

AN OLD REFERENCE

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The year 1876 marked the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. It was also noted for a logological event of considerable interest, which has languished in obscurity all too long: the publication in London of William R. Cooper's landmark work, *An Archaic Dictionary, from the Egyptian, Assyrian, and Etruscan Monuments and Papyri*.

As reference works go, it is modest in compass. Its 668 pages do not include more than 6,500 or possibly 7,000 entries. Yet, there is a flavor to these entries quite unlike those found in any other dictionary ever published. The purpose of this review is to bring the book to the attention of today's logologists.

While a majority of the entries are consistent with the title of the work, the casual browser through the dictionary spots numerous entries which it seems inconceivable could ever have appeared on Egyptian, Assyrian, and Etruscan monuments and papyri. Some examples: SIL-FRINTOPPR (the name of one of the horses of the gods in Scandinavian mythology), DOLICHOCEPHALIC (a term applied by modern anthropologists to a long and narrow skull), GRAPHIEL (in Cabalistic mythology, the intelligence of the planet Mars), XOCHIQUETZAL (in Mexican mythology, the wife of the patriarch Coxcox), JYOTISHA (an ancient Hindu astronomical treatise derived from the Vedas), and FIRAMODOR (the Anglo-Saxon earth goddess).

Scholars engaged in research must be unhappy about the "vagueness" of a surprising number of the definitions supplied by Cooper. Examples: LAB-MAHKI (an Accadian city, of which the site is unknown), HIRODEA (a Badaga idol, of whom little is known), DAPOUR (the Egyptian name of an uncertain Syrian town), TAR-TAHKI (in Chaldean astronomy, the name of an unidentified star), PER-UI (the name of an unidentified king of Ethiopia), S-ANKH (an early Egyptian city, site unknown), and KAN-MAMITU (a lost book on Assyrian magic).

Equally distressing is the extreme brevity of many of the definitions, though there are some astonishingly long ones. Thus, RAMESES III rates one and one-half pages in small print, and the subject of MUMMIES covers two and one-third pages. The most interesting fact mentioned about mummies is, perhaps, the estimate that some 420 million bodies may have been mummified in the period between 2,000 B.C. and A.D. 700. The figure seems unbelievably high.

Scattered through the book are words with meanings of considerably

above average interest. Consider as specimens: AH (an unknown Egyptian medicine), HATHNA (a young nude Satyr, represented on an Etruscan mirror as upturning an amphora, with a leopard on each side of him), WAD-EL-BENAT (in pre-Koranic history, the name of a custom among the ancient Arabs whereby they were allowed to bury alive such female children as the parents were unwilling to maintain), and SHARU-SHARU (the mystical pupil of the right eye of Osiris, wherein the deceased is said to be hidden, in the 164th chapter of the Ritual of the Dead). Or, consider LILITH, an evil spirit said by Arab writers to have been Adam's first wife. Cooper informs us that she had 784 children (all of them jinn or devils), apparently because the letters of her name had that numerical value. Furthermore, she was said to have "stimulated nocturnal impurities" and to have been most dangerous to married women at the birth of the first child, upon which occasion Arab nurses still throw stones at the foot of the bed to drive Lilith away.

The entries in Cooper's work have a more than passing specifically logological interest. The careful observer quickly finds palindromes such as AASAA (an unidentified Asiatic country), ABEBA (a favorite of an Egyptian king of the VIth dynasty), ALALA (a form of the goddess Ishtar), RUTUR (an unidentified star in Chaldean astronomy), ULULU (the 6th month of the Assyrian year), and ZAZAZ (one of the conspirators against Assurbanipal). Tautonyms are equally common: AATAAT (a city near Memphis, Egypt), QARQAR (a city in Palestine), ZEMZEM (the sacred well of Mecca, said to have risen from the earth at the striking of the ground by the foot of the dying Ishmael), AMENAMEN (a mystical title of the god Amen Ra, in the 166th chapter of the Ritual of the Dead), SHEN-SHEN (the mystical name of the sacred heron into which the souls of the justified deceased were transformed), and SHARU-SHARU (defined above).

There are long names, such as AMENHOTEPTETUNAFHAPU (a prince of Syene -- 20 letters), AMENMERBASTSEUASARKON (a prenomen of Uaserken II of the XXIst dynasty -- 21 letters), and AMUNHIKHOPSEFNUTERHIKTEN (the surname of Rameses VI of the XXth dynasty -- 24 letters).

Vowel curiosities of various sorts command attention throughout the book. First, of course, are the all-vowel words such as AUAU (a species of hunting dog), IU-AA (an unknown chief of a Japhetic people), IU-IU (a keeper of the Egyptian treasury), OUEI (an Egyptian lady, sister of an overseer of the royal bulls), AOUAA (father of Taia the Queen), and OEAEI (an Egyptian lady, wife of the spondist of Pthah).

Other names simply have concentrations or clusters of vowels: AAAUASASU (a royal Ethiopian house), RIE-AEI (a grand priest of Pthah), and YAOUAH (the Supreme Being among the Dyaks of Borneo -- how did that name get into this book?).

Miscellaneous vowel words include AAAATAMAD, with its four consecutive A's (the Egyptian name of an unidentified town in Palestine),

ABERIOU, featuring the five vowels in alphabetical order (a captive Syrian people, possibly the Jews), and BARTABBAGALGAL, a 14-letter word using only A's as vowels (in Chaldean astronomy, the name of a famous star or planet of the West, which has not yet been certainly identified).

While vowel curiosities predominate, there are some consonantly interesting words as well: DSJOT-KHONS (a priestess of Amen Ra). PHTHEMPHUTHUS (a Greek nome of Lower Egypt), PSCHENT (the crown of united Egypt), and YASHDJOB (the son of a Yemeni king).

Noticeable throughout this dictionary is the large number of multiply hyphenated names. Examples using 6 or 7 hyphens: KA-HARUS-APU-SARU-MA-HAKAR-UMA (a mystical name for the goddess Bast), RA-AMEN-TUT-ANKH-HIQ-AN-RES (the prenomen of King Tut-ankh-amen), and NU-NEKHT-IK-NU-EN-NEB-BEK-I (an Egyptian scribe whose period and works are uncertain).

I cannot urge you to rush to your neighborhood bookstore to buy a copy of this unique reference work, because your neighborhood bookstore doesn't have a copy -- it has long been out of print. However, it has recently been reprinted by the Gale Research Company, and you can obtain a copy by sending \$28.50 to this company at the Book Tower, Detroit, Michigan 48226. Let's get with it -- now!