

P.CtYBR Inv. 1430: Letter from the Heroninos Archive

Erynn Kim
Yale University
erynn.kim@yale.edu

Abstract

Edition of P.CtYBR 1430, a fragmentary letter from the Heroninos Archive.

Keywords

Heroninos Archive, Documentary Papyri, Roman Egypt

P.CtYBR inv. 1430 contains ten lines of a letter that is linked to the Heroninos Archive. In line 10, the letter mentions «Apianos», the dominant figure Aurelius Appianos who is attested from 231-259 A.D. to have owned multiple estates in the Arsinoite nome and elsewhere. The letter was purchased by Michael Ivanovich Rostovtzeff from Maurice Nahman in Paris on September 13, 1931, with funds donated by Edward Stephen Harkness and Horatio McLeod Reynolds. The vast majority of the papyri in this purchase are documents of various kinds: contracts, census records, reports, loans, debts, accounts. Some are Byzantine, most are Roman. Most have been dated to within the range of the 1st to 3rd c. A.D., with the majority in the 2nd century A.D. Almost all are written in Greek, with a few exceptions in Coptic and Latin. Most are of unknown origin. Some have been associated with Oxyrhynchus. A handful originate from the Arsinoite nome, as does most likely P.CtYBR 1430, although it is unclear where the sender was located.

P.CtYBR 1430 measures 108 x 92 mm. The recto has been dated by the Beinecke Library to roughly the 2nd-3rd c. A.D, and the verso to around the 3rd c. A.D. The mention of Appianos would date it to c. 231-259 A.D., the approximate time during which Appianos was owner of the Arsinoite properties that would be inherited by his daughter after his death. The extant fragment on the recto contains the middle section of a letter, ten lines in total, missing both the opening address and the closing greeting, as well as the right margin. The bottom of the delivery address on the verso runs parallel to the middle of the folded sheet, which, on the recto, is the visible crease that runs perpendicular to the text of the letter and appears after $\mu\alpha\tau$ - in line 2 (m. 1). This would indicate that, widthwise, the original papyrus would not have been much longer than the extant fragment. Reconstructing the text seems to confirm that the right margins of the recto were probably not far away from the ends of the extant lines of the papyrus. The reconstruction of the third line on the recto suggests at the very least fifteen letter-spaces total, with the upper bound

probably being in the mid-twenties.¹ The reconstruction of the longest line in the extant text, line 8, has eighteen visible letters and seems to confirm a total of around twenty-five letter-spaces per line. The extant text is fairly legible. There are a few holes in the middle and on the right side of the papyrus that obstruct reading but not, for the most part, meaning. The handwriting slants to the right and is simple, straight, and legible.² The letters are relatively uniform, although the letter *sigma* seems to vary in shape, having a long tail at the end of words, as seen most visibly in lines 4, 6, and 8. Due to the fragmentary nature of the text, it is difficult to convey the precise content of the letter, but the sense seems to concern the sending of men to the estate in lines 3-5, then perhaps the replacement of a not-so-successful employee in lines 6-9, following orders, perhaps coming directly, or indirectly, from Appianos himself in lines 10-11.

On the verso there is writing in different hands, none of which resembles in any way the single hand that writes the entirety of the letter on the recto. The contrast between that hand and the writing styles of the verso is a stark one. The writing along the length of the verso's right margin, perpendicular to the rest of the writing on the verso, is in a chancery style, clearly intended as the address of the person to whom the letter on the recto is to be delivered. It reads: φροντιστῆι Ἀρσινό(ε)ίτου, an address to the *phrontistes* of the Arsinoite (nome), with the spelling exhibiting itacism. No parallel to this address, however, has yet appeared in the published texts of the Heroninos Archive. All the *phrontistai* currently attested on the Appianos estate are relatively lowly managers of holdings clustered around one village. Heroninos and his fellow *phrontistai* of the estates belonging to Appianos in the Arsinoite nome were all under the direct supervision of Alypius from September 249 A.D. to the summer of 268 A.D. There is no other case of an address to the estate manager of the entire Arsinoite nome. Perhaps the address

¹ The extant line has thirteen visible letters, τὸν καὶ ἕτερον, and traces of two more letters, ἐρ. The following line, line 4, seems to complete the phrase εἰς κυριακὰς χρείας, which would add five more letter spaces to line 3 (εἰς κυ-), rendering a total of twenty letter spaces: τὸν καὶ ἕτερον ἐρ[? εἰς κυ-. A possible full reconstruction of line 3 in the context of the letter could be τὸν καὶ ἕτερον ἐρ[γάτας εἰς κυ-. See commentary for discussion.

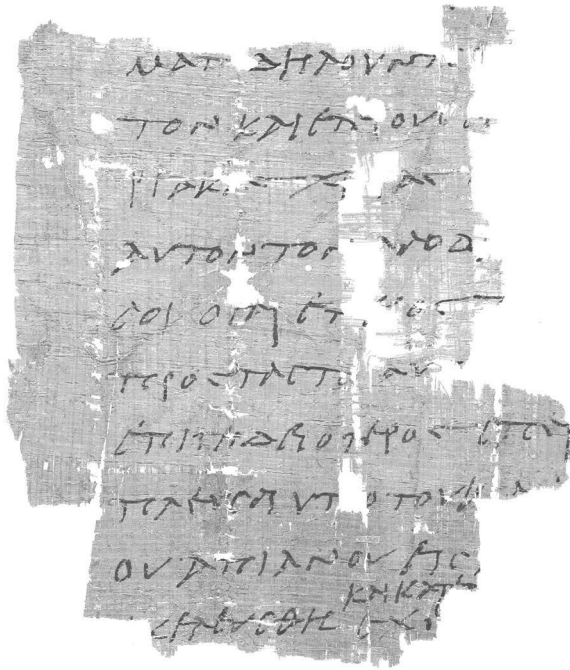
² A letter from Heroninos to Alypius is of some interest here, SB XXIV 16323 (= TM 41583), first published in ZPE 122, 1998, 131-134, with Tafel V and VI after p. 300. It too is a letter belonging to the Heroninos Archive and is drafted in a hand deliberately tailored to be simple and totally legible to its recipient. The editor surveyed twelve additional letters from the Archive written by Heroninos himself and argued in an Addendum, pp. 133-134, that the letter she was publishing (eventually SB XXIV 16323) had also been written by Heroninos. Five of the twelve letters were written to Alypius, in addition to SB XXIV 16323, and the other seven letters were each addressed to others. When describing these thirteen letters, the editor differentiates between those neatly written, including SB 16323, and those in very fast cursives, and yet suggests that both writing styles characterized what Heroninos kept in his files of sent letters. Be that as it may, the hands of both letter the Yale letter and SB 16323 share a number of paleographic characteristics in common, no doubt due, at least in part, to the efforts each writer was expending toward the courtesy of plainness and maximum legibility. The differences between the two hands are even more striking, and it is very unlikely that the Yale text could have been written by Heroninos himself: namely, the markedly rightward slant of the letters in the Yale text, together with the sharpness of angles in its *alpha*, and the relatively large form of the *omicron* stand in direct contrast with Heroninos' straight, vertical strokes in SB 16323 which recur in P.Bingen 111, originating in Theadelphia (Arsinoites) and dated to 250-252 A.D., as well as the softened, curved lines of the *alpha*, and the smallness of the *omicron*. The similarities between the two hands, then, promises little more than that the two writers were most likely contemporaries, that they probably traveled in the same or similar circles, and in the two letters had chosen to write their own most simple, cursive script, for they were writing for someone else to read, rather than for their own eyes alone. That both writers could produce initial *delta* in two strokes, a tall, thin initial *epsilon*, and an *upsilon* sometimes shaped like an English «v», with an impressively long tail, is hardly surprising for contemporaries. Thanks to Ann Hanson for this observation.

reflects an error made by a scribe writing from somewhere outside the Arsinoite nome.³ Another possibility is that the address is meant ironically or sarcastically or as an inside joke shared between the sender and the recipient. A letter seeming to express a somewhat similar irony that likewise underscores distance between employer and employee is to be found in P.Flor. 2. 259, originating from Theadelphia (Arsinoites) and dated to 249-268 A.D., in which Timaios appends to his letter to Heroninos the first two lines from *Iliad* Book II.⁴ Timaios uses these lines as a jibe to make an analogy out of the difference in behavior of Zeus as opposed to that of other gods and men; those in charge stay awake during the night while their lowly subordinates are able to sleep the night away. In P.CtYBR 1430, there might be a similar irony – the joke might be that by addressing the recipient as the manager of the Arsinoite nome, for that one moment when the letter arrived, the recipient was being asked to play the role of someone responsible for the entire nome.

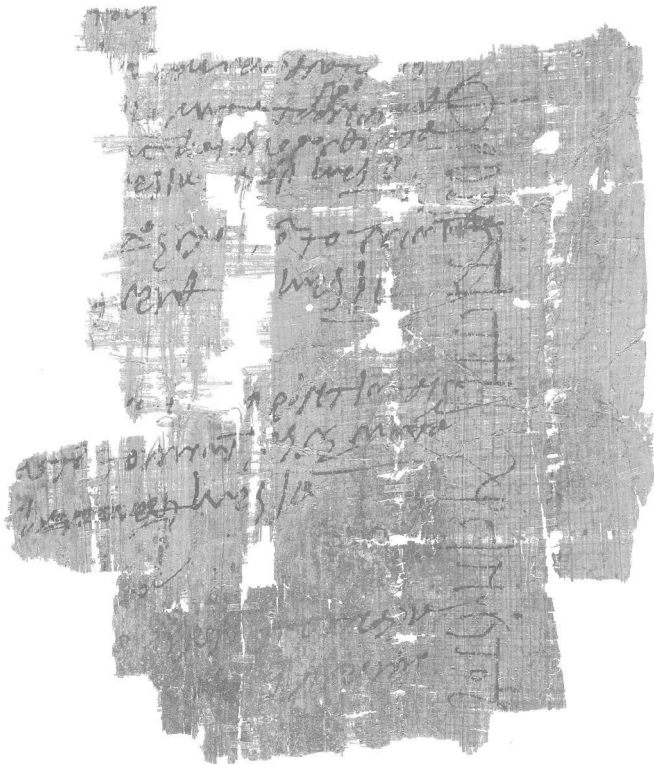
Other than the address, the verso has another unrelated text along with the letter's address but placed after the address on the verso at a ninety-degree angle in order to separate these later additions from the address for the letter that appears on the recto. This writing on the verso is mostly likely an account written subsequently to the writing of the letter on the front, using this letter as scrap paper. The Beinecke has dated the verso to the 3rd c. A.D., a later range of time than the recto, dated to the 2nd-3rd c. A.D. The account on the verso appears to be tripartite, with three separate sections: lines 1-4, ending in κυρι(ακ() θ plus overstroke, followed by a space of one line; lines 5-6, ending in κυρι(ακ() ιβ; and lines 7-9, ending in κυρι(ακ() ιβ plus overstroke. This text appears to be an account or accounts that seem to clarify some financial dealing involving the master's goods, the κυρι(ακ), on the twelfth of an unnamed month. This tripartite account is written in a hand different both from the chancery address perpendicular to it and from the writing on the recto. The handwriting in this tripartite account even appears to vary slightly between each of the three sections, so it is possible that this account – or accounts – has been written by one to three different hands. Unfortunately, the tripartite account on the verso is extremely fragmentary. In addition, the letter on the recto does not provide any hints that might aid the interpretation of the verso's unusual address. Moreover, not knowing the name of the sender of the letter on the recto impedes our ability to elucidate the intentions of the letter's writer. Overall, the letter itself seems to discuss nothing more than routine matters that appear and reappear in the Heroninos Archive.

³ Suggestion by Dominic Rathbone.

⁴ In P.Flor. II 259 (TM11146 and LDAB 602030), Timaios begs Heroninos to send «some grain (τὰ σιτάρια) or the cost of some and see that Kiot figures out that unless he gives another sack-full or comes up here and deposits his amount, the soldier is coming down against him» and Timaios repeats his plea for grain before he closes his letter with a farewell greeting. In the blank space still left on the papyrus and at ninety-degree angle from his letter, however, Timaios appended the first two lines of *Iliad* II (MP³ 623; TM 60203): Ἄλλοι μὲν ῥα θεοὶ τε καὶ ἄνδρες ἵπποκορυσταὶ | εὐδὸν παννύχι, Δία δ' οὐκ ἔχε νήδυμος ὕπνος («Other gods and men with their charioteers were sleeping all the night through, but sweetest sleep did not overtake Zeus») Timaios repeats «εὐδὸν παννύχι», «they were sleeping the whole night through.» There are two possibilities in interpretation: 1 a) rebuking Heroninos [saying that while he sleeps others, i.e. Alypius-Zeus, are keeping watch through the night], 1 b) [saying that he should stay awake because he is in charge]; 2) not rebuking Heroninos but mocking Alypius, i.e. «we lowlies can sleep».



Pl. 1. Recto of Inv. P.CtYBR 1430. Photographed by David Driscoll. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University (Right for publication granted by the Beinecke Library).



Pl. 2. Verso of Inv. P.CtYBR 1430. Photographed by David Driscoll. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University (Right for publication granted by the Beinecke Library).

Transcript

Recto:

1 [τὰ γράμ-]
(m. 1) ματα δηλοῦντο.[
τον καὶ ἑτέρους ἐρ[εἰς κυ-
ριακὰς χρ[ε]ίας .[
5 αὐτὸν τὸν Λαοδι[
σοί. ὁ γὰρ ἕτερος τ[.
προστὰς το[.]αυτ[
ἐπιτηδειότερος σπέρ[χει κατα-
πλεῦσαι ὑπὸ τοῦ κ[.]λ[.]
10 ου Ἄπιανοῦ εἰς .[
ἐκελεύσθη \καὶ κατερ[?/ εχε[

Verso:

φροντιστῆι Ἄρσινο(ε)ίτου

Translation

Recto:

«[the letter]

(someone or something) indicating that NN 1 [the man in charge?
and the others [are coming? for
the estate's need, [and ...
the Laodicean one [
to you. For the other fellow [NN 2
having taken his position in the front [with such great effort and?
being a more suitable person hastens [now
to sail by the [
Appianos toward ? [
he has been ordered to come down ... to have ...».

Address on the verso:

«To the Overseer of the Arsinoite (nome)».

Commentary

Recto:

2 ματα: It seems most likely that the first letters of the fragment, ματα, complete the word γράμματα, which often appears with or near forms of the verb δηλώω and means «letter».⁵

– δηλοῦντο[: The construction may be a genitive absolute if the form is δηλοῦντος. The letter after the *tau* is too curved to be an *alpha* at the end of δηλοῦντ-. If δηλοῦν is in the infinitive form here, the construction may be an indirect statement or impersonal construction, or else an articular infinitive along the lines of τὸ τὰ γράμματα δηλοῦν ... followed by a masculine name.

3 ἑτέρους: A hole in the papyrus obstructs the middle of the word, ἑτέρους, but the strokes below the hole give the appearance of an *epsilon* followed by the long stem of a *rho*. There are a couple of traces after the word ἑτέρους. The first is likely an *epsilon* or a *sigma*, and the second looks like it could be *rho*, *tau*, or *iota*. A possible reading in the context of the letter could be ἐργάτας, «workers».

4 ριακάς: -ριακάς should be completed as the word κυριακάς, an adjective that appears in other papyri modifying the noun χρείας in the phrase εἰς κυριακάς χρείας, which appears in P.Bingen 110. 8, originating in Philoteris (Arsinoites) and dated to 246-247 A.D.; P.Lond. II 328. 10, originating in Soknopaiu Nesos (Arsinoites) and dated to 163 A.D.; and P.Stras. IX 872. 14, originating in Arsinoites and dated to the period between 201-225 A.D. In the Heroninos archive the adjective κυριακός means «of the master» in the sense of «belonging to the estate».

– χρ[ε]ίας: A hole obstructs the middle of this word, but the long stem right before the hole suggests a *rho*, leaving room for one or two more letters before the *alpha*, thereby making it very likely that the word is χρείας, which appears commonly in similar communications.

5 Λαοδι[: The hole in the papyrus makes it difficult to see this last word, but if λαοδι- is the correct reading, it could only start some form of Laodikeia, a place named for a woman named Laodikê. The name Laodice was one borne by a number of Seleucid princesses. There are five so-named towns in modern Syria, Turkey, and Iran. The word could be a man's name, ὁ Λαοδικηνός, although there is no prominent figure by that name in the Heroninos Archive.⁶ The word seems most likely to be a form of the adjective Λαοδικηνός, meaning «from the town of Laodicea».⁷ In the context

⁵ Τὰ γράμματα can also refer specifically to a «bank draft» (cf. Rathbone 1991, 325: P.Flor. II 176. 2-5 (TM 11033, originating in Theadelphia – Arsinoites – and dated to 256 A.D.) but usually in the context of a package whose contents are being detailed). For instances where τὰ γράμματα appears in a similar context to that in which it appears in P.CtYBR 1430 and means «letter», cf. P.Flor. II 154 verso = TM 11012 (originating in Theadelphia – Arsinoites – and dated to before 267 A.D.), P. Flor. II 171 verso = TM 11026 (originating in Theadelphia – Arsinoites – and dated to 255 A.D.).

⁶ For Λαοδικηνός as a man's name, see P.Oxy. LX 4058. 6-7 (originating in Oxyrhynchos and dated to 158-159 A.D.): Θεαγένης ὁ καὶ Λα(ο?)δικηνός («Theagenes alias Laodikenos»).

⁷ Following Hélène Cuvigny's interpretation in her editions of O.Did. (= Didymoi). Angelos Chaniotis may have been the first to suggest the correction in *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* 62. 1761 (81), but Cuvigny seems to have been the one to introduce the corrections into papyrology. Corrections are not made in O.Berenike I, published in 2000, but are known in P.Bingen, also published in 2000.

of line 5, the adjective seems to be in the masculine accusative singular, following the masculine accusative singular article τόν and meaning «a man from Laodikeia» or some masculine object from Laodikeia. The adjective Λαοδικηνός appears most often in *ostraka*, particularly from Berenike. However, the forms that appear in the *ostraka* from the port of Berenike all appear with the spelling *lambda, alpha, delta* – with the *omicron* missing. The *lambda* is not capitalized in O.Berenike volumes 1-2 but is corrected in P.Berenike 1, in which there are about 25 examples referring to «Laodikean wine». There is nothing in P.CtYBR 1430 that particularly points to wine, but wine played a major role on the Appianus estate as one of the most important cash crops, so a reference to wine would not be out of place here. Another possibility is that the adjective describes clothing, as seen in P.Sijp. 55 (TM 110220), of unknown origin but dated to 276-325 A.D.⁸

6 ἔτερρος: The hole in the middle of the word obscures the middle part of the word, but the strokes to the top and bottom of the letter look closest to an *epsilon* followed by a *rho*, rather like what we see in line 8 in ἐπιτηδειότερος, where *epsilon* and *rho* are ligatured.

7 προστάς: The word in line 7 is most likely προστάς, the aorist participle of προϊσθημι, which could be related to the position of the *prostatai* who maintained the vineyards on the estate. The *sigma* ending προς looks like it has a bit of a tail, which appears elsewhere on the papyrus when the *sigma* is at the word end. However, the tail of this *sigma* in προς is very short compared to the other *sigma*'s that end words elsewhere on the papyrus.

– το[.]αυτ[]: Either ταιαυτ- «such» or τοςαυτ- «so many» looks like it could fit here. The form could be the feminine accusative plural, ταιαύτας or τοςαύτας, which could refer to χρείας in line 4. Otherwise, the correct form of this last extant word of line 7 may be ταιαῦτα or τοςαῦτα, unrelated to χρείας in line 4.

8 σπέρ[χει: The long stroke at the very right end of the papyrus looks too long for any letter other than rho. If this is true, it looks like we need a verb on which the infinitive πλεῦσαι in the next line can depend. This would leave us with a form of σπέρχω. The word might also be a form of σπείρω or σπέρμα, but it is less clear how sowing and seed might relate to the next line. The verb πλεῦσαι is often preceded by a prepositional prefix, which seems to be the case here if there are around twenty-odd letters in each line.

10 Ἄπιανου: Appianos with two *pi*'s is the correct spelling, but «Arianos» with a single *pi* occurs regularly in letters in the Heroninos Archive.

11 ἐκελεύσθη \καὶ κατερ[?]/ εχε[[: The phrase καὶ κατ- occurs in between lines 10 and 11, closer to the right side of the papyrus. It does not seem to be a full line but an interlinear addition by the

⁸ Cf. P.Sijp. 55, frag. b7, in which the «white undershirts from La(o)dikeia» seem to be neuter: κολόβια λευκὰ Λα(ο)δικ(ηνά). Note the same misspelling: no *omicron* after *alpha* and prior to *delta*.

same hand that is writing the letter, perhaps as a correction or addition to the text, although the fragmentary state of the rest of the papyrus makes it impossible to tell for certain.

Verso:

1 Φροντιστῆ Ἀρσινοείτου: The otiose *epsilon* here is the only itacistic mistake in the preserved portions of this letter, and although spelling the name of the Arsinoite nome as Ἀρσινοείτου instead of Ἀρσινότου is a trivial and very common mistake, it may suggest that the writer of the address on the back was not penned by the writer of the letter, whoever he was, but by someone whose tasks included adding a proper address on letters before they were dispatched. Furthermore, we would usually expect the name of a town rather than the name of the entire nome. The address to the estate manager of the Arsinoite nome is unparalleled in the extant texts in the Heroninos Archive.

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