

MISCELLANEA

A NEW FRAGMENT OF HOMER

1: C.A. HOPE: THE FIND CONTEXT

The fragment of an inscribed wooden board discussed below by Dr. K.A. Worp was found during the 1995/6 season of excavations at the village of Ismant el-Kharab (ancient *Kellis*) in the Dakhleh Oasis¹).

It was discovered in Room 3B of a mud-brick structure designated Shrine III which is situated in the north-east corner of the inner temenos of the Temple of Tutu²). The temple is a small seven-roomed, sandstone building which stands within two mud-brick temenos walls at the western end of a large enclosure which contains numerous mud-brick structures. In addition to Shrine III, there are three other mud-brick shrines within the inner temenos; all of these buildings are assumed originally to have served a religious function given their location. The date of the construction of Shrine III has yet to be determined with precision; however, the complex of buildings within the inner temenos was mostly developed between the reigns of Hadrian (117/138) and the end of the second century, by which time Shrine III had undoubtedly been constructed³). It would appear that the temple continued to function as a place of worship until (at least) 335, at which date a priest of Tutu is still attested⁴). Thereafter, until the abandonment of the site at the end of the fourth century, the temple complex witnessed various modifications and use for domestic activity.

Shrine III comprises three rooms. On the east is the main room, Room 1, which is entered through a door in the centre of its south wall; high in the centre of the north wall is the lower part of a niche. Rooms 2 and 3 each open off Room 1 on the west with their doors adjacent; they are smaller and of similar size. Room 3 is 4.04m. E/W by 3.41m. N/S on the east and 3.23m. N/S on the west. The walls of the large room are coated with white gypsum plaster and the north and east walls have a painted design of a foliate scroll above panels. Each of the small rooms was divided in half after the original construction by the addition of a N/S mud-brick wall; in Room 3 it is 0.90m. high and 0.18/20m. thick. The two areas so created in each room are designated A and B, with A lying to the east of B. Access to each room was impeded by walls of uncertain height which delineated a rectangular area immediately inside the door. In Room 3A this measured 0.86m. E/W and 1.30m. N/S. The purpose of the subdivisions of Rooms 2 and 3 is unknown. They occurred late in the use of the structure as the earth floors which were laid contemporaneously with them are contiguous with a floor of similar material in Room 1, and this overlies two earlier gypsum floors. When the former was laid low benches were also built against the north and west walls of the main room. The

earth floor in this room mounds to the east and 0.5m. from the west wall it contains an S-shaped channel lined with potsherds, running north-south for a length of 1.32m. and having a maximum width of 0.10m. The channel is highest on the south and at its northern end a ceramic bowl is set into the floor. The potsherds used to line the channel are of late third to fourth century types, and so we may ascribe all of the alterations to the shrine just described to the fourth century.

The fragmentary, inscribed wooden board we are concerned with here was found in deposit 3 in Room 3B; its excavation registration number is 31/420-D6-1/D/4/2⁵). This comprised a fine powdery matrix of eroded mud plaster, decomposed brick and gypsum plaster across the entire room upon the late earth floor. This deposit had a depth of 0.6-0.26m., with the maximum depth on the north, and the fragment of Homer was found nine centimeters above the floor, 0.75m. from the south wall. Lying upon the floor and buried by this matrix were various fragmentary objects including part of another inscribed board (D/4/9), a Greek ostrakon (D/4/4) and small scraps of papyrus inscribed in Greek, six reed pens, pieces from a plaster sculpture, a few pieces of glass, plus the usual sherds and botanical material. This material undoubtedly represents a combination of what was left in the room at the time the structure was abandoned—and which may not all have been used in the room—with material which had accumulated during the use of the room. It was covered directly by collapse from the roof of the room and the walls, to a depth of 0.13-0.50m., and then considerable accumulations of sand. It may be assumed from this that no significant length of time separated the abandonment of the structure from the collapse of its roof as if this had been the case there would have been an intervening sand deposit, as is inevitable in the region. It is of interest to note that the shrine yielded nine fragments from inscribed wooden boards, 30 Greek ostraka and nine reed pens, plus fragments of several others. Three of the board fragments join; two of these were found on the floor in Room 3A (D/4/10-11) and the other derived from Room 3B (D/4/9). While the number of ostraka is not unusual for the temple area, there is a concentration of inscribed board fragments and reed pens in the structure which is atypical. The text upon the wooden board which comprises three fragments has been identified as a school exercise and similarly that upon an ostrakon from the floor of Room 1 (D/4/39)⁶). One cannot but wonder if this does not indicate some scribal activity there, though whether before or after the closure of the temple is uncertain.

The ostrakon from Room 3B deposit 3 (D/4/4) is dated to 329, while a coin from the upper floor of Room 1 is a posthumous issue of Constantine I dated 347-48⁷).

2: K.A. WOPR: THE TEXT

The find context of the fragment of a wooden board published below is described supra by the excavation director, Dr. C.A. Hope⁸). The

excavation registration number of the fragment is D/4/2, its dimensions are H. 3.5 x W. 12.1 cm. The bottom of the board has broken off and the amount of lost text is unknown. The writing runs parallel with the grain of the wood, over guiding lines pressed with a blunt object into the wood. The verso of the board is blank.

The board contains four lines of writing by what looks like an early/mid 4th-century hand⁹); the text can be identified as Homer, *Il.* XII 294 - 297. The beginnings of ll. 294 and 296 and the right hand parts of ll. 295 and 296 show damage to the wood surface, due to rather thorough cancelling of earlier text. Evidently, this fragment is a school text (cf. also below, note to l. 295).

294 ἀντίκα δ' ἀσιπιδά μεν προσθ' ἔχετο παντοσεισην

295 [κ]άλκη^ν χαλκειην ἐξηλατον ἠν ἄρ' ἀχιλλευσ

296 [η]λασεν ἐν]τοσθεν δε βοειας ραψε θαμειας

297 χρυσειης ραβδοιῖ διηνεκεσιν περὶ κ[υκλον

294, ἀντίκα: corrected from θυμω, or vice versa?

295, [κ]άλκη^ν: first letter cancelled by scribe, fourth letter (-κ-) resulting from correction (< -β- ?).

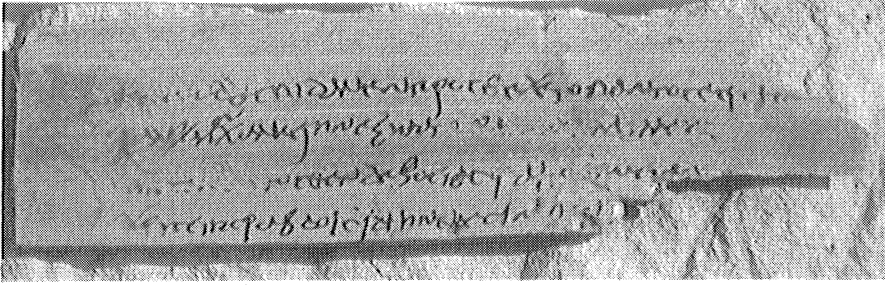
A comparison with the standard Homer text (I have used the Budé-edition by P. Mazon) shows that the fragment yields a few textual variants. Moreover, it is of some special interest, as there is no other fragment of this passage listed in R.A. Pack, *The Greek and Latin Literary Texts from Graeco-Roman Egypt*² (Ann Arbor 1965) while in more than thirty years since only one such papyrus seems to have been published, viz. P.Mon. II 38 (ll. 296-303, 335-372)¹⁰).

294. ἔχετο (for ἔχετο) entails a metrical error, as the first syllable should be long. Moreover, as my colleague C.J. Ruijgh reminds me, it also does not fit syntactically, as ἔχεσθαι is used only directly reflexive, while σχέσθαι can be used also indirectly reflexive, i.e. with a direct object.

παντοσεισην: for πάντος' εἰσην, i.e. either one splits παντοσεισην into πάντοσε (written in *scriptio plena*, instead of πάντος' with elision of the final -ε) εἰσην, or one separates πάντος' from εἰσην, while regarding the latter as a iotacistic spelling with -ει- for the (long) -ι-. In view of the preceding elisions (in δ' and πρόσθ) the latter approach seems the most likely.

295. [κ]άλκη^ν, for κάλην. Apparently, the first character written on this line was cancelled. There is, however, some more correction in the first word on this line (cf. the critical apparatus), and the palaeographical situation is complicated and difficult to reconstruct. It is reasonable to suppose that the scribe was influenced already here by the beginning of the following word χαλκειην.

ἠν ἄρ' ἀχιλλευσ, for ἦν ἄρα χαλκεύς. This should not be taken as a serious textual variant; rather, it looks like an error committed by a distracted or ignorant schoolboy. For Homer as a school author cf. M. Hamdi Ibrahim,



The study of Homer in Graeco-Roman Education (Athens 1976), 187-195 (non vidi); R. Criboire, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Atlanta GA 1996; = AmStudPap, 36).

296. Though there are a few ink traces visible, belonging to letters now printed between the [], I think that it is preferable not to assign these to any specific letters and to treat the beginning of this line as a lacuna resulting from a rather thorough cancelling of text.

297. The use of a *dihæresis* on an initial iota or on a iota in the center of a word is quite normal, but a *dihæresis* on a final iota (here of $\rho\alpha\beta\delta\omicron\iota\tilde{\iota}$) is much less regular. Maybe the pupil (mis-)took this iota as the initial letter of the following word. Did he think of a combination like, e.g. $\rho\acute{\alpha}\beta\delta\omicron\iota\varsigma$ $\iota\delta\acute{\eta}\nu$, because he did not recognize the poetic word $\delta\eta\eta\nu\epsilon\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\iota\nu$?

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2) For discussions of the site and the excavations conducted to date see C.A. Hope *et alii*, *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 15-17 (1985-7) and 19 (1989), *Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* 1-6 (1990-95) and 8 (1997) and *Mediterranean Archaeology* 1 (1988).

3) For a detailed discussion of the dating evidence for activity within the temple and the occupation at the site in general see C.A. Hope, *Observations on the Dating of the Occupation at Ismant el-Kharab*, in: M. Marlow (ed.), *The Oasis Papers, I: Proceedings of the First International Symposium of the Dakhleh Oasis Project, Durham, July 5-9, 1994* (Oxford, in press).

4) K.A. Wörpf, *Greek Papyri from Kellis I* (Oxford 1995), no. 13.

5) 31/420-D6-1 is the official number of the site in the Dakhleh Oasis Project site index; in other registration numbers cited hereafter it will be omitted.

6) Information upon the texts from this structure has been provided by Dr. Wörpf.

7) This identification has been provided by Gillian E. Bowen.

8) I am most grateful to Dr. Hope for kindly allowing me to publish this text.

9) There is some similarity between this hand and the hand which wrote the famous Kellis Isocrates Codex from Ismant el-Kharab, published by A. Rijksbaron and myself (Oxford 1997).

10) I have benefitted from a search by my colleague W. Clarysse (Leuven) through his 'Post-Pack²' computer files. He also refers me to W. Cureton, *Fragments of the Iliad of Homer from a Syriac Palimpsest* (London 1851), which apparently contains various passages of the Iliad between XII 273 - XXIV 483. Unfortunately, I could check neither this publication nor that of C. Lestani, *I papiri dell' Iliade dal 1965 a oggi*, *Rudiae* 4 (1992), 135-190.