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The Etymology of Egyptian ḥn^{c}

Abstract

The paper discusses a new Chadic etymology for the ancient Egyptian preposition denoting “(together) with”

One of the ancient Egyptian prepositions lacking a convincing etymology is ḥn^{c} “zusammen mit” (PT-, Wb III 110–111). A. E m b e r (1926, 309, §4; 1930, §5.i) and W.F. A l b r i g h t (1927, 224) assumed in it a strangely long chain of phonetic shifts ($\text{ḥn}^{\text{c}} < *ḥn^{\text{?}} < *ḥny < *ḥnw$) with $^{\text{c}} < *y$ “due to the proximity of l or n” in order to affiliate it with Ar. ḥanw- “side” deriving from the Ar. verbal root ḥnw “to incline”. The semantic aspect of this comparison is also somewhat dubious. Besides, already C.T. H o d g e (1995, 639) has identified the true cognate of the Ar. root in question in Eg. ḥn.tj “the two sides or ends” (MK, FD 171). E m b e r’s (1926, l.c., note 15) reference to Ar. $^{\text{c}}\text{an}$ “from” < $^{\text{c}}\text{an}$ - “side” is not too helpful here (our preposition meaning “with”). Elsewhere, E m b e r (1930, §5.i) quoted Aram. šād “with” ~ Hbr. šad, Ar. šadd- “side” and the case of Akk. itti “with” supposed to originate in Akk. idu “side”. The latter etymology is, however, not commonly accepted (for an alternative cf. AHW 405; DRS 37; KB 101). E.L. H o m b u r g e r (1928, 343) combined Eg. ḥn^{c} with extra-Afro-Asiatic parallels like Bantu na “avec, et” etc., but this can hardly solve problem for a basic preposition let alone the absence of reflex for Eg. ḥV-. E. Z y h l a r z (1932–33, 170) has, in turn, equated Eg. ḥn^{c} with Bed. han “gleichfalls, auch” [Zhl.] = han “also, besides” [Rpr. 1928, 197] and even Bed. hai “with it, them”, cf. hoi “in it, of it, them” [Rpr. 1928, 190, not listed in Rn. 1895], but these seem to be clearly unrelated forms of diverse origins. L. R e i n i s c h (1895, 122), besides, listed Bed. han as an “erstarrtes Nomen” (basic meaning * “das Sein” < hān “bleiben, verbleiben, sich aufhalten, existieren, leben”) denoting “1. oder, 2. auch, etwa, doch”. Th. S c h n e i d e r’s (1997, 202, #68) most recent

suggestion, strictly adhering to the controversial Rössler theory¹, is not better either. He worked with the alleged regular correspondence of Eg. ʕ to Sem. *d (disproved by myself in a number of works, cf. footnote 1 below) and compared Ar. ʕinda “bei (von Ort, Zeit und Besitz)”. Some time ago I was disposed to combine Eg. ḥnʕ with SCu.: Dahalo holló “with, and” [Ehret], but this too is to be abandoned, since Dahalo h- ≠ Eg. ḥ- and there is no reflex of -ʕ in the Dahalo parallel, which was, besides, explained by Ch. Ehret (1980, 306) from SCu. *hal- “else, otherwise”.

A couple of years ago, I have probably found the so far most promising Chadic parallels to Eg. ḥnʕ, namely WCh.: Fyer hóná “und” [Jng. 1970, 85] || CCh.: Logone hón ~ hen ~ han ~ hun “mit” [Lks. 1936, 97], in which the initial radicals seem to regularly correspond to Eg./AA *ḥ-, cp. the following cognate sets:

- Fyer hen ~ hyen “ablehnen, zurückweisen” [Jng. 1970, 86] || Eg. ḥn “zurückweichen” (Lit. MK, NK, LP, Wb III 103, 22), ḥnḥn “1. zurückgehalten werden (beim Gehen), 2. (in der Bewegungsfreiheit) behindert werden (von den Schenkeln)” (Lit. MK, Wb III 115, 8-9).
- Fyer hyè (Koll.), pl. ḥihyé “Bauch” [Jng. 1970, 86] || Eg. ḥ.t [ḥ < *ḥ reg.] “Leib, Bauch” (PT, Wb III 356-7) || Sem.: Ar. ḥāwiy-at- (in pl.), also ḥāwiyāʔu “intestins” [BK I 522].
- Logone ḥil “schinden” [Lks. 1936, 97] || Sem.: Ar. ḥalaʔa I “3. enlever les chairs de la peau d’un animal égorgé ou mort (se dit d’un équarrisseur ou d’un corroyeur)” [BK I 475] || (?) Eg. ḥn.t [ḥ reg. < *ḥ] “Tierfell, Schlauch” (OK-, Wb III 367).
- Logone há “eingießen” [Lks. 1936, 97] || Eg. ḥwj “fließen” (MK, Wb III 48, 16-20), ḥwj > ḥj “Flut (eines Gewässers)” (PT, Wb III 48, 24).
- Logone há ~ hí ~ hii “werfen” [Lks. 1936, 97] || Eg. ḥw3 (GW for ḥw?) “werfen” (NE, Wb III 50, 2-4).

Nevertheless, even these Chadic cognates provide no evidence for what happened to the reflex of Eg. -ʕ. In general, we have observed a regular loss of AA *ʔ and *ʕ in the overwhelming majority of the Chadic daughter languages². But already V.M. Illič-Svityč (1966, 33, fn. 11) has discovered the regularity that Chadic ŋ often derives from *n + *ʔ (in a direct contact, i.e., *-nʔ-), which has been most recently extended by O.V. Stolbova (CLD I 10) to other laryngeals (*ḥ) and pharyngeals (*ḥ, *ʕ) also, with which I have to fully agree in the light of my own research experience. Now, working on the Dangla-Migama group section of a comparative dictionary of the East Chadic language groups, I have managed to identify an East Chadic cognate to Eg. ḥnʕ that carries clear trace of *-nʕ too in the form of -ŋ: WDng. íŋ “avec, au moyen de” [Fdr. 1971, 35], EDng. íŋ “1. avec, au moyen de, à, 2. avec, et ...,

¹ For a detailed and thorough analysis of the fundamental methodological mistakes of this new trend in Egypto-Semitic comparison see EDE I 333-393; Takács 2003, 59-132; 2006, 90-127; 2007, 5-43.

² Only the North Bauchi group in West Chadic seems to have retained consonantal traces of AA *ʕ. Cf. Takács 2002, 183-4; 2007, 103ff.

3. avec (temporel), à, au, 4. avec (lieu), vers, à, dans, 5. avec, en, de” [DM 1973, 141]. As for the regularity of AA *ḥ- > Dangla-Migama *ʔ-, I can quote the following evidence:

- Dangla-Migama *ʔēr- “to burn” [GT] > WDng. èrà “brûler, brûlant, chaud”, èrè “brûler (corps, aliment, surface)”, cf. èrikàw (f) “état de ce qui est chaud” [Fdr. 1971, 30], EDng. éré “brûler (feu)” [DM 1973, 104], Bdy. ʔèer (ʔèerí, ʔèerèṅ), pl. ʔèrèw (ʔèrèewí, ʔèrèewen) “2. brûler” [AJ 1989, 74] ||| Eg. ḥrj.t “der Ofen (des Metallarbeiters)” (NE, Wb III 148, 15) > Cpt. (SB) ḫpꜣw, (A) ḫpꜣy (f) “Ofen, Backofen” (KHW 383).
- ECh. *ʔUs- “(cool) wind” [GT] > WDng. ùsù (m) “1. vent, 2. froid” [Fdr. 1971, 50], EDng. úsú (m) “le vent, le froid” [DM 1973, 327], Mgm. ʔússú (m) “1. vent (froid), 2. tourbillon” [JA 1992, 132] | Mubi-Toram *ʔos- “(cool) wind”: Kofa ʔós (m) “wind” [Jng. 1977 MS, 9a, #207], Jegu ʔós “Kälte (‘Wind’)”, ʔósdâ “kalt” [Jng. 1961, 116], Birgit ʔúsì (m) “vent” [Jng. 2004, 360], Toram ʔooh [-h < *-s reg.] “éventer” (GT: denom. verb?) [Alio 2004, 261, #365], Ubi ʔòsò “vent” [Alio 2004, 274, #261] ||| Eg. ḥsj “1. frieren, 2. der Frierende” (MK-, Wb III 166, 1-2).
- WDng. ázé “tisser” [Fdr. 1971, 22] ||| Eg. ḥzj “Art des Spinnens” (MK, Wb III 159, 2) > Cpt. (S) ḫice, (B) ḫici “spinnen” (KHW 391).
- There is also an indirect proof from an other East Chadic group (behaving in this respect the same way), cf. Mubi-Toram *ʔasay ~ *ʔisey (pl.) “faeces” [GT]: Mubi ʔàsè (coll.) “fèces” [Jng. 1990 MS, 3], Kjk. ʔàsày “excréments” [Alio 2004, 239, #32], Kofa ʔis “faeces” [Jng. 1977 MS, 4, #56], Jegu ʔiš [-š < *-sy < *-se/iy] “Exkrement” [Jng. 1961, 113], Birgit ʔisèy (pl.) “déchets” [Jng. 2004, 354], Ubi ʔisò “défécations” [Alio 2004, 271, #145] ||| Eg. ḥs “Kot, Exkreme” (PT, Wb III 164, 4-10) ||| Bed. hūš [irreg. -š] “liquid faecal matter” [Rpr. 1928, 200] = “dünner Kot” [Zhl.] || (?) LECu.: Afar ḥays-ú “Urin, Harn” [Rn. 1886, 862], Saho haš(š)-ú “Harn” [Rn. 1890, 196].

Note that – in spite of its similarity – WDng. ḥny “avec les, au moyen de” [Fdr. 1971, 35] has presumably nothing to do with the Dangla preposition just examined above. It is rather a distinct word, perhaps akin to Eg. jn “Praeposition: durch jem., seitens jemds.” (OK-, Wb I 89).

Abbreviations of languages and author names

(A): Ahmimic, AA: Afro-Asiatic, AJ: Alio & Jungrathmayr, Akk.: Akkadian, Alb.: Albright, Ar.: Arabic, Aram.: Aramaic, (B): Bohairic, Bdy.: Bidiya, Bed.: Bedawye, Ch.: Chadic, Cpt.: Coptic, CT: coffin texts, Cu.: Cushitic, DM: Djibrine & Montgolfier, Dng.: Dangla, E: East(ern), Eg.: Egyptian, Fdr.: Fédry, Hbr.: Hebrew, JA: Jungrathmayr & Adams, Jng.: Jungrathmayr, KB: Koehler & Baumgartner, Kjk.: Kajakse, LECu.: Lowland East Cushitic, Lit.: literary, Lks.: Lukas, LP: Late Period, Mgm.: Migama, MK: Middle Kingdom, N: North(ern), NE: New Egyptian, OK: Old Kingdom, PT: pyramid texts, Rn.: Reinisch, Rpr.: Roper, S: South(ern), (S): Sahidic, Sem.: Semitic, W: West(ern), Zhl.: Zyhlarz.

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