

EGYPTOLOGICAL REMARKS CONCERNING DAḤAMUNZU

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One of the most debated events of Hittite history is what scholars have called the *Daḥamunzu-episode* (BRYCE 1990; VAN DEN HOUT 1994). This episode falls right in the time of the Amarna Pharaohs, some of whom – like Akhenaten and Tutanchamun – belong to the best-known figures of Egyptian history. Nevertheless, and despite of the extraordinary amount of sources that have come to us, the 14th century B.C. remains in some respects a poorly understood period of ancient history.

In Anatolia, the successful Hittite king Suppiluliuma, had just managed to lead his forces into Syria and conquer most of its kingdoms, above all the mighty empire of Mitanni. Here again, the exact course of events is a matter of debate, so is the chronology of Suppiluliuma's reign. He is just prepared to besiege Karkemiš, the last remaining Mitannian stronghold, when suddenly an envoy arrives carrying a letter from the Egyptian court. Addressee is not the Pharaoh but his wife, whose name is given as *Daḥamunzu* in the cuneiform accounts of this event. What the Hittites obviously did not know was, that *Daḥamunzu* was not the queen's name but her Egyptian title *t3-h'm.t-nšw* (*tə-ḥi'm.~t-nsw) “*the royal consort*”. Be it as it may – the name or title is not, what astonishes Suppiluliuma most, but the letter's contents. It begins with the words “*My husband has died*”. The next sentences are so unbelievable, that the king summons his courtiers for a special meeting and exclaims “*Such a thing has never ever happened to me in the whole of my life*”.

Let the so-called *Deeds of Suppiluliuma* speak for itself. Fragment number 28 states (KLINGER 2005; HOFFNER 1997):

“For in the meantime, their Lord Nibḥururijas had died, the queen of Egypt – who was Daḥamunzu – sent an envoy to my father, saying: “My husband has died, but a son I do not have. But you, they say, have many sons. If you give me one of your sons, he

will be my husband, for one of my servants, I will never take and make him my husband.”

We are in the very lucky position, that the original of this letter or a copy of it has been found in the archives of the Hittite capital (ÄHK 1, see EDEL 1994). But even so, the crucial points remain obscure. Who was this mysterious queen, whose name has not been recorded? And who was her husband, whose name is transcribed as *Nibḥururija* or *Bibḥururijas* in other (later and more corrupt) sources? One should think, that such a transcription of an Egyptian name in cuneiform texts should be significant enough to identify the person in question, but unfortunately it is not. Three problems arise in connection with the interpretation of the cuneiform data: First, the Egyptians only wrote the consonants of their language. The vowels were omitted. Secondly, there is not just one king, whose name would somehow fit to *Nibḥururija*, but three of them. The three in question are Akhenaten, Semenkḥkare and Tutankhamun. And – last but not least – in the case of Akhenaten, there are three royal consorts to choose from.

The scientific literature on who *Nibḥururija* and *Daḥamunzu* were, fills whole libraries. Let me just recapitulate the most widespread opinions (BREYER 2005: chapter D.V.7–8; BRYCE 1990, VAN DEN HOUT 1994): Nicolas Reeves thinks, that Nefertiti, Akhenaten's widow, must have been *Daḥamunzu*, whereas Wolfgang Helck opts for Akhenaten's widow Kija. For Rolf Kraus, *Daḥamunzu* can be no other person, than Meritation, Akenaton's widow after her marriage to Semenkḥkare. Wilhelm & Boese, on the other hand, believe, that she must have been the latter's widow and Elmar Edel claims this to be the case for Ankhesen-Amun, Tutankhamun's widow, followed by Kitchen, Brice and Van den Hout. I will not go into further details. Only some comments may be allowed: although so much has been writ-

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ten on this topic, not one single study has been devoted purely to the linguistic aspects involved. Partly due to the fact, that the sources in question are written in cuneiforms, and not many Egyptologists are capable of reading this script, parts of the discussion have been dominated by specialist of Near Eastern History, who – on the other hand – are not trained to handle the severe problems of Egyptian vocalization. Thus, one problem has been the scholarly tradition, the gap between Egyptology and Anatolian Studies.

Another problem is that of method. Practically every opinion on the Daḥamunzu-problem rest on the reconstruction of its historical circumstances. But things should go the other way round. As we have seen, nearly every so-called “fact” in the Amarna age is based on sand. We must not create arguments on the ground of sometimes dozens of hypotheses and assumptions, but we must set aside the huge amount of scholarly opinions, traces and weak arguments such as the average travel-time of ancient oriental envoys in comparison to Prussian ones, the season, in which the flowers on Tutankhamun’s coffin must have been in blume or the accumulation of interdependent synchronisms. The circumstances cannot tell us, who Nibḥururija actually was, but the mentioning of his name can tell us, when those events took place! In short – the only secure way of solving the Daḥamunzu-problem is to investigate what Egyptian name cuneiform *Nibḥururija* stands for.

This is by no means an easy task. Before I begin to bring forth my arguments, let me stress, that there can be no doubt on the reliability of cuneiform writings, as far as the transcription of Egyptian language material is concerned. Even though in some cases, certain errors, which can all be explained, occur, the vast majority of thousands of transcriptions confirm the general trustworthiness of such an investigations.

At the same time, it cannot be allowed to throw different ways of writing the same name in one pot, as HESS has done in his *Amarna Personal Names* (1993).

Now back to the question STURM asked back in 1933 “*Wer war Piphururias?*”. The premenen of Akhenaten, Semenkhkare and Tutankhamun, as those of other pharaohs of the 18th and 19th dynasty occur in the Amarna archives several times and with several spelling variations. As I have said before, HESS is of no help here, for he groups them all under *Nabḥururija*, which is

Amenhotep III. and refers to Elmar Edel. But Edel, in the article cited, does just the opposite. He clearly states, that *Nabḥururija* was Amenophis III., and *Nibḥururija* Tutankhamun. It was KITCHEN (1985), who has lately pointed out, that we must distinguish between the two variations. And they can indeed be separated (BREYER 2005: chapter D.V.7–8).

If we now have a closer look on the Hittite writings, we notice, that the different scribes have written *Nibḥururijas* in one text and *Bibḥururijas* in another. This can be easily explained. The scribe of the second text not only mixed up the relatively similar looking signs <NI> and <BI>, he probably also made a hearing mistake. What remains, after the Hittite nominative ending has been removed is *Nibḥururija*. Curiously enough, eminent scholars, such as HELCK (1971) have postulated, that *Nibḥururija* be a mere variation of *Nabḥururija*. But this is not so. It is true, due to certain ambiguities, that we cannot tell for sure, whether to read /b/ or /p/. But one thing is clear: the difference between \bar{a} and \bar{i} , *Nab-* (d.h. **nafir*) and *Nib-* are two totally different words in Egyptian.

One major hint towards the meaning of *Nab-* is the correspondence between the Egyptian and Hittite court at the time of Ramesses and Hattusili. Here, Ramesses’ wife writes to the Hittite royal couple, and this time we can be definitely sure about the identity of this woman. Cuneiform *Na-ap-te-ra* can hardly represent anything but *Nfr:t-ir:i* better known to us as Nefertari, Ramesses’ favourite wife. The cuneiform script does not know the consonant /f/, for that reason, /p/ was written instead. Another name that consists of the element *nfr*, this time from the Amarna letters, is *Ri-an-a-pa* (EA 292:36; 315:13; 326:17), undoubtedly the equivalent of Egyptian *R^c(.w)-nfr(.w)* “*Ra is perfect*”. Thus, the cuneiform data alone points to the equivalence <*nab* – *nfr*> /*nav*/ – /**nafir*/.

But we still have more evidence to come. If we have a look at the last stage of the Egyptian language, Coptic, we can find not a few derivations of the stem *nfr* “*good, perfect*” (VYICHL 1983: 150). There is the masculine adjective ⲛⲟⲩⲓⲛ , its feminine counterpart ⲛⲟⲩⲓⲛⲉ and even the nominalized form ⲛⲟⲩⲓⲛ̅ . As thousands of examples show, the Coptic stressed long vowel /o/ always goes back to the ancient Egyptian vowel /*a/. In some cases, the Egyptian /*a/ remains even in Coptic, and we are fortunate to have some examples of this phenomenon with *nfr*. ⲛⲁⲩⲓⲛ̅ⲟ “*mercyfull*” lit-

erally “good of face” and $\mu\alpha\gamma\pi\tau\omega\rho\epsilon$ “skilful”, literally “good of hand” have retained the old vowel (VYCI-CHL 1983: 151), because the syntagmatic stress is on the last syllable.

The final trump comes from the chronologically opposite direction – afroasiatic linguistics. It is generally accepted, that afroasiatic participles have had the form *qātil*, i.e. first vowel: /a/, second vowel: /i/. If we take for example Akkadian, the active participle is *pārisum*, *pāristum*, and the verbal adjective is *pārsum*, which goes back to **pārisum*. In Egyptian, the verbal adjective *šāčim* and the participle *šāčim* amalgamated and became *šādīm*. Etymologically, the Egyptian stem *nafir* “good” is related to Bedja *nāfir* “sweet” with its s-causative *senafir* “to sweeten” (VYCI-CHL 1983: 150).

Next, we must have a look at the Egyptian word *Nib*. It can only be the vocalized form of *nb* “lord” (VYCI-CHL 1983: 138), for this is the only element left from the royal names, that has any similarity with the cuneiform writing. Its Coptic form is NHB . For Coptic stressed H /ē/ there are two possibilities: it can either represent Old Egyptian */ī/ or */ū/. The Greek transcriptions of several Egyptian names such as

$\text{N}\epsilon\chi\theta\nu\beta\iota\sigma, \text{N}\epsilon\kappa\tau\alpha\nu\beta\iota\sigma$	<i>Nḥt-nb=f</i>	<i>Nektanebos</i>
$\text{X}\nu\omicron\mu\omega \text{N}\epsilon\beta\iota\eta\beta$	<i>Ḥnm(.w) ʕ nb ʔbw</i>	<i>Chnum, der Große, Herr von Elephantine</i>

show, that in fact the vowel must have been */ī/. This corresponds to all, we know of Egyptian phonology, because, although Old Egyptian */ī/ generally remains $\epsilon\iota$ in Coptic, in front of the labials /m/ and /n/, it changes to H . In essence, Coptic evidence show, that the Old Egyptian word for *lord* must have been vocalized **nīb*.

After this little excursion into the depth of Coptic phonotactics, let us return to the Hittite texts. Again a whole set of letters from the diplomatic correspondence between Hattusili and Ramesses give us the last certainty on this matter. EDEL (1994) has called them the *insibia-letters*, for they have a very characteristic address-line beginning with the Egyptian title *insibia* “King of Upper and Lower Egypt”.

ÄHK Nr. 72 is the best preserved example of these letters:

1. *umma insibia ni-ib ta-a-ua* ¹*Uasmuuar*
2. *satiḫnaria DUMU dUTU (mār šamsi bzw. *si²-ria [2-Rī^cuw])* ¹*Riamasēsa māi* ^d*Amān^a*
3. DINGIR-lī (*ili* bzw. *nāčar*) LUGAL (*šar* bzw. **h-k̄w*) ^{URU.KI}*An^a* ŠEŠ (*aḫu* [or *šān*]) *ša*

<d>*Anḥara ša dIŠKUR (Adad, Haddu, Tessub, o.ä. bzw. Suteḫ) irām[šu]*.

1. Thus (speaks) the King of Upper and Lower Egypt (*nsu-bīt*), Lord of the Two Lands (*nb-ḫ.wi*), Wasmuaria,
2. chosen of Ra (*štp.n=R^c(.w)*), Son of Ra (*s²-R^c(.w)*) Ramesses (*R^c(.w)-mšš-šw (Rī^cuw-masī²ī-^a)*, beloved of Amun (*mri.y ʔImn(.w)*),
3. the god (*nčr*), ruler of Heliopolis (*ḫk³ Iwnw*), Bruder (*šn* ?) of *Anḥara*, whom the storm-god (*Šth* ?) loves.

As in all the other examples, one of the principal titles of Egyptian Pharaohs, *nb-ḫ.wi*, Lord of the Two Lands, is written with an *i*-vowel: *nib tāwa*.

From these collected arguments from the Egyptian, from Coptic, Afroasiatic, Cuneiform and Greek sources, we can conclude, that cuneiform Nibhururija can only be the cuneiform transcription of Egyptian *Nb-ḫpr.w-R^c(.w)*, which is Tutankhamun's prenomen (BREYER 2010c). As Tutankhamun only had one wife, Ankhesenamun, she must have been the Daḥamunzu-queen, who wrote so desperately to Suppiluliuma. The consequences for our understanding of ancient oriental history are immense. We now have another synchronism between Egypt and Anatolia and the events of Suppiluliuma's reign can be better understood.

The second part of my contribution presents supplementary evidence for the identity of Nibhururija with Tutankhamun. These further hints are of two kinds. First comes a hittite loanword in the *Deeds of Suppiluliuma*, namely Daḥamunzu's letter (BREYER 2010b). Secondly, we have a dagger found in the tomb of Tutankhamun, which definitely is of Anatolian origin and a Hittite *ad-hoc* borrowing written on a wooden box from the same tomb (BREYER 2010c).

Let me begin with the Daḥamunzu letter and return to the *Deeds of Suppiluliuma*. As we have seen, Daḥamunzu requests one of Suppiluliuma's sons for marriage. Then, she adds one simple sentence (KLINGER 2005; HOFFNER 1997; GÜTERBOCK 1956:94):

tekri-wa nahmi

The exact meaning of this syntagma can only be guessed, for *tekri* is a *hapax legomenon* in Hittite (GÜTERBOCK 1956:94, g). Therefore we have to rely on the context. Fortunately, another part of the same text paraphrases this sentence and the well known Hittite word *tapnumar* “humiliation” is

used. From this, it has been postulated, that *tekri* meant “shame, humiliation” or something similar (TISCHLER 2000, 302). If we look for *tkri* in an Egyptian dictionary, we will not be successful at all. But if we look for the German word “Schaam” in the index, our search will be rewarded. The price in question is Egyptian *k3t* “Schaam” (Wb. V, 106–7).



Can this lexeme be a possible equivalent of cuneiform *tekri*? The answer is: yes! To understand why this is true, let us once again dive deep into the problems of Egyptian language history.

The middle consonant in *k3t* is a consonant traditionally called “Aleph”. Only the recent decades have made it clear, that this so-called Aleph has nothing in common with its Semitic counterpart, but must rather be considered a liquida, i.e. /r/ or /l/ (PEUST 1990:127sqq). In most cases, this Aleph has been reduced during the Middle Kingdom, but in some instances, it remained unchanged (PEUST 1990, 131–132). If so, it was written with an internally complex graphoneme, consisting of the traditional grapheme Aleph and some kind of phonetic “update”, <r> (KAMMERZELL 1995:LII–LIII) (Fig. 1).

Luckily enough, the word *k3t* is often written in such a manner (Wb. V, 107:10–11).

We are dealing with a word, borrowed in the Amarna period, that is: a Late Egyptian lexeme. One of the most characteristic aspect of Late Egyptian is the definite article <t3>, which precedes its corresponding noun and was pronounced /tə-/, similar to Coptic τ- (ZEIDLER 1995). The main reason for the introduction of this genus marker is the reduction of wordfinal syllables. The result was, that the feminin ending <-t> was lost, leaving behind only some vocalic hiat. All in all, we can therefore reconstruct the pronunciation of <t3-k3.t> in the late 18th dynasty as /*tə-krə/, which corresponds perfectly to the cuneiform data.

The original meaning of <k3t> is “vulva”, but during the Middle Kingdom, a very common semantic shift took place. Late Egyptian /*tə-krə/, is no longer a *concretum*, but the abstract concept of “shame” or “shamelessness”, especially when used as a pejorative denomination of a woman (Wb. 101:14–15). We might compare this a to similar usage of words like “cunt” or “bitch” in English.



Unfortunately, the socio-linguistic level of this word is not known. Therefore, we might explain its occurrence in the *Deeds of Suppiluliuma* in two different ways (Breyer 2010b): Either, the sentence *tekriwa nahmi* is a translation of a direct quotation from the queen’s original letter, where the Dahamunzu switched into her mother tongue for lack of an appropriate Akkadian word. Or, we might postulate some sort of rhetoric masterpiece, implemented by the hands of the Hittite editor of the *Deeds*. I really am not quite convinced, whether an Egyptian queen of some dignity would have used such a word as *t3-k3t*, but: who knows? On the other side: words of sexual connotation tend to be borrowed much more often than their euphemistic nature might suggest. One possible scenario is the use of such a word in the Egyptian dominions in Syria and Palestine, especially the ports. Maybe, Hittite *tekri* originated in seamen’s talk or in what is called *Soldatensprache* in German. Maybe, the author of the *Deeds* used this word, to give his text an exotic touch and – in the same way – stress the singularity of the queens request and her desperateness. Maybe, he could presuppose, that the readers or rather – the listeners of his story knew about the Egyptian origin of *tekri* with all its implications.

After so much speculation, let me now turn to a more down to earth hint to the afore proposed identity of Nibhururija and Tutankhamun. One of the daggers found in the tomb of this king, is of distinctly Anatolian origin. As my colleges from




	Old Kingdom		Middle Egyptian		Late Egyptian
<3>	/r/	→	/ə/	→	/Ø/
<r>	/l/	→	/r/	→	/r/
/r/		→		→	

Fig. 1

Near Eastern Archaeology tell me, the handle and especially the upmost part is characteristic of Anatolian weapons of this kind. For me as a philologist, another find in the same tomb has brought to light even more spectacular things. Ironically, the object in question no longer exists, but we still have its footprint, so to speak. The tomb of Tutankhamun has been robbed in antiquity, but the thieves have been disturbed and forced to leave most of the treasures behind. From one of the many boxes, they took with them one rather small object: a little basket made of gold wire. We know this, because the priests who were responsible for the burying were anxious bureaucrats. Every box filled with precious things was inscribed with an inventory. One of these lists of content gives the name of such an object and a brief description: (*nb.w*) *made of gold – t-h-b-w-s3*, written with a determinative depicting a basket (ČERNÝ 1965:27) (Fig. 2).

The writing system used is what Egyptologists call “group writing”. This is a specific subsystem of Egyptian hieroglyphics used exclusively for rendering foreign language material. For us, the use of this subsystem is a clear indicator of the non-Egyptian origin of *t-h-b-w-s3*. Since the lexeme in question consists of four consonants, none of which are typical morphological formants in their position, a Semitic origin is highly unlikely (HOCH 1994, Nr. 537; WARD 1989). Hittite dictionaries, thought, list a possible equation, that is: ^{DUG}*tagapisa*. The corresponding determinative DUG leads us to the somehow doggy translation “a container” (TISCHLER 2001:160).

You might argue, that *t-h-b-w-s3* and *tagapisa* are quite different, but in fact, they are not. Hittite is an Anatolian language and – as such – the indoeuropean distinction of plosives (voiced – voiceless – aspirated) has been transformed into an opposition: *voiced/voiceless* and *fortis – lenis*, the latter being more distinct. On the other side, Egyptian is a Semitohamitic language, where the opposition is *voiced – voiceless – emphatic* (PEUST

1990). This explains, why the Egyptians would have difficulties hearing the distinction between some Hittite sounds (BREYER 2010a). At the same time, Anatolian words with a simple laryngal are often written with <g> in other writing systems and vice versa, compare *Pegasus – pihassa-* or *Perge – Paḥa* (BREYER 2010a). We might therefore conclude safely, that Egyptian *t-h-b-w-s3* is derived from Hittite *tagapisa*.

The loanword *t-h-b-w-s3* is quite well-known from Late Ramesside texts, some several hundred years after the Amarna period (ČERNÝ 1965:27). But here, it is spelled differently with a stable orthography and has a rather different meaning – it denotes *huge baskets for carrying goods*, something like a pithos. How can we explain this fact? The answer is quite simple: the Late Ramesside word is a true loanword, securely integrated into the Egyptian language, whereas Tutankhamun’s *t-h-b-w-s3* is not. On the contrary: *tehebusa* seems to be an ad-hoc transcription of the Hittite word (SCHERNER 1994; VON POLENZ 1967).

So, at the end of my contribution, allow me to leave aside the subtle science of linguistics and draw a more imaginative picture. From the *Deeds of Suppiluliuma*, we know, that the hittite king sent an envoy, Hattusa-zidi, to Egypt. His task was to confirm Daḥamunzus claim, that Nibḥururija had no son. Ḥattusa-zidi might have arrived just in time for the burial to be sealed and one of Suppiluliumas’s presents, being of uppermost prestige, found its way into the tomb. The Amarna letters show, that presents from one great king to another were accompanied by a written record of their contents. The gifts themselves were labelled as received and for this reason, one cuneiform word or the other was transcribed. Since *t-h-b-w-s3* was shut up in the chancellery and the tomb, this lexeme had no chance to become an Egyptian word. Centuries later, the same Hittite word was borrowed again, but this time by merchants and on a regular basis. I know this is highly speculative, but a nice thought nevertheless.

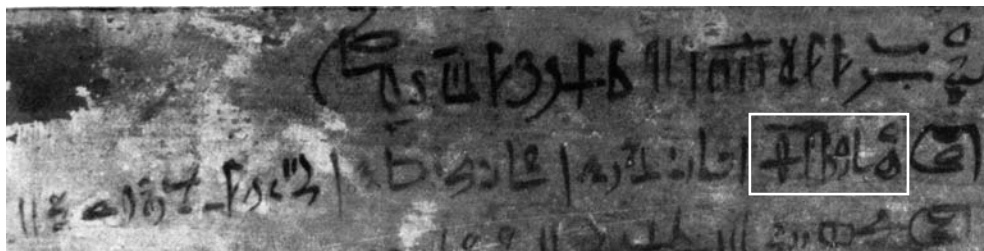


Fig. 2

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