

## The Conjunctive Construction mtw.f sDm in the Language of the Amarna Period

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### ABSTRACT

This paper tackles one of the significant Late Egyptian (LE) verbal system constructions, which was an innovation of the Amarna Period. It also shows the evolution of the verbal system in the late stage. The author explores this subject for the importance of the Amarna Period in the transitional stage from Classic Egyptian (CE) to the LE. The language used in the Amarna Period has extraordinary characteristics. The most important one is the attestation of the patterns of the colloquial language, which was used as an official language.

### المخلص

يناقش هذا البحث أحد التراكيب الفعلية بالعصر المتأخر للغة المصرية القديمة، والذي يُعد تجديدًا في عصر العمارنة. ولهذا كان أحد أسباب اختيار هذا الموضوع يكمن في أهمية عصر العمارنة في المرحلة الانتقالية ما بين العصر الكلاسيكي إلى العصر المتأخر والذي شهد تطوراً واضحاً في التراكيب الفعلية التابع للعصر المتأخر. هذا وقد كانت اللغة المستخدمة في عصر العمارنة لها عدة صفات مميزة، وأحدة من أهم هذه الصفات هي استخدام اللغة العامية كلغة رسمية.

## INTRODUCTION

The analytic or periphrastic system was more dominant within LE verbal system construction. Most of the constructions in this system consist of auxiliary verb *ir*, subject and the main verb is in the form of infinitive<sup>1</sup>. The clause order in LE is SVO<sup>2</sup> (e.g., Auxiliary verb *ir* + Subject + Infinitive), but it was VSO in CE<sup>3</sup>. The conjunctive *mtw.f sDm* construction, is a sequential clause following the analytic system of the LE, which is attested in texts of the Amarna Period 14<sup>th</sup> times.

## THE CONSTRUCTION

The conjunctive *mtw.f sDm* is a sequential clause, which was used as the Non-Initial Main Sentence (NIMS), was based on the Initial Main Sentence (IMS)<sup>4</sup>, even though was not attested as subordinate<sup>5</sup>. It has the value of independent use. It can be translated into independent future. It also could express a wish, command or injunction<sup>6</sup>. The conjunctive *mtw.f sDm* follows the

<sup>1</sup> Loprieno, *A Linguistic Introduction*, 91; Jenni, *Lehrbuch der Klassisch-ägyptischen Sprache*, 145; Allen, *Middle Egyptian*, 141-184.

<sup>2</sup> S (subject), V (verb), O (object). Loprieno, *A Linguistic Introduction*, 91; Jenni, *Lehrbuch der Klassisch-ägyptischen Sprache*, 145; Allen, *Middle Egyptian*, 141-184.

<sup>3</sup> Jansen-Winkeln, "Diglossie und Zweisprachigkeit im alten Ägypten", 85-6; Loprieno, *A Linguistic Introduction*, 91; Jenni, *Lehrbuch der Klassisch-ägyptischen Sprache*, 145; Allen, *Middle Egyptian*, 141-184.

<sup>4</sup> Korostovstev, *Grammaire du Neo-Egyptien*, 595; Černý and Groll, *Late Egyptian Grammar*, §42, 440; Borghouts, "A New Approach to the Late Egyptian Conjunctive", 16; Greig, *Grammatical structure in Late Egyptian*, §2.2.4B, 79; Loprieno, *A Linguistic Introduction*, 95; Neveu, *The Language of Ramesses*, §25.1.

<sup>5</sup> Nims, "Demotic Papyri from Philadelphia", 77; Neveu, *The Language of Ramesses*, §25.1.

<sup>6</sup> Nims, "Demotic Papyri from Philadelphia", 77; Mattha, "Egyptian conjunctive", 46; Volten, "The Late Egyptian Conjunctive", 54; Kröber, *Neuaegyptizismen vor der Amarnazeit*, §34.31.3; Callender, "Grammatical Models in Egyptology", 72; Borghouts, "A New Approach to the Late Egyptian Conjunctive", 14; Neveu, *The Language of Ramesses*, §25.1.

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 main clause<sup>7</sup>. Additionally, this construction gives rarely the meaning of past tense in narrative cases<sup>8</sup>. It fulfills the meaning of purpose<sup>9</sup> and is considered as a subjective construction<sup>10</sup>. This form was derived from Hna sDm ntf, which was attested from Middle Egyptian (ME) till the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty<sup>11</sup> and then Hna ntf sDm form was rare and ephemeral construction used from the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty till the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty<sup>12</sup>. The mtw.f sDm construction follows the analytic system. It consists of: mtw + suffix pronoun (actor) .f + infinitive sDm<sup>13</sup>. It continued to survive in Coptic taswtm or Ntefswtm<sup>B</sup> or nFswtm<sup>S,F,A2</sup> or FswtM<sup>A</sup><sup>14</sup>. **Gardiner**<sup>15</sup> assumed that the first attestation of mtw.f sDm is in the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty onward. This investigation proves that

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<sup>7</sup> Egberts, *Concise Introduction to Late-Egyptian*, 17.

<sup>8</sup> Gardiner, "Origin of the Coptic Conjunctive Tense", 92; Mattha, "Egyptian conjunctive", 48; Černý, "Origin of the Egyptian Conjunctive", 30; Wenté, "Late Egyptian Conjunctive as a past Continuative", 304; Callender, "Grammatical Models in Egyptology", 71; Borghouts, "A New Approach to the Late Egyptian Conjunctive", 20.

<sup>9</sup> Frandsen, *Outline of the Late Egyptian Verbal System*, §82.

<sup>10</sup> Egberts, *Concise Introduction to Late-Egyptian*, 17; Junge, *Late Egyptian Grammar*, §2.3.3, 104, §5.4.3 (1), 232.

<sup>11</sup> Kröber, *Neuaegyptizismen vor der Amarnazeit*, §34.32.12; Junge, *Late Egyptian Grammar*, §2.3.3, 103-4.

<sup>12</sup> Gardiner, "Origin of the Coptic Conjunctive Tense", 86; Volten, "The Late Egyptian Conjunctive", 54; Kröber, *Neuaegyptizismen vor der Amarnazeit*, §34.2; Junge, *Late Egyptian Grammar*, §2.3.3, 103-4; Neveu, *The Language of Ramesses*, §25.3. Winand supposed it from exist from Seti I to Ramses II. Winand, *Etudes de neo-egyptien*, §725.

<sup>13</sup> Černý, "Origin of the Egyptian Conjunctive", 25; Kröber, *Neuaegyptizismen vor der Amarnazeit*, §34.2, §34.33; Frandsen, *Outline of the Late Egyptian Verbal System*, §64; Winand, *Etudes de neo-egyptien*, §731; Loprieno, *A Linguistic Introduction*, 95-6; Egberts, *Concise Introduction to Late-Egyptian*, 16; Junge, *Late Egyptian Grammar*, §2.3.3, 103-4; Neveu, *The Language of Ramesses*, §25.3.

<sup>14</sup> Černý, "Origin of the Egyptian Conjunctive", 25; Kröber, *Neuaegyptizismen vor der Amarnazeit*, §34.2, §34.33; Frandsen, *Outline of the Late Egyptian Verbal System*, §64; Winand, *Etudes de neo-egyptien*, §731; Loprieno, *A Linguistic Introduction*, 95-6; Egberts, *Concise Introduction to Late-Egyptian*, 16; Junge, *Late Egyptian Grammar*, §2.3.3, 103-4; Neveu, *The Language of Ramesses*, §25.3.

<sup>15</sup> Gardiner, "Origin of the Coptic Conjunctive Tense", 91.


this construction was an innovation of the Amarna Period and it continued up to the demotic phase<sup>16</sup>.

The outline of the development of the conjunctive mtw.f sDm, from ME to Coptic:

Hna sDm ntf → Hna ntf sDm → mtw.f sDm → taswtm or Ntefswtm<sup>B</sup> or nFswtm<sup>S,F,A2</sup> or FswtM<sup>A</sup>

**Gardiner**<sup>17</sup> suggests that mtw- did not develop from any preceding stage, as the independent pronoun ntf continued as mntf in LE and as Ntof in Coptic. **Mattha** and **Černy**<sup>18</sup> rejected Gardiner's point of view and confirms that independent pronoun nt- + suffix gives a uniform mtw- + suffix from the Amarna Period onwards. **Hammam**<sup>19</sup> suggest, "Im Laufe der Entwicklung fällt die Präposition Hna aus, was an einem Beispiel bereits aus der Zeit Ramses' III. (Elephantine-Dekret, Zeile 7) festzustellen ist ... und ntf wird zu mtw.f, obwohl das unabhängige Pronomen im Neuägyptischen als mtwf auftritt. D. h. der Zusammenhang mit dem unabhängigen Personalpronomen geht verloren. Ein Brückenbeleg stammt aus dem P. Kairo CG 58053:Recto 7–9, Verso 1, wo anstelle des erwarteten unabhängigen Pronomens ein Suffixpronomen auftaucht."

Moreover, **Lexa**<sup>20</sup> reject the derivation of mtw.f from the independent pronoun and proposes that mtw- is identical with the

LE proposition , which become nte-- at Coptic<sup>21</sup> and the personal suffix acts as the semantic subject. Likewise, **Hammam**<sup>22</sup> suggest that the conjugation bases mtw and m-dj are very striking, and there is no difference between their occurrences. **Volten**<sup>23</sup> theory is that "in order to try to put a new

<sup>16</sup> Černy, "Origin of the Egyptian Conjunctive", 30; Kröber, *Neuaegyptizismen vor der Amarnazeit*, §34.2.

<sup>17</sup> Gardiner, "Origin of the Coptic Conjunctive Tense", 92.

<sup>18</sup> Mattha, "Egyptian conjunctive", 43ff; Černy, "Origin of the Egyptian Conjunctive", 30.

<sup>19</sup> Hammam, "Echnaton, seine Leute und die Sprache", 163-4.

<sup>20</sup> Lexa, *Grammaire Démotique*, §774.

<sup>21</sup> Lexa, *Grammaire Démotique*, §771.

<sup>22</sup> Hammam, "Echnaton, seine Leute und die Sprache", 179.

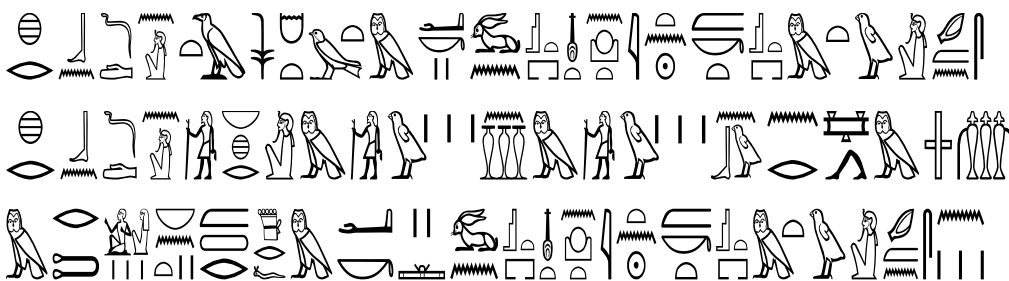
<sup>23</sup> Volten, "The Late Egyptian Conjunctive", 69.

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hypothesis concerning the origin of the Late Egyptian conjunctive it will be necessary to turn to the verb prefix *sante*<sup>S,B,A</sup>/*sate*<sup>B,A</sup>. It was formerly generally admitted that this prefix contained the conjunctive mtw> Nte preceded by SAa<sup>27</sup> and it writing as SAatw.f sDm and Samtw.f sDm at Demotic<sup>24</sup> according to the different dialect.

## THE INSTANCES

**Ex.1.** The inscription from the Boundary Stelae K, X reads<sup>25</sup>:



xr bn Dd n.i tA Hmt-nswt wrt mk wn st nfrt n Axt-Itn m kt st  
**mtw.i sDm** n.s

xr bn Dd n.i sr nb xr.i m srw n xnty m srw n-bnr m imy-xnty

m rmT nb nty m tA r-Dr.f mk wn st nfrt n Axt-Itn m kt st **mtw.i**  
**sDm** n.sn

“Then, the great royal wife will not say to me: “behold, there is a beautiful place for Akhetaten in another place” and I shall listen

to her. Not even one of the officials will say (this) to me. Neither, the favourite officials, nor the officials outside, nor chamberlain,

<sup>24</sup> Lexa, *Grammaire Démotique*, §741.

<sup>25</sup> Davies, *Rock tombs of El Amarna*, Part V, Pl.XXIX (k12-3), Pl.XXXII (X15-6); Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, 112, K12-13 (L.15), 113 (1, 3, 5); Helck, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, 1972, K33-4 (L.17-20), 1973 (L1-3); Murnane, *Boundary Stelae of Akhenaten*, 24 (K12-13, X15-16).

nor any human, who is on the whole land: “behold, there is a beautiful place for Akhetaten in another place” and I shall listen to them.”

**Ex.2.** The inscription from the Boundary Stelae K reads<sup>26</sup>:



//// **mtw.i sDm pA** ////

“//// And I should listen ////”.

**Ex.3.** A hieratic text on the pMond I reads<sup>27</sup>:



r Dd.k n tAw [pA]y.i **mtw.k** //st imi iwt tA-rmT

“You say that; [m]y lands’ and you will // them. Allow (to) the woman coming.”

**Ex.4.** A hieratic text on the pMond I reads<sup>28</sup>:



[tw].k sDm n.i pA nty tri r.i **mtw.i smi** n[.k] n srw

“While you listening to me this time, than I will report to [you] and the officials.”

**Ex.5.** A hieratic text on the pMond I reads<sup>29</sup>:

<sup>26</sup> Murnane, *Boundary Stelae of Akhenaten*, 27 (K23).

<sup>27</sup> Peet, “Two letters from Akhetaten”, Pl. XXIII (L.7-8); Silverman, “Texts from the Amarna Period”, 311 (L.7-8).

<sup>28</sup> Peet, “Two letters from Akhetaten”, Pl. XXIII (L.9-10); Silverman, “Texts from the Amarna Period”, 311 (L.9-10).

<sup>29</sup> Peet, “Two letters from Akhetaten”, Pl. XXIII (L.13); Silverman, “Texts from the Amarna Period”, 311 (L.13).

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xr ir sDm.s n.k r iy i.TAy st **mtw.k hA** ///

“Now, if she listens to you to come, take her and then go down  
///.”

**Ex.6.** A hieratic text on the pMond I reads<sup>30</sup>:



bAk n Itn i.wxA.f **mtw.k in tw.f mtw.k dit** hA.f

“Servant of Aten, whom he sought and you shall bring him and  
you shall allow him to come.”

**Ex.7.** A hieratic text on the pMond II reads<sup>31</sup>:



r.i m-TA(wt)<sup>32</sup> **mtw.t**<sup>33</sup> gm n.i wa n rmT **mtw.t hAb .n**<sup>34</sup> .f n.i

“Against me furtively, and you will find one of the people for me  
and then you will send him to me.”

**Ex.8.** A hieratic text on the pMond II reads<sup>35</sup>:

<sup>30</sup> Peet, “Two letters from Akhetaten”, Pl. XXV (2, L.18-9); Silverman, “Texts from the Amarna Period”, 311 (L.18-9).

<sup>31</sup> Peet, “Two letters from Akhetaten”, Pl. XXVII (L.11-2); Silverman, “Texts from the Amarna Period”, 312 (L.11-2).

<sup>32</sup> Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*.V, 350 [6-8].

<sup>33</sup> The suffix pronoun .t is the singular second person, female. Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*.V, 337 (4).

<sup>34</sup> Sic. Peet, “Two letters from Akhetaten”, Pl. XXVII (L.12).

<sup>35</sup> Peet, “Two letters from Akhetaten”, Pl. XXVII (L.15); Silverman, “Texts from the Amarna Period”, 312 (L.15).



ky-Dd xft spr tAy.i Sat r.t **mtw.t pt[r]**

“Another says; when my message arrives for you then you will see.”

**Ex.9.** A hieratic text on the pMond II reads<sup>36</sup>:



bw ir.n.i **mtw (.t) hAb** n.i Hr pA-nty nb iw.i r Dd

“I cannot act and (you) will send to me about all what I shall say<sup>37</sup>.”

**Ex.10.** A hieratic text on the pMond II reads<sup>38</sup>:



iw.k r smi.f /// nA srw **mtw.i in.tw** m in.tw.i nb ///

“You will report him /// about the officials, and then I shall bring one and I shall bring all ///.”

**Ex.11.** A hieratic text on the oAmarna reads<sup>39</sup>:



<sup>36</sup> Peet, “Two letters from Akhetaten”, Pl. XXIX (2, L. 19-20); Silverman, “Texts from the Amarna Period”, 312 (19-20).

<sup>37</sup> Osman, “Negative Aorist forms from Amarna”, 141.

<sup>38</sup> Peet, “Two letters from Akhetaten”, Pl. XXIX (2, L. 20-1); Silverman, “Texts from the Amarna Period”, 312 (20-1).

<sup>39</sup> Pendlebury, *City of Akhenaten*, Pl. LXXXIV (1); Silverman, “Texts from the Amarna Period”, 313 (1).



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ix di.k dbn 10 n PyAy **mtw.k dit 50**

“Then, you will give 10 depan to Piay, and you will give 50 [...].”

## DISCUSSION

All the instances above of the conjunctive mtw.f sDm express future tenses. It was used as consequence for the main verb in the preceding clause<sup>40</sup>. The conjunctive mtw.f sDm construction also exists in direct speech<sup>41</sup> in all the instances above and gives the conjunctive meaning<sup>42</sup>.

The conjunctive mtw.f sDm expresses future after negative prospective (Ex.1). On the other hand, the Exs. 4 and 8 show the conjunctive mtw.f sDm expressing future after present tense. **Mattha**<sup>43</sup> mentioned that “mtw.f sDm is directly related to the preceding verb with which it is co-ordinate, in the sense that it is either directly dependent on it as resultant from it, or that both verbs are closely connected by their common relation to a third member of the sentence”.

The conjunctive mtw.f sDm expresses future after imperative<sup>44</sup> which has been shown in the above (Ex.5). This construction can

express future after relative clause<sup>45</sup> and it is proved in the above (Ex.6). Moreover, the above (Ex.10) represents the conjunctive

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<sup>40</sup> Callender, “Grammatical Models in Egyptology”, 70.

<sup>41</sup> Frandsen, *Outline of the Late Egyptian Verbal System*, §64; Egberts, *Concise Introduction to Late-Egyptian*, 17.

<sup>42</sup> Loprieno, “The sequential forms”, 144-5.

<sup>43</sup> Mattha, “Egyptian conjunctive”, 50.

<sup>44</sup> Callender, “Grammatical Models in Egyptology”, 71; Frandsen, *Outline of the Late Egyptian Verbal System*, §83; Borghouts, “A New Approach to the Late Egyptian Conjunctive”, 20; Egberts, *Concise Introduction to Late-Egyptian*, 17; Junge, *Late Egyptian Grammar*, §5.4.3 (1), 232.

<sup>45</sup> Gardiner, “Origin of the Coptic Conjunctive Tense”, 91; Mattha, “Egyptian conjunctive”, 47.

mtw.f sDm expressing future after a third Future as **Neveu**<sup>46</sup> suggested.

**Mattha**<sup>47</sup> explained, the used of mtw.f dit/ rdit in demotic is to express future actions in an emphatic instead of using 3<sup>rd</sup> future iw.f (r) sDm, which is declared in the above (Ex.11).

The Amarna texts used the conjunctive mtw.f sDm in stelae and letters on papyri to express the future tense. The only attestation appears for the use of mtw.f sDm is on an ostrakon<sup>48</sup> to express future actions in an emphatic position instead of using 3<sup>rd</sup> future iw.f (r) sDm<sup>49</sup>.

On the other hand, scholars argue about the attestation of preposition Hr in the conjunctive mtw.f sDm construction;

1. **Erman and Grapow**<sup>50</sup> recorded that mtw- was usually needed for Hr +infinitive.

2. **Gardiner**<sup>51</sup> assumed that the conjunctive mtw.f sDm construction is the original construction, but later at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty preposition Hr occurred in the spoken language and occasionally in the written language.

3. **Mattha**<sup>52</sup> supposed that “mtw.f sDm is directly related to the preceding verb with which it is co-ordinate, in the sense that it is either directly dependent on it as resultant from it, or that both verbs are closely connected by their common relation to a third member of the sentence”. However, mtw.f Hr sDm represents action referring to a future tense after imperative, injunctions and relative clauses.

4. **Černy**<sup>53</sup> suggests that the conjunctive mtw.f sDm and mtw.f Hr sDm construction has no difference.

<sup>46</sup> Neveu, *The Language of Ramesses*, 78.

<sup>47</sup> Mattha, “Egyptian conjunctive”, 54-5.

<sup>48</sup> Pendlebury, *City of Akhenaten*, Pl. LXXXIV (1); Silverman, “Texts from the Amarna Period”, 313 (1).

<sup>49</sup> Gardiner, “Origin of the Coptic Conjunctive Tense”, 92; Černy, “Origin of the Egyptian Conjunctive”, 26; Kröber, *Neuaegyptizismen vor der Amarnazeit*, §34.21.

<sup>50</sup> Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*. II, 165.

<sup>51</sup> Gardiner, “Origin of the Coptic Conjunctive Tense”, 92.

<sup>52</sup> Mattha, “Egyptian conjunctive”, 47, 50-1.

<sup>53</sup> Černy, “Origin of the Egyptian Conjunctive”, 27.

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5. **Volten**<sup>54</sup> assumed that “ there can not doubt that all the wrong Hr belong to the actual spoken language of their time.”

To sum up this point, the examples that are attested on the stelae, papyri and an ostracon of the Amarna Period, which is shown above, confirm that the preposition Hr does not exist in the construction of mtw.f sDm.

At the same time, the conjunctive mtw.f Hr sDm construction was used in the spoken language or oral communication more than in the written language in communications<sup>55</sup>. This expresses continuity and succession<sup>56</sup>. It also has no tense<sup>57</sup> and is used more frequently in the imperative, optative and 3<sup>rd</sup> future<sup>58</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

The following table shows the number of attestations of instances in the mtw.f sDm construction in the texts of the Amarna Period:

Construction	Boundary Stelae	Papyri	OAmarna	Total
Conjunctive mtw.f sDm	3	10	1	14

The mtw.f sDm construction expresses the future tense in action. It was also used as NIMS in emphatic sentences and come frequently in a direct speech position. The conjunctive mtw.f sDm used in the boundary stelae, papyri and on an ostracon. The conjunctive mtw.f Hr sDm was not observed in texts of the

<sup>54</sup> Volten, “The Late Egyptian Conjunctive”, 72.

<sup>55</sup> Gardiner, “Origin of the Coptic Conjunctive Tense”, 92; Černý, “Origin of the Egyptian Conjunctive”, 30; Borghouts, “A New Approach to the Late Egyptian Conjunctive”, 15.

<sup>56</sup> Callender, “Grammatical Models in Egyptology”, 71; Černý and Groll, *Late Egyptian Grammar*, §42, 440; Neveu, *The Language of Ramesses*, §25.1.

<sup>57</sup> Frandsen, *Outline of the Late Egyptian Verbal System*, §82 (1-2, 4); Callender, “Grammatical Models in Egyptology”, 71-2; Neveu, *The Language of Ramesses*, §25.3.

<sup>58</sup> Callender, “Grammatical Models in Egyptology”, 71; Frandsen, *Outline of the Late Egyptian Verbal System*, §83; Borghouts, “A New Approach to the Late Egyptian Conjunctive”, 20; Egberts, *Concise Introduction to Late-Egyptian*, 17; Junge, *Late Egyptian Grammar*, §5.4.3 (1), 232.

Amarna Period, so it was attested later at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

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