Thomas Schneider. 2023. *Language Contact in Ancient Egypt* ("Einführungen und Quellentexte zur Ägyptologie," Volume 16). Berlin: LIT Verlag. 248 pages. Hardcover, € 29.90, ISBN: 978-3-643-91507-8

The book to be discussed here presents the first comprehensive introduction to language contact and multilingualism in ancient Egypt. The historical evidence of linguistic interferences of Egyptian with African, Near Eastern and Mediterranean languages is elaborated. The book is structured as follows:

In Chapter 1 background information is given. The volume aims to follow the language contact from the late 4th millenium BCE to the Late Period (2).

In Chapter 2 language contact within the African continent is scrutinized. The term *ṯḥnw* "Libya" occurs for the first time towards the end of the 4th millenium on the lower part of the "Libyan palette" (8). In sources around 2300 BCE the term *ṯḥnw* becomes conflated with *ṯmḥw* as a different expression for Libyans, the oldest mention of which being found in the expedition report of Weni (10-11). Only in the Ramesside era do Libyans play a larger role in the Egyptian textual and pictorial documentation (13). The ethnonym *nḥśi* is used as a generic Egyptian term for people from beyond the southern border since the 2nd dynasty (19). The root *nḥśi* may be linked etymologically with North Cushitic *nehas* "clean, pure" (19). The word *mḏ3i* as another term for Nubians can be traced back to a toponym *mḏ3* which in the 6th dynasty designates a territory on the Eastern desert of Lower Nubia (21). The vocabulary of Napatan is mostly related to that of younger Egyptian, the actual borrowings from local languages being very limited (28). The most distinctive feature of Napatan grammar consists of the loss of gender distinction for inanimate nouns (30). The comparison between the situation of Napatan and Old Persian regarding the use for royal representation (30) is poorly founded. The existence of earlier stages of the Meroitic language can be deduced from foreign names in Egyptian transcriptions of the 2nd millenium (33). The only securely identified Proto-Meroitic word in texts of the New Kingdom is *qore* "king" (35). A number of Egyptian loan words in Old Nubian exhibit a Paleo-Coptic vocalization (39). The explanation of Eastern Saharan **jerbo* "elephant" as a possible etymology for Egyptian *3bw* "elephant" (41) appears to be promising. The names of some members of the Kushite 25th dynasty may possess a (Proto-)Old Bedawiye (i.e., Beja) origin (44; for etymological connections between Egyptian and the Beja language as the modern heir of Old Bedawiye cf. Blazek 2021, 42/46/47/49/50/51). The Omotic word **dongor* "elephant" work as a possible late loan word in Demotic *tnhr* and Ptolemaic *dnhr,* both "elephant" (46). The clearest example for Egyptian-Proto-Berber language contact is *(t3) mrt* "chin, beard" which can be linked with Berber **(ta) mart* "beard" (55). The explanation of the name *Š3-š3-n-ḳ* with the Proto-Berber root *šišiw* "hatchling, chick" plus the suffixed possessive pronoun of the 1st person Plural, resulting in the meaning "our hatchling, chick" (57), remains doubtful, as does its

reference to the young Horus as a falcon hatchling. The name would sound strange at the latest when the recipient has reached adulthood. The Egyptian-Libyan connections during the Theban 11th dynasty are elucidated most famously by the "Dog Stele" of king Antef II (61).

In Chapter 3 the languge contact with the Near East is treated. The clay tablets from the Egyptian western oasis residence of Balat/6th dynasty point indirectly to the knowledge of Cuneiform tablets in Egypt (75). The best-documented case for Egyptian-Near Eastern language contact is the lexical transfer in the Egyptian New Kingdom (85). In Egyptian New Kingdom texts, c. 350 loan words of probably or possibly Semitic origin are preserved, the majority of which being Nort-West Semitic (86-87). The Egyptian *Myth of the Weather God´s Battle with the Sea* ("Astarte Papyrus") was adapted from Anatolian and Levantine originals (102; for the "Astarte Papyrus" cf. Ayali-Darshan 2020: 16-27). The text delivers the first attestations of the divine names Teššob and Yam (103). The alleged calques between the Egyptian *Tale of the Two Brothers* and the Ugaritic myth and water ritual about Baal and his elder brother KTU 1.12 (103) must be strongly doubted, because they are to unspecific. The alleged Aramaic loanword for the 1st cataract on the Ptolemaic famine stele – *grf* must be meant – (106) has to be deleted, the required Semitic root does not exist in Aramaic of all places (Bojowald 2017: 29-34)

In Chapter 4 the language contact with ancient Mediterranean languages is discussed.

The alleged connections between Egyptian Indo-Europaean (114-115) are probably only based on so-called "Kling-Klang-Etymologien." The rendering of "Persepolis" by Egyptian *prs-nw.t* on Darius I´s canal stele from Tell el-Maskhuta deserves special mention as an intriguing case of a Greek/Egyptian calque (121). The Egyptian word *ḳ-3-r-m-ti* "ashes" may be related to Latin *cremare* "to burn" and *carbo* "coal" (124; for further interferences between Egyptian and Latin cf. Hoffmann 2021: 158-159; Shisha-Halevy 2007: 47).

In Chapter 5 the phenomena of language contact are analyzed. Attestations of loanwords prior to the New Kingdom are rare (125). The largest group of loanwords is that of military language (128). In the Amarna and Ramesside Periods evidence exist for the training of specialists in the languages of the Near East (135).

In Chapter 6 foreign language communities in the Egyptian military are investigated. The military slang, involving technical terms, is poorly documented (141). The land register of Papyrus Wilbour from c. 1150 BCE presents a unique source for the question of the Sherden in Egypt (147). In the Egyptian administration, since the 20th dynasty an increase of officials of Libyan descent can be noted (148).

In Chapter 7 conclusions are drawn and in Chapter 8 the bibliography (157-204) is added. In Chapter 9 an index of words and phrases from individual languages is prepared, followed by a subject index. The book concludes in the appendix with the maps (1-4).

The book fulfilles its purpose as an introduction. Most of the arguments are understandable. The otherwise good impression is somewhat marred by the unnecessary redundancies, e. g. the remarks on Hurrian loan words (87/97/128), 1100 lexemes of Pre-Greek origin (116/ 119), borrowings from Hebrew into Egyptian from before the Persian Period (105/ 130), a Carian title (107/132), and a pidgin language for the merchants of the Greek trade emporium of Naukratis (136/149), to name a few.

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