CHAPTER III. THE ACTIVE n sDm.t=\f CONSTRUCTION

In the two preceding studies on the sDm.t=\f verb form attention has been focused on the Dr sDm.t=\f and r sDm.t=\f constructions.\(^1\) What these constructions have in common is that they are introduced by a preposition/conjunction and are translated, respectively, with the related conjunctions "before" and "until". While there the fundamental problem was to distinguish the form from the feminine infinitive—or even the feminine-neuter Perfective Relative Form with implicit antecedent--, owing to its formal similarity to them, this morphological problem is of no consequence at all with n sDm.t=f. The form can be identified at a glance owing to its combination with the negation n, which does not occur in Middle Egyptian in combination with the infinitive.

Now the problem lies with the translation of n sDm.t=f with "not yet", which notion appears to be regarded by several scholars as the usual, but nonetheless optional, meaning of the negation in that sDm.t=f construction, besides the meaning "not" known from the use of the negation in other constructions with finite verb forms, i.e. n sDm=f and n sDm.n=f.\(^2\) A second problem is the relationship of the form in n sDm.t=f to the form in Dr sDm.t=\f and r sDm.t=f.

Putting forward the hypothesis that it concerns one verb form on account of its meaning in its three indubitable uses,\(^3\) an attempt must be made to bring the use of the verb form in Dr sDm.t=\f, r sDm.t=f and n sDm.t=f under one common semantic denominator.

§ 1. The absolute time of the reference situation and of the context.

In the following discussion of examples of the use of n sDm.t=f in relation to the three possible reference times I shall consistently use the conjunction "before" + affirmative clause as the translation of the construction. This strategy only serves the purpose of establishing that n sDm.t=f in that translation can be interpreted in terms of relative future time reference.\(^4\) Remarkably, the translation of this construction appears to cause great confusion as regards its relative time reference, since several scholars claim a relative past with respect to the time of the reference situation.\(^5\) One example will suffice to show that this analysis cannot be correct.

\(^1\) See Studies sDm.t=\f ! (Dr sDm.t=\f) and op.cit. 11 (r sDm.t=\f).

\(^2\) For "not" or "not (yet)" see, among others, Gardiner, EG, 316 (§401): ["sDm.t=f] after n 'not', chiefly with the meaning 'he has (had) not yet heard'; 317 (§402): "lit. 'he has (had) not (yet) ...'; however, Gardiner has stated that the 'not yet/before' notion is only very rarely absent (see Studies sDm.t=\f ! (Dr sDm.t=\f), §1 [p. 4]). Lefebvre, GEC, 212 (§421): [la construction négative n sDm.t=f signifie, dans une proposition principale: 'il n'a (n'avait) pas (encore) entendu']. Callender, Middle Egyptian, 103 (4.10.1.1): ["the main clause is apparently i\w n sDm.t=f 'he has not yet heard'; the conjoined form in n sDm.t=f 'when/and he had not heard'"]. Borghouts, Egyptisch I, 104 (§48.a.1): n sDm.t=f ["hij heeft nog niet gehoord" (eigl. 'hij zal niet hebben gehoord') ["'he has not yet heard' (strictly speaking 'he will not have heard')"]]. Graefe, Mitteläg. Grammatik, 101: ["'ohne dass ...' bzw. 'bevor noch'"]]. Grandet - Mathieu, Cours d'égyptien II, 143 (42.4): ["on les rend de préférence par 'avant qu'il n'ait mangé' ou 'n'ayant pas encore mangé'... (lit., 'tandis qu'il n'a pas mangé')"].

\(^3\) Contra Loprieno, sDm.t, GM 37 (1980), 18 (1.2) and 20 (3); for a further remark see §4 below [p. 45], and for further discussion see Studies sDm.t=\f V (sDm.t=\f), §7-9 [pp. 75-77].

\(^4\) Thus Westendorf, Gramm. med. T., 191 (§264); Satzinger, Neg. Konstr., 29 (§39); Gaskins, Notes M.Eg. Syntax, 167. Note that under certain conditions "before" and "while not yet" are not easily interchangeable. Whereas "before" in "John got to safety before the boiler blew up" can be smoothly replaced by "while the boiler had not yet blown up"—where in both translations the implicature is indeed that "the boiler blew up"--this is different in "John got to the safety handle before the boiler blew up"; in the latter case, where the blow-up is aborted, "while not yet" cannot replace "before". For the example with "before" see Gazdar, Pragmatics, 106 in a discussion of the pragmatic definitions of presupposition.

\(^5\) Already pointed out in Studies sDm.t=\f ! (Dr sDm.t=\f), n.15. Note the remarkable stance taken by Loprieno, op.cit., 17, where it is stated that r sDm.t=\f "until he hears/ has heard" has a (relative) future time reference, whereas n sDm.t=f "before he has heard" has a (relative) past reference (see also p. 26). Thus also Graefe, Mitteläg. Grammatik, 101 on n sDm.t=f: ["Bedeutung: relative Vergangenheit, gleichzeitig mit oder vorzeitig zur Handlung des Hauptsatzteils: 'ohne
Sh. Sailor, 97-98. sn=sn Da n iy.t=f nSny n xpr.t=f "they foretold a storm before it had come, a tempest before it had happened". One can simply not foretell anything that lies in the past relative to the reference time of foretelling.

The construction n sDm.t=f occurs quite frequently in narrative contexts, where the reference situation may be situated in the absolute past. In the following examples the absolute past reference time is set by sDm.n=f verb forms and their passive counterpart, the Passive sDm.-f.

PT [607] §1701a-b/M. ms.n Nw N Hr Dvt=f iAbt nxN.(w) ny sAAt N "it is while being a child, before N had become wise that N wns has given birth to N at his left hand". 6

CT [154] II 280 d-e/B280. Ra pw xpr.n sw imy-tn=f n xnt=f a=f r=f "it so happened to Re that the One-who-is-in-his-red-cloth surprised him, before he [Re] had stretched out his arm against him". 7

CT [660] VI 282 a. xpr.n N pn n xpr.t ptn n xpr.t TA "it was before the sky had come into existence, before the earth had come into existence that this N had (already) come into existence".

Kamose Stela II, 26. 8 snD.n=f n=i iw=s m xd n aHA.t=n n xpr.t=i r=f "it was while I was sailing north, before we had fought, before I reached him that he had (already) become afraid of me".

CT [630] VI 251 c-d/Sq3C. iw rdi.(w) n=s mw nw nT n hA.t=f "the water of the eye was given to her, before she had descended".

CT [640] VI 261 f-h/T2B. iw Ts.(w) Tst HA=i i 4tS PsDt m nsw=f n xpr.<t> Xnnw "a knot was tied around me by Seth, when the Ennead was in its prime power, before the disturbance had come into being". 9

The particle/auxiliary aHa.n is a certain marker of a narrative context.

Ur.k IV 2,12-15. aHa.n=f Hr ir waw r Dba=f m pA wIA n pA smA m hAw nb tAwNy Nb-pHy-ra mAA-xw iw=f n Sm n ir.靓丽 Hmt "then I served as private soldier to replace him on the Barque of the Wild Bull in the time of the Lord of the Two Lands Neb-pehty-re, justified, when I was a youngster, before I had married".

In Nominal Sentences the reference time may also be apparent from the retrospective viewpoint taken in the text.

CT [660] VI 280 q-281 c. mswt=f mswt nTr hnw pw n msNt hdn n xpr.t pt TA n xpr.t mw n xpr.t Nw n xpr.t Gb Nw t n xpr.t WsIr Ast n xpr.t 4tS Nbt-Ht "his birth was the birth of a god (already) on this day of the birth of the heden-plant, before the sky and the earth had come into existence, before the water had come into existence, before Nun had come into existence, before Geb and Nut had come into existence, before Osiris and Isis had come into existence, before Seth and Nephthys had come into existence". 10

CT [261] III 389 b-c/S1C4. nkn tm n xpr.t=Tn nTrw "everything belonged (already) to me, before you had come into existence, gods".

The following example is also from CT Spell 261, which is concerned with the primordial role of the god Heka. 11

CT [261] III 382 e-383 a/S1C4. ink ir.n nb-wa n xpr.t isTy stnty mTA pn "I am one whom the Sole Lord had made (already), before two things had come into existence in this land". 12 In this case the main clause implicitly has present time reference, but the reference time of the n sDm.t=f construction here is the absolute past set by the sDm.n=f Relative Form.

dass ...", bzw. 'bevor noch ...". Ritter, Verbalisystem, 211-212 on n sDm.t=f: "'bevor', anteriore Textrelation". Allen, Inflection, 320 (§473): "the basic sense of the negated sDm.t=f is that of action prior to that of the governing clause, whatever the translation"; I assume that Allen's last words mean 'whether translated with 'while not yet' or 'before'". Bakir, Introduction M. Eg., 121 (§329): "it is also noticed that this form is particularly used after the negative particle n, in this case, would mean 'not yet', 'before' + a tense anterior to the main tense of the context. In other words, with two events taking place in the past, this form is used for the earlier event". Lefebvre, GEC, 212 (§419): "et, dans une proposition subordonnée, par un temps de l'indicatif ou subjonctif qui marque clairement que l'action est antérieure à celle du verbe de la proposition principale, à quelque temps que soit ce dernier"; pp. 212-213 (§421): translations with 'avant que'.

6 Note that Faulkner, Pyramid Texts, 251 translated ny sAAt N with "who had no wisdom", with reference to Gunn, Negative Word, JEA 34 (1948), 28 (C), where ny xpr.t is translated with "not" instead of "not yet".

7 For the inadequacy of this translation to render the grammatical structure of Nominal Sentence + Circumstantial sDm.-f in circumstantial function see Polotsky's remarks in Transpositions, IOS 6 (1976), 41-42 (3.10.2). For the passage see Setha, Sprüche für das Kennen der Seelen [1], ZÄS 57 (1922), 13 (24).

8 Publ. Habachi, Stela of Kamose.

9 Bickel, Cosmogonie, 226 (ex. 199) reads HA=f instead of HA=A.

10 For the heden plant see Le Saout, Fête d'Hathor, CRIPEL 11 (1989), 69-71.


12 For a parallel see CT [162] II 396 b.
In the next example it is the passive Perfective Participle that sets the absolute past of the reference time.

CT [673] VI 301 j. i iry m=f m X[i] nt mwt=f n pr.t=f Hr tA "O you whose name was made in the womb of his mother, before he had gone forth upon earth". The absolute present can also function as the reference time for n sDm.t=f.

Dispute of a Man with his Ba, 11-12. n sDm.n=f n=f Hr sTA=f r m(w)\(\text{n}\) iy.t=f(i) /\(\text{t}\) (? ) n=f "I do not listen to him whilst dragging me to death, before I have come to it".\(^{13}\)

The next passage comes from the series of CT Spells 38-41, the general content of which is that a living person is addressing his deceased father, asking him to prevent a premature death.\(^{14}\)

CT [39] I 167 a - 168 c/B12C\(^{b}\). sDm.n=f m r n iryw wnt Ts.n wi it=f pf imy lmt\(\text{n}\) r int=f(i) sart=f(i) hww\(\text{w}\) N pn m tA pn n anxxw n Sd.t\(\text{N}\) p<\(\text{t}\>)\(\text{m}\) TAw=f n sxxn=t=f swHwt=f n in.t\(\text{N}\) pn Hnty=f n wnm.t\(\text{N}\) pn pnd n mna.t=f(i) n swr.t\(\text{N}\) pn HsA=f r Xaaw=f n Hbs.\(\text{t}\)\(\text{N}\) pn pr=f n anxxw m iw nsrsr "he has heard from the mouth of the figures that that father of mine who is in the West has summoned me to fetch me and reduce my days (lit., of this N) in this land of the living, before I (lit., this N) have brought up my fledgelings, before I (lit., this N) have deposited my eggs, before I (lit., this N) have attained my (lit., his) lifetime, before I (lit., this N) have eaten the cake of (my) nurse, before I (lit., this N) have drunk my milk according to its measure, before I (lit., this N) have furnished my (lit., his) house of the living on the Island of Fire". The reference time is "my (present) days in the land of the living".\(^{15}\)

Finally, here are some examples with absolute future reference time.

Eloquent Peasant B1, 183. m grg.(w) dwAw n iy.t=f "do not provide for tomorrow, before it has come".\(^{16}\)

Dispute of a Man with his Ba, 18-19. imh\(\text{w}\) r m(w)\(\text{t}\) n iy.t=f n=f "restrain me from dying, before I have come to it".

CT [982] VII 191 q. n dmm=k n pH.t=f Tw "you will not be named, before he has reached you".

In accordance with the evidence from sDm.t=f it appears that the n sDm.t=f construction has a relative future time reference with respect to any of the possible reference times of absolute past, present and future.

§ 2. Introduction to the analysis of the construction n sDm.t=f.

Now that it has been established that the construction n sDm.t=f can indeed be analysed as having relative future time reference, I will proceed to an analysis of the more literal translation with "while not yet", in which the negation is accounted for. This analysis is not in accordance with the interpretation by others of its verb form as expressing the relative past with respect to the action in the main clause, when the construction is translated with "while he has/had not yet heard". It seems that such an analysis has fallen victim to a translation trap, since it is inconceivable that a construction which has a relative future time with respect to the reference situation in the main clause contains a verb form which at the same time expresses a past relative to that main clause situation. This trap may well be elicited by the elements "while" and "he has/had heard". To put more solid ground under our feet, I shall proceed from the analysis of certain tenses in the Bantu language Luganda as given in Comrie’s recent and important work on tense.

§ 3. Comrie’s analysis of the ‘still’, ‘no longer’ and ‘not yet’ tenses in Luganda.

Comrie deals with these rare tenses in a section on combinations of absolute tenses.\(^{17}\) The ‘not yet’ none of which is discussed in §10 below [p. 52].

\(^{13}\) The possible n iy.t=f is discussed in §10 below [p. 52].


\(^{15}\) Barguet, Textes des sarcophages, 180 translates here—in my opinion, correctly—with a present tense ("avant que j’aille élevé mes petits" etc.), whereas Faulkner, Coffin Texts I, 31-32 has "when I had not yet brought up my fledgelings". The latter translation implicates that this action has been completed before the present.

\(^{16}\) Compare the similar phrasing in the inscr. Hatnub 24, 1-2 (publ. Anthes, Hatnub, 54-56, pl. 24; Readingbook, 73-74), which, however, has been suggested to read n x dwAw\(\text{n}\) m\(\text{A}\) n nHH "who knows the morrow when it has not yet come, who has a view on eternity"; for further comment see Studies sDm.t=f V (sDm.t=f), n. 7.

\(^{17}\) Comrie, Tense, 53-55. For a discussion of Comrie’s analysis of these tenses see Schadeberg, Schon - noch - nicht - mehr, Frankfurter Afrikanistische Blätter 2 (1990), 1-15.
tense occurs only in the negative, but the affirmative 'still' tense has a negative counterpart in the 'no longer' tense. His analysis of this pair is of great importance for the approach to n sDm. t=f and is therefore quoted in some detail.

"The 'still' tense occupies two continuous segments on the time line including the past and present: mu-kya-tudde 'you-still-sit', i.e. 'you are still seated'. Its negative is te-kya-tudde, 'neg-you-still-sit', i.e. 'you are no longer seated'. The negation attaches only to the present reference of the 'still' tense, but crucially does not negate its past time reference; whence the name 'no longer' tense. What this clarifies is the distribution of presupposition and assertion in the 'still' tense. Since negation affects only the present time reference part of the overall meaning of the 'still' tense, this indicates that the present time reference is the assertion of this tense, while the past time reference, which remains constant under negation, is a presupposition. Thus a more accurate semantic description of the 'still' tense would be: it is presupposed that a situation held in the past and asserted that it holds at present. Its negative would therefore automatically receive the interpretation: it is presupposed that a situation held in the past and asserted that it does not hold at the present".

Comrie proceeds as follows. "Luganda has one further verb form that fits into this general pattern, namely the 'not yet' tense, as in te-tu-nna-genda 'neg-we-not-yet-go', i.e. 'we have not yet gone'. The meaning of this tense is that a certain situation did not hold in the past and does not hold in the present, i.e. that it is still the case that a certain situation does not hold. It may seem that there is an additional semantic component, namely that the situation of 'our going' will hold in the future. However, further investigation shows that this is only a [conversational] implicature, not part of the meaning of the verb form, as is equally the case with the English expression 'not yet'.

All that is indicated with regard to the future is the possibility of the situation holding in the future, and this possibility may be demonstrated as unrealisable by the rest of the context" [e.g., by explicitly cancelling the implicature].

What can be inferred from Comrie's discussion of these three tenses is of great relevance to the ensuing discussion of n sDm. t=f. Firstly, conversational implicature is different from assertion as not being part of the meaning of a verb form. Secondly, presupposition can be grammaticized in the meaning of a verb form, and in cooperation with assertion it can partake in the meaning. Thirdly, presupposition is immune to negation, and negation can affect only part of the meaning of a verb form.

There is general agreement that implicatures can be cancelled in the context, whereas this has been argued to be different for presuppositions. Proceeding from this theoretical foundation, the issues in the analysis of n sDm. t=f are the following. Is the reference to a future occurrence in the translation of n sDm. t=f with "(while) he has/had not yet heard" in reality part of the meaning of the verb form in Egyptian, or is it an implicature? Does the negation assert that only part of the meaning of the verb form does not hold? Is a presupposition grammaticized as part of the
meaning of the sDm.t=f? If so, what is the nature of this presupposition?

In this contribution I shall only pay attention to presupposition as a phenomenon that can be grammaticalized in a verb form; presupposition as related to the speaker will be discussed in the study of the verb form proper.

§ 4. The sDm.t=f as a relative future tense and the translation trap in n sDm.t=f.

In the study on Dr sDm.t=f I have argued that in Dr sDm.t=f the preposition/conjunction has the same basic meaning "(at) the time that" as in the other uses of Dr where it is translated with "since/from the moment that", and that the translation with a relative future time reference ("before") is due to the verb form as a relative future tense: "he is yet to hear".

Assuming that the verb form in Dr r sDm.t=f is the same as that in n sDm.t=f, the latter construction also contains this verb form, with the same relative time reference as part of its meaning. The strongest plea against an assumption of different verb forms or of one verb form with different meanings in the sDm.t=f constructions is that Dr sDm.t=f and n sDm.t=f can be translated with "before".

Thus, despite the suitable English translation of n sDm.t=f with "(while) he has/had not yet heard"--which can be analysed as involving an implicature--the reference to a relative future time in n sDm.t=f cannot be an implicature and must be part of the meaning of the verb form.

§ 5. The roles of the negation and the verb form in n sDm.t=f.

The passage Sh. Sailor, 30-32. sr=sn Da n iy.t=Ø nSny n xpr.t=f "they foretold a storm, when (it) had not yet come, a tempest when it had not yet happened"--the parallel of the passage quoted in § 2--is directly followed in lines 32-34 by the mention of the actual occurrence of a storm. The prediction has come true. Crucially, the negation in n iy.t=f does not assert the future nonoccurrence of the storm, but only its nonoccurrence at the time of the main clause.

In the light of my conclusion that the sDm.t=f is a relative future tense, the translation of n iy.t=f must be rephrased to do justice to the Egyptian. The passage from the Shipwrecked Sailor should then be rendered--admittedly in impossible or very bad English--"they foretold a storm, while it was not to come yet", which means "(they foretold a storm), while 'it was to come', but not then. "Then" represents the time reference coincidence with the main clause.

Let us now imagine that in the above example sr=sn is not a past tense, but rather signifies the present, which yields "they foretell a storm, while it has not yet come". In rephrased rendering it would be "they foretell a storm, while it is not to come yet", which means "they foretell a storm, while 'it is to come', but not (as) yet".

The translation of n sDm.t=f with "while he has/had not yet heard" must contain the word "yet", because omitting it would completely change the meaning into one without reference to the relative future. The addition of "yet" is obligatory for this time reference and is elicited by the meaning of the verb form. There is no evidence that the negation n can mean anything else than plain and simple "not".

The paraphrases "while it was to come, but not then" and "while it is to come, but not (as) yet" form an exact analogy with the meaning of the well-known type of verbal clause with the discontinuous negation n...is. The particle is functions there as a negative scope/focus specifier, diverting the reach of the negation from the verbal situation ("contradictory negation") to the scope of an adverbial adjunct/circumstantial clause ("contrary negation").
In drawing a comparison, I would like to point out that in *n sDm.t=f* the occurrence of the situation in a relative future is not affected by the negation either. However, constructions of *n sDm.t=f* involving contrary negation by the addition of *is* + a time adverb expressing the coincidence with the reference situation do not occur. Therefore it is the meaning of the verb form that must be held responsible for leaving the relative future occurrence of its Event untouched by the negation.

§ 6. Assertion and presupposition in the meaning of the *sDm.t=f*.

The concept of the *sDm.t=f* as a relative future tense offers a solution to the problem of why the negation in *n sDm.t=f* only asserts that a situation does not occur at reference time, but, crucially, does not deny its occurrence in a future relative to it. The meaning of a relative tense is that it locates a situation in time relative to a reference time, which is given by the context. Thus, of necessity, two time points partake in the meaning of such a verb form.

My explanation of why the negation *n* does not assert that a situation will not hold in a relative future, but in contrast leaves it untouched, is based on the presence of a presupposition in the meaning of the *sDm.t=f*. Comrie’s analysis of the distribution of presupposition and assertion in the Luganda ‘no longer’ tense in relation to its affirmative counterpart, the ‘still’ tense, can also be applied to the verb form as used in Dr *sDm.t=f* and *n sDm.t=f*, where it equally concerns two time situations. Since presuppositions remain constant under negation and the negation leaves the relative future occurrence of the Event in *n sDm.t=f* untouched, it may be inferred that the relative future occurrence of the Event is a presupposition.

Thus, the *sDm.t=f* verb form can be described as follows: "if the verb form asserts that an Event is located in a future relative to a Reference point, then that Event is, necessarily, presupposed as part of its meaning".

Taking a wider view, I would like to suggest that, with finite relative tenses in general, the relating of an Event in time to a Reference point presupposes the Event. If there were no Event, no Reference point would be needed; but because a Reference point is grammaticized as part of the meaning, the Event is a presupposition.

§ 7. Assertion and presupposition in the meaning of *n sDm.t=f*.

The use of the English time adverb “still” to render the meaning of a specific Luganda tense indicates that it asserts that “being still seated” holds at the present. This assertion entails, necessarily, that a “having been seated” holding continuously from some moment in the past until the present moment is presupposed. The grammaticalization of this presupposition in the meaning of the affirmative ‘still’ tense excludes in its negative the meaning “you are still not seated”, since it would then be asserted that “having been seated” in the past has not taken place. This presupposition in the affirmative tense cannot be affected by the negation, whence the meaning can

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33 Comrie, Tense, 61: “in looking for examples of relative time reference, it is essential to ensure that the relative time reference interpretation is part of the meaning of the form in question”. Not fully understanding Satzinger’s argument, sDmt.f, JEA 57 (1971), 67, I surmise that with the formulation "der subjektive Standpunkt ist mittels der Negation vorverlegt" something comparable to my "reference time" is meant. Arguing in favour of a meaning of the *sDm.t=f* “finally he heard”, he formulates as follows: “es wird gleichsam nur das ‘schliesslich’ negiert, nicht das ‘Hören’”, i.e. the final occurrence of the Event is not yet at stake at the time of the "vorverlegte subjektive Standpunkt".

34 Compare Vernus’s formulation, Études VI, RdE 38 (1987), 173: “...la forme *n sDmt.f*, où *sDmt.f* est fondamentalement un accompli, avec, de plus, présupposition que l’action dont l’accomplissement est nié a été ensuite accomplie, ou devrait l’être”.

35 The 'still' and 'no longer' presupposition seems to belong to this type of presupposition, for which see Seuren, [Presupposition], in: Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics, 3320. Little work seems to have done on the notions "still", "no longer" and, assumedly, "not yet" in connection with presupposition, witness Seuren’s remark that "on the whole the literature [on presupposition] is remarkably silent on the question of a ‘remainder’ category of presuppositions induced by words like ‘only’, ‘no longer’, ‘still’".

36 My formulation is slightly different from that of Comrie (quoted in my §3 above [p. 44]).
only be that "being still seated at present" does not hold. This results in 'being no longer seated'.

Returning to n sDm.t=f, this construction cannot mean: **relative to a reference point in the context he is/was not going to hear", in which the nonoccurrence of a relative future Event would be asserted. Thus, if the sDm.t=f enters into a syntagmatic relationship with the negation n, the semantics of the verb form, i.e. the presupposition contained in its meaning, bar from asserting that the relative future Event of hearing will not hold, and cause it to assert that it is only not holding at the reference time. This is why n sDm.t=f can be translated with "before" + affirmative clause.

On the basis of the distribution of assertion and presupposition in the meaning of the sDm.t=f verb form as described just above, the negative construction n sDm.t=f automatically receives the description: "if in the meaning of the verb form in its affirmative use the future holding of the Event relative to a Reference point is presupposed, then the negative construction can, necessarily, only assert that the relative future Event does not hold at reference time".

For the assessment of the role of negation in Classical Egyptian it is of importance to note that in grammatical studies of this language phase there appears to have been remarkably little interest in the explanation of the problem of how it is possible that in the negative construction n sDm.t=f the negation asserts that the Event has/had not occurred at some point in time and leaves unaffected the relative future occurrence of the Event, with the result being the 'disappearance' of "not" in the adequate affirmative and commonly used translation with "before". Satzinger is the only one who has taken explicit notice of this phenomenon but, in general, it seems to have been taken for granted under the assumption that the negation in n sDm.t=f means "not (yet)". But all the evidence concerning the construction demonstrates that the time adverb "yet" is a necessary element and cannot be regarded as optional.

To the role of the negation n in contradictory negation a refinement must now be added, i.e. that in n sDm.t=f it 'contradicts' only part of the meaning of the verb form, owing to a presupposition that is grammaticalized. Only superficially does this type of 'partial' negation resemble in effect contrary negation with n-is.

The description of the verb form and its negative construction as given by scholars who do not consider the sDm.t=f to be a finite relative tense runs into a serious problem. For example, Borghouts defines the form as denoting a future result which is completed (a future perfect): sDm.t=f means "he will have heard", and he argues that n sDm.t=f means, strictly speaking, "he will not have heard", but in practice "he has not yet heard". I cannot see how it is possible for a construction which asserts that an Event will not occur--or will not have occurred--to in practice always receive the opposite meaning, in which its future occurrence is not affected by the negation.

If the Egyptian construction n sDm.t=f is rendered literally, the translation of the example from the Shipwrecked Sailor quoted above would be: "they foretold a storm, when 'it was yet to come' was not (holding)". From the viewpoint of the relative future tense the meaning of the construction n sDm.t=f is: "at Reference point an Event located in a future relative to it does/did not hold".

There are, however, rare examples of n sDm.t=f denoting in an absolute past context an Event that is irreal, because it has been aborted by the action at the Reference point. Such examples seem to defy the above analysis of the presence of a presupposition of the relative future occurrence of the Event as part of the meaning of the sDm.t=f. Since this phenomenon belongs rather to the domain of the verb form proper, the point will be discussed in the contribution devoted to it.

§ 8. Two passages of n sDm.t=f where the 'not yet' notion seems absent.

In connection with the first example given below Gardiner states that the temporal significance "not yet" is only very rarely absent. In addition to the existential expression n wnt, where this is consistently the case, he produces the following example as evidence for this.

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37 See §6 above, last but one paragraph.
38 For contradictory and contrary negation see my note 28 above.
40 Studies sDm.t=f V (sDm.t=f), §18 [pp. 87-88].
41 Gardiner, EG, 317 (§ 402, bottom).
42 See Appendix A below [pp. 52-53].
Emphatic Sentence, I have adapted Gardiner's translation in this vein. He translates the passage as if it reads "without my swerving". This simple translation is so plausible that I suggest the negation n is here a mistaken writing for nn. Another example of a translation with only "not" comes from the medical texts.

The following examples seem to provide excellent support for this observation. On account of their importance for the issue of main clause use of the construction is not to be regarded as essentially subordinate in meaning. The most explicit evidence comes from one of the ferryman spells, where a conversation between the ferryman (F) and the deceased (D) is going on. The most explicit evidence for the reference see my next note. Incomprehensible to me is Loprieno's translation in "another (remedy) to drive off a constipation in the belly which does not go away". The only difference is the fact that in both examples the reference time is the absolute present of the writing of the letter ("as yet") and not an explicit reference situation in the context.

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§ 9. The use of n sDm.t=f in the main clause.

Gardiner has observed that in spite of the common use of n sDm.t=f as a virtual adverb clause, the construction is not to be regarded as essentially subordinate in meaning. The following examples seem to provide excellent support for this observation. On account of their importance for the issue of main clause use of the construction is not to be regarded as essentially subordinate in meaning. The most explicit evidence comes from one of the ferryman spells, where a conversation between the ferryman (F) and the deceased (D) is going on. The most explicit evidence for the reference see my next note. Incomprehensible to me is Loprieno's translation in "another (remedy) to drive off a constipation in the belly which does not go away". The only difference is the fact that in both examples the reference time is the absolute present of the writing of the letter ("as yet") and not an explicit reference situation in the context.

43 Gardiner, EG, 317 (§402, n.10). Since the form HAq.n=f would now be considered a Substantival sDm.n=f in an Emphatic Sentence, I have adapted Gardiner’s translation in this vein.

44 Gardiner, EG, 179 (§235); 80 (§104).

45 For the reference see my next note.

46 Westendorf, Gramm. med. T., 195 (§268,2).

47 For a remark on "before" as a relative temporal conjunction see Studies sDm.t=f I (Dr sDm.t=f), §4 [p. 9].

Incomprehensible to me is Loprieno’s translation in sDm.t=f, GM 37 (1980), 24: “Another (remedy) to keep away from the belly a constipation before it has gone away”.

48 Cf. Satzinger’s translation in Neg. Konstr., 30 (§40). Note that, although Westendorf drops “noch [immer]” in his translation of the passage, he translated cases of use of n sDm.n=f (Gramm. med. T., 172) with “noch nicht”, since they have parallels with n sDm.t=f. I suggest translating both versions literally because there is in practice very little difference in meaning. Case Sm 6 (2,21) mj Aht whnn n Xrd n aD.n=f “like the weak spot of the skull of a child which is not hardened” versus Sm 8 (4,11) n Ts.t=f “which has not yet attached”. Case Eb 593 (76,1-4) sSm snf n Ts.n=f “a bloodnest which does not attach” versus H 143 (10,2-4) n Ts.t=f “which has not yet attached”. The only difference is the overt presupposition of the sDm.t=f that “attaching will yet occur”, which does not underly the formulations with n sDm.n=f.

49 Gardiner, EG, 317 (§402): “n sDm.t=f is not to be regarded as essentially subordinate in meaning”. Satzinger, Neg. Konstr., 29: “n sDm.t=f ‘er hatte noch nicht gehört’, bzw. im Zustandssatz ‘bevor er hörte’”. Satzinger, sDm.f, JEA 57 (1971), 60. In Late Egyptian bw ir.t=f sDm is an autonomous construction, made circumstantial by the converter iw; cf. recently Winand, Études néo-égyptien, 291-292 (§462). For a note on n sDm.t=f as a main clause construction see Studies sDm.t=f V (sDm.t=f), §11 [p. 78].

50 Studies sDm.t=f IV (passive sDm.t=f/ms.(y)t=f), §6 [p. 62].

51 See now Willems, Coffin of Heqata, 415-418 (7.4.3), particularly n.(t).

52 = Gardiner, EG, 318, ex. 10a (Coffins M 3C, 137 and G1T, 129).

It is not yet clear whether women workers to be brought? They have not yet been received. 54 However, the omission of the suffix pronoun may point to its use as a virtual relative clause: 55 “the (three) women workers which have not yet been received”.

Pap. Berlin 10025, 6. 56 “/// ntt sw r ir r bAk in n rd.yt n sDm bAk in ir.t=f ”//// that he will act against the humble servant. The humble servant has not yet been allowed to hear what he has done”. In this letter a servant in trouble is writing to his superior. 57 Although it is also possible to translate with “while not yet”, 58 I prefer to translate with a main clause because the repetition of the expression “the humble servant” in the main and the subordinate clauses in one sentence is not to be expected on stylistic grounds.

At least the example of n sDm.t=f in the main clause as used in the context of a speech situation (“as yet”) proves that the construction is not exclusively subordinate. On account of the following example with the particle iw preceding the construction it has been suggested that this is necessary for n sDm.t=f into a main clause. 59

CT [157] II 344 b - 345 b/S2P. 60 xr m wn=f m Xrd xpr xrw=f m SA iw n mr.t ir.t=f “now when he was a child, his sacrificial animal became a pig. His eye had not yet become ill (then)”. 61 This example is particularly good evidence for use as a main clause because, if iw n mr.t ir.t=f is taken as a subordinate clause expressing contrast, it would then be expected to directly follow xr m wn=f m Xrd.

However, in the following example with the particle isT, translation as a subordinate clause seems preferable.

CT [312] IV 76 a-c/B6C. 62 N pn wa m nw n fnTw 6m qmAn, m=f m ir.t=f isT n xpr.t Ast m=s=s 1r “this N is one of these serpents of Atum which he has made from his eye, nota bene when Isis had not yet come into existence that she might give birth to Horus”. 63

The interpretation of this clause introduced by isT as a subordinate one cannot find support in an example from the medical texts containing the variant sk, because its exact meaning and grammatical structure are too uncertain to be used as good evidence for the role of isT and its variants in this connection.

Pap. Ebers, 39,18-19. 64 ha sp pn m=r=f r-pw m pHwy=fy r-pw mi snf n SA m-xt DAt=f sk ir.n=k n=f wt Hr /// r bAg=s(t) m r=f irt=f “this case [of illness] descends either from his mouth or from his anus like the blood of a pig after its cooking. Nota bene you have then already made for him a

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53 Publ. Scharff, Briefe aus Illahun, ZÄS 59 (1924), 24-27 and 2**-3**; photograph in Möller, Hier. Paläogr. I, pl. 5/2, 6.
54 For the interpretation as a question I follow Silverman, Interrog. Constr., 12 (ex. 20). For n sDm.t=f as active see Scharff, op.cit., 24: “Du liestest 3 Arbeiterinnen bringen, die ich nicht erhalten habe (?)”; note his remark “wie n Ssp.t am Ende des Antwortzapfes zu fassen ist, vermag ich nicht zu sagen”; so also Silverman (“(For) I have not yet received them”) and Wente, Letters from Anc. Eg., 76 (90): “I have not received any”.
55 See the next section [p. 51].
56 = Gardiner, EG, 318, n.19 (ÄZ 59,5, top). Now published by Luft, Archiv Illahun; for a photograph and transcription see under its inv. no.
57 Luft, op.cit., see under translation and commentary of the inv.no.: “/// der gegen den Diener dort handelt. Nicht durfte der Diener dort vernehmen was er gemacht hat”. Note that id., Illahun Verteidigungsbrief, Oikumene 4 (1983), 149 (fig. 34) has transliterated n rd.yt, despite the clear transcription n rd.yt (see pl. between pp. 168-169).
58 Thus Wente, op.cit., 77-78 (94): “before I have been permitted”.
59 Satzinger, Neg. Konstr., 29 (§40), n.89: “ein selbständiger Satz, gebildet aus iw + Zustandszatz”; this despite the fact that on the same page (§39) he translates n sDm.t=f with “er hatte noch nicht gehört”, bzw. im Zustandszatz ‘bevor er hörte’. See also Frandsen, Outline Late Eg. Verbal System, 40-41 (§28,1); Callender, Middle Egyptian, 103 (4.10.1.1); Gaskins, Notes M. Eg. Syntax, 168.
60 = Gardiner, EG, 317 (§402), n.5 (ÄZ. 58,20*).
61 The example ibid., n.9 (Urk. V.-6) m wn n xpr.t sTsw 5w, translated by Gardiner with “when the supports of Shu had not (yet) come into existence” and considered by him to be the subordinated form of iw n sDm.t=f, does not explain why n sDm.t=f is not simply used; thus also Gaskins, Notes M. Eg. Syntax, 170. I prefer Gunn’s solution, Studies in Eg. Syntax, 180 (7), who takes m wn as containing a participle (“as one who existed”).
63 Translated by Gardiner as a subordinate clause. For a translation see De Buck, op.cit., 94; for a partial translation of the passage see Bickel, Cosmogonie, 96 (ex. 78).
bandage upon the ///, so that it [the bloodnest] will have clotted in advance. Nota bene, (that is), when you have not yet applied this treatment”. 65

Only rarely do these particles and the negation n occur together in other constructions, presumably to bring about a strong contrast, in translation often “whereas”. 66

Under the assumption that iw n mr.t=f int=t is indeed a main clause, the presence of iw here, but not in the three examples of speech situations must be accounted for. These n sDm.t=f constructions can only be interpreted as being used in a main clause, but in the instance with iw this is not so evident, an interpretation of n sDm.t=f as a subordinate clause expressing contrast is also possible. I suggest that the analogy with the particle iw marking the main clause in iw/it sDm=f/sDm.n=f may explain this unusual combination: the particle functions here purely as a syntactic marker of independence, but now exceptionally in front of a construction that is almost exclusively known to exercise circumstantial function instead of fronting a circumstantial verb form.

§ 10. The omission of the suffix pronoun in n sDm.t=f constructions.

Among the occurrences of n sDm.t=f there are a number which may show omission of the suffix pronoun as subject, particularly in relative constructions where the antecedent is coreferential. 67 This phenomenon occurs in both genuine relative clauses with ntt and virtual ones with a circumstantial construction. That this is not restricted to n sDm.t=f appears from the following examples with suffix pronoun omission in the verb form in n sDm=f.

Urk. IV 7,6. mi ntyw n xpr=ø "like ones who have not come into existence".

Inscr. Hatnub 22, 18. 68 iw gr<t> ir.n=i ntt n ir.tw=ø in kyun mT "I now have done what had never been done by other people". 69

Turning now to the n sDm.t=f constructions, I would like to start with the 'true' relative clause with nty.

Eloquent Peasant B1, 271-272. m wA.(w) n ntt n iy.t=ø m Ha.w n ntt n xpr.t=ø "do not brood on what has not yet come, do not rejoice over what has not yet happened".

Contrary to n sDm=f and n sDm.n=f when functioning as virtual relative clauses, the omission of the suffix pronoun as subject also occurs in n sDm.t=f in such a function. I will refer first to the example Pap. Berlin 10016, vo. 4a, which was discussed in the preceding section and which, taken as it stands, contains a unique passive n sDm.t=f with suffix pronoun omission. 70 Also, the two following examples have a directly preceding referent/antecedent.

Sh. Sailor, 30-32. sr=sn Da n iy.t=ø nnty xpr.t=f “they foretold a storm which (lit., while (it)) had not yet come”, and a tempest which (lit., while it) had not yet happened”.

Urk. IV 971,2. rx imyw-Xt n pr.t=ø Hr spwy mdw “one who knows the inner things of the body, which (lit., while they) have not yet come forth on the lips of the speaker”.

An intermediate position is taken by the following instance, where no explicit referent/antecedent is present in the immediately preceding context, but where the verb Dd in the main clause automatically evokes the notion “speech, words”.

CT [75] I 383 d - 384 a/S1C. iw Dd.n n HAtyw=Tn n Trw n pr.t=ø m r=Tn. "your hearts have (already) spoken to me (words), gods, which (lit., when (they)) had not yet come forth from your mouth". 71

65 This translation follows von Deines - Grapow - Westendorf, Übersetz. med. T., 91; see for this difficult passage also the commentary of id., Übersetz. med. T. Erläuterungen, 87 (8). There the meaning “whether // whether” of sk // sk, as suggested in Gunn, Studies in Eg. Syntax, 181 (10) and at the time followed by Westendorf, Gebrauch Passivs, 111, is strongly doubted. This has resulted in quite different translations.

66 See Gardiner, EG, 388, n.9 (Urk. IV 751,9); see for this example also Junge, Emphasis, 106 (E77a). See further Gardiner, EG, 313 (§394), exs. Urk. IV 38,11; Inscr. Hatnub 11, 9.

67 Gardiner, EG, 317 (§402): “the omission seen in the last example [Sh. Sailor, 30-32] is found elsewhere in cases where the context makes its expression superfluous”.

68 Publ. A nthes, Hatnub, 47-52.

69 Similarly translated by A nthes, op.cit., 49-50; Vernus, Essai sur la conscience, 63, n.150. For a profound approach to this ideological motivation see now Vernus, op.cit., part 2.

70 An active translation would require emending the pronouns to express the subject and the object.

71 Jürgens, Überlieferungsgeschichte, 173 (104) and n.35 fills the ellipse with “kein Wunsch”. See also Bickel, Cosmogonie, 102 (ex. 82).
In the following instance the implicit referent is a general "something".

Stela Leiden V 7, vert., right, 3.72 sr n iy.t=ø mA n xpr.t=ø "one who announces (something) which (lit., while (it)) has not yet come, who sees (something) which (lit., while (it)) has not yet occurred".

Here is an example in which the structure is identical with the preceding one, but the determinatives suggest a reinterpretation or misunderstanding by the copyist.

Eenseignement loyaliste, §13,5/Pl.73 xmt n iy.t=ø n iy.t=ø "one who anticipates (something) which (lit., while (it)) has not yet come".

The plural determinative (Z2, vertical) in the verb xmt "to anticipate"--which is not uncommon there, but is borrowed from the distinct verb xmt "to do for the third time"--is followed by the negative arms sign (D35). I assume that the latter sign originally represented the negation n, but was reinterpreted as the final determinative of the verb xmt "to anticipate", another borrowing from the compound preposition m-xmt "in the absence of". This reinterpretation of the negative arms sign as the final determinative of xmt "to anticipate" may have entailed a further one, namely that of the sDm.t=ø verb form iy.t=ø as the word iyt "mishap". This subsequent reinterpretation, which breaks up the n iy.t=ø construction, would explain the presence of the 'bad bird' and plural determinatives (G37+Z2) after the writing iyt: "one who anticipates mishap".74 Posener translates the writing iyt more neutrally with "ce qui peut arriver".75

In particular, the occurrence of n sDm.t=ø in the examples containing 'true' relative clauses and the last three examples with n sDm.t=ø, where no specific referent precedes, suggests that n sDm.t=ø in such constructions may, to some extent, no longer have been perceived as a construction with a finite verb form, but rather as an expression with a standard meaning signifying something like "before an Event".76

Schenkel and Loprieno have recently pointed out that n sDm=m=f and n sDm.n=f are verbal patterns with a bound negation, which cannot simply be split up into a negation and a verb form from the affirmative verbal system.77 With reference to n sDm.t=ø, this coalescence may even have been reinforced by the restriction of the verb form to only two common uses with adverbial/circumstantial function: n sDm.t=ø being roughly equivalent in meaning to the adverbial expression "before an Event" and r sDm.t=ø to "until an Event". Though in Late Egyptian bw.i=r.t=ø sDm has become a typical main clause pattern,78 n sDm.t=ø in Classical Egyptian almost always functions as a circumstantial construction.79

What is interesting with respect to the above phenomenon are two instances from one text, the first without and the second with the suffix pronoun iñ written out.

Dispute of a Man with his Ba, 11-12. n sDm.n=iñ n=f Hr sTA=i r m(w)t n iy.t=ø(?) / ø(?) n=f "I do not listen to him whilst dragging me to death, while I have not yet come to it".

Ibid., 18-19. ihw n=f r m(w)t n iy.t=n=f "restrain me from dying, while I have not yet come to it".

If the writing n iy.t=n=f in the first example is taken as it stands, the meaning comes close to "before coming to it".

Appendix A: the negative existential expression n wnt and the possible n wnt.t=ø construction.

In Middle Egyptian the negation n only precedes suffix conjugation forms, and on that syntactic account the negative existential expression n wnt seems to be a n sDm.t=ø construction.80 There are, however, serious semantic and syntactic objections that force it to be set apart from the 'true' n

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72 Publ. Boeser, Beschrijving van de Egyptische verzameling l. pl. 7.
73 Publ. Posener, Enseignement loyaliste, 132.
74 Faulkner, Concise Dictionary, 10.
75 Posener, op.cit., 46. See Hannig, Grosses Handwörterbuch, 28.
76 Just as the translation of n sDm.t=ø with "while not yet" is generally translated with "before". Cf. Gunn, Studies in Eg. Syntax, 181 (C) on the construction n sDm.t=ø: "n is thus apparently equivalent to a preposition". See also Ritter, Verbalsystem, 243 (2-3), where it is remarked that particles, with inclusion of the negations, have prepositional character. For the ‘true’ relative clause compare the ny Hr/m|r sDm construction.
77 Schenkel, Einf. Sprachwissenschaft, 190 (4.5.c). Loprieno, Ancient Egyptian, 209 (7.8.1).
79 For the few exceptions see §10 above [pp. 49-50].
80 Thus Gardiner, EG, 317 (§402, bottom). For a different opinion see Gunn, Studies in Eg. Syntax, 167.
sDm.t=f construction.

The most important is, of course, that the typical 'not yet' notion always seems to be absent. No doubt for this reason grammars may refer to n wnt under the n sDm.t=f construction, but will range it under the negative existential expressions, together with nn wn which has the same meaning "(while) there is not ....". A second objection is that, in contrast to n sDm.t=f and in accordance with the nn wn construction, n wnt has no valency for suffix pronouns.

Since there is evidence from Dr wn.t=f and r wn.t=f that wn is the stem of the sDm.t=f of wnn, a writing n wnt=f, as in the following example, might in principle qualify as a n sDm.t=f construction.

CT [1042] VII 293 b-c/B2L. Ax sA=n n wnt=f "the akh-spirit which I hate, it does not exist". A translation with "not yet" is unsuitable because the deceased gains much better prospects from a claim that a spirit which is hostile to him does not exist than from one saying that it not yet exists. The translation without "yet" is supported by the parallels which have the Nominal Sentence n nft wn here. Therefore, it is improbable that we are dealing here with a n sDm.t=f construction. Rather, this must be an exception to the general rule that the existential expressions have no valency for suffix pronouns.

The same line of argument concerning the deceased weakening his own claim is also valid for the next example, in which the deceased claims to be creator-like.

CT [261] III 384 d - 385 a/B1Bo. ir wnt N pn sA pi n mst 6m msy n wnt mwt=f "as for truly this N, he is the son of her who gave birth to Atum, one who was born while there was no mother of him".

Nevertheless, n sDm.t=f constructions of wnn may exist. In the following example translations with "while not yet" and with "while not" are both possible.

Urk. I 50,13-14. ir.n(=i) is pw Hr mtn imnty m st wabt n(n) wnt/wn.t is im n rmT nb n-mrwt mk.(i) xt sbi n kA=f "it was in order that the property of him who had departed to his ka might be protected that I have built this tomb on the west side in a pure place, while there was no tomb (yet) of any man". Whether the circumstantial clause with n wnt/wn.t is translated with "while not" or with "while not yet", in both instances it is related to ir.n=i, which has absolute past time reference. However, in the translation with "while not" the clause n(n) wnt has relative present time reference in the absolute past, but in that with "while not yet" it has relative future time reference. The difference is that in the latter translation the owner would in his retrospective view explicitly express that by the very building of his tomb at a place where at the time no tomb existed this has now changed into the presence of at least one actual tomb, namely his own, which had been built before the present of the inscription.

None of the above random examples qualifies convincingly for a translation with "not yet". Still, it cannot be excluded that the existential expression n wnt is in origin a n sDm.t=f construction. If so, it must then have lost the typical 'not yet' notion at the earliest possible stage, because there is no written evidence supporting a development from "not yet" to simply "not". I have explained above that "not yet" signifies something rather different from "not".

However, n wnt could have gone through the following imaginary development: "he is not yet existent" (realisation presupposed) → "he is as yet still not existent" (realisation retarded, but still expected) → "he is ever still not existent" (realisation no longer expected to come about) → "he is not existent" (statement of nonexistence).

To some extent the use of "nog" in Dutch "dat betekent nog niet dat ..." is comparable; so also in German "das heisst ja noch lange nicht, dass ....". This usage is an euphemistic understatement of a speaker toward an (imaginary) addressee, which may well mean "taken at face value your conclusion seems based on argument and logic, but I do not agree (at all) with it".

81 See Studies sDm.t=f I (Dr sDm.t=f), §13: Pap. BM 10059, 14,7 [p. 17], and op.cit. II (r sDm.t=f), §3 (Ptahhotep, 86-87 [p. 32]).
82 In De Buck’s arrangement the antecedent Ax is taken to belong to section 293b; for the present arrangement see Lesko, Book of Two Ways, 47. Version B2P also has n wnt=f; the other parallels have n nft wn, a Nominal Sentence "he is not an existing one".
83 Lesko, op.cit., 47 also translates with "not".
84 Bickel, Cosmogonie, 37 (ex. 9) follows the parallels, which have the better version ink wnt sA pw and tm "everything" instead of 6m "Atum" (B1Bo with god determinative).
85 Doret, Narrative Verbal System, 28, ex. 12 translates as a main clause: "there was no tomb". He has a different view on the syntax of the sentence, taking m st wabt Hr mtn imnty as the emphasized adverbial adjunct of ir.n(=i), and n(n) wnt as a main clause, followed by the subordinate clause with n mwt etc.
86 See §7 above [p. 47].
Strictly speaking, this construction involving the negative verb tm belongs with the r sDm.t=f construction, which has already been studied, but there are good reasons for dealing with it here. In the first place, like n sDm.t=f it is a construction involving negation, and second, the problem of its translation is intimately connected with that of n sDm.t=f, as I shall demonstrate.

There are only two examples of this construction that I know of.

Ptahhotep, 465-466/Pr. 46-5 r sp Hna=f wa(.w) r tm.t=k mn(.w) xrt=f "deal with him in private, until you no longer suffer from his situation".

Letter to the Dead Naga ed-Deir, 5-6. Im[=f] sbgs.w sAwt(y)=f r tm.t=f m[AA.w bA]k im r nHH "he [the villain] must not (/never again) harm his guardian(?), until (finally resulting in that) he no longer sees this servant, forever".

It is significant that it is necessary to translate here "no more/no longer". In these passages the obligatory use of "no more/no longer" instead of "not" refers to a situation where someone is "not troubled anymore", actually a new state succeeding the old one of "being troubled". Though the assertion in these r tm.t=f sDm.w constructions refers to the wish for the non-holding of some negative situation in the future, the implication is that a new, positive one is present: "not being bothered anymore" = "to be left in peace".

It seems to me that here, too, the implied presence of a new situation derives from the presupposition of the existence of a situation which underlies the meaning of the sDm.t=f. Here, too, an Event--here actually the beginning of a new situation--is located in a future relative to a Reference situation and is presupposed.

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87 Studies sDm.t=f II (r sDm.t=f).
88 Cf. Lefebvre, GEC, 214 (§424, n.3).
90 Translated by Simpson, op.cit., 41: the sender Heni is writing to his deceased father Meru complaining about Seni "do not let [him, Seni] cause his protector(?) to be injured, so that he will not see this [servant] ever <again> ; alternatively (p. 50): "do not let him allow his guardian(?) to be hurt, so that he may never again see this [servant]". In connection with the great interpretation problems I quote Fecht's commentary, Totenbrief Nag' ed-Deir, MDAIK 24 (1969), 116-117: "4nj soll so lange 'bewacht' werden, bis er den 1nj in Ewigkeit nicht gesehen haben wird. Das heisst, Mw soll nicht nur dafür sorgen, dass 4nj den Absender (1nj) nicht bedrohe, dass er ihn nicht töte (der Traum!); er soll darüber hinaus auch in Ewigkeit verhindern, dass 4nj seinen [Mw, LZ] Sohn [1nj, LZ] 'sehen' und ihm damit--nach seinem, 1nj's, natürlichen Tod--im Jenseits anklagend entgegentreten könnte".
91 For this presupposition see §3 above [p. 44].
92 See §6 above [pp. 46-47].