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A Semantic Approach to the Egyptian Language: The Case of Time and Aspect. Towards a New Paradigm

Jean Winand, Liège

1 Preliminaries

It is not lacking in respect for the great scholar Polotsky was to bring critically under close scrutiny the system he built step by step over three decades. The weakest point in the Polotskian Theory (PT) is his view of how forms and meanings (*i.e.* morpho-syntax and semantics) relate to each other¹. The basic question, which the PT has implicitly answered in the affirmative, comes down to deciding whether there are as many grammatical forms as semantic functions. When looking back on the foundations of the PT, one can see three major epistemological problems:

- anachronism: how far can we take the situation of Coptic as paradigmatic of a grammatical system more than two millennia older? The way the second tenses were handled in the PT is exemplary in this respect. Are we completely free to consider as equivalent what is completely grammaticalized in Coptic (tempora I vs. tempora II) and the grammatical system of Middle Egyptian, where there are no systematic morphological correspondences between emphatic and non-emphatic forms; can we make a simple equation between what is the main *raison d'être* of the second tempora in Coptic, at the semantic level, and what is one function (and most probably a derivative) among many others in older Egyptian? In other words, how much Coptic can we see in Middle Egyptian without going completely astray?²
- analogy and symmetry: how far can we go with analogy, be it syntactic or morphological (see Winand 2007)? For instance, does the *sdm.n.tw.f* definitively prove the existence of a substantival *sdm.n.f* distinct from another (other) *sdm.n.f(s)*? What is the implication (if any) of the existence of the *mrr.f* for the perfective and subjunctive forms? Is it necessary to forge two subjunctive *sdm.f* forms arguing from the existence of two different negative patterns (*nm sdm.f* vs. *tm.f sdm*)? Should we consider two forms for the pseudo-participle? and so on.
- isomorphism: to what degree is there a strict adequation between form and function? Is the fact that the *sdm.n.f* has a circumstantial function (« after having heard ») and a sequential function (« and he heard ») sufficient in itself to create two distinct morphological forms?

All that is known of how languages work, in synchrony or diachrony, descriptively or typologically, invites us to answer the questions raised above in a negative way.

1 I have set aside the widely used concept of Standard Theory: it was never true to the diversity of opinions among Egyptologists, and it is now completely obsolete.
2 The Late Egyptian system of emphatic forms is not that close to the Coptic's either, as the basic opposition between the periphrastic *l.tr.f sdm* and non-periphrastic *l.sdm.f* is one of modality.

- In diachrony, permanence of forms does not imply permanence of functions. Complex processes are at work here, like semantic changes, grammaticalization and lexicalization. Egyptian offers numerous examples of it. For instance, the Late Egyptian Future III seems to be the carbon copy of the Middle Egyptian paradigm *iw.f r sdm*. But who would analyse *iw* in Late Egyptian as in Middle Egyptian? The simple fact that *iw iw.f r sdm* exists in Late Egyptian shows how much has changed in the grammatical system.
- Asymmetry is everywhere in language. Looking at how languages, far better known than Egyptian, work must suffice. In French, for instance, there are eight tenses in the indicative; this has obviously no incidence on the number of tenses in the subjunctive or in the infinitive. Neutralisation is not unknown in Egyptian either: in Late Egyptian, there are two negative patterns (*nm sw hr sdm* vs. *bw ir.f sdm*) according to the opposition \pm progressive, but only one affirmative pattern in the Present I (*twi hr sdm*).
- Strangely enough, some scholars have tended to strictly link forms and functions in a series of one-to-one correspondences. This would imply that a language cannot fix the relations between members of a sentence or of a text without a syntactic system morphologically marked. This leaves on the roadside the far more fundamental system of intonation (Oreal 2002), numerous phenomena of semantically motivated linkages and the role of context (Winand 2000, 2006b: ch. 9). From a cognitive viewpoint, it is only natural that a non-verbal predication, which by its very nature stays outside the temporal flux (Winand 2006a), would be most often backgrounded in narration. That the circumstantial function can be formally marked by a specific device, more or less grammatically integrated (*isk*, *iw*, etc.), is a matter of detail, relevant in a typologically oriented diachronic perspective.

1.1 Temporality: an overview

This paper is concerned with how Egyptian expresses time from a semantic viewpoint. It presents itself as a complete reversal of paradigm, when compared with the PT. How far the two systems can be integrated, how much they can influence each other, is for others to say. I have been working on questions related to time and aspect since 1994. The result is a book now published in the series *Probleme der Ägyptologie* in 2006. In this paper, I present the basic observations which worked for me more or less like a catalyst, and I present the general structure of my theoretical system.

As regards the semantics of time and aspect, the linguistic tradition in Egyptology (and in some degree in general linguistics) makes the following assumptions:

- the verbal lexeme is an unanalysable (or rather unanalysed) unit,
- the grammatical tenses directly operate on this unit,
- according to every Egyptologist's personal belief, the tenses have aspectual values, temporal values, or both,
- whether explicitly stated or not, the temporal relations are analyzed in a Reichenbachian framework.

The following points have to some degree an impact on the aspectual values of a sentence:

- a) A verb usually takes different meanings according to the grammatical tenses (e.g. « *inaccompli global* » vs. « *inaccompli progressif* »³):
 - 1: *ir ḥ3.k z hr mn r-ib.f iw.f mn.f g3b.f*
« if you examine a man who is suffering from the stomach and who suffers from the left arm » (P. Ebers, 37, 10-11)
- b) The sense of a grammatical tense must adapt itself to the lexical meaning of verbs:
 - 2: a: *šsp.n.i ksw.i m b3.t*
b: *šnd.n.f n.i iw.i m ḥd*
« I took a leaned position in a bush » (Sim., B 16-18)
« he began to fear me as I was coming downstream » (St. Kamose II, 26)
- c) The meaning of a sentence can be modified if the argumental structure of the verb has changed:
 - 3: a: *iḥ p3y šhr bin nty twk hr ir.f r.i*
b: *sw (hr) ir m p3y.f šhn*
c: *3ḥ n irr Ø*
a: « what is this bad plan you are making against me? » (KRI III, 534,8-9)
b: « he is busy doing his mission » (LRL 32,13)
c: « useful for the one who acts » (St. Berlin 7311, k 2)

Point a) has to do with the definition of the grammatical aspect(s), point b) with the relation between grammatical aspect(s) and actionality⁴, and point c) with the definition of actionality.

To a) In this description of a medical pathology, the text shifts from a progressive to a non-progressive. This use of an aspectual opposition is very well known: while the patient is suffering from his stomach all the time that is under the progressive's scope, he also suffers from the left arm from time to time. What is continuous in the former case is discontinuous in the latter and only potentially active⁵.

To b) The *sdm.n.f*, which here expresses the PERFECTIF MOMENTANÉ, as I call it (cf. *infra*), has a completive meaning in 2a, but an inchoative force in 2b. This can be easily explained by considering the SoA's actionality. The more common, completive sense only obtains with telic propositions, whereas atelic propositions take an inchoative sense. This is a very general rule supported by numerous facts coming from a vast array of typologically or genetically unrelated languages. It is here worth noting that tenses cannot be mechanically used with whatever verbal lexeme. There is always a dialectic process at work between both sets of instructions. In some cases, the speakers may feel the gap too wide to fulfil: for instance, I do not know of a single example of *šm* or *wmn* used in the progressive in Egyptian. This can be easily explained by both verbs' Aktionsart: a non-

³ I most often keep the original French terminology for lack of a strict correspondence in English.

⁴ Occasional shifts of tense within a sentence cannot be explained but with reference to the SoA's actionality: (« a teaching ») *m 3ḥ.t n sdm.tj.f m wgg n nty r th.t st* « useful for him who will have listened to it, but woeful for him who will neglect it » (Ptahhotep, 49-50); *ir st3.i rḥ.n.i ntr tnw, k3 ir.j.i Ø n.f* « if I had the science, if I got the knowledge of where the god is, I would act for him » (Admonitions, 5, 3); *ršy gmḥ.tj.fj Ø wnn.tj.fj hr šms nsw.t* « he will rejoice who will have perceived (it) and who will get to follow the king » (Neferti, 69-70).

⁵ On the modal force of the non-progressive imperfective (a well known fact in the negative), see Winand (2006b: 280).

durative process without a pre-phase in the case of *šm*⁶, a non-agentive non-dynamic process in the case of *wnn*⁷.

To c) The same verb, *iri* « to make, to do », appears in the three examples ; in the first one, *iri* has a direct object (*f*), in the second one, the object is indirectly expressed (*m* + SN), in the last one, there is no object. The presence or absence of the object, its syntactic expression, and of course its quantificational properties, affect more or less the meaning of the sentence. The changes can bear on the SoA's actionality, as in c (the process is detelicised, hence the shift in meaning from « to do » to « to act »)⁸, or it can modify the sentence's aspectuality, as in b (the partitive expression of the direct object leads to a progressive meaning at the sentential level).

1.2 The moment of reference

The crucial issue is how time and aspect articulate with each other. Temporal instructions, as it seems, are not very well understood. According to Reichenbach's and Comrie's definitions, time relates the process (SoA) to a point of reference, which can be absolute (moment of speaking) or relative (another process). Unfortunately this model does not always work properly. The reason is that there is no direct link between the process and the point of reference. The relation is mediated by what I call the moment of reference, that is an interval in the process which functions as an interface between the aspectual and the temporal branches of the more general phenomenon of temporality.

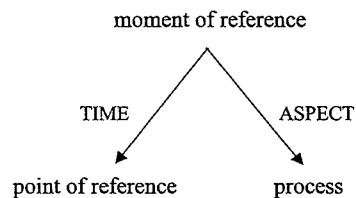


Fig. 1. The two axes of temporality

In the following example, the selection made by the moment of reference isolates an interval within the process. In a second step, this interval is related to the moment of speaking. *If one sticks to the linguistic instructions, there is no way of calculating the limits of the process itself*; this can be guessed at only by pragmatic inferences⁹.

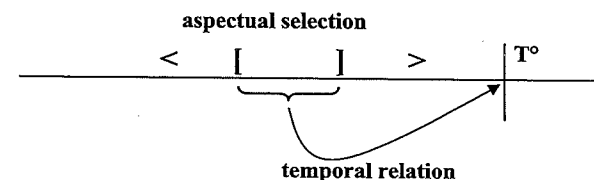
6 This contrast with a verb like *ph* « to reach », which has a dynamic pre-phase, which can be attained in the progressive (KRI II, 65,9-14 ; P Caire CGC 58042, 15,12 ; P Valencay II, R° 11,2). There are of course some examples of *šm* in the progressive. In those cases, the verb has been detelicised by the deletion of its argument. This triggers a shift in the verbal semantics: *šm* takes the meaning of « to walk, to move » (P. Ebers, 108,4-5 ; P. Chester Beatty III, 7,7). A possible instance of the progressive is Teaching of Amenemhat. XIVe. As predicted by the theory, the resulting meaning is mellic “my legs are about to leave”.

7 Those two features (+ DYN, + AGT) are part of the definition of the Egyptian progressive. This contrasts with English where the progressive can express a contingent state as opposed to a permanent state (Smith 1997: 52; Winand 2006b: 287).

8 Cf. Winand (2004: 221-223).

9 In this example, one can assume that the process has come to an end at the moment of speaking. But if one changes the temporal adjunct, for instance, into « ten minutes ago », then the position of the SoA's right

4: He was playing in the park yesterday



In this model, aspect is primary, both functionally and ontogenetically. To explain satisfactorily how aspect functions, one has to answer two basic questions:

- What is a process made of ?
- What are the core instructions of the grammatical tenses at an aspectual level ?

2 Actionality

The first point amounts to building a taxonomy of the SoA's actionality. Since Vendler's pioneering study, it is now widely accepted that the processes are not uniformly constituted (Vendler 1967). From a cognitive viewpoint, processes can be classified according to several criteria: durativity, dynamicity, telicity, gradability ... Semantic roles of the arguments should also be considered when classifying a process. Although there are general, maybe universal, tendencies across languages, any taxonomy of actionality remains language specific. This too often neglected point cannot be overemphasized. The following figure shows the taxonomy of processes in Egyptian¹⁰.

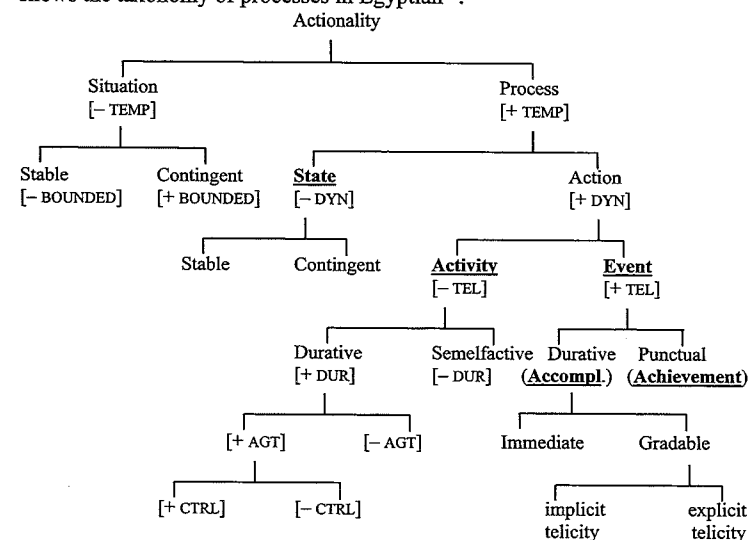


Fig. 2. Taxonomy of actionality in Egyptian¹¹

limit is left open. One cannot rule out that the subject is still playing at T°. It is simply out of the scope (or out of the interest) of the speaker.

10 For the detail, cf. Winand (2006b: 94f.).

11 Vendlerian classes have been written (or added) in bold.

- 8: *dr wn ʕm.w m k3b n b3-mhw hw.t-wʕrt*
šm3.w m k3b.sn hr šhn iry.t
 → *hk3.n.sn m-hmt rʕ*

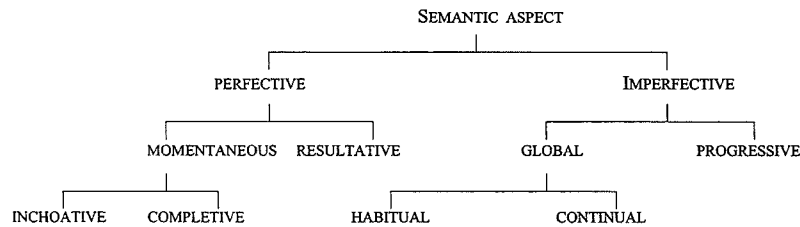
« ... when the Asiatics were in the midst in Avaris of Lower Egypt, as hordes among them were overthrowing what had been made ; (for) it is without Re that they ruled » (*Urk. IV, 390,7-9*)¹⁵

3 Aspect

Studies on aspect have long been marked by the confusion between the semantic and the formal level. While the taxonomy of aspect at the semantic level legitimately claims universal validity, the realisation of aspect at the formal level can be subject to considerable variations across languages. To avoid confusion in terminology, I subsequently use the terms PERFECTIVE and IMPERFECTIVE for the two main semantic subcategories of aspect, and the pair *accompli* and *inaccompli* for the two main subcategories of the grammatical aspect. As will become clear below, grammatical aspect is only one way (of course the most prominent one in some languages) among many others to implement the semantic aspect in language.

3.1 Semantic aspect

Here is a simplified taxonomy of aspect, at the semantic level:



The PERFECTIVE is the marked term of the opposition. Its main expression is the MOMENTANEOUS (the RESULTATIVE is a secondary development). MOMENTANEOUS is a new term, forged to encompass the two realisations of the PERFECTIVE, which at first sight do not seem very compatible: COMPLETIVE and INCHOATIVE. According to a widespread definition, the PERFECTIVE views the process as a whole. This contrasts with the IMPERFECTIVE, which is claimed to consider the process from within. Unfortunately, this definition is unable to explain why the PERFECTIVE can sometimes give an inchoative meaning. As we'll see later, the generally accepted definition of the PERFECTIVE looks very much like that of the IMPERFECTIVE. Actually, the role of the PERFECTIVE is to isolate what is considered the most cognitively salient phase of the process. For telic processes, this crucial moment is the final

¹⁵ The first meaning of *hk3* is « to take the power ». The meaning « to rule » only obtains with resultative tenses. E.g.: *hʕ sbk, hk3.n.f.p.t. mh.n.f.ʕ.wy m wsrw.f* (*Hymn to Sobek = RdE 11, 1957, pl. 3, col. 105-106*; cf. Allen 1991: ex. 3); *Šin.*, B 70: *rš.wy ʕ pn hk3.n.f.*; *Urk.* VII, 34,1: *hk3.n.f.niw.t.f m sdj n šh.t.f m ʕm*; *Urk.* IV, 59,16-60,1: *s3.f ʕhʕ(w) m s.t.f m nswt ʕ.wy, hk3.n.f.hr ns.t n.t wtt sw*; *Urk.* IV, 2028,3-4: *hʕy.t [hm.f] hr s.t it.i hk3.n.f.idb.w hr*; *KRI II, 153,10-11: mi bik hk3.n.f.ʕ.wy*; *KRI II, 237,1: dr hk3.n.f.ny-sw.t n.t rʕ šsp.n.f hʕ.wy tm* (the contrast between *hk3* and *šsp*, two achievements, but with a different kind of post-phase, is here clearly marked).

one, as expected ; for atelic processes, the only moment that can be safely assessed is when the process begins. The division of the uses of the PERFECTIVE thus mirrors that of actionality:

	PERFECTIVE	
	COMPLETIVE	INCHOATIVE
Telic proposition	←~~~~~{+}—	
Atelic proposition		[←~~~~~>

The IMPERFECTIVE is the unmarked term of the opposition. As already noted, the IMPERFECTIVE is said, by sheer symmetry with the definition of the PERFECTIVE, to view the process from within. This definition actually fits very well with the PROGRESSIVE. But it leaves unexplained the nature of the IMPERFECTIVE at a general level. I here propose that the IMPERFECTIVE opens a semi-open interval to the right, whose left limit coincides with the beginning of the process: $\langle [\] \rangle$. This allows for the habitual meaning occasionally conveyed by the IMPERFECTIVE. As the interval is not closed to the right, factorisation of the process can occur. The PROGRESSIVE is a specialisation of the IMPERFECTIVE. The selection is a close interval within the process to the exclusion of the limits of the process: $\langle [\] \rangle$.

I now give the formal definitions of the GLOBAL IMPERFECTIVE and the PROGRESSIVE IMPERFECTIVE:

The GLOBAL IMPERFECTIVE of a sentence $f(k,l)$ is true, if there is an open interval $(i,j) \cap (k,l)$ with $i > k$ and $t^\circ > i$.

$$k < [i \quad | t^\circ \quad] >$$

The PROGRESSIVE IMPERFECTIVE of a sentence $f(k,l)$ is true, if there is an open interval $(i,j) \cap (k,l)$ with $i > k$ and $j < l$, with no subinterval of $(i,j) = (i,j)$, and with $t^\circ \cap (i,j)$.

$$k < [i \quad | t^\circ \quad] j >$$

One can contrast the GLOBAL IMPERFECTIVE and the PROGRESSIVE IMPERFECTIVE as follows:

- The PROGRESSIVE's left limit is dissociated from the SoA's left limit.
- The PROGRESSIVE is bounded to the right (contingency).
- The point of reference (t°) cuts the domain of the PROGRESSIVE in two subdomains. The subdomain to the right of t° is part of the possible worlds (this allows a modal use of the PROGRESSIVE).
- The PROGRESSIVE has the gradability property. With this are most often associated dynamicity and control (see below).

3.2 Formal realisations of aspect

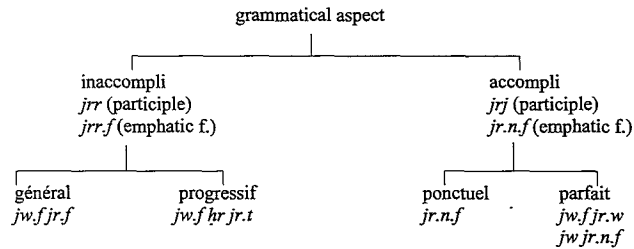
Languages have at their disposal a large array of means to express aspect. One can distinguish, from the most to the least integrated at the grammatical level:

- a. the grammatical aspect, as a system of a regular set of oppositions,
- b. grammatical tenses outside the regular system of aspect but with strong aspectual instructions,
- c. aspectual auxiliaries,
- d. lexical means.

The four categories will now be briefly discussed.

3.2.1 Grammatical aspect

Middle Egyptian makes use of a regular set of oppositions between *accompli* and *inaccompli*. In its extended formation, grammatical aspect is a system of four basic tenses¹⁶:



According to the SoA's actionality, different shades of meaning obtain (dialectic relations between aspect and actionality). To give an example, the following table gives the selection made by the *inaccompli progressif*:

ACTIONALITY CLASSES	BASIC CONFIGURATION	SELECTION
state	←→	---
activity with subject [+ AGT] [+ CTRL]	←→	←[~][~]→
activity with subject [+ AGT] [- CTRL]	←→	←[~][~]→
activity with subject [- AGT]	←→ _[-agt]	---
semelfactive	<> / <>	<>[x] / <>[x]
achiev. w/ dyn. pre-phase and stative post-phase	←→<+→	←[~][~]<+→
achiev. w/o pre-phase and w/ dyn. post-phase	<+→	[[<+→
achiev. w/o pre-phase and w/ stative post-phase	<+→	[[<+→
non-gradable accomplishment	←→<+→	←[~][~]<+→
gradable accompl. w/ explicit telicity	<++++> _e	<++++>[+] _e
gradable accompl. w/ implicit telicity	<++++> _i	<++++>[+] _i

As in many languages, the Egyptian progressive carries the features [+ DYN] and [+ DUR]. That the use of the progressive is blocked with states and activities with agentless subject comes thus as no surprise¹⁷. Activities with an agent in full control of the process and accomplishments are standard in the progressive. With other classes come very interesting features:

- the agent's control is strengthened with activities whose subject is prototypically viewed as having a small control (or no control at all) of the process. In Egyptian,

16 The French names have been retained to avoid ambiguities. I also note that translations like unachieved for *inaccompli* is not well received in the English tradition ; it is also not completely devoid of ambiguity since it is sometimes taken as an equivalent of PERFECTIVE in general linguistics ! The subclasses of the *accompli* and the *inaccompli* are neutralised in the participles and relative forms, and in the emphatic formations.

17 The situation in Egyptian is different from that of English where the progressive can express a contingent state (The statue is standing in the park vs. The statue stands in the park): cf. Smith (1997: 52).

this results in a shift of the meaning for certain verbal lexemes¹⁸. For instance, *sdm* and *m33*, which mean « to hear » and « to see » in the *inaccompli général*, take the meaning of « to listen to » and « to look (at) » in the progressive:

- 9: *iw mdw.f n.i*
→ *nn wi hr sdm st*
« he spoke to me, but I was not listening » (ShS, 73-75)¹⁹
- 10: *ist wi hd.i r nd-hr.t r hnw pf wr n hm.f*
→ *sd3wty.w (...) hr m33 s3.i r pr-nsw.t*
« each time I sailed downstream to pay my respect to this great Mansion of His Person, the treasurers were witnessing my introduction to the palace » (Munich Glypt. 35,15-16)²⁰
- the non-durative verbs without pre-phase (semelfactive) are normally not found with the progressive. Factorisation of the process is a possible by-product in this case. Examples are not numerous ; here is one in Late Egyptian:
- 11: *iw.s sdr.ti <hr> bš Ø*
« she was lying, spitting » (LES 14,1)
- for the verbs of achievement, the progressive makes a selection within the pre-phase, if any:
- 12: *tw ph.tw mw.t hr rh st*
« one reaches death when trying to know them » (Ptahhotep, 288)²¹
- 13: *iw t3 h3s.t hr mwt m-^c hkr.w*
« this land is dying of hunger (Semnah Dispatches, 4x+10, JEA 31, 1945, pl. 10)²²

18 In a way, Middle Egyptian can be said to compensate a relative paucity of its stock of verbal lexemes by the use of aspectual tenses. Cf. the case of *mwt* « die », which takes on the meaning of « agonize » in the progressive, and that of « be dead » in the resultative.

19 Contrast with *Peas.*, B2, 113-114: *mk wi hr spr n.k n sdm.n.k st* « I am appealing to you, but you cannot hear it ». The use of an *inaccompli général* suggests that Rensi's attitude is close to surdity. In the following example, the presence of the adjunct *m 'nh.wj.i* « Look, I am listening with my ears whoever will speak ».

20 Control of the process can have a demiurgic force, as in the following example: *dd.in hr mk wi hr m3.f hd hd hpr m3-hd pw* « Then said Horus: 'I am seeing it very white'; this means that the oryx came into being » (CT II, 337d-338b).

21 Cited by Vernus (1990: ex. 388), with other possible cases. Cf. *ki.n psd.t hr rh rn.f* « the Ennead cried when discovering his name » (Kees 1922: 98-99). Cf. in Late Egyptian, treated as an aspectual auxiliary, *iw.i hr hpr <iw> bn twi hr rh pr r-hnr m p3y.i shr* « and then it happened that I would not try to go out as it was my habit » (P. Leyde I 371, V° 23). Same phenomenon in P. *Gourob*, R° 2,5-6 (= *RAD*, 14,10-11), where *rh* is used as a modal auxiliary.

22 Compare with Russian: *on umiral* (imperfective) ... *nakonec on umer* (perfective) « he was dying ... and finally he died » (Forsyth 1970: 49). Cf. *Pyr.*, 833a MN: *h3 A pw sm.n.k 'nh.k, nj sm.n.k is mwt.k* « Oh, this A, it is living that you have gone ; it is not dying that you have gone », with the *sdm.f* functioning as an *inaccompli progressif*. By contrast with the *inaccompli général*: *ist ir p3 nty nb hr mwt m nn n wr.w, hr-di hm.f sm [s3].fr 'h^c hr s.t.f* « for whoever died among those nobles, His Person made his son go to stand in his place » (Urk. IV, 690,2-5). The habitual meaning of the sentence is made clear by the generic phrase *ir p3 nty nb*, and by the pattern *hr-sdm.f*, perhaps already on its way to be grammaticalized ; the pseudo-verbal construction SN + *hr* + inf. here expresses the *inaccompli général* (contra Junge 1970: 33, who understands the sentence as a progressive).

if there is no pre-phase, the meaning is what I call the *mellique*²³:

- 14: *mṯ wi m h3.t r km.t r inṯ.ṯ ḳw im n ḥrdw.i*
 « Look, I am about to go down to Egypt to bring back some meal for my children » (*Peas.*, R 2-6)²⁴
- with the gradable accomplishments with an implicit telicity (the so-called verbs of quality), the meaning is, as expected, dynamic:
- 15: *rdi ḳw ḥr g3.t ḥr ḳ*
 « he who gives breath is becoming sparse on earth » (*Peas.*, B1, 131)
- 16: *ḥc.n šḥm.n ḥm.f r.s ḥr-ḥ3.t mšc.f*
 → *m3.in.sn ḥm.f ḥr ḥm r.s*
 « and then His Person showed his strength for it at the head of his army, and they saw His Person showing his strength for it » (*Urk.* IV, 657,17 = Vernus 1984b: ex. 36)²⁵

3.2.2 Grammatical tenses outside the regular system of aspect

There also exist tenses outside the aspectual system *stricto sensu*, but which nonetheless carry aspectual instructions. For instance, the *sḏm.t.f* and, most probably, the *sḏm.tj.fj* belong to the sphere of the perfective resultative. This can be evidenced by looking at the meaning of some actionality classes. In ex. 20, the selection of the post-phase of the verb *ḥk3* gives the expected meaning: an activity (cf. *supra*, ex. 8). This contrasts with the second member of the phrase, *jr.tj.fj*, where the *sḏm.tj.fj* expresses a situation.

- 17: *iw n mr.t ir.t.f*
 « his eye was not yet ill » (*CT* II, 345b)
- 18: *ir swt rmt nb.t sš nb (...)* ḳ.tj.sn r iz pn
 « but as for any man, any scribe (...) who will have entered in this tomb » (*Siut* I, 225)
- 19: *šḥnt s.t.f iw.f m ḥrd,*
n rḥ.t.f d.t.f
 « ... who advanced his position when he was a child, before having known his nature » (*B.H.*, I, pl. 41)
- 20: *ir ḥk3 nb ḥk3.tj.fj m ḥf3.t*
ir.tj.fj c-ḏw bin r ḏri.t tn

23 The *mellique* (from the Greek auxiliary μέλλω) expresses a process which is about to happen. This term has been chosen to avoid « inchoative » or « ingressive », commonly used in this sense, but most unfortunately, since they etymologically express the beginning of a process. From a typological viewpoint, the situation of Egyptian is not isolated: cf. Russian (Forsyth 1970: 47-51, Comrie 1976: 41-44, Bache 1985: 38, 50, Paducheva 1995: 81-84). The following example is particularly clear: *Ivan mne daval* (imperf.) *knigu, a potom ne dal* (perf.) « Ivan was about to give me a book, but finally he did not give it » (Klein 1995: ex. 28). Greek offers a close parallel: καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἐδεδώκεσαν σφέας αὐτοῦς τοῖσι Ἀθηναίοισι οἱ Πλαταιεῖς (...) Ἐδοσαν δὲ ᾧδε. Πιεζόμενοι ὑπὸ Θηβαίων οἱ Πλαταιεῖς ἐδίδωσαν πρῶτα παρατηροῦσι (...) Λακεδαιμονίοισι σφέας αὐτοῦς. Οἱ δὲ οὐ δεκόμενοι ... « The Plateans had put themselves to the Athenians (...). They did it so: pressed by the Thebans, the Plateans first offered themselves to the Lacedaemonians who happened to be there. But as they were not accepting them ... » (HDT VI,108). In this nice example where the verb δίδωμι appears in three different tenses, the choice of ἐδίδωσαν shows that the first move of the Plateans turned out to be a vain attempt.

24 Cf. Vernus (1990: ex. 285). See also *Lit. Fragments*, I, B 1: *hrw nfr iw.n m h3.t r 33*; T. *Carnarvon* I, R° 15-16: *p3 w n nfr <ws> m h3(.t)*.

25 For an example of *šḥm* in the *sḏm.n.f* with a resultative meaning, see *Pyr.*, § 779: *šḥm.n.t m ḥ.t mw.t.t tfn.t n msy.t.t* « you was not born when you already had seized the power in the womb of your mother Tefnut ».

« as for any governor who will govern in Hefat, and who will have done an evil and bad action against this sarcophagus » (*Ankhtifi*, II,0,3)

3.2.3 Aspectual auxiliaries

Aspectual auxiliaries are not systematically used in Egyptian. There are auxiliaries for inchoative (*ḥpr*, *s3c*, *f3j*, *mḥ*, *šsp*), egressive (*rwi*, *tm*), completive (*3bi*, *ḳk*, *pḥ*, *fḥ*, *ḥd*, *ḥ3c*, *kn*, *grḥ*), resultative (*ḥpr*) and progressive. It is sometimes difficult to decide whether they are (semi-)grammaticalized elements or lexical expressions.

The verb *ḥpr* quickly became integrated in the grammatical system to express the inchoative. The process, which can already be seen at work in Middle Egyptian, was probably achieved in Late Egyptian:

- 21: *iw ḥpr.n didi.ti šmḥw n niw.t(.t)*; *iw ḏ3.n(.t) s(j) c33.w zp.w (?)*
 « one began to give barley to my city; I have crossed it many times » (*JEA* 47, 1960, pl. 1, l. 12)
- 22: *iw.s ḥr ḥpr ḥr s3w p3y.s ḥ3y r-ikr zp 2*
 « and she started to watch her husband very closely » (*LES* 6,14-15)

The complex constructions involving the verbs *ḥc*, *ḥmsi* and *sdr* in Late Egyptian is another case to consider. When used as auxiliaries, they can be conjugated in the Old Perfective or in a dynamic construction (e.g. *iw.f ḥr sḏm*, *wn.in.f ḥr sḏm*); they are followed by a verb in the Old Perfective or in the infinitive with the preposition *ḥr*. The combinations are given in the table below²⁶:

	Old Perfective	Dynamic construction
Old Perfective	resultative (23)	ingressive (25)
<i>ḥr</i> + Inf.	progressive (24)	inchoative (26)

- 23: *p3-wn twi ḥms.kwi lb.kwi*
 « because I have now become thirsty » (*KRI* III, 157,5)
- 24: *ḥr-ir twn ḥc.ti pš.w, iw X tj*
 « and as we were sharing them, X came » (*P. BM* 10053, V° 2,16)
- 25: *iw p3 ḥrd ḥr ḥc w3.w ḥr nw °*
 « and the child put himself aside while looking » (*LES* 4,11-12)²⁷
- 26: *iw.f ḥr ḥc ḥr rmy.t n.f ḳ3(.f)*
 « and he began to weep high on his account » (*LES* 17,5)²⁸

The construction *iw.f ḥr ḥc* + Old Perfective is not frequent²⁹. But examples of *iw.f ḥr ḥc* + adv./prep. SN are numerous to express the beginning of a new situation:

- 27: (...) *iw.sn ḥr ḥc m-b3ḥ knb.t*
iw.sn ḥr ir cḥḥ n nb c,w,s
 « and they stood up in front of the magistrates, and they made an oath by the Lord, LPH » (*KRI* II, 802, 12-13)³⁰

26 In the late XXth Dyn., there are some examples of a more complex construction combining *ḥpr* and *ḥc*: *iw.w ḥpr ḥc sḏd r-ḏd* « and they began to discuss » (*P. BM* 10052, 8,9).

27 Cf. *LES* 32,6: *iw.s (ḥr) [ḥ] iw.ti <m> p3y grḥ m w c ḏd šri*.

28 With the verb *rmi* « to weep », this expression seems stereotypical: cf. *Histoire de revenant*, 8-9 (*LES* 91,6-7); *Horus & Seth*, 7,1-2 (*LES* 45,13-14); 8,11 (*LES* 48,10); *Wenamun*, 2,64 (*LES* 73,13).

29 But *ḥpr* in a dynamic tense + Old Perfective is well attested (Winand 1996: II,B,1): e.g., *iw n3 ih nty r-ḥ3.t.f ḥr ḥpr nfr r-ikr zp 2* (*LES* 10,15-16).

30 For other ex. with *ḥc*, see *LES* 25,8; 29,9; 41,8; 53,4; 71,9-10; *LRL* 45,5; *KRI* V,476,5.

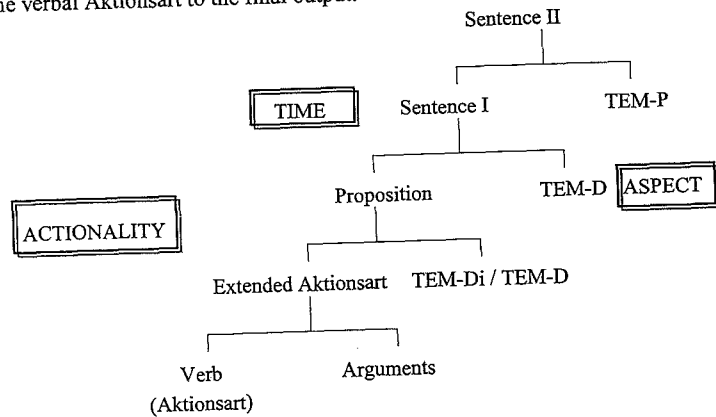
Here it is worth noting that the *sw ḥꜥ.w ḥr sdm* pattern, which conveys progressive in Late Egyptian, never achieved a full grammatical status. It always remained an option for the speaker. Although the progressive is distinct from the non-progressive in the negative (*bn sw ḥr sdm* vs. *bw ir.f sdm*), the present I (*twi ḥr sdm*) can express all the nuances attached to the *inaccompli*.

3.2.4 Lexical means

Lexical means can help fixing aspectual values. The best known are probably the temporal adjuncts (TEM), in the largest meaning of the term. There are three main categories of TEM:

- Temporal adjuncts of position (TEM-P) set a process on the timeline absolutely (tomorrow, June 14) or relatively by reference to a secondary point of reference (the day after, three weeks ago). TEM-P can explicitly integrate a time span (yesterday, between 3 and 5 o'clock).
- Temporal adjuncts of frequency (TEM-F) indicate, with more or less precision, the rhythm of a process (often, every day). TEM-F can be considered as a subcategory of TEM-P.
- Durative temporal adjuncts (TEM-D) give some indication on the time interval of a process (during three hours, for a long time). Either limit of the interval can be completely ignored (TEM-D-l: since one hour; TEM-D-r: until three o'clock). There is also a subcategory of TEM-D for expressing the time needed to achieve a process. In this case, the temporal adjunct is viewed *mutandis mutatis* as an instrument (TEM-Di: in three hours, quickly).

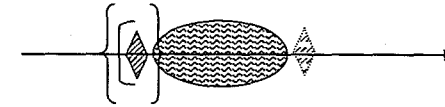
While some temporal adjuncts like TEM-P's and TEM-F's bear on the sentence (temporal relation), TEM-Di's have the process under their scope (actionality). TEM-D's are more ambiguous: they can affect the process (actionality) or explicitate the span of the moment of reference (aspectual relation). The figure below shows the chronogenesis of a sentence from the verbal Aktionsart to the final output.



Here are now some illustrations of TEM. The first example shows the perfect coincidence of the instructions given by the grammatical tense (*accompli momentan * with an inchoative

meaning according to the verb's actionality) and the TEM-P. In the chronograph, the moment of reference is figured with square brackets³¹ and the TEM with curly brackets:

28: *iw ḥm.fꜥ.w.s ḥr mr.t n.f r-ikꜣ zp 2 m 13 wnw.t*
 « and His Person, L,P,H, fell exceedingly in love with him on the spot » (LES 28,14)



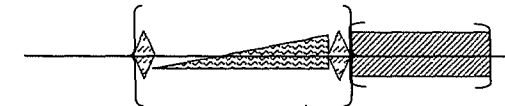
With TEM-D and TEM-Di the situation looks different. In the following example, the SoA's actionality is durative and telic. The TEM-Di bears on the whole process, but the grammatical tense (here an *accompli momentan *) entails a completive meaning:

29: *ḥꜥ.n rdd.t wꜥb.n.s m wꜥb n hrw 14*
 « and then Redjedet purified herself by a purification of 14 days » (P. Westcar, 11,18-19)



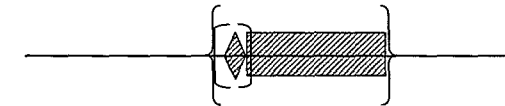
In the next example, the scope of the TEM-Di is still the process, and the moment of reference selects the post-phase of the process:

30: *iw ir.n(i) mi-kd n rnp.t wꜥ.t*
 « I have done it all in one single year » (Urk. I, 109,3)



The last example shows how the moment of reference and a TEM-D-r interact. Although the moment of reference selects the process *stricto sensu*, the TEM-D-r encompasses the post-phase of the process. The right limit of the post-phase is extra-linguistically fixed:

31: *dy r.in sw ḥr ḥnk.wt.fr snb.t.f*
 « put him to bed until he has recovered » (CT II, 342a S2P)



4 Time

Expression of time by grammatical means is not the top priority in the Middle Egyptian verbal system³². This sharply contrasts with the situation of Late Egyptian and Demotic.

In the theoretical approach sketched here, expression of time in a narrow sense is channelled through the relation of a moment of reference with a point of reference. As noted above, the moment of reference makes a selection within the process. It is the aspectual

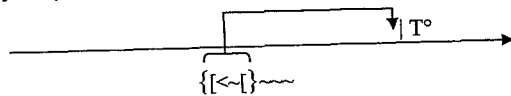
31 As previously noted, the interval is here open to the right.

32 Egyptology has seen extreme attitudes as regards the expression of time: from a radically aspectual system, without time dimension (Hannig 1982: 37), to a time only system (Schenkel 1997).

branch of temporality. The moment of reference can then be related to a point of reference, be it the moment of speaking (absolute tense) or another moment of reference (relative tense).

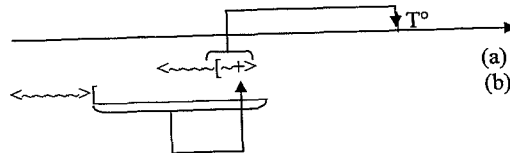
In the first example below, the moment of reference selects the beginning of the process³³. The moment of reference is anterior to the moment of speaking. Its precise location in time, completely left out of the grammatical scope, is lexically specified by a temporal adjunct (TEM-P):

- 32: *ḥḥ.n.i hr ir.t w^cw r-db3.f(...)* *m h3w nb t3.wy nb-ph.ty-r^c*
 « then I became officer in his place (...) at the time of the Lord of the Two Lands
 Nebpehtyre » (*Urk.* IV, 2,12-13)



The next example illustrates a relative time: the *sdm.n.f* of sentence b selects the post-phase of the process (*accompli résultatif*). This moment of reference is coextensive to the main sentence's moment of reference: when the sheikh decides to promote Sinuhe's situation, he is in the state of having already noted how brave he is:

- 33: *rdi.t.f wi m h3.t hrd.w.f* (a)
m3.n.f r(w)d^c wj.t (b)
 « he put me at the head of his children, (for) he had noted how vigorously my
 arms behaved » (*Sin.*, B 106-108)



Egyptian has at its disposal a vast array of means for expressing time. They can be more or less integrated into the grammatical system. Most often, two or more of them are used simultaneously. In the list given below, the parameters for defining time are shortly presented. I refer to my study for longer developments (Winand 2006: ch. 9).

4.1 The enunciative level

Egyptology is now accustomed to the general opposition between discourse and narration (Benveniste 1966, Luscher 1998: 88-91, Doret 1986: 13-14, Vernus 1987), to which one should add narrative discourse as an intermediate category (Winand 1995, 1998). As regards the expression of temporality in a wide sense, there are some statistically founded correlations between the enunciative level on the one hand, and time and aspect on the other hand. They are presented in the figure below:

	Discourse	Narrative disc.	Narrative
persons	1 st -2 nd	1 st	3 rd
modality	subj./polemical	objective	objective
aspect & time	<i>inaccompli</i> present/future	perfect past-present	<i>accompli</i> past

33 An inchoative selection is what is to be expected (combination of an *accompli momentané* with an atelic activity: cf. supra, § 3.1).

4.2 Temporally marked verbal forms

Ancient and Middle Egyptian seem to have an opposition between an aspectual sub-system (*accompli vs. inaccompli*) and a modal-temporal sub-system. To the latter one belong the so-called ancient perfective *sdm.f*, and, with crisscrossed relations, the prospective *sdm.w.f*, the subjunctive *sdm.f* and the future pattern *iw.f r sdm*. From a typological viewpoint, the case of Egyptian is not isolated, for it could possibly share company, as far as time *stricto sensu* is concerned, with a small group of languages which basically oppose a future to a non-future (Comrie 1985: 49, Tournadre 2004: 40).

There are also in Middle Egyptian some tenses specialized in expressing relative time, as *sdm.hr.f*, *sdm.in.f*, *sdm.k3.f* (most recently, see Polis 2005). The sequential *mtw.f sdm* and *iw.f hr (tm) sdm*, both typical of the Late Egyptian system, are also engaged in a dialectic process at the modal and aspectual levels (Winand 2001a).

4.3 Enunciative auxiliaries

There is in Middle Egyptian a rich set of enunciative auxiliaries. They originally operate at the enunciative level by expressing the speaker's attitude vis-à-vis what he/she says or what he/she expects from the hearer. Some of them have time implication. As is well known, there are auxiliaries for fixing the absolute time (*iw*, *mk*), for expressing sequentiality (*ḥḥ.n*, *wn.in*, *hr*, *k3*, *ih*), and for backgrounding (*isk/ist*).

4.4 Temporal auxiliaries

Temporal auxiliaries have not always been given the full attention they deserve. There are in Egyptian verbal auxiliaries which help structuring the chain of events or linking an event to a point of reference. The best known of such auxiliaries is *p3w* « to have done in the past » (Reintges 1997: 135). It etymologically implies the existence in the past of a SoA whose left limit of the moment of reference coincides with the *zp tpj*³⁴. Besides *p3w*, which became fully grammaticalized in Late Egyptian (*bwpw.f sdm*), one has to mention two patterns: *n-zp sdm.f* « it has not happened that he could hear » and *n-zp p3.f sdm* « it has never occurred that he heard in the past » (Vernus 1995: 76 sqq).

There are also semi-auxiliaries to specify the position of an event in a chain, in what I call a « *processus* ». Egyptian has auxiliaries to fix the beginning of a *processus* (*š3^c* « to begin, to start »³⁵), to introduce a new development in a *processus* (*šp* « to receive »³⁶, *iwi* « to

34 Obviously not all occurrences of *p3w* connect the event to the primaevial time (Uljas 2003: 399, but with excessive criticism). The left limit of the moment of reference can be linguistically specified: *n-zp p3.tw ir.t st dr h3w nj-sw.t bitj snfrw* « one had never done this since the time of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Snefru » (Inscr. Sérabit el-Khadim). In scientific texts, where the causal chain of events must be precisely known, *p3w* is sometimes used to mark an event as past: *ir k3.k s.t p3.n.s h3(i).t h.t mi mw* « if you examine a woman who has already poured out substances like water » (P. Ebers 96,16-17), *ir swt gm.k s pf shd.n.f p3.n.f wd.t nhd* « but if you find that this man has become pale, once he has overcome his feebleness » (P. Smith 3,13).

35 *LEM* 2,12.

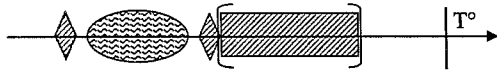
36 *Sin.*, R 47.

come »³⁷ and *hr* « to fall »³⁸, or to express the end of a *processus* (*pri* « to go out »³⁹, *ph* « to reach »⁴⁰ and *dr* « to end »⁴¹).

4.5 Converters

There is a past converter in Egyptian, *wn*, whose primary function is not, as it is widely assumed (Polotsky 1960: § 10, Junge 1996: 169-171, Allen 2000: 20.16), to transfer a process to the past, but to explicitly state that this process is no more relevant at the considered point of reference (*contra* Wentz 1962: 307, n. 21 whose advocated example is misunderstood)⁴². In the following example, it is clear that the chaotic situation is over when the King has the report written:

34: *wn p3 b3 n km.t h3f*
 « the land of Egypt was neglected » (P. Harris I, 75,2)



The meaning of *wn* clearly manifests itself in relative phrases by contrast with *nty*. Although, in a phrase introduced by *wn*, the moment of reference is closed to the right and set before T° , the moment of reference includes T° if the phrase is introduced by *nty*. The contrast is evident in the following example: the fact that the sceptre was in the King's hand (*wn m-^c hm.f*) was no more relevant when the text was written down; on the contrary, it was felt important to state that Rawer's tomb was still in the necropolis at that time (*nty m hr.t-ntj*).

35: *hsf 3ms wn m-^c hm.f r rd n sm r^c-wr (...)* *w3 hm.f wd.t m [s3] hr iz.f nt(y) m hr.t-ntj*
 « the sceptre which was in His Person's hand hurt the leg of the *sem*-priest Rawer (...) His Person has ordered to put (it) in writing in his tomb which is in the necropolis » (Urk. I, 232,8-16)

The past converter thus marks a rupture with the moment of speaking, and more generally with what constitutes the relevant world at T° . This explains the modal use of *wn* to express a counterfactual event. The pattern *wn iw.f r sdm* in Late Egyptian to convey counterfactuality is very well known (cf. *joue-r-ait* in French, for a typologically close formation)⁴³.

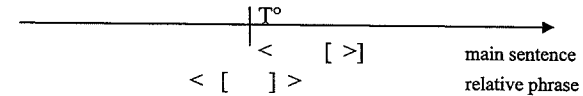
4.6 Syntax

Temporal instructions can be conveyed through syntax. This has been poorly studied so far. As an example, one can consider what happens in Late Egyptian relative clauses in *discourse*⁴⁴. Circumstantial phrases introduced by *iw* express a relative time, but an absolute

37 *Sin.*, B 246-247.
 38 P. *Westcar*, 6,4.
 39 P. *Westcar*, 6,16 ; *ShS*, 130 ; P. *Ebers* 99,20-21 ; *Eloquent Peasant*, B1, 144 ; *Urk.* IV, 895,4.
 40 *Ptahhotep*, 112.
 41 *Kagemni* II,4 ; *The Dispute between a Man and his Ba*, 75 ; *BD Naville* 18,28.
 42 I only mention in passing the role of *wn* in providing background information, as this is very well known.
 43 P. *BM* 10052,4,12 ; *LES* 14,10.
 44 The respective uses of *nty* and *wn* in *narration* seem to go along with the general opposition between essential vs. contingent: compare *ms.w nj-sw.t wn.w m-ht.f* (*Sin.*, R 23), *m stp.w n wnw.t hn^c.f* (B 80), and *rm3 km.t nty.w im hn^c.f* (B 33-34), *it.n.i ntt m im3.f* (B 146).

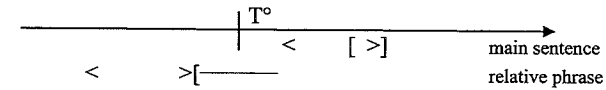
time when introduced by *nty*. To illustrate this, one can consider how the system works in the future.

- a. Main sentence in the future + *nty* + Present I: the moment of reference of the relative phrase includes T° ; as a pragmatic implication, the moment of reference of the relative phrase is, most often, anterior to that of the main sentence: $MR(rel) \cap T^{\circ} \Rightarrow MR(rel) > MR(main)$. The situation can be prototypically figured as follows:



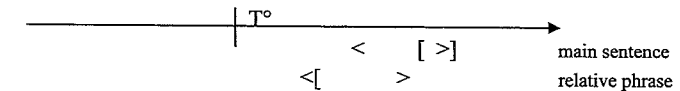
36: *mtw.k h3b <n>.i p3 i.ir.k nb hr smi wp.t nb nty twk hr ir.w*
 « and you'll write me all that you have done and make a report on all the tasks you are doing » (LEM 2,1-2)

- Main sentence in the future + *nty* + *bwppw.f sdm* / relative form: the moment of reference of the relative phrase, that is the post-phase of the process, includes T° (this means that the process *stricto sensu* is anterior to T°); the moment of reference of the relative phrase cannot be but anterior to that of the main sentence: $MR(rel) \cap T^{\circ} \Rightarrow MR(rel) > MR(main)$. The situation can be prototypically figured as follows:



37 *mtw.k di.t in.tw n3 smd.t n thn i.h3b.<D> n.k hr.w*
 « and you'll send the pearls of fayence I have written to you about » (not « I will have written to you about ») (LEM 2,9)

- Main sentence in the future + *nty* + future III: the moment of reference of the relative phrase is set after T° ; the relation between the moment of reference of the relative phrase and that of the main sentence cannot be defined at the linguistic level (it can be inclusion or anteriority): $MR(rel) > T^{\circ} \Rightarrow MR(rel) > \text{or} = MR(main)$. The situation can be prototypically figured as follows:



- inclusion:

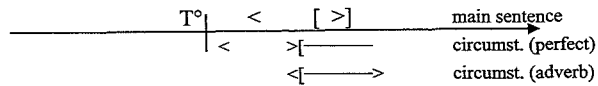
38: *iw.k sdm p3 nty nb iw.i dd.f m dw3*
 « and you'll hear tomorrow all that I'll have to say » (LES 74,8)

- anteriority:

39: *wnm t3y.i 3^c.t hr spr r.k iw.k di.t iw p3 rmt3 nty iw.f sm.t r 3sp n3 it p3 3*
 « as soon as my letter will reach you, you shall send back the man who will have come in order to receive the grain and the ass » (P. *Gardiner* 4, R 4-5)

- Main sentence in the future + *iw* + Present I: the moment of reference of the circumstantial phrase includes the moment of reference of the main sentence; T° is thus anterior: $MR(rel) \cap MR(main) \Rightarrow MR(rel) > T^{\circ}$. This is only attested with *non-dynamic* constructions (adverbial predicate or prepositional phrase, and perfective *sdm.f* or old perfective). With dynamic constructions, Late Egyptian uses

Future III with the circumstantial converter *iw* (*iw iw.f r sdm*: see below). The situation can be prototypically figured as follows:



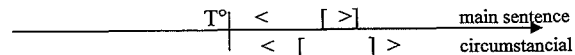
40: *nm iw.i r hpr m s.t iw.k im.s*

« I will not stay in any place where you will be » (LES 16,5-6)

41: *i.ir.k di.t iw.t p3y br 3 zp 2 zp 2, iw.f šw.w*

« you'll let come back this great ship only when completely unloaded » (KRI III, 504,3-4)

- Main sentence in the future + *iw* + Future III: the moment of reference of the circumstantial phrase includes the moment of reference of the main sentence, or it can be posterior; in either case, it is set after T°: MR(rel) ∩ ou > MR(main) ⇒ MR(rel) > T°. As noted above, this construction and the preceding one are complementary. The situation can be prototypically figured as follows:



42: *mtw.k šsp t3y 3k3 (...) mtw.k i3d n.s iw iw.k gm.s r ir n3y.k wprw.t im.s*

« and you shall receive this bark (...) and you shall take care of it, for you shall find it (later) to do your missions with it » (LRL 10,4-5)

The circumstantial Future III is frequent in negative to connect two sentences in TIP texts:

43: *iw.n di.t ky m-r-pw k.t m šb r-db3.s*

iw bn iw.n di.t.s m šb r-db3.w

« we will put another man or woman in her place in substitution, and we will not put her in their place in substitution » (P. Turin 1983, R° 89-92 = OAD, pl. XIX)

- The pattern Future III + *iw* + Future III is thus clearly distinct from the pattern Future III + *iw* + Present I, and from the pattern Present I + *iw* + Future III, where the moment of reference of the circumstantial phrase is set after T° and after the moment of reference of the main sentence. In the following example, one should also pay attention to the modal nuance:

44: *twi di.t n.s p3y.i 2/3 hr [p3]y.s r 3*

iw bn iri šri šri.t m3w m p3y šhr i.ir.i n.s m p3 hrw

« I give her my 2/3 in addition of her third, and nor her son, nor her daughter won't speak against the plan I have done for her today » (KRI VI, 741,14)

4.7 Lexical means

Time can be specified by lexical means, like TEM-P. As with aspect, they can help fixing an absolute or a relative time.

45: *r-nty t3y šc.t twt spr.<tw> r.i (...) m h3.t-zp 10 ibd 1 šmw sww 25*

« this letter of you has reached me (...) in year 10, 1st month of Shemu, day 25 » (LRL 17,10-11)

46: *hr-ir hr-s3*

iw.i hr di.t n.f hmw 1

« and after, I gave him a skin » (KRI IV, 229,1)

4.8 Intonation patterns

I only mention here the all important and very powerful role of intonation in structuring intra- and extra-clausal links (Oréal 2002). The hieroglyphic writing system is completely insensitive to intonation. It thus gives the misleading impression that Egyptian sentences are loosely concatenated without structure, which would obviously make Egyptian a typological curiosity, a trend already too familiar in the discipline, unfortunately.

It is often the case that several of the points discussed above are simultaneously present in a sentence. For instance, in ex. 33 above, the instructions given by the sequential (*3h.c.n.f hr sdm*), the level of enunciation (narration), and the TEM-P point in the same direction.

To this list, one should add other criteria whose links with time are much looser, but essential nonetheless for a correct understanding. They do not primarily aim at expressing time, but they display some statistically demonstrable correlations with time (Winand 2000, 2006b: 409-434):

- temporal implications of aspect,
- temporal implications of actionality classes,
- temporal implications of some constructions according to their polarity or their pragmatic force,
- the use by the hearer/reader of what I call the *inférences directionnelles* (± directional implications) for reconstructing the correct sequence of events as thought of by the speaker.

The correlations of the first three points with time expression can be summed up in a table like the one below. The focus here is the organisation of narration. The main division is a pragmatic one, between foreground and background constructions. Within the foreground constructions, there is a syntactic distinction between initial and intermediary constructions. From this, it is quite easy to establish a connection with a temporal system.

	Foreground		Background
	Initial constr.	Intermed. constr.	
Predication	verbal	verbal	verbal / non-verbal
Aspect	<i>acc. résultatif / ponctuel</i>	<i>acc. ponctuel</i>	<i>acc. résultatif / inaccompli</i>
Actionality	activities / events	events	all kind of process, including non-verbal process
Polarity	positive	positive	positive / negative
Modality	indicative	indicative	indicative / subjunctive
Enonciative level	unmarked	unmarked	marked / unmarked

One has to keep in mind that these are only statistically founded correlations. There is no automatic correspondence between, say, a negative construction and background information. There are of course some instances of negative patterns in foreground, but this is very rare and it always conveys a special meaning. In Late Egyptian, the negative sequential (*iw.f hr tm sdm*) remains exceptional. When one bothers to mention what did not happen, it is usually because the course of events is not what the narrator expected to happen. The negative

sequential thus implies some emphasis, with an adversative side-meaning. The following example, with the adjunct *m p̄y.f shr*, is a good illustration of this strategy:

- 47: *iw.f hr spr r p̄y.f pr*
iw.f hr gm t̄y.f hm.t s̄dr.ti mr.ti n ʿd̄3
iw.s hr tm di.t mw hr dr.t.f m p̄y.f shr
 « and he reached his home, and he found his wife lying down, as if sick. She did not put water over his hands as it was his custom » (LES 13,14-16)

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CONTENTS

PREFACE.....	
Verena M. Lepper "After Polotsky". <i>New Research and Trends in Egyptian and Coptic Linguistics</i>	
"Rückblick"	
Ariel Shisha-Halevy <i>H.J. Polotsky Structuralist</i>	7
H.J. Polotsky – Person and Theory	
Leo Depuydt <i>Our Knowledge of Egyptian and Coptic since Polotsky</i>	17
Stephen Emmel <i>Coptic Grammatical Terminology before and after Polotsky. Transitivity and Case (with sōtm "Hear" for an Example)</i>	31
Wolfgang Schenkel <i>Von der Morphologie zur Syntax und zurück</i>	55
Earlier Egyptian	
Joris F. Borghouts <i>Scrambling in Middle Egyptian: the case of in ir</i>	85
Francis Breyer <i>Ein Faktitiv-Stamm im Ägyptischen</i>	97-
Paul John Frandsen <i>Of Crossroad(s) and Theory</i>	107-
Chris H. Reintges <i>The Older Egyptian Stative Revisited</i>	115-
Alessandro Roccati <i>Die aktiv/passiven Verbalformen des Ägyptischen</i>	135-
Helmut Satzinger <i>Die ägyptischen Gerundiva</i>	139-1
Pascal Vernus <i>Pronouns interrogatifs en égyptien de la première phase</i>	145-1
Later Egyptian	
Marc Collier <i>The Lure of Alterity: inn Conditionals in Late Egyptian</i>	181-1
Åke Engsheden <i>Über die Markierung des direkten Objekts im Koptischen</i>	199-2
Masakatsu Nagai <i>Language Variety in the 19th Dynasty</i>	223-2