

Original article

FOUR UNPUBLISHED HIERATIC JAR LABELS FROM EL- ASHMUNEIN MAGAZINE

Zaafrany, A.

Archaeology dept., Faculty of Arts, Minia Univ., Minia, Egypt

*E-mail address: ahmed_farouk90@mu.edu.eg

Article info.

Article history:

Received: 2-1-2025

Accepted: 12-10-2025

Doi: 10.21608/ejars.2026.511049

Keywords:

Label

Hieratic

El-Ashmunein

Wine

Fowl

EJARS – Vol. 16 (1) – June 2026: 69-73

Abstract:

This paper deals with publication and study of four label jars, that were discovered in 1994 by chance in the region of Zawyet el- Amwat (East bank of Nile- El- Minia). Now they are kept in the magazine of El-Ashmunein. The four ostraca were cataloged with the numbers 1515, 1516, 1517, and 1530 in the fourth register. According to the paleography, formulae and content these labels can be dated to the 18th dynasty, specifically to Al- Amarna period. Unfortunately, they are very poorly because they have few inscriptions, and the text mostly incomplete. They were written in black ink, and recorded years 11 and 12 from one of kings of Al- Amarna reign (most probably Akhenaten). The four labels divided to three of them deal with wine labels, and one of them deals with fowl label. They have two titles of wine, the first is Hry- kAmw "the chief of the vineyard, and "k3mw" The gardener.

1. Introduction

The hundreds of hieratic labels written in black ink on the shoulders of the pottery jars in which supplies of wine, ale, meat, fat, honey, oil, and other commodities. Inscriptions of this class, however, are well known from tombs, temples, and other palace and town sites of the 18th and 19th dynasties and have been published in varying degrees of detail and from various points of view [1]. Jar labels in ancient Egypt illustrate the graduation and the development of the Egyptian administration [2], one of these labels known as wine labels, which consider the most common labels found in the new kingdom. These labels varied in their elements, their dates, and the places where they were found. The largest part of these belonged to the 18th dynasty, as they represent a large and important part of it. A large number of these labels were found in the palace of king Amenhotep III in Malkata. In addition, there are many numbers of it found in Al-Amarna, which dates to the reign of Akhenaten. Then there is a small group dating the reign of Horemheb, which were found in his tomb at Saqqara, Horemheb labels were the link between the labels of the 18th dynasty and the Ramesside period. This is in addition to labels found in the Deir el-Medina and in the storerooms of the Ramesseum temple, and numerous numbers of them came from various regions [3]. One of this labels dealt with Wine jar label as the wine in ancient Egypt was a prestigious product consumed only by the upper classes and the royal family. Wine jars were placed in tombs as offerings to the dead in order for them to be able to enjoy this drink in the Afterlife. Thanks to the existence of decorated scenes on walls of Egyptian tombs showing the elaboration of wine, we are able to know how it was made [4].

2. Methodology

2.1. Ostracon no. 1515, fig. (1)

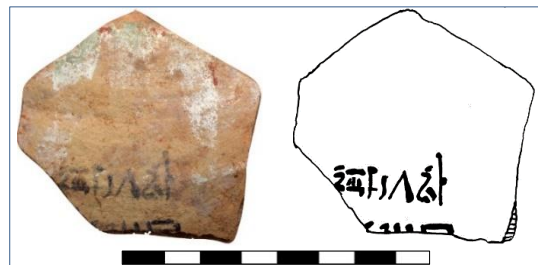




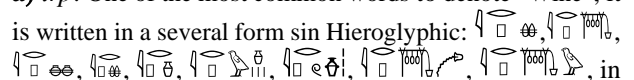
Figure (1) O. 1515 and its facsimile

- **Dimensions:** H. 8 cm×W. 9 cm
- **Material:** Pottery
- **Provenance:** Zawyet el-Amwat, 1994
- **Date:** New kingdom, 18th dynasty
- **Description:** This pottery ostracon is written in two lines in black ink, the 2nd line is incomplete, and there are some sediments of salt on its top.

▪ **Transcription:**

1. 
2. 
1. *rnpt sp 11 irp^(a)....*
2. *hry- k3mw^(b)*
1. *regnal year 11, wine of.....*
2. *the chief of vineyard*

▪ **Commentary**

a) *irp*: One of the most common words to denote "Wine", it is written in a several form sin Hieroglyphic:  , in

2.2. Ostracon no. 1516, fig. (2)



Figure (2) O. 1516 and its facsimile

- **Dimensions:** H. 8 cm×W. 9.5 cm
- **Material:** Pottery
- **Provenance:** Zawyet el-Amwat, 1994
- **Date:** New kingdom, 18th dynasty
- **Description:** This pottery ostracon is written in two lines incomplete in clear black ink, the scribe leaves a space from right to begin writing, May the empty side is a right edge of the jar.
- **Transcription:**

1.

2.

1. *rnpt sp 11 irp*
 2. *k3mw^(c) S[gzy]^(d)....*

1. *Regnal year 11, wine of....*
 2. *The Vintner S[gay].....*

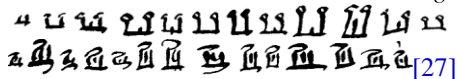
▪ **Commentary**

c) the word *k3mw* transcript here to to meaning "Vintner", and wrote in another form as: [24]. For the hieratic forms for word *k3mw* (the vintner), tab. (3).

Table (3) the various forms for word "*k3mw, k3miw*" in hieratic documents

kAmw/kAmiw Vineyard	Petrie, Tell al-Amarna [18]	Petrie, Thebes [19]	P. Harris I [25]	P. Anastasi IV [26]	Spiegelberg, ZAS 58, pp.25-36 [11]	Hassan, Kh. [3]
	pl. 22, 5				p. 28	Pl. 67 (K.6331)
						Pl. 68(K.6350)
					p. 26	
					Pl. 27, 10	
					Pl. 7, 4	
						Pl. 19, 6

d) This group are consisting of, the first sign surely read the letter s | the first letter in name *k3mw*, but the second incompletely letter may be read *k3* | , or the letter *g* as shown the next forms for *k3*. or for letter "g".



But for the word *sk3* its different from the sign before it in text. so, I think the name approach to be "sgzy" [28] as written it Ranke, not to be

2.3. Ostracon no. 1517, fig. (3)



Figure (3) O. 1517 and its facsimile

- **Dimensions:** H. 6.5 cm×W. 7cm
- **Material:** Pottery
- **Provenance:** Zawyet el- Amwat, 1994
- **Date:** New kingdom, 18th dynasty
- **Description:** This pottery ostracon is written in one line unfortunately incomplete, and not as clear as the previous ostracon, written in black ink, and it's broken on the right side.
- **Transcription:**

1.

rnpt sp 11 irp^(d)
Regnal year 11, wine of...

▪ **Commentary**

d) The hieratic form for word *irp* here is written as: This form is slightly unusual; as there was a ligature between the base of the seat and the three strokes.

2.4. Ostracon no. 1530, fig. (4)



Figure (4) O. 1530 and its facsimile

- **Dimensions:** H. 4.5 cm×W. 8 cm
- **Material:** Pottery
- **Provenance:** Zawyet el- Amwat, 1994
- **Date:** New kingdom, 18th dynasty
- **Description:** This pottery rectangular ostracon is written in one line by black ink. This ostracon is shown label jars dealing with Fowl. These ostraca are something rare, not famous like the previous ostraca dealing with wine labels.
- **Transcription:**

rnpt sp^(c) 12 3pd- mr n msyt^(f)

Regnal year 12, Pond- duck of water- fowl

▪ **Commentary**

e) *rnpt- sp*: which mean regnal year written on four ostraca here in a different hieratic forms, tab. (4). f) The group read *3pd- mr* translated "Pondfowl", as came on jar labels from palace of Amenhotep III in Malkata in forms: , , [9], but Faulkner mentioned that the word *3pd* abbreviated in , meaning "Duck" as a specific type of bird, not meaning "bird" in general as mentioned in Wb 1, 9, 5 (including in this term perhaps also other small water- fowl) [29]. The hieratic form for word "*3pd*" mentioned in the Papyrus Leningrad 1115 (Shipwrecked Sailor tale), 51 is [30], and with a different determinative in Anastasi Papyrus III, 3,1, in form: [26] .



Table (4) Hieratic forms for group "mpt- sp".

mpt- sp regnal year	O. 1515	O. 1516	O. 1517	O. 1530

As for word "mr"; it's written in forms and translate in meaning: "channel", "canal", "garden pool", or "pond", when "Gardiner" & "Bell" explain the word "Mr-wr" and presented it in meaning "Kom Medinet Ghurab", not the Common definition of it as "Lake Moeris" [31]. The second word is read *msyt* translate " water-fowl", and written in forms [24]. The hieratic form for *msyt* as came in the papyrus Berlin museum 3024, 93 is form [32]:



On a papyrus from the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty the word *msyt* is written in and translate by Caminos is a "water- fowl" [33]. Hayes mentions these kind of labels which mentioned in Malkata label jars in a various forms as: [1].

3. Results

The four ostraca include three of them related to the wine label jars, and the fourth of them dealt with fowl label jars. We can say that these ostraca date back to Al- Amarna period, because the title "*hry- k3mw*" appeared on ostracon no. 1515.

4. Discussion

As for dating these Ostraca, we can say through the title "*hry- k3mw*" which mentioned on O.1515, and as for Černý suggested that, the title "*hry- k3mw*" replaced with "*hry- b3h*" in the 13th year from reign Akhenaten, through the date wrote on theme is 11th and 12th, we can say these Ostraca date back to the reign of the king Akhenaten.

5. Conclusion

We can conclude that these ostraca represent labels of great importance in the system of recording the famous label Jars in the New kingdom. Although they are generally lacking in text. Adding to their historical value it is include the rare label jar, is the flow label, in addition to three labels for wine, It's have two title related to winemaking; *hry- k3mw* "chief of vineyard", and *k3mw* "the vintner, which refers to a responsibility related to the production or storage of wine, highlighting the role of wine as part of the local economy and royal administration during that period. These details shed light on the vital role of wine and its labels in the social, economic, and religious life of ancient Egypt, especially during the Amarna period.

References

[1] Hayes, W. (1951). Inscriptions from the palace of Amenhotep III. *JNES*. 10 (1): 35- 56.
 [2] Hassan, Kh. (2014). *Publish and study a group of hieratic ostraca from the Egyptian museum of Cairo (Deir el-Bahari and Deir el-Medina)*, Ph.D., Egyptology dept., Faculty of Archaeology, Cairo Univ., Egypt.
 [3] Hassan, Kh. (2009). *Hieratic jar labels in the new kingdom*, MA., Egyptology dept., Faculty of Archaeology, Cairo Univ., Egypt (In Arabic).

[4] Jané, M. (2008). *Wine in ancient Egypt: A cultural and analytical study*, British Archaeological Reports, Int. Series 1851, London.
 [5] El Qenawy, M. (1988). *Viticulture and winemaking in ancient Egypt: The pharaonic era*, MA, Egyptology dept. Faculty of Archaeology, Cairo Univ, Egypt (In Arabic).
 [6] Erman, A & Grapow, H. (1982). *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen sprache: Im Auftrage der deutschen akademien*, Band I, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin.
 [7] Wahlberg, E. (2012). *The wine jars speak a text study*, MA., Archaeology and Ancient History Egyptology dept, Uppsala Univ., Sweden.
 [8] Poo, Mu. (2001). *Wine*. In Redford, d (ed.) *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, Vol. 3, Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford, pp. 502-503
 [9] O'Connor, D & Kemp, B. (1978). *Excavations at Malkata and the Birket Habu 1971-1974: The Inscriptions*, Aris & Phillips Ltd, Warminster.
 [10] Peet, E. & Woolley, L. (1923). *The city of Akhenaten*, Part I: Excavation of 1921 and 1922 at el-Amarnah, EES Pub., London.
 [11] Spiegelberg, W. (1923). Bemerkungen zu den hieratischen amphoreninschriften des Ramesseums, *ZÄS*. 58: 25-36.
 [12] Erman, A & Grapow, H. (1982). *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache: Im auftrage der deutschen akademien*, Band V, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin.
 [13] Abder-Razik, M. (1979). Die altägyptischen Weingarten (*k3nw/k3mw*) bis zum ende des neues reiches, *MDAIK*. 35: 227-247.
 [14] Gardiner, A. (1947). *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, Vol II (Text), Oxford Univ. Press: London.
 [15] Nassar, M. & Eissa, M. (2020). Hieratic wine jar docketts from Tuthmosis's IV temple in Gurna, *Shedet*. 7: 26-38.
 [16] Spiegelberg, W. (1898). *Hieratic ostraka & papyri found by J. E. Quibell in the Ramessum 1895-6*, Bernard Quaritch, Piccadilly, W., London.
 [17] Černý, J. (1964). Three regnal dates of the eighteenth dynasty, *JEA*. 50: 37-39.
 [18] Petrie, W. (1894). *Tell el Amarna*, Methuen & Co., London:
 [19] Petrie, W. (1897). *Six temples at Thebes*, Bernard Quaritch, London.
 [20] Černý, J. (1965). *Tutankhamūn's tomb series II: Hieratic inscriptions from the tomb of Tutankhamūn*, Griffith Institute, Oxford.
 [21] Abd el-Samie, A. (2009). *Hieratic ostraca of the Ramesside period in the Egyptian museum, Cairo: documentation, classification and commentary*, MA., Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, School of Historical Studies, The Birmingham Univ., England.
 [22] Leathy, M. (1985). *The hieratic labels, 1979-1982, Amarna Reports II*, EES Pub., London.
 [23] Bouvier, G. (2001). Un ostracon hiératique inédit de Leyde. *RMO F*. 1980/3.7, *BIFAO*. 101: 87-97.
 [24] Faulkner, R. (1991). *A concise dictionary of middle Egyptian*, Griffith Institute, Ashmolean museum, Oxford.

- [25] Grandet, P (1994). *Le papyrus Harris I (BM 9999)*, Vol II, IFAO, Cairo.
- [26] Hawkins, E. (1842). *Select papyri in the Hieratic character from the collections of the British museum*, British Museum, London.
- [27] Möller, G. (1965). *Hieratische paläographie: Die Aegyptische buchschrift in ihrer entwicklung von der fünften dynastie bis zur römischen kaiserzeit*, Zweiter Band, Otto Zeller Verlag, Biblio Verlag, Osnabrück, Germany.
- [28] Ranke, H. (1935). *Die Ägyptischen Personennamen*, Band I, Verlag Von J.J. Augustin in Glückstadt, Holstein, Germany.
- [29] Faulkner, R. (1952). *3pd= duck*, *JEA*, 38: 128.
- [30] Golenischeff, W. (1913). *Les papyrus hiératiques No 1115, 1116 A et 1116 B de l'ermitage imperial á st-petersbourg*, Otto Harrassowitz Leipzig.
- [31] Gardiner, A. & Bell, H (1943). The name of lake moeris, *JEA*. 29: 37-50.
- [32] Goedicke, H. (1970). *The report about the dispute of a man with his ba: Papyrus Berlin 3024*, The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore
- [33] Caminos, R. (1956). *Literary fragments in the hieratic script*, The Griffith Institute press, Oxford.