

Sami Uljas & Andreas Dorn (eds)

Crossroads VI:  
Between Egyptian Linguistics and Philology

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# Crossroads VI

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Sami Uljas & Andreas Dorn

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# Verbal and Lexical Suppletion in Ancient Egyptian

Jean Winand

## 1 Introduction

This paper is a part of a general study in ancient Egyptian linguistics at the crossroads of lexical semantics and verbal actionality. It deals more precisely with different interrelated types of semantic phenomena that are well-known in general linguistics, but still poorly investigated in ancient Egyptian: complementarity, asymmetry, and suppletion.<sup>1</sup>

## 2 Paradigmatic suppletion

Paradigmatic suppletion is a common phenomenon cross-linguistically. Suppletion is at work when a word does not have a regular morphology. Instead of taking the inflexions or endings that regularly apply to the members of their morphological class, words use different forms. In general linguistics, one usually makes a difference between weak and strong suppletion.<sup>2</sup> The former one applies when irregular forms related to a single root/stem are used. This is for example the case with the pair ‘bring’ vs. ‘brought’ in English. In Egyptian, a case of weak suppletion is offered by the alternation of the stems *jj* and *jw* in *jwj* ‘to come’. Strong suppletion happens when a word supplies parts of its paradigm with forms from other words. This phenomenon is well-known with the so-called irregular verbs of Indo-European languages, like λέγω, εἶπον, εἶρηκα ‘to say’ in ancient Greek. It is also attested in nominal morphology, for instance, for expressing the degrees of comparison (ἀγαθός, ἀμείνων, ἄριστος ‘good’ in ancient Greek), or the plural of nouns (ребёнок vs. дети ‘child’, год vs. лет ‘year’, человек vs. люди [cf. *Leute* in German] ‘person – people’ in Russian). Although this does not seem frequent in ancient Egyptian, some examples suggest themselves like *z* vs. *rmt* ‘man vs. people’ in EEg.<sup>3</sup>

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1 The following abbreviations have been adopted: EEg for Earlier Egyptian, MEg for Middle Egyptian, LEg for Late Egyptian, EgTrad for Égyptien de tradition, OK for Old Kingdom, NK for New Kingdom, SIP for Second Intermediate Period, and TIP for Third Intermediate Period. Examples are provided with the specification of date, provenance and literary genre. By provenance, one understands the provenance of the document, which does not necessarily coincide with the place of composition. I warmly thank the anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions for improving the quality of this paper, and Sami for his help and support. All shortcomings of course remain mine.

2 See Juge (2000).

3 In Later Egyptian, however, *z* has completely disappeared, leaving *rmt* as a collective but also a singulative noun (*p3 rmt* ‘the man’ vs. *n3 rmt* ‘the men’, cf. Coptic ϣⲟⲓⲙⲉ). The pair ⲟⲩⲁ vs. ϣⲟⲓⲙⲉ (indefinite singular and plural article) in Coptic is another illustration of strong suppletion.

In this paper, I shall first produce some evidence for cases of strong suppletion in ancient Egyptian (3), before summing up the main arguments (4). I shall then enlarge the perspective by suggesting that the concept of suppletion can be extended to include other cases of what I shall here call semantic suppletion (5). Some words of conclusion finally wrap up the paper (6).<sup>4</sup>

### 3 Strong suppletion in ancient Egyptian

In this section, I review two cases of strong suppletion in ancient Egyptian, namely *šm* – *hn* (3.1) and *hʒj* – *hr* (3.2).

#### 3.1 *šm* and *hn* ‘to go’

The basic opposition between the two generic verbs of motion (‘go’ vs. ‘come’) is expressed in EEg by the pair *šm* – *jwʒ*.<sup>5</sup> In LEg, the basic centrifugal movement was taken over by two verbs, *šm* and *hn*. Elaborating upon a suggestion already made by Wenté, Peust suggested that these two verbs are in complementary distribution according to the grammatical tenses they are used with.<sup>6</sup> The verb *hn*, which originally meant ‘to hasten, to move quickly’, underwent a process of semantic bleaching, and ended up as a synonym of *šm*; it must be accordingly translated ‘to go’.

When looking at the evidence more closely, the morphological patterns are not distributed between the two stems as straightforwardly as it seems, for some tenses are actually attested with both *šm* and *hn*. The evidence is particularly clear for the subjunctive and, to a lesser extent, the stative.<sup>7</sup> For the latter tense, while *hn* is clearly the preferred stem in LEg, *šm* sporadically occurs in conservative texts where the influence of EgTrad can still be felt. As regards the subjunctive, the distribution is rather geographically conditioned, as already suggested by Peust.<sup>8</sup> The relevance of the regional factor seems to be supported by the distribution of other tenses that are also worth considering, namely the imperative, the stative, and the infinitive. First, the forms used for the imperative are shown in Table 1.

4 To some extent, suppletion could also be advocated for explaining cases of grammatical asymmetry in the verbal predication. For instance, while there is a distinction in EEg for expressing the perfect between transitive and intransitive (*jw sdm.n.f* ‘he has heard’ vs. *jw.f jw.w* ‘he has come’) in negative, however, the pattern *n sdm.f* applies to both constructions (*n sdm.f* ‘he has not heard’ vs. *n jw.f* ‘he has not come’). The same observation can be made with respect to the subjunctive and the future (*sdm.f* ‘may he hear!’ vs. *jw.f r sdm* ‘he will hear’, but *nn sdm.f* ‘he will not hear’). In a more cognitively oriented approach, this might be accounted for by the phenomenon of ‘radiality’: see Uljas (2009), elaborating on Collier (1994).

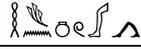
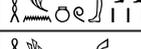
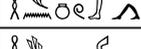
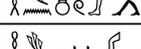
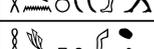
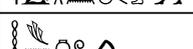
5 See Winand (1991).

6 Wenté (1959), Peust (2007). The role of *nʒj* in this distribution appears to be limited to the expression of the stative, and is not attested in this role before later LEg, i.e. in the TIP. See the discussion below.

7 Peust (2007). For the stative, see the discussion below.

8 While *hn* is overwhelmingly used in the subjunctive, the predominance of *šm* after *rdj*, however, could suggest some early process of lexicalization of the causative construction.

Table 1 | Distribution of *hn* and *šm* in the imperative.

oDeM 1064, r° 2	unknown	
oDeM 117, 2	19 <sup>th</sup> dyn.	
oPetrie 62	19 <sup>th</sup> dyn.	
pDeM 39, r° 5	19 <sup>th</sup> dyn.	
oDeM 10061, 19	Ramses II	
pSallier 1, 5,10	Merenptah	
pBM 10429, v° 1	20 <sup>th</sup> dyn.	
pBM 10054, r° 2,2	Ramses IX	
pBM 10054, r° 3,11	Ramses IX	
pBM 10052, r° 6,4	Ramses XI	
pBM 10403, v° 3,4	Ramses XI	
pMoscow 120 (= <i>Wenamun</i> ), 1,45	21 <sup>st</sup> dyn.	
pBM 10800, 5	22 <sup>nd</sup> dyn.	
oDeM 1064, r° 2	unknown	
pBN 202 + pAmherst 9 (= <i>Astarte</i> ), 2,x+11	18 <sup>th</sup> dyn.	
pCairo CGC 58054, 4	Amenhotep III	
pDeM 01 (Ani), 3,5	19 <sup>th</sup> dyn.	
pHarris 500 (= <i>Taking of Joppe</i> ), 2,11	19 <sup>th</sup> dyn.	
oDeM 636, r° 3	Seti I	
pOrbiney (= <i>Two Brothers</i> ), 3,1	Seti II	
pAnastasi 5, 24,4	Seti II	
oCairo prov. n° 175, v° 4	20 <sup>th</sup> dyn.	
pDeM 19	20 <sup>th</sup> dyn.	
pTurin 1880, r° 4,21	Ramses III	
oCaire CG 25364, r° 6	Ramses IV	
pDeM 26, v° B2	Ramses III	
oGardiner 54, v° 3	Ramses III	
oChicago OIC 12074	Ramses IV	

P. Chester Beatty 1 (= <i>Horus &amp; Seth</i> ), 10,12	Ramses V	
pAbbott, 5,2	Ramses IX	
pBoulaq 4 ( <i>Ani</i> ), 15,16	21 <sup>st</sup> dyn.	
pBoulaq 4 ( <i>Ani</i> ), 19,12	21 <sup>st</sup> dyn.	
Inscription of Taharqa (Karnak), col. 20	Taharqa	

The data are presented in two groups, for *hn* and *sm* respectively, in chronological order with the spellings. As is clear enough, diachrony cannot be the governing principle for explaining the distribution of the two stems. However while *sm* is attested all across Egypt, *hn* is limited to texts coming from Upper Egypt, with only one isolated counter-example (courtesy of pSallier 1,5,10), which does not suffice to invalidate the hypothesis.<sup>9</sup> One is thus faced with the same kind of distribution as for the Future III as regards the expression of the nominal subject: while the canonical paradigm *jrj* + NP + (*r*) + infinitive is used without limitation all over Egypt, the pattern *jr* + NP + *r* + infinitive, which was fully productive in Eeg, is also attested, but only in Upper Egypt.<sup>10</sup>

A similar line of explanation can also be suggested for the stative. It has been argued that *sm* is unusual with the stative,<sup>11</sup> except for some texts where some influence of EgTrad is present, like in the Poem of Qadesh. According to the data encoded in the Ramses database, there are three, possibly four, instances of the stative in texts whose core predicative system is LEg:<sup>12</sup>

- [1] *twj sm.kwj r ptr p3 hpr jm.s*  
 PRS-1SG go:RES-1SG to see:INF ART:M.SG happen:PTCP in-3SG.F  
 ‘I went to see what happened there.’ (oStrasburg H 68, 2–3)  
 End 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Deir el-Medineh – Letter

- [2] (as for the wise men that come after the gods (...)) *st sm*  
 3PL(PRS) go:RES-3PL  
 ‘They are gone.’ (pChB 4 v<sup>o</sup> 2, 5–6)  
 19<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Deir el-Medineh – Wisdom text

- [3] *sn sm r p3y[ ]*  
 brother go:RES-3SG.M to POSS:M.SG  
 ‘The brother is gone to his (?)’ [ ] (oDeM 10629 r<sup>o</sup> 2)  
 Ramses VII – Deir el-Medineh – Non-literary

9 For other dialectal features in Deir el-Medineh, see Winand (2016, 2022, forthc. a).

10 Winand (1992, 2016, 2018).

11 Peust (2007: 74).

12 In a passage from pAnastasi 8 (*KRI* III 501, 1–2), which is unfortunately partly in lacuna, the stative is probably the best option of analysis: *mk p3j.f hrj-mnš* [3 c.] *sm r dj.t 3tp p3j rmt 2 jnn m sb.t* ‘look, his captain came (?) to make these two guys of ours take charge of the cargo’.

- [4] *twj šm.kwj r-ḥ3.t n3 mdw.t ʿn*  
 PRS-1SG go:RES-1SG because ART:PL affair-F.PL again  
 ‘I went again because of the “affairs”.’ (pMayer A r° 4, 5)  
 End 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Judicial

A last example should probably be included in this small set. It is, however, methodologically better to leave the analysis undecided between a circumstantial Present I with a stative and a sequential due to the numerous lacunae of the context:

- [5] *jw ns-sw-ḥnsw šm r p3 ḥn*  
 SBRD Neskhons go:RES-3SG.M to ART:M.SG ??  
 ‘After Neskhons has gone to the (?) / and then Neskhons went to the (?)’ (Oracular decree for Henuttaui, l. 14)  
 21<sup>st</sup> dyn. – Karnak – Oracular

Finally, another candidate is probably better understood as a circumstantial Present I with (*hr*) + infinitive, as suggested by the spelling of the verb, although admittedly one can never draw a firm conclusion from the spelling alone:

- [6] *jw p3 wʿw (hr) šm (𓀀𓄿𓀀) ḥr ʿš*  
 SBRD ART:M.SG soldier [PROG] go:INF on call:INF  
*n ntr:f*  
 to god-3SG.M  
 ‘While the soldier is on his way calling his god.’ (pSallier 1 7, 5–6)  
 Merenptah – Memphite area – Miscellanies

From this very small list, it is striking that all examples come from Upper Egypt. It is thus tempting to link them to a form typical of the southern dialect.<sup>13</sup> The small number should not invalidate the result. However limited in number, the examples of *šm* should not go unnoticed for the following reasons. Although the majority of the data come from Upper Egypt, *ḥn*, which is overwhelmingly the preferred stem in the stative (37 examples in the Ramses Database), provide examples from both Lower and Upper Egypt. In this distribution, the fact that the examples of *šm* are circumscribed to a geographical area that precisely belongs to the bigger subset, is clearly significant.

The case of the infinitive is also worth considering. As has been often noted, *šm* is the stem used for this tense. Nevertheless, there are a few examples of infinitives with *ḥn*:

- [7] *j3 jḥ p3j.k tm ḥn n md3j PN*  
 EXLM Q POSS:M.SG-2SG.M not\_do go:INF to medjai PN  
 ‘Why do not you go to the Medjai Nebmehit?’ (oDeM 554, 1)  
 19<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Deir el-Medineh – Letter

13 Due to its particular composition, pAnastasi 8 is better left out of the discussion as regards its geographical provenance and some possible links of its author(s) with dialectal varieties.

- [8] *mtw.k*            *hn.k*            *hn<sup>c</sup>*    *mdʒj*    *pʒ-sr*  
 CORD.MOD-2SG.M    go:INF-2SG.M    with    medjai    Paser  
 ‘And you will go with the Medjai Paser.’ (oDeM 558,7)<sup>14</sup>  
 19<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Deir el-Medineh – Letter
- [9] *jw:f*            *hr*    *hn*    *r*    *tʒ*            *hw.t*            *KN*  
 CORD-3SG.M    on=    go:INF    to    ART:F.SG    temple-F    KN  
                   *ʕ.w.s.*    *m*    *pr*            *jmn*  
                   lph    in    domain    Amun  
 ‘And he went to the temple of KN, lph, in the domain of Amun.’ (oBerlin 10633 r°  
 3–4)  
 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Administrative
- [10] *jw*    *βtj*    (*r*)    *hn*    *n.f*            *tʒ*            *wnw.t*  
 FUT    vizier [:FUT]    go:INF    to-3SG.M    ART:F.SG    hour-F  
 ‘The vizier will leave immediately.’ (oDeM 227 r° 3–4)<sup>15</sup>  
 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Letter

The following example is open to discussion, for a sequential or a circumstantial Present I with a stative are both possible. Unfortunately, the context is too badly damaged to draw a definite conclusion:

- [11] *jw.n*            (*hr*)    *hn* [ ] /    *jw.n*            *hn*  
 CORD-1PL    [on=]    go:INF /    SBRD-1PL    go:RES-1PL  
 ‘And we went / as we had gone.’ (oDeM 227, r° 3–4)  
 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Letter

Yet analyzing *hn* as a stative here is not very attractive, for one would expect either the ending *-tw* (Ex. 12) or, but less frequently attested, the conservative ending *-wjn* (Ex. 13).<sup>16</sup> The first ending is quite common at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty for all persons, except for the 1<sup>st</sup> singular, where *-k(wj)* remains the default ending<sup>17</sup>, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> masc. singular and the 3<sup>rd</sup> plural:

14 One will note here the presence of a direct object co-referenced with the subject, which is reminiscent of some uses of other verbs of motion like *ʕn(n)* ‘to return, to come back’, *pn<sup>c</sup>* ‘to turn back’, *hmsj* with the meaning of ‘to settle’.

15 The presence of a Benefactive co-referenced with the subject is well-known with some verbs of motion, particularly with *šm* (Winand 2006: 84; 2021).

16 A zero ending is attested only once in a letter: *r-dd twn hms r-šʒ<sup>c</sup> pʒ hrw* ‘we are settled (here) up to now’ (LRL 69, 10).

17 The ending *-tw* is also possible in certain syntactic environments, and become regular during the TIP, as shown in *Wenamun* (Winand 1992: 103–49).

- [12] *tw n ḥn.tw m wḥm zp r n3*  
 PRS-1PL go:RES-1PL in repeat:INF time to ART:PL  
*ḥtr.w ʕn*  
 doorjamb-M.PL again  
 ‘We have gone back once more to the doorjamb.’ (pBM 10053 v° 3, 19)  
 End 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Judicial
- [13] *jw.n ḥms.wjn ḥkr.wjn*  
 SBRD-1PL sit:RES-1PL be\_hungry:RES-1PL  
 ‘While we continued starving.’ (pBM 10403 v° 3–7)  
 End 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Judicial

As is well known, *šm* is not found with the preposition *m* to convey the progressive.<sup>18</sup> This can be explained by the non-durative Aktionsart of *šm*, which properly means ‘to set on (a journey)’.<sup>19</sup> It can take the meaning of walking by modifying its argument structure. By deleting its second argument, *šm* is recategorized as an atelic activity verb, and can consequently be used in a progressive construction with *ḥr* + infinitive. Here are three relevant examples:

- [14] *jḥ p3 ntj ḥr šmj.t m-s3 p3*  
 Q ART:M.SG REL-M.SG PROG- go:INF behind ART:M.SG  
*s ʕ ntj m jj.t ḥr [t3]*  
 man great REL-M.SG PROG- come:INF on [ART:F.SG]  
*mj.t*  
 road-F  
 ‘What is this that is walking behind the great person who is coming on the road?’  
 (LES 2, 4–5)  
 19<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Fiction
- [15] *(j.jr.t šmj.t) r p3 [ntj] twt*  
 THMZ-2SG.F go:INF to ART:M.SG REL-M.SG PRS-2SG.F  
*(ḥr) šmj.t jm jw.j jrm.t*  
 (PROG) go:INF there(ADV) MCM-1SG with-2SG.F  
 ‘When you went to the place to which you were going to, I was with you.’ (pBerlin 10497 v° 5–6)  
 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Letter

18 See already Vernus (1990: 157) for MEg. Examples of *m šm* in LEg must be analyzed as the full preposition *m* ‘in’ (i.e. the non-grammaticalized preposition *m*) followed by the noun *šm* ‘expedition, enterprise, gang’: *jw.k m šm wʕ jrm K3r* ‘you were in the same expedition as Kar (lit. in a single expedition with Kar)’ (LRL 19, 14–15).

19 See Winand (2006: 40,112, 2021: §3.1, 4.4).

- [16] *bn B js.t <n> p3 hr hr šmj.t*  
 NEG ART:F.SG gang-F of ART:M.SG Tomb PROG- go:INF  
*r b3k m p3 hr n pr-ʕ3*  
 to work:INF in ART:M.SG tomb of Pharaoh  
 ʕ.w.s  
 lph

‘The gang of the Tomb is not going to work in the Tomb of Pharaoh, lph.’ (KRI VI 642, 5)

20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Deir el-Medineh – Administrative

As already noted, *šm*, like other verbs of motion, could also be used as a proto-auxiliary in constructions for conveying aspectual, temporal or modal nuances, without ever reaching the full stage of a grammaticalized pattern.<sup>20</sup> In this respect, *šm* seems to be more frequently attested than *nʕj* for expressing the mellic aspect in LEg before the TIP:

- [17] *hr jw.k (hr) šmj.t <r> wj3 rn.j*  
 CORD SBRD-2SG.M [PRS=] go:INF to repel:INF name-1SG  
*m-b3h n3 rmt m p3 dmj ntj*  
 in\_front\_of ART:PL man in ART:M.SG city REL-M.SG  
*twj jm.f*  
 PRS-1SG in-3SG.M

‘But you came to move away my name in front of the men in the village where I am.’ (pDeM 7, v<sup>o</sup> 3–4)

20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Deir el-Medineh – Letter

- [18] *twk hr šmj.t <r> jrj.t jh*  
 PRS-2SG.M PROG- go:INF to do:INF Q  
 ‘What are you going to do?’ (pAnastasi 5,11,6)  
 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty – Memphite area – Miscellanies

- [19] *n3 (j).wn twtn hr šmj.t hr smtr*  
 DEM:C was(AUX) PRS-2PL PROG- go:INF on= report:INF  
*hr.sn*  
 on-3PL

‘Those you were going to report upon.’ (KRI III 532, 4–5)

19<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Deir el-Medineh – Letter

In the following example, the construction with two coordinated phrases *hr* + infinitive has a conative modal value:

- [20] *sw hr šmj.t hr nhm dhr.w gr*  
 3SG.M(PRS) PROG- go:INF PRS= take:INF hide-M.PL still  
*š3<sup>c</sup>-m p3 hrw*  
 since ART:M.SG day

‘He is still going around taking the hides up to now.’ (Urk IV 2149, 8–9)

End 18<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Karnak – Royal decree

20 See Grossman, Lescuyer, Polis (2014: 101–05).

Finally, Peust has also suggested that the verb *nʕj* should be integrated in the paradigm of *šm*, for supplying the latter in the construction *m* + infinitive.<sup>21</sup> This is, however, a different case from those studied so far. *hn* does indeed supply *šm* with some tenses in EEg (and it is still attested in some dialects as observed above). As regards *nʕj*, it is actually supposed to fill a systemic gap – the expression of the progressive – since *šm*, as discussed above, is never found with this pattern. The progressive aspect does not make sense for *šm*, whose Aktionsart is non-durative. Two points are relevant here in the discussion. First, *šm* can be used in the progressive with some adaptation of its argument structure. Second, the suppletion of *šm* by *nʕj* would entail that the latter underwent the same process of semantic bleaching as was observed for *hn*, which does not seem to be the case.

The case of *nʕj*, and its relation to *šm*, should be reopened. In later LEg (i.e. at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> dyn.), *nʕj* was progressively used in a new pattern to express an activity about to happen.<sup>22</sup> In this long process that extended over several centuries, *nʕj*, which originally means ‘to navigate’, underwent a process of semantic bleaching, expressing the generic activity of going before ending up as a tense-prefix in Coptic. In LEg, however, the evidence shows that *nʕj* always retained somewhat of the idea of navigating in its meaning, not only, as expected, in texts where some influence of EgTrad can be found (Ex. 21), but also in texts written in plain LEg (Ex. 22).

- [21] *p3 dj nʕy wj3 rʕ m*  
 ART:M.SG CAUS:PTCP navigate:SBJV bark Re with  
*3h.w nw tp-r3.f*  
 magic\_power-M.PL of-M.PL speech-3SG.M  
 ‘The one who makes the bark of Re navigate with the magic powers of his speech.’  
 (oDeM 1080, 2)<sup>23</sup>  
 Ramesside – Deir el-Medineh – Hymn

- [22] *hr wnn p3 jmw (hr) nʕj, jw.(j)*  
 CORD when ART:M.SG ship [PRS=] navigate:INF CORD-1SG  
*hr jn n.k n3j.k b3k.w hmw*  
 on= bring:INF to-2SG.M POSS:PL-2SG.M production-M.PL craftwork  
 ‘As soon as the ship will sail, I shall bring you your productions of craftwork.’ (pBM 10683 v<sup>o</sup> 4–5)  
 19<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Deir el-Medineh – Letter

21 Peust (2007: 72). For the sake of completeness, one should also consider the use of the adverbial predicate for negating a positive activity expressed by *jwj* or *šm*: e.g. *st jw n.tn, bn st dy m-dj.n* ‘they have gone to you, they are not here with us’ (pLeiden I 365, 7). See also statements like *jw bn n3 h3stj.w jm* ‘the foreigners are not here’ (KRI VI 564, 4) or *jw mn rbw dy* ‘there is no Libyan here’ (KRI VI 564, 15) in the Journal of the Tomb, which could be the negative counterparts of *n3 h3stj.w jw.w* ‘the foreigners have come’, etc. In this respect, one can compare the role of ‘to be’ in Spanish as a suppletive form of ‘to go’ in the perfective (Pomino & Remberger 2019: 492–93), a phenomenon also known in modern French (*‘j’ai été à Paris’*), without having reached the stage of grammaticalization.

22 See the extensive study on the grammaticalization paths of the construction from LEg to Coptic by Grossman, Lescuyer & Polis (2014).

23 Cf. pLeiden I 344, VI 8; oTurin N 57428 v<sup>o</sup> 3–5; oBM EA 21282 v<sup>o</sup> 3; pBerlin P 3049 IV, 5. In a different context, see also pBM 9999, 7, 5; 44, 4.

A significant part of the data deals with oracular procedures. For opposing a proposal submitted to the god, it is generally said that the god *nʕj n-h3.f*, i.e. moves backward.<sup>24</sup> The presence of *nʕj*, instead of *šm/hn*, must obviously be linked to the divine portable bark carried on the priests' shoulders during the consultation:

- [23] *ʕhʕ.n p3 ntr hr nʕj n-h3.f*  
 CJVB:ANT ART:M.SG god PRS= navigate:INF behind-3SG.M  
 'And then the god moved backward.' (oIFAO 1280 r<sup>o</sup> 7)<sup>25</sup>  
 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Deir el-Medineh – Oracular

In the same context, *nʕj* is once used to describe the arrival of the god on the silver ground of the court of the 10<sup>th</sup> pylon in the temple of Amun-Re in Karnak, where the oracular consultation of the god used to proceed:<sup>26</sup>

- [24] *nʕj m hr:f hr p3 t3 hd (...)*  
 navigate:INF in face-3SG.M on ART:M.SG ground silver  
 'Proceeding toward him on the silver ground (...).' (pBrooklyn 47.218.3, A 2–3)  
 26<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Oracular

In other texts, while the context is insufficient to decide whether a travel by boat was implied or not, there is no ground to reject it *a priori*. Or rather, there is no basis to discard what the verb seems to mean *prima facie*. In the examples I have been able to collect, it is only reasonable to assume that at least the first part of the trip was made by boat. This was then probably enough for referring to the whole trip as a *nʕj*-journey:

- [25] *jw:f m nʕj r h3rw, jw:j hr*  
 SBRD-3SG.M PROG- navigate:INF to Syria CORD-1SG PRS=  
*pnʕ:f r p3 htm*  
 return:INF-3SG.M to ART:M.SG stronghold  
 '(When you reported to me about my son,) as he was sailing to Syria, I had him  
 return to the stronghold.' (pAnastasi 5 13, 6)<sup>27</sup>  
 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty – Memphite area – Miscellanies

In the Qadesh Poem, *nʕj* is used to describe the first steps of the king's expedition northwards to Syria. There is no reason to reject the possibility that the army first sailed on the Nile before going by land for the rest of the journey. One will note that there is no other use of *nʕj* in the Poem, which also seems relevant. The verbs for expressing the generic motion in the Poem (and the Bulletin) are *jw:j* 'to come', *mšʕ* 'to walk, to go', which is the regular verb used to describe the march of the army, and *šm* 'to go'.<sup>28</sup>

24 For this formula, see Černý (1930: 491–96).

25 Cf. oUC 39622 r<sup>o</sup> 6–7; Oracular text for Djehutymose, l. 14.

26 See Kruchten (1986: 167–68). In the oracular consultations of the 21<sup>st</sup> dynasty, the arrival of the god was rather expressed by *sB* 'to draw', a verb also connected to navigation. The mention of the silver ground is also well-attested in the formula *htp (hr s.t wr:t) hr p3 t3 n hd n pr jmn* for indicating the end of or a halt in the procedure (Winand 2003: passim).

27 One will note the presence of *pnʕ* 'to return', written with the classifier P1A (𓆎).

28 One can also add *wd3* 'to proceed solemnly', which is a heritage of the Königsnovelle only found with the kings and the gods.

- [26] *nʕj*            *pw*    *jr.n.f*                    *m-ḥd*  
 navigate:INF    DEM    do:REL-ANT-3SG.M    PRS=go\_northwards:INF  
*tʕj.f*                    *n.t-ḥtr*    *pʕj.f*                    *mšꜥ*            *ḥnꜥ.f*  
 POSS:F.SG-3SG.M    chariotry    POSS:M.SG-3SG.M    infantry    with-3SG.M  
 ‘He travelled northwards with his chariotry and his infantry.’ (Qadesh Poem, §28 Sallier III)  
 19<sup>th</sup> dyn. – ?? – Royal narrative

In the following passage, one cannot exclude the possibility that the author of the letter had first to cross the river to fetch the men settled in Thebes.<sup>29</sup> The verb *nʕj* could in this case encompass as a single activity the crossing of the Nile, the wandering in Thebes to collect the workmen, and the way back to the West Bank.

- [27] *ḥr*            *wnn*    *twj*            <*m*>    *nʕj*                    *m*    *njw.t*    <*r*>  
 CORD    when    PRS-1SG    PROG-    navigate:INF    in    city-F    <to>  
*jn*            *nʕ*            *rmt*            *nty*            *ḥms.w*            *jm*,  
 bring:INF    ART:PL    man-M.PL    REL-M.SG    sit:RES-3PL    there(ADV)  
*jw.j*            (*ḥr*)            *gm*            *rmt-ʕs.t*    *PN (...)*  
 CORD-1SG    [on=]    find:INF    workman    PN  
 ‘As I was coming/sailing back from Ne to fetch the men who had settled there, I met the workman PN.’ (pBM 10375, 14–15)  
 End 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Letter

In the *LRL*, the verbs that are used for expressing the generic centripetal or centrifugal motion are *jw.j*, *ḥn*, and *šm*. The verb *nʕj* is attested only three times, twice in the same papyrus. In addition to Ex. 27, the second example, from pBM 10375, does in no way exclude the possibility that the garments had to be delivered (partly) by boat:

- [28] *jn*    *bn*    *twk*                    *m*    *nʕj*                    *jrm*    *nʕ*            *ḥbs.w*,  
 Q    NEG    PRS-2SG.M    PROG-    navigate:INF    with    ART:PL    garment-M.PL  
*ḥr*    *mntk*    *j.jr.k*                    *swd.w*                    *n*    *pʕj.k*  
 CORD    2SG.M    THMZ-2SG.M    deliver:INF-3PL    to    POSS:M.SG-2SG.M  
*nb*  
 lord  
 ‘Are not you going with the garments, for it is you who should deliver them to your lord?’ (pBM 10375, 26)  
 End 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Letter

This example can be linked to a passage from a letter of ‘el-Hibeh’, where there is once again no obvious reason to discard the possibility that the travel was partly, and more probably in its first part, done by boat:

<sup>29</sup> See also *KRI* II 385, 3–5 about Khaemwaset’s mission to announce his father’s heb-sed all across Egypt (*r nʕj.t m-ḥt tʕ.wj*).

- [29] *st* (m) *nʕj* *r* *mšʕ* [ ] *msj* *ʒj*  
 3PL(PRS) [PROG] navigate:INF to go:INF garment take:REL  
*nʒ* *rmʔ*  
 ART:PL man  
 ‘They are about to go [ ] garments the men have taken.’ (pStrasburg 24 iv+v, v°  
 2–3)<sup>30</sup>  
 21<sup>st</sup> dyn. – Middle Egypt – Letter

The last example deals with the military campaign which Dhutmose was about to make with Paiankh in pursuit of Panehesy in the South. It would be awkward if the expedition, which of course would also imply some march (cf. *mšʕ* in the same line), did not first proceed by sailing upstream as far as possible:

- [30] *twk* *rḥ.tw* *pʒj* *mšʕ*  
 PRS-2SG.M know:RES-2SG.M DEM:M.SG expedition  
*nty* *twj* *m* *nʕj* *r* *jr:f*  
 REL-M.SG PRS-1SG PROG- navigate:INF to do:INF-3SG.M  
 ‘You are aware of the expedition I am about to do.’ (pBN 197 V, v° 3)  
 End 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Letter

In the *Tale of Wenamun*, *nʕj* is used only once, to qualify the flight of the birds that are going back (lit. sailing) to cooler regions. The most reasonable explanation is that Wenamun, who is in Byblos, that is on the seaside, was watching the birds as they pass before his eyes over the sea, which is sufficient enough to explain the use of a nautical metaphor as found in other languages for describing some species of sea-birds.

- [31] *ptr* *st* *jw.w* *m* *nʕj* *r* *ḳbh*  
 look:IMP =3PL SBRD-3PL PROG- navigate:INF to cool-region  
 ‘Look at them as they are going (lit. sailing) to a cool region.’ (*LES* 73, 16)  
 21<sup>st</sup> dyn. – el-Hibeh – Fiction

Finally in pVandier, a very late literary tale at the juncture of LEg and Demotic, one cannot exclude that the use of *nʕj* was consciously made to describe the fatal destiny of the king. The metaphor of death as the crossing of the Nile (cf. the widespread use of *mnj* ‘to moor’) is well-known enough in Egypt:

- [32] *j.jr(.j)* *nʕj.kwj* *r* *pʒ* *mwt*  
 THMZ-1SG navigate:RES-1SG to ART:M.SG death  
 ‘It is to death that I will sail.’ (pVandier 3, 9)  
 25<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Fiction

Another possible metaphorical use is provided by the following example taken from a description of the miseries of the soldier. In this passage, the charioteer is depicted losing control of his vehicle. The use of *nʕj*, without any adverbial adjunct, is strange if it is

30 One will also note in the same papyrus the following passage where some navigation is also intended: *yʒ wn.f(m) nʕj smj* [ ] *n* PN *r-ḥʕ.t.j* ‘for he was about to report to PN and myself’ (r° 6–7).

supposed to express the trivial idea of going. I would rather suggest that there is an intended comparison with a boat that has no direction (a well-known metaphor in the classical literature, also found in the Ramesside Letter of Menna, and, of course, previously in the *Eloquent Peasant*). In this respect, the mention in the next sentence of a slipping road, reminiscent of the river's water, makes perfect sense:

- [33] *p3j.k*            *ḥtr*            *nʕj.f*  
 POSS:M.SG-2SG.M chariot    navigate:IMPF-3SG.M  
 {*B*}            *mrj.<f>*            *ḥr*    *t3*            *ḥrk.t*  
 take:INF    speed-3SG.M    on    ART:F.SG    slippery\_ground-F  
 ‘Your chariot is drifting away, skidding on the slippery ground.’ (pAnastasi 1 25, 8–9)  
 19<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Memphite area – Literary letter

Finally, the verb *nʕj* can also appear in contexts where navigation was previously implied by perhaps some kind of ‘semantic attraction’. This seems to be the case in the passage from *Horus and Seth*, where Isis has just crossed the lake (*d3j*) and is now walking under the trees:

- [34] *wn.jn.f*            *d3j.s*            *r*    *p3*            *jw*    *ḥrj-jb,*  
 CJVB:CNSV-3SG.M    ferry:INF-3SG.F    to    ART:M.SG    island    middle  
           *ḥr*    *jr*    *sj*            *m*    *nʕj*            *ḥr*    *n3*  
           CORD TOPZ    3SG.F(PRS)    PROG-    navigate:INF    under    ART:PL  
*šn.w,*            *wn.jn.s*            (*ḥr*)    *nw (...)*  
 tree-M.PL    CJVB:CNSV-3SG.F (on=)    notice:INF  
 ‘He then ferried her to the island of the middle, and as she was walking under the trees, she noticed (...).’ (*Horus & Seth* 6, 2)  
 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Memphite area – Fiction

This explanation is admittedly only half-convincing, but one has to note that this is the sole appearance of *nʕj* in the tale. The verbs usually used for expressing a generic movement are as usual *jwj*, *ḥn* and *šm*. It would thus be curious to use *nʕj* for no particular reason. In this respect, one can compare Ex. 35 with a passage from the *Tale of the Two Brothers*, in very a similar context (walking down under a tree), where *šm* has been instead used:

- [35] *jw.f*            *ḥr*            *šm*            *r*    *wh3*            *ḥ3ty*    *n*  
 CORD-3SG.M    on=    go:INF    to    search:INF    heart    of  
*p3j.f*            *sn*            *šrj*            *ḥr*    *p3*            *ʕš (...)*  
 POSS:M.SG-3SG.M    brother    little    under    ART:M.SG    cedar\_tree  
 ‘And he went to search the heart of his younger brother under the cedar-tree (...).’ (*Two Brothers* 13, 4)  
 19<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Memphite area – Fiction

To sum up, the evidence provides for the following conclusions:

- 1) the paradigm of the verb ‘to go’ in LEg was a suppletive one, with two stems involved, *šm* and *hn*;
- 2) in this process, *hn* underwent a process of semantic bleaching, losing its special modality of motion (to hasten > to go);
- 3) the two stems are in overall distributed across different verb forms;
- 4) some tenses could still be expressed by either stem. This can be explained as conservative reflexes in some texts influenced by EgTrad, but one must also consider that the distribution of the two stems was partly geographically conditioned.
- 5) the verb *nʿj* must be left out of the picture as far as LEg is concerned. Indeed, in most cases the notion of navigating is clearly perceptible in its meaning.<sup>31</sup> One has also to take into account that the respective Aktionsart of *šm* and *nʿj* are different, for the latter behaves more as an atelic verb of activity than as a telic verb. Another point worth mentioning is that *nʿj* is never found in LEg for expressing the stative, which is one of its main uses in Demotic and Coptic to supply *šm*. Finally, *šm* is more frequently found for expressing a mellic process (‘to be about to do something’) in Ramesside LEg than *nʿj*, which gradually took over only from the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty onwards.
- 6) Of course, one should be careful not to overstate one’s point. Examples from the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> dynasty show that *nʿj* progressively lost its original semantic links with the action of navigating and later of moving. But the process was precisely so, gradual. It thus seems that in LEg, including in its last phase, the action of going was still consciously felt.<sup>32</sup>

### 3.2 *h3j* and *hr* ‘to fall’

Another interesting case not previously studied is the expression of falling and lying on the ground, which illustrates another kind of process that led to a suppletive paradigm in LEg.

In EEg, *h3j* ‘to descend, to go down’ and *hr* ‘to fall’ have their respective well-defined semantic domains showing only occasional overlaps. All tenses seem to be freely open to both lexemes.<sup>33</sup> However, things changed dramatically in LEg, and two steps can be distinguished in the process.

First, a quick look at the data immediately shows that in LEg *hr* is only found in tenses expressive of resultative state, like the old perfective and the perfective participle,

31 The regular presence of the moving legs classifier (D54) instead of the original boat classifier (P1) is not as significant as it first seems, as this should probably be better understood as part of a more general evolution of the system of classifiers in LEg (Chantraine 2014).

32 I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out to me.

33 In EEg, *h3j* seems to have the same Aktionsart as *šm*, i.e. a non-durative telic process with an active post-phase (Winand 2006: 40, 112; 2021) as shown by the following example: *jnk pw h3.kwj r bj3* ‘it happened that I was going down to the Mines’ (*ShS*, 89). It also explains why in the pattern *m* + infinitive, *h3j* has a mellic value while *hwj*, a durative telic process (accomplishment) has a normal progressive meaning: *mṯ wj m h3j r km.t* ... ‘I am about to go down to Egypt’ (*Peasant R* 1, 2–3).

which are still well represented. By contrast, *h3j* does not seem to suffer restrictions in its capacity of combining with all grammatical tenses. Yet, as regards the respective semantic values of the two verbs, the uses of *hr* have been restricted to expressing the situation of a subject lying on the ground. While still retaining its historical value of descending (Ex. 36–37), *h3j* is increasingly used to express the idea of falling, which was previously the domain of *hr*, but without including the resulting post-phase, which remained expressed by *hr* (Ex. 38–39). One must also note that *hr* is overwhelmingly present in texts where some influence of EgTrad can be felt. As a second step, *h3j* took over the expression of the resulting state (the post-phase) of the process of falling; the two examples from the same text describing an activity and its resulting state are illustrative of this stage (Ex. 40–41). As a consequence, *hr* rapidly went out of use.

[36] *p3j.f jrj hr h3j (r) t3*  
 POSS:M.SG-3SG.M companion on= go\_down:INF (to) ART:F.SG  
*ˁ.t hkt*  
 room-F beer-F

‘His companion went down to the beer cellar.’ (oDeM 10270, 2)  
 Ramesside – Deir el-Medineh – Aphorism (?)

[37] *hn jβj jw ns-sw p3j.j t3 p3*  
 MODP thief SBRD belonging\_to POSS:M.SG-1SG country ART:M.SG  
*h3j r t3j.k br.t*  
 go\_down:PTCP to POSS:F.SG-2SG.M boat-F

‘If it were a thief that belongs to my country that went down to your boat.’ (*Wenamun* 1, 18–19)  
 21<sup>st</sup> dyn. – el-Hibeh – Fiction

[38] *jr h3j p3 wd nty sw hr:f*  
 COND fall:PROS ART:M.SG stela REL-M.SG =3SG.M on-3SG.M

‘If the stela where it (i.e. the decree) stands falls.’ (Amarna Boundary stela A, 18)  
 18<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Royal decree

[39] *jw.w hr.w hr rd.wj.k r nhh*  
 SBRD-3PL fall:RES-3PL under leg-M:DU-2SG.M for eternity  
*d.t*  
 eternity-F

‘They have fallen at your feet for ever.’ (*Joppe*, 3, 12)  
 19<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Fiction

[40] *jw t3 h3bw.t n t3j.f*  
 CORD ART:F.SG shadow-F of POSS:F.SG-3SG.M  
*srp.t (hr) h3j.t rj*  
 umbrella-F [on=] go\_down:INF upon-1SG

‘And the shadow of his umbrella fell upon me.’ (*Wenamun*, 2, 45)  
 21<sup>st</sup> dyn. – el-Hibeh – Fiction



Sallier 3). In a judicial context, it is sometimes attested to mean punishment (*KRI* I 125, 15). There is also a single example where *shꜣr* is used intransitively with the meaning of crashing, in a sense again very close to *hꜣj* or *hꜣr* (pTurin 1993 = PR 132, 3). The original meaning is still present in a passage from a hymn to Amun, about the lowering of the arm (pLeiden I 343 + 345, x13). Finally, *shꜣr* is used in connection with lies or evil, or even a disease that has to be defeated (pBM EA 75025, 8–9), according to the metaphor [WIN IS TO PUT DOWN].<sup>35</sup> One must here underline that this is the only use of *shꜣr* in a documentary text.

The causative *shꜣj*, which is unfortunately split between several entries in the *Wb.*, etymologically means ‘to lower’, a meaning well attested in EEg: *jw shꜣ.n(j) bj.t jnr 300 n hrw 1* ‘I brought down 300 blocks of alabaster stone in a single day’ (graffito Hatnub 6, 5). From there, *shꜣj* takes on the technical sense of evacuating harmful materials in the medical papyri (*kt nt whꜣ ht shꜣj.t ht nb.t dw.tn, tt m hꜣ.w n z* ‘Another (remedy) to empty the stomach and to evacuate any painful matter which is in the body of a man’ [pEbers 7, 2–4]). The meaning of descending is undoubtedly still present in a series of three examples taken from the Myth of the celestial cow, where it is applied to an inversion of an order of presentation.<sup>36</sup>

In LEg, the meaning of *shꜣj* has evolved greatly. Its uses are concentrated chronologically (from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty to the 22<sup>nd</sup> dynasty) and geographically (the Theban region), which is perhaps, for this last point, to be related to the general distribution of the written documentation for this period. The verb *shꜣj* has by then taken on distinctly pejorative nuances. This semantic evolution follows the general metaphor that what goes down is depreciated [DOWN IS BAD]. The link with the original meaning is still perceptible in a passage from Amenemope where *shꜣj* ‘to lower, to diminish’ is opposed to *ꜣꜣ* ‘to inflate, to increase’ (19, 2), and probably also in a metaphor involving the heart-*jb*, ‘to lower the heart in the belly’, for expressing that the heart is no longer in its normal place (14, 10). A small thing or a belittled person can quickly become qualitatively depreciated, a meaning that is sometimes found, in a very concrete sense or with an ethical dimension. From there, the verb receives the meaning of faking, devaluing something, defrauding; it can be used absolutely or with a direct object. When the object is a person, *shꜣj* means ‘to deceive (someone)’. In this latter sense, *shꜣj* is attested twice in the Tomb Robberies,<sup>37</sup> in a passage with a strong flavour of slang. It will be noted here that the evolution of *shꜣj*, with an animated object, towards the meaning of ‘to drop, to neglect’ is already attested in EEg (Letter to the Dead, Chicago Bowl, col. 6).

35 This a subcategory of the generic metaphor [UP IS POSITIVE] and [DOWN IS NEGATIVE]: see Lakoff – Johnson (1980: 15–16).

36 Himmelskuh (Tomb of Sethi I, l. 49, 50, and 51), with Pupko’s commentary in the *TLA* (<https://aaew.bbaw.de/tla/servlet/GetCtxt?u=guest&f=0&l=0&db=0&tc=774&ws=1494&mv=3>, who argues that *m shꜣj* cannot here mean ‘in the reverse order’ (contra the *Wb*).

37 It is actually the reporting of the same episode in two different documents: see Winand (2018a: 145–46), Winand (2018b: 519).

- [44] *sh3.k*                      *wj*    *hr<.f>*                      *m*    *w<sup>c</sup>*    *n*  
 con-APLI-2SG.M    =1SG    say-APLI-3SG.M    in    one    to  
*p3j.f*                      *jrj*  
 POSS:M.SG-3SG.M    companion  
 ‘‘you conned me’’, that is what they said to each other.’ (pMayer A, v<sup>o</sup> 9, 19)  
 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Judicial

The majority of the uses of *sh3j* are concentrated in the Wisdom of Amenemope, where it is written with the classifier  $\text{A}$  to perhaps first express the retreat from something, before becoming a derogatory term. Here it is also noteworthy that in TIP texts the classifier  $\text{S}$  is present (oLouvre N 698 v<sup>o</sup> 21).

- [45] *m jr*    *sh3*                      *rmt*    *m*    *t3*                      *knb.t*  
 PROH    deceive:INF    man    in    ART:F.SG    court-F  
 ‘Do not fool a guy at the court.’ (*Amenemope* 20, 20)  
 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Wisdom

### 3.4 Suppletion is no synonym for substitution or replacement

As should be clear by now, suppletion always involves the reorganization of the tense system of a given verbal lexeme, with a mixture of the original stem with another stem (weak suppletion, *jj/jw* type) or with another verb (strong suppletion, *šm/hn* and *h3j/hr* type). Suppletion should then not be confused with other kinds of evolution like substitution or replacement. These latter processes can be illustrated by the history of two lexical pairs, *hdb – sm3*, roughly meaning ‘to kill’, and *ph – spr* ‘to reach’.

#### 3.4.1 The case of *hdb – sm3* ‘to kill’

The respective meanings of the pair *hdb – sm3* in EEg has been the subject of a recent study by Frandsen. In a nutshell, both verbs mean ‘to kill’, but the latter one would do it in a special way, by implying the total destruction of the [PATIENT], its complete annihilation, and hence the impossibility of any kind of afterlife.

While this general characterisation probably retains some global value, the distribution of the two verbs in LEg is not as clear cut as suggested by Frandsen. When looking at the data, one gets the feeling that the choice of either lexeme was conditioned by time and by the type of text.

It should be noted from the onset, when considering the long time, that *hdb* is indisputably gaining ground.<sup>38</sup> Absent from the OK documentation, it is only sparingly attested in the MK, where *sm3* is still prevalent. In Late Egyptian, *hdb* is more frequently found than *sm3*. In Demotic *sm3* is still attested, but on a very limited scale, and in Coptic it has disappeared completely. Of course, *sm3* is still well represented in religious texts written in EgTrad until the Graeco-Roman times.

<sup>38</sup> For a detailed study, I refer to Winand (2021).

When looking at the L<sub>E</sub>g data, the first conclusion is that both verbs could be used in the same contextual environment. The activity of killing one's enemies can be expressed by both *hdb* or *sm3*, but one must note that there are identifiable clusters where one of the two verbs is predominantly used. In the royal inscription of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, *sm3* is found everywhere (e.g. *Urk.* IV 1297, 1). A contrastive situation – and to my opinion a very illustrative one – is offered by the texts reporting Ramses II's expedition to Qadesh (including also the Hittite treaty) and the records of Ramses III's wars in Medinet Habu. The texts composed for Ramses II almost entirely ignore *sm3*, which is used only twice. The reverse situation can be observed in Ramses III's inscriptions, where *sm3* is used 48 times whereas *hdb* occurs only once. Strikingly, both sub-corpora contain identical expressions where the verbs occur in variance:

[46a] *jw.j hr hdb jm.sn r mr:n.j*  
 SBRD-1SG PROG- kill:INF in-3PL as wish-APLI-1SG  
 'I was killing among them as I wished.' (Qadesh Poem, §140 K1)  
 19<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Royal narrative

[46b] *sm3.k ntj jb.k r*  
 kill:IAPLI-2SG.M REL-M.SG heart-2SG.M according\_to  
*mrr.k*  
 desire:NMLZ-2SG.M  
 'You slay the one that you wish according to your desire.' (*KRI* V 97, 4)<sup>39</sup>  
 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Royal narrative

[47a] *t3.w nb.w h3s.wt nb.wt hdb.w*  
 land-M.PL all-M.PL foreign-country-F.PL all-F.PL kill:RES-3PL  
*hr tb.tj.f d.t*  
 under sandal-F:DU-3SG.M eternity-F  
 'All lands and all foreign countries lay killed under your sandals for ever.' (Qadesh Poem, §343 K2)  
 19<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Royal narrative

[47b] *sm3.j n.k t3 nb hr tb.tj.k*  
 kill-APLI-1SG to-2SG.M land all under sandal-F:DU-2SG.M  
 'I slaughtered for you all lands under your soles.' (*KRI* V 97, 15)  
 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Royal narrative

[48a] *hdb.k hfn.w*  
 kill-APLI -2SG.M hundred\_thousand-M.PL  
 'You slaughtered hundreds of thousands.' (Qadesh Poem, §84 L1)  
 19<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Royal narrative

39 The verb *sm3* is also used in the Bulletin of Qadesh (§101 R1) instead of *hdb*, which was preferred in the Poem.

- [48b] *smʒ*            *ḥfn.w*  
 kill:PTCP    hundred\_thousand-M.PL  
 ‘(...) who slaughters hundreds of thousands.’ (KRI V 44, 8)  
 20<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Royal narrative

As regards the semantics of the two verbs, the difference, if any, seems to be largely blurred. There are examples where *hdb* was used in documentary texts in contexts where it is explicitly stated that the act of killing was actually plain murder, planned *m grg* ‘wrongly’ (pDeM 26, r° A,19, see also *LES* 16, 10 and 16), which matches the criteria advanced for the use of *smʒ*.<sup>40</sup> This is stretched to the extreme in the oracular inscription for Henuttai (Ex. 49) where *hdb* is used for punishing people whose names, as explicitly stated in the following sentence, will also be wiped out from the surface of the earth.

- [49] [*m-dd jw.*]n    *hdb.w,*    *jw.n*    *fdk*  
 COMP    CORD-1PL kill:INF-3PL    CORD-1PL    erase:INF  
*rn.w*                    *m*    *pʒ*            *tʒ*  
 name-M.PL-3PL    from    ART:M.SG    earth  
 ‘We shall kill them, we shall erase their names from the earth.’ (Decree for Henuttai, l. 20)  
 21<sup>st</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Oracular decree

In later LEg, *hdb* is exclusively used in non-literary texts. This applies to people that were killed during riots as a consequence of some personal feud, but also in a judicial context, as plainly evidenced in the corpus of the Great Tomb Robberies, where a person alludes to his possible punishment as a case of *hdb* (KRI VI 785, 15, see also KRI VI 776, 10–11). In the same corpus, convicted robbers are said to have been pinioned (KRI VI 827, 6),<sup>41</sup> a context where in earlier times *smʒ* would have been used. In literary texts from the 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty onward, *smʒ* was no longer used.<sup>42</sup>

The reverse situation can also be observed. In a passage from the *Miscellanies*, *smʒ* was used to describe the activity of the mosquitoes tormenting people’s life (oDeM 1014, 1,14). Of course, one can postulate some metaphoric use of *smʒ*, implying that the pain inflicted is close to total annihilation, but this seems too far-stretched. The same conclusion should be drawn from a passage of Ani *a propos* the uncontrolled activity of a mad bull (pBoulaq 23, 1).<sup>43</sup> Actually, when a contrast is intended, one has the feeling that *smʒ* is preferred for describing mass murder, while *hdb* is more often found in reference to killing individuals. On the whole, *hdb* is the unmarked term.

To sum up, *smʒ* is gradually replaced in LEg by *hdb*, which means ‘to kill’ in the wider sense of the term but also ‘to annihilate’ in some contexts. The evolution is chronologically

40 See the two examples given in Frandsen’s study (2016: 223).

41 See also KRI III 530, 4–5: *jw.f shr dj.tw hr-tp ht* a propos someone who had to give an oath by the Lord whose power (*bʒw*) is worse than death, a context that also would have implied *smʒ* in MK.

42 This is largely exemplified in the *Tale of Horus and Seth* (with one exception that reproduced a fixed phraseology), the *Tale of Woe*, the *Mission of Wenamun* and the *Tale of pVandier*.

43 Probably to be connected with *smʒ* referring to a kind of wild bull (*Wb.* IV 124, 1–7) since OK.

conditioned, as demonstrated by the use of the two verbs in war inscriptions. Interestingly enough, the choice of either verb can be a matter of personal preference as shown by the exclusive presence of *sm3* in Ramses III's inscriptions at a time when *hdb* had already become prevalent. The transition can also be seen in ritual and magical texts. As *sm3* was largely retained in these texts when the EgTrad idiom was used, in later LEg fluctuations are sometimes observable in the same text:

[50a] *twj m-s3.k r sm3.k*  
 PRS-1SG after-2SG.M to kill:INF-2SG.M  
 'I am after you to kill you.' (pBoulaq 6 r° IV, 2)  
 21<sup>st</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Magical

[50b] *twk hdb m wr hk3w.j*  
 PRS-2SG.M kill:RES-2SG.M by magical\_power-M.PL-1SG  
 'You have been killed by my magical powers.' (pBoulaq 6 r° IV, 3)  
 21<sup>st</sup> dyn. – Theban area – Magical

The history of the pair *sm3* – *hdb* in Late Egyptian illustrates a case of lexical substitution of one lexeme (*sm3*) by another one (*hdb*). The verbs never merged into a single paradigm where one of them would have supplied the other for some grammatical tenses as was the case with the pair *šm* – *hn*. For this to happen, one would have expected *sm3* to undergo a process of semantic bleaching, which did not happen. If one returns to the evidence from MK literary works where *sm3* dominates, one may wonder if the notion of annihilation (the second death according to Frandsen's analysis) is always present. For instance, should we really assume that Sinuhe, who has no supernatural power as the king, is inflicting total destruction to his tribe's enemies when fighting them (B 104)? Similarly, is there any particular reason to think that in medical texts the use of *sm3* for killing worms infesting the body implied that they were subjected to a second death (pEbers 25, 11)?

In conclusion, my impression is that *sm3* (and later *hdb*) can take this precise meaning not because it was part of its core semantics, but merely because it is suggested by the context. From the NK onward, the distribution of the two verbs *a priori* seems to lend credit to Frandsen's hypothesis. The evidence, as shown above, only partially support it. As *sm3* was consistently used in texts written in EgTrad (royal inscriptions, religious and magical texts, and rituals), it is only natural that he would be preferred in contexts dealing with archetypal enemies and cosmic foes for which total annihilation could only be expected.

#### 3.4.2 The case of *ph* – *spr* 'to reach'

In a previous paper, I extensively examined the semantic fields of the verbs *ph* and *spr* as well as their mutual relations.<sup>44</sup> Both are well represented in the LEg corpus, but *spr* is arguably more specialized if one compares the respective core meaning of both lexemes. While *ph* means 'to reach, to arrive', with the implication that the actor has finally reached a destination, *spr* means more specifically 'to make a stop on a journey', a precision that is

44 Winand (2019).

rarely lexicalized cross-linguistically, if attested at all. In some context, *ph* also means ‘to attack’ someone, a sense which is more frequent when the second argument is realized as a direct object. The semantic units of *ph* and *spr* are presented in Table 2.<sup>45</sup>

Table 2 | The semantic units of *ph* and *spr*.

<i>ph</i>	<i>spr</i>
<i>ph</i> (1a) “arrive, reach”	<i>spr</i> (1) “arrive, reach”
<i>ph</i> (1b) “catch up”	
<i>ph</i> (1c) “achieve, succeed”	
<i>ph</i> (2) “attack, assault”	<i>spr</i> (2) “make a plea, appeal”
<i>ph</i> (3) “at last (something happened)”	<i>spr</i> (3) “succeed in doing something”

*spr* is no longer attested in Demotic nor in Coptic, while *ph* is still widely used. As the LEg corpus is drastically limited during the TIP, one cannot document the disappearance of *spr*, nor suggest any plausible clue as regards the possible triggering factors. One can of course make some plausible guesses. When two lexemes are used in parallel with small, albeit significant differences, the more generic term can absorb the more specific one. *hn* had to somehow lose its relation to a specific way of moving (haste) to be able to enter the paradigm of the generic verb of motion *šm*. But the reverse is not impossible either. For instance, the generic expression of the verb of seeing underwent two consecutive cycles of transformation that saw the more specific verb take over the generic sense, which twice resulted in the disappearance of the former lexeme (*m33* > *ptr* > *nw*).

#### 4 Verbal suppletion in ancient Egyptian

Morphological suppletion is not the same as lexical substitution. The examples that have been discussed in the preceding sections all tell a different story. Table 3 is a summary of the questions that were addressed in this study: a) are there perceptible semantic differences between the two verbs before they began to interact?, b) can one observe a process of semantic bleaching for one member of the pair?, c) was their interaction the motor for creating a suppletive paradigm?, d) if so, are there any dialectal features at work in this process?, and finally e) what was the final outcome of the process?

Table 3 | Summary of the criteria relevant for the phenomena of suppletion or substitution.

	originally semantic differences	semantic bleaching	suppletive paradigm	dialectal features	final outcome
<i>jj/jw</i>	?	?	yes	?	fusion
<i>h3j – hr</i>	yes	yes	yes	no	> <i>h3j</i>
<i>šm – hn – (nʕj)</i>	yes	yes	yes	yes	> <i>šm</i>
<i>ph – spr</i>	yes	yes	no	no	> <i>ph</i>
<i>hdb – sm3</i>	no	no	no	no	both kept

45 For lack of space, I refer to Winand (2019) for a detailed presentation.

In the discussion above, a difference was made between weak and strong suppletion. Once two (or more) forms have merged to form a suppletive paradigm, semantic differences can no longer be observed. This is of course the case for *twj jj.kwj* ‘I have come’ and *sw jw.w* ‘he has come’, a case of weak suppletion: the fluctuation between the two stems *jj-* and *jw-* has no semantic relevance. The same conclusion also applies in LEg to *twj šm.kwj* ‘I have gone’ and *dj.j ḥn.f* ‘I let him go’, a case of strong suppletion.

In case of strong suppletion, some kind of semantic bleaching is, however, to be expected in case of the donor. This can be observed with *ḥn* when it integrated the paradigm of *šm*. In this process, it lost its particular modality of motion ‘to go hastily, to run’ to take the generic meaning of going. The situation is also rendered more complex as the distribution of the two stems was probably conditioned along geographical lines, which probably explains why *ḥn* disappeared somewhat abruptly in Demotic and Coptic.

A suppletive paradigm can be diachronically stable, as is for instance the case for ‘to go’ in the Romance languages, the *locus classicus* for the study of morphological suppletion,<sup>46</sup> even if they adopted different solutions to solve the same original problem (the morpho-phonological instability of Latin *ire*). This also seems to be the case for *jwj* ‘to come’ in Egyptian. As regards *šm* and *h3j* however, the final outcome turned out to be different. For after a period of time when the paradigms of *šm* and *h3j* were partly supplied with forms coming from *ḥn* and *ḥr* respectively, the latter verbs ultimately felt out of use. In later LEg, and then in Demotic, *nʃ* came as a new player to supply some forms of the (already much reduced) paradigm of *šm*.<sup>47</sup> This is also what happened for the pair *h3j* – *ḥr*; the uses of the latter were gradually reduced in LEg and were eventually absorbed by *h3j*. This case is, however, different from what can be observed for *šm* and *ḥn*. While the uses of *ḥr* were limited to the old perfective and the perfective participle, *h3j* could also be commonly found in the old perfective when meaning ‘to go down’. It is only in its meaning of ‘to fall’ that *h3j* constituted a suppletive paradigm with *ḥr*, which took in charge the expression of the resulting phase. This situation began to fade out when *h3j* took over from *ḥr* the expression of the post-phase.

This situation bears only remote resemblance to cases like *ḥdb* and *sm3*. Indeed, *ḥdb*, which was not attested before the MK, became common only in LEg, and was still largely used in Demotic and Coptic. On the other hand, *sm3*, which largely prevailed in EEg, gradually disappeared in LEg, was still retained in Demotic in certain formulaic contexts when speaking of foes and arch-enemies, and apparently left no trace in Coptic. There is no significant semantic difference between the two verbs. The distinction that was postulated between killing and completely annihilating, i.e. inflicting a second death, which undoubtedly captures something of the anthropology of ancient Egypt, turns out to be a consequence of the context and the literary genre, and should not be integrated in

46 For French, see Aski (1995), for an overview of all Romance languages, see Pomino & Remberger (2019). The French forms can be traced back to the Latin verbs *ire*, *vadere* and *ambulare*. For interesting parallels with the Greek verb ἔρχομαι and verbs of motion in general, see Létoublon (1987).

47 As shown by the situation in Coptic where the generic expression of centrifugal motion is distributed over two verbs along dialectal lines (ⲱⲉⲓ vs. ⲃⲠⲕ), one cannot exclude that some geographical forces were already at work earlier.

the core semantic meaning of *sm3*. As the texts susceptible to allude to such a terrible fate mainly deal with religious matters, *sensu lato*, it was only to be expected that *sm3*, which is the default verb in Égyptien de tradition for ‘to kill’, would be overwhelmingly used. In this case, *hdb* and *sm3* never formed a suppletive paradigm with dedicated forms of either verb for expressing specific TAM features as is the case for *jwj* and *šm/hn* in Egyptian, or *aller* in French.

The dilution and then suppression of a near synonym can also be observed in the case of the pair *ph* and *spr*, which tells another story. Both verbs share the core meaning of reaching a place or a person. The verb *spr* however had the extra-meaning of making a stop on a journey. It thus contrasted with *ph* whose precise meaning was to reach the final destination.<sup>48</sup> As both verbs were semantically very close, one could expect some kind of economic solution. A possibility could well have been an intermediary stage with a suppletive paradigm, like was the case for *h3j* – *hr*. As it turned out, this was not the option chosen in Egyptian. As the semantic range of *ph* was more diversified than *spr*’s, the former eventually absorbed the latter, which is no longer attested in Demotic and Coptic.

## 5 Semantic suppletion

It is fascinating to observe not only in Egyptian, but cross-linguistically, how activities are lexicalized. The pairs *šm* – *hn* and *h3j* – *hr* offer interesting cases of semantic suppletion. In this section, I would like to extend the scope of this paper by offering some general considerations on how languages classify all kind of activities, or rather states of affairs (SoA), by using lexical, but also grammatical means. As this has been recently treated, I shall here limit myself to a short presentation.<sup>49</sup>

A SoA prototypically has three main defining moments: a beginning, an end, and something in between.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, activities have commonly additional phases that immediately precede or follow, without belonging to them *stricto sensu*, but nevertheless adhering to them cognitively. Phases are mainly defined by two properties, durativity and dynamicity. Two other notions are also worth considering in this respect: gradability and, above all telicity, which is not a phasal property, strictly speaking, but a property defining a SoA globally.

The question I would like to address here is precisely what makes a SoA and why a language lexicalizes a SoA with one lexeme, while another will rather choose to have two

48 Cf. the opposition between *ph.wj* ‘hinder part, end’ and *h3.t* ‘front, begin’: Polis-Winand (2015).

49 See Winand (2021). The lack of specialized lexemes in Egyptian, when compared to modern languages, is another issue that will not be treated here. Most often it is the context that suggests a specialized word in translation where Egyptian uses a generic term. For instance, *h3j* ‘measure’ in medical texts will be translated as ‘to examine, to make a diagnosis’, or *ʕj* in judicial procedures will be rendered by ‘to steal, to rob’, although it is a generic verb meaning ‘to take’. Such cases of semantic under-specification are interesting, but are not to be mingled with the issue of semantic suppletion as defined here.

50 See Winand (2006). An updated version can be found in Winand (2021: §3.4). For the concepts of pre- and post-phase in Egyptology, see Winand (2006a: 67–68).

or more lexemes. SoAs are most often complex activities made of several phases. To attach a phase to a given SoA, rather than to lexicalize it as an individual lexeme, is a matter conditioned probably by universal perceptive and cognitive means, but it also depends on cultural factors that explain differences cross-linguistically, and also chronologically in the history of individual languages.

In languages where aspect is predominant in the organisation of the predicative system, grammatical tenses are commonly used to select specific phases of a SoA. In languages where aspect is not (mainly) expressed by the grammatical system, like many modern European languages, specific phases are either left unspecified or lexicalized. The contrast between Egyptian *mwt* and French *mourir*, and between *rh* and *connaître, savoir* illustrates this point. In the both cases, Egyptian has only one word, which encompasses different phases related to the SoA of dying or knowing. These phases can be accessed to by dedicated tenses (progressive, perfective, and resultative perfect). The following two graphs show how grammatical aspect selects the relevant phases of a SoA:<sup>51</sup>

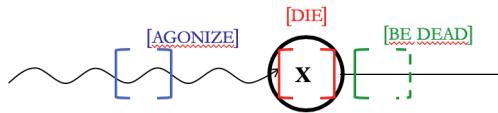


Fig. 3 | The actionality phases of *mwt* ‘to die’.

As regards the expression of knowledge, Egyptian does not make a distinction between the activity of gaining knowledge of something (to learn) and the resulting state (to know).<sup>52</sup> Both are conceived as a single SoA. The grammatical system however leaves little doubt as regards the precise phase the speaker is referring to.<sup>53</sup>

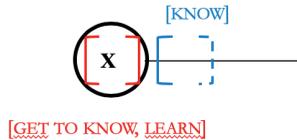


Fig. 4 | The actionality phases of *rh* ‘to learn, to know’.

It is here important to note that *rh* has no pre-phase in Egyptian. When used, the progressive does not exactly express the mental activity that normally leads to the state of knowledge,

51 For *mwt*, cf. *Semnah Dispatches*, 4x+10 (progressive), oAshmMus. 1933.810 (perfective), and pBM 10052 4, 27 (resultative perfect). See also the opposition in Russian: Он умирал (imperfective) несколько часов ... наконец он умер (perfective) ‘he was dying for several hours ... and finally he died’.

52 The activity of getting the knowledge of something can also be expressed by specific verbs, like *sdm* ‘to hear’, which is very common, indicating how the subject receives his/her information.

53 Cf the opposition between *rh.n.f* (*Sinuhe*, B 31–32) and *rh.kwj* (pWestcar 9, 3–4). In ancient Greek and in Latin, the solution is a weak suppletive paradigm with stems coming from the same root: γιγνώσκω vs. ἐγνώκα, *cognosco* vs. *novi*.

but rather the attempt at gaining the knowledge of something (conative meaning).<sup>54</sup> The pre-phase is normally conveyed by verbs like *wh3* or *dʿr*.

Another way of modifying the original verbal Aktionsart is to change its argument structure.<sup>55</sup> While adding an argument can transform an atelic verb into a telic one (*b3k* ‘to work’ vs *b3k* + direct object ‘to make something’),<sup>56</sup> suppressing an argument has the reverse effect (*jrj* + direct object ‘to do something’ vs. *jrj* ‘to act, to have an activity’). Another strategy is to modify the grammatical expression of an argument. For instance, a transitive verb of accomplishment can be recategorized as an atelic SoA if its object is partitive.<sup>57</sup> This obtains in Egyptian by introducing the object with the preposition *m* ‘in’.

Although the verbal predication in EEG is mainly organized with a system of aspectual oppositions, some phases of complex SoAs are sometimes lexicalized. A good illustration thereof is the case of the complex process of looking or searching that culminates in finding something. In Egyptian, there is apparently no example of *gmj* ‘to find’ in the progressive; verbs like *wh3* or *dʿr* are instead used to express the activity that leads to the culminating point of finding. Furthermore, the post-phase of *gmj*, its resultant phase, is more often expressed by a verb of knowing like *rh* than by *gmj*, which is consistent with the observation made above that *rh* is never found in the progressive. This contrasts with French. It is indeed possible to use *trouver* in the progressive pattern, which means that the subject is in the activity of searching that will eventually lead to the culmination event of finding. There is thus a continuum between *il est en train de trouver*, *il trouve*, and *il a trouvé*. In Egyptian such a sequence would be better expressed by three different verbs as illustrated in the last example:<sup>58</sup>

[61] *wh3.tw*                      *jkr*,                      *gm.tw.k*,                      *bw*  
 search:IAPLI-3SG.C    excellent                      find-PASS-2SG.M    NEG-  
    *jr.tw*                      *rh*                      *šrj*  
    do:IAPLI-3SG.C    know:INF    small

‘If one looks for an excellent one, one will find you, for one does know the small one.’ (pChB IV v° 4, 4)

19<sup>th</sup> dyn. – Deir el-Medineh – Wisdom

54 See *Ptahhotep*, 288 P.

55 See Winand (2021: §3.4.3).

56 This also the case with some verbs of quality, like *nfr*: *nfr* + object ‘make something perfect/beautiful’.

57 Another case is the verb *sḏm* ‘to hear’, which takes on the meaning of ‘to listen to’, hence ‘to obey’ when the second argument is obliquely expressed by being introduced by the preposition *n* ‘to’. Historically, the expression *sḏm n* + NP ‘to listen, to obey’ was probably first to be understood as ‘to listen (to something) to the benefit of someone’, before being reinterpreted as ‘listen to someone’.

58 Interestingly enough, in the following example, the negation of *gmj* has been expressed by *rh*: *j.jr.w gm.t.fjw 7 hrw p3 nty (hr) grh n p3j.fʿhʿw, jw bw rh rn n p3j.fhry-tp* ‘one found that it is 7 days that end his lifetime, but one does know the name of his magician (...)’ (pVandier 1, 7–8).

## 6 Conclusion

This study is a part of a larger project that aims at better understanding the ancient Egyptian lexicon. I have for a long time been interested in the relations between lexicon and grammar, particularly as regards the functioning of aspect.<sup>59</sup> The premises of my study rely on the intuition that SoAs are generally made of phases, which have their own semantic properties, like dynamicity, durativity, gradability, and telicity. While most SoAs are lexicalized as one single verb, it is not uncommon cross-linguistically to find cases of complementarity or suppletion. To be more precise, SoAs that historically focus on a limited and well-defined type of activity ended up merging into one single paradigm. This is what happened in several Indo-European languages where the organization of the predication was originally based on actionality rather than grammatical oppositions, with dedicated lexemes for specific types of activity, before proceeding to a system where aspect would select specific phases of a SoA, by then envisioned as a multiphased activity.<sup>60</sup> For instance, one can arguably show that in ancient Greek εἶμι and ἤλθον, two complementary morphological themes of the verb ‘to go’, were suppletive forms that stood in opposition aspectually and semantically, the former one being originally non-effective (viz. atelic), the latter effective (viz. telic).<sup>61</sup>

While ancient Egyptian does not seem to have been organized along the same principles, at least on such a scale, cases of suppletion can be observed. The causes are not to be searched for in a major reorganization of the predicative system as was the case in (pre-)archaic Greek, but rather in the story of particular lexemes. In the course of time, they gradually became less used and were finally reduced to a specific phase of a complex SoA. These isolated cases are thus closer to the reorganization of ‘to go’ in the Romance languages.<sup>62</sup>

In the second part of this study, I tried to show that cases of suppletion should be integrated into a larger representation of the lexical organization of ancient Egyptian. After discussing the case of multiphased SoAs whose lexical expression can be divided into several lexemes, I showed that a single lexeme could quite easily in ancient Egyptian correspond to what is conceived in European modern languages as distinct SoAs either by selecting a specific aspectual grammatical tense or by changing its argumental structure or the nature of its arguments. In other words, would it be too adventurous to suggest that EEg somehow compensated for a relative lexical paucity by its grammatical system?

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