

# FOUR GREEK *OSTRACA* IN THE EGYPTIAN MUSEUM IN CAIRO

BY

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## ABSTRACT

The paper is an edition of four unpublished Greek documentary *ostraca* that form part of a larger collection in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. This group of four is divided into two sub-groups, which are housed on the third floor of the Egyptian Museum, in room D3East. The *ostraca* were brought to the museum on January 25<sup>th</sup> 1955 from the region of Thebes, and specifically from either Elephantine or Syene, sites mentioned in some of the *ostraca*, including O. N°. 20b discussed here. The four *ostraca* presented here have the same inventory number, S.R.18953. The editor has assigned a separate serial number to the two sub-groups. They date back to: 1- The 23<sup>rd</sup> year, 21<sup>st</sup> of Pachon 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, mostly 19 June 158 BC; 2- the 30<sup>th</sup> year, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Pharmouthi of the reign of Ptolemy IX Soter II May 3<sup>rd</sup> 87 BC; 3- Beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD; and 4- 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. The first document is O. N°. 6b and measures 11.9 cm in width x 12.9 cm in length. It is bilingual and consists of five complete lines, four of Greek and one of Demotic, that have been written on the recto convex, while the verso concave is blank. It is a granary receipt in which two tax-payers acknowledge that they have paid five and one-six artabas of wheat to a sitologos whose name is illegible. The document has some problematic readings in the propername in the beginning of line 2 and the proper name in line 4. The second document is O. N°. 20b and measures 5.1 cm in width x 8.7 cm in length. It preserves seven complete lines and the verso is blank. This document mentions clearly in line two the place to which it belongs, i.e. Syene, modern Aswan. It is possibly a Treasury receipt, since almost all parallels with the same or close formula are Treasury receipts. The hand is well-trained and the text is almost legible and clear except for the last word in line 6. In the text, *Patapes* declares that he paid an amount of money to an official whose name or title is not clear in the text, yet is probably the banker of the village. The third is O. N°. 6a and measures 13 cm in width x 12 cm in length. This potsherd has preserved four complete lines on the recto, while the verso is blank. It is a short *Decania* List «groups of camel-drivers» which has the number «25», which was probably given to each group of the *Decania*. The fourth *ostrakon* is O. N°. 20a and measures 9.2 cm in width x 6.5 cm in length. It has preserved three complete lines that have been written on the recto and the verso is blank. It is «A person Name», unusual in that one person's name has been written in *ostrakon*. There are a couple of suggestions for why this *ostraca* was produced: either because of the importance of this person, where he, his patronymic and grandfather's name were mentioned, or he was a chief of *Decania* «decanos».

**KEYWORDS:** Papyrology, Greco-Roman history, Greco-Roman period, *Papyri*, Egyptian Museum, *Ostraca*, Greek language

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to the online database of PN and other resources, e.g. HGV, APIS, a tremendous number of *ostraca* (over 4000) pieces have been found in Thebes so far, which reflects the importance of these jar sherds as a main source for record-keeping by the administration<sup>1</sup> throughout the years in Upper Egypt.

As mentioned previously,<sup>2</sup> this small collection of *ostraca* belongs geographically to the same group, yet each differs in date. The *ostraca* were brought to the museum on January 25<sup>th</sup> 1955 from the region of Thebes, and specifically from either Elephantine or Syene. They are part of a larger group of *ostraca* (over 100 pieces) that includes Greek and Demotic languages, pieces from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, documentary and literary texts, and sherds from both fine and poorer quality vessels. Moreover, they cover many topics, such as: tax receipts (a large number of them), letters and lists of names. The collection is preserved in the third floor of the Egyptian museum in Cairo, <sup>3</sup>D3East. A relatively large number has been edited so far, some are published (36 documents) and the others are still under study by MA students and the editor of this paper. The edited documents cover a period of time extending from the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. The following four *ostraca* have no clear indication of their provenance, except for O. N°. 20b,<sup>4</sup> which mentions Syene (modern Aswan) in line 2 as a place in which the text is written. The earliest is 6b, which dates back to 19 June 158 BC and the latest is O. N°. 20a, which dates to 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. O. N°. 6b is a Granary receipt, O. N°. 20b is possible Treasury receipt, O. N°. 6a is *List of Decania*, while O. N°. 20a is a List of a Name.

1<sup>st</sup> Granary Receipt

O. Cairo S.R.18953, O. N°. 6b

Thebes

11.9 x 12.9 cm

2<sup>nd</sup> century BC

This light-coloured *ostrakon* is flat rather than curved. It has been broken from a vessel of moderate quality fabric, and has been regularly cut and ground at all sides. Although this potsherd has suffered erosion, scratches, discoloration and some deposition of salt, while some letters are partly effaced, the text is still legible overall.

<sup>1</sup> Most of the published *ostraca* are tax-receipts, signed and collected by officials as the tax collectors, whether a *παιτηταί, πράκτορες*.

<sup>2</sup> MAGDY 2019: 59

<sup>3</sup> Thanks are due to Mrs. SOMAYA <sup>c</sup>ABD AL-SAMĪf, ex-curator of the 7<sup>th</sup> section in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo that holds the group of *ostraca* and her assistants for helping me clean and photograph the collection.

<sup>4</sup> The way of numbering (i.e. 6b, 20b, 6a and 20a) this collection of *ostraca* is completely the editor's method, where "a" refers to first group and "b" refers to second group. It is not the Egyptian Museum in Cairo's (which has its own system of cataloging i.e. SR, JE, TR and CG). The two main groups have been divided to facilitate the editing of these documents.

The bilingual *ostrakon* preserves five complete lines (four Greek and one Demotic). The text shows some signs of elegance and a general attractive appearance. The scribe has used a relatively thick nib with black ink, which is faded in some parts, although without affecting the readability of the text. The document has been written in two hands. The first hand, that has written the body of the text, is slow and the letters are short and contracted with a tendency towards ligatures. It is of a medium-sized cursive.

There are traces of letters at the upper edge of the potsherd (part of short and long legs of a letter and traces of black ink afterwards along the edge). It is probably part of a previous text that was written at the upper edge that was then broken off and the sherd worked to be reused.

The characteristics of the letters show some consistency as follows. The *kappa*, whether drawn as a number or as a letter, is a sloping V-shape with a horizontal connective. The *phi* is small contracted circle with long ascender and descender. The *alpha* is written without lifting the pen in two small sloping strokes begins with a serif and forming an acute angle. The *epsilon* is drawn as a crescent shape with an attached tongue. The second hand has written the name in line 4 where the letters are slightly larger than first hand, while the *upsilon* and *kappa* has been written without lifting the pen, and *lambda* is formed by two strokes. The interlinear are even at ca. 0.8 cm. The scribe has left a vast lower margin of ca. There is a sign which resembles (πυροῦ ἀρτάβαι) in line 3; there is no punctuation or diacritical marks. According to palaeographic grounds, this document may be dated back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. As with all the other documents, this document belongs to Thebes, either Elephantine or Syene. It is a Granary receipt in which *Enouphis* son of Pates grandson of *Phaeres*, and Phibis his mother being *Iazaria*, acknowledge that they have paid five and one-six artabas of wheat to *Eukles*, who might be a sitologos.

The following seven documents are the closest parallels for this text:

*O. Wilck 711*, unknown, Thebes, 300 BC - 101 BC; *O. Wilck 1520*, unknown, Thebes, 146 BC - 135 BC; *O. Wilck 1498*, unknown, Thebes, 111 BC; *O. Wilck 1342*, unknown, Thebes, 111 BC; *O. Wilck 321*, unknown, Thebes, 112 BC; *O. Wilck 352*, unknown, Thebes, 119 BC; and *O. Wilck 753*, unknown, Thebes, 121 BC.

The names attested in this receipt are: the uncertain Πατῆς, Φαηρέους, Φιβίς and Ἰαζάριας. The verso has no writing.

## TRANSCRIPTION

(Ἔτους) κγ Παχών κα με(μετρήκασι) κγ (ετους)

Ἐνουπὸς(ς) Πατῆς Φαήρεους <καὶ>

Φῖβις Ἰαζάριας (πυροῦ ἀρτάβας) πέντε  $\frac{1}{6}$  (γίνονται) ε  $\frac{1}{6}$

(Hand 2) Εὐκλῆς

4- trace of a Demotic line

## TRANSLATION

The 23<sup>rd</sup> year, 21<sup>st</sup> of Pachon, *Enoupis* son of Pates grandson of *Phaeres* (and) Phibis (his mother being) Iazaria have paid for the 23<sup>rd</sup> year five and  $\frac{1}{6}$  artabas of wheat, total  $5\frac{1}{6}$ , total five and  $\frac{1}{6}$  artabas of wheat, *Eukles*. Demotic line

## COMMENTARY

**Line 1 (Ἔτους) κγ Παχών κα με(μετρήκασι) κγ (ἔτους):** This document is dated to the 21<sup>st</sup> of *Pachon* in the 23<sup>rd</sup> year. Since the document belongs to the Ptolemaic period, the date of this receipt must be one of the following dates: Either 25 June 182 BC (during the reign of Ptolemy V Epiphanes) or 19 June 158 BC (during the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor). According to palaeographic grounds, it most likely belongs to the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor, who has ruled about 34 years. Accordingly, it dates to 19 June 158 BC. Another indication for the date of the document is discussed in the note on line 3.

According to parallels and aspects of construction, the abbreviated word με(μετρήκασι) indicates the verb μετρέω ω in the form: perf. ind. act. 3<sup>rd</sup> plur. This can be cited in many documents in the second century BC (ca. 229 documents).

**Line 2 Ἐνουπὸς(ς) Πατῆς Φαήρεους:** Depending upon the formula for these kinds of documents, the word in the beginning of the line should be a name of a place, yet the reading refers to a male personal name (i.e. Ἐνούπις), which is Hellenized from the Egyptian form Ἄνουπις (which refers to the Egyptian god Anubis). It seems that the first two letters *epsilon* and *nu* are ligatured, which is very similar in the preposition εν in *ostrakon* N°. 2, and connected with a tiny superscripted *omicron* then *upsilon* then *pi*, another superscripted *omicron* that has to be followed by *upsilon*. The name Πατῆς appears 54 times in documentary sources, in both Roman and Ptolemaic eras, and in most of the provenances.

**Φαήρεους:** the name is cited 12 times, all of them in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and all of them in Thebes. The position of the name mostly indicates a «genitive» *patronymic* name with a tiny contracted *omicron*.

**Line 3 Φῖβις Ἰαζαρίας:** It seems that this person was fatherless<sup>5</sup> when he got his name and his *metronymic*, and as a person it is the first time he appears in the document. As for the names Φῖβις, it has been attested 81 times, from 225 BC to 641 AD, in most of the provenances. While Ἰαζαρίας is *Hapax* and there are only attestations to the masculine form (Ἰαζάρως) and it is attested *dis-graphomenon* in the Ptolemaic era i.e. BC, in *O. Wilck* 1233, unknown, Thebes, 153 BC and *O. Wilck* 1255, unknown, Diospolis Magna (Thebes), 153 BC. This gives another indication of the date of the document along with the demotic signature in line 5. Nevertheless, it worthwhile pointing out that the name is uncommonly cited in this document, with first declension ending rather than second declension!

Although the construction of the text signifies that both Πατῆς Φαήρεως and Φῖβις Ἰαζαρίας have paid this amount of wheat, the conjunction καὶ is not written.

(πυροῦ ἀρτάβαι) πέντε  $\frac{1}{6}$  (γίνονται) ε  $\frac{1}{6}$  : The amounts (quantities) of wheat in Granary receipts varied from small amounts starting from 2 artabas (*O. Ont.Mus* I 2, Granary receipt Thebes, 141 BC) of wheat reaching to 38 artabas of wheat (*O. Theb* 14 unknown, Thebes, 58 BC). The fraction  $\frac{1}{6}$  is not frequently used in the documents, where it has been cited only five times, in: *O. Mich* 1 171, keener, Karanis (Arsinoites), 401 CE - 425 AD; *O. Mich* 1 172, keener, Karanis (Arsinoites), 301 AD - 400 AD; *P. Tebt* 2 388, Loan of Grain and Money, Tebtynis (Arsinoites), 98 AD; *SB*, 6 9436, Receipts for payments in kind, mostly with the inclusion of the εἰκοστή, but with the exclusion of the ναῦλον πλοίου, Karanis (Arsinoites), 301 AD - 500 AD; and *SB*, 22 15732, Sitologenquittung, Theogonis (Arsinoites), 86 AD.

**Line 4 Εὐκλῆς :** The name is clear and legible. It is mostly the name of the *sitologos*, yet there is no *sitologos* called Εὐκλῆς attested in the published documents( i.e. PN, HGV or TM) so far.

**Line 5:** The Demotic signature usually one line is one of the idiosyncrasies of the Ptolemaic documents.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Treasury receipt?

*O. Cairo* S.R.18953, O. N°. 20b

Syene

5.1 x 8.7 cm

May 3<sup>rd</sup> 87 BC?

<sup>5</sup> KEENAN & MANNING: 2014: 164, 201.

This small irregular pentagonal potsherd with a base and vertex has been broken from a poor quality pottery vessel. It is of a dark-brown color. The surface has severely suffered some scratches here and there.

In addition to a big blot of oil and some minor spots along the right side of the text, there is a salt encrustation at the beginning of the first two lines. The left, upper and lower margins are preserved, while the right side is broken and a part of the lower right margin is preserved. The upper margin is of ca. 2.3 cm, and the lower margin is ca. 1.8 cm. The four edges are regular and smoothed mostly by the draughtsman, whereas the left edge is broken irregularly. The text was written on the recto «common softened used side» (i.e. the convex side). The *ostrakon* has preserved complete seven lines.

The text has been written in black ink with blunt nib. The general appearance of the text shows that the hand is a regular one and clearly well-trained. It is of medium-sized cursive with a tendency towards ligature. The characteristics of the letters include the following aspects: The *phi* has been drawn with a small contracted triangle rather than circle and ascender and descender invade the interlinear spaces. The *sigma* is small crescent but has been drawn in two strokes. The *tau* and *upsilon* are very similar as a short V-shaped with two arches used as connectives to preceding and following letters. The *alpha* has one loop attached to a connective shallow dished stroke. The interlinear spaces are even and of ca. 0.2 cm; at times a space is left between words. The text has signs and monetary abbreviations; there is no punctuation, yet there is a diaeresis (*trema*) on the *upsilon* of Σὴνη in line 2. As it is cited in line 2, the document belongs to Syene (modern Aswan), Thebaid region; Ombite nome. The palaeographical features and the formula of the document refer to the beginning of 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. The document is possibly a Treasury receipt. Patapes declares that he made a payment (one thousand seven hundred thirty) of unmentioned money or in-kind type to an official of the village Syene, whose name or title is not clear in the text, yet is most likely the banker of Syene. The following 12 documents offer good parallels:

*BGU 6 1306*, Treasury receipt, Elephantine or Syene, 95 BC; *BGU 6 1307*, Treasury receipt, Elephantine or Syene, 86 BC; *BGU 6 1308*, Treasury receipt, Elephantine or Syene, 103 BC; *BGU 6 1309*, Treasury receipt, Elephantine or Syene, 77 BC; *BGU 6 1315*, Treasury receipt, Elephantine or Syene, 103 BC - 102 BC; *BGU 6 1316*, Treasury receipt, Elephantine or Syene, 102 BC; *BGU 6 1317*, Treasury receipt, Elephantine or Syene, 99 BC; *BGU 6 1318*, Treasury receipt, Elephantine or Syene, 99 BC; *O.Cair 8*, Receipt for payment of tax on ἀκρόδρα, Elephantine or Syene, 92 BC- 91 BC; *O.Leid 19*, Receipt for Tax on Fruit Trees, Elephantine or Syene, 79 BC; *P.Eleph.Wagner 1 287*, Tax Receipt on Fruit tree, Elephantine or Syene, 88 BC; and *SB 1 1096*, Tax receipt, Elephantine or Syene, 66 BC - 37 BC. All belong to either Elephantine or Syene. The verso is blank.

## TRANSCRIPTION

ἔτους λ Φαρμοῦθι κβ  
 τέτα(κται) ἐπὶ τὴν ἐν Συήνη [τράπεζαν]  
 λ (ἔτους) Παταπῆς  
 4- χιλίας ἑπτακοσίας τριάκον[τα  
 (γίνονται) 2 ψλ  
 αὐτῆς (ἔτους) λ Παῦν(ι)  
 Demotic line

## CORRECTIONS

Line 6: αὐτῆς → αὐτοῦ

## TRANSLATION

The 30<sup>th</sup> year, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Pharmouthi

Patapes has paid for the 30<sup>th</sup> year in Syene one thousand seven hundred thirty, total 1730. The same 30<sup>th</sup> year. Paun (i)

## COMMENTARY

**Line 1 ἔτους λ Φαρμοῦθι κβ:** Although the day of the month is partly covered by the blob of oil, it still clear.

According to the formula of the text and comparing it with similar documents, it mostly refers to the reign of Ptolemy IX Soter II. If that is so, the document dates to May 3<sup>rd</sup> 87 BC.

**Line 2 τέτα(κται) ἐπὶ τὴν ἐν Συήνη [τράπεζαν]:** The phrase is relatively common, which might led to the faulty orthographic *parablepsy* of the *iota* of the preposition ἐπί *diaeresis* (*trema*) upon the *upsilon* is merely a dot.

The phrase has been attested fourteen times in: *BGU* 6 1306 to *BGU* 6 1309, and from 1315 to 1318 as a «Treasury receipt», Elephantine or Syene, dated on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> BC. And *o.berl* 21, Unknown, Diospolis Magna (Thebes), 2 AD.

The other documents (*O.Cair* 8, *O.Leid* 19, *O.Leid* 175, *P.Eleph.Wagner* 1 287) are a «Receipt for Tax on Fruit Trees», belong to Elephantine or Syene and date back to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.

The verb τέτακται has been written sometimes in full form (two times) and sometimes abbreviated, as in this document, in the form τέτα(κται) (six times), or τέ(τακται) (four times) or τ τακ (ται) (only once). The construction of the text suggests an official recipient after the name of the village, mostly the τράπεζαν of the village.

There is almost a constant formula followed by the treasury receipts of Syene, incorporating the following elements:

- Date of the receipt
- The bank of Syene to which the amount has been paid
- The name and the title of the banker
- The name of the current year
- Either fishermen (ἀλιέων) or fruit-trees (ἀκροδρύων) of a place
- The amount is in letters and numbers
- The name and title of the banker
- Sometimes a demotic signature line

**Line 3 (ἔτους) λ Παταπή:** The name was attested seven times, in *O. Heid* 329, different lists, Ta Memnoneia (Thebe) sunknown, Hermonthis, 101 AD - 200 AD; *O. Ont. Mus* 2 248, List of Names, Ta Memnoneia (Thebes) unknown, Hermonthis, 1 AD - 400 AD; *O. Ont. Mus* 2 277, Memorandum, Thebes, 1 AD - 400 AD; *O. Stras* 1 641, unknown, Ta Memnoneia (Thebes), 101 AD - 300 AD; *O. Wilck* 1023, unknown, Thebes, 300 BC - 201 BC; *O. Wilck* 1156, unknown, Thebes, 1 AD - 400 AD; and *SB* 22 15442, mummy tablets, Ta Memnoneia Thebes, 201 AD - 400 AD. As can be seen, all belong to Thebes and date to the Roman period except for *O. Wilck* 1023, which dates back to the Ptolemaic era. In being dated a century earlier, it is not the same person as in the current document.

**Line 4 χιλίας ἑπτακοσίας τριάκοντα:** It is worth noting that there is no mention of the type of currency by which Patapes has paid the amount mentioned in the text (i.e. 1730); that is. in money or in-kind. The text might indicate a «Treasury receipt» (e.g. *BGU* 6 1307, Treasury receipt, Elephantine or Syene, 86 BC). According to the texts of Treasury receipts so far published, the amounts generally range from 525 to 2780.

**Line 6 αὐτῆς (ἔτους) λ Παῶν(ι):** A scribal grammatical error of the gender of the personal pronoun αὐτοῦ at the end of the line is problematic; a barely legible *pi*, tiny *alpha* then *upsilon* and *nu* that led to the month Παῶν(ι) with an abbreviated *iota*. Without mentioning a day number!

**Line 7 Demotic line.**

3<sup>rd</sup> Decania  
List

*O. Cairo* S.R.18953, O. N°. 6a  
13 x 12 cm

Thebes  
Beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> century  
AD



This medium irregular trapezoid *ostrakon* is bright brown in color and has been cut from a piece of moderate quality pottery. The potsherd has been regularly cut and smoothed at all sides. The surface has suffered erosion, deposits of salt, and some letters are partly effaced, but the text is still generally legible. Except for some scratches at the left and upper sides, the *ostrakon* is generally in good condition. The four margins have been preserved: while a very large blank area (ca. 6.4 cm) has been left out at the lower margin, the right margin is larger than left and it is ca. 4.8 cm. There is a blot of oil at the top side to left, most probably from antiquity. The four edges are regular and have been smoothed. This potsherd preserves four complete lines. The text was written on the convex side in medium-sized cursive with a light black ink. The hand is moderately skilled and the faulty orthography occurs in lines 2, 3 and 4. The contracted letters and short ascenders and descender show some aspects of Bradygraphy. There are no ligatures.

The characteristics of the letters' appearance show consistency in terms of the following: *Alpha* has a loop attached to an oblique stroke. *Rho* is contracted and has a round head with short descender. *Psi* has been formed by drawing two crossed vertical and horizontal strokes at the middle, while the descender and ascender are equal. The *nu* is shaped as a capital Roman M with a foot or a connective to the left. The scribe uncommonly shaped the *omicron* as a small triangle rather than circle with a serif. The *epsilon* has been drawn as a lunar with a rather cupped stroke from the upper end. The interlinear spaces are uneven and there is a tendency towards spacing between words. In addition to a horizontal superlineation over the κε, there is no punctuation or diacritical marks. On palaeographical grounds, this document dates to the beginning of the second century AD, and belongs to Thebes. The document is a short *Decania* List «groups of camel-drivers» which has the number «25» that probably was given to each group of the *Decania*.

The similar attestations to this document are: *O.Heid* 411, Dekania-Liste, Ta Memnoneia (Thebes) or Hermonthis, 101 AD - 300 AD; *O.Kell* 125, Dekania list, Kellis (Oasis Magna), 201 AD - 400 AD; *O.Lund* 23, Liste über δεκανία, Arsinoites (?), 276 AD - 325 AD; *O.Lund* 24, Liste über δεκανία, Thebes (?), 1 AD - 400 AD; *O.Mich* 4 1136, Dekania-Liste, Karanis (Arsinoites), 301 AD - 325 AD; and *P.Oxy* 12 1512, List of δεκανίαι, Tholthis (Oxyrhynchites), 301 AD - 400 AD.

The persons mentioned in the text are: Ἀρσινωῖ Ψενγαμοῖνις, Παθιοῦς Παθιοῦς and Ὀρου Πετοσιρῖς. The verso is blank.

## TRANSCRIPTION

δεκ(ανία) κ̄ε  
 Ἄρσινωη Ψενναμοῖνις  
 ᾠ Παθιοῦς Παθιοῦς  
 4-υ<ι>οῦ Ὁρου Πετοσίρις

## CORRECTIONS

Line 2: Ἄρσινωη	→	Ἄρσινωης
Ψενναμοῖνις	→	Ψενναμουνέως
Line 3: Παθιοῦς	→	Παθιῆς
Line 4: ὑου	→	υῖοῦ
Πετοσίρις	→	Πετοσίρεως

## TRANSLATION

The 25<sup>th</sup> of *decania*

Arsinoes son of Psennamounis. 1 Pathies son of Pathies son of Horus son of Petosiris

## COMMENTARY

**Line δεκ(ανία) κ̄ε** : has been written abbreviated in this form only five times; three in *O. Berenike* 3: 296, 423 and 435, all of which are Receipts for water and belong to the same date 51 AD - 100 AD; *O. Heid* 411, Dekania-Liste, Ta Memnoneia (Thebes) or Hermonthis, 101 AD - 300 AD; and *O. Bodl* 2 1923, unknown, Thebes, 201 AD - 300 AD.

The word generally appears in the online database more than 150 times, beginning from 51 AD (*O. Berenike* 2 226) to the middle of 6<sup>th</sup> century 556 AD.

The word appears in LSJ as: the tenth, guard-house of *adecuria*, measure or division of land. Other editors<sup>6</sup> mention it just as a «gang or group». But etymological the word might refer to: δεκα + ανια «ten-bridle»<sup>7</sup>. Actually, the *decaniai* were «groups of camel-drivers»<sup>8</sup> and *decania* was a single group. Each group was led by *decanos/ dekanos*. The *decania* was mainly used in reference to individual men, yet sometimes referred to women. These individuals mostly bear Egyptian names, many of them theophoric as in this case of Πετοσίρις «who was given by Osiris» *Demotisches Namenbuch* p. 298-299 & 527. But they sometimes bear mixed Greek-Egyptian filiations. It is worth mentioning that, according to Rodney Ast,<sup>9</sup> camel-driving was a family business. The *decaniai* delivered commodities such as: wheat, wine, some medicines ingredients, barley, lentils, anise, tow, leather bags, oil, bread, wood planks, and clothing. Most of the

<sup>6</sup> *O. Claud* 1 134. Letter from Domitius curator to Successus, Mons Claudianus, 107 AD.

<sup>7</sup> As indication to the bridles of the camels that are hold and controlled by the camel-driver.

<sup>8</sup> *Ast* 2018: §3

<sup>9</sup> *Ast* 2018: §3

documents mentioning the *decania* were receipts of water. The majority of the documents in which δεκανία are cited belong to Berenike, with 119 in *O. Berenike*, and 38 in other collections.

As for the  $\overline{\kappa\epsilon}$  «25<sup>th</sup>», it is most likely the number of the *decania*, an identification number that was given to each group of «camel-drivers».

**Line 2: Ἀρσιωνη Ψενναμοῖνις:** the scribe has forgotten to write the final *sigma* in Ἀρσιωνη (Ἀρσιωνης) as a *parablepsy* error, which was common in the period<sup>10</sup>. Another conversion between vowels has been cited in the text, where the scribe has converted the *diphthong ου* with the *diphthong οι*<sup>11</sup>. The name Ψενναμοῖνις has been attested only once in *P.Bad* 4 53, Λόγος οἴνου, Hipponon (Herakleopolites), 301 AD- 400 AD but with *onenu* instead of two, and with the *diphthong ου* instead of the *diphthong οι*.

**Line 3:** the *alpha* with the horizontal sign stroke at the beginning might refer to this person who is the elder and has a younger brother with the same name, and *O. Berl. 77*.

**Line 2 and 3:** Παθιοῦς Παθι[οῦς πρεσβ(υτέρου)] καὶ Παθιοῦς Παθιοῦς γεω(τέρου).

.Παθιοῦς Παθιοῦς: it is a person's name and his *patronymic*. The scribe has written the first name in genitive instead of nominative; this instance «*dis legomenon*» in this form in the documents; in *O.Berl 77*, unknown, Ta Memnoneia (Thebes) or Hermonthis, 101 AD-200 AD, and *O.Heid 354*, List of amounts of wheat, Ta Memnoneia (Thebes) or Hermonthis (?), 101 AD - 200 AD, which might be the same person! It is an Egyptian name and according to TM, the geographical spread for this name shows it was around Theban region as well as Pathyrites (Gebelein).

There is a prolonged inward-curved stroke, which could be the end of the *sigma*.

Line 4 υ<ι>οῦ Ὁρου Πετοσιρίς: The scribe forgot to write the *iota* of υἱου which is cited in the documents nine times in both AD and BC.

**Πετοσιρίς:** He who was given by Osiris (Demotisches Namenbuch p. 298-299 & 527). It is currently attested 264 times. And it should be formed in the genitive i.e. Πετοσίρεως.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> A person Name!

*O. Cairo* S.R.18953, O. N°. 20a

Thebes

9.2 x 6.5 cm

2<sup>nd</sup> century AD

<sup>10</sup> For the omission of the final sigma see, GIGNAC 1976: vol. 1: *Phonology*, 124-125.

<sup>11</sup> GIGNAC 1976: 215

This small *ostrakon* has a bright-brown color and it has been broken from a moderate quality pottery jar. It has an irregular hexagonal shape with a base at the bottom and a vertex at the top. The surface is marred by faint letters, a deposit of salt here and there, scratches and a spot of ink, none of which impairs the legibility of the text. The *ostrakon* has preserved three margins: the upper margin is ca. 1.9 cm, the vast lower margin, which is ca. 5.6 cm, and a narrower left margin. The left upper edge is rather broken, while the upper right, right, lower and the two left sides are regular and smoothed. The text has been written on the convex side of the potsherd. The *ostrakon* has preserved three complete lines that have been written in a faded dark color with a relatively thick nib. The text has been written in a medium-sized cursive; it is fluent and in a well-formed hand with infrequent ligatures. The *psi* had been formed by a dashed stroke with a hook at the left; a very long descender invades the interlinear spaces to the following line, ending with a foot facing left. *Chi* has been drawn with two crossed diagonal strokes with a hook at the left lower end. *Nu* is drawn as a capital Roman N with a loop at the upper right leg and foot facing right. The *sigma* is either a lunate with prolonging at the upper end, or two small strokes with a junction forming a right angle. *Mu* has been formed as a deep wave without lifting the pen with a short contracted left serif rather than a leg. The *omega* is wavy and drawn without lifting the pen, with a connective with the following letter. The interlinear spaces are uneven and the text is a *scriptura continua* rather than having spaces between words. Neither abbreviations nor signs are attested in this document, nor any punctuation or diacritical marks. This document also belongs to Thebes (either Elephantine or Syene). On palaeographic grounds, the text dates to the second century AD. It is unusual that one person's name has been written on the *ostrakon*; the name is Πεκμηῆτος son of Ψενχώνσιος grandson of Σαχομνέως. The reason why this sole name was written is obscure, but there are a couple of suggestions that can be raised: 1- It indicates the importance of the owner of this document where it mentions his name, *patronymic* and his grandfather's name, something which is not common in the documents. 2- The name also might refer to a *decanos*<sup>12</sup>.

The concave side (i.e. verso) has no writing. The next seven documents stand as good parallels for this text: *P.Eleph.Wagner* 1 113, List of names, Elephantine, 1 AD – 200 AD; *P.Eleph.Wagner* 1 114, List of names, Elephantine, 1 AD - 200 AD; *P.Eleph.Wagner* 1 115, List of names, Elephantine, 101 AD - 150 AD; *P.Eleph.Wagner* 1 307, List of names, Elephantine, 101 AD - 300 AD; *P.Eleph.Wagner* 1 350, List of names, Elephantine, 101 AD - 200 AD; *P.Eleph.Wagner* 1 356, List of names, Elephantine, 101 AD - 200 AD; and *P.Eleph.Wagner* 1 359, List of names, Elephantine, 1 AD - 200 AD.

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<sup>12</sup> See note on line 1 of O. N°. 6a

TRANSCRIPTION

Πεκμήτος Ψεν-  
χμουμιος Σα-  
χομνέως

TRANSLATION

Pekmeis son of Psenchonis grandson of Sachomnis

COMMENTARY

**Line 1:** Πεκμήτος, genitive of Πεκμήης, it is an Egyptian name. It has been attested 25 times in different forms in genitive (Πεκμητίτιος, Πεκμηίτιος, Πεκμηεικος) and nominative (Πεκμήης, Πεκμήεις), the earliest in 48 AD and the latest in 212 AD. All of these documents belong to the Arsinoite nome.

**Line 1, 2:** Ψενχώνσιος, the reading is certain except for the letter *nu* which is partly washed out but still considerably legible. The name is *Hapax*; at least the stem of the word (i.e. not the prefix Ψεν - son of...). Although this is the first time this form appears in the documents, it represents the ancient Egyptian god «*Khonsou*»; so it indicates the same meaning «son of *Khonsou*».

**Line 2, 3:** Σαχομνέως, in spite of there being a spot of ink over the letter *sigma*, the syllable is still legible and clear. The name is cited 28 times; all of them coming from Thebes «Upper Egypt in general» and dating from 63 AD to 211 AD. Some of them are definitely not the same person. Others give no clear indication that they are certainly referring to the same person as mentioned here, but could do so; such as *O.Ashm* 50, unknown, Thebes, 126 AD. It is worth mentioning that the scribe has written in line 1 and 2 the name and a syllable of the following name (Ψεν-, Σα-).

## II. CONCLUSION

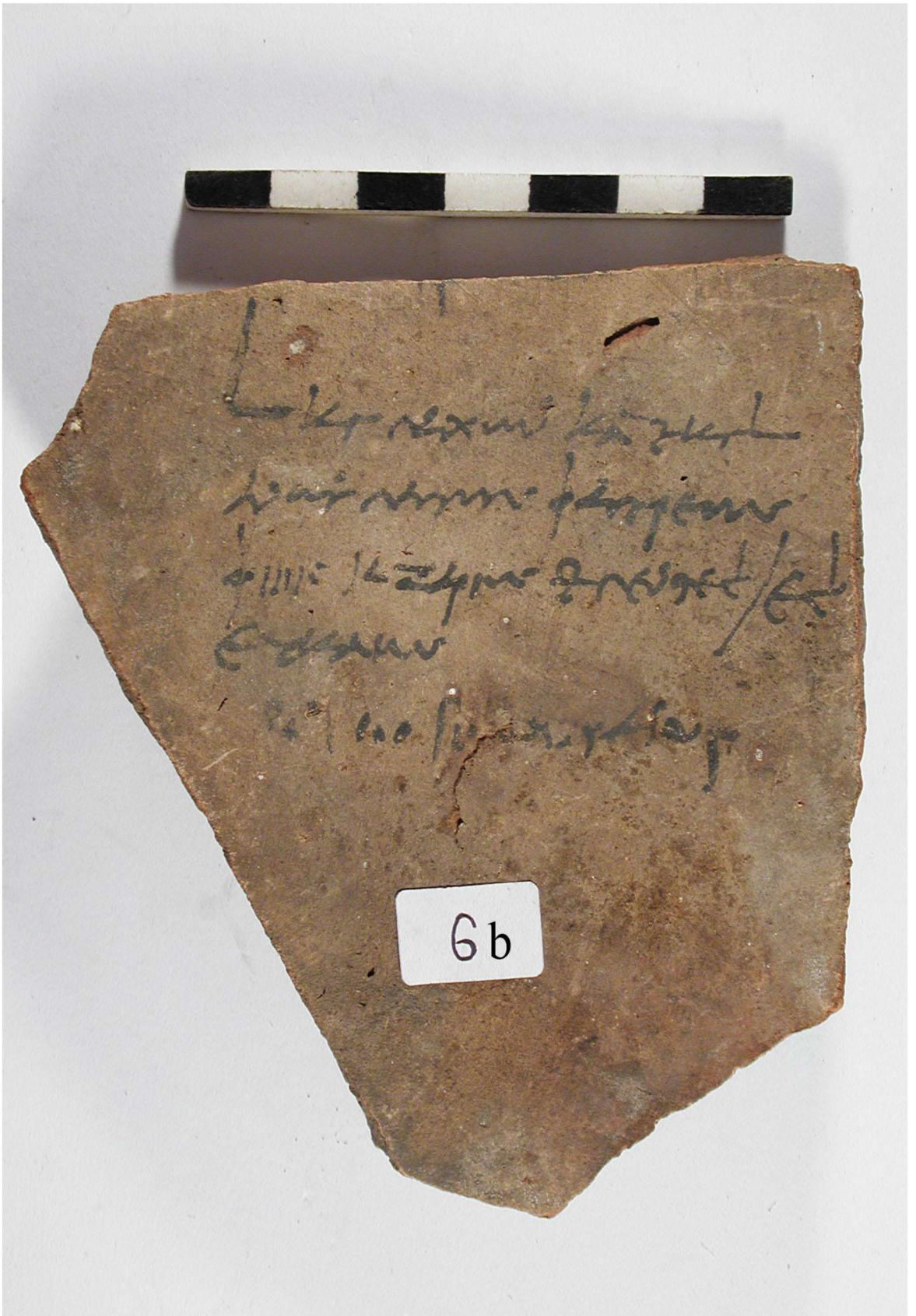
- 1- The importance of the Ombite nome during the Ptolemaic *era* and how the government gave prominence to the granary of wheat.
- 2- The bilingual receipts indicating that there still was a major of people who were Greek-illiterate «*aggramates*».
- 3- The Ptolemaic government was giving major attention to collecting taxes.
- 4- There was some sort of unique transportation system between ancient Egyptian cities/ villages, represented for example in the formation of several groups of camels/ drivers.
- 5- The importance of knowing and using this «very Egyptian» material (i.e. papyrus) to register all daily life interaction among the population and government.

### HOW TO CITE

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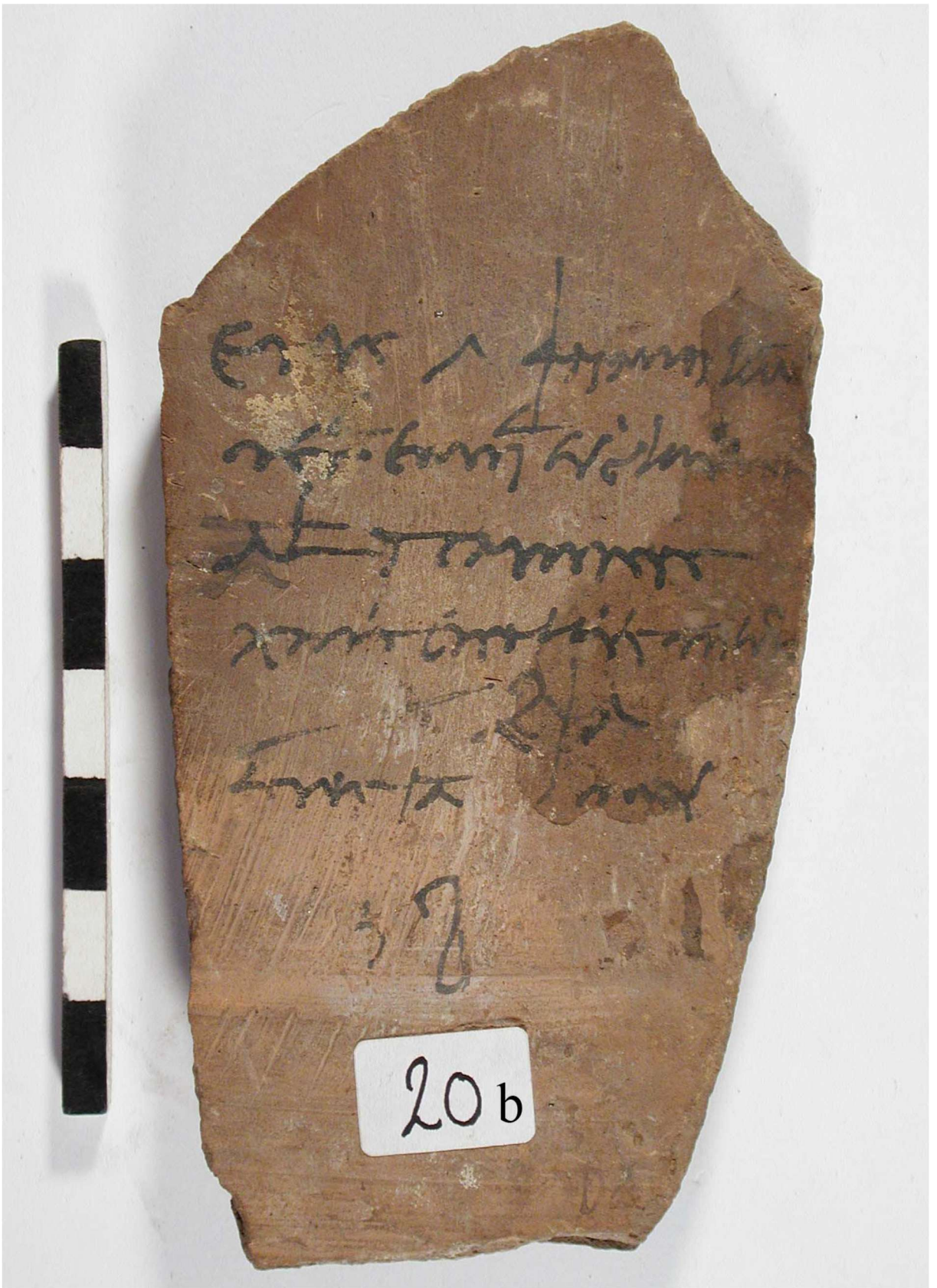
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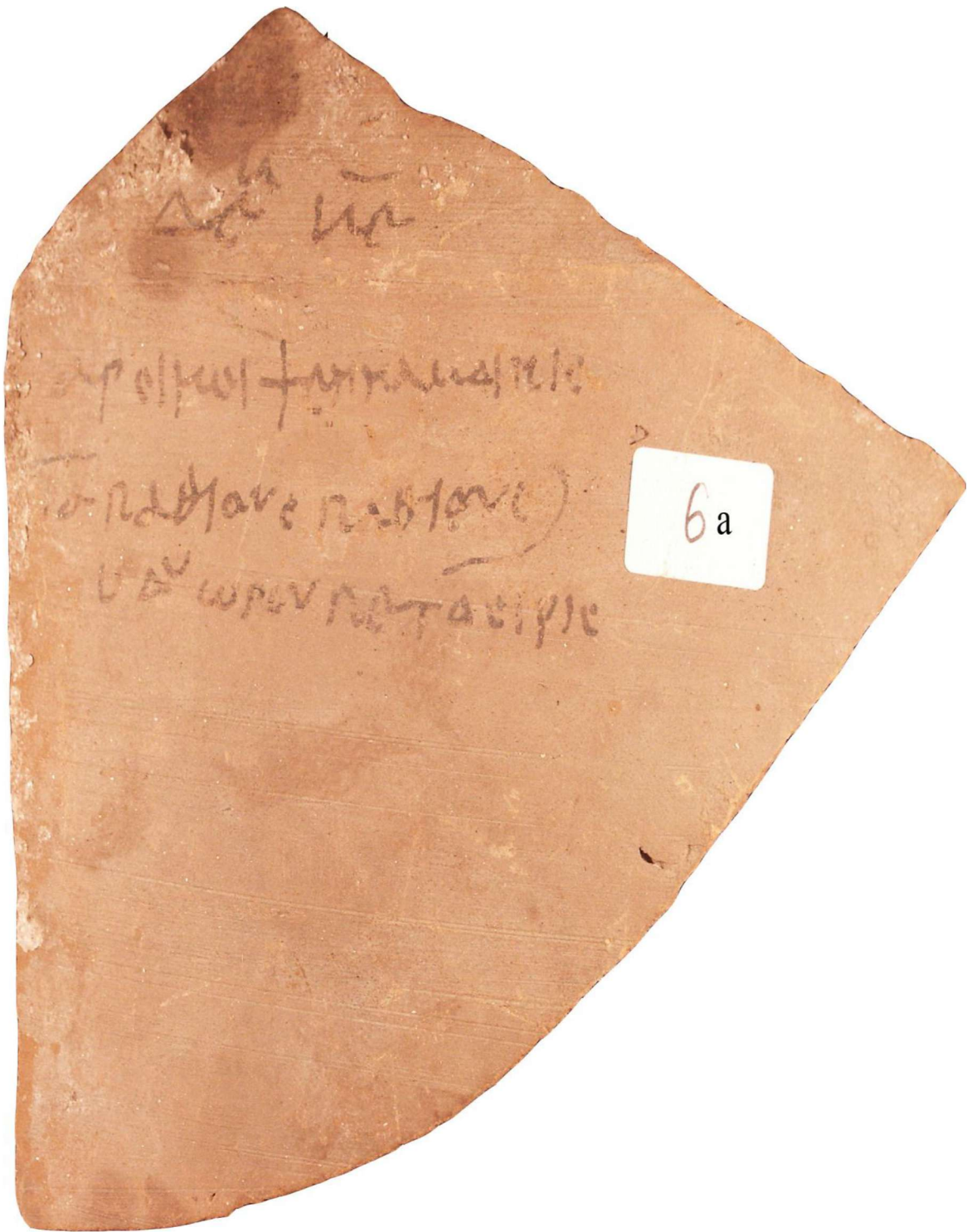


[FIGURE 1]: Photo taken by author

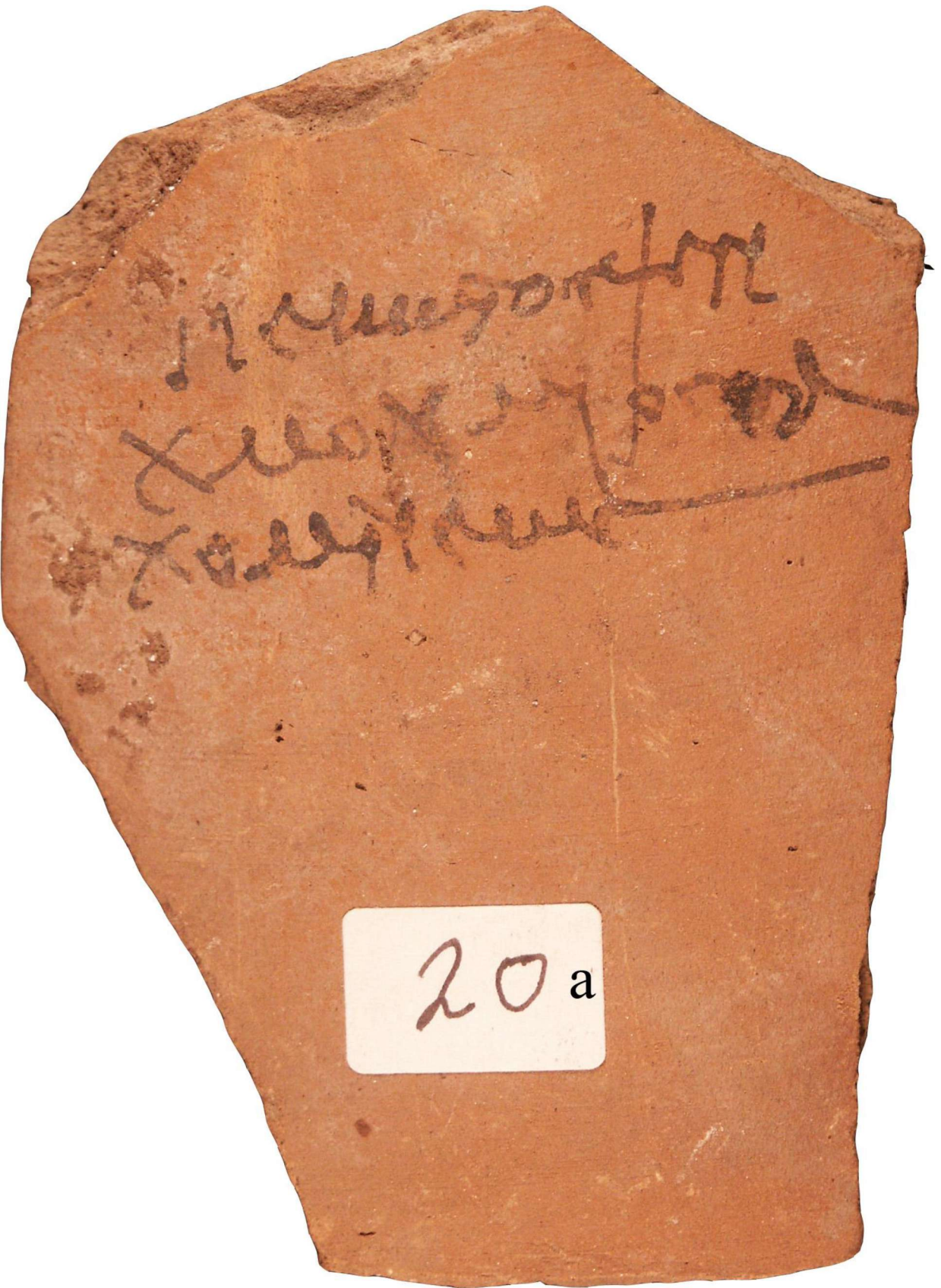




[FIGURE 2]: Photo taken by author



[FIGURE 3]: Photo taken by author



[FIGURE 4]: Photo taken by author

## أربع قطع شقافات يونانية من المتحف المصري بالقاهرة

مجدى على

أستاذ مساعد - بكلية الآداب / جامعة منصور

### الملخص

البحث عبارة عن ترجمة أربع قطع شقافات وثائقية مكتوبة باللغة اليونانية وهي محفوظة بالمتحف المصري ضمن مجموعة كبيرة من الأوستراكا، تم تقسيمها إلى مجموعتين رئيسيتين في الطابق الثالث من متحف المصري بالقاهرة. D3East. الدور الثالث، د. شرق تم إحضار الشقافات إلى المتحف في ٢٥ يناير ١٩٥٥ من منطقة طيبة على وجه التحديد إما من جزيرة فيلة أو أسوان، كما هو مذكور أحياناً في بعض الشقافات وكما هو مذكور في هذا البحث في أوستراكا رقم ٢٠ب. وقد نُشرت هذه القطع الأربعة لأول مرة. وللأربع قطع نفس رقم الجرد ١٨٩٣٥. قام الباحث بتقييم المجموعتين في رقم تسلسلي منفصل لكل مجموعة. يعود تاريخ هذه القطع إلى: ١- السنة الثالثة والعشرون، الحادى والعشرون من بشنس ١٩ يونية ١٥٨ قبل الميلاد ، ٢- السنة الثلاثين، الثانى والعشرون من برمودة فى عهد بطليموس التاسع سوتير الثانى ٣ مايو ٨٧ قبل الميلاد ، ٣- بداية القرن الثانى الميلادى و ٤- القرن الثانى الميلادى على الترتيب. الوثيقة الأولى هي رقم ٦ب ويبلغ عرضها ١١.٩ سم × ١٢.٩ سم فى الطول. وهي ثنائية اللغة وتتكون من خمسة أسطر كاملة أربعة يونانية وأخرى ديموطيقية تمت كتابتها على الوجه المحدب، في حين أن الظهر المقعر فارغ. وهو عبارة عن إيصال غلال يقر فيه اثنان من دافعى الضرائب بأنهم دفعوا خمسة وسدس أردبات من القمح إلى مسئول الغلال والذي اسمه غير مقروء. يحتوى المستند على بعض الإشكاليات فى القرءة فى اسم العلم فى بداية السطر ٢ واسم العلم فى السطر ٤. الوثيقة الثانية هي رقم ٢٠ب ويبلغ عرضها ٥.١ سم × ٨.٧ سم فى الطول. وقد احتفظت بسبعة أسطر كاملة فى حين أن الظهر فارغ. تشير هذه الوثيقة بوضوح فى السطر الثانى إلى أن المكان الذى تنتمى إليه هو مدينة أسوان. وهو عبارة عن إيصال خزانة غير مؤكد؟ حيث أن جميع الوثائق المشابهة تقريباً التي لها نفس الصيغة أو قريبة منها هي عبارة عن إيصالات الخزانة. الكاتب يبدو انه مدرب جيداً والنص تقريباً واضحاً باستثناء الكلمة الأخيرة فى السطر ٦. فى هذا النص، يعلن باتابس أنه دفع مبلغاً من المال لمسئول اسمه أو وظيفته غير واضحة فى النص، ومع ذلك فهو فى الغالب المصرفى الخاص بالقريه. الوثيقة الثالثة هي رقم ٦أ ويبلغ عرضها ١٣ سم × ١٢ سم طولاً. احتفظت قطعة الفخار هذه بأربعة أسطر كاملة على والوجه ، فى حين أن الظهر فارغ. وهي عبارة عن «مجموعة من سائقى الجمال» فى قائمة «ديكانيا قصيرة» التي تحمل الرقم «٢٥» والتي ربما أعطيت لكل مجموعة من ديكانيا. الوثيقة الرابعة هي رقم ٢٠أ ويبلغ عرضها ٩.٢ سم × ٦.٥ سم طولاً. لقد احتفظت بثلاثة أسطر كاملة مكتوبة على الوجه بينما الظهر فارغ. إنها «اسم شخص!» من غير المعتاد أنه تم كتابة اسم شخص واحد على قطعة من الشقافة. هناك عدد من الاقتراحات لوجود هذا الاسم بمفرده: إما بسبب أهمية هذا الشخص حيث تم ذكره واسم أبيه واسم جده، أو أنه كان رئيساً لمجموعة ديكانيا «ديكانوس».

**الكلمات الدالة:** علم البردى، التاريخ اليونانى الرومانى، بردى، المتحف المصرى، شقافات، العصر الرومانى، العصر البطلمى، اللغة اليونانية.