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A LITTLE MOON-LIGHT ON AFROASIATIC “NIGHT”

1. Attestation in Hieroglyphic and Demotic Egyptian and orthographic variants.
2. Attestation in Coptic and vocalization.
3. Survey of existing etymologies.
4. Comments.
- 5./6. New etymology.
7. Conclusion.

1. The Egyptian word *3bd/ibd* „month“ (1) is known from the beginning of the Old Kingdom. From the Greek period the meaning (1i) „name of a moon“ is also attested (Wb. I, 65). The transcription *3bd* is confirmed by the personal name (1b) *3bdw* (Wb. I, 8), but the variant reading *ibd* is retained (Gardiner 1988, 486), cf. also Demotic *ibt, ibd* „month“ (Černý 1976, 33; Vycichl 1984, 39 respectively).

| (1a) OK | (1b) OK: personal name | (1c) MK | (1d) NK | (1e) NK: Dynasty 22 |
|---------|------------------------|---------|---------|---------------------|
| | | | | |

Satzinger (1998-99, 81) explains the ‘bizarre’ spelling of the New & Late Egyptian records (1e+f) by insertion of the sign complex (1g+h) *dw3.w* „tomorrow“ (Wb. V, 422):

| (1f) Late Egyptian | (1g) MK | (1h) Late Egyptian | (1i) Greek Period |
|--------------------|---------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | | | |

2. The word continues in Coptic: Sahidic ⲉβⲟⲩ, pl. ⲉβⲁⲧⲉ, Bohairic ⲁβⲟⲩ, pl. ⲁβⲏⲧ „month“ (Vycichl 1984, 39). Osing (1976, 45) proposes the vocalization **3abād* of the abstract name, according to the pattern **sadām*, forming also nomina actionis and infinitives. Similarly Loprieno (1996, 52, 61-62) who reconstructs sg. **3abád* vs. pl. **3abūdaw*.

3. Up to the present time the following etymologies of this word have been proposed, in chronological order:

3.1. Ember (1913, 118, #73): Arabic *badr*, pl. *budūr* „full moon“.

3.2. Farina (1924, 323) & Ember (1930, 6): Semitic $\sqrt{\text{'-b-d}}$ „to wander, be lost“; the Egyptian word „month“ would thus be the perfect participle „wanderer“ → „moon“ → „month“.

3.3. Cohen (1947, 77, #5): Central Cushitic **'ärb-* „month, moon“ > Bilin *'ärba* „month, moon“, Qwara *arfā* id., Khamtanga *arfa* „month“, *arba* „moon“, Kemant *arfa* „month“, Awngi *árfi* „month“, *árfá* „moon“, Kunfāl *arfa* „month“ (Appleyard 2006, 100). Cohen's so-called „Sidamo“ cognates represent in reality the Omotic counterparts from the Sidamo region (former province): She *erf*, Bench *'yarp*; Dime *'irφe*, Hamar *arpe*, *arfi*, Banna *arpi*, Ari & Ubamer *arfi*, Galila *árfená* „moon“ (Blažek 2008, 80, 116).

3.4. Osing (1976, 45, 511, fn. 238): Egyptian *3bd* „dauern“ (missing in Wb.) & Arabic $\sqrt{\text{'-b-d}}$ „to continue, go on“, *'abad* „eternity“.

3.5. Skinner (1977, 31): West Chadic: Hausa *wata* „moon“ and North Bauchi: Diri *afada* „moon“.

3.6. D'jakonov et al. (1981, 45-46): Egyptian *bd* „erhellen“ ||| West Chadic **b-d* „to open, begin“ or Angas-Sura **bit* „morning“.

4. Comments:

Ad 3.1. Cf. also Arabic *'ibdār* „light of the full moon“ (Steingass 1988, 3). The Arabic word *badr*, pl. *budūr* „full moon“ is isolated within Semitic (see DRS 46), but an internal etymology is possible if it is analyzed as a compound in which the first component is the root attested in Arabic *badi^c*, pl. *bud^c* „new“ (Steingass 1988, 111), and the second member is the root $\sqrt{\text{'-w-r}}$ „light“, continuing e.g. in Ugaritic *ar / ir* id., Hebrew *'ōr*, *'ōrā* id., and especially in Soqotri *'ere* „moon“ (DRS 13). The hypothetical compound **bud^c-'ūr* „new light“ could be simplified as *budūr* and reinterpreted as a plural from which the regular singular *badr* was formed. Alternatively it is possible to surmise a compound of Arabic *badi^c* „new“ & *ray^c* „light; brightness of the day“ (Vycichl 1959, 30; 1984, 170; EDE I, 363). Concerning semantics, cf. Hebrew *hodesš* „new moon; month“ : *hādās* „new, fresh“, Phoenician *hdš* „new moon“, Ugaritic *hd₁* „month“ : *hd₂* „new“ (HAL 294; DRS 838).

Ad 3.2. The meaning „to wander“ is not actually attested in Semitic: Akkadian *abātu* „to perish“; Ugaritic *'bd* id.; Hebrew *'ābad* „id., go astray“; Aramaic *'ābad*

„to be lost“, Syriac *ʿebad* „id., come to naught“; Arabic *ʿabada* „to become wild (cattle), shy away“; Geez *ʿabda* „to be insane, become enraged, be mad“ etc. (DRS 2; Leslau 1987, 2-3; HAL 2). The primary meaning „to be lost; disappear“ *vel sim.* is too far from „month“.

Ad 3.3. Cohen speculated about a correspondence between Egyptian *d* and Central Cushitic **r*. This is not regular, but there is another possibility. The Egyptian word is reconstructible as **ʿabad* in the first approximation, but also **rabad* or even **arbad*, if the primary skeleton was **i3bd*. But the final *-d* is so far explainable (cf. Takács 2005, 84). Maybe a compound **ʿarb(V)-baḏ^o* „moon of the night“, modifying the etymology explained in §5?

Ad 3.4. Besides Arabic *ʿabada* the Semitic root $\sqrt{b-d}$ continues in Hebrew *ʿobēd* „duration“ and Ugaritic *šd ubdy* „loan for ever“ (HAL 3; DRS 2). None of these meanings are directly compatible with the concrete time interval „month“.

Ad 3.5. Takács (2005, 83-84) declares the mutual phonetic incompatibility of Skinner’s examples.

Ad 3.6. Takács (2005, 84) is right in his doubts concerning a common semantic denominator of examples collected by D’jakonov’s team. For more about Egyptian *bd* see EDE II, 359.

Takács himself (2005, 84) discusses some new possibilities, but with healthy criticism:

Central Cushitic: Khamir *bātā* „beginning of month“; East Cushitic: Oromo *baatii* „new moon“, Burji *bāati* id. < Geez *baʿat* ~ *bāʿat* „entry; beginning of month“ : *boʿa* $\sqrt{b-w}$ „to entry“ (Leslau 1987, 83, 114-15).

5. The key to a new etymology may be found in Tashelhit *ayyur wwaḏan* „full month“, lit. „month of the nights“ (cited by Vycichl 1984, 39) = Tashelhit of Tazerwalt *ayyūr wāḏān* „ein Monat an Nachten“ = „die Zeit von einem Monat“, where the plural (*w*)*āḏān* has also been used in the meaning „Zeit“ (Stumme 1899, 241).

5.1. The word „night“ is among the best preserved words common to all groups of Berber languages:

East: Siwa *iṭ* (Laoust), *īṭ* (Vycichl), Sokna *iṭi* (Sarnelli), Foqaha *aṣyāḏ* (Paradisi), Augila *ávoṭ*, pl. *voṭáwen* (Paradisi).

North: Ghadames *ībeḏ*, pl. *ībeḏawen* (Lanfry), *iḏaḏ*, pl. *-en* (Motylinski), Jebel Nefusa *yeṭ*, pl. *iṭan* (Motylinski), Nefusa of Fasato *īṭ*, pl. *īṭáwen* (Beguinot), Zwara *īḏ* (Paradisi), *iḏ* (Mitchell), Sened *iṭ*, pl. *ieṭan* (Provotelle), Shawiya *iḏ* (A. Basset), Matmata *ēḏ* (Destaing), Wargli & Mzabi *iḏ*, pl. *iḏan* (Delheure), Kabyle *iḏ*, pl. *uḏan* & *aḏan* (Dallet), Figuig *iḏ*, pl. *iḏan* (Kossmann), Beni Snus *ēḏ*, *ēḏ*,

pl. *idḏān* (Destaing), Rif: Iznacen *id'* (Destaing), Tamazight *id*, pl. *iḏawen* (Cid Kaoui), Tashelhit *yḏ*, pl. *āḏān* (Stumme).

West: Zenaga *iḏ*, pl. *āḏan* (Taine-Cheikh), *id'*, pl. *āḏ'an* (Nicolas).

South: Ghat *iheḏ*, pl. *-en* (Nehli), Ahaggar *éhōḏ*, pl. *ihăḏān* (Foucauld), Taneslemt *ehaḏ & ihəḏ* (Militarev), Ayr *ehăḏ*, pl. *yăḏan & ihăḏawān* (Alojaly), East Awlemmiden *ehăḏ*, pl. *ăḏan* (Alojaly), Tadghaq *éhæḏ*, pl. *ihéḏan* (Heath).

5.1.1. There have been several attempts to reconstruct the Berber protoform:

DRB III, 436-37: \sqrt{d}_8 .

Kossmann 1999, 69, #55; 96-97, #189: **iĤed*.

Prasse 1969, 45, #145: $\sqrt{H_2-d-H_1}$.

Prasse 1974, 145: South Berber **ē-baḏaH*, pl. **ī-baḏāH-an*.

5.2. The closest cognates to Berber „night“ are found in the most widespread word for „night“ in Chadic languages, as first determined by Rössler (1979, 20; see examples from JI 256-57; Kraft 1981; Sölken 1967, 99-101)¹:

West:

Angas-Ankwe: Angas *paar*, Sura *par*, Gerka *piru* id. vs. *par-ra* „dawn“, Tal *p^hāi*, Yiwom *p^hwɔ:t^h* „night“ < **pār ~ *par* (Takács 2004, 281).

Ron: Kulere *máfōd*, Bokos *fwo'*, Daffo *fulul*.

Bole-Tangale: Bole *bōḏi*, Kirfi *būdī*, Karekare *bèèḏi*, Dera *bōri* < **baḏi* (Schuh 1984, 211).

South Bauchi: Boghom *vōd*, Kir *fūt*, Tala *káfūr*, Jimi *berhudo*, Guruntum *bauru/vūru*, Zaar *gùvùḏi* etc. (Shimizu 1978, 28).

Bade-Ngizim: Bade *dəvig*, Ngizim *divid*.

Central:

Tera: Tera *vidki*, Pidlimdi *viḏiti*.

Margi: Bura-Pela *viri*, Kilba-Pela *vəi*, Margi *vi'ī*, Ngwaxi *viri*, Chibak *viri*.

¹ D'jakonov et al. (1981, 49) connected the Berber „night“ with Assyrian *bādu* „evening“, *biādu(m)* „to spend the night“, but a more archaic form is preserved in Akkadian *biātum* „to spend the night, stay overnight“, a derivative of *bītum* „house“ (CDA 35, 43, 46). Bade (West Chadic) *pūtē* „west“ and Kotoko (Central Chadic): Affade *butéh*, *fūtē*, Ngala *futé*, Klesem, Makari *futé*, Gulfei, Shoe *bute* „west“, are loans from Kanuri *fūte* „west“ (Sölken 1967, 200-01). On the other hand, D'jakonov et al. (1981, 73) connect the Chadic „night“ with South Semitic: Soqotri *bó^cor*, Harsusi *ba^car*, Mehri *bār* „voyager la nuit; avoir lieu pendant la nuit“ (but Leslau 1938, 92 related it to Hebrew *ḥereb* „evening“, Arabic *ḡarb*) || East Cushitic: Saho *bar* „night; age“ (Vergari), Afar *bar* id. (Parker & Hayward) < East Cushitic **bar(r)-* „time, age, year“, while Sidamo *bero*, Kambatta *bere*, Gedeo *bere-k'e*, Burji *baray* „yesterday“ < HEC **bere* id. < East Cushitic **bar-/*ber-/*bor-* „yesterday“ (Sasse 1982, 34-35; Hudson 1989, 155, 171).

Higi: Higi-Nkafa *ivrɛ*, Fali Kiria *vɪllɛ*, Fali Gili *vĩrđĩ*, Higi Futu *vidĩ*.

Bata: Gude *vida*, Nzangi *vədə*.

Lamang: Lamang *vidĩ*.

Mandara: Wandala *vąjíá*, Glavda *áávəđà*, Guduf *vide*, Dghwede *v(ə)đĩ*, Gava *vidĩyà*.

Sukur: Sukur *vət*.

Mafa-Mada: Mafa *vàđ*, Muktele *vəđ*, Mofu *tàvəd*, Gisiga *dùvúd*, Hurza *hòvəd*, Vame *lùvəd*, Muyang *mə̀lávəd*, Mada *mə̀lárə̀vəd* < **(hu-la-)vad* (Rossing 1978, 298).

Daba: Daba *vùdũ*, Musgoy *vədu*, Kola *vúđú*.

Gidar: Gidar *đə́fđə*.

Kotoko: Afade *fáđáy*, Maltam *fáđày*, Makari *fàđày*, Gulfey *fàđày*, Kuseri *̀nvàdè*, Logone *̀nvàdè*, Mazera *̀nvəđày*, Zina *lə̀və̀yn* < **faday* (Tourneux 2003, 119-20, 122).

Musgu: Musgu *nufúr*.

Masa: Zime-Batna *ndùfun*.

East:

Sokoro: Sokoro *bàđùm*, Mawa *bə̀dəŋ*.

5.2.1. There have also been several attempts to reconstruct the Chadic protoform:

Newman 1977, 29, #92: **bəđĩ* „night“

Stolbova 1987, 154: Chadic: (West) **bardi* „night“.

Jungrauthmayr & Ibrizimow 1994, 128: **b-d* „night“.

Stolbova 1996, 22: Common Chadic **-bor-odi* „night“.

5.3. Egyptian *d* corresponds to both (a) voiced dental and (b) its emphatic counterparts in other Afroasiatic languages (EDE I, 240-48):

(a) Egyptian *dw3* „to praise“ ||| Semitic $\sqrt{d-l-l}$ id. ||| West Chadic **dal-* “to love, like”.

Egyptian *rd* “foot” ||| Semitic $\sqrt{r-d-y}$ “to tread, step” ||| East Cushitic: Somali *raad* “footprint, trace”.

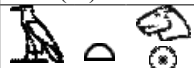
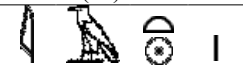
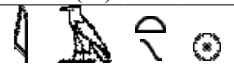
Egyptian *ıdmj* „red linen“ ||| Semitic $\sqrt{’-d-m}$ “to be red” ||| Cushitic: (Central) Awngi *dəmmi* “red”, Kunfāl *demé* id. || East Cushitic **dum-/ *dim-* “red” || (South) Qwadza *dimayi-* “red”||

(b) Egyptian *d3 /dr/* „niederschmettern, to subdue“||| Semitic: Arabic *ṭara’a* „to descend, befall“ ||| Berber $\sqrt{d-r}$ „to descend, go down into, fall“ ||| West Chadic: Ron: Bokkos *door*, Daffo-Butura *doṛ* “to descend”.

Egyptian *d3 /dl/* „to copulate, coire“ ||| East Cushitic **ḏal-* „to beget, give birth“.

Egyptian *qnd* „wütend werden, zürnen“ ||| Semitic $\sqrt{q-n-t}$ „zürnen“.

6. It remains to explain the first member of the hypothetical compound *3-bd* / *i-bd*. A good candidate could be Egyptian (2a) *3.t* „Zeit“ (Wb. I, 1) attested from the Middle Kingdom, known also from the variant (2b, 2c) *i3.t* „Zeitpunkt“ recorded in the New Kingdom (Wb. I, 27), or some formation of the verb (3) *i3* „weit schreiten“ (Wb. I, 26), known from the Old Kingdom and Pyramid Texts which may be a source of both *3.t* „Zeit“ and *i3.t* „Zeitpunkt“². The primary meanings of this hypothetical compound *„night-timer“ ~ *„night-timing“ or “walking through the night” represent a factual designation of the moon as a timekeeper.

| (2a) MK | (2b) NK | (2c) NK | (3) Pyr, OK |
|---|---|---|--|
|  |  |  |  |

7. In summary, assuming the preceding arguments are valid, it is possible to add the Egyptian counterpart to the Berber-Chadic isogloss „night“.

Abbreviations: HEC Highland East Cushitic; NK New Kingdom; OK Old Kingdom; Pyr Pyramid Texts; RG Rgved.

² Vycichl (1984, 56) derived *3.t* „time“ from one of three homonymous verbs *w3y* (i) „sich anschicken zu etwas, in einen Zustand geraten“, (ii) „kommen“, (iii) „sich einlassen“ (Wb. I, 246, 244). But none of these comparanda stand as semantically close to „time“ as „weit schreiten“. A parallel semantic development has been proposed e.g. for Germanic **aþnaz* & **aþnja* > Gothic dat. pl. *aþnam*, gen. pl. *at-aþnjis* “year”, Latin *annus* “year”, Umbrian *acnu* “annos”, Oscan *akenei* “in anno” < **atno-*, all from a verb preserved in Vedic *sám atasi* [RV I, 30.4] “du rennst darauf los”, *átamána-* [RV II, 38.3] “wandering”. Maybe also Sanskrit (lex.) *atna-* “sun” is of of the same origin. Similarly Old English *wadól* „full moon“ vs. Old High German *wadalôn*, *wallôn* „to wander“, Middle Irish *fethid* „walks“ (see Schaffner 2004, 286). Vergote (1965, 93; 1973, 114) etymologized Coptic Sahidic *oo2*, Bohairic *io2*, Fayyumic *aa2* “moon” in a similar way, on the basis of Semitic $\sqrt{r-w-h}$ > Arabic *râha* „to go, travel“ & $\sqrt{h-w-r}$ > Arabic *hâra* “to return”, Thamudic *hr* id., Geez *hora* „to go (forth)“ (Leslau 1987, 249-50; DRS 850-51). The Coptic word „moon“ is a continuation of Egyptian *i^ch* “moon” (Old Kingdom) which can be vocalized as **ya^chaw* and further derived from **wa^chaw* with regard to use of the ‘moon-determinative’ “)” in both the words “moon” and *w^ch* “Körnerfrucht” (Wb. I, 289) < **wa3haw* < **warhaw*, while the traditional comparison with Semitic **warih-* “month” is more problematic due to incompatibility of *h* vs. *h̄* than metathesis (Vycichl 1984, 156). But there are other alternative comparanda of Egyptian *i^ch* “moon” (EDE I, 280), namely in East Cushitic **le^c*- id. ||| West Chadic: South Bauchi **li(-N)* ||| South Berber **tâ-lilit-t*, pl. **tî-liHlâH* „moon“ < “lunar month”, from $\sqrt{l-H-H}$ (Prasse 1974, 170). On the other hand, for Egyptian *3.t* „time“ external comparanda have also been sought. Zyhlarz (1932-33: 165, #1) saw a cognate in Beja ’*aa* f. „time, period“ (Roper) = ’*at* „tempo“ (Cifoletti), but it could instead be an ancient loan. Orel & Stolbova (1995, 23, #85) compare *3.t* and *i3.t* with hypothetical West Chadic cognates from the Angas-Ankwe group: Angas *yi(i)* „year; time“, Mapun *yí* „year“, Chip *yī* id., Goemai *yii* „year“, Montol *yí* „time“ < **yí* „year“ vs. Sura *yit* „times“ = German *mal*, Mapun *yit* id. < **yit* (Takács 2004, 416, 419; see also Id. 1999, 102).

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Acknowledgement:

The present study was prepared thanks to the grant of the Grant Agenture of the Czech Republic, P406/12/0655. The author would like to express his gratitude to John D. Bengtson for help with correction of English.

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