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BIFAO 103 (2003), p. 203-218

Adel Farid

A New Suggestion on the Sign Heading the Witness List in Demotic Legal Texts.

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A New Suggestion on the Sign Heading the Witness List in Demotic Legal Texts

Adel FARID

PUBLICITY was characteristic in legal documents in Ancient Egypt. This fundamental aim was achieved through a third party i. e. the witnesses.[1] One of the most important duties of the witnesses was to be present when the contract was signed. Another duty of the witnesses was to testify and tell the truth in case the matter of the contract went to court or the god's court.

From the Late Period till the beginning of the Ptolemaic Period, witnesses signed their name at the end of the document on the recto or on the verso [pl. I-II]. From 644-213 B.C., one of the witnesses or some of them or all of them could copy the whole document or part of it, what demotists call witness copy contracts.[2] It is stated that some of the witnesses could sign their name or the scribe simply wrote the names of the witnesses.[3]

The scribe could have acted as a witness.[4] Witnesses take the risk by signing the contract to go to court or the god's court to testify and swear to tell the truth. The witness also could be punished by beating or fine[5] if his testimony is proved to be false.[6] The number of witnesses differed according to the period and the importance of the documents.[7] There could be from 2 to 36 witnesses in the demotic contracts (see Annex *in fine*).

1 Sch. ALLAM, *LÄ* VI, 1986, col. 1398-1399, *s. v.* Zeuge ; *Urk.* I, 157-158 ; S. HASSAN, *Excavations at Giza 1930-1931*, Cairo 1936, p. 179-201, esp. p. 190-192, scenes on the eastern wall, fig. 219, pl. LXXIV, LXXV, LXXVI ; G. MATTHA, *The Legal Code of Hermopolis West*, *BiEtud* 45, Cairo, 1975 : M. EL-AMIR, *A Family Archive from Thebes, Demotic Papyri in the Philadelphia and Cairo Museums from the Ptolemaic Period* II, Cairo, 1959, p. 98 ff.

2 Sch. ALLAM, *loc. cit.;* K.-Th. ZAUZICH, *Die ägyptische Schreibertradition in Aufbau, Sprache und Schrift der demotischen Kaufverträge aus ptolemäischer Zeit*, *ÄgAbh* 19, Wiesbaden, 1968, p. 5 ; M. DEPAUW, « Demotic Witness-Copy-Contracts », *RdE* 50, 1999, p. 67-105.

3 Sch. ALLAM, *loc. cit*.

4 *Loc. cit.* ; K.-Th. ZAUZICH, *loc. cit.;* M. DEPAUW, *loc. cit.;* Sv. VLEEMING, « The Sale of a Slave in the Time of Pharaoh Py », *OMRO* 61, 1980, p. 1-17, pl. 1, esp. p. 15, fn. 55.

5 A.H. GARDINER, « A Lawsuit Arising from the Purchase of two Slaves », *JEA* 21 (1935), p. 140-146, pl. XIII-XVI, esp. p. 142 ; Sch. ALLAM, *loc. cit.* ; *id.*, *Das Verfahrensrecht in der altägyptische Arbeitersiedlung von Deir-el-Medineh*, Tübingen, 1973, p. 61-62 ; *id.*, *Hieratische ostraka und Papyri aus der Ramessidenzeit*, Tübingen, 1973, p. 217-218.

6 A.H. GARDINER, *The Inscription of Mes*, *UGAÄ* 4, Leipzig, 1905, p. 9-11, p. 49-54 ; G.A. GABALLA, *The Memphite Tomb-Chapel of Mose*, Warminster, 1977 ; Sch. ALLAM, *LÄ* VI, 1986, col. 1398-1399, *s. v.* Zeuge.

7 *Ibid.*, col. 1398-1399 ; K.-Th. ZAUZICH, Kaufurkunden, demotische, *LÄ* III, 1980, col. 370-371, *s. v.* Kaufurkunden, demotische ; K. ZIBELIUS, *LÄ* V, 1984, col. 1222-1223, *s. v.* Staatsvertrag ; W. HELCK, *LÄ* VI, 1986, col. 1225-1227, *s. v.* Werkverträge.

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The Demotic Sign Heading the Witness List in Legal Documents

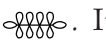
THE OPINION OF GRIFFITH[8]

Griffith read the demotic sign which occurs in papyrus Rylands XXV as *sꜣ* and translated it as "order".

THE OPINION OF GRIFFITH AND THOMPSON[9]

Griffith and Thompson read the word, which occur in the demotic magical papyrus of London and Leiden *sꜣ* with the meaning of "protection" and "amulet". Erichsen[10] accepted the suggested meaning and introduced this word into his dictionary.

THE OPINION OF REICH[11]

In 1911, Reich published an article and he considered the demotic sign heading the witnesses list as  and equal in hieroglyphic . Its reading is *sꜣ*, meaning "Reihe, Orden". Reich depended on the reading of Griffith in Papyrus Rylands XXV. Reich said : "Der durchstrichene wagrechte Strich, welcher so häufig über den Zeugenunterschriften steht, den Beginn derselben markierend ist soweit ich sehe bisher weder gelesen noch erklärt worden. Ich halte dieses Zeichen für das Wort *s*  "Reihe, Orden", vgl. Pap. Rylands XXV wo die Zeugenunterschriften mit diesem Zeichen eingeleitet sind, welches Griffith auch zutreffend s gelesen hat."

In 1936 Reich[12] published another article and he mentioned the following statement : "The crossed horizontal line, that this sign means list, order, I have shown some years ago".

THE OPINION OF BOTTI[13]

Botti accepted the opinion of Reich and he read the demotic sign as *sꜣ* and he translated it as "lista (dei testimoni)".

8 F.Ll. Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library Manchester with Facsimiles and complete translations*, 3 vols. Manchester 1909, vol. 1, I, pap. XXV, pl. LXXII, 5, 8, 11 ; *ibid.* III, p. 154-155, p. 282-283.

9 F.Ll. Griffith, H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden*, London, 1909, p. 71f. esp. vol. 1, 1904, 27, recto col. II, L. 8, CW may be only magical gibberish, but suggests the word for « protection », « amulet ».

10 W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar*, Kopenhagen, 1954, p. 403, *sꜣ* Schutz, Amulett.

11 N.J. Reich, « Eine Ägyptische Urkunde über den Kauf eines bebauten Grundstücks, eine philologisch-historische Studie », *RecTrav* 33, 1911, p. 140 ; N.J. Reich, « A Demotic Divorce (Papyrus University Museum JAR 2, 800 d, 885 in Philadelphia) = Cairo JE 89366 », *Mizraim* 1, 1933, p. 135-139, pl. XV ; in this article Reich reads the demotic sign heading the witness list *s* and he translates it as « List » ; N.J. Reich, *Mizraim* 2, 1936, p. 17 ; *id.*, *Mizraim* 7, 1938, p. 19.

12 *Id.*, « The Field Museum Papyrus (A Promissory Note of the Year 109/8 B.C.) », *Mizraim* 2, 1936, p. 36-51, pl. I-II, p. 51, n. 1.

13 G. Botti, « Il Contratto di matrimonio del Museo gregoriano egizio del Vaticano (Papiro demotico n. 2037B) », *MDAIK* 16/2, 1958, p. 1-4, Tav. I-II, esp. p. 4, n. 1 ; *id.*, *Testi Demotici I. Museo Civico di Bologna – Museo Archeologico di Firenze – Museo Nazionale di Napoli*, Firenze, 1941, p. 3-10, Tav. I-II.

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THE OPINION OF MUSTAFA EL-AMIR[14]

Mustafa el-Amir accepted the opinion of Reich and he read it and translated it the same in his book "A Family Archive from Thebes".

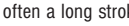
THE OPINION OF E.A.E. REYMOND[15]

Reymond read the demotic sign heading the witness list *sꜣ* and translated it as "Guarantee?". In the footnote, she adds: "We are inclined to give the sign which frames the signatures of the witnesses a special meaning, and to suggest the reading *sꜣ*, meaning protection or guarantee in the legal sense."

THE OPINION OF NUR EL-DIN[16]

Nur el-Din examined the reading and the meaning of this sign and he found out that it does not give the right and proper meaning of this sign. He studied the different palaeographical forms of this demotic sign in the different contracts. His study yielded that it was written in eight different ways as follows:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 

14 M. EL-AMIR, *A Family Archive from Thebes, Demotic Papyri in the Philadelphia and Cairo Museums from the Ptolemaic Period* II, Cairo, 1959, p. 101, n. 6 « these witnesses write their names and filiation one below another in a column on the verso of the papyrus ». « At the top of the column there is often a long stroke  which is interpreted as  = *sꜣ* = list » (p. 101, n. 6).

15 E.A.E. REYMOND, *Catalogue of Demotic Papyri in the Ashmolean Museum* I. *Embalmers' Archives from Hawara including Greek Documents and Subscriptions by J. W. B. Barns*, Oxford, 1973, Pap. Ash. D 10, verso, p. 84-92, pl. VIII.

16 M.A. NUR EL-DIN, « The Sign heading the List of Witnesses in Demotic Legal Texts », *MDAIK* 37, 1981, p. 383-388.

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There is another palaeographical new form recorded in Document Hawara II = papyrus Carlsberg 35 kept in Copenhagen and which was published recently by Erich Lüddeckens :[17]



Nur el-Din mentioned that this demotic sign might mean "a list" or "a list of names" or a compound preposition meaning "in the presence of" to indicate that the document was completed in the presence of the undersigned names. Nur el-Din mentioned also that it might mean the act of signing or the role of those persons as witnesses ; he mentioned also that this demotic sign might mean a verb to seal, that is to say to end the text, not by the actual sealing which would take place after the papyrus was rolled, but by the witnesses, in the sense that their action completes the deed. Nur el-Din noticed also that lists of witnesses when occurring on the recto are not introduced by any sign, and the names are preceded each by *sḫ* "signed". But when they occur on the verso, the lists are introduced by the sign heading the witness lists, while the names are not preceded by *sḫ*. Nur el-Din concluded that the sign introducing the lists is a substitute for *sḫ*. He thought of words like *thʿ* and *ḫtm* "to close, to seal", especially since they have both something in common with some forms of this sign. The actual meaning of both is to seal by using a signet which cannot apply to lists of witnesses unless the implication is that the text came to its end (lit. was sealed) by inscribing the names of the witnesses. Then Nur el-Din thought that this sign was a single sign in the early demotic texts, but a combination of two different signs, i. e. *sḫ* and *mtr* in the Ptolemaic period to indicate that the undersigned are the witnesses. The horizontal line represents an abbreviated form of the sign *sḫ*, the scribe's palette and the second vertical sign represents the sitting man with hand to mouth, which is in his assumption the determinative of the word *mtr* ; and that the determinative of a word could replace the whole word. Nur el-Din finishes his study saying that his suggestions imply that authenticity and correctness of the document depended upon it having been tested and witnessed in the presence of the undermentioned names.[18]

THE OPINION OF CAROL ANDREWS[19]

Carol Andrews read the demotic sign heading the witness list *sꜣ* but she did not translate it ; she read it in the transliteration and translation *sꜣ* and she referred in all the cases of the demotic papyri of her publication to the opinion of Nur el-Din.

17 E. Lüddeckens, *Demotische Urkunden aus Hawara (VOHD Supplementband 28)*, Stuttgart, 1998, p. 13-20, Taf. 2.

18 M.A. Nur el-Din, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

19 C.A.R. Andrews, *Catalogue of Demotic Papyri in the British Museum* IV. *Ptolemaic Legal Texts from the Theban Area*, London, 1990, P. BM 10026, p. 19, p. 22, n. 89 ; etc.

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THE OPINION OF VLEEMING[20]

Vleeming commented on this sign in his book "Pap. Hou" saying that this sign had no hieroglyphic origin or phonetic value, just as it is clear from its function that it was simply a stroke and no more. He says : "Over the list of witnesses on the verso of the early demotic texts there is regularly found a short horizontal stroke. It was put there by the notary scribes probably feeling their way by keeping an index finger on the recto at the desired spot in order to indicate for the witnesses how to place their signatures exactly behind the initial word of the contract *ḏd* says. This praxis of the witnesses may first be observed in the first half of the 6th century B.C. when the earliest stroke over a witness list may be found. Although the scribes of Ptolemaic times made cross ticks of various shapes in this stroke. It is clear from its early demotic shape that the stroke had no hieroglyphic origin or phonetic value, just as it is clear from its function that it was simply a stroke and no more."

THE OPINION OF PESTMAN

Pestman commented on this demotic sign several times ; in 1978 he said : "Les témoins répètent parfois mot à mot cette déclaration en copiant, sur la même feuille de papyrus, les paroles du déclarant : il s'agit alors de ce qu'on appelle en anglais "witness copies". Il est évident que ces témoins ont pour tâche de garantir l'exactitude de la mise par écrit des mots du déclarant. Il en va d'ailleurs de même dans le cas où ils se limitent à écrire leurs noms au dos de l'acte puisque – ainsi que je viens de le constater à Turin en examinant la riche collection de documents démotiques qui y est conservée – la colonne avec les noms des témoins débute au verso à l'endroit précis où se trouve, au recto, le verb *ḏd* qui introduit les paroles du déclarant. Il va sans dire qu'en cas de différend relatif à un contrat démotique on peut faire appel aux témoins et les citer en justice. Cela ressort d'ailleurs d'une clause que contiennent certains contrats et qui interdit de citer en justice un témoin qui habite une autre localité : ce serait en effet un excellent moyen de faire traîner en longueur un procès ! D'autre part, le scribe n'a rien à voir avec le contenu des contrats qu'il rédige et un tel contrat n'est certainement pas un acte authentique faisant foi par lui-même. Je n'oserais donc pas qualifier les scribes égyptiens de "notaires", d'autant plus qu'ils pouvaient rédiger des contrats dont ils étaient eux-mêmes partie [21]."

In 1981 Pestman[22] commented on this demotic sign for the second time in his book of Amenothes.

20 S.P. VLEEMING, *The Gooseherds of Hou (Pap. Hou). A Dossier Relating to Various Agricultural Affairs from Provincial Egypt of the Early Fifth Century B.C.*, *StudDem* 3, Leuven, 1991, p. 252, § 90.

21 P.W. PESTMAN, « L'Agoranomie : un avant-poste de l'administration grecque enlevé par les Égyptiens ? », in H. Maehler, V.M. Strocka (ed.), *Das Ptolemäische Ägypten (Akten des Internationalen Symposions 27.-29. September 1976 in Berlin)*, Mainz, 1978, p. 203-210, esp. 203.

22 *Id.*, *L'archivio di Amenothes, figlio di Horos*, *CMT Serie Prima : Monumenti e Testi* 5, Milano, 1981, p. 153-162, Appendice Testimoni di atti Ufficiale.

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In 1992 Pestman[23] commented on this demotic sign for the third time in his book of Hermias saying : "Appendice, Testimoni, Segnigrafici in testa alle liste di testimoni in contratti demotici. Come tanti vecchi castelli inglesi, anche il palazzo del demotico ha il suo fantasma. Ha persino un nome : si chiama *sꜣ* e si manifesta qualche volta in testa alla lista dei testimoni di contratti, ma soltanto nelle pubblicazioni di taluni demotisti. Questa parola *sꜣ* appare in P. BM Reich, tradotta in Tedesco come "Reihe", in P. Tor. Botti, tradotta in italiano come "lista", e senza traduzione in P. BM Andrews. Manca però nel dizionario demotico di Erichsen, e vi manca giustamente, poiché il segno che sovrasta le liste di testimoni non é un segno geroglifico che indichi una parola, ma bensì un semplice segno grafico."

In 1993 Pestman[24] commented on this demotic sign for the fourth time in his book of Choachites.

In 1994 Pestman[25] commented on this demotic sign for the fifth time in his book of the papyrus of Tsenhor mentioning : "Les témoins : il n'y a pas d'endroit fixe pour les signatures des témoins dans les documents du "type étroit". Elles peuvent se trouver au verso mais aussi au recto dans le cas où le scribe a laissé un espace vide en bas du contrat, précisément destiné à cet usage. C'est ce qui était pratiqué, semble-t-il, quand il y avait peu de témoins. Ce qui permettait d'avoir une disposition assez esthétique des différents écrits. Voir l'exemple du n° 15 (deux témoins) et, à l'époque ptolémaïque, le contrat de divorce P. Tor. Botti 16 (pl. XXI ; quatre témoins)."

THE OPINION OF MARK DEPAUW

Mark Depauw commented on this demotic sign twice ; the first time in 1999 [26] he said : "This enumeration of the witnesses on the verso is in most cases found at a very precise spot, namely behind the initial word of the actual contract *ḏd* on the obverse. This place is often marked by a horizontal stroke, sometimes with a short dash perpendicular to it." And he adds in fn. 96 : "this is no linguistic sign and has no phonetic value".

In 2000 Mark Depauw[27] commented on this demotic sign again : "As is normal for documents of the larger type, the witnesses are listed on the verso, under a small stroke that indicates where the *ḏd* introducing the parties of the agreement is written on the recto."

23 *Id.*, *Il processo di Hermias e altri documenti dell'archivio dei choachiti (P. Tor. Choachiti), Papiri greci e demotici conservati a Torino e in alter collezioni d'Italia*, *CMT Serie Prima Monumenti e Testi* 6, 1992, p. 225-232, Tav. L.

24 *Id.*, *the Archive of the Theban Choachytes (Second Century B.C.). A Survey of the Demotic and Greek Papyri Contained in the Archive*, *StudDem* 2, Leuven, 1993. He mentioned scribes and witnesses.

25 *Id.*, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor (P. Tsenhor)* I, p. 26-32, esp. p. 26.

26 M. Depauw, « Demotic Witness-Copy-Contracts », *RdE* 50, 1999, p. 67-105, esp. 84-85, fn. 96.

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A New Suggestion on the Demotic Sign Heading the Witness List in Demotic Legal Documents : it equals protection

In spite of the opinions of Pestman, Vleeming and Depauw that the demotic sign heading the witness list in demotic legal documents is not a linguistic sign and had no hieroglyphic origin or phonetic value, and had no meaning and that it was simply a stroke and no more, I believe that this sign was certainly a linguistic sign and had hieroglyphic origin and phonetic value, and had with all certainty a meaning as we will see from my explanations and interpretations.

The principal aim of witnesses is publicity and to keep the contract safe from any manipulations of any of the two parties ; also to tell the truth before judges, if the matter went to court or the god's court.

A sentence occurring several times in the demotic family archive from Siut, which was published by H. Thompson, supports the opinion that the contract was completed with the signature of the witnesses.[28] The Demotic Legal Code of Hermopolis, which was published by G. Mattha,[29] states issuing contracts (draw a deed) in the presence of witnesses, who will sign it, and parties of the contract.

Interpretation of the Hieroglyphic Origin[30] *of the Demotic Sign Heading the Witness List*

The hieroglyphic origin of the demotic sign heading the witness list is the hieroglyph .

The question is, where does the meaning "protect, guard, escort, watch, keep, hold, maintain" come from ? This hieroglyphic sign , *sꜣ*, "hobble for cattle" means originally "to pull up, to check, curb, restrain, control, repress" the animals from bolting so that they will not hurt the human beings, when they dash, rush and run ; so this hieroglyphic sign means to protect people from the harm of animals and it means also it protects the animals from hurting themselves, probably from dash against something.

This demotic sign is recorded also in the book of Erichsen.[31]

27 *Id.*, *The Archive of Teos and Thabis from early Ptolemaic Thebes. P. Brux. Dem. Inv. E8252-8256*, *MRE* 8, Brepols, 2000, p. 239, fn. 850.

28 THOMPSON, *A Family Archive from Siut*, B. I, 20-21, pl. I ; *ibid.*, B. II, 23, pl. II ; ibid., B. III, 5, pl. III ; *ibid.*, B. IV, 13, pl. IV ; *ibid.*, B. V, 15-16, pl. V ; *ibid.*, B. V, 21, pl. V.

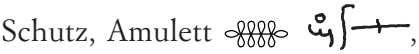
29 G. MATTHA, *The Demotic Legal Code of Hermopolis West*, *BiEtud* 45, Cairo, 1975 (preface, additional notes and glossary by G.R. Hughes), vol. 1, column II, line 19, transliteration p. 3, translation p. 22, vol. II, pl. II, line 19.

30 A.H. GARDINER, *Egyptian Grammar*, Sign-List V, 16, p. 523 = looped cord serving as hobble for cattle. *Sꜣ* = protection.

31 W. ERICHSEN, *Demotische Lesestücke* I, Leipzig, 1937, p. 18, S. 3, 5, 7 ; p. 4, C, 3.

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The Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache[32] and the Demotic Dictionary of Erichsen[33] mention the two following words, the first is a noun while the second is a verb :

sꜣ Schutz, Amulett 
Erichsen, Demotisches Glossar, 403, Schutz, Amulett ; Wb. III, 414, 9-21 ; 415, 1-17 ; F. Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, op. cit., esp. vol. 1, 1904, 27, recto col. II, L. 8, vol. III, Indices, London 1909, p. 71 s. protection, amulet .

sꜣw bewachen, hüten, sich hüten, gewöhnlich mit direktem Objekt, I. einen Ort (ein Land und seine Grenzen, Örtlichkeit im Himmel und Jenseits) bewachen, ein Gebäude (besonders ein Tor) bewachen. II. Personen hüten, bewachen, besonders auch Feinde, Gefangene (daß sie nicht entfliehen) ; III. eine Schlange bewachen (daß sie nicht Schade) ; Briefe aufbewahren ; **Worte eines Vertrages halten** ; den Schritt hüten = vorsichtig gemessen gehen (im Tempel), / guard, escort, protect, watch, keep, hold, maintain, take care of, / (حمى، يحمى، صيانة) حماية، يصون، صان.
Erichsen, Demotisches Glossar, 403, Schutz, Amulett ; Wb. III, 416, 12-19 ; 417, 1-19.

It means : guard, escort, protect, watch, keep, hold, maintain, take care of, and it mentions exactly the meaning "**Worte eines Vertrages halten**"



ويعنى « سهر على، حرس، خفر، حمى، صان، حفظ، حافظ على، اعتنى ب، رعى »
ويذكر بالتحديد المعنى المطلوب وهو « يحافظ على كلمات العقد ».

The source which the Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache took this meaning "**Worte eines Vertrages halten**" from is the Peace Treaty[34] between King Ramses II and Khatuselis King of the Hittites, which took place in the regnal year 21 of Ramses II, and which is recorded on the walls of the temples of Karnak and the Ramesseum.

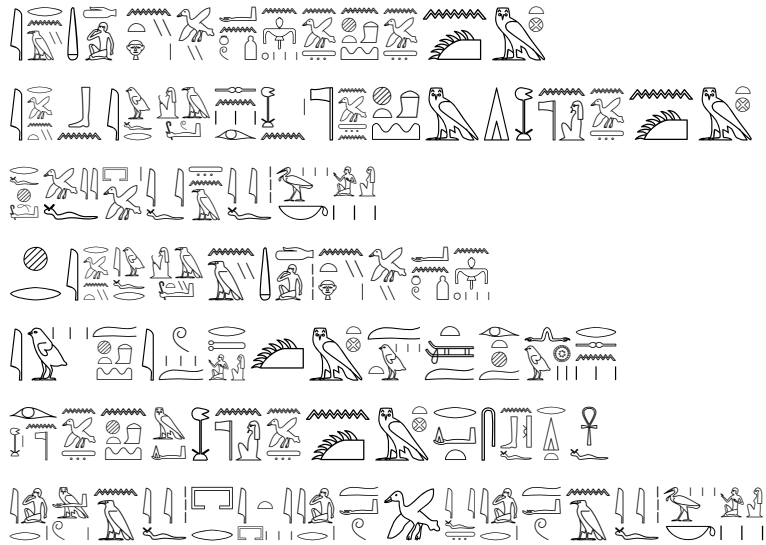
32 *Wb* III, 416, 12-19 ; 417, 1-19.

33 W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar*, Kopenhagen, 1954, p. 403.

34 Wb. III, 417, 7. LD III, 146 ; Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, II, Karnak 49 (2), Ramesseum 152, (14) ; K. A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions, Historical and Biographical*, vol. II, Oxford 1979, p. 225-232, Nr. 64, esp. 230-231, Line 30-32 ; S. Langdon and A. H. Gardiner, "The Treaty of Alliance between Hattusili, King of the Hittites, and the Pharaoh Ramesses II of Egypt", in *JEA* 6 (1920) p. 179-205, pl. 18, esp. 197 ; J.B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament*, Princeton 1955, p. 199-201 ; U. Bouriant, *Notes de Voyage*, § 7. – "Le traité de l'an XXI entre Ramsès II et le Prince de Khéta", in *RecTrav* 13 (1890) 153-179, esp. 153-160 (Karnak) ; Bouriant, *Notes de Voyage*, § 13. – "Le traité de l'an XXI ; Texte du Ramesséum", in *RecTrav* 14 (1893) 67-70 (Ramesseum) ; Möller, "Der Bundnisvertrag Ramses' II und des Hetiter Königs", in *MVÄG* 7 (1902) ; Sharpe, *S. Egyptian Inscriptions*, 2nd series, pl. 50 : 32-42 (Ramesseum) ; J.F. Champollion, *Monuments de l'Égypte et de la Nubie. Notices descriptives conformes aux manuscrits autographes rédigés sur les lieux*. Paris 1844, vol. II, p. 195-204 (Karnak) ; 585-586 (Ramesseum) ; Brugsch, *Geographische Inschriften*, vol. II, 20f ; Brugsch, *Recueil de Monuments* I, pl. XXVIII. E. Edel, "Der Vertrag Zwischen Ramses II. von Ägypten und Hattusili III. von Hatti". Berlin 1997, *WVDOG* 95.

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The hieroglyphic text



TRANSLATION

As for these words (31) which are on this silver tablet from the land of Kheta and from the land of Egypt, as for this who will not keep them, a thousand gods from the land of Kheta, and a thousand gods from the land of Egypt, they will destroy his house and his land and his servants.

As for him who will keep these words which are on this silver tablet whether they are from the Hittite or from the people of (32) Egypt, and will not neglect them, a thousand gods from the land of Kheta, and a thousand gods from the land of Egypt, they will give him health and they will let him live with his house and his land and his servants.

THE PALAEOGRAPHY OF THE DEMOTIC SIGN

The palaeography of the demotic sign, which precedes the witness list is the same as the first demotic sign of the word *sꜣ*, "protection, amulet"; if we take it as a verb, it equals the hieroglyphic sign *sꜣ* and in this case it is a full word; in the other hand it could be a shorthand of the word, which means "guard, escort, protect, watch, keep, hold, maintain, take care of", the words of the contract.

Therefore, the meaning of the demotic sign heading the witness list is:

"This contract or this document has been "guarded, escorted, protected, watched, kept, hold, maintained, taken care of" through these witnesses, who signed their names, and who will prevent any manipulations from any of the two parties of the contract."

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According to the previous explanation I would suggest the reading *sɜw* and the meaning "guard, escort, protect, watch, keep, hold, maintain, take care of" as to the demotic sign heading the witness list. The Egyptian-Arabic word

صان، يصون، صيانة بمعنى حمى، يحمى، حماية

is derived from the Ancient Egyptian word *sɜw*, , after adding the letter N at the end of the word; as parallel Egyptian words taking in the Egyptian Arabic or the Arabic at the end of the word *n* or *wn* or *ɜn*, cf. the following list of words:

pr-ʿɜ	Pharao / Pharaoh / فرعون, (E*DG* 133; *Wb* I, 516),
sjb	Laus, / louse, vermin / سبان (قمل), (E*DG* 408),
sw	hüten / guard, protect / يصون، صان, (E*DG* 412),
pt	ärgerlich sein, unzufrieden sein, verärgert, / vexed, mad, angry, discontented, dissatisfied, / غبن، يغبن، مغبون, (*Wb* IV, 454; cf. also *ḫpt, ḫpt*),
klɜ.t, klj.t, gwr	Riegel, Zapfen, *pɜ gwr n pɜ sbɜ* der Zapfen des Tores / bolt / كالون (الباب), (E*DG* 545, 567, 576).
tmj	Stadt, Dorf / city, town, village (metathesis) / مدينة, (E*DG* 632-633).

ANOTHER INTERPRETATION OF THE DEMOTIC SIGN HEADING THE WITNESS LIST

The origin of the horizontal demotic sign heading the witness list could also be the hieroglyphic sign , *s*, the bolt[35] as a shorthand of the word *sɜw* meaning protect, because the bolt of the door protects the house and its inhabitants from danger. (The closed door prevents the hurrying destiny; Egyptian popular proverb).

الباب المقفول يمنع القضاء المستعجل

THE ARTISTIC FORM OF THE DEMOTIC SIGN HEADING THE WITNESS LIST AND THE WITNESS LIST ALSO

The horizontal form of the Demotic sign heading the witness list and the witness list itself which resembles a vertical column, look like the form of the umbrella taking the shape of the letter **T** which protects people from rain and from the sun heat and sunrays; the figurative meaning of this shape is to protect the contracts and documents from the manipulations of any of the two parties of the contract. The panorama of this scene is as if the witnesses were carrying or standing under the umbrella of protection to protect the document from manipulations of the two parties of the contract.

35 A.H. GARDINER, *op. cit.*, Sign-List, p. 496, nr. O 34 bolt.

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Annex : Number of Witnesses in the Contracts

CONTRACTS WITH 2 WITNESSES

P. Louvre AF 9761 (P.W. Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor (P. Tsenhor). Les archives privées d'une femme égyptienne du temps de Darius I^er^*, *StudDem* 4, Leuven, 1994, vol. I, p. 46-49, vol. II, pl. IV, IVa).

CONTRACTS WITH 3 WITNESSES

– P. Berlin 3108 (W. Spiegelberg, *Demotische Papyrus aus den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin*, Leipzig, Berlin, 1902, p. 17, Taf. 33);

– P. Turin 2125 (P.W. Pestman, *op. cit.*, p. 77-79);

– P. Louvre 7846 (E. Lüddeckens, *Ägyptische Eheverträge, ÄgAbh* 1, Wiesbaden, 1960, *Urk.* 4, p. 14-17, p. 187, n. 40b, p. 188, n. 50a).

CONTRACTS WITH 4 WITNESSES

– P. Turin 2124 (P.W. Pestman, *op. cit.*, p. 74-76);

– P. Turin 2128 (*ibid.*, p. 90-92);

– P. Berlin 3076 (W. Spiegelberg, *op. cit.*, p. 5, pl. 2);

– P. Berlin 3077 (*ibid.*, p. 5, pl. 3);

– P. Berlin 3078 (E. Lüddeckens, *op. cit.*, *Urk.* 7, p. 19-19);

– P. Loeb 41 (W. Spiegelberg, *Die demotischen Papyri Loeb*, München, 1931, verso, Taf. 24, col. 70-72);

– P. Loeb 43 (*ibid.*, Recto Taf. 24, col. 73-75);

– P. Loeb 44 (*ibid.*, Verso, Taf. 24, col. 75-76);

– P. Loeb 47 (*ibid.*, Verso, Taf. 26, col. 79-80);

– P. Loeb 48 (*ibid.*, Verso, Taf. 27, col. 80-81);

– P. Rylands XXI (F.Ll. Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library Manchester*, Manchester, 1909, vol. 1, pl. LXIX, vol. III, p. 150-151, 278-279);

– P. Strasbourg 4 (W. Spiegelberg, *Die Demotischen Papyrus der Straßburger Bibliothek*, Straßburg, 1902, p. 17, Taf. I).

CONTRACTS WITH 5 WITNESSES

– P. Libbey Toledo, Ohio (E. Lüddeckens, *op. cit.; Urk.* 9, p. 22-23);

– P. Strasbourg 2 (W. Spiegelberg, *op. cit.*, p. 15-16, pl. I);

– P. Strasbourg 5 (*ibid.*, p. 16, pl. I).

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CONTRACTS WITH 6 WITNESSES

– P. Cairo CG 30907 (E. Lüddeckens, *op. cit.*, *Urk.* 2, p. 12-13, 185, n. 15a);

– P. Berlin 13614 (W. Erichsen, "Zwei Frühdemotische Urkunden aus Elephantine", in *Coptic Studies in Honor of Walter Ewing Crum*, Boston, 1950, p. 271-286, pl. IV-V; E. Lüddeckens, *op. cit.*, p. 16-17).

CONTRACTS WITH 7 WITNESSES

– P. Louvre 3231 A (P.W. Pestman, *op. cit.*, p. 82-84).

CONTRACTS WITH 8 WITNESSES

– P. British Museum 10120 B (*ibid.*, p. 50-52);
– P. Bibl. nationale 216 (*ibid.*, p. 53-56);
– P. Bibl. nationale 217 (*ibid.*, p. 57-59);
– P. Turin 2122 (*ibid.*, p. 60-62);
– P. Turin 2123 (*ibid.*, p. 67-70);
– P. Louvre 7128 (*ibid.*, p. 71-73);
– P. Turin 2126 (*ibid.*, p. 80-81);

– P. Berlin 3079 (W. Spiegelberg, *Demotische Papyrus aus den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin*, Leipzig, Berlin, 1902, p. 5, pl. 3);

– P. Berlin 9069 (U. Kaplony-Heckel, "Die demotischen Gebelên-Papyri der Berliner Papyrus-sammlung", *FuB* 8, 1967, p. 73-75, Taf. 23-24);

– P. Loeb 45 (W. Spiegelberg, *Die demotischen Papyri Loeb*, recto Taf. 25, col. 76-78);
– P. Loeb 65 (*ibid.*, recto Taf. 35 verso, col. 99-102);
– P. Lonsdorfer I (= P. Berlin 15830 : E. Lüddeckens, *op. cit.; Urk.* 8, p. 20-21);

– P. Rylands XXIV (F.Ll. Griffith, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pap. II, recto, pl. XX; verso (witness list) pl. XXII; vol. III, p. 153-154, 281-282);

– P. Rylands XXIX (*ibid.*, vol. I, pap. XXIX, pl. LXXIV; vol. III, p. 158-159 (translation), p. 285-286 [transliteration]);

– P. Rylands XXXII (*ibid.*, vol. I, pap. XXXII, pl. LXXVI; vol. III, p. 160 (translation), 287-288 [transliteration]);

– P. Hauswaldt 16 (W. Spiegelberg, *Die Demotischen Papyri Hauswaldt*, Leipzig, 1913, p. 51-54, Taf. 22);

– P. Strasbourg 6 (W. Spiegelberg, *Die Demotischen Papyrus der Straßburger Bibliothek*, Straßburg, 1902, p. 25-26, Taf. X);

– P. Strasbourg 9 (*ibid.*, p. 26f, Taf. VII, X).

CONTRACTS WITH 9 WITNESSES

– P. British Museum 10120 A (P.W. Pestman, *op. cit.*. vol. I, p. 46-49, vol. II, pl. IV, IVa; E. Lüddeckens, *op. cit.*, 16-19, *Urk.* 6).

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CONTRACTS WITH 10 WITNESSES

– P. Ashmolean Museum D. 14 and D. 15 (E.A.E. Reymond, *Catalogue of Demotic Papyri in the Ashmolean Museum* I. *Embalmers' Archives from Hawara including Greek Documents and subscriptions by J. W. B. Barns*, Oxford, 1973, p. 97-112, Pl. IX);

– P. Ashmolean Museum D. 16 and D. 17 (*ibid.*, p. 112-126, pl. XII-XIII);

– P. British Museum 10592 (H. Thompson, *A Family Archive from Siut from Papyri in the British Museum*, Oxford, 1934, p. 65-67, pl. XXV);

– P. Berlin 3110 (W. Spiegelberg, *Demotische Papyrus aus den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin*, Leipzig, Berlin, 1902, p. 4, Taf. I, verso Taf. III).

CONTRACTS WITH 11 WITNESSES

– P. Ashmolean Museum D. 3 (E.A.E. Reymond, *op. cit.*, p. 55-67, Pl. II);

– P. Rylands II (F.Ll. Griffith, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pap. II, pl. 9-14 (facsimiles); (witness list) pl. 8; vol. III, p. 47-50, 207-209);

– P. Rylands VII (*ibid.*, vol. I, pap. VII, recto, pl. XX; verso (witness list) pl. XXII; vol. III, p. 55-59, 216).

CONTRACTS WITH 12 WITNESSES

– P. Ashmolean Museum D. 10 (E.A.E. Reymond, *op. cit.*, p. 84-92, Pl. VIII);

– P. British Museum 10528 (S.R.K. Glanville, *Catalogue of Demotic Papyri in the British Museum* I. *A Theban Archive of the reign of Ptolemy I, Soter*, London 1939, p. 15-19, pl. 8, 10, 11);

– P. Brooklyn Museum 37.1796, 37.1802, 37. 1803 (R.H. Pierce, *Three Demotic Papyri in the Brooklyn Museum*, Osloae, 1972, Symbolae Osloenses Fasc. Suppl. XXIV, p. 13-66, pl. I-II, p. 67-76, pl. III-IV, p. 77-82, pl. V-VI);

– P. Museo Nazionale di Napoli N. 8414 (G. Botti, *Testi Demotici* I, Firenze, 1941, p. 65-73, Tav. XIV);

– P. Philadelphia 4 (N. J. Reich, « the Papyrus-Archive in the Philadephia University Museum », *Mizraim* 7, 1938, p. 11-19, pl. 1-10. There is a difference in the given numbers of this document; in the text he mentioned document VI, while in the plate he mentioned document IV; M. el-Amir, *A Family Archive from Thebes*, Cairo, 1959, document IV, p. 17-21);

– P. Philadelphia 12 (*ibid.*, p. 53-55);

– P. Reinach 1 (W. Spiegelberg, in W. Spiegelberg, Th. Reinach, *Papyrus grecs et démotiques recueillis en Égypte*, Paris, 1905, p. 5-18, 175ff, Taf. 10, 17a; F. Ll. Griffith, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 155-157 [Translation], 283-284 [Transliteration]);

– P. Reinach 2 (W. Spiegelberg, *op. cit.*, p. 19-20, Taf. XI);

– P. Reinach 3 (*ibid.*, p. 27-30, Taf. XIII);

– P. Reinach 4 (*ibid.*, p. 21-26, Taf. XII);

– P. Reinach 7 (*ibid.*, p. 40-44, Taf. XVI, verso Taf. XVIIb);

– P. Strasbourg 8 (W. Spiegelberg, *Die Demotischen Papyrus der Straßburger Bibliothek,* Straßburg, 1902, p. 25-26, Taf. X).

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CONTRACTS WITH 13 WITNESSES

– P. Rylands VIII (F.Ll. Griffith, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pap. VIII, recto, pl. XXI ; verso (witness list) pl. XXII ; vol. III, p. 59-60, 216-218).

CONTRACTS WITH 15 WITNESSES

– P. Rylands IV (*ibid.*, vol. I, pap. IV, recto, pl. XV ; verso (witness list) pl. XXII ; vol. III, p. 52-53, 210-211).

CONTRACTS WITH 16 WITNESSES

Most of the contracts in the Ptolemaic Period have sixteen witnesses.

CONTRACTS WITH 17 WITNESSES

– P. Louvre 10935 (P.W. Pestman, *op. cit.*, p. 35-42) ;

– P. Berlin 3142 (S. Grunert, *Thebanische Kaufvertrge des 3. und 2. Jahrhunderts v. u. Z., Demotische Papyri aus den Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin*, Lieferung II, Berlin, 1981 ; W. Spiegelberg, *Demotische Papyrus aus den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin*, Leipzig, Berlin, 1902, 17, Taf. 36f) ;

– P. Berlin 3144 (S. Grunert, *op. cit.* ; W. Spiegelberg, *op. cit.*, 17, Taf. 36f).

CONTRACTS WITH 19 WITNESSES

– P. Rylands VI (F.Ll. Griffith, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pap. VI, recto, pls. XVII-XIX ; verso (witness list) pl. XXII ; vol. III, p. 54-55, 213-215).

CONTRACTS WITH 21 WITNESSES

– P. Rylands V (*ibid.*, vol. I, pap. V, recto, pl. XVI ; verso (witness list) pl. XXII ; vol. III, p. 53-54, 211-213).

CONTRACTS WITH 24 WITNESSES

– P. Chicago Oriental Institute 25257 (G.R. Hughes, R. Jasnow, *The Oriental Institute Hawara Papyri : Demotic and Greek Texts from an Egyptian Family Archive in the Fayum, (Fourth to Third Century B.C.)*, Chicago, 1997, *OIP* 113, p. 16-18, pl. 8-13).

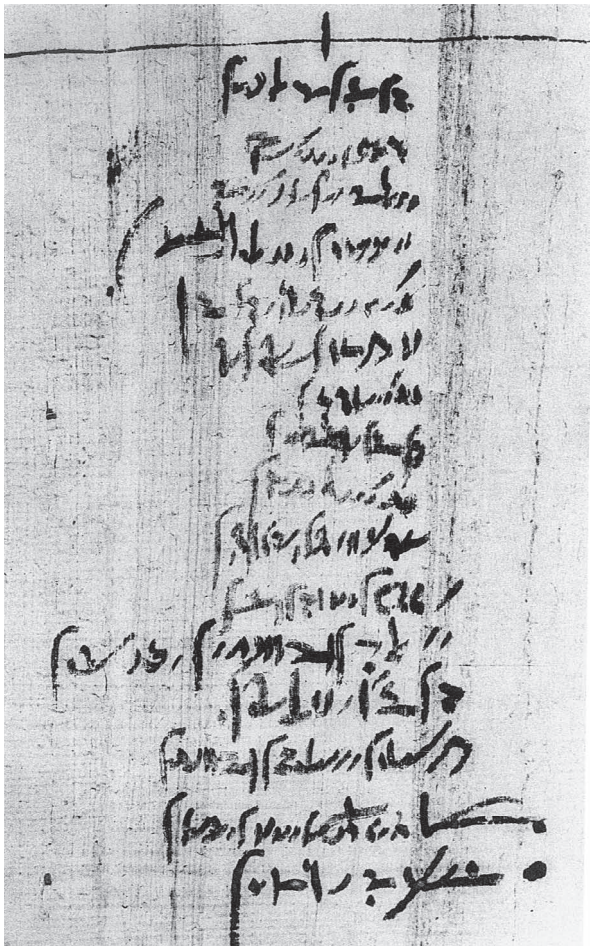
CONTRACTS WITH 36 WITNESSES

– P. Chicago Oriental Institute 17481.

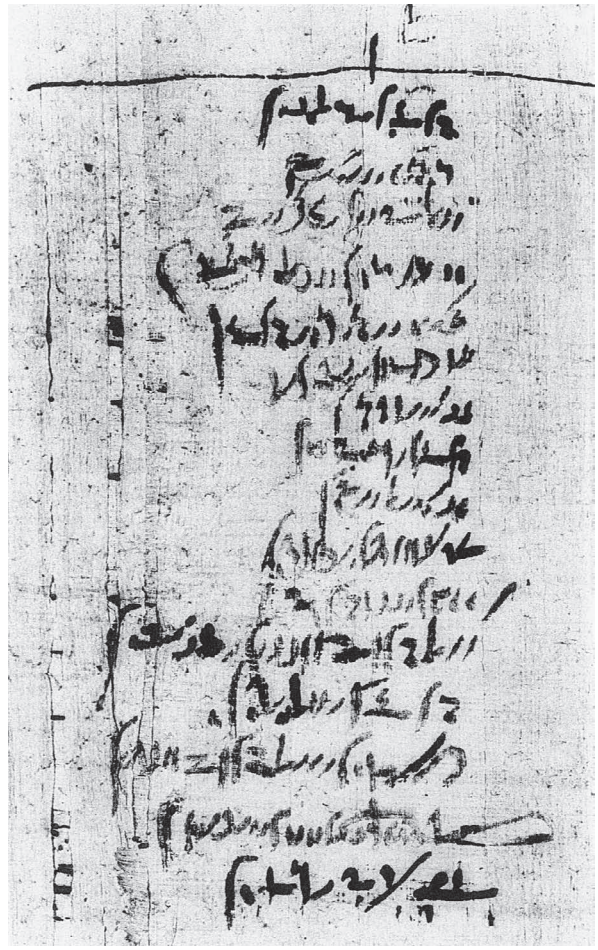
– *ibid.*, p. 9-15, pl. 1-7.

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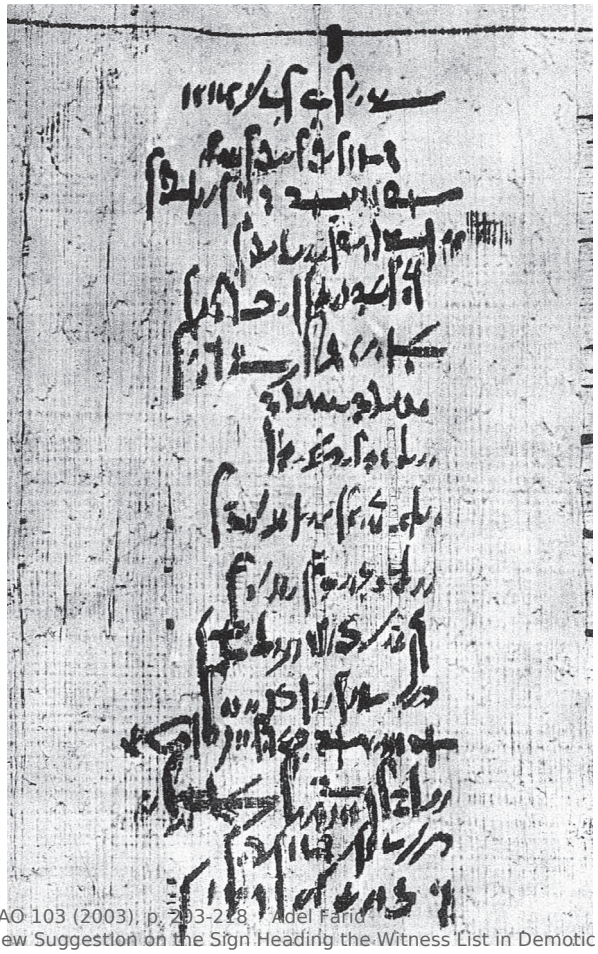
Pl. 1a. From G. Botti, *L'archivio demotico da Deir El-Medineh* I, Florence, 1967, pl. VI ; **b.** Ibid, pl. VI ; **c.** Ibid, pl. XIV ; **d.** Ibid, pl. XIV.



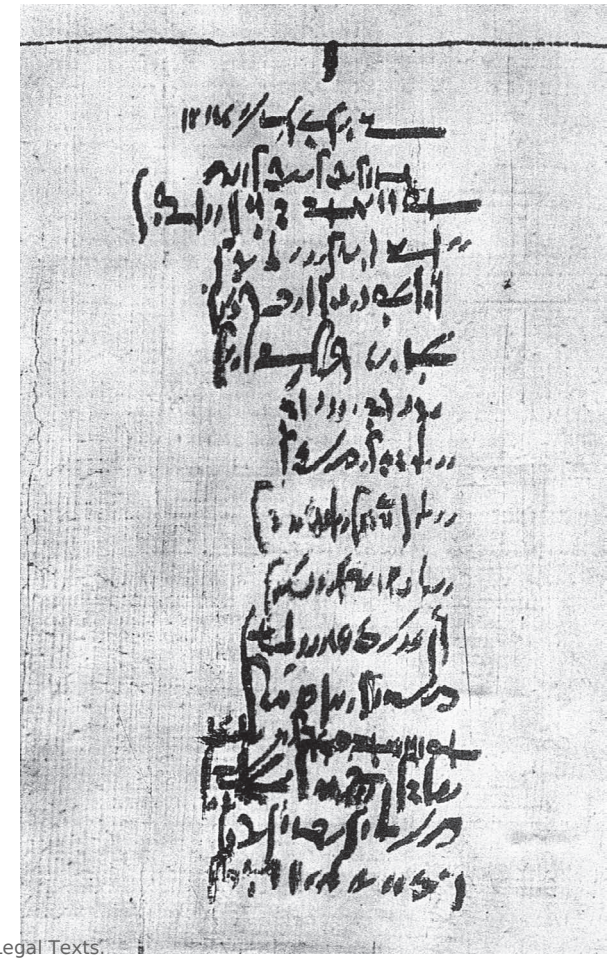
a.



b.



c.



d.

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Pl. II. Ibid, pl. VII.

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