SOME UNPUBLISHED DEMOTIC OSTRACA FROM THE PTOLEMAIC PERIOD

Nabil, S.

Egyptology dept., Faculty of Archaeology, Ain Shams Univ., Cairo, Egypt
E-mail address: sara.nabil@arch.asu.edu.eg

1. Introduction

Daily life texts in Demotic inscriptions such as taxes, accounts, reminders, temple oaths, and so on spotlight on social life and economic system in Egypt during the Ptolemaic period. For that important reason I will try in this paper to publish some of these texts which are kept in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, to know more about the life of the Egyptians in this period. Dating the texts depends on some interior evidences like mention the date in some texts, for example text nos., 2. 1. 1-2, 2. 3. 1, 2. 6. 1 and also the style of the handwriting. As for the provenances some of them are known from their excavations nos., 2. 3. 1 and 2. 6. 1, while the others are not known. Some texts were written on both recto and verso such as nos., 2. 2. 1 and 2. 5. 1. Each text is preceded by a short introduction that provides information on the contents of the text.

2. Methodological Studies

2.1. Salt taxes

Two tax receipts concern salt tax and dated to the early Ptolemaic period they belong to the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus between years 259 B.C. to year 256 B.C., their provenance is not known.

2.1.1. Ost. Nr. 20/10/14/1 c/155

- **Type**: potsherd, brown, fig. (1)
- **Measures**: 6x8 cm. thick, 1.3:1.6 cm.
- **Description**: The text is complete. It's in a good state of preservation. The handwriting is small, neat and regular.
- **Provenance**: Unknown
- **Date**: Early Ptolemaic, Ptolemy II Philadelphus (2 January 259 B.C.)
- **Transliteration**
  1) in Ta-Hb(?) t3 rmt.t Pa- ḫt ħt (kt) ¼
  2) r ḫt hm3 n ḫ3.t sp 26 šh Thwty-i.ir-ti=s s3 ḫr-nq-št=f šh
3) n h₃.t sp 26 n ibt 3 ḥ₃.t sw 8 šh Pa-hṛ (?) (s) Pa-Mn

**Translation**
1) Ta-Hb(?) the wife of Pa-hṛ has paid ¼ silver (kite)
2) to the salt tax of year 26. Signed (by) Thwty-ỉ.ỉr-ti=s son of Hr-nḍ-tt=f. Written
3) in year 26, in 8 Hathyr, day 8. Signed (by) Pa-hṛ (?) (son of) Pa-Mn

Notes: Ta-Hb(?) the wife of Pa-hṛ has paid ¼ silver kite as an installment for the salt tax in year 26 of the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.

It seems that both the taxpayer and the tax collector are not known from other texts before. L.3. It is not usual that the month in the date is preceded by a preposition n like in this text.

**Provenance:** Unknown

**Date:** Early Ptolemaic, Ptolemy II Philadelphus (3 January 256 B.C.)

**Transliteration**
1) in [N.N.] sʒ Hr-mʒ-hrw(? ḫḥ (kt) ⅛₂₂ r ḫḥ ḫhmʒ [ṣḥ]
2) n hʒ.t sp 28 šh Thwty-ỉ.ỉr-ti=s sʒsʒ Hr-wdʒs(? j n hʒ.t sp 29 ibt 3 ḥʒ.t (sw) 10
3) šh ḫthwty-ỉwʒ(? [ṣʒ] ḫPʒ-rʒ[?] (?

**Translation**
1) [N.N.] son of Hr-mʒ-hrw(?) has paid ⅛₂₂ silver (kite) to the ḫsalt tax
[Written]
2) in year 28. Signed (by) Thwty-ỉ.ỉr-ti=s sʒsʒ Hr-wdʒ[? j in year 29, Athyr, (day) 10.
3) Signed (by) ḫThwty-ỉwʒ(?) [son of ] ḫPʒ-rʒ[?]

Notes: [N.N. son of] Hr-mʒ-hrw (?) has paid ⅛₂₂ silver (kite) as an installment for the salt tax in year 29 for the previous year for the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.

L.1, 3. The ink in these lines which contain the names of the taxpayer and the tax collector is very faint to recognize and seems they are not known before.

2.1.2. Ost. Nr. 382

**Type:** Limestone, fig. (2)

**Measures:** 9×14.5 cm.

**Description:** The text is incomplete as the ostracon is broken partly on the left side, the ink is very faint on the right side which is affected the text. The handwriting is rounded and compact.

**Figure (1) Shows Ost. Nr. 20/10/14/1 c/155**

**Figure (2) Shows Ost. Nr. 382**
2.2. Account

Second type of the texts is the account. It represents some values which should be accounting in money, liquids, goods and so on. The accounts always mention some people who should probably be received, delivered or paid by them. This account represents an account of money which is written on both recto and verso.

2.2.1. Ost. Nr. 20/10/14/1c/178 R&V

- **Type:** Potsherd, brown, figr., (3- & 4)
- **Measures:** 10x14 cm. thick, 1.4:2 cm.
- **Description:** The text is incomplete as the ostracon is broken on the left side in the recto, on the right side in the verso and at the bottom. The ostracon is washed in some places especially on the left side and at the bottom of the recto and in the middle and at the bottom of the verso which is affected the text. The handwriting is small, rounded and compact.
- **Provenance:** Unknown
- **Date:** Ptolemaic.
- **Transliteration**
  - **Recto**
    - Col.1
      1) P3-ti-Wsir s3 Pa-h.t -ntr ht kt ½
      2) Hr-s3-Ist.s.t s3Ns-k(y)-šw.ty (?) ʾšr (?)
      3) ʾnh...ht kt ½ sp kt ½
      4) Ti-rmt.t hry-s-n-f(?)
      5) Ta-Hr t3 Ttwtw ht kt ½
      6) Ta-Hr s3 (sic) P3-ti-Hns=swn (?) ht kt ½
      7) Ta1-...? [ ] [ ]
    - Col. 2
      1) Ti-Mn-...? [ ]
      2) Ta-Hr t3 Pa-wnt ht kt ½
      3) Ta-Mn ss(sic) Thwty-hwp
t      4) Pa-Hnm (ss) Pa ʾ...? ht kt ½
      5) [ ] s3 Ns-p3 hy ht kt 2 ½
  - **Verso**
    1) Ns-p3-hy s3 Pa-hnm ʾswn(?)
    2) ʾht kt 2 sp ht kt 4 ʾ...? 2
    3) ʾ...? 7½ ʾ...? 2
    4) swn bn r ht ʾI(?) ʾkt 3½
    5) swn irp7½ nḥḥ(?) ʾkt 3½
    6) [ ] ʾ...? ht kt ʾ...? 1
    7) [ ] 1½ ʾ...? ʾkt kt ½
    8) ʾswn(?) ʾhkn ht kt 1
    9) [ ] ʾ...? ʾ[ ]

- **Translation**
  - **Recto**
    - Col. 1
      1) P3-ti-Wsir son of Pa-h.t -ntr ʾ½ silver kite
      2) Hr-s3-Ist.s.t son of Ns-k(y)-šw.ty (?), price(?) 4 silver kites
      3) ʾnh... ʾ½ silver kite rest ʾ½ kite
      4) Ti-rmt.t hry-s-n-f(?) ʾ½ silver kite
      5) Ta-Hr t3 Ttwtw ʾ½ silver kite
      6) Ta-Hr son of (sic) P3-ti-Hns=swn(?) ʾ½ silver kite
      7) Ta1-...? ʾ½ silver kite
    - Col. 2
      1) Ti-Mn-...? [ ]
      2) Ta-Hr daughter of Pa-wnt ʾ½ silver kites
      3) Ta-Mn ss(sic) Thwty-hwp ʾ½ silver kite
      4) Pa-Hnm(ss) Pa ʾ...? ʾ½ silver kite
      5) [ ] son of Ns-p3 hy ʾ2 ʾ½ silver kites
  - **Verso**
    1) Ns-p3-hy son of Pa-hnm ʾprice(?)
    2) 2 silver kite rest 4 silver kite ʾ2
    3) ʾ...? 7½ ʾ...? ʾ
4) Price of date makes 1(?) silver (piece) 3½ (silver) kites

5) Price of 7½ (jar of) wine, oil(?) 3½ (silver) kites

6) [ ] 1 silver kite

7) [ ] 1/6 [ ] ½ silver kite

8) [Price(?) of ] beer 1 silver kite

9) [ ] r ....... [ ]

**Verso**

L.3. Reading this proper name is problematic, and it is clear that it ends with the determinative.

L.4. Writing word bn meaning date [1,2] with this sign is unusual.

L.8. This line is probably begins with word sw (price) as its determinative is obvious.

2.3. Reminder

The text belongs to the demotic ostraca from the excavation of the French Institute for Oriental Studies in Thebes in the year 1963. It is kept in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. This text represents a reminder which is a simple text related to an exchange between individuals to transfer certain amounts of goods or money [3]. Comparing the handwriting of this text with other texts seems that it belongs to the early Ptolemaic period.

**DO 251**

- **Type:** Potsherd, light brown, fig. (5)
- **Measure:** 5.5×7.5 cm. thick, 0.8:0.9 -cm.
- **Description:** The text is incomplete as the ostracon is broken at the lift side and at the bottom. The handwriting is neat and regular.

**Provenance:** Thebes

**Date:** Early Ptolemaic, Ptolemy II Philadelphus (5 June 273 B.C.) or Ptolemy III Euergetes (27 May 235 B.C.)

**Transliteration**

1) h.t sp 12 ibt 4 pr.t (sw) 9
2) nty mtw P3-šr-pi-hy s1 'P3-š=s(?) [ ]
3) sw 16 ½¼ r sw 6 5/6(?)
4) [ ] r ...... [ ]

**Translation**

1) Year 12, Pharmouthi, (day) 9
2) which P3-šr-pi-hy son of 'P3-š=s(?) [ ]
3) 16½ (artabas of) wheat to 6 5/6(?) (artabas of) wheat
4) [ ] r ...... [ ]
Notes:
L.2. This proper name is probably read as \( P\zeta-h\tilde{\tau}s = \tilde{s} \) [4].
L.3. The sign probably represents the fraction 5/6 [2].

2.4. List of personal names
It is difficult to know the nature of this kind of texts as it is always written without headings or dates. The proper names in our text might refer to officials of temples or workmen [3].

20/10/14/1c-181
- **Type:** Potsherd, brown, fig. (6)
- **Measure:** 12×12.5 cm. thick, 0.8:1.2 cm.
- **Description:** The text is complete. The handwriting is small, neat and regular
- **Provenance:** Unknown
- **Date:** Ptolemaic
- **Transliteration**
  1) \( Pa-Mnt \) \( s\tilde{s} \) \( Pa-sny \)
  2) \( Wr\tilde{s}-nfr (?) \) \( s\tilde{s} Ti-m-htp \)
  3) \( Wn- nfr \) \( s\tilde{s} \) \( Pa-Hnm \)
  4) \( Pa-\tilde{t}\tilde{w}y \) \( s\tilde{s} \) \( P\tilde{t}-htr \)
  5) \( P\zeta-ti-lmn \) \( (ss) \) \( Ns-ps-mtr \) \( s\tilde{s} \) \( Hri=\tilde{w} \)
  6) \( \tilde{n} Pa-Mn \) \( s\tilde{s} \) \( Stm-n-il-Hnm \)
  7) \( Hr-Pa-Is.t \) \( s\tilde{s} \) \( \tilde{n}h-Hp \)
  8) \( Pa-\tilde{t}\tilde{w}y \) \( s\tilde{s} \) \( Pa-mtr \)
  9) \( Pa- \tilde{B}.wy \) \( s\tilde{s} \) \( Pylws(?) \)

20/10/14/1c-181
- **Type:** Potsherd, brown, fig. (7)
- **Measure:** 13.5×9 cm. thick, 0.7:1 cm.
- **Description:** The text is incomplete as the ostracon has washed out in lines, 3
and 4 in the Recto and in most of the text in the Verso. The handwriting is thick, rounded and compact.

- **Provenance:** Thebs or Gebelen
- **Date:** Ptolemaic
- **Transliteration**
  - **Recto**
    1) \( \text{w}^\circ \text{ht} \text{ ht 3} \)
    2) \( \text{w}^\circ \text{ht} \text{ tb}\circ \text{t 2.t} \)
    3) \( \text{w}^\circ \text{t} \text{ sdr.(t) (ht 2.t} \)
    4) \( \text{r} \text{w}^\circ \text{r} \text{..............} \)
    5) \( \text{w}^\circ \text{wnh(?)} (\text{ht}) 2 \)
  - **Verso**
    1) \( \text{r} \text{..............} \text{r}\text{wy(?)} \text{r} \text{..............} \)
    2) \( \text{r} \text{..............} \)
    3) \( \text{r} \text{..............} \)
    4) \( \text{r} \text{..............} \)
    5) \( \text{r} \text{..............} \)

- **Translation**
  - **Recto**
    1) one \( \text{ht} \text{-cloth 3 silver (piece)} \)
    2) one \( \text{ht} \text{-cloth 2.t silver obols} \)
    3) one \( \text{sdr.(t)} \text{-bed 2.t (silver piece)} \)
    4) one\( \text{r} \text{one} \text{r} \text{..............} \)
    5) one \( \text{wnh(?)} \text{-vessel 2 silver (piece)} \)
  - **Verso**
    1) \( \text{r} \text{..............} \text{pair of(?)} \text{r} \text{..............} \)
    2) \( \text{r} \text{..............} \)
    3) \( \text{r} \text{..............} \)
    4) \( \text{r} \text{..............} \)
    5) \( \text{r} \text{..............} \)

**Notes:**
- **Recto**
  L.1-2. Word \( \text{ht} \) "cloth, garment, a type of cloth” [1,2] is written in these texts in two different ways as follows:
  L.1. \[\text{[recto image]}\]
  L.2. \[\text{[verso image]}\]

**2.6. Temple Oath**

The temple oath is usually concerned with private matters of the individuals as stealing, beating or the disputes concerning the rents or buying [8]. The oath was given to the hand of the temple official who should receive it and “had the authority to supervise the performance of the oath” [9], accompanied by the title \( \text{sms} \) “the attendant” [8], or \( \text{rt} \) “the representative” [8]. The temple oath is usually written on ostraca (potsherds and limestone flakes) [9]. The oldest text is dated to about the year 200 B.C. And that kind of oath continued until the Early Roman Period [8]. The performance of the oath was done “at the entrance of a special gate of the temple of the local god” [9] of Thebes or those of Gebelen or on the Dromos of the temple [10]. The formula of the oath from Gebelen always starts with \( \text{nh} \) (means by) while in Thebes starts...
with *dd ʿnh* (means Saying: by). This temple oath came from Thebes and belongs to the excavation at Medinet Habu performed by the Oriental Institute’s 1929/30 [11-18].

**M.H. 3726**
- **Type:** Potsherd, brown, fig. (8)
- **Measure:** 9×7 cm. thick, 1:1.5 cm.
- **Description:** The text is incomplete as the ostracon is broken on the left side, on the bottom and partly at the right side; the ink is very faint in most of the text. The handwriting is neglected.
- **Provenance:** Thebes
- **Date:** Late Ptolemaic. Cleopatra III and Ptolemy IX Soter II (13 July, 114 B.C.)
- **Transliteration**
  1) *hp3 ʿnh° nty° i.ir° [N.N. ss N.N. r.ir-f]*
  2) *n °N.N. ss (?) [N.N.]*
  3) *[n] h₃.t-sp °3° ibt 2 šmw sw 16 [dd ]*
  4) *ʿnh ḫmn nty °htp° [dy irm ntr nb nty *htp irm-f]*
  5) *bn-pw=i...........[ ]*
  6) *ο............. [ ]*
- **Translation**
  1) Text of the *oath* [which] [N.N. son of N.N. should do it]
  2) to [N.N. ° ss(?)] of [N.N.]
  3) [in] year °3°, Payni, day 16 [Saying:]
  4) by ḫmn who ° rests [here together with every god who rests with him]
  5) I did not ...........[ ]
  6) ο............. [ ]

**Notes:**
The handwriting of the text is similar to that had been published by U. Kaplony-Heckel which was written also in year 3 and dated the text to the late Ptolemaic period and she dated to the reign of Cleopatra III [8].

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**3. Results**
The article concerns publishing different kind of texts to spotlight on social life and economic systems in Egypt during the Ptolemaic period as follows: 1) Two salt tax receipts which have been paid by a woman and a man, dated to the early Ptolemaic period belong to the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus between years 259 B.C. to year 256 B.C., their provenance is not known. Both of the taxpayers have paid the tax in installments as follows:
* *Ta-Hb(?) the wife of Pa- ḫt* has paid ¼ silver kite as an installment for the salt tax in year 26 for the previous year for the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.
* *[N.N. son of] ḫr-m3°-hrw(?)* has paid 1/22 silver (kite) as an installment for the salt tax in year 29 for the previous year for the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.
2) A money account from unknown provenance which is written on both recto and verso. The account on the Recto is written in two columns, deals with money account and delivered by some persons; most of the payments are ½ silver kite, while the account on the Verso mention proper names of some men concern different kinds of goods and its values in money.
3) A Reminder from Thebes, dated to the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (5 June 273 B.C.) or Ptolemy III Euergetes (27 May 235 B.C.). In this text a man called
4. Discussion

4.1. Salt taxes
Salt tax was a capitation tax [19-21] levied on all adult men, women, and slaves [19]. The rate of salt tax differs from men to women as for men before the year 32 of the reigns of Ptolemy II Philadelphia paid \( \frac{2}{3} \frac{1}{12} \) kite while women paid \( \frac{1}{2} \) kite (or \( \frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{4} \) kite for both men and women) Form year 32 of Ptolemy II Philadelphia men paid \( \frac{1}{2} \) half kite, and women paid \( \frac{1}{4} \) kite. From the first year of Ptolemy III Euergetes men paid \( \frac{1}{3} \) kite and women paid \( \frac{1}{8} \) kite [22] and this tax could also be paid in installments [3]. Slaves paid one-half rate of the freemen [19]. The salt tax in the present study was paid by a woman (No. 2. 1. 1. Ost. Nr. 20/10/14/1c/155) who paid \( \frac{1}{4} \) silver (kite) and by a man (No. 2. 1. 2. Ost. Nr. 382) who paid \( \frac{1}{22} \) silver (kite) which both of the rates represent installments of the tax.

4.2. Account
The account on the Recto is written in two columns, deals with money and mentions proper names of some men and women most of the payments are \( \frac{1}{2} \) silver kite, while the account on the Verso mention proper names of some men concern different kinds of goods and its values in money.

4.3. Reminder
It seems that \( P\text{-}\text{sr-p}\text{-}p\text{-}h\text{-}\text{hy} \) son of \( P\text{-}h\text{-}s\text{(?)} \) should deliver amounts of wheat which are 16 \( \frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{4} \) (artabas of) wheat and 6 \( \frac{5}{6} \) (artabas of) wheat to another person or to a place which is vague because the text is incomplete.

4.4. List of Personal Names
It is a list of personal names of some men and probably related to officials of temples or workmen [3].

4.5. List of the Properties of the wife
The list of woman properties sometimes appears in the first type of marriage \( s\text{h n h}\text{m}.t \) [6] “document of the wife” and sometimes it doesn’t. In this type of marriage, the husband gave the \( s\text{p n s.h}\text{m}.t \) to his wife. It is a gift representing an amount of money and sometimes accompanied by a quantity of corn [6]. At the beginning of the Ptolemaic period, the father of the bride received it from the future husband before the marriage while in the middle of this period the wife received it by herself, and at the end of it she received it after the divorce [24].

4.6. Temple Oath
The defendant in this text is denied the charge which is vague because the text is incomplete. According to the style of the handwriting of the text, it seems that it belongs to the late Ptolemaic period.
5. Conclusion
The present article concerns publishing different kinds of daily life of demotic texts from the Ptolemaic period. Two salt tax receipts have been paid in installments by a woman and a man and dated to the early Ptolemaic period belonging to the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphia between years 259 B.C. to year 256 B.C. A money account which is written on both the recto and the verso mentions some names of men and women. A reminder dated to the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphia (5 June 273 B.C.) or Ptolemy III Euergetes (27 May 235 B.C.) deals with an amount of artabas of wheat. A list of personal names of some men. A list of the properties of the wife which is written on both the Recto and the Verso. A temple oath probably dated to the reign of Cleopatra III and Ptolemy IX Soter II (13 July, 114 B.C.). These texts spotlight on social life and economic systems in Egypt during the Ptolemaic period.

Endontes
(a) It appears a few times in the other two types of marriage: ḫd n ḫ lmr.t “money in order to become a wife”, that wife gave money to her husband who received a receipt from his wife and he had to bring it back after the divorce through 30 days and if he couldn’t he gave her his property which he pledged it to her. In the type of marriage the contracts don’t mention the children’s rights. This type of marriage could be turned to the first type. ẖnḥ “to cause to live”, money was also given by the wife to her husband and he has to bring it back after the divorce too and in this type the husband mentioned that his children inherit him after his death.

References


