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The Athribis Ostraca – Overview of the Corpus and Preliminary Results from the Demotic Material, with a special focus on the moschosphragists' certificates

Sandra LIPPERT

1 Presentation of the site of the ostraca excavation

With currently over 33000 inscribed sherds, unearthed by the archaeological mission of Tübingen University since the beginning of its operations in 2003,¹ the site of Hut-Repit/Athribis in Upper Egypt is fast becoming the largest findspot for ostraca from the Graeco-Roman period in Egypt. However, during the first years, from 2003 to 2017, while the team concentrated on excavating the temple built under Ptolemy XII (fig. 1), the site had yielded less than 500 inscribed sherds, most of which (ca. 350) actually came from a survey trench just outside, at the north-west corner of the temple. This trench had been opened in 2010 and continued to be excavated in 2011. The rest were discovered in small numbers here and there while cleaning the temple rooms or as dispersed surface finds around the temple.

In spring 2018, near the end of the campaign, a survey to the west of the temple, in the axis of a side gate to the peristyle L3, was started with the aim of finding a sanctuary of Osiris that might be alluded to in the texts of this gate.² In the western part of this survey trench, nicknamed “Osiris-Sondage”, 1450 inscribed sherds were unearthed in only about six weeks. During the following campaign, from October 2018 to March 2019, the area was enlarged to cover a rectangle of 20 by 40 metres (the so-called ostraca excavation or “Ostraka-Grabung”), to the south of the “Osiris-Sondage”, and in about three months of digging, 6244 more ostraca were discovered. Moreover, it became clear that this zone was not an undisturbed antique rubbish dump, as had been thought at first, but the place where the *sebakhin* of the late 19th/early 20th century had deposited the larger pieces that were left in their sieves while extracting the fertile Nile silt (*sebakh*) by crushing ancient mud bricks from the ruins. This explained the extremely high concentration of pottery sherds, mixed not with sand, but dark brown *sebakh* powder. A short, but very successful campaign in spring 2020 brought another 3919 inscribed sherds to light. Due to travel restrictions during the Covid pandemic, there was no campaign in the winter 2020/21, but work resumed from November 2021 to February 2022, and this campaign proved to once again be very rich in finds, with 7697 inscribed sherds. In December 2022, the new long-term project financed by the DFG started to work on the so-called “Pylon Temple”, just south of the principal ostraca excavation, and during the following campaigns 2022/23 and 2023/24, another 13116 inscribed sherds were discovered. It is by now clear that the *sebakhin* dump

¹ The information and numbers given at the moment of the conference in June 2022 have been updated with the results of the last two campaigns, available by the end of February 2024.

² See LEITZ, Athribis VII, 767–783.

does not abut against this “Pylon Temple”, but partially covers it, although some of the ostraca discovered on top of its ruins might also have been collected by Petrie’s team in 1907/8 and then abandoned there.

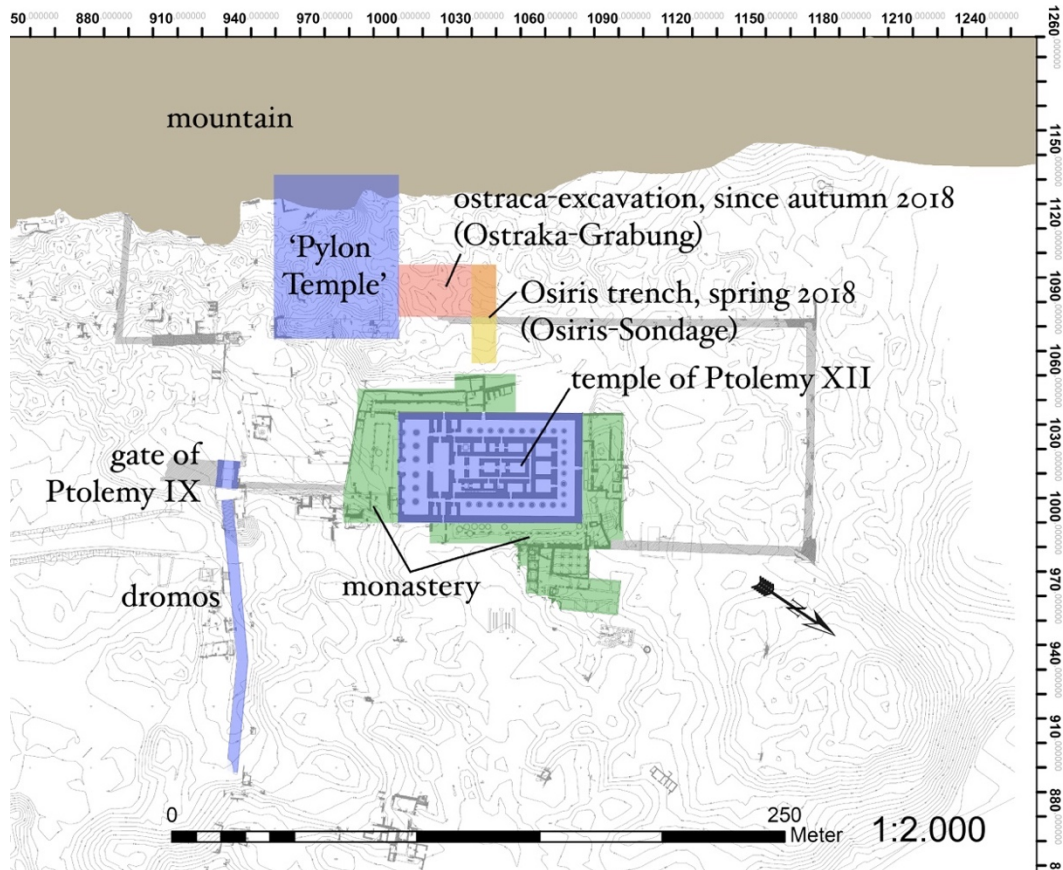


Fig. 1: Plan of the site

Image: © Athribis Project Tübingen with additional processing by SANDRA LIPPERT

The aspect of the surface to the north and west of the already explored area of the *sebakhin* dump makes it likely that it extended a lot further than the current “Ostraka-Grabung”. The thickness of the ceramic-rich layers of this dump is also impressive: the mud brick buildings in the north-western corner of the excavated zone which are now visible to a height of over 3 meters (fig. 2) had been completely covered before the excavation started there in autumn 2018.

2 Languages, scripts and chronological range of the material

The vast majority of the sherds (fig. 3) are inscribed in demotic (about 70 to 75%), but a significant number (15 to 17%) are inscribed in Greek. That is more or less what one would expect from a site with an Egyptian temple that was active during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. While the percentages of sherds inscribed in hieratic, with a little over 1%, and in hieroglyphs, with less than half a percent, are significantly lower, one has to bear in mind that the sheer mass of material means that this also amounts to well

over 200 hieratic and several dozen hieroglyphic sherds, which is interesting because such ostraca had hitherto been quite rare from Graeco-Roman contexts.³



Fig. 2: Mud brick buildings in the north-western corner of the “Ostraka-Grabung”, spring 2022
Photo: © Athribis Project Tübingen

³ Some ostraca with hieratic inscriptions (and occasionally hieroglyphs) from the 2nd c. CE have been found at Narmouthis, see GALLO, *Ostraca Narmouthis*, vol. 2, XLIII, LIV–LX, 3–21 (nos. 34 to 43).

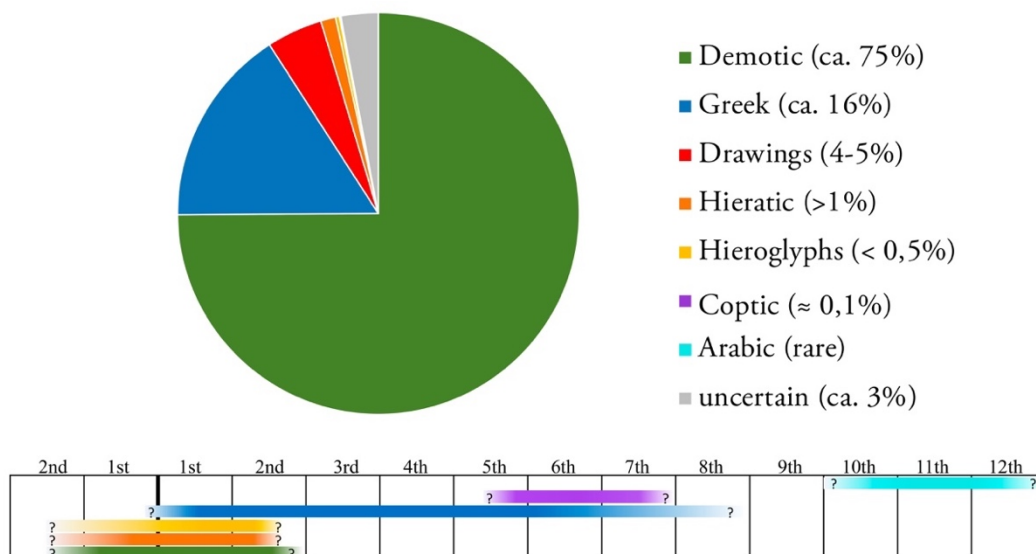


Fig. 3: Languages, scripts and chronological range of the inscribed sherds from Hut-Repit/Athribis

Quite frequent are sherds with drawings – about 4 to 5%. Coptic, on the other hand, has been getting rarer over time – there were comparatively more Coptic sherds among the surface finds of the earlier campaigns than we have now found in the *sebakhin* dump. But given that the *sebakhin* dump should have an inversed stratigraphy, because the upper, later layers of the site have been sifted through at the beginning of their work of destruction and therefore should have ended up at the bottom of the dump, it is likely that we will get more of them again the deeper we go – and indeed, the last campaigns have again brought at least some new Coptic material to light. The same is true for Arabic, which is even rarer – only a handful of amphora labels are currently known from the site, and they are practically exclusively from the earlier campaigns.⁴ Overall, the inscribed sherds range from probably the end of the 2nd c. BCE or the very beginning of the 1st c., to the 10th or even 12th century CE, that is the Arab medieval period, with the large majority from the Graeco-Roman period.

3 Ongoing work on the ostraca material

The research group “Ostraca d’Athribis” that I am coordinating since 2018 currently consists of a dozen people who are actively participating in the edition,⁵ including postdocs and a PhD student. We also have the help of the IT specialist AGNÈS TRICOCHÉ (CNRS) for our research database. This allows us to enter meta-data, like measures, find date and ceramological descriptions as well as transliterations and

⁴ VANTHIEGHEM, in: BOUD’HORS et al., in: BIFAO 121 (2021), 139–140.

⁵ Demotic: besides myself, MARION CLAUDE (IFAO), MARINA ESCOLANO POVEDA (University of Liverpool), CÉCILE LANTRAIN (PhD student, EPHE, AOROC); hieratic: IVAN GUERMEUR (EPHE-PSL, AOROC); hieroglyphs: CHRISTIAN LEITZ (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen); Greek: LAURA AGUER (IFAO) and NAÏM VANTHIEGHEM (CNRS, IRHT); Coptic: ANNE BOUD’HORS (CNRS, IRHT); Arabic: NAÏM VANTHIEGHEM; drawings: CAROLINA TEOTINO (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen); ceramological study: DELPHINE DIXNEUF (CNRS, L3AM).

translations and to associate them with the images. The database is for the moment only used by members of the research group, but will eventually be accessible for the public as a complement to the printed volumes of text editions which we are preparing. Although we use “ostraca” as a shorthand term for the inscribed sherds we are studying, this is a simplification. Even though most of the inscribed sherds are ostraca in the true sense of the word, that is, ceramic sherds reused for different types of texts or drawings, not all are: about 15% are sherds that, by chance, preserve all or part of an amphora label (also known as *titulus pictus* or *dipinto*). These jar labels constitute only about a tenth of the demotic material, but almost half of the Greek; they can mention a date, place name and/or personal names as well as quantities. The demotic jar labels are currently being studied by CÉCILE LANTRAIN in the PhD thesis that she is preparing under my direction, and the Greek jar labels are being worked on by LAURA AGUER as part of her post-doctoral project. A handful of the hieratic sherds are also amphora inscriptions, although these seem exclusively to refer to the intended use of the jar, by mentioning the deity to whom it was to be offered. As mentioned above, the rare Arabic sherds are all jar labels. Not surprisingly, a sherd that already has an amphora label on it can be reused as ostrakon, as is the case of ostrakon Athribis 2010.B.33+38+45+107: the amphora label mentions the year 12 and then a partially lost toponym, and a large sherd of this amphora was then reused for an account of wine and vinegar.⁶

One major problem we are facing is the comparatively high rate of sherds – about 10 to 15% – that are covered with mud and especially salt. During the 2021/22 campaign, STÉPHANIE NISOLE, a specialist ceramics conservator, developed a cleaning plan based on mainly mechanical techniques, since prolonged immersion in liquids was deemed too dangerous for the ink. This proved to be slow, but highly successful in preserving the ink underneath the salt, and will be the method employed henceforth.

⁶ LIPPERT, in: BSFE 208 (2023), 23, fig. 4.

4 Subjects and text types represented in the material

When looking at the domains and text types represented on the sherds (fig. 4), we see that the distribution between scripts is not even at all: some types are only attested in one script, others in several. In the following, I will concentrate on the demotic material, but occasionally mention the other scripts as well.

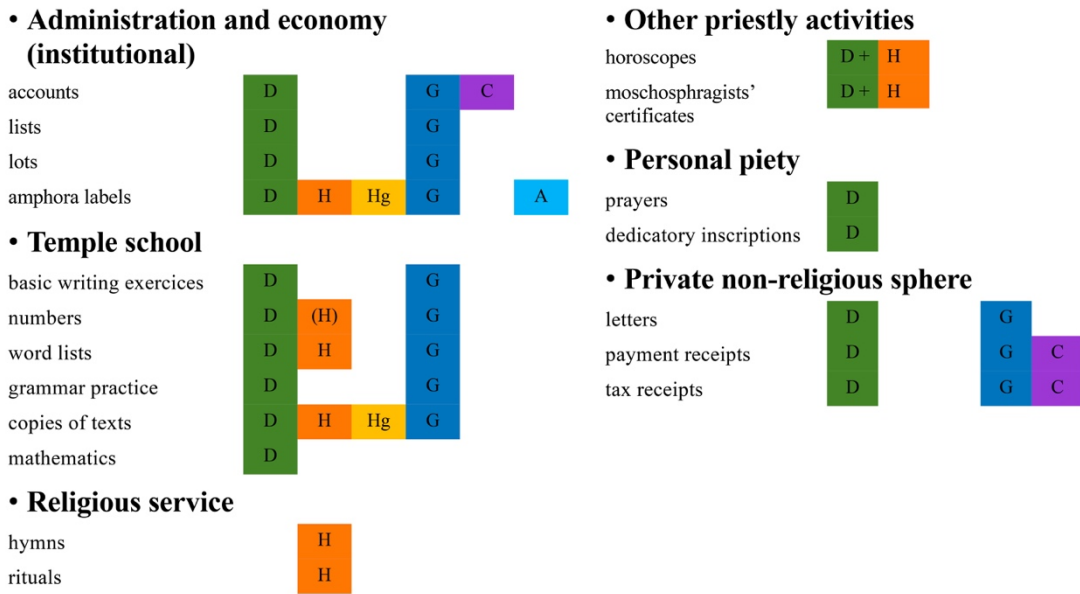


Fig. 4: Domains and text type represented on the inscribed sherds from Hut-Repit/Athribis

The by far largest group of the demotic ostraca consists of texts from the administration and economy of the temple, although it is not clear whether this means solely the one built under Ptolemy XII or whether all of the sanctuaries of Hut-Repit, most of which have not yet been excavated, functioned as one single economic unity. Extremely frequent are different types of accounts: often these are organised in columns, with the first column listing persons and the second listing amounts, but often without units. In the case of money, we can often identify it even if the units *talent*, *stater* or *kite* are not explicitly written, because the scribes of Athribis, as elsewhere, use a special writing for “one half” that only occurs in the context of money.⁷ Occasionally, the commodity is actually mentioned, or at least the unit, which helps us to distinguish between liquid products, measured in the Greek unit *chous* (Greek

⁷ See LIPPERT, in: NAETHER (ed.), *New Approaches*, 159–170.

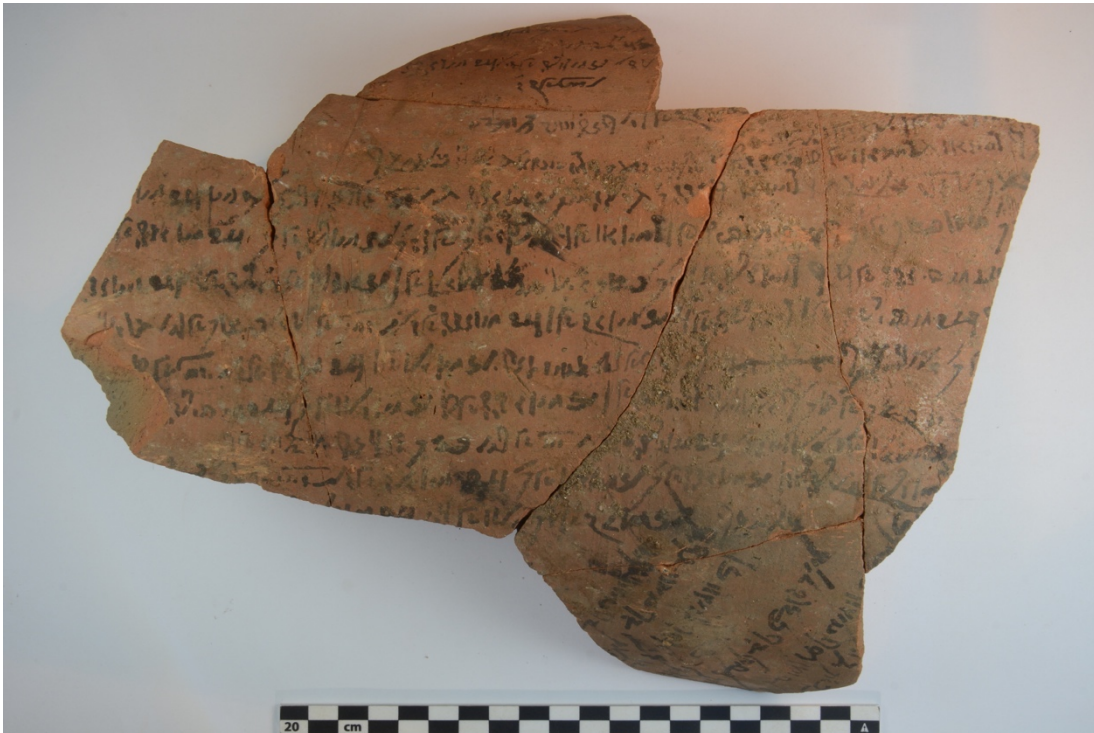


Fig. 5: Account of wine in continuous writing (ostraca Athribis 17-36-1/634+635+636+742+743+744)
Photo: © Athribis Project Tübingen

χοῦς, demotic *qw(s)*) or the Egyptian unit *log* (dem. *lg*) and dry products, measured in *artabas* (dem. *rtb*, ca. 30 litres). There are also accounts that explicitly mention the commodities, e.g. wheat (*sw*), wine (*irp*) and vinegar (*pwr*), oil (*nḥh*), dates (*bne.t*) or bread (*‘q*). Other accounts list dates in the first column and amounts without unit in the second. More rarely, accounts are not written in separate columns, but continuously, for example on a large part of a wine amphora that could be reassembled from several fragments (fig. 5).

A special type of accounts has been found not only in the *sebakhin* dump, but also during the Egyptian cleaning mission of small rock-cut tombs a little further up the hill in 2019, directed by MOHAMED ABUL-YAZID:⁸ these stand out through their large, awkward handwriting and the fact that in most of them only the numbers and dates are actually written in demotic, while the other entries, presumably designating persons and products or objects, are made by using symbols, see for example ostrakon Athribis 19-36-61/3133 (fig. 6). This type of semi-literate accounting is already attested in workmen’s accounts from at least the New Kingdom, and symbols used to designate workmen also occur in other regions in Egypt⁹ and outside, including the stonemasons

⁸ I thank M. ABUL-YAZID for sharing with me the images of the sherds which his team discovered.

⁹ See HARING, in: ROSATI/GUIDOTTI (eds), Proceedings XIth ICE, 266–270; HARING, From Single Sign to Pseudo Script.

working on medieval cathedrals in Europe.¹⁰ It is therefore highly likely that these sherds belong to the accountancy of the men working in the quarries and the necropolis of Hut-Repit.

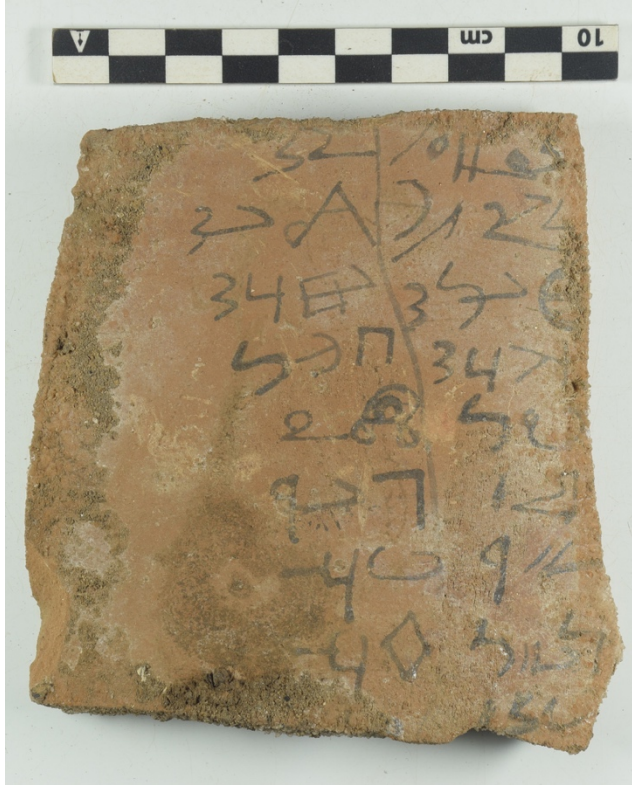


Fig. 6: Account for quarry workmen(?)
(ostrakon Athribis 19-36-61/3133)
Photo: © Athribis Project Tübingen

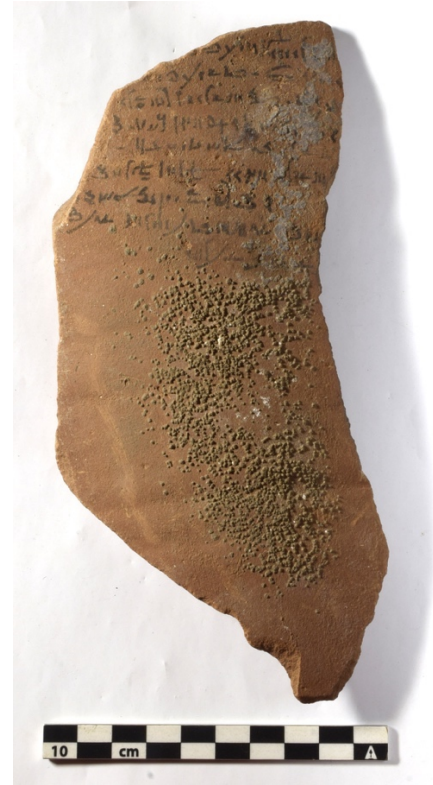


Fig. 7: Dedication to Triphis and Kolanthes
(ostrakon Athribis 18-36-2/2170)
Photo: © Athribis Project Tübingen

Another very common type of demotic administrative texts on ostraca consists of lists, mainly of persons, occasionally of real estate (perhaps for the preparation of tax registers) and, very rarely, inventory lists. Accounts and lists of persons also occur in the Greek and Coptic material. Taken together with the demotic material, these are extremely rich sources for the prosopography of Athribis as well as for the study of local naming traditions.

An increasingly important part of the ostraca come from the temple school – a more detailed overview of this material will be published in *Enchoria*.¹¹ These include beginners' exercises that are little more than squiggles which probably served to familiarise the young pupils with the use of the writing material – how to hold the pen, how to refill it with ink, how to apply it to the writing surface without smudging. A next step might have been to try to “write” in straight lines, even though the signs

¹⁰ See HARING/KAPER (eds), *Pictograms or Pseudo Script?*; ANDRÁSSY et al. (eds), *Non-Textual Marking Systems*; BUDKA et al. (eds), *Non-textual Marking Systems*.

¹¹ See LIPPERT, in: *Enchoria* 38 (forthcoming).

themselves are not real writing, but simply squiggles, hooks, strokes and circles that imitate demotic or Greek script. As can be seen from the workmen's accounts, some people who never learned how to actually write demotic words or names at least learned the numbers and dates in demotic script. We may therefore presume that numbers and dates figured at the very beginning of the curriculum – which also could explain the large amount of number and month exercises with very childish handwriting and sometimes glaring mistakes that are attested in the school material from Hut-Repit. The school texts also cover lists of words for a given semantic field, for example family relations, the times of the day or body parts, grammatical and mathematical exercises. Excerpts from literary texts and model letters are also attested, but much rarer. The pupils at Athribis also learned Greek – there are at least twenty sherds with (parts of) the Greek alphabet,¹² others with syllable exercises. That the pupils had learned demotic previously can be seen in those cases where the columns have to be read from right to left. As with demotic, the next step were word lists, for example the names of the Egyptian months, then grammar exercises and excerpts from literary texts.

At least some of the hieroglyphic sherds, which are being studied by CHRISTIAN LEITZ,¹³ contain texts copied from temple walls: where the exact place can be ascertained, the texts come from parts of the temple that were easily accessible to everyone and were placed on the lower part of the wall. The often clumsy handwriting makes it likely that these sherds had been inscribed by pupils learning how to write hieroglyphs.

A strange group of sherds, of which already more than 200 had been found before the 2022/23 campaign, but which has now grown to about 2000 thanks to numerous finds from the site of the “Pylon Temple”, might also come from the temple school. These are completely covered in dense horizontal rows of C-shapes, interrupted somewhere in the middle by a sign that looks like the demotic evil bird determinative, so that these “evil birds” form a vertical column.¹⁴ The rows start with an oblique stroke, without leaving a margin at the edge of the sherd, and this is also the first sign after such an “evil bird”. Most of these sherds are inscribed on both sides, unless the interior of the sherd is pitched or one of the sides is weathered off, and they are always broken on at least one side. SIR WILLIAM FLINDERS PETRIE had interpreted these as writing exercises,¹⁵ but this interpretation is by no means obligatory – they might be pupils' punishments, to be shattered after the teacher had controlled them in order to avoid reutilisation, or something else entirely: IVAN GUERMEUR proposes a magical and/or religious context, for example funerary or execration rituals.¹⁶

It is worth to note in this overview that the priests of Hut-Repit seem to have been among the first in Egypt to practice advanced astrology, as is documented by the

¹² For an example with several Greek alphabets and a drawing of a figure that we first took to be the teacher, pointing with a stick, but who is actually shooting an arrow, see LIPPERT, in: BSFE 208 (2023), 31, fig. 14.

¹³ See LEITZ in: BOUD'HORS et al., in: BIFAO 121 (2021), 113–120.

¹⁴ Examples in LIPPERT, in: BSFE 208 (2023), 34, fig. 18.

¹⁵ PETRIE, Athribis, 11–12.

¹⁶ LIPPERT, in: BSFE 208 (2023), 32–35.

ostraca with horoscopes that have been found by F. PETRIE, who brought some of them back to Oxford, as well as the Tübingen mission in recent years; these are studied by MARINA ESCOLANO POVEDA.¹⁷

While the hieratic ostraca mainly contain liturgical texts and hymns¹⁸ that, if not also connected with the training of priestly apprentices, might have been used as memory aids in the execution of the ritual obligations of the priests, a small number of demotic ostraca document their personal piety: several sherds contain proskynemata or formula of dedication with the typical phrase “Deity X is giving life to person Y”.¹⁹ One of them has a peculiar long and narrow shape, of which only the upper third is used for the inscription, in honour of Triphis and Kolanthes the child (ostracon Athribis 18-36-2/2170, fig. 7): it could have been used as an improvised stela by planting the pointy lower part into the soil. Up to now unique is ostracon Athribis 17-36-5/5340 with a demotic prayer to Repit of which the first four lines each start with *im n=y T3-Rpy[.t ...]* “Come to me, Repit [...]”.

5 Moschosphragists’ certificates

Another priestly activity for which the ostraca furnish testimonies is the inspection of red bulls that were to be sacrificed.²⁰ Currently 58 sherds, inscribed in demotic and often also hieratic,²¹ can be identified as belonging to moschosphragists’ (“calf sealers”) certificates: the vast majority of them have come to light in the *sebakhin* dump. The practice of inspecting male bovines of reddish colour that were destined to be slaughtered as sacrifice and marking them with a stamp or seal is well attested in Greek accounts of Egyptian religious practices since the 5th century BCE: HERODOTUS explains that this was done to avoid sacrificing an animal showing the signs of an Apis bull;²² PLUTARCH explains the red colour of the sacrificial bulls through their association with Typhon (i.e. Seth), going as far as claiming that a single black or white hair disqualified the animal as sacrifice.²³ CHAIREMON, whom PORPHYRIOS draws on, mentions the exclusion of a bovine “resembling those that are venerated” (τιμωμένοις ἐμφερής) as well, but also enumerates other criteria, such as having already been domesticated for labour, possessing spots or blemishes (κατάσπιλος), being of more than one colour (ἐτερόχρους) or having deformities (παραλλάσσων τῆ μορφῆ) which would render a bull inapt for consumption by the priests; he points out

¹⁷ See ESCOLANO POVEDA, in: JHA 53.1 (2022), 49–87, as well as her contribution to this volume.

¹⁸ See the contribution of IVAN GUERMEUR in this volume.

¹⁹ See the ostracon Athribis 16-33-44/359 (LIPPERT, in: BOUD’HORS et al., in: BIFAO 121 (2021), 98–101, nr. 3.6).


²⁰ See for the sacrifice of red bulls at Hut-Repit and more generally the contribution of CAROLINA TEOTINO in this volume.

²¹ I thank IVAN GUERMEUR for discussing the hieratic passages of these ostraca with me and for verifying the transcriptions of those that are published here.

²² HERODOTUS, Histories II, 38. See also VON KÄNEL, Prêtres-ouâb de Sekhmet, 106 (doc. 48), and 261-262.

²³ PLUTARCH, De Iside et Osiride, 31. See also VON KÄNEL, Prêtres-ouâb de Sekhmet, 155 (doc. 71), and GRIFFITHS, Plutarch, 164–167 and 413–417. More generally on the idea of sacrificing to the gods those beings that bore the marks of Seth, see YOYOTTE, in: AnnEPHE-SR 89 (1980-1981), 32–107, esp. 42–56 (reprinted in GUERMEUR (ed.), YOYOTTE, Opera Selecta, 1–75).

that these observations belong to the “skillset of the so-called calf sealers” (τέχνη τῶν καλουμένων μοσχοσφραγιστῶν).²⁴ The Egyptian Book of the Temple also contains passages that speak of this practice: according to J. QUACK,²⁵ this still unpublished handbook on temple matters explains that the priests of Sakhmet that were responsible for controlling animals before their slaughter not only checked them to avoid confusion with sacred animals, but also for various signs of illness. Finally, a demotic literary text, preserved in a single copy on papyrus Vienna KM 3877 verso,²⁶ mentions the control of sacrificial animals in a satirical context: the depraved harpist Haryothes, who is the subject of this invective, is said to have formerly worked as a butcher’s aid (*sdm- š n sfj*, “servant of the knife”) at Psonis²⁷ in the region of Akhmim (col. 5, l. 2–3). That this was in a temple setting and concerned animal sacrifice becomes clear from what follows: a broken line speaks of “keep safe those that are sacred before the god” (col. 5, l. 5) – however, the despicable Haryothes did his work “without inspecting (*sn>hy*) the seal (*hty.t*), without heeding the chief of the priests of Sakhmet (*mr-w b (n) Shm.t*),²⁸ hitting with his knife on everything that was brought to the slaughtering block (*nm.t*)” (col. 5, l. 6–7) in his greed for meat.

Although HERODOTUS does not use the term “to stamp/seal” (σφραγίζειν) itself, his account of the practice is the most detailed we have: after the control, the animals that were found to be pure (καθαρός) were marked (σημαίνειν) by a strip of papyrus wrapped around the horns that was then secured with a clay sealing (literally “earth for sealing”, γῆ σημαντρίς) on which the priest imprinted their signet ring (δακτύλιος). PLUTARCH, who calls the controlling priests “sealers” (σφραγισταί), cites CASTOR OF RHODES for the description of the carving on this seal (σφραγίς), which showed a kneeling man with his hands tied behind his back and a sword in his throat, that is, a variant of the hieroglyphic sign for an enemy A13 ().²⁹

HERODOTUS claims that sacrificing a bull that had not been “sealed/stamped” carried a death sentence. However, in the Roman period, only a fine of 500 drachmas, payable to the Idios Logos, is exacted from those who sacrifice an “unstamped” (ἄσφραγιστος) bull,³⁰ which, though steep, points to a preoccupation with correct procedure more than fear of high sacrilege. Therefore, HERODOTUS’ assertion, which can be compared to his own account that death was the punishment for purposefully killing a sacred animal,³¹ if correct at all, might only ever have applied to cases where the sacrificed bovine turned out later to have borne the marks of a sacred bull.

²⁴ PORPHYRIUS, *De abstinentia* IV, 7. The translation of this passage given by VON KÄNEL, *Prêtres-ouâb de Sekhmet*, 150–151 doc. 68, is faulty in several places.

²⁵ QUACK, in: FITZENREITER (ed.), *Tierkulte*, 115.

²⁶ THISSEN, *Harfenspieler*. For the passages cited hereafter, see 59–64 and 76–77.

²⁷ For this toponym, see also the commentary to ostracon Athribis 12-9-17/30, l. 5 below.

²⁸ For the role of this priest as moschosphragist, see below.

²⁹ Cf. GRIFFITHS, *Plutarch*, 416–417. For other uses of sealings with the image of a fettered enemy, see POSENER, in: MDAIK 16 (1958), 252–270, especially 252–258.

³⁰ *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* I. 183 (MESSERER, *Clergé égyptien et les autorités romaines*, vol. 1, 28–51, doc. 6 [esp. 33, § 72]; see also MESSERER, *Clergé égyptien et les autorités romaines*, vol. 4, 4–5).

³¹ HERODOTUS, *Histories* II, 65. See also DIODORUS, *Library of History*, I 83.8–9 who reports that a Roman delegate who inadvertently ran over a cat with his chariot was attacked by the Alexandrian

Additionally, there are also several Greek moschosphragists' certificates on papyrus from the mid-2nd to 3rd centuries CE, as well as a Greek letter to the strategos of the Fayum from 133 CE in which someone justifies the lack of a certificate for a calf he donated for the sacrifice in 120/1 CE by the fact that the obligation to obtain this certificate, which he had been asked to produce by the Roman authorities, had only been introduced in 122/3 CE.³²

The certificates from Hut-Repit, which are the first demotic moschosphragists' certificates to be discovered, show significant differences to the Greek certificates. The latter always mention: the exact date; the name and title (μοσχσφραγιστής or ιερομοσχσφραγιστής) of the controlling priest who is at the same time the scribe of the document; the place of the sacrifice (all of the surviving examples come from two closely connected villages in the Fayum, Soknopaiou Nesos and Dionysias);³³ the name of the donor; and the fact that the priest had inspected (ἐπιθεωρέειν) the animal, which is simply called a "calf/young bull to be sacrificed" (μόσχος θυόμενος) without further qualifications, and then sealed/stamped (σφραγίζειν) it as being pure (καθαρός). Two of these Greek certificates³⁴ have a demotic/hieratic subscription by the hand of the same priest, giving his name without patronym, his title "priest of Sakhmet"³⁵ (*w' b n Shm.t*)³⁶ and the phrase "I have sealed/stamped a bovine" (*db' =y ih*). On the other hand, the demotic certificates from Hut-Repit never indicate a date, but mention: the red colour (*tše/dšr*); the age (in most cases where this part is conserved, two years, but one year³⁷ and four years³⁸ are also attested) of the animal, characterised as a male bovine (*ih*); the name of the controller with his patronym, but always without a title; and either the name and patronym of the donor, sometimes with his place of origin, or the fact that the bull had been born on the temple estate.³⁹ This distinction seriously weakens the hypothesis, emitted by some scholars on the evidence of tax receipts issued to the priests, that the people mentioned as donors on the Greek moschosphragists' certificates always had to buy animals from the temple herds from the priests.⁴⁰ In fact, the taxes paid by the priests on the one hand (δεκάτη

crowd.

³² Many of the relevant Greek documentary sources have now been reedited and commented by MESSERER, *Clergé égyptien et les autorités romaines* vol. 4, 1–30, docs 157–166a; the cited letter is doc. 162; see also PESTMAN, *Recueil*, vol. 2, 117–121.

³³ For the administrative links between the two, see LIPPERT, in: CAPASSO/DAVOLI (eds), *Soknopaios*, 161–162, and LIPPERT/SCHENTULEIT, in: JÖRDENS/YIFTACH (eds), *Accounts and Bookkeeping*, 149–151.

³⁴ P.Gen. I2 32 (= PESTMAN, *Recueil*, vol. 1, 111–113, doc. 13) and W. Chr. 89 (= PESTMAN, *Recueil*, vol. 1, 114–115, doc. 14); see also MESSERER, *Clergé égyptien et les autorités romaines* vol. 4, 24–27, doc. 163, 164.

³⁵ For the equivalence between the moschosphragists and the priests of Sakhmet, see already VON KÄNEL, *Prêtres-ouâb de Sekhmet*, 265.

³⁶ The name of the goddess is in both cases written in hieratic, cf. PESTMAN, *Recueil*, vol. 1, 112.

³⁷ Ostrakon Athribis 19-36-61/3906 and 20-39-16/2156.

³⁸ Ostrakon Athribis 20-39-1/1970 and perhaps also 17-36-1/456.

³⁹ See for examples of both the text editions below.

⁴⁰ Thus VON KÄNEL, *Prêtres-ouâb de Sekhmet*, 267 and ENGELMANN/HALLOF, in: SAK 23 (1996), 135. SIPPEL, *Gottesdiener*, 105, evokes both possibilities, but thinks that at least in Soknopaiou Nesos, the use of animals from the temple herds was more likely.

μόσχων, levied at the end of the year) and the donors on the other (τέλος μόσχου θυομένου, paid on the day before or the day of the sacrifice)⁴¹ are no proof for a symbolical sale of sacrificial bulls by the temple. It is more likely that the first was a tax on income in kind (i.e. the animal donations to the temple) and that the latter compensated the state at least in part for the loss of the sales tax which would have been paid if the donated animal had been sold on the market.

The demotic certificates do not explicitly mention the sacrifice of the animal, although it is implied through the phrase “before Triphis, the great goddess” (*m-b3h T3-Rpy.t t3 nr.t 3.t*), which at the same time gives the location. With one exception⁴², there is no explicit declaration of the animal’s purity; sealing or stamping it is never mentioned.⁴³ Branding marks on cattle destined for the sacrifice are attested for the New Kingdom,⁴⁴ branded (*3b, i3b*) animals that were sold for work or breeding are regularly mentioned in demotic and Greek sales documents,⁴⁵ and variously shaped branding tools are indeed preserved from ancient Egypt.⁴⁶ However, the terminology used in the Egyptian and Greek sources of the Graeco-Roman period for the action of the moschosphragists, i.e. *htm*,⁴⁷ *db* or σφραγίζειν “to stamp, to seal” and *hty.t* “seal, seal impression”, instead of the unambiguous *3b, i3b* or κωντηριάζειν “to brand”, is not sufficiently clear to prove that by this time, the clay sealing on a papyrus strip mentioned by HERODOTUS had been replaced by a branding on the body of the animal, as had been suggested by C. MESSERER.⁴⁸ C. MESSERER refers to C. FEYEL⁴⁹ who deduced this through analogy from inscriptions in Sicily and Greece and by pointing to a single Greek papyrus of the 2nd c. CE from Soknopaiou Nesos,⁵⁰ where two female camels „stamped (ἐσφραγισμένας) with the letters *nu* and *eta* on their right thighs“ are mentioned, as proof that σφραγίζειν could, at that period, also mean branding. C. MESSERER also

⁴¹ MESSERER, *Clergé égyptien et les autorités romaines* vol. 4, 4, 6–11 (docs. 157–160), 16, 24 with further literature.

⁴² Ostrakon Athribis 20-36-64/2419, which follows a different model than the rest of the certificates.

⁴³ See the commentary to Ostrakon Athribis 19-0/2070 l. 2 below.

⁴⁴ LECLANT, in: MDAIK 14 (1956), 133 n. 5; pl. VII.1 and 2, VIII.1.

⁴⁵ CRUZ-URIBE, *Cattle Documents*, 51. For the Greek documents, see JÖRDENS, in: *Tyche* 10 (1995), 83 with n. 239.

⁴⁶ See most recently KAREV, in: *JEA* 108 (2022), 195–197.

⁴⁷ Compare for this the terms *mhtm.w* (with seal ring and animal skin determinatives) for „sealed/stamped (bovines)“ destined for the burnt offerings mentioned in the Famine Stela l. 26 (BARGUET, *Stèle de la famine*, 30 n. 8; also cited by LABRIQUE, in: GEORGOUDI et al. (eds), *La cuisine et l’autel*, 168 n. 33; for new photographs and fac-similes see now GASSE/RONDOT, *Inscriptions de Séhel*, 336, 562–567, no. SEH 542), and *mhtm.t* “place of sealing/stamping” for the enclosure where the herds of the temple of Thoth are subjected to the skill of the priests of Sakhmet (*š3s n w ‘b Šhm.t*) before being burnt on the altars, as mentioned in the tomb of Petosiris (LEFEBVRE, *Tombeau de Petosiris I*, 89–90; II, 30, scene 58c; CHERPION et al., *Tombeau de Pétoisiris*, 83, scene 67; see also VON KÄNEL, *Prêtres-ouâb de Sekhmet*, 119–120 doc. 55); LEFEBVRE, *Tombeau de Petosiris I*, 89, n. 1 had understood the term *mhtm.t* as “stable, enclosure,” deriving from *htm* “close” (thus also LECLANT, in: MDAIK 14 (1956), 133 n. 5), while KEES, *Götterglauben*, 485, had already proposed the connection with the sealing/stamping of bulls for offering.

⁴⁸ MESSERER, *Clergé égyptien et les autorités romaines* vol. 4, 2, n. 4; 23.

⁴⁹ FEYEL, in: *Revue de Philologie* 83.1 (2006), 51–53.

⁵⁰ BGU I 87 = *Chr.Mitt.* 260, l. 12 and 26–27.

cites F. LABRIQUE⁵¹ in this context, but the latter only speaks of branding the temple herds that were potentially destined for sacrifice, and not of the moschosphragists branding those bulls that had just passed the examination for immediate slaughter, two actions which she elsewhere explicitly distinguishes.⁵²

Most of the demotic certificates in which the lower part of the ostrakon is preserved contain a short hieratic text covering one, rarely two lines that adds no new information, but just repeats the beginning of the demotic text up to the age of the animal. In five cases,⁵³ instead of this hieratic subscription there is a demotic signature of the scribe who at least in one case is clearly not the same person as the controlling priest; in three cases, these signatures conserve a title which is still undeciphered. This could point to the hieratic subscription only serving as a confirmation that the certificate had actually been issued by a priest. It might also be significant that of the five certificates with demotic signatures, two have a handwriting that is, from a palaeographic point of view, significantly later than the rest of the material, and one follows a partially different model than the rest, explicitly mentioning the purity of the animal. Given that at least in some cases the phrasing of the demotic main text could imply that it was written before the actual inspection had taken place,⁵⁴ the hieratic subscription or demotic scribal signature might have been applied only in those cases where the controlled animal was in fact found apt for the sacrifice – although one would then also expect to find occasionally ostraca without these subscriptions, when the animal failed the test. However, of the almost sixty demotic certificates, eighteen are so fragmentary that we cannot be sure whether they ever had such a subscription or not. Shattering these incomplete documents might, in that case, even have been the norm.

The missing date, the evidence of certificates that were not made out for a private donor, but mention a calf directly from the temple stable, and the fact that all demotic certificates have been found in the vicinity of the temple, even when the donor was from a different village, show that these were not simply demotic variants of the Greek moschosphragists' certificates, which had to be kept by the donors as proof in case of official controls. Rather, these demotic-hieratic ostraca seem to have had a purely internal use: they might have accompanied the animal when it was brought from the place where it was controlled and sealed/stamped by the priest of Sakhmet acting as moschosphragist to the temple slaughterhouse, where the relevant information was perhaps transferred on another medium by a temple scribe before the ostrakon would be discarded. Therefore, the introduction of obligatory Greek moschosphragists' certificates in 122/3 CE cannot be used as a *terminus post quem* to date the demotic certificates.

⁵¹ LABRIQUE, in: Archimède 1 (2014), 68, citing in note 64 LABRIQUE, in: GEORGOUDI et al. (eds), *La cuisine et l'autel*, and QUACK, in: FITZENREITER (ed.), *Tierkulte*, 115, neither of which speaks of the moschosphragists branding the controlled animals.

⁵² LABRIQUE, in: GEORGOUDI et al. (eds), *La cuisine et l'autel*, 168–171.

⁵³ Ostraca Athribis 19-36-61/1925, 19-36-61/3214, 19-36-61/3503, 20-36-64/2419 and 20-39-1/1970.

⁵⁴ See the commentary to ostrakon Athribis 12-9-17/40 l. 3 below.

5.1 Edition of three demotic moschosphragists' certificates

The edition uses the demotists' version of the Leiden system of parentheses.⁵⁵ Additionally, a backslash \ marks words that had to be line swapped in the translation. The hieratic parts of the text are marked in **bold**.

5.1.1 Ostrakon Athribis 12-9-17/40 (fig. 8a and b):

Height: 10 cm; width: 10.9 cm; thickness: 0.8 cm. Body sherd, ceramological description outstanding. Inscribed on the exterior, roughly parallel to the turning lines, probably with a thickish calamus rather than a rush pen. The ink has in many places flaked off, leaving only a faint outline on the surface.

1	<i>p3 ih tše n rnp.t 2.t</i>	The red bull of 2 years,
2	<i>(r-)dr.t=y P3-Šy s3 Sn-2</i>	(into) my hand, (i.e. of) Psois, son of Sansnos,
3	<i>(r) mšd n p3 hrw n šsp (n-)dr.t{=y}</i>	(for) controlling on the day of reception from {my} (the) hand of
4	<i>P3-di-Wsir s3 Pa-p3-igš p3 rmt{.w}</i>	Petosiris, son of Papekysis, the man
5	<i>(n) P3-swn</i>	(from) Psônis,
6	<i>m-b3h T3-Rpy(.t) t3 ntr.t</i>	before Triphis the \great
7	<i>'3.t p(3) ih dšr n rnp.t</i>	\goddess. The red bull of \2
8	<i>2.t</i>	\years.

1: *tše* “red” is, in all demotic moschosphragists' certificates where this passage is preserved, written with the animal skin determinative.

2: Other moschosphragists' certificates do not employ the suffix of the first person singular after *(r-)dr.t*, although its use in this place can be justified: the priest who received the animal on behalf of the temple and controlled it was probably in most cases also the scribe of the certificate.

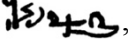
Given that the name Sansnos (*Sn-2*) is not extremely common on Hut-Repit, it is possible that Psois, son of Sansnos was the brother of Basis, son of Sansnos, the moschosphragist of ostrakon Athribis 17-36-2/299 (see below), and perhaps also the father of the moschosphragist of ostrakon Athribis 17-36-5/5719, who exceptionally also indicates his grandfather's name.

3: With the exception of ostrakon Athribis 12-9-16/4 that has a slightly different structure, all other certificates where this passage is fully preserved use either *r mšd* “for controlling” or *iw=f mšd* “it being controlled”; the preposition *r* of the first version has therefore been supplemented here.

The verb *mšd* “to inspect, to control”⁵⁶ is in all currently known moschosphragists' certificates from Hut-Repit written with the *šd* group that is also employed for this

⁵⁵ DEPAUW, Companion, 179 (appendix D).

⁵⁶ ERICHSEN, Demotisches Glossar, 182 (*mšt*); CRUM, Coptic Dictionary, 206b (ⲙⲟⲩⲱⲧⲣ).

verb in the manuscript of the teachings of Kha-Chechonqy from the region of Akhmim ,⁵⁷ but the determinatives vary: sometimes, it has none,⁵⁸ sometimes, like here, it is only determined with a “man with his hand to his mouth”,⁵⁹ once with the “small bookroll” and “man with his hand to his mouth” determinatives⁶⁰ and sometimes in the same elaborate form as in the Kha-Sheshonqy manuscript.⁶¹

Although written exactly like in line 2, the preposition here has to be understood as *(n-)dr.t* “from the hand of”, which introduces the donor. Again, the scribe adds *t=y*, this time clearly erroneously.

- 4: The sense of the vertical stroke after *rm.t* is not clear, neither the number 1 nor a plural mark yield much sense here.
- 5: *P3-swn*, in the demotic material from Hut-Repit sometimes also written *Pr-swn*,⁶² is rendered in Greek texts as $\Psi\omega\nu\iota\varsigma$ and corresponds to the modern village Baṣūna, about 20 km to the north of Hut-Repit.⁶³
- 7: While in most cases, the hieratic notice is added in a new line underneath the demotic text, sometimes even with a significantly larger line spacing, the lack of room on this sherd has prompted the scribe to insert it almost immediately after the end of the demotic text, moving only slightly downwards.
- 7-8: The hieratic notice is not very carefully written. Comparison with other certificates from Hut-Repit allows the following transcription into hieroglyphs:

 (l. 8) | 

Where it is present, the article is in the certificates always written as a *p* above either double strokes or a filler dot.

The writing of *ih* is unusual: other certificates use in the hieratic part either a purely ideographic writing just with the bull sign, like ostracon Athribis 17-36-2/299 below, or write *ihw* out phonetically with the bull as determinative, like ostracon Athribis 19-0/2070 below.

Like in other certificates from Hut-Repit,⁶⁴ *dšr* is here written only with the fish sign, as is also attested in temple inscriptions of the Graeco-Roman period.⁶⁵ For a phonetic writing with the fish as determinative, see ostracon Athribis 19-0/2070 below.

⁵⁷ Papyrus BM EA 10508, col. 9, l. 11. The facsimile has been taken from THISSEN, Anchscheschonqi, 79.

⁵⁸ Ostraca Athribis 17-36-5/4604 and 17-36-5/5719.

⁵⁹ Ostraca Athribis 12-9-16/4, 17-36-1/456, 17-36-2/299, 17-36-4/458, 19-36-61/3503, 19-36-61/3591.

⁶⁰ Ostraca Athribis 19-36-61/1925, 19-36-61/3214, 19-36-61/5061.

⁶¹ Ostraca Athribis 19-0-2070 and probably also 17-36-5/2337 where the beginning of the word is broken off. See for the discussion of this writing the commentary to ostracon Athribis 19-0-2070 l. 2 below.

⁶² E.g. on the jar label Athribis 2011.14 (LIPPERT, in: NAETHER (ed.), *New Approaches*, 157–158).

⁶³ See for literature and attestations the database Trismegistos (TM Geo 3011).

⁶⁴ See also ostracon Athribis 17-36-2/299 below.

⁶⁵ Wb V, 488, 492. See also LEITZ, *Tempelinschriften*, 165.

The number 2 is here, as often in the certificates from Hut-Repit, written with the *w**p* sign as a play on the two horns.⁶⁶ It is here followed by what might be a ligature of *w* and *t*, probably to indicate the feminine ending.

- 8: Like in ostracon Athribis 17-36-2/299 below, there is a horizontal stroke after the hieratic text, probably to mark the end of the certificate, but it is very faint here.

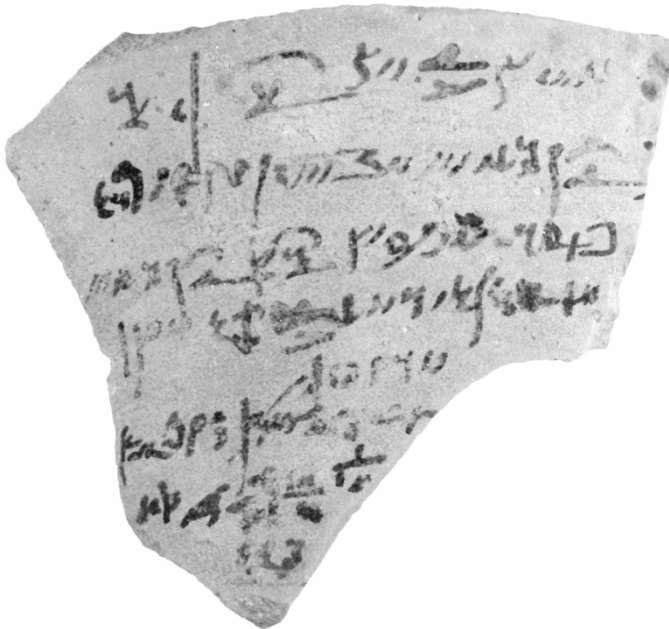


Fig. 8a: Ostracon Athribis 12-9-17/40
Photo: © Athribis Project Tübingen

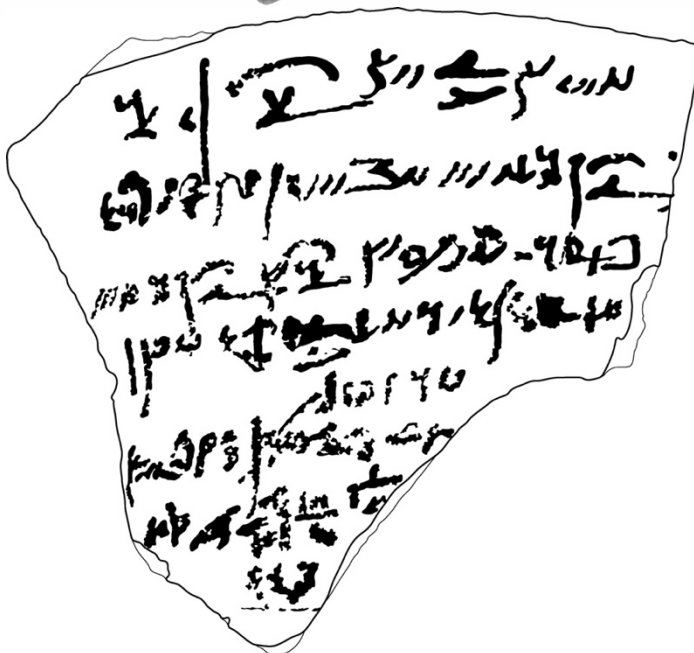
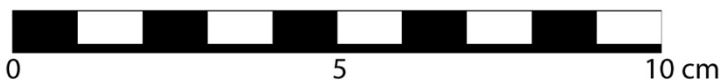


Fig. 8b: Ostracon Athribis 12-9-17/40
Facsimile: S. LIPPERT



⁶⁶ See LEITZ, *Tempelinschriften*, 161 (*sn*).

5.1.2 Ostrakon Athribis 17-36-2/299 (fig. 9a and b):


Height: 8.5 cm; width: 6.1 cm; thickness: 0.9 cm. Body sherd, ceramological description outstanding. Inscribed on the exterior with a calamus. The surface is dotted all over with small aggregations of salt crystals.


1	<i>p3` ih tse n rnp.t 2.t</i>	The red bull of 2 years,
2	<i>(r-)dr.(t) Bs s3 Sn-2 r mšd</i>	(into) the hand of Basis, son of Sansnos, for controlling
3	<i>n p3 hrw n šsp (n-)dr.(t) P3ny-</i>	on the day of reception from the hand of Pani-
4	<i>s-qrs s3 3(?)wt3m`n</i>	skos, son of Eudaimon,
5	<i>n-b3h T3-Rpy.t (t3) ntr.t</i>	before Triphis (the) \great
6	<i>3.t</i>	\goddess.
7	<i>p(3) ih dšr n rnp.t 2.t</i>	The red bull of 2 years.
8	—	—

2: Contrary to ostrakon Athribis 12-9-17/40 above, *mšd* is here explicitly introduced with an *r*, which can hardly be understood other than the preposition *r* followed by a substantivated infinitive.⁶⁷

3-4: Paniskos is written mainly alphabetically, but at the end, the group *qrs* “to bury” (Coptic κωρε), with phonetic complement *s* but without the determinatives, is used to express the syllable -κος.

4: The father’s name is also written (mainly?) alphabetically and determined with the sign of the foreign land. The penultimate sign is an *ayin*, somewhat affected by the head of the snake sign from the line below. The first sign might be a small *aleph*, although one would expect the large *aleph* in the initial position, or the *iw* group, which would then be complemented by the following very small vertical *w*.⁶⁸ In any case, this has to be understood as the demotic rendering of the Greek name Εὐδαιμόν.⁶⁹

5: The article *t3* after *Rpy.t* is left out, and the following word, which according to the parallels has to be *ntr.t*, is hardly identifiable. Moreover, the writings of this word on the certificates are quite variable: while some, like the ostrakon Athribis 12-9-17/40 above, have a normal demotic writing, others, like the ostrakon Athribis 19-0/2070 below, show hieratic forms, and these can sometimes be extremely abbreviated: on ostraca Athribis 17-36-4/458 and 17-36-5/5719, *ntr.t* is simply written with the snake sign. The first sign here might therefore be a very narrow, upright snake: / .

7: The last line is again written in hieratic | , but the number *2.t* is written in demotic.

⁶⁷ SPIEGELBERG, *Demotische Grammatik*, 104–105 § 226.

⁶⁸ I thank MICHEL CHAUVEAU and DIDIER DEVAUCHELLE for discussing the reading of this name with me.

⁶⁹ PREISIGKE, *Namenbuch*, 110–111, FORABOSCI, *Onomasticon*, 113.

The fish sign here resembles the *hn*-plant 𓆎 followed by a very low-set 9.
 8: Underneath the hieratic text, there is again a horizontal stroke.

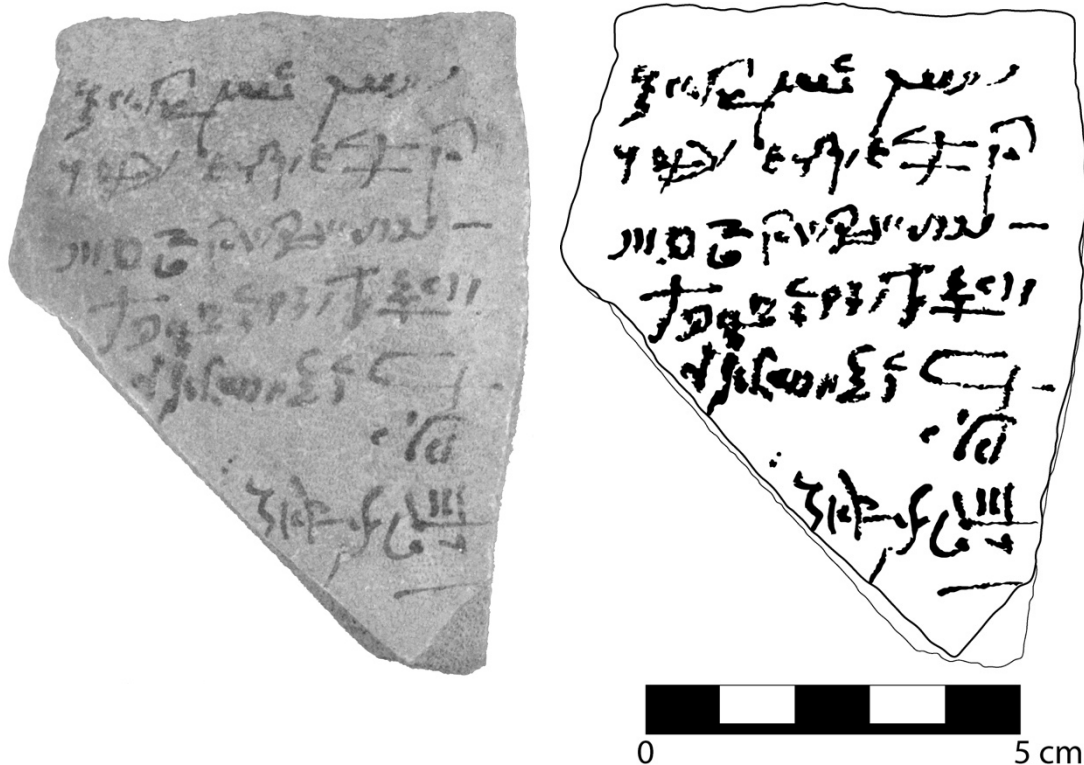


Fig. 9a and 9b: Ostrakon Athribis 17-36-2/299
 Photo: © Athribis Project Tübingen

Facsimile: S. LIPPERT

5.1.3 Ostrakon Athribis 19-0/2070 (fig. 10a and b)

Height: 9.6 cm; width: 12.4 cm; thickness: 0.7 cm. Body sherd, ceramological description outstanding. Inscribed on the exterior with a calamus and very thin ink that has faded in some places to a light grey.



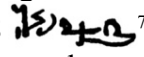
1	<i>p3 ih` tše n rnp.t 2.t (r-)dr.t</i>	The red bull of 2 years, (into) the hand of
2	<i>Nms3lgh iw=f mšd.t</i>	<i>Nms3lgh</i> , it being controlled
3	<i>(n) p3 hrw šsp (n) ms (n) ihy m- b3h</i>	(on) the day of reception (as) stable born, before
4	<i>T3-Rpy.t t3 ntr.t 3.t</i>	Triphis the great goddess .
5	<i>ih dšr n rnp.t 2(.t)</i>	A red bull of 2 years.

- 1: The first two words, except for the animal determinative of *ih*, have almost completely faded, but the traces can be restored through the parallels.
- 2: The name of the receiving priest is written purely with alphabetic signs. *Nms3lgh* is certainly not Egyptian, although the determinative does not seem to be that of the

foreign land. Demotic *gh* can correspond to Greek χ ,⁷⁰ but there are no Greek personal names ending in χ , so either the name is not Greek, or the end of the name was omitted in this rendering. Could this be an unusual, and partially inverted, spelling of Μνήσαρχος? This name is occasionally attested in Egypt, although for the moment only from the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE.⁷¹ If this interpretation is correct, the adoption of this Greek name by an Egyptian priest from the region of Akhmim might be linked to the phonetic resemblance of its first element to the theonym Min.⁷² Although rare in Egypt, Μνήσαρχος might have been more widely known there as the name of the father of the philosopher Pythagoras (6th-5th c. BCE) whose teachings, said to have been inspired by the asceticism and scientific endeavors of Egyptian priests, regained popularity through the neo-Pythagorean movement from the 1st c. BCE onwards.

The lack of a patronym is unusual, but most likely due to the fact that the name *Nmszlgħ* – whatever its origin – was so unusual that there was not risk of confusion with a homonym.

Like ostracon Athribis 19-0-2070, several other certificates use the phrasing *iw=f mšd*⁷³ instead of *r mšd* “for controlling”. Because there is no direct object to *iw=f mšd*, this has to be a circumstantial present I with a qualitative as predicate and the bull as its subject, meaning “it being controlled”.

It would be tempting to read  as *iw=f mšd db* “it being controlled (and) sealed”, since, as mentioned above, the verb *db* is used in the demotic subscriptions of two Greek moschosphragists’ certificates from Soknopaiou Nesos. However, it is more probable that ostracon Athribis 19-0/2070 simply provides a more elaborate writing of the word *mšd*, with a very large *t* sign preceding the ligature of determinatives that PESTMAN interpreted as ⁷⁴ and which is commonly found for words with a legal context.⁷⁵ compare for this the already cited writing of *mšd.t* in pBM EA 10508 ⁷⁶ where the curved stroke after the *šd* group is undoubtedly to be interpreted as a *t* serving as phonetic complement.

⁷⁰ CLARYSSE/VAN DER WEKEN, *Eponymous Priests*, 141; see also CLARYSSE, in: VLEEMING (ed.), *Aspects*, 21 no. 10, 25 no. 36, 31 no. 91.

⁷¹ PREISIGKE, *Namenbuch*, 218; FORABOSCHI, *Onomasticon*, 198b. The database Trismegistos (TM Nam 4138) lists six individuals of this name from Egypt.

⁷² It might not be a coincidence that all of the Egyptian Mnesarchoi are from regions with a cult of Min. Five come from the larger Thebais, which included the two main cult centers at Coptos and Akhmim: TM Per 10473 (a prophet of Khonsu) and TM Per 195375 are from Thebes, TM Per 383551 was also from the Thebaid, probably from Pathyris/Gebelein, TM Per 10474 (a tax farmer) was from Coptos and TM Per 16181 from Lykopolis (Assiut), not far north from Akhmim. The sixth, TM Per 10472, was from Berenikis Thesmophorou, situated close to Tebtunis where a cult of Min is attested as well (RONDOT, in: Gs Quaegebeur, 241–255).

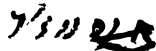
⁷³ So also ostraca Athribis 17-36-3/1009, 19-36-61/1925, 19-36-61/3503, 19-36-61/5061 and perhaps also 19-36-61/3591.


⁷⁴ PESTMAN, in PESTMAN (ed.), *Textes et Études*, 126-128, n. h).

⁷⁵ LIPPERT, *Lehrbuch*, 30.

⁷⁶ Papyrus BM EA 10508, col. 9, l. 11. The facsimile has been taken from THISSEN, *Anchscheschonqi*, 79.


Moreover, three other demotic certificates from Hut-Repit show elaborate writings of *mšd* with a *t* that cannot be confused with the *db* ‘ group:

 oAthribis 19-36-61/1925, l. x+5

 oAthribis 19-36-61/5061, l. 2

 oAthribis 17-36-5/2337, l. 2

- 3: *hrw* is written in hieratic as |⊙; this is quite common in the demotic certificates.⁷⁷ While most certificates mention after *šsp* the person from whom the bull was received (see also ostraca Athribis 17-36-2/299, l. 4–5 and 12-9-17/40, l. 3–5 above), here and in eight others⁷⁸ the animal is characterised as “born (in the stable/hurdle” (*ms (n) ihy*), that is, originating from the temple’s own cattle farm.⁷⁹ Despite the short writing – the sitting child as ideogram for *ms* and the animal skin determinative –, it might be better to understand *ms* here as the participle of the verb and not as the noun “calf”, compare the use in the expression *ms hn pr* “born in the temple precinct” that characterises some of the persons entering into hierodouly⁸⁰ and in the expression *ms n Kmy* “born in Egypt” as translation of τῆς ἐπιγονῆς.⁸¹

4: *ntrt.t* is written in hieratic: 

5: The last line is again written in hieratic, but this time the words *iḥw* and *dšr* are written out phonetically: 

No traces of the article that is quite regularly found at the beginning of the hieratic text in other certificates can be made out.

The number 2 seems here to have been written twice, first normally as two strokes, then with the *wp*-sign that also occurs in many other certificates.

The horizontal sign underneath the latter is probably a scroll determinative.

⁷⁷ Also in ostraca Athribis 17-36-1/456, 17-36-5/2337, 17-36-5/4604, 17-36-5/5719, 19-36-61/3591, 19-36-61/5061.

⁷⁸ Ostraca Athribis 12-9-16/4, 17-36-5/4604, 17-36-5/5719, 19-36-61/3906, 20-36-64/1600, 20-36-64/1898, 20-36-64/2050 and 20-39-16/2156.

⁷⁹ See CRUZ-URIBE, Cattle Documents, 61, for the clause in demotic animal sales that includes any offspring of the sold cattle born in the buyers stable/hurdle (*n3 hrd.t.w nty iw=w r ms.t=w n pzy=k ihy*) in the guarantee against third party claims.

⁸⁰ CHAUVEAU, in: BIFAO 91 (1992), 120 with further literature.

⁸¹ For this term, see LA’DA, in: KRAMER (ed.), Akten 21. Papyrologenkongreß 1995, 593–569 and VANDORPE, in: APF 54 (2008), 87–108.



Fig. 10a: Ostrakon Athribis 19-0/2070
Photo: © Athribis Project Tübingen

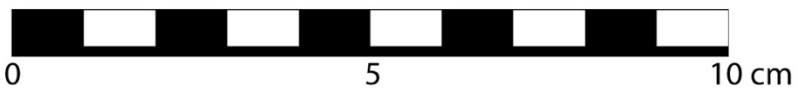
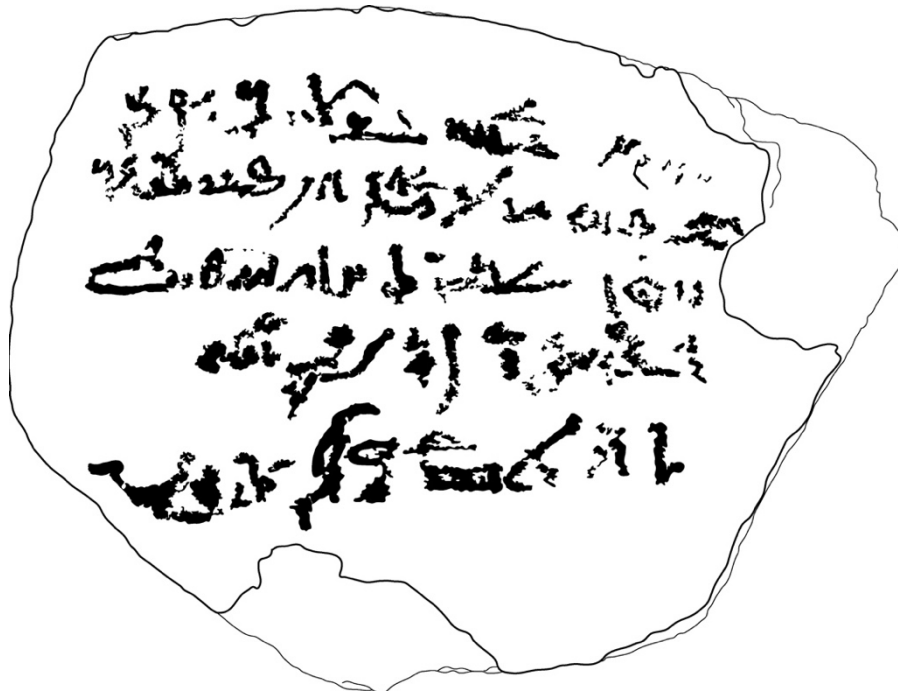


Fig. 10b: Ostrakon Athribis 19-0/2070
Facsimile: S. LIPPERT

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