ALBERTYNA DEMBSKA

Suffix-Pronoun of the First Person Plural in Late Egyptian

In Late Egyptian, the varnacular of the XVIII–XXIV Dynasties (1580–715 B.C.)[1] the grammarians note that the suffix-pronoun of the 1st person plural -*n* is sometimes written in the same way as the suffix-pronoun of the 2nd person plural. This is illustrated by the following examples:

A. Erman[2]:
(Horus and Seth)[3]

8,9

mtw.n hrp m
"We plunge into..."

13,3

mtw.n mdḥ n.n nhyn; 'ḥ3w m inr
"[and] we shall build for us ships of stone"

13,4

mtw.n trr m p3 s 2
"[and] we shall race each other"

J. Černy[4]:
(LRL)[5]

44,15

mtw.n mḥ irt.n m ptr.k

[1] E. Drioton, J. Vandier, *L'Egypte*, Paris 1952, pp. 630–632.
[2] A. Erman, *Neuaegyptische Grammatik*, Leipzig 1933, §. 275, § 576.
[3] A. H. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Stories*, Bruxelles 1932, pp. 37ff.
[4] J. Černy, *A Late Egyptian Grammar*, Rome 1975, p. 27.
[5] J. Černy, *Late Ramesside Letters*, Bruxelles 1939.

"[and] we shall fill our eye[s] with the sight of you"
M. Korostovtsev[6]:
(LRL=Bibl. Nat. 198, III)

69,13

mtw.n ii r p; nty t; ty im m dw;w

"[and] we shall come to [the place] where is the vizier in tomorrow"
(BM 10054, 2.12)[7]

2,12

nty tw.n gm.f im.w
"which we find in them"
(LRL=BM 10375,9)

45,10/11

r rdit iw n.n r p; nty tw.n im
"to come to us to [the place] where we are"
(LRL=Leiden I, 370,18)

10,8/9

ii; wn hrw dy r-h;t.n
"indeed, day is here before us"
(LRL=Berlin 10494,7)

23,11/12

iw.k rh.tw p;y.n shr hms.t nty tw.n im.f
"you know our way of life in which we are"[8]
(BM 10054,2,4)[9]

2,4

iirt.n ii
"until we come"
(LRL=Berlin 10494,2)

23,6

tw.n [hr] dd n imn-r'
"we pray to Amon-Re"

At first glance the above cited examples allow us to draw the conclusion that

---

[6] M. Korostovtsev, *Grammaire du Néo-Egyptien*, Moscou 1973, p. 88.
[7] J. Herny, *The Will of Naunakhte and the Related Documents*, JEA 31 (1945), 38.
[8] Cf. also J. Černy, *A Late Egyptian Grammar*, 100, Ex 339.
[9] J. Černy, *The Will of Naunakhte...*, p. 38.

$\overset{o}{\underset{\text{↑↑↑}}{\sim\sim}}$ is perhaps a specific form of the suffix-pronoun of the 1st person plural. But a more careful examination from a different point of view might lead to another conclusion.

If the morphological categories of words accompanying this form is considered, no interdependence between them can be noticed. There are nouns such as *ḥꜣt* "front", *irt* "eye, verbs *iri* "to make", pronominal performatives of the first person present and conjunctive.

If, however, the gender of words and stems to which this suffix-pronoun is attached, is taken in consideration, a totally different picture appears. All the verbs belong to the class of tertiae infirmac with feminine infinitive ending *t*. Also the pronominal performatives end in *t*, just as the nouns do. In other words, all these words have the *t* ending in status pronominalis. This *t* is either a part of the root or of the stem. It was pronounced when the suffix-pronoun was attached, since in that case it was not the last consonant any more. When pronounced this *t* suffix formed — together with the suffix-pronoun of the 1st person plural — the last closed syllable of the word. Thus we have:

Late Egyptian	Coptic
	TN-ˢ , TEN-ᵇ
	NTN-ˢ, NTEN-ᵇ
	EIⲁT⸗ˢ, IⲁT⸗ᵇ
	ⳡHT⸗ˢ
	EIⲁT⸗ˢ, ⲁpIT⸗ᵇ

Now, let us consider the rules that govern Egyptian orthography. It is the scribes who, in order to retain this pronounced *t*, used to copy it before the suffix-pronoun[10] regardless of its place among the hieroglyphs it had been copied with. Since the hieroglyphs were arranged symmetrically and without gaps, the ◯ — sign was placed above 〰️ .

These facts allow us to draw the following conclusions. The scribes following the rules of Egyptian orthography placed the *t* which was a part of the root or the stem over the 〰️ — sign, i.e. the sign of the 1st person plural. This could have been the result of strictly following the pronunciation. This particular graphical representation did reflect this pronunciation. Hence, the most commonly used suffix-pronouns of the 2nd person plural were introduced.[11]

---

[10] A. H. G a r d i n e r, *Egyptian Grammar*, Oxford 1957, p. 53.

[11] Concerning Naunakhte II, 2; III, 2. Those examples are not in accord with this rule. Perhaps it should be recognized as suffix-pronoun 2nd pers. pl. or the *t* is an epenthesis, cf. Copt. ϢOⲠTEN.