THE ORIGIN OF ARABIC WORDS IN THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN LANGUAGE

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THE ORIGIN OF ARABIC WORDS
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ABSTRACT

[AR] أصل الكلمات العربية من اللغة المصرية القديمة

[EN] The ancient Egyptian language played an increasingly important role in archaeological studies. Much of the modern word chronology is closely connected with Egyptian chronology. Many modern words are recorded on Egyptian monuments and in ancient Egyptian documents. Arabic language, in particular, serves as a rich repository of this cultural legacy, with classical Arabic and modern names for cities and villages still used daily. As part of the effort to revive this linguistic heritage, I aim to explore the names and vocabularies that have their origins in the ancient Egyptian language and continue to be a part of our modern lexicon. The article can help students to exceed the difficulties of learning thousands of hieroglyphic and ancient Egyptian words by comparing them with our modern vocabulary in daily life. It will be recognized that there is a continuity of using the words from the beginning of the ancient Egyptian civilization.

KEYWORDS: Arabic, Egyptian, Hieroglyphic, origin, script, semitic, word.
I. INTRODUCTION

By delving deeply into various aspects of ancient Egyptian civilization and comparing them to our contemporary life, we can assert the continuity between the past and present. This is particularly evident in many of our inherited traditions and religious beliefs, which are deeply rooted in our ancestral heritage from the ancient Egyptian language. The knowledge of the ancient Egyptian civilization is essential in understanding its historical background and cultural context among all civilizations because it influenced the widest range of modern vocabularies. The following study examines the classical Arabic words in several documents in various Egyptian texts:

1-Word and Table 

"Amīr" means in classical Arabic the commander, prince, and chief. It was originally taken from the ancient Egyptian words "imy" means who is in and "r" means mouth; when combined, they mean "he whose orders are taken from his mouth", which was also used for princes. The word "imy-r", means overseer, steward, prefect, mayor, governor, or commander.

Documentation of "imy-r"

It is frequently mentioned in the Egyptian texts, e.g., on the scribal equipment’s mastabas of Giza Cemetery (G 2100) and the tomb of Kaninisut I (a high state official in the fourth dynasty), Mastaba (G 2155). On the North wall of Kaninisut I’s chapel, there is a scene of Kaninisut I accompanied by the title "imy-r" in different lines. "imy-r" title was found l. 4 and l. 7 and reads as follows:

, l. 4: "imy-r pr ḥm-kꜣ, «Steward Wehemka».

, l. 7 "imy-r-pr kꜣ-m-nfrt, «Steward Kaemnefret».

Another example of "imy-r" was in the 6th dynasty’s biographic inscriptions of Iny. The fragment was purchased in the Japanese antiquities market in the spring of 2009 without a specific reference to its origin or previous whereabouts. In the Kikugawa fragment, the

5 ḥm-kꜣ was also known kꜣ-m-nfrt, the owner of tomb D117 in Giza cemetery. He was the dignitary charged in the household of Giza. In the late 4th dynasty and early 5th dynasty, forty three people worked under the supervision of Wehemka. BÁRTA 2020: 330, 783.
results are completely undocumented. It is currently accessible to the public by the Ancient Egyptian Museum, Shibuya, Tokyo.7

In the 6th dynasty’s biographic inscriptions of Iny (the Kikugawa fragment), line three from the left side is mentioned imy-r that reads: r bnr hn.w b.n.i m stp-s3 bnr imy-r šmꜥw8, « to the residence. I went down to the palace together with the overseer of Upper Egypt».

2-Word and Table

Sea is called in the classical Arabic language bahr /بحر.9 The Egyptians had names for water sources that are still used in Arabic, including ba’r /بئر (well). The words bhr- bḥ in Egyptian language means well, fountain, basin, etc. The letter r in Egyptian language was transformed into the «h» letter in Arabic10. The ideogram of each word is bḥ-ḥbr n gp-ḥm ḥnꜥ imy-r šm NAFTA, meaning water abundance, inundation, flood, and well-irrigated land11.

Documentation of bḥ-brḥ

A- bhr was mentioned in Anastasi Papyrus III. It was mentioned in a list of fresh and salt-water and the fish habitats there, which reads as follows14

rdw n h{...} n bhr, «It means the buri-fish of the h{....} sea»15.

B- bhr was frequently mentioned in Anastasi Papyrus III, which reads, bḥ-ḥbr n bhr trmg, roar (sound of water) of the sea. It was also documented in the manuscript of Maspero in the works related to Egyptian and Assyrian archaeology in Paris and Cairo in 1880-1923. The text read bḥ Ṣnṯw, which means sea of Monthu16.

C- bḥ was mentioned in various spells of the Coffin Texts, such as spell 646 (VI 266p).
It reads:

\[
\text{wr.b.kw}i \text{ntr.kw}i \text{in br}h \text{wr}h \text{n.k im.f}^{17}, \quad \langle \text{I am purified and I am divined (a god), by the flood which you are purified with it}\rangle^{18}.
\]

3- Word and Table \textit{barkit} /بركة \textit{brkt}

\textit{Barkit} /بركة is the classical Arabic word for pond or pool\textsuperscript{19}. The word بركة is related to the ancient Egyptian word \textit{brkt}, «pond, pool, and lake»\textsuperscript{20}.

Documentation of \textit{brkt}

The word was attested in Egyptian texts, such as Anastasi Papyrus VI. It refers to the pool used by Bedouins in the Wadi Tumilat. The text reads\textsuperscript{21}:

\[
\text{tw n grh n m rdt sǐ nì mhw}i \text{išsw n idam ps htm n Mr-n-Pth-htp-hr-mrt nb ṣnh wdi snh nty Tkw r n;} \text{brkt n pr-Tm}^{22},
\]

«We are finished letting the tribe of Bedouin of Edom (was the ancient Kingdom in the Southern Levant east of the Jordan River) pass by the fort of \textit{Mr-n-Pth-htp-hr-mrt}, lord (who gives) life, prosperity, and health, which (referred) in Tjeku to the pool of temple of Atum»\textsuperscript{23}.

4- Word and Table \textit{baṣq} /بصق \textit{psg}

\textit{Baṣq} /بصق is the classical Arabic word for spit\textsuperscript{24}. It was derived from the hieroglyphic word \textit{psg}.\textsuperscript{25} It also means to spit\textsuperscript{25}.

\[\text{in}: \text{so says. Faulkner 1964: 22.}
\]
\[\text{kw}i: \text{1st singular old perfective. Gardiner 1927: 234, 597, §309.}
\]
\[\text{grh}: \text{to finish, sǐ: to pass, to cross, to spread out or to extend, išsw: Bedouins. Lesko 2002: vol.2, 79, 109, 191; mhw}: \text{tribe, people, family, warriors, relatives, htm: fort, tower, fortress. Lesko 2002: vol.1, 196, 377; Tkw: Wadi Tumilat (Old Egyptian Tjeku) is the 50-kilometre-long (31 ms.) dry river valley (wadi) to the east of the Nile Delta. In prehistory, it was a distributary of the Nile. It starts from the area of modern Ismailia and continues to the west. Gauthier 1929: vol.6, 83; Redmount 1995: 127-135.}
\]
\[\text{Hoch 1994: 106-107.}
\]
\[\text{22 grh: to finish, sǐ: to pass, to cross, to spread out or to extend, išsw: Bedouins. Lesko 2002: vol.2, 79, 109, 191; mhw}: \text{tribe, people, family, warriors, relatives, htm: fort, tower, fortress. Lesko 2002: vol.1, 196, 377; Tkw: Wadi Tumilat (Old Egyptian Tjeku) is the 50-kilometre-long (31 ms.) dry river valley (wadi) to the east of the Nile Delta. In prehistory, it was a distributary of the Nile. It starts from the area of modern Ismailia and continues to the west. Gauthier 1929: vol.6, 83; Redmount 1995: 127-135.}
\]
\[\text{Hoch 1994: 106-107.}
\]
\[\text{24 Wehr 1979: 61.}
\]
\[\text{25 Gardiner1927: 566.}
\]
Documentation of \textit{psg}

It was recorded in the Tale of Sinuhe\textsuperscript{26}.

\begin{align*}
\textit{n psg.tw} & \textit{i n wfs.tw r hr.t}, \text{«Although I was not spat on, I was not talked about in my presence»} \textsuperscript{27}
\end{align*}

\textbf{5- Word and Table \textit{baṭiḥh} / بطيخة \textit{bddw-kꜣ}}

In the classical Arabic language, watermelon is called بطيخ\textit{/ batiḥh} plural form, and the singular is \textit{baṭiḥh}/بطيخ. It originated from the Egyptian word \textit{bddw-kꜣ}.\textsuperscript{29}

\textbf{Documentation of \textit{bddw-kꜣ}}

The first occurrence of watermelon was attested in hieroglyphic inscriptions on tomb walls dating to fifth dynasty in Saqqara (3566-3333 BC). It was also mentioned in the tomb of Tutankhamen\textsuperscript{30}.

Watermelon was presented as food and offerings to nourish the dead in the afterlife. Thus, it spread outside Egypt throughout countries along the Mediterranean Sea by merchants. It was recorded in the Brugsch Papyrus\textsuperscript{31} or P. Berlin 3038. The line 193-194 reads\textsuperscript{32}:

\begin{align*}
\textit{ddwt r.f m kt phrt bddw-kꜣ}, \text{«sayings to (the mother of) him as another prescription of the watermelon \textit{bddw-kꜣ}»} \textsuperscript{34}
\end{align*}

\textbf{6- Word and Table \textit{بكاء-بكي} (bukā'-baka) \textit{iṣkb}}

\textit{(Bukā'-baka)} \textit{بكاء-بكي} are Arabic expressions indicating to lament, weep, commiserate, and cry\textsuperscript{35}. They originated from the hieroglyphic word \textit{iṣkb}. They are pronounced from right to left instead of left to right, meaning crying or mourning\textsuperscript{36}.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{26}P. Berlin 3022, lines 36-43. \hfill \textsuperscript{32}WRESZINSKI 1909: 45.
\textsuperscript{27}wfs: talk about, discuss. FAULKNER 1964: 60. \hfill \textsuperscript{33}kt: another, other, thought, device, plan, \textit{phrt}: prescription, remedy. DICKSON 2006: 66, 270.
\textsuperscript{28}BULLOCK 1978: 22-23; HANNIG 2006: 945. \hfill \textsuperscript{34}BRUGSCH 1880: vol.5, 463; WRESZINSKI 1909: 45, 106, 121.
\textsuperscript{29}FAULKNER 1964: 86; AL-BAALBAKI 1995: 241; DIF 2002: 54; DICKSON 2006: 42. \hfill \textsuperscript{35}WEHR 1979: 69.
\textsuperscript{30}WOENIG 1886: 201-203, 425. \hfill \textsuperscript{36}SASS 1991: 49; BATES 2004: 37.
\end{flushright}
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Documentation of ḳīkb

It was documented various times in coffin texts, such as CT VII 177 b spell 958. It reads as follows:

hr n.sn imyw ḳīkb, «those are in mourning (or crying)».

6- Word and Table ṭufāḥ/تًفبح ṭḥw- ḏḥw- ḏḥ

The meaning of apples in the classical Arabic language is ṭufāḥ/تًفبح38. Its origin was from the Egyptian word ṭḥw (كتب), ḏḥw (ذكبت), ḏḥ (ذبت), which means apples39.

Documentation of ṭḥw- ḏḥw- ḏḥ

It was mentioned in different types of writing, such as in Anastasi Papyrus III as ṭḥw, ḏḥw, while also mentioned in the papyrus of Rainer (Anastasi IV) as in ṭḥw. However, it was documented in the Papyrus of Harris I as ṭḥw. It was mentioned in the magical Demotic papyrus of London and Leiden as ṭḥw. It used the ȝ instead of ḏ. The text in Demotic papyrus reads as:

ky-ȝd ȝ prwt n ḏḥ ...., «another saying nine of apple seeds...»41.

7- Word and Table ṭamm/تم tm

Ṭamm/تم the word from the classical Arabic language, means has been completed and done42. It originated from the Egyptian word (tm) (تم) translated as completed, entire, all, everything, the universe, stop, and not do. The Gardiner sign list codes are (X1 U15 G17)43. Its grammar type is a verb and a noun. It is also used as a negative verb to negate wish form in main clauses and subordinate clauses, for example:

A. tm as a negative verb:

tm. f ṣḏm n s pn, «Wish he had not heard this man».

prt: seeds. LESKO 2002: vol.1, 152.
43 FAULKNER 1964: 298, 299.
B. The negative verb tm is used to negate interrogative sentences containing the interrogative particle km.

\[ \text{tm.t bn(w) hr-m} \nu, \text{«Why you do not row?»} \]

C. The verb of negation (tm) may be preceded by the particle of negation n or nn, meaning (it will not fail) on the basis that the negation of the negation is proven:

\[ n (n) \text{tm.i wšb, «I will not fail to answer } \text{(that means I will answer)} \]

Document Tm

According to the Pyramid Text 527, Tm is the image of the sunset as Ra at noon and Khepri, the scarab beetle, the morning sun. Atum was at the top of creation theory. The root tm, in Atum’s name, means «complete» or «finish». In the Pyramid Texts, Atum is Lord of Totality and the Completed One. Another example was fragments of silver jug during the 19th dynasty (New Kingdom) made for tm m t nb (royal butler and principal servant of the household), Ambassador in all lands, Tell Basta Bubastis.

8- Word and Table tmsāḥ/تمساح msh

Tmsāḥ/تمساح is a crocodile in the classical Arabic language. The word is derived from the ancient Egyptian origin as the msh in hieroglyphs. Its ideogram is the Gardiner sign list codes are (G17-O34-V28-I3).

Documentation of msh

It was documented in ancient Egyptian documents, such as in the Tale of Eloquent Peasant (B1 l. 212-213).

\[ \text{iw msh bt.f, «the crocodiles retreat him»} \]

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45 hr-m, ḫr : why. GARDINER 1927: 406 (§496).
46 GARDINER 1927: 264 (§345); NUR EL- DIN 1988: 71-72.
48 LEHNER 1997: 34.
49 PORTER & et Al 1969: 35.
52 GARDINER 1923: 5-25.
9- Word and Table *gubūb*/*جَبُوبَ* **gb-gbb**

*Gubūb*/*جَبُوبَ* is the classical Arabic word that refers to the soil or the thick land and means earth. Originating from the Egyptian word is the word *gb-gbb* 𓊱𓊱𓊱-𓊱𓊱-𓊱 (G38 D58 A40). It means earth and the god of the earth\(^{54}\).

**Documentation of *Gb***

*Gb* was the god of the earth. *Gb* was the husband and brother of the sky goddess Nut. He was also the father of Osiris, Isis, Nephthys, and Seth in the Heliopolitan Ennead. *Gb* appears as a man lying down below the arch of the sky goddess Nut or a man with a goose on his head. The god’s name was also documented several times in Coffin Texts (CT spell 1141, VII 488bb), (CT spell 1130 VII 467e), (CT spell 1099 VII 392a), (CT spell 1079 VII 351b). The Coffin Texts of the spell (131: II, 151c) reads\(^{55}\):

\[iw \, w̱d. \, dd. \, n \, Gb, \, rpṭ \, nṯw…, «Geb, chief (prince) of the Gods has decreed that …»\] \(^{56}\)

10- Word and Table *gamāḥ*/*جَمَاعَه* **ḏꜣmw**

*Gamāḥ*/*جَمَاعَه* is the classical Arabic word that means troop, group, company, or community. It is related to the ancient Egyptian word *ḏꜣmw* 𓊱𓊱𓊱-𓊱𓊱-𓊱, (U28-G1-G17-Z7-A17-A1: Z2). It means troop\(^{57}\).

**Documentation of *ḏꜣmw***

It was attested as a hieratic graffito dating to the Middle Kingdom. Its provenance was the 15\(^{th}\) nome of Upper Egypt. The text was mentioned in the Middle Kingdom’s hieratic papyrus from Kahun\(^{58}\).

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\(^{54}\) Faulkner 1964: 288; Dip 2002: 91.


\(^{58}\) The Kahun Papyrus (also called Petrie Medical Papyrus, Kahun Medical Papyrus, or Lahun Medical Papyrus, was the oldest known medical text in Egypt. It was found in El-Lahun (Faiyum, Egypt) by Flinders Petrie in 1889 and was first translated by Francis Llewellyn Griffith in 1893 and published in The Petrie Papyri: Hieratic Papyri from Kahun and Gurob. It is kept in the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology of the University College London. The later Berlin Papyrus and the Ramesseum Papyrus IV cover much of the same ground, often giving identical prescriptions. Griffith 1898, vol.1, 1-5.
The text reads⁵⁹:

\[
\text{ḏꜣ mw.k n tst rdi.n.k rd.sn, «Your battalion troop you appointed; they expand»}^{60}
\]

11-Word and Table al-ḥd الحد bd

The word al-ḥd/الحد in the classical Arabic language means punishment for a person who commits sin or fault and then is condemned for it. This punishment is called in Arabic الحد. The word originated in the ancient Egyptian language from bd (O4 D46 D41 A24), (O4 D46 D41 D40), which means «to punish, to attack, to conquer, to drive off»⁶¹.

Documentation of bd

The word was frequently mentioned in Karnak on the stele of Seti I (19th Dynasty). The text described the triumph of Seti I after his 1st campaign. It reads⁶²:

\[
iw \text{bd.f hpr....., «his punishment has happened ...»}^{63}
\]

II. CONCLUSION

Based on the data collected in this research from Semitic languages, the entire words of its languages are interpreted for this study, originating in the ancient Egyptian language. A team of researchers from the University of Bonn, Germany, in cooperation with the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities, succeeded in deciphering four hieroglyphs carved more than five thousand years ago on a large stone written with hieroglyphic signs in Wadi Abu Sabira area, eastern Aswan, southern Egypt. It is believed that the hieroglyphic script is the oldest in history. These classical Arabic words were derived entirely from the ancient Egyptian language but with a very long and complex development over time. This study provided valuable insights into the beliefs, customs, and daily life of the ancient Egyptians. By studying the ancient Egyptian language, researchers can gain a deeper appreciation for this remarkable civilization and its enduring legacy.

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⁵⁹ HANNIG 2006: 2819-2820.
⁶⁰ Ṭst: complaint, gang, battalion, troop. rd: to grow, a plant, be prosperous, to flourish, to expand. GRIFFITH 1898: vol.1, 2, l. line. 7; LESKO 2002: vol.2, 236; BATES 2004: 289.
⁶² KITCHEN 1975: 41, l.1; DAVIES 1997: 41ff.
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