

JOHN REA

A STUDENT'S LETTER TO HIS FATHER: P.OXY. XVIII 2190 REVISED

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This letter offers an insight into student life which is unique in the papyri, but it has not received much attention since it was published by C.H. Roberts as long ago as 1941. Some entries can be found in F. Preisigke et al., *Berichtigungsliste* IV 63, VI 105, VII 145-6, derived especially from E.G. Turner, *HSCP* 79 (1975) 5-9 and M.-H. Ibrahim, 'Η Ἑλληνικὴ Παιδεία ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ 259-61 (lines 5-36), 265, 267, 269 (lines 44-50).

It touches on some of the topics which perennially concern students. The writer's scorn for the available teachers is very familiar. He thinks tutors are useless and expensive, and claims that he is attending public declamations, from which he hopes to learn enough to do well (30-36). If my interpretation is right, see below 37-40 n., his father thinks that he neglects his appearance or more probably cultivates a scruffy one! He has got himself into some disreputable scrape at the theatre and is glad to have learnt that his father does not take a serious view of it (3-4, cf. 45-6). He is short of money for living (39-42) as well as for tuition, and hopes for more (50-54). A younger boy, probably a brother, is with him, studying literature while he studies rhetoric (54-5), and 'the little one', whom the father is on the point of sending (55-6), seems likely to be a third brother, coming up, as it were, to university. When the third boy comes, they will need more accommodation, having got themselves into a flat which is already too small, and which they chose in order to be near a certain Dionysius (56-8). Finally he acknowledges the receipt of large quantities of food from home and also of a liquid which is more easily taken as wine than as oil (so, doubtfully, Turner p. 6), and some of this wine he has distributed in presents to his father's friends in the 'university' town. The town is very likely to have been Alexandria. The strongest argument, apart from general probability, rests on the contrast between the town and the *χώρα* as mentioned in line 29, see Turner p. 6 n.16.

Not everything is modern and familiar, of course. He had been accompanied by a slave, 'the "useful" Heraclas – woe to his wickedness!'. This slave's function was to do unskilled work in the city and bring back his wages to cover the expenses of the boys. According to the writer's account the slave was malicious and enjoyed spreading rumours about the scrape which the father had taken lightly, and even told lies about it, in spite of the fact that he was under no more restraint than a free man. However, the slave had been shackled, and had thereupon run away to go back, as the writer supposes, to report to the father (42-3). This suggests that it was not the slave's recalcitrance that was at fault but the boy's treatment of the slave.

Also divergent from modern conditions is the lack of a central organization of the teaching. Although he seeks the advice of his father and friends, the boy is himself finally responsible for finding teachers and for paying the fees to them privately. It is this aspect of affairs which makes M. Kleijwegt, *Ancient Youth* 116, deplore the use of the term 'university' in connection with ancient higher education, but I find enough justification for it in the way that scholars gathered in certain centres of population and culture, such as Athens and Alexandria, and so attracted students to these places.

The language sheds some light on the the question of literacy. It is evident that the boy's studies have influenced his style. As well as technical terms from the field of education (καθηγητής, σοφιστής, σχολή, φιλόλογος) and rhetoric (δεινός (?), ἔξις, τῶν ἐπιδεικνυμένων ἀκροῦσθαι) he uses some rather literary words and phrases, ἐξ ἀπόπτου, κακὸς κακῶς, φημί-

ζειν, etc., and puts in a particle from time to time, e.g. παραδοῦναί γε, but on the other hand he doesn't shrink from the Koine οἶδας for οἶcθα and he writes δραχαμάc, an accidental misspelling which may indicate a faulty pronunciation. We ought to bear in mind that he was probably rather younger than a modern student would be at the beginning of his college career, perhaps only just into the second half of his teens, see Kleijwegt, op.cit. 117-120.

The date of the handwriting is probably about AD 100 or slightly earlier, see Turner, op.cit. 5-6, who suggests the reigns of Vespasian or Domitian. Turner also noted a resemblance to a hand found in literary manuscripts of Demosthenes, P.Oxy. IX 1182, VIII 1093, see *Greek Manuscripts of the Western World*² No. 67 (pp. 112-113, 152 n. 148). The farewell formula is written in the same rather spiky hand as the rest, which suggested to Turner (p. 5) that the sender wrote the whole letter himself.

It is written in two columns, each about 12 cm wide, along the fibres of the recto of a piece cut from a roll. The piece is c. 27 cm wide and c. 22 cm tall, with three sheet joins running vertically, the first c. 3 cm from the left edge, the second c. 11 cm further right just between the columns, the third c. 13 cm further right very close to the right hand edge. An address was written downwards along the fibres of the back close to the left edge. Most of it has been lost on a missing rectangular piece about 5 cm wide and 15 cm tall, which also had the beginnings of lines 1-18 on the other side.

I have tried to produce a slightly more plausible restored version of the earlier part of the letter, although much uncertainty still remains there, and to improve the interpretation at other places. Some of the salient points are the suggestions that φιλόλογος (7, 25) means 'scholar, tutor', rather than being a name, that σχολή (21) means 'school' rather than 'leisure', and that the chariots or carriages, ἄρματα (10) should rather be κα]θάρματα 'trash', referring to the available teachers.

col. i

c. 10 letters Θ]έωνι τῶι κυρίωι πατρὶ

c. 10-12 letters?] (vac.) χαίρειν.

τῆς μὲν μεγίcτης ἀθυμίας ἀπήλλαξας ἡμᾶc δηλώσας ὡc
ἐcτί σοι ἀδιά]φορα τὰ γενόμενα περὶ τοῦ θεάτρου,

- 5 ἥλιπζον δὲ φ]θάcας καταπλεῦσαι τυχεῖν λαμπρῶν
ἀγαθῶν, καὶ τί ἀ]ντι τῆς προθυμίας ἔπρα[ξ]α; νῦν
γάρ, ἐπιζητῶ]ν φιλόλογον, καὶ Χαιρήμονα τὸν καθη-
γητὴν καὶ Δίδ]υμον τὸν τοῦ Ἀριcτοκλέο[υc], παρ' οἶc
ἐλπὶc ἦν καὶ ἐμ]έ τι κατορθῶσαι, οὐκέτι ἐν τ[ῆ]ι πόλει
10 εὔρον, ἀλλὰ κα]θάρματα, παρ' οἶc τῆι εὐθείαι ὁδῶι χρη-
cάμενοι οἱ πλείο]νγεc διεφθόροci. καὶ πρότερόν σοι ἔγρα-
ψα, καθάπερ καὶ] ἔγραψα τοῖc περὶ Φιλόξενον, ἐπι-
cκέψασθαι τὸ πρᾶ]γμα, καὶ ὑπ' ἐκείνων τῶι εὐδοκιμοῦν-
τι συνεστάθην, ὃν κ]αὶ παραιτηcάμενον Θέωνα εὐθὺc
15 ἀπεδοκίμαcας, ο]ἶ[ο]ν κ[α]ὶ τὸc κατεγνωκῶc αὐτοῦ
ὡc ἐνδεῆ παντ]ελῶc ἔ[χ]οντοc τὴν ἔξιν. μεταδόν-
τοc δ' ἐμοῦ Φι]λοξένωι τὴν cὴν γνώμην, τὰ αὐτὰ μὲν
ἐφρόνει, διὰ τα]ύτην μόνην τὴν τῶν σοφιστῶν ἀ-
πορ[ί]α]ν cυ]νπαθ]εῖν τῆι π[ό]λει φάcκων, καταπλε[ύ]c]αν-

20 τα δὲ τὸν Δί[δι]δυμον, ὡς ἔ[ο]ικεν, φίλον ὄντα αὐτῷ καὶ
 σχολὴν ἔχοντα, ἔλεγεν ἐπιμελήσεσθαι τῶν ἄλ-
 λων, μᾶλλον καὶ τοὺς τοῦ Ἀπολλωνίου τοῦ τοῦ Ἡρώ-
 δου παραβαλεῖν] ἔπειθεν αὐτῷ. καὶ τοὶ γὰρ με[τ]ὰ τού-
 25 του δεῖ[ν]ότερον καθηγητὴν ἕως τοῦ νῦν ἐπιζητ[ο]ύ-
 ριν, ἀποθανόντος φιλολόγου ᾧ παρέβαλλον. εὐ-
 ξάμενο[ς] δ' ἂν ἔγωγε, εἴπερ ἀξίους λόγου καθηγητὰς
 εὔρον, μηδὲ ἐξ ἀπόπτου Δίδυμον ἰδεῖν, τοῦτο αὐ-
 τὸ ἀθυμῶ, ὅτι ἔδοξεν εἰς σύνκρισιν τοῖς ἄλλο[ις]
 ἔρχεσθαι οὗτος, ὃς ἐπὶ τῆς χώρας καθηγεῖτο.

ii

30 τοῦτο οὖν εἰδὼς - ὅτι, πλὴν τοῦ μάτην μισθοὺς πλείονα
 τελεῖν, ἀπὸ καθηγητοῦ οὐδὲν ὄφελος, ἀλλὰ ἀπ' ἑμαυτοῦ
 ἔχω - ταχέως ὅ τι εἰάν σοι δοκῆ γράψον. ἔχω δὲ
 τὸν Δίδυμον, ὡς καὶ Φιλόξενος λέγει, αἰεὶ μοι προ[ς]ευ-
 καιροῦντα καὶ πᾶν ὅ τι δύναται παρεχόμενον. [ἔτι δὲ
 35 τῶν ἐπιδεικνυμένων ἀκροώμενος, ᾧ ἐστὶν ὁ Πο-
 σειδώνιος, τάχα θεῶν θελόντων καλῶς πράξομαι.
 ἢ δ' ἐπὶ τούτοις ἀθυμία ἐστὶν ἢ ὀλιγωρεῖν τοῦ σώματος
 ἡμᾶς ἀναγκάζουσα, ὡς οὐδ' ἐπιμελεῖσθαι δεόν αὐτῶ ν'
 40 [τ]οὺς μήπω πράσσοντας, καὶ μάλιστα ὅτε οὐ[δ]ὲ οἱ
 χαλκὸν εἰσφέροντες εἰσιν. τότε μὲν γὰρ πρὸς ἡμέρας
 ὁ χρήσιμος Ἡρακλᾶς - κακὸς κακῶς! - ὀβολοὺς ἐπ[ε]ί-
 ἔφερον, νῦν δὲ ἅμα τῷ δεθῆναι ὑπὸ Ἰσιδώρου, ὡ[ς] [π]ερ
 ἦν ἄξιον, ἔφυγεν καὶ ἀνήλθεν, ὡς δοκῶ, πρὸς σέ. ὃν
 εὖ ἴσθι μηδ' ἂν ὀκνήσαντά σοί ποτε ἐπιβουλεύσαι.
 45 οὐ γὰρ ἠσχύνετο πρὸ πάντων μετὰ χαρᾶς τὰ περὶ τοῦ
 θεάτρου ἐν τῇ πόλει φημίζων καὶ λαλῶν τὰ ψεύ-
 δη ἂ οὐδ' ἂν κατήγορος εἴποι, καὶ ταῦτα μηδὲν ἄξι-
 ον αὐτοῦ πάσχω, ἀλλὰ λελυμένος καὶ ὡς ἐλεύθε-
 ρος πάντα ποιῶν. ἀλλ' ὅμως δύνῃ, εἰ μὴ πέμπεις αὐ-
 50 τόν, παραδοῦναί γε τέκτονι. ἀκούω γὰρ ὅτι νεακί-
 σκος δύο δραχ[μ]ὰς τῆς ἡμέρας ποιεῖ. ἢ σύνζευ-
 ξον αὐτὸν ἄλλω ἔργω, ὅθεν πλείονα χαλκὸν λή-
 ψεται, ἵνα τὸ μισθᾶριον αὐτοῦ συνλεγόμενον
 πέμπηται ἡμῖν διὰ χρόνου. οἶδας γὰρ ὅτι καὶ ὁ Δι-
 55 ογᾶς γράμματα μανθάνει. ἐν ᾧ τὸν μεικρὸν πέμ-
 πεις, πλατύτερον ἐν οἰκίᾳ ἰδιωτικῇ τόπον ὀψόμεθα.
 ἵνα γὰρ γειτνιεύσωμεν Διονυσίῳ, ἐν μεικρῷ λείαν
 τόπῳ γεγονάμεν. ἐκομιάμεθα τὸν κῶϊκα, πάντα ἀσφα-

60 λ[ῶ]ς ὅσα ἔγραψα ἔχοντα, καὶ τὰ ἄγγη σὺν τῷ ἡμικαδίῳ,
 ἐν οἷς εὐρομεν, ἀντὶ χορέων ἰη, κβ. καὶ ὧν ἔγραψα ἔπεμ-
 ψα μετ' ἐπιτολῆς ἐκάστωι ἡμικάδιον. τοῦ ὀλοφάκου
 τὰ ἕξ μέ(τρα) ἔλαβον, καὶ κῶν ὄξους πλήρες, καὶ ταριχηρὰ
 κρέα ρκς, καὶ τὰ ἐν τῷ κάδῳ, καὶ τὰ ὀπτὰ λ̄.
 ἔρρωσο. Χοιὰκ δ̄.

Back, downwards along the fibres:

65 c. 30 letters? ἀρ]χιερεῖ Νείλου.

11 l. διεφθόρασι	28 l. κύγκριον	44 l. ὀκνήσαντα	50-51 l. νεανίσκος	51-
52 l. κύζευξον	53 l. συλλεγόμενον	54 l. ἡμῖν	55 l. μικρόν	57 l. μικρῶι
λίαν	62 ε̄ μ̄			

“... to Theon (?) his lord father, greetings.”

(2-11) “You relieved us of our greatest depression by declaring that the events at the theatre are indifferent to you, but I had hoped to win splendid advantages by sailing down quickly, and what return have I got for my eagerness? For now in my search for a tutor I find that both Chaeremon the teacher and Didymus the son of Aristocles, in whose hands there was hope that I too might have some success, are no longer in town, but (only) trash, in whose hands most pupils have taken the straight road to having their talent spoiled.”

(11-29) “I wrote to you before, just as I wrote to Philoxenus and his friends, to consider the matter, and was introduced by them to the man they favour, whom, although he ‘begged the indulgence of Theon’, you immediately rejected, inasmuch as you had yourself condemned him as possessing a completely inadequate training. When I informed Philoxenus of your view, he began to be of the same opinion, declaring that it was on account of this shortage of sophists alone that he felt compassion for the city, and to say that Didymus has sailed down, as it seems, who is a friend of his and keeps a school, and will look after the others, and especially he began to urge the sons of Apollonius the son of Herodes to attend his (Didymus’) classes. For they too, along with him (Philoxenus), have been searching till now for a more stylish teacher, since the tutor whose classes they used to attend has died. I for my part, since I would vow never to see Didymus even from afar, if I found teachers worthy of the name, am depressed by the very fact that this person, who used to be a teacher in the country, has made up his mind to enter into competition with the others.”

(30-36) “So bearing this in mind – I mean that there is no good to be got out of a teacher, unless it is paying exorbitant fees to no purpose, but that I am depending on my own efforts – write to me quickly what you think. I have Didymus, as Philoxenus too says, always at my disposal and providing all the help that he can. By listening still to the rhetoricians declaiming, among whom is Poseidonius, perhaps, if the gods will, I shall do well.”

(37-58) “It is the depression about these things which makes us neglect our persons, it not being required of those who are not yet engaged in work even to look after themselves, and especially when there are not even the people to bring in money. For at one time the ‘useful’ Heraclas – woe to his wickedness! – used to bring in some pennies every few days, but now, no sooner was he shackled by Isidorus, as was fitting, than he ran away and went up, as I guess, to

you. Remember that he would never hesitate to plot against you. For he was not ashamed first of all to enjoy spreading tales in the city about the events at the theatre and telling lies which not even an accuser would utter, and this although he got none of the treatment that he deserved, but could do everything without restraint and like a free man. But all the same you can, if you don't send him back, at least put him to work with a carpenter. For I hear that a lad can make two drachmas a day. Or put him to some other work from which he will get more money, so that his wages can be collected and sent to us from time to time. For you know that Diogas too is studying literature. In the meantime, while you send the little one, we shall look for a more spacious place in a private house. For in order to be near Dionysius we got ourselves into too small a place.”

(58-63) “We received the basket, safely containing all that you wrote, and the jars with the half-cadus; in them we found twenty-two, instead of eighteen, *choes*. And I sent a half-cadus with a letter to each of the people you wrote about. I got the six measures of whole lentils, and a Coan jar full of vinegar, and one hundred and twenty-six pieces of salt meat, and the contents of the cadus, and the thirty pieces of roast.”

“Farewell! Choecac 4. “

Back. “. . . (to Theon?) . . . high priest of the Nile.”

- 1 [? Νεῖλος Θ]έωνι ed. pr., depending on a different reading and interpretation of the address, see below 65 n. Even Θ]έωνι, though very likely, is not inevitable. It could be e.g. Κλ]έωνι, Ἡρακλ]έωνι etc.
- 2 [πλείστα] χαίρειν ed. pr. Although χαίρειν is far to the right, nothing need have been written in the lacuna, see e.g. P.Wisc. II 84 (Plate XXXIX). πολλά, as well as πλείστα, may be a possibility, see F.X.J. Exler, *A Study in Greek Epistolography* 25-8, but an Ibycus search for τῷ κυρίῳ πατρί showed examples of τ. κ. π. χαίρειν only: P.Oslo III 152 (I/II), P.Oxy. XIV 1762 (II/III), SB X 10277 (c. AD 116 = CE 41 (1966) 343-7).
- 3 [τῆς μὲν παρούσης ἀθυμίας ed. pr., but the sender continues to be depressed about other matters, see 27-8 and 37, so perhaps μεγίστης here is a better possibility.
- 4 [ἐστὶ σοὶ ἀδιά]φορα ed. pr.
τὰ γενόμενα περὶ τοῦ θεάτρου. This refers to some disreputable scrape; see 45-7, where the boy tells his father that his runaway slave had been spreading rumours, untrue he claims, about what had happened in the theatre. For the theatre as a regular place for rowdyism see A.D.E. Cameron, *Circus Factions* 223-5.
- 5 ἤλιπον δὲ φ]θάσας. Ed.pr. put a full stop at the end of line 4, and restored ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν φ]θάσας. In the present version the boy launches immediately after the relief of the first clause into complaints about his disappointment at not finding good tuition.
- 5-6 τυχεῖν λαμπρῶν [ἀγαθῶν, καὶ τί ἀ]ντι τῆς προθυμίας ἔπρα[ξ]α? Ed. pr. had λαμπρῶν [..... ἄξιό]ν τι κτλ. BL IV 63 offers σοφιστῶν for the gap, BL VII 145 καθηγητῶν. Turner prints C.H. Roberts's text, but has various objections on p. 7 n. 17, and adds that “a trace of ink is visible before]ν τι (CHR) in 1.6, and it looks like part of υ, not ο, so that Roberts' restoration ἄξιον is excluded”. There may indeed be a tiny trace of ink, but it is so faint and abraded that no argument can be based on it; it may even be stray ink. For λαμπρῶν ἀγαθῶν cf. Josephus, AJ 3.55 μεγάλων τε καὶ λαμπρῶν ἐκ τοῦ πονεῖν ἐπέτυχον ἀγαθῶν, Philo, *Legat.* 137. 1-2 ἤλιπον (3rd pl.) ἐπαινεθήσεσθαι καὶ μειζόνων καὶ λαμπροτέρων ἀπολαύσειν ἀγαθῶν. Roberts translates his text, ‘For my part, I've lost no time in sailing

down stream to find distinguished . . . and have achieved something that repaid my eagerness'. The sense of the second clause is precisely the opposite of what is implied by all that follows. We could retain ἄξιόν τι if we restored οὐδέν before it, but this leaves a gap of about three letters which is hard to fill convincingly.

- 7 [γὰρ ἐπιζητῶ]ν ed. pr. Turner p. 7 n. 18 said he would prefer [γὰρ τοὺς περ]ὶ Φιλόλογον, but see next note.

φιλόλογον. Ed.pr. took this as a proper name, both here and where the word recurs in line 25, but it seems clear that in this line the word is used generally of a scholar, whom the writer is seeking more particularly to act as a tutor, and below refers to the scholar whose death has interrupted the classes taken by his friends. It may be especially relevant to see it applied to the members of the Alexandrian Museum, cf. the *diegeseis* to Callimachus vi 2-6 (R. Pfeiffer, *Callimachus* i 163, P.Mil.Vogl. I p. 99) ὑποτίθεται φθιτὸν Ἰππώνακτα συνγκαλοῦντα τοὺς φιλολόγους (corr. from φιλοσόφους) (εἰς τὸ Παρμενίονος καλούμενον Καραπιδείον, Strabo XVII 794 τῶν μετεχόντων τοῦ Μουσείου φιλολόγων ἀνδρῶν.

The frequent occurrence of φιλόλογος in funerary inscriptions for brilliant young men who died before they could fulfil their promise, cf. M. Kleijwegt, *op.cit.* 118-119, is not relevant to this instance.

- 8-9 The restorations of the beginnings of the lines are those of ed.pr.

- 8 τὸν τοῦ Ἀριτοκλέο[υς], cf. τοὺς τοῦ Ἀπολλωνίου τοῦ τοῦ Ἡρώδου 22-23. This double use of the article with patronymics is contrary to classical usage, see K. Meisterhans, *Grammatik der Attischen Inschriften*³ 223-4 (§ 86 b). There are a few rare examples in Ptolemaic papyri, see E. Maysner, *Grammatik* II ii pp. 6-9 (§ 54), citing only P.Tebt. I 12.5, 23.3, 58.8-10 (p. 7 para. 2a). In the papyri of the Roman period it seems also to be fairly rare, but cf. BGU II 423.25-6 (= Schubart, PGB 28 = J. Hengstl, *Griechische Papyri* 84) Σερῆνος ὁ τοῦ Ἀγαθοῦ Δαίμωνος [καὶ]ς ὁ τοῦ[...]ρος καὶ Τούρβων ὁ τοῦ Γαλλωνίου καὶ Δ[...]νᾶς ὁ τ[οῦ ...], in a letter from a son thanking his father for giving him a good education. There is just a possibility that the second name is not, or not always, a patronymic, see e.g. P.Petaus 59.61-62 Σωκράτης Παμούν(εως) ἐπ(ικαλούμενος) ὁ τοῦ Διοσκ(όρου), Πααῦς Ψονθ(νεῦτος) μη(τρὸς) Καμβούτ(ος) ὁ τοῦ Καμματάϊς. That these are not necessarily even patronymics is shown by line 65, where one copy of this list has Σοκμάς Ποτάμ(ωνος) τοῦ Παθ(ύνεως) ὁ τοῦ Πααύτιος, 'Socmas son of Potamon grandson of Pathynis, (called) Paouis's'. More relevant, perhaps, is Plut. *Caes.* 3. 1 ἐπὶ χολῆν πρὸς Ἀπολλώνιον τὸν τοῦ Μόλωνος, οὗ καὶ Κικέρων ἠκρόατο, σοφιστεύοντος ἐπιφανῶς. This, although it seems isolated, may suggest that it was an affectation of some who thought that it was a classical usage.

- 10-11 ἀλλὰ κα]θάρματα, παρ' οἷς τῆι εὐθείαι ὁδῶι χρη[σάμενοι οἱ πλείο]νες διεφθόροι (l. διεφθόρασι). Éd. pr. read and restored τ]ὰ ἄρματα, {παρ'} οἷς τῆι εὐθείαι ὁδῶι χρῆ [ἀνελθεῖν πρόχθ]ε διεφθόροι (l. διεφθόρασι) (ἄς) καὶ πρότερόν σοι ἔγρα[ψα, '(found) . . . the chariots in which the direct journey up to them has to be made were smashed up, as I have already written to you the day before yesterday', referring this to a supposed accident with a chariot on the model of the modern young man with a motor car (introd.). Ed. pr. printed {παρ'} οἷς, but it is likely that παρ' οἷς here in 10 is parallel with the same phrase in 8 and has a similar meaning, referring to prospective teachers. The boy takes his usual view and refers to them as 'trash'.

The εὐθεία ὁδός recalls NT 2 Pet. 2.15 καταλείποντες εὐθείαν ὁδὸν ἐπλανήθησαν. Cf. P.Oxy. XII 1494.6-9 εἶν' οὕτως ἐπακούσῃ ὁ θαῖος (= θεός) τῶν εὐχῶν ὑμῶν καὶ γένηται ἡμεῖν ὁδὸς εὐθεία (early IV). However, no parallel to the phrase as restored has yet been found.

For ὁδῶ χρῆσθαι cf. Cassius Dio 49.19.3 ἐτέρα τινὶ ὁδῶ . . . χρήσονται, Procopius, *De Bellis* 3.19.18 ὁδῶ χρησαμένου μεταξὺ ἧς κτλ., 4.23.5 ὁδῶ ἐτέρα χρήσασθαι κτλ.

διεφθόρασι. Like ed.pr. 11 n. and Turner p. 7 n.19 I am forced to take this as a phonetic misspelling of διεφθόρασι; for omicron substituted for alpha in unaccented syllables see F.T. Gignac, *Grammar* i 286-7, cf. below 44 n. For the sense wanted here cf. Philostratus VS 1.21 (§ 521). Atticus, father of Herodes Atticus, after hearing Scopelian, ordered all the busts of the ancient orators in the porticos of his house to be stoned, 'because they corrupted his son's talent' (Loeb: ὡς διεφθορότασ ἀντῶ τὸν υἱόν). However, that is active; what we want here is the passive sense frequently attested for the perfect active forms, see LSJ s.v. διαφθεῖρω III, cf. IV.

11-19 This whole passage is too badly damaged for us to have much confidence in the possibilities of recovering the full sense, much less the exact words. The main thread that I seem to see emerging is that the father has himself rejected a prospective tutor, i.e. τὴν σὴν γνώμην (17) refers back to κ[α]ὐτὸς κατεγνωκὼς αὐτοῦ (15). The candidate was probably one recommended by Philoxenus and his friends, but when the father's unfavourable opinion was known, Philoxenus agreed with it and suggested another candidate, Didymus. In a later section (25-36) the boy himself expresses dissatisfaction with Didymus.

The ed.pr. of these lines is reprinted here for reference, with the translation of C.H. Roberts:

(ὡς) καὶ πρότερόν σοι ἔγρα-

[ψα] ἔγραψα τοῖς περὶ Φιλόξενον, ἐπι-
 [τρέπτεον τὸ πρᾶ]γμα, καὶ ὑπ' ἐκείνων τῷ εὐδοκιμοῦν-
 [τι ὡς ἐ]μὲ παραιτησάμενον Θέωνα εὐθὺς
 15 [καθηγητοῦ τυγχάνει]ν κ[α]ὐτὸς κατεγνωκὼς αὐτοῦ
 [. ὡς ἀμ]ελῶς ἔ[χ]οντος τὴν ἕξιν. μεταδόν-
 [τος δέ μου Φι]λοξένωι τὴν σὴν γνώμην τὰ αὐτὰ μὲν
 [ἐπήνει . . . α]ὐτὴν μόνην τὴν τῶν σοφιστῶν ἀ-
 πορ[ία]ν συνπαθεῖν τῇ π[ό]λει φάσκων, κτλ.

"... as I have already written to you, the day before yesterday (see above 10-11 n.) ... I have written to Philoxenus and his friends telling them that they, too, must leave the matter in the hands of the esteemed ... so that I, after rejecting Theon, may find a teacher as soon as possible, for I myself formed a bad opinion of him ... for being of so careless a character. When I informed Philoxenus of your opinion he agreed, saying that just in this shortage of professors ... was in the same condition as the city".

11-13 καὶ πρότερόν σοι ἔγραψα, καθάπερ καὶ] ἔγραψα τοῖς περὶ Φιλόξενον, ἐπι[σκέψασθαι τὸ πρᾶ]γμα καὶ κτλ. Ed.pr. has inserted (ὡς) before this and so attached (ὡς) καὶ πρότερόν σοι ἔγραψα to the previous sentence. Turner disliked the repeated ἔγραψα and suggested for the second one ἔγραψα(ς) with ἐπι[τρέπειν instead of ἐπι[τρέπτεον in 13, "You wrote that I was to submit the matter to Philoxenus and his circle" (p. 8 n. 20).

13-14 καὶ ὑπ' ἐκείνων τῷ εὐδοκιμοῦν[τι συνετάθην], “and was introduced by them to the man they favour”. LSJ s.v. συνίστημι IV ‘introduce or recommend one to another’, cites Plato, *Thg.* 122a ἵνα τῷ τούτων τῶν σοφιστῶν δοκοῦντων εἶναι συτήσω τουτονί.

14 ὄν κ]αὶ παραιτητάμενον Θέωνα. Ed. pr.’s ἐ]μὲ does not suit the traces. We seem to have the sloping back of alpha and slight remains of the loop as it joins the back, followed by remains of a single upright. This is not very suitable for the usual ligatured shape of αι in καί, but in 59 there is a καί where the last two letters are written without ligature.

This Theon I take to be the addressee of the letter, see 1. If I am right, the prospective tutor, who is unnamed, was hesitant when he was approached, and asked what the father's opinion was; naturally enough, since his fee would come from the father. He said something polite like παραιτοῦμαι τὸν Θέωνα, “I shall beg the indulgence of Theon”, to which the boy alludes sarcastically in παραιτητάμενον Θέωνα. This is an odd effect and perhaps too desperate in this damaged context. Theon is one of the commonest of names and there would be no difficulty in assuming the mention of two men of that name, if a satisfactory text could be reached by that means.

15 ο]ἶ[o]ν. Ed.pr. read these traces as]ιν, but the space suggests that there was another letter between them. Iota is the top of an upright, nu is represented by a trace compatible with part of the diagonal followed by the top of another upright.

16 ἔξιν. ‘Character’ ed.pr., but here this is a technical term in rhetoric, not in philosophy. English translation is awkward; my version has ‘training’, but it is not so much ‘training’ as the facility which training helps to produce, see Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.* X 1.1 *Sed haec eloquendi praecepta, sicut cogitationi sunt necessaria, ita non satis ad uim dicendi ualent nisi illis firma quaedam facilitas, quae apud Graecos hexis nominatur, accesserit*, X 1.59 *Sed dum adsequimur illam firmam, ut dixi, facilitatem, optimis adsuescendum est ... Itaque ex tribus receptis Aristarchi iudicio scriptoribus iam borum ad hexin maxime pertinebit unus Archilochus*. Cf. Philostratus, *VS* 2.7 (§ 577) ἐς δὲ ἄνδρα ἥκων ἀφηρέθη τὴν ἔξιν ὑπ’ οὐδεμιᾶς φανερᾶς νόσου, 2.22 (§ 604) ἐδόκει δὲ ἐπιτηδειότερος γεγόνεσθαι τοῖς ἀρχομένοις τῶν νέων ἢ τοῖς ἔξιν τινὰ ἤδη κεκτημένοις.

17-18 τὰ αὐτὰ μὲν [ἐφρόνει. Ed. pr. restored ἐπήνει. Cf. e.g. Herod. V 72 οἱ λοιποὶ τὰ αὐτὰ φρονήσαντες ἐπολιόρκεον αὐτούς, Appian, *BC* 1.65 οἱ τὰ αὐτὰ ἐφρόνουσιν, Cassius Dio 4.17.4 ὅτι μὴ τὰ αὐτὰ ... ἐφρόνουσιν, 42.10.2 τοὺς τὰ αὐτὰ φρονούντας ἐδέχετο, Diod. Sic. 38/39.2 μετὰ τῶν τὰ αὐτὰ φρονούντων, Plut. *Pyrrh.* 23.5 Θοίνωνα δὲ τὰ αὐτὰ φρονεῖν αἰτιατάμενος ἀπέκτεινεν.

18-19 I have retained most of ed.pr. here, only changing α]ύτην to τα]ύτην in 18 and adding dots under the omicron of ἀπορ[ί]α]ν (there may be a shadow of a speck from the iota as well) and the theta of συνπαθεῖν. I have also adopted Turner's suggestion to supply διὰ in the lacuna, p. 8 n. 22. The remains are really very tiny and uncertainly read. Although they are distinctive enough to make it difficult to suggest an alternative reading, some doubt should still be felt. They are restored to agree with the known facts about the relative unpopularity of rhetoric at Alexandria, see Turner p. 5, below 54-5 n., but they can hardly be regarded as giving fresh evidence for it.

For τὴν τῶν σοφιστῶν ἀπορ[ί]α]ν cf. Philostratus, *VS* 1.19 (§ 511) ἀπορία γυνναίων σοφιστῶν ἐπουδάσθησαν, “in the scarcity of first-rate sophists they were sought after” (trans. Loeb).

Instead of $\kappa\upsilon\upsilon\pi\alpha\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ M. David suggested $\kappa\upsilon\upsilon\epsilon\lambda\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ (BL IV 63), which was rightly rejected by Turner p. 8 n. 22 (BL VII 146).

- 19-20 $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\pi\lambda\epsilon[\acute{\upsilon}\kappa]\alpha\nu\tau\alpha$. Ed. pr. has $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\pi\lambda\epsilon[\acute{\upsilon}\kappa\omicron]\nu\tau\alpha$; the aorist was suggested by B.A. van Groningen (BL IV 63) and favoured by Turner, p. 8, n. 23. A prominent ligature to the top left corner of the nu suits the tail of alpha, not any part of omicron; there is also a spot of ink from the loop of the alpha.

For compounds of $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\alpha}$ and $\acute{\alpha}\nu\acute{\alpha}$ referring to movements northwards, i.e. down the Nile, and southwards, up the Nile, see H.C. Youtie, *Scriptiunculae* i 493 (= *Harvard Theological Review* 41 (1948) 15) n. 36, cf. LSJ s.v. $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\pi\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ I. 2. See also line 43, where $\acute{\alpha}\nu\eta\lambda\theta\epsilon\nu$ plainly refers to a journey from Alexandria back to Oxyrhynchus.

- 21 $\chi\omicron\lambda\eta\nu$ ἔχοντα. ‘who keeps a school’. This meaning is virtually unavoidable here, in spite of ed.pr.’s alternative, ‘who has time to spare’, which was left unimpeached by Turner and Ibrahim. LSJ s.v. $\chi\omicron\lambda\eta$ II, 2 cites Arrian, *Epictet.* 3.21.11, “ἄλλ’ ὁ δεινα $\chi\omicron\lambda\eta\nu$ ἔχει. διὰ τί μὴ κἀγὼ $\chi\omicron\omega$,” (Ch. 21 is entitled $\pi\rho\delta\varsigma$ τοὺς εὐκόλως ἐπὶ τὸ σοφιστεῦειν ἐρχομένους, and this is the objection of one such person to the rebukes of Epictetus.) Cf. Latin *ludum habere*, e.g. Aulus Gellius, *NA* 15.11.2 *his, qui eos ludos habent, et his qui et uenire consuerunt ...*

- 22 Ed.pr. puts the stop after $\mu\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron\nu$, translating ‘would take more care than the others’, perhaps rightly, but I prefer to have $\tau\omega\nu$ ἄλλων as the object of $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\mu\epsilon\lambda\eta\varsigma\epsilon\theta\alpha\iota$. I think it refers to the friends of Philoxenus and represents the attitude of the writer rather than the expression of Philoxenus, i.e. the boy refers to prospective pupils other than himself.

Ed.pr. prints $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ { $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ }, again perhaps correctly, but on the double article with the patronymic see 8 n.

- 24 $\delta\epsilon\iota[\nu]\acute{\omicron}\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\nu$ seems more satisfactory than the $\delta\epsilon\zeta[\iota]\acute{\omicron}\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\nu$ of ed. pr. For $\delta\epsilon\iota\nu\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ as a technical term in rhetoric see Demetrius Phalereus, *Eloc.* §§ 240-286 (ed. W. Rhys-Roberts pp. 180-197, or trans. G.M.A. Grube, pp. 114-124), with G. Morpurgo-Tagliabue, *Demetrio: dello stile* (Roma, Edizioni del Ateneo 1980 - *Filologia critica* 35) 106-119. Strictly of style it means something like ‘forceful’, embracing such qualities as vehemence and vigour (Morpurgo-Tagliabue, op. cit. 113-9), but here it would be nearer to one of its ordinary senses, ‘clever, skilful’, cf. Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 2 (of Lysias and Thucydides) $\delta\epsilon\iota\nu\omicron\iota$ μὲν ἐν τοῖς αὐτῶν ἔργοις ἀμφοτέρω, ‘both excellent in their own kinds of composition’, cf. *ibid.* 109, 111 (for Hermogenes of Tarsus $\delta\epsilon\iota\nu\acute{\omicron}\tau\eta\varsigma$ meant effectiveness in any of the styles).

- 25 $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\theta\alpha\nu\acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\tau\omicron\varsigma$. Ed. pr. has $\acute{\alpha}\pi\alpha\theta\alpha\nu\acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\tau\omicron\varsigma$, presumably a misprint, since the remains are compatible with the expected omicron.

$\phi\iota\lambda\omicron\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\upsilon$. Cf. 7 n.

- 26 $\acute{\alpha}\xi\iota\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ λόγου καθηγητάς. Cf. Philostratus, *VS* 2.2 (§ 566) $\pi\rho\upsilon\acute{\omicron}\tau\eta$ δὲ (sc. Θεόδοτος) καὶ τῆς Ἀθηναίων νεότητος πρῶτος ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐκ βασιλέως μυρίαῖς. καὶ οὐ τοῦτό πω λόγου ἄξιον, οὐδὲ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐπιβατεύοντες τοῦ θρόνου τούτου λόγου ἄξιοι.

- 29 $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha\varsigma$. Cf. introd. para. 2 end. On the $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$ as the hinterland of Alexandria and contrasted with it see U. Wilcken, *Grundzüge* 34, cf. P.Oxy. LIX 3988.4-5, 9.

- 30-33 These lines are hard to unravel. Following a suggestion by Turner (p. 8, n. 25) and also persuasion by two pupils, Michael Anderson and Michael Sharp, I now take $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ to refer to the father, so that the sentence runs down to $\gamma\rho\acute{\alpha}\psi\omicron\nu$. Turner translated this ‘knowing as you do’, but observed that this ‘does not chime in with the correspondent’s earlier account’. My suggestion is that $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\acute{\omega}\varsigma$... $\gamma\rho\acute{\alpha}\psi\omicron\nu$ is the equivalent of $\acute{\iota}\kappa\theta\iota$... καὶ $\gamma\rho\acute{\alpha}\psi\omicron\nu$, so that the

clauses after εἰδῶς define not what the father knows but what the son wants him to believe. This is like the sentence in 44 εὖ ἴσθι μηδ' ἄν ὀκνήσοντά (l. -αντά) σοί ποτε ἐπιβουλεύσαι, 'Remember that he would never hesitate to plot against you'. Here 'bearing this in mind' is perhaps better.

One of the awkwardnesses lies in the ἀλλά. I have kept 'but', but 'and' would be more natural in English. Ed.pr. had ἀλλά, but Roberts in an article on the Greek papyri in *The Legacy of Egypt* (ed. S.R.K. Glanville) 268 translates ἄλλα, 'I've other resources of my own', cf. Turner p. 8, n. 25. I cannot make this work.

33-34 προ[σ]ευκαιροῦντα. This is a common verb in the papyri, e.g. P.Oxy. III 487.16, VIII 1119.12, XXXVIII 2853.13, XLVII 3366.68, P.Panop.Beatty 1.91, SB VI 9050 ii 6, X 10278.13-14 (?), 20, XVI 12500.19.

34 [ἔτι δέ ed. pr.

35 τῶν ἐπιδεικνυμένων. These are the rhetoricians who give public declamations, λόγοι ἐπιδεικτικοί, as distinct from regular teachers. He obviously expects to hear such speeches fairly frequently, so that he is probably not talking about the visits of famous orators such as Dio Chrysostom, but of the sort of practice public speeches which Menander Rhetor dismisses: ἄς γὰρ ἐπιδείξεις λόγων πολιτικῶν οἱ σοφισταὶ καλούμενοι ποιοῦνται, μελέτην ἀγῶνων εἶναι φαμεν, οὐκ ἐπίδειξιν (i 331, ed. D.A. Russell and N.G. Wilson p. 2).

35-36 No contemporary rhetorician called Poseidonius is known, but he was evidently famous in his time.

37-40 The text does not differ from that of the ed.pr., which offers the following translation: "The cause of my despondency about this, which is making me neglect my health, is that those who have not yet succeeded ought not to concern themselves with these matters, especially when there are none who are bringing in any money". This seems to me meaningless. According to my interpretation it has come to the father's attention, probably by report from visitors to Alexandria rather than his own observation, that the writer and Diogas, see 54-5 and n., neglect their appearance, perhaps by wearing clothes which are too casual or, for instance, by not shaving or washing frequently enough. These lines offer the writer's defence: firstly, they are depressed because of their difficulties in finding good teachers, just recounted; secondly, they are not yet taking part in adult life and work, and therefore need not dress smartly, just as today's students usually wear jeans and T-shirts in preference to business suits; thirdly, they are short of money, although it is not quite clear whether this means that they can't afford to go to the barber and buy clothes, or that poverty adds to their depression.

With ὀλιγωρεῖν τοῦ σώματος ... ὡς οὐδ' ἐπιμελεῖσθαι δέον αὐτῶν' (i.e. τῶν σωμάτων?) cf. Diodorus I 70.2 ... ἵνα τοὺς ἐπιμελησομένους τοῦ σώματος ... ὁ βασιλεὺς ἔχων ἀρίστους μηδὲν ἐπιτηδεύη φαῦλον, "... so that the king, having people of the highest rank to look after his person, may not become accustomed to any practice which is base". Looking after the body is mainly a matter of routine hygiene and dress.

Perhaps αὐτῶν' is the equivalent of τῶν σωμάτων, but there is a fair chance that it represents ἑαυτῶν, see F.T. Gignac, *Grammar* ii 170-171, and it is certainly easier in English to translate 'look after themselves'. Gignac advises the retention of the smooth breathing, but it is possible that this student of rhetoric really meant αὐτῶν; so too perhaps ἄξιον αὐτοῦ in 47-48.

41 ὁ χρήσιμος Ἡρακλᾶς. In ed.pr. the article was omitted by printer's error (cf. BL IV 63).

χρήσιμος, it turns out, is irony, which is rare in the documentary papyri.

For hypocoristic names in -ᾶc see F.T. Gignac, *Grammar* ii 16-18; cf. below Διογᾶc (54-5). κακὸς κακῶc. For the sense of this curse compare an epitaph, perhaps from Smyrna, published by A. Geissen, *ZPE* 56 (1984) 300, Taf. VI c, with the curse formula: εἰ δέ τις ἐπιχειρήσει ἀνοί[ξ]αc ἕτερον βαλεῖν, κακὸς [κα]κῶc ἐξώλης γένοιτο, "If any person attempts to open (the grave) and put in another (corpse), may he perish evilly as an evildoer" (= AE 1988 No. 1024, p. 271), cf. L. Robert, *Hellenica* XIII 132-3, 206, id. *CRAI* 1978, 241-89. The classical examples were no doubt nearer to the writer's mind: e.g. Ar., *Nub.* 554, *Thes.* 169, *Plut.* 65, 418, 879; Dem. VII 45, XVIII 267, XXI 204, XXXII 6; Men. *Aspis* 238, *Dysc.* 220-221, 442, *Sicyon.* fr.11.5, *Epitr.* 424; cf. Lucian, *J.Tr.* 37, *Icar.* 33, *Pisc.* 44, *Par.* 57, *Philops.* 20.23, *Pseudol.* 24; *Plut. Ant.* 70.7, *Brut.* 33.6.

- 42 δεθῆναι. For a list, derived from Latin sources, of the means of restraint that might be applied to slaves as punishment, including yokes, chains, shackles, manacles, collars, see W. Backhaus, *Klio* 71 (1989) 321-2. Cf. F.G.B. Millar, *Papers of the British School at Rome* 52 (1984) 129.

ὑπὸ Ἰσιδώρου. It is not clear who this Isidorus was. If he had been the writer's older brother, we might expect him to have taken a larger place in this letter. Since he had the power to shackle a family slave, one might guess that he was a senior slave. If Heraclas had been expected to spend his days working to earn money to support the household, which is a normal employment for slaves, cf. P.Oxy. LVIII 3921.20-24 n., citing I. Biezuńska-Małowist, *L' Esclavage* ii 103, add 104 for our document, it is possible that Isidorus was another older slave who acted as housekeeper and παιδαγωγός.

- 43 ἀνῆλθεν. Cf. 19-20 n.; introd. para. 3.
- 44 μηδ' ἄν ὀκνήκοντα (l. ὀκνήσαντα). An aorist rather than a future participle is needed after ἄν. The confusion may be simply phonetic, see F.T. Gignac, *Grammar* i 286-7 for omicron replacing alpha in unaccented syllables, citing especially τάλοντα for τάλαντα from P.Lond. III 1164 (h).29 (p. 165). This sort of error is more usual in very vulgar texts. Here possibly the ideas of futurity and potentiality have become confused in the writer's mind, but cf. 10-11 n. on διεφθόροσι (= -ρασι).

- 45-46 τὰ περὶ τοῦ θεάτρου. See 4 n.

- 46 φημίζων. This verb is found in the papyri elsewhere only in a very consciously literary letter, P.Giss. 19.4.

- 50-51 νεακίκοc (l. νεανίκοc). The first kappa seems to be only an error of anticipation of the second.

- 51 δύο δραχ{α}μὰc τῆc ἡμέραc. On the 'vowel development' or 'anaptyxis', see F.T. Gignac, *Grammar* ii 311-312.

The rate is a good one for the period, see A.C. Johnson, *Roman Egypt* 307-9, but the evidence on wages is not detailed enough to allow us to use it to date the letter, even if there were not a strong suspicion that the boy was being too optimistic.

- 54 οἶδαc. Cf. introd. para. 5, F.T. Gignac, *Grammar* ii 409-410.

- 54-55 καὶ ὁ Διογᾶc γράμματα μανθάνει. The phrase γράμματα μανθάνειν refers, not to the learning of the alphabet, but to the study of literature, see R.A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language* 43 (γρ. = literature), referring to J. Bingen, *CE* 45 (1970) 356 and P.J. Sijpesteijn, *CE* 51 (1976) 141-5. W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* 158-9, cf. 240 and n. 347, did not take

this point and believed, to his surprise, that boys of eleven and thirteen described as γράμματα μανθάνοντες were still learning their alphabet, see Stud.Pal. II 27.5,7, cf. P.Oxy. XXII 2338.43-4, 2345.2, P.Flor. III 382.79. This was usually the intermediate stage between elementary education and the study of rhetoric; for the three stages cf. S. Lauffer, *Diokletians Preisedikt* 124-5: pay of *magister institutor litterarum, grammaticus, orator*. In P.Oxy. XXII 2338.41-4 the two boys are aged fifteen and nineteen, the first competing in games as a herald, the elder as a poet. Nineteen seems rather old for the intermediate stage, see Kleijwegt, *Ancient Youth* 117-120. Since rhetoric was not as popular as poetry in Egypt, see G.W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* 20-21, P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* i 810, it may be that higher education could consist of further study of literature instead. It seems likely in our case that Diogas was the writer's junior, living with him away from home, and sharing the same financial resources. This suggests that the most likely hypothesis is that Diogas was a younger brother of the sender, see ed.pr. introd., and further that ὁ μικρός, 'the little one', whom the father was sending to join them (55-6), was yet a third brother about to embark on higher education away from home. Cf. Plin. *Ep.* iv 13.3, a *puer praetextatus* from Comum studying in Mediolanum (from W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* 242, cf. M. Kleijwegt, *Ancient Youth* 80-81).

56 τόπον, cf. 58 τόπων. See G. Husson, *OIKIA* 276-8. The passages cited indicate that in this sort of context the word usually denotes a room, but it is so vague a term, cf. *ibid.* 276 n. 2, that an apartment could be meant here.

57 γειτνιεύωμεν. On γειτνιεύω, the normal verb being γειτνιάω, see *ZPE* 10 (1973) 154 on B 14, P.Laur. III 60.7, SB XII 11008.[11?], 11224.(4), 27. The form γιτνεύουσιν (3rd. pl. pres. indic. of γειτνεύω) has appeared recently in P.Yadin (= N. Lewis, *The Documents from the Bar-Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters*) 20.10, and in BGU III 775.15-16 γιτνεύουσα has been regarded as a form of γειτνιεύω, although F.T. Gignac, *Grammar* i 228-9 gives several examples of epsilon replacing diphthong ευ; on those two passages see P.J. Sijpesteijn, *Aegyptus* 71 (1991) 50-51 (cf. CPR VIII 9.8 and n.). See also Gignac, *op.cit.* ii 363-373 for various types of confusion relating to contract verbs.

Διονυσίωι ed. pr.

58 κόϊκα. This is a basket made of palm fibres, see especially N. Hohlwein, *Et. Pap.* 5 (1939) 22-23, cf. P.Oslo III 159.13 n., J. Bingen, *CE* 19 (1944) 272, J.R. Rea, *ZPE* 46 (1982) 207 n. 1. 29.

58-59 κόϊκα ἀ[κ]ρι[βῶ]ς ed. pr., κ. πάντα ἀ. BL VI 105.

Though faint, ἀ[κ]ρι[βῶ]ς seems certain.

59 ἡμικαδίωι, cf. ἡμικάδιον, 61. It is impossible to be sure what metrology is involved here, although it is pretty clear from the distribution of one each to a number of persons that a specific measure is intended. According to F. Hulstsch, *Griechische und römische Metrologie* 101, κάδος was a name for the Attic μετρητής of 39.39 litres, see *ibid.* 703 Tab. X B, cf 625, but his index shows no reference to the ἡμικάδιον. The Attic measure was divided into 12 χόεες of 3.283 litres. If a ἡμικάδιον was six of these, and the intended total of the jars and the ἡμικάδιον was 18 χόεες, then only three persons were given presents of a ἡμικάδιον measure. The boy found that the total volume was 22 χόεες. His measure may have been inaccurate, or at least different, or perhaps his father meant to be generous, but we can only speculate. However, R. Scholl, *Anagennesis* 4 (1986) 259, gives the capacity of the ἡμικάδιον as '3 χοῦς, nearly 10 litres', citing Pap. Lugd. Bat. XXIB p. 550, which derives

from Ptolemaic evidence. This is only half the Attic size extrapolated from Hultsch. Sixth century evidence refers to a κάδος of a much smaller capacity, see 63 n. See also P.Trenta 22.2 n.

- 60 ἀντὶ χόεων $\overline{\iota\eta}$, $\overline{\kappa\beta}$. Possibly the 18 *choes* specified by the father did not include the ἡμικάδιον, see above 59 n. If this had roughly the capacity of the Ptolemaic measure of 3 χόεα, the unspecified ἄγγη may have been three jars of about twice that size with a capacity of about 6 *choes*, cf. P.Lugd. Bat. XXIB p. 551 s.v. μετρητής. Again the difference may simply be a question of different measures.

On the forms derived from χοεύς, which are not abnormal in the papyri, see F.T. Gignac, *Grammar* ii 83-4.

- 60-61 ἡμικάδιον τοῦ ὀλοφάκου ed. pr. B.A. van Groningen removed the full stop to follow ἡμικάδιον (BL IV 63).

Measurement by the *chous* shows clearly that the substance is a liquid. The wording seems to imply that part at least of it went on presents to the father's friends. In such a case an unspecified liquid is much more likely to have been wine than olive oil, as Turner doubtfully proposed (p. 6). Since olives were not much grown in Egypt, olive oil would have been a very acceptable present, but it would almost certainly not have been left anonymous.

ὀλοφάκου, cf. P.Bouriant 13.5, *Geoponica* 20.12.1, 20.19.1. Read probably [ὀ]λοφάκ(ου) for [ὀ]λοφάκ(ων) in P.Ryl. IV 627.79; likewise for ὀλοφάκε[ινα]? in PSI VI 683.33 read probably ὀλοφάκο[υ] (cf. BL VII 236, from P.Mich. XIII 660.11 n.), and for ὀλοφάκ(ελον) in P.Oslo III 191.6 ὀλοφάκ(ου). Lentils are more familiar without their husks or pods, but these retained them. Lentils are supposed to keep better in the pod, for up to two years, says the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*¹¹ (1911) s.v., and that may be why they were left in the pod in this case.

- 62 τὰ ἕξ μέτρα). For the μέτρον as $\frac{1}{10}$ of an artaba see U. Wilcken, *Gr. Ostr.* i 751. The usual artaba in Egypt had a capacity of 38.78 litres according to D. Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism* 465, 39.39 litres according to F. Hultsch, *Metrologie* 628.

κῶνον. See R.W. Daniel, R. Pintaudi, *Aegyptus* 64(1984)65. The shape and capacity seem not to be known.

ὄξους. For ὄξος = 'vinegar' (rather than 'sour wine') see N. Kruit, *ZPE* 90 (1992) 267-8.

- 62-63 ταριχηρὰ κρέα ρῆς. There are tips on pickling various meats in *Geoponica* 19.9.

- 63 κάδοι. Cf. above 59 n., on the Attic κάδος of 39.39 litres, and the Ptolemaic ἡμικάδιον, but sixth century evidence refers to a κάδος of only 4 *sextarii*, see P.Prag. I 45.12-13 n., P.Cair.Masp. III 67314.13. The sextarius has a capacity of only .547 litres, see Hultsch, *op.cit.* 704-5., so that such a κάδος contained only 2.188 litres! Of course, our text, being remote from all three periods for which there is evidence, classical, Ptolemaic, and Byzantine, may involve yet another standard.

- 63-64 τὰ ὀπτὰ ᾰ. These seem to be pieces of roast meat, or at least it is hard to think of an obvious alternative meaning. The date of the letter, given in line 64 as Choeac 4 = 30 November (or 1 December), falls in the cool season, but a journey from Oxyrhynchus to Alexandria would take several days by any ancient means of transport, and thirty pieces of roast could hardly be consumed immediately after that. It seems probable that they were preserved in some way. J. André, *L'alimentation et la cuisine à Rome* 143, offers only one

method for preserving cooked meats, a coating of honey, but perhaps they could have been preserved in oil.

- 65 ἀρχιερεῖ Νείλου (] εῖ Νείλου ed. pr.). There is no discussion in ed.pr., but [? Νείλος Θέωνι is restored in line 1, and Neilus is evidently taken as the name of the sender of the letter, as if the address had read Θέωνι ... παρὰ Νείλου. The new reading, which is palaeographically suitable but not perfectly certain, finds some support in P.Wisc. I 9, a contract of AD 183 addressed to a former agoranomus of Oxyrhynchus, currently high-priest of the most sacred Nile, ἐνάρχῳ ἀρχιερεῖ τοῦ ἱερωτάτου Νείλου (4-5). The tenure of a local priesthood is at least consistent with the social status which we expect from a father who could send his sons to be educated in Alexandria. For the short form cf. κωμασταῖς Νείλ(ου) in P.Oxy. III 519.10, an account.

The letter was rolled up for sending with the right edge inside, as usual, and the address was written downwards along the fibres of the back near the edge which is the left edge of the letter. If this is still part of the address to the father, then the boy's name probably followed in a second, shorter, line, which is entirely lost.