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A Tale of Semantics and Suppressions:
Reinterpreting Papyrus Mayer A and the So-called ‘War of the High Priest’
during the Reign of Ramesses XI

Kim Ridealgh

Abstract
The ‘War of the High Priest’ is a phrase commonly used by scholars to refer to the so-called ‘suppression’ of the High Priest of Amun Amenhotep by the King’s Son of Kush Panethy during the reign of the last Ramesside king, Ramesses XI. The precise date of this event is debated, but it likely occurred around Regnal Year 17 or 18 of Ramesses XI (c. 1089–1088 BCE). The sources that document the ‘War of the High Priest’ are limited (P. Mayer A, P. BM EA 10383, P. BM EA 10052, and the Karnak Inscription) and scholarly opinion on the topic is hotly divided. What is clear, however, is that the term ‘suppression’ used to refer to this event is ineffectual in conveying the nuances of the Egyptian term thj, and by translating thj as ‘suppression’ extreme connotations are imposed upon it that alter modern perceptions concerning the ‘War of the High Priest’. This study will add to the existing debate on the ‘War of the High Priest’ by examining the terminology surrounding the event through a lexical analysis of thj, analysing its uses in other textual contexts, scholarly interpretation, and its wider implications. Chronological issues and debates will be discussed only on the periphery.

1. Introduction
The reign of Ramesses XI Menmaatre-Setepenptah (c. 1106–1077 BCE), the final king of the Twentieth Dynasty, marked the end of the New Kingdom in ancient Egypt. Civil war, famine, physical threat from marauding Libyans, and economic crisis all played their part...
in creating an unstable political scenario in Egypt. In Regnal Year 19 of the reign of Ramesses XI a new era named the wḥm-ms.wt period or ‘repeating of births’ was introduced to ‘cancel’ out these political and social troubles that had characterised his reign.6
Perhaps the most influential event prior to this period of renewal was the ‘War of the High Priest’7 in which the King’s Son of Kush Pt-nsḥy was either invited, or instructed,8 to restore order in Thebes through the ‘suppression’ of the High Priest of Amun Jmn-htp.9 The


8 See P. Turin Cat. 1896, a royal order sent to Pt-nsḥy in Thebes (A. Bakir, Egyptian Epistemology, BdÉ 48, Cairo 1970, pl. 31; KRI VI, 734–735; Lull, Los sumos sacerdotes de Amón, 45, pl. 4). Thijs claims that there must have been a controversy of some kind involving the authority of the High Priest of Amun, stressing that striking workmen, presence of hostile forces, ration troubles, and a conflict between workers and higher authority reflect ‘an ‘ideal’ background for the actions against Jmn-htp’ (in: SÄK 31, 2003, 293). Pt-nsḥy is also documented in P. BM EA 10053, v.1.2 (Peet, The Great Tomb Robberies, pl. 19; KRI VI, 755, 12), and P. Turin Cat. 1895 + 2007, rt.1.4–5 (A. Gardiner, Ramesside Administrative Documents, Oxford 1968, 36); see also Lull, Los sumos sacerdotes de Amón, 44–45.

9 The tenure of Jmn-htp as High Priest of Amun is firmly documented between Regnal Years 9/10 of Ramesses IX and Regnal Year 2 of Ramesses X (P. Turin Cat. 1932+1939, v.1.3; KRI VI, 686; Černý, Egypt from the Death of Ramesses III, 629, no. 4; Thijs, in: SÄK 31, 2003, 293). For further information on Jmn-htp, see G. Lefèbvre, Inscriptions concernant les grands prêtres d’Amon Romê-Roû et Amenhotep, Paris 1929, pl. 2; H. Kees, Das Priester tum im ägyptischen Staat, Probleme der Ägyptologie 1, Leiden 1953, 126–127; Bell, in: Serapis 6, 1980, 17; Morales, in: GM 181, 2001, 61; Lull, Los sumos sacerdotes de Amón, 24–25. Although von Beckerath (in: Tanis un Theben, Hamburg 1951, 91–4) and E. Wente (The Suppression of the High Priest...
aim of this paper is to examine certain elements of the data that concern the classification of the ‘War of the High Priest’, not to add to the ever-growing chronological debate on the issue surrounding when this event supposedly took place. Rather, this paper will focus on the term thj and its interpretation by scholars in regards to the ‘War of the High Priest’ and in other genres of texts. Through such an analysis conclusions regarding whether the ‘War of the High Priest’ can accurately be defined as a ‘suppression’ can be made. In turn this will allow for a new interpretation and understanding of the ‘War of the High Priest’.

2 Sources for the War of the High Priest

Very little evidence survives concerning the ‘War of the High Priest’, and what does survive is somewhat ambiguous. P. Mayer A, v.6.6–7, is the most prevalent of the remaining documents, and links Pḫ-nhḥy with a ‘suppression’ ( thj) of Jmn-htp:

(v.6.4) dd=f n3 jḥ, w14 jw jw=wk mh m tḥ hw.t jw=j m-sj nḥy n ējw (v.6.5) n pγ=γ jt=j jw Pḫ-hiτj w3 jḥ mh m jmj=j jw=f ptj (v.6.6) r Jpjp jw jr.tw thj Jmn-htp wn [mj] hm-ntr tpj n Jmn (v.6.7) r-ṣ3 bj 6 jw ḫpr j.jr jy 9 ṣbd n ḫrw n thj (v.6.8) j.jr.tw Jmn-htp wn m hm-ntr tjp n Jmn jw ḫw p/y pr-n-stj15 (v.6.9) jw djdj.tw ḫt m jm=f

(v.6.4) He16 said “the foreigners came and conquered the temple, whilst I was following after some donkeys (v.6.5) belonging to my father. Pḫ-hiτj, a foreigner, captured Amenhotep, in: JNES 25, 1966, 85) both argue that Pḫ-nhḥy was in fact instructed to restore Jmn-htp to his previous position. Kees argued that the activity against the High Priest was a Theban insurrection spurred on by his mismanagement and resentment over his wealth (Die Hohenpriester des Amun, 2–6; contra: Wente, in: JNES 25, 1966, 87).

12 This translation of thj is first used by Peet, The Great Tomb Robberies, 125.
14 Whilst jḥ is often translated as ‘interpreter’ (Wb 1, 2.15; TLA Lemma no. 18; Lesko, A Dictionary of Late Egyptian I, 2), for the purposes of this document it is generally understood to refer to foreigners, specifically Nubians, highlighting the foreign aspect of the term (Morales, in: GM 181, 2001, 65). The same applies to its use in P. BM EA 10053 versus; P. BM EA 10383, rt.2.5; and Turin Cat. 2018, verso (KRI VI, 856). A wide discussion on the term is provided by L. Bell, Interpreters and Egyptianized Nubians in Ancient Egyptian Foreign Policy: Aspects of the History of Egypt and Nubia, University of Pennsylvania PhD, Ann Arbour, Michigan, 1976, especially pages 84–90.
15 Wente (in: JNES 25, 1966, 73) translates v.6.8–9, as ‘this portable chest had been misappropriated and set on fire that I returned’. Peet (The Mayer Papyri, 9–10) provides further discussion of pr-n-stj, concluding that it was some form of portable house and that it had more in common with a movable chest in which valuables are stored. He translates the section as ‘this Corridor-House was violated and it was set on fire’ (The Mayer Papyri, 13).
16 The ‘he’ in this section refers to the Porter ḫiτj-nfr who is on trial for stealing from the portable-chest (See P. Mayer A, v.6.1–3. Peet (The Mayer Papyri, 13) translates his profession as workman, but this is an incorrect reading of ḫw=τj meaning porter (Wb 5, 102.4–10; TLA Lemma no. 163280; Lesko, A Dictionary of
me and took me (v.6.6) to Jpp.17 Jmn-htp, who used to be High Priest of Amun, had been ‘suppressed’18 (v.6.7) for 6 months. Then it so happened that I came back (after) 9 whole months of the ‘suppression’19 (v.6.8) that was made to Jmn-htp, who was High Priest of Amun, when this Portable-House was violated, (v.6.9) it was burned throughout”.20

P. Mayer A presents a conundrum as the text records two different temporal periods, six months (ḥbd 6) and nine months21 (9 ḫbd), which show a different position of the numerical value in separate subordinate clauses.22 It appears that this variation may have been an intentional construction on the part of the scribe, possibly in order to demonstrate that they were distinct, separate events. The ḫbd 6 is written in a similar fashion as items on a list, indicating that this was, perhaps, the full length of time that Jmn-htp was ‘suppressed’.23 The 9 ḫbd is directly influenced by the following n hrw genitival adjective, which requires the placement of the numerical value before the noun, as is often common in expressions of time.24 This suggests that the period of time experienced by the individual in P. Mayer A was distinct from that experienced by Jmn-htp25.


17 Gauthier comments that this toponym must be somewhere within the traditional boundaries of the Theban Necropolis, but the exact location is unknown (Dictionnaire des noms géographiques contenus dans les textes hiéroglyphiques, Osnabrück 1975, 66).

18 Peet (The Mayer Papyri, 13) actually translates ḫḥ as ‘violence/violated’, but then later changed it to ‘suppression’ (in: JEA 12, 1926, 254). He does comment that ḫḥ is difficult to translate into English and often requires the use of a noun (in: JEA 12, 1926, 256, no. 1). Černý translated this as ‘attacked’ (J. Černý/S. Groll/C.J. Eyre, A Late Egyptian Grammar, Studia Polil (series maior) 4, Rome, 1978, 386).

19 Spiegelberg (in: ZÄS 29, 1891, 12) does not translate these lines in his original publication of P. Mayer A.

20 Barwik argues that this passage indicates that Jmn-htp was a victim of the suppression and not the instigator of the civil war (The Twilight of Ramesside Egypt, 77, no. 2). However, no sources survive stressing that he was a victim as such. P. Mayer A, v.6.4–9, makes no reference to the individual responsible for the event, and P. BM EA 10383, rt.2.5 is ambiguous in the exact identity of the individual superior in question. As such, the instigator of the event is open to debate, and no sources survive detailing Pi-nḥbs’ account of events (the notion that Jmn-htp was a victim comes from Peet, in: JEA 12, 1926, 254; contra: W. Spiegelberg, Die Empörung des Hohenpriesters Amenhotpe unter Rameses IX, in: ZÄS 58, 1923, 47–48).

21 Th.E Peet originally translated v.6.7 as ‘5 whole months’ (The Mayer Papyri, 15, pl. 10; as does K. Sethe, Die angebliche Rebellion des Hohenpriesters Amenhotpe unter Rameses IX, in ZÄS 59, 1924, 60.), but he later changed it to ‘9 whole months’, where he comments that ‘the first point to be noted is that the second numeral in line 7 is not a 5 but a 9, a fact which should never have escaped my observation in the first place’ (in: JEA 12, 1926, 255).

22 First observed by Peet, in: JEA 12, 1926, 256, no. 3.

23 Junge states that in all numerals can follow their noun (Late Egyptian Grammar: An Introduction, Oxford 2005, 68), whilst Gardiner states that at least during the Middle Kingdom the numeral follows the noun, which, as a general rule, exhibits the singular form (Egyptian Grammar, Oxford 1957, 192).

24 A. Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, Oxford 1957, 194. As stated by Černý, for numbers 3–9 the number generally stands immediately before the noun numbered, but in expressions of time the numeral often follows the noun (Černý/Groll/Eyre, A Late Egyptian Grammar, 86–87). For discussion on subordinate clause see Peet, in: JEA 12, 256; Černý/Groll/Eyre, A Late Egyptian Grammar, 368.

25 The events in P. Mayer A may also have occurred in a linear fashion, although the problem is that the text is somewhat vague on this topic. The reviewer of this paper suggested the following translation of this text, for which I am very grateful: ‘Pa-Hati, der Dometscher ergriff mich und brachte mich nach Ipi, als man schon
This may imply two distinction notions, both of which are not clearly explained in the text. Firstly, that the whole action, i.e. the so-called ‘suppression’, lasted nine months, or, secondly, that the individual returned after nine months. If the first hypothesis is accepted, and it generally is, then this would complement the inscription on the rear wall of the Tuthmoside chapel near the 7th pylon at Karnak, which records the eight month long ‘suppression’ of an unidentified Ramesside High Priest of Amun, identified by Edward Wente as Jmn-htp. The eight months recorded in this text is close enough to the nine months of ‘suppression’ recorded in P. Mayer A to suggest that the two texts record the same event, even if the scribes disagreed on the exact start date, or rounded up the number of months in question. It also does not provide clarity as to the exact length of the conflict, only that after nine months the looting occurred.

Antonio Morales argues that this distinction regarding the amount of months is reflective of the affected testimonies of the individuals involved, due to the ‘War of the High Priest’ occurring earlier in the reign of Ramesses XI, or one of his predecessors, and not at some point between Regnal Years 17–19. However, this would result in vastly different time periods, not simply one month, which certainly lies within the realms scholarly possibility. Jose Lull argues convincingly that it was not until Regnal Year 18 or 19 that the ‘War of the High Priest’ climaxed. He bases this hypothesis on P. Turin Cat. 1896, which suggests P3-nhsy was in Thebes in Regnal Year 17 still receiving orders from Ramesses XI, and the change in the composition of P3-nhsy’s name at beginning of the whm-ms.wt (Regnal Year 19 of Ramesses XI), which from this point onwards is determined by the sign of a fallen enemy: (Gardiner A14). Of course it is quite possible that the Karnak Inscription in fact refers to another High Priest of Amun, but this is something that is difficult to determine. Hence, it seems unlikely that the differing durations for the ‘suppression’


27 Morales, in: GM 181, 2001, 70; this is also commented on by Wente, in: JNES 25, 1966, 82.

28 P. Turin Cat. 1896; KRI VI, 734–735.

29 Lull, Los sumos sacerdotes de Amón, 333. The King’s Son of Kush’s troops were also responsible for plundering tombs and temples, see Niwiński, Bürgerkrieg, 259–62; Gnirs, Militär und Gesellschaft, 193–195. This highlights the possibility that P3-nhsy did not become persona non grata until well after Regnal Year 12, hence the suppression of the High Priest had to occur after Regnal Year 12.

30 Bell highlights that in between the succession of R-ns-sw-nht and his son Jmn-htp, there may have been the appointment of another son to the position of High Priest of Amun, that of Ns-Jmn (Only One High Priest Ramessenakht and the Second Prophet Nesamun His Younger Son, in: Serapis 6, 1980, 16). Ns-Jmn is known only from a single inscription on the front of a statue inscribed for his father, possibly set up around
can be associated with ‘affected’ memories, but more probable that they reflect the different authors of the two texts.

Two other sources also discuss the so-called ‘suppression’ of Jmn-htp. P. BM EA 10383, rt.2.5, identifies P#-nHsy as the ‘suppressor’ (jw=f thj p’y=j hry) of an unnamed official. The text states *dd=f j.jr(=j) pr m p’i pr n pr-ṣi’si ‘nḥḥ wdj snb m-ṛṛ jw P#-nHsy jw=f thj p’y=j hry jw mn thj m.jm=f; ‘He said I made to leave from the house of Pharaoh LPH, when P#-nHsy came and ‘suppressed’ my superior, although there was no transgression in him***. Whilst this text may also refer to the ‘suppression’ of Jmn-htp, the exact identity of the ‘superior’ is unknown, and P#-nHsy may have had to ‘suppress’ more than one individual in his attempt to control Thebes. The conflict between P#-nHsy and Jmn-htp is also recorded in P. BM EA 10052, rt.13.24–5, a document dated to Year 1 of the whm-ms.wt period (=Regnal Year 19). This text states that: *dd=ṣ jr m-ṛṛ jry.tw p’i hrw.yw hm-ntr tpj jw p’i r(m)t j’tj h n p’y=j jt, ‘She said *when the conflict of the High Priest occurred, the man stole things from my father***. In this example, however, hrw.yw is used instead of thj; this significantly links the two terms together, and is discussed further in more detail below.

3. Interpreting thj

The issue here concerns the interpretation of the term thj in relation to the ‘suppression’ of Jmn-htp. The Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘suppression’ as ‘the action of suppressing (forcibly putting an end to) something such as an activity or publication’. Historically, the word ‘suppression’ possesses negative connotations often associated with cruel oppressions or military sieges of settlements. In Egyptian, the word *dšr* is used


Wente commented that R*-ms-sw-nht may have remained in office until the reign of Ramesses IX, extending the tenure of R*-ms-sw-nht as High Priest rather than introducing a second man with the same name (in: JNES 25, 1966, 83). See also no. 16, for comments about a possible additional High Priest named Ns-Jmn; Morales, in: GM 181, 2001, 62–3; Bierbrier, in: JEA 58, 1972, 195–199; J. Černý/ A. Sadek, Graffiti de la montagne thében, Cairo 1970, IV, 21 (no. 1860a).  

Complete text can be found in: Peet, The Great Tomb Robberies, 122–127, pl. 22, (individual passage: 125, pl. 22).

32 Here, the ‘he’ refers to the Wthr-priest P’y-sn, who is being interrogated for theft from Medinet Habu (P. BM EA 10383, rt.2.4). P’y-sn also appears in P. BM EA 10068, v.2.17 and P. BM EA 10053, v.3.10.

33 Translation by Peet, The Great Tomb Robberies, 125. Wente (in: JNES 25, 1966, 84) questions whether this superior truly is Jmn-htp.

34 Reference to P#-nHsy also appears in P. BM EA 10053, v.1.2, dated to Year 9 of the whm-ms.wt period or a later reign (Regnal Year 19 of Ramesses XI).

35 The ‘she’ in this line refers to a woman named Mw.t-m-j# wife of the Scribe of Divine Records Ns-Jmn (P. BM EA 10052, rt.13.22)

36 Peet, The Great Tomb Robberies, 155, pl. 33.

37 The word ‘suppression’ has its origins in the Late Middle English period, and is based on the Latin word ‘suppress’, to press down upon: http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/suppress?q=suppressing (accessed April 2013).

38 There are many occurrences throughout history of minority groups who have deemed themselves to be oppressed, primarily due to an event or constraint placed upon them that restricts their freedom to live as they choose, perhaps the largest groups are African Americans, women, Native Americans, etc.
to imply these concepts, since it is generally translated by scholars as ‘to control’, ‘to suppress’ (‘beherrsch', ‘unterdrücken’). 

D\(\text{ih}\)r is not an overly common word, but appears to be used throughout the Pharonic period.\(^{42}\) However, th\(\text{j}\) is treated in a different manner, and, as will be discussed below in further depth, is often translated as ‘to err’, ‘to transgress’, ‘to injure’ (‘übertreten’, ‘freveln’, ‘schädigen’, ‘irreführen’, ‘angreifen’).\(^{43}\) The slight alteration to the nuance of th\(\text{j}\) modifies the effect of the word. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, ‘transgression’ has a rather different meaning than ‘suppression’, stating that the word refers to the act of ‘go[ing] beyond the limits of what is morally, socially, or legally acceptable’.\(^{44}\)

In early 2013, the online Wörterbuch, Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae (TLA),\(^{45}\) provided 157 examples of the verb th\(\text{j}\).\(^{46}\) For the purpose of this study, each of these entries was assessed to examine the individual lexemes and translations of th\(\text{j}\). All dates given by the TLA have been assimilated for this study, although some texts have disputed dates. The full results are too large for inclusion in this article, but can be made available on request. This list compiled by the TLA does include some duplicate references, and has yet to include the texts under consideration in this article: P. Mayer A, P. BM EA 10383, P. BM EA 10052,
the Karnak Inscription. From this compilation of the usage of the word *thj* some key observations can be made. Firstly, the term *thj* is used with some frequency throughout the Pharaonic period, first appearing in the Old Kingdom, where it can be viewed in a pyramid text found in the pyramid of Pepi I (PT484), and then continuing into the Roman Period, where the TLA lists the last entry of the word in the Opet temple at Karnak. The term also survives into demotic, but no attestations are known from Coptic.

Secondly, there is a noticeable evolution of the composition of *thj* in the texts, as the following chart demonstrates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Classifiers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Kingdom</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>First Intermediate Period</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle Kingdom</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Second Intermediate Period</td>
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<td>New Kingdom</td>
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<td>Third Intermediate Period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late Period</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ptolemaic and Roman Period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the above chart, the classifiers used change depending on the period in question. In the Old Kingdom no classifiers are present, with the first classifier appearing in the First Intermediate Period, where (G37) is used implying negative connotations to the lexeme. The most frequently used classifiers, which first appear in the Middle Kingdom, are:

49 W. Erichsen, Demotische Glossar, Milan 1972, 649–650, here it is translated as übertreten/schädigen (transgress/damage).
50 Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, 471.
(D54) and ⲡ (D56). As noted by Arlette David, Alan Gardiner argued that the double classifiers are used to determine various verbs expressing movement.\textsuperscript{51} David goes on to state that ‘if the icon Ⲥ (D54) is used to represent movement, one must admit that no real movement is involved here’. However, once combined with the ⲡ (D56) classifier, which appears to be associated with connotations of ‘trampling down’ or ‘taking over’, then ‘the group relates metaphorically to the lexeme, when ‘trespassing is walking over someone’’.\textsuperscript{52}

From the New Kingdom onwards three new classifiers are introduced, the most frequent of which becomes prominent in the construction of the lexeme during both the latter stages of the New Kingdom and later in the Pharaonic period: ⲍ (D57), which can be found in lexemes for ‘mutilation’ (jīt), ‘cheat’ (ṣj.jīt) and ‘damage’ (nkn).\textsuperscript{53} Also found are the classifiers ⲍ (D40), which is used to convey a sense of ‘strength’ (nhjt),\textsuperscript{54} and ⲡ (A24), which provides a sense of violence, appearing in lexemes for ‘strike’ (hwj), ‘strong’ (nhjt), and ‘take away’ (nhm).\textsuperscript{55} Also, to briefly note, from the New Kingdom onwards, thj can also be written thi (𓊕 thj), with the addition of ⲝ (G1) to the composition, perhaps reflecting a possible shift in the pronunciation of the word. Other variations of thj are apparent in the chart, but these do not occur with regularity, Ⲋ Ⲋ Ⲥ and Ⲉ ⲝ Ⲥ, for example, only appear once each in P. Cairo CG 51189 (Tb 125, lines 720 and 743, respectively) dating to the New Kingdom.\textsuperscript{56}

The third observation to make in regards to thj concerns its interpretation. Several scholars have attempted to define thj,\textsuperscript{57} although the majority of studies remain generally within

\textsuperscript{51} Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, 457.
\textsuperscript{52} A. David, Syntactic and Lexico-Semantic Aspects of the Legal Register in Ramesside Royal Decrees, Göttinger Orientforschungen IV. Reihe Ägypten, Wiesbaden 2006, 29.
\textsuperscript{53} Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, 457.
\textsuperscript{54} Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, 455.
\textsuperscript{55} Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, 444.
\textsuperscript{56} I. Munro, Die Totenbuch-Handschriften der 18. Dynastie im Museum Cairo, ÄA 54, 1994, pl. 65.
the scope of the individual document under consideration. Gardiner had perhaps the largest impact on outlining the definition of *thj*. In his commentary on the *Story of Sinuhe*, he stated ‘it must be admitted however that the sense ‘to lead astray’ [given in the text] is not supported by any further evidence; elsewhere *th(j)* is ‘to err’, ‘to transgress’ or ‘to violate’.

He extended on this point further during his analysis of the Nauri Decree, pondering that ‘the verb *thj* undoubtedly possesses some implication of wrongdoing.’ Anthony Spalinger briefly argued that in the context of the Nauri Decree it implied that ‘the people of Abydos are protected against ‘violation’’ (i.e. wrong doing). However, David has expanded on this notion in her analysis of the Decree, stating that ‘it is not clear [in the Nauri Decree] if the transgression nature is incompetence or abuse within the scope of the transgressor authority’, suggesting that *thj* also had legal connotations, normally represented as *thj-r*.

Thus, what is seen in regards to the translation of *thj* in both literary and non-literary texts is that the term is treated in a similar manner; translated as ‘to transgress’, ‘to violate’, ‘to injure’, ‘to lead astray’. The complete list of translations of *thj* is too large to include in this article, but a brief demonstration of the usage of the word will now be provided. One of the earliest occurrences of *thj* is contained in a Sixth Dynasty letter from Elephantine P. Berlin 8869, rt. K9. In this document *thj* has been translated as ‘violate’ and ‘transgression’.

Two sources are known from the First Intermediate Period, the Stele of Rediuiknum (CCG 20543), line A14, where *thj* is translated as ‘neglected’, and the Stele of Tjeti (BM EA 614), line 9, where it is translated as ‘transgress’, ‘neglected’, and ‘overstep’.

58 A. Gardiner, Notes on the Story of Sinuhe, Paris 1916, 74, 161, especially 74, no. 202, in regard to his discussion on P. Berlin 3022.


60 David, Syntactic and Lexico-Semantic Aspects of the Legal Register, 29. Kutchen also comments on this, finding a similar conclusion (Le decret d’Horemheb : Traduction, commentaire épigraphique, philologique et institutionnel, Brussels 1981, 209); Polaček (Le décret d’Horemheb à Karnak: essai d’analyse socio-juridique, in: Théodoridès, Le droit égyptien ancien, 87–111) and Lephron (The Reign of Akhenaten Seen through the Later Royal Decrees, in: Posener-Kriéger, Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar II, 93–103) both translate *thj* as ‘corruption’ in this text.

61 G. Möller, Hieratische Papyrus aus den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin III, Leipzig 1911, pls. 2–3. Only two sources are known from the Old Kingdom, the second source PT Pepi I (PT484) is discussed above in no. 82, Allen translates *thj* in this text as ‘contravenes (The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts, 336).


64 Blackman, The Stele of Thethi: British Museum No. 614, in: JEA 17, 1931, 56, pl. 8; W. Schenkel, Memphis - Herakleopolis – Theben, ÄgAbh 12, Wiesbaden 1965, 105 (überträt); M. Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1975, 92 (overstep); idem, Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies, 47 (neglected).
In the Middle Kingdom text P. Hknkh I, rt.16, thj was translated by T. G. James as ‘disobey’, but later translated by Hans Goedicke as ‘trespass’ by Wente as ‘overstep’, and by James Allen as ‘violate’. In another Middle Kingdom text, P. Prisse, rt.5.8, which contains the *Maxims of Ptahhotep*, thj is interpreted as ‘to harm’ or ‘to damage’, the same translation of the term appears in a Second Intermediate Period text from the Stele of Juf (Kairo TR 9/6/18/26), line x+8. In the New Kingdom text P. Moscow 4658, rt.5.8, which contains a copy of *The Teachings for Merikare*, thj is generally translated as ‘to transgress’ and in German as ‘frevel’. Other New Kingdom texts translate thj in a similar fashion; in P. MMA 27.3.560, rt.2, thj has been translated as ‘transgressed against’ and ‘interfered with’, in P. BM EA 10184, v.5.2, it is translated as ‘to lead astray’, whilst in P. BM EA 10509, rt.1.13, it is thought to mean ‘to transgress’ and ‘to damage’.

*Thj* continues then to be interpreted in a similar manner throughout the Third Intermediate Period, the Late Period, and indeed into the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. These

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68 Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 59 (overstep), 61, no. y (overstepping).
74 Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 90.
80 For example, in the Late Period it appears in P. BM EA 10474, rt.4.10, *The Teachings of Amenemope*, and is generally translated in the following manner: F. Griffiths, *The Teaching of Amenophis the Son of Kanacht: Papyrus B.M. 10474*, in: JEA 12, 1926, 200 (injured); H. Lange, *Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope*
sources and their translations demonstrate that there is no clear development in the usage of the term thj, it seems consistently to refer to the act of ‘going against’ someone, projecting strong, negative connotations. More importantly, however, is that thj is not once in all 157 examples given by the TLA translated by scholars into English as ‘to suppress’, where ‘to transgress’ and ‘to damage’ are prevalent translations in English, and ‘übertreten’, ‘freveln’, and ‘schädigen’ in German. So why then is this trend not repeated in regards to the ‘War of the High Priest’ at the end of the Twentieth Dynasty?

4. Thj and the ‘War of the High Priest’

With the above discussion in mind, how then does this improved understanding of thj alter the translations and nuances of the texts that discuss the ‘War of the High Priest’? If the thj present in P. Mayer A, v.6.7, is translated as ‘transgression’, rather than the usual ‘suppression’, the text implies that for a period of time (at least 9 months) the High Priest of Amun Jmn-htp was ‘transgressed’ against. Certainly this ‘transgression’ appears to have been violent, as P. Mayer A, v.6.8, records the destruction of a portable-chest. Morales proposes, and to a certain degree this is supported by this study, that the ‘suppression’ of Jmn-htp was not ‘describing a violent action’ against the religious institution of Medinet Habu, but rather ‘a forced appointment by a new superior’. Morales approaches this conclusion not from a semantic viewpoint, but via an examination of the administration during the ‘War of the High Priest’. It certainly appears that a ‘new superior’ was appointed, and thus, under this hypothesis, the ‘transgression’ committed against Jmn-htp involved the loss of both his titles and his authority.

Yet, rather than a minimally-violent event, as implied by the term ‘forced’ employed by Morales that suggests a localised act of violence against either an individual, in this case Jmn-htp, or a small number of individuals, the event was permeated with violent actions on a much wider scale than that envisaged by Morales. P. Mayer A, v.6.4, states that the Nubians conquered the temple, and presumably its supplies, during the transgression of Jmn-htp, leaving the priest impotent during this period. However, this does not imply that a ‘suppression’ occurred. Similar representations of the suffering experienced by Jmn-htp can


79 Wilson (A Ptolemaic lexicon, 1148) translates it as ‘to violate, transgress, with direct object–to attack’. Additionally, it appears several times in P. Turin Museo Egizio 1791 where it is translated either as ‘attack/damage’ (Lepsius, Das Todtenbuch der Ägypter, Thb109, line 9, pl. 39, and Thb125, line 11, pl. 46), or as ‘transgress’ (Lepsius, Das Todtenbuch der Ägypter, Thb125, line 28.1, pl. 47). de Rachewitz (Il Libro dei Morti, 62, 65, 67) translates these lines in Italian in a similar manner.

80 In Italian most common is ‘trasgredire’, whilst in French ‘celui qui s’oppose a toi’ is prevalent.
81 See no. 49.
83 See no. 48.
be found in the Karnak Inscription on the rear east wall of the Tuthmoside chapel near the 7th pylon. In this text thj appears three times, and is, once again, translated differently by scholars. In line 18 of the inscription, it states that [...] tj=k jw=f jr 8 bd n hr.w jm=st jw=j šnj gr=f r$jr sp-2, ‘...seized it. He spent 8 whole months in it, and I suffered exceedingly under him!’ This line asserts that an unknown man, unknown due to damage on the wall of the shrine, seized it (the temple) for a period of eight months. It does not suggest that Jmn-htp was ‘suppressed’ for this period, but rather the man, presumably P$nhsy, controlled Medinet Habu and its supplies for a period of eight months, thus ‘seizing’ Jmn-htp’s titles and authority for this period, and hence, he ‘suffered exceedingly’.

In later lines, Jmn-htp refers to this seizure of the temple as a ‘transgression against’ him. This only appears in line 21, where Elizabeth Frood translates this nominal use of the infinitive form of thj as ‘transgression’ (Wente translated it as ‘wrong done’$^{84}$), with the implication that it refers to an ‘injustice’ conducted towards Jmn-htp.$^{85}$ This sudden change in the translation of thj is not limited to this text, it also occurs in P. BM EA 10383, rt.2.5, which states $gd=f j.jr(=j) pr m p$i pr n pr-g3 ‘nh w€j snb m-dr jw P$nhsy jw=f thj p$i=j hrj jw mn thj m=ji=j, ‘He said ‘I made to leave from the house of Pharaoh LPH, when P$nhsy came and ‘suppressed’ my superior, although there was no ‘transgression’$^{86}$ in him’’. The notable problem with this translation is the two separate ways in which thj is interpreted; the section should perhaps read ‘when P$nhsy came and transgressed against my superior’, i.e. removing his authority.

In line 24 of the Karnak Inscription, the text states: (24): [...] jry=j n=fr th=$j p$i th=$j jw-bw-pw=f dj wdfj, ‘I have accomplished for him (likely a reference to the pharaoh)$^{87}$ benefactions, (for) he has ‘suppressed’ quickly the one who had ‘suppressed’ me, without his ever having permitted delay’. It asserts that the ‘suppressor’ of Jmn-htp was himself ‘suppressed’. No sources are known concerning a ‘suppression’ of P$nhsy, but if thj is instead understood here to represent an act of hostility (as Xrw$yw$ is in P. BM EA 10052, see below) then this would support documentation concerning the later persecution of P$nhsy$. Hence, it would be better to translate this line as ‘he has transgressed quickly, the one who had transgressed me’, referring to the restoration of Jmn-htp’s titles and authority, and the removal of P$nhsy’s. This would then link back to the notions of the Eng-

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$^{84}$ Wente, in: JNES 25, 1966, 78.
$^{85}$ Frood, Biographical Texts from the Ramesside Period, 80. For a comparable sentence, see P. Anastasi V, rt.27.5, where Caminos states that ‘the transitive infinitive of thj ‘to wander, transgress, disobey’ is sometimes used nominally in the sense of the present instance (Late Egyptian Miscellanies, London 1954).
$^{86}$ Peet translates this second thj as ‘there was no fault’, he does not translate the two occurrences of thj in the same manner (The Great Tomb Robberies, 125).
$^{87}$ This section likely refers to pharaoh (Ramesses XI) as line 21 states ‘I appealed to pharaoh’, with his action discussed in line 24 (see Wente, in: JNES 25, 1966, 78).
$^{88}$ Wente, in: JNES 25, 1966, 78–79; Also, Frood (Biographical Texts from the Ramesside Period, 80) follows Wente’s translation. See also J. Quack, Die Lehren des Ani: ein neûgäytscher Weisheitstext in seinem kulturellen Umfeld, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 141, Göttingen 1994, 181.
$^{89}$ Lull, Los sumos sacerdotes de Amón, 45.
$^{90}$ It is unlikely that he lived longer than the initial years of the wHm-ms.wt period, although it does seem like he resumed his position as High Priest of Amun. He had already exercised this position for 31 years and would have been of a considerable age. Furthermore, he is not mentioned in a tribunal dated to the beginning of the wHm-ms.wt (see Lull, Los sumos sacerdotes de Amón, 46–7). This is counter-argued by Barwik (The Twi-
lish definition of ‘transgression’, involving the act of going beyond what is morally, legally, or socially acceptable, and for Jmn-htp this involved the removal of his titles and authority. This would then also reflect the usage of thj in the Nauri Decree, where David argues that the transgression reflects an abuse of the transgressor’s authority, in this case the ability of Pš-nh sy, as the king’s son of Kush, to remove the authority of the High Priest of Amun.

The tension between Jmn-htp and Pš-nh sy had probably been developing for at least eight years since Pš-nh sy’s arrival in Thebes, as suggested by his presence in P. BM EA 10053, v.1.2, dated to Regnal Year 9 of Ramesses XI. The growing friction between them is supported by the use of the word hrw.yw in P. BM EA 10052, rt.13.24–5. This text states that: jr m-Dr jry.tw pš hrw.yw hm-ntr tpj, ‘when the conflict of the High Priest occurred’. In this example, hrw.yw is used instead of thj, referring to ‘conflict’ or ‘hostility’, rather than ‘suppression’. Moving the connotation of thj away from the idea that it infers a form of ‘suppression’ to the notion that it implies some form of hostility would better compliment the treatment of thj in textual sources beyond its use in sources concerning the ‘War of the High Priest’. Hence, a semantic connection can be made between thj and hrw.yw, a union supported by the shared classifier ←, and the violent nuances expressed by its inclusion. The variation in treatment of thj in relation to the ‘War of the High Priest’ results in extreme nuances being placed on both the term and the event itself. In actuality, all that can accurately be ascertained from the use of the term here is that Pš-nh sy committed some form of (more than likely violent) offence against Jmn-htp, perhaps on more than one occasion as the sources imply, resulting in the loss of titles and authority.

5. Aftermath of the ‘War of the High Priest’ and Concluding Remarks

The events that unfolded after the so-called ‘suppression’ are even more vague, but it would appear that the restriction of Jmn-htp, whether officially endorsed or not, forced Ramesses XI to intervene with his army from the north in order to prevent a potential separation between northern Egypt and the area south from Thebes. Pš-nh sy seems to have responded to this threat with a military reply and P. Mayer A, rt.13, B.2–3 details his march northwards. In P. BM EA 10052, rt.10.18–20, it states that Pš-nh sy looted Cynopolis, and that he may have even reached Heracleopolis Magna.


91 David, Syntactic and Lexico-Semantic Aspects of the Legal Register, 29.
92 Wb 3, 326.1–3; TLA Lemma no. 120090.
93 Lull, Los sumos sacerdotes de Amón, 45.
The army of the pharaoh was apparently able to push P3-nhsy back southwards,\(^98\) however, the Tomb Robbery Papyri do question the success of this manoeuvre, since he still appears causing trouble for the local populous in the early years of the \(\text{wHm-ms.wt}\) period.\(^99\) In the aftermath of this revolt, Jmn-htp was likely reappointed to his previous position of High Priest of Amun\(^100\) and P3-nhsy was labelled \textit{persona non grata}.\(^101\)

The fact remains that the events before, during, and after the ‘War of the High Priest’ and the ‘suppression’ of Jmn-htp remain ambiguous, but what is clear is that modern understanding and interpretation of the event needs to be re-evaluated. Current scholarship appears to be too focused on the motivations behind P3-nhsy’s decision to enter Thebes and when this occurred, and as such, very little consideration has been given to what took place when he entered the city from the sources that have actually survived.

Further questions arise concerning the interpretation of the verb \textit{thj}, suggesting that translating it as ‘suppression’ in relation to the ‘War of the High Priest’ alters the nuance of the term, when in all other cases it is understood to mean ‘transgression’ or possibly ‘to damage’, ‘to injure’, or ‘to lead astray’. Hence, it is plausible to argue that instead of a sustained ‘suppression’ of Jmn-htp at Medinet Habu, where the High Priest was trapped behind the temenos wall of the temple, the ‘War of the High Priest’ consisted of a series of violent transgressions against Jmn-htp, the ultimate of which resulted in the removal of his title of High Priest of Amun for a period of time. Thus, \textit{thj} can be observed in relation to the ‘War of the High Priest’ as highlighting that P3-nhsy’s removal of Jmn-htp’s titles and authority was considered by Jmn-htp to be legally and socially unjust, and as such, he is able to state that he was ‘transgressed against’, as he viewed this action as an abuse of P3-nhsy’s authority. These transgressions carried out during the specified periods were most likely the cause of a power struggle between these two men over the control of Thebes, which had presumably been increasing ever since P3-nhsy first appeared in Thebes in Regnal Year 9 of Ramesses XI.

\(^{97}\) Lull, Los sumos sacerdotes de Amón, 46.
\(^{98}\) Lull (Los sumos sacerdotes de Amón, 46) even suggests that this army included support from Smendes.
\(^{99}\) See P. BM EA 10383, \textit{rt}.2.4 (Peet, The Great Tomb Robberies, 125, pl. 22), dating to Year 2 \textit{wHm-ms.wt}, discusses the suppression of a Theban superior. However, the date of the suppression itself is not given, so it may have happened before P3-nhsy marched north or on his return south after the so-called suppression of the High Priest.
\(^{100}\) See inscription on rear wall of the Tuthmoside chapel near the 7th pylon in Karnak (Wente, in: JNES 25, 1966, 73–87; KRI VI, 536–538; Frood, Biographical Texts from the Ramesside Period, 77–81).
\(^{101}\) Lull (Los sumos sacerdotes de Amón, 46) claims that perhaps it would be more logical to interpret the observed destruction found in the archaeological reports by Hölscher at Medinet Habu dated to the end of the Twentieth Dynasty, as not being directly related to the capture of the temple by P3-nhsy during his dispute with the High Priest of Amun Jmn-htp, but, rather, the seizure by the forces of Pharaoh against the last major pockets of resistance as P3-nhsy retreated southward (U. Hölscher, Medinet Habu, Leipzig 1933; The Excavation of Medinet Habu, Chicago 1934–1954).
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