

CHICAGO DEMOTIC DICTIONARY

Janet H. Johnson

This year has seen a few changes on the staff of the Demotic Dictionary, with François Gaudard leaving to work at Chicago House for a season and Foy Scalf joining Jackie Jay as graduate student assistants on the project. Brandon Bourgeois, an undergraduate Classics major, did extensive volunteer work checking bibliographic and text references. Jackie and Foy finished their check of the two files for the letter P, a total of about 160 pages. We also finished the final, online, read-through of the letter H, which was posted online in mid-June. Three more letters, including P, are ready for their final read-through, so we hope to have them online by fall 2006. We have also incorporated many minor corrections provided by two German colleagues, Friedhelm Hoffmann and Joachim Quack, to the letters already posted online. We especially appreciate their careful reading and willingness to pass along suggestions. Our longest-staying visitor this year was Verena Lepper, who recently finished her Ph.D. at the University of Bonn and is currently working on a project to study the Aramaic materials from Elephantine in their Egyptian context. Having searched our online files for examples of Aramaic vocabulary used in Demotic texts, she spent about a week here looking through our unfinished, unpublished files. We hope she will return next year as her project progresses. Jan, François, Jackie, and Foy all attended the Ninth Interna-

tional Congress of Demotic Studies in Paris in late summer 2005, where Jan gave a report on the current status and future plans for the Dictionary. The Dictionary staff would like to thank all the Congress participants for their enthusiastic and helpful comments.

With so much of our effort focused on the letter P this year, we were especially aware of one unusual aspect of the Dictionary: We're including geographical names as well as more standard vocabulary, partly for their lexical value and partly because there is no other good resource to track down Demotic place names (unlike proper names, for which there is an excellent collection and analysis of examples from all stages of Demotic). For every geographic name, we not only try to identify where it was physically located, but we also include items such as: Greek name, Arabic name, names of deities and temples attested in the town, and titles associated with people in the town. This is done in order to provide users of the Dictionary with detailed information about these locations. Place names in ancient Egypt were not only geographic markers but also sacred designations with religious significance. The cultic and ritual importance of geographical terminology was the subject of philosophical and scholarly treatises such as the "Book of the Fayyum" and the still unpublished Demotic texts of Papyrus Berlin 6750, which includes a list of the various incarnations of Osiris sacred to the many settlements throughout the Fayyum region. The entries for geographic names in the Chicago Demotic Dictionary will aid in the comprehension of physical location as well as of the role that such terms played in Egyptian religion and society.

There are an especially large number of place names in the file for the letter P because many place names begin with the masculine definite article *pʒ* "the" or the noun *pr* "house" or "estate." To make things more interesting, since both *pʒ* and *pr* were probably pronounced just *p* (an *r* at the end of a word had been lost in pronunciation), we not infrequently find place names with writings alternating between these two beginning elements. A good example is the island of Philae, located just south of the first cataract. Philae was famous for its temple to the goddess Isis, who was the sister and wife of the god of the netherworld Osiris and mother of Horus. The last dated Demotic inscription comes from the temple of Isis on Philae, dated to A.D. 452. In Demotic, Philae is written both *Pr-ḯw-rq* and *Pʒ-ḯw-rq*, reflecting the loss of the final *r* in *pr* and, perhaps, a new interpretation of the name. All Egyptian names have meaning beyond their phonetic value; *Pr-ḯw-rq* means "House of the Island of *rq*" while *Pʒ-ḯw-rq* means "The Island of *rq*." As of yet, there is no consensus among Demotists about the meaning of *rq*, an example of the extensive work still to be done in Demotic lexicography.

Major institutions such as temples had large work forces who could participate in associations similar to craft guilds. The Ptolemaic and Roman period temple personnel from the Isis temple on the island of Philae are attested in Demotic texts with a range of priestly titles including servant of Isis, *wʒb*-priest, shrine-opener, second prophet, agent of Isis, and temple scribe of Isis. The baker and transport skipper who are attested worked for the temple but may have been officially employed by the royal administration, as was certainly the case with the man called "administrator of the town of Philae." One man identified himself as a "man of Philae, servant of Isis, born in Egypt," stressing his Egyptianness here at the border between Egypt and Nubia. But Philae also had a military presence, attested by the title "curator (a special commander of cavalry in a garrison) of Philae."

One source for many place names included in the Dictionary is the publication of a collection of "surety" documents, in which a man or woman provides a guarantee that a person bidding on a job controlled as a state monopoly (such as beer-making) will carry out the duties appropriately. The preserved surety documents all come from the Fayyum, the large fertile depression southwest of modern Cairo where the Ptolemies established many new agriculture-based settle-

ments. Many of these new settlements were given names honoring a deity, including deceased, divinized members of the Ptolemaic royal family. Thus, we have, for instance, “The Place of Arsinoe” (abbreviated just “Arsinoe” in Greek documents) and “(The Place of) Berenike” as well as “The Settlement of Thoth,” “The Estate of Hapy” (the god of the inundation), and “The Place of Him-who-Belongs-to-Apis” (abbreviated “Apias” in Greek documents). But some settlements may have been named for a local geographic feature, e.g., “The Hillock” and “The Point.” Some of these towns are further identified as “Sobek-towns,” noting their cultic association with this important crocodile god of the Fayyum.

The many Greek and Demotic documents preserved in the towns and temple libraries of the Fayyum indicate that it was divided administratively into three divisions, and contracts frequently specify not only which division of the Fayyum a city or town was in but its relation to other important geographic markers, especially the canals which carried the vital Nile river water into the Fayyum lake. Thus, among others, we find references to such Sobek-towns as “Ps in the Themistos division on the south side of the Mnevis canal in the Arsinoite nome” and “The Settlement of Shu which is on the south side of the Moeris canal in the Arsinoite nome.” One especially full description mentions the “place of invocation of Fortune, the great goddess, which is on the eastern side of the dromos of Sobek, lord of Tebtunis, the great god, in the Sobek town of Tebtunis which is in the Polemon division which is on the south side of the Moeris canal in the Arsinoite nome.” The extensive bureaucratic records kept under the Ptolemaic administration also recorded places which were far from the centers of power: El-Lahun (lit., “The Mouth of the Canal”), Syron Kome (lit., “The Place of the Syrians”), and “The Settlement of Sobek” of the Polemon division are described as “three villages which are in the outlying area of the Arsinoite nome.”

Some towns had more than one name. One well-attested example in the Fayyum is the Sobek-town “The Place of [Arsinoe] Philadelphia, which is called The Sycamores, which is on the north side of the Moeris canal in the Arsinoite nome.” Another example, located in the Nile Valley just east of the Fayyum, is “The Divine Bark, namely The Estate of the Lady of the Chief of the Cows.” This city, modern Atfih, was associated with the goddess Hathor and was called Aphroditopolis (i.e., the city of Aphrodite) in Greek texts. Historically, many important Egyptian cities had two names, one religious and one civil. Whether that is the case with these Demotic examples (especially likely for the two names of Aphroditopolis) or whether one name is formal and the other a local, popular name is not certain.

Larger cities were divided into quarters. For example, “The Estate of Hathor,” frequently referred to in scholarly literature by its Greek form Pathyris, was located at modern Gebelein, in southern Upper Egypt between Thebes and Aswan. We have citations of the southwest and west-central quarters of the city while the eastern quarter of the city even had its own name: “The Lake.” There was a gate leading into this eastern quarter; one text concerns a house “which is upon the gate of The Lake.” In addition to its major temple to Hathor, which included gardens as well as assorted temple property, Pathyris included at least one chapel of Isis, a military camp (where both Greek and Egyptian-speaking soldiers were stationed) and a fortress (with a letter carrier attached to it). Within its administrative district were numerous storehouses or treasuries as well as “highland,” the descriptive term indicating good agricultural land. Among the officials attested are an epistates (a senior administrative title) and an inspector of the district.

It is also interesting that the Egyptians seem frequently to have given names to their fields. Grain-growing land north of Pathyris that is in the endowment of the goddess Hathor is called “The Sand of Nesmin.” On the west bank opposite Thebes was a parcel of land, consisting of seven and a half arouras (about 5.25 acres or just over two hectares), called “The Point” and described in one text as “high land which is called ‘The Point’ which is in the divine endowment

of Amun in “The Ished-tree of Amun of *ʿIpy*.” The latter location, “The Ished-tree of Amun of *ʿIpy*,” may have been named after a sacred ished-tree or shrine dedicated to Amun of *ʿIpy*. Canals were also given names; a canal in this part of the west bank was known as the “canal (lit., water) which is called *Pa-tn*,” and there is a reference to the clay dike of the *Pa-tn* (canal). We’ve also seen that towns in the Fayyum were frequently distinguished by their relation to the Mnevis and Moeris canals.

This quick overview, based on the letter P, of geography in Demotic texts is but a sampler of the wide range of material that we are including in the Demotic Dictionary. As is always the case with dictionary work, the topics keep changing and one has to try to become a mini-master of many different fields. That is one of the challenges, but also one of the attractions, of lexicography.
