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LITURA: ἀλειφάς, NOT ἄλειφαρ, AND OTHER WORDS FOR 'ERASURE'

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LITURA: ἀλειφάς, NOT ἄλειφαρ, AND OTHER WORDS FOR ‘ERASURE’*

In the year 1912, writing about ink used in antiquity for inscribing a sheet of papyrus, U. Wilcken made the following statement (*Grundzüge*, p. xxxiii): ‘Wollte man etwa zur Fälschung von Urkunden eine völlige Tilgung einzelner Worte herbeiführen, so bediente man sich besonderer Salben. Daher wird gelegentlich die Echtheit von Aktenstücken bezeugt durch Worte wie καθαρὸν ἀπὸ ἐπιγραφῆς καὶ ἀλείφατος (oder χωρὶς ἀλείφατος ο.ä).’ In footnote 2 Wilcken referred to *APF* 1, 1900, p. 125. There, in a discussion of P.Oxy. I 34.i.12ff, he mentions for these and similar phrasings P.Lond. II p. 207.11ff., BGU 578.15, 666.31 and 717.24 and he comes to the conclusion that “es nur heißen kann ‘ohne Rasur und Zuschrift’, oder genauer ‘ohne Ausstreichen (resp. Abwischen) und Hinzuschreiben’. Für das Lexikon des Kanzlei-Griechisch aber gewinnen wir die bisher nicht belegte Bedeutung von ἄλειφαρ im Sinne von ἀλοιφή (= *litura*).”¹ Wilcken refers in another footnote (fn. 3) to page 98 in the same volume of *APF* where, in an article by O. Gradenwitz, the nominative of the noun, occurring in a similar context, is given as ἀλειφάς. In the word index to *APF* 1, p. 566, only ἄλειφαρ is mentioned and refers to both p. 98 and p. 125.

Among papyrologists there still appears to be some confusion as to the nominative and meaning of the noun in question. The situation is complicated by the fact that the documentary papyri produce no instance of a nominative, be it (τὸ) ἄλειφαρ or (ἡ) ἀλειφάς, see below. The electronic *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* appears to produce a further neuter, τὸ ἄλειφας, in Herodianus, *De Prosodia catholica*, III.1 p. 351.25, and III.2 p. 220.17 and 631.32. Τὸ ἄλειφας, however, is not listed in standard printed dictionaries, and Herodian does not mention (ἡ) ἀλειφάς.

Following Wilcken, F. Preisigke listed the lemma ἄλειφαρ in *Fachwörterbuch* and *Wörterbuch I*, and his practice was followed in *Wörterbuch IV*. One finds the same lemma in N. Hohlwein’s *L’Égypte romaine. Recueil des termes techniques* (Bruxelles 1912; cf. p. 87). In his *Spoglio Lessicale Papyrologico*, vol. I, S. Daris lists both ἄλειφαρ (from P.Harr. 83.15, 84.10; P.Oxy. XVII 2134.29, P.Hamb. I 70.26, PSI IX 1035.16, SB III 6995.26 and 7197.15) and ἀλυφας (unaccentuated) from P.Stras. 303.7, and he introduced a form, ἀλειφῶς, citing first P.Princ. III 149.11 and P.Stras. 252.1; in these two cases, however, the nominative should be accentuated ἀλειφάς. The third reference in the *Spoglio* regards BL III 269 on O.Tait I p. 78, nr. 87.7 (= O.Ashm. 87), where the *ed. princ.* read αλειφα; for this K.F.W. Schmidt imaginatively proposed the interpretation ἀλειφῶ = ‘dealer in ἀλείφατα’.² Here the accentuation ἀλειφῶς is technically in order, but this noun (if it ever existed) is a different word from ἀλειφάς. While *WB Suppl. I* has no lemma to offer, *WB Suppl. II* lists the lemma ἄλειφαρ and, like the *Spoglio*, gives a cross-reference to ἄλυφας, from P.Stras. V 303.7.

As far as general Greek dictionaries are concerned, *LSJ* lists both τὸ ἄλειφαρ (with quotations from literary texts) and ἡ ἀλειφάς, the latter with a single reference to P.Ryl. II 163; the editors of this text, however, list the nominative in their general index as ἄλειφαρ. Like *LSJ*, C.D. Buck - W. Petersen, *Reverse Index of Greek Nouns and Adjectives*, list (p. 413) ἀλειφάς from P.Ryl. II 163. The new Spanish counterpart of *LSJ*, the *DGE*, prints only the form ἄλειφαρ.

* This paper is the result of a discussion between the authors on the internet list ‘papy’ in October 1999.

¹ The word ἀλοιφή turns out to be hardly attested in the documentary papyri from Egypt. The only published attestation is P.Ryl. II 227.19, where some obols are paid for ἀλοιφῶν (gen. plur.). Another, as yet unpublished instance is from Mons Claudianus (AD II) inv. 7420, where ἀλοφή (grease) is demanded in connection with the hardening of steel (also gen. plur.: περὶ ἀλοφῶν).

² *Philologische Wochenschrift*, 51, 1931, col. 539. Schmidt had seen that the context calls for a description of a trade/profession or a proper name.

The authoritative Greek etymological dictionaries of P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (I 57, s.v. ἀλείφω) and H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (I 68, s.v. ἀλείφω) list both ἄλειφαρ and ἀλειφάα, attributing the latter form to the papyri.

As there are no attestations of ἄλειφαρ/ἀλειφάα in any Ptolemaic papyrus, Mayser does not have to pronounce himself on the subject in his *Grammatik der Griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit*, vol. I.3 (Stammbildung) p. 6-7. The only modern grammar dealing specifically with questions of word formation in the pertinent papyrological documentation, i.e. L. Palmer, *Grammar of the Papyri of the Post-Ptolemaic period* (vol. I. London 1946), does not mention ἄλειφαρ and ἀλειφάα.

A search in the DDBDP for ἀλειφ-/ἀλιφ-/ἀλοιφ-/ἀλυφ- produced the following results:

A. One encounters several variants of a standard clause (in col. II, we present the reading of the papyrus, then the corrected readings proposed in the *edd.princc.*)

I	II
χωρὶς ἀλείφατος SB XIV 11488.27 (Ars., 146/7 ^p), [αλειφ]ατος	
χωρὶς ἀλείφατος καὶ ἐπιγραφῆς BGU III 717.24 (Ars., 149 ^p), αλιφατος BGU XI 2117.13 (Ars.?, 193-200 ^p) [αλειφατος] P.Harr. I 84.10 (Oxy.?, I ^p ?), αλ[ειφατος] P.Oxy. IV 719.27 (Oxy., 193 ^p), [αλειφατος] PSI IX 1035.16 (Oxy., 179 ^p), [αλειφατο]c	χωρὶς ἀλειφάδος καὶ ἐπιγραφῆς P.Diog. 27.15 (Ars., 213 ^p), αλιφαδος (l. ἀλείφατος) P.Hamb. I 70.26 (Ars.?, ca. 150 ^p), αλυφαδος (l. ἀλείφατος) P.Oxy. XVII 2134.29 (Oxy., ca. 170 ^p), αλυφαδος (l. ἀλείφατος) P.Princ. III 149.11 (Ars., 177-79 ^p), αλιφαδος (no crit. app., but the index of the volume lists a nominative ἀλίφαα [sic]) P.Tebt. II 396.19 (Ars., 188 ^p), αλιφαδος (l. ἀλείφατος) SB XVI 12333.19 (Oxy.?, 189 ^p ?), αλιφαδος (l. ἀλείφατος)
χωρὶς ἀλείφατος καὶ παρεπιγραφῆς πάσης SB III 6995.26 (Memph., 124 ^p), αλειφα[το]c	χωρὶς ἐπιγραφῆς καὶ ἀλειφάδος SB III 7197.15 (Ars., 170 ^p) αλιφαδος (l. ἀλείφατος)
καθαρ- ἀπὸ ἀλείφατος καὶ ἐπιγραφῆς BGU II 666.31 (Ars., 177 ^p), αλειφατος P.Stras. IV 252.1+ BL V 140 (? , 185 ^p), αλιφ[ατος] SB X 10492.13 (? , 163 ^p), [αλειφατος] CPR I 198.20 + BL I 121 (Ars., 139 ^p), αλειφα[τ]οc	καθαρ- ἀπὸ ἀλειφάδος καὶ ἐπιγραφῆς P.Ryl. II 163.17 (Hermop., 140 ^p), αλειφαδος (ἄλειφαρ in the index) P.Stras. V 303.7 (? , 161-169 ^p), αλυφαδος (l. ἀλείφαδος) P.Stras. V 374.21 (? , II ^p), αλιφαδος (l. ἀλείφατος)
καθαρ- ἀπὸ ἐπιγραφῆς καὶ ἀλείφατος P.Gen. II 106.18 (? , 152/53 ^p), [αλειφατος] P.Giss. I 96.17 (? , 160 ^p), [αλειφατος]	καθαρ- ἀπὸ ἐπιγραφῆς καὶ ἀλειφάδος P.Lond. II 178.13 (Ars., 145 ^p), αλιφαδος (listed as *ἀλ(ε)ιφάα in the index) BGU II 578.15 (Ars., 189 ^p), αλιφαδος (l. ἀλείφατος)
καθαρ- ἀπὸ ἀλείφατος καὶ ἐπιγραφῆς καὶ χαράξεωc P.Ryl. II 164.18 (Hermop., 171 ^p), [αλιφατος]	καθαρ- ἀπὸ ἀλειφάδος καὶ ἐπιγραφῆς καὶ χαράξεωc P.Lips. I 10.ii.4 (Hermop., 240 ^p), [αλι]φαδος (no crit. app., but the index of the volume lists the nominative ἄλειφαρ)

B. The only attestation outside this formula, and outside the genitive case, is BGU XIII 2349.14-15, a private letter, where mention is made of an ἐπιτολὴ ἔχουσα ἀλυφίδα (ed.: l. ἀλοιφίδα, cf. ἀλοιφή) μίαν.

As can be seen, the genitive ending in -τος is preserved only three times with sufficient certainty, viz. in SB XIV 11488.27 (146/7^p), BGU III 717.24 (149^p), and in BGU II 666.31 (177^p); all other cases in our col. I involve restorations. On the other hand, there is the accusative in -δα in BGU XIII 2349 and the genitive ending in -δος is preserved thirteen times (all forms in column II, mostly corrected by the

editors into ἀλείφατος); this preponderance of inflected forms with a spelling with -δ- warrants the conclusion that the correct nominative form of the noun in the papyri is ἀλειφάκ (with Frisk, Chantraine, *LSJ*), rather than the classical form ἄλειφαρ (adopted by Wilcken, Preisigke, Hohlwein and also admitted by Daris). It is not necessary to suppose that the three occurrences of ἀλειφατος refer to the nominative ἄλειφαρ: nouns in -άκ, gen. -άδος sometimes have gen. -άτος.³ ἄλειφαρ simply never occurs in papyri.

It is impossible to decide whether ἀλυφάδος and the idiosyncratic ἀλυφίδος are only iotacistic variants of ἀλειφ-, or if υ is a misspelling for οι, in reference to ἀλοιφή, one of the secondary meanings of which was also ‘erasure’ (see below).

As to the meaning of the noun ἀλειφάκ, consultation of C.D. Buck - W. Petersen, *Reverse Index of Greek Nouns and Adjectives* p. 411, is instructive. Nouns in -άκ, -άδος (mostly feminine) derive, *i.a.*, from verbal adjectives; cf., e.g., λαμπάκ = shining, φυγάκ = fleeing, μαινάκ = raving, φθινάκ = wasting, etc. The suffix -άδ- in Greek is derived from the Indo-European participial morpheme *-end-* (clear in Latin verbal adjectives).⁴ ἄλειφάκ must therefore be connected with the very common and classical verb (ἐξ/ἀπ)αλείφω in the sense of ‘erase’, while – if it existed, see *supra* – the doublet *ἀλοιφάκ (always spelled ἀλυφάκ in the extant cases) would derive from a noun (ἀλοιφή), as also happens in this series of derivatives.⁵ Thus, it is not true that the ending -άκ, -άδος was unproductive in the non-literary *koine*, as has been written by Chantraine (*o.l.*, p. 358.) and repeated by Palmer (*o.l.*, p. 47), who goes on, however, to mention seven new formations from the papyri, *i.a.* λοιπάκ ‘arrears’ and φοράκ ‘instalment’.

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It seems that at a certain point, in Egypt, the need was felt of creating a noun for ‘erasure’. This may have happened under Hadrian, since no attestation of the formula in the papyri is older than this emperor – except P.Harris I 84, which is dated exclusively on palaeographical grounds ‘? First century’.⁶ As a matter of fact, important reforms were conducted in Egypt under Hadrian with the aim of preventing falsification of contracts, of which we have an echo in the edict of Titus Flavius Titianus, stipulating, among other things, that the εἰκονισταί, who examine the contracts before their registration, track down erasures and additions (παρασημιούσθ[ωσαν εἴ πο]υ ἀπαλήλειπται ἢ ἐπιγέγραπται τι ὃ [ἐτέ]ρωσ ἔχει).⁷ The edict dates of 127 and is only three years later than the oldest dated occurrence of the formula (this shows that the process had already started).⁸ It is therefore tempting to think that the phrase χωρὶς ἀλειφάδος καὶ ἐπιγραφῆς translates a Latin one. To the best of our knowledge, the formula has not survived in any Latin document,⁹ but we find the same *unctura* in Quintilian, *Inst.* 11.2.32: *litura aut adiectio*. Even more significant, because it is in a juristic context, is the kindred formula quoted by Ulpian (*Dig.* 28.4.1): there, Ulpian says that it is usual in wills to put the formula *lituras inductiones superductiones ipse feci*. Actually, there exists a single testimony of this formula in classical Latin wills: it is a fragmentary Roman will of AD 108 copied on a stela (CIL VI 10229, 121 =

³ All the more since Egyptian speakers tended not to distinguish phonetically /t/ and /d/ (A. MEILLET, *Aperçu d'une histoire de la langue grecque*, Paris 1965⁷, p. 274).

⁴ CHANTRAINE, *La formation des noms en grec ancien*, Paris 1933, p. 350.

⁵ CHANTRAINE, *o.l.*, p. 352 sq.

⁶ Dr. R.A. Coles, Oxford, has kindly sent us a photograph of P.Harris 84. The immediate reaction to the palaeography is certainly ‘1st century’, but the hand is rather inexperienced and would not cause surprise if it were securely dated to the 2nd century by other means than the palaeography.

⁷ M.Chr. 188.i.14-15 = P.Oxy. I 34, commented on by Wilcken in *Archiv* 1.

⁸ SB III 6995.26 (124^p). That it took time for the Roman governor to enforce the reform is also shown by the Lycian inscription SEG XXXIII 1177 (AD 43). Cf. also P.Oxy. I 34.iii.3-9 and SEG XIX 854 (Pisidia, II AD).

⁹ Cf. however *Pauli Sententiarum Interpretatio* 2.32.26: *nec interest, utrum cautiones ipsae sine aliqua litura sint, an fuerint caraxatae...*

FIRA III, n° 48), where only the word *liturae* [remains. However, various versions of the formula are regularly found in Latin wills¹⁰ of the seventh century, such as this one, quoted by Niermeyer, in his *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus*, s.v. *charaxatura*:

si quid liturae caraxaturae adjecciones superdiccionessvae facte sunt.

Charaxatura is obviously the transcription of Greek χάραξις, which is found in three papyrological instances of the ἀλειφάδος-formula (καθαρ- ἀπὸ ἀλειφάδος καὶ ἐπιγραφῆς καὶ χαράξεως).¹¹ Χάραξις, a late word,¹² is otherwise unknown with the meaning it has in this formula, where it refers to a certain type of erasure (see below). Just as ἀλειφάδος, it was chosen (or even created) at that time (the 2nd-3rd c. AD) to translate a Latin word, *inductio*, as numerous entries in the *Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum* show.¹³ *Inductio* is the second noun of the formula mentioned by Ulpian, but it seems that in late wills, as the one just quoted, *inductio* is replaced by the ‘hellenism’ *charaxatura*.

Does all this mean that the three nouns mentioned in the two papyri where the formula is the most complete¹⁴ (ἀλειφάδος, χάραξις, ἐπιγραφῆς) could be the translation of the three nouns of the Latin formula quoted by Ulpian? We do not think so, for if ἀλειφάδος corresponds to *litura* and χάραξις to *inductio*, ἐπιγραφῆς does not seem a suitable translation of *superductio*. But can we define the meanings of these words precisely?

Methods of correction as observed in the papyri are listed in E.G. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World*, see the Palæographical Index s.vv. *correction* and *expunging dot*. Striking through with the pen was probably the most common, but wiping with a sponge¹⁵ or even a wet finger¹⁶ were also known. For a unique attestation of glueing a small scrap of papyrus on the letters to correct, see the observations made by P.J. Sijpesteijn, ‘Eine Außergewöhnliche Korrektur’, *ZPE* 65 157-159.¹⁷

Ἀλειφάδος could probably apply to any method of erasing. However, when it is employed in conjunction with χάραξις, its meaning must be restricted to removing the ink with water (since we speak here of papyrus). Χάραξις is, as we have seen, the translation of *inductio*. Opinions differs on *inductio*: for Forcellini, Ernout-Meillet, Lewis & Short, *inductio* is an erasure by striking through; but for *TLL* and the *Oxford Latin Dictionary (OLD)*, it means ‘erasure’ in general; for *OLD*, an erasure by striking through is *superductio*. *Inducere* may have the general meaning of ‘to erase, delete’,¹⁸ but, when opposed to *delere* (as often in juristic writings), and when *inductio* is opposed to *litura*, we must

¹⁰ U. NONN, ‘Merowingische Testamente. Studien zum Fortleben einer römischen Urkundenform im Frankenreich’, *Archiv für Diplomatik* 18, 1972, p. 78.

¹¹ P.Ryl. II 164.18 and P.Lips. I 10.ii.4 (both from the Hermopolite), and also P.Stras. III 144.20 (prov. ?, 244^p), where ἀλειφάδος is omitted: καθαρὰν ἀπὸ ἐπιγραφῆς καὶ χαράξεως.

¹² The first Greek author to use it is Plutarch, who is also the first one (apart from the *LXX*) to use ἀλοιφή with the meaning of *litura* (see footnote 27).

¹³ For instance *CGL* II 475.33: χαράσσῳ induco cancello.

¹⁴ P.Lips. I 10 and P.Ryl. II 164.

¹⁵ Lib. *Or.* 47.10 : οὕτω βουλευτῆς βουλῆς ἐξαλείφεται οὐ σπόγγου γράμματα ἀφαιρούντος, ἀλλ’ οὐκέτ’ οὔσης οὐσίας. In Latin, there are several references to the sponge as eraser. Augustus is reported (Suet., *Div. Aug.* 85) to have made one of his jokes concerning an attempt of his to write a tragedy called ‘Ajax’. Asked how Ajax was doing, he replied that he had thrown himself on the sponge. Another example, to name but the two, is Martial, *Ep.* 4.10 where he sends a new book to a friend along with a sponge.

¹⁶ So Alkibiades, to help a friend who was subject to an accusation, goes to the Μετρώον ὅπου τῶν δικῶν ἦσαν αἰ γραφαί, καὶ βρέξας τὸν δάκτυλον ἐκ τοῦ στόματος διήλειψε τὴν δίκην τοῦ Ἡγήμονος. (Ath. *Deipn.* 9,72)

¹⁷ We are grateful to Prof. D. Hagedorn for reminding us of this article.

¹⁸ The *OLD* and LEWIS & SHORT consider that this meaning of *inducere* is derived from the concrete one, ‘to apply (a substance, in this case, wax) on’. Therefore, the semantic evolution and the image is the same as for *interlinere*, *delinere* and the noun *litura*. FORCELLINI and ERNOUT & MEILLET consider that, what is drawn, is not wax, but a line (‘per ipsas litteras lineam ducere’; ‘tirer une ligne sur, biffer’).

admit that it has a narrower meaning. That this specialized meaning is ‘erase/erasure by striking through’ is shown by the following facts :

1) Ulpian specifies (*Dig.*28.4.2): ‘*inducta*’ *accipiendum est et si perducta sunt*, “‘erased’ is to be taken as also covering words struck through”¹⁹ (*et* confirms that *inducere*, *inductio* had two different meanings for Ulpian). What does *perducere* mean? Here again, there are different opinions. For Lewis & Short, it is ‘to rub out, erase’, but for Forcellini (see s.v. *induco*), *OLD* (‘to cross through’) and *TLL* (s.v., III A2), *perducere* means ‘to erase by striking through’. This second option is confirmed by the following phrase, where Julianus (*Dig.* 29.1.20) clearly enumerates the four possible types of alterations in the text of a testament: *si et aliquid interleverit perduxerit adjecerit emendaverit*. Here, *perduxerit* is employed instead of *induxerit* and, if we proceed by elimination, means ‘to strike through’. Moreover, if we compare this passage to *si quid liturae caraxaturae adjeccionis superdictionesvae facte sunt*, we notice that the four terms in each phrase correspond to one another. Thus *perducere* corresponds to the noun *charaxatura*.

2) We remember that *inducere* is translated χαράσσειν in *CGL*. As for the meaning of χαράσσειν, it is specified in *CGL* II 477.17, where equivalents to χαράσσω are given as *induco*, *cancello*, but also the very descriptive χιῶ ἐπὶ τοῦ (χιόω is a late doublet of χιάζω. For ἐπὶ τοῦ read ἐπί του). Therefore, Preisigke is right²⁰ to translate χάρραξις *Durchstreichung* (*LSJ* simply translates ‘erasure’).

Strictly speaking, χιάζω and *cancello* refer to ‘crossing through’. This is why they normally apply to entire documents. Jurists seldom use *inducere* for a complete text²¹ but never use *cancello* for striking through one word, an action expressed by *inducere*.²² For χιάζω, we find only one exception, W.Chr. 245, 25, where instead of ἀπεγρ(άφη) π(αρά) στρ(ατηγῶ) κάμηλ(ο)ς εἶς, Wilcken read [ἀπεγρ(άφη) π(αρά) στρ(ατηγῶ) κάμηλ(ο)ς α] ἐχία(α), and comments: ‘Die Subskription fand ich am Original ausgelöscht, und dahinter las ich εχι^α (statt εἶς). Damit ist also amtlich bestätigt worden, daß die Subscriptio absichtlich getilgt worden ist.’ However, the reading εχι^α rather sounds like guesswork and would be more convincing if Wilcken had found the subscription, not erased (which the previous editor had not noticed), but crossed through.

Finally we must mention another interpretation of *charaxatura*, which has to be rejected. Probably because of the idea of ‘carving, incising’ which is originally in χαράσσω, Niermeyer, *l.l.*, translates *charaxatura* (as used in late wills) ‘grattage, erasure’. The French translation ‘grattage’ shows that, for him, the *charaxatura*-erasure was made by ‘scraping’, but this practice is improbable where papyri are concerned. Χάρραξις in our formula had not totally lost the connotation of incising (it is only in the Byzantine period that χαράσσειν simply means ‘to write’), but it was the image of making a furrow in the wax, because it aimed at faithfully translating *inductio*.

The replacement of *inductio* by *charaxatura* in late wills could be due to the desire to avoid the ambiguity of a noun derived from *inducere*, a verb which, when texts are concerned, can mean ‘to insert, to introduce’, as well as its contrary, ‘to strike out’. This is why, in an imperial constitution of 294, the need was felt afterwards²³ to specify the meaning of *inductum*: *inductum (id est cancellatum) nec ne sit chirographum* (*CJ* 8.42.22).

Let us go back to the ἀλειφάς-formula: does ἐπιγραφή refer to an addition in the margins or between the lines, or written over a cancelled part of the text? In the formula quoted by Ulpian, the third term is *superductio*. Once more, dictionaries do not agree as to the meaning of *superductio*, a word only known from late wills and Ulpian, *Dig.* 28.4.1, about wills. *OLD* translates: ‘(apparently) the drawing of

¹⁹ Trad. A. Watson.

²⁰ But wrong to put it s.v. χάρραξις.

²¹ Ulp. *Dig.* 28.4.2; *Dig.* 39.1.15.1.

²² See for example *Dig.* 28.4.2.

²³ Krueger considers *id est cancellatum* as an interpolation.

a line over words in a documents'²⁴ and similarly Lewis & Short: 'a drawing over, erasure'; Gaffiot's dictionary has 'surcharge d'écriture', which would appear to be the correct interpretation,²⁵ when one goes back to the already quoted *liturae caraxaturae adjeccionis superdictionesvae* where *superdicio* is the equivalent of *emendare* in Julianus' text.

This attention to minutiae, typical of the Latin juridical casuistic, is not attained in the Greek counterpart of the formula as it appears in the papyri, where most often only two terms are retained, ἀλειφάκι and ἐπιγραφή, which must then have the general meaning of 'removing something from the text'/'adding something to the text', regardless of the method. With the meaning of adding something (either in a blank space or by writing over), we have *inscribere* in the title of Dig. 28.4: *De his quae in testamento delentur, inducuntur vel inscribuntur*. Watson translates *inscribuntur* 'written over', but 'added' would be a better translation.

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It is noticeable that a new noun, ἀλειφάκι, was created in Egypt, when Greek nouns for 'erasure' already existed. The most anciently attested is ἀλοιφή, which appears first in *LXX, Ex. 17.14*, where it refers to the very act of erasing,²⁶ while in Plutarch, *Consolatio ad uxorem* 611a, ἀλοιφή could be²⁷ exactly what is called an ἀλειφάκι in the papyri, a place where the text has been erased, which has to attract, as suspect, the eye of the εἰκονιστής, and, in Plutarch, may hurt the eye of the bibliophile.²⁸ Those are the two occurrences of ἀλοιφή in relation with text-suppression quoted by *LSJ*. One may add Johannes Chrysostomus, Migne *PG* 50.462: οὐχὶ ἐξαλείφονται μόνον (*scil. αἱ ἀμαρτίαι*), ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀποκαθαίρονται, ὥστε μηδὲ λείψανον μένειν τῆς ἀλοιφῆς. The emperor Claudius wanted exactly the opposite effect when, as a censor, he reluctantly erased a condemning mark in front of a name, saying *litura ... tamen exstet*, 'but I want the erasure to show'.²⁹

Moreover, in the same context where, as we think, Egyptian Greek ἀλειφάκι was created, *i.e.* efforts by the Roman authorities in the provinces to prevent falsifications,³⁰ another noun had already been employed: ἀπαλοιφή. We find it in 43 AD, in an edict of Q. Veranius, the governor of Lycia, who forbids the employees of the public archives to accept contracts which have παρενγραφαὶ καὶ ἀπαλοιφαί (SEG XXXIII 1177, lines 9-10, 29 and 40). Ἀπαλοιφή was retained by glossators as a translation of *litura*.³¹

Greek being less prone to use abstract nouns than Latin, it seems that these nouns, ἀλοιφή (as used with that meaning), ἀπαλοιφή and ἀλειφάκι were *ad hoc* creations, rendered necessary by the need of faithful, literal translations (so in *Exodus*, where the translators, in their effort to stay as close as possible to the Hebrew, needed a noun, to render the pleonastic Hebrew phrase which runs 'I shall erase by erasing').

²⁴ Which is, in our opinion, the restricted meaning of *inductio*.

²⁵ It conveys the same idea as *superscribere*, which we have *e.g.* in Suet. *Ner.* 52 (in a description of the original draughts of the poems composed by Nero): *ita multa et deleta et inducta et superscripta inerant*. Once more, the distinction between *litura*, *inductio*, *superductio*. The CUF editor wrongly translates *inducta* 'additions'.

²⁶ εἶπε δὲ Κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν· κατάγραφον τοῦτο εἰς μνημόσυνον ἐν βιβλίῳ καὶ δὸς εἰς τὰ ὄψα Ἰησοῖ ὅτι ἀλοιφῆ ἐξαλείψω τὸ μνημόσυνον Αμαληκ ἐκ τῆς ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν.

²⁷ The meaning 'stain', 'blemish' is equally possible in this passage (cf. the Loeb translation: 'for receiving, like a book, a single stain, while all the rest is clean and unspoiled'). We venture to suggest that Plutarch used ἀλοιφή here to cover the concept of Latin *litura*, which has both meanings and even applies to unintentional stains on a written page (cf. *e.g.* Ovid *Tristia* 3.1.15 and *Her.* 3.3, or Pliny, *NH* 13.79.3). H. ERMAN comes to the same conclusion in 'La falsification des actes dans l'antiquité', *Mélanges Nicole*, Genève 1905, p. 120, n. 2.

²⁸ εἰ μίαν ἔσχηκεν ὥσπερ βιβλίον ἀλοιφῆν ἐν πᾶσι καθαροῖς καὶ ἀκεραίοις τοῖς ἄλλοις. The two meanings are not distinguished in *LSJ*.

²⁹ Suet. *Div. Claud.* 16.2. Possibly with a pun, since *litura* also means a disfiguring mark, a blemish.

³⁰ See on that subject F. BURKHALTER, 'Archives locales et centrales en Égypte', *Chiron* 20, 1990, p. 203.

³¹ *CGL* II 232.47. Also Priscianus (*Grammatici Latini* II, Leipzig 1855, p. 563).

The etymological kinship of ἀλειφάς to ἀλοιφή ‘grease, paint’ (*litura* has the same polysemy), and further out to λίψ ‘fat’, does not entail that the erasure needed to be done with some kind of salve or ointment, the only – dubious – attestation for which is found by V. Gardthausen, *Griechische Palaeographie*, Leipzig, 1879, p. 45 (Band I, p. 105 in the 2nd edition from 1911-13), where he mentions a VIIth c. interdiction against giving parchment manuscripts with holy writing to booksellers or perfumers (τοῖς λεγομένοις μυρροποῖς) to destroy them. He concludes from this that ‘die μυρροποῖ kochten also Salben, welche die alte Schrift vernichteten’. This interpretation of the passage is unlikely to be correct. The booksellers would of course destroy the sacred manuscripts by scraping them and making palimpsest books. If there had been a salve for erasing ink it might have been produced by the μυρροποῖ, but it would have been applied by the booksellers. The other possible use of old parchment is boiling glue or gelatine out of them³² which, we feel sure, is what the μυρροποῖ did when given the possibility, although we still have no evidence that gelatine played any part in the production of perfumes or cosmetics.³³

Gardthausen also relates the supposed salves to the verb ἀπαλείφειν. But this verb is much older than the Byzantine period. One cannot help wondering, however, why words meaning ‘ointment, painting, plaster’, ‘to cover with a semi-liquid substance’ came to mean ‘erase’, ‘erasure’. Was it felt originally as erasure by covering the previous text – as Wilcken thought when he mentioned *besondere Salben*³⁴ – or by wiping/scrubbing it off? The use of *litura* (whose first meaning is ‘smearing’, ‘anointing’) for ‘erasure, erasing’ is commonly explained by the practice of ‘rubbing or smearing of the wax on a writing tablet in order to erase something written’.³⁵ As for the verbs ἐξ/ἀπ-αλείφω they generally refer, when the context is explicit, to the wiping off from wooden tablets, often whitened, but there are a few testimonies of wax-tablets in classical Greece: not only the πινάκια τιμητικά, tablets on which *heliastai* would simply make a stroke (Aristoph. *Vespae* 106), but also the γραμματεία covered with μάλθα in Aristoph. *Frag.* 157, the waxed δέλτος in Aeneas Tacticus 31.14, and a very interesting passage in Dem., *Contra Stephanum* II 11 where it is stressed that a clean definitive copy is written on a whitened tablet (λελευκωμένον), whereas notes taken on the spot are to be written ἐν μάλθῃ ... ἴνα, ἐάν τι προσγράψαι ἢ ἀπαλείψαι βουληθῆ, ῥάδιον ᾗ. Should we follow Erman (*l.l.*) and argue from this last instance that ἐξ/ἀπ-αλείφω, just as *litura*, originally derive from the practice of writing on wax? In any case, it should be stressed here that ἐξ/ἀπ-αλείφω do not mean ‘delete (writing)’ *in general*: They are usually avoided for carved inscriptions, and reserved for wooden tablets or papyrus.³⁶

³² E.g. Pliny, *NH* 11.231 *Boum coriis glutinum excoquitur, taurorumque praecipuum.*

³³ Plutarch, *Pericles* 1.4 tells us that the μυρροποῖ and the purple-dyers were despised trades. Would it be the unpleasant smell of what they did that they had in common? The unpleasantness of living in Tyre because of the purple-dyeing is described in Strabo 16.23.

³⁴ The *OLD* makes the same mistake as Wilcken when understanding *interlino* as ‘to make a blot on (a document in order to falsify it)’. *Interlino* means ‘to make erasures here and there’ and, at least in *Dig.* 29.1.20, specifically erasures of the *litura* type, as opposed to erasures by striking through.

³⁵ LEWIS & SHORT, *s.v.* We find in *CGL* a Greek verb to denote the action of deleting something written on a wax-tablet: λειαίνω (‘to smooth, polish’), which translates latin *deleo* (*CGL* III 225.28).

³⁶ In *Or.* 31 (Ῥοδιακός), Dio Chrysostomus carefully avoids to use ἐξ/ἀπ-αλείφω in relation to ‘stelae’ and dedicatory inscriptions (ἐπιγραφαί), for which he uses ἐκ/ἀπο-χαράττειν or the less descriptive ἀναρῆν. See particularly §86. However, we have an exception in §150: παρὰ μὲν γὰρ τοῖς ἄλλοις μένει τὰ τῶν τιμηθέντων ὀνόματα καὶ τὰς ἐπιγραφὰς οὐδεὶς ἂν ἀπαλείψειεν· ὑμεῖς δ’ ὡς περὶ κακόν τι πεπονθότες ὑπ’ αὐτῶν ἐκχαράττετε. If ἐπιγραφαί means here, as elsewhere in the text, ‘dedicatory inscriptions’, does Dio think of two ways of erasing a stone inscription, a ‘soft’ one (by washing away the painting in the carved letters?) and a radical one? Rather, ἀπαλείφω here exceptionally means ‘to erase’ in general (and the opposition ἀπαλείψειεν/ἐκχαράττετε is purely rhetorical). It should be noted that von Arnim considers this passage as an interpolation. Ἀπ/ἐξ-αλείφω chiefly employed for ‘painted’ writing, while erasing of carved writing is normally expressed by ἐκκόπτειν, ἐκκολάπτειν, ἐκχαράττειν: A. WILHELM, *Akademieschriften zur griechischen Inschriftenkunde (1895-1951)*, Teil 2 (1895-1937), Leipzig, 1974, p. 403. Apart from the examples quoted by Wilhelm, one could also mention several graffiti of the Memnonion at Abydos where the interdiction of erasing the (engraved) proscynem is expressed with the verb ἀπ/ἐξ-αλείφειν (nr. 492, 295, 500, 504).

This passage of Johannes Chrysostomus nicely expresses the idea that one cannot ἐξαλείφειν engraved writing: γράμματα ἦν ἀναγεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ μετώπῳ, γράμματα ἐξαλειφθῆναι μὴ δυνάμενα - οὐ γὰρ ἦν μέλαν ἵνα τις ἐξαλείψῃ.³⁷

Conclusions

An indirect result of the research behind this paper is that Greek literature of the classical and Hellenistic periods is curiously empty of references to the act of writing, while literature of the Roman period, both in Greek and in Latin, shows many examples. Somehow classical Greek authors do not seem to have looked at or referred to their own situation while writing, whereas Roman authors frequently did so. The reason must be that, contrary to the Romans, classical Greek authors do not seem to have considered the written page their end-product, but rather the reading aloud of those pages, so corrections were unimportant.

On a practical level, and as a direct result, the conclusion is that future editors of papyri should not correct χωρὶς ἀλειφάδος into χωρὶς ἀλείφατος and, when the papyrus has αλειφατος, it should be accentuated ἀλειφάτος with a note: *read ἀλειφάδος*.

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³⁷ Migne PG 56.127.