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The inscription from Hamath

4.4.2 and 4.6.4

WHEN BARNETT projected the connection of Greek *éléphant-* "ivory" with hieroglyphic Hittite *ulubandas* "bull,"¹ he believed himself to be solving one of the minor puzzles of etymology, for the origin of Greek *éléphant-* was still unaccounted for. Since the Romans, when they first met the elephants of Pyrrhus in South Italy, called them Lucanian bulls, it seemed clear to Barnett that this hieroglyphic Hittite word for a bull had been used for what was supposed to be his horn. Kretschmer postulated an Indo-European equation with a particular significance:² in addition to comparing Greek *éléphant-* and hieroglyphic Hittite *ul(u)bandas*, he compared Gothic *ulbandus* "camel" and Greek *elepháirmai* "harm." From this, he inferred an Indo-European appellative "noxious animal, destroyer" referring to "mammoth," which preserved in Gothic *ulbandus* the evocation "big animal." Kretschmer's line of reasoning is especially definitive in his own words (p. 320), alleging the mammoth to be a species of animals which, though "schon längst ausgestorben . . . durch die grosse Menge ihrer fossilen Überreste und den kostbaren Stoff Elfenbein, den sie lieferte, sich dauernd im Gedächtnis der Menschen erhielt."

Kretschmer's theorizing might have had a great impact on the comparison of the Anatolian and Indo-European languages. Unfortunately, Kretschmer's results must be disregarded as far as the reconstruction of the basic Indo-Hittite vocabulary is concerned, for a hieroglyphic Hittite *ulubandas* is non-existent. Barnett obtained his information from Hrozný,³ whose reading

¹R. D. Barnett, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 68 (1948), pp. 6f.

²P. Kretschmer, *Anzeiger der phil.-hist. Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 88.21 (1952), pp. 307-325.

³B. Hrozný, *Les inscriptions hittites hiéroglyphiques* (Prague, 1933-7), p. 307.

and interpretation of the documents in question have proved to be arbitrary. The word, which occurs twice, has now to be read BULL *u-su-pa-ta-ti* and BULL-*su-pa-ti-n*,⁴ and is probably only an epithet, for the time being of unknown meaning.⁵



Inscription from Hamath (4.6.4) appearing in the articles by Barnett and Kretschmer. The inscription appears in reverse in Kretschmer's article. The numbers refer to Laroche's list of signs in *Les hiéroglyphes hittites* (Paris, 1960). Read: 105-407-370-334-90-35; BULL-ideogram mark-*su-pa-ti-n*.

⁴Hamath, 4.4.2 and 4.6.4. See figure.

⁵Cf. E. Laroche, *Les hiéroglyphes hittites* 1 (Paris, 1960), p. 67.