

THE BILINGUAL ARCHIVE
OF THE LINEN WEAVER PETECHONSIS,
SON OF THOTEUS,
AND *O. BODL. EG. INSCR. 328**

Abstract: In this article, a brief overview of the early Roman texts belonging to the private archive of a Theban linen weaver is presented. The contents of the archive, which consists of receipts, is analysed and discussed. The investigation shows that the original possessor of the archive was not only involved in the textile industry but that he also supplemented his income through agriculture. Finally, a previously unpublished Demotic letter-receipt (*O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr. 328*) pertaining to the weaving business is edited and examined. A brief discussion of a dyeing tax is also included.

Petechonsis, son of Thoteus, was a linen weaver, who lived in the Theban area during the early Roman period. Three tax receipts inscribed on ostraca attest his activities in the textile industry. The oldest text, written in Greek (*O. Bodl. II 1011*), records his payment of the linen tax (τέλ(ος) λινύφωρον)¹ to the state bank in regnal year 13 of Augustus (6 Feb 17 BC).² The other two receipts are written in Demotic (*O. Mattha 182* and *184*) and document his payment of the “weaver tax” (*tny n sht*)³ to the same institution.⁴ The latter texts date somewhat later, having been issued in regnal years 25 (11 Aug 5 BC) and 28 (19 May 2 BC) respectively.

* I am indebted to Liam McNamara (Oxford) for his kind assistance and for permitting me to publish *O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr. 328*, Nikolaos Lazaridis (Sacramento) for relinquishing his publication rights to me, and Klaus Wagensohn (Oxford) for photographing the ostrakon. I would also like to thank Todd Hickey (Berkeley) and Sven Vleeming (Trier) for critical remarks. I also thank Robert Simpson (Oxford), Michael Zellmann-Rohrer (Berkeley) for correcting my English, and my two anonymous reviewers whose comments have improved several aspects of this paper. Needless to say, any error is my responsibility alone. Frequently cited works will be referred to with the following abbreviations: Erichsen, *DG* = Wolja ERICHSEN, *Demotisches Glossar*, Copenhagen 1954; *DemNb* = Erich LÜDDECKENS e.a., *Demotisches Namenbuch*, Wiesbaden 1980-2000.

¹ See e.g. *BGU XIV 2456* and comments by Brashear (1980) 260. See also Kaplony-Heckel (1994) 161-181 for Ptolemaic receipts on linen in Demotic and Greek.

² All dates are calculated with the help of Pestman (1967); Skeat (1993). See also Hagedorn (1994); Skeat (2001).

³ See Wängstedt (1965) 18; Wängstedt (1976/1977) 7-9 for a listing of such Demotic texts from the Thebaid.

⁴ See Bogaert (1994) 158-162; Clarysse & Vandorpe (2010) 167-168 for the bankers and the language used in the receipts.

The Greek ostrakon is generally understood as recording a payment of a specialised duty on linen workers,⁵ whereas the Demotic texts are receipts for a general trade tax on weavers.⁶ The Egyptian term is usually understood as equivalent to the Greek γερδιακόν / τέλος γερδιών (or similar).⁷

Two additional texts may reveal Petechonsis' involvement in the agricultural sector. *O. Mattha* 274, dating to regnal year 12 of Augustus (16 Sept 19 BC),⁸ mentions an individual with the same name and patronymic who acts as a lessor of farmland in a locality called "The Island of Opet" (*t3 m3y.t n Ipy*).⁹ For letting two parcels of land (*3h 2*) he is compensated with four *artabai* of wheat that are to be paid at his house in Thebes (*ˁ.wy n Nw.t*).

The second text, *O. BM EA* 20145,¹⁰ records that Petechonsis, son of Thoteus, paid the harvest tax to the temple¹¹ for regnal year 14 on the yield from fields situated on the Amun domain in Thebes, called the Field of Amun (*3h n Imn*).¹² The transaction was completed on Mecheir 12, year 15 of Augustus (6 Feb 15 BC). In both cases, the fields in

⁵ Bogaert (2000) 174; Droß-Krüpe (2011) 194 and 196; Wallace (1938) 193-198.

⁶ Reiter (2004) 111-144 esp. 120-121 and 132-138; Wallace (1938) 437-439.

⁷ Mattha (1945) 152, and n. 5-6 above. It is not clear what the difference is between this tax and the Demotic *tny mdqn* (or similar) "weaver tax" as found in, for instance, *O. BM EA* 21493 (Wängstedt (1970/1971) 47-48; den Brinker e.a. (2005) 672). It seems that *mdqn* as an occupational title could be paralleled by γέρδιος in Greek, as can be seen in *P. Batav.* 29 (see Pestman & Thieme (1978) 136). More explicitly, however, the term *mdqn*, and therefore the tax connected to it, could refer to wool weaving (so Lippert (2007) 151). See Droß-Krüpe (2011) 47-102 for other designations found in the papyrological documentation. It might be noted that the early Ptolemaic "wool-tax" (*tny/ht in.w, êréa/êpeōn*) was probably a capitation tax on women rather than a real trade tax (cf. e.g. *O. Taxes* II, 63-66; Muhs (2005) 51-54; Muhs (2011) 86 with further references). See Quack (2004/2005) 64; Monson (2012a) 140 n. 1 for the reading of the Demotic word translated as wool.

⁸ See Mattha (1945) 198 for the date.

⁹ See n. 12 (below).

¹⁰ Wängstedt (1967) 31-32.

¹¹ The recipient of the tax was the λεσῶνις (*mr-šn*), the head of economic affairs in the temple (see e.g. Chaufray (2009) 157-68; Clarysse (2003) 21-22; Evans (1961) 185-186; Lippert & Schentuleit (2005) 72-73; Monson (2012b) 212-218 and 223-227; Pfeiffer (2004) 76-77; Vittmann (1998) 290-291). In this instance, the *lesonis* can be understood as a kind of tax farmer, or at least as a fiscal middleman, responsible for collecting revenues from temple lands.

¹² It is difficult to assess what the location of the fields on temple land in Upper Egypt indicates, besides giving the priesthood a fiscal prerogative. It is possible that Petechonsis had a special connection with the temple, but since much of the temple land in Upper Egypt was treated as private property, it is possible that the fields had been in the possession of his family for a longer period (see Monson (2012b) 114-141).

question were located on the Theban East Bank,¹³ the same place where the linen and weaver taxes were paid.¹⁴

Because these two texts are roughly contemporary with the linen and weaver tax receipts, and individuals with this name and patronymic are rare,¹⁵ it seems probable that all five ostraca once belonged to the same archive. A further circumstance supporting this suggestion is that all the ostraca originate from the same source.¹⁶

That a weaver was involved in agriculture is not astonishing. Nearly a century and a half earlier, another textile worker from Medinet Habu, Psenchonsis, son of Patemios, is attested as the recipient of a measuring receipt for the harvest tax.¹⁷ Evidence from the Fayum also suggests that weavers held smaller parcels of land.¹⁸ The variety of receipts that once belonged to Petechonsis, son of Thoteus, and the other weavers suggests that they were not confined to weaving only, just as many other professional groups were not limited to earning their living by practicing a single craft, but that they also engaged in agricultural affairs,¹⁹ both as farmers and lessors of land. From the extant material it is impossible to

¹³ Whether the lands mentioned in *O. Mattha* 274 are the same fields or parcels in another agricultural area is impossible to answer. However, it is probable that *t3 m3y.t n Ipy* in *O. Mattha* 274 is located within the Amun domain referred to as *3h n Imn*: “Fields of Amun” in *O. BM EA* 20145. The latter is probably just a general term describing the “owner” of the land rather than designating a particular region. See Heilporn (2009) 54-64, esp. 55-57, for a discussion of the toponym and locality of *Ipy* / Ὠφιῆον, situated on the Theban East Bank south of the Luxor Temple.

¹⁴ The bankers signing the receipts are well attested on the East Bank, cf. Bogaert (1984) 241-296; Bogaert (1994) 153-203.

¹⁵ The only other text in which an individual with the same name appears is *O. Brooklyn* 102, which dates to the Ptolemaic period (Hughes e.a. (2005) 37). It ought to be remembered, however, that the name Petechonsis is the fourth most popular *P3-di-DN*-name (Depauw & Jennes (2012) 114).

¹⁶ The pieces published by Mattha (*O. Mattha* 182, 184, and 274) and Tait and Preux (*O. Bodl.* II 1011) were donated to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford by A.H. Sayce in 1914. The ostrakon edited and published by Wångstedt (see n. 10 [above]) is held by the British Museum. This ostrakon belongs to a group of texts that was acquired by R.J. Moss and subsequently purchased by the British Museum in 1893. The pieces that reached London under the auspices of Moss were obtained in Egypt at the same time and from the same source as the ostraca that came to Oxford through Sayce, who had bought them in Thebes in the early 1880s. See Muhs (2011) 279-280 and 283-284, for the origin of the ostraca collections in the museums mentioned and how these texts belong together. Note, however, that the author only discusses Ptolemaic examples.

¹⁷ Kaplony-Heckel (2006a) 383; Kaplony-Heckel (1991) 59-60 (Nr. 5).

¹⁸ Droß-Krüpe (2011) 231-232.

¹⁹ There are many examples, primarily of priests and soldiers active as farmers. See also Bagnall (1993) 115-116, 143, 148-150, and 310.

discern with certainty whether Petechonsis only acted as a lessor of land as seen in *O. Mattha* 274 or whether he occasionally farmed his own fields. He may have transferred the harvest taxes, paid in *O. BM EA* 20145, to the temple on behalf of a tenant of the land. In the Demotic documentation, either the lessee or the lessor could be responsible for remitting the harvest taxes. In most cases, however, the tenant was accountable for turning in the harvest tax in Upper Egypt, while in the Fayum and Lower Egypt it was the landholder who was responsible for settling the land tax.²⁰ It could be argued, however, that the tax that Petechonsis paid came from his own lands. Since he was the lessor of land a couple of years earlier (*O. Mattha* 274), it is more plausible that he paid the harvest taxes on behalf of his tenants or from his own farming activity rather than as a tenant himself. One may further assume that the amount represents what he owed the *thesaurus*; had he paid the tax for someone else's land in addition to his own, this would have been mentioned in the receipt.

The amount that he paid as harvest tax for year 14 of Augustus's reign, 73 *artabai* of wheat, indicates that he must have been relatively well off from his agricultural engagements alone.²¹ At a rate of four to five *artabai* of wheat per *aroura*,²² he would have possessed at least 14 to 18 *arourai* of land.²³ Yet it is possible that he had a slightly smaller parcel of land; the figures paid for the harvest tax vary considerably in the extant Theban material. The rate can fluctuate between four and eight *artabai* per *aroura*.²⁴ In the latter case, he would have possessed roughly ten *arourai*. This is still a rather considerable landholding.

Regardless of whether Petechonsis possessed 10 or 18 *arourai*, his agricultural dealings were profitable and surely substantially supplemented his

²⁰ Most Roman period Demotic leases seem to imply that the lessee should pay the harvest tax, e.g. *O. Mattha* 274-276 (cf. also Fazzini & Jasnow (1988) 27-28), but, for instance, *O. Mattha* 131 and 273 (see Hughes (1952) 110-111 for the latter) show that this was not always the case. Also in the Ptolemaic land leases, either party could be responsible for paying the taxes (Herrmann (1958) 122-124; Lippert (2008) 95-96). In Greek-Roman-period lease agreements, the general rule is that the lessor paid the taxes.

²¹ The tax alone would feed approximately seven men for a year. See e.g. Bowman (1996) 238; Crawford (1971) 122-131; Drexhage (1991) 440-448; Monson (2006) 225; Pestman (1990) 49 for the annual consumption of an average Egyptian during this period. Note also Foxhall & Forbes (1982) 41-90.

²² See Monson (2012b) 164-172; Vandorpe (2000) 174 and 196.

²³ See n. 12 (above).

²⁴ See n. 21 (above).

earnings from the textile trade,²⁵ possibly even surpassing them. Other textile workers attested as possessors of land owned mostly garden plots or parcels not larger than two *arourai*. Petechonsis therefore seems to be one of the more prosperous textile workers attested thus far, even if perhaps not the wealthiest; for instance, in the Fayum a weaver from the second century AD is attested as the possessor of a parcel in excess of 20 *arourai* of land (*P. Bodl. I 27*).²⁶ Yet it is not easy to compare, since the productivity of land as well as its price can vary considerably between regions.

At any rate, a wider portfolio of income sources for any weaver, textile worker, or craftsman would certainly diminish the risk of loss of profits and perhaps even balance his earnings throughout the year. The archive is thus an important reminder of the economic versatility and resilience of Theban craftsmen during the Roman period.²⁷

Another ostrakon, *O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr. 328*, a receipt in epistolary form,²⁸ would seem to belong to the archive of the same linen weaver Petechonsis, son of Thoteus. The piece is of Theban origin²⁹ and dates to the same period as the other texts discussed above, specifically to the 18th regnal year of Augustus. In the receipt, Petechonsis appears as the payer and is thus the receiver of the document (party B).³⁰ A woman called Senchonsis, daughter of Pikos, was the payee and therefore the person who issued the receipt (party A). The content of the text also relates to weavers; they are mentioned as a collective at the end of the document (see below).

²⁵ See Drexhage (1991) 372-379; Droß-Krüpe (2011) 207-232.

²⁶ See Droß-Krüpe (2011) 231-232.

²⁷ The early Roman period archive of Chemsneus and his son Kabiris provides further information on the involvement of craftsmen in more than one trade. Kabiris paid the weaver tax and the merchant tax while his father, Chemsneus, seems to have traded in fish while also being involved in farming; he was taxed for a wheat harvest. He is not attested as a weaver, however (cf. Clarysse (1993) 33-38; Clarysse (2010) 70). Similarly the oil dealer (*s-n-nhh*) Phanesis, son of Nechturis, who ran a business in third-century BC Tebtunis, was involved in the textile trade and seems to have been a representative of the royal treasury at the same time (Muhs e.a. (2002/2003) 62-81).

²⁸ Mattha (1945) 17-20 discusses the usual formulae for this kind of receipt.

²⁹ The piece belongs to the same lot as the other ostraca entering the museum in Oxford in 1914 (see n. 14).

³⁰ It might be pointed out that he occupies the same role in all texts in which he is attested.

O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr. 328

Provenance: Thebes (East Bank); Date: 17 Nov 13 BC; Measurements: 95 × 93 mm; Material: pottery.³¹ Reverse: Inscribed – Obverse: blank

Transcription:

T3-šr.t-Hnsw ta P3y-k3 t3 nty dd n
P3-di-Hnsw pa Dḥwtj-iw twzy mh n p3y krkr 3 r ht 900
r krkr 3 'n nty sh n p3 bsk r.irzy nzk hr
P3-di-Hr pa P3-hrt p3yzy šr sh n hsb.t 18.t ibd-3 3ḥ.t sw 21
sh Twtw pa Hnsw-Dḥwtj r hrzw n rn p3 tḥzf r.irzw
iw bn-iw i.iwzk rh hpr m-s3zy h'zy hn' p3yzy šr hr
p3 wgs n p3y nste nty iw Mnwtr pa
Ty3s m-s3 n3 sh.w n.imzf hr md.t Pr-'3'.w.s r'n' (?)

Translation:

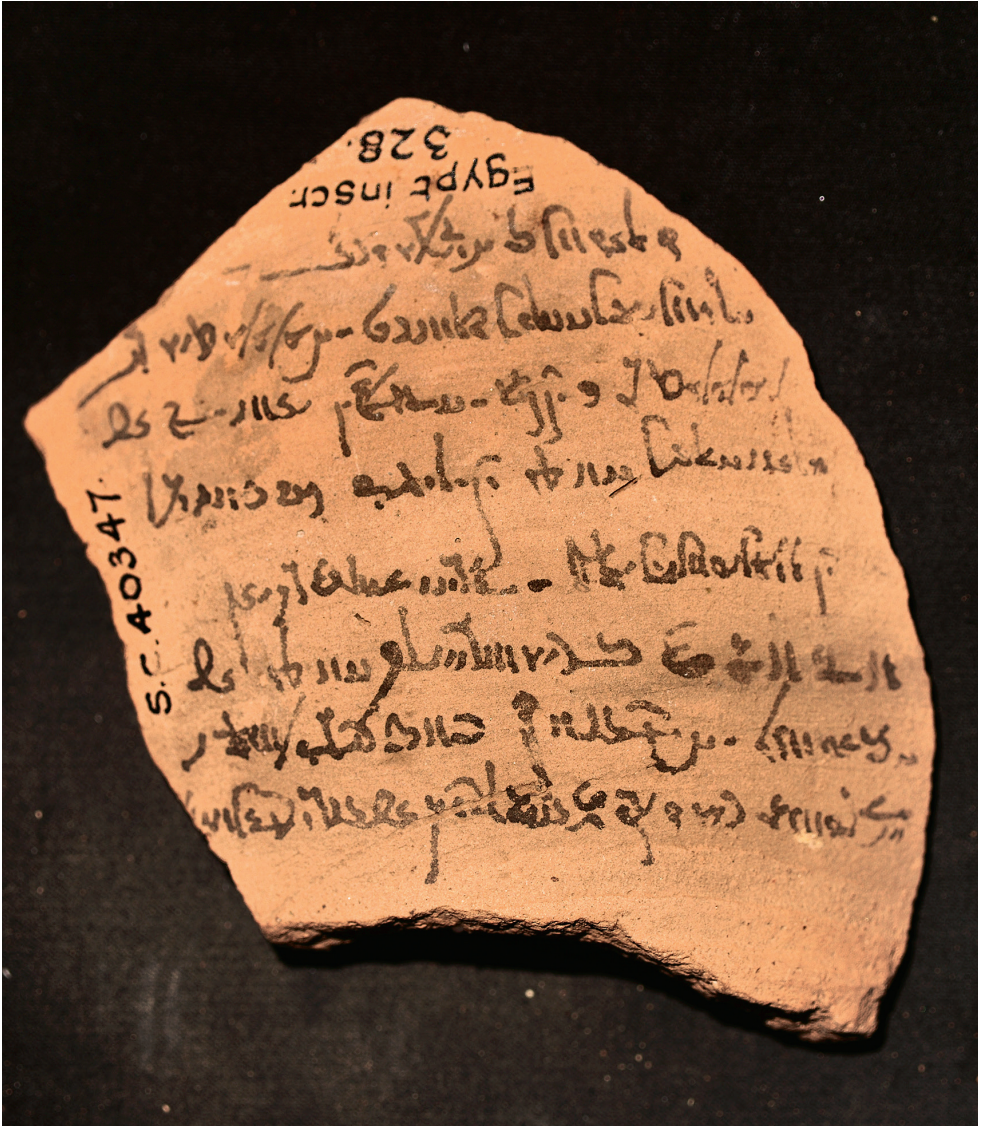
⁽¹⁾Senchonsis, daughter of Pikos, is the one who speaks to ⁽²⁾Petechonsis, son of Thoteus: “I have been paid with these 3 talents, equalling 900 deben of silver, ⁽³⁾equalling 3 talents again, as has been written down in the document, which I made for you on behalf of ⁽⁴⁾my son Peteyris, son of Pachrates.” Written in regnal year 18, month 3 of Akhet (Hathyr). ⁽⁵⁾Written by Totoes, son of Chesthotes, at their behest because they asked for it, ⁽⁶⁾“while you ⁽⁸⁾still (?) ⁽⁶⁾will not be able to have a claim on me myself and my son for ⁽⁷⁾the contribution of this dyeing-agent, which Menodoros, son of ⁽⁸⁾Dios, claims (from) the weavers as state tax.”

Notes:


- 1 See *DemNb* 1144 for the name *T3-šr.t-Hnsw* / Σενχῶνσις and *DemNb* 442-444 for *P3y-k 3* / Πικῶς. The woman who issued the document is not attested in any hitherto published text.
- 2 See *DemNb* 336-337 for the name *P3-di-Hnsw* / Πετεχῶνσις and *DemNb* 1298-1299 for *Dḥwtj-iw* / Θουτεύς.
 I read the oblique stroke, usually transliterated as *s3* “son of” (Erichsen, *DG* 402), as *pa* lit. “he of” or as *ta* lit. “she of”, if following a feminine name, in accordance with Vleeming (2012) 846-851 (§ 33).³²

³¹ The piece is terracotta coloured.

³² See also the observations in Broux (2011) 49-61.




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The orthography of *mh*  “pay” literally “fill” (Erichsen, *DG* 171-172) is common in Roman period Thebes (as well as in other parts of Egypt) for both infinitive and stative forms of the verb.³³

- 2-3 The formula expressing the sum paid does not, as usually is done, give the whole sum followed by half the value and the whole sum again *... *krkr 3 ḥt r 1 ½ krkr (ḥt) r krkr 3 (ḥt) ḥn*: “3 talents of silver (its half) being one and a half talents, still being 3 talents of silver.”³⁴ Instead the sum (3 talents) is repeated in another denomination (900 deben); 300 deben is the equivalent of one talent (e.g. Lichtheim (1957) 1). Other texts expressing sums in two (or more) denominations include *P. BM* 10398 and *P.L. Bat.* XXIII 3 (= *P. Tor. Botti* 44).
- 4 See *DemNb* 3 for the name of Senchonsis’ son, *P3-di-Ḥr* / Πετεῦρις and *DemNb* 211 for the name *P3-ḥrt* / Παχράτης.
- 5 See *DemNb* 1273-1275 for *Twtw* / Τοτοῦϛ³⁵ and *DemNb* 881-882 for *Ḥnsw-Dḥwty* / Χεσθώτης.³⁶ Although another individual with the same name and patronymic appears in *O. Leid. Dem.* 176, dated to the Ptolemaic period, it is unlikely that it refers to the same person. He is probably a namesake of the scribe of the present document.

Considering the date of the other documents in which Petechonsis appears, the date must refer to the reign of Augustus. Regnal year 18 Hathyr 21 corresponds to 17 Nov. 13 BC. Parallel placements of dating formulae at the end of receipts, followed only by the scribe’s name, would suggest that it refers to the drafting of the present document rather than to the *b3k*-document, which Senchonsis had drawn up for Petechonsis (earlier), mentioned on l. 3.

Normally a document of this kind, i.e. a letter-receipt, would end with the remark *r ḥrw* followed by a suffix pronoun that corresponds to the number of the speakers. In the present case, one would therefore anticipate *ꜣs* referring to Senchonsis.³⁷ Yet the traces seem better deciphered as *ꜣw*. If this is not a mistake on the behalf of the scribe or just a very clumsily written *ꜣs*, it must refer to Senchonsis and her son Peteyris, although the latter does not figure directly in the text.³⁸

Next follows a group , which is best read as *n rn* “because of” (Erichsen, *DG* 249) together with the masc. definite article *p3*. Although *n rny*: “...and because of me” would be a possible reading from a palaeographical point of view, it would be nonsensical.

³³ Cf. e.g. Nur el-Din (1974) 398.



³⁴ See Sethe & Partsch (1920) 21-22; Naether (2012) 188.

³⁵ See Kaper (2003) 179-183 for a brief outline of the name.

³⁶ See Benaissa (2009) 80-81 and 83 for a brief discussion of the name and a possible Greek equivalent.

³⁷ See Vleeming (1994) 143-144; Kaplony-Heckel (1987) 257-258.



³⁸ If both parties (A and B) speak in the text, the remark could refer to both the issuer and receiver of the document as in e.g. *P. Tor. Botti* 23 (Pestman (1985) 176 n. k).

The subsequent inelegantly written group  is problematic. Grammatically it must be a transitive verb with a direct pronominal object.³⁹ A possible reading is to understand the group as *tbh* “ask (for)” (Erichsen, *DG* 625).⁴⁰ The *t* is written over the *b*, which here is the “large *b*,” going back to the hieroglyphic leg together with an ideographic stroke . The last letter, the sign before the man-with-hand-to-mouth- and the book roll determinatives, can easily be conflated with a *š*, but it is clear that the usual dot under the semi-circular *h* is written as a stroke in this instance. The phrase “because they have asked for it” (*n rn p3 tbhꜣf r.irꜣw*) explains why the receipt was written. Both parties wanted to have a document issued that recorded the payment. Such a comment seems superfluous, but since receipts were mostly issued by authorities, either by a temple or a representative of the state, it was perhaps felt necessary in this case.


- 6 See Erichsen, *DG*, 115-116, for the writing of the negated fut. III, second person masc., *bn-*iw* i.*iw*ꜣk*.

hpr m-s3 lit. “be behind” (Erichsen, *DG* 355) means “to have a (legal) claim on someone” (cf. n. l. 8).

It seems as if party A emphasises that party B will not have the right to make any claim on her in addition to her son on whose behalf she acts, since *hꜣy* ‘myself’ is added after *m-s3ꜣy*, which sufficed alone in normal cases.

- 7 The masc. noun *wgs*, written with a fallen warrior determinative  is not attested in the *Chicago Demotic Dictionary* or Erichsen, *DG*. It is probable that the word corresponds to the Coptic noun $\sigma\gamma\omega\delta\varsigma$ “contribution, collection” (Crum (1939) 513b), deriving from the older  (or similar),⁴¹ which can be translated as “cut (up) (animals/plants)” and with an extended meaning “eviscerate/clean out” (Erman & Grapow (1926) 377: 12-15). A collection or levy of taxes understood as something cleaned out, as a “drainage” or similar, might explain the peculiar choice of determinative. If so, the term cannot be the official designation for a collection or contribution. There was no need for this; the text is not an official receipt but records a transaction between two private individuals.

See the discussion below for the translation of *nsꜣe* as “dyeing-agent.” The wood determinative could indicate that it was the root that was used for producing the dye (e.g. Esna II, 227: 10).

The name  also occurs in several other Theban ostraca from the early Roman period, for instance *O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr.* 632. In the *editio princeps* of the text, the name was read as *Mnwqrs* / Μεννοκλῆς .⁴² *DemNb* 591, acknowledges this reading but also proposes an alternative, *Mnwtrs* / Μηνώδωρος . In her re-edition of the piece, U. Kaplony-Heckel accepts the

³⁹ Spiegelberg (1925) 107 (§ 234).

⁴⁰ I am grateful to Joachim Quack (Heidelberg) for this suggestion.

⁴¹ Vycichl (1984) 243.

⁴² Wängstedt (1965/1966) 25-26.

new analysis proposed by the *DemNb*.⁴³ *Mnwtrs* appears to be the correct rendering;⁴⁴ different scribes would not make the same “mistake,” muddling two letters, writing a *q* like a *t*. The same name, identically written by the signee himself, is found in *O. Ashm. Dem.* 398,⁴⁵ which probably dates to the early Roman period. In *O. Upps. Dem.* 825 from the late Ptolemaic or early Roman period, the name of a royal farmer acting as lessee is also written in the same way. Although it was deciphered as *Mnwqrs* by the editor,⁴⁶ the name should likewise be read as *Mnwtrs*.⁴⁷ It might be noted that in the Ptolemaic *P. Ashm. Dem.* 81, line 232, the same spelling is found, although the editors cautiously add a question mark to their interpretation of the name.⁴⁸ Not only orthographical reasons favour such a reading, but also the fact that Menodoros was a far more common name in Graeco-Roman Egypt than Menokles or rather Μενεκλῆς, which is the more frequently attested form in Greek sources from Egypt.⁴⁹ A different rendering of Menodoros can be found in *P. Strasb.* 50, from the second-century AD Fayum, namely *M3n't'rw*s.

- 8 See *DemNb* 1253 for *Ty3s / Δῖος*. In the previously mentioned Bodleian ostrakon, which probably dates to year 2 of Augustus (Oct. 2, 29 BC), Dios, son of Menodoros, acts as an agent of a temple granary (*rt n t3 šm3.t*). If the date proposed for that ostrakon is correct, he must have been the father of our Menodoros; the combination and the relative rarity of the names support this interpretation.⁵⁰ W. Clarysse takes the discussion one step

⁴³ Kaplony-Heckel (2006b) 40.

⁴⁴ den Brinker e.a. (2005) 665.

⁴⁵ Kaplony-Heckel (1999) 45.

⁴⁶ Wängstedt (1984) 127-128. It might also be noted that the name *ⲙⲛⲱⲧⲣⲟⲥ* which Botti (1967) 172 deciphered erroneously as *Mnqrs* should most probably be understood as Μένανδρος (*DemNb*, 593). Menu (1980) 170 has collected additional writings of the name (cf., however, n. 50 below).

⁴⁷ See Clarysse (1990) 77-84 esp. 80, for additional writings of this name. Clarysse corrects the erroneous rendering of the name *3ntrws in *DemNb* 22, to *Mntrws* which should be understood as Menodoros. The different spelling (*Mnwtrs* – *Mntrws*) might depend on the fact that all the examples listed by the *DemNb* refer to the same person who was also the scribe. Although the name is spelled slightly differently — it is in fact similar to how Menandros is occasionally rendered (cf. n. 46 above and 50 below) — its reading is confirmed because the Greek bank receipt *W. Chr.* 413, dated to year 5 of Tiberius (2 Jan AD 19), was also signed by him; the banker there is Μηνόδ(ω)ρος (Clarysse & Vandorpe (2010) 167).

⁴⁸ Clarysse e.a. (2014) 45.

⁴⁹ See Masson (1990) 61-69. The name, spelled as Μενεκλῆς, is not attested as a personal name of any Egyptian during the Graeco-Roman period. The only hitherto published attestation from Egypt (*SB* I 1042 = *SB* VIII 10172), dated to the fifth century BC, refers to Cretans. See, however, *Pros. Ptol.* 15222.

⁵⁰ If Kaplony-Heckel (2002/2003) 33-36 has correctly understood the name of the signee and his father in the measurement receipt *O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr.* 918, as Dios, son of Menodoros (*Tyws pa Mntrws*), we surely have to do with the same person and not a namesake. The name deciphered as Dios is, however, transliterated as *Tywy* by the editor, though the last letter is clearly *s* and not *y*. The editor dates the piece to year 13 of

further and suggests that Menodoros — he refers to the father and grandfather of “our” Menodoros — could be related to the banker with the same name, Menodoros, son of Pikos,⁵¹ who was in office between AD 19 and 31, because similar names tend to be used in the same family and there were close connections between the bankers and the *sitologoi*.⁵²

How — if at all — Menodoros (without a preserved patronymic) in *O. Ashm. Dem.* 398, who was a τοπογραμματοεὐς (*sh mʿ*)⁵³ on the Theban

Ptolemaios XII, Cleopatra VII, or Augustus. No ruler is mentioned but the palaeography favours one of the later dates, either 39 BC or 17 BC.

Nevertheless Kaplony-Heckel attributes the piece to Elephantine; the ostrakon is registered as coming from that locality in the museum hand-list, which, however, is notably unreliable in such matters. She also argues that the phrasing of receipts could point to such a provenance because it deviates from the standard formula found in Theban texts of this kind; it is slightly abbreviated. Nonetheless, the lack of corresponding receipts from Elephantine prohibits the equation of the formula in *O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr.* 918 with similar texts from that locality, at least until further texts become known. The editor also believes that the names of the two payers of the harvest tax reflect such a provenance. Yet their names, contrary to what she asserts (Kaplony-Heckel 2002/2003 33-34), point to a Theban origin. A survey of the Trismegistos database shows that *ʒm(w)nys* / Ἀμμώνιος (*DemNb*, 18-19), the name of the first payer, is common throughout Egypt, while his father’s name, Petechonsis, was far more popular in Thebes than in any other part of the country. To argue that he must have moved southwards from Thebes, as Kaplony-Heckel suggests, is not very credible given the circumstances. The other payer *Mtyʒs* (Ματήλος) has a Semitic name, which so far only seems to be attested in or near Thebes (*O. Ont. Mus* 1 7, *O. Wilck.* 1189, and *UPZ* II 180). Also the single attestation of the personal name *Pʒ-šr-Mtyʒs* (*DemNb*, 250) is found in a Theban source (*ODL* 139). It might be added that the name Menodoros is hitherto unattested in any other text from Elephantine.


On the other hand, since *Mntrs* is written without *w*, it is possible that we are to understand the name as Menandros instead (cf. n. 46 and 47 above), and therefore we would be dealing with a completely different individual. It is hard to tell; *w* is commonly used to represent *omicron* in Egyptian renderings of Greek names, but it is irregularly employed. In nearly one third of the cases, the Greek vowel is left unreproduced (cf. Clarysse (1983) 146 and 149). See e.g. Menandros = *Mnntrs* – *Mntrws* – *Mntrws* – *Mntrs*; Menodoros = *Mntrws* – *Mnwtrs* – *Mʒnʿtrws*; Ammonios = *ʒmns* – *ʒmwns* – *ʒmnyws* – *ʒmnys* etc. Other good examples of writings with or without *w* include Alexander (*DemNb* 27) and Apollonios (*DemNb* 13-14). The sample above shows that the Demotic spelling *Mntrws* could be used for rendering both Menodoros and Menandros and it is possible that *Mntrs* also could have been used for both names. That different individuals wrote their names in their own way might also affect the spellings. This is also true of *Tyʒs* – *Tyws* (cf. Clarysse (1983) 151). In this connection, it might be noted that both the names Dios and Menandros are more common in Elephantine than in Thebes. Nevertheless, the combination of both names is unattested in that locality. Until further evidence or better arguments turn up it is perhaps best to leave *O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr.* 918 aside, although there are strong indications that this text contains another reference to the father and grandfather of our Menodoros.


⁵¹ Cf. n. 47 above.

⁵² Clarysse (1990) 83. See also Clarysse & Vandorpe (2010) 166-168.

⁵³ See Muhs (2005) 13.

East Bank during the early Roman period,⁵⁴ is related to the other people with the same name, who also functioned within the Theban administration on the East Bank, cannot be answered with the information presently available. Nevertheless, the chances that we are dealing with the same person as mentioned in our text are rather high.

The bottom of the group  appears to be slightly abraded. Although it is tempting to read the group as *mh* “pay, fill, complete” or as “seize” or the like (Erichsen, *DG* 172-173), the best reading is *m-s3* (cf. l. 6), “after” with the meaning “having a claim on (someone)” (Erichsen, *DG* 405). The sentence is thus to be translated literally as: “... the collection of the dyeing-agent with which Menodoros ... is behind the weavers as state tax.”

The shape of the following group , read as *sh.t.w* “weaver(s)” (cf. 6, *DG* 457), is peculiar but clear enough.

It is possible that the last sign after *md.t pr-3^{.w.s}* is to be read as *n* “still” or similar (Erichsen, *DG* 61-62), even though one would expect it to be curved or have a small hook at the top, cf. the writing on l. 3.

It seems improbable that much more of the text is lost in the small piece broken off at the lower left edge of the ostrakon.

Even though female tax collectors are attested in Ptolemaic Egypt,⁵⁵ *O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr.* 328 is not a tax receipt. If it were, the nature of the charge would have been mentioned. The ostrakon records the acknowledgment of a payment for an earlier debt of three talents (*krkr*). The text does not provide any further explicit information as to the nature of the dues, besides stating that they were mentioned in another document (see l. 3) and that both parties wanted to have a receipt recording the payment issued (l. 7).

The second document, which is mentioned in *O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr.* 328, was drawn up by the payee of this text on behalf of her son Peteyris, son of Pachrates,⁵⁶ who may have been a minor (see below). In addition, in line 7 the receipt records that party A, Senchonsis, declares that party B, Petechonsis, is not entitled to make a claim on her and her son on another contribution (*wgs*), which relates to the textile industry. For this reason it seems probable that Senchonsis, or at least her son, was also involved in that trade.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Kaplony-Heckel (1999) 45 mentions another measuring receipt (Berlin P. 114) in which the same person might be attested as a royal scribe (*sh pr-3*) and signee of the document.

⁵⁵ E.g. Clarysse (2007) 90; Clarysse & Vandorpe (2010) 158.

⁵⁶ Pachrates would most likely have been the husband of Senchonsis.

⁵⁷ For women involved in the textile industry, see Droß-Krüpe (2011) 49-51, 58, and 86. See also Rowlandson (1998) 263-270; Wallace (1938) 192; Zauzich (2008/2009) 185-188.

The contribution mentioned in the ostracon is a fee collected on the *nst̄e*-plant. Although it is well known that the root of this herb was used for the red colour of cloth, including linen,⁵⁸ and for colouring other things, such as oil, the exact nature of the plant is still debated. The *nst̄e*-plant has been identified with, for instance, “madder” (Erichsen, *DG* 229)⁵⁹ or “alkanet”.⁶⁰ In the present contribution, it will be referred to as “dyeing-agent”.⁶¹

At least three published Demotic receipts from Djeme⁶² attest that a tax (*tny*) was imposed on the plant, its root, or perhaps rather the handling of it. It was gathered by the same tax collectors who also levied the linen tax (*tny šs*) and other charges on various woven products.⁶³ That the same tax collectors were responsible for collecting different but related imposts does not necessarily imply that all the contributions were gathered from the same professional group. In the case of the dyeing-agent, the payers are not mentioned by title but they are certainly also textile workers. *O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr.* 328, line 8, seems to indicate that it was weavers (*šht.w*) who had to pay the dyeing-agent fee to the state

⁵⁸ Charpentier (1981) 412-413; Wilson (1997) 548.

⁵⁹ Lucas & Harris (1962⁴) 150 and 152-153. See Chenciner (2000) 21-41 for madder as dyeing-agent. Crum (1939) 14a; Vycichl (1984) 14 identify madder with another term, *jp3/απτε1* (cf. Germer (1992) 119-20).

⁶⁰ Charpentier (1981) 412-413; Germer (1992) 125-126; Germer (2008) 89 and 186-187; Wilson (1997) 548. Other suggestions have been made, cf. Germer (1986) 174-175.

⁶¹ The *Chicago Demotic Dictionary* does not specify the nature of the plant.

⁶² In all three texts, the same collectors are mentioned (Hor, son of Psenmonthes, and Harsiese, son of Psenchonsis) but they collect the tax from two different people. The taxpayer is Pasemis, son of Senechtis, in *OMH* 118 and *O. BM EA* 31449 (Wängstedt (1967) 27-29). In *O. Mattha* 111, it is Esnachomneus, son of Panechates (*Pa-n3-šht.w*; *DemNb* 382-383). It is perhaps mere coincidence that all three ostraca are dated to year 2 of an unnamed Roman emperor. The editors suggested different dates; Mattha (1945) 120 dated his text to “the early Roman period,” Lichtheim (1957) 52 suggested hesitatingly Tiberius for her piece, while Wängstedt (1967) 9 proposed Augustus for the ostracon that he published. Probably the three texts are issued during the same year, and the most plausible date is year 2 of Tiberius’s reign. It is quite conceivable that the tax collectors appearing in these texts are known from other documents from the Theban West Bank that may be dated to the end of the reign of Augustus. Besides the texts mentioned, each one of the tax collectors are attested in e.g. *OMH* 116 and 128 as payers. There is a slight possibility that at least one of the collectors appears in other texts but it might also be a namesake. A person attested in the late Augustan era is more likely to be known also from the first years of Tiberius than early in the reign of Augustus.

⁶³ Kaplony-Heckel (2006a) 387 n. 17 refers to an unpublished text in St. Petersburg mentioning two men, who farmed the taxes on canvas, woven products, and the *nst̄e*-plant/dyeing-agent.

(*hr md.t Pr-ʕ*). Without the information provided by the ostrakon it would have been easy to assume that they would have been dyers. The latter occupation is often found separate from that of the weaver.⁶⁴ It is unlikely that the weavers would also have been dyers or *vice-versa*; dyeing is usually a rather complex and laborious operation requiring specialist knowledge. Nevertheless, since dyers and weavers are both involved in the textile industry, it would not be surprising if the one group had dealings with the other.⁶⁵

It is odd that the payers of the dyeing-agent fee were weavers as explicitly stated by the text, since it is known that it was the yarn that was dyed and not the fabric.⁶⁶ The weaver would have received red yarn, and the tax for dyeing had then already been remitted by those liable to pay it. The yarn was then woven into red fabrics. The coloured linen, however, usually had its own terminology, and if these finished woven cloths were the object of the tax, it is probable that another term would have been used.⁶⁷ It is not easy to explain why weavers would pay a dyeing-tax. There are two possible scenarios. Either the weavers had taken over the tax burden from the dyers, perhaps therefore being able to acquire the yarn at a discount, or “weavers” was a way of referring to the guild of textile workers,⁶⁸ a professional association primarily consisting of weavers, which possibly also included dyers among its members. Either solution would require better parallels to be deemed satisfactory, although there are fairly reliable indications that workers in the textile industry could share guild membership or have common licences.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Droß-Krüpe (2011) 46-86.

⁶⁵ Cf. Droß-Krüpe (2011) 170-171; Kaplony-Heckel (2006a) 396; n. 68 below.

⁶⁶ Droß-Krüpe (2011) 32 n. 9.

⁶⁷ See e.g. Germer (1992) 126-132; Smith (1987) 93-95; Smith (2005) 93 n. e.

⁶⁸ See Droß-Krüpe (2011) 197 n. 671 for references to trade guilds; Gibbs (2011) 292, 294, 301; San Nicolò (1972²) 101-110 for guilds of textile workers. Additional examples include a guild of the weavers from Coptos attested in *BM EA 1325* (Vleeming (2001) no. 158). The group — unlike the case in our text, if understood correctly — is referred to as “the guild of the weavers” (*ʕʕ.t n nʕ mʕk(n)y.w*). *P. Erbach* also mentions a similar congregation (*ʕʕ.t n nʕ shʕ.w*) in Djeme. *P. Mich.* II 124, col. II: 19, refers to a similar congregation (πληθὸς γερδίων) in Tebtunis, while, for instance, *P. Mich.* II 121 attests a σύννοδος of weavers from Kerkesoucha Orous. Such associations are also well known from, for instance, Soknopaiou Nesos (Lippert (2007) 151; Lippert & Schentuleit (2006) 11), where they go under the name *pʕ hʕ nʕ mdqn.w* “the corporation of the weavers,” and Oxyrhynchus (e.g. *P. Oxy.* LXXVI 5097). However, it is not uncommon for the trade guilds to be referred to as a collective only, i.e. “the weavers,” “the carpenters,” etc.

⁶⁹ It is possible that *P. Tebt.* II 287 testifies to a joint association of fullers and dyers, two separate trades (Droß-Krüpe (2011) 51-58 and 86-89). This is the interpretation put

The three previously published texts that attest the collection of the dyeing-agent tax show that it was levied in instalments on an irregular monthly basis,⁷⁰ as was common for many trade taxes. Unfortunately, the amount paid is never stated in the Demotic receipts, and therefore the annual or monthly dyeing-agent fee cannot be estimated.⁷¹

The three dyeing-agent receipts show that tax farmers collected the fee. This is a well-established practice for collecting imposts on the textile trade at Thebes.⁷² *O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr.* 328 (cf. l. 7-8) also attests this practice. Menodoros, son of Dios, is the name of the person (cf. n. l. 8 above) who was responsible for the collection of the charge in our text. Since he has a claim (*m-s3*) on the “weavers” for the dyeing-agent on behalf of the state, he must have been a tax farmer. In all likelihood, Menodoros had close ties to other important Theban state and temple officials to whom he most probably also was related (cf. n. l. 8 above). Whether he acted as a representative for the temple, an institution known to have been involved in the collection of similar taxes,⁷³ as his father was (cf. n. l. 8 above), or whether he was just a “self-employed” intermediary between the weavers and the state is unclear.

The explanation for Menodoros’s claim on the weavers does not clarify in what sense Senchonsis and her son would have been liable to pay such a fee and why it was necessary for her to point out that Petechonsis would not be entitled to claim it from her. One possible scenario is that Senchonsis and her son Peteyris would normally have been payers of the dyeing-agent fee, whether being dyers or weavers paying such a tax, and Petechonsis a collector thereof. At some point, he shouldered the responsibility for her instalments of this tax. He in all likelihood did so as a part of a deal with her and her son, and this deal would have been recorded in the *b3k*-document mentioned in line 3 (see below). It is also clear that this

forward by the editors of the papyrus (Hunt e.a. (1907) 48-49) and there are other indications in the papyri, which seem to favour such an interpretation of the situation described, e.g. *P. Ryl.* II 98 and *BGU* I 115 (see n. 65 above).

⁷⁰ *O. BM EA* 31449 specifies the period for which the tax was paid as Thoth to Mecheir. *OMH* 118 only records the instalments for Payni. In *O. Mattha* 111, the period for which the fee was paid is not preserved.

⁷¹ Cf. Droß-Krüpe (2011) 52 and 195; Wallace (1938) 202; Wilcken (1899) 170-171 for the trade tax on dyeing in Greek texts (τέλος βαφέων and similar). It is difficult to assess whether the fees recorded in the Greek receipts, a general trade tax on dyers, and the charge discussed here are related more directly or whether the Demotic fee is specific to the *nste*-plant dyeing-agent as implied by its name.

⁷² Droß-Krüpe (2011) 195; Reiter (2004) 120-121; Wallace (1938) 194-195.

⁷³ Droß-Krüpe (2011) 236-239; Lippert & Schentuleit (2006) 11-14.

obligation was not terminated when he had paid Senchonsis the three talents recorded in *O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr.* 328.

If Petechonsis were a collector of the tax, he would have been an associate of Menodoros. The latter perhaps made use of Petechonsis' connections among the weavers and other textile workers since Menodoros, most likely a member of the Theban administrative elite, was surely not himself involved in the trade. As he otherwise might have had scarce contact with this group of people, he would surely have gained much from Petechonsis' partnership.⁷⁴ Petechonsis would therefore have been a weaver, a farmer, and a lessor of land, and possibly also a tax collector. It is possible, however, that he only had paid the fee on behalf of Senchonsis and Peteyris and that the text only specifies that he had no right to claim it (back).

To what kind of writing the *b3k*-document discussed above refers is not entirely clear. The term *b3k* usually designates any kind of letter-like document. Several types of legal texts or written private messages could be denoted by the term.⁷⁵ Since Senchonsis issued the document to Petechonsis, and it recorded that he had a monetary commitment to her, it cannot have been a regular promissory note. In such a document, the debtor would normally acknowledge his or her obligation to the creditor. He or she would thus also have been the issuer of such a document.⁷⁶ This is not the situation described by our text.

Since the *b3k*-document was issued by the payee in *O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr.* 328, the possible document types with which it could be identified are limited. It is unlikely that the *b3k*-document is a sales receipt since this document was as a rule issued by the seller.⁷⁷ The two most probable

⁷⁴ For instance Droß-Krüpe (2011) 236-238 mentions a parallel situation; in Soknopaiou Nesos, the collectors of the weavers' tax were weavers themselves. In Ptolemaic Tebtunis, linen-merchants seem to have been involved in the collecting of the garments tax as well (Muhs e.a. (2002/2003) 81).

⁷⁵ Depauw (2006) 257; Wängstedt (1965) 32.

⁷⁶ Lippert (2008) 160-162. Cf. also *O. Taxes* I 7 (and discussion in Vleeming (2006/2007) 93-98 esp. 97) and *O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr.* 631 (Wängstedt (1981) 17-20). Assuming a Greek document would not make a big difference; Greek debt acknowledgments are often recorded in *homologia* documents issued by the indebted party.

⁷⁷ Cf. e.g. *O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr.* 459 (Wängstedt (1981) 26-28). Even if the seller and thus the payee issued the document recording a sale, or rather a loan disguised as a sale, it seems unlikely that the transaction was of this kind; usually a sale is related to other kinds of documents than what the current receipt represents (see Lippert & Schentuleit (2010) 11-58; Lippert (2008) 147-154; Zauzich (1990) 128 n. 1). *O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr.* 459 refers to the text recording the deal as a *sh*-document, an official notary document. Wooden Tablet Hess 1, on the other hand, seems to be a real sales receipt.

options are either to understand it as a deed recording an obligation or that it was a so-called *shn*-deed, which in most cases should be understood as a lease document (Erichsen, *DG* 446).⁷⁸

The latter suggestion depends on the fact that either the lessee or the lessor could write such documents.⁷⁹ If we suppose that the latter was the case, namely that Senchonsis issued a lease for Petechonsis, being the lessee, then the three talents paid by Petechonsis to Senchonsis would have been the compensation for the transaction. Yet, if the document were a lease, perhaps another wording would have been expected. Instead of referring to the document as a *b3k*, one would have anticipated *shn*.⁸⁰

If the *b3k*-document were a deed recording an obligation, Senchonsis would have penned it, pledging to undertake any task for Petechonsis, or rather, it might have been her son who was supposed to carry out the work. In exchange, Petechonsis would have to pay her and her son the given sum. Such texts are known in Demotic, worded from the perspective of the party that promises to perform a service, e.g. *P. Cairo CG* 30604.⁸¹ Nevertheless, this kind of text, written in Demotic, is rather rare and only known from the Ptolemaic period.⁸²

Some Greek papyri disclose under which conditions workers in the textile industry could be employed. A fine example is posed by *P. Mich.* V 355 / *PSI* VIII 902, a so-called *παραμονή*-contract⁸³ from first century AD Tebtunis. In this text issued by a weaver to his employer, probably in his turn a weaver, the former declares himself willing to work for a specified period of time, two years, in exchange for getting his living costs covered. In addition to this, the employer is to pay all the weaver's taxes, including the trade tax (*γερδιακόν*).⁸⁴ It is possible that the Theban document discussed in this article attests to a similar arrangement.

⁷⁸ Felber (1997) 117; Hughes (1973) 154-159; Manning (2003) 189; Monson (2005) 83; Pestman (1993) 188; Pestman e.a. (1977) 102; Winkler (2010) 167.

⁷⁹ Examples of leases written by the lessor include *O. Leid. Dem.* 65, *OMH* 131, *O. Upps. Dem.* 825, *O. Zauzich* 23 (= *O. Leid. Dem.* 323), and *O. Zauzich* 27. See also Kaplony-Heckel (2004) 288 n. 25. Nevertheless, leases issued by the lessee are more common.

⁸⁰ Hughes (1973) 156.

⁸¹ Thissen (1984) 235-244.

⁸² Lippert (2008) 162-163.

⁸³ See e.g. Adams (1964) *passim*, esp. 15 and 60-61; Jördens (1990) *passim* for such texts.

⁸⁴ Droß-Krüpe (2011) 164-165.

Yet, since we have a mother who enters an agreement for her son, we might actually be dealing with a related kind of treaty, namely a so-called *διδασκαλική*,⁸⁵ an arrangement between an apprentice, or rather his or her caretaker,⁸⁶ and a master of a trade. These texts, similarly to the above-mentioned contracts, usually specify a duration during which a person is to work for a master while learning a trade. In these agreements, it is not unusual for the master to be obliged to pay for the apprentice's living expenses, provide him or her with clothing, and occasionally also remit the trade taxes that the apprentice was liable to pay.⁸⁷ In some cases, the master recompenses the guardian of an underaged apprentice. The purpose of this latter payment is only occasionally specified, namely that the guardian, not the master, provides housing, nourishment, and clothing. In other cases, it seems to be a small salary.⁸⁸ Similar texts are also known in Demotic, for instance *P. Berlin* P 9800 from first-century BC Herakleopolites which is a contract between a weaver (*mdqn*) and a prospective apprentice.⁸⁹ The text is issued by the apprentice to the master and thus follows the pattern envisioned for the *b3k*-document.

The last suggestion is the most plausible one, i.e. that we are dealing with the confirmation of a payment for an apprenticeship and thus the *b3k*-document would have been that agreement. Peteyris would therefore have obtained professional training from Petechonsis, working as a prospect weaver, dyer, or similar. Similarly to the situation in many Greek documents recording such deals, it is possible that the master was supposed to pay the taxes for the apprentice. Since Peteyris might have been a minor (under the age of 14),⁹⁰ his mother, Senchonsis, would then have been his guardian. Women as guardians for their children are attested in many papyri,⁹¹ and in, for instance, *P. Oxy.* XXXVIII 2875, a similar situation as envisioned in our case may be attested; a mother possibly acts as a guardian

⁸⁵ Adams (1964) 114-138; Bergamasco (1995) 95-167; Johnson (1936) 388-392; see also Zauzich (1997/1998) 125 n. 2.

⁸⁶ Zauzich (1997/1998) 131.

⁸⁷ Cf. Kruse (1996) 155-158.

⁸⁸ Cf. e.g. *P. Mich.* II 121 ro. II: 8; see also Adams (1964) 114-119 esp. 115 and 133-135.

⁸⁹ Zauzich (1997/1998) 125-139.

⁹⁰ See Boehm (2011) 67-68 for references to discussions on the age of minors in Egypt.

⁹¹ Chiusi (1994) 155 n. 1 and 175-178; Taubenschlag (1944) 113-127. See also Bergamasco (1995) 114 for the apprenticeship contracts. In most *διδασκαλική*-agreements, in which a mother acts as guardian for the apprentice, she is accompanied by a *κύριος*, occasionally a husband but mostly her brother or elder son. Examples of texts where this is the case include: *P. Heid.* IV 326, *P. Mich.* II 121 ro. II: 8, *P. Oxy.* II 332

for her son who is about to begin his apprenticeship as a construction worker. The contract, however, is phrased as if the prospective apprentice himself enters the agreement, while the mother consents to it.⁹² Women took the role of a guardian usually only when the father was not longer present, in most cases because he had died. *O. Bodl. Eg. Inscr.* 328 is therefore likely a receipt indicating that Petechonis had fulfilled at least his monetary obligations (or some of them)⁹³ from the agreement with Senchonsis and her son Peteyris described above.

The three talents or 18.000 copper drachms of the transaction are a considerable sum, even taking the Ptolemaic and the Early Roman currency conversion into account, i.e. dividing the sum by roughly 400 to obtain the value in silver drachms.⁹⁴ 18.000 copper drachms correspond to roughly 45 silver drachms. Only a rough estimation of the value of Petechonis' debt can be made. Depending on the exact conversion rate, the value of this amount would correspond to approximately the price of a year's consumption of wheat for a working adult male.⁹⁵ In terms of the relation between the debt and a regular annual salary, accurate estimations are impossible. However, according to Drexhage's rather rough approximation of average wages in the Roman period and how much wheat one would be able to buy with them, the figure paid corresponds to roughly a third or a half of a year's total income of an average worker.⁹⁶ It is possible therefore that the sum, if taken as a wage, could indicate that the apprenticeship would last for a shorter time, but considering the nature of such an agreement it would not be surprising if an apprentice in fact would obtain less than a standard worker; the payment might, as mentioned above, only compensate for the fact that the master does not provide housing, clothing, or food (see above). Be this as it may. The amount paid by Petechonis to the mother and her child was certainly a sum worthy of being recorded.

Oxford University
Oriental Institute

Andreas WINKLER
andreas.winkler@orinst.ox.ac.uk

and XLI 2971, *PSI* X 1110 vo I and 1132, *P. Tebt.* II 385, and *Stud. Pal.* XXII 40. In *P. Oxy. Hels.* 29, a grandmother acts as a caretaker.

⁹² Cf., however, Bagnall (1968) 135-136; Bergamasco (1995) 115.

⁹³ See e.g. *P. Tebt.* II 385; Adams (1964) 117 and 135-136.

⁹⁴ Lichtheim (1957) 1-2; Maresch (1996) 34-51 and 116-117.

⁹⁵ Drexhage (1991) 18; cf. n. 21 above.

⁹⁶ Drexhage (1991) 10-24 and 402-448.

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