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IN KOMMISSION BEI  
OTTO HARRASSOWITZ · WIESBADEN

Notes on Greek and Egyptian ostraka<sup>1)</sup>

1. O. Med. Habu 12<sup>2)</sup>

This ostrakon contains a three-line Demotic receipt for the salt-tax, dated to year 28 of Ptolemy II Philadelphos (258/7), given to *T3-šr.t(-n)-Mnt<sub>x</sub>*, wife of Peteminis. The tax is paid for the preceding year 27, and the amount paid is 1/4 kite of silver. Below the Demotic text stand three lines of Greek; of these the editor read the first and third but not the second. The entire Greek text is clearly readable on the photograph and facsimile and is as follows:

4 L κη θαὐτ ε  
5 Τσομμαντ ἄλας (ἐξα)μή(νου)  
6 ζ

From the Greek of line 4 the editor restored the date in line 3 of the Demotic. Line 5 gives us the name of the taxpayer, followed by "salt" and the period for which the tax was paid; and line 6 contains the amount, 3 obols (=1/4 kite). The interest of line 5 is twofold: the transcription of the woman's name and the amount of time for which 3 obols were paid.

We can scarcely doubt that the writer intended Tsommant to represent as closely as possible what he heard in *Tῖ-ḡr.t(-n)-Mnt<sub>λ</sub>*. The writing is very unusual for Greek texts of the Ptolemaic period. First, the phrase *tῖ-ḡr.t(-n)-* is usually transcribed in Greek as *Σεν-*, although several other versions are found<sup>3)</sup>; and the standard transcription of the name of the taxpayer here is *Σενμῶνθης*. More unusual is the use of *o* instead of *ε* as the vowel in the syllable.<sup>4)</sup> But alternation of *ε* and *ο* for a schwa-like sound in unaccented syllables is common enough and<sup>5)</sup> has been explained by LACAU as a phenomenon produced by the attempt of scribes to represent in Greek a sound in

1) I am grateful to JAN QUAEGEBEUR for discussing the first part of this article with me and giving me several pertinent references.

<sup>2)</sup> MIRIAM LICHTHEIM, *Demotic Ostraca from Medinet Habu* (OIP 80, Chicago 1957) pp.13-14, with plates 3 and 37.

<sup>3)</sup> One finds  $\Sigma\epsilon\nu^-$ ,  $T\sigma\epsilon\nu^-$ ,  $\Theta\sigma\epsilon\nu^-$ ,  $\Theta\epsilon\nu^-$ ,  $X\epsilon\nu^-$ ,  $\Theta\iota\nu^-$ , and  $T\iota\nu^-$ . See J.QUAEGBEUR, *OLP* 4 (1973) 97; *CdE* 46 (1971) 166; *Le dieu égyptien Shai* (Leuven 1975) 212.

4) Only one such name, ΤΟΟΝΘΩΣΘ, appears in FORABOSCHI, *On.*, cited from O.Bodl. 18 (also a receipt given to a woman for 3 obols for salt-tax). On the rarity of ΤΟΟΝ- in *tj*-šr.t-n names, cf. J.QUAEGBEUR, *CdE* 46 (1971) 162.

Egyptian which resembled both Greek sounds but neither perfectly.<sup>5)</sup>

Most interesting of all is the vocalization -μαντ for the god Mont, compared to the normal -μωνθ. The use of an *a* sound, instead of the short *o* sound commonly represented in Greek by ω, is characteristic of Akhmimic, the original spoken dialect of the Theban area, and may represent a survival of the pronunciation of earlier periods.<sup>6)</sup> It is, however, rare for Akhmimic to affect the vocalization in Greek texts of personal names formed on the names of the principal divinities like Mont; normally one finds the dialectical influence in names formed from those of less "established" divinities. A case in point is names formed from the god Shaï, where the *a* sound is used in virtually every instance from Thebes<sup>7)</sup>. The explanation for this situation, as J. QUAEGEBEUR suggests to me, is the coexistence of Akhmimic, the popular spoken dialect, and Sahidic, which as kind of *κοινή* was used in literature and educated speech in areas other than the area in which it was the spoken dialect<sup>8)</sup>.

Τσομμάντ, then, shows itself to be a vulgar form by its use of Τσομ- instead of Σεμ-, by the use of the Akhmimic vocalization Μαντ, and by the absence of the Greek inflectional endings which are almost always found on Egyptian names rendered into Greek in the Ptolemaic period.<sup>9)</sup> One may compare from the Roman period Τεμφενμάντ(ις) in SB I 3527, a mummy-label. These rare vulgar variants of the normal writings probably are the work of a writer not accustomed to rendering Egyptian names in Greek, a person who did not have a fixed idea of how to render *T3-šr.t(-n)-Mnt* but instead wrote down just what he heard from the tax-

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<sup>5)</sup> P.LACAU, *Etudes d'égyptologie I, Phonétique égyptienne ancienne* (Cairo 1970) 131-36; cf. P.W.PESTMAN, J.QUAEGEBEUR and R.L.VOS, *Recueil de textes démotiques et bilingues* (Leiden 1977) I 11, n.12.

<sup>6)</sup> On the localization of the Coptic dialects, cf. P.KAHLE, *Bala'izah*, pp.198-217, with corrective remarks of J.VERGOTE, *CdE* 36 (1961) 243-45. VERGOTE's diagrams of sound changes in *Textes et langages de l'Égypte pharaonique (Hommages Champollion, Cairo 1972)* 103-105, are helpful. For a detailed study based on onomastic evidence, see J.QUAEGEBEUR, *Shaï* (supra,n.3) 256-61. See also P.LACAU, *EtPap* 2 (1933-34) 232-33, for the vocalization of short *o* in Greek. For the use of an *a* sound in earlier periods and its survival in Akhmimic (as in Fayumic) see J.VERGOTE, *Gramm.Copte Ib* (Leuven 1973) 53-83, 88-89 and WORRELL, *Coptic Sounds*, 58. Other examples of the coexistence of Akhmimic (vulgar) and Sahidic (educated) transcriptions of personal names are known; cf. e.g.E.LIPINSKI, *OLP* 6/7 (1975-76) 384-85.

<sup>7)</sup> Cf.QUAEGEBEUR, *Shaï* (supra,n.3).

<sup>8)</sup> On "diglossie", the concurrent use of Akhmimic and Sahidic in the same region but in different contexts, cf. J.QUAEGEBEUR, *Onoma* 18 (1974) 419 and G.ROQUET, *Bull.Soc.Fr.Eg.* 76 (1976) 42.

<sup>9)</sup> Only Τσονθωθ (supra,n.4), of the renderings of *t3-šr.t-n* names in PREISIGKE and FORABOSCHI, lacks a normal Greek nominal ending.

payer herself (or conceivably her intermediary). The use of a relatively sophisticated abbreviation (see below) and the competent handwriting suggest that the writer was Greek rather than Egyptian.<sup>10)</sup>

The ostrakon reads at the end of line 5,  $\varsigma\upsilon\eta$ . This kind of abbreviation, with a numeral written instead of the word for a number, is commonplace in the Ptolemaic period; support for my resolution comes particularly from the occurrence of  $\delta\mu\eta = \tau\epsilon\tau\rho\acute{\alpha}\mu\eta\nu\omicron\varsigma$ .<sup>11)</sup> The ostrakon contains a statement that Tsommant paid 3 obols for a period of six months for the salt-tax. The Ptolemaic salt-tax has been the subject of recent study by the late F.UEBEL, who concluded that the normal rate for men was 1 drachma per year, for women 3 obols, until the amount was reduced under Euergetes.<sup>12)</sup> UEBEL reached this conclusion despite his knowledge of evidence indicating that the true amounts were 1 1/2 dr. and 1 dr. respectively; he explained this evidence as representing payments for a married couple, only one of whose names was given, or by one person representing several.<sup>13)</sup> The evidence was sufficiently equivocal that UEBEL's arguments had some force,<sup>14)</sup> but with O.Med.Habu 12 taken into consideration,<sup>15)</sup> the position is no longer tenable.

In fact, UEBEL's conclusion based on the Greek evidence had already been challenged by JOHN SHELTON,<sup>16)</sup> who concluded that the rate for men had been 1 1/2 dr. and for women 1 dr. prior to year 32 (254/3), after which the rates were 1 dr. for men and 3 ob. for women. It is not necessary to repeat SHELTON's documentation or argument here, nor to

<sup>10)</sup> For the opposite situation, Egyptians thinking in Egyptian while writing Greek transcriptions, cf. J.QUAEGBEUR, *Pap.Lugd.Bat.* XIX, Appendix F, § 10, who discusses the results of this process in mummy labels.

<sup>11)</sup> See W.PEEMANS and E.VAN'T DACK, *JJP* 18 (1974) 198-99 for this abbreviation. For the process in general, see e.g. A.BLANCHARD, *Sigles et abréviations dans les papyrus documentaires grecs* (BICS Suppl. 30, London 1974) 38, 39, 47 n.33, etc.; WILCKEN, *Grundzüge* xlii.

<sup>12)</sup> F.UEBEL, *Atti dell'XI [1965] Congresso internazionale di Papirologia* (Milano 1966) 325-68; *AfP* 19 (1969) 62-64. The first of these is a thorough analysis of all aspects of the tax and remains standard.

<sup>13)</sup> F.UEBEL, *Atti* (supra, n.12) 346-49.

<sup>14)</sup> UEBEL specifically considers the hypothesis of payments double the size he supposes, but rejects it on the grounds explained in n.17 below, see *Atti*, 348-49.

<sup>15)</sup> UEBEL does cite this ostrakon in *AfP* 19 (1969) 62 n.3, but he evidently did not attempt to read the Greek text.

<sup>16)</sup> *ZPE* 20 (1976) 35-39.

deal with UEBEL's a priori arguments about the annual amounts.<sup>17)</sup> Now that O.Med.Habu 12 specifically indicates that the payment of 3 obols is for six months and for the salt-tax, and as there is no question of someone other than Tsommant involved, we must conclude that at the time of this text, in 258, the annual rate was 1 drachma per year for women; it follows that the rate for men was 50 per cent larger, 1 1/2 dr. per year.<sup>18)</sup> SHELTON's conclusion from the Greek material is thus confirmed.

## 2. O.Med.Habu 67

This text is a granary receipt of 6 B.C., signed by Pamonthes and then by Plenis son of Kalasiris. The Demotic text is followed by one line of which the editor does not indicate anything. It is in fact visible on the plate and facsimile (pl.12 and 44) that the line reads  $\Delta\iota\omicron\nu\acute{\sigma}\iota\omicron\varsigma$ , followed by a letter or letters the sense of which is not entirely clear; I think it likely that we have a monogram for  $\sigma\epsilon(\sigma\eta\mu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omega\mu\alpha\iota)$ , "I have signed". Since Dionysios does not appear in the Demotic text, one must suppose that he is yet a third granary official. It is not likely that he is the granary official of A.D. 28/9 who signed several Demotic receipts (cf. WANGSTEDT, *l.c.*, p.12).

## 3. O.Med.Habu 75

This granary receipt of 4 B.C. has two lines of Greek in the middle of the Demotic text; they are a subscription to the first payment (lines 1-5) and are followed by a second payment recorded in Demotic in lines 8-9. Their text is as follows:

6 'Οννῶ(φρῖς) γραμμα(τεῦς) ἐπηκολλούθ(ηκα).

7 κς (ἔτους) Ἐπεῖφ 19

"I, Onnophris, scribe, have checked it. 26th year, Epeiph 19."

I have not found Onnophris the scribe in any other text of this period. It is curious that the date in the Greek text is apparently eight days later than the date given in the Demotic. From the photograph and especially the facsimile (pl.14 and 44), there can be no doubt that the second digit of the Greek date is theta, and that 19 is correct. From

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<sup>17)</sup> His arguments against the higher amounts were essentially (a) that we would then have to suppose payments in our texts of three different portions of the total sum due (such lack of uniformity does not seem astonishing to me; cf. the wide variation in the poll-tax receipts of Roman date); (b) that the rates would then be higher in Upper Egypt than in the Arsinoite Nome.

<sup>18)</sup> UEBEL's thesis that his supposed 1 dr. rate for men was lowered in the third financial year of Ptolemy III Euergetes has been contradicted by O.Ont.Mus. II 73 (cf. introd.), where a 1 dr. payment appears in year 12 of Ptolemy III; SHELTON concludes (rightly) that the rate was 1 dr. for men from 254/3 and did not change in the following reign.

the reproductions, it in fact appears that the correct reading in the Demotic text is also 19; the writing is more connected than in other texts, but it is not unlike no.99.6, only more cursive. The forms of 11 and 19 come very close in some of these ostraka.

#### 4. O.Med.Habu 84

This receipt for 3 1/2 artabas of wheat paid to the granary by Pasesmis son of Pamonthes, grandson of Mesoueris, in 2 B.C., is followed by a line of Greek. This reads simply  $\mu\epsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\tau\eta\eta(\tau\alpha\iota)\zeta\gamma^L$ , "Paid, 3 1/2 art. of wheat".

#### 5. O.Zürich 54<sup>19)</sup>

The text of this fragment was published as follows by the editor (who thanks L.AMUNDSEN for the Greek transcription):

x+1 n ip(?) ...  
 2 'l3gsntrs ... ..  
 3 ntj hwj sh Pa-irj p3 '3(?) ...  
 4 'ibt-3' 'šm' sw 3 ... r hrw=n  
 5 Με(μέτρηκεν) 'Ιμοῦθ(ης) δε(ᾷ) Παῶντος ηλ() καὶ πλ()  
 6 κατὰγ( ) γ s" ... ὑδ  
 7 ζσ'

To this text the editor assigned the date "Ptolemaic Period".

Two items excite doubt about this date. First, the Greek subscription is written in a hand which belongs to the late second or third century after Christ. Secondly, the text employs the phrase *ntj hwj*, which is found in texts of the Roman period as an equivalent of the Latin Augustus and Greek Σεβαστός in rendering imperial titles, month names, and designations of special days.<sup>20)</sup> It is highly improbable that we should find it in a Ptolemaic text. Since the reading of *hwj* appears sound, the combined evidence points to a Roman date for this text. *Ntj*, however, must have stood in the preceding line, since on the photograph it is clear that line 3 starts with *hwj*.

The reading of the name 'l3gsntrs is rather clear, and since only one word probably stands between it and *ntj hwj*, we must conclude that Alexander is part of the imperial title. Only Severus Alexander (222 - 235) can come into question, and his reign would in fact

<sup>19)</sup> ST.V.WANGSTEDT, *Die demotischen Ostraka der Universität zu Zürich (Bibliotheca Ekmaniana, Uppsala 1965) p.54.*

<sup>20)</sup> Cf. already O.Theb., p.31 n.3; there are numerous examples in the various collections of ostraka, e.g. WANGSTEDT, *O.*, pp.209, 233-34. For a general discussion of the use and meaning of *hw(j)*, see E.GRAEFE, *Jaarbericht...Ex Oriente Lux* 23 (1973-74 [1975] 371-72.

suit the handwriting of the Greek text perfectly well. Since datable papyri and ostraka of the third century written in Demotic are very rare,<sup>21)</sup> even a fragment which can be dated securely in this period is of some interest. The list of PESTMAN includes only two ostraka (and no papyri) from a time after the accession of Commodus (A.D.180) which have been published in full.<sup>22)</sup> Both of these are Theban ostraka, and both have a formula of interest:

O.Theb. D31 (p.51), lines 8-9:

h3.t-sp 12 (?) n K<sup>c</sup>mjts <sup>c.w.s.</sup> pr-<sup>c3</sup> ntj hwj

O.Theb. D221 (p.54), line 9:

h3.t-sp 11.t n n3 pr-<sup>c3</sup>.w ntj hwj

The second of these texts refers, according to its editor (H.THOMPSON), to the joint reign of Severus and Caracalla. These texts therefore may be dated to 190 and 203. They are the only examples we have of imperial titlature in Demotic papyri and ostraka from this period. From them it may be surmised that in O.Zürich 54 one would expect pr-<sup>c3</sup> between Alexander's name (which is followed by <sup>c.w.s.</sup>) and the epithet; and in fact on the photograph one can recognize the following (my drawing is made from an excellent photograph kindly provided by Professor H.BLOESCH, Zürich):

Since the pertinent information in the text is otherwise lost, it is of some importance to examine the Greek text closely. I give here a text revised from the photograph.

5 ἀπὸ Ἰμούθ(ου) δὲ(ᾧ) Παμοντεκ(ύσιος)

πλ(οίων) καὶ πλ(οίων)

6 καταγ(ωγίου) γ' μῆ(νός) φαρμούθι ἔδ

7 ζ ε ε

"From Imouthes through Pamontekysis, for boats and for boats for transport, for the 3rd year, Pharmouthi 14, 6 3/4 art. wheat."

5. με(μέτρηκεν) (ed.) is principally a Ptolemaic formula and in any event is not to be read here.

<sup>21)</sup> P.W.PESTMAN, *Chronologie (Pap.Lugd.Bat.* 15, Leiden 1967) 108 ff., lists no papyri or ostraka after 232/3; the apparent exception of the two Karanis texts published in *Aegyptus* 33 (1953) 22 seems to me very unlikely, but it has not yet been possible to have the originals (now in Cairo) checked by a Demotist. Their date in any event cannot be earlier than 323/4 (322/3 PESTMAN) and is probably to be put in 338/9, as I will argue in *Columbia Papyri* VII. After three mummy labels between 245 and 261, in fact, no texts at all are found except Philae inscriptions.

<sup>22)</sup> The Demotic subscription of P.Teb. II 313 (210/1) is unpublished, as also the British Museum ostrakon from 232/3 cited from *ZAS* 39 (1901) 144, where it is quoted only for the dating formula.

5-6. The resolutions of the abbreviations are offered with some reserve, since I cannot cite an exact parallel. But charges for καταγωγή are attested on grain (O.Petr.292) and green fodder (P.Lond.IV 1577). Cf. S.L.WALLACE, *Taxation in Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian* (Princeton 1938) 43 and 325. Various taxes on boats are known; cf. PREISIGKE, *Wb.* III 246.

If, as one may reasonably suppose, the third year is that of Severus Alexander, we have an exact date of 223/4 for the ostrakon. The date of the Greek text is then 9 April 224. We cannot tell the precise relationship between the Greek and Demotic texts, but the Demotic is probably earlier, probably 223, unless *pr.t* is to be read for the season.

6. O.Amst.93<sup>23)</sup>

This text was included in a volume of Greek ostraka and treated as one. It is, however, Coptic, and belongs to a large group of similar texts. It is a tax receipt for dapane, coming from Djeme and to be dated in the early eighth century. The signer is the well-known Psate son of Pisrael. A new text, revised on the original, follows.

ⲉ ⲁⲃⲣⲁⲁⲙⲓⲟ̅ ⲁⲁⲣⲱⲛ̅  
 ⲉⲁⲧⲁⲁⲡⲁⲛⲛⲉ .....  
 ⲛ̅ 4<sup>2</sup>// ⲁⲟⲩⲣ ⲉ ⲓⲛⲁ/ ⲉⲧ  
 4        ⲉ ⲡⲉⲥⲁⲧⲉ ⲡⲁⲡⲛ ⲉ ⲥⲧⲟⲓ<sup>x</sup>  
vacat  
 ⲉⲩⲁⲧⲉ ⲡⲓⲥⲣⲁⲛ̅ ⲁⲓⲥⲙ̅  
 ⲡⲉⲓⲉⲛⲧⲁⲓ/

"Abraham son of Aaron, (2) toward the dapane ... , (3) nomismation 2/3. Hathyr 9, indiction 7. (4) Pesate the headman signs. (5) Psate son of Pisrael, I have written (6) this receipt."

1. I have not found the taxpayer in another text. Beginning a text with the taxpayer's name is not the most common formula in the Djeme ostraka, but it occurs in a number of texts written by Psate son of Pisrael, e.g. *OMH* 350, 358, 365, 366, 370, 377, 378, 389, 390, 393; *KOW* 92, 96, 99a, 99b, 100.

2. I have not succeeded in reading the writing after the name of the tax, where we might expect information about the year and perhaps καταβολή for which payment was made. The reader can consult the plate in the ed.pr.

<sup>23)</sup> R.S.BAGNALL, P.J.SIJPESTEIJN, K.A.WORP, *Ostraka in Amsterdam Collections* (Zutphen 1976).



3. Above this line are some traces of writing which may either be interlinear or else washed-out remains of a previous text. For the form of the zeta (ed.pr. has indiction 8), cf. *OMH* 291.5, 365.4. For the date, cf. note to line 5.

4. Pesate the headman occurs also in *OMH* 370 and 381, in the latter of which he also places a chrism before CTOIX.

5. Psate son of Pisrael is known from a very large number of texts from the first quarter of the eighth century. A list can be found in W.TILL, *Datierung und Prosopographie der kopt. Urkunden aus Theben* (*Sb Wien* 240.1, Wien 1962) 185-87, who gives the outer limits of Psate's career as 698 until the 720's. P.KAHLE, in *Bala'izah*, p.43, n.3, remarked of the Djeme ostraka, "I have found definite evidence which enables us to date most of these ostraca within the short period of A.D. 710-730. I cannot deal with the full evidence here, but I am hoping to return to this subject elsewhere." KAHLE's views appeared only in summary form, in *Festschrift Aegypt. Mus. Berlin*, 283-85. Indiction 7 here, according to his arguments, must be 723/4 (Hathyr 9, 6.xi.723), since Psate son of Pisrael probably died in 725.

#### 7. O.Ont.Mus. I 16

The editors describe the last line of this text as Demotic, but remark that it has not been possible to read it. The line in fact seems to me to be Greek, and I offer as a tentative reading,

(δραχμας) ββ' αλ' κ(αθαπαλ)<sup>24)</sup> βζχ

" 2 dr., 3 ob., net 2 dr., 1/2 ob., 1 ch."

#### 8. O.Ont.Mus. II 73

Lines 5 and 6 of this text are Demotic, but largely not read in the ed.pr.<sup>25)</sup> The text is badly faded, but it certainly begins with P3-šr(-n)-'Imn s3 Ḥr-s3-'Is.t, "Psenamounis son of Harsiesis," the name of the taxpayer in the Greek text. What follows is less clear, but it seems to end in 1/2, and probably a half kite is meant (i.e., 1 drachma, the amount paid in the Greek text). The date in line 2, however, begins ḥ3.t-sp 11 (as WILLIAMS read), whereas the Greek text is dated to year 12. What follows looks to me like *ibd-3 3ḥ.t*, i.e. Hathyr. This payment would then fall in year 11, Hathyr, where the Greek one comes in year 12, Pachon. Even if they refer to different payments the order is odd, but I do not know how to account for it.

<sup>24)</sup> For this resolution, see now A. GARA, *Prosdiagraphomena e circolazione monetaria* (Milano 1976) 47-48.

<sup>25)</sup> The reading of the taxpayer's name here was first suggested to me by W. CLARYSSE.