined verbal sentences, which represent the most significant change in Egyptian syntax. Middle Egyptian verbal syntax is underlyingly VSO. The presence or absence of certain sentence-initial particle, in addition to other verbal morphological changes, determines whether a sentence is focalizing or not; this process of focalization emphasizes an adverbial adjunct or the following sentence.

Coptic word order, on the other hand, is aux-SVO. In Late Egyptian, the semantic verb in the VS combination was replaced by the verb *to do*—a process called do-support. The semantic verb was moved to a position after the subject. By Demotic, the verb *to do* became grammaticalized into an aux-like verbal morpheme that denoted tense, negation, and mood. Because it lost all productivity, it ceased to function as a verb; therefore, the syntax could be reinterpreted as aux-SVO.

Furthermore, we examined a few crosslinguistic examples in which structures in other languages mirror those in Egyptian. In the third chapter, I compared Whitman's (2000) interpretation of the Chinese copula's derivation from a demonstrative to both Middle Egyptian and Coptic's reinterpretation of a demonstrative as a copula. In the fifth chapter, I linked the grammaticalization of the Welsh preposition *yn* from a preposition to an aspect marker to the grammaticalization of three Middle Egyptian prepositions. In the seventh chapter, I compared the focalization property of the Arabic word '*innamā* to the Middle Egyptian focalizing sentence pattern. These examples demonstrate that Egyptian constructions pattern similarly to those in other languages, and analyses of these structures in other languages help to illuminate the interpretation and investigation in Egyptian.

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Text Abbreviations

- I Cor.* The First Book of Corinthians.
- Acts* The Acts of the Apostles.
- Adm.* The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage. Leipzig, 1909.
- B.M.* Stelae, statues, &c., of the British Museum, quoted by their old registration numbers. Mostly published in *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae, &c., in the British Museum*, 8 parts. London, 1911-39.
- B. Äl.* *Ägyptische Inschriften aus den königlichen Museen zu Berlin*, 2 vols. Leipzig, 1913-14.
- CT* The Coffin Texts. A. De Buck. 7 vols. Chicago, 1935-61.
- Disp.* The Report about the Dispute of a Man with his Ba, *Papyrus Berlin 3024*. Baltimore and London, 1970.
- Hamm.* *Les Inscriptions hiéroglyphiques et hiératiques du Ouâdi Hammâmât*, MIFAO XXXIV. J. Couyat and P. Montet. Cairo, 1912.
- John* The Gospel of John.
- Kah.* The Kahun Papyrus, F.Ll. Griffith, *The Petrie Papyri, Hieratic Papyrus from Kahun and Gurob*. London, 1897-1898.
- Luke* The Gospel of Luke.
- Mark* The Gospel of Mark.
- Matt* The Gospel of Matthew.
- Mo.* *Mo'alla, La combe d'Ankhtifi et la tombe de Sébekhotep*, J. Vandier. *Bibliothèque d'études XVIII*. Cairo, 1950.
- Nef.* The Prophecies of Neferti. Leningrad 1116B.

- Peas.* The Story of the Eloquent Peasant, published by F. Vogelsang and A.H. Gardiner, *Die Klagen des Bauern*, in A. Erman, *Literarische Texte des mittleren Reiches (Hieratische Papyrus aus den königlichen Museen zu Berlin, Bd. iv)*. Berlin, 1908. The individual papyri are quote as R (Ramesseum), Bt (Butler), B1 (Berlin 3023), and B2 (Berlin 3025).
- Prov.* The Book of Proverbs.
- Ps.* The Book of Psalms.
- ShIII* Attributed to Shenoute. *Simuthii archimandritae vita et opera omnia*, vol. 3. Crum and Leipoldt.
- ShAm.* Attributed to Shenoute. *Ceuvres de Schenoudi*. Amélineau.
- Sh.S.* The Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor, *Papyrus Leningrad 1115*, published by W. Golenishcheff, *Les papyrus hiératiques nos. 1115, 1116A et 1116B de l'Ermitage Impérial à St.-Pétersbourg*. St. Petersburg, 1913.
- Sin.* The Story of Sinuhe, published A.H. Gardiner, *Die Erzählung des Sinuhe und die Hirtengeschichte*, in A. Erman, *Literarische Texte des mittleren Reiches (Hieratische Papyrus aus den königlichen Museen zu Berlin, Bd. v)*. Leipzig, 1909. The individual papyri are quote as R (Ramesseum) and B (Berlin 3022).
- St. BM* The Stela of Heka-Yeb, H.J. Polotsky, *JEA* 16 (1930), pp. 194-199.
- St. L.* The Stela of the Louvre Museum. Paris.
- Th.T.S.* *Theban Tomb Series*, edited by N. de G. Davies and A.H. Gardiner. London (Egypt Exploration Fund [Society]), 1915-33.
- Urk.* *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums*. G. Steindorff.
- Westc.* A. Erman, *Die Märchen des Papyrus Westcar*, in *Mittheilungen aus den*

Orientalischen Sammlungen, Heft v. vi. Berlin, 1890.