

Family Archives from Elephantine

The Evidence from the *Ostraka**

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Abstract

The majority of Greek *ostraka* from Egypt, and from Elephantine in particular, are tax receipts. The huge number of names which come up in these texts provide the opportunity to reconstruct family archives enhancing our knowledge of various aspects of the prosopography and sociology of Elephantine. Two small families are documented here through one already known, and three newly published *ostraka* from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

Keywords

Ostraka, Elephantine, small family archives

A Family archive is a private archive, which consists of informal collections of texts that belong to various members of the same family; it is created diachronically by the accumulation of papers over several generations.¹

Several scholars have already searched successfully for family archives in the Elephantine *ostraka*.

1. The two family archives of Petorzmetis son of Kalasiris and Tisatis, whose members appear in 9 texts so far (A.D. 115-140) over three generations, and of Kalasiris son of Patephaus and Senpamonthes, whose members appear in 3 texts so far (A.D. 136-140) over three generations; analyzed by J. Shelton 1990, 223.
2. The family archive of Menophilos, whose members appear in 15 texts so far (A.D. 147-174) over four generations; analyzed by J. Shelton in P.Brook. 53 (introduction).
3. The family archive of Thrakidas and his sons and grandsons, whose members appear in 16 texts so far (A.D. 98-127) over three generations; analyzed by G. Nachtergaele in P.Hombert II 45.

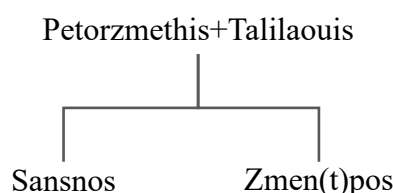
* I am grateful and indebted to Cornelia Römer for her careful review, enriching criticism and helpful comments.

¹ Fournet 2018, 182; Hedrick 2008, 103.

4. The family archive of Patsibtis son of Petorzmetis and Senpelaias, whose members appear in 44 texts so far (A.D. 123-177) over three generations; analyzed by Duttenhöfer 2017, 221-226.

I can at least add two small nuclei of families, of which the number of family members may increase by the continuous publication of new documents, and then become archives that span several generations. The two archives are nearly contemporary and stem from the period between A.D. 131 and 143.

The First Family



In the following two texts,² we meet two brothers as taxpayers for different kinds of *merismos*, Sansnos son of Petormethis his mother being Talilaouis, and Zmen(t)pos son of Petormethis his mother being Tanlilauis (sic). The time span of this little archive is from A.D. 133 to 138.

The names of the available members of this family are all Egyptian. The male names Sansnos, Zmen(t)pos and Petormethis are common either in Elephantine only or in many other places in Egypt. The mother's name Talilaouis is a rare name till now. It appears in a limited number of texts, all of them are from Elephantine.

The name Talilaouis has various forms. We can find Ταλιλαῶις as in O.Bankes 47 (A.D. 138-161), Ταλιλαοῦις as in SB VI 9545, 31 (27 Dec. A.D. 149- 25 Jan. A.D. 150), Τανλιλαῶις as appears in ZPE 202 (2017), 233- 234³ (13 Mar. A.D. 160), Τανλιλαῶεις as appears in ZPE 202 (2017), 237⁴ (27 Sept. A.D. 165) and Ταπλιλαῶθις⁵ as in O.Wilck. 253 (22 June A.D. 163).

Talilaouis, the woman, who appears in all the previous texts, is not the same Talilaouis, the mother, who appears in our texts here. The woman Talilaouis in all the previous texts, except SB VI 9545, 31, appears as the wife of Patsibtis in the archive of Patsibtis son of Petorzmetis and Senpelaias. The woman Talilaouis in SB VI 9545, 31 appears as wife of Harpaesis.

² The two texts come from Elephantine and are housed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo under S.R. 18955.

³ This text is presented by Ruth Duttenhöfer as a combination of the two texts SB XVIII 13276 and O.Bankes 13.

⁴ This text is presented by Ruth Duttenhöfer as a combination of the two texts O.Bankes 23 and 50.

⁵ Corrected to be read as Ταπλιλαῶέως in BL 2.1, 52.

1.

O.SH. 18955. 19

9.8 x 7.9 cm.

27 May A.D. 133

The *ostrakon* preserves six complete lines; a large margin appears at the bottom; some parts of the text are faded as in lines 4, 5, and 6.

The receipt was issued by the tax collector Petorzmetis for the receipt of *merismos* for the costs of two statues for Antinous, the Roman Emperor's Hadrian lover, who died in A.D. 130.⁶ It appears that the tax collector Petorzmetis was in charge of collecting this tax for a longer period in this year A.D. 133, as he appears in P.Bingen 84 (10 Aug. A.D. 133) and in Duttenhöfer 2017, 239-240⁷ (15 Aug. A.D. 133).

1 Πετορζμήθις πράκ(τωρ)᾽ Ελε-
 2 φαντ(ίνης). Διέγρα(ψεν) Σανσνώς
 3 Πετορζμήθ(ιος) μητ(ρός) Ταλιλαού-
 4 ις ὑπ(έρ) μερισμ(οῦ) ἀνδ(ριάντων) β̄ ιζ (ἔτους)
 5 ᾽ Αδριανού τοῦ κυρίου
 6 ρυπ(αράς) δραχ(μάς) δ. Παῦνι β̄.

1 πρα^κ 1-2 Ελε|φαντ^τ 2 διεγρᾱ 3 Πετορζμη^θ μη^τ 4 υ^π μερισμ^μ αν^δ β̄ ιζ L
 6 ρυπ δραχ

«Petorzmetis collector of Elephantine. Sansnos son of Petorzmetis his mother being Talilaouis has paid for *merismos* of 2 statues for the 17th year of Hadrian the lord 4 debased drachmas. 2nd Pauni».

1-2 Πετορζμήθις πράκ(τωρ)᾽ Ελε|φαντ(ίνης). Petorzmetis the tax collector of Elephantine appears alone collecting poll tax in O.Leid. 180 (A.D. 100-125), as an evidence for the chief duty of the *practor* in Elephantine starting in A.D. 91-92; see Wallace 1937, 298.

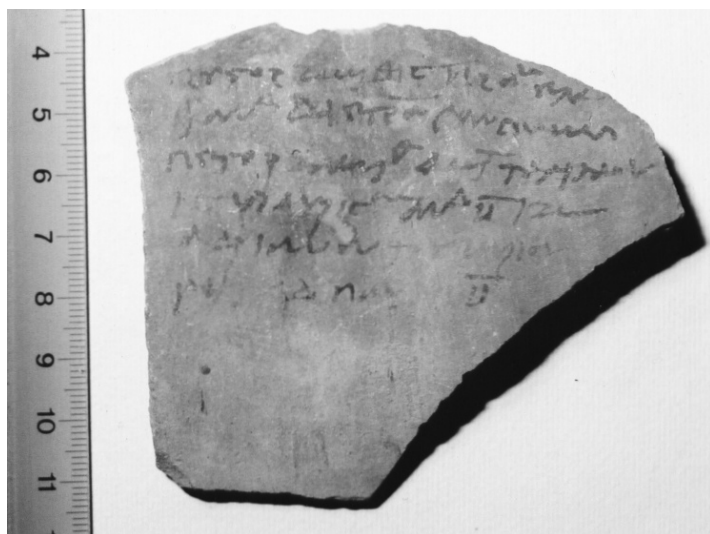
Petorzmetis appears also alone collecting μερισμὸς ποταμοφυλακίδος in P.Eleph.Wagner I 294 (A.D. 112-114); μερισμὸς ἀνδριάντων β̄ in Duttenhöfer 2017, 239 (15 Aug. A.D. 133).

Petorzmetis with Pachompsachis appear together collecting μερισμὸς ἀνδριάντων, ποταμοφυλακίδος καὶ στατίωνος in P.Bingen 84 (10 Aug. A.D. 133).

⁶ See Renberg 2010, 159-198, who argues for such an identification of the statues erected at this date.

⁷ This text is presented by Ruth Duttenhöfer as a combination of the two texts O.Bankes 27 and 75.

4 μερισμ(οῦ) ἀνδ(ριάντων) β̄ This is a local tax; its proceeds went to finance the provision or renovation of imperial statues and busts. The receipts for taxes on imperial statues are dating to the period from Trajan (first attestation) down to Marcus and Verus (last attestation). The amount of this tax increased from reign to reign and could double under emperors, who ruled with a co-ruler. Specific terms indicate the different forms of imperial effigies: ἀνδριάς or προτομή; in some cases we are given the material that was used, either bronze or silver; see Fishwick 1989, 335-347. Receipts for such assessments have been found in considerable number at Elephantine, where the presence of a Roman garrison made the erection of such a tribute to the emperor important; see Wallace, *ibidem*, 159-162.



Pl. 1.

2.

O.SH. 18955. 21

5.6 x 7.7 cm.

24 May A.D. 138

The text preserves six incomplete lines; a large margin appears at the bottom; a regular break on the right hand side causes a loss of 3 to 5 letters in each line.

This tax was issued by the collectors Psanmouos and Petesouchos for two taxes, μερισμὸς σκοπέλων «*merismos* for watch-towers», and μερισμὸς διπλῶν «*merismos* for the license-tax».

The tax payer Zmenpos son of Petorzmetis his mother being Tanlilauis is the second brother in this family. The mother's name was written in one of the forms we formerly mentioned (see above).

- 1 Ψανμοῦς καὶ Πετεσοῦχ(ος) [πράκ(τορες)].
- 2 Διέ(γραψεν) Ζμενπῶς Πετορζ[μήθ(ιος)]
- 3 μητ(ρός) Τανλιλαῦις ὑπ(έρ) μερι[σμοῦ]
- 4 σκοπέλ(ων) (δραχμῆν) α (ὀβολὸν) διπλ(ῶν) ὄμ[(οίως) ...]
- 5 (ἔτους) κβ' Ἀδριανοῦ Καί[σαρος]
- 6 τοῦ κυρίου. Παχ(ῶν) κθ̄.

1 Πετεσου^χ 2 διε̄ 1. Ζμεντπῶς 3 μη^τ υ^π 4 σκοπε^λ α — διπ^λ 5 L 6 Πα^χ

«Psanmous and Petesouchos [collectors]. Zmenpos son of Petorzmethis his mother being Tanlilauis has paid 1 dr. 1 ob. for *merismos* for watch-towers likewise [...] for the license-tax. Year 22 of Hadrianus Caesar the lord. 29th Pachon».

1. Ψανμοῦς καὶ Πετεσοῦχ(ος) [πράκ(τορες)]. Psanmous the tax collector appears alone from A.D. 135 to 137 collecting μερισμὸς διπλῶν as in SB VI 9545, 27 (A.D. 135); O.Wilck. 163 (A.D. 135-136); O.Wilb. 22 (A.D. 136); SB I 4358, 4359 (A.D. 136); O.Berl. 38 (A.D. 138), μερισμὸς ποταμοφυλακίδος as in O.Wilck. 162 (A.D. 136); O.Deiss. 41 (A.D. 137), and τιμὴ δημοσίου φοίνικος as in O.Wilck. 161 (A.D. 135). Psanmous sometimes appears with Petesouchos as collectors for the same kind of taxes from A.D. 137 to 139 as in O.Wilb. 23 (A.D. 137) and P.Eleph.Wagner I 78 (A.D. 139). Petesouchos worked as πράκτωρ alone in A.D. 139 in O.Wilck. 169, 170; SB I 4361; SB XX 15054; ZPE 212 (2019), no. 3.

The two πράκτορες Psanmous and Petesouchos sometimes title themselves as πράκτορες only and sometimes as πράκτορες Ἐλεφαντίνης.

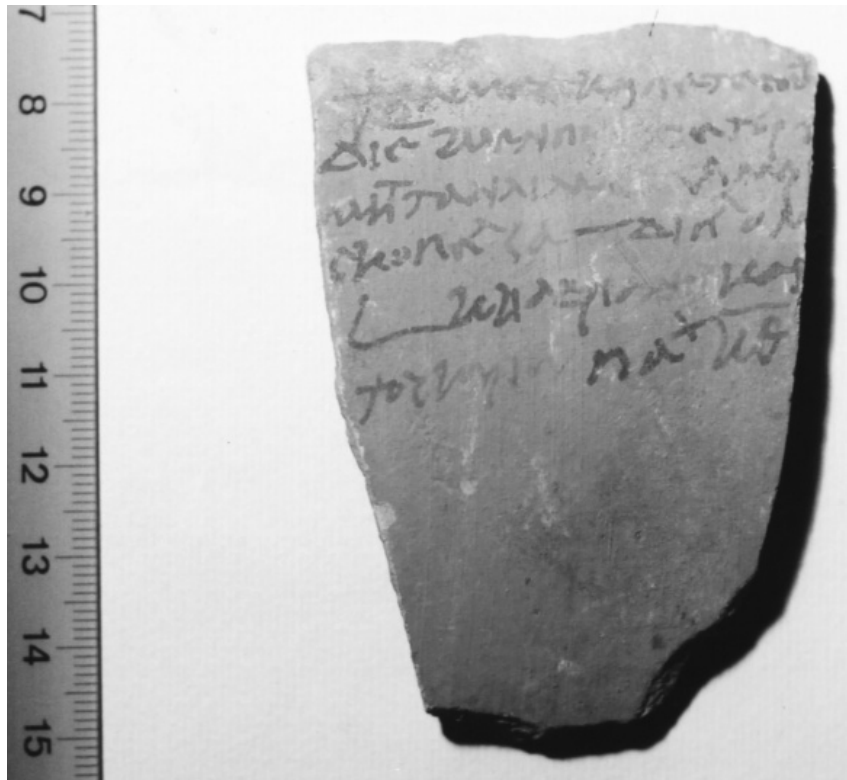
2-3 Ζμενπῶς Πετορζ[μήθ(ιος)] | μητ(ρὸς) Τανλιλαῦις: a Zmenpos son of Petorzmethis (without the mother's name) is known as a taxpayer from O.Wilck. 48 (A.D. 97-98); O.Wilck. 168 (29 Aug. A.D. 138-29 Aug. A.D. 139) in which the alias name of the father Petorzmethis is Dax, «Ζμενπῶς Πετορζμήθου τοῦ καὶ Δακός»; see Heilporn 2000, 318. A Zmenpos son of Petorzmethis appears also in SB XIV 11923 (15 March A.D. 139-140) in which the name of the mother is in the broken part of the text; G. M. Browne suspected it to be «Tisatis» [Ζμεντ]πῶς Πετορζμήθ(ιος) μητ(ρὸς) | [Τισάτις]. But by reference to the image of SB XIV 11923, we find that the broken part allows the suggestion for a long name for the mother, so we can suggest the name Talilaouis as the name for the mother in SB XIV 11923.

3-4 ὑπ(ἐρ) μερι[σμοῦ] | σκοπέλ(ων) (δραχμῆν) α (ὀβολὸν) Tax for watch-tower places at Elephantine-Syene may have been a special capitation tax to provide funds for building such look-outs. The amounts range from 2¾ obols to 4 drachmae; see Wallace, *ibidem*, 148; O.Wilck. 249 (A.D. 162).

4 διπλ(ῶν) is a tax paid to guarantee housing and supplies for military personnel, who are sent on missions away from their military organizations; see Wallace, *ibidem*, 153-154; Quenouille 2008, 199-208.

ὄμ[(οίως) ...] The rate for διπλῶν is quite variable from one year to the next; cf. K. A. Worp, *The Bankes Ostraca*, Messina, 2016, 36-38.

The space here can be reconstructed as ὄμ[(οῖως) ὄβο(λούς) ἕξ], this amount for διπλῶν «6 obols» (= 1 dr.) appears in O.Wilck. (29 Jul. A.D. 137) in which the receipt was issued by Psanmous and Petesouchos the tax collectors. The amount for the same tax appears also in A.D. 139 at the rate of 3 drachmas 1 obol (δραχμὰς γ (ὄβολόν) as in SB I 4361 (13 Feb. A.D. 139); SB XX 15054 (18 Feb. A.D. 139); O.Wilck. 169 (5 Mar. A.D. 139).



Pl. 2.

The Second Family

This family is also still small. It consists of the father Ζμεντῶς, the mother Τισάτις, and their sons Ἄρπαῆσις and Πετορζμήτις.

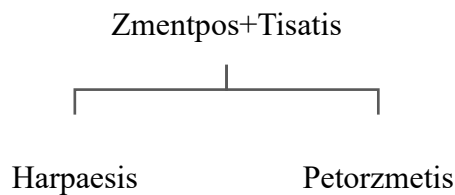
Ἄρπαῆσις is the first son who appears as a taxpayer for μερισμὸς ποταμοφυλακίδος in a tax receipt issued by the tax collector Καλασίρις in ZPE 209 (2019), no. 7 (23 Dec. A.D. 131).

- 1 Καλασίρις πράκ(τωρ). Διέγραψεν
- 2 Ἄρπαῆσις Ζμεντ(ῶτος) μητ(ρὸς) Τισάτις ὑπ(ὲρ)
- 3 μερισμ(οῦ) ποτ(αμο)φυλ(ακίδος) ις (ἔτους) Ἄδριανου
- 4 τοῦ κυρίου (γίνονται) (δραχμὴ) α (διώβολον) Οὐάλ(ης) Πρεσβύτ(ερος)
- 5 ἔγραψα μὴ εἰδ(ότος) γράμματ(α) (ἔτους) ις Ἄδριανου
- 6 τοῦ κυρίου μηνὸς Ἄδριανου κς.

2. 1. Τισάτιος

«Kalasiris tax collector. Harpaesis, son of Zmentpos his mother being Tisatis, has paid for the *merismos* of the river-guard of the 16th year of Hadrianus the lord in total 1 dr. 2 obols. I, Valens the elder wrote (for him), who does not know writing. Year 16 of Hadrianus the lord, 26th of month Hadrianos».

Πετορζμῆτις is the second son who appears here in the following new text as a taxpayer for unspecified *μερισμός* in a tax receipt issued by the tax collectors of money taxes at Elephantine Σωτήρ and Παπρεμίθης.



3.

O.SH. 18955. 24

9.6 x 7.5 cm.

10 Oct. A.D. 143

This *ostrakon* preserves seven complete lines; narrow margins appear at the top, and at the left hand side; a quite wide margin is preserved at the bottom. The ink is not properly controlled and appears thicker in some parts of the text than in others.

This receipt was issued for unspecified *merismos* in the 7th year of Antoninus at the rate of five drachmas. The nature of this tax depended on the needs of the state.⁸ Its amount is also variable in Upper Egypt.⁹ Five drachmas as a rate for *merismos* appears as an odd amount, but is also attested once in O.Wilck. 196 (28 Jun. A.D. 144), to which Worp referred with perplexity in his excursus in O.Bankes, p. 34.

This receipt was issued by the tax collectors of money taxes at Elephantine Soter and Papremithes, but it was written by Soter whose signature appears at the end of the receipt in the same hand.

- 1 Σωτήρ καὶ Παπρεμίθης πράκ(τορες) ἀργ(υρικών) Ἐλεφ(αντίνης).
- 2 Διέγρα(ψεν) Πετορζμῆτις Ζμεντπῶτ(ος) μητ(ρὸς)
- 3 Τισάτις ὑπ(έρ) μερισμ(οῦ) ζ (ἔτους) Ἀντωνεῖνο(υ) Καίσαρος
- 4 τοῦ κυρίου ῥυπ(αράς) δραχ(μάς) πέντε, (γίνονται) (δραχμαὶ) ε. Φαῶ(φι) ἰβ̄

⁸ Heilporn 2000, 320.

⁹ Shelton 1990, 232.

- 5 Σωτήρ σεσημίωμαι
 6 vac. (δραχμάς)
 7 vac. ξ

1 πρα^κ αργ̄ Ελεφ̄ 2 διεγρά̄ Ζμεντπω^τ μη^τ 3. Ι. Τισάτιος υ^π
 3 μερισ^μ Αντωνεινο 4 ρυπ δραχ / ς Φαωφ̄ 5. Ι. σεσημείωμαι 6 Δ

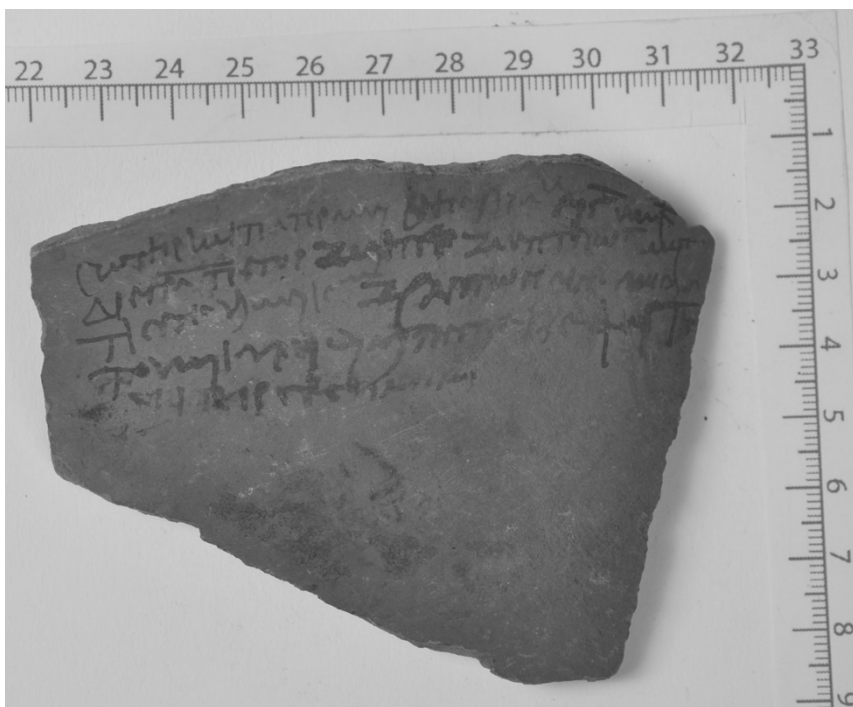
«Soter and Papremithes, the tax collectors of money taxes at Elephantine. Petorzmetis son of Zmentpos his mother being Tisatis has paid for *merismos* for the 7th year of Antoninus Caesar the lord five debased drachmas, the total 5 dr. 12th Phaophi. I Soter have signed. 5 dr.»

1 Σωτήρ καὶ Παπρεμίθης πράκ(τορες) ἀργ(υρικῶν) Ἐλεφ(αντίνης). The collector Soter is found alone without an associate in O.Bodl. II 1167 (A.D. 142-146); P.Eleph.Wagner I 39 (A.D. 143); SB XX 15057 (A.D. 143); ZPE 80 (1990) no. 14 (17 Jul. A.D. 143).

The collector Papremithes is found alone without an associate in O.Bodl. II 808 (4 May A.D. 146); O.Wilck. 205 (4 May A.D. 146); O.Heid. 220 (5 May A.D. 146).

The two collectors Soter and Papremithes appear together in 21 texts so far; see [www.trismegistos.org/person/299667].

6-7 (δραχμάς) | ξ the reading is not perspicuous but can be expected.



Pl. 3.

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