

Two Demotic Ostraca of Unknown Provenances

كسرتان من الفخار بالخط الديموطيقي مجهولتي المصدر

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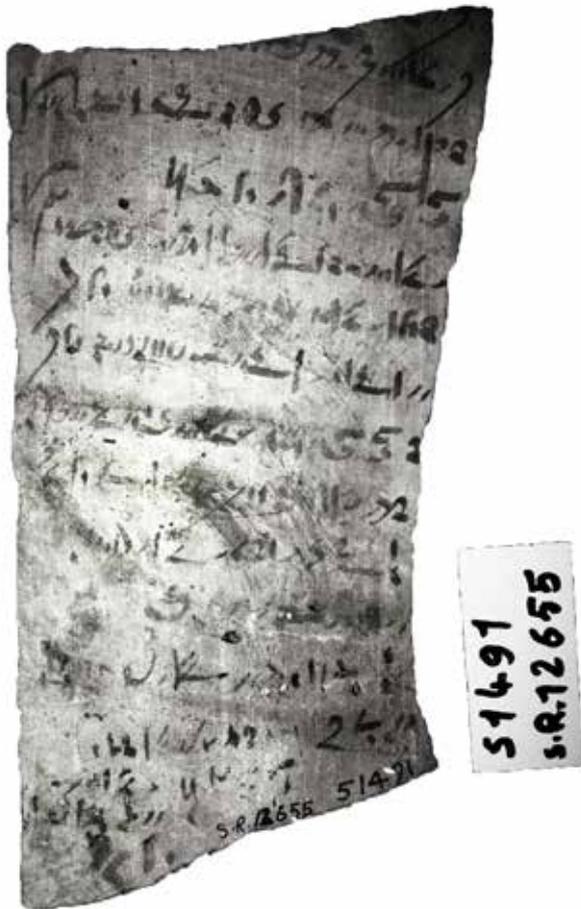
ملخص

تتضمن هذه المقالة دراسة لكسرتين من الفخار من مجموعات المتحف المصري بالقاهرة؛ إلا أن مصدرهما غير معروف. وتؤرخ الأولى بالفترة المبكرة من العصر البطلمي. والنص الخاص بها يتضمن وثيقة تنتمي لأحد المعابد، وتمثل هذه الوثيقة إعلاناً باستلام مواد مختلفة ومبالغ مالية لتلبية احتياجات المعبد الخاصة بالشهر الثالث والرابع من فصل الصيف، أما من قام بإعداد النص فهو غالباً المسئول الإداري بالمعبد.

النص الآخر مؤرخ بالعام السادس والعشرين من حكم الإمبراطور أغسطس (السابع من يونية - العام الرابع ق.م.)، ويتضمن كميات من القمح التي تمثل قروضاً خاصة بمحصول القمح التي تُسَلَّم في أيام محددة، ويُسلمها الفلاح المسئول عن زراعة الأرض المؤجرة.

This article deals with two Demotic ostraca belonging to the collections of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, and of unknown provenances. The first one could be dated to the early Ptolemaic period and represents a temple document. The latter dates to Year 26 of the reign of Augustus, and is a loan document concerning wheat crop. Unfortunately, neither of these documents includes any clues pertaining to their provenances.

1. A temple account list (Fig. 1)



Inv.: Cairo *JdÉ* 51491.

Measurements: 18.7 x 9.5 cm.

Provenance: Unknown.

Date: Early Ptolemaic?

Description: Potsherd of dark reddish-brown color; text appears on one side of the potsherd; some surviving traces suggest being palimpsest; broken off at the upper edge.

Transliteration

1. 1/3 r. t[]
2. 1/3 r. tj=j n=f n hj []
3. n³ rmt.w n hj hr n³ mnḥ.w Ês.t (rtb n) sw 4
4. k^ck^c.t 5 r (rtb n) sw 1/12
5. r. tj=j n n³ ḥtp-ntr r p³ ntr ... hr n³ wn.w tbn 4
6. n³ sw.w r tj=j [] ḥtp (rtb n) sw 1/4
7. ^c.wj (n) p³ ntr.... p³ ḥm-ntr Ḥr-s³-Ês.t (rtb n) sw 1/3
8. n³ k^ck^c.w.t [p³ ḥm-ntr] Ḥr-s³-Ês.t irm w^cb
9. n³ hj.w [] sw 20 [] (rtb n) sw 1/6
10. šr mnḥ ḥbt-3 r ^c.wj
11. p³ ḥm-ntr Ḥr-s³-Ês.t [] tj []
12. [...] tr [..]
13. (rtb n) bt 49.t ḥbt-4 šmw sw 10 r.tj n³... []
14. k^ck^c.t 2.t [] tj .. []
15. P³ šr
16. (rtb n) sw 3.t

Translation

1. 1/3 which []
2. 1/3 which I gave to him for the cost []
3. The tenants besides the stylists of Isis 4 (artabas of) wheat
4. Five cakes make 1/12 (artabas of) wheat
5. What I gave for the divine offerings concerning the god ... besides the shrine openers 4 debens
6. The wheat which I gave [] priestly allowance 1/4 (artabas of) wheat
7. The temple.... the first priest Harsiesis 1/3 (artabas of) of wheat
8. The cakes [the first priest] Harsiesis with the priest.

9. The costs [] day 20 [] 1/6 (artabas of) wheat.
10. (The) son of the stylist the third month concerning the temple.
11. The first priest Harsiesis [] that one []
12. [.....] entire [..]
13. Forty-nine (artabas of) emmer-wheat Mesore day 10 what the ... [] gave
14. Two cakes [] gave... []
15. The son....
16. Three (artabas of) wheat.

Line Commentary

L.1: It can be predicted easily that this line starts with the same formula as that of the following line (1/3 r.tj=j “1/3 which I gave”).

L.3: Among the various meanings of preposition hr² “besides” seems to be the most appropriate one for the context, so it is adopted also in L.5.

mnḥ is interpreted as “stylist” i.e. “the one who dresses divine images”, which appeared in many titles, such as mnḥ Wsīr-Ḥp p³ ntr³ “stylist of Osiris-Apis, the great god” (P S Vienna Kunst 5850, 10 & 13), mnḥ }s.t t³ mw.t n Ḥp “stylist of Isis, the mother of Apis” (E I Saq 9, 16).³

The dot, representing the letter s, of the word sw “wheat” is probably covered under the elongated sign for four. The sign occurring between sw and four could be unobliterated sign of a previous text.

L.5: The faint curved sign appearing below the sign ntr “god” (in r p³ ntr), probably belongs to an earlier text.

tš “province” is legible after ntr, where it makes a perfect sense (p³ ntr tš “the god of the province”), but the absence of the geographical determinative of this word assumes that this reading might be uncertain.

The reading wn “shrine opener = Gr.παστοφόρος” is agreed by many scholars, such as Erichsen depending on *Wb* 1, 312/13; Meeks, *Année* 3 (1982) 69, 79.0675. This reading was also taken by Clarysse & Thompson, *Counting the People* 1 (2006) 653 or it might be also read wn-pr, as suggested uncertainly by Sp., *RdT* 23 (1901) 99, n. 2 & Griffith, *Rylands*, 3 (1909), 214, n. 5; & supported by Pestman, *RdE* 25 (1973) 22, n. 1; Tait, *Fs. Lüddeckens* (1984) 218; Pestman, *Choachyte* (1993) 428, d, who gave a number of hand copies of exx.⁴ Quack suggested iri³-³ as a different reading.⁵

The silver sign is read as tbn due to being followed by a number (4), while the reading kt becomes certain in case of being followed by a fraction.⁶

The tbn sign is written above the plural sign for wn.w.

L.6: n³ sw.w “wheat” could be written in the plural form probably to refer to considerable quantities.⁷

L.7: Both ^c.wy “house” and ^c.wj n p³ ntr “house of the god” were used frequently to convey the meaning “temple”.⁸

ḥ-ḥtp “advance or deposit”⁹ could be a suggested reading for the ambiguous word appearing after ^c.wj n p³ ntr, albeit its meaning does not go well with the context.

The religious title p³ ḥm-ntr “the first priest” was also used as a proper name,¹⁰ but the non-existence of any other proper names, rather than Harsiesis, in this text and the recurrence of many titles make the scale tip in favor of being the title.

L.13: bt “emmer-wheat” is legible at the beginning of this line.¹¹

General Commentary

This text starts with a declaration made by a person whose name is not mentioned (*L.2*: 1/3 r. tj=j n=f n h[j] “1/3 which I gave to him for the cost”), by which he declared that he gave sums of money and seeds and numbers of cakes for certain persons who were indicated by their titles without mentioning their personal names, except that of the first priest (hm-ntr):

L.3: n³ rmt.w n hj hr n³ mnḥ.w Ês.t (rtb n) sw 4 “The tenants¹² besides the stylists of Isis 4 (artabas of) wheat”

L.4: k^ck^c(.t) 5 r (rtb n) sw 1/12 “5 cakes make 1/12 (artabas of) wheat”

L.5: r. tj=j n n³ ḥtp-ntr r p³ ntr ... hr n³ wn.w tbn 4 “What I gave for the divine offerings concerning the god ... besides the shrine openers 4 debens”

L.6: n³ sw.w r tj=j [] ḥtp (rtb n) sw 1/4 “The wheat which I gave [] priestly allowance 1/4 (artabas of) wheat”

L.7: ^c.wj (n) p³ ntr p³ hm-ntr Ḥr-s³-Ês.t (rtb n) sw 1/3 “The temple the first priest Harsiesis 1/3 (artabas of) of wheat”

L.8: n³ k^ck^c.w.t [] p³ hm-ntr] Ḥr-s³-Ês.t irm w^cb “The cakes [] the first priest] Harsiesis with the priest”

L.9: n³ hj.w [] sw 20 [] (rtb n) sw 1/6 “The costs [] day 20 [] 1/6 (artabas of) wheat”

L.10: šr mnḥ ibt-3 r ^c.wj “(The) son of the stylist third month concerning the temple”

L.11: p³ hm-ntr Ḥr-s³-Ês.t [] t³j [] “The first priest Harsiesis [] that one []”

L.13: (rtb n) bt 49.t ibt-4 šmw sw 10 r.tj n³ .. [] “49 (artabas of) emmer-wheat Mesore day10 what the ..[] gave”

L.14: k^ck^c.t 2.t [] tj .. [] “2 cakes [] gave .. []”

L.16: (rtb n) sw 3.t “3 (artabas of) wheat”.

The recurring religious titles unveil clearly the identity of its holders, who are members of the clergy of a temple, which is mentioned twice (*L.7*: ^c.wj (n) p³ ntr, *L.10*: ^c.wj) with no further details about it. The tenants (*L.3*) are probably also of the same clerical members, as priests were always engaged in the temple’s land.¹³ Those priests are of different ranks, whose chief is the first priest Harsiesis, designated three times in the text (*L.7*, 8, 11), the only one mentioned with his name probably because of his high rank. The sums mentioned were described as being given for costs (*L.2*, 9), divine offerings (*L.5*) and priestly stipend (*L.6*). The declared sums ranged between being money (*L.4*: 4 debens = 40 kite = 80 drachma), wheat (*L.3*: 4 artabas, *L.6*: 1/4 artaba, *L.7*: 1/3 artaba, *L.9*: 1/6 artaba, *L.16*: 3 artabas), olyra¹⁴ (*L.13*: 49 artabas) and numbers of cakes (*L.4*: 5 cakes, *L.8*: .. cakes, *L.14*: 2 cakes), where it was clarified that the quantity of wheat used to make 5 cakes is 1/12 artabas of wheat.¹⁵

Eventually, this text can be classified as a temple document registering a declaration of the delivery of diversified substances and money in order to be used to meet many of the temple’s needs related to the third and fourth months of the summer season. The one who made this declaration is most likely the mr-šn (*lesonis*) of the temple.¹⁶ The lack of the provenance of this document leaves no room for any speculations concerning the location nor the deity of the temple.

2) A loan document of wheat crop (Fig. 2)

Inv.: Cairo CG 67043.

Measurements: 20.1 x 15 cm.

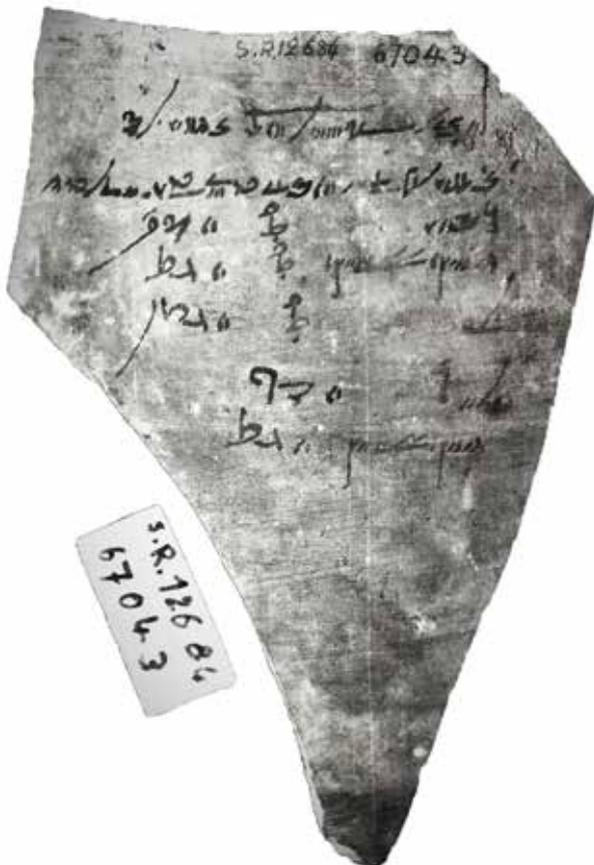
Provenance: Unknown.

Date: Year 26 of Augustus (7 June 4 BC)

Description: Dark reddish-brown potsherd; written on one side of the pot, with a possibility of being palimpsest due to not fully obliterated signs that can still be observed.

Transliteration

1. ḥ.t-sp 26 n Gjjsrs ḥbt-2 šm sw 13
2. wj^c Lw s³ Smbḥtj³n n p³ ḳr³
3. sm mḥ-3.t (rtb n) sw 70 1/3
4. pr.t-sh.t mḥ-3.t (rtb n) sw 13
5. sw 19 mḥ-3.t (rtb n) sw 14 2/3
6. sw 26 ḥ[] (rtb n) sw 85
7. pr.t-sh.t (rtb n) sw 13



Translation

1. year 26 of Caesar Payni day 13
2. The peasant of Loes son of Smpathian of the ḳr³ (?)
3. herb, the third 70 1/3 (artabas of) wheat
4. the seeds of field, the third 13 (artabas of) wheat
5. day 19, the third 14 2/3 (artabas of) wheat
6. day 26 ḥ[] 85 (artabas of) wheat
7. the seeds of field 13 (artabas of) wheat.

Line commentary

L.2: The personal name Lw¹⁷ has the foreign determinative¹⁸ (a combination of sandy-hill country over edge of green cultivation and a throw stick). The patronymic Smbḥtj³n is most probably one of the variants of Snpthjn.¹⁹

P³ ḳr³ is clearly written with the house determinative, but its meaning is problematic. In the *Chicago Demotic Dictionary* two words were discussed shortly, i.e. ḳr³ and ḳḽ³:

ḳr³ appeared in the plural form with a clear determinative of the house which was read by de Cenival as ḳr^c, who interpreted it as “to scatter” (*RdE* 20, 1968, 38-40). While ḳr³, with the plant determinative, was translated as a type of plant “coriander” (Reymond, *Medical* 1976, who read ḳr(ḥ)). ḳḽ³ recurred also in the plural form with two determinatives, each appeared separately, the house and the stone determinatives, where it was interpreted as unit of liquid measure (Thissen, *Enchoria* 6, 1976, 69, n. to l. 2), part of personal name (Bresciani, *SCO* 22, 1973), or docks (Pestman, *Amenothos*, 1981, 150-51, n. d). Two other variants are also known kl, with unclear determinative, and ḳr with the house determinative, rendered as farmhouse.²⁰ Therefore, it is preferred to leave p³ ḳr³ without being translated, albeit the occurrence of

the house determinative raise a question concerning being a type of buildings related to the agricultural society to which *Loes* and his farmer belonged.

Lines 3, 4 and 5 are written in the form of 3 columns, but the context proposes that they are nothing but three successive lines.

General commentary

This document starts with a clear date of Year 26 of the reign of Augustus. Then *wj^c* conveys the meaning of a farmer undertaking the tiling works,²¹ followed by *Loes* son of *Smpathian*, to whom the farmer presented his services. Next *n p³ k^r* “of the *k^r*” showed up, which is likely an agricultural institution located at the province where both the farmer and *Loes* lived. The main subject of this text showed up starting from line 3, where some amounts of wheat were connected with herb and the seeds of field for the third time in certain days:

L.3: *sm mḥ-3.t (rtb n) sw 70 1/3* “herb, the third 70 1/3 (artabas of) wheat”

L.4: *pr.t-sh.t mḥ-3.t (rtb n) sw 13* “the seeds of field, the third 13 (artabas of) wheat”

L.5: *sw 19 mḥ-3.t (rtb n) sw 14 2/3* “day 19, the third 14 2/3 (artabas of) wheat”

The last two amounts of wheat mentioned are in relevance to the seeds of field and one certain day:

L.6: *sw 26 ḥ[] (rtb n) sw 85* “day 26 ḥ[] 85 (artabas of) wheat”

L.7: *pr.t-sh.t (rtb n) 13* “the seeds of field 13 (artabas of) wheat.”

The word *sm*²² can be interpreted as herb, probably a general term used to refer to the produce of the rented land, whereas *pr.t-sh.t* appeared in many ostraca from Thebes dated to the Roman period. Some of these ostraca acknowledged money payments made instead

of amounts of wheat for *pr.t-sh.t* “the seeds of field”, where it was elucidated as amounts of seeds, specified according to the piece of land rented, delivered in advance by the cultivator of the State’s land upon paying the rent, by which it was guaranteed that the land will remain cultivated in the next year.²³ Others included amounts of wheat paid also for *pr.t-sh.t* “seed grain”, either separately or with the land rent (*p³ ḥw-ḥwtj*), which was explained as loans of seed grain.²⁴ Both of the two elucidations are reasonable, however the latter is more acceptable.

Accordingly, the amounts of wheat could represent loans of wheat crop delivered in certain days by the farmer cultivating the rented land, whose lessee could be *Loes*. Unfortunately the fluctuation in the amounts paid will be left unaccounted for.

Notes

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1 The paleographical features of the text, the thick script formed with separated signs or with ligatures, suggest the early Ptolemaic period as a possible date for this ostrakon. M. Depauw, *A Companion to Demotic Studies, Papyrologica Bruxellensia* 28 (Brussels, 1997), 23–24.

2 W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (1954, Kopenhagen), 386–87.

3 *Chicago Demotic Dictionary* 117, letter m, consulted on 5 July 2019.

4 *Chicago Demotic Dictionary* 89, letter w, consulted on 5 July 2019.

5 J.f. Quack, ‘Zu einigen demotischen Gruppen umstrittener lesung oder problematischer Ableitung’, in: S.P. Vleeming (ed.), *Aspects of Demotic Orthography (Stud. Demot. II)* (Leuven, 2013), 110.

6 D. Devauchelle, ‘ḤD: deben ou kite?’, *Enchoria* 13 (1985), 157.

- 7 Cf. ḥmꜣ.t n nꜣ sw.w “freight of wheat” no.174, 1; sw.w n ꜣs.t “wheat of Isis” no. 418, 3. M.A.A. Nur El-Din, *The Demotic Ostraca in the National Museum of Antiquities at Leiden* (Leiden, 1974), 142–43, 320.
- 8 *Chicago Demotic Dictionary* 8, letter ꜥ, consulted on 5 July 2019.
- 9 *Chicago Demotic Dictionary* 301, letter ḥ, consulted on 5 July 2019.
- 10 E. Lüddeckens, et al. (eds), *Demotisches Namenbuch*, vol. 1–17 (Wiesbaden, 1980–2000), 204.
- 11 M. Malinine, ‘Un Prêt de Céréales à L’Époque de Darius I (Pap. Dém. Strasbourg N. 4)’, *Kémi* 11 (1950), 9.
- 12 Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar*, 248.
- 13 G.R. Hughes, *Saite Demotic Land Leases, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization* 28 (Chicago, 1952), 46–47.
- 14 During the Ptolemaic period, the Egyptian priests received their allowances in the form of baked bread made of emmer wheat “bt”. D.J. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies* (Princeton, 1988), 183.
- 15 From the Sarapieion papyri, it is known that thirty loaves were reckoned as the equivalent of one artaba of olya (emmer wheat), where the allowance of four loaves per day was given as the daily ration for the twins engaged in mourning ceremonies for the Apis bull, which died in 164 BCE. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies*, 183–84.
- 16 During the Ptolemaic period, each temple had one *lesonis* who was in charge of the temple’s finances and of meeting its obligations to the State. A. Monson, ‘Priests of Soknebtunis and Sokonopis: P. BM EA 10647’, *JEA* 92 (2006), 208.
- 17 Lüddeckens, et al. (eds), *Demotisches Namenbuch*, 722.
- 18 The Greek male names normally take either the sitting man determinative or that of the foreigner. W. Clarysse, ‘Determinatives in Greek Loan-Words and Proper Names’, in S.P. Vleeming (ed.), *Aspects of Demotic Orthography (Stud. Demot. 11)* (Leuven, 2013), 1–2. For additional forms of the foreign determinative, see O. El-Aguizy, ‘A Palaeographical Study of Demotic Papyri’, *MIFAO* 113 (1998), 342–43.
- 19 Lüddeckens, et al. (eds), *Demotisches Namenbuch*, 930.
- 20 *Chicago Demotic Dictionary* 55–58, letter ꜥ, consulted on 13 July 2019.
- 21 Hughes, *Saite Demotic Land Leases, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization* 28, 46.
- 22 Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar*, 430.
- 23 Year 1 and Year 6 of Tiberius. Nur El-Din, *The Demotic Ostraca in the National Museum of Antiquities at Leiden*, nos. 57.2, 58.2, 59.2.
- 24 Years 42, 32 and 27 of Augustus. M. Lichtheim, *Demotic Ostraca from Medinet Habu* (Chicago, 1957), nos. 89.3, 91.3, 92.3.