

TRADITION AND TRANSFORMATION IN ANCIENT EGYPT

ANDREA KAHLBACHER – ELISA PRIGLINGER (Eds.)



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TRADITION AND TRANSFORMATION
IN ANCIENT EGYPT

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ANDREA KAHLBACHER – ELISA PRIGLINGER (EDS.)

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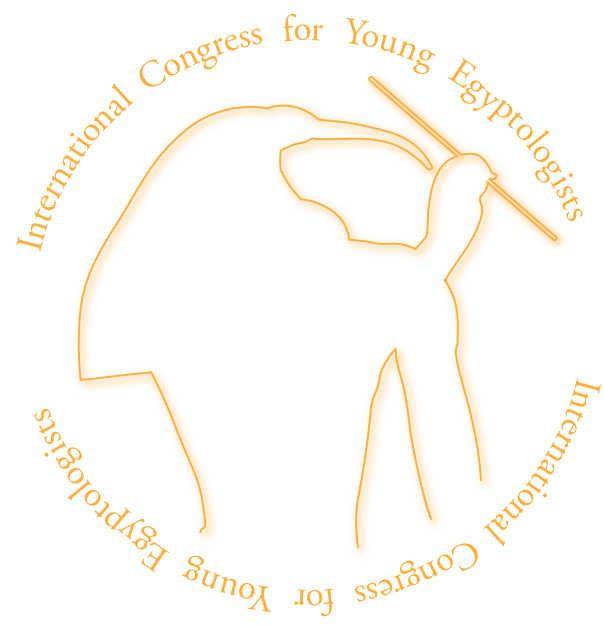
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SEMANTIC CHANGES IN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN

Some Case Studies

Gaëlle Chantrain¹

Abstract: Cases of semantic changes are very frequent in Ancient Egyptian, which can be easily understood, given the fact that the language was attested for a very long period. It never stopped evolving, which justifies its division by Egyptologists

into different stages. The present study will be dedicated to several cases of lexemes undergoing one or several semantic changes in the course of their history. I will focus on two markers: the change of gender and the change of classifier.

1. INTRODUCTION

In a former article, I approached the case of what I called the reorganisation of the classifier system that took place in hieratic texts in the Ramesside period.² I mentioned, among others, the fact that this reorganisation of the system takes into account eventual semantic changes.

The Ramesside period and the beginning of the TIP are a turning point for the evolution of language and the evolution of the classifier system.

This can be noticed in the great structural richness of some literary texts, playing on a multimodal manner on the semantic variations and their formal actualisations, as well as on the reorganisation of the classifier system.

The present study will be dedicated to several cases of lexemes undergoing one or several semantic changes in the course of their history. I will focus on the period going from the OK to the TIP.³ My research is articulated along several axes: which patterns do we find? In which way are the semantic changes formally actualised? What is the dynamics of these changes?

I hope to be able to give a good overview of the forces at work in the semantic change processes in Egyptian. As I mentioned before, I will take as starting point several case studies:

Nouns:

dw3.t, *dw3* (morning, tomorrow)

dmi, *dmi.t* (harbour, city)

h3w (period, relatives, spatial proximity, material goods)

Verbs:

ʕm (to swallow, to learn)

whʕ (to untie, to loose, to stop, to solve)

wh3 (to search, to look for, to want)

thi (to transgress, to harm, to attack)

nʕi (to sail, to travel, to go)

The mechanisms of semantic changes are not the same for verbs and for nouns. Depending on the cases, they can or not be formally actualised, and in different ways.

Here, I will focus on two markers: the change of gender and the change of classifier. These are, of course, not the only cases. Other phenomena can indicate a semantic change, such as the modification of the argument structure,⁴ or a more general change in the grammatical construction.

The meaning of a lexeme can also change because another lexeme from the same semantic field gains in importance.⁵ The first lexeme can then be restricted to certain uses (specific of certain registers), undergoing some dialectal specification or disappear altogether.

Thus, I will talk about the two formal actualisations that are the change of gender and the change of classifiers. In a general way, here are the cases one can be faced with:

a) Nouns

- Division into two different lexemes, with change of gender, without change of classifier
- Division into two different lexemes, with change of gender and change of classifier
- Lexeme initially polysemous; the polysemy is then explicitly marked by means of a change

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² The study will be extended to hieroglyphic texts in the future.

³ The gathering of the data has been considerably facilitated by the use of the *Ramses* database: <http://ramses.ulg.ac.be>.

⁴ WINAND 2014, 2016.

⁵ E.g. the case of *dg3* and *nw3* 'to look', cf. STELLA 2012, 455.

of classifier. If there is no change in gender, the problem is then to determine whether there is polysemy or divisions in different lexemes

- The semantic change is generally undergone in the direction SPECIFIC → GENERAL

nouns	Change of gender	Change of classifier	2 lexemes	Polysemy	Replacement	S → G	G → S
<i>dw3(.t)</i>	+	-	+	-	-	+	-
<i>dmi(.t)</i>	+	+	+	-	-	+	?
<i>h3w</i>	-	+	?	← +	-	-	?

b) Verbs

- Change of classifier, the meaning1 remains attested but becomes recessive compared to the meaning2
- No change of classifier, the meaning1 is still the majority but the meaning2 is well attested in certain contexts

- The semantic evolution is generally in the direction CONCRETE → ABSTRACT or SPECIFIC → GENERAL
- Apparently no change of meaning, but a change of semantic categorisation, reflected by a change on the classifier level

Verbs	Change of classifier	2 lexemes	Polysemy	Replacement	C → A	S → G
<i>ɛm</i>	+	-	+	-	+	-
<i>whɛ</i>	+	-	+	-	+	-
<i>wh3</i>	-	-	+	-	+	-
<i>nɛi</i>	+	-	+	-	-	+
<i>thi</i>	+	-	-	-	-	-

2. CASE STUDIES – NOUNS

2.1. Division into two lexemes, with change of gender and without change of classifier: *dw3/* *dw3.t*

dw3.t is first a feminine lexeme, even though the ending *-t* tends to disappear quite early from the spellings, which creates some confusion. It is attested from the OK down to Coptic.⁶ As I have already shown in a precedent study, *dw3.t* means ‘morning’, and not ‘dawn’ (*dw3 zp-sn* and *tp n dw3*) or ‘tomorrow’.

- 1: *3.t dw3.t* $\Rightarrow$ $\text{𓂏} \star \text{𓂏}$ *hpr.t(i)*
‘morning time has come’ (Tomb of Mehu, hall, south wall, T 90)⁷
Teti/Pepy II – funerary

- 2: *h3.d.n rf t3 dw3w* $\star$ $\text{𓂏} \text{𓂏}$ *zp-sn iw iwi ɛš n.i*
‘when the earth became white, at dawn, they came to summon me’
(*Sinuhe*, P. Berlin P 3022, 248)⁸
12th Dyn. – fictional

- 3: *rɛ di.f sw tp dw3y.t* $\star$ $\text{𓂏} \text{𓂏}$ *(i)tm htp m m3nw*
‘Ra shows up at dawn, while Atum rests in the western mountain’
(Tomb of Neferhotep (TT 50), Harpist Song, text B, 1, 4)⁹
Horemheb – poetry

In the MK, *dw3(.t)*₁ undergoes a semantic evolution and the meaning ‘tomorrow, future’ starts to be attested in the wisdom texts, assumed by a new masculine lexeme, *dw3*₂.

⁶ VYICHL 1983, 317.

⁷ ALTENMÜLLER 1998, 117.

⁸ KOCH 1990, 71, l. 10.

⁹ HARI 1985, 38, pl. XXVI.

4: *n rh.n.tw hpr.t si3.f dw3* *

‘one cannot know what can happen when he considers tomorrow’

(*Ptahhotep* P. Prisse, 11,2 (§D343))¹⁰

12th Dyn. – wisdom

5: *iw dw3w* * *mi p3 hrw*

‘because tomorrow is like today’ (*Ani*, P. Boulaq 4, 21, 15)¹¹

21st Dyn. – wisdom

The difference of distribution between *dw3₁* and *dw3₂* is thus marked in diachrony and according to the genre and the context.¹² Here, the semantic change is in the direction CONCRETE → ABSTRACT. Indeed, the starting point is the daily cycle, which is the main basic unit in the conception of time in Ancient Egypt. Thus, one goes from the concrete and observable notion of ‘morning’ to the more abstract one of ‘tomorrow’, and, by extension, of ‘future’. As I have already highlighted in a precedent study,¹³ the semantic evolution seems to occur first in the wisdom texts, where the meaning ‘tomorrow’ appears for the first time. The thematic content and the nature of the discourse, involving more abstraction, partially explains the phenomenon.

The use of *dw3₂* then spreads to other genres, but *dw3₁* remains in use. As most attestations of *dw3₁* are written with a defective spelling (without the feminine *-t*), there can be some confusion in certain cases, also given the fact that the semantic domains of *dw3₁* and *dw3₂* remain very close. However, the ambiguity can be solved in most cases by means of the contextual analysis. Sometimes, the author of the text gives some clues, as is the case in *Wenamun*:

6: *iw.i (hr) dwn m B{y} dw3w* *

‘I set off in the morning’ (*Wenamun*, P. Moscow 120, 1, 12)¹⁴

21st Dyn. – fictional

Indeed, in this example, the article *B* is clearly used in a deictic way (it is, furthermore, the only attestation I have found of *dw3* with an article).

dw3.t (F) ‘morning’ → *dw3(.t)₁* (F) ‘morning’
→ *dw3₂* (M) ‘tomorrow’

2.2. Division into two lexemes of different genders, with change of classifier:

dmi/dmi.t: harbour, city

dmi is attested from the OK as a masculine noun. Its first meaning seems to be ‘harbour’. On the classifier level, we can observe the following situation: before the NK and in the course of the 18th Dynasty, *dmi* is written with the classifier Ξ in most cases. Sometimes, Ξ or Ξ can also be found.

7: *n in.n.tw htp.t r dmi*

‘one does not go and search for peace in the harbour’

(*Ptahhotep*, P. Prisse, 11,4 (§D348))¹⁵

12th Dyn. – wisdom

In the NK, *dmi* slowly takes the more general meaning ‘city’. At the same time, the classifier Ξ is added to Ξ in the spelling.¹⁶ Ξ is still attested alone in the 19th Dynasty, but it is progressively being replaced with the group $\Xi\Xi$. Furthermore, this semantic change is accompanied by a change of gender. The feminine noun *dmi.t* appears and takes on the first meaning ‘harbour’, in recessive use. The second and main meaning ‘city’ is taken over by the masculine *dmi*.

8: *mtw.k {hr} sm.t n.k r p3y.k dmi*

‘and you will go back to your village’ (*Two Brothers*, P. Orbiney, 14,9)¹⁷

Sety II – fictional

Even if the ending *-t* is regularly added in the NK without being a convincing factor in the gender determination anymore, here the difference is clearly established thanks to the contrastive use of *p3 dmi* and *B dmi(.t)* in the same section. The feminine is here the marked term of the opposition and is actually a reactivation of the first meaning of the word ‘harbour’.

9: *iw n3y t3 dmi.t* *pr r.i r hdb.i*

iw.i w3š<.i> iwd r p3 nty h3tib3 B wr n p3 dmi

‘the ones of the harbour came to kill me, but I managed to find a way to the place where Hatiba was, the princess of the city’ (*Wenamun*, 2, 75)¹⁸

21st Dyn. – fictional

¹⁰ ZABA 1956, 43.

¹¹ QUACK 1994, 321.

¹² For further details, see CHANTRAIN 2017.

¹³ Idem.

¹⁴ GARDINER 1932, 62, l. 3.

¹⁵ ZABA 1956, 44.

¹⁶ CHANTRAIN 2014, 49–50.

¹⁷ GARDINER 1932, 24, l. 12.

¹⁸ GARDINER 1932, 75, l. 1–2.

material (+ relatives)	→ material	→ material
relatives	→ relatives	→ /
time	→ time	→ spatio-temporal
spatial	→ spatial (rare)	→ /

3. CASE STUDIES – VERBS

3.1. Semantic evolution in the direction CONCRETE → ABSTRACT, change of classifier, the meaning 1 remains in use, but becomes recessive compared to the meaning 2: *ʕm* and *whʕ*

3.1.1. *ʕm* ‘TO SWALLOW, TO LEARN’

The verb is attested from the OK. Before the NK, *ʕm* has only the meaning ‘to swallow’. It is then written with the classifiers  (in Pyramid Texts); ; ; ; .

The situation changes in the 18th Dynasty, when *ʕm* takes a new meaning: ‘to learn, to know’. The first meaning remains in use, but becomes progressively recessive. The difference of meaning is systematically reflected in the classifiers from the 19th Dynasty: *ʕm* in the sense ‘to swallow’ keeps the classifier  or the group , while *ʕm* ‘to learn, to know’ adopts the classifier .

15: *mk ib.i pr.tw m ʕwt sw ʕn <r>bw ʕm*     
 ‘See, my heart went away discreetly, he ran away to a place that he knows’
 (P. Anastasi 4, 4, 11 = LEM 39,9)²⁹
 Sety II – miscellanies

16: *wn p3 iwt n r3.f ʕ3.f sn ʕm*                <

In the *Teaching of a man to his son*, we find the two spellings on the basis of the different versions. Among the four documents for which this section is conserved, two have the group wh^c : the leather roll BM 10258 I (18th Dyn.) wh^c and the O. DeM 1266 + O. Caire cat. 25218 (Ramesside) wh^c . The other two have the classifier wh^3 : the O. Michaelides 37 (Ramesside) wh^3 and the O. DeM 1665 I + O. Gardiner 1 (Ramesside) wh^3 .

Once again, it seems that the semantic change CONCRETE $\rightarrow$ ABSTRACT appears in the wisdom texts for the first time.³⁹ The semantic path leading to this evolution is made explicit by other examples, as for instance in the stela of Mentuhotep, dating to the MK. The metaphor of the knot to untie is used here to give the idea of a problem to solve:

21: $\text{sr wh}^c \text{ts.t}$
 ‘a magistrate who unties what is knotten’ (St. Cairo CG 20539, I.b.9)⁴⁰

In the 19th Dynasty, the spellings of wh^c become standardised in the hieratic texts, with the group wh^3 in the great majority of the cases and for all the meanings of the lexeme.

22: $\text{rnp} \text{stn} \text{3bw.t twt im wh}^c \text{itn.w gn.wt mi i.ir sn}$
 ‘a young man, with good-looking aspect and a slim figure, the one who solves the difficulties of the annals, like the one who made them’ (Hori, P. Anastasi 1, 1,7)⁴¹
 19th Dyn. – satirical

23: $\text{spr.k r wh}^c \text{m rwh}^3$
 ‘when you manage to stop in the evening’ (Hori, P. Anastasi 1, 19, 8)⁴²
 19th Dyn. – satirical

The group wh^3 is also used in some cases, most often with the meaning ‘to stop, to leave’:

24: $\text{wh}^c \text{fr pr.f m rwh}^3$
 ‘it is in the evening that he goes back home’ (P. Lansing 5,5)⁴³
 20th Dyn. – miscellanies

The situation evolves again at the 21st Dynasty. Indeed, at that time the group of classifiers wh^3 or the classifier wh^c are used systematically for the abstract meaning ‘to solve, to understand’. This is the case in Amenemope, among others, where in all attestations wh^c has the meaning ‘to understand’ and the group of classifiers wh^3 .

25: $\text{imy h}^3 \text{ty.k r wh}^c \text{w}$
 ‘lend your heart to understand them’ (Amenemope, P. BM 10474, 3, 10)⁴⁴
 21st Dyn.⁴⁵ – wisdom

3.2. Semantic evolution in the direction

CONCRETE $\rightarrow$ ABSTRACT, no change of classifier, the first meaning is still the one attested in the majority of the cases, but the second meaning is well attested in some contexts: wh^3 ‘to search, to want’

The first meaning of wh^3 is ‘to search’, in the physical meaning of the term. It is literally ‘to go and search (for something)’, as is clearly shown by the classifier wh^3 .⁴⁶ In Late Egyptian, the meaning of a ‘physical’ search is extended to a more abstract search, and besides its first meaning, wh^3 takes the meaning ‘to want, to wish’.⁴⁷

In this case, there is no change of classifier: wh^3 is used in both cases. This can eventually be explained with the fact that the origin of the will/the wish is a thoughtful act. The subject stays highly agentive in comparison to other verbs of volition like *mri* or *3bi*.⁴⁸

26: $\text{hr wnn.k in.t} \text{f} \text{iw.f hr di.t in.tw n.k p}^3 \text{nty iw.k r wh}^3 \text{f}$
 ‘and when you will bring it, he will make bring to you whatever you want’
 (O. DeM 118, v° 3–5 = KRI III, 535, 6–7)⁴⁹
 Rameses II – letter

To my knowledge, there are only two attestations of wh^3 with the classifier wh^c (of which we could expect the meaning ‘to want, to wish’). The first one comes from a graffito in the TT63, from the reign of Amenhotep III,⁵⁰ and the second one

³⁹ As it is the case for *dw3(t)*, cf. *supra*.

⁴⁰ Idem in II.b.5; LANGE and SCHÄFER 1908, 152.

⁴¹ FISCHER-ELFERT 1983, 26.

⁴² FISCHER-ELFERT 1983, 128.

⁴³ GARDINER 1937, 104, I. 5.

⁴⁴ LAISNEY 2007, 328.

⁴⁵ Document: 26th Dynasty.

⁴⁶ WINAND 2016.

⁴⁷ POLIS 2009b, 214–216.

⁴⁸ POLIS 2009b, 211–214.

⁴⁹ POLIS 2009a, 190, ex. 262; WINAND 1992, 535.

⁵⁰ Graffito TT 63, 3; cf. RAGAZZOLI 2008, 27–29.

comes from the tale of the *Doomed Prince*.⁵¹ Unfortunately, both examples are lacunar.

In the case of *wh3*, we thus have two nuances of meaning, but they are not reflected in the classifier usage. In Coptic, the semantic change has progressed in the direction CONCRETE → ABSTRACT, and we find the verb *ⲟⲩⲱⲩⲱ* ‘to love’.⁵²

3.3. Semantic evolution in the direction SPECIFIC → GENERAL, change of classifier, the first meaning remains attested but becomes recessive in comparison to the second meaning: *nʿi*

The first meaning of *nʿi* is ‘to sail’. From the OK and until the 18th Dynasty, it systematically takes the classifier *ⲛⲓ*.

- 27: *nʿ.t* *ⲛⲓ* *ⲛⲓ* *pw* *ir:n.n* *m-hd* *r* *hnw* *n* *ity*
 ‘Then we sailed northwards, to the Residence of the sovereign’
 (Shipwrecked Sailor, P. Petersburg 1115, 172)
 12th Dyn. – fictional

From the 19th Dynasty onwards, *nʿi* tends to adopt the more general meaning ‘to travel’, without the restriction ‘by boat’, and then, simply ‘to go’.⁵³ Afterwards it takes the group *ⲛⲓ*.

- 28: *hr-ir* *sy* *m* *nʿy* *ⲛⲓ* *ⲛⲓ* *hr* *n3* *šn.w*
 ‘(He made her cross to the island) and while she was passing under the trees, (she saw...)’ (Horus & Seth, P. Chester Beatty I, 6,2 = LES 44,6)⁵⁴
 Rameses V – fictional

Some attestations of *nʿi* with the classifier *ⲛⲓ* are still present in the 19th Dynasty, mostly in funerary context, and refer to the journey of the solar boat through the sky.⁵⁵ The usage of the group *ⲛⲓ* becomes systematic in the 20th Dynasty. The meaning ‘to sail’, however, remains attested, but with the new group *ⲛⲓ*.

3.4. Apparently no change of meaning, but a change of semantic categorisation, reflected on the classifier level

The verb *thi* means ‘to transgress, to attack’. The two meanings are conjointly attested, apparently from the OK onwards. In the OK, *thi* does not

usually take any classifier. From the MK and until the 19th Dynasty, *thi* is classified with *ⲛⲓ*, or, more frequently, with the group *ⲛⲓ*.

- 29: *mtn* *b3.i* *hr* *th.t.i* *ⲛⲓ* *n* *sdm.n.i* *n.f*
 ‘Look, my ba is going after me, but I don’t listen to him’
 (Dialogue of a Man with his Ba, P. Amherst 3 + P. Berlin 3024, 11)
 12th Dyn. – dialogue

In the 20th Dynasty, the group *ⲛⲓ* is systematically replaced with the new group *ⲛⲓ* or *ⲛⲓ*, at least in the hieratic texts.

- 30: *iw* *i.ir.tw* *th3* *ⲛⲓ* *ⲛⲓ* *imn-htp* *wn* *m* *hm-ntr*
tpy *n* *Imn* *r-š3* *m* *3bd* *6*
 ‘by then it was six months since one had gone after Imen-Hetep who was then high priest of Amun’ (P. Mayer A, v^o6,6)⁵⁶
 Rameses XI – legal

There is apparently no real semantic change in this case, but a phenomenon of semantic recategorisation. *thi* moves from the category of motion verbs to the one of action verbs. This change of classifier might be partially due to the use of the lexeme in more abstract contexts, especially to express the idea of social interaction of which the classifier *ⲛⲓ* can be a marker.⁵⁷ The possible influence of the juridical texts also has to be taken into account, the classifier *ⲛⲓ* being particularly frequent in this category of texts at the end of the NK.⁵⁸ Finally, it is important to note that *thi* undergoes a change of argument structure in Late Egyptian.⁵⁹

CONCLUSIONS

Nouns and verbs do not react to semantic changes in the same way. In the case of nouns, the semantic change can occur in different manners. It can be reflected on the graphic level, with a change of classifier and on the grammatical level, with a change of gender. In the case of a change of gender, the marked one is defined according or in opposition to the original gender of the lexeme. In the two cases discussed here, the feminine takes charge of the marked term. Only a broader study could determine

⁵¹ P. Harris 500, 7,7 = LES 6,13.

⁵² VYICHL 1983, 240.

⁵³ PEUST 2007, 72, 77–79.

⁵⁴ GARDINER 1932, 44, l. 6.

⁵⁵ CHANTRAIN 2014, 44.

⁵⁶ KRI VI, 815, l. 8.

⁵⁷ CHANTRAIN and DI BIASE-DYSON 2017.

⁵⁸ DAVID 2006, 25, 27, 49, 66, 68, 211, 245–246, 255.

⁵⁹ WINAND 2014, 545–547.

if here we are faced with a recurrent phenomenon. It is, however, a possibility.

In the case where there is a change of classifier without a change of gender, it is not always easy to distinguish between polysemy and division in dif-

ferent lexemes. In the case of *h3w* it is possible that the division in several lexemes follows the state of polysemy.

The different evolution patterns illustrated in this article are the following ones:

nouns	Change of gender	Change of classifier	2 lexemes	Polysemy	Replacement	S → G	G → S
<i>dw3(.t)</i>	+	-	+	-	-	+	-
<i>dmi(.t)</i>	+	+	+	-	-	+	?
<i>h3w</i>	-	+	?	← +	-	-	?

Verbs	Change of classifier	2 lexemes	Polysemy	Replacement	C → A	S → G
<i>ɛm</i>	+	-	+	-	+	-
<i>whɛ</i>	+	-	+	-	+	-
<i>wh3</i>	-	-	+	-	+	-
<i>nɛi</i>	+	-	+	-	-	+
<i>thi</i>	+	-	-	-	-	-

The list is by no means exhaustive, but the listed cases seem to be the most frequent ones. As we can see, the study of the evolution of the classifier system adds up to our understanding of the mechanisms of semantic changes and to the cognitive processes leading to them.

The reorganisation of the classifier system is not the only broad phenomenon taking place at the transition between the NK and the TIP. Indeed, this period witnesses important changes in different aspects of the language. The literary texts from this period, such as Wenamun, or Amenemope, are particularly well built. They exploit an in-depth and multimodal way of all the possibilities given by the system, by calling on the graphical, grammatical, lexical and semantic subtleties of the language. Wenamun exploits, among others, the changes in gender and uses the masculine-feminine pairs to a deictic end. On the classifiers level, the text furthermore offers a typical third phase scheme.

Amenemope essentially exploits the idea of cycles: themes, metaphors, classifiers (as markers of metaphors and thematic cycles on the visual level, among others) and plays on semantic changes and nuances. It takes pride of place of the duality concrete-abstract, and to the general idea of interpersonal relations inside the thematic cycles.⁶⁰

The various changes taking place during the Ramesside period would deserve an in-depth study as a global phenomenon by considering different points of view. It seems that this period constitutes a turning point for the linguistic system as well as at the cognitive level. In a former study, I have used the – anachronistic – term ‘rationalisation’ of the system. What I mean by this is that here we are probably faced with a (partially, at least) conscious phenomenon regarding the semantic categorisation. The dynamics underlying these changes, especially the distribution according to the time, genres and writing system would also deserve more attention. This could, I think, be a starting point towards a better understanding of the patterns governing semantic changes and, in a lexicographic perspective, towards a better treatment of the polysemy – monosemy dilemma.

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⁶⁰ Cf. CHANTRAIN and DI BIASE-DYSON 2017.

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"Tradition and Transformation in Ancient Egypt" presents papers from different fields, linked through the discussion of (dis)continuity of traditions and consequent cultural transformation. The main aim of the conference was to stimulate research and exchange ideas as well as to build bridges for a variety of sub-disciplines within Egyptology.

The first impression given by the ancient Egyptian culture is that of continuity and long-lasting stability. In fact, we can observe very different kinds of transformation processes alongside enduring tradition. These changes are visible in all areas of society: politics, art, language, economy, religion, etc. This volume gives an insight into current research on this topic and the results of various discussions following the 5th International Congress of Young Egyptologists.

In the study of ancient cultures and civilizations, the questions about what remains and what is changing are always of great importance. A primary goal is to get a deeper understanding of the life and thinking of our ancestors. Cultural changes are dynamic processes and can be caused by developments in technology, political and religious ideas or substantial experiences with diverse societies or environmental factors.

Because of this sheer panoply of possible causes, one seeks to understand transformation in ancient Egypt by asking a series of essential questions: what is the nature of a particular change, when and where did it come about, through what agency, for what purpose, which parts of Egyptian society did it affect, and how lasting were its consequences. In order to be able to answer these questions, as many cultural aspects as possible must be included and considered in detail.