**The Constructionalization of the n-Demonstratives**

**as Demonstrative Modifiers from Old to Middle Egyptian**

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*Abstract*: A discussion of the constructionalization of the Old Egyptian invariant n-demonstrative pronouns into the common-plural demonstrative-modifier construction n-demonstrative n(y) + noun of early Middle Egyptian.

*Keywords*: demonstrative pronoun, demonstrative modifier, number-gender marking, Old Egyptian, Middle Egyptian

Jim Allen is one of my Egyptological heroes. They say you should never meet your heroes, but Jim is an exception to that rule. Like so many others, I have benefited from the hospitality and friendship which Susan and Jim are famous for. Right from my first international outing, Jim was eager to discuss what I was working on and how it might relate to his own work. All couched in a peer-to-peer format, which was anything but in actuality, but which made me feel welcome in and a part of the research world of Egyptology.

For my contribution to this volume celebrating Jim’s career and his contribution to Egyptology, I would like to discuss certain features of the constructionalization of the n-demonstratives of Old Egyptian as they extended from being demonstrative pronouns to become common-plural demonstrative modifiers.

**1. Introduction**

One of the characteristic features of Ancient Egyptian from Middle Egyptian through to Coptic is the increasing role of the p-, t-, n- series of determiners in gender-number marking in the noun phrase.[[1]](#footnote-1) The 3-term series marks: masculine singular (p-), feminine singular (t-), and a common plural (n-). Over an extensive period of time, this prefixal 3-term series co-exists with and then supersedes the older suffixal marking of number and gender, centred on the noun itself. [[2]](#footnote-2) This older suffixal system originally in Old Egyptian distinguishes masculine and feminine gender in singular, plural and dual numbers. So, in terms of plural marking, over time an original system of masculine and feminine plural first co-exists with and is then superseded by a common-plural marking as the dominant marking system.

One key element in this change is the rise of common-plural number-gender marking through the n-determiners. We are in the fortunate position that in Old Egyptian through to Middle Egyptian we have reasonable evidence for the development of this series of new common-plural determiners.

**2. Old Egyptian**

**2.1 Demonstrative Modifiers in Old Egyptian**

In Old Egyptian, the predominant demonstrative system is one which distinguishes in form between demonstrative modifiers and demonstrative pronouns:[[3]](#footnote-3)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | demonstrative modifier | | demonstrative pronoun |
|  | sg | pl & dual | common/invariant |
| m | p- | ip- | n- |
| f | t- | ipt- |

The demonstrative modifiers (i.e. demonstratives used in combination with a noun, with which the demonstrative agrees in number and gender in Old Egyptian) are composed of a prefixal number-gender marker plus a demonstrative base (distinguishing the various demonstratives from each other; in Old Egyptian the most common demonstratives are the pn, pw and pf series of demonstratives, quoted here in their masculine singular form).[[4]](#footnote-4) The table above shows the prefixal component common to the different demonstratives.[[5]](#footnote-5)

So, the Old Egyptian singular forms of demonstrative modifiers already reflect the p- for masculine singular and t- for feminine singular system we see later for demonstratives and their relations. However, for the plural (& dual; see below), there are separate forms for the masculine and feminine, which aligns with the distinctions in the suffixal number-gender marking system found on the noun (and its other dependents under agreement), where masculine and feminine plurals (and duals) are distinguished in Old Egyptian.[[6]](#footnote-6) The plural is marked by the additional prefix i(p)- (possibly just ip- if the masculine plural writings reflect forms such as \*ippn, \*ippw, \*ippf).[[7]](#footnote-7) The existence of a separate dual form is likely, though not straightforward to demonstrate for Old Egyptian. However, given the slightly later Coffin Text evidence, such a separate dual form seems to be a derivative of, or at least to share the plural prefixal elements from, the plural forms, with an additional suffixal dual ending -y, an ending which standardly is not written in Old Egyptian orthography.[[8]](#footnote-8)

The Old Egyptian demonstrative modifiers occur after their noun (probably as enclitics) and, as already noted, agree with that noun in number and gender, here in singular and plural:

Ex. 1. *Urk*. I, 202, 16 (Tomb of Ankhmahor)

zS **pf** StA n(y) Hmt Xry-Hbt

writing.msg **dem.msg** secret.msg of.msg craft.fsg lector.msg

that secret writing of the craft of the lector-priest

Ex. 2. *Urk*. I, 202,9 (Tomb of Ankhmahor):

DADAt **tf**  Spst nt nTr aA

court.fsg **dem.fsg** august.fsg of.fsg god.msg great.msg

that august court of the great god

Ex. 3. Tomb of Niankhkhnum & Khnumhotep (Moussa and Altenmüller, *Grab des Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep*, pl. 28)

ir snw **ipn** Hm(w)-kA **ipn**

as-for brothers.mpl **dem.mpl** ka-priests.mpl **dem.mpl**

as for these brothers and these *ka*-priests

Ex. 4. *Urk*. I, 125, 9 (Tomb of Harkhuf)

xAs(w)t **(i)ptn**

foreign-lands.fpl **dem.fpl**

those foreign lands

**2.2. Demonstrative Pronouns in Old Egyptian**

The demonstrative pronouns in Old Egyptian share the demonstrative base with the demonstrative modifiers, but have a different prefixal element, n-. The demonstrative pronouns are invariant or neutral in number and gender, usually taken to be in the default masculine singular form.[[9]](#footnote-9) In terms of number, the n-demonstrative pronouns can refer to single entities, dual entities, plural entities, or situations (and sections of discourse), without any distinctions of marking (here deictic examples accompanying scenes depicting the referent):

**singular referent:**

Ex. 5. Berlin M1108 (L*D* 2, pl. 68; *ÄI*, 114 [Ce]). A butcher is holding up a single leg of an ox, prior to cutting it off. He says to his colleague:

iT **nw** r=k

pull.imp dem to=you

pull this towards you

**dual referent:**

Ex. 6. Tomb of Pepiankh Heny, Room B East Wall North Scene Register 3 (left middle): Blackman and Apted, *Meir* V, pl. 30). A man is holding two birds in one hand and is reaching into a net of caught birds with his other. He wants his colleague to take the two birds from him. The caption above says:

Ssp **nw** m-a(=i)

take.imp **dem** from(=me)

Take these from me

**plural referent**

Ex. 7. Von Bissing, *Gem-ni-kai* 1, pl. 24. Door to Chamber 2, Wall A. Three men are carrying heaps of offerings. The caption says:

iw **nn** n kA mmi

aux **dem** for *ka* Memi

These are for the *ka* of Memi

**situational reference**

Ex. 8. Tomb of Ankhmahor. Room 4 East Wall Middle Register (Kanawati and Hassan, *Ankhmahor*, pl. 49). A butcher is cutting off a leg of an ox with a knife in one hand and holding the leg with his other (contrast Ex. 5). The caption says:

iw qsn r irt **nn** wa.kw wrt

aux difficult to do.inf **dem** be-one.stat.isg very

It’s very difficult to do this alone/on my own

irt nn refers to his cutting off the leg with his knife.

**2.3. Old Kingdom** **Demonstrative Pronouns in Construction**

The examples above also show the demonstrative pronouns on their own without other modifiers used nominally to occur in standard noun-phrase grammatical positions (such as the direct object of a verb). In addition, the demonstrative pronouns in Old Egyptian occur in two main constructional combinations:

* + in first position in the indirect genitive construction
  + with a directly following relative clause

Both of these constructions are essentially constructionalizations of the deictic relationships seen in the examples above (as well as anaphoric examples not exemplified here), where the demonstrated entity or situation is expressed in combination with the demonstrative pronouns as either the second noun in the indirect-genitive construction or through a relative clause.

**2.3.1. The indirect-genitive construction**

My focus here is on the indirect-genitive construction, since this is the origin of the common-plural demonstrative-modifier construction of Middle Egyptian and later. Although I cannot here go into the required detail for a full treatment of the indirect genitive construction, if we take a typical example such as the following, this can be used to compare and contrast with the construction of the demonstrative pronoun used with the indirect genitive:[[10]](#footnote-10)

Ex. 9 = Ex. 2. *Urk*. I, 202,9 (Tomb of Ankhmahor):

**DADAt** tf Spst nt **nTr**  aA

**court.fsg** dem.fsg august.fsg of.fsg **god.msg** great.msg

**N1** nt **N2**

that august court of the great god

By form, the indirect-genitive construction relates together two nominal expressions (N1 and N2). The indirect-genitive linker links the two nouns together and allows N2, in effect, to function as a modifier of N1.[[11]](#footnote-11) The indirect genitive linker agrees with and is a dependent of N1 and takes N2 as its own dependent.[[12]](#footnote-12) In examples such as the one above, each nominal expression has its own nominal core (here nouns) each with its own number-gender marking and each can take nominal modifiers of its own such as demonstrative modifiers and adjectives as here (N1 DADAt has its own demonstrative modifier and adjective, both of which agree with it in number and gender, here feminine singular; N2 nTr has its own adjective, which agrees with it in number and gender, here masculine singular).

By meaning, in examples such as Ex. 2 = Ex. 9, each nominal expression also refers to a distinct entity. Referentially, N1 supplies the primary referent (R) (the phrase refers to a particular type of court/council and not a particular type of god), whilst N2 provides the secondary reference point (r) delimiting more specifically the reference of N1 (it’s not just any court/council, but more specifically the court of the great god). In the construction exhibited above, the two nouns and their referential fields are distinct, without any necessary grammatical or referential indexing between the two nouns (DADAt is feminine and nTr is masculine in this example and both entities are distinct). Each noun controls agreement of its modifiers within its referential field and each noun is unrestricted in number and gender (each can be masculine or feminine and singular, dual or plural).

It might help to present this in a more visual fashion (\_\_ indicates referential domain; … indicates scope of agreement with N):

DADAt **tf**  Spst nt nTr aA

R\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ r\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

N1[fsg] …… Dem ……… Adj ………… IG linker N2[msg] …… Adj

Meaning and form are in harmony or accord. Taking N1 as the head and N2 as being in a modifier expression with the indirect-genitive linker, there is the following head-modifier relationship:

N1 indir-gen N2

Head Modifier

**2.3.2 The Old Egyptian n-demonstrative n(y) construction**

Throughout Old Egyptian (including the Pyramid Texts), occasional examples occur (albeit relatively rarely in the surviving sources) in which the invariant demonstrative pronoun is found in the N1-position within an indirect genitive construction (but not in the N2-position).[[13]](#footnote-13) In this construction, the N2-position is occupied by a noun which can appear in either masculine or feminine gender and singular, dual(?) or plural number, bringing to expression the referential range surveyed above in 2.2 and exemplified here in singular and plural:

**singular** (here masculine); zS is written with a single determinative:

Ex. 10. *Urk*. I, 119, 17 (see Borchardt, *Denkmäler des Alten Reiches* II, 85 & pl. 82 for the full inscription). In a vertical column after an offering formula: “It was her husband PN who made”:

**nn n(y)** zS

**dem of** writing.msg

this inscription

**plural** (here masculine); hrw(w) is written with three-fold repetition of the determinative:

Ex. 11. Tomb of Wepemnefret (Eastern Wall, Second Register; Hassan , *Excavations at Giza 1930–1931*, fig. 219 and p. 194). A sculptor comments on the time it has taken to work on a statue, including:

**nn n(y)** hrw(w)

**dem of** days.mpl

these days

It would take a fuller study to investigate this construction in detail, but, in terms of meaning, the n-demonstrative n(y) construction perhaps brings with it a sense of particularity, exemplar, member, instance, collection, group or set, perhaps with an original literal sense of something like “this (instance) of”. In terms of form, it is notable that this provides a non-enclitic demonstrative-modifier construction as an alternative to the enclitic post-nominal demonstrative modifiers noted above. In any case, by at least the 6th dynasty, the n-demonstrative n(y) construction would seem to be able to deliver what is essentially a demonstrative-modifier equivalent to an undemonstrated noun as in the following pair of examples found in different tombs within the Mereruka complex (cited without glosses for ease of comparison), displaying variant expression with the collective stpt ‘the choice(st)’ (here of cuts of meat, with threefold repetition of the foreleg determinative):

Ex. 12. Tomb of Mereruka (Mereruka complex, A11 East Wall; *The Mastaba of Mereruka* II, pl. 109)

wn Tn rHw Hurry, guys!

iw Xry-Hbt Hr irt xt The lector is beginning to conduct the ritual.

sxp **stpt** Bring **the choice cuts.**

Ex. 13. Tomb of Meryteti (Mereruka complex C3, East Wall, second register from bottom; Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, *Tomb of Meryteti*, pl. 52)

wn Tn rHw Hurry, guys!

iw Xry-Hbt Hr irt xt The lector is beginning to conduct the ritual.

sxp **nn n(y) stpt** Bring **these choice cuts.**

The only difference between the two inscriptions is the simplex stpt (Old Egyptian has no definite article) in the main Mereruka tomb (A) and the complex nn n(y) stpt in the Meryteti tomb (C).

As a micro-constructional derivative of the indirect genitive construction, the n-demonstrative n(y) construction shows the demonstrative pronoun in the N1-position of the standard construction discussed above.[[14]](#footnote-14) In accord with this, the indirect-genitive linker n(y) takes its agreement from the demonstrative pronoun. Since the demonstrative pronoun is invariant and does not shows distinctions of number and gender, the agreement marking of the indirect genitive is similarly the default, unmarked form of nominal agreement, which is that shown in the masculine singular form. So invariant and masculine singular here coincide. In origin, at least, the noun in the N2-position of the standard indirect-genitive construction occurs as the dependent after the n(y) linker:

n-dem n(y) N

Head Modifier

However, the demonstrative pronoun displays certain restrictions (ultimately linked to its referential properties) in that it shows a preference to avoid additional modifiers of its own aside from the indirect-genitive link, nor does it occur in the N2-position in the indirect construction. This is connected, of course, to the fact that the demonstrative pronouns have the semantic referential properties of demonstratives and, from the semantic point of view of constructional networks, find their semantic links with the other demonstrative constructions. Indeed the history of this co-opted indirect-genitival construction is one of harmonization with other demonstrative-modifier constructions.

The noun in the original N2-position is the primary referential noun in the construction and supplies the R in the construction and not the r. This noun can occur in masculine or feminine gender and singular, dual(?) or plural number. As noted, this construction essentially brings to linguistic expression the referential relationships displayed by the demonstrative pronoun (surveyed above). The demonstrative does not have separate, distinct reference (unlike the N1 noun in the source construction), but points to the R-noun and is coindexed with it in a referential relationship (though not in a specific agreement relationship). The referential and grammatical properties of the noun in the original N2-position are, of course, in line grammatically with the separate nominal core provided by N2 in the standard indirect-genitive construction, but now with the semantic distinction that this noun provides the principle referent for the phrase as whole (R rather than r):[[15]](#footnote-15)

nn n(y) zS

Demi \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Ri

Dem ………………………. linker N[msg]

this inscription

So, although a micro-constructional derivative of the indirect-genitive construction, forming part of the grammatical network of indirect genitive constructions, the n-demonstrative n(y) construction shows significant deviation from the fuller grammatical potential of the more typical indirect-genitive construction examples such as Ex. 2 = Ex. 9 above, not least in the semantic referential properties of the demonstrative. This leads to a reanalysis or neoanalysis of the head-modifier relations, in which the R-noun is increasingly taken to provide the primary content head of the construction and the n-demonstrative n(y) is taken either as a co-indexed functional head (as in a generative-grammar style DP analysis) or specifier, or, more simply, as a co-indexed pre-nominal modifier. Although the functional-head or specifier analyses have much to recommend them, this would require more detailed discussion than can be accommodated here and so, if the modifier analysis is taken as the primary means of discussion for convenience, then we have (“Modifier” can be replaced by “Functional Head” or “Specifier” label, if preferred):

n-dem n(y) N

Modifier Head

An additional factor in this which should be mentioned is the role of chunking,[[16]](#footnote-16) the gathering together of repeated strings of elements into a single “chunk”. For example, taking the nn-demonstrative as a specific example of the n-demonstratives, speakers would encounter repeated examples of nn n(y) as a given string with varied expression of the noun (lexically and in terms of number and gender), which can be depicted in notation as follows (where ordinary-transliteration characters represents fixed elements of expression and small-caps represent variable expression):

nn n(y) noun.ng

This increases the likelihood of nn n(y) being treated as a single “chunk” and thus as a single component in its own right, essentially as a periphrastic demonstrative modifier.

So, a key element of the earlier form of this construction is that whilst it is licensed by the nominal nature of the n-demonstrative pronoun which fills the N1 role in the indirect genitive construction (analogy), there is a mismatch in that the primary referential noun is the noun that fills the N2 role. With the particular semantics of demonstratives, this is resolved in the first instance by neoanalysis as a demonstrative-modifier construction, albeit of a rather different kind from the then-dominant demonstrative-modifier constructions, with a new word ordering and constructional relationship mediated by the indirect-genitive linker n(y).

The next major step is the inclusion of the n-demonstrative n(y) construction within the standard paradigm of dominant demonstrative-modifiers.

**3. Early Middle Egyptian**

By early Middle Egyptian, the n-demonstrative n(y) construction is primarily used as the common-plural demonstrative in the paradigm of demonstrative modifiers, [[17]](#footnote-17) replacing the old distinct masculine and plural forms (the dual in Middle Egyptian is primarily facultative), except in more conservative textual sources, as in the table below: [[18]](#footnote-18)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | demonstrative modifier | | demonstrative pronoun |
|  | sg | pl | common/invariant |
| m | p- | n- n(y) | n- |
| f | t- |

This can be exemplified by a well-known example from the *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*:

Ex. 14. Peas. B1, 81–82:

n wSb=f n **nn n(y)** srw

neg answer=he to **dem.cpl of** official.mpl

wSb=f n sxty  **pn**

answer=he to peasant.msg **dem.msg**

he didn’t answer **these** officials, nor did he answer **this** peasant.

The masculine singular noun sxty takes its post-nominal demonstrative modifier pn, which agrees with it in showing masculine singular prefixal p-. The plural noun srw (written with explicit masculine plural -w ending and with plural-strokes determinative in the B1 manuscript) occurs after the n-demonstrative in the n-demonstrative n(y) noun construction.

In this common-plural demonstrative-modifier construction, the n-demonstrative is, of course, invariant for gender, whereas the accompanying noun can be either masculine plural (as above in nn n(y) srw) or feminine plural:

Ex. 15. Siut 306:

nn n(y) gmHwt

dem.cpl of wicks.fpl

these wicks

Just to reinforce this point, wicks occur in a number of the Djefahapy contracts and, with demonstratives, show the following feminine singular form:

Ex. 16. Siut 299

gmHt tn

wicks.fsg dem.fsg

this wick

and with the newer tA demonstrative in pre-nominal position:

Ex. 17. Siut 313

tA gmHt

dem.fsg wicks.fsg

this wick

The plural equivalent of Ex. 16 is the nn n(y) gmHwt example in Ex. 15 and the plural equivalent of Ex. 17 is the nA n(y) construction:

Ex. 18. Siut 297 and 301:

nA n(y) gmHwt

dem.cpl of wicks.fpl

these wicks

In all three plural occurrences in the contracts, gmHwt shows the full feminine-plural writing with -wt ending as well as plural-stroke determinative.

In this usage as a common-plural demonstrative-modifier construction, the primary referential noun occurs in the plural form (either masculine or feminine, as above). The old invariant n-demonstrative already existed in a co-indexed referential relationship with the following noun and with the effective restriction of this noun to plural form (in this dominant variant of the construction), this co-indexing relation is reanalysed (neoanalysed) as an agreement relation with the n-demonstrative agreeing as a (periphrastic) common-plural demonstrative modifier, increasing the degree of harmony of meaning and form:

[nn n(y)] srw

Demi\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Ri

Dem[cpl] …………………………… N[mpl]

In terms of head-modifier relations (which, alternatively could be analysed with the demonstrative expression as a functional head or specifier, as noted above), we have:

n-dem.cpl n(y) N.m/fpl

Modifier Head

Within this neoanalysis, the indirect-genitive linker has an increasingly redundant and less-analysable role within its chunk and the construction. Its presence is also out-of-step with the other demonstrative modifier constructions, which show direct relation between the demonstrative and the noun, particularly as the prenominal pA and tA singular forms begin to predominate. Eventually, of course, the indirect-genitive linker drops away from the construction entirely, leaving the new common-plural n-demonstrative modifier in a direct agreement-relation with the referential noun. However, that occurs over an extensive period of time, primarily after the pA, tA, nA demonstratives have become the predominant forms of demonstratives. That is another story, although nA behaves like other n-demonstratives in occurring first in the nA n(y) common-plural demonstrative-modifier construction (cf. Ex. 18). [[19]](#footnote-19)

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1. See, for example, Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Language*, 60–65. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For a general discussion of the shift from suffixal to prefixal marking in Ancient Egyptian, see Grossman and Polis, “Swimming against the Tide”, particularly 404–429 (section 4). Note their focus on the history of specific constructions and the slow and incremental nature of change. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. I deal here only with the dominant variety and not the varieties of less preferred usages. See Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, 83–89 (§§ 181–201) for fuller details, and Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Language*, 64–65 for a concise overview. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. To be joined by the rise from the late Old Kingdom onwards of the new pA-series of demonstratives; see Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, 87–88 (§§194–195) and 89 (§201). Notice that this new series (which lacks the old prefixal plural forms with ip-) is formed by the prefixal marker added to an -A base, a base which lacks any obvious lexical precursor. As Diessel, *Demonstratives*, 150 notes, aside from lexical reinforcement of a demonstrative “there is no convincing evidence from any language that demonstratives may have evolved from a lexical source”. As such demonstratives stand aside from the majority of grammaticalization cases. The singular demonstratives pA and tA are positioned before their noun as demonstrative modifiers in a direct agreement relationship with no additional linker item, perhaps drawing on numeral- (principally 3–9) and ky-constructions in Old Egyptian. As with the other demonstratives, the demonstrative pronoun nA eventually provides the common-plural demonstrative modifier through the n-demonstrative n(y) construction discussed in this paper, and, by later Middle Egyptian (e.g. the Illahun documents) has become the dominant common-plural demonstrative; cf. Brose, *Grammatik der dokumentarischen Texte*, 66–77, with specific reference to his Gruppe 2 sources. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. On the number-gender prefix in the demonstrative modifier, see Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, 84 (§184) with comments. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Edel, *Altägytpische Grammatik*, 115–123 (§§269–286), with discussion of orthography. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Language*, 65 with n. 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See Grapow, “Die Duale der Demonstrativpronomina”, 57–60 and Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, 84 (§184). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, 88 (§196). This raises an issue for glossing. I have elected to simplify matters by not adding number-gender glossing to the invariant demonstrative pronouns. However, the reader may prefer to add in msg or something like inv (“invariant”) or com (“common”). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. There are a wide variety of micro-constructions within the indirect genitive family, covering semantic territory such as kinship, possession & belonging, membership and the like, as well as contents and composition. Similarly, the n-demonstrative construction is the not the only indirect-genitive development to move into the territory of determiners. Already in the late Old Kingdom an example exists of the nhy n(y) construction (“something of”/”some”) which eventually develops into the plural indefinite article; Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, 165 (§384). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. That is, N1 provides the primary grammatical (number-gender) and content (reference) head for the construction. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Etymologically, of course, the indirect genitive linker is a *nisbe* prepositional-adjective derivative of the preposition n and shows adjectival agreement with the preceding head noun (N1) in its adjectival role and takes its following N2 dependent in its prepositional role; see Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, 137–140 (§§325–331). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, 89 (§199). Most of the examples noted in this section can also be found in Edel’s brief account. For a somewhat different account of the relationships in this construction than I provide here, see Silverman “Plural Demonstrative Constructions”. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Although I keep my account here informal, I am broadly following the approach taken in Traugott and Trousdale, *Constructionalization and Constructional Changes*. See, for example, their discussion of the development of the English “a lot of” construction (pp. 23–26), the grammaticalized variant of which has become a modern quantifier in which the accompanying plural noun determines agreement with the verb as in “A lot of people know that”, despite the origin of the construction in a singular indefinite construction as in “a lot of land” (in the sense of a parcel of land). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. One might posit either an alternative or an earlier stage with the demonstrative as a separate referential domain, but in any case this would be r not R and still restricted to co-indexing with the primary noun. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See, for example, Bybee, *Language, Usage and Cognition*, 7: “In language, chunking is basic to the formation of sequential units expressed as constructions, constituents and formulaic expressions. Repeated sequences of words (or morphemes) are packaged together in cognition so that the sequence can be accessed as a single unit. It is the interaction of chunking with categorization that gives conventional sequences varying degrees of analysibility and compositionality.” Of particular note is the gradient approach to constituency, see her chapter 8 “Gradient constituency and gradual reanalysis.” [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Standard grammar discussions, e.g.: Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 85–97 (§§110–112); Allen, *Middle Egyptian*3, 65–68 (5.8–5.11). The French-language grammatical tradition has often had a greater focus on Classical Egyptian and has discussions covering both the older and newer usages, such as Lefebvre, *Égyptien classique*, 61–66 and, particularly, the more detailed discussion in Malaise and Winand, *Grammaire raisonnée*, 121–133 (chapter 12). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Examples persist into Middle Egyptian of the less-preferred construction with a singular noun in the n-demonstrative n(y) construction, as the standard grammars note (within the references cited in the previous note). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. I should note that this paper was written under pandemic conditions, including restricted access to resources. I should also note that to conform to the word-limit for contributions, I have had to gloss over various issues which would repay fuller discussion. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)