Letter from Pyrrandrus and other/s to Heracleides

CG 10298a+b 22 x 14.4 cm June 4th, 243 BCE

Gurob (Fayoum)

The document CG 10298 consists of two pieces: A, which has been edited by an Egyptian colleague (Belal Abu El-Ela) in his Master’s thesis and later published in the Bulletin of the Center of Papyrological Studies and Inscriptions, Ain Shams University (BACPSI) 23 (2006), 77-81, and B, which is being edited here.

This dark brown papyrus measures ca. 22 cm in width by 14.4 cm in height. It is of good quality. Although the papyrus has suffered significant damage, lacunae, loss and discoloration, especially at the middle and on the left, the preserved part is in relatively good condition. The surface is rugged. Some parts still need to be unfolded and cleaned. The fibers are frayed in the middle, wrinkled at the bottom right and misaligned at the bottom left, which does not significantly affect the text. It seems that the papyrus was folded vertically at right side (ca. 5 cm from the right edge). The left side of the papyrus is broken off, while the top, right and bottom margins are preserved. The ink is partially rubbed from some parts of line 8, so that the writing is barely legible especially in the middle. There is a blot of ink almost in the middle of line 8, probably caused by the scribe. The papyrus has been glued to the verso by modern chemise paper for reinforcement, as with many papyri in the Catalogue of Grenfell and Hunt.

The papyrus has preserved 9 incomplete lines, which run against the fibers (transversa charta). The text has been written in black ink with a fine nib. The letters are large semi-uncials with no ligatures. The hand is slow, clear and moderately skilled with no calligraphic features. It is characterized by the following features: The mu is produced by two curved vertical strokes with a more-or-less shallow curve which joins them. There are two kinds of alphas, where sometimes the scribe has written the alpha in two different shapes. The tau is a T-Shape, while epsilon is a Y-shape. The sigma is lunate, while the epsilon has a tongue attached to the middle. Iota is a simple short vertical stroke. The rho has a small head with a vertical stroke sometimes invading the interlinear space. The interlinear spaces are almost even. There is no punctuation or diacritical marks.

Besides the palaeographical indicators which place this document in the 3rd century BCE, line 9 refers to the fourth year of Ptolemy most likely Ptolemy III Euergetes, who ruled from 246 to -222 BCE. Another hint can be found in line 1. Accordingly, the date is most likely June 4th, 243 BCE.

As mentioned in the Catalogue General of Grenfell and Hunt “this document is probably from Gurob, Fayoum,” modern Kom Madinet El-Gurab. I am actually inclined to believe that this is the place from which the papyrus came, since the only attestation

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(1) There are some minor differences in this edition from Belal’s readings (especially the restoration of the missing part), where the two pieces have been joined together and the general sense made relatively clearer.

(2) A large number of papyri in the catalogue of Grenfell and Hunt has been restored in this way and all of them are currently kept together and known as the “Chemise” papyri.

(3) See note on line 1

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of the name Pyrrandrus is in P.Petr. 29(a), reprinted in P.Petr 3.117(b), "A Taxing Account on Vineyards," which dates to May 13, 245 BCE, and is from the Arsinoite. There are two persons who bear this name in the document: Pyrrandrus son of Demosthenes and Pyrrandrus son of Pyrrandrus.

The document is a letter from Pyrrandrus and others to Heracleides about the produce of a vineyard.

+10 NN καὶ Πυρραννόρος Ἡρακλείδης χαίρειν. εἰ ἔρρωσοι καὶ τάλλα σοι
+14 ἧξοι ἂν ὡς ἡμεῖς βουλόμεθα. ἔρρωμεθα δὲ καὶ ἰ αὐτοῖ.
+14 Συγγένης ὁτι εἰ μὴ δια σὲ ἀπο[η]γηται τὸ ἀμπελῶνα
+14 λέγεσθαι τὰς ἁμεῖς οἷς ἡμῶν καὶ εἰ [τὸ] λοιπὸν δὲ [φρο[η]τίζων
+14 η μερί τις ἁμαφοράς τοῦ χρυσίου [ά]ξιομεν σε
+13 τὸ λέγομεντα ἀμπέλα καὶ τις [. . .] η[α]τος πά[λ]ειστα προσ-
+14 ιππόπιεσιν καὶ κατασκεπην τὰ γενήματα

8 +14 Ημήριον ἀντευχαριστείν σοι διὰ διατελεῖ ἡμῖν πολυορόν
Vac. ἔρρωσο (ἐτους) ὁ Παυνί

1 Η Ἡρακλείδη

NN and Pyrrandrus to Herakleides greetings. If your health is good and your other concerns [are agreeable,] it would be as we wish. We too are well . . . Perigenes/Chairegenes, that if they will not buy the vineyard through you . . . us . . . and you consider for the rest . . . we entreat you regarding the payment of the gold . . . for the young plants of vine and of the olive, the greatest (largest) . . . promise to pay and not withhold the produce . . . the same (produce, . . . we are) thankful to you in return, that you continue giving extra care to us. Farewell. Year 4, Pauni 10th

Line 1: NN καὶ Πυρραννόρος Ἡρακλείδης: The name Πυρραννόρος is attested only twice, in P.Petr. 2 29(a) (from 245 - 244), once as a son of Demosthenes and again as a son of Pyrrandrus. Since this document has been dated around the same time as P.Petr. 2 29 (i.e. 243 BCE) and both of them are from the Arsinoite, the person mentioned in this document could be either Pyrrandrus son of Demosthenes or Pyrrandrus son of Pyrrandrus.

From the syntax of the text (cf. ἀξιομεν in line 5, also the construction in line 2 ἡμεῖς βουλόμεθα. ἔρρωμεθα) more than one sender is expected, consequently we expect at least one other name before Πυρραννόρος.

Line 2: There are few possibilities for the restoration of the beginning of this line. Either "κατὰ λόγον ἐστίν" as in P.Cair.Zen 3 59397, Draft of a Letter from Zenon to Themistocles (Arsinoite, 275 BCE - 226 BCE), SB 1 4304, Private Letter (Unknown, 300 BCE - 201 BCE).

Or κατὰ γνώμην ἐστίν as in bgu 6 1301, Private Letter (Unknown, 200 BCE - 1 BCE), P.Cair.Zen 1 59056, Letter from Apollodotos to Zenon (Karies, 257 BCE), P.Petr. 2 2, Correspondence of Diophanes. Letter from Moschion (Arsinoite, 224 BCE -
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ἐρρώμεθα δὲ καὶ οὕτω: for the restoration of this phrase see: P.Col.3.9 (257BC) and P.Mich.1.10 (257 BCE).

Depending on which restoration in the beginning of line 2 is correct, the number of missing letters could be from 13 to 15 letters. Thus an average of 14 letters, about one quarter of the papyrus, has been lost on the left hand side.

Line 3: ἦργηνης. There are two possibilities for the restoration of this line: either Πηργήνης O.Bodl 1 285 (Thebes?, 300 BCE - 101 BCE), P.Grad 7, Receipt of Royal Farmer for Seed (Unknown, 221 BCE - 203 BCE); or Χαργήνης P.Lond 7 1994, Philadelphia (Arsinoite), 251 BCE, P.Lond 7 1995 (Philadelphia, 251 BCE). Another possible restoration for name is Ὁργήνης, yet this name is attested only once in Ptolemaic era “during the 2nd BCE” in P.Amh 2 62, List of Soldiers, Soknopaiu Nesos (Arsinoites), while this document dates back to the middle of the third century CE.

ἀπο-[νήσ]οντα: Although the letters are not certain, the reading still provides a reasonable meaning for the context.

Line 4: There are traces of an alpha at the beginning of the line.

Line 5 ἐπὶ περί ἐς: After checking the original papyrus it seems clearly that eta and iota are legible and after the preposition περί there are traces of vertical stroke of the tau, then epsilon.

Line 6: τῆς .. ἐλίας Before πλείστα at the end of line 6 τῆς is legible before the lacuna then the lacuna fits about two letters, then ἐλίας and τὰ πλείστα. Although the missing part at the middle of this line fits for about three letters (cf. line 7), including the sigma of the article τῆς, the construction does not allow additional words; the writer could have left a blank area between the article and ἐλίας.

The usual form is ἐλίας, but sometimes appears as ἐλάξα or ἐλᾶ. For the exchange between αἰ > α see, E Mayser, Grammatik der Griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit. Laut-Und Wortlehre, pp 103/106.

Line 7 ὕπόχειαν: The papyrus is mutilated at the beginning of this line, where ὕποχε- can barely be read.

Line 8: ἄντεχαριστεῖν this compound infinitive form has never been attested before in the documents. The verb gives the impression of a big favor or at least the expectation of continued support from the part of the addressee.

ὅν διατελεῖς ἑμ[ί]γι μοι ἄνωφορόν: this closing phrase is not attested in the correspondences before.

Magdy Aly
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