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Gilula, Mordechai

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(Basel)

Addresses

Seminar für  
Ägyptologie und Koptologie  
Georg-August-Universität  
Göttingen  
Weender Landstraße 2  
37073 Göttingen  
Germany

Seminar für Archäologie und  
Kulturgeschichte Nordostafrikas  
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin  
Unter den Linden 6  
10099 Berlin  
Germany

Ägyptologisches Seminar  
Universität Basel  
Bernoullistraße 32  
4056 Basel  
Switzerland

Online: <http://www.gwdg.de/~lingaeg/>

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## The King's Egyptian

Mordechai Gilula, Tel Aviv

In the story about the magician Djedi in pWestcar there are expressions uttered by the king which may show majestic license: disregarding "the rules of grammar", or they may be of a level of speech that is higher than that of common people and might indicate special breeding, erudition and sensitivity to the language and its eccentric usages<sup>1</sup>.

(1) (for lack of the original edition I cite from De Buck's *Readingbook*, 79, 12-13)

*dd.in hm.f ds.k ir.f Hr dd.f s3.i int.k n.i sw*

"then it is you Hordedef, my son, who will bring him to me yourself", or rather, "then it is you yourself Hordedef, my son, who will bring him to me."

This is an odd sentence in some respects: it is supposed to stand for a Participial Statement in the future tense, which is of the pattern *in* + NOUN + *sdm.f* or Independent Pronoun + *sdm.f*. Thus \**NTK ir.f Hr dd.f s3.i* etc would convey the necessary meaning, but here the strengthening adverb *ds.k*, which would be redundant anyway in such a sentence<sup>2</sup>, replaces the pronoun and is placed moreover at the beginning of the phrase, while its usual position is after a noun or a pronoun<sup>3</sup>. In view of note 2, it seems as if our sentence may be short for \**ntk ds.k Hr dd.f s3.i int.k n.i sw*. On the other hand, *ds.k* may stand here and there at the beginning of the sentence in extra position in nominal use (which is unique), *int.k* being the 2nd person Prospective *sdm.f* which implies request or polite demand: "Then you yourself Hordedef my son, please bring it to me."

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<sup>1</sup> This is apparent from the fact that they follow rules defined by this writer, and are in accord with his attempt to understand and explain similar occurrences in other texts.

<sup>2</sup> But cf. CT VII 249p (*in?*) *R' ds.f m33.f wi m ntr h'w.i*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Gardiner, *EG*, § 36.

Punctuality is the politeness of kings; heedlessness<sup>4</sup> is their right and prerogative. However, its construction notwithstanding, the meaning of the sentence is clear.

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The sentence quoted in note 2 is important in another way than substantiating what might look like a "royal whim". Aside from providing, together with CT I 216c, the earliest example of the strengthening word *h'w* (and at that, without a preceding preposition<sup>5</sup>), it contains simultaneously *ds* and *h'w*:

(2) (in?) *R' ds.f m33.f wi m ntr h'w.i*

"It is Ra himself (or, if Ra is part of a preceding sentence: "he himself"), who sees me as a god myself", i.e., on my own, in my own right.

Another khufuistic expression worthy of dissection: *Ddi* told the king that the first born child of *Rdddt* will bring him the secret plan of the Temple of Thot, and the king said:

(3) (De Buck, *Readingbook*, 83, 1-2) *Mr.i is st n3 ddy.k*

"I'll like that which you might say, who is that *Rdddt*?"

*Mr.i* is a bare non-geminating *sdm.f* of a weak verb at the beginning of direct speech (without preceding *iw*). By the theory of H.J. Polotsky, it is a prospective *sdm.f*; *is* is the enclitic particle that also takes part in the negative expressions *n-is* and *n...is*. In affirmative sentences it is used to indicate the non-predication of the verb<sup>6</sup>. Namely, it indicates that it is not the verb that is the center of interest in the sentence, but another part of it. This use began by its redundant employment to hypercharacterize "emphatic" sentences which are already noticeable as such by being, among the rest, verbs of motion in the bare *sdm.n.f* form<sup>7</sup>. Here this function finds its extreme expression in emphasizing the direct object: "Whatever you might say, I promise to like it".

The desire to preserve the special meaning of the "prospective" *sdm.f* in the 1st person<sup>8</sup>, while, at the same time, stressing the direct object<sup>9</sup>, is perhaps the cause of this

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<sup>4</sup> "HEEDLESSHOOD," a supposed synonym of "heedlessness," which some would read for "headelessehood": *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, 190 d.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Gardiner, *EG*, § 36, with n. 7.

<sup>6</sup> It is primarily the subordinating morpheme that subordinates non-verbal sentences without *iw* (i.e., sentences with nominal predicate, participial statements, and emphatic sentences) to a preposition, or as complement of a verb. Cf. Gilula, *JEA* 57 (1971), 16 n.c.

<sup>7</sup> Polotsky, *Egyptian Tenses*. I hope to elaborate on this in a future publication; in the mean time cf. Note 3 below.

<sup>8</sup> Wish or promise.

strange combination. In doing this Khufu is not unique: this mode of expression was not alien to Hatshepsut (cf. Note 1 below), nor to the courtiers of Thutmose III (cf. Note 2 below).

### Notes

1 *Chapelle d'Hatshepsout*, 99: *išt pw mrt.n.k ḥpr iry.i* (distinctive prospective writing) *is ḥft wdt.n.k* "Whatever you have wished to happen, it is according to your command that I mean to perform it."

2 Urk. IV 1382, 10: *Di.k* (prospective) *is s3.f Wsr rn.f m sš sd3wty-ntr m ḥwt-ntr n Imn* "It is his son *Wsr* by name, that you will place as scribe and treasurer of the God in the temple of Amun" (lit. "Please put his son" etc.).

3 Pyr. 777c: *iw<sup>10</sup> n.t sdḥ.t s3.t, iw<sup>10</sup> n.(i) is hnm.(i) wr pn*, "Have you come to conceal your son? It is to protect this great one that I have come." This is perhaps the earliest example of *is* within an emphatic sentence, cf. also CT III 392e, Urk. IV 1280, 11 and many more. Interesting is Urk. IV 648, 4: *ḥpr.n.is m h3w kywy*. "It is in other times that it had happened"?, or "They (impersonal *ḥpr.n.*) became in other times", i.e., they were confused.

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<sup>9</sup> Silverman, *Orientalia* 49 (1980), 199-203 showed that another way to emphasize the direct object was to make it the subject of an "emphatic" verb-form by putting before it the *m* of predication.

<sup>10</sup> In the Pyramid Texts *iw* is the emphatic *sdm.n.f* form of *iy* "to come".

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