

Egyptologese

A Linguistic Introduction

Carsten Peust


Egyptologese¹ is, in brief, what Egyptologists utter when they read Ancient Egyptian words or phrases aloud. This idiom is spoken by a few thousand people, most of whom live in Egypt, Europe including Russia, and the US. While Ancient Egyptian is a fairly well researched language, not least thanks to Loprieno's (1995) study, Egyptologese has received almost no scholarly attention, neither by Egyptologists nor by general linguists.

Egyptologese began to take shape in the 19th century. At that time, it did not yet have an independent status but was (in its speakers' minds, at least) largely identical with Ancient Egyptian. In that era, knowledge of the Egyptian hieroglyphs was (or seemed to be) more advanced than today in three respects: It was authentic, synchronic and international. Let me explain in each case what I mean. The term "authentic" in this context means that scholars of that age were convinced that their readings came close to reality. When scholars cited Egyptian words such as *rā* "sun", *maāt* "truth" or *āuf* "flesh", they assumed that their transliterations closely mirrored the pronunciation by the Ancient Egyptians. Of course, certain details, like the differences between the various *a*-sounds, were still in need of clarification, but Egyptologists were confident that both the consonants and the vowels of the ancient words were known in reasonable approximations. Yet, already then, the readings suggested some minor gaps within their knowledge. Take the words *rīā* "to give" and *hru* "day" as examples. In each of these items, two consonants and the primary vowel were assumed to be known, but the words are difficult to pronounce as they stand. So some less important or less prominent vowels, for which writing provided no evidence, were suspected of being hidden at the beginning. To achieve a smooth pronunciation of this and similar words, Egyptologists inserted *e*-vowels where it seemed suitable to them. In these specific items, Egyptologists decided for the spoken forms "erta" (Birch 1877: 23; de Rougé 1851: 130) ~ "ertā" (Brugsch 1867 ff., III: 877; Ebers 1876: 412) ~ "ertā" (Mariette 1855: 95) ~ "ertā" (Maspero 1871: 116) ~ "erṭā" (Budge 1899: 100) and "heru" (Brugsch 1867 ff., III: 906; de Rougé 1867 ff., II: 129) ~ "héru" (Ebers 1875, I: 21) ~ "herou" (Mariette 1855: 95).

¹ I am grateful to Camilla Di Biase-Dyson who assisted me in coining this term. I very much appreciate the help of the many Egyptologists from various countries who provided me with lots of information concerning their way of pronouncing Egyptian.

This was the germ of an artificial pronunciation that later became entirely detached from Ancient Egyptian and developed into Egyptologese. There was even a minority of words for which the ancient sources provided no vowel at all, so that the need for inserting artificial *e*'s was even more pressing. These included items such as “to know”: *reḫ* (Brugsch 1867 ff., III: 868; Budge 1899: 231; de Rougé 1867 ff., III: 37) – *rekh* (Loret 1889: 104); “god”: *neter* (Brugsch 1867 ff., III: 824; Budge 1899: 64; Ebers 1876: 401; Loret 1889: 41; Mariette 1855: 95; de Rougé 1851: 25); “to hear”: *setem* (Brugsch 1867 ff., IV: 1344; Budge 1899: 41) – *sétem* (Ebers 1875, II: 42) – *seṭem* (Birch 1877: 63; de Rougé 1867 ff., I: 100) – *sedjem* (Loret 1889: 62); “ear”: *mester* (Brugsch 1867 ff., II: 713) – *mest'er* (Budge 1899: 37; de Rougé 1867 ff., IV: 66) – *méstér* (Ebers 1875, II: 25) and “incense”: *senter* (Brugsch 1867 ff., IV: 1258; Loret 1889: 15; de Rougé 1867 ff., IV: 48) – *sénter'* (Ebers 1875, I: 19).

On the whole, though, many more vowels were known in the early days of Egyptology than today. The extensive available documentation even enabled those scholars to identify rhymed passages in Egyptian texts, such as *Ámun Rā / neb nest ta*” or *āa nerau / ur bau' / seḫemu ḫāu / ut' ḫetep' ar tefau*” spotted by Ebers (1877).² This is literary criticism on a level way beyond the capabilities of modern Egyptologists.

But then, a cataclysmic event occurred towards the end of the 19th century, which led to an implosion of the realistic attitude towards their subject that Egyptologists had enjoyed before. At that time,³ scholars became aware that all the hieroglyphic phonograms they had been interpreting as vowels were in fact consonants, sometimes of indeterminable value. This already holds for the first sign of the Egyptological alphabet, formerly “a”, which came to be transliterated as “ʾ”, an arbitrary symbol for something that was now believed to be a consonant of uncertain pronunciation: “Die Wahl des ʾ für  soll nur die Unsicherheit seines Lautes ausdrücken” (Brugsch/Erman 1889: 3; today recognized as /r/). The transcription changed to a purely consonantal skeleton. What had formerly been realistic transcriptions turned into obscure, abstract formulas.

The implications of the consonantal reinterpretation of the Egyptian writing system cannot be overestimated. It came as a shock for the Egyptologists to realize that their knowledge of the ancient vowels vanished to zero and all Egyptian words became impossible to pronounce: “Die Worte [...] sind unaussprechbar, da sie der Vokale entbehren und das macht sich im akademischen Unterricht oft unangenehm fühlbar” (Brugsch/Erman 1889: 3); “Freilich ist es ein grosser Uebelstand, dass die durch die neue Transscription wiedergegebenen Worte unaussprechbar sind” (Steindorff 1892: 729); “Wenn wir die hieroglyphischen Texte mit den Zeichen unserer Umschreibung wiedergeben [...], so ist es für uns schlechterdings unmöglich, diese vokallosen Ungeheuer auszusprechen” (Erman 1912: 24); “Alle die Namen der großen

2 In modern transliteration: *ʾmn r' / nb ns.t b.wy; ʿ3 nrw / wr b3w / šm h3.w / wd ḥtp.w lri dβ.w.*

3 The issue of priority is somewhat delicate since the insight appeared gradually. Brugsch/Erman (1889: 2) already considered the huge majority of all elementary phonograms as consonantal but still characterized two of them as “i-Laute”. Essentially the same readings were already assumed by Steindorff (1884). The consonantal interpretation was brought to a definite conclusion by Steindorff (1892: 726): “Die obigen Darlegungen haben wohl gezeigt, dass das ägyptische Alphabet ebenso wie das Altsemitische ein Consonantalphabet ist”.

Könige und Helden der Vergangenheit [...] sind wesenlose Schemen für uns. Die alten Ägypter, die alles getan haben, um durch ihre Denkmäler ihren Namen auf die Nachwelt zu bringen [...] – infolge der Vokallösigkeit ihrer Schrift haben sie es doch nur halb erreicht. Ihre Namen leben bei der Nachwelt nur in Umgestaltungen und Verballhornungen fort, über die sie sich im Grabe umdrehen würden, wenn sie noch darin lägen” (Sethe 1923: 158). Some Egyptologists, among them Sethe (1923), made desperate attempts to compensate for the loss of knowledge about Egyptian vowels by exploiting external sources like Coptic and cuneiform. But this was only to find out that these sources shed light on no more than fragments of the Egyptian vocabulary. To make things worse, scholars became aware of various diachronic changes and similar previously unknown complications, which left them even more at a loss.

Understandably, there were some who rejected the new transcriptions as long as possible. Probably the last Egyptologist⁴ to have stuck to the old system was Edouard Naville: “Cette langue que transcrit le grand Dictionnaire allemand, ce beau travail de compilation, ce n’est certainement pas la reproduction du langage parlé par des Égyptiens. Alors qu’est-ce? Et que sont ces signes nouveaux qui ne se trouvent dans aucune langue? Transcription me paraît signifier une écriture qu’on peut lire, ce qui n’est pas le cas dans la grande majorité des mots du Dictionnaire allemand” (Naville 1926: vi). In esoteric circles, the old pronunciation patterns have retained some degree of reality up until today. For example, the Polish informant Lucyna Łobos, who was an Egyptian priestess under Cheops in one of her former lives, remembers to have heard this pharaoh’s name being pronounced as “Khufu” (Wójcikiewicz 2006: 112).

The loss of knowledge at that time was not limited to the pronunciation but affected other aspects of Egyptology as well. It may suffice to mention the testimony of classical and biblical sources, or of the Egyptian king lists, which had been taken at face value by the early Egyptologists but came to be radically rejected by Adolf Erman and his fellow members of the Berlin school.⁵

The second characteristic of 19th century Egyptology is that its object of study was essentially synchronic. Even though Brugsch dated the beginning of the Egyptian first dynasty to as early as 4400 BC (Brugsch 1877: 764), scholars of that time believed in the existence of a single hieroglyphic language with no major diachronic variation. Brugsch’s grammar (Brugsch 1872) documents this assumption in an impressive way since it deals with all the various stages of Egyptian at a time, collapsing them into a single system. Only the texts in Demotic characters were considered as a different “dialect”, but even here the profound distinction from earlier Egyptian was not really acknowledged.

⁴ I am ignoring here totally uninformed approaches of fantasists such as Huang (1998).

⁵ “Hingegen was uns das alte Testament über ägyptische Verhältnisse mitteilt, das kann man nicht misstrauisch genug ansehen. [...] Selbst wenn man annehmen will, dass der Verfasser der betreffenden Teile der ‘Bücher Mosis’ Aegypten nicht bloss vom Hörensagen kannte, so hätte doch seine Schilderung nur für das Aegypten seiner Zeit (des achten Jahrhunderts) Interesse [...] Was Herodot sich von den Tempeldienern, die ihm als Ciceroni dienten, über die alte Zeit Aegyptens erzählen liess, ist freilich meist auf den ersten Blick als unrichtig und sagenhaft zu erkennen.” (Erman 1885/7, I: 6f.).

It was finally the young Adolf Erman who destroyed this conception. He discovered that what had been considered a single language in fact consisted of numerous diachronic varieties that differed profoundly from each another: "Ich hatte bei meiner Erstlingsarbeit über 'die Pluralbildung' richtig gesehen, daß die Texte des neuen Reiches in einer sehr anderen Sprache geschrieben sind, als die der älteren Zeit. [...] Ich brach dabei mit dem damals verbreiteten Vorurteil, daß alles, was in Hieroglyphen geschrieben sei, ein und derselben Sprache angehöre" (Erman 1933²: vii). With this discovery, the ignorance concerning the pronunciation of Egyptian was aggravated even further: Even when a piece of evidence became available for the pronunciation of some word, it could no longer be taken as representative for Egyptian as a whole. To illustrate the drastic effects introduced by the diachronic dimension into Egyptian studies, it will suffice here to mention the reading of the noun for "sun". Although the hieroglyphic spelling of this word remained constant through all ages, its pronunciation may be assumed to be close to the Coptic equivalent PH ($r\bar{e}$) for the Roman period, but a vastly different /'li:duw/ for the 3rd millennium (in Kammerzell's 1999: 71 reconstruction).

Third, both the transliteration and the pronunciation of Ancient Egyptian were international in early Egyptology. This is because they were tied to an external point of reference, namely the ancient reality. Even though the written transliteration was never entirely normalized during the 19th century (there being differences in symbols such as $kh - \chi$, or in the use of diacritics), Egyptologists of that time employed fairly similar transliterations with no systematic differences according to their nationality. I suppose that not only the written transliteration but also the way of reading it aloud was very homogeneous in those days. To be sure, minor native accents must have remained as Egyptologists of different nations read Egyptian texts aloud. But all of them essentially aimed at the same ideal of pronunciation, and I assume that the major characteristics of their speech were fairly identical for all Egyptologists, at least for the more common Egyptian words.

There was sufficient personal contact for also prosodic features to be exchanged, in particular between H. Brugsch, the then leading German Egyptologist, and various eminent French scholars including E. de Rougé and A. Mariette: "der Ägyptolog Vicomte E. de Rougé und sein Kollege Ch. Lenormant, der neueste Demotiker de Saulcy [...], sie alle empfingen mich, den schüchternen jungen Studenten aus Berlin, wie einen werten Freund und älteren Bekannten" (Brugsch 1894: 88), "Selbst meiner drei Treppen hoch gelegenen Klausur in der Johannisstraße ward die Auszeichnung zu teil, von den berühmtesten Leuten betreten zu werden. Die französischen Akademiker Renan, E. de Rougé, Maurice [...] gehörten zu ihrer Zahl" (Brugsch 1894: 117), "Im Monat Februar sollte mir die Freude zu teil werden, Auguste Mariette in seiner Einsiedelei des Serapeums [...] von Angesicht zu Angesicht kennen zu lernen und damit das Band lebenslänglicher Freundschaft anzuknüpfen" (Brugsch 1894: 165), "Meine regelmäßige Thätigkeit erlitt manche Unterbrechung durch die häufigen, wenn auch angenehmen Besuche von Freunden und Gönnern, zu denen das Ausland, vor allem Paris, einen bedeutenden Beitrag lieferte. Eine besondere Genugthuung gewährte mir die plötzliche Ankunft meines Gastfreundes Auguste Mariette, der eine Reise nach Frankreich benutzt hatte, um einen dreiwöchentlichen Abstecher nach Berlin zu unternehmen und mir sein volles

Herz auszuschütten" (Brugsch 1894: 201), "Mariette [...] lud mich ein, meinen Weg nach Paris zu richten, mit ihm dort zusammenzutreffen und im stillen an den Arbeiten für die geplante Weltausstellung im Jahre 1867 teilzunehmen. Er hatte in Passy eine Villa inmitten eines hübschen Gartens gemietet, ich war sein Gast und Mitbewohner seines Hauses und so lebten wir im täglichen und freundschaftlichen Verkehr neben einander [...] Ich hatte dabei vollauf Gelegenheit und Zeit, mit den mir von meiner ersten Reise her befreundeten französischen Gelehrten aufs neue in Verbindung zu treten und vor allem in dem Grafen Emmanuel de Rougé, der damals bereits den Rang eines Staatsrats bekleidete, einen ebenso warmen als großmütigen Beschützer zu finden" (Brugsch 1894: 266).

When the previous knowledge about the vowels was lost, all Egyptian words suddenly became impossible to pronounce. Egyptologists were no longer able to plainly read texts off the hieroglyphs but had to devise some kind of arbitrary convention. What they basically did is to retain their traditional pronunciation for the purpose of oral communication. While euphonic transcriptions like *rā* "sun", *maāt* "truth" or *iākuā* "I came"⁶ had to be replaced by the odd formulas *r^c*, *m^{3c}.t* and *lyi.kw* respectively, the words continued to be spoken as "ra", "maat" and (with minor changes up until now:) "iiku". But with the decoupling of the pronunciation from historical reality, an unforeseen development came about, namely the emergence of different regional traditions of reading Egyptian aloud. Only when the pronunciation was relegated from the imitation of reality to a mere convention, did it become possible for more than one convention to develop, and that is what happened.

This is how Egyptologese emerged as a separate language, which started to follow its own paths of development and was no longer tied to our reconstruction of Ancient Egyptian phonetics. Today, the way of pronouncing Egyptian varies from country to country, and even from university to university, to a far greater extent than would be predicted by the speakers' different native accents. Various Egyptologese dialects have come into existence, all of which derive from a largely uniform 19th century source that I call "Proto-Egyptologese".

One striking isogloss that cuts between the modern Egyptologese dialects is the pronunciation of an initial (transliterated) *w*-. This character is pronounced as a vowel /u/- in all words in France today: /ur/ "big", /uɛn/ "to be", /uben/ "to rise (of sun)", /udʒa/ "to prosper", as well as in Russia:⁷ /ur/, /'unen/, /'uben/, /'udʒa/. By contrast, Egyptologists in Britain and probably also in the US use /we-/ throughout: /wer/, /'wenen/, /'weben/, /'wedʒa/, and so also in Egypt (here as /wi/-): /wir/, /'winin/, /'wibin/, /wi'dʒa/.

⁶ The latter one from Birch (1877: 53).

⁷ Only two informants. The auxiliary vowel used by Russian Egyptologists is the un-iotated sound written as э in Cyrillic. The word /'unen/, for example, would have to be cyrillicized as у́нѐн. This is true even though popular Russian transliterations of Egyptian names employ the letter e in preference to э: Нефертити "Nefertiti". I will note this vowel simply as /e/ in my Latin renderings.

The situation in Germany is more complex. While almost⁸ all German speakers opt for *we-* when the next letter is a sonorant: /wɛr/ (or /vɛr/)⁹, /'wɛnɛn/, the pronunciation of *w-* before obstruents is variable. We can distinguish roughly three subgroups of speakers: First, there is a group who say *we-* in all (or almost all) such words, thus joining the English usage: /'wɛbɛn/, /'wɛdʒa/.¹⁰ Another and probably larger group, whom I will call differential speakers, have *u-* whenever the next letter is an obstruent: /'ubɛn/, /'udʒa/.¹¹ Finally, there are speakers whose pronunciation is highly lexicalized and retains *u-* only for some words of this class. A number of Egyptologists¹² say /'wɛbɛn/ but /'udʒa/ (the reverse is not found). In Israel, there are persons who come close to what I call the group of differential speakers, but I have also heard several cases of variation which makes the system less obvious: /wɛr/, /'wɛnɛn/ ~ /'unɛn/, /'wɛbɛn/ ~ /'ubɛn/, /'udʒa/.

In Proto-Egyptologese, *u-* must naturally have been spoken in all words that we transcribe with *w-* today because the corresponding Egyptian letter was then considered to be a *u*. This is amply evidenced by written records like “ur” (Birch 1877: 11; Brugsch 1872: 31; Budge 1899: 47; Ebers 1876: 395; de Rougé 1867 ff., IV: 6) ~ “our” (Loret 1889: 27);¹³ “unen” (Brugsch 1867 ff., I: 253; Budge 1899: 178; de Rougé 1867 ff., II: 82) ~ “ünen” (Ebers 1875, I: 22); “uben” (Birch 1877: 36; Brugsch 1867 ff., I: 248; Budge 1899: 74; Ebers 1875, I: 5; de Rougé 1867 ff., III: 45); “utā” (Birch 1877: 13; Brugsch 1867 ff., I: 312; Budge 1899: 139) ~ úṯa (Ebers 1875, I: 5) ~ “outā” (de Rougé 1851: 187) ~ “Utsaaugen” (Ebers 1893, II: 100). This pronunciation has survived in France and Russia to this day. Also the other traditions preserve some occasional remnants of the original forms. One example is the pharaoh *Wnjs* who is still often called “Unas” today even by Egyptologists who are otherwise *we*-speakers.

As far as I am aware, the earliest evidence of the *we*-pronunciation comes from members of the Berlin School, notably Adolf Erman: “Uennofre” (Erman 1885/7, I: 230) ~ “Wennofre” (Erman 1909²: 42), “Weneg” (Erman 1909²: 106), “Ipu-wer” (Erman 1936: 86), “Ueser-mont” (Erman 1885/7, I: 203), “Wep-wawet” (Erman 1909²: 23). But *u-* is often found, too: “Unamun” (Erman 1934: 315, 1936: 226), “Uni” (Erman 1936: 74), “Unennofre” (Erman 1936: 126), “Uzatauge” (Erman 1934: 22), “Userchopesch” (Erman 1885/7, I: 196), “User-het” (Erman 1936: 228), “Usechet” (Erman 1885/7, I: 107), “Uschebti” (Erman 1934: 277), “Uba-oner” (Erman 1936: 90), “Up-uat” (Erman 1934: 43), “Uten” (Erman 1885/7,

8 I met only one German speaker who says *u-* in all these words (Adelheid Schlott: /ur/, /'u:nɛn/); a few others do so less consistently (e.g. Dieter Kurth). Also Joachim Spiegel is remembered to have said “ur” for “big”.

9 German Egyptologists may pronounce the consonantal *w* as either /w/ or /v/, an issue that will not be addressed here and will not be noted in the following examples.

10 E.g. Elke Blumenthal, Erhart Graefe, Helmut Satzinger, Erich Winter.

11 E.g. Hellmut Brunner’s students, Günter Burkard, Wolfgang Helck’s students, Fritz Hintze’s students, Thomas Schneider, Elisabeth Staehelin, Heinz-Josef Thissen, Wolfhart Westendorf. The *u-* in such words can be heard as long or short, an issue that I am not addressing here.

12 E.g. Jan Assmann, Gerhard Fecht, Rolf Gundlach, Wolfgang Schenkel, Karl-Theodor Zauzich.

13 Specifically for “big”, some early French sources such as de Rougé (1851: 96) and Mariette (1855: 96) write “ouer”. This was a lexical peculiarity motivated by the existence of Coptic ⲟⲩⲣ.

I: 179, modern reading “deben”). Despite some amount of fluctuation and the possibility that Erman may at times have retained traditional spellings, it appears to me that he tended towards being what I call a differential speaker. Erman’s student and colleague Kurt Sethe, who used popular transcriptions very sparingly, seems to have turned from an *u*- into a *we*- (differential?) speaker during his lifetime: “Un-amun” (Sethe 1906: 357), but “Wenamūn” (Sethe 1939: 49).

The split of Proto-Egyptologese into today’s various Egyptologese dialects is a prime example of what is known in linguistics as a genetic tree of languages. The original proto-language, the modern diversity, and the ways the modern dialects developed from their common source are all worthy objects of study. The best-known of all language families, and a model for the research of all other language families, are the Romance languages. In that case, their common source, which is Latin, is excellently attested and hardly requires any reconstruction. But scholars took the pains to elaborate an upward reconstruction from the Romance languages even here (e.g. Hall 1950) in order to determine the precise variant of Latin that served as the top node of Romance. Another parallel, more familiar to egyptologists, is the study of Ancient Egyptian. This language is known from rich contemporary sources, which, however, happen to be defective in certain respects, such as the vocalism. A historical-comparative reconstruction from the Coptic dialects must therefore be appended to supply some of the missing information.

In a very similar way, we can attempt to reconstruct Proto-Egyptologese, a task that has not been tackled before. Here again, two types of evidence need to be combined: On the one hand a historical-comparative reconstruction based on its modern descendants, the Egyptologese dialects, and on the other hand the rich, but defective written evidence of Proto-Egyptologese from the 19th century. We are fortunate in having more abundant written records than might have been expected. There are popular handbooks directed to the general public in which Egyptologists transliterated Egyptian words and names just as they spoke them. More importantly, even many of the scholarly transliterations – going beyond what this term suggests – included the spoken auxiliary *e*-vowels although they had no basis in the hieroglyphs. This was possible because a conceptual distinction between Egyptian and Egyptologese was not yet drawn at that time. Only with the transition to the 20th century did the custom of adding *e*-vowels in written transliterations become lost, so that we face a “dark age” from which much less documentation of Egyptologese is available.

In what follows, I will take some first steps towards the reconstruction of Proto-Egyptologese. Three issues will be addressed: (1) the quality of the auxiliary *e*-vowel, (2) the position of the auxiliary vowel, and (3) word stress assignment. In using written evidence, I will focus my attention on France, Germany and Britain, these being the centres of Egyptology at that time and the natural birth places of Egyptologese.

The letter *e* was selected to be the auxiliary vowel because this letter had not been occupied by any transliteration symbol, and probably also because “*e*” is perceived as a rather neutral vowel by most European speakers. Regarding the exact quality of this vowel, the possibilities were naturally limited by the inventories of the Egyptologists’ native tongues. German and

French happen to have strikingly similar phonemic systems in the subsection of interest here. Both languages possess three *e*-like vowels: a closed vowel (/e/, French spelling *é*, in German long-closed), an open vowel (/ɛ/, French spelling *è*, in German short-open), and a shwa (/ə/, French spelling *e*). Thus, it was certainly possible to agree upon a unified Proto-Egyptologese pronunciation common to (at least) French and German Egyptologists. Only two *e*-phonemes /e/ and /ə/ are available to British speakers, so that they must have been unable to share an *e/ɛ*-distinction, if there was any.

A shwa would seem to have been the most natural choice for an auxiliary vowel, and I know of two early testimonies that in fact confirm the use of this sound: “I prefer inserting the short natural vowel, which I will express by *e*, to be sounded as in *other*, when we have no authority from transcriptions to insert some other in preference to it” (Hincks 1846: 142); “Je remplace les voyelles brèves omises [i. e. in the Egyptian spelling] par un *e* muet de convention, comme l’a fait M. Lepsius” (de Rougé 1851: 13). Despite these explicit statements, I assume that a shwa can only have been used in words like *erta* “to give” but hardly so in words like *setem* “to hear”, because words with all shwas are not allowed by the phonotactics of any of the relevant native languages. Instead, one of the other *e*’s must have been supplied in such cases. German and English written records are unhelpful in this respect as they can only spell an indistinct “e”. By contrast, French distinguishes the three different *e*’s in its orthography. We find that most French sources, in particular all technical transliterations, that write the auxiliary vowel at all employ just “e” for this purpose. But there are instances, notably in more popular contexts, which write “è” or “é” and thus show us what was really spoken. One example is the proper name that de Rougé (1851) transcribes as “Ahmes” in his transliteration (e. g. p. 28) but as “Ahmès” in the book title and elsewhere in the running French text. This reveals that he in fact spoke /ahmes/. While a comprehensive study of the accentuated Egyptologese records from France remains to be done, it can be said that they agree with modern French usage at least in a number of cases, cf. items such as “méri” “beloved” (de Rougé 1847: 411) or “Sébek” (theonym) (de Rougé 1847: 187), which were evidently spoken /meri/, /sebek/ and still have the very same pronunciation in France today.

I will now put aside for a moment the historical written evidence in order to proceed to the modern spoken dialects and to find out what they have to tell us. My knowledge of the pronunciation by modern French Egyptologists is limited, but as far as I am informed, most of them employ /e/ in open and /ɛ/ in closed syllables (/sedʒem/), while /ə/ seems to be only rarely used. This distribution also holds for popular French transliterations like “Ramsès”, “Néfertiti” or “Mérenptah”. By contrast, most German Egyptologists use /ɛ/ in all positions (/’sedʒem/). We thus find a striking national difference, another isogloss that separates the Egyptologese dialects. How can we decide which pronunciation was the original one?

When reconstructing the history of natural languages, irregularities within a system may provide valuable traces of an earlier more regular use. I will employ this kind of reasoning here. Whereas /ɛ/ is the usual auxiliary vowel for most German Egyptologists, a minority of them pronounce a long closed /e:/ in a limited number of lexical items, most notably in the word

for “god”, which for them is /'ne:tʃɛr/¹⁴ or /'ne:tʃɛr/¹⁵. There is in any case a notable contrast to regular words such as /'sɛdʒɛm/ “to hear” which I have never heard spoken with /e:/ by any German speaker. Another remnant might be the verbal tense *sdm.t=f* which a minority of German speakers read as /sɛdʒɛm'te:ʔɛf/.¹⁶

My tentative conclusion from both the written records and the modern dialect evidence is that the use of different *e*-vowels in open versus closed syllables, as is still found in modern France, represents the original state of affairs, with the possibility that /ə/ was spoken in some of the unstressed syllables. In Germany, all instances of the auxiliary vowel were later levelled to /ɛ/ by analogy, the old contrast having been maintained only in a few words and by a few speakers. I therefore reconstruct the Proto-Egyptologese pronunciation of the words “god” and “to hear” as */net(s)ɛr/ (or */net(s)ər/) and /setɛm/, respectively.¹⁷

Another worthwhile subject of investigation would be the tradition in which Antonio Loprieno, to whom I dare to offer the present essay, grew up as an Egyptologist. Two *e*-vowels are available in Italian (in stressed syllables): /e/ as in *venti* “twenty” and /ɛ/ as in *venti* “winds”. As Antonio told me, /ɛ/ is the usual auxiliary vowel (in stressed syllables) for Italian Egyptologists (/sɛdʒɛm/). But it is not very clear how far this pronunciation can be carried back because the normative *e/ɛ*-distinction of Italian has been blurred for many contemporary speakers.

Among the numerous languages in which Antonio converses on a native or near-native level of proficiency, his preferred one these days is probably no longer Italian but Swiss German or, more precisely, Baseldeutsch. In Baseldeutsch, alongside three long *e*'s, two short *e*-phonemes are available, namely /æ/ as in /æssə/ “to eat” and /ɛ/ as in /bɛssər/ “better”. Since /æ/ (which is unknown in Standard German) is the more frequent of both in the Basel native vocabulary, it might have been expected to be the default choice. But my fieldwork among Basel Egyptologists revealed that they constantly employ /ɛ/ as the auxiliary vowel. The probable reason for this is its phonetic closeness to the auxiliary vowel used by German Egyptolo-

¹⁴ E.g. Gerhard Fecht, Rolf Gundlach.

¹⁵ This is the usual pronunciation in Vienna.

¹⁶ E.g. Helmut Satzinger, Wolfgang Schenkel, Wolfhart Westendorf, Erich Winter, and myself. For me, this is the only Egyptologese item that I speak with /e:/.

¹⁷ The pronunciation of the symbols *ḡ* and *ṯ* is not at issue here, but it can be assumed that /ts/ was the most common realization of both of them in Proto-Egyptologese (as still recommended by Erman 1912: 25), with the reservation that *ṯ* was not yet distinguished from *t* in the earliest period. As far as I know, the symbol *ḡ* has not preserved its original pronunciation anywhere but was generally replaced by /ḡ/, even though remnants like “Zoser” as the name of the pharaoh more commonly known as “Djoser” are still sometimes encountered. By contrast, the pronunciation /ts/ for *ṯ*, as against the more common /tʃ/, is still used by some modern Egyptologists including Günter Burkard, Erich Winter, Karl-Theodor Zauzich, and most speakers in Vienna. In addition, some of my informants remembered that the deceased Egyptologists Wolfgang Helck, Erich Lüddeckens, Siegfried Morenz and Joachim Spiegel also used to say “netser”. The pronunciations /ḡ/ and /tʃ/ which ousted the former /ts/ in most modern traditions certainly owe their prevalence to a prescriptive statement in Gardiner's (1927: 27) influential grammar.

gists, and maybe also the fact that the speakers perceive /æ/ as a characteristic Baseldeutsch sound which they avoid using in a foreign language like Egyptologese.

My second object of reconstruction will be the location in which the auxiliary vowels were inserted. As we saw, the need of artificial vowels was smaller in Proto-Egyptologese than today because many words already contained lexical vowels. For the items in which auxiliary vowels were required, quite a stable convention developed as to their positioning. The entire system of rules still needs to be elaborated, but it appears that a complex interplay of phonetic, morphological and lexical factors has been at work. I will start with words consisting of a single consonant symbol. Three of them are prepositions, all of which consist of a sonorant, and all of which have been spoken with a preceding *e* in all Egyptological traditions from the 19th century down to this day: *em* “in”, *en* “of, to”, *er* “to”.¹⁸

By contrast, the early sources consistently postpone the auxiliary vowel in lexical words: “soul” *ké* (de Rougé 1847: 174); “place (ghost word)” *mê* (Ebers 1876: 402); “mouth” *re* (Budge 1899: 56) – *rê* (Ebers 1875, II: 35); “person” *se* (Brugsch 1867 ff., IV: 1150; Loret 1889: 21; de Rougé 1867 ff., II: 76) – *sê* (Ebers 1875, I: 5); “son” *se* (Brugsch 1867 ff., IV: 1151; de Rougé 1866: 110); “lake” *še* (de Rougé 1867 ff., I: 133) – *šê* (Ebers 1875, II: 44) – *še* (Brugsch 1867 ff., IV: 1360) (cf. also the entry “Sche” in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* vol. V, 1984: 546). Some of these words have meanwhile changed their transliteration to become biradicals so that we now say, in Germany, /ka:/ “soul”, /ra:/ “mouth”, /za:/ “son”. For the remaining monoradicals, the modern pronunciation has become rather inconsistent, at least according to my notes taken from German speakers. For “person”, the most common pronunciation is either /es/ with a preposed *e*- or else /zi:/ with a pseudo-vowel appended. The item “lake” alternates between /šə/, /eš/, /še:/ and /ši:/. The noun “bread”, which used to be transliterated as “ta” (Brugsch 1867 ff., IV: 1523; Erman 1885/7, II: 450; de Rougé 1867 ff., I: 59 writes “tā”; Ebers 1875, II: 47 writes “tā”), is now considered a monoconsonantal word and can be heard as /tə/ or /te:/ (but never */et/). In addition, a pronunciation /ta/, which continues the old transliteration, is still widely used. I have heard this one with a short -a for the most part, which is somewhat exceptional by the standards of German phonology.

The feminine form of the genitive preposition “en” was formerly spoken “ent” (Birch 1877: 10; Brugsch 1872: 79; Budge 1899: 177; Ebers 1875, I: 5; also Erman 1885/7, I: 218: “Nebet-sochet-ent-Rê^c”).¹⁹ This pronunciation is still occasionally encountered in Germany,²⁰ and I have also heard it from one British speaker, but most German Egyptologists now say /net/, a form that seems to predominate also in most other countries. This testifies to a still ongoing transition from the more versatile original principles to a mechanical insertion of auxiliary vowels only in the interior of words. Similarly, the relative pronoun is consistently

18 Attested passim by Egyptologists of all nations in 19th century sources (“em”, “en”, “er” e.g. in Birch 1877: 40; Brugsch 1872: 79 f.; Budge 1899: 156; Ebers 1876: 401; Loret 1889: 65; Maspero 1871: 36–38; de Rougé 1851: 75) as well as by all Egyptologists I have met. It should be remarked that French Egyptologists pronounce /em/, /en/ and no nasal vowels.

19 Some early sources that did not yet recognize the feminine function of this morpheme wrote “nte” or “ente” (de Rougé 1851: 26 and 70), which is by influence of Coptic ⲛⲧⲉ.

20 I recorded it from several of Hellmut Brunner’s students.

attested as “enti” in written Proto-Egyptologese sources from all countries (Birch 1877: 19; Brugsch 1872: 17; Budge 1899: 101; Ebers 1876: 395; Loret 1889: 36; Mariette 1855: 57; de Rougé 1867 ff., II: 49; “enti” in Maspero 1871: 48). This pronunciation is still very much alive in Germany as /'enti/²¹ and in Egypt as /'inti/, even though I have met a number of German informants who have replaced it with /'neti/. I recorded the original form also from French (/enti/) and British (/enti/) speakers but cannot tell how common it is there. In Israel, however, only /'neti/ is heard. A third item of this kind is *erta* “to give”, which was already discussed above. Its pronunciation subsequently changed to *erdi*,²² but most modern Egyptologists have regularized it to *redi* (/redi/ in Germany, /redi/ in France) or further to *redʒi* in order to accommodate to the most recent transliteration.

An almost reverse development affected the combination of the dative preposition “en” with person suffixes. Earlier Egyptologists cancelled the initial vowel to say *nà* “to me” (Birch 1877: 27; Brugsch 1872: 15; Budge 1899: 149; de Rougé 1867 ff., III: 85; Ebers 1876: 411 writes *nà*) and *nef* “to him” (Birch 1877: 9; Brugsch 1872: 15; Budge 1899: 149; Loret 1889: 37; de Rougé 1867 ff., II: 67). But most modern speakers, at least those whom I interviewed, pronounce the two morphemes separately, usually as /'enʔi:/, /'enʔef/ or (more rarely) /en'ʔi:/, /en'ʔef/ in Germany, as /in'ʔi:/, /in'ʔif/ in Egypt, as /enəf/ according to one francophone informant. However, I also heard the presumably more archaic forms /ni:/, /nef/ from a few German speakers.²³

Consonant clusters at the beginning or end of words were tolerated in Proto-Egyptologese much more readily than today. While the typical pronunciation of an item such as *nfr.t*, the feminine form of “good”, is now usually /'neferet/ or /'nefret/ in Germany, /neferet/ in France, /'neferet/ in Israel, /'nifirit/ in Egypt and /'nef(ə)ret/ in Britain (cf. “nefret” already prescribed by Gardiner 1927: 26), the earlier pronunciation is documented as “nefert” from all countries: Birch (1877: 28); Budge (1899: 123); de Rougé (1866: 147); Ebers (1893, I: 10 and passim, a romance in which one of the main protagonists bears the name “Nefert”; in Ebers 1876: 407 he writes “néfert”). Consonant clusters of this kind must have survived long into the 20th century as is revealed by popular transcriptions like “Nebemwast” (Lüddeckens 1943: 74), “querert” (Piankoff 1942: passim) and “Urt-hekau” (Bonnet 1952: 848). This was also the way the young Adolf Erman spoke (“Nechebt”, Erman 1885/7, I: 134), but he appears to have turned into a modernist *e*-inserter during his lifetime. The same goddess that he still called “Meschent” in Erman (1909: 193) appears as “Mesechenet” in Erman (1934: 52) (a name which would be /mes'xenet/ in my own idiom).

Although hardly any Egyptologist would be likely to say “nefert” today, the old pronunciation still survives in a petrified form in the proper names “Nefert-iti” and “Nefert-ari”, the

21 There are a few speakers, e.g. Erhart Graefe and Dieter Kurth, who say /'ænti/. I am tempted to derive this from a hypothetical earlier variant */ænti/.

22 The pronunciation /'erdi/ is now becoming obsolete, but I still recorded it from Fritz Hintze's students and from Wolfhart Westendorf. The shift *a > i* is due to a change in the transliteration.

23 Erhart Graefe, Helmut Satzinger, Heinz-Josef Thissen, Karl-Theodor Zauzich; probably also Gerhard Fecht (from whom only /ni:/ was recorded).

latter of which also conserves the old reading *â* for the modern *j*. The place name “Punt”, still widely used in this form today, is another remnant from the Proto-Egyptologese period.

Examples of consonant clusters that would be very uncommon nowadays abound in written records of Proto-Egyptologese, e.g. “to establish”: *smen* (Brugsch 1867 ff., II: 637; Budge 1899: 184; de Rougé 1851: 188); “to kill”: *sma* (Brugsch 1867 ff., IV: 1225; Budge 1899: 35; de Rougé 1867 ff., IV: 32); “to direct”: *χerp* (Brugsch 1867 ff., III: 1129; Budge 1899: 84; de Rougé 1888: 84); “to fear”: *senṭ* (Brugsch 1867 ff., IV: 1256; Budge 1899: 67; de Rougé 1867 ff., IV: 8); “nose”: *fent* (Birch 1877: 29; Loret 1889: 87) ~ *fent* (de Rougé 1867 ff., I: 116) ~ *feñt* (Brugsch 1867 ff., II: 551) ~ *fēnt* (Ebers 1875, II: 13); “West”: *âment* (Birch 1877: 5; Brugsch 1867 ff., I: 73; Budge 1899: 16) ~ *âment* (de Rougé 1851: 70; Mariette 1855: 95).²⁴

The item “to live” is exceptional in having preserved a consonant cluster to this day in all traditions known to me. It is /anx/ for most²⁵ modern Egyptologists, still the same form in which it was spoken in the 19th century (“ānχ” Birch 1877: 13; Brugsch 1867 ff., I: 197; de Rougé 1867 ff., II: 17 ~ “ānkh” Budge 1899: 25 ~ “ānkh” Loret 1889: 96 ~ “ānχ” Ebers 1875, I: 5). Modern francophone Egyptologists commonly use a nasal vowel in this word: /õx/, this being the only instance of a nasal vowel in the modern French-Egyptologese dialect. To appreciate why “to live” is so special, it should be contrasted with an item like *menex* “excellent” (still as *menχ* in Brugsch 1867 ff., II: 660; Budge 1899: 87; de Rougé 1866: 32) that originally had the same consonant cluster but is hardly spoken in that way by any modern Egyptologist. The item “to live” is thus pertinent even to general linguistics since it provides a classic example for the inhibition of a regular sound change in a high-frequency word.²⁶

As my last topic, I will attempt to reconstruct the word accent of Proto-Egyptologese, which is the most demanding issue since the written 19th century records contain no explicit information on accent at all. We therefore have to rely essentially on the modern idioms. A word must be said on the copious accents and apostrophes used in some of G. Ebers’s publications, such as “āḥmés-néfert-āri” (Ebers 1875, I: 3), “ḥèbs” (Ebers 1875, I: 36) or “rêpâ” (Ebers 1875, I: 5). These are not intended as indicators of stress or any other prosodic features but serve to distinguish details of the hieroglyphic spelling in a similar way as the accents used by cuneiform scholars (explanations in Ebers 1875, I: 20; II: vi).

A caveat is in order with regard to France. Since the French language lacks the concept of a word accent, there is no word stress assignment when Egyptian is spoken by francophone Egyptologists today, and there was certainly none in the past. French evidence will therefore be ignored in this section. Egyptologists of all other traditions are forced to select one syllable as being accented when pronouncing any polysyllabic word. Rather than attempting a full reconstruction, I will confine myself to discussing the accentuation of four frequent root

24 Typical modern pronunciations of these words in Germany are: /se'men/ ~ /'semen/, /'sema/, /'xerep/, /'senetʃ/, /'fenetʃ/, /i'menet/ (all words with /s-/ may also be spoken with /z-/).

25 Wolfgang Schenkel has innovated: /'a:nex/.

26 A parallel from a natural language is Berlin German *wat* “what”, which escaped the general High German sound change *t > s*.

patterns. I start with bisyllabic words that have *e* in the second syllable such as *sedgem* “to hear”, *nefer* “good”, *xeper* “to become”, *unem/wenem* “to eat” and *uben/weben* “to raise”. Such words are stressed on the first syllable in all traditions that I am aware of. Typical modern pronunciations are in Germany: /'sedʒem/, /'nefə/, /'xɛpəl/ ~ /'çɛpəl/, /'wɛnɛm/, /'u(:)bɛn/ ~ /'wɛbɛn/; in Britain: /'sedʒem/, /'nefə(r)/, /'xepə(r)/, /'wɛnɛm/, /'wɛbɛn/; in Egypt: /'sɪdʒim/, /'nɪfɪr/, /'xibɪr/, /'wɪnim/, /'wɪbɪn/; in Israel: /'sedʒem/, /'nefer/, /'xeper/, /'unem/ ~ /'wɛnɛm/, /'uben/ ~ /'wɛbɛn/; in Russia: /'sedʒem/, /'nefer/, /'xeper/, /'unem/, /'uben/. I therefore reconstruct their Proto-Egyptologese forms (French speakers excepted) as /'setʃem/,²⁷ /'nefər/, /'xepər/, /'unɛm/, /'uben/ (perhaps alternatively with -ə- in the unstressed syllable). The initial accent seems to be confirmed by the occasional omission of *e* from the second syllable in 19th century spellings: The same authors who usually transcribe “to become” as *xeper* (Birch 1877: 8; Brugsch 1867 ff., III: 1072; Ebers 1876: 413) also provide the variants *xepɾ* (Birch 1877: 11; Ebers 1876: 413) ~ *chepr* (Brugsch 1863: 34), presumably spoken /'xepər/.

Coming now to bisyllabic words with *e* in the first syllable and a different vowel in the second syllable (*CeCV*), the issue becomes more delicate since the modern dialects disagree. Typical words of this pattern include *heru* “day”, *hena* “with” and *meri* “love, beloved”. In present-day Germany, such words consistently bear an initial accent: /'heru/, /'hɛna/, /'meri/. The initial accent is also typical for Israel: /'heru/, /'xena/, /'meri/, and probably (though my field notes are meagre here) among anglophone Egyptologists. But there are two traditions that assign a final accent to such words, namely in Egypt: /hi'ru:/, /mi'ri:/,²⁸ and in Russia: /xe'ru/, /xe'na/, /me'ri/. These differences of accentuation cannot be explained from properties of the speakers' native languages. On the contrary, the pronunciations used in Israel and Egypt are quite marked from the point of view of the respective native phonologies. Israelis say /'heru/ although a final accent is much more common in Hebrew, and Egyptians say /hi'ru:/ although final stressed vowels are highly unusual in native Arabic words. This shows that the different stress patterns are not imposed by the native accents but must be deeply rooted in the Egyptological tradition.

If we believe in the original homogeneity of Proto-Egyptologese also with respect to word accent, only one of the two modern stress patterns of the *heru*-like roots can be original and the other must be an innovation. My suggestion is that the final accent, that is /he'ru/, is the original one. I can offer five arguments for this claim. My first argument is the weakest since it is only based on my subjective gut-feeling: I imagine that when the early Egyptologists transcribed a word with a single vowel that they believed to be the authentic Egyptian one, they should have stressed this authentic vowel rather than what they only inserted as a pronunciation aid. They must have assumed that the only vowel that the Ancient Egyptians had chosen to spell out in a word was the most prominent, and presumably stressed, vowel in the ancient language. As the early Egyptologists did not yet perceive a fundamental distinction between their readings and historical reality, they should have made this vowel prominent in their own speech as well.

²⁷ On the pronunciation of *d* see note 17 above.

²⁸ The item “with” is spoken with a final consonant in Egypt so that this rule is not applicable: /'hinaʃ/.

Fortunately, there are other arguments, too. Georg Ebers cites the beginning of the 1st chapter of the Book of the Dead in one of his romances as follows: “Ha em re’ em per em hru”.²⁹ The word for “day” is here given as “hru” even though the passage notes the auxiliary *e*-vowels elsewhere. Similarly, Budge (1899: 40; 124; 136) writes “hru” and de Rougé (1851: 57; 154) “hrou” in phrases elsewhere supplied with *e*’s.³⁰ This suggests to me that these scholars pronounced the word as /h(ə/ɛ?)’ru/. My third argument, again from Ebers, is taken from his presumed rhymes that I mentioned above. As one example of Egyptian rhyme he cites the following passage: *χet en ānχ’ en χememu’ / ār ānχθā remu’* (Ebers 1877: 45). Had he spoken the final words in a modern fashion as /’χememu/ and /’remu/, they would hardly have suggested a rhyme to him as a native speaker of German, because a rhyme (in German) requires the identity of all segments from the last stressed vowel onward. I therefore suppose that Ebers read these words as (approximately) /xeme’mu/ and /re’mu/, by which the rhyme becomes much better. My fourth argument is that I have heard the compound “true-of-voice” being spoken with a conspicuous final accent as /maʔaxɛ’ru:/ ~ /maʔaɕɛ’ru:/ by a number of German Egyptologists³¹ even though they apply the regular initial accent to the noun “voice”: /’xɛru/ ~ /’ɕɛru/. This seems to be yet another instance of the retention of an older pronunciation in a fossilized compound. My fifth and last argument is the topology of the genetic tree of the Egyptologese dialect cluster. There has never been any special connection between Egyptologists in Egypt and Russia, which means that their uniform accentuation cannot plausibly be a common innovation but rather must be shared inheritance. By contrast, the traditions of Germany, Israel, Britain, and the US can all be linked to the Berlin school (as I will argue below) and thus derive from a common subnode to which the accent shift can conveniently be attributed.

Let us next consider roots of the structure (C)VCV, which have two full vowels ≠ *e*, such as *abu* “elephant” or *uba* “to open”. According to my field notes, these are stressed on the first syllable everywhere, not only in those traditions that assign an initial accent also to the *heru*-pattern (e.g. in Germany and Israel /’abu/, /’uba/ ~ /’weba/), but also in the traditions in which the *heru*-pattern selects a final accent: /’abu/, /’uba/ in Russia; /’a:bu/ in Egypt³². I therefore project this state of affairs back to Proto-Egyptologese. My explanation is that when the early Egyptologists saw two authentic vowels, neither of them being more prominent than the other, they resorted to the same default accentuation as in the *nefer*-pattern, namely on the first syllable.

Finally, I will briefly mention words of the pattern *CeCVC* (last vowel ≠ *e*) such as *sešat* (goddess), *menit* “necklace” and *merut* “love”. They are consistently spoken with a final accent in Egypt: /si’ša:t/, /mi’ni:t/, /mi’ru:t/, whereas initial stress seems to predominate in Britain and Israel. The pronunciation of such words is exceedingly confused in Germany. Most speak-

29 Ebers (1893, II: 4). This is *ḥ3.t-ḥ m r’.w n.w pr.t m hrw* in a modern transliteration.

30 French sources are irrelevant as to the accent, but the spelling suggests at least that the first vowel, if spoken at all, was /ə/ rather than /e/.

31 Gerhard Fecht, Fritz Hintze’s students, Thomas Schneider, Karl-Theodor Zauzich.

32 But /wi’ba:/, where *w* has a consonantal realization so that the rule is not applicable.

ers appear to have a highly unpredictable stress assignment, often with some hesitation as to where to put the accent. Only a minority of informants apply a consistent stress to all such words, or at least to all those words that I requested from them, either on the initial³³ or on the final³⁴ syllable. My preliminary guess is that words of the *CeCVC* pattern essentially share the history of the *CeCV* pattern, but the leftward accent shift was retarded due to the additional consonant that creates a heavy final syllable. This may have left the members of the Berlin school with an inconsistent accentuation practice, which subsequent speakers were inclined to regularize in various ways.

I conclude that Proto-Egyptologese had a variable accent determined by the nature of the vowels: /'nefər/, /'abu/, but /he'ru/ (or /hə'ru/), /se'šat/ (or /sə'šat/). The variable accent has survived to this day in the traditions of Egypt and Russia, whereas the German, English and Israeli traditions generalized the initial accent to /'heru/ (and to a lesser degree to /'sešat/) by analogy. In terms of historical linguistics, this is a prototypical case of a shared innovation, which suggests that the German, English and Israeli traditions derive from a common root unlike the Egyptian and Russian traditions which split off earlier. Since the modern Israeli pronunciation essentially goes back to Hans Jakob Polotsky, who left Germany in 1934, this gives us a terminus ante quem for this innovation. My guess is that the accent shift /he'ru/ > /'heru/ was initiated by members of the Berlin school, which would well explain its wide present-day distribution. The introduction of the initial stress to the US and Britain can possibly be ascribed to respectively James H. Breasted, one of Erman's students and the founder of US Egyptology, and Alan H. Gardiner, who also had close personal connections to the Berlin school. This would push back the terminus ante quem to 1895, the year Breasted returned from Berlin to the US.

I have dwelt on accentuation in some detail because subtle features of this kind, which are acquired unconsciously, are most likely to propagate by genetic transmission. Features like the pronunciation of individual consonants, about which speakers are fairly conscious and which are explicitly prescribed in many introductory grammars of Egyptian, may be changed deliberately and are therefore less indicative of the genetic tree.

I hope to have shown that the study of Egyptologese is a fascinating field, and I can say that my fieldwork with various Egyptologists, who are so numerous that I cannot name them all in the present essay, has been a great pleasure to me. But it must be warned that this kind of research is not always so very different from doing linguistic fieldwork in the Amazonian jungle. One encounters lots of enthusiastic informants willing to help, but also reluctance, incomprehension, and outright fear. Not a few of my informants suspected that my real intention was to put their knowledge of Ancient Egyptian to the test. Unfortunately, I have never done fieldwork with Antonio Loprieno because I supposed that the dialect of such a cosmopolitan scholar might be too mixed and confused. But I am confident that he will regard this research with indulgence and a smile.

33 E.g. Dieter Kurth, Helmut Satzinger, Erich Winter.

34 E.g. Friederike Seyfried, Heike Sternberg-el Hotabi.

Apart from seeking to amuse Antonio Loprieno, this essay also intends to encourage others to take up research in their own surroundings. As with any other language group, the foremost task in the study of Egyptologese must be a careful documentation of the extant idioms. The state of documentation of Egyptologese is most fragmentary.³⁵ Since the language is constantly evolving, features that are not recorded today may be lost forever within a few decades. I go so far as to claim that Egyptologese should become one of the prime objects of study by historical linguists. Its community of speakers is so small and its paths of transmission are so transparent that we can hope to tie diachronic changes even to specific individuals, something that will never be possible for any other language. If anyone feels stimulated by this paper to document one of the dialects of Egyptologese, or to do some diachronic research on the language, in other words to become an Egyptologist (if I may name it thus), I would certainly be delighted, and I am optimistic that Antonio Loprieno, whom I know as such an open-minded and versatile person, would be too.

Bibliography

Birch 1877

S. Birch, *Egyptian Texts*, London.

Bonnet 1952

H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*, Berlin.

Brugsch 1863

H. Brugsch, Die Phallus-Gruppen in der hieroglyphischen Schrift, in: *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 1, 21–27; 31–38.

Brugsch 1867 ff.

H. Brugsch, *Hieroglyphisch-demotisches Wörterbuch* enthaltend in wissenschaftlicher Anordnung die gebräuchlichsten Wörter und Gruppen der heiligen und der Volks-Sprache und Schrift der alten Ägypter, Leipzig.

Brugsch 1872

H. Brugsch, *Hieroglyphische Grammatik* oder übersichtliche Zusammenstellung der graphischen, grammatischen und syntaktischen Regeln der heiligen Sprache und Schrift der Alten Aegypter zum Nutzen der studierenden Jugend, Leipzig.

Brugsch 1877

H. Brugsch, *Geschichte Aegypten's unter den Pharaonen*, Leipzig.

Brugsch 1894

H. Brugsch, *Mein Leben und mein Wandern*, Berlin.

Brugsch/Erman 1889

H. Brugsch/A. Erman, Zur Umschreibung der Hieroglyphen, in: *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 27, 1–4.

Budge 1899

E.A.W. Budge, *Easy Lessons in Egyptian Hieroglyphics with Sign List*, London.

Ebers 1875

G. Ebers, *Papyrus Ebers. Das hermetische Buch über die Arzneimittel der Alten Ägypter (...) mit hieroglyphisch-lateinischem Glossar* von Ludwig Stern, 2 vols., Leipzig.

35 I have tried to provide synchronic descriptions of a few modern idioms, most recently in Peust (2012).

Ebers 1876

G. Ebers, Das Grab und die Biographie des Feldhauptmanns Amén em héb, in: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 30, 391–416.

Ebers 1877

G. Ebers, Der Klang des Altägyptischen und der Reim, in: Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde 15, 43–48.

Ebers 1893

G. Ebers, Uarda, 3 vols. (Gesammelte Werke 3–5), Stuttgart.

Erman 1885/7

A. Erman, Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum, 2 vols., Tübingen.

Erman 1909²

A. Erman, Die ägyptische Religion, Berlin.

Erman 1912

A. Erman, Die Hieroglyphen (Sammlung Götschen 608), Berlin.

Erman 1933²

A. Erman, Neuägyptische Grammatik, Leipzig.

Erman 1934

A. Erman, Die Religion der Ägypter, Berlin.

Erman 1936

A. Erman, Die Welt am Nil, Leipzig.

Gardiner 1927

A.H. Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs, Oxford.

Hall 1950

R.A. Hall, The Reconstruction of Proto-Romance, in: Language 26, 6–27.

Hincks 1846

E. Hincks, An Attempt to Ascertain the Number, Names, and Powers, of the Letters of the Hieroglyphic, or Ancient Egyptian Alphabet, in: Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy 21, 132–232.

Huang 1998

M.M.C. Huang, The Phonetic System of Egyptian Hieroglyphics, Hurstville.

Kammerzell 1999

F. Kammerzell, Zur Interpretation einiger Beispiele graphemsprachlicher Varianz im Ägyptischen, in: Göttinger Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft 2, 61–97.

Loprieno 1995

A. Loprieno, Ancient Egyptian. A Linguistic Introduction, Cambridge.

Loret 1889

V. Loret, Manuel de la langue égyptienne. Grammaire, tableau des hieroglyphes, textes & glossaire, Paris.

Lüddeckens 1943

E. Lüddeckens, Untersuchungen über religiösen Gehalt, Sprache und Form der ägyptischen Totenklagen, in: Mitteilungen des Deutschen Instituts für Ägyptische Altertumskunde in Kairo 11, 1–188.

Mariette 1855

A. Mariette, Renseignements sur les soixante-quatre Apis trouvés dans les souterrains du Sérapéum, in: Bulletin Archéologique de l'Athenæum Français, 45–50; 53–58; 66–68; 85–90; 93–100.

Maspero 1871

G. Maspero, Des formes de la conjugaison en égyptien antique, en démotique et en copte, Paris.

Naville 1926

E. Naville, L'écriture égyptienne, Paris.

Peust 2012

C. Peust, Survey ägyptologischer Dialekte. (4) Ägypten, in: Göttinger Miscellen 235, 75–84.

Piankoff 1942

A. Piankoff, Le livre des quererts. I^{er} tableau, in: Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale 41, 1–11.

de Rougé 1847

E. de Rougé, Examen de l'ouvrage de M. le chevalier de Bunsen intitulé: Le place de l'Égypte dans l'histoire de l'humanité" (4th+5th part), in: Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne 15, 165–193; 405–438.

de Rougé 1851

E. de Rougé, Mémoire sur l'inscription du tombeau d'Ahmès, chef des nautoniers, Paris.

de Rougé 1866

E. de Rougé, Recherches sur les monuments qu'on peut attribuer aux six premières dynasties de Manéthon, Paris.

de Rougé 1867 ff.

E. de Rougé, Chrestomathie égyptienne, 4 vols., Paris.

de Rougé 1888

J. de Rougé, Le poème de Pentaour, in: Revue Égyptologique 6, 81–89.

Sethe 1906

K. Sethe, Eine ägyptische Expedition nach dem Libanon im 15. Jahrhundert vor Chr., in: Sitzungsberichte der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 1906/1, 356–363.

Sethe 1923

K. Sethe, Die Vokalisation des Ägyptischen, in: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 77, 145–207.

Sethe 1939

K. Sethe, Vom Bilde zum Buchstaben, Leipzig.

Steindorff 1884

G. Steindorff, Prolegomena zu einer koptischen Nominalclassen, Dissertation, Göttingen.

Steindorff 1892

G. Steindorff, Das altägyptische Alphabet und seine Umschreibung, in: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 46, 709–730.

Wójcikiewicz 2006

A. Wójcikiewicz, Die Erweckung des Pharao. Der Schlüssel für das goldene Zeitalter, Tübingen.