

At the end of the 19th century, two 3rd-century B.C.E. papyrus fragments appeared in Cairo purporting to describe someone's nocturnal dream (*P.Cair.* 10313 & 10328). Once connected, they became a single epistle from a certain Ptolemaios addressed to a certain Achilleus. This combined papyrus was then connected to a third papyrus (*P.Cair.* 30961) which was not written in Greek but in Demotic Egyptian, showing that this epistle was not a Greek one after all, but bilingual. This sent a brief spark of electricity through the scholarship, not so much due to the dream content, but due to its bilingual nature. As Wilcken wrote, one would expect this level of bilingualism not in the 3rd century but in the 2nd, and thus labelled the papyrus "A Problem in Bilingualism" (1912). However, despite emphasizing its bilingualism, he did not print the Demotic text alongside the Greek, even though he believed it to be a bilingual document. So, too, when Spiegelberg published the Demotic part of the epistle (1908), he omitted the Greek part, even though he too believed the letter to be bilingual. In fact, even though the document has been believed to be bilingual for a century now, the two parts (the Greek part and the Demotic part) have never been published together. Even in Bagnall and Derow's recent translation of the papyrus (2004), the English ends with the line "a Demotic text starts here." This paper will not only be the first to print this bilingual document *as* a bilingual document, but also, in so doing, will treat it more accurately for what it is: an organic unity. The papyrus deserves such treatment because it is indeed remarkable: not just because it is a test-case of early bilingualism in Ptolemaic Egypt, but because of the particular use of bilingualism encountered in the text: a reported dream. The letter-writer recounts his dream in Egyptian, as he claims, so that his correspondent can better understand it (lit. "I wrote [this] in Egyptian so that you may know clearly," "Αἰγυπτιστὶ δὲ ὑπέγραψα, ὅπως ἀκριβῶς εἰδῆις.")

The main question of this paper, then, is why would someone choose to write their dream in Egyptian? Presumably, the letter-writer's dream was in Egyptian (as much as any dream is language-bound), so he reports it in that language. But this does not fully explain the problem, since it does not articulate exactly what would have been lost in translation. Although it is possible that there is something "Egyptian" about dreaming—that in order to discuss dreams properly in a certain milieu, one must do so in Egyptian—there is no certain evidence to support this. Instead I will argue that in certain ancient contexts dream interpretation was not necessarily symbolic, but linguistic. After showing parallels from Artemidorus and Philo's discussions of dreams, as well as two Greco-Demotic dream parallels from the Sarapeion archive, it will become clear that dream objects in ancient interpretation were not just symbols but very much *words* (an almost pre-Lacanian preoccupation with the semantic functioning of dreams). Since dream interpretation is connected with the actual words, the language itself matters, in order that the significant words be connected to the proper matrix of homophones. Thus, this man, Ptolemaios, relates his dream in Egyptian so that it can be properly, *semantically*, interpreted. In this milieu of professional dream-interpretation, dreams are simply untranslatable.