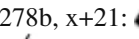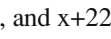# CHICAGO DEMOTIC DICTIONARY (CDD)

François Gaudard and Janet H. Johnson
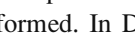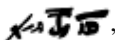
This year the staff of the Chicago Demotic Dictionary — Janet Johnson, François Gaudard, and Mary Szabady — have continued to check and prepare more letter files for publication. Foy Scalf left us to become the Head of the Oriental Institute Research Archives. We have been assisted by several volunteers: Janelle Pisarik, who started to check the Text Information and Abbreviations Authors files (we are delighted to note that she has now been admitted to our graduate Egyptology program, after having already studied Egyptology as an undergraduate); Oriental Institute volunteer Larry Lissak, who scanned for us photographs of various Demotic papyri, ostraca, and other inscriptions which we need in order to prepare our own scans and hand copies for the dictionary; and graduate students Humphrey H. Hardy II, Charles J. Otte III, Benjamin D. Thomas, and Jacqueline E. Vayntrub, who helped us check some of the Hebrew and Aramaic references cited in the letter files on which we have been working. Our continuing efforts to finish the font conversion were assisted by Clay Smith.
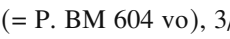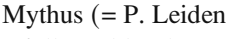
During the course of the year we have completed the letters W, Š, and P, which will be posted online shortly. Letters M and Ḥ are having their final checks carried out, and letters ʾI, S, and T remain in rough draft, waiting final check and preparation of scans and hand copies.

Since May 29, 2008, all the published volumes of the Oriental Institute's primary dictionary projects (Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, Chicago Demotic Dictionary, Chicago Hittite Dictionary) have become available on the Institute Web site. All the Demotic Dictionary files are searchable, in electronic format as Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) files, and downloadable from the Oriental Institute Web site at http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/pubs/catalog/. This was made possible thanks to the hard work of John Sanders, Thomas Urban, Leslie Schramer, Katie L. Johnson, and the rest of the Publications Office staff. We would like to thank all of them very much, as well as the Electronic Publications Committee and the Oriental Institute voting members, who have always given their full support to this publication effort.

As a matter of interest, the Demotic script (from Greek δημοτικά "popular [script]"), which is the most cursive Egyptian script, was first used during the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, under the reign of Pharaoh Psammetichus I, around 650 B.C. It is derived from a less cursive script named hieratic (from Greek ἱερατικά "priestly, sacerdotal [script]"), itself derived from the hieroglyphic script (from Greek ἱερογλυφικά "sacred carvings"). Both Demotic and hieratic were always written from right to left. Originally, Demotic was used only for business and everyday affairs (administrative, legal, and economic documents), but later it was also used for literary, religious, and scientific texts. By then the use of hieratic was mainly limited to religious compositions. While in Early Demotic it is often still possible to recognize the hieratic equivalent of a Demotic sign, it becomes much more difficult by the Ptolemaic period (332–30 B.C.), when the Demotic script differentiated itself even more from its hieratic ancestor. As one can expect, the handwriting of one scribe could differ greatly from that of another, and the same sign could look quite different depending on the person who wrote it. It is these types of variant writings that we would like to discuss here.

In the same text, the same word or group could sometimes be spelled in several different ways by the same scribe. As an example, in P. Berlin 8278, let us consider the word ḫšb "to mutilate," which is spelled in three different ways: ḫšb (with ⌀ and ꜣ) in P. Berlin 8278a, x+10: ; ḫšb (with ⌀ and ꞵ) in P. Berlin 8278b, x+21: , , and x+22: , ; and ḫšb (with ꜥ and ꞵ) in P. Berlin 8278a, x+10: . All these writings are of course perfectly correct.

The so-called "hieraticizing writings" are of great interest; in this case the scribe decided to use a writing close to the hieratic script (for a sign or a whole word) instead of the expected Demotic one. Let us examine a few examples, starting with the word *pr-nfr* "house of rejuvenation," which literally means "good house." This euphemistic designation refers to the embalming workshop in which mummification was performed. In Demotic this word is usually written ⟨⟩,[1] with a Demotic writing of the *nfr*-group as ⟨⟩. In P. Cairo 31179, 1/14, however, this word is written ⟨⟩, with a clearly hieraticizing writing of the same group as ⟨⟩ (cf. the hieratic writing of this sign, e.g., in P. Rhind I, 4h7: ⟨⟩ or II, 9h1: ⟨⟩, as given in Möller's *Hieratische Paläographie*, vol. 3, p. 16, #180). It even looks almost like the original hieroglyphic sign ⟨⟩, which is sometimes also drawn with two horizontal strokes instead of one. Another good example is the word ⟨⟩ *Mꜣ.t* "Maat" in the magical text of P. BM 10588, 2/2, written with a typical Demotic feather: ⟨⟩ (preceded in this case by the letter ⟨⟩ M used as a phonetic complement). However, in P. BM 10588, 1/3, the same word *Mꜣ.t* is written ⟨⟩, with a hieraticizing feather: ⟨⟩ (cf. the same sign in hieratic, e.g., in P. Tanis [= P. Berlin 7809], 4/3: ⟨⟩, or in the linen mummy bandage (Leinwand) [= P. Berlin 3073], 3/3: ⟨⟩ in Möller's *Hieratische Paläographie*, vol. 3, p. 22, #236). As a last example, let us examine the writing of the *nb.t*-group in the divine name *Nb.t-ḥw.t* "Nephthys" in P. Berlin 8278b, x+12: ⟨⟩ and in P. Berlin 8278c, x+4: ⟨⟩. In both cases we are dealing with the regular Demotic writing of this group as ⟨⟩, but in P. Berlin 8278b, x+13: ⟨⟩ and x+14: ⟨⟩, the same word is written with a hieraticizing writing of the *nb.t*-group: ⟨⟩ (cf. the hieratic equivalent of the *nb*-group [without the feminine *.t* ending: ⟨⟩], e.g., in P. Berlin 3135, 2/4: ⟨⟩ and 3/5: ⟨⟩, in Möller's *Hieratische Paläographie*, vol. 3, p. 49, #510).

Non-etymological writings are also a very interesting phenomenon. A non-etymological writing is a writing whose spelling does not take the etymology into account. In English, for example, the writing of the word "pharmacy" conforms to its Greek etymology by rendering the letter φ as "ph." Such is also the case in French with "*pharmacie*." In Italian and Spanish, however, we are dealing with a non-etymological writing of the same word as "*farmacia*" where "ph" was replaced by the letter "f," which does not reflect the original spelling of this word. In Demotic, non-etymological writings occur mainly in texts from the Roman period. Thus, in P. BM 10072, 1–2: *ꜥnḫ pꜣy =t by rpy =f rḫ =f r nḥḥ ḏ.t* "May your soul live, may it be rejuvenated, may it live forever and ever!" the first occurrence of the verb ⟨⟩, *ꜥnḫ* "to live" is perfectly normal: ⟨⟩, while the second one is written like the verb *rḫ* "to know": ⟨⟩, but the context makes it clear that the meaning of this word is "to live." Non-etymological writings can also be used to write royal names: Menkheperra (*Mn-ḫpr-Rꜥ* ⟨⟩), the prenomen of pharaoh Thutmose III (1479–1425 B.C.), meaning "May the Manifestation (= *ḫpr*) of Re (= *Rꜥ*) Endure (= *Mn*)," is spelled *Mnḫ-pꜣ-Rꜥ* in P. Setna II (= P. BM 604 vo), 3/32: ⟨⟩, which means "Pre is excellent," as if it were composed of the words *Mnḫ* "to be excellent" and *pꜣ Rꜥ* "Pre."[2] It is exactly as if in English the word "belief" were spelled with the words "bee" and "leaf" as "beeleaf." Another interesting example is the writing of the name of the land of Punt (⟨⟩ *Pwnt*), which is spelled *Pꜣ-wꜥny* in P. Mythus (= P. Leiden 384 ro), 11/10: ⟨⟩, as if it were a writing of the definite article *pꜣ* followed by the name of the juniper tree, namely *wꜥn*. The land of Punt, whose location has been long disputed, provided Egypt with incense and myrrh, as well as many other exotic products. It became especially famous after the discovery of the reliefs in Queen Hatchepsut's mortuary temple at Deir-el-Bahari depicting her expedition to this land.

Some non-etymological writings seem also to reflect later reinterpretations of a word or a name. Such is the case with Herishef, the ram-headed god venerated at Heracleopolis in the twelfth Upper-Egyptian nome, whose name is attested as 'Αρσαφής in Greek and as *Ḥr-šf* in

Demotic, for example in P. Rylands 9, 8/1: [demotic glyph]. Although *Ḥr-šf* is generally understood as derived from *Ḥry-š⸗f* "He who is upon his lake"[3] and is so written in earlier phases of Egyptian (e.g., [hieroglyphs] or [hieroglyphs]), later writings of the word suggest that it had been reinterpreted as [hieroglyphs] *Ḥr-šfy* "ram-faced,"[4] or "majestic-face(d)."[5] This phenomenon can also be observed in English: "goodbye," for example, is derived from "God be with you." Earlier spellings of this expression include among others the forms "God be wy you," and "god buy'ye." Later on the word "god" was reinterpreted as "good" by analogy with expressions such as "good night" and "good day," probably because the original meaning was no longer obvious. As for the word "sparrowgrass," it is nothing but a reinterpretation of "sparagus," a colloquial variant of "asparagus," by folk etymology. Likewise, in Greek, the ancient interpretation of the word Ἀμαζόνες "Amazons," as meaning "the breastless ones" (from privative α- "without," and μαζός "breast"), by reference to the belief that these fierce female warriors amputated their right breast in order to draw the bow more easily, is very probably incorrect. The exact etymology of this word is still debated. According to one interpretation, it may derive from the name of an Iranian tribe **ha-ma-zan*, namely, "warriors."[6] Note that the Amazon River takes its name from the fact that, in 1542, the conquistador Francisco de Orellana claimed to have encountered women warriors in that area. In all likelihood, those were simply long-haired male Indians. This interesting anecdote brings us back to Demotic since the Amazons and their queen are the main characters of a Demotic literary composition from the Roman period usually referred to as *Egyptians and Amazons* and belonging to the Story-Cycle of King Petubastis. In this text, the queen's name is Serpot, unlike in Greek mythology where she is called Hippolyte. A famous passage depicts the Egyptian prince Pedikhons and the queen falling in love after fighting in one-on-one combat.

Although all the variants discussed above — orthographical, hieraticizing, and non-etymological — make it all the more difficult to read and understand Demotic texts, they are also one aspect of the richness of the Demotic script and language, rendering them even more challenging and attractive to scholars.

Notes

[1] See W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (Copenhagen, 1954), p. 133.

[2] *pꜣ Rꜥ*, lit. "the Re," is a common designation of the god Re during the Greco-Roman period, usually rendered in English as "Pre."

[3] "He who is upon (= *Ḥry*) his lake (= *š⸗f*)."

[4] "ram (= *šfy*)-faced (= *ḥr*)" (see *Wb* 4, 457/1).

[5] "majestic (= *šfy*)-face(d) (= *ḥr*)" (see P. Magical [= P. BM 10070 + P. Leiden 383] 11/6).

[6] See, e.g., P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque: Histoire des mots* (Paris, 1990), p. 69a; H. Frisk, *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Band 1: *A–Ko*. Indogermanische Bibliothek, II. Reihe-Wörterbücher (Heidelberg, 1960), pp. 83–84.

———————————