

Soad S. Abdel Aal

Some Demotic Ostraca Dealing with

Land Allotments^(*)

The group of texts published here is a part of a collection of Demotic ostraca kept in Cairo-Museum on the 3rd floor P. 23 East. They bear the special Register Number 18953⁽¹⁾. Nothing is known from where they were acquired, or to which era they are dated.⁽²⁾

The present ostraca forms an interesting group of texts since each text begins with the sentence *r r h = w r N.* "What they have allotted to N. " The verb *r h* used here is a technical term means "to allot, to measure, to adjudge"⁽³⁾ This sentence is a heading of some texts which are concerned with what is known "land allotment".

In 1974, Nur el Din⁽⁴⁾ stated that the actual meaning of these texts is not yet settled referring to both statements of:

1. Thompson⁽⁵⁾ who explained that these texts are concerned with rectifications of boundaries of land distributed by the inundation, the amount of land is sometimes so small .

(*) My gratitude goes to Mrs. S. Abd el Samee, Miss. A. Abd el Aleem as well as Mr. L. Abd el Hamid in Cairo- museum for their help in making these ostraca available to study.

(1) This collection of Ostraca will be dealt with in a volume of Catalogue Generale, forthcoming.

(2) This collection of Ostraca are kept in many boxes, only some of them known their origin, as scrap of papers told us in some of these boxes but the others are not known.

(3) Erichsen, Demotische Glossar , Kopenhagen 1953, P. 252-3.

(4) Nur el Din, Demotic Ostraca from the National museum at Leiden, Leiden 1974, P. 62-7.

(5) H. Thompson, Theban Ostraca, University of Toronto studies 1913, P. 44, note 1. He pointed out that perhaps the verb *rh* has a similar meaning in earlier times Beni Hassan I, P. 59, where Chnomhotep relates how the king came and caused one city to know its boundary with another city, establishing their land marks as heaven, reckoning their waters (*rh mw. sn*) i.e allotting their rights in the water for irrigation purpose.

2. Lichtheim⁽¹⁾ added that some texts state clearly that the lands are being transferred from one person to another, others might be allotments of marginal or water land which the government was anxious to restore to cultivate and which it assigned to the village of Jeme for distribution among its peasants.

In one of her extensive series of publication of Demotic ostraca which were obtained from Pathyris, Ursula K. Heckel dealt with the same kind of texts⁽²⁾. She pointed out that they are of Upper Egyptian origin⁽³⁾, and most of them are dated to the late Ptolemaic Period. She came to the conclusion that these texts were kind of receipts related to the cultivated land where one can identify two distinct types:

First one concerns the work which was carried out by the farmers in the fields or in the wine gardens in high land of Pathyris. In this type, some plots of land were allotted to a group of farmers. The plots were not so small, so the farmers were divided into two groups. They had the responsibility to take care and to till these plots.

Second type of receipts is concerned with the gardens which were neglected. The government aimed to be taken care of this land and to be recultivated. By this type each text states that a plot had been allotted to a

(1) M. Lichtheim, *Demotic Ostraca From Medinet Habu*, the University of Chicago Oriental Institute publications, Vol. XXX, New Haven 1955, P. 53

(2) Ursula K. Heckel, *Pathyris 2* in *Enchoria* 19, 1992, P. 47-9.

(3) For the texts dealt with this allotment see, Bilabel, "Ein demotischen ostrakon aus Pentakomia" in *Aegyptus* XI, 1930-1931, P. 386-7; Sten Wangsted, *Die Demotische Ostraka* Zurich, Uppsala 1965, Nos. 35-48; Id, *Ausgewählte Demotische Ostraka aus der Sammlung des Victoria-Museum zu Uppsala und der Staatlichen Papyrussammlung zu Berlin*, Uppsala 1954, No. 65, note 1; Thompson, op. cit, nos. D 23, D 1, D 25, D 6, D 44, D 2, D 82; Lichtheim, op. cit, nos. 121-125; Nur el Din, op. cit, nos. 73-79, P. 62-7; Devauchelle, *Ostraca Demotiques du Musee du Louvre*, Bd'E, t. XCII, I-II, Le Caire 1983, P. 36-7; Ursula K. Heckel, "Demotische texte aus Pathyris" in *MDAIK* 21, 1966, P. 133-70, nos. 8, 18, 21, 26-28; Id, "Pathyris, Demotische Kurz-Texte in Cairo", in *Enchoria* 19, Wiesbaden 1992, nos. 21-22, nos. 23-29, see also, Mattha, *Demotic Ostraka from the Collections at Oxford, Paris, Vienna and Cairo*, Le Caire 1945, P. 23, note 1; De Meulenaere, "Prospographia Ptolemaica" in *Cd'E*, XLII (1967), PP. 297-300.

farmer, this plot was usually small. Comparing this type with the Greek χέρσος which means "fallow or uncultivated land", she stated that the farmer handed or allotted a small area of this neglected land, where he had to recultivate it without paying taxes for five years, then he had to pay a reduced tax for another three years. Starting from the ninth year he had to pay it fully.

Text Nr. 1 plate 1

DO Cairo 32

Potsherd, reddish

6 X 6.5 cm, thick. 8-1 cm

Gebelen (for internal evidence)

Late Ptolemaic

the ostrakon is broken at the left side, the text is not complete. The handwriting is in a good state of preservation.

Transliteration:

1- *r rḥ = w r P3 dj Šbk s3 (N3) nḥt [=f*

2- *Pr ḥt ḥr kj (?)*

3- *r st3 2 mḥ 2 st3 2 ʿn n 3[mwr?*

4- *sh Pa - t3 s.t [ʿ 3.t*

5- *sh N3 nḥt [=f*

Translation:

1- what they have allotted to *p3 - dj Šbk* son of (N3) *nḥt [=f*

2- Pathyris , highland

3- to be 2 arura, 2 cubit, 2 arura in Crocodilopolis (?)

4- writhen by *Pa - t3 - st [ʿ 3.t*

5- writhen by *N3 nḥt [=f*

Notes:

The text concerns a plot of land in Pathyris, in addition to another area probably in Crocodilopolis

- L. 1: The proper name *P3 dj Šbk* is familiar in Gebelen documents.⁽¹⁾
- L. 2: *kj* lit. the high land, an older floodplain already covered with bushes. It was the normal agriculture land.⁽²⁾
- L. 3: *st3* Coptic **Ⲫⲟⲩ**, GK aroura is a measure of 100 cubit square, *mh*, cubit, palm i.e palm breadth⁽³⁾.
: After *st3 2 ʿn* the sign suggests to be *3mwr* or Gocodilopolis 14 km north Pathyris⁽⁴⁾
- L. 4: The ostracon might be dated to year 109/10 because the scribe's name Pa - *t3 st - [ʿ3.t* is the same of ostracon 36 which published by Wangstedt⁽⁵⁾.

Ost. Nr. 2 plate 1

DO Cairo 130/ 18953

Potsherd, reddish

8.7 X 5.5 cm, thick. 6 – 8. cm.

Thebes (for internal evidence)

Late Ptolemaic

The ostracon is broken at the right side and partly at the top of the left side. Heading or beginning of the text is missing. The handwriting is in a good state of preservation.

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- (1) Luddeckens , DNB 5, p. 340- 1; Vleeming, Some Coins of Artaxerxes and Other Short Texts in the Demotic Script found on Various Objects and gathered from many publications , (Studia Demotica V), Peeters 2001, Nr. 38/ 49.
- (2) Erichsen, Glossar, p. 532; Gardiner, AEO I, p. 55, see also Christine Strauss- Seeber, "Gifts of the Nile,The Agriculture of a River Oasis ", in Egypt the world of the Pharaohs, P. 337.
- (3) Vleeming, " Masse und Gewichte " in LA III, col. 1210-12; see also Erichsen, Glossar, P. 472- 3; Gardiner, EG 266, 3.
- (4) Ursula K. Heckel , Domotische texts aus Pathyris , in MDAIK 21 , Ost. Nr. 26/3 Ost. Nr. 27 /2 . For the Geographical name *3mwr* see Gardiner, AEO II , P. 274- 5.
- (5) Wangstedt , Die Demotisch Ostraca Zurich , Ost. Nr. 36 / 3 . p. 41-2

Transliteration:

X+1 – *irm* (*n3y = f*) *irj* (.w) *n t3 mtn.t* (?)

X+2 – *st3 3 (r) st3 6 ʕn sh Pa - hr n h3t sp 36*

X+3 – *st3 6 ʕn n h3t sp 36*

X+4 – *P3 Imn (?) r st3 6 st3 3 r st3 6 ʕn n h3t sp 36*

+5 – *M3j] hs (?) r st3 6 st3 3 (r) st3 6 ʕn n h3t sp 36*

Translation:

X+1 – together with (his) fellow(s) in *t3 mtn.t*

X+2 – 3 aruras to be 6 aruras again written by Pa -*hr* in the year 36

X+3 – 6 aruras again in the year 36

X+4 – *P3 Imn (?)* 6 aruras , 3 aruras to be 6 aruras again in the year 36

X+5 – *M3j] hs* 6 aruras , 3 aruras to be 6 rauras again in the year 36

Notes:

The origin of the present ostracon was Theban Nome, not only for of the proper names, but also for the geographical name *mtn.t* which located near Thebes. The allotment here concerns an area of 6aruras handed to a group of farmers to cultivate and to take care of.

L. 1: for the word *T3 Mtn.t* :it was a place located near Thebes and Hermenthlis⁽¹⁾

L. 2: The proper name suggests to be Pa-*hr*. It was of Theban origin.⁽²⁾It should be written at the beginning of the line and precedes the area of the land , but it is written in the midst between the area and the year.

Ost. Nr. 3 plate II

DO Cairo 277

Potshord, brownish

(1) Erichsen, Glossar, P. 189; Grandiner, AEO II, P. 120

(2) Lichtheim, op. cit , Nr. 10/1, 121/4, 122 /5; see also DNB 6, P. 40; Vleeming, op. cit., Nr. 253/1.

7 X 10.5, thick. 8 – 1 cm
 Thebes (for internal grounds)
 late Ptolemaic

The Ostracom is broken at the left side, and at the lower part of the right side. It is in a good state of preservation. The handwriting is neat, rounded as a characteristic of late Ptolemaic Period.

Transliteration:

- 1- r r ḥ = w (r) Hry w P3 ḥm s3 P3 šr Imn - ipy n Dm3 kj
- 2- st3 5 st3 2 1/2 r st3 5 ʿn n wʿ tgm sh̄ s n wsr.t s3 ʿnh̄ - ḥpj
- 3- sh̄ Hr m- ḥb (?) s3 Pa - Dm3 st3 5 st3 2 1/2 r st3 5 ʿn
- 4- sh̄ Ptlmys st3 5 st3 2 1/2 r st3 5 ʿn
- 5- lllll s3 Hr-wn- nfr st3 5 r st3 2 1/2 r st3 5 ʿn

Translation:

- 1 - What they have allotted to H ry w P3 ḥm son of P3 šr Imn ipy in Dme highland
- 2 - 5 aruras to be 2 1/2 aruras to be 5 aruras again in one castor oil -land ? written by s-n- Wsr.t son of ʿnh̄ -ḥpj
- 3 - Written by Hr- m- ḥ b (?) son of Pa - Dm3 5 aruras , 2 1/2 aruras , to be 5 aruras again
- 4 - Written by Ptlmys 5 aruras , 2 1/2 aruras to be 5 aruras again
- 5 - written by 2 1/2 Hr wn – nfr 5 aruras , 2 1/2 aruras to be 5 aruras again

Notes:

The present text concerns an allotments of 5 aruras of land cultivated with castor oil (?). It is worth noting that no mentioning of the year as in other receipts of allotment.

L. 1: The proper name P3- šr- Imn - ipy is of Theban origin.⁽¹⁾

(1) DNB 4, P. 225

L. 2: The allotment determines the Castor- oil⁽¹⁾ as a crop that Hryw-p3-*hm* had to cultivate the land

: The proper names *s-n- wsr.t* and *ꜥnh - hꜣj* are common in Theban texts⁽²⁾. The same proper names occurred in one of Medinet Habu ostraca which dated to the Late Ptolemaic period⁽³⁾.

L.3: The proper name is more likely to be *Hr- m- hb*⁽⁴⁾

L.6: A trace of writing beneath, at the end of this line. It suggest to read 24. It seems that this ostracon was reused.

Ostracon Nr. 4 . plate II

DO Cairo 282

Potsherd, brownish

7.5 X 7 cm, thick 8 – 1 cm

Pathyris (for internal evidence)

Late Ptolemaic

The text is incomplete as the ostracon is broken at the left side and at the bottom. The text is in a good state of preservation.

Transliteration:

1-*r r h = w r Gꜥy s3 Pa – tw*
 2-*n pr Ht hr kj*
 3-*hn st3 20 (?) st3 1/2 r st 3 I st3 1/2*
 4-*sh Pa – t 3 - st ꜥ 3.t*
 5-*sh] ij m htp (?)*

Translation:

1 - What they have allotted to *Gꜥy* son of *Pa – tw*

(1) Erichsen, Glossar, P. 662

(2) DNB 2, P. 103

(3) Lichtheim, op. cit., No. 121/ 3

(4) Compare Nur el Din , op. cit, nos. 131/ 3, 280/ 3, 319/2; Devauchelle, op. cit., ODL 277/ 2, ODL 933/ 1, Vleeming, op. cit., Nr. 241.

- 2 - in Pathyris , highland
- 3 - within 20 arura , $\frac{1}{2}$ arura , to be 1 arura to be $\frac{1}{2}$ arura
- 4 - written by Pa – t 3 - st ϵ 3.t
- 5 - writhen by ij m h tp (?)

Notes:

The receipt concerns one arura within 20 arura in highland in Pathyris.

L.1: for the second part of the proper name, it suggests to be pa– tw. Compare the same name $G^{\epsilon}y s3 Pa-tw$ in an ostracon acquired from Gebelen and dated to the late Ptolemaic Period.¹

L.3: For the writing $st3 \frac{1}{2} r st3 I st3 \frac{1}{2}$, it might be written $st3 I st3 \frac{1}{2}$
r $st3 I \epsilon n$

Text Nr. 5, plate III

DO Cairo 290

Potsherd , yellowish

8.5 x 9.5, thick. 6 – 1 cm

Gebelen (for internal evidence)

Late Ptolemaic

The text is incomplete as the ostracon is broken at the right side. The beginning of the text is missing.

Transliteration :

X+1- r r h = w r] Hr s3 P3 mr ih.t irm n3y=f iry.w n t3 wp.t wj ϵ

X+2- n Pr - ht - hr r hj st3t I n h w.t ntr n Rsn

X+3- st3 $\frac{1}{4}$ p3 mh $\frac{1}{2}$ st3 $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{32}$ st3 $\frac{1}{2}$ st3 5 r st3 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ st3 5 ϵn

X+4- sh] Hr – sm3- t3wy n h3t sp 53

X+5- sh] P3 mr ih.t st3 5 st3 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ r st3 5 ϵn n h3t - sp 53

X+6- sh] P3] hb st3 5 st3 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ r st3 5 ϵn n h3t sp 53

X+7- st3 5 st3 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ r st3 5 ϵn n h3t sp 53

(1) Wangstedt, op. cit, ost. Nr.12 /1, see also DNB, 14 / P. 1018.

Translation:

X+1- What have been allotted to *Hr* son of *P3- mr- ih.t* together with his fellows concerning the work of farming

X+2- in Pathyris, measurement of 1 arura in the temple of *Rsn*

X+3- $\frac{1}{4}$ arura, $1 \frac{1}{2}$ culiut, $\frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{32}$ arura to be 5 arura again

X+4- Written by *Hr]* - *sm3 - t3wy* in the year 53

X+5- Written by *P3 - mr - ih.t* 5 arura $2 \frac{1}{2}$ arura to be 5 arura again in the year 53

X+6- Written by *P3 hb* 5 arura $2 \frac{1}{2}$ arura to be 5 arura again in the year 53

Notes:

The present text concerns allotment of farming work in two sites Pathyris, and in temple of *Rsn* which were in Gebelen to the farmers to cultivate them. It might be 5 aruras in both sites.

L.1: The proper name *p3- mr - ih.t*,⁽¹⁾ was common in Gebelen documents.

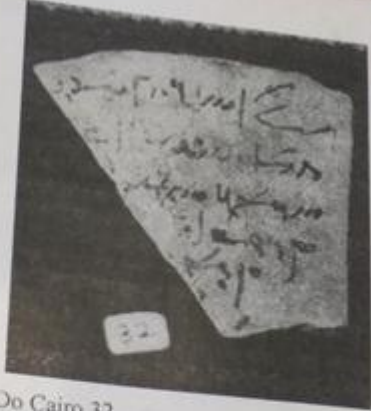
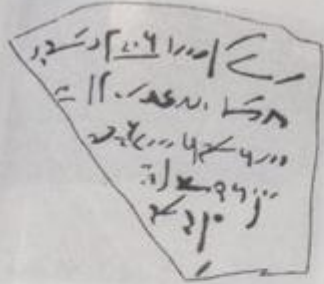
For *t3 wp.t wj^c* : farming work here the text belongs to first type of allotment's receipts.⁽²⁾

L.2 : For *h.t ntr Rsn* it was a temple in Gebelen.⁽³⁾

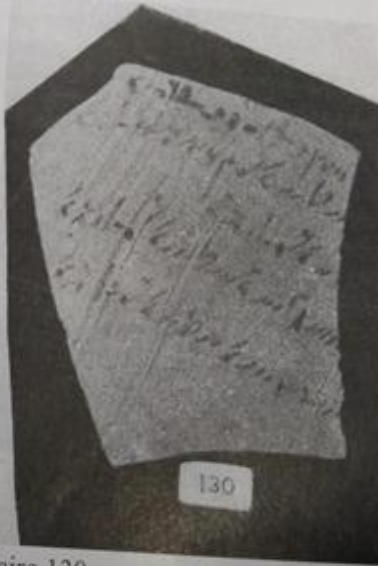
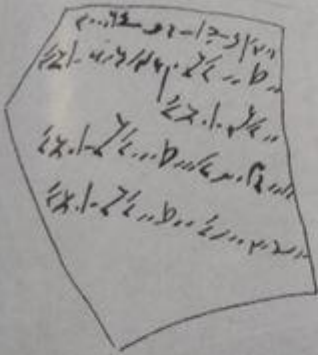
(1) Ursula K. Heckel, MDAIK 21, Nr. 21/ 2; Wangstedt, op. cit., nos. 19/ 1, 21/2.

(2) See the discussion page 1-2 above.

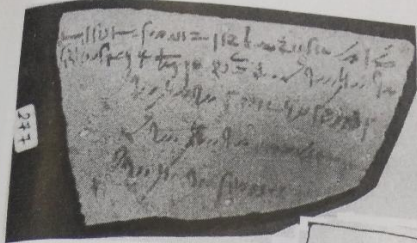
(3) Ursula K. Heckel, Enchoria 19, Nr. 21/ 3, P. 68.



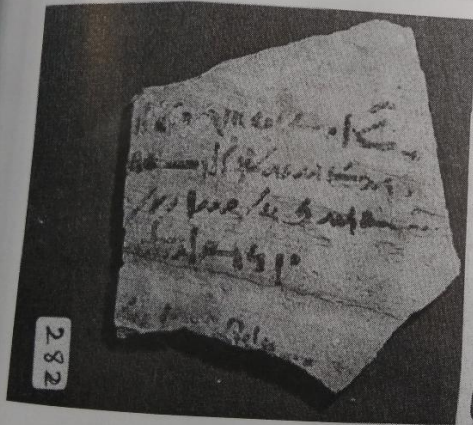
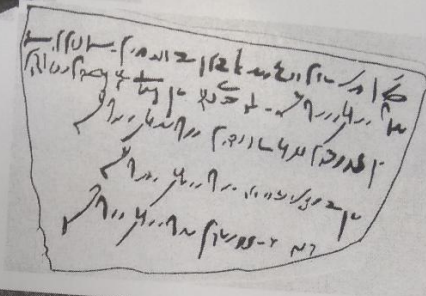
Ost. Nr. 1, Do Cairo 32



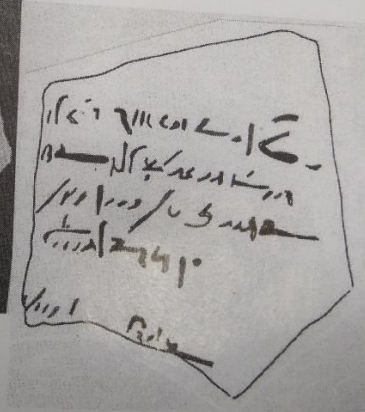
Ost. Nr. 2, Do Cairo 130

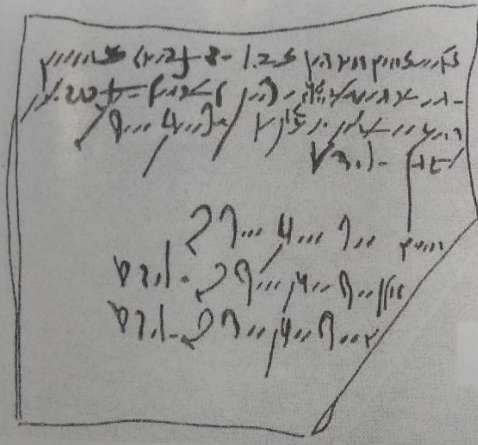
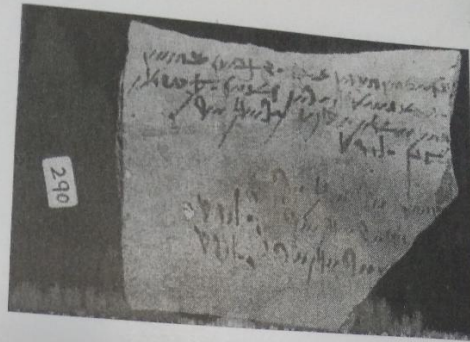


Ost. Nr. 3, Do Cairo 277



Ost. Nr. 4, Do Cairo 282





Ost. Nr. 5, Do Cairo 290