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NOTES ON TWO EPISTOLARY CONVENTIONS

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(1.) Some more phantom φίλτατοι

‘Though φίλος often indicates merely a close relationship (whether of blood or other kind), in φίλτατος 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 φίλτατος are markedly different: ‘als Epitheton des Briefstils ist φίλτατος nicht gefühlsbetont, 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 φίλτατος 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 δεῖνα 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 φιλτάτῳ Ἰαχυρῶτι 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 examples. In one case the adjective immediately precedes a personal name: POxy X 1300v.11 (V) ἀπόδος το (I. τῆ) φι(λτάτῃ) Μαρίᾳ. In two other instances we find constructions of the type τ(ῷ) (various epithets) φιλ(τάτῳ) ἀδελφ(ῷ) τῷ δεῖνι: 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 less 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) τῆ κυρίᾳ μου φιλτάτῃ ἀδελφῆ ἐν κ(υρίῳ), 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

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¹ On the significance of the adjective in (Classical) Greek literature see M. Landfester, *Das griechische Nomen »philos« und seine Ableitungen* (*Spudasmata* 11) (1966) 75ff.

² Cf. also G. Tibiletti, *Le lettere private nei papiri greci del III e IV secolo d.C.* (1979) 43f. The terms φίλοι and φίλτατοι have been discussed also by C. Spicq, *Mnemosyne* s. IV 8 (1955) 27f. and *Notes de lexicographie néo-testamentaire* ii 936ff., who, however, fails to notice their semantic development and their significance in the papyri.

³ ‘PSI 1437 and its ghost *proskynema*’, *Istituto Papirologico ‘G. Vitelli’: Comunicazioni* 2 (1997) (forthcoming).

⁴ POxy X 1292v.17 (c. 30), PRyl II 230v.14 (40), POslo III 149v.6 (61), BGU I 248v, BGU II 531v (both c. 75-76), BGU III 884v (c. 76) (the edition has Ἀπ[ολλωνίω]ι φιλτάτῳ, but Ἀπ[ολλωνίω]ι τῷ]ι φιλτάτῳ is more likely), PHerm 1v.11, PMichael 15v.11, POxy XLII 3070v.10 (all I), SB XII 11021v.18, POslo II 49v (both I/II), Pland VI 111.32 (c. 200 ed., but one should probably reckon with an earlier date).

⁵ Despite the generous provision of dots, τῷ φιλτάτῳ 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 τῷ φίλτάτῳ. In some third- and fourth-century texts⁶ φίλτατος is attributive. And correspondence preserved in late antique non-documentary sources displays markedly different patterns of usage, close to those of classical times.⁷ Perhaps the appearance of the sequence τῷ φίλτάτῳ τῷ δεῖνι, or a clear ‘gefühlbetont’ 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 φίλτ[άτ]η μου μητρ[ί] in BGU III 814.1 (p. 98 n. 1 = BL IV 5), where he proposed γλυκυτ[άτ]η, and of τῷ φίλτάτῳ πα[τρὶ μ]ο(υ) in PGissUniv III 30.1 (p. 98 n. 2 = BL IV 34). Twenty-five years later Farid showed that in POxy XIV 1680.2 γλυκύ]τατε πάτερ was to be preferred to φίλ]τατε πάτερ of the ed. pr. (*Anagennesis* 1 (1981) 15ff. = BL VIII 248). In the paper mentioned above I advanced arguments against retaining τῷ φίλτάτῳ ἀδε[λ]φ[ῶ] in the prescript of BGU I 27, where I suggested restoring τῷ γλυκυτάτῳ ἀδε[λ]φ[ῶ],⁸ and [τῷ φίλτάτῳ | ἀδελ]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:

Ἰγνάτις Ἀπολιναρείῳ καὶ Ἀλλάμμου[ι φίλτά]-
τοι(ς) κυρείοις πλείετα χαίριν. π[ρὸ μὲν]
πάντων κτλ.

The sequence [φιλτά]τοι(ς) κυρείοις is odd Greek; this renders the restoration implausible. Instead, assuming a blank space at the end of line 1 and reading τοῖ(ς) κυρείοις would remove the singularity and produce a smooth text. The editor apparently opted for restoring [φιλτά]τοι(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 φίλτατος is that of PMil II 77, a third-century letter. As edited the prescript runs as follows:

χαίροι[ς φίλτατε Ἰμ]άραγδε [π]αρὰ Ἰσιδώρου.

The restoration φίλτατε Ἰμ]άραγδε would have been blameless if it had occurred in the final greeting, as in e.g. PHarr I 105.14f. (II) ἔρρωσο, φίλτατε | Ἀπολλώνιε. But the vocative φίλτατε 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 κύριέ μου. Compare the following texts:

⁶ Cf. POxy XLVII 3366.2.22 (253-60) τὸν φίλτατ[ον], POxy IX 1218.10 (III) τὸν φίλτατον Φούλλωνα, PRainCent 73.12 (III-IV) Ἀρκάδιον τὸν φίλτατον, SB III 7243 (= VIII 9746).25 (early IV) τὸν φίλτατον Φαβουρίνον, PGissUniv III 32.20f. (III/IV) τὴν | φίλτάτην Ἐρμιόνην. Cf. also PSI VII 836v.15-6 (VI) φιλιτάτῳ | Ἀφοῦτι.

⁷ For example cf. Basilius, *Epist.* 277.1.17 φίλτατε παίδων, Greg. Naz., *De vita sua* 502 πατήρ σε λίττεθ', υἱέων ὃ φίλτατε, *Orat.* 7.21.7.4f. ὃ φίλτατε ἀδελφῶν ἐμοί, Syn., *Epist.* 134.3 ὃ φίλτατε ἐταίρων.

⁸ Another possibility would be [τῷ τιμιωτάτῳ], 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 Ἐπώνυχος Ὀρωί [τῷ φίλτά]τῳ ἀδελφῶι [χαίρειν.]. The ed. pr. has Ἐπώνυχος Ὀρωί [| τῷ ἀδελφῶι [χαίρειν.]. The supplement, which, as far as I know, has not appeared in print anywhere, is plainly wrong. Incidentally, in CPR VII 14.7 (305) one should supply the definite article before φίλ]τάτοις, and read βιβλιοφύλαξιν ἐγκτήσεων τοῦ αὐτοῦ νομοῦ τοῖς φίλ]τάτοις χαίρειν.

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, κύριέ μου Ἀπολινάριε, παρὰ Διογένους φίλου.
PSI IX 1049.1ff.	(260?)	χαίροις κύρ[ιέ] μου Ἄρπαλε π(αρὰ) Ἡρωνείνου.
SB XIV 12107.1	(III)	[χαίρ]οις κύριέ μου Θεῶν π(αρὰ) Χαιρήμονος.

It may be that the editor settled on φίλτατε on the basis of the address, which reads Ἰσμαράγδω π(αρὰ) Ἰσιδώρου φίλου 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 φίλτατε 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:

[ἔρρω]θαί σε εὐχομαι, ἄδελφε
[φί]λτατε, μεθ' ὧν βούλη.

[φί]λτατε is impossible on three counts. First, we would normally expect lines 21 and 22 to align; but [φί]λτατε 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 φίλτατος qualify ἀδελφός. I would thus propose supplementing [γλυκ]ύτατε, which suits both space and trace, and is also contextually more appropriate than [φί]λτατε.¹¹ (I should note that [τιμι]ώτατε 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 γλυκύτατοι 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: ἀπάζο[μα] | Ἀμμωνῶν τὸν πατέρα μου καὶ τ[ῆν] μητέρα μου καὶ τὴν ἀδ[ελφήν] καὶ τοὺς ἐν οἴκῳ πάντες κ[αὶ] | τ[οὺς] φίλους (lines 13-7).¹² I would therefore suggest that the text is to be presented thus:

[ἔρρω]θαί σε εὐχομαι, ἄδελφε
[γλυκ]ύτατε, μεθ' ὧν βούλη.

'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 βίφ. θαυμάζομε]ν πῶς οὐδεμίαν ἡμεῖν, φ[ί]λτατε],
[ἔπεμψα]ς ἐπιτολήν.

There are two difficulties. First, φ[ί]λτατε] 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 φίλτατος 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[ί]λτατε] unviable. (It should be noted that the supplement for the

¹¹ There are very few examples of τιμιώτατε ἀδελφε: 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 ἐρρωσθαι ὑμᾶς εὐχομαι, φίλτατοι ἀδελφοί, are official letters. PBerlMöller 9 (AD 45), whose prescript presents the unusual sequence Κουχίων Ἀπολλωνίω τῶι ἀδε(λφῶι) φίλτάτωι, is a business letter.

¹³ This is of course a *topos*, 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:

[±3 θαυμαζομε]ν πῶς οὐδεμίαν ἡμεῖν φ[άειν]
[ἔπεμψα οὐδὲ ἐ]πιτολήν.

‘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)	οὔτε φάειν μοι οὔτε ἐπιτολήν ἐγράψατέ μοι
PPhil 35.14ff.	(II)	καὶ οὐδὲ ἐπιτόλιν ἢ μοι ἐπέμψατε οὐδὲ οὐδεμίαν ἢ φάειν

A further case where the vocative of the adjective is supplemented but should probably be abandoned 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:

χάριν δέ σοι οἶδα, μήτηρ, ἐπὶ τῇ σπουδῇ τοῦ καθεδραρίου· ἐκοιμάμην γὰρ αὐτό. οὐκ ἀλλότριον γὰρ] τοῦ ἤθους ποιεῖς, φιλ[τάτη μήτηρ,]πουδάζουσα...

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 φιλ[and]πουδάζουσα. One possibility would be φιλ[τάτη, ἐπι]πουδάζουσα; POxy XVII 2113.19f. (316) σπουδάσων ἢ τοίνυν, φίλτατε could be adduced in support, but there, unlike our letter, the context is official. Note also that the adjective is extremely rarely used for women, as Koskeniemi, *op. cit.* 98 has shown.¹⁴ I am inclined to think of an adverb beginning with φιλ- which would qualify]πουδάζουσα, but published papyri do not offer any particularly strong candidate. Only φιλοτίμως would suit the space (φιλανθρώπως is too long); it can be paralleled only by BGU VIII 1770.8f. (64/3 BC) φιλοτίμως διακείμενος εἰς πᾶν τό σοι ἢ χρίσιμος --- [ἐσπούδασα].¹⁵ *Faut de mieux*, I would suggest printing φιλ[-6-7]πουδάζουσα.

As we saw, the prescript of POxy LXIII 4365 τῇ κυρίᾳ μου φιλότατη 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 [τῷ δ]εσπότη μου ὡς ἀληθῶς ἢ [φιλ]τάτῳ ἀδελφῷ Μονίμῳ. Although the collocation ὡς ἀληθῶς φιλότατῳ seemingly receives support from CPR V 23v.17 (V?) (on which see below), [φιλ] is too short for the space; note also that in the CPR V 23 the adjective occurs in the address. Instead, I propose restoring [τῷ δ]εσπότη μου ὡς ἀληθῶς ἢ [τιμιω]τάτῳ κτλ., a relatively common type of address,¹⁶ which also suits the space better.¹⁷

The CPR passage cited above calls for a further note. The address (line 17) reads τῷ δεσπότη μου ὡς ἀληθῶς φιλότατῳ [.] (vac?) [. The prescript of this letter runs τῷ δεσπότη μου ὡς ἀληθῶς τιμιωτάτῳ ἀδελφῷ ἢ Γερωντίῳ Ἡλίου Κτήσιπος χ(αίρειν). The editor notes that ‘after φιλότατῳ one expects Γερωντίῳ (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 φιλότατην κύνευον in BGU IV 1080.23 (III?) 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 3086.6f. (III/IV) αἰ σπουδαῖ τῶν ἢ φίλων; PFay 135.8ff. (IV) ἐπισπούδασων πληρῶσαι ἢ ἵνα ἢ φιλία διαμίνῃ μετ’ ἀλλήλων.

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 ε in δ]εσπότη 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 τῶ [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 τῶ τιμιωτάτῳ Νικάνδρῳ has been confirmed by Dr W. A. Brashear, who kindly checked the original at my request and informed me that one should read τῶ τιμιωτάτῳ;¹⁸ for this (late) use of τῶ τιμιωτάτῳ 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 (προκαγορεύω ---) καὶ πάντα τοὺς ἡμᾶς ἀγαποῦντας | [φιλτά]τους (?) εἰδίους. 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 εἰδίους, although not secure, is tolerable, especially when compared to PStras VIII 765.9f. (ii) ἄ]πασαι καὶ Ἐλένην --- καὶ Ἐρμῆ | ? πᾶ]ντες τοὺς ἰδίους (before πᾶ]ντες probably supply καί).

(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:

οπ[. . .] [. . . τ]οὺς τιμί[ους

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

ἀσπ[ά]ζ[ομαι τ]οὺς τιμί[ους πόδας.

There are parallels to this expression; I cite three:

PRossGeorg III 13.10f. (VI) τ[οὺς τ]ιμίους | πότας τ[ο]ῦ δε[σπ]ότη[ου] μ[ου] κατ[α]σπᾶ[ζ]ομαι

POxy XVI 1855.17 (VI/VII) ἀσπᾶζομαι τ[οὺ]ς τιμίους ἀντὶ τῆς πόδας

POxy XVI 1861.2f. (VI/VII) τοὺς τιμίους πόδας τῆς ὑμετέρας ἐνδόξου μετὰ θεὸν προστασίας | ἀσπᾶζόμενος

After the supplemented πόδας we expect a genitive denoting the person whose feet are kissed to have followed. This may be τῆς ὑμετέρας δεσποτείας,¹⁹ which it is just possible to read in the traces of line 2: space and trace allow δεσπ[ο]τ[ε]ίας, that is

τοὺς τιμίους (?) πόδας τῆς ὑμετ[έρασ δεσπ]οτ[ε]ίας (?)

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

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

ἀσπᾶζομαι καὶ προσκυνῶ καὶ [

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

ἀσπᾶζομαι καὶ προσκυνῶ τὰ ἴχ[νη] (ἴχνη pap.²⁰)

¹⁸ In his review of the volume, due to appear in *BZ*, Dr A. Papatomas independently reaches the same conclusion.

¹⁹ For other possibilities see A. Papatomas, *ZPE* 104 (1994) 295 n. 14.

²⁰ It is noticeable that in most cases the word is written with a diaeresis.

A genitive should have followed, perhaps τῆς ὑμετέρας δεσποτείας, which occurs in line 6; compare PStras VII 679.1f. (end of VI) πολλὰ ἀσπάζομαι καὶ προσκυνῶ τὰ ἐυλογιμένα ἵχνη τῆς ὑμετέ[ρ]α ἀγιω[ρ]ύνης. The expression has numerous parallels, usually in the order προσκυνῶ καὶ ἀσπάζομαι τὰ ἵχνη: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 ἀσπάζομενος: PAnt II 95.15f. (VI), PFouad 89.2 (VI), PGot 29.1 (VI/VII), PGrenf 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 ὄμμα προσκυνῶ καὶ ἀσπάζομαι ἢ τὰ ἵχνη σου.

ὄμμα 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 Papyrology Rooms at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) eliminates all difficulty. The papyrus has:

πρὸ μὲν πάντων πολλὰ προσκυνῶ καὶ ἀσπάζομαι ἢ τὰ ἵχνη σου.

'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 τὰ τίμια ἵχνη τῶν ποδῶν τῆς ὑμετέρας ἐνδόξου φιλανθρωπίας κ[αὶ]

The editorial restoration κ[αὶ] is by no means binding—in fact the papyrus has κα[], as I was able to see on the original (kept in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana at Florence). We need a verb to govern ἵχνη.²³ One might expect a verb meaning 'kiss'. But the only such verbs beginning with κα-, κατασπάζομαι and καταφιλῶ, have never occurred in the same context as ἵχνη. κατασπάζομαι governs πόδας in PRossGeorg III 13.11 and PApoll 42.9f. (703-15); the same applies to καταφιλῶ, as shown by Papatomas, 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) ἔτοιμος [γ]άρ εἰμι καταλαβεῖν ἢ τὰ ἵχνη τῆς αὐτῶν ἐξουσίας ἢ περὶ τῆς αἰτίας one might consider restoring *exempli gratia* κα[]ταλαβόν; 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]ερον τὰ τίμια ἵχνη τοῦ θεοφυλάκτου μο(υ) δ[ε]πτότου. It is likely that a verb such as ἀσπάζομαι or προσκυνῶ or both verbs (for this cf. Papatomas, *ibid.*) followed. It should be noted that the verb normally precedes; but cf. POxy XVI 1875.15 (VI/VII) πολλὰ τὰ ἵχνη ὑμῶν προσκυνῶ.²⁶ Another possible occurrence is provided by CillumPap I 31 (= SB XX 14495), a sixth/seventh-century text. Line 1 is printed as]τα εἵχνη τῆς εὐο . . ε []; as the editor noted 'Man kann sich vorstellen, daß man im Anfangsbereich eines Briefes steht'. This

²¹ SB XVI 12815.1-2 (570-73) as edited runs ἀσπάζομαι καὶ προσκυνῶ τὴν ὑμετέραν []; but the supplemented ἀσπάζομαι καὶ is by no means secure, and should be regarded as *exempli gratia* only. Compare POxy XVI 1829.22f. (577-79?) πολλὰ προσκυνῶ τὴν ὑμετέραν ἢ ἐξουσίαν.

²² For πολλὰ 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 γράψον μοι, ἀδ(ελφὲ), τὴν κατάστασιν ἢ σου, but γράψον μοι δὲ τὴν κατάστασιν ἢ σου; for the postponed δέ see J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles*² 185ff. and E. Mayer, *Grammatik* II.3 125.

²³ There is no connection between αἰτῶ and ἵχνη; αἰτῶ goes with ἔνδοξον μέγ[εθο]ς μὴ παριδεῖν from line 4 (before ἔνδοξον μέγ[εθο]ς perhaps supplement τὸ ὑμέτερον).

²⁴ The same idea occurs also in other sixth-century petitions; cf. e.g. PLond V 1676.54f. (566-73) πρόκειμι τοῖς εὐκλεεῖς ὑμῶν ἵχνεσι κυλινδο[ύ]μ[ενος] ἢ καθικετεύων τὴν ὑπερφυῆ ὑμῶν φιλανθρωπίαν κτλ.

²⁵ For the significance of καταλαμβάνω here cf. F. Preisigke, *WB* sv. 2 'seine Zuflucht wohin nehmen'.

²⁶ I am not clear as to how]ερον should be restored; I have thought of πρότ]ερον, but cannot parallel it.

is very probable, as a good number of letters which start with a version of the *topos* show,²⁷ and ἀσπάζομαι or προσκυνῶ vel sim. may well have preceded in the lacuna at the start of the line (for]τᾶ read]τὰ). What is printed as εὐο . . . ε [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]λῆς πολλὰ προσκυνῶ καὶ ἀσπάζομαι τὰ ἴχ[νη. The editor tentatively suggested πρὸ τῆς ὄ]λῆς, on the analogy of other occurrences of the *topos* introduced by πρὸ μὲν πάντων. But πρὸ τῆς ὄ]λῆς would be an *unicum*, whereas comparable passages are not lacking (see also n. 30 below):

PCairMasp I 67076.1	(VI)	διὰ τῆς πα]ρούσης ἐπιτολῆς γράφω προσκυνῶν τὸν ἐμὸν δεσπότην
PGot 29.1	(VI/VII)	διὰ τῆς ἐλαχίστου μου ἐπιτολῆς γράφω προσκυνῶν καὶ ἀσπαζόμε[ενος τὰ τί]μια ἴχνη τοῦ θεο[²⁸
POxy XVI 1860.1	(VI/VII)	ἐν μὲν πρόοιμοις τῆς ἐπιτολῆς πλείστα προσκυνῶ καὶ ἀσπάζομαι τ[ὴν] ὑμετέραν περίβλεπτον ἀδελφότητα

On the basis of the above and the published photograph (Pl. XIV) I suggest reading ἐπιτ[ε]ο]λῆς in place of]λῆς; what preceded it cannot be reconstructed *verbatim* (a prepositional construction governed by διὰ is very likely), but the idea is clear.²⁹

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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), PNess 53 (608), 148 (VII).

²⁸ Perhaps τοῦ θεο[φύλακτου μου ἀντιγεούχου, suggested by H. I. Bell, *CR* 43 (1929) 237 (= BL II.2 70).

²⁹ It is not certain whether PNess 148.1 (VII) attests the *topos*. The editor printed διὰ τῶν ἐλαχίστων μου γραμάτων γράφω προσκυνῶν τὰ ἴχνια; Papatomas, loc. cit. 294f. pointed out that ἴχνια 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), PNess III 145.1f. (VI/VII) [†] (probably διὰ τῶν) ἡ γραμμάτων παρόντων (the word-order adopted by the editor is not Greek; γραμμάτων must be an afterthought, and if it is written directly above παρόντων, we should read παρόντων γραμμάτων) μου γράφω καὶ π[ρ]οσκυνῶ τῆ[v] | [. . .] νουραν κτλ., PHerm 49.1ff. (VI) διὰ τῶν παρόντων μου γραμμάτων | γράφω· πολὰ προσκυνῶ καὶ ἀσπάζομε (the scribe probably wrote indicatives instead of participles; if so, the punctuation (colon) should be removed) | τὴν ὑμετέραν γνίσιαν ἀδελφότητα; 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 τ[α]ύτης (we would expect διὰ τῆς π[α]ρούσης) μου ἐπιτολῆς γράφ[ων] πολλὰ προσκυν[ῶ] | [(note that γράφ[ων] --- προσκυν[ῶ] occurs only here; probably we should read γράφ[ω] --- προσκυν[ῶν]), and PLaur II 48.1 (VII) διὰ τῆς παρ' (ούς)οις (the apostrophe is striking; but the plate allows reading παρούσης) μου ἐπιτολῆς γράφω προσκυνῶ(ν) κα[ὶ] (the commentary suggests restoring ἀσπαζόμενος, which is certain, if the final nu of προσκυνῶ(ν) is indeed abbreviated). Note also that the supplement in SB XVIII 1311.1f. (V/VI) προσκυν[ῆ]σαι τὴν ὑμετέραν ἀδελφότητα | διὰ τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων μου γραμμάτων is arbitrary; nothing in the text supports the supplement ἀδελφότητα.