

François Gaudard

This has been a busy and productive year for **François Gaudard**, who made significant progress with his work on several projects, including the Chicago Demotic Dictionary (CDD) and the Mummy Label Database (MLD) (see separate reports).

In the spring, François was invited to contribute to the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics (EAGLL)* (Leiden: Brill) as well as to write an article for a Festschrift in honor of a fellow Egyptologist. In addition, he is currently working on several other publication projects.

Three of François' recent articles will be published soon: "Pap. Berlin P. 8278 and Its Fragments: Testimony of the Khoiak Festival Celebration during the Ptolemaic Period," in a Festschrift for the *Neues Museum* in Berlin; "A Demotic-Hieratic Mummy Label in the Museu de Montserrat," in a Festschrift honoring a colleague; and "Birds in the Ancient Egyptian and Coptic Alphabets," in the catalog of the forthcoming Oriental Institute exhibition entitled *Between Heaven and Earth: Birds in Ancient Egypt*. This article discusses, among others, the still little-known fact that the ancient Egyptians had an alphabet and designated each of its letters by a bird name beginning with the letter in question. The common depiction of the god Thoth in the form of an ibis would explain why the Egyptians, who ascribed to him the invention of letters, named the first letter of their alphabet *hb* "ibis." This practice dates back as early as the fourth century BC and was probably adopted for mnemonic reasons.

On July 1, 2011, François presented a lecture on the Chicago Demotic Dictionary and on the various scripts and stages in the development of the ancient Egyptian language for the

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University of Chicago Egyptology summer class “Ancient Egyptian Language, Culture, and History,” taught by Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer. On May 11, 2012, he led a gallery tour at the Oriental Institute Museum with a focus on ancient Egyptian wine-making and drinking practices, discussing the different phases of vinification and storage as well as the role and symbolism of wine in both Egyptian society and religion (see *Public Education* report).
