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Mahmoud Ebeid

Two Demotic Ostraca from al-Ashmunein Magazine

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## Two Demotic Ostraca from al-Ashmunein Magazine

MAHMOUD EBEID

*This paper is presented as a tribute to my Professor, Dr M.A.A. Nur el-Din,  
to whom all Egyptian Egyptologists are indebted.  
The subject of this article is directly connected to his main sphere of interest.*

**T**UNA AL-GEHEL necropolis yielded numerous materials among which were two demotic ostraca. They were found during the Cairo University excavations conducted on location by S. Gabra and others. They are now stored inside the al-Ashmunein magazine in Mallawi province, in al-Minya Governorate.<sup>1</sup> Because of the occurrence of the word *kt* in ostr. 1, 4, ostr. 2, col. 1, 3, it is clear that these ostraca include accounts of certain sums of money. In virtue of the paleographical features (the handwriting is bold and thick, no ligatures can be witnessed), these two ostraca can be dated back to the late Ptolemaic period.

### 1. Ostrakon Inv. No. 1128

[FIG. 1A-b]

*Dimensions:* Height: 17 cm; Width: 9 cm; Thickness: 1 cm.

*Bibliography:* Unpublished.

*Content:* Accounts of payments made to the woman *T3-‘n.t* who may have been related to a religious association in Tuna al-Gebel necropolis.

I would like to thank Prof. Dr. M.A.A. Nur el-Din, Prof. Dr. D. Kessler, and members of the joint archaeological mission of Cairo and München Universities in Tuna al-Gebel for their great help. For the photographs of these ostraca, I would like to thank Dr. F. Steinmann (Leipzig) and P. Brose (München University). My thanks are also due to Y. Zakarya,

M. Khallaf, S. Abd-el-Malek and all the inspectors in the al-Ashmunein magazine for their great help during my work on location; to Prof. O. El-Aguizy, Prof. H.-J. Thissen, my colleague Dr. M. Akeel (Helwan University) and Prof. S.P. Vleeming who have read my manuscript and presented some useful suggestions and comments.

**1** These two ostraca were found inside the magazine together with a clay-bowl (Inv. No. 1173), and another ostrakon (Inv. No. 1130). Unfortunately the excavator did not give any information about their original place. However, one can assume that they were found together at the same place inside the necropolis.

*Description:* Potsherd of reddish brown colour; two columns consisting of 17 lines of proper names and sums written on the outside of the pot. The neat script reveals that it was written by a meticulous hand.

### Transliteration

[1] (r)-in=w <sup>a</sup> T3- <sup>c</sup> n.t <sup>b</sup>	
[2] P3y(=y)(?) - hnsu <sup>c</sup> (s3) Hr-m3y-ḥs	1/2[4]
[3] Īs.t-m-ḥ3.t ta Hr-igš	1/4.t <sup>d</sup>
[4] Hr-st3.ṯ(?) <sup>e</sup> s3 3ṯ	1/4.t kt 1/2
[5] St3.ṯ=w-t3- wty (s3) Pa-Īs.t	1/24
[6] Pa-sy-p3- <sup>c</sup> w	1/24
[7] Hr (s3) P3-n3	1/24
[8] T3-mu.t-nfr.t <sup>f</sup> ta Hr	1/36
[9] Mn-ī.īr-dī.t=s(?) <sup>g</sup> (s3) P3y-ḥrd	1/36
[10] Hr-m-ḥb (s3) P3-šr-Īmn	1/36
[11] T3- <sup>c</sup> 3 <sup>h</sup> (s3) Bs	1/24
[12] Ta-ḥ3.t ta Htp-ḥr	1/2[4]
[13] P3-mnḥ (s3) P3-ḥb	1/24
[14] P3-mnḥ (s3) Hr	1/12(?) <sup>i</sup>
[15] Hr-Sm3-t3.wy s3 P3-dī-Wsīr	1/24
[16] Dd-ḥr (s3) Wn-nfr	1/24
[17] Ta-wn (ta) Šp-B3st.t (?)	1/24

### Translation

[1] (What) has been paid (to) T3- <sup>c</sup> n.t	
[2] P3y(=y)-hnsu (son of) Hr-m3y-ḥs	:1/2[4]
[3] Īs.t-m-ḥ3.t daughter of Hr-igš	:1/4
[4] Hr-st3.ṯ son of 3ṯ	:1/4 (and) 1/2 kite
[5] St3.ṯ=w-t3-wty (son of) P3-Īs.t	:1/24
[6] Pa-sy-p3- <sup>c</sup> w	:1/24
[7] Hr (son) of P3-n3	:1/24
[8] T3-mu.t-nfr.t daughter of Hr	:1/36
[9] Mn-ī.īr-dī.t=s (son of) P3y-ḥrd	:1/36
[10] Hr-m-ḥb (son of) P3-šr-Īmn	:1/36
[11] T3- <sup>c</sup> 3 (son of) Bs	:1/24
[12] Ta-ḥ3.t daughter of Htp-ḥr	:1/2[4]
[13] P3-mnḥ (son of) P3-ḥb	:1/24
[14] P3-mnḥ (son of) Hr	:1/12
[15] Hr-Sm3-t3.wy son of P3-dī-Wsīr	:1/24
[16] Dd-ḥr (son of) Wn-nfr	:1/24
[17] Ta-wn (daughter of) Šp-B3st.t	:1/24

### Commentary

- a. *in=w* : This group recurs six times in the second ostrakon: ostr. 2, col. 2, 2; col. 3, 1; col. 4, 1; col. 5, 1; col. 5, 2; col. 6, 1; it could be read as part of a proper name, cf. *Īn=w-p3-mw* “*Man hat das wasser gebracht*”, *Demot. Nb. II* 2, p. 68. It could also be suggested that (*r*)-*in=w* is to be understood as a *sdm=f* relative form (see W. Spiegelberg, *Demotische Grammatik*, Heidelberg, 1925, § 549-553, p. 248-251; J. Johnson, *The Demotic Verbal System*, *SAOC* 38, 1976, p. 182-185): “(what) has been paid to NN”, which is usually used in tax receipts. For payment verbs, see M.A.A. Nur el-Din, “Terms of, ‘Payment’ in Demotic”, in Sch. Allam (ed.): *Grund und Boden in Altägypten, (Rechtliche und sozio-ökonomische Verhältnisse): Akten des internationalen Symposions, Tübingen 18.-20. Juni 1990*, *URAÄ II*, 1994, p. 285-288. This interpretation is the most plausible here, since the oblique stroke for “*r*” in ostr. 2, col. 5, 1, 2, col. 6, 1 before the verb *in* is clear; as well as it is followed by an enumeration of personal names and some sums of money.
- b. *T3-n.t*: “the female baboon”, see *Wb I*, 41, 5-9; W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar*, Kopenhagen, 1954, p. 56. For the personal name *T3-n.t*, cf. *P3-n*, *Demot. Nb. I*/ 3, p. 162.  
Although this name is not followed by a title, it might refer to one of the women who, in the religious associations in Tuna al-Gebel necropolis, were responsible for, or leaders of, receiving the contributions or participations of other members of the association. For female religious titles in connection with religious associations, cf. *P. dém. Lille 31* (H. Sottas, *Papyrus demotiques de Lille I*, Paris, 1921, p. 81-82, pl. 17; Fr. de Cenival, “Deux papyrus inédits de Lille, avec une révision du *P. Dem. Lille 31*”, *Enchoria* 7, 1977, p. 21-23, pl. 7-8); *P. dém. Lille 97 v°*, (*ibid.*, p. 6-12, pl. 3-4).
- c. The reading of the initial element of the personal name *P3y(=y)?-hnsu* is uncertain.<sup>2</sup>
- d. The sign could be the feminine *t* under the fraction 1/4, the same sign occurs also in l. 4, and on ostr. 2, col. 1, 3, 4.
- e. The personal name *Hr-st3.t* (?) is neither attested in *PN* nor in *Demotisches Namenbuch*. The first element *hr* “face” is a common element occurring with personal names, see W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar*, p. 317, and for *hr-nb*, *hr-pn*, *hr=f-nb*, *hr-rr3*, *hr-hp*, see *Demot. Nb. I/II*, p. 793, 810, 811, 828, 829.  
The second element *st3.t* can be part of the personal name *St3.t=w-t3-wty*, cf. l. 5.
- f. The personal name *T3-mw.t-nfr.t* is not attested in *Demotisches Namenbuch*, but occurs in *PN* (I, 357, 8). The same name is mentioned in the genealogy of the demotic archive of *Dd-hr* son of *Hr* (191-162 B.C) from Tuna al-Gebel necropolis, see E. Lüddeckens, *LÄ IV*, 1982, col. 831, s. v “Papyri, Demotische, Kairo, aus der äg. Grabung in Tuna al-Gebel”; *id.*, *LÄ VI*, 1986, col. 881, s. v. “Urkundenarchive”; *id.*, “Ein demotischer Urkundenfund in Tuna el Gebel (mit einer genealogischen Skizze)”, in E. Kiessling, H.-A. Rupprecht (eds.), *Akten des XIII. internationalen Papyrologenkongresses, Marburg/Lahn, 2.-6. August 1971*, *MBF* 66 1974, p. 239.

<sup>2</sup> This name is not listed in *Demotisches Namenbuch*; I thank Prof. S.P. Vleeming who suggested to me the reading *P3y(=y)*, which, to my opinion, is better than the reading *P3-...?-Hnsu*, made by H.-J. Thissen.

- g. The first element of the personal name *Mn* seems certain, but the second element is illegible; we suggest to read *Mn-ī.īr-dī.t=s* (?) (*Demot. Nb.* I/8, p. 589), the reading *-ī.īr-dī.t=s*(?) being more likely here than the alternative *-īw*, see W. Clarysse, “Noms démotiques en *-īw*, *-m-hb*, et *-ī.īr-dī-s*”, *Enchoria* 15, 1987, p. 11-24.
- h. The personal name *Tj-ʿj* [𐤓𐤓] is attested in other demotic documents from the same site, whether inside the subterranean galleries of the sacred animals or in the area outside the galleries, see H.-J. Thissen, “Demotische Inschriften aus den Ibisgalerien in Tuna al-Gebel. Ein Vorbericht”, *Enchoria* 18, 1991, p. 108; M. Ebeid, “Demotic Inscriptions from the Galleries of Tuna al-Gebel”, *BIFAO* 106, 2006, p. 64, n. u; *Demot. Nb.* I/17, p. 1310,3-4; demotic papyrus Cairo 24/11/62/4 r° 4; v° 16, see A. Farid, “A Demotic Sale Contract of the Whole Property”, in B. S. El-Sharkawy (ed.), *The Horizon. Studies in Honour of M.A. Nur el-Din (10-12 April 2007)*, Cairo, 2009, p. 262-265.<sup>3</sup>
- In addition to this common form of the personal name *Tj-ʿj* [𐤓𐤓] in Tuna al-Gebel necropolis, the form [𐤓𐤓𐤓] is also known on the wooden coffin al-Ashmunein magazine Inv. No. 1254 from the animal galleries.<sup>4</sup>
- i. The group 𐤓 should be a fraction; probably 1/12. This can be supported by the fact that all entries in the text are 1/2, 1/4, 1/24, 1/36.

## 2. Ostrakon Inv. No. 1129

[FIG. 2a-b]

*Dimensions:* Height: 22 cm; Width: 12.5 cm; Thickness: 1.3 cm.

*Bibliography:* Unpublished.

*Content:* Accounts of payments made to persons who might be related to a religious association in Tuna al-Gebel necropolis.

*Description:* Potsherd of reddish brown colour broken in two; the top and the right sides are broken. The text comprises six columns written on the outer surface; the inner surface is blank. The first column includes ten incomplete lines, the second contains nine lines, the third, which was inserted afterwards and written in a thin handwriting that is different from the two others, consists of three lines, the fourth, fifth and sixth columns each comprises two lines. The handwriting in general is neat and skilful, and there are some faded signs, especially in the middle of the ostrakon and at the bottom.

### Transliteration

#### ● Column 1

[1] [ 1/2 ] 4

[2] [ ..... ] 1/24

[3] [ ] 1/4. t kt 1/2

<sup>3</sup> For the reading *Tj-ʿj*, see K.-Th. ZAUZICH, “Die demotischen Ostrakelfragen - eine Zwischenbilanz”, in P.J. Frandsen, K. Ryholt (eds.), *A Miscellany of Demotic Texts and Studies*, CNIP 22, 2000, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> M. EBEID, *Demotic Inscriptions from the Galleries of Tuna al-Gebel Necropolis, The Carlsberg Papyri 3* (forthcoming).

- [4] [ ] I/4.t  
 [5] [ ... ] <I>/36  
 [6] [ ] <I>/36  
 [7] [ ] I/24  
 [8] [ I/2 ] 4  
 [9] [ ] <I>/36  
 [10] [ ] <I>/36

• Column 2

- [1] [Pa-s]y-p3-ꜥ <I>/36  
 [2] (r)-in=w Īs.t-m-h3.t  
 [3] Ta-h3.t ta Htp-hr I/24  
 [4] P3-mnh (s3) Hr <I>/36  
 [5] Dḥwt-y-īw (s3) Hr-hnsw (s3) Pa-sy (p3)-ꜥ<sup>a</sup> I/24  
 [6] Dd-hr (s3) Wn-nfr I/24  
 [7] Hr-(m>-hy<sup>b</sup> I/24  
 [8] Pa-sy-p3-ꜥ <I>/36  
 [9] Bs(?) I/36

• Column 3

- [1] (r)-in=w Dd-hr (s3) B3  
 [2] Ta-h3.t ta P3-dī-Wsīr 4I<sup>c</sup>  
 [3] Dd- hr-p3 n3 (s3)Pa-n3-hb.w<sup>d</sup> I/24

• Column 4

- [1] (r)-in=w ... H<sup>c</sup>-īs.t (?) ta Hr-s3-īs.t<sup>e</sup>  
 [2] Hr-p3y-Wsīr (?)<sup>f</sup> (s3) Hr- [iḡš ]

• Column 5

- [1] r-in=w P3-šr-Īmn (s3) Hr-s3-Īs.t  
 [2] [r]-in=w Hr-Hnsw s3 Pa-hb(?)<sup>g</sup> I/24

• Column 6

- [1] r-in=w Ta-Īs.t  
 [2] Wn-nfr-p3-iḡš <I>/I6

*Translation*

• Column 1

- [1] [ I/2 ] 4  
 [2] [ ..... ] I/24  
 [3] [ ] I/4 (and) I/2 kite  
 [4] [ ] I/4  
 [5] [ ..... ] <I>/36

[6] [ ] <I>/36

[7] [ ] I/24

[8] [ ] I/2/4

[9] [ ] <I>/36

[10] [ ] <I>/36

● Column 2

[1] [Pa-s]y the great :<I>/36

[2] (What) has been paid (to) Īs.t-m-ḥ3.t

[3] Ta-ḥ3.t daughter of Htp-ḥr :I/24

[4] P3-mnh (son of) Hr :<I>/36

[5] Dḥwty-īw (son of) Hr-ḥnsw (son of) P3-sy (the)-great :I/24

[6] Dd-ḥr (son of) Wn-nfr :I/24

[7] Hr-(m>-ḥy :I/24

[8] Pa-sy the great :<I>/36

[9] Bs :I/36

● Column 3

[1] (What) has been paid (to) Dd-ḥr (son of) B3

[2] Ta-ḥ3.t daughter of P3-di-Wsīr :4I

[3] Dd-ḥr-p3-n3 (son of) Pa-n3-hb.w :I/24

● Column 4

[1] (What) has been paid (to).....Hr-Īs.t daughter of Hr-s3-Īs.t

[2] Hr-p3y-Wsīr (son of) Hr- [iḡs ]

● Column 5

[1] What has been paid (to) P3-šr-Īmn (son of) Hr-s3-Īs.t

[2] [What] has been paid (to) Hr-Hnsw son of Pa-hb :I/24

● Column 6


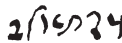


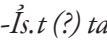

[1] What has been paid (to) Ta-Īs.t

[2] Wn-nfr-p3-iḡs :<I>/I6

**Commentary**

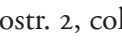
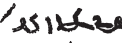


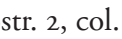

- a. The reading *Dḥwty-īw* (s3) *Hr-Hnsw* (s3) *Pa-sy* (p3)- '3 “*Dḥwty-īw* (son of) *Hr-Hnsw* (son of) *Pa-sy* (the) great” seems certain, although three generations are unlikely in the accounts. For three generations in the demotic accounts, cf. e.g. DO Wien 329, 4, S. Wängstedt, “Demotische ostraka aus Ptolemäisch-römischer Zeit”, *Or. Suec* 18, 1969, p. 99; OL Nr.262, r<sup>o</sup> 9, M.A.A. Nur el-Din, *The Demotic Ostraca in the National Museum of Antiquities at Leiden*, Leiden, 1974, p. 211.
- b. For the personal name *Hr-(m>-ḥy*, cf. *Demot. Nb.* I/II, p. 813; for the orthography of *Hr-m-3ḥ.t/Hr-m-ḥy*, see Fr. de Cenival, *Enchoria* 7, 1977, p. 10-11, n. 4.I; for the god *Hr-m-3ḥ.t*, Harmachis, see Chr. Leitz, *LGG V*, 2002, p. 238-239.



- c. The reading 41 of the group  is clear, but it is a high sum compared with others mentioned in the two ostraca: 1/4, 1/2, 1/12(?), 1/16, 1/24, 1/36.
- d. The personal name *Pa-n3-hb.w* is not included in *Demotisches Namenbuch*, where it can only be found *Pa-hb.w* (*Demot. Nb.* I/6, p. 396, example 1), *Ta-n3-hb.w* (*Demot. Nb.* I/16, p. 1192), but it is mentioned in the demotic papyrus Cairo 24/II/62/4 v<sup>o</sup> 14 , coming from the same site, see A. Farid, “A Demotic Sale Contract of the Whole Property”, p. 262, p. 264; and on the limestone sarcophagus al-Ashmunein magazine Inv. No. 1214 or 1314 from the subterranean galleries .<sup>5</sup>
- e. For the sign  which could also be read *ns* or *bk*, I am inclined to read it *bk*: “servant”, as a title of the woman called  *Hr-Is.t (?) ta Hr-s3-Is.t*, “*Hr-Is.t* daughter of *Hr-s3-Is.t*”.<sup>6</sup> Although the name *Hr-Is.t (?)* is not mentioned in *Demotisches Namenbuch*, similar personal names are known such as *Hr-Hp*, *Hr-Hr*, *Hr-Hnsw*, *Demot. Nb.* I/12, p. 874-875; cf. also the name *Hr-j-m-3s.t PN*, I, 263, 16.
- f. The personal name  *Hr-p3y-Wsir (?)* is not mentioned in *Demotisches Namenbuch*, only *Hr-p3y-Is.t (?)*, *Demot. Nb.* I/12, p. 858 (“fragliches”).
- g. For the personal name *Pa-hb*, see *Demot. Nb.* I/6, p. 396. For the form of writing *Pa*, cf. *Pa* in the personal name *Pa-n3-nfr-imj*, *Demot. Nb.* I/5, p. 380, esp. examples 2, 3, 8, 13, 14.


### General Commentary

The texts of both ostraca are not dissimilar; they comprise lists of personal names followed by payments, without units of payment except for ostr. 1, col. 4; ostr. 2, col. 1, 3, and without titles or professions. Some of them received payments from other persons. Consequently, one can suggest that these accounts could be in relevance to religious associations in Tuna al-Gebel necropolis. It can be also added that the persons (males and females) named in these lists may be members of these associations who paid their contributions or participations to the leaders or persons responsible for these associations. Some of these names are repeated in both ostraca:

- (1) *P3-mnh* (s. of) *Hr*: ostr. 1, 14 ; ostr. 2, col. 2, 4 .
- (2) *Ta-h3.t* d. of *Htp-hr*: ostr. 1, 12 ; ostr. 2, col. 2.3 .
- (3) *Dd-hr* (s. of) *Wn-nfr*: ostr. 1, 16 ; ostr. 2, col. 2, 6 .

For lists of members of the religious associations with accounts, cf. e.g., P. Cairo 31178 r<sup>o</sup> col. 2, v<sup>o</sup> col. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; P. Cairo 30606 r<sup>o</sup> col. 1, 2, 3; P. Hamburg I r<sup>o</sup> 1, 2, 3c etc., (Fr. de Cenival, *Les associations religieuses en Égypte d'après les documents démotiques*, BdE 46 1972, p. 215-236; P. dém. Lille 31 (H. Sottas, *op. cit.*, p. 81-82, pl. 17; Fr. de Cenival, *Enchoria* 7, 1977, p. 21-23, pl. 7-8); P. dém. Lille 97 v<sup>o</sup> (Fr. de Cenival, *op. cit.*, p. 6-12, pl. 3-4); P. dém. Lille 104 (*ead.*, *Papyrus démotiques de Lille.3*, MIFAO 110, 1984, p. 66-68); P. Louvre E 7840 bis, (*ead.*, “Comptes

<sup>5</sup> The Inventory number of this limestone sarcophagus in the register book of al-Ashmunein magazine is unclear, see M. EBEID, *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> Prof. Vleeming suggests that the sign  here is probably dissociated from the name *Hr-Is.t (?) ta Hr-s3-Is.t*, and could be a modification of *r-in=w*.



d'une association religieuse thébaine datant des années 29 à 33 du roi Amasis [P. démot. Louvre E 7840 bis]", *RdE* 37, 1986, p. 13-29); P. Mil. Vogl. demot. Inv. 77, B (E. Bresciani, "Nuovi statuti demotici di 'Confraternite dalla necropoli dei Coccodrilli a Tebtynis". P. Vogl. demot. Inv. 77 e Inv. 78 », *EVO* 17, 1994, p. 59, p. 63-64.

As to the absence of monetary units, it is not known whether the payments mentioned in both ostraca were paid in money or in kind, except for the mention of 1/2 kite, which is problematic here. These payments might refer to contributions made by members of a religious association.

All the payments mentioned are fractions (1/4, 1/2, 1/12 (?), 1/16, 1/24, 1/36) except 41, which is higher than the others. Nothing can be suggested concerning this important sum.

According to the contents of these two ostraca, one can assume that the Archives room (Room 1) in the priests' house building, 6m opposite to the temple of Osiris-Baboon on its southern side, was the original place of these ostraca, the place where such documents were usually kept.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> D. KESSLER, *LÄ* VI, col. 801, s.v. "Tuna el-Gebel"; A. NUR EL-DIN, über die Grabungen in Tuna 1989-1994 (I)", *MDAIK* 52, 1996, p. 263-293; D. KESSLER, "Das Priesterhaus am Ibiotapheion von Tuna el-Gebel. Vorbericht D. KESSLER, A. NUR EL-DIN, "Tuna al-Gabal. Millions of Ibises and other Animals", in S. Ikram (ed.), *Divine Creatures. Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt*, Cairo, 2005, p. 135-137.

FIG. 1a. Ostracon al-Ashmunein magazine Inv. No. 1128.

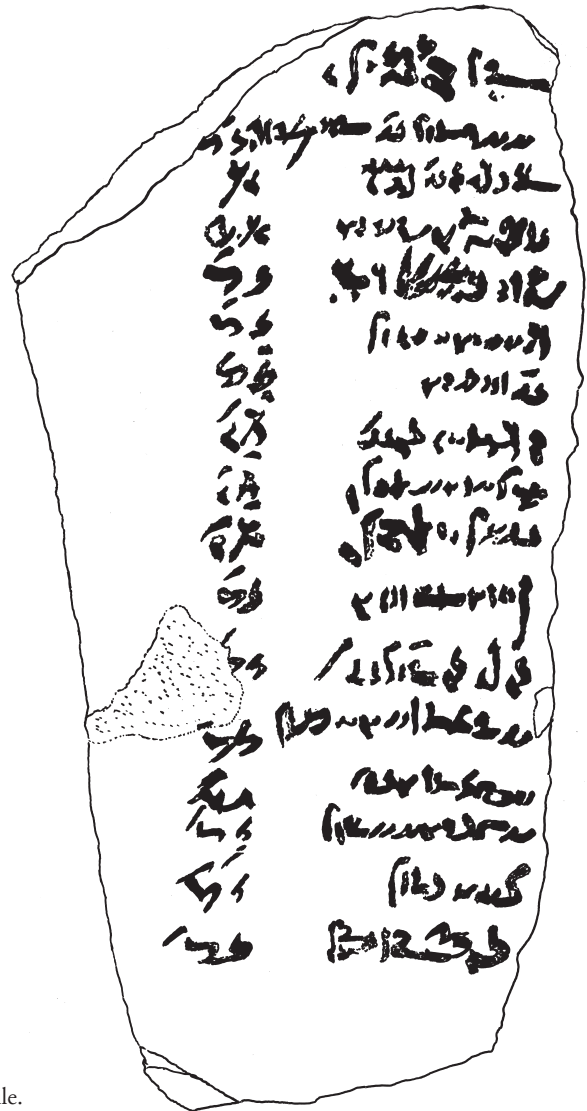


FIG. 1b. Facsimile.

FIG. 2a. Ostracon al-Ashmunein magazine Inv. No. 1129.

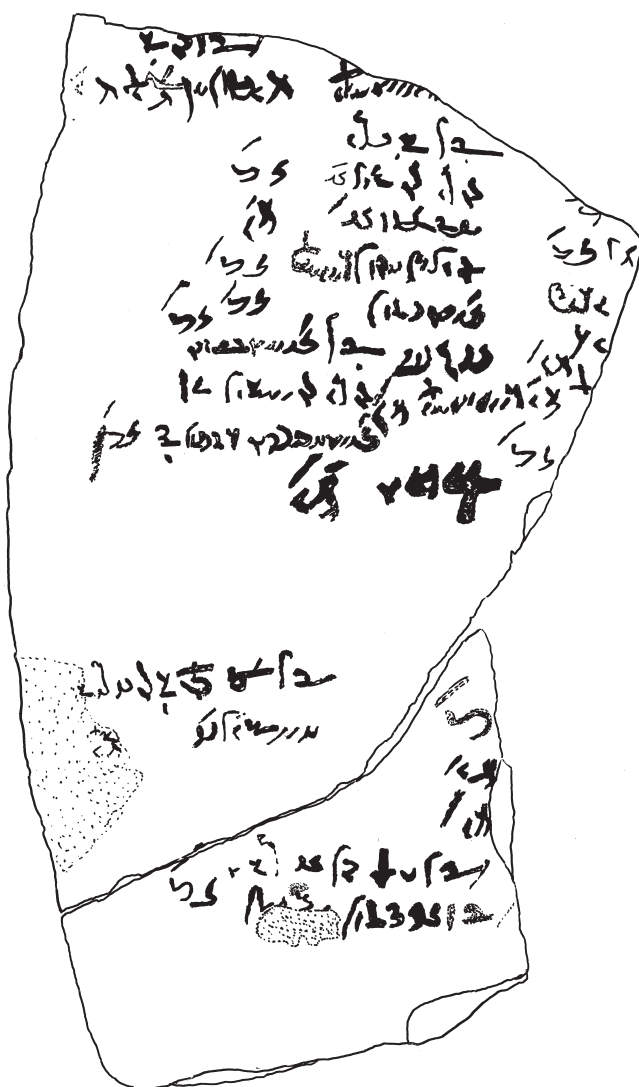
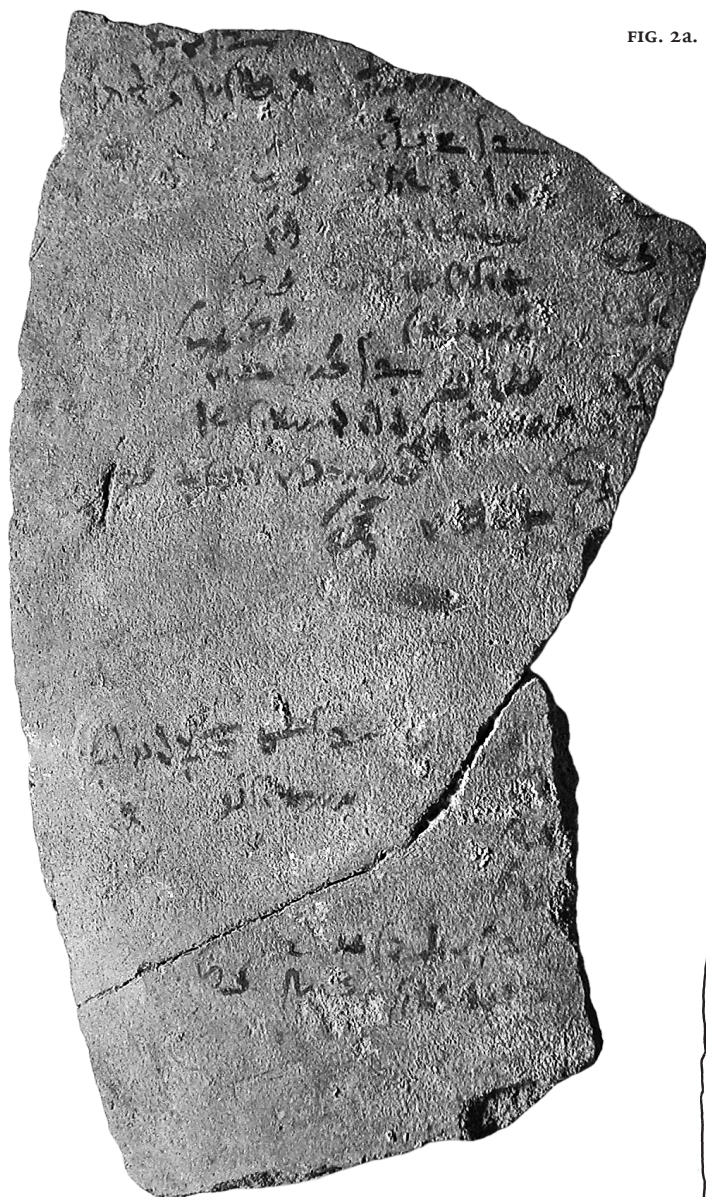


FIG. 2b. Facsimile.