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A NEW PTOLEMAIC PAPYRUS FROM THE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY COLLECTION

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P.Col. inv. 257
columbia.apis.p1357

10.7 × 12 cm

3rd cent. B.C.E.

This papyrus constituting part of a letter contains 19 partial lines.¹ It was purchased by Columbia University from the well-known Cairo dealer M. Nahman and J. Brummer through H. I. Bell in 1925; it is no. 54 in Bell's inventory. The papyrus, broken on all sides except the right, mentions various details (e.g., petitions, travel, antigrapheus) that suggest the document is of an official nature, perhaps a formal petition. The name(s) of the sender and the addressee(s) are not preserved. Antiochos is mentioned, along with a certain Nikanor and Pythion. The precise provenance of the text is unknown. The text is written along the fibers on a medium brown papyrus; the verso has some traces of ink, but the text is obliterated. There is a lower text on the recto that is barely visible, which has presumably been erased by the scribe (see especially the right margin at the ends of ll. 4–7, 10–12). The beginning of each line is lost and it is difficult to say how many letters are missing. An interesting feature of this papyrus is the presence of a previously unattested Greek word in both documentary and literary texts (cf. note 12 in the commentary below).

The hand is an excellent specimen of a fine, non-cursive documentary hand that gives the impression of being at home with literary texts. The letters are of medium size, detached, and bilinear, with the typical letters rising above or falling below the notional line (φ, ρ, ψ, υ; also τ). The connecting oblique stroke of ζ is nearly vertical (ll. 3, 7, 11). The cross-stroke of τ is heavy, occasionally slightly broken, and extends well to the left. The curved cross-stroke of μ is in a middle-high position as in contemporary documents. The right vertical hastas of π and η are characteristically curved. ξ is formed by three horizontal strokes, the middle one being smaller in size. The second half of ω is undeveloped (). o and c are small and high.

The hand evinces several features common to papyri in the Ptolemaic period: broken τ, ξ in three horizontal strokes, ζ with nearly vertical connecting stroke, μ with high saddle. The hand is strikingly similar to *PSI IV 383* (248/247 B.C.E.), which betrays the characteristics of the period: vertical hastas transformed into curved lines, conclave oblique strokes in δ, α, λ, small ornamental strokes at the tips of most letters. The hand may also be compared with *P.Cair.* 65445 (late 3rd cent. B.C.E.; C. H. Roberts, *GLH*, No. 5b), which possesses similar letter-forms of several different letters (cf. τ, μ, ξ, η), although the scribe's execution is less refined than in our papyrus. Additionally, the handwriting may be compared to *P.Mich.* I 78 (3rd cent. B.C.E.; michigan.apis.1769), a letter from the Zenon archive; notice here especially the identical form of ω in both texts. We also compared the script of our papyrus with that of *P.Genova III 107* (236 B.C.E.; H. Harrauer, *Handbuch der griechischen Paläographie*, No. 21), which shows many similarities (e.g., broken τ, ω with absent right stroke, π and η with curved vertical hastas, etc.). Thus, the general impression of the script suggests a date of 3rd century B.C.E., perhaps the second half of that century. Further support for this date is provided by the occurrence of the names Νικάνωρ and Ἀντίοχος, which are attested predominantly in the 3rd cent. B.C.E.

Is this document part of the Zenon dossier? There are a few features that suggest it may be. First, the name Νικάνωρ is very popular among the Zenon papyri (see references in note ad loc). Unfortunately, the Νικάνωρ in our papyrus cannot be matched with any certainty given the lack of details in our text. Second, the acquisition data of P.Col. inv. 257 match the acquisition data of other Zenon texts at Columbia. A large majority of the Zenon papyri were purchased by Columbia in 1924–1925 from M. Nahman and J. Brummer, precisely from whom our text was purchased in 1925. Third, our text is surrounded in H. I. Bell's

¹ For permission to publish the papyrus here, I thank Dr. David M. Ratzan, Curator of Papyri at Columbia University. The image has been digitally reproduced with the permission of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University. In preparing the publication, I am most grateful for the comments of Prof. Klaas A. Worp, whose sharp eye and editorial perceptiveness have helped my text immeasurably. I would also like to thank Dr. Charikleia Armoni for her valuable comments, which greatly improved the paper.



P.Col. inv. 257. Courtesy of the Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library

distribution list by batches of Zenon papyri, which suggests there is a link between the texts in question. These considerations raise the probability (but do not establish absolute certainty) that P.Col. inv. 257 is part of the Zenon dossier, and that for unknown reasons the papyrus has been overlooked thus far.

1]υτη [c. 14]
]ετοξεαυτῶ[ι c. 7]
]ιζει παρ' [A]ντιόχ[ο]υ [c. 4]
 γέγρ]αφε δὲ ἀξίων ἀνακαλέ[ε]σθαι
 5]οναc καὶ παρακαλέσαντα
].c μη καταπλαγένταc τινὰc
 ἐμ]φανίζεῖν περὶ ὧν ἐληλύθηcιν
 N]ικάνωρ κατ' αὐτῶν φάσκων
]τους περὶ τὴν ἀποδημίαν
 10 ἐντ]εύξειc τε παρὰ τινων δέχεσθαι
]δώονταc καὶ χρηματίζεῖν
]αγγέλλεσθαι ἐπεργείαc
 ἀπ]οσταληρόμενοι ἀντιγραφεῖc
]ων οἰκονομίαc μετὰ Πυθίωνοc
 15]απέμψαc[θ]αι αὐτόν, ὅπως ἐπιδέξει
] .. [c. 3]τους ε... [..] ...υ
]εῖτων [..]ληλυ.....
]κυ. [c. 6] ...
].. [c. 10]

Commentary

- 2]ετοξεαυτῶ[ι: If this line is near the opening of the document, one may read a name here, such as Μένετοc, which is attested twice in the Zenon papyrus (*P.Col.* III 9). If this papyrus is part of the dossier of Zenon, then the reconstruction is at least possible. In terms of frequency, ἔτοc (“year”) is also possible, followed by εαυτω. But -ετο, the 3rd sg. ending of a verb, is most likely correct, given what follows on the papyrus. The base of sigma has been extended (cf. παρακαλέσαντα in l. 5), and the following lunate shape prior to the lacuna is likely the back of ε. ceαυτω[ι is, therefore, the probable reading.
- 3 [A]ντιόχ[ο]υ: Ἀντιόχοι is a possible reading, but I think it unlikely, since we should be able to see the descending stroke of the right half of ω. An unidentified Ἀντιόχοc of Alexandria is mentioned in *P.Cair. Zen.* I 59057 on the verso of which is the occurrence of the name Νικάνωρ, which is also featured in our papyrus.
- 5]οναc: The right vertical hasta of a letter, probably μ or π, precedes ο. We may read μόναc, though other possibilities cannot be excluded.
- 6 .c μη: We may attempt to read these letters together as a feminine noun, which may explain the reason why “some were terrified” (καταπλαγένταc τινὰc), such as ὀσμῆ (“smell, odour, foul smell”). But other readings are possible and even more likely, such as the negation μή preceded by some word ending in sigma.
καταπλαγένταc: From καταπλήσσω – “strike down, strike with amazement, terrify”. The term is rare in the papyri; cf. Preisigke, *Wörterbuch*, s.v. (inc. supp.). See *P.Petr.* III 74, *P.Cair.Isid.* 73 (with Attic -τω), *CPR* XV 7, *SB* I 3924.
- 7 ἐληλύθηcιν: The reading is slightly difficult due to the fading of the ink and the integration of the lower text with the upper at the end of this line.
- 8 N]ικάνωρ: Based on a generated chronological graph in the Trismegistos database,² 70% of the occurrences of the name Νικάνωρ in the papyri are from the 3rd cent. B.C.E. The name is prominent in the Zenon archive, including a letter from Νικάνωρ addressed to Apollonius (*P.Cair. Zen.* 5 59806 = *PSI* VI 634), Νικάνωρ the hypodioiketes (*P.Cair. Zen.* I 59041 = *P.Mich.* I 58), Νικάνωρ the director of a logisterion (*P.Mich. Zen.* 33 2), Νικάνωρ the manager of a bath-house (*P.Cair. Zen.* II 59176), among others (see listings in *Pap.Lugd.Bat.* XXXI.A, 374–375). For a study on the persons bearing this name in the Zenon archive, see C. J. Kraemer, *TAPA* 58, 1927, 159–169. In another text (possibly

² <http://www.trismegistos.org/>.

- also belonging to the Zenon archive; but see B. E. Nielsen and K. A. Worp, *P.NYU*, II, no. 46), Νικάνωρ is a nomarch. The Νικάνωρ in our papyrus cannot be identified with any certainty.
- 10 ἐν]εύξει: Probably ἐντεύξει (fem. nom./acc. pl.), common in petitions and official letters.
- 11 δώοντα: The term ἀποδίδομι is very frequent in the papyri and we may read it here as ἀποδώοντα, but other prepositional prefixes are equally possible, e.g., ἐπιδώοντα, which could relate to the filing of a petition or report.
- 12 ἐπεργεία: The reading ἐπεργεία is very clear on the papyrus; however, ἐπεργεία is an unattested word. ἐνεργεία is absolutely excluded, and the word division ἐπί + ἐργεία produces no results. ἐπεργεία is derived from the noun ἔπεργος (cf. LSJ s.v. and supplement), which means “assistant” (e.g., *SB* 22 15558) and denotes in the language of the Ptolemaic administration persons who serve in the monopolies (see D. Kaltsas, Ein Streit zwischen Epergoi in P.Hels. 1, *ZPE* 142, 2003, 214–220). For the formation of ἔπεργος – ἐπεργεία, cf. ἔπαρχος – ἐπαρχ(ε)ία, κύνεργος – κυνεργεία, μετάβολος – μεταβολία. ἐπεργεία probably indicates the field of work of the designated functionary (ἔπεργος). Cf. οἰκονομία in l. 14, which here could also mean the office activity or jurisdiction of the οἰκονόμος (see Preisigke, *Wörterbuch*, s.v. οἰκονομία).
- 13 ἀντιγραφεύς: The ἀντιγραφεύς was a financial clerk within the Ptolemaic bureaucracy, charged with checking revenue and expenditure (Preisigke, *Fachwörterbuch*, s.v. ἀντιγραφεύς; Ch. Armoni, *Studien zur Verwaltung des ptolemäischen Ägypten: Das Amt des Basilikos Grammateus*, *Pap.Colon.* XXXVI, Paderborn 2012). Here, like elsewhere in the 3rd century, the range of the activity of an ἀντιγραφεύς is perhaps an entire Nomos (Ch. Armoni, *op. cit.*, 27ff. with n. 74). In the Ptolemaic period, the oikonomos and antigraphheus worked closely together in keeping careful fiscal records. Apparently, some of the latter are here being sent off. Commenting on this role within Athens, Aeschines explains that the ἀντιγραφεύς was elected by the city as a checking-clerk and gave a public report of the city revenues every prytany, but in the time of the Theoric Fund (θεωρικόν) the superintendents of the Fund assumed the role of ἀντιγραφεύς, which included various duties, e.g., controlling the dockyards, taking charge of the naval arsenal under construction, and being superintendents of the streets (*Ctes.* 3.25). Cf. P. J. Rhodes, *The Athenian Boule* (Oxford 1972), 238f.
- 14]ων: An oblique stroke of what appears to be the right half of ω appears, although α cannot be excluded. Πυθίωνος: The name is first attested in *P.Petrie* III 21 (227/225 B.C.E.) and 136 (231–206 B.C.E.). There is a Πυθίων mentioned in *P.Mich.* XVIII 778 (193/192 B.C.E.) who is the oikonomos from the village of Mouchis, Polemonos meris. The name does not occur among the other Zenon papyri from Columbia.
- 15 ὄπως ἐπιδέξει: In leases, ἐπιδέχομαι is frequently used in the phrase ἐπιδέχομαι μισθώσασθαι (“I undertake to lease”; see, e.g., *P.Col.* X 284, *P.Mich.* XI 611, *P.Mich.* XV 731). But it is also used to denote the receiving of a person, as in the petition of *P.Oxy.* II 281 (ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἐπιδεξαμένη αὐτὸν εἰς τὰ τῶν γονέων μου οἰκητήρια). We may therefore translate this line: “to send him in order that you might receive”. It is not clear who is being sent, but a good candidate would be Πυθίων, who is mentioned in the previous line.
- 16 ε...: The traces of ink following ε suggest that this word is ἐπί.
- 17 [.]ληλυ: This is most probably some form of the perfect of ἔρχομαι (cf. line 7 above).

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