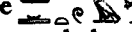

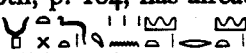





three times what appears to be  *mnw*, a common Late Egyptian word for 'gold' (Wb. III, 122, 4), plural in form, but used also with singular meaning.


JAROSLAV ČERNÝ

JEA 34: 121, 122

### Thoth as Creator of Languages

AMONG the hieratic ostraca which Professor Steindorff bought in Egypt many years ago for the Egyptian collection of Leipzig University and kindly lent to me for examination, there was one containing a hymn to Thoth and consisting of 12 lines written on one side only of a piece of limestone. In l. 6 Thoth is invoked in the following terms: , 'Hail to thee, Moon-Thoth, who made different<sup>3</sup> the tongue of one country from another', a remarkable statement which for a long time I thought unique in Egyptian literature. In this I was, however, mistaken, for P. Boylan, in his monograph on Thoth, p. 184, has already quoted as an epithet of Moon-Thoth from P. Turin, *Pleyte-Rossi*, 25, 10 . The papyrus is, to judge from the rather poor published facsimile, not too legible, and we must clearly read  instead of  and translate 'who distinguished (or separated)<sup>3</sup> the tongue of country from country'. Boylan also quotes (p. 197) the similar epithet applied to Thoth, Lord of Hermopolis,  'who distinguished<sup>3</sup> the tongue of every foreign land' from Brit. Mus. Stela 551, l. 19 (photo in *Hierogl. Texts from Egn. Stelae*, VIII, pl. xxviii), but, in note 1 on p. 101, does not sufficiently point out that it is, therefore, Thoth who according to the New Kingdom beliefs created foreign languages,

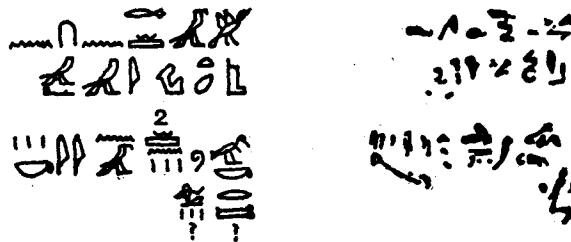
<sup>1</sup> Gardiner points out to me that *imy-r io* and *in io* may be identical, the former being a Middle, the latter a Late, Egyptian formation.

<sup>2</sup> The superfluous  is perhaps due to the following *n* of *ny.k*.

<sup>3</sup> Past participles alluding probably—as Professor Gunn pointed out to me—to some lost myth or legend according to which Thoth differentiated the languages of the various countries. These epithets might even be cited as evidence of an Egyptian parallel to the Hebrew fable of Yahweh and the Tower of Babel.

## Organization of Ushabti-figures

IN his book on ushabtis (*Les figurines funéraires égyptiennes*), pp. 6-7, Speleers draws attention to the fact that cases are known of 365 ushabtis found in one tomb—evidently one for every day of the year—or 401, i.e. 365+36, the latter being foremen, one for every ten workmen. Speleers suggests, without being able to adduce a definite proof, that these foremen of ushabtis were  $\text{imy-r } 10$  'chief of ten'. As a matter of fact they were supposed to be  $\text{great of ten}^1$  as shown by the first line of the hieratic inscription on a ushabti from Gurob published in Brunton and Engelbach, *Gurob*, pl. 46, 6. The rest of the inscription presents difficulties, but may perhaps be transcribed as follows:



'O "great of ten" of Eše, make thy men (?) work!' This request addressed to the figure of the foreman can hardly be invalidated by the fact that only three other ushabtis (see op. cit., p. 18) inscribed with the name of the owner ( $\text{imy-r } 10$ ) were found with it.

It is worth mentioning that another ushabti-figure from Gurob (op. cit., pl. 46, 4) bears written three times what appears to be  $\text{hwtiw}$ , a common Late Egyptian word for 'chief' (*Wb.* III, 122, 4), plural in form, but used also with singular meaning.

JAROSLAV ČERNÝ

## Thoth as Creator of Languages

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another proof that by that time Egyptian gods had ceased to be purely national and were believed to show some concern about other nations as well, a change for which Sethe has quoted interesting indirect evidence in *Griffith Studies*, pp. 432-3. Thoth was, of course,  $\text{⤵} \text{𓄏} \text{𓄏} \text{𓄏}$  'Lord of Iunut'<sup>1</sup> (Borchardt, *Grabdenkmal des Königs Šasḥu-ṛer*, II, pl. 8, and text p. 83) and  $\text{⤵} \text{𓄏} \text{𓄏}$  'Lord of foreign lands' (*Urk.* I, 54 = Gardiner-Peet, *Inscr. of Sinai*, pl. vi; Borchardt, loc. cit., pl. 12) as early as the Fifth Dynasty. In view of this the role of Thoth seems earlier than the idea expressed in the hymn to Aton (Davies, *El Amarna*, VI, pl. 27, ll. 8-9).<sup>2</sup> There the distinction of languages and of the colour of skin is attributed to Aton: 'tongues are distinguished ( $\text{𓄏} \text{𓄏}$ ) in speaking, their character likewise; their skin is made different ( $\text{𓄏} \text{𓄏} \text{𓄏} \text{𓄏}$ ), (because) thou hast differentiated the peoples.'

JAROSLAV ČERNÝ

<sup>1</sup> Inhabitants of the Sinai peninsula.

<sup>2</sup> It was also Professor Gunn who drew my attention to this passage.