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***Nil novi sub sole?* Hieratic Documents in the Museum Gustavianum (the Uppsala University Collection)**

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Nil novi sub sole?

Hieratic Documents in the Museum Gustavianum (the Uppsala University Collection)

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ABSTRACT

The Uppsala University collection contains four hieratic ostraca, four hieratic jar labels and no papyri. One of the ostraca and all of the jar labels found in the Ramesseum (Bouvier 2003) are published here for the first time. Of the other three ostraca, two contain house lists (Hagen 2016), and O. Armitage contains a magical text (Shorter 1936; Quack forthcoming): all were recently published or are in the process of being republished.

1. HISTORY OF THE COLLECTION OF NEW KINGDOM HIERATIC TEXTS

The collection of the Museum Gustavianum contains a small number of objects that were inscribed with hieratic texts during the New Kingdom: these consist of four limestone ostraca and four jar labels. The few texts in the collection written in hieratic script are evidence of the low interest in this type of object on the part of the persons who purchased and donated objects for and to the Uppsala University collection. Among these persons were Queen Victoria of Sweden (1862–1930), Karl F. Piehl (1853–1904),¹ Sten V. Wångstedt (1904–1986) and Zsolt Beöthy (1848–1922), whose collection was bought in 1936 by Ede Mahler.²

Three of the four limestone ostraca are connected with Torgny Säve-Söderberg (1914–1998) who purchased two of them (Inv. no. Victoria Museet: VM 3000 and VM 3001) in 1956 in

Qurna³ and who probably received the third ostrakon (VM 2364) as a gift from his friend Alan H. Gardiner (1879–1963) in the 1940s. On the upper edge of the last of the four limestone ostraca (VM 1082) is a faded inscription written in ink in an old-fashioned style of writing that mentions ‘Qurna’—the supposed place of acquisition and/or the findspot of the ostrakon.

No information is preserved on the collection’s old inventory cards concerning the provenance or the circumstances of the acquisition of the four jar labels (Inv. no.: VM 669, 1318, 1404, 1895). The only indication concerning their entry into the collection are the old hand-written inventory numbers on each jar label—these point to the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century when a large number of ostraca, mainly Coptic, were bought and later given to the collection.

¹ Piehl acquired several hundred Coptic ostraca; these formed part of his research interests.

² More information about these individuals can be found in Dorn et al. (2020: 117); on Wångstedt, see Holthoer (1986: vii–ix).

³ Hagen (2016: 207, fn. 12).

2. THE INDIVIDUAL TEXTS: AN OVERVIEW

- a. Number:
4 ostraca and 4 jar labels
- b. Provenance:
Ostraca: Deir el-Medina (based on internal evidence; one with the note 'Qurna');
Jar labels: Ramesseum (?)
- c. Distribution according to genre:
Ostraca: 2 administrative texts, 1 magical text, 1 accounting text (r^o) and 1 (probably) religious text (v^o); Jar labels: administrative, wine delivery
- d. Material published vs. unpublished
3 of the 4 ostraca are published; the 4 jar labels are unpublished.

The three larger ostraca (VM 2364, VM 3000 and VM 3001) are already published. VM 3000 and VM 3001 were on display for many years in the former exhibit in the Museum Gustavianum, which is currently (2022) under reconstruction. From 2024 onwards, the new exhibition of the Egyptian collection will probably display all three ostraca.

2.1. VM 2364: The magical ostrakon Armytage

Ostrakon Armytage, named after its original owner, has been known since 1936 when it was published in a four-page article by A.W. Shorter (1936: 165–168, pl. VIII–IX).⁴ This well-preserved and neatly written ostrakon contains two magical spells, both designed to protect the beneficiary of the spell from an aggressor. In the first spell,

the aggressor is identified with mud; in the second, a fly is set in the aggressor's stomach so as to act against him. Both spells use analogies and call for the support of certain deities. Based on palaeographic criteria, the ostrakon can be dated to the 20th Dynasty, while Deir el-Medina can be identified as its place of origin. Following its publication, the ostrakon's whereabouts are unknown. J.F. Quack is currently preparing a new edition of the ostrakon; his re-examination of the original has permitted improvement of several of Shorter's readings.⁵

2.2. The two administrative ostraca VM 3000 and VM 3001: House lists from Deir el-Medina

Together with O. Liverpool M13624, these two ostraca form a small group of documents which attest to the practice of recording the members of individual households in Deir el-Medina already in the 19th Dynasty.⁶ This practice is much better attested for the following dynasty, during which more such lists (known as 'Stato Civile') were made and recorded on papyrus.⁷ The interpretation of these documents as house lists by the editors⁸ of the 'Stato Civile' as well as by the editors of further, recently identified papyrus fragments belonging to the 'Stato Civile' has superseded their classification as census documents.⁹

2.3. VM 1082: Fragment of a tablet with an accounting text and an unidentified religious (?) text

The ostrakon labelled 'Qurna' is so far unpublished. An initial publication is given below.

⁴ Further translations have been published since the first edition: see Dieleman (2019: 109–110) and Borghouts (1978: 1–2, no. 2–3). The text has been encoded both in the TLA (search for Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae > Projekt 'Digital Heka,' Universität Leipzig > Magische Ostraka Neues Reich > oArmytage) and *Ramses Online* (not yet available online, as of 23.02.23).

⁵ Quack (forthcoming).

⁶ For the publication of this group of ostraca see Hagen (2016: 207–212).

⁷ Demarée & Valbelle (2011).

⁸ Hagen (2016: 211–212); Müller (2012: 218).

⁹ Demarée et al. (2020: 196–199).

2.4. VM 669, VM 1318, VM 1404 and VM 1895: Wine jar labels of Ramesses II

The place of origin of the fragmentarily preserved jar labels' might be the Ramesseum at Western Thebes, as is suggested by the parallel texts from that location published by G. Bouvier (2003: 207–212). The labels reflect well-known formulae and attest to wine deliveries in Year 3 and Year 7.

3. THE UNPUBLISHED HIERATIC DOCUMENTS FROM THE MUSEUM GUSTAVIANUM (THE UPPSALA UNIVERSITY COLLECTION)

3.1. VM 1082

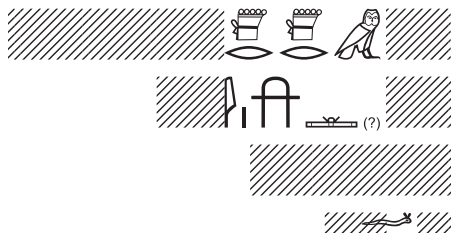
Material: limestone

Measurements: H: 6.0 cm; W: 7.0 cm; D: 1.6 cm

Colour: black ink

Description: smooth front side suggesting classification as a tablet, upper edge at right angle to the front, rough back side; left and right side broken; clear traces of palimpsest on front—remarks: indication of provenance on the edge: 'Qurna.'

Front



- (1) [...] /// *m drdr* [...]
- (2) [...] /// (?) *dmd h³r 1 i* /// [...]
- (3) [...] /// *traces* /// [...]
- (4) [...] /// *tr* /// [...]
- (1) [...] /// on both sides^a (?) /// [...]
- (2) [...] /// (?)^b total 1 khar /// [...]

Back



- (1) [...] /// *traces* /// [...]
- (2) [...] /// *zh³.w n³ rmt.w mi* [...]
- (3) [...] /// *n³y.w iri[w] Pth (?)* [...]
- (2) [...] /// [the?] scribes and the people just like /// [...]
- (3) [...] /// their companions^c of Ptah /// [...]



Fig. 1. VM 1082 front: ostracon
(© Museum Gustavianum, photo: John Worley)

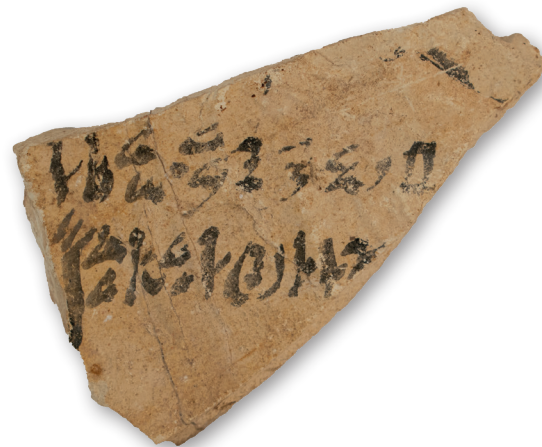


Fig. 2. VM 1082 back: ostracon
(© Museum Gustavianum, photo: John Worley)

Comments

I wish to thank Annie Gasse for comparing the ostracon with similar palette-like ostraca¹⁰ to which O. VM 1082 ultimately does not appear to belong, as well as Hans-Werner Fischer-Elfert and Robert J. Demarée for comments on the reading of the verso.

- a) The reading of the signs which follow *drdr*  (?) is uncertain and the phrase might alternately be rendered ‘in the ribs (?)’. If the determinative is not read as the flesh sign (F51) but as the sign A1, then the reading *drdr* ‘foreign’ cannot be excluded. Taking into account the traces before the *m*, one might also consider *mḥ m drw.w* ‘filled with colour.’ The second *dr*-sign was drawn differently to the first—a practice that is observed in other cases where a sign is written twice.
- b) It might be possible to read the sign before ‘total’ as a rendering of a bird (F38 or F39) followed by three plural strokes, but the sequence of birds followed by *h³r* is problematic.
- c) The hieratic rendering of the sign A47 (seated shepherd with a stick) deviates from the standard form.

3.2. VM 669, VM 1318, VM 1404 and VM 1895: Wine jar labels of Ramesses II

3.2.1. Inv. no.: VM 669—other older numbers: 374. and (8.)

Material: marl

Measurements: H: 11.0 cm; W: 5.5 cm; D: 0.6 cm

Colour: black ink

Description: body sherd.



Fig. 3. VM 669: jar label Ramesses II
(© Museum Gustavianum, photo: John Worley)

- (1) *rnp.t sp 7 irp n t³ ḥw[t ...]*
- (2) *pr Wsr-m³.t-R³ stp.n-R³ ḥḥ wḏ³ snb m p[³...]*
- (1) Year 7, wine of the temple [...]
- (2) from the estate of Ramesses II in [...]

Comments

- a) Renderings of *irp* followed by *w* are rather rare in the corpus of jar dockets from Year 7: see Bouvier (1999: pl. 32, no. 108; pl. 39, no. 138). The inscription corresponds with type IVd, see Bouvier (2000: pl. 21, no. 634, pl. 45, no. 744; 2003: 69, 73).

3.2.2. Inv. no.: VM 1318—other older numbers: 372. and (6.)

Material: marl

Measurements: H: 6.3 cm; W: 6.0 cm; D: 0.5 cm

Colour: black ink

Description: body sherd.



- (1) [...] /// *Wsr-m³.t-R³ stp.n-R³ ḥḥ wḏ³ [...]*
- (1) [...] Ramesses II l. p. [...]^a

¹⁰ The group of ostraca that share some of the features of palettes—both their shape and the smooth surface(s)—is under study by Annie Gasse.



Fig. 4. VM 1318: jar label Ramesses II
(© Museum Gustavianum, photo: John Worley)

Comment

- a) The isolated cartouche displays only a small remnant in front and above (line 1?). The state of preservation of the cartouche does not allow an identification of the formula type.

3.2.3. *Inv. no.: VM 1404—other older number:*
139.

Material: marl

Measurements: H: 3.5 cm; W: 7.1 cm; D: 0.6 cm

Colour: black ink

Description: body sherd.



- (1) [rnp.t sp X] irp [...]
(2) m pr 'Imn nty m /// [...]

- (1) [Year X]^a, wine of [...]
(2) from the estate^b of Amun which is located at
/// [...]

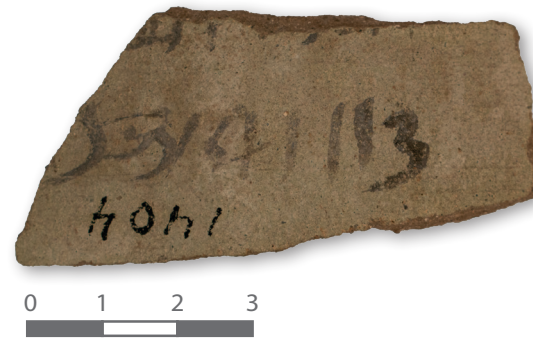


Fig. 5. VM 1404: jar label Ramesses II
(© Museum Gustavianum, photo: John Worley)

Comments

- a) The reading of the fragmentary opening of line 1 is not fully certain. The inscription corresponds with type VIIa; see Bouvier (2003: 80, 86).
b) For the rendering of *pr* without the upper horizontal stroke, see, e.g., Bouvier (2000: pl. 107, no. 1044). The rendering of *nty* is similar to some renderings of *hri*, but the latter can be excluded here because of the following *m*; see Bouvier (2000: pl. 82, no. 917).

3.2.4. *Inv. no.: VM 1895—other older number:*
198.

Material: marl

Measurements: H: 4.0 cm; W: 8.2 cm; D: 0.6 cm

Colour: black ink

Description: body sherd.



Fig. 6. VM 1895: jar label
Ramesses II (© Museum
Gustavianum, photo: John
Worley)



- (1) *rnp.t sp 3 irp nfr* [...]
 (2) *m pr 'Imn k[ʔ- ...]*

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- (1) Year 3, good wine [...]
 (2) from the house of Amun *k[ʔ-n-kmt ...]*

Comment

- a) The formula corresponds to type Ib; see Bouvier (2003: 42, 54; 1999: pl. 1–13).