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## INY'S TRAVELS<sup>1</sup>

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The recently reconstructed biography of Iny refers to Egypt's trade with Asiatic countries throughout the 6th Dynasty. The outstanding importance of the reported information on a slab kept in Tokyo Archaeological Museum concerns several valuable goods as well as trade routes, where some place names stick at renowned broker centres of the Old Bronze Age (second half of 3rd Millennium to beginning of 2nd Millennium BC). This essay argues for their proper identification.*

### **RIASSUNTO**

*La biografia di Iny, ricostruita recentemente, narra di commerci dell'Egitto con i paesi del Vicino Oriente durante la VI Dinastia egiziana. La grande importanza delle informazioni fornite da una lastra conservata al museo archeologico di Tokyo è dovuta al fatto che informa dei beni di prestigio ricercati dal funzionario egiziano e delle vie da esso percorse che includono alcuni nomi di luogo di centri commerciali importanti nell'Antico Bronzo (seconda metà del III millennio -inizi II millennio a.C.). Questo studio propone l'identificazione di alcuni di questi toponimi.*

### **KEYWORDS**

*Anatoly, trade, silver, lapis lazuli, tin, bitumen*

### **PAROLE CHIAVE**

*Anatolia, commercio, argento, lapislazzuli, stagno, bitume*

“The splendid jewellery discovered in Egypt bears silent testimony to a trade intercourse, direct or indirect, with many remote and little known lands; and it would be of considerable interest to learn through what channels the precious stones that adorned the necks of the Memphite and Theban ladies found their way to the Egyptian markets ... we are tolerably well informed concerning the expeditions that journeyed thither (Sinai) almost annually in quest of the turquoise; but with regard to other much used stones ... some of them, like lapis lazuli, from countries farther afield – our ignorance is almost complete.”<sup>2</sup>

A passage in the Story of Sinuhe was definitely explained as quoting the titles of rulers as far as the Luvian country,<sup>3</sup> and a biography found in Dahshur told of an official, who in the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty travelled well beyond Byblos.<sup>4</sup> Thereafter, although the outstanding archive found at Ebla/Tell Mardikh in 1975 still keeps silent about a likely partnership with Egypt concerning the trade of precious materials,<sup>5</sup> an exciting discovery by Michele Marcolin in Japan<sup>6</sup> provides decisive evidence in favour of an Egyptian trade much farther than Ebla, reaching the heart of Anatoly in the same time of pharaoh Pepy I,

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<sup>2</sup> A.H. Gardiner, “The Tomb of a Much-Travelled Theban Official”, *JEA* 4 (1918), p. 28(38).

<sup>3</sup> Th. Schneider, “Sinuhe's Notiz über die Könige: Syrisch-Anatolische Herrschertitel in ägyptischer Überlieferung”, *Ägypten und Levante* XII (2002), pp. 257-72.

<sup>4</sup> J.P. Allen, “L'inscription historique de Khnumhotep à Dahchour”, *BSFE* 173 (2009), pp. 13-31.

<sup>5</sup> See M.G. Biga, “Tra Egitto e Siria nel III millennio a.C.”, *Acc.Sc. Torino Atti Sc.Mor.* 146 (2012), pp. 17-36 for a possible solution,


<sup>6</sup> M. Marcolin, “Una nuova biografia egiziana della VI dinastia con iscrizioni storiche e geografiche”, *Acc.Sc. Torino Atti Sc.Mor.* 144 (2010), pp. 44-79.

to whose reign the Ebla archive is currently dated.<sup>7</sup> A stone built chapel from somewhere in Egypt was illicitly dismantled and sold out in pieces all over the world. It had belonged to a first rank official who lived through the Egyptian 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and left a detailed account of his journeys northwards from Egypt:

“<sup>5</sup>I reached (litt. “I did”) *ꜥmꜣw, ḥntš, pꜣws* four times when I was a chancellor of the god under the Person of my lord, Pepy (I). <sup>6</sup>I brought him silver and every good produce that his ka wished, and his Person praised me because of that <sup>7</sup>exceedingly. Then I was sent to Byblos by the Person of my lord Mernefer. <sup>8</sup>I brought three Byblos ships and made the big Palace boats. I brought lapis lazuli, tin, <sup>9</sup>silver, bitumen and every gift that his ka wished, so that I was praised therefore in the Palace <sup>10</sup>and treasures were given to me. I went down to Byblos from *R-ḥꜣt* and came back <sup>11</sup>in peace. Never was the same done by any general sent by my god earlier”.

“<sup>2</sup>I was sent by the Person of my lord Neferkarê (Pepy II) to *ḥntš*. <sup>3</sup>I brought back one Byblos ship and cargo boats laden <sup>4</sup>with silver, native men and women. <sup>5</sup>The Person of my lord praised me etc.”

Hitherto almost nothing was known of Egypt's outreach beyond the Sinai peninsula in this early period,<sup>8</sup> but for the expeditions of general Weni during the reign of pharaoh Pepy I, and the information coming from Byblos and Ebla excavations. Although Marcolin could find out and join together several inscribed slabs from different collections, the relevant piece is kept in Tokyo Archaeological Museum (Kikugawa slab). On it one can read the record of four journeys of Iny under the long reign of Pepy I, that took him to three remarkable towns or countries, their names being perfectly preserved as well as somehow unprecedented.

I shall now venture to tackle a reasonable clue for all three, provided that the horizon of the Egyptian civilization is extended in a way that had never been admitted before for such an early period, highlighting the magnificence of Pepy I's reign, whose pyramid gave the name to Memphis. The reason for presenting a paper in a conference at Istanbul is that the farthest point reached by Iny was sited in central Anatoly and must be the renowned silver market of Burus-ḥanda. This place is well known in the later archive of the Assyrian merchants at Kaneš,<sup>9</sup> and is even quoted in the poem Šar Tamkari. However, Iny's mention is by far the oldest one, and the hieroglyphic spelling  is exactly what we should expect for a name “Purus” or “Bur(r)us” in this period. Its connection with silver ensures the correct identification, whereas the lack of “ḥanda” in Iny's inscription may be due to it being a later addition, or something that could be omitted in the very concise Egyptian writing. Consider however what is going to be said about *ḥntš* below.

Before reaching Burus, Iny touched two certainly important places, one of which had already been known for a long time, though its exact location is still open to debate. I have the impression that their succession may not represent an exact itinerary, but rather mark


<sup>7</sup> M. Lebeau, “Dating the destructions of Ebla, Mari and Nagar from Radiocarbon with references to Egypt. Combined with Stratigraphy and Historical Data”, *Stories of long ago (Fs. Roaf) AOAT 397*, 2012, pp. 301-321.


<sup>8</sup> See P. Tallet in *RdE 59* (2008), pp. 155-180 and *BIFAO 109* (2009), pp. 473-93; *BIFAO 112* (2012), p. 381; *Abgadiyat 8* (2013), pp. 122-27.

<sup>9</sup> C. Michel, *Correspondance des marchands de Kanish (LAPO 19)*, Paris 2001.

<sup>10</sup> As provider of wood (ex. *Urk. IV 1715,11*) and perfumes (unpublished papyrus in the Louvre: Th. Bardinot, “Hérodote et le secret de l'embaumeur”, *Parcourir l'éternité, Hommages à Jean Yoyotte*,

the extreme points reached on the east and west (and north) sides. The western place name (*hntš*) occurred during the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty in the annals of pharaoh Amenemhet II, and later in various sources of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty,<sup>10</sup> and then until the end of the pharaonic civilization. Moreover, it was mentioned in the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty as the source for the (precious) wood of a prince's coffin.<sup>11</sup>

 looks to me as a good Egyptian rendering of “Hundašša” (omitting the initial “Tar” of “Tarhundašša”) and must be related to somewhere on the sea coast.<sup>12</sup> Even if a geographical term may have changed its reference in the course of time, I believe that a correspondence with Cilicia Aspera might well fit Iny's route to Burus. Otherwise that stretch is the closest shore in the continent to Cyprus.<sup>13</sup>

The third term (*ꜥmꜣw*: the first place reached by Iny according to his inscription) is the least certain for a topographical identification as it is known to me only in the present instance, but I suppose that an equation with Palmyra/Tadmor may hit the point.<sup>14</sup> Its redundant writing  is normal for the archaic writing of the period, but may entail the reduplication of *m*, perhaps due to assimilation (*d* > *m* before *m*): \*Dammuru, or even better \*Ṭammuru < \*Ṭadmuru. The reference to the writing of the verb “to see” (*mꜣ*, determined with the “eye” sign) may offer a hint of some sort for its reading. Palmyra is already quoted in the letters of Mari, and it must have been from early times the crossroads of important caravan routes.<sup>15</sup> The hieroglyphic rendering looks satisfactory in default of another solution, and Palmyra would well suit the easternmost country crossed by Iny. If we trace a line from Palmyra to Cilicia, we notice that it passes not far from Ebla, a town Iny might have stopped at, where a major commercial trade centre for lapis lazuli and tin was thriving and fragments of gifts by the Egyptian pharaohs Chephren (4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty) and Pepy I have been dug out by the Italian archaeological mission. Moreover most of the evidence in the archive for a trade between Ebla and Dugurasu (Egypt according to Biga) lies during the rule of Išar-Damu, a contemporary of Pepy I.<sup>16</sup> It is likely that Iny travelled to Anatoly by land before Weni led several mighty military expeditions by land and sea against “native” countries, which were not specified in his biographical inscription, but the word “native” (*ꜥꜣm* = [*drm*]) is the same used for people to be brought to Egypt from Hundašša.<sup>17</sup>

During the reign of Pepy I, Iny was not looking for timber or any other materials, but silver, the metal mined in the Amanus. Under the successor of Pepy I, pharaoh Mernerê, Iny was sent not only for silver, but also lapis lazuli and tin,<sup>18</sup> besides bitumen,

*Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Etudes + Sciences Religieuses*, 156, Brepols, Leuven 2012, pp. 58-82: pp. 64-70.

<sup>11</sup> *Urk.* I 146,10, written exactly as in Iny's contemporary inscription plus the addition of the wood determinative.

<sup>12</sup> M. Forlanini, “How to infer ancient roads and itineraries from heterogeneous Hittite texts, The case of the Cilicean (Kizzuwatnean) road system”, *Kaskal* 10 (2013), pp. 1-14.

<sup>13</sup> See footnote 25,

<sup>14</sup> An alternative Simyra encounters major phonetic difficulties (\*Dumuru ?), although it might fit Iny's itinerary.

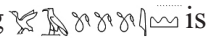
<sup>15</sup> A new perspective is opened by P. Tallet, “Deux notes sur les expéditions au pays de Pount à la lumière de nouvelles données archéologiques”, *RdE* 64 (2013), pp. 189-203.

<sup>16</sup> See Biga (quoted note 3) p. 36. Unless “Dammuru” (?) is a hitherto unknown Egyptian name for Ebla, corresponding to an equally unknown name Dugurasu, used in the Ebla archive to name Egypt, according to Biga.

<sup>17</sup> For its meaning as a general term for “foreigner” or “native”, see E. Brovarski and W.J. Murnane, “Inscriptions from the Time of Nebhepetrê Mentuhotep II at Abisko”, *Serapis* 1(1969), pp. 1-33.

<sup>18</sup> For quarries of tin (and copper) near Byblos: C.F.A. Schaeffer, “La Contribution de la Syrie Ancienne à l'Invention du Bronze”, *JEA* 31 (1945), pp. 92-95.

wherefore he travelled to Byblos (*Kbn*, namely *Gubla*), and the inscription stresses that he moved from *R-ḥ3t* (= Dugurasu ?),<sup>19</sup> The choice of a different (sea ?) route was perhaps due to the fact that the inland route was no longer safe and Ebla had been destroyed. Anyway, Iny's mention of Byblos is the second one we get for the Old Kingdom, after the first one in the reign of Pepy I,<sup>20</sup> besides another one datable to the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, while the archaeological evidence has shown how many contacts underwent with Egypt since the fourth millennium, and Byblos is well known to the Middle Kingdom Coffin Texts.

On another hand a likely second quotation of Burus, spelt in quite another way, is found in a Ramesside papyrus from Deir el-Medina containing a long list of products and countries (pBeatty IV vs 7,5).<sup>21</sup> It was never read but the different writing  is easily explained with the renovated writing system of Late Egyptian.<sup>22</sup> It is to be hoped that future excavations will discover the true site of what looks like a very promising archaeological target, and check whether a *kārum* was already established there in Iny's times.

Eventually Iny went back to *Hundašša* once more under the reign of the last pharaoh of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Pepy II, who succeeded Mernerê after his rather short reign. He must have been old by this time, being perhaps the most experienced of the pharaoh's envoys to the northern countries, and he voyaged by sea, in quest of silver, without going as far as Burus,<sup>23</sup> and of people, male and female, from that "native" country. This last trip of Iny's probably was at the beginning of the new reign, more or less contemporary to those of Harkhuf to inner Africa, so that Egypt may prove to be also a trade broker, f.i. between Ebla and Kerma, leaving quite a various evidence of its contacts. The clay tablets engraved with Egyptian hieratic writing found at Balat in the Dakhla oasis and dated to the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty may assess the knowledge that the Egyptians had got of the cuneiform clay tablets, at least of their existence. Finally the three place names reported by Iny seem to forecast a parallel to the three ruler names quoted in the Story of Sinuhe.

All that not only shows how wide was the Egyptian knowledge of the world in the Old Bronze Age, but is an enlightening confirmation of what W. Helck guessed a number of years ago:<sup>24</sup> "Endlich muß auch betont werden, daß wir uns den Handel in dieser spätneolithischen Epoche nicht gar zu primitiv vorstellen dürfen. Es war nicht nur ein Handel von Dorf zu Dorf, der dann ein Produkt nach vielen Jahren auch in ferneren Bereichen auftauchen ließ, sondern wir müssen mit Sicherheit mit weitreichenden Seefahrten und Karawanenzügen rechnen ... Die Handelsfahrten haben sicherlich viel weiter ausgegriffen, als wir bisher anzunehmen bereit waren. "

A similar expedition to *Hundašša*, on a larger scale, was sent under Amenemhet II, and it was doubtless directed towards the same country as Iny's, again reached by sea, in

<sup>19</sup> A. Roccati, "DUGURASU = *rw-ḥ3wt*", in (A. Archi ed.) *Tradition and Innovation in the Ancient Near East, Proceedings of the 57th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Rome 4-8 July 2011*, Winona Lake 2015, pp. 155-159.

<sup>20</sup> A. Diego Espinel, "The role of the Temple of Ba'alat Gebal as Intermediary", *SAK* 30 (2002), pp. 103-119; p. 109.

<sup>21</sup> A.H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum. Third Series, Chester Beatty Gift*, London 1935. Silver and lapis lazuli are connected to *Prwi* (miswritten for *Prws* ?).

<sup>22</sup> 3 corresponds regularly to [r] or [l] until the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, in spite of the existence of another *r/l* sound, which is maintained except in some positions to render later [r]. See O. Rössler, "Das ältere ägyptische Umschreibungs-system für Fremdnamen und seine sprachgeschichtlichen Lehren", *Hamburger Beiträge für Afrikakunde* 5 (1966), pp. 218-29.

<sup>23</sup> Ebla, another source for silver (according to Biga), had been destroyed by that time.

<sup>24</sup> W. Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens und Vorderasiens zur Ägäis bis ins 7. Jahrhundert v.Chr.*, Darmstadt 1979, p. 4.

order to provide silver (from Amanus ?), copper (from Cyprus ?), tin (from Iran ?), trees (for the transportation of which ships were indispensable), “native” people.<sup>25</sup> It was already contemporary with the *kārum* of Kaneš and its archive, but Egypt’s concern apparently did not mind the Assyrian merchants and was turned to other directions. Now we can argue that the knowledge of the island of Crete by the Egyptians is secured from old times, in spite of the occurrence of the topographical term of Keft(er)u/Crete only in the New (or Middle ?) Kingdom.<sup>26</sup> Vessels with the name of Pepy I were found in Mirgissa (Nubia), Crete, Byblos and Ebla.<sup>27</sup> The quotation of *Kft3w* in the Leiden papyrus of the Admonitions,<sup>28</sup> together with Byblos, far from being due to an interpolation, adds weight to the dating of the composition of that literary text (probably) to the mid 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, confirming thereby the width of the Egyptian background also overseas. In their turn the sources of the Middle Kingdom contain no exaggeration, but narrate the adventurous deeds of some lesser competitors of Iny.<sup>29</sup> Anyhow a major hint of how much silver as well as lapis lazuli and tin were coveted by the Egyptians is granted by the “Tod treasure”, a mixed hoard of gold and silver vessels and pieces of rough lapis lazuli contained in four bronze boxes, which was buried in a temple near Thebes during the reign of Amenemhet II.<sup>30</sup>

Iny’s travels are also a complementary confirmation of some statement by H.L. Thomas,<sup>31</sup> that during the middle of the third millennium, the Old Kingdom of Egypt and the city states of *Anatoly*, *Syria*<sup>32</sup> and Mesopotamia of Early Dynastic III times created markets that catalyzed trade throughout south-western Asia. Although tin was known from as early as the early third millennium, it is only in these times that there was a gradual transition to the use of tin bronze, although it did not come under widespread use until the second millennium. Silver entered Egypt since predynastic times from Asia, but now we get a definite information about at least one of its main sources in Anatoly. Likewise lapis lazuli was traded from Asian markets, among which Byblos played a role, as a consequence of political events we can scarcely guess.

<sup>25</sup> H. Altenmüller & A.M. Moussa, “Die Inschrift Amenemhets II. aus dem Ptah-Tempel von Memphis. Vorbericht”, *SAK* 18 (1991), pp. 1-48; Ezra S. Marcus, “Amenemhet II and the Sea: Maritime Aspects of the Mit Rahina (Memphis) Inscriptions”, *Ägypten und Levante* XVII (2007), pp. 137-190.

<sup>26</sup> J.F. Quack, “*Kft3w* und *I3sy*”, *Ägypten und Levante* VI (1996), pp. 75-81.

<sup>27</sup> D. Valbelle, “L’Égyptien en Nubie”, in (Ch. Bonnet ed.) *Études Nubiennes*, Geneva 1992, pp. 359-62: p. 360 n. 12-15.

<sup>28</sup> A.H. Gardiner, *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage*, Leipzig 1909, p. 32.

<sup>29</sup> A. Roccati, “Note letterarie V. Sinuhe come prototipo di Marco Polo”, *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum. Recueil d’études dédiées à J.Cl. Grenier (Cenim 5)*, vol. IV, Montpellier 2012, pp. 661-66.

<sup>30</sup> F. Bisson de la Roque, *Le trésor de Tod*, CG, Cairo 1950. Cf. the study of Marcus, quoted note 25, pp. 158-60.

<sup>31</sup> H.L. Thomas, “Historical Chronologies and Radiocarbon Dating”, *Ägypten und Levante* III (1992), pp. 144-155: p. 150.

<sup>32</sup> The additions in italics are mine.