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## FOUR GREEK OSTRAKA FROM DEIR EL-HAGAR

During the clearance of sand and debris from the first century sandstone temple at Deir el-Hagar, Dakhleh Oasis, four Greek ostraka were discovered. The temple 1 is dedicated to the great Theban Triad, Amun, Mut and Khonsu, and bears the names of the emperor-pharaohs Nero, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian. The decoration of the temple remained unfinished through the ritual life of the building, apart from the Sanctuary, the doorways of the processional way, and the east-facing walls of the 'Porch of Titus'. It seems that the life of the temple as a pagan ritual building was less than two centuries, although there is no real evidence to suggest a terminal date.

In partnership with the (then) Egyptian Antiquities Organization (EAO), the Dakhleh Oasis Project (DOP) undertook the rehabilitation in the early 1990s, completing the work in February, 1995. A.J. Mills directed the work, A. Zielinski was chief conservator, and the EAO was represented by Mr. Sayed Yamani, while Mr. Senaid Safina was the able EAO conservator. The temple ruin was basically filled with sand and with roofing slabs, architrave blocks and other architectural stones. The north wall had collapsed, while the south wall remained complete to the top. There was little appearance of any post-collapse use of the building (but cf. nos. 3 and 4, below), nor of any quarrying. The project was to clear the monument and rebuild it as much as possible, without utilizing new stone materials. The Greek ostraka which are the subject of this paper will be dealt with *seriatim*. Their date is not quite certain, as there are no absolute dating criteria present and only archaeological and palaeographical considerations can offer some clue. For all four texts a broad date '2nd century, but early 3rd century not excluded' seems in order.

(1) <sup>33</sup>/<sub>390</sub>-F9-1/G/1 (= EAO # 2198)

The ostrakon (H. 9.5 x W. 8.2 cm; convex side inscribed; ware: P1a variant, brown fired, oxydized carbonates) was found outside the temple gateway (Plan [see fn. 1] # 7), within a distance of 2 metres of the exterior face of the gateway and some 16 cm above the level of the stone floor. If one assumes that the entry was kept cleaned during the ritual use of the temple, it is possible that the ostrakon will be rather late in the second century or even later in time.

1	Πμουν Πεμ( ):	"For Pmoun Pem( ) ;
2	διὰ Σαλαέως πρε-	through Salais the
3	σβυτέρου ἀνδ(ρες)	elderman 8 men,
4	η̄, βαίων καὶ σιτο-	6 bundles of palm branches
5	καλαμῶν δέσμας ζ̄,	and wheat stalks,
6	σχο<ι>νίων κύκλια	6 small reels of ropes;
7	ζ̄· τοῦ γεούχου [	of the landlord --
8	οἱ ἄλλοι[	the other --
9	ἐργάται [	laborers --."

-----  
4 βαίων Ostr.



<sup>1</sup> A plan of the temple, by J.E. Knudstad, is published in Anthony J. Mills, 'Deir el Haggar' in Hope, C.A. and A.J. Mills (eds), *Dakhleh Oasis Project: Preliminary Reports on the 1992 - 1993 and 1993 - 1994 Field Seasons* (Oxford 1999), p. 26. On the sanctuary at Deir el-Hagar and its cult, see O.E. Kaper, *Temples and Gods in Roman Dakhleh. Studies in the indigenous cults of an Egyptian oasis* (PhD Dissertation Univ. Groningen, 1997), *passim*.

The text regards a delivery of people (8 men), bundles of palm branches and of wheat stalks (6 units of each) and 6 reels of ropes. While we do not know what services were expected from the men, the commodities referred to in this text were probably needed for the cult in the temple at Deir el-Hagar. On this subject cf. O.E. Kaper, *op.cit.* [fn. 1], esp. pp. 167-180, 'The offering of palm-ribs to the gods: a ritual of the Dakhleh Oasis'. A much similar text is found in 2.

1. Cf. O.Kellis 96, l. 5: γυ(νή) Μαχ.ε ἐν Πμουν Παμ( ) (δρ) ρ = 'The wife of Mach.e in Pmoun Pam( ), 100 dr.'; is Πεμ( ) only a spelling variant of Πάμ( )? For toponyms in Πμουν in the Oasis cf. G. Wagner, *Les Oases*, 159ff.
2. A search in the DDBDP sub Σαλα- yields the result that apparently a personal name Σαλαίς / Σαλαεύς is not yet attested. Perhaps one may compare the name Σελλαεύς (?) in O.Kellis 106.5.
- 4-5. A search for a compound σιτοκαλάμ- in the DDBDP (on PHI CD-ROM # 6) produced no result; moreover, such a word beginning is also not listed in the WL, in LSJ and LSJ Rev.Suppl. The new compound σιτοκαλάμη may be compared with the Greek noun λινοκαλάμη = 'linen'.
6. Only LSJ's RevSuppl. lists the word κύκλιον from P.Köln 124.3-10,13 (IVP) and SB XIV 11289.6 (IV/VP). One may add a reference to P.Prag. II 176.9 (III/VP). These sources date from later Roman or early Byzantine Egypt.

(2) <sup>33</sup>/<sub>390</sub>-F9-1/N/1 (= EAO # 2200)

The ostrakon (H. 9 x W. 6.5 cm; ware: P1b) was discovered on the floor of the small mudbrick room adjacent to the south exterior wall of the 'Porch of Titus' (Plan [see fn. 1] # 1). Within the *temenos* there are some rooms without obvious function, to judge from their contents, although their position would suggest a function allied to that of the temple. Often such structures are designated as storerooms, workshops, or living quarters of the priests in residence. The dating of this room is assumed to be similar to the temple proper. There are six room contiguous to the west of this room.

Concave side

1	Παθώτης	"Pathotes,
2	πρεσβυ-	elder-
3	τέρου.	man."

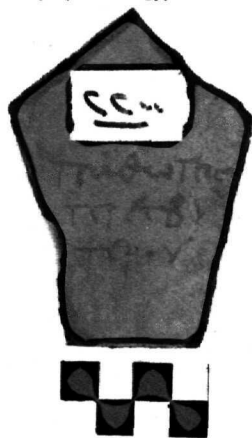
Convex side

4	ὕδρευματος	"For the well of
5	Πμουμ Φεβ [	Pmoun Pheb--
6	Πεβ' ἄνδρες	Peb( ): 16 men,
7	ις, βίαα	4 bundles of palm
8	δέσμ(ας) δ,	branches,
9	σιτοκαλά-	4 bundles of wheat
10	μιν δέσμ(ας)	stalks."
11	δ.	

2-3 πρεσβύτερος 7 βαιών 9-10 σιτοκαλάμης or σιτοκαλαμῶν (cf. note ad loc.)

This text is quite comparable with the preceding ostrakon; cf. also 4. It seems that there is a direct link between the text on the concave side and that on the convex side, but it seems impossible to decide which side was actually inscribed first.

- 1-3. One expects either 'διὰ Παθώτου πρεσβυτέρου', = '(delivered) through Pathotes the elderman' (cf. text 1.2-3), or 'Παθώτης πρεσβύτερος' = 'Pathotes the elderman (has delivered)'.  
4-5. The name of the *hydreuma* (= 'well') is not attested elsewhere; we think that Πμουμ instead of Πμουν is just a matter of assimilation of the final nasal before the following aspirated labial consonant.



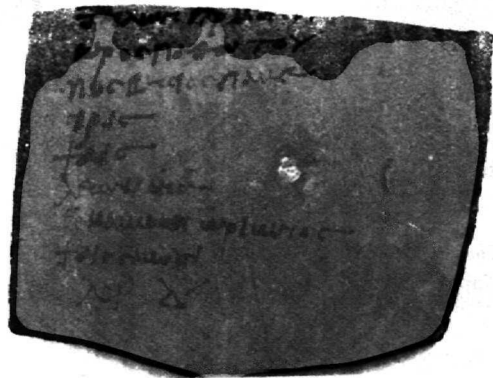
6. It is not certain whether the ' after the initial  $\pi\epsilon\beta$  indicates an undeclined form or an abbreviation, e.g. a personal name like  $\Pi\epsilon\beta(\acute{\omega}\varsigma)$ ; if the latter approach were correct, it might have been preceded in l. 5 by a preposition  $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}$  which is now lost in a lacuna. On the other hand, it is conceivable that the delivery of the goods mentioned on the convex side was taken care of by the man mentioned on the concave side, cf. lines. 1-3.n.; in that case the element  $\Pi\epsilon\beta'$  might form part of the toponym starting in l.
- 9-10. In principle the form  $\sigma\iota\tau\omicron\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\alpha}\mu\iota\nu$  can be regarded as a iotacistic scribal error for  $\sigma\iota\tau\omicron\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\alpha}\mu\eta\nu$  (cf. the accusative  $\beta\alpha\acute{\iota}\alpha$  in l. 7), but that is not all, because one needs a partitive genitive  $\sigma\iota\tau\omicron\kappa\alpha\lambda\omicron\mu\acute{\omega}\nu$  (conceivably  $\sigma\iota\tau\omicron\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\alpha}\mu\epsilon\varsigma$ ) going with  $\delta\epsilon\sigma\mu(\acute{\alpha}\varsigma)$  = 'bundles', cf. text 1.4-5.

(3) <sup>33</sup>/<sub>390</sub>-F9-1/C/4 (= EAO # 2426).

On the floor of the 'Hypostyle Hall' (Plan [cf. fn. 1] # 2) was a mudbrick vaulted tomb chamber, built into the north-west corner of the room. Although plundered before the temple filled with sand, nearby objects, including pieces of furniture, indicate it is of a date in the first two centuries A.D. Surrounding this vaulted tomb was wind-blown sand. This ostrakon (H. 7 x W. 9 cm; 0.6 cm thick; greyish material; convex side inscribed obliquely to the throwing marks) was discovered within the sand at a level of course 17 of the north wall of the 'Hypostyle Hall'.

- 1 Traces  
2 Τήλων Γερμανοῦ  
3 ὄρωρος Παθώτου  
4 υἱὸς Βήσιος Παμε  
5 Σίρις  
6 Ψάις  
7 Λεωνίδης  
8 Ἐρμάμμων Ὀρίωνος  
9 Ψάις Σαμμων  
10 λοι(ποι) δ'.

4 Παμε: π- ex corr. 8 Ἐρμάμμων: partly retraced



An indication of the precise character of this list of persons is not preserved. Maybe one is dealing with a *dekania*-list (not necessarily always listing exactly 10 persons), for which cf. R.S. Bagnall, *Army and Police in Roman Egypt*, JARCE 14 (1977) 67-86, esp. 72ff.; J.A. Straus in ZPE 41 (1981) 257-258. At first sight l. 10 seems to stand in opposition against this hypothesis, but cf. the note ad loc. Other, similar lists of names and in particular *dekania*-lists from the Dakhleh Oasis are published in O.Kellis 124-137.

2. A personal name Τήλων does not yet occur in the texts listed in the DDBDP or in the WL; cf., however, the patronymic Τηλου (gen.?) in P.Kellis IV 1073 and 1649, and Τηλος in O.Kellis 90.1 (form uncertain) and 136.2.
10. For a similar surprising use of 'remainder' in what definitely is a *dekania*-list cf. O.Kellis 124.

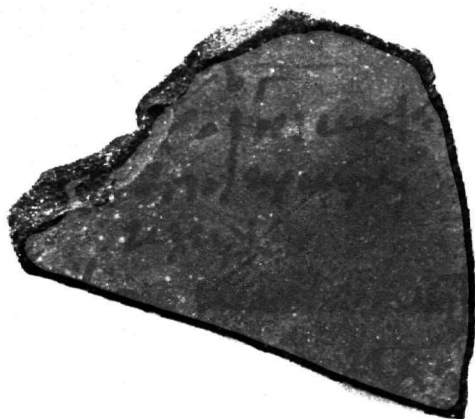
(4) <sup>33</sup>/<sub>390</sub>-F9-1/C/5 (= EAO # 2427).

This ostrakon (H. 6.7 x W. 6.8 cm; ware not known) was recovered from sand near 3 within the 'Hypostyle hall', but down at the level of course 20 of the masonry. This piece was quite close to the vaulted mudbrick tomb, although this is not dating evidence for either the tomb or the ostrakon.

- 1           ]λογ( )  
 2    σ]χοινίων  
 3    ]ἐποικιῶται  
 4    ].. κούκλια traces (?)  
 5    ].. κυκλι traces κβ  
 6    Traces of a 6th line?  
 7 (or 6?)    ]κῆ
- 

The nature of this text (a list?, cf. line 1.n) may be compared with that of text 1, cf. its line 6, σχο<Δ>νίων κούκλια = '6 small reels of rope', with lines 2 and 4.

1. Resolve λόγ(ος) = 'list, account', or is this part of some compound?  
 4,5. For other attestations of the word κούκλιον cf. text 1.6n.



These four ostraka, while not clearly dated by the temple decoration or architecture, do form part of the larger archaeological context. Texts 3 and 4 indicate that while the monument was filling with sand, there was still some traffic in the building, while texts 1 and 2 are perhaps more pertinent to the life of the temple when its cult was still in active practice.

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