

Pylon 6 (2024)
ISSN: 2751-4722

Critical Notes on Published Documentary Papyri and Ostraca

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Heidelberg: Propylaeum, 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.48631/pylon.2024.6.108245>

Citation

C. Balamoshev, "Critical Notes on Published Documentary Papyri and Ostraca," Pylon 6 (2024) Article 1. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.48631/pylon.2024.6.108245>.

§1 In this paper, I offer corrections and remarks on various documentary papyri and an ostracon. The proposed changes are based on readings conducted either through high-quality digital images accessible online or through personal inspection in Warsaw (specifically, at the National Museum and the Department of Papyrology of the University of Warsaw). Thanks are due to W.G. Claytor for reading the draft and offering useful comments and to the anonymous referees for their valuable suggestions.

🔗 **BGU 4 1031**

§2 On the verso side of this private letter, the address was uncovered during conservation. The papyrus has: Ἡρακλείδῃ vac. φίλω; this text was not included in the *editio princeps*, and the subsequent revisions¹ of the text had no knowledge of it. During a conservation project carried out at the Faculty of Archaeology of the University of Warsaw, when the original Berlin cardboard was removed from the glass frame, we discovered a line of text on the papyrus (Fig. 1). It contained the address line, written in an elegant upright script, comparable to the one on the recto (Fig. 2), albeit with a slight change of style and employing the iota adscript (as observed throughout the recto, interestingly forgotten by the author in the epigraphic section, where the same name Ἡρακλείδῃ is written), indicating the sender's advanced level of education.

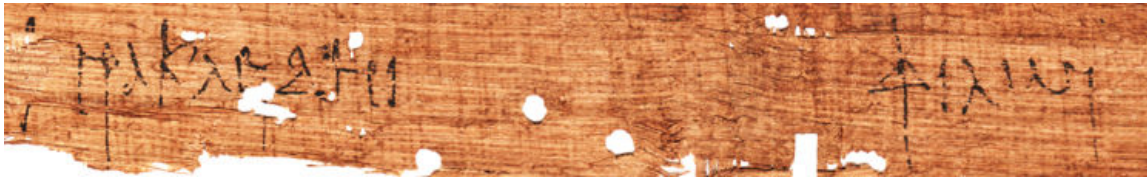


Fig. 1: verso

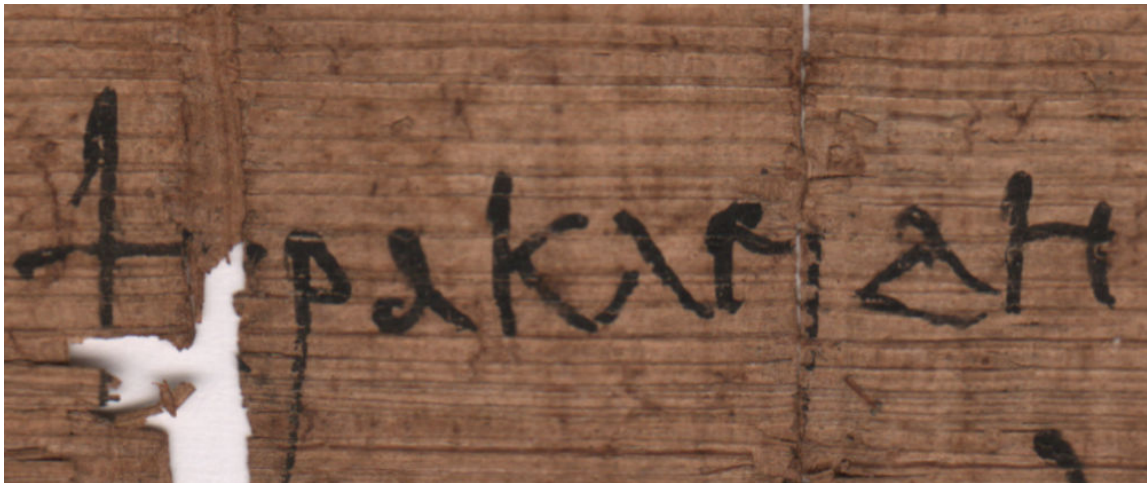


Fig. 2: recto line 1

🔗 **BGU 7 1584 = SB 18 13878**

§3 This tax receipt together with the subsequent papyrus was personally inspected by me at the Department of Papyrology of the University of Warsaw.

§4 Line 6: Καλίτου → Κα[τ]σίτου.

¹ 🔗 Böhm 1953: 468–470 (= 🔗 BL III 16); 🔗 Kapsomenos 1957: 354–355 (= 🔗 BL IV 6); 🔗 Gonis 2003: 163 (= 🔗 BL XIII 29).



Fig. 3: line 6

This man reappears in the following text, [BGU 7 1585 = SB 18 13879.6](#), where once again he represents Διδύμη Μένωνος and his name is evidently written as Καίσιου (for a snapshot, see the next entry). The lambda is distinctly different and there is a noticeable hook towards the right at the bottom of the lambda in question. It is worth noting that the name Caesius/Καίσιος is quite rare in Egypt, with only a total of eight documented occurrences in both papyri and inscriptions ([TM Nam 9727](#)), excluding the example from Side in Pamphylia. With Καίλιος, however, the situation is slightly worse with a total of five confirmed attestations, if we exclude the two papyri corrected here. Surprisingly, in line 23 of 13878 we find a hook-shaped slanting stroke in the first lambda of Φιλαδελφίας.



Fig. 4: line 23

However, the form of the letter in the alleged Καίλιου in line 6 of 13879 as compared to the λι of Ἀφρηλίου in line 2 of the same text leaves almost no doubt that it should be read as sigma.

- §5 Line 16–17: Φαρμ(οῦθι) β | διέγραψεν → Φαρμοῦ(θι) | ῥ διέγραψεν. At the beginning of the line, a letter with a horizontal stroke above it marking a number went unnoticed in both the *editio princeps* and the subsequent re-edition.²

² [Daniel and Sijpesteijn 1985](#): 47ff., esp. 55–57.

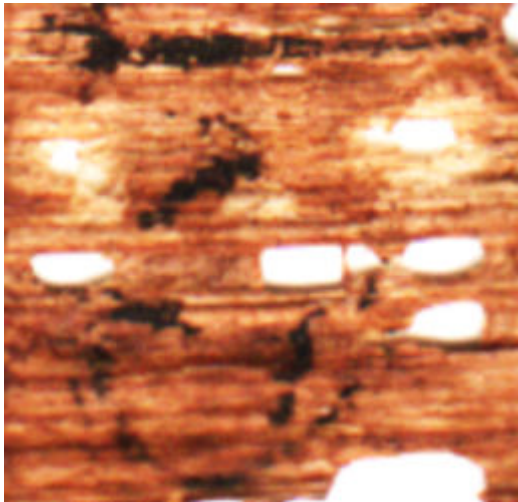


Fig. 5: line 17

- §6 The date should be corrected to Pharmouthi 9th (4th April 174 CE). Contrary to what R.W. Daniel and P.J. Sijpesteijn argued, the day was not written at the end of the preceding line, where the alleged number was the malformed ου of Φαρμοῦθι with an abbreviation stroke above it.
- §7 Line 18: Λούκειο[ς] Οὐαλέρις → Λούκιος vac. Οὐαλέρις. Here I restore the original edition's Λούκιος. There is no epsilon on the papyrus.



Fig. 6: line 18

The square shape of the omicron and other strokes indicate a scribal correction of unclear nature, possibly from an initial Λουκις, cf. l. 23.

- §8 Line 23: Φιλαδελφίας → Φιλαδελφείας. On the papyrus, the ει ligature is visible.



Fig. 7: line 23

☞ **BGU 7 1585 = SB 18 13879**

- §9 To the upper left corner of the papyrus, there exists line not mentioned in the original edition that is likely to be read as πρ[ά]κ(τορσιν) ἀργ(υρικῶν) Φ[ι]λ(α)δ(ε)λφ(ε)ίας. The text is not well preserved but the multitude of parallels of this abbreviated phrase is sufficient to confirm the reading, cf. e.g. ☞ **P.Gen. 2 108.5**.

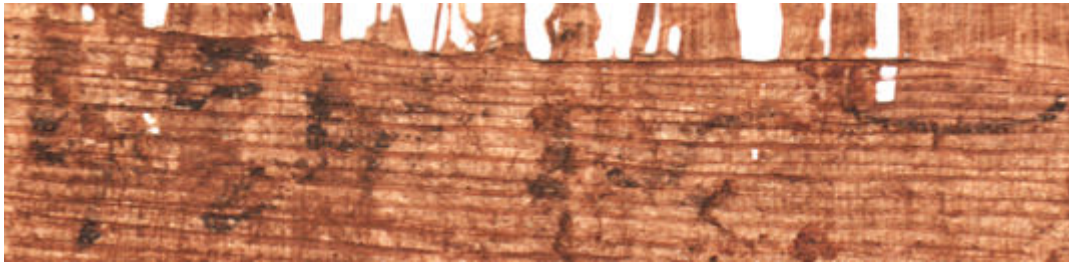


Fig. 8: upper margin

- §10 Line 6: Καίλιου → Καισίου; in this case, the reliable reading of the name as “Καισίου” confirms the correction in the above ☞ [BGU 7 1584 = SB 18 13878](#)

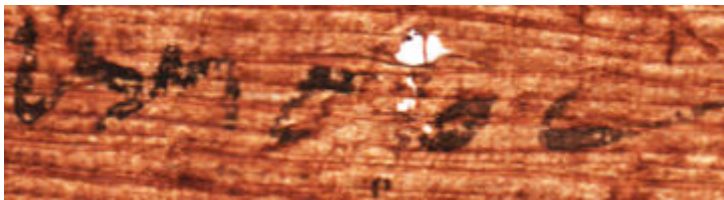


Fig. 9: line 6

☞ [BGU 7 1647](#)

- §11 This contract of apprenticeship can be improved further with a few additions.
- §12 Lines 4–5: επ[.] [.....]ος | [.] [.....] τῆ μεγάλης παρεμβολῆ → as a tentative reconstruction one could propose ἐπὶ [ἔτη τε]σσε[σσα]ρα (l. τέσσαρα) ἐν τῆ μεγάλης παρεμβολῆ based on the traces, although one must presume a repetition of the first sigma of τέσσαρα after the line break. Cf. ☞ [P.Heid. 4 326.12–13](#) (98 CE, Ankyron) with similar phrasing right after the name of the apprentice: τὴν θυγατέραν (l. θυγατέρα) αὐτῶν Συα[ι]ροῦν ἐπὶ ἔτη τέσσαρα.
- §13 ὥστε[ε] [.] → ὥστε α[ὐ]τόν, cf. the above cited ☞ [P.Heid. 4 326.16–17](#).
- §14 Line 9: μηνιῶν (l. μηνιαίων) → μηνιαίων.



Fig. 10: line 9

- §15 Lines 12–13: ἢ... [.]ν.. | [.]εσ..ν... δίδοναι → ἢ ἰς (l. εἰς) ἔτε[ρ]ον ἐρ[γ]αστήριον δίδοναι. This clause specifies that the owner of the shop is not allowed to outsource his apprentice to another shop.

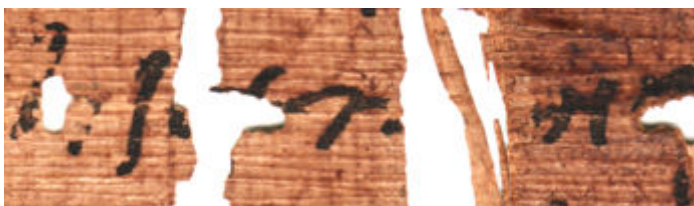


Fig. 11: line 12

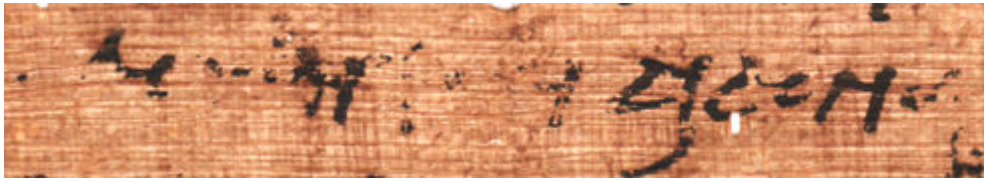


Fig. 12: line 13

☞ **P.Giss. 1 57**

§16 On palaeographical grounds, the papyrus should be dated to the 5th – early 6th century instead of the 6th/7th century, cf., e.g., ☞ **P.Mich. 11 613** (415 CE, Herakleopolis); ☞ **P.Oxy. 34 2718** (458 CE, Oxyrhynchos), which exhibit the characteristic horn-shaped tip of the sigma.



Fig. 13:

§17 Line 2: ε... ρει → ἐν τῷ ὄρει. The new reading shows that Apa Kollouthos is a presbyter connected with a monastic foundation in the Oxyrhynchite nome. For the term ὄρος, see ☞ **Cadell and Rémondon 1967**: 343–349. Although the specific monastic foundation is not explicitly mentioned, we do have some evidence of oros-related designations in the Oxyrhynchite nome:

- entries in an account including pious donations directed to a monastery of Oros,³ and in the following entry the *coenobium* of Abba Pamoun located in the Oros Paeē⁴ (☞ **P.Oxy. 27 2480.119–120**, 565–566 CE);
- a list of offerings to religious institutions, in which a *prosphora* is made to Mega Oros⁵ (☞ **P.Oxy. 67 4620.18**, 5th–6th cent. CE). As a toponym, this place is also found in a 7th–8th century tax list (☞ **P.Leid.Inst. 80 v, 2. 7**);⁶ in a request by a *pronoetes* to supply wheat to a monastery (☞ **P.Oxy. 82 5342.1**).⁷ See also ☞ **Benaissa 2021**, s.v. Oros, Mega;
- a monastery named after Abba Kopreous located in the western oros of the city (☞ **P.Oxy. 16 1890.6–7**, 508 CE);⁸

³ εἰς τὸ μοναστήριον τοῦ Ὁρους λόγῳ εὐσεβ(είας). Could this be the Mega Oros?

⁴ εἰς τὸ κοινόβι(ον) ἀββᾶ Παμοῦν ἐν τῷ Ὁρι (l. Ὁρει) Πάεε.

⁵ εἰς τὸ Μέγα Ὁρος.

⁶ χ(ωρίον) Μ(ε)γ(άλου) Ὁρους.

⁷ παρασχεῖν εἰς τὸ Μέγα Ὁρος

⁸ ἐν τῷ λιβικῷ ὄρει ταύτης τῆς πόλεως | ἐν τῷ μ[ο]ναστηρίῳ τῷ καλουμένῳ ἀββᾶ Κοπρεοῦτ[ο].

- a receipt made by Kollouthos, a monk of the oros of the village Berky (☞ [PSI 7 786.9–10](#), 581 CE),⁹ for which see ☞ [Benaissa 2021](#), s.v. Berky.

§22 Line 6: ἄξασθαι → δέξασθαι, made out of a triple ligature of delta, epsilon and xi.



Fig. 14: line 6

Cf. e.g., ☞ [P.Apoll. 37.9](#) (second half of the 7th cent. CE): ἄλλας ἀποκρίσεις ἐδεξάμην τοῦ δεσπότητος ἡμῶν; ☞ [P.Fouad 86.16](#) (6th cent. CE): οὐδὲ ἀπόκρισιν ἐδεξάμεθα.

§23 Line 7: πρὸς τὰ με → πρὸς τω (l. τὸ) μέ. One observes an omega with a redundant stroke connected to the mu.

⁹ Κολλοῦθος μονάζ(ων) τοῦ ὄρους κόμ(ης) | Βερκύ.



Fig. 15: line 7

Cf. τω in l. 1 τῷ ὄρει. As a general principle, an alpha has one less stroke compared to omega, cf. the sequence in μετὰ τῶν in l. 4.

- §24 Line 10: For Φοιβάμμωνι βοηθ(ῶ) ἀβάκ(τις), see [☞ Benaissa 2020: 220](#). It is worth noting that an unpublished papyrus from Vienna (P.Vind. G 47705), which was edited in my still unpublished Ph.D. thesis, contains a reference to a Phoibammon *boethos* of the *ab actis*: Φ]οιβάμμωνι βοηθῶ τοῦ ἀβάκτης.

[☞ P.Oxy. 41 2951](#)

- §25 In this sale of a slave, a few revised readings are proposed.
- §26 Line 20: κατέχοντος → καὶ ἔχοντος. Read καί (Fig. 16) rather than κατ-: tau's vertical stroke in the Greek text never descends as low as iota, as illustrated by the comparison of καί in line 29 (Fig. 17) and κατ (κατεχομένης) in line 20 (Fig. 18).

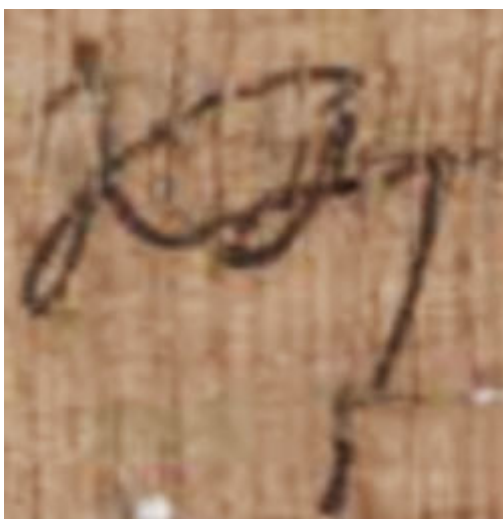


Fig. 16: line 20

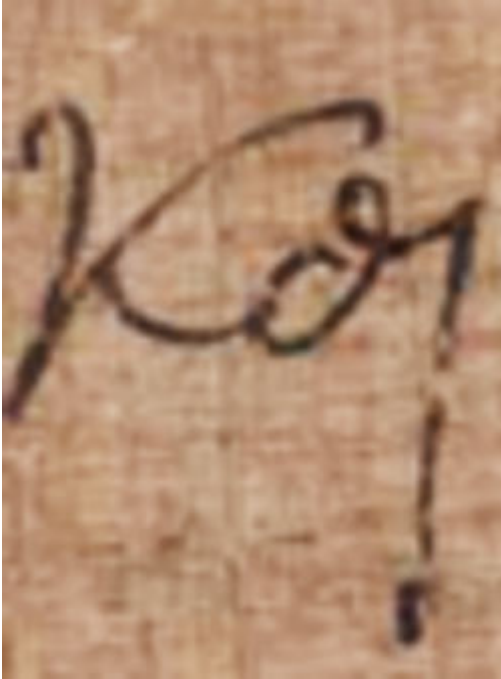


Fig. 17: line 29

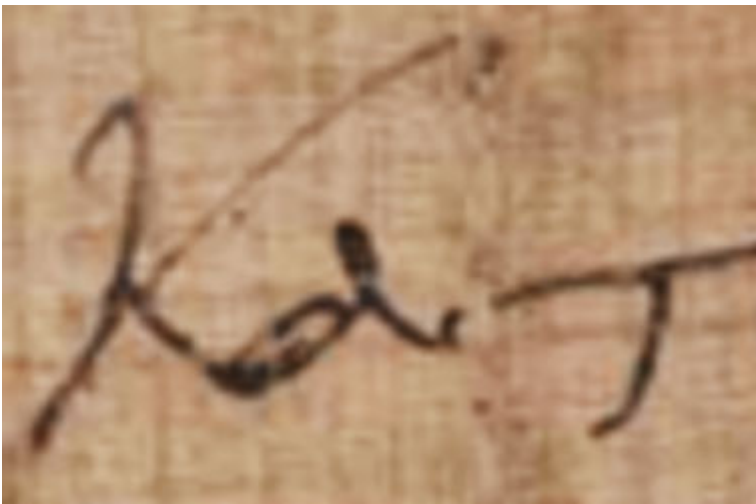


Fig. 18: line 20

For a parallel, see [P.Oxy. 9 1208.6](#) (291 CE): τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ καὶ ἔχοντος αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῆ χειρὶ κατὰ τοὺς Ῥωμαίων νόμους (l. νόμους).

§27 Line 22: ὀπίωνει (l. ὀπίωνι) → ὀπίωνι: the vertical right leg of the nu crosses the curved horizontal stroke before its end, creating a false impression of an epsilon (Fig. 19).



Fig. 19: line 22

Compare the nu in τήν in line 22, directly following ὀπίωνι (Fig. 20), or in κατεχομένης in line 29 (Fig. 21).

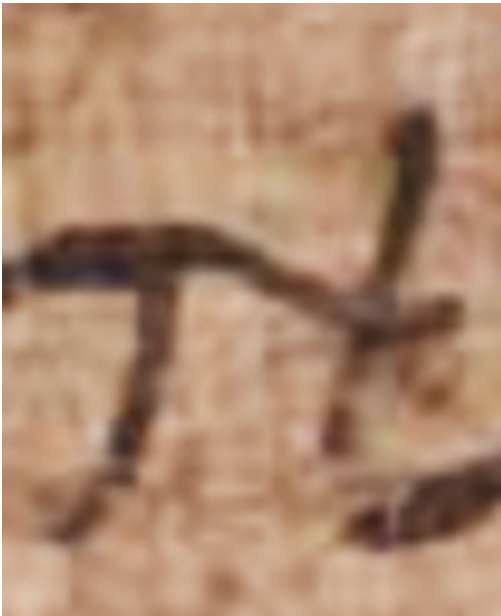


Fig. 20: line 22



Fig. 21: line 29

🔗 **P.Oxy. 50 3581** ¹⁰

- §28 Line 4: πρὸς γάμ[ον....].δο...μ[.]. → πρὸς γάμ[ον καὶ ἐπα]ιδιοποιησάμ[η]ν. The insertion of καὶ in the lacuna is necessary to achieve a transition in the narrative of the petition. At the same time, it is one of the few suitable conjunctions narrow enough to fit together with the initial part of the verb. The impression of an αἰ ligature after ποιησ and just before the lacuna can be misleading. Still, it can be easily dismissed by the fact that the shape of αμ sometimes resembles an αἰ with an elongated left upright stroke of the mu, cf. αμ in l. 6 πάντα μου.

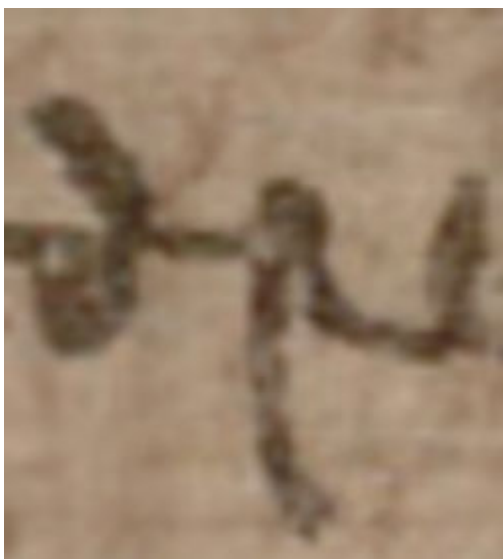


Fig. 22: line 6

Moreover, for a woman, the middle voice of the verb παιδοποιῶ is the standard form often accompanied by the prepositional phrase with ἐξ + the male parent, cf., e.g., 📜 **P.Tebt. 2 334.8–9** (200/201 CE): ἐξ οὗ καὶ <ἐ> παιδοποιησάμην [πα]ιδία δύο; 📜 **P.Ryl. 2 269.5–6** (2nd cent. CE): ἐκ δυεῖν οἴκ[ω]ν | ἐπαιδ[οπ]οήσατο.¹¹

¹⁰ See 📜 **BL XIII 163**, for the probable date of the petition (5th cent.).

¹¹ The only exception to this pattern is 📜 **P.Cair.Masp. 1 67005.10–11** (ca. 568 CE): καὶ παιδοποιήσασα | [ἀπὸ(?)] τοῦ εὐμοίου ἀνδρὸς - ca.12 - τέκ]νον [ἀρ]ρενκόν, where the subject of the active participle is Sophia.

§29 Line 5: μη[.]ν → probably μηδ[έ]ν ... She probably asserts that she was completely unaware of her husband's ill intentions.

SB 5 8006

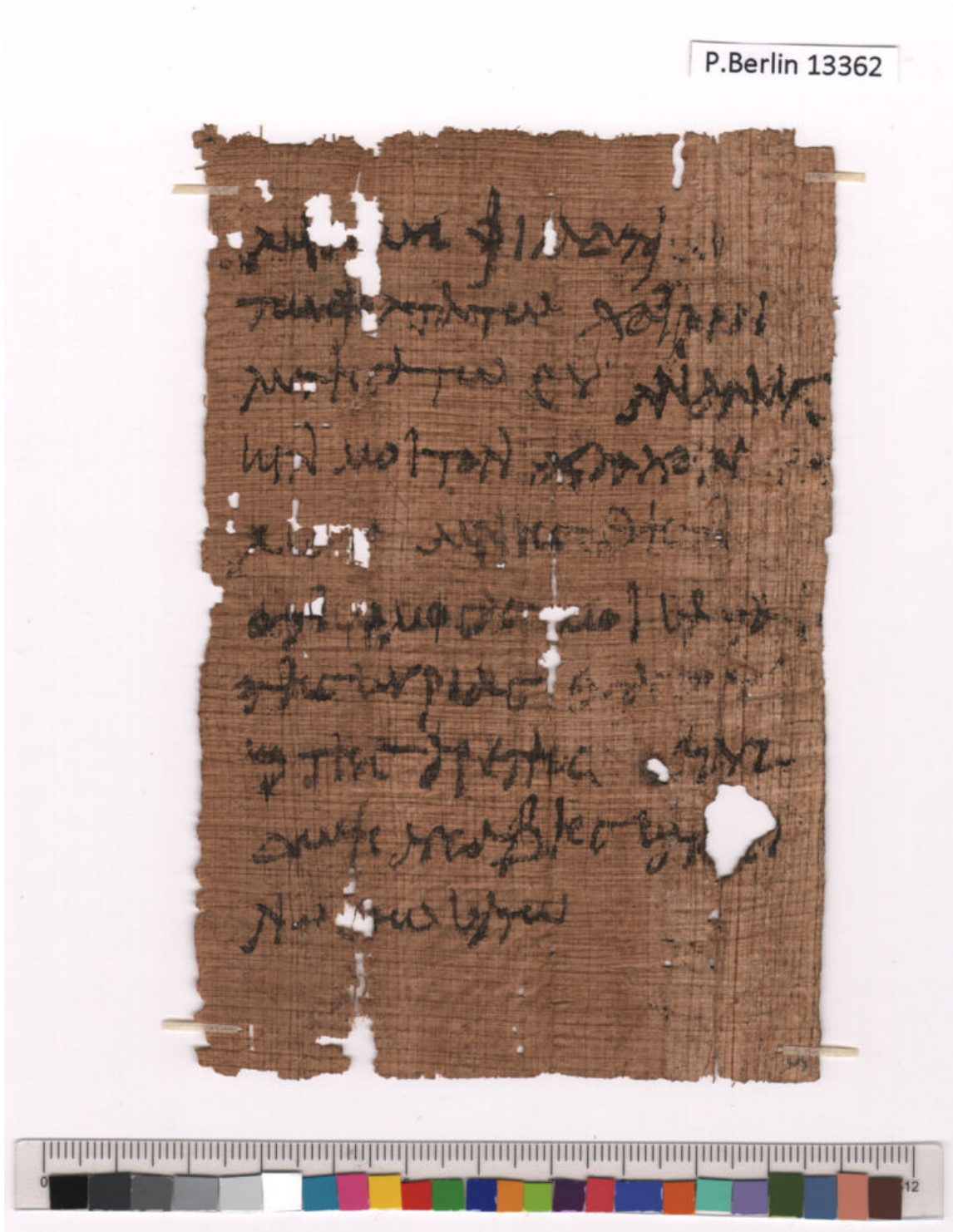


Fig. 23: P. 13362 R (SB 5 8006)

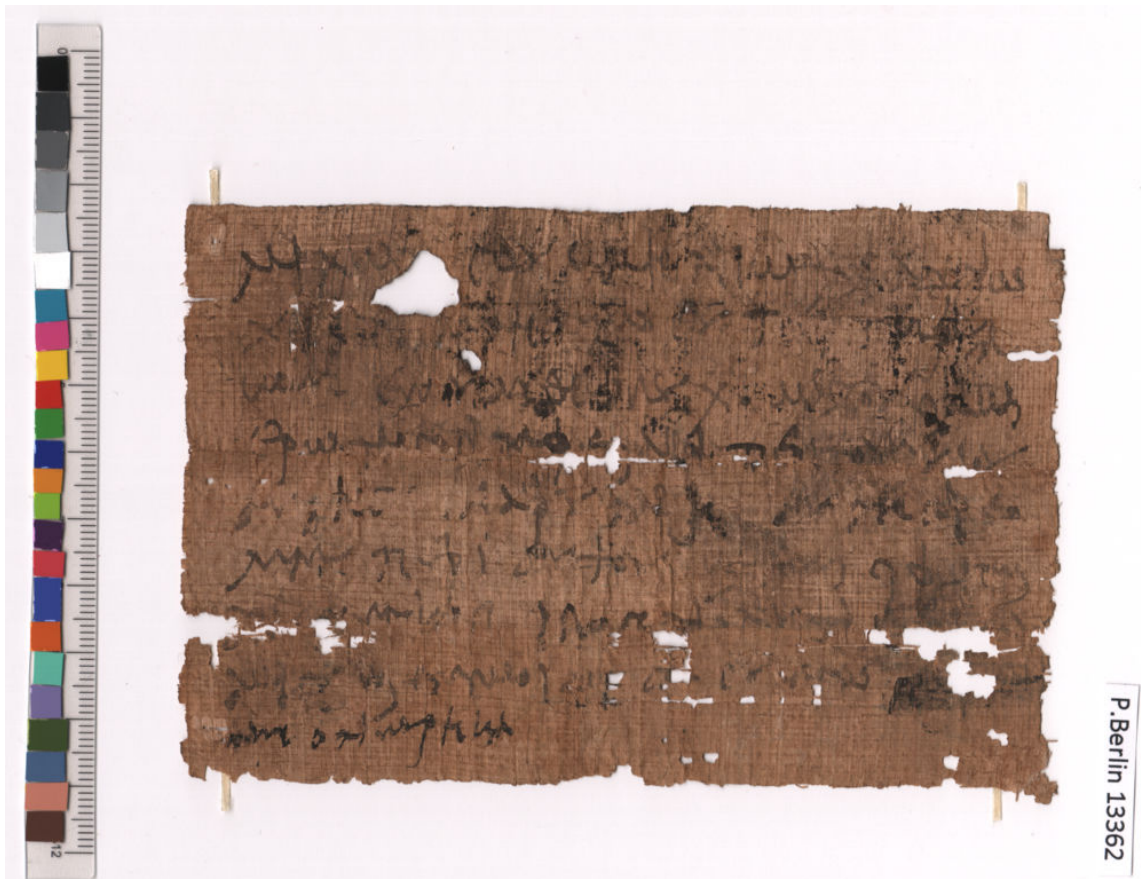


Fig. 24: P. 13362 V (SB 5 8006)

- §30 As a preliminary remark, what was printed as the verso is, in fact, the recto side, for which see [☞ BL V 101](#). The papyrus underwent conservation in Warsaw, yet the dispersed ink blotches render some readings extremely challenging. This is particularly true for the actual verso side, where the stains are ubiquitous.
- §31 Lines 4–5: χαλκοῦν.. χ|μον→ χαλκοῦν | μου¹² The traces of ink after χαλκοῦν are likely meaningless blotches.

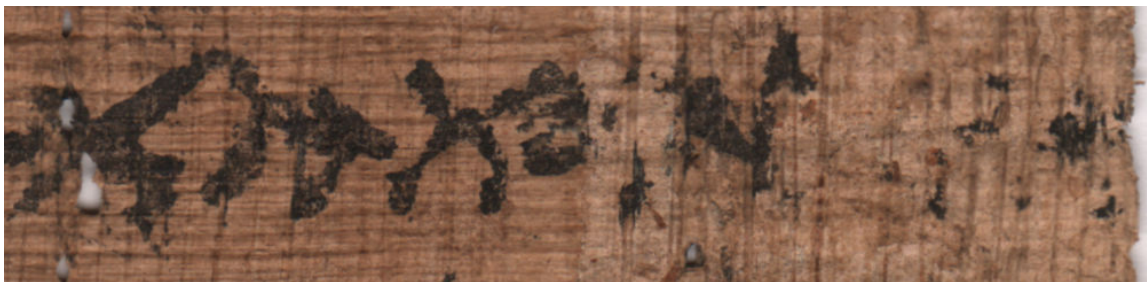


Fig. 25: line 4

- §32 The lines do not exhibit uniformity in their length, although in this case χαλκοῦν aligns well with μνήσθητι in line 5.

¹² Credit goes to W.G. Claytor for this suggestion.

- §33 Line 11: ΣουμμηνίϜ → ΣουκμηνίϜ (Fig. 26); this appears to be an alternative form for the more often attested Σοκμηῆνις (☞ **TM Nam 1130**). What seems to form a mu are various ink traces that occur throughout the text. For comparison, observe the kappa in φυλάκων in line 13 (Fig. 27).



Fig. 26: line 11



Fig. 27: line 13

- §34 Line 14: ἐρωτήσοντε (l. ἐρωτήσονται) φερνήν → ἐρώτησον Τεφεράιν *νε*/Τνεφεράιν (in which case Τνε corr. ex Τε), l. Τνεφερσάιν?. In ☞ **BL III 196** a ghost-name Τεφέρνην was proposed, which is otherwise unattested.¹³ Upon closer inspection, we can see that the author initially wrote Τε but seemingly inserted a nu in between (although due to the numerous ink stains throughout the papyrus, this impression may be incorrect). This is followed by a clear φε with the cross-stroke of epsilon being longer than usual, but still plausible, in my opinion. Otherwise, one could also consider an unattested and difficult metathesis of the sigma, i.e. Τνεφεσράιν/Τεφεσράιν. Regarding the ending, the traces are misleading. After the rho, there seems to be a letter starting with a curved line ascending to create a loop. As ligatures are not employed after a rho, this suggests that the letter is rather not a nu (which has a different shape) but a vertical alpha, otherwise used elsewhere in this text. However, it is not easy to interpret the double vertical lines that follow. It seems that the first represents the iota and the second the left vertical component of the nu (thus ΑΙΝ).

¹³ See also B. Borelli's note in the papyri.info digital commentary, where she entertains the possibility of Τεφέρνη being a variant of Τεφερσάις.



Fig. 28: line 14

§35 The omission of the nu appears to be quite common in the various renditions of feminine names commencing with the prefix T- and followed by the compound Νεφερ, for which we have plenty of examples:

- Τεφερσάις (a variant of Tnepersais, ↗ [TM Nam 1433](#));
- Τεφερῶς (↗ [BGU 9 1891](#) passim, and ↗ [PSI 1 51.4](#));
- Τεφερῶς (a variant of Tnepheros, ↗ [TM Nam 1272](#)).

§39 Line 18: ἔλεγ(έ) μοι → ἔλεγ<έ> μοι; there is no abbreviation. The author, by a *lapsus calami*, conflated the epsilon with the mu.

§40 π...ς → πᾶρες ('do not bother as I have found it').



Fig. 29: line 18

§41 Line 19: ... : I am uncertain how these underdots in the edition could be justified since there are no visible ink traces on the papyrus. It must be either a misprint or an ellipsis marked by the editor, who intended to imply that the text ends abruptly and the thought remained unfinished.

↗ [SB 6 9395](#)

§42 Since its initial edition,¹⁴ this private letter has undergone a series of corrections. To provide a brief overview of the current state of affairs, a significant contribution to its understanding was offered by ↗ [Papathomas 2009](#): 261–263, where several new readings were proposed and discussed. Additionally, three other scholars offered their ideas on specific words:

§43 ↗ [Jördens 1986](#), esp. 106 n. 12, revised the ghost-name Σύμμαχος in line 6; ↗ [Bonati 2016](#): esp. 203 n. 27, discussed the potential colour of the olives mentioned in the text (μελίχροας); ↗ [Martinez 1992](#): 216, used the text as a reference to the Saite jars (Σαίτια). In this note, I aim to present further

¹⁴ ↗ [Gerstinger 1957](#): 100–116.

corrections and interpretations of the content, utilizing the high-resolution images now available online.¹⁵

§44 Line 2: Φαμούτζωνος; an attempt to re-read this difficult name inserted above ἀδελφοῦ ἡμῶν was made by A. Papatomas (see above) as `Φ<ο>ιβάμμων[ος]`. Upon closer examination, it appears that this is not an isolated text, but instead a seamless extension of the address in line 1. According to Papatomas' restoration, the letter is addressed to the plural τ[οῖς δεσπότηι]ς ('lords'), with the first name read as Νεμεσσ[ι]α[νῶ]. If so, the available space after this name could likely accommodate merely the conjunction καί (despite the absence of visible ink traces), which would logically precede a second name (at least one additional name is necessitated by the plural form of address). Consequently, the second addressee is the person in the purportedly inserted text in line 2, but actually at the beginning of a line in its own right. Here, I read Φλαουιανῶ, followed by other eroded letters. The indentation of the line is certainly nothing new. The examples of such practice are abundant, but for the sake of my argument here it is worth mentioning instances such as [BGU IV 1082](#) (4th cent.), where the address (lacking χαίρειν) extends across three lines and the name of the second addressee is similarly in the second (indented) line:

κυρίῳ μου ἀδελφῶ Ἀφυνχίῳ
καὶ Διδύμῳ (l. Διδύμῳ) ταπιταρίου (l. ταπηταρίῳ)
Πετύσις Παντηβε

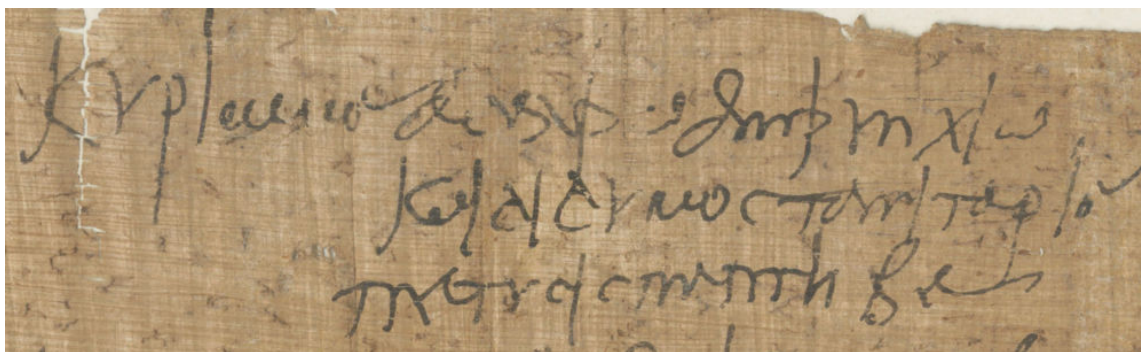


Fig. 30: BGU 4 1082 lines 1-3

§45 A difficult possibility that could be considered is to read a nominative Φλαουιανός, implying that he was the addresser of the letter. Nevertheless, such an interpretation is at odds with the plural address on one hand and, on the other, with the structure of the address on the verso, where a completely different name appears in the second line, presumably reserved for the sender's details. In conclusion, the text should now be construed as follows:

† τ[οῖς δεσπότηι]ς καὶ πάντων ἕνεκα θαυμασιωτάτοις ἀδελφοῖς Νεμεσσ[ι]α[νῶ καὶ]
Φλαουιανῶ.....[.][.][.][.][.][.].
[εὐ]χαίριαν εὐρῶν τοῦ κοινῶ ἡμῶν ἀδελφοῦ ἡμῶν δα.....δ...κων.ν

§46 The above restoration may have implications for the address on the verso. The original abbreviated † ἀπόδ(ος) \†/ τῶ κυρί(ῳ) ἀδελ(φῶ) μου Νεμεσσ[ι]α[νῶ]¹⁶ could be read as: † ἀπόδ(ος) \†/ τ(οῖς)¹⁷

¹⁵ https://digital.onb.ac.at/RepViewer/viewer.faces?doc=DTL_8642472

¹⁶ The name should be probably read with an epsilon here, cf. the almost upright εσ in ἀπεστίλατε in II. 5-6.

¹⁷ The alleged omega of the article τῶ is nothing but a small, slightly slanting stroke.

κυρί(οις) ἀδελ(φοῖς) μου Νεμεσια(νῶ), although it remains plausible that the primary recipient was only one to avoid unnecessary confusion. I refrain from transcribing the second line of the address as I am skeptical about the reading παρ' Ἐτήων[ος]. The initial two letters appear to be pi and rho marked by an abbreviation line: πρ(), followed by τι...

- §47 Line 3: [... ἰ]σοτύπως → [πρω]τοτύπως, with the meaning ‘primarily/first of all,’ attested not seldom in private correspondence in Late Antiquity, e.g. ⚡ **P.Abinn. 28.24–27** (around 346 CE): ἀλλὰ | πρωτοτύπως σοι τῷ ἐμῷ | δεσπότη ἔγραψα ἐκδικηθῆναί | με; ⚡ **P.Erl. 120.2–3** (546–547 CE ?): ἐδεξάμην κ[αὶ] ἔμαθον | πρωτοτύπως μὲν τὴν ἐν Χρισ[τῷ] | [α]ύτης ὑγείαν; ⚡ **P.Lond. 3 1244.4** (4th cent. CE): προσγυνησαί (l. προσκυνῆσαι) σοι (l. σου) τὸ [ε]ὔμορφον καὶ ἰλαρὸν πρόσωπον | προ[το]τύπως (l. πρωτοτύπως); ⚡ **P.Neph. 8.13–14** (352 CE): διὸ ἀνα[γκαῖ]ον ἡγησάμην γράψαι σοι | πρωτο[τύ]πως; ⚡ **P.Neph. 11.6–9** (4th cent. CE): πιστὸν ἡγησάμην καὶ πάσης | ἀποδοχῆς ἄξιον | πρωτοτύπως | προσειπεῖν ὑμῶν τὴν ἐν θ(ε)ῷ | διάθεσιν; ⚡ **P.Oslo 3 88.5** (around 370 CE): ἀπετίτω (l. ἀπαιτείτω) τὸν παλῆδον (l. παλαιόν) οἶνον πρωτοτύπως; ⚡ **P.Oxy. 16 1832.5–6** (5th–6th cent. CE): κελεύσαι πρωτοτύ[ως] | τὰ ἅγια κιμήλ[ια] (l. κειμήλια) ἀναδοθῆναι. These instances demonstrate how common it was, especially in stressing, as a rhetorical device, the significance of the addressee.
- §48 Line 7: ὄνον πρᾶτιον → ὄνον πρωτίον (l. πρωτεῖον), i.e. ‘of first quality.’ For the ωτ, compare the one in θαυμασιωτάτοις in line 1. For examples of similar references to various commodities, one may refer to, e.g., ⚡ **BGU 3 950.3–4** (4th–7th cent. CE): κραβατάλιον ἐν | πάνυ πρωτίον (l. πρωτεῖον); ⚡ **P.Flor. 1 65.15** (570–571 CE): παρασχεῖν σοι ἐν π[ρ]ωτίῳ (l. πρωτεῖῳ) οἶνον (l. οἶνω); ⚡ **P.Lond. 5 1764.7** (6th cent. CE): παρασχεῖν ἐν πρωτίῳ (l. πρωτεῖῳ) οἶνω; ⚡ **P.Mich. 11 608.17** (6th cent. CE): παρασχ(εῖν) ἐν προτίῳ (l. πρωτεῖῳ) οἶνω; ⚡ **P.Ness. 3 87.2–4** (7th cent. CE): μέλιτος [πρ]ωτί[ου] (l. πρωτεῖου)...γάρου πρωτίου (l. πρωτεῖου); ⚡ **SB 26 16830.27–28** (6th–7th cent. CE): παρασχεῖν σοι τὰ ἴσα ἐν πρ[ω]τίου οἶνου (l. πρωτεῖῳ οἶνω);
- §49 Line 9: θεοφοβίῳ → Θεοφοβίῳ (⚡ **TM Nam 9527**). It is most likely a name known from at least one more document, ⚡ **SB 20 14965.6** (4th cent. CE): δι(ὰ) Θεοφοβίου σί(του) (ἀρτάβαι).
- §50 Lines 10–12: ἐμοῦ λογιζομένου τὴν τούτου τιμὴν καὶ σαίτια τυρῶν δύο καὶ ἐλίας (l. ἐλαίας) κύθρας | μελίχώρας. τριβόριον δαῖ (l. δὲ) ἔλαβον <παρ'(?)> Ἡρακλίδου, ὅσται (l. ὅστε) αὐτὸν μὴ ἀμελήσαι περὶ | τούτου. The content of this line is directly related to the olive pots mentioned in line 10. The missing information that one would expect is the number of these pots, whereas the Saite jars were specified as two. A revised reading of the line produces the following meaningful text:
- §51 ἐλίας (l. ἐλαίας) κύθρας | μελίχώρας (l. μελίχροας) τρῖς (l. τρεῖς). ὄρκον δαῖ (l. δέ) ἔλαβον <παρὰ> Ἡρακλίδου (l. Ἡρακλείδου) ὅσται (l. ὅστε) αὐτὸν μὴ ἀμελήσαι περὶ | τούτου (= ‘three pots of honey-coloured olives. I had an oath given to me by Herakleides, to ensure that he does not show negligence in this matter’).
- §52 ὄρκον ἔλαβον is attested in ⚡ **P.Cair.Masp. 2 67200.4** (6th cent. CE): φριξ[τ]ὸν δὲ ὄρκον ἔλαβον παρὰ Ἡρακλείου.¹⁸ Cf. also examples such as Schol. Apoll. Rhod. I, 773: (...) μέχρις οὗ ὄρκον ἔλαβον παρ’ αὐτῶν (...); ⚡ **Vita Adam et Evae**, 19.3: ὅτε δὲ ἔλαβεν ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ τὸν ὄρκον; Eur. Supp. 1188: πρῶτον λάβ’ ὄρκον.
- §53 Line 14: Here I advocate for the reading of διαφυλάττειν (l. διαφυλάττειν), which goes back to Gerstinger’s version, whereas Papatomas had transcribed it as διαφυλάττειν. Limited space leaves the latter possibility open, if one accepts the iota leaning on the omicron. I have dotted the alpha as a remote possibility of an epsilon (διαφυλάττειν) remains. To counter this tempting idea, the few occurrences of the epsilon-iota combination in the text exhibit a distinct shape characterized by a curved line descending from the epsilon’s cross-stroke (see, e.g., εἶνα in l. 3).

18 The opposite, “to give an oath,” is also attested: ⚡ **P.Flor. 3 279.23** (514): ὄρκον δίδομαι (l. δίδομι) τε; ⚡ **P.Oxy. 16 1862.40** (around 624 CE?): ὄρκον δέδοκα τῷ Βίκτωρι.

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- §54 This private letter addressed from Beryllus to Zosime, which was found at the Didymoi *praesidium*, contains two enigmatic lines at the top of the ostrakon, written by a different hand than the rest of the text. The edition reads: ἔρρωσ(ο) Ζωσιμηῆτι | ὕπα ἄπανξε (l. ἀπάγξει). It has been suggested that these lines may have been a postscript, for which reason the initial ερρωσ was interpreted as ἔρρωσ(ο) as if this was the text's closing section. However, several problems emerge with this interpretation:
- Ζωσιμηῆτι is in the dative, thereby indicating her as the addressee.
 - The two lines are written by a different hand.
 - ἔρρωσο never appears in this contextual position, also in the case of other ostraca from Didymoi.
 - There is no indication of an abbreviation after or above the sigma of ερρωσ.
- §59 In light of the above considerations, a more plausible hypothesis based on a revision of the text may be proposed: Ἔρωσ (corr. ex Ερρωσ) Ζωσιμηῆτι (ζ corr. ex δι) | ὕπα (l. ὕπαγε) ἄπανξε (l. ἀπαγξει). 'Eros to Zosime. Go and hang yourself.'
- §60 If Eros is viewed as the sender of the brief message, which appears probable, he may have secretly added a humorous remark before it was dispatched. The story becomes even more theatrical, if, following the editor, we assume that Beryllus was illiterate (his sister's letter was read to him) and, thus, was incapable of reading what Eros presumably wrote to his sister. In this scenario, Beryllus did not compose the main body of the text but had someone else do it.
- §61 In line 2, although the editor does consider the reading ὕγια instead of ὕπα, the final choice of ὕπα is well founded. Two illustrative parallels corroborate this interpretation of ὕπα: 📄 P.Athen. 62.9–12 (1st–2nd cent. CE): ἡ μή|τηρ μου ὑπάγη εἰς Ἀρσεινοεῖτην (l. Ἀρσινοίτην) ὕπα (l. ὕπαγε) μαῖτὰ (l. μετὰ) αὐ|τῆς σύ ('My mother is setting out to the Arsinoite. You too, go with her.') mentioned in the edition; 📄 SB 14 11588.19–20 (late 4th cent. CE): ὕπα (l. ὕπαγε) παρὰ Μαρίαν τὴν ἀδελφὴν | μου καὶ δεῖδει (l. δίδωσι) σου (l. σοι) αὐτά ('Go to Maria's, my sister, and she'll give them to you.'). which was published by H. Youtie three years after 📄 Mandilaras 1973, where he made reference to the former instance in § 690. The form survived into Medieval Greek, cf. e.g., ὕπα καλῶς, γεράκιν μου ('farewell, my hawk'),¹⁹ and is attested in a number of Modern Greek folk songs.²⁰

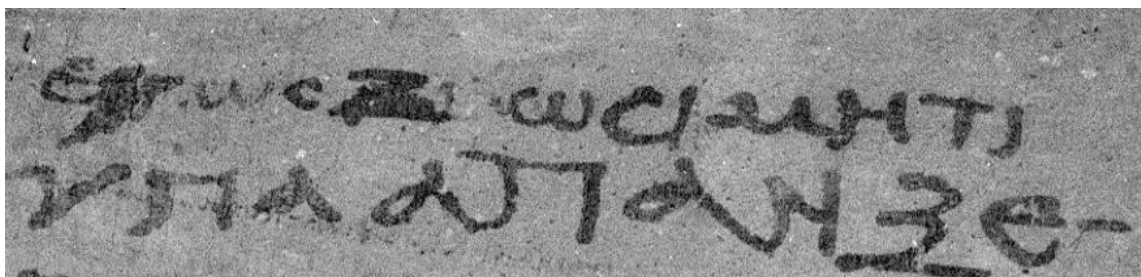


Fig. 31: lines 2–3

- §62 In the following section (the main body of the letter), the addressee is again Zosime in a standard dative form (Ζωσίμη). Various feminine names are often found in a non-standard dative form ending in -ᾶτι or -ῆτι, as observed here. I intend to explore this phenomenon in another paper currently under preparation.

¹⁹ 📄 Politis 1912: 644 [= 📄 Politis, N.G. (1980–1985), "Λαογραφικὰ Σύμμεικτα Δ'," Athens: 202].

²⁰ References and details can be found in 📄 Politis 1954: 271–272, n. 4.

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