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# THE STATIVE PARTICIPLE — AN ARABIC APPROACH TO EGYPTIAN GRAMMAR

Ahmad ABDEL-HAMID YOUSSEF

The Egyptian tongue, being of the Hamito-Semitic family, has shown and still affords — whenever there is chance of study — many affinities with its sister languages. Its affinities with Hebrew — to quote Prof. Bakir — are often acknowledged; but it is equally manifest that an affiliation with Arabic exists <sup>(1)</sup>.

The so-called pseudoparticiples or old perfectives described as a survival of the Semitic finite verb has retained a close resemblance noticed in particular to the Akkadian permansive. An important feature, to quote Gardiner <sup>(2)</sup>, is that it can be used with passive as well as in active and that the time position it indicates depends upon the context <sup>(3)</sup>. That is to say that the same form can give — regardless of time — the active meaning in some verbs and the passive in others.

This is strikingly the same with the Arabic Verbal form or rather Verbal measure *فاعِل* *fa'īl* and *فَعُول* *fa'ūl* a form which sometimes gives the meaning of, and is substituted by, the active participle or passive participle.

<sup>(1)</sup> Erman's comparison between his 'Pseudo-partizip' of which the Coptic qualitative is the latest form — and the Arabic perfective was based on a striking resemblance — he said — between the endings in both. But endings alone cannot be a decisive criterion for comparison. In meaning the «Stative participle» being essentially of a circumstantial nature qualifying a noun or a pronoun differs greatly from the Arabic perfect. As a matter of fact cannot be translated *sami'tu* 'I heard'; nor can the perfective

passive be the correct or accepted translation for «I was sent» *ursiltu*. (See Erman, «Eine Neue Art der ägyptischer Konjugation», *ZÄS* 27' (1889), p. 65 ff.; cf. Lefebvre, *Grammaire de l'Égyptien Classique*, § 334).

<sup>(2)</sup> Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*<sup>3</sup>, § 309, OBS. 1.

<sup>(3)</sup> Cf. T.W. Thacker, *The Relationship of Semitic and Egyptian Verbal Systems Oxford* (1954), p. 109.

	« I know »	علم (انا) 'alīm = عالم 'ālim
	« he hears »	سميع samī' = سامع sāmi'
	« I am sent »	رسول rasūl = مرسل mursal

With verbs of motion, the stative participle, as well as the Arabic *fa'il - fa'ul* measure, describes not as much the movement itself as the position reached of the movement.

	« I am descended »	نزيل (انا) nazil
	« sitting »	قعيسد ka'id

Furthermore, the stative participle and the Arabic *fa'il - fa'ul* measures, share the common feature of being frequent with adjective Verbs<sup>(1)</sup>. A good deal of Arabic adjectives as a matter of fact is in the *fa'il - fa'ul* measure e.g.

	« great »	كبيرات kabirāt
	« wide »	وسيع wasi'
	« beautiful »	جميل jamil

In the following pages, we will find that the Arabic measure we bring forward for discussion applies well in all the uses of what we call the « stative participle » known as the pseudopart participle or old perfective.

The stative participle is used as a predicate to a nominal sentence :

	« The mouth is silent »	الفم صموت (Pap. Prisse 4, 4).
	« Old age is descended »	(او هوّى) المشيب نزيل (Prisse 4, 2).
	« The divine body is mixed with he who created him »	جسد الاله أيش بخالقه (Simuhe, R 7-8).
	« Thy son is shining upon thy throne »	ولذلك بدى (او جلى) على عرشك (Book of the dead LXXVIII, 52).

(1) Cf. Gardiner, *Grammar*<sup>3</sup>, § 135; cf. see « Coronation of King Haremheb », l. 11, *JEA* 39 (1953), p. 13 ff.  
 'His Majesty being (or is) great in the sight of the populace'



himself reacting by going and climbing a high tree. The serpent has expressed himself similarly in his own narrative :



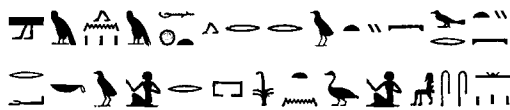
« Then a star fell and those went into the fire by it ....

« Then I was (almost) dead for them »

(*op. cit.* 129-131). واذا نجم هوى وانطلق هؤلاء في النار . . . . واذا انا ميت عليهم

« Then the bull is standing » (*Westcar* 8, 26). واذا الثور وقيف

The independently used stative participle (Gardiner § 312) can be interpreted in Arabic Grammar terms as a predicate to an omitted subject understood to be « I ». Such an interpretation may have been the actual Egyptian conception of the stative participle; the fact that it developed so that it is only found in the first person singular, may suggest that the Egyptian of the Middle Kingdom disliked the omission of the subject qualified by the stative participle which henceforth required the support of a preceding pronoun suffixed or dependent.



« After we had gone to the great portal I was put to a magnificent prince palace »  
(*Sinuhe*, B 285-6). فلما ان مشينا من بعد الى السدة الكبرى (اذا انا) ثوى في دار امير فخمة

« At dawn I had reached Peten stopping at an island in Kem-wer »  
(*Sinuhe*, B 20-21). (Kem-wer was a part of Peten i.e. he reached Peten where the island was). فلما ان اضاءت الارض كنت قد بلغت بن هيبطا في جزيرة كور

« I was wealthy and I was great » (اذا انا) «  
(*Brit. Mus.* 614). كنت غنيا عظيما أو (اذا انا) غنى عظيم

« I was watchful concerning it day and night »  
(*Urk.* IV, 185). حفيز عليها ليلا كالنهار

A similar rule applies to the exclamatory use (*Gardiner*<sup>3</sup> § 313) of the stative participle :

بعيدا عنى او بعينين عنى « (be you) away from me »  
(*C.T.* 236).

The Arabic analysis of such a case is that it is a predicate to the omitted imperative of the incomplete 'verb to be' كونا — كن which governs the subject in the nominative and the predicate in the accusative :

« beware of any occasion of neglectfulness »  
حريصا ابدا من ضلال القلب (*Prisse* 154).

« in heath in heath good fellow to thy house »  
سليما سليما ايها الصديق الى دارك (*Sh.* S. 158).

« praised thou art : I do not know the number thereof »  
حميدا (كنت) لا اعرف عدد ذلك (*Westcar* 9, 2-3); and the well known formula « life, prosperity and health »  
حيا صحيحا سليما .

Appended to a noun, the stative participle gives the meaning of an epithet or an Arabic adjective (*Gardiner's* virtual relative clause § 317).

« an old book boiled with oil »  
كتاب قديم «  
(*Ebers* 49, 1).

« a frog boiled with oil »  
ضفدع طبخ في زيت «  
(*ib.* 52, 4).

« a chariot wrought in gold »  
عجلة حلية بالذهب «  
(*Urk.* IV 663).

« the complete eye »  
العين التيممة «  
(*Eb.* 99, 20).

« *šns*-cake mixed with salt »  
كعك خليط بالملح «  
(*Eb.* 97, 19).

The circumstantial use of the stative participle is frequent :

« Teti found his throne empty »  
وجد تيتي عرشته خليا «  
(*Pyr.* 602).







It can be thus understood, however, why in boastful and self laudatory texts, the stative participle is frequently used in the first person singular; the deceased asserts his knowledge and equipment of the requirements that allow him to the hereafter. It is not improbable that such a tradition was an important factor in the survival of the independent use of the stative participle in the first person singular.

Being of itself timeless, the future meaning was indicated in Middle Egyptian by placing the imperfective *sdm.f* of the verb *wnn* (to be) which has future reference, before it.

« Nay, he who is yonder shall be standing in the bark » « ويقفون في السفين الذي ثم (Leb. 143-4).

« His soul shall live beside the Lord of the Universe » « وتكون روحه حية الى جنب رب العالمين (Urk. IV 62).

Yet, the future meaning can be implied like our Arabic measure<sup>(1)</sup> in the following example in Middle Egyptian :

« Never shalt thou see this island (again) it becoming waves » « لن ترى تلك الجزيرة (ثانية) اذ هي صائرة امواجاً (Sh. S 154).

Two more late Egyptian examples of the stative participle give the future meaning :

« He took an oath by the lord saying, if all that I have said is not true, I shall be put on a stake » « اصدر قسماً بالرب قائلاً لئن لم يصدق ما قلت جميعاً فاني موضوع (وديعة) على رأس قضيب (B.M. 10053, verso 3, 5; sim. ib. 4, 6).

(1) Arabic examples are frequents. Cf. « Verily thou shalt die and they shall die » (Koran XXXIX 30) « انك ميت وانهم ميتون وقلن تمتع ليلة النأى هذه فانك مرجوم غدا أو مسيف

« and they said enjoy this eve of departure; for you will be stoned tomorrow or slain by sword » (Ĝirānu 'l-'Awd جران العود).

