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A COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S ORDER FROM SAQQÂRA

By E. G. TURNER

THE Greek papyrus text published here was found by the Egypt Exploration Society under the direction of Dr. G. T. Martin during the 1972/3 season of work at North Saqqâra (inv. 1972 G.P. 3).¹ Three reasons justify its publication in advance of the volume in which the Greek papyri from this site are to be published. Firstly, it is a 'notice', that is an order, pinned or posted up, and as such is almost² unique in papyrological literature. Secondly, if the interpretation here outlined is accepted, it can be connected with a historical personage of the time of Alexander the Great and is therefore valuable for the fourth-century history of the sacred animal necropolis of Saqqâra. Thirdly, it is the oldest surviving Greek document on papyrus.

The find spot was in the 'South Dump', in sector 7 of the 1972-3 excavation plan. Dr. G. T. Martin wrote in a preliminary report dated 8 February 1973: 'this area proves not to be the administrative centre of the Sacred Animal Necropolis but an adjunct to the main temple complex [that is, the temple of Nektanebo II, Nakht-ḥaremḥeb]. There are some domestic buildings of XXXth Dynasty date on the far South side of this area, and it was in a dump excavated in this part that we recovered some demotic papyrus fragments . . . also a papyrus with extremely boldly written Greek letters.' By a lucky chance I myself was able to visit Saqqâra during the following fortnight, and to work on the original. The accompanying photograph is my own (pl. LV; reduced to $\frac{2}{3}$ the actual size).

The papyrus is a broad strip cut from a roll about 36 cm. high. The material has been turned through ninety degrees so that the letters are 'written' across the fibres. 'Breadth' and 'height' being understood as used in relation to the writing, the piece is 35.8 cm. wide, 13.4 cm. high. In the three lines of writing the letters have not been made with a pen, but drawn with a rush, which has in places left ragged edges (e.g. the α of μῆ|δενα, line 3). A series of four holes running from the top centre to top right may be holes through which pins were passed to fix the notice, but there is no balancing hole at the top left. On the back is only a single long oblique stroke.

The letters in the first line are broader and taller (κ is 4.1 cm. high) than in the two following lines. But even in that line there are unevennesses of size between letters, and they are irregularly placed in relation to each other. Indeed, the same letter varies in size. The first ε is 2.0 cm. high, the second 2.6 cm. η μ π are usually broad and shallow, α δ ε ι κ ρ υ are tall. Ε is rectangular, Σ has four movements (epigraphists

¹ I should like to thank the Society, Professor H. S. Smith, and Dr. G. T. Martin for permission to publish this text in advance. For the discovery compare Dr. Martin's remarks above, p. 18.

² P. Oxy. XLI, 2950, a dedication to Diocletian, may be another example.

would call it '4-barred'), Ω is epigraphic; the cross-bar of A is sometimes straight, sometimes formed of two strokes angled in relation to each other; the two obliques of both α and δ are produced vertically after uniting; \odot is round with a central dot, Υ a shallow angle above a long vertical; the two obliques of κ are short in relation to the very high vertical to the centre of which they cling. These palaeographical features suggest a date in the 4th century B.C. Three Greek texts in particular are to be used for comparison: (1) the Berlin Timotheos (plate M. Norsa, *La Scrittura letteraria greca*, Tav. I, 1), undated, but found in an archaeological context that hardly allows it to be brought down later than c. 330 B.C.; (2) The 'Curse of Artemisia', Vienna Pap. Gr. I, 494 (plate in Norsa, op. cit. tav. I, 2), also undated but acceptably assigned to the same period on grounds of content and letter-forms;³ (3) P. Elephantine 1, a marriage contract dated to 311 B.C. (plate in W. Schubart, *Papyri Graecae Berolinenses*, no. 2).

It might be contended that in a notice intended for quick reading the shapes of the letters would tend to be the same as those used in inscriptions, and therefore in this case morphological analysis was even less trustworthy than usual. Certainly some of the letters (especially E , \odot , Σ , Ω) are like those found in fourth-century inscriptions. Such forms may be seen, for instance, in an inscription from Samos dated to 346/5 B.C. (O. Kern, *Inscriptiones graecae*, no. 26) or a document from the Piraeus of 323/2 B.C. (J. Kirchner, *Imagines Inscr. Atticarum*, taf. 30, no. 64). There is, therefore, something in this contention.⁴ Fortunately, the doubts, as I hope to show, can be removed by a decisive internal indication based on the text.

- 1 [[μ]] πευκεστου
- 2 μηπαπαπορευεσθαιμη
- 3 δειαιρειωστοοικημα

2. Of final η traces of ink of both left and right hand verticals.

Πευκέστου· μὴ παραπορεύεσθαι μηδένα· ἱερείως τὸ οἶκημα may be literally translated: 'Of Peukestes (or, Peukestas). No one is to pass. The chamber is that of a priest'. The implications behind these words need discussion. But first a few linguistic notes.

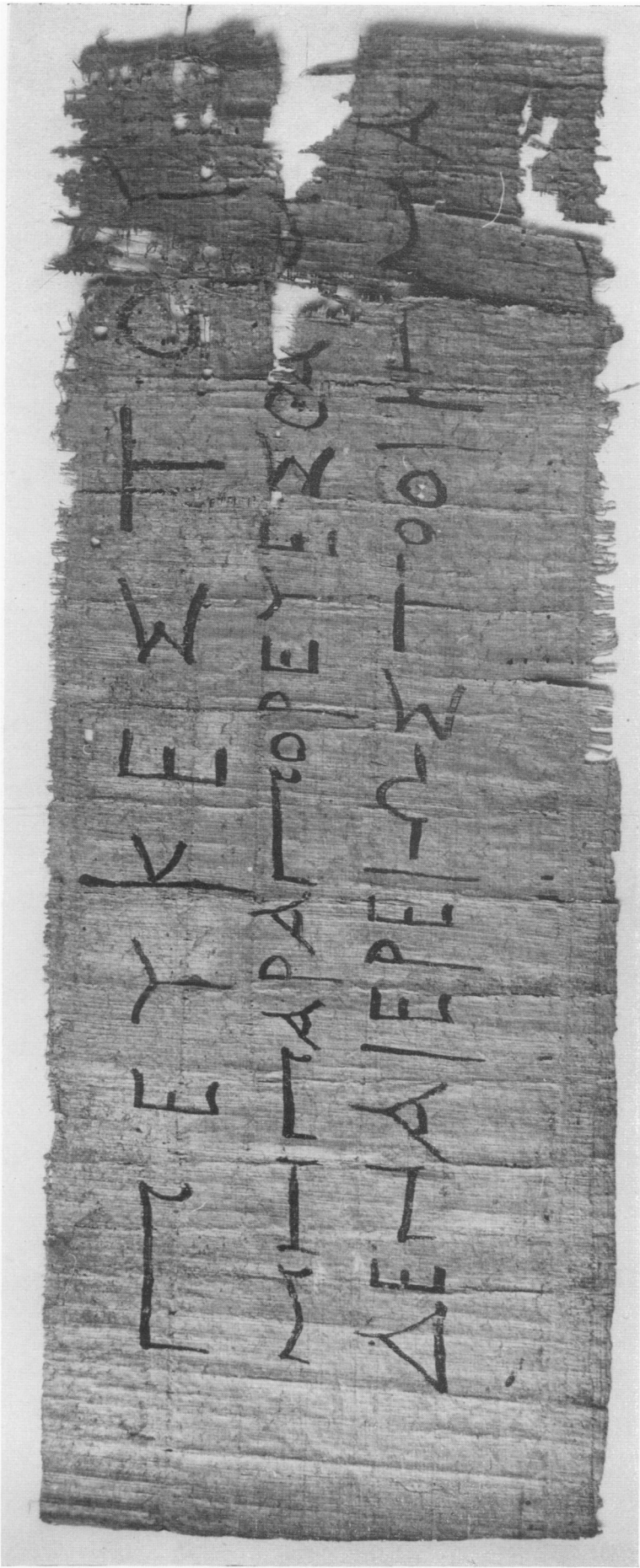
1. The scribe began to write the negative $\mu\eta$, that is, he omitted the name Peukestes.

2. παραπορεύεσθαι 'to go past'. Commonly of going past without stopping (e.g. omitting to call on a friend): P. Petrie II, 13, 5, 3 = III, 42 b (2) 3 (257 B.C.); P.S.I. IV, 354, 13 (third century B.C.); P. Sorbonne 33, 3 (third century B.C.), where the note is inexact; P. Ent. 70, 7 and 79, 3 (third century B.C.); P. Beatty Panop. 2, 104 τὰ παραπορε[υόμενα πλοῖα, A.D. 298. Here simply of 'going beyond a certain point'.

3. ἱερείως: the spelling of the genitive with $\epsilon\iota$ instead of ϵ is found in Attic inscriptions from about 340 B.C. onwards (K. Meisterhans, *Grammatik der attischen Inschriften*², 36), and is common throughout the Ptolemaic period (E. Mayser, *Gramm. d. ptol. Papyri* I, 1, 43).

³ See the masterly analysis of U. Wilcken, *UPZ* I, 97 ff.

⁴ It might be further noted that the α with angled cross-bar of the papyrus, if judged by epigraphic parallels, might be considered to be of third-century shape or even later. (A similarly written α is found in a letter from the Zenon archive dated to 257 B.C., P. Cairo Zenon v, 59816.) On the other hand, the tall κ with tiny obliques is well paralleled in early papyri, and (I believe) not at all in inscriptions.



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οἴκημα: 'chamber', either a free-standing building or a room in a larger complex. Index to *S.I.G.* offers numerous cases of its use for a room to contain ritual objects.

The nominative form of the genitive *Πευκέστου* may be either Peukestes (so P. Teb. 1, p. 78 and P. Teb. 1, 94, 26, both *c.* second century B.C.)⁵ or Peukestas. The second form is Macedonian, and it was a name borne by at least three historical personages⁶ in the late fourth century. My attention was first drawn to them by Professor A. Swiderek of the University of Warsaw. She suggested that the person involved here might be that Peukestas who took part in Alexander the Great's Indian campaign, saved his life at the storming of the city of the Malli, and who was afterwards satrap of Persia. This suggestion cannot be taken further, and is improbable in that there is no mention of this individual in connection with Egypt. But another contemporary seems to be just the man needed. According to Arrian 3. 5. 5, on leaving Egypt in 331 B.C., Alexander divided the command of the troops there between Balakros son of Amyntas and Peukestas son of Makartatos.⁷ I suggest that this joint C.-in-C. is the person who authorized the present notice.

It cannot of course be demonstrated that the *Πευκέστου* of our text is this person and not an unknown namesake. But a consideration of case usage will make my suggestion all but irresistible. When in Greek a name is put in the genitive case at the head of a document, list, or notice,⁸ the effect of that case may be (*a*) possessive ('belonging to P.', 'attached to P. '); (*b*) more vaguely, expressing a relationship 'concerning P.' (e.g. 'about P. '); or (*c*) it may denote authorship. In book titles a Greek author's name is regularly put in the genitive case, whether or not the name of the work is also given. A number of Ptolemaic documents⁹ begin with an official's name in the genitive, with which one mentally supplies a noun such as 'letter', 'memorandum', 'petition'. In our papyrus, sense (*b*) offers no meaning that we can comprehend out of the notice itself. Sense (*a*) 'this belongs to P.' is conceivable. The chamber might be that of P.—he might in fact be the priest. But in the Sacred Animal Necropolis at Saqqāra such a priest must surely be an Egyptian. Why should a priest there put up a prohibition in the Greek language to catch the attention of casual Greek intruders (sightseers ?), who seem expected to be able to read and obey the notice? With sense (*c*), however, all the elements fall into place. We understand as noun, e.g. *κέλευσις* or *πρόσταγμα*, 'order' or 'proclamation'. The following translation now brings out the implications: 'By order of the C.-in-C. Peukestas. Out of bounds to troops. Ritual area.' The first line is written larger to catch the eye and give authority. This interpretation satisfactorily combines the palaeographical, linguistic, and psychological implications of a notice of this kind, and gives it a firm historical context that fits and also illuminates the local conditions.

At the time of Alexander's departure from Memphis in 331 B.C. for Asia there were

⁵ These are the only examples cited in Preisigke, *Namenbuch*. None are mentioned in Foraboschi's *Onomasticon*. The ethnical affinity of the name in P. Teb. 1 cannot be determined.

⁶ See *PW* s.v., articles by H. Berve and P. Schach.

⁷ στρατηγὸς δὲ τῇ στρατιᾷ κατέστησεν ἦντινα ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ὑπελείπετο Πευκέσταν τε τὸν Μακαρτάτου καὶ Βάλακρον τὸν Ἀμύντου.

⁸ Long discussion and many examples in E. Mayser, *Gramm. d. ptolema. Papyri*, II, II, §72.

⁹ Mayser, *op. cit.* 133 ff.

certainly Greek troops in that town. Arrian¹⁰ speaks explicitly of Pantaleon garrison-commander (phrourarch) of the *ἐταῖροι* at Memphis, who will have been subordinate to the two C.'s-in-C. Peukestas and Balakros. It is possible that some of their Greek troops were stationed in the Saqqâra necropolis. They will certainly have been eager visitors to shrines already famous. But whether our notice is simply a matter of routine (that is, of preventive discipline) to maintain good relations between Greeks and Egyptians, or may have been provoked by some incident we cannot tell.

To have established its date brings other reassurances. It offers confirmation of the palaeographical correctness of the accepted dates for the Timotheos and Artemisia papyri (both, incidentally, also found in the Saqqâra necropolis, as Wilcken has cogently demonstrated).¹¹ And it offers valuable support for the dates beginning to be proposed for the as yet unpublished documents associated with this find, whether the latter are in Demotic Egyptian, Aramaic, or in Greek.¹²

¹⁰ Arrian, 3, 5, 3.

¹¹ *UPZ* I, 2, 98 and 538.

¹² Of the thirty-three papyrus texts in Greek from Saqqâra I had myself already assigned five with some confidence to the fourth century B.C., and an additional four or five are early third century, if not late fourth. Most of these texts are less well preserved than the notice here discussed, and some are mere scraps.