

(museum director), Ahmet Beyazlar, Burhan Balcıoğlu, and Mehmet Önal; the governorship of Gaziantep and in particular Süleyman Kamcı (provincial governor), Salih Efiloğlu (culture director), and Mehmet Aykanat (deputy culture director); government officials of the İslahiye and Nurdağ districts and in particular Bekir Yılmaz (İslahiye district

governor) and Emrah Yılmaz (Nurdağ district governor); and last but not least, our many friends in the town of Fevzipaşa, especially İsmet Ersoy (mayor of Fevzipaşa) and his wife Arzu.

All the photographs except fig. 4 were taken by Eudora Struble. The geomagnetic maps in figs. 23, 31, and 32 were prepared by Jason Herrmann under

the direction of Jesse Casana of the University of Arkansas. The architectural plans and section drawings in figs. 10, 12, 15, 20, 22, and 28 were prepared by Benjamin Arubas and Octavian Reicher. The drawings in fig. 19 were done by Karen Reczuch.

ACCOUNTING FOR LIFE IN PTOLEMAIC AND ROMAN THEBES: ONLINE ACCESS TO ANCIENT ARCHIVES

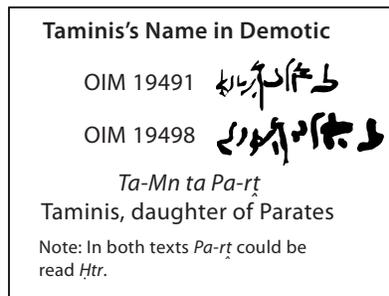
Foy Scalf and Jacqueline Jay

THE SCRAP PAPER OF ANTIQUITY: RECEIPTS ON POTSDHERDS

On the 22nd of May, 247 BCE, a woman named Taminis paid for a supply of oil and was issued a receipt for her payment. Her full name was Taminis, daughter of Parates; as was customary, her father's name served as a kind of surname. Like most of her contemporaries, Taminis could probably write very little, if at all, so the text was recorded for her by a scribe who signed his name: Esminis. Taminis paid in silver for roughly a quarter of a liter of oil, which had probably been produced at a local farm growing sesame or castor under strict governmental control by the state or its private contractors.¹ Oil was a necessity of life, used for medicine, cosmetics, fuel, and cooking,² and Taminis does not seem to have bought all that much of it. From so-called marriage contracts of the time, we know that husbands often promised to provide stipends of oil to their wives, stipends which were usually two to six times greater than the amount this receipt records Taminis to have purchased.³

That this supply lasted for a short time is proven, not just by the small

amount itself, but by other receipts from the files of Taminis dated to the very same year. It seems that Taminis customarily received oil on credit, paying for it at a later date, for the surviving receipts were usually written in the months after the oil was received. For example, in the 38th year of the reign of Ptolemy II, Taminis received a supply of oil in the month of Khoiak for which she was issued a receipt on the 30th day of the same month.



Two months later, in Mecheir, we know Taminis received another quantity of oil, for which she paid the cost on the very first day of Pharmouthi, having gone the entire intervening month of Phamenoth without making payment (see chart of Egyptian months on the facing page). However, we know she received another

supply of oil on credit in Phamenoth because just 8 days after her previous payment, on the 9th day of Pharmouthi, she made another payment and was issued a receipt for the oil she received in the preceding month of Phamenoth. The oil dealer would have also kept a record of these payments and his section for Taminis would have contained the same information as the following chart, although more complete.

The affairs of individual citizens of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt like Taminis are just one of the many facets of ancient society that can be reconstructed through texts written on potsherds. These sherds, which are also called ostraca, a term derived from the Greek word ὄστρακον (singular), or ὄστρακα (plural) meaning earthen vessel or potsherd, were nothing more than the fragments of broken pottery vessels. Fragments of this type were used by the ancient Greeks when they were voting on whether or not to expel a citizen (giving us the term ostracism); as we have seen, however, they had many other purposes as well.⁴ Cheaper and more readily available than papyrus, potsherds were the ancient equivalent of note pads, and the texts which appear on

Receipts for Cost of Oil Paid by Taminis in the Oriental Institute Museum

Taxpayer	Museum No.	Reign	Year	Date Issued	Month of Credit	Scribe
Ta-Mn ta Pa-rꜥ	OIM 19347	Ptolemy II	36	Epeiph 12	Payni	Esminis
Ta-Mn ta Pa-rꜥ	OIM 19498	Ptolemy II	38	Khoiak 30	Khoiak	Esminis
Ta-Mn ta Pa-rꜥ	OIM 19294	Ptolemy II	38	Pharmouthi 1 (22 May 247 BCE)	Mecheir	Esminis
Ta-Mn ta Pa-rꜥ	OIM 19491	Ptolemy II	38	Pharmouthi 9 (30 May 247 BCE)	Phamenoth	Esminis

Ancient Egyptian Months

The ancient Egyptian civil calendar consisted of three seasons divided into twelve months of thirty days, plus five epagomenal days added to equal the 365 days of the solar year.

Month 1: Thoth	Month 7: Phamenoth
Month 2: Phaophi	Month 8: Pharmouthi
Month 3: Hathor	Month 9: Pachons
Month 4: Khoiak	Month 10: Payni
Month 5: Tybi	Month 11: Epeiph
Month 6: Mecheir	Month 12: Mesore

them were just as diverse as the post-its of today. Ostraca were employed for a wide variety of record-keeping: administrative documents including accounts, receipts, and lists; school exercises including literary texts; religious documents including hymns, magical-medical texts, and oracles; memoranda including greetings and letters. In Ptolemaic-Roman Egypt, these texts were written in a variety of scripts including Aramaic, Greek, Coptic, and Demotic. Although the documents in each of these scripts deserve their own attention, we focus here on the Demotic examples.

THE COLLECTION OF DEMOTIC OSTRACA IN THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE MUSEUM

The texts referring to Taminis represent only a small percentage of the roughly 900 Demotic ostraca in the collection of the Oriental Institute. Approximately 350 of these were purchased and have no known provenance, while the other 550 were excavated at Medinet Habu by Uvo Hölscher on behalf of the Oriental Institute from 1926 to 1933. Some of these documents were excavated near houses of the Roman period town. Unfortunately, we have not been able to identify houses of specific individuals because, in most cases, the ostraca have been moved from the houses of their owners. Such displacement occurs for a variety of reasons, including the continuous occupation of the site of Medinet Habu, the discarding of unnecessary documents in antiquity, and modern digging performed by locals searching for fertilizer.

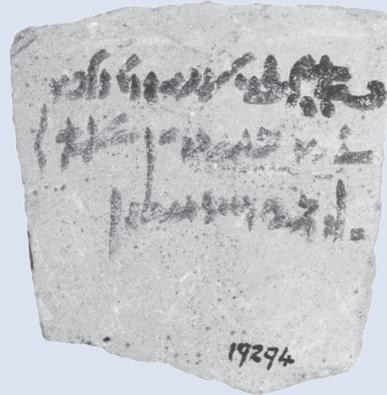
The 900 Oriental Institute Demotic ostraca contain information critical to

Two Receipts for the Cost of Oil of Taminis

According to the receipts on OIM 19294 and OIM 19491, Taminis paid twice within the first week of Pharmouthi for quantities of oil received in the previous two months. These texts, like the others discussed here, are written in Demotic, a cursive ancient Egyptian script which appeared in the middle of the first millennium BCE and was used until the middle of the first millennium CE.

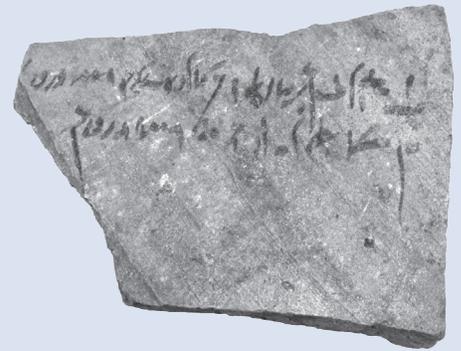
OIM 19294⁵

1. Taminis, daughter of Parates, 1/6 silver (kite⁶ for) the cost
2. of oil of Mecheir. Written by Esminis
3. in year 38, Pharmouthi, day 1.



OIM 19491

1. Taminis, daughter of Parates, 1/4 silver (kite for) the cost of oil of Pharmouthi.
2. Written by Esminis in year 38, Pharmouthi, day 9.



the study of society in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. Economic matters predominate, offering a chance to further refine our understanding of how the Greeks and Romans administered Egypt and how the population accounted for their daily lives within a constantly changing system. In pre-Ptolemaic Egypt, our documentation of fiscal matters — paying taxes, lending money, accepting payments — is patchy, but we have a wealth of such documentation for the Ptolemaic period, recorded in both Greek and Egyptian. Life, both ancient and modern, is lived at a very small scale and the remaining evidence is often meager. Here we have a good chance to witness the activities of individuals, how their lives ebbed and flowed, while reflecting the grand sweep of political history. Buying a monthly supply of oil may seem insignificant, but that consumer is but one cog in a great administrative machine. In light of the importance of this material, we have designed a database in order to organize and tease out the data pertinent to these issues.

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE DEMOTIC OSTRACA ONLINE (O.I.D.O.O.)

Thousands of Demotic ostraca are scattered throughout museum collections around the world, many still awaiting study. A great many more surely lie buried in the sands of Egypt. Currently, less than one-third of the Demotic ostraca in the Oriental Institute Museum collection have been published and, as a result, we began the Oriental Institute Demotic Ostraca Online (O.I.D.O.O.) project in order to make the information contained in these ostraca available to both the scholarly community and the general public. Through O.I.D.O.O., we hope to present the information from this material in an accessible as well as useful online database with the capability to search and sort the data in order to reveal meaningful patterns. Although information derived from a single ostrakon is generally of limited value, the information synthesized from hundreds, even thousands, of ostraca have allowed scholars to begin to reconstruct significant sections of Ptolemaic and Roman period economy in ancient Egypt. Aiding this process is the ultimate goal of O.I.D.O.O.

Documents of Thotsutmis in the Oriental Institute Museum

<i>Taxpayer</i>	<i>Museum No.</i>	<i>Reign</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Date Issued</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Month of Payment</i>
<i>Dḥwty-sḏm sʿ Pa-nfr</i>	OIM 19504	Ptolemy II(?)	?	Thoth 2	Receipt for Cost of Oil	Mesore
<i>Dḥwty-sḏm sʿ Pa-nfr</i>	OIM 19514	Ptolemy II or III	?	Hathor 12	Receipt for Cost of Oil	Hathor
<i>Dḥwty-sḏm sʿ Pa-nfr</i>	OIM 19302	Ptolemy II	?	Phamenoth 13	Receipt for Cost of Oil	Mecheir
<i>Dḥwty-sḏm sʿ Pa-nfr</i>	OIM 19493	Ptolemy II	?	Epiphi 20	Receipt for Cost of Oil	Payni
<i>Dḥwty-sḏm sʿ Pa-nfr</i>	OIM 19483	Ptolemy II	31	Pachons 8	Receipt for Cost of Oil	Phamenoth(?)
<i>Dḥwty-sḏm sʿ Pa-nfr</i>	OIM 19292	Ptolemy III	?	?	List of Names	—
<i>Dḥwty-sḏm sʿ Pa-nfr (?)</i>	OIM 19298	Ptolemy ?	?	?	Receipt for Burial (?) Tax	—

being set at the Oriental Institute of disseminating the results of our research projects freely to the general public over the Internet (<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/projects/>).

THE ARCHIVE OF THOTSUTMIS

We opened this article with a single individual, Taminis, and her regular purchase of oil on credit; we will close it with another individual: a man named Thotsutmis. Like Taminis, Thotsutmis was a resident of Thebes who conducted his business in the same manner as many other Thebans of his time. Seven documents in the Oriental Institute Museum name him, five of which are oil payment receipts. Unfortunately, none of these texts are dated; however, two were written by Esminis, the same scribe who wrote dated receipts for Taminis. As a result, we can presume that Thotsutmis, Esminis, and Taminis were all contemporaries, active late in the reign of Ptolemy II, in the mid-third century BCE. Beyond this ballpark date, we cannot provide a specific year for the receipts of Thotsutmis, and we have no way of knowing the relationship between these receipts. Are they from the same year or scattered across several years? Such questions illuminate some of the fundamental issues which arise when working with ostraca.

Issues of provenance also complicate our research. While some groups of texts have been found in or buried beneath the floors of a private dwelling, yielding

interesting insights about the layout of a town and the owners of individual dwellings in it, excavation records from Medinet Habu regarding our sherds have been relatively unhelpful.⁷ Even more problematic are the many ostraca in the Oriental Institute Museum, including those of Thotsutmis, that derive from illicit excavations. In the first half of the twentieth century, local Egyptians found the ostraca and then sold the pieces to various directors of the Epigraphic Survey resident at Chicago House, such as H. Nelson, W. F. Edgerton, J. Wilson, and G. Hughes. Although we can gain a great deal of information from these purchased sherds, we will probably never know their exact findspot.

To overcome these difficulties, we must look for significant patterns, and here is where our database comes into play. While constructing the database, we have been able to identify individuals who are mentioned in more than one text (such as Taminis and Thotsutmis) and perhaps connect them with people mentioned in other texts. Our Thotsutmis, for example, may be the same individual mentioned in documents now in Berlin and London. In one of these documents, he is given the title *pastophoros* of Amenophis in the west of Thebes, identifying him as a *choachyte* (a priest in charge of the mortuary cult), a role which aligns well with our Thotsutmis's appearance in a burial tax receipt (OIM 19298). If this connection is correct, we can identify members of Thotsutmis's

family, including his father Panouphis, son of Petenephtes, who is mentioned in several receipts in the Brooklyn and Ashmolean museums, as well as his brother Psenenteris, son of Panouphis, with whom Thotsutmis is mentioned in a list of names (OIM 19292), perhaps a list of mortuary priests.⁸

All this information will also be included in O.I.D.O.O. As we have mentioned, a simple search for Thotsutmis will quickly result in a list of records for which that name appears. Sorting these records chronologically, researchers can quickly determine what information we have about a given individual, what types of texts he or she appears in, the chronological range of the texts, and, through the catalog of names in the database, familial relationships of certain individuals. In the future, databases of this sort will reinvent the way we do research about the ancient world, providing us with greater insights concerning both the political sweep of history as well as the quotidian activities of the humble taxpayer.

NOTES

¹ The government maintained a strict monopoly on oil-producing plants and production, at times contracted out to private individuals in each nome. The fundamental study is Claire Préaux, *L'économie royale des Lagides* (Brussels: Édition de la fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1939), pp. 65–93.

² We do not know what type of oil Taminis was buying because the Egyptian term for oil used in her receipts,  *nhh*, is simply a generic term

for any type of oil (though often identified as sesame). The many uses and sources of oil (castor, sesame, olive, safflower) are described in D. Brent Sandy, *The Production and Use of Vegetable Oils in Ptolemaic Egypt*, Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists Supplements 6 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989).

³ Brian P. Muhs, *Tax Receipts, Taxpayers, and Taxes in Early Ptolemaic Thebes*, Oriental Institute Publications 126 (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2005), p. 75.

⁴ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 1264.

⁵ Published in Muhs, *Tax Receipts*, catalog no. 6.

⁶ The kite was a unit of measurement based upon the Egyptian silver *deben*. In pharaonic Egypt, the *deben* amounted to 91 grams of silver bullion, with the kite equaling 1/10th of a *deben*, thus 9.1 grams. This system was modified in the late Persian period so that one silver *deben* equaled the value of

five Greek silver staters. The Egyptian accounting system, with its equivalence in stater value rather than bullion weight, continued to be maintained throughout the Ptolemaic period despite continued revisions in the weight and value of Ptolemaic coinage. See Muhs, *Tax Receipts*, pp. 24-25; Sitta von Reden, *Money in Ptolemaic Egypt: From the Macedonian Conquest to the End of the Third Century BC* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 49-50.

⁷ Uvo Hölscher, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu*, Vol. 1: *General Plans and Views*, Oriental Institute Publications 21 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), pl. 10. In most cases, however, knowledge of the findspot of a sherd tells us relatively little; thus far, for example, we have not been able to link individuals to particular features on the ground. For instance, we know of several ostraca found in excavation square F/5 (see plan). Intriguingly, two of these ostraca (MH 2196 and MH 2393) were written for the same

taxpayer, Pamonthes "the younger." He is mentioned in another text (MH 1745), for which there is, unfortunately, no findspot information. There are several Roman structures which were excavated in squares F/4-5 and it is tantalizing to try to identify them as the houses of Pamonthes or members of his family. However, also from square F/5 is MH 2190, an early Ptolemaic receipt for the salt tax belonging to Semmonthis, written nearly two centuries before the receipts of Pamonthes! Other Demotic ostraca found in squares E-G/4 were said to be discovered "between foundation walls," suggesting that they had been moved either in antiquity or by fertilizer diggers. The Demotic ostraca from E-G/4 are mentioned in Uvo Hölscher, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu*, Vol. 5: *Post-Ramesside Remains*, Oriental Institute Publications 66 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 39.

⁸ Identified in published documents by Muhs, *Tax Receipts*, pp. 123-24.

CATASTROPHE! EXHIBIT RECEIVES AWARD

On October 22, the Oriental Institute Museum was presented with the "2008 Best Practices Award" for exhibits and programs from the Association of Midwest Museums. The award acknowledges the exemplary practices and processes employed by the Museum to raise public awareness of a critical issue. The AMM cited the success of the exhibit in the following areas: raising awareness of the archaeological tragedy taking place in Iraq; explaining why the public should and must care about the loss of national heritage, and stating what individuals can do to help, not just in Iraq but also worldwide. The application for the competition was written by Carole Krucoff, Head of Public and Museum Education. Museum Director, Geoff Emberling traveled to Kansas City to receive the award.



Museum Director Geoff Emberling holding the "2008 Best Practices Award"

CATASTROPHE! EXHIBIT IMPACT: RATIFICATION OF THE HAGUE CONVENTION

On Thursday, September 25, 2008, the United States Senate voted to ratify the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

The Hague Convention defines the responsibilities of an occupying power to avoid destruction or damage to cultural sites, monuments and collections during military conflicts and occupations. This treaty was supported by the U.S. State Department and Pentagon.

The Hague Convention is highlighted in the Oriental Institute's special exhibit, *Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past*. Thanks to the many visitors to this exhibit who sent over 1,200 postcards to the Illinois Senators in support of the Hague Convention.