

Dakhleh Oasis Project: Monograph 11

**Dakhleh Oasis Project:
Preliminary Reports on the 1994–1995
to 1998–1999 Field Seasons**

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An Inscribed Pedestal from the Temple of Tutu

Roger S. Bagnall and Klaas A. Worp, with a note by John Tait

The Greek Text: Roger S. Bagnall and Klaas A. Worp

(The pedestal upon which the inscriptions discussed below are written was discovered in two pieces [Plate 1] within slightly different parts of the Forecourt of the Temple of Tutu, see Hope this volume, Figure 5. The upper part, block 1D/8, was found in 1993 east of Pedestals 3 and 4 [see Worp and Hope this volume] amongst much architectural debris almost at floor level. The lower part, block 1.87, was found in 1992 amongst similar material to the north, 6 m east of Pedestal 2. The pedestal would appear to have been originally set up on the processional route within the forecourt, though exactly where, is unknown. It stands 65 cm high; the shaft measures 24 ± 2 cm in section while the top is 43 ± 1 cm. It is made from poor-quality sandstone. The demotic text is in red paint and the Greek letters are lightly incised and filled with red paint. CAH)

The pedestal is inscribed on one face, which we take to be the front, with a single line of demotic above two Greek texts (Plate 1). From what survives it seems that the latter were identical, but of the lower one so little is now readable that even this is not quite certain. The most secure element of the upper text (Plate 2) is the standard regnal titlature of the emperor Nero, in the genitive.

The key term in the text is *πρόσεργον*. We have also considered the possibility that the halves of the word should be separated, *πρός ἔργον*. We do not find any instances of such a phrase in the *Duke Data Bank of Documentary Papyri* or the body of Greek inscriptions on the PHI7 disk; however, and we are inclined to suppose both that *εἰς* would be more likely a preposition and that the definite article ought to stand before *ἔργον*. Although *πρόσεργον* is not completely preserved in either occurrence (2, 8), the combined texts guarantee the form. It is cited by Liddell, Scott and Jones (1940) only from two sources. One is Demosthenes, *Against Aphobus* 1.17, 35, 39, where the standard text uses *ἔργον* for 'interest', but a variant reading gives instead *πρόσεργον*. A first documentary instance of this meaning occurs in P.Oxy. LIV 3756.17, where the editor

translates it 'interest' but does not comment on the term. The second text cited is IG VII 3073.8, 62, 131, a Lebadeian inscription in which the definition offered is 'extra work', that is, additional to that contracted for.

The context here is insufficient to explain the usage of the word, but the sense 'interest' seems unlikely to be meant. One might imagine that the inscription records the carrying out or donation of the means of carrying out some additional work in the temple, but there is no parallel to this formulation known to us from building inscriptions in Egypt or elsewhere. We think it likely that the word *πρόσεργον* marks the end of a clause, but the context is so poorly preserved that we have refrained from printing punctuation there.

Upper text

Demotic

[ca. 7] τὸ πρόσεργο[ν

[ca. 6] Πετεύριος ἐγραψ-

4 [ca. 5] Νέρωνος Κλα[υδίου Καί-]

σαρος Σεβαστοῦ Γερ[μανι]κοῦ[ν]

Αὐτοκράτορος traces

Lower text

traces

8 τὸ πρ[ός]εργον ..φρ..

Πετεύριος ἐγραψ[.]..

[]

[]

12 ρος

traces?

3, 9 It is attractive to suppose that Peteurius, or more likely a son of Peteuris, is the subject of *ἔγραψ[*, which we would then supplement as *ἔγραψεν*, the *nu* of which may be partly preserved in line 9. The names that come to mind as fitting the traces in line 8 are Greek (*Σώφρων*, *Ἐφφρων*) rather than Egyptian. These would also fit the available space in line 3.

4 The first *nu* in *Νέρωνος* seems to have been made backward. For the titulature of Nero used here, see P. Bureth, *Les titulatures impériales dans les papyrus, les ostraca et les inscriptions d'Égypte* (30 a.C.–284 p.C.), Brussels, 1964, 34–35. This formula is found throughout Nero's reign. We suppose that at the start of the line there stood *ἔτους*, whether written in full or abbreviated *L* (we see no trace of it now; the symbol is perhaps more likely), followed by the year number. The traces in line 6 would then most plausibly stem from a month name and day number.

10–11 There is no trace of paint in these lines now, but there may well have been writing in both originally.

It is, however, difficult to reconstruct these lines so as to have the *ρος* in line 12 be the end either of *Καίσαρος* or of *Αὐτοκράτορος*, as the lines seem to have held about 17 letters in this part of the inscription. One possibility is that there is only one lost line rather than two, and whatever began line 4 was written already in line 9 or in a very compressed manner. That would allow *ρος* to be the end of *Καίσαρος*. To get to the end of *Αὐτοκράτορος* would suppose lines of about 24 letters each, which does not seem likely.

REFERENCES

- Hope, C. A., this volume, Excavations in the Settlement of Ismant el-Kharab in 1995–1999, 167–208.
 Liddell, H. G., R. Scott and H. S. Jones, 1940 *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
 Worp, K. A. and C. A. Hope, this volume, Dedication Inscriptions from the Main Temple, 323–331.

The Demotic Text: John Tait

Concerning the pedestal-inscription, I have had the benefit of a variety of types of photograph, sent by Colin A. Hope and Roger S. Bagnall, and have been able to discuss the piece with colleagues at the Copenhagen Demotic Conference. The only reading that can be proposed is that the line of inscription ends ... *m-bʃh Twtw*, '... before (the god) Tutu'. This reading is agreed to be certain.

We have also had the benefit of Roger Bagnall and Klaas Worp's work on the Greek text or, rather, texts that stand below the demotic. We have therefore been able to look specifically for any connection with the

Greek, including, for example, the name Peteuris (or Peteurius). No readings considered, however, are thought to be possible, let alone likely.

Further, the Greek text is securely dated to the reign of Nero. Little perhaps ought be said on the palaeography of a text of which only a single phrase can be read, but the demotic gives the impression of being somewhat earlier: a late Ptolemaic or even a second century BCE date might have been suggested.

The possibility therefore should be considered that the Greek text was added at a significantly later date to an object that already bore the demotic.



Plate 1 Front (?) face of the Pedestal.



Plate 2 The demotic and upper Greek inscriptions.