THE NEUBAUER EXPEDITION TO ZINCIRLI, TURKEY

• ACCOUNTING FOR LIFE IN PTOLEMAIC AND ROMAN TIMES

• CHICAGO HOUSE UPDATE
IN MEMORIAM  Nancy Sargis

THIS IS WITH GREAT SADNESS that we inform you that Nancy Sargis, a friend of the Oriental Institute, passed away in June 2008. Miss Sargis, who received a PhD in nursing from Columbia University, became interested in the Oriental Institute because of her Persian descent and her belief that the Oriental Institute is an incredible resource for learning about Persian culture. She also trusted that it would continue to make one-of-a-kind discoveries for generations to come. Miss Sargis's desire to support the future endeavors of the Oriental Institute led her to designate it as the sole beneficiary of her two retirement accounts, as well as two properties, the sale of which will ultimately benefit the Oriental Institute. Although Miss Sargis wanted to establish a fund in her parents' memory, she was unsure of what the best use of her gift would be when the Oriental Institute realized her bequest. She chose to make her fund very general, thus allowing the Oriental Institute to use it for several purposes in perpetuity. The Rachel and Joseph Sargis Fund will be used to support work in Assyriology, including general research, lexicography, material remains, publications, and scholarly interaction.

For more information on designating the Oriental Institute as the beneficiary of your retirement plan or how to include the Oriental Institute in your will, please contact the Oriental Institute Development Office at (773) 834-9775, visit http://giftplanning.uchicago.edu or contact the University of Chicago Office of Gift Planning toll free at (866) 241-9802.

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NEWS & NOTES
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Cover photo: The Soul in the Stone. Zincirli, Turkey. Photo by Eudora Struble

FROM THE DIRECTOR’S STUDY
It is a truism at the Oriental Institute that our greatest discoveries take place in the field and in the basement. Archaeological excavations in the Near East and the analyses of artifacts and texts in our museum collections provide fascinating complementary insights into the ancient civilizations of the Fertile Crescent.

David Schloen, director of the Oriental Institute Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli — ancient Sam'al — provides a wonderful example of the ways that the powerful tools of modern archaeology can be integrated with careful philological research to generate completely unexpected discoveries about ancient civilizations. A century after the original German excavations at this important Iron Age capital, the Oriental Institute is making new discoveries at Zincirli, emerging at a dizzying pace. Perhaps the most significant of these occurred in summer 2008 with the discovery of the Kuttamawi funerary stele, illustrated on the cover of this News & Notes issue. Analysis and translation of the inscription on this stele by Dennis Pardee and his students provides us with unexpected insights into the beliefs of the Luwian and Aramean speaking inhabitants of Zincirli about death, the afterlife, and the very nature of the soul. We have every reason to anticipate additional surprises as David and his team continues their careful explorations at Zincirli.

Foy Scalf and Jacqueline Jay’s article gives us a wonderful example of the ways collected and documented collections in the Institute’s museum can yield incredibly rich information about the ancient Near East. Although the Institute’s excavations at Medinet Habu in Egypt are best known from the monumental temples and magnificent reliefs, the many artifacts recovered during excavations give valuable insight into the later occupation at Medinet Habu. The Institute’s collection of about 900 ostraca with Demotic inscriptions shows us small details of daily life in the third century BC. In this rich corpus, we can see records of an individual woman’s purchases of specific household supplies, or documents of administrators and scribes in this Ptolemaic town; while never recorded on the monumental inscriptions of Medinet Habu, they provide an invaluable complement to the textual record of kings, gods, and priests. The Oriental Institute’s Demotic ostraca are now being entered into a database that will make this important resource available for online scholarship around the world.

Taken together, the complementary approaches of archaeological fieldwork and research with museum collections will continue to surprise us with new discoveries and perspectives on the ancient civilizations of the Near East. — Gil J. Stein
especially Ahmet Denizhanoğlu (museum director), Ahmet Beyazlar, Burhan Balçoğlu, and Mehmet Önal; the governorship of Gaziantep and in particular Süleyman Kancı (provincial governor), Salih Efıloğlu (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 POTSHERS

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 the receipt of 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. Oil was a necessity of life, used for medicine, cosmetics, fuel, and cooking, 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 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 that Taminis received another quantity of oil, for which she paid the cost on the very same day. 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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxpayer</th>
<th>Museum No.</th>
<th>Reign</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date Issued</th>
<th>Month of Credit</th>
<th>Scribe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ta-Mn ta Pa-rt</td>
<td>OIM 19347</td>
<td>Ptolemy II</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Epeiph 12</td>
<td>Payni</td>
<td>Esminis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ta-Mn ta Pa-rt</td>
<td>OIM 19498</td>
<td>Ptolemy II</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Khoiak 30</td>
<td>Khoiak</td>
<td>Esminis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ta-Mn ta Pa-rt</td>
<td>OIM 19294</td>
<td>Ptolemy II</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Pharmouthi 1 (22 May 247 BCE)</td>
<td>Mecheir</td>
<td>Esminis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ta-Mn ta Pa-rt</td>
<td>OIM 19491</td>
<td>Ptolemy II</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Pharmouthi 9 (30 May 247 BCE)</td>
<td>Phamenoth</td>
<td>Esminis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: In both texts Pa-rt could be read hr.
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.

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

**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 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.

**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 19294**
  1. Taminis, daughter of Parates, 1/6 silver (kite for) the cost of oil of Mecheir. Written by Esminis
  2. 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.

**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 ostracon 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.
The O.I.D.O.O. database itself will contain all the relevant information for each ostracon. Acquisition and museum registry information will be provided in addition to a standard text edition including transliteration, translation, photos, and hand copies. The following example (below) shows the range of information provided for each ostracon. We learn its provenance (Thebes), its period (Ptolemaic), its date (Phamenoth 8); for this example, we don’t know the king or the regnal year. Scholars interested in further research are provided with the sherd’s exact location in the museum collection. The side-by-side transliteration and translation gives easy access to the content of each ostracon and can easily be compared to the photograph of the text itself.

Incorporating the information from these ostraca into a database format allows users an increased flexibility over paper publication. Rather than simply flipping pages, information in O.I.D.O.O. can be browsed, searched, and sorted according to specific criteria, enabling powerful and efficient researching. A simple search for Taminis, daughter of Parates, brings up all the Demotic ostraca in the Oriental Institute Museum which mention this person. Alternatively, a researcher may be interested in only a particular type of text and a search for “Oath” would provide them with all the Demotic ostraca containing oath formulae. Of course, these results could then be refined through further searching and sorting. Like a Google search engine for Demotic ostraca, O.I.D.O.O. seeks to provide the researcher with simple, yet effective means to organize and interpret data. Ultimately, we intend to catalog the entire collection of Demotic Ostraca from the Oriental Institute Museum in O.I.D.O.O. and make the database available through the Oriental Institute Web site (http://oi.uchicago.edu) to anyone interested in the material. Version 1, consisting of nearly one-third of the collection, is going online in the winter of 2009. This follows the precedent

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**OIM 19323 — O.I.D.O.O. Record**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Museum No.:</td>
<td>OIM 19323</td>
<td>Reign:</td>
<td>Ptolemy</td>
<td>Day:</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Baked Clay Ostracon</td>
<td>Box:</td>
<td>331.02B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size:</td>
<td>7.4 x 6.3 cm</td>
<td>Year:</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Language:</td>
<td>Demotic</td>
<td>Provenance:</td>
<td>Thebes</td>
<td>Accession:</td>
<td>3289</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Obverse**

1. \(\text{h.t p:\ 'nh nty nfr 'Imn-}
   \text{hpt s} \)
   2. \(\text{Pn-n-thb: w r-t sn n}
   \text{pr-Dm} \)
   3. \(\text{ibh 3 pr t sw 8 'nh Dm}
   \text{nty Htp} \)
   4. \(\text{imr n: nty htp irm sn w}
   \text{pr w r-tm k} \)
   5. \(\text{mt irm sy r-Dhb: w dd}
   \text{ir n s k} \)
   6. \(\text{[...]} \)

**Reverse**

1. \(\text{[...]} \)
2. \(\text{[...]} \)
3. \(\text{mnt w Pr-tm r-b h n 'nh n}
   \text{[...]} \)
4. \(\text{4. p:\ 'nh 'nh m:\ [p t y ...]} \)
5. \(\text{sh bkt t 8 ib 3 pr t [...]} \)
6. \(\text{[...]} \)

**Notes:**

Line 1: The expected nty nfr is actually written nty iwr fr nfr.
Line 2: For the name Pa-n-thb: w, see Erich Lüdecken’s, *Demotisches Namenbuch*, Band I, Lieferung 5 (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1985), 384.
Line 4: For the writing of pr w, see Wolja Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1954), 135.
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. 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 (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 Petenehotep, 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.

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 re-invent 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


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


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 stater.

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!

8 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.

CATASTROPHE! EXHIBIT IMPACT: RATIFICATION OF THE HAGUE CONVENTION

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”


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.
The Life of Meresamun
A Temple Singer in Ancient Egypt

Edited by Emily Teeter and Janet H. Johnson

This companion volume and catalog to the exhibit that opens to Oriental Institute Members on February 9, 2009, traces the life of Meresamun whose mummy, dating to about 800 BC, is one of the highlights of our museum. The text introduces the historical and cultural setting of Egypt during her time. Essays and artifacts examine the role of music and of musicians in Egyptian temple cults, their training, and the types of musical instruments that Meresamun would have used. The life of Meresamun outside the temple is explored, with emphasis upon her social and legal status, what other professions were available to her, and what home life was like. The study of the life of this individual is augmented by forensic evidence obtained with the newest generation of CT scanners that sheds light on Meresamun’s life and death.

Members’ Price: $34.15