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Palaeography and Bilingualism:

P.Duk.inv. 320 and 675

We present here two papyri from the Special Collections Library at Duke, P.Duk.inv. 320 and 675⁽¹⁾. Both offer palaeographical insights into the phenomenon of bilingualism. The first is a Greek letter that appears to have been written with a brush, the Egyptian scribe's implement of choice. The second contains two letters, one Greek and one Demotic, both written with a reed pen, the Greek scribe's preferred tool. Together, the documents offer complementary perspectives on literacy and bilingualism in Ptolemaic Egypt⁽²⁾.

P.DUK.INV. 320

The first text, P.Duk.inv. 320, is a private letter concerning the harvest of sesame. Author and recipient are unknown. The contents of the letter are not especially noteworthy, but the handwriting is. As is well known Greek scribes wrote with pens made of sharpened reed, while Egyptian scribes "painted" their text with brushes made from frayed rushes⁽³⁾. Written Egyptian was difficult to master and most Greeks would have lacked the need or inclination to acquire literacy in the foreign language. Thus, in the face of a Greek document written with a brush, the reasonable assumption is that the scribe was Egyptian.

(1) Duke University, Special Collections Library, "Duke Papyrus Archive," <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus>, 2001. We are grateful to John Oates, Willy Clarysse and the participants at the Demotic Summer School in Triest, Summer 2001, for constructive criticism.

(2) Among the mass of literature on Egyptian language, literacy and ethnicity the following are especially useful: W. Peremans, "Le bilinguisme dans les relations greco-égyptiennes sous les Lagides," in E. Van't Daek et al., eds., *Egypt and the Hellenistic World* (Leuven 1983), 253–280; idem, "Notes sur les traductions de textes non littéraires sous les Lagides," *CdÉ* 60 (1985), 248–262; W. Clarysse, "Greek Loan-Words in Demotic," in S. P. Vleeming, ed., *Aspects of Demotic Lexicography* (Leuven 1987), 9–33; idem, "Ethnic Diversity and Dialect among the Greeks of Hellenistic Egypt," *Pap.Litg.Ber.* XXX, 1–13; D. J. Thompson, "Language and Literacy in Early Hellenistic Egypt," in P. Bilde et al., eds., *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt* (Athens 1992), 39–52.

(3) W. J. Tait, "Rush and Reed: The Pens of Egyptian and Greek Scribes," *Acta XVIII*, 477–481.

In a recent excellent study W. Clarysse collected a large sample of Greek documents written with a brush⁽⁴⁾. One feature of the evidence stands out. "[A]fter 230 B.C. the use of the brush for writing Greek texts was quickly abandoned"⁽⁵⁾. This swift disappearance is neither surprising nor lacking in explanation. Scribes were in business and they met the needs of a market that favored pen-written Greek. The reed pen produced a script whose aesthetic was acceptable for all types of documents, while the brush, as Clarysse notes, was "never used in formal official correspondence ... or for petitions to the king or to high officials"⁽⁶⁾. An Egyptian scribe may have found it easier to master a new tool than to alter his brush-handling so as to produce script whose look was more pen-like. Motor memory dies hard. Demotic, however, did not cease to be written after 230. Could some scribes have retained their native tools, opting to forge a new brush-written script whose appearance was more in line with that of its pen-written counterpart? Perhaps the break ca. 230 was not so clean as it appears.

P.Duk.inv. 320 was recovered from mummy cartonnage containing several documents dated to the end of the third century and the beginning of the second⁽⁷⁾. Inv. 320 is dated to a twelfth regnal year. If the papyrus' association with the other Duke pieces is not coincidence then we may, with caution, assign inv. 320 to 211/10 (Philopator) or 194/3 (Epiphaneus)⁽⁸⁾. One palaeographic feature of the Duke papyrus distinguishes it from the other examples of brush-written Greek and may suggest a later date. The

(4) W. Clarysse, "Egyptian Scribes Writing Greek," *CdÉ* 68 (1993), 186–201. Add: A. Martin and G. Nachtergaeel, "Papyrus du Musée du Carré, III," *CdÉ* 74 (1999), 301–315, no. 7, pp. 301–305 with Fig. 1 on p. 303; *P.Köln* VIII 341 verso (pl. VII); also <http://www.uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/ifa/NRW/akademie/papyrologie/Karte/VIII_341.html> and 341 recto and verso (pl. IX); also <...papyrologie/Karte/VIII_342.html>).

(5) Clarysse, *CdÉ* 68 (1993), 193.

(6) Clarysse, *CdÉ* 68 (1993), 194; this conclusion may need modification in the light of a recently published brush-written petition to the king: Martin and Nachtergaeel [n. 4], 71b.2, p. 302.

(7) W. H. Willis, "Comoedia Dukiana," *GRBS* 32 (1991), 331–353; J. D. Sosin and J. E. Oates, "P.Duk.inv. 314: Agathis, Strategos and Hipparches of the Arsinoite Nome," *ZPE* 118 (1997), 251–258, esp. 251 n. 2, 255, Sosin, "A Word for Woman?," *GRBS* 38 (1997), 75–83, 81, dated only palaeographically.

(8) Papyri associated in mummy cartonnage can vary in date and so a date of 211/10 or 194/3 must remain for now tentative. A date in the first year of the short-lived triple reign of Philometor, Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra II (170/69), unofficially the twelfth year of Philometor, seems less likely. A date under Euergetes (230/5), however, cannot be ruled out.

bulk of the specimens collected by Clarysse are typically written in fast, casual, and somewhat rough script. *P. Cair-Zen. II 59186* and *59243* are representative ⁽⁹⁾. In both the script tears up as it moves to the right. These are moderately fast hands.



P. Cair-Zen. II 59186-1-3 (255)
Ὁνωθῆρῖς Ζηῆωνι
χαίρειν· ἐκποιτά-
μην τὴν παρὰ σοῦ...



P. Cair-Zen. II 59243.6-8
εἰ σοὶ δοκεῖ ἔλ[θ]ῃ-
ἴν' πρὸς μέ, εἴνα
εὐφραν[θῆ]θῆς



P. Cair-Zen. III 59519.6-8
ἀπολατρεῖας τινὰ παρὰ σοῦ
πρὸς με μετὰ τοῦ ἀπο-
θιδόντος (σ)οι τὴν ἐπιστολάνην

Occasionally, however, we find a script with a slower, more orderly appearance, as in *P. Cair-Zen. III 59519*. The pace of writing is slower and brush strokes are restricted between base- and head-line. The script more closely resembles pen-written Greek. Moreover, the scribe achieved a crude consistency in application of thick and thin strokes. This contrasts with *P. Cair-Zen. II 59243*, for example, where the iotas in εἰς (6) and εὐφραν[θῆ]θῆς (8) are thin and fat respectively. Consistent distribution of thick and thin strokes suggests script produced by a pen cut on the angle, not a brush. But rigid adherence to the principle is usually lacking in documentary texts. Angular pens are the implements of literary Greek, not documentary. The net effect is a clean but artificial script ⁽¹⁰⁾.

(9) For a faster, less careful example see *P. Mich 152*.

(10) Artificial in the same way as the so-called quadrat capital of early Latin manuscripts.

We suggest that *P. Duk.in.v. 320* represents a more ambitious attempt to naturalize brush-written Greek, so that its general esthetic was more in line with that of ordinary pen-written Greek:



P. Duk.in.v. 320.4-5
ὡς δ' ἂν παύσῃται μετοίσω ...
τινάσσειν ἐν Ὀξύπυργος τῆ ...

This is a skilled, confident and comfortable hand. The script does not suggest a bilingual scribe working too quickly to change tools on the fly. Its speed is reminiscent of *P. Cair-Zen. II 59186*, *59243* and *P. Mich. 129*, but its flow is more controlled and at ease. The hand's neat observance of base- and head-line has a parallel in *P. Cair-Zen. III 59519*, but its contours have a much more natural and practiced appearance. This scribe excelled at writing elegant Greek with a brush. He appears not to have abandoned his native brush for the Greek pen, but instead to have achieved an attractive hybrid of the utilitarian pen-written Greek and his own historically calligraphic Egyptian Demotic tradition.

P. Duk.in.v. 320 6.7 x 31.1 cm.

Arsinoite

Special Collections Library at Duke University, "Duke Papyrus Archive,"
<<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/records/320r.html>>, 2001.

α.1
σπασθῆν ἀπὸ τῆς χρείας ... ἐπ[ι]θ[ι]μῶν τῆ[ς] ... [L. I. ...] L. I.
... [L. I. ...] L. I.
ἄμα Τυπαιὸν εἰς Πτολεμαῖδα Μελάσσοσυρῶν πρὸς τῆ[ς] τ[ι]νὸς ἐπι-
σημίονου.
4 ὡς δ' ἂν παύσῃται μετοίσω εἰς Ὀξύπυργα καθότι ἐπεγ[ρά]φ[η]ται
ἡρᾶσθαι ἐν Ὀξύπυργοις τῆ[ς] κῆ Χοιμα[ς] ἀπόστειλὸν [ὄε] πρὸς ἡμᾶς
Μαυροῦταν.
ἔρρωσο (ἔρουσ) ιβ Χοιμα[ς] [L. I.]

Verso: Account in Greek (?) in at least six virtually illegible lines.

... that X not be disturbed from his task (?)... wrote on the Nth (?) [...] along with Timaios to Ptolemais Melissoûgon for the task of harvesting the sesame, but when I finish I shall transfer (them) to Oxyrhyncha as you had written. I shall commence harvesting in Oxyrhyncha on the 25th of Choiak. Send us Marsyas. Farewell. Year 12, Choiach 16(?).

2. The traces before *εγ/δ*- are difficult to construe: *ὄρος* seems an outside possibility; *-γυν* also seems possible. If *εγ/δ*- belongs, as it seems, to a form of *γράφο*, then perhaps we should restore *τῆλ* and a number.

3. This Timaios is not otherwise known. This is the earliest explicit witness to the village Ptolemais Melissoûgon (*SB XIV 11597.6* as cited in Calderini, *Diz.geogr.* suppl. 2, p. 179, is less than secure); see Calderini, *Diz.geogr.* 4, p. 211, suppl. 1, p. 231.

4. The future of *μεταρρέπον* does not seem to appear elsewhere in the documentary papyri.

5. Three rough contemporaries named Marsyas are known: *P.Perr.* 16.38, 105; 106 (*Arsinoite*, 236/5), *P.Lille* I 4 (Ptolemais Hornou, 218/17); *P.Tehr.* III.1 976.2 (184/3). Whether any one is our Marsyas is not certain.

6. The date seems to have two digits and must fall before the twenty-fifth (cf. line 5). The traces that we have construed as stigma might also be read as those of an alpha, in which case the date could be the eleventh or twenty-first.

P.DUK.INV. 675

The top portion of the papyrus contains a private letter in Greek, which is dated to an eleventh regnal year. The papyrus was extracted from cartonnage containing pieces securely dated to the end of the third and beginning of the second century (11). So 195/4 is the most likely date.

The first three fragmentary lines suggest a single recipient (also *σοι* 8) and multiple authors. But the author(s) use(s) the first person singular and plural (*αὐτός* 4, *ὑρέλαβον* 7, *εἰ{1}θέπαρεύομεν* 10, *ἤμ[η]ς* 11, *λαμβάνομεν* 15). The scribe seems to have written *εἰθέπαρεύομεν* (10) for *ἐθέπαρεύομεν*. Grammar and orthography stumble but the Greek is not unambitious. The opening and closing formulas are not common and may have a rhetorical flair, not matched by the scribe's command of grammar.

The authors write that they are attending to the *διοικήτης* (ἐἰ{1}θέπαρεύομεν τὸν διοικητήν 10) until their release (*μετ' ἧσ' ἐπιτρεχέμεθα* ? 11). It is not uncommon for people to be "released" from liturgies

(11) See *ZPE* 116 (1997), 141–146, esp. 142 n. 9 and 145.

or other obligations, including debts and labor (12). Perhaps the authors anticipate release from a contract to serve the *διοικήτης*, maybe as physicians (thence ἐἰ{1}θέπαρεύομεν?) (13).

The bottom half of the papyrus contains a private letter in Demotic, which consists of nine lines in a mid-Ptolemaic Fayyumic hand. The surviving text preserves neither address nor date. It appears to begin with a command, perhaps "[send] before [the official...]" Petaus: "The text contains commands to engage officials regarding money. There is an instruction to go to the place of an official (perhaps a pastophoros priest) and, failing that, to have someone send money to the letter's recipient in Memphis. The last line of the text mentions a *hypêrêtês* named Theon. Perhaps he is the agent of the *διοικήτης* mentioned in the Greek text (10). Or, since he seems to be in Memphis, he may more likely be an agent there.

P.Duk.inv. 675 is the only example from the Ptolemaic period, to our knowledge, of pen-written Demotic. We assume that if a scribe wrote Greek with a brush he must have been Egyptian. Can we assume that the inverse also holds true, that if a scribe wrote Egyptian with a pen he must have been Greek? The authors of both letters on P.Duk.inv. 675 are lost in lacunas but it is worth considering that the same person wrote both documents. Papyrus was expensive. Whoever wrote the Greek at the very least may have suspected that the Demotic document would be appended. Moreover the two letters might be connected in context. The author of the Greek letter refers to "attending to the *διοικήτης*" (10). The last line of the Demotic mentions a *hypêrêtês*. In the papyri powerful men like Zenon, *stratêgoi* or *chrematistai* have *hypêrêtai*. (14) Could Theon be an *hypêrêtês* of the *διοικήτης*? Is this the connection between the two texts? Could the Demotic text refer to a legal dispute, with the *hypêrêtês* assisting in adjudication? The fragmentary nature of both texts prevents certainty. The somewhat shoddy Greek may suggest that the scribe was Egyptian, but again, we cannot say for sure. In any case, we must consider the possibility, however

(12) Liturgy: *P.Mich.* 1.23.5 (Philadelphina, 257 BC); *P.Hib.* I 78.13 (244–242 BC); *BGU VI 1256.30* (Philadelphina, II BC); *dem: PSI V 529.7* (Philadelphina, III BC); *Jabor: P.Sorb.* I 50.16, 24 (Arsinoite, 220 BC).

(13) There is no reason to think that they are being held against their will. For someone released from jail, by the *διοικήτης*, even: *P.Coll.Youtie* I 12 (Tebynis, 177 BC); *dussac: P.Coll.Youtie* I 16.18 (?; ca. 109 BC); legal proceedings: *P.Merr.* II 59.14 (Kokkolidon polis, 154/143 BC).

(14) H. Kupiszewski and J. Modrzejewski, "Υπέρηται. Étude sur les fonctions et le rôle des hypêrêtês dans l'administration civile et judiciaire de l'Égypte gréco-romaine," *JJP* 11-12 (1957–58), 141–166; cf. *P.Athen.* 5.12–13; *P.Hib.* 92. On the office, see S. Strass, *Le funzioni degli υπέρηται nell'Egitto greco e romano* (Heidelberg 1997).

slight, that both letters were written by the same person and that this person was Greek.

Evidence of Greeks learning Egyptian is thin. A second-century private letter is crucial (*UPZ I 148 = Christ. Witck. 136*): (15)

- κινθωνομένη μανθά-
 νειν σε Αιγύπτια
 γράμματα συνεγράμην σοι
 4 καὶ ἐμαυτῆι, ὅτι
 νῦν γε παραγενόμενος
 εἰς τὴν πόλιν διδάξεις
 παρὰ Φαίου. ἦτι τερποκλύστη τὰ
 8 παιδάτια καὶ ἐξείς
 ἐφόδιον εἰς τὸ γῆρας.

On hearing that you are learning Egyptian letters I rejoiced for you and for myself, because now you may go the city and teach the servants at the house of Phalou. ἐς, the doctor who uses washes; and you will have spending money for your old age.

One scholar adduces the text in support of the claim that if Greeks did learn Egyptian it was “mostly out of an interest in Egyptian culture, especially religion but also medical knowledge.” (16) This Greek man—if he is indeed so—is not teaching the Egyptian doctor’s servants because he is curious about medicine. He has learned Egyptian to get a job and to make money. Or at least that is the benefit envisioned by the woman writing the letter. P.Duk.inv. 675 may admit a similarly unromantic interpretation.

P.Duk.inv. 675 17 x 27.5 cm.

195/4 BC

Special Collections Library at Duke University, “Duke Papyrus Archive,” <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/records/675a.html>>, 2001.

Greek text

| | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------|------------|
| [| ^{ca.2} | Ἄ | Ἀπολλωνίου | ^{ca.2} | τῶν] | ἀδελφῶν |
| [| ^{ca.2} |] | καὶ Τοθοῦς | | | |
| [| ^{ca.6-7} | | χαίρουσιν. εἰ ἐπιλογοῦσιν εἰς τὴν | | | |
| | | | τοῖς] θεοῖς τοῦ ἁγίου / | | | |
| 4 | [| καὶ τὰ | λαύρα σου κατὰ ? | ^{ca.2} |] | . αὐτόσ δὲ |

(15) R. Reimonon, “Problèmes de bilinguisme dans l’Égypte Lagide (U.P.Z. I, 148).”

CdÉ 39 (1964), 126–146.

(16) M. Depauw, *A Companion to Demotic Studies* [= *PapBrux* 28] (Brussels 1997), 41.

[καὶ ὕμνουν ? ^{ca.2} (?) διελθῆναι αὐτόστων
 εἰς Ἀλεξανδρείαν τῆι ζ τοῦ ἐνεστώ-
 τοσ μηνός, καλῶς ἔχειν ὑπέλαβον
 8 γράματα σοι ὅσος εἰδότες . . . α τῶν κτ . . .
 ἔσος δὲ τοῦ γράσειν σοι τὴν ἐπι(τορο)λήν
 ἐ(τι)θεραπεύουσιν τὸν διοικητήν
 μεχρὶ τοῦ ἀπολύθηνα [ἡμ]ῶς (?) ἄλλὰ
 12 ἀνδρῶν καὶ ἐπιμελοῦσιν σου τοῦ
 καὶ τοῦ ἀδελφίου καὶ τῶν ἐγ[ο]φικτα σου ?
 ὅσος ὕμνουντας βιάς κτλ . [^{ca.5-7}]
 ἀμψάνα.

16 ἔρρωσο L ια Μεχ[ε]ρι

Verso: Ἄπολλωνίου

10. ἐ(τι)θεραπεύουσιν corr. from ἐ(τι)δεδραρυέουσιν?

To Apollonios (?), brother, X and Y and Tothoēs [and Z?] greetings. If you are well [and your affairs are as you would wish, may there be great thanks to the gods, I too am well, . . . having come over to Alexandria on the seventh of this month, I thought it well to write you so that you might know . . . Before writing you the letter we were attending to the *διοικητές* until our release. So be tough and take care of yourself and your little brother and those in the house, so that I may find you in good health and . . .

3-5. For the formula see *PSI* IV 344.16 (Philadelphia 256/5); *P.Petr.* II 13.fr.6-1-3 (Gurob ca. 156/5); *P.Cair.Zen.* II 59160.1-2 (Philadelphia 235 BC), III 59526.1-2 (Philadelphia III BC); *PSI* V 522.7 (Philadelphia 248/7), XIII 1312.7 (Tebisyn II BC); *P.Tehr.* 115-16 (114).

5: Restore a genitive subject for (?) διελθῆναι αὐτόστων in the lacuna after ὕμνουν.

9. Cf. μεχρὶ (ὅσ) τοῦ γράσειν, *P.Tehr.* III.1 729.13, III.2 920.2, 31.

12. Phrase: *P.Cair.Zen.* IV 59579.5 (Philadelphia III BC); cf. *P.Munch.* III 58.5-8 (II BC), *P.Tehr.* I 55.9 (II BC)

Special Collections Library at Duke University, “Duke Papyrus Archive,” <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/records/675b.html>>, 2001.

Demotic text (written with a pen)

- 1) . . .] . . . m-b3h? . . . P3-dy-w? my sm-f
- 2) . . .] Lwswy3s
- 3) my [. . .] hd 112 [. . .] in-w
- 4) r Qln3? hd 27 Tw3nss p3 wn? . . . [. . .]
- 5) m sm (r) p3 w3 Ty3n3s p3 wn? . . . [. . .]
- 6) in-f dda s3 in dda t-s n-f dda t3y hb in-t-r-f . . .
- 7) in-w-y 3 dda my? W3h-w? hd 64? n-k n Mn-ntfr

8) *sh iw-y gm-s P3-dy-w? mn [...] n-s*
 9) *my dy-w n-k? T3n p3 hprt/s]*

- 1) before....? Petaus Let him send
- 2) ... Lysanias
- 3) let [...] 112 deben [...] bring them
- 4) to Kleon?... 27 deben Dionysias the pastophoros?
- 5) Go (to) the house of Dionysias the pastophoros?...
- 6) If he insults (you), tell him "This letter...."
- 7) I will complain? saying: Let them send 64 deben to you in Memphis.
- 8) Strike. If I find Petaus, there is nothing ... in its name.
- 9) Let them give to you Theon the *hypêretês*]

1. Or read *nh. P3-dy-w* : *Demotisches Namenbuch* 1.4, 296.
2. *Lwsny3s* : *Demotisches Namenbuch* 1.10, 723.
5. *sm* : EG 506, *m sm (r-)*.
8. The syntax of *sh*, seemingly on its own here, eludes us.
9. *T3n*: *Demotisches Namenbuch* 1.17, 1290; *hprt/s*: Kupiszewski and Modrzejewski, [n. 14]; Clarysse, *Aspect of Demotic Lexicography* 31.

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The two Duke papyri add to Clarysse's history of the palaeography of Greek-Egyptian bilingualism. P.Duk.inv. 320 suggests that the Egyptian tradition of writing with a brush may not have died so quickly, but that some scribes may have modified their skills so as to produce a hybrid script that appealed to both Greek and Egyptian aesthetic sensibilities. The scribe of P.Duk.inv. 320 did. Others may have done the same. (17) P.Duk.inv. 675 presents the flip-side of the coin and may suggest at least one instance in which Greek-Egyptian bilingualism was not so lopsided.

Joshua D. SOSIN – Joseph G. MANNING

(17) A receipt of sesame from 162 BC published by H. Harrauer and R. Pintaudi, *Anal. Pap* 6 (1994), 130–131 no. 2, is an excellent candidate.

CHRONIQUE D'ÉGYPTE

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