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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.

TUNA AL-GEBEL 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.1 Because of the occurrence of the word ḫr 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. Ostracon Inv. No. 1128

Dimensions: Height: 17 cm; Width: 9 cm; Thickness: 1 cm.
Bibliography: Unpublished.
Content: Accounts of payments made to the woman Tȝ-ʿʿn.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 ostraca (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. \((r)-în=w\) \(Tȝ-ʿʿn.t\)
2. \(Pȝy(=y)?-bns\)w \(sȝ\) \(Hr-mȝy-ḥs\) \(1/2[4]\)
3. \(Ī.s.t-m-bȝ.t\) \(t\) \(a\) \(Hr-ĭg\š\)
4. \(Hr-\) \(\hat{s}ȝ\) \(t(?)-sȝ\) \(？\)
5. \(Stȝ.t=w-tȝ-wty\) \(sȝ\) \(Pa-Īs.t\)
6. \(Pa-sy-pȝ-‘w\)
7. \(Hr\) \((sȝ)\) \(Pȝ-nȝ\)
8. \(Tȝ-mw.t-nfr.t\) \(t\) \(a\) \(Hr\)
9. \(Mn｡t.īr-di.t=s(?)\) \(sȝ\) \(Pȝy-brd\)
10. \(Hr-m-bb\) \((sȝ)\) \(Pȝ-śr-Īmn\)
11. \(Tȝ-‘ȝ\) \((sȝ)\) \(Bs\)
12. \(Ta-ḥȝ.t\) \(t\) \(a\) \(Htp-hr\)
13. \(Pȝ-mnḥ\) \((sȝ)\) \(Pȝ-bb\)
14. \(Pȝ-mnḥ\) \((sȝ)\) \(Hr\)
15. \(Hr-Smȝ-tȝ.wy\) \(sȝ\) \(Pȝ-dĭ-Wsir\)
16. \(Ḍd-br\) \((sȝ)\) \(Wn-nfr\)
17. \(Ta-wn\) \((tā)\) \(Sp-Bȝst.t\) \(?(?)\)

**Translation**

1. (What) has been paid (to) \(Tȝ-ʿʿn.t\)
2. \(Pȝy(=y)?-bns\)w \((sȝ)\) \(Hr-mȝy-ḥs\) \(1/2[4]\)
3. \(Ī.s.t-m-bȝ.t\) \((sȝ)\) \(daughter of Hr-ĭg\š\) \(1/4\)
4. \(Hr-\) \(\hat{s}ȝ\) \(t(?)-sȝ\) \(？\) \(1/4\) \((\text{and}) 1/2 \text{kite}\)
5. \(Stȝ.t=w-tȝ-wty\) \((sȝ)\) \(Pȝ-Īs.t\) \(1/24\)
6. \(Pa-sy-pȝ-‘w\)
7. \(Hr\) \((sȝ)\) \(Pȝ-nȝ\) \(1/24\)
8. \(Tȝ-mw.t-nfr.t\) \(t\) \(a\) \(Hr\) \(1/36\)
9. \(Mn｡t.īr-di.t=s(?)\) \((sȝ)\) \(Pȝy-brd\) \(1/36\)
10. \(Hr-m-bb\) \((sȝ)\) \(Pȝ-śr-Īmn\) \(1/36\)
11. \(Tȝ-‘ȝ\) \((sȝ)\) \(Bs\) \(1/24\)
12. \(Ta-ḥȝ.t\) \(t\) \(a\) \(Htp-hr\) \(1/2[4]\)
13. \(Pȝ-mnḥ\) \((sȝ)\) \(Pȝ-bb\) \(1/24\)
14. \(Pȝ-mnḥ\) \((sȝ)\) \(Hr\) \(1/12\)
15. \(Hr-Smȝ-tȝ.wy\) \(sȝ\) \(Pȝ-dĭ-Wsir\) \(1/24\)
16. \(Ḍd-br\) \((sȝ)\) \(Wn-nfr\) \(1/24\)
17. \(Ta-wn\) \((tā)\) \(Sp-Bȝst.t\) \(?(?)\) \(1/24\)
Commentary

a. ỉn=w: This group recurs six times in the second ostracon: ỉn= ostr. 2, col. 2, 2; ỉn col. 3, 1; ỉn col. 4, 1; ỉn col. 5, 1; ỉn / col. 5, 2; ỉn col. 6, 1; it could be read as part of a proper name, cf. İn=w-pȝ-mw “Man hat das wasser gebracht”, Demot. Nb. II/2, p. 68. It could also be suggested that (r)-ỉn=w is to be understood as a sḏm=f relative form (see W. Spiegelberg, Demotisches Grammatik, Heidelberg, 1925, § 549-553, p. 248-251; J. Johnson, The Demotic Verbal System, SAOC 38, 1976, p. 182-183): “(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 Altegypten, (Rechtliche und sozio-ökonomische Verhältnisse) Akten des internationalen Symposioms, 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 ỉn is clear; as well as it is followed by an enumeration of personal names and some sums of money.

b. Tȝ-ʿʿn.t: “the female baboon”, see Wb I, 41, 5-9; W. Erichsen, Demotisches Glossar, Kopenhagen, 1954, p. 56. For the personal name Tȝ-ʿʿn.t, cf. Pȝ-ʿʿn, 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 démotiques 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 Pȝy(=y)?-ḥnsw ỉn is uncertain.2
d. The sign ƙ could be the feminine t under the fraction ¼, the same sign occurs also in l. 4, and on ostr. 2, col. 1, 3, 4.
e. The personal name Hr-stȝ.ṱ (?) 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-ʿnb, hr-ʿn, hr=fʿ nb, hr-rȝ, hr-hp, see Demot. Nb. I/1, p. 793, 810, 811, 828, 829. The second element stȝ.ṱ can be part of the personal name Stȝ.ṱ=w-tȝ-wty, cf. l. 5.

2 This name is not listed in Demotisches Namenbuch; I thank Prof. S.P. Vleeming who suggested to me the reading Pȝy(=y), which, to my opinion, is better than the reading Pȝ-…-Hnw, 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 \( Mn-\text{i.r-di.t}=s(?)(\text{Demot. Nb. I/8, p. 589}) \), the reading \(-\text{i.r-di.t}=s(?)?\) being more likely here than the alternative \(-\text{iw, -m-hb, et -i.r-di-s}\), Enchoria 15, 1987, p. 11-24.


In addition to this common form of the personal name \( Tȝ-\text{ḥȝ} \) in Tuna al-Gebel necropolis, the form \( [\text{ḥȝ-ḥȝ}] \) is also known on the wooden coffin al-Ashmunein magazine Inv. No. 1254 from the animal galleries.

i. The group \( \text{ḥȝ} \) 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. Ostracon Inv. No. 1129

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 ostracon and at the bottom.

Transliteration

- Column 1

| [1] | \( 1/2 \) |
| [2] | \( \ldots \ldots \) |
| [3] | \( 1/4.t \) |

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```
[5] [ .... ] (1>/36
[6] [ ] (1>/36
[7] [ ] 1/24
[8] [ ] 1/24
[9] [ ] (1>/36
[10][ ] (1>/36

Column 2
[1] [Pa-s]y-pȝ-ʿȝ (1>/36
[2] (r)-ỉn=w Ḳt-m-hȝ.t
[3] Tā-hȝ.t tā Htp-br 1/24
[4] Pȝ-mnh (sȝ) Ḥr (1>/36
[7] Ḥr-⟨m⟩-by(b
[8] Pa-sy-pȝ-ʿȝ (1>/36
[9] Bs (?) 1/36

Column 3
[1] (r)-ỉn=w Dd-br (sȝ) Bs
[2] Tā-hȝ.t tā Pȝ-di-Wsir 41c
[3] Dd-br-pȝ nȝ (sȝ) Pa-nȝ-hb.w 1/24

Column 4
[1] (r)-ỉn=w ... Ḥʾ-is.t (?) tā Ḥr-ȝw- is.t
[2] Ḥr-pȝy-Wsir (?)f (sȝ) Ḥr- [igš ]

Column 5
[1] r-ỉn=w Pȝ-šr-Ỉmn (sȝ) Ḥr-ȝw-Łs.t
[2] [r] -ỉn=w Ḥr-Hnsw sȝ Pa-hb(?)g 1/24

Column 6
[1] r-ỉn=w Tā-Łs.t

Translation

Column 1
[1] [ ] 1/24
[2] [ ......] 1/24
[3] [ ] 1/4 (and) 1/2 kite
[4] [ ] 1/4
[5] [ ......] (1>/36
```
Column 2

1. [Pa-s]y the great :<1>/36
2. (What) has been paid (to) Ỉs.t-m-b2.t :1/24
3. Ta-h2.t daughter of Htp-hr :1/24
4. Pȝ-mnh (son of) Ḥr :<1>/36
5. 甸wty-iw (son of) Ḥr-hnsw (son of) Pȝ-sy (the)-great :1/24
6. ḫd-hr (son of) Wn-nfr :1/24
7. Ḥr-{m}>-by :1/24
8. Pa-sy the great :<1>/36
9. Bs :1/36

Column 3

1. (What) has been paid (to) ḫd-hr (son of) Bȝ Ọa-ḥȝ.t daughter of Pȝ-dỉ-wsỉr :41
2. ḫd-hr-pȝ-nȝ (son of) Pa-nȝ-hb.w :1/24

Column 4

1. (What) has been paid (to) ...Hr-{ş}.t daughter of Ḥr-sȝ-Ỉs.t
2. Ḥr-pȝy-wsỉr (son of) Ḥr- [iġi ]

Column 5

1. What has been paid (to) Pȝ-šr-Ỉmn (son of) Ḥr-sȝ-Ỉs.t
2. [What] has been paid (to) Ḥr-Hnsw son of Pa-hb :1/24

Column 6

1. What has been paid (to) Wię-Ǐs.t
2. Wn-nfr-pȝ-iġi :<1>/16

Commentary

a. The reading 甸wty-iw (sȝ) Ḥr-Hnsw (sȝ) Pa-sy (pȝ)-‘2 “甸wty-iw (son of) Ḥr-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. Wångstedt, “Demotische ostraka aus Ptolemäisch-römischer Zeit”, Or. Suec 18, 1969, p. 99; OL Nr.262, r9, 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 Ḥr-{m}>-by, cf. Demot. Nb. I/11, p. 813; for the orthography of Ḥr-m-sȝ-h.t/Ḥr-m-by, see Fr. de Cenival, Enchoria 7, 1977, p. 10-11, n. 4.1; for the god Ḥr-m-sȝ-h.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-nȝ-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-nȝ-hb.w (Demot. Nb. I/16, p. 1192), but it is mentioned in the demotic papyrus Cairo 24/11/62/4 v° 14 2�4ض, 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 54.5.

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-Īs.t (?) ta Hr-Īs.t “daughter of Hr-Īs.t”.6 Although the name Hr-Īs.t (?) is not mentioned in Demotisches Namenbuch, similar personal names are known such as Hr-Hp, Hr-Hr; Hr-Hnsu, Demot. Nb. I/12, p. 874-875; cf. also the name Hr-īn=t PN I, 1, 263, 16.

f. The personal name Hr-pȝy-Wsỉr (?) is not mentionned in Demotisches Namenbuch, only Hr-pȝy-Īs.t (?), Demot. Nb. I/12, p. 888 (“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-nȝ-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) Pȝ-mnḫ (s. of) Hr: ostr. 1, 14 9; ostr. 2, col. 2, 4 9.
(2) Tȝ-hȝ.t d. of Htp-hr: ostr. 1, 12 9; ostr. 2, col. 2, 3 9.
(3) Dd-hr (s. of) Wn-nfr: ostr. 1, 16 9; ostr. 2, col. 2, 6 9.

For lists of members of the religious associations with accounts, cf. e.g., P. Cairo 31178 v° col. 2, v° col. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; P. Cairo 30606 v° col. 1, 2, 3; P. Hamburg I r° 1, 2, 3c etc., (Fr. de Cenival, Les associations religieuses en Égypte d’après les documents démotiques, Bde E6 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° (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

5 The Inventory number of this limestone sarcophagus in the register book of al-Ashmunein magazine is unclear, see M. Ebeid, op. cit.

6 Prof. Vleeming suggests that the sign here is probably dissociated from the name Hr-Īs.t (?) ta Hr-Īs.t, and could be a modification of r-in=w.
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 kites, 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, 6 m 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.7

Ostracon al-Ashmunein magazine Inv. No. 1128.

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

FIG. 2b. Facsimile.