

# DEMOTIC DICTIONARY PROJECT

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This year, as for the past couple of years, the Demotic Dictionary staff concentrated on checking drafts of entries for individual letters in the Egyptian “alphabet” and preparing and entering computer scan copies of the actual Demotic words. As of the end of June 1995, checking, formatting, and scanning are complete for five letters (Y, F, L, Q, and K), six letters are checked and formatted and awaiting scans (ʒ, ʿ, ʾI, P, G, D), for nine letters the checking has been done but both formatting and scans must still be done (W, B, R, M, H, H̄, T, T̄), three letters are partially checked (N, H̄, S), and one has yet to be checked at all (Š̄). The staff this year consisted of Tom Dousa, Alexandra O’Brien, and, for the first part of the year, John Nolan, all of whom worked hard and well checking first draft manuscripts.

The longest letter that has been fully checked and formatted is “Q,” which includes words ranging from *q(y)* “to be high, to be long” to *qtqwʒs*, apparently a Demotic spelling of the Greek word *κάτοικος* “military colonist.” Within the entry for *qy* there are included examples of the standard writing of the word, of variant writings of the word, of the verb used with “extended meaning” (e.g., “to be exalted”), of the verb used in compounds (e.g., *tī qy* “to cause to be high” meaning “to exalt, to celebrate”), and of the verb used as an adjective meaning “high, long” in compounds (e.g., *hrw qʒ* “long day,” perhaps indicating the day of the heliacal rising of the star Sothis, and *sw qy* “high (number of) days” meaning a “long time”). Related entries discuss and provide examples of the masculine noun *qy* “height, length” and the feminine noun *qy* “high ground” (i.e., land above the level reached by the annual inundation), a noun which was used in the formation of several place-names. This is typical of entries throughout “Q,” and throughout the dictionary, which try to bring together the available information and identify the range of meaning and usage of a word.

In some cases, we have been able to improve readings or identification of meanings. For instance, the entries for *qb(ʒ)(.t)*, a type of vessel, perhaps “jug, pitcher,” and *qb(ʒ)(.t)*, a large cloth, have been able to straighten out various examples of these two words which can be written identically except for their determinatives (the sign at the end telling what kind of word they are). In one of the texts cited in the dictionary the large cloth was used in the burial of the Apis bull; that text also has an example of the word written in hieroglyphs, where it is spelled *qbīt* and has a cloth determinative. But most of the references indicate that this cloth was used as clothing—there are references to a *ḥbs n qbʒ(.t)*, a “garment of *qbʒ.t*-cloth,” and to a *qbʒ.t n ʒyw*, a “linen *qbʒ.t*(-cloth),” where the latter is parallel to *šnto.t n ʒyw*, a “linen kilt(-cloth).” The word *qbʒ.t*, usually with the cloth determinative, appears frequently in lists of valuables brought by a woman to her marriage. Despite this determinative, and because of the occasional “jar” determinative on this word, most scholars have taken this *qbʒ.t* to be the word for “jar” or “pitcher.” But the examples in the lists occur within the context of other types of cloth and clothing and, given the accumulated evidence for the *qbʒ.t*-cloth, we are now able to identify the *qbʒ.t* prized by the newly wedded women as a type of cloth, evidently large

(large enough to use in the burial of the Apis bull) and perhaps of especially fine quality.

Some entries are common words, well known by most Demotists and others who will be using the dictionary, be they Egyptologists working on earlier stages of Egyptian history, Greek or Aramaic papyrologists working on contemporary materials, or Coptacists working on later Egyptian materials. In many cases, the dictionary's major contribution will be providing a wide range of facsimiles showing variant writings; in other cases the dictionary's listing of compounds involving each word or titles, geographical or divine names associated with the word will provide nonspecialists a "jumping off point" for research of many kinds. Other words are rare and in many cases the reading and/or meaning of the word are uncertain. In these cases, the dictionary includes every example of the word of which we have a record as well as references to all secondary discussions of the word.

A fair number of words used in Demotic texts are loanwords from Greek, Aramaic and other Semitic languages, or African languages. An example of the latter is *qrny*, which appears in graffiti on the island of Philae and farther to the south in northern Nubia as an important title. Although there are examples of "*qrny* (or *qrny ʒkrr*) of the king," the commoner references are to "*qrny*-officials of the goddess Isis," whose temple at Philae remained a place of worship and pilgrimage for Nubians into the fifth century of our era. As a result of recent work on Meroitic, this title can now be derived from Meroitic *qoreñ* "regal man" (or similar). A Greek word which made its way into Egyptian, reflecting Egyptian adoption or recognition of the originally Greek activity involved, is *qrr* for κλήρος "lots" and the related compounds and concepts *hwy qrr* "to cast lots" and *ph n qrr* "to inherit by (casting) lots." The later idiom is an interesting mix of Egyptian *ph* "to reach," which was frequently used of property meaning "to accrue to, to devolve upon (someone)," especially by inheritance, and the Greek concept of casting lots. What would seem to be involved is the division of property among heirs, where all of a person's property was divided into the appropriate number of shares and lots were cast to see which heir got which specific share, or got to choose first.

Those who have read the annual report in previous years know that we "got into" computers early on, composing all drafts on the Macintosh and using a scanner to digitize photographs or hand copies of texts for preparation of facsimiles of words and phrases. This year, as the Oriental Institute breaks ground presenting the ancient Near East and modern scholarship about it to the world of the Internet, sample dictionary documents were prepared for inclusion on the Oriental Institute's World-Wide Web (WWW) page. These include a sample page of the dictionary (the first page of the letter "F," complete with gray scale scans of each word cited and a black and white "line drawing" prepared from the scan), a gray scale scan of a contract in the collection of the Oriental Institute Museum (published by Robert Ritner when he was a member of the dictionary staff), the running transliteration and translation prepared by the dictionary staff prior to "carding" every word in the text, and a covering document giving basic information about the document. This latter information was pulled from the dictionary's appendix on "Text Information," which has collected the date, provenience, and publication data for every text being cited in the dictionary. An abbreviated version of the full "Text Information" was recently published in *Enchoria*, a major journal dedicated to Demotic and Coptic studies; this was published to make available to colleagues around the world our abbrevia-

tions for texts (e.g., P. OI 10551, the “name” of the text put up on the WWW, shows that the text is a Papyrus in the collections of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, where it has number 10551) since many Demotists expressed the desire to try to coordinate abbreviations. A copy of the short “Text Information” is also included in the WWW material put “on-line.” Anyone with access to the Internet can look at the dictionary page or the Oriental Institute papyrus with its transliteration and translation. The copies of words in the “F” file are cut from gray scale scans and will show up on the screen and on any printout of the file. In addition, anyone with appropriate software (e.g., Macintosh computer, Microsoft Word word processing program, Adobe Photoshop graphics program) can take the scans of individual words, copy them into their own graphics program, enlarge the image, change the brightness or contrast, or in many other ways manipulate the image right on screen. This ability means that every user can look at a word and decide exactly what the scribe wrote and how he wrote it

Because the gray scale scans retain so much information from the original published photograph, and because this image can be manipulated so easily by anyone with a graphics program on their computer without any special computer expertise, we are now intending to publish two versions of the dictionary, the standard hard copy monograph version and an “on-line” version, probably a CD-ROM. The latter has the added advantage that, as new texts are published and old words are better read and understood, corrections can be made in the “master” and be made available for incorporation in every copy that has been sold. The computer is changing how we work and making our work much more efficient; all of us benefit as we are able to learn and communicate more quickly about the ancient world.

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