

Textes réunis et édités par  
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# Mélanges offerts à Ola el-Aguizy

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## A Demotic School Exercise in Two Copies

SEVERAL demotic school exercises contain lists of proper names, words for occupations, botanical terms and body parts. Two of them are discussed here, in honour of my distinguished colleague Ola el-Aguizy, because they may represent the same model handbook used in several schools.

O. Strasb. dem. 5 (= LDAB 52208) was published by W. Spiegelberg ("Aus der Straßburger Sammlung demotischer Ostraka", ZÄS 50, 1912, p. 28) and rightly identified by him as a list of bodily parts, belonging to the face.

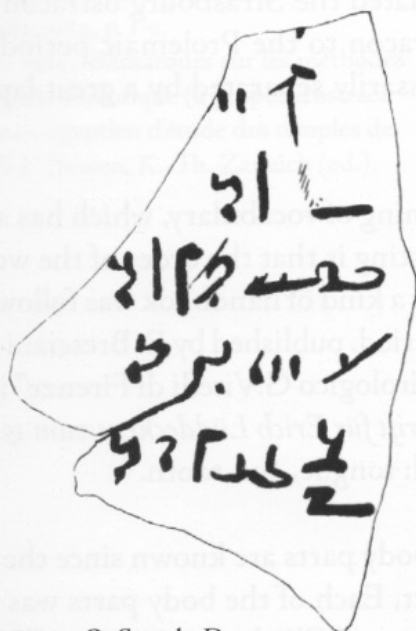


Fig. 1. O. Strasb. Dem. 5.

1	šy	nose
2	r3	mouth
3	3bḥ	tooth
4	ls	tongue
5	sptw	lips

O. Leid. dem. 487 (= LDAB 49513) contains two columns of text. Of the second column only the article *p3* at the beginning and the flesh determinatives at the end of ll. 2, 4-7 are legible. In the first column Nur el-Din read the word *ir.t* (eye) and *šy* (nose) in ll. 2-3. Since other words

in both columns also contain a flesh determinative, he rightly interpreted the text as a list of body parts. With the help of O. Strasb. dem. 5 it is now easy to read also ll. 4-6, where the same words are listed in exactly the same order.

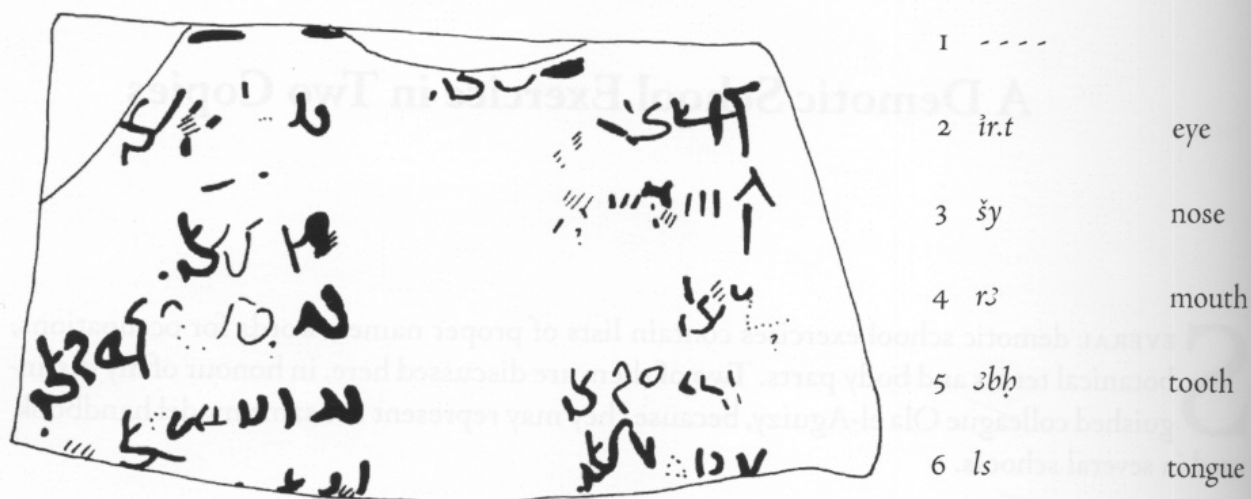


Fig. 2. O. Leid. 487.

Both texts come from Thebes. Spiegelberg dated the Strasbourg ostracon to the Roman period, Nur El-Din attributed the Leiden ostracon to the Ptolemaic period, each time on palaeographical grounds. The two are not necessarily separated by a great lapse of time and could both be late Ptolemaic or early Roman.

These two ostraca both contribute to the training of vocabulary, which has a long tradition in demotic.<sup>1</sup> What makes this small find interesting is that the order of the words in the two documents is exactly the same. This suggests that a kind of handbook was followed by different teachers, though in a similar text of the Roman period, published by E. Bresciani ("Testi lessicali demotici inediti da Tebtuni presso l'Istituto Papirologico G. Vitelli di Firenze" in H.J. Thissen, K.Th. Zauzich [ed.], *Grammata demotika. Festschrift für Erich Lüddeckens zum 15. Juni 1983*, 1984, p. 4 [LDAB 89422]) a different order is followed: tongue, eye, tooth.

Spiegelberg already pointed out that lists of body parts are known since the Old Kingdom and were linked to a religious or magical context. Each of the body parts was protected by a god (cf. H. Altenmüller, *LÄ II*, 1977, col. 624-627, s.v. "Gliedervergötterung"). The order here is also from top to bottom: eye, nose, mouth (with its different parts). Similar enumerations are for instance found in the magical statue of Teos the Saviour (head, eye, nose, ear, mouth,

1. For demotic school ostraca, see KAPLONY-HECKEL 1974, p. 227-246; DEVAUCHELLE 1984, p. 47-59.

neck and other bodily parts)<sup>2</sup> and in some books of breathing, e.g. in P. BM 10201: head, face (the more general words), **eyes**, brow, **nose**, gullet (? or rather a word for ears?), **tongue**, jaws; BM 10191 I ll.45-47: hair, face, **eyes**, ears, **nose**, **lips**, **teeth**, neck, arms, chest, back, belly, thighs, calves, legs, toes<sup>3</sup>. It is surprising that on our school ostraca the ears are not mentioned.

In Greek school texts list of bodily parts are rare, e.g. P. Mich. 18 762 verso (eyes, ears, cheeks, nose, shoulders) (AD III), PSI 12 1275 vo ("the head consists of the front, the temples and the top of the head"). A very detailed bilingual lexicon (greek-coptic; 8th-10th century) was brought to my attention by T. Wilfong (to be published): P. Mich. inv. 4949 (LDAB 107876) contains an enumeration of [τὰ μέ]λη τοῦ ἀν(θρώπ)ου "the parts of the human body", including **eye**, face, cheek, jaw, moustache, beard, temple, **tongue**, molars, but also finger, palm, navel, and kinship terms such as father, mother, son and daughter.

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2. See JELINKOVA-REYMOND 1956, p. 82-83.

3. HERBIN 2008, p. 136 and p. 51.