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In various of its uses, the Old Perfective possesses qualities that can obviously not be reconciled, like dynamic – static, active – passive, past – present – future. The most objective set of these is probably the active – passive dichotomy. A different diathesis (gender) implies a different structure of the sentence involved, the object of the active being the subject of the passive etc.

The typical appearance of the Old Perfective is that of a stative form, of present perfect or static present tense character, which has circumstantial (adverbial) function and/or meaning¹. Transitive verbs are passive, with the exception of *rh* and *hm* which are always active. But apart from that, the two verbs mentioned behave as described above. When we find active meaning with other transitive verbs, however, the character of the Old Perfective is distinctly different. Among them we can distinguish 'narrative' and 'optative' examples, with past and future reference respectively. In particular the 'narrative' examples clearly display a dynamic character, quite different from the stative usage mentioned above.

From this result one may conclude that the Old Perfective is not uniform but appears in two basic varieties. We may call them, in agreement with Akkadian grammar, Stative and Perfect:

1. static, transitive-passive, typically circumstantial;
2. dynamic, transitive-active, typically independent.

The optative Old Perfective is regarded by some² as circumstantial, i.e., as the adverbial predicate of an elliptic subject. Actually, several of the instances that are thought to be optative are preceded by their subjects³ and therefore overtly of adverbial function. In each case the verb happens to be intransitive, the meaning being probably static. But apart from the instances where the Old Perfective is preceded by a subject, the optative Old Perfective behaves like the 'Perfect', rather than the 'Stative'; cf. *infra*. The cases mentioned above, however, may be regarded as 'Statives' in special usage.

¹ An instance like *šm-n-k 'nh.t(j)* 'it is alive that you have gone' (Pyr. 134 a) is an unequivocal case of both adverbial function and meaning (as an embedded clause of circumstance, of predicative function); in *j(w)k 'nh.tj* 'you are alive' (Pyr. 1700), the function is the same according to the 'standard theory', though 'pre-' and 'post-Polotskianists' would deny this.

² Cf. F. Kammerzell, *GM* 117/118 (1990), 194; K. Jansen-Winkel, *BSÉG* 15 (1995), 55.

³ Cf. J.P. Allen, *The Inflection of the Verb in the Pyramid Texts* (Malibu, 1984), §§569C, 570B.

By distinguishing a). Stative from Perfect, b). initial from circumstantial status, and c). past from future time reference, we arrive at the following classification.

1. Initial Stative (in Pyramid Texts only)⁴

Syntactic status: initial.

Diathesis of the transitive verbs: none attested, except *rh* and *hm* which are not conclusive in this respect as their Old Perfective is always active. As the corresponding active form is obviously the initial *sdm-n-f*⁵, passive diathesis is to be expected.

With nominal subject⁶, intransitives have the initial Perfective *sdm-f*⁷, transitive verbs have initial passive *sdm(jj)-f* (the corresponding active form being initial *sdm-n-f*)⁸.

Tense, time reference: present perfect or static present tense, absolute time reference.

2. Adverbial (circumstantial) Stative⁹

Syntactic status: adverbial predicate or adverbial complement of the verb.

Embedding the adverbial Stative in an *jw* construction results in the formation of the composite tense form, *jw-f* + Old Perfective.

Diathesis of the transitive verbs: passive (except *rh* and *hm* which are active)¹⁰, the corresponding active form being circumstantial *sdm-n-f*¹¹.

With nominal subject, we find the perfective *sdm-f* in the Pyramid Texts, otherwise an adverbial sentence with an Old Perfective predicate¹². In the composite Middle Egyptian forms with initial *jw*, 'h'-n, etc., of passive meaning, we find the passive *sdm(jj)-f*¹³.

⁴ Cf. *ibid.* §590. The following is probably not an exception: *hz k hr-s jn nb-j*, *Urk.* 1 255, 5, (cf. E. Doret, *The Narrative Verbal System of Old and Middle Egyptian* (Genève, 1986), 99, ex. 173): as it is preceded by *jw shp n-(j) hšwr nb(t)*... 'I have pacified all the foreign countries...', it may be an early instance of narrative sequence (for which cf. *ibid.* 130–131), though still of present perfect character: 'and I have (accordingly) been praised for it by my lord' (also cf. *ibid.* 49 ex. 69). This would make it an example for no. 2. As it is passive, and probably of present perfect character, it is not an example for no. 3.

⁵ Cf. Allen, *op. cit.* §310, 432A–B.

⁶ As a verb form, the Old Perfective cannot have an explicit subject; a pronominal subject is expressed by the ending, but a nominal subject is not provided for. Of course, the adverbial sentence with an Old Perfective as predicate may have a nominal subject. But then the nexus is on a higher level than the verb. Cf., e.g., Doret, *op. cit.* 61; Schenkel, *Afo* 35 (1988), 239.

⁷ Cf. Allen, *op. cit.* §309–310.

⁸ Cf. *ibid.* §502–503.

⁹ Cf. Doret, *op. cit.* 118, Tab. 4.

¹⁰ Cf. Allen, *op. cit.* §580.

¹¹ Cf. *ibid.* §413–421.

¹² Cf. *ibid.* §569 B; Doret, *op. cit.* 61.

¹³ Cf. W. Westendorf, *MIO* 1 (1953), 49 ff.; H. Satzinger, *Neuägyptische Studien* (Wien, 1976), 171f; Doret, *op. cit.* 129.

Tense, time reference: generally present perfect, but ranging from the historical perfect (in particular, with intransitive verbs of motion) to static present (in particular, with verbs of quality); relative time reference.

NB. This is by far the most common usage, and apart from some Middle Kingdom 'narrative' examples (cf. no. 3) it is the only Old Perfective function that remains active in Middle Egyptian and later on.

3. Perfect ('narrative' function; attested in Old Egyptian and Classical Egyptian)¹⁴

Syntactic status: initial.

Diathesis of the transitive verbs: active¹⁵. The corresponding passive form is perfective *sdm-tj.f* > *sdm.tw.f*¹⁶.

With nominal subject¹⁷, we find the perfective *sdm.f*.

Tense, time reference: preterite, with narrative character.

In Middle Egyptian, it is only sporadically attested; it is always 1 ps. sing., and it is found with a few verbs only (like the transitive verbs *jbj* 'assume', *jnj*, *jrj*, *wdj*, *rdj*, *dd* 'say')¹⁸.

4. The optative function¹⁹

Syntactic status: initial, though often accompanying proper names.

Diathesis of the transitive verbs: active²⁰.

With nominal subject, the Old Perfective is not used.

Tense, time reference: prospective, volitive; stative according to Allen²¹, although he quotes counter evidence²²; the opposition dynamic vs. static is probably neutralised, as in many cases of prospective time reference.

In Middle Egyptian, the use of the optative Old Perfective is by and large restricted to stereotyped expressions.

¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.* 117, Tab. 2.

¹⁵ Cf. *ibid.* 61–6.

¹⁶ Cf. *ibid.* 28–30.

¹⁷ This condition is controversial. Dorff, *op. cit.* 62, sees the reason for *sdm.f* taking the place of the Old Perfective in the 3 ps. subject. But see J. Quaeq, *Orientalia* 46 (1977), 168, and *exx. Urk.* I 108, 9 and 109, 4–5, on p. 167; Allen, *op. cit.* §311; also cf. Schenkel, *AfO* 35 (1988), 238–9; Satzinger, *WZKM* 79 (1989), 212; Jansen-Winkel, *BSEG* 15 (1995), 55–6.

¹⁸ Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, 1957), §312; J. Vergote, in *Ägyptologische Studien* (Grapow Festschrift), 338–62.

¹⁹ Cf. Allen, *op. cit.* §591.

²⁰ Cf. *ibid.* §591B.

²¹ When Allen says, '... expresses a state as being possible or desirable' (*ibid.* §569C), he speaks of Old Perfectives embedded as adverbial predicates ('with preceding subject').

²² *wd-j mdw ntrw šm jš hnt* [*šmw*] 'you shall judge the gods, as a power at the head of the powers', *Pyr.* 2110c–d (*ibid.* §592).

Overview

(first lines: pronominal subject, second lines: nominal subject)

	intransitive	transitive, active	transitive, passive
Stative, initial (Pyr. only)	Old Perfective <i>sḏm</i> + noun (or noun + Old Perfective)	<i>sḏm-n-f</i>	[Old Perfective?] <i>sḏm(jj)</i> + noun
Stative, circumstantial	Old Perfective <i>sḏm</i> + noun (or noun + Old Perfective)	<i>sḏm-n-f</i>	Old Perfective <i>sḏm(jj)</i> + noun
Stative, composite	<i>jw-f</i> + Old Perfective <i>jw</i> noun + Old Perfective	<i>jw sḏm n-f</i>	<i>jw-f</i> + Old Perfective <i>jw sḏm(jj)</i> + noun
Perfect (not attested in Pyr.)	Old Perfective <i>sḏm</i> + noun	Old Perfective <i>sḏm</i> + noun	<i>sḏm t-j-f</i>
Oplative	Old Perfective [<i>sḏm</i> + noun]	Old Perfective [<i>sḏm</i> + noun]	[<i>sḏm t-j-f</i>]

As stated above, a result of this morpho-syntactic analysis is the aspect that we are confronted with two basic varieties of the Old Perfective:

1. the Stative: a stative character prevails, most transitive verbs being passive;
2. the Perfect: a dynamic character prevails, all transitive verbs being active.

A few years ago, F. Kammerzell²³ reported on his discovery of two graphic varieties of the Old Perfective. His analysis of Pyramid Text attestations seemed to prove that the Old Perfective with explicitly written final *j* had a distribution different from those written without final *j*. He was of the opinion that the *j* forms are adverbial, while the forms without ⟨*j*⟩ are either adverbial — being allomorphs of the *j* forms — or initial, at least in the early Old Kingdom. Whereas he was of the opinion that adverbial forms had two allomorphs, *j* and Ø, K. Jansen-Winkel has convincingly

²³ F. Kammerzell, *GM* 117/118 (1990), 181–202; *Atti della Quinta Giornata Comparatistica* (Perugia, 1991), 107–35; *LingAeg* 1 (1991), 165–99. See also the critical remarks of Jansen-Winkel, *BSEG* 15 (1995), 43–56.

corrected him in demonstrating that *j* & \emptyset are mere graphic variants (*plene* vs. *defective*) in the cases of adverbial use.

What we have here are two independently achieved paradigms of the Old Perfective²⁴: 1). the morphological paradigm, with optional writing of an (j) grapheme vs. lack of (j) throughout, and 2). the diathesis paradigm, with passive vs. active meaning of transitive verbs (others than *rh* and *hm*). It is tempting to correlate these two paradigms. Optional writing of endings with (j) graphemes (\bar{j} , \bar{j} , $\bar{j}\bar{j}$) is typical of the Circumstantial Stative, and therefore, also of the Composite Stative. Are there conclusive examples for the Initial Stative? The following is probably not initial, but rather circumstantial: *ms-j m grh mjj ms-kj* 'I am born in the night; come, for I am born' *Pyr.* 714a (P). A more probable instance is *hpr-tj r-sn²⁵ m jmn(jw) n sm3w wn-k hnt-sn* 'you have become the leader of the wild bulls against them in order that you be ahead of them' *Pyr.* 1477c (M)²⁶. We may conclude that the initial Stative is spelt in the same way as the Circumstantial Stative. As for the Perfect, the problem is its absence from the Pyramid Texts. The Old Kingdom tomb inscriptions do not make use of the optional (j) spelling²⁷. This means that we cannot verify a difference in spelling between 'Stative' and 'Perfect'.

As stated in the beginning, some of the Old Perfective instances that have been claimed to be optative are clearly adverbial, in particular those serving as predicates to preceding subjects, and we have to include them in the 'Stative'. Otherwise, in particular in examples of verbs with transitive-active meaning, Old Perfectives with optative meaning behave rather like the 'Perfect' (see above). Nevertheless, an (j) grapheme spelling seems to be beyond doubt with some of them²⁸.

In summing up, I do not see any way to verify the existence of two morphological paradigms (with optional (j) vs. \emptyset) in the Old Kingdom. This is quite a pity, as a proof of two distinct morphological paradigms would be very welcome. If it corresponded to a distinction of 'Perfect' and 'Stative' it would meet the expectations of Afroasiatic comparison. If the optional final (j) could be shown to be a marker of circumstantiality or adverbial function it could be compared with the adverb ending -j, var. -w, appearing with adverbs derived from prepositions²⁹ and the marker -j which probably distinguishes the circumstantial negation *njj*³⁰ from the basic negation *nj*.

²⁴ The form of the verb-stem and the prefixed *j* are here not considered.

²⁵ The ending of *hpr-tj* is spelt with the (tj) and the (j) signs; even if the latter is taken as the initial sign of the following *jr-sn* the (tj) is an unequivocal spelling.

²⁶ Cf. Allen, op. cit. §311B; R.O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford, 1969), 227, assumes an optative meaning.

²⁷ Cf. Kammerzell, *Atti della Quinta Giornata Comparatistica*, 112; *LingAeg* 1 (1991), 166.

²⁸ Exx.: 'Be joyful, you gods! Be joyful, you Enneads!' *Hrw hsf-tj m KING pn* 'O Horus, meet me' *Pyr.* 1234a (P); *wd-tj mdw (n) nprw* 'govern the gods', *Pyr.* 2110d (N); *wnh-tj dt k jwtk hr(j)* 'clothe your body that you may come to me', *Pyr.* 224d; in the last two cases a transitive verb has active meaning.

²⁹ Cf. Satzinger, *ZAS* 113 (1986), 148-9.

³⁰ Cf. Doret, op. cit. 36-7.

We are left with the results of Schenkel's investigation into the Old Perfective in the Coffin Texts³¹. Inspired by Kammerzell's observations, he found that those verbs for which static meaning is typical (e.g., verbs of quality) show the final *j* distinctly more often than those for which a dynamic meaning is typical (e.g., verbs of motion). This has led him to distinguish between a 'Stative' form, with a final ⟨*j*⟩ grapheme in many instances, and a 'Perfect' form, without such an ⟨*j*⟩ grapheme. In interpreting this result, he chooses two different paths. On the first, he compares the Old Perfective forms in ⟨*tj*⟩ / ⟨*t*⟩ with the nisba adjectives derived from words ending in *t*. In following J. Osing³², he distinguishes between two vocalisation patterns that correspond to the two semantic categories of the nisba adjectives. Accordingly, there are both ... $\check{V}tVj\#$ and ... $\check{V}CtVj\#$ vocalisation types. Whereas 53% of the former are spelt ⟨...*t*⟩ in the Coffin Texts, as against 47% with the spelling ⟨...*tj*⟩, the latter has 93% ⟨...*t*⟩ spellings and only 7% with ⟨...*tj*⟩. From this result, Schenkel concludes that what he calls 'Perfect' had the structure ... $C\check{V}CtVj$ (like $\epsilon\kappa\alpha\epsilon\iota\tau < *h.q\acute{a}rt.j$, spelt ⟨*hqrt*⟩ in the Coffin Texts)³³, whereas his 'Stative' forms had ... $C\check{V}tVj$, spelt ⟨-*Ctj*⟩. The second path of interpretation leads him to resume his comparison of the Old Perfective with the Hittite Perfect; through this he is led to a reconstruction that assumes lack of final *j* for the 'Perfect', and its presence with the 'Stative'³⁴.

It would seem that with regard to the Coffin Texts Schenkel arrived at an issue that is very close to what Kammerzell assumes for the Pyramid Texts. We must, however, take into consideration the essential difference that exists between the idioms of these groups of texts. In the later Old Kingdom a remarkable change happened in respect of the character of Egyptian verb forms. Those that had until then connoted the present perfect became expressions of the preterite. These are the *sdm-n.f*, the passive *sdm(j).f* and the Old Perfective (in its 'Stative' variety). Note that each of these forms is likely to be used circumstantially. At the same time the ancient preterite forms became obsolete, viz. the perfective (or narrative) *sdm.f* and the 'Perfect' variety of the Old Perfective. Note that neither form is found in circumstantial use.



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on my mac

³¹ W. Schenkel, in *Quaerentes scientiam* (2nd Westendorf Festschrift; Göttingen, 1994), 157–82.

³² J. Osing, *Die Nominalbildung des Ägyptischen* (Mainz, 1976), 310–11.

³³ Schenkel, op. cit. 177.

³⁴ Ibid. 170.

Present Perfect (main clause) or Relative Perfect (clause of circumstance):

	Old Kingdom proper ³⁵ :
trans. active, pron. subj.	(jw +) <i>sdm n-f</i>
trans. active, nom. subj.	
trans. passive, pron. subj.	(jw-f +) Old Perfective ('Stative')
trans. passive, nom. subj.	(jw +) passive <i>sdm(jj)-f</i>
intrans., pron. subj.	(jw-f +) Old Perfective ('Stative')
intrans., nom. subj.	jw-f + Old Perfective ('Stative'); Pyr.: <i>sdm</i> + noun

Preterite:

	Old Kingdom proper ³⁶ :	From end of Old Kingdom onward ³⁷ :
trans. active, pron. subj.	Old Perfective ('Perfect')	(jw +) <i>sdm-n-f</i> ³⁸
trans. active, nom. subj.	<i>sdm</i> + noun ('perfective <i>sdm-f</i> ')	
trans. passive, pron. subj.	<i>sdm-tj-f</i>	(jw-f +) Old Perfective
trans. passive, nom. subj.	(passive of 'perfective <i>sdm-f</i> ')	(jw +) passive <i>sdm(jj)-f</i> > <i>sdm(w)-f</i>
intrans., pron. subj.	Old Perfective ('Perfect')	(jw-f +) Old Perfective
intrans., nom. subj.	<i>sdm</i> + noun ('perfective <i>sdm-f</i> ')	

It can be clearly seen that the post-Old Kingdom Preterite forms are derived from the Old Kingdom Perfect forms. All post-Old Kingdom Old Perfectives go back to what was termed above 'Stative', except for the few classicisms of the 'narrative Old Perfective' (with initial status; dynamic meaning; active gender with transitives, again leaving apart the verbs *rĥ* and *hm*)³⁹. As no instances of the latter have been identified in the Coffin Texts, none of the many spellings without final (j) are cases of what was called above 'Perfect'. In conclusion, we must say that the two basic varieties of the Old Perfective discerned here are a morpho-syntactic reality, as shown in the distribution charts above, but they are not differentiated in spelling. The condition for the writing or the omission of a final (j) in the Pyramid Texts is as yet undecided; for the time being we may conclude that the situation seems similar

³⁵ Cf. Doret, op. cit. 119, 117; for the Pyramid Texts see above for references.

³⁶ Cf. Doret, op. cit. 117; as for Table 2, see above, n. 17.

³⁷ Forms without jw are mainly sequential or circumstantial; cf. Doret, op. cit. 176, 179. Forms with jw are main sentences; cf. ibid. 175.

³⁸ Cf. ibid. 175.

³⁹ Note that several of the Middle Kingdom examples of actively used Old Perfectives of transitive verbs show the spelling (kw) or the like for the 1 ps. sing.; cf., e.g., Gardiner, op. cit. §312.1.

to that of the Coffin Texts where verbs with dynamic meaning (like the intransitive verbs of motion and the transitive verbs — passive gender!) mostly use an Old Perfective form that differs from that of verbs with static meaning (like verbs of quality).