Seven Papyrus Documents from the Oslo Collection

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis seven unpublished Greek documents from the papyrus collection of the Oslo University Library are presented. The documents date from the Roman and Byzantine periods, and include a contract, a fragment from a public register and five letters. Each document is described physically and paleographically, and the Greek text is edited with commentary and translation into English.
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INTRODUCTION

The papyrus collection of the Oslo University Library consists of about 2270 inventoried items of various kinds. Some of them are literary texts, but documentary papyri constitute the great majority. The collection was initiated by Professor Samson Eitrem, who acquired several papyri privately during a visit to Egypt in 1910. Eitrem travelled back to Egypt in 1920 and acquired around 400 fragments on means provided by the University of Oslo’s 100th Anniversary Fond. Another trip to Egypt in 1936 resulted in the acquisition of around 150 papyri.

The collection had meanwhile been further extended through the University’s participation in the international cartel of European and American institutions for the acquisition of papyri, headed by H. I. Bell of the British Museum. Representatives of the institutions purchased papyri in rotation on behalf of the cartel, which subsequently distributed them to the different member institutions.\(^1\) Two joint purchases (1923 and 1928) resulted in the acquisition of 75 and 27 pieces respectively for the University of Oslo.

Eitrem’s younger colleague and collaborator Leiv Amundsen, who had added several papyri to the collection through purchases during his stay in Egypt 1927–1929, where he participated in the excavations of Karanis, led by the University of Michigan, undertook the task of organizing the items of the collection in an inventory list. Three volumes of papyri from the Oslo Collection were published in the period 1925–1936 (Papyri Osloenses I–III), containing editions of 300 fragments. In addition some 90 fragments have been published independently in journals, Festschriften etc.\(^2\)

In this master thesis eight hitherto unpublished items from the collection, belonging to seven different ancient documents, will be presented with transcription of the texts, commentary on orthographical and grammatical peculiarities as well as on various interesting extratextual aspects, followed by a translation as far as it can be made from the reconstruction of the text. The translations do not have any pretensions of literary quality or originality, as they are intended as an aid to the understanding of the Greek text only. They often adopt verbatim standard phrases from other papyrus editions.

All the texts presented are documentary – apart from that they are not linked by any common factor. On the contrary they are intended to represent a cross section of the Roman

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1 The information about the organization of the cartel is based on Gagos 2001, pp. 518–519.
2 The information about the chronology and quantity of the different acquisitions is based on Amundsen 1932, pp. 328–331, the webpage of the Oslo Papyrus Collection and data from the inventory list.
and Byzantine documents in the collection, both regarding type and chronology. Chronologically the documents range from the first year of the reign of emperor Nerva, i.e. 96–97 CE (inv. 1511), until the fifth or sixth century (inv. 1555).

The papyri are in various states of preservation, and they also exhibit considerable variation in handwriting, orthography and grammar. Such variations are of course a natural result of language development over the course of time, but these aspects also serve as an indication of the level of education and general command of the language of the individual scribe. As a consequence of the high prestige held by the Attic Greek of the classical period, which has lasted even up to modern times, a highly educated scribe would follow orthographical, morphological and syntactical conventions having long ceased to be current in the spoken language.

The papyrus documents generally lack most of the reading aids taken for granted in printed texts. In the transcriptions punctuation, accents and breathings have been added according to the customary conventions of editions of classical Greek texts. In the rare cases where the scribe has used some form of diacritics, these have been noted in the *apparatus criticus*. The scribes of the papyri usually wrote continuous sequences of letters without separating them into words, and in cases where some word division was applied, this was rarely done consistently. In documents where there is a more distinct tendency to separate words with spacing, this is mentioned in the description of the single document.

The *iota* as second element of a long diphthong was written *adscriptum* in ancient majuscule script, while it is written *subscriptum* by convention since mediaeval times, both in hand-written and printed minuscule script. In the times of the papyri such diphthongs had already lost the second element in pronunciation, but the *iota* was still sometimes applied in script – occasionally even as a form of hypercorrection. In this edition the *iota* of an original long diphthong is printed *adscriptum* when it is present in the papyrus, while it is added *subscriptum*, as a diacritic, when it is not. This is the current practice in papyrological editions. The letter *sigma* is printed in the *lunate* variant (ϲ). As well as rendering more accurately the shape of the letter in the papyrus manuscripts, it is also neutral regarding the position of the letter in the word – an advantage in passages where the distinction of single words is difficult.

The documents are presented in the following chapters in rough chronological order.
ABBREVIATIONS

Periodicals

_Aegyptus_ = Aegyptus. Rivista Italiana di Egittologia e di Papirologia (Milan).

_BASP_ = Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists (Ann Arbor).


_ZPE_ = Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik (Bonn).

Reference Works


References to papyri follow those in J. F. Oates et al., _Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets_, 5th ed. (BASP Suppl. no. 9, 2001).
NOTE ON EDITORIAL PROCEDURE

The heading of each document consists of inventory number, dimensions, date and provenance as far as it can be decided either from direct mention in the text or from external evidence. Dimensions are given width x height in relation to the direction of the main text. The symbols ↓ and → indicate the direction of the fibres.


1. letters about the reading of which there is a genuine doubt or that are so mutilated that without the context they might be read in more than one way
2. illegible letters, the approximate number of which is known
3. missing letters, the approximate number of which is known
4. missing letters, the number of which is unknown
5. letters restored by the editor of the text
6. lacunae in the text (omissions of the scribe)
7. additions made by the editor in order to fill such lacunae
8. resolutions of abbreviations (e.g., γρ = γρ(ἀμματεύς))
9. interpolations (i.e., letters or words wrongly added by the scribe and cancelled by the editor of the text)
10. erasures by the scribe
11. interlinear additions that would be impractical to print between the lines

Dots have been used liberally including cases where the correct reading is given from the context. There are two reasons for this: Firstly, that the visual impression of the transcription mirrors more accurately the actual state of the papyrus. Secondly, not to exclude the possibility that a word has been misspelled even if the orthographically and grammatically correct reading is certain.

The texts of documentary papyri edited follow (unless otherwise stated) the editions in the database papyri.info, which has also been used for word-searches. Line end is indicated with | when a papyrus text is given as continuous prose text.
1. TITHE ON SACRIFICIAL CALVES

P. Oslo inv. 1511 14 x 24 cm 96–97 CE Soknopaiou Nesos

This item is a fairly well preserved papyrus document purchased by Professor Samson Eitrem from the antiquities dealer Maurice Nahman in Cairo in March 1936. The upper and lower margins are preserved (1.5 cm and 4 cm respectively) as is also the left margin (1.5 cm). On the right side the sheet is worn off, but only a few letters are lost as a result of this, mainly in the first lines and in the subscription. Probably the right margin was minimal already at the time of writing, as the scribe in some cases has written supralinear miniature letters at line end seemingly to fit word endings into the same line (ll. 1, 2, 22 and 23). The sheet has clear horizontal folding marks at intervals of about 2.5 cm at the top of the document, increasing gradually to 3 cm at the bottom, which shows that it would have been folded (or rolled and subsequently pressed) starting from the top. It has some damage in the form of cracks and worm-holes, apparently suffered as the papyrus was in a folded state, as most of this damage occurs in a pattern of similarly shaped holes at the same intervals as the folding marks. The text has been written along the fibres. On the back there are some traces of letters near the bottom of the sheet, which would have been visible when the document was folded. It is likely that these would have been a description for easy identification of the document.

The document was written during the first year of the reign of Emperor Nerva (96–97 CE) – for the exact dating there is some uncertainty, which will be discussed in the commentary to line 28. It is a contract in the form of a hypomnema, issued by two chief priests (ἡγούμενοι ἱερέων) in the temple of Soknopaiou Nesos to two exactors of tithe for calves (ἐκλήμπτορες μόσχων δέκατης).\(^3\)

The document amounts to 29 lines, of which the last three and a half are written in clearly different hands than the main part of the text. The main hand writes a fluent cursive. The letters are well-spaced and roundish, apparently the hand of a clerk. The hands in the subscription are likewise samples of documentary cursive, but more quickly penned and more difficult to decipher. The scribe is inconsistent with regard to \textit{iota} in long diphthongs and often leaves it out (e.g. l. 13 τῷ θεῶ). There seems to be a trema above the \textit{iota} in line 13 (ἰερευτικοῦ), probably in order to separate it from the preceding \textit{iota}.

\(^3\) In the inventory list the ἐκλήμπτορες are said to be three, probably because Δημητρίῳ τῷ καὶ Φιλότῳ has been counted as two persons.
Ἡρακλείδη Ἡρακλείδου καὶ Δημήτριος τοῖς καὶ Φιλότα ἐκλήμπτορι μόσχω(ν) δεκάτης παρὰ Πανεφρέμμεως τοῦ Σαταβοῦτος καὶ Ἀρπαγάδου τοῦ Πανε-
φρέμμεως τῶν δύο ἡγουμένων ἱερέων Σκοναπαῖον νήσου τῆς Ἡρακλείδου μερίδος Περσῶν τῆς ἐπιγονῆς καὶ ἄλλων ἐνγύων εἰς ἔκτειν. ἐπιχωρηθέντες ἡμεῖς ἀκτῆς καὶ τοὺς λυποῖς ἡμῶν εὐνιερῆ-
σι τοῦ αὐτοῦ θεοῦ μεγάλου θύειν ἐντὸς περιβόλου τοῦ ἱεροῦ τοῦς φε-
ρομένους τῷ θεῷ ἱερευτικοῦ μόσχους γαλακτίνους ἔτη ἄπο
μήνος Σεβαστοῦ η <ἐ>ω Καΐσαρι<τ>οι ἐπαγομένων πέμπτ<τ>ος τοῦ ἐνε-
κτότος πρώτος ἔτους Ἀυτοκράτορος Νέρου Καΐσαρος Σεβαστοῦ ὑφετά-
μεθα τελέεσιν εἰς τὸν τῆς ὧν ἡ λόγ[ον]
ἀργυρίου δραχ<μ>ὸς ἐξήκοντα, ὡς καὶ διαγράφομεν παραχρῆμα ἁμα τῶ-
δε <τῷ> ἀναφορῶν. οὐκ ἔξεται δὲ ἡμεῖς θύειν ἐτέρους μόσχους εἰ μὴ μόνο(ν)
tοῦ<ε>τοῦ θεοῦ φερομένους γαλακτί-
νους οὐδὲ κρεοπολεῖν, ἐὰν φα[ιν]·
ται ἐπιχωρῆσαι. 

Back:
↓  ἢ[ν - η]

1 δημήτριον 
9 ἐπιχωρθέντος 
14 θαλακτίνους 
27 ἐκ τοῦ 
28 ἱσοκράτους 
2 δοξά 
8 ἐγγόνου 
10 λοιποῖς 
13 ἱερευτικοῦ 
15 εἰς Καισάρι τοῦ 
16 ἐπαγομένων 
17 ἐκτῶς 
22 ἡμί 
23 μοῦ 
27 ἡμί 
28 Καύσαρ 
29 ἕκτειν
Commentary

1 Ἡρακλείδης Ἡρακλείδου is too common a name to make any conclusion about whether he figures in other papyri as well.

1–2 Δηµήτριος ὁ καὶ Φυλότας is also mentioned in P. Oslo III 118 (Euhemeria, 111–112 CE) and BGU III 914 (Karanis, 113 CE). A comparison of the first hand of the subscription of our document with that of P. Oslo III 118 indicates that the scribe is the same. As his name is attested in three different villages, belonging to different divisions (see note to ll. 6–7), this tax-farmer seems to have been active in the whole Arsinoite nome.

1–9 The introductory clause follows the formula τῷ δεῖνι παρὰ τοῦ δεῖνοι, which is the typical form of the hypomnema as opposed to the formula ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δείνι χαίρειν of the cheirographon (see Montevecchi 1988, p. 198).

2 ἐκλήµπτορς: The word is attested (with the classical spelling ἐκλῆµπτωρ) in a papyrus dating back to 143/142 BCE (P. Tebt. III, pt I 733), but there it has the more general sense of “contractor of works”. The word ἐκλήµπτορ denoting an administrative post connected with tax collection appears in the Roman period and might be a translation of Latin exceptor. The insertion of a nasal in derivatives of λαµβάνω is common and the result of analogy to the present stem. It can be observed already from the first century BCE. The regular forms continued to be in use alongside the ones with inserted nasal (see Gignac I, p. 118 and Mayser I.1, pp. 166–167).

2–3 A tax described as μόσχων δεκάτη seems to have existed already in the third century BCE (P. Hib I 115). Apart from that occurrence, it is mentioned (in the reverse order δεκάτη μόσχων) in a series of tax receipts from Tebtynis dating from the late second and early third century CE (see note on l. 20). In several documents from Soknopaiou Nesos a τέλος μόσχου θοµµένου is mentioned (BGU III 718, BGU II 463 and P. Louvre I 39, dated 102 CE, 148 CE and 203 CE respectively).

4–5 The Egyptian names Πανεφρέµις, Σαταβοῦς and Ἄρπαγάθης are all very common in Soknopaiou Nesos (compare the index of Personennamen in Jördens 1998, pp. 302–306). As the writer of the text was probably a professional scribe, a paleographical comparison with other documents concerning priests of Soknopaiou Nesos with these names is unlikely to lead to any closer identification of the individuals. Regarding the accentuation of Egyptian names, the transcriptions follow those used in Preisigke, NB and Foraboschi. For the oblique cases, the accent of the nominative is kept unless it is in discordance with the rules of accentuation in the Greek language. The genitive Πανεφρέµιως, existing alongside Πανεφρέµιος, resembles graphically the genitive of Greek i-stem nouns having undergone
quantitative metathesis. This sound change was of course by long irrelevant by the time of the papyri, so the spelling is probably a matter of convention. For further information on the declension of Egyptian proper names in -tc see Mayser, I.1, pp. 21–24.

6–7 Σοκνοπάιον νήσου τῆς Ἡρακλείδου μερίδος: The Arsinoite nome consisted of three divisions (μέριδους), the division of Herakleides, of Themistos and of Polemon.

Soknopaiou Nesos, a place referred to in numerous papyrus documents, was a village situated on the north-east shore of Lake Moeris, and a cult centre inhabited mainly by priests of the local deities (see Calderini IV, pp. 296–301).

7–8 Περσόν τῆς ἐπιγονῆς: By the Roman period this designation had ceased to have ethnic and military connotations (Pestman 1994, p. 91). Whatever its exact legal implications were, it seems in general to be applied to the economically inferior part of a contract.

8 ἔνγυσ: The lack of assimilation in the graphic representation of nasals preceding velar (and labial) stops is common in papyri of all periods (see Gignac I, pp. 170–171). An early example of this phenomenon is the spelling ἔνγυς in PSI IV 346 (254 BCE), a late example is ἔνγεγραμένων in P. Lond. V 1731 (585 CE).

9 ἔκτασις: The spelling with epsilon-iota is found in Demosthenes (27.67 and 40.56) and is according to LSJ the older one. The entry in the lexicon is accordingly listed with that spelling. The form ἔκτασις is however by far the most common both in Demosthenes and in other classical authors, and by the Roman period it seems reasonable to consider this the correct orthography. When the variant ἔκτασις appears in the papyri, it seems reasonable to ascribe it to the identification of the two sounds as /i/ rather than to some etymological awareness on behalf of the scribe (see Mayser I.1, pp. 60–65 and Gignac I, pp. 189–191 for the very frequent interchange of epsilon-iota and simple iota in general).

9–11 ἐπιχορηθέντες ἡμὲν (I. ἡμῖν) … θύειν: If the transcription is correct (the papyrus is in poor condition at this place, but the reading ἡμὲν is paleographically unlikely), the syntax of the sentence is somewhat distorted. The active indicative construction of the sentence would be ἐπιχορήγατε ἡμῖν θύειν, where the infinitive functions as direct object. When transferred into passive, either of the objects might within the limits of Greek syntax become the nominative subject and either retain their original case. Two examples from Smyth (p. 396, § 1748) illustrate the options: οἱ τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἐπιτετραμένοι τὴν φυλακῇ on the one hand, Ἰωνες, τοῖς ἐπετέρασα τῇ φυλακῇ on the other. In our case the two syntactically correct alternatives would be the personal construction ἐπιχορηθέντες (ἡμὲν) θύειν or the absolute construction ἐπιχορηθέντος ἡμῖν (τοῦ) θύειν. P. Fay. 36.6–11 (111–112 CE) includes both constructions: ἐπιχορηθείσης μοι … τῆς πλινθοπωλίας καὶ πλινθοπωλικῆς.
καὶ ἑτέρως ἐπιχωρηθεῖς διδόναι. In PSI V 459.5–11 (72 CE) the scribe constructs a genitive absolute with a feminine participle and an infinitive: ἐπιχωρηθεῖσθαι μοι ... τοῦ ἔρια πωλῆν (I. πωλεῖν). He is likely to have had the noun πολέμεως in mind as he started the sentence. The possibility also exists that the confusion of ἐπιχωρηθέντες and ἐπιχωρηθέντος in our text is not of a syntactic nature, but simply a result of a less distinct pronunciation of the sound represented by omicron as /ɔ/ in certain phonetic environments (see Gignac I, pp. 289–292 for several examples of the interchange).

10 λυποί: In the Ptolemaic period omicron-iota was probably still largely pronounced as a diphthong, although interchange with epsilon occurs occasionally since the third century BCE (Mayser I.1, p. 87). By Roman times the pronunciation seems to have merged with epsilon, and the interchange is frequent (see Gignac I, pp. 197–199 for examples). The interchange goes in both directions. In P. Oslo II 31.25 (second century CE) the scribe has written κόριοι, then follows immediately κύριοι, probably intended as a correction of the misspelled word.

10–11 ὥστε καὶ τοῖς λυποίς ἡμῶν εὐνερέοι: In this phrase ὥστε seems to modify καί rather than introduce the infinitive θέειν (which depends directly on ἐπιχωρέω). The use of ὥστε gives the impression that the following element is somewhat secondary – an extension of the contract’s range to include also non-present subordinate persons. The same syntactic formula appears in several contracts concerning the cession of land to someone, where the terms are extended to include the descendents of that person. An example can be given from P. Mich. V 262.3–4 (34–36 CE): παρακεχωρηκέναι αὐτῆι ὥστε καὶ ἐγγόνοις (I. ἐκγόνοις) αὐτῆς (similar examples are found in P. Eirene III 10.7, BGU III 709.6 and P. Fam. Tebt. 23.2–3).

14 γαλακτήνος: The word is not found in the dictionaries. LSJ gives the word γαλάκτινος meaning “milk-white” (for the interchange of eta and iota see Gignac I, pp. 235–238). In his report of the geography and customs of Egypt Herodotus describes how the priests examine oxen to see if they have even a single black hair and thus are considered impure: τοὺς δὲ βοῦς τοὺς ἔρεενας τοῦ Ἐπάφου εἶναι νομίζουσι, καὶ τοῦτοι ἐκείναι δοκιμάζουσι αὐτοὺς ὅσον μὲν τρίχα ἴνα καὶ μίαν ἴδηται ἐπεοῦσαν μέλαιναν, οὐ καθαρὸν εἶναι νομίζει (2.38). The ritual described by Herodotus refers to the cult of the calf-god Apis (Epaphos), and is obviously not directly transferable to the religion of Soknopaiou Nesos five centuries later, but it shows that purity of sacrificial animals was important in ancient religion and often connected with their colour.
14 ἔτι ἀπὸ: The use of the adverb ἔτι seems to imply that the permission has already been granted at the time of writing of the contract.

15 Σεβαστοῦ ἡ <ἴ>ος Καίσαρ<ἤ> οὐ ἐπαγομένων πέμπ<τ>ης: Another possible reading is Σεβαστοῦ ἡ<ἴ>ος Καίσαρ<ἤ> οὐ ἐπαγομένων πέμπ<τ>ης, where ἡ<ἴ>ος would be an unorthographic spelling of ἐ<ἴ>ος. In that case no precise date would have been given explicitly, but the contract would presumably run from the first of Sebastos until the fifth of the epagomenai, which would amount to a full year. For examples of spelling with eta in the place of accented epsilon before back vowels, see Gignac I, pp. 245–246. The spelling ἡ<ἴ>ος for ἐ<ἴ>ος is attested in P. Fam. Tebt. 29, line 34, dated 133 CE. The honorific month name Sebastos is the Greek translation of the Latin month Augustus, and was used in Egypt as equivalent to the month Thoth (which actually covers mainly the month September and only the last days of August). It was used frequently in the second half of the first century CE (see Hohmann 1911, pp. 64–65). It is unclear which emperor the honorific month Kaisareios refers to. Its earliest occurrence in the preserved papyri seems to be CPR I 242 dated in October 40 CE, i.e. during the reign of Caligula.

16–18 Dates in the papyri of the Roman period were generally given by the regnal year of the emperor. Αὐτοκράτωρ Νέρουας Καίσαρ Σεβαστός was the most common titulation of Emperor Nerva, sometimes with the addition of the honorific epithet Γερμανικός. For other variants used for titling Nerva, see Bureth 1964, p. 45.

19 τελέσειν εἰς τὸν τῆς ὀνής λόγον: This phrase for meeting financial obligations occurs also in P. Stras. VIII 706, P. Aberd. 45, P. Bodl. I 34 and P. Amh. II 92, all from Arsinoites and dating from the second century CE.

20 The tax to be paid is 60 drachmas. Even if it is called a δέκατη, it seems to be a fixed amount. Several receipts from Tebtynis involving tax on calves (cf. note on ll. 2–3) give the amount of 20 drachmas (P. Tebt. II 307, P. Tebt. II 605, P. Tebt. II 606 and P. Tebt. II 607), while in one (P. Tebt. II 572) 84 drachmas have been paid for a two-year period.

21–22 ὣμα τῷ ὁδὲς ἀναφορίω: Even if there are some very rare occurrences of the demonstrative pronoun ὁδὲ used attributively without the definite article (Gignac II, p. 175), it seems more reasonable to consider this a haplographic error on behalf of the scribe than a syntactical variant.

22 ἡμεῖς: For the interchange of iota and epsilon-iota, see Gignac I, pp. 189–191. The same unorthographic spelling of ἡμὲν is probably made also at the end of line 9, where damage however has made the discerning of letters difficult.
23–24 μὴ μόνον(ν) | τοῦ<ν>: As the scribe because of lack of space was forced to abbreviate after μον, it is difficult to decide whether he intended adverbial μόνον or adjectival μόνους. The traces of a raised letter resemble somewhat an omicron, but could also be interpreted in other ways. The miniature letters at the end of ll. 1, 2 and 22 are equally difficult to discern, and are interpreted mainly based on the context. In general raised letters, unless their shape unambiguously points to something else, will be interpreted in the transcriptions as being the letter immediately following the last normal-sized one.

25 κρεμπολείν: The fact that the priests are not allowed freely to make an extra income by selling the meat of the sacrificial animals, is paralleled also in Greek religion. In Aristophanes’ Knights the Paphlagonian accuses the sausage-seller of being in possession of untithed consecrated intestines: ἀδεκατεύτου τῶν θεῶν ἱερὰς ἐχοντα κουλίας (Ar. Eq, 300–302). The interchange of omicron and omega occurs frequently throughout the Roman and Byzantine periods as the quantitative distinction of vowels was lost (see Gignac I, pp. 275–277).

25–26 ἐὰν φαίνηται ἐπιχωρῆσαι: This is a standard phrase at the end of applications. In this case the permission seems already to have been given, and the phrase is logically unnecessary, unless the participle ἐπιχωρηθέντες of l. 9 is to be understood as conditional instead of causal. Similarly, the phrase ἀλλήλων ἐνγύων | εἰς ἕκτεινι in ll. 8–9 is apparently superfluous, as the amount is to be settled on the spot, and there is no need for guarantors.

28 This line includes the dating of the subscription, but it is difficult to decipher. The day of the month is given at the end of the line by κθ (=29). Apparently the month name is immediately preceding with a phi as the first letter. That would give three possible months, Φαιωφι, Φαμενοῦθ or Φαρμοοθι. In the inventory list the document is dated 26th October 96 CE, which would presuppose reading Φαιωφι. There is however no sign of a second phi, so the text would in that case read Φ[α]ω[(φι) τη(νος)] κθ. An equally likely alternative would be Φ[αμ]ένο[θ] τη(νος) κθ or possibly even Φ[α]μενα[θ] τη(νος) κθ (25th March 97). The third alternative, Φ[αρ]ώ[θι] τη(νος) κθ (24th April 97) seems, however, paleographically less likely, as one would have expected some traces of the rho to have been visible.

30 Back: The traces of letters are very vague. Based on the two first, somewhat more distinct letters, a restoration of the word μἐθοςες . . . ρ[ is tempting.
Translation
To Herakleides, son of Herakleides, and Demetrios alias Philotas, farmers of the tithe on calves, from Panephremonis, son of Satabous, and Harpagathes, son of Panephremonis, the two chief priests of Soknopaiou Nesos, Herakleides division, Persians of the epigone, and mutual guarantors for payment. As it has been granted to us, as well as to the rest of our fellow-priests of the same great god, to sacrifice within the precinct of the temple the milk-white sacrificial calves brought to the god, already from the fifth of the month Sebastos until the fifth of the intercalary days of the month Kaisareios of the present first year of Imperator Nerva Caesar Augustus, we promise to pay on account of the concession sixty silver drachmas, which we will settle on the spot together with this application. It shall not be allowed us to sacrifice other calves except only the milk-white ones brought to the god, nor to sell the meat, should you decide to grant it (sc. the application). (2. hand) I, Demetrios alias Philotas, farmer of the tithe on calves, have conceded on the foregoing terms. (3. hand?) In the first year of Imperator Nerva Caesar Augustus, on the 28th of the month(?) Ph…, I, Herakleides, have signed.
2. ABSTRACTS OF CONTRACTS FROM A GRAPHEION

P. Oslo inv. nos. 1318 and 1327, although listed separately in the inventory list, belong to the same document. They are part of a group of almost 400 items, purchased by Leiv Amundsen from Maurice Nahman on 18th February 1929. The bulk of these papyri presumably comprise an archive from Tebtynis. Inv. 1318 preserves part of 17 lines of text (of the first line there is only a trace of a descending letter, probably rho), while inv. 1327 consists of one bigger (a) and one smaller (b) fragment preserving parts of 17 and 8 lines respectively. None of the fragments preserves line beginnings or line ends. Below a diplomatic transcription of each of the fragments is given, followed by a definite transcription of the three fragments combined.

P. Oslo inv. 1318

(6 x 7 cm)

→ ]ρ[ ]ριουτουαδέλφου[  
]. τουενετοτοι[ .]τουε[  
]τατονχρονον , [  
]των[ ]τριακοτ[ .]διω . υλ. [  
]οδω[ . .]ποιης . ε[ . .]ερ . [  
]. οφετω . τεζαρακονταουλ[  
]φαλαιουδραχμαξιακοιακισογ[  
]. αυτ . . αντονγκαθαι[  
]χοντα[ . .]ενυκονοβθαλμω[  
]μενη[ . .]τιμ. νδιαξιροεκ[  
]ονγκες . ωγτ[ . . .]ακοντατ[  
]. εφαλαι[ . ]ν δ . α . . . ]ρ . ακος . [  
]τωπα[ . . .]κα . [  
]ο . . . α . . . ουο . [  
]αδ[ . .]φου . . ραπ[ .  
]. υ[ . . .]. . .[ . . .].[  

5 10 15
P. Oslo inv. 1327a
(6 x 7.5 cm)

→ ....]μ [.].].
].ευτηκο.[
].π.τριαετ][
].το.ουδ[ 5]
].ουδοποιμ[ 5]
].ουδραχμ[.].].].α[ 10] 5εντκο[.].].].βε[ 10]
].νοσαπο[.].].].ηθ[ 10]
].ροζχρη[.].].].ηθ[ 10]
].αι.κτ[.].].].χ[ 10]
]οφερμουθιακη[.].].].ωντρ[ 15]
]εβαντοτηνεψμ.εψω.[ 15]
]ειοσαποκωμ.σοζυρυγχω[ 15]
]ηεδιαχρ.ξρηειαργυριο. [.]. 15]
].tvωνuπαρχοκτoνα.[ 15]
]ευτοςωζκεωνεικοςιαςη.[ 15]
].υτω.δεπεριτον.ονιο.[ 15]
]...[.].].].].].].].]. 15]

P. Oslo inv. 1327b
(1.5 x 2.5 cm)

→ ].τααε [.].].].].].].].].].]
].απο[ 5]
].αχμα.[.].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].]
].φοδό.[ 5]
].iou τ.[].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].].).] 16

16
P. Oslo inv. 1318 and 1327 combined

P. Oslo inv. 1318+1327 11.5 x 7.5 cm 152–153 CE
Arsinoites

The three fragments reassembled have inv. 1327a on the left, the smaller fragment inv. 1327b further right covering ll. 2–9 and partly filling the gap in ll. 6–9, while inv. 1318 lies to the right, with the same lines preserved as in 1327a. See illustration below.

The preserved part of the document mentions several individuals, referred to by name, habitation, age and physical marks serving as identification. Few of the names are, however, preserved in the fragments. The mention of interest rates and amounts to be paid, points to contracts. The document apparently consists of abstracts of contracts (eiromena) registered during a certain period of a time at a record-office (grapheion) (for eiromena, see Montevecchi 1988, p. 197). An example of such a document is preserved on the recto of P. Mich. II 121 (42 CE), a 2.39 m long roll, comprising four columns of an average width of 70 cm. If the Oslo document had similar dimensions (as there are good reasons to believe), large parts of the original document must be lost. The amount of letters lost on each line can in fact be estimated with reasonable certainty as the abstract partly preserved in ll. 15–16 apparently is a summary of the marriage contract PSI X 1115 (152 CE) (see commentary on these lines).
In the *eiromenon* on the recto of P. Mich. II 121 each contract starts on a new line and in *ekthesis*. Another example of such a register, P. Lond. III 1179 (146–147 CE (?)), although it does not have a left margin preserved, seems to have the same pattern of new entries starting off on a new line, judging from the repeated occurrences over several lines of ὅμολογη in fragment a. This seems likely to have been the case also for P. Oslo inv. 1318+1327, as several of the lines resemble each other indicating that they occupy the same position in standard contracts (for the standard formula in loan contracts, see Montevecchi 1988, p. 226). A plausible division of the document into single contracts, based on such repetitions and on phrases likely to occur towards the end of a contract (e.g. καθάπερ ἐκ δίκης), could be:

- lines 2–4 (contract party … duration of contract … interest, expiration of contract)
- lines 5–6 (contract party … interest, repayment)
- lines 7–9 (contract party … amount … consequences of non-repayment)
- lines 10–11 (contract party … contract party, amount)
- lines 12–14 (contract party … amount … consequences of non-repayment)
- lines 15–17 (=PSI X 1115)

A noteworthy peculiarity of our document is the lack of abbreviations, the use of which one might have expected in a document of this bulk, and which occur abundantly in the parallel documents mentioned above.

Three geographical names from Arsinoites are preserved or can be conjectured with reasonable probability: the *amphodía* Bithynon and Hermouthiakes, neighbourhoods of the capital city of Ptolemais Euergetis, and the village of Oxyrhyncha (not to be confused with the city of Oxyrhynchos) in the Polemon division of the nome. The marriage contract in ll. 15–16 is from Tebtynis. Consequently there seems to be two likely scenarios regarding the provenance of the document. Either the document comes from a central archive in the capital Ptolemais Euergetis registering transactions of the whole nome, or it is from the *grapheion* in Tebtynis, an administrative centre of the Polemon division, and some of the individuals involved in the transactions only happen to come from Ptolemais Euergetis.

A characteristic letter of this hand is the *beta*, which has a line underneath (ll. 7 and 11). The scribe of SB 9369, which dates from 173 CE, makes this letter in the same way, and a dating of our document in the second century seems likely based on the paleography. As the aforementioned contract preserved as PSI X 1115 dates from 28th December 152 CE (153 according to the *ed. princ.*, but corrected by Fritz Mitthof in *ZPE* 132 (2000), p. 224), we are able to give a more precise date to P. Oslo inv. 1318+1327, assuming that the contract would
be entered into the register around the same time. The restoration of the regnal year in l. 3 points to the same year.

→ [            ]Μ[            ]Π[            ]

ός ἕτων] πεντήκοντα δέ[ημ., μετὰ κυ]ρίου τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ [

τόκου δραχμαίου τῇ μνᾶ [καὶ τὴν ἀπόδος[ε]ὶ ποιήσεσθαι[ Α]θὴρ β][
] νος ἀπὸ ἀμφόδουρ[. . . . . . ὡς ἕτων τετεταλάκτων ὦλ[ή]

dιὰ χρόνως χρῆσιν ἀρ[γυ]ρίου[] κεφαλαίου δραχμάς διακοσιάς ἵγ[ήν][κ[ή]τα]
], καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὑ[πα]ρχ[ήν]των αὐτο[τ]ε πάντων καθάπε[ρ ἐκ δίκης]

Π]έβα[ὐ]τος τὴν δε[μπεφο[ν]][μένη[ν] τιμὴν διά χρόνος κ[]
] ἄρα διὰ χρόνος χρῆσιν ἀργυρίου[ν] κεφαλαίου δραχμάς τριακοσίας καὶ
καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῶ[ν] πάντων καθάπε[ρ ἐκ δίκης]

Μ]ε[ὕ]ς ὡς ἔτων ἐκοι νἄσιμος τῇ ἑτεροῦ ὅμ[πατρίῳ]
] [. . . . . [. . .] [. . .] [. . .][. . .][. . .]

6 l. ποιήσεσθαι 7 l. Βθυννόν 8 l. χειρὸς 11 l. χειρὸς

Commentary

2 The individual aged fifty years is apparently a woman, as she has her brother as her legal representative (kyrios).

3 Given that all the contracts belong to the same year as PSI X 1115 (152–153 CE), the line can be extended to τ[οῦ ἐκκαιδεκ]άτου ἐνεκτότοις [ἐ]τοῦς [Ἀντικράτορος Καίσαρος Τίτου Αὐγουστου Αὐτοφυίου Ἀντωνίνου Εὐστατοῦ Εὔσεβοῦς (or any variant titulation, for which see Bureth 1964, pp. 65–77). Antoninus Pius was proclaimed emperor 10th July, 138 CE. As the Egyptian calendar started 29th August, the year 137–138 would have counted as his first regnal year, and accordingly 152–153 is his sixteenth (see Pestman 1994, pp. 40–41).
4 The rate of a drachma per mina, i.e. 1%, is apparently the monthly interest. The usual annual interest was 24% in Ptolemaic times, decreasing gradually to 12%, which remained the standard throughout the Roman period (for an analysis of the evolution of interest rates see Kühnert 1965, pp. 40–42). The line might possibly be restored as τόκου δραχμαί[ου τῇ μνᾶ καὶ με]τὰ τῶν χρόνων, followed by some form of the verb παραδίδωμι. The form δραχμαίοις is less frequent than δραχμαῖοι, but both are listed in LSJ. In this line, the shorter variant is certainly used, while in l. 6, a iota might have been lost between the two fragments.

5 The tiny traces of a letter after the word ἀμφόδου are insufficient to give any good clue as to which neighbourhood the person is from. The lacuna seems to fit another seven or eight letters, given the almost certain restoration of ὧς ἔτον. The lack of elision in ἀπὸ ἀμφόδου here and in l. 7 is not uncommon (see Gignac I, pp. 315–316).

5 The word οὐλή in sequences where individuals are identified, as here and in l. 7, seems to be interpreted by most editors as in the nominative case, not the dative, and actual occurrences of οὐλὴ in the manuscripts are often corrected by the editor. Accusative οὐλὴν is also found, although less frequently, and always followed explicitly by a form of the participle ἔχουν. The form λευκόν (formally either nominative or accusative) in the same position in l. 10 makes the dative interpretation less likely.

6 The deadline for the payment, if the line has been correctly deciphered, is 29th October (Ἁθὺρ β). As the contracts are likely to have been written in late December (PSI X 1115 has the date Τύβι β) the repayment date cannot have been within the same Egyptian year, and the line might possibly have continued Ἀ[θύρ β] [τοῦ εἰς ἔτος ἑπτακαὶδέκατῳ ἔτους …, which would give a duration of the loan of 10 months. An even later term can, however, not be excluded. The average duration of loans in the second century CE was 13 months, but there are examples of loans with a duration of up to five years (see Kühnert 1965, p. 59).

7 ἀμφόδου Βε[θυνὸν] (l. Βθυνὸν): If the reading of epsilon before the lacuna is correct, this seems to be the most likely restoration of the name of the amphodon. The spelling with epsilon-iota is not uncommon (e.g. SB XII 10806, dated 154 CE). In most cases reference to the neighbourhood of the Bithynians is specified either as ἀμφόδου Βθυνὸν Ἰἱῶνον or as ἀμφοδὸν Βθυνὸν Ἅλλων τόπων (see Calderini II, pp. 49–50). Several neighbourhoods of the city are named after ethnic groups, a testimony to the cosmopolitan character of Graeco-Roman Egypt.
9 This line, as well as l. 14, concerns the recovery of debt in case of fail on behalf of the debtor to meet his obligations. The typical formula would be τῆς πράξιν εὐσής (τῷ δεῖν) ἐκ τοῦ δεῖνος καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῷ πάντων καθάπερ ἐκ δίκης (for a detailed analysis of the concept of praxis in papyrus contracts see Wolff 1941).

10 ἀμφόδιου Ἐρμοθιακῆς: The neighbourhood of Hermouthiake had its name from a street, and it seems to have been the site of a certain banking activity (see Daris 2001, p. 185).

11 λευκὸν ὀφθαλμῷ: This distinguishing mark is apparently the result of an eye disease, probably leukoma or cataract. Preisigke, WB gives the translation “weißer Staar”.

12 The village of Oxyrhynchus was situated in the Polemon division of the Arsinoite nome. Its exact location, however, is not certain, and several, widely diverging, propositions have been posted by different scholars (see Clarysse 2008, pp. 57–59).

13 χρόνος: Here we notice again the confusion of epsilon-iota and simple iota (see Gignac I, p. 189–191). The same spelling of the word is likely to have been used in l. 8.

15–16 Assuming that our document follows the same practice as P. Mich. II 121, and that each entry in the register would start on a new line, the restoration of l. 15 ὀμολογεῖ Κρόνιος Ὀρσενούφεως τοῦ Μιεῦτος … (based on PSI X 1115) would indicate that around 30 letters are lost to the left of our fragments. If mention of the place and date of the contract were included, the number of letters lost would of course be higher. It seems though that the date would normally only be included when it was different from that of the previous entry. In P. Mich. II 121, col. 4 most of the entries start directly with ὀμολογεῖ, ἐμίσθωσεν or a similar verb, while two contracts are preceded by κεκτημένος and κηπῳ (sc. Παχών) respectively, and finally one contract is introduced by Πνήματος τοῦ υἱοῦ …, in which case the rest of the intervening text between ll. 15 and 16, around 150 letters in total, would indicate the amount of text lost to the right of our fragments. In any case it seems clear that slightly less than one sixth of the original column width is preserved, which gives a total width corresponding to that of P. Mich. II 121 (70 cm in average). A much wider column would probably be difficult to handle even for a professional scribe.
Translation

(l. 2)⁴ … fifty years old, without a distinguishing mark, with her guardian, her brother …
(l. 3) … for three years from the present sixteenth year …
(l. 4) … at an interest of a drachma per mina … at the expiration of the term …
(l. 5) … from the neighbourhood of …, thirty-two years old, (with) a scar …
(l. 6) … at an interest of a drachma per mina, and will make the repayment on the 2nd of Hathyr …
(l. 7) … from the neighbourhood of the Bithynians, forty years old, (with) a scar …
(l. 8) … cash-in-hand a loan of the principal sum of two hundred and eighty(-…?) silver drachmas …
(l. 9) … and against all their property as if in compliance with a legal judgement …
(l. 10) … from the neighbourhood of Hermouthiake, thirty years old, (with) a white spot in the eye …
(l. 11) … (son of) Pebaus, the price agreed upon cash-in-hand …
(l. 12) … from the village of Oxyrhyncha, forty-three/-four years old …
(l. 13) … cash-in-hand a loan of the principal sum of three hundred (…?) silver drachmas …
(l. 14) … and against all his property as if in compliance with a legal judgement …
(l. 15) … (son of) Mieus, twenty years old, without a distinguishing mark, his own sister of the same father and mother …
(l. 16) … son, and of those around Kronion, Sarapammon …

⁴ Line numbers are given as an aid because of the larges lacunas in the text.
3. LETTER FROM ARTEMIDOROS TO STEPHANOS

P. Oslo inv. 1434 9 x 5 cm II century CE
Unknown provenance

This papyrus is one of a group of 24 papyri purchased in 1933 from Professor Carl Schmidt in Berlin. It preserves the upper part of a letter written along the fibres with a left margin of 1.5 cm and a slightly narrower top margin. On the right the text runs until the edge which is cut straight. The fibres are worn along the cut, which makes the reading difficult especially at the end of l. 6, but only few, if any, letters are totally lost on the right side. The first seven lines of the letter are preserved plus what seems to be an interlinear addition between ll. 6 and 7. The back is blank.

Artemidoros writes to Stephanos, whom he calls his “most esteemed son”, whether this is to be taken literally or not. The preserved part includes standard phrases of politeness, wishes for good health and expressions of gratitude for keeping in touch. Unfortunately the letter is broken off at the point where the main content begins, but the mention of a basket and a festival gives some hint concerning the content of the letter.

As the fragment is small, some characteristic letters, like beta, are not represented. The letters are tiny and rather characterless, which makes it difficult to find good parallels. It seems to imitate the informal round style, but is still cursive. An example of this style in a literary text can be found in a Menander-fragment P. Oxy. L 3533, assigned to the second century CE (image on Plate IV of the edition). The hand of the Menander-fragment has the same rightwards curve of the last vertical stroke of the eta as does the hand of Artemidoros’ letter. Documentary texts exhibiting paleographical similarities include:

- the upper half of P. Lond. II 313 (especially my, ny, epsilon and eta), dating from 148 CE (reproduced in Montevecchi 1988, tav. 53)
- SB XX 14612 (alpha, my and ny), dating from 137–138 CE (reproduced in Harrauer 2010, Tafelband, Abb. 106)
- PSI XIII 1322 (epsilon and my), dating from 118 CE (image on tav. X of the edition)

The paleographical evidence generally points to the dating of P. Oslo inv. 1434 in the second century CE.
Commentary

1–2 The opening formula of letters, ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖν χαίρειν, remained in its basic structure the same from the earliest times of the papyri throughout the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, until the fourth century CE, when the infinitive χαίρειν started disappearing from the prescript, and only the names of the addressee and the sender was kept, if the prescript was not omitted altogether. Syntactically, the infinitive χαίρειν seems originally to have depended on the verb λέγει, which, however, was omitted already at an early point, leaving the remaining part of the phrase a fixed conventional formula (see Koskenniemi 1957, pp. 155–158). In this letter the opening formula extends over two lines with much space left open in the second line. The name of the addressee is qualified by the apposition τῶι τιμωτ(ήτω) | υίοι. The extended opening formula ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖν τῷ τιμωτάτῳ χαίρειν is attested in familiar letters from the first century CE (see Exler 2003, p. 62), but the great majority of its occurrences date from the second or third century. The adjective τιμωτάτος, either in the prescript or as a vocative inside the letter itself, belongs mainly to the sphere of private letters with an objective, impersonal content, rarely however pure business communication. It indicates a certain distance between the correspondents, both in personal relation and in social rank, and generally seems to place the sender in a subordinate position (Koskenniemi 1957, pp. 100–103). Whether the word “son” is here to be taken literally, or merely expresses affection towards some younger person, is not sure, as kinship terminology was frequently used metaphorically (Koskenniemi 1957, p. 105). In any case there is a discrepancy between the intimacy expressed by the use of a familial noun on the one hand, and the distance connected with the use of τιμωτάτος on the other, and their co-occurrence is rare. A parallel to this formula, where a son is addressed as τοῖ πτιμωτάτοι, is, however, found in P. Herm. 12 (reproduced on plate III of the edition), dated to the fourth century CE in the ed. princ., but
reddated by John Rea to the second or beginning of the third century (see BL V, p. 44). It is written in a similar, albeit less cursive script and does not abbreviate τιμωτάτωι, but shows a striking similarity in the way the two last words of the prescript have been centred on line 2 with much space left open.

3 λείαν: This is another example of the very frequent interchange of epsilon-iota and iota in the papyri (see Gignac I, p. 189–191). P. Oxy. LIX 3991 (second or third century CE) presents the same spelling mistake in the phrase λείαν ἑξάρην κομισθέντων συ τὸν γραμμάτων.

3–4 ἑξάρην κομισθέντων συ τὸ ἐπιστόλιον: An equivalent phrase is used by a woman writing to her children in BGU I 332.6 (second or third century CE): ἑξάρην κομισθένη γράμματα. Expressing delight upon receiving a letter is common in the papyri (see Koskenniemi 1957, pp. 75–76).

4 ἐπιγνοὺς καὶ ἐφρομένων: The phrase occurs also in BGU II 632.9–10 (second century CE), but there preceding λίαν ἑξάρην.

4–5 The scribe has erased some letters at the end of line 4 and the beginning of line 5 and replaced them with a word above line 4. If the readings λέιαν (for λίαν) and πάνυ respectively are correct, the scribe might simply have wanted variety of expression, as he had already used the word λείαν in line 3.

5–6 The construction κατὰ μνήμην ἑχειν τινός seems to be unparalleled in the papyri and in extant Greek literature. The motive of remembering, however, is common in papyrus letters (Koskenniemi 1957, pp. 123–127), occurring frequently in the formula μνήμην (or μνείαν) ποιεσθαι τινός. In our document the motive is expressed pleonastically by two parallel expressions – one positive, κατὰ μνήμην | ἐμοὶ ἐχέσει, and one negative, οὐκ ἐπελάθοι μου (see Smyth, pp. 681–682, § 3042 for examples of pleonastic constructions in Classical Greek).

6–7 Both the end of line 6 and the beginning of line 7 is damaged, and it is difficult to discern the letters. One possibility is to read ἄποντος in line 6, which would conclude the preceding sentence. However, the letters ϵεημθυ in line 7, if correctly deciphered and restored as ϵεημθυ, point to a verb in the perfect tense. A suitable verb in the context could be ἀπεκκομισθεθα, which would fit roughly the available space of the two lines.

7 ἐωρτῆς: The spelling with omega indicates the loss of quantitative distinction by the Roman period (see Gignac I, pp. 275–277). The genitive is likely to be governed by a preposition. The restoration ὑπερ τῆς ἐωρτῆς, “(receive) for the festival”, would make sense.
The noun θφυρίδιν is a diminutive of θφυρίς, “basket”, which has the classical spelling θφυρίς. There is a tendency for aspirated stops to lose their aspiration after sigma, which leads to the frequent confusion of pi and phi in this position (see Gignac I, pp. 86–88). The variant θφυρίδιον indicates that the syllable /o/ of the original diminutive suffix -ιον, was weakened in pronunciation. Both θφυρίδιον and θφυρίδιν (as well as θπυρίδιον and θπυρίδιν) occur in the papyri. The diminutive forms in -ίν, which are found more frequently in the papyri than elsewhere in the Koine (see Gignac II, p. 25), later developed into the large class of modern Greek neuters with the ending -ι (see Horrocks 2010, pp. 175–176).

The last word of the preserved fragment, which may represent the content of the basket, probably begins with ὑπ, with ὑγι being a less probable alternative.

Translation
Artemidoros to Stefanos, his most esteemed son, greetings. I was exceedingly joyful upon receiving your letter and learning that you are in good health. I am very thankful to you that you kept me in your memory and did not forget me … the festival, through Chairas, a basket …
4. LETTER TO IOULIOS GERMANOS

P. Oslo inv. 1430 12 x 26.5 cm II century CE
Unknown provenance

This papyrus, like the previous, belongs to the group purchased from Professor Carl Schmidt. On the front is a letter written along the fibres, while the address is written on the back at a 90 degrees angle. The margins are intact – 2 cm on the top, 3 cm on the bottom, 1.5 cm to the left and 0.5 cm to the right. Two fragments are broken off at the top, but still most of the text is intact in this part. In ll. 11–18, however, the text is badly damaged, mainly because of large holes, but in ll. 12–13 also because the ink has faded and is hardly discernible. There are several folding marks, apparently the cause of some of the damage, but it is difficult to find a clear pattern. It seems as if the letter was rolled or folded vertically, starting from the right and leaving a long thin strip of about 1.5 cm height when turned 90 degrees, used for writing the address. It seems afterwards to have been folded once or twice on the long axis.

The name of the sender is difficult to decipher because of damage in the upper left corner of the recto as well as in the central part of the verso (see commentary on l. 1). The addressee has a Roman name, Ioulios Germanos. The two are apparently close associates, as suggested by the recurrent use of the address ἀδέλφος. A third individual, Maximos, who is a friend of the sender, has been sent to supervise some of Ioulios’ works in Admenthe. Ioulios Germanos is asked to finance some expenses in Epagathou. Apparently he has several enterprises going on at different locations in the Hermopolite and the Arsinoite. Reference is made to vine-dressers and stalk-cutting, pointing to an agricultural context.

The author leaves good space between the lines and also to a certain degree divides words by space. This combined with a thin pen gives the first part (ll. 1–12) an impression of airiness. In the second part (ll. 13–22) the writing gets somewhat more dense. Characteristic elements of the hand are enlarged epsilon at word beginning, delta with oblique strokes intersecting at top and occasionally projecting upwards in the manner of the Coptic letter giangia ((pipe)X) and champagne glass shaped epsilon. Eta consists of a vertical stroke, then a horizontal which starts slightly to the left of the vertical, continues to the right, forms a little loop and descends into a right curve. All these letter forms are encountered in P. Flor. I 67, dated 161 or 169 CE (reproduced in Cavallo et al. 1998, tav. CXVI). Alpha and my have the same tendency to be equipped with loops as observable in SPP XX 16, dated 193 CE (reproduced in Harrauer 2010, Tafelband, Abb. 133). A dating of P. Oslo inv. 1430 in the
second half of the second century appears plausible. A *terminus post quem* is provided by the use of the honorific month name Hadrianos (see note to l. 22).

→ Π [. . .] τοι Ἰουλίωι Γερμανῷ
[τ]ῷ ἀδέλφῳ χαίρειν.
ἔπει οἴδας ἐς, ἀδέλφε, π[ο]λλὰ περιπό-
μενον, διεπιψάμην Μάξιμον
5 φίλον μου ἐπιστήναι τοὺς
ἐν Ἀδριάνῳ ἔργοις, οὐδ’ αὐτὸ
ὑποδικήνοντος τὰ ἐπείγον-
τα. εὖ οὖν, ἀδέλφε, ἑξοδιασεις
ὑπὸ χείρα εἰς τὰς γεινομέ-
10 να διαπάνας τὰς ἐν Ἐπι-
γάθους ἐρ . . . . . . . . . .
τω . . . δρ . . . . . . . . . .
ιδ[.] . . του εν . . . .] . ιου. καὶ τοῖς δὲ
ἀμπελουργοίς ἐπιμελῶς, α.
15 φε . . ατη ἐτομηκ . .
εκατὸν ὡς κ[α]λὶ περὶ τῆς
κοπῆς τῆς Ἐκ . . .’ καλάμ[ης ± 5]
ήνα ἐπ’ ἀκριβείας [± 7].
ἀσπασαν τούς σοῦ πάντας καὶ τοὺς ἴδιον[ε].
20 ἔρρωθάι σε εὕχομαι,
ἀδέλφε μου.
μηνὸς Ἀδριανοῦ Ἰ

Back:
→ Ἰουλίωι Γερμανῷ (vac.) . . . π . . .

9–10 l. γινομένας  18 l. ἀκριβείας

**Commentary**

1 The name of the sender is difficult to discern, partly because of a *lacuna*, but also because the preserved letters have been ligatured as a series of connected curves, that can be deciphered in different ways. A plausible restoration based on the traces and the available space would be Πτ[ο]λεμαῖος.
1–2 The standard opening formula is extended with the apposition [τῇ ὑἱῷ ἄδελφῳ]. This variant occurs frequently throughout the Ptolemaic and Roman period (Exler 2003, pp. 25–27), but as was the case with ὠψέ, it does not necessarily mean fraternity in a literal sense (see Koskenniemi 1957, p. 105).

3 ἀδελφὲ: This vocative is repeated also in ll. 8 and 21. On all three occasions it seems motivated by the use a second-person personal pronoun. Whether this is done intentionally as a rhetorical device, or it just mirrors the writer’s style, it certainly gives the letter a colour of orality and a tone of intimacy. The recessive accent of the vocative is kept here in accordance with standard Attic, although it is unclear if this represents the actual pronunciation of the Koine (see Probert 2006, pp. 67–68, n. 31).

4 The first three letters of this line are somewhat thicker than those of the rest of the document. The scribe seems either to have made a correction or filled ink.

6 Ἀδημένθη: This is likely to be the village in the Hermopolite nome referred to as κόμη Ἀδημένθον in several other papyri (see Drew-Bear 1979, p. 53).

6–7 As the lines are deciphered and punctuated in the transcription, the phrase κόμη Ἀδημένθον would be a genitive absolute with a dative pronoun ἀντίθη to referring to Maximos. A parallel expression is found in SB XIV 11707.15–16 (212 CE): ἐμοὶ ἀντίθη ὦ [ποδεικνύοντος]. The last letters of l. 6, however, are somewhat distorted, and another case ending for the pronoun cannot be excluded. Moreover κόμη might be interpreted as a possessive pronoun attached to ἔργως.

9 ὑπὸ χεῖρα: This phrase can according to LSJ mean “at once”, while according to Preisigke, WB it can mean “nach und nach”, i.e. “gradually”. Both interpretations would make sense here.

10–11 Ἐπαγάθους: The genitive Ἐπαγάθου is the usual in the papyri, but the variant with sigma is found in l. 9 of CPR I 29 (184 CE) The spelling without sigma occurs in l. 29 of the same document (in the ed. prin.: both occurrences were read as Ἐπαγάθου, but l. 9 has later been corrected to Ἐπαγάθους. See BL I, p. 117). In our text a toponym seems to be referred to as indicated by the preposition ἐν. Likely candidates would be the estate of Epagathos (Ἐπαγάθου κλήρος) in the area of Tebtynis, or the canal of Epagathos (Ἐπαγάθου διόρους) running by Karanis and Soknopaiou Nesos (see Calderini II, pp. 150–151).

13 καὶ τοῖς δὲ: Because of the damage in the preceding lines, it is not clear if δὲ picks up a μὲν clause or if it marks the beginning of a new clause (see Maysier II, pp. 103–131).

19 Sending regards is a prominent element in private letters. It normally occurs towards the end of a letter (see Koskenniemi 1957, p. 148). In this letter it seems like two
groups of people are referred to by the phrases τοῖς σοῖς πάντας and τοῖς ἰδίοις[ε] respectively, if this is the correct transcription. While the first phrase occurs frequently in letters from the Roman period, there are few, if any, good parallels for the use of the other. The word ἰδιος is often used for near relatives, but can also refer to slaves (see Koskenniemi 1957, p. 104). It is of course possible that the writer does not have two distinct groups in mind, and that it is merely an example of hendiadys (see Smyth, p. 678, § 3025 for a description of the rhetorical figure).

20–21 The final greeting clause of papyrus letters is often built on some form of the verb ῥώνυμ. In the Ptolemaic period the simple imperative ἔρρως is most commonly used, but from the first century CE the more extensive ἔρρῶθαί εἴχουμαι becomes the norm – from the second century often extended by a reference to the addressee, as here ἄδελφε (see Koskenniemi 1957, pp. 151–152).

22 Άδριανοί: The letter is dated 16th December. The honorific month name Hadrianos for Choiak was possibly introduced with Hadrian’s visit to Egypt in 130 CE (see Hohmann 1911, p. 66). One of the earliest examples of its use can be found in P. Turner 21.2, dating from 131 CE. It occurs frequently throughout the remaining second century, and was also in use in the early third. A late example of its use is found in P. Gen. I 43.2, dating from 227 CE.

Translation

Ptolemaios(?) to Ioulios Germanos, my brother, greetings. Since I know, brother, that you are very occupied, I sent Maximos, my friend, to supervise your works in Admenthe, while you point out to him the urgent ones. You, brother, are to provide at once/gradually(?) for the expenses at Epagathou … And to the vine-dressers … and the digging(?) as well as about the cutting of the stalks … so that … in detail. Give my regards to all your friends and family. I pray for your health, brother. 20th of the month Hadrianos.

Back: To Ioulios Germanos … Ptolemaios(?)
This papyrus document is one of the 75 items that were allotted to the University of Oslo from a joint purchase in 1923 with the British Museum and the Universities of Michigan and Columbia. The report compiled by H. I. Bell does not give any definite information concerning the provenance of this particular piece. It is a private letter written against the fibres, with the address on the other side written along the fibres. Apart from the address, there are some other traces of letters, which, together with the direction of the fibres, suggest that the papyrus had earlier served another purpose before its back side was reused for the letter. The upper and lower margins are intact. On the right side the papyrus is worn, but in most lines all the letters are visible. On the left 2–4 letters are lost in the first 14 lines and there is also damage occurring at regular vertical intervals of about 4 cm – apparently the result of folding – causing loss of letters and difficulties in the reading of lines 3–4, 8, 12–13 and 17.

In the letter Herakleides informs Kronion that some works have been completed. He warns him not to stay idle at home, because the tax-collector is on the way. The letter is accompanied by a basket with different foodstuff, and also includes the usual greetings to and from family and household members.

The writing is a typical cursive of the second or third century CE. The vertical stroke of the phi hangs to the right of a single circle without intersecting it. This form of phi occurs in documents from the mid-second to the mid-third century. The epsilon is sometimes written v-shaped with a loop below its angle, but most often has the champagne glass shape with a curved leg. The general impression as well as individual letters, e.g. eta, the ligature of sigma and iota can be compared with P. Mil. 51, dated after 160 CE (reproduced in Montevecchi 1988, tav. 54). The somewhat styleless impression of the hand and the form of some letters, though not the characteristic phi, are paralleled in P. Petaus 28 (image on Tafel XI of the edition). The papyri in the Petaus-archive date from the mid-180s. According to all indications P. Oslo inv. 485 dates from the late second or early third century.
Ἡράκλειδης Κρόνιων

tο γῆς χαίρε[iv].
[γνώσει] εἰς θέλω ὁτι
[,]ατου κ. , ou

καὶ πάντα σου
[tά] ἡγα ἀπηρτίςθη, γράφο
[κο] ὑν περί τοῦ πράκ(το)ρος του
[,]., .[,]., ὡς ὁτι μέλλον-
[ειν Ἦμας χαίρειν. μὴ βρα-

κόμις σου. κόμις τοῦ
ἀναδίδοντες τὸ ἐπικ-
[τ]ὸλιν επιρίδιον ὅπου ἴς ἔπ-
γη ἄρτον καὶ δύο μέτρα φακ-
ῶν καὶ τρία λαγάνα.

αἐπάξεται σοι Κρο[.].[.
عظ ὁδής σου [[τ]]] καὶ ἡ θυ-
γάτηρ σου καὶ Πεββαῦς καὶ Πόνικσ. αἐπάξεται σοι
τοὺς ἐνοίκους[ε] πάντες.

ἐρώθεθαι σοι εὐχή]μι[αι].

Back:

ἀπόδος X Κρονίων

| 7 πρα' pap. | 9 l. ἱεράκειαν | 13 πρα' pap. | 12–13 l. συγκεχώρηκεν |
| 15 l. κόμις | 16 l. ἀναδίδοντος | 20 l. εκ | 22 καβ βασικ pap. |

Commentary

1 Both Herakleides and Kronion are common names. The names appear mainly, but not exclusively in Arsinoites.
1–2 The opening formula ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δείνι τῷ τιμωτάτῳ χαίρειν would often imply that the letter is addressed to a person of higher social rank than the sender (Koskenniemi 1957, pp. 100–103).

3 [γινός]κ[είν] εξ θέλο ὤτι: A statement of the motivation for writing the letter is common. In letters of the Roman and Byzantine periods it is often introduced by some variant of this expression (see Koskenniemi 1957, pp. 77–78).

7 The abbreviation πρακ for πράκτωρ is common (e.g. PSI XII 1236.23, dated 128 CE and BGU I 65.3, dated 202 CE). The case ending has to be supplied from the context.

8 The beginning of this line would apparently have had either the given name of the πράκτωρ as an apposition, or else the place or field of his jurisdiction. The restoration μητροπόλεσις λεοντάτω ως χαίρειν is tempting, but would be inconsistent with the article in the preceding line. A given name that would be paleographically possible is [Πο]ραμ[η]γειω, which occurs on an ostracon (O. Wilck. 65) dated 165 CE.

8–9 μέλλου[ν] [ειν] ήμις χιμάς (I. χιμάςειν): The verb χιμάζω can according to LSJ have the metaphorical sense “to distress”. This metaphorical use of the verb occurs in P. Oslo II 48.8 (61 CE) and BGU III 84.4 (83 CE), and would make sense also in our text. A parallel to the periphrastic construction consisting of μέλλω and a future infinitive is found in P. Rev. col. 50.9 (259–258 BCE): μέλλουςιν ἀνηλώςιν (I. ἀνηλώςειν). The construction is, however, rare in early papyri (see Mayser II.1, p. 226).

9–10 A possible restoration is μὴ βρα[δύ]γον, “do not delay”, but although the verb can be used in the medium with this sense according to LSJ, no parallel use has been found in the papyri.

10 ἐχονομά λοι: The word ἐχονομα has puzzled the editors of papyrological texts. It occurs in P. Oxy. VIII 1160 where the first editor emended to ἔχωνομα. Other examples of ἐχονομα were discovered where this emendation did not make sense, and other explanations were sought (see Winter 1931, pp. 61–62). Still more occurrences led to the conjecture that the word derives from ἐχομένα (see Youtie 1937). For the use of ἐχοματι in this local sense, see Mayser II.2, p. 200.

11 ἀναπλεύομεν: Either a sigma has been omitted by mistake, and future tense is intended, or present tense is intended, and an epsilon has been inserted as a glide anticipating the second rounded vowel (for examples of the spelling epsilon-ypsilon for simple epsilon, of which some might be explained by similar phonetic conditions, see Gignac I, pp. 229). A parallel spelling ἀναπλέουςει occurs in P. Bad. II 39, col. 3.8.
13–14 οὖ καλὸς | [ποιε]ῖς καθήμενος: Various periphrastic expressions are used in papyrus letters as polite alternatives to the imperative. One of the most common consists of the phrase καλὸς ποιεῖς (or any of the variants ποιήσεις, ἃν ποιεῖς, ἃν ποιήσας) followed by the actual request, usually, as here, in the form of a participle (see Steen 1938, pp. 131 and 138–143).

15–16 τοῦ | ἀναδίδοντες (l. ἀναδίδοντος): The orthographic mistake indicates that the pronunciation of the vowel was weakened to /ə/ in certain phonetic environments (see Gignac I, pp. 289–292).

17 εὑρίσκων: The papyrus is damaged at the beginning of this word, but the spelling of the word with πι appears certain, as there are no traces of the descender of a phi.

17–19 Papyrus letters frequently mention foodstuff accompanying the letter. Bread is often delivered in pairs, as e.g. in P. Oslo III 152.8 (late first or early second century CE). The papyrus is worn at the place where the second commodity is mentioned, but the reading φακίδιον in ll. 18–19 seems likely. The λάγανον (diminutive λαγάνιον) was a flat pasta-like product or a type of unleavened bread (see Dalby 2003, p. 251). The word survives in Modern Greek, with change of grammatical gender, as λαγάνα.

20 Possibly the name of the sister completes the line, in which case Κρο[νία]ίνα would be suitable, considering the name of her brother.

22 The normal variant of the name is Πεββαῦς. The scribe has separated the name Πεββαῦς in Πεβ and βαῦς. The reason is not clear.

23–24 ἀκάζεται εἰς | τοῦ ἐνοίκου[ε] πάντες: Something has clearly gone wrong with the syntax, and it is unclear who is the subject and who is the object.

Translation
Herakleides to his most esteemed Kronion, greetings. I want you to know that … and all your works were carried out. I write to you therefore about the tax collector, … because they will be pestering us. Do not delay(?) at home. You wrote us “we sail … the 30th”. The tax collector has agreed. You are not doing well sitting at home. Receive from the bearer of the letter a basket where (there are) ten pairs of bread, two metra of lentils(?) and three flatbreads. Kroniaina(?), your sister, and your daughter and Pebbaus and Ponnis send you regards. You give regards to all your household members(?). I wish you to be healthy.

Back: Deliver to Kronion
This papyrus was purchased in 1934 from Maurice Nahman. It has a top margin of around 1.5 cm and lower margin of 6 cm. The papyrus is worn both to the left and to the right, and letters are lost. The text is written transversa charta, i.e. turned at a 90 degrees angle. This is clear from a horizontal kollesis under and slightly touching line 4. The kollesis is visible also on the back and the overlap of the sheets has a width of 2–2.5 cm. Except from the worn sides the papyrus is well preserved, and damage in form of worm-holes occurs mainly at the bottom of the sheet where there is no text. A small hole near the beginning of line 5 is causing difficulties in discerning a few letters. There are two horizontal folding marks, one in line 2 and one underneath the text, at a distance of 5 cm. There is also a vertical folding mark exactly in the middle, which makes it likely that the same amount of papyrus is lost towards the left and the right edge. There is moreover a certain symmetry in the destroyed edges, both vertically and horizontally suggesting strongly that the papyrus suffered the damage in a folded state. The back is blank.

Addressed to an unnamed landowner (γεωῦχος) this short letter of five lines is a petition of a group of farmers for grain to be used for sowing. The names of the farmers, who form a sort of agricultural firm (πιττάκιον), occupy l. 3. A chief assistant named Dioskoros seems to have already sent a letter about the subject.

The letter is written in a medium-sized cursive hand. It has v-shaped ypsilon. The second oblique stroke of delta descends from high up. The ypsilon is v-shaped, and omicron, when part of a ligature, is reduced to a minimal loop, hardly distinguishable from the curve of omega or my. The left vertical stroke of my extends underneath the line, as does iota, which also makes a small turn to the right. The epsilon is split in two, each half frequently forming a ligature with the preceding and following letter respectively. The same applies for lambda. No parallel matching all the aspects has been found, but single elements are found in:

- Pap. Lugd. Bat. XVI 12, dated 345 CE (reproduced in Boswinkel and Sijpenstein 1968, no. 42)
- BGU II 405, dated 348 CE (reproduced in Cavallo 2008, no. 98)
- P. Oxy. XLVIII 3390, dated 358 CE (reproduced in Harrauer 2010, Tafelband, Abb. 193)
combined all seems to point to the second half of the fourth century.

↓ [τῷ] δεσπότη {μοῦ} ἡμῶν καὶ ἑναρέτῳ πάτρων ἡμῶν γεωύχῳ.
[kαθ]ός ἐπέστηλη Διόσκορος ὁ ἀρχιπερέτης προφάσῃ τοῦ πιττ(ακ)ίου τῶν ἄρουρόν κε.[
[...]. . . οἰκ παρατομοι Καλλινίκου καὶ Ἡρων Πασκουηρι καὶ Ἀνοῦς Πέτρου κ[.
[...]. . . κεφαλαίου καταξίωσῃ ἢ τῷ ἀρετῆ κελεύετε ζ. . . . εἰ ὑμῖν ἡξῆκοντα ἁρτάβας εἰ[ου] 5
[...]. . . ἢ ἱνα δυνηθήσομεν αὐτὰς γεοργήσαι.

Commentary

1 [τῷ] δεσπότη {μοῦ} ἡμῶν: The phrase δεσπότη μου might have been felt by the scribe as a fixed unit in a similar way to English Milord or French Monsieur, and the scribe has by mistake kept μου even though the plural possessive ἡμῶν follows. The formula τῷ δεσπότη μου πάτρων occurs also in P. Abinn. 29, dating from the middle of the fourth century CE. The title δεσπότης was given frequently to bishops. It also occurs frequently, however, outside a religious context, where it is used for people of high social standing, and seems to imply that the writer is addressing someone who has authority over him (Dinneen 1980, p. 56). This is apparently the case also in our context, where a landlord is addressed.

The typical opening formula of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, ὁ δείνα τῷ δείνῃ χαίρειν, has been replaced by addressing of the recipient only. This supports a dating no earlier than the fourth century (see Koskenniemi 1957, p. 135).

2 ἐπέστηλη: Spelling with iota in the place of epsilon-iota is very frequent, and in the Byzantine period the transformation of the original diphthong to /i/ would have been long completed. The interchange of epsilon and eta is less frequent and occurs mostly in specific phonetic conditions, as here in unaccented final position (see Gignac I, pp. 242–245).

2 ἀρχιπερέτης: The prefix ἀρχι- occurs both in the full form and elided ἀρχ- in front of a vowel. Here elision has led to the disappearance of ςιπλογιον instead of the expected ἱοτα, suggesting that the two vowels had merged into a single /i/. For the substitution of epsilon for
an unaccented *eta* before a liquid see Gignac I, p. 243 and preceding note. The same spelling (genitive ἄρχιπερέτου) is found in CPR XIV 34, dating from the fourth or fifth century.

2 πιττ(ακ)ίου: The word is abbreviated after πιτ, marked by a raised deformed letter. The scribe seems then to have added the last letters of the word. This type of abbreviation, where the middle part of a word is left out, is uncommon in Greek papyri. The noun πιττάκιον can refer to an agricultural firm cultivating common land (see Montevecchi 1988, p. 258).

According to LSJ this meaning is secondary and the word originally describes a member list of such a firm (compare the similar etymology of English *firm*, deriving from Italian *firma*, “signature”). The word can also mean “receipt” or “account-book”.

2 κε[...] This is likely to be the first letters of the main verb of the sentence. Some form of κελεύο could be paleographically possible, although it is unclear who would be giving orders to whom. A verb denoting the fulfilment of the farmers’ obligations would also make sense in the context.

3 The line mentions at least four individuals, three of which are certainly referred to also by patronym. The first name might follow a preposition and be deciphered παρ’ Ἀ<ντωνίου. Alternatively Παρατωνίου could perhaps be an Egyptian name in the genitive, in which case it would probably be the patronym of a name lost at the beginning of the line. If all of the individuals occupy the same syntactic position, the dative form Πλούτιωνι must be a mispelling for Πλούτιον. The names Πλούτιων, Καλλίνικος, Ἡρων, Ἀνύσιος and Πέτρος all occur in either of two Hermopolite rural lists, P. Flor. I 71 and P. Giss. inv. 4, dating from the middle or late fourth century (compare the index of Personennamen in Sijpesteijn and Worp 1978, pp. 129–158). The name Πακοήρις has not been found elsewhere, but might be an alternative spelling of Πασχήρις, who occurs in the late fourth century letter SB XII 10800 (for the frequent interchange of omicron and omicron-ypsilon in Egyptian names, see Mayses I.1, p. 75).

4 κεφαλέου: The diphthong alpha-iota was monophthongized as /e/ at an early point, and the interchange with epsilon is frequent (see Gignac I, pp. 192–193). The word κεφάλαιον does not necessarily refer to capital money – often it means an amount in kind.

4 καταξιώ... κελεύ(ει) (l. κελεύ(α)ι): The verb καταξιώθη is used in the same way as καλάω ποιήει to form a more polite request than a pure imperative. It begins to appear in the fourth century, and occurs frequently in letters throughout the Byzantine period. It would normally, as here, take an infinitive, but can also function rather like an interjection, and be followed by an imperative as e.g. in P. Oxy. XVI 1935 (sixth century CE): καταξιώθη ἢ σῇ ἀδελφότης παρακεύεσθαι (see Steen 1938, pp. 146–147 for further variants and examples).
4 ἡς ἐρέτη: Interchange of *eta* and *ypsilon* occurs in the Roman and Byzantine periods, although less frequently than some of the other vowel interchanges. The phonological merge of both sounds to the /i/ of Modern Greek had probably not yet been completed on a general level by this time, in educated speech they might have been phonologically distinct as late as in the ninth or tenth century (see Horrocks 2010, pp.168–169). The fact that *eta* and *ypsilon* were still interchanged even at an early date in the papyri might be the result of bilingual interference in Egypt (see Gignac I, pp. 262–267). Here the confusion is probably motivated also by the fact that the abstract honorific title ἡς ἐρέτη is replacing the second person singular personal pronoun ἐς. The noun ἐρέτη as an honorific title was used for bishops, but also for laymen and can be rendered “Excellency” (Dinneen 1980, pp. 55–56).

4 ζ...η: A likely reconstruction based on the context would be ζυγίς (l. ζυγίσαι), although it would imply a distorted tilting gamma.

4 ὑμίν: The confusion of the first and second person plural of the personal pronoun (ἡμ- and ὑμ-) is very common. For the phonological development of *eta* and *ypsilon* see previous note.

4 ἐξήκωντα: For the interchange of *omicron* and *omega* see Gignac I, pp. 275–277.

5 δυνηθῆσομεν: The expected verb form would be subjunctive δυνηθῶμεν. Here there seems to be a mixture of the passive aorist theta-element with an innovated sigmatic aorist or future construction. A similar form of this verb has not been found in other papyri, but some other hybrid forms of δύναμαι are mentioned in Gignac II, p. 319.

5 γεοργησι: For the interchange of *omicron* and *omega* see note on ἐξήκωντα above.

**Translation**

To our master and virtuous landowner. As Dioskoros, the chief assistant, requested by letter on account of the receipts for the fields … and Ploution, son of Kallinikos and Heron, son of Pasoueris and Anysios, son of Petros … amount. May your Excellency deign to order the weighing out(?) for us of sixty artabas of grain … so that we might cultivate them.
7. LETTER TO APA DOROTHEOS

P. Oslo inv. 1555 30 x 15 cm V/VI century CE
Unknown provenance

P. Oslo inv 1555 is a sheet of light brown papyrus, purchased by Professor Samson Eitrem in Egypt in March 1936. It preserves most of a letter addressed to a certain apa Dorotheos from or concerning the widow of a fellow cleric apa Eutropios. The text of the letter runs against the fibres. It is probably written transversa charta. No kollesis is visible, which could have confirmed this assumption, but there are several other indications (for characteristics of documents written transversa charta see Harrauer 2010, Textband, p. 54):

- the width of the document amounts to 30 cm, which was a typical height of a roll in the Byzantine period
- the surface on the side where the letter is written, seems somewhat smoother, indicating that this was the recto in the sense of being the inside of the roll at the time of production
- the left margin is uneven, while the upper and lower margins are straighter and seem to have been cut

The upper right corner of the papyrus is broken off, with the consequence that the last 15–20 letters of ll. 1–4 are missing except for some traces in l. 4. There is also a lacuna at the bottom of the document, resulting in the loss of 3–5 letters in the middle of the last four lines. The address is written on the verso along the fibres. Its first part is missing. The address presents the same confusion of dative and genitive as the opening formula of the letter (Δωροθέου) and also shares the raised epsilon in the name Εὐτροπίου. The word γυναικός, however, is correctly spelled in the address, unlike in the heading of the letter, where it is spelled γυνηκός. The last part of the address furthermore seems to be written in a more formal style (closed angular alpha and epsilon with straight back), and is likely to have been penned by a different hand.

The letter, although fairly well preserved with large, quite distinct letters, is still difficult to interpret adequately. It is clear who the addressee is, but because of the lacuna at the end of l. 1, it is not clear if the wife of apa Eutropios mentioned in l. 2 is to be taken as the sender, or if she is merely the subject of the letter. As the symbol (♯) preceding τῆς γυναικὸς ἦτα Εὐτροπίου on the verso is not the one typically used for παρά, the address does not provide a certain answer either. In any case the letter apparently describes the difficult
economic situation of a widow and her children. Mention is made of blindness, inability to work and even the pledging of a child. Although all this strongly indicates that the letter is a petition for economic aid, an explicit statement of the purpose of the letter has not been found. This might be because key words or phrases are lost due to the lacunae, or because the spelling and grammar of the letter diverge to a large extent from classical usage.

Both the general impression of the main hand and individual letters (split tau, open alpha, delta and eta in the shape of latin d and h respectively) show similarities with P. Flor. I 94, dated 491 CE (reproduced in Cavallo et al. 1998, tav. CXL1). Another paleographical parallel is found in P. Oxy LXIV 4397, dated 545 CE (reproduced in Cavallo 2008, no. 103). The somewhat different alpha and epsilon of the second part of the address are paralleled in P. Oxy. LVI 3866, possibly belonging to the sixth century according to the editor (image on Plate VII of the edition). A dating of P. Oslo inv. 1511 in the late fifth or early sixth century seems plausible.

↓ ¶ τῷ θεοεβεβεστάτῳ πατρὶ ἡμάς Δωροθέου πα[ρᾶ ± 14
tῆς γυνηκὸς ἡμᾶς Εὐτροπίου. γινώσκειν [θ]έλω τὴν [± 16
eπεστὶν ε[...]ολὴν καὶ μετὰ ἡμᾶς Εὐτροπίου[υ] κα[θ[ε]]ε[± 15 τῆς]
χήρας καὶ τῶν ὀρφανῶν οἰκίας εἰς γαρ τετ[...] [. .] ήλας κ[± 9
5] καὶ εγενε ἄγομάτων τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ οὐκ ἔδω μοι πῶς ἑργάζεται ἵνα
εροποιεσθεργερεῖτα, ε ἔγενε παῖδ[...]ον ἔθηκαν ὑποθήκην εἰς ὀλοκότον
eἰς τὴν θλίψιν τοῦ ποιμένος τούτου καὶ οὐδε[...]εἰς περιπηγὰς καὶ 
καὶ εἰς τὴν θεο[...]ον καὶ τῶν ὀρφανῶν καὶ τῆς χήρας
καὶ καθὼς ἐπετείμη θέμον δαθέων κα[...] θυμοῦ μνημόνησις ἡμῶν
καὶ [καὶ] τῷ ἐφέτος καὶ <αί> εἰς τοῦ καταλάβουσαι[ν ἡμᾶς]. ¶

Back:
→ [τῷ θεοεβεβεστάτῳ ἡμᾶς Δωροθέου (m.2 ?) (παρᾶ?) τῆς γυναικὸς ἡμᾶς Εὐτροπίου

1 I. θεοεβεβεστάτῳ 1 I. Δωροθέω 2 I. γυναικὸς 2 eutropiον παρ.
5 I. ἐνα 6 I. ἄγομάτων 6 οὐκ' παρ. 6 I. ἐργάζεται
7 ἤν παρ. 7 I. ἐνα 7 I. ὀλοκότον 8 θομοῦ παρ.
9 οὐδέπετε 9 καί παρ. 10 I. μνημόνησιον 11 I. ἐφέτος
11 καταλάβωσειν 12 I. θεοεβεβεστάτῳ 12 I. Δωροθέω 12 eutropiον παρ.
Commentary

1 In the opening formula the scribe blends the standard dative of the addressee (τῷ and πατρὶ) with genitives (θεοεβεβεβάτου and Δωροθέου). The same confusion involving the same name (πατρὶ Δωροθέου) occurs in the heading of the fifth-century letter P. Oxy. LVI 3864. The missing part of the line would in all probability include the name of the sender.

2 τῆς γυνῆκος ἀπα Εὐτροπίου: This phrase could either be in apposition to the name of the sender in l. 1, or it could be the subject of the letter, depending perhaps on the preposition περί, which in that case would also be the interpretation of the symbol on the verso. In any case it is noteworthy that a holy man has a wife. No parallel has been found where a woman is referred to as the wife of an ἀπα, but there are some examples of individuals being their sons, e.g. SB XIV 12080 (fourth century CE) and P. Wisc. II 45 (seventh or eighth century CE).

2 γινώσκειν [θ]έλω τήν: The text is damaged, but certainly has some variant of the standard expression γινώσκειν σε θέλω. There is not enough space for supplying ce, and the expression is moreover followed by τήν, not the expected ὦτι. A possible solution would be to restore as accusative subject of the infinitive γινώσκειν some honorific title in the form of an abstract feminine noun (e.g. τήν ἐὴν θεοεβεβεβαν). Parallel constructions are found in CPU XXV 28 (sixth or seventh century CE): γνώναι βούλομαι οὖν ἐμ[.]ον ἄγαθον δεσπότην (?) ὦτι and possibly in P. Cair. Masp. I 67065 (early sixth century CE): γνώναι βούλομαι τήν.

3 ἐπέστην ἐ[.]ολὴν κοū: It is unclear how the letters should be divided and interpreted. The verb ἐπέστην seems likely, but it is unclear in which sense. There is a small trace of ink further right, possibly the upper part of an epsilon, which would make ἐ[ν]τολὴν a possible restoration. Still it is difficult to make sense of the line.

4 οὐαςοῦ με γαρ τετ[. . . θ], [. . .]κα θε[ι]: The passage is difficult to decipher. οὐαςοῦ might perhaps be a misspelling for ἔμανον, “let” (for the interchange of epsilon and omicron-iota see Gignac I, pp. 274–275).

5 τρέφομην: One of the following forms might perhaps be intended: τρεφοῦμην, τρέφομαι, τρέφομαι(ν), ἐτρεφοῦμην.

5 ἐτη: The interpretation is uncertain both here and in l. 9.

5 οἰ[. θ]ομ: The restoration οἱ[κ]ῶμε (l. οἰκῶμεν) is a possibility, but one would in that case expect the preposition ἐν following.

5 ἔναν: The addition of a final ny, apparently in analogy with the first and second declension nouns, occurs both in the neuter and in the masculine accusative article (see Gignac II, p. 184). In the masculine accusative it has survived into Modern Greek.
The restoration μικρὸν πι[δ]γι is paleographically possible, but the *alpha* would in that case be the angular type used on the back of the letter.

6 *εγεινε*: This seems to be some misspelled form of γίγνομαι, but it is difficult to connect it syntactically with the genitives ἄγομάτων τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν.

7 *ερωπωϲϲηεργα*: In this line it is again unclear how the words should be divided. ε`γραϲ would provide a suitable verb for the preceding ἵνα, and also fit somehow with the context of work, but too many elements are left unexplained (ςε and the ending of ἵνα) to accept the interpretation.

7 *ἕνα παιδίον ὑποθήκην*: A group of eighth-century Coptic contracts P. KRU 78–103 concern the donation of young boys to local monasteries. This was usually done by the parents in gratitude for the curation of some illness (see Wilfong 2002, pp. 99–100). The mention of the blindness in the preceding line could suggest a similar context here, although the motivation seems to be financial.

8 *θρεψου*: Infinitive θρέψαι would fit syntactically here as a compliment to περιήγαι (I. περεύειν or περιήγη;? ) μοι. Phonetically, however, it seems more likely that the scribe intended first person θρέψω. This could be an indication that the infinitive was beginning to be replaced by finite verb forms.

10–11 *μνημόνηϲον (I. μνημόνευϲον) ἡμῶν*: In the Byzantine period the verb μνημονεύω was also used as a technical term for intercession (see Koskenniemi 1957, p. 147), in which case μνημόνηϲον ἡμῶν … καὶ <αί> εὕχαϲ ζου καταλαβοϲϲε[ν ἡμ]ὰϲ would be a pleonastic construction.

**Translation**

(staurogram) To the most reverend apa Dorotheos from … the wife of apa Eutropios. I want your reverence(?) to know that … your … with apa Eutropios … and … of the widow and the orphans … with him. As I have not been able to support myself (and them) so that we … a small … and (my) eyes have become sightless, and do not allow me to work … so that I find … one child has been pledged for a golden solidus so as to squeeze out his bread and nor … is left for me to support. Remember then that the orphans and the widow are your … of God, and as … of the. Remember us also this year. May your prayers embrace us. (staurogram) Back: To the most reverend apa Dorotheos from(?) the wife of apa Eutropios
CONCLUSION

The seven documents of this thesis provide various interesting information, but they also present different types of difficulties, of which the most obvious is the physical damage that they have suffered in the course of time. Yet, as official documents, and to a lesser extent private communication, make extensive use of fixed formulas and standard phrases, we are often able to restore and interpret lost and damaged passages. This was the case with the public register fragmentarily preserved in P. Oslo inv. 1318+1327. Although these fragments only formed a small part of the original document, the formulaic character of the text allowed for restoration of lost passages.

Another challenge affecting the reading of papyrus texts is related to the development of the language and the level of education and practice of the scribe. During the many centuries from which papyrus documents have survived, the standard written Greek remained strikingly consistent. Nevertheless, an unskilled writer, especially of the later period, might present spelling and grammar diverging to such a degree from the standard, that it becomes difficult for the modern reader to comprehend even if most of the text is preserved and the single letters are decipherable. This was the case in the private letter P. Oslo inv. 1555, where the seemingly non-standard spelling and grammar caused great reading problems.

Still, the papyri constitute an immense source of knowledge. A large part of the information that can be drawn from such documents is of a linguistic character. The frequency of unorthographical variants provides good evidence for the dating of sound changes. Morphological and syntactical developments may also be traced diachronically. Furthermore new vocabulary as well as alternative interpretations of already known words may be observed.

The various letters from different periods in time illustrate how style and mode of expression are products of time and place, but also of the individual style and characteristics of the current writer. Finally, documents such as the contract P. Oslo inv. 1511 and the public register P. Oslo inv. 1318+1327 may provide information on how transactions between individuals were carried out, what kind of taxes were paid and who collected them, and how and where contracts were registered.

Each single information of this kind provides a piece of the puzzle in our understanding of the past.


