THE ETYMOLOGY OF EBUR

Ernout-Meillet derive *ebur* from Egyptian 3*bw*[1] (used for both" „elephant" and „ivory"). A slightly different explanation, which would account for the *r*, has occurred to me.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that 3*bw* itself is an African loanword. Suppose the Romans obtained their word from a Nubian rather than an Egyptian intermediary. A feature of Old Nubian is the suffix *l* (*il* after a consonant) which serves as a definite article — e. g. KOCMOC-, „the world". But Zyhlarz (*Grundzüge der Nubisehen Grammatik im Christlichen Grühmittelalter*, Leipzig, 1928, p. 14) points out that this *l* occasionally appears as *r* — e. g. [αλ or [αρ, definite for [α „son". Since loan-words are often taken over in the articular form— European borrowings from an Arabic are an obvious example — the Latin language could have acquired *ebur* ready — made from Nubian traders.

Our knowledge of Old Nubian comes, of course, from texts of much later date[2], but the Sudanese languages seem to exhibit a considerable stability[3].

Bedford (England).   *G. M. Lee.*

J. W. Goethe:

ÜBER ALLEN GIPFELN...

Incubat monti requies, nec aurae
commovent ramos, tacet alitum vox
cuncta per dumeta; mane: Frueris
    tu quoque somnis.

Bedford (England).   Latine vertit *G. M. Lee.*

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[1] I adopt Sir Alan Gardiner's transliteration. I do not know whether 3*bw* is related to 3*by* „panther". Erić Partridge (*A Charm of Words*, 1960, p. 58f.) shows that in several languages the name of „elephant" is given to other large animals.

[2] Edited by F. Llewallyn Griffith for the Berlin Academy in 1913. They are writtten in a modifical form of the Coptic alphabet.

[3] The general character of these languages is described in Meillet and Cohen, *Les Langues du Monde*, II, nous. éd. 1952, p. 237f. — I abstain for the moment from speculation about the origin of ἐλέφας and its oriental equivalents.