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CHICAGO DEMOTIC DICTIONARY

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The staff of the Chicago Demotic Dictionary Project, Thomas Dousa, François Gaudard, and myself, have continued the laborious job of checking and double-checking every entry and every reference included in the dictionary. We have been ably assisted this year by three volunteers. Anne Nelson and Kathy Wagner verified and corrected bibliographic entries for us. Alejandro Botta has continued to be our expert on interconnections between Demotic and various Northwest Semitic languages. We are delighted to note that Alejandro finished his Ph.D. dissertation this spring and has a position as Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible at the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University. As noted last year, discussions with Gene Gragg, Director of the Oriental Institute, and with Thomas Urban, of the Institute's Publications Office, led us to decide to post completed files on the Internet, to make them available around the world without waiting for the completion of the rest of the dictionary. We are pleased that nine files, each containing the full entry for one letter of the Demotic "alphabet," have been completed and posted on-line — six during the autumn of 2001 and three more during the winter of 2002. The first posting also included an introduction to the dictionary plus supplementary files providing lists of abbreviations, including bibliographic abbreviations and abbreviations used in referring to individual texts.

During the course of the year, we have completed six more letters, where all the problems which had been identified over the years have now been addressed and resolved, if possible. Those six files will be posted during the summer, as the Publications Office finds time to do their checks and prepare the on-line documents. We will then have over half the dictionary completed and available for scholars from the wide range of disciplines for which Demotic materials are pertinent.

The second posting also included what we call our "Problems" file, in which we include all those entries for which we are uncertain of the reading or meaning of the word in question or for which we are uncertain about our scan or, more likely, the black-and-white line art "hand copy" that we provide. For example, in the Apis Embalming Ritual is a list of items belonging to the overseer of craftsmen. One of the items listed is a *bs.t*, a feminine noun. The great German Demotist Wilhelm Spiegelberg had suggested identifying this item with the masculine noun *bs*, which indicates a type of vessel, frequently made of metal. That a noun might switch gender between stages of the language is possible, but there are good examples of the masculine noun *bs* attested in Demotic, and even in the same text in which the *bs.t* is found. For this reason, we have suggested a possible alternative derivation, from a feminine noun *bꜣs(.t)* "pail," attested from the New Kingdom and still found in Coptic ВНСЄ with the meaning "pail, well-bucket." We based this proposal not only on phonetic and grammatical "soundness of fit," but also on the assumption that "pails," like other vessels, may well have formed part of the equipment in mummification rituals. This entry is not only included in the B-file in the dictionary, but it is also put into the Problems file in order to call attention to it and ask our colleagues whether they have anything with which to support, or overturn, our suggestion.

Another example comes from the often-studied literary text preserved in Papyrus Krall and known as the "Battle for the Armor of Inaros." Inaros had died, and the council of the gods decided to start a war in Egypt by persuading a man from the family of Inaros to fight with a man from a contending family for the dead man's armor. This is one of a series or cycle of

texts involving characters who may be (very loosely) based on adventures and battles of actual kings from the so-called "Third Intermediate Period." At one point a warrior is described as being "on the ꜥnq of a newly decorated chariot (or 'litter')." The most recent editor of the text was unable to suggest any etymology for this word but hazarded the suggestion, based on context, that it referred to the "basket" or "cabin" of a chariot, relying on semantic and phonetic considerations. We have quite hesitatingly suggested it might be related to the verb ꜥnq "to embrace, enclose," and included it the Problems file in hopes someone will provide stronger evidence that we can include in the final version of the dictionary.

In putting the Problems file together, we noted that some types of vocabulary are especially difficult to identify with any certainty; a very good example are plant names, for which we have twenty-nine examples from the fifteen letters that are done. Many of the plants for which we hazard some suggestion are names that we suggest *may* be related to Greek words for plants, which are quite well known. Examples include ꜣpstn "wormwood"(?) for Greek ἀψίνθιον; ꜣnꜣs "anise"(?) for Greek ἄννησον; and ꜣrgs "wild chickling"(?) for Greek ἄρακος. In some cases a "good Egyptian" name is used for a plant, but the name is a phrase and the only indication that the term is a plant name is the plant determinative. An example is the "Amun-is-great-plant," which has been suggested to be flax. Similar plant names occur in English, such as Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Forget-Me-Not, and Snapdragon. This lack of certainty in identifying ancient plants is found in earlier stages of Egyptian as well and reflects the difficulties of coming to terms with a tradition of botanical classification which differed in many details from our own. As scholars continue to work on materials such as the medical texts, in which many of these plant names are mentioned, it is hoped that more, and more precise, identifications will prove possible.

We have already begun receiving feedback from colleagues with suggestions for improving, or providing, readings or meanings of individual entries. Since many of these suggestions come from yet unpublished manuscripts, the dictionary is certainly benefiting from this procedure. Especially helpful have been the comments and suggestions from Joachim Quack, a German colleague who is preparing for publication a hieratic version of a Demotic text that was published twenty-five years ago. The Demotic text is very fragmentary and the work of dictionary staff and other colleagues around the world has made it possible to better understand many sections of the Demotic text. The hieratic version which Quack has identified exists in numerous copies, some from the Fayum and some from Elephantine in the south. The text, known to scholars as the "Book of the Temple," contains a catalog of temple buildings, rooms, equipment, deities, priests, and so on. Given the nature of the text, there would probably have been a copy in the temple archives of every major temple. At some point, this important religious document was transcribed from hieratic to Demotic. The existence of numerous copies of the hieratic manuscript has helped Quack to reconstruct the original text of this very long and fascinating document. And the reconstruction of this original hieratic text contributes enormously to the reading and interpreting of the Demotic one. For example, in one broken passage there occurs a phrase that the original editor read *bt bty* and translated "who loathes crime." But the feminine noun *bty* means "abomination" and must be kept separate from the masculine noun *btw* "crime," as was shown by George Hughes many years ago. In addition, one reviewer rejected the original editor's reading of the verb *bt*, although he did not have an alternative to suggest. But the verb does indeed look like *bt*, and we had thought of deriving it from an earlier verb meaning *bṯ* "to avoid, abandon." Quack, however, pointed out to us that our *bt* corresponds to *bwt*, from earlier *bwꜣ* "to abominate, to shun," in hieratic parallels to our passage. Thus both the verb and the noun in this phrase derive from the same lexical

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root. We can now translate the phrase "abominate an abomination," a rendition that not only reflects the meaning of the Egyptian words more accurately but also allows us to savor more fully the sophisticated assonantal wordplay of the ancient Egyptian author of our text.

We look forward to ongoing collaboration with our colleagues as we try to move words from the "Problems" file to their proper and explicated homes.

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