

The Berlin Leather Manuscript and the Development of the *Königsnovelle*

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## Introduction

The so-called *Berliner Lederhandschrift* or Berlin Leather Manuscript (P. Berlin 3029) is a small hieratic palimpsest of two columns that dates to the reign of the Eighteenth Dynasty king Amenhotep II.<sup>1</sup> For its relatively diminutive size, it has nevertheless garnered considerable attention by Egyptologists. The central debate concerning the manuscript is whether the inscription—a purported building inscription for the temple of Atum in Heliopolis during the reign of the Twelfth Dynasty king Senwosret I—contained thereon is a New Kingdom copy of a Middle Kingdom original or a New Kingdom composition that is essentially pseudepigraphic (that is, falsely attributed to Senwosret I). A similar question discussed among Egyptologists is whether the text can be classified as a specimen of the literary genre commonly called the *Königsnovelle* (“king’s novel”). Although many Egyptologists tend to simply assume the historicity of the Berlin Leather Manuscript (henceforth BLM) with little or no comment,<sup>2</sup> there yet remains no consensus concerning the dating of the inscription by scholars who have critically examined the matter.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a translation and commentary of the palimpsest texts, see Matthias Müller, “Die administrativen Texte der Berliner Lederhandschrift,” in *From Illahun to Djeme: Papers Presented in Honour of Ulrich Luft*, BAR International Series 2311, ed. Eszter Bechtold, András Gulyás, and Andrea Hasznos (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011), 173–181.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: Volume I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 115; Barry J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), 158; Colleen Manassa, *Imaging the Past: Historical Fiction in New Kingdom Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 157 n. 70.

<sup>3</sup> For different views, compare Philippe Derchain, “Les Débuts de L’Histoire [Rouleau de Cuir Berlin 3029],” *Revue D’Égyptologie* 43 (1992): 35–47; Aldo Piccato, “The Berlin Leather Roll and the Egyptian Sense of History,” *Lingua Aegyptia: Journal of Egyptian Language Studies* 5 (1997): 137–159; Andréas Stauder, *Linguistic Dating of Middle Egyptian Literary Texts*, *Lingua Aegyptia Studia Monographica* 12 (Hamburg: Widmaier Verlag, 2013), 249–257.

Arguments for dating the inscription have focused mainly on the grammatical and lexical features of the text.<sup>4</sup> Some have likewise sought to situate the text in a broader Egyptian historiographical context.<sup>5</sup> One area that remains to be more fully explored is whether the BLM is indeed an example of the *Königsnovelle*. There are discernable convergences in theme and narrative between the BLM and other texts of the *Königsnovelle* genre, which naturally raises the question of whether the BLM is an early example of such, or whether it represents an earlier stage in the development of the genre, or whether it is a pseudepigraphical *Königsnovelle* of the New Kingdom.

In this paper I will address this matter and propose that the BLM is an authentic Middle Kingdom composition that shows an earlier stage in the development of the *Königsnovelle*. Said another way, I believe the BLM is evidence that elements of the *Königsnovelle* pre-dated the rise of the “classical” manifestation of the genre after the close of the Middle Kingdom. Admittedly, we must remain cautious in how much weight we afford the BLM as evidence for this, since, as indicated earlier, there is no consensus on the matter. Nevertheless, I am convinced there are enough reasons to at least seriously consider the possibility of my argument.

### **Transliteration and Translation of P. Berlin 3029<sup>6</sup>**

**I** (1) ḥꜣt-sp 3 ‘bd 3 ꜣḥt 8 ḥr ḥm n nsw bity ḥpr-kꜣ-rꜥ sꜣ rꜥ s-n-wsrt mꜣꜥ ḥrw ‘nh ꜥt r nhḥ (2) ḥꜥt nsw  
m ḥmty ḥpr ḥmst m ꜥꜣdw nd-r imyw ḥt.f smrw nw (3) stp<-sꜣ> {ḥr pr} ‘nh wdꜣ snb srw r st

<sup>4</sup> This has been the focus of Stauder, *Linguistic Dating of Middle Egyptian Literary Texts*, 249–257.

<sup>5</sup> Piccato, “The Berlin Leather Roll and the Egyptian Sense of History,” 137–159.

<sup>6</sup> My translation and transliteration is based on the text prepared by Adrian de Buck, “The Building Inscription of the Berlin Leather Roll,” *Studia Aegyptiaca I*, *Analecta Orientalia* 17 (1938): 48–57. The bolded Roman numerals are the two columns of the text, and the italicized numbers enclosed in parentheses are the lines of text prepared by de Buck. By means of critical apparatus, words marked with chevrons (< >) are conjectural emendations and words marked with brackets ( { } ) are extraneous words or signs in the original.

w<sup>š</sup>wt w<sub>d</sub>.w mdt hft s<sub>d</sub>m(.w) st nd-r m (4) swnt h<sub>r</sub>w.sn m<sup>š</sup>.tn h<sub>m</sub>.i h<sub>r</sub> š<sub>3</sub>w k<sub>3</sub>t š<sub>3</sub>.w m sp m ž<sub>3</sub>t n m-ht (5) iri.i mnw smn.i w<sub>d</sub>w r<sub>w</sub><sub>d</sub>w n h<sub>r</sub>-ž<sub>3</sub>ty msy.n.f wi (6) irt {irt} n.f r š<sub>3</sub>pr w<sub>d</sub>.n.f ir<y.i> rdi.n.f wi r mniw t<sub>3</sub> pn r<sub>h</sub>.n.f s<sub>3</sub>k(.w) n.f (7) sw m<sub>3</sub><sup>š</sup>.n.f n.i s<sub>3</sub>zt.f š<sub>3</sub>dt irt imit.f ir<y.i> mi k<sub>d</sub>w m mrt.f <sup>š</sup>pr.n.i (8) š<sub>3</sub>t.n.f r<sub>h</sub> ink nsw n h<sub>3</sub>pr.f ity <sup>š</sup>n<sub>h</sub> w<sub>d</sub>ž snb n rdi.tw n.f it<sub>t</sub>.n.i m t<sub>3</sub> bw<sub>3</sub>.n.i (9) m swht h<sub>r</sub>y.n.i tp m inpw š<sub>h</sub>w<d>.n.f wi r nb psšt 2 m n<sub>h</sub>n (10) n f<sub>h</sub>t n.i m<sup>š</sup> t<sub>3</sub>w dh<sub>n</sub>.n.f <w>i r nb r<sub>h</sub>yt k<sub>m</sub>ž(.w) (11) m<sub>h</sub>r n h<sub>n</sub>mmt imt.n.f wi r imi-<sup>š</sup>h m w<sub>d</sub>h n prt.i m ž<sub>3</sub>ty.i rdi<.n.f n.i> (12) ž<sub>w</sub>.f wš<sub>h</sub>.f rnn.kw m h<sub>3</sub>pr.f it<sub>t</sub>.f <rdi.n.f> n.i t<sub>3</sub> ink nb.f p<sub>h</sub> n.i b<sub>3</sub>w (13) k<sub>3</sub>w n pt mn<sub>h</sub> h<sub>r</sub> m<sup>š</sup> irit n iri wi š<sub>3</sub>tp n<sub>r</sub> m rdi<t> n.f <ink> s<sub>3</sub><.f> n<sub>d</sub><ty>.f (14) w<sub>d</sub>.n.f n.i it<sub>t</sub> it<sub>t</sub>.n.f ii.kw m h<sub>r</sub> ip.n.i d<sub>t</sub>.i smn.n.i p<sub>3</sub>wt (15) n<sub>r</sub>w iry.i k<sub>3</sub>t m h<sub>w</sub>t <sup>š</sup>zt n it.i itmw di.f wš<sub>h</sub>.f mi rdi.n.f it<sub>t</sub>.i s<sub>d</sub>f<sub>3</sub>.i (16) h<sub>3</sub>wt.f tp t<sub>3</sub> h<sub>w</sub>s.i h<sub>w</sub>t.i m s<sub>3</sub>h<sub>w</sub>.f š<sub>3</sub>.tw n<sub>r</sub>w.i (17) m pr.f rn.i pw mr{t} mnw.i pw mr n<sub>h</sub>h pw irt ž<sub>3</sub>t n (18) mwt.n nsw nis.w h<sub>r</sub> išt.f n r<sub>h</sub> k<sub>3</sub>rw (?) k<sub>3</sub><t> n.f rn.f h<sub>r</sub>.s dmw (19) m r-<sup>š</sup><wy> n h<sub>t</sub>m.n h<sub>r</sub>t d<sub>t</sub> irt pw wnnt d<sup>š</sup>r p<w> (20) ž<sub>3</sub>t š<sub>3</sub>b pw i<sub>k</sub>r rn rs-tp pw h<sub>r</sub> h<sub>r</sub><t> n<sub>h</sub>h

**II** (1) d<sub>d</sub> in nn n smrw nsw wš<sub>b</sub>.sn h<sub>r</sub> n<sub>r</sub>.sn h<sub>w</sub> <m> r.k si<sub>3</sub> (2) m h<sub>t</sub>.k i ity <sup>š</sup>n<sub>h</sub> w<sub>d</sub>ž snb š<sub>h</sub>rw.k pw h<sub>3</sub>pr h<sup>š</sup>t nsw m sm<sub>3</sub>-t<sub>3</sub>wy r p<sub>d</sub> (3) <sš> m h<sub>w</sub>t n<sub>r</sub>.k š<sub>p</sub>ssw pw m<sub>3</sub>ž n dw<sub>3</sub> m ž<sub>3</sub>t n <sup>š</sup>h<sup>š</sup>w n km.n (4) d<sub>m</sub>d m h<sub>m</sub>t nb h<sub>m</sub>.k <sup>š</sup>n<sub>h</sub> w<sub>d</sub>ž snb is irty bw nb twt<.k> wrt iri.k mnw.k (5) m iwnw iw<sub>n</sub>n n<sub>r</sub>w h<sub>r</sub> it.k nb h<sub>w</sub>t <sup>š</sup>zt itmw k<sub>3</sub> ps<sub>d</sub>t š<sub>3</sub>pr h<sub>w</sub>t.k (6) h<sub>n</sub>k.s n <sup>š</sup>bw iri.s b<sub>3</sub>kw n h<sub>n</sub>ty imi ib.s n twt.k m ž<sub>w</sub>t (7) d<sub>t</sub> nsw d<sub>s</sub>.f d<sub>d</sub>.n.f h<sub>t</sub>mw-bity smr w<sup>š</sup>tw.y imi-r pr nbw (8) h<sub>d</sub>.y h<sub>r</sub>y sš<sub>t</sub>ž n w<sub>3</sub>d<sub>t</sub>y n<sub>d</sub>-r.k d<sub>d</sub> iri.tw k<sub>3</sub>t <nbt> mrt.n (9) h<sub>m</sub>.i h<sub>3</sub>pr.s twt r h<sub>r</sub>y n.s imy ir.ti.fi mi ntt m ib<.i> h<sub>m</sub>t (10) . . . rs-tp h<sub>3</sub>pr.s n š<sub>w</sub> m b<sub>3</sub>gi k<sub>3</sub>t nbt ns st (11) wn-h<sub>r</sub> nb <sup>š</sup>w.y pw dd(.w) mn<sub>h</sub> wnwt.k nw n irt ws . . . (12) h<sub>3</sub>ft <s>h<sub>r</sub>w.k m w<sub>d</sub>w h<sub>t</sub>w iri . . . st mryt h<sub>3</sub>pr (13) w<sub>d</sub>w n iryw r irt h<sub>3</sub>ft š<sub>3</sub>.n.k h<sup>š</sup>t nsw m sš<sub>d</sub> š<sub>w</sub>ty (14) r<sub>h</sub>yt nbt m-ht.f h<sub>r</sub>y-h<sub>3</sub>t h<sub>r</sub>y-tp sš<sub>3</sub> m<sub>d</sub>ž<sub>t</sub> n<sub>r</sub> h<sub>r</sub> pd š<sub>s</sub>yw (15) wh<sup>š</sup> <w>ž<sub>w</sub>ž<sub>y</sub>t di.w m t<sub>3</sub> (16) ir.w m h<sub>w</sub>t tn rdi in h<sub>m</sub>.f š<sub>3</sub>s (17) nsw <sup>š</sup>nn sw n h<sub>3</sub>ft-h<sub>r</sub> h<sub>r</sub> mrt (18) d<sub>m</sub>d <m> bw w<sup>š</sup> š<sub>m</sub><sup>š</sup>w m<sub>h</sub>w t<sub>3</sub>wy (19) imi b<sup>š</sup>h tp t<sub>3</sub>

I (1) Year 3, month 3 of the inundation, day 8 under the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Kheper-Ka-Re, the Son of Re, Senwosret, justified, living forever and ever. (2) The king's appearance with the Double Crown happened in a meeting of the audience chamber while taking council with those in his following: the courtiers of the (3) palace, l., p., h., and the officials of the privy council, adjudicating affairs as well as listening to things and taking council and (4) offering instruction. "Behold, My Majesty is ordaining works which are remembered as moments of glory for what will soon follow. (5) I shall make monuments and establish enduring stelae for Hor-Akhty, since he bore me (6) to carry out for him what he decreed. I shall execute (such) when he has ordained me to be the shepherd of this land, inasmuch as he knows the one who should unite (it) for him, (7) and he has truly handed over to me that which he protects and what the eye, in which he is, reveals. I shall do (it), in every respect, as one whom he loves, once I have acquired (8) understanding of what he ordained. I am the king of his being, the sovereign, l., p., h., to whom (such) was not given. I took (it) as a child. I acted nobly (9) as a hatchling. I had authority even as a royal child. He enriched me more than two lords of income as a youth (10) before I was circumcised. He ordained me lord of mankind, as one who carries out instructions (11) for humanity. He appointed me a resident of the palace as a child without coming forth between my thighs. (12) He gave to me its length and its breadth, and I rejoiced in taking its possession. He gave me the land and I am its lord. Fame as (13) high as heaven shall reach me. Why is doing (such) excellent for the doer? The god makes content in giving to him. I am his son, his protector. (14) He commanded me to take what he had taken. I have arrived as Horus, have confirmed my image, and have established the primeval (15) gods. I shall carry out work in the great temple of my father Atum. I shall cause him to be rich just as he has appointed my taking possession (of it). (16) I shall endow his altars on the land. I shall build my residence

in his neighborhood. My glory shall be remembered (17) in his house: the pyramid is my name, the lake is my monument, doing profitable things is eternity. There is no (18) death for a king who is invoked on account of his possessions. Migrants do not know what he had intended, but his name is (still) (19) actively pronounced on it. Affairs do not perish; what exists, exists. To search out is (20) beneficial. Excellent meals are the name. Being aware of affairs is eternity.”

**II** (1) Then one of those followers of the king replied before their God: “(The god) Hu is your speech, (the god) Sia (2) follows you! O sovereign, l., p., h., your designs (be such) when the king’s appearance occurs at the uniting of the Two Lands to extend (3) the cord in your temple. To look upon morning as beneficial for a lifetime is precious. Commoners cannot finish (4) thinking without a lord. Your Majesty, l., p., h., is truly the eyes of everyone. Your image shall be great when you make your monuments (5) in Heliopolis, the sanctuary of the gods, for your father, the lord of the great temple, Atum, the Bull of the Ennead. May your temple be brought into existence; (6) it will be fit for the altar, it will do work for the (cult) statue, it will give its heart to your image in the expanse of (7) eternity.” The king himself (then) said: “Wearer of the Royal Seal, Sole Official, Overseer of the Two Houses of Gold and (8) Silver, Secret Master of the Double Uraeus: your council has caused that every work be done as (9) My Majesty pleases. It shall come to pass to the benefit of the master; to the one who shall make it according to that which is in my heart. Craftsmen . . . (10) awareness. It shall come to pass devoid of weariness. Every work belongs to one of (11) clear vision, a lord of arms is one who causes. Excellent is your hour of time of making . . . (12) in accordance with your plans with the commands and things . . . the desired place. (13) Commands shall come forth for the doers to do according to what you ordained.” The appearance of the king in the Diadem of the Two Feathers (14) with all the subjects behind him: the Chief Lector Priest and the Scribe of the God’s Book were

stretching (15) the cord and loosened the cord when it was placed on the ground (16) and made into this temple. Then His Majesty caused to hasten, (17) and the king turned himself back in front of the presence of the servants (18) and the commoners united in one place, Lower and Upper Egypt, (19), who are abundant on the land. . . .

### Grammatical and Contextual Commentary

I (1) *ꜣḥt 8* – De Buck noticed traces of hieratic in the lacuna that appear to indicate *ꜣḥt 8* as opposed to *ꜣḥt 5* as appears in his prepared transcription.<sup>7</sup>

I (3) *stp<-s3> {hr pr}* – The *stp-s3* (“palace”) is attested in Middle Egyptian,<sup>8</sup> but the *hr pr* appears intrusive, although it would amount to a similar meaning (“at the house”). Whether such was a Middle Egyptian variant spelling of the word or a New Kingdom transmutation on the part of the scribe or copyist cannot be determined, although the latter seems more likely.

I (3) *srw r st w<sup>ss</sup>wt* – Literally “the officials at the private place.” Goedicke very effectively captured the meaning with his rendering of the phrase as “privy council,” and so I have followed suit.<sup>9</sup>

I (6) *irt {irt}* – De Buck detected the hieratic duplication of this sign, which might be explained as a dittography on the part of the New Kingdom scribal copyist. If so, this would stand as strong evidence that P. Berlin 3029 is a copy of an earlier *Urtext*.

I (7) *sw m3<sup>c</sup>.n.f n.i s33t.f shḏt irt imit.f* – This obscure phrase has challenged translators. Goedicke cited evidence for *m3<sup>c</sup>* as carrying with it the sense of transferring property,<sup>10</sup> while *s33t.f* (from

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<sup>7</sup> De Buck, “The Building Inscription of the Berlin Leather Roll,” 49.

<sup>8</sup> Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1962), 254.

<sup>9</sup> Hans Goedicke, “The Berlin Leather Roll (P Berlin 3029),” in *Festschrift zum 150Jährigen Bestehen des Berliner Ägyptischen Museums* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1974), 87.

<sup>10</sup> Goedicke, “The Berlin Leather Roll (P Berlin 3029),” 92.

s3w, “to guard”) is a straightforward relative *sdm.f*. But the exact meaning of the phrase is uncertain. It seems to be saying that Senwosret is in the sight of the deity Hor-Akhty and so enjoys divine protection and foreordination to accomplish his (the deity’s) commands.

*ity ‘nh wd3 snb n rdi.tw n.f* – That is, Senwosret was awaiting his appointment as king.

**I (7) *ir<y.i>*** – Goedicke perceptively recognized the likelihood that this is a prospective *sdm.f* that is beginning a new sentence.<sup>11</sup> Otherwise it is difficult to understand the standalone presence of *ir* in the middle of this line.

**I (9) *m swht*** – Literally “in an egg.”

**I (9–10) *m nhn n fht n.i m<sup>f</sup> t3w*** – Another obscure phrase that has divided translators. De Buck read it as “before the swaddling-clothes were loosened for me,” but Helch and Brunner saw it as a reference to circumcision. Goedicke followed his German colleagues and thus rendered it “before the prepuce went off from me.”<sup>12</sup> The writing of *t3w* as close to *t3m* (“foreskin”) would seem to strengthen the latter reading.<sup>13</sup>

**I (10) *km3(.w)*** – Scholars are unsure if *km3* should be read as a participle (.w) or a stative (.kw). Either would work grammatically, but a participle seems more likely.<sup>14</sup>

**I (11) *n prt.i m zhty.i*** – Likely a euphemism for puberty. That is, Senwosret was destined to be a member of the royal palace even before he began emitting semen.<sup>15</sup>

**I (12) *3w.f wsh.f*** – That is, the palace.

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<sup>11</sup> Goedicke, “The Berlin Leather Roll (P Berlin 3029),” 91.

<sup>12</sup> Goedicke, “The Berlin Leather Roll (P Berlin 3029),” 94. Compare Jürgen Osing, “Zu zwei literarischen Werken des Mittleren Reiches,” in *The Heritage of Ancient Egypt: Studies in Honour of Erik Iversen*, ed. Jürgen Osing and Erland Kolding Nielsen (Copenhagen: The Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Ancient Near Eastern Studies, 1992), 112: “als mir noch nicht die Vorhaut gelöst war.”

<sup>13</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 303.

<sup>14</sup> Goedicke, “The Berlin Leather Roll (P Berlin 3029),” 94–95.

<sup>15</sup> Goedicke, “The Berlin Leather Roll (P Berlin 3029),” 95.

I (12) *rnn.kw* – There is some ambiguity in the meaning of *rnn*. Most translators take it to mean “bring up, nurse,” but another possibility is “rejoice, extol.”<sup>16</sup> The text lacks the seated king determinative and instead features the sitting man with his hand to his mouth determinative, which leads me to take it to mean the latter.

I (12) <*rdi.n.f*> – Goedicke confidently read this as a passive *s<sub>d</sub>m.n.f* (*di[.w]* *n.i t3*).<sup>17</sup> I am less confident in this reading, since an active *s<sub>d</sub>m.n.f* seems just as possible.

I (13) *sh<sub>t</sub>p n<sub>t</sub>r m rdi<t> n.f* – Goedicke emended *rdi* as the relative *rdi.w.n.f*,<sup>18</sup> but another likely emendation would be to make *rdi* an infinitive with the preposition *m*: “in giving to him.”<sup>19</sup>

I (17) *rn.i pw mr{t}* – This reading follows de Buck and Al-Adly.<sup>20</sup> Another possibility is *rn.i pw bnb<sub>n</sub>*, “The Ben-Ben (obelisk) is my name.”<sup>21</sup>

I (17–18) *n rh k3rw (?) k3<t> n.f rn.f hr.s dmw m r-<sup>s</sup><wy>* – A difficult phrase to render based on a lacuna that obscures the word right after *n rh*. Some have opted to leave the word unread, while Goedicke rendered it as *k3rw* (“migrants”). Goedicke has likewise proposed emending this line in other ways that I have followed.<sup>22</sup>

I (19) *irt pw wnnt* – Literally, “What exists are deeds.”

II (3) <*sš*> – Detected only faintly in the lacuna by de Buck.<sup>23</sup>

II (5) *iwnw iw<sub>n</sub>n* – Very obviously a pun based on the phonetic similarity of these two words.

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<sup>16</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 150.

<sup>17</sup> Goedicke, “The Berlin Leather Roll (P Berlin 3029),” 96.

<sup>18</sup> Goedicke, “The Berlin Leather Roll (P Berlin 3029),” 96.

<sup>19</sup> Osing, “Zu zwei literarischen Werken des Mittleren Reiches,” 110.

<sup>20</sup> Sanaa Abd el-Azim Al-Adly, “Die Berliner Lederhandschrift (pBerlin 3029),” *Die Welt des Orients* 15 (1984): 8.

<sup>21</sup> Goedicke, “The Berlin Leather Roll (P Berlin 3029),” 97; Osing, “Zu zwei literarischen Werken des Mittleren Reiches,” 110.

<sup>22</sup> Goedicke, “The Berlin Leather Roll (P Berlin 3029),” 98.

<sup>23</sup> De Buck, “The Building Inscription of the Berlin Leather Roll,” 50.

II (9) *ib<.i>* – The emendation proposed by Osing appears reasonable given the context.<sup>24</sup>

II (16) *hwt tn* – The use of the demonstrative adjective to describe the temple works especially well in this instance as a sort of *inclusio* that brings the text temporally down to the present, as it were, and finalizes the preceding historical narrative.

II (16–17) *hm.f šzs nsw ʿnn sw* – The close association between the *hm* and the *nsw* is remarkable, and is perhaps evidence for the co-regency of Amenemhat I and Senwosret I.<sup>25</sup>

Another possibility is that this is an instance of poetic parallelism (in this case a couplet) that is emphasizing the activity of the king.

### **The Dating and Composition of P. Berlin 3029**

The BLM has enjoyed multiple translations in English,<sup>26</sup> German,<sup>27</sup> and French.<sup>28</sup> There is not much more I can offer in the way of grammatical commentary on this text that hasn't already been presented by especially de Buck and Goedicke.<sup>29</sup> The language is classical Middle Egyptian, but Stauder has pointed to some apparent Late Egyptian grammar and vocabulary.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Osing, “Zu zwei literarischen Werken des Mittleren Reiches,” 111.

<sup>25</sup> Goedicke, “The Berlin Leather Roll (P Berlin 3029),” 102.

<sup>26</sup> James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1906), 1:240–245; De Buck, “The Building Inscription of the Berlin Leather Roll,” 48–57; Adolf Erman, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, trans. Aylward M. Blackman (London: Methuen, 1927), 49–52; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 115–118; Goedicke, “The Berlin Leather Roll (P Berlin 3029),” 87–104, pls. 8–9; Richard B. Parkinson, *Voices from Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Middle Kingdom Writings* (London: The British Museum Press, 1991), 40–43.

<sup>27</sup> Ludwig Stern, “Urkunde über den Bau des Sonnentempels zu On,” *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache* 12 (1874): 85–96; Al-Adly, “Die Berliner Lederhandschrift (pBerlin 3029),” 6–18; Osing, “Zu zwei literarischen Werken des Mittleren Reiches,” 109–119; Carsten Peust, “Die Berliner Lederrolle,” in *Grab-, Bau-, und Votivinschriften*, Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments 6, ed. Bernd Janowski and Daniel Schwemer (München: Gütersloh Verlag, 2011), 94–96.

<sup>28</sup> Derchain, “Les Débuts de L’Histoire [Rouleau de Cuir Berlin 3029],” 35–47.

<sup>29</sup> de Buck, “The Building Inscription of the Berlin Leather Roll,” esp. 53–57; Goedicke, “The Berlin Leather Roll (P Berlin 3029),” 88–104.

<sup>30</sup> Stauder, *Linguistic Dating of Middle Egyptian Literary Texts*, 249–257.

Other late redactions to the text are also apparent. For instance, Senwosret is acknowledged as being *m3<sup>c</sup> hrw* (“justified”), a posthumous honor. Very likely then the text was composed after the king’s death, with the question remaining whether it was composed in the Twelfth or Eighteenth Dynasty.

Based on the evidence for Late Egyptian in the BLM, Stauder has argued that the text is an Eighteenth Dynasty “production, not merely in a redactional sense, but in terms of actual composition.”<sup>31</sup> At the same time, though, he acknowledges that this position “stands in no contradiction with the possibility that the composers may have drawn on earlier materials: such a scenario is in fact inherently plausible in view of the cultural functions the text may have had.”<sup>32</sup> This admission, however, would appear to undermine Stauder’s position more than he may realize. If we are to posit the existence of underlying (but now irretrievable) sources for the text, then what is to stop us from merely taking the text’s claims for itself at face value? The Late Egyptianisms in the text cited by Stauder are, in fact, relatively few, and one of them is arguably not what Stauder reads it as.<sup>33</sup> We might just as well attribute these Late Egyptianisms to the New Kingdom copyist or scribe who took liberties in emending the text, as is known from other examples, as opposed to outright composing it.<sup>34</sup> Parsimoniously speaking this is just as likely.

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<sup>31</sup> Stauder, *Linguistic Dating of Middle Egyptian Literary Texts*, 257.

<sup>32</sup> Stauder, *Linguistic Dating of Middle Egyptian Literary Texts*, 257.

<sup>33</sup> Stauder reads *m r3<sup>c</sup>* in **I (19)** as the Late Egyptian “as well, likewise.” Stauder, *Linguistic Dating of Middle Egyptian Literary Texts*, 254. But Goedicke, “The Berlin Leather Roll (P Berlin 3029),” 98, read it as *m r3<sup>c</sup>wy* (“in action”) acting as an adverb attested in Middle Egyptian.

<sup>34</sup> The transmission of the Tale of Sinuhe comes to mind. See Richard B. Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among Other Histories* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 185–186. See also additional examples and commentary provided by Piccato, “The Berlin Leather Roll and the Egyptian Sense of History,” 140 n. 25. “In reality the problem of the date is a more general problem which affects many other literary texts, traditionally placed in the MK but known to us only by NK manuscripts.”

While Stauder's position is worth considering, and the evidence he has presented does in fact appear to indicate some level of Eighteenth Dynasty scribal redaction that the text has undergone, his argument that this *must* imply an Eighteenth Dynasty composition for the text is by no means definitive.

The most vocal advocate for a Twelfth Dynasty origin of the text is Piccato. Among other things, he rejects the supposed parallels between the BLM and other Eighteenth Dynasty royal inscriptions as “not definitively conclusive,” and points out (as I have above) that “the syntactical and lexical features typical of the [New Kingdom]” are “indeed very few.”<sup>35</sup> In fact, whereas Derchain saw the BLM attempting to copy or mimic New Kingdom royal inscriptions, Piccato has convincingly argued that instead the influence went in the other direction: it was Thutmose III and Hatshepsut and other New Kingdom pharaohs who were attempting to emulate the style of Senwosret I out of “sentiment of devotion for the royal predecessors.”<sup>36</sup> This seems highly plausible given the Egyptian penchant for artistic and literary archaism even down into the latest stages of Egypt's history (the Greco-Roman Period), and further benefits from not starting with a cynical assumption about the authenticity of the text. In short, I am satisfied that the more productive way to proceed is to assume the BLM is innocent until proven guilty, and therefore admit it as evidence for the development of the *Königsnovelle*.

### **An Overview of the *Königsnovelle***

With all of this in mind, the rest of this paper shall analyze the BLM as featuring several elements known to the *Königsnovelle* genre. We might even call the BLM a proto-*Königsnovelle* for reasons I will give below. The literary genre known today as the *Königsnovelle* has been

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<sup>35</sup> Piccato, “The Berlin Leather Roll and the Egyptian Sense of History,” 139.

<sup>36</sup> Piccato, “The Berlin Leather Roll and the Egyptian Sense of History,” 140.

extensively studied, so this short paper will not wade into the finer minutiae of the subject.<sup>37</sup>

Instead I will provide an overview of the *Königsnovelle* and point to a few salient examples of where the BLM parallels (and diverges from) other recognized texts in the genre.

The *Königsnovelle* in its “classical” form, as first articulated by Alfred Hermann in his pioneering work, originated in the Eighteenth Dynasty with the Sphinx Stela of Thutmose IV.<sup>38</sup>

Jansen-Winkeln has summarized Hermann’s early typology of the *Königsnovelle* thus:

Die Geschichte kann z.B. beginnen, indem der König einen Traum hat, oder ihm werden (im Palast) Botschaften gebracht oder Meldungen erstattet, er breitet während einer Thronsetzung einen Plan aus, dem die Höflinge dann begeistert zustimmen, gelegentlich aber auch widersprechen, wobei sich später freilich herausstellt, wie recht der König hatte, es kommt mithin oft mals zu Dialogen, die in einem Lobpreis des Königs durch sein Gefolge enden können, darauf folgt die Ausführung des Befehls oder Plans, die teils ausführlich geschildert, teils knapp berichtet wird.<sup>39</sup>

Since Hermann, however, the typology and nature of the *Königsnovelle* has been widened.

Jansen-Winkeln, for instance, expanded the elements of the *Königsnovelle* to include: “Thema ist ein denkwürdiges Ereignis mit dem König als ‘Held’, der Text ist zur öffentlichen Anbringung

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<sup>37</sup> For a representative sample of the literature, see Alfred Hermann, *Die Ägyptische Königsnovelle* (Glückstadt: J. J. Augustin Verlag, 1938); Anthony John Spalinger, *Aspects of the Military Documents of the Ancient Egyptians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 101–112; Karl Jansen-Winkeln, “Die ägyptische ‘Königsnovelle’ als Texttyp,” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 83 (1993): 101–116; Antonio Loprieno, “The ‘King’s Novel’,” in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, Probleme der Ägyptologie 10, ed. Antonio Loprieno (Brill: Leiden, 1996), 277–295; Irene Shirun-Grumach, “Kadesh Inscriptions and Königsnovelle,” in *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 82, ed. C. J. Eyre (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 1067–1073; Beate Hofmann, *Die Königsnovelle: ‘Strukturanalyse am Einzelwerk’* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004); Anthony Spalinger, “Königsnovelle and Performance,” in *Times, Signs and Pyramids: Studies in Honour of Miroslav Verner on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Vivienne Gae Callender et al. (Prague: Charles University Press, 2011), 351–374; Shih-Wei Hsu, “The Development of Ancient Egyptian Royal Inscriptions,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 98 (2012): 269–283, esp. 274–276;

<sup>38</sup> Jansen-Winkeln, “Die ägyptische ‘Königsnovelle’ als Texttyp,” 101.

<sup>39</sup> Jansen-Winkeln, “Die ägyptische ‘Königsnovelle’ als Texttyp,” 102.

bestimmt, als Rahmen dient die Textform ‘Bericht’ und es handelt sich funktional um ‘Königspropaganda’.<sup>40</sup>

Another expanded definition of the *Königsnovelle* comes from Loprieno, who describes it as “a form of Egyptian narrative which focuses on the role of the king as recipient of divine inspiration or as protagonist of the ensuing decision-making process.”<sup>41</sup> A defining characteristic of the king’s decision-making process in the *Königsnovelle* is that he has acted decisively in a time of great controversy or (near) national disaster; a “hero of a (real or fictional) historical episode in which a state of uncertainty or deficiency is overcome by his word or his decision.”<sup>42</sup> Very often the decision is one of a military or diplomatic nature,<sup>43</sup> but Loprieno has expanded this to include ritual, building, and entrepreneurial operations that fell to the king for adjudication.<sup>44</sup>

Beyond merely extolling the king, the *Königsnovelle* appears to have been utilized as a rhetorical device to maintain and amplify the image of the king as Egypt’s guardian and, as it were, proxy. This free blending of “historical” and “literary” conventions has made it difficult to always carefully parse the historicity of any particular supposed *Königsnovelle*. Given these complications and competing definitions of the genre, one Egyptologist has even gone so far as to dismiss the existence of the *Königsnovelle* altogether.<sup>45</sup> While outright denying the reality of the genre seems extreme, there nevertheless remains the fact that since Hermann’s early work

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<sup>40</sup> Jansen-Winkeln, “Die ägyptische ‘Königsnovelle’ als Texttyp,” 108.

<sup>41</sup> Loprieno, “The ‘King’s Novel’,” 277.

<sup>42</sup> Loprieno, “The ‘King’s Novel’,” 280.

<sup>43</sup> This is especially true of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasty *Königsnovellen*, for obvious reasons. See Spalinger, *Aspects of the Military Documents of the Ancient Egyptians*, 113.

<sup>44</sup> Loprieno, “The ‘King’s Novel’,” 280.

<sup>45</sup> See Kenneth A. Kitchen, review of Spalinger, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 44, no. 5/6 (1987): 639, wherein he dismisses the *Königsnovelle* genre as “fictitious,” “inaccurate,” and “spurious.”

attempting to typologically identify the *Königsnovelle*, texts pre- and post-dating the Eighteenth Dynasty have been recognized as *Königsnovellen*, thus necessitating subsequent work on the topic that more carefully articulates the elements, typology, and overall *Sitz im Leben* of the genre.

Take for instance two military texts from just before and after the Eighteenth Dynasty: the victory stelae of Kamose and the Kadesh inscriptions of Ramesses II. Kamose's campaign against the Hyksos is recorded in two hieroglyphic stelae and a hieratic wooden writing tablet covered in stucco.<sup>46</sup> In these texts, which are clearly part of the same textual tradition,<sup>47</sup> Kamose recounts his decision to expel the foreign rulers of the Fifteenth Dynasty (the so-called Hyksos) despite pressure from his cabinet to be content with sharing Egypt with them and a Nubian dynasty. The Carnarvon tablet text opens by depicting Kamose as speaking "in his palace to the council of officials which was in his following."<sup>48</sup> The text explicitly depicts Kamose as balking at his councilors' suggestion that he be satisfied with his portion of Egypt, with the narrator explaining that any hint of sharing Egypt with foreign dynasties was "disturbing in the heart of His Majesty."<sup>49</sup> "Dividing the land with me is not tolerable for me," Kamose insists, and so he

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<sup>46</sup> Alan H. Gardiner, "The Defeat of the Hyksos by Kamose: The Carnarvon Tablet No. 1," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 3, no. 2/3 (1916): 95–110; Labib Habachi, *The Second Stela of Kamose and His Struggle against the Hyksos Ruler and His Capital* (Glückstadt: J. J. Augustin Verlag, 1972).

<sup>47</sup> The Canarvon Tablet (discovered in 1908) appears to be a copy of the principle textual source for Kamose's campaign: a fragmentary stela discovered at Karnak in the 1930s. In 1954 a second stela was discovered at Karnak that parallels the text of the first stela in many respects while also including new information. See the extended discussion in H. S. Smith and Alexandrina Smith, "A Reconsideration of the Kamose Texts," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache* 103 (1976): 48–76.

<sup>48</sup> William K. Simpson, "The Kamose Texts," in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*, ed. William Kelly Simpson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 346.

<sup>49</sup> Simpson, "The Kamose Texts," 436.

issues an executive order to subdue and expel any foreign rulers and their Egyptian collaborators. The rest of the text then narrates Kamose's decisive (and violent) campaign.<sup>50</sup>

By the command of Amun, astute of counsel, I sailed north to my victory to drive back the Asiatics, my courageous army in front of me like a flame of fire, with the bowmen of the Medjai upland of our encampment (ready) to seek out the Setiu and to destroy their dwellings, the eastern desert lands and the western desert lands provided with their fat and my army being supplied with produce from their dwellings.<sup>51</sup>

With stereotypical language Kamose boasts: "I was upon [the enemy] as if I were a falcon, and when the time of midday meal had come, I had driven [the enemy] back and had destroyed his walls and had slain his people."<sup>52</sup> Clearly the text depicts Kamose as the victorious, divinely-appointed hero whose sole and quick-thinking decision saved Egypt from further foreign occupation. It does so in a highly literary and rhetorical narrative fashion that is not quite straightforward history,<sup>53</sup> but also not quite outright fictional fabrication.<sup>54</sup> Thus many scholars see it as an example of the *Königsnovelle*, even though it lacks some of Hofmann's typological requirements (e.g. Kamose does not experience any dreams that prompt him to his course of action).

Ramesses II's inscriptions celebrating his (supposed) victory over the Hittites at Kadesh can easily be read as a *Königsnovelle*,<sup>55</sup> and one that has likely even been influenced by earlier

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<sup>50</sup> Simpson, "The Kamose Texts," 436.

<sup>51</sup> Simpson, "The Kamose Texts," 346–348.

<sup>52</sup> Simpson, "The Kamose Texts," 348.

<sup>53</sup> Compare the so-called Second Stela of Kamose where an intercepted letter from the Hyksos ruler Apopi is supposedly quoted verbatim but contains language that has undoubtedly been manipulated by Kamose's agents. To suggest, for instance, that Apopi would eulogize Kamose as "the valiant, given life," makes reason stare. Simpson, "The Kamose Texts," 349.

<sup>54</sup> No Egyptologist denies the historicity of Kamose's campaign, even while recognizing that his own account thereof is selective, biased, and presenting the events leading up to the ousting of the Fifteenth Dynasty in a highly polemical and ideological manner.

<sup>55</sup> Spalinger, *Aspects of the Military Documents of the Ancient Egyptians*, 109–110.

entries in the genre.<sup>56</sup> In the literary or poetic rendering of the account,<sup>57</sup> Egypt faces devastation at the hands of a Hittite-led coalition of Semitic and northern Mesopotamian nations. Ramesses, acting with divine approval, heroically faces down the foreign hordes at the town of Kadesh on the Orontes river in modern Syria. The text amplifies the heroism of Ramesses by depicting the king as (literally) singlehandedly facing off against an innumerable host of enemies after his army fled in terror and sought for surrender.

I have called on you, O Amun, while I am amidst multitudes whom I know not. All the foreign countries have united against me, I being (left) entirely alone, no-one else with me. My regular troops have abandoned me, not one of them has looked for me, from my chariotry. When I kept shouting out to them, none of them heeded me, as I called out. Amun I found more help to me than millions of troops, than hundred-thousands of chariotry, than ten-thousands of men, whether brothers or offspring (even) if united in one will. (39:3–41:3 // §110–118)<sup>58</sup>

Despite this setback, the king nevertheless triumphs thanks to divine intervention.

Now, His Majesty was after them like a griffon, I slaughtered among them, without letting up. I raised my voice to call out to my troops, saying: Stand firm, be bold-hearted, my troops, see my triumph, (all) on my own, with only Amun to be my protector, his hand with me. And how cowardly are your hearts, my chariotry, it's no use trusting in you either! (55:1–56:3 // §166–173)<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Shirun-Grumach, “Kadesh Inscriptions and Königsnovelle,” 1067–1073.

<sup>57</sup> Ramesses’ account of the Battle of Kadesh survives in both monumental and papyri sources. The so-called Poem version of the text is recorded on three papyri: P. Raifé, P. Sallier III, and P. Chester Beatty III. The so-called Bulletin account of the battle is preserved as commentary and captions over the battle scenes found in temples at Abydos, Karnak, Luxor, and Abu Simbel. For an overview with bibliography see William J. Murnane, “Battle of Kadesh,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Donald B. Redford (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1:166–167.

<sup>58</sup> Kenneth Kitchen, ed. and trans., *Ramesside Inscriptions: Translated & Annotated: Translations, Volume II, Ramesses II, Royal Inscriptions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 6.

<sup>59</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions*, 8.

An ensuing dialogue between Ramesses and his war council features the king excoriating his troops for their cowardice (78:1–84:4 // §251–276).<sup>60</sup> After their dressing-down, the members of the war council exclaim the rightness of Ramesses’ rule and course. “Then they spoke out in unison: ‘Excellent, indeed, is peace, O Sovereign our Lord! There is no dishonor . . . in peace, when you make it! Who shall resist you on the day of your wrath?’” (97:1–3 // §327–330)<sup>61</sup> As is common in the genre, the king’s exemplary and divinely-sanctioned behavior is contrasted with the ineffectual or outright contemptible counsel of his officials (who in the end acquiesce to his superior plan of action).

These two examples (and the foregoing discussion of the more recent scholarly literature) illustrate the need for nuance when it comes to speaking about the nature of the *Königsnovelle*. The first issue is agreeing on what the *Königsnovelle* looks like (i.e. what narrative and typological elements characterize it). Only then, and with careful and close readings, can ostensible texts of the genre be determined if they indeed fall thereunder. Delineating *the* characteristics of the *Königsnovelle* has not reach universal consensus, and so at this point it would appear we are dealing with a matter of good, better, and best when it comes to which typologies or classifications we use to describe the genre.

#### **P. Berlin 3029 As *Königsnovelle***

Several scholars have recognized that the BLM either contains many of the elements of the *Königsnovelle* or is itself such. Goedicke, for instance, broke with Hermann’s designation of the Eighteenth Dynasty as the beginning of the *Königsnovelle* by arguing, “As far as can be seen the ‘*Königsnovelle*’ . . . has its earliest representatives in the Protocol of Neferyt and in the

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<sup>60</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions*, 11–12.

<sup>61</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions*, 13.

Stories of Papyrus Westcar.” Goedicke went on to include the BLM as another text “of the early Twelfth Dynasty” which “use[s] the frame-story as a literary device,” such as is commonly seen in the *Königsnovelle*.<sup>62</sup> El-Adly followed Goedicke in this opinion,<sup>63</sup> and more recently Peust has straightforwardly categorized the BLM as a *Königsnovelle* on the basis that in the text the king is represented as the “Helden in den Mittelpunkt.”<sup>64</sup> Piccato likewise sees the text as “characteristic of the so-called *Königsnovelle*,” going so far as to argue that “the text is in fact considered the first example of this literary genre.” The “basic elements” of the *Königsnovelle* identified by Piccato include “royal council; speech of the king; reply of the courtiers; realization of the project exposed by the king,” and indeed these are fairly obviously present in the BLM.<sup>65</sup> I find Piccato’s typology more useful, not only because its economy, but also can more easily account for texts before and after the Eighteenth Dynasty example cited by Hermann.<sup>66</sup>

But the Middle Kingdom texts used to illustrate these expanded definitions of the *Königsnovelle* are different than those from after the Second Intermediate Period onward that feature so prominently the elements of dreams, disputations in the king’s council, and heroic actions that save Egypt. Take for instance the glaring fact that the BLM does not open with Egypt at a time of crisis. There is no military or diplomatic situation that calls for immediate action to save Egypt from some sort of national disaster. Instead, Senwosret simply announces to his cabinet that he intends to dedicate monuments for Hor-Akhty and Atum to secure his pre-

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<sup>62</sup> Hans Goedicke, *The Protocol of Neferyt (The Prophecy of Neferti)* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 15. Compare Hsu, “The Development of Ancient Egyptian Royal Inscriptions,” 275.

<sup>63</sup> El-Adly, “Die Berliner Lederhandschrift,” 14–15.

<sup>64</sup> Peust, “Die Berliner Lederrolle,” 94.

<sup>65</sup> Piccato, “The Berlin Leather Roll and the Egyptian Sense of History,” 137.

<sup>66</sup> Compare Hsu, “The Development of Ancient Egyptian Royal Inscriptions,” 275, who identifies three “critical” criteria for the *Königsnovelle*: “theme (memorable event both in its origin and unfolding), function (royal propaganda), linguistic form (narrative [+speech]).”

ordained right to kingship, and then he does just such with no impediment. Furthermore, unlike the Sphinx Stela of Thutmose, these monuments to the respective deities are not said to be dilapidated or otherwise in a state of disrepair. Indeed, they seem to be newly-commissioned works. Nor is Senwosret directed on his course by a dream.

The depiction of the king’s council in the BLM is also surprising, as there is no actual deliberation or controversy that unfolds therein. Unlike the Kamose and Ramesses *Königsnovellen*, the councilors in the BLM are not depicted as useless, cowardly, or ineffectual, but rather just the opposite. After Senwosret announces his plan, the council immediately consents, and encourages the king to execute his design. So pleased is Senwosret that he assures his councilor that “your council has caused that every work be done as My Majesty pleases” (II [8–9]). In the Kamose and Ramesses texts the council stands in the way of the king as sort of narrative a foil to highlight the heroism of the king. In the BLM, on the other hand, they actively help instead of hinder Senwosret. To be sure, the council in the BLM hails Senwosret as a divine hero who is acting with divine sanction, thus fulfilling the propagandistic aspect of the *Königsnovelle*. But they complement rather than contradict the king, as is later seen in *Königsnovellen* beginning at the end of the Second Intermediate Period onward.

### Conclusion

The chart below represents a synoptic view of the various elements scholars have ascribed to the *Königsnovelle* genre and compares such with the BLM.

Elements of the <i>Königsnovelle</i>	P. Berlin 3029 (Berlin Leather Manuscript)
The king has a dream wherein he is visited by a divinity	
National crisis threatens Egypt and/or the cosmic order (i.e. the cult)	
The king deliberates in his council/palace	✓
Debate ensues, and the king is opposed by his council	

The king acts decisively	✓(?)
The king executes his plan with divine help/approval	✓
The king gives a speech to his council	✓
The king is extolled/praised by the council, which recognizes his wisdom	✓*
The king accomplishes his work	✓*
The king is depicted as a divinely-inspired hero and rightful ruler (i.e. royal propaganda)	✓

The question mark next to the “king acts decisively” element indicates that the BLM does not really depict Senwosret as acting decisively *in opposition* to the council in order to save Egypt. As mentioned, the BLM opens with Senwosret announcing his intentions to the council. There is no dialogue or deliberation about what to do. Similarly, the asterisks above next to the “king is extolled/praised” and “king accomplishes his work” elements are there to alert readers that in the BLM: (1) the king is praised by the council at the outset, not after being proven wrong, and (2) the king is assisted by his council in carrying out his work, unlike in Ramesses’ Kadesh narration in which he acts alone despite his council.

How might we account for this? Why does the BLM differ so markedly from the “classical” New Kingdom *Königsnovelle* as outlined by Hermann? I believe that this may in fact be evidence for an earlier developmental stage of the *Königsnovelle*. If we grant that the BLM is in fact a Twelfth Dynasty production, as I believe it is, and as I believe the evidence indicates, then we might account for this divergence by seeing Middle Kingdom *Königsnovellen* such as the BLM as reflecting a different social reality than those of the Second Intermediate Period and Dynasties Eighteen and Nineteen of the New Kingdom (periods notably marked by militaristic and imperialistic concerns). This in turn would reinforce the proposition that the BLM is not a New Kingdom production, but an authentic, early witness to the *Königsnovelle* in its nascent Middle Kingdom form.