The Inferential Evidential in Sahidic Coptic

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1 Introduction

- Evidentiality is generally understood as a grammatical category, which indicates the source of information contained within an utterance as well as the type of evidence available to the speaker for what he or she is saying (inter alia: Barnes 1984: 256; Bybee 1985: 28; Anderson 1986: 273; Willet 1988: 55; Lazard 2001: 360; Aikhenvald 2004: 3–4). It is a matter of controversy whether evidentiality can also be defined in broader terms as indicating the reliability of information and the degree to which the speaker can verify the truth of the assertion being made (for remarks to this effect, see Palmer 1986: 20–21; Rooryck 2001a: 125; Higginbotham 2009: 222).

- In spite of the considerable overlap that exists between evidentiality and epistemic modality, a consensus view seems to have emerged in the literature (de Haan 1999; Plungian 2001: 354–355; Aikhenvald 2004: 7) that the two cognitive-semantic categories are independent of each other. In other words, evidentiality constitutes a grammatical category in its own right and is therefore not subcategory of epistemic modality.

- According to some authors (Lazard 2001: 360–361; de Haan 1999: 194; Aikhenvald 2004: 3–11), only those languages in which paradigmatically organized forms (inflectional affixes, morphological clitics) express the source of information as part of their primary grammatical meaning have genuine evidential systems. By contrast, those languages in which certain verb forms can take on evidential meanings, such as the Armenian and the Turkish perfect, are said to be on their way to grammaticalizing evidentiality, but do not yet possess a grammatical evidential category.

- Still, the proposed division between languages with evidentiality proper and languages with evidential strategies (i.e. not yet grammaticalized evidentials) is in need of further refinement and clarification, considering the fact that even languages with a “pure” system of evidentials such as Tuyuca [Central Eastern Tucanoan, Brazil, Columbia] display complex interrelationships between evidentiality and the available temporal interpretations (Barnes 1984). This suggests that evidentiality is not an isolable grammatical category but rather interacts in complex ways with other verbal–semantic categories such as tense, aspect, mood and polarity.
As pointed out by Diewald & Smirnova (2010: 4–5), one must also be careful not to equate a grammatical category with a conceptual domain and to thereby exclude from investigation items and constructions representing different points of a grammaticalization into fully-fledged evidential markers.

Over the past three decades, typological and language-specific research has disclosed an impressive body of evidence that evidential systems are much more common in the world’s languages than previously assumed. However, there appears to be a rather striking gap in the geographical distribution of morphological evidentials, which seem to be almost completely absent in the languages of the African continent (see Willet 1988: 78–79; Aikhenvald 2004: 291; and, more recently, de Haan (2013) in WALS online). Notably exceptions include Sissala [Niger–Congo (Gur), Burkina Faso] (Blass 1989) and Lega [Bantu, Eastern Zaire] (Botne 1997). It seems to be that the picture is distorted by the fact that evidentiality is an underresearched category rather than being systematically absent in the verbal system of these languages.

With the exception of reportative/quotative markers, the Afroasiatic languages of Northern Africa and the Near East represent a “terra incognita” in our knowledge of evidential systems. This holds particularly true for the extinct Afroasiatic languages with a long documented history, such as the Ancient Semitic languages (Akkadian, Ugarit, Biblical Hebrew, and Ge'ez) and the Ancient Egyptian–Coptic—the object language of the present study. The crosslinguistic study of evidentiality can inform philology and historical linguistics and shed new light on previously elusive categories in the verbal system of these languages. Vice versa, corpus-linguistic research can uncover potentially significant evidence for the diachronic sources of morphological evidentials and their diachronic development.

The concern here is with the inferred evidential (glossed as INFER) in Sahidic Coptic—the classical dialect of Coptic (Ancient Egyptian [Afro-Asiatic], 3rd–11th c. CE). As a relatively unique case of a non-firsthand evidential, the Sahidic tare formative encodes information derived from inference and deduction as well as from tradition and common knowledge. A typical context of usage is represented by mixed coordination, which involves a sequence of different speech acts. In the first example, the first conjunct sōtəm an–te–sqə ‘Listen to the teaching!’ is a directive speech-act formulated in the imperative mood, which is coordinated with a declarative clause introduced by the inferred evidential tare=k he e–u–kharis ‘and you (man) shall find grace’. While the imperative clause can stand on its own, the inferential clause cannot so be used and generally involves co-subordinative nexus with the preceding sentence. In other words, we are dealing with an instance of unbalanced or asymmetrical coordination (for further discussion on symmetric and asymmetric types of clause coordination, see Johannessen 1998: 39 and Haspelmath 2004: 3–4, 34).
Mixed coordination with same-subject inferential in second conjunct

pa-fere  t'ìn  te=k-mañt-kowi
DEF.M.SG.POSS.1SG=son  since  DEF.F.SG=POSS.2M.SG=NOM.AG=young
sōtəm  an-te-sβə
listen.IMP  to=DEF.F.SG=teaching
tare=k  he  e-u-kharis  fa  te=k-mañt-hllɔ
INFER=2M.SG  find  PREP=INDEF.SG=grace  until  DEF.F.SG=POSS.2M.SG=NOM.AG=old
“My son, listen to the teaching from your childhood onwards, (and) [be assured], you will find grace until your old age.” (Sirach 6:18)

- The language has yet another asymmetrically coordinating verb form, traditionally known as the conjunctive conjugation, which, akin to the tare evidential, always follows the first conjunct/main clause. The conjunctive occupies a special position in tense–aspect–mood–evidentiality (TAME) system of the language. Apart from its clause-linking functions, the conjunctive has no temporal, aspectual or modal values of its own, but rather receives all these values by being anaphorically related to a controlling verb with fully specified TAME markings (Reintges 2010: 233–237).

- Consider in this regard the mixed coordination in example (2), in which the same-subject conjunctive η–nau ‘and you see’ continues the imperative clause fei an-ne=k-βal ‘lift your eyes’. In contrast to the inferred evidential, the events denoted by the imperatival verb and by the following conjunctive are temporally ordered in an event chain. Crucially, the conjunctive lacks the ego-phoric perspective that forms an integral part of the grammatical meaning of the inferred evidential.

Mixed coordination with same-subject conjunctive in second conjunct

fei  an-ne=k-βal  ehrai  η–nau  e–nə–kolasis
lift.IMP  PREP=DEF.PL=POSS.2M.SG=eye  PCL  CONJ.2M.SG=see  PREP=DEF.PL=punishment
“Lift your eyes up and look at the punishments!” (Testament of Isaac 235:5–6)

- In the above example, the directive force of the initial imperative verb is spread out to the same-subject conjunctive clause, with the result that two asymmetrically coordinated clauses express a single directive speech-act. By contrast, the consequent implicature conveyed by the inferential marker tare turns it into an illocutionary island, which is impermeable to the illocutionary force of the initial conjunct. Accordingly, the mixed coordination structure in the first example must be interpreted as a sequence of a directive speech-act followed by an assertion (on this point, see Reintges 2010: 238–239).

- Based on this preliminary discussion, we may then conclude that the Sahidic inferential tare meets Aikhenvald’s restrictive definition of what constitutes a grammatical evidential category insofar as it represents a paradigmatically organized item, which enters into a systematic
meaning and function opposition with categories of a similar kind, in particular, with the semantically less specified conjunctive.

- At the methodological level, the present investigation involves a typologically oriented (re)analysis of historical corpus data. Different from previous studies (Polotsky 1944; Lefort 1947), the concern here is not with which textual resources represent “good” Sahidic. In the Coptic descriptive tradition, this approach has narrowed down corpus-linguistic research to **Scriptural Sahidic**, the linguistic idiom of the Bible translations (which is, in fact, not entirely unproblematic due to the many interferences with the Greek model). Rather, the data analysis includes **literary Sahidic**, the rich apocryphal, monastic and hagiographic literature as well as the much smaller corpus of **legal and administrative** records (Green 1983). The broadening of the linguistic documentation has already produced interesting results, in particular, the absence of the first–person effects in Non-Scriptural Sahidic.

### 2 Background information about the Coptic language

- Coptic Egyptian, the indigenous language of late-antique and medieval Christian Egypt, is actually a **dialect cluster** with at least six regional varieties, two of which gained supra-regional importance: Sahidic (from Arabic ʻas-Šā ṭā ʻUpper Egyptʼ) and Bohairic (from Arabic ʻal-Buhairā, a province southeast of Alexandria), the vernacular of the Delta and Lower Egypt, the latter of which presently functions as the liturgical language of the Coptic Orthodox Church (for dialect variation, history, and genetic affiliation, see Layton 2000: 1–4 §§1–6; Reintges 2004: 2–6 §0.1).

- The genesis of the Coptic language is closely associated with the Christianization of Egypt during the third and fourth century CE. Christianity provided the relevant ideological superstructure for a newly defined cultural and ethnic identity and became the motor for reviving the native vernacular. In the course of this process, it acquired a number of non-Egyptian features, which can be explained in terms of intensive language contact with the prestige language Greek.

- Greek **superstratum influence** is visible at the lexical and the syntactic level (see Reintges 2013: 314–316 for a more detailed exposé). In the case at hand, Lefort (1947) proposed to analyze the functioning of modal and evidential markers as originating from calques of Greek moods, but this picture turned out not to be entirely accurate. Polotsky (1950) argues—convincingly, in my view—that the Coptic Bible translators could not possible have access to the subtleties of the modal system of Classical Greek and base the context of usage of the Sahidic inferential on no longer transparent meaning connotations.

- On the other hand, it is well known that languages can gain evidentials through language contact (see Aikhenvald 2004: 294–296 and the references cited there). In the case at hand, a borrowing scenario is, however, not very likely, given that Classical and Koine Greek do not morphological evidentials in their verbal system, although much more research is needed here. In particular one
might wonder whether so-called modal particles such as the second position clitic ἄν cannot be reanalyzed in evidential terms.

- Here I would like to propose that the expansion of the TAME system may be a contact-induced phenomenon insofar as the discourse-configurational character of Coptic syntax with a close relation between word order variation and topic and focus prominence as well as the need for greater expressivity in the verbal system provided the relevant incentive for morphological innovation.

- In terms of holistic morphological typology, the language falls near the isolating pole of the analytic–synthetic dimension, with low ratio between morphemes and words. In fact, the correspondence between words and functional morphemes is almost one-to-one. TAME auxiliary verbs or verbal particles furnish a broad range of conjugation patterns, i.e. patterns in which lexical verb stems can appear and can be further subdivided into two positional classes of preverbal and presubject TAMES markers.

- The inferred evidential tare belongs to the large and diversified group of presubject TAMES, which are placed at the left edge of the clause, leaning on the subject noun phrase. The postponement of second-position “Wackernagel” clitics such as the Greek discourse marker de provides prima facie evidence for the proclitic-like status of TAME auxiliary elements, which are attached by the phonology to the left of the immediately following subject constituent. This is illustrated with the example of the Perfect tense/aspect marker a.

(3) Basic TAME/AUX–SVO order with second-position clitic de

a te=f–sōne de ol ἄn–ne=f–kees

PERF DEF.F.SG=POSS3M.SG-sister PCL carry PREP-DEF.PL=POSS.3M.SG–bone.PL

“His sister carried his bones.” (Mena, Martyrdom 4a, 1-2)

- The resulting word order TAME auxiliary Subject–Verb–Object can be identified as the basic one, as it involves a minimal amount of syntactic structure and morphological marking. This is also the word order in pragmatically neutral (or, more correctly, involves all-new sentences) without dislocation of the nominal arguments to the clausal peripheries for discourse-related purposes. It should furthermore be kept in mind that in Coptic Egyptian, there are no word order differences across clause types and between main and subordinate clauses.

- The analysis of free functional morphemes indicating temporal, aspectual, modal, and evidential meaning as auxiliary verbs or as particles remains a moot point. Elsewhere (Reintges 2011) I argue that TAME elements are verbal categories, although they differ significantly from Pre-Coptic auxiliary verbs in that they cannot be modified by independent tense–aspect and grammatical voice morphology. Some monosyllabic TAMES exhibit an impoverished type of agreement inflection with the adjacent nominal or pronominal subject—a feature unattested throughout the entirety of Egyptian language history.
3 Semantic distinctions in inferential evidentiality

- We shall now turn to consider the core semantic functions and the main contextual uses of the Sahidic inferred evidential. Broadly speaking, the tare auxiliary can be described as a non-firsthand evidential, which presents inferences about future situations from a speaker-centered (ego-phoric) point of view. Apart from indicating inferences based on non-observable facts, it indicates the speaker’s belief that the inferred evidence is particularly robust and cogent. Accordingly, the speaker takes responsibility for the truth of his or her assertion. Whenever contextually feasible, this meaning component will be paraphrased as ‘be assured’.

- In its futurate or prospective orientation, the Sahidic inferential differ crucially from the retrospective inferentials of better-known evidential systems, which designate inferences based on the observable results, outcome or effects of a previous situation. The discussion here focuses on the co-subordinative and declarative uses of the inferred evidential. The less prototypical subordinative and interrogatives uses are discussed in sections 4 and 5.

3.1 Speaker–centered perspective and validational/verificational function

- The “Sitz im Leben” for the Sahidic inferred evidential is the wisdom or catechistic textual genre, in which the involved speech participants differ from each other in terms of social status, age and socially shared knowledge. That is, the speaker has the superior role of the sage or wise man that offers practical advice to the addressee who is in the inferior role of the disciple.

- By using the inferential, the speaker assures the addressee that a desired but not yet actualized situation will be realized in the future, once his authoritative command or instruction is being complied with (for representative views, see Polotsky 1944: 2 §2, 1950: 87; Depuydt 1993: 76–77 §45; Layton 2000: 284 §358). In the following example, the addressee is not a concrete persona (i.e. the disciple), but rather an abstract representative of humankind (ō pə–talaipɾos pə–rōme “Oh you, miserable human”). To stress the fact that the speaker represents not only the source of knowledge, but at the same time takes responsibility for the truth of the assertion being made, I referred to this contextual use of the tare evidential as validational or verificational in my Sahidic Coptic reference grammar (Reintges 2004: 325–326 §8.2.4.3)

(4)  Validational/verificational use of same–subject inferential clauses

ō   pə–talaipɾos   pə–rōme   hareh e–pə–tββ  

tare=k   βok ehun e–tö–polis əm–pə–nūte

“Oh you, miserable human, guard purity (and) [be assured], you shall enter the city of God”
(Horsiese’s catechism 81:7–8)
As we can see from examples (5a–b) below, the speaker-oriented perspective carries over to different–subject inferential clauses with NP subjects and corresponding third person pronouns. Such inferential clauses are characterized by a reference switch vis-à-vis the preceding imperative from second to third person singular.

(5) **Validational/verificational uses of different–subject inferentials**

a. hế tare te=tn-psyk əon əm aga əon
titore.IMP to=1SG INFER.DEF.F.SG=POSS.2PL -soul live in good
“Listen to me (and) [be assured], your soul shall live in good (things).” (Isaiah 55: 3)

b. awə ən-ən-ən-ən sêtəm ən=qa-ən=qa tare=ən nahme=ən
tine.IMP after.DEF.M.SG -god INFER=3M.SG save=2M.SG
“And most of all, listen to God (and) [be assured], he will save you.” (Pachomius’ Catechism Concerning a Vengeful Monk 5:7–8)

c. təpje u-səje tare=ən merito=ən
rebuke.IMP INDEF.SG -wise.man INFER=3M.SG love=2M.SG
“Do not rebuke evil people that they won’t hate you! Rebuke a wise man (and) [be assured], he will love you.” (Proverbs 9:8–9).

With respect to the next example, it should be observed that the switch references from second to third person represents, as it were, a shift in grammatical perspective, as the inferential clause is construed as a **third person plural impersonal active sentence**, which serves as the functional equivalent of the morphological passive in this language. Since the third person plural subject pronoun =ən lacks a concrete referent in the preceding discourse, the resulting construction is used when the agent is downgraded or left implicit.

(6) **Shift in grammatical perspective with impersonally construed 3PL inferentials**

aitei tare=ən ti nə=əon ʃine tare=təon k'ine
ask.IMP INFER=3PL give to=2PL search.IMP find INFER=2PL find
 tôhəm tare=ən wom nə=əon
knock.imp INFER=3PL open to=2PL
“Ask (and) [be assured], you will be given (lit. they shall give to you). Search (and) [be assured], you shall find. Knock (and) [be assured], it (the gate) will be opened for you.” (Luke 11:9)

Stern (1880: 284 §450) observed that the **tare** evidential “commonly has a subject that is different from that of the main clause” and concluded from this that this form “can be translated as »auf daß, damit« (‘such that, so that’) [my translation from German]” does not entirely go through. As already pointed out by Polotsky (1944: 18 §10), different subject inferentials such as...
example (5c) do not necessarily entail a purposive interpretation. To put it differently, the co-
subordinative use of the inferential in mixed coordination structures is sensitive to the same-
subject/different-subject clause distinction.

3.2 Occurrence in the consequent clause of a “Realis” conditional sentence

- The mixed coordination structures in examples (4) through (6) have a secondary interpretation,
in which the imperative clause in the first conjunct is semantically interpreted as the antecedent
clause of a conditional sentence, while the asymmetrically coordinated inferential clause is
interpreted as the consequent clause.
- This would lead one to expect that the inferred evidential can also be found in overtly realized
conditional constructions—an expectation that is borne out by the empirical evidence. Consider
in this regard the following example, in which the antecedent or protasis clause is
morphologically marked as such by means of a specialized modal pattern. The conditional mood
consists of the auxiliary element *fan* and the focus-sensitive relative particle *ere*.

(7) Conditional sentence with inferred evidential in the consequent clause

```
er−fan u−piramos tōwən ehrai hitən u−rôme
REL−COND INDEF.SG−temptation raise PCL upon INDEF.SG−man
fare ne−thlipsis aʃai na=f ən−sasa nim
HABIT DEF.PL−hardship be.many for=2M.SG in-side each
tare=f kəwi ən−het nə=f kəməm
INFER=3M.SG become.small LINK−heart CONJ=3M.SG be.vexed
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“If temptation raises against someone, the hardships become more intense (lit. numerous), (and) [be
assured], he will become discouraged (lit. faint-hearted) and vexed.” (Apophthegmata Patrum, Chaîne
n°45, 9:18–20)

- As is well known, conditional clauses express quantification over event types as well as possible
scenarios in some imaginary world. In the case at hand, the antecedent clause contains the
habitual auxiliary *fare*, which represents a pluractional aspect. As such, it indicates the plurality
of event and participants. In the case at hands, the habitual present has a gnomic interpretation
and presents the statement of a fact or truism (for further discussion on pluractional aspect in
Coptic, see Reintges 2004: 276–278 §7.3.6.2). On its part, the inferred evidential *tare=f kəwi
ən−het* ‘and (be assured) he will become discouraged’ expresses the speaker’s expectation
with respect to the outcome of some event. The inference is based on mental constructs, i.e.
reasoning about behavior based on logic and personal experience.
- The ego-phoricity is insensitive to the same-subject/different-subject clause distinctions as well
as to changes in grammatical perspective (downgrading of the agent). This follows from the fact
that the speaker is not syntactically encoded as the clausal subject.
3.3 Inferences about future situations

- The inferential patterns studied in de Haan (1999) are commonly used as secondhand evidentials, whereby the speaker sees evidence after the fact that he or she did not personally witness. With secondhand information of this kind, the action described by the evidential “typically (but not necessarily) occurred in the past” (de Haan 1999: 195; cf. also Aikhenvald 2004: 265).

- The situation is different with the Sahidic *tare* inferential evidential, which has long been observed to convey a futurate meaning (cf. Stern 1880: 284–285 §450 and Layton 2000: 283 §358 “conjunctivus futuri τἀρε”; Mallon 1953: 245 “ce temps exprime un futur à l’état de dépendance” (“this tense expresses a dependent future’); Depuydt 1993: 75 “promissive future”).

- In the examples of mixed coordination considered thus far, the initial directive speech-act has immediate future reference, which can be seen an extension of the present (for the crosslinguistic relation between imperatives and (future) time reference, see Aikhenvald 2010: 128–133). The inferred evidential, on the other hand, designates a forthcoming situation that is temporally removed from the immediate future action issued in the imperative clause. A particularly clear example is the following one, which describes the forthcoming resurrection of the dead.

(8) The futurate orientation of the inferred evidential

\[
\text{tōwān=g p–et–ānkātāk n}=\text{l5}
\]

raise.IMP=2M.SG DEF.M.SG–COMP.REL–sleep CONJ.2M.SG-cease

\[
\text{ütē n–et–mōwāt}
\]

from DEF.P–COMP.REL–die.STAT

\[
\text{tare pe-Khristos ɔr woein ər}=\text{k}
\]

INFER DEF.M.SG-Chist make light for=2M.SG

“Raise yourself, you who is sleeping, and cease from among the dead (and) [be assured], the Christ will appear to you” (Ephesians 5, 14)

- In the next example, the inferred inferential is used in the context of contrastive affirmative–negative pairs. The negated future tense *anne=u mesto=k* ‘they won’t hate you’ and the inferred evidential *tare=f meriš=k* ‘and (be assured) he will love you’ do not differ from each other in temporal reference, but rather with respect to negative and affirmative polarity. The shared temporal value between a fully grammaticalized future tense and the inferential provide prima facie evidence for the inherent futurate orientation of the latter.
Affirmative inferential parallel to a negated future tense

\[ \text{ampor} \quad t\text{şpje} \quad n-\text{et} \quad \text{how} \quad t\text{e} \quad \text{anne}=u \quad \text{mesto}=k \]

\[ \text{NEG.IMP} \quad \text{rebuke.INF} \quad \text{DEF.PL-COMP.REL} \quad \text{be.evil.STAT} \quad \text{COMP} \quad \text{NEG.FUT}=3\text{PL} \quad \text{hate}=2\text{M.SG} \]

\[ t\text{şpje} \quad u-\text{saše}t \quad \text{tare}=f \quad \text{merito}=k \]

rebuke.IMP INDEF.SG-wise.man INFER=3M.SG love=2M.SG

“Do not rebuke evil people that they won’t hate you! Rebuke a wise man (and) [be assured], he will love you.” (Proverbs 9:8–9).

- Aikhenvald (2004: 256) observes that “[i]n many languages the information source cannot be negated”. If a non-firsthand evidential is negated, the scope of the negation is on the verb phrase and not the clause. Accordingly, the evidential falls outside the scope domain of the negative marker. Consider in this regard the following example, in which the negative auxiliary verb təә ‘to do not’ scope over the main verb ti ‘to give’.

The inferred evidential with negative auxiliary təә

\[ \text{eksesiti} \quad e-ti \quad \text{kənos} \quad \text{sm-}pɔ-rr\text{ŋ} \quad t\text{on} \quad \text{ouk ekseseti} \]

be.lawful to–give.INF tax to–DEF.M.SG–king or NEG be.lawful

\[ \text{tara}=n \quad t\text{i} \quad t\text{on} \quad \text{tara}=n \quad \text{təәm–ti} ? \]

INFER=1PL give or INFER=1PL NEG.AUX–give

“Is it lawful to pay tax to the king or is it not lawful (so that) we should pay (it) or shouldn’t?” (Mark 12:14)

- Crucially, neither the future time interpretation nor the ego-phoric stance associated with the Sahidic tare inferential is negated. To me, there seems to be no good reason to doubt the text-critical status of this example, as do Polotsky (1987/1990: 164 §39) and Layton (2000: 283 §357). The initial yes/no question poses two alternatives, while the correlated positive and negative consequence is expressed by the affirmative and negative inferential, respectively. The underlying logical structure of this example is, again, that of a conditional, which can be paraphrased as sentence “If paying taxes to the king complies with the Mosaic Law, then we should pay taxes, but if it does not, then we shouldn’t”.

- To summarize, then, the Sahidic inferential describes inferences about the future from an ego-phoric point of view: the speaker makes an inference about a future event, for which he or she has no direct evidence. Thus, the cogency or reliability of the inference is mainly based on the speaker’s epistemic authority.
4 Subordinative uses of the tare evidential

4.1 Purposive uses

- According to Willet (1988: 61), inferred inferentials arise from the need to assign causes to the observed situations. When the speaker sees the results of a prior event, he or she may use it as evidence to infer a causing event.

- The situation is, again, different with the Sahidic inferential, which, due to its inherent futurate orientation, extends the main clause event in time by describing its consequences or outcome. When used in adverbial purpose clauses, the ego-phoric bias of the inferred evidential is maintained: speaker as narrator reveals the rationale for his own actions or somebody else’s. This is illustrated in examples (11a) and (11b), respectively.

(11) The purposive use of the inferred evidential

a. \(\text{mar}=n\ \text{tamj} \ ə̆̆\text{n}=u=řome\ \text{kata}\ \text{pe}=n=\text{eine}\)
   \hspace{1cm}\text{OPT}=1\text{PL} \ \text{create} \ \text{PREP}\text{-INDEF.SG}=\text{man according to}\ \text{DEF.M.SG}=\text{POSS.1PL}=\text{form}
   \hspace{1cm}\text{mə̆̆} \ \text{in} \ \text{DEF.F.SG}=\text{POSS.1PL}=\text{image}
   \hspace{1cm}\text{tare}=f \ \text{k}^\prime \ \text{e}=f \ \text{smu} \ \text{er}=n \ \text{am}=p=\text{how}
   \hspace{1cm}\text{INFER}=3\text{M.SG} \ \text{remain} \ \text{REL(PRES)}=3\text{M.SG} \ \text{praise} \ \text{PREP}=1\text{PL} \ \text{in}\text{DEF.M.SG}=\text{day}
   \hspace{1cm}\text{mə̆̆} \ \text{in} \ \text{DEF.F.SG}=\text{night}
   “Let’s create a man according to our form and image that he praises us day and night.” (Budge, Martyrdoms 232:9–11)

b. \(\text{a}=f \ \text{mun} \ \text{de} \ \text{eβol} \ \text{e}=f \ \text{βεl} \ \text{har}=s \ \text{tare}=s \ \text{ut}=\text{aj}\)
   \hspace{1cm}\text{PERF}=3\text{.M.SG} \ \text{stay} \ \text{PCL} \ \text{PCL} \ \text{REL(PRES)}=3\text{M.SG} \ \text{pray} \ \text{for}=3\text{F.SG} \ \text{INFER}=3\text{F.SG} \ \text{recover}
   “He (Apa Sarapion) stayed praying for her (the prostitute’s) sake that she would recover.”
   (Apophthegmata Patrum, Chaîne n° 240, 73:5-6)

- Aikhenvald (2004: 253–256) observes that evidentials are rarely used in dependent clauses and explains its use in adverbial purpose clauses as being related to quotative evidentiality. As we shall see in a moment, the purposive use of the inferred evidential differs syntactically from its use as a reported evidential insofar as it can be embedded under the purposive complementizer ʃekas ‘in order that, so that’. On the other hand, when the inferred evidential is used in indirect speech, it is not so embeddable.
(12) Subordinated inferred evidential with purposive complementizer ʃekas

\[
\begin{align*}
ti=kōrāf & \quad er=\text{k} & \quad et=\text{on} & \quad af & \quad an−n5\text{e} & \quad ere & \quad po−\text{wa} \\
(\text{PRES})1\text{SG}=\text{ask} & \quad \text{PREP}=2\text{M} & \quad \text{for} & \quad \text{which} & \quad \text{LINK}=\text{sin} & \quad \text{REL}(\text{PRES}) & \quad \text{DEF.} & \quad \text{M} \quad \text{SG}=\text{one} \\
po−\text{wa} & \quad \text{DEF.} & \quad \text{M} \quad \text{SG}=\text{one} & \quad \text{place} & \quad \text{STAT} & \quad \text{PCL} \\
\text{ʃekas} & \quad e−\text{a}=i & \quad \text{eime} & \quad \text{e−pei−ket} & \quad \text{tar}=i & \quad \text{ar} & \quad \text{fəmm5} & \quad \text{COMP} & \quad \text{REL}=\text{PERF}=1\text{SG} & \quad \text{know} & \quad \text{PREP}=\text{DEM.} & \quad \text{M} \quad \text{SG}=\text{other} & \quad \text{INFER}=1\text{SG} & \quad \text{make} & \quad \text{stranger} & \quad \text{e−mənt−at−sowən} & \quad \text{nim} & \quad \text{to−NOMINAL−NEG.PFX−know.INF} & \quad \text{each} \\
\end{align*}
\]

“I ask you »Which sin is everyone (pre)disposed to, such that having come to know this, too, I would be alienated (lit. a stranger) to all ignorance?« (Apophthegmata Patrum, Chaîne n° 211, 60:4–5)

- With respect to the above example, Stern (1880: 285 §450) suspects that the first person singular inferential tar=əә ʃəә mə̄ ‘I shall become alienated’ can be embedded under the purposive conjunction ʃekas, because it is separated from it by the temporal adverbial clause e−a= eime e−pei−ket ‘having come to know this, too’.

- For Steindorff (1904: 146–147 §309), the purposive use of the Sahidic inferential represents its main grammatical meaning. However, there are very few instances in which a purposive interpretation can be ascertained and a co-subordinative interpretation is excluded, as argued by Polotsky (1944: 6–7 §3C, 18–19 §10). This generally suggests that the subordinative uses of the inferred evidential represent a secondary diachronic development (co-subordination > subordination).

4.2 Reportative uses in indirect speech

- As pointed out by de Haan (1999: 193–194), inferred evidentials share important features in common both with sensory evidentiality and with non-firsthand evidentials.

- The Sahidic inferential is occasionally used to mark reported discourse, where the speaker chooses to report someone else’s speech without repeating it verbatim. When used as a reportative evidential, the Sahidic inferential is not so much a means of distancing oneself from the content of what is being said or to remove all responsibility for the information. Rather, the speaker becomes the source of knowledge and guarantees for the verifiability of the reported speech.

- In example (8), the verb of speaking ʃə əә ‘to say’ is construed with an expletive 3rd person singular pronoun =s ‘it’, while the reported speech complement tar=əә n wom ‘we shall eat’ has been extrapolated to the right roof of the sentence. Traditionally, the inferred evidential was thought of as being restricted to direct speech (Polotsky 1997/1990: 160 §31).
The use of the inferred evidential in reported speech

As originally observed by Green (1983: 143), the inferred evidential is commonly in the complement clause of manipulative verbs, which introduce reported directives. The next example involves the Greek loan verb *aitei* ‘to request’.

It generally appears that the *tare* evidential, when used in indirect speech, corresponds to an imperative or optative verb form in direct speech. The speaker is referentially connected to the indirect discourse, first, as the narrator, and, second, as the original utterer of the direct speech-act. In this respect, the reportatively used inferential evidential does not always fall square within the conceptual domain of quotative evidentiality and hears-say markers.

5 The use of the *tare* evidential in interrogative sentences

It has long been observed that the inferred evidential can be coordinated with a first conjunct constituent question (Polotsky 1944: 5–6 §3b). Crucially, the inferential clause itself does not obtain a genuine interrogative interpretation. Rather, the entire construction is a mixed coordination consisting of an initial question and a following declarative clause.

In examples (13a–b), the *tare* evidential corresponds to or echoes the conversational implicature associated with questions, namely that they indicate a quest for information on part of the speaker. In other words, the inferential is coordinated with an elliptical answer [Tell us] (for a related idea, see Depuydt 1993: 77 §45; Layton 2000: 285 §358b).
Inferential evidential continuing an interrogative sentence

a. nim pe tara=n makarize ømmə=f?
   who DEM.M.SG INFER=1PL praise PREP=3M.SG
   “Who is he? [Tell us] (and) [be assured], we shall praise him.” (Sirach 34:9)

b. e=f ton pə−wonaʃ tare ḟos pot nso=f?
   REL(PRES)=3M.SG where DEF.M.SG−wolf INFER shepherd run after=3M.SG
   “Where is the wolf? [Tell us] (and) [be assured], the shepherds will pursue it?” (Shenoute, Amélineau II 510:7–8)

- This seems to suggest that the speaker-attributive inference conveyed by the Sahidic inferential is not always related to the actual utterance it continues, but is related to the contextual and conversational implicatures associated with the utterance (on this point see the discussion in Ifantidou 2001: Chapter 7).

- The inferential can be used independently in yes/no question of the kind in (16). It is, however, not entirely clear or obvious whether kind of questions imply “an unspoken imperative asking the interlocutor to grant permission”, as argued by Layton (2000: 285 §358c).

Independent use of the inferred evidential in presumptive questions

pə−tʃeis tara=n hiwe øn−tə−səfe?
   DEF.M.SG−lord INFER=1PL draw PREP−DEF.F.SG−sword
   “Lord, shall we draw the sword?” (Luke 22:49)

- It rather looks as if the interrogative sentence in (16) is a presumptive question, in which a positive answer is presupposed. With rhetorical questions of this kind, the answer is known both to the speaker and to the addressee and do not necessarily require an answer to be pragmatically felicitous. We may then conjecture that the fact that the speaker knows the answer underlies the insertion of a inferential evidential.

6 A note on first person singular effects

- The complete inflectional paradigm of the Sahidic inferred inferential is shown in table 1 below. (The triliteral verb sōtam ‘to hear’ has been chosen for paradigmatic purposes.)
TABLE 1. The inflectional paradigm of the Sahidic inferred evidential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SINGULAR</th>
<th>PLURAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>tar=i sōtəm</td>
<td>tare=ə sōtəm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd masc.</td>
<td>tare=k sōtəm</td>
<td>tare=əən, var. tare=əən sōtəm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd fem.</td>
<td>tare=s sōtəm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd masc.</td>
<td>tare=f sōtəm</td>
<td>tarū sōtəm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd fem.</td>
<td>tare=s sōtəm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before NP</td>
<td>tare sōtəm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Contrary to what is stated in many descriptive grammars (Polotsky 1944: 7–9§3c, 1987/1990:160 §31; Lefort 1947: 23; Depuydt 1993: 85–86 §52; Layton 2000: 284 §357 N.B.), there is no evidence for a paradigmatic gap in the first person singular of the inferential evidential.

(17) First person singular form of the Sahidic inferential

\[ awō fi ār-əwəʃ tar=i ei ənso=k hən u-raʃe \]

and take.IMP DEF.M.SG=care INFER=1.SG come.ABS behind=2.M.SG in INDEF.SG=joy

“And take care (and) [be assured] I will go behind you with joy.” (Testament of Isaac 230:9–10)

- Although the 1st person sing. form \textit{tar=i} is not missing from the pronominal paradigm of the Inferential conjugation, it is often replaced by the corresponding 1st person sing. Conjunctive \textit{(n)ta} (cf. Polotsky 1944: 8 §3c; Lefort 1947: 18–22).

(15) Replacement of a first person singular inferential by the corresponding conjunctive

\[ ma na=i ən-u-jō ta-ale ero=f \]

\[ give.IMP to=1SG PREP-INDEF.SG-donkey CONJ.1SG-ascend.ABS on=3M.SG \]

‘Give me a donkey that I can ride on it!’ (Vita of Pachomius 90, 5-6)

- There might be a functional explanation for this distributional pattern. In a system based on a primary division of the source of knowledge into the speaker and other speech participants, inferred evidence is intrinsically related to the speaker. As pointed out by Anderson (1986: 277–278), when the speaker was a knowing participant in some event, either as a voluntary agent or as a conscious experiencer, the knowledge of that event is normally direct and evidentials can then be omitted.
7 Concluding remarks

- The Sahidic inferential conflates semantic values associated with the **inferred** and the **assumed evidential**, which are distinguished from each other in terms of the different degree of reasoning being involved: the former indicates inference based on results and the latter inference based on reasoning. The Sahidic situation is in line with Aikhenvald’s typological (2004: 174) predication that if there is only one evidential in a language, it combines both these meanings.

- The inferred evidential has a future–prospective meaning. Naturally, future events are outside of the visual or perceptual field of the speaker (see de Haan 1999: 216–218 for further discussion on different degree of the speaker’s involvement in evidential systems). Yet, neither the source of knowledge nor the (indirect) type of evidence is further specified. In other words, the validity of the inference is mainly based on the speaker’s authority. This generally suggests that the inferred evidential makes reference both to the source and to the reliability of the information of the speaker’s discourse.
References


