Methods of Completing Missing Parts of Demotic Texts: Based on Studying Some Unpublished Ostraca

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Abstract:

 In this study I will try to spot more light on one of the problems that face the researcher who is interested in publishing and studying old texts which is the missing parts that affected the text, such as lacuna or spots and sometimes the text is washed out or has a faint ink and I will give some examples through studying some unpublished demotic texts which are written on ostraca and located in the Egyptian museum in Cairo.

This problem can partially be fixed as follows:

1-Some texts which have parallels can be restored such as texts which have featured elements like

2- Texts which include well known persons such as scribes who issued receipts from different places and eras.

And I will give some examples for each from some published demotic texts which are written on ostraca.

Meanwhile it is difficult to follow these methods if the text does not have a parallel, in this issue sometimes the context of the text helps to find out the missing part as if the text includes a word or a sentence which is repeated many times in it.

Keywords: Demotic, Ostraca, Tax, Temple oath, lacuna.

طرق إستكمال الأجزاء المفقودة من النصوص الديموطيقية من خلال دراسة بعض النصوص غير المنشورة

الملخص :

في هذا البحث سيحاول الباحث إلقاء المزيد من الضوء على واحدة من المشكلات التي تواجه المهتمين بدراسة النصوص القديمة ألا وهي الأجزاء المفقودة من النصوص بسبب الكسر أو البقع أو النصوص الممسوحة أو المكتوبة بحبر خفيف وذلك من خلال دراسة بعض النصوص الديموطيقية غير المنشورة بالمتحف المصري بالقاهرة تنتمي إلى بعثة الحفائر الخاصة بالمعهد الشرقي لموسم 1929\1930 بمدينة هابو والتي تحمل أرقام (M.H. 110, M.H. 2786, M.H. 363). يمكن حل هذه المشكلة جزئيا عن طريق الآتي: 1- مقارنة تلك النصوص بنصوص مشابهة لها ولديها عناصر محددة مثل إيصالات الضرائب وقسم المعبد وقوائم متاع الزوجة والحسابات والخطابات والعقود وغيرها

2- النصوص التي ذكر بها اسماء لأشخاص معروفين مثل الكتاب الذين حرروا العديد من الإيصالات من مختلف المناطق والعصور وسيتم إيضا عرض بعض الأمثلة من النصوص المنشورة والمكتوبة على الأوستراكا. يصعب حل هذه المشكلة إذا كانت النصوص ليس لها مقابل ولكن في بعض الأحيان يساعد محتوى النص في إستكمال الأجزاء المفقودة منه مثل تكرار بعض الكلمات والعبارات فيه.

الكلمات الدالة : ديموطيقية ، أوستراكا، ضريبة ، قسم معبد، فجوة.

Introduction

One of the problems that face the researcher who is interested in publishing and studying old texts is the missing parts which affected the text. The missing parts such as lacunae or spots and sometimes the text is washed out or has a faint ink. In this study I will try to spot more light on this problem through studying some unpublished demotic texts which are written on ostraca and located in the Egyptian museum in Cairo, The texts belong to the Oriental Institute's 1929/30 season of excavation at Medinet Habu, and held numbers M.H. 363, 110 and 2786. [1]

This problem can partially be fixed as follows:

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[1] U. Höschler, *Medinet Habu Reports vol. 2 The Architectural Survey* (Chicago-Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1929-1930).

1- Some texts which have parallels can be restored such as texts which have featured elements like tax receipts, temple oaths, the properties of a wife, some accounts, letters, contracts and others.

In The texts which have featured elements, if one of these elements is missing it can be deduced, for example the demotic tax receipt its general elements as follows:

It starts in formal receipts with the verb of paying *in* or *wt* (*r.in* or *r.wt* in Roman receipts) then the name of the taxpayer, the preposition + definite article + the name of the tax, the rate of the tax, the date of paying and then the signature of the scribe.

If one of these elements is missing it could be completed as follows:

An example of a broken text affected with spots:
M.H. 110 Plate I
Potsherd, Brown
7 x 4 cm., thick. 0.4-0.6 cm.
Date: Roman, Tiberius 15-16 AD.
Description: The text is incomplete as the ostracon is broken from all sides. There are many spots which affected the text. The handwriting is small, rounded and compact.

Transliteration:
x+1) [*r.in*] ⌐......⌐*s3* ⌐......⌐[*r p3 sḫn n n3 ꜥ.wy.w mḫt.w ḫr ….n ḥз.t sp x*]

x+2) [   ] ⌐......⌐n ⌐9mA(?)⌐ n ⌐......⌐[   ]

x+3) *ḥt 7* ⌐......⌐ *r ḥt 3* [½ r Ht 7 ½]
x+4) *ꜥn* ⌐.....................⌐ *6 (?)*⌐......⌐[   ]
x+5) *sḫ n ḥз.t sp 2.t* ⌐*Tybrys*⌐
x+6) ⌐*Gysrs*⌐ [*ibt x* season *sw x*]
Translation:
1) ⌐……⌐ son of ⌐……⌐[has paid to the bank of the northern quarters for…in year x]
2) [ ] ⌐……⌐in ⌐Jeme (?)⌐in ⌐……⌐[ ]
3) 7 silver (pieces) ⌐……⌐makes 3[½] silver (pieces) [makes 7 silver (pieces)]
4) again ⌐……………………⌐ 6(?)⌐……⌐[   ]
5) Written in year 2 of ⌐*Tybrys*⌐
6) ⌐*Gysrs*⌐[month of ….. day x]
Notes:
The missing parts of this text are completed from other published texts from the same place and period.[2]
The text concerns a tax receipt from Thebes and the taxpayer has paid 7 silver pieces for a tax whose name is missing in year 2 of Tiberius 15-16 AD.
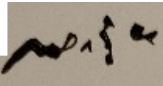
L.2. From the determinatives of this word it is probably represents 9mA which should be followed by the rate of the tax.
An example of a broken text:
 M.H. 2786 Plate II
Potsherd, Brown

[2] e.g. M. Lichtheim, *Demotic Ostraca from Medinet Habu*, (Chicago-Illinois:The University of Chicago Press,1957) , nos.43-50; M.A.A. Nur El-Din, *The Demotic Ostraca in the National Museum of Antiquities at Leiden*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974) , nos. 10,15-16.

8.2 x 8 cm., thick. 0.5-0.8 cm.

Date: Roman, Augustus 5 AD. 16 October.[3]

Description: The text is incomplete as the ostracon is broken at the left side and at the bottom.The handwriting is thin and rounded.

Transliteration:

x+1) [*r.in*]*Pꜣ-šr-ꜣImn sꜣ Pa -wn r pꜣ sḫn*

x+2) [n nA awy.w mHt.w] ⌈Xr⌉ pA Ht n ap.t (n) HA.t sp ⌈3⌉5

x+3) [*sttr 2.t*] *r 1.t r sttr 2.t ꜥn sḫ n ḥꜣ.t sp 35*

x+4) *ibt 2 ꜣḫ.t sw 19 sḫ Pꜣ-*⌈…⌉ [   ]

x+5) [*n ḥꜣ.t sp x season*] *sw 28*⌈…⌉ [   ]

Translation:

1) *Pꜣ-šr-ꜣImn* son of *Pa-wn* [has paid] to the bank

2) [of the northern quarters] ⌈for⌉ the poll tax in year ⌈3⌉5

3) [2 staters] makes 1 makes 2 staters again, written in year 35

4) Paophi day 19. Signed by *Pꜣ-*⌈…⌉ [   ]

5) [in year 35 month of a season] day 28 ⌈…⌉ [   ]

Notes:

Completing the lacunae in this text depends on some published texts from the same tax, place and date.[4]

The taxpayer *Pꜣ-šr-ꜣImn* son of *Pa-wn* has paid 2 staters as an installment[5] for the poll tax in year 35 of Augustus[6] (5 AD).

 Another example from temple oaths: if some parts of the text of the oath are missing it can be restored from other temple oaths who have the same element as follows:

Temple oath usually begins with *ḥ pꜣ ꜥnḫ* "Text of the oath" *nty i.ir* + the name of the plaintiff + *r.ir=f* "which N.N. should do it" *n ḥwt ntr*+ a name og a God or his title" in the temple of …"+ the date +prepostion *n*+ the name of the definite after that came the text of the oath which starts with *ꜥnḫ* Gebelen or *ḏd ꜥnḫ* in Thebes:

ꜥnḫ a name of a God *nty ḥtp di irm ntr nb nty ḥtp irm=f* " By God who rests here together with every God who rests together with him" after that comes the subject of the oath and at the end comes *iw=f ir pꜣ ꜥnḫ nty sḫ ḥry* "If he swears the oath which is written above" *mtw=f wy r-r=f* "he will be far from it" *iw=f stꜣt r tm ir pꜣ ꜥnḫ* "If he refuses doing the oath then comes the punishment.

An example of a washed out and broken text:
 M.H. 363 Plate III
Potsherd, Brown
12 x 5 cm., thick. 0.6-0.9 cm.

Date: Late Ptolemaic, Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (139-138 BC.).

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[3] A. Depauw, *A Chronological Survey of Precisely Dated Demotic and Abnormal Hieratic Sources* (Köln-Leuven: Universiteit Leuven, 2007), 174; http://aegyptologie.online-resourcen.de/Date converter for Ancient Egypt.

[4] eg. Lichtheim, *Demotic Ostraca from Medinet Habu*, nos. 25-29; Sara Nabil, "Unpublished Demotic Ostraca from Medinet Habu in the Egyptian Museum" (PhD diss., University of Ain Shams, 2011), nos. 2-7.

[5] G. Mattha, *Demotic Ostraca from the Collections at Oxford, Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Cairo*, (Le Caire: Publications de la Société Fouad I de Papyrologie 6, 1945), 45f.

[6] Lichtheim, *Demotic Ostraca from Medinet Habu*, 16.

Description: The text is incomplete as the ostracon is broken at the bottom and partly at the left side. Most of the text is washed out. The handwriting is rounded and compact.

Transliteration:

1) [ẖ pꜣ] ⌜ꜥnḫ⌝ nty i.ir Pꜣ-šr-Ỉmn

2) [sA…..] r-ir=f n pA (rA) n 9mA

3) [n] ⌜prỈmn-nꜣyw-ḥmnw⌝ n ḥꜣ.t sp 32 ibt 4 ⌜…⌝ [sw x n N.N.]

4) [ḏd ꜥnḫ] ⌜Ỉmn-nꜣyw-ḥmnw nty⌝ ḥtp di

5) [irm nṯr nb nty ḥtp irm=f] ⌜…⌝ bn-pw=s

6) ⌜............................... .⌝

7) ⌜..............⌝ n=f ⌜...............⌝

8) ⌜............................... .⌝

9) ⌜............................... .⌝

10) ⌜......⌝

Translation:

1) [Text of the] ⌜oath⌝ which *Pꜣ-šr-Ỉmn*

2) [son of….] should do it in the (gate) of Jeme

3) in ⌜temple of *Ỉmn-nꜣyw-ḥmnw*⌝ in year 32 forth month of ⌜…⌝ [day x against N.N.]

4) [saying: by] ⌜*Ỉmn-nꜣyw-ḥmnw* who⌝ rests here

5) [rests here together with every god who rests with him] ⌜…⌝ she did not

6) ⌜……………………………⌝

7) ⌜…………⌝ to him ⌜……………⌝

8) ⌜……………………………⌝

9) ⌜……………………………⌝

10) ⌜……⌝

Notes: The text is a temple oath from Thebes and from the style of the handwriting it seems that it belongs to the late Ptolemaic period and year 32 belongs to the reign of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (139-138 BC.).[7]

The missing parts are completed from parallel published texts from the same place Thebes.[8]

The oath should end with the formula *iw=f ir pꜣ ꜥnḫ nty sḫ ḥry mtw=f wy r-r=f iw=f stꜣt r tm ir pꜣ ꜥnḫ* "If he swears the oath which is written above he will be far from it, if he refuses he will…" then came the punishment.

The oath concerns a man called *Pꜣ-šr-Ỉmn* who was the plaintiff against the defendant whose name is in lacuna and probably is a woman because of using the third feminine person pronoun =*s* in line 5.

2- Texts which include well known persons such as scribes who issued receipts from different places and eras. Those scribes have the same formula in their receipts which they have been isuued, for example *Pa-tꜣ-s.t-ꜣꜥ.t* who was a professional scribe in the state granary of Pathyris (a town in Gebelen).[9] He issued the texts between year 127 B.C. to year 91 B.C.[10]

An example of a complete receipt for the same scribe: DO Cairo 95[11], Plate IV

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[7] cf. U. Kaplony-Heckel, *Die Demotischen Tempeleide*, (Wiesbaden: Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 6, 1963), no. 136.

[8] e.g.Kaplony-Heckel, *Tempeleide*, nos. 4,7

[9] A.H. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* Vol.2, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947) 274f.

[10] E. Revillout, *Mélanges sur la métrologie, l'économie politique et l'histoire de l'ancienne Égypte*, (Paris: Librairie Orientale et Américaine, 1895), 194; S.P. Wångstedt, *Ausgewählte Demotische Ostraka aus der Sammlung des Victoria-Museums zu Uppsala und der Staatlichen Papyrussammlung zu Berlin*, (Uppsala: AB L. Norblads Bokhandel, 1954), nos. 41-42; S.P. Wångstedt, *Die demotischen Ostraka der Universität Zürich*, (Uppsala: Almquist & Wiksells Boktryckeri AB, 1965) nos. 36, 14, 19-20, 26; U. Kaplony-Heckel, "Demotische Texte aus Pathyris", *MDAIK* 21 (1966): nos. 18, 21, 19-20, 22; S.P. Wångstedt, "Demotische Ostraka aus ptolemäisch-römischer zeit," *OrSu* 18 (1970): no. 15; U. Kaplony-Heckel, "Pathyris, Demotische kurz-texte in Cairo", *Enchoria* 19-20 (1992-1993), no. 28; S. Abdel Aal, "Some Demotic Ostraca Dealing with Land Allotments", *BACPSI* 20 (2003): nos. 1, 4; U. Kaplony-Heckel, *Tempeleide*, no. 180.

[11] S.Nabil, "Three Unpublished Demotic Ostraca Dealing with Harvest Tax", *BACPS* 27 Part 1 (April 2010): no. 1.

Transliteration:

1) *in P3-tj-Mn(?) s3 Pa-Gb r p3 r3*

2) *n Pr-ḪtHr   Ḫr p3 Smw n H3.t sp 2.t*

3) *(rtb) sw 7 ½ r ⌜3 ¼ r (rtb) sw⌝ 7 ½ ˁn*

4) *Ḫr p3 3ḥ kj*

5) *sḪ Pa-tA-s.t-ˁA.t*

Translation:

1) PA-tj-Mn (?) son of P*a*-Gb has paid to the granary

2) of Pathyris for the harvest tax of year 2

3) 7 ½ (artabas of) wheat, makes ⌜3 ¼, makes⌝ 7 ½ (artabas of) ⌜wheat⌝ again

4) for the high lands

5) Signed (by) P*a*-tA-s.t-aA.t

Another example for the same scribe but the text is incomplete DO Cairo 207[12] Plate V

Transliteration:

1) *in NA-nḫ.t=f s3 Pa-t3.wj (r) p3 [r3 n Pr-Ḫtḥr]*

2) *ḫr p3 šmw n ḥ3.t sp 54 (rtb) sw 3 r 1 ½ r [3 ˁn]*

3) *⌜sḫ⌝ Pa-t3-s.t-ˁ3.t*

Translation:

1) N3-nḫt=f son of Pa-t3.wj has paid (to) the [granary of Pathyris]

2) for the harvest tax of year 54, 3 (artabas of) wheat, makes 1 ½, makes [3 again]

3) ⌜signed⌝ (by) Pa-t3-s.t-ˁ3.t.

It is remarkable that the lacuna in this text could be completed by the other complete text for the same scribe.

Conclusion

1- Some texts which have parallels can be restored such as texts which have featured elements.

2- Texts which include well known persons such as scribes who issued receipts from different places and eras.

Meanwhile it is difficult to follow these methods if the text does not have a parallel, in this issue sometimes the context of the text helps to find out the missing part as if the text includes a word or a sentence which is repeated many times in it.

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[12] S. Nabil, "Three Unpublished Demotic Ostraca Dealing with Harvest Tax", *BACPS* 27 Part 1 (April 2010), no. 2.

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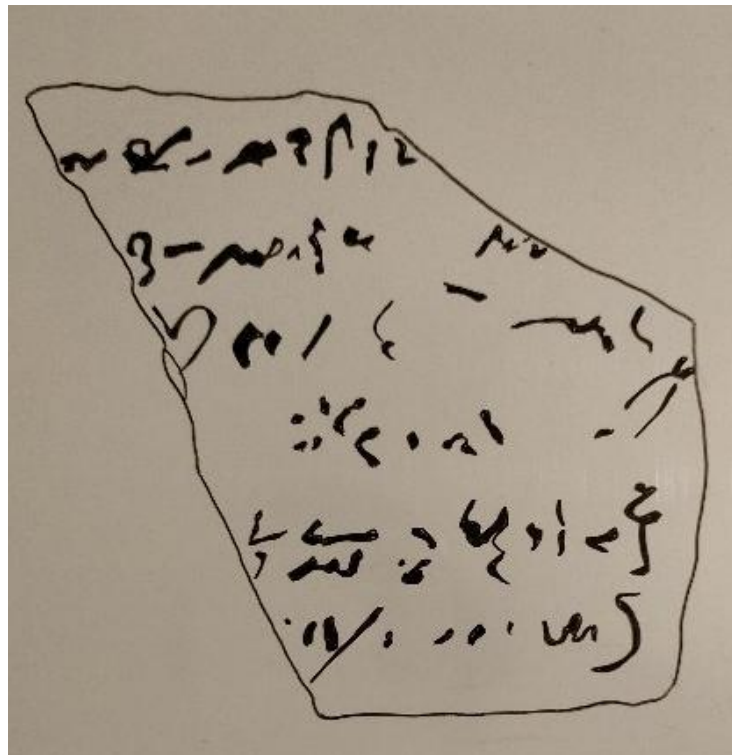- Wångstedt, S.P., "Demotische Ostraka aus ptolemäisch-römischer zeit," *OrSu* 18 (1970): 69-100.

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Plate I

M.H. 110
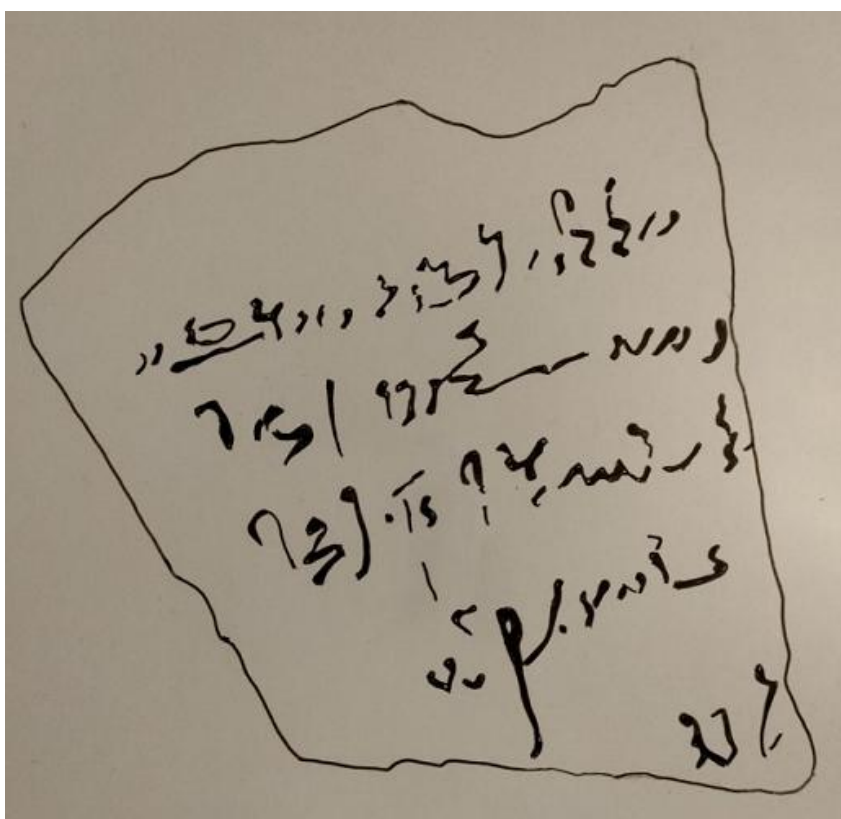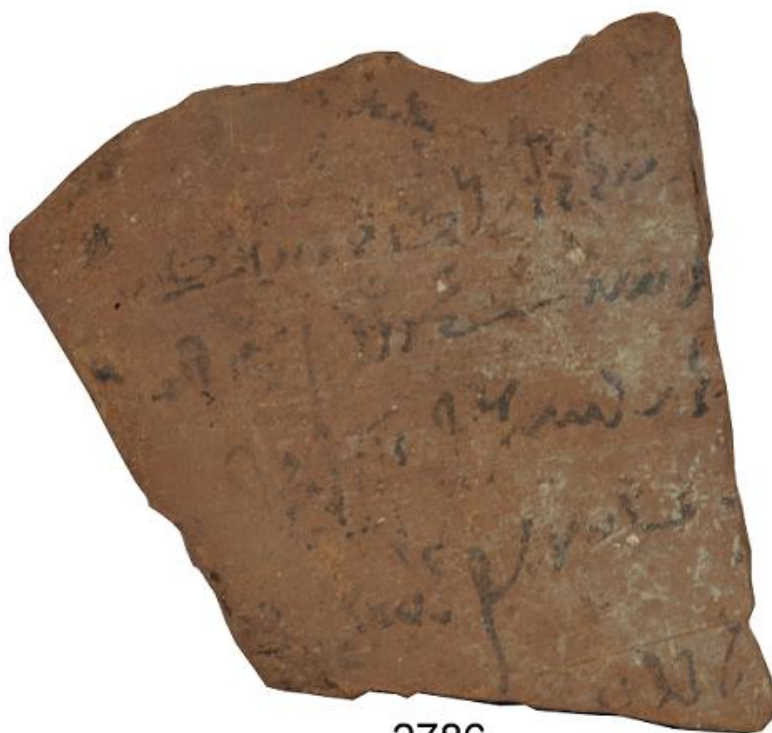
Plate II

2786

M.H. 2786

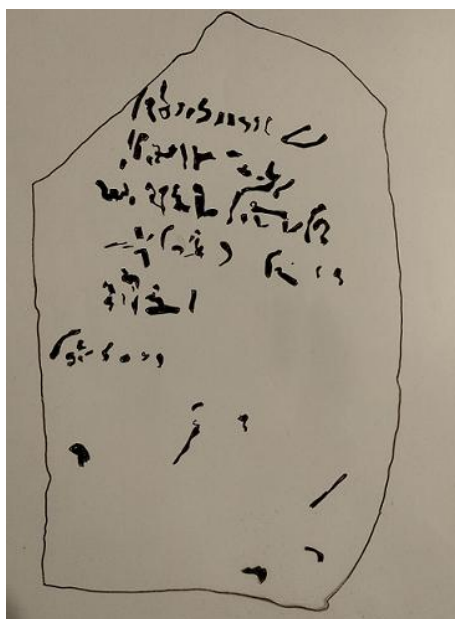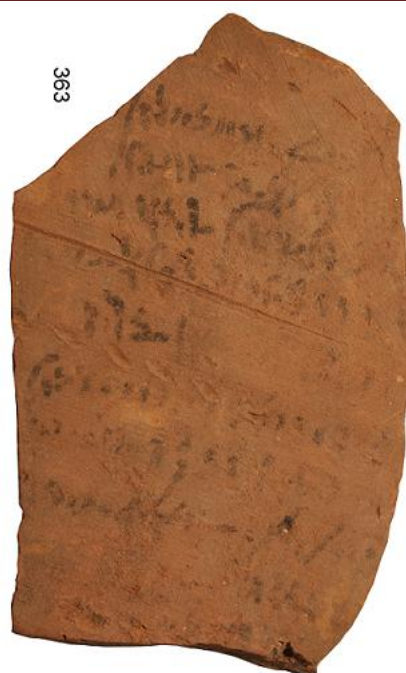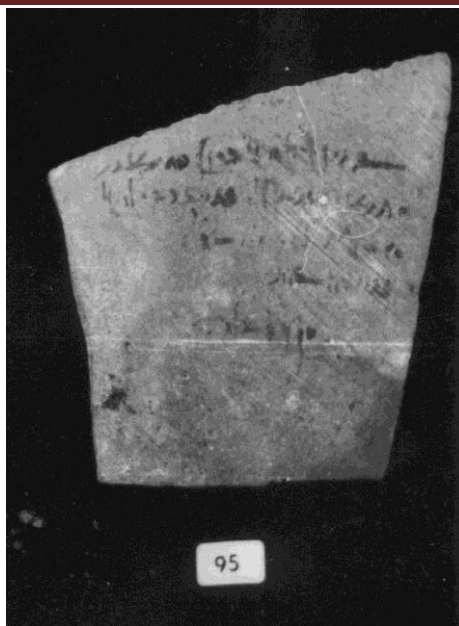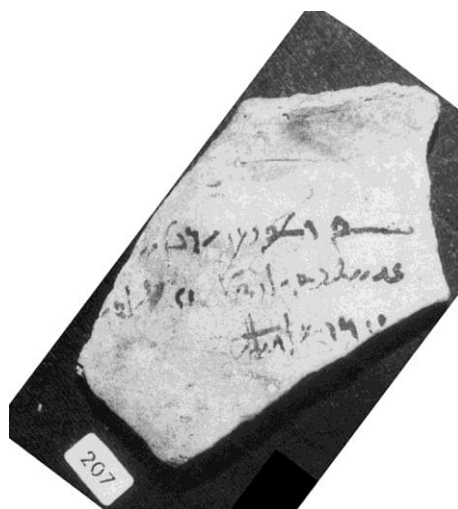**Plate III**

M.H. 363

Plate IV

DO Cairo 95

S.Nabil, "Three Unpublished Demotic Ostraca Dealing with Harvest Tax", *BACPS* 27 Part 1 (April 2010): no. 1.

Plate V

DO Cairo 207

S. Nabil, "Three Unpublished Demotic Ostraca Dealing with Harvest Tax", *BACPS* 27 Part 1 (April 2010), no. 2.