

DEMOTIC DICTIONARY PROJECT

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This year, as for the past several 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. The only student working on the project this year was Thomas Dousa, whose command of Egyptian and Greek and the extensive literature in both has allowed him to make major contributions to the checking and rewriting of first draft entries. Thanks to a very generous bequest from Professor and Mrs. George R. Hughes, we anticipate being able next year to hire a recent Ph.D. graduate as Research Associate to work full time on checking of draft and preparation of scans and copies.

The checking and rewriting of first draft entries involves double checking of all information provided in the entry and the incorporation of several categories of information that we decided to include after the first drafts had been written. Many of these categories are being added to provide social or cultural information as part of the "meaning" of a word. For example, whenever the "word" is the name of a deity, a reference is provided to every geographic location (e.g., a specific city or cemetery) with which the deity is associated in the texts of the corpus from which the Chicago Demotic Dictionary is being drawn. Similarly, whenever the "word" being discussed is the name of a geographic location, reference is made to all deities mentioned in the texts of our corpus in conjunction with that geographic location. In both cases, where the "word" is the name of a deity or where it is the name of a geographic location, we are also providing references to titles associated with the name, which has led me to think about the range of titles and professions found in Demotic documents and the implications they could have for Egyptian society and its organization. I cannot go into great detail here, but a survey of the titles and professions that begin with one of the three letters that have recently been checked proves interesting and tantalizing. It must be stressed here that these titles are selected from only those words which begin with one of these three letters (out of twenty-four) of the Egyptian "alphabet." As a result, whole categories of jobs or professions are unrepresented or grossly under-represented. A prime example of what is not included here is the extensive range of what is probably the commonest title of all, *sh* "scribe," used repeatedly by itself and as an important component of what I call "title strings," lists of (all[?] of the) titles held (concurrently[?]) by an individual.

Some titles are quite general and seem to indicate unskilled or semiskilled positions: servant (lit., worker), laborer (lit., man of work), storehouse worker, provisioner, letter

carrier (lit., letter bringer), and seller of fragrant *qšwṯ* (an aromatic plant) (with variants seller of Egyptian *qšwṯ* and seller of Syrian *qšwṯ*). Others indicate skilled or semi-skilled jobs: builder, with its specializations house builder and potter (lit., builder of pots), leather-worker/sandalmaker, (metal)smith and specifically iron-smith. Sometimes the city or district in which the job was held was also specified: brewer(?) of the Sobek-town Sethrempai (in the Fayum), captain of the ferryboat of Dime (in the Fayum), collector of birds of ... of Themistos (in the Fayum), laundryman of Nilopolis (near Cairo), leather workers of the Pathyrite nome (south of Thebes), and provisioners of Thebes. Military titles are attested: chief of bowmen; man who receives rations *and*¹ who is assigned to the (military) camp of Pathyris; member of the bodyguard; member of the bodyguard of Pharaoh; and, perhaps, letter carrier of the fortress(?) of Pathyris. Very common are administrative titles, ranging from local officials in the provinces through the ranks up to senior officials in the capital: (tax-)collector (of a particular village); village scribe (with the name of the specific village); document-scribe *and* scribe of the tax lists of the Sobek-town of Dime; district scribe *and* agent of the man of Pharaoh; scribe of Pharaoh; scribe of Pharaoh in the temple of gold; scribe of Pharaoh in western Alexandria; scribe of the treasury, scribe of the house of documents; audit scribe of Pharaoh; agent of Pharaoh; and magistrate. One literary text refers to the people present at the daily audience of the king as the “guards, generals, and great men of the palace.” Also attested are staff directly serving the king: scribe *and* servant of the palace; majordomo; staff-bearer; and steward of the royal harem.

Some administrative titles are simply transcriptions into Demotic of a Greek title used by an official of the Greek-speaking administration. For example, Demotic *qwmwmsstts* is a transcription of the Greek title κομομοισθωτής, “district lessor of royal land.” Similarly, *qmrqs* is a Demotic rendering of Greek κόμαρχης, “village leader” in the title “administrator of the town of Philae”; *špysstts* transcribes ἐπιστάτης, “chief, commander” in the title “epistates of Pathyris” and *pšrkr* is Greek πράκτωρ, “bailiff, tax collector” in the titles “bailiff of the temples” and “bailiff of the house of” In some cases, whole title strings seem to reflect Greek court titles: “chief of the army, leader of princes, great one of princes, exceedingly great one, ..., general, member of the bodyguard.” A few Latin titles from the Roman period are also transcribed into Demotic: *qrṯr* for *cūrātor* “guardian” in the title “curator of Philae,” in which “curator” has the sense of a special commander of cavalry in a garrison. There are even a few Meroitic titles written in Demotic, especially in graffiti left by Nubian worshippers at the temple of Isis at Philae. For example, *qrny* (Meroitic *qoreñ*, literally “regal man” or similar) occurs both alone, in compounds such as “*qrny* of the king” and “*qrny* of Isis,” and in title strings such as “*qrny* of Isis *and* agent of Isis *and* prophet of Isis.” Attested in ostraca from Nubia is the title *Pqyl* Meroitic *pqr* “royal crown prince,” the man who ruled semi-independently in lower Nubia.

Very common are religious titles. Some were specific to one particular deity, e.g., counselor (of) Isis of the Sobek-town Themistos in the district of Themistos or of the chapel of Isis of Pathyris. Other priestly titles were more general and were found in temples throughout the country: porter of the gods of Dime in the temple of Sobek, of the gods of Taoueris of the Sobek-town The-Settlement-of-Thoth (in the Fayum); servant of the divine falcon, of the ibises of the town of The-Elevated-Sandy-Land (location uncertain); water-pourer of the falcon; herald of Sobek in The-House-of-Khnum (in the Fayum); shrine-opener of the Serapeum, of the treasury of Amon, of Ptah; *w ʿb-*

1. Titles linked by an italic *and* are held by the same person.

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priest of Dime, of the royal town, of Ḥathor the great goddess of Pitob southeast of Pathyris, of Ba-neb-Djet (lit., Ram of Mendes), of Soknopaios the great god *and* Isis Nepherses the great goddess *and* Isis beautiful of character; *wʿb*-priest who enters before Ptaḥ, before Thoth the doubly great the lord of Hermopolis, before Soknopaios the great god, before Soknopaios the great god *and* Isis Nepherses *and* the Brother-loving gods *and* the Beneficent gods *and* the Father-loving gods *and* the Gods who appear [the last four being references to deified Ptolemaic rulers]; *lesonis* of Ptaḥ who is south of his wall, of Soknopaios the great god *and* Isis Nepherses *and* the gods who dwell with him; prophet of Bastet, of Bastet *and* Sobek the great god, of Bastet who is in Dendera, of Ba-neb-Djet, of the statues of Nakht-Ḥoremḥeb the falcon in the temple of Tehne, of Khnum in Psoi (i.e., in Ptolemais north of Thebes), of Ptaḥ, of Ptaḥ *and* Arsinoe Philadelphus, of Pharaoh, of Pharaoh Menkheperre Thutmose (the cult of the deified Eighteenth Dynasty ruler), of the House of Books, of the scriptorium of the Mistress of the Sycamore (an epithet of Ḥathor), of Smenmaat which is in House-of-the-Lady-of-the-Sycamore, of the temple of Menkheperre in the domain of Ptaḥ. The title prophet of Ptaḥ *and* chief artificer was the title of the high priest of Ptaḥ in Memphis, an official with a great deal of both religious and secular influence under the Ptolemies.

Sometimes people who had titles which identify them as skilled or semiskilled workers with no particular religious duties were nevertheless associated with a particular deity or temple: doorkeeper of the scriptorium who guards the council chamber; stonemason of Apis-Osiris the great god *and* servant of the living Apis the great god; scribe *and* man of the scriptorium; herdsman *and* man of the temple of Bastet; merchant *and* man of the Anubieion which is under the officials of Memphis; and chief baker of Ptaḥ. Especially common was the association of scribes with particular deities or temples: scribe of Ptaḥ, of Ptaḥ of Ptiḥotepttaḥ(?) in the estate of Ptaḥ, of Ba-neb-Djet foremost of the lake, of the excellent tomb of Apis-Osiris *and* Isis the mother of Apis, of the sistrum of Bastet lady of Ankhaw, of the divine book of Bastet lady of Ankhaw, of every first phyle of Buto (in the Delta), before Osiris, of the *wʿb*-priests of Soknopaios and Isis Nepherses the great goddess.

The mixing of what seem to us “secular” and “religious” titles was very common. Examples in this quick survey include: agent of Pharaoh who inspects the temple of Sobek *and* the temples of the district of Arsinoe; prophet *and* scribe of Pharaoh who keeps accounts; and god’s father *and* prophet of Amon in Karnak *and* scribe of the treasury of Djēme.

The hierarchy by which jobs were organized sometimes becomes visible. It is clear that a chief engraver/sculptor outranked an engraver/sculptor, that a chief baker outranked a baker, and that a chief stonemason outranked a stonemason, but the exact implications of the three titles stonemason of graywacke *and* galena, stonemason of graywacke *and* galena who inspects graywacke *and* galena, and royal stonemason of graywacke *and* galena are unclear. Within the temples, prophets outranked *wʿb*-priests (the title great *wʿb*-priest of Pharaoh Alexander might have had political implications) while the *lesonis* served as chief economic officer, appointed by the king and reporting directly to him. Heads of departments, such as the overseer of the house of doctoring, are attested as are what might be more independent, free-lance operators, such as the agents of the weavers of Dime or the agents of the *wʿb*-priests of the temple of Soknopaios the great god *and* Isis Nepherses.

Sometimes a title served more to indicate “status” than an actual “job,” as in the example of *bʿk* “servant” used in legal documents in the compound “servant of DN” to indicate that the person so titled was “under the protection” of the temple of the named

deity.² Although the title occasionally occurs alone, as an individual's sole title (examples occur with Amun, Amun lord of the thrones of the Two Lands [i.e., Egypt], Ḥathor, and Ḥorus of Edfu), it is much more frequently found in conjunction with another functional title. Usually this title is that of a skilled or semiskilled profession without religious duties.

butcher(?), servant of	Sobek Thoth the great the lord of Hermopolis the great god
farmer, servant of	Ḥathor mistress of Aphroditopolis <i>and</i> of Isis the great goddess Khnum lord of Smenḥor the great god Sobek
fisherman, servant of fisherman of the harbor, servant of	Wepwawet Sobek
gooseherd, servant of	Wepwawet
young gooseherd, servant of	Thoth the great the lord of Hermopolis the great god
herdsman, servant of	Min Montu lord of Armant Neferhotep Ḥathor mistress of Aphroditopolis the great goddess Ḥorus of Edfu Ḥorus uniter of the Two Lands Ḥorus Khentikhet the god of Djēme
herdsman, milk-jug porter, <i>and</i> servant of hunter <i>and</i> trapper, servant of leatherworker, servant of merchant, servant of	Sobek Wepwawet Montu, lord of Armant Ḥorus, lord of Harit(?) <i>and</i> Isis, the great goddess Min Ḥathor the great goddess Ḥorus uniter of the Two Lands Ḥorus Khentikhet the great god Khnum Sobek
overseer of the canal, servant of	Sobek
sealbearer of the god, embalmer, <i>and</i> servant of	Sobek
chief sealer <i>and</i> embalmer, servant of	Sobek
trustee, servant of <i>and</i> of Isis the great goddess	Ḥathor mistress of Aphroditopolis
weaver, servant of	Sobek

Confirmation of the analysis of the group “servant of DN” as a “status designator” rather than functional title is the parallel with the title “servant of Pharaoh” in the title

2. Much of this material was put together by Joe Manning when he was working on the dictionary; see his “Land and Status in Ptolemaic Egypt,” in *Grund und Boden in Altägypten*, edited by Schafik Allam, pp. 147–75 (Tübingen, 1994).

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strings “stonemason, servant of Pharaoh” and “farmer, servant of Pharaoh” where the latter parallels examples of “royal farmer of the village of Apias, of the Sobek-town Themistos in the district of Themistos” and the latter in turn appears to be a translation of the very common Greek “status designator” “royal farmer.”

As I noted above, this survey is compiled from words beginning with just three (of twenty-four) letters, leaving whole categories unrepresented or under-represented. But one category of individuals is unrepresented in the above lists for a different reason. In those three files there are only two titles that pertain to women, both religious: torch-bearer of Queen Cleopatra III and priestess of Ptah *and* singer. This demonstrates that Egyptian women, somewhat in earlier pharaonic history but increasingly so during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, did not participate actively in public life. Aside from the occasional woman of fairly high social status who held a position in a temple, women did not hold formal, recognized jobs outside the home. Some women might have to work to earn money to survive and provide for their families (there is certainly evidence for female household servants) and some women were wealthy, owning (and buying and selling) valuable real estate or floating loans to relatives, friends, and neighbors. But society decreed that men had jobs, women stayed at home and took care of the house and the children. A woman might leave handling of her affairs to her husband (or father), who was more “worldly,” in which case she disappears from our records altogether. Even if a woman acted on her own behalf, the relevant legal or economic document, from which so much of our information derives, normally would describe her not by any functional titles but by the generic description “woman.”

As I have said before, writing a dictionary can be tedious, one can (and quite regularly does) get enmeshed in minute details of lexicography, and one runs the risk of forgetting the forest for the trees. However, one also has an absolutely unparalleled opportunity to observe patterns and trends and access to some of the data that can help to make sense of them. That is the challenge and the fun.

1. See my observations in *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?* (Scribner, 1995), chapter II and *passim*. The abiding public interest in the scrolls is indicated by the separate publication of the book in England and by its appearance in German and Dutch, as well as by publication of the work next year in Portuguese, Japanese, and French.