Ancient Egyptian Classifiers in a Diachronic Perspective

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT: PERIOD OF 2010

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Prof. Dr. Frank Kammerzell (Berlin)

Signatures

Berlin, [...]
Principal investigator

Jerusalem, [...]
Principal investigator
1. Updated time schedule

   [...]  

2. Staff and research  

   2.1. Researchers of year 2010 

   [...]  

   2.2. Research  

   [...]  

3. Research in 2010  

   3.1. Classification systems in written language and in spoken language 

   (Orly Goldwasser, Colette Grinevald)  

   [...]  

   3.2. Classifiers in Hieratic and in Hieroglyphs: Diachronic investigations into the script and categorization (Niv Allon)  

   [...]  

3.3. Classifiers in Papyrus Prisse: The Teaching of Ptahhotep, The Teachings for Kagemni  

   (Annette Sundermeyer; mentoring: D. Werning, F. Kammerzell)  

After finishing the phase of intensive data collection in 2009, Annette Sundermeyer has statistically evaluated The Teaching of Ptahhotep in four modules:  

   (A) Verb classification: an analysis along the lines of Kammerzell’s ‘Egyptian Verb Classifiers’ (in print); including a map of semantic similarity of verbs according on their classifiers. She also collected the cases of verbs with more than one classifier referring to the same lemma (multiple classification), and secondary classification of de-verbal nouns (derivate classification).  

   (B) (Primary) noun classification: Analysis along the lines of Linke’s modifications of Goldwasser’s taxonomy in her Prinzipien der Klassifikation im Altägyptischen (2011). Analog to her presentation of the verb classifier system, she prepared a semantic similarity map of (primary) nouns depending on their classifiers.  

   (C) Comparison of the sets of verb classifiers and noun classifiers: So far it has often been perceived, that the same classifiers can be found on verbs and nouns. This perception was partially flawed by the neglect of the recently proposed distinction of primary classification and derivate classification. Inspired by the ‘statistical feeling’ that both sets are at least partially and statistically disparate (D. Werning), A. Sundermeyer compared the sets and found that,
effectively, only a rather small set of classifiers that can be found as well on verbs as on nouns in The Teaching of Ptahhotep. This raises the question of the ‘heuristic’ contribution of the classifier system to the identification of lemmata in the process of reading.

(D) Adjective classification: According to the most widespread opinion among Egyptologists, Egyptian ‘adjectives’ are nothing but (neutral) participles, i.e. de-verbal derivates. There are some hints, though, that a part of speech ‘adjective’ should be accounted for (C. Peust, in: Göttinger Miszellen. Beihefte 3, 2008; D. Werning [2011, in print]). Working with this hypothesis, A. Sundermeyer also enumerated data on the system of classifiers found on adjectives. It turns out, that the set of classifiers on adjectives and verbs do not perfectly match. This raises further questions to be investigated in the near future.


After finishing the phase of intensive data collection in 2009, Philipp-Emanuel Klepsch has sorted his data on The Eloquent Peasant on Papyrus Berlin 3023 and has started to analyze it in three modules:

(A) Noun classification: Analysis of noun classifiers with special interest in lemma classification vs. referent classification, and primary classification vs. derivate classification; list of phrase classifiers; preparation of a semantic similarity map of (primary) nouns depending on their classifiers.

(B) Verb classification: Analysis along the lines of Linke’s modifications of Kammerzell’s agent role analysis of verb classifiers in her Prinzipien der Klassifikation im Altägyptischen (2011). Quantitative analysis of verb classifiers and preparation of a semantic similarity map; cf. §0, (A) above.

(C) Adjective and Adverb classification: enumeration of classifiers found on adjectives (cf. §0, (D) above) and adverbs.

3.5. Verb classifiers in a diachronic perspective (Frank Kammerzell, Philipp-Emanuel Klepsch, Annette Sundermeyer)

[...]

3.6. Deviation of classifiers in different copies of the Story of Sinuhe (Lital Belinco)

[...]

3.7. Man and woman, human categories in early dynastic script (Racheli Shalomi-Hen)

[...]

3.8. The classifier: a special phenomena on the diachronic axis (Orly Goldwasser)

[...]
3.9. The use of the STROKE classifiers in the Book of Caverns (Daniel Werning)

Based on his taxonomy of ‘determinatives’, Daniel Werning, researched the use of the complex grapheme ⲉ as found in the Book of Caverns (13th cent. BCE).

First of all, the ⲉ grapheme can be used with reference to the grammatical meaning PLURAL (as opposed to SINGULAR or DUAL), either as

G1) PLURAL classifier after grammatical morphemes, e.g. after Ⲋ =n */n/ PRON.1PL “we” or ⲉ -w */w/ ~ */u:/ (nominal) M.PL,

or it can be used as

G2) PLURAL morpho-gram that denotes (grammatical) PLURAL morphemes of different linguistic substance: */w/ ~ */u:/ -M.PL as opposed to *ø (-M.SG), or vowel length, e.g. in */a:u/ -F:PL as opposed to */a/ -F(SG). Here it stands not after the morpheme but as the only written index to the morpheme.

Rarely, ⲉ can be used with reference to the verbal (grammatical) plurality of ‘Distributive Participle’ forms (as opposed to neutral verbal plurality),

G3) DISTRIBUTIVE, e.g. after ⲉ “one (constantly) guarding”, Ⲋ “one having created (many things)”.

Besides this use as classifier or morphogram for grammatical nominal and verbal PLURAL, ⲉ is also used as a (regular) semantic classifier after various nouns and adjectives that are – as proven by concording elements – grammatically singular(!) words:

N1) AMOUNT, e.g. ⲉ “many”;
N2) SET of potentially heterogeneous members, e.g. ⲉ “group of gods; ‘pantheon’”; especially also the body as set of different body parts: e.g. ⲉ “corps”;
N3) MASS, consisting of un-countable or unknown amount of equal elements, e.g. ⲉ “sand”, Ⲋ “disheveled hair (of mourning)”; as well as FLUIT, e.g. ⲉ “secretion”, and fire, e.g. ⲉ “fire”, and very probably also light, e.g. ⲉ “light”, as a fluit(?) substance;

and very often as part of the combination ⲉ:
N4) ABSTRACTUM, e.g. ⲉ “manner, kind”;
N5) NOT_PERCEIVABLE, e.g. very possibly Ⲋ “(the) hidden”, and occasionally ⲉ “mysterious”;
N6) words for (embodied) IMAGES, e.g. ⲉ “figure”, tfw “image”, ⲉ “picture”, ḫprw “transformation”.

Also, ⲉ is rarely used as a semantic classifier after various verbs and (more often) derived nouns that describe a multi-phasic aktionsart (Engl. lexical aspect, situation types, situation aspect):

V1) MULTI-PHASIC with an inherent ITERATIVE repetition of equal event phases, e.g. ⲉ “(to) breathe”, ⲉ “(the) breathing, breath”, ⲉ “(to) speak”, probably ⲉ “speech, words; affairs”, ⲯ “to jubilate”, ⲯ “jubilation”, ⲯ “(pounding) jubilance”, ..., ⲯ “(the) yelling”, ⲉ “(the) slaughtering”.

Finally, ⲉ is occasionally attested as a semantic classifier after verbs that describe a process of aggregation of necessarily ‘many’ objects:

V2) AGGREGATE, ⲯ “(to) unite; (to) consort (with someone)”, ⲯ “concentrated darkness”, i.e. ‘complete darkness’, and probably also ⲯ “(the) approaching”.

The following table summarizes the results:

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<th>Type</th>
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<th>Concord</th>
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<td>(singular) nouns;</td>
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</table>

[see now: Werning 2011.I, §5]

3.10. **Computer-aided identification of classifiers in hand-written hieroglyphic texts**
(Dan Elharrar)

[...]

4. **First Symposium in Paris**

The first symposium of the project has been held in May 2010 at Paris, as part of a greater gathering in which many of the GIF participants took part. The first GIF symposium was attended by O. Goldwasser, R. Shalomi-Hen, N. Allon, I. Diamant, D. Elharrar, Frank Kammerzell, Daniel Werning and Eliese-Sophia Lincke. On this occasion, each researcher, presented the current state of his/her research. The Paris conference enabled us to introduce the results of the GIF research to a wider audience.

[...]

5. **Visits**

[...]

6. **Publications**


Articles in preparation:

Goldwasser, Orly & Colette Grinevald. What are Determinatives Good for?.
Kammerzell, Frank & Eliese-Sophia Lincke. Egyptian Verb Classifiers in a Diachronic Perspective.
[...]

7. Talks and posters in 2010
[...]