

# Statements of Identity and the *m* of Predication<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

Stemming from an observation of Alan H. Gardiner, studies of Egyptian grammar have unanimously agreed about the function of the *m* of predication. According to the generally accepted view, the *m* of predication is employed to indicate secondary or acquired characteristics in identity statements. However, a diachronic examination of the use of the *m* of predication shows that syntactical structures may dictate its choice, rather than the nature of the predicate.

In studies of Egyptian grammar, Egyptologists have long believed that the *m* of predication indicates temporary, acquired or secondary qualities when used to characterize identity. In this function, the *m* of predication has been contrasted with nominal predication, which Egyptologists have believed indicates permanent or inherent qualities when used to characterize identity.<sup>2</sup> However, these long-standing assumptions have rarely been questioned. Upon closer examination, the data seem to challenge this dichotomy between the *m* of predication and nominal predication as the same descriptive qualities appear in both grammatical constructions. Rather than the nature of the descriptive quality involved, the use of the *m* of predication may be based on the syntactic environment in which it occurs.<sup>3</sup>

The terminology “*m* of predication” or “*m* of equivalence” refers to the usage of the preposition *m* “in” to associate two entities, with the meaning “in the capacity of.”

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- 1 The present article is a heavily revised and abridged version of a M.A. thesis submitted to the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations of the University of Chicago. The conclusions were presented at the 52<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt in 2005. I would like to thank Dr. Peter Dorman, Dr. Janet Johnson, Dr. Robert Ritner, Dr. James Allen, Dr. Edmund Meltzer, Dr. Jackie Jay, Dr. Magnus Widell and Dr. Hratch Papazian for their helpful comments and discussions on earlier drafts of this manuscript. Nevertheless, whatever errors remain are the sole responsibility of the author. The abbreviations cited in this paper follow Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto, *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* Lieferung 50. Band VII: Nachträge, Korrekturen und Indices, Lieferung 1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1989).
  - 2 Interesting issues have been raised regarding the use of the terms subject/predicate, theme/rheme, topic/comment, etc., within both Egyptology and general linguistics. As this discussion has only marginal bearing on the conclusions of the present article, I have retained traditional terminology in hopes of clarity and refrained from complicating matters with undue detail by importing the complexities of such a debate. The relevant bibliography is enormous, but can be consulted in the following works: Landgráfová (2001: 69-79); Englund & Frandsen (1986), and the valuable articles in *Lingua Aegyptia*.
  - 3 The *m* of predication occurs in all stages of the Egyptian language. The present article focuses on Late Old Egyptian and Middle Egyptian, where it most frequently occurs. However, examples are also discussed of so-called “Neo-Middle Egyptian,” or the Middle Egyptian employed in higher register texts after the Middle Kingdom. Examples from Late Egyptian, Demotic and Coptic are discussed further below.

The paradigmatic example given by Alan H. Gardiner<sup>4</sup> was *iw=k m sš* and has been understood to mean “You are in (the capacity of) a scribe.” The basic grammatical function of the *m* of predication has long been known in Egyptology,<sup>5</sup> but it was Gardiner who attempted to refine our understanding of the construction. In a very brief observation of his magisterial *Egyptian Grammar*, Gardiner states: “The predicate here usually, if not always, expresses what in logic is termed an ‘accident,’ an acquired attribute rather than a permanent ‘property.’”<sup>6</sup> In retrospect, perhaps it is significant that not a single source is noted for this example, nor are any textual passages cited as further corroboration, in a grammar filled with copious citations. Our current understanding is entirely drawn from this passing note.

Every significant grammar written since the time of Gardiner has not only accepted this notion, but has expanded upon it in great detail. The beginning student finds in the *Middle Egyptian Grammar* of James Hoch: “What follows *m* is usually a secondary feature or an acquired (or temporary) feature. In other words, it serves to identify people and things by *function* rather than by *essence*. The *m* of predication cannot be employed when the connection between the two members is inherent or intrinsic.”<sup>7</sup> As a direct antithesis, Egyptologists have interpreted nominal predication as expressing inherent, intrinsic or permanent qualities: “Note that in contrast to the *m* of predication, here [in nominal predication] the link is essential or inherent. The idea is that of *identification* and not description.”<sup>8</sup> Since the suggestions of Gardiner, this

4 Gardiner (1973: 41, §38).

5 Erman noted the equivalent function of the preposition *m* in his Egyptian grammar of 1902 and expanded upon it in the 1928 edition (Erman 1902: §331.6, 158; *idem* 1928: §445, 227 and §469b, 247-248). He also noted this function in his 1933 grammar of Late Egyptian (*Idem* 1933: §467, 226: “Wichtig ist der häufige Fall, wo die Praeposition  $\mathfrak{M}$  benutzt wird, um die Gleichheit von Subjekt und Praedikat zu bezeichnen: ‘A ist B’, eigentlich: ‘A ist als B’”). Edel, in his Old Egyptian grammar, called the preposition the “*m* of predication” when used in adverbial predicates of identification (Edel 1955-1964: §758 h, 389). In 1940 Lefebvre called this use the “*m* d’equivalence” (Lefebvre 1940: 242-243; *idem* 1954: 247-248). In De Buck’s grammar, translated into French in 1952, he designates this function as the “*m* d’identité” meaning “en qualité de” (De Buck 1952: 97. On page 116, it is called the “*m* d’équivalence”). Junge does not overtly deal with this construction and only mentions that “In order to classify (assign expressions to semantic classes) the noun is left without an article” and he goes on to cite the example from pBM 10052 16, 13 NN *iw=f m hšy m-di tšy=f sn.t šri* “NN being a husband to his younger sister” (Junge 2001:57-58). There is no specific treatment of the *m* of equivalence in Černý & Groll (1984). This may be because of its infrequent use in textual registers employing the style of Late Egyptian covered in these grammars (exception pMayer A rt. 2, 19 *i.ir=w hdb pšy=i i iw=i m šri* “It was when I was a child that my father was killed” cited by Junge 2001: 98, 101 – note here the use of the *m* of equivalence in a circumstantial clause). The construction continues in the so-called Neo-Middle Egyptian used in later periods (Jansen-Winkeln 1996: 167). The Egyptological terminology was even adopted to explain constructions in Hebrew and Greek (Gordon 1981: 612-613). Pascal Vernus has now introduced the terminology “*prédication de situation*” (Vernus 1997).

6 Gardiner (1973: §38, 41).

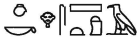
7 Hoch (1997: §24, 34). Cf. “The nominal sentence is used when the identity is thought of as natural or unchangeable, and the adverbial sentence with *m* is used when the identification is seen as acquired or temporary” (Allen 2000: §10.6, 113); Winand 2006b: 160-163. “*Permanent* associations are expressed by *substantival* sentences. *Transient* associations are expressed by *adverbial* sentences” (Depuydt 1999: §4.199, 301). All italics present in the original.

8 Hoch (1997: §56, 63). Cf. “*Substantival* sentences associate two entities with one another. They *identify someone or something* and *someone or something* with one another” (Depuydt 1999:

nominal/adverbial dichotomy has become the traditional and standard understanding of such descriptive grammatical predicates.<sup>9</sup>

Taking the preceding descriptions of the two types of predication in statements of identity as a foundation, we would expect an examination of the use of the *m* of predication, in contrast to the use of nominal predication, to demonstrate which descriptive qualities were considered permanent and which were considered secondary, temporary or acquired. At the very least, we would expect to discover important nuances about their contextual employment. When studying these constructions, however, it became immediately apparent that the paradigmatic example is somewhat misleading. As an example of an “accidental” attribute, an occupation, *sš* “scribe,” was provided in the example *iw=k m sš* “You are a scribe.” Again this idea has been generalized by subsequent scholars, such as John Callender: “This is usual for the expression of acquired professions or occupations, since these imply change.”<sup>10</sup> However, the most common, one might say typical, construction for this expression uses nominal predication *ink sš*. Examples 1-13 are only a few selected examples from an otherwise very large corpus.<sup>11</sup> As one can see from examples 5 and 6, nominal predication is used with the same paradigmatic predicate (*sš* “scribe”) given as an example of an acquired attribute.

Ex. 1 Nedjemib (C 1732), *Urk.* I. 75, 11



*ink hry-sšt3*

“I am a<sup>12</sup> master of secrets.”

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§4.11, 187). This is summarized best by the statement: “the expression of identity cannot be assigned a temporal beginning or end” (Callender 1984: 67-68). All italics present in the original.

9 Winand (2006: 12) hints at the problem from a different perspective: “For instance, the four sentences *ink sš*, *iw.t m sš*, *iw.w ir.t sš*, *iw.t hr ir.t sš*, could be, in an appropriate context (especially the last one), translated into French by ‘Je suis scribe’.”

10 Callendar (1984: 132).

11 Examples 1-13 are given in rough chronological order from Old Egyptian to Neo-Middle Egyptian. It should be noted that the references given here are to easily obtained and reliable volumes, rather than to original publications. The reader can easily track down the origin of these references through the relevant bibliography found in the references provided.

12 Note that the use of the indefinite article here reflects only English usage and not Egyptian. Nothing in the Egyptian determines this noun. The possible suggestion that nominal predication is used with defined nouns and the *m* of predication with undefined nouns is contradicted by examples such as *m wi m 3h pn iqr* “Look, I am this excellent Akh-spirit” (*Urk.* IV, 547, cited in Edel 1955-1964: 297, vs. *ink gr 3h iqr ‘pr* “Moreover, I am an excellent and equipped spirit” [*Hnqw*, *Urk.* I, 79, 14] and *ntt ink is wr pw* “because I am this great one ...” CT 186i), as well as circumstantial clauses following A B nominal sentences and the logic of certain expressions such as *wnn r<sup>c</sup> hr wbn hr htp iw=k m nb n km.t r d.t* “It is while you are lord of Egypt for eternity that the sun rises and sets” (ex. 20 below). It would seem to indicate that the king is *the* lord of Egypt and not simply *a* lord of Egypt. Additionally, from BD spell 86, there is *iw Hr m hrp wi3* “Horus is the controller of the bark.” It is logical to believe that Horus is *the* controller and not *a/some* controller of the bark (although other interpretations are also possible, such as “Horus is in control of the bark”).

Ex. 2 Henqu, *Urk.* I 79, 4 (26a)

*ink hm w<sup>c</sup>bw n ntr niwty r3=f rdiw snd*

“Indeed, I am a w<sup>c</sup>b-priest of the local god whose speech causes fear...”

Ex. 3 Henqu, *Urk.* I 76, 8

*ink Hnqw dd nfr bnr*

“I am Henqu, who speaks well and sweetly.”<sup>13</sup>

Ex. 4 Tetyrenef, *Urk.* I. 89, 15

*ink hry-h3b.t*

“I am a lector priest...(broken text)”

## Ex. 5 Hatnub 12, Anthes (1964: pl. 15, 3-6)



*ink sš md3.t-ntr s3 imy-r3 3h.t ink sš sm3y.t dfdf.w kn m db<sup>c</sup>.w=f hmww n wnw.t=f ink gr hry-hb.t iqr hmww m wp h3y.t*

“I am a scribe of the divine book (and) son of the overseer of the field. I am a scribe of the collected (writings) of secretions, who was capable with his fingers, a craftsman of his craft. I am, moreover, an excellent lector-priest, a craftsman in the discernment of disease.”

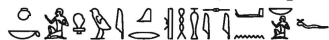
## Ex. 6 Hatnub 11, Anthes (1964: pl. 14, 5)



*ink sš iqr*

“I am an excellent scribe.”

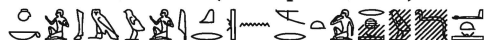
## Ex. 7 Hatnub 14, Anthes (1964: pl. 17, 3)



*ink htmw iqr hsy n nb=f*

“I am an excellent seal-bearer, one praised of his lord.”

## Ex. 8 Hatnub 14, Anthes (1964: pl. 17, 9-10)



*ink whmw iqr n mrw.t rh wd<sup>c</sup>.t*

“I am a herald, excellent of love, one who knows the judgment.”

13 This is a unique example in which it appears that the speaker identifies himself using independent pronoun + name (Grunert 2008: 132, note a).





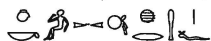
Ex. 14 Ibi, Deir el Gebrawi, *Urk. I* 142, 8<sup>14</sup>



*ink id tz mdh hr hm n ny-sw.t bity mry-r<sup>c</sup>*

“I was a youth who tied the fillet under the majesty of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt Meryre.”

Ex. 15 Samontu, BM 828, Budge (1912: pl. 21)



*ink id tz mdh hr hm=f*

“I was a youth who tied the fillet under his majesty...”

Ex. 16 Qar (C 43371), Edfu, *Urk. I* 253, 18



*wn(=i) m hwn tz mdh m rk tti*

“I was as a youth who tied on the fillet in the time of king Teti.”

The expression clearly refers to an acquired state or characteristic, namely that the child ties on the fillet as an act signifying his entry into manhood.<sup>15</sup> As these examples show, both nominal predication and a verb with the *m* of predication can be used to convey this attribute and that so-called acquired, temporary or secondary associations can be used in clauses with nominal predicates, contrary to the traditional interpretation. Additional evidence contradicts the standard interpretations as so-called permanent or essential characteristics can occur in clauses with adverbial predicates, specifically using the *m* of predication. A selection of such constructions is given in examples 17-23. They have been chosen because the attributes (e.g. *im3hy* “venerated one” and *ny-sw.t* “king”<sup>16</sup>) used after the *m* of predication have traditionally been interpreted as inherent or eternal characteristics.<sup>17</sup> However, it should be noted that

14 Similarly, in a broken passage at the beginning of the biography of Weni, Sethe restores *ink id* (*Urk. I* 98, 12). Brugsch does not restore the passage (Brugsch 1891: 1471). Examination of a photograph of the text reveals that both the end of the previous line and the beginning of this line are substantially broken, making any restoration entirely conjectural (photograph in Grébaut 1890-1924: pl. xxvii). The example from the tomb of Ibi cited here is the presumed basis for Sethe’s restoration, though Breasted restores the text based on the stela of Samontu (Breasted 2001: 135, n. a).

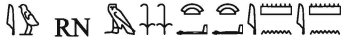
15 Gunn (1939: 219). This is very clear in the example from the stela of Samontu in which he is enumerating his rise in office. He is stating his previous positions, saying: “I was born in the time of the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Shetepibre, justified. I was a youth who tied on the fillet under his majesty...His majesty placed me as scribe...” (Budge 1912: pl. 21).

16 E.g. *ink ny-sw.t qdw irrw* “I am a king who says and does” (Berlin 1157, Senwosret III Boundary Stela, Sethe 1928: 83, 23).

17 I question the validity of categorizing “essential characteristics” because I have yet to find an attribute which appears *only* in nominal predication. At least one example can be found for virtually every possible “essential” attribute. Even a princess is identified with the *m* of predication when she is the king’s real daughter! (see note 20). The essential character of terms such as *im3hy* and *ny-sw.t* can be questioned by assuming that these are acquired attributes and that is why the *m* of predication is used. However, it does no more to further the argument as these terms are also found in nominal predicates (e.g. *ink im3hy* “I am a venerated one” *Urk. I*, 76, 14; *ntk ny-sw.t ir m<sup>c</sup>.wy=f* “You are a strong king who acts with his arms” Piankhy Stela, 15, *Urk. III*, 10) and in such

examples with other attributes following the *m* of predication can be cited such as *nb* “lord,”<sup>18</sup> *hk3* “ruler,”<sup>19</sup> *Rc* “Re,”<sup>20</sup> *s* “man,”<sup>21</sup> *s3.t n ny-sw.t* “king’s daughter,” *s3* “son,”<sup>22</sup> *ntr* “god,”<sup>23</sup> among others.

### Ex. 17 Pyramid Texts 414a



*iw RN m mn h<sup>c</sup> h<sup>c</sup> i.mn i.mn*

“RN is this one, who appears and appears, who lasts and lasts.”<sup>24</sup>

a case we would be compelled to assume that their descriptive character was sometimes considered inherent and other times acquired.

- 18 *wmn r<sup>c</sup> hr wbn hr htp iw=k m nb n km.t r d.t* “It is while you are lord of Egypt for eternity that the sun rises and sets” (Epigraphic Survey 1936: pl. 4, 11-12). Cf. *ntk nb n i<sup>c</sup>3 n=f* “You are the lord for he who calls to him...” (Stela of Nebre, Kitchen 1980: 655, 6).
- 19 *smi hsy m hn dmi=k tw=k if.ty r-gs m3<sup>c</sup>=k r3=k hns m ir=k wi m sr iw=k m hk3 r dbh n=k t3 nm.t hr.t=k n=s* “A miserable report is in your town. You are repelled from beside your army. Your speech is despicable when you make me as an official while you are a ruler, in order to beg for yourself the chopping block to which you fall” (Second Kamose Stela, Miosi 1981: 42, 4-9). *hr mi h<sup>c</sup>=k m hk3 nn rdi.t rh=i* “Why have you arisen as ruler without causing me to know?” (Second Kamose Stela, Miosi 1981: 48, 3-4). Cf. ... *ink p3 [hq3] nty hr mni=tn* “... I am the ruler who herds you.” (Karnak Inscription of Merneptah, 16, Manassa 2003: 156-157).
- 20 *iw=k m Rc in.n=k r r3<sup>c</sup>=sn w<sup>c</sup>fw=k sn (n) s3 mr=k* “... for you are Re, having reached to their end while curbing them for your beloved son ...” (From the Great Hymn to the Aten, Sandman 1938: 93, 15-16).
- 21 *ink s rgy m d3 n Pth* “I am a man who swore falsely by Ptah...” (Stela of Neferabu, James 1970: 9, 36 and pl. xxxi) – note the negative connotations of the statement and the use of nominal predication. Cf. *in iw ntk s n h.t=f* “Are you a man of his body?” (P. Harris 500, 1, 3). See also, *pr.n=i 3 r hw.t-nb m s n rnp.t 73*... “As a man of 73 years, I went here to Hatnub...” (Hatnub 14C, Anthes 1964).
- 22 Egyptians often described themselves as “sons” of royalty even when they were not. Following the standard interpretation, the *m* of predication should be used to show that they were not really the person’s son, but acting as one (“In the same way, the sentence *ntk z3.j* ‘You are my son’ implies that the speaker is talking to his real son, while *jw.k m z3.j* ‘You are my son’ indicates that the person being addressed is acting as a son (whether he is the speaker’s real son or not)”, Allen 2000: §10.6, 113). Nominal predication should be used to denote true kinship. However, we also have statements using the *m* of equivalence in which the subject is indeed the son of the high ranking person mentioned in the text. In the following examples, we know that the protagonists were the actual children of those described in the text. *hnt.n=i m s3 h3ty<sup>c</sup> htm bitl imy-r m3<sup>c</sup> wr n m3hd m idn s it i3ww hft hst.t m pr-nsw mrw.t=f m stp-s3 sn=i k* “It was as son of the local ruler, seal-bearer, great general of the Oryx Nome, that I sailed upstream, as a man replaces the aging father through the favor of the palace (and) his love in the palace” (Amenemhat, Newberry 1893: pl. 8, 7). *iw ir.n(=i) h<sup>c</sup> 3 m rnp.wt hr hnw.t(=i) ... isf s(y) m s3.t n ny-sw.t m hm.t ny-sw.t mr.t=f...* “I passed a great number of years under my lady...while she was a king’s daughter and a king’s beloved wife...” (Stela of Redi-Khnum [C 20543], Lange & Schäfer 1908: 165, 7-9). Cf. the playful use of nominal predication in P Harris 500: *ink sn.t=k tpy(t)* “I am your first sister” (P Harris 500, 7/7).
- 23 *sw m ntr iw=i m hq3 wnn=f hr hdb iw=i hr s<sup>c</sup>nh* “He is god while I am ruler. While I vivify, he will kill.” (Stela of Emhab [Cairo E 49566], Baines 1986: 41-53). Note also the use of *hq3* with the *m* of predication as well as the use of the Late Egyptian pronominal compound with the *m* of predication in the main clause followed by a circumstantial clause marked by *iw*, also containing the *m* of predication.
- 24 In this example, even the vocabulary implies an eternal quality in the use of the verb *mn*. Cf. Calverley (1958: pl. 20): *ntk s3(=i) pr.n=k im(=i) rnn.n(=i) tw r hq3 t3.wy snht.n(=i) h<sup>c</sup>=k m nht r t3 nb ph tw iw hm=k m ny-sw.t nhh Hr w3h n d.t* “You are (my) son, having come forth from me.

## Ex. 18 Tomb of Khnumhotep II, Beni Hasan, De Buck (1948: 70, 2-5)



*n ḥpr mī.t n b3k..w p3.n nb=sn ḥs.t st rḥ.n=f s.t-ns=i nḥ qm3=i tw=i m im3ḥy  
n ḥr ny-sw.t ḥs.t=i ḥr šn.wt=f i3m.t=i m b3ḥ smr.w=f r-p<sup>c</sup> ḥ3ty-<sup>c</sup> nḥri s3 ḥnm-  
ḥtp nb im3ḥ*

“The like did not happen for the servants whose lord had ever praised them. It was while my form was small that he knew my speech, **I being as a venerated one by the king**, my praise being with his entourage, my charm being in the presence of his friends, the prince, high official, Nehri’s son, Khnumhotep, possessor of veneration.”

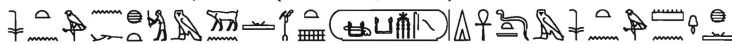
## Ex. 19 Tale of Sinuhe B 67-68/R 92-93



*sw3 t3y.w ḥm.wt ḥr rnn.wt im=f tw=f m ny-sw.t*

“**Because he is king**, men and women pass in jubilation about him.”

## Ex. 20 Carnarvon Tablet, Miosi (1981: 35, 11-12)



*ny-sw.t nḥt m ḥn w3s.t k3-ms di <sup>c</sup>nḥ d.t m ny-sw.t mnḥ*

“The strong king within Thebes, Kamose, given life forever, **is beneficent king**.”

## Ex. 21 Epigraphic Survey (1936: pl. 4, 11-12)



*wnn r<sup>c</sup> ḥr wbn ḥr ḥtp tw=k m nb n km.t r d.t*

“**It is while you are lord of Egypt for eternity** that the sun rises and sets.”

Ex. 22 Calverley (1958: pl. 15)<sup>25</sup>

*wnn r<sup>c</sup> ḥr d3(.t) ḥr.t tw ḥm=k m ny-sw.t tp t3*

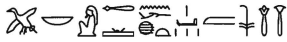
“**It is while your majesty is king upon earth** that the sun crosses the sky.”

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As I have reared you to rule the two lands, so have I strengthened your limbs as one victorious over every land who attacks you. Your majesty is the king for ever, Horus, enduring for ever.”

25 “In such examples the *iw*-clause, which contains a durative (adverbial or stative) predicate, is certainly circumstantial” (Wente 1977: 311).

## Ex. 23 Epigraphic Survey (1936: pl.28, 60)



*p3 nb ʿ3 nht.w m ny-sw.t t3.wy*

“The lord who is great of victories is **king of the two lands.**”<sup>26</sup>

Upon looking at such constructions, we must ask ourselves why non-essential characteristics appear in nominal constructions and essential characteristics appear in adverbial constructions contrary to the standard interpretation. Explaining any of the examples presented above according to the traditional understanding of the *m* of predication becomes exceedingly convoluted. If one appeals to the funerary context of an inscription to explain the non-essential characteristics expressed with nominal constructions, i.e. the deceased is being associated with his position of status as an inherent characteristic, then one must explain the examples using the *m* of predication. If one appeals to the mortal quality of the king in his act of acquiring the divine seat of kingship to explain the essential characteristics expressed in adverbial predication, then one must explain the examples using nominal predication in the very same contexts.<sup>27</sup> It is obvious in this case that the traditional explanation lacks consistency in explaining the observed grammatical phenomena.

The answer to this conundrum may lie not in semantics but in syntax,<sup>28</sup> as indicated from a text in the tomb of Hezi at Saqqara. Hezi uses both nominal and adverbial predicates to associate himself with specific characteristics, but the characteristics are repeated in each case so that we can see where he is using nominal predication and where he is using adverbial predication with the very same predicates. As example 24 shows, he begins his biographical inscription with nominal predication. It is not until later after a context has been established that the *m* of predication is used in clauses subordinated by the particle *sk*.

26 Following the translation of Edgerton & Wilson (1936: 32).

27 In the inscription of Khnumhotep, the *m* of predication is used in a circumstantial clause which itself is part of series of circumstantial clauses. The attribute is a nisba form of *im3h*, something which you would generally want to associate yourself with eternally, as would be clearly shown according to the standard interpretation in many other examples of the type *ink im3hy hr ny-sw.t* “I am a venerated one before the king.” In the other examples, the concept of king is the expressed attribute. Even *Re* is used as a predicate after the *m* of predication in the Great Hymn to the Aten. The examples from the Seti temple at Abyos and the inscriptions of Ramesses from Karnak and Medinet Habu are most specific. Obviously, this implies the eternal nature of the king, yet the scribe has chosen to use an adverbial predicate in an emphasized circumstantial clause. Compare this with the example from Sinuhe also quoted above. The example “It is while your majesty is king upon earth, that the sun crosses the sky” is unquestionably associating the king with everlasting, i.e. essential, kingship.

28 I should like to thank here James Allen for pointing out to me that, while the *m* of predication seems to be used based on syntactic principles, the use of the pronouns involved in these constructions may be governed by various other principles. Examples such as *ink m whmw* “I am a steering oar” and *sk ink is m N* “while I am a N” are unusual because the independent pronoun is not usually used in initial position before an adverbial predicate or after the particle *sk*. Is this due to a conversion from an original sentence with a nominal subject? As James Allen has pointed out in the Baer festschrift, this may also be due to rhematization of the pronoun (Allen 1994: 1-13).

## Ex. 24 Tomb of Hezi, Silverman (1999: fig. 3b)



(1) *dd=f ink z3b zš n rk izzi ink z3b šhd zš.w n rk wntš in tti nb(=i) (w)d(i) wi m z3b ḳd-mr* (2) *(w)d(i) wi m hry-tp ny-sw.t rdi.n hm=f ir.t(i) n(=i) n rh hm=f rn(=i) m it.t(=i) zš n ḳ.wy=f(y) ny wnt h3(w) nb šh3.w n=f dd n=f s3i* (3) *ir.n(=i) zš hr hm=f m h3.t zš.w ir.n(=i) sr hr hm=f m h3.t sr.w* (4) *wn rdi hm=f h3i(=i) r wi3 ʕ3 stp(=i) z3 twt(=i) r w3.wt iri.t(i) 3w.t(=i) mi m hry-tp ny-sw.t sk w(i) m z3b ḳd-mr ny wnt try.t(w) mit.t n mit(y=i) nb wn hm=f nd=f ht m-ḳ(=i) m r3-ḳ(=i)* (5) *m-m sr.w sk wi m z3b šhd zš.w n rh hm=f rn(=i) tny r b3k nb*

(1) ...as he says: “I was a dignitary and scribe during the reign of Isezi. I was a dignitary and inspector of scribes during the reign of Unis. It was Teti, (my) lord, who appointed me as dignitary and ḳd-mr official (2) and who appointed me royal chamberlain.<sup>29</sup> His majesty caused that (it) be done for me because his majesty was aware of (my) name when I took over the role of scribe from (lit. of) his hands, there not being any supporter who is called to mind (or remembered by) to him, (nor) one of whom it is said: ‘Wise (one)!’” (3) I performed the role of scribe under his majesty at the front of the scribes. I performed the role of an official under his majesty at the front of officials. (4) His majesty used to cause that I descend to the great sacred bark, that I might perform escort duty; that I come to the ways; and that my gifts be made just as a royal chamberlain, when I was a dignitary and ḳd-mr official, the like was not done for any equal of mine. His majesty asked advice from me because of my activity (5) among the officials, when I was a dignitary and inspector of scribes, because his majesty knew my name, it being more distinguished than (that of) any scribe.”<sup>30</sup>

What is obvious in these examples is the use of the *m* of predication in circumstantial clauses. The *m* of predication is being used here with the same meaning as the phrase *ink sš*, except the clause is subordinated. In fact, there are few ways in Egyptian to subordinate the idea *ink sš* “I am a scribe” without placing the clause in a restricted semantic situation, e.g. after *ḳr ntt*.<sup>31</sup> For this idea to be subordinated as a circumstantial clause in Old and Middle Egyptian, the *m* of predication must be used. As a circumstantial clause, the phrase provides background, descriptive information.<sup>32</sup> Two

29 Note the use of the *m* of predication with the verb *di* in Hezi’s appointments by the king.

30 Note the addition of “only” to the published translations in an attempt to bring out the “nuance” of the *m* of predication in accordance with the accepted view (Kanawati & Abder-Raziq 1999: 38).

31 Or, for instance: *n ink is wḳb s3 wḳb* “because I am a pure one, son of a pure one” (PT 1139c).

32 Particularly useful in literary texts, e.g. *dd.in s3 n ny-sw.t Hr-dd=f iw wn nds Ddi n=f hms=f m Dd-Snfrw m3ḳ-hrw tw=f m nds n rnp.wt 110 iw=f hr wnm t 500 rnm n k3 m iwḳ hnḳ swr hnq.t ds 100 rnm m hrw pn* “Then the Prince Hardedef said: ‘There is a commoner whose name is Djedy, living

common circumstantial clauses using the *m* of predication in Old and Middle Egyptian are those following *iw* plus a suffix pronoun and those following the subordinating particle *sk/ist*, just as we saw in the inscription of Hezi above.<sup>33</sup> Clauses marked by *sk/ist*<sup>34</sup> also must use the *m* of predication since *sk/ist* is followed by a dependent pronoun which should be followed by the *m* of predication.<sup>35</sup> However, this does not mean that the *m* of predication can only be used in circumstantial clauses.

Certain syntactic environments will condition the use of the *m* of predication in main clauses. For example, if the particle *iw* is used to begin a clause with a noun<sup>36</sup> or suffix pronoun subject, the *m* of predication must be used since *iw* Noun + Noun is not a viable option and Noun + Noun is used only in a number of “frozen” phrases (e.g. PN *rn=f* “His name is PN”). If the scribe uses *mk* to summon the reader’s attention, he will then follow *mk* with the dependent pronoun and the *m* of predication, just as described before with the particle *sk/ist*.<sup>37</sup> In the phrases with *wn* “to exist,” it is the nature of the verb that forces the use of the *m* of predication since you cannot “exist (something)” in Egyptian, but must “exist *in/as* (something).”<sup>38</sup> The same can be said of *rdi m* “to appoint as,”<sup>39</sup> *hpr m* “to become as,”<sup>40</sup> *ḥc m* “to arise as,”<sup>41</sup> *ḥc m* “to appear as,” and *smn m* “to be established as.”<sup>42</sup> We are dealing here

in Djed-Snefru as a commoner of 110 years eating 500 loaves of bread and a side of beef as well as drinking 100 jugs of beer in the course of this day” (Papyrus Westcar, De Buck 1948: 79, 5-9).

- 33 In the stela C 258, occupations are at first given in nominal predication and then the father’s occupation is given in a circumstantial clause: *ink w<sup>c</sup>b ḥq n ip.t-sw.t ink s3 n ḥm-nṯr ʿ3 n imn ḥr mw.t=l s3 w<sup>c</sup>b nty n sbḥ.t šm<sup>c</sup>w nty ḏr ḥn.t iw it n lt(=l) n lt-nṯr m33 št3 n p3wty t3.wy* “I am a priest who enters Karnak. I am the son of a great prophet of Amun through my mother, son of a competent priest of the door of Upper Egypt which has been since before, while the father of my father was as a god’s father, who saw the secret of the primordial one of the two lands” (C 259, Jansen-Winkel 1985: 250, 3-4).
- 34 This also includes other particles, e.g. *mk - m wi m 3ḥ pn ikr* “Look, I am this excellent Akh-spirit” (*Urk.* IV, 547, cited in Edel 1955-1964: 297); *ti - ti wi m sšmy=k spr=k r=sn* “Surely I am your guide so that you might reach them” (Poetical Stela of Tuthmosis III, 7; De Buck 1948: 54). However, if a scribe wanted to use one of these particles and emphasize the pronoun, in very rare instances he used an independent pronoun: *mk ink p3 i.di nṯr.w k3 nb [n=f ...]* “Look, I am the one to whom the gods gave all nourishment ...” (Karnak Inscription of Merneptah, 24; Manassa 2003: 158-159). This last sentence could also be understood as *mk A pw* (see Ritner [forthcoming]). For the last phenomenon, see Allen (1994).
- 35 E.g. *st w(i) m z3b iry-nḥn rdi wi ḥm=f m smr w<sup>c</sup>t(y)* “When I was a senior warden of Hierakonpolis, his majesty appointed me as sole companion...” (Biography of Weni, *Urk.* I, 100, 6-7); cf. with nominal subject: *ist ḥm-f m inp mi Ḥr m 3ḥ-bity* “Now, his majesty was a youth like Horus in Khemmis” (*Urk.* IV, 1541, 1).
- 36 E.g. *iw Ḥr m ḥrp n wi3* “Horus is the controller of the bark” (BD 86).
- 37 There are a few, rare examples of *mk* + independent pronoun + noun. Such a construction is unusual, just as the counterpart independent pronoun + *m* + noun is unusual. Rhematization of the pronouns here may lie behind these rare constructions (see note 21).
- 38 E.g. *ir wnn=f m ḥrd wr ḥm=f st m ḥm* “If he is an old(er) child, he will swallow it by swallowing” (Papyrus Ebers 49, 22).
- 39 E.g. *rdi wi ny-sw.t bity Mr-n-r<sup>c</sup> nb(=i) ḥnḥ ḏ.t m ḥ3ty-<sup>c</sup>* “The King of Upper and Lower Egypt Merenre, my lord, living forever, appointed me as governor...” (Biography of Weni, *Urk.* I, 105, 11-12).
- 40 E.g. *hpr.k(w)i m rḥ ny-sw.t m3<sup>c</sup>* “I became as a true king’s acquaintance” (Stela of Semty, Sethe 1928: 75, 6).
- 41 E.g. *ḥr mi ḥc=k m ḥq3 nn rdi.t rḥ=i* “Why have you arisen as ruler without informing me?” (Second Kamose Stela, Miosi 1981: 48, 3-4).

with nothing other than verb-preposition idioms which are common in every language.

These constructions have the same basic functions in Old and Middle Egyptian. In archaizing texts written in Middle Egyptian after the Middle Kingdom, the same constructions occur although they are more restricted in number.<sup>43</sup> Because of further developments in the grammar of Late Egyptian, the preposition *m* is used less frequently in texts written in Late Egyptian and therefore fewer examples exist.<sup>44</sup> As *iw* had become a circumstantial converter in Late Egyptian, the exact opposite of its Middle Egyptian function, *iw* can stand before a nominal clause consisting of an independent pronoun plus noun, converting the clause into a circumstantial clause and thus replacing some of the uses of the *m* of predication from Middle Egyptian (ex. 25-26). With this development, the usage of nominal predication converted with *iw* and the use of the *m* of predication overlap and the two become viable options, but not mutually exclusive.

Other developments in Late Egyptian grammar multiplied the number of options for constructing identity statements. Just as the pronominal compounds could be used to create sentences with adverbial (location) predicates (ex. 27), so too could they be used in identity statements (ex. 28-29). Several factors may have dictated their choice. First, use of the independent pronoun focused the stress onto the pronoun. Second, other elements, such as *ptr*, forced the speaker/writer away from the independent pronoun while maintaining a non-circumstantial clause. Finally, it is possible that some constructions were chosen for metric reasons, especially those derived from literature and poetry.

Ex. 25 Papyrus Abbott, 6, 1-2



*y3 ih iw ink p3 h3ty-<sup>c</sup> dd smy n p3 hk3 nh wd3 nb*

“What is this, while I am the mayor who reports to the ruler (l.p.h.)”

Ex. 26 Gardiner (1932: 75, 12)



*...iw ink ipwty n imn*

“...while I am a messenger of Amun.”

42 E.g. *n i<sup>r</sup>.t=f smn hr ns.t R<sup>c</sup> m ny-sw.t t3.wy* “...of his uraeus, established on the throne of Re as king of the Two Lands” (Epigraphic Survey 1936: pl. 27, 7).

43 E.g. *ist gm.n hm=f inr pn m shr bik ntr(y) iw=f m inpw* “Now, his majesty found this stone in the form of a divine falcon when he was a youth” (Naos of Tuthmosis IV, *Urk. IV*, 1565, 3-4); *dt=tn mn=f m hw.wt-ntr=tn iw=f m sl 3 m niw.t=f dt=tn mn hrd.w=f s3 n s3=f m hw.wt-ntr=tn iw=w m sy.w 3.w m niw.wt=sn r nhh* “May you cause him to remain in your temples while he is a great noble of his town. May you cause his children and the son of his son to remain in your temples while they are great nobles in their towns forever” (Saite Votive Stela from Buto, Förster 2004: 47-56).

44 E.g. *y3 s3<sup>c</sup> iw=i m sri (m) r3-<sup>c</sup> p3 h3w tw=i irm=k bw iri=i 3m3 p3y=k q3i* “Indeed, since I was a child, still (down to) today, when with you, I do not understand your character” (P. DM, t, rt. 3-4, Černý & Groll 1984: 318-319) – note syntactically conditioned by *y3 s3<sup>c</sup>*.



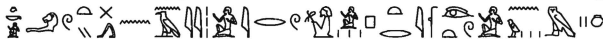
Ex. 27 Stele of Ka-Nefer (BM 1324), Budge (1912: pl. 4)



*ir nw in s3=f wr rh ny-sw.t K3-w<sup>c</sup>b irr [n=f] sk sw m imnt.t hp(.w) n k3=f*

“As for this, it is his eldest son, the king’s acquaintance Kawab, who acts for him while he is in the west, having gone to his *ka*.”

Ex. 28 Love Poem, Papyrus Turin 1996, 1.5-6, Mathieu (1996: pl. 15)



*ink h3ty n n3y=i ir.w ptr tw=i n=w m sn-nw*

“I am foremost among my companions. Look, I am second to them.”<sup>45</sup>

Ex. 29 Love Poem, Papyrus Harris 500, 2.1, Mathieu (1996: pl. 9)



*tw=i m gb k3rt*

“I am a young goose.”

Ex. 30 Love Poem, P. Harris 500, 5.5, Mathieu (1996: pl. 12)



*hr bn ntk p3 snb ‘nh*

“For are you not health and life?”

The *m* of predication continues into Demotic, often written as *n* or entirely dropped.<sup>46</sup> Its use is syntactically conditioned and occurs frequently in the circumstantial description to witness copy contracts *tw=f n mtr* “...he being a witness” and in the surety clause of legal documents *nty nb nkt nb nty mtw=n hn<sup>c</sup> n3 nty iw=n r ti hpr=w n iwe* “Everything and all property which we have along with what we will acquire is security...,” but also in circumstantial clauses with titles and professions (ex. 31-32). In the examples 33 and 34, the *m* of predication must be used because a circumstantial clause must follow the particle *hmy* and the subjects of both circumstantial clauses are nouns. In the third example, a noun subject conditions the use of the *m* of predication since a noun subject followed by a noun predicate should equal full predication only in archaic language (ex. 35).<sup>47</sup>

45 Mathieu interpreted the second clause as a second tense *ptr.tw=i* “I am seen (by them as second).” However, we could also interpret this as a use of *ptr* as a particle followed by the first present. For such usage, see Černý & Groll (1984: 148-149), where, however, many of the examples cited are of the first present following *ptr* involve use of the stative. An apparent example of the circumstantial following *ptr* is cited by Erman (1933: §364): *ptr tw=i hr hprw*. However, Gardiner (1932: 24a) reinterpreted this example as the third future *ptr iw=i r hprw*.

46 The following paragraph presents some preliminary data from a forthcoming article by the author on the *m* of predication in Demotic.

47 See also the forthcoming discussion of Robert Ritner, “Some Problematic Bipartite Nominal Predicates in Demotic,” a prepublication version of which can be read here: [http://oi.uchicago.edu/pdf/bipartite\\_nominal\\_predicates.pdf](http://oi.uchicago.edu/pdf/bipartite_nominal_predicates.pdf).

- Ex. 31 P Bib. Nat. 215: *The Demotic Chronicle* 4/8, Spiegelberg (1914)



*bn-pw=w ti 3sg=f iw=f n hry*

“He was not allowed to delay **while he was ruler.**”

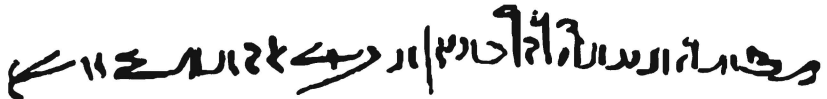
- Ex. 32 P Rhind I 1d2-1d3, Möller (1913)



*iw p3y=f iv n 3 (n) t3y=f niw.t Iwnw-šm<sup>c</sup>w iw=f n hm-ntr Mnv-R<sup>c</sup>*

“... and his father **was a great one** (in) his town of Upper Egyptian Heliopolis and he **was a prophet** of Montu-Re.”

- Ex. 33 P BM 10508: *The Instruction of ‘Onchsheshonqy* 10/11, Glanville (1955)



*hmy iw p3y=y sn (n) pa n3 htr.w iw=f ts n3y=y qny*

“If only **my brother** was as a horse groomer, he mounting mine in valor.”

- Ex. 34 P BM 10508: *The Instruction of ‘Onchsheshonqy* 10/23, Glanville (1955)



*hmy iw t3y=y mw.t (n) t3y=y nšy.t ir=s n=i p3 nt n3-<sup>c</sup>n=f*

“If only **my mother** was **my hairdresser** so that she could do for me that which is pleasant.”

- Ex. 35 P BM 10508: *The Instruction of ‘Onchsheshonqy* 13/6, Glanville (1955)



*iry n IV n IV iry rmt (n) rh (n) rmt rh*

“The companion of a fool is a fool. The companion of a wise man is a wise man.”

The construction continues into Coptic, although the *m* of predication is no longer used by itself. In Coptic, the qualitative of εἰπε (ω) is used with *n*, what is historically the *m* of predication, to mean “act as.” The construction derives ultimately from Old and Middle Egyptian *iri m* + Noun. This Coptic construction is again contrasted with nominal clauses consisting of independent pronoun plus noun. Whether or not the same dichotomy which the standard interpretation poses for earlier phases of the Egyptian language holds up must be postponed for the topic of another paper, but examples 37-41 demonstrate that the same predicates can be used with both constructions.

- Ex. 36 Matyrdom of Shenoufe, Reymond and Barns (1973: 83)  
 ΤΑΙ ΤΕ ΤΩΡΠΕ ΝΑΠΟΓΡΑΦΗ ΝΤΑΣΩΠΕ ΖΗΠΚΑΖ ΝΚΗΜΕ ΕΤΒΕΝΕΤΟΥΑΛΒ  
 ΖΗΝΕΖΟΥ ΝΔΙΟΚΛΗΤΙΑΝΟΣ ΠΡΡΟ ΝΑΝΟΜΟΣ ΕΦΟ ΝΡΡΟ ΖΝΤΑΝΤΙΟΧΙΑ  
 ΕΡΕΑΝΔΙΟΧΟΣ Ο ΝΖΗΓΕΜΩΝ ΕΤΕΦΥΝΕΙΚΗ ΕΡΕ ΚΟΥΚΚΙΑΝΟΣ Ο ΝΖΗΓΕΜΩΝ  
 ΕΡΑΚΟΤΕ ΕΡΕΠΟΜΠΕΙΟΣ Ο ΝΖΗΓΕΜΩΝ ΕΠΕΡΕΜΟΥΝ ΕΡΕΖΡΟΚΗΛΛΕΙΑΝΟΣ  
 Ο ΝΖΗΓΕΜΩΝ ΕΤΠΟΛΙΣ ΖΗΡΑΚΛΑΙΟΣ ΜΗΤΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΡΣΙΝΟΗ ΜΗΤΚΕΠΟΛΙΣ  
 ΖΕΡΙΧΟΣ ΕΡΕΑΡΙΑΝΟΣ Ο ΝΖΗΓΕΜΩΝ ΕΘΥΒΑΕΙΣ  
 “This is the first written account which came into being in the land of Egypt  
 about the saints in the days of Diocletian, the lawless king, **while he was  
 king in Antioch, when Antiochus was governor** over Phoenicia, **when  
 Culcianus was governor** over Alexandria, **when Pompeius was governor**  
 over Peremoun, **when Hierocleianus was governor** over Heracleopolis and  
 the city of Arsinoe as well as the city of Oxyrhynchus, **when Arianus was  
 governor** over the Thebaid.”
- Ex. 37 II Kings 2:11  
 ΑΥΩΠΕ ΝΒΙ ΝΕΖΟΥ ΝΤΑ ΔΑΔ ΑΛΥ ΖΝ ΧΕΒΡΩΝ ΕΦΟ ΝΡΡΟ ΕΧΗ ΠΗ  
 ΝΙΟΥΔΑ ΕΥΝΑΡ ΣΑΩΦΕ Ν ΡΟΜΠΕ ΜΝ ΣΟΥ ΝΕΒΟΤ  
 “The days came which David passed in Hebron **while he was king over the  
 house of Judea**, while seven years and six months will have passed.”
- Ex. 38 II Kings 5:2  
 ΑΥΩ ΣΑΒ ΜΝ ΩΜΗΤ ΜΠΟΥ ΝΖΟΥ ΕΡΕ ΣΑΟΥΑ Ο ΝΡΡΟ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΕΧΩΝΒ  
 “And yesterday and the day before, **while Saul was king over us...**”
- Ex. 39 Luke 23:32  
 ΑΝΓ ΠΡΡΟ ΠΕΧ̄C  
 “I am the king, the christ.”
- Ex. 40 Matthew 27:42  
 ΠΡΡΟ ΜΠΗΛ ΠΕ  
 “He is the king of Israel...”

In this article, I have pointed out several instances in which the traditional interpretation of the grammatical constructions under discussion is insufficient to describe the usage of the *m* of predication as contrasted with that of nominal predication. In light of this evidence, it can be safely concluded that the traditional understanding of this construction is unsatisfactory. The inconsistencies are simply too numerous. Here I have tried to show that the two constructions differ not in meaning, but in how they are employed. Previous scholars have thought that time-bound associations (e.g. occupation, age expressions, etc.) required the *m* of predication. However, any temporal restrictions of the *m* of predication come from the syntax, not the nature of the descriptive predicate. That is to say, the *m* of predication in a circumstantial clause is restricted only by the main clause on which it depends, not on the nature of the predicate employed. In a main clause, it is the syntactical elements used to create the clause which condition the use of the *m* of predication. Thus the *m* of predication is used for

syntactic reasons, not semantic ones. To conclude, it is not the nature of the predicate, but the syntax of the clause as well as its components which condition the use of the *m* of predication.

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