



L2/02-281

The University of Oklahoma

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

July 22, 2002

Lisa Moore
Chair, Unicode Technical Committee
The Unicode Consortium
PO Box 391476
Mountain View, CA 94039-1476

Dear Ms. Moore:

I understand that your organization is considering taking on a project to allow computerization of Ancient Egyptian script and making accessible the lexicographic work especially of Alan Gardiner and then of other scholars. I strongly support undertaking such an effort because it will make up-to-date Egyptological knowledge available to my students at the University of Oklahoma in Norman.

Here I have a small but steady number of students, this autumn, two, who wish to study the language, and the resources available here are pathetic. We do have the classic textbook and the concise dictionary for Middle Egyptian in the library, but once one gets into real texts, we are at a loss. Last semester the final project was to copy and translate a hitherto untranslated set of mummy cases in a private museum in Wichita, Kansas; we made a beginning, but not a publishable end. This semester I am going to set them on another, more complex mummy case at a college museum in Shawnee, Oklahoma. All of this is great experience for them, of course, but we could get much farther if your contemplated project were already on line.

Thanks for all your efforts.

With best wishes,

Daniel C. Snell, Ph.D.

L. J. Semrod Presidential Professor of History

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July 27, 2002

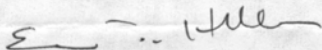
Lisa Moore
Chair, Unicode Technical Committee
The Unicode Consortium
P.O. Box 381476
Mountain View, CA 94-39-1476

Dear Ms. Moore:

I am writing to express my support for the encoding of Egyptian Hieroglyphs in the Script Encoding Project, most particularly the eventual inclusion of the Hierglyphica published by CCER. The encoding of this signs in addition to the many other languages included in the project will provide tremendous assistance to scholars, students, and other interested parties.

Thank you for giving your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Susan Tower Hollis, Ph.D.

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July 29, 2002

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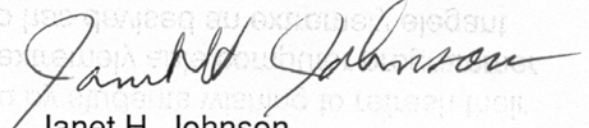
Dear Ms. Moore,

I am an Egyptologist who does not pretend to understand computers but who makes considerable use of them in my Egyptological research and publications. I am the editor of the Chicago Demotic Dictionary Project (<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/PUB/SRC/CDD/CDD.html>), which is preparing an electronic dictionary of the later stage of the Egyptian language known as Demotic. I am also the PI for a project (funded by the Mellon Foundation) to develop an interactive electronic reading book of Middle Egyptian. This reading book is designed to be used by beginning students (both within and external to a classroom situation) and by students wishing to refresh their knowledge of Middle Egyptian. I have worked closely with an extremely able computer programmer who is handling all the technical aspects of the project and who has devised an extremely elegant method of handling (inserting, grouping, and so on) hieroglyphs, using a font based on the Gardiner fonts designed specifically for the Publications Office of the Oriental Institute (the designer of the font very kindly gave permission to use it for the reading book as well).

I am a very strongly Macintosh-based person and I feel that, given what computers can do today (and will be able to do soon), we should not limit ourselves to the kind of study-, research-, and publications-tools which were available in the pre-electronic era. Thus, although I require all my students to learn how to transliterate hieroglyphs as well as read them, I find that, rather than using transliteration to talk about a passage, I am more inclined to include a copy (keystroked or scanned) of the original text.

But I fully recognize the need to have a way to identify individual signs across platforms and I am quite happy to support this proposal for including the Gardiner Sign List in Unicode as the appropriate starting point for the inclusion of Egyptian hieroglyphs in the Unicode system. The Gardiner Sign List is an internationally recognized group of signs, including those signs most needed for didactic purposes and with sufficient coverage for the presentation of a large percentage of both hieroglyphic and hieratic texts. It is far from complete, but no fixed set of hieroglyphs will ever be complete because of the nature of the scripts involved. If, as you say, the inclusion of the Gardiner Sign List is seen as a first step, a major and basic first step, toward tackling the problem of computer handling of Egyptian hieroglyphs, I would certainly welcome this move.

Sincerely yours,


Janet H. Johnson
Professor of Egyptology