NIKOLAOS GONIS

REMARKS ON PRIVATE LETTERS


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REMARKS ON PRIVATE LETTERS*

P.Graux II 23

This is a second-century letter on business matters. Among other things, Koitonikos advises Heron to beware of a certain woman who has given him trouble in the past: βλέπε οὖν μὴ αφής | αὐτὴν κεινηθῆναι ἵνα ἀπολλάβης τοὺς καθοδάς μου. οὐ θέλω γὰρ λαλεῖν ὥσα ἐπράξε παρ’ ἐμέ (lines 12-15). The editor translates the last period as ‘car je ne te dis pas tout ce qu’elle m’a coupé (?)’, notes that she has not found any other example of such a use of πράττειν with παρὰ tīν in the papyri, and suggests that perhaps ‘le scribe mélange-t-il deux constructions équivalentes, πράττειν τινά tī et πράττειν tū παρὰ tīνα, “faire payer quelque chose à quelqu’un”? Koitōnikos se plaint-il de s’être déjà fait rouler par la cliente?’. The solution is simple, and may be found in the fairly frequent use of παρὰ + accusative instead of παρὰ + dative, see Mayser, Grammatik iïii 344, and generally the confusion between the dative and accusative of the personal pronouns, see S. G. Kapsomenakis, Voruntersuchungen 24, 76 n. 1, 102, 131f. παρ’ ἐμοί ‘chez moi’, is what a schoolteacher would recommend to his pupils. Compare, e.g., P.Haun. II 28.13f. (AD 31) ὧδε παρ’ ἡμᾶς [οὖ] | εὑρήκα αὐτόν, P.Stras. VI 576.14 (c. 300) τὸ ὄνομα ἄργυρον τὸ παρ’ ἐμαὶ ἀπέξεσθον, P.Rain.Cent. 161.4f. (v?) εὑρέθην τὰ περισσελίδια τῆς ἑλευθέρας ὑμοί παρ’ ἐμὲ; also the stock phrase εἰς οἴκον παρ’ ἐμὲ in P.Prág. I 36.10 (88), P.Sarap. 16.6 (105/6), 48bis.18 (123). An interesting case is UPZ I 70.7 (c. 152/1 BC), where in παρὰ cē | θεοί the e of ce is corrected from cē. Translate thus ‘for I don’t want to tell you the things she did in my place’. There is a close verbal parallel in another letter, P.Ant. I 43.15f. (iii/iv): οὐ[γ] χρῆ γὰρ σῦ λαλῶν ἃ ἐπο[η]κέν | εἰ.

P.IFAO II 30

This is a letter-fragment from the second century addressed to a woman (Ταύτ[α]). Lines 3-4 have been presented as follows:

πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχαριστεῖν καὶ τῇ ἀβακάκατῳ καὶ συν παιδία

In the commentary the editor admits the tentative character of his restoration in line 4. The sequence καὶ τῇ ἀβακάκατῳ καὶ καὶ συν παιδία may receive some support from a single support from a single text, SB XIV 11906.3ff. (ii/iii) πρὸ τῶν ὄλων εὐχαριστεῖν καὶ τῇ συμβίοις καὶ καὶ τῇ ἀβακάκατῳ καὶ τῆν ὄλου καὶ ὄλον καὶ τὸν ὄλον ἀστάσιμα. But in most of its occurrences the wording of this formulaic greeting is different. Out of the nine other instances I have found, I cite five below:1

P.Brem. 64.2ff. (117-31) πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχαριστεῖν καὶ τῇ ἀπολλαγήσα τοῦ ἀδέλφα σου καὶ τῶν ἀβακάκατων σου

SB III 6263.3f. (ii) πρὸ τῶν ὄλων ἔρρόθης καὶ καὶ τῶν ἀβακάκατων καὶ τῶν υἱῶν, P.Würzb. 21.FrA.3ff. (ii) πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχαριστεῖν καὶ τῇ ἀπολλαγήσα τοῦ ἀβακάκατων καὶ τῶν ὄλων καὶ τῶν ὄλων

P.Oxy. XIV 1758.3ff. (ii) πρὸ τῶν ὄλων εὐχαριστεῖν καὶ τῇ ἀπολλαγήσα τοῦ ἀβακάκατου καὶ τῶν ὄλων

P.Fuad I Univ. 6.2ff. (iii) πρὸ γε πάντων εὐχαριστεῖν καὶ τῇ ἀπολλαγήσα τοῦ ἀβακάκατου παιδίου.

It is likely that the writer intended something alongside the lines of one of the above examples. Perhaps it is worth adding that the formula is employed by, as well as referred to, both men and women.

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* I am grateful to Dr. J. R. Rea, who read an earlier draft of a part of this paper and gave me valuable advice; to Prof. T. Gagos, who checked a number of papyri at Ann Arbor for me and contributed some very helpful remarks; and to Dr G. Poethke for examining a Berlin papyrus at my request and supplying me with a photograph of another.

1 Cf. also P.Alex.Giss. 59.3ff. (117-38), P.Phil. 35.2ff. (ii), P.Wisc. II 72.4ff. (ii), P.Mil. II 80.3ff. (iii), P.Oxy. II 292.11ff. (c. AD 25) πρὸ δὲ πάντων ὑγιεῖνειν εὐχαριστεῖν καὶ οἰκία τῆς ἀβακάκατος τῷ ἀρίστῳ παρίστατον εἶναι τὸν ἄριστον παράτην εἶναι τὸν ἄριστον παράτην.
P.Lond. III 1019 (= SB XX 14727)²

This sixth-century ‘Geschäftsbrief in Geldangelegenheiten’ contains instructions from a certain Alexandros to his ‘brother’ Theodosios. The editor notes that the understanding of the text ‘wird durch zahlreiche orthographische und grammatikalische Fehler (Genetiv anstelle des Dativs)³ zusätzlich erschwert’. Two of these mistakes, which, however, remained undetected, occur in lines 5 and 6. The text reads:

καὶ λαβῇ ἐκοι χῦραν παρὰ Φοιβάμανος καὶ πέμψῃ τὴν λοιπάδα Γενας-

διέυ. μόνον κοι λαβῇ χῦραν τῶν δεκαενή(α) εὐς(ο)ταθμά ἀπὸ Φοῖβάμανος.

The translation ‘nimm für Dich einen Handschein’ (line 5; similarly line 6) takes (ε)κοι as a dative, apparently a dativus ethicus.⁴ But here the sense hardly needs one;⁴ and there is nothing else in the text to justify Theodosios’ personal interest in the transaction (he has only to obey Alexandros’ orders). All difficulty is removed once we take (ε)κοι for what it really is: (ε)κύ in phonetic spelling, cf. F. T. Gignac, Grammar i 198f., used in this context to emphasise and better define the imperative λαβέ.⁵

P.Lond. V 1831

This is a fragment of a fourth-century letter. The editor favours the idea of a petition, but this should probably be ruled out; although some official business is implied in lines 4-5, this can hardly determine the nature of the text. Instead, the possibility of a letter of recommendation should be reckoned with (for the introductory pattern in such letters cf. C.-H. Kim, The Familiar Letter of Recommendation 37ff.). The text has been presented as follows:

1) τὸ δὲ[ createUserErroroggle] καὶ Ἀθανασίῳ ²) Ἀντίοχῳ ³) ... ὃ ἄπο αθλητῶν ὁ ἄναδιδοῦς ⁴) ... ματα ἐνετευχηκός τὸ δεκπότη μου ⁵) ... ἱοι καὶ παραθέμενος τὰ ἐσωτὸ [6] ...

The editor notes that in line 4 ‘probably not ἵπομνήματα, but γράμματα is possible’. Inspection of the original proves him right; but we may go a little further, and venture a reconstruction of the broken beginning of line 4. Line 1 gives the length of the lacuna, which must be about 7 letters long; on this basis, I propose to restore ὁ ἄναδιδοῦς [κοι τὰ γράμματα, a common collocation (for example, it appears in P.Oxy. XX 2275.5 and P.Princ. II 101.7f. discussed below).

P.Oxf. 18

This is a short letter of the second or, more likely, third century. Its first three lines may be presented as follows (in line 3 the corrections reported in BL have been incorporated⁶):

Μελ[κ]αλίο Ἀρείον τῷ πατρὶ χαίρειν.

ὁ ἐπ[ε]τέλεος μοι περὶ τῶν κ[ε]ρίμισιν τῶν γάλα-


‘Melcalius to Areion, his father, greetings. As to the order you gave me about the jars of sweet olives, I have bought the olives and they are stored’.

The name of the sender is not known from any other source. On the published photograph the reading appears very uncertain, and on inspection of the original (kept in the Bodleian Library at

³ In a sixth-century text this can hardly be branded a mistake, inasmuch as it is a phenomenon of the Greek spoken at that time, which was to become established in Medieval and Modern Greek; cf. Kapsomenakis, Voruntersuchungen 114 n. 2.
⁴ For the contexts in which such datives occur see H. Ljungvik, Aegyptus 13 (1933) 159ff., H. Steen, C & M 1 (1938) 125f., H. Koskenniemi, Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie 130, 134, 153.
⁵ For a similar misunderstanding of κοι in P.Bour. 23.7 see Kapsomenakis, Voruntersuchungen 23.
⁶ κύντα [ ... ] ed. pr., κυνται [ἀ]κὰ H. C. Youtie (BL IV 47), κύνται [vac.] P. J. Sijpsteijn (BL VII 95). The latter suggestion has been confirmed on the original. The translation combines that of the editor and Youtie’s (= Scriptiunculae ii 887).
Oxford) Melkö! turns out to be impossible: there is nothing that would admit a lambda before the break; it is also not clear whether an entire letter has been broken away, while very little survives of the epsilon and alpha to justify the absence of sublinear dots. It has not been possible to restore any known name. H. Solin, O. Salomies, Repertorium nominum gentilicium et cognominum Latinorum (1994) record the gentilicia Macal(ius) and Magal(ius), and one might think of the otherwise unattested *Megál-λος. Either way, faut de mieux I would be inclined to print Mé [ ]álloς, without excluding Mé álloς.

Line 2 exhibits two unusual linguistic features. First, the construction ὅ ἐπ[ε]τειλω ... ἡγόρθεκα is good classical Greek, but strikes one as odd in a text of this date and type; second, ‘to order someone about something’ is a very unusual meaning for ἐπιτελέωμαι, and this papyrus is in fact the only text attesting the form ἐπετείλω. ός ἐνετείλω μοι would be less exceptional, cf. SB XII 11148.5f. (iii/iv, cf. BL VIII 367), P.Oxy. III 527.2 (ii/iii), PSI IX 1080.3 (iii), XII 1247.17 (iii), P.Warr. 15.12 (ii) (most of these texts have κεθῶς ἐνετείλω); cf. also the phrase ὅς ἐνετείλάμην vel sim. which occurs in many other papyri. This has actually been confirmed on the original, and we should read ός [ἐ]π[ε]τειλω μοι κτλ. There is a further noteworthy detail: the juxtaposition of the incorrect γλ[έ]ν with the correct ἕλειας. But in effect the papyrus has γλ[ά]ς[έ]λαιον; for the spelling see Gignac, Grammar i 196f.

There are more problems in the final sentence (lines 6-8). It was printed thus:

όσπαζεται σε Σαραπίων καὶ ...
[ ... ]ητρι καὶ Τριμέας.
ἐρρῶθαι (ε) εὐχομ(αι).

For the beginning of line 7 the editor tentatively suggested restoring [Δημ]ητρι = Δημήτριον. This is not credible; further, καὶ cannot be read in the previous line. The traces admit ϵ[υ][ν], and I am thus inclined to supplement ϵυ[ν] | [τη μ]ητρι. After that comes the proper name Τριμέας, an unicum. But this is a ‘ghost’: the papyrus has Τημέας. This should be either an idiosyncratic spelling of the common name Νημέας (for the interchange δ > τ at the beginning of a word cf. Gignac, Grammar i 80), or an orthographic variant of the rare name Τιμέας, attested only in O.Tait 144 (215? BC). Finally, as regards the supplemented (ε) in the last line, it should be noted that the omission of the personal pronoun is well attested, cf. F. Ziemann, De epistularum Graecarum formulis sollemnibus quaestiones selectae 336 n. 1, and F. X. J. Exler, The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter 70f., and cannot be regarded as an accidental omission (the phenomenon is not as rare as Exler states). In conclusion, I propose that the end of the letter be edited as follows:

όσπαζεται σε Σαραπίων ϵυ[ν]
[τη μ]ητρι καὶ Τημέας.
ἐρρῶθαι εὐχομ(αι).

‘Sarapion along with his mother, and Timeas greet you. I pray for (your) health’.

P.Oxy. XX 2275

In this letter, assigned to the first half of the fourth century (but the late third should also be considered), Theonas asks his ‘brother’ Timotheos to ‘buy carpets on his behalf’. His request starts thus (lines 4-7):

[καλὸς ποιήσω, κύριε, περὶ [πο]ιλλόυ σοι γενέέθαι Πα–
5 [ζόντι τῷ άναδιδοῦντι καὶ ταυτά μου τὸ γράμματα]
[ ... ] ϕίλω ἡμῶν συνανόησαθαι
[ ... ] τοπ[ὴ]ται κάλλιστα κτλ.

The lacunae at the start of lines 5-7 cause some difficulty. In line 5 the restoration Πα[ζόντι is arbitrary; although we find Πας[ίονος in P.Oxy. XX 2273.5, the two texts are not related, and there is
no good reason to admit Ἡμών here. For the beginning of line 6 the editor offered no supplement, but the length of the break allows supplementing [Ἰντί καὶ] φίλω ἡμῶν (on the original I see nothing of the trace reported after the lacuna), which would match ἢναθίς ἔσων and φίλω; cf. P.Oxy. XXXVI 2768. 14f. (iii) Ἰντί καὶ προκτήσωμε. For line 7 the editor considered supplying ἦμοι or ἡμῖν i.e. ‘on my behalf’. Spacing is inconclusive, but in the text there is nothing to justify the plural (ἡμῶν in 6 is not relevant). All this result in the following text for lines 5-7:8


‘… that you buy together with Pa..., who is delivering you this letter of mine (and is) a friend of ours, the most beautiful carpets for me, etc.’9

P.Oxy. XXXIV 2728

This is an interesting business letter of the early fourth century.10 Close to the end of it the writer asks for the dispatch of various eatables (pepper, pickled mullet, honey). His last requests have been presented in the following words:

ἀπόστειλον καὶ ἡμῖν
μέλιτος: πάντα ἦν τῇ τῆς μή ὁκνήσῃς πα...

The editor translates: ‘And send off half a chous of honey. As for all the details of the price, do not hesitate ... to write to me about everything’, and comments on line 35: ‘Read πάντα (τὰ) τῆς τῆς μή’. This is not so. τῆς τῆς μή means ‘at the current price’, and πάντα, which sums up what the writer has asked for, should go with ἀπόστειλον. Compare, e.g., SB III 7572.5f. (ii) πέμψων μοι τὰ λοδίκια τῆς τιμῆς. P.Wisc. II 72.22 (ii) ἀγόρασων μο[1] τῆς τιμῆς, or SB XIV 11901.12f. (iii) ἀγόρασὼν μοι καλὸν καλὸν τῆς τιμῆς, with the note ad loc. of the ed. pr. (= G. M. Parássoglou, Ἑλληνικά 26 (1973) 281).

53 τῆς τιμῆς is a brachylogy: cf. P.Fouad 35.7f. (48) πωλεῖν τοῖς προσελευκομένοις τῷ ἀγόρασῳ, τῆς εὐρεθῆ[σο]μένης τιμῆς, τὰ ὑπάρχοντα κτλ.; cf. also BGU IV 1080.18ff. (iii?) κυνοστέιλον μοι εἰσπίπλω ... λίτρας δέκα ... τῆς ὁυσίας παρὰ καὶ τειμῆς, or the shorter τῆς ὁυσίας τιμῆς: P.Oxy. LVI 3854.5f. (iii) πωλήσης τὰ(ε) διάδεκτα επιστία τῆς ὁυσίας τιμῆς.11 A final point: at the end of line 35 πάλιν, which has been suggested in place of πα... (see BL VII 152), has now been confirmed on the original. One should thus modify the text’s punctuation, and read:

ἀπόστειλον καὶ ἡμῖν
μέλιτος, πάντα τῆς τῆς μής. μὴ ὁκνήσῃς πάλιν γράψας μοι περὶ πάντων.

‘Send off also half a chous of honey, all these at the current price. Do not hesitate to write to me again about everything’.

P.Princ. II 101

This is a Christian letter of recommendation from the fourth century, reprinted in M. Naldini, Il Cristianesimo in Egitto as no. 70. Only the upper part survives. Lines 7-9 were edited thus:

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8 One more minor correction: in line 17 for ἔσων read ἡμῖν.
9 I am doubtful as to whether in εὐνοών ἐκεῖς one has to recognise the practice of coemptio, for which cf. P.Oxy. LX 4060.86n.
10 R. S. Bagnall has calculated the date of the text as 308-12, or rather 312-8 in Currency and Inflation in Fourth Century Egypt 57, 66 (= BL VIII 261).
11 Similarly P.Graux II 10.16 (i), SB XII 11127.12 (88), BGU V 1210.10.230 (c. 150), P.Graux II 23.9f. (ii), PSI XIII 1333.9 (iii), P.Heid. II 216.8f. (iii), SB XVIII 13593.22f. (iii/iv).
The name of the person recommended does not survive: the lacuna at the start of line 7 has probably carried it away. As the editor noted, it must have been very short. What will concern us here is the way line 9 has been restored. The editor opted for toË. Letters of this kind display a fairly fixed pattern of presenting the details of the recommendation. C.-H. Kim, _The Familiar Letter of Recommendation_ 48f. notes that ‘the identification of the [recommended] person is usually expressed in terms of the family relationship to the writer or the degree of intimacy with the recommended’, and lists the phrases used for identifying this relationship: ἄδελφος μου, τής γνήσιος οἰκίας, ἡμῶν οἰκίας, ἡμῶν ἰδιόν, ἡμῶν ἄδελφον καὶ οἰκ[είος] καὶ κτλ., μου ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας, οἰκ[εία]ν μου, οἰκιεσιν μου, and οἰκίας τοῦ πατρός [τοῦ C]τεθανόντος. It is evident that the last example, furnished by our papyrus, does not show the same degree of intimacy as the others. Naturally, what was clear to the recipient of the letter may not be obvious to us, and Stephanos may have been a close friend; cf. P.Cair.Zen. I 59042 (257) (= no. 5 Kim) τῶν φίλων τινῶν τῶν [ἰμ]ὸν ἐξίν οἰκίας. But since we are dealing with a supplement, I see no reason why we should not seek to emphasise the closeness of this person to the writer, and restore toË patrÒ! [μου C]τεθανόντος [(κου] is another possibility, but I think it much less likely). We find a similar idea in another letter of recommendation, P.Brem. 7.3f. (ii): Ἕρμαῖον φίλον ὅντα τοῦ πατρός μου ἐπαρατθημαί σοι, ἄδελφε (for the construction toË μου + name in genitive cf. PSI XIII 1322.7 (118), P.Oxy. XXXI 2596.9 (iii), etc.)

PSI I 95, P.Fay. 109

PSI I 95 is a third-century letter written by a woman called Ptolemais to a certain Ammonios. Ptolemais gives him instructions about various agricultural matters. This is how lines 7-15 are printed:

| ο|ν | δε | μηθεν | τοιτων | γεινηται, | κανο | ση | δη | βαδιει | εις | τεταρτον | η | ἄποστειλαι | την | έκει | περι | άπαντων | μοι | φασιν | ειμαιναι σαι | τινες | τοποις | παρετιθηκεν | προς | κοιτασκοραν. |

The note on 9ff. shows the editor’s uneasiness: ‘Forse κανο εις δη (...) βαδιει εις τεταρτον <nome di luogo?> η ἄποστειλαι <cioe tino> την έκει etc.’. However, things are not so difficult. First we have to remove the problem caused by what was unread in line 10. The original (kept in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana at Florence), clearly shows that we should read τον. τον τεταρτον must refer to a τοπος, as we may deduce from the occurrence of the word τοποι a few lines below. I have found two relevant parallels: P.Bour. 15 fr.3.57 (ii) τοπου τεταρτου, and PSI X 1126.11 (iii), where τεταρτον τοσοπου is securely restored. Then with regard to the syntax, ἄποστειλαι goes with φασιν, while βαδιει and ἄποστειλαι, which convey orders, are either imperatival infinitives (for imperatival infinitives parallel to imperatives cf. B.G. Mandilaras, _The Verb_ §§ 756ff.), or genuine imperatives (cf. Gignac, _Grammar_ ii 349f.; Modern Greek has στειλε, βάδισε). κανο εις δη is an elliptical conditional clause. A parallel to the conditional here is P.Oxy. LXII 4340.11f. (late iii): ἄν ο δει γραψον ημειν

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12 Naldini does not rule out the possibility that ‘il periodo poté per es. iniziare nel r. 7 con [ἐπει ο] ἄναδιδοις ecc.’. But this is highly unlikely: there are very few letters of recommendation which do not mention the name of the person recommended, cf. Kim, op. cit. 41ff., and none of them starts with ἐπει or the like.

13 It might be worth considering whether in P.Col. VIII 212, a short letter of AD 49, one may restore τέταρτον in the lacuna of line 7, so that the sentence should run τῶς [μη]χαμάς μετὰθεκε εις τὸν τέταρτον τόπον ‘move the sakie' to the fourth _topos._’ When this letter was first published, the editor noted that there are many possible restorations of the lacuna in line 7, and _exempli gratia_ suggested [πρότερον]. But [τέταρτον] at least has a parallel.

14 There are numerous examples of φασιν construed with ἄποστειλα or πέμπω.

15 For a similar misunderstanding and mistaken punctuation in P.Oxy. XVII 2153.19 see Kapsomenakis, _Vorunter-suchungen_ 52.
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16 The text should therefore be arranged as follows:

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If none of these things takes place, and if you have to, go to the fourth (topos), or send me word about everything there. Notify me also ...

To the best of my knowledge the personal pronoun occurs in the same phrase only in one other text, P.Fay. 109, a letter from the archive of Gemellus (early i). In the edition lines 2-6 of this text appear thus:

17

If necessary, put your cloak in pawn'.

P.Wash. I 31, 35, 44

The first of these three Washington papyri is a scrap of a letter which the editor placed in the third century. In the introduction the editor noted: ‘If \( \text{γενε\(\lambda\)α \(\epsilon\)\(\alpha\)λεξ\(\alpha\)ν\(\delta\rho\)υκ\(\bar{\epsilon}\)ο\(\rho\)υ\) refers to the emperor, a date between A.D. 222 and 235 can be assigned to the letter, the lack of \( \text{ψευ\(\delta\)ω} \) with the name indicating a living ruler.’ But \( \text{γενε\(\theta\)λία \(\alpha\)\(λεξ\(\alpha\)ν\(\delta\rho\)ν\(\rho\)υ, \(\text{the birthday of Alexander}, \) may refer to the birthday of any person with this name, and not necessarily to Alexander Severus, who, at any rate, would not have been mentioned simpy as ‘Alexander’, cf. e.g. W.\(\text{Chr}\) 41.3,8 (232); for this usage there are numerous parallels within a wide time-span. There is a further point which rules out the possibility of any mention to this emperor: lines 3-5, as now read and restored (cf. BL IX 371), point to a later date:

19

But its meaning is ‘for some need (of yours)’, and not ‘from necessity’, as the editors translate. Likewise his change of \( \text{ε\(\epsilon\)\(\alpha\)\(υ\)\(\iota\)} \) to \( \text{ε\(\epsilon\)\(\alpha\)\(υ\)\(\iota\)} \) (line 2) is unwarranted.

19

Cf. P.Abinn. 22.2ff., 23.2ff., 31.4f. (all 342-51), P.Haun. II 25.4ff., P.Lips. 111.3ff., P.Oxy. XIV 1683.3ff., LVI 3859.3ff., 3860.2ff., LIX 4000.3f. (all iv), P.Ross.Georg. III 10.4ff. (iv/\(v\)), P.Bour. 25.4ff., P.Oxy. 3864.5ff. (all v), et al.
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The amount of text lost between lines 2 and 3 cannot be specified, but we can form an idea of what it was about from the following passages:

P.Ross.Georg. III 10.4ff. (iv/v)  
prÓ m¢m pãntvn eÎxome tÚn paneleÆmona yeÒn tø Ígi°nontÒ! !ou ka‹ eÈyum«n | épolãb˙! tØn par' §moË pro!hgor¤an

P.Batav. 21.3ff. (v) 20  
prÚ m¢n pãntvn eÎx[ø]m|e tÚn paneleÆmona yeÒn, Ígien|onou!a | [épolãb˙! d]i`å` gram-mãtvn tØn pro!hgor¤an

P.Iand. VI 128.2f. (v)  
prÚ m¢n pãntvn eÎxome tÚn paneleÆmona yeÒn, Ígien|onou!a | [épolãb˙! d]i`å` gram-mãtvn tØn pro!hgor¤an

P.Iand. VI 103.1ff. (vi)  
prÚ m¢m [pa]ntÚ! eÎx[ø]mai tÚn paneleÆmona yeÒn, Ígien|onou!a | [épolãb˙! d]i`å` gram-mãtvn tØn pro!hgor¤an

P.Wash. II 108.1f. (vi)  
[eÎxomai tÚn paneleÆmona yeÒn], Ígien|onou!a | [épolãb˙! d]i`å` gram-mãtvn tØn pro!hgor¤an

P.Köln II 111.2f. (v/vi)  
... épolãb˙! tØn par' §mo(Ë) pro!hgor¤an...

Something alongside the lines of these passages should be restored in P.Wash. I 44.2-3; in the break between the the two lines we have to posit one or two participles (e.g Ígia¤nvn, eÈyum«n) and a verb (most likely âpolázhtc), but the exact wording evades us. At any rate, ce Ígia¤nein should no longer stand in the text.

In the passages cited above pro!hgor¤a is virtually equivalent to grãmmata (cf. P.Köln II 111.3n.), which is better attested. 21 One of these words is to be supplemented in P.Wash. I 35.2f., a fourth/fifth-century letter from a husband to his wife, where what remains from the formula has been read as eÎxomai tÚn paneleÆmona yeÒn, Ígien|onou!a | [épolãb˙!] tØn par' §moË g`r`ãmmata /tØn par' §moË pro!hgor¤an.22

This is an interesting third-century letter (for its date see BL VIII 324), translations of which have appeared in two collections of texts.23 Only a textual point will concern us here. It is contained in the period which runs from line 7 to line 8, and has been edited as follows:


Two words invite suspicion: nvei (l. vvei), which normally occurs in different contexts,24 and [dok]h|î with iota-adscript, cf. Gignac, Grammar i 183 n. 3. But the main objection to the published text is that the conditional clause seems to be an implausible conflation of two expressions that often qualify commands or requests in the papyri:

(a) kán vvei, a widely attested colloquial 'expression d’intensité’, which accompanies imperatives or equivalent expressions (Steen offers no discussion in ‘Les clichés épistolaires’, C & M 1 [1938] 153ff.); for the sense see LSJ s.v. kên I 3 ‘now at any rate'. It is attested from the third to the sixth/seventh century, mainly in private, as well as official correspondence (very few times in petitions). Its earliest occurrence in a dated document is in P.Bub. I 1.6.5 (and 3.Fr3.8) (224); two texts may be earlier:

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20 The editor assigned the papyrus to the sixth century, but palaeography (see pl. XV), format and wording point to an earlier date.
21 P.Abinn. 22.4f. (342-51), P.Haun. II 25.6f., P.Lips. 111.4, P.Oxy. XIV 1683.8, LVI 3859.4f., 3860.3f., 4000.4, 4001.6f. (all iv), P.Giss. 54.5 (iv/v), P.Bour. 25.5, P.Oxy. LIV 3863.7f., 3864.7f. (all v).
22 It may only be a coincidence that P.Abinn. 22.4f. has [i]h|îsoc ]ìgai|νtòi cai metá tòu ù|κ]ou âpolázhtc tÙ pàr' ëmou ãgrapmatà.
23 W. Schubart, Ein Jahrtausend am Nil no. 67; AA. VV., Sport und Spiel bei Griechen und Römern (Berlin 1934) no. 32 (the quality of the published photograph, Taf. 38, is very poor).
24 I have found only one secure example of the collocation kán vvei, P.Mich. VIII 492.14f. (ii), but the context is different: kán vvei (l. vvei), ei ì mì ìti īgænvì de ì l'Àlìzændòrièç, ìmèllæn tò ëkà kà tà ëmà kà tà tà ììòò èìmì dì èìàn l' pàntà pòlìhìçì.
N. Gonis

P.Princ. III 164.3 (ii) and P.Dubl. 15.26, but note that in both cases the dating is made on the basis of the hand. The latest examples are CPR XIV 49.2, P.Iand. II 20.2, P.Foud 85.9 (all vi/vii). Often the expression is followed by the particle οὖν. An interesting variant is provided by SB VI 9138.6 (vi): θελήσῃ οὖν ἤ σή ἀρετή καν ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος δηλάσει μοι κτλ. Henceforth, we sometimes use οὖν with the subjunctive, as in P.Princ. III 170.2 (vi), but in both cases one should articulate καν οὖν.

SB III 7243 (= VIII 9746)

The text of this papyrus (P.Berol. 13897) has appeared four times in print: originally published by G. Manteuffel in Eos 30 (1927) 211f., it was reprinted in the Sammelbuch twice, and was included as no. 36 in M. Naldini, II Cristianesimo in Egitto. It contains a letter, assigned to the early years of the fourth century, which is addressed by a certain Didyme and her ‘sisters’ to another woman named Sophia. Half-way through the letter Didyme informs Sophia that she has sent (the governing verb is ἀπεκτίλα, from line 17), among other things,


‘Immediately, if you think fit, write back to us about your well-being.’

Sipharos’ patronymic, Πλου[σιον], is also problematic. A photograph, kindly supplied by Dr. G. Poethke, shows that the final ου is an impossible reading. After the break there are traces of two letters; the first is inconclusive, the second may be sigma. Papyrological onomastica offer various possibilities.

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25 The editor prints καν νυν, as also did the editor of P.Princ. III 170.2 (vi), but in both cases one should articulate καν νυν.

26 This has not been recognised in P.Stras. IV 270.3 (c. 200), where the editor prints ἱκαν, νυν οὖν τὸ ἔργον γεινέθθω; read instead ] καν νυν οὖν τὸ ἔργον γεινέθθω.

27 Occasionally καν νυν is used with exactly the same meaning as καν νυν. Compare also the rare collocations τα νυν οὖν (P.Oxy. LXIII 4361.4 (iii/iv), P.Michael. 29.12 (iv?) only), and κα οὖν (P.Oxy. LIX 3997.20 (ii/iv), O.Douch III 284.4 [iii]).

28 P.Laur. III 84.7 as edited read ἐπα Ναεινατου; this has been corrected to ἐπα Ναει (but perhaps read Ἀπαναει, cf. T. Derda, E. Wipszycka, JJP 24 (1994) 53) οὐκότο (＝BL IX 121).

29 Cf., e.g., P.Gron. 15.A2 (ii), P.Oxy. XII 1488.4 (ii), XLIX 3517.4 (260/282), P.Meyer 20.41 (iii), P.Oxy. X 1294.14f. (iii), PSI XIII 1331.10f. (iii), PSI Cong. XI 12.2 (iiii), P.Oxy. XXXIV 2729.8 (iv), PSI IX 1042.15 (iv), P.Heid. IV 333.7 (v), P.Apoll. 12.3 (706).
but I have not been able to match the remains with any known name. But I would not rule out the possibility that we are not dealing with a patronymic.

Πανσοφίου (line 21) also attracts attention. This is the sole instance of the name Πανσοφίος in the papyri, otherwise known only from non-papyrological sources. But it may well be that Πανσοφίου refers to a woman. P.Oxy. LIX 3984.7 (340) attests a woman named Πανσοφίος; and in line 30 of our letter Πανσοφίος seems to be a woman.\(^{30}\) There is also a palaeographic difficulty. The photograph indicates that after the eta of νυψωρ there is a hole which is likely to have taken one letter away. I have thought of νύψωρςcision Πανσοφίος. By comparison with P.Wash. I 56.18 (v/vi) τῆς νύψωρς Ἥραείδος, a lady called Πανσοφίος is perfectly imaginable. At any rate, a νύψωρς Πανσοφίος could also be ‘Pansophion’s daughter-in-law’.\(^{31}\) But if a genitive were in fact written, its syntactic position would be unclear. The uncertainty over what stood at the end of line 20 makes matters worse. All in all, an obscure point.

In line 22 Naldini takes ἔχωςι as an idiosyncratic version of ἔχοςι. Phonologically this is not impossible, cf. Gignac, Grammar i 209, but there is a great difficulty: the sentence ἔχωςι ράκχως φόνικας is awkwardly placed within the run of the text, and it is not clear which is the subject of ἔχωςι. Moreover, if ράκχως φόνικας stands for ράκχει φωνίκηκα, as the apparatus criticus of SB VIII 9746 asserts (Naldini adduces Hdt. 7.76 ράκχει φωνίκηκα),\(^{32}\) it is hard to understand why the writer of the letter chose such a morphology; even if in ράκχως we were to see a change of gender (τὸ ράκχος > ὅ ράκχος).\(^{33}\) It would be difficult to understand the choice of φόνικας.

All difficulty can be removed if we opt for a different articulation (and punctuation): ςφιςιδιὸν μικρὸν ἔχω σφικτὸς φωνικας, that is, in normalised spelling, ςφιςιδιὸν μικρὸν ἔχων σφικτός φωνικας ‘a small basket containing Syrian palm-dates’. This text may receive support from the following considerations:

(i) The dispatch of baskets is mentioned in a great number of private letters. Sometimes the contents of the baskets are denoted with words very similar to those in our text. Three examples (there are more) will suffice to illustrate the usage:

| P.Oxy. XXXI 2596.6f. | (iii) | ςφιςιδιὸν ἔχων ταρίχους ἐκτά. |
| SB XVIII 13593.8ff. | (iii/iv) | ςφιςιδιὸν ἔχων ἐπέταυ ἐλατών καὶ πλακουτίγνη φωνικοῦν |
| P.Oxy. XIV 1658.6ff. | (iv) | μεικρὸν ςφιςιδιὸν ἔχων κάτω ἐπὶ μακρότιμα β’ |

In all three examples the spelling of ἔχων with omega is noticeable; for the interchange o > ω see Gignac, Grammar i 277. Our text presents a further phonological idiosyncrasy, the omission of the final nu; for other examples of such omissions before words beginning with a sibilant see Gignac, op. cit. 112.

(ii) Some of the baskets that we find in the papyri contain palm-dates. One such example, SB XVIII 13593.8ff., is cited above; other examples include P.Cair.Zen. IV 59692.2.20 (iii BC), O.Stras. 599.9f. (ii/i BC), SB VI 9025.25f., 33f. (ii), (καλαθίον) P.Mich. VIII 476.7 (ii), P.Oxy. I 116.9 (ii), XXIV 2424.13, 32 (ii/iii), P.Genova I 49.8 (iii/iv).\(^{34}\)

(iii) Some of the palm-dates attested in the papyri are of Syrian provenance: see P.Aberd. 57.19n., P.Mich. XII 630.24n., P.Yadin 16.19n.\(^{35}\) The spelling without iota here can be paralleled by BGU XIII 2280.1.3, 2.12 (276), which has [Ϲ]φιςιδις; the omission of unaccented iota before a back vowel is well

\(^{30}\) Naldini has misunderstood the passage, but cf. the text of SB VIII 9746, which rightly has Λουκίλα instead of Λουκίλα in line 29.

\(^{31}\) Cf. LSJ s.v. I.3; Moulton-Milligan s.v.; Bauer-Aland-Aland s.v. 2.

\(^{32}\) Naldini interprets ράκχος φόνικας as ράκχη φωνίκης, but φωνίκης must be a misprint.


\(^{34}\) For palm-dates in the papyri see P.Dubl. 16.3n.

\(^{35}\) That in all other texts the adjective used for ‘Syrian [date]’ is σύριος (or σύρος, as in more than one instance in P.Yadin) should not affect the argument. Cf. σύριος/σύρικος πωπός (for which see P.Heid. VII 407.12n.).
documented in the papyri, cf. Gignac, op. cit. 304. cι for cv- would be an easy iotacistic mistake; for u > i in unaccented syllables see Gignac, op. cit. 267. 36 (I would rule out the possibility that the adjective derives from the noun κυρός, for which see G. Husson, ΟΙΚΙΑ 252f.)

A word also about (c)τρούθιος in line 21. Manteuffel printed τρούθιος, and suggested that this may be interpreted as (c)τρούθιος[v]. Wilcken (APF 9 (1930) 97) suggested instead (c)τρούθιος or (c)τρούθιος[v]. Shortly after the appearance of Wilcken’s note there came the corroboration of Manteuffel’s proposal: P.Mich.Zen. 9.2 (257? BC) has οῖτων τροφυθεῖον. In LSJ the latter passage and Manteuffel’s suggestion are juxtaposed. In conclusion, I suggest that the passage in question is to be presented as follows:

20 καὶ δία τοῦ ναύτη Σιφάρου τοῦ Πλου [±3 ] Curl
νύφη[  ] Πανορίσιον ὑετὸν τρούθιον μέγα
καὶ εφυρίδιοι μικρὸν ἔχων σιρακοῦς
φυγίκας.

20 l. ναύτου 21 l. νύφη-, φῶν, τροφυθεῖον 22 l. ἔχων, Σιφάροκος 23 l. φοίνικας

‘[I sent...] and through the sailor Sipharos, ?the son of Plou... ?bride (or: ?daughter-in-law of) Pansophion a big ostrich egg and a basket containing Syrian palm-dates.’

The same text contains another name otherwise unknown, Φιλοκόφιος. The photograph suggests that in line 29 Φιλοκόφιον is a misreading for φιλόσοφον; the presumed second iota is part of the loop of phi, which is elongated and open to the right. The context in which the word occurs is ambiguous (the reading of the first part of the line is very uncertain, but this will not concern us here); it could be a personal name, but I would not care to rule out a noun. For the name Φιλόσοφος, attested in a number of Oxyrhynchite documents from the late third and early fourth century, see P.Oxy. XXXVI 2796.3n., and P. Pruneti in M. S. Funghi (ed.), ΟΔΩΝ ΔΙΑΖΗΣΙΟΣ: Le vie della ricerca (1996) 399ff. 37

SB XIV 11538

This papyrus preserves the beginnings of the first six lines of a Christian letter assigned to the fifth century; lines 1-4 have been printed as follows:

Κυρίων, μου θητα[τρί - - -]
ἐν κυρίῳ χάρισιν [ - - - πανπ-
τοκράτωρα θεόν [ - - - ]
καθός ἀπέκτης [ - - - ]

The collocation πανπτοκράτωρα θεόν (l. παντοκράτωρα θεόν) catches the eye: when it occurs close to the prescript of a letter, it always belongs to a formulaic prayer in which the sender wishes that the addressee receives the letter in good health, or simply that he/she is in good health; the prayer can also be directed to τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ, τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ θεῷ, τῇ θείᾳ προσευχῇ. The use of the expression is a strong indication that the letter comes from a Christian milieu, cf. Naldini, II

36 The photograph does not prove the text of the ed. pr. wrong. The iota after sigma has its upper part broken, but I think that iota is the best reading. Perhaps I ought to add that there is a small hole before sigma that has taken away most of the right-hand loop of omega, but it does not seem very likely that it took away another letter such as μu.
37 This name may occur in P.Oxy. XXIV 2421.40 κληρονόμως Σάτου Φιλοκόφου. However, it is not entirely clear whether we are dealing with a personal name or a noun. The papyrus mentions the heirs of various individuals, and in some cases the professions of the deceased persons are given. Pruneti, op. cit. 401 favours the idea of the personal name, but her main argument, the absence of the article, does not rule out the opposite. (But note that in line 19 of the same papyrus, where the edition has κληρονόμως Διός Κομματού, κομματού probably denotes Dios’ profession, and is not his patronymic, cf. P.Oxy. LXI 4125.7-8, 14-16n.; a further ghost-name can be eliminated!) As we saw above, P.Oxy. XXIV 2421 also attests the name Σιφάρος; this may not be entirely accidental. Note also that the ladies who authored SB III 7243 are the senders of another letter which was unearthed at Oxyrhynchus, P.Oxy. XIV 1774 (= Naldini no. 37).
Remarks on Private Letters

Cristianesimo 22f., and G. Tibiletti, Le lettere private 112f., 113 n. 8. Three examples will suffice to see the epithet in context:


P.Neph. 10.3ff. (iv) προηγούμενος εἴχομε τὴν παντοκράτορα θεόν πρὸς τὴς ὁλοκληρίας σου | ὥπος υγιεί-νοντι καὶ εὐθυμοῦντι ἀποδοθεῖται ταύτα μου τὰ γράμματα

BGU III 948.3ff. (iv/v) πρὸ μὲν πάντων εἴχομε τὸν παντοκράτορα θεόν τὰ πε[ρὶ] τῆς ύγίας σου | καὶ ὁλοκλη-ρίας σου χαίρειν.

In the light of these passages we may restore [εἴχομαι τὸν παντοκράτορα θεόν | in our text, perhaps with πρὸ μὲν πάντων or the like preceding εἴχομαι, and ὥπος (or ὣς) following θεόν. But there is no means of being certain about the exact wording of what followed, since the versions of the formula are numerous, cf. P.Oxy. LVI 3860.2-3n. and LIX 4000.3-4n.39 At any rate, the greeting ended with line 3; the informative part of the letter begins with καθὼς ἀπέςτης (line 4), as in, e.g., P.Oxy. LVI 3859.4 (iv) (cf. also the note ad loc.).

SB XVI 12245

This is a third-century letter dealing with agricultural matters. The sender, whose name is Demetrius, communicates to a certain Chariton various orders. According to the edition this is what he says in lines 10-18:

λαβὲ τὴν τιμὴν τοῦ χόρθου | παρὰ Εὐλογίου καὶ ἐὰν | εἰδῆς ὅτι ἐνὶ περισσᾷ | πάλης | ὡς δέκα αροῦρας | καθὼς δὲ ἐνετιλάμμην | σοι | θέλω ἢς κοπὴν ὡς δέξ[α] | ἀροῦρας. μόλις γὰρ σωτέλα | ἄρκετο ἦμεν.


This makes tolerable sense, but there are some difficulties. First in line 13 the writer apparently did not intend ἐνὶ, but ἐνί, for which see Mandilaras, The Verb § 106, and Gignac, Grammar ii 401f.. Then καθὼς δὲ ἐνετιλάμμην σοι should start a new period; the presence of δὲ leaves no room for doubt. One is thus compelled to punctuate (and accentuate) differently:

λαβὲ τὴν τιμὴν τοῦ χόρθου | παρὰ Εὐλογίου καὶ, ἐὰν εἰδῆς (= ἤδης) ὅτι ἐνὶ περισσᾷ, πάλης | ὡς δέκα αροῦρας. καθὼς δὲ ἐνετιλάμμην σοι, θέλω κτλ.

‘Take the price of the hay from Eulogios, and, if you see that there is a surplus, sell about ten arouras (of hay). As I instructed you, I want etc.’

SB XVIII 13110

This is a fragmentary fourth/fifth-century letter. The beginnings of lines 14-15 are broken off; the first editor did not suggest any supplements, but the run of the text seems to permit an hypothetical

Cf. also P.Haun II 25.4ff. (iv), and P.Batav. 21.3ff. (v) (the latter cited above, p. 141).

Considerations of space may suggest the following text for lines 1-3, which should be taken as an exempli gratia reconstruction only:


For the supplement in line 3 I rely on SB XII 10841.2ff. (iv) πρὸ μὲν [πάντων εἴχομα τῇ(ν)] ὁλοκληρίταν σου παρὰ τῷ κυ(ρίο) θ(ῆς) ὅπως ὁλοκληροῦντι(τα) | σὲ ἀπολάβο; alternatively, we may supplement ὅπως ὁλοκληροῦν εἰς ἀπολάβο[ς], cf. P.Oxy. XIV 1773.4ff. (iii). But at this date we would expect a statement about the receiving of letters; this, however, does not seem to fit into the available space.

Line 5 has λεεξο. καὶ τοῦ όπρ.; read perhaps -καλλεός σε δὴ τοῦ όπρ.

This confirms that the papyrus has περισσά at the end of the line. (The editor noted that ‘auch unter dem Mikroskop läßt sich nicht entscheiden, ob die Bindung am Ende des Wortes nicht ας ist.’)
restoration of what has been lost. I communicated my tentative conjectures to Prof. T. Gagos of the University of Michigan, where the papyrus is housed. Prof. Gagos kindly examined the original for me, and made some new readings, which necessitate a reprint of lines 9-15. This is presented below, accompanied by a translation and minimal commentary:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{10} & \quad \text{παρασχεῖν τὸν} & \quad [\text{καὶ}] \, \text{ἔτη (?) φάσιν} \\
\text{15} & \quad \text{ἔδω χρύσινον} & \quad [\text{πέμψας}] \, \text{Θεοδώρ(φ).}
\end{align*}
\]

Φοιβάμμωνι

‘Please provide the one gold solidus to Phoibammon, the symmachos, and also send word to Theodoros’.

9 δέ. This word was not transcribed in the ed. pr.
10 χρύσινον: χρυσινο ed. pr.
13 συμμάχῳ(φ): συμμάχῳ ed. pr. This symmachos is included in A. Jördens’ supplementary list in ZPE 92 (1992) 230. So far as I am aware he is not known from any other source.
14 [καὶ] ἔτη (?): [καὶ τῇ] φάσιν ed. pr., which had originally made me think of [καὶ τῇ] φάσιν. [προς] ἔτη would do as well for sense, but I have not found an exact parallel.
15 [πέμψας]: [πέμψας] ed. pr. Numerous parallels suggest that [πέμψας] is very likely to be the verb that governs φάσιν. Prof. Gagos tells me that the surviving trace is compatible with iota.

SB XVIII 13114

This papyrus bears the upper right-hand part of a letter which the editor assigned to the fifth century. Although the subject-matter is impossible to recover, some improvements of the published text are possible. First, in the prescript, which has been presented as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{1} & \quad \text{… ἀλήθος} \text{τὸ τιμιώτατον} \\
\text{2} & \quad \text{Εὐάγγελος}
\end{align*}
\]

The two words in line 1 are never so juxtaposed in similar contexts. Numerous parallels show that the passage should be restored as ἀλήθος τὸ τιμιώτατον for this type of intensification in fifth-century letters see R. Camps, Stud. Pap. 2 (1963) 55f. Regrettably, there can be no certainty about what preceded.42

Some more minor changes may be suggested. In line 4 in place of τοῦ μου ὁ γεώγος supplement ὁ δέκατος μου ὁ γεώγος (τῷ δέκατῃ μου in line 10 may not be irrelevant); cf. P.Oxy. XLVIII 3400.25, 35 (359-65), P.Princ. II 104.1f. (v), PSI VII 843.1 (v/vi), P.Vind.Worp 23.2 (vi/vii), P.Wash. II 105.5 (vi/vii), and particularly P.Prag. II 193.3f. (v) τὸ τῶν γέρων μοι προκεῖται γράφει καὶ ὁ δέκατος μου ἦ γεώγος. In line 6 ἐπιφέντων looks attractive enough.43

42 Cf. P.Haun. II 25.2ff. (iv), SB XIV 11882.1 (iv/v), P.Oxy. LVI 3864.2f. (v) (all three have ὃς ἀλήθος κατὰ πάντα μου τιμιώτατον), P.Laur. IV 191.1 (v) (cf. BL VIII 168), P.Prag. II 194.1f. (v) (see ‘Notes on two epistolary conventions’ on p. 151), P.Ross.Georg. V 8.2 (v) (cf. BL III 158), CPR V 23.1 (v?), P.Oxy. XVI 1873.1 (v), SB V 7635.1 (v/vi), P.Land. VI 102.1f., 129.1 (both vii), and possibly SB XVI 12573v.6 (vi). In P.Oxy. LIX 4004.1, 24 (v) ὃς is omitted.

43 Line 5 might provide a clue. There the editor restored ἀδελφότητα: the supplement is not certain: θαυμασία ἢ ἀδελφότητα, or even ἀπόπειρα, as Prof. Gagos reminded me, are also possible. But if it is right, it offers a good hint that the addressee of this letter was styled as ἀδελφός. If this is so, and bearing in mind the overwhelming presence of δέκατος in the prescripts of letters of that time (see I. Suñol, Stud. Pap. 4 (1965) 39ff. — but τῷ κυρίῳ μου is possible too), one may venture the following hypothetical reconstruction of the prescript of our letter:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{τῷ δέκατῳ μου ὁ ἀδελφός} & \quad \text{τιμιώτατον} \\
\text{ἀδελφός} & \quad \text{τῷ δεκατίν} \quad \text{Εὐάγγελος}
\end{align*}
\]

44 Also in line 9 ἴπτει εἴς may be compared to P.Oxy. XLVI 3314.8 (iv) μελλόντος μου γὰρ στραφῆναι εἰς ἄλλο μέρος (but of course there are various possibilities for restoring ἴπτει).
The papyrus preserves the right-hand part of a letter written some time in the sixth or seventh century. Its closing line (11) was printed thus:

[- - λαβὼν τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ταξύτην τῇ ὀρὰς καταξίωσον γράψαι μου, δέσποτα †

The restoration is problematic: it would be unusual to find the expression λαβὼν τὴν ἐπιστολὴν in a letter of this date; instead, we would expect something like δεξάμενος τὰ γράμματα vel sim. Furthermore, the syntactic position of τῇ ὀρὰς is unclear; taken alone, τῇ ὀρὰς would make no sense in this context (this rules out restoring τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ταξύτην). But τῇ ὀρὰς provides a good clue to lead us out of the impasse. The collocation αὐτῆς ὀρὰς ‘immediately’ (for the expression cf. G. M. Parássoglou, Ἑλληνικά 29 (1976) 59) occurs before imperatives or other imperatival phrases in many private letters. Once we find the definite article added before ὀρὰς (without any semantic change): P.Abinn. 8.13f. (342-351) (ίνα ---) αὐτῆς τῇ ὀρὰς ἀπολύσῃς αὐτοῦ. In our passage αὐτῆς instead of ταξύτην would remove the anomaly; I submitted my conjecture to Professor Gagos (the papyrus belongs to the collection of the University of Michigan), who kindly confirmed that in line 11 the papyrus reads:

[- - αὐτῆς τῇ ὀρὰς καταξίωσον γράψαι μου, δέσποτα. †

‘Please do write to me immediately, my lord’.

Wolfson College, Oxford

Nikolaos Gonis

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46 This is the latest example of the collocation. Other late texts offer the semantically equivalent κατ’ αὐτῆς τῇ ὀρὰς: P.Oxy. LVI 3861.22 (iv/v), XVI 1871.2 (v), SPP X 254.2 (vi), P.Oxy. XVI 1844.1, 1852.3, LVI 3873.2, SB III 7036.3f. (all vi/vii), P.Lond. IV 1346.12f., 1348.6, 1370.7 (all three date from 710); for the expression see T. Gagos, ZPE 79 (1989) 275.