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## Letter from a Soldier in Pannonia

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### Abstract

Edition of a private letter from the Egyptian recruit Aurelius Polion of *legio II Adiutrix* stationed in Pannonia Inferior. Writing home, he complains of receiving no letters and mentions furlough. There is a third-party address on the back. The Greek hand has Latinized features, including the occasional use of interpuncts.

This private letter comes from the expedition of Grenfell and Hunt at Tebtynis, which began on December 3, 1899. The T-number written on it prior to shipment, T520, indicates that the letter was found before the excavators turned to the cemeteries on January 5, 1900; that the T-number is high suggests that the find spot was the Roman town somewhere outside the temple.<sup>1</sup>

Right and left margins are more or less intact, as is much of the top. However, the bottom of the papyrus breaks off before the end of the salutation and the closing formula, with some lines missing. There is one damaged line of text, which could be a postscript, running up the left margin at 90 degrees.<sup>2</sup> It does not carry over onto the back, which seems to feature a double address, one longer, perhaps with delivery instructions, now mostly illegible, followed by another, shorter, third-party address. Lacunae are numerous throughout, especially in the left half (back: top half) of the papyrus.

To add further challenge, besides inconsistency of spelling there are morphological irregularities, and the hand is not practiced. It can be categorized as an “alphabetic” personal hand comparable, for instance, to *PKöln* 1.56 (private letter, first/second century), although it is not quite so unpracticed.<sup>3</sup> Characters are written slowly and for the most part separately. Lines are wavy and in

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<sup>1</sup> E.R. O’Connell, “Recontextualizing Berkeley’s Tebtunis Papyri,” in J. Frösén et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the XXIVth International Congress of Papyrology* (Helsinki 2007) 2:811-819.

<sup>2</sup> Discussion of other letters with marginal text in R. Luiselli, “Greek Letters on Papyrus, First to Eighth Centuries: A Survey,” *AS/ÉA* 62 (2008) 707-708.

<sup>3</sup> Categorization based on the typology in R. Bagnall and R. Cribiore, *Women’s Letters from Ancient Egypt, 300 BC-AD 800* (Ann Arbor 2006) 45.

general slope downward to the right. Grenfell, Hunt, and Goodspeed frankly describe it as “a rude uncial hand” and the Greek as “very poor.”<sup>4</sup>

While unpracticed, the hand has Latin features worth attention. Interpuncts are used occasionally. As the text survives, they are used in line 2 (βοηθοῦ·Ἡρωνει), line 11 (ἦ|μετέρας·σωτ[ηρείας]), line 20 (ἔξ·ἦδέ), and line 45 (Πολείονος·στρατεϊότη). The frequent use of interpuncts between words in Latin writing tapered off in the first and second centuries CE. For instance, in *P.Wisc.* 2.70 (letter of a senior officer to a *decurion*, early second century CE), they are still used to divide the text into words. In other Latin texts such as *C.Epist.Lat.* 73, 74, 75, 76, 77 (first/second century) and the Vindolanda writing tablets, they are used occasionally to divide the text into clauses and various sense units. Polion’s letter is not the only example of this Latin influence on written Greek. Interpuncts are also used occasionally in *SB* 6.9017.44 = *O.Fawakhir* 44 (private letter, first/second century), *P.Oxy.* 58.3917 (private letter of a *stator* to a *strategos*, early second century CE), and *P.Ross.Georg.* 5.4 (private letter, second century CE).<sup>5</sup> Latin writing seems to have influenced the formation of some of Polion’s characters as well, notably *gamma*, with its somewhat wispy crossbar extending up at an oblique angle. Given the angularity and extension of this and other characters, the Greek hand of the papyrus resembles, for instance, the Latin hand of *P.Mich.* 8.467 (private letter of a soldier, early second century CE), which is more practiced however, along with that of *P.Mich.* 8.470 and 471 (private letters of the same soldier). In particular, *mu* resembles *m* written in four strokes, the two longest of which extend up to the left; though not interchangeable, *gamma* resembles *s*. These Latin features no doubt reflect the Roman army setting in which Polion wrote the letter.

Polion had left Tebtynis for a military career. Stationed in Pannonia with *legio II Adiutrix*, he writes home to complain that his family does not reply to his letters. Relations were strained, and Polion seems to regret having departed from them. Concerned and in an effort to restore goodwill, he informs his family that he will obtain leave so as to be able to visit, however unlikely this may be (cf. line 21, note). Along with this reference to furlough, Polion’s letter is

<sup>4</sup> B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, with E.J. Goodspeed, *The Tebtynis Papyri 2* (London 1907) 325.

<sup>5</sup> See E.O. Wingo, *Latin Punctuation in the Classical Age* (The Hague 1972) 16; A.K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas, with J.N. Adams, *The Vindolanda Writing-Tablets: Tabulae Vindolandenses 2* (London 1994) 56-57; J.N. Adams, “Interpuncts as Evidence for the Enclitic Character of Personal Pronouns in Latin,” *ZPE* 111 (1996) 208-210; G.O. Hutchinson, *Talking Books* (Oxford 2008) 21-24; Luiselli (n. 2) 688, n.67; R. Wallis, “The Latin Alphabet and Orthography,” in J. Clackson (ed.), *A Companion to the Latin Language* (Chichester 2011) 23.

of special interest as one of a few extant private letters sent home by Egyptian recruits stationed in the western part of the Roman Empire, such as *P.Mich.* 8.490 and 491 and *BGU* 2.423 (all second century CE), letters that happened to be preserved only because they reached their destination.<sup>6</sup>

There were two *legiones Adiutrices*, established by Galba and Vespasian (Dio 55.24.1-4). From the start of the second century, if not the end of the first century, both were stationed in Pannonia. Soon thereafter, the province was divided, with *legio II Adiutrix* stationed at Aquincum in Pannonia Inferior.<sup>7</sup> How Polion, from Tebtynis, would have been recruited to this frontier is not obvious, but there are examples of similar eastern recruits to these legions.<sup>8</sup> He may have volunteered and left Egypt without knowing where he would be assigned. By way of comparison, *P.Mich.* 8.490 and 491, as well as *BGU* 2.423, provide some details concerning naval recruits from Karanis and Philadelphiea who traveled to Italy for assignment there.<sup>9</sup>

According to the third-party address in lines 44-45 on the back of the papyrus, the carrier of Polion's letter was to deliver it to a veteran for forwarding (εἶνα πέμψη εἰς) πατρῆιδ[α]. The carrier may have been someone en route to Egypt or perhaps a designated courier within the postal system. For *BGU* 2.423, a private letter sent to Philadelphiea from an Egyptian recruit in Italy, military post was used, there being a military unit specified in the delivery instructions; whereas for *P.Mich.* 8.490 and 491, private letters sent to Karanis from an Egyptian recruit in Italy, it was not used. Polion apparently did not use military post either. Otherwise, as S.R. Llewelyn has argued, a military unit would have been specified rather than the name of a veteran.<sup>10</sup> Whether or not the veteran had ever met Polion, it would seem that he was acquainted with Polion's family so as to know where to forward the letter. Depending on the specificity of πατρῆιδ[α], the veteran may not have lived in Tebtynis but elsewhere in Egypt or perhaps even somewhere between Egypt and Pannonia. In fact, if the veteran lived in Tebtynis, arguably he would not need to send the letter to Polion's family; they could pick it up from him. It is striking that no place of residence is given for the addressees or the veteran, at least in lines

<sup>6</sup> In J.L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (Philadelphia 1986) 159-164; S.R. Llewelyn, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* 7 (Macquarie 1994) 45-47.

<sup>7</sup> E. Ritterling, "Legio," *RE* 12:1380-1404, 1437-1456; B. Campbell, "Legion," *New Pauly* 7:358, 363.

<sup>8</sup> M. Speidel, *Roman Army Studies* 1 (Amsterdam 1984) 131, n.16.

<sup>9</sup> Note also *P.Mich.* 8.466, a private letter from a soldier in Arabian Bostra to his father in Karanis, 107 CE. Further sources on recruitment in B. Campbell, *The Roman Army, 31 BC-AD 337* (London 1994) 9-15.

<sup>10</sup> Llewelyn (n. 6) 47.

44-45 (but see commentary on line 39), as if the veteran's name alone were sufficient for delivery and the carrier knew where to find him.<sup>11</sup>

Grenfell, Hunt, and Goodspeed suggest a date for the letter sometime in the third century CE, and indeed a date after 212 CE could be assumed from Polion's *nomen*, although Aurelii are attested in the second century.<sup>12</sup> The occasional use of interpuncts could be seen as evidence for an earlier rather than a later date. Other Greek letters with this Latinate feature, cited above, date from the first and second centuries. However, interpuncts are used more frequently in these Greek letters than in the papyrus; this could be an argument for Polion's letter having been written later, in the third century. A final clue comes from the reference to furlough in lines 21-22 (λήψωμμι κομειᾶτον πα|[ρὰ] τοῦ ὑπατεικοῦ), in particular the reference to obtaining leave from "the consular (commander)," which suggests a date for the letter sometime after 214 CE. Once Pannonia was divided circa 103-106 CE, there was only one legion in Pannonia Inferior, *legio II Adiutrix*, under the command of a praetorian governor. This remained the case throughout the second century and into the early third century. A joint consular governorship of both Pannonia Superior and Inferior during 136-137/8 CE is the sole exception. But in 214 CE the province was re-divided, with the two *legiones Adiutrices* now in Pannonia Inferior and under the command of a consular governor.<sup>13</sup> Thus, on the whole, a date in the third century seems preferable. However, a date in the second century cannot be ruled out.

Editing the text, I relied on autopsy as well as color images available from the Center for the Tebtunis Papyri (<http://tebtunis.berkeley.edu>) and infrared images captured while the papyrus was on loan to Brigham Young University for the 2011 American Society of Papyrologists Summer Institute.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Discussion of third parties in addresses in S. Llewelyn, "The εἰς (τήν) οἰκίαν Formula and the Delivery of Letters to Third Persons or to Their Property," *ZPE* 101 (1994) 71-78. However it should be noted that the εἰς (τήν) οἰκίαν formula is quite different from εἰ(ς) πατρειδ[α] on the papyrus.

<sup>12</sup> List of such Aurelii in F.A.J. Hoogendijk and K.A. Worp, "Drei unveröffentlichte griechische Papyri aus der Wiener Sammlung," *Tyche* 16 (2000) 54-55.

<sup>13</sup> A. Mócsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia: A History of the Middle Danube Provinces of the Roman Empire* (London 1974) 92-94, 102, 111; and A. Mócsy, "Pannonia," *RE Suppl.* 9:591-593, where the names of praetorian and consular governors of Pannonia Inferior from 107 to 252 CE are listed.

<sup>14</sup> I would like to thank: the Bancroft Library for permission to publish; all the members of the Summer Institute for their collegiality, teaching, and many suggestions, especially Brigham Young University faculty Stephen Bay, Lincoln Blumell, John Gee, Roger Macfarlane, Thomas Wayment, and guest professors Rodney Ast, Roger Bagnall, Todd Hickey, Nikos Litinas, Maryline Parca, Joshua Sosin, Peter van Minnen, Arthur

UC inv.1468

H x W = 26.6 x 15 cm

Tebtynis

P.Tebt. 2.583 descr.

Second/third century CE

Front, along the fibers:

- Ἀυρήλειο[ς] Πωλείον στρατ[ειώτης λε]γειῶ[νος] β  
 βοηθοῦ · Ἡρωνει [τ]ῶ ἀδελφ[ῶ κα]ἰ Πλουτου τῆ ἀδελ-  
 φῆ καὶ μητρει [ . . ] . Σεινουφει τῆ ἀρτοπόλει καὶ κύρα  
 πλείστα χαίρειν. εὐχομα[ι ὑ]μᾶς ὑγειαίνειν  
 5 γυκτὸς καὶ [ή]μ[έρα]ς, κ[α]ἰ τὸ προ[σ]κύνημα ὑμῶν πάντο-  
 τε ποιῶ παρὰ πᾶσι τοῖς θεοῖς. ἐγὼ δὲ γράφων οὐκ ἀνα-  
 πάφμαι ὑμείν. εἰμεις δὲ κατὰ νοῦ με οὐχ ἔχεται.  
 ἀλλὰ ᾗ τὸ ἕμὸν ποιῶ γράφων εἰμείν πάντοτε,  
 καὶ οὐκ ἀναπάομαι ὑμᾶς φέρων καὶ [κ]ατὰ ψυχὴν ἔ-  
 10 χων εἰμ[ᾶς]. ἀλλ' οὐ[δ]έποτέ μοι ἐγράψ[α]τε πε[ρ]ὶ τῆς ἡ-  
 μετέρας · σωτ[ηρείας π]ῶς ἔχετε. ἐγὼ δ[έ] μεριμνῶ πε-  
 ρὶ ἡμῶν ὅτι λαβόν<τες> ἄ[π'] ἐμοῦ γράματα πολλάκεις  
 οὐδέποτέ μοι ἀντ[ε]γράψατε εἶνα εἰδῶ[τ]ες πῶς ἡμᾶς  
 [ . . ] . ωπ . . [ . . ] . . [ . . ] . . ἀπόντας ἐν τῇ Παγωνεία  
 15 ἔπεμψα πρὸς ἡμᾶς. εἰμει[ς] δὲ οὕτως με ἔχετε  
 ὡς ξένον α . . . [ . . ] . ἐξηλθότα, καὶ χαίρετε ὀ-  
 . . . . . εἰ . σ . . . . . στρατείαν. ἐγὼ δὲ εἰμείν  
 . [ . . ] εἰν οὐκ ἔ . . οἰ . [ . . ] . πεια τεις εἰς [τ]ὴν στρατείαν,  
 ἀλλὰ μετενο[ . . ] . . φ . . ου ἐξήλθα ἀφ' ὑμῶν.  
 20 ἐγὼ δὲ ἐπειστολ[ᾶς] εἰμειν ἔγραψα ἕξ · ἡδὲ ὑμεις  
 με κατὰ νοῦ[ . . . . ] . . λήψωμαι κομειᾶτον πα-  
 [ρὰ] τοῦ ὑπατεικοῦ, καὶ ἐλεύσομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς εἶνα εἰδη-  
 τε ἐμὲ εἶνα ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν. ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐδὲν  
 {οὐδὲν} ἀφ' ἡμῶ[ν . . ] . . τησα εἰς τὴν στρατείαν. ἀλ-  
 25 λ[ᾶ λ]ογείζομα[ι ὑ]μειν ὅτι ἐμοῦ εἰμείν γ[ρ]άφογ-  
 τος ἡμεῖ οὐδεις . [ . . . . ] . γ λόγον ἔχει. εἰδὲ γείτων  
 η . ην ὑμῶν ἐμ[ὲ ἀδ]ελφὸν ἡμεῖ. καὶ ἡμεῖς μοι ἀν-  
 [τ]εγράφατε . . . . . ης μοι γράψαι τεις ἡαν  
 ἡμείν τὴν ἐπε[ . . ] . . . . . εἰς αὐτοῦ μοι πέννατε.  
 30 ἄσπαισαι τὸν π[ ca. 8 ] Ἀφροδείσειν καὶ Ἀτήσιων  
 [ . ] οὔτειον . . [ ca. 8 ] . εἰν τὴν θυγατέρα αὐτοῦ  
 [ . ] . ε . . . . . [ ca. 7 ] . . καὶ τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς

Verhoogt, Klaas Worp (in alphabetical order); the Humanities Research Center at Rice University for added funding; and the *BASP* editors and an anonymous reader for their review and further suggestions.

κ[α]ι Ὀρσινο[υφειν κ]αι τοὺς ὑγειοὺς τῆς ἀδελφῆς  
 τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ Ξ[εγοφῶνε καὶ Ουηγοφε  
 35 [τ]ὸν καὶ προ . [ ca. 10 ] . . . . του Αὐρηλείους  
 [ . . . ] . . . [ ca. 19 ] . φειν την φει-  
 [ ca. 27 ] . . δ[ ca. 5 ]

Left margin, across the fibers:

38 [ - - ] υ[ - - ] ε[ . . . ] τῆγ [ ἐ ] πιστολή[ ν . . . ] . δοτ . .

Back, along the fibers:

39 . . . [ . . ] ειν τεπ . . . . . τοῖς ὑγειοῖς [ καὶ ] Σεινυφει τῆ ἀρτοφωλίσσα  
 . . συγγωνε[ - - ]  
 40 . οπ . . . . . Π[ο]λ[ε]ῖ[ο]νος στρατειότου λεγειῶνος β βοηθοῦ  
 . . . . . [ - - ]  
 41 [ c. 10 ] . . . . [ . . . ] . . . . υ . . [ . ] . εἰ . . . [ c. 7 ] . . .  
 [ . . ] . . . . . [ - - ]  
 42 . [ . ] . . . . . ψ . [ . ] . . . . [ c. 10 ] . θ . . [ . . ] . [ - - ]  
 43 [ . . τ ] ῆς Π[α]ννονείας τῆς κάτω [ . . ] . . [ . . . ] . . [ c. 7 ] η . .  
 [ . . . ] . . [ c. 5 ] . [ - - ]

*vacat*

44 [ ἀ ] ὁδος Ἀκουτονε Λεωγ [ ο ] ὑτρανῶ λειγει[ ᾶ ] γ[ ος - - ]  
 45 Αὐρηλείο Πολείωνος · στρατειότη λεγεῶνος β βοηθοῦ εἶνα πέμψη  
 εἰ(ς) πατρεῖδ[ α - - ]

1 l. Αὐρήλιος Πωλίων στρατιώτης λεγιῶνος 2 l. Ἡρωνι 3 l. μητρί, ἀρτοπώλι-  
 δι, κυρία(?) 4 l. ὑγαίειν 6-7 l. ἀναπαύομαι 7 l. ὑμῖν ὑμεῖς, νοῦν; οὐχ corr.  
 from οὐκ; l. ἔχετε 8 l. ὑμῖν 9 l. ἀναπαύομαι 10 l. ὑμᾶς 10-11 l. ὑμετέρας  
 σωτηρίας 12 l. ὑμῶν, γράμματα πολλάκις 13 l. ἵνα εἰδότης for εἰδῶ(?),  
 ὑμᾶς 14 l. ἀπόντος for ἀπών(?), Παννονία 15 l. ὑμᾶς ὑμεῖς 16 l. ἐξελθόν-  
 τα 17 l. στρατίαν, ὑμῖν 18 l. τις(?), στρατίαν 20 l. ἐπιστολὰς ὑμῖν, ἰδέ  
 21 l. λήψομαι κομμεᾶτον 22 l. ὑπατικοῦ, ἵνα 23 l. ὑμῶν 24 l. ὑμῶν, στρα-  
 τίαν 25 l. λογιζομαι ὑμῖν ὅτι, ὑμῖν 26 l. ὑμῶν(?), ἰδέ 27 l. ὑμῶν(?), ὑμεῖς  
 27-28 l. ἀντιγράψατε 28 l. τις(?) ἐάν(?) 29 l. ὑμῶν(?), πέμψατε 30 l. ἄσπασαι,  
 Ἀφροδίσιον, Ἀτήσιον 33 l. υἰοὺς Ξενοφῶντα; Ουηγοφε: Ο corr. from  
 Α 35 l. Αὐρηλίους 39 l. υἰοῖς, ἀρτοπωλίσσα 40 l. Πωλίωνος στρατιώτου  
 λεγιῶνος 43 l. Παννονίας 44 l. οὐτρανῶ λεγιῶνος 45 l. Αὐρηλίου Πω-  
 λίωνος στρατιώτου λεγιῶνος, ἵνα, πατρίδα



“Aurelius Polion, soldier of *legio II Adiutrix*, to Heron his brother and Ploutou his sister and his mother Seinouphis the bread seller and lady(?), very many greetings. I pray that you are in good health night and day, and I always make obeisance before all the gods on your behalf. I do not cease writing to you, but you do not have me in mind. But I do my part writing to you always and do not cease bearing you (in mind) and having you in my heart. But you never wrote to me concerning your health, how you are doing. I am worried about you because although you received letters from me often, you never wrote back to me so that I may know how you ... while away in Pannonia I sent (letters) to you, but you treat me so as a stranger ... I departed ... and you are glad that(?) ... the army. I did not ... you a ... for the army, but I ... departed from you. I sent six letters to you. The moment you have(?) me in mind, I shall obtain leave from the consular (commander), and I shall come to you so that you may know that I am your brother. For I demanded(?) nothing from you for the army, but I fault you because although I write to you, none of you(?) ... has consideration. Look, your(?) neighbor ... I am your brother. You also, write back to me ... write to me. Whoever of you ..., send his ... to me. Greet my(?) father(?) Aphrodisios and Atesios my(?) uncle(?) ... his daughter ... and her husband and Orsinouphis and the sons of the sister of his mother, Xenophon and Ouenouphis also known as Protas(?) ... the Aurelii ...

(*left margin*) ... the letter ... (*back*) ... to the sons and Seinouphis the bread seller ... from(?) Aurelius(?) Polion, soldier of *legio II Adiutrix* ... from(?) Pannonia Inferior(?) ... Deliver to Acutius(?) Leon(?), veteran of *legio* ..., from Aurelius Polion, soldier of *legio II Adiutrix*, so that he may send it home ...”

1-2 λ[ε]γ[ε]ι[ῶ]ν[ος] β | β[ο]η[θ]οῦ: The sender's legion is given here as well as in lines 40 and 45, all damaged. In their description of the letter, Grenfell, Hunt, and Goodspeed identify Polion as a soldier of *legio II Adiutrix* based on line 40, where they state that “the number of the legion is preserved.”<sup>15</sup> There, β is not clear to me. Still, from the traces it is more conceivable than α. Here, β is perhaps clearer, the bottom stroke being visible at the end of line 1.

- β[ο]η[θ]οῦ · Ἡρω[ν]ει: the function of the interpunct is to divide the sender from the addressees in the prescript. Compare, vice-versa, the address in *T. Vindol. 2.260* (late first/early second century CE): *Flauio Ceriali praef(ecto) coh(ortis) · a Iustino col(lega)*.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Grenfell, Hunt, Goodspeed (n. 4) 325.

<sup>16</sup> See Adams (n. 5) 209.

2-3 The number of addressees and their relation to the sender are not obvious.<sup>17</sup> These lines should be read together with line 39, where Seinouphis reappears.

- Πλουτου: syntactically, this must be the sister's name in the dative, not a masculine genitive. Perhaps it is an abbreviation. Compare also the woman named Protous in the prescript of *P.Tebt.* 2.416 (third century CE): Πρωτοῦτι τῇ ἀδελφῆ.

- μητρει [ . . . ]. Σεινουφει: after Ἡρωνει [τ]ῷ ἀδελφ[ῷ κα]ὶ Πλουτου τῇ ἀδελφῆ, the expected pattern would be: name, definite article, familial relation. Instead, no article precedes μητρει, and it is followed by a name.

- κύρα: if intentional, this spelling of the adjective with vowel loss is rare before the fifth century CE.<sup>18</sup> Earlier parallels in letters from the first and second centuries CE, with μητρὶ followed by κυρία, are found in *P.Corn.* 49, *SB* 20.14132, *P.Oxy.* 12.1481, *SB* 3.6263, *P.IFAO* 2.11, *P.Mich.* 8.491, *P.Mich.* 15.751, and *P.Mich.* 15.752. Alternatively, Κύρα could be a proper name.

4 ὕμας: no hasta from υ appears next to μ so as to preclude εἰμας, but I default to the standard spelling.

6-7 ἀνα|πάφμαι: interchange of αυ and α.<sup>19</sup>

8 ἀλλὰ ᾿γά: inverse elision of ἐ-.<sup>20</sup>

10-11 πε[ρι] τῆς ἡ|μετέρας · σωτ[η]ρείας π[ῶ]ς ἔχετε: the phrase περὶ τῆς σωτηρίας and its equivalents are common in private letters.<sup>21</sup> The phrase πῶς + a form of ἔχω and its equivalents are relatively rare, occurring, for instance, in *SB* 1.4630 (113-120 CE) and *P.Oxy.* 12.1488 (second century CE). They occur together in *P.Brem.* 61 (early second century CE), where the sender asks πῶς δ' ἔχεις and a few lines later wants to be informed περὶ τῆς σωτη[ρίας σου]; in *P.Oxy.* 9.1216 (second/third century CE), where the sender wants to be informed [πε]ρὶ τῆς σωτηρίας \σου, / καὶ πῶς σοί ἐστιν τὰ πρὸς τὸν πενθερ[όν]; and in *P.Gron.* 18 (third/fourth century CE), where the sender wants to be informed περὶ σοῦ καὶ περὶ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ Ὠρίωνος πῶς ἔχων, λεία\ν/ γὰρ φιλῶ

<sup>17</sup> On the larger problem of relation, see E. Dickey, "Literal and Extended Use of Kinship Terms in Documentary Papyri," *Mnemosyne* 57 (2004) 131-176.

<sup>18</sup> F.T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* 1 (Milan 1976) 302.

<sup>19</sup> Gignac (n. 18) 227.

<sup>20</sup> Gignac (n. 18) 319.

<sup>21</sup> Discussion and examples in H. Koskeniemi, *Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr.* (Helsinki 1956) 71-73, 128-130.

αὐτόν. In the lacuna between ἡ||μετέρας and ἔχετε on the papyrus, there is space for approximately seven letters, thus σωτ[ηρείας π]ῶς.

- ἡ||μετέρας · σωτ[ηρείας]: the function of the interpunct is unclear. But compare *T. Vindol.* 2.211 (late first, early second century CE): *de hac · re*, where the preposition and a modifier are divided from the object, because the preposition is proclitic.<sup>22</sup>

11 μεριμνῶ: among other letters from the second and third centuries CE, the verb occurs in *P. Mich.* 8.473, *P. Mich.* 8.498, *O. Claud.* 1.147, *P. Tebt.* 2.315, and *SB* 6.9194. Compare also occurrences of ἀμεριμνῶ and equivalent phrases expressing the relief of worry in private letters, increasingly common in the second and third centuries CE.<sup>23</sup>

13 εἴνα εἰδῶ[τ]ες πῶς ἡμᾶς: while εἰδῶ[τ]ες appears to be a plural participle, Polion must be the subject of the clause. After εἴνα, the optative or far more likely the subjunctive would be expected to follow.<sup>24</sup> If εἰδῶ[τ]ες is not meant as the verb of the ἴνα clause, perhaps it is meant as a genitive participle. After εἰδῶ[τ]ες πῶς ἡμᾶς, an infinitive would be expected to follow in line 14 with ἡμᾶς, i.e., ὑμᾶς, as subject accusative, but it cannot be read. Compare lines 22-23.

14 ἀπόντας: again, Polion must be the subject of the clause despite the apparent plural form. If εἰδῶ[τ]ες is meant to be the verb of the ἴνα clause in line 13, a nominative would be expected here. Perhaps ἀπόντας is meant to be genitive in agreement with εἰδῶ[τ]ες, if that is meant as a genitive. Whatever the syntax, compare the use of ἀπειμι in military context in *BGU* 7.1655 (testament, 169 CE): τέκνα μου στρατευόμ(ενα), ἐπειδὴ διὰ τῆ[ν] στρατείαν ἀπεισιν.

- ἐν τῆ Παιγγωνεία: τ and π are least certain, τ because the papyrus looks as though it is crumpled besides lacunose, and π because it looks as though its right leg has been combined with α, something that does not otherwise occur in the paleography of the letter, at least as it is preserved. In line 43 on the back of the papyrus where [τ]ῆς Παιγγωνείας can be read, π is just as difficult to see. Nevertheless, in favor of the reading are its simplicity and its plausibility in the immediate context of the line as well as in the broader context of the letter, namely the attested disposition of *legio II Adiutrix* in Pannonia.

<sup>22</sup> See Adams (n. 5) 208.

<sup>23</sup> Occurrences and discussion in N. Litinas, "P. Mich. Inv. 1622 (= SB XVI 12589) + Inv. 1580," *ZPE* 163 (2007) 194.

<sup>24</sup> B.G. Mandilaras, *The Verb in the Greek Non-Literary Papyri* (Athens 1973) §§ 531.1, 604-605, 657-658.

15-16 με ἔχετε | ὡς ξένον α . . . [ . ] . ἐξηλθότα: perhaps restore ἄνδ[ρ]α, which would better fit if spelled ἄναδ[ρ]α with vowel development as in *O.Tebt.* 1 (tax receipt, first/second century CE).<sup>25</sup> However, the word is spelled without vowel development in line 32. There is a general parallel to this construction in *P.Ryl.* 4.691 (private letter, third century CE), although the opposite scenario: ἴνα μὴ ὡς ξένον [ἀλ]λ' ὡς νιὸν ἡμῶν αὐτὸν ἔχωσιν. Rendered causally, ἐξηλθότα would suggest that Polion's family did not want him to join the military. But it is also possible that their treatment of him as a stranger began before he departed. At any rate, in *SB* 4.7354 (private letter, second century CE) a father threatens to disown his son if he does not enlist: εὖ οὖν ποιήσεις εἰς καλήν στρατείαν στρατεῦσαι.

16-17 χαίρετε ο | . . . ε ι σ . . . . . στρατείαν: restore ὄ|[τι] or perhaps ὄ|[ταν] after χαίρετε and perhaps τῆν before στρατείαν. It is not clear what Polion's family was glad about. It may have been some unpleasant circumstance subsequent to his enlistment, as if to spite him for departing against their wishes (with ἐξηλθότα rendered causally). Or it may have been the simple fact of his departure.

18 . [ . . ]ειν: perhaps restore {ὕ[μ]εϊν}, with dittography at line break, as in lines 23-24. Because the left portion of what appears to be a crossbar is visible, it could also be read τ[ . . ]ειν. However, the downward stroke extends quite far, and what the sense of that reading would be is not clear. Compare traces with υ at the beginning of ὑπατεικοῦ in line 22.

- οὐκ ἐ . . ο ι . [ . ] . πεια τεις: after ἐγώ in line 17, a verb is expected to follow here beginning with ἐ as **past indicative augment**. **Word division is difficult**. It is also possible to read τεις as τοις.

19 μετενο[ . . ] . . φ . . : presumably restore μετενό[ησ]α and perhaps τῶν, but α cannot easily be read after the lacuna, and τῶν would appear to leave some ink unaccounted for after ν. The verb occurs elsewhere in *BGU* 3.747 (letter of *strategos* to prefect, 139 CE) and *P.Tebt.* 2.424 (private letter, late third century CE).

20 ἔξ · ἥδέ: the function of the interpunct is to divide main clauses.<sup>26</sup>

20-21 ἥδὲ ὑμεῖς | με κατὰ νοῦ[ . . . ] . . . λήψωμαι: coming up to the very edge of the papyrus, the final characters of ὑμεῖς are cramped; the strokes of εἰ also resemble θ, and ζ is **hardly rounded**. **If indeed the pronoun is nominative**, a verb would be expected, comparable to line 7 (εἰμεῖς δὲ κατὰ νοῦ με οὐχ

<sup>25</sup> Gignac (n. 18) 311.

<sup>26</sup> See Adams (n. 5) 209.

ἔχεται). However, space does not seem to allow for ὑμεῖς | με κατὰ νοῦ[ν οὐκ ἔχ]ετῆ much less a conjunction before λήψωμαι. Perhaps οὐκ has been omitted by mistake. As for the apparent lack of conjunction, it would not be a problem if λήψωμαι is actually the main verb after ἡδέ, and ὑμεῖς is meant to be genitive followed by a circumstantial participle.

21 κομειᾶτον: from Latin *commeatus*.<sup>27</sup> It could take time and money for soldiers to obtain leave from the provincial governor or a lower-ranking commander. They first had to make a request, as in *T.Vindol.* 2.176 (late first, early second century CE): *rogo domīne dīgnūm me habeas cui des ζ[ο]μ[ε]ατῦμ;* compare also from the same time period *T.Vindol.* 2.166-177, and from the second century *ChLA* 11.467, *O.Claud.* 4.862, *P.Giss.* 1.41, *P.Mich.* 12.629. Furlough may then have been given by the commander, as in *P.Wisc.* 2.70 (early second century CE) and *O.Florida* 1 (mid-second century CE); or not, as in *O.Claud.* 1.137 (private letter, early second century CE): οὐδεῖς μοι κομειᾶτον ἔδωκεν. In *P.Mich.* 8.466 (private letter, 107 CE), a soldier tells his father that he will visit if the commander begins giving furloughs, which implies that a request made at present would have been to no avail: ἐργασίαν δὲ δώσω εὐθέως ἐὰν ἄρξῃται ὁ ἡγεμῶν διδόναι κομμεᾶτον εὐθέως ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς. In *SB* 16.12570 (private letter, second/third century CE), a soldier tells his brother that he requested furlough, but his commander did not give it to him: οὐ δέδω[κ]έν μοι. Polion does not tell his family that he has been given furlough, or even that he has requested it yet, suggesting that for now his visit is little more than a rhetorical hope. In fact if he were about to visit them, there would be no reason for the imperatives ἀν[τ]εγράφατε and πένψατε in lines 27-29. Apparently, εἰ λαμβάνω κομειᾶτον was a question that soldiers asked fortune tellers often enough to be included in divinatory handbooks like the *Sortes Astrampsychi* (*P.Oxy.* 12.1477 = *PGM* 26).<sup>28</sup>

24 [ . ] . . . τησα: perhaps restore [ἀπ]ετήσα, i.e., ἀπήτησα.

26 γείτων: if he had contact with a neighbor from Tebtynis, Polion may indeed have known that his previous letters were received and not simply lost.

<sup>27</sup> See S. Daris, *Il lessico latino nel greco d'Egitto* (Barcelona 1971) 60 s.v.; Gignac (n. 18) 251; P.I. Price, "Some Roman Ostraca from Egypt," *JJP* 9/10 (1955/1956) 162-164; M. Speidel, *Roman Army Studies* 2 (Stuttgart 1992) 330-341; Bowman et al. (n. 5) 77-78; A.K. Bowman, *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier* (London 1994) 39, 78, 88, 107.

<sup>28</sup> G.M. Browne, *The Papyri of the Sortes Astrampsychi* (Meisenheim 1974) 25-26; Speidel (n. 27) 334, n.18; and most recently F. Naether, *Die Sortes Astrampsychi: Problemlösungsstrategien durch Orakel im römischen Ägypten* (Tübingen 2010) 254.

27-28 ἀν[τ]εγράφατε . . . . . ης; perhaps restore περί + genitive. Compare line 10.

29 τὴν ἐπε[ . . ] . . . . . εἰς αὐτοῦ μοι πένψατε: perhaps restore τὴν ἐπε[ισ]τολήν, which would be expected but is difficult to see and makes little sense of εἰς. Little sense can be made of εἰς regardless. It looks as though the preposition has been inserted or its object omitted by mistake.

30 ἄσπαισαι: interchange of αι and α in medial position.<sup>29</sup>

- τὸν π[ ca. 8 ]: perhaps restore τὸν π[ατέρα μου]. If so it would be interesting that Polion does not address him in the prescript. Other possible restorations are τὸν κ[ύριον μου] and τὸν τ[ιμώτατον], although π seems to fit the trace before the lacuna better than κ or τ.

- Ἀφροδείσειν: declension -ις, -ίου, -ίω, -ιν.<sup>30</sup>

31 [ . ]ουτειον: perhaps restore [μ]ου and read θεῖον.

33 ὑγειούς: inserted γ as vowel glide.<sup>31</sup>

34 Ξεγοφῶνε: ν is dotted because the middle stroke cannot be seen even in the infrared image. But ξ fits the slight trace visible at the top edge of the lacuna, and the name is attested at Tebtynis from the second century CE.

- the corrected letter could also be λ or the first half of μ.

35 [τ]ὸν καὶ προ[ . ca. 10 ] . . . . . του Αὐρηλείου; after his Egyptian name at the end of line 34, another name for Ouenophis could be expected to follow [τ]ὸν καὶ, such as the name Protas, which is attested at Tebtynis from the second century CE. Perhaps restore [τ]ὸν καὶ Προτ[ᾶν καὶ ὑγει]οῦς αὐτοῦ Αὐρηλείου. If Αὐρηλείου is masculine plural accusative, presumably it would be followed by two or more individual names, as in *P.Corn.* 18.10, *P.Oxy.* 1.80.18, *P.Oxy.* 17.2136.10, *P.Oxy.* 34.2711.5, *P.Oxy.* 49.3476.20, *P.Oxy.* 66.4530.13, all from the third century CE though none of them letters. It also has to be considered that word division may be Αὐρηλείου σ-. Elsewhere on the papyrus, in lines 9 (ἐ-), 10 (ή-), and 16 (ό-), the first character of a word ends the line despite there being space for more.

38 [- -]ε[ . . . ] τὴν [ἐ]πιστολή[ν . . . ] . δοτ . . : a preceding verb is expected, but space does not seem to allow for ἔ[λαβον] τὴν [ἐ]πιστολή[ν, in

<sup>29</sup> Gignac (n. 18) 195.

<sup>30</sup> Gignac (n. 18) 25-26.

<sup>31</sup> Gignac (n. 18) 72.

particular. At the end of the line, -δοτ . . could be read -δοτου. Perhaps it is a name, such as Ἐρμ]οδότου or Ζην]οδότου.

39-43 Some information from the address in lines 44-45 is also found here, and it seems that these difficult lines also contain an address, perhaps with instructions for delivery of Polion's letter or any others that may be sent to him in return.<sup>32</sup>

39 . . . [ . . ]ειν: perhaps an infinitive as imperative, or ἐν to be followed by a place name.

- τεπ . . . . . : reference to Τερ/btynis is appealing, and Τεπτ- could be read, but afterwards it is difficult to make sense of the traces on that reading. If the town is referenced here, perhaps it is abbreviated.

- τοῖς υἱοῖς [καὶ] Σεινυφει: in the prescript, there are at least three addressees, Polion's brother, sister, and mother, named in that order. Seinouphis, the mother and bread seller, is the only one also named here. It could be supposed that τοῖς υἱοῖς refers to the brother and sister, but the general use of υἱός as child is rare; see *PSI* 9.1039.37-38 (third century CE). If that is not satisfying, it becomes a question of whose sons these are and why they are not mentioned in the prescript.

- τῆ ἀρτοφωλείσα: in the prescript, Seinouphis' occupation is indicated by the noun ἀρτοπῶλι, presumably for ἀρτοπῶλιδι.<sup>33</sup>

40 Πολεξίφονος: παρά or ἀπό + Αὐρηλίου could be expected to precede, but neither a preposition nor the name can be read.

43 τ]ῆς Παννονείας τῆς κάτω: *legio II Adiutrix* was ἐν Παννονία τῆ κάτω according to Dio (55.24.3). To be more specific, the legion was stationed at Aquincum. *CIL* 8.25740 reads: *veteranus leg. II adiutricis piae fidelis quae habitat in Panonia inferiore Acinco*.<sup>34</sup>

- η . . [ . . . ]: η . . could be read ηλθ-. If so, perhaps restore ἦλθ[ον . . ]. Albeit highly speculative, it is not impossible that Polion explains here on the back of the letter that he is currently on expedition from Pannonia. Soldiers belonging to the *legiones Adiutrices* are known to have been on expedition outside the province. For instance, a group of third-century tombstones placed by fellow soldiers has been found in Byzantium, one for an eagle-bearer be-

<sup>32</sup> See Llewelyn (n. 6) 29-41.

<sup>33</sup> For the interchange of -πωλις and -πωλίσσα see H.-J. Drexhage, "Feminine Berufsbezeichnungen im hellenistischen Ägypten," *MBAH* 11.1 (1992) 70-79.

<sup>34</sup> See Ritterling (n. 7) 1446.

longing to *legio II Adiutrix* and another for a trumpeter belonging to *legio I Adiutrix*, the latter named Aurelius Surus, presumably of Syrian birth. In his discussion of the tombstones, M. Speidel hypothesizes that *legio II Adiutrix* especially was mobile.<sup>35</sup>

44 [ἀπ]όδος; **the vocative subject of this imperative would be the unmentioned carrier of the letter who was to deliver it to the veteran, so that the veteran could then send (εἶνα πέμψη) it to the addressees proper.**<sup>36</sup>

- Ἀκουτονε: though it appears to be vocative, the case must be dative, given [ο]ὔτρανῶ. Compare the name Akoutas occurring in the body of *P.Tebt.* 2.416 (private letter, third century CE): Ἀκουτᾶτι τῶ ἀδελφῶ; **also in the address of *P.Tebt.* 2.422** (private letter, third century CE): ἀπόδ(ος) Ἀκουτᾶτι. Closer are the names Akoutianos and Akoution. For instance, there is a soldier named Acutianus in *Chr.Mitt.* 372.6 (second century CE): Ἀκουτιανῶ. Perhaps the veteran that was to forward Polion's letter had as a Latin name either Acutius or Acutianus.

- Λεωγ: presumably an abbreviation of Λεων(ίδη), a rather common name among soldiers at Oxyrhynchus in the third century, Λέων(τι), **or Λεων(τίφ).**

- [ο]ὔτρανῶ: omission of ε.<sup>37</sup>

44-45 λειγει[ῶ]γ[ος - - -] | Ἀῦρηλειο: presumably restore παρά] or ἀπό] at the end of the line before Ἀῦρηλειο. Grenfell, Hunt, and Goodspeed restore π(αρά)].<sup>38</sup> Because the margin of the papyrus is gone, it cannot be certain that there was no text between λειγει[ῶ]γ[ος and the expected preposition. However, line 44 is written about twice as large as the other lines on the back. Thus despite the way it appears in transcription, there is probably not room for the name of the veteran's legion before the expected preposition at the end of the line. If the name was not given, perhaps it was because his legion was the same as Polion's.

45 Πολείονος · στρατεῖότη: the function of the interpunct is to divide the name from the profession. Compare *T.Vindol.* 2.315 (late first, early second century CE): *ad Vocusium Africanum · praefectum*; and *T.Vindol.* 2.345 (late first, early second century CE): *[pe]r A[t]tonem · decurionem*.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Speidel (n. 8) 132.

<sup>36</sup> See Llewelyn (n. 6) 35.

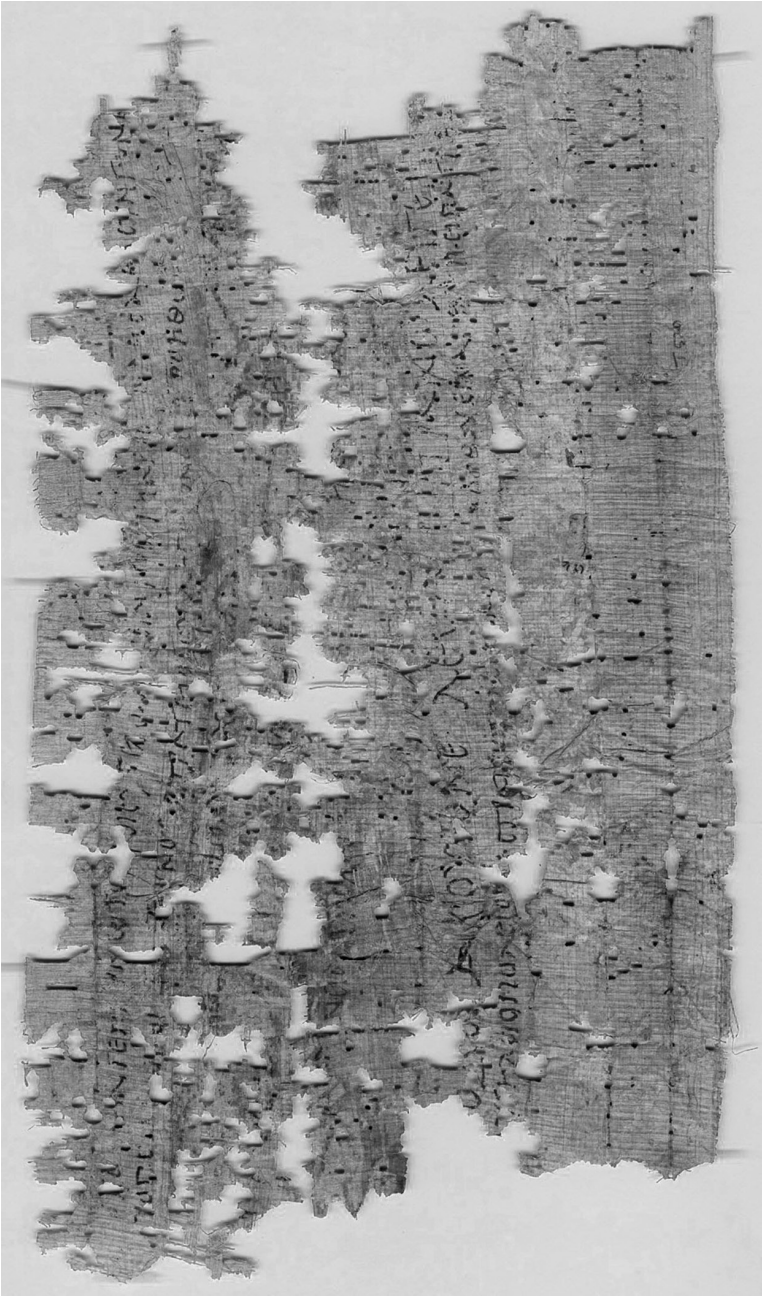
<sup>37</sup> Gignac (n. 18) 305-306.

<sup>38</sup> Grenfell, Hunt, Goodspeed (n. 4) 325.

<sup>39</sup> See Adams (n. 5) 209, with other instances from Wadi Fawakhir.







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