This year has seen some changes on the staff of the Chicago Demotic Dictionary (CDD), with graduate student Jonathan Winnerman joining the project as a Research Assistant and with Mary Szabady leaving us. Mary was an excellent member of our staff, and we miss her already. We thank her for her work and wish her much success in her new field.

Janet Johnson, François Gaudard, and Brittany Hayden made progress in checking drafts of entries for individual letters, while Jonathan Winnerman checked our Text Information, Abbreviation Authors, and Bibliographical Information files. Our efforts focused on the last letter, namely, S, which is the largest letter file (now over 540 pages long). Letter T is being posted as we write this. Oriental Institute docent Larry Lissak assisted us by scanning photographs of various Demotic texts.

The editors of the CDD would like to take this opportunity to thank Gil Stein, Director of the Oriental Institute, for supporting the next phase of the project. A “roundtable” discussion of what Demotists want us to do with our resources and what digital humanities can offer will be held this summer at the University of Chicago Franke Institute for the Humanities in conjunction with our new colleague Brian Muhs’ sponsorship of the “Demotic Summerschool,” a gathering where practicing Demotists bring their current research for help and suggestions from their colleagues. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our colleagues for their comments and suggestions, in particular Eugene Cruz-Uribe, Friedhelm Hoffmann, Joachim Friedrich Quack, and Kim Ryholt. Special thanks also go to Willy Clarysse and Martina Minas, who supplied us with hard-to-find photographs and publications.

From time immemorial, Egypt has been regarded as a land of magicians and sorcerers, the motherland of magic and alchemy par excellence.\footnote{1} This reputation is indeed attested by many a tradition such as in the episode of the Old Testament in which Moses and Aaron confronted the pharaoh’s magicians, turning their rods into serpents,\footnote{2} or in the passage of the Talmud stating that Egypt received nine of the ten measures of magic that came into the world.\footnote{3} In classical Egyptian and Demotic literature, likewise, numerous tales involve magicians: think of the miracles performed by Djadja-em-ankh and Djedi in the famous stories of P. Westcar\footnote{4} and of the exploits and amazing deeds of Naneferkaptah,\footnote{5} of Setna Khaemuas\footnote{6} and his son Si-Osire,\footnote{7} or of Horus son of Paneshy;\footnote{8} and what about the magicians Petese,\footnote{9} Hihor,\footnote{10} and Hen-naw\footnote{11} and their messenger birds, or Naneferkysokar, whose enigmatic and fragmentary adventures take place in faraway Babylon?\footnote{12}

Within the specialized vocabulary included in the CDD, magical names, designated by the abbreviation MN, are among the most intriguing and fascinating.\footnote{13} Those names, referring to gods, angels, and demons, usually occur in invocations in which the magician summons these spirits. While some names are quite explicit, as is the case with $\text{sqmt}$ $\text{w}_\text{t}$ $\text{s} \text{qmp} \text{(p) t}$ “Creator of (the) earth”\footnote{14} or with $\text{ht}_\text{mt} \text{itmn-rn}=\text{f} “He whose name is hidden,”\footnote{15} the meaning of most of them is rather obscure and often eludes us. However, it would be an error to label them systematically as nonsense. To ensure correct pronunciation, necessary for the successful achievement of the ritual, it was common to add glosses, usually in Old Coptic, above the name in question.\footnote{16}
In several cases, the use of foreign magical names gives us an insight into external influences on ancient Egyptian culture. Such names were usually spelled in alphabetic Demotic signs. Thus, the name \( \text{YʿꜢerbeth} \) exhibits the foreign determinative attesting its non-Egyptian origin, and \( \text{MythrꜤ} \) is presumably the Iranian god Mythra. The name \( \text{YʿꜢerbeth} \), the most common vox magica in Roman-period magical texts, is a clear example of borrowing from Jewish sources in Demotic magical invocations. It occurs, for example, as \( \text{Mytḥr Ꜣb} \) and \( \text{Mytḥr Ꜣb} \), all of which are transliterated \( Y'CJ \) and “can be easily interpreted as a vocalised rendition of the tetragrammaton YHWH,” namely, Yahweh, the Hebrew name of God used in the Bible. Other biblical examples include the obvious Mwses “Moses” and \( \text{brẖme “Abraham}, “ \) as well as \( \text{Sabaoth “Sabaoth,”} \) who is one of the seven angels of the Presence. Likewise, the name grʿb is likely to be related to the Demotic word gerwbe, which in its turn probably derives from the Hebrew “Cherub,” cited as one of the angels of the air in the Kabbalah, the ancient Jewish tradition of mystical interpretation of the Bible. A very popular vox magica is the name Abrasax, which is normally written Ꜣbrʿsʿks, but also occurs, written differently, at the end of the following passage:

\[
\text{hꜢy sʿks Ṭmn s(t)Ꜣks ḫbrʿs(t)Ꜣks}
\]

“A Hail, Sax, Amun, Sax, Abrasax!”

Abrasax, also known, among others, in the variant form Abraxas, and whose name is found engraved on magical gems used as amulets and charms, is often depicted as a rooster-headed being. According to the Gnostic writer Basilides, who taught in Alexandria during the first part of the second century AD, Abrasax is the great archon, ruler of the 365 spheres. Indeed, the sum of the numerical values of the Greek letters of his name corresponds to 365, in accordance with the rules of isopsephy: \( \text{Aβρασαξ} = A (= 1) + \beta (= 2) + \rho (= 100) + \alpha (= 1) + \sigma (= 200) + \alpha (= 1) + \xi (= 60) = 365. \) This name may be related to the magical word abracadabra. Greek borrowings are also attested, for instance, in a name string in which it is possible to identify, among others, the names Sew, whose gloss \( \text{Zeov} \) indicates that we are in fact dealing with the vocative of Zeōs “Zeus,” and ḫep Hele, as the vocative of “Ḥlōs “Helios,” the sun god. Since Nubians were also renowned magicians, as attested, for example, in the Demotic tale of Setna II in which a duel takes place between Si-Osire and a Nubian sorcerer, it is no surprise to find Nubian words in Egyptian magical texts. In one case, there is even a short text accompanying a Nubian healing spell in order to provide a mythical justification for its efficacy:

\[
\text{O Amun, this lofty male from Nubia who came down from Meroe to Egypt and found Horus, my son. He hurried on his feet and beat him on his head with three spells in the Nubian language. He found NN, whom NN bore, hurried on his feet, and beat him on his head with three spells in the Nubian language: Gntyny Ttyn3 Qwqwby [Ꜣ]keh ṣkḥi.}
\]

Since no one yet has been able to translate this spell, one could question its authenticity, but one should always be cautious since, for example, magical formulae occurring in a Demotic spell against scorpions stings and long regarded as unintelligible turned out to be composed in Aramaic, and such was also the case with Early Northwest Semitic “serpent spells” occur-
ring in the Pyramid Texts.\textsuperscript{41} It is worth noting that, due to the need for secrecy, some names could also be written in cipher.\textsuperscript{42} For instance, the name \textit{bel-n-\textit{Ebuw}} “raven’s eye,” referring to a leguminous plant identified as the Greek bean (\textit{Vicia faba} L.), is attested both partially or entirely in cipher as \begin{math} \text{\begin{symbol} F \end{symbol} \begin{symbol} S \end{symbol} \begin{symbol} T \end{symbol} \begin{symbol} T \end{symbol}} \end{math}\textsuperscript{43} and as \begin{math} \text{\begin{symbol} F \end{symbol} \begin{symbol} S \end{symbol} \begin{symbol} S \end{symbol} \begin{symbol} T \end{symbol}} \end{math},\textsuperscript{44} while in another passage, it is used as a magical name and written \begin{math} \text{\begin{symbol} B \end{symbol} \begin{symbol} l-n-\textit{bk}} \end{math}, with a gloss.\textsuperscript{45}

Nowadays, such demonic names may seem foreign to us, but in our culture too, often unknowingly, we still allude to demons: in the word “nightmare,” for example, “mare” is nothing but an evil spirit thought to suffocate sleepers by lying upon them. Moreover, references to the ancient Egyptian occult and magical lore lie hidden in everyday words. The god Thoth, identified with Hermes by the Greeks and later known as Hermes Trismegistos, was regarded as the founder of alchemy, hence, of course, the word “hermetic” in the sense of “esoteric, cryptic,” but also, surprisingly, of “airtight.” Indeed, the expression “hermetically sealed” derives from the fact that airtight containers were used in the Hermetic art of alchemy to collect vapors after heating substances. Such an early distillation apparatus called \textit{κηροτακίς} and used by Egyptian alchemists was considered to be the invention of Mary the Jewess, a famous alchemist, said to have lived in Alexandria in the first century AD, and who used to write under the pen name of Miriam the Prophetess, sister of Moses. Aficionados of the culinary arts should also know that the bain-marie, namely, “a container holding hot water into which a pan is placed for slow cooking,” was believed also to be her invention and named after her. The etymology of the word alchemy itself is complicated and still debated: via Old French and Medieval Latin, it comes from Arabic \textit{al-	extit{kīmiyā’}}, itself derived from ancient Greek χημεία or χημία, also attested as χυμεία, “the art of alloying metals, alchemy,” preceded by the Arabic definite article \textit{al-}. According to one interpretation, χημ(ε)ία could derive from Χημία, the Greek rendering of \begin{math} \text{\begin{symbol} K \end{symbol} \begin{symbol} m \end{symbol} \begin{symbol} t \end{symbol}} \end{math} “The Black Land,” which is an Egyptian designation for Egypt.

We hope to have been able to demonstrate that magical names, often unjustly neglected and considered to be some sort of gibberish, are nonetheless important testimonies of the relationships that the ancient Egyptians entertained with the supernatural world and that they certainly deserve more attention. It is indeed also the role of the CDD to put such words “under the spotlight.”

\textbf{Notes}

1. For an in-depth study of ancient Egyptian magic, see Ritner 2008.
2. Exodus 7:8–12. On ancient Egyptian serpent wands, see Ritner 2006.
3. Talmud, b. Qid. 49b.
5. In P. Cairo 30646; see Ritner 2003d.
6. See note 5, above.
7. In P. BM 604; see Ritner 2003a, and in Jug Strasburg; see Ritner 2003b.
8. In P. BM 604; see Ritner 2003a.
10. In Jug Berlin 12845; see Ritner 2003c.
11. In P. Heidelberg 736 ro; see Spiegelberg 1917.
12. In P. Berlin 13640; see Spiegelberg 1932.
14 In P. Magical (= P. British Museum 10070 + P. Leiden 383), 7/6; see Griffith and Thompson 1904–1909. QmꜢ (pꜤ) ti is rendered as ḳōmtu in the Old Coptic gloss. On glosses, see note 16, below.

15 In P. BM 10588, 5/11. For the reading, see Ritner 1986, p. 97, n. d, vs. Thompson in Bell, Nock, and Thompson [1933], who translated “Amen is his name.”


17 In P. Leiden 384 vo, 4/8; see Johnson 1975 (1976).

18 For discussion and examples of foreign determinatives, see, e.g., Gaudard and Johnson 2011, p. 29.

19 In P. Louvre 3229 vo, 2; see Johnson 1977.

20 In P. Louvre 3229 vo, 9.

21 In P. Magical, 10/4. For other occurrences and variant writings, see, e.g., Griffith and Thompson 1909, pp. 120–21 and nos. 184–96.

22 For discussion, see Dieleman 2005, p. 78.

23 In P. Magical, 5/14.

24 In P. Magical, 8/8.

25 In P. Magical, 10/4 (and passim).

26 In P. Leiden 384 vo, 4/15. Grʿb is rendered as ḵpḥ in the Old Coptic gloss. On glosses, see note 16, above.

27 In P. Magical, 14/29.

28 See Griffith and Thompson 1904, p. 103, n. to l. 29.

29 In P. Magical vo, 12/8.

30 In P. Magical, 23/24.

31 Isopsephy is the practice of adding up the numerical values of the letters in a word to form a single number.

32 In P. Magical, 17/18–19.

33 Here, the sign ☼, used in Greek magical texts as a common symbol for the sun, plays the role of a gloss; see, e.g., Griffith 1909–10, p. 122; Dieleman 2005, p. 79 n. 90.

34 For further examples and discussion, see, e.g., Dieleman 2005, pp. 78–79.

35 = P. BM 604; see Ritner 2002a; Thissen 1991, p. 370.

36 For discussion, see Thissen 1991.

37 In P. Magical vo, 20/1–5.


39 For discussion, see Dieleman 2005, p. 142.


41 See Steiner 2011.


43 In P. Magical, 27/25.

44 In P. Magical, 5/24–25.

45 In P. Magical, 7/33. On glosses, see note 16, above.

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