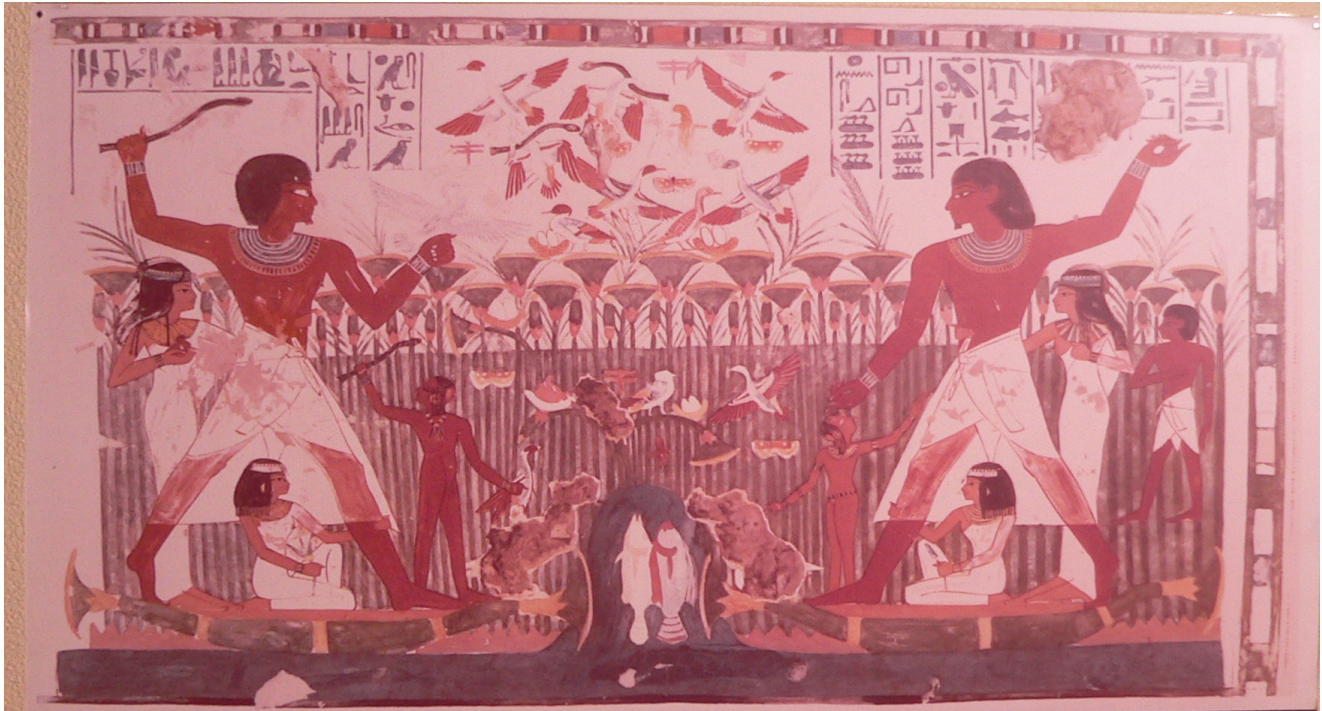


LESSON FIVE STUDY GUIDE

Last Revision Date: 2013 Mar 3



A FAMILY OUTING

When I wrote this Study Guide in February of 2013 there was some discussion on GlyphStudy about the Penn Museum. It's well worth the trip. Here's a copy of a wall painting on display there, this work is by Norman de Garis Davies in 1917, after an original tomb painting.

The caption on the right reads (broken down by columns):

'hns ss' "The traversal of the marsh"

'hbhb ss' "Traveling across the marsh"

'hmhm ib stit' "Taking recreation, Spearing"

'mhYt' "Fish"

damaged

'nht' "Nakht"

'm3^c hrw' "True of voice"

Sorry, the original Egyptian artist seems to have left Nakht empty-handed! No spear!

I'll leave the caption on the left as an exercise for anyone who wants to take a crack at it.

An important point to consider when viewing pictures like this is that the ancient Egyptians don't seem to have illustrated things just for the purpose of showing you a picture. In a case like this, in a tomb, Nakht's "house of eternity", the events depicted actually come to life! Nakht loved taking his family with him on outings like this - and now he gets to do it - forever. What a wonderful way to view eternity! I wish him well.

Lesson highlights
A word to the wise -

Do not put the homework off until the last day.

I'll repeat that again because it's so important.

Do not put the homework off until the last day.

In this lesson you will learn about:

- abbreviations and some rather common strange spellings
- nisbas (we have them in English, too, you've just never thought of them that way)
- independent pronouns
- and many pages of explanation of infinitives which you won't need if you treat them for what they are: nouns.

And you're probably going to learn more about Superman, Batman, and Chicken Man than you ever wanted to.

Section: #51, page 58

PVsisSOA handles all of this stuff in one simple diagram, so you can safely ignore this section.

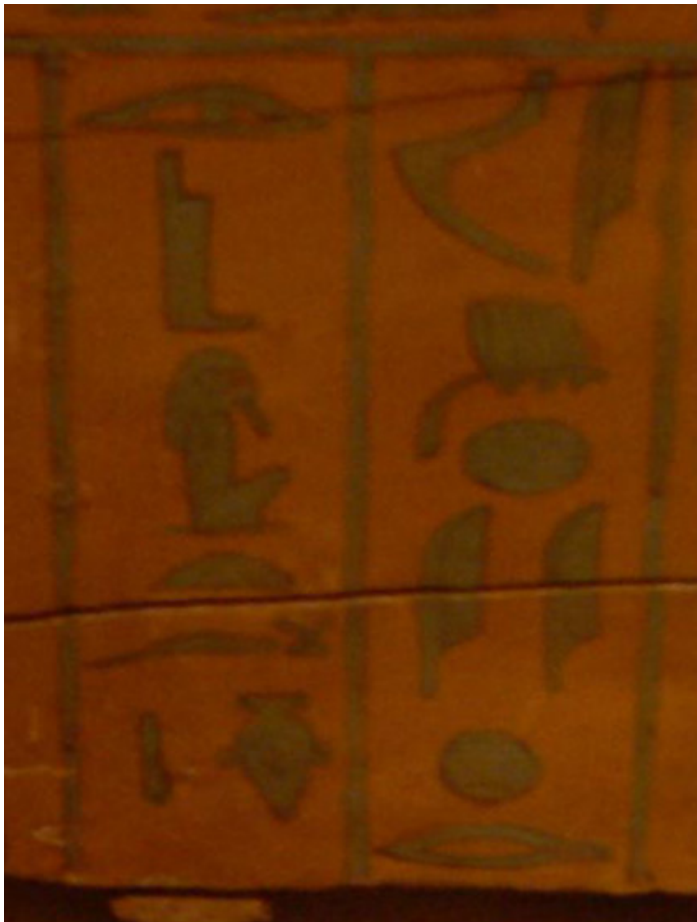
Section: #52, page 59:

This stuff is enough drive you sane. Everything in this section is *très important*. Memorize it. There I go again with that instruction.

A note about '*m³^c hrw*' (or the feminine version: '*m³^ct hrw*'). It is not only used for dead people. It is also applicable to the living. It means “straight shooter”, “straight talker”, literally: “true of voice”. It's most often applied to dead people because when you die you go for judgement. You have to reassure the gods that in your lifetime you did no evil. It's called a negative confession. “I did not kill, I did not steal, ...”. When you are through with your defense, your heart is weighed in the balance against the feather of Maat. Maat is often translated as “truth”, “the way the world should work - i.e. in harmony”, that kind of stuff. I usually think of Maat as being “truth, justice, and the Egyptian way”, a take-off on Superman¹.

If the feather of Maat outweighs your heart you are indeed '*m³^c hrw*'. You have spoken truly. If not, you die a gruesome second death. For the ceremony, see the picture at the end of this Study Guide.

¹ For those who are not familiar with Superman, at least the American version, he always fought for “truth, justice, and the American way.” In other words, the three components of that motto were projected as being inseparable and, to some extent, exclusive. Which made the motto as a whole a noble sounding sentiment - to an American.



A really dark detail from a coffin in the Field Museum, Chicago.

NAME THE DECEASED

GLYPHSTUDY POLL:

What is this guy's name?

Send your answers to

GlyphStudy.

This text certainly includes abbreviation, it may also include honorific precedence².

Read from right to left (as usual):

The first column is clear enough: “*im³hy hr*” = “He who is revered before ...”

The second column starts with '*wsir*' = “Osiris”. But next comes the problem. Is it:

'it ib'

'it.f ib'

'ib it' or

'ib it.f'

And if so, what does it mean?

As Hoch says, the things he mentions in this section are common. I would add, dirt common. Like Chicken Man³, they're everywhere, they're everywhere.

Section #53, page 60:

I don't know why this is here except that in Hoch's mind it probably follows on from the preceding section. You're not going to encounter examples of this stuff in an introductory textbook so, while I think this should be added to your general knowledge, the section would be better located in an appendix.

Section #54, page 61:

I say “nisba”, you say “nisbe”. Same difference.

² For some reason “honorific precedence” seems clearer to me than the more polysyllabic “honorific transposition”. Of course, the more syllables you have in a word, the more “technical” it seems to be.

³ Chicken Man is a series of very short (two/three minute) radio spots which are parodies of the Batman TV series (both originally from the 1960's, and both of which can still be seen, at least some episodes, on You Tube and on broadcasts. Of course, it's also a spoof of Superman. Batman itself (not the modern movies, but the old TV series) was a parody of James Bond and the Batman comic books all at the same time. Chicken Man can be heard at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3j7fjzJvnA> and an Egyptian themed Batman episode is visible at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWitfq9-ZUA> (an hour show). I just thought you might like a little cultural break in your life. Very little culture.

It's interesting that both Egyptian and English form their nisbas the same way, with a 'y' sound at the end of the singular and then use their native plurals to indicate more than one. American GI's will refer to the civilians in the neighboring community as “townies” (= “those in the town”, of course), but only when the GI's are feeling magnanimous. Otherwise the epithet they use is somewhat more derogatory.

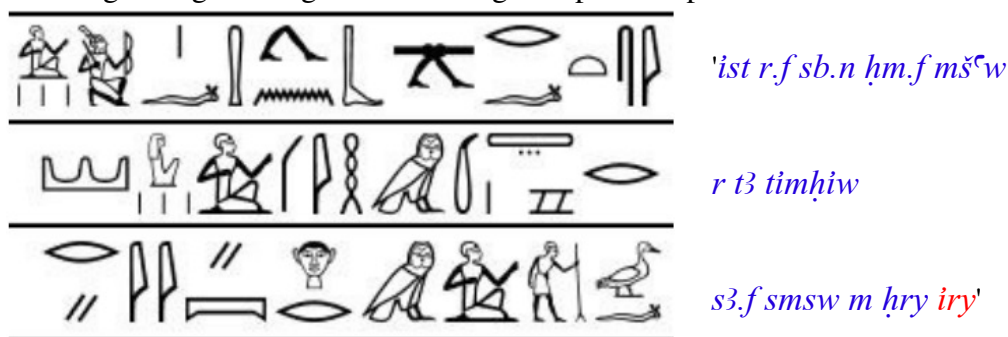
Well, that one comes from a noun. Here's a couple from a pair of related prepositions. It deals with navels. Most people prefer an “inny”. You definitely don't want to be a girl with an “outy”. Nisbas all.

What does west '*imnty*' have to do with being on the right hand? It's because the primary direction of orientation in ancient Egypt was south, not north as it is with us⁴. West is to the right of south. Yeah, I'm serious. Oops, I just saw Hoch gives you a footnote on that subject.

Section #55, page 62:

Pretty clearly these things are derived from the preposition '*r*'.

But things can get strange from the English speaker's point of view:



"At this time His Majesty had sent an army against the land of the Timhiu, his eldest son was in command of *it*."

literally:

'''*ist*' At the time, '*r.f*' concerning this matter, '*sb.n*' sent, '*hm.f*' His Majesty, '*mšw*' an army '*r*' to/against, '*t3*' the land '*timhiw*' of the Timhiu, '*s3.f*' son his '*smsw*' eldest, '*hry*', the one in charge over '*iry*', *it/thereunto*".

Expect to see '*iry*' used like this a lot. If you don't like “thereunto” (which is what '*iry*' really means here) try “it”.

Section #56, page 62:

Don't worry about the phrase “nominative case”. It isn't appropriate to Egyptian. What it means is that the independent pronoun is used as the subject of a sentence which it appears in.

⁴ And just to add to your confusion I'll point out that “orientation” comes from “orient”, the east, because that used to be the primary direction in maps from western Europe - putting the direction of Jerusalem, orienting it, at the top, don't you see?

This is the third of the four great groups of Egyptian pronouns. Uh-oh, here comes that word again: memorize!

part 1:

It's important to know not only where a construction is used, but also where it is not used. This contrast can suggest important differences in how the language appeared in the minds of the actual speakers.

Here's what it means to me, if you have some different take on it, I'd like to know - on GlyphStudy, of course.

- Legitimate: '*ntf it.s*' = “he is her father”. “Identification” as Hoch put it, or perhaps “existential”.
- Never: *'*iw.f it.s*'. Although a '*iw.f sdm.f*' construction exists, this ain't it because there's no verb in this example. There does not seem to be a legitimate '*iw.f*' + noun construction that I am aware of.

But to locate something or someone in time and/or space you DO use the '*iw.f*'.

- Legitimate: '*iw.k m pr*' (= “you are in the house”).
- Ungood: *'*ntk m pr*'.

But, I think this is OK:

'*iw.k m it.s*' (= “you are acting in the capacity of her father”), because it has the same structure as '*iw.k m pr*'.

This particular example is controversial - I put it here so you would be familiar with the problem.

Hoch says that the “*m*” of status⁵ refers to non-inherent things. In other words, usually referring to someone as “her father” you would not use the '*m*' of status because the condition of being her father is permanent. The example above would indicate impermanence, perhaps an adoptive father. I used this definition for a long time but then found some cases where '*m*' certainly appeared to indicate a permanent status. I just don't remember where they are. If I find one I'll let you know.

Having said all this, it's time to review the four main sentence types in Egyptian. They all follow PVsioSOA. It's also time to review the four verb forms we've seen so far. Take the time to do this.

The four types break down into two main varieties:

- “Verbless” sentences - three kinds:
 - Location in time, space, or condition⁶: the general form is '*iw*' + nominal subject + place where it is located, almost always identified by a prepositional phrase. '*iw.k m dpt*' (= “you are in the boat”), '*iw hrwt.k m pr.i*' (= “your stuff is in my house”, and '*iw.i m t3ty*' (= “I am acting in the capacity of the king's deputy⁷”). The latter one is actually a location in the

5 Don't call this thing an “*m*” of predication”. The English language has moved on since the time that phrase was coined. The phrase means nothing any more. It's gibberish. *It amazes me that grammarians, who profess to be discussing language, are incapable of keeping up with changes in their own language.* Another abuse of the same stripe (and vintage) is the out-of-date word “modify”. That's why you shouldn't use that one either.

6 Some people call these “adverbial”. No, I'm not going to rant. By now you know how silly and useless this term is.

7 I've told you elsewhere that early Egyptologists wanted to make their subject sound, well, middle eastern, so they used the term “vizier” to translate '*Bty*'. And it has remained so. Unfortunately. “King's deputy” is a more accurate term and

space occupied by the king's deputy. These are the kind of sentences Hoch introduced way back in **#1,10, page 13**.

- Initial adjective⁸ **#3,44 page 51**.
- Nominals⁹ and maybe one or more prepositional phrases, which is **what we're learning now**. I have no comment on **#56, part 2 on page 63**. Just read the text.
- “Verbal” sentences - lots of kinds. So far we have studied:
 - Simple statements of fact: **#1,9, page 11** and expanded upon in **#2,16, page 23** and again in **#3, 32, page 40** where Hoch talks about so-called “circumstantial” clauses.

It is also time to review the verb forms covered so far:

present active: *'sdm.f'* present passive: *'sdm.tw.f'*

past active: *'sdm.n.f'* past passive: *'sdm(w).f'*

And keep in mind that Hoch's (and he is by no means alone in this) term for these is “circumstantial forms”, which is to be kept distinct in your minds from “circumstantial clauses/sentences”. The verb forms are called “circumstantial” because they appear in “circumstantial clauses/sentences” but not every clause they appear in is a “circumstantial” clause. We've said that often enough by now so that if there is any residual confusion in your mind, review **#2,16, page 23** and **#3, 32, page 40**, and the appropriate Study Guides. If there is still confusion, ask on GlyphStudy.

one which actually means something in our modern parlance. To the advantage of being more familiar and less exotic it adds the advantages of being intelligible and actually accurate. Or perhaps some people think of those as disadvantages.

8 The so-called “predicate” adjective.

9 At last a name we can agree on. Remember what the definition of a nominal is. The definition can fit one of two ways of thinking about them. In no particular order, these two are:

* based on parts of speech:

nouns, pronouns, participles/adjectives, infinitives

* based on function in a sentence:

subject, direct object, indirect object, object of a preposition



I have been where you are. I know what you are going through. Been there, done that. Not too long ago. Listen to me.



Do not proceed further until you're absolutely clear on these points because pretty soon we're going to be discussing verbal sentences which do NOT use '*iw*' or '*m.k*' to start them off and which do NOT use “circumstantial” '*sdm.f*' forms. The time to know this stuff is at hand. Do not say “Well, I'm still a bit confused but I'll pick it up later.” No you won't. You will instead be called upon to learn new concepts and compare and contrast with the stuff you've already gone through - how can you do that if you don't know the material you have gone through? So you will begin to feel yourself lost and slipping away - and you will drop out and throw away all your effort, and our effort, up to this point. I don't want to see that happen to you. Help is what GlyphStudy is all about - but it does require the effort to ask and learn.¹⁰

So ask and learn.

¹⁰ You'll be able to translate the hieroglyphs when you have completed reading the text.

Section #57, page 64

The most important thing you should take out of this section is right there in the first sentence: “the infinitive is a *nominal* form”. I don't think I can make it any clearer. The text makes it seem like perhaps this applies only to the Egyptian verb. Well, it's true in English, German, French, Russian, Spanish, Latin, and Greek (both ancient and modern). And certainly others as well.

When you encounter an infinitive you need to think: “NOUN”. Because that's what it is. It's the name of the action which the verb represents.

Now, I'm not denying that infinitives can have a verbal quality to them which they inherit from the underlying action concept. The operative word here is “can”. The infinitive doesn't have to do this. This is true for all infinitives. An infinitive will *always* act as a noun and only when it has completed that function will you be able to see any verbal qualities which it might have.

This is the first of a large number of words, phrases, and indeed, whole clauses, that will act as nouns. The reason I'm harping on this so much is because every grammarian on this planet (and, no doubt, on most other planets as well) talk about these things as if they were - gasp - verbs! Hoch will too. And he will fill up the next several pages with grammatical goop about how wonderful it is that infinitives behave like nouns. And he will give you all sorts of situations to remember. When all you have to do is to treat them as nouns and *let the English translation suggest itself*.¹¹

In the second paragraph on page 64, Hoch drops into the old habit of describing infinitives in terms of verbs. And there confusion begins. You can safely skip this paragraph and go right on to the forms at the bottom of the page. With the exception of the weak verb '-t' and '-y' endings infinitives usually look just like the actual verb forms they are related to in meaning. But they have a very different usage. That would be as nouns. If you think of them that way, you won't have to worry about any of the special uses or definitions which follow until the end of the lesson. I guarantee it. So read it over if you really want to, I'll put in some notes which will emphasize and reinforce the thesis which I've developed here, and we will move on.

part 2, page 65

Every single one of the uses which Hoch identifies in this section are uses which are filled by nouns. Of course. You've already learned that the object of a proposition is always a nominal. The list given in this section of the text does not exhaust the possibilities. In every single instance, the fundamental meaning of the prepositional phrase which ends in an infinitive shows no change whatsoever from its meaning with any other nominal.

- 'r' + infinitive, not only purpose but often translated as a future in English. That doesn't mean that it's a future in Middle Egyptian. For details on this latter, see the Excursus at the end of this Study Guide.
- 'hft' + infinitive, an important note in this paragraph reinforces a point I made in the excursus,

¹¹ That ain't the grammarian's way of doing it but you know what? My view is that you're here to learn how to translate Middle Egyptian into English - that's it. The technical grammar stuff you can pick up later at your leisure, if you want. Right now, if I can simplify this for you and give you some hints as to how to just let this stuff flow out onto your keyboard and computer screen (and mouth when you're showing off your knowledge), the easier it will come to you - and the better and easier you will understand the technical grammar stuff later on.

that although English might occasionally require a passive form, that's just the target language. Nothing changes in Middle Egyptian.

- '*m-ht*' + infinitive, “We were just after coming home and we left again.” That sounds familiarly Irish to me. Hoch says that it expresses prior action. Sure it does, but my understanding of the phrase is that the prior action it talks about is only mentioned to provide a reference point for what is going on later - that later stuff is what's important.
- '*hr*' + infinitive, '*hr irt*' = literally: “upon the doing”.
- '*m*' + infinitive - although Hoch produces two articles about this construct, one with the infinitive of a verb of motion (here including any verb of motion - including those that can take a direct object), there really is no distinction. When you look at these uses you will find that the fundamental meaning is always - here it comes - activity that is taking place in the present¹².

parts 3 and 4, page 66

Here's where our text begins to go off the rails. These are “logical” direct objects and “logical” subjects ONLY if you think of infinitives as verbs. They are not direct objects or subjects in Egyptian (or in English) and must not be understood that way. If you remember that infinitives are nouns and treat them that way, things like this will be obvious to you.

'm-ht irt.s'

“...after the making of it”.

Well, Hoch gave you this one.

'r m33 hr n(y) nb.i'

literally: “in reference to the seeing of the face of my lord” = “for seeing the face of my lord”.

'm33 hr' is a bound construction, a direct genitive!

If you think of them in Egyptian, the correct English version will suggest itself to you. I promise.

That's true even in this one:

'm-ht gmt.f in 3ty'

“After the finding of him by the king's deputy”.

That's not the way I would phrase it however because it's pretty clumsy English. But the clumsy English will automatically suggest a better version (at least if you're a native speaker). You already know that a construction like '*in 3ty*' identifies an agent, and agents can be associated with passives. So you can translate it that way: “After his being found by the king's deputy”. Or, if you prefer the active: “After the king's deputy found him.” And you don't have to put a note in your translation when you do this.

Now let's put all these “logical” constructs and prepositions together in one sentence, like the second one on page 67:

'm prt.s m hrw r m33 pr.s'

“in the going out of her in daytime with respect to the seeing of her house”

¹² We have to be careful to remember that the “present” is always relative. If the context demands a past tense then '*m*' + infinity is taking place in what was the “present” at that time. Same thing for the future. Use the appropriate English tense.

Well, that ain't no good English, but play with it.

“While her going out was in daytime to see her house” →

“While she went out in daytime to see her house.”

Think of it this way, as a noun, which is really the way it was anyway, and you won't have to remember a bunch of silly rules.

Even in the last two examples in this section, things are simpler:

'hft gmt it.f sw'

“during his father's finding him”

I'll leave the last one as an exercise for the reader.

part 5, page 67

Nothing mysterious here, either.

'm.k wi ii.kwi r irt.s n.f' (where '.s' refers to some feminine noun)

“See, I have come for the making of it (fem.) for him” = “See, I have come to make it for him”.

The English suggests itself. No need to memorize a special case here.

part 6, page 67

Infinitives as direct objects? Infinitives are nouns. So why would this be a surprise? Why would we need to see a separate discourse on this? You don't have to try to memorize or even write down the list of verb types at the bottom of the page.

What you do need is over on page 68. It has to do with *'rdi'*.

'rdi' has a lot of meanings. “Give and cause” are the basic meanings.

'šw di.f n.k irt hḥw m ḥbw-sd š3w m ḥnh w3s dt'

“Shu, may he cause/grant for you **the making/celebrating** millions of jubilees and often, and while (you are) living and being in power forever.”

In this case the English doesn't translate the Egyptian infinitive as an infinitive but uses a gerund (whatever that is¹³) instead.

The reason why *'rh'* means “know how to” is because a stative indicates the present result of a past action. Since the basic meaning of *'rh'* is “learn”, the stative meaning of *'rh.ti'* is “you have learned and now know”.

The rather gruesome quote from Papyrus Westphal

'iw.k rh.ti ts tp ḥsk(w)'

“You know how **to attach** a severed head”

refers to a magician who could reanimate a decapitated goose.

¹³ Don't get me started.

part 7, page 67

The use of the infinitive in captions, the so-called “narrative infinitive” is simply another use as a noun. If you remember that an infinitive is the name of an action, then this usage suddenly becomes clear. Pictures frequently employ this technique.

For an example of this phenomenon, see the picture way at the top of this Study Guide. Every one of the verbs is actually an infinitive. Every one. English gives various ways of translating these. For example, the first line (the first column, that is) could have been rendered:

- “The traversing of the marsh”
- “The traversal of the marsh” (which is the way I did it there)
- “Traversing the marsh”
- “To traverse the marsh”

part 8, page 68

That nouns can act as the subjects of sentences is not a novel idea.

Hoch translated

'*3h sdm n s3*' without an infinitive, so here's one with an infinitive which identifies its function as a noun unambiguously:

“**To listen** is effective/useful for a son” - or even more effective is:

“For a son, **to listen** is effective/useful”. But I don't think Egyptian can say it in that order, even for emphasis.

P	V	s	i	o	S	O	A
					<i>3h sdm</i>		<i>n s3</i>

Note that in this construction no particle is used.

Do not put the homework off until the last day.

Vocabulary Notes

You will often see '*rmf*' transliterated '*r(m)t*'. Unlike '*h(n)qt*' which you had in the last chapter, I don't think there's even a single instance of the '*m*' actually being spelled out. But it was there in the language in Coptic, so Egyptologists are pretty sure it was there in Middle Egyptian, too.

You'll see '*nh(.w)*', '*(w)d3(.w)*', '*s(nb.w)*' everywhere. You'll see it so often I don't think you have to memorize it. Hallelujah!

Look at the translations of '*hr*' carefully. As with all prepositions, come to an understanding of what the preposition fundamentally means. If you just select a translation from a list of meanings you will

ultimately get it wrong. And then look at the next word '*hrt*' and see if you can visualize the connection between these two vocabulary entries. Visualization is extremely important in comprehending the concepts of a language. Some people call it “internalizing”, some people call it a “gut understanding”. I don't care what you call it. Do it. With every one of these terms. Comprehend what it meant to live in the culture and technology of ancient Egypt. Exactly how, as an ancient Egyptian, would you perform a particular task? Then you will begin to understand the language and the implications of the words you read.

Why all the sudden harping on this? Because this word will come in the exercises at the end of the chapter and if you don't have a gut feeling for what this word means you will miss the point of what the text is saying and you will therefore mistranslate the sentence.

The last word in the vocabulary has a very unexpected spelling. '*drt*'.

Homework Notes

Do not put the homework off until the last day.

Part C

1)

Alles in ordnung.

By “s-causative” Hoch means that the verb almost certainly (in this case - certainly) has a form without the initial '*s*'. In the case of '*sip*' there's a verb '*ip*' which means “examine, account”. '*sip*' means “cause an accounting, inventory”. Not all verbs that start with '*s*' are “s-causatives”.

This sentence could be construed as two sentences.

2)

What a dump!

Betty Davis' unflattering remark about the house she found herself in (in a movie - she probably wouldn't have said that in real life - then, again, we're talking about Betty Davis so maybe she would have!)

This is a long sentence (and it is one sentence) which will challenge your vocabulary and your skill at reading the lesson material.

3)

A man with a plan.

The Egyptians were very uncomplimentary about their foes. Always. The epithet you read here is very common in their writings. But don't look down on them for it. The same demonization or dehumanization of our enemies is commonplace today in all nations. After all, if the enemy wasn't such a bunch of worthless, greedy, murdering scumbags there'd be no point in fighting them, would there?

4)

Not a bad god, rather useful in his own way.

As many as three sentences here. Review #19 and #23, especially #23.3

5)

How I'd like to be remembered.

This is pretty standard stuff on stelae which the deceased had commissioned to be put up next to tombs, telling the world what a great guy we lost when he died. Two sentences here. Get the first one right by reviewing #21. Since this is the text that would appear on a stela erected after the guy's death, you can assume that English would put this in past tense.

6)

This sentence is a load for you.

Try it. Put it in the grid, good ol' PVsioSOA. That will help determine what the subject is, at least. When you get hopelessly stuck go to page 236. Then back to PVsioSOA.

Oh, one more thing: look at the tenses of the two verbs. That should tell you something about how English will want the tense of the second verb to be.

7)

A man with a mission.

Review the verb forms you've had so far. By that I mean: using the verb '*sdm*' can you construct a present and past form for both active and passive voices? Don't know what those words mean? You'd better by now - or we should see some questions coming from you. Go back and read that stop sign in the middle of this Study Guide. I was serious about that.

8)

Dialogue involving a comfy chair.

Note the '*n.f n.f*' at the beginning of the exercise. '*di.n.(i) n.k*' (= "I have given to you...") is a similar construction found on stelae all over the place. Without context, I don't know if it's "he" or "him" that is performing the action of '*hmst*'. I think I know, but I ain't sure.

9)

Peace has broken out.

'*htp*' can mean "offerings, altar, boon (whatever that is)". As a verb it can also mean "be pleased, happy, gracious, be at peace, become calm, grant pardon to someone, be at rest, set (like the Sun), pacify, satisfy, make content". A related word '*htpw*' means "peace, contentment, pleasure".

Surprisingly hard to tell what the basic concept is here, as soon as you think you got it you run into a related, but distantly related usage, and many of the alternate translations seem to refer possibly to a metaphorical usage in Middle Egyptian.

There are also several missing glyphs in this sentence. Your job: find 'em.

For extra credit: How do you think the Egyptians would view embassies such as this?

10)

A man with his head on straight.

In addition to Hoch's suggestions which indicate that you should review sections #38 and #47 (which you should do before you attempt the sentence, you should review section #57, part 6.

Part C

If you do this and send it in I might look at it, maybe. I'm not sure you get much out of these parsing exercises. The important thing is can you translate the Egyptian and I can tell that from your translations and whatever notes you send in.

Part D

But I do want you to do this one. It's a great exercise. Here are some more notes.

3)

This sentence will be a lot shorter if you do it right.

6)

Only do the first clause - don't even try to handle the rest of the sentence.

8)

For this one only replace the subject with a noun of your choice. Leave the rest alone.

EXCURSUS ON 'r' + INFINITIVE (and a bunch of other stuff thrown in)

Actually, the full construction is NOUN + 'r' + infinitive. The basic meaning of the preposition 'r' is “in reference to ...”. Now follow how the thinking on this example (taken from Allen's grammar, actually¹⁴) actually works:



Assume for the sense of argument that the suffix pronoun 's' indicates some feminine noun of place like, oh, 'st' (= “seat, chair”) for example. We're going to have go through a bunch of other stuff before we get to the meat of our main topic, so bear with me.

The sentence starts with things you've seen before, 'm.k wi', but maybe you haven't seen them like this. 'm.k' is your old familiar particle, here with something of a verbal force in that the dependent pronoun 'wi' can be construed as its direct object but it's best not to. I know that in the past I've told you that 'm.k' isn't an imperative but rather something like “as you can see for yourself”. It's not an imperative here, either. It's more a case of “as you can see, looking at me...”

How would you grid it? Simple:

P	V	s	i	o	S	O	A
mk.wi							

Yep, the whole thing goes in the P slot.

'ii.kwi' technically is a verb form called a stative. You haven't had this stuff yet. The verb is 'ii' (= “come”) and the '.kwi' is the first person singular stative pronoun which refers back to 'wi'. 'ii' is an intransitive¹⁵ verb of motion - a kind of verb which regularly forms its past tense with the stative instead of the 'sdm.n.f' construction that you are familiar with.

The really important thing you're going to learn about stative forms is that they are NOMINAL¹⁶. I told you this was going to happen, that Egyptian was a language in which even verb forms can appear as nominals, and here one is. Look at where it goes in the grid. I'll put in the final prepositional phrases so you can see how everything fits in:

P	V	s	i	o	S	O	A
mk.wi					ii.kwi		r hmst im.s

The NOUN + 'r' + infinitive construction is 'ii.kwi r hmst'.

Literally “I have come in reference to sitting”. Where? 'im.s' (= “in/on it”).

¹⁴ Exercise sentence #15 in Chapter 14.

¹⁵ That means it can't take a direct object. Verbs that can take a direct object are called “transitive” verbs.

¹⁶ You'll find out *why* they're nominal later. For now, just take my word for it.

Here's where the fun starts. Pascal Vernus¹⁷ says: “NOUN + 'r' + infinitive has become a full-fledged verbal construction in Middle Egyptian”.

That can't possibly be true.

If it were true:

- the construction would show the capability of having pronominal subjects like every other Middle Egyptian full-fledged verb form;
- in fact, it would have an infinitive of its own;
- the construction would ultimately appear where every other verbal construct appears in Middle Egyptian: the V slot. It never does. It stays in the A slot all the time with all the other prepositional phrases.¹⁸

The real thing at issue in this case is that when you translate it into English, the nearest valid construction is often a future tense verb. So I think that what Vernus has done is construe it in terms of the target language, English, rather than the original language, Middle Egyptian. Which is not the way to understand the grammar of a language.

So here comes the full grid:

P	V	s	i	o	S	O	A
<i>m.k wi</i>					<i>ii.kwi</i>		<i>r ḥmst im.s</i>
	<i>ii</i>	<i>.kwi</i>					<i>r ḥmst im.s</i>

Now if '*r ḥmst*' were really thought of as being a true verbal tense you would be left with a virtual clause which consisted of nothing but a prepositional phrase (in the V slot of all places!) and another one in the A slot. Two lone prepositional phrases one after the other, no matter how you construe them, do not a sentence make.

I'm not arguing that you shouldn't translate NOUN + 'r' + infinitive into English as a future tense. I just said a moment ago that often the closest construction you can use is a future tense. I am arguing that you should understand that the Ancient Egyptians, when using Middle Egyptian, did not think of it like that.

17 Pascal Vernus is a noted student of the grammar of Middle Egyptian. The references here are to his monograph “Future at Issue: Tense, Mood and Aspect in Middle Egyptian in Syntax and Semantics”, Yale Egyptological Studies 4, New Haven 1990. The quote appears on page 6 where the examples he cites in support of his thesis are unconvincing and one of them (the second one) isn't even appropriate! Having said that, I heartily recommend the book because it is a very, very good one - full of lots of good information about future tense in Middle Egyptian.

18 I am not married to PVsioSOA. Although I was the first one to present it in that form, it is merely a synthesis of what Hoch and Allen had already taught, just, for some reason, not in that exact, complete form. I played with it for a while and discovered that what they had said was true: Middle Egyptian word order is fairly rigid - and exceptions are deliberate and emphatic to some degree, and the grid helps you identify them. And then I went further on and found that what I now call “subsequent virtual clauses” could be expanded out onto their own lines in the grid.

In this instance, if you were to translate the NOUN + 'r' + infinitive in '*m.k wi ii.kwi r ḥmst im.s*' as “I will come and will sit down on it”, which is what a full-fledged future tense would require, you might miss the sense of purpose here which Hoch suggested on page 65. In other words, “I have come for the purpose of sitting down on it” or, less clumsy English “I have come to sit down on it”. Note that the action of sitting down has not yet occurred but that doesn't mean that the construction itself is a future tense.

Keep this in mind. It's not really a true future tense in Egyptian. It can be often, but not always, translated as a future tense in English.

THE WEIGHING-IN CEREMONY



From the Papyrus of Khonsu-Renpyw in the Field Museum, Chicago.

The moment of truth in the afterworld. Khonsu-renpyw is dead, well, at least to our world. But in the afterworld he has made his negative confession and now his heart, that's it down there on the balance scale at the lower right, is about to be weighed against the feather of Maat. Anubis is operating the balance while Djehuty (Thoth to some of you), the god who invented writing¹⁹, records the results for all time. If Khonsu-Renpyw has told the truth, he has nothing to fear. If he has not, well, the platform on which he is sitting tips him into the mouth of Ammit, the crocodile, waiting hungrily below and so he will suffer the dreaded second death - eternal obliteration. Total non-existence was simply an unimaginable horror to the Egyptians.

In front of Khonsu-Renpyw are the words (follow along as well as you can):

'wsir hns(w) rnp(y.w) m3^c hrw m wsh(t) m3^cty(t)'

"The Osiris²⁰ Khonsu- Renpyw, true of voice, in the hall of Maat"

19 Which is why writing is called "the god's words". We know that scribes were exalted, but I wonder if there may have been something of a holy exaltation connected with them.

20 The dead merged with the god Osiris, lord of the underworld. So the deceased were always referred to as "the Osiris ..." + name.

In front of Djehuty is his wish for the outcome of the trial:

'di.f m3^c hrw m hrt-ntr m-b3h ntr 3'

“May he produce (himself) as true of voice in the necropolis before the great god.”

If I read Khonsu-Renpyw's name right he was probably born in a time when the sliver of the Moon, just past new, was becoming visible at sunset in the west; *'hnsu rnp(y.w)* means “Khonsu (the Moon) is now young”.