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ABSTRACT

The paper presents an overview of the history of the Archäologische Sammlung der Universität Zürich. It also presents three unpublished hieratic ostraca from the collection.

1. History of the collection [M. B.]

The Archäologische Sammlung der Universität Zürich was founded on 7th January 1857, when the Director of Education, as well as the Education Council of the Canton of Zurich, accepted the gift of an archaeological museum from the Society of Academic Lecturers on behalf of the Universität Zürich (UZH).[1] This legal act, which took place shortly after the founding of the Swiss federal state in 1848, represented the temporary suspension of a tug-of-war that had played out for a number of years within the liberal milieu of the small state of Zurich.

The process of founding the museum had begun seven years earlier, when H. Meyer-Ochsner, a classical philologist and numismatist (and thus a typical exemplar of Zurich's *Bildungsbürgertum*),[2] petitioned the *Regierungsrat* and Director of Education, A. Escher,[3] to establish an archaeological museum. As the leader of the liberals in Zurich, A. Escher was not averse to the idea, though he saw no possibility of state funding. H. Meyer-Ochsner was not deterred, however, and with the help of a number of other individuals, including such professors and lecturers from the UZH as H. Köchly,[4] the new professor of Classical

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1 On the origins of the Archaeological Collection at the University of Zurich, see Waser (1935: 7–11). J. Koller's ongoing SNSF-funded dissertation project "Die Archäologische Sammlung der Universität Zürich von 1850 bis 1950 zwischen Wissenschaft und Öffentlichkeit" aims to refine and clarify the picture drawn by O. Waser.

2 von Roten (2008).

3 Bürgi (2020).

4 Dill (2008).

Philology, he set about establishing a private fund for the purchase of objects, with the intention of eventually donating the collection to the university. As a result, from 1852 onwards, the revenues from the "*Rathausvorträge*," a series of public lectures held in Zurich's Town Hall by lecturers of the University, were directed towards this fund. In the spirit of the times, but also due to a lack of funds for original works of antiquity, the focus of this fund was on acquiring plaster casts after famous ancient sculptures. The initial idea was to purchase these casts as an educational tool for students of the university, especially philologists and historians (archaeology was only established at the university in 1869), as well as artists and the general public.

As early as 1854, sufficient funds had been raised to order 30 plaster casts from London and Paris. The selection of the models for these casts was made by a three-member committee consisting of H. Köchly, T. Mommsen, then Professor of Roman Law,[5] and the lecturer D. Fehr. After the founding of the Eidgenössische Polytechnische Schule (today, the ETH Zurich) in 1855, its lecturers also participated in the "*Rathausvorträge*" and as members of the procurement committee for the Archaeological Collection. These included J. Burckhardt, Professor of Archaeology from 1855 to 1858,[6] and G. Semper, the famous architect and the head of the "*Bauschule*".[7]

In 1869, a chair of Archaeology was established at the UZH and filled by O. Benndorf (who left Zurich again in the aftermath of the "*Tonhallekrawall*"[8] in 1871). In accordance with his ideas, a basic stock of original ancient works, mainly Greek and Etruscan vases, was acquired in 1870–1871.[9] The collection thus took the first step towards becoming a comprehensive museum of antiquities. Then, in 1897 and 1914, the antiquities in the collection of the Antiquarische Gesellschaft in Zürich were transferred to the Archäologische Sammlung—first the Mesopotamian and Egyptian collections in 1897, and then the Greek, Italian, and Roman collections in 1914; the Swiss parts of the collection's objects had formed the basis of the collections of the Swiss National Museum from 1898.[10] With these acquisitions, the Archäologische Sammlung der Universität Zürich became definitely Switzerland's first museum for the Archaeology of the Mediterranean and the Near East (including Egypt). From then on, the expansion of the collection was driven primarily by private donations, including the five limestone ostraca with hieratic texts discussed below.

Two of these ostraca come from the estate of the married couple L. (1863–1938) and E. "Mimi" Borchardt-Cohen (1877–1948).[11] The first of these (inv. no. 1892, bearing part of the *Story of Sinuhe*) is said to have come from the Valley of the Kings; the second (inv. no. 1895, bearing part of the *Teaching of a Man*) is said to have been found in the northern half of Western Thebes.[12] These ostraca were a gift from the Borchardt-Cohen'sche Stiftung, a foundation that grew

5   Schmid (2008).

6   Ganz (2012).

7   Fröhlich (2011).

8   de Weck (2011).

9   Waser (1935: 16–18). Currently, 27 objects in the Vase Collection of the ETH Zurich can be viewed in the Archaeological Collection's digital database. See https://archaeologische-sammlung-uzh.zetcom.net/de/collection/?om=1&q=-Vasensammlung%20ETH (accessed 12.01.2024).

10   Waser (1935: 28–29).

11   For details of the Borchardt-Cohens, see von Pilgrim (2013).

12   Borchardt (1931); Schlögl (1978: 72, no. 221–222); Koch (1990: 1–6 oBdt = inv. no. 1892); Fischer-Elfert (1999: X); Bommas (2006). On the find-spots, see especially Bommas (2006: 7, 13–15).
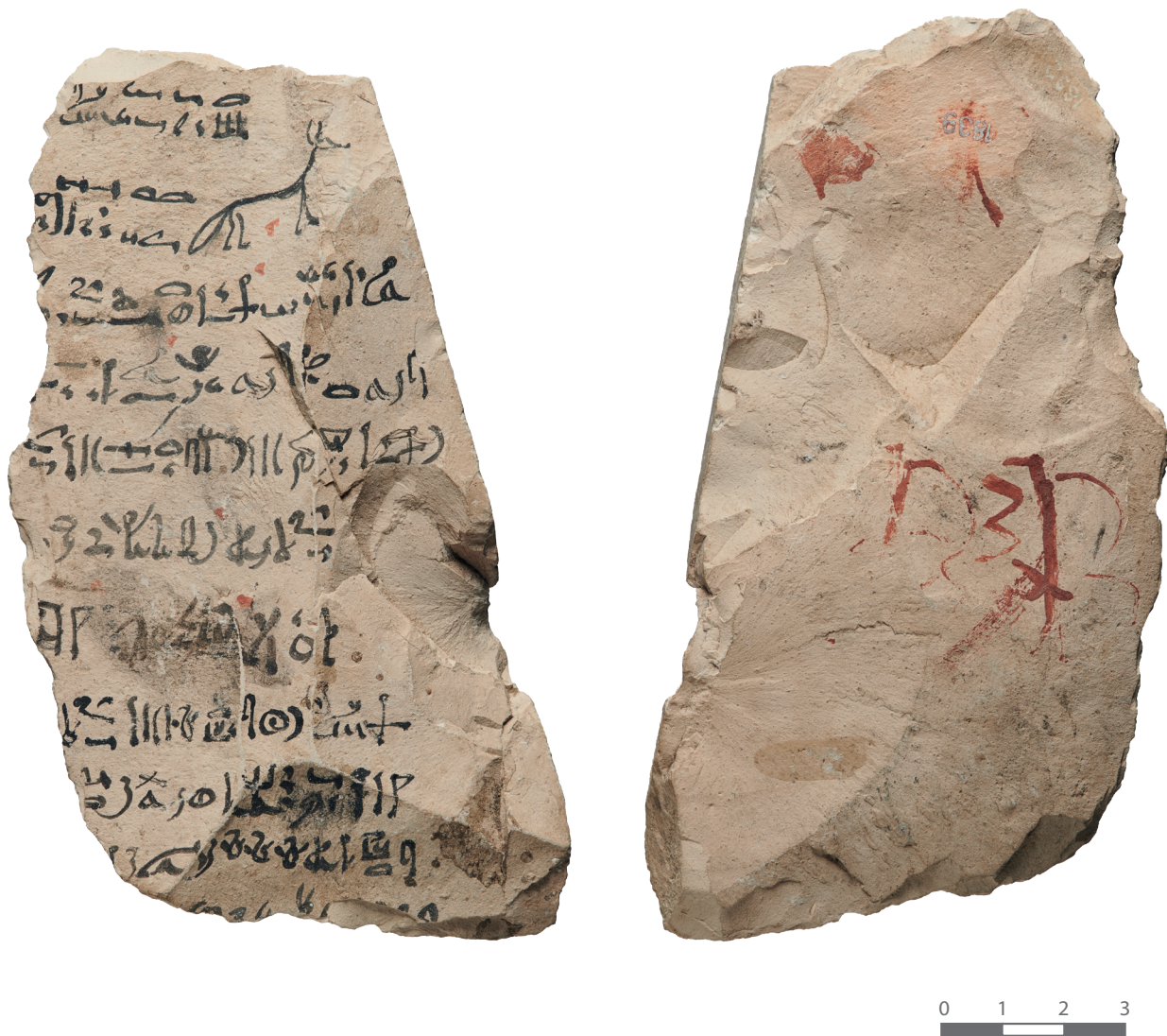
Fig. 1. O. Zurich ÄS 1892 Ostracon bearing part of the *Story of Sinuhe*
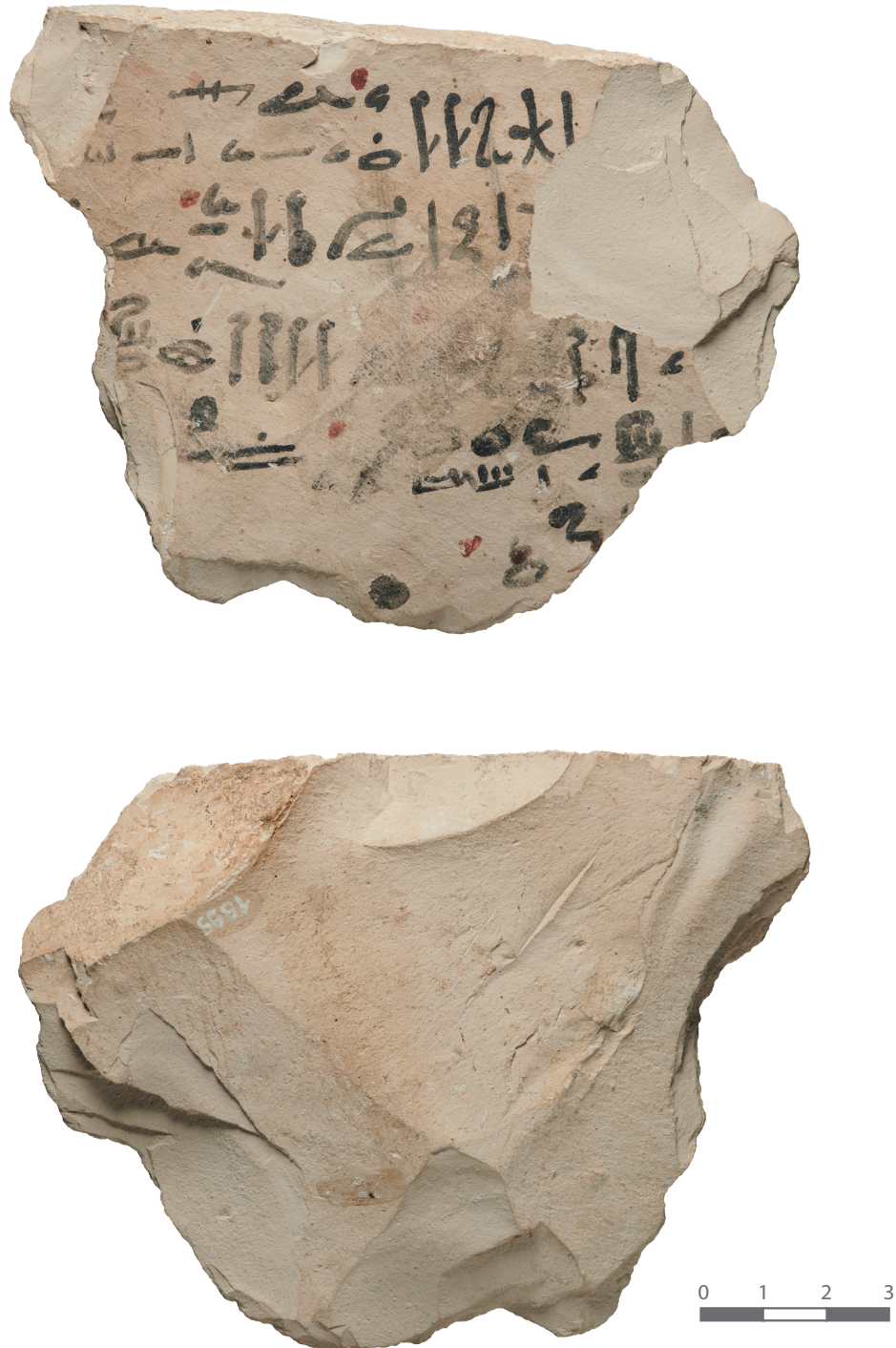(© Archaeological Collection, UZH, inv. 1892. Photograph: Frank Tomio)

Fig. 2. O. Zurich ÄS 1895 Ostracon bearing part of the *Teaching of a Man*.
(© Archaeological Collection, UZH, inv. 1895. Photograph: Frank Tomio)

out of the establishment in 1931 of the Stiftung für Bauforschung in Ägypten by the Borchardt-Cohens in Schaffhausen (Switzerland). The Stiftung für Bauforschung in Ägypten was set up following Ludwig's retirement from the position of director of the Kaiserlich Deutsches Institut für Ägyptische Altertumskunde (the predecessor to today's Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo). Its purpose was to further architectural research in Egypt, and the Stiftung eventually grew into the private Institut für Ägyptische Bauforschung und Altertumskunde. The institute enabled L. Borchardt, together with his assistant H. Ricke (1901–1976),[13] to continue working in Egypt until his death in 1938, even in the face of the difficulties that Jewish citizens of the German Reich faced following the rise to power of the National Socialists. It is no coincidence, however, that L. Borchardt suffered a fatal heart attack on the journey from Zurich to Paris in a desperate attempt to protect his institute from the Nazis.

After the subsequent death of Borchardt's widow "Mimi" in 1948, the same H. Ricke presented the two ostraca in 1950 to A. von Salis (1881–1958), the director of the Archaeological Collection from 1940 to 1951. H. Ricke did so on behalf of the Borchardt-Cohen'sche Stiftung (now the Ludwig Borchardt-Stiftung, sponsor of the Schweizerisches Institut für ägyptische Bauforschung und Altertumskunde, which grew out of Borchardt's private institute in 1949).[14] A letter of thanks for the donation of the two limestone ostraca is held in the archives of the Archaeological Collection.[15]

The three other ostraca discussed below (inv. nos. 5822, 5823, and 5889) derive from the collection of P.Á. Kaplony (1933–2011), assistant professor of Egyptology at the UZH from 1970 to 2000.[16] P.Á. Kaplony bequeathed his private study collection to the Archaeological Collection at the UZH after his death. His collection consisted of a corpus of cylinder seals that derived from older collections, as well as acquisitions from the art market and auctions, and accidental finds. Only the history of ostracon inv. no. 5822 can be traced in any detail on the basis of the surviving documentation; P.Á. Kaplony appears to have come into possession of the piece in 2006, apparently as part of an exchange with a Swiss art dealer.

2. Case studies

The two literary ostraca in the collection have previously been published and incorporated into the respective synoptic editions of the *Story of Sinuhe* and the *Teaching of a Man*. As such, their texts are not included below, though we do make two new colour images of these ostraca available here (fig. 1 and 2). As for the three remaining unpublished ostraca, editions of these documentary pieces are presented here for the first time.

2.1. Checks & balances: Ostracon Zurich ÄS 5822 [M. M. & M. R.][17]

Limestone, 8.9 cm × 6.3 cm × 1.2–1.6 cm (fig. 3–5)

A limestone ostracon in the form of a flintstone bulb, though there are no visible traces of flint on the outside. Some debris incrustations on the lower right part of the front hamper the reading there. The scribe flipped the object horizontally to inscribe the back.

Fig. 3. O. Zurich ÄS 5822 Ostracon bearing a letter from Amunqen to Harmose, front side (© Archaeological Collection, UZH, inv. 5822. Photograph: Frank Tomio)

Fig. 4. O. Zurich ÄS 5822 Ostracon bearing a letter from Amunqen to Harmose, back side (© Archaeological Collection, UZH, inv. 5822. Photograph: Frank Tomio)

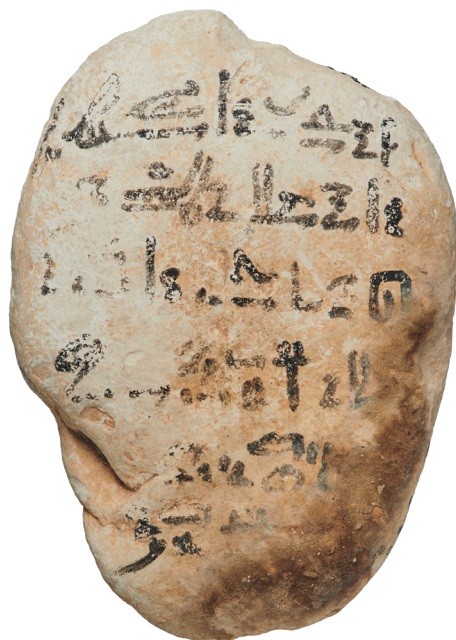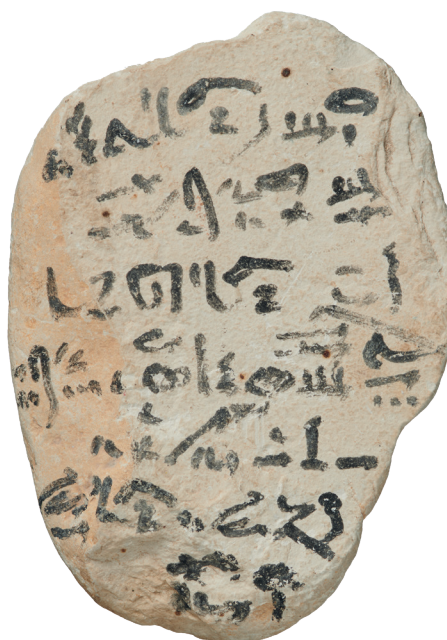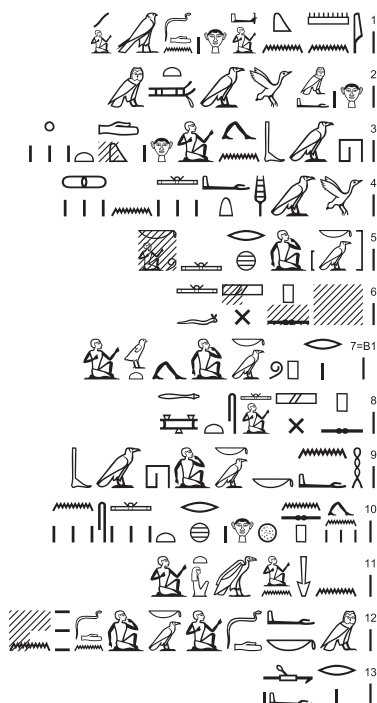

Fig. 5. O. Zurich ÄS 5822 Ostracon bearing a letter from Amunqen to Harmose, side (© Archaeological Collection, UZH, inv. 5822. Photograph: Frank Tomio)

The text on the ostracon consists of a letter from an individual named Amunqen to another individual named Harmose. The letter appears to concern the production of bread, as well as the need to get a set of accounts in order before a meeting with an individual named Senenmut. It is likely that this third individual was the steward of Queen Hatshepsut.[18] As such, the date of the ostracon would fall sometime within her reign. Like Senenmut, the letter's two correspondents are also attested in other texts (see the references in Römer 2023: II 155 & 214), though only the present text and the ostracon O. Berlin P 10614 witness to the two of them together. The Berlin ostracon bears a letter by Amunqen to Harmose regarding eight stone masons,[19] while the background to the Zurich ostracon may concern the construction of a royal building or a temple building enterprise and the need to get the accounts for this enterprise straight.

(1) *ʾImn-qn ḥr ḏd n Ḥr-msw*

(2) *ḥr-m pꜣ tm* (3) *hꜣb n=i ḥr dqw* (4) *<n>* (a) *pꜣ Ꜥꜣ n t*

(5) *[kꜣ](= i) rḫ.kwi* (b) (6) *[…] psš=f* (c) (7)=B1 *r-pw kꜣ iw.t=i* (8) *psš=i st Ꜥꜣ* (9) *ḥnꜤ=k kꜣ hꜣb*(10)*=n n-sp ḥr rḫ.t=sn* (d) (11) *n Sn-n-mw.t*

(12) *mk ḏd=i kꜣ ḏd.n* (e) *n* (f) (13) *rꜣ wꜤ*

1. Amunqen speaks to Harmose:

2. What is the meaning (of you)(g) not ³ writing to me about the flour ⁴ <for> the amount of bread? ⁵ [Then] I am able ⁶ … its share(h) ⁷=B1 or I will come(i), ⁸ and divide it here ⁹ with you, and then we can send ¹⁰ at once because of the account thereof(j) ¹¹ to Senenmut.

12. Behold, I say (this) in order that we speak with ¹³ one mouth.

Comments

(a) The right margin is indented slightly at line 4 due to an imperfection on the writing surface. There does not appear to be enough space for the expected *n* at the beginning of the line (especially when taking into consideration the size of the same sign elsewhere).

(b) Our reading of the remaining traces of the last square is highly provisional; the *w* in particular does not accord with the form we would expect to find here.

(c) It is not clear whether a further line followed beneath line 6. If so, it would have been short.

(d) At first glance, the pronoun at the end of the line appears to be *st*. However, the *t* sign in the last sign group is slightly wider than the other *t*s in the text (even if not as wide as the *n*s) and lacks the upper hook. That said, the writer may have been compelled to

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18 According to the records of the collection, P.Á. Kaplony also thought to identify the Senenmut mentioned in the letter with Hatshepsut's steward.

19 See *HPKMB* 3, pl. XXX; for an English translation, see Wente (1990: 93 no. 119); for a German edition, see Müller (2006: 325 no. 2.7).

shorten the *n* slightly as he approached the edge of the ostracon.

(e) It is noteworthy that the plural strokes of the 1st person plural pronoun are tilted at 90° here rather than appearing horizontally below the *n* or just after. The lack of space towards the end of the line is the most likely explanation for this.

(f) A trace at the end of the line here extends to the front side of the ostracon. From its line positioning, it cannot be taken to form part of line 5 or 6, but must instead belong to line 12. Although one might expect an *m* here, the surviving traces appear to suggest an *n*.

(g) For the interrogative pattern, see Vernus (2006: 168–170).

(h) One would expect a particle such as *tw=i* or *mk* at the beginning of the line. A negation seems unlikely, as this would read *bn tw=i* or *nn iw=i*. In light of the construction in line 7, we assume that the particle *k3* appears here; see Gardiner (1957: 369 § 450.5.d). For the use of a stative after that particle, see *Cairo Bowl* 6–7: *ir nfr-n m-ꜥ=k k3 pr=k ḥb3* "If you own nothing, your house is destroyed." (Gardiner & Sethe 1928: pl. VI); see also Brose (2014: § 325 ex. 98 & 99).[20]

(i) Note the subjunctive form after *k3* in line 7. It is possible that nothing is missing from the beginning of line 8. Note also that the scribe did not use the remainder of the line, even though there appears to have been sufficient space for *ḥnꜥ=k* there.

(j) Although the appearance of a female determinative within a name is unexpected, such that a family relation might seem more likely, M. Römer has collected various spellings of the name that embrace the B1-determinative in his corpus.

2.2. A delivery list: Ostracon Zurich ÄS 5823 [M. M.][21]

Limestone, 9.1 cm × 10.3 cm × 1.2–2.6 cm (fig. 6)

A limestone flake with a smooth, flat front and a rather uneven back. The scribe seems to have begun working with the ostracon turned at 180° before washing that initial effort off, turning the piece, and starting anew, probably in order to obtain an even right margin.

The ostracon bears a short list of items (bread, fish, wine, and date-beer) in a hand that clearly dates to the 18th Dynasty, though a lack of personal names or any other context mean that it is not possible to provide a more specific date. The quantity of items listed on the ostracon suggest that it was a receipt for the delivery of provisions for two work gangs: M. Römer (PC) has pointed out that the 500 loaves of bread mentioned in the text divide neatly into 10 loaves for 50 workmen,[22] thus reflecting two groups made up of the common number of 25 men.[23] As such, the text might be compared with the materials from Deir el-Bahari, though wine is not attested in the Deir el-Bahari texts as a commodity for distribution (but only for ritual use). The enumeration of fish on our ostracon, however, argues against a ritual context, as does the general reference to bread where one would expect a description of specific

Fig. 6. O. Zurich ÄS 5823 Ostracon bearing a delivery list
(© Archaeological Collection, UZH, inv. 5822. Photograph: Frank Tomio)

bread types for a ritual offering. As such, it seems likely that the ostracon reflects a delivery of food for two gangs of workmen and a delivery of beverages for their superiors.

¹   *t 500*
²   *rm.w 500*
³   *irp ḥn.t 1*
⁴   *srm.t snw 5*

1   500 units/loaves
2   Fish 500 units/pieces
3   1 *ḥn.t*-jar^a) of wine
4   6 *sn*-jars^b) of date-beer

Comments

(a) The container referred to in this line poses a problem. The body of the word looks like *ḥn.t* "animal skin", though this word usually takes the sign F27 𓄛 as a classifier/determinative. Further to this, while there is classical evidence for wine in skins (for instance, wineskins feature in Odysseus' plan to outsmart the cyclops Polyphemus in *Odyssey* 9; note also the "new wine in old wineskins" in Matt 9: 14–17, Luke 5: 33–39, Mark 2: 21–22), such items are not (yet) attested in connection with wine in Ancient Egypt.[24] The ostracon O. Cairo CG 25707, 7 attests to a container 𓎼𓊪𓃀𓅱𓏏 *ḥnm.t*, which, despite the different spelling, might be connected with our item. However, the Cairo ostracon does not provide much context: the container it refers to only appears in a partially preserved list of items. Because the classifier/determinative of the word on the Zurich ostracon is clearly a jar, I have

24   Wine skins are absent from the discussions in Murray (2000) and Veldmeijer (2008). The present writer, however, has suggested connecting an entry from another list, *gs n ḥn.t n nbr* "half a hide for a wine-skin(?)" (O. DeM 10083, 6, though read *mbr* in the editio princeps) with the Hebrew word נֶבֶל "wine skin"; see Müller (2007: 317, erroneously sub 10082).

chosen for the time being simply to render the term as *ẖn.t*-jar.

(b) This type of jar is also attested in T. BM EA 29558 (Dautais, Gabolde & Birin 2022: 167 note i); for the product *srm.t*, see the discussion of the available data in the same publication (Dautais, Gabolde & Birin 2022: 177–179). M. Römer points out that, in the Deir el-Bahari ostraca, *srm.t* usually appears in *snw*- or *mnt-/mny*-jars.

2.3. A fragment from a law suit: Ostracon Zurich ÄS 5889 [R. D. & M. M.]

Limestone, 10.8 × 14.5 × 0.5–0.9 cm (fig. 7–8)

The ostracon represents the left-hand side of a once larger piece. It currently consists of two pieces glued together. The piece was turned vertically overhead to be inscribed on the smoother side.

The individuals mentioned in the text on the ostracon suggest that it most likely dates to the end of the 19th Dynasty. The text appears to concern various acts of misconduct, seemingly initiated by the unlawful seizure of something, but the ostracon's poor state of preservation prevents a full understanding of the events in question. It appears that things were taken from some people and given to others (line 1). In light of other evidence, one might guess that someone occupied or robbed a tomb and threw its female owner out (line 2). The dispute seems to have taken place between Khonsu (v), later the chief workman, and Iyerniutef (ii, possibly) (line 3). In line 4, the workman Amenemope (iii) appears to become involved, while his son, if the reconstruction Meryre (v) is correct here, perhaps enters the scene in line 5. The surviving traces of the remainder of the text provide no further insight into the issues at hand. It might be possible that the Zurich ostracon once formed part of a larger one with O. AG 19, nowadays in the IFAO.[25] However, the shape both ostraca preserve would not point to any direct joint.

r° 1 […] *r nḥm m-dỉ nꜣy=f-… ỉw-tw ḥr dỉ.t=w n-ktẖw*
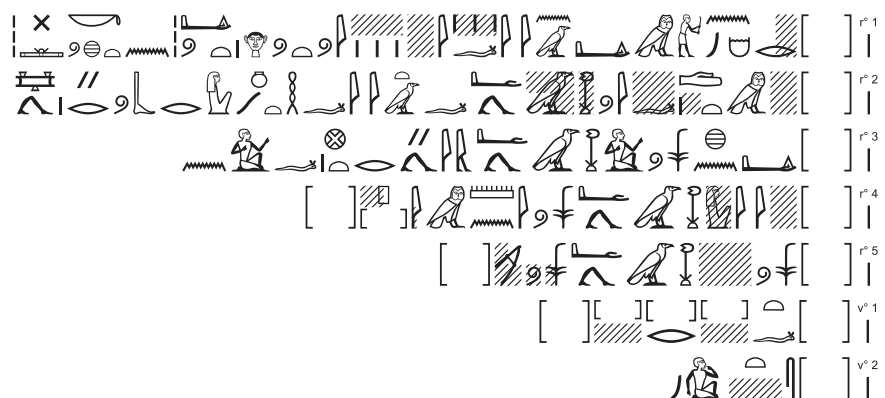
r° 2 […] … *m-ḏr.t=f ỉw ḫꜣꜥ=f tꜣy=f-ḥnw.t r-b(n)r*

r° 3 […] *dỉ ḫnsw ḫꜣꜥ ỉy-r-nwt=f n*

r° 4 […] …*y ḫꜣꜥ sw ḫꜣꜥ m* […]

r° 5 […] *sw … ḫꜣꜥ …*

v° 1 […] *tf …*

v° 2 […]…

Fig. 7. O. Zurich ÄS 5889 Ostracon bearing a juridical text, front side
(© Archaeological Collection, UZH, inv. 5889. Photograph: Frank Tomio)

Fig. 8. O. Zurich ÄS 5889 Ostracon bearing a juridical text, back side
(© Archaeological Collection, UZH, inv. 5889. Photograph: Frank Tomio)

[…] to seize his …[a] and they were given to others […]

[…] …with him[b] while he threw his mistress out[c] […]

[…] Khonsu made Iyernutef throw [out] for […]

[…] …y.[d] Amenemope has thrown him [out]

[…] he/him …. [Ra]mery threw him out…

[…] his/he/him[…]…

Comments

(a) This should be reconstructed as *nꜣy=f-iḫwt*, though the usual spelling of this word would be *ꜣḫwt*, which does not seem to accord with the surviving traces of the text here.

(b) The reading *m-ḏr.t* (plus pronoun) is not especially clear here, though it does seem possible.

(c) The phrase *ḫꜥ r-bnr* "to throw out, to leave, to set free"[26] was also used to mean divorce (Eyre 1980: 151–153; 1987: 15n), usually with respect to the action of a man; women are said "to leave" *šm* (Toivari-Viitala 2001: 90–95; 2013: 8–9); see also Demarée, Gabler & Polis (2022: 58, n. 25). However, it would seem that women were not usually referred to as *ḥnw.t* in the context of marriage/divorce. As such, we tentatively suggest that the phrase *ḫꜥ=f tꜣy=f-ḥnw.t r-bnr* refers to the illicit occupation of a tomb and to the forceful eviction of the deceased woman originally buried there.

d) […]*y* must be a personal name; its classifier looks more like the female B1 than the male A1. It would be possible to restore the names *Ḥwy* or *Ty/Twy* here. However, if the name was that of a male person, *Pꜣy*, *Ipwy* or *Ḫꜣy* would be possible restorations.

As can be seen, the items in the Archäologische Sammlung der UZH reflect a fairly heterogeneous set of literary and documentary texts from the 18th and 19th Dynasties. That all the objects are limestone is a matter of chance.

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26   The same expression is also attested with the meaning "to release"; see McDowell (1990: 237).

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