

ANCIENT GREEK AT WORK

A pragmatic approach to business letters in 3rd century B.C.E. Egypt

George William Mackay

M.A., Dip. Ed., University of Sydney

Litt.B., Dip. Soc. Sc., University of New England (Australia)

M.Ed. (Admin.), University of New South Wales

B.Anc.Hist. (Hons), Macquarie University, Sydney

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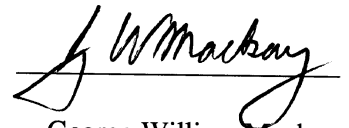
Department of Ancient History
Faculty of Arts
Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

To my wife and daughters

**With thanks to my supervisor
Associate Professor Trevor Evans**

DECLARATION

I declare this thesis to be my own work and that it has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution. To the best of my knowledge all sources of information used and all help received have been acknowledged and full references provided as appropriate. (Ethics Committee approval has not been required for this thesis.)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G W Mackay', written over a horizontal line.

George William Mackay
22 February 2016

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LIST OF TEXTS

Number	Trismegistos	Description	Archive
1	TM 2492	Letter from Panakestor to Kleon.	Arch. Kleon
2	TM 44593	Letter to Kleon from stone-cutters from Pasontis.	Arch. Kleon
3	TM 7639	Letter to an addressee (name not preserved) from Philoxenos and others.	Arch. Kleon
4	TM 7647	Letter to Kleon from the foremen of the 'free stone-cutters'.	Arch. Kleon
5	TM 1923	Letter to Zenon from Apollonios (an employee).	Arch. Zen.
6	TM 2021	Letter of instruction to Apollodotos from Apollonios.	Arch. Zen.
7	TM 7446	Letter of instruction to Hephaiston from Asklepiades.	Arch. Kleon
8	TM 1536	Letter of instruction to Zenon from Apollonios.	Arch. Zen.
9	TM 847	Letter to Zenon from Apollonios.	Arch. Zen.
10	TM 1544	Letter to Zenon from Hermolaos.	Arch. Zen.
11	TM 807	Letter of instruction to Zenon from Apollonios.	Arch. Zen.
12	TM 6200	Letter of instruction to Demetrios from Apollonios.	Arch. Zen.
13	TM 6220	Letter to Kleon from Philonides, his son.	Arch. Kleon
14	TM 7671	Letter to Kleon from Philonides, his son.	Arch. Kleon
15	TM 7667	Letter to Kleon from Polykrates, his son.	Arch. Kleon
16	TM 2491	Letter to Kleon from Zenon.	Arch. Kleon
17	TM 7634	Letter to Kleon from (name of sender not preserved).	Arch. Kleon
18	TM 1988	Letter/memorandum to Zenon from Labois.	Arch. Zen.
19	TM 2385	Letter to Zenon from Amyntas.	Arch. Zen.
20	TM 1621	Letter to Zenon from Philoxenos.	Arch. Zen.
21	TM 2384	Letter to Zenon from Hierokles.	Arch. Zen.
22	TM 7650	Letter (names of recipient and sender not preserved).	Arch. Kleon
23	TM 7651	Letter to Kleon from Alexandros.	Arch. Kleon
24	TM 1997	Letter to Zenon from (name of sender not preserved).	Arch. Zen.
25	TM 1603	Letter to Zenon from Menon.	Arch. Zen.
26	TM 7443	Letter (names of recipient and sender not preserved).	Arch. Kleon
27	TM 1588	Letter to Zenon from Asklepiades.	Arch. Zen.
28	TM 1589	Letter to Zenon from Asklepiades.	Arch. Zen.
29	TM 881	Petition to Diotemos from Neoptolemos.	Arch. Zen.
30	TM 984	Petition to Apollonios from Theopropos.	Arch. Zen.
31	TM 1456	Petition to the king from Zenon.	Arch. Zen.
32	TM 1601	Petition to the king from Menandros.	Arch. Zen.

Number	Trismegistos	Description	Archive
33	TM 1600	Petition to Zenon from from Lysimachos and Paesis, potters.	Arch. Zen.
34	TM 1598	Memorandum to Zenon from Isadora.	Arch. Zen.
35	TM 1986	Petition to Zenon from Kallippos.	Arch. Zen.
36	TM 1543	Report to Kollouthes from agricultural workers in Ammonias.	Arch. Zen.
37	TM 7448	Formal notice of appointment of Theodoros issued by Aristandros.	Arch. Kleon
38	TM 7659	Letter to Kleon from Thamous.	Arch. Kleon
39	TM 388486	Letter to Kleon from Nikostratos.	Arch. Kleon
40	TM 1542	Letter to Zenon from Demetrios.	Arch. Zen.
41	TM 1882	Letter to Artemidoros from Hierokles.	Arch. Zen.
42	TM 388508	Letter to Theodoros from Asklepiades.	Arch. Kleon
43	TM 1575	Letter to Zenon from Demetrios.	Arch. Zen.
44	TM 1511	Letter to Apollonios from Glaukias	Arch. Zen.
45	TM 1570	Letter to Zenon from Iason.	Arch. Zen.
46	TM 1957	Letter to Theophilos from Lysanias.	Arch. Zen.
47	TM 1916	Letter to Zenon from Antimenos.	Arch. Zen.
48	TM 1732	Letter to Zenon from three ambassadors from Kaunos.	Arch. Zen.
49	TM 1960	Letter to Zenon from Païs.	Arch. Zen.
50	TM 7660	Letter to Zenon from Archestratos.	Arch. Zen.
51	TM 1996	Memorandum to Zenon to from (name of sender not preserved).	Arch. Zen.
52	TM 2382	Letter to Zenon from Ammonios.	Arch. Zen.
53	TM 1982	Letter to Zenon from Herakleides	Arch. Zen.
54	TM 1956	Letter to Zenon from Philon.	Arch. Zen.
55	TM 1946	Letter to Zenon from Pyron.	Arch. Zen.
56	TM 1887	Letter to Kleitarchos from Zenon.	Arch. Zen.
X1	TM 7447	Antigraphon to Diotimos from Theodoros.	Arch. Kleon
X2	TM 7442	Letter to Theodoros from Hermogenes.	Arch. Kleon
X3	TM 890	Letter to Zenon from Kollouthes.	Arch. Zen.
X4	TM 2022	Letter of instruction to Hikesios from Apollonios.	Arch. Zen.
X5	TM 1937	Letter to Theopompos from Petosiris.	Arch. Zen.
X6	TM 1516	Letter to Kleitarchos and Andron from Panakestor.	Arch. Zen.
X7	TM 1965	Letter to Eukles from Hermaphilos.	Arch. Zen.
X8	TM 865	Letter to Zenon from Apollonios.	Arch. Zen.
X9	TM 815	Letter to Zenon from Apollonios.	Arch. Zen.
X10	TM 388479	Fragment of a letter referring to Kleon	Arch. Kleon
X11	TM 381302	Memorandum to Phileas from Kleon.	Arch. Kleon

Number	Trismegistos	Description	Archive
X12	TM 388485	A request to ensure a payment is made payment (names of recipient and sender not preserved).	Arch. Kleon
X13	TM 712	Letter to Zenon from Amyntas.	Arch. Zen.
X14	TM 1618	Letter to Zenon from Philinos.	Arch. Zen.
X15	TM 1951	Letter to Zenon from Philinos.	Arch. Zen.
X16	TM 1969	Letter to Zenon from Heroides.	Arch. Zen
X17	TM 1980	Letter to Agron from Zenon.	Arch. Zen
X18	TM 1919	Letter to Zenon from Nikon.	Arch. Zen
X19	TM 1920	Letter to Apollonios or Zenon from Charmylos.	Arch. Zen
X20	TM 7644	Letter to Kleon from Nikeratos.	Arch. Kleon
X21	TM 7645	Letter to Kleon from (name of sender not preserved).	Arch. Kleon
X22	TM 388476	Letter to Kleon from Dikaio.	Arch. Kleon
X23	TM 7680	Letter to Kleon from Metrodora (his wife).	Arch. Kleon
X24	TM 2085	Letter to Philiskos from Harentotes	Arch. Zen
X25	TM 3357	A petition to the king from Philista.	P Enteux.
X26	TM 7670	Letter to Kleon from Philonides (his son).	Arch. Kleon
X27	TM 388474	Two fragments.	Arch. Kleon
X28	TM 1934	A prosangelma in duplicate.	Arch. Zen
X29	TM 7446	Letter to Hephaistion from Asklepiades.	Arch. Kleon
X30	TM 1925	Letter to Zenon from Aristeides.	Arch. Zen

ABSTRACT

The value of the documentary papyri in Ancient Greek to scholars of the language has long been recognised and they have been studied from a number of perspectives. These have included analysis of the information the documents make available to us about the development of Ancient Greek grammar (semantics, syntax and morphology) and phonology. The structure of particular genres such as petitions and letters has also been examined.

This thesis takes a sample of business letters from the Zenon archive and the archive of Kleon and Theodoros (3rd Century B.C.E.) and examines, to the extent that we can infer them, the purposes of the writers. It seeks to identify some of the goals the writers were pursuing, with all that this may tell us about the society in which they lived, and, most importantly, the ways they used language to achieve those goals.

The theory of language that informs this investigation is consistent with that branch of modern linguistics known as pragmatics and with the approach of classical rhetoric. While by no means a thesis in linguistics, it takes a number of concepts from speech act theory in particular, as well as politeness theory and Grice's theory of conversational implicature, and uses them as tools to provide a framework for the thesis and for textual analysis. The use of rhetorical tropes in the letters, and appeals to λόγος, πάθος and ἥθος as means of persuasion, is also examined when relevant.

Following an *Introduction*, Part I sets out the theoretical foundations of the thesis and reviews previous work on Ancient Greek from a similar perspective. Part II examines the use of directive speech acts in the letters sampled, including threats, warnings, orders, requests, and petitioning. Part III considers assertive, commissive and expressive speech acts. Following these three parts, a chapter of *Conclusions* sets out what the thesis has shown about the way language was used in these documents and about the society that produced them. It also evaluates the usefulness of the pragmatic approach to them.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on Ancient Greek documentary papyri. Specifically, it examines letters drawn from two archives of the 3rd century B.C.E.: the Zenon archive¹ and the archive of the engineers Kleon and Theodoros². It is my view, one shared by many others,³ that these archives provide some of the richest material available to us as we attempt to improve our understanding of how Ancient Greek was used in everyday life. It is invaluable linguistically, but also casts additional light on the society that used language in the ways that will be analysed here. Certainly nothing comparable is available to us from the archaic or classical period.⁴

This introductory chapter sets out how these archives will be approached, the questions to be addressed, and provides a brief statement of the argument to be made by the thesis. An overview of the texts to be examined is provided and the structure of the thesis explained.

1.1 Why this thesis

This thesis takes as its principal focus the apparent goals of the writers of the many business letters found in these archives. It examines how, given their specific social context, the writers sought to achieve those goals through their choice of words and the ways they put those words together. In short, it seeks to extend our understanding of the

¹ Willy Clarysse and Katelijn Vandorpe, *Zénon, un homme d'affaires Grec à l'ombre des pyramides*, ed. Faculteit Letteren Van De K. U. Leuven Ancorae (Steunpunten Voor Studie En Onderwijs, 14; Leuven: Presses Universitaires de Louvain, 1995). Claude Orrieux, *Les Papyrus de Zénon: L'horizon d'un grec en Egypte au IIIe siècle avant J. C.* (Paris: Macula, 1983).

² Bart Van Beek, *The Archive of the Engineers Kleon and Theodoros: Archive Study, Text Edition, with Translations and Notes (diss.)* (Leuven: 2006).

³ For a brief overview of both early and renewed interest see T. V. Evans and D. D. Obbink 'Introduction' in T. V. Evans and D. D. Obbink (eds.), *The Language of the Papyri* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp 1 – 3..

⁴ A recent overview of ancient Greek letter writing can be found in Paola Ceccarelli, *Ancient Greek Letter Writing: A Cultural History (600 BC - 150 BC)*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

language of these texts by examining them from a pragmatic perspective. In this regard, it differs significantly from previous approaches.⁵

Historically, studies of the documentary papyri have fallen into two main strands. First, many scholars have considered the papyri largely from what may be called a 'grammatical' perspective. That is to say, they have focused on semantics, syntax and morphology. They have also analysed phonological changes evident in the documents. One of the most significant achievements of this approach, undertaken in the early part of the twentieth century, has been the work of Edwin Mayser.⁶ There has also been ongoing and important recent work with this focus.⁷ The second strand, also commencing in the first half of the twentieth century, has studied the structure of letters⁸ and the structure of petitions⁹.

At risk of over-generalising, it seems reasonable to say that the first of these strands takes a very fine-grained, sometimes word by word approach to the documents, while the second strand stands back and seeks to identify common overarching patterns in their structure. Both strands, important as they are, frequently miss the force and vitality found in the language—they miss its liveliness. This point is expressed more formally by Fitzmaurice when she writes about familiar letters in early modern English:

⁵ Tentative steps in this direction were taken by Stowers who, in discussing Greco-Roman letters in the context of early Christianity, focuses on what writers were trying to do through their letters. He writes: 'It is more helpful to think of letters in terms of the actions that people performed by means of them'. (This is in contrast to the information they communicate, which he considers to have been the most common modern perspective on ancient letters until his time of writing.) Stowers organised the letters he discussed, all from a period later than those considered here, according to these actions and identified some rhetorical approaches found in them, but did not utilise modern linguistic insights or consider the texts in as close detail as is undertaken in this thesis. Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), p 15..

⁶ Edwin Mayser, *Grammatik der griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit, mit Einschluss der gleichzeitigen Ostraka und der in Ägypten verfassten Inschriften* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1970 (Photomechanischer Nachdruck)). (In 2 volumes each of 3 parts—see Bibliography.)

⁷ See for a recent example John A. L. Lee, 'Auxiliary Θέλω', in T. V. Evans and D.D. Obbink (eds.), *The Language of the Papyri* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp 15 - 34.

⁸ John L. White, 'The Greek Documentary Letter Tradition Third Century B.C.E. To Third Century C.E.', *Semeia*, 22 (1982), pp 89 - 106.

⁹ See Paul Collomp, *Recherches sur la Chancellerie et la Diplomatie des Lagides* (Publications de la Faculté des lettres de l'université de Strasbourg; Fascicule 29; Diffusion ÉDITIONS OPHRYS; Paris: 1925). This early work is well-summarised in Robert R. I. Harper, *The Forensic Saviour: Petitions and Power in Greco-Roman Egypt (diss.)* (Sydney: 1997). Also see John L. White, *The Form and Structure of the Official Petition: A Study in Greek Epistolography* (Dissertation Series, Number Five; Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972).

It [a familiar letter] consists of conventional or formulaic utterance in order to meet basic expectations of politeness in the course of the exchange, but it also consists of *particular locutions* expressed and phrased in order to carry out specific tasks that the letter is intended to perform.¹⁰

This thesis in no way denies the value of work identifying linguistic formulae used in letters, structural or other conventions. It most certainly does not deny the value of work done on semantics, syntax and morphology. It does, however seek a middle way. Like Fitzmaurice, it sees special value in examining letters—letters written by busy people in their everyday lives. It is especially interested in Fitzmaurice’s ‘particular locutions’—locutions that while perhaps different in the (mostly) business letters found in these archives from the ones she studied in private letters, are just as important. In doing this it seeks to complement the two other strands of research identified above. It does not seek to replace them. It seeks to develop an approach that, while continuing to examine individual words and grammatical constructions when relevant, and while bearing in mind the overall structure and conventions of letter writing, pays closest attention to the apparent goals of the writers.

There is need for caution here. The everyday experience of all speakers and listeners is that we can easily err in our judgment of the goals of others. We can be deceived for many reasons. Sometimes we are deceived because deception is the purpose of our interlocutor; sometimes we are misled by our own desires and hopes that someone has a purpose congenial to us; sometimes we are simply mistaken. How much the more careful then ought we to be when dealing with written material that is more than two thousand years old and is in a language the everyday usage of which is lost to us. It is almost certain, therefore, that we will be mistaken in individual cases. This is a limitation to work of the kind undertaken in this thesis that cannot be overcome. Yet it is equally certain that we will not be mistaken if we assume that there are purposes at work in any letter that we examine, even if we cannot be certain that we have inferred them correctly. On the whole, as a result of the fact that letters provide us with at least

¹⁰ Susan M. Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter in Early Modern English: A Pragmatic Approach* (Pragmatics and Beyond: New Series, 95; Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2002), p 23, (emphasis added).

some context on which to base our inference, and as a result of our shared humanity, we may nevertheless get close enough, often enough, to learn something useful.

There are also other reasons why this approach can be justified. Firstly, ‘pragmatics’ has become such an important part of the discipline of linguistics that not to explore its usefulness when analysing these documents would be foolish. In particular, the branch of the discipline known as historical pragmatics has demonstrated its usefulness in examining texts from a number of historical periods notwithstanding the fact that at least some of the reservations we have about our understanding of the everyday use of Ancient Greek apply in those cases as well.¹¹

Secondly, in reading the two archives, one cannot but be impressed by the extent to which almost every letter is seeking from its recipient, either action, materials, information, or sometimes all three. (This is also frequently the case in other archives of other periods.¹²) The letters come alive as they express the goals, fears, hopes and concerns of the correspondents. To overlook this is to miss their very essence. To express this more technically, they are full of ‘speech acts’—directive speech acts in particular (see below)—rhetorical appeals and tropes. It need hardly be added that letters, both private and business (the majority here) are a unique genre: whether or not they give us insight into spoken language they are certainly worth studying in their own right.¹³ This was recognised very soon after the papyri became available to scholars.

Thirdly, as will be made clear in the review below of research undertaken into Ancient Greek from a pragmatic perspective, this is an approach that has as yet been only tentatively explored. The field is open and inviting.¹⁴ In this regard it is worth pausing

¹¹ Something of the growth in this discipline can be gauged by comparing an early article such as Andreas H. Jucker, 'The Feasibility of Historical Pragmatics', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 22 (1994), pp 529 -547. with later publications such as Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.), *Historical Pragmatics*, eds. Wolfram Bublitz, Andreas H. Jucker, and Klaus P. Schneider (Handbooks of Pragmatics, 8; Berlin/New York: De Gruyter Mouton, 2010).

¹² See, for example, Martti Leiwo, 'Imperatives and Other Directives in the Greek Letters from Mons Claudianus', in T. V. Evans and D.D. Obbink (eds.), *The Language of the Papyri* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp 97-119 at p 99.

¹³ Jeremy King, 'Power and Indirectness in Business Correspondence: Petitions in Colonial Louisiana Spanish', *Journal of Politeness Research*, 7 (2011), pp 259 - 283 at p 265.

¹⁴ More work has been done from this perspective on Latin. See, for example Rodie Risselada, *Imperatives and Other Directive Expressions in Latin: A Study in the Pragmatics of a Dead Language*

briefly to remember just how much excitement the discovery of the non-literary papyri from all periods created as they first began to be available to scholars. Horn wrote, in 1922: ‘The letters come from all kinds of people; they are on all kinds of subjects; they are written under all kinds of conditions.....The life of a thousand years along the Nile is being revealed to us’.¹⁵ While perhaps over-stating the case a little, such enthusiasm is contagious.

Indeed, the ‘liveliness’ of these letters deserves further elaboration. Letters by their very nature are likely to contain greetings and politeness formulae together with questions, requests, promises, apologies, and much more of this kind.¹⁶ Such language usage is not found in most of the Ancient Greek that has come down to us. The documentary papyri are our best source of such usage. Secondly, while not lacking in the occasional example of finely crafted prose that might merit the epithet ‘rhetorical’, the letters most commonly contain much language that demonstrates a high degree of ‘immediacy’, rather than of ‘distance’, in linguistic register.¹⁷ This is put succinctly by Exler who writes:

In its simplest form the letter is essentially intimate, individual, personal, intended exclusively for the eyes of the person or persons to whom it is addressed. It is of ephemeral nature; called forth by the need of the moment, it has no purpose of existence, when this need has been attended to.¹⁸

Sell, in similar vein, has observed that some written material, including perhaps business letters such as those considered here, ‘interact more fundamentally with human beings than any speech, and, further, that ‘[S]ome types of writing are more casual and

(Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1993), Hilla Halla-Aho, *The Non-Literary Latin Letters: A Study of Their Syntax and Pragmatics* (Helsinki: diss., 2009). Hilla Halla-Aho, ‘Linguistic Varieties and Language Level in Latin Non-Literary Letters’, in T. V. Evans and D.D. Obbink (eds.), *The Language of the Papyri* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp 171 - 183.

¹⁵ Robert C. Horn, ‘Life and Letters in the Papyri’, *The Classical Journal*, 17/9 (1922), pp 487 - 502 at p 502.

¹⁶ Jucker, ‘The Feasibility of Historical Pragmatics’, p 535.

¹⁷ Andreas H. Jucker, ‘Historical Pragmatics’, *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 2/5 (2008), pp 894-906 at p 896. Jucker acknowledges and cites Peter Koch and Wulf Oesterreicher, *Sprache der Nähe — Sprache der Distanz. Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit im Spannungsfeld von Sprachtheorie und Sprachgeschichte*, *Romanistisches Jahrbuch*, 36 (1985), pp 15-43.

¹⁸ Francis Xavier J. Exler, *The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter: A Study in Greek Epistolography* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1923), pp 15-16.

colloquial than many styles of speech...'¹⁹ Although a smaller proportion of the corpus, it is also the case that the papyri from the Hellenistic period in Egypt provide our best source of such personal letters.²⁰

Unlike the classical canon, these documents were not written to honour the gods or persons of high status, to provide entertainment, to persuade an assembly or to ensure the author would be remembered by future generations. They were written in order to meet particular exigencies with due concern for the likely consequences of alternative actions or inaction. They grant us access to the linguistic strategies adopted by practical men, at a particular time, in a particular place, in order to discharge their responsibilities.

In short, the letters are examples of Ancient Greek language in everyday use. Their value in this respect cannot be overstated and this thesis is a contribution towards realising that value. Given the relatively small amount of work undertaken into Ancient Greek from a pragmatic perspective, the thesis will also serve as a test case of the extent to which this approach has potential to be useful for similar research in future.

1.2 Questions and argument

Given the above, the thesis addresses four main questions.

- What was the purpose of these letters?
- What linguistic strategies do the letters demonstrate as they pursue these purposes?
- How were these strategies modified in individual cases?
- What do these strategies imply about the society in which these correspondents lived?

¹⁹ Roger D. Sell, 'The Politeness of Literary Texts', in Roger D. Sell (ed.), *Literary Pragmatics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp 208 - 224 at p 218.

²⁰ M. Luther Stirewalt, *Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography*, ed. Marvin A. Sweeney (Resources for Biblical Study; Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1993), p 11.

An additional question, implicit in the approach the thesis takes, is whether the modern linguistic discipline of pragmatics, as applied through close reading of the text, can produce fresh and useful insights into this material, sufficient to justify their use elsewhere in the study of Ancient Greek.

My answers to these questions, derived from a description and analysis of examples of these texts, form the argument of this thesis. I argue that the non-literary papyri are a rich source of information about the goals of the writers of these letters and the linguistic strategies they adopted to achieve them. While containing some examples of fine prose from the well-educated, they also demonstrate that those who presumably lacked this advantage also adopted a wide range of linguistic strategies, including some that would have been readily recognised by ancient authorities on rhetoric.²¹

Contemporary theories of pragmatics are utilised in support of this argument. In this respect—the pragmatic approach—the thesis takes up the invitation implied by some work already done on literary works. It breaks new ground for our understanding of Ancient Greek by applying this approach to documentary papyri. This is the first contribution to knowledge in the field of papyrology that the thesis makes.

The second contribution to papyrology made by this thesis is to demonstrate the value of reading these documents in a manner that pays closer attention to their content and style than has previously been undertaken. It shows that the kind of close reading routinely applied to literary works can prove fruitful with these texts as well. The ‘particular locutions’ found in letters, to use Fitzmaurice’s description (p 2 above), are shown to deserve closer attention than they have often been given, both for the insights they provide into the probable motives of the writers²² and for the language use they instantiate. Some observations are made on each of these.

²¹ Combining insights from both rhetoric and pragmatics, or other branches of modern linguistics, is not new in other contexts and with other languages. Van Dijk, as long ago as 1985, noted that classical rhetoric in many ways ‘anticipated’ many aspects of current linguistic interest. Teun A. Van Dijk, *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, 4 vols. (Volume 1: Disciplines of Discourse; London: Academic Press Inc., 1985), p 1. For a recent example—one that cites Van Dijk—see Stefan Keller, ‘Combining Rhetoric and Pragmatics to Read *Othello*’, *English Studies*, 91/4 (2010), pp 398 - 411.

²² ‘Private and official epistolary prose can be a great source of knowledge about processes of personal communication in a culture, and can shed light on the social relations, linguistic and cognitive mechanisms of discourse composition, and language change in the history of a community.’ Urszula Okulska, ‘Textual Strategies in the Diplomatic Correspondence of the Middle and Early Modern English Periods: The Narrative Report Letter as a Genre’, in Marina Dossena and Susan M. Fitzmaurice (eds.),

Finally, while readers may disagree in detail with the conclusions drawn, by reading this thesis they will be in a better position than they otherwise would have been to judge whether a pragmatic approach to language has potential for further development and application to the study of Ancient Greek. This writer's reflections on the methodology employed are recorded in the conclusions to this thesis.

1.3 Sources

As indicated in the opening lines of this chapter, this thesis examines letters drawn from two archives of the 3rd century B.C.E. The first, the Zenon archive, is the richest source of Ancient Greek documentary material that we have for the pre-Christian era. The second, much smaller archive from the same period is the archive of the engineers Kleon and Theodoros.²³

1.3.1 The Zenon archive

Zenon was a business representative and private secretary to Apollonios, the finance minister to King Ptolemy II, manager of the estate of Apollonios, and a man with many business interests of his own.²⁴ We know little of his personal life beyond that he came from Kaunos and had two brothers. What we do know is well-summarised by Edgar and by Clarysse.²⁵

Business and Historical Correspondence: Historical Investigations; Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), pp 47 - 76 at p 47.

²³ For the most part, the period from which documents in both archives are drawn overlap. The period spanned by the Zenon archive is slightly longer (263-229 B.C.E.) than that for the archive of Kleon and Theodoros (260-237 B.C.E). Leuven Homepage of Papyrus Collections www.trismegistos.org. (For information on the Zenon archive see <http://www.trismegistos.org/arch/archives/pdf/256.pdf> For information on the archive of Kleon and Theodoros see <http://www.trismegistos.org/arch/archives/pdf/122.pdf>)

²⁴ Willy Clarysse and Katelijn Vandorpe, *Zénon, un homme d'affaires Grec à l'ombre des pyramides*.

²⁵ Campbell Cowan Edgar, *Zenon Papyri in the University of Michigan Collection* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1931). Willy Clarysse, 'The Zenon Papyri Thirty Years On', in Guido Bastianini and Angelo Casanova (eds.), *100 Anni Di Istituzioni Fiorentine Per La Papirologia: 1908 Società Italiana Per La Ricerca Dei Papiri 1928* (Firenze: Istituto Papirologico 'G Vitelli', 2009), p 33.

The Zenon archive (henceforward ‘Arch. Zen.’) contains at least 1,819 texts. Most are well-preserved.²⁶ There is a range of text types represented, including petitions (10 per cent), accounts, lists and other internal documents (10 percent), receipts (3.7 per cent) and other documents. More than 40 per cent are letters.²⁷

It is the letters that are of interest here. The large number of letters preserved, however, presents a difficulty for this thesis. To deal with them all is beyond its scope. A selection has been necessary. Thirty-eight letters from this archive are reproduced and discussed in detail in the body of this thesis. A further 18 are referred to briefly, to support or otherwise enrich the discussion. (These are reproduced in the appendix.)

The guiding principles applied in choosing letters for analysis include their state of preservation, length and significance. This last criterion has been operationalised in that publication and discussion have been deemed good indicators of significance. Most of the letters considered here have been published, translated and discussed in a variety of contexts. In addition, letters which illustrate a range of speech acts and styles have been given greatest prominence.²⁸

No claim is made that this sample of letters is in some way ‘representative’ of the archive (and certainly not of the Ancient Greek language of the time). Given that all of the documentary papyri that have come down to us have done so as a matter of chance, it is, in any event not clear what ‘representative’ might mean. As has been remarked about the study of Medieval Greek texts, and as is certainly true of the papyri, ‘...the compilation of the corpus does not belong to the linguist, but to chance and fate, who decide which texts will be preserved.’²⁹ What is important for this thesis is that examples of particular linguistic usages are found, not that they are always, or even typically, found.

²⁶ Leuven Homepage of Papyrus Collections <http://www.trismegistos.org/arch/archives/pdf/256.pdf>

²⁷ The texts have been classified in a more fine-grained manner into eighteen types. P. W. Pestman, *A Guide to the Zenon Archive (P.L. Bat. 21)*, 2 vols. (Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava, XXI A; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), p 171.

²⁸ The concordance provided in the *Appendix* identifies the editions from which each letter has been drawn.

²⁹ Io Manolessou, ‘On Historical Linguistics, Linguistic Variation and Medieval Greek’, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 32/1 (2008), pp 63 - 79 at p 65.

1.3.2 The archive of Kleon and Theodoros

Kleon was a regional *architekton* or engineer responsible for public works in the Fayum in Egypt. The documents in this archive relate both to his official duties (and those of his successor Theodoros) and his personal life.³⁰ *Architekton* was a highly responsible position with substantial official status.³¹ We are fortunate, in this archive, to have a small number of very personal family letters. Frustratingly, many of these are fragmentary. Nevertheless it is true that these letters add a personal touch amid essentially administrative documents.³²

The archive of Kleon and Theodoros (henceforward 'Arch. Kleon') consists of at least 106 certain and 14 uncertain texts. Of these, 66 are correspondence of Kleon, 12 are correspondence of Theodoros, 14 are accounts, 4 registers of correspondence, 2 registers of contracts and 2 law cases. Unfortunately many documents are too poorly preserved to be read coherently or even for their type to be identified. A new edition of 119 texts, including those not well preserved, has been prepared, and its publication is anticipated.³³

Eighteen letters from this archive are reproduced and discussed in detail in the body of this thesis. As in Arch. Zen additional letters (12) are referred to more briefly, and these are reproduced in the appendix. Only a relatively small number have been published and discussed in secondary sources.³⁴ It is the state of preservation of individual documents more than any judgments about their broader significance that has informed the selection of letters to be discussed from this archive.

³⁰ Van Beek, *The Archive of Kleon and Theodoros*, p 10.

³¹ Naphtali Lewis, *Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt: Case Studies in the Social History of the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp 37-38.

³² Bart Van Beek, 'We Too Are in Good Health'. The Private Correspondence from the Kleon Archive', in Peter Van Nuffelen (ed.), *Faces of Hellenism: Studies in the History of the Eastern Mediterranean (4th Century B.C. - 5th Century A.D.)* (Studia Hellenistica; Leuven - Paris - Walpole MA: Peeters, 2009), pp 147 - 159 at p 157.

³³ Van Beek, *The Archive of Kleon and Theodoros*.

³⁴ In addition to the new edition prepared by Van Beek and his article cited above, the only recent publication to give much attention to Kleon is Lewis, *Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt: Case Studies in the Social History of the Hellenistic World*.

Consideration of texts from this archive has been made much easier by the edition prepared by Van Beek and by the online access provided by the Leuven collection (Trismegistos).

1.3.3 Editions and translations

Texts reproduced in the body of this thesis are numbered progressively from first-mentioned to last ('TEXT 1', 'TEXT 2' and so on). Reproduced texts are also identified by the number allocated by the Trismegistos web site³⁵ ('TM xxxx') and another siglum. That siglum may be more familiar to some readers and assist them more readily to place the text in context. Fifty six letters in total are included.

Texts referred to but not discussed in sufficient detail to warrant reproduction in the body of the thesis—Supplementary Texts—are reproduced for the reader's convenience in the appendix. These texts are also numbered progressively from first to last but numbers are preceded by the letter 'X' ('TEXT X1', 'Text X2' and so on.) There are 30 such letters appended.

A list of texts showing the Trismegistos number and the archive from which each text has been drawn followed the Table of Contents. A concordance showing these identifiers, together with a page reference to where they are reproduced, discussed or mentioned in the thesis is also appended. The Trismegistos number and other identifying data are included in this concordance.

For Arch. Zen., texts have been drawn in the first instance, (through Trismegistos) from the Duke Database.³⁶ Many of these texts have been published in well-known collections. Texts on the Duke Database are generally congruent with these, but if there is a difference the published version has been used.³⁷

³⁵ www.trismegistos.org.

³⁶ <http://papyri.info/browse/ddbdp/>

³⁷ Principally, Edgar, *Zenon Papyri in the University of Michigan Collection*, and T. C. Skeat, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum (Now in the British Library) The Zenon Archive* (Vol. VII; London: The British Library Board, 1974).

In the case of Arch. Kleon, texts are taken from Van Beek's edition. These texts are identified with the Trismegistos number as well as the number allocated to them by Van Beek ('Van Beek xx').³⁸

The texts discussed have generally been translated elsewhere, the majority in editions already cited (Edgar, Skeat and Van Beek³⁹). A smaller number have been translated in other published sources. Published translations are not readily available for the remainder and the translation is my own. For each text reproduced, both in the body of the thesis and in the *Appendix*, translations are identified and their location given as a short reference (for example, 'Van Beek, (2006), p x'). Full details of these are included in the *Bibliography*. In a significant number of cases I have modified these translations according to my understanding of the Ancient Greek and of 21st century Australian English. In those cases the reference is marked 'modified'. Where the translation is entirely my own, it is marked simply 'Trans. Mackay'.

1.4 The structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into three parts—*Foundations* (two chapters), *Directives* (five chapters) and *Other Speech Acts* (three chapters). These parts are preceded by a chapter of introduction and followed by a chapter of conclusions.

In seeking to describe and analyse particular texts, I am aware of the need for caution. Description is always partial and can only address a limited number of aspects of any phenomenon. The aspects described will have been selected, consciously or unconsciously, because of an underlying theoretical approach to language—a model. It is important to be explicit about this model. In **PART I** of the thesis, therefore, **Chapter 2 Foundations**, provides such an account. In addition, good scholarship benefits from the work of those who have already considered the same or similar issues and builds upon it. **Chapter 3 Pragmatics and Ancient Greek – Previous Studies** provides an overview of relevant research. These chapters identify a number of tools provided by

³⁸ Van Beek, *The Archive of Kleon and Theodoros*.

³⁹ See the two preceding footnotes.

contemporary theories of pragmatics that have been used to some degree in examining other Ancient Greek texts and that are considered likely to be useful in examining these papyri. Chief among these is the concept of the speech act and it is this tool that provides the overall structure for the remainder of the thesis.

Part II considers what is perhaps the most common speech act in these letters—Directives. *Chapter 4 Directives in the papyri* provides an overview of directive speech acts, for the purpose of clarifying the concept and noting some cautions relevant to its application to the papyri. A number of subsets of directive speech acts that are found in the texts form the topic of the remaining chapters in this part. They are: *Chapter 5 Threats and warnings*; *Chapter 6 Orders*; *Chapter 7 Requests*; and *Chapter 8 Petitions and petitioning*.

While of major importance, directive speech acts are not the only speech acts performed by the writers of these letters. Other speech acts employed to persuade or otherwise interact with the recipients should not be ignored. These are considered in **Part III**. *Chapter 9 Other speech acts in the archives* provides an overview of them using the classification of speech acts developed by Searle.⁴⁰ *Chapter 10 Assertives* considers speech acts referred to by Searle by this name and *Chapter 11 Commissives and expressives* concludes the discussion by considering examples of letters where correspondents appear to be making commitments as to their future action, or expressing their own psychological state.

Chapter 12 Conclusions, returns to the questions posed in this *Introduction* and sets out some answers that I consider justifiable in the light of the analysis provided. The usefulness or otherwise of this approach to the papyri is also reflected upon.

The *Appendices* consist of a *Concordance* and reproduce the *Supplementary Texts* referred to in Section 1.3.3 above.

⁴⁰ John R. Searle, 'A Classification of Illocutionary Acts', *Language in Society*, 5/1 (1976), pp 1-23.



PART I

Foundations

FOUNDATIONS

Without language, thought is a vague, uncharted nebula. There are no pre-existing ideas, and nothing is distinct before the appearance of language.¹

As indicated in the previous chapter, description and analysis of any text is inevitably coloured by assumptions and beliefs that may not always be recognised, let alone acknowledged by writers, even to themselves.² I am aware of this and consider it necessary to be as explicit as possible about the model of language that informs this thesis. This chapter, therefore, begins by setting out the model that I adopt. An outline of the analytical tools emerging from it follows. The applicability of these tools to ancient documents is then addressed through brief discussion of the field of historical pragmatics.

2.1 Models of language

2.1.1 *Two approaches: pragmatic vs grammatical*

In *Section 1.1 of Chapter 1*, two approaches to the language of the papyri were identified and briefly introduced. This requires elaboration.

That language is not a straightforward mapping of ‘reality’ onto words was well known to the ancient Greeks. It is this insight that informed the sophists and led ultimately to the development of rhetoric as a fundamental discipline in classical education.³ That it was also the subject of satire by Aristophanes (*The Clouds*) is evidence that in this

¹ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin (London: Peter Owen Limited, 1959), p 112.

² This is true of any scientific discussion in that there are assumptions taken for granted and held constant while others are explored. Asa Kasher, ‘Philosophy and Discourse Analysis’, in Teun A. Van Dijk (ed.), *Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (Volume 1; London: Academic Press, 1985), pp 231 - 248 at p 236.

³ These comments are drawn from A. López Eire, ‘Rhetoric and Language’, in Ian Worthington (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), pp 336 - 349.

regard many were well aware of such thinking and that it was not an uncontested view. Nor was a concern with the importance of language confined to the sophists and later writers on rhetoric. It is important to remember the emphasis placed upon effective speaking as a necessary skill for the heroes of Homer, both in content and delivery.⁴

Such a view of language, the first of the two approaches considered here, is sophisticated. It is nevertheless possible to sum up its essence in a few words. Language is goal-directed. A speaker or writer always has his or her purposes in mind in making any utterance and will use a wide variety of means to achieve them. All of these means will be specific to the particular context in which the utterance is made. This includes where the utterance is made, the social role of the speaker, the social role of those addressed and, at least in some cases, who else is present. As Kasher observes of a matter that will be of special interest later in this thesis:

Only a person who plays a certain role in...a background hierarchy is in a position to use imperative sentences, under suitable circumstances, in order to issue a command.⁵

Language viewed in this way is, in the fundamental meaning of the term, 'pragmatic'. It is the first of the two approaches discussed in this section.

A pragmatic approach draws our attention to the wide variety of strategies speakers may adopt to achieve their goals, and the skill displayed by them in their judicious use. Speakers/writers pursue their purposes quite self-consciously at times, as in the case of an orator addressing the Athenian assembly. At other times they may pursue their purposes almost unconsciously and, at least in the case of spoken language, would have to stop and think for a moment to articulate in detail what they are trying to achieve. It follows that language is inextricably intertwined with its social context and the actors, whether proximal or distant, involved. It is, first and foremost 'an instrument of social

⁴ Michael Gagarin, 'Background and Origins: Oratory and Rhetoric before the Sophists', Ian Worthington (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, pp 27 - 36.

⁵ Kasher, 'Philosophy and Discourse Analysis', p 240.

interaction between human beings' not 'an abstract object' to be characterised by a set of formal rules of grammar, syntax and the like.⁶

To put the same point another way, any utterance, even the kind of brief exchange involved in everyday conversation, is more complex than is commonly recognised. That language establishes a link between the speaker and the hearer(s) using a flow of vocalisation, ordered according to the syntax of the language and limited (mostly) to its phonemes, is obvious. What is sometimes overlooked is that the meaning of individual words and expressions, while clearly of the utmost importance, may also vary according to the context. It is also necessary in understanding the utterance to take into account other aspects of context, such as the relationships existing between the speaker and the hearer, and the physical, social, temporal and psychological environment in which it occurred. As the Greeks came to realise, any useful thinking about language must somehow take account of this complexity.

A pragmatic approach to language has led to the development of a major sub-discipline within modern linguistics. In my view this approach has absorbed much that is of value in ancient (and modern) rhetorical approaches. More importantly it has developed into a very fruitful area of research in its own right. It has produced a valuable set of insights and tools that are enormously useful in understanding texts such as those under consideration here—as this thesis seeks to demonstrate.

Yet there is a second approach that, notwithstanding the attention paid to the work of ancient authors on rhetoric such as Aristotle, scholars in the area of ancient languages in particular have preferred. Much scholarship has examined the meaning of words in isolation, their morphology, and the syntax with which they are marshalled. Much effort has also been directed towards achieving an understanding of phonetics, including phonetic change over time. These concerns, especially those focusing on semantics, morphology and syntax, may be referred to, for convenience, as 'grammatical' approaches. Their focus has, in general, been the single sentence.⁷ Grammatical

⁶ Simon C. Dik, *Functional Grammar*, eds S.C. Dik and J. G. Kooij (North-Holland Linguistic Series; Amsterdam, New York, Oxford: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1978), p 1.

⁷ Brown and Yule perhaps go too far in declaring that a 'grammarian's data is inevitably the single sentence', but they are probably correct more often than not. Gillian Brown and George Yule, *Discourse*

approaches have, at least until recently characterised most scholarship addressing Ancient Greek.⁸ Yet, to reiterate, and as Bakker so succinctly states, '[L]anguage is not...a simple algorithm or a value-free "code" for the expression of thoughts'.⁹ The grammatical approach has therefore missed much of importance.

It is important not to deny the value of this scholarship and I am not doing so. It is very important knowledge in its own right. The division into two approaches that I have made overstates a complex issue.¹⁰ Yet it is the case that a grammatical approach pays less attention (and in my view insufficient attention) to the dynamic nature of language—dynamism recognised by the Greeks themselves so many centuries ago. Consequently, for the purposes of this thesis, it is the pragmatic approach to language that will be adopted.

To find a model that incorporates this insight while still being simple enough to inform an analysis of the kind to be undertaken here is difficult. There are many approaches to language and many models, although not all address the considerations set out above.¹¹ Many of these are very technical. It is also not unreasonable to include ancient rhetoric among the models, as there have been a number of developments based upon the foundation of ancient rhetoric across a lengthy historical period.¹² Some authors have sought to merge insights from traditional rhetorical approaches and modern theories of the pragmatics of language. Some of these are noted in 2.1.3 below.

Because of these developments, and above all because of the debt we owe to the ancient Greeks for recognising the pragmatic nature of language in the first place, a model that

Analysis, eds B. Comrie et al. (Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p 20.

⁸ Egbert J. Bakker, 'Introduction', in Egbert J. Bakker (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010 (a)), pp 1 - 8 at pp 1-2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, at p 5.

¹⁰ For a brief overview of some of the differing views of the relationship between pragmatics, semantics and syntax, together with articles that explore aspects of these differences in detail see Bernd Heine and Heiko Narrog (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Analysis*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp 13 - 14.

¹¹ Heine and Narrog (*ibid.*) also provide a relatively recent overview of a wide range of models.

¹² Douglas Ehninger, 'On Systems of Rhetoric', *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 25/Supplementary Issue (1992), pp 15 - 28.

can accommodate ancient rhetorical insights and modern pragmatic theories without seeking to incorporate either into the other seems desirable. Such a model would be of most heuristic value for this thesis. It is this thinking that has led me to adopt the model of language proposed by Jakobson, to which I now turn.¹³

2.1.2 Jakobson's model

Jakobson designates six speech functions that he declares to be characteristic of any verbal communication, each of which can provide the focus for analysis. His model is reproduced as Figure 2.1. It deliberately eschews what he considered to be the illicit restrictions placed on the discipline of linguistics by those who view the sentence as the 'highest analyzable construction', or who wish to restrict its scope to 'grammar alone'.¹⁴

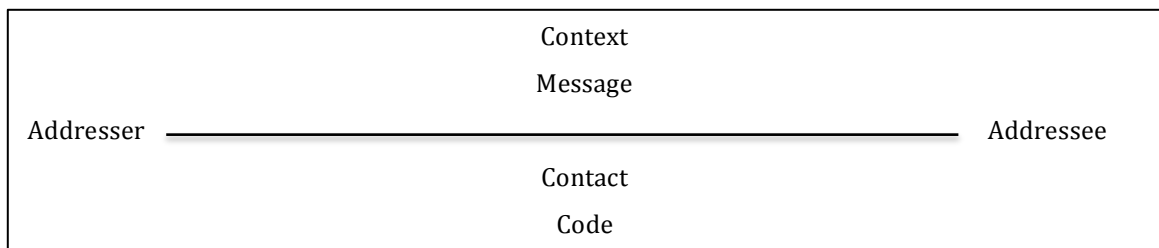


Figure 2.1 Jakobson's model of language

A strictly *grammatical* approach to language would, in this model, focus on code and message. By contrast, in a pragmatic approach, to return for a moment to a rhetorical example, for an orator such as Demosthenes, the addressee(s), the context and the addresser are at least as important as the message. Indeed, for his purposes, they are probably the most important elements. An orator must decide how to order a speech, what words to choose, and what figures (if any) to use given the occasion and the audience so that the message is both easily understood and as persuasive as possible.¹⁵

¹³ Roman Jakobson, 'Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics', in Thomas A. Sebeok (ed.), *Style in Language* (New York; London: The Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1960), pp 350 - 377.

¹⁴ Ibid., p 352.

¹⁵ 'Any author writing for the Assembly or the law courts would need to consider how to hold the attention of a large, often boisterous, and easily bored crowd'. Victor Bers, 'Kunstprosa: Philosophy, History, Oratory', in Egbert J. Bakker (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), 453 - 467 at p 458.

Of course it is impossible to separate out elements in this way with any degree of purity. Jakobson himself stresses this, noting that ‘we could...hardly find verbal messages that would fulfill only one function’.¹⁶ The issue is one of emphasis and perspective. In the case of an utterance with a rhetorical intent, the nature of that intent invites the perspective here outlined.

Notwithstanding these limits, what this model does do is recognise the richness of language in a way that concentration on one or more of semantics, syntax and phonology does not. In its emphasis on the link between addresser and addressee in their respective roles and context, and like rhetoric and modern pragmatic theorists, the model places emphasis upon the intentions of the speaker. In distinguishing *message* and *contact* from *code*, and in giving prominence to *context*, it meets de Saussure’s stipulation that languages cannot be understood without keeping in mind their community of speakers.¹⁷

2.1.3 Jakobson, rhetoric and pragmatics

There are two, very practical reasons why Jakobson’s model is so useful in orienting this thesis.

Firstly, it readily accommodates the approach to language found in ancient rhetoric. Porter has argued that rhetoric was the means by which the ancient Greeks identified and articulated their growing understanding of metalanguage. Porter draws parallels between Jakobson’s model, which he describes, and parts of Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric*.¹⁸ Certainly Aristotle’s famous definition Ἦεστω δὴ ἡ ῥητορικὴ δύναμις περὶ ἕκαστον τοῦ θεωρήσαι τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον πιθανόν, (Aristot. Rh. 1.2.1) usually translated as ‘the capacity to consider in each case the possible means of persuasion’¹⁹, invites one to ask where these ‘means of persuasion’ might be found. It is readily apparent that all of the

¹⁶ Jakobson, ‘Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics’, p 352.

¹⁷ ‘masse parlante’ - De Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, p 77.

¹⁸ James Porter, ‘Language as a System in Ancient Rhetoric and Grammar’, in Egbert J. Bakker (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010 (a)), pp 512 - 523 at pp 512 - 513.

¹⁹ W.W. Fortenbaugh, ‘Aristotle’s *Art of Rhetoric*’, in Ian Worthington (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp 107 - 123 at p 107.

elements identified by Jakobson are likely to be relevant to that consideration. For example, the divisions Aristotle makes in setting out the parts of a speech show him concentrating on one or other aspect of language that Jakobson has identified—in this case perhaps the ‘context’ and/or the ‘code’. Similarly, figures of speech can be considered to be one way to analyse how a speaker (or ‘addresser’) might have greater or lesser impact on an addressee, and greater or lesser force with respect to the message.

Secondly, Jakobson’s model also accommodates the approach to language taken by modern linguistic theories of ‘pragmatics’. It is not easy to find a definition of pragmatics as succinct as Aristotle’s of rhetoric. Levinson devotes some thirty pages to a chapter section headed ‘defining pragmatics’, giving due recognition to the differing approaches found in what was still a relatively new area of inquiry when he wrote.²⁰ More recently, Ariel devotes a monograph to the subject, specifically seeking to distinguish pragmatic from grammatical aspects of language. Her conclusion: that the best way of distinguishing the two is to recognise that grammar is about code and pragmatics is about inference—the inferences we draw from both grammatical code and a range of extra-grammatical features, is succinct and generally convincing.²¹ But it is Yule, writing a much earlier and less comprehensive treatment of the subject who is perhaps most helpful in that his views are more readily comprehensible in the light of Jakobson’s model. In his glossary, he declares pragmatics to be ‘[T]he study of speaker meaning as distinct from word or sentence meaning’.²² Moreover, very helpfully, he further operationalises his account, declaring that pragmatics is the study of:

- ‘speaker meaning
- ‘contextual meaning
- ‘how more gets communicated than is said
- ‘the expression of relative distance’.²³

²⁰ Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics*, eds B. Comrie et al. (Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp 5-35.

²¹ Mira Ariel, *Defining Pragmatics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp 271 - 272.

²² George Yule, *Pragmatics*, ed. H. G. Widdowson (Oxford Introductions to Language Study; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p 133.

²³ *Ibid.*, p 3.

In the context of Ancient Greek, Bakker summarises the essence of pragmatic approaches to language as he sees it as follows.

In its most principled (some would say, radical) form, pragmatics sees “linguistic meaning” not as something that inheres in the words and sentences themselves of the language, but in the strategies by which speakers convey through language what they mean or intend to achieve. Words don’t mean, speakers do...²⁴

I would prefer to amend Bakker slightly to indicate that linguistic meaning does not inhere in the words and sentences *alone*. Nevertheless his is an excellent statement of this approach.

This relationship between Jakobson’s model, ancient rhetoric and modern pragmatics is important. All three share an understanding of the complex social quality of language, its context dependence and purposiveness, and a willingness to deal with larger units of language than the clause or sentence.²⁵ Yet while they share much, there are also differences that need to be understood.

First, ancient rhetoric and modern pragmatics, although they would not express it in this way, share the goal of explaining in detail how the various features of language identified by Jakobson work in practice. Each has developed ways of analysing language with respect to its goals, purposes and effectiveness. Each has developed its own set of tools for thinking about language. Jakobson, by contrast, offers no tools. His model is of an object to be explored. Rhetoric and pragmatics supply tools to facilitate that exploration.

Secondly, setting aside Jakobson’s model for the moment, there are other differences between ancient rhetoric and modern pragmatics. The principal focus of ancient rhetoric—public speech making—is different to the focus of pragmatics. The latter analyses speech in all contexts, including the banal, and attends also to writing. The

²⁴ Egbert J. Bakker, 'Pragmatics: Speech and Text', in Egbert J. Bakker (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2010 (a)), pp 151 - 167 at p 151.

²⁵ Casper C. De Jonge, 'From Demetrius to Dik: Ancient and Modern Views on Greek and Latin Word Order', in Rutger J. Allan and Michel Buijs (eds.), *The Language of Literature: Linguistic Approaches to Classical Texts* (Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 211 - 231 at p 231.

literature of ancient rhetoric was prescriptive in nature—that is to say, it was intended to serve as a source of instruction for speakers. Pragmatics seeks to describe everyday usage. These are by no means all the differences. Despite this, there have nevertheless been attempts to subsume ancient rhetoric under more recently developed frameworks. Many topics of rhetoric are now commonly analysed by other disciplines, ‘including parts of syntax, pragmatics, stylistics and sociolinguistics’.²⁶ The relationship between them has been the topic of interesting discussion and brief mention of some of the proposals to emerge from this is consequently appropriate here.

Leech, one of the earliest scholars to address this issue, proposed what he calls ‘[A] process model of language’—a model of no little utility.²⁷ He does however, define ‘rhetoric’ in a rather special way for his purposes, the details of which need not detain us.²⁸ In a manner not far removed from Leech, Dascal and Gross have proposed a Gricean theory of rhetoric.²⁹ This proposal also relies upon a specific ‘reading’ of the rhetorical tradition. Dascal and Gross have suggested that pragmatics may serve as a common analytic framework for considering both rhetoric and dialectic.³⁰ This is a very ambitious paper. Some may take issue with both its understanding of dialectic and of rhetoric. Mason has suggested taking Austin’s notion of a perlocutionary act and complementing it with what he calls a ‘perlocutionary field’. This is a set of social beliefs and expectations that changes over time and, in Mason’s view, can help explain the success or otherwise of certain rhetorical strategies.³¹

²⁶ P. H. Matthews, ‘Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics’, (2nd edn.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

²⁷ Geoffrey N. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, eds R. H. Robins and Martin Harris (Longman Linguistics Library; New York: Longman, 1983), p 58 ff. See also Geoffrey N. Leech, *Explorations in Semantics and Pragmatics*, eds Herman Parret and Jef Verschueren (Pragmatics & Beyond; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1980).

²⁸ Yameng Liu and Chunsen Zhu, ‘Rhetoric as the *Antistrophos* of Pragmatics: Towards a “Competition of Cooperation” in the Study of Language Use’, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43 (2011), pp 3403 - 3415 at p 3404.

²⁹ Marcelo Dascal and Alan G. Gross, ‘The Marriage of Pragmatics and Rhetoric’, *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 32/2 (1999), pp 107 - 130. See also Attila L. Nemesi, ‘Implicature Phenomena in Classical Rhetoric’, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 50 (2013), pp 129 - 151.

³⁰ Scott Jacobs, ‘Rhetoric and Dialectic from the Standpoint of Normative Pragmatics’, *Argumentation*, 14 (2000), pp 261 - 286.

³¹ Jeff Mason, ‘Rhetoric and the Perlocutionary Field’, *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 27/4 (1994), pp 410 - 414.

All of these suggestions are interesting and useful. None is entirely satisfactory. They illustrate the difficulty of determining which aspects of pragmatics might account best for the insights of ancient rhetoric. I can find no consensus about this in the literature to date. This suggests caution in assuming that pragmatics can replace the insights of ancient rhetoric.

It would seem preferable to proceed on the assumption that rhetoric and pragmatics can complement each other, both contributing their particular insights into language. This is the argument of Liu and Zhu (referred to above as critics of Leech).³² It is also the approach of De Jonge.³³ He draws attention to the similarity between the accounts of word order provided in the rhetorical treatises of Demetrius and Quintilian and the framework of functional grammar, without arguing that one should replace the other. He reaches this conclusion by adopting a strategy that, citing Rorty,³⁴ he calls 'rational reconstruction'. By this he means looking at theories developed in antiquity hoping that they might solve a modern problem.³⁵ This seems a sensible approach and, when used in conjunction with modern theories, provides a middle way. The case for this approach is further strengthened by observing the good evidence found for the contemporary usefulness of rhetorical thinking in a variety of settings.³⁶

There is also sense, in the context of this thesis, in looking for examples of the use of rhetorical tropes and techniques in the letters of often well-educated writers who lived in a culture that had only recently systematised the study of such.

Some of the analytical tools developed by both ancient rhetoric and modern pragmatics will therefore be used in this thesis. An account of the available tools follows. They are discussed, for the sake of convenience, under two headings: 2.2 *Rhetorical tools* and 2.3 *Pragmatic tools*. An additional section, (2.4), is devoted to Historical Pragmatics. It is

³² Liu and Zhu, 'Rhetoric as the *Antistrophos* of Pragmatics: Towards a "Competition of Cooperation" in the Study of Language Use'.

³³ De Jonge, 'From Demetrius to Dik', p 231.

³⁴ R Rorty, 'The Historiography of Philosophy. Four Genres', in R. Rorty, J.B. Schneewind, and Q. Skinner (eds.), *Philosophy in History: Essays on the Historiography of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) pp 49 - 76.

³⁵ De Jonge, 'From Demetrius to Dik', p 212.

³⁶ Sam Leith, *You Talkin' to Me?: Rhetoric from Aristotle to Obama* (London: Profile Books Ltd, 2011).

separated out here for special attention because of the material under consideration in this thesis and because it is a growing area of research in its own right with its own special insights. It meets the possible objection that may be raised about the appropriateness of trying to apply tools developed with contemporary (and often oral) language in mind to ancient documents.

2.2 Rhetorical tools

Given that the ancient rhetorical tradition focuses on public speech making, deliberative, forensic and epideictic, its usefulness in considering private and business letters may seem limited. Yet Aristotle's definition, cited under 2.1.3 ('the capacity to consider in each case the possible means of persuasion') is broad and may be applied widely. It is true that treatments of letter writing are not to be found in the early rhetorical handbooks.³⁷ Letter writing had only a small place in formal rhetorical education. Only in the work attributed to Demetrius—*On Style*—which probably dates from the first century B.C.E., do we find an explicit discussion of its requirements.³⁸ A moment's reflection however shows that rhetoric has great relevance for letters.

Letter writers share many of the same challenges as orators. They are not in conversation with their audience (although an orator may well receive immediate feedback, such as cheering or booing, not available to a letter writer). They both strive to 'present' ideas to an audience with a view to their acceptance and, most commonly, to persuade its members of the 'correctness' of those ideas. They both, generally, have time to think through in advance the approach they take.

There are also reasons why a letter written in the ancient world can most appropriately be examined from the perspective of ancient rhetoric. Some letters to be discussed in this thesis were dictated to scribes by people who were most likely illiterate. Others were composed by people of considerable education. While we have almost no literary

³⁷ Abraham J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, ed. Bernard Brandon Scott (Society of Biblical Literature: Sources for Biblical Study, Number 19; Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988), p 2.

³⁸ W. Rhys Roberts, *Demetrius on Style: The Greek Text of Demetrius De Elocutione Edited after the Paris Manuscript* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1902 (1969 reprint)) at § 223 - 235. Malherbe correctly notes that these sections are an excursus. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, p 3.

evidence concerning education from the Hellenistic period, and no treatise on rhetoric or oration completed between c.300 and late first century B.C.E.,³⁹ there is good reason (from later writings) to believe that rhetoric was very much a part of the education of the rich and powerful.⁴⁰ There is also reason to believe that rhetoric continued to play an important role in public life throughout the Hellenistic period.⁴¹ It is unlikely that there would be no sign of this in the letters of the time. The following tools emerge from these considerations. It is acknowledged that they are not a comprehensive list and there is overlap between them.

2.2.1 *Structure*

One of the ways in which rhetorical education might be exhibited, and consequently the first tool that ancient rhetoric provides us with, is in the structure used to put a letter together. What evidence is there that the letter was deliberately (or perhaps unconsciously) divided into the four sections (prooimion, narrative, agon, and epilogue) that the ancient texts of rhetoric identify?⁴² How much attention is given by the author to establishing a connection with the recipient(s) (ethos)? Is a substantial part of the letter devoted to engaging the sympathy, anger, or other emotions (pathos) of the recipient(s)?

2.2.2 *Artful modes of persuasion*

Do we see systematic use of ‘artful modes of persuasion’ as set out by Aristotle: rational argument, emotional appeal, and persuasion through character?⁴³ Rational argument may stand apart from any rhetorical framework and would be all that is necessary, in Aristotle’s view, in a world that is not ‘corrupt’. The extent to which

³⁹ Martine Cuypers, 'Historiography, Rhetoric, and Science: Rethinking a Few Assumptions on Hellenistic Prose', in James J. Clauss and Martine Cuypers (eds.), *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp 317 - 336 at p 323. Cuypers notes that *On Style* by Demetrius may be an exception although there has been much disagreement as to when it should be dated.

⁴⁰ Teresa Morgan, 'Rhetoric and Education', in Ian Worthington (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp 303 - 319 at p 309.

⁴¹ Cuypers, 'Historiography, Rhetoric, and Science: Rethinking a Few Assumptions on Hellenistic Prose'.

⁴² Michael De Brauw, 'The Parts of the Speech', in Ian Worthington (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp 187 - 202.

⁴³ W.W. Fortenbaugh, 'Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric*', *ibid.*, pp 107 - 123.

rational argument is supported by, for example, arguments from the character of the addresser, or through appeal to the emotions of the addressee is nevertheless of great interest, as is how well each of these techniques manages to reinforce the others.

2.2.3 *Style*

Letter writers, like any writers, are in one respect similar to speakers. They choose, again whether consciously or unconsciously, between various ways of delivering their message—from a wide variety of styles and tones.⁴⁴ They vary in the extent to which they use active or passive voice, simple or compound sentences, rhetorical questions, and figures of speech such as hyperbole or litotes. In some cases style is as much a personal characteristic as is personality. In other cases it is used deliberately for persuasive effect. In both cases it is of considerable interest.

2.3 Pragmatic tools

That pragmatics has potential as a way of approaching Ancient Greek has been increasingly recognised in recent years.⁴⁵ Slings states the case for this approach most forcefully when he writes that '[T]he *only useful* way of studying style is audience-oriented, linguistic and more in particular pragmatic'⁴⁶ (emphasis added). Pragmatics is a broad field. The key question, as in the case of rhetoric above, is which aspects of it may be relevant here and what tools for analysis can it furnish. The answer, for the purposes of this thesis, is that there are five.

⁴⁴ Roger D. Sell, 'The Politeness of Literary Texts', in Roger D. Sell (ed.), *Literary Pragmatics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp 208 - 224 at p 218.

⁴⁵ See, for example, Porter, 'Language as a System in Ancient Rhetoric and Grammar', in Egbert J. Bakker (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell), pp 512 - 523. Also Andreas Willi, 'Register Variation', *ibid.*, pp 297 - 310.

⁴⁶ S. R. Slings, 'Oral Strategies in the Language of Herodotus', in Egbert J. Bakker, Irene J. F. De Jong, and Hans Van Wees (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Herodotus* (Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 2002), pp 53 - 77 at p 77.

2.3.1 *Speech acts*

Sometimes, and in some contexts, using words for a given purpose is more than just ‘saying’. It is to act in the world in a most forceful and significant way. Utterances of this kind have come to be called ‘speech acts’. ‘[T]he central tenet of speech act theory is that the uttering of a sentence is, or is part of, an action within the framework of social institutions or conventions.’⁴⁷ They thus include the utterances of people who have been appointed to important positions in a particular society and who are formally exercising their legitimate authority. Examples include a marriage celebrant declaring a couple to be married according to civil or religious law, and a judge, pronouncing sentence on a convicted criminal. Examples of less formal use of speech acts include utterances that occur frequently in everyday interactions (although their form may well vary from society to society), such as apologising, promising, or threatening.

All of the above speech acts have been labelled ‘illocutionary’ by John Austin. Austin is generally credited with being first to elucidate this concept.⁴⁸ The term draws to our attention the force of the utterance as distinct from its grammar or reference. While there is a difference in his conceptualisation between the uttering of the words ‘I advise you to...’ (the locutionary act) and the force of these words (the illocution), both of which he would consider to be part of a speech act, in practice the distinction is generally glossed over and has not been accepted by others such as Searle.⁴⁹

There have been several attempts, beginning with Austin,⁵⁰ to provide a classification of illocutionary speech acts. The most systematic and arguably most influential is that of Searle.⁵¹ In brief he identifies the following types of illocutionary acts:

⁴⁷ Yan Huang, *Pragmatics*, eds Keith Brown et al. (Oxford Textbooks in Linguistics; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p 93.

⁴⁸ J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words (the William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955)* (2nd edn.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

⁴⁹ John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p 23 n1.

⁵⁰ Austin (*How to Do Things with Words*) was under no illusions as to the difficulty of the task. He hypothesised that, in English, the number of verbs capable of expressing speech acts explicitly (examples include *order*, *warn*, *name*, *sentence*...) is ‘...of the order of the third power of 10.’ Ibid., p 150.

⁵¹ More generally in Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Most explicitly in John R. Searle, ‘A Classification of Illocutionary Acts’, *Language in Society*, 5/1 (1976), pp 1-23.

‘Representatives’; ‘Directives’; ‘Commissives’; ‘Expressives’; and ‘Declarations’.

These terms will be explained and explored progressively throughout this thesis.

Perhaps the last is most challenging. Searle considers that: ‘Making a statement is as much performing an illocutionary act as making a promise, a bet, a warning or what have you. *Any utterance* will consist in performing one or more illocutionary acts’⁵² (emphasis added). This view is consistent with the purposive, functional approach to language adopted by Jakobson and discussed above.

Of particular interest here are the illocutionary acts Searle classifies as directives. As already noted in the introduction to this thesis, efforts to get the recipients of letters to act in certain ways—to ‘direct’ them—are perhaps the most notable feature of these documents.

Exploring speech acts of all kinds however, has proved to be a useful approach to language. Just how useful is demonstrated in relation to the classical canon by the work of Denizot.⁵³ In focusing on directive speech acts, and indeed a particular sub-set of these—orders—she explores matters of considerable relevance to this thesis.

Notwithstanding the fact that some speech acts are identifiable from one or more distinctive patterns of phonology, morphology and syntax,⁵⁴ and notwithstanding the fact that in the case of orders there is a specific grammatical form—the imperative—in most languages, Denizot prefers a pragmatic approach to language. She explicitly abandons semantics as a means of reaching a satisfactory definition of an order or of otherwise understanding this speech act.⁵⁵

Risselada has published a monograph covering similar material to Denizot but with respect to Latin.⁵⁶ Her starting point is an examination of directives as speech acts. Of particular interest for this thesis is the typology of speech acts that she adopts, dividing

⁵² Searle, ‘A Classification of Illocutionary Acts’, at p 14.

⁵³ Camille Denizot, *Donner des ordres en grec ancien. Etude linguistique des formes de l’injonction* (Mont-Saint-Aignan: Presses universitaire de Rouen et du Havre).

⁵⁴ Levinson, *Pragmatics*, p. 372.

⁵⁵ Denizot, (*Donner des ordres en grec ancien*) writes at p 22: *L’acte directif est donc caractérisé par une variété sémantique qui peut être étudiée, mais qui ne peut servir de base à une définition de l’injonction.*

⁵⁶ Rodie Risselada, *Imperatives and Other Directive Expressions in Latin: A Study in the Pragmatics of a Dead Language* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1993).

them into speech acts about actions, speech acts about emotions and speech acts about facts.⁵⁷ As will become apparent, this division can be found in the letters under consideration here.

The identification and consideration of speech acts is for these reasons, as well as others outlined earlier in this chapter, a very important part of this thesis.

2.3.2 *Conversational implicature*

The notion of ‘conversational implicature’⁵⁸ begins with the observation that, in trying to achieve their purposes, speakers or writers start with a number of assumptions. In particular, they will presume certain knowledge to be held by their hearers and that those hearers will hold certain attitudes and expectations. There will often be what has been called a ‘preferred interpretation’ of any utterance shared by speaker and listener.⁵⁹ Trying to understand the presumptions that lie behind many utterances turns one attention away from the surface or grammatical meaning in order to clarify why this particular utterance, rather than others apparently semantically equivalent, was made. (This has, in fact, been the essential achievement of the development of pragmatics as a whole.⁶⁰)

Grice proposed a number of principles or maxims that appear to underlie most conversations. People may generally be expected to cooperate, be generally truthful, relevant, concise, and clear. He also noted that when participants in an exchange appear to depart from these principles, there is likely to be a reason present in the context, which once identified, generally shows they have not departed from too far from these maxims at all.⁶¹ Understanding this gives a scholar seeking to identify the purposes of

⁵⁷ Ibid., p 37ff.

⁵⁸ The foundational treatment of this topic was by Grice, first proposed in 1967 in a series of lectures and re-presented in H. Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991). The theory has been revisited and developed many times, a relatively recent example being Stephen C. Levinson, *Presumptive Meanings: The Theory of Generalized Conversational Implicature* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 2000).

⁵⁹ Levinson, *Presumptive Meanings: The Theory of Generalized Conversational Implicature*, p 1.

⁶⁰ (Editorial), ‘Linguistics and Pragmatics, 25 Years After’, *Journal of Pragmatics*, (2002), pp 1671 - 1682 at p 1672.

⁶¹ Levinson, *Pragmatics*, pp 100 - 118.

apparently incongruous passages a useful heuristic. It should be noted here that while Grice and his successors have focused mostly upon oral conversation, he assumed the principles he outlined apply in other contexts, including letters, and used a hypothetical letter to illustrate an important point.⁶² He also rejected a potential rational grounding of his theory because it did not apply to a number of circumstances, one of which was letters.⁶³

While not as important as speech acts, the insights of Grice also play a significant role in this thesis. They can help make sense of some of the more cryptic (for us) letters. Grice invites us to infer that there are shared understandings between the correspondents that we lack—a lack that is hardly surprising given our distance from the situation. The notion of conversational implicature and evidence of its operation in these letters also suggests that we may be justified in regarding many of them as ‘conversational’ in register.

2.3.3 *Deixis*

At its most basic, deixis refers to linguistic expressions that point.⁶⁴ The ‘pointing’ may involve space (‘here’, ‘there’, ‘this’, ‘that’), person (‘I’, ‘you’, ‘her’), and time (‘before’, ‘later’).⁶⁵ It has also been described, succinctly, as ‘what speakers do to locate themselves in space and time, with respect to things, events and each other’.⁶⁶ Deixis is the area of pragmatics that has the strongest claim to be seen as universal across all languages.⁶⁷ Bakker (elsewhere) provides an introductory treatment of how Ancient Greek grammar meets the demands of deictic expressions with respect to space and time, stressing that these elements, if present, require some understanding of context to

⁶² Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, p 33.

⁶³ Ibid., p 29.

⁶⁴ Yule, *Pragmatics*, p 9.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Egbert J. Bakker, *Pointing at the Past: From Formula to Performance in Homeric Poetics* (Washington DC & Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), p 71.

⁶⁷ Barbara Kryk, 'On Pragmatic Universals', *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia*, 23 (1990), pp 63 - 72 at p 63.

be intelligible.⁶⁸ To understand deictic expressions one must be able to identify the participants doing the communicating and their location in both space and time.⁶⁹

A consequence of the importance of contextual information in understanding deictic expressions is that letters between associates may often be difficult for outsiders to interpret. Associates may know each other very well. They also know their social and geographical context. Frequent use of deictic pronouns and demonstratives may be sufficient for their purpose. The scholar who tries to understand these purposes will need to pay close attention to their deictic terminology.

It is also the case that ‘there has been no full-scale systematic work on deixis as it occurs in either ancient Greek or Latin. Studies of deixis in various ancient authors have typically moved from the identification of deictic features in an author or text to literary interpretation’.⁷⁰ Edmunds proceeds to list seven deictic features of both Ancient Greek and Latin ‘about which one would like to know more’.⁷¹ They include demonstratives, adverbs of place, verbal tense and verbal aspect⁷² and particles. These are all matters upon which the non-literary papyri may be able to cast light and will be identified and discussed where relevant.

2.3.4 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis focuses on longer units of language. Discourse analysts are interested in how the overall purpose of a series of sentences (such as those forming a letter) affects their internal grammar and syntax. In general however, they are less interested in the internal grammar of the sentences, or even the relationship between

⁶⁸ Bakker, 'Pragmatics: Speech and Text', p 152.

⁶⁹ C.J. Fillmore, *Lectures on Deixis* (C S L I Lecture Notes Number 65; Stanford California: Centre for the Study of Language and Information, 1997), p 59.

⁷⁰ Lowell Edmunds, 'Deixis in Ancient Greek and Latin Literature: Historical Introduction and State of the Question', *Philologia Antiqua*, 1 (2008), pp 67 - 98 at p 79.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp 79 - 82.

⁷² Bakker ('Pragmatics: Speech and Text'.) references work he has done in this area that develops further the approach outlined in the work cited. Egbert J. Bakker, 'Verbal Aspect and Mimetic Description in Thucydides', in Egbert J. Bakker (ed.), *Grammar as Interpretation: Greek Literature in Its Linguistic Contexts* (Mnemosyne Bibliotheca Classica Batava; Leiden New York Koln: Brill, 1997), pp 7 - 54. Bakker, *Pointing at the Past: From Formula to Performance in Homeric Poetics*. Egbert J. Bakker, 'Time, Tense and Thucydides', *Classical World*, 100/2 (2007), pp 113 - 122.

them than they are in the social and psychological factors that are at play.⁷³ What matters, to the extent that it can be elucidated, is what the speaker or writer has in mind, including what is unsaid or unwritten even though it manages to be communicated.⁷⁴

Here there are parallels with ancient rhetoric. The order of words and sentences is important. Allusions to, as well as explicit reference to, information and beliefs the addressee and the addresser share, and which may have significance for how they will interpret a message, are very important things to note. This approach is very rich, if complex. The letters considered here however are mostly quite concise. To that extent, discourse analysis has less application than might otherwise be hoped.

2.3.5 Politeness

An area of interest to students of pragmatics with particular relevance to an examination of correspondence is politeness. The topic has been the focus of major endeavour and has produced a range of theories and modifications to those theories.⁷⁵ Among these, the work of Brown and Levinson has gained most attention.⁷⁶ While of undoubted significance, this work has been challenged, sometimes quite vigorously.⁷⁷ In particular, its claim to cultural universality is subject to considerable debate. There is concern that Brown and Levinson's model has encouraged research that has suffered from an 'Anglo' bias and a male gender bias.⁷⁸ Culpeper and Demmen have gone so far as to suggest that Brown and Levinson's approach valorises only relatively recent

⁷³ 'Because the analyst is investigating the use of language in context by a speaker / writer, he is more concerned with the relationship between the speaker and the utterance, on the particular occasion of use, than with the potential relationship of one sentence to another, regardless of their use.' Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, p 27.

⁷⁴ Yule, *Pragmatics*, p 84.

⁷⁵ Nine theories from within the Anglosphere are summarised and critiqued in Gino Eelen, *A Critique of Politeness Theories*, eds Jan Blommaert and Chris Bulcaen (Encounters; Manchester U.K. & Northampton MA.: St Jerome Publishing, 2001).

⁷⁶ Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁷⁷ Chaoqun Xie, Ziran He, and Dajin Lin, 'Politeness: Myth and Truth', *Studies in Language*, 29/2 (2005), pp 431-61.

⁷⁸ A. J. Meier, 'Defining Politeness: Universality in Appropriateness', *Language Sciences*, 17/4 (1995a), pp 345 - 356 at p 350.

characteristics of European and (especially) English culture.⁷⁹ Others have demonstrated the differences between English speaking culture and one or more other cultures on this dimension.⁸⁰

At one level, there can little doubt that most cultures have developed linguistic strategies and conventions that allow users to acknowledge, for example, differences in social status. Yet concentrating upon linguistic formulae or other patterns of usage that demonstrate politeness in an effort to demonstrate its universality has proven to be unproductive. Meier makes a strong case against equating politeness with such features.⁸¹ Brown and Levinson themselves recognise that politeness is a concept deeply tied up with the structure and the smooth functioning of a society,⁸² although it should be acknowledged that they would not concede that it is necessary to step outside of any linguistic framework to understand whether an utterance is polite.⁸³

In the study of letters, examination of linguistic formulae has been a focus of much work. It is undeniable that most societies, as a minimum, require conventional polite forms of greeting and farewell. Business letters have been of special interest to students of historical pragmatics (see below) because their distinctive features have been useful in exploring the expression of both positive and negative politeness.⁸⁴ Variations in the formulae that recur in letters of all kinds are noteworthy and in the case of the papyri

⁷⁹ Jonathan Culpeper and Jane Demmen, 'Nineteenth-Century English Politeness: Negative Politeness, Conventional Indirect Requests and the Rise of the Individual Self', *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, 12/1-2 (2011), pp 49 - 81.

⁸⁰ Anna Wierzbicka, 'Different Cultures, Different Languages, Different Speech Acts', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 9 (1985), pp 145 - 178. A wide range of issues directly or indirectly relevant to politeness across cultures is considered in Shoshana Blum-Kulka, Juliane House, and Gabriele Kasper (eds.), *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies*, ed. Roy. O. Freedle (Advances in Discourse Processes, Norwood New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1989).

⁸¹ A. J. Meier, 'Passages of Politeness', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 24 (1995b), pp 381 - 392.

⁸² Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978 1987(re-issue)), pp 1 - 3.

⁸³ Just how far the theoretical debate has moved from Brown and Levinson's work is well-summarised in Pilar Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 'Introduction: Face, Identity and Im / Politeness. Looking Backward, Moving Forward: From Goffman to Practice Theory', *Journal of Politeness Research*, 9/1 (2013), pp 1-33. Some of the directions indicated are consistent with Eelen's recommendation for 'a firmer embedding of politeness within the dynamics of social reality'. Eelen, *A Critique of Politeness Theories*, p 257.

⁸⁴ Marina Dossena and Susan M. Fitzmaurice, 'Introduction', in Marina Dossena and Susan M. Fitzmaurice (eds.), *Business and Official Correspondence: Historical Investigations* (Linguistic Insights: Studies in Language and Communication; Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), pp 7 - 15 at p 8.

have been subjected to considerable analysis well before the development of linguistic theories of politeness.⁸⁵

Other patterns of usage in letters, such as indirect requests that extend beyond conventional formulae, and that may be motivated by a wish to be exceptionally polite to a particular superior, may occasionally be observed and are worthy of investigation. These patterns should not, however, be interpreted mechanically. Indeed they cannot. To take an example given by Leech,⁸⁶ while few English speakers would have difficulty deciding that ‘You must come and have dinner with us’ is polite, and ‘We must come and have dinner with you’ is impolite, to identify the linguistic difference between these two sentences in such a way as to explain the difference in politeness would seem to be impossible.

It is also possible to use politeness conventions for counter-intuitive purposes.⁸⁷ Close and careful analysis is required. The notion of ‘appropriateness’ as developed by Meier⁸⁸ may also sometimes be helpful here. ‘Appropriateness’ is clearly something that cannot be determined solely from linguistic clues.⁸⁹

Finally, a relatively recent development in this field has been interest in ‘impoliteness’. It has become apparent to many that impoliteness is not simply the absence of, or indeed even the opposite of, politeness.⁹⁰ Definitions of impoliteness abound,⁹¹ and

⁸⁵ A relevant early example is Francis Xavier J. Exler, *The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter: A Study in Greek Epistolography* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1923).

⁸⁶ Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, p 133.

⁸⁷ See for example, Arin Bayraktaroğlu and Maria Sifianou, ‘The Iron Fist in a Velvet Glove: How Politeness Can Contribute to Impoliteness’, *Journal of Politeness Research*, 8 (2012), pp 143 - 160.

⁸⁸ Meier, ‘Defining Politeness: Universality in Appropriateness’.

⁸⁹ Klaus P. Schneider, ‘Appropriate Behaviour across Varieties of English’, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 44 (2012), pp 1022 - 37. See also: Ardith J. Meier, ‘Teaching the Universals of Politeness’, *ELT*, 51/1 (1997), pp 21 - 28.

⁹⁰ That the concepts which may explain politeness do not serve to explain impoliteness was a conclusion of Eelen’s wide-ranging critique of politeness theories. (Eelen, *A Critique of Politeness Theories* at p 245). A recent thorough treatment of ‘impoliteness’ is Jonathan Culpeper, *Impoliteness: Using Language to Cause Offence*, eds Paul Drew et al. (Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁹¹ Culpeper discusses nine definitions. Culpeper, *Impoliteness: Using Language to Cause Offence*, pp 19 - 20.

work is ongoing. Clearly linguistic usage that is impolite must be recognised and considered as part of any discussion of the purposes of speakers/writers.

Questions of politeness will arise frequently as letters are examined in this thesis and will affect discussion of many other pragmatic features of them.

2.4 Historical pragmatics

Before reviewing the relatively small amount of work that has been done to date on Ancient Greek from a pragmatic perspective there is need for some brief remarks on historical pragmatics. Those familiar with the above approach and who have read many of the general works cited⁹² will be aware that most research has focused on oral language. Even discourse analysis, which lends itself more directly to the consideration of written text, has often focused on spoken language.⁹³

How then can this approach be applied to the documentary papyri? There are two answers to this question.

Firstly, since the mid 1990's there has developed a distinctive sub-discipline within pragmatics called historical pragmatics.⁹⁴ The definition of pragmatics it accepts is broad⁹⁵ and the samples of language it analyses are drawn from varied historical periods. The tools it uses vary little from those set out in the preceding section.⁹⁶

⁹² As distinct from work focusing specifically on Ancient Greek and Latin.

⁹³ Brown and Yule, for example, while including a lengthy discussion of spoken versus written language, at §1.2, generally report research on spoken language. Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*.

⁹⁴ Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.), *Historical Pragmatics*, eds. Wolfram Bublitz, Andreas H. Jucker, and Klaus P. Schneider (Handbooks of Pragmatics, 8; Berlin/New York: De Gruyter Mouton, 2010).

⁹⁵ 'Pragmatics studies the use of language in human communications as determined by the conditions of society.' Andreas H. Jucker, 'Historical Pragmatics', *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 2/5 (2008), pp 894 - 906 at p 895.

⁹⁶ What Manolissou writes with respect to Medieval Greek manuscripts applies equally well, if not better to the papyri. (The manuscripts she discusses were often later copies of the originals—in the case of the papyri we have the originals.) She writes: 'The manuscript is a concrete written speech act, a setting down of a linguistic message at a specific time in a specific place: it is the only one accessible to the linguist, and everything else is conjecture, however informed'. Io Manolissou, 'On Historical Linguistics, Linguistic Variation and Medieval Greek', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 32/1 (2008), pp 63 - 79 at p 67.

Correspondence has received particular attention and studies have examined letters, among other documents, for how meaning is made in interaction.⁹⁷ The work of Fitzmaurice has already been cited in the *Introduction*.⁹⁸ Given that the focus of this thesis is on letters, that such work has been found feasible is encouraging. It is hard to deny the validity of the question posed by Perrin (as editorial writer): ‘What do people want to do when they write, and what do they actually do?’⁹⁹

Secondly, as already implied, there has been some, if not much, research on Ancient Greek from a pragmatic perspective already. It is reviewed in the next chapter.

2.5 Concluding Remarks

It is apparent from *Section 2.3* above that pragmatics as a discipline offers many tools of possible use to the scholar of any language, and, given developments in historical pragmatics, of any era. Work on Latin, such as that by Risselada or Halla-Aho¹⁰⁰ demonstrates their applicability in a substantial way, to ancient languages. Even more encouraging for this thesis is the significant monograph of Denizot.¹⁰¹

Not all tools will be as applicable to particular texts as others. From introductory remarks already made it will be apparent that the theory of speech acts is considered likely to be especially useful. Both Denizot, for Ancient Greek, and Risselada, for Latin, have shown how much can be achieved from a concentration on these linguistic acts. Risselada, drawing upon and extending Searle’s classification, and notwithstanding her

⁹⁷ Minna Palander-Collin, ‘Correspondence’, in Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.), *Historical Pragmatics* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter Mouton, 2010), pp 651 - 677 at p 667.

⁹⁸ Susan M. Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter in Early Modern English: A Pragmatic Approach* (Pragmatics and Beyond: New Series, 95; Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2002).

⁹⁹ (Editorial), ‘Introduction: Towards a Pragmatics of Writing’, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 35 (2003), pp 825 - 828 at p 827.

¹⁰⁰ Risselada, *Imperatives and other directive expressions in Latin: A study in the pragmatics of a dead language*. Hilla Halla-Aho, *The non-literary Latin letters: A study of their syntax and pragmatics*, ed. Jaakko Frösén (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum, 124; Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 2009).

¹⁰¹ Denizot, *Donner des ordres en grec ancien. Etude linguistique des formes de l’injonction*.

focus upon directive expressions, developed a model of speech acts extending well beyond directives alone, in a manner that invites further exploration.¹⁰²

Section 2.2 has also made the case for continuing to look to the traditional tools of rhetoric when analysing the strategies speakers or writers are adopting to achieve their purposes. These will also be utilised as appropriate in this thesis.

That so little of this potential has been utilised in relation to the documentary Greek papyri is regrettable. This thesis is an attempt to explore some of the ways in which this potential can be realised.

¹⁰² Risselada, *Imperatives and Other Directive Expressions in Latin: A Study in the Pragmatics of a Dead Language* Ch. 2.

PRAGMATICS AND ANCIENT GREEK PREVIOUS STUDIES

3.1 Introduction

The literature on the Ancient Greek language fills libraries and has developed over centuries. To review it would be the work of a lifetime. Any literature review, if it is to be manageable, must be tightly focused. For this reason, no attempt is made here to review the literature on Ancient Greek from a rhetorical perspective. It is acknowledged that this remains a contemporary area of research and that the work being undertaken is not confined to the best-known works of the canon. See, for example, the work of van der Eijk.¹ It is also true however, that the documentary papyri have not received much attention from this perspective.

Literature on Ancient Greek from a pragmatic perspective is beginning to accumulate, although it is to date limited in extent. Moreover, scholars, with a small number of exceptions, have not applied this perspective to the documentary papyri. To consider this literature is consequently a more manageable task than that of considering the literature on rhetoric and Ancient Greek. Nevertheless this discussion does not claim to be comprehensive. Literature is considered here only where it is relevant to the tools whose applicability to the documentary papyri is being explored in this thesis. By narrowing the focus in this way, relevant work of a more general kind may have been excluded. There has nevertheless been enough done that meets these criteria to make reviewing it valuable.

An exception to this focus on work with an explicitly pragmatic orientation is made towards the end of the chapter. Work done under the broad heading of epistolography

¹ Philip J. Van Der Eijk, 'Towards a Rhetoric of Ancient Scientific Discourse: Some Formal Characteristic of Greek Medical and Philosophical Texts (Hippocratic Corpus, Aristotle)', in Egbert J. Bakker (ed.), *Grammar as Interpretation: Greek Literature in Its Linguistic Contexts* (Mnemosyne Bibliotheca Classica Batava, Supplementum 171; Leiden New York Köln: Brill, 1997), pp 77 - 130.

has too much relevance to be ignored. The efforts undertaken by scholars within this tradition to identify different types of letters, the structure that characterises these types, and the formulae that recur within each, is important. It seems likely that the patterns so identified are relevant to the purposes with which those letters were composed.

A further exception is also made to allow for brief consideration of some other work that, while not on Ancient Greek at all, is particularly pertinent (*Section 3.8*). There has been interesting work on Latin from a pragmatic perspective. The parallels with Ancient Greek are considerable in that the work shares the particular challenges that come with applying a pragmatic perspective to a language where we have only written material and limited understanding of how it was used in every-day life. The approaches taken in studying Latin can provide helpful guidance in expanding the amount of similar work undertaken on Ancient Greek.

3.2 Research on speech acts

A relatively early and very interesting paper on the pragmatics of Ancient Greek is that of N. E. Collinge.² In seeking to summarise the field of pragmatics at the time he was writing, Collinge identifies five key topics: the identification of performative verbs or sentences (he cites Searle's classification of these³); the observation that these verbs have what has been called 'illocutionary force'; the insight that we often mean far more than we actually say; the insight that, in a similar way to the previous, much of what we say may be by implication rather than explicit statement; and finally the identification of the concept of (conversational) implicatures as set forth by Grice. It is speech acts to which he gives most attention.

Collinge seeks to identify examples of these linguistic features in the classical literature. On the whole, he is not optimistic that many can be found. While recognising that any natural language must contain assertives, he finds little evidence in the canon for declaratives or expressives. He also writes that 'ancient Greek clings to convention: it

² N. E. Collinge, 'Thoughts on the Pragmatics of Ancient Greek', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 214 (New Series No. 34) (1988), pp 1 - 13.

³ Searle, John R. 'A Classification of Illocutionary Acts', *Language in Society*, 5 (1) (1976), pp 1-23.

dislikes implicatures based on the unverifiable; it is timid over indirect illocutions and hostile to presuppositions'⁴ Collinge himself would no doubt regard these conclusions as preliminary and subject to correction after lengthier consideration and exploration of texts. His suggestion, for example, that 'we should treat the language as one, ignoring regional and cultural differences'⁵ is difficult to agree with in the context of the papyri. As a preliminary overview of the relevance of pragmatics to Ancient Greek however, this is an important and valuable paper. It is to be regretted that the challenge he addressed—the need to examine the possible relevance of various pragmatic findings to the study of Ancient Greek—has not been taken up more comprehensively than it has.

A scholar who has taken up the challenge quite comprehensively, at least with respect to a particular kind of speech act, is Camille Denizot. As noted in the previous chapter, Denizot has examined the giving of orders in Ancient Greek from a pragmatic perspective, making explicit use of the concept of the speech act.⁶ Her work confines itself to just one of Searle's five kinds of speech act—directives—and her focus is on the classical canon from Homer to the Athenian orators. She does not examine the papyri. Yet hers is an extended and comprehensive treatment of the topic and perhaps the monograph with the most direct relevance to this thesis. It is not the details of her findings that are most important here, interesting as they are.⁷ Her focus on classical literature limits their relevance to any study of the papyri, although the questions she asks might well also be asked of different texts. The importance of her work for this thesis is that her decision to adopt a pragmatic approach proved so fruitful. By defining her task in pragmatic terms from the outset,⁸ she equipped herself with a productive way

⁴ Collinge, 'Thoughts on the Pragmatics of Ancient Greek', p 12.

⁵ Ibid., p 4.

⁶ Denizot, Camille, *Donner des ordres en grec ancien. Etude linguistique des formes de l'injonction* (Mont-Saint-Aignan: Presses universitaire de Rouen et du Havre 2011) and 'Impolite Orders in Ancient Greek? The Οὐκ Ἐγεῖς Type', *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, 13/1 (2012), pp 110 - 128.

⁷ For example, Denizot is unable to find morpho-syntactic features characteristic of orders for which there are no counter examples (p 185) and is convinced of the importance of considering the recipient of any order in understanding the language (p 184). She considers in detail the use of the subjunctive (Part II, Chapter V), of indirect ways of giving orders (Part III, Chapter 10), and identifies 'typical forms' taken by the directive (Part II, Chapter IV).

⁸ Following Searle, Denizot declares: *parler une langue, c'est réaliser des actes comme per exemple énoncer des affirmations, poser des questions, donner des ordres, faire des promesses et ainsi de suite... Donner des ordres en grec ancien*, p 10.

of thinking through her topic. Her work is very encouraging for a thesis that shares this approach.

Gerry Wakker's work is also of importance here.⁹ Wakker takes as the framework for her study functional grammar, which she explicitly contrasts to formal grammar and goes on to declare that 'from a functional perspective pragmatics is the all-encompassing framework and is prior to semantics'.¹⁰ Her focus is narrow—more narrow than that of Denizot—in that she attends only to conditions and conditionals. Her treatment of these is nevertheless extensive. It is when discussing conditional clauses that she observes a number of ways in which their use supports the performative purpose of the principal clause of the sentence. In general, she argues, conditional clauses establish the appropriateness or relevance of that speech act.¹¹ Examples include issuing directives in a somewhat oblique manner (e.g. 'if you wish, do x...'). Indeed she divides conditionals into two broad types: 'propositional and illocutionary'.¹² As with Collinge and Denizot, Wakker's examples are drawn from the classical canon and no reference is made to the papyri.

Shalev uses the notion of illocutionary expressions as a very interesting means of reinterpreting passages in both Ancient Greek drama and Plato—passages that have previously been considered redundant or parenthetical.¹³ Her paper is an excellent example of the way a pragmatic perspective can open up new understandings of previously puzzling features of a language.

The topic of speech acts has also attracted attention among biblical scholars interested in the Greek of the New Testament.¹⁴ The focus of these articles however, has been less

⁹ G. C. Wakker, *Conditions and Conditionals: An Investigation of Ancient Greek*, eds Albert Rijksbaron, Irene J. F. De Jong, and Harm Pinkster (Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology; Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1994) at (for example) pp 233 ff.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p 13.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p 228.

¹² *Ibid.*, Chapter 5.

¹³ D. Shalev, 'Illocutionary Clauses Accompanying Questions in Greek Drama and in Platonic Dialogue', *Mnemosyne* (Fourth Series), 54/5 (2001), pp 531 - 561.

¹⁴ Examples include J. G. du Plessis, 'Speech Act Theory and New Testament Interpretation with Special Reference to G. N. Leech's *Pragmatic Principles*', in P. J. Hartin and J. H. Petzer (eds.), *Text and Interpretation: New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament* (Leiden New York Kobenhavn

on what speech act theory reveals about the language of the New Testament and more on biblical exegesis. The material is thus of more interest to the scholar of religion than to the scholar of language or history.

Of special interest to this thesis, given the material that he considers, is an article by Martii Leiwo.¹⁵ Focusing on letters in Ancient Greek found among ostraca at Mons Claudianus, and with reference to certain recurring phrases in a manner drawing in some ways upon models developed earlier in the study of Ancient Greek epistolography (discussed in *Section 3.7.* below) he identifies a number of different types of directive speech acts in his corpus. It is true that Leiwo explicitly states that in his paper ‘pragmatics lies in the background’ and that morpho-syntax and phonology are questions he considers to be prior to these.¹⁶ Nevertheless he shows clearly the way a consideration of speech acts can provide a different approach to these texts—a way that can help reveal features otherwise often overlooked.

3.3 Research on conversational implicature

Collinge and Wakker (above) also discuss conversational implicature in Ancient Greek. Wakker offers by far the most detailed discussion and intends her observations to apply to the Ancient Greek language as a whole. It is her view that one of the functions served by conditional clauses is to enable the writer to comply with Gricean maxims. For example, she considers that the addition of a suitable conditional clause can help writers avoid being seen to breach the Gricean maxim of quality by asserting something for which they may not have adequate evidence (for example, ‘if I am not mistaken...’).

Köln: Brill, 1991), pp 129 - 142. (The collection from which this paper is drawn includes a number of papers adapting pragmatic approaches to language to New Testament Studies.) See also Karl J. Franklin, ‘Speech Act Verbs and the Words of Jesus’, in Shin Ja J. Hwang and William R. Merrifield (eds.), *Language in Context: Essays for Robert E. Longacre* (Arlington: The Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of Texas, 1992), pp 241 - 261 and Vern Sheridan Poythress, ‘Canon and Speech Act: Limitations in Speech-Act Theory, with Implications for a Putative Theory of Canonical Speech Acts’, *Westminster Theological Journal*, 70 (2008), pp 337 - 354.

¹⁵ Martti Leiwo, ‘Imperatives and Other Directives in the Greek Letters from Mons Claudianus’, in T. V. Evans and D.D. Obbink (eds.), *The Language of the Papyri* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp 97-119.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p 98 n. §3.

Similarly, other conditional clauses can be employed to avoid breaching the Gricean maxim of relevance (for example, ‘if you are interested in this....’).¹⁷

In contrast to these general discussions, Lloyd uses the concept of conversational implicature in an attempt to offer a convincing interpretation of a particular example from Homer—a speech by Achilles in *Iliad* 24 that has caused much debate (Achilles’ apparently unnecessary explanation of why Priam must sleep under the porch of his tent—something that would be normal practice for even an honoured guest in Homeric society.) Lloyd also considers other exchanges in both *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* where violation of one or more of the Gricean maxims can be taken to be a deliberate strategy in order to communicate more than is to be found in the words themselves (that is, ‘off the record’). As the title of his paper indicates, he is particularly interested in the idea that interpreting the context as a breach of Gricean maxims may offer a way to understand the meaning of ‘kertomia’, a word whose interpretation has proved more than a little troublesome within Homeric scholarship.¹⁸

Like those discussed above, Lloyd’s article is significant in that it shows how helpful a pragmatic approach can be in casting new light on old problems. Additionally, it is important because it has stimulated further substantial debate. Gottesman looks at similar material to Lloyd and takes issue with him directly.¹⁹ He states that he agrees in part with Lloyd but offers a significantly different interpretation of ‘kertomia’. The details need not detain us here. The point to be stressed is that the two articles taken together demonstrate that productive exchanges of opinion and possible refinement of ideas can result from a pragmatic approach. These two articles also demonstrate the way in which a close reading that explores the apparent purposes of interlocutors, even when, as in this case, they are fictional, can be of value.

¹⁷ Wakker, *Conditions and Conditionals: An Investigation of Ancient Greek*, pp 242 - 249.

¹⁸ Michael Lloyd, 'The Politeness of Achilles: Off-Record Conversation Strategies in Homer and the Meaning of "Kertomia"', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 124 (2004), pp 75 - 89.

¹⁹ Alex Gottesman, 'The Pragmatics of Homeric "Kertomia"', *The Classical Quarterly*, 58/1 (2008), pp 1 - 12.

There is other work to be found applying linguistic analysis, often from a pragmatic perspective, to both Ancient Greek and Latin Literature. Eleven papers of this type can be found in the collection edited by Allen and Buijs.²⁰

3.4 Research on deixis

Lowell Edmunds' overview of research into deixis in both Ancient Greek and Latin literature has already been cited.²¹ His argument that there are at least seven deictic features of Ancient Greek (and Latin) about which we would like to know more was noted. This is an important paper. That his focus is on classical literature is indicative of where the small amount of research on this topic has generally been directed and his extensive bibliography of this material is helpful. There can be little doubt that addressing the questions he raises is likely to improve our understanding whatever the period from which the Ancient Greek is drawn. He also sounds a note of caution to the extent that the study of deixis has not been as productive in literary theory as other developments in linguistics.²² We therefore have fewer guides to follow from linguistic scholarship concerned with other languages.

Egbert Bakker's paper, also already cited, is the most significant discussion of deixis in Ancient Greek in a readily accessible source.²³ (Pragmatic approaches to language do not play a large part in the 'Companion' volume in which this work appears, although it indirectly impacts on at least one other chapter.²⁴)

²⁰ Rutger J. Allan and Michel Buijs (eds.), *The Language of Literature: Linguistic Approaches to Classical Texts*, eds. Albert Rijksbaron and Irene J. F. De Jong (Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology, 13; Leiden Boston: Brill, 2007).

²¹ See *Chapter 2 Section 2.3.3* (p 35). The reference, (p 36) is Lowell Edmunds, 'Deixis in Ancient Greek and Latin Literature: Historical Introduction and State of the Question', *Philologia Antiqua*, 1 (2008), pp 67 - 98

²² *Ibid.*, p 67.

²³ See *Chapter 2 Section 2.1.3*. The reference is Egbert J. Bakker, 'Pragmatics: Speech and Text', in Egbert J. Bakker (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp 151 - 167

²⁴ See, for example, Willi, already cited in *Chapter 2* (p 31 n. 45). Andreas Willi, 'Register Variation', in Egbert J. Bakker (ed.), *ibid.*, pp 297 - 310.

Bakker deals both with deixis of place and deixis of time treating them as two ‘test cases’.²⁵ His attempt to distinguish between deixis in speech and deixis in writing is interesting although he himself acknowledges that the behaviour of speakers in everyday situations in the ancient world is lost to us. It can only be inferred from speech-like examples, such as dramatic dialogues, or from narrative structured in such a way as to create a sense of immediacy. He consequently draws upon the Athenian playwrights and Herodotus for most of his examples. It will be argued later in this thesis (*Chapter 6*) that some of the letters on papyri seem to have more of the features of spoken language than do literary texts. Examining them for the particular, probably unconscious use of deictive markers may prove interesting, although texts from these archives have not made that possible here.

Bakker’s suggestions for further reading relevant to Ancient Greek are limited. He notes only that a discussion of deixis can be found in Nancy Felson²⁶ and cites his own work from 2005.²⁷ This last is a study of Homer, although his chapter on *The Poetics of Deixis* (Chapter 5) also considers Hesiod. Nevertheless his observation that, in oral poetry, the very fact of its oral performance means that it is impossible for it not to be ‘deictic,’ has some relevance here.²⁸ Bakker argues that it is only in certain literary genres that the narrator can in some way fade into the background. Letters are clearly not such a genre. The material we are dealing with in the papyri involves writers, recipients and others whose relationship with each other in time and space is very much central to their communication. We might wish that the correspondents would spell out some of these relationships. In practice, they commonly do not as they are sufficiently closely connected with each other to allow much to be assumed. Just how much is assumed may be taken as a measure of the closeness and frequency of contact of the participants.

²⁵ Egbert J. Bakker, ‘Pragmatics: Speech and Text’, p 152.

²⁶ Nancy Felson, ‘Introduction’, in Nancy Felson (ed.), *The Poetics of Deixis in Alcman, Pindar, and Other Lyric* (*Arethusa* 37.3) (Baltimore: MD, 2004 (a)), pp 253 - 256.

²⁷ Egbert J. Bakker, *Pointing at the Past: From Formula to Performance in Homeric Poetics* (Washington DC & Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p 71.

The work of Felson to which Bakker refers (see Footnote 26) provides a good overview of the importance of the topic generally. As is the case with Bakker, her main interest is in how a consideration of certain aspects of deixis can assist with some difficult questions in the interpretation of Ancient Greek poetry—poetry that was written to be performed. She rightly points out that much is lost to us about the context of performance when all we have are the texts. We cannot know how many of the deictic references were to the specific context of the first performance or whether the poet had anticipated future performance.²⁹ Elsewhere in the same edition of *Arethusa*, she applies her own insights to Pindar's Ninth Pythian Ode.³⁰

In another place, Felson offers a detailed interpretation of Pindar's *Pythian 4*. Her summary of the variety of morphological features through which Ancient Greek expresses deixis is interesting but not easily applied to other contexts.³¹

There have been a number of other papers exploring deictic features in epic poetry. The use of relative pronouns in Pindar, for example, has been addressed by Bonifazi.³² In addition, Bonanno cites a number of papers that consider deixis in archaic lyric poetry.³³

3.5 Research on discourse analysis

An area of pragmatics that has contributed much to scholarship on Ancient Greek has been discourse analysis. The topic most thoroughly addressed in this context is word order. Perhaps this is to be expected given that it is an issue that has long been of

²⁹ Felson, 'Introduction', p 259.

³⁰ Nancy Felson, 'The Poetic Effects of Deixis in Pindar's Ninth Pythian Ode', *Arethusa*, 37/3 (2004 (b)), pp 365 - 389.

³¹ Nancy Felson, 'Vicarious Transport: Fictive Deixis in Pindar's Pythian Four', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 99 (1999), pp 1 - 31.

³² Anna Bonifazi, 'Relative Pronouns and Memory: Pindar Beyond Syntax', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 102 (2004), pp 41 - 68.

³³ Maria Grazia Bonanno, 'All the (Greek) World's a Stage: Notes on (Not Just Dramatic) Greek Staging', in Lowell Edmunds and Robert W Wallace (eds.), *Poet, Public, and Performance in Ancient Greek* (Baltimore, London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) pp 112 - 123 at pp 114 ff.

interest to philologists. Dover's well-known work dates from 1960³⁴ and the matter has continued to receive attention in recent times.³⁵

Helma Dik, using examples from Herodotus, seeks to provide a general account of variability in Ancient Greek word order for pragmatic reasons. Because of her focus on Herodotus, the language she has in mind is that characteristic of extended narrative. Nevertheless there are many ways in which her approach is helpful for anyone interested in word order in almost any language. Questions such as the three that she proposes about referents: 'How do speakers organise their texts? How do they communicate new information successfully? Why do speakers repeat given information?'³⁶ have wide application. Such 'how' and 'why' questions, while they are likely to result in different answers when examining correspondence from those resulting from examination of other genres, may well yield new insights.

Dik's is one of two comprehensive contemporary treatment of the issue. The other is by Matic, who uses the topic/focus approach developed by discourse analysts to propose a strong relationship between word order and pragmatic content.³⁷ Matic considers Dik's book to be foundational in looking at Ancient Greek word order from a pragmatic perspective and seeks to build upon and extend her work. His paper is lengthy and technical in a way that is not wholly relevant to the present endeavour. One of his principal conclusions however, is highly relevant. He argues that Greek word order is largely pragmatically determined.³⁸ While our knowledge of how this is done in any given case is at present not very detailed, Matic's paper at least suggests the possibility of using differences in word order as markers of the different purposes of different speakers or writers.

³⁴ K. J. Dover, *Greek Word Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

³⁵ R. J. Allan, 'Clause Intertwining and Word Order in Ancient Greek', *Journal of Greek Linguistics*, 12/1 (2012), pp 5 - 28.

³⁶ Helma Dik, *Word Order in Ancient Greek: A Pragmatic Account of Word Order Variation in Herodotus*, eds Albert Rijksbaron, Irene J. F. De Jong, and Harm Pinkster (Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology Volume 5; Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1995), p 23. It is taken for granted here that for 'speaker' one may substitute 'writer'.

³⁷ Dejan Matic, 'Topic, Focus and Discourse Structure: Ancient Greek Word Order', *Studies in Language*, 27/3 (2003), pp 573 - 633.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p 628.

In broad agreement with Dik and Matic is Panhuis, who also adopts a pragmatic perspective. He uses it in a consideration of a more tightly defined aspect of word order: prolepsis.³⁹

Herodotus has attracted considerable attention by scholars interested in pragmatic variation in word order. Helma Dik, in a separate work to the above, adopts a pragmatic explanation for the varying position of adjectives in Herodotus.⁴⁰ Stephanie J. Bakker has also addressed the position of adjectives⁴¹ and, at book length, the functions of the noun phrase.⁴²

Other topics under the general heading of discourse analysis that have attracted interest include the influence that pragmatic strategies common in oral language may have had on some classical texts, given especially the ancient practice of reading texts aloud. Slings offers a particularly interesting account of what appear at first sight to be anacolutha.⁴³ His examples range from Homer to Herodotus and Plato and his conclusion is stimulating. He does not doubt that even in a writer as careful as Plato we may find anacolutha that might properly be considered error. What is more interesting is his suggestion that in each case, before assuming an error has been made, we should, ask whether, in expressing himself in this way, the author had a purpose—most commonly perhaps to write in a style typical of natural, unself-conscious speech. It is too easy to identify the apparently grammatical usage of the uneducated as mistakes rather than to see them, following Horrocks, as an opportunity to gain insight into the

³⁹ Dirk Panhuis, 'Prolepsis in Greek as a Discourse Strategy', *Glotta*, 62/1/2 (1984), pp 26 - 39.

⁴⁰ Helma Dik, 'Interpreting Adjective Position in Herodotus', in Egbert J. Bakker (ed.), *Grammar as Interpretation: Greek Literature in its Linguistic Contexts* (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997), pp 55 - 76.

⁴¹ Stephanie J. Bakker, 'Adjective Ordering in Herodotus: A Pragmatic Explanation', in Rutger J. Allan and Michel Buijs (eds.), *The Language of Literature: Linguistic Approaches to Classical Texts* (Leiden Boston: Brill, 2007), pp 188 - 210.

⁴² Stephanie J. Bakker, *The Nouns Phrase in Ancient Greek: A Functional Analysis of the Order and Articulation of NP Constituents in Herodotus* (Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology 15; Leiden Boston: Brill, 2009).

⁴³ S. R. Slings, 'Figures of Speech and their Lookalikes', in Egbert J. Bakker (ed.), *Grammar as Interpretation: Greek Literature in its Linguistic Contexts* (Mnemosyne Bibliotheca Classica Batava; Leiden New York Köln: Brill, 1997), pp 169 - 214.

everyday usage of ordinary people.⁴⁴ Slings' approach would suggest that offering firm judgments that writers have erred is something to be avoided until an effort is made to consider the possible pragmatic purposes that led the writers to choose the words that they did.

In another paper, already cited in *Chapter 2*,⁴⁵ this time on Herodotus, Slings takes the generally well-accepted view that the language of Herodotus lies on the border between oral and written styles and uses this insight to further our understanding of his work. He demonstrates that Herodotus uses many oral strategies in a very natural way. By drawing our attention to this, Slings demonstrates very clearly some of the potential of the approach of discourse analysts.

Gerry Wakker, referred to earlier for her work on conditions and conditionals, has also considered purposes clauses. Specifically, she has looked at their placement in a sentence (in particular, their placement in either initial position or final position) and the significance this placement may have in relation to the function of the clause in the discourse.⁴⁶ She offers a number of tentative explanations for these differences but overall is content in this paper to conclude that she has described some of the significant subtleties of the pragmatics of Ancient Greek purpose expressions, a conclusion with which it is difficult to disagree.

I have found only one paper taking up the issue of word order in the documentary papyri.⁴⁷ Stephen Bay's paper is interesting but it has a narrow focus. (He examined every instance of the particle γάρ on the Duke Database of Documentary Papyri, sorted them by century and compared each sample with a sample of literary texts also drawn from the same century. Variation in the incidence of its deferment across these samples

⁴⁴ Geoffrey Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p 115.

⁴⁵ S. R. Slings, 'Oral Strategies in the Language of Herodotus', in Egbert J. Bakker, Irene J. F. de Jong, and Hans van Wees (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Herodotus* (Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 2002), pp 53-77.

⁴⁶ G. C. Wakker, 'Purpose Clauses in Ancient Greek', in J. Nuyts and George de Schutter (eds.), *Getting One's Words into Line: On Word Order and Functional Grammar* (Functional Grammar Series 5; Dordrecht: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1987), pp 89 - 101.

⁴⁷ Stephen Bay, 'The Deferment of Postpositive Particles in Greek Documentary Papyri', *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*, 46 (2009), pp 75 - 79.

was then observed.) It thus would not pretend to do more than open up for discussion one small aspect of this topic.

3.6 Research on ‘politeness’

As might be anticipated, given the comprehensive nature of her treatment of the speech act of ordering, Denizot considers a number of issues related to politeness. Her approach is informed by Brown and Levinson’s influential theory and she takes up the topic of politeness in a number of places.⁴⁸ These include a discussion of politeness in relation to the level of language used in giving an order,⁴⁹ politeness and grammatical issues such as verbal aspect,⁵⁰ and the relationship between politeness and linguistically indirect ways of giving orders.⁵¹

Denizot expands on some of this material and addresses some additional issue in a paper which draws on a relatively recent area of pragmatic research into linguistic politeness, namely impoliteness.⁵² She has examined this research with a view to finding a better explanation of the use in Ancient Greek of the negative future interrogative to issue an impolite order.⁵³ As with her book, the focus of her discussion is on classical literature—in this case Athenian drama. This article (in a manner not dissimilar to the approach of Lloyd and Gottesman discussed in Section 3.3 above) demonstrates the value of asking whether new developments in linguistic theory can be applied effectively to long-standing problems in interpreting aspects of Ancient Greek.

The book and articles cited in *Section 3.3* above on conversational implicature (Wakker, Lloyd, and Gottesman) also touch on politeness. These authors make good use of Grice’s work to show how much may be communicated indirectly in Ancient Greek for

⁴⁸ Denizot’s treatment of Brown and Levinson is found in Section III, 1.3.2 of *Donner des ordres en grec ancien*, p 139.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p 73.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p 228.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp 483ff.

⁵² See Jonathan Culpeper, *Impoliteness: Using Language to Cause Offence*, eds Paul Drew et al. (Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁵³ Denizot, ‘Impolite Orders in Ancient Greek? The Οὐκ Ἐγεῖται Type’.

purposes that include a wish to be polite. Wakker specifically identifies examples that serve both to avoid breaching Gricean maxims and to be polite in the process.⁵⁴ Both Lloyd and Gottesman⁵⁵ discuss ways in which turns of phrase can be fundamentally rude while appearing on the surface to remain polite.

As has already been noted, (*Chapter 2, Section 2.3.5*) there are problems with the application of theories of politeness that have been developed with a focus on one language and culture to another culture even if those cultures are contemporary and even if they relate to each other in some way (for example, European languages or varieties of English). It is also important to recognise that indirectness does not always have politeness as its purpose—the two are not equivalent.⁵⁶ Particular caution is therefore necessary when thinking about politeness in Ancient Greek, and perhaps especially in a culture as remote as that depicted in Homer. Even more so than in the case of the suggestions made about the applicability of Grice's theory, remarks made about politeness in Homer, by Lloyd, Gottesman or anyone else, need to be considered cautiously and carefully. That does not mean, however, that these ideas are not worthy of further exploration in relation to the papyri.

There is a small amount of other research relating to politeness strategies in the canon,⁵⁷ and in New Testament studies.⁵⁸ Wilson's approach to a Pauline epistle is especially interesting. He is surely correct when he writes: 'the social setting constitutes a powerful constraint on the linguistic expression of ideas'.⁵⁹ This applies to any era. Unfortunately to be able to give due weight to this assumes a better knowledge of the society from which a letter (or other document) is drawn than we often have. We are probably more lacking in our knowledge of the society of 3rd century B.C.E. Egypt, than

⁵⁴ Wakker, *Conditions and Conditionals: An Investigation of Ancient Greek*, pp 249 ff.

⁵⁵ Lloyd, 'The Politeness of Achilles: Off-Record Conversation Strategies in Homer and the Meaning of "Kertomia"'. Gottesman, 'The Pragmatics of Homeric "Kertomia"'

⁵⁶ Shoshana Blum-Kulka, 'Indirectness and Politeness in Requests: Same or Different?', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 11 (1987), pp 131 - 146.

⁵⁷ H. Paul Brown, 'Addressing Agamemnon: A Pilot Study of Politeness and Pragmatics in the "Iliad"', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 136/1 (2006), pp 1 - 46.

⁵⁸ Andrew Wilson, 'The Pragmatics of Politeness and Pauline Epistolography: A Case Study of the Letter to Philemon', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 48 (1992), pp 107 - 119.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p 107.

we are about society in the time of Paul. Wilson also makes many assumptions about the applicability of theories of politeness across cultures and across time.⁶⁰ His article nevertheless demonstrates a way of thinking about reasons why a letter-writer adopts, or fails to adopt, certain forms. The desire to appear modest or thankful—something Wilson postulates to explain some features of the Pauline letter he discusses—may well be similar to those adopted by other letter-writers at other times. To that extent at least, his article is helpful.

The extended use of family kinship terms, often as a means of respect, has been noted and investigated.⁶¹ Dickey has demonstrated that misunderstanding this phenomenon can lead to serious error. This is especially important as Dickey's work, unlike much of the pragmatics-focused research identified in this chapter, engages directly with the papyri. With respect to politeness, hers is a cautionary paper reminding us of some of the problems involved in considering linguistic politeness across cultures.

Otherwise, work on politeness in the papyri has been limited. There has however, been research focused on identifying the distinctive style of individual correspondents in Arch. Zen. While not explicitly examining issues of politeness, some of the individual differences identified in, for example, the use of extended salutations, are relevant to this issue.⁶²

⁶⁰ It is Leech's theory that Wilson relies upon. Geoffrey N. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, eds R. H. Robins and Martin Harris (Longman Linguistics Library; New York: Longman, 1983).

⁶¹ Eleanor Dickey, 'Literal and Extended Use of Kinship Terms in Documentary Papyri', *Mnemosyne* (Fourth Series), 57/2 (2004), pp 131-176. See also Eleanor Dickey, 'Latin Influence and Greek Request Formulae', in T. V. Evans and D.D. Obbink (eds.), *The Language of the Papyri* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp 208 - 220.

⁶² See: T. V. Evans, 'Greetings from Alexandria', in Jaakko Frösén, Tiina Purola, and Erja Salmenkivi (eds.), *24th International Congress of Papyrology Helsinki, 1 - 7 August, 2004* (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum, 122:1 2007; Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 2004), pp 299-308, 'Valedictory Ἐγγύσιο in Zenon Archive Letters from Hierokles', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 153 (2005), pp 155 - 158, 'Linguistic and Stylistic Variation in the Zenon Archive', in Martti Leiwo, Hilla Halla-Aho, and Marja Vierros (eds.), *Variation and Change in Greek and Latin* (Helsinki: Foundation of the Finnish Institute at Athens, 2012), pp 25 - 42, and 'The Language of the Individual', in T. V. Evans and D. D. Obbink (eds.), *The Language of the Papyri* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp 51-70; Delphine Nachtergaele, 'Remarks on the Variation in the Initial Health Wish in Hierokles' Letters', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 190 (2014 (a)), pp 223 – 226, and 'The Polite Phrases in the Letters of Apollonios Dioiketes', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 190 (2014 (b)), pp 219 - 222; Bart Van Beek, '"We too are in good health'. The Private Correspondence from the Kleon Archive', in Peter Van Nuffelen (ed.), *Faces of Hellenism: Studies in the History of the Eastern Mediterranean (4th Century B.C. - 5th Century A.D.)* (Studia Hellenistica; Leuven - Paris - Walpole MA: Peeters, 2009), pp 147 - 159.

3.7 Epistolography

It is possible to re-read several earlier works through the lens of pragmatics. For example, Dik observes that Dover, in his widely respected work on word order referred to above, thought that there are several determinants of word order: lexical and semantic, syntactic, and logical. She hazards that Dover would now probably describe these last as ‘pragmatic’.⁶³ It is work undertaken under the general heading of ‘epistolography’ however, that has the greatest claim to reconsideration from a pragmatic perspective. Specifically, politeness, at least as it is expressed through linguistic formulae common to letters, has been a topic of long-standing interest. This interest commenced shortly after the papyri became available for study and long before a pragmatic approach to language was articulated.

A pioneer in the study of the letters in the documentary papyri was Exler.⁶⁴ Politeness per se was not a topic given much importance in his work. His purpose—in his own words, ‘to illustrate the history of the Greek letter form during the Ptolemaic and Roman period’⁶⁵—did not lead him to consider such matters directly. He was certainly interested in opening and closing formulae, but he did not comment on their significance for social intercourse. He observed that the formula ‘To A, from B’ tended to be used more commonly in petitions, complaints and applications, but did not take the next step of spelling out what this probably implied—that the formula ‘To A, from B’ was more polite than the common ‘From B, to A’.

Steen, on the other hand, another pioneer researcher in this field, saw clearly that the function of many common phrases in the letters was to soften somewhat the force of imperatives (as well as, in some cases, to reinforce them).⁶⁶ This is not unlike the observations made by Denizot about the ways in which orders may be given indirectly.

⁶³ Dik, *Word Order in Ancient Greek: A Pragmatic Account of Word Order Variation in Herodotus*, p 259.

⁶⁴ Francis Xavier J. Exler, *The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter: A Study in Greek Epistolography* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1923).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p 12.

⁶⁶ Henry A. Steen, 'Les clichés épistolaires dans les lettres sur papyrus grecques', *Classica et Mediaevalia*, I (1938), 119 - 176 at p 125.

Steen specifically uses the terms *la rudesse*, *la politesse* and *l'urbanité*.⁶⁷ Like Exler's, Steen's paper is a broad survey and detailed discussion of the significance for politeness of the *clichés* he identifies is not undertaken. This is not to undervalue the importance of his work in surveying the texts available to him.

The most comprehensive work of this kind for the Ptolemaic era, if only because it was written far more recently than those discussed above and thus had the benefit of access to more letters than the authors discussed above, is that of Rodolfo Buzón.⁶⁸ Again, however, while the formulae that we would regard as relevant to politeness are identified, their significance in this regard is not teased out by him to any significant degree.

Brief mention should also be made of John L. White's survey of the secondary literature—or at least that part of it that has been the work of the Society for Biblical Literature's Ancient Epistolography Group.⁶⁹ The work he surveys examines a far wider range of letters than those from 3rd century B.C.E. Egypt, so much of it is not relevant here. An article by Stirewalt is similar in its broad-brush approach.⁷⁰ Both share something common to this field. Even until relatively recent times, much effort was expended in carefully observing the letters available to us and noting commonalities. Less effort has been spent in teasing out the significance of these commonalities in relation to the practical purposes of those who used them.

On balance however, this earlier research is disappointing from the perspective of this thesis. Recurring phrases are identified and there can be little doubt that these phrases have considerable significance for the politeness of the letters in which they appear. With the exception of Steen's work however, one searches in vain for a discussion of this significance.

⁶⁷ Ibid. Examples are at p 126, p 128 and p 144 respectively.

⁶⁸ Rodolfo Buzón, *Die Briefe der Ptolemäerzeit: ihre Struktur und ihre Formeln* (Heidelberg: diss., 1980).

⁶⁹ John L. White, 'The Greek Documentary Letter Tradition Third Century B.C.E. To Third Century C.E.', *Semeia*, 22 (1982), pp 89 - 106.

⁷⁰ M. Luther Stirewalt, *Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography*, ed. Marvin A. Sweeney (Resources for Biblical Study; Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1993).

3.8 Other relevant research

As foreshadowed in *Section 3.1*, there has also been work from a pragmatic perspective on Latin. This is not a thesis on Latin and to review this literature in full would be beyond its scope. It is sufficient to note a few examples and discuss in more detail two works which on the surface appear to offer some directions that might be explored in Ancient Greek.

There is research on Latin from the perspective of conversational implicatures,⁷¹ discourse analysis,⁷² and politeness, including in this regard, a significant monograph⁷³. Of particular interest is the conclusion drawn by Ferri that he found a lack of linguistic realism in his sources (mostly Plautus and Cicero) problematic in attempting to correlate social class and linguistic politeness. It is tempting to hope that this would be less of a problem if his sources were non-literary documents—letters in particular. His comment is also cautionary in reflecting upon the material discussed above. The majority of it has attended to classical literature and is thus very much subject to his caution.

As previously observed when referring to Lowell Edmunds' study (*Section 3.3*), work on deixis is not readily found in either language.⁷⁴ More helpfully, more extensive work has been done on the topic of speech (or illocutionary) acts.⁷⁵ One monograph on this

⁷¹ For example, Randall L. B. McNeill, 'Cum tacent clamant: The Pragmatics of Silence in Catullus', *Classical Philology*, 105/1 (2010), pp 69 -82.

⁷² For example, Caroline Kroon, 'A Framework for the Description of Latin Discourse Markers', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 30 (1998), pp 205 - 223. Rodie Risselada, 'The Discourse Functions of *sane*: Latin Marker of Agreement in Description, Interaction and Concession', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 30, pp 225 - 244.

⁷³ For example, Jon Hall, *Politeness and Politics in Cicero's Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Timothy A. Brookins, 'A politeness analysis of Catullus' polymetric poems: Can Leech's GSP cross the ancient-modern divide?', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42 (2010), pp 1283 - 1295; Rolando Ferri, 'How to say No in Latin: Negative Turns, Politeness and Pragmatic Variation', in Martti Leiwo, Hilla Halla-Aho, and Marja Vierros (eds.), *Variation and Change in Latin and Greek* (Helsinki: Foundation of the Finnish Institute at Athens, 2012), pp 115 - 137.

⁷⁴ Edmunds lists only two papers which refer explicitly to Latin. John Hilton, 'The Role of Discourse and Lexical Meaning in the Grammaticalisation of Temporal Particles in Latin', *Glotta*, 74 (1997/1998), 198 – 210, and Jared Klein, 'Personal Deixis in Latin', *The Classical Outlook*, 77/3 (2000), pp 93 - 99.

⁷⁵ Rodie Risselada, *Imperatives and other directive expressions in Latin: A Study in the pragmatics of a dead language* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1993). Luis Unceta Gómez 'Pedir perdón en latín: El acto de habla de la disculpa en las obras de Plauto y Terencio - Apologising in Latin: The Speech Act of Apology

topic⁷⁶ will be discussed briefly here, along with a second work that applies a pragmatic perspective more generally in a consideration of syntax.⁷⁷ These works too, address classical literature to the exclusion of other documents.

Risselada's work is important for a number of reasons, not least because it invites comparison with that of Denizot discussed above (*Section 3.2*). Her focus, as is Denizot's with respect to Ancient Greek, is upon how Latin was used, and like her, it is directives that claim her attention. In this regard she is at pains to distinguish her approach from previous studies of speech acts of various kinds in Latin, in that she considers none investigated the full range of directive expressions in use.⁷⁸ She is thus more comprehensive in the type of speech acts that she considers, but as a result cannot consider them with the depth that Denizot was able to do by investigating the giving of orders only.

While wider in focus than Denizot, Risselada's focus is still relatively narrow. This is her book's strength. In limiting her study to directive speech acts, she has demonstrated just how many linguistic issues emerge in a new light when directive expressions are examined from the perspective of their use. Like some of the studies in epistolography referred to above, she has also categorised directive speech acts in a classical language in a way that will make future approaches to the topic more focused (she describes her work in this regard as an 'inventory' of directive speech acts⁷⁹). Her identification of subtypes draws attention to just how many ways people may seek to direct others, across a range that she summarises as 'from straightforward instructions to tentative suggestions'.⁸⁰ It should be noted however, that issues of semantics and syntax also feature with considerable importance in Risselada's work.

in Plautus' and Terences's Comedies', *Emerita, Revista de Lingüística y Filología Clásica*, LXXXII (1), (2014), pp 69 - 97. Ferri, 'How to say No in Latin' is also of interest here as saying 'no' can be considered from the perspective of illocutionary acts as well as that of politeness.

⁷⁶ Risselada, *Imperatives and Other Directive Expressions in Latin*.

⁷⁷ Hilla Halla-Aho 'The non-literary Latin letters: A study of their syntax and pragmatics', Thesis (doctoral) (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, University of Helsinki, 2008, 2009).

⁷⁸ Risselada, *Imperatives and Other Directive Expressions in Latin*, p 2.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p 329.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p 47.

A concern with issues beyond the pragmatics of the language is also what motivates the other work to be discussed further here. What is important for this thesis about Halla-Aho's work is that, alongside Martii Leiwo's work on the ostraca from Mons Claudianus, it is the only work able to be cited here that considers non-literary letters from a pragmatic perspective. It is, however, modern syntactic theory, rather than pragmatic theory, that is the theoretical foundation of her work.⁸¹ Pragmatic considerations may well influence, in subtle ways, different parts of her paper, but they are explicitly drawn upon only in her discussion of word order.

3.9 Concluding remarks

In the concluding remarks to *Chapter 2* (p 41), the claim was made that pragmatics offers many tools with the potential to improve our understanding of Ancient Greek. The literature reviewed in this chapter has substantiated this claim. While the works cited have varied enormously in length and ambition, there can be little doubt that all, in their own way, have demonstrated that a pragmatic approach to Ancient Greek has useful insights to offer.

It was also suggested in *Chapter 2* (ibid.) that an approach drawing on the theory of speech acts was likely to be particularly productive. *Section 3.2* above has given support to this view. Denizot's monograph and Leiwo's paper demonstrate that this approach can lead to very detailed and interesting findings, as does Risselada with respect to Latin. That Leiwo has productively utilised letters similar to those examined here, albeit from a later time period and on a different medium, is further reason to pursue this approach.

A caveat needs to be entered here. Denizot, Leiwo and others cited in *Section 3.2* have used the framework of speech acts as a way to explore issues of syntax and semantics. Questions in relation to these aspects of language have been very important to them. The same was true in Latin for Halla-Aho. The focus of this thesis is different. The questions I seek to explore relate to the goals of the writers, their manners of expression, preferred genres and rhetorical strategies. In short I am examining language

⁸¹ Halla-Aho, *The Non-Literary Latin Letter*, p 22.

from a similar perspective but with a different goal in mind. I nevertheless take their work as sufficiently encouraging to format the chapters that follow using speech acts as the overall organising principle. Part II, indeed, will deal only with directive speech acts for reasons that will become apparent as the thesis progresses. Part III will explore other speech acts—speech acts that have attracted relatively little attention to date.

Despite the cautions canvassed in *Chapter 2* (pp 37 – 40), and in *Section 3.6* above concerning the cross-cultural applicability of linguistic theories of politeness, it is clear that it would be very unwise to avoid issues of politeness when considering letters. Work here dates back to some of the earliest undertaken into the papyri and some of the possibilities raised by it in the light of modern theorising will be explored.

Some of the other pragmatic tools discussed here, particularly deixis, have not so far been shown to have great heuristic value, especially once one's focus moves from syntax and semantics to the use made by writers of features of language in their everyday endeavours. An understanding of the importance of deixis however may help explain some of the confusion we feel when letters refer to places and people whose relationship to the correspondents is not known to us. Similarly, the usefulness of Grice's maxims of conversational implicature will emerge as individual letters are considered and as evidence that in some letters at least we may be dealing with language that is very close to what was probably typical of oral language at the time.

As already noted, the research cited here on Latin serves largely to support and endorse the approach adopted here, with respect to Ancient Greek. As also noted in *Chapter 2*, rhetorical language to a greater or lesser degree can be assumed to be part of any attempt to persuade. Interesting rhetorical strategies will be noted and commented upon as they arise.

Finally, it is in some ways a surprise that only a small number of speech acts have so far been examined in the literature on ancient languages. Speech acts, as introduced in the work of Austin,⁸² are arguably the foundation stone of modern pragmatic theory.

⁸² J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words (the William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955)* (2nd edn.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

Moreover, a pragmatic approach to language is certainly not new. Many of the foundational texts cited in *Chapters 2 and 3*, while later than Austin, date from more than thirty years ago. This survey shows that, notwithstanding Collinge's relatively early and quite insightful 'thoughts' on the matter it has taken longer than might have been anticipated for scholars to adopt a pragmatic or functional approach to Ancient Greek. Nevertheless this survey has also shown that interest in this approach is increasing. Excluding articles from within the broad field of epistolography, a third of the material cited here has been published since 2010, the majority dates from 2000 onwards, and the remainder from the late 1990's. This holds out hope that more work along these lines can be anticipated.



PART II

Directives

DIRECTIVES IN THE PAPYRI

4.1 Introduction

It was noted in the *Introduction* that it is characteristic of letters in the archives being considered here for the writer to be seeking something from the person they are addressing—action, materials, information or some combination of these. In the broadest sense of the term, they seek to direct their recipients to undertake certain actions. Directives are therefore an appropriate place to begin. Consider the following:

*Example A*¹

8 -----
 Ἐὰν δὲ μὴ παραγένῃ, ἀναγκασθῶμεθα
 [γ]ράφειν Ἀπολλωνίῳ ὅτι μονωτάτῃ ἢ αὐτοῦ γῆ ἐν τῇ Λίμνῃ
 10 ἄβροχός ἐστιν, ἡμῶν βουλο-
 μένων πᾶσαν χορηγίαν παρέχειν.

If, however, you do not come over, we will be compelled to write to Apollonios that his land alone in the Lake district is unirrigated, even though we were willing to provide all that is needed.

*Example B*²

12 -----
 Ἀπόστειλον δὲ λιτουργοὺς ἡμῖν
 ἐν τάχει ἵνα μὴ ἐνκαταλίπωμεν ‘καὶ ἡμεῖς’.

Send us stone-masons quickly, so that we might not go away ourselves.

*Example C*³

8 -----
 Ἐὰν γὰρ αἴσθωνται
 οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι οὐθὲν ἡμᾶς εἰληφότας
 τὸν σίδηρον ἐνέχυρα θήσουσιν

¹ Extract from Text 1, (TM 2492) reproduced in full on page 83. For all examples in this chapter, details of the source and the translation are provided where the text is reproduced in full.

² Extract from Text 2 (TM 44593) reproduced in full on page 88.

³ Extract from Text 4 (TM 7647) reproduced in full on page 98.

If the men who are working realise we have not received anything, they will pawn the tools.

Example D⁴

5 -----
 Σπούδασον οὖν ἵνα καθὰ ἐξειλήφामεν [[χ...]]
 ὑπὸ Διονυσίου καὶ Διοτίμου χρηματισθῇ
 ἡμῖν καὶ μὴ τὰ ἔργα ἐνλειφθῇ καθὰ
 καὶ ἔνπροσθεν ἐγένετο.....

Do your best to make sure that, as agreed, we are supplied by Dionysios and Diotimos so that the work will not be left undone as happened before. (Emphasis added.)

Example E⁵

1 ὥς ἂν ἀναγνώις
 τὴν ἐπιστολήν, ἀπόστειλον εἰς Πτολεμαίδα
 τὰ τε ἄρμάτια καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ βαδιστικά -----

As soon as you read this letter send off to Ptolemeis the chariot and the rest of the carriage-animals

All five have something in common. They require the recipient to undertake a relatively simple task. Come and meet with us (*Example A*); send men (stone-masons) to help us (*Example B*); send us something (i.e. not the ‘nothing’ we have received to date) (*Example C*); bring influence to bear on others in our favour (*Example D*); and send off some means of transport to... (*Example E*).

To express this commonality more technically, each is an example of a directive speech act. It is clear that in uttering (writing) these words, something is being attempted such that, if the attempt is successful, the world will be different in some (albeit perhaps very small) way. It is also clear that this difference will be brought about by action taken by the recipient of a kind that the writer would welcome. In Searle’s straightforward terminology, directive speech acts are attempts by the utterer to get the recipient to do something.⁶

Despite this commonality, all five also differ in significant ways. *Example A* is a threat whose full significance and force will be discussed later, but whose nature is already

⁴ From the same text as *Example C* (that is, Text 4 (TM 7647) reproduced in full on page 98).

⁵ Extract from Text 8 TM 1536 reproduced in full on page 114.

⁶ John R. Searle, ‘A Classification of Illocutionary Acts’, *Language in Society*, 5/1 (1976), pp 1 - 23 at p 11.

clear in this extract once it is understood that the man who will be told of the recipient's lack of cooperation is very powerful. *Example B* is also a threat, but may be interpreted as a warning. (The former is the more likely as it is the writers themselves who may abandon the works, thus carrying out the threat that is implied.) *Example C* is clearly a warning. It is in some ways similar to *Example B*, but differs in that it is persons other than the writers who may take the action that is to be avoided. *Example D* is a request, and politely worded. The recipient is asked to take action but no assumption is made that the action will be successful—it is enough that he does his best. *Example E*, once it is known that the writer is in a superior social position to the recipient, is clearly an order.

Three of the five (*Examples B, D and E*) contain imperative forms of the verb, which is the form that might be expected given the usual way this form is glossed. What is of more interest is that two of the examples manage to be directive speech acts without using this form.

Finally, it must be noted that any attempt to confine language extracts into neat categories will almost certainly fail. *Example A*, as well as being a directive, is also a speech act of a different kind. It is also a 'commissive'. It serves (again, in Searle's terms) to commit the person uttering it to some future course of action.⁷ In this case, the commitment is to the action that the recipient will almost certainly perceive as something to be avoided—a threat. It is no less a commissive for that. (See also *Chapter 5, Section 5.1.1*, p 81.) Nor is it any the less a directive—a directive of a kind that Searle would call 'fierce'.⁸ Searle argues strongly elsewhere that a proposition may have a number of possible illocutionary forces,⁹ and Leech is certainly correct when he writes: 'it is pointless to attempt a rigid taxonomy of illocutionary acts'¹⁰. Language being the subtle tool that it is, on occasion more than one meaning may be conveyed simultaneously. This is such a case.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ John R. Searle, 'Austin on Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts', *Philosophical Review*, 77/4 (1968), pp 405 - 424 at p 420.

¹⁰ Geoffrey N. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, eds R. H. Robins and Martin Harris (Longman Linguistics Library; New York: Longman, 1983) at p 225.

Similarly *Example C*, as well as serving as a warning, is a prediction—a prediction about what the workmen will do once they are in possession of certain information. There is an important sense in which a warning is always in part a prediction because by its very nature it must be delivered before the events that the recipient may wish to avoid have occurred.

Example A and *Example C* will be considered in context and closely in the next chapter. Before proceeding to a detailed analysis however, there is more to be considered with respect to the nature of directive speech acts—‘directives’ for short. There are important factors to be borne in mind when seeking to analyse directives—factors likely to add significantly to our understanding of them, and factors that can prevent us being led astray by adopting explanations too simple for the purpose.

4.2 Directive speech acts

4.2.1 A ‘Definition’

As is apparent from the above discussion, it is of the essence of a directive that there exists a situation in which a speaker/writer wishes to bring about a certain state of affairs, communicates this wish by some appeal to a recipient, and expects that the recipient will act promptly to fulfil this wish.¹¹ It will be readily apparent that these elements extend beyond the linguistic code. ‘Directive’, so defined, is a pragmatic concept. This does not mean that directives are unmarked in grammatical forms. It does mean that any grammatical marking that suggests a directive must, in addition, be considered from a pragmatic point of view if its force is to be evaluated. It also means that directives may be found in the absence of explicit code markers.

¹¹ Caterina Mauri and Andrea Sansò, 'How Directive Constructions Emerge: Grammaticalization, Constructionalization, Cooptation', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43 (2011), pp 3489 - 3521 at p 3491.

4.2.2 Kinds of directive

There are many kinds of directive. Considerable research has been undertaken into this variety, both in modern linguistics and in a number of studies of classical languages.¹²

Many of these studies use the word ‘imperative’ in their title, or freely throughout. This is not surprising. It can, however, be misleading. A command (or order), perhaps the paradigmatic directive, is usually issued in the imperative mood, and mood is generally distinguishable in Ancient Greek (and other languages) through its morphology alone.¹³ Yet in addition to commands and prohibitions, the imperative is used for a wide range of purposes, including, as Smyth notes, requests, entreaties, summons, prescriptions, and exhortations.¹⁴ All of these have a directive purpose in that they seek to bring about a change in the behaviour, or at least in the thinking, with long term implications for the behaviour, of the addressee. They are not, however, the kind of speech act that comes readily to mind in association with the term ‘imperative’.

Moreover, the above does not exhaust the range of ways in which directives may be expressed. Ancient Greek, again along with other languages, can express commands in

¹² Relevant works include: Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald, *Imperatives and Commands*, eds Ronnie Cann et al. (Oxford Studies in Typology and Linguistic Theory; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Chapter 8 of T. Givón, *Syntax: A Functional-Typological Introduction* (Volume II; Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1990); passages in Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978 1987(re-issue)); Camille Denizot, *Donner des ordres en grec ancien. Etude linguistique des formes de l'injonction* (Mont-Saint-Aignan: Presses universitaire de Rouen et du Havre, 2011), Rodie Risselada, *Imperatives and other Directive Expressions in Latin: A Study in the pragmatics of a dead language* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1993); Martti Leiwo, 'Imperatives and Other Directives in the Greek Letters from Mons Claudianus', in T. V. Evans and D.D. Obbink (eds.), *The Language of the Papyri* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp 97-119.

¹³ Smyth (Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Gordon M. Messing Revised edn.; U.S.A.: Harvard University Press, 1984) at §1759.) declares that ‘Mood designates by the form of the verb the mode or manner (modus) in which *the speaker conceives* of an assertion concerning the subject’ (emphasis added). While this statement is essentially correct, a full understanding of the matter requires a consideration of Austin’s notion of ‘uptake’. As well as being conceived of as an order, for example, an utterance must also be perceived as such by the person who reads/hears it. Much certainly depends on the user’s purpose, but the context, including the reader’s/hearer’s expectations and response is also vitally important. Austin makes the point succinctly and forcefully when he writes: ‘[T]hus we can say “I argue that” or “I warn you that” but we cannot say “I convince you that” or “I alarm you that”’ Austin, J. L. (1975), *How to Do Things with Words* (*The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*) (2nd edn.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976) pp 103 – 104.

¹⁴ Palmer helpfully adds ‘...to give permission or advice’. F. R. Palmer, *Mood and Modality*, eds S. R. Anderson et al. (2nd edn., Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p 80.

a range of ways not requiring the imperative form of the verb.¹⁵ Aikhenvald presents a rich collection of examples of directives in all sorts of formats, including World War I recruiting posters, wordless signs, and charts (for example, to promote ‘good manners’ in children).¹⁶ Similarly, Leiwo, whose focus is on Ancient Greek, and indeed on a particular subset of Ancient Greek papyri, identifies at least seven types of directive speech act in his language sample.¹⁷ It is for reasons such as these that Denizot, in her investigation into the giving of orders in Ancient Greek, abandoned a semantic approach in favour of a pragmatic approach.¹⁸ As she points out, in agreement with Aikhenvald, it is sometimes not even necessary to use a verb to issue a command.¹⁹

Smyth’s categories (above) of requests, entreaties, summons, prescriptions, and exhortations, together with the examples collected by Aikhenvald, are as much directive speech acts as are parade ground orders. It is important to distinguish between the use of the term ‘directive’ by linguists, and the connotation this term has, in English at least, of forcefulness and abruptness. These directives also vary considerably as to the implied relationship between the addressor and the addressee. A further brief illustration from the papyri drives home this point.

Example F²⁰

7 Γράφε δ’ ἡμῖν καὶ σὺ ἵνα εἰδῶ-
μεν ἐν οἷς εἶ καὶ μὴ ἀγωνιῶμεν. Ἐπιμέλου δὲ καὶ σαυτοῦ ὅπως
ὑγιαίνῃς καὶ πρὸς ἡ-
μᾶς ἐρρωμένος ἔλθῃς.

Do write us yourself also, so that we may know how you are and so that we do not worry. Take care of yourself that you may be well and that you may come to us in good health.

The last two sentences in this letter to Kleon, from his son Polycrates, both start with an imperative (γράφει and ἐπιμέλου). Yet both serve as very polite expressions of care

¹⁵ Smyth, *Greek Grammar* at §1803 §1820 §1917 §1936 §1957 §2013. See also Evert Van Emde Boas and Luuk Huitink, 'Syntax', in Egbert J. Bakker (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp 134 - 150 at p 138.

¹⁶ Aikhenvald, *Imperatives and Commands*, Chapter 9.

¹⁷ Leiwo, 'Imperatives and Other Directives in the Greek Letters from Mons Claudianus'.

¹⁸ Denizot, *Donner des ordres en grec ancien* at pp 20 - 25. At page 22, Denizot writes: *L'acte directif est donc caractérisé par une variété sémantique qui peut être étudiée, mais qui ne peut servir de base à une définition de l'injonction...*

¹⁹ Denizot identifies several examples in French utilising adverbs of manner or time, adjectives as well as other examples that would work equally well in English. (For example, if issued in an appropriate tone of voice, single word utterances such as 'Now!' or 'Silence!' serve very well as directives.) Ibid., p 41.

²⁰ Extract from Text 15 (TM 7667) reproduced in full on page 137.

and concern. While certainly somewhat formulaic, given their placement at the conclusion of a letter, the request ‘to write to us’, is somewhat more than conventional, and suggests a degree of sincerity. What is beyond doubt is that these imperatives lack entirely the common dictionary sense of an authoritative instruction. (In this case the term ‘precative’ seems fitting.²¹)

4.2.3 *Directives and power*

As already indicated, directives assume certain relationships between addresser and addressee. One of the most important of these is power relations. This is most apparent in the case of a command. To be able to issue a command, X must be in a position of authority—the nature of which will vary between and within individual societies—over Y. In fact, an utterance can only be considered a command ‘in virtue of the authority’ of X over Y.²²

Yet one must proceed carefully here. Jakobson’s model (*Chapter 2*, p 23) reminds us, it is always important to take into account the part played by the recipient of any utterance—the addressee—in any instance of language use. It is one thing to believe oneself to be in a position of power. It is nevertheless another equally important thing for that power to be recognised. By way of illustration, I will only show identification documents to you if I know and accept that you hold a position of legitimate authority relevant to that request. Most contemporary societies recognise this issue and solve the problem by putting personnel, such as police or customs officers, who have this legitimate authority, into a uniform. Even then, there are further contextual constraints. There are limits, certainly prior to my being arrested, even as to what a police officer may legitimately ask me to produce.

Someone who issues a threat must, if they are to be successful, also have a degree of power or agency sufficient to ensure that what is threatened takes place. While the power they hold may not, as in the above example, be formally recognised, or even

²¹ Leiwo, ‘Imperatives and Other Directives in the Greek Letters from Mons Claudianus’, p 98.

²² John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p 65.

considered legitimate, it is necessary all the same. Moreover, that they hold this power must be recognised by the addressee. In *Example A* above, Kleon must accept that a letter from Panakestor will be treated credibly by Apollonios.

Similarly someone who issues a warning, at the least should possess information of material significance to the recipient. In *Example B* does Kleon believe the workmen will leave the work or are they more likely to be afraid of the consequences of such action and so be bluffing?

Nor can advice, at least if it is to be taken up, either be given by or accepted from just anybody. Lastly, complaints and pleas assume the person performing these speech acts is, or is prepared to be, at least to some extent dependent upon the person addressed.²³

Lastly, there are clearly many circumstances in which someone with little or no social power will wish to direct the behaviour of those with great power. That we would usually use a word other than ‘direct’ in this context, preferring persuade or even plead, does not change this. Of particular interest in this regard, and a class of speech act that has received no little attention in the study of the papyri, are petitions. Objection may be taken to the use of the term ‘directive’ in relation to a speech act which is clearly made from a position of weakness. It is true that a petition is, *prima facie*, less likely to bring about a change of behaviour than say a request directed to a friend. It is also true that a petitioner has little explicit power. Yet because of well-established social and political convention, the very process of lodging a formal petition provides a certain amount of power. A petitioner cannot be ignored entirely. In the modern world it is not uncommon to refer to a ‘right’ to petition.²⁴ In many societies, including, 3rd century B.C.E. Egypt, individuals could confidently seek to direct the more powerful members of their society by following a formally sanctioned process—submitting a petition— even if, ultimately, their request was not granted. Petitions are discussed in *Chapter 8*.

²³ Givón, in this regard, refers to a ‘speech act continuum’. This is in contrast to what he describes as traditional speech act analysis that stresses discrete functional entities that may nevertheless sometimes be used for other purposes. Givón, *Syntax: A Functional-Typological Introduction*, p 814.

²⁴ The Parliament of Australia, for example, is at pains to remind readers that ‘*the right of petitioning the Crown and Parliament for redress of grievances dates back to the reign of King Edward I in the 13th century*’. Parliament of Australia (2015), ‘Infosheet 11 - Petitions’ http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/Powers_practice_and_procedure/00_-_Infosheets/Infosheet_11_-_Petitions, accessed 29 May 2015.

4.2.4 Directives and politeness

Given the wide variety of directives identified above, it is unsurprising that not all directive speech acts rely solely on the power held by the utterer for their success. Consider, for example, requests. Two things are central to the concept of ‘request’. It is the act of asking for something in a manner that is polite, in accordance with the standards of the particular society and, in some cases at least, it is formal in nature.²⁵

With respect to politeness in language, some of the complexities involved were outlined in *Chapter 2, Section 2.3.5*, p 37. It is well to begin with a relatively simple example. I may request many things of a friend, perhaps that they accompany me to dinner or lend me something they own. In cases like this we would both take for granted that such a request would be framed politely, in accordance with the standards of the society in which we live. The more my request imposes upon my friend, the more polite I am likely to be. Equally, the more distant our relationship, the more polite I will be.

If I get this wrong, and my request lacks sufficient politeness to meet conventional expectations, it is likely to be considered a ‘demand’. In making a demand, someone who lacks the formal authority to issue orders arrogates such power to him or herself anyway. They may write/speak in a manner that is perceived as peremptory, that resembles an order issued by someone of higher status, and that is cast in a style that does not allow for non-compliance. Most people do not make this kind of mistake in ordinary everyday interchanges, as rules of politeness in this regard are widely understood.

²⁵ The Macquarie Dictionary (4th edition) for example gives as its first definition of ‘petition’: ‘a formally drawn-up request, often signed by a large number of people, addressed to a person or a body of persons in authority or power, soliciting some favour, right, mercy, or other benefit’. The ‘formal’ element of a request is not immediately relevant to this discussion. That this is important however is widely recognised. Institutions, such as universities, make it clear how to go about making a ‘polite request’. A student, and not his or her friend or parent, may request that their assignment grade be reviewed, and must ‘submit’ (the term is a significant marker of formal roles) their request to the course convener (not, in the first instance anyway, to the head of school). This is a situation where the request is ‘formal’ in the sense that how it may be done, by whom and to whom, is in some way prescribed by a set of publicly available rules.

Sometimes, however, how one can be polite is less clear. No doubt Oliver Twist's famous fictional attempt to fill his belly in Charles Dickens' eponymous novel—'Please sir, I want some more?'—was polite enough in form and no doubt intended to be so. It contains the polite marker 'please' the honorific of respect 'sir' and the tentative form of a question. It is hard to suggest how it might be made more polite in form. It was nevertheless judged to be outrageously bold to the point of impertinence by the authority figure in the scenario, Mr Bumble. This is an illustration that the relative power of the parties involved in an interchange will significantly influence the politeness strategies adopted.²⁶ Sometimes politeness strategies will not be sufficient to ensure that these power differences are overcome. The desired speech act—the request, or other directive—will not be effected. Oliver's request is also excellent evidence, fictional as it may be, in support of the observation made by Fraser and Nolen that 'no sentence is inherently polite or impolite'.²⁷

Power relations may even cause a speech act that is not intended as a directive, to be perceived as such by an addressee who is overly eager to please the addresser. This is illustrated by the probably apocryphal quote attributed to Henry II of England in regard to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket: '[W]ho will rid me of this turbulent priest?' Whatever Henry said (probably in a rage and certainly not in English), some followers interpreted his words—words that do not, out of context, fit readily into anyone's concept a request, let alone an order—as a command, and murdered the archbishop.²⁸

The force of this example does not lie in its historical accuracy. Rather it has survived in dictionaries of quotations because of the horrible consequences of its misinterpretation. It may indeed be preferable to consider it, as would Kurzon, as a speech act of 'incitement', even if perhaps unintended incitement, rather than seeing it

²⁶ Jeremy King, 'Power and Indirectness in Business Correspondence: Petitions in Colonial Louisiana Spanish', *Journal of Politeness Research*, 7 (2011), pp 259 - 283 at p 261 ff.

²⁷ Bruce Fraser and William Nolen, 'The Association of Deference with Linguistic Form', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 27 (1981), pp 93-109 at p 96. They proceed to state: '[W]e often take certain expressions to be impolite, but it is not the expressions themselves but the conditions under which they are used that determines the judgment of politeness'.

²⁸ Dennis Kurzon, 'The speech act status of incitement: Perlocutionary acts revisited', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 29 (1998), pp 571 - 596 at p 590.

as an order or request.²⁹ Yet it remains easy to understand that a loyal subject of Henry might interpret this question as an indirect order because of the powerful position of the king and an eagerness in the subject to gain credit in the king's eyes.

4.2.5 *The relationship between power and politeness in directives*

According to Steen, ancient Greek rhetoricians discouraged the use of the imperative in the opening of a speech, a time when it is usual to try to make a good impression on the audience, and certainly not a time when one would wish to be impolite.³⁰ This approach takes for granted that there is a scale of absolute politeness and that on this scale, some illocutions, such as orders, are inherently impolite, whereas others, such as offers, inherently polite.³¹ It would lead us to expect that letters sent by writers of considerable power, such as Panakestor, would be direct and probably impolite, whereas requests, especially those to people in more powerful positions, would use indirect expressions and many markers of politeness.

There is reason to believe that this is a mistake. There is not a straightforward inverse relationship between power and politeness. It is not the case that the less power addressers have, the more polite will be any directive they issue. Brown and Levinson present evidence, for example, that in situations of social equality—where neither party holds more power than the other, or, in the case of parents who do hold power over their children—a high degree of care is taken to be polite. They also present evidence that English speakers are very reluctant, among equals and within families, to make direct requests, preferring more indirect forms such as suggestions and hints. They declare, in their own terminology, that orders are ‘extreme FTAs’ (face-threatening acts) in Western cultures and consequently much to be avoided even when, as in the case of parent/child interactions, they would, *prima facie*, be expected.³² Aikhenvald has shown

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Henry A. Steen (1938), 'Les clichés épistolaires dans les lettres sur papyrus grecques', *Classica et Mediaevalia*, I, pp 119 - 176 at pp 123 - 125.

³¹ Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, pp 83 - 84. In fairness to Leech, it should be noted that he also acknowledges the existence of what he calls ‘relative politeness’ and develops a more sophisticated model of politeness than this short reference would indicate.

³² ‘In English, for example, conventionalized indirect requests are so common that it is rare to hear a completely direct request even between equals.....’ Brown and Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*, p 248.

that this is also true of a number of other languages,³³ but this does not make it universally true.

Moreover, cross-cultural linguistic studies suggest the relationship is even more complex than this would suggest. Direct imperatives may sometimes be perceived to be polite, while the most indirect of linguistic strategies may be perceived to be impolite. A balance between the need for linguistic clarity, and the need not to be perceived as coercive, is necessary for politeness.³⁴

Of considerable interest for this thesis is a study that examined 18th century business correspondence in Louisiana (in the Spanish language). King found that while there was a tendency for superiors to use direct requests, and inferiors indirect ones, a significant portion of the interactions recorded did not conform to this pattern.³⁵ Some confirmation of this finding is shown in this thesis.

4.3 Concluding remarks

This chapter is in some ways an extension of the introduction. It has nevertheless been a necessary preliminary. It has demonstrated that to venture an examination of directive speech acts in any context is to examine a very wide range of socio-linguistic interactions. It has also demonstrated that one should enter into any such investigation with as few preconceptions as possible.³⁶ A consideration of the relative power of each party to a piece of correspondence is unavoidable, as is consideration of the apparent politeness strategies adopted. Quite what this consideration might demonstrate in any given linguistic context should not be prejudged.

³³ Aikhenvald, *Imperatives and Commands*.

³⁴ Shoshana Blum-Kulka, 'Indirectness and Politeness in Requests: Same or Different?', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 11 (1987), pp 131 - 146.

³⁵ King, Jeremy, 'Power and indirectness in business correspondence: Petitions in Colonial Louisiana Spanish', *Journal of Politeness Research*, 7 (2011), pp 259 - 283.

³⁶ Vine's study is an important warning about the need to avoid preconceptions. It documents the complexity of context factors affecting how directives are used even by those in clearly defined positions of authority. Bernadette Vine, 'Directives at work: Exploring the contextual complexity of workplace directives', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41 (2009), pp 1395 - 1405.

The researcher, in this respect at least, shares some of the challenges faced by the ancient correspondents themselves. They too needed to proceed with caution. Like the author of a modern letter (including an email) they were addressing a person who was not physically present. They were not in a position to modify or amend what they said in response to their addressee's reactions, either immediate or more considered. They were no doubt very aware that a letter's power to elicit the desired action might be undermined if it provoked a negative response by omitting expected formulae or seeming in other ways to be impolite.³⁷

Attempting to direct another person to behave in a particular way by letter, is to undertake a very complex sociolinguistic act. It will shortly be shown that in many cases the writers whose letters are preserved in the archives under consideration here have set about this task, and chosen options appropriate to their purposes, with considerable skill and subtlety. Moreover this is true not only of those with a high level of education or socio-economic status, but of correspondents whose background and position in an ancient society would not lead one to expect them to have benefitted from much education.³⁸

Finally, this section has identified something of the wide range of directive speech acts undertaken in any language. A comprehensive consideration of them all is beyond the scope of this thesis.³⁹ The next four chapters will consider some of the more interesting

³⁷ It is well-established that certain formulaic greetings and conclusions were characteristic of the letters of this period. See John L. White, 'The Greek Documentary Letter Tradition Third Century B.C.E. to Third Century C.E.', *Semeia*, 22 (1982), pp 89 - 106.

³⁸ In this and following chapters, where letters sent by people whose education was certainly limited are analysed, it may seem that I am assuming them to have crafted their words with all the skill and knowledge of a Demosthenes. This would be a mistake. They clearly lacked such learning. Yet, and this belief informs what follows, all native speakers of any language use it with more skill than they can articulate. Rhetorical skill existed long before its elements were observed and written down by the early rhetoricians, and it frequently existed in the absence of formal education. In Roberts' lapidary words, there is a great difference between 'the methods by which the artist composes and the analyst decomposes, between the method of life and the method of dissolution...' (W. Rhys Roberts, *Demetrius on Style: The Greek Text of Demetrius De Elocutione Edited after the Paris Manuscript* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1902 (1969 reprint)), p 41.) When it comes to the use of language to achieve purposes of vital personal importance to them, there is more of the artist in the common man or woman than is commonly realised.

³⁹ An indication of the extent of the number that may be identifiable, depending upon the criteria used, is apparent from the fact that no fewer than 41 types of style in letters are listed in Pseudo Libanius (4th–6th centuries C.E.). Many of these we would now label 'speech acts'. Abraham J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, (Society of Biblical Literature: Sources for Biblical Study, Number 19; Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988), pp 67 - 81.

examples of directive speech acts to be found in the papyri. These include threats and warnings (*Chapter 5*), orders (*Chapter 6*), requests (*Chapter 7*), and petitions and petitioning (*Chapter 8*).

THREATS AND WARNINGS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1. *Threats - preliminary remarks*

A threat, either implicitly or explicitly, refers to negative consequences for its intended recipient, usually with the proviso that if the recipients take certain action these consequences can be avoided. These negative consequences are usually within the control of the person who utters the threat.

In most societies, a threat is morally repugnant. Laws take a dim view of threats and to utter one in most social contexts is likely to provoke indignation. At base threats are straightforwardly aggressive and may be designed to frighten.¹ They are certainly not polite, although they may be wrapped up in polite formulae.

It follows that we would expect threats to be used sparingly. Writers in a powerful social position may often have the motive and the capacity to threaten recipients in some way. Yet they may refrain. Threatening is, so to speak, a ‘high stakes’ activity.

A threat is also more than just a directive speech act. It is also a commissive speech act.² Those who utter a threat must be prepared to follow through with the action to which it commits them. In this respect a threat is very close to the defining example of a ‘commissive’—a ‘promise’. There are however, differences that make it more appropriate to consider it here, along with other directives, rather than later in the thesis

¹ Franck Nicoloff, 'Threats and illocutions', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 13 (1989), pp 501 – 522, at pp 505 - 508.

² John R. Searle, 'A Classification of Illocutionary Acts', *Language in Society*, 5/1 (1976), pp 1-23 at p 11. Searle acknowledges Austin here (J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words (the William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955)* (2nd edn.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976). Leech also identifies ‘threat’ as a commissive: Geoffrey N. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, eds R. H. Robiins and Martin Harris (Longman Linguistics Library; New York: Longman, 1983), p 217.

where commissive speech acts such as promises are discussed.³ One difference lies in how congenial or otherwise the action would be to the receiver.⁴ Another is that a promise may be made unconditionally whereas a threat is rarely so made. Most importantly however, as noted in the second paragraph above, there is an aggressive, all-or-nothing quality about a threat—a determination to ensure that the recipient acts in the way the person making the threat wants them to act—that its directive nature becomes paramount.

If writers with considerable power may refrain from making threats, occasions when writers with less power seek to persuade others—especially others with greater power—to a course of actions by this means are very interesting indeed. As already emphasised, to make a threat implies the possession of a degree of power. If that power does not arise from the respective social positions of the two parties, then locating where it lies is likely to be informative. The language used in such circumstances may also contain features of distinctive interest. For example, there is evidence for contemporary English, that writers, when seeking to change the opinion of a superior, resort to a range of openly rhetorical strategies and not infrequently breach conventions of politeness.⁵

5.1.2 Warnings - preliminary remarks

Warnings share with threats a statement, however blunt or subtle, the fact that something the recipient finds undesirable will occur if the recipient takes no relevant action. As noted in the previous section, with a threat, the addresser commits to bringing about these negative consequences. In a warning, action taken by others, or certain impersonal events, such as flooding, are predicted. One way of considering a warning is as a special case of prediction. The events predicted are of such negative import for the recipient that the predictive element is generally disregarded. The ‘force’ of the utterance places the focus on the negative events.

³ Commissive speech acts are discussed in *Chapter 11*.

⁴ F. R. Palmer, *Mood and Modality*, eds S. R. Anderson et al. (2nd edn., Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p 72.

⁵ Roger D. Cherry, 'Politeness in written persuasion', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 12 (1988), pp 63 - 81.

While a threat is an unfriendly act, to warn someone may sometimes be perceived as friendly. Warnings carry with them the (often only superficial) sense that the persons who issue them are aligning themselves in some way with the recipients and helping them avoid some unpleasantness they may not have foreseen. Much depends on the manner in which the warning is issued and the prior relationship between the parties. The closer the relationship the more likely it is that the warning will be taken as ‘friendly’. Nevertheless, even here, parents who warn their child of, for example, the dangers of alcohol, may not always find ready acceptance. The warning issued in lieu of a charge by a police officer is generally not considered to be ‘friendly’, however preferable it may be to its alternative.

5.1.3 Threats, warnings, and social and linguistic diversity

It follows from the above discussion that threats and warnings are likely to be relatively uncommon in any corpus of correspondence. One might expect that they will be found only in letters penned by those of relatively high status in the society represented in that correspondence. It is therefore of considerable interest to note that this is only partly true. Threats and warnings can be found in letters from a number of levels in society.

5.2 Threats

5.2.1 A threat from on high

There is, I believe, no better example in these archives of a threat from a man of power than the well-preserved letter from Panakestor, manager of the estate of the dioiketes, Apollonios, to Kleon (**TEXT 1**). (An extract from this letter was used in *Chapter 4, Section 4.1*, p 67, as *Example A*.)

TEXT 1

TM 2492 (Van Beek 17)

Panakestor expresses disappointment that Kleon did not respond to his request to send men to carry out certain work and threatens to report the circumstances to Apollonios, holding Kleon to blame for a lack of irrigation of Apollonios’ land.

Recto

1 Πανακέστωρ Κλέωνι χ[αί]ρειν. ἀπεστείλαμέν σοι καὶ [τ]ῇ πθ
ὅπως ἂν ἀπο-
στείλῃς πλήρῳμα ὃ κατασκ[ευ]ῶι τοὺς ἀγκῶνας τῆς μικρᾶς

διώρυγος. Σὺ δὲ φαίνει
 παρεληλυθέναι εἰς τὴν μικρὰ[ν] λίμνην. Οὐκ ἔδει μὲν οὖν σε
 π[α]ραπορεύεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ
 πρὸς ἡμᾶς παραβαλεῖν ὥρ[α]ς μόριον καὶ τεθεαμένον σε μὴ
 βρεχομένην τὴν γῆν, ἐπερωτῆσαι
 5 [δι]ὰ τίν' αἰτίαν οὐ βρέχ[ο]μεν. Οὐ γὰρ[ρ] μόνον τέταξαι τὴν
 μικρὰν λίμνην ἀρχιτεκτονεῖν
 [ἀλλὰ] καὶ ταύτην. Ἔτι οὖν κα[ὶ] γῆ[ν] συνάντησον ἡμῖν αὖριον
 ἐπὶ τὴν ἄφ[ε]σιν καὶ ἀρχιτεκ<τ>ό-
 [νη]σο[ν] ὥς δεῖ τὸ ὕδωρ ἀγκω[νί]ζειν· ἡμεῖς γὰρ[ρ] ἄπειροί ἐσμεν.
 Σώματα δὲ κα[ὶ] τὴν λοιπὴν
 [χο]ρηγίαν ἡμεῖς παρέξομέν σοι, ὅ[ση]ν ἂν συντάσσης. Ἐὰν δὲ
 μὴ παραγένηι, ἀναγκασθισόμεθα
 [γ]ράφειν Ἀπολλωνίῳ ὅτι μονωτάτῃ ἢ αὐτοῦ γῆ ἐν τῇ Λίμνῃ
 10 ἄβροχός ἐστιν, ἡμῶν βουλο-
 μένων πᾶσαν χορηγίαν παρέχειν.
 ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) κθ Μεσορῇ κα.

Panakestor to Kleon, greetings. We sent you a letter on the 29th, so that you would send out a gang to construct the bends of the small canal. But you seem to have passed by on your way to the Little Lake. You should not have gone past, but rather come by us for a moment and, having seen for yourself that the land is not irrigated, asked yourself the reason why we do not irrigate. You have not been appointed only to be commissioner of works at the Little Lake, but also of this (land). Even now, come to meet us tomorrow at the sluice and give instructions on how the water is to be conducted into side channels, for we have no experience. Workmen and other supplies, we will provide for you, as much as you instruct. If, however, you do not come over, we will be compelled to write to Apollonios that his land alone in the Lake district is unirrigated, even though we were willing to provide all that is needed. farewell. year 29, mesore 21

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 71 (Modified).

This is a remarkable letter that deserves extended attention. Clarysse observes that it provides evidence for the difficulties Panakestor faced as he sought to organise the estate of Apollonios.⁶ It is also possible to take a less sympathetic view of Panakestor's, or perhaps Apollonios' attempts to ensure their concerns receive priority. The letter has been described as one example, among others, of 'importunate demands for preferential treatment'.⁷ To have been prepared to write such a strong letter certainly suggests that bringing about a change in Kleon's behaviour was very important to Panakestor.⁸

⁶ W. Clarysse in P. W. Pestman, *Greek and Demotic Texts from the Zenon Archive: (P.L. Bat. 20)*, 2 vols. (Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980), p 268.

⁷ Naphtali Lewis, *Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt: Case Studies in the Social History of the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p 43.

⁸ Rostovtzeff offers the intriguing suggestion that: '[S]uch conflicts between Panakestor and the administration were probably the reason for his being replaced by Zenon'. Michael Rostovtzeff, *A Large Estate in Egypt in the Third Century B. C.*, (New York: Arno Press, 1922 (1979 reprint)), p 67. It seems unlikely however, given the limited nature of our sources, that this suggestion will ever be either confirmed or disproved.

Whichever view one inclines to, from the point of view of this thesis, what immediately attracts attention is the final sentence prior to the closing salutation—lines 8 – 10.

To tell Kleon that he (Panakestor) will write to Apollonios advising that his land remains unirrigated and making sure that he understands that it is Kleon and not Panakestor who is to blame for this, is no small threat. Moreover Panakestor makes it clear in the linguistic form that he adopts, that he will carry out this threat. The compulsion he will be under (ἀναγκασθησόμεθα) to report the matter to Apollonios is expressed in the future indicative (passive), the so-called ‘more vivid’ conditional form.⁹ One ought not, however, make too much of this. Too close attention to the grammar can blind us to other more significant factors. Apollonios was one of the most powerful man in the kingdom outside the royal court and would not have taken kindly to being singled out in such a way that his economic interests were harmed by lack of irrigation. It is knowledge of this state of affairs and the near certainty that Kleon would not wish to incur the disfavour of such a man that ensures the minatory force of this sentence.¹⁰ We depend on context to communicate meaning more often, arguably, than we depend on the linguistic shape of a sentence.¹¹ Moreover the threat in this case is intensified by the last clause in the sentence suggesting as it does that Kleon’s failure to irrigate the land of Apollonios was in some way wilful. It is implied that he had no excuse, given the willingness of Panakestor and his associates to assist. Panakestor relies on circumstances rather than linguistic form to ensure Kleon’s ‘inferential recovery of speakers’ intentions’.¹² It seems incontrovertible here that the

⁹ Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Gordon M. Messing Revised edn.; U.S.A.: Harvard University Press, 1984), §2297 and §2321).

¹⁰ Wakker points to examples of the subjunctive and the optative being used both as deterrents and inducements. G. C. Wakker, *Conditions and Conditionals: An Investigation of Ancient Greek*, (Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology; Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1994), p 194. For another argument against relying on features of surface structure to determine the force of an utterance see Richard A. Young, 'A Classification of Conditional Sentences Based on Speech Act Theory', *Grace Theological Journal*, 10/1 (1989), pp 29 - 49.

¹¹ Marilyn M. Cooper, 'Context as Vehicle: Implicatures in Writing', in Martin Nystrand (ed.), *What Writers Know: The Language, Process, and Structure of Written Discourse* (London: Academic Press, Inc, 1982), (especially) p 119.

¹² Stephen C. Levinson, *Presumptive Meanings: The Theory of Generalized Conversational Implicature* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 2000), p 29.

circumstances require Kleon to take action or suffer unpleasant consequences.¹³ To express this more formally in terms of speech act theory, it is the circumstances as outlined in this paragraph that ensure Kleon's 'uptake'¹⁴ of the message Panakestor is sending him.

This threat, including the suggestion that Kleon has only himself to blame, follows upon a series of other speech acts which have the effect of confronting Kleon in a manner that he would find difficult to ignore. His individual responsibility is emphasised from the very beginning of this letter. After the salutation, in the first sentence of the body of the letter, Kleon is reminded that this communication is following up an earlier request (Ἀπεστείλαμέν σοι ... (line 1)). While on the surface this is a reminder, or even a topic sentence to clarify what follows, in context (yet again) it might more properly be interpreted as a rebuke. Certainly by the time he has heard the full contents of the letter, Kleon is likely to have believed it to be so.

Kleon is then told, sentence by sentence, in initially mild terms (although even in this regard conventional modifying expressions of politeness such as those identified by Steen are noticeable for their absence) but with increasing directness, what he should or should not have done, and why. The mild, almost conversational tone of the second sentence - 'you seem to have passed by' (...Σὺ δὲ|φαίνει παρεληλυθέναι... (lines 2 - 3)), is shown by the context not to be so mild at all. It is not an everyday remark so much as over-politeness to the point of irony.¹⁵

By the third sentence any hint of politeness has passed and Kleon is being told quite explicitly what he should have done (...Οὐκ ἔδει μὲν οὖν σε παραπορεύεσθαι ἀλλὰ

¹³ Wakker and Young (see footnote §10 above) both adopt what Brown and Yule have characterised as a 'top-down' approach to processing meaning—that is, relying upon context and the general direction of a piece of prose rather than a 'bottom up' approach—working out a sentence's meaning from its semantic and syntactic context. Gillian Brown and George Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, eds B. Comrie et al. (Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp 234 - 236.

¹⁴ Austin, *How to Do Things with Words (the William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955)*, p 117.

¹⁵ An instance of politeness serving to hide 'the iron fist in a velvet glove' Arin Bayraktaroğlu and Maria Sifianou, 'The iron fist in a velvet glove: How politeness can contribute to impoliteness', *Journal of Politeness Research*, 8 (2012), pp 143 - 160.

καὶ | πρὸς ἡμᾶς παραβαλεῖν ὥρας μόνιον καὶ τεθεαμένον σε μὴ βρεχομένην τὴν γῆν, ἐπερωτῆσαι | διὰ τίν' αἰτίαν οὐ βρέχομεν.... (lines 3 - 5)). This is no mere suggestion. It is not qualified by any conditional to the effect that it would have been better if he had done these things, or that Panakestor or Apollonios would have been pleased by these actions. The sentence is simply blunt assertion.¹⁶

The fourth sentence states why he should have carried out these actions. (...Οὐ γὰρ μόνον τέταξαι τὴν μικρὰν λίμνην ἀρχιτεκτονεῖν | ἀλλὰ καὶ ταύτην.... (lines 5 - 6)). His responsibilities extend beyond the 'little lake'. It is rare to tell someone what their job is without the negative implication that they have neglected some aspect of it. This is certainly the case when committed to writing. Once again then, the speech act is that of rebuke.

In the sixth sentence Kleon is given an opportunity to make good the situation. Cast grammatically as an imperative (Ἔτι οὖν καὶ νῦν συνάντησον αὐτόν.... (line 6)) and given what precedes and follows, pragmatically there can be no doubt that the sentence is an order.

Concentrating on the individual speech acts in these sentences that together form this threat makes clear an important pragmatic feature of this letter. Omitting the salutations there are only seven sentences in total, yet the second person pronoun appears no fewer than four times (as set out above), twice in the third sentence, which is the most direct of all in style. While each example is of little significance by itself, the cumulative effect is substantial. It is not Kleon's team of workmen or his office that is being held to account. If that were the case the plural form of the personal pronoun would have served. Kleon is being challenged personally about his individual actions.

The repetitions of the personal pronoun are a little too far apart to form an anaphora. Yet they are central to the letter's rhetorical force. Of the three divisions of rhetoric identified by Aristotle as ἥθος, λόγος and πάθος, the appeal to πάθος here is

¹⁶ In Brown and Levinson's terminology, the statement is 'bald-on-record', with the implication that the speaker/writer is in a more powerful position than the addressee. Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p 228.

overwhelming.¹⁷ Panakestor seeks to persuade Kleon by arousing in him the emotion of fear. The more often the letter refers to ‘you’, the more forcefully the threat, when it finally comes, of what a dissatisfied, powerful man might do to Kleon is forcefully brought home to him.

It is a letter exceptionally well-crafted for its purpose, designed, pragmatically, to produce an instant response in its recipient. It is careless of any mitigating circumstances or hurt feelings, yet not lacking in subtlety. Even in issuing his threat, Panakestor hints that he regrets having to be so forthright.¹⁸ He does not simply write that he will inform Apollonios of Kleon’s inaction. He writes, in the passive voice, that ‘he will be forced’ to inform Apollonios. It is as if he wants to position himself, finally, as writing more in sorrow than in anger.¹⁹ One may assume that Panakestor believes he will need to deal with Kleon in future and does not want to create a rift with him that is wider than necessary.

5.2.2 Threats from below

Another letter to Kleon that can be construed as a threat is **TEXT 2**. (An extract served as *Example B* in *Chapter 4, Section 4.1*, p 67.

TEXT 2

TM 44593 (Van Beek 50)

Stone-cutters from Pasontis write to Kleon seeking labourers to assist them in their work. They draw attention to their isolation and lack of bread, and threaten to leave if the assistance they seek is not forthcoming quickly.

Recto

- 1 [Κλέ]ωνι χαίρειν οἱ λατόμοι οἱ ἐν Πάστωντι
[ἐρ]γαζόμενοι. (vac.) [[α]] Παρελάβομεν π[αρ]ὰ σοῦ
τὰς πέτρους ἐν Τιτνούει ‘καὶ’ λελατόμητ[α] ἤδη.
Νυνὶ δὲ ἀργοῦμεν διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν σώμ[α]τα
5 ὥστε ἀνακαθᾶραι τὴν ἄμμον τὴν ἐπάνω

¹⁷ A useful discussion of ἦθος and πάθος is found in Christopher Carey, ‘Rhetorical means of persuasion’, in Ian Worthington (ed.), *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

¹⁸ Similar to earlier in the letter: .Σὺ δὲ...

φαίνεται παρεληλυθέναι... (l. 2-3) ‘You seem to have passed us by...’

¹⁹ Baratta discusses the use of the passive voice to reveal, whether intentionally or not, something of the author’s stance, in contemporary English. Alexander M. Baratta, ‘Revealing stance through passive voice’, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41 (2009), pp 1406 - 1421.

τῆς 'λοιπῆς' πέτρας [ἄ]πὸ μηνὸς Ἐφεῖπ ἕως Ἐῶυθ ι' [[τῆς σήμε-]]
 [[ρον ἡμέρας]]. Τὰς 'δὲ' ἡμέρας ἃς εἰργασμένοι εἰσὶν
 δέ[κα τ]ῇ διμήνῳι 'ἐπέσται'. Οἶδας δὲ διότι [ὁ] τόπος
 ἔρημός 'ἐστίν' καὶ οὐκ ἔχομεν σῖτον. Βουλόμεθα 'οὖν'
 10 συντελέσαι τὰ ἔργα ἵνα τὴν ταχίστην
 ἀπέλθωμεν. Ἀπόστειλον δὲ λιτουργοὺς ἡμῖν
 ἐν τάχει ἵνα μὴ ἐγκαταλίπωμεν 'καὶ ἡμεῖς'. Εὐτύχει.
 (Ἔτους) λ Θῶυθ θ

Verso

Κλέωνι. (m3) (Ἔτους) λ Θῶυθ θ παρὰ τῶν [λατ]όμων
 ἔντευξις

To Kleon, greetings, from the stone-cutters working in Patsontis. We have received from you the rocks in Titnouis and it (sic) has been cut already. But at present we are idle, because we do not have men to clear away the sand on top of the rest of the rock, from the month Epeiph up to the 10th of Thoth-[[today]]. The days they worked will be ten more than two months. You know that the region is desolate and we have no bread. So we want to finish the work so we can leave as quickly as possible. Send us stone-masons quickly, so that we do not go away ourselves. May you prosper.

Year 30, Thoth 9.

Trans.: Van Beek (2006), pp 131 - 132 (Modified).

Verso

To Kleon. (m3) Year 30, Thoth 9. Petition from the stone-cutters.

The letter is from men in an inferior social position to Kleon. Of most interest here is the final sentence in which they declare that they will leave if help is not provided quickly. It is this last which constitutes the threat.

Some preliminary remarks are again necessary. There is evidence the letter was edited before reaching its final form as there are corrections throughout. It has been argued that the threat, (Ἀπόστειλον δὲ λιτουργοὺς ἡμῖν | ἐν τάχει ἵνα μὴ ἐγκαταλίπωμεν καὶ ἡμεῖς) which is in lines 11 - 12, has been inserted later.²⁰ This is certainly possible. An image of the text has been published relatively recently,²¹ and the sentence is crowded in near the bottom of the papyrus and slopes upwards. Rather than being a later addendum however, it is also possible that the scribe simply misjudged the amount of space available to him. Clarysse considers that the whole letter gives the appearance of

²⁰ Bart Van Beek, 'The Archive of the Engineers Kleon and Theodoros: Archive Study, Text Edition, with translations and notes (*diss.*)', (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2006), p 131.

²¹ Willy Clarysse, 'Linguistic Diversity in the Archive of the Engineers Kleon and Theodoros', in T. V. Evans and D.D. Obbink (eds.), *The Language of the Papyri* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp 35 - 50 at p 42.

a draft.²² In any event, it seems difficult to draw any firm conclusions as to whether the final sentence containing the threat was added as an afterthought or not.

Some of the corrections are explained by Clarysse as likely to have been made necessary because of errors commonly made by Egyptian scribes. Others, in his view, seek (largely unsuccessfully) to clarify some dates. It is almost self-evident that the editing resulted from a wish to refine the message in such a way that it would be more likely to achieve its goal. Even the attempts at clarifying the dates may be seen in this light and the unfortunate effect on the letter of not being successful in this regard is discussed below. The two possibilities are not mutually exclusive.

The issue of corrections need not detain us. What matters is that the stone-cutters, probably with the assistance of a scribe or other adviser, perhaps solely on their own initiative, considered a threat to be in order here. This in itself is interesting. It shows clearly that while they lacked Kleon's social standing, and did not have the power over Kleon that Apollonios had, the stone-cutters were not entirely powerless. If they were to abandon the site—in modern terms, if they were to strike—the consequential delay could be significant. Kleon's work always suffered under the pressure of the seasons. The Nile would flood whether his work was completed or not. (The problem is neatly encapsulated in **TEXT XI**²³, a letter from Theodoros to Diotimos, and briefly mentioned again below, when he writes, as the reason for seeking urgent supplies: Τοῦ γὰρ ποταμοῦ | πρὸς πάντα τὰ χῶματα προσβαίνοντος, τὰ πάντα | ὀχυρῶσαι δεῖ . 'For with the river rising up to all the dykes, everything must be strengthened' (lines 7 - 9).

In short, to withdraw labour was a real threat, not an idle one. There are numerous examples among the papyri which indicate that this action was undertaken or contemplated on other occasions. **TEXT 3**, reproduced in *Section 5.3.1* below, is a report of a large number (140) of stone-cutters not working because of lack of provisions. It is not suggested in this case that the men have decided to withdraw their

²² Ibid., p 41.

²³ As indicated in *Chapter 1*, p 13, all texts whose number is prefixed with 'X' are reproduced in the Appendix.

labour. The letter implies that they are still on site. They are nevertheless not working (οὐδενὶ τρόπῳ ἐργάζονται, (line 14)). In contemporary terms, perhaps, we might describe this as a ‘work to rule’ or ‘go slow’.

TEXT X2 also includes two letters discussing what to do with some workmen causing difficulties and suggesting a certain action be undertaken so that the men will not do anything inappropriate (ἵνα μὴ ἄτοπόν | τι πράξωσιν (lines 17 - 18)).

Most interestingly, **TEXT X3** shows us that workmen, if they refused to work, may have had some recourse to safety, in that the men referred to in that letter had retreated to a temple (ἀναχωρηκότας ἐπὶ τὸ Ἱσιεῖον τὸ ἐν τῷ Μεμ[φίτῃ] (line 2)).²⁴ A temple was a traditional place of refuge of course and **TEXT X3** is written in terms that suggest efforts were being undertaken to resolve the matter. Yet retreat to a temple was very much a last resort, not something undertaken lightly or routinely. There is not, in my view, enough information available to be as confident as Orrieux, who, when discussing this letter, writes: *Il est probable qu'un compromis à l'amiable sera trouvé.*²⁵ There is certainly no reason to believe in the existence of some kind of legal protection or sanctioned industrial action. Men took such action when in peril, or there would have been no need to seek sanctuary. If not in such a sanctuary it may be assumed that they would have been treated harshly. We cannot even be certain that sanctuary was always respected.

To return to **TEXT 2** in the light of this background it is clear that the challenge facing the stone masons as to how to phrase such a letter was substantial. How blunt would they dare to be? The threat is:

12 Ἀπόστειλον δὲ λιτουργοὺς ἡμῖν
ἐν τάχει ἵνα μὴ ἐνκαταλίπωμεν ‘καὶ ἡμεῖς’.

Send us stone-masons quickly, so that we ourselves do not go away.

²⁴ Hélène Cadell, 'Sur quelques cas de grève dans l'Égypte lagide', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, XXVI/Part 1 (1983), pp 22 - 32.

²⁵ Claude Orrieux, *Les Papyrus de Zenon: L'horizon d'un grec En Egypte au IIIe siècle avant J. C.* (Paris: Macula, 1983), p 125.

It is expressed in a purpose clause with ἵνα μὴ plus subjunctive (in this case ἐγκαταλίπωμεν²⁶), rather than, as in Panakestor's letter, through conditional structure with future indicative in the apodosis.²⁷ Moreover the stone-cutters have not chosen to use ἀναχωρέω, which Liddell and Scott gloss, among other meanings, as 'strike'. This choice of words and syntax serves to direct attention to the action Kleon is asked to undertake, rather than the consequences he may suffer if he does not carry out this action. Its message then is more softly expressed than Panakestor's. Yet it is noteworthy that the imperative here (Ἀπόστειλον) is not modified in any of the ways that were commonly in use at the time.²⁸ It is a very clear threat and, as in the discussion of the letter from Panakestor above, its force depends more upon the inference Kleon draws from it. It is harder for us to know what this might be than in the case of the previous letter. Apollonios' disapproval was certainly to be avoided. Whether a delay to the work undertaken by these stone-cutters at this particular time was a major problem, or whether being seen by his superiors to be having difficulty managing his men was something Kleon needed to avoid, depend on details to which we are not privy.

Yet there is much more to understanding this particular speech act. Of particular significance is how the stone-cutters lead up to it. The earlier parts of the letter are just as relevant as the capacity of the writers to do as they threaten. They are also relevant to how damaging, if at all, such action would be for Kleon at this time and at this place.

The letter begins by stating that rocks have been received from Kleon²⁹ and that they have already been cut.³⁰ On the surface this serves only to inform. Yet given who is

²⁶ The form of the verb here is interesting. It could be taken to be an intermediate form between classical καταλείπω and the later καταλίμπω, but is more likely, to be an early example of the practice of substituting iota for epsilon-iota. (Geoffrey Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p 118.)

²⁷ For a discussion of the use of ἵνα rather than ὅπως in this period see Clarysse, 'Linguistic Diversity in the Archive of the Engineers Kleon and Theodoros', pp 43 - 45.

²⁸ Steen, for example, noted that the use of phrases such as καλῶς ὅν ποιήσαις in lieu of a direct imperative was common in the Ptolemaic papyri he surveyed. Henry A. Steen, 'Les clichés épistolaires dans les lettres sur papyrus grecques', *Classica et Mediaevalia*, I (1938), pp 119 - 176 at p 139.

²⁹ Παρελάβομεν παρὰ σοῦ τὰς πέτρας... (lines 2-3)

³⁰ Λελατόμηται ἤδη (Van Beek notes here that this verb is singular, thus not agreeing with the plural τὰς πέτρας, to which it refers. Van Beek, 'The Archive of the Engineers Kleon and Theodoros', p 131. Van Beek also identifies a number of other departures from grammatical rules that are not relevant to this discussion.

writing to whom and given that a threat is to be issued, pragmatically it serves as an attempt to gain or maintain for the stone-cutters merit in the eyes of their employer. While it is unlikely that the stone-cutters would have been able to label it as such, in rhetorical terms this sentence is an appeal to ἡθος. The men are stressing that they have not been idle to this point. One may presume that this is done in the hope that Kleon will respond more favourably as a result.

It was probably wise of the writer(s) to begin in this way as the next sentence reports their current idleness (Νυνὶ δὲ ἀργοῦμεν (line 4)). An excuse for this idleness—a lack of labourers to assist (...διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν σώμα | ὥστε ἀνακαθᾶραι τὴν ἄμμον τὴν ἐπάνω | τῆς λοιπῆς πέτρᾳς (lines 4-16))—follows so abruptly that it interrupts the flow of the letter.³¹ The information as to the time frame of this idleness (lines 6 – 8) follows the excuse. It would have been clearer for it to precede the excuse. The result is a failure of deixis, something that serves to undermine the overall clarity of the message. In the middle, then, the letter may be said to have strayed somewhat from its main purpose.

Two more sentences precede the threat. They declare the place to be desolate, that the men lack bread and that, as a result, they wish to finish the work as soon as possible. These are all good reasons. In some ways they are the most convincing reasons why Kleon might consider their request. Interestingly however, the stone-cutters do not simply ‘state’ these ‘facts’. They choose rather, to ‘remind’ Kleon of them. They address Kleon directly and declare that he knows these things (.....Οἶδας δὲ διότι ὁ τόπος | ἔρημος ἐστὶν καὶ οὐκ ἔχομεν σῖτον (lines 8 -9). Not content with the λόγος of their case, they reinforce it with an appeal for sympathy (πάθος). As simple as this sentence appears, it is not lacking in subtlety.

It is followed by a sentence that echoes the opening of the letter in that it reiterates the stone-cutters’ good faith. They declare that they want to finish the work, albeit so that they can leave their desolate location quickly. It is important to note here that the

³¹ Edgar comments on the confusion here as to exactly who has been working or not working and precisely when. Campbell Cowan Edgar, ‘Four Petrie Papyri Revised’, in Egypt Exploration Society (ed.), *Studies Presented to F. Ll. Griffith* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), pp 209 - 213.

sentence opens with the wish to finish the work (.....Βουλόμεθα οὖν | συντελέσαι τὰ ἔργα... (lines 9 - 10)), not with what is probably their strongest motive—to leave quickly ..ἵνα τὴν ταχίστην | ἀπέλθωμεν.... (lines 10 - 11). To caricature it, the message the stone-cutters seem to be trying to convey most strongly is that ‘we are doing the right thing, help us out here’.

Van Beek is no doubt correct to observe that this letter is ‘a bit clumsy here and there, and maybe somewhat vague if the insertions would be left out...’.³² Yet to concentrate too much on these faults can lead one to miss some very important things. A lot of thought has gone into how best to form this letter and it has drawn upon, whether consciously or unconsciously, some important rhetorical strategies. It is not simply a list of grievances followed by a threat. Certainly there is a threat and the threat is, in the end, the point of the letter. But the threat is contextualised in such a way that it is less offensive than it might otherwise have been. There is a sense in which, like Panakestor, the writers want Kleon to understand that they have been driven to this extreme and to put the onus upon him to resolve the matter in a way that will be mutually advantageous. The threat is there but it is not the sole basis for persuasion.

It was remarked above that it would seem difficult to judge if Kleon would find the threat in this letter more forceful than that from Panakestor. In fact, this letter is one of the few where we get at least some hint of its outcome. The letter is labelled on the docket as a petition (ἔντευξις).³³ It is quite possible of course that Kleon felt something of the threat with which the letter concludes. It is hard to avoid it. Yet the way in which the threat appears within the letter as a whole clearly has served to soften its impact. Kleon seems to have been able to read the real intent of the letter—as a petition—despite the element of threat. It is an excellent example of the pragmatics of language in letter format.

³² Van Beek, *The Archive of the Engineers Kleon and Theodoros*, p 132.

³³ παρὰ τῶν λατόμων ἔντευξις.

5.3 Warnings

The following examples of warnings found in the archive illustrate clearly some of the different ways such a speech act was attempted. There are notable differences between them.

5.3.1 A 'friendly' warning

TEXT 3 (mentioned in *Section 5.2.2*, p 90, as evidence that the withdrawal of labour was a real possibility) is a relatively straightforward example of a warning.

TEXT 3

TM 7639 (Van Beek 49)

Philoxenos and others draws attention to the lack of provisions for some stone-cutters and the fact that they are not working as a consequence.

Recto

(Column II only)

Φιλόξ[εν]ος καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ νεα[νίσκοι τῷ δεῖνι]
χαίρειν. Οἱ ῥμ λατόμοι[ι - - - - -]
οὐδενὶ τρόπῳ ἐργάζονται διὰ τὸ μ[ὴ ἔχειν τὰ δέ-]
15 οντα. Τὸ γὰρ προδοθέν αὐτοῖς δόμ[α ἀνήγγειλαν
ἡμῖν καταβεβρωκέναι σχολάζον[τες οὐδενὸς
παρὰδεικνύοντος ἔργα. Δοκιμά[ζομεν οὖν καλῶς]
ἔχειν προέσθαι σε αὐτοῖς ἐκ τοῦ βα[σιλικοῦ εἰς ἕκασ-]
20 τὸν πυρ(οῦ) ἄρ(τάβην) α ὅπως τὰ ἔ[ργα συντελέσωσιν
καὶ μὴ παρὰ ταύτην τὴν αἰτία[ν σχολάζωσιν]
τοῦ διοικητοῦ σπεύδοντος [- - - - -].
Παρὰ πάντας γὰρ τοὺς λατόμους ἔ[- - - - -]
τοῖς ἔργοις.
Ἑρρωσο. (Ἑτους) [κθ - - -]

Philoxenos and the rest of the cadets to NN greeting. The 140 stone-cutters [- - -] are not working at all because they have no provisions; for they told us that the payment given to them in advance, they have used up with nothing to do, nobody showing them work. So we think it would be well for you to give them, from the royal store, one artaba of wheat each, so that they will finish the work and not depend on this reason to be idle, as the dioiketes is urging [- - -]. (Compared to?) all the stonecutters [- - -] for the works.
Farewell.

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 129 (Modified).

It is not clear if Kleon was the intended recipient of this letter as it was forwarded as a copy (ἀντίγραφον).³⁴ Edgar however, makes a reasonable case for Kleon being the

³⁴ Ibid., p 129.

addressee and that the letter seeks to have him get the stone-cutters working again.³⁵ It was certainly important for Kleon to complete his work within the time constraints imposed by the seasons. Any delay in the completion of the irrigation work he was responsible for was to be avoided, so any suggestion of such delay was likely to be a powerful means of persuasion. This consideration would apply equally to Theodoros, or to other members of the team working with Kleon. For the purposes of this thesis, it is not essential to know who it was that was being warned, although it would have been helpful to have clearer information about the relationship between sender and recipient.

The authors of this letter are somewhat more detached from the situation than are the stone-cutters discussed in the previous section. The best interpretation we have is Edgar's, who believes, on the strength of one (quite reasonable) reconstruction (νεαν[ίσχοι] (line 12), and another that he himself acknowledges to be no more than an interesting possibility (τοῦ διοικητοῦ σπεύδοντος [περὶ τῶν οἰκήσεων] (line 21) the authors to be military cadets relying upon the provision of stone for the completion of their houses.³⁶ Their need to persuade, therefore, while far from negligible, seems likely to be at a lower level of intensity than in the letter from the stone-cutters discussed in *Section 5.2.2*, and it may be expected that their approach would be somewhat different. Whatever may be said about their social status it is also reasonable to consider them to be less powerful than Panakestor (*Section 5.2.1*) but more powerful than the stone-cutters. While it is likely that it was in their interest that work proceed without interruption, it remains possible that there was at least a small element of good will motivating the letter.

As in the case of the letters making threats, the key speech act does not open the letter. Nor, again in contrast, is there any rhetorical attempt to engage the recipient. Rather, the facts of the case (at least those matters that the writers consider to be the relevant facts) are stated. These are that the stone-cutters are not working and that they give as their reason for this that they have no provisions. This assertion is elaborated upon somewhat to the effect that, at least according to the author(s) they once did have provisions, but have consumed them waiting for direction. The warning comes following a suggestion

³⁵ Edgar, 'Four Petrie Papyri Revised', p 210.

³⁶ Ibid.

to give them a measure of grain so that they no longer have this excuse. It is a warning that the dioiketes is pressing for some action. (We do not know what, precisely he was pressing for and Edgar's speculation is as good a guess as any.) It is reasonable to assume that the recipient, whether Kleon or not, would want to be seen to be helping the dioiketes achieve his goals, so the warning, if accurately reflecting that officer's views, is important.

Yet the final sentence of the letter, depending upon how one interprets it, seems to suggest that the writer does not think a warning is sufficient to get Kleon to take action. It adds another reason in lines 22 - 23:

Παρὰ πάντας γὰρ τοὺς λατόμους [δει γίνεσθαι πρὸς] | τοῖς ἔργοις

The insertion here is Edgar's and it is a bold one. He translates the above as:

For the quarrymen above all ought to have been busy.³⁷

Van Beek is almost certainly correct to challenge this. He does not hazard a reconstruction himself but translates the fragment as: '*Compared to* all the stone-cutters'³⁸ (emphasis added).

This, too, in my view, is not very satisfactory. "Παρά" is a preposition with many uses, deriving its precise meaning from its context. When the full sentence in which it is used is not available, fixing its meaning is difficult. Smyth documents the use of παρά in relations of 'cause' and of 'dependence'.³⁹ The sentence might, on this reading, be translated as: 'Because of (or Depending on) all the stone-cutters [something.....] for the works'. This is consistent with the general sense of the letter but is also very speculative. The usage noted by Smyth is not identified in the papyri of this period by Mayser.⁴⁰ A solution here is elusive.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Van Beek, *The Archive of the Engineers Kleon and Theodoros*, p 129.

³⁹ Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, §1692(3)c.

⁴⁰ Edwin Mayser, *Grammatik der griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit, mit Einschluss der gleichzeitigen Ostraka und der in Ägypten verfassten Inschriften* (II 2; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1970 (Photomechanischer Nachdruck)), §126.

That it is so difficult to arrive at a convincing translation draws attention to something that will become increasingly apparent as these letters are discussed. The letters are brief. They assume much that is not expressed and rely upon a shared understanding of the social context and work practices. Much of this we do not understand. This issue will be returned to later in this chapter.

Whatever the correct translation, the sentence functions to provide another reason why Kleon (or another recipient) should take action over and above the reason set out in the warning (i.e. the special concern of the dioiketes). It is as if the authors do not think the warning will be sufficient and seek to add one more reason before closing. The warning, an appeal to *πάθος*, is embedded in a generally ‘matter of fact’ argument or *λόγος*. It is not as strong as it might be as a consequence of this.

5.3.2 Stronger warnings

TEXT 4 (*Examples C & D in Chapter 4, Section 4.1, p 67 & p 68*) is a letter that contains a far stronger warning.

TEXT 4

TM 7647 (Van Beek 55)

Stone-cutters seek redress from Kleon as they have not received promised supplies. They threaten that if the men find out about this they will pawn the tools.

Recto

1 Κλέωνι χαίρειν οἱ δεκάταρχοι τῶν ἐλευθερο-
λατόμων. Ἀδικοῦμεθα. Τὰ γὰρ ὁμολογηθέν-
τα ὑπὸ Ἀπολλωνίου τοῦ διοικητοῦ οὐθὲν
γίνεται ἡμῖν. Ἔχει δὲ τὴν γραφὴν Διότιμος.
5 Σπούδασον οὖν ἵνα καθὰ ἐξειλήφμεν [κ...] ὑπὸ
Διονυσίου καὶ Διοτίμου χρηματισθῇ
ἡμῖν καὶ μὴ τὰ ἔργα ἐνλειφθῇ καθὰ
καὶ ἔμπροσθεν ἐγένετο. Ἐὰν γὰρ αἴσθωνται
οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι οὐθὲν ἡμᾶς εἰληφότας
10 τὸν σίδηρον ἐνέχυρα θήσουσιν
(ἔτους) λ Παχῶνς ιθ

Verso

Κλέωνι

To Kleon, greetings, the foremen of the free stonecutters. We are being wronged. For (of) what was granted by Apollonios the dioiketes, nothing reaches us. Diotimos has the document. Do your best to make sure that, as agreed, we are supplied by Dionysios and Diotimos so that the work will not be left undone as happened before. If the men who are working realise we have not received anything, they will pawn the tools.
Year 30, Pachons 19.

Trans.: Van Beek (2006), p 147 (Modified).

Verso

To Kleon

The letter is from the foremen of the stone-cutters to Kleon. The warning, in its final form (there is also a gentler hint of other negative consequences, discussed below), again comes towards the end of the letter: Ἐὰν γὰρ αἴσθωνται | οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι οὐθὲν ἡμᾶς εἰληφότας | τὸν σίδηρον ἐνέχυρα θήσουσιν (lines 8 - 10). It is interesting for a number of reasons. Unlike the military cadets, the writers here are closely involved in the events and are writing to someone of superior rank. Kleon might be forgiven for having wondered if it was, despite its phrasing, a threat. That it is a warning rather than a threat derives from the statement that the actions in prospect (pawning of tools) will not be taken by the authors themselves but by the men they are supervising. One might expect supervisors to take steps to head off action of this kind by their men. To issue such a warning is to this extent an admission of weakness or dereliction of supervisory responsibility. The foremen may have deliberately chosen to understate their involvement here so that they could be seen to be warning rather than threatening.

This ambiguity becomes easier to understand given the structure of the letter. Some of its wording is characteristic of a petition.⁴¹ The name of the addressee, Kleon, appears first, giving him precedence⁴² and is immediately followed by the salutation 'χαίρειν', with the names (or in this case positions only) of the senders last—the order usually employed in petitions, complaints and applications.⁴³ (This is in contrast to the letter from Panakestor, above, where it is his name that comes first.) The writers take care to specify precisely who it is that is addressing Kleon, stating that they are foremen of free stone-cutters (ἐλευθερο | λατόμων (lines 1-2)).⁴⁴ The opening of the main part of the

⁴¹ Petitions are discussed in *Chapter 8*.

⁴² John L. White, 'The Greek Documentary Letter Tradition Third Century B.C.E. To Third Century C.E.', *Semeia*, 22 (1982), pp 89 - 106 at p 97.

⁴³ Francis Xavier J. Exler, *The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter: A Study in Greek Epistolography* (Washington D. C.: Catholic University of America, 1923), p 23.

⁴⁴ Van Beek notes that there are only two places in the archive that refer to ἐλευθερολατόμοι, the other being in the salutation to Theodoros that opens a largely indecipherable fragment previously unpublished (TM 381300, Van Beek 64). This may be attempt to ensure the stone-cutters are not confused with slaves

letter—‘Ἀδικοῦμεθα’—is formulaic, although its use nevertheless always retains a certain sense of immediacy and personal intensity.⁴⁵ The reason for the request that follows is expressed with additional force by the use of prolepsis:

2 Τὰ γὰρ ὁμολογηθέν-
τα ὑπὸ Ἀπολλωνίου τοῦ διοικητοῦ οὐθὲν
γίνεται ἡμῖν.

For (of) what was granted by Apollonios the dioiketes, nothing reaches us.

This is puzzling. We have, in form, something very similar in most respects to a petition. Yet we also have, in content, a warning issued to a superior—someone upon whom their employment presumably depends—by a group of men who would appear to have a relatively low position in the social hierarchy. The letter, then, is a good example of the limits as to what can be identified by concentrating on the form of these letters. There is much more to this letter than its ‘petition language’ and it deserves closer analysis as a consequence. Some of these issues will be discussed further in *Chapter 8*.

What is clear is that these men are asking for something promised to them by an appropriate authority and may be presumed to be doing so in the manner that they hope will give them the best chance of achieving that purpose. (Whether it was Apollonios the dioiketes, to whom Panakestor threatens to report Kleon (above) or, as Van Beek suggests,⁴⁶ an ergodioiketes or works supervisor, is not of great relevance here.) They therefore emphasise this point as strongly as they can. Van Beek is no doubt correct to annotate the above passage as an anacoluthic construction. More important in my view, is that it is an example of how pragmatic intent, characterised most clearly here by the prolepsis, can sometimes outweigh grammatical correctness.⁴⁷

or prisoners sometimes required to perform this task. It may thus be both a matter of personal pride and dignity. It may also be a means of ensuring that the letter observes the convention in petition writing of specifying name and location of the petitioner(s). (Van Beek, *The Archive of the Engineers Kleon and Theodoros*, pp 147 - 148.) In the context of the letter, it serves as an appeal to ἦθος.

⁴⁵ Robert R. I. Harper, *The Forensic saviour: petitions and power in Greco-Roman Egypt* (Sydney: diss., 1997), pp 151 - 152.

⁴⁶ Van Beek, *The Archive of the Engineers Kleon and Theodoros*, p 148.

⁴⁷ For discussion of the need to understand anacolutha in pragmatic and rhetorical context see S. R. Slings, 'Figures of Speech and Their Lookalikes', in Egbert J. Bakker (ed.), *Grammar as Interpretation: Greek Literature in Its Linguistic Contexts* (Mnemosyne Bibliotheca Classica Batava; Leiden New York Köln: Brill, 1997), pp 169 - 214. For discussion of prolepsis as a communicative strategy deliberately

The specific request to Kleon is as follows:

5 Σπούδασον οὖν ἵνα καθὰ ἐξειλήφामεν [[κ...]]
 ὑπὸ Διονυσίου καὶ Διοτίμου χρηματισθῇ
 ἡμῖν καὶ μὴ τὰ ἔργα ἐνλειφθῇ καθὰ
 καὶ ἔνπροσθεν ἐγένετο.

Do your best to make sure that, as agreed, we are supplied by Dionysios and Diotimos so that the work will not be left undone as happened before.

Σπούδασον οὖν is followed by a purpose clause. Steen classifies the imperative form of σπουδάζω as *un cliché d'intensité très usité...*, most commonly in the aorist, as here, and most commonly followed by an infinitive, but he also cites examples of its use, again as here, with a purpose clause.⁴⁸ It is difficult to know how to interpret its use here. Steen is probably correct to see it as an intensifier when used with an infinitive, and it does open the sentence, giving it some importance. Yet semantically it would seem to be only a mild intensifier, the meanings identified in the papyri not going beyond 'take action' and sometimes no more than 'be concerned'.⁴⁹ When used with a purpose clause it seems to allow the recipient a way out. The notion of 'doing one's best' is sufficient to capture its rhetorical force. Suggesting that the matter is of some importance to the person one wishes to influence is not as directive as, say, an imperative to 'instruct', 'order' or even 'tell' Dionysos and Diotimos to provide supplies. On the other hand, the expression is itself unmodified. There is no conditional phrase of the 'if you please' variety such as εἰ δυνατόν ἐστιν. So the level of politeness or otherwise that we might read into σπούδασον is unclear. This is a long sentence and there is another warning embedded in it (that the work might not get done) in a way that does not draw itself to attention to the same extent as the concluding sentence. It is nevertheless a warning. It is as if the writers wish to slip it in without notice and justify their temerity by quickly reminding Kleon that something like this has happened before. There is enough, in short, in the sentence as a whole, to add intensity

chosen by a speaker (or writer), see Dirk Panhuis, 'Prolepsis in Greek as a Discourse Strategy', *Glotta*, 62 (1/2) (1984), pp 26 - 39.

⁴⁸ Henry A. Steen, 'Les clichés épistolaires dans les lettres sur papyrus grecques', pp 166 - 167.

⁴⁹ Thanks are due for this interpretation to T. V. Evans and J. A. L. Lee for providing access to a draft entry in *Greek – English Lexicon of the Zenon Archive* (in preparation).

to this request, so that the particular force of *σπούδασον* is reduced to relatively minor importance.

So there is much to this short (10 line) letter. The writers have sought to establish their good standing and that they are being treated unjustly, the latter with some rhetorical flair. They seek Kleon's help, warning him almost in passing of one possible negative consequence, and conclude by appending, at the point of greatest emphasis (the last sentence) another warning. They seem heedless that this warning may reflect badly on themselves.

It is possible to imagine a group of foremen surrounding a scribe, each suggesting what would be the best way to influence Kleon. The letter is both bold and restrained in turn. Again however, this discussion has shown how much shared knowledge is assumed. How far may men in the position of these stone-cutters go in seeking to influence a superior without risking his wrath? Is pawning tools a realistic option in the present case even given the precedent? All of this information, known to the correspondents, remains unknown to us.

TEXT 5 (below) is in some respects similar to **TEXT 4**. As in the case of the foremen of the stone-cutters, the writer is also someone who is dependent upon the recipient (in this case Zenon) for employment. The letter in this case is however, more straightforward and less apologetic in tone. It is an example of a warning where it is reasonable to assume a desire on the part of the writer to prevent the recipient experiencing an unwanted outcome. In this respect it could have been discussed in the previous section as a 'friendly' warning. While the writer may well have been concerned about possible negative consequences for himself if the horses in his care starved—and there are elements in the letter that suggest this—he may also be given the benefit of the doubt as to whether he wished to do the right thing by his employer. The letter is however so direct that it is its strength that impresses most and is the reason why it is discussed in this section rather than elsewhere.

TEXT 5

TM 1923 (P Mich Zen 21)

Letter from Apollonios, an employee of the dioiketes, who begs Zenon to send him some hay for the horses, as his stock is almost finished and it is difficult to buy more in Alexandria.

Recto

Ἀπολλώνιος Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. καὶ ἐνδημοῦντι μ. . [
 ἐξαίφνης ἐγλείψει ἡμᾶς ὁ χόρτος τοῖς ἵπποις, καὶ νῦν δὲ χ[
 ἐπιστε[ί]λαί σοι περὶ τούτων. ἵνα οὖν μὴ συμβαίνει τοῖς ἵπ[πο]ις
 τὰ δέοντα, καλῶς ἂμ ποιήσας φροντίσας τὴν ταχίστην[
 5 οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀγοράσαι ῥαϊδίον ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ πόλει διὰ τὸ τὸν με[ν]
 παλαιὸν
 τὸν δὲ νέον σπάνιον γεγενῆσθαι· εἰ δὲ μή, τοῦτ' ἂν ἐποιούμ[εν]
 οὐδὲ μιᾶς ἡμέρας χόρτον ὄντα. ἐὰν οὖν μὴ ταχέως ἐπισκέψη[ι]
 νοχλεῖσθαι τοῖς ἵπποις.
 [ἔρρωσο.

Verso

10 Ἀπολλώνιος Ζήνωνι.
 περὶ χόρτου τοῦ εἰς τοὺς
 ἵππους. (ἔτους) κθ, Δαισίου κη,
 ἐν Ἀρσινόῃ τῇ Δίωνος.

Apollonios to Zenon. When you were staying here I warned you that soon we should have no hay left for the horses, and now [I must] write to you about this matter. In order then that the horses may not suffer through want of the necessities, please take care quickly [to ?]. For it is not easy to buy it in town because the old stock is exhausted and the new crop sparse; otherwise we would have done so. Know that we have not enough hay for a single day; so if you do not take thought at once, the horses will be falling ill.

Farewell.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 81 (Modified).

Verso

To Zenon (Docket, 2nd hand) Apollonios about hay for the horses.
 (Received) year 29, Daisios 28, in Arsinoe of Dion.

Edgar⁵⁰ restores the end of line 1 as μ[έν σοι ἐνεφανίσσαμεν ὅτι], a not insignificant restoration, and translates it using the relatively strong English verb ‘warned’. Quite whether the author would have expressed himself so directly, given his status, is uncertain. Yet Edgar’s interpretation gains credibility the further one reads into the letter. The letter begins by reminding Zenon that the issue was discussed with him previously in person (ἐνδημοῦντι)—an opening of considerable rhetorical force. Moreover, the problem (a lack of feed for horses) is reiterated in that reminder and declared to be something that will occur soon (ἐξαίφνης). The urgency of the situation

⁵⁰ Campbell Cowan Edgar, *Zenon Papyri in the University of Michigan Collection* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1931), pp 80 - 81.

is further stressed with the use of καὶ νῦν as a conjunction. The impersonal χρεή⁵¹, if it was indeed used, serves to frame the situation as not of the writer's making. This may be a way for the writer to suggest that he recognises his low rank relative to that of Zenon and that the letter is one he would not have written but for the necessity of the situation. Instead of persisting with this line of argument however, the writer, in the next sentence, turns the focus very directly on the needs of the horses by placing the purpose, or final clause first. The principal clause that follows, for the third time, emphasises the urgency of the situation using the superlative form, ταχίστην. Only then (lines 5 - 6) does Apollonios add some words of explanation in support of all this urgency, answering the question he could anticipate Zenon asking—why does he not manage the situation by accessing local supplies. In the final line he again stresses the need for a rapid response to his concerns.

It may be that Apollonios had a more compelling case than the foremen of the stone-cutters. There is no hint in the letter that he may have left something undone or failed to exercise an appropriate level of supervision, as may have been the case with the foremen. He would seem to be on strong ground if, as he declares in his opening sentence, he had already told Zenon of the situation. Moreover, although Zenon probably did not welcome the pressure the letter placed upon him to act quickly, in the absence of other information about the care Apollonios took of the horses, we can assume that he would have had to acknowledge the importance of the issue.

In discussing the letter from the foremen of the stone-cutters I commented that in at least one sentence in that letter (a warning that some work might not get done) was embedded in such a way as almost to disguise the fact that it was a warning. No such diffidence is found anywhere in this letter.

5.3.4 *A warning or not?*

Not all warnings are as clear as the above. Sometimes a warning can be very vague. **TEXT X1**, mentioned above with a different focus, is a case in point. The papyrus in this case is very fragmented in the relevant section. In lines 1 and 2 an unknown writer

⁵¹ The full restoration of the end of line 2 suggested by Edgar is χ[ρησίμων εἶναι ὑπέλαβον].

warns an unknown recipient that if he does ‘anything else’ (we do not have information as to what he was supposed to do) then he will meet with trouble. (.....Εὖ γάρ τι ἄλλο δρόσεις συμβήσεταί σοι κινδυνεύειν). Without more text available to us it is difficult to evaluate this. (The letter *in toto* consists of only these lines plus a closing salutation, and the essentially meaningless ἤδη καὶ κατ.τ. εἰ ἄλλο.) It may nevertheless be the case that a warning as vague as this serves, pragmatically, to mark the writer’s uneasiness as much as an attempt to suggest untoward events that should be avoided. That is to say, vagueness may be in some sense exactly what the sender wishes to convey. On the other hand, it may be that what we have here is the equivalent of a snatch of conversation overheard in a crowded bus, meaningful in context to the participants, cryptic to the point of incomprehension to anyone else.

5.4 Interim conclusions

It will be apparent from these examples that both threats and warnings are more than a form of words. As speech acts they must be appropriately contextualised, including being made by the appropriate people in an appropriate way. They must also be communicated to someone who realises their significance—the person must understand that they really are at risk of the harm alluded to. As is the case for all speech acts, and arguably most language, context is everything.

Two examples of the most forceful of all directive speech acts—threats—have been considered in some detail. The first of these, **TEXT 1**, a letter from Panakestor to Kleon, has been shown to be a piece of prose as well constructed for its purpose as any piece of fifth or fourth century B.C.E. Athenian oratory. There are features of oratorical practice found in it that would have readily been recognised by the ancient authorities on the subject. The case that the language of the papyri is as deserving of our respect and interest as other examples of Ancient Greek that we have could rest upon this one letter alone.

The second letter, **TEXT 2**, is equally interesting for different reasons. That it includes a threat at all, given that the writer(s) are addressing someone in a superior socio-economic position, and someone who has influence over, if not direct responsibility for,

their employment, is not a little remarkable. That it is in a letter which does much to soften this threat through the other speech acts it employs (including some designed to ingratiate as well as to inform and seek compassion) is, at first sight at least, less surprising. Yet it is only less surprising until it is remembered that we are reading a letter from working men with little education. Even if they utilised the services of a scribe, quite how good an attempt at sophisticated communication it is, notwithstanding some shortcomings, is noteworthy. It is at least a suggestion that the level of general linguistic competence in Ancient Greek in third century B.C.E. Egypt was high.

While the examples of threats illustrate something of the complexity and subtlety of the language in the papyri, once we consider the examples of warnings we come to appreciate its diversity. To consider the stronger warnings first (that is, those discussed in *Section 5.3.2*), it is clear that the first of these, **TEXT 4**, is not an elegant or well-formed piece of prose. The decision to issue a warning appears to have been taken by a group of people for whom some action on the part of the recipient was extremely important to their wellbeing, but whose social status and power relative to that of the person they were addressing was quite low. The action that is warned about is quite specific and effort is made in the preceding text to establish the credibility of those issuing the warning. Yet the authors, presumably because of their socio-economic status, also wish not to appear impolite and cite evidence of their good faith in support of this. In doing so, they risk falling between two stools. Their goal is ambitious, but the approach that they adopt is not well-executed. Much hangs on the extent to which the events warned about will be sufficient to prompt action. In short, it is a somewhat messy example of language at work in the real world that may or may not have been successful in achieving its goal. This is, of course, true of much of everyday social intercourse whatever the period of history.

The second example discussed in *Section 5.3.2*, **TEXT 5**, is also from a writer of lower status than the person to whom the letter is addressed. Yet in this case the letter, as the discussion above shows, is very direct. There are one or two sentences which show that the writer is aware that he is writing to a superior, and the consequent need to justify what might be perceived by the recipient as the writer's temerity.

When we turn to the ‘friendly’ warning discussed in *Section 5.3.1*, **TEXT 3** we must consider a letter that is even more difficult to interpret. The letter suggests that action is required because a delay may be in conflict with some priority of the dioiketes.

Unfortunately the text is corrupt at this point. Even given this, the text is brief and even if all of it was readable, the space available means that whatever the dioiketes was urging could not have been spelled out in any detail. It therefore serves to underline again the importance of considering any speech act in context. Our incomplete knowledge is painfully apparent here and is the most important thing to observe. The correspondents shared much knowledge that would have made the letter infinitely more meaningful to them than it is to us. Language can sometimes work very well even when not spelling things out precisely and in detail.

In *Section 5.3.3* above, the metaphor of a partial conversation overheard in a crowded bus was used. While the metaphor has weaknesses, the idea is sound. We often have in the papyri incomplete samples of ongoing conversations between people whose relationships with each other are complex in ways that we do not fully comprehend. There is also much about the physical and economic context that we do not understand, making it difficult to determine if the events foreshadowed, either as threats or warnings, will in fact be as persuasive as the writers intend.

The letters discussed here raise many questions about the society that produced them. It is significant, although not startling that a man as powerful as Panakestor should openly threaten Kleon with serious consequences if his bidding was not done. In a very hierarchical society, this would raise few eyebrows. Nor is it surprising that a man of Panakestor’s position should have the education and skill to craft a letter of great force.

What is remarkable is that stone-cutters, who were dependent upon Kleon for work, could consider communicating with him in this manner. It is also almost as remarkable that a similar group of men should seek to influence him by issuing a warning. The prose that these men composed was not, as discussed above, especially polished, although we should be grateful to have it. That they were able to compose as much as they did, whether with the assistance of a scribe or not, suggests that their position in society was not as abject as we might imagine. The warning that comes from the man

responsible to Zenon for the care of a number of horses is further evidence of a level of direct communication across social boundaries that we might not expect and supports this hypothesis.

ORDERS

6.1 Introduction

Of all of the directive speech acts discussed in this thesis, none rely more for their effectiveness upon explicit and well-understood interpersonal relationships than orders. Central to the concept of an order—certainly of ‘to order’ as a verb—is that it be ‘authoritative’.¹ It is necessary to be someone in an appropriate position of authority to ensure that an utterance one intends as an order is taken as such. More technically, in Searle’s terms, to be in a position of authority is a ‘preparatory rule’.² Again, it will be apparent that no feature of syntax or semantics can ensure that this condition is fulfilled. In identifying orders in the papyri then, consideration of the social relationships, both formal and, to a lesser degree, informal, is not only necessary, it is essential.

A person with the requisite authority to issue an order may do so in a variety of ways. The notion of politeness is relevant here, although not in a straightforward way. Some orders lack those linguistic markers of politeness such as (in English) ‘please’, ‘thanks’, and other modifiers, whereas others may be replete with them and go to considerable trouble to avoid the imperative mood. Some authority figures adopt a strategy of issuing orders bluntly, if not brusquely. Others seek to find a softer way. There is evidence in a contemporary context that in some individuals with the authority to issue orders, a mix of these styles may be found, often in interactions with the same person.³ It will be shown that something of this variety can also be found in the papyri.

¹ The Macquarie Dictionary (4th edition) for example gives as its first definition of ‘order’ (as a noun) ‘an authoritative direction, injunction, command, or mandate’.

² John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp 64 - 67.

³ Bernadette Vine, 'Directives at Work: Directives at work: Exploring the contextual complexity of workplace directives', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41 (2009), pp 1395 - 1405.

6.2 Orders and their variety

6.2.1 Direct orders

It is appropriate to start by considering examples of orders that appear to be the most straightforward. These are what Leiwo, in discussing another archive, calls the ‘plain imperative’.⁴ In Brown and Levinson’s terms, such orders, employ a ‘bald-on-record’ strategy.⁵ Brown and Levinson describe this as a strategy where the speaker (or writer) regards it as of overriding importance that the action that is the subject of the order be carried out as quickly and efficiently as possible, irrespective of any loss of ‘face’ that may be experienced by the person ordered to carry it out. The strategy is likely to be adopted only if one or more of the following circumstances apply: (i) if both parties agree as to the urgency of the need (or the demands of efficiency), and are willing to dispense with any niceties, (ii) if the possible loss of face to the recipient is very small, and/or (iii) if the speaker/writer ‘is vastly superior in power to’ the hearer/reader.⁶

A letter that fits these criteria is **TEXT 6** from Apollonios to Apollodotos.

TEXT 6

TM 2021 (PSI 4 324)

Apollonios instructs Apollodotos as to how to receive payment for grain, and how to record such payment.

Recto

1 Ἀπολλώνιος Ἀπολλοδότῳ χαίρειν. ἐάν τινες τῶν ἐξαγόντων
τὸν σῖτον ἐξ Συρίας διαγράφωσιν ὑμῖν ἢ τὰς τιμὰς ἢ τὸ
παρὰβόλιον,
5 παραλαμβάνετε παρ’ αὐτῶν διὰ τῆς τραπεζῆς καὶ δίδετε
ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς/ σύμβολα διπλᾶ ἐσφραγισμένα, γράφοντες τὸ τε
ὄνομα
τοῦ καταβαλόντος καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ ἀργυρίου καὶ ἐάν
ὑπὲρ ἄλλου καταβάλῃ.
ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) κε, Ἀρτεμισίου ιβ

Verso

(hand 2) σίτου τιμῶν
Ἀπολλοδότῳ

⁴ Martti Leiwo, 'Imperatives and Other Directives in the Greek Letters from Mons Claudianus', in T. V. Evans and D.D. Obbink (eds.), *The Language of the Papyri* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp 97-119.

⁵ Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978 1987(re-issue)), p 68.

⁶ Ibid., p 69.

Apollonios to Apollodotos, greeting. If anyone exporting grain from Syria pays you either the price or a deposit, accept it from them through the bank and give us sealed duplicate receipts, writing the name of the payer and the amount of silver and if he is paying on behalf of another.
Farewell. Year 25, Artemision 12

Trans.: Bagnall & Derow (1981) p 98 (Modified).

Verso

Price of grain
To Apollodotos

This letter is one of many in the Zenon archive from Apollonios, a man of considerable power. We know less about Apollodotos.

Apart from the greeting formula, which is brief, and the closing salutation, there are no explicit politeness markers in this letter. It opens with a conditional clause. Wakker suggests that conditional clauses serve as a means of softening a suggestion or an imperative, by limiting the circumstances to which the order applies. Consistent with the Gricean maxim of relevance (*Section 6.4* below), in her words ‘it anticipates the possible question “why do you tell me this?” or “what is the use of this information for me?”’⁷ On this interpretation, it is thus a means of being polite.

I am not confident that Wakker’s point applies with here. The letter reads as a straightforward instruction from a senior officer to a detached more junior officer as to how to deal with a situation the junior officer may possibly be meeting for the first time and which may be challenging. It is that situation that is summarised in the conditional clause. Apollodotos might well expect such orders. An employee/servant/agent will not infrequently expect direction from a superior and will be quite satisfied if it gives the necessary information without ornament.

This view is confirmed by the existence of **TEXT X4**, a letter identical in wording to **TEXT 6** except for the addressee (here it is addressed to Hikesios rather than to Apollodotos). Both may well have been dictated to a scribe by another member of his

⁷ G. C. Wakker, *Conditions and Conditionals: An Investigation of Ancient Greek*, eds Albert Rijksbaron, Irene J. F. De Jong, and Harm Pinkster (Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology; Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1994), pp 241-244 at p 242.

household, under delegation from Apollonios.⁸ If this were the case it would be further support for the unexceptionable and routine nature of such letters. That is to say, we are dealing with a straightforward instruction from one party, who is normally in a position to give orders, to another party well-used to receiving them.

This letter and others like it are not impolite. They are the kind of communication that begs the epithet ‘appropriate’ as used by Schneider.⁹ Few would see such interchanges, given the respective ranks and relationship between the participants, as in any way remarkable. They are brief samplings of ongoing business relationships where the roles of the two parties—the duties they are to perform—are well understood by both and require nothing in the way of elaboration. They can afford to be ‘bold-on-record’ because each party understands the importance of the particular action required of them and, in the case of the recipient, is of a mind to carry out such action without further prompting or explanation. The recipient loses no face by so doing.

TEXT 7, from Asklepiades to Hephaistion, merits a similar assessment. The letter is an order for payment in kind to Theodoros.

TEXT 7**TM 7446** (Van Beek 80)

Asklepiades instructs Hephaistion to give to Theodoros certain payment in kind, in lieu of a sum of money.

Recto

1 Ἀσκληπιιάδης Ἡφαιστίωνι
 χαίρειν. Δὸς Θεοδώρῳ ἀρχιτέκτονι
 τῶν [ἐ]ν τῷ νομῷ ἔργων κατὰ τ[ὴν]
 παρ' Εὐτύχου τοῦ διοικητοῦ
 5 ἐπιστολὴν τὴν γινομένην
 ἀγορὰν εἰς τὸ ι (ἔτος) ἀντὶ (δρ.) 3 οἴνου
 κεράμια πεντήκοντα ἕξ τέταρ-
 τον καὶ σύμβολ[ο]ν ποίησ[αι] πρὸς]
 αὐτ[ὸ]ν
 10 ..ματ...τον.

Verso

Ἡφαιστίωνι

Asklepiades to Hephaistion, greetings. Give to Theodoros, the engineer responsible

⁸ Delphine Nachtergaele, 'The Polite Phrases in the Letters of Apollonios *Dioiketes*', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 190 (2014 (a)), pp 219 - 222.

⁹ Klaus P. Schneider, 'Appropriate behaviour across varieties of English', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 44 (2012), pp 1022 - 1037.

for the works in the nome, according to the letter from Eutychos the dioiketes the payment in kind due to him for the 10th year, instead of 900dr., fifty-six and a quarter keramia of wine, and issue a receipt for him [...].

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) (Modified).

Verso

To Hephaiston

Were it not for the detail provided, including the occupation of Theodoros, this letter might be mistaken for a cheque.¹⁰ While it is certainly in letter format, in many respects this document is like a modern payment order of the kind that a manager might issue to an accounts branch to authorise expenditure. That it is in the form of a letter suggests a reluctance to use proforma for such purposes, despite the presence in the archives of many memoranda (ὑπομνημα although this term is used loosely and is also applied to a number of other different communications). The addition of χαίρειν, a polite if formulaic greeting suggests a desire to retain an element of interpersonal connection, something not possible through the use of proforma. It may well suggest the importance of polite formulae for these correspondents in contexts where to us this would seem superfluous. Yet it would be a step too far to identify these features as elements intended to convey politeness. Routine and appropriate remains the best assessment.

There are many such ‘letters’. The same format (‘From...to... χαίρειν’, and in this case with a concluding ἔρρωστο) is also found in **TEXT X5** where payment is to be made to several men by authority of the same letter. **TEXT X6** is another interesting example. So unstudied is its list of how much of this and how much of that is to be given to whom that it could well have been a hurried instruction called out across a granary floor. It is clearly the case in this example—an example at an extreme end of a continuum—that we are not dealing with a letter in the conventional sense at all. It is a memorandum of instruction. Skeat discusses other documents—orders and receipts—closely related to this one.¹¹ There is also to be found **TEXT X7**, a letter authorising a

¹⁰ Van Beek is surely correct to deny that it is a cheque. He also believes the letter contains a reason for the payment. This is in my view arguable. Presumably he refers to the statement in the letter that the payment is due to him. This seems to me to be more of a description of the payment than the reason for it, although it can serve the same purpose. *The Archive of the Engineers Kleon and Theodoros: Archive study, Text Edition, with translations and notes (diss)*, (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2006), p 191.

¹¹ T. C. Skeat, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum (Now in the British Library) the Zenon Archive* (Vol. VII; London: The British Library Board, 1974), pp 40 - 43.

purchase without specifying any sum but including direction as to what to do with the purchased material.

More general orders serving to set practice guidelines are also found and are similarly expressed in ‘the plain imperative’.

It would be wrong to conclude from this however, that ‘bald-on-record’ orders issuing from the office of Apollonios are all of a routine nature. **TEXT 8**, from Apollonios to Zenon, is well-known. It is notable for its obvious urgency and, given its focus on specific events of a diplomatic nature, is hardly routine.

TEXT 8

TM 1536 (P Lond 7 1973)

Apollonios instructs Zenon to send transport for ambassadors touring the Arsinoite nome, stressing the urgent need for prompt action.

Recto

1 Ἀπολλώνιος Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. ὥς ἂν ἀναγνώις
τὴν ἐπιστολήν, ἀπόστειλον εἰς Πτολεμαίδα
τά τε ἄρματα καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ βαδιστικά πορεῖα
καὶ τὰς νωτοφόρους ἡμιόνους ὥστε τοῖς παρὰ
5 Παιρισάδου πρεσβευταῖς καὶ τοῖς ἐξ Ἄργους
θεωροῖς οὕς ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ βασιλεὺς κατὰ θέαν
τῶν κατὰ τὸν Ἀρσινόιτην. καὶ φρόντισον
ἵνα μὴ καθυστερήσῃ τῆς χρείας. ὅτε γὰρ
ἐγγράφομέν σοι τὴν ἐπιστολήν ἀνεπεπλεύκεισαν ἤδη.
10 ἔρρωσο. L λβ, Πανήμου κς, Μεσορὴ ᾱ.

Verso

L λβ, Μεσορὴ [[α]] β, Ἀπολλώνιο[ς] Ζήνωνι.
ὥρας ι. περὶ τῶν τοῖς
παρὰ Παιρισάδου καὶ
Ἀργείοις πρεσβευταῖς
15 Πορείων.

Apollonios to Zenon greeting. As soon as you read this letter send off to Ptolomais the chariots and the other the carriage animals (?) and the baggage-mules for the ambassadors from Pairisades and the delegates from Argos whom the King has sent to see the sights of the Arsinoite nome. And make sure that they do not arrive too late for the purpose : for at the time of writing this letter they have just this moment sailed up.

Farewell. Year 32, Panemos 26, Mesore 1

Trans.: Skeat (1974) p 65.

Verso

(Addressed) To Zenon (Docketed) Year 32, Mesore 2, at the 10th hour
Apollonios about the animals for the envoys from Pairisades and Argos.

The opening: ὥς ἄν ἀναγνώις τὴν ἐπιστολήν – ‘As soon as you read this letter.....’, is terse. An order in the imperative (ἀπόστειλον) to supply carriage and baggage animals for some ambassadors whose travel is supported by the king, follows. A second order, again in the imperative (καὶ φρόντισον ἵνα μὴ καθυστερήσῃ τῆς χρείας - ‘and make sure they do not arrive too late for the purpose’ (lines 8 - 9)) reinforces the first and emphasises the importance of complying on time.

This last is followed by an explanation that the ambassadors in question have just left, which in some sense softens the bluntness of the second order—it is the facts of the situation that require a prompt response, not some whim of Apollonios. Nevertheless Apollonios in this letter is very direct and forthright.

The question of the politeness or otherwise of the letter is much harder to answer. To begin with, Zenon was probably of higher social status than the recipients of **TEXTS 6** and **7** but was less powerful than Apollonios. He is certainly likely to have noted the abrupt tone of the opening of the letter. Equally however, given the topic and the importance of avoiding the king’s displeasure, he is likely to have appreciated the urgency of the situation. A less abrupt tone might have been welcomed by Zenon but he may have been willing to make allowances for the pressure Apollonios was under.

Because the matter relates to the king’s wishes—in this case presumably that the ambassadors are, among other things, positively impressed by the efficiency with which their travels are organised—a ‘bald-on-record’ order is issued. (Indeed the need for an immediate response is declared even before the reason that links the issue to the king is expressed.) The stakes are high enough and Brown and Levinson’s criteria discussed above are in play.

Bald-on-record orders, routine or otherwise, are sufficiently common in the archives to identify this as an important sub-type of directive. Other examples include **TEXT X8** and **TEXT X9**.

6.2.2 'Polite' orders

Such unselfconscious wielding of authority is not the only format in which we find orders delivered. An order can also be expressed with greater concern for how it might be received. Apollonios himself was not always blunt, as will be demonstrated presently. Sometimes this means using one or more of the common *clichés* identified by Steen.¹² Sometimes it can be achieved without their aid. An example of the latter is discussed first.

TEXT 9 is interesting in this regard. There remains an absence of formulae of politeness – there are no *expressions atténuantes* in Steen's terms.¹³ Yet there can be little doubt of its overall politeness.

TEXT 9**TM 847** (P Cair Zen 2 59202)

Apollonios endorses Zenon's action in arresting one man and tells Zenon that he is sending a second (one Ammeneos) and that both should be brought before Peton the Chrematistes. He suggests a punishment for Ammeneos if he is found guilty.

Recto

Ἀπολλώνιος Ζήνωνι χαίρειν, ὀρθῶς ἐποίησας
 συλλαβὸν τὸν ἐκ τοῦ ζυτοπωλίου ταμίαν.
 ἀπεστάλκαμεν δὲ πρὸς σὲ καὶ Ἀμε[ν]νέα [τὸν]
 ζυτοποιὸν ὅπως περὶ ὧν ἔγραψας κατηγορεῖν
 5 αὐτοῦ τὸν ταμίαν ἐξελέγξῃ ἐπὶ Πέτωνος
 τοῦ χρηματιστοῦ. κατὰστησον οὖν ἀμφοτέρους
 ἐπὶ τὸν Πέτωνα. ἐὰν γὰρ φαίνεται κατ' ἀλήθειαν
 ὁ Ἀμεννεὺς εἰρηκῶς ἃ ἔγραψας πρὸς ἡμᾶς
 10 περιαχθεὶς κρεμῆσεται.
 ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) λα, Δύστρου κγ, Φαμενῶθ λ.

Verso

(ἔτους) λα, Φαρμουῦθι α.
 Ἀπολλώνιος περὶ τοῦ
 ζυ(τοποιοῦ) Ἀμεννέως.
 Ζήνωνι.
 [Ἀμ]εννέως.

Apollonios to Zenon, greeting. You have acted correctly, arresting the treasurer from the brewery. We have also sent Ammeneos the brewer to you, so that the treasurer may convict him before Peton the chrematistes on the matter about which you wrote that he had accused him. So bring both of them before Peton. If it appears to be the truth that Ammeneos said what you wrote to me, let him be strung up with his hands

¹² Henry A. Steen, 'Les clichés épistolaires dans les lettres sur papyrus grecques', *Classica et Mediaevalia*, I (1938), pp 119 - 176.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p 125.

tied behind him, Farewell Year 31, Dystros 23, Phamenoth 30.

Trans.: Bagnall & Derow (1981) p 189 (Modified).

Verso

(Year) 31 Pharmouthi 1
Apollonios about the brewer Ammenios
To Zenon
Ammenios.

Following the salutation, the letter begins with strong words of praise - ὀρθῶς ἐποίησας – with the placement of the commendatory adjective first. Zenon would immediately have had grounds to be pleased. Nor does an immediate order follow. Some necessary background information—that Apollonios is sending an additional probable wrongdoer for Zenon to deal with—is provided first. Only then does the order come—κατάστησον οὖν ἀμφοτέρους ἐπὶ τὸν Πέτωνα. A second consequential order follows, framed in a conditional sentence. It uses middle/passive verbs with respect to what is to be done to the prisoner, rather than explicitly ordering Zenon to do it—περιαχθεὶς κρεμήσεται (line 9).

The letter is an example of the way that orders can be conveyed politely, without explicit politeness formulae and, at least in part, through indirect constructions. Again, given the relationship of the parties, the letter appears to be entirely ‘appropriate’.

Sometimes efforts to be polite are very explicit. **TEXT 10**, from Hermolaos to Zenon, is such an example.

TEXT 10

TM 1544 (P Lond 7 1982)

Hermolaos advises Zenon that he has sent someone to collect some croton and asks him to hire draught animals to take it away.

Recto

Ἡρμόλαος Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. εἰ ἔρρωσαι, ἔχοι ἂν καλῶς.
ὕγαινον δὲ καὶ ἐγώ. ἀπεστάλκαμεν Κόρραγον παρα-
λαβεῖν τὸν παρὰ σοὶ ὑπάρχοντα κρότωνα καὶ παρα-
κομίσαι. καλῶς οὖν ποιήσεις συντάξας μισθώσασθαι αὐτῷ
5 ὑποζύγια ἵνα ἐν τάχει παρακομίσῃ.
ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) λδ, Μεχίρ ιε.

Verso

Ζήνωνι

Hermolaos to Zenon greeting. If you are in good health, it would be well. I myself am

well. I have sent Korragos to collect the croton now with you and carry it away. So
please arrange to hire draught animals for him, so that he may carry it away quickly.
Farewell Year 34 Mechir 15

Trans.: Skeat (1974) p 80 (Modified)
Verso
To Zenon

It begins with an extended greeting, including a health wish, provides background information—that he is sending a messenger/courier to collect some croton—and proceeds to use the phrase *καλῶς (οὖν) ποιήσεις*, followed by a participle, *(συντάξας)* to introduce the action needed.¹⁴ The writer wants Zenon to arrange draft animals for the courier's use, but takes the time to ask after Zenon's health and offer information, albeit superficially, about his own. There is a marked contrast between this letter and **TEXT 8**, the terseness and urgency of which is its defining feature. The contrast with **TEXT 9**, while not as marked, is also significant, notwithstanding that Apollonios starts by praising Zenon in that letter. The praise is a fleeting moment in an otherwise task-focused communication.

This letter raises an interesting question. When many politeness formulae are found in a letter, should the letter be considered an order at all? Is it not, instead, a request? Hermolaos, according to Skeat,¹⁵ was the chief oecnome, and thus the dioiketes' representative of the Memphite nome.¹⁶ He thus had substantial authority. Quite how much authority may be debated as the term 'oecnome' is vague and there is reason to believe it may have been used for positions with varying levels of authority. These range from individuals with responsibility for the financial management of kingdoms, the financial management of cities and, at least in some periods, to the management of estates such as that of Apollonios.¹⁷

¹⁴ Steen describes this construction—*καλῶς ποιήσεις* + a participle—as ...*la construction la plus souvent employée*. Steen, 'Les clichés épistolaires dans les lettres sur papyrus grecques', p 140.

¹⁵ Skeat, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, p 80.

¹⁶ Michael Rostovtzeff, *A Large Estate in Egypt in the Third Century B. C.*, ed. Sir Moses I. Finley (Ancient Economic History (an Arno Press Collection); New York: Arno Press, 1922 (1979 reprint)), p 29.

¹⁷ Christophe Chandezon, 'Some Aspects of Large Estate Management in the Greek World During Classical and Hellenistic Times', in Zosia H. Archibald, John K. Davies, and Vincent Gabrielsen (eds.), *The Economies of Hellenistic Societies, Third to First Centuries Bc* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) pp 96 - 121, at pp 106 - 108.

Such use of the same title for multiple purposes is not unfamiliar to us. In the present day for example, a company secretary is in a very different position of authority to that of a private secretary. The term ‘Secretary of State’ in the United Kingdom and other countries can refer to government ministers as senior as the Foreign Minister. In Australia the most senior public servant in a portfolio is frequently referred to as the ‘Secretary’. That an oecomete in service of the king had substantial status, whatever may be said of others who hold the title, is indicated by another papyrus: **TEXT 37** (reproduced and discussed in *Chapter 9*, p 198). That document announces the appointment of the engineer Theodoros to succeed Kleon as the man responsible for guarding and building dykes and sluices. In a letter to a list of functionaries who are to be made aware of this appointment, the oecomete appears first in the list, a strong suggestion of the importance of the position.¹⁸

I am therefore inclined to classify this letter as an order to Zenon, even if he too has high status. It may well be the relatively small social distance between Hermolaos and Zenon compared with the larger social distance between Apollonios and Zenon that accounts for the difference in politeness. On the other hand, it may also be a difference in personal style between the two writers.¹⁹

6.2.3 ‘Reasoned’ orders

Sometimes letters issuing orders are distinguished by the trouble taken by the person issuing them to explain the reason why the action that is required should be taken. It is tempting to speculate that this is a means of being polite in a manner rather less direct than through the use of conventional formulae. It is interesting that this sub-type is sometimes used by a writer with considerable power in the relationship and so with no *prima facie* need to justify his order. **TEXT 11** is an example of this type.

¹⁸ Rostovtzeff uses the letter’s addressees as the basis for discussing the significance and number of a range of officials. Rostovtzeff, *A Large Estate in Egypt in the Third Century B. C.*, p 47.

¹⁹ T. V. Evans, *The Language of Individuals in the Zenon Archive* (forthcoming).

TEXT 11

TM 807 (P Cair Zen 2 59159)

Apollonios orders Zenon to procure some young plants for his estate and promises to send additional plants himself.

Recto

[Ἀπο]λλώνι[ος] Ζήνωνι χ[αίρειν. ὥρ]α φυτεύειν ἐστὶ τ[ὴν]
[ἄμπ]ελον καὶ τὴν ἐλάα[ν καὶ τ]ὰ λοιπὰ μοσχεύματα.
[με]ταπεμπόμενος οὖν ἐκ τ[ε Μ]έμφεως καὶ ἐκ τῶν λοιπῶ[ν]
[τόπ]ων σύντα[σ]σε καταφυτεύειν. ἀποστελ[ο]ῦμεν δ[ὲ]
5 [καὶ ἡ]μεῖς ἐκ τῆς ἀφωρισμένης ἀμπέλινα μοσχεύμ[ατα]
[πλεί]ονα καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ γένη [ὅσα] ἂν χρήσιμα ᾖ.
ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) λ, Δίου κδ, Ἀ[θὺρ] ιδ].

Verso

Ζήνων[ι].

Apollonios to Zenon greetings. It is [time] to plant [the] vines and the olives [and] the rest of the young plants. So send for them from Memphis and the other [places] and give orders to plant. And we will [also] send from the separated district [more] young vine plants and whatever other kinds (of plant) are useful.

Farewell Year 30 Dios 24, Hathyr 14

Trans.: Evans (in preparation).

Verso

To Zenon

The letter is brief as are the opening and closing salutations. It opens with a justification for the ensuing order (ὥρ]α φυτεύειν ἐστὶ) and links that order specifically to the reason ([με]ταπεμπόμενος οὖν (line 3)). It does not however, utilise a conditional clause of the kind observed by Wakker (see above, p 111) and relies on Zenon's understanding of the seasonal constraints on raising plants. The reason serves in this context as a reminder. That it may as a result produce a letter that it is possible to interpret as more polite is coincidental. It is certainly 'softer' than the simple order set out in **TEXT 6**, p 10, with which this discussion of orders began, even though it lacks politeness formulae. It is not unreasonable to assume that this arises from the relationship between the correspondents, the writer having the most power and in this case anyway, can rely on that to ensure that Zenon complies with his wishes.

Sometimes, however, giving a reason, far from being a matter of politeness, serves to emphasise the force of a particular order. **TEXT 12** is an example.

TEXT 12

TM 6200 (SB 6 9215)

Apollonios orders Demetrios to cut certain timber for use in building or repairing warships. (The poorly preserved first nine lines may have been a covering letter to which the order was appended.)

Recto

- [-ca.?-] ἀπέστ[αλκά σοι]
 [-ca.?-] ἐπιστολ[-ca.?-]
 [-ca.?-] ὅπως μα[-ca.?-]
 [-ca.?-] ὡς τῆς β[-ca.?-]
 5 [-ca.?-] πληθος [-ca.?-]
 [-ca.?-] ταυταχ[-ca.?-]
 [-ca.?-] ησε τὰ ημ[-ca.?-]
 [-ca.?-] ημα[.] κ[.] ν[. . .] αλις εκα[-ca.?-]
 ἔρρωσθε (ἔτους) λε Ἀπελ[λαίου] Ἀθὺρ κβ.
 10 [Ἀπολλ]ώνιος Δημητρίῳ χ[αίρει]ν·προ[σέ]τ[αξεν] ὁ βασιλε[ύς]
 [πρὸς τή]ν ἐντορνείαν τῶν μακρῶν γηῶν κόψαι [ξ]ύλα τῶ[ν]
 ἐπ[ι-]
 [χωρίων ἀκ]άνθινα καὶ μυρίκινα καὶ ἰτέϊνα·ὥς ἂν οὖν ἀναγγο[ίς]
 [ταύτην <τὴν> ἐ]πιστολὴν παρλαβὼν τοὺς βασιλικοὺς
 γραμ[ματεῖς]
 [καὶ τὸν] ἐπὶ τῶν φυλακιτῶν [κ]αὶ τοὺς φῶρας καὶ τοὺς
 αἰθ[. . .]
 15 [- ca.13 -]ν πρὸς τὴν κοπὴν [σ]ώματα πληθ[ος] φ[. . .] [-ca.?-]
 [- ca.13 -] ἐπ[ι] τόπων τὸ διαγεγραμμένον πληθος μὴ [οὖν]
 ἀμελήσης ἀλλὰ σ[υντομώτερον] ἀναπλήρωσον τὸ
 ἐπιγεγραμ[μένον]
 [ἔως εἰ] δὲ μὴ τὸ ἔσχατον ἔως τῆς ιε τοῦ Χοίακ. [-ca.?-]
 [- ca.10 -]τατα ἦι καὶ πρὸς τὴν χρείαν ἐπιτήδ[εια]
 20 [- ca.10 -]προ[σέ]ταξεν ὁ βασιλεὺς περὶ τούτου [πλ]ήθου[ς]
 [- ca.12 -]ντας ποιεῖσθαι τή[ν ἐπίσ]χεψιν ἐπ[. . .] [- ca.15 -]

(Lines 1-9 untranslated.)

Apollonios to Demetrios, greeting. The king has given instructions that native timber, namely acacia, tamarisk, and willow should be felled to provide the breastwork for the men-of-war. On reading this letter you will therefore take with you the basilikoi grammateis, the chiefs of police, the thieves, and the ...and [collect] laborers for felling to the number of 500 - - - the required contingent on the spot.[Give this matter your attention and] expeditiously complete your quota [.by...or], failing that, at the latest by Choiak 15. [See that the wood is...] and serviceable for its purpose, - - - The king has ordered in respect of this quota- - - to make the survey - - -

Trans.: Bagnall & Derow (1981) p 166.

The reason for the order (προ[σέ]τ[αξεν] ὁ βασιλε[ύς] (line 10)) opens this letter and receives a second reference in line 20. It is the most important thing that Apollonios needs to convey. One does not disappoint the king in his expectations. It is followed by an order to organise the felling of 500 trees so that a quota might be fulfilled. The king's wishes provide all the justification needed for an approach that is 'bald-on-record'.²⁰

²⁰ There can be little doubt that Apollonios, convinced that he is meeting the king's wishes, would (as noted when discussing Brown and Levinson's concept of 'bald-on-record' requests in the introductory

Demetrios would have known that the option of not meeting these wishes did not exist and would also have known that Apollonios would have been very anxious to ensure that everything occurs just as he requested it. Apollonios, in these circumstances, may have appeared more demanding than is justified. Some support for this last possibility is found later in the letter when there appears to be two dates by which the task can be completed. That is to say, despite the urgency of the need, there is a fallback position if that which is demanded cannot be delivered in the preferred time frame. This can be interpreted almost as an afterthought by Apollonios. What if Demetrios simply cannot deliver? Then there is a further afterthought: καὶ πρὸς τὴν χρείαν ἐπιτήδ[εια] ‘and serviceable for the purpose’ (line 16). The latter part of the letter is not well-preserved, but seems to consist of a series of additional thoughts, reminders or requirements for Demetrios, set out one after the other as they came to Apollonios’ mind. It is as if he has been so concerned to convey the message that this is the king’s command that the subsequent organisation of the letter is less important to him. Again, one is reminded of a face-to-face conversation where ideas flow freely and without sophisticated organisation, rather than of a piece of formal writing that one might expect to be more carefully structured.

6.3 Orders: some general observations

The above discussion has focused on individual details of each letter. The presence or absence of politeness formulae; other means of softening orders; whether some ‘orders’ are, pragmatically, better considered as ‘requests’; or whether some are not ‘letters’ at all, being closer to what we might regard as authorisations, or even cheques. All are interesting questions. The most striking feature of these letters is their diversity, apparent even in the relatively small number of letters discussed here.

There is also something else to be observed in these samples, most clearly illustrated by the last two letters considered. These letters conveying orders are brief and, in contrast with some of the threats and warnings discussed earlier, not structured with great care.

paragraph to 3.2.1. above) regard it as of overriding importance that this order be complied with as quickly and efficiently as possible. This would be the case irrespective of any loss of ‘face’ that may be experienced by the recipient of the order.

Rather they seem like snippets of conversation recorded only because of the need to address the practical exigencies of distance. That these kinds of brief communication have been preserved for so long would no doubt surprise the writers. The reference to the boiling house in **TEXT X7** for example, placed where it is, seems like the kind of afterthought that naturally gets tacked on to the end of a sentence in a conversation. It is immediately communicated, just as it would be if it came to the mind of a speaker, but of necessity written down here, perhaps by a scribe taking dictation.

Modern parallels can help us to understand this and help to underline some characteristics of the language used in the letter that might otherwise be overlooked. In discussing a letter sent in 1715 by Richard Steele, the (Irish born) English essayist, dramatist, journalist, and politician, to his wife Mary (called by Steele 'Prue') Fitzmaurice, acknowledging the unhistorical nature of the move, compares aspects of the letter to a hypothetical telephone conversation between husband and wife in, say, 2000.²¹ In similar vein, and with similar recognition that it is unhistorical, it is tempting to compare these letters, (especially **TEXT 6**, p 110, because, while it is brief, it is clearly dealing with an important operational matter) to a contemporary business email. Caution is required of course. To specify the characteristics of a contemporary business email is itself no easy matter and common sense would lead one to expect great variation.²² Email is still a relatively new technology and practices are continuing to change.²³ There is however, some reason to believe that many emails are closer in form to spoken language than written language and that they dispense with elaborate greeting formulae and other conventions.²⁴ (Although not discussed in the literature cited, it is also my experience that they rarely demonstrate much in the way of rhetorical flourish.)

²¹ Susan M. Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter in Early Modern English: A pragmatic approach*, ed. Andreas H. Jucker (Pragmatics and Beyond New Series, 95; Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2002), p 21.

²² An introduction to the complexities surrounding this issue can be found in Naomi S. Baron, 'Letters by phone or speech by other means: the linguistics of email', *Language and Communication*, 18 (1998), pp 133 - 170. A more recent survey of the sometimes contradictory opinions expressed about email style can be found in Jenny Lewin-Jones and Victoria Mason, 'Understanding style, language and etiquette in email communication in higher education: a survey', *Research in Post-Compulsory Education* 19/1 (2014), pp 75 - 90.

²³ Some of these developments, until 2006, are summarised in Julio C. Gimenez, 'The Language of Business E-Mail: An Opportunity to Bridge Theory and Practice', *Scripta Manent*, 1/1 (2006), pp 13 - 23.

²⁴ Rebecca Mallon and Charles Oppenheim, 'Style used in electronic mail', *Aslib Proceedings*, 54/1 (2002), pp 8-22.

Gains suggests that there are good grounds for identifying a subgroup of business emails that could appropriately be labelled the ‘short request note’.²⁵

It has been observed on a number of occasions in this thesis how much knowledge, unavailable to us, is shared by these correspondents. This is especially true of orders. To give an order, or to obey it, requires that one ‘knows one’s place’. If both parties do, the person issuing the order will find lengthy explanations are unnecessary. The letters come to the point immediately and offer no unnecessary information. Given the relationship of ‘superior’ to ‘inferior’, there is little scope for further discussion. Meaning is conveyed parsimoniously, as much through implication as through details on the page.

In these respects, the letters are consistent with the principles which Grice has postulated as underlying normal conversation.²⁶ These were introduced briefly in *Chapter 2 (Section 2.3.2)*. Before proceeding any further it will be helpful to consider these principles more closely.

6.4 Gricean ‘conversational implicature’

Grice’s theory of conversational implicature sets out the assumptions implicit in the way speakers (or those using other media for a similar purpose) use language in conversational interactions. Set out in the form of four maxims, these assumptions are usefully summarised by Levinson²⁷ as follows.

The cooperative principle

Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged

The maxim of Quality

Try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically:

²⁵ Jonathan Gains, ‘Electronic Mail - a New Style of Communication or Just a New Medium?: An Investigation into the Text Features of E-Mail’, *English for Specific Purposes*, 18/1 (1998), pp 81 - 101 at p 98.

²⁶ H. Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

²⁷ Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics*, eds B. Comrie et al. (Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp 101 - 102.

- (i) Do not say what you believe to be false
- (ii) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence

The maxim of Quantity

- (i) Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purpose of the exchange
- (ii) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required

The maxim of Relevance

Make your contribution relevant

The maxim of Manner

Be perspicuous and specifically:

- (i) Avoid obscurity
- (ii) Avoid ambiguity
- (iii) Be brief
- (iv) Be orderly

As Levinson notes, the significance of these maxims comes to the fore when they seem not to be adhered to. That is to say, any breach with these maxims will cause the listener to suspect that the breach is only superficial and that there is an underlying meaning—the pragmatic meaning—which when identified will be found to comply with these maxims.²⁸ Despite the importance of instances of non-compliance however, it is nevertheless the case that the maxims are observed in much everyday conversation—something that generally escapes our attention because it is so unremarkable. It is this that is important for our understanding of these letters.

A sample of language that demonstrates most, or even many, of Grice's principles, even if in writing, can appropriately be considered 'conversational' in genre. It will certainly differ from many other genres. Thus, to consider a contemporary example first, a novelist will be more concerned to ensure that their prose is entertaining rather than concise, and truth, in its normal meaning, will often be irrelevant to their purpose. Even passages of dialogue will have an authorial purpose likely to distinguish them from conversations in the real world, notwithstanding the author's skill in making them appear 'real'. To consider an ancient example, an orator before the Athenian assembly

²⁸ Levinson's example (loc. cit.) is the exchange: A: 'Where's Bill?' – B: '*There's a yellow VW outside Sue's house.*' A will assume that the apparently irrelevant reference to a car in response to their question abides by Grice's maxims and will use his knowledge of Bill's car ownership and relationship with Sue to be able to understand it as a good answer to their question.

may well consider goals such as gaining the confidence of the audience to be more important than brevity, although he will certainly not wish to appear unnecessarily prolix. Evidence may be manipulated to suit his purpose; ambiguity may be helpful; and falsehood may be risked through the use of hyperbole or by casting doubt on the assertions of his opponents. Even the genre of drama, which has the surface structure of conversation, will differ in many important ways from everyday conversation. This is obvious in the case of classical drama in verse form, but is equally true of contemporary dramas where every interchange will have many purposes including character development, dramatic irony, and carefully crafted humour to name but a few.²⁹

Slings is correct in noting that we have a large corpus of Ancient Greek that he describes as ‘quasi-spoken’ language.³⁰ In this he includes both the dialogue of the dramatists, and philosophical dialogues, but does not mention letters. Examples of letters from the classical period are not available to us.

Slings would no doubt agree as to the absolute importance of the word ‘quasi’ in his description. The documents under consideration in this thesis, it is argued, are closer to ordinary conversation than this. Letters and their close relatives including modern emails, unlike these genres, bear many similarities to conversation. It has already been observed (*Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3*) that Grice himself implicitly endorsed this view by using at least one letter to illustrate some aspects of his principles. The letters discussed here can serve the same purpose.

There is no straightforward way of distinguishing spoken from written language. Much effort has been expended over many years on this question with complex results.³¹

Grice’s approach has the advantage of avoiding these complexities while still engaging

²⁹ It is not argued here that classification of a language sample as one or other particular genre is always possible or desirable. It is sufficient that some of the letters discussed here may be considered to have many of the characteristics of a particular genre, with a consequent improvement in our understanding of what Ancient Greek may have been like in everyday use.

³⁰ S. R. Slings, ‘Written and spoken language: An exercise in the pragmatics of the Greek sentence’, *Classical Philology*, 87/2 (1992), 95 - 109 at p 101.

³¹ For a thorough albeit now dated review of some of this work—more than sufficient to appreciate the complexity of both the question and the answers proposed—see Wallace Chafe and Deborah Tannen, ‘The relation between written and spoken language’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 16 (1987), pp 383 - 407.

helpfully with what we all recognise to be some of the features of an important subset of it—conversational language.

6.5 Orders and ‘conversational implicature’

The discussion of ‘bald-on-record’ orders in particular (*Section 6.2.1*) has noted their sometimes quite startling brevity. Certainly none could be considered to be more informative than is necessary, while still being sufficient to the purpose (Grice’s maxim of Quantity). They come to the point at once, relying upon extensive mutual understanding of the relationships between addresser and addressee and of the tasks they share. Wakker’s observation that the use of a conditional, as in **TEXT 6**, p 110, is consistent with Grice’s maxim of relevance was noted when that text was discussed early in this chapter. The discussion of the politeness or otherwise of these ‘bald-on-record’ orders implied something that can be made explicit here—they meet, effectively and economically, Grice’s cooperative principle (‘make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged’).

The orders discussed in *Section 6.2.2*, which pay more attention to conventions of politeness, and those discussed in *Section 6.2.3*, which offer (brief) reasons by way of support are also consistent with these maxims. While they are longer letters, they are not very long and they stick closely to their expressed purpose. The purpose of **TEXT 12**, p 121, for example (that this order implements the wishes of the king) is spelt out succinctly and forcefully, immediately after the greeting, and in only three words: ‘πρὸ[σέ]τ[α]ξεν] ὁ βασιλε[ύς]’ (line 10).

It was also observed in discussing **TEXT 12**, that the latter part of it appears to be a series of afterthoughts. Writing in this style is often regarded as inferior, unless explicitly presented in the context of an accepted literary genre such as ‘stream-of-consciousness’ or similar. Few however, would be critical of a friend who, in a conversation, provided information item after item, as the details came to them. We would be especially indulgent if we knew that the friend was under pressure for some reason, as we can assume Apollonios was when composing this letter. This situation

seems to describe very well the style of **TEXT 12** and in my view is further evidence of the ‘conversational style’ that sometimes characterises letters in these archives.

6.6 Interim Conclusions

Chapter 5 discussed letters containing directive speech acts at the most forceful end of the scale (threats and warnings) and of a kind not commonly found in most collections of correspondence for this reason. One (**TEXT 1**, p 83) was of considerable linguistic complexity and others (including **TEXT 2**, p 88) also strove somewhat less successfully to pursue a complex task of communication. Yet in discussing these letters, unusual as they may be, it was noted how much they relied upon knowledge shared among the correspondents and not available to us. In this regard it was remarked that reading these letters is sometimes like overhearing a snippet of conversation in a public place. That the letters raise questions about the nature of the society that produced them was also noted but not explored.

This chapter has discussed directives that have resulted in text that is by some measures simpler than those directives discussed in *Chapter 5*. Orders are a much more common directive than threats and warnings and many of the letters considered in this chapter have been too brief to allow for linguistic complexity. The sense of being an outsider looking in on a complex web of social relationships and expectations is all the greater. This sense of ‘overhearing’ a conversation has been confirmed by assessing the extent to which the documents are consistent with Grice’s maxims of conversational implicature. To the extent that these maxims can be used as a kind of proxy criterion for identifying conversational language, it is reasonable to conclude that in these letters we are as close to such usage as is likely to be possible for us to get at a distance of over two millennia.

REQUESTS

7.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters have considered a variety of speech acts, some expressed in quite sophisticated ways (see, for example, *Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1*), others much more simply and briefly. Brevity and simplicity is especially characteristic of orders, relying as they do, as much on features external to the words themselves—on the relative status of the individuals concerned—for their effectiveness as they do on their semantics. The speech act of ‘request’—one of the most common of speech acts—can also be made in a context where the relative status of participants is important. In such cases however, we frequently label the act ‘petitioning’ rather than requesting. The term ‘request’ is used most commonly to describe speech acts of requesting that occur in ordinary everyday interactions, most commonly between equals. We might therefore expect such an act to be both simple and transparent, and as brief as an order. This is sometimes true when the context is appropriate, but a request can also be expressed in quite complex language.

Part of the reason for this is the importance that issues of politeness or proper form play in requests. Requests are however, none the less directive because they are polite. The purpose of a request remains to elicit a response from the hearer/reader that will satisfy the wishes and goals of the speaker/writer.

Dictionaries of modern English generally draw attention to two types of request—the polite and the formal (or petition).¹ The former is typically characterised by the everyday requests that are made frequently and almost unthinkingly by people of friends and family. The latter refers to requests made of someone in authority, political,

¹ The Macquarie Dictionary makes this distinction in number 4 of its definitions of ‘request’. (Macquarie Dictionary (The) 4th ed. (2005) C. Yallop et.al (eds.) (Macquarie University Sydney: The Macquarie Library Pty. Ltd.)) The Shorter Oxford Dictionary includes in its definition, in addition to the act of requesting, ‘petition’ as a synonym, which it elsewhere defines as ‘the act of formally asking or humbly requesting....’ *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 6th edn., (Oxford; Oxford University Press 2007)

legal, or institutional, where there are clear rules and often proforma that help to ensure that the request is both polite and acceptable in other ways. As a contemporary example of what this means in practice, a student at a university, and not his or her friend or parent, may request that their assignment's grade be reviewed and may, for example, be required to 'submit' (the term is a significant marker of formal roles) their request to the course convener in the first instance, and not directly to the head of school. The request is 'formal' in the sense that how it may be made, by whom and to whom, is in some way prescribed by a set of publicly announced rules. Formal requests of this kind are the modern equivalent of what the ancient world would regard as a petition. This chapter will focus only upon more informal requests. Much attention has been given elsewhere to petitions and these will be discussed in *Chapter 8*.²

To identify the features of a request, linguistic or otherwise, that affect its politeness is far from straightforward. As indicated briefly in *Chapter 2, Section 2.3.5*, while there has been an influential attempt to identify certain aspects of linguistic politeness as 'universal', there is evidence to suggest considerable variation across cultures. This is relevant to the consideration of requests found in the papyri and is considered in *Section 7.3* below.

7.2 Requests and their variety

7.2.1 Requests among family members

It is among family members and friends where people expect that reasonable requests will be met and where they will be ready in turn to respond favourably to requests made of them. This chapter, therefore, begins by considering requests made within a family. A preliminary word of explanation is required. This thesis is about business letters. To consider family letters might seem off topic. The letters between family members discussed here however, all from Arch. Kleon, address matters of business in almost all cases. This is true even of those that appear to be the most intimate. The letter of filial devotion—**TEXT 14**, considered at some length below (page 134)—seems nevertheless

² It is acknowledged that the difference between a request and a petition is not always as clear in practice as it is in theory.

to have been written in response to developments in the career of Kleon. So too does the fragment from wife to husband reproduced as **TEXT X23**.

Examples of letters between family members in Ancient Greek during the period under consideration here are regrettably rare.³ Since a small number are found in Arch. Kleon, it would seem unnecessarily rigid to leave them out of consideration altogether.

Arch. Kleon includes 16 texts sent to Kleon by his wife and sons.⁴ Unfortunately, of these 16, eight are too fragmentary to yield any meaning beyond, sometimes, the opening salutation, and are not useful in the current context. Five include no request and so are also not immediately relevant. Three do contain requests. Two are to Kleon from his son Philonides and one from his son Polycrates. These will each be discussed in turn, notwithstanding that they present a number of difficulties in interpretation. Consider **TEXT 13**.

TEXT 13**TM 6220 (Van Beek 7)**

Philonides, one of Kleon's sons, seeks to persuade his father that it is better that a letter be written to the king from the office of Telestes, rather than from someone else. He reports that Satyros despairs of his demotion. Hope is held out that Kleon may be given the responsibilities of a certain Androitias.

Recto

Φιλωνιδῆς τῷ πατρὶ καίῃ[ειν. Καλῶς ἂν π]οήσαις σπουδάσας
 ὅπως ἂν
 παρὰ Τε[λ]έστου γραφῇ ἐπιστολὴ βασιλ[ε]ῖ. Οὐ γὰρ ταῦτ'
 ἔσται [ἐὰν Σά-]
 τυρός τ[ε κ]αὶ Ἄβας καὶ [.]. σε ἐνκωμιάζω[ι]ν. Ἀπον[ενό-]
 ηται γ[ὰ]ρ [Σάτ]υρος [.....].[.]σα[.....]σ. τῷ σχήματι [.....]ναι τῷ
 5 τοῦ ὑπηρέτου. Ἐνέτυχε δὲ μοι καὶ Ἀριστόβουλος καὶ πλεονάκ
 [ις]
 καὶ ἔφησεν οἴ[ε]σθαι σοι τὰ τοῦ Ἀνδροίτου π[ρ]άγματα
 ἀποδοθήσεσθαι.
 Τοῦ γὰρ βασιλ[έ]ως μνησθέντος ὅτι οὐθε[.] τ[ὸν] Ἀνδροίτ[αν]
 τῶν δικαί-
 10 ων αὐτοῖς δυ[.]ενον ποῆσαι εἶπεν τίς [- - - - -]
 ἐπιτηδ[.....]. δ' εἶπεν εἰ μὴ ἱκανῶ[ς - - - - -]
 ἀλλ' ἔχω [.....] γ[ὰρ] πρὸς ταῦτα οὐκ [- - - - -]

³ More are to be found in later periods. An interesting selection of these is discussed in John Muir, *Life and Letters in the Ancient Greek World* (Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies; Oxford - New York: Routledge, 2009), Chapter 2.

⁴ Bart Van Beek, "We too are in good health'. The Private Correspondence from the Kleon Archive', in Peter Van Nuffelen (ed.), *Faces of Hellenism: Studies in the History of the Eastern Mediterranean (4th Century B.C. - 5th Century A.D.)* (Studia Hellenistica; Leuven - Paris - Walpole MA: Peeters, 2009), pp 147 - 159 at p 149.

[- - - - -] ἐχονται . λ [- - - - -]

Verso

Κλέωνι

Philonides to his father, greeting. Please take care that [a letter] is written [to the King] from Telestes. For it will not be the same if Satyros and Abas and [- - -] sing your praises. Satyros despairs [being reduced to] the position of a servant. Aristoboulos has also met with me, several times, and has said that he thinks Androitas' responsibilities will be given to you. When the king remembered that [- - -] not [- - -] Androitas of the lawful(?) (Remainder too fragmentary to be relevant (Mackay))

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 44 (Modified).

Verso

To Kleon

Skeat is correct to note that 'the general sense of the first six lines is now fairly clear', but that we are nevertheless ignorant of the significance of the manoeuvring it describes and even of the relative importance of the key players named.⁵ The point of the letter is a request (that Kleon arrange for a letter to be written from a particular officer) followed by a reason as to why acting as requested would be advantageous. The letter then provides other information the relevance of which to the request cannot be judged at this distance.

There is nothing about the style or content of the letter that would mark it in any way as particularly familial. In discussing a letter from Polykrates to his father (TEXT 15 p 137 below), Van Beek notes a contrast with this letter in that Philonides does not include in his salutation the extended health wish (καλῶς ποιεῖς εἰ ἐρρωσαι ... καὶ ἡμεῖς) found in several of Kleon's private letters and that was common in other correspondence elsewhere in this period. In the same note, Van Beek also characterises Philonides' letter as 'rather austere' and 'official'.⁶

Moreover, the form in which the request is phrased is in no way exceptional. Καλῶς ᾧν ποίησαις was identified by Steen as *un des clichés le plus ordinaires dans les lettres sur*

⁵ Skeat, 'A Letter from Philonides to Kleon Revised (P. Lond. 593 = Crönert, "Raccolta Lumbroso" 530 = Sammelbuch 7183)', pp 80 - 81 at p 80.

⁶ Van Beek, *The Archive of Kleon and Theodoros* at p 59. Van Beek also chose to emphasise this usage when giving a title to his paper examining these private letters ("We too are in good health" see above, note 4).

papyrus.⁷ It is much as one might expect from an educated man with full command of the grammar of his language, including use of the optative (ποῆσαις) and ὅπως ἂν followed by the subjunctive.⁸ This is also consistent with a somewhat ‘official’ character.

Further, the reason provided for making the request is also brief and is confined to a single sentence. Philonides believed his father would understand the importance of a letter (presumably of recommendation) from the office of Telestes rather than from the others named in the letter. This, together with the information provided about the thwarted ambitions of Satyros (if this is the correct interpretation—the text is damaged here) relies on a great deal of mutually shared knowledge. Its persuasive force rests in this shared background, not in the way in which the letter is constructed.

These observations suggest that the letter is not especially interesting. To dismiss it in this way however, would be a mistake. It has been observed on a number of occasions in this thesis that a neat classification of a language sample as one speech act or another is unwise. This is another example supporting such caution. For is not the suggestion that Kleon make sure that a letter is written from the office of Telestes as much a piece of advice as it is a request? The suggestion that ‘it would not be the same’ (Οὐ γὰρ ταῦτ' ἔσται) if praise came from the other men mentioned strongly suggests a preference on the part of Philonides and in this context, it is clearly a preference (whether well-founded or not we cannot say) that he is seeking to communicate to Kleon. The use of a common polite form of request in this letter may in fact be misleading.

A little consideration of the relationship between the correspondents here—son to father—would support this interpretation. It is not unreasonable, given the nature of the society in which Kleon and his son lived,⁹ to assume that Philonides would have been reluctant to offer blunt advice to his father. Kleon was a man of considerable

⁷ Henry A. Steen, 'Les clichés épistolaires dans les lettres sur papyrus grecques', *Classica et Mediaevalia*, I (1938), 119 - 176 at p 138.

⁸ Van Beek comments that this latter construction is found in two other papyri. Van Beek, *The Archive of Kleon and Theodoros*, p 44.

⁹ The same would be true in many societies, including contemporary western societies.

achievement over and above the respect that Philonides owed him as his father. Philonides is likely to have thought carefully how best to proceed given these constraints and it is far from unimaginable that he might disguise his advice as a request. By framing his advice in this way, assuming Kleon was of a mind to act as his son wanted him to act, Philonides would have allowed his father the dignity of indulging the wishes of the younger man rather than acknowledging and yielding to the younger man's claim to superior knowledge.

If this interpretation is accurate, the letter, while remaining a directive, demonstrates a very high level of interpersonal sensitivity and care. It adopts a strategy of 'politeness' of a much higher order than the adherence to conventional formulaic expressions and extended greeting or health wishes. It is also a different level of politeness to that usually discussed in the linguistic literature. Hiding under this letter's apparent austerity, I would argue, is a level of consideration on the part of Philonides that is not immediately apparent if one focuses solely on the form of the letter. A deeper reading is required.

There is also some support for this interpretation to be found in another letter to Kleon from Philonides. This letter sets out quite explicitly the regard Philonides had, or claimed to have had, for his father in a way that, if true, is wholly consistent with a wish to maintain his father's dignity.

TEXT 14

TM 7671 (Van Beek 11)

Philonides seeks to persuade his father Kleon to give up his position, if not permanently then for a period. He expresses deep care and concern for Kleon and commits to his support.

Recto

(Fragment a only)

[Φιλωνίδης τῷ]ι πατρὶ χαίρειν. -----]

[- -----]

[- -----]

[----- -χ]ρόνον ἔχων [-----]

5 [- -----]αῖς, οὕτω γὰρ [ἔστα]ι τυχεῖν καὶ τὸν
ἐπίλοιπον χρόνον εὐιλάτου τοῦ βασιλ[έως. Ο]ὐ μὴν οὐθὲν ἐμοὶ
[ἔστα]ι μείζον ἢ σοῦ προστατῆσα[ι τὸν] ἐπίλοιπον βίον, ἀξίως
[μὲ]ν σοῦ, ἀξίως δ' ἐμοῦ, καὶ ἐάν τι τῶν κατ' ἄνθρωπον γίνηται
τυχεῖν σε πάντων τῶν καλῶν. Ὁ ἐμοὶ μέγιστον ἔστα καλῶς
σοῦ

10 προστατῆσαι καὶ ζῶντος σου καὶ εἰς θεοὺς ἀπελθόντος.
Μάλιστα

- μὲν οὖν τὴν πᾶσαν σπουδὴν πόησαι τοῦ ἀφεθῆναι σε διὰ
τέλους,
εἰ δ' ἄρα μὴ ὀρᾷς ὃν δυνατόν, αὐτὴν γ[ε τῇ]ν ἀνα[χώ] ησιν τοῦ
ποταμοῦ, καθ' ὃν χρόνον οὐθεὶς ἐστὶν κίνδυνος, ἀ[λλ' ἐ]ξέσται
καὶ
15 Θεόδωρον καταλειφθέντα ταυτὸ ποεῖν ὅπως τ[οῦτό]ν γε
τὸν χρόνον παρεπιδημῆς. Τοῦτο ὅδ' ἔχε τῇ δια[νοίᾳ] ὅτι
οὐθέν σοι μὴ γενηθῇ λυπηρόν, ἀλλὰ πᾶν ἐ[μοὶ ἔστ]αι πεφρον-
τισμένον τοῦ σε γενέσθαι ἄλυπον. [Ἔρρωσο.]

Verso

Not accessible

[Philonides to his father, greeting. - - - -] for in this way it will be possible to obtain the king's mercy for the future. Nothing will be more important to me than to support you for the rest of your life in a manner worthy of us both, and if something of the fate of all men happens, that all honours ensue. This will be my main concern, to support you in a decent way both while you live and when you have departed to the gods. So then, make every effort, if possible, to obtain your release for good, or if you see this is not possible, for at least the period when the Nile retreats, at which time there is no danger and it will be possible to leave behind Theodoros to do the same, in order that you may stay over at least for that period of time. Bear in mind that nothing distressing will happen to you but every care will be taken by me to see that you are without trouble. [Farewell].

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 54 (Modified).

The first four lines of the letter are, unfortunately, fragmentary. Further, lines 5 - 6 raise many questions as to what may have preceded them. More advice? If so, one can but wonder at how it might have been expressed. What we do have however, is six lines of very well-crafted prose leading up to a request of the utmost significance—that Kleon relinquish his position, either for good, or at least for the period when the Nile is in retreat (Μάλιστα | μὲν οὖν τὴν πᾶσαν σπουδὴν πόησαι τοῦ ἀφεθῆναι σε διὰ τέλους. | εἰ δ' ἄρα μὴ ὀρᾷς ὃν δυνατόν, αὐτὴν γ[ε τῇ]ν ἀνα[χώ] ησιν τοῦ ποταμοῦ (lines 9 - 12)). To make such a request is a far more important matter than requesting/advising that Kleon seek a letter from a particular individual's office. This request is life-changing. It is not surprising then, that in developing a letter designed to persuade Kleon of the merit of this action, Philonides has taken considerable trouble in its composition.

Philonides introduces his request only after a relatively lengthy assurance of his concern for and willingness to support his father. It is an indication of the seriousness of the situation addressed by the letter that the language in which Philonides expresses this concern is very formal in style. Sentences are long and the language itself far from

concise. It is not without force however. In line 6, the sentence commencing Οὐ μὴν οὐθὲν ἐμοὶ opens very strongly indeed.¹⁰ It contains the carefully balanced ἄξιως [μὲν] σοῦ, ἄξιως δ' ἐμοῦ, stressing, by the repetition of ἄξιως in the quite formal μὲν...δὲ construction, the strength of feeling with which Philonides identifies with his father. When Philonides proceeds to contemplate Kleon's possible death, he uses the euphemistic ἐάν τι τῶν κατ' ἄνθρωπον γίνηται... There is a balanced repetition throughout of forms of the personal pronouns 'you' and 'me', which serves to place at the forefront the relationship between father and son.

After the request is made (from line 10) Philonides concludes the letter by reiterating, also in a sentence that is long and formal, his devotion to his father. The sentence opens with the very forceful τοῦτο ὅδ' ἔχε τῇ δια[νοίᾳ]ι¹¹ and again stresses the care that will be taken by 'me' for 'you'

It is impossible to read this letter without concluding that Kleon was facing a crisis. Kleon himself could hardly have drawn any other conclusion from the tone of the letter, even if he was not previously aware of the situation himself. (To bring Kleon to a fuller understanding of the seriousness of his position may have been part of Philonides' purpose.) The nature of the crisis is not addressed in the letter itself. Moreover, the letter cannot be dated with any degree of accuracy. Van Beek associates it with events referred to in a fragmentary letter to Kleon from his wife, Metrodora mentioned above (TEXT X23, p 131). In that letter Metrodora expresses fears for Kleon because, during a visit to the Fayum, the king is reported to have 'treated him harshly' (πικρῶς σοι ἐχρήσατο (line 8)). To connect these two letters is highly plausible, albeit not incontrovertible. If they are related, the seriousness of Philonides' purpose and style would clearly be justified.

¹⁰ Van Beek, *The Archive of Kleon and Theodoros*, p 54., quoting Mayser, *Grammatik* II.3 p 147, notes that οὐ μὴν is typical of stylised prose found in the likes of Plato and Thucydides and is rare in the papyri, as are some other particles in the text (ὁῦρα in line 12 and γε in line 12 and 14).

¹¹ Even if one finds Van Beek's translation: 'Lay this to your heart' perhaps a little strong, preferring, as I do, 'bear in mind', and even if one reads ἄλυπον as 'without trouble' rather than, as he does, 'without grief', there can be little doubt that the intention is to remind Kleon of the guarantees of support offered earlier in the letter.

Requests such as these are far from everyday events in any family, even families such as Kleon's that engaged in significant business or political enterprises. More 'typical'¹² may be the following.

TEXT 15

TM 7667 (Van Beek 13)

Polykrates asks his father to come to the Arsinoeia as he believes there will be opportunity for Kleon to introduce him to the king. He also accounts for some money and expresses concern for Kleon's wellbeing.

Recto

1 Πολυκράτης τῷ πατρὶ χαίρειν. Καλῶς ποεῖς εἰ ἔρρωσαι καὶ τὰ
λοιπὰ σοι κατὰ γνώμην ἐστίν· ἐρρώ-
μεθα δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς. Πολλάκις μὲν γέγραφα σοι παραγενέσθαι
καὶ συστήσαί με ὅπως τῆς ἐπὶ τοῦ
παρόντος σχολῆς ἀπολυθῶ. Καὶ νῦν δὲ εἰ δυνατόν ἐστιν καὶ
μηθέν σε τῶν ἔργων κωλύει
πειράθητι ἐλθεῖν εἰς τὰ Ἀρσινόεια. Ἐὰν γὰρ σὺ παραγένῃ,
πέπεισμαι ῥαδίως με τῷ βασιλεῖ
5 συσταθήσεσθαι. γίνωσκε δέ με ἔχοντα παρὰ Φιλωνίδου
(δραχμὰς) ὃ. Ἀπὸ τούτου τὸ μὲν ἡμισυ
εἰς τὰ δέοντα ὑπελιπόμην, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν εἰς τὸ δάνειον
κατέβαλον. Τοῦτο δὲ γίνεται
διὰ τὸ μὴ ἄθροῦν ἡμᾶς ἀλλὰ κατὰ μικρὸν λαμβάνειν. Γράφε δ'
ἡμῖν καὶ σὺ ἵνα εἰδῶ-
μεν ἐν οἷς εἶ καὶ μὴ ἀγωνιῶμεν. Ἐπιμέλου δὲ καὶ σαυτοῦ ὅπως
ὑγιαίνῃς καὶ πρὸς ἡ-
μᾶς ἐρρωμένος ἔλθῃς. Εὐτύχει.

Verso

Κλέωνι

Polykrates to his father, greeting. I hope you are in good health and everything else is as you wish. We are in good health too. I have often written to you to come over and to introduce me, so that I may be relieved from my present unemployment. And now, if it is possible and nothing of the works hinders you, try to come for the Arsinoeia; I am convinced that if you come, I will be easily introduced to the King. Know that I have received 70 drachmas from Philonides. From this I have taken one half for daily expenses, the remainder I have paid for the loan. That happens because we do not get all our money at once, but in small instalments. Do write us yourself also, so that we may know how you are and so that we do not worry. Take care of yourself that you may be well and that you may come to us in good health. Farewell.

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) pp 58 - 59.

Verso

To Kleon

Polykrates' purpose in this letter is transparent. Following the somewhat formal and full salutation (including a wish for the good health of the recipient that is often found in

¹² It is again important to note here that we do not have sufficient material available to us to use the term 'typical' without scare quotes.

letters between intimates) he reminds Kleon that he has written to him on other occasions (Πολλάκις μὲν γέγραφα σοι (line 2)) about the topic of the letter—that Kleon ‘come over and introduce me’ (παράγενέσθαι καὶ συστήσαί με (line 2)). His confidence that Kleon will remember this previous correspondence is demonstrated by the way he summarises the reason for this request, choosing the broadest of terms. He does not specify where Kleon should come, he does not, initially, specify to whom he wishes to be introduced, and does not write anything about the nature or duration of the unemployment from which he wishes to be relieved. It can be presumed that he is confident Kleon already knows this information and needs only to be nudged to bring the details to mind. The purpose of the letter—its request—is to bring about action ‘now’ and to specify a time and place.¹³ Indeed the opening of the relevant sentence (Καὶ νῦν δὲ (line 3)) is very direct. This somewhat forceful start is immediately qualified however, by the use of εἰ δυνατόν ἐστιν (if possible) and by acknowledging that Kleon may be hindered by his work.

This concession is interesting. In acknowledging that Kleon may be too busy to come it avoids addressing the issue of whether or not Kleon wants to come. It allows Kleon an excuse should he not wish to promote his son’s interests as enthusiastically as the son might wish. It may be, in fact, that Polykrates recognises the possibility that his father sees things differently to how he sees them. The next sentence suggests this with its emphasis on Polykrates’ viewpoint (πέπεισμαι (line 4)). It is as if he is unwilling to state categorically that the Arsinoeia would be a good time for him to be introduced to the king, preferring instead to assert his personal conviction that this is the case. The letter sets up an uneasy balance between Polykrates’ emphatic request that Kleon take action for his benefit and his recognition that Kleon may not be disposed to meet that request, either because he is genuinely unable to find the time to take this action, or because, for other reasons, he chooses not to take it.

Even after reading to the end of this carefully qualified request it is easy to infer that there is a substantial history behind it, the details of which we will probably never know. When we read the remainder of the letter our puzzlement increases. What is the nature of the 70 drachmas referred to in line 5? Are they a gift from Philonides? What is

¹³ For the *Arsinoeia*, the festival in honour of Arsinoe.

the nature of the loan (τὸ δῶναιον (line 7)) and who is the lender? Van Beek makes the key point that the family letters in the archive lack Kleon's perspective, given we have no letters that he authored.¹⁴ We can only ask questions like these and sometimes make inferences such as those above, without much confidence. For this thesis, however, such complexity draws attention to some very important aspects of language usage, not least that what is not said (or written) can be at least as important as what is said. In some ways the more difficult it is for us to fully understand these documents the more confident we can be that we are dealing with the language of the real world.

7.2.2 Brief requests

To begin, as did the previous section, with a discussion of requests in a family context, and to use examples (in the absence of others) where the request made is of great significance to the parties involved, could easily mislead. There are many more requests found in the archive that are as routine and straightforward as some of the simpler orders discussed in the previous chapter.

In Arch. Kleon, for example, a letter of the form of **TEXT 16** is not uncommon.

TEXT 16

TM 2491 (Van Beek 19)

Zenon asks Kleon to open the sluice gates to irrigate the land.

Recto

Ζήνων Κλέωνι χαίρειν. Τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ἐν τῇ διώρυγι οὐκ
ἀνα]βέβη[κ]εν πλείω ἢ [πῇ]χυν,
ὥστε μὴ δύνασθαι ἀπ' αὐτῆς ποτίζε[σθαι τὴν γῆν. Καλῶς ἂν
οἶν π[ο]ήσαις ἀνοίξας
τὰς θύρας, ἵνα ποτίζεται ἡ γῆ.
Ἔρ[ρωσο. (Ἔτους) λ Λωίου] κγ Μεσορῇ κγ.

Verso

5 (m2) [(Ἔτους) λ, Μεσ]]ορῇ κδ Κλέωνι
ων υδ[ατ]ος
...[- - - - -]

Zenon to Kleon, greeting. The water in the canal has not risen more than a cubit, so the land cannot be irrigated from it. Please, open the sluice gates so the land can be irrigated. Farewell. [Year 30, Loios] 23 Mesore 23.

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 75.

¹⁴ Van Beek, ““We too are in good health””, p 149.

Verso

[Year 30, Mes]ore 24.
[- - - - -] water [- - - - -].

To Kleon

A similar example is **TEXT 17**.

TEXT 17**TM 7634** (Van Beek 21)

A request to supply ropes to repair sluice gates.

Recto

A[.]υς Κλέω[νι]
χ[αίρ]ειν. Κα[λῶς ᾄ]ν
π[ο]υήσαις συντ[άξ]ας
δοῦναι Πετεενοῦπει
5 κωμάρχ[η]ι Σεβε[ννύτου]
εἰς ἐπισκευ[ὴν θ]υ-
ρῶν τριῶν τῶν κατὰ
Σεβέννυτον σχοινία
10 τριάκοντα καὶ τὸν
πρὸς ταύταις ἐσό-
μεν[ο]ν συναπόστειλον
αὐτῷ ἵνα ἐπισκευ-
ασθῶσι πρὸ τῆς
τοῦ ὕδατος ἀφέσεως.
(blank)
15 Ἑρρωσο. (Ἔτους) λ
Παῦνι κγ

A[.]ys to Kleon, greeting. Would you please give order to provide Peteenoupis, the village head of Sebennytyos, with 30 ropes for repairing three sluice gates near Sebennytyos, and send the man who will be responsible for them with him, so they may be repaired before the release of the water.

Farewell. Year 30,
Payni 23.

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 81.

While the second of these letters is longer than the first by perhaps a third, both express a simple request backed up by a reason. In the first letter, the reason is placed first, the request follows. In the second, the request comes first. This variation in order is of little significance here as the matters dealt with are quite straightforward. The texts do not present us with the challenges the family letters in *Section 7.2.1* do because, although our knowledge of irrigation practices in Egypt at the time is incomplete, the action requested in these letters is consistent with what we do know and, for that matter, with a common sense understanding of what irrigation must involve,

In both cases too, the language is straightforward and grammatical. **TEXT 16**, brief as it is, seems a little repetitive to us with double use of the verb ‘to irrigate’ (ποτίζω). This is however, less apparent in the Greek because of the different forms used (ποτίζεσθαι (line 2) and ποτίζηται (line 3)). These forms are different enough to give a certain phonetic balance to the two sentences. Even from the least sympathetic view, the worst one might say about this letter’s style is that it suggests the letter writer was hurried.

TEXT 17 consists of one long sentence. The several sub-clauses it contains all cohere in a way that makes good sense. One element follows another in a manner that would be equally easy to understand if they were spoken. The order of the ideas is natural. The man to whom the ropes are to be given is named then described, the number of ropes required is stated and their purpose explained, with further information as to where they are to be used. A failing of deixis from our perspective (is the man who is to be sent with the ropes responsible for repairing ropes or gates (or gate mechanisms)?) would not have been a problem for the correspondents, given their understanding of the way such work was done at the time. Both display a style that might best be described as ‘unstudied’.

The request Zenon makes of Kleon in **TEXT 16** is, as Van Beek notes,¹⁵ seeks action similar to that requested in **TEXT 1**, (discussed at some length in *Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1*, p 83). Whether they are part of a sequence we are unable to tell. The contrast between the two letters however, in length, tone, composition or, indeed, a range of other dimensions could not be greater, even if the purpose—to get some land irrigated—is identical. It is worth reflecting on this as it highlights an important point. In Chapter 5, **TEXT 1** was identified as and discussed as a ‘threat’. It was also noted that Zenon’s letter has elsewhere been described as ‘an importunate demand’.¹⁶ Juxtaposing it against **TEXT 16** here, reminds us that despite these features, it was also, at base, a request. There are many means towards the same ends.

¹⁵ Van Beek, *The Archive of Kleon and Theodoros*, p 76.

¹⁶ Naphtali Lewis, *Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt: Case Studies in the Social History of the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p 43.

There are other letters in Arch. Kleon, in much the same format, that make a straightforward request in as few words as possible. With the exception of several of the more fragmentary letters (Van Beek identifies three, otherwise unpublished, that despite their fragmentary state, can be interpreted as very brief requests¹⁷) few are quite as concise as these two.

Arch. Zen. also includes several letters that rival the above for brevity. Most notable is **TEXT 18**.

TEXT 18

TM 1988 (P Mich Zen 89)

Labois requests some of his salary.

Recto

ὑπόμ[νημα]
Ζήνω[νι παρὰ]
Λαβόιτ[ος, εἴ σοι]
δοξεῖ, δ[οῦνάι]
5 μοί τι δ[ψώνιον].
εὐτύ[χει]

Memorandum to Zenon from Labois. If it seems good to you, give me some salary.
May you prosper.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 167.

In five short lines it announces itself as a memorandum, adopts the order of address (addressee before sender), and closing salutation (εὐτύχει) typical of petitions, as well as a polite phrase (εἴ σοι δοξεῖ) also commonly found in petitions (see *Chapter 8*).¹⁸ Yet there is very little content other than the request for salary. There is no reason given as to why the request is made at this time, or any detail as to a possible delay or other grievance. Given the nature of the request, it is clear that it is a letter from an employee to an employer.¹⁹ Given this, and notwithstanding some of the polite formulae adapted from petition language, it is surprisingly direct.

¹⁷ Van Beek, *The Archive of Kleon and Theodoros*. No. 36 (TM 388479) at p 107; No. 66 (TM 381302) at p 170; and No. 70 (TM 388485) at p 178. (TM 381302 also serves as an apology.) These texts are reproduced in the Appendix as TEXTS X10, X11, and X12.

¹⁸ The term ‘memorandum’ (ὑπόμνημα) is used very loosely and is used in a variety of texts. See Footnote §22 (p 185) in *Chapter 8*.

¹⁹ Labois is identified among the farmers in the list of trades and occupations found in the Zenon archive. P. W. Pestman, *A Guide to the Zenon Archive* (P.L. Bat. 21, 2 vols. (Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava, XXI A; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), p 529.

Other brief letters of request can also be found. These are less surprising because there is reason to believe that they are either from friends, business associates or officials: that is, men who are more or less his equals. An example is **TEXT 19**.

TEXT 19**TM 2385** (P Lond 7 1942)

Amyntas asks Zenon to bring some mattresses and pillows for his mother when he visits.

Recto

1 Ἀμύντας Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. ὥς ἂν παραγίνηι, καλ[ὼς ποιήσεις]
τῶν τε περιστρωμάτων τῶν μεγάλων ὅτι/ λεπτοῦ[άτων δύο,
καὶ]
προσκεφαλαίων λεπτῶν ζευγος ὥστε τῇ μητρὶ ἀ[γαγών.]
ἔρρωσο []

Verso

5 Ἀμύντας ὀθονίων Ζήνωνι.
(ἔτους) κθ, Ξανδικοῦ β
ἐμ Μέμφει.

Amyntas to Zenon, greeting. When you come please bring two (?) of the large mattresses, as fine as possible, and a pair of fine pillows, for my mother. Farewell.

Trans.: Skeat (1974) p 29.

Verso

To Zenon Amyntas, about the linens. Year 29, Xandikos 2, in Memphis.

As Skeat explains, this letter appears to supplement another letter (**TEXT X13**), written about a month earlier, where Amyntas tells Zenon he is expecting to be ordered abroad and asks for some equipment.²⁰ As a supplement, its brevity is understandable. That such letters were exchanged supports the view that what we have in these archives, at least some of the time, is one or more elements of an ongoing conversation.

Letters similar in their brevity include **TEXT X14**, **TEXT X15**, **TEXT X16**²¹, and **TEXT X17**. Also of interest are **TEXT X18**, and **TEXT X19**. Both draw Zenon's (or perhaps Apollonios') attention to some goods and request some action on his part. Both

²⁰ Skeat, T. C., *Greek Papyri in the British Museum (Now in the British Library) The Zenon Archive* (Vol. VII; London: The British Library Board, 1974), pp 28 - 29.

²¹ In **TEXT X16** it is possible to infer a degree of impatience, if not irritation in the way Heroides indicates that he has mentioned the matter several times to Zenon previously, both personally and in writing.

waste no words. It seems reasonable to assume that their brevity arises from the fact that these are routine and relatively unimportant matters. The correspondents understand each other's roles and responsibilities well.

No discussion of brief letters should omit **TEXT 20**. More perhaps than any referred to so far it serves to remind us just how much can be communicated in a letter no longer than 50 words.

TEXT 20**TM 1621** (P Lond 7 2059)

Philoxenos asks Zenon to return his millstone.

Recto

Φιλόξενος Ζήνωνι
χαίρειν. καὶ παρόντα
μέν σε ἡξίωσα τὸν μύ-
λον ἀποστεῖλαί μοι,
5 καὶ γέγραφα πλεο-
νάκις, καὶ νῦν δὲ κα-
λῶς ἂν ποιήσας, εἰ ἐν-
δεχόμενόν ἐστιν, ἀ-
ποστείλας. Χρεῖαν
10 γὰρ ἔχομεν. εἰ δὲ μὴ
ἐνδέχεται κομίσασ-
θαι, γράψον μοι.
αἰσχύνομαι γὰρ
περὶ οὐδενὸς πλεονά-
15 κισ σε ἐνοχλῶν.
ἔρρωσο.

Verso

Ζήνωνι.

Philoxenos to Zenon, greeting. I have both asked you in person to send back my millstone, and have written a number of times. Now please, if you would, return it, if it is possible, for I need it. But if it is not possible to return it, write to me; for I am ashamed, troubling you about nothing. Farewell.

Trans.: Skeat (1974) p 209 (Modified).

Verso

To Zenon

The letter is striking in its economy and force, while nevertheless taking some care not to offend. It is, in turn, insistent (mentioning one oral and multiple previous written requests (lines 2 – 4)), quietly assertive ('for I need it' (lines 9 – 10)), polite (καλῶς ἂν ποιήσας (lines 6 – 7)), conciliatory (εἰ ἐνδεχόμενόν ἐστιν (lines 10 – 11)) and

modest in its conclusion. Skeat's description of it as a 'gracefully worded epistle' is very apt.²²

The question of whether the letter may cause offence bears directly on the issue of politeness. Is it polite to remind someone of their failure to respond to several requests for the return of one's property? On the other hand, by making the recipient feel guilty, is it likely to cause offence? Is a degree of animosity, motivated by this guilt, likely to ensue? A reminder such as this, and the associated request, may well be justified. Yet both risk causing Zenon to lose face. In Brown and Levinson's view this would mean that the letter was lacking in politeness.²³ Certainly the writer moves quickly to include a polite formula (καλῶς ἂν ποήσαις) immediately after this reminder. He also quickly suggests that there might be a good reason why Zenon has so far not met his request (εἰ δὲ μὴ ἐνδέχεται κομίσασθαι (lines 10 – 12)), a strategy probably calculated to reduce the likelihood of such a reaction in a manner that does save face for Zenon. The final apology, for even raising the matter, probably has a similar purpose. But again, the question: 'Is it polite?' raises itself. Somehow, in this case, given the purpose and the strategies adopted by the author, it seems to be the wrong question, in the same way that it was the wrong question to ask about the two letters from Philonides discussed in *Section 7.2.1* above (**TEXT 13** and **TEXT 14**). In all of these cases, it is hard not to believe that there is more than one way of judging politeness.

7.2.3 Longer or more complex requests

Requests are strongly enmeshed in social relationships. While who may make a request of whom is not as clearly determined by relative social position as is the case with the speech act of ordering (see previous chapter), it remains true that a request, to be successful, must negotiate a range of social expectations. In correspondence, therefore, we would expect to find requests placed in a context that meets those expectations. Such letters are likely to be longer and, as we have seen in the previous section, while

²² Skeat, T. C., *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, p 208.

²³ Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978 1987(re-issue)).

they are sometimes very carefully constructed, in other cases, if the relationship can bear it, can almost be off-hand.

An interesting example is **TEXT 21**.

TEXT 21**TM 2384** (P Lond 7 1941)

Hierokles writes to Zenon about the athletic potential of a boy, adding several unrelated requests at the end.

Recto

Ἱεροκλῆς Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. εἰ ἔρρωσαι καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς
ἀπαλλά[σσεις κατὰ νοῦν,]
καλῶς ἂν ἔχοι. ὑγιαίνω δὲ καὶ αὐτός. ἔγραψάς μοι περὶ
Πύρρου ὅτι εἰ μὲν ἡμεῖς ἐπιστάμεθα]
ἀκριβῶς ὅτι νικήσει, ἀλείφειν, εἰ δὲ (μή), μὴ συνβῇ αὐτὸν ἀπό
τε τῶν γραμ[μάτων ἀποσπασθῆναι]
καὶ ἀνήλωμα μάταιον προσπείπειν. ἀπὸ μὲν οὖν τῶν
γραμμάτων ο[ὕ] πᾶν ἀπεσπάσθη,]
5 ἀλλὰ παραβάλλει, καὶ πρὸς τὰ λοιπὰ δὲ μαθήματα. περὶ δὲ
τοῦ ἀκριβῶς ἐπί[στασθαι, οἱ θεοὶ μάλισ-]
τ' ἂν εἰδέησαν, τῶν δὲ νῦν ὄντων πολὺ ὑπερέξουσιν φησὶ
Πτολεμαῖος, καίπερ τὸ παρὸν λείπεται]
παρὰ τὸ ἐκείνους μὲν προειληφέναι χρόνον πολὺν, ἡμεῖς δὲ
ἄρτι ἐναρ[χόμεθα ἀλείφοντες. καὶ]
ἐπίστω ὅτι Πτολεμαῖος οὐ μισθοὺς ἐ(κ)πρασ(σ)εται ὥσπερ οἱ
λοιποὶ ἐπιστάτ[ται, ἀπλῶς δ' ἐλπίζει σε]
στεφανῶσαι ἀνθ' ὧν ἀγνῶς ὧν αὐτῷ πρότερος ἐβούλου
εὐεργετεῖν καὶ [.]
10 τα ποιεῖς περὶ τῆς παλαίστρας. φρόντισον δὲ καὶ περὶ τοῦ
στρωματίου περὶ οὗ [ἔγραψά σοι πρότερον]
ἵνα καταγάγῃς, καὶ ῥίσκον πρὶω δραχμῶν ἕξ καὶ κατάγαγε.
ἀπόστειλον δὲ [καὶ μέλιτος κάδια δύο,]
ἵνα ἔχωμεν· χρήσιμον γάρ ἐστι.

Verso

Ἱεροκλῆς περὶ τοῦ παιδαγίου Ζήνωνι.
(ἔτους) α' θ', Ξανδικοῦ β,
15 ἐμ Μέρφει.

Hierokles to Zenon, Greeting. If you are in health and in other respects are progressing as you desire, it would be well. I also am in good health. You wrote to me about Pyrrhos, that if we know for certain that he will win, to train him, but if not, that it should not happen both that he is distracted from his lessons and that useless expense is incurred. Well, so far from being distracted from his lessons, he is making good progress in them, and in his other studies as well. As for 'knowing for certain', the gods might very well know; but Ptolemaios says that he will be better than the rest, [despite the fact that at the moment he lags behind them] because they have got a long start and we have only just begun training. You should also know that Ptolemaios does not charge any fees, as do the other trainers [but simply hopes] to win you the crown in return for the kindnesses which you, when a complete stranger, volunteered to him and are doing [everything necessary(?)] concerning the palaistra. Give thought to the mattress about which I wrote to you earlier, to bring it down with you. And buy a trunk for six drachmae and bring it down. And send two jars of honey, so that we may have some; for it is useful. (Addressed) 'To Zenon' (Docketed) Hierokles about the boy. Year 29, Xandikos 2,

in Memphis.

Trans.: Skeat (1974) pp 27 - 28 (Modified).

Verso

To Zenon

Hierokles about the boy. Year 29, Xandikos 2, in Memphis.

Skeat notes that there are other letters in the archive on this topic, but concludes, for reasons that need not concern us here, that this is likely to have been the first.²⁴ The letter is interesting for a number of reasons. Of most relevance to this discussion is that the final lines of the letter include three separate requests of Zenon (concerning a mattress, a trunk, and some honey). In each case the justification for the request is minimal. In the case of the mattress, reference is made to a previous letter, and in the case of the trunk, its value is specified but where it is to be brought down to, and when or how, is not addressed. Indeed, the loose deixis of these requests is good evidence that a close relationship exists between the correspondents. That the recipient (Zenon) has knowledge of these details is assumed by the writer. Finally, the request for some jars of honey is expressed in such a way that it can hardly be anything but an afterthought—*ἵνα ἔχωμεν·χρήσιμον γάρ ἐστι* ‘so that we may have some; for it is useful’ (line 12).

The docket is relevant here. The letter is notated *Ἱεροκλῆς περὶ τοῦ παιδαρίου* (‘Hierokles about the boy’). It is instructive to observe that no reference is made in this note to the three requests discussed above. Whatever the priorities of the writer, whoever made this notation (and we cannot assume that it was Zenon himself) does not think the requests are the main point.

It was noted when discussing **TEXT 2** (*Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2*, p 94), that the threat contained in that letter (by stone-cutters to withdraw their labour) was, on the evidence of the docket, not taken up—that is, it was not seen by the recipient as the most important thing communicated. As in this case of course, we cannot be sure who made the notation. Nor can we assume that either the threat or, in this case, the requests, were overlooked. What is clear is that the letters we are considering here received a

²⁴ Skeat, T. C., *Greek Papyri in the British Museum* at p 26. The texts he identifies are TM 718 (P Cair Zen 1 59060) and TM 719 (P Cair Zen 1 59061). It has not been considered relevant to reproduce these texts for the purposes of this thesis.

sophisticated reading. With respect to the requests, we may well regard them as good examples of those made in an off-hand manner.

Yet there is much more to this letter than those off-hand requests. **TEXT 21** is itself a response to a request—the request that the boy whose training is discussed should be trained only if it is certain that he will win. At least, this is how Hierokles has understood Zenon and Hierokles reiterates this earlier request sufficiently for us to have a reasonable understanding of it. This is despite the fact that we do not have the letter (presuming it was a letter) in which the request was made and so cannot be wholly confident that we have its essence. Despite this, a moment's reflection will show that Zenon's request could not have been met. It implies a degree of prediction as to the future in general, and as to the outcome of sporting contests in particular, that few would accept as possible. The response provided by Hierokles is worth considering in the light of this.

Skeat describes the letter as 'a good specimen of the epistolary style of an educated Greek of Alexandria'.²⁵ It is certainly written by someone with the capacity to put together complex sentences with multiple subordinate clauses and someone who has a familiarity with and fluency in the use of Greek particles. More significantly in this context, it is a perceptive and well-judged response to a difficult request. It is perceptive in that it recognises Zenon's underlying desire for reassurance. It is well-judged in that it is not afraid to state the obvious (only the gods can know for sure that the boy will win) while at the same time offering Zenon at least some reassurance—as much as the circumstances of the case seem to make possible. It is likely that Zenon would have been satisfied with this answer, even though it challenges some of his assumptions.

To consider a response to a request here, rather than a request *per se*, may be considered a digression. Yet it draws attention to something very important about requests. They are often a first step in a process of negotiation. Zenon, in this case, would have had to consider whether he still wanted to pursue the training of Pyrrhos in the light of the information and opinion that was provided to him. Perhaps that was his real purpose, rather than the purpose Hierokles understood him to have—to train only someone who

²⁵ Ibid.

could be certain to win. Whatever the case in this individual example, it is surely true that requests may initiate a process of negotiation as much as they seek a yes/no response, and that this was something well understood by the correspondents in these archives.

A document which makes this abundantly clear, despite its relatively poor state of preservation is **TEXT 22**.

TEXT 22**TM 7650** (Van Beek 24)

An unknown writer to an unknown recipient apparently asking (to the extent that we can interpret this letter) that pressure be placed on Timoxenos to deal with a deteriorating situation.

Recto

1 [Ὁ δεῖνα - - - αἰώι χαίρειν. Ἐγραψά σοι τῆς πρὸς Τιμόξενον
ἐπιστολῆς τάντίγραφα
[περὶ τῶν ἔργων ἃ δι' αὐτοῦ δεῖ γένεσθαι ἐν] τῇ διώρυγι τῇ
ἀπὸ Ψεονγώφρεως ἀγούσῃ ἐπὶ
[- - - - -]υν καὶ τὸν Ἰβίωνα ὅπως καὶ σὺ ἐνταθῆις τῷ
Τιμοξένῳ χορηγεῖν
[- - - - -]παρ' αὐτοῦ...ωτην οἱ γὰρ καιροὶ πάλαι ἤ[δη]/ [δι'
ὀλίγ]ου ταῦτα συν-
5a [- - - - -]διο οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ νῦν
5 [τρί]ψουσιν. Οἱ δὲπ[άλιν] σχολ[ά]ζουσιν καὶ ὕδατα ἐν τοῖς
τόπ[οις] ἐ[στίν]. Εἰ μὲν οὖν
[δυνατόν] ἐστι τῷ δεῖνι ἐ[γ]τυχεῖν περὶ τούτων, εἰ δὲ μὴ, ἔτι
καὶ νῦν [καλῶς] ποιήσεις
[γράψας] πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐπ[εὶ] ἡμῶν γραφόντων οὐχ ὑπακούει.
Ἐρρωσο. (Ἔτους) λα Τῦβι ζ

Verso

[- - - - -]αἰώι.

[NN to - -aios], greeting. I have copied for you the letter to Timoxenos [about the works that] should be carried out [through him] on the canal leading from Pseonnophris to [- - -] and Ibion, so that you too would make an effort to supply to Timoxenos [- - -]. For the situation already a long time ago [- - - - -] and even now they again have nothing to do and there is water in the places. So, if it is possible talk with him about these matters; if not, please write to him, even now, since he does not listen when we write.

Farewell. Year 31, Tybi 7.

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) pp 86 - 87 (Modified).

Verso

To [- - -]aios

The lacunae in this document prevent us gaining a full understanding of the letter, and the identities of those involved, with the exception of the named Timoxenos, are

unknown. Van Beek clarifies the situation probably as well as is possible given our current knowledge.²⁶ Something can nevertheless be said about the nature of the request that it conveys. The importance of this letter to the discussion here is its lack of precision and the explicit recognition that the first request made may not be complied with. It envisages a ‘plan B’. The copy of the letter to Timoxenos referred to has been provided to the unknown addressee, ὅπως καὶ σὺ ἐνταθῆις τῷ Τιμοξένῳ χορηγεῖν....(line 3) (‘so that you too would make an effort to provide to Timoxenos....’). It may be inferred from this choice of words that others too, may have been asked to assist Timoxenos. A reason, only part of which we have, is provided, and it is followed by a repetition, in only slightly more precise terms, of the original request. We rely very much upon reconstruction hazarded by several editors here²⁷ but the reconstruction is convincing, and the suggestion of the alternative of writing to Timoxenos is clear enough. Final comment should be made on the last line of the letter. It expresses some frustration that the author’s attempts at writing to Timoxenos have not gained a response. This implies (an admittedly speculative implication) that the request being made has less to do with provision of materials to Timoxenos (we lack any detail as to what these might be) and perhaps more to do with getting him to recognise the need for action on this matter (ἔτι καὶ νῦν (line 6)) .

Even without engaging in such speculation, there seems little doubt that the speech acts of request in this letter are part of an ongoing dialogue between the parties involved. The force and nature of the request, and even the details as to exactly what is expected, are not spelled out in a manner that allows us to properly comprehend the issues. But for those involved, these details were unnecessary. The parties themselves brought much knowledge to the situation, all lost to us, which made the requests much richer and more meaningful for them.

²⁶ Van Beek states that the name Timoxenos does not appear anywhere else in Arch. Kleon, but is mentioned in Arch. Zen. (P.Cair.Zen. 3 59499 (TM 1137) and P.Cair.Zen. 4 59651 (TM 1282)) as well as in P.Enteuxeis 12 (TM 3289). He adds that the rarity of the name supports the case that it is the same man in each document and that if so, he was a local official, perhaps *epistates*. *The Archive of Kleon and Theodoros*, p 87.

²⁷ Van Beek cites Mahaffy, Revillout, Wilcken and Smyly, as well as himself, in noting the various editorial interventions in the last two lines. *Ibid*.

Yet one should not over-emphasise these linguistic complexities. Among the longer letters containing requests, as well as among the brief ones discussed in the preceding sections, can be found those that are quite straightforward. **TEXT 23** from Alexandros to Kleon is one such.

TEXT 23**TM 7651** (Van Beek 25)

Alexandros asks Kleon to adjust the means by which taxes are collected to include the provision of labour instead of money and asks for some supplies, the lack of which is holding up the work.

Recto

1 Ἀλέξανδρος Κλέωνι χαίρειν. Τῆς ἐξαγωγοῦ τῆς φερούσης ἐκ
Τεβέτνου
καὶ Σαμαρείας εἰς Κερκεῆσιν ἣν ἐσκάψαμεν πέρυσσι
ἐγκατάλειμμα γέγονεν.
Καλῶς οὖν ποιήσεις συντάξας ὑπολογῆσαι εἰς τὰ ἀλικά τοῖς ἐκ
Κερκεῆσιος
λαοῖς (δραχμὰς) σ ὧν ἀωίλια μετρήσουσιν εἰς ξ τῶν δ (δραχμῶν)
ἵνα συντελεσθῇ καὶ ἡ γῆ μὴ κα-
5 τάβροχος γίνηται. Ἀπόστειλον δ' ἡμῖν καὶ ξύλα τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν σ
ὅτι εὐμηκέστατα καὶ
παχύτατα ἵν' ἔχωμεν εἰς διατόναια ταῖς γεφύραις. Τούτοις γὰρ
κατακωλύμεθα. Ὡς-
αύτως δὲ καὶ σχοινία ρ ἐὰν δὲ ὑπάρχηι πλέω σ.
Ἐρρωσο. (Ἔτους) λα Παῦνι ιξ

Verso

(m2) (Ἔτους) λα Παῦνι ιξ (m1) Κλέωνι
παρ' Ἀλεξάνδρου

Alexandros to Kleon, greeting. The drainage channel running from Tebetnou and Samareia to Kerkeesis which we dug last year, has become silted up. Please order that the salt-tax for the natives of Kerkeesis be reduced with 200 drachmas, for which they shall pay in aoilia (of sand) removed, at the rate of 4 drachmas for every 60 aoilia, so that it may be completed and the land does not become inundated. Send us the rest of the 200 wooden beams, as long and as thick as possible, so that we have them to serve as joists for our bridges. For we are being held up by these. And as well, send us ropes, 100 of them, but if there are more, 200.

Farewell. Year 31, Payni 16

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) pp 88 (Modified).

Verso

Year 31, Payni 16 (m1) To Kleon.
From Alexandros.

Van Beek observes that this letter was written by a professional scribe on good quality papyrus,²⁸ suggestive of its business focus. Its structure is straightforward. Firstly, Alexandros advises Kleon that a drainage channel has only partially been completed.

²⁸ Van Beek, *The Archive of Kleon and Theodoros*, p 88.

Secondly he asks that the salt-tax be reduced locally and that those benefitting make up the difference by supplying the labour needed to finish it. Thirdly, the consequence of a failure to complete the channel—inundated land—is specified. Fourthly and fifthly, Alexandros makes two subsidiary requests, one for wooden beams (giving the reason that the lack of these supplies is holding up work) and one for ropes. The salutation and farewell are both brief and the grammar is unexceptionable. It is, in short, an entirely straightforward and logically ordered letter making three requests—the most significant first—and setting out the reasons the author has for making them. While, as is frequently the case, much relies on the shared knowledge, roles and relationships between the correspondents and others, in this letter and in other letters such as this, we do not find it necessary to puzzle out just what these relationships may be in order to come to a reasonable understanding of them. Nor, it may be added, do we need to spend much time considering issues of politeness.

There are several other letters in this straightforward style in Arch Kleon. Examples include **TEXT 17**, referred to in *Section 7.2.2* (p 140). **TEXT X20** is also a clear example—information about a collapsed wall and the risk it poses is supplied, and a request to let a contract to deal with the issue is made. **TEXT X21** (a less well-preserved document) relates to the same matter. It makes a direct request and attaches what appears to be a copy of **TEXT X20** in support of the request. There are others in the archive not well enough preserved for us to be certain that it is appropriate to describe them in these terms, but where the text that has been preserved suggests as much. Examples include **TEXT X11**, **TEXT X12**, and possibly **TEXT X22** (although this text is fragmentary).

The discussion in the previous section identified some short letters of request from Arch. Zen. In general however, even the shorter letters of request in this archive tend to be more complex in subject matter than those in the Arch. Kleon. This may reflect the wider range of issues for which Zenon was responsible. The consequence is that, while still short, the letters contain more complex reasons designed to persuade recipients to grant the request being made. **TEXT 24** and **TEXT 25** illustrate this well through both their similarities and their differences.

TEXT 24

TM 1997 (P Mich Zen 98)

Zenon is asked to question two men in order to resolve a dispute about two cows and a calf.

Recto

[.] Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. ἔγραψάς μοι περὶ τῶν δύο βοῶν καὶ
τ[οῦ μοσχάρου ἀποδοῦναι]
[.] τῶν. ἐμποιοῦνται δὲ οἱ γεωργοὶ φάσκοντες
ἡγορακέναι παρὰ [.]
[.] διὰ τίνος τὸ ἀργύριον δέδοται, ἵνα μὴ δοκῶμεν ἐν
βία[.]
[.] ἀπεστάλακαμεν Νεχθμῖνιν καὶ Τετοραμοῦν τῶν ποτ[-
ἵνα κατα]-
5 [στῶσιν] πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ σοῦ οἱ διακριθέντες περὶ αὐτῶν
τούτων. καλ[ῶς οὖν ποιήσεις
[.] γράψας μοι τίνι δεῖ ἀποδοθῆναι. τὰς γὰρ β[οῦς] καὶ
τὸ μοσχά[ριον κατέχομεν ἕως ἄν]
[ἐπιστεῖ]λῃς περὶ αὐτῶν. καὶ γὰρ οἱ ἐκ τῆς κόμης
προσμαρτυροῦ[σιν
[.] ἐπὶ τὸ Εἰσιεῖον, τὴν δὲ γυναῖκα [ἀὐτοῦ] πεπρακέναι
ἀποδη[μούντος αὐτοῦ].
ἔρρω[σο.]

Verso

10 Ζήνωνι.

[- - -] to Zenon greeting. You wrote to me about the two cows and [the calf, to be given to - - -]. But the farm workers object, saying that they have bought them from [- - -] through whom the money has been given, so that we might not be thought high-handed [- - -] we have sent Nechthminis and Tetoramous(?) [- - - in order that] those who were tried about this very matter [should be confronted] with them before you. Please [therefore examine them and] write to me to say to whom the cattle are to be given; for [we are keeping] the cows and the calf [until you write] about them. For the people of the village also give evidence [that the man had gone off] to the Isieion and that his wife had sold the cattle in [his] absence.

Farewell.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 173 (Modified).

Verso

To Zenon

We can only guess at much of the context here. (Edgar acknowledges that he has included ‘a few conjectural restorations’ in his published text.²⁹) Clearly however, the letter concerns the quasi-judicial duties that fell to Zenon because of his position. The request does not appear until line 5, with the earlier part of the letter summarising the background. This background is set out concisely and explains the request effectively. Thus, while the issue addressed is somewhat more complex than those found in the archive of Kleon and Theodoros, the structure is essentially the same. Its rhetorical force in this case is an appeal to λόγος.

²⁹ Edgar, *Zenon Papyri in the University of Michigan Collection*, p 172.

TEXT 25

TM 1603 (P Lond 7 2041)

Menon reminds Zenon of his conscientious service and asks for some wine, so that he might pour a libation on Zenon's behalf.

Recto

Ζήνωνι χαίρειν Μένων. οἶδας
 μὲν αὐτὸς ὃν τρόπον τὰ ἔργα λυ-
 σιτελῶς τε καὶ ἀμέμπτως
 5 συντελῶ σοι, πειράσομαι δὲ καὶ
 ἔτι βελτίον προστῆναι. εἰ οὖν δο-
 κεῖ σοι, σύνταξον δοθῆναι μοι
 γλεύκους μετρητὴν ὅπως
 ὑπὲρ τε σοῦ καὶ Ἀπολλωνίου
 10 σπείσω τῷ δαίμονι τοῦ χω-
 ρίου. ἔθος δ' ἐστὶν τοῦτο παν-
 ταχοῦ.
 εὐτύχει.

To Zenon greeting from Menon. You yourself know the manner in which I carry out my duties profitably and blamelessly for you, and I shall try to manage even better in future. If it seems good to you, give orders for a metretes of sweet wine to be given to me, in order that I may pour a libation on behalf of you and Apollonios to the spirit of the place: for this is the custom everywhere.

May you prosper.

Trans.: Skeat (1974) p 189.

In **TEXT 25**, Menon offers a reason of a rather different sort to justify his request for a measure of wine. He includes a reminder to Zenon of his dutiful nature, including a promise that he will be even more dutiful in future. He then follows his request with a further promise that he will pour a libation with the wine to a local supernatural power (τῷ δαίμονι τοῦ χωρίου (line 9) The same structure we have been commenting on—reason, request, further reason/explanation—can be identified, although there are important differences. The reason following the request in this case may or may not have been found very convincing by Zenon, depending upon the value he placed upon having a libation poured for him. It is hard for the modern mind not to see this as an attempt at flattery. It is certain the request relies upon an appeal to ἦθος.

7.2.4 Letters of introduction

Before leaving the consideration of letters of request, it is important to note letters of introduction. To consider them last in this chapter is appropriate as they have a degree

of formality that is greater than those discussed so far, but not as great as with petitions, the topic of the next chapter. They serve as a useful transition point between the two.

Reliance for employment or advancement upon recommendations to someone in a position of authority, made by a mutual friend or professional acquaintance, has been common throughout history and remains important today. These recommendations may be made by letter or in person. That letters of recommendation were common among the papyri from Egypt was noted as early as 1922.³⁰ Their importance in Ptolemaic Egypt can be inferred from the first letter discussed in this chapter. Although not a letter of recommendation itself, Kleon's son's concern that a letter comes from one particular officer rather than from another underlines the importance placed on such communications (**TEXT 13**, in *Section 7.2.1*, p 131).

Letters of recommendation have been shown to have sufficient distinctive structural features to merit identifying them as a genre of their own. In a study of 83 private letters of recommendation, Kim identified a structure consisting of: an opening in two parts (salutation and formula valetudinis); a background in two parts (an identification formula and the background proper); a request in three parts (a request clause, a circumstantial clause, and a purpose or causal clause); an appreciation; and a closing—again in two parts, (a closing formula valetudinis and a closing salutation).³¹ Perhaps because his survey extends across a wider time period, this structure is not found in much detail in the letters of recommendation found in the archives under discussion here. Requests in letters of recommendation in this period are sometimes very specific but, not infrequently, the details of what is being requested are vague. The 'request' in such cases can generally be summarised as 'do what you can to further the career or otherwise help' the person being introduced. Exactly what action this may lead to is understood by both parties in accordance with the conventions of their society and the specific circumstance, usually not fully articulated in the letter.

³⁰ Robert C. Horn, 'Life and Letters in the Papyri', *The Classical Journal*, 17/9 (1922), pp 487 - 502 at p 493.

³¹ Chan-Hie Kim, *Form and Structure of the Familiar Greek Letter of Recommendation* (Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972), 'Introduction' pp 1 - 8 and especially p 7.

There is only one example of a letter of recommendation in the Arch. Kleon—**TEXT 26**, which will be examined below.³² Moreover, Van Beek acknowledges that in the absence of the name of either sender or receiver its inclusion in the archive is an inference only.³³ It remains of interest as the discussion below will show. It may be that the position of *architekton* allowed the exercise of relatively little influence. The letter to Kleon from Panakestor **TEXT 1** (p 83) would certainly support the view that he was not held in high regard by at least one man of authority. That he may also have come to the notice of the king and been judged unfavourably is suggested as a possible motivation for one of the the letters sent to him by his son Philonides **TEXT 14** discussed in *Section 7.2.1* (p 134) We also know, from a (frustratingly fragmentary) letter, that his wife, Metrodora, wrote to him in some alarm following a visit from the king and entourage **TEXT X23** (referred to earlier at p 131 and p 136). (These letters may not have reflected his standing at other times during his career of course.) On the other hand, the reason why there are so few letters of recommendation addressed to Kleon may simply be that the sample of relatively well-preserved letters in that archive is small. Similarly, that there are more (although not all that many) such letters in Arch. Zen. may reflect the size of the archive as much as it reflects Zenon's greater perceived influence.

Three letters of recommendation will be considered here. In one example the request is very specific and in the other two it is more open.

TEXT 26**TM 7443** (Van Beek 83)

A request is made to establish a scribal office for a man unidentifiable from the text. (Some indecipherable text added in the margins has not been reproduced here.)

Recto

[- - - - -]
 Διὰ ταῦτα προσε.....[- - - - -]
 πρὸς τῷ πληρώματι τῷ ἐ[ντα]ῦθα
 τὸν αὐτοῦ ἀδελφόν. καλῶς [οὖν] ποιήσεις
 φροντίσας ὡς ἐνδεχομένως περὶ αὐτοῦ
 5 εἰς τὸ ἐπιγραφῆναι αὐτῷ γραμματεῖαν

³² While **TEXT 37**, discussed in *Chapter 9, Section 9.1*, p 198, in a sense 'recommends' Theodoros to a range of relevant officials, in context it is a letter publicly declaring that he is appointed to carry out responsibilities previously carried out by Kleon.

³³ Van Beek writes: 'The text has been included in the archive because of the reference to a *pleroma*; these were sometimes engaged for work in quarries (stone cutting) and for works on canals.' Van Beek, *The Archive of Kleon and Theodoros*, p 196.

οὐ ἄν σοι φαίνεται. Τοῦτο/ δὲ
 ποιήσας εὐχαριστήσεις ἡμῖν καὶ [αὐτῶι.]
 Ἄξιός γάρ ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐν χρεΐαι ε[.....]
 9α [[-----]]
 9 Ἑρρωσο. (Ἑτους) [- - -]

Therefore [he asked] to [put ?] his brother [in charge ?] of the troop there. Please, try all that is in your ability to make sure that a scribal office is registered for him wherever you think fit. In doing so, you do a favour to us and to him. For the man is competent, and he is in need [...].

Farewell. Year [- - -]

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 195.

It is unfortunate that the opening lines of this text are missing. We know neither the sender nor the recipient and its inclusion in the archive of Kleon and Theodoros is based on limited evidence.³⁴ Nevertheless the purpose is transparent and it is this that matters for this thesis.

The letter is a request that someone be formally appointed as a scribe. Much is achieved in few words. The missing opening salutation may or may not have been marked by formulae of politeness, but the closing salutation is brief.³⁵ The elements of persuasion included in the letter to support the request are confined to the assertion of the man's competence and need, with the appeal this makes to the recipient's sense of justice. Something similar is also attempted in the assertion in lines six and seven that to prefer this man, while it would clearly be doing him a favour, would also do a favour to the correspondent. This is somewhat formulaic and is a turn of phrase that, if used in a contemporary letter of recommendation, would not cause great surprise.

TEXT 27 is longer and better preserved but is more general in what it asks of the recipient (in this case Zenon).

³⁴ Van Beek writes: '[T]he text has been included in the archive because of the reference to a 'pleroma'; these were sometimes engaged for work in quarries (stone cutting) and for works on canals...'. Van Beek, *The Archive of Kleon and Theodoros*, p 196.

³⁵ In at least some cases a health wish is absent from letters of recommendation and Nachtergaele, citing Kim, considers that it may well not have been typical in this genre. Delphine Nachtergaele, 'Remarks on the variation in the initial health wish in Hierokles' letters', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 190 (2014 (b)), pp 223 - 226. Kim, *Form and Structure of the Familiar Greek Letter of Recommendation*, p 25.

TEXT 27

TM 1588 (P Lond 7 2026)

Asklepiades asks Zenon to provide assistance to Philon, the bearer of the letter, by introducing him to important people and otherwise actively helping him.

Recto

Ἀσκληπιάδης Ζήνωνι
 χαίρειν. Φίλων ὁ ἀποδεδωκώς σοι
 τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἐστὶν ἡμῖν
 ἐγὼ γινώσκει ἐπὶ πλέον, ἀνα-
 5 πῆπλευκεν δὲ ἐσόμενος
 πρ[ός] τισι μέρεσι τῶν παρὰ
 Φιλίσκωι γραμμάτων, συνεστά-
 μενος ὑπὸ Φιλέου καὶ ἄλλων
 λογιστῶν. καλῶς οὖν ποιήσεις
 10 γινώ[σ]κων τε αὐτὸν καὶ εἰς
 ἄλ[λους] παρακαλ[ῶν] τῶν καλῶς
 ἐχ[όντ]ων, προθύ[μω]ς αὐτῷ/ συνε-
 γῶν καὶ ἡμῶν εἵνεκεν καὶ
 αὐτοῦ τοῦ νεανίσκου. ἔστιγ
 15 γὰρ ἄξιός ἐπιμελείας, ὥς καὶ σοι
 αὐτῷ δῆλον ἐστὶ ἐὰν λαμβά-
 νῃς αὐτὸν εἰς τὰς χεῖρας.
 ἔρρωσο.

Verso

] . . . Ζήνωνι
 20] α

Asklepiades to Zenon, greeting. Philon, the bearer of this letter to you, has been known to me for a considerable time. He has sailed up in order to obtain employment in certain sections of the office of Philiskos, being recommended by Phileas and other accountants. So please get to know him and introduce him to other persons of standing, assisting him actively for my sake and for that of the young man himself. For he is worthy of your consideration, as will be clear to you if you take him into your hands.

Farewell

Trans.: Skeat (1974) p 177 (Modified).

Verso

To Zenon.

Skeat describes this text, and **TEXT 28** (below) by the same author, as ‘typical examples of letters of recommendation’.³⁶ It is very logical in its organisation, given its apparent purpose. From the first sentence Asklepiades identifies the ‘young man’ (line 14) as known to him for some time (lines 3 – 4), relying on the regard Zenon has for Asklepiades himself extending to any friend of Asklepiades.³⁷ (This is so even though knowing someone for sometime is not exactly the same as being a friend of them.)

³⁶ Skeat, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum* p 176

³⁷ Something that is of the essence of a letter of recommendation, whenever and wherever one is written.

Some practical details are then provided. Only in the third sentence (line 9) does the request appear, justified explicitly (καλῶς οὖν ποιήσεις) by the immediately preceding information and Asklepiades' relationship. The request is specific (getting to know the young man implies at least some personal contact, as does introducing him to 'other persons of standing' (Skeat's translation of Asklepiades' euphonious phrase: εἰς ἄλλ[λους] παρκακαλ[ῶν] τῶν καλῶς ἐχ[όντ]ων (line 10-11)). It is also further justified in the remainder of the letter by the introduction, for the first time, of an explicit evaluation of the young man's character and the assertion that his merit will be readily evident to Zenon when he meets him.

TEXT 28 is similar in structure if not in content to **TEXT 27**. It is worth considering here to note those similarities.

TEXT 28**TM 1589** (P Lond 7 2027)

Asklepiades asks Zenon to provide assistance to Erasis, the bearer of the letter, and his nephew, by finding accommodation for them and seeing that they are not cheated.

Recto

Ἀσκληπιάδης Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. Ἐρασις ὁ ἀποδιδούς σοι τὰ
 γράμματα τυγχάνει ἡμῖν
 ἀναγκαῖος ὢν καὶ φίλος. ἀνάγει δὲ Ἡρίλοχον αὐτοῦ
 ἀδελφιδοῦν γῆν καταμετρη[σ]η[σο]μενο[σ]ν.
 καλῶς ἂν οὖν ποιήσας φροντίσας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἵνα σταθμόν
 τε λάβωσιν ἐπιτήδειον
 μάλιστα μὲν ἐν Φιλαδελφείᾳ ἵνα πλησίον ὑμῶν ᾦ, εἰ δὲ μή,
 ὅπου ἂν καθήκηι, καὶ περὶ τὴν
 5 γεωμετρίαν ἵνα μηδὲν ἀδικηθῶσιν, καὶ ἐάν τινά σου ἄλλην
 χρεῖαν ἔχωσιν, προθύμως
 αὐτοῖς συνλαμβανόμενος καὶ ἡμῶν ἕνεκα καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν
 ἀνδρῶν · εἰσὶν γὰρ ἄξιοι ἐπιμελείας.
 ἔρρωσο.

Verso

Ζήνωνι

Asklepiades to Zenon, Greeting. Erasis, the bearer of this letter to you happens to be a relative and friend. He brings with him his nephew Erilochos in order to have land measured out to him. So please look out for the men, so that they may obtain suitable accommodation, preferably in Philadelphia so as to be near you, but if not, wherever may be suitable; and so that no injustice is done to them in the measuring out. And if they have any further need of you, give them active assistance both for my sake and for that of the men themselves. For they are worthy of your consideration.

Farewell.

Trans.: Skeat (1974) p 178 (Modified).

Verso

To Zenon.

The similar structure of these two, and of **TEXT 26** above, suggests that such letters were a well-recognised genre in the correspondence of the time. It would be too much to conclude that this is a standard format—**TEXTS 27** and **28** are by the same author after all, so a similarity of approach is hardly surprising. Yet I suspect that much of their force comes from their having been written at all. The detailed content of letters of this kind is less important than the fact that someone has taken the trouble to write them.

To the extent that content is important, it appears to rely on two things: the ἦθος of the relationship between the sender and the receiver; and the λόγος that comes from the assertion that the person recommended is of good character. In **TEXT 27** at least, the writer stresses that the good character of the person being recommended will be self-evident once the recipient makes his acquaintance. Neither of the letters, despite being longer than several of those discussed earlier, are long enough to do this in an elaborate way. It is the formula that matters.³⁸

7.3 Politeness

Early in this chapter it was observed that politeness is inherent in the very definition of a request. It was also observed that the features of a request that make it polite cannot always be identified easily. The examples of request discussed above have demonstrated a number of things.

Firstly, while formulae of politeness can be found (most commonly καλῶς οὖν ποιήσεις) they are not found often or invariably. Brief formulaic salutations at the opening and closing of the letters seem to have been sufficient in the case of a communication that, provided it contained nothing glaringly impolite, could come to its point quite succinctly.

³⁸ Muir's schematic summary of this form, as found here and in similar letters, is both concise and accurate: 'A knows B, and B is asked to trust A's judgement about the excellent C and give C a chance to show what he can do'. Muir, *Life and Letters in the Ancient Greek World*, p 58.

Secondly, there is a significant number of letters that are so brief and to-the-point that their politeness or otherwise must depend upon the already established relationships between friends or colleagues. On the evidence of these letters, it would seem that the correspondents lived in a society in which it was unnecessary to stand upon much verbally explicit or 'linguistic' ceremony. The absence of any impolite language, it seems, was all that was commonly expected of many requests at the time.

Finally, the family letters discussed suggest that there can be communicated through the careful use of the Greek of the time, when appropriate, a level of politeness that extends far beyond any form of words. It certainly takes care not to cause anyone involved in the communication to lose face. More than this however, it communicates a degree of genuine care and concern for the feelings and well-being of others using language of remarkable sophistication.

7.4 Interim Conclusions

In the Introduction to this thesis (*Chapter 1 Section 1.1*), it was observed how frequently the letters to be examined seek something from their recipients. Common sense would suggest that the simplest way of seeking something is to request it. For this reason, and perhaps in contrast to the speech acts discussed in previous chapters, it is tempting to think that the speech act of request is relatively straightforward.

Similarly, the introduction to this chapter noted the commonness of the speech act of request, situated as it is at the heart of many interactions between family and friends. Again, this suggests simplicity, although the question of politeness—what it is and how it is to be achieved—is an important if not unproblematic issue.

The brief survey undertaken in this chapter has suggested that the speech act of 'request' is far from simple. It can include among its varied forms, communications that range from the cursory, to the most sophisticated and subtle.

The examples of requests in the family letters discussed in *Section 7.2.1* above (p 130) illustrate that the form of a request can be used when the writer has other purposes. It

was suggested that in at least one letter from son to father (**TEXT 13**, p 131) an apparent request may have been a face-saving (for the recipient) means of offering persuasive advice. In a second family letter (**TEXT 14**, p 134) a request of life-changing significance is embedded in an extended passage of concern for and assurance about ongoing care. In both cases politeness formulae are for the most part irrelevant.

These two letters are exceptional rather than typical, although clearly very important. More common is the brief letter of request, examples of which were discussed in *Section 7.2.3*. In these too, as noted above, politeness formulae, beyond brief salutations and farewells do not figure prominently. It was observed of them that the requests they enact are usually straightforward and supported by a logical reason. That as a form they are so common suggests that they achieved their purpose. That they achieved their purpose relies only partly upon their simplicity. There can usually be little room for misinterpretation, but this relies more upon the relationships and understandings that exist between the correspondents than upon anything inherent in the form of the language. They are the brief communications common among people who know each other, and know each other's responsibilities so well that there is no need to stand upon ceremony. In rhetorical terms, these letters are reliant upon λόγος.

This impression is reinforced by the letters discussed in *Section 7.2.3*. Letters that include longer or more complex requests are even more clearly situated in a social network. Some of the requests are made by a writer who is, as is apparent from the explicit content of the letter, fully aware that his request cannot, or may not be met. This may be either because circumstances preclude this or because a decision is made by the recipient not to comply with the request for whatever reason. In such cases the request is part of a dialogue or a process of negotiation. Each letter is likely to form only a part of an exchange of communications that may be extended in time and include oral exchanges as well as further letters.

Finally, letters of recommendation, perhaps more than the others discussed, are very much evidence of a complex web of social relationships. To judge whether Muir is correct to suggest that '[D]oing business in the Greek world has always been closely linked to personal contacts and in the ancient world *it mattered even more* whom you

knew and what your connections were' (emphasis added)³⁹ is not within the scope of this thesis. It seems clear however, from the examples that we have discussed, that it did matter, and that there was a common letter form by which those contacts could be utilised. In these letters, it was not so much the request that was made that mattered. It was that a request came from someone whom the recipient respected. If the brief letters of request discussed earlier in the chapter relied upon λόγος, letters of recommendation depended almost entirely upon ἥθος.

³⁹ Ibid., p 57.

PETITIONS AND PETITIONING

8.1 Introduction

As noted in the introduction to Chapter 7, the discussion of directive speech acts in this thesis has moved from acts, such as threats and orders, issued from a position of power, to acts such as requests that are more commonly seeking to direct the behaviour of peers. The introduction to Chapter 7 also noted that requests can be made by people in a socially inferior position seeking to direct those in more powerful positions, and examples of letters of this kind were discussed. The more formal sub-group of such requests—petitions—was omitted from Chapter 7, with the promise that it would be dealt with in this chapter. The reasons for this decision require further elaboration.

8.1.1 *Petitions*

There is nothing inherently special about a letter from someone with little power seeking redress for a perceived injustice, or seeking a favour, from someone in a position of authority. Certainly such a writer is likely to take special pains to be as persuasive as possible, and take considerable care not to offend. This is nevertheless well within the range of what letter writers do. Also, in principle, whether we choose to call such a letter a petition would seem to be arbitrary. Here however, common usage becomes the arbiter and common usage makes some important distinctions.

Currently, in English, there is a relatively strict or specific usage of the term ‘petition’, and there is also looser usage. This distinction will serve as a useful starting point in discussion as the same distinction has been observed in the papyri.¹ Strict usage is considered in this section, looser usage in 8.1.2 below.

¹ Paul Collomp, *Recherches sur la Chancellerie et la Diplomatie des Lagides* (Publications de la Faculté des lettres de l'université de Strasbourg; Fascicule 29; Diffusion ÉDITIONS OPHRYS; Paris, 1925), p 71. Collomp's observations will be discussed further below.

Strictly, a ‘petition’ is a document submitted to a governing body seeking redress of a perceived grievance and/or government action often of a legislative nature. In contemporary societies, such a document is most commonly signed by many people. A petition of this kind must be set out in a prescribed manner and contain certain essential elements. The information sheet provided by the Parliament of Australia serves as an example of these requirements. These can best be illustrated through a brief extract:

Please be aware that a petition must:

- be addressed to the House of Representatives;
- refer to a matter on which the House of Representatives has the power to act (falls within the legislative or administrative power of the House—some matters are the responsibility of State or Territory Governments, local authorities or private entities);
- first explain the issue the petition concerns (‘reasons’), and second, make a request of the House to take a specified course of action (‘request for action’);
- use a maximum of 250 words (this includes the ‘reasons’ and the ‘request for action’);
- have a front (first) page which is addressed to the House of Representatives and provides the terms of the petition (‘reasons’ and ‘request for action’) along with the original signature, full name and address of a principal petitioner (the person responsible for the petition). Please note, the principal petitioner’s contact details will not be published in Hansard or on the Committee’s webpage;
- be written in language which is moderate in nature;
- not promote illegal acts;
- if written in a language other than English, must be accompanied by a certified translation, including contact details of the translator;
- consist only of original, hand written signatures (photocopies, faxes or electronic signatures are not accepted);
- contain all signatures on pages which detail at least the request for action *exactly* as on the first page of the petition; and
- not contain attachments, letters, photos or supporting documentation. These will be returned to the principal petitioner.²

Such a document is therefore very formal. It is more formal probably than any letter, including letters to a Minister of State raising similar matters. Nor would most people confuse such a petition with other kinds of document that, for reasons of historical or traditional practice, may be labelled as such (for example, a ‘petition’ for divorce). Such technical usage need not concern us here.

The above suggests that the subject matter of a petition will generally be of some importance. It will certainly be of more significance than a request made among equals, or a request from an employee to his employer in the ordinary course of their relationship—the kinds of request discussed in the previous chapter. That it will address

² Parliament of Australia,), ‘Infosheet 11 - Petitions
http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/Powers_practice_and_procedure/00_-_Infosheets/Infosheet_11_-_Petitions’, (accessed 29 May 2015).

significant matters is almost guaranteed in contemporary society by the practice of expecting multiple signatures to be attached. It is nevertheless impossible to specify further what might constitute ‘topics of importance or significance’. Modern petitions to a parliament are publicly available and it would be possible in principle to identify and classify the matters they raised. No matter how comprehensively this were done however, it would not be possible to produce a definitive list. The ultimate decision as to what is important enough to justify a petition lies always with the individual petitioner and those who agree to append their names to the document. Even a relatively small number of people may decide to proceed with the process in the face of good advice to the contrary, and with little likelihood of success.

Finally, while in this strict usage a petition must be addressed to a high authority, neither this, nor anything else observed above precludes people from preparing documents that they label ‘petitions’ and submitting them to people with relatively little authority. This usage will be discussed in Section 8.1.2 below.

From a pragmatic perspective then, in this strict use of the term, petitions are a well-defined and formal means, made available in complex societies, by which an individual or group may seek to direct, or redirect the actions of high authority. This strategy is in theory available to all and even if it is an option not often adopted, its very existence is important in that it provides a means by which those with little power may direct those with much power. Scheerlinck, for example, notes that petitions are a good source of information about women’s capacity to seek independent redress without apparent family assistance.³

In Ptolemaic Egypt, it was also possible to seek redress formally from the governing authority. In the 3rd century B.C.E., the governing authority was the king and the term for a petition in this strict sense was ἔντευξις. In the absence of a parliamentary structure however, there seems no reason to exclude documents addressed to high officials close to the king. Apollonios, whose role as finance minister to King Ptolemy II and (briefly) Ptolemy III, made him the most senior of those officials identified in

³ Eline Scheerlinck, ‘Inheritance Disputes and Violence in Women’s Petitions from Ptolemaic Egypt’, *Papyrologica Lupiensa*, /n, 20 - 21 (2012), pp 163 - 176.

these archives, would seem to be an example. It may also be assumed that petitions addressed to the king were often dealt with by lesser officials.

Petitions to the king were one of the first sets of papyrus documents to be subject to close scrutiny. The work of Paul Collomp, already cited, is very important here.⁴ Interested in many types of government documents, he was one of the first to seek to identify and explore their underlying structure as a means of distinguishing one type from another. Petitions proved to be a well-represented category.⁵ While his understanding of their structure has been modified by further research, it has by no means been completely invalidated.

There is now general consensus that there are four features of a document that identify it as an ἔντευξις: a particular form of initial salutation or opening address—to A from B rather than from B to A; a ‘background’, where the writer sets out his or her grievance; a request for official intervention, using one or other of a small number of verbs; and a particular form of closing salutation—almost invariably εὐτόχει. Certain words and phrases are used with sufficient frequency to amount to formulae. There is room for some minor variations within these formulae and within the structure as a whole.⁶

Certain similarities between these requirements and some of those set out by the Parliament of Australia are clear. An exact parallel can be found in the requirement for

⁴ Collomp, *Recherches sur la Chancellerie et la Diplomatie des Lagides*. Collomp cites more than 60 secondary sources in his bibliography, including Exler whose approach was similar to his own but focused on a different genre - Francis Xavier J. Exler, *The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter: A Study in Greek Epistolography* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1923).

⁵ Collomp identified a three-part structure: *exposé*, *requête* (and) *motivation*. *Recherches sur la Chancellerie et la Diplomatie des Lagides*, pp 72ff.

⁶ A clear summary of recent thinking is found in Robert R. I. Harper, *The Forensic Saviour: Petitions and Power in Greco-Roman Egypt* (Sydney: diss., 1997), p 147. A detailed examination of the form and structure of the enteuxis has been undertaken by di Bitonto: Anna Di Bitonto, 'Le Petizioni al re: Studio sul formulario', *Aegyptus*, 47 (1/2) (1967), pp 5 - 57; 'Le Petizioni ai funzionari nel periodo tolemaico: Studio Sul Formulario', *Aegyptus*, 48 (1/4) (1968), pp 53 - 107; 'Frammenti di petizioni del periodo tolemaico', *Aegyptus*, 56 (1/4) (1976), pp 109 - 43. See also Exler, *The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter: A Study in Greek Epistolography*; John L. White, *The Form and Structure of the Official Petition: A Study in Greek Epistolography* (Dissertation Series, Number Five; Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972); and John L. White, 'The Greek Documentary Letter Tradition Third Century B.C.E. To Third Century C.E.', *Semeia*, 22 (1982), pp 89 - 106.

a background and a clear request. While the details differ, a form of address is also specified in both, as are details about closure.

A collection of 3rd century B.C.E. petitions was published relatively early in the history of papyrological research.⁷ A small but instructive selection of petitions, both to the king and to other officials, and from a wider time period, has been published by Hunt and Edgar.⁸ Their selection ranges across a wider period than that of the two archives discussed here, and changes certainly occurred from Ptolemaic through Roman times.⁹ The early examples provided by Hunt and Edgar however, illustrate the above structure very well. Thus, and unlike the letters discussed so far in this thesis, which usually open with the name of the author, petitions place the name of the person addressed, sometimes with his title, first, (for example, **TEXT 29** reproduced in *Section 8.2*, below p 172; **TEXT X24**; and **TEXT X25**¹⁰). The background to the issue is commonly introduced by a (usually) passive form of the verb ἀδικέω (for example, **Text 29** (ἀδικεῖται μὲν ὁ πατήρ) and **TEXT X25** (ἀδικουμαι ὑπο Διονυσίου)). A section follows explicitly making a request, again using one or more of a small number of words (for example, **TEXT 29** (δέομαι οὖν, εἴ σοι δοκεῖ, ἐπισκέψασθαι περὶ τούτων), **TEXT X24** (δέομαι οὖν σου καὶ ἰκετεύω, εἴ σοι δοκεῖ)), and often also including a form of προστάσσω.¹¹ The final salutation is usually εὐτόχει.

As was noted above in discussing the way the term petition is used, one would expect the issues addressed to be of some importance. Anna di Bitonto, in an extensive survey, demonstrated this to be the case through an analysis of the concerns that make up the

⁷ Octave Guéraud, *Ἐντεῦξεις: Requêtes et plaintes adressées au Roi d'Égypte au III^e siècle avant J. C.* (Publications De La Société Royale Egyptienne De Papyrologie. Textes Et Documents 1 (Premier Fascicule); Cairo: Imp. de l'institut Français d'archéologie orientale, 1931/1932).

⁸ A. S. Hunt and C. C. Edgar, *Select Papyri in five volumes: Vol II: Non-Literary Papyri - Public Documents* (Loeb Classical Library; London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1932 (reprinted 1963)), pp 226 - 331.

⁹ Hunt and Edgar note a change in language from 3rd century B.C.E. to Byzantine papyri which they describe as a move from 'pure Greek' to 'empty verbosity' *ibid.*, p xxix. Mullins illustrates the persistence of core elements with relatively small variation through New Testament times. Terence Y Mullins, 'Petition as a Literary Form', *Novum Testamentum*, 5/1 (1962), pp 46 - 54.

¹⁰ TEXT X25 is not drawn from either of the archives that are the focus of this thesis.

¹¹ Collomp saw this verb as an essential part of the formula at this point, finding that it almost invariably followed δέομαί σου. Collomp, *Recherches sur la Chancellerie et la Diplomatie des Lagides*, pp 103ff.

content of petitions.¹² This work is important for many reasons, not least for the way in which it demonstrates that there was significant scope for composing petitions that differed greatly in both style and content, even while they retained the same overall structure. Much scholarship examining Ancient Greek petitions has focused on commonalities of form and structure to a degree that this variation has been given relatively little attention. It is one of the purposes of this thesis to remedy this, from a pragmatic perspective.

While neither Zenon nor Kleon were royal officials, some of the structural features of formal petitions identified above are found in letters in these archives. This is noteworthy and will be explored further below.

Examples of formal petitions will be considered in Section 8.2. Before examining them however, there is need for some discussion of what was called above ‘looser usage’ of the term petition. For convenience, this will be referred to as ‘petitioning’.

8.1.2 *Petitioning*

Language is fluid. Words with a strictly defined meaning can nevertheless be used in a different context. Thus, in contemporary societies, not a few middle managers have been ‘petitioned’ by staff members who believe that a letter signed by them all expressing a grievance, however informally prepared, will have more chance of success than a request conveyed in other ways.

This demonstrates two related matters: first it is very difficult to conceive of an organisation where members will never wish to persuade their leadership to change in some way; and secondly there is widespread knowledge in many societies that a petition is a powerful way to formalise one’s requests and, it is assumed, increase the chances of them being met. This may betray something of a misunderstanding of the stricter meaning of a petition as set out above. It is nevertheless evidence of the way a formal

¹² Anna Di Bitonto, ‘Le Petizioni al re: Studio sul formulario’; ‘Le Petizioni ai funzionari nel periodo tolemaico’; and ‘Frammenti di petizioni del periodo tolemaico’. Among the issues di Bitonto identified were crimes against the person (*reati contro la persona*), crimes against property (*delitti contro il patrimonio*), and failures of duty (*inadempienza ad obbligazione*).

means of using language to achieve particular goals can coexist with not dissimilar language used in other contexts. It is not, however, grounds for suggesting that a petition of this kind is in some way a derivative, sub-standard or otherwise inferior use of the language. Rather it shows that people will seek to perform speech acts, the outcome of which is important to them, using whatever resources their language community has to offer.

Indeed, the distinction between a formal petition and looser forms of petitioning can easily become blurred. In an organisation such as a university, for example, students might seek redress or express their concern in a variety of ways. If seeking a response that cannot easily be discounted, one of these ways might be to submit a petition to the Vice-Chancellor or President of the institution, rather than to someone, such as a dean, with narrower responsibilities. In the relatively smaller, yet still large context of a university, as distinct from the society as a whole, because of the authority vested in a vice-chancellor or college president, the difference between this kind of petition and a petition to parliament will not be great. To use a model provided by sanctioned governmental practice in order to achieve more local goals is in my view an example of the flexibility a sophisticated language makes available to its users as they seek to make their way in their particular social context.

There is, in short, a continuum between the formal petitions that Collomp examined and other appeals to authority that might use similar language. This is something Collomp saw very clearly as he tried to decide what to identify as a petition and what to exclude. He hypothesised a tripartite division among some of the documents he examined: letters (some of which may be respectful in style throughout (*respectueuse*, *à corps de lettre*) and adopt the model of opening (addressee first) usual in petitions; petition letters (*lettre enteuxis*) which adopt, to a greater or lesser degree, the structure and formulae found in a petition; and petitions per se or petitions ‘strictly speaking’ (*enteuxis proprement dite*).¹³

This is helpful. Indeed, *mutatis mutandis* the distinctions he made could also be applied to the contemporary examples above. Note can be taken of the extent to which ‘proper’

¹³ Collomp, *Recherches sur la Chancellerie et la Diplomatie des Lagides*, p 71.

petition form is adopted, including, for example, ‘being written in language which is moderate in nature’, or whether it is absent to varying degrees. Some contemporary writers in organisations such as businesses or educational institutions will petition their superiors in a style that would meet most of the criteria set out by the Parliament. Others, whether through ignorance or other reasons, including a high level of emotional distress, will not achieve it. In all cases, it is variations in the details of the language used that are important, and there is no reason to believe that this is any the less true in Ancient Greek.

Pestman et al., recognised the distinction between formal petitions to the king and other documents petitioning individuals with power in their typological survey of the Zenon archive. These petition-like documents are usually referred to, and treated by them, as ἐπιστολή rather than ἔντευξις.¹⁴ In this respect, Pestman et. al. share my view that these are not petitions in the strictest sense. It was not their business to pursue in detail the characteristics of those documents. It is, however, the business of this thesis.

In what follows below, some examples of letters that are clearly *enteuxis proprement dite*, or are being edited towards that goal, are discussed (*Section 8.2*). Subsequently, (*Section 8.3*), examples of letters making (usually) respectful requests by an ‘inferior’ to a ‘superior’ and characterised to a greater or lesser extent by certain formalities of expression derived from practices defining of a formal petition, are discussed. Brief consideration is given to the relationship between some ‘reports’ (prosangelmata) and petitions in *Section 8.4*. Some conclusions derived from this comparison will be set out in *Section 8.5*.

8.2 Formal petitions

Let us begin with **TEXT 29**, which was referred to in *Section 8.1.1* above.

TEXT 29

TM 881 (P Cair Zen 2 59236)

Neoptolemos, a Macedonian cleruch, petitions Diotemos on behalf of his father, claiming that his father’s tax has been calculated incorrectly and seeking a correction of this error.

¹⁴ P. W. Pestman, *A Guide to the Zenon Archive* (P.L. Bat. 21, 2 vols. (Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava, XXI A; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), p 191.

Recto

- 1 Διοτίμωι διοικητῇ χαίρειν Νεοπτόλεμος Μακεδὼν τῶν ἐν
 Φιλαδελφείᾳ κληρούχων. ἀδικίται μοι ὁ πατὴρ Στρά-
 τιππος ὑπὸ Θεοκλέους τοῦ οἰκονομήσαντος τὸν
 Ἀφροδιτοπολίτην νομὸν καὶ Πετοσίριος τοῦ βασιλικοῦ
 γραμματέως. ἐπιγραφὴν γὰρ
 ποιούμενοι τοῖς ἀμπελῶσι, ἐκ τριῶν ἐτῶν τὰ γενήματα λαμβά-
 νοντες, τὸ τρίτον μέρος ἐπέγραφον, τῷ δὲ πατρὶ ἐκ δύο
 ἐτῶν
 τὴν ἐπιγραφὴν πεποίηνται, φάμενοι νεόφυτον εἶναι. δέομαι οὖν
 σου, εἴ σοι δοκεῖ, ἐπισκέψασθαι περὶ τούτων, καὶ κὰν ᾗ
 ταῦτα ἀληθῆ,
 5 ἐπειδὴ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς ἐκ τριῶν ἐτῶν πεποίηνται τὴν
 ἐπιγραφὴν, δοῦναί μοι πρόσταγμα
 πρὸς Ἑρμόλαον καὶ Πετοσίριν/ [[αὐτοὺς]] ὅπως ἂν ἐκ τριῶν
 ἐτῶν
 τὴν ἐπιγραφὴν καὶ τῷ πατρὶ ποιήσωνται, εἴτε βούλονται ἀπὸ
 τοῦ ἐνάτου καὶ εἰκοστοῦ ἔτους τὴν ἀρχὴν ποιούμενοι,
 εἴτε ἀπὸ τοῦ τρια-
 κοστοῦ ἔτους, ἥδη γὰρ οἰνοποιήκαμεν ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἔτη τέσσαρα ,
 καὶ προσδέξασθαι αὐτῷ τὸ πεπτωκὸς ἐπὶ τράπεζαν
 ἀργύριον παρὰ
 τῶν οἰνοκαπήλων οἴνου οὐ ἔλαβον ἐκ τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος, ὅπως ἂν
 διὰ σέ τοῦ δικαίου τύχηι.
 εὐτύχει.

Verso

- 10 Νεοπτόλεμος Διοτίμωι ἔντευξιν περὶ
 ἀμπελῶνος.
 υπε
 13, md

To Diotimos, dioiketes, greeting from Neoptolemos, Macedonian, one of the cleruchs at Philadelphia. My father Stratippos is being wronged by Theocles the oeconomos of the Aphroditopolite nome and Petosiris the royal scribe. For in calculating the tax to be paid on the vineyards they used to take the produce of the last three years and make the third part of this the basis for the tax, but in the case of my father they have calculated the tax on the average of the last two years, saying that his vineyard was lately planted. I beg you therefore, if you think fit, to inquire into this and, if this is true, since they have calculated the tax for all the others on the average of three years, to give me an order to Hermolaos and Petosiris to calculate the tax for my father also on the average of three years, beginning either from the twenty-ninth year or from the thirtieth year, just as they wish, for we have now made wine from the vineyard for four years, and to credit him with the money paid into the bank by the wine-dealers for the wine which they received from the vineyard, in order that he may obtain justice at your hands. May you prosper.

Trans.: Hunt & Edgar (1934) pp 227 - 229 (Modified).

Verso

Petition from Neoptolemus to Diotimos about a vineyard.

Drawn from Arch Zen., it is a good example of the genre in the mid third century B.C.E. It contains the four common elements of a petition—a distinctive form of greeting and closure, with the greeting including in this case what White would call

‘lineage’, ‘vocation’ and ‘residence’ items,¹⁵ a background, including a form of the verb ἀδικέω, and an explicit request of the addressee.

This petition is also written in a straightforward style that seems well-suited to its purpose—persuading a busy official to respond favourably to the request that it makes. The wrong complained of is asserted briefly in line 2 and explained in the next sentence. The explanation is essentially simple, although given what needs to be said, it is probably too wordy. It compares what the writer asserts to be normal practice with the treatment allegedly received by his father. The request for redress made in lines 4 onwards is also clear, and preceded by careful use of polite language, including the formulaic δέομαι οὖν σου, and the reservation (also formulaic) εἴ σοι δοκεῖ (line 4). The writer recognises that the matter will need to be investigated rather than responded to solely on the basis of the assertions he is making. Despite confidently arguing his case, he is not presumptuous. He asks that an order be issued to recalculate his father’s tax and repeats, for emphasis and clarity, the difference between his father’s treatment and the treatment of others. He is sufficiently detailed in this request as to specify the times from which calculations of the tax base should start.

This approach, whether it is ultimately successful or not, is at least unlikely to annoy the official who has to deal with it. The issue is clear, the response requested well-articulated and the approach polite. It can, in the absence of any unspoken rules of patronage or corruption, be dealt with on its merits. In this case the standard format has been adopted in full and used to good effect. It is notable that beyond the structure itself, and the essentially modest stance that the form requires, there is little in the way of rhetorical flourish in this document—not even much in the way of an appeal to πάθος. Indeed this is rather surprising. Bauschatz is surely correct in observing that petitions are by nature rhetorical documents, yet there is little to be found here. Bauschatz’s further generalisation that ‘detailed accounts of pain and suffering were important ingredients for successful claims’¹⁶ is, at least on the evidence of this example, open to question. He may of course be correct with respect to the wider

¹⁵ White, *The Form and Structure of the Official Petition: A Study in Greek Epistolography*, p 21.

¹⁶ John Bauschatz, ‘The Strong Arm of the Law? Police Corruption in Ptolemaic Egypt’, *The Classical Journal*, 103/1 (2007), pp 13 - 39, p 18.

sample and broader time frame of the documents he has studied. **TEXT 29** however, suggests that restraint can sometimes be a preferred rhetorical strategy.

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that most formal petitions are as balanced and well ordered as this. It is interesting to compare it with **TEXT 30**.

TEXT 30**TM 984** (P Cair Zen 59341)

A complex and much corrected document that appears to be an early draft of a petition, the exact nature of which is not easy to determine. Some text (including the verso) not directly part of the petition has been omitted, following Edgar.

Recto

- Ἀπολλωνίῳ διοικητῇ χαίρειν Θεόπροπος
θεωρὸς ἀπὸ Καλύνδων. τοῦ η καὶ λ (ἔτους)
ὁ γεωργὸς μου Θήρων ἐπρίατο παρὰ
10 τῆς πόλεως παρᾶσχειν οἶνον τῇ γινομένη
πανηγύρει ἐγ Κυπράνδοις κατ' ἐνιαυτόν,
ὕπερ οὐ ἐγὼ παρέσχον τὸν οἶνον μετρη-
τάς πδ τὸμ μετρητὴν ἀνὰ (δραχμάς) ι
ὁ γίνονται (δραχμαὶ) ων, [[δανεισά-
15 μενος τόκων ἐννόμων διὰ τὸ τὸν Θήρωνα
μὴ ἔχειν ἀνηλῶσαι, δι' ἐμοῦ ὕδ' ἡγορακότα]].
καὶ εἰς τοῦτο ἄποδεδωκότων μοι/ τῶν ταμιῶν Διοφάντου καὶ
Ἀκρισίου
[[ἀποδεδωκότων μοι]] (δραχμάς) χ, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν [[(δραχμάς) σν]]
18a (δραχμάς) σν διὰ τὸ μὴ πεσεῖν πάσας τὰς συμβολάς,
οὐκ ἀποδιδόντων κατέστησα τοὺς ταμίαις [[Διο]]
20 ἐπὶ τε τὸν στρατηγὸν Μότην καὶ τὸν οἰκονόμον
Διόδοτον ἀπαιτῶν τὰς σν (δραχμάς) [[καὶ τὸν τόκον]].
οἱ δὲ ταμίαι Διόφαντος καὶ Ἀκρισίος ἡξίου
ψηφί/σμα αὐτοῖς γραφῆναι, ἡράμενοι οὐκ/ [[μὴ κύριοι]] εἶναι
κύριοι/ ἄνευ ψηφίσματος/ ἀποδιδόντες/ / οἱ δὲ πρυτάνεις
καὶ ὁ γραμματεὺς παρήλκυσαν καὶ οὐκ ἔγραψαν
25 τὸ ψηφίσμα ἕως ὅτου προχειρισθεὶς ὑπὸ τῆς πόλεως/ θεωρὸς
μετὰ Διοφάντου ἐνὸς τῶν ταμιῶν παρεγενή-
θην ἐνταῦθα πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα. εἰ οὖν σοι
δοκεῖ, καλῶς ποιήσεις γράψας πρὸς τε τὴν πόλιν
ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν στρατηγὸν [[Μο]] καὶ τὸν οἰκονόμον
30 ἀποδοθῆναί μοι τὰς σν (δραχμάς) [[καὶ τὸν τόκον]]
[[ὅσος ἂν γένηται ἀφ' οὗ εἰσανήλωκα εἰς τὸν οἶνον]]
[[τῇ πόλει αὐτὸς παρ' ἐτέρων δανεισάμενος]]
[[καὶ τόκους φέρων ἔτι καὶ νῦν]] [ἴνα] μὴ ἀδικηθῶ,
r,a,md
[[ἐπειδ]ῆ καὶ πρότερον ἕτερο[.] . . σιν
ε[.] το ἀπο-
35 δ[οῦναι] διὰ τὸ μὴ
ἐ[κπο]ιῆσαι ἐκ τῶν
σ[υμβ]ολῶν τὴν
ἀ[πόδ]οσιν γενέσθαι]]
r,a,ctr
ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐγὼ ὦ [[.]] τῆς παρὰ σοῦ φιλανθρωπίας
35 τετευχώς.
εὐτύχει.

To Apollonios the dioiketes greeting from Theopropos, sacred envoy from Kalynda. In the 38th year my father Theron purchased from the city a concession to provide wine for the festival which is held yearly at Kypranda, and I provided the wine on his behalf, amounting to 84 metretae at 10 drachmae the metretes, which makes 840 dr., [[borrowing at the legal interest, as Theron had no money to spend and had made the purchase through me]]. And as the treasurers Diophantos and Akrisios had paid me 600 dr. towards this sum, but were withholding the balance of 250 dr. because the subscriptions had not all come in, I brought them before the strategos Motes and the oeconomos Diodotos, demanding the 250 dr. [[and the interest]]. The treasurers Diophantos and Akrisios asked that a decree should be drawn up for their instruction, saying that they had no authority to pay without a decree. But the prytaneis and the secretary procrastinated and had not proposed the decree up to the time when, having been appointed by the city as sacred envoy along with Diophantos, one of the treasurers, I came here to salute the king. If therefore you approve, kindly write to our city and to the strategos and the oeconomos to let the 250 dr. be paid to me [[with the interest], whatever it may amount to from the time when I spent money on the wine for the city, as I myself borrowed from others and am still paying interest, seeing that before now it has been decided by decree to reimburse other such claimants (?) when the amount payable could not be obtained from the subscriptions]]. In order that I may not be wronged, but may have personal experience of your benevolence. May you prosper.

Trans.: Hunt & Edgar (1934) pp 231 - 233 (Modified).

The text is a draft and has some lengthy deletions. Like **TEXT 29** it conforms to most of the conventions discussed above. It contains the four common elements of structure, although is lacking certain formulae, such as introducing the background section with a form of the verb ἀδικέω. There are also some additions, such as the wish that the writer might ‘have personal experience of your benevolence’ (ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐγὼ ὃ τῆς παρὰ σοῦ φιλανθρωπίας τετευχώς (lines 34-35))—an expression of flattery not identified by those who have sought to catalogue the formulae. There can nevertheless be little doubt that the person(s) doing the drafting had at least some acquaintance with the expected format and that the intention was to produce a formal petition.

Unlike **TEXT 29** however, this letter’s style, in the draft that we have, is far from concise. The wrong for which redress is sought is described at considerable length and new names are introduced in almost every sentence. While this ill-defined deixis may have been less of a problem for the recipients than it is for us—they would have had a better understanding than we do of the roles and relationships of those named—it is not apparent at this distance that all the details provided are necessary. The crux of the matter—given its position as the final point made in the background—might well be taken, on a superficial reading, to be a delay in issuing a decree (lines 23 - 25). Yet what

Theopropos clearly wants his money. The issuing of a decree is no more than a means to this end. This is made explicit earlier in the letter and it is to this that the letter returns when making his explicit request (τὸν στρατηγὸν [Mo] καὶ τὸν οἰκονόμον (lines 28 – 30)). In short, the material is, at the point captured on this papyrus, far from well organised.

It seems, from the amendments we are able to identify as such, that Theopropos and/or his scribe and advisers realised this. The amendments can be read as an attempt to delete material that is not essential to the case being made. There is an underlying coherence to them—the deletions refer to interest payments—something that suggests that the writers are striving for a greater degree of brevity and as a consequence, greater force.

It would be wrong to read too much into a document of this kind. Ideas as to the direction the authors will eventually take are necessarily speculative. The final draft may have approached the model of **TEXT 29**. The writer may have dropped the matter entirely. In the corrections that we have, he certainly seems to be striving to improve the document, so must have had some notion of a well-organised petition in mind.

TEXT 31 is further evidence of this and interesting because it is also a draft with many corrections. The subject matter is also of considerable importance to Zenon given the significant change of circumstances he was facing. Apollonios, whose estate Zenon formerly managed, had been dismissed from his powerful position as finance minister.¹⁷

TEXT 31**TM 1456** (P Cair Zen 5 59832)

Zenon responds to a request from the king for a financial accounting of his time managing the estates of Apollonios, now dismissed from the king's service.

Recto

- βασιλεῖ Πτολεμαίῳ χαίρειν
 2a Ζήνων τοῦ γενομένου
 2b διοικη(τοῦ)
 Ἀπ(ολλωνίου) [. ξιμι] ἐπεστάτησα τῆς
 ἐμ Φιλαδελφείαι δωρεᾶς [τῆς]
 4a [δοθεῖσης Ἀπο(λλωνίῳ) τῷ γενομένῳ διοικη(τῇ)]

¹⁷ Roger Bagnall and Peter Derow (eds.), *Greek Historical Documents: The Hellenistic Period (Sources for Biblical Study 16*; Chico, Calif.: Published by Scholars Press for the Society of Biblical Literature 1981), p 125.

- 5 ἕως τοῦ λη (ἔτους) ἀποσταθεῖς δὲ
 5 ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐξετέθην πρὸς τοὺς λόγο[υς]
 5 [[καὶ πρὸς τοὺς λόγους]]-
 5/6 [[ἐξετέθην]]
 6a [[πρὸς τοὺς λόγους]]
 ὀφείλων εἰ . . . τα ἐκ τῶν
 ἀγρῶν γενήματα ἃ φέρεται
 8a [[μὲν . . .]]
 8b ἐμοῦ τε καὶ τῶν ὑπηρετῶν [-ca.?-]
 (ἔτους) γ . . . ἀξιῶ οὖν, ἐπειδὴ
 ἐξετέθη εἴ τις τι ὀφε[ίλει]
 10 Ἀπο(λλωνίου) ἢ [[τοῖς]] τῶν οἰκονομ[η-]
 σάντων τι τούτου ἀπογρά-
 φεσθαι, ὑπολογῆσαί μοι
 εἰς ἃ προσωφείληκα ὅσα [ἄν]
 14a [[τῶν ἐμῶν κ[αὶ]]
 14b [[τῶν ὑπηρετησ[άντων μοι]]
 ἐπιδείξω [[εἰληφότας τοὺς]]
 15 αἰληφότας γενήματα τῶν ἐμῶν
 15b καὶ τῶν ἐμοῖ ὑπηρετησάντων [[εἰληφότας]]
 15 \τοὺς/ παρ' Ἀπολλωνίου [[γενήματα]]·
 16a εἴ τινες [[ἀπογραψ]]
 ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ [[ἐάν τινες τῶν]]
 \τῶν/ ἐμοῖ ὀφειλόντων ἀπο[[. . .]]
 γεγραμμέν[ο]ι εἰσίγ,
 ἵνα δύνωμαι διορθώσασθαι
 20 τὸ ὀφείλημα καὶ μὴ συμβῇ
 μοι τούτων μὴ προσδεχθέν-
 των οὐ δυναμένῳ τάξασ-
 θαι [[διὰ τὸ ἀπορεῖσθαι]]
 23a τὸ ὀφείλημα [[διὰ τὸ ἄδυ]]
 ὑπὸ τὸ πρόσταγμα γενέσθαι.

To King Ptolemy from Zenon, greeting. I was in charge of the gift-estate in Philadelphia belonging to Apollonios the former *dioiketes*, until year 38 when I was dismissed by him. I was included in the announcement concerning the rendering of accounts, because I owed...the produce of the fields in my charge and that of my assistant...Therefore, because it has been announced that if anyone owes anything to Apollonios or those who managed his property, he should make a declaration. I ask that everything that I demonstrate to have been received by the agents of Apollonios with respect to the crops in my charge and that of my assistants be deducted from what I still owe; and likewise all that my own debtors have been able to declare; so that I may be able to pay the debt and that it may not happen to me to fall under the proclamation for want of being able to pay the debt because these sums were not credited to me.

Trans.: Bagnall & Derow (1981) p 125.

In this case, formal markers of a petition are confined to the form of the opening, and the order in which the subject matter is set out. In this copy, it lacks even a closing salutation. Yet in overall structure it already approaches petition format and it is unlikely that Zenon would address the king in any other format. Zenon is identified in some detail with regard to his role and responsibilities as compared with the more

common and brief statement of lineage and occupation, as this is clearly necessary to show why the decree that has prompted the petition is relevant to him. From as early as line 9 (ἀξιῶ οὖν, ἐπειδὴ...) the petition begins to detail carefully the action it is seeking. Getting this set out fully and clearly may be assumed to have been the most important thing on Zenon's mind.

Given Zenon's standing, it may be presumed that this draft, if it were ever sent, would have been reworked to include at least some of the conventional formulae. At a basic level, it is not too far from the style of **TEXT 29**. It also suggests—and for this we can be grateful that we do have an early draft—that different styles of petition may be the result of writers concentrating on their immediate concerns first, and only later shaping them into a standard format. Despite the fact, as suggested above, that there seems to be some concept of a model petition that they have in mind they do not seem to be engaging in a form filling exercise, or using a template to ensure compliance with a rigid ideal. The expected formulae are included, but are not applied in such a way as to dilute variations in individual expression.

Sometimes, however, perhaps as a consequence of this concentration on immediate issues of personal concern, even petitions that adhere more closely to the accepted structures can misfire. Adopting the standard structure does not always result in a convincing petition. Consider **TEXT 32**, also a petition to the king.

TEXT 32**TM 1601** (P Lond 7 2039)

Menandros seeks redress from the king claiming he was driven from a house he believed he was entitled to occupy by a certain Dionysodoros. The nature of the restitution he seeks is unclear.

Recto

- 1 βασιλῇ Πτολεμαίῳ χαίρειν Μένανδρος τῆς ἐπιγονῆς. ἀδικ[ο]ῦ-
μαι ὑπὸ Διονυσοδώρου τῶν κληρούχων. αἰτησαμένου γάρ μου
τόπον ἔρημον Πετοσίριν τὸν σταθμοδότην κατωικοδόμησα
ἐμαυτῶι οἰκίαν. προσελθόντος δέ μοι καὶ ἀξιώσαντος
Διονυσοδώρου
5 ἀντὶ ἐνοικίου (δραχμᾶς) β εἰς ἐνιαυτόν, ἄχρι ἥμην ἐν ἀγρῶι
παρὰ Ἀββιλαρῶν
...ὦν αὐτῶι τὸν κλῆρον, κ[α]τ[ω]ικοδόμει μοι τὴν οἰκ[ί]αν
κύκλῳ κ(α)ταγνούς μου τὴν ἐρημ[ί]αν τύπτων ἐγβάλλει
[[καὶ ἀπὸ ταύτης]]. ἐπὶ δ'
ἐπέσ[χ]ον, ὅκ ἔ-
χων τὸν παραστησάμενόν μοι, ἄ[λλ]ην οἰκίαν ὠικοδόμησα
[ἐμαυτῶι,
αὐτὸς ἐγβάλλει με τύπτων κ[αὶ ἀπὸ] ταύτης/ φά[μεν]ος παρὰ
Ζήνωνος ἔχει[ν] τὸν

εὐτύ[χει].

May you prosper.

Trans.: Skeat (1974) pp 187 – 188 (Modified).

.....

¹⁸ Collomp, *Recherches sur la Chancellerie et la Diplomatie des Lagides*, p 103 ff. Collomp also identifies a model that is closer in form to the one used here : *un infinitif ayant un sens autre que 'ordonner'* , but considers it to be largely atypical: *Ce group pourrait bien n'avoir qu'une existence apparente.* (loc. cit.)

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The contrast between this letter and **TEXT 29** is marked. The general nature of the wrong being done to Menandros, as he describes it, is clear enough—he claims to have been driven off a piece of land by a certain Dionysodoros, despite, he believed, having been given permission to build on it. Yet many of the details are less than clear, and seem unnecessary to his apparent purpose. While partly due to the incomplete text, the sentence in line 5 beginning ἄχρει ἤμην ἐν ἀγρῶι παρὰ Ἀββιλαοῦν is a case in point. Who is Abbilaos and what is meant by ‘in the field’? Is the name important? Is the information that the petitioner was ‘in the field’ with him significant in a way that escapes us from this distance? Or is the point of the sentence simply that one of the alleged injustices perpetrated by Dionysodoros occurred ‘while I was absent’? There is some basis for concluding here that Menandros is so upset by his predicament that he set out details as they occurred to him rather than in the more measured way that might be expected by those receiving the petition.

Support for this view is also found in the emotional language used here. Yet again, it can be contrasted with **TEXT 29**. Depending upon the exact circumstances, it may have been tempting for the writer of that petition also to make an emotional appeal given that he was writing on behalf of his father. Concern about his father’s age comes immediately to mind as an optional way to rely upon an appeal to πάθος. Yet he does not pursue that option. By contrast, Menandros uses the vividness of a present participle to describe how he was beaten as he was driven from his house (τύπτων ἔγβάλλει..., line 7), and repeats the phrase in line 9. In the first instance (line 7) he also adds the additional intensifying phrase καταγνούς μου τὴν ἐρη[μί]αν. The force of this is well-captured by Skeat’s translation as ‘despising my *destitution*’ (emphasis added) rather than the possible ‘isolation’. The appeal to πάθος is strong indeed.

One is also left wondering whether Menandros, in introducing himself as τῆς ἐπιγονῆς (line 1) was also making an appeal for special consideration as someone who, as the son of a military settler, might have the right to special consideration. One has to be careful here however. White notes that the opening section of a petition commonly includes four distinct items: (1) ‘salutation’, (2) ‘lineage item’, (3) ‘vocation item’ and (4) ‘residence item’.²⁰ Of these, a lineage item was one of the more common among the 71

²⁰ White, *The Form and Structure of the Official Petition: A Study in Greek Epistolography*, p 21.

letters he investigated.²¹ Menandros, then, was in this regard following a well-established formula. (The writer of **TEXT 29** also includes a lineage item, describing himself as a cleruch.) Nevertheless, formulaic or not, Menandros was not obliged to include this detail, and does not include anything that would otherwise fall under the heading of ‘vocation item’ or ‘residence item’. There are some grounds, consequently, for considering choices made by a writer within the usual formulae as being made for pragmatic reasons particular to the purpose of the communication.

Finally, comment was made earlier on the fact that one of the expected parts of the petition differed somewhat in form from the usual. In comparing it to **TEXT 29**, the request made of the king (or, if Skeat is correct, of Zenon) is noticeably vague. In essence, all that the petitioner asks is that the king ‘hear me’ or, we might paraphrase, ‘consider my case’, with a view to ending the treatment he alleges is being meted out to him by Dionysodoros (μὴ καταδυναστευθῶ (ὑ)πὸ Διονυσιοδώρου (line 11)). He does not ask that he be restored to his house, that Dionysodoros be prosecuted, or any of a range of remedies which, we might guess, may have been available to him.

This petition may or may not have been successful. It would, however, be difficult to know quite what Menandros would regard as success beyond his immediate need for some kind of restraint to be placed upon his alleged persecutor. Nor is it easy to see exactly what an agent of the king (or Zenon) should do in this case. Modern authorities would also be at something of a loss and might resent the onus placed upon them, not only to provide some relief for Menandros, but to work out the best way of doing this.

Overall then, there is remarkable variation across this small set of petitions. This is despite the fact that all are essentially formal. This is true even though there are certain formulae missing and, in the examples still in draft, certain structural markers are also missing. Within this formality however, the language displays a wide range of styles. There is a very big difference between the cool and measured prose of Neoptolemus, **TEXT 29**, and the somewhat untidy and emotional writing of Menandros. To focus too closely on the formality of a petition is to miss much about the language, and the life of its users, that is of real interest.

²¹ Ibid., p 13 note §15.

8.3 Petitioning by other means

Variation in style and content is even more readily found in letters that appear to be petitions while lacking much, if not all of their formal structure. Consider **TEXT 33**.

TEXT 33**TM 1600** (P Lond 7 2038)

Two potters petition Zenon for unpaid wages, documenting the out of pocket expenses they have incurred in paying workmen themselves.

Recto

Ζήνωνι χαίρειν Λυσίμαχος
 καὶ Παῆσις κεραμεῖς. [σοῦ] προσ-
 τάξαντος τόπον τ[ε] ἡμῖν δοῦ-
 ναι καὶ χαλκῶ[ν] Παῆσι μὲν]
 5 Λυσιμάχῳ δ[ὲ]
 καὶ σοῦ ἀποδημ[ήσαντος ο]ὐδὲ τὸν
 τόπον ἡμῖν ἐδωκ[ε]ν/ καθότι συν-
 ἔταξας, ἀλλ' ἡργήσαμεν ἡμέ-
 ρας τέτταρας, μισθω[τ]οὺς
 9a [- - -]οῖς δίδο-
 10 καταμηνίον[ς] ἔχοντες . .] εἷς
 10a μὲν τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν - - -]
 τε τὸ καθ' ἡμέρ[α]ν ἡμ[ῖ]ν γι-
 νόμενον εἰλήφαμεν [.] τοῦ
 μηνὸς τούτου ἀπὸ [.] ἔως
 13a ἔχομεν
 ἰς ἡμερῶν [.] ἀντὶ κε(ραμίων)] ρκη
 15 (δραχμὰς) ἰξ. γεγον[ε]ασιν οὖν δι-
 άφορον ἐν ταῖς δ ἡμέραις
 αἷς ἡργήσαμεν τ[όπο]ν οὐκ ἔ-
 χοντες κε(ράμια) λ. περὶ [ῶ]ν ἐπε-
 μαρτυρόμεθα Νέστῳ
 20 Ἰατροκλεῖ Ἀρμο[δί]ῳ
 Ἀνόσιτι τῷ γραμ[μα]τεῖ.
 ἵνα οὖν μὴ πάλιν ἀργή-
 σωμεν ἐγκατα[λε]λεμέ-
 νοι ὑπὸ τῶν μισθωτῶν κα-
 25 λῶς ἂν ποιήσαις προστάξας
 τοὺς μισθοὺς εὐτ[άκτ]ως
 ἡμῖν ἀποδιδόναι.
 (hand 2) καὶ νῦν ὁπτᾶν μέλλομεν καὶ οὐκ ἔχο-
 μεν ἀνήλωμα.
 30 (hand 1) εὐτύχ[ε]ι.

To Zenon, greeting from Lysimachos and Paesis, potters. Whereas you had given orders that a place should be given to us and money, to Paesis...and to Lysimachos..., after your departure they never gave us a place as you had ordered, and we were without work for four days, although we had in our employ...workmen hired on a monthly basis, to whom we gave the daily amount...and towards this daily amount we received for this month from the...to the 17th, i.e. days, for 128 jars, we received 60 dr. The loss we sustained in the 4 days when we could not work amounted to 30 jars, concerning which matters we protested to Nestos, Iatrokles, Harmodios, and Anosis

the (village) secretary. In order therefore that we may not be idle again and be deserted by our hired workmen, please give orders that our wages may be paid out to us punctually. May you prosper. (Postscript) We are just now beginning to fire and have no spending money.

Trans.: Skeat (1974) p 186.

Superficially, this document announces itself as a petition by the form of its greeting and by the use of εὐτύχει at its close. Its intent is also clear—to persuade Zenon to intervene on behalf of the writers to ensure that they receive the pay Zenon is alleged to have promised them. Not all of the common formulae are present. Missing is any form of ἀδικέω when the grievance is being set out. The writers do use προστάξας when introducing their specific request, although it is preceded by καλῶς ἂν ποιήσας, a less formal, although very common polite phrase, rather than the usual ‘petition language’ δέομαι οὖν σου. In general however, given its relatively straightforward statement of its grievance and clear indication of what the writers would have Zenon do about it, it has more in common with the most formal of the petitions discussed above, **TEXT 29**, than say the more emotional **TEXT 32** with which **TEXT 29** was contrasted.

Yet this ‘petition’ is not addressed to the king and its content is focused on relatively routine matters at issue between employees/contractors and the person engaging them. It is evidence that people such as potters, whose trade would generally not require them to have high levels of literacy, were capable, perhaps with the help of a scribe, of putting together a well-formed petition. This one certainly includes the essential elements of order and clarity that one would expect in a petition even if in doing so it fails to adopt all of the conventional formulae.

Now consider **TEXT 34**.

TEXT 34

TM 1598 P Lond 7 2036

Isidora, who leases baths from Zenon, confronts him about an injustice she has received at the hands of Maron and asks him to investigate.

Recto

ὑπόμνημα Ζήνωνι πα[ρὰ]
Ἰσιδώρου. τί ἐστὶν ὅτι με
ἀδικεῖ Μάρων φάμενος [ὀφεί-]
λειμ με τέσσαρας χρυσοῦς;
5 ἐγὼ δὲ κατέβαλλον καθ' ἡ-
μέραν τὸ γινόμενον ἡμ[ε-]
ρῶν ἕξ ἀνὰ (δραχμὰς) 5.

- ἐπεὶ δέ μοι οὐκ ἐξεποίει,
 ἦλθόν σοι ἄξιουσά ἀφείναί μ[οι]
 10 καὶ ἐπεχώρησας (δραχμάς) δ
 τὴν ἡμέραν ἡμερῶν η.
 ἐγλιπόντος δὲ τοῦ ὕδα[τος],
 ὥς ἐμάχου μοι ξένων ἐλθόν[ν-]
 τῶν ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι ὕδωρ, ὥρυσσ[ον]
 15 καὶ ἔλουν φρηταίωι, καὶ συγ[έ-]
 ταξάς μοι φέρειν (δραχμήν) α (τριώβολον)
 ἡμερῶν ἐννέα. καὶ ἦι ἡμέ[ραι]
 τὸ ὕδωρ ἦλθεν αὐτὸς σὺ ἐλογ[ίσω].
 νῦν δέ φησιν Μάρων καὶ Πύρ[ων]
 20 ἀνοίσειν Ἀπολλωνίωι ὀφει-
 λουσάμ με χρυσοῦς τέσσ[αρες] .
 εἰ οὖν δοκεῖ σοι ἐπίσκεψαι
 περὶ τούτων ἵνα μὴ ἀδικ[ηθῶ].
 καὶ περὶ τοῦ μεγάλου βαλα-
 25 νείου σύνταξον διαλογί[ζε-]
 σθαί μοι αὐτοὺς ἕως σὺ
 ἐνδημεῖς.

Memorandum to Zenon from Isidora. Why is it that Maron wrongs me, saying that I owe four gold coins? I myself paid each day the amount due, for six days at 6 dr. And when it did not pay me, I came to you asking for concession, and you allowed 4 dr. a day for 8 days. And when the water failed and you quarrelled with me when the visitors arrived because there was no water, I dug and washed with well-water, and you ordered me to pay 1½ dr. for nine days; and on which day the water came, you yourself made a reckoning. But now Maron and Pyron say they will record me as owing four gold coins to Apollonios. If you think fit, investigate these matters so that I may not be wronged. And concerning the large bath, order them to balance accounts with me until you are in town again.

Trans.: Skeat (1974) p 184 (Modified).

This document describes itself as a ‘memorandum’ (ὑπόμνημα)²² thereby, at least on the surface, removing it from the class of petitions. Additionally, at the end it lacks the εὐτύχει one would expect to find in such a document, and in fact there appears to be no valediction at all. Yet there can also be little doubt about its purpose. The writer, Isadora, clearly has a grievance, even though it is not expressed in the way characteristic of formal petitions. It is cast initially in the interrogative (τί ἐστίν ὅτι με ἀδικεῖ Μάρων (line 3)) and then sets out in some detail the reasons why she believes she is being unjustly dealt with. A proposal for redress is also made. Only later in the

²² The term ‘ὑπόμνημα’ seems to have been used loosely to introduce a wide range of matters in the papyri. Liddell and Scott give ‘reminder, memorial’ as the first gloss but add... ‘IV memorial, petition, addressed to a magistrate...’ and proceed to declare that an ἔντευξις is reserved for the king. (Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, in Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie (eds.), *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1996 (with revised supplement)). Exler notes that ‘ὑπόμνημα’ is often found in the greeting in business letters but observes that ‘its primary meaning was mostly lost sight of’ Exler, *The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter: A Study in Greek Epistolography*, p 65.

letter do we find a turn of phrase commonly used by petitioners (εἰ οὖν δοκεῖ σοι ἐπίσχεψαι | περὶ τούτων ἵνα μὴ ἀδικῇ[ηθῶ] (lines 22 – 23)). Finally, Isadora, it seems, leased baths from Zenon. Can a lessee ‘petition’ a lessor? Does the business relationship between them mean the letter cannot be a ‘petition’?

The answer, at least in terms of the formal meaning of the term is probably no. Yet some doubts remain. Certainly Isadora is formally the ‘inferior’ in this relationship and certainly she is seeking redress through someone in authority. Given this, the style that she adopts in making her case to Zenon is quite surprising. There can be little doubt that her purpose is to direct Zenon’s behaviour towards more favourable terms for herself. To begin with a question that takes for granted that a certain Maron, (presumably an intermediary between Isadora and Zenon) is wronging her would seem to be at least a little bold. It may not be a ‘rhetorical question’ given that she is presumably seeking a straight answer, yet it certainly has a certain rhetorical force.

Skeat describes the document as ‘vividly written’ and ‘almost like direct speech’.²³ I agree that it is another example among a significant number where we seem to be very close to everyday oral usage. I would describe it as more than just ‘vividly written’ however, and consider it, at least in its opening lines, to be little short of confrontational. It is certainly not humble. It refrains from the use of polite formulae until the penultimate sentence. The change of style then comes across as almost an afterthought. Even the last sentence, which, by its very position, carries extra force, is in the form of a request or demand.

The letter is to someone in power from someone in an inferior position. It sets out a clear grievance and proposes a preferred solution. It also adopts a not uncommon formula as it brings the document to a conclusion. All of these factors suggest the label ‘petition’ is appropriate. Even the placement of the name of the addressee before the name of the sender suggests ‘petition’. On the other hand, the lack of the usual sign-off, the use of the term ὑπόμνημα; and above all, the feisty opening sentence—these suggest something else. The document illustrates very well the capacity of individuals who occupy relatively minor positions in their society, to utilise language creatively,

²³ Skeat, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, p 183.

and to adopt some aspects of conventional usage while ignoring others. This letter, despite labelling itself as a memorandum, adopts at the outset, the form of a vigorous personal letter of grievance and persists with this style even down to the lack of a final valediction. Yet it also uses at least some of the language forms of a petition—something that is clearly appropriate given its overall purpose. Moreover it manages to do all of this in a way that produces a document of no little persuasive power. This document demonstrates more clearly than most the inadequacy of relying upon form and formulae to identify petitions.

In the same vein, consider **TEXT 35**.

TEXT 35**TM 1986 P Mich Zen 87**

Kallippos, in prison, writes to Zenon asking him to consider the financial losses he (Zenon) will suffer if he does not arrange for his freedom. He offers his wife as a prisoner to answer for him.

Recto

Ζήνωνι χαίρειν Κάλλιππος. ἐπικωμ[αί] [σὺ] περιορῶν \μει/
ἐν τῷ δεσμωτηρίῳ; φρόντισον περὶ
\τῶν/ κτενεῶν τῶν ὑμετέρων. γίνωσκε δ[ὲ] ὅτι, ἐὰν
ἐν]ταῦθα ᾧσι αἱ αἱγες αἱ τοῦ Δημητρίου, ἀπολοῦν-
ται· ἰκανὴ γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ὁδὸς ἣν κατὰ [γ]ει εἰς τ]ὰς νομάς
\ἀπορῆξαι αὐτάς./ φρόντισον καὶ περὶ τοῦ χούρτου
τοῦ
κεκομμένου ἐν Σεναρύ, ὅπως ἂν μὴ ἀπόληται· ὁ μικρὸν γάρ
ἐστιν ὃ ὠφελήθησι· ὑπολαμβάνω
5 ἔσεσθαι δέξμας εἰς Γ. δέομαί σου καὶ ἰκετέω, μὴ περιίδης
μὴ ἐν τῷ δεσμωτηρίῳ. ἰκανῶς
βέβλαμαι ἀφ' οὗ ἀπέγμαι ἀπ τοῦ κλήρου ο[ὗ] ἐ]μισθωσάμην
ἐπὶ σῶι πεποιθώς. ὁκ ἰλία \βέ/βλα-
ψαι ἀφ' οὗ ἀπέγμαι, καὶ τὰ προβάτια ἃ περιπεποίημαι
ἀφ' οὗ ἐλήλυθα πρὸς ὑμᾶς διέρπα-
κται ὑπὸ τῶν ποιμένων ἀφ' οὗ ἀπέγμαι. εἰ δέ \τι / σῶι
φαίνεται, καταλίψω τὴν γυναῖκα ἐν
τῷ δεσμωτηρίῳ περὶ ἐμοῦ, ἕως ἂν ἐπισκέψη περὶ ᾧ μοι
ἐνκαλοῦσι.

10

εὐτύχει

To Zenon greeting from Kallippos. Have you fallen asleep, disregarding me in prison? Think of your flocks and herds. Know that if the goats of Demetrios remain here, they will perish; for the road down which he drives them to the pastures is enough to kill them. And think about the cut hay in Senary, so that it is not lost; for not small is the profit you will take from it; there will be close to 3,000 sheaves. So I beg and beseech you, do not ignore me in prison. I have suffered much loss since I was led to jail from the allotment which I leased, trusting in your support. No little loss have you suffered since I was led to jail; and the sheep which I have acquired since I came to you have been carried off by the shepherds since I was led to jail. And if it seems good to you, I will leave my wife in prison to be answerable for me, until you inquire into the matters about which they accuse me. May you prosper.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) pp 166 – 167 (Modified) .

Edgar labels this document a petition.²⁴ In its opening and closing salutations it certainly is. The relationship between writer and recipient is also consistent with this label. Yet in style and content, even more so than was the case with **TEXT 34**, it is far from moderate. The opening sentence is similarly cast in the form of a question, and in this case there can be no doubt that the style is confronting (ἐπιχωμ[αί] [σὺ] περιορῶν \με/ ἐν τῷ δεζμωτηρίῳ). Almost as surprising is the immediate appeal to the self-interest of the recipient, Zenon, who is invited to think of the injury his flocks are likely to sustain in the absence of the imprisoned writer. Zenon's profit is also held to depend on the writer being restored to freedom. Only when we reach line 5 do we come across a turn of phrase consistent with petitioning language (δέομαί σου καὶ ἰκετέω). And even after this change of direction, Kallippos turns from the loss he has suffered since being imprisoned to again assert that the damage suffered by Zenon has been 'not little'.²⁵

Edgar remarks: '[T]he bad spelling and the abrupt style perhaps add to the liveliness of this amusing letter'.²⁶ I read these features (the style much more than the bad spelling) rather differently. I think they are an indication of either the author's genuine desperation, or at least his wish to be perceived to be in desperate straits (that is, the adoption of hyperbole as a rhetorical tool). The message, paraphrased somewhat, seems to be 'if you won't think of me, then at least think of yourself!' Support for this view is the final offer made by Kallippos to leave his wife in prison in his stead. In one sense, therefore, this letter is a better example of a petition than many of the others discussed here because even allowing for a degree of rhetorical over-statement it appears to come from a position of weakness and need. On the other hand, with the exception of the opening and closing salutations, as well as the phrase identified above in line 5, its language is not very petition-like, if by petition-like we mean both humble and making use of the polite phrases and common expressions identified by Collomp and others.

²⁴ Campbell Cowan Edgar, *Zenon Papyri in the University of Michigan Collection* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1931), pp 166 - 67.

²⁵ Much depends upon Edgar's restoration here. Ibid., p 166 (note §6 to the text).

²⁶ Ibid., p 165.

In some examples at least then, elements of the petitioning form have been used in documents whose style is not greatly different from that expected in a formal petition to the king, but that are in other ways so confronting that, if they were ever to be submitted to him, would, likely lead to swift and severe punishment.

Before concluding this section, it is important to recall that letters that approximate petitions, to a greater or lesser extent, have already been reproduced and discussed earlier in this thesis. In those discussions it has been speech acts other than that of petitioning that have pressed themselves to the fore. They include **TEXT 4**, discussed in *Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2* (p 98) as a warning. This letter opens with the recipient's name first and introduces its main concern with a form of ἀδικέω. **TEXT 18** was discussed in *Chapter 7, Section 7.2.2* (p142) as a brief request. It defined itself as a ὑπόμνημα and closed with εὐτύχει. Finally, **TEXT 25**, also discussed in *Chapter 7, Section 7.2.3*, (p 154) as a longer request has a number of the characteristics of a petition, including the forms of opening and closing address it adopts.

Further brief discussion of **TEXT 25** is sufficient to offer some insight into this overlap. As noted above, opening and closing salutations in that text are characteristic of a petition. Yet there is no explicit grievance set out in the opening sentence. At most there is a hint that the writer has been subjected to criticism and seeks to remind Zenon of past service. The request, although it uses a common polite phrase (εἰ οὖν δοξεῖ) is not for redress. Rather, it appears to be a request for a gift—some wine—phrased in a manner that is not a little flattering of Zenon. The writer declares that he wishes to pour a libation on Zenon's behalf. In short, it is a petition only in very superficial ways.

8.4 Petitions and reports

This thesis is concerned with letters rather than other documents. It is useful nevertheless to make mention of the existence of documents that identify themselves as a 'report' (προσάγγελμα) but share many of the features identified here as characteristic of petitions. Almost none are from the archives under consideration here. An exception however is **TEXT 36**, and its duplicate, in a different hand, TM 2502 (not reproduced in this thesis).

TEXT 36

TM 1543 (P Lond 7 1980)

One hundred and fifty farmers or agricultural workers claim, in the form of a prosangelma, to have been evicted from their land and seek compensation.

Recto

1 [προ]σάγγ[ε]λμ[α] Κολλούθ[η] κωμο-
 γραμματεῖ Ἀμμωνιάδ[ος] πα-
 ρὰ τῶν γεωργῶν [τῶν ἐξ Ἀμμω-
 γιάδος ὧν κατεμετρήθη ὁ σπό-
 5 [ρος αὐ]τῶν τοῖς πεσσοῖς. ἀδικού-
 [μεθα] ὑπὸ Νέστου καὶ [Τορρίμου]
 [καὶ] Ζήνων[ος], ὅντ[ες] κριταὶ αὐ-
 τοὶ καὶ τὴν γῆν ἡμῶν ἀφείκ[η]ν-
 10 τα[ι]. βουλομένων [γὰρ] [τῶν] πεσ-
 [σόντων] ἐργ[ο]ν καὶ ἡμῶν τὴν γῆν
 [τοῖς γε]ωργ[ο]ῖς [καὶ] τοῖς κατεσπαρχό-
 [σιν] ἵνα μὴ ἀγασσώμεθα
 [ὄντες γεωργοὶ] ἐμποδίσ-
 15 [αντες] {γὰρ} Νέστο[ς] καὶ Τορρίμ-
 [μας καὶ] Ζήνων ἐξεκλήκ[η]σαν
 [τὴν γῆν]. ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν γῆν παρ-
 εἴρηνται ἡμῶν, ἀξιούμεν τὸ [ν]
 [σπόρον] ἡμῶν ἀποδοθῆναι
 20 [. . .]. κατὰ τὴν σύν-
 κρισιν. γεγράφαμεν οὖν σοι ἵ[να]
 εἰδῇ[ς], διότι ἐκχ[ωρή]σομεν ἀδικού-
 μενοι, καὶ Φιλίσκου γραψαντος τοῦ
 οἰκονόμου περὶ ἡμῶν ἐπιθεωρη-
 σιν ἡμῶν. Χ[ρ]ο[ν]ο[λό]γ[ος] καὶ Χ[ρ]ο[ν]ο[λό]γ[ος].

Report to Kollouthes, komogrammateus of Ammonias, from the farmers of Ammonias, whose own sown lands have been allocated to the footsoldiers. We are wronged by Nestos and Torrimmas and Zenon, judges themselves, and they have taken away our land. For although the infantrymen were willing to sublet the land to us, the farmers who had sown it, so that we should not be disturbed, being 150 in number, Nestos and Torrimmas and Zenon prevented them and have contracted for the land. And since they have taken away our land, we ask that the seed-corn should be returned to us at...the aroua, according to the judgment, We have therefore written to you to inform you, for if we are wronged we shall depart, especially as Philiskos the oeconome wrote that our case should be reviewed.

Trans.: Skeat (1974) pp 77 – 78 (Modified).

There are a few points worth noting. Instead of the form of address with which we have become familiar in the above discussion, this text begins with the word *προσάγγελμα*. It then follows, in the usual way for a petition, with the name of the person to receive it, followed by the identity of the senders (in this case by role (farmers) rather than name). The second sentence begins with the familiar *ἀδικούμεθα* and a request is made. It is also not without interest that in the last sentence the writers indicate that if wronged, they will depart. There is insufficient information from the context to know if this is

intended as a threat or an indication that they feel defeated by the situation.²⁷ It is also not entirely clear why the explanation they offer for this action—that the oecumene has given them reason to believe their case should be reviewed—should cause them so to decide. The details need not detain us. It is sufficient to note both the similarities and difference between this *prosangelma* and the other petitions we have discussed. The similarities are not negligible.

There has been some study of *prosangelmata* as a genre and in the papyri they are most commonly used in a legal context, to lodge a complaint, report a crime and similar.²⁸ That such a mechanism can also be used to petition someone (and in this particular case perform other speech acts such as threatening) is a reminder that it is the purpose behind a document rather than its form that is important. Moreover despite our wish to classify documents neatly into various genres, in the real world speakers and writers are not so constrained and will utilise conventional genres in whatever mix they consider will best suit their purpose.

8.5 Interim conclusions

The range of and variety of the examples of petitions or petitioning discussed in this chapter is very marked. This variation is intriguing and has a number of implications.

First, there is no denying the importance of the early work undertaken by Collomp and others. The examples above taken from these archives show that there were certainly well-established forms and structures for petitioning the king and his ministers. There was a way of writing that resulted in what Collomp called the *enteuxis proprement dite*. This is not surprising and the opportunity to submit a petition of this kind—a formal petition to government—is found in many societies including contemporary ones.

²⁷ We have reason to believe that they followed through on this threat. In TEXT X3, Kollouthes informs Zenon that these farmers have retreated to a temple. The connection is made by Skeat (Skeat, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, p 77).

²⁸ Bauschatz, 'The Strong Arm of the Law?' See also Marcel Hombert and Claire Préaux, 'Recherches sur le *Prosangelma* à l'époque ptolémaïque', *Chronique d'Égypte*, 17/34 (1942), pp 259 - 286, and Maryline Parca, 'Prosangelmata ptolémaïques: une mise à jour', *ibid.* 60/119-120 (1985), pp 240 - 247.

Secondly, these examples have also demonstrated the extent to which elements of this genre—what might, for convenience, be called ‘petition language’—are found in other documents where someone is writing to a person more powerful than they are. The order of names used in the opening address—addressee first—and the concluding salutation—ἐὐτόχει—are the most marked and readily identifiable examples of this.

Thirdly, as has been shown in *Section 8.3*, sometimes these relatively superficial features are the only aspects of petition language that can be identified in particular documents. Indeed, these elements are sometimes found in documents that challenge the recipient directly in a way that could be taken as offensive. In others, they are found where the purpose, as embodied in the speech act that the writer appears to be performing, does not approximate anything near the humble seeking of redress that is fundamental to the notion of petitioning.

Fourthly, it was pointed out in the introduction to *Chapter 7* that politeness is part of the very definition of a request, and variations along this dimension might influence the likelihood of its success. One might expect this to apply *a fortiore* to a petition, given that it involves, by definition, a difference in power between petitioner and respondent. One should not, however, make assumptions too readily. The requests examined in the last chapter, contrary to expectation, showed only minimal politeness formulae to the point where it seems that the absence of any impolite language was all that was commonly expected. Equally, the documents discussed in this chapter, while they include the formal markers of a petition and a number of formulaic expressions also characteristic of the genre, rarely demonstrate more than this minimum and not infrequently omit some of them.

Finally, whether addressed to the king or to others, the documents discussed above demonstrate a wide variety of language styles, from the most carefully and calmly argued to those displaying considerable emotional intensity and rhetorical flourish. Even when using, or trying to use the somewhat strict structure characteristic of a formal petition to the king, different writers adopt different styles. As has often been found in previous chapters, attempts to apply rigid divisions between, in this case, formal petitions and letters seeking some form of redress can be misleading. There is

clearly a continuum and making too rigid a classification between what is and is not a petition is inadvisable.

Taken together, these observations raise an interesting possibility. Could it be that the characteristics identified by early scholars such as Collomp are not so much defining features of petitions as they are common features of correspondence where the writers are seeking to be polite? Rather than framing the examples discussed in *Section 8.3* above as a kind of ‘trickle down’ consequence of conventions surrounding the petitions to the king (or members of his court), could they not be seen as evidence of a widespread politeness convention relating to letters one sends to one’s social ‘superiors’? Could not, for example, the placement of the name of the addressee before the name of the recipient be a practice akin to the use of ‘Dear Sir’ or ‘Dear Madam’, the most commonly adopted formal style in contemporary English business practice,²⁹ in preference to the slightly less formal ‘Dear Mr Smith’ or, as in electronic communication, which, for whatever reason, appears to encourage informality, ‘Hi Susan’? The use of εὐτύχει and ἔρρωσο, may also be alternatives, one somewhat less commonly used than the other.

Evidence for this view is found in the contents and style of the letters discussed in this chapter. The letters are so varied along both dimensions, and are between people whose relationship with each other is so diverse that often the only thing they have in common is the so-called ‘petition’ forms of salutation. These forms were certainly appropriate in addressing the king, to whom the utmost politeness was no doubt owed, whether through respect, fear or both. They also seem to have been adopted not infrequently if the addressee was in a socially superior position to the writer.

It is interesting also that of the sixteen letters from Arch. Kleon that Van Beek classifies as ‘private correspondence’, all except one of which were written by members of Kleon’s family, three bear the closing salutation “ἔρρωσο”. (**TEXT 14**, (p 134), **TEXT X26**, and **TEXT X27** (this last is a very fragmentary text)) and one uses ‘Εὐτύχει’

²⁹ An even more formal style, involving the use of titles such as ‘Dear Professor...’, is also used in appropriate circumstances. It should be noted that these conventions vary across the Anglo-sphere and that there is further variation among groups within broader divisions (such as within Australian English or American English).

(TEXT 15, p 137). It would be unwise to place too much emphasis on this, given the small number of family letters we have from the period and given that in the remaining 12, the closing salutation is not preserved. Nevertheless, while one might well be polite and respectful to one's father, in general one does not, petition him. Therefore, to regard TEXT 15 as a petition would, I believe, be a mistake.

Early scholars began the study of the papyri with a consideration of government documents and so quickly had their attention drawn to petitions to the king. Subsequently, scholars may have been blinded to the likelihood that the conventions found there were not as distinctive as at first they appeared and were not uncommonly found in other documents. The tripartite division Collomp identified, reported earlier in this chapter (page 171)—*respectueuse*, *à corps de lettre*, *lettre enteuxis* and *enteuxis proprement dite*—did not apply to the letters found in the chancellery alone. Rather, they represent identifiable degrees of respect that were used in a wide range of correspondence wherever there was a difference of rank between addressee and writer. Of course distinctly polite formats and formulae were to be found in chancellery archives. This did not, however, mean that they were related to petitions alone. Rather, they represented broad politeness conventions characteristic of the correspondence of the day. 'Petitioning', so interpreted, becomes a speech act of considerable flexibility and utility.

If this is true, then formal petitions in Ptolemaic Egypt have at least something in common with the expectations set out for petitions by the Australian parliament. The requirements reproduced on page 166 above can be crudely summarised to mean that a petition should be polite, reasonable and concise with the criterion for politeness not extending beyond the norms of the socio-linguistic context. This should not however, blind us to the suggestion emerging from above that a petition may be better seen as a particular speech act undertaken in a wide variety of ways, not in itself, a distinctive genre. The distinctive forms identified in early research may be necessary in some context, unnecessary in others. Their use does not create a special kind of document.



PART III

Other speech acts

OTHER SPEECH ACTS IN THE ARCHIVES

9.1 Introduction

As foreshadowed in the Introduction, and elaborated in *Chapter 4* and subsequent chapters, the class of speech acts known as ‘directives’ is found very frequently in the business letters in these archives. Indeed directives predominate. Important as they are however, directives are by no means the only speech acts that writers of these letters employ. To confine the discussion of speech acts to directives alone, notwithstanding limited space, would not do justice to the topic. There is reason to believe, for example, that where a directive speech act in the form of a request is made in a letter, it may often be accompanied, whether in the same letter or a related letter, by a speech act such as a commitment or compliment.¹ Such quid pro quo exchanges are characteristic of human interrelationships. It will also often be the case that a letter will serve multiple purposes. Rather than a straightforward attempt to change the behaviour of the recipient, letters may, in addition to this, if not instead of it, be seeking to remind recipients of the writers’ good will or, as in the case of an apology, to repair a damaged relationship. At a less complex level, a letter may seek to do no more than convey a small piece of information.

In the classification developed by Searle, directives are one of five broad types of speech act. The others are ‘representatives (or assertives)’, ‘commissives’, ‘expressives’ and ‘declarations’. Of these, ‘representatives’ are the speech acts used to convey information; ‘commissives’ commit the speaker to some future action (for example, promises); ‘expressives’ make clear an individual’s ‘psychological state’ in relation to some state of affairs, (for example, an apology); and ‘declarations’ are those acts, made by someone with the appropriate authority, which in and of themselves ‘do things with words’ in the sense meant by Austin (for example, ‘I name this ship....’ or ‘I pronounce

¹ Dawn Archer, ‘Speech Acts’, in Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (eds.), *Historical Pragmatics* (Handbooks of Pragmatics, Vol. 8; Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), p 389.

you man and wife').² It should be noted that Searle, here, is using 'declaration' in a more narrow sense than some. His category of 'declaration' should not be confused with the notion of 'declarative' sentences, or sometimes declarative speech acts, terms often used to describe what Searle would classify as assertives.³

Only a small number of letters in these archives can be considered declarations in Searle's sense. One example is **Text 37**, already referred to briefly in *Chapter 6, Section 6.2.2* (p 119) and in *Chapter 7, Section 7.2.4*, (p 156 n. 32).

TEXT 37**TM 7448** (Van Beek 79)

Aristandros appoints Theodoros to the position of *architekton*, identifying his tasks as guarding the dykes and sluices, as well as other tasks not preserved on this papyrus.

Recto

- 1 [Ἀρίστ]ανδρος οἰκο[νό]μοις, νομάρχ[αις],
 βασιλικοῖς γραμματεῦσι, φυλα-
 κί[ται]ς, μυριαρούροις, κωμάρχ[αις]
 κωμογραμματεῦσι χαίρειν.
 5 Ἀπολελοίπαμεν Θεόδωρον τὸν
 ὑπαρχιτέκτονα πρὸς τῇ φυλακῇ
 τῶν χωμάτων καὶ ταῖς ἀφέσεσιν
 ἐντειλάμενοι αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἀνα-
 [- - - - -]ν [- - - - -]ων

Verso

(Blank)

Aristandros to the *oikonomoi*, *nomarchai*, royal scribes, policemen, *myriarouroi*, village heads and village scribes, greetings. We have left Theodoros, the *hyparchitekton*, in charge of guarding the dykes and of the sluices, assigning him also the [- - - -].

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 188.

² John R. Searle, 'A Classification of Illocutionary Acts', *Language in Society*, 5/1 (1976), pp 1-23. J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words (the William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955)* (2nd edn.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976). Searle's classification is far from the only one proposed for speech acts. His approach was subjected to criticism and revision as long ago as 1983 and the very notion of a classificatory system questioned (Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics*, eds B. Comrie et al. (Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p 240 ff.). New systems of classification continue to be proposed (e.g. Aleksander Kiklewicz, 'The Hierarchical System of Speech Acts', *Lingua Posnaniensis*, 53/1 (2011), pp 65 - 81.) Nevertheless Searle's system is well-known and straightforward. It remains a useful approach when analysing the content of a body of letters when the focus is upon the writers' purpose.

³ See, for example, T. Givón, 'The adaptive approach to grammar', in Bernd Heine and Heiko Narrog (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp 27 - 49.

The letter informs a number of officials that Theodoros has been ‘left’ (ἀπολελοίπαμεν) with the responsibility of guarding the dykes and sluices and also assigned (ἐντειλάμενοι) by the writer of this letter certain other responsibilities. The writer, whom Van Beek identifies as the chief oikonomos of the Arsinoite Nome,⁴ may be taken to have significant authority—certainly authority over who might hold important official positions such as architekton. Thus the letter clearly has the effect of ‘appointing’ Theodoros as the person responsible for these tasks. As a speech act it is, in Searle’s sense, ‘declarative’.⁵

There is variety in the kinds of speech acts that fall into this category.⁶ A relatively small proportion of these however, lend themselves readily to the letter format. They will very often be recorded in other ways, in, for example, court records or registry offices (there is at least one royal decree to be found in Arch. Zen. (TM 2299, P Mich Zen 70)). It may be remarked, in passing that there is at least one other declarative speech act that does lend itself to the letter format—the letter of resignation. In such letters it is the writers’ current status as occupant of a particular position that gives them the authority to make this declaration. I have not identified any examples of this kind in my reading of these archives. A small number can be found in later archives (for example TM 12066 (P Mich 9 575) (2nd century C.E.)) and TM 37140 (P Oxy 1 128) (6th century C.E.)).

In general, it is not surprising that there are few declaratives among these documents. The writers were not in judicial or military posts so the declarations that emerge from discharging such authority were not something they were in a position to make. Even if it is true that it is within an archive of official business letters such as these that appointments and resignations are likely to be found, these are not everyday events. By

⁴ Bart Van Beek, *The Archive of the Engineers Kleon and Theodoros: Archive Study, Text Edition, with Translations and Notes* (Leuven: diss., 2006) at p 188.

⁵ Van Beek notes that the letter refers to Theodoros as ὑπαρχιτέκτονα and speculates that a further official letter may have followed, appointing him architekton-in-charge, as would have been appropriate if he were taking over fully from Kleon (Ibid., at p 189). If Van Beek is correct, such a letter would also have been a declarative speech act.

⁶ Levinson, discussing Austin, lists ten, although again the list includes speech acts that Searle would classify elsewhere. Levinson, *Pragmatics*, p 228.

their very nature they are a relatively uncommon speech act. For these reasons, ‘declarations’ will not be discussed further here.

Three other types of speech act in Searle’s classification not already discussed—assertives’ (Searle’s alternative name for ‘representatives’ that will be used in this thesis) ‘commissives’, and ‘expressives’—will be considered. A brief introduction to each follows below. Examples from the archives will be discussed in more detail in later chapters.

9.2 Assertives

Assertives are those speech acts in which a speaker or writer asserts that something is the case. In essence, they are propositions and commonly take the form of sentences with verbs in the indicative. As such they represent the default understanding of what language is—a system not unlike logic where what is said is either true or false. This relatively narrow approach to language has been slow to disappear even in learned discourse.⁷ This position has been called the ‘priority of the literal’ and is not so much a fully articulated theory as ‘a vague, general point of view’.⁸ That there is a distinction between the literal meaning of a sentence and what the hearer or reader may take from it—that is, what it implies—was an important insight of the pragmatic approach to language in general and of Grice in particular, to whose approach this discussion will return.⁹

It has also been argued that one of the most significant insight of Austin’s work on speech acts was that the distinction he observed between sentences that express logical propositions (assertives), and other sentences that ‘do things with words’ (Searle’s ‘declaratives’)—his starting point—cannot, in the end be sustained. By the end of his lectures, Austin had shown that to assert a proposition is as much a ‘performative act’ as

⁷ Nuel Belnap, ‘Declaratives Are Not Enough’, in Asa Kasher (ed.), *Pragmatics: Critical Concepts Volume II Speech Act Theory and Particular Speech Acts* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp 290 - 315.

⁸ Patrick Hawley, ‘What is said’, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 34 (2002), pp 969 - 991 at p 972.

⁹ H. Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

is passing sentence on a prisoner.¹⁰ It is true that some sentences (Searle's 'declaratives') have a particular 'force' when uttered by someone with socially prescribed authority, but my assertion, say, that my bus is due in fifteen minutes, is also a kind of speech act with a somewhat different, but certainly non-negligible kind of force.¹¹ It matters in a range of ways, not least to me and the person with whom I am communicating. Most people will acknowledge this to some extent. However, because the view that language is essentially a series of propositions was, before Austin and, among non-linguists, probably still is the default view (notwithstanding everything the ancient Greeks and Romans taught us about rhetoric) most people will also fail to see the importance of this. Austin's insight has immensely broadened and deepened our understanding of language. It is a major challenge to long-held 'common sense' understanding and offers a perspective that encourages us to think carefully about how we go about making apparently straightforward statements. An assertive is not as straightforward and simple a speech act as has often been assumed.

The speech acts classified by Searle as assertives (Austin used the term 'constative'¹²) include such things as stating, informing, announcing, affirming, confirming, maintaining, reporting, and many others. This category, it has been argued, contains probably the largest variety of verbs of any,¹³ (although as indicated in Section 9.3 below, there are also very many ways to perform commissives and, I believe, other speech acts). It is easy to see the usefulness of many of these speech acts in correspondence. Leaders of any enterprise require information as do those at other levels. Reports of various kinds thus figure frequently in this correspondence.

TEXT 38 is an example of an assertive speech act or acts of a relatively straightforward kind.

¹⁰ Searle, 'A Classification of Illocutionary Acts', at p 14. Austin begins to make this clear in 'Lecture XI' Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, pp 133 - 147.

¹¹ Austin expresses this well when he writes: 'That the giving of straightforward information produces, almost always, consequential effects upon action, is no more surprising than the converse, that the doing of any action (including the uttering of a performative) has regularly the consequence of making ourselves and others aware of facts.' Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, p 111, n2.

¹² Ibid., p 3.

¹³ Geoffrey N. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, (Longman Linguistics Library; New York: Longman, 1983), p 223.

TEXT 38

TM 7659 (Van Beek 33)

Thamous reports to Kleon on action he has taken to contract out some work. He also states that the purpose for this report is to ensure that ‘we’ are not ‘blamed’.

Recto

1 Θαμῶυς Κλέωνι
 χαίρειν. Ἐξέλαβον
 τὸ ἔργον τὸ ἐν θανι
 σμοῖ καὶ λαβόντος
 5 τὸ σύμβολον παρὰ
 σοῦ συνγραψάντ[ων]
 ἡμῶν τὴν συνγρα-
 φὴν ἐδώκαμ[ε]ν τὸ [σ]ύμ-
 β[ο]λον Πάξι[τι]. ..[..]
 10 τριος οὖ. ἐὰν τι μ[--]
 ἀντιγρ[αφ..]
 κωλύσαι ἡμῖν δὲ
 Γίνωσκε δὲ κατακλυ-
 ζόμενον τὸ χῶμα.
 15 Γεγράφαμέν σοι [ἵνα]
 μὴ αἰτιάση[ι ἡ]μᾶ[ς]
 [Ἐρρωσο. (Ἔτους) - - - - -]

Thamous to Kleon, greetings. I have contracted the work in thanismos¹⁴, and having received the *symbolon* from you, we have written the contract and have given the *symbolon* to Pasis. [- - - - -] to hinder [- - - - -]. Know that the dyke has been washed away. I have written to you so that you do not hold us responsible.
 [Farewell. Year - - - - -].

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 102.

There are some difficulties with this text due to its poor state of preservation. Yet it is clear that the writer wishes to convey at least three pieces of information: that he has contracted some work, written down the details and authorised the work by use of a *symbolon*¹⁵, and that a dyke has been washed away. This last is expressed most simply of all with the imperative form of γινώσκω. (Rather than being a directive, the imperative form here serves as an idiomatic means of providing information.) From a pragmatic perspective, the main complication in this letter with respect to its purpose is the final sentence where the reason for the report is given (that ‘we’ may not be blamed).

¹⁴ There is some difficulty in glossing ἐν θανισμοῖ. It may not be a toponym so it is not capitalised. Van Beek considers the issue but to pursue it is not relevant to our purpose here. Van Beek, *The Archive of Kleon and Theodoros*, p 103.

¹⁵ Quite what form the *symbolon* may have taken in this case is difficult to determine. It was clearly a token of authority to proceed on Kleon’s behalf but was not a contract *per se*, else there would have been no need for Thamous to issue a contract (line 6).

This sentence may be just another report. It may be a subtle directive aimed at persuading Kleon to hold a positive view of Thamous and his associates. It may even be taken as an expressive—a communication of Thamous’ psychological state (anxious or afraid). It also clearly implies that Kleon is capable of or is even likely to hold Thamous and his associates accountable for the state of the dykes. It is difficult to choose between these options in so short a letter and in the absence of any contextual knowledge (which must be what determines such matters) and there is no reason why they may not all be true. For the purposes of this chapter however, it will be sufficient to note that the letter suggests a style of reporting that wastes few words while nevertheless conveying much beyond those words alone.

As alluded to above (p 200), it is helpful in evaluating the significance of a sentence such as this, and indeed of assertive speech acts in general, to turn to the work of Grice on conversational implicature. Grice’s theory was summarised in *Chapter 6 (Section 6.4)* where the usefulness of his work when dealing with language that seems to be inconsistent with his principles was emphasised. In the case of assertives, it would be expected that well-formed examples will generally follow his principles. Without repeating in full the summary set out in *Chapter 6* (pp 124 - 125), it is sufficient to note that this means they will be cooperative relative to the context, true, evidence-based in the broadest sense, and as informative as is necessary without being over-informative. In addition, they will avoid obscurity and ambiguity and will be brief and orderly. Reports that meet these criteria tend to be highly valued in business matters, for obvious reasons, in any culture or any historical period.

At first reading, **TEXT 38**, notwithstanding some of the uncertainties identified above, and to the extent that we can judge these matters at such a distance, appears to meet these criteria. There is no reason to doubt the truth of the information provided. Moreover, if we accept that the stated motive for the letter (that we not be blamed) is also true, then we have a further internal reason to accept the accuracy of the information. The letter is concise and informative and certainly does not provide an over-abundance of information. Information about the letting of the contract is summarised in one sentence, information that a dyke has been washed away in the next.

It also presumably relies upon the evidence available to the writer since it reports what the writer and his colleagues have done. Taken together, these ideas provide a reasonable basis to assume a cooperative intent.

On the other hand however, Grice would no doubt argue that there is more to the sentence Γεγρόφαμέν σοι [ἴνα] | μὴ αἰτιόση[ι ἢ]μᾶ[ς] (lines 15-16) than a reason for the letter. It implies much. It implies much about the relationship between the correspondents, the management practices of Kleon (if indeed he is in the habit of blaming others for disasters), the need for employees or contractors to protect themselves from blame and no doubt much else about which we know nothing. This is not the place to pursue these matters. It is sufficient to note again, as above, that it would be a mistake to regard assertive speech acts as *prima facie* simple and straightforward. In individual cases, they may be, but these may well be exceptional rather than typical.

Many assertives have been encountered already in the letters discussed in this thesis. In *Chapter 7 (Section 7.2.3)* for example, where longer or more complex requests were discussed, almost all of the examples include information. This information is usually provided as justification for the request. It is especially characteristic of the requests encountered in Arch. Kleon where information about the level of the river or the state of certain channels is central to the responsibilities of both Kleon himself and his correspondents. See, for example, **TEXT 23** (p 151).

It will be shown that there are other such examples in Arch. Kleon and Arch. Zen. Some are relatively straightforward. There are others, however, that clearly put the lie to the implicit assumption that assertion is a simple linguistic act.

It should be noted here that future chapters will not consider *prosangelmata* (discussed in *Chapter 8 (Section 8.4)*). There are very few of these in Arch. Kleon and Arch. Zen. More importantly, while by their very definition they provide factual reports, they are an essentially different genre to letters. They are most common in legal contexts including criminal matters. An example from these archives, **TEXT X28** is included in the Appendix.

9.3 Commissives

Commissives are arguably a less common speech act than assertives, especially in writing, as by definition they ‘commit’ the person who utters them to future action of some kind. This commitment creates an obligation on the speaker or writer which they may come to regret if the obligation is, or through changing circumstances, becomes, onerous. To the extent that it is much more difficult to deny a commitment made in writing than one made orally (especially in the absence of witnesses), to that extent will a writer be especially cautious in making it.

Austin listed no fewer than 33 ways to perform a commissive speech act.¹⁶ Searle disagrees with some of the verbs Austin considers to be commissive but generally accepts his classification.¹⁷ This thesis has already discussed one kind of commissive: ‘threats’. In *Chapter 5 (Section 5.2.1)* a particularly forceful threat was discussed (**TEXT 1**, p 83). It was also observed in *Chapter 5, Section 5.1.1* (p 81) that threats are a commitment that even those with considerable power may be reluctant to make. It was described as a ‘high stakes’ activity because the person making it must be prepared to take the proposed action and suffer the possible ensuing opprobrium. In at least one letter previously discussed (**TEXT 2**, p 88) the writers seem to realise how high the stakes are and seek to soften the threat to some extent by how they structure the letter as a whole.

A promise is similar to a threat in at least one important way—both entail willingness on the part of the person who commits to it to follow through with actions that might become burdensome. *Chapter 5, Section 5.1.1*. (p 82), identified some of the differences. It is certainly true that in describing briefly¹⁸ or even when discussing commissives in more detail, scholars frequently choose ‘to promise’ as their example.¹⁹

¹⁶ Austin, *How to Do Things with Word*, pp 155 - 156.

¹⁷ Searle, 'A Classification of Illocutionary Acts', p 11.

¹⁸ Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, pp 217 ff.

¹⁹ In a general treatment of speech act theory edited by Asa Kasher, ‘Promise’ is both a section heading of the part devoted to particular speech acts and part of the title of the two papers in that section: Asa Kasher (ed.), *Pragmatics: Critical Concepts: Volume II: Speech Act Theory and Particular Speech Acts* (London

The differences between a threat and a promise, and their relationship both to other directives and to other speech acts, is an important topic but not immediately relevant here.²⁰ Having considered a number of examples of threats in *Chapter 5*, it is interesting to consider under what circumstances and to what end promises or similar are made or implied. For to make a promise or vow, express a commitment, or otherwise guarantee one's (good) intentions may be even more of a high stakes activity than issuing a threat. Depending upon one's community, one may be more likely to be forgiven for not carrying out a threat than for breaking a promise. In extreme circumstances, in the contemporary world if not the ancient, the making of a threat can lead to legal sanction. Failing to keep a promise, on the other hand, even in relatively inconsequential matters may result in an immediate degree of opprobrium within one's social circle.

It may be for this reason, or because a high level of engagement between writer and recipient is almost a necessary pre-condition for this kind of commitment to be made, that letters making a clear and unequivocal promise are not common in the archives. We have already discussed one in some detail. Although the focus of the discussion **TEXT 14** (*Chapter 7, Section 7.2.1* p 135) was on the speech act of request, it is also clear on any reading that Philonides, in that letter, is promising to take care of his father should something bad happen to him. This is despite the fact that nowhere in the letter is any form of ὑπισχνέομαι to be found. It will be recalled that this letter is a very sophisticated communication in a number of ways and the manner in which the promise is expressed is similarly sophisticated.

Simpler promises can also be found occasionally in these archives. In **TEXT 49**, reproduced in full in *Chapter 11, Section 11.2.2* (p 248), Païs, writing to Zenon seeking authorisation (among other things) to repair a boat, writes (at line 10):

and New York: Routledge, 1998) at Part Four: V Promise pp 445 -492. See also Andrzej Boguslawski, 'An analysis of promise', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 7 (1983), pp 607 - 627.

²⁰ For a detailed discussion, see Cristiano Castelfranchi and Marco Guerini, 'Is it a promise or a threat?', *Pragmatics and Cognition*, 15/2 (2007), pp 277 - 311.

.... ἐγὼ δὲ ὑφίσταμαι[ι], ἐφ' ᾧ γραφήσεται εἰς μονοπώλια,
τάξομαί | σοι (δραχμάς) ω.

I myself undertake to pay you 800 drachmai for her, on condition that she (the boat)
will be assigned in writing to monopoly trading.

In such a context, a promise of this kind almost amounts to offering a contract. It is certainly different to the kind of interpersonal promise found in the previous example. Taken together however, these two examples indicate both the variety and importance (in different ways) of this speech act.

Indeed the importance placed on keeping promises in most societies is likely to be one reason why research specifically into this speech act has been undertaken from quite early in the development of pragmatics as a discipline.²¹ This interest continues. In the contemporary world of business and law, there is reason to believe that to make a promise, at least when made by certain people in certain positions, is a very serious matter indeed. One kind of promise—a so-called ‘ethical oath’—has been proposed, following the financial crisis of the early 21st century, as something that might ‘contribute to the development of more ethical behaviour in economics and business’.²² The modern world has also raised the issue of whether it is possible to ‘promise’ that some fact or event is, or will be, the case (for example, that a product I am selling to you, will last for five years), or whether such a promise (the better word here is ‘warranty’) should be considered a different kind of speech act altogether.²³

Some of these issues are likely to be evident in the papyri, some are not. A point fundamental to this thesis is that ‘speech act analysis cannot be conducted without reference to information about the social and cultural context in which speech acts are performed’.²⁴ For this reason, it will be of considerable interest if it is found that writers in these archives do ‘promise’ states of affairs. It will also be of interest to observe the

²¹ Andrzej Boguslawski, 'An analysis of promise', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 7 (1983), pp 607 - 627

²² Vincent Blok, 'The Power of Speech Acts: Reflections on a Performative Concept of Ethical Oaths in Economics and Business', *Review of Social Economy*, 71 (2) (2013), pp 187 - 208 at pp 205 - 206.

²³ Mark Migotti, 'All Kinds of Promises', *Ethics*, 114 (1) (2003), pp 60 - 87.

²⁴ Editorial, 'Speech Acts in Legal Language: Introduction', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41 (2009), pp 393 - 400 at p 397.

variety of ways in which the writers of these letters commit themselves to actions of any kind.

9.4 Expressives

In declaring that the ‘illocutionary point’²⁵ (or we may say the purpose) of expressive speech acts is to communicate certain psychological states, Searle was drawing attention to something very fundamental about language. As well as acting on the material world, we speak in order to maintain, develop and improve (or sometimes to break) relationships with other people. There is a sense in which expressive speech acts are an outcome of a fundamental human need for connection with others. This is not to say that expressive speech acts are always guileless. It was noted in *Section 9.1* (p 197) that there is often a degree of ‘give and take’ in business letters and there is no guarantee that the ‘give’ element—either the commissive (a promise of future action), or the expressive (an expression of ‘sincere’ gratitude) are honest and non-manipulative. Yet genuine friendship can develop among business associates and expressions of thanks or apologies can be sincere at the same time as they serve some other purpose.

It is in dealing with expressive speech acts that a problem that applies to the kind of analysis undertaken in this thesis (discussed in *Chapter 1, Section 1.1*, pp 5 - 6) comes to the fore most acutely. We can never know with certainty what purposes an individual is pursuing in their actions, including their speech acts. Only the individuals themselves know this for sure and even they may sometimes confess to having mixed purposes or even not to know fully their own minds. All we can do is infer these intentions from the words we have in front of us and from the knowledge we have of the context in which they were written. That has been the approach adopted in considering letters throughout this thesis. Sometimes these inferences can only be tentative. (This is hardly surprising given the distance in time between us and the writers.) On other occasions, when the situation is straightforward and given that there are some constants in human nature across history, we can infer with some confidence.

When we are dealing with expressive speech acts however, we are dealing with what people claim to be feeling, whether this feeling is labelled thankful, apologetic, or

²⁵ Searle, 'A Classification of Illocutionary Acts', p 12.

something else. In such cases it is even harder to be confident in one's inferences. We might assume sincerity in the case of communications between family members. When Kleon's wife, Metrodora, declares herself to be immensely frightened by the account she has been given of the visit to Kleon of the king, (**TEXT X23**, referred to previously at p 131 and p 136) there is no reason to doubt her honesty. In this case, too, there are at least some things that we know with a degree of confidence that can support this inference. At the very least we know that anyone in Kleon's position is likely to have been very sensitive to disapproving remarks made about him by a king.

In other cases, expressives may not always be so easy to take on face value. In **TEXT 56** for example, Zenon writes:

----- θαυμάζω οὖν εἰ οὕτως | ἐπιλήσμων εἶ...
 - - - -I am astonished that you should be so forgetful ...

The relevant text of this letter is provided in greater detail in *Chapter 11*, p 261. Here it is sufficient to note that the purpose of the letter is, among other things, to inquire into discrepancies in some accounts—discrepancies which, at least in the context of this letter, seem to be the result of an error of omission by Kleitarchos. The context suggests that Zenon is more likely to be angry than he is to be astonished, and that even if he is experiencing a degree of surprise, it is likely to be surprise at an unanticipated lapse and that the 'surprise' is being communicated for the purpose of reproach. The use of *θαυμάζω* in this case is rhetorical.

Similar reservations may be held about the expressive used by Philoxenos in **TEXT 20**, (*Chapter 7*, Section 7.2.2 (p 44)). Philoxenos writes:

Αἰσχύνομαι γὰρ | περὶ οὐδενὸς πλεονά | κίς σε ἐνοχλῶν ...
 For I am ashamed troubling you about nothing ...

This is the concluding sentence of a letter, one of the purposes of which, I suggested in the discussion in *Chapter 7* (pp 144 - 145) was to ask the recipient (Zenon), gently but assertively, to return an item of property belonging to the writer. I suggested that this sentence, the last prior to the valediction, had the purpose of emphasising that the

request was a polite one and to avoid offending the recipient. Was the writer genuinely 'ashamed' then? I suspect not. I suspect that this sentence too, served a rhetorical purpose rather than simply describing the writer's psychological state.

9.5 Cooperation and affiliation

It will be apparent from the speech acts discussed above that they often demonstrate something that directives—the type of speech act that has concerned us in previous chapters—lack. They can demonstrate an attempt at a substantial degree of cooperation with others, rather than what might be called the 'manipulation' of, or the 'management' of, others. Whether a directive, at one extreme, takes the form of an order (in cases where the writer has the power to do so) or, at the other extreme, the form of a petition (in cases where the writer is in relevant respects powerless), in every case the principal purpose is to change the behavior of the recipient. This may not be true of assertives, commissives or expressives. For these speech acts, outcomes such as mutual respect, confidence that someone else is acting or will act in your best interests, or that someone else is concerned about your feelings, can be (although need not be) more important.

To consider assertives first, it is evident that, by supplying information, they may meet either an expressed or perceived need of the recipient. This is true even if the information supplied is not to the liking of the recipient as they may draw the recipient's attention to something of importance they had otherwise overlooked. If the information is accurate, then the recipient must face it or suffer the consequences of ignoring it. As indicated above, Grice has interesting things to say about the expectations we hold when people provide us with information.

Commissives can also be more cooperative than not. This is the case notwithstanding the counter-example of threats. For reasons argued earlier in this thesis (*Chapter 5, Section 5.1.1*, pp 81 - 82), threats are a relatively uncommon speech act. What could be more cooperative than a promise? Similarly, committing oneself to future actions such as forwarding supplies, checking that some undertaking of interest to the recipient is

progressing satisfactorily, or gathering some information they are not in a position to gather, would generally be considered acts of cooperation.

With regard to expressives, it is clear that to express regret, to apologise, to commiserate or to agree with a correspondent are all cooperative acts. Of course one can also express anger or disappointment, and indicate that one is offended in some way by a correspondent. Yet even expressives such as these, while they may seem uncooperative at first glance, can sometimes produce positive outcomes. It may be that the person who is told that they have caused offence had no wish to offend and will modify their behavior in future. Their response may even be a further expressive speech act in the form of an apology. Such a mutually satisfactory resolution of misunderstandings can lead to greater cooperation in future.

One ought not, however, to focus on this cooperative quality too exclusively. There are several reasons for this reservation. First, it is important to remember that individual speech acts may be combined with others, in the same letter, to reinforce or soften the force of one another. Thus, in individual cases, even a commissive speech act may not be very cooperative because of the context in which it is found. For example, in *Chapter 6, Section 6.2.3*, (pp 119 - 122), it was found that orders are not infrequently accompanied by a reason to justify them—a reason that often takes the form of an assertive (the situation is thus and so...please therefore...). Yet the point of those letters is the order, not the information used to justify it. The assertive in such cases is not provided in an attempt to cooperate with the recipient by providing them with useful information. It is included to convince the recipient to comply with the order.

Secondly, speech acts may be used rhetorically (discussed in the previous section). The ‘information’ about a writer’s emotional state conveyed in an expressive speech act may be a figure of speech such as hyperbole. Assertives may also be used with hidden intent. This usage is described helpfully by de Souza as ‘action-guiding’ language.²⁶ Here, influence is exerted by directing the attention of the hearer/reader to particular facts or feelings rather than to others which could also be relevant or may even challenge or modify in some way the ‘facts’ provided. De Souza also points out that certain words

²⁶ Marcondes de Souza, D. 'Action-guiding language', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 7 (1983), pp 49 - 62.

carry an emotional connotation or overtone that cannot be avoided when used in a particular context. (One of his examples is ‘communist’ whose pejorative associations in mid-20th century America were overwhelming).²⁷

Thirdly, expressives in particular present particular problems for us as we seek to judge their significance. They may or may not be sincere and can lend themselves very readily to manipulative use. We can certainly express feeling we genuinely experience, and we can have feelings we do not express. We can also elect to ‘express’ feelings we do not, genuinely experience at all, but believe that we should be seen to express them in a particular context.²⁸ There is also the added problem for us, looking at letters in a language far distant in time from our own and originating in a culture whose subtleties can often elude us, of interpreting the emotions being expressed. As Cairns asks: ‘[I]s emotion a pan-cultural category?’²⁹ It would be wrong to suggest that we can infer nothing sensibly about the expressives encountered in these letters because they are about emotions in a different culture. Emotions of some kind are a universal human experience. Clearly, however, we do need to be cautious in the interpretations that we make.

Finally, it is hard to interpret at least some commissives as cooperative at all. Threats we have already discussed. Additionally, a commitment made to a course of action without consultation may be the opposite of cooperative even if made with good will.

All of this suggests that, while it is a helpful distinction to make when comparing these speech acts with directives, ‘cooperation’ does not quite capture what they have in common. I consider ‘affiliation’ to be a term better suited to describing them.

By affiliation, I mean a process by which people are connected with one another in a way that leads to better understanding, and sometimes to mutual appreciation and trust. Those with a sense of affiliation to each other or to a group may also be willing to meet

²⁷ Ibid., p 50.

²⁸ Caffi, Claudia and Janney, Richard W., ‘Towards a pragmatics of emotive communication’, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 22, (1994) pp 325 - 373 at p 326.

²⁹ Douglas Cairns, ‘Look both ways: studying emotion in ancient Greek’, *Critical Quarterly*, 50 (4) (2008), pp 43 - 62 at p 43.

requests or otherwise do the will of those others. If I provide you with information that you need concisely, accurately, and in a timely manner, you are likely to be think favourably of me. If I promise to do something in future and in due course carry out that promise you are likely to trust me and be willing to do something for me in return. If I let you know how I feel about events of interest to us both, and, if the occasion calls for it, apologise for things I have done that upset you, then you are more likely to be prepared to deal with me in future. Over a period of time, these interchanges can bring us closer together.

This is most apparent in the case of expressive speech acts, where in performing them, people open themselves up in some way. They let us glimpse something of their emotional state in a manner foreign to what happens when, for example, an order is given. It is also the case that to utter a commissive speech act is to show one's hand with respect to the actions one is prepared to take, thus leaving oneself open to a negative response in a way that requires a certain degree of trust. Finally, even to provide information in the form of an assertive speech act is to place some value on the needs of others for that information. At the least, one is taking the trouble to prepare and send the letter.

The other reason why 'affiliation' is a better descriptor of the way these speech acts differ from directives than 'cooperation' is that it is possible to pursue affiliation with someone for reasons of one's own, and with disregard for the well-being of the person with whom the affiliation is sought. The attempted affiliation may be both insincere and manipulative. The intent of a speech act of a broadly affiliative kind can be to make the recipient act in a manner that may not be in their best interest.

These distinctions will become clearer through the examples discussed in the following two chapters. If I am correct in the above however, then the identification and examination of speech acts of this kind in the archives holds out the promise of gaining some genuine glimpses of how the correspondents related to each other.

ASSERTIVES

10.1 Introduction

It has been characteristic of the speech acts discussed in previous chapters that their expression has been undertaken in styles which range from the succinct and terse to the extended and subtle. Some are very formal, others conversational. This is not surprising in the case of speech acts such as orders and requests. Nor should it be surprising to find such variation with respect to assertives. It was argued in the previous chapter that, notwithstanding the common assumption that conveying information is a simple and straightforward matter, we might expect to find complex assertives as well as straightforward ones. There are many assertive verbs. It is more likely than not, as Leech observes, that the choices speakers make among these verbs has pragmatic significance.¹

Leech also makes some other observations that are helpful here. Assertive verbs can be grouped along a number of dimensions. First, a person may assert something that has happened in the past (for example, ‘reporting’) or they may assert that something will happen in future (for example ‘predicting’). Secondly, some assertives make the information they convey publicly known (including ‘announcing’ and ‘declaring’), others appear to have a more limited or private scope (including ‘implying’ and ‘hinting’). (This is not to say that other verbs and speech acts do not also sometimes imply more than they appear to convey on the surface.) Thirdly, there is a distinction between those verbs that are confident in their assertion (‘affirming’ and ‘confirming’) and those that are not (‘suggesting’). Finally, some assertives have what Leech calls an ‘argumentative’ quality to them (for example, ‘claiming’ and ‘allowing’).²

¹ Geoffrey N. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, (Longman Linguistics Library; New York: Longman, 1983), p 224.

² Ibid., pp 223 - 25.

Some of the assertive verbs identified by Leech (for example ‘to announce’) are unlikely to be found in letters. Letters are commonly (although not necessarily) addressed to a single individual. Announcements, almost by definition, are unlikely to be made in such a communication other than in exceptional circumstances. Common usage in English generally implies that the audience for an announcement is a broad one. Politicians make announcements as do the managers of railway stations. Exceptions, when they occur, are more likely to be spoken rather than written, and serve a purpose wider than simply conveying information. If I ‘announce’ something to a friend, what I say is likely to be unanticipated and probably somewhat startling.

Similarly, ‘declaring’ something to be the case, rather than simply stating it, carries connotations of emphasis and solemnity difficult to convey in a letter other than by explicitly doing so in a form of words such as ‘I declare to you that...’. I have not found such a formulation in the letters that I have examined. Leech’s observations are nevertheless helpful in demonstrating that the same degree of diversity found in the speech acts discussed in previous chapters is also found in the superficially more straightforward case of conveying information. Some of Leech’s distinctions form the basis for the sub-headings that follow.

10.2 Reporting and predicting

There are examples of reporting to be found in these archives that are straightforward and simple. It is these with which we will begin. Consider the following.

TEXT 39

TM 388486 (Van Beek 72)

Nikostratos informs Kleon that a person accused of a crime or misdemeanour has been sent to him.

Recto

[Νικ]όστρατος Κλέω-
[νι] χαίρειν. ὦμι ἐπε-
[κά]λει Λάηθις ἀπε-
[σ]τάλκαμεν [ἤδη]
5 [πρ]ὸς σέ ἵνα διὰ [σὲ δύ-]
[ν]ηται τυχε[ῖν]
[..] τῶν δικαίων

Verso

(m2) Παῦνι ιδ

Νικο(στράτου) ὦι \ Λάηθις / ἐπεκάλει (m3) Κλέωνι

Nikostratos to Kleon, greetings. We have [immediately] sent to you the man whom Laethis accused in order that he may obtain what is just.

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 180 (Modified).

Verso

Payni 14. From Nikostratos, on the man whom Laethis accused. To Kleon

Here we have a report of some action taken in the recent past that will have an impact on the recipient in the near future if not immediately. While there is a hint of a request in this letter (ἵνα διὰ [σὲ δὲ-] | [ν]ηται τυχε[ῖν] | [...] τῶν δικαίων (lines 5 – 6)) the emphasis is on the fact that an accused man is on his way. There is no explicit request to bring him before a judge or to suggest that Kleon himself undertake a particular course of action. In its brevity and directness it complies with Grice's maxims of manner—it is brief and orderly and it is neither obscure nor ambiguous.

In short, the purpose of this letter as a whole is to inform. We have encountered assertive speech acts in previous letters discussed in this thesis. Many of those examined in *Chapters 6 and 7* in particular included assertive speech acts. There, it was observed that assertive speech acts often provided the reason for an order or request. They played a subsidiary role. Here, the roles are reversed. The assertive speech act is the more important, and the purpose expressed in the final clause of this letter—that the accused man might obtain what is just—is less significant. What the writer wants Kleon to know more than anything else is that the accused man is on his way.³

This letter also differs from those others in that it would appear to be of more value to the recipient. Kleon would find it useful to have advance notice of an accused man being transported to him and, if asked, would probably acknowledge that Nikostratos was being cooperative to a degree in providing this notice. It is hardly high level cooperation however, and it would be stretching the meaning of the term to describe the letter as in any way affiliative.

³ There may be purposes nesting in the relationship between the correspondents, but we have no knowledge of these.

We need to turn to letters that provide more information than this example to come to a better understanding of the cooperative nature of assertives and, more importantly in my view, how they can be used to establish, enhance or diminish a level of affiliation between the parties.

TEXT 40 provides a detailed report of circumstances that have occurred in the past and also makes predictions as to what will occur in future. (Such predictions can be distinguished in a letter such as this from commissives in that it is not the writer who is to carry out the future action.)

TEXT 40**TM 1542** (P Lond 7 1979)

Demetrios provides reports on a number of matters including the safe arrival of Zenon's father in Kaunos, a delay in the despatch of some cushions and failure to receive some money from Sostratos. Sostratos is accused of cheating.

Recto

- Δημήτριος Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. εὖ ἂν ἔχοι εἰ τῷ τε σώματι
 ὑγιαίνεις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις κατὰ λόγον ἀπαλλάσσεις.
 ὑγίαινον δὲ
 καὶ γὰρ. γίνωσκε τὸν πατέρ[α τ]ε καὶ Ἀκρίσιον
 διασσεσσιμένους εἰς οἶκον.
 παρόντες γὰρ τινες ἐγ' Ῥόδου ἀν[ή]γγελλον τὸ ποῖον ὅτι ἐν
 Ῥόδῳ ἦν
 5 τὸ Τιμοκράτους ἤδη ἐκ Καύνου παραγεγενημένον. καὶ
 ἐκπλέον-
 τες δὲ κατέλιπον τύλας τε καὶ προσκεφάλαια δερμάτινα,
 ἃ συνέτα-
 ξαν ἀποστεῖλαι Κίμωνι εἰς Καῦνον. [τ]έως μὲν οὖν οὐκ
 ἐκπεποίηκεν
 αὐτῷ ἀπ[ο]στειλεῖν, ὥς ἂν δὲ τάχιστα, ἅμα τῇ ὥραίαι,
 εὐθέως ἀποστελεῖ.
 ἐγενήθη δὲ ταῖτιον τὸ μὴ ἀναλαβεῖν τὸν ναύκληρον ταῦτα
 παρὰ τὸ
 10 μὴ δύνασθαι ἀποτελωνήσασθαι, ἀλλ' ἡμέρας πλείους
 ἐλκῦσαι ἕως ὅτου
 καὶ τὸ πλοῖον μετέωρον ὥρμει. ἴσθι δὲ καὶ τὴν μνᾶν τοῦ
 ἀργυρίου ἣν συν-
 ἔστησας ἡμᾶς παρὰ Σωστράτου λαβεῖν οὐκ εἰληφότας
 [ἡμᾶς]. ἔδειξε δ' ἡμῖν
 καὶ Δημήτριος τὸ ὑπόμνημα τὸ παρὰ σοῦ, ἐν ᾧ γράφεις ἐκ
 τ[οῦ] μέλιτος
 δοῦ[ναι] ἡμῖν. τὸ δὲ μέλι πεπραμένον ἤδη ἦν ὑπὸ τῶν περὶ
 Ἰσοκράτην τὸν
 15 τραπεζίτην, καὶ οὐκ ἔφασαν ἐκποεῖν οὐδ' αὐτοῖς
 τὰργύριον ἐβουκόλησεν μὲν
 οὖν ἡμᾶς Σώστρατος· συστήσας γὰρ ἡμῖν Προῖτον ἵνα δῶι
 ἐκ τοῦ μέλιτος, πάλιν
 ἀποσυνέταξεν ἀποτρέχων μηκ[έτ]ι [τὸ] μέλι Προῖτοι
 προέσθαι. ἐβουλόμην
 μὲν οὖν καὶ αὐτὸς ἀναπλεῦσαι πρὸς σε, ἀλλ' οὐκ

ἐκπεποίηκέ μοι. γράφει γὰρ Ἀντιλέων
 πρὸς σε ἐπιστολὴν ὑπὲρ μου. ἔρρωσο.

Verso

20 [(ἔτους)] λγ, Ἀθὺρ ι. Δημήτριος Ζήνωνι.
 περὶ τε τῆς μν(ᾶς) τοῦ ἄρ(γυρίου)
 ὅτι οὐκ εἴληφεν, καὶ περὶ
 τῶν τυλῶν, ὅτι ἀπολελειμμένοι [εἰσίν.]

Demetrios to Zenon greeting. It would be well if you are in good bodily health and if in other respects you are prospering. I myself am in good health. Know that your father and Akrisios have arrived safely home. For some people arriving from Rhodes bring the news that the ship of Timokrates was in Rhodes, having just arrived from Kaunos. When they sailed away, they left behind cushions and leather pillows which they asked Kimon to send on to Kaunos. For the moment it is impossible for him to send them, but as soon as possible, when the fair weather comes, he will send them off immediately. The reason why the captain could not take them on board was that he was unable to clear them through the customs, although he delayed several days until the ship was anchoring out at sea. And know that we have not received the money which you advised us to collect from Sostratos. Demetrios showed us the memorandum from you in which you write that payment is to be made to us out of the honey. But the honey had already been sold by the agents of Isikrates the banker, and they said the money was not even enough for themselves. So Sostratos has cheated us. For after recommending Proitos to us so that he might give it us out of the honey, he rushed off and gave orders not to deliver the honey to Proitos. I myself am anxious to sail up to you, but have not had time to do so. For Antileon is writing the letter to you on my behalf. Farewell.

Trans.: Skeat (1974) pp 75 - 76 (Modified).

Verso

To Zenon Year 33 Hathyr 10. Demetrios about the mina of money that he has not received it and about the cushions that they have been left behind.

This is a long letter and a number of things can be said about it. Skeat discusses some of its puzzling features. These include a change from first person singular to first person plural and back, as well as the reference to Demetrios, the writer of the letter, in the third person.⁴

These anomalies or possible errors need not concern us as the interest of the letter for present purposes is the nature of the information it provides. Whatever the relationship of Demetrios and Antileon to Zenon, it would seem, on the surface anyway, to be an act of fellow feeling—of affiliation—to pass on information that serves to confirm the safe arrival at Kaunos of Zenon's father. This is an additional, freely offered piece of information that was not central to the principal purpose of the correspondence. The

⁴ T. C. Skeat, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum (Now in the British Library) the Zenon Archive* (Vol. VII; London: The British Library Board, 1974), p 74.

docket suggests it was not even expected. It references only the money that was not received and the cushions left behind. Moreover the information is provided in a way that does more than simply assert the fact of the safe arrival of Zenon's father. It asserts further details in support. Aristotle would recognise the λόγος here. This is a pattern repeated throughout the letter. More than in many other letters discussed in this thesis, for each statement made, further details in support are provided.

Why this is so—why the writer(s) should choose to do this—is open to a number of interpretations. It is possible that the relationship between Demetrios and Zenon is such that he feels the need to support his assertions or risk not being believed. To open with unsolicited information that Zenon will be pleased to receive may also be seen as a means of making the letter as a whole more welcome than it might otherwise have been. Support for this view comes from the nature of the information conveyed. The letter is reporting failure—failure to receive money the writer was expected to collect and failure in the forwarding of some cushions, the significance of which for Zenon we do not know. On this interpretation, letting Zenon know that his father has arrived home may be an attempt at diminishing the impact of this failure.

It is also of significance that in at least one instance—the assertion ἐβουκόλησεμ μὲν | οὖν ἡμᾶς Σώστρατος – ‘So Sostratos has cheated us’ (lines 15 – 16)—some of the reasons upon which the assertion is based are provided before it is made (the honey had already been sold for a price insufficient even for the agents) and others follow (Sostratos had prevented Proitos from receiving and selling the honey). These events are not simply reported chronologically. They are ordered in such a way as to make the case for the duplicity of Sostratos.

Exactly what Zenon would have made of these ‘facts’ is impossible for us to know. The accusation that Sostratos has cheated depends upon the implication that his actions were intentional. Zenon may not accept this and may even wish to challenge whether the reasons given for certain other actions were adequate. Did the captain, for example, try hard enough to get the cushions cleared through customs?

The point here is Grice's. Meaning is a composite notion and depends on the interpretation of many different kinds of content.⁵ The meaning a recipient (Zenon here) takes from such assertives will be drawn in part from how they are positioned in the text (their relative place among other assertives). It will also be drawn in the light of other extra-linguistic information, including what the recipient of a message already knows. In a letter as long as this one, the facts are not simply the facts. The details reported relate to each other in a number of ways that may be assumed to serve the writer's purpose and will be interpreted by the recipient in the light of much additional knowledge not found in the text. One must always ask: why this particular assertive here, and not that one?

This degree of uncertainty (for us) is also true of the one prediction found in this letter—that the cushions not previously despatched will be sent on (by Kimon) when the weather is suitable (line 8). Having reported to Zenon that something he wanted to happen has not happened, it is not surprising that Demetrios immediately predicts that the matter will be rectified promptly. The goal may be to lessen the likelihood or severity of Zenon's anger. Zenon may or may not have been convinced.

We have already seen that predictions, as distinct from promises, may play a role in persuasive letters. In discussing **TEXT 13** *Chapter 7, Section 7.2*, p 131) it was noted that the reason Philonides offers to his father Kleon as to why he should arrange for a letter to be sent from a particular person's office (that of Telestes) rather than another person's is that it will not be the same if others (in this case Satyros and Abas) praise him. This is certainly a prediction. Equally certainly, as was discussed in *Chapter 7*, it has a persuasive purpose. A series of assertives of the apparently straightforward kind found in a letter such as **TEXT 40** may also have a persuasive effect when taken as a whole that is significantly stronger than the persuasive effect of any one of them alone.

Finally, the sentence spread across lines 17 - 18 (ἐβουλόμην | μὲν οὖν καὶ αὐτὸς ἀναπλεῦσαι πρός σε, ἄλλ' οὐκ ἐκπεποίηκέ μοι may be rich in implications that are lost to us. Is Demetrios offering an excuse? Does his inability to sail to Zenon suggest

⁵ Stephen C. Levinson, *Presumptive Meanings: The Theory of Generalized Conversational Implicature* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 2000), p 21.

an unwillingness to provide the information contained in the letter face-to-face? Has Zenon previously requested such a meeting? Does Demetrios wish to impress Zenon with how hard he is working? We are unlikely ever to know. Something that should not be lost to us though, is that this long letter, full of information as it is, is most certainly not just about providing information *per se* and that the correspondents whose texts we are examining were using their language with far more sophistication and subtlety than immediately meets the eye.

It should not be assumed that reports made by letter are all as relatively straightforward as the above. We certainly face some difficulties in understanding some of the details of the above letter but these difficulties fade into insignificance by comparison with those presented by **TEXT 41**.

TEXT 41**TM 1882** (P Zen Pestm 51)

Hierokles writes to Artemidoros the doctor setting out details of the apparently unapproved opening of a palaistra and attributing blame to some and exonerating others for their actions.

Recto

- Ἱεροκλῆς Ἀρτεμιδώρῳ χαί[ρε]ιν. εἰ ἔρρωσαι καὶ ἐν τοῖς
 λοιπ[οῖς ἀπαλ-]
 λάσσεις κατὰ νοῦν, εὖ ἂν ἔχοι. αὐτὸς μὲν γὰρ καταπλεύσας
 ἄνωθεν
 [ἦν]ωχλήθην ἰσχυρῶς, νυνὶ δὲ πρὸς τῷ ἀναλαμβάνειν εἰμί.
 ὕγαι-
 [νε]ν δὲ καὶ Ἐφάρο μος(τος) καὶ τὰ π[αρά σο]ῦ
 παιδάρια. περὶ Πτολεμαίου
 5 καὶ πρότερον μὲν σοι ἔγραψα [-ca.?-]ν. [.] . ξισθ. [-ca.?-]
 Ζήνωνος οἰόμενος ἔχειν τὴν [παλα]ίστραν π[-ca.?-]
 σαι ἐπιτηνόχει τὰ τε ζῶν. [-ca.?-] . [-ca.?-]
 νῦν οὖν συμβαίνει αὐτῷ ἀσχ[η]μονεῖν, ἃμ μὴ σὺ ἐνταθῆς
 10 περὶ αὐτοῦ, καθάπερ δίκαιό[ν] ἐ[στι]ν τοὺς ἐπαγγειλαμένους
 συντελεῖν. ἔστι δὲ σοι πάντων μὲν τῶν κακῶν αἴτιος Μητρό-
 δωρος· ἀποκρίεται γὰρ τοῖς ἐντ[υ]γχάνουσι περὶ Πτολεμαίου
 ἐν
 αὐλῇ τοιαῦτα λέγων, ὅτι ἐ[γ]ὼ πρότερον μὲν ἐσπούδαζον
 περὶ Πτολεμαίου, ἐλάνθαν[ε γ]ὰρ με τὸ πρᾶγμα· νυνὶ δὲ ἡσ-
 θιμένος οἶόν ἐστιν ἀντιλέγω λέγων ταῦτα. Ἀπολλώνιον μὲν
 15 συμβαίνει τὸν πλείον χρόνον [δια]τρίβειν ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ, Ἀμύν-
 ταν δὲ ἔξω τε σκηνοῦντα [κ]αὶ γεγαμηκότα καὶ τέκνον
 ὑπάρχον ἤδη αὐτῷ, ὥ[στε] μηδεμίαν ὑποψίαν ἐκείνῳ γε
 προσπεσεῖν· λοιπὸν τὸ τόξον ἐπ' ἐμὲ τείνεται τῷ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ
 20 σκηνοῦντι. ἄγ γὰρ αἴσθητα[ι] ὁ βασιλεὺς τὴν παλαίστραν
 ἀνοιχθεῖσαν, ὑποψίαν ἐγὼ πλείστην ἔξω δι' ἐμὲ ἀνοιχθαι, ὅτι
 φιλόνηός εἰμι. διὸ καὶ Ἀμύνταν ἀξιῶ συσπεύδειν ἡμῖν τοῦ μὴ
 ἀνοιχθῆναι τὴν παλαίστραν· ἂν δ' ἄρα καὶ ἐγβιασθῇ Ἀμύντας,
 συμβήσεται μοι ἐκχωρεῖν ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας, ἐὰμ μὴ δύνωμαι
 Ἡγήμονα πείσαι τοῦ γράψαι Ἀπολλωνίῳ. σὲ οὖν καὶ ἀξιοῦ-

- 25 μεν καὶ δεόμεθα πᾶσαν σπουδὴν ποιήσασθαι περὶ Πτολεμαίου
τοῦ λαβεῖν τὴν παλαίστραν· πεπεῖσμεθα γὰρ σοῦ βουλομέ-
νου πάντ' ἔσεσθαι. ἔτι δὲ καὶ κακεῖνο· οὐκ ἐττηθήσεσθε ὑπὸ
ἀνθρώπου
ἀνελευθέρου; γράψον δὲ καὶ Ἀρτεμιδώρῳ ἵνα τὸν γαυνάκην
δῶι τοῖς παιδαρίοις· οὐ γὰρ δίδωσιν, ἅμ μὴ σὺ γράψῃς.
ἀπόστειλον
- 30 δ' ἡμῖν καὶ τὸ παιδάριον ὃ ἐδείκνυές μοι, ἵνα προσάγωμεν καὶ
τοῦ-
τον πρὸς τὰ μαθήματα.
ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) κθ Δίου ιθ.

Verso

Ἰατρῶι Ἀρτεμιδώρῳ[ι]

Hierokles to Artemidoros greetings. If you are well and in the rest you are getting along according to your intention, it would be good. For I myself, when I sailed down from up-river, became very ill, but now I am picking up. And Epharmostos was well too, and the boys from you. I wrote to you about Ptolemaios also before ... of(?) Zenon, knowing that he has(?) the *palaistra* ... So now it turns out for him that he is to be in disgrace unless you exert yourself concerning him, just as is right(?) for those who have promised to accomplish things. But Metrodoros is your cause of all the evils. For he has answered those who are presenting petitions about Ptolemaios in court by making the following assertions, that I was making an effort about Ptolemaios before, for the matter escaped my attention. But now, perceiving how it is, I counter him saying these things. It happens that Apollonios is spending the majority of the time in the *khora*, but Amyntas is living outside (the household) and has married, and already has a child, so no suspicion falls on him. The bow, then, is stretched against me, the one who lives in the household. For if the King perceives that the *palaistra* has been opened, I will bear greatest suspicion, that it has been opened through me, because I love the young ones. Therefore I am also asking Amyntas to make an effort for us as well to the effect that the *palaistra* has not been opened. But if, then, Amyntas is forced out as well, the result will be my withdrawal from the household, unless I can persuade Hegemon to write to Apollonios. So we also ask and beg you to make every effort about Ptolemaios, as to getting control of the *palaistra*. For we trust that all will happen if you are willing. There is still this as well; you will not be bested by a base man. And write also to Artemidoros, so that he may give the thick cloaks to the boys. For he is not giving them unless you write. And send us also the boy whom you showed me, so that we may introduce this one too to his studies. Farewell. Year 29, Dios 19.

Trans.: Evans (in preparation).

Verso

(Address) To (the) doctor Artemidoros.

The text is remarkable in this context for a number of reasons. The health wish is extended and the writer also reports both the recovery from illness of himself, the health of Epharmostos,⁶ and of 'the boys from you' (τὰ π[αρὰ σο]ῦ παιδάρια (line 4)). It is

⁶ Zenon's brother: P. W. Pestman, *A Guide to the Zenon Archive* (P.L. Bat. 21, 2 vols. (Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava, XXI A; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), p 330.

difficult, from the information in the letter alone,⁷ to determine how the several people referred to by name here, and elsewhere in the letter, are related to each other. The correspondents, as often in these archives, know each other so well there is no need for them to be explicit. Their respective roles can nevertheless sometimes be deduced from other sources.⁸

Following the health wish, the greater part of the letter consists of a series of assertives. To gain a better sense of the letter it is useful to attempt a summary of these, notwithstanding several lacunae in the text.

- The author wrote to Artemidoros about Ptolemaios before (line 5).
- Ptolemaios is now in disgrace (unless Artemidoros intervenes) (lines 8-9).
- Metrodoros is the cause of all the trouble because of how he is answering petitions made about Ptolemaios (lines 10-12)
- Hierokles is speaking against whatever Metrodoros is saying (lines 13 – 14).
- Apollonios is spending most of his time in the country (lines 15 -16).
- No suspicion falls on Amyntas (lines 16-17).
- Hierokles himself is under the greatest suspicion (lines 18-21).
- And more.....

It is far from certain that this summary captures the significance of each of these points, or indeed, exactly how they relate to each other, given that we lack an understanding of the context. All seem to be related to each other but in ways that it is not possible for us to discern. It is appropriate to stop here for the letter then turns to the conclusion that the writer clearly intends the recipient to reach—that he, the recipient, should intervene with respect to Ptolemaios. The prediction—that ‘all’ will happen if he does—follows.

The letter ends with a sentence or two on matters only distantly related to what has gone before. Further intervention on the part of Artemidoros, to obtain thick cloaks for the boys, is requested and there is also a request to send another boy to begin his studies.

⁷ As the previous footnote demonstrates, we do have relevant information from elsewhere.

⁸ TEXT 21 (p 146), for example, is also from Hierokles and refers to a boy training at a palaistra. We may assume the boys referred to here are also training as athletes.

No attempt will be made here to explore further the meaning of this letter. By itself it is more intriguing than meaningful to us. Almost all of the assertives it contains make sense only to someone with a detailed involvement in the circumstances discussed.

Earlier in this section a contrast was drawn between those texts, such as **TEXT 39** with which this discussion opened, and some of those discussed in *Chapters 6* and *7*. There it was stated that the assertives used to justify orders and requests played what may be described as a low key role in the pragmatic purpose of the letters. Here however the assertives dominate the letter. For whatever reason, the writer believes that a detailed report of a range of complicated circumstances that only the two parties to the correspondence fully understood was essential if the request which forms the climax of the letter (liners 24 - 26) was to be met.

If a single illustration were to be sought of the importance of contextual knowledge held by both writer and recipient of the letters in this archive, this letter would serve the purpose admirably.

10.3 Affirming and confirming

Affirming and confirming are both speech acts that lend themselves readily to the letter format. Again it is useful to begin with a relatively simple example—**TEXT 42**.

TEXT 42

TM 388508 (Van Beek 81)

Asklepiades informs Theodoros that payment in kind owed to him has been made.

Recto

1 [Ἀσκληπιάδης Θεοδώρῳ ἀρχιτέκτονι χαίρειν. Κεχρημάτισταί
 σοι]
 [κατὰ τὴν π]αρ' Εὐτύχου τοῦ [διοικητοῦ ἐπιστολὴν ἢ γιγομένη
 ἄγο-]
 [ὅτ' εἰς τὸ ι] (ἔτος) [ἀ]ν[τὶ] (δραχμῶν) ἄ ο[ἴνου κεράμια
 πεντήκοντα ἕξ τέταρτον].

Asklepiade]s to Theodoros, engineer, [greeting. The payment in kind that is due to you for the 10th year, being fifty-six and a quarter keramia of wine], instead of 900 drachmas, [has been paid to you, in accordance with the letter] of the [dioiketes] Eutychos.

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 192 (Modified).

While this letter has undergone restoration in the light of other information,⁹ there can be little doubt about its intent. It confirms that certain actions have occurred and does not seek to do anything more than this. Theodoros has received a payment to which he is entitled—information he would no doubt have found welcome. Such communications are to be expected wherever there are workers contracted or employed by others and are generally unremarkable. It is worth noting however, that such a ‘pay advice’ goes somewhat beyond the kind of accounting that we see elsewhere in the archives—lists of items, quantities and costs. Adopting the letter form demonstrates a certain level of interpersonal cooperation (albeit a low level) that is not found in bare accounts, invoices and other financial documents.

Not all letters of affirmation or confirmation however, can be passed over so easily.

Consider **TEXT 43**.

TEXT 43

TM 1575 (P Lond 7 2013)

Demetrios advises Zenon that Demeas has not been successful in obtaining the right to operate a bank, and that Demetrios and his associates are banking with Peisistratos. He further advises that he will send some financial details promptly and that everything is proceeding satisfactorily.

Recto

Δημήτριος Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. Δημέ[ας]
 μέ[ν ἄ]ποπέπτωκεν ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης[ς],
 τ[ὸν δ]ὲ λόγον λαμβάνομεν παρὰ Πει[σι]στρ[ά-]
 [του] τοῦ Χελλῶνος οἰκείου ὃς ἀντι[γ]ρά-
 5 [φ]εται τὴν τρ[ά]πεζαν παρὰ τοῦ οἰκονόμου. ὥς ἂν
 οὖν λάβω τὰ πτώματα καὶ τὴν διάπρα-
 σιν τὴν γεγεννημένην, ἀποστελῶ σοι
 ἔν/ [τὸ] τάχ[ος] εἰ ἕως Ἐπαγομένων. τὰ δὲ λ[οι]πὰ
 κατὰ λόγον προχωρεῖ. ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) δ, Θωὸθ ς.

Verso

10 Ζήνωνι

Demetrios to Zenon, greeting. Demeas has missed out on the bank, and we are taking our account from Peisistratos the relative of Chellon, who is acting as controller of the bank on orders from the oeconome. As soon as we have details of the deposits and the sale, I will send them to you with all speed up to the Epagomenal days. Everything else is going on normally. Farewell Year 4, Thoth 6.

Trans.: Skeat (1974) p 165 (Modified).

⁹ Van Beek has used information contained in TEXT X29 in which Asklepiades orders this payment, to restore this text. Bart Van Beek, *The Archive of the Engineers Kleon and Theodoros: Archive Study, Text Edition, with Translations and Notes (Diss.)* (Leuven, 2006), p 192.

Verso

To Zenon

At least at first glance, the emphasis here again seems to be on the provision of items of information. To that extent it is similar to **TEXT 42**. It would therefore be easy to regard this letter also as a straightforward report to Zenon of some financial matters, more complicated it is true than the advice to Theodoros about his payment, but in principle not dissimilar. This would be a mistake. The full significance of this information becomes apparent when one reaches the last sentence. This sentence (τὰ δὲ λ[οι]πὰ | κατὰ λόγον προχωρεῖ. (lines 6-7)) is pivotal and immediately casts new light on all of the earlier assertives. It is an example of how the information conveyed by an assertive can depend almost wholly upon context.

The point is this. If things are generally proceeding ‘as normal’ (κατὰ λόγον line 9) why is it necessary to draw attention to that fact? To do so immediately suggests that the information provided thus far is not normal at all—it is exceptional.

In stating that everything else is going normally, Demetrios is implying much. The sentence is, in Gricean terms, a ‘conversational implicature’. The information in the earlier part of the letter may be far more significant than its apparently straightforward reporting suggests.

Zenon may have been anxious that the contract be awarded to Demeas and needed to be reassured that satisfactory arrangements can be made in the light of this not happening. The commitment (it is not flagged as a promise, although may well be intended as such) to send details of the deposit and sale remains a commitment, but in the light of the concluding sentence, comes to be seen as part of the process of affirming and confirming. This, too, as in the case of **TEXT 40** (p 218 above) is an indication of a willingness on the part of the writer to respond to what he perceives to be the concerns of the recipient.

In short, to take a quick glance at this letter and decide to pass over it as a routine report is not to do it justice. As was the case in **TEXT 40**, the writer's overall purpose is more complex than the individual assertions that he makes would suggest.

TEXT 44 is a letter of similar length that uses assertive speech acts to pursue an even more comprehensive and subtle range of purposes.

TEXT 44**TM 1511** (P Lond 7 1948)

Glaukias confirms that he has passed on orders given by Apollonios and that they are being carried out. He further reports on his visit reassuring Apollonios that the estate is being well managed and that the wine is of good quality.

Recto

1 Γλαυκίας Ἀπολλωνίῳ χαίρειν. περὶ ὧν μοι ἐνετείλω
ἀναγγεῖλαι Νικάνορι καὶ Ἀντιόχῳ, ἀνηγγείλαμεν. ἴσθι δὲ
αὐτοὺς συμφερομένους. τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ ὡς ἂν παραγενώμεθα
5 ἀναγγελοῦμέν σοι. παραγενόμενος δὲ καὶ εἰς Βαιτανῶτα
καὶ παραλαβὼν Μέλανα ἐπῆλθον τὰ φυτὰ καὶ τᾶλλα πάντα.
ἱκανῶς οὐ<μ> μοι δοκεῖ κατειργάσθαι, ἔφη δὲ εἶναι τὴν
ἄμπελον
μυριάδας ὀκτώ. κατεσκευάκει δὲ καὶ φρῆρ καὶ οἴκησιν ἱκανήν.
ἔγευσεν δέ με καὶ τοῦ οἴνου, ὃν οὐ διέγνων πότερον Χιός ἐστιν
10 ἢ ἐπιχώριος. καλῶς οὖν ποιεῖς εὐκληρῶν κατὰ πάντα.
ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) κθ, Ξανδικοῦ ζ.

Verso

παρὰ Γλαυκίου περὶ ὧν ἐνετέ- Ἀπολλωνίῳ.
ταλτο ἀναγγεῖλαι Ἀντιόχῳ καὶ Νικάνορι,
καὶ τοῦ οἴνου ἐν Βαιτανάτοις.
(ἔτους) κθ, Ξανδικοῦ vac. ?, ἐν Ἀλεξ(ανδρείᾳ).

Glaukias to Apollonios, greeting. Concerning the instructions you ordered me to pass on to Nikanor and Antiochos; know that they are conforming to them. The rest of the news I will report to you on my return. On arrival at Bethanath I took Melas with me and inspected the plants and everything else. The estate seems to me to be satisfactorily cultivated, and he said the vines numbered 80,000. He has also constructed a well, and satisfactory living quarters. He gave me a taste of the wine, and I was unable to distinguish whether it was Chian or local. So your affairs are prospering, and fortune is favouring you in everything.

Farewell Year 29, Xandikos 7.

Trans.: Skeat (1974) p 37 (Modified).

Verso

To Apollonios. From Glaukias about what he was ordered to tell Antiochos and Nikanor, and about the wine at Bethanath. Year 29, Xandikos at Alexandria

Again, on the surface, the writer's purpose seems uncomplicated. There is, following the greeting, a sentence that offers explicit assurance that instructions have been passed

on and are being followed (lines 1-3). Thus far the main purpose seems to be to reassure Apollonios that matters of importance to him are proceeding as he would wish. This is clearly also the intent of the final sentence: καλῶς οὖν ποιεῖς εὐκληρῶν κατὰ πάντα (line 9), which, given its position, serves as a summary of what has preceded it and seems likely to have been the message that Glaukias wanted Apollonios to take from the letter. Yet Apollonios might nevertheless have been left with some doubt, especially given lines 3-4 (τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ ὡς ἂν παραγενόμεθα | ἀναγγελοῦμέν σοι). Apollonios might well ask if some less favourable news is being withheld from him.

It is also interesting that many of the assertives in this letter are evaluative. Glaukias approves of what he claims to have seen. Admittedly he first reports his actions and observations—he has passed on orders, inspected the plants, and tasted the wine. But he also asserts that the orders he passed on are being followed, the estate is well-cultivated, and that he was unable to distinguish the local wine from that from Chios (a wine generally agreed to have been of good quality and famous in antiquity¹⁰). It is also interesting that, with the exception of his confident assertion that the orders Apollonios gave him to pass on are being followed, none of his evaluations are unqualified. Thus the estate *seems to me* to be ‘satisfactorily cultivated’ (ἱκανῶς οὐ<μ> μοι δοχεῖ κατειργάσθαι (line 6)), *he said* there were 80,000 vines (ἔφη δὲ εἶναι τὴν ἄμπελον | μυριάδας ὀκτώ (lines 6-7)) and *I was unable to distinguish between* the Chian and the local wine (ὄν οὐ διέγνων πότερον Χίος ἐστίν | ἢ ἐπιχώριος (lines 8-9) (emphasis added)).

As so often is the case in trying to deduce a writer’s purpose, ultimately we can only speculate on some of these matters. Yet it is sensible to ask why Glaukias chose these particular turns of phrase. It may be because he genuinely wished to reassure Apollonios that the situation was entirely satisfactory because he knew that Apollonios was worried about the matter. Equally, it may be that given Apollonios was a man of considerable power, the attempt to reassure may have been a strategy to achieve something else, such as removal of suspicion concerning the efficiency and effectiveness of Melas, (if indeed he was the responsible manager). This might account

¹⁰ Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (eds.), *Oxford Classical Dictionary 3rd Edition (Revised)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p 1622 ('Wine').

for the way Glaukias held back from giving unqualified approval. Another agent sent by Apollonios may have other opinions as to the state of cultivation and be more discerning in his wine tasting. In such a case it would be better for Glaukias to allow himself a fall-back position and be able to defend himself by declaring that there was not time to count the vines and that he is known to be a poor judge of wine.

The purposes of an agent can be multiple. Of course he may wish to please his employer. He may wish to please him even if the available evidence is not all that compelling. In such a case great care is required not to write in such a way that the deception may have negative repercussions for him in future. Assertives that allow for some kind of plausible excuse for any errors made will be formed where possible and it is this that I believe Glaukias may have been doing in the particular way he forms the assertives that make up the bulk of this letter. In the British justice system a witnesses, before they give evidence, may be required to swear that they will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. On at least one possible reading of this letter, Glaukias is probably telling the truth and is probably confining himself to nothing but the truth. It is less certain that he is telling the whole truth.

10.4 Other assertives

Glaukias, in **TEXT 44** above, was using assertives to make a case (that everything was going well) to the recipient of his letter even if he was being somewhat disingenuous. In other letters, it is possible to see assertives used quite openly to make a case using assertives that have what Leech calls an ‘argumentative’ quality to them. **TEXT 45** is an example.

TEXT 45

TM 1570 (P Lond 7 2008)

Jason reports on a significant number of challenges facing Zenon, implying some failure to act on Zenon’s part in relation to at least some of these.

Recto

Col. i

- 1 Ἰάσων Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. γέγραφα σοι
πλεονάκις περί τε τῶν ἐννομίων
καὶ τοῦ φυλακτικοῦ τῶν ὑικῶν ἱερείων,
καὶ οὐδεμίαν οἰκονομίαν πεποίησαι [[ο]]
5 οὐδὲ χρόνον ἥιτεσαι ἔν/ ὧι ταξόμεθα.
ἡμῖς δὲ ὧδε παροινούμεθα ὑπό τε

- τῶν οἰκονόμω[ν] καὶ πρακτόρων.
 διέγνωκα οὖν καταπλεῦσαι πρὸς
 σε τοὺς λόγου[ς] φέρων ἵνα μὴ Θεοφί-
 10 λου παραγενομένου παροινηθῶ δι-
 ἅ τὸ χειρογραφήσαί με αὐτῶι. τέτα-
 γμαι δὲ ἅφ' οὗ τὸν δι(ά)λογον ἐποιεσά-
 μεν εἰς (δραχμάς) υ. τὰ δὲ ὀφιλήμ(ατ)ά ἐστιν
 15 ἀδύνατα τοὺς ἐν Ἡφαιστιάδει σκρο-
 δευτὰς παρέδωκα εἰς τὸ ἐννόμιον καὶ
 τὰ φορτία αὐτῶν Ἀριστάνδρῳ τῶι οἰκο-
 ν(όμ)ῳι. Ἐτέαρχος δὲ ἔφη αὐτοῦ εἶναι τὰ ἐν
 τῇ γῇ καὶ αὐτὸς κεχορηγεκέναι, ὥς δ' ἂν
 κομίσωμαι, ἔφη/, τό τε ἐκφόριον καὶ τὸ ἀνήλωμα,
 20 ἐάν τι καταλίπεται κομίσασθε. καὶ ἡμῖς
 ἄφηκα(με)ν οὖν αὐτούς.
 τὸν σπόρον τοῦ σησάμου ἐφώδευσα τῇ θ
 τοῦ Φαμενώθ, καὶ ἐνήν ἀ(να)τολὴ ἀραιά.
 ἐπιτιμῶντος δ' ἐμοῦ Εὐδήμῳι, ἔφη σε
 25 γεγραπέναι αὐτῶι τὸ προστασσόμενον
 ὑφ' Ἡροδότου ποεῖν, τὸν δὲ Ἡρόδοτον

Col ii

- οὐ συνπαράλαμβάνειν
 αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν σπόρον
 οὐδὲ ἐὰν ἐπακολουθεῖν
 30 τοῖς γεινομένοις, ὡσαύ-
 τως δὲ καὶ Μενίταν.
 ἔφη δὲ Εὐδήμος ἐμβ(εβ)λήσ-
 θαι εἰς ἐκάστην ἅ σπέρμα-
 τος χ(οίνικες) δ . τὰ δὲ λοιπά
 35 σοι ἀναγγελεῖ [[σοι]] Σάτυρος·
 ἐφώδευκεν γὰρ πάντα.
 προσέγγειλεν ἡμῖν Τιμοκλῆς
 τῶν προσβυτέρων ἴτις/ ὀφίλειν σοι
 τοὺς νοιτοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τοὺς/ ἐν τῇ Διννέως Κοίτῃ
 40 [δ] ἀνήλωσας εἰς τὴν διώρυγα
 εἰς (δραχμάς) νς (ὀβολὸν) ἐφ' ᾧ ἐὰν διαλογι-
 σώμεθα πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ ἔλ-
 θῃ εἰς ὁμόλογον, ἀφ[[η]]θε/θήσεται
 τὸ ἐπιβάλλον αὐτῶι μέρος
 45 Ἄπὸ/ τῶν νς (ὀβολοῦ), (δραχμαὶ) ς (τετρώβολον). διαλε-
 λογισμένοι οὖν ἰσιν καὶ συν-
 εγράψαντο δώσιν εἰς τὰ
 ἀργυρικὰ τοῦ λς (ἔτους). ἐὰν δὲ
 50 ἡμῖς καταβάλωμεν, ὑπολο-
 γήσομεν αὐτοῖς εἰς τὸ ἐκ-
 φόριον τοῦ λθ (ἔτους).
 ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) λθ, Φαμενώθ ι.

Verso

Ζήνωνι.

Iason to Zenon, greeting. I have written to you repeatedly about the pasture-tax and the guard-tax, and you have made no arrangements nor have you asked for time to enable us to reach agreements. We are being intimidated here by oeconomes and practors. I have decided therefore to sail down to you bringing the accounts with me in case Theophilos should appear and I be attacked because I have signed an agreement with him. I have agreed to pay from the time when we made up the

accounts up to 400 drachmas. The debts are impossible. I have handed over the garlic-growers at Hephaistias to meet the pasture-tax, and their crops to Aristandros the oecome. But Etearchos says that the crops in the ground belong to him, since he himself has provided them: 'When I get back', he said, 'the rent and the outlay, you can keep anything that is left over.' We therefore let them be.

I inspected the sesame plantation on Phamenoth 9, and there was only a sparse growth showing. When I blamed Eudemos, he said that you had written to him to do whatever Herodotos ordered, and that Herodotos had not taken him with him for the sowing, nor had he allowed him to follow up the operations. Menitos had done the same. Eudemos said that four and a half choinikes were sown to each aroua. Satyros will report the rest of the news to you, for he has inspected everything.

Timokles, one of the veterans, has reported to me that the rest of the veterans in Dinneios Koitê owe you 56 dr and 1 obol for what you have expended on the canal. His condition is that if we come to account with them and reach agreement, his own share of the 56 dr. 1 ob., namely 6 dr. 4 ob., shall be remitted. They have now accounted, and have signed an agreement to pay the amount towards the money-taxes of the 36th year. If, on the other hand, we make the payment, we shall deduct the money from the rent due for the 39th year. Farewell. Year 39, Phamenoth 10.

Trans.: Skeat (1974) p 159 (Modified).

Verso

To Zenon

There is again so much information here that it is difficult for us to interpret. The details are less important however than is the overall structure. Almost every sentence in this letter asserts something. At one level, then, the letter is a straightforward report. But as above, closer consideration reveals more.

In a number of places, an assertion is followed by a near-contrary assertion. Thus at lines 14-17, Iason reports how he has disposed of the produce of some garlic growers, but follows this by reporting that Etearchos lays claims to the crops currently in the ground (lines 17-19). Similarly, in lines 24 - 26, Eudemos is reported as claiming to have only been following orders when held to account for the poor state of the sesame. It is examples such as these that I believe Leech had in mind when suggesting that some assertives that have an argumentative quality to them. They do not explicitly 'claim' and 'allow' as in the exemplar verbs that Leech chooses. They do, however, convey something of a 'point/counterpoint overview that clearly identifies a significant degree of contention over the matters asserted. Paradoxically, placing assertives in opposition like this serves both to confuse the issue to some degree (just what is Zenon to believe about the 'true' state of affairs?) while at the same time explaining it more fully. The information contained in these assertives must surely have convinced him, if he did not already know it, that his financial affairs were far from flourishing.

That to convey this message may be the purpose behind the series of assertive speech acts Iason performs in this letter can be deduced with some confidence from the opening sentences. While it contains three assertives—that Iason has written before about these matters and that Zenon has neither taken action nor asked for more time to take action—their effect is to challenge Zenon very directly. The implication is clearly that Zenon has been neglectful. The next two sentences indicate, also by implication, the result of this neglect—that we are being abused by (παροισνούμεθα) the oeconomes and practors (lines 6-7) and that Iason is intending to take the accounts to Zenon in person for fear of further abuse from Theophilos (lines 8-11).

These opening sentences, then, demonstrate that the ‘argumentative’ quality of the assertives in this letter extend beyond the way in which the events they describe relate to each other. They also extend to the relationship between the writer and the recipient of the letter.

Is the relationship affiliative? Certainly informing someone by letter of a difficult situation the seriousness of which they may not fully comprehend can be seen to be an act of affiliation. The facts asserted may not be welcome but they remain facts and it may be in Zenon’s long term best interest to know and address them, complex and unclear as they may be. It is far less clear however, whether criticising (again by implication) Zenon’s handling of the situation to date could be considered affiliative. If it were to be so considered, it seems to me there would need to be more explicit markers of politeness than are present here, especially since Zenon was Iason’s employer. Some acknowledgment (‘allowing’, in Leech’s terms) that Zenon may have been too busy to date to deal with these matters and a polite request that he now consider the situation as a matter of priority would be more likely to persuade than does the current letter. We cannot, of course, rule out the possibility that Iason had done this in the earlier correspondence to which he refers, and that the style adopted here reflects his frustration. The decision to sail to Zenon—something he would presumably not undertake lightly—is an indicator suggestive of this frustration. If so, and I believe it to be so, then it would demonstrate the capacity of Iason at least to convey his emotional reaction to a set of circumstances through a carefully chosen and ordered set of

assertives and not by the use of expressives that explicitly set out his feelings of frustration and anger with Zenon. This is a further reason for not underestimating the importance of assertive speech acts by regarding them solely as a means to convey pieces of information.

Skeat writes about this letter that ‘Zenon’s affairs were in a state of embarrassment which it was beyond the power of his subordinates to control.’¹¹ This probably explains much of the above and indeed the letter is itself evidence of these problems. They are not problems that Iason could solve by himself and it is not surprising that a degree of frustration can be detected in his writing.

Skeat is certainly correct when he describes Iason as writing in ‘simple, forceful style...’¹² He does not elaborate on the details of this style, something the previous paragraphs have tried to remedy. That much information can be conveyed with a series of assertives is not surprising. That so much more than information can also be achieved through the careful ordering of these assertives, and by the implications they convey, is an example of the insights a pragmatic perspective can provide when applied to what are superficially the simplest of speech acts.

This is, in contrast to **TEXT 44**, a very frank letter. Iason was writing as an agent of Zenon and was presumably dependent upon him but chose nevertheless to spell out a difficult and much contended situation. Whether it would have contributed to or detracted from whatever level of affiliation may have existed between them would depend to a large degree on the extent to which Zenon welcomed plain speaking. In any event this is not the first letter we have examined where one or more people have written to a superior in a manner that is challenging, at least by implication, even if the challenge is not made explicit. (**TEXT 2** (p 88) is another apt example where indeed, the writers probably had less social status than did Iason.)

In some other documents the purpose of the writer is clearer but the question of the sincerity of the apparently affiliative assertives comes to the fore. Consider **TEXT 46**.

¹¹ Skeat, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, p 157.

¹² Ibid.

TEXT 46

TM 1957 (P Mich Zen 57)

Lysanias writes to Theophilos to persuade him to return to appear in a court case where his appearance has been guaranteed by Lysinias' brother, Alketas. If Theophilos fails to appear Alketas will be required to pay the penalty.

Recto

Λυσανίας Θεοφίλῳ χαίρειν. οἶμαι μὲν σε οὐκ ἄγνοεῖν τὴν
 ἡμετέραν φιλοτιμίαν καὶ προθυμίαν εἰς σέ, καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς δὲ
 ὥς σου προέστημεν, ἰδόντες δὲ σε ὑπὸ Δημέου
 συκοφαντούμενον καὶ ὃν τρόπον ὑπὸ τῶν περὶ τὸ συνέργιον
 συνεργούμενον εἰς τὸ κατακρεῖναι σου ἀδίκως, καὶ Ἀλκέτου δὲ
 τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σε ἐγγυησαμένου ἐ-
 νοχληθέντος αὐτοῦ τε καὶ τῶν φίλων κατὰ σύμβολον
 παρῆξασθαι εἰς κρίσιν ἐν ἡμέραις πέντε ἢ ἀποτίσειν
 5 τὸ ἐπικαλούμενον, σὺ δὲ οὕτως ὠλοψύχηςας ὥστε καὶ
 ἐκχωρῆσαι ἄνευ ἡμῶν, πότερον, εἰ καὶ ὥς ἡβοῦλῳ κατα-
 πλεῖν, οὐκ ἂν καὶ ἐφοδιάσαντές σε καὶ συμβούλους
 ἀδ[.] ἐρεσοπηκτας ἔχοντα ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀντιδίκους καὶ τοὺς
 περὶ τὸ συνέργιον ἀναπλεῖν· ἐδώκαμεν γὰρ ἂν σοι ὑποθέσεις δι'
 ὧν οἱ ἀντίδικοι ἂν οἴμωζον. ἔτι οὖν καὶ νῦν
 εἰ μὲν δύνῃ αὐτὸς ἀπὸ σαυτοῦ ἀπομεριμνήσας ἐντυχεῖν· οὐ γὰρ
 ἐπιτήδειον ἦν ἡμᾶς γράφειν, ἀκηκόαμεν δὲ
 καὶ δυνατόν σε πορίσαι προστάγματα εἰς τ[ὸ] τιμωρηθῆναι
 αὐτούς, γίνωσκε οὖν ἐντυχόντος Δημέου Φανίαι κατὰ
 10 Ἀλκέτου ὅτι ἐγδεξάμενος Θεόφιλον κατὰ σύμβολον/
 παρῆξασθαι κρινόμενον οὐ παρέχεται καὶ Φανίου
 γεγραφότος Ἐπηράτῳ
 κατασχεῖν τὰ γενήματα Ἀλκέτου ἕως ἂν παραγενόμενος ἐπὶ
 τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ διακούσῃ. σὺ οὖν πειρῶ πρὸ τοῦ
 Φανίαν ἀναπλεῦσαι αὐτὸς φθάσαι καὶ προαναπλεύσας, εἰ δὲ
 μή, οὐ παρόντος σου κατακριθήσεται καὶ κινδυνεύσει ἀπο-
 τ[[ε]]ῖσαι Ἀλκέτας τὰς τ (δραχμὰς). ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν δυνατόν
 πρόσταγμα λαβεῖν, εἰ δὲ μή, αὐτὸς ἀνάπλευσον, ἵνα σύ τε
 καὶ Ἀλ-
 15 κέτας ἀπολυθῆτε καὶ μὴ συμπέσῃ μὴ παρεχομένου σε ἐπὶ τῆς
 κρίσεως ἀποτίνῃ τὸν Ἀλκέταν τὸ ἐπικαλούμε-
 νον, ὃ ἄνω σοι ὑπογέγραπται. καλῶς ἂν ποιήσῃς
 παραγενόμενος ἐν τάχει.
 ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) λη, Παχῶς ιδ.

Verso

Θεοφίλῳ.

τῷ παρὰ Ἐπι-
 στράτου.

Lysanias to Theophilos greeting. I think you are not ignorant of our esteem and goodwill towards you and how from the first we stood up for you; and when we saw you prosecuted by Demeas and how the members of the association cooperated to have you condemned unjustly and Alketas my brother became surety for you and put himself to trouble along with his friends, engaging by written bond to produce you for trial within five days (of summons) or else pay the sum claimed, and yet you were so faint-hearted as to slip away without telling us, did you not know that, if nevertheless you wished to go down the river, we would have provided funds for the journey and enabled you to return with . . . counsellors to meet your adversaries and the members of the association; for we would have given you arguments that would have made your adversaries wail. Even now, then, if you can manage to present a

petition by your own efforts, do so; for it was not expedient that we should write, and we have heard it is possible for you to procure decrees that will enable us to exact vengeance from them. Know then that Demeas has made a petition to Phantias against Alketas, saying that after guaranteeing by written bond to produce Theophilos for trial he is not producing him, and that Phantias has written to Eperatos to hold the crops of Alketas until he comes himself on the occasion of the review and hears the case. Try therefore, before Phantias sails up, to sail up yourself and be here before him; otherwise, if you do not appear, Alketas will be sentenced and will be in danger of having to pay the 300 drachmai. But if it is possible to get a decree, do so; if not, sail up yourself, in order that you and Alketas may be acquitted and that, through not producing you at the trial, Alketas may not have to pay the sum claimed, which has been stated above. Please come in haste. Farewell. Year 38, Pachons 14.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 132 (Modified).

Verso

To the agent of Epistratos.

Edgar characterises this letter as a reproach.¹³ Both by implication and more directly, it certainly is that. Indeed Lysanias directly accuses Theophilos of being ‘so fainthearted’ (οὕτως ὠλιγοψύχησας (line 5)) as to leave without telling anyone. Yet the assertions Lysanias makes about Theophilos are not all negative. This is especially true at the opening of the letter, the first sentence of which is clearly intended to be a reminder of affiliation. Whether this expression of affiliation (φιλοτιμίαν καὶ προθυμίαν εἰς σέ (line 2)) is sincerely expressed, or whether it is used instrumentally as a means of encouraging Theophilos to do what Lysanias and his friends want him to do is another matter. Whether sincere or not it is one of a string of assertives which serve to create a strong argument to persuade Theophilos to return from wherever he has gone.

Edgar also remarks that ‘[T]he first seven lines in particular are merely a string of clauses which cannot be construed as a sentence, but which nevertheless express the writer’s thought clearly and even vividly’.¹⁴ I would agree that we have a string of clauses that might have been better ordered. I would not, however, dismiss them as ‘*merely* a string...’. In my view, to do so misses the point that Edgar himself concedes—they do clearly and forcefully express the writer’s thoughts. The assertives, all relating to the actions undertaken by Lysanias and his brother in support of Theophilos, assuming they are not lies, accumulate rapidly into a case for him to

¹³ Campbell Cowan Edgar, *Zenon Papyri in the University of Michigan Collection* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1931), p 130.

¹⁴ Ibid.

acknowledge a debt. Even more than in **TEXT 45** above, these are assertives with an argumentative quality. One can find here examples of ‘claiming’ (of which line 2, reproduced in the previous paragraph is the most forceful) and examples of ‘allowing’ (see for example lines 5-6, which ‘allow’ that Theophilos might have wanted to go down river and that Lysanias and his associates would have provided support in that case).

Nor does the absence of carefully formed sentences prevent Lysanias making judicious use of rhetorical devices when appropriate. The litotes of the first sentence (οἶμαι μὲν σε οὐκ ἄγνοεῖν – I think that you are not ignorant of...), by the way it emphasises the sense of affiliation that is imputed to exist between recipient and writer, is especially well chosen for the purpose. The assumption that Theophilos ‘knows’ these things is also implied through the assertives that follow: that he knows (or should know) that Lysanias and friends would have made provisions for his journey on the river (see previous paragraph) and provided counsellors (ἐφοδιάσαντές σε καὶ συμβούλους (line 6)) to assist with his defence. Moreover, these counsellors would not just have provided suggestions or advice (ὑποθέσεις (line 7)), but they would have provided ὑποθέσεις δι’ ὧν οἱ ἀντίδικοι ἂν οἴμωζον—suggestions or advice that would make his accusers ‘wail’. (That this formulation is not uncommon in Ancient Greek does not diminish its force in this context.)

In the latter half of the letter, explicit requests are made of Theophilos: that he should present a petition by his own efforts if he can; that he should return, with or without a decree; and that he should do so quickly. That a letter should contain more than one kind of speech act and have complex purposes is not surprising. There is a sense then in which the assertives here serve the same purpose as those encountered earlier in this thesis—as support for an order or similar. There is a difference however, in the assertions as to fact made in this letter compared to those discussed earlier in this thesis. It is one thing to assert that there is not enough water in a canal to irrigate the land (so it should be supplemented) (**TEXT 16** *Chapter 7*, p 139) or that an individual is well-known to a correspondent (and should be assisted) (**TEXT 27** *Chapter 7*, p 3158). It is an entirely different thing to assert, as here, that another man *knows* that the writer and his associates are well-disposed towards him. Such assertions are much more

contestable. They are also more interesting in that they enter the realm of practical psychology and make moral judgments as to what individuals (in this case the recipient of the letter) ought to do.

We can do little more than speculate as to the actual relationship that existed between the parties to this correspondence. We can, however, deduce that one party thought it appropriate to seek to change the behaviour of another by appealing to his sense of obligation for favours done. The implication of this approach, (it is hardly necessary to spell it out, since it is so widespread in both contemporary and historical societies) is that care and favour extended should be returned. While, to repeat, we have only a limited understanding of the relationship between the parties to this letter, it is also worth remembering the special sense of obligation incurred in ancient Greek society if individuals saw themselves as ξένοι. Moreover, even if that concept is not directly relevant here, it is a reminder of the value placed on mutual obligation. Certainly, with respect to the detail here, most societies would agree that if someone stands surety for another in a legal case, the accused ought to take all necessary steps to ensure that the surety does not incur punishment. Finally, if this appeal was disingenuous, or even if it was a direct lie about the circumstances (perhaps Alketas was at no real risk of being penalised at all) it demonstrates only that human relationships are complex and not always benevolent.

10.5 Interim conclusions

The introductory overview of assertive speech acts noted that there are very many ways of performing these acts and that they are common. So common in fact that they are often taken to be straightforward and simple. The default view sees assertives as a kind of baseline use of language that deals in logical propositions and facts. Such a view was challenged and it was foreshadowed that some of the more interesting aspects of assertive speech acts are revealed when Grice's notion of conversational implicature is employed.

The examples discussed in this chapter do show that it is possible to make straightforward assertions that are close to the default view. More importantly however, they have also demonstrated the following.

- Assertives may be about concrete facts, they may be evaluations that an observer has made about those facts, and they may make claims about, or allowances for, aspects of the psychology and moral choices made by the person addressed.
- They frequently imply much more than they explicitly state.
- The order in which they are placed in a text is important, in ways not immediately obvious, to their meaning.
- Like any other speech act, they are performed with a purpose in mind. Sometimes the purpose will be explicitly stated in the form of a request. Sometimes the purpose will only be implied.
- The purposes for which they are used may include establishing and maintaining a sense of cooperation and affiliation between the parties, sometimes for reasons that are genuine and sometimes for reasons that could be entirely manipulative and false.

The last point deserves a degree of elaboration. It was argued in *Chapter 9* that assertives, by providing information to others that they may value, are a more cooperative act than directives and can assist in developing a sense of affiliation between people. The early examples discussed in this chapter (**TEXT 39** and **TEXT 40**) are evidence that this is the case. In particular the information provided to Zenon about the safe arrival of his father (**TEXT 40**) appears to be genuinely affiliative. The later texts discussed here however, cast this matter in a somewhat different light. Certainly information is provided. Certainly that information may have been of value to the recipients and, as part of an ongoing relationship of cooperation and helpful responses to previous correspondence, may be considered affiliative. Yet close reading of these texts has shown that there is more to them than this approach suggests. The

correspondents have their own agendas, the prosecution of which is assisted by an appearance of cooperation and affiliative care. The rider to the remarks made on cooperation and affiliation at the end of *Chapter 9* (p 213) has been shown to be important. Assertive speech acts may not be directive but may certainly be manipulative. Even genuine cooperation on some matters and an appearance of affiliative intent can on occasions be both insincere and have multiple purposes. In saying this however, it should not be assumed that these attempts at manipulation are always or even often successful. The recipients of these letters may be assumed to have been as wise to the ways of the world as were the writers.

This chapter has again demonstrated the value of a model of language that pays close attention to the purposes of writers and the way in which those purposes may be understood by the recipients. By applying such a model in the analysis of even the most apparently straightforward piece of prose, it is possible to increase our understanding and appreciation of the power of the language. Moreover this power is available to and sometimes utilised by people for whom, unlike poets and other artists, language is a tool for everyday use, and not a tool to be applied with an artistic purpose. It also reminds us that the skilful use of language is not solely the property of those gifted with the powers of a poet.

COMMISSIVES AND EXPRESSIVES

11.1 Introduction

In Chapter 9, an overview of three kinds of speech act: assertives, commissives, and expressives, held out hope that a consideration of how they were used in these archives would give us some insight into the ways correspondents pursued a degree of affiliation with each other. The discussion of assertive speech acts in *Chapter 10* took us some way into this topic. Examples were considered that showed writers offering information in the form of reports and predictions that seemed to be intended to maintain or develop a degree of fellow-feeling. Equally, however, the examples also showed that, either directly or by implication, the information provided could have purposes beyond what appeared to be the case from a superficial reading. There is clearly much more going on through these speech acts than the provision of information. Not all of it, moreover, was as genuinely affiliative as might be expected.

It was also suggested in *Chapter 9* that commissive and expressive speech acts hold out more hope than assertives of gaining insight into the humanity of the interactions among the correspondents. These hopes will be tested in this chapter.

11.2 Commissives

11.2.1 A special case

There is at least one example in these archives of a promise apparently sincerely and seriously made. It has already been discussed from a different perspective. In *Chapter 7* (p 134) **TEXT 14** was considered with a focus on the request that is an important part of its purpose. The final sentence, however, is a clear promise.

Bear in mind that nothing distressing will happen to you but every care will be taken by me to see that you are without trouble.

It is a promise made by a son to take care of his father in circumstances suggesting that he (the father) is facing serious difficulties (see discussion in *Chapter 7*). The fact that the letter is between family members is *prima facie* evidence that it is sincere. It would be naïve of course, to assume that family members always deal guilelessly with each other. In the absence of evidence to the contrary however, it is reasonable to take a promise such as this at face value. Indeed if there are any letters in the archives that use one or more commissive speech acts with an apparently unqualified and sincere view to affiliation with another, then this is it. Given the blood relationship between the correspondents, it is in fact ‘affiliative’ in the most fundamental sense of the word.

One factor that distinguishes this letter even from the small number of other letters in Arch. Kleon that are from members of Kleon’s family,¹ is that the promise is both very personal, and all-encompassing. In this case, and given the great care taken by the writer to consider the needs of his father in a range of subtle ways (again, see discussion in *Chapter 7*) it may be assumed that this open-endedness stems from the generosity of the commitment. The writer is committing himself to do whatever may be necessary in future in the interests of his father.

Other less comprehensive promises are found in the small number of letters we have from members of Kleon’s family. They however, are generally promises to do with specific business undertakings. **TEXT X26** for example, (mentioned in passing in *Chapter 8*, p 185) simply promises to send on some linen cloths and other items as soon as they are available.²

11.2.1 Unspecified and ‘diplomatic’ commissives

This contrast between the very general and open-ended, and the specific and minor is found elsewhere. Yet a caution must immediately be registered. There is reason to

¹ As noted in *Chapter 7* (p 130) there are 16 family letters, of which eight are too fragmentary to yield meaningful information.

² Whether this is a personal matter or a business matter, it is, in either case, a relatively trivial one.

believe that many of the more general commissives to be found in the archives are not motivated by the open-ended willingness to do whatever may be of benefit to the recipient that characterises **TEXT 14** (p 134). Rather their purpose is much more limited and their inclusion in a letter is often no more than a matter of good form or politeness. The commitment is made because it is expected rather than because it is sincerely meant. Sometimes indeed, it will be readily apparent that a commissive made in the context of, or directly following a request, is no more than a bargaining tool, or *quid pro quo*. Consider, firstly, **TEXT 47**.

TEXT 47**TM 1916** (P Mich Zen 10)

Letter from Antimenes to Zenon with a copy of a letter from Sosipatros to Antimenes reporting the safe arrival of Ariston and 'the' sister. The letter also refers to the fare having been paid.

Recto

- 1 Ἀντιμένῃς Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. εἰ ἔρρωσαι, εὖ ἂν [ἔχοι· ὑγίαινον δὲ
καὶ ἐγώ.]
ὑπογέγραφα σοι τῆς παρὰ Σωσιπάτρου ἐλθούσης μοι
ἐπιστολῆς τὸ ἀντίγρα-
φον, ὅπως εἰδὼς ἀναφέρῃς ἐν λόγῳ Ἀπολλωνίῳ εἰ
οὐθὲν αὐτοῖς συνετέθη ἐφόδιον οὐδ' ἀκ. ρ. . γ. . [
- 5 ὑπὸ τοῦ χειμῶνος κατηνέγκθησαν εἰς Ἀρσινόην [
- [ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) κη, Περιτίου πη.
Σωσίπατρος Ἀντιμένει χαίρειν. εἰ τῷ τε σώματι ἔρρωσαι καὶ]
τὰ λοιπὰ σοί ἐστιν
κατὰ γνώμην, ἔχοι ἂν καλῶς ἐρρώμεθα δὲ καὶ αὐτοί.
π[αραγενόμε]νοι πρὸς ἡμᾶς
Ἀρίστων καὶ ἡ ἀδελφὴ ἀνήγγελλον πεπολυωρῆσθαι ὑπ[ὸ] σοῦ
κατὰ] πάντα. καλῶς οὖν
- 10 ποεῖς πρὸς ἡμᾶς οὐκ ἄλλοτρίως ἔχων· πειρασόμεθα γὰρ [καὶ
αὐτοὶ π]ερὶ ὧν ἂν σὺ σπου-
δάζῃς καὶ γράφῃς πρὸς ἡμᾶς τὴν πᾶσαν ἐπιμέλεια[ν ποεῖσθαι.
γί]νωσκε δὲ ὑπὸ
τῶν χειμῶνων κατενεγκθέντας εἰς Πάταρα, κεῖθε[ν] δὲ μι-
σθωσά[μενοι] πλοῖον
παρέπλευσαν πρὸς ἡμᾶς εἰς Ἀρσινόην. τὸ δὲ ναῦλον διωρ-
θ[.....]νων (δραχμ) λε. γέγρα-
φα οὖν σοι ὅπως εἰδῇς.
- 15 [ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) κη], Ἀπελλαίου κς.

Verso

Ἀντιμένῃς περὶ Δωρίδος Ζήνωνι.
καὶ τῆς παρὰ Ἀντιπάτρου
ἐπιστολῆς ἀντίγραφον. (ἔτους) κη, Δύστρου
ις, ἐν Μένδ[ητι].

Antimenes to Zenon greeting. If you are well, it would be excellent. [I too am in good health]. I have written for you below [a copy of the letter] which came to me from Sosipatros, in order that you may take note and enter to the account of Apollonios [- -] no travelling allowance was delivered to them . . . [- -] were driven in by the stormy weather [- -] to Arsinoe. [Farewell. Year] 28, Peritios 28.

Sosipatros to Antimenes greeting. If [you are well] in body and everything else is to your mind, it would be excellent. We too are well. Ariston and his (?) sister arrived here, reporting that they had been well cared for by you in every way. You do well then not to be a stranger to us; for we too will try to do what we can in any matter that you are keen about and write to us about. Know that they were driven in to Patara by the storms; from there they hired a boat and sailed along to Arsinoë to join us. The fare has been paid . . . amounting to 35 drachmai. I have therefore written to let you know. Farewell. Year 28, Apellaios 26.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 71.

Verso

To Zenon (2nd hand: docket) Antimenes about Doris, with a copy of the letter from Antipatros (Received) year 28, Dystros 17, in Mendes

It is the ἀντίγραφον from Sosipatros that is of interest here. In lines 9 – 11, (καλῶς οὖν | ποεῖς πρὸς ἡμᾶς οὐκ ἄλλοτρίως ἔχων·πειρασόμεθα γὰρ [καὶ αὐτοὶ περὶ ᾧν ἂν σὺ σπουδάζῃς καὶ γράφῃς πρὸς ἡμᾶς τὴν πᾶσαν ἐπιμέλεια[ν ποεῖσθαι]) Sosipatros compliments Antimenes for looking after the travellers and promises to try to be helpful in future with regard to whatever Antimenes is keen on and communicates to him by letter.

It is appropriate to doubt whether the word ‘promise’ fits here because, while the sentence certainly amounts to a commitment to do something, it is a very vague commissive. Writers who commit to *trying* to do something for someone excuse themselves from achieving anything much at all and allow themselves maximum freedom. What do they mean by ‘try’? How hard will they try? Who is to be the judge of whether they have tried and failed or simply expended so little effort as not to be trying at all? The lack of sincerity is even more marked here where the writer further distances himself from the commitment by placing the onus on the recipient to write to request whatever help is sought.

In the opening paragraph of *Chapter 9*, I observed, citing Archer, that it is common in business correspondence across historical periods to pair a request with a commitment or compliment. The letter from Sosipatros is an example of this. With respect to purpose, the tone of the commissive suggests that Sosipatros feels obliged to offer a return of favour for the assistance offered. In the context of the letter, this offer comes across as second in importance to the later reference (from line 13) to the fare having been paid. It is after the total for the fare is mentioned that the letter concludes with the

assertion that Sosipatros has written to inform Antimenes. In short, the commissive is very much a matter of form only, almost an after-thought, equivalent in force to a parting comment made by one of two distant acquaintances that perhaps ‘we might meet up again soon’.

TEXT X30 is another letter not very different in this regard. In that text, Aristideides seeks help from Zenon to get himself excused from a liturgy. His concluding sentence (lines 8 - 9) is almost identical in style to that of **TEXT 47** above. It also reads like the parting comment made by one acquaintance to another. To paraphrase, the message is that if there is anything Zenon might want, then he need only write and ask and ‘we’ will do all we can. One cannot imagine that Zenon would take such a promise very seriously. Moreover, if Zenon did in fact choose to assist Aristideides, it is unlikely to be because he was pleased by this commissive.

The shared beliefs underlying this kind of mutual exchange of favours is most clear in **TEXT 48**.

TEXT 48

TM 1732 (P Col 3 11)

An embassy of three men from Kaunos seeks an audience with Apollonios and, relying for help upon him because he is also from Kaunos, asks Zenon to introduce them to the dioiketes. They offer a return of favours.

Recto

Ζήνων Πρωτογένης [Ἀπολλ]ωνίδης Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. ἡμεῖς
ἀκούοντες τὴν εὐνοίαν
ἦν εἰς ἅπαντας τοῖς συμπολίταις ἔχεις ἐπαινοῦμέν τέ σε καὶ
ἡδέως ἂν προενετετεύ-
χειμέν σοι συνλαλή[σαι βο]υλόμενοι περὶ τε τῶν τῇ πόλει
συμφερόντων καὶ αὐτῶν.
ἐπεὶ δ' οὐκ ἐγγεγέν[ηται ἡ]μῖν . . [. .] . . θε . . κέν[αι] τοὺς τρεῖς
νομίζοντες ἐπιβάλ-
5 λειν σοι καθάπερ τοῖς λο]ιποῖς πολίταις τοῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ
βελτίστου πολιτευομένοις φρον-
τίζειν τούτων π[αρακ]αλοῦμέν σε τὴν τε ἐπιστολὴν ἣν
δεδώκαμεν Ἀπολλω-
νίδει οὖσαν πᾶσιν ἡ[μῖν] χρησίμην ἀποδοῦναι μετὰ Πυρρίου καὶ
Ἀπολλωνίδου
Ἀπολλωνίωι, κα[ὶ] ἐάν τ[ι] ἄλλο δύνῃ συνεργῆσαι ἡμῖν ὅπως
λόγου τύχωμεν
εἰδὼς ἀκριβῶς ὅτ[ι πορευ]θέντες εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν οὐκ
ἀμνημονήσομεν τούτων
10 ἀλλὰ τῷ τε δῆμ[ωι] ἀντεμφανιοῦμεν ὥστε σοι φανερόν
γενέσθαι
καὶ αὐτοῖς πειρασ[όμ]εθα χάριν ἀποδοῦναι.
εὐτύχει.

Verso

Ζήνων Πρωτογένης Ἀπολλωνίδης.
(ἔτους) κθ Ξανδικοῦ. ἐμ Μέρφει.
[Ζή]νωνι

Zenon, Protogenes and Apollonides to Zenon, greeting. Hearing of the good will which you have towards all your fellow-citizens, we commend you; and we would gladly have met you beforehand, wanting to speak with you concerning matters of advantage to the city and about ourselves. Since it has not come about that you were able to (receive ?) the three of us, believing that it falls to you, as it does the rest of our townsmen whose public life is of the best, to give thought to these things, we beg you, along with Pyrrhias and Apollonides, to present to Apollonios the letter which we have given to Apollonides, [a letter] which is useful to us all. And if you are able in any other way to work with us to the end that we may obtain consideration, [we request you to do so] with the full knowledge that when we return to our own city we shall not be unmindful of these things, but will in turn disclose them to the assembly so that it is clear to you [that we are not unmindful. And we will personally, also, try to return the favour. Farewell.

Trans.: Bagnall & Derow (1981) p 124 (Modified).

Verso

Zenon, Protogenes, Apollonides, To Zenon. Year 29, Xandikos. In Memphis.

There is a rather more precisely defined commissive in this text compared to the two texts discussed immediately above. In lines 9 -10 the writers commit themselves to reporting to the assembly of their home town—which is also Zenon’s home town³—the extent of any help Zenon may provide. In line 11 they also add a promise that they will personally try to return the favour (χάριν ἀποδοῦναι).

What is most interesting about this letter, however, is the way in which this commissive relates to the issue of affiliation. The letter does not attempt to foster cooperation or affiliation in the way that was discussed in the previous chapter (by, for example offering information that the recipient would value). Rather, it assumes that a degree of affiliation currently exists between writers and recipient because of their shared home town. The purpose of the letter is to gain Zenon’s help in obtaining an audience with Apollonios for some ambassadors from Kaunos. The assertion of the writers in lines 1-2, that they have heard of the goodwill Zenon extends to his fellow citizens, may indeed be evidence-based, although we lack that evidence. It is not impossible that the writers

³ Willy Clarysse and Katelijn Vandorpe, *Zenon, Un Homme D'affaires Grec À L'ombre Des Pyramides*, ed. Faculteit Letteren Van De K. U. Leuven Ancorae (Steunpunten Voor Studie En Onderwijs, 14; Leuven: Presses Universitaires de Louvain, 1995), p 30.

are attributing this feeling to Zenon because they take it for granted that anyone would feel positively disposed towards their home town. A similar assumption—that Zenon would be pleased to talk about the city (Kaunos) and speak with the ambassadors themselves—is also made (lines 3). The commissive (promise), or more accurately the *quid pro quo*, that is made in lines 9 -10 similarly assumes Zenon will consider himself advantaged in some way, or at least honoured, if his actions are positively mentioned in a report to the assembly.

It is difficult at this distance to judge how Zenon may have reacted to such a letter and what value he may have placed on the commissives that it includes. Would he have been very willing to help? Or would he have dismissed the letter as blatantly manipulative? A 21st century observer is likely to adopt the latter view. To do so unthinkingly however, is to ignore some things we know about the ancient world. People had a strong sense of identity with both family and place of origin as, it must be acknowledged, do many people in the 21st century. Even if this sense of identity was not sincere in an individual case, there are certainly examples in the ancient world of men in positions of power and wealth bestowing public buildings and other benefits upon their home town to the enhancement of their reputation. Yet it is true also that Zenon, as a man of some influence, was presumably the recipient of a multitude of requests of this nature, some better articulated than others, and cannot have been easily manipulated.

The commissives in this letter only make sense within the context of broader societal expectations. Those, such as the writers of this letter, who believe people will wish to maintain and enhance their reputation in their home town, will see the commissives included here as persuasive. Anyone who does not share this belief is likely to see them as crudely manipulative. In either case, a letter such as this is an indication that commissives may tell us as something about the society in which they are made as well as about the individuals who make them.

11.2.2 Precisely articulated commissives

It is important not to assume that commissives will always, or often, be as deeply personal or socially enmeshed as those discussed above. There are also to be found

quite precise commitments—commitments to which people might easily be held as a consequence—that are important enough in their own way, but which have a somewhat contingent and ad hoc character. On the surface at least, these appear relatively uncomplicated. Consider **TEXT 49**.

TEXT 49

TM 1960 (P Mich Zen 60)

Païs, the captain of a boat thought to belong to Zenon, writes about terms of employment for its sailors and the need for repairs. He promises to pay Zenon 800 drachmas if the boat is given certain trading concessions.

Recto

Ζήνωνι χάριεν Πάις. ἀ[ν]έπλευσα ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ καὶ
ἐνοχλούμεθα ὑπὸ
τοῦ πραγματευομένου τὴν δωδεκαδραχμίαν καὶ οὐπω οὐ . . . γμη-
μεθα οἷς ἔγραψας. Ἀρτεμ[ιδώρῳ] δὲ . . . ἡγ]άγομεν εἰς Μέμφιν
πυ(ρῶν) ἀρ(τάβας) φ
Ἐκ Τηφι/ καὶ ἔδωκέν μοι (δραχμὰς) η, ἃς ἀνήλωσα εἰς τὸ
πλοῖον. οἱ δὲ ναῦται οὐ προσ-
5 ἔχουσιν πλεῖν ἐπὶ τῷ τρίτῳ μέρει. πυθοῦ δὲ παρὰ σοὶ πῶς πλέ-
ουσιν ἐπὶ τὴν μονοπωλίαν, εὐρήσεις δὲ πλέοντας ἐφ' ἡμισέαι.
εἰ οὖν σοι δοκεῖ, γράψον [ἡμ]ῖν [ναυπη]γῆσα[ι] τὸ
πλοῖον· ἐνέστηκεν γὰρ
ὁ καιρὸς καὶ οἱ ναυπηγοὶ ἀ]σχολάζουσιν. ἔ[σ]ται δὲ
ἔπεργον· νυνὶ γὰρ
ὄντος παλαιοῦ οὐθεὶς προσπορεύεται· [κα]ί, ἐὰν βούληι,
ἐγμισθώσεις
10 αὐτό. ἐγὼ δὲ ὑφίσταμα[ι], ἐφ' ᾧ γραφήσεται εἰς μονοπώλια,
τάξομαί
σοι (δραχμὰς) ω. γράψον οὖν μοι πεν[. . .]εν, ἵνα μὴ τρίτος ᾦν
καθῶμαι
ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ. οὐθὲν [λ]αμβάνοντες [ο]ὐκ ἔχομεν τὰναγκαῖα.
ἔρρωσο.

Verso

(ἔτους) λη, Φαμενώθ κ. Ζήνωνι.
15 Πάις κυ(βεργήτης).

To Zenon greeting from Païs. I sailed up in the boat and we are being pestered by the man who collects the twelve-drachmai tax and we have not yet . . . We brought for Artemidoros to Memphis 500 artabai of wheat 'from Tephî' and he gave me 8 drachmai, which I spent on the boat. The sailors are not inclined to sail on the terms of a third share. Inquire at home on what terms they sail for monopoly trading and you will find that they sail on a half share. Now if you approve, write to me to repair the boat; for the opportunity has come and the boat-builders are available. The boat will then find work; for at present, as she is old, no one comes to deal with us; and if you wish, you will be able to let her for hire. I myself undertake to pay you 800 drachmai for her, on condition that she will be assigned in writing to monopoly trading. Write to me then if we are to begin work, in order that I may not sit idle in the boat with two other men. For we are taking nothing and lack basic necessities. Farewell.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 136 (Modified).

Verso

To Zenon. (Docket) Year 38, Phamenoth 20. Païs the boat-captain.

The promise in lines 10 -11 (αὐτό. ἐγὼ δὲ ὑφίσταμαι[ι], ἐφ' ᾧ γραφήσεται εἰς μονοπώλια, τάξομαί | σοι (δραχμὰς) ω is precise enough. The writer offers to pay a specified amount of money for a boat if certain conditions are met. On this reading it is an unapologetic business proposal.

Closer reading casts more than a little doubt on this interpretation. First, because of what is asserted elsewhere in the letter, there remains a degree of doubt as to the sincerity of the proposal. If Païs and his colleagues are lacking in even basic necessities [ο]ὐκ ἔχομεν τὰναγκαῖα (line 12), where will the not insignificant amount of money required to meet that commitment come from? This suggests that the commissive may not be as straightforward a business proposition as it first appears. It may rather be a rhetorical gambit to encourage Zenon to repair the boat by convincing him that it is a more valuable asset than he might previously have thought. Perhaps there is an implied 'if I had the money' behind the offer. Zenon may well have known either that Païs does not in fact have that kind of money, or that indeed it was a genuine offer.

The proposal, on either reading, may or may not have been welcome. Issues of cooperation and affiliation are relevant only to the extent suggested earlier—any provision of information, unless it is blatantly false, is a cooperative act. There is little sign of any affiliative motivation behind the commissive here, or indeed any other aspect of the letter. In considering this letter, as in the case of so many others, initial impressions can be misleading.

Very precise commitments to future action by the writer are made in **TEXT 50**.

TEXT 50

TM 7660 (Van Beek 59)

Archestratos, after referring to discussions he has initiated about a contract he believes to be profitable, commits himself and his colleagues to be guided by Kleon and further promises to put pressure upon someone by means of public notices and official protest.

Recto

Ἀρχέστρατος Κλέωνι χαίρειν. Εἰ ἔρρω[σαι καὶ τὰ λοιπά σοι]
κατὰ λόγον ἐστίν, πολλὴ χάρις τοῖς [θεοῖς ἐρρώμεθα δὲ]

καὶ αὐτοί. Ἐγὼ βουλόμενος Καλλίδ[ομωι - - - - - συνέ-]
 τάξαι τῶν ἐκ τῆς Πτολεμαίδος αὐτ[οῦ - - - - -]
 5 πυθέσθαι περὶ τῆς ἐργολαβίας ἧς ἤρ[γολάβῃκει Ἀπολ-]
 λώνιος ὁ τοῦς λίθους. Ἀναγγείλαντος δέ μοι τ[οῦτου]
 ὅτι εἴη λυσιτελὴς ἡ ἐργολαβία καὶ π[- - - - -]
 αὐτῷ ἐπιτελεῖ τὸ ἔργον, ἐνεχείρησα [ἐλθεῖν πρὸς σέ]
 ἵνα σοι περὶ τούτων ἴσοι/ λαλήσω, ἐνοχληθ[εῖς δὲ ὑπο - -]
 10 του τινος ἐλθεῖν μὲν πρὸς σέ οὐκέτ[ι] ἡ[δυνήθηγν - - - - -]
 τόπ[ω]ι αὐ[τῶς], γέγραφα δέ σοι. Ἐδόκ[ε]ι [γὰρ ἡμῖν σύμ-]
 βουλόν σε εἰς τὸ πρῶγμα λαβεῖν καὶ μηθ[έν ἄνευ σοῦ]
 πρᾶξαι, ἀλλ' ὥς ἂν συ[νβουλευσαμένωι φα[ίνηται καὶ]
 ἡμεῖν συντάξις οὕτως ποιεῖν. Καλ[ῶς ἂν οὖν ποιήσας]
 15 φροντίσας καὶ τὰς ψήφους ἐλκυσ[θῇναι καὶ πλήθος τὸ]
 ἱκανὸν ἀφαιρεθῇναι ἀπὸ τοῦ λιθοῦρ[γείου εἰς τὸ ἔργον]
 ἵνα μὴ ἔλκηται, οὕτως δὲ ὥς καὶ [συγγέγραπται τῆς]
 μερίδος ἐσ[ο]μένης. Ἐὰν οὖν μοι ἐν τάχε[ι γράψῃς, ἐγὼ]
 αὐτὸν ἐνοχλήσω ἐχθέματά τε ἐκ[θεῖς καὶ διαμαρ-]
 20 τυρ[[ά]]ν[ο]μενος καὶ Ἀμαδόκωι ἐντε[ύξομαι λέγων ὅτι τὸν]
 βασιλέα κουφίζομεν καὶ ἐπιστ[- - - - -]
 λήψομεθα πρὸς σέ περὶ τούτων [- - - - - Ἐρρωσο]

Verso

(m2) Ἀρχεστράτου
 ἦλθεν Φαῶφι ιβ

Κλέωνι

Archestratos to Kleon, greetings. If you are in good health and everything else is as you wish, thanks to the gods. We are fine as well. I wanted to [- - -] Kallidomos, and I ordered him to ask information from [- - -] in Ptolemais about the contract for the execution of work which Apollonios, who is responsible for the rocks, had entered into. When he told me that the contract was profitable and [- - -] to him to finish the work, [I tried to come to you] in order to talk to you about all this, but I was held up by some [- - -] and I just could not come to you anymore myself [- - -], but I have sent you (this) letter. For we decided to take you as a counsel in this matter and to do nothing without your consent, but to act as agreed after receiving advice and according to what you order us. Please, make sure that the stones are dragged away and that enough rock is removed from the quarry for the work, so it does not get behind; and so, as stipulated in the contract, the meris will be [- - -]. If you write to me quickly, I will put pressure on him, giving out public notices and officially protesting, and I will meet Amadokos declaring that we relieve the king and we will receive a letter for you from [...] about these things. [Farewell]

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 158 (Modified).

Verso

From Archestratos
 Arrived Phaophi 12

To Kleon

Subject to the condition that Kleon write to him promptly (Ἐὰν οὖν μοι ἐν τάχε[ι γράψῃς line 18), Archestratos promises to:

- put out notices (line 19)
- protest formally (lines 19 – 20)
- meet Amadokos (Line 20)

This is another letter where it is difficult for us to understand the full significance of what is being discussed, both because we lack contextual knowledge and because the text in some places is not well preserved. Whatever these detailed actions imply in context however, they are precise enough for the writer to be held to account if he fails to carry them out. It is therefore important to ask why Arcestratos chose to commit himself in this way. What was his purpose?

A simple answer is unlikely to be forthcoming as there are significant lacunae. A close reading of the earlier part of the letter, however, identifies a somewhat apologetic tone. This is most marked from line 6 onwards, particularly in line 9 where Arcestratos indicates that he wished to talk to Kleon about an issue (ἵνα σοι περὶ τούτων \σοι/ λαλήσω) but was unable to do so (μὲν πρὸς σὲ οὐκέτ[ι] ἠ[δυνήθην (line 10)). What follows is a concession to Kleon that the writer and his associates will be guided by him. (Ἐδόκ[ε]ι [γὰρ ἡμῖν σοῦ] | βουλὸν σε εἰς τὸ πρᾶγμα λαβεῖν..... (lines 11 - 12)). Again, one wonders why. Is it because of the conversations with (whomever it was) in Ptolemais and Apollonios that are referred to (but are incompletely preserved) in lines 3 - 6? It would be wrong to identify these sentences as a complex expressive speech act apologising for something the writer has done. A concession, in this case that the writer will be guided by the recipient in future action, does somewhat diminish the writer's standing, and signals a willingness to undertake tasks that the recipient regards as important. It is against this background (and following a request the significance of which it is again difficult for us to understand) that these commissives are placed. The actions specified in the commissives then may well be tokens of this proposed new relationship between the two parties. Quite what may be gained by taking the actions dot-pointed above is unclear to us but would not have been so to the parties themselves. By making them, Arcestratos is demonstrating the extent to which he is willing to become an agent of Kleon.

This letter, to the extent that it does express something with respect to how the author feels in relation to the recipient—he is content, irrespective of any reservations that he may have but has not articulated here, to yield up a large amount of independent decision-making—comes close to effecting an expressive speech act. It therefore serves

as a useful transition point to a consideration of more explicit expressives. Before doing so, it is worth briefly considering one more example of a letter containing a commissive. It is important, notwithstanding some of the subtleties discussed in the above examples, to place on record that straightforward commissives can be found among these letters. Consider **TEXT 51**.

TEXT 51**TM 1996** (P Mich Zen 97)

The unknown writer asks Zenon to give some people money for expenses and some other things if possible. He also promises to pay immediately when he receives some items of clothing.

Recto

ὑπόμνημα Ζήνωνι παρὰ Π[. . .]-
 νος. καλῶς ἂν ποιήσαις κα[θα]
 καὶ ἐν Ἀλεξανδρίῃ ἡξ[ίου]
 5 δ[ο]ῦ[ν]αι εἰς ἀνήλωμα τοῖς ἔ[v-]
 δον (δραχμαῖς) ἰ καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐορτῇ[v]
 πυρῶν μάλιστα μὲν . [

ἰ ἄρ(τάβας), εἰ δὲ μή γε, τὰς 5 καὶ/ οἷν[ου]
 κεράμιον [α]. φρόντισον [δὲ]
 καὶ περὶ τοῦ [ε] ἱματίου κα[ὶ]
 10 χιτῶνος ὅπως ἂν μοι κατ[ε-]
 νεχθῇ [μοι] εἰς πόλιν. τὴν
 δὲ τεμῆν/[. . .] παραχρῆμα
 κομῆι.

εὐτόχει.

Memorandum to Zenon from . . . Will you kindly, as I requested of you in Alexandria also, give those at home 10 drachmai for expenses and, if possible, ten artabai of wheat for the festival or, if not, the six, and a jar of wine? And about the himation and chiton, see to it that they are brought down to me in town; and you shall receive the price immediately.

May you prosper.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 172.

A clue to the relatively straightforward nature of this communication is found in its labelling as an ὑπόμνημα. It is also signed off εὐτόχει—a sign-off that is a recognised formula in petition language, and which, it was argued in *Chapter 8*, can serve more generally as a politeness marker (see Section 8.5). The commissive is a brief part-sentence added at the end of an overall quite brief letter (lines 11 – 13) and is nothing more than a promise to pay promptly if some clothes are delivered to the writer. It is surely intended to encourage the dispatch of the clothing and is in that way part of the requests that are the point of this letter. It is nonetheless a commissive and is, in a small

way, a cooperative act. Like some assertives, discussed in the previous chapter, it offers a degree of reassurance to the recipient that action he would expect to occur will take place. It is hardly of a kind likely to develop any sense of intimacy.

11.3 Expressives

Writers who perform an expressive speech act are by definition laying open a part of themselves in a way that is not without risk. While, as was suggested in *Chapter 9, Section 9.4*, such speech acts may bring people closer together, there is no guarantee that this will always be the result. An apology may not be accepted, an expression of anger considered unjustified and expressions of surprise, amusement or other psychological states dismissed as insincere or offensive in some way, in the opinion of the recipients.

The risk of such misunderstanding or misinterpretation is all the greater when the medium of communication is a letter. In general, expressive speech acts are likely to be more successful in communicating their intent when delivered in person. Tone of voice, body language and physical context all contribute elements of meaning that cannot be conveyed in written text. The option exists in face-to-face communication for the person uttering the expressive speech act to observe how it is being received and stop, rephrase, apologise or otherwise take action to retrieve the situation. Such measures are not available to a letter writer. We might therefore expect more caution or reserve in the use of expressives in these letters. Care to provide justification for the expressive is likely to be taken, either in the letter itself or in some other way.

For these reasons, there are not many examples of speech acts readily identifiable as expressives to be found in these archives. As in the case of commissives and assertives, those that are found are often enmeshed in language that is seeking to achieve several purposes of which the expressive is only a part.

Of particular interest in this regard are several letters of ‘apology’. Consider **TEXT 52**.

TEXT 52

TM 2382 (P Lond 7 1938)

Ammonios explains why he has sent only a part of some money owing, and apologises.

Recto

Ἀμ[μόνιος Ζή]νωνι χαίρει[τι]ν. εἰς τ[.....]εν. . . . (δραχμας) Β
 ἄργυ]ρίου δοθῆναί σοι,
 δεδώκαμεν [Θε]οδώρῳ τῷ παρὰ σοῦ ἀρ[γυρίου καὶ χαλκοῦ]
 (δραχμας) Α. ἀναγγελεῖ
 δέ σοι Ἰατροκλῆς τε καὶ Θεόδωρος ὥς τη[.....]α[. . .]μεθα τοῦ
 ἀποσταλῆν[α]ί σοι πᾶν τὰργύριον, ἀλλὰ διὰ [τὸ τοὺς
 στρατιώτ]ας [σ]ιταρχομένους
 5 παραγεγενῆ[σθ]αι οὐκ ἠδυνάσθημε[ν, διὸ κ]αλ[ῶς ποιήσεις
 συ]γγνώμην ἡμῖν
 σχών.

ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) κθ, Μεχεῖρ θ.

Verso

(ἔτους) κη, Δύστρου δ, ἐν Λεόντων πόλει. [Ζήνωνι].
 Ἀμμόνιος περὶ τοῦ δεδομένου
 10 ἄργυρίου καὶ χαλκοῦ Θεοδώρῳ.

Ammonios to Zenon greeting. Towards [the order(?) for 2,000 drachmai] of silver to be given to you, we have given your messenger Theodoros 1,000 drachmai of silver and copper. Both Iatrokles and Theodoros will explain to you that we [aimed(?)] to have sent you the whole of the money [as soon as possible], but because the soldiers arrived needing money for rations we were unable to do so, wherefore please excuse us. Farewell. Year 29, Mecheir 9.

Trans.: Skeat (1974) p 20.

Verso

[To Zenon.];(Received) year 28, Dystros 4, at Leontopolis. Ammonios about the silver and copper given to Theodoros

This is a generally straightforward letter and the purpose of the writer is clear. A (substantially) lesser amount of money than was anticipated has been sent to Zenon so an explanation and an apology—the expressive speech act of interest here—is offered at the conclusion of the letter (lines 5 – 6). The brief reason for the lesser amount (the need to give money to soldiers for rations) is provided (lines 4 – 5). Importantly however, Zenon is referred to Theodoros (presumably the same messenger who has received the money) for a fuller explanation. This is consistent with the suggestion above that it is preferable to communicate an expressive speech act such as this apology in person

rather than in writing. It is not unreasonable to imagine that Theodoros and Iatrokles may have had an uncomfortable conversation with Zenon in delivering this letter.

In **TEXT 53** however, not only is there no reliance upon messengers to make an apology in person, it is also not deferred to the end of the letter.

TEXT 53
TM 1982 (P Mich Zen 83)

Fragment of a letter from Herakleides to Zenon, beginning with an apology.

Recto

Ἡρακλείδης Ζήνωνι
χαίρειν. Συγγνώμην
ἔχε εἰ διὰ πλειόνων
ἡμερῶν σοι γράφω. συν-
5 ἔβη γάρ μοι πρὸς τὸν λόγον
ἀσχοληθῆναι διὰ τὸ
Θράσωνα καταπλεῖν
εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρειαν. ἔτι

Verso

Ἡρακλείδης περὶ τοῦ
10 οἰνικοῦ κερματίου.
. Χοίακ καθ.
Ζήνωνι

Herakleides to Zenon greeting. Forgive me if I have not written to you for several days, for I was obliged to busy myself over the account as Thrason was sailing down to Alexandria. . .

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 161

Verso

To Zenon (Docket, 2nd hand) Herakleides about the money for wine. Choiak 29.

It is necessary to be cautious in discussing this letter as we have only a fragment and cannot be sure how it may have proceeded. The letter begins (lines 2 - 3) with an apology in essentially the same form found as that found in **TEXT 52** above. It lacks the additional polite phrase καλῶς ποιήσεις found there (line 5) yet in general the whole purpose of this letter seems to be to register an apology. We know that in **TEXT 52** Ammonios had much to apologise for—failure to deliver half of a sum of money. Here the apology is for a much more trivial offence—a delay in writing for a number of days. In the absence of any other admission of fault—something that may have been

present in that part of the text that has not been preserved—Herakleides would seem to be over precious in comparison with Ammonios. It is not uncommon to apologise in this way of course and it seems likely that Herakleides was simply seeking to be polite. The comparison between these two letters then, serves to illustrate the range of intensity of the common expressive speech act of apologising.

This range is even better illustrated by **TEXT 54**.

TEXT 54
TM 1956 (P Mich Zen 56)

Letter from Philon to Zenon, excusing himself for a delayed payment and proposing an alternative means of payment.

Recto

Col i

Φίλων Ζήνωνι χαίρειν.
οὐδ' ἔνεκα εἴλκυσαι
ὑπὲρ ὧν δύο μνα-
ιεῖων γέγονεν αἴτιον
5 τὸ Ἀρίστανδρον
ἡμῖν ἐγκόψαι. οὐ μὲν
δεῖ γε, ἀλλὰ ἀπ' ἄλλων
συντόμως σοι πορι-
σθὲν ἀποδοθήσεται.
10 καλῶς οὖν ποιήσεις
ἡγησάμενος μὴ δι' ἐ-
μὲ εἰλκύσθαι, ἀλλὰ
τὴν αἰτίαν ἐμβλέψας.
15 εἰ δέ σοι χρεία ἐστὶν
ἀράκου χλωροῦ ἢ Σω-
στράτῳ, λαβὲ ὅσον
θέλεις, εἴτε δὴ
παντὸς εἴτε τοῦ κεσματίου/ μέρους.
20 εἰ δὲ μή γε, τέταγμα
ποιμέσιν, οἷ μοι δώσου-
σιν λτιμήν/, ὥστε ἐκ παντός σε

Col ii

ἐγδιοικηθῆναι. Πάλαι
δ' ἂν καὶ ἐμ πόλει ἤ-
μην, εἰ μὴ αὐτὸ τοῦ-
25 τό μοι ἐνεπόδιζεν.
ἔρρωσο.
τὸ ἐπιστόλιον τοῦτο
ὄρα ἵνα μὴ [[ἔρρωσο]]
παράπῃ ἕως τοῦ
30 με ἐλθεῖν πρὸς σέ.

Verso

Ζήνωνι.
παρὰ Φίλωνος.
[[Ζήνωνι]]

Philon to Zenon greeting. The reason why you have been kept waiting about the two hundred-drachma pieces is that Aristandros interfered with us. However, this must not go on, but the money will shortly be obtained from other sources and repaid to you. So please, then, do not believe that you have been kept waiting by my fault, but to take note of the real cause. If you or Sostratos need any green wild chickling (arakos), take as much as you wish, whether to the value of the whole sum or to part of it. If not, I have agreed with some shepherds who will pay me a price for it, so that in any case your claim shall be settled. I should have been away in town long ago if this particular thing had not prevented me. Farewell. See that this letter is not put aside until I come to you.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 129

Verso

To Zenon From Philon

A quick scan of this letter might cause the reader to doubt if, on the whole, it amounts to an apology at all. Certain parts of it, especially the sentence beginning line 10 (καλῶς οὖν ποιήσεις | ἡγησάμενος μὴ δι' ἐ | μὲ εἰλκύσθαι, ἀλλὰ | τὴν αἰτίαν ἐμβλέψας) have a somewhat indignant tone to them and seek to place blame elsewhere (presumably with the Aristandros referred to in line 5) for a delay in providing some money. Yet these early lines do contain a sentence which implies an apology, albeit expressed impersonally (οὐ μὴν | δεῖ γε, ἀλλὰ ἀπ' ἄλλων | συντόμως σοι πορὶ | σθὲν ἀποδοθήσεται (lines 6 - 9).

This is interesting. Philon may be denying personal responsibility for the situation but his assertion that it should not so be, and that alternative ways of repaying Zenon will be found to resolve it amounts almost to the same thing. We have, in fact, a commissive—a commitment to get the delayed payment made—serving as an indirect way of expressing Philon's discomfort. This implied discomfort hardly amounts to the open expression of his psychological state in Leech's terms. Yet it remains an apology of sorts. In fact such an 'apology', holding out as it does the prospect of resolving the situation, may well have been far preferable to Zenon than an explicit admission of fault and/or expression of regret.

The remainder of the letter moves on to matters that may not be entirely unrelated but we lack the detailed contextual knowledge to determine whether that is the case or not. The final sentence (lines 27 - 30—actually a postscript) in the light of the comments

made in introducing this discussion of expressives, is arresting. As in **TEXT 52** above, this implies that a fuller explanation of circumstances, Philon's role in them, and perhaps his feelings about them will be provided in person. Why the letter should be kept, beyond ensuring that the ideas and offers expressed in it are important to Philon, is hard for us to tell. Unlike **TEXT 52** there is no suggestion here that the letter was accompanied by a messenger, although that is quite possible. Philon's request to keep the letter indicates that he is not willing to delegate any further explanation of the circumstances giving rise to it to an intermediary. This suggests a degree of caution. Such caution is reflected in the rather oblique and impersonal apology that is so important a feature of the early part of the letter.

It would be helpful in understanding the purposes of this letter if we knew more about the identity of the writer. This is, unfortunately, unclear. Edgar identifies three individuals named Philon in the archive. One of these—a baker—was engaged in a law suit with Zenon. If this letter were written by that man it might explain something of its tone. Edgar however, argues that the author of this letter was not that man, being rather a cleruch.⁴ Helpful context is therefore not available to us here.

Oblique apologies, because of a wish not to concede too much, or as a means of being polite rather than expressing a high degree of regret or recognition of fault, can be found in other examples. **TEXT 20**, was discussed in *Chapter 7* (p 144) as an example of how much is sometimes communicated in a generally brief letter. Of special interest to the discussion here is the concluding sentence of **TEXT 20**: αἰσχύνομαι γὰρ | περὶ οὐδενὸς πλεονά | κισ σε ἐνοχλῶν. Philoxenos writes that he is ashamed for raising the subject matter of the letter—a request to Zenon to return a (presumably borrowed) millstone. On one reading, this is an apology. In context, however, this shame seems more a rhetorical ploy than a description of his psychological state. It is preceded by a reminder of several previous requests to return the item in a manner that was described in *Chapter 7* as quite forceful. It seems better to read this 'apology' as an attempt (successful in my belief) to balance the forthright nature of most of the letter with a

⁴ Campbell Cowan Edgar, *Zenon Papyri in the University of Michigan Collection* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1931) at p 55. (Discussion relevant to the identity of Philon is provided by Edgar in his introduction to the previous papyrus in his collection—P Mich Zen 55.)

polite concluding statement. The statement is therefore to a degree self-deprecating, but the self-deprecation is more a matter of form than of how the writer genuinely feels about the situation. From a reading of the letter as a whole, rather than from a reading of individual sentences in it (explicit speech acts or not) it seems likely that Philoxenos considered himself to be well-justified in the request he was making. His psychological state, I suspect, was not apologetic.

It is interesting to compare this letter with **TEXT 55**, another where the writer describes himself as ‘ashamed’.

TEXT 55**TM 1946** (P Mich Zen 46)

Letter to Zenon from Pyron, asking for help to buy poppy seed and for a parcel of land to establish his independence in future.

Recto

Col. i

Ζή[ν]ωνι χαίρειν Πύρων.
 βουλόμενος ἀξιῶσαί σε παλαίτερον
 περὶ χαλκῶν εἰς μήκωνος
 συναγορασμόν, διαισχυνόμενος
 5 καὶ πλείους προσπορευομένους
 ἀπεΐρημαι. καλῶς οὖν
 ποιήσεις, ὅπως, ἐὰν καταπλέης
 εἰς τὴν πενταετηρίδα,
 εὐσχημόνως συγκαταπλέ-
 10 ωμέν σοι, βοηθήσας ἡμῖν
 πάντως εἰς ἀρ(τάβας) ρν, ἣν ὑπὸ
 χεῖρα σοι ἀπομετρήσω κατὰ ἀρ(τάβας) λ.
 ἀξιοῦμεν δέ σε τοῦτο οὐχ ἔ-
 νεκεν τοῦ ἰδίου μόνον, ἀλλὰ
 15 καὶ τοῦ εἰς τοὺς χάρτας ἀνη-
 [λώμα]τ[ος]

Col ii

αἰτεῖν σε. ποιήσον οὖν
 ἡμῖν πάντως. καλῶς δὲ
 20 ποιήσεις καὶ περὶ γηιδίου
 φροντίσας, ὃ σπεύροντες
 διευσχημονήσομεν σέ τε
 οὐκ ἐνοχλήσομεν τὸν
 πλείω χρόνον τοῦτον τὸν
 σπόρον χορηγήσαντα.
 25 εὐτύχει

To Zenon greeting from Pyron. Though I wanted previously to ask you for money for buying poppy seed, I have refrained until now, being ashamed to see so many others applying to you. So in order that, if you sail down to the Pentaeteris, I may accompany you in proper style, please help me at any rate to buy 150 artabai, which I will presently deliver to you in quantities of 30 artabai(?) I ask this not only for the sake of myself alone, but also to meet expenditure on the papyrus rolls [- - -] Do this

for me then at any rate. And please consider my request about a plot of land which I can sow and thus live decently without troubling you for the future, once you have provided this year's seed. May you prosper.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 119 (Modified).

This letter, which is in the form of a petition, was excluded from consideration in Chapter 8 ‘Petitions and Petitioning’ largely for reasons of space. It shares some of the features of **TEXT 35**, (p 187) with respect to its resort to rhetoric, and with respect to its appeal to the self-interest of the recipients, as a means of persuading them to take action for the benefit of the senders. In **TEXT 35** this resulted in a very lively letter that is surprisingly confronting from a writer in a position of very little power. In **TEXT 55** by contrast, even though he has more power than the petitioner in **TEXT 35**,⁵ Pyron also positions himself as having the best interests of Zenon at heart. Pyron’s approach may be summarised as ‘help me in these ways just once and I won’t bother you again as I understand how many demands come before you’.

The expressive speech act in lines 4 - 5 that makes the letter relevant here—the suggestion that Pyron has delayed writing because he is ‘ashamed’ at how many other people are seeking help from Zenon—takes on a different significance from this perspective. While prima facie an apology for sending the letter, it can also be seen to be an attempt to affiliate with Zenon by suggesting that the writer understands the pressure Zenon must be under from so many requests for help. Rhetorically, it is an appeal to ἡθoς. It is not the case however, that this means we should discount the possibility of some sense of shame at making the request. It is difficult to assess the relative status of the employees of Zenon but if Edgar has identified him correctly, it may well be that someone with supervisory responsibilities may have felt the need to apologise for an approach such as this.

If any cautionary example against taking isolated speech acts out of context were needed after the discussion of other texts in this chapter, then this text would serve well. Its purpose is clear enough in many ways. As is the case in the petitions discussed in

⁵ Edgar thought that Pyron was an accountant in Zenon’s service and had three clerks working under him. (Edgar also notes a similar letter (TM 2185 (PSI 6 571)) making essentially the same request of Zenon.) Ibid., p 117.

Chapter 8 and elsewhere, the writer seeks a benefit from the recipient. When an expressive speech act is used in such a context, it is wise not to take it at face value as reflecting the psychological state of the writer and nothing else.

There are nevertheless features of this letter that do suggest the expressive speech act may be genuinely meant. The apparent belief of the writer that Zenon would have seen it as important for him to be well-presented (εὐσχημόνως (line 9)) in Zenon's company, is interesting. This would certainly explain a wish to keep up appearances (although we do not know if he was correct in the belief that this was important to Zenon) and the need for an income to do this. Pyron's position as a man of some importance, at least for his clerks, and presumably in his own eyes, may also suggest that he did feel somewhat ashamed at petitioning Zenon. He may have perceived himself as above such action. Further, his position may also have meant that he did have some knowledge of the number of petitioners that were approaching Zenon at the time. Pyron is, in short, a petitioner from a different position in society from most of those previously considered.

A particular form of words, including particular expressive speech acts may be put to use for a wide variety of purposes, sometimes more than one at a time. A final example makes this point abundantly clear.

TEXT 56

TM 1887 (P Zen Pestm 56)

(Text and translation here are those of Skeat, reproduced and discussed in introducing TM 1553 (P Lond 7 1991), a lengthy series of accounts.⁶ It is reproduced here in part only.)

Recto

Ζήνων Κλειτάρχῳ χαίρειν. παραγενόμενος Σπίνθηρ ὁ παρὰ
Ἡρακλείδου
ἀνήγγειλεν ἡμῖν ἀνειληφότα σε τοὺς λόγους εὐρίσκειν ἐν τῇ
τοῦ λδ.
εἰσμετρήσει πλείω ἀνενηνοχότα αὐτόν. θαυμάζω οὖν εἰ οὕτως
ἐπιλήσμων εἶ, καὶ ταῦτα προειρηκότων ἡμῶν ὅτι ἡξιωκῶς εἴη
ἡμᾶς Ἡρακλείδης κατὰ τὸν παρ' αὐτοῦ λόγον ἀνενεργεῖν. ...

Zenon to Kleitarchos greeting. Spinther, the assistant of Herakleides, has come to me and reported that when you took up the accounts you found that he [Herakleides] had put down inflated figures in his account of the deliveries of the 34th year. I am astonished that you should be so forgetful, after I had warned you in advance that Herakleides had asked me that the accounts should be drawn up on the basis of the

⁶T. C. Skeat, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum (Now in the British Library) the Zenon Archive* (Vol. VII; London: The British Library Board, 1974), pp 88 – 94.

figures submitted by him.....

A smaller extract from this letter was discussed in *Chapter 9* (p 209) when introducing expressives. There it was noted that to take the use of θαυμάζω in its literal sense would be to miss the point entirely. It was being used rhetorically. It was hazarded in Chapter 9 that Zenon's psychological state was probably anger rather than amazement.

The fuller extract of the letter reproduced above supports this interpretation. Nevertheless, given the observation expressed above that a speech act may be used for several purposes concurrently, it is worth considering what Zenon may have hoped to achieve by this lapse.

Lapse is an appropriate description here if it is correct to consider this expressive speech act to be one of anger. In *Chapter 5* (p 81) the point was made that a threat is a 'high stakes' activity and is generally subjected to widespread disapproval. Anger shares some of this disapproval in most societies and while militaristic societies may tolerate it more readily as an appropriately masculine response to frustration, even such a society may take objection when the anger has a sarcastic quality to it—something that applies in this case.

The history of this document as explained by Skeat⁷ does not allow us to determine if the letter was sent. Certainly the early draft, which is what we have here, underwent modification, but much of this modification relates to the accounting issues that were in dispute. Kleitarchos is apparently in trouble here for not implementing a practice designed to address some of these issues. If it was sent, an everyday understanding of human nature can allow us to predict some resentment on the part of Kleitarchos. Such resentment may have led to resistance to Zenon's demands and less efficient performance of his duties than otherwise—the opposite of what would have been Zenon's intention. Expressing 'astonishment' as a way of avoiding explicit expression of anger may, therefore, have had unanticipated consequences. Once again we are

⁷ Ibid. (Skeat reproduces and discusses this document in introducing P Lond 7 1991 (TM 1553).)

reminded that language is a process of interaction between (at least) two parties and that each brings something to any given interaction that will affect its outcome.

11.4 Interim Conclusions

A review of this discussion suggests a number of things. First, while the text, with reference to which this chapter began (**TEXT 14**)—a letter between family members—had its *raison d'être* in the fluctuating business fortunes of the recipient, it remains personal in the extent of the commitment it offers. It serves, therefore, to highlight by contrast something important about the remaining commissives and expressives discussed here: their reserve.

The discussion of individual texts in this chapter has shown that among letters in these archives, commissives are sometimes little more than a matter of form. They are polite promises, for example, vague as to their precise intent (*Section 11.2.1*), and often placing the onus for any fulfilment of them on the recipient.

Expressives, in particular, since they are mostly in the form of apologies, give very little impression of sincerity or depth. In at least one case (**TEXT 54**), an apology has been expressed impersonally. This is evidence for the caution or reserve referred to in introducing *Section 11.3*. There are two examples (**TEXT 52** and **TEXT 54** again) where an intention is expressed to provide a fuller account of the circumstances than is contained in the letter through a messenger or face-to-face meeting with the writer. These writers share an appreciation of the limits to communication by letter when dealing with sensitive situations.

As in the case of the assertives discussed in *Chapter 10*, most of the speech acts discussed in this chapter were used to pursue a wide range of purposes. Indeed, when the speech acts discussed in *Chapters 10* and *11* are reviewed overall, it seems reasonable to conclude that they share with directive speech acts the intention to have recipients act (or not act) according to the desires of the writers. Like all speech acts, they are a means to an end, not an end in themselves. What is interesting is that the ends

are sometimes different to what might be expected from the kind of speech act employed.

Even when these speech acts do sometimes provide an indication of genuine feelings or of the psychological state of the writers this seems almost to be incidental. Similarly, while *Chapter 9* held out the expectation that considering these speech acts would help us understand ways in which writers pursued a sense of affiliation with each other, more detailed discussion has suggested that any such affiliation is sought for instrumental—one might almost say manipulative—reasons.

Ultimately, we should not be surprised by this. The letters are for business purposes and business is unsentimental. These conclusions also bring us back full circle to the observation made at the beginning of this thesis—these letters are about persuasion first and foremost.

CONCLUSIONS

12.1 Introduction

In *Chapter 1*, I set out four main questions that this thesis addresses. An additional question focused upon the effectiveness or otherwise of the approach to language adopted by this thesis was posed. This chapter returns to these questions, answering each to the extent that is possible from the preceding analysis and discussion.

12.2 Purposes

One of the motivations for this thesis was that even a casual reading of the letters in these archives leads one to the observation that they almost invariably seek something from the recipients. The previous chapters have explored this observation with the following results.

Many of these letters have as their purpose minor matters of everyday routine. They appear to be of no significance to anyone other than those directly involved. Examples include requests for ropes and other supplies necessary for the completion of irrigation work (**TEXT 17**, p 140) and from a worker seeking his pay when, presumably, it has been delayed or overlooked (**TEXT 18**, p 142). At a more personal level, there is a request from a friend asking that some mattresses and other things be brought to him in a forthcoming visit (**TEXT 19**, p 143). It is examples such as these, seemingly commonplace to the point of banality, that may have discouraged close attention to the content of letters in these archives in the past. If so, this is a mistake. There are things to be learnt about the ancient Greek language from such simple letters, as this thesis has shown.

There are also many letters that must have been far more significant when written. This thesis has discussed letters advocating a strategy for career advancement, (**TEXTS 13**, p

131) and **TEXT 15**, p 137) letters exercising raw power (**TEXT 1**, p 83), threatening the withdrawal of labour (**TEXT 2**, p 88), and making arrangements for the transport of international ambassadors (**TEXT 8** p 114).

Some improve our understanding of the society that produced them, including one about the training of a young athlete (**TEXT 21**, p 146), one trying to head off what we would now call industrial action (**TEXT 3**, p 95) and some that give us a glimpse of the judicial responsibilities of prominent men (**TEXT 9**, p 116).

Others, such as letters of introduction (*Chapter 7, Section 7.2.4*) direct our attention to attempts to influence those in positions of authority. These complement the significant number of petitions or petition-like letters that are also to be found. It is worth emphasising at this point the variety to be found even within this particular category of letter. These ‘petitions’ range from that of a prisoner seeking release from jail (**TEXT 35**, p 187) to a group of ambassadors seeking an introduction to a powerful man through an intermediary (**TEXT 48**, p 245).

Equally as interesting as these, there are several letters considered here that discuss interrelationships, both business and personal, so complex that the purpose of the writer is not clear to us (**TEXT 41**, p 222). It has been shown (especially in *Chapter 10*) that in some such letters the writer was juggling the need for an immediate outcome with the need to maintain a longer term relationship with the recipient (**TEXT 44**, p 228). *Chapter 11* has also shown that particular speech acts (commissives and expressives) can be undertaken for many purposes at once and that some of these purposes are far from guileless.

Lastly, special notice should be taken of a letter from a son suggesting his father retire and promising to care for him whatever may happen in future (**TEXT 14**, p 134). In its personal significance and in the humanity it displays, as well as for the subtlety of its expression, it is of such a different order to the others that it has merited mention more than ten times in this thesis.

The above is not intended to be a catalogue, or a comprehensive summary of the range of purposes undertaken in these letters. It is intended, rather to step back from the detailed discussion of the preceding chapters and draw attention to some important features of them. Business letters these may be. Mundane, on occasion they may also be. Easily ignored, they most certainly are not.

A consideration of the purposes these writers were pursuing has provided a strong argument for continued study of what these letters say and how they say it. The thesis has shown the value of extending discussion of the papyri beyond examinations of their structural features and beyond the historical changes in semantics, morphology and syntax that they track. Even the most mundane allow us to see the way written communication was an essential part of the way people went about their business.

12.3 Linguistic strategies

The discussion in *Section 12.2* focused on the variation in the purposes pursued in the letters in these archives. This variety becomes even more marked when we consider the linguistic strategies that were employed to these ends.

The writers of these letters, unlike say, Cicero or the younger Pliny, did not have literary or other artistic purposes high among their priorities. They were practical people seeking to bring about real change in the environment in which they found themselves, with all the different levels of hierarchy and power that it contained. The language strategies they employed were in a very real sense then, ‘speech acts’—the use of words in such a way as to make a difference to events in the world. It is for this reason that the speech act has served as an appropriate basis upon which to organise this thesis.

It was important to the correspondents that the most effective speech acts were employed and that, when necessary, these speech acts were appropriately modified to suit unique circumstances. Evidence has been presented here that the writers made these choices very carefully. This section (*12.3*) reviews the choices made with respect to speech acts at a broad level. *Section 12.4* carries this analysis further in order to review

the surprisingly subtle ways in which these speech acts were further modified to improve their effectiveness.

Given the above discussion, and given the evidence gathered in previous chapters, it will be no surprise that I consider the most common speech act employed was the directive. Nor, given the range of purposes being pursued, will it be a surprise that these included a wide range of sub-types of directive. Requests predominate (*Chapter 7*). After all, what more straightforward way of getting someone to do what you want is there than to ask them? For similar, common-sense reasons, people in positions of power can readily issue orders and there are many examples of these (*Chapter 6*). Those who lack power generally must ‘petition’ those who have it (*Chapter 8*).

There are also examples to be found of directives in the form of threats and warnings (*Chapter 5*)—a much more surprising state of affairs for the reasons outlined in that chapter. Most interesting of all is that speech acts that are not explicitly directive (those discussed in Section III of this thesis) have also been used to similar ends. Even speech acts that apparently do no more than provide information (assertives) have been shown to be quite persuasive in sometimes very subtle ways.

The significance of this is twofold. First, while *Section 12.2* above demonstrates the wide variety of purposes being pursued in these letters, this *Section* reminds us that these purposes were well-matched with appropriate linguistic strategies, depending upon the relationship between the correspondents. The writers, in short, were in full command of the resources of their language in a manner that we might not always have expected and knew, or at least believed they knew, the best way to utilise them. This remains true universally, even though some of the letters sampled here are from writers who we would not expect to have had much education.

Secondly, it is the kind of close reading adopted here that has brought these matters to light. It is only when one looks closely at the text and asks what may have been the purpose behind a particular turn of phrase that one is able to understand this richness.

12.4 Modifications

This close reading leads to further important observations. The command over the language resources exercised by these correspondents was not just characterised by its breadth. It also displayed considerable depth.

Examples of this discussed in preceding chapters include the following.

- A threat issued by a man of power carefully worded to emphasise the personal responsibility of the recipient (**TEXT 1**, p 83).
- A threat to withdraw their labour issued by some workmen to their employer, carefully phrased to take the edge off its temerity (**TEXT 2**, p 88).
- A life-changing request to his father by a son who demonstrates exceptional care and subtlety in his command of language to save face for his father (**TEXT 14**, p 134).
- A petition that breaks expectations that such a document should be humble and, with considerable rhetorical flourish, suggests the recipient's own interests will suffer if the petition is ignored (**TEXT 35**, p 187).
- An apparently objective report to his employer by an agent, very carefully phrased to minimise his responsibility should the report be challenged (**TEXT 44**, p 228).

These letters and others like them show writers using language that has been crafted with great skill for maximum impact, both positive and negative. On occasion too, there is use made of rhetorical appeals and figures. Sometimes this is done in a calculated way, in the case of the more restrained figures (for example, litotes). More commonly however it arises naturally out of the need of those with limited power to find a means (such as an appeal to their compassion) of pressing their case. Hyperbole is not unheard of.

Most often however, the writers express their purposes quite bluntly. In this regard the language they use sometimes resembles face-to-face conversation more than written text. That is to say, they appear to rely upon a shared understanding of the context and

of related matters, including the urgency of the business need (the Nile will flood on its schedule not on the schedule of men) rather than relying upon the words themselves, their morphology and syntax, to convey their detailed meaning. They are therefore usually short, show little if any complexity in their structure and, to a reader lacking a full understanding of the context, may appear cryptic. In this regard they resemble, more than any other form of text that I am aware of, modern emails.

Relying on such shared understanding, the letters take for granted that cooperation will be forthcoming. For this reason, they lack the flowery expressions of politeness set out according to lengthy protocols and strict forms of address that are found in other ages and other places. Respect is paid to the conventional forms of opening and closing salutations, including, in many cases, a conventionalised expression of care for the health and wellbeing of the recipient. Greetings and closing salutations follow a slightly different custom when the letter is essentially a petition. Sometimes however, even in so well-recognised a genre as this, conventional patterns are varied or even dispensed with entirely if the writer considers this is best for the purpose. This practice in particular suggests the need for caution in applying a too rigid categorisation of letters into particular forms or types. Sometimes there is as much variation within categories as there is between categories.

In considering assertive, commissive and expressive speech acts (Section III) this thesis began with some expectation that they might allow us insight, however limited, into the psychological state of some of the writers. This expectation was not fulfilled. These speech acts are some of the more subtly expressed of those observed in the thesis. This subtlety is used more to avoid disclosure than to provide it, and where an apology or degree of amazement or similar is expressed, it is done in the interests of a wider purpose. More often than not, inferring the wider purpose is also to doubt the sincerity of the psychological state apparently expressed. The discussion in this section is a reminder, if one were required, that we are dealing with business letters used by practical people to achieve their own ends. A little dissembling and a degree of attention to self-preservation should not surprise us.

12.5 The society

To seek to draw firm conclusions about the society from which these letters came would be to make bricks with very little straw. There are no grounds, for example, for considering the letters as representative of language use at the time. This would be true even if all available documents had been considered (see *Chapter 1*, page 8). Some tentative conclusions can nevertheless be offered.

These letters prove the existence of at least a small group for whom literacy was an important tool in their everyday communications. It is of special interest that it appears to have been a tool employed by people from different levels of society, even if, as was probably the case, they needed the assistance of a scribe to do so.

The language used, even by those addressing their employer or others with more power than they themselves possessed, can best be described as ‘robust’. It is tempting to make inferences from this as to relationships among these correspondents more broadly. I doubt that such inferences are justifiable. Much communication would also have taken place face-to-face and many letters would have been delivered by messengers whose role would have included ensuring that the message was delivered in a respectful manner. How obsequious or otherwise these interactions may have been is lost to us. We also lack knowledge of the aftermath of sending a robust letter to a man of power. It nevertheless remains intriguing that letters were composed in this way and it is much to be regretted that we have so little in the form of ongoing correspondence that would inform us of how well-received or otherwise these were.

That workmen were not entirely powerless can be deduced from these letters. Those discussed in *Chapter 5 Threats and warnings* in particular provide an insight into some of the constraints placed upon those with high-level management responsibilities. While presumably Kleon and Zenon had extensive power over the lives of their workers, there was a need for them to exercise this power judiciously. If, for example, inadequate provisions were supplied to certain work groups then there was a risk the work would not be completed on time. In the case of the irrigation works for which Kleon was

responsible the consequences of this may have moved beyond the inconvenient to the disastrous.

One must also be cautious in seeking to draw conclusions from correspondence about the efficiency with which Greeks in 3rd century B.C.E. managed their affairs. If matters are proceeding well in any organisational context, there is little need to engage in correspondence about them. It is problems and difficulties, or the urgent need to respond by an unanticipated deadline that generates such exchanges. Management intervention is usually only required when problems arise. These letters do suggest frequent need for management intervention and that problems were common. The language in which letters are framed, including those clearly composed in haste as well as those sharply focused for maximum impact, remind us of this. Administering the many changes and developments taking place in accordance with the plans for expansion and other priorities of the Ptolemies was very challenging. It was a society in transition and one not without conflict at many levels.

12.6 The pragmatic approach

To the extent that the above conclusions are defensible and interesting, to that extent also is the adoption of a pragmatic approach to language defensible and interesting. It is appropriate to consider its contribution in detail.

In *Chapter 2*, a number of the tools the pragmatic approach to language makes available to us were outlined and their relationship to traditional rhetorical approaches to the analysis of language explored. Not all of these tools were found to be useful.

Without doubt, it is the concept of the speech act that has done most to inform the approach of this thesis. This is apparent in the section and chapter headings. More importantly, it is also apparent in the kinds of question asked in discussing individual texts. To focus upon the purposes of a text, while necessarily requiring a greater reliance on inference than is ideal, has offered important perspectives. It is an approach already shown to be of use with respect to Ancient Greek texts of different genres and to some Latin texts.

While not as central to the structure of the thesis, Grice's notion of conversational implicature has also proved invaluable. Much that is said in these letters is not said explicitly. Grice's approach to conversation, including, as it does, recognition of how much is contributed to the meaning by listeners (or readers) themselves has been shown to improve our understanding significantly. That these letters are in many cases conversational in style and tone has been part of the reason for this.

Less important to this thesis has been the notion of deixis. The insights derived from discourse analysis have also not been as heuristic as might have been expected. The former has been helpful on occasion in identifying why it is difficult for us, at an historical distance, to understand certain references. The latter has delivered little here. This is surprising given that it was noted in *Chapter 3* as an area where a pragmatic approach to language has been applied most extensively in the analysis of Ancient Greek literary texts. This puzzle is, in fact, part of the explanation. The letters discussed here are short—often very short. The approach to language developed by discourse analysts has most to contribute when dealing with texts of more significant length.

Finally, the contribution made here by research into politeness must be considered mixed. Much research into politeness has been criticised for being very Anglo-centric (see *Chapter 2, Section 2.3.5*). As a consequence, to apply it without serious reservations to a language and culture as different as that of Ptolemaic Egypt would be wrong. There is no avoiding the issue of politeness in letters however. The finding that the examples discussed here are not characterised by a major focus upon it—at least not through the use of politeness formulae—has made it possible to avoid some of the major controversy that surrounds the issue. These formulae, as noted above, are present but not overly emphasised. Asking questions about politeness has nevertheless been important in that it encourages the kind of close reading that has been the means by which most of the insights of this thesis have been generated.

While not strictly a pragmatic tool, being alert to traditional rhetorical features of language has also been helpful here. For similar reasons perhaps to the limited contribution of discourse analysis—that we are dealing largely with relatively brief

documents—these have not come to the forefront of discussion often. Rhetorical strategies have nevertheless been adopted in these letters on occasion, whether consciously or unconsciously, and they should not be ignored in coming to an appreciation of how these letters work.

There is, then, good reason to conclude that a pragmatic approach to the letters in these archives is productive and that at least some of the tools it offers will be useful in considering other texts. A brief caution is nevertheless in order. These tools must be applied flexibly and with close attention to the individual text. For example, and to consider only the concept of the speech act, the discussion here has shown that, on occasion, apparently similar texts—indeed often almost the same words—can be used to perform more than one speech act. A promise may also be a prediction. A threat may be hard to distinguish in its form from a promise. An excuse may serve as an apology. An assertive may simply inform, yet in the context of other assertives, may seek to persuade. Care must be taken not to overlook these complexities and interactions. Tools must be used judiciously. If misused however, they can do more than fail to make useful findings. They can also mislead.

12.7 Final remarks

It was stated in *Chapter 1 Introduction* that this thesis aimed to break new ground in approaching documentary papyri, first through the adoption of pragmatic approaches to language and secondly through a process of close reading not elsewhere adopted in response to these texts. I consider that the conclusions set out above have shown that examining the texts in these ways leads to both a deeper understanding of them and a greater appreciation of the range and subtlety of the Ancient Greek language in which they were composed.

In addition, I also consider that the thesis has shown that the pragmatic approach to language has potential to improve our understanding of similar texts. There is much knowledge still to be gained about Ancient Greek from the documentary papyri and the approach adopted in this thesis has, I believe, the potential to provide at least one further way in which that knowledge may be developed.

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- | | | |
|---------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Band I | Laut- und Wortlehre | I Teil Einleitung und Lautlehre |
| | | II Teil Flexionslehre |
| | | III Teil Stammbildung |
| Band II | Satzlehre | 1 Analytischer Teil erste Hälfte |
| | | 2 Analytischer Teil zweite Hälfte |
| | | 3 Synthetischer Teil |
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APPENDICES



CONCORDANCE (Main texts)

Text	Page Number *	Trismegistos	P Cair Zen	P Lond 7	P Mich Zen	Van Beek	P Petr 3	P Petr 2	Other
1	67, 83 , 105, 128, 141, 156, 266, 269.	TM 2492				17	42 B (2)	13 (5)	P Zen Pestm C
2	67, 88 , 91, 105, 128, 147, 234, 266, 269.	TM 44593				50	42 C (2)	4 (9)	
3	90, 95 , 107, 266.	TM 7639				49	42 C (1)	4 (8)	
4	67, 68, 98 , 102, 106, 189.	TM 7647				55	42 C (12)	13 (1)	
5	102, 103 , 106.	TM 1923			21				
6	110 , 115, 120, 123, 127.	TM 2021							PSI 4 324
7	112 , 115.	TM 7446				80	43 (7)	15 (2a)	
8	68, 114 , 118, 266.	TM 1536		1973					
9	116 , 118, 266	TM 847	2 59202						
10	117 .	TM 1544		1982					
11	120 .	TM 807	2 59159						
12	121 , 127, 128.	TM 6200							SB 6 9215
13	131 , 145, 155, 221, 265.	TM 6220				7	42 H (7) (1 st line only)		SB 3 7183 & 6 9440
14	130, 134 , 145, 156, 206, 235, 241, 243, 263, 266, 269.	TM 7671				11	42 H (5)	13 (19)	
15	72, 132, 137 , 194, 266.	TM 7667				13	42 H (1)	11 (1)	
16	139 , 237.	TM 2491				19	42 A	13 (11)	
* Where text is given in full, the <i>Page Number</i> column entry is bolded. For other entries, reference may be to part of the text, additional discussion or <i>passim</i> .									

CONCORDANCE (Main texts)

Text	Page Number	Trismegistos	P Cair Zen	P Lond 7	P Mich Zen	Van Beek	P Petr 3	P Petr 2	Other
17	140 , 152, 265.	TM 7634				21	42 C (10)	13 (2)	
18	142 , 189, 265.	TM 1988			89				
19	143 , 265.	TM 2385		1942					
20	144 , 209, 258.	TM 1621		2059					
21	146 , 224 (n.8), 266.	TM 2384		1941					
22	149 .	TM 7650				24	42 D (1)	4 (13)	
23	151 .	TM 7651				25	42 D (2)	4 (11)	
24	153 .	TM 1997			98				
25	154 , 189.	TM 1603		2041					
26	156 .	TM 7443				83	43 (4)	15 (3)	
27	158 .	TM 1588		2026					
28	159 .	TM 1589		2027					
29	172 , 176, 177, 179, 181, 182, 184.	TM 881	2 59236						
30	175 .	TM 984	3 59341						
31	177 .	TM 1456	5 59832						
32	179 , 184.	TM 1601		2039					
33	183 .	TM 1600		2038					
34	184 .	TM 1598		2036					
35	187 , 260 , 266 .	TM 1986			87				
36	190 .	TM 1543		1980					
37	119, 198 , 156 (n. 32).	TM 7448				79	43 (1)	42a	

CONCORDANCE (Main texts)

Text	Page Number ¹	Trismegistos	P Cair Zen	P Lond 7	P Mich Zen	Van Beek	P Petr 3	P Petr 2	Other
38	202	TM 7659				33	42 G (3)	4 (12)	
39	216 , 225, 239.	TM 388486				72	Elsewhere unpublished.		
40	218 , 227, 228, 239.	TM 1542		1979					
41	222 , 266.	TM 1882							P Zen Pestm 51; PSI 4 340
42	225 , 227.	TM 388508				81	43 (7)	15 (2b)	
43	226 .	TM 1575		2013					
44	228 , 230, 234, 266, 269.	TM 1511		1948					
45	230 , 236.	TM 1570		2008					
46	235 .	TM 1957			57				
47	243 .	TM 1916			10				
48	245 , 266,	TM 1732							P Col 3 11
49	248 .	TM 1960			60				
50	249 .	TM 7660				59	42 G (4)	13 (6)	
51	252 .	TM 1996			97				
52	254 , 263.	TM 2382		1938					
53	255 .	TM 1982			83				
54	256 , 263.	TM 1956			56				
55	259 .	TM 1946			46				
56	209, 261 .	TM 1887		1991 (Intro.)					P Zen Pestm 56

¹ Where text is given in full, the Page Number column entry is bolded. In other locations reference may be either to part of the text, additional discussion, or *passim*.

CONCORDANCE (Supplementary texts)

Text	Page Number	Trismegistos	P Cair Zen	P Lond 7	P Mich Zen.	Van Beek	P Petrie III	P Petrie II	Other
X1	90, 104, A vii.	TM 7447				41	43 (8)	9 (1)	
X2	91, A viii.	TM 7442				39	43 (3)	9 (2) + 9 (3)	
X3	91, A x.	TM 890	2 59245						
X4	111, A xi.	TM 2022							PSI 4 325
X5	113, A xii.	TM 1937			37				
X6	113, A xiv.	TM 1516		1953					
X7	113, 123, A xv.	TM 1965			65				
X8	115, A xvi.	TM 865	2 59220						
X9	115, A xvii.	TM 815	2 59168						
X10	142 (n. 17) A xviii.	TM 388479				36	Elsewhere unpublished.		
X11	142 (n. 17), 152, A xix.	TM 381302				66	Elsewhere unpublished.		
X12	142 (n. 17), 152 A xx.	TM 388485				70	Elsewhere unpublished.		
X13	143, A xxi.	TM 712	1 59053						
X14	143, A xxii.	TM 1618		2056					
X15	143, A xxiii.	TM 1951			51				
X16	143, 143 (n. 21), A xxiv.	TM 1969			69				
X17	143, A xxv.	TM 1980			81				
X18	143, A xxvi.	TM 1919			14				
X19	143, A xxvii.	TM 1920			15				

CONCORDANCE (Supplementary texts)

Text	Page Number	Trismegistos	P Cair Zen	P Lond 7	P Mich Zen	Van Beek	P Petr 3	P Petr 2	Other
X20	152, A xxviii.	TM 7644				52	42 C (8)	13 (3) Also: 4 (10) [ll 1-7 & Verso] + 5c [ll 8–10]	
X21	152, A xxix.	TM 7645				56	42 C (9)	13 (4)	
X22	152, A xxx.	TM 388476				29	Elsewhere unpublished.		
X23	131, 136, 209, A xxxi.	TM 7680				3	42 H (8f), ll. 1-8		
X24	169, A xxxii.	TM 2085							PSI 4 402
X25	169, A xxxiii.	TM 3357							P Enteux 82
X26	193, 242, A xxxiv.	TM 7670				8	42 H (4)		P Petrie I 30 (1)
X27	193, A xxxv.	TM 388474				16	Elsewhere unpublished.		
X28	204, A xxxvi.	TM 1934			34				
X29	226 (n.9), A xxxvii.	TM 7446				80	43 (7)	15 (2a)	
X30	245, A xxxviii.	TM 1925			23				

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS

X1

TEXT X1

TM 7447 (Van Beek 41)

Of most interest for the antigraphon, this document illustrates the relentless nature of the river's rising, a matter of urgent significance for the work of Kleon and Theodoros.

Recto

1 [- - - - -]
ἤδη καὶ κατ.ι.ε ἄλλο. Εἰ γὰρ τι
ἄλλο δράσεις συμβήσεται σοι κινδυνεύειν
Ἐρρωσο. (ἔτους) [- - -]
5 Θεόδωρος Διοτίμωι χαίρειν. Καλῶς ποιήσεις εὐτονώ-
τερον γράψας Ἀνδροσθένει καὶ τοῖς νομάρχαις
ἀποστέλλειν τὸ ἀνοῦχι διὰ πάντων τῶν ὑποζυγίων
καθάπερ καὶ πάρος ἐποίησαν. Τοῦ γὰρ ποταμοῦ
πρὸς πάντα τὰ χώματα προσβαίνοντ[ος τὰ π]άντα
ὁχ[υρῶσ]αι δεῖ, Ἀποστέλλειν δὲ καὶ τὰ [- - -]

[- - - - -] already and [- - -] (something) else. If you will do something else, you will be in trouble.

Greetings, Year [- - -].

Theodoros to Diotimos, greetings. Please write forcibly to Androsthene and the nomarchs, to send the anouchi using all the draught-animals, just like they did before. With the river rising higher up to all the dykes, everything has to be strengthened. (Tell him also) to send the [- - -].

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 115 (Modified).

X2

TEXT X2

TM 7442 (Van Beek 39)

Hermogenes writes to Theodoros endorsing advice provided by Harmachoros as to how to manage several work gangs.

Recto

- 1 Ἑρμογένης Θεωδώρῳ χαίρειν. Ὑπ[οτέταχ]ά σοι τῆς παρὰ
 Ἀρμαχόρου ἐπιστολῆς
 τὸ ἀντίγραφον. Καλῶς οὖν ἔχει εἰς ὃ ἡ|τήθησαν εὐσυνθετῆσαι
 αὐτοῖς.
 Πλέοντα γὰρ χρόνον εἰργασμένων αὐτ[ῶν ἐν] τοῖς χαλκωρυχίοις
 καὶ εἰληφότων
 ἐλπίδα ἕως λ τοῦ Πάχων ἐργασα[μέν]ων ἃ εἶχον ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν
 ἔργα,
 5 καθότι συνεκρίθη ἐπὶ Λογβάσεως [καὶ Ἑρ]μαφίλου,
 μεταπ[ορε]ύεσθαι εἰς Ἀλαβα[ν-]
 θίδα διὰ τὴν ἀνυδρίαν τῶν τόπων [τῶνδ]ε καὶ σοῦ ἡξιωκότ[ος]
 τὸν γραμματεία
 προσυπομεῖναι ἕως ι τοῦ Παῦνι κ[αὶ οὐκ] ἀντειπόντος καλῶς
 (vac.) ἔχειν ὑπο-
 λαμβάνω, ὃν τρόπον αὐτοῖς παρ[ωμ]ολογη[σά]μεθα ποιῆσαι τοὺς
 τε ἐγμε-
 τρητὰς ἀποστεῖλαι τὸ τάχος, ὅπ[ως ἐγ]μετρηθέντος αὐτοῖς τοῦ
 ἔργου
 10 μὴ καθῶνται τὸν πλείω χρόνον.
 Ἦρρωσο. (ἔτους) ζ Παῦνι θ.
 [Ἀ]ρ[μ]άχ[ο]ρος. Ἦγραψάς μοι μὴ ἀποσπᾶσαι τὸ π[λή]ρωμα ἐκ
 Φιλωτερίδος ἕως οὐ τὰ ἔργα
 συντελέσαι. Γίνωσκε οὖν τά τε ἔργα ἃ εἶχ[ον συ]ντετελεσμένα
 καὶ ἄλλα σχοινία λξ
 διὰ τὸ Θεόδωρον ἀξιῶσαί με ὑπομεῖναι [ἕως Π]αῦνι ι. Ἦτι δὲ
 [οὐ]κ ἀγνοεῖς ὥς σοι
 15 διελέγην περὶ τοῦ ση[σ]άμου καὶ κρότωνος [ὅ]τι παρέστηκεν.
 Τὸ [δ]ὲ π[λή]ρωμα οὐκ ἐρ-
 γάζεται ἕως οὐ τὰ συντετελεσμένα ἔργα ἐγμετρηθῇ α[ὐ]τοῖς.
 Καλῶς ἂν οὖν
 ποιήσῃς ἀποστείλας τοὺς ἐγμετρητὰς ὅπως ἐγμετρ[ήσῃ]σι ἵνα
 μὴ ἄτοπόν
 τι πράξωσιν. Οὐ γὰρ ἀγνοεῖς οἷά ἐστιν τὰ κατὰ τὰ πληρώματα
 ἐὰν ἀργῶσιν.
 Ἦτι δὲ τὸ Μέγητος π[λή]ρωμα ἀναβέβηκεν κ[αὶ] τὰ λοιπὰ τὰ
 ἐνταῦθα, ὥστε μηθένα
 20 εἶναι ἐνταῦθα ἄλλ' ἢ ἡμᾶς, καὶ τὸ π[λή]ρωμα γογγύζει φάμενοι
 ἀδικεῖσθαι
 ἐνταῦ[θα] ἤδη μῆνας ι, τοῦτο δὲ πάσχε[ι]ν διὰ τὸ μὴ παρ[εῖ]ναι
 αὐτοῖς τὸν τριήραρχον.
 Ἦρρωσο (ἔτους) ζ Παῦνι θ

Verso

(m2) (ἔτους) ζ Παῦνι ια. Ἑρμογένῃ
 ἀν(τίγραφον) τῆς παρὰ Ἀρμαχόρου ἐπ(ιστολῆς). (m1)
 Θεωδώρῳ.

Hermogenes to Theodoros, greetings. In attachment I have sent you a copy of Harmachoros' letter. It would be good if you would keep faith with them concerning that which has been asked of them. They have been working in the Copper Mines for quite some time now, and they have been hoping to move on to Alabanthi when they have finished the job on which they were at work up to the 30th of Pachon, since there is no water around here. This was agreed upon in the presence of Logbasis and Hermaphilos. Since you have asked that the secretary should stay on until the 10th of Pachon, and since you have made no objection, I think it is all right to do as we had agreed with them, and send out the measurers immediately, so they will not sit idle most of the time after this job has been measured for them.

Farewell, Year 7, Payni 9.

Harmachoros. You have written me not to withdraw the group out of Philoteris until they have finished the works. You should know, then, that the works they had, have been finished, and even 35 additional schoinia, because Theodoros had asked me to stay until Payni 10. Also, you are well aware that I talked to you about the sesame and krotos that it is ripe. The gang does not work until all the work already accomplished is measured out for them. Hence you would do well to send the measurers, to measure it, to make sure they [the gang] will not do anything stupid. You know how things are with the groups if they have no work to do.

Moreover, Meges' group has gone up as well as the other groups that were left here, so there is no one here but us, and the group is muttering that they have been treated unfairly here for 10 months already, and that they have those problems because the trierarchos is not with them. Greetings, Year 7, Payni 9.

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 111.

Verso

(m2) « Year 7, Payni 11, to Hermogenes

Copy of the letter from Harmachoros.

(m1) To Theodoros.

X3

TEXT X3

TM 890 (P.Cair Zen 2 59245)

Kollouthes informs Zenon that the farm labourers have fled to the temple of Isis. He has gone to Krokodilopolis to ask Maimachos to get them out and will come to Zenon afterwards.

Recto

- 1 Κολλούθης Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. ἀπελθόντος μου ἀπὸ σοῦ κατέλαβον
τοὺς γεωργο[ὺς ἐκ]
τῆς καταμεμετρημένης γῆς τοῖς στρατιώταις ἀνακεχωρηκότας
ἐπὶ τὸ Ἰσιεῖον τὸ ἐν τῷ Μεμ[φίτη].
[ἡνί]κα οὖν ἐκομισάμην τὴν παρὰ σοῦ ἐπιστολήν, ἐπορευόμην
εἰς Κροκοδίλων πόλιν πρὸς Μαίμ[αχον],
[ὅπ]ως ἂν ἐγείρῃ αὐτούς· καὶ ὥς ἂν τοῦτο γένηται παρησόμεθα
πρὸς σέ· οὐκ ἐνεδήμει [γὰρ]
5 [ἐ]ν τῇ κώμῃ Ψενομοῦς. γέγραφα οὖν σοι ἵνα εἰδῇς.
ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) λγ, Χοιάχ [-ca.?-]

Verso

- (ἔτους) λγ], Τῦβι β. Κολλούθης.
00 Μῦς
Ζήνωνι.

Kollouthes to Zenon, greeting. When I left you I discovered that the farmers on the land allocated to the soldiers have withdrawn to the temple of Isis in the Memphite nome. When I received the letter from you I was on my way to Maimachos in Krokodilopolis to ask him to rouse them out and when this is done I will come to you. Psenomous is not at home in the village. I have written to you so that you should know. Farewell Year 33 Choiach

Trans.: Mackay.

Verso

Year 33 Tybi 2 Kollouthes
(In another place)
To Zenon.

X4

TEXT X4

TM 2022 (PSI 4 325)

Apollonios instructs Hikesios as to how to receive payment for grain, and how to record such payment.

Recto

1 Ἀπολλώνιος Ἰκεσίῳ χαίρειν. ἐάν τιν'ε/ς τῶν ἐξαγόντων
τὸν σῖτον ἐξ Συρίας διαγράψωσιν ὑμῖν ἢ τὰς τιμὰς ἢ τὸ
παράβολιον, παραλαμβάνετε παρ' αὐτῶν διὰ τῆς τραπεζῆς
καὶ δίδοτε πρὸς ἡμᾶς σύμβολα διπλᾶ ἐσφραγισμένα, γράφοντες
τό τε ὄνομα τοῦ καταβάλλοντος καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ ἀργυρίου
5 καὶ ἐὰν ὑπὲρ ἄλλου καταβάλλῃ.
ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) κε, Ἀρτεμισίου ιβ.

Verso

Ἰκεσίῳ.

Apollonios to Hikesios, greeting. If anyone exporting grain from Syria pays you either the price or a deposit, accept it from them through the bank and give us sealed duplicate receipts, writing the name of the payer and the amount of silver and if he is paying on behalf of another.

Farewell. Year 25, Artemision 12.

Trans.: Mackay.

Verso

To Hikesios

X5

TEXT X5_L

TM 1937 (P Mich Zen 37)

An order in duplicate for the payment of several workmen for tasks undertaken.

Recto

Πετοσίρις Θευπόμποι χαίρειν].
 δὸς Τεῶτι λαξοὶ μισθὸν θυρ[
 λιθίνης ἥς συνεβουλεύσατο
 κόψαι ἐν τοῖς Νέστου (δραχμὰς) ς [καὶ]
 5 Ἀρεντώτης οἰκοδόμος εἰς [δοκοῦ-]
 ς ὥστε κόψαι καὶ ἀνακραμάσαι
 τὰς δοκοὺς καὶ κατακοδομ[ῆσαι]
 (δραχμὴν) α (ὀβολὸν) καὶ Ἀμφιώμ οἰκοδ[όμος]
 καὶ Ψενψεῆβις εἰς δόρωμα [ἐν]
 10 τοῖς Διοτίμου πεντακλείων
 ἱ δ / ὥς τοῦ πεντακλείου
 ζ (ὀβολοὶ) = c εἰς τοῦτο ἔχι α (ὀβολὸν) καὶ εἰς]
 ὁμαρίαν τῶν Διοτίμου β.

Πετοσίρις Θευπόμποι χαίρειν].
 15 δὸς Τεῶτι λαξοὶ μισθὸν
 λιθίνης ἥς συνεβουλεύσατο
 κόψαι ἐν τοῖς Νέστου (δραχμὰς) ς [καὶ]
 Ἀρ [
 ς ὥστε κόψαι καὶ ἀν[α]κραμάσαι
 20 τὰς δοκοὺς καὶ [κατοικο]δομ[ῆσαι]
 (δραχμὴν) α (ὀβολὸν) καὶ Ἀμφιώμ [
 καὶ Ψενψεῆβις εἰς [
 τοῖς Διοτίμου [
 ἱ δ / (δραχμαὶ) ζ (ὀβολοὶ) β = c εἰς [
 25 εἰς ὁμαρίαν τῶν (δραχμὰς) β.
 ἔρρωσο,
 (ἔτους) λα, Φαμεν[ὼθ

Verso

εἰς τὰ Διοτίμου ἐμ Φιλ[αδελφεαίαι]
 δορωσιος πεντακλείων
 30 καὶ εἰς ὁμαλισμὸν (δραχμὰς(?)) β
 τὸ πᾶν . . .
 and above, a similar docket, probably cancelled:
 δόρωσιν δ[
 ἐδο[.]ακ
 [[κλεινῶν]]
 ὁμαλισμοῦ δὲ (δραχμὰς) β

Petosiris to Theopompos greeting. Give to Teos the stone-cutter as wages for a stone door which he agreed to cut in the house of Nestos 6 drachmas, and to Harentotes the mason for beams to cut and suspend the beams and build them in, 1 drachma, 1 obol, and to Amphiom the mason and Psenpseebis for plastering the ceilings, in the house of Diotimos, of . . . dining-rooms with five couches . . . 14½ cubits(?), at the rate of . . . for each room, 7 drachmas, 2½ obols, towards which he

has 1 drachma 1 obol, and for levelling the floors in the house of Diotimos 2 drachmas.

Farewell. Year 31, Phamenoth . . .

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p106.

Verso

1st docket, probably cancelled, too fragmentary to be translated)

2nd docket For the house of Diotimos in Philadelpheia: for plastering the ceilings of . . . dining-rooms with five couches - - - and for levelling the floors, 2 drachmas. Total [- - -

X6

TEXT X6

TM 1516 (P Lond 7 1953)

Payment orders, in duplicate.

Recto

- Πανακέστωρ Κλειτάρ-
χωι Ἄνδρωνι χαίρειν
μετρήσατε Νικηρά-
τῳ Πρωτάρχου δάνειον
5 εἰς τὸ κάτεργον εἰς τὴν
γῆν ἣν ἔχει κριθῶν ἄρ(τ.) κ,
καὶ Κελεήσει Ὡρου Πέρσηι
δάνειον κριθῶν ἄρ(τ.) ι καὶ σπέρμα
10 πυρῶν ἄρ(τ.) β, καὶ Πάτιτι Πάειτος
δάνειον εἰς τὸ κάτεργον
κριθῶν ἄρ(τ.) ιε καὶ σπέρμα πυρῶν ἄρ(τ.) γ,
καὶ Νικομάχῳ Βαλά-
κρου Μακεδόνι σπέρμα
15 πυρῶν ἄρ(τ.) γ.
(2nd hand) ἔτους) κθ, Θωὺθ πξ.
(1st hand) Πανακέστωρ Κλειτάρχῳ
Ἄνδρωνι χαίρειν. μετρή-
σατε Νικηράτῳ Πρω-
τάρχου δάνειον εἰς τὸ
κάτεργον κριθῶν ἄρ(τ.) κ,
καὶ Κελεήσει Ὡρου Πέρσηι
δάνειον κριθῶν ἄρ(τ.) ι
καὶ σπέρμα πυρῶν ἄρ(τ.) β,
καὶ Πάτιτι Πάειτος δάνει-
ον εἰς τὸ κάτεργον κρι-
θῶν ἄρ(τ.) ιε καὶ σπέρμα πυ-
ρῶν ἄρ(τ.) γ, καὶ Νικομάχῳ
Βαλάκρου Μακεδόνι
σπέρμα πυρῶν ἄρ(τ.) γ.
(2nd hand) ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) κθ, Θωὺθ πξ.
διὰ Διοδώρου μετρήσατε.

Verso

- (1st hand) Γ Κλειτάρχῳ
Ἄνδρωνι.
(3rd hand) ΚΕ. σιτικὰ.

(Outer text) Panakestor to Kleitarchos and Andron greeting. Measure out to Nikeratos son of Protarchos as a loan for labour costs 20 artabas of barley, and to Keleësis son of Horos, Persian, as a loan, 10 artabas of barley and for seed 3 artabas of wheat, and to Nikomachosson of Balakros, Macedonian, for seed 3 artabas of wheat. Farewell Year 29, Thoth 25. Measure through Didoros.

Trans.: Skeat (1974) p 42.

Verso

(Addressed) To Kleitarchos and Andron (Docketed) 25th. Grain accounts.

X7

TEXT X7

TM 1965 (P Mich Zen 65)

An order to buy some lead and to use it for a bath and a boiling house.

Recto

Ἑρμάφιλος Εὐκλεῖ χαίρειν. τὸν μόλυβδον περὶ οὗ γράφεις
συναγορεύσας κατὰχρησai εἰς τὰ χαλκία τοῦ βαλανείου,
ὁμοίως δὲ/
καὶ τοῦ εἰς τὸ ἔψημα.
ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) β, Ἀθὺρ πγ.

Verso

5 Εὐκλεῖ. μόλυβδου.

Hermaphilos to Eukles greeting. Buy the lead about which you write and use it for the coppers of the bath, likewise for those of the boiling-house.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 66.

Verso

To Eukles (Docket of dispatch) About lead

X8

TEXT X8

TM 865 (P Cair Zen 2 59220)

An order to have work on a canal finished.

Recto

[Ἀπ]ολλώνιος Ζήνωνι χαίρει[ιν]. τὴν διώρυγα [τὴν]
πρὸς λίβα τῶν μυρίων ἄρουρων ἀπέγδος ἐξεργάσα[σθαι].
ἔρρωσο (ἔτους) λβ, Ὑπερβερε(ταίου) ιγ, Φ[αῶφι ιγ]

Verso

5 [(ἔτους) λβ, Ἀπολ]λώνιος
[τὴν διώρυγα ἀπε]γδοῦναι.
Ζήνωνι.

Apollonios to Zenon Greetings. Contract out the work on the canal to the west of
the 10,000 arourai.

Farewell.

Trans.: Mackay.

Verso

Year 32 Apollonios
To contract out the canal
To Zenon

X9

TEXT X9

TM 815 (P Cair Zen 2 59168)

Apollonios orders Zenon to build a temple to Sarapis and specifies that provision be made for a grand approach to it and to a nearby sanctuary.

Recto

Ἀπολλώνιος Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. [σύνταξον πρὸς τῶι]
Ἰσιεῖωι οἰκ[ο]δομήσαι Σα[ραπιεῖον παρὰ τὸ τῶν]
Διοσκούρων ἱερὸν καὶ τὸν ὥ[στε - ca.12 -]
ἄπολ[ελειμμένον τόπον. ἐπιμελὲς δέ σοι ἔστω]
5 ὅπως παρὰ τὴν διώρυγα εἰς δρ[όμος ἀμφοτέρων]
ἱερῶν γένηται.
ἔρωσθ. (ἔτους) [-ca.?-]

Verso

[(ἔτους) . Δύστρ]ου δ, Φαμενὼθ δ.
[Ἀπολλώνι]ος Σαραπιείου.
Ζήνωνι.

Apollonios to Zenon greetings. Give orders to build a Sarapeion in addition to the temple of Isis beside the temple of the dioskouri and the place left overAnd take care so that there is one colonnade for both temples along the canal.

Trans.: Mackay.

Verso

Year Dystros 4, Phamenoth 4
Apollonios about the Sarapeion
To Zenon

X10

TEXT X10

TM 388479 (Van Beek 36)

A fragment apparently referring to a request needing a prompt response.

Recto

1 μον επ...[- - - - -]
 Γέγραφα μὲν οὖν καὶ γὰρ Κλέω[νι ἐπιστολὴν ἧς τὰντί-]
 γραφα ὑπογέγραφα. Τὸ ὕδωρ [- - - - -]
 τὸ τάχος ὅπως εἰ δυναίμεθα [- - - - -]
5 αὐτῷ. [Νῦν] δὲ καλῶς ἂν ποι[σας ἀποστεί-]
 λας αὐτῷ[ι εὐ]τονώτερον [- - - - -]
 ἐπίτῃ [- - - - -] τῆς σωτ[ηρίας [- - - - -]]

[- - - - -] So I have also written to Kleon myself, and in attachment I have sent a copy of my letter. The water [- - - - -] as soon as possible so that, if we are able [- - - - -]. Please [- - -] send him urgently [- - - - -] afterwards [- - -] of the security/safety [- - - - -].

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 107.

X11

TEXT X11

TM 381302 (Van Beek 66)

A memorandum from Kleon to Phileas advising of his illness and apparently suggesting how this may be addressed.

Recto

1 (Ἔτους) λα Χοιὰχ ιγ. Τὸ δο-
θὲν ὑπόμνημα Φιλέαι
παρὰ Κλέωνος ἐν Κροκοδίλων πόλει.
vac.
Φιλέαι. Ἐμοὶ μὲν συμβαίνει
5 εὖς...π.... ἐνοχλεῖσ-
θαι τ... τῷ σώματι
[οὐδ]ὲ δύναμαι πρὸς οὐθενὶ
[τῶν ἔργ]ων εἶναι. Σὺ δὲ κα-
[λῶς πο]ιήσεις συντάξας
10 [.....]ινι πορεύεσθαι
[- - - - -]ημα.

Verso

(Ἔτους) λα[α - - -]...... X

Year 21, Choiak 13. The memorandum given to Phileas by Kleon in Krokodilon Polis.

To Phileas. I happen to [be ...] physically unwell, and I cannot conduct any (of my tasks). Could you please order [...] to go to [- - - -].

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 170.

Verso

Year 3[1 ...].

X12

TEXT X12

TM 388485 (Van Beek 70)

A request to ensure a payment is made promptly so that certain works may not be delayed.

Recto

1 [...]...[- - - - -]
φ.. παρὰσ[- - - - -]
[.]λικά ἔργα [εἰ]ς ἔ-
κτισιν (δρ.) μ. Καλῶς οὖν
5 ποιήσεις χρηματίσας
αὐτῷ ἧς τὰς μ (δραχμὰς) ὅπως
σώματα ὅτι πλεῖστα
συνάγη καὶ σίδηρον
προσαγοράσῃ σοι συν-
10 [τελεσθ]ῇ τὰ ἔργα
ἐν τάχει.
Ἔρρωσο. (Ἔτους) λδ Χ[οία]ρ ιθ

[- - - - -] works for payment of 40 dr. Please pay him [...] the 40 dr., in order that he may gather as many workmen as possible and buy iron [so that] the works may be finished in a short time.

Farewell. Year 34, Choiak 19.

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 70.

X13

TEXT X13

TM 712 (P Cair Zen 1 59053)

Amyntas has learned that he will soon be ordered away, and asks Zenon to have awnings and other things made for his boats and to bring them down with him when he returns to Memphis. He has also sent Hermon with a list of the things required and to attend to the business of procuring them.

Recto

Ἀμύντας Ζήνωνι χαίρειν.
 ὑπολαμβάνομεν ἀποδημίαν
 ἡμῖν παραγγελήσεσθαι, τὰ δὲ
 πλοῖά ἐστιν ἡμῶν ἀκατάσκευα.
 5 καλῶς ἂν οὖν ποιήσαις φροντίσας
 ὅπως γένων/ται ἡμῖν τά τε στε-
 γάσματα τοῖς πλοίοις καὶ τὰ
 λοιπὰ χρηστά τε [κ. . . . καὶ τοῦ]
 καὶ τοῦ καλῶς ἔχοντος ἀργύριον
 10 δὲ εἰς ταῦτα χαριεῖ ἡμῖν συντά-
 ξας ἐμ Μέμφει δοθῆναι, παρ' ἡ-
 μῶν δὲ ἐμ πόλει κομιῇ· καὶ τὴν
 ταχίστ[η]ν, ἵνα γενόμενα ὥς ἂν
 παραγένῃ εἰς πόλιν κατα-
 15 γάγῃς ἡμῖν. ἀφεστάλκα-
 μεν δέ σοι τὴν γραφὴν πάντων
 Ἑρμῶνα κομίζοντα καὶ ἅμα
 ἵνα γένηται πρὸς τούτοις.
 20 ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) κη,
 Δύστρου ις.

Verso

[-ca.?-] . ου .
 [-ca.?- Ἑ]ρμῶνος.
 Ζήνωνι.

Amyntas to Zenon, greeting. We understand that we will be ordered away but our boats are lacking equipment. Please arrange that both awnings and other useful things for the boats and on favourable terms (?) and please you will do us a favour by ordering money for these things to be given (to me) in Memphis, and from me you will receive (it) in town and as fast as possible. I have sent Hermon to you with a list of everything so that at the same time they may be added to these

Farewell Year 28.

Dystros 16.

Trans.: Mackay.

Verso

Hermon
 To Zenon

X14

TEXT X14

TM 1618 (P Lond 7 2056)

Philinos asks Zenon to give some wine to Poseidonios and to send some other items so as to avoid being late for a visit of the king.

Recto

1 Φιλῖνος Ζήνωνι
χαίρειν. καλῶς ἄν
ποιήσῃς ἀποδοῦς
Ποσειδωνίῳ τὸ κε-
5 ράμιον τοῦ οἴνου ἡδέος
ὃ ὁμολόγησας,
ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ ἡμῖν
ἀπόστειλον τό τε
ἔψημα καὶ τὸ μέλι.
10 ἀπόστειλον δὲ καὶ τὸ
ἱερεῖον ἐν τάχει
ἵνα μὴ καθυστερήσωμεν
εἰς τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως
π[αρ]ουσίαν.
15 ἔ[ρ]ρωσο.

Verso

Ζήνωνι.

Philinos to Zenon, greeting. Please hand over to Poseidonios the jar of sweet wine you promised, and also send me the boiled grape-juice and the honey. And send the pig as soon as possible so that we may not be late for the visit of the king. Farewell.

Trans.: Skeat (1974) p 207.

Verso

To Zenon.

X15

TEXT X15

TM 1951 (P Mich Zen 51)

Philinos asks Zenon to reserve 1,000 artabai of wheat for him and advise him of the price.

Recto

Φιλῖνος Ζήνωνι
χαίρειν. καλῶς ἂν
ἔχοι εἰ ἔρρωσαι· ἔρρωμαι
δὲ καὶ αὐτός. καλῶς
5 [ἄ]μ ποιήσας, εἴ σοι εὖ-
καιρόν ἐστιν, εἰς τὰ
νέα . [
πυρῶν ἄρ(τάβας) Ἀ.
τὴν δὲ τιμὴν γράψον
10 ἡμῖν, ἵνα ἀποστείλω-
μέν σοι.
ἔρρωσο.

Verso

ἔτους) λε, Τύβι κγ. Ζήνωνι.
Φιλῖνος πυ(ρῶν) ἄρ(ταβῶν) Ἀ.

Philinos to Zenon greeting. If you are well, it would be good. I too am well. If it is convenient to you, kindly reserve me 1,000 artabai of wheat from the new crop. And write me the price, in order that I may send it to you. Farewell.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 122.

Verso

To Zenon. (Docket, 2nd hand) Year 35, Tybi 23. Philinos about 1,000 artabai of wheat.

X16

TEXT X16

TM 1969 (P Mich Zen 69)

Herodes asks Zenon to send a pig, a matter he has raised with him many times previously.

Recto

Ἡρώδης Ζήνωνι χαίρειν.
καλῶς ποιήσεις τὸ ἱερεῖ-
ον, περὶ οὗ σοι πλεονάκις
γέγραφα καὶ ἐνώπιον
5 πλεονάκις εἶρηκα,
συντάξας δοῦναι
Ἀντιόχῳ. χαριεῖ γὰρ
μοι.

10 ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) ζ,
Παχὼνς ιε.

Verso

Ζήνωνι

Herodes to Zenon greeting. If you will kindly order the pig, about which I have several times written to you and several times spoken to you in person, to be given to Antiochos, you will do me a service. Farewell. Year 7, Pachons 15.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 147.

Verso

To Zenon

X17

TEXT X17

TM 1980 (P Mich Zen 81)

Zenon writes to Agron, asking him to pass some money to Doxaios.

Recto

Col i

Ζήνων Ἄγρωνι

χαίρειν. καλῶς

ποιήσεις δοῦς

Δοξαίῳ τὴν

5 τιμὴν τῶν

τριῶν κερ(αμίων) ὅπως

ἀποστείλῃι πρὸς

Col. ii

ἡμᾶς· χρεία γ

γὰρ ἔχομεν εἰς

10 Κροκοδίων

πόλιν παρακο-

μισθῆναι.

ἔρρωσο.

Zenon to Agron greeting. Will you please give Doxaios the price of the three jars in order that he may send it to us; for we are obliged to go over to Krokodilopolis.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 159.

X18

TEXT X18

TM 1919 (P Mich Zen 14)

Nikon writes to Zenon about payment for certain dishes and their disposal.

Recto

Νίκων Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. γεγράφαμεν Ἀρτεμιδώρῳ ἰτῶι
ἐλεάτρῳ/ τὴν τιμὴν τῶν ἀβακείων, ὧν παρεθέμεθ[α]
παρ' αὐτῶι, ἀποδοῦναί σοι, εἰ δὲ μὴ πεπράκαμεν, αὐτὰ τὰ
ἀβάκεια. ἐὰν οὖν κομίσῃ, ἀπόστειλο[ν]
ἡμῖν, ἐὰν μὴ σοι ᾖ χρήσιμα.
ἔρρωσο.

Verso

5 Νίκων περὶ τιμῆς ἀβακείων, Ζήνωνι.
κομίσασθαι παρὰ Ἀρτεμιδώρου.
(ἔτους) κθ, Ξανδικοῦ κη, ἐν Ἀλεξ(ανδρείαι).

Nikon to Zenon greeting. We have written to Artemidoros the *eleatros* to deliver to you the price of the dishes which we deposited with him, or the dishes themselves if we have not sold them. So if you receive them send them to us, unless they be of use to you. Farewell.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 76.

Verso

To Zenon.
(Docket) Nikon about the price of dishes, asking us to receive it from Artemidoros. Year 29, Xandikos 28, in Alexandria.

X19

TEXT X19

TM 1920 (P Mich Zen 15)

Charmylos (to Apollonios or Zenon) writes to ask that arrangements be made to take delivery of a large consignment of nuts.

Recto

Χαρμ[ύλος Ἀπολλωνίῳ (?) χαίρειν]. ἀπέσταλκά σοι καρῶν
φυτὰ (?) πε]ντακισχίλια.
καλ[ῶς οὖν ποιήσεις συντάξας τινὶ] δέξασθαι παρὰ [τοῦ
δεῖνα] τοῦ παρ' ἡμῶν.
[ἔρρωσο. (ἔτους) κθ], Φαρμουῦθι ιᾶ

Verso

Χαρμύλος περὶ καρῶν -ca.?-]
5 (ἔτους) κθ, Ἀρτεμισίου ι[

Charmylos [to Apollonios (?)greeting. I have sent you 5,000 shoots of nut trees (?).
Will you kindly then order someone to receive them from . . . our agent. Farewell.
Year 29, Pharmouthi 11.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 77.

Verso

Charmylos, about nut trees(?). . . Year 29, Artemisios

X20

TEXT X20

TM 7644 (Van Beek 52)

Nikeratos reports a collapsing wall and asks Kleon to let a contract for its repair as he has to make space for prisoners sent to him by Apollonios.

Recto

- 1 [Νική]ρατος Κλέωνι χαίρειν. Τὸ πρὸς νότον
[τ]οῦ ὀχυρώματος τείχος, μέρος μὲν τι αὐτοῦ
πεπτωκός ἐστιν, τὸ δ' ἐπίλοιπον φέρεται ὥς-
τε κινδυνεύει πεσόντος αὐτοῦ διαφωνήσαί
5 τι τῶν σωμάτων. Καλῶς οὖν ποιήσεις τὴν
ἀπέγδοσιν αὐτοῦ ποιησάμενος καὶ δοὺς Διονυ-
σίῳ τῷ [ο]ἰκο[ό]μῳ ὅπως ἐνεργῇ. Εὐθέως γὰρ
ἔξομεν ἐξαγαγόντες καὶ πλέονι τόπ[ω]ι ἀπο-
10 χρήσασθαι πρὸς τοὺς παραδεδομένους \νὺν/ δ[[1α]]εσ-
μώτας ὑπ' Ἀπολλωνίου τοῦ διοικητοῦ. Ἔρρωσο. (Ἔτους) λ
Ἀθὺρ ιξ

Verso

(Ἔτους) λ, Ἀθὺρ ιη.
[- - τ]ὸ παρὰ Νικηράτου. Κλέωνι

Nikeratos to Kleon, greetings. The southern wall of the fortification, part of it has collapsed, and the remaining part is being dragged down so there is a risk that if it falls, some of the men will perish. Please, make up the contract for it and give it to Dionysios, the building contractor so he can get started. For soon, once we have brought (them) outside, we will have to use up even more room for the prisoners whom Apollonios the dioiketes has handed over to us. Farewell, Year 30, Hathyr 16.

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 138.

Verso

Year 30 Hathyr 18
[- - -] from Nikeratos. To Kleon.

TEXT X21

A copy of a letter on the same matter as TEXT X20—a collapsing wall—is forwarded with a covering note also asking that a contract for its repair be let immediately because of risk to the fortification.

X22

TEXT X22

TM 388476 (Van Beek 29)

What appears to be a request for some action in relation to some ‘water’ by the ‘Small Lake’.

Recto

1 [Δίκα]ιος Κλέωνι χαίρειν.
[Καλ]ῶς ἄν ποιήσῃς
[...]αμενος ἢ πο-
[...] δ]ύναται τὸ ὕδωρ
5 [.....]την
[...] ἐν τῇι] Μικρῷ Λίμνῃ
[.....] ἐὰν δύνω-
[μαι ...]τους

Verso

(m2) Χοιὰχ θ παρὰ
10 Δικαίου Κλέωνι
«[Dika]ios to Kleon, greetings. Please [- - - - -] can the water [- - - -] in the Small Lake [- - - -]. » Verso

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 96.

Verso

(m2) Choiak 9, from Dikaïos. To Kleon

X23

TEXT X23

TM 7680 (Van Beek 3)

Metrodora expresses her fears for Kleon because she has heard that he was harshly treated by the king on a recent visit.

Recto

1 [- - - - ca. 30 - - - -].τατα φέρειν
 [- - - - -]ρον τοῖς πράγμασιν τοῖς ἐν
 [- - - - -].ἡ ἐφιλοτίμου με παραγε-
 [νέσθαι πτός σέ καὶ] ἦλθον ἂν π[ά]ντα παραλιποῦσα, νυνι
 5 [δὲ ἐν φόβῳ εἰμι οὐ μετρίῳι, πῶ[...]τε σοὶ ἀποβήσε-
 [ται καὶ ἡμῖν. Οἱ γὰρ κυνηγοὶ οἱ πρῶτῳ παραγενόμενοι
 [τὰ γεννημέ]να σοὶ ἐμοὶ ἀνήγγελλον, ὅτι ὁ βασι-
 [λεὺς ἐλθὼν εἰς τὴν Λί]μνην πικρ[ῶ]ς σοὶ ἐχρήσατο καὶ
 [- - - - -]καὶ βεβληκέναι οὕτως α-
 10 [- - - - -]λυποῦμα[ι - - -] καλέσσασα ἐπυνθα-
 [νόμην - - - -]τε ἀκηκ[ο]ιέν[αι - - Νῦ]ν δὲ παραγενόμενος
 [- - - - -]εσθαι εἰο.[- - - -]ς ἀπέβη, ἐφ' οἷς
 [- - - - -]ανεσαν ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀν[- -]υ[.]νουτευ
 [- - - - -]ι γῆν λήμψεσθαι τ[- - - -]υν σαυ-
 15 [τ- - - - -]δεκας εἰς μείζω φόβ[ον - -]ν, ἀλλὰ βελ-
 [τι - - - - -]. ἐκεῖνων γένοιτ[ο ὥς] θέλω καὶ ὑ-
 [- - - - -].ος μοι ὥς [τ]άχιστα ἐκει-
 [- - - - -][- - - - -]

[- - -] about the things in [- - -] you have been urging me [to come to you], and I would have come, leaving all behind, but now I am immensely [frightened] about how things will end up for you [and for us]. For the hunters who have arrived this morning have told me what [has happened] to you, that the king [came to the] Lake (Province) and treated you harshly [- - -].

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 39.

X24

TEXT X24

TM 2085 (PSI 4 402)

A lentil cook seeks more time to pay taxes.

Recto

Φιλίσκωι χαίρειν Ἀρεντώτης φακηψὸς
Φιλαδελφείας. δίδωμι κατὰ μῆνα (ἄρταβῶ) λε
καὶ ἀνδρίζομαι ἵνα ἀναπληρῶ τοὺς φόρους κατὰ
μῆνα, ἵνα μηθέν μοι ἐγκαλῆς. ὁ λαὸς οὖν ὁ ἐν τῇ
5 πόλει [[πόλις]] τὰς κολυκύνθας ὀπτῶσιν. διὰ ταύτην
οὖν τὴν αἰτίαν οὐθεὶς παρ' ἐμοῦ φακὴν ἀγοράζει
ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ. δέομαι οὖν σου καὶ ἱκετεύω,
εἴ σοι δοκεῖ, γενέ/σθαι μοι, ὥσπερ καὶ ἐν Κροκοδίλων πόλει
πεποιήκασι, βραδύναι τῷ βασιλεῖ τοὺς φόρους
10 ἀναπληροῦν. καὶ γὰρ τὸ πρῶτ' εὐθέως παρακάθην-
ται τῇ φακῇ πωλοῦντες τὰς κολυκύνθας, καὶ οὐκ ἐῶσι
πωλῆν τὴν [φακ]ήν.
Εὐτυεῖ

To Philiscos greeting from Harentotes, lentil-cook of Philadelphia. I give the product of 35 artabae a month and I do my best to pay the tax every month in order that you may have no complaint against me. Now the folk in the town are roasting pumpkins. For that reason then nobody buys lentils from me at the present time. I beg and beseech you then, if you think fit, to be allowed more time, just as has been done in Crocodilopolis, for paying the tax to the king. For in the morning they straightway sit down beside the lentils selling their pumpkins and give me no chance to sell my lentils.

Trans.: Hunt and Edgar (1932 (reprinted 1963)) pp 228 - 229.

Philista petitions the king, asking that the person she accuses of deliberately scalding her in the village baths be brought to justice.

Recto

βασιλεῖ Πτολεμαίῳ χαίρειν Φιλίστα Λυσίου, τῶν
 κατοικουσῶν [ἐ]ν Τρικωμία. ἀδικούμαι ὑπὸ Πε-
 τεχῶντος. λουομένης γάρ μου ἐν τῷ βαλανείῳ τῷ ἐν τῇ
 προειρ[η]μένῃ κώμῃ, (ἔτους) α, Τῦβι ζ, πα-
 ραχέων ἐν τῷ γυναικειῳ [θό]λῳ, ἐγβεβηκυίας μου ὥστε
 ζμήσασθ[αι], εἰσενέγκας θερμοῦ τὰς ἀρυταί-
 νας καστεσκέδασέν μου κ[. . .] καὶ κατέκαυσεν τήν τε
 κοιλίαν καὶ τὸν ἀριστερὸν μηρὸν ἕως τοῦ γόνατος
 5 ὥστε καὶ κινδυνεύειν με· [ὄν κ]αὶ εὐροῦσα παρέδωκα
 Νεχθοσίρῳ τῷ ἀρχιφυλακίτῃ τῆς κώμης, παρόν-
 τος Σίμωνος τοῦ ἐπιστάτου. δέομαι οὖν σου, βασιλεῦ, εἴ σοι
 δοκεῖ, ἰκέτις ἐπὶ σὲ καταπεφευγυῖα, μὴ περι-
 δεῖν με οὕτως ἡνομημένην, χειρόβιον οὖσαν, ἀλλὰ προστάξαι
 Διοφ[ά]νῃ τῷ στρατηγῷ γράψαι Σίμωνι
 \τῷ ἐπιστάτῃ/ καὶ Νεχθοσίρῳ τῷ φυλακίτῃ ἀναγαγεῖν ἐφ'
 αὐτὸν τὸν Πετεχώντ[α ὅ]πως Διοφάνης ἐπισκέψῃται περὶ
 10 τούτων, ἵν' ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγούσα, βασιλεῦ, τὸν πάντων κοινὸν
 εὐ[ε]ργέτην, τοῦ δικαίου τύχῳ.
 εὐτύχει.

(hand 2) Σίμωνι ἀπόστειλον τὸν ἐγκαλούμενον. (ἔτους) α,
 Γ[ορπ]ιαίου κη, Τῦβι ιβ.

Verso

(ἔτους) α, Γορπιαίου κη, Τῦβι ιβ.
 Φιλίστα πρὸς Πετεχώντα
 παραχύτην περὶ τοῦ κατα-
 κεκαῦσθαι.

To King Ptolemy greeting from Philista daughter of Lysias resident in Tricomia. I am wronged by Petechon. For as I was bathing in the baths of the aforesaid village on Tubi 7 of year 1, and had stepped out to soap myself, he being the bathman in the women's rotunda and having brought in the jugs of hot water emptied one (?) over me and scalded my belly and my left thigh down to the knee, so that my life was in danger. On finding him I gave him into the custody of Nechthosiris the chief policeman of the village in the presence of Simon the epistates. I beg you therefore, O king, if it please you, as a suppliant who has sought your protection, not to suffer me, who am a working woman, to be thus lawlessly treated but to order Diphanes the strategus to write to Simon the epistates and Nechthosiris the policeman that they are to bring Petechon before him in order that Diophanes may inquire into the case, hoping that having sought the protection of you, O king, the common benefactor of all, I may obtain justice. Farewell.
 (Docketed) To Simon. Send the accused. Year 1, Gorpiaeus 28 Tubi 12.

Trans.: Hunt and Edgar (1932 (reprinted 1963)) pp 234- 236.

Verso

(Endorsed) Year 1, Gorpiaeus 28 Tubi 12. Philista against Petechon, bathman, about having been scalded.

X26

TEXT X26

TM 7670 (Van Beek 8)

Philonides writes to his father about some linen cloth and other things, not presently available, but which he promised to send as soon as possible, also adding information about the illness of Satyros.

Recto

1 Φιλωνίδες τῷ πατρὶ χαίρειν. Καλῶς ποεῖς εἰ ὑγιαίνεις,
ὑγι[αίνω δὲ]
καὶ αὐτός. Ἐγράψαμέν σοι καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἔνπροσθεν ἐπιστολαῖς,
ὅ[τι οὐδὲ τὰ]
[...]ρα ἔχομεν οὐδὲ τὰ ὀθόνια. Ὡς [[δ']] ἄν 'οὔν' λάβωμεν,
π[έμψομεν. Γίνωσκε δὲ]
[Σάτ]υρον ὄν[τ]α ἐν Μέμφει ἀρρωστοῦντα καὶ τ[ὰς]
δ[ι]α[τ]ρι[βὰς] ποιοῦμενον]
5 [ἐν τ]ῷ Ἀσκληπιείῳ.

Ἐρρω[σο (ἔτους) -]
Φαρμου[θι -]

Philonides to his father, greetings. I hope you are in good health; I am well too. Also in previous letters I have written you that we have neither the [- - -] nor the linen cloths. As soon as we get them, [we will send them. You should know] that Satyros is in Memphis, being ill, and that he is staying in the Asklepieion. Greetings. [Year . .], Pharmouthi [. .]

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 46.

X27

TEXT X27

TM 388474 (Van Beek 16)

Two fragments that make limited sense to us.

Recto

Fragment a

- 1 [- - - - Εἰ ἔρρω]σαι, ἐρρώμεθα δὲ καὶ ἡ[μεῖς] καὶ
[- - - - - - - -] πρὸς Καλλικράτην κα[λέ]σας με
[- - - - - - - - -Σάτ]υρον καλοῦντά σε ἀχάριστον καὶ
[- - - - - - - -] ἀβησε οὐκ ἀφέξεσθαί σου καὶ
5 [- - - - - - - - -Πρὸς] δὲ ταῦτα ἀνήγγελλον Ἰστιεῖω[ι]
[- - - - - - - -] γει. Σε δὲ ἤξιο[ὺν] τὰ πρὸς τὸν Βα-
[σιλέα - - - - - - - - - - - - - -]

Fragment b

- [- - - - - - - -] αἰουθε[- - -]
[- - - - - - - -] βασιλέα [..]αἰ
10 [- - - - - - - -] μεθα γὰρ καὶ
[- - - - - - - -] τρόπον οἶκον[ν]ο-
[- - - - - - - -] ἔρωσο.

[- - - -]. If you are in good health, then so are we and [- - - -] to Kallikrates, having called me [- - - - Sat]yros having called you ungrateful and [- - - -] that he will not stay away from you and [- - - -]. Furthermore, I/They have reported to Histieios [- - - -] you to the king [- - - -].

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 67.

X28

TEXT X28

TM 1934 (P Mich Zen 34)

A formal notification in duplicate, concerning the loss of a donkey.

Recto

(ἔτους) αλ, μηνὸς Ἀθὺρ ιβ, ἐν Φιλα-
δελφείαι τοῦ Ἀρσινοίτου νομοῦ.
προσάγγελμα Ἀλεξάνδρῳ
ἀρχιφυλακίτῃ παρὰ Ἀντιγένε-
5 υς Μακεδόνοσ τῶν Νικάνορος κλη-

ρούχου. ἀπόλωλέμ/ μοι ὄνος θήλει-
α λευκὴ ἐκπηδήσασα παρὰ Νικί-
ου νυκτός, ὧν τιμὴ (δραχμῶν) π.

(ἔτους) αλ, μηνὸς Ἀθὺρ ιβ, ἐμ
10 Φιλαδελφείαι τοῦ Ἀρσινο-
ίτου νομοῦ. Προσάγγελμα
Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἀρχιφυλα-

κίτῃ παρὰ Ἀντιγ[[ο]]λέ/νους Μακεδό-
νος τῶν Νικάνορος κληρού-
15 χου[[ς]]. ἀπόλωλέμ μοι ὄνος θήλεια
λευκὴ ἐκπηδήσασα παρὰ
Νικίου νυκτός, ἧς τιμὴ (δραχμῶν) π.

Year 31 Athyr 12, in Philadelphia of the Arsinoite nome. A notification to Alexandros, chief policeman, from Antigenes, a Macedonian, of the troop of Nikanor, cleruch. I have lost a white female ass, which escaped from Nikias by night, of which the value is 80 drachmas.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 102.

X29

TEXT X29

TM 7446 (Van Beek 80)

Asklepiades authorises Hephaistion to provide Theodoros with payment due to him.

Recto

1 Ἀσκληπιάδης Ἡφαιστίωνι
χαίρειν. Δὸς Θεοδώρῳ ἀρχιτέκτονι
τῶν [ἐ]ν τῷ νομῷ ἔργων κατὰ τ[ὴν]
παρ' Εὐτύχου τοῦ διοικητοῦ
5 ἐπιστολὴν [τ]ὴν γινομένην
ἀγορὰν εἰς τὸ ι (ἔτος) ἀντὶ (δρ.) ἃ οἴνου
κεράμια πεντήκοντα ἕξ τέταρ-
τον καὶ σύμβολ[ο]ν ποίησα[ι πρὸς]
αὐτὸν
10 ...ματ...τρῶν.

Verso

Ἡφαιστίωνι

Asklepiades to Hephaistion, greetings. Give to Theodoros, the engineer responsible for the works in the nome, according to the letter from Eutychos the dioiketes the payment in kind due to him for the 10th year, instead of 900 dr. fifty-six keramia one quarter of wine, and issue a receipt for him [...].

Asklepiades.

Trans.: Van Beek (2006) p 190.

Verso

To Hephaistion

X30

TEXT X30

TM 1925 (P Mich Zen 23)

Aristeides asks Zenon, to whom he asks to introduce his messenger to Apollonios, with a view to getting himself excused from a liturgy. He invites Zenon to write if he ever needs anything.

Recto

Ἀριστείδης Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. καλῶς ἂν ἔχοι εἰ ἔρρωσαι καὶ
τὰ λοιπὰ σοί ἐστι πάντα κατὰ
γνώμην, ἔχοιμι ἂν τοῖς θεοῖς πολλὴν χάριν· ἔρρωμ[αι] δὲ
καὶ αὐτός. συμβέβηκέ μοι ὑπὸ τῶν πο-
λιτῶν προβεβλήσθαι με σίτου ἐγδοχέα οὕτω ὅντι μοι τῶν
ἐτῶν οὐδὲ γινομένης μοι τῆς λειτουρ-
γίας ταύτης, ἀλλὰ διὰ φθονερίαν τινές [με προέβαλλον].
ἄπεστάλακαμεν οὖν ἐγὼ τε καὶ ὁ ἀδελ-
5 φὸς Θηρωνίδης Δρόμωνα ὅπως ταῦτα δηλώσῃ
Ἀπ[ολ]λωνίῳ, ἵνα ἡμῖν βοηθήσῃ καὶ ἀπολύσῃ με
τῆς ἐγδοχέας ταύτης. χαρίζοιο ἂν οὐμ μοι τόν τε
Δρόμωνα προσαγαγὼν ἐν τάχει Ἀπολλωνίῳ
καὶ συνεπιλαβόμενος τοῦ ἐντυχεῖν αὐτὸν Ἀπολλωνίῳ
τὴν τα[χίς]την καὶ ἵνα ἀποστέλῃ αὐ-
τὸν ἡμῖν ἐν τάχει πάντα οἰκονομησάμενος. γράφε δὲ καὶ
σύ, ἐάν τις χρείαν ἔχῃς τῶν
10 παρ' ἡμῶν, ἵνα σοι πάντα ποιῶμεν. ἔρρωσο.

Verso

Ἀριστείδης περὶ αὐ(τοῦ) Ζήνωνι.
σίτου ἐγδοχείας. (ἔτους) κθ,
Πανήμου α, ἐν Ἀρσινόῃ.

Aristeides to Zenon greeting. If you are well and everything else is to your mind, I would give much thanks to the gods. I too am well. I have had the misfortune to be proposed by the ciitzens as commissary of corn, though I am not yet of the right age nor due for that burden, but have been proposed by certain persons out of jealousy. I and my brother Theronides therefore have sent Dromon to explain these things to Apollonios, in order that he may help us and release me from that responsibility. You would do me a favour then by immediately admitting Dromon to Apollonios's presence and assisting him to have speech with Apollonios as soon as possible and seeing that he sends him back to us immediately after settling everything. And write yourself if ever you need anything from there, in order that we may do all that you want. Farewell.

Trans.: Edgar (1931) p 84.

Verso

To Zenon. (Docket, 2nd hand) Aristeides about himself and the charge of supplying corn. (Received) year 29, Panemios 1, in Arsinoe
