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ORDER TO DELIVER: P.LOND. V 1655 REVISED

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LETTER OF A RECRUIT: P.LOND. III 982 REVISED

British Library inv. 982

14 x 28.5 cm

Late fourth century AD

This letter first attracted my attention by its use of the rare word *νεολέκτης, (2), see above on P.Lond. V 1655.3-4 n., but its potential interest for the subject of recruitment in the Late Roman Empire is such that it deserves to have time spent on its difficulties, even though a good many uncertainties still remain. The correction from the ed. pr.'s ναολέκτης to *νεολέκτης was made by R. Rémondon in *Chronique d'Égypte* 41 (1966) 168 in a very important revision of the text, and the latest version of the whole text has appeared in J. Bingen et al., *Choix de papyrus grecs* No. 28, with p. 33 (apparatus). Texts and translations have been given in G. Ghedini, *Lettere Cristiane* No. 27, pp. 193-6, and M. Naldini, *Il Cristianesimo* No. 54, pp. 234-6. For various other corrections and bibliography see BL Konkordanz p. 107; there are no new references in BL VIII and IX.

My first view of the text was from the plate, see P.Lond. *Facsimiles* III Pl. 75, but I have inspected the original in the British Library.

The governor or *dux* called Annianus who conducted the *probatio* of the recruit has been tentatively identified again in P.Herm. Rees 7 by C. Zuckerman, *BASP* 32.3-4 (1995) 187. It is perhaps possible that P.Lond. 982, like 981, comes from the interesting find of papyri at the monastery of John of Lycopolis which Dr Zuckerman has argued for in his article, see *ibid.* pp. 188-194, since it mentions Scinepöis, a village of the Lycopolite nome.

The writing runs along the fibres. A sheet-join running vertically very close to the right edge, disappearing at the foot after line 21, shows that this was the recto of the roll from which the piece was cut. The back is concealed by the framing. Any address there might in any case have been removed by the loss of a strip along the full height of the left edge.

5	τῷ δ]εσπότη μου καὶ πάτρωνι Ἑρμίνῳ πρ]ωτεύοντι (v.) Ἀπόλλων νεολέκτης. ὄν μὲ]ν παρὼν δέδωκα εἰς ἐμοί τε καὶ τῷ ἀδελφ]ῷ μου ὀλοκότινον ἓνα διμερικό- μεθα ε]ἰς ἑαυτούς. ἀφ' οἷας γὰρ ἡμέρας ἀνήλ- θομε]ν ἀπὸ τῆς δοκιμασίας Ἀννιανοῦ μέχρι]ς δεῦρο τῆ λιμῷ διεφθάρημεν. τὸ γὰρ μέρος] μου ἀνήλωσα εἰς τὸν ἰατρόν, ἕως ἂν θεραπ]εύσῃ με ἐν τῇ νόσῳ, καὶ εὐχαριστῶ 10 τῇ θεί]α προνοίᾳ καὶ συ τῷ ἐμῷ πάτρωνι ὦ]ς [οἱ ἀ]πὸ τῆς κόμης ἔγραψάν μοι ὡς δεδ]ωκότες σοὶ τὸ χρῆμά μου τῆς στρατίας. ἂ μ]όνα γὰρ νομικμάτια τέσσαρα ἐδεξά- μη]ν ἐν τῇ κόμῃ εἰς τοῦτο ἄχρι καὶ τού- 15 του ὁ]μοῦ ἐπ' ἐνεχύρω εἶακα διὰ τὰς χρεία]ς μου. τὰ νῦν ἀπέστειλα τὴν μητέ- ρα μου] καὶ τὴν σύμβιον μου ὅπως ποιήσῃς παραδο]θῆναι αὐταῖς τὸ χρῆμά μου. ἐὰν οὖν 20 σὺ μὴ π]αρασχῆς αὐταῖς, ἀνάγκη μοι γέινεται]αι ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀπὸ Σκινεπέως
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.....] μὲν διὰ τὸν ὄρκον οὐκ ἀλλάσσω ἑμαυτὸ-
 v] Ἀμμωνίῳ ἐν τῇ κώμῃ.
] (vac.) ἐρρωσθαί με εὐχομαι
] (vac.) πολλοῖς χρόνοις.

4 ολοκοτ'τινον 8 ἰατρον 10 l. coi 12 l. στρατείας 19 αναγ'κη; l. γίνεται 20 ὑπερ, ω corr. from η?

'To my master and patron Herminus, *proteuon*, Apollo, new recruit. The one *solidus* which you gave in person to me and to my colleague we have divided (and spent?) between us. For, ever since the day we came up from the review of recruits by Annianus till now, we have been ravaged by hunger(?). For I have spent my share on the doctor, so that he should treat me in the sickness, and I thank the Divine Providence and you my patron that the people of the village have written to me that they have given my army bounty to you. For the four *solidi* only which I received in the village towards it I have down to this moment left all together in pawn for my own uses. Now I have sent my mother and my wife so that you may have my army bounty delivered to them. If, therefore, you do not make delivery to them, it becomes a necessity for me to (pay?) on behalf of the people of Scinepōis. Since (or 'But if'?) for the sake of my oath I cannot leave my post (?), (deliver the bounty to?) Ammonion in the village.'

'I pray for your health for many years.'

- 1 πᾶτρωνι, cf. 10. See CPR V 19.18-19 n. for this non-technical use of the word in private letters of the fourth and fifth centuries. It is difficult to judge the precise relationship which it implies.
- 2 πρ]ωτεύοντι. This was the suggestion of Rémondon, *CE* 41 (1966) 169-70, to replace the στρ]ατεύοντι of the ed. pr. (P.Lond. III p. 242 (No. 982), with Facsimiles III No. 75). He took it to mean the president of the town council of the district from which Apollon was recruited, pointing out that στρ]ατεύοντι would mean 'him who recruits', hardly suitable as a title in the prescript of a letter. Herminus is seen here in lines 11-12 and 16-18 conducting almost the same procedure as Cyrillus the ἐπιμελητής who appears in P.Lond. III 985 (pp. 228-9) as having received a recruit's bounty of thirty *solidi* from the village and delivered it safely to the new soldier Flavius Parnuthis. Cyrillus' title was presumably the same as that of his colleague Theon acting as a witness in the same receipt, ἐπιμελητής τειρώνων for Heracleopolis. If Herminus was really acting in the same way as these ἐπιμεληταί, this suggests that his title of πρωτεύων had a less specific sense than Rémondon argued, and that in this use it was more like that seen in the πρωτεύοντες, 'officers', of army or civil service units, or the colleges of village πρωτεύοντες. For the controversy see CPR VI/2 79.2 n. νεολέκτης. Corrected from ed. pr.'s νοολεκτής by Rémondon, see introd. para. 1; see also above on P.Lond. V 1655.3-4 n. The epsilon, originally read as alpha, unusually small for this hand and much more carelessly made than usual, most closely resembles the second epsilon in ἐνεχύρω (15) and the first in Σκινεπώεως (20).
- 3 ὄν με]γ. ον κ]αι ed. pr., ὄν πάλ]αι Bingen. In this document the iota of αι regularly begins from the tail of the shallow oblique of its alpha and has a long descender. The remains here seem to show a short vertical descending to touch an oblique coming in from the left edge to the level of the feet of most letters. This is not how nus are usually made here either, but at least the nu of ἀνάγκη (19) seems to be similar. For μὲν without answering δέ cf. F. Blass, A. Debrunner, F. Rehkopf, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*¹⁵ 377-8 (§447.2 and nn. 14, 15) and below, line 21; if it still seems objectionable, καὶ ὄ]γ could be substituted, but I see no good reason for the καί, in whatever position.
- 4 [ἀδελφ]ῶ. [?αδελφ]ω ed. pr. Rémondon thought this possibly too long. It is not certain, but seems a likely and satisfactory stopgap.
- 4-5 διμερικά[μεθα ε]ἰς ἑαυτούς. διμερικά[μεν ed. pr., -κά[μεθα Rémondon.
- 5 ἀφ' οἷα γὰρ ἡμέρας κτλ. The implication of the γὰρ seems to be that they spent the *solidus* between them, rather than that they divided it only.
- 5-6 ἀνήλ[θομε]γ. -[θομεν] ed. pr. There is a trace on the edge. The ἀνά in the compound verb most probably indicates that their journey was upstream with regard to the Nile, that is, that it was from north to south, see especially H.C. Youtie, *Scriptunculae* i 493 (= *HTR* 41 [1948] 15) n. 36, cf. P.Oxy. LVIII 3919.14 n., P.Freib. IV 56.4 n. Cf. below 6 n.
- 6 ἀπὸ τῆς δοκιμασίας Ἀννιανοῦ. The δοκιμασία is the official approval of a trained recruit conferred by the governor of the province or a high-ranking army officer, such as a *dux*. The Latin term is *probatio*, on which see J.F. Gilliam, *Eos* 48 (1956 = *Symbolae Raphaeli Taubenschlag Dedicatae*) ii 207-16 = id. *Roman Army Papers* (= *Mavors* 2) 163-172. It follows that Annianus is the governor or general in question. The name Annianus has been recognized recently in P.Herm. 7.18 by C. Zuckerman, *BASP* 32.3-4 (1995) 187, who has identified that person with the one here. Zuckerman assigns P.Herm. 7 to a time shortly after September AD 381, the date of a law changing recruitment conditions to which

there seems to be an allusion. A distant possibility is that he could be the *corrector Augustamnicae* of AD 386 who has recently appeared in P.Oxy. LXIII 4385.9 as Ἀβννί [. There is an uncertainty about the provenance of the present papyrus, which certainly mentions a village in the Thebaid, Scinepöis in the Lycopolite nome. It could perhaps also mention Tēis in the district of Oxyrhynchus, which region would have been in Augustamnica at the date of this letter, if it too belongs to the period suggested by Zuckerman. This is a reading, however, which I am inclined to reject, see below on line 20.

- 7] δευρο ed. pr. μέχρη] Rémondon, convincing as to sense, but there is a ligature to delta not compatible with iota. μέχρ(ε)ι]c, cf. P.Abinn. 55.10-11, or ἄχρ(ε)ι]c, cf. P.Abinn.10.25-6, would suit, εἰ]c is too short.

τῆ λιμῶ. M. Naldini, *Il cristianesimo* 236, cites J.H. Moulton, W.F. Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* ii 123-4, for the confusion of the gender of this word in the Koine, but, because of the ensuing reference to a doctor treating the sender's illness, he follows Rémondon p. 170 in preferring to take it as standing for τῶ λοιμῶ, a notorious uncertainty even in the text of Thucydides' account of the plague at Athens. In that case, then, perhaps it could be suggested that the mistaken gender might have been caused by anticipation of τῆ νόσῳ (9). This may also give a better, more direct, sense to γάρ in line 5, the extra expenditure being forced by a medical emergency, with the γάρ in line 7 doubling the sense of the one in line 5. On the other side of the argument the γάρ in line 7 might better explain the hunger as having been caused by poverty resulting from expenditure on the medical problem.

A strong argument against the interpretation of λιμῶ as λοιμῶ is the rarity of the word λοιμός in the papyri, see G. Casanova, 'Epidemie e fame in Egitto', *Aegyptus* 64 (1984) 163-201, especially 164-6, although he accepts the equivalence of λιμῶ and λοιμῶ here, see pp. 166-7. If we exclude the magical texts it occurs for certain only in P.Oxy. XIV 1666.20 (III), the restoration of λοι]μου in P.Cair. Masp. III 67283 i 9 (VI) being most improbable in its context. There are two attestations of cognates: τῶ λοιμικῶ κατακτήματι P.Thmouis I 1.104.16 (II), and νόσου λοιμώδους τινοσ SB VI 9218.12 (c. AD 319/20?).

There is only one other passage where it appears to me at all possible that λιμός represents λοιμός, i.e. P.Lond. V 1729.19-20 (AD 584) ἀλλὰ καὶ πολλὰ δαπανήματα οἴκοθεν σου ἀνήλωσάς μοι ἐν τῷ νῦν γεγονότι λιμῶ. This is preceded at a distance of about five lines by τὴν τούτων (property sold by the writer) τιμὴν καὶ ἀνήλωσα εἰς τὰς ἀναγκαίαις μου χρείας καὶ συνέβη με ἐνπεσῶ (l. ἐμπεσόντα) εἰς νόσον ἐδεσθῆν (l. δεσθῆναι) πολλὰ ἀναλώματα (13-15). Even this second collocation of νόσος and λιμός is hardly clinching evidence for the equivalence of λιμός and λοιμός, and in fact Casanova accepts the meaning 'famine' for this text, *op. cit.* p. 186.

On the other hand λιμός is well attested with reference to both individual hunger and general famine, see Casanova, *op.cit.* 182-3, and is feminine in slightly more than half of the cases in which the gender is apparent, e.g. P.Cair. Zen. IV 59578.4, SB VI 9302.7, P.Hib. II 256.5, P.Oxy. VI 902.9, PSI IV 399.10, UPZ I 42.9, 52.18, 53.20, 122.23. In the Serapeum archive, from which the last group comes, there are four balancing references with the masculine gender, UPZ I 11.27, 19.21, 46.10, and 48.13. I know of no instance of λοιμός in the feminine.

On the whole I am reluctant to accept that the present passage shows the use of λιμός for λοιμός.

- 8 For ἕως in final sentences see LSJ s.v. A.I.4.

- 9 θεραπ]εύχη με.]δυσχημεν ed. pr., θεραπ]εύχη με Bingen.

εὐχαριστῶ. εὐ[χ]αριστῶ ed. pr. There are traces of all the letters.

- 9-12 I have linked εὐχαριστῶ κτλ. with what follows by removing a full stop after πάτρωνι and adding ὦ]c in the lacuna at the beginning of 11. The sigma is represented by an otherwise unexplained stroke descending at a very shallow angle through the riser of the kappa of δεδ]ωκότες in 12. This exaggerated final sigma with its cap pulled down even below the base line also occurs in ὦc at the end of 11 and twice in τὰς [χρεία]c in 15-16, see P.Lond. Facsimiles III No. 75. The previously accepted asyndeton beginning οἱ ἀ]πὸ τῆς κόμης is contrary to the writer's usage, although from so small a sample this argument is not clinching. In this interpretation God and Herminus are thanked for a financial reason rather than for the recruit's return to health. This is more consistent with the predominant theme of money in the letter.

- 10 τῆ θεί]α προνοία. τη θεια] ed. pr. Rémondon p. 170 thought θία might be better. There is a tail characteristic of alpha on the edge.

- 11 [οἱ ἀ]πὸ τῆς κόμης. απ]ο της κομης ed. pr., οἱ Wilcken, BL I 292. There are characteristic remains of the pi.

- 12 δεδ]ωκότες:].. πῶ ed. pr., 5]3πῶ Bingen. The omega is represented by a mere trace, but the rest is relatively clear. For the stroke through kappa see 9-12 n.

- 12-16 For the χρῆμα μου τῆς τραπε]τίας see Rémondon, *CE* 41 (1966) 171, citing the Latin phrase *gratia uestis ac sumptuum* from *Cod. Theod.* VII 13.7. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* i 615 ff. explains that it might be as much as thirty *solidi*, see P.Lond. III 985 (pp. 228-9). Four *solidi*, plus the one given by Herminus and shared with another man, were evidently too little for a good beginning to his service.

- 13 ἂ μ]όνα γάρ.]να γαρ ed. pr., χρύσι]να Rémondon. The restoration is intended to link the main verbs ἐδεξά]μην] and εἶα]σα. The fairly substantial traces on the left edge can be interpreted as an arc from the top right of omicron, plus a spot from the upper left, hardly as iota.

- 13-14 ἐδεξά]] εν κτλ. ed. pr., ἐδεξά]μην Grenfell and Hunt, BL I 292.

- 14 ἄχρη καί Bingen, αχρη]ον ed. pr., ἄχρη οὖν Rémondon. Neither offered anything to bridge the gap at the beginning of line 15, for which I suggest ἄχρη καὶ τοῦ[του ὁ]μοῦ ἐπ' ἐνεχύρω εἶα]σα.

15 ἐπ' ἐνεχύρω. Cf. P.Tebt. III.ii 876.21 (ἐπ' ἐνεχύρωι in a context too broken to help), P.Hombert 32 (= P.Coll. Youtie II 96).2-3 (ἐπὶ ἐνεχύρω), P.Mil. Vogl. II 73.20 ἐπὶ ἐ[ν]εχυροῖς ἐδόνα[ι]ζε), P.Genova II 62.30 (for ἐν ἐνεχύρωι[c read ἐπ' ἐνεχύρωι[c]), P.Enteux. 33.6 (ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐνεχύροις), SB VIII 9834.18 (ἐπὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς ἐνεχύροις), and perhaps P.Select. 9.4 (altered from [ἐπ'] ἄλλοις ἐνεχύροις?). ἐπ' ἐνεχύρου is found in P.Oxy. X 1288.33, again broken, but perhaps understandable in part. It is an early fourth century account, assigned most lately to the period 318-323, see R.S. Bagnall, *ZPE* 76 (1989) 76. Lines 32-3 of the text run εἰς τὰς διαγραφὰς μη[] τηκῶν ἀργύριον [δέδ]ωκα τὸ χειρρί³³ψικτον καὶ τὸ κοχ[] ἐπ' ἐνεχύρου ἀργυρίου (ταλ.) ρν, translated, 'In payment for ... I gave the current cash (?) and the ... on security amounting to 150 tal. of silver'. My guess is that the writer meant to say that, not having cash, he put two items into pawn for the sum of 150 talents in the current base-metal coinage. The papyrus is now in Cambridge; a photograph shows a slight loss of papyrus in line 32, unless a piece was folded under when the text was photographed; read εἰς τὰς διαγραφὰς[] ηκῶν ἀργύριον. The διαγραφή is a bank draft, presumably drawn on the account of the writer or that of his principal. Then [] ηκῶν (or [] τηκῶν) might represent ἐνηκῶν for ἐνεγκῶν, see F.T. Gignac, *Grammar* i 246, citing P.Oxy. XIV 1678.15 (ἐνήκε for ἐνέγκαι) as well as 16 and 17 (ἐνήκω for ἐνέγκω), so that we could translate, 'not having received cash to meet the bank drafts ...'. The χειρρίψικτον is probably yet another version of χειρόνιπτρον, 'hand basin', possibly with a dim memory of χέρνιψ, cf. P.Oxy. LVI 3860.35 n., on χειρονίπτιν (= χειρονίπτριον?), and especially BGU XIII 2360.1 χειρονίψαται γ' in a list of receptacles and vessels. The most likely explanation of τὸ κοχ[] might be τὸ(ν) κόγχο[ν] or κόγχο[ν], an object, probably a dish, shaped like a shell (κόγχη), the whole passage then running, 'Not having received cash to meet the bank drafts, I put the hand basin and the shell-shaped dish into pawn for one hundred and fifty talents'. The dative is evidently standard with ἐπὶ in this meaning; the seeming genitive in P.Oxy. 1288.33 is not very likely to be a phonetic confusion, see F.T. Gignac, *Grammar* i 213, but may be a symptom of the decline of the dative, see J. Humbert, *La disparition du datif*. For the meaning of our recruit's letter this implies that he treated his four *solidi* as the solid gold bullion that they were and put them into pawn against an advance in the ordinary base-metal coinage, intending to redeem them later. I do not think that the language here can refer to the *deposita*, sums deriving from the military stipend kept on deposit at the *principia* of the camp. He received these four *solidi* 'in the village', presumably before he left it to begin his military training.

16 χρεία] μου Rémondon,] μου ed. pr.

17 συνβιον ed. pr. σύμβιον Ghedini p. 194, with no comment, and subsequent texts.

20 ...]αι ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀπὸ Σκινεπώεωσ. The importance of this passage is that, if rightly understood, it might give a clue to the place of writing and perhaps even to the place where the papyrus was found. Ed. pr. had ὑπὲρ τῆν ν αποκτινεμώεωσ. Rémondon recognized Scinepöis, which was in the Lycopolite nome, see especially P.Herm. 31.3, P.Oxy. XXVII 2472.8 (with *JEA* 49 [1963] 180), CPR VII 36.2-3. The pi has been corrected, perhaps from mu. Of τῆν ν Rémondon wrote, 'Après la préposition ὑπὲρ, il est tentant de voir aussi un toponym à l'accusatif. La troisième lettre, seule, est douteuse. Il est impossible de lire Τῆνιν, et la lecture la plus probable est Τῆιν'. The only known village called Tëis lay in the district of Oxyrhynchus, see P. Pruneti, *I centri abitati* 203-4, who with all proper reserve includes a reference to SB V 7666.5, which Rémondon cited from *Mnemosyne* ser. 3.3 (1935-6) 234-5, with plate opp. 324, as evidence that there was another village of that name in the Panopolite nome. One party in that text is a councillor of Panopolis, the other is given in the edition as being ἀπὸ Τῆωσ. The form is very dubiously connected with Τῆιν, genitive Τῆωσ, the writing is tiny; the plate suggests to me rather ἀπὸ τῆς α[(ὑτῆς), i.e. 'from the same (city of Panopolis)', the last letter being broken and a mark of abbreviation presumed lost in the damage at the edge. No connection between the Panopolite district and our text is indicated.

The preposition ὑπὲρ with the accusative of a place name means 'beyond'. I have not found it other than in the conjunctions ὑπὲρ Μέμφιν, which is frequent, and ὑπὲρ Κόπτων (P.Flor. III 382.91), which are looked at from Alexandria and refer then to anywhere south of Memphis or south of Coptus. In this case the perspective would be from the south northwards and the journey threatening the recruit would be from Scinepöis in the Thebaid northwards to somewhere beyond the village of Tëis in the eighth *pagus* of the Oxyrhynchite nome and earlier in the toparchy of Thmoesepho, see Jane Rowlandson, *Landowners and Tenants in Roman Egypt* 14, cf. Map 3 (p. xiv) for the location of the toparchy, although the site of Tëis has not been identified and so is not marked. Why the writer should have made use of the phrase 'beyond Tëis' is hard to say, but perhaps his destination could have been an even smaller place not far north of Tëis.

If we were to adopt this suggestion, the dotted iota of Τῆιν would not be very clear, but the space it occupies is small, making it the most convincing reading, if indeed there are four letters. But faintly showing under or over the misshapen eta is an omega; ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀπὸ Σκινεπώεωσ would be a perfectly routine phrase, 'on behalf of (or 'in respect of') the inhabitants of Scinepöis'. It is not clear whether the faintness of the omega was caused by an attempt to erase it or by lack of ink on the pen. Dominating this is the doubtful eta, in which the second upright curves upwards from the foot again to follow the second bowl of the omega in a way which is somewhat like the last stroke of the writer's idiosyncratic nu, but then it rises inexplicably above the top line and the pen may have retraced its course downwards to the level of the tops again. It is presumably this high stroke which has been taken for iota. To me the likeliest possibility is that the trouble was caused by the clerk's confusion, evident in the miswriting of the village name later in this line. I assume that the fainter writing of the omega is the version which should have been legible. A possibility is that he had intended first the wording ὑπὲρ τῆς κώμης and that he changed his mind just at this point, which made him botch the eta. He altered it to omega with not much ink on the pen, dipped the pen again, and went on with nu at a little distance.

In that case we should be reading only τῶν. If this is right, it suggests that τῶν ἀπὸ Κκινεπέωος is parallel with [οἱ ἄ]πὸ τῆς κόμης above in 11, and that Scinepōis is therefore the village from which Apollon was drafted into the army. The result of this for our knowledge of where the text was written and perhaps found is rather doubtful. If Rémondon's suggestion were right, we could conclude that the recruit's letter was written at Scinepōis in the Thebaid and that he was contemplating a journey from there to the neighbourhood of Oxyrhynchus, which was in Augustamnica from AD 341 until the creation of the new province of Arcadia sometime after AD 386 but before the end of the century, see P.Oxy. LXIII 4385 introd. In that case there would be even more attraction in the possibility that the high-ranking officer called Annianus who conducted the recruit's *probatio* was the *corrector Augustamnicae* of AD 386 who has recently appeared in P.Oxy. LXIII 4385.9 as Ἀννί [see above 6n. We could also guess that the document itself had been found at Oxyrhynchus like so many others.

My preference for τῶν over Τῆιν suggests rather that the recruit was supplied and funded by the Lycopolite village of Scinepōis and that it may have been found somewhere in that area, as indeed Rémondon also thought. Papyri from the district of Lycopolis are comparatively rare, but C. Zuckerman, *BASP* 32.3-4 (1995)188-194, has argued for excavations at the monastery of John of Lycopolis as the provenance of a group of papyri which includes P.Lond. III 981, so that there is a possibility that this neighbouring item might belong. However, it betrays no connection with the anchorite John or his monastery, and has a flavour very different from that mixed Greek and Coptic archive, although there is the coincidence that P.Herm. 7, the particular focus of Zuckerman's attention, is concerned with a man trying hard to avoid recruitment.

The word]αι is very difficult to complete. Anything supplied here must be regarded as a stopgap. Rémondon's view of the passage required an infinitive denoting some form of travel. He offered a choice of ὑπάξ]αι or πλεῦς]αι; the latter was adopted by Bingen. H.I. Bell contributed [μείν]αι by letter to BL I p. 293, but we do not know what he thought of the sense. It might suit if it means 'stay at my post', i.e. 'serve as a soldier' on behalf of the people of Scinepōis, but it is not entirely satisfactory, as presumably the obligation to serve would have been imposed on him whether his bounty was paid to his womenfolk or not. I would have expected it again to be a question of money. Supply perhaps δοῦν]αι, 'If, therefore, you do not make delivery to them, it becomes a necessity for me to give, i.e. 'pay', on behalf of the people of Scinepōis'. The following two lines might clarify this, if they could be understood, but they remain incomprehensible for the moment, see below.

21] μὲν. Both Rémondon and Bingen left the reading of the ed. pr.,]λεν, unchanged, but the remains on the edge are unsuitable for lambda because the peak that would be the top consists of a loop. An oblique rising to the right loops round anticlockwise to form another oblique descending to the right. This shape is best suited to mu, with kappa and omega as less likely possibilities. This suggests nothing better than μέν. For μέν without answering δέ see above, 3 n. διὰ τὸν ὄρκον. The most obvious possibility is that the oath is the one which all Roman soldiers had to take as they graduated from *tiro* to *miles*, see Vegetius, *Epitome rei militaris* II 5 ... *cum matriculis inseruntur, iurare solent*. The phrase *matriculis inserere* is the equivalent of *in numeros referre*, which was the official terminology, and this was the last stage of the recruit's transition, see especially J.F. Gilliam, *Eos* 48 (1956 = *Symbolae ... Taubenschlag*) ii 207-216 (= id., *Roman Army Papers* 163-172).

οὐκ ἀλλάσσω ἐμαυτὸ]ν. The division at the end of the line is strictly in accord with the rules of syllabification, see E.G. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World*² 17 (= ¹ 19-20), but looks unfamiliar. Perhaps the clerk intended to add a horizontal mark of suspension over the omicron, i.e. ἐμαυτο̄ = ἐμαυτό(ν). Ghedini, implying a phonetic writing unlikely in this writer, printed a circumflex accent above the omicron and 'I. ἐμαυτῶ' in his apparatus, which were retained by Naldini, Bingen, and Rémondon, all without comment.

In two seemingly parallel passages the senders stress their own constancy or consistency: P.Giss. Univ. III 31.17-19 οἶδ[αε] δὲ ὅτι οὐκ ἀλλάσσω ἐμαυτὸν πόποτε οὐδὲ δ[ύο] ψυχὰς ἔχω εἰς ἐμέ, BGU VII 1675.3-8 ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐμαυτὴν οὐκ ἠλλάξα. ὅσα πόποτε πεποίηκα, διὰ σοῦ τοῦ Ἡρακλ[εῖδ]ου γέγονε. ὁδὲν χωρὶς σοῦ γέγονε. (I. ἐμαυτήν, πόποτε, πεποίηκα, οὐδέν). This is not easy to accommodate here, though it is possible that the dative Ἀμμωνίονι in the next line could be an alternative construction to εἰς ἐμέ in P.Giss. Univ. 31, 'I do not (will not?, cannot?) change my attitude to ... Ammonion'. Perhaps a better sense could be elicited from the military letter on an ostrakon from the Wadi Fawakhir, SB VI 9017(18), taken from O. Guéraud, *BIFAO* 41 (1942) 174, τάχα οὖν οὐ ἀλλάσσομεθα. λοιπὸν εὐψύχως ἡμᾶς δ(ε)ῖ φέρ(ε)ιν. He translates, 'Peut-être donc ne serons-nous pas relevés(?). Enfin, il nous faut endurer avec courage!'. He notes, 'ἀλλάσσομεθα: lire ἀλλακόμεθα, ou plutôt ἀλλαξόμεθα. Le sens de 'être relevé' que je donne à ἀλλάσσομεθα me paraît justifié par les idées d'échange et de déplacement que le verbe implique. Cf. ἀλλαγή pour désigner un relai de chevaux, P.Oxy. 1863, 5, et l'expression moderne ἀλλάζειν τὴν φρουράν, 'relever la garde'. If we may take the reflexive and the middle forms to be virtually equivalent we might look for the sense, 'Since (ἐπεὶ, or 'But if', ἀλλ' εἰ) because of my (military) oath I cannot leave my post, deliver (the bounty) to Ammonion (δοῦς τῶ] Ἀ.) in the village'. This would be rather a sudden climb down from his request to have the bounty delivered directly to the women, but is perhaps conceivable.