

CHICAGO DEMOTIC DICTIONARY

Janet H. Johnson

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 are pleased that nine files, each containing the full entry for one letter of the Demotic “alphabet,” have been completed. The files for six more letters are in the final stage of checking, where all the problems which have been identified over the years must now be addressed and resolved, if possible. In discussions with Gene Gragg, Director of the Oriental Institute, and with Thomas Urban, of the Oriental Institute Publications Office, it was decided to post finished files on the Internet in order to make them available around the world without waiting for the completion of the rest of the dictionary. Thus, as of 30 June 2001, the Publications Office had, ready to prepare for posting, the files for the nine completed letters of the Dictionary plus supplementary files providing lists of abbreviations, including bibliographic abbreviations and abbreviations used in referring to individual texts. We have also put together 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” which we are providing. It is our hope that, as scholars and students around the world use the dictionary files, they will send us corrections (both typos and suggestions for changes of actual content of the entries) which we can evaluate and include in the final (print and electronic) version of the Dictionary, as appropriate. By posting one file called “Problems,” we especially invite comments, suggestions, and corrections to the entries included therein.

RESEARCH

As an example of words included in the “Problems” file, I cite a word from the Roman period ostrakon O. Pisa 2, line 7. There a man with the good Egyptian named Ḥor is described as *pꜣ(?) rts(?)*. *Pꜣ*, assuming the reading is correct, is the masculine singular definite article “the.” The following word should then be a profession or perhaps a geographic name indicating the man’s place of origin. The editor of the text suggested taking *rts* as a Demotic spelling of Greek Ῥόδιος, a term meaning “(man) from Rhodes.” But Greek words which begin with the letter *r* are aspirated and usually transcribed into Demotic using the two letters *hr*. In addition, the compound “man of Rhodes” appears in a different Demotic ostrakon (O. Cologne 159, line 4) written *rmꜥ n Hrwꜥs* literally “man of Rhodes.” Therefore, the dictionary staff remains unconvinced that *rts(?)* should be translated “man from Rhodes.” In addition, we are not certain that the black-and-white line drawing which we have prepared from the scan of the published photograph is entirely accurate. We have, therefore, indicated in the left margin, following an arrow, that there is some uncertainty about the hand copy. Here is how the entry appears in R and in the Problems file:

rts(?) n. “man from (GN) Rhodes” (?)
 →hc? so Bresciani, *SCO* 15 (1966), but “(GN) Rhodes” is written *Hrwꜥs* in the compound *rmꜥ n Hrwꜥs* “man of (GN) Rhodes”; see *Hrwꜥs* below
 see also correspondence between Demotic *hrꜥꜣntꜣr* & gloss **ῬΟΔΙΟΡ** in ^R P. Magical vo, 26/7

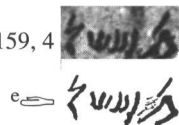
^R O Pisa 2, 7



The cross-reference to *Hrwꜥs* will take the user to the following:

Hrwꜥs[∞] GN “Rhodes”
 = Ῥόδος LSJ 1573b
 in compound
rmꜥ (n) Hrwꜥs “man of Rhodes”

? O Cologne 159, 4



It is hoped that extensive use will be made of the letter files which are posted on the Internet and that any and all typographical errors and other mistakes included in the drafts as they now exist will be brought to our notice so that the final printing of the dictionary will be as free of errors as possible. We shall continue to double-check, prepare scans and hand copies, and make all the cross-references that will enable users to track down as much information as possible. The final publication date still has not been set, but with the first preliminary web-publication, we feel we are finally coming close.