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 esthetic 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 cartouche 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 (Epiphanes) (8). One palaeographic feature of the Duke papyrus distinguishes it from the others of brush-written Greek and may suggest a later date. The


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 rears up as it moves to the right. These are moderately fast hands.


We suggest that P.Duk.inv. 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:

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.


(9) For a faster, less careful example see P.Mich I 52.
(10) Artificial in the same way as the so-called quadrate capital of early Latin manuscripts.
**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 Ptolemaios Mellissourgôn for the task of harvesting the sesame, but when I finish I shall transfer (them) to Oxyrhynchus as you had written. I shall commence harvesting in Oxyrhynchus on the 25th of Choiak. Send us Marsyas. Farewell. Year 12, Choiak 16(?).

2. The traces before ἔγγραφον are difficult to construe; ὡντας seems an outside possibility. ἔμαθα also seems possible. If ἔγγραφον belongs, as it seems, to a form of γράφω, then perhaps we should restore τῇ and a number.

3. This Timaios is not otherwise known. This is the earliest explicit witness to the village Ptolemais Mellissourgôn (S8 XIV 11597.6 as cited in Calderini, *Dir. geogr.* suppl. 2, p. 179, is less than secure); see Calderini, *Dir. geogr.* 4, p. 211, suppl. 1, p. 231.

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

5. Three rough contemporaries named Marsyas are known: *P. Petr.* 16.38, 105, 106 (Arsinoite, 236/5), *P. Lille* 1 4 (Ptolemais Hormou, 218/17); *P. Tebr.* III.1 976.2 (184/3). Whether any one of 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 sΩn 8) and multiple authors. But the author(s) use(s) the first person singular and plural (αὐτός 4, ἐπέλαβον 7, ἔγγραφον 10, ἡμῖν 11, λαμβάνει 15). The scribe seems to have written ἔγγραφον (10) for ἑγραφέσθηκεν. 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 dioikētēs (ἔγγραφον τούτῳ διοικητήν 10) until their release (μεταφέρεται ἡμᾶς ? 11). It is not uncommon for people to be “released” from liturgies or other obligations, including debts and labor (12). Perhaps the authors anticipate release from a contract to serve the dioikētēs, maybe as physicians (hence ἔγγραφον; (13)).

The bottom half of the papyrus contains a private letter in Demotic, which consists of nine lines in a mid-Ptolemaic Fayumic 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 hypērētai named Theon. Perhaps he is the agent of the dioikētēs 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 dioikētēs” (10). The last line of the Demotic mentions a hypērētai. In the papyri powerful men like Zenon, ἐργαζόμενοι or χρηματίσται have hypērētai. (14) Could Theon be an hypērētai of the dioikētēs? Is this the connection between the two texts? Could the Demotic text refer to a legal dispute, with the hypērētai 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


(13) There is no reason to think that they are being held against their will. For someone released from jail by the dioikētēs, even: *P. Coll.Youve 11* 12 (Tebtynis, 177 BC); duress: *P. Coll.Youve 1* 16.18 (7 ca. 109 BC); legal proceedings: *P. Morii.* I 59.14 (Krokodiilion polis, 154/143 BC).

sight, 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 = Chrest.Wilek. 136): (15)

ποιήθηκε μενούς μειονούνα ἡδενεῖ, παρὰ Ἀγίππα
παρὰ Φαλοῦ· ἦτο ἱστορία συνεχάρην σοι
καὶ ἐμαυτή, δότι
νόν γε παραγονόμενος
ἐλει θάνην διδάξας
παρὰ Φαλοῦ· ἦτο ἱστορία συνεχάρην σοι
καὶ ἐμαυτή, δότι
νόν γε παραγονόμενος
ἐλει θάνην διδάξας
παρὰ Φαλοῦ· ἦτο ἱστορία συνεχάρην σοι.

4 καὶ ἐμαυτή, δότι
νόν γε παραγονόμενος
ἐλει θάνην διδάξας
παρὰ Φαλοῦ· ἦτο ἱστορία συνεχάρην σοι.

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...es, 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.
1954 BC

Greek text

[ ca.7 'Απολλωνίων ca.7 τοίνι διδασάων
ca.7 ] καὶ Τοθοῦς
ca.6-7 
χαρίσειν εἰ ἔρροσει εἴη αὐ[ν]
tοι[ς] θεοῖς πολλὴ χάρις /
καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ σοι κατὰ ? ca.7 ]... αὐτός δὲ

8) šḥ iw- ... gm- ... P̄ t̄ dy-w? mn …? …? r̄n-s
9) my dy-w n-k? Ttn p̄ t̄ hpr[t̄ 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 hyperetfes ……

1. Or read ’nh. P̄ t̄ dy-w : Demotisches Namenbuch 1.4, 296.
2. Lwsnyls : Demotisches Namenbuch 1.10, 723.
3. šm : EG 506, m šm (r-).
4. The syntax of šḥ. seemingly on its own here, eludes us.
5. Ttn: Demotisches Namenbuch 1.17, 1290; hpr[t̄ s: Kupiszewski and Modrzejewski, [n. 14]; Clarysse, Aspect of Demotic Lexicography 31.

* * *

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.

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