

## Old Egyptian and Akkadian independent pronouns : a reassessment

The two series of Ancient Egyptian independent pronouns have often been put in parallel with Akkadian forms that show some striking morphological similarities :

	Egyptian 'archaic'	Egyptian	Akkadian Nominative	Akkadian Genitive-Accusative
1SG.C	Ø	<i>jnk</i>	<i>anāku</i>	<i>yāti</i>
2SG.M	<i>twt</i>	<i>nt-k</i>	<i>atta</i>	<i>kâta, (kâti)</i>
2SG.F	<i>tmt</i>	<i>nt-t</i>	<i>atti</i>	<i>kâti</i>
3SG.M	<i>swt</i>	<i>nt-f</i>	<i>šū</i>	<i>šuāti/u</i>
3SG.F	<i>stt</i>	<i>nt-s</i>	<i>šī</i>	<i>šuāti, šâti</i>

However, the correspondance is only partial and these forms do not seem to share a lot of their uses. The most prominent difference lies in the fact that the notion of case does not have any relevance for the Egyptian forms. Moreover, the Akkadian third person form often functions as an anaphoric attribute while the Egyptian form appears only as a pronoun. The present contribution aims at putting the known data in a new light. It suggests that the Akkadian paradigm of forms called independent pronouns deserve a closer scrutiny. Grammars traditionally present a paradigm showing cases corresponding to those of Akkadian nominal inflection. At a functional level, the subject functions are expressed by the verb. The so-called nominative of the independent personal pronoun may actually represent not a Subject case but rather an emphatic (topicalizing ?) form (see fr. *moi* 'as for me'). Moreover, Huehnergard (2011: 273) mentions the fact that *kâta* / *kâti* often occurs as subject with *anāku* in Old Babylonian letters. Hasselbach (2005, 150) further shows that in Sargonic Akkadian the original accusative form had no final *-t*, while explicitly stating that « The origin of the forms of independent pronouns with infixed /t/ still requires further study ». The so-called genitive-accusative of the independent pronoun, based on the pronominal suffixes, is indeed problematic. I suggest to question the status of the *-t(i)* endings as case ending in the strictest sense. The data found in grammars show that an primary discourse function could in fact have been characteristic for the use of these 'independent' pronouns. These observations and the proposed reassessment of the status of the forms have a crucial bearing on the usual comparison with the Ancient Egyptian corresponding pronouns. After briefly recalling their use in this language, this contribution aims at presenting a possible explanation of the relationship between apparently cognate pronominal forms in Akkadian and Egyptian. According to this hypothesis, the final *-t(i)* that is present in both Akkadian and Egyptian forms appears likely to take its source in a particle expressing selection and restriction, which would explain its semantically emphatic uses and those that appear more neutral but generally involve a marked identification with a preceding element, with or without explicit contrast with another term:

*mri-w-f*                      *mwt-f*                      *swt*                      *mwt-f*  
 like-INDEF-3MS            die\SUBJ-3MS    3MS            die\MOD-3MS  
 'One whom he wants to die, that one has to die' (Pyramid Text, 159cW)

### References

Hasselbach, Rebecca. 2005. *Sargonic Akkadian: A Historical and Comparative Study of the Syllabic Texts*, Wiesbaden.

Huehnergard, John. 2011. *A Grammar of Akkadian*, 3rd ed., Winona Lake, Indiana.