CHICAGO DEMOTIC DICTIONARY
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Progress continued to be made on the Chicago Demotic Dictionary (CDD) from July 2023 to June 2024, thanks to CDD research assistants Brendan Hainline and Rolland Long and to Sandy Schloen and Miller Prosser at the University of Chicago's Forum for Digital Culture.

During the past year, Hainline and Long largely completed work on the letter and number files. These files contain individual entries for each of the Demotic words and numbers treated in the dictionary, organized among twenty-four letters and three kinds of numbers ("regular" numbers, months, and days). Each entry consists of a lemma and definitions; examples of different meanings, usages, and writings; and images depicting the different writings (fig. 1).

Hainline and Long transferred the last three letter files (Ỉ, W, and Ḍ) from the word-processing software Microsoft Word to the publication software InDesign, reformatted them, and linked the digital images of Demotic words to the correct places in the reformatted files, thereby completing a process that began in 2015 with the conversion of the Microsoft Word files to Unicode. The letter and number files now need to be checked to correct errors and inconsistencies that have arisen during the transfer and to replace some images that have degraded over time as a result of automatic image compression in Microsoft Word files.

Figure 1. First part of the first entry in the letter file Ỉ.

Also in the past year, Schloen and Prosser worked on the preliminaries and the "problem" files. The preliminaries include the table of contents, lists and explanations of abbreviations, and the bibliography, and are intended to precede the letter and number files. The problem files contain entries for signs and words whose reading, meaning, and placement in the dictionary are disputed; they are intended to follow the letter and number files. Schloen and Prosser kindly converted the preliminaries and the problem files to Unicode, as they did for the letter and number files. The files now need to be transferred to InDesign, to be reformatted, and (in the case of the problem files) to have their images linked, as was done for the letter and number files. Then they, too, will need to be checked to correct errors and inconsistencies and to replace degraded images. Fortunately, there are fewer files and images than in the letter and number files, so the process should not take as long.

After all the files have been transferred and corrected, the first goal is to publish an updated version of the CDD both in print and as PDFs on the ISAC website, replacing the "work-in-progress" PDFs posted there in 2001. Once the updated version is published, the second and longer-term goal will be to create an interactive online database using the text and images from the updated version. This database will allow for live updates and links to other online resources for Demotic.

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