NIKOLAOS GONIS

NOTES ON TWO EPISTOLARY CONVENTIONS


© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn
NOTES ON TWO EPISTOLARY CONVENTIONS

(1.) Some more phantom φιλτάτοι

‘Though φιλός often indicates merely a close relationship (whether of blood or other kind), in φιλτάτος the emotional connotation is unmistakable’ wrote E. Fraenkel in his commentary on Aesch. Agamemnon 329.¹ Fraenkel’s statement holds generally true for Greek literature of the Classical age. But in papyrus letters from Roman Egypt the contexts and patterns of use of φιλτάτος are markedly different: ‘als Epitheton des Briefstils ist φιλτάτος nicht gefühlbetont, sondern sachlich’ writes H. Koskenniemi in his Zur Ideen und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr. (1956) 99. Koskenniemi offers a comprehensive treatment of φιλτάτος on pages 97-100 of his book,² and perhaps his most important conclusion is that the adjective does not indicate a family or other close relationship, but ordinarily occurs in business or official correspondence. In a recent paper³ I tried to show that the syntactic behaviour of the adjective also seems to conform to certain patterns: when it occurs in the prescript of a letter of the first three centuries of Roman rule in Egypt, the prescript is always in the form ὁ δεῖναι τῷ δεῖνι τῷ φιλτάτῳ. It never precedes the name of the recipient or a term indicating a relationship. Exceptions are extremely few, and occur in different contexts. In most cases these are the addresses (written on the back) of some late letters; but this deserves a special note.

The addresses of papyrus letters display a noticeable feature of the use of the adjective and its changes across the centuries. A number of letters from the first century (or slightly later) bear addresses of the general type τῷ δεῖνι τῷ φιλτάτῳ, with ἀπόδος occasionally preceding.⁴ (POxy X 1292v.17 (c. 30) τῶι φιλτάτοι 1 Δεώρητι apparently attests an exceptional word order, but this is probably accidental. Note that the address is in two sections divided by the binding.)⁵ This type of address seems to vanish after the first century (or thereabouts), but in the fifth century the adjective reappears in addresses, although the usage is different. I know of three such cases. In one case the adjective immediately precedes a personal name: POxy X 1300v.11 (V) ἀπόδος(ος) τῷ (I. τῇ) φιλ(τάτῳ) Μαρίνῳ. In two other instances we find constructions of the type τῷ (ἀπόδος) φιλ(τάτῳ) ἀδελφ(ῳ) τῷ δεὶνι: POxy VIII 1165v.14 (VI), VI 942v.6 (VI/VII). It is remarkable that in these examples the rules that were in force in the earlier period became much more strict: the adjective comes before a personal name or a term indicating relation (I consider the case POxy X 1292v.17 as of no consequence). This impression may be strengthened by the recently published POxy LXIII 4365.1f. (IV) τῷ κυρίῳ μου φιλτάτη ἀδελφῇ ἐν κυριὰ ὁ, where we find a construction that would have seemed intolerable in earlier times. It cannot be said with certainty whether this more relaxed attitude relates to the infrequent use of the adjective from the fourth century onwards (cf. Koskenniemi, op. cit. 97). We still lack an example of the adjective immediately preceding a personal name in a prescript. Nevertheless, one cannot entirely rule out the

¹ I am grateful to Dr C. V. Crowther and Dr D. D. Obbink for some very helpful remarks on an earlier draft of this paper. My thanks are also due to Prof. T. Gagos and Prof. H. Harrauer for checks of papyri at Ann Arbor and Vienna.

² On the significance of the adjective in (Classical) Greek literature see M. Landfester, Das griechische Nomen »philos« und seine Ableitungen (Spudasmata 11) (1966) 75ff.

³ Cf. also G. Tibiletti, Le lettere private nei papiri greci del III e IV secolo d.C. (1979) 43ff. The terms φιλός and φιλτάτοι have been discussed also by C. Spicq, Mnemosyne s. IV 8 (1955) 27ff. and Notes de lexicographie néo-testamentaire ii 936ff., who, however, fails to notice their semantic development and their significance in the papyri.


⁵ Despite the generous provision of dots, τῶι φιλτάτοι seems to be what the papyrus had, as I was able to see on the original (kept in the Cambridge University Library).
possibility that some day a papyrus will be published which attests a personal name preceded by τὸ φιλτάτο. In some third- and fourth-century texts φιλτάτος is attributive. And correspondence preserved in late antique non-documentary sources displays markedly different patterns of usage, close to those of classical times. Perhaps the appearance of the sequence τὸ φιλτάτῳ τὸ δεῖνι, or a clear ‘gefährlsbetont’ use of the epithet in a papyrus is only a matter of time. But it has not yet appeared.

Knowledge of the patterns of usage of the epithet, syntactic, as well as pragmatic, may be useful when restoring the text of fragmentary papyri. In the light of his research Koskenniemi pointed out the impossibility of the supplemented φιλτάτη[η μου μητή] in BGU III 814.1 (p. 98 n. 1 = BL IV 5), where he proposed γλυκυτάτη[η, and of τὸ φιλτάτῳ] πι[τρι μύ]ου(ν) in PGissUniv III 30.1 (p. 98 n. 2 = BL IV 34). Twenty-five years later Farid showed that in POxy XIV 1680.2 γλυκύτατε πάτερ was to be preferred to φιλ[λ]τατε πάτερ,10 and [τὸ φιλτάτῳ] ὁδελ.]φῶ in PSI XIV 1437.1. A few more cases where the adjective is the result of editorial intervention, but where various considerations militate against its presence in the text, will be treated below. In the course of the discussion some further remarks on the use of the adjective will be made.9

The first such case which will concern us here appears in SB XVI 12594, a letter of the third century. Its beginning has been edited thus:

Ignástēς Ἀπολλονίωρι καὶ Αλλάμμω[νι φιλτάτ]-
tοι(ς) κυρείος πλείστα χαίριν. π[ρὸ μὲν]
πάντων κτλ.

The sequence [φιλτάτοι(ς) κυρείος is odd Greek; this renders the restoration implausible. Instead, assuming a blank space at the end of line 1 and reading τοι(ς) κυρείος would remove the singularity and produce a smooth text. The editor apparently opted for restoring [φιλτάτοι(ς) in order to fill the available space in line 9. But this is not necessary: the first and second lines of letter prescripts do not always reach the edge of the papyrus, and (short) blank spaces at both the beginning and the end of the lines are fairly common.10

Another prescript that bears a phantom φιλτάτος is that of PMil II 77, a third-century letter. As edited the prescript runs as follows:

χαίροι(ς) φιλτατε ἵμαραγδε [πι]κρὰ Ἰκιδόφην.

The restoration φιλτατε ἵμαραγδε would have been blameless if it had occurred in the final greeting, as in e.g. PHarr I 105.14f. (II) ἕρρωσο, φιλτατε ἰ Ἀπολλώνιε. But the vocative φιλτατε has not been found in the prescript of any other letter. A different supplement is thus to be sought; it is probable that this is κῦριε μου. Compare the following texts:

6 Cf. POxy XLVII 3366.222 (253-60) τὸν φιλτάτον, POxy IX 1218.10 (III) τὸν φιλτάτον Φούλλανα, PRainCent 73.12 (III-IV) Ἀρκάδινον τὸν φιλτάτον, SB III 7243 (= VIII 9746)25 (early IV) τὸν φιλτάτον Φαιδορίνον, PGissUniv III 32.20f. (III/IV) τὸν φιλτάτον Ἐμμιον. Cf. also PSI VII 836v.15-6 (VI) φιλτάτῳ ἰ Ἀρούτη.
8 Another possibility would be [τὸ τυμωτάτῳ], but the context makes it less likely (for the epithet see Koskenniemi, op. cit. 100-3).
9 The electronic version (DDBDP) of OStras 792.2, a letter from the early years of Roman rule in Egypt, presents the prescript as Ἑπόνυμος Ὀρος τὸν φιλτάτον ἀδέλφοι [χαίρειν]. The ed. pr. has Ἑπόνυμος Ὀρος [τὸν ἀδέλφον] [χαί-}

10 I am grateful to Prof. Traianos Gagos who kindly checked the original (at Ann Arbor) at my request, and discussed the passage with me.
POxy VI 933.1ff. (II) χαίροις, κύριε μου ἧ Ἀπολινάριῳ, παρά Ἰωάννους φίλου.
SB XIV 12107.1 (III) [χαίροις κύριε μου Ἐθεόν παρά] Χαιρήμωνος.

It may be that the editor settled on φιλάττατε on the basis of the address, which reads Ἰσμαράγδῳ π(αρά) Ἰσμαράγδου. But this is not conclusive; in this respect, POxy VI 933, cited above, is very instructive. (See now also D. Martinez, PMich XVIII p. 275.)

The vocative φιλάττατε is also restored in PMert I 28, a letter assigned to the later third century (but the plate indicates that a somewhat earlier date should be preferred). Lines 21-22 are printed as follows:

[ἐρροις]θεί· εὐχόματι, ἀδέλφε
[φι]λάττατε, μεθ' ἀν βούλῃ.

[φι]λάττατε is impossible on three counts. First, we would normally expect lines 21 and 22 to align; but [φι]λάττατε breaches the alignment (the closing formula valedicendi is indented). Second, the plate indicates that the trace visible after the break, the top of an oblique rising from left to right, cannot be reconciled with lambda. Third, in no other private letter from the first three centuries of Roman rule in Egypt does φιλάττατοι qualify ἀδέλφως. I would thus propose supplementing [γλυκ]ύττατε, which suits both space and trace, and is also contextually more appropriate than [φι]λάττατε.11 (I should note that [τιμ]ύττατοι does not suit the trace.) The adjective is commonly used among relatives, cf. Koskenniemi, op. cit. 103, and this may be the case here too; for other γλυκύττατοι ἀδελφοί cf. e.g. PMich XV 752.4f. (II), PSI VIII 943.2 (II?), PMert II 85.29f. (III), POxy XII 1494.9f. (IV). From our letter there emerges a close relationship between sender and recipient; the text consists entirely of the usual affectionate commonplaces, with greetings to all in the family: ἐπαύξα[μαι] ἡμεῖς, ἀδέλφε,
[γλυκ]ύττατε, μεθ' ἄν βούλῃ.

‘I wish that you are well, my sweetest brother, along with whom you may wish’.

Another problematic restoration occurs in SB XIV 11900, a second-century letter addressed to a certain Herakleides, whom the sender addresses in affectionate terms: he calls him ‘father’ three times, and repeatedly expresses how greatly he and others at home, perhaps his brother and sister, miss him.13 In the edition lines 6-7 appear as follows:

[ἐν βίῳ, θαυμάζομεν] πῶς οὐδεμιῶν ἡμεῖς, [φι]λάττατε,
[ἐπεκαίμησε] ἐκπίπτολην.

There are two difficulties. First, φ[ι]λάττατε seems to be at odds with the overall familiar tone of the letter; the writer may not be Herakleides’ father, but the two individuals appear to be on close terms. We often find this vocative in official and, occasionally, in business correspondence, but never in a letter such as this. Naturally, there are a few exceptions to the general rule that φιλάττατος is ‘nicht gefühlsbetont’, cf. Koskenniemi, op. cit. 99, and one might think that this is a one of them. But the second difficulty is impossible to circumvent: the supplement in line 7 is too short for the space, as may be seen from the plate in the ed. pr. (pl. 35: note that the left-hand edge of the piece is more or less straight at this point); the lacuna must have carried away up to twelve letters, but the supplement is only eight letters long. All this make φ[ι]λάττατε unviable. (It should be noted that the supplement for the

11 There are very few examples of τιμύττατος ἀδέλφε: BGU XI 2129.25f. (II), PBrem 22.14 (II), PCairPreis 48.10 (II), POxy LIX 4004.20 (V), BGU III 950.9 (Byz.).
12 PapAgon 7.17 and SPP V 123.9 (both 264-68), which have ἐρρόθατι ὑμᾶς εὐχόματι, φιλαττότοι ἀδελφοί, are official letters. PBerlMoller 9 (AD 45), whose prescript presents the unusual sequence Σουχίων Ἀπολλονία τω ἀδελφῷ φιλάττατοι, is a business letter.
13 This is of course a topoi, cf. Tibiletti, op. cit. 92f., and might be devoid of any real sentiment, but in principle it might not be right to apply a blanket scepticism over the sender’s true feelings in all instances.
beginning of line 6 adopted in the ed. pr. is extremely uncertain – I discuss this elsewhere. At any rate, it
does not affect the argument here.) A different supplement is to be sought; I would propose the
following text:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[±3 θαυμάζομεν] } & \text{πώς οὐδεμίαν ἦμεν φ[ά]σιν} \\
\text{[expired οὐδὲ έπιστολήν].}
\end{align*}
\]

'We are surprised that you didn’t send us any word nor even a letter.’

For the proposed restoration, which is in harmony with space requirements, I have found two
parallels:

PMichael 16.7f. (II-III) οὐσ τασιν μοι οὐσ ἐπιστολήν ἐγράφατε μοι
PPhil 35.14ff. (II) καὶ οὐδὲ ἐπιστολήν οὐσ ἐπέμψατε οὐδὲ οὐδεμίαν οὐδεμίαν οὐδεμίαν οὐδεμίαν

A further case where the vocative of the adjective is supplemented but should probably be abandon-
ed is POxy VI 963. The text is a letter from the second/third century, and is addressed by one woman to
another. The passage where the dubious restoration occurs has been edited as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{χάριν δὲ σοι οἶδα, μητέρ, ἐπὶ τῇ σπουδῇ τοῦ καθεδραρίου· ἐκοιμισάμην γάρ αὐτό. οὐκ ἀλλότριον γάρ}
\end{align*}
\]

A photograph of the original (itself now in the Toledo Museum of Art) suggests that the available
space is short for this supplement: only six to seven letters seem to have been lost between

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{fil[} & \text{poudãzoua...]}
\end{align*}
\]

As we saw, the prescript of POxy LXIII 4365 τῇ κυρίᾳ μοι φιλτάτῃ ἀδελφῇ is a case apart. The adjective
probably does not occur in PPrag II 194.2, a fifth-century letter: as edited, its prescript runs

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[ῳ δ]εκόπη μοι ὡς ἀληθῶς ἢ φιλ[]τάτῳ ἀδελφῷ Μονίμῳ. Although the collocation ὡς ἀληθῶς}
\end{align*}
\]

The CPR passage cited above calls for a further note. The address (line 17) reads τῷ δεκόπητι μοι ὡς ἀληθῶς φιλτάτῳ [ ], [ ], [ ], [ ], [ ] (vace?) [. The prescript of this letter runs τῷ δεκόπητι μοι ὡς ἀληθῶς τιμιωτάτῳ ἀδελφῷ Γεροντίῳ Ηλίᾳ Κτήσιππος χ(αίρετοι). The editor notes that ‘ατερ φιλ[]τάτῳ one
expects Γεροντίῳ (cf. 2), which seems too long for the gap’. But the adjective has not hitherto been
attested immediately before a personal name in a prescript or address; instead we can easily supply
ἀδελφῷ in the six-lettered lacuna, which at least makes the sequence less exceptional.

---

14 The expression τὴν σοι φιλτάτην σύνευνον in BGU IV 1080.23 (II?) probably has its origin in the writer’s effort to
compose high-flown classical Greek (but his orthography and syntax sometimes let him down).

15 For the meaning of the word φιλοτιμία see G. R. Horsley, New Docs 2 (1982) 87f. More than one text attests to the
association of σπουδή and φιλία: PTebt II 314.8ff. (II) τῆς...τῶν φίλων σπουδῆς; POxy XLII 3086.6ff. (III/IV) οἱ σπουδοί
tῶν τῶν φίλων; Pfay 135.8ff. (IV) ἐπισπουδάζον πληράσασί ἵνα φιλία διαμεῖν μετ’ ἀδελφῶν.

16 For this see my note on SB XVIII 13114 in ‘Remarks on private letters’ on p. 146.

17 As may be seen on the published plate (Tav. LIII), the break in line 1 has taken away four and a half letters (of the
dotted ι in διεκόπητι only its top, elongated to the right, survives); the supplement I propose has five and a half letters lost,
but two of them are iotas.
The sequence τὸ [φιλ]τάτῳ Νικάνδρῳ in PBerlSarisch 12.2 (IV/V), an order to supply couched in the form of a private letter, seemingly contradicts the statement that the adjective does not occur prior to personal names in prescripts (see above). On closer scrutiny, however, the passage turns out to offer a different reading. The published photograph is not very clear at this point, but hardly supports the printed text. My suspicion that the papyrus has τὸ τιμιοτάτῳ Νικάνδρῳ has been confirmed by Dr W. A. Brashear, who kindly checked the original at my request and informed me that one should read τὸ τιμιοτάτῳ: for this (late) use of τὸ τιμιοτάτῳ in business contexts compare PCharite 38.2 (300-50), POxy X 1337.1, XX 2268.5, SB XIV 11330.1 (all three V), PPrinc II 105.1 (VI), etc.

I close this series with a note on BGU III 984, a letter from the late fourth century. The text was reprinted as no. 55 in M. Naldini, Il Cristianesimo in Egitto; there lines 25-6 read (προσαγορεύω --- καὶ) πάντας τοὺς ἡμᾶς ἄγαμοιντας κ[φιλτά]τους (?) εἰδίοις. The restoration [φιλτά]τους (recorded in BL VI 14), proposed without much confidence, should be rejected; not only does it create an odd sequence, which hardly is Greek, but also it is not justified by the epithet’s usage. The text of the ed. pr., [τε καὶ] τοὺς εἰδίοις, although not secure, is tolerable, especially when compared to PStras VIII 765.9f.


(2.) Kissing feet and footsteps: some (more) examples

The recently published PBod I 63 is a fragmentary letter from the ‘late Byzantine’ period (probably sixth/seventh century). It contains two instances of a late antique epistolographic topos, the kissing of the feet of correspondents; for literature on the issue see POxy LIX 4006.7n., and PBerlSarisch pp. 136-7 with nn. 9-12. The first occurs in line 2: the editor read τοὺς πόδας τῆς ὑμετ[έρας , and noted: ‘Restore at the end of l. 1 e.g. προσκυνῶ’. The other, in line 10, was not recognised; the edition has:

[ποδα] τοῖς τιμ[ίους δ]επότα

But study of the published photograph (pl. 41) results in a different reading; what the scribe must have written is

ἀκπάζομαι τοῖς τιμ[ίους πόδας.

There are parallels to this expression; I cite three:

POxy XVI 1555.17 (VI/VII) ἀσπάζομαι τοῖς τιμίοις αὐτής πόδας
POxy XVI 1861.2f. (VI/VII) τοῖς τιμίοις πόδας τῆς ὑμετέρας ἐνδόξου μετὰ θεόν προστασίας ἀσπαζόμενος

After the supplemented πόδας we expect a genitive denoting the person whose feet are kissed to have followed. This may be τῆς ὑμετέρας δεσποτείας, which it is just possible to read in the traces of line 2: space and trace allow δεσποτ[είας, that is τοῖς τιμίοις (?) πόδας τῆς ὑμετ[έρας δ]ες[ποτ[είας (?)

This could have been governed by ἀκπάζομαι, but in theory one cannot exclude προσκυνῶ, φιλῶ, καταφιλῶ, or καταπάζομαι.

Like the previous letter, PBod I 64 (‘late Byzantine’ ed.; judging from the hand I would place it in the sixth century) attests another example of the same topos, but this has remained unnoticed in the edition. The last surviving words of the letter (line 9) have been transcribed as

ἀκπάζομαι καὶ προσκυνῶ καὶ []

In the apparatus criticus the editor noted that a diaeresis is placed above the iota of καὶ. But the published photograph (pl. 41) shows that the papyrus has

ἀκπάζομαι καὶ προσκυνῶ τὰ ἵχνη (ἵχνη pap.20)}
Notes on Two Epistolary Conventions

A genitive should have followed, perhaps τῆς υμετέρας δεσποτείας, which occurs in line 6; compare PStras VII 679.1f. (end of VI) πολλά ἀσπαζόμαι καὶ προσκυνῶ τά ἐν υἱογέμενα ἧνη τῆς υμετέρας ἤγιος ὑμᾶς. The expression has numerous parallels, usually in the order προσκυνῶ καὶ ἀσπαζόμαι τά ἤχημι.\(^{21}\) PAnt I 45.1ff. (VI), PHaun II 31.1 (VI/VII), POxy LIX 4006.7 (VI/VII), SB VI 9398.6 (VI/VII); sometimes we encounter προσκυνῶν καὶ ἀσπαζόμενον: PAnt II 95.15f. (VI), P Fouad 89.2 (VI), P Got 29.1 (VI/VII), P Grenf II 91.1 (VI/VII).

In one of the occurrences of the topos the wording of the context is peculiar. The topos appears at the beginning of PAnt I 45, a short note addressed to a pronoetes by a notarius some time in the sixth century (lines 1-2):

> πρὸ μὲν πάντων ὁμια προσκυνῶ καὶ ἀσπαζόμαι τά ἤχημι.

ὁμια is hard to explain; at the very least the editor’s translation ‘first of all I make obeisance to your countenance and salute you’ is fanciful. A check of the original (kept in the Papyrus Room at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) eliminates all difficulty. The papyrus has:

> πρὸ μὲν πάντων πολλά προσκυνῶ καὶ ἀσπαζόμαι τά ἤχημι.

‘Before all I repeatedly worship and salute your footsteps’.\(^{22}\)

This topos may be present also in PSI VII 800, a sixth-century petition, apparently to a dux. In the edition line 3 runs as follows:

> αἰτῶ τά τίμια ἤχη τῶν ποδῶν τῆς υμετέρας ενδόξου φιλανθρωπίας καὶ

The editorial restoration καὶ is by no means binding—in fact the papyrus has καὶ, as I was able to see on the original (kept in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana at Florence). We need a verb to govern ἤχημι.\(^{23}\) One might expect a verb meaning ‘kiss’. But the only such verbs beginning with κα-, καταπαζομαι and καταφιλασφεί, have never occurred in the same context as ἤχημι. καταπαζομαι governs πόδας in PRossGeorg III 13.11 and PApoll 42.9f. (703-15); the same applies to καταφιλασφεί, as shown by Papathomas, loc. cit. 293. However, in theory PSI VII 800.3 could provide a first such instance. Another possibility is that the writer intended something on the lines of ‘having taken recourse to your footsteps I ask that...’;\(^{24}\) in the light of PCairMasp I 67091.19ff. (528) ἐστοιμὸς γὰρ εἰμι καταλαβέων | τά ἤχη τῆς ἀντών ἐξουσίας | περὶ τῆς αἰτίας one might consider restoring exempli gratia καὶ ταλαβάνων; this would well suit the character of our text.\(^{25}\)

A further instance of the topos may be suspected in PLond V 1739r, which comes from the seventh or eighth century. Line 2 (the last of the letter) reads ἦρον τά τίμια ἤχη τοῦ θεοφράκτου μοῦ δέσποτον τούτου. It is likely that a verb such as ἀσπαζόμαι or προσκυνῶ or both verbs (for this cf. Papathomas, ibid.) followed. It should be noted that the verb normally precedes; but cf. POxy XVI 1875.15 (VI/VII) πολλά τά ἤχη μον προσκυνῶ.\(^{26}\) Another possible occurrence is provided by CIlumPap I 31 (= SB XX 14495), a sixth/seventh-century text. Line 1 is printed as ἦρον τά τίμια τιμία ἤχη τῆς εὐφ.\(^{21}\) [as the editor noted ‘Man kann sich vorstellen, daß man im Anfangsbereich eines Briefes steht’].

\(^{21}\) SB XVI 12815.1-2 (570-73) as edited runs ἀσπαζόμαι καὶ προσκυνῶν τῆς υμετέρας [: but the supplemented ἀσπαζόμαι καὶ is by no means secure, and should be regarded as exempli gratia only. Compare POxy XVI 1829.22f. (577-79) πολλὰ προσκυνῶν τῆς υμετέρας ἤχουσιαν.

\(^{22}\) For πολλά see POxy XVI 1875.15 and PHaun II 31.1, both cited below. The examination of the original further revealed that in line 4 the papyrus does not have γράφων μοι, ὀδίσκοπτος, τῆς κατάστασιν | σου, but γράφων μοι ἐκ τῆς κατάστασιν σου; for the postponed ὀδίσκοπτος see J. D. Denniston, The Greek Particles\(^{2}\) 185ff. and E. Mayer, Grammatik II.3 125.

\(^{23}\) For the significance of καταλαβέων here cf. F. Preisigke, WB sv. 2 ‘seinem Zuflucht wothin nehmen’.

\(^{24}\) The same idea occurs also in other sixth-century petitions; cf. e.g. PLond V 1676.54f. (566-73) πρόετι τοῖς ἐκσκλητεῖ ὑμῶν ἤχεις κυνῖνδρον[ν]μο[ν]ον καὶ καθικτείων τὴν ὑπερβολὴ ὑμῶν φιλανθρωπίας κλ.

\(^{25}\) For the significance of καταλαμβάνω here cf. F. Preisigke, WB sv. 2 ‘seinem Zuflucht wothin nehmen’.

\(^{26}\) I am not clear as to how ἦρον should be restored; I have thought of πρότερον, but cannot parallel it.
is very probable, as a good number of letters which start with a version of the *topos* show, and *ἐκπάζομαι* or *προκυνῶ* vel sim. may well have preceded in the lacuna at the start of the line (for Ἰαν read Ἰάν). What is printed as *εὐο* should correspond to a feminine abstract noun, but what can be read with certainty is not particularly suggestive (see the note ad loc.). According to Professor Harrauer, who kindly examined the papyrus for me, there is nothing different from what is printed in the edition.

In the course of reviewing the texts attesting the *topos*, there appeared a way of supplementing the beginning of line 1 of PHaun II 31, a sixth/seventh-century letter. The papyrus as edited has Ἰάν πολλὰ προκυνῶ καὶ ἐκπάζομαι τὰ ἰχν. The editor tentatively suggested πρὸ τῆς Ἰάν, on the analogy of other occurrences of the *topos* introduced by πρὸ μὲν πάντων. But πρὸ τῆς Ἰάν would be an *unicum*, whereas comparable passages are not lacking (see also n. 30 below):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PCairMasp I 67076.1 (VI)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>θιά τῆς παροῦσης ἑπιστολῆς γράφου προκυνών τὸν Ἐμῶν διεπάθην</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGot 29.1 (VI/VII)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>θιά τῆς ἑλαχίστου μοι ἑπιστολῆς γράφου προκυνών καὶ ἀσπαζόμεθα[ν] τό τί μεια ἰχνῆ τοῦ θεοῦ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poxy XVI 1860.1 (VI/VII)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ἐν μὲν πρόσμειοι τῆς ἑπιστολῆς πλείστα προκυνῶ καὶ ἐκπάζομαι τὴν ἡμετέραν περιβλέπτων ἀδελφότητα</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the basis of the above and the published photograph (Pl. XIV) I suggest reading ἐπὶ τοῖς Ἰάν in place of Ἰάν; what preceded it cannot be reconstructed verbatim (a prepositional construction governed by διά is very likely), but the idea is clear.

Wolfson College, Oxford

Nikolaos Gonis

---

27 PAnt I 45, PFouad 89, PStras VII 679 (all VI), PGot 29, PGrenf II 91, PHaun II 31, Poxy LIX 4008 (all VI/VII), PNe 53 (608), 148 (VII).

28 Perhaps τοῦ θεοῦ λαξυκτοῦ μοι ἄντιθετοῦ, suggested by H. I. Bell, CR 43 (1929) 237 (= BL II. 2 70).

29 It is not certain whether PNe 148.1 (VII) attests the *topos*. The editor printed διὰ τῶν ἑλαχίστων μου γραμμάτων γράφω προκυνήσων τὸ ἰχνός; Papathomas, loc. cit. 294f. pointed out that ἰχνός is impossible (the word in this form is absent from the existing documentary evidence) and discussed possible supplements on the assumption that the letter contained a reference to feet-kissing. But although the *topos* would not be at odds with the tone of the letter, its restoration here may not be the likeliest possibility; the suggested supplements may be paralleled only by PGot 29.1 (cited above). The object of the verb may well have not been the feet or footsteps of the recipients as a number of other texts may suggest; for example compare PCairMasp I 67076.1 (cited above), PNe 145.1f. (VII/VIII) [† . . . . . ] (probable διὰ τῶν) ἑγγαμάτων παρόντων (the word-order adopted by the editor is not Greek; ἑγγαμάτων must be an afterthought, and if it is written directly above παρόντων, we should read παρόντων ἑγαμάτων) μοι γράφοντας καὶ προκυνήσων τῃν µου γνώσεως κτλ., PHer 49.1f. (VI) διὰ τῶν παρόντων μου γραμμάτων ἑγγαμάτων (the scribe probably wrote participles instead of participles; if so, the punctuation (colon) should be removed) καὶ τὴν ἰμετέραν γνώσεως ἀδελφότητας; also PMichael 39.1f. (V), SB VI 9138.1f. (VI), 9397.1 (VI/VII). The same uncertainty applies to PRossGeorg III 13v.2 (VI) διὰ τοῦ ὢντας (we would expect διὰ τῆς προοίμους μου ἑπιστολῆς γράφων πολλὰ προκυνῶ καὶ ἐκπάζομε [με] (note that γράφων --- προκυνῶ occurs only here; probably we should read γράφων --- προκυνῶν), and PLaur II 48.1 (VII) διὰ τῆς παρ᾽ οὖν εἰς τοὺς τῶν ἑλαχίστων μου γραμμάτων ἀδελφότητας | διὰ τούτον τῶν ἑλαχίστων μου γραμμάτων is arbitrary; nothing in the text supports the supplement ἀδελφότητα.