

## Unpublished Demotic Receipts Concerning Land

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**Abstract:** The present study contains the publication of four demotic ostraca with receipts concerning land. These texts, which are now kept in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, were discovered in the Oriental Institute's 1929/30 season of excavation at Medinet Habu, (MH 4071, MH 4076, MH 196, and MH 4318 R&V). Their date can be determined from some interior evidences such as known persons. The first ostrakon is dated to the late Ptolemaic period, while the other ones are dated to Roman; one of them belongs to the reign of Augustus. Three receipts of them were issued in money while one text concerns a payment in kind. These receipts concern the delivery of grain, which was always paid in kind and delivered to the granary, and sometimes when the harvest was decreased, the farmer would not be able to deliver the amount of wheat to the granary, so he had to pay its cash value to the bank. He could pay either in the year following the year in which the grain was due or even in the same year.

**Keywords:** Demotic, Receipt, Land, Ptolemaic, Roman.

إيصالات ديموطيقية غير منشورة متعلقة بالأرض

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**المخلص:** يقوم هذا البحث بنشر أربعة إيصالات من طيبة متعلقة بالأرض وهذه النصوص محفوظة بالمتحف المصري بالقاهرة و تنتمي إلى بعثة الحفائر الخاصة بالمعهد الشرقي لموسم ١٩٢٩/١٩٣٠ بمدينة هابو والتي تحمل أرقام: MH 4318 R&V, MH 196, MH 4076, MH 4071. تم تحديد تأريخ النصوص من بعض الأدلة التي وردت بالنصوص كأسماء الشخصيات المشهورة. النص الأول يعود للعصر البطلمي المتأخر بينما باقي النصوص تؤرخ للعصر الروماني، وأحد هذه النصوص يعود لعصر أغسطس. تم دفع ثلاثة إيصالات بالمال بينما إيصال واحد فقط دفع بالنوع. هذه الإيصالات متعلقة بتوصيل المحاصيل التي تدفع دائما بالنوع ويتم إيصالها إلى الشونة ولكن في بعض الأحيان عندما يقل الحصاد ولا يتمكن المزارع من إيصال كمية القمح للشونة عليه أن يدفع قيمتها بالمال إلى البنك وبإمكانه الدفع في السنة المقبلة أو في نفس السنة.

**الكلمات الدالة:** ديموطيقية، إيصال، أرض، بطلمي، روماني.

These receipts concern the delivery of grain which was always paid in kind and delivered to the granary. Sometimes when the harvest was decreased, the farmer would not be able to deliver the amount of wheat to the granary, so he had to pay its cash value,<sup>1</sup> to the bank. He could pay either in the year following the year in which the grain was due,<sup>2</sup> or even in the same year.<sup>3</sup>

The four receipts concerning land come from Thebes. They have the numbers M.H. 4071, 4076, 196 and 4318 R&V and belong to the Oriental Institute's 1929/30 season of excavation at Medinet Habu.<sup>4</sup>

The two receipts nos. 1 and 3 were paid in money, while one receipt no. 4 was paid in kind and the amount is missing in text no. 2. Most of the payers in the texts were men while the receipt was paid by a woman in text no. 3.

Text no. 1 belongs to the late Ptolemaic period and is dated to the reign of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, while the rest of the texts belong to the Roman period, and text 2 is dated to the reign of Augustus.<sup>5</sup>

### 1) M.H. 4071 Plate I

Potsherd, Brown

6 x 4 cm., thick. 0.5-0.8 cm.

**Date:** Late Ptolemaic, Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II 136 BC.

**Description:** The text is incomplete as the ostracon is broken partly at the top, at the left side and at the bottom. There is a lacuna which affected the text in the middle of line 1. The handwriting is big, neat and regular.

### Transliteration:

1) *dī* 'Pa-Dmz' [ ]

2) *irm ht 1.t zḥ ht ½* [ ]

3) 7 '½' 'ht kt' 8 ht 'I' [ ]

4) *h3.t sp 35 ibt 4* [ ]

5) '...' [ ]

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<sup>1</sup> G. Mattha, *Demotic Ostraca from the Collections at Oxford, Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Cairo*, (Le Caire: Publications de la Société Fouad I de Papyrologie 6, 1945), 49; M.A.A. Nur El-Din, *The Demotic Ostraca in the National Museum of Antiquities at Leiden*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), 45.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. Lichtheim, *Demotic Ostraca from Medinet Habu*, (Chicago-Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), nos. 98-103, 105, 107; Sohair Wahid El-Din, "Demotic Ostraca from Thebes in the Egyptian Museum" (PhD diss., University of Zagazig, 2005), nos. 101-106.

<sup>3</sup> e.g. Lichtheim, *Demotic Ostraca from Medinet Habu*, nos. 96, 106; Wahid El-Din, "Demotic Ostraca from Thebes," no. 100.

<sup>4</sup> U. Höschler, *Medinet Habu Reports vol. 2 The Architectural Survey* (Chicago-Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1929-1930).

<sup>5</sup> Lichtheim, *Demotic Ostraca from Medinet Habu*, 16.

**Translation:**

- 1) '.....' has paid [ ]
- 2) with 1 silver (piece), land  $\frac{1}{3}$  silver (piece) [ ]
- 3) 7  $\frac{1}{3}$ , 8 'silver kite', '1' silver (piece) [ ]
- 4) Year 35, fourth month of [ ]
- 5) '...' [ ]

**Notes:**

This receipt concerns a land and the payment is in money. It seems that from the style of the handwriting that the text belongs to the late Ptolemaic period as the year 35 belongs to the reign of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II.

Year 35 = 136 BC.



L.2. This sign is probably read as *ꜥḥ* "land" it is similar to  <sup>1</sup>

L.3. At the end of the line the scribe wrote another word before he corrected it to *ḥt* and the trace of the old sign still remains.

**2) M.H. 4071 Plate II**

Potsherd, Brown

10.5 x 7 cm., thick. 0.8-1 cm.

**Date:** Roman, Augustus, 14 Augustus, 4 AD.

**Description:** The text is complete. The ink is very faint. The handwriting is straight and compact.

**Transliteration:**

- 1) *r.dī Pa-Dmꜣ sꜣ Ms-wr*
- 2) *n Pꜣ-šr-Mnt ꜥirm (?) Pꜣy-kꜣ*
- 3) *ḥr pꜣ šḥ.t n ꜥꜥḥ ntr (n) ḥꜣ.t-sp 32*
- 4) '.....' *sh n ḥꜣ.t sp 33 ibt 4 šmw sw 21*

**Translation:**

- 1) *Pa-Dmꜣ* son of *Ms-wr* has paid
- 2) to *Pꜣ-šr-Mnt* 'together with(?) *Pꜣy-kꜣ*
- 3) for the corn-seed of god's field (of) year 32
- 4) '.....' Written in year 33, Mesore, day 21

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar*, (Kopenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1954), 9.

**Notes:**

*Pa-Dm3* son of *Ms-wr* has delivered an amount of corn-seed of the god's field in year 33 for the previous year of Augustus.

In the Greco-Roman period the government rented the state land to the farmers and supplied them with amounts of seeds to be planted in specific area of land having certain crops.<sup>1</sup>

The farmer of the state land had to pay the rent and to deliver certain amounts of seeds to the state granary, these amounts differed according to the area of the land.

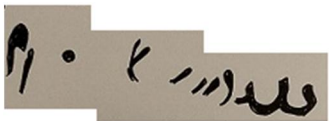
The amount of corn-seed was preserved in the state granary in order to be given to the same farmer –in case that he will continue in cultivating the land- or to another farmer who will cultivate the land in the next season.

This delivery of corn-seed, achieved a guarantee to the state, that the land will be planted for the next year.

If the farmer could not deliver the amounts of seeds because of the shortage of the harvest, he had to pay the value of it in money to the bank.<sup>2</sup>

L.1. *Pa-Dm3* son of *Ms-wr* was already known from other receipts concerning wheat, two texts are datable to year 26 and 32 of Augustus<sup>3</sup> and in a receipt for rent is dated to the Roman period.<sup>4</sup>

L.2. It seems that both *P3-šr-Mnt* and *P3y-k3* are the tax collectors.

L.3.  *hr p3 sh.t n '3h' ntr* " for the corn-seed of god's field", it was a land dedicated to a specific god and sometimes exempted from paying taxes in the Ptolemaic period, while in the Roman period it enjoyed all its privileges.<sup>5</sup>

L.4. The amount which *Pa-Dm3* son of *Ms-wr* has delivered for the corn-seed is written at the beginning of this line and it is washed out.

**3) M.H. 196 Plate III**

Potsherd, Brown

7x 9.5 cm., thick. 0.8-1 cm.

**Date:** Roman

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<sup>1</sup> Maha Akeel, "Taxes in Egypt During the Ptolemaic Rule, Through the Texts and Some Demotic Documents (ostraca) from the Collections of the Egyptian Museum – Cairo" (MA diss., University of Cairo, 2003), 8f.

<sup>2</sup> Mattha, *Demotic Ostraca*, 50; Nur El-Din, *O.Leiden*, 47.

<sup>3</sup> Lichtheim, *Demotic Ostraca from Medinet Habu*, nos. 75,100.

<sup>4</sup> Sara Nabil, "Unpublished Demotic Ostraca from Medinet Habu in the Egyptian Museum" ( PhD diss., University of Ain Shams, 2011), no. 43.

<sup>5</sup> S.L. Wallace, *Taxation in Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian*, (Princeton and London: Princeton University Studies in Papyrology 2, 1938), 4.

**Description:** The text is incomplete as the ostrakon is broken at the left side and at the bottom. There are some scratches which affected the text. The handwriting is big, neat and elegant.

**Transliteration:**

- 1) *r. di Ta-nw3 t3 rmt.t n Pa-iry* [ ]
- 2) *n ibt 4 3h.t sw 7 sttr* [ ]
- 3) *cn bt ht 12 cn bt ht x* [ ]
- 4) *cn bt kt 6 bt n Ta-hb3(?)* [ ]

**Translation:**

- 1) *Ta-nw3* the wife of *Pa-iry* has paid [ ]
- 2) in Choiak, day 7 [ ] stater
- 3) again emmer 12 silver (pieces), again emmer *x* silver (piece)
- 4) again emmer makes 6 kites, emmer of *Ta-hb3(?)* [ ]

**Notes:**

This receipt was issued to a woman called *Ta-nw3*, she paid in money for a land cultivated with emmer. It seems from lines 2-3 that the payments are in installments.

**4) M.H. 4318 R&V Plate IV & V.**

Potsherd, Brown

6 x 7.5 cm., thick. 0.9-1 cm.

**Date:** Roman

**Description:** The text is written on both Recto and Verso and it is incomplete. The Recto the ostrakon is broken at the bottom, while it is broken at the left side on the Verso. There is a big space between lines 2 and 3 on the Recto. The ink is faint on the Recto while it is refilled on the Verso. The handwriting is straight and regular.

**Transliteration:**

**Recto:**

- 1) *r. di P3-šr-Hnsw*
- 2) *Pa-Dm3 s3 Thwty-i. ir-ti=s*
- 3) *sw 2½<sup>1</sup>(?) P3-ti-Sbk*
- 4) [ ] *x* [ ]

**Verso:**

- 1) *Hry=w s3 c3-phr* [ ]
- 2) *Ta-p3-šy t3* [ ]

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<sup>1</sup> J.H. Johnson (ed.), *The Demotic Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, (Chicago-Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), Numbers, 267.

**Translation:**

**Recto:**

1-2) *P3-šr-Hnsw* and *Pa-Dm3* son of *Tḥwty-ī.ir-ti-s* have paid

3) 2½(?) (artabas of) wheat *P3-ti-Sbk*

4) [ ] [ ..... ] [ ]

**Verso:**

1) *Hry=w* son of [ <sup>ᵚ</sup>3-*pḥt* ] [ ]

2) *Ta-p3-šy* the [ ]

**Notes:**

There are two men who paid this receipt *P3-šr-Hnsw* and *Pa-Dm3* son of *Tḥwty-ī.ir-ti-s*. The text on both the Recto and the Verso mentioned some proper names of another man and a woman.

**Recto:**

It is not clear why the scribe left that big space between the first two lines and the rest of the lines of the text.

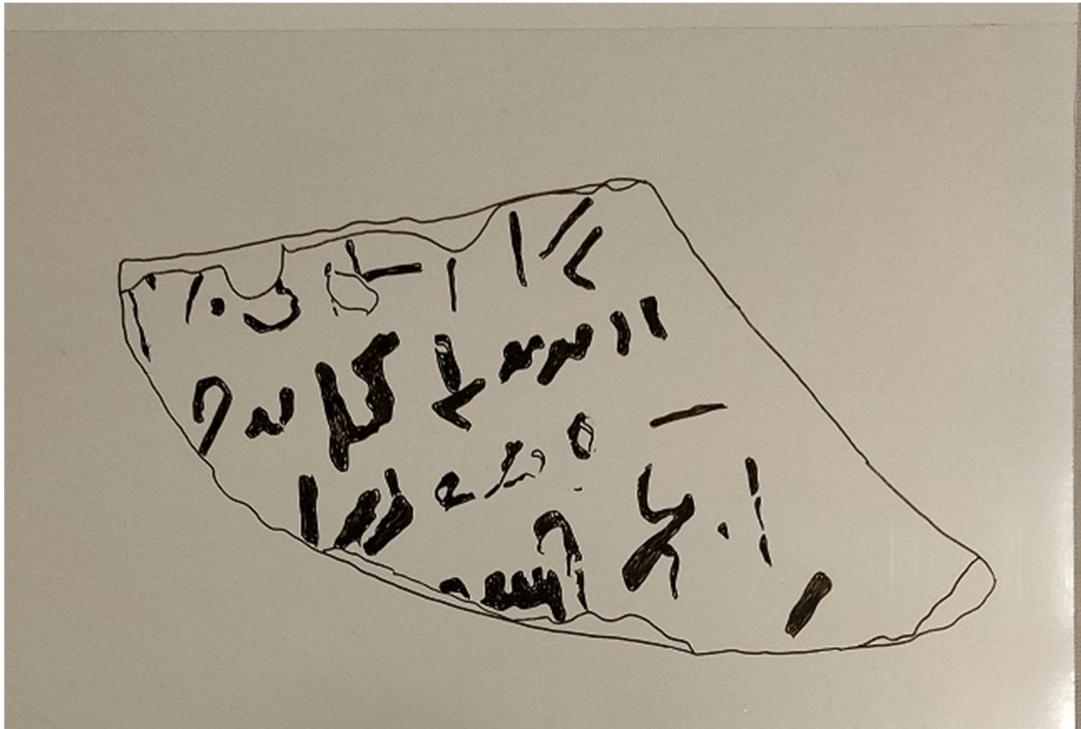
**Verso:**

L.2. word *rmt.t n* "wife of" is expected to be written after the name of the woman and the definite article *t3*.

**Conclusion:**

Both men and women who paid the receipts concerning land could pay them in money and in kind and they could pay either in the year following the year in which the grain was due, or even in the same year.

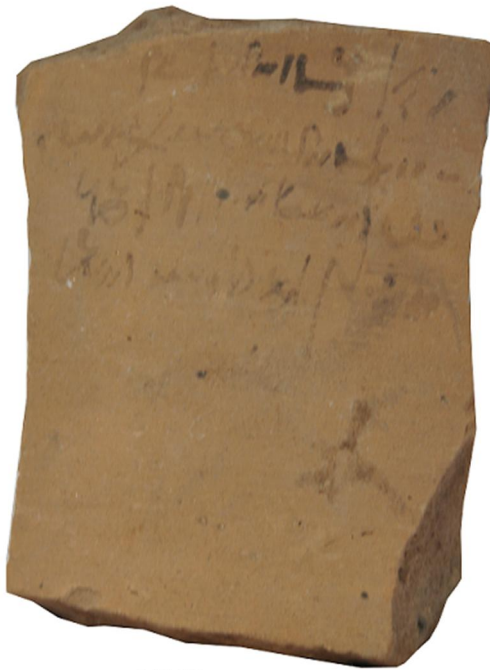
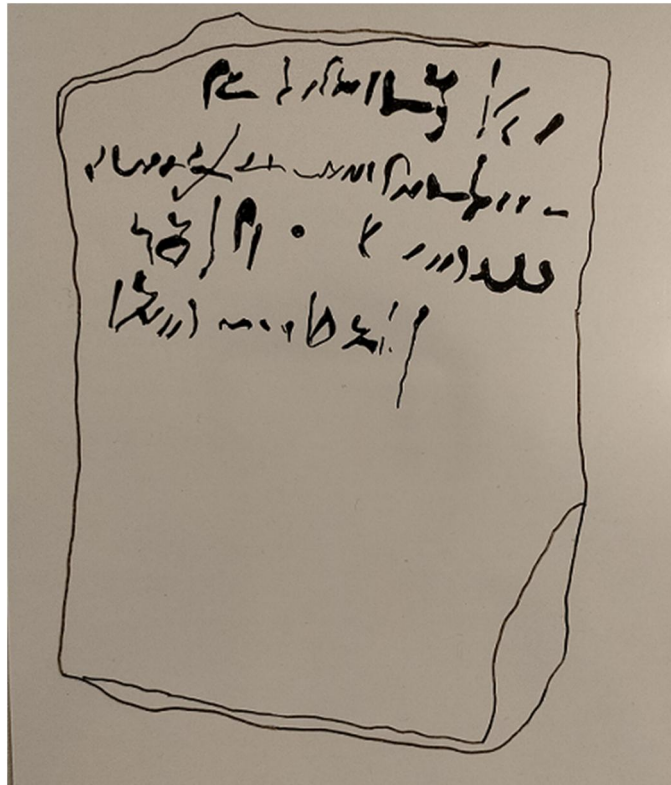
Plate I



4071

No 1

Palate II

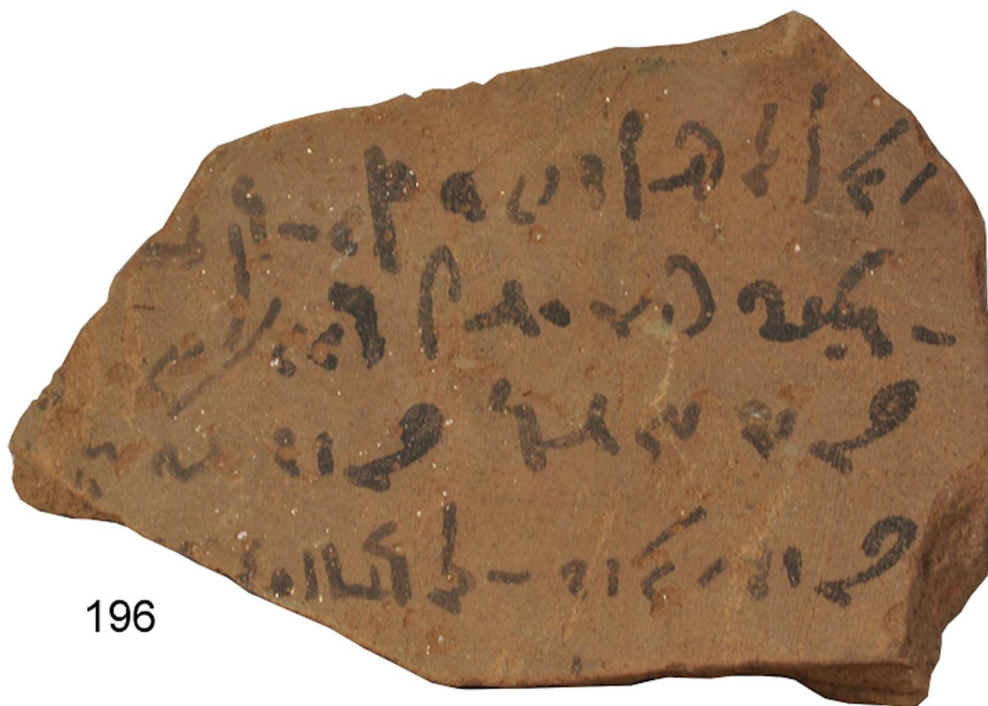
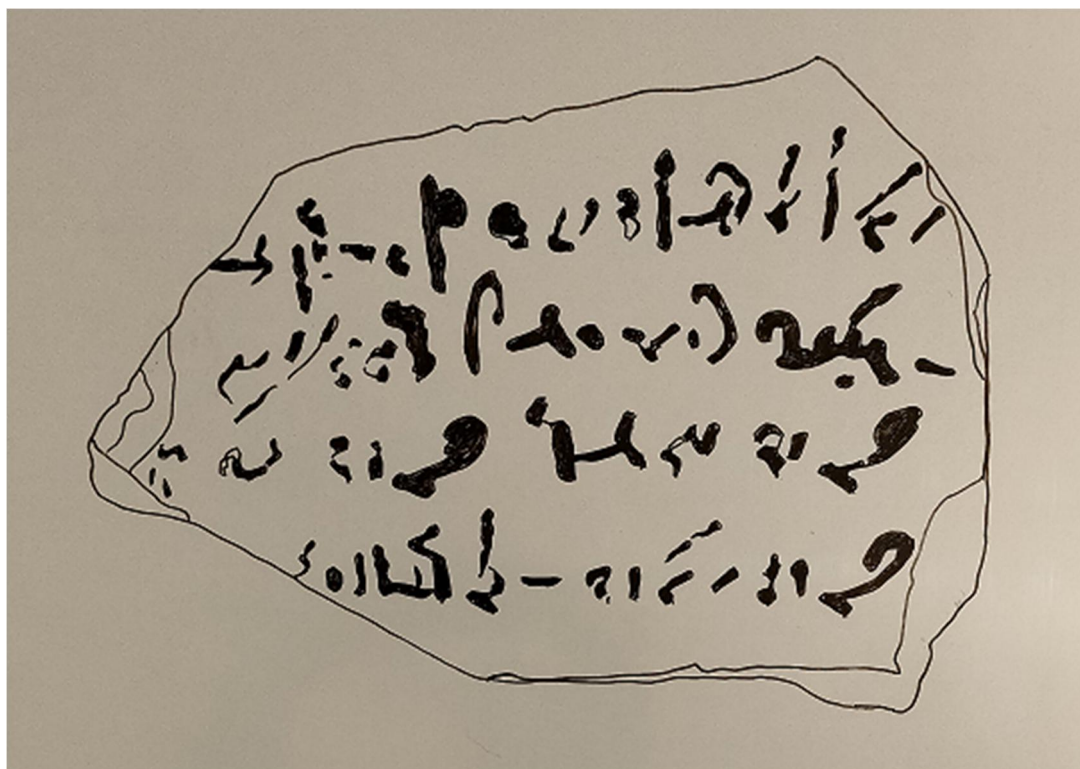


4076

No. 2



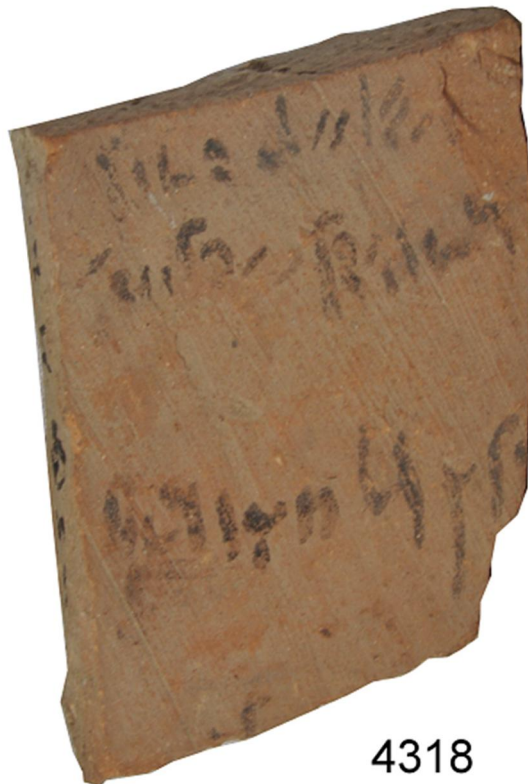
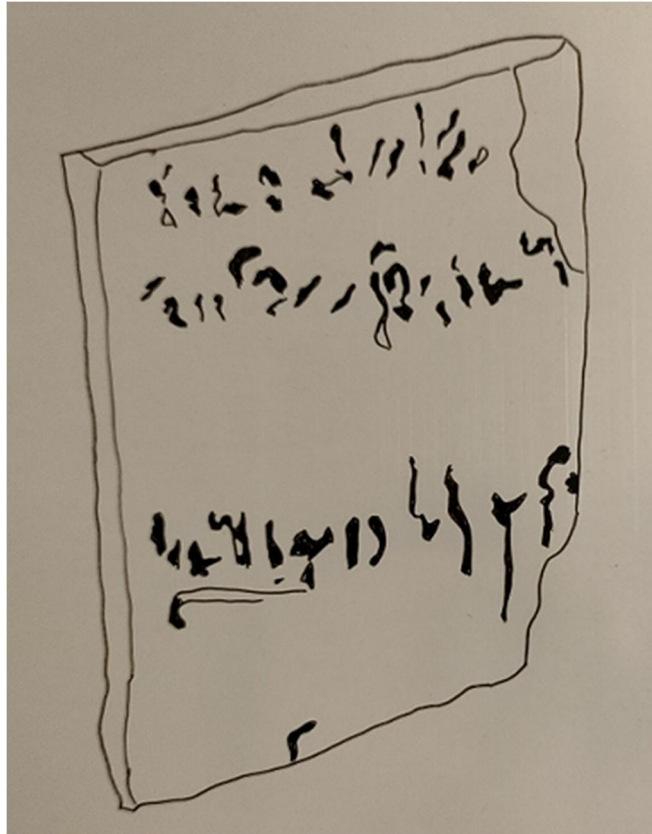
Plate III



196

No. 3

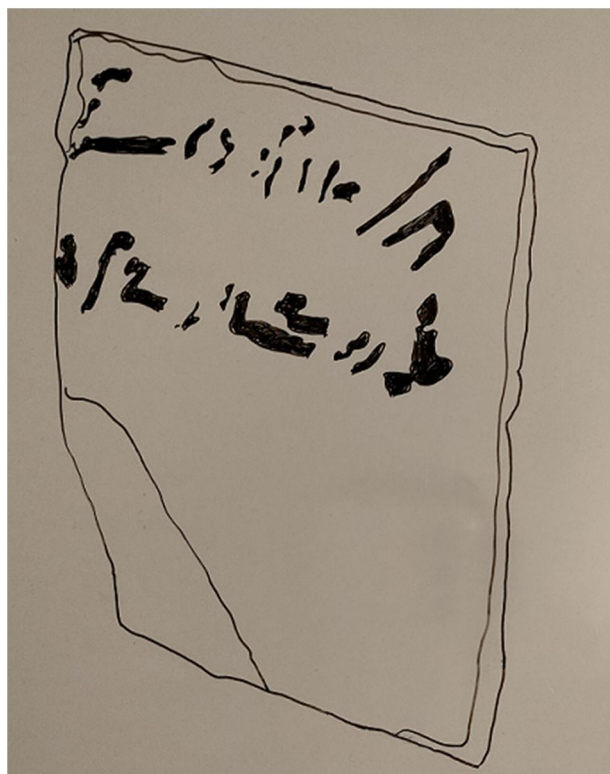
Plate IV



4318

No. 4 Recto

Plate V



4318

No. 4 Verso

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