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Copres and Domnio. Remarks on P.Mich. VII 460 and 461

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Copres and Domnio. Remarks on *P.Mich*. VII 460 and 461*

Abstract – Re-edition of *P.Mich.* VII 461 (Egypt, IV century AD) and some remarks on *P.Mich*. VII 460, written respectively on the *recto* and the *verso* of the same papyrus sheet, and most likely drafts and/or copies of Latin petitions in epistolary form.

Keywords – Latin papyri, petition, papyrus draft, Late Roman Egypt, Late Latin epistolography

Federica Micucci (1989–2021)
In loving memory

This paper dwells on two Latin documentary texts on papyrus from the IV century AD, found in Karanis in the spring of 1930: *P.Mich*. VII 460 and 461, written respectively on the *recto* and the *verso*[1] of the same papyrus fragment P.Mich. inv. 5756[2]. Both texts, most likely drafts whose sent copies are so far lost, present particular reading difficulties due to the damaged papyrus fibre and the weak ink; both have been published, but – especially for the *verso* – the editions leave much room for improvement. The first text examined, that on the *verso* (*P.Mich*. VII 461[3]) will be completely re-published and commented upon (**1**); the second, that on the *recto* (*P.Mich*. VII 460[4]), having been more thoroughly published earlier, will be more briefly dwelt on (**2**) and mainly used to reconstruct (with due caution) the original context involving the two documents in a conclusive paragraph (**3**). Whereas the *recto* offers fifteen incomplete Latin lines, hardly allowing any reconstruction of the flow of the original text, the re-edition of the *verso* bears more fruit, inasmuch as it reveals seven almost complete Latin lines concluding a long and

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[1] «The pasting of the sheets of papyrus is seen on the *verso* some nine centimeters from the bottom» (HENRY A. SANDERS, *Michigan Papyri VII. Latin papyri*, Ann Arbor 1947: p. 106). One cannot be sure whether the text on the *recto* (460) was written before that on the *verso* (461): one might just assume, and not conclusively, that the original papyrus was employed as it generally was, first on the *recto* and then on the *verso*. If so, the scribe might have cut the sheet from the original roll before or after drafting the text on the *recto*, and then turned the *verso* 90° and drafted another text in it. This text in the *verso* happened therefore to be drafted along the fibres just as that on the *recto*, and perpendicular to it. The sheet was then subsequently cut, or at any rate one large portion of it went lost.

[2] Respectively TM 70015 and 70016. What little is known about their location and archaeological context is in the *editio princeps*. Images are available at http://ipap.csad.ox.ac.uk/4DLink4/4DACTION/IPAPwebquery?vPub=P.Mich.&vVol=7&vNum=460 and http://ipap.csad.ox.ac.uk/4DLink4/4DACTION/IPAPwebquery?vPub=P.Mich.&vVol=7&vNum=461. The papyrus, once kept in Ann Arbor (MI), was moved in 1953 to the Cairo Museum in Egypt, where it is currently preserved. Its inventory number (5756) was modified when the papyrus was given back to Cairo; the museum personnel, whom I have addressed in order to obtain a better photograph, has allegedly no record of the new numbers nor any correspondence table where the old and new inventory numbers are kept. I have, therefore, been unable to work on a different image from the one available online; only a month before submitting a final draft of this work I received by B. Haug and M. Tsuneishi (Ann Arbor), whom I warmly thank, a slightly better photograph of the *recto* which happened to be in their archive. Details on the rich and complex history of the return of the Michigan papyri from Ann Arbor to Egypt are in the recent BRENDAN HAUG, *Politics, Partage, and Papyri: Excavated Texts Between Cairo and Ann Arbor (1924–1953)*, «AJA» 125 (2021), pp. 143–163.

[3] A preliminary re-edition, with a brief commentary, I have already produced for the forthcoming MARIA CHIARA SCAPPATICCIO (ed.), *A* Corpus of *Latin Texts on Papyrus*, Cambridge 2022.

[4] This too will appear in the forthcoming *Corpus of Latin Texts on Papyrus*.

articulated text. This text can be associated with several other Latin documentary texts from Late Antique Egypt, and – just like them – features several syntactic and lexical qualities to be also found in contemporary Latin epistolography.

1. *P.Mich.* VII 461: draft of a letter. The text was first published in 1947 in the seventh volume of the *Michigan Papyri* by Henry A. Sanders, who labelled it as the draft of a document with no connection to the text on the *recto* (*P.Mich.* VII 460), and dated it to the IV century AD. James F. Gilliam made a few remarks on the text in his review in 1950[5]. Tiziano Dorandi republished the text in the *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores* (volume XLII, no. 1224) in 1994, incorporating in it Gilliam's remarks and a few improvements by Jan-Olof Tjäder[6]. This re-edition allowed the detection of the name *Copre* also in 461 (l. 6), thus establishing a connection with 460, where a 'Copres' is clearly mentioned (l. 4 *Copres parens eius*). After the reassessment here discussed, the text can be safely framed as the draft of a communication (maybe a petition?) from a lower to a higher-ranking official, most likely within an Eastern provincial bureau.

The sheet measures 24.5 cm in length and 14 cm in height. Only the upper margin is lost, and we can now see the conclusion of the original document. Because within the *recto* the reader is left with the right segments of originally much longer lines, one can suppose that in the *verso* many more lines than the surviving ones were contained, and that the missing upper portion of the text was larger than the preserved lower one. However, in order to assess how much of the text we have lost, we need to know how long the lines were in the *recto*, because the width of the sheet in the *recto* corresponds to its height in the *verso* (as explained in fn. 1). The *recto*'s height, roughly 24.5 cm, matches the data gathered from papyri rolls in Roman Egypt[7]; but the width of a sheet cut from a roll must have varied wildly. If an original (and actually employed) document such as the beautifully and completely preserved Latin letter in *ChLA* XIX 687 (see below) is contained in a roughly square sheet, *P. Abinn.* 1 – a draft of a Latin petition – and *P.Abinn.* 2 (again, see below), an actually sent Latin letter, are both contained in sheets that had more width than height. So far there is no way to understand how many lines one has lost from the text on the *verso*.

The content is difficult to reconstruct. The sender seems in need of some assistance, as he hopes a certain matter will be investigated and that he will always be able to burden the person

[5] JAMES F. GILLIAM, *Latin Papyri in the University of Michigan Collection by Henry A. Sanders* (review), «AJPh» 71 (1950), pp. 432–438: p. 437.

[6] «Il testo, pubblicato in maniera insoddisfacente dal Sanders, è divenuto più chiaro grazie a una revisione parziale del Tjäder» (T. DORANDI in *ChLA* XLII, p. 58).

[7] 25 to 30 cm according to WILLIAM A. JOHNSON *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus*, Toronto 2004, pp. 141-143. See also ANTONIA SARRI, *Material Aspects of Letter Writing in the Graeco-Roman World*, Berlin-Boston 2018, pp. 107-113; and JEAN-LUC FOURNET, *Disposition et réalisation graphique des lettres et des pétitions protobyzantines. Pour une paléographie «signifiante» des papyrus documentaires*, in JAAKKO FRÖSÉN-TIINA PUROLA-ERJA SALMENKIVI (eds.), *Proceedings of the 24th Congress of Papyrology, Helsinki, 1-7 August, 2004*, Helsinki 2007, pp. 353-367, for Late Antique letters in papyrus and how they were laid out in the papyri sheets.

he is writing to with his own problems; i.e., that he will always remain on his good side. This addressee must be acquainted with some facts (l. 9 *[r]eferere ad scientiam auctoritatis tuae*) and he – or someone else referred to with the third person singular – must operate accordingly, to improve the sender's current predicament, perhaps concerning an ongoing trial or investigation (l. 5 *inquisitos uero minim[e] desereret*; l. 8 *efficientissime* ⟦*e*⟧*inquisita rei acumine*). Someone called Romullus is destined to a *ciuitas* of uncertain name (ll. 5–6), perhaps in his capacity of a clerk in a state bureau. No indication exists that the text, although found in Egypt, was produced in that region. The devices employed for altering the text of this draft – erasures through long horizontal lines, and interlinear additions in smaller characters – have already been witnessed in another well-known draft of a Latin document from Egypt: the petition of Flavius Abinnaeus to the Emperors Constans and Constantius II (*P.Abinn.* 1: see below).

Producing such documents most likely required combining some of the Latin those officials had acquired in specific schools in the Roman East (Constantinopolis, Antiochia, Berytus, and Alexandria[8]) with stock formulae they could find in companions[9]. It was expected from the clerks of provincial bureaus after Diocletian's reforms to be capable of at least reading and writing Latin[10], and the scribe of 461 is clearly able to put together a more or less correct text and to make choices in what he wants to say, and how he wants to say it. It cannot be determined whether the main character of the text – the person who says 'I' – is also the one actually writing, or the scribe and the speaking person were two different individuals; however, these clerks being most likely literate, one may safely suspect the speaking person and the writing person to be one and the same. One the other hand, it is quite certain that he is addressing a superior in rank from l. 9 *pusilitatis meae … ad scientiam auctoritatis tuae domine*. Latin documents from Late Antique East (mainly from Egypt) that are meant to someone higher in the social ladder than the sender survive in little quantity, and they can be broken down into two typologies:

(**1**) The recommendation letters, or *epistulae commendaticiae*, which are precedent from an early period in Roman epistolary tradition and which were used from an individual to recommend another to a third party (usually higher in rank[11]). They are:

[8] Details on this cultural phenomenon are widely given in the recently published ALESSANDRO GARCEA-MICHELA ROSELLINI-LUIGI SILVANO (eds.), *Latin in Byzantium I. Late Antiquity and Beyond*, Turnhout 2019, particularly in GIANFRANCO AGOSTI, *Modelli latini per poemi greci? Sulla possibile influenza di autori latini sulla poesia epica tardoantica* (pp. 313-331, notably pp. 315-316), ALESSANDRO GARCEA, *Latin in Byzantium: Different Forms of Linguistic Contact* (pp. 43-70), and ANDREA PELLIZZARI, *La lingua degli Ἰταλοί. Conoscenza e uso del latino nell'Oriente greco di IV secolo attraverso l'opera di Libanio* (pp. 131-142).

[9] A companion with epistolary models is in *P.Bon.* 5 (late III-IV AD, TM 64278 / LDAB 5498).

[10] See fn. 8; some details also in RAFFAELLA CRIBIORE, *Higher Education in Early Byzantine Egypt: Rhetoric, Latin and the Law*, in R. BAGNALL (ed.), *Egypt in the Byzantine World*, *300–700*, Cambridge 2007, pp. 47-66.

[11] This typology, typical of Latin epistolography, is described in PAOLO CUGUSI, *Evoluzione e forme dell'epistolografia latina nella tarda repubblica e nei primi due secoli dell'impero*, Roma 1983, pp. 40-41; 111-114. The paper does not cover the Late Antique developments of the genre. Something in this respect can be found in ANTONIO GARZYA, *L'epistolografia letteraria tardoantica*, in MARIO MAZZA-CLAUDIA GIUFFRIDA MANMANA (eds.), *La trasformazioni della cultura nella tarda antichità*, Roma 1985, pp. 347-373.

a. *ChLA* XIX 687 (AD 317–24[12]), letter from the *rationalis* Vitalis to the *praeses Phoeniciae* Achillius, to recommend his colleague Theophanes (both work in the chancery of the province of Thebaid[13]);

b. *P.Ryl*. IV 623 (AD 317–24[14]), from the same sender to recommend the same colleague, this time the addressee being an otherwise unknown Delphinius. The letter is identical to the former, but much worse preserved;

c. P.CtYBR inv. 590 (AD 317–24[15]), from Sperantius (another clerk in the Thebaid provincial office) to the aforementioned Vitalis;

d. P.Berol. inv. 25673 (IV AD), most likely a recommendation letter, but very little is preserved; the editor believes it to have come as well from the office of *prouincia Thebaidos*[16];

e. P.Misc. inv. III 21a (IV AD), most likely a recommendation letter, but very little is preserved; the sender is a Maximus, the addressee a Barbaserna[17].

(**2**) The petitions:

a. *P.Abinn.* 1 (AD 340–2[18]), a petition from the *praefectus alae* Flavius Abinnaeus to the emperors Constans and Constantius II, in order to be confirmed in his position as commander of his military unit quartered in the village of Dionysias (he refers to it as *ala Dionysiados*);

b. *P.Lond.* V 1792 (IV AD[19]), a letter from Eulogius, an ἐπίτροποc asking something of his superior (ll. 10–11 *pretium cuius peto sanctita|[tem tuam*);

c. *BGU* XIX 2760 (late IV AD[20]), a partially preserved document which is nevertheless clearly addressed to an emperor (l. 1 *tri]umfator semper Auguste*).

d. Possibly, also *P.Mich.* VII 460 (see below).

e. P.Lips. inv. 1033+271 *recto*, from IV century AD, where the end of a letter (?) is preserved[21]. The formulae[22] make it clear that someone superior in rank is being addressed, so a petition is conceivable; but the content and the exact typology escape us.

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[12] = P.Strasb. inv. Lat. 1, TM 70001.

[13] Details on the archive of the said Theophanes in ALESSANDRO MOSCADI, *Le lettere dell'archivio di Teofane*, «Aegyptus» 50 (1970), pp. 88-154; and in JOHN F. MATTHEWS, *The Journey of Theophanes: Travel, Business, and Daily Life in the Roman East*, New Haven 2006.

[14] TM 17314.

[15] TM 69908.

[16] No TM number so far. The first edition, soon to be followed by one in the *BGU* from the same author, is in SERENA AMMIRATI, Cum in omnibus bonis … *un inedito frammento berlinese tra papirologia e paleografia*, in Ianuensis non nascitur sed fit. *Studi per Dino Puncuh*, Genova 2019, pp. 79-93.

[17] No TM number so far. The papyrus has been studied by myself and is forthcoming in *Aegyptus* 100. Its provenance is completely unknown; it might have been written in Egypt or outside it, anywhere in the East.

[18] TM 10014.

[19] TM 35255.

[20] TM 69961.

[21] TM 69996. The papyrus is also being republished by A. Bernini (Heidelberg).

[22] I am informed by A. Bernini himself that the formula *domine benignissime* is clearly visible in the re-edited text.

As specified above, *P.Mich.* VII 461 can be located among the second group, because it bears none of the features of a recommendation letter on papyrus as we know them. One notices how all of these specimens cluster in the IV century, which is a further clue to Sanders' initially proposed dating for *P.Mich.* VII 460 and 461.

Why the text, or rather the papyrus fragment containing these two texts, ended up in Karanis where it was found, is discussed in the final paragraph of this paper (**3**).

The script employed is a new Roman cursive, or *litterae communes*, devoid of any feature of provincial chancery writing[23], which appears not to have been a requirement for the documentary typologies listed above, let alone for a draft text. The scripts in *P.Mich.* 460 and 461 are very similar to each other: one notices a particular resemblance, despite the worse conservation status of 461, between 460 as a whole and the left side of ll. 5–9 of 461, where the ink is best preserved. It is not possible to determine whether they are the same hand or not. Editors were certain of a change of hand in l. 7, from *contentus* onwards[24], but this too cannot be stated with certainty. It is likely, however, that the sentence from *contentus* onwards was added after some time (see below). The scribe is prone to make ligatures *ta* and *tu* where the vowel is drawn directly from the upper portion of *t*, and remains above it; *u* itself is often written above the preceding letter, only slightly slanting to the right (l. 5 *rom**u**llo*, l. 6 *inq**u**isitos*). Final *m*'s (l. 3 *dominicaru**m***, l. 7 *iusione**m***, l. 8 *daturu**m***) and *r*'s (l. 4 *prohibentu**r***) are made into long and elaborate curls, pointing downwards. Note at l. 7 *i**gi**tur* with *i* directly protruding from the top of *g*; the *b* still *panse-à-gauche* in l. 4 *prohi**b**entur* (apparently the only instance in both documents); the abbreviation *p- p-* at l. 5, the first *p* being surmounted by an almost horizontal stroke slightly bent and facing down, the second by a dot.

Other instances of *b panse-à-gauche* in Late Antique Latin manuscripts – where the 'modern' *b panse-à-droite* is overwhelmingly attested – are in the aforementioned *ChLA* XIX 687, right at the beginning (l. 3 *cum in omni**b**us **b**onis **b**enignitas*…), but also in *P.Iand.* IV 68b ⸸ *Fl(auius) Symeonius cornicularius o**b**tul(it)* ⸸ (VI cent. AD)[25]. As for the abbreviation marks, the first one is perhaps to be identified as the so-called *titulus*, the horizontal bar rarely attested in Latin documents on papyrus both for marking figures and for signalling abbreviations (a similar instance is in *SB* I 1010 and *P.Thomas* 20, two *agnitiones bonorum possessionis*[26]); the second one, the high dot, is as well rare, but attested for the very same purpose (e.g. in the already mentioned *SB* I 1010). Combinations of different abbreviation markers in the same syntagm can be seen e.g. in P.Vindob. inv. L 76 (IV–V AD[27]), a military receipt for *annonae*.

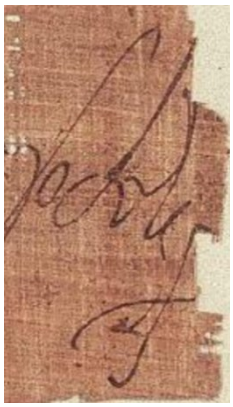
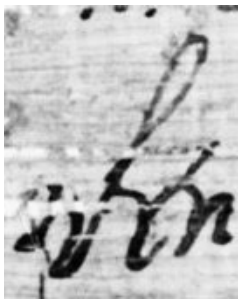
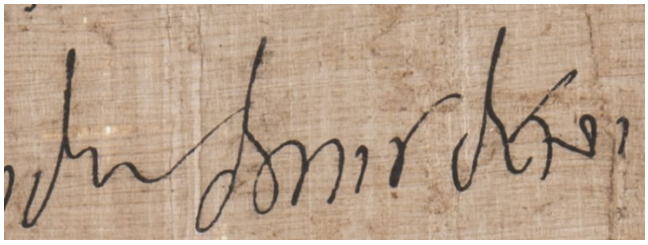
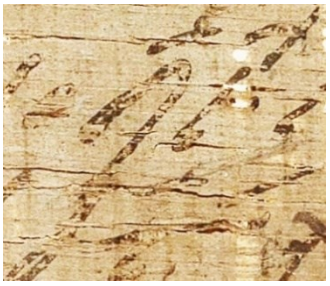
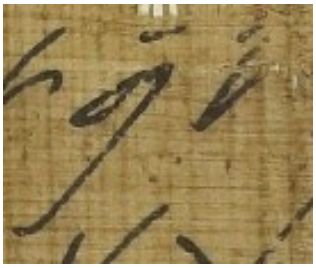
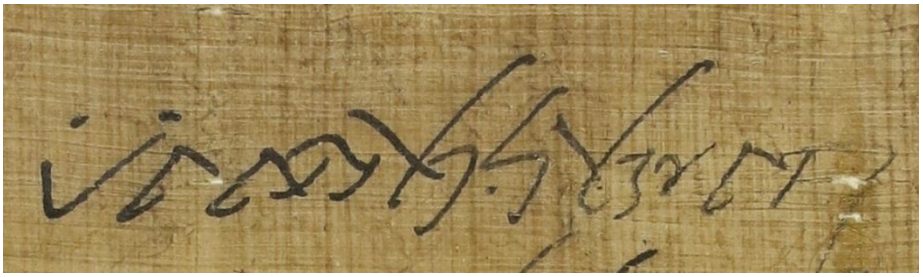
[23] Papyri in new Roman cursive where the script is artificially elongated and 'solemnized' in order to give it a more 'dignified' appearance without resorting to the forbidden *litterae caelestes* are attested in the Egyptian provinces of Late Antiquity. Details in GIORGIO CENCETTI, *Dall'unità al particolarismo grafico. Le scritture cancelleresche romane e quelle dell'alto medioevo*, in *Il passaggio dall'antichità al Medioevo in Occidente*, Spoleto 1962, pp. 237–64 [= ID., in GIOVANNA NICOLAJ (ed.), *Giorgio Cencetti. Scritti di paleografia*, Dietikon-Zürich 1993, pp. 225–271]; FLAVIA MANSERVIGI-MELANIA MEZZETTI, *The Didyma Inscription: Between Legislation and Palaeography*, in MARKUS HILGERT (ed.), *Understanding Material Text Cultures: A Multidisciplinary View*, Berlin-Boston 2016, pp. 203–242, particularly pp. 204-210; and GIULIO IOVINE, *Cinque papiri inediti in corsiva nuova romana dalla* Papyrussammlung *di Vienna (P.Vindob. inv. L 13; 33; 34; 43; 154)*, «Scripta» 13 (2020), pp. 87–101: pp. 87–88.

[24] «Two hands are easily distinguishable; one covers the first six and a half lines; the other, the last three» (H. A. SANDERS in *P.Mich.* VII, p. 106); «sono ben evidenti due mani di scrittura» (T. DORANDI in *ChLA* XLII, p. 58).

[25] TM 78417.

[26] Respectively AD 249 (TM 23051) and AD 269–70 (TM 78797).

[27] = *ChLA* XLIV 1302, TM 70089.

		
↑ *P.Iand.* IV 68b: *o**b**tuli(t)* ☩	↑ *P.Mich.* VII 461, l. 4: *-i**b**en-*	↑ *P.Mich.* VII 461, l. 5: ***p ṗ***
		← *ChLA* XIX 687, l. 3 *-**b**us **b**onis **b**eni-*
→ *P.Thomas* 20, l. 4 ***q̄**(ui) **ē**(t)* → *SB* I 1010, l. 2 ***q̄**(ui) **ē**(t)*		
↓ *SB* I 1010, l. 1 ***u**(iro) **ṗ**(erfectissimo) praef(ecto)· Aegypti*		
		

Overall, the paleographical analysis of 461 and the comparison with the samples of the lists

above, as well as that with specimens from later Egypt[28] confirms Sanders' original dating; nothing more precise can be said.

This is how Dorandi's text appears in the *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores*:

(m¹)] in hac [
]gatio municio pr..t.i..uno..[
] homini copumque feriorum ni hic [
...]o prohibentu(r) ab[.]adet adque eund[.....]riunt a facia[...
5 mili( ) distinare (?) [.....] dendorom^{u} lbspp adequerunt ciuitatem
inquisitos uero mini[...] esercarintor.t. Copre poss. uide referre etiam ad-
teptus igitu(r) debent [
(m²) dux torr.. inter[....] quo[...]crico preclo pa[
amplitudini ..[....]abet tr[.]diemque et meam qui in yridem intrepid..t.bad[
10 frui.ili [.]ensum ert[.]induro[....]..us rerum.t. est[..]mant[.]rio[.]is[.] uideris alter[

The new text, on the other hand, runs as follows[29]:

— — —
|1 [. . . . .] . nemque[. . . .] . [±30]
|1a]tionem]
|2 [. . . . .]rogationem dor . [.] . . . [.] . . . . . ne[± 30]
|3 [. . . . .] dominicarum qu‹a›e per Domnionem . [. . . . .] . [± 20]
|3a e . [. . . . .] . d[. . . . .]mea con . i . [. . .]
|4 [. . . .] . . . prohibentur [a]b eadem adque eundem [. . . . .] . [. . . .] . cro c[u]rae asociari] misi
|4a to [re] . . . . . am ciuitatem asociare . . speciali ‘et’ ob ‘h’anc rem nisi
|5 [mili] distina[ndum] . . . . [. . .]edendo Romullo p(rae)p(osito) ad [Cephanam ciuitatem]
|6 inquisitos uero minim[e] desereret memorato Copre possit [uede] referrere etiam ad
|7 auctorita[t]em tua . [. . . . .] benign[i]ssime contentus igitur ut ante iusionem
|8 amplitudinis tuae . . [[. . . . .]eres] efficientissime [e]inquisita rei acumine si per eum saepe daturum
|9 pusilitatis meae neces[sitat]es [r]eferere ad scientiam auctoritatis tuae domine

1] in hac [*edd.* || **2**]gatio municio pr . . t . i . . uno . . [*edd.* || **3**] homini copumque feriorum ni hic [*edd.* || **4** [. . .]o prohibentu(r) *edd.* | ab[.]adet *(dubitanter an* ab[r]adet*) Sanders* | adque eund[. . . . .] *edd.* |]riunt a facia[. . . *edd.* |]am don[.] mea *additum supra* a facia *edd.* || **5** mili( ) *(dubitanter an breuiatum verbum pro* miles *vel similia Sanders) edd.* | distinare (?) *Tjäder apud Dorandi:* distinguit *Sanders* | *supra ultimas litteras verbi* distinguit *deletas siglum cum* peperit [. .] nole[.]as *uidit Sanders: om. Dorandi* | [. . . . .] dendorom^{u} lbspp adequeruntque utru(m) *Sanders qui de* re]dendorom *vel de* Dendera *cogitauit*: adequerunt ciuitatem *Tjäder apud Dorandi* | *supra* ciuitatem *deletum* id reu[. . .]ab eo ho‘u’nc r[.]m[*vidit Sanders: om. Dorandi* || **6** inquisitos *Tjäder apud Dorandi:* inquisitas *Sanders* | mini[. . .]esercarintor . t . *edd.* | Copre poss . *Tjäder apud Dorandi:* c . preposs . *Sanders* | uide referre etiam ad- *Tjäder*

[28] Only a few Latin documents are preserved from V and VI century AD Egypt, among which one finds the dated P.Vindob. inv. L 75 (= *ChLA* XLIV 1301, AD 465–7, TM 70088), an Imperial constitution, *P.Ryl.* IV 609 (AD 505, TM 17309), an *epistula probatoria*, and P.Vindob. inv. L 3 (= *ChLA* XLIII 1243, AD 561, TM 70035); then the datable P.Vindob. inv. L 66 (= *ChLA* XLIV 1293, AD IV–V, TM 70080) and L 83 (= *ChLA* XLIV 1307, AD IV–V, TM 70094), two official documents, and L 169 (AD V–VI, TM 832101), another very fragmentary *epistula probatoria*.

[29] Given the particular placement of the insertions within the lines of the document, I prefer – for the sake of clarity – not to adhere to all the Leiden criteria in presenting the text: namely, the inserted sequences will not be placed between ‘…’ but above the lines where they have been originally written, in smaller characters.

apud Dorandi qui uide *erasum esse animaduertit:* uidere errore etiam ad- *Sanders* || **7** *hanc lineam in duas lineas diuiserunt edd.:* -teptus igitu(r) debent [. . . . . *(dubitanter an* ad-teptus *i.e.* ad-temptus *i.e.* attentus*) et* dux torr . . inter[. . . .]quo[. . .]crico precio pa[. . . . . (torr . . *Tjäder apud Dorandi:* terrae *Sanders)* || **8** amplitudini . . [*Gilliam Dorandi:* amolitu(r) diminu[*(dubitanter an* amplitu(r)*) Sanders* |]abet tr[.]diemque et meam qui in yridem intrepid . . t . bad[*edd.* || **9** fribili *(dubitanter an* frioli *pro* frivuli *vel* frivoli*) Sanders*: frui . ili *Dorandi* | [.]ensum ert[.]induro[. . . .] . . . us rerum . t . est[. .]mant[.]rio[.]is[.] videris alter[*edd.*

'… of the lordly, which through Domnion … are forbidden, from the same and to (?) the same … (… to be associated: *erased*) [*added*: … and I sent … associate … special, and for this reason, unless …] … having the *praepositus* Romullus been destined to (the town of Cephas (?): *erased*) [*added*: the town of …], he would by no means let down those who are inquired after, and thanks to the abovementioned Copres he would be able to report to your authority (?) … most kind. Therefore, happy as I'd be in the presence of (*or:* before?) the command of your immensity … the matter having been inquired after with acuity and utmost diligence, if it will be constantly granted through him to report the necessities of my littleness to the knowledge of your authority, my lord'.

1 After *m* I see the faintest dot-like traces of a letter (forming roughly a circular shape at the bottom of the writing line), a *u* written above, and an oblique letter with a stroke protruding from it, which I identified as *e*. It is possible we have here *que[*. If so, it is at any rate impossible to determine whether this was an enclitic *-que*, or *que-*, or even *qu‹a›e-*.

2 Because of the lack of context, one might have here the simple *rogatio* or *adrogatio* (frequently attested in Late Antique official Latin documents[30]), *erogatio*, *interrogatio*, *irrogatio*. What follows is extremely uncertain: perhaps *Doro[t]ei e[t] rat[i]one[m* (*scil. Dorot‹h›ei*). The scribe has added a cognate word in *-tio* above *]rogationem*, in the same accusative case, probably intending to replace it. Erasure strokes can be seen covering the word at least so far as *]tio*: one supposes, *faute de mieux,* that the whole word was meant to be erased. If so, the scribe might have determined that the inserted word was not an apt substitution or – being at first undecided about which technical word he should use in the present circumstance – he put two of them in the page, and then chose.

3 Since the final ligature in *dominicarum* presents a curl and is evidently detached from the following *que-*, I take the words to be divided *dominicarum qu‹a›e* instead of *dominicarumque*. It might even be possible that after *dominicarum* a sentence ends, and *qu‹a›e* is the beginning of the next, but the significance of the curl cannot be understood thus far. *Quae*, at any rate, could very well be the relative pronoun referring to the feminine plural name governing *dominicarum* ('…of the lordly …, which…'). This name is lost and can only be the object of conjecture. Since the *dies dominica* (Sunday) as a Christian festivity is still referred to in most of the official documents from the IV cent. AD as *dies Solis*[31], the adjective is more probably connected to something different, a generic *dominus* 'master[32]' or the Imperial possessions[33]. The name after *per* presents some difficulties:

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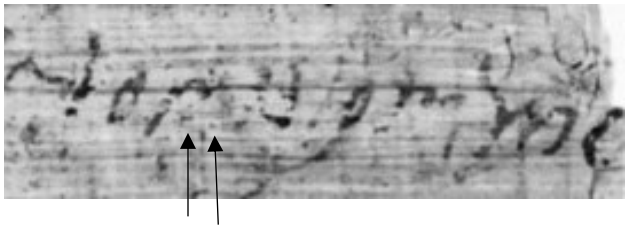
[30] See e.g. DIG. 1, 7, 1, 1; 1, 7, 2; 4, 4, 3, 6; 26, 1, 14; 37, 12, 1, 2; 49, 17, 4, 2 etc.

[31] See details in A. DI BERARDINO, *La cristianizzazione del tempo nei secoli IV-V: la domenica*, «Augustinianum» 42 (2002), pp. 97-125, and E. MORENO RESANO, *El Dies Solis en la legislación constantiniana*, «Antiquité Tardive» 17 (2009), pp. 289-305. Sunday began be officially called 'the day of the Lord' (*dies dominicus* and the like) in a Christian sense after AD 386: see COD. THEOD. 2, 8, 18 ***solis die**, quem **dominicum** rite dixere maiores, omnium omnino litium, negotiorum, conuentionum quiescat intentio* promulgated by the Augusti Gratianus, Valentinianus I and Theodosius ; and 2, 8, 19, 4 ***dies** etiam **dominicarum**, qui feriati sunt, ab audiendis negotiis vel exigendis debitis sequestramus*, promulgated by the Augusti Valentinianus I, Theodosius and Arcadius in AD 389. One might think, of course, this particular document to have been drafted *after* AD 386.

[32] See e.g. DIG. 4, 4, 11 = Ulp. 11 *ad ed. sed et nomine **earum rerum**, quas **dominicas** seruus manumissus supprimebat, competunt aduersus eum actiones ad exhibendum et furti et condictio, uidelicet quoniam et manumissus eas contrectabat.*

[33] See e.g. COD. IUST. 11, 67, 1 *Valentinianus Theodosius Arcadius Augusti Drepanio comiti rerum priuatarum. Si quis ouium vel equarum greges **in saltus rei dominicae** alienus immiserit, fisco ilico uindicetur*; COD. IUST. 2, 7, 37, 3 *Iustianianus Augustus Floro comiti rerum priuatarum et **curatori dominicae domus** et Petro uiro illustri curatori diuinae domus serenissimae Augustae*



The initial *d* and the following *o* are certain. After that, one sees the upper portion of *m*: the central and right descending strokes (pointed by the arrows) are fainter than the others, and might have been weakened. Next comes *n*, in one of the two graphical variations attested in new Roman cursive: the majuscule shape[34]. *I* and *o*, as well as the final -*em*, are certain. Between these two couples, one can be in doubt between *r* and *n* in ligature to *e*. The short stroke, which connects the letter to *e*, can be seen both in *r* and in *n* when in ligature with *e*[35]: *n*, however, is more likely – assuming its second downward stroke to be almost completely vanished – as *domniorem* makes no sense, whereas *domnionem* provides us with the syntagm *per Domnionem*, seen identically in 460 (see below). The name Domnio ~ Δομνίων (TM Names 19085) is rare but attested in Egypt[36]; a few cases are attested of teachers and governors of this name both in Antioch and Asia Minor[37]. The name is widespread in the West, where it originated.

4–7 The final ligature of *prohibentur* ends with an elongated curl sloping downwards, and seems to be followed by a blank space. If this marks the end of a sentence, not just of a word, one might suppose that *[a]b eadem* would start the next, which most likely ends with *benign[i]ssime* (l. 7). The sequence starting with *contentus* might have been added later, as a first draft of this document probably stopped here, with *benign[i]ssime*: see below.

4 Before *prohibentur* one can only see the bottom of three letters, the last being *c*, *e, o* or *t*. An ending in e.g. *]ēre* would create, if *prohibentur* is at the end of a sentence, a *cursus trispondaicus*, like *ésse uideátur*[38]. After the final curl of *prohibentur*, there is room for one letter, then the upper portion of a letter which might be *b*, *l* or *d*, then the faint upper traces of an *e* and of a circular letter, which may be *a* or *o*. After that, the sequence *dem* is quite clear, if a little blurred. Given the following *adque eundem*, I take the sequence to be *[a]b eadem*. The preceding *b* in *prohibentur* is sloping to the right instead of standing upright like the supposed b in *[a]b*; however, another *b* in *benign[i]ssime* (l. 7) is evidently upright, and one can see from the several *d*'s in the text that this letter can be drawn either with a cane-like upper stroke (l. 8 ***d****aturum*) or with an upright one (l. 5 ***d****istina*⟦*ndum*⟧), the same variation being possible for the similarly drawn *b*. One can construe *adque* as *ad* + the enclitic –*que* or as a mistakenly written *atque*. Both *eādem* and *eundem* probably refer to previously mentioned objects or people. After them begins a lacuna,

et Macedonio uiro illustri curatori et ipsi dominicae domus. *Bene a Zenone diuae memoriae fiscalibus alienationibus prospectum est…* (AD 531).

[34] For this variant and its attested specimens, see IOVINE, *Cinque papiri* cit., pp. 90 (fn. 2) and 98.

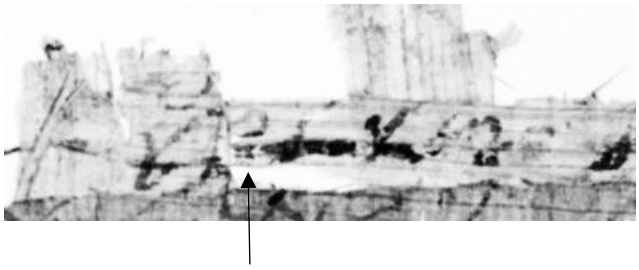
[35] See e.g. at l. 1 *]* ***ne****mque[* and at l. 5 – the same ligature with a different letter – *disti****na***⟦*ndum*⟧.

[36] *CPR* 17.1 30, l. 1]ος Δομνίων [(IV cent. AD, TM 70177). Probably a list of names, roughly coeval with *P.Mich.* VII 460 and 461.

[37] Attestations in *PLRE* I 266-267 *s.v.* Domnio 1 and 2.

[38] Details on the *cursus* in Late Antique Latin prose are amply given in F. DI CAPUA's monograph, *Il ritmo prosaico nelle lettere dei papi e nei documenti della cancelleria romana dal IV al XIV secolo. Vol. II*, Roma 1939.

which conceals most of the line – until the line itself resumes in its last three words, the clearest of which is *asociari*. What precedes is shown in the following image.



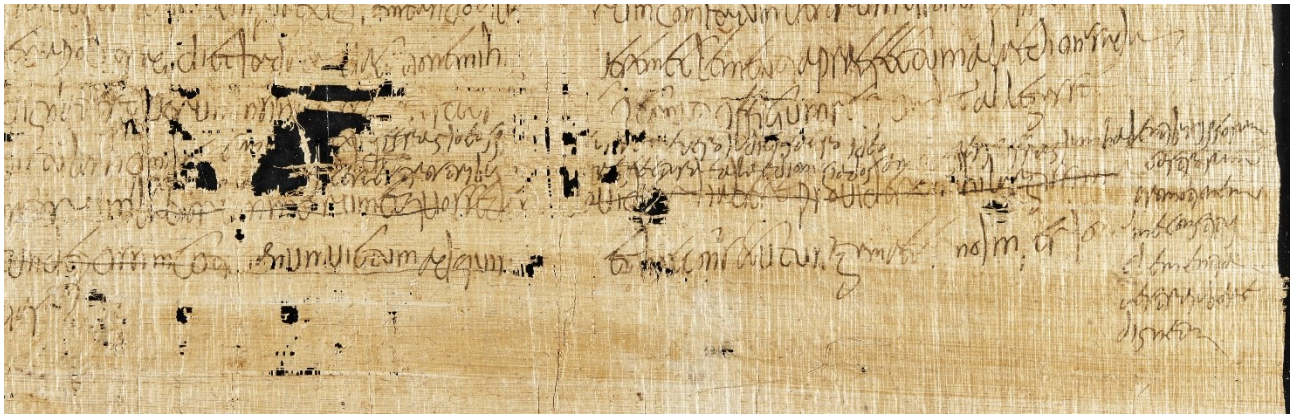
The sequence *cro* can be read almost immediately after the lacuna: notice the ligature between *r* and *o*, which reduces *o* (pointed out by the arrow) to a small circle almost hanging from the upper stroke of the *r*. *C* is in ligature with the preceding letter, which might be – given the type of ligature – either *a* or *e*. Both *s]ạcro*[39] and *obs]ẹcro* are possible. There is then another *c*, and at a short distance another *r* or *s*. Between the two letters there is room enough to suspect that a *u* has been written, as customary, above them. The last two letters before *asociari* resemble closely *ae* in ligature; one might consider *es* as well, but the last letter appears to be too wide at the bottom for *s*, if compared with other cases of *s* in this document. Overall, I believe *ḍ[u]ṛạẹ* to be more likely than *ḍ[u]ṛẹs* (e.g. *obs]ẹcro ḍ[u]ṛẹs*). Traces of a horizontal stroke from the *c* of *] ̣ cro* until the last *a* of *asociari* suggest that the line was erased from somewhere in the lacuna until its very end. The erasure definitely proceeded in the following l. 5, where the scribe cancelled the word *mili*, clearly only half-written: it appears that he stopped writing in the middle of a sentence. The form *asociari* stands for *adsociari*, and is maybe a simplification from a further form *associari*. The verb allegedly governs the dative: perhaps *curae asociari militiae*, or *militari*, or *militum*[40] was originally meant.

Both above and below this final section of the line (ll. 3a, 4, 4a) one can see interlinear additions; those in ll. 3a–4 are almost completely lost, whereas those below (l. 4a) can still be partially read. One can approximately calculate the number of lost letters in l. 3a if one considers that the right portion of the sheet is mostly intact and apparently clean-cut, and that it starts drifting to the left only above the sequence in l. 4 (*ṃisi*); therefore, only from l. 3a upwards one can suppose lacunae in the right margin. What relation do these additions stand in with l. 4, is uncertain. In the aforementioned *P.Abinn.* 1, the scribe, after erasing the sequences he meant to cut from his text (ll. 12–14), started adding the correct lines *above* the first erased word, *ideo* at l. 12; after reaching the right margin, he keeps writing *below* that word, and when he comes again to the end of the writing frame, he uses the *right margin* to accommodate the last words[41]. This is clearly visible in the image below:

[39] *Sacer* 'holy' as an adjective would be probably associated with something connected to the Emperor(s). This association is strictly connected with the reinterpretation of the Emperor's figure from the highest-ranking man among the mortals (Early Empire) to a demigod, ordained monarch by (the) God(s) to the benefit of his subjects (Late Empire). A good summary of this, with attached bibliography, is in J. N. DILLON, *The Emperor's New Prose: the Style of the Legislation of Diocletian*, in W. ECK-S. PULIATTI (ed.), *Diocleziano: la frontiera giuridica dell'impero*, Pavia 2018, pp. 285-343 (particularly pp. 338-343).

[40] The syntagm is not often found in the surviving Latin production. One of the rare instances is in AMM. 27, 5, 9 *missique uicissim Victor et Arintheus, qui tunc* ***equestrem curabant militiam*** *et* ***pedestrem****, cum propositis condicionibus assentiri Gothos docuissent litteris ueris, praestituitur componendae paci conueniens locus.*

[41] I am here using the revised text of my colleague A. Bernini (Heidelberg), whom I thank, and to which I only added a few modifications. The re-edition will be in the forthcoming *Corpus of Latin texts on Papyrus* (see fn. 2). My gratitude also goes to P.



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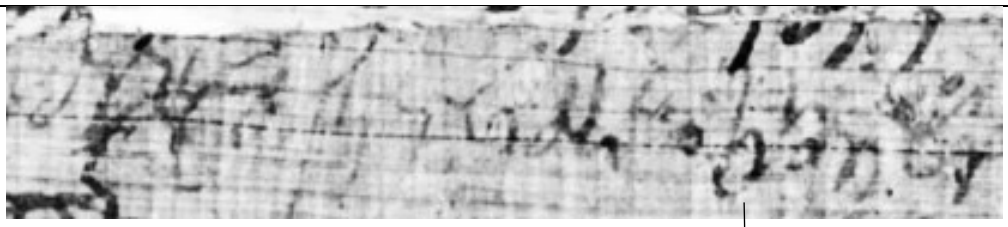
|11 prouinciae Aegypti uestra dignata est. Verum insinuatis sa[cri]s litter[is Vala]c[i]o comiti, officium respondit allegasse
cumq[ue pateat] ex suffragio eos pro[motos] fuisse me uero iudicio sacro ideo
|12 al[i]osque huiuscemodi epistulas homines. ⟦Ideo⟧
iuxta s[u]pra[dictos] apices uestros tribun[um pr]aefecturae alae Dionysiados amotis per suffragium habentibus ipsorum
|13 soliti contemplatione memoratorum ⟦laborum meorum et quos sedes [re]cto uide[o]r habere prouidere mihi largissima castrorum
|14 pietas uestra dignetur unde possim cotidianum uictum adquirere⟧ Et hoc consecutus agam aeterno imperio promotionem me constitui
|15 uestro maximas gratias. clementia uestra iubere dignetur

The same might have happened in this papyrus. After erasing the sequence from an undetermined place in the lacuna till *sacro curae asociari* | *mili*, the scribe started adding sequences in the interlinear space above l. 4, namely the sequence beginning with *e [. . . . .] d[. . . . .]mea con i [. . .]*. He must have reached the end of the sheet, since he added a few letters immediately below *con i [*, i.e. *misi*; he then proceeded with l. 4a *asociare* etc. From the first section of corrections in ll. 3a–4 almost nothing can be gathered: the scanty traces on the papyrus can lead to more than one letter, and several solutions are possible (*e.g. mea consil[ia]* | *misi, me a consil[io de]*|*misi*, *mea* or *me a confid[entia]*, etc.). The section in l. 4a is better preserved, but as well problematic. The infinitive *asociare* directly refers to the erased asociari; what follows might be *se* (as if the scribe, or he who was dictating the text, preferred a reflexive form to the passive infinitive), but also *te* or *eo*. The first three letters of *speciali* are also uncertain, especially *e*, which appears to have almost entirely vanished, and can be hypothesized only thanks to the traces of its lower portion and the ligature with the following *c*. above the ligature *-li* of *speciali*, the scribe has added an *e* followed by scanty traces of another letter, which I tentatively identified as a *t*. Note that the *h-* of *hanc* has been added in a later moment in the space between and above *ob* and *anc*: the scribe had at first written *ohanc*, then closed the open lower section of *h* in a *b* and added a supralinear *h* (*o**b**`h´anc*).

Toth (British Library, UK), who provided the very photo I am now using within the frame of the partnership between the British Library and project PLATINUM ERC-StG n. 636983, p.i. Prof M. C. Scappaticcio.



asoci|***are e̤o̤*** *(?)* ***s̤p̤e̤ciali`e̤t̤′ ob hanc r***|*em̤*

this letter was evidently drawn as *h*, then rewritten as *b*

One might also suspect that the *m* in *rem̤*, whose right portion is represented only by a dot at the bottom of the writing line, might have been an *n*, written by mistake (*hanc re**n***), both because of the influence of Greek word endings and the immediately following ***n̤i̤s̤i̤***. The sense of the whole additional sentence, given its partial preservation, escapes us. Maybe *n̤i̤s̤i̤* was meant to govern the subjunctives *d̤esereret̤* and *poss̤i̤t̤* in l. 6, but this is entirely speculative.

5 Two other erased sequences can be seen in this line. The first concerns the form in which the verb *distinare* (for *destinare*[42]) was to be inflected. The scribe first thought of a gerundive accusative *distinandum*; then he changed it to the infinitive *distinare*, then again to the participle *distinato*, which is probably governed by *Romullo p- p-* and – perhaps – further by *]edendo*. The identity of this Romul(l)us, as well as his rank, are uncertain. The sequence *p- p-* is better understood as *p(rae)p(osito)*, rather than *p(raeside) p(rouinciae)*[43] or *p(raefecto) p(rateorio)*, which would require titles such as *u(iro) c(larissimo)* or *p(erfectissimo)* closely to follow them. The syntagm *ad C̤e̤p̤h̤anam ciuitatem* (the second to have been erased in this line) is governed by *distinato*, rather than *p(rae)p(osito)*; whereas *p(rae)p(osito)* does not need a further specification (it may be just a rank in the army, instead of a past participle), *distinato* does. That this Romullus is 'destined'/'assigned' to a particular town (*ad ... ciuitatem*) is therefore to be gathered from the text[44]; the scribe, however, erased the name of the town and re-wrote it above *distinato*, as if to connect them more closely by juxtaposing them. It is also possible that he was forced to rewrite the new sequence farther away from the erased one, because the interlinear space above it had already been employed to insert corrections from the previous line. One is to understand that the preposition *ad*, not erased at the end of the line, was in the scribe's mind to be preserved; oddly, he did not erase and rewrite it in the interlinear space (which would have made for a more perspicuous text), but just left it where it was.

It remains to be settled what role played the form *-edendo* in the sentence and what the town's name was. The first problem is not to be solved, for several verbs in *-edere* might be supplied: anything cognate with *cedere* or *edere*. It cannot even be stated with certainty whether the form was a gerundive governed by *Romullo* or it was a dative or ablative of the gerundium[45], therefore an element detached from

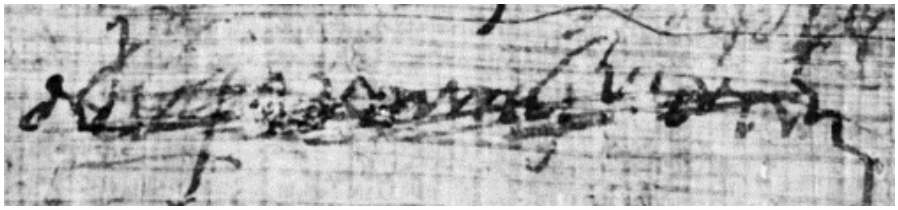
[42] See e.g. GREG. ILIB. (PS. ORIG.?) *tract*. 12, 191 *hoc enim signo saluantur, qui ad praemium aeternae uitae sunt* ***distinati***, and the very same *recto* of this papyrus at l. 10 *ciuitatem* ***distinare*** *curabit*. All other attestations are much later. It is dismissed in the *ThLL* as an orthographical variant in the manuscripts: see V 1 col. 755 *s.v. destino*, ll. 35-36.

[43] Incidentally, a Laenatius Romulus is attested as *uir perfectissimus* and *praeses prouinciae Tripolitaniae* around AD 324-326: see *PLRE* I 771 *s.v.* Romulus 4.

[44] *Destinare* can govern both the simple dative and *in*/*ad* with the accusative. See *ThLL* V 1 *s.v. destino* col. 757 l. 39.

[45] See e.g. COD. THEOD. 2, 9, 3 *si quis maior annis aduersum pacta vel transactiones nullo cogentis imperio, sed libero arbitrio et uoluntate confecta putauerit esse ueniendum, uel* ***interpellando*** *iudicem, uel* ***supplicando*** *principibus, uel* ***non implendo*** *promissa*

the ablative absolute *distinato Romullo ad ciuitatem*. As for the name of the *ciuitas*, which is apparently twice repeated, together with *ciuitatem* – first at the end of the line, then above *distinato* – one is not able at the moment to read anything in the interlinear space between *-to* and *ciuitatem*, and is therefore compelled to make do with the erased name at the end of the line. The name here is given tentatively.



The letters *-anam* at the end of it are certain; so are *c*, *e* and *p* at the beginning, despite the loss of ink in the upper portion of the writing line, which caused the top of *c* to be weak and that of *e* almost to vanish. As it regards *e*, it is also possible that we are witnessing here one of the first instances of an ace-of-spade-like ligature (the so-called '*asso di picche*'), which would cause the upper stroke of *e* to be much shorter than usual, and connected directly to the circular stroke of *p*[46]. That the first letter of the town's name is *c* can also be argued from the fact that the scribe clearly began writing *ac* instead of *ad*; he then turned the *c* into *d* (as he did with the *b* of *ob* in l. 4a, originally an *h*) by drawing a vertical stroke to close the cup of *c*. and wrote another *c* immediately after the former.

What lies between *-p-* and *-anam* has been here tentatively read as an *h*. This *h* would have supposedly lost its upper stroke in its entirety: only the lower portion remains visible, as well as part of the ligature between *h* and the following *a*. The reconstructed adjective **Cephanus* is odd inasmuch as in the IV cent. AD, Greek φ is usually transliterated *f* rather than *ph*[47]; plus, the adjective cannot be linked with any certainty to any known toponym in Roman East. The name 'Cephas' is widely attested for people, not for places. Only a few possibilities can be given for this *Cephana ciuitas*:

- one finds a town called Cephas in the Late Antique Roman province of Mesopotamia, close to Amida and the river Tigris. Constantius II allegedly built a fortress there in the mid-IV AD[48]. It apparently remained in Roman hands after Julian's unsuccessful campaign against the Sasanians (*Not.dign. or*. 36 *Dux*

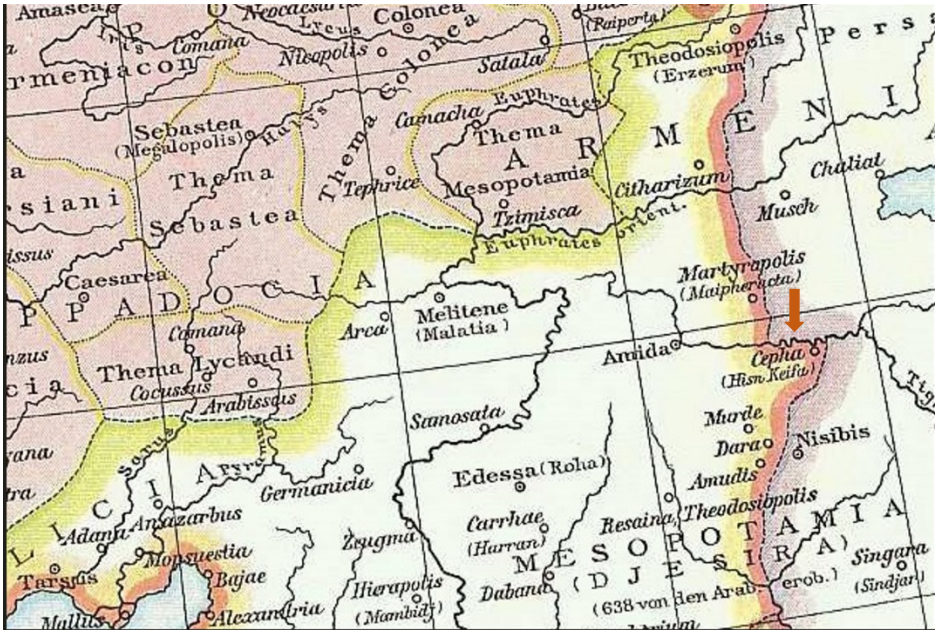
ea, quae inuocato dei omnipotentis nomine, eo auctore, solidauerit … (AD 395, promulgated by Arcadius and Honorius and directed to the *praefectus praetorio* Rufinus).

[46] Several instances of this ligature, in both Greek (ερ) and Latin (*ep*) papyri, are in MARCO D'AGOSTINO, *La legatura 'ad asso di picche' nei papiri greci e latini*, «Segno e testo» 3 (2005), pp. 147-55. D'Agostino notices the first Latin instances in an Italian papyrus (*P.Ital.* I 10-11a, Syracuse AD 489, TM 114802) from the late V century, whereas the Greek ones are already established in Egyptian papyri from the IV cent. AD; but the graphic κοινή operating in Egypt from that very century onwards allows one to expect some instances of that ligature also in Latin papyri from that period and region.

[47] As can be seen e.g. in the aforementioned *ChLA* XIX 687, ll. 6–9 *quapropter Theo**f**anen oriundum ex ciuitate Hermupolitanorum prouinciae Thebaidos qui ex suggestione domini mei fratris nostris **F**ilippi* etc.

[48] Archaeological and historical details on this shady town, which is very rarely covered by coeval sources, are in CHRIS S. LIGHTFOOT, *The Eastern Frontier of the Roman Empire with special reference to the reign of Constantius II* (PhD diss.), Oxford 1981; THOMAS A. SINCLAIR, *Eastern Turkey: an Architectural and Archaeological Survey. Volume III*, London 1989, pp. 365-381, particularly pp. 370-371; ANTHONY M. COMFORT, *Roads on the frontier between Rome and Persia: Euphratesia, Osrhoene and Mesopotamia from AD 363 to 602*, (PhD diss.), Exeter 2008, particularly pp. 289-290 (the Gazetteer in the Appendix). The Syrian author 'Jacob the Recluse' quoted by Lightfoot allegedly refers to Cephas (Kiphas) in a text published in FRANÇOIS NAU, *Résumé de monographies syriaques*, «Revue de l'Orient chrétien» 18 (1913), pp. 270-76, 379-89; 19 (1914), pp. 113-134, 278-89, 414-440; 20 (1915-1917), pp. 3-32 (the passage where Cephas is mentioned is in vol. 20, p. 7).

Mesopotamiae […]. *Praefectus legionis secundae Parthicae,* ***Cefae***). It might have been an episcopal seat at least in the VI AD[49], and is now the Turkish city of Hasyankef;



detail from G. Droysen, *Allgemeiner Historischer Handatlas*, Bielefeld-Leipzig 1886[50]

- an Egyptian village called [χω]ρ(ίον) **Κεφα**̣[- - -], in *Stud. Pal.* X 53, l. 4 (VII-VIII cent. AD)[51];

- another country dwelling (τόπος), also attested very late: *P.Lond.* IV 1419 + *SB* XX 15099 (AD 716-717[52]), l. 374 (καὶ) (ὑπὲρ) ὀν(όματος) γαμ(ε)τ(ῆς) Διωνυσίο(υ) (ὑπὲρ) μέ(ρους) **τόπ̀ου΄** Βης Σημ (καὶ) Μυλονάρχ(ου) (καὶ) **Κεφα** κτλ.

None of these settlements appears to be large or relevant enough to warrant the use of *ciuitas* + adjective or genitive, usually found in Late Antique Latin papyri from Egypt for πόλεις in their own right: e.g. the aforementioned *ChLA* XIX 687, ll. 7–8 *ex ciuitate Hermupolitanorum prouinciae* | *Thebaidos*; *ChLA* XVIII 660, ll. 4–5 *i[n] c[iuita]te Oxy*|*[rynchitarum]* (AD 324–9[53]); *ChLA* III 210, l. 2 *naute ex ciuitat(e) Panopo[l(itarum)]* (AD 352[54]); the aforementioned *P.Ryl.* IV 609, ll. 4–5 *Heracleon fili(um) Constantinii* | *[ortum e] ciuitati Hermupolitana*, etc. The reconstructed adjective, if palaeographically plausible, must eventually refer to some different place than those known so far.

6 Two subjunctive forms, *desereret* and *possit*, seem to govern the two full sentences in the line; a third sentence, governed by *possit* and represented by the infinitive *referrere*, is split between ll. 6 and 7. The link between the sentence governed by *desereret* and that governed by *possit* is unclear: they might be connected through asyndeton. The last *t* of *desereret* is in ligature with, and very close to, the first

[49] This if one gives credit to the Greek *Notitia episcopatuum* published by ATHANASIOS PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS in *Ὁ ἐν Κονσταντινουπόλει Ἑλληνικὸς φιλολογικὸς σύλλογος* 18 (1884) and discussed by SIMEON VAILHÉ in *Une 'Notitia episcopatuum' d'Antioche du Xe siècle*, «Échos d'Orient» 10 (1907) pp. 90-101, and subsequently in *La 'Notitia episcopatuum' d'Antioche du patriarche Anastase, VIe siècle*, «Revue des Etudes Byzantines» 64 (1907), pp. 139-145. The document is also mentioned in A. M. COMFORT, *Roads on the frontier* cit., p. 39.

[50] The image is in public domain (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Droysen_-_Ostr%C3%B6misches_Reich.jpg).

[51] TM 38930.

[52] TM 19869.

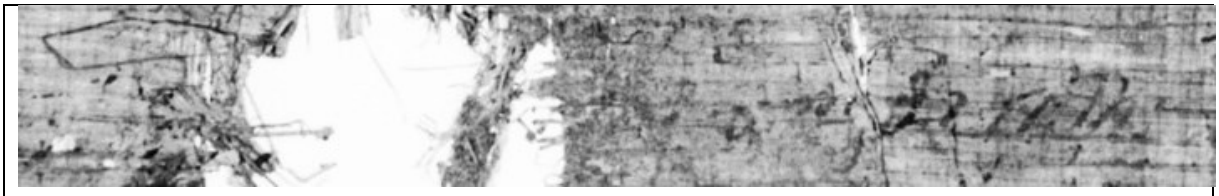
[53] TM 70000.

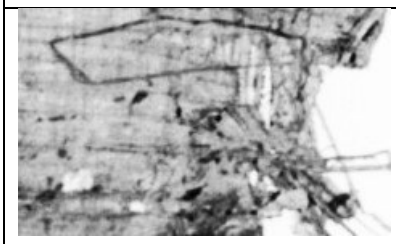
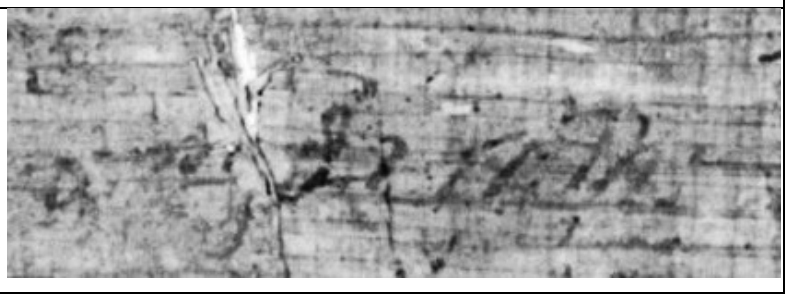
[54] TM 19773.

m of *memorato*; the *u* of ⟦*uede*⟧ is small and written in the upper portion of the writing line, squeezed between the *-t* of possit and *-ede*. Notably, the scribe had at first chosen the verb *uidere*, mistakenly written *uedere*, but he changed his mind halfway through, erased and switched to *referrere*, a mistake for *referre*. The subject is impossible to detect. The sentences probably represent a consequence of Romullus' assignment to an unidentified city: this having been done, other things will happen. An unidentified entity would 'certainly (*uero*[55]) not abandon those who are the object of inquiry (*inquisitos*)'. The same entity would be able, 'thanks to the aforementioned Copres' or 'having mentioned Copres[56]', to report about something to the addressee of this communication. It is also possible, but less likely, that *memorato Copre* is a mistake for *memoratum Copretem*, and the object of *referrere*. This Copres, one realizes, was not mentioned here for the first time, but appeared already in the lost portion of the document.

The name Copres ~ Κοπρῆς (TM Nam 3702 for Κοπρῆς and 9959 for Κοπρεύς) is common in Egypt from the Roman conquest onwards, and forms like Κοπρῆ (genitive for Κοπρῆς), which may justify our *Copre* here, are also attested in Greek. Notably, an abbot named Copres, therefore styled 'father', appears in the anonymous *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, later translated in Latin by Rufinus (10 Περὶ Κόπρη. Ἦν δέ τις πρεσβύτερος **ἔχων** πλησίον ἐκεῖ **μοναστήριον** ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, **Κόπρης λεγόμενος**, ἀνὴρ ἅγιος ἐτῶν σχεδὸν ἐνενήκοντα, ἡγούμενος ἀδελφῶν πεντήκοντα κτλ.); another Copres is *praepositus rei priuatae*, or at any rate a minor clerk in an office pertaining to Imperial finances in Egypt, in the IV AD[57].

7 Between the words *auctorita[t]em* and *contentus* the ink is almost evanescent and a large lacuna took away at least six to seven letters.



tua [	] benign[i]ssime
	

[55] I take *uero* here either to have a mildly adversative meaning, or to emphasize the effect of *desereret*: cf. *OLD* 2038-2039 *s.v. uero* and JULES MAROUZEAU, *La construction des particules de liaison*, «Revue des études latines» 26 (1948), pp. 235-267: pp. 242-243.

[56] I take the participle *memoratus* here as 'aforementioned', 'abovementioned', as in *P.Abinn.* 1, l. 7 *cum legatis* ***memoratae gent[i]s*** ('with the ambassadors of the aforementioned tribe', i.e. the *Blemmyae*); ll. 8-9 *praeceptusque itaque producere* ***memoratos*** | ***leg[atos*** *in p]atriam suam* ('having been ordered to escort the aforementioned ambassadors to their homeland', i.e. the ambassadors of the *Blemmyae*); l. 13 *ideo solit{i}‹a› contemplatione* ***memoratorum laborum meorum*** ('therefore, with the usual consideration for the aforementioned labours of mine', i.e. those in the preceding twelve lines, in which Abinnaeus made a *résumé* of his career).

[57] *PLRE* I 228 *s.v.* Copres.

After the incomplete final *m* of *auctoritá[t]em* one can see faint traces of a *t*, then of a cup-like stroke above it, which suggests a ligature *tu*, as in the following l. 8 *ampli**tu**dinis*. Since *auctoritá[t]em* was most likely followed by the feminine singular form of the possessive adjective *tuus* (as a courtesy title for the addressee[58] who is referred to by an abstract term, as is customary in Late Latin letters[59]), one can interpret the following scanty traces of two letters as *am* or *ae*: *auctoritá[t]em tuam [domine]* or e.g. *auctoritá[t]em tuae [pietatis]*[60]. After the lacuna, there likely lies an adverb ending in *-ssime* – the sequence is the only portion safely to be read – or, if a genitive is in the lacuna, a mistakenly written adjective ending in *-ssim‹a›e*. One can suppose that the first letter of this word, visible immediately to the right of the lacuna, is a *b*, since there is a cup at the bottom and faint traces of a vertical stroke with an evident curl at the top. The mid-sequence of the word is also still visible: after *b* and traces of a further letter, one sees *n* in ligature with an *i* which protrudes under the writing line, and a ligature *gn* where *g* projects above the same writing line and then turns down to connect with *n*. To conclude, one can read here *auctoritá[t]em tuam [domine] benign[i]ssime* or *auctoritá[t]em tuae [pietatis] benign[i]ssim‹a›e*.

7–9 The last sentence of the text was probably added some time after the rest of it was completed. From *contentus* onwards, the writing line visibly drifts upwards, a fact that prompted earlier editors to suppose that the sequence was a continuation of the preceding l. 6, rather than what followed *benign[i]ssime*. That a second hand added this section, and consequently ll. 7–9 as a whole, cannot be stated with certainty. The hand is less polished and grows coarser till the end of l. 7, but it regains its former neatness at the beginning of l. 8; plus, this is a draft, where no regularity of writing could be required. One cannot be sure, to conclude, that it was the same scribe who worked on these lines a bit later, or a different scribe altogether. One can only notice a more cursive writing and more fading letters, either because the pen was provided with ink less frequently, or because time has affected the ink itself more decidedly in these last lines, the surface of the fragment not being uniformly damaged. One can, on the other hand, suppose that from *contentus* onwards a new sentence begins.

The sentence can be broken down to two smaller ones: *contentus ... acumine*, and *si ... domine*. The second one is the more perspicuous of the two as far as syntax goes: it is the condition of a hypothetical period. Something will be accomplished 'if it will be often granted, through him' (or 'by him') 'to relate the necessities of my littleness to the knowledge of your authority, my lord'; if, in other words, the sender will be permitted (by whom?) to have the addressee's attention when he needs anything. This *eum* might be Copres, as it is the closest personal name available in the document as present. The first sentence, on the other hand – which represents the situation that exists if the above mentioned condition will be satisfied – is problematic. Leaving aside the relatively unproblematic syntagm *efficientissime inquisita re acumine*, another absolute ablative (see below), if the general sense of the whole sentence can be more or less surmised ('you or I will be happy and the matter will be investigated properly'), its syntactic articulation, mainly because of a lacuna in the middle of it, is not perspicuous.

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[58] For the syntagm *auctoritas tua*, see below.

[59] This tendency, which mirrors that of the sender depreciating himself with the same abstract expressions – see A. GARZYA, *L'epistolografia* cit., p. 356 – is consistent in Late Antique epistolography, especially connected with late Roman administration: see SIMON CORCORAN, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs*, Oxford 1996, pp. 325–331. Instances in Latin letters on papyrus have been collected in PAOLO CUGUSI's *CEL* I, p. 43.

[60] For the genitive *tuae pietatis*, see e.g. AMBR. *epist*. 10, 75, 19 *atque utinam liquido mihi pateret quod Arrianis ecclesia minime traderetur! Sponte me offerrem* ***tuae pietatis arbitrio***.

For starters, one cannot locate with any certainty the necessary verb: it may be concealed in the sequence . . [. . . . .]*eres*, but its exact form escapes us. On top of that, one notices some signs of erasure in the sequence]*eres*: the scribe might have felt dissatisfied with the verb as it was written, and erased and replaced it – it is impossible to know what replaced it. Then, the preposition *ante* is most likely connected to *ut* in forming the syntagm *contentus ut ante* 'satisfied as before'. It is unclear whether this *ut ante* is in absolute sense, or *ante* governs *iusionem* ('satisfied as before your order'). There is a further possibility that *ante iusionem amplitudinis tuae* could just be a convoluted periphrasis to say 'in your presence': when presented to the Emperors in Constantinople, Abinnaeus was ordered to adore the purple (*P.Abinn.* 1, ll. 7-8 *atque obtulitis eis clementiae uestrae | me e ducenario diuinitas uestra uenerandam purpuram suam ador[ar]e [i]ussit*). *Contentus* might refer to the addressee or to the sender. If the former, one should gather that the addressee gave an order the consequence of which was to restore a preceding situation – therefore leading to the addressee's satisfaction. If the latter, one might suspect that *contentus* governs *ut* ('I will be satisfied of the fact that[61] … in your presence/before your order'), but there is no way of understanding why there is no apparent verb in the first person to match *contentus*. Out of desperation, one might resort to think of *contentus* as a mistake for *contentum*: the original sentence, before the scribe erased the verb, might have therefore been meant like *contentum igitur ut ante iusionem amplitudinis tuae me [effic]eres* 'you could make me satisfied as if I were in front of the order of your greatness [or: in your presence][62], provided that I will always be permitted to report to you my needs'. Mistakes in cases are not impossible in these sort of documents. However, both Youtie's law and the scribe's erasure of at least the ending]*eres*, bind one's hands in this case. A conclusive solution is not yet achievable.

7 *Igitur*, in second position after *contentus*, appears to mark a conclusive speech[63]. *Iussio*, here mistakenly written *iusio*, is an equivalent of *iussus*, *iussum*, *praeceptum*, *imperium* 'order', and a favourite among Late Latin prose writers[64].

8 *Amplitudo tua* 'your immensity' is an abstract periphrasis (one among the many) to address someone, not necessarily superior in rank, in Late Latin prose[65]. It functions, like *auctoritas tua*, as a courtesy title. Notably, the superlative form *efficientissime* from the adverb *efficienter* was thus far unattested in all extant Latin evidence; yet, it is a correct formation (as in *libenter* ~ *libentissime*). What

[61] The participle *contentus* in Latin can govern the simple ablative, *in* or *ad* and the accusative, the genitive (*alicuius rei*), the infinite as well as the infinitive, *quod* and even *ut*/*ne*. See *ThLL* IV *s.v. contentus* coll. 678–680.

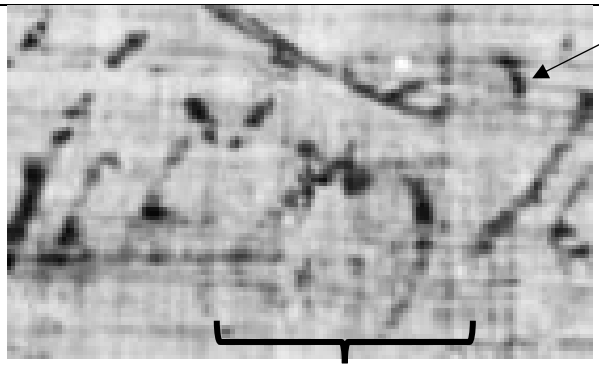
[62] I owe this suggestion to M. Fattura (Roma 'La Sapienza'). He also remarked that the mistake might conceal a couple of futures – *contentus me effeceris* (mistakenly written *effeceres* or *efficeres*: maybe the erasure was meant to correct this mistake), *si daturum (est)*. But in this case the tenses should be inverted, and *effeceris* should be a first, not a second future (first comes the permission, than the satisfaction).

[63] On this conjunction and its position and value, see J. MAROUZEAU, *La construction* cit., pp. 256-262; also CAROLINE KROON, *Causal Connectors in Latin: the Discourse Function of* nam, enim, igitur *and* ergo, in MARIUS LAVENCY-DOMINIQUE LONGRÉE, *Actes du Ve Colloque de Linguistique Latine*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1989, pp. 231-243.

[64] Widespread in several writers from the III cent. AD onwards, such as Cyprianus, Victorinus of Pettau (*Poetouium*), Lactantius, Arnobius, Firmicus Maternus, Lucifer of Caralis, St. Augustin, Orosius, etc.

[65] Its use goes back to Cicero (e.g. *fam.* 10, 1, 3 *sed et te aliquanto ante, ut spero, habebimus et, praeterquam quod rei publicae consulere debemus, tamen tuae dignitati ita fauemus ut omne nostrum consilium, studium, officium, operam, laborem, diligentiam* ***ad amplitudinem tuam*** *conferamus*), where it still did not function as a courtesy title for magistrates and the personnel in Roman administration. See ENNOD. *epist.* 3, 34, 3 *non credidi tanto tempore* ***amplitudinem tuam*** *mei inmemorem sic futuram, ut etiam sollemnibus conloquiis abstineres*; DIG. 2, 7, 26, 3 *quorum omnium si quid uel minimum quocumque tempore fuerit uiolatum, uiginti primates eiusdem ordinis et qui pro tempore sollicitudinem ab actis in* ***amplitudinis tuae*** *gerent officio, adiutores etiam eorum denis singuli libris auri ferientur*, etc.

follows I believe to be an absolute ablative, *rei* being a mistake for *re*; the whole syntagm *efficientissime … acumine* can be construed as 'the matter having been investigated with the utmost diligence and acuity[66]'.

The sequence following *inquisita*, pointed at by the brace, has been here interpreted as *rei*. After the ligature *ta* – where *a* projects in the upper portion of the writing line – one sees the lower stroke of an *r* which forms a small, cup-like stroke at the top. Above it, one can see the upper stroke of *c* or *e*, and below it, an *i*, right before the *a*- of *acumine*. I conclude that this upper stroke was in ligature with that *i*, forming *ei*: the mid-portion of the ligature appears to have vanished.	

Note the scribe's slip. He was going to write *enquisita*. The future participle *daturum* most likely implies an *est*, which was omitted either by mistake or because it was felt unnecessary. A similar structure is in SEN. *benef.* 7, 20, 1 *illum mihi seruandum modum credam, ut,* ***si beneficium*** *illi* ***meum neque*** *uires maiores* ***daturum est*** *in exitium commune* ***nec confirmaturum****, quas habet, id autem erit, quod illi reddi sine pernicie publica possit, reddam.*

9 *Mea pusillitas* ('my littleness', here mistakenly written *pusilitas*) as an abstract form for 'me' is seldom attested[67]. The syntagm *referre ad scientiam alicuius* 'bring something to someone's knowledge' is instead common[68]: once again, the scribe writes *referere* instead of *referre*. In this case, what is going to be related are the sender's *necessitates* 'needs', 'demands': the syntagm *referre necessitates* is also (if seldom) attested[69]. The syntagm *auctoritas tua* can be found in Cicero and Plinius the Younger, but only a few times as an actual periphrasis for an addressee outside the Imperial constitutions and rescripts of the Theodosian Code, where it is widely attested[70]. One can find it also in two Imperial communications which did not make to the Cod. Theod., but were found in papyri: *ChLA* XVII 657[71], text B, ll. 4-9 *Andrea frater amantissime, | i[n]l[u]stris itaque* <u>*auctoritas tua*</u> *… legibus ei redhiberi praecipiat* (AD 436-450); and *ChLA* XLIV 1301[72], ll. 4-7 *inlustris ig[i]tuṛ e̤t̤ magnif[ica] |* <u>*auctori[ta]s tua*</u> *eos … f̣a̤c̤i̤a̤t̤ omnibus m[odis] | ut a̤bsol[ui]* (AD 465–467).

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[66] For *acumen* 'sharpness (of the mind)', without further specification (*ingenii, mentis* etc.), see e.g. LACT. *epit.* 50, 8 *nec inmerito extitit Carneades homo summo ingenio* ***et acumine****, qui refelleret istorum orationem et iustitiam, quae fundamentum stabile non habebat, euerteret*; AVG. *trin.* 10, 11, 7 *cum uero de cuiusque doctrina quaeritur, non quanta firmitate ac facilitate meminerit uel* ***quanto acumine*** *intellegat, sed quid meminerit et quid intellegat quaeritur*; HIER. *adv. Rufin.* 3, 27 *in laude et detractione mea, quia uarius extitisti,* ***miro acumine*** *argumentatus es*.

[67] See GAVDENT. *serm.* 5, 19 *quod adnuat de uobis* ***pusillitati meae*** *saluator humani generis dominus Iesus*; and OROS. *apol.* 3, 3 *ilico* ***a pusillitate mea*** *postulastis uniuersi, ut si quid super hac haeresi, quam Pelagius et Caelestius seminarunt, in Africa gestum esse cognoscerem, fideliter ac simpliciter indicarem*.

[68] See e.g. in COD. THEOD. 1, 5, 1; 1, 29, 1; 9, 1, 1; 9, 1, 13; and in DIG. 7, 61, 2; 10, 48, 8; 12, 37, 16; NOVELL. Theod. 2, 1; LEX Alaric. 9, 1, 1.

[69] See e.g. HIER. *epist.* 155, 88, 2 *itaque nunc quia frater felicissimus ob quasdam* ***domesticas necessitates*** *quas tibi praesens* ***referre*** *poterit perrexit Africam*, or CONC. Carth. a. 345/348 p. 109 l. 266 *quod si tanta urguet necessitas ut non possit ante consulere, saltim uicinos testes conuocet episcopos, curans ad concilium omne* ***referre suae ecclesiae necessitates***.

[70] To my knowledge, only in IANVAR. epist. p. 253, l. 202 *unum autem aliquid suggero, et, quia das fiduciam, etiam ingero: ut de cetero statuere dignetur in monasterio* ***auctoritatis tuae*** *cauta et diligens admonitio*.

[71] TM 69999.

[72] TM 70088.

2. Notes on *P.Mich.* VII 460. As mentioned in fn. 2, this text was drafted on the *recto* of the original papyrus sheet: the sheet might have been cut from the roll after the document was written, or before. Remnants of fifteen lines are preserved, perhaps all the lines in the original text, and they are far more legible than in the *verso*; but none of them are complete. Instead, we only see the right portion. The text is a draft or copy of a letter (l. 2 *salutem*), perhaps a petition; one sees on the whole only two passages which have been the object of correction, in ll. 5 and 7. At any rate, since there is a draft on the *verso*, this can hardly be an original – unless we are witnessing here a re-used document.

As in the *recto*, the content is hard to reconstruct – in a way, even harder, inasmuch as we don't have complete lines. The context might be at least partially military, since the addressees of the letter are allegedly *tribuni* and *praefecti legionum* (l. 1); it is impossible, however, to establish whether the sender is higher or lower than them in the hierarchy. Not only a *translatio* is discussed (l. 5), but at least two *ciuitates* are mentioned, including Berenice on the Red Sea (l. 8) and a city whose name ended in *–polis*, as we seem to see the adjective *-politanus* in the genitive plural (l. 9). An unknown city mentioned at l. 10 might refer to both or neither. A small stripe detached from the main fragment, and so far impossible to reattach in its original position, can be read as *]am ciuitate[m*; again, this might refer to the two cities mentioned in ll. 8 and 9, to that in l. 10, or to none of them. That someone is destined to a town, as Romullus in the *recto*, might be argued from l. 10 (… *ciuitatem distinare curabit*).

The overall better conditions of the ink and of the surviving lines have granted this text more precise and thorough editions[73], the last of which will be my own in the forthcoming *CLTP*[74]. There is no therefore no need for a detailed palaeographical and historical commentary as there was for the text on the *verso*. The commentary I will give below will mainly focus on further possible readings. The updated text runs as follows[75]:

|1 t]ribb(unis) praeff(ectis) legg(ionum) et
|2]ati [ ]car(-) salutem
|3 p]er Domnionem exin diem
|4]lus et habentur Copres parens eius
|5]ti minime earum traslatione com-
|5a ut
|6]asus esse suggestus est ⟦ ⟧ quoniam
|7 -poli]ta⟦r⟧norum ciuitatem [ ]
|8]risque ‹e›um ad Beronicem ciuitatem
|9] grauitas uestra esse cognouerit pro

[73] Previous editors are: HENRY A. SANDERS in *P.Mich.* VII 460; PAOLO CUGUSI in *CEL* I 225 (with some further observations in III 225); TIZIANO DORANDI in *ChLA* XLII 1223 and XLVIII 1223 (where some remarks by Robert Marichal are included). A few notes also in JAN-OLOF TJÄDER, *Die nichtliterarischen lateinischen Papyri Italiens aus der Zeit 445-700*, Lund 1955, p. 93.

[74] Despite the fact that the edition will bear my name, I must here acknowledge my colleague's M. Pedone thorough work on the text, which began before I set eyes on it, and which I continued and completed at a late stage. The new readings and the apparatus here featured can be credited to him as much as to me. I also am grateful to him for granting me the permission to use our text.

[75] The same reasons I gave for not fully employing the Leiden criteria in presenting 461 hold for the present text.

|10]a[m] ciuitatem distinare curabit
|11]. sollicitudinem
|12]
|13].
|14 u]m Febrariarum
|15]am . . . . . e[.]m . . [.]es

1] . . ib(us) procip[.]b(us) eg̅g̅ *(*eg(regiis) *in commentario) Sanders:* legg *Gilliam Cugusi:* leg(atis) *Dorandi* || **2**]antius ser(uus) *edd.* || **3**]er domnio *(*dominio *legendum)* rem *Sanders:*] . . dom‹i›ni orem *Gilliam:*]er domni *(*domini *legendum)* orem *Cugusi Dorandi:* Domnionem *vel quaedam uox a* Domnus *vel a* Domnius *dubitanter Cugusi (CEL III: 278)* | exindiq(ue) *Sanders:* ex indig(nitate) *dubitanter Gilliam Cugusi Dorandi:* ex indig(entia) *dubitanter in commentario Cugusi* || **4** lus abradentur *edd.* | parens eius *Gilliam Tjäder Cugusi:* Parenseius *Sanders* || **5** *uel* traslatio ne com- *vel* traslatio nec om-*:* earum oras laquonecoru(m) *(dubitanter an* Laconicarum*) Sanders:* earum oras laquonecoru *(dubitanter an* Laconicorum *vel* Laconicarum*) Cugusi Dorandi*[1]*:* translatic pecorum *dubitanter Marichal apud Dorandi*[2] || **6**] . sus *Sanders Cugusi Dorandi*[1]*:*]sus *Marichal apud Dorandi*[2] | e . . . . osedam *(fortasse* et p[r]osedam*) edd.* || **7**] . . rporum *(fortasse* corporum*) edd.* | si utar *Sanders Cugusi Dorandi*[1]*:* ciuita *dubitanter Marichal apud Dorandi*[2] || **8**]isqu(e) eum *Sanders:*]isqu(e) cum *Cugusi Dorandi* || **10**]ram *Sanders Cugusi Dorandi*[1]*:*]a *Marichal apud Dorandi*[2] | distinare curabit *Tjäder Dorandi:* distin . . . . mabit *Sanders Cugusi* || **11**]s sollicitudinem *Sanders (fortasse* tolla]s sollicitudinem *uel* dema]s sollicitudinem*) Cugusi Dorandi* || **14**]mi *edd.* | Febrarium *dubitanter Marichal apud Dorandi*[2]*:* pe huniarl *Sanders Cugusi Dorandi*[1] || **15** *fortasse uestigia nominum consulum:*] . . . . qu . . . . us *Sanders:*] . . . qu . . . us *Cugusi Dorandi*

'… to the tribunes and (?) the prefects of the legions and … greetings.
… through Domnio, thence the day … they are considered. Copres, his father … not even by moving them … he was suggested that … be … because … the city of the … and … him to the city of Berenice … may your solemnity investigate this to be for … will take care of designating (to the?) the city … concern …
… of February …'

1–2 The sender is unknown, but the addressees appear to be members of the military chain of command: at least some (unspecified, apparently) *tribuni* and *praefecti legionum*[76], styled in the plural[77] at l. 9 (*grauitas uestra*). The tribunes might be *legionum* as well as the *praefecti* – perhaps they are an asyndetic couple (i.e. *tribunis* ***et*** *praefectis legionum* with omitted *et*). For the rank of *praefectus legionis*, still existing in later Antiquity even if not common, see e.g. *Not. dign. or.* 32, 30–1.

2 Traces are blurred. One might have *]atini car(issim-) salutem* or *]atiro* or *]atiori [ui]car(io) salutem*.

3 We preferred to divide *exin*, attested poetic and (in prose) late variant for *exinde* 'thence', 'subsequently' and *diem*, as the final ligature in the line closely resembles the *-em* in the *verso*, e.g. in *ciuitatem* (l. 5) and *iusionem* (l. 7).

[76] The reduplication of the last letter of the abbreviated word to indicate a plural number is a common feature of abbreviations in the Roman world from the III cent. AD onwards (see e.g. in *P.Dura* 60, letter *B* l. 6 *ad* ***dd****(ominos)* ***nn****(ostros) fortissimos* ***Impp****(eratores)*, i.e. Septimius Severus and Caracalla – AD 208, TM 44872). One also notices that in Latin letters on papyrus, particularly those long and elaborated late-antique specimens, abbreviations are usually confined to the initial greeting formulae, or to very frequently abbreviated nouns, whereas words from the main body of the letter remain largely unabridged. In *P.Oxy.* XLIV 3208 (I BC–I AD, TM 78573), a private letter between two slaves, the sender Syneros only abbreviates customary formulae in the *praescriptum*, or greeting formula: l. 1 Suneros Chio suo ***plur(imam) sal(utem)***. ***S(i) u(ales) b(ene est)***. In a request for *probatio*, *ChLA* XLII 1212 (AD 113–17, TM 70013), the sender only abbreviates in l. 1 ***praef(ecto)*** *Aegypti* and in ll. 6-7 *sub sig[ni]s* ***Imp(eratoris)*** | *domini* ***n(ostri)***. Finally, in the aforementioned, *P.Ryl.* IV 609, quite a lengthy letter, the sender confines the abbreviations in the greeting formula: ll. 1–2 *[Fl(auius) Cons]tantinus Theofanes* ***com(es)*** *et uir* ***inl(ustris) com(es) deuu(otissimorum) domm(esticorum)*** *et rei* ***mil(itaris) Th[e]b(aici) lim(itis) `Fl(auio)´*** *Ver`ĺe siue Theodoti[o]* | ***u(iro) d(euotissimo) trib(uno)*** *Hermupoli* ***deg(enti)***.

[77] One points out that in Latin letters on papyrus from Late Antiquity (and apparently in all Latin epistolography before the V cent. AD) there is no trace of the so-called 'illogic' *uos*, or *pluralis reuerentiae*. When a plural is used, is referred to a really plural entity. See some details in GERD HAVERLING, *On the 'Illogical' Vos in Late Latin Epistolography*, in LOUIS CALLEBAT (ed.), *Latin vulgaire, Latin tardive IV. Actes du 4e colloque international sur le Latin vulgaire et tardif. Caen, 2-5 septembre 1994*, Hildesheim, Zürich & New York 195, pp. 337–53.

ciuitat|***em*** (461, l. 5)	*iusion*|***em*** (461, l. 7)	*di*|***em*** (460, l. 3)

Notably, Domnio appears both in the *verso* and here, again with *per* and the accusative: someone through, by, or thanks to whom something else is done. If he is someone who can make things happen, he might be some sort of overseer, but this is entirely speculative.

4 Here too, as in the *verso*, Copres is mentioned. Little can be gathered on his condition: he appears only in his capacity of someone's father.

5 *Tra‹n›slatio* 'transfer' appears not to be linked to a specific context in Latin extant authors and documents: it can be used in economic, juridical, political or military-related texts.

6 The use of the verb *suggero* in the passive form, meaning 'I am ordered (to do something)' 'it is decided about me that…', is seen also in *P.Abinn.* 2, l. 5 and *ChLA* XLIII 1248[78], l. 8; it is discussed in *CEL* II, p. 327 and 333.

7–8 The names of two cities appear in these two lines. The intended link between them is unfathomable. The former is designated by the adjective referring to their population (ending in *-anus*) in the masculine genitive plural: *Hermupoli]ṭanorum* is possible, but any other town ending in *-polis* might fit the bill. Extant Latin documents on papyrus have a few other instances of this adjective: *ChLA* XIX 687, ll. 6–7 *Theofanen* | *oriundum ex* <u>*ciuitate Hermupolitanorum*</u>; *P.Ryl.* IV 623, ll. 7–8 *ex* <u>*ciuṭ[tate] Hermṭ[po]litanorṭ[m*</u> | *prouinciae Thebaido]ṣ*; IV 609, ll. 4–5 *Heracleon fil(ium) Constantinii* | *[ortum e]* <u>*ciuitati Ḥermupolitana*</u>; and *ChLA* III 210[79], l. 2 *ex* <u>*ciuitat(e) Panopo[l(itarum)]*</u>. After *ciuitaṭem* at l. 7, one sees traces of two letters, and then a lacuna of no more than 8 letters.

[78] = P.Vindob. inv. L 8+125, AD 395–401, TM 12866.
[79] AD 352, TM 19773.

The first of the two closely resembles a *d*: one can see the connecting point between the circular stroke and the upright stroke. The following ones, right before the lacuna, are only represented by the faint upper portion of an upright stroke. Perhaps *ciuitatem* ***di[stina*** *. . .]*?

The latter city is the renowned Beronice or Berenice (Βερενίκη) *Troglodytarum*, on the Red Sea. Again, there is no indication as to why this town is mentioned here. It definitely enjoyed its last bloom of economic and political prosperity between the IV and V centuries AD before its final demise in the mid-VI: not only commerce from the Red Sea and India increased, but a massive rebuilding program was enacted, probably on behalf on some unspecified higher authority[80]. If this authority was in any way connected to the Late Roman administration of the Egyptian provinces, that may explain why someone is possibly destined for that place and/or is being sent there (*‹e›um ad Beronicem ciuitatem*).

9 It cannot be determined whether it is from a lower to a higher-standing individual or group of individuals, or the opposite, since *grauitas uestra*[81] does not imply that the sender thinks himself inferior to the addressee – it can just be a polite form of address, and in this capacity is amply commented upon in S. CORCORAN, *The Empire* cit., pp. 325–327. The same holds true for other similar abstract expressions[82]. Notice at l. 9 *ésse cognóuerit*, an instance of *cursus tardus*.

10 *Distináre curábit* is an instance of *cursus planus*.

14–15 At the end of the text, probably a dating formula. Since l. 15 cannot, as far as I can determine, end in *coss*, it is difficult to hypothesize a consular year in that line. If this text is a copy to be stored in an archive, the formula might have been added by a further hand to mark out the day, the month and perhaps the year in which it was received by the addressee or included in the archive itself[83].

3. Final remarks. The fact that Copres and Domnio appear in both texts, and that the two texts themselves were drafted in the same papyrus with similar verbiage (*ciuitates*, *destinare*), suggest that, if they are not addressing the very same circumstance, the documents were produced very close to each other temporally, and concerned events and necessities in the very same *milieu*. One wonders who kept the draft, and why the draft ended up in Karanis, where it was found. The village is known for having hosted a small but consistent minority of veterans from the Roman

[80] Details in STEVEN E. SIDEBOTHAM, *Late Roman Berenike*, «JARCE» 39 (2002), pp. 217–240. The author points out that, as far as demographics go, the city was at this late stage likely populated by people from the Eastern Desert, raising and consuming goats, camels and sheep rather than pork, which would have been proof of a solid Roman military presence in the area, like in Trajan's times (pp. 234–235).

[81] This particular syntagm – in its capacity of an abstract form of address – is not very widespread. One finds it twice in PS. QVINT. *decl.* 4, 13 *dum utrumque colligo, interim apud* ***grauitatem uestram*** *depono sensisse aliquid etiam patrem, cum metuit* and 14, 1 *quaeso tamen vel hinc totam delati sceleris probationem* ***grauitas uestra*** *prospiciat, quod dolori meo querelaeque non creditur; nec amo, qui accusare possum, nec odi, qui amare mallem*; twice in REG. eccl. Carth. p. 210 l. 964 *quid de auctoritate illius amplissimae sedis impetrauerimus, petimus* ***grauitatem uestram****, recitari et gestis innecti, atque in effectum deduci iubeatis* and CONC. Carth. a. 345/348 p. 7 l. 120 *statuat* ***grauitas uestra*** *ut unusquisque clericus uel laicus non communicent in alia plebe sine litteris episcopi sui*; twice again in OPTAT. *app.* 10 p. 214, 8 *rectissime et sapienter* ***grauitas uestra*** *fecit*, and 215, 11 *accepta igitur epistola sapientiae et* ***grauitatis uestrae***; and once in CASSIOD. *var.* 10, 14, 14 *sed hoc quoque mirabile est, quod* ***grauitatem uestram*** *cogimur ammonere, quam constat semper sponte sapuisse*.

[82] In the aforementioned *P.Ryl.* IV 609, decidedly a letter from the highest rank in the province to a local commander, Theophanes refers to Verte with an abstract syntagm: see ll. 4-5 *Heracleon fili(um) Constantinii | [ortum e] ciuitati Hermupolitana ἐν uexillatione* ***prudentiae tuae*** *pro tempore credita edictio mea militare prae[cip]it*.

[83] Details on these archival practice in GIULIO IOVINE, Data epistula: *Later Additions of Roman Dating Formulae in Latin and Greek Papyri and* Ostraka *from the First to the Sixth Centuries AD*, «Manuscripta» 63/2 (2019), pp 157–230: pp. 206–215.

army in the first three centuries of Roman power; the situation appears not to have significantly altered in the IV cent. AD[84]. One might compare the case of *P.Mich*. 460 and 461 to that of the aforementioned *P.Abinn*. 1, a draft of a petition by Flauius Abinneus which remained in his personal archive and was discarded in Dionysias[85] when Abinnaeus himself retired from his job as *praefectus alae*. Abinnaeus left his documents behind, but this might not have occurred in the present case: also Flauius Isidorus, *officialis* and *beneficiarius* in the late-IV AD Hermupolis, kept two drafts of petitions to the Emperors (*P.Lips.* I 34 and 35[86]) in his personal archive *after* he retired from those positions, instead of discarding them[87]. The clerk who drafted 460, 461 or both of them might have kept the draft when he moved (back?) to Karanis after retirement, because one of the documents – or both of them – concerned his own person (a petition, maybe?), and he still needed a copy of it. Alternatively, he might have written the petition(s) for someone else in his office, perhaps one among the people mentioned in the documents – Copres, Domnio, Romullus or the like[88]; consequently, this person would have needed to keep a draft of documents which directly concerned himself, being unable – for unfathomable reasons – to access the final drafts, or official copies, of the documents. Abinnaeus, after all, kept the draft of his petition because the official copy was sent to the Emperors, and likely never returned directly to him – if it returned at all – except as a copy at the bottom of an Imperial rescript, as in the much later *SB* XX 14606[89]. The only way he had to re-peruse it again was to keep the draft. To conclude, if either document was in fact a petition, the clerk who produced it – for himself or for one of the mentioned persons – might have wanted to hold it in his personal archive.

[84] See NIGEL POLLARD, *The Chronology and Economic Condition of Late Roman Karanis: An Archaeological Reassessment*, «JARCE» 35 (1998), pp. 147–162; and about Karanis in general, RICHARD ALSTON, *Soldier and Society in Roman Egypt*, London-New York 1995, especially pp. 117–142.

[85] And there it was found, not in Philadelphia, as recently argued in CLAUDIO GALLAZZI, *Dove è stato ritrovato l'archivio di Abinneo?*, «APF» 61 (2015), pp. 170–179.

[86] AD 375–8, TM 22345 and 22346.

[87] Details on this rich archive (TM Archive 89) are now collected in www.trismegistos.org/archive/89 (consulted in 9 December 2021).

[88] Their social standing is unknown; they might have been clerks in a provincial or military office, or at any rate have dealt with the same office in which the texts were produced, and where they were known.

[89] TM 23768. After the Emperor's greeting formula (*bene ualere te cupimus*), the Greek text of the petition is copied: *exemp[l]um pre[c]ụm* ('copy of the requests'). Τοῖς γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης καὶ παντὸς ἀνθρώπων κτλ.