

CHICAGO DEMOTIC DICTIONARY (CDD)

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The Chicago Demotic Dictionary continues to prepare for final publication as PDF files and hard-copies. During the 2017–18 academic year, the CDD staff continued the vital but tedious task of converting all of the text files to a Unicode font named Gentium Plus, which Tom Urban, the head of the Publications Office, modified to include every letter or symbol we need for preparation of any entry in the Dictionary. The staff also carried on extracting every image (whether photo scan or scan of a hand copy of a Demotic word or phrase) from the Microsoft Word text files in the form of high-resolution PNG files, which will be converted to TIFF files. We are transferring every text file from Microsoft Word, in which the files were originally composed, to (Adobe) InDesign, which handles images better than the more recent versions of Word, after which the TIFF image files will be reinserted into the text files.

The staff this year has consisted of Jonathan Winnerman (through the summer of 2017, after which he left for Chicago House and the finishing of his PhD dissertation), Ariel Singer (who also spent the winter of 2017–18 working at Chicago House but continued her invaluable work on reformatting dictionary pages while she was there), Brendan Hainline and Theresa Tiliakos, Egyptology graduate students, working here in Chicago on reformatting, and Jan Johnson and Brian Muhs as editor and associate editor. Joey Cross, a graduate student in Egyptology and Northwest Semitic philology, has continued expanding and correcting the Dictionary entries that include Northwest Semitic vocabulary. In addition, we continue to profit from the expert assistance of several other members of the OI staff, including Sandy Schloen and Miller Prosser, of Ochre Data Services, who handled the font conversions for us; Tom Urban, editor and head of the Oriental Institute Publications Office, and Charissa Johnson and Alex(andra) Cornacchia, his associates. Knut Boehmer, the OI IT guru, has been available and solved problems for us all year long, as usual. We express our deep thanks to all of these colleagues.

Sandy and Miller handled the font conversions to Gentium Plus, while Jonathan, Ariel, and Theresa finished extracting the approximately 40,000 images from the text files, and the Publications Office is arranging for conversion of all extracted images from high-resolution PNG files to the TIFF files that are used by InDesign. Ariel has also been working with Tom and Charissa, in the Publications Office, on establishing style sheets for transferring and reformatting the text files in InDesign, while Ariel, Brendan, Theresa, and Alex in the Publications Office, are working on the actual reformatting, which goes slowly since every line of text in the Dictionary must be reformatted, and every image moved. But the final results will produce pages that are far superior to the old pages in legibility and ease of access. We have the first “mock-ups” of how the new pages will look and are very pleased; the volume(s) will be 11” × 14”, which will allow for large enough type-face to make the pages easily legible and it will be possible to manipulate the images for legibility, as well.

As of the middle of June, 2018:

- All 41 text files have been converted to Tom's Gentium Plus
- All 40,000 image files have been extracted as high-resolution PNGs
- 19 of 41 text files contain Northwest Semitic to be checked by Joey:
 - 4 files have been checked by Joey and formatted in InDesign (3-1,F, M-1 & M-2);
 - 1 file has been checked by Joey but not yet formatted in InDesign (H2-part 4);
 - 14 files are still waiting for final checking by Joey and formatting in InDesign (3-2, ʾI-1, ʾI-2, ʿ, W-1, W-2, R, H, H2-1, H2-2, H2-3, H3-1, H3-2, H4)
- 22 of 41 text files do not contain Northwest Semitic:
 - 5 files have been formatted in InDesign (B-1, N-1, N-2, P-1, Q)
 - 3 files are being formatting in InDesign (B-2, P-2, G)
 - 14 files have not yet been formatted (Y, S-1, S-2, S-3, Š-1, Š-2, K, T-1, T-2, T, D, days of the month, months, numbers)

The Publications Office is currently recording the length of time needed for Alex to reformat one of the text files (P-2), so that it will be possible to estimate how long it will take to finish reformatting the remaining text files in InDesign. This will allow the Publications Office and the CDD to determine whether it will be necessary to hire additional staff to handle the reformatting. Once the reformatting is done, the CDD staff will be switched to proof-reading the reformatted version of the entire manuscript before final publication as PDF text files online, and in hard-copy for libraries and individuals who so desire.

We are also looking forward to the goal of creating an interactive web-based dictionary in database format using the new Unicode text files and TIFF image files. In preparation for another round of fund-raising to achieve this goal, we spoke with Chris Woods, the OI director, and Jimmy Gurcek, the OI's chief financial officer, about problems of financing the preparation of and especially the long-term storage and delivery of the OI's digital projects. We were pleased to find a receptive audience to our suggestions that some digital expenses be considered communal "OI expenses" across digital projects to avoid costly and unnecessary duplication, and that the OI consider expanding our already very valuable IT staff to deal with shared problems among digital projects.