

# Variation in Private Letters: The Papyri of the Apollonios *Strategos* Archive

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## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

VARIATIONIST SOCIOLINGUISTICS has emphasized that variation is inherent to natural everyday (synchronic) language: language users constantly make choices between various so-called linguistic variables and they alternate among these possible choices according to the context of the utterance.<sup>2</sup> On a linguistic level, the choice between linguistic variables is insignificant, as they are synonymous; on a social level, however, it is meaningful. By using one form or another, one links oneself to a certain group of speakers. Whereas the sociolinguistic approach with its focus on variation in language is widespread in the study of modern languages, its application in papyrology is a recent development.<sup>3</sup> Since the main studies of the private papyrus letters are much older than that,<sup>4</sup> they were

<sup>1</sup> This paper is part of a larger study of papyrus letters, which was funded by the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO). For this study, I have assembled all private letters on papyrus, a corpus of over 4000 documents on which I rely in this paper.

<sup>2</sup> W. Labov, “Contraction, Deletion, and Inherent Variability of the English Copula,” *Language* 45 (1969) 715–762, at 728; S. Tagliamonte, *Variationist Sociolinguistics. Change, Observation, Interpretation* (Malden 2012) 2.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. T. V. Evans and D. Obbink (eds.), *The Language of the Papyri* (Oxford 2010); A. Papaconstantinou (ed.), *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt, from the Ptolemies to the Abbāsids* (Burlington 2010); M. Leiwo et al. (eds.), *Variation and Change in Greek and Latin* (Helsinki 2012).

<sup>4</sup> F. Ziemann, *De epistularum graecarum formulis sollemnibus quaestiones selectae* (Halle 1910); F. X. J. Exler, *The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter: A Study in Greek Epistolography* (Washington 1923); H. Koskenniemi, *Studien zur Idee und Phra-*

not intended to describe all linguistic variation: their goal was to deduce the standard epistolary framework of the private letter.<sup>5</sup> Yet scholars also noticed the variety in the epistolary phrases:<sup>6</sup>

Si in formulae ipsius speciem et faciem inquiremus, videbimus apud Graecos non ita rem se habere, ut una tantummodo valedudinis formula exstiterit, sed eius varia inveniri genera, ita ut vix altera alteri sit omnino similis. Nam Graeci nunquam eam adeo formulam iudicaverunt inertem, ut eam per compendia scribere conarentur ut Romani (SVBEEV). Immo has quoque formulas, quae prorsus obduruisse videntur, quodammodo se evolvere et cum saeculis commutari videre licet, ita ut tandem formula admodum nova oriatur.

But variation was often disregarded and considered uninteresting; some scholars even made value judgments on deviations from the standard phrases:<sup>7</sup>

plerumque tantummodo propter negligentiam vel ignorantiam scribentium differunt a communi consuetudine.

Moreover, the authors of past studies did not have a corpus which was large enough to describe this variation.<sup>8</sup>

In the last decades, the field of papyrology has changed under the influence of two main factors. First, the easy digital

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*seologie des griechischen Briefes* (Helsinki 1956); R. Buzón, *Die Briefe der Ptolemäerzeit. Ihre Struktur und ihre Formeln* (Buenos Aires 1984).

<sup>5</sup> Also more recent studies, such as Kortus' edition of the Apollonios archive letters in the Giessen collection, applied the same approach of focusing on uniformity and neglecting variation: M. Kortus, *Briefe des Apollonios-Archives aus der Sammlung Papyri Giessenses* (Giessen 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Ziemann, *De epistularum* 305.

<sup>7</sup> Ziemann, *De epistularum* 298.

<sup>8</sup> Ziemann investigated 368 private letters (*De epistularum* 277); Ghedini did slightly better with "circa 600 lettere" (G. Ghedini, "Di alcuni elementi religiosi pagani nelle epistole private greche papiri," *Studi della Scuola Papirologica* 2 [1917] 51–76, at 52). J. L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (Philadelphia 1986) 3, for example, investigated only 117 documents. Others, e.g. Exler, *The Form*, did not provide information on the corpus they were working on.

access to the texts has made possible quantitative analyses of the material, and has stimulated linguistic research. Second, papyrology has turned its methodological focus to more modern approaches, and recognition of the (socio-)linguistic value of the papyrus letters has also affected the field of Greek (documentary) epistolography. Different case studies on the variation of individuals' language are a fine example of this new approach.<sup>9</sup>

This paper is also part of the new interest in the (socio-)linguistic study of the papyri. Its goal is to show that epistolary formulas are not as fixed as one would perhaps expect; by means of the case study of the archive of Apollonios *strategos*, I will illustrate that epistolary phrases are flexible and can be adapted to circumstances or to a person's taste. It is exactly the focus on variation that will enable us to make interesting observations about the language use of ancient letter writers.

## 2. *The archive of Apollonios strategos*

A collection of scores of private letters centered around Apollonios *strategos* was found in Hermopolis,<sup>10</sup> the home of

<sup>9</sup> M. Leiwo, "Both and All Together? The Meaning of ἀμφότεροι," *Arctos* 37 (2003) 81–99; H. Halla-aho, "Scribes and the Letters of Claudius Terentianus," in H. Solin et al. (eds.), *Latin vulgaire, latin tardif VI. Actes du VI<sup>e</sup> colloque international sur le latin vulgaire et tardif* (Hildesheim 2003) 244–252; T. V. Evans, "Valedictory ἔρωσο in Zenon Archive Letters from Hierokles," *ZPE* 153 (2005) 155–158; M. Leiwo, "Substandard Greek. Remarks from Mons Claudianus," in N. M. Kennell and J. E. Tomlinson (eds.), *Ancient Greece at the Turn of the Millennium* (Athens 2005) 237–261; T. V. Evans, "Greetings from Alexandria," *Pap. Congr.* XXIV.1 (Helsinki 2007) 299–308, and "Identifying the Language of the Individual in the Zenon Archive," in *The Language of the Papyri* 51–71; W. Clarysse, "Linguistic Diversity in the Archive of the Engineers Kleon and Theodoros," in *The Language of the Papyri* 35–50.

<sup>10</sup> For information on this archive, a list of the papyri, and a link to the digital texts see [www.trismegistos.org/archive/19](http://www.trismegistos.org/archive/19) (accessed January 20, 2015). When a document is cited for the first time in this article, it is accompanied by its Trismegistos number (TM; cf. [www.trismegistos.org](http://www.trismegistos.org)), which enables the reader to easily access the text on [www.papyri.info](http://www.papyri.info).

Apollonios and his family.<sup>11</sup> In the early second century A.D. Apollonios was appointed *strategos* of Apollonopolites Heptakomias, and moved to Heptakomia (some 100 km. south). The letters reflect the situation of the split family, with Apollonios and his wife Aline living in Heptakomia and other members of the family, including Apollonios' mother Eudaimonis and his daughter Heraïdous, remaining in Hermopolis.<sup>12</sup> The content of the letters is varied, but in those from A.D. 115 to 117, the threat and danger of the Jewish revolt dominates the correspondence, especially since Apollonios took part in the war.<sup>13</sup> These intimate letters sent during the Jewish revolt have engaged scholarly attention:<sup>14</sup> whereas most papyrus letters are businesslike, many in this archive give insight into the thoughts and emotions of the senders. Furthermore, several letters were sent by women. Consequently, the collection was studied intensively in recent work on women in Greco-Roman Egypt.<sup>15</sup> Cribiore had a particular interest in the palaeographical character of the letters: she concluded that a remarkably high number of scribes were used.<sup>16</sup> Further, peculiarities with regard to lay-out have been discussed: many of the letters in the archive are written in several columns.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>11</sup> After Apollonios laid down his office in Heptakomia, he brought home his collection of letters (J. Whitehorne, "Religious Expression in the Correspondence of the Strategus Apollonios," *APapyrol* 6 [1994] 21–36, at 21). This explains why letters sent from Hermopolis to Heptakomia were dug up in Hermopolis.

<sup>12</sup> Aline travelled back and forth between the two cities: see R. Cribiore, "The Women in the Apollonios Archive and their Use of Literacy," in H. Melaerts and L. Mooren (eds.), *Le rôle et le statut de la femme en Égypte hellénistique, romaine et byzantine* (Leuven 2002) 149–166 at 152.

<sup>13</sup> Whitehorne, *APapyrol* 6 (1994) 21–36; R. S. Bagnall and R. Cribiore, *Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt* (Ann Arbor 2006) 139–140.

<sup>14</sup> Whitehorne, *APapyrol* 6 (1994) 22.

<sup>15</sup> Cribiore, in *Le rôle* 149–166.

<sup>16</sup> Cribiore, in *Le rôle* 151–152.

<sup>17</sup> N. Litinas, "A Letter from the Strategos Apollonios' Archive? P.Lond. inv. 1228," *Pap. Congr. XXII* (Florence 2001) 805–812, at 805–806.

But the language of the letters has not yet been fully exploited. Kortus, in his edition of the letters in the Giessen collection, discussed the epistolary formulas, but did not elaborate on the peculiarities of the phraseology of the individual letters.<sup>18</sup> Cribiore gave attention to variation in the lexicon in the body of the letters and found elements that reveal the process of letter writing: repetitions of words indicates that a letter was penned from dictation. Further, the use of words with a literary flavor is telling for the education of these upper-class women.<sup>19</sup> But Cribiore focused only on the letters of women, and her discussion of language was confined to the lexicon of the body of the letters. This paper is therefore intended as a complement to Cribiore's interesting observations; it will deal not with the body of the letters but with their epistolary framework. I will compare the formulas in the archive to my corpus of over 4000 private papyrus letters to evaluate the language of this archive.

### 3. *Uniformity and variation in the epistolary language of the archive*

For the body of the letters, Cribiore has already touched on elements of uniformity, such as repetitions of a word within one letter, and variation, such as the observation that Eudaimonis' letters are "never conventional and commonplace."<sup>20</sup> In the epistolary language of this archive we can see these two distinct phenomena even more clearly.

#### 3.1 Variation in the initial health wish

The most common initial health wish in papyri of this period

<sup>18</sup> Kortus, *Briefe* 22–50. Other studies on the archive only touched upon linguistic topics, but had different perspectives. Whitehorne mainly studied the religious expressions, although he investigated a few isolated words (*APapyrol* 6 [1994] 21–36). Litinas, by contrast, made excellent use of the uncommon language in the archive to link a new letter to the collection: one of his arguments to add *SB XXVI 16536* (TM 29260) was the presence of the uncommon verb *προκόπτω* in line 7: its cognate *προκοπή* occurs thrice in the archive but is rare in other papyri (*Pap. Congr.* XXII 805–813).

<sup>19</sup> Cribiore, in *Le rôle* 154–156.

<sup>20</sup> Cribiore, in *Le rôle* 151.

is *πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομαί σε ὑγιαίνειν*.<sup>21</sup> Variation of this phrase can be found: the intensifier *πρὸ μὲν πάντων* can be left out or replaced by another similar word group; there are some alternatives for *ὑγιαίνειν* including, e.g. *ἐρρῶσθαι* and *ὀλοκληρεῖν*. Still, the overall variation is rather limited. In this archive, by contrast, letter writers often deviate from the standard: of the twenty private letters preserving an initial health wish, only seven stick to standard phraseology. In others, the writer varies the wording.<sup>22</sup> For instance, in a letter from Eudaimonis<sup>23</sup> the first part of the initial health wish, *πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομαί σε ὑγιαίνειν*, is standard, but the addition of *ἀπρόσκοπον εἶναι πάντοτε* is uncommon:

*πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομαί σε ὑγιαίνειν καὶ [. ] [ . . . . . ] καὶ ἀπρόσκοπον εἶναι πάντοτε.*

Before everything I pray that you are well and ... and that you are always free from harm (*P.Alex.Giss.* 60.3–4; TM 27582).<sup>24</sup>

*ἀπρόσκοπος* and its derivatives such as *ἀπροσκοπία* occur only 11 times in all papyri,<sup>25</sup> of which 4 are in the Apollonios archive. The other 7 range from the first to the fifth century and cannot be linked to a particular part of Egypt. The use of *ἀπρόσκοπος* etc. is thus not a regiolectic feature. However, 2 of the occurrences belong to the archive of Eutychides,<sup>26</sup> *P.Sarap.*

<sup>21</sup> Besides the infinitive construction, also phrases like *εὐχο[μαι παρὰ τοῖς] θεοῖς περὶ τῆς σῆς σω[τηρίας]* (*P.Alex.Giss.* 50.3–5; TM 27572) are common in the health wishes and are regarded as standard.

<sup>22</sup> I discuss the most telling variants, but it is not my intention to describe all uncommon features in the health wishes of the archive.

<sup>23</sup> Probably written during the Jewish revolt, in 116 or 117: M. P. B. Zeev, *Diaspora Judaism in Turmoil, 116/117 CE* (Leuven 2005) 23.

<sup>24</sup> I discuss below the intensifier *πάντοτε* in the initial health wish.

<sup>25</sup> See <http://papyri.info/search> (accessed January 20, 2015): the search *απροσκοπ* yields 12 results, but one (*P.Strasb.* VIII 732; TM 16464) is for the most part restored and this instance is therefore omitted. The word is thus not as “conventional” as Whitehorne thought, *APapyrol* 6 (1994) 26.

<sup>26</sup> For this archive see [www.trismegistos.org/archive/87](http://www.trismegistos.org/archive/87) (accessed January 20, 2015).

89 and 95 (TM 17111, 17120).<sup>27</sup> This archive is similar to that of Apollonios in its socio-economic, chronological, and geographical aspects. First, the two archives come from the same region. Sarapion, the ‘founding father’ of the Eutychedes archive, lived with his wife and family in Hermopolis; this wealthy family owned several hundred *arourai* of land around Hermopolis and in the north of the Hermopolite nome.<sup>28</sup> Like the family of Apollonios, they belonged to the upper class. Further, the archives are also close in time: the four attestations of ἀπρόσκοπος in the Apollonios archive and the two in that of Eutychedes were written at the end of the first and beginning of the second century. Hence, the fact that six of the eleven occurrences of ἀπρόσκοπος come from the two archives in the Hermopolite nome may be a shared linguistic feature between those two collections due to their similar social variables.<sup>29</sup>

Apart from *P.Alex.Giss.* 60, the other attestations of ἀπρόσκοπος in the Apollonios archive include *P.Giss.* I 17 (TM 19419),<sup>30</sup> a letter from a woman named Taus, and *P.Giss.* I 79

<sup>27</sup> *P.Sarap.* 95 is a letter from Eutychedes, one of Sarapion’s sons, to his brother Heliodoros. Eutychedes lived in Magdola Mire, not far from Hermopolis and probably the place from which he sent this letter. The letter deals with issues related to the recovery and the health of Heliodoros, which implies that the addressee had been ill. It cannot be dated precisely within the time span of the archive (90–133). *P.Sarap.* 89 was sent to Phibion by Heliodoros, who presumably was living in Memphis at the time (J. Schwartz, *Les archives de Sarapion et de ses fils* [Cairo 1961] 210); from 108 on, Heliodoros left Hermopolis and stayed in Memphis (Schwartz 340). It probably was written during the Jewish revolt, perhaps in 117 (Zeev, *Diaspora* 73).

<sup>28</sup> Schwartz, *Les archives de Sarapion* 339.

<sup>29</sup> Admittedly, there is the possibility that our data are influenced by factors of preservation, and the fact that many of the attestations come from the two archives is due to coincidence. Nevertheless, as ἀπρόσκοπος will not be the only shared linguistic element between the two archives, coincidence is not a likely explanation.

<sup>30</sup> Kortus (*Briefe* 150) excludes that this letter was written in the period that Apollonios actively took part in the Jewish war, since it refers only to the threat of illness, not to that of the revolt; in his opinion, the letter thus

(TM 19468),<sup>31</sup> a letter from a woman whose name is lost. Its last occurrence is in another letter from Eudaimonis:<sup>32</sup>

[πρὸ π]άν[τ]ων εὐχομ[α]ί σε [τὸν ἀγ]αθ[ὸν] ἀσπ[ά]σθαι [καὶ] τὴν [γλυκυ]τάτην σου ὄψιν προσκυ[νῆσαι] νῦν ὄντως ἀμοιβ[ή]ν [ἤδη] τῆς εὐσεβείας μου ἀ[πολ]αμβανούσης/ σε ἀπρόσ[κοπ]ὸν καὶ ἰλαρώτατον. ταῦ[τά μ]οι ἡ πᾶσα εὐχή ἐστι [καὶ μ]έριμνα.

Before everything, I pray to greet you with good fortune, and to greet your sweetest person, since it is my piety which has got you back again unharmed and most blessed. This is all my prayer and concern (*P.Giss.* I 22.3–11; TM 19424).<sup>33</sup>

In this formula, ἀπρόσκοπος is not the only remarkable feature; the formula differs from standard phraseology in length (9 lines in a total of 14, 33 words in a total of 52), and in other respects. That greetings are sent to the addressee at the beginning of the letter is not uncommon in this archive (cf. 158 below); but no other papyrus letter includes the greetings in the initial health wish. Only here is the verb ἀσπάζομαι subordinate to the main clause with εὐχομαι. Also the verb προσκυνέω is rare in the infinitive clause after εὐχομαι.<sup>34</sup> ἀπολαμβάνω, by contrast, is

dates to either 113–114 or 117–120.

<sup>31</sup> Written at the end of the Jewish revolt (117, cf. <http://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.giss.apoll;24>) or just after (Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters* 163).

<sup>32</sup> Probably an autograph by Eudaimonis (Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters* 155), whereas *P.Alex.Giss.* 60 is in a very capable hand showing traits typical of literary hands (Cribiore, in *Le rôle* 151). Given the different palaeography, the verbal uniformity cannot be ascribed to scribal influence. Similarly *P.Giss.* I 79 is written in an excellent hand, whereas *P.Giss.* I 17 is in a poor one (Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters* 162, 149).

<sup>33</sup> Probably written towards the end of the Jewish revolt, perhaps in 117 (Zeev, *Diaspora* 37).

<sup>34</sup> It appears only in *P.Kell.* I 75.5–11 (TM 33329): προηγουμένως πολλά σου τὴν φιλαδελφίαν προσαγορεύω εὐχόμενός σε προσκυνεῖν ἐν τάχει. Further, the verb appears in the relative subclause attached to the initial health wish of *P.Mich.* VIII 465.3–5 (TM 17239): [πρὸ μὲν πᾶ]ντων εὐχομαί σε ἐρρωσθαι, ὅ μοι [εὐκταῖόν ἐ]στιν [προ]σκυνησαί σε ἐρρωμένην [ – – ]μοι π[ . . . ] . π . . . καὶ βίος.

regularly found in the initial health wishes. It appears in different constructions, viz. as an infinitive clause or as a purpose clause after εὐχομαι. I quote two examples from outside of the archive:

πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομαι τῷ θεῷ ὀλοκλήρους ὑμᾶς ἀπολαβεῖν.  
Before everything I pray to the god to find you well (*P.Oxy.* XIV 1773.3–5; TM 31815).

πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομαι θεοῖς πᾶσιν [ὅ]πως ὑγιαίνοντας ὑμᾶς ἀπο[λ]άβω.  
Before everything I pray to all the gods that I may find you well (*P.Ryl.* II 244.3–5; TM 31173).

Eudaimonis' idiosyncratic expression in *P.Giss.* I 22 is clearly an idiolectic variant of the ἀπολαμβάνω phrase: in most examples of this phrase a predicative adjunct (ὀλοκλήρους in *P.Oxy.* XIV 1773) or a participle (ὑγιαίνοντας in *P.Ryl.* II 244) expresses the hope that the addressee will be fine when the sender sees him again. In *P.Giss.* I 22 Eudaimonis uses ἀπρόσκοπος καὶ ἰλαρώτατος as predicative adjuncts: not only ἀπρόσκοπος is rare, but also ἰλαρώτατος is attested only here in the ἀπολαμβάνω phrase and even in the initial health wish in general.

At the end of the health wish of *P.Giss.* I 22, Eudaimonis adds that the addressee's health is important with the phrase ταῦτά μοι ἢ πᾶσα εὐχή ἐστι [καὶ μ]έριμνα. A similar idea is found in another of her letters:<sup>35</sup>

[πρὸ] πάντων τῶν εὐχῶν μου ἀναγκαιοτάτην ἔχω τὴν τῆς ὑγείας σου καὶ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου Ἀπολλωνίου καὶ τῶν ἀβασκάντων ὑμῶν.

I consider the prayer for your well-being and that of your brother Apollonios and your children free from harm as the most necessary of all my prayers (*P.Giss.* I 23.4–10; TM 19425).

The usual contents of the health wish, viz. praying (εὐχομαι and variants) that the sender is well (ὑγιαίνω and variants), can

<sup>35</sup> This is an autograph by Eudaimonis (Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters* 156). The specific epistolary style in the letter thus reflects the choices of Eudaimonis.

indeed be found here, but the standard health wish has been loosely interpreted: instead of the main verb εὐχομαι, the main clause is [[πρὸ] πάντων τῶν εὐχῶν μου ἀναγκαιοτάτην ἔχω.

In a letter from Sarapas to Eudaimonis,<sup>36</sup> the basic formula is extended with a second infinitive εὐτυχεῖν:

πρ[ὸ] μὲν π[άντων ε]ὔχομαί σε ὑγια[ίνειν καὶ διὰ π]αντὸς [εὐτυ]χεῖν.

Before everything I pray that you are well and always prosperous (*PSI IV* 308.3–5 (TM 31135)).

This verb is often found in the imperative form εὐτύχει as a closing formula at the end of letters and especially petitions, but it is far less common in the initial health wish. In total, εὐτυχέω occurs only about a dozen times in initial health wishes of private letters. It recurs as a participle in another initial health wish of the archive, which is again severely damaged:<sup>37</sup>

[ – – θ]έλω εὐρρωστεῖν (= εὐρωστεῖν) εὐτυχοῦντα [ – – ]ν σου πάντων.

I want [you] to be strong and prosperous [together with?] all yours (*P.Alex.Giss.* 61.3–4; TM 27583).

Another idiosyncratic word here is εὐρωστέω. This verb is not preserved in any other initial health wish in the private papyrus letters.

In another letter Eudaimonis chooses the standard construction εὐχομαι with infinitive clause, but deviates from the common phraseology by using the verb διασφάζω:

πρὸ τῶν [ὄλ]ων εὐχομαί σε διασφάζεσθαι ἅμα τῆι συμβίωι σου Ἀλίνῃ καὶ ἀβασκάντοις \σ/ου παιδίοις.

Before everything I pray that you may be saved together with your wife Aline and your children free from harm (*P.Alex.Giss.* 59.3–6; TM 27581).

Like εὐρωστέω, this verb does not appear elsewhere in the

<sup>36</sup> I follow Messeri's reading of Sarapas instead of Sarapias and her suggestion that this letter belongs to the Apollonios archive: G. Messeri, "Suggerzioni da PSI IV 308," *ZPE* 135 (2001) 165–168.

<sup>37</sup> The names of the letter's correspondents are also lost.

*formula valetudinis initialis*. The choice for διασφύζεσθαι was perhaps inspired by the threat of the Jewish revolt: Eudaimonis does not simply pray for Apollonios' health, but hopes he comes safe through the perilous situation. Unfortunately, the letter cannot be dated precisely: Zeev places it either in 116 before the end of August or in 117 after the end of June.<sup>38</sup>

Elsewhere Eudaimonis adjusted the initial health wish to the circumstances, namely that Aline is expecting her baby soon:<sup>39</sup>

εὔχομαί σε πρὸ πάντων εὐκαίρως ἀποθέσθαι τὸ βάρος καὶ λαβεῖν φάσιν ἐπὶ ἄρρεν[ο]ς.

Before everything I pray that you may give birth in good time, and that I shall receive news of a baby boy (*P.Brem.* 63.3–6).

This wish is not “the run-of-the-mill” formula Whitehorne calls it.<sup>40</sup> Not only the infinitive clause is idiosyncratic, but also the main clause has a remarkable feature: the intensifier πρὸ πάντων is in a strange place, since we usually find it at the beginning of the sentence. Elsewhere πρὸ πάντων is not found in another position, except perhaps in *P.Brem.* 66.2 (TM 19651), another letter from this archive:<sup>41</sup> [εὔχομαί σε πρὸ π]άντων ὑγιαίνειν, “I pray above all that you are well.”

Also other intensifiers in the health wishes of this archive differ from the standard phraseology. *P.Alex.Giss.* 60, quoted above, preserves the intensifier πάντοτε, which is also found in the initial health wish in *P.Giss.* I 17.4, a letter from Taus to

<sup>38</sup> Zeev, *Diaspora* 20.

<sup>39</sup> *P.Alex.Giss.* 59 and *P.Brem.* 63 were written by different scribes: the former is in a very capable hand, while the latter is less smooth (Cribiore, in *Le rôle* 151). I therefore link the language of both letters and the choice to adapt the initial health wish to the circumstances to Eudaimonis' own choice.

<sup>40</sup> Whitehorne, *APapyrol* 6 (1994) 27: “although Aline was the addressee of this letter, and although she was pregnant at the time, all that she merited from her mother-in-law was the run-of-the-mill εὔχομαι ... πρὸ πάντων formula.” As this phrase is adapted to the circumstances it is no surprise that neither ἀποτίθημι nor λαμβάνω is attested in any other initial health wish.

<sup>41</sup> The names of the correspondents are lost.

Apollonios: καὶ εὐχομαι πάντοτε περὶ τῆς ὑγείας σου, “and I always pray for your health.”<sup>42</sup> Apart from those two instances, the intensifier is found in only five other papyrus letters.<sup>43</sup>

The formula in the following letter from Eudaimonis to Apollonios is also a loose interpretation of the idea of the health wish. I draw attention in particular to the asyndetic intensifier νυκτὸς ἡμέρας:

ο ὦ τὰς παρ’ ἡμεῖν ταραχ[άς] οὐ καρτε[ρ]ῶ νυκτ[ὸ]ς ἡμέρας  
εἰ[ὸ]χ[ὸ]μένη τοῖς θεο[ῖ]ς πᾶσι καὶ π[ά]σαις ὀ[π]ώσ[ε] δ[ι]α-  
συ[λ]λα[β]ῶσι.<sup>44</sup>

Seeing the disturbances near us, I cannot endure and I do not refrain night or day from my prayers to all the gods and goddesses that they may keep you safe (*P.Alex.Giss.* 58.3–6; TM 27580).

There are only four other examples of this intensifier in the *formulae valetudinis*, which all date from the fourth century.<sup>45</sup> One letter of Eudaimonis even has an intensifier which is not attested elsewhere in any epistolary formula, πάση ὥρα:

πάση ὥρα εὐχομα[ι – – ] ὑπέρ τε τῆς σω[τ]ηρίας[ς] σου καὶ τῶν  
σῶν] πάντων.

I pray every hour ... for your health and that of yours (*P.Brem.* 60.3–5; TM 19645).

Here the sender prays not only for the well-being of the ad-

<sup>42</sup> As mentioned above (n.32), *P.Alex.Giss.* 60 and *P.Giss.* I 17 were written in very different hands by different scribes, so that the preference of one scribe cannot be the source for this variation.

<sup>43</sup> In the health wishes of *P.Oxy.* XXXI 2598 a and b (TM 30437 and 30438), *SB XVIII* 13762 (TM 36300), and *P.Oxy.* XIV 1759 (TM 29022), and in the greetings of *PSI XIII* 1345 (TM 38683).

<sup>44</sup> Other scholars read δ[ι]αφυλάξωσι: see Zeev, *Diaspora* 28.

<sup>45</sup> Further, νυκτὸς ἡμέρας is possibly attested in the body of another letter from our archive: οὔτε πο[ ] οὔτε [σε]ιτίοις ἠδέως προσέρχομαι, [ἀλλὰ συν]εχῶς ἀγρυπνοῦσα νυκτὸς ἡ[μέρας μ]ίαν μέριμναν ἔχω τὴν περὶ [τῆς σωτ]ηρίας σου, “I take no pleasure in food and drink, but always stay awake day and night with only one thought, your safety” (*P.Giss.* I 19.5–9; transl. Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women’s Letters* 151). The fragment is, however, too damaged to draw conclusions.

dressee but also for others of the family. Such an extension to the basic idea of the health wish is found 63 times in the entire corpus of over 4000 papyrus letters. Since 8 of them belong to the archive, it seems that this *topos* was remarkably popular in the circle around Apollonios,<sup>46</sup> e.g.

πρὸ πάντων σε εὐχομαι [σε] ὑγιαίνειν μετὰ Ἀλίνης τῆς κυρίας  
καὶ Ἡρακλᾶ Ἀπόλλωνος οὗ τὰ τέκνα ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ βασιτάξε[ι]ς, ὧν  
οὐ διαλείπω τὸ προσκύνημα ποιῶν παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ Ἑρμῆι.

Before everything, I pray that you are well together with the lady Aline and Heraklas, Apollon's son, whose children you will take up in good fortune, for whom I do not stop making my obeisance before lord Hermes (*SB X 10278.2–5*; *TM 16755*).

In this initial health wish, the expression ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ is uncommon as well.<sup>47</sup> The phrase is attested in 33 papyri of different textual types (e.g. petitions, letters, lists, applications). No less than 10 come from the archive of Apollonios *strategos*.<sup>48</sup> In the archive it is found three times in combination with the participle ἐσόμενον (*P.Brem. 9*, *SB V 8001*, *XXVI 16804*), e.g.

ἔχων πρᾶγμα Παχούμιος Παπαίκιος τῶν ἀπὸ Τερύθεως τοῦ  
αὐτοῦ νομοῦ περὶ ὀφιλ(ήματος) ἀργ(υρίου) (δραχμῶν) ζς, ἀξιῶι  
(= ἀξιῶ) παραγγεληναὶ αὐτῷ δι' ἐνὸς αὐτῶν (= τῶν) περὶ σὲ  
ὑπηρετῶν ἦξιεν εἰς τὸν ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ ἐσόμενον διαλογισμὸν Ἀτε-  
ρίου Νέπωτος τοῦ κρατίστου ἡγεμόνος.

Since I have a difference with Pachoumis, the son of Papias, from Terythis of the same nome about a debt of 66 silver drachmas, I ask that he be summoned by one of your officers to come

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Kortus, *Briefe* 35. The 63 attestations represent 4.5% of all initial health wishes, whereas the percentage is much higher for the Apollonios archive (12.7%; my data).

<sup>47</sup> The formula is a farewell or good luck wish found in funerary and votive inscriptions.

<sup>48</sup> The petitions *SB XXVI 16804* (*TM 44705*) and *V 8001* (*TM 18006*) and the private letters *P.Brem. 9* (*TM 19594*), *65* (*TM 19650*), *P.Giss. I 77* (*TM 19466*), *I 78* (*TM 19467*), *I 79*, *I 16* (*TM 19418*), and *P.Ryl. II 233* (*TM 19531*). These instances are based on a search in the Duke Database of Documentary Papyri.

to the judicial inquiry that will take place under good fortune, led by Haterios Nepos, the most noble prefect (*SB* V 8001.4–11).

*P.Brem.* 9 is a letter of recommendation; *SB* V 8001 and XXVI 16804 are petitions, probably dealing with the one and the same case. In the private letters of this archive, ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ appears mainly in wishes for safe travel, but also in a wish for an uncomplicated delivery:

ὅταν δὲ ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ ἐκβῶμεν καὶ τὸ δῶμα ἀσφαλισθήσεται ἢ διαβάθρα καγγελλωτῆ (= καγκελλωτῆ) καὶ τὰ προσκήνια γενήσεται ἅμα [[καὶ]] τῶι καγγελλωτῆ (= καγκέλωι) τοῦ μικροῦ συμποσίου.

When we are fortunate, the house will be established, a balustrade will be added to the stairway and the porch will be constructed together with the balustrade of the small dining-hall (*P.Ryl.* II 233.2–5).

δίκαιον δοκῶ εἶναί σε φίλον πᾶσι ὡσπερ καὶ ἦς τοῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ νομοῦ, ἵνα μετὰ φιλίας καὶ ἀπροσκόπως ἐξέλθωμεν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἐπ' ἀγαθῶι.

I think that you should be friendly to all people as you were to the people from the nomos, in order that we depart from them on good terms with friendship and without giving offense (*P.Giss.* I 79 col. iv.5–10).

γένουτο δ' [ἐ]μέ σε ἐπ' [ἀγ]α[θῶ] {σε} προσκυ[γῆ]σα]ι ἔχουσα (= ἔχουσαν; my correction) ἀρ]σένιον.

May it happen that I will greet you in good fortune, when you have a baby boy (*P.Giss.* I 77.8–9).

Like ἀπρόσκοπος, ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ is found more than usually in the archive. We can thus again ask whether the use of this word is an element of shared language in the archive. Another similarity with ἀπρόσκοπος is that ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ also appears twice in the archive of Eutychides. In the two letters the phrase occurs in a context similar to that in the Apollonios archive, in wishes about travel:

καθ' ὅλου μὲν ἔδει παρηγορεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς μέχρι οὗ ἀναπλεύσης πρὸς ἡμᾶς<ς> ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ ἀσπαζομένους σε δι' ἐ[π]ιστολῶν καὶ διακομιζομένους τῆς ἀπὸ σοῦ ἀνταμοιβῆ[ς] τὰς ἴσας.

It was wholly necessary that you address us before you sail up to us, who greet you in good fortune and convey the same as the exchange from you (*P.Sarap.* 100.4–9 [TM 17125]).

ἐὰν δὲ ἐξέλθῃς ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ, ἕξε[ις] παρ' ἐμοῦ τὸν κατ' εἶδ[η  
λό]γ[ο]ν[υ].

If you depart on good terms, you will get from me the account in writing (*P.Sarap.* 103.15–17; TM 17128).

In sum, the use of ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ in a private context (safe travel, for instance) is not limited to the two archives; but like ἀπρόσκοπος, ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ also was perhaps more popular in the circles around Apollonios and Eutyichides than elsewhere.<sup>49</sup>

Overall, whereas the initial health wishes of the archive of Apollonios are generally characterized by variation and idiosyncrasy, there are also elements of lexical uniformity in the initial health wishes. Some of those elements (ἀπρόσκοπος and ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ) appear not only in this archive, but also in that of Eutyichides.

### 3.2 Uniformity in the epistolary formulas

Uniformity within the archive and uniformity between it and the archive of Eutyichides can be observed not only in initial health wishes, but in other epistolary elements as well. Whereas linguistic studies of texts in archives usually focus on recurring elements in an individual's epistolary language,<sup>50</sup> the uniformity of the formulaic phrases of this archive have not yet been discussed.

#### 3.2.1 Proskynema formula

Private letters from the first century on often have a

<sup>49</sup> Here too, factors of preservation may have influenced our data.

<sup>50</sup> E.g. Leiwo, *Arctos* 37 (2003) 81–99, on the language of Dioskoros; Halla-aho, in *Latin vulgaire* 244–252, on that of Claudius Terentianus; Evans, in *Pap. Congr.* XXIV.1 299–308, on that of the doctor Artemidoros, and in *The Language of the Papyri* 51–71, on the language of Amyntas. Another approach focusing on variation is found, for instance, in Evans, *ZPE* 153 (2005) 155–158, about Hierokles' changed attitude towards the closing formula ἔρωσο, and D. Nachtergaele, "Remarks on the Variation in the Initial Health Wish in Hierokles' Letters," *ZPE* 190 (2014) 223–226.

*proskynema* formula, usually just after the initial health wish. It expresses that the sender has made obeisance to a (usually local) god for the benefit of the addressee. Its basic phraseology is τὸ προσκύνημά σου ποιῶ παρά a god or gods. Yet the *proskynema* formulas in the Apollonios archive show some important deviations from the standard phraseology.<sup>51</sup>

### 3.2.1.1 Gods in the *proskynema* formula

Instead of the usual παρά string, five instances have another construction, e.g.

τοῦ Σεράπιδος θέλοντος κομψῶς ἔσχον καὶ τὸ προσκύνημά σου ἐποίησα, ὡς εἶπον, καὶ πάντων.

Since Sarapis allowed it, I was well and I made obeisance, as I said, for you and all (*P.Oxy.* LIX 3988.16–19; TM 27844).

This letter does not belong to the Apollonios archive, but three of the four other letters with a construction other than παρά + the name of a god do come from the archive, viz. *P.Giss.* I 85, *P.Brem.* 15, and *P.Brem.* 48. In the first, one must take the sentence preceding the *proskynema* formula into account to know to which god the *proskynema* is made:

εὐχαριστῶ [παρὰ τῷ κυρ[ί]ωι Ἑρμῇ [κ]αὶ οὐ διαλείπω [τ]ὸ προσκ[ύνη]μά σου [ποι]ῶν [καθ' ἐ]κάσ[τη]ν ἡμέρ[αν].

I thank the lord Hermes and I do not stop making obeisance for you daily (*P.Giss.* I 85.7–9; TM 19472).

In two others, the festivities or the offerings on behalf of the god are mentioned instead of the god alone:

τὸ προσκύνημά σου ἐποίησα πρὸς ταῖς θυσίαις τῆς Ἰσιδος τῆι νυκτὶ γενεσί[οι]ς αὐτῆς.

I made obeisance on your behalf at the festival of Isis on the night of her birthday (*P.Brem.* 15.31–33).

<sup>51</sup> Kortus (*Briefe* 37–40) discussed the *proskynema* formula in general terms, but did not refer to the peculiarities of the *proskynemata* in the archive; in fact, to illustrate his point that a letter writer can give a personal touch to the phrase, he quotes a letter from outside of the archive.

πρὸ πάντων αὔριον τὸ προσκύνημά σου ποιήσω ἐν τῷ Σαρα-  
[π]είῳ, ἐπεὶ σήμερον οὐκ ἀνέβην ἀπὸ ἀδρῶν σκυλμῶν καὶ κιν-  
δύνων.

Before all things I shall make obeisance for you tomorrow in the Sarapeum, since I did not go up there today because of the abundant troubles and dangers (*P.Brem.* 48.29–32; transl. Zeev, *Diaspora* 76).

The fifth attestation of such an alternative reference to the gods is in a letter from the archive of Eutyichides:

ὑγιαίνοντες σοῦ [κη]δόμεθα, τοῖς καλοῖς Σαραπέοις τὸ προσκύνημά σου καὶ τῶν τέκνων π[οι]ήσαντες

While we are well, we are concerned about you and we make obeisance for you and the children in the beautiful Sarapeia (*P.Sarap.* 89c.3–5; TM 17114).

This letter is similar to *P.Brem.* 48 and 15 in that the festivities rather than the god's name are mentioned. Once more, the archives of Apollonios and Eutyichides differ in the same way from the standard phraseology. In both collections, the letter writers were able to restructure the conventional formula to make it fit more specific circumstances.

### 3.2.1.2 Grammatical construction of the proskynema formula

Also in their grammatical construction, some *proskynema* formulas in the archive show uniformity in deviating from the standard phraseology. Instead of the common main verb ποιῶ/ποιοῦμεν, in the Apollonios archive we sometimes find the litotic οὐ διαλείπω + προσκύνημα ποιῶ, e.g. a letter of Eudaimonis:

πρὸ πάντ[ων] εὔχομαί σε ὑγιαί[νειν μετὰ τῆς συμ]βίου σου Ἀ[λίνης] καὶ οὐ διαλείπω [τὸ προσκύνημά] σου ποιῶσ[α] παρὰ πᾶσι τ[οῖς θεοῖς].

Before everything I pray that you are well together with your wife Aline and I do not stop making obeisance for you before all the gods (*P.Alex.Giss.* 57.2–4; TM 27579).

Adding this litotic construction to an epistolary phrase has the effect of a strong intensifier.<sup>52</sup> This construction occurs only 4

<sup>52</sup> In letters like *P.Giss.* I 85, in which οὐ διαλείπω is combined with an

times in all papyrus letters, and all are in the Apollonios archive. Besides *P.Alex.Giss.* 57,

[κ]αὶ οὐ διαλείπω [τ]ὸ προσκ[ύνη]μά σου [ποι]ῶν [καθ' ἐ]κάσ[τη]ν ἡμέρ[αν]

and I do not stop making obeisance for you every day (*P.Giss.* I 85.8–9).

πρὸ πάντων σε εὐχομαι ὑγιαίνειν μετὰ τοῦ κυρίου μου Ἡρακλᾶ Απόλλωνος καὶ τῆς κυρίας μου Ἀλίνης ὧν οὐ διαλείπω [[τὸ]] ποιῶν τὸ προσκύνημα παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ Ἑρμῇ καὶ παρὰ πᾶσι τοῖς θεοῖς.

Before everything I pray that you are well together with my lord Heraklas, the son of Apollon, and my lady Aline for whom I do not stop making obeisance before the lord Hermes and all the gods (*P.Giss.* I 14.2–5; TM 19416).

πρὸ πάντων σε εὐχομαι [σε] ὑγιαίνειν μετὰ Ἀλίνης τῆς κυρίας καὶ Ἡρακλᾶ Απόλλωνος οὗ τὰ τέκνα ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ βασιτάξε[ι]ς, ὧν οὐ διαλείπω τὸ προσκύνημα ποιῶν παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ Ἑρμῇ (*SB X* 10278.2–5; cf. 152 above).

The *proskynema* phrase with οὐ διαλείπω thus seems to be another shared linguistic feature within the Apollonios archive: this word string is attested a few times in other epistolary formulas and in the body texts of private letters from the second century B.C. on;<sup>53</sup> but only in the archive of Apollonios is this construction preserved in the *proskynema* phrase. Moreover, in *P.Giss.* I 14 and *SB X* 10278 the *proskynema* phrase is a relative clause subordinate to the initial health wish. These two letters

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intensifier, there is a tautology about continuity, “I do not stop making obeisance for you: I do it every day.”

<sup>53</sup> An early attestation in the epistolary formulas is *P.Bad.* IV 48.1–2 (TM 5830; 127 B.C.): Διονυσία Θέωνι τῷ κυρίῳ χαίρειν καὶ ἔρρωσθαι, ἔρρωμαι δὲ καὶ αὐτή, σοῦ τὴν ἀρίστην μῆναν ἐπὶ παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ ποιουμένη οὐ διαλείπω. The phrase is attested in the body text in e.g. *BGU XVI* 2625 (TM 23349; 15 B.C.). It was also used in petitions, which often have the same set of epistolary formulas as letters, e.g. οὐ διαλίπομεν καθ' ἡμέρ[α]ν ἐκάστην εὐχόμενοι ὑπὲρ τε σοῦ καὶ τῶν τέκνων (*BGU VIII* 1835.5–7; TM 4914; 50/49?).

from the archive of Apollonios are the only ones that preserve this construction in the *proskynema*.

### 3.2.2 Initial greetings

Greetings in private papyrus letters are usually expressed by the formula ἀσπάζου/ἀσπάζομαι τὸν δεῖνα and variants, and are usually found at the end of the letter. They also appear at the beginning (cf. *P.Giss.* I 22, above), especially for greetings sent to the addressee (often expressed as ἀσπάζομαί σε).<sup>54</sup> Still, the greetings at the beginning of the letter are far from commonplace: whereas approximately 1000 letters have greetings at the end, only ca. 250 have greetings at the beginning. In the Apollonios archive, no less than 21 (24.1% of the 87 private letters in the archive) contain initial greetings.<sup>55</sup> Compared with the 250 initial greetings in the entire corpus of roughly 4350 private letters (5.7%), the archive thus makes far more use of this epistolary phrase than the average papyrus letter.<sup>56</sup>

### 3.2.3 Courtesy formula with προτρέπω and ἐπιτρέπω

προτρέπω, according to a DDbDP search, appears in only a few dozen attestations, of which many are official documents—

<sup>54</sup> I would not go so far as Kortus (*Briefe* 41), who seems to see a dichotomy between greetings sent to the addressee, found at the beginning, and greetings to third persons, at the end: “Die Grüße haben ihren festen Platz im Brief. Sie stehen meist am Ende direkt vor der Schlußklausel, mit Ausnahme der an den Empfänger selbst gerichteten Grüße, die meist am Beginn stehen.” In many letters, including those of our archive, the sender is greeted at the end, e.g. ἐν τάχει σε ἀσπάσομαι (*P.Brem.* 66.9, just before the closing formula). Similarly, greetings at the beginning of the letter may be dedicated to third persons, e.g. πρὸ πάντων [σ]ε ἀσπάζε[τ]αι {σε} Ἡραϊδοῦς καὶ [ἀσ]π[ά]ζομαι πάντα τ[οὺς] σο[ύς] (*P.Giss.* I 77.3, just after the opening formula).

<sup>55</sup> Initial greetings are attested in an official letter of the archive as well: *P.Brem.* 10 (TM 19595).

<sup>56</sup> The frequency of this feature is not due to a general popularity of the initial greetings in the second century: of the 725 private letters dated to the second century, only 48 have initial greetings, 6.6%. That this is somewhat higher than the average can be attributed to the fact that the many attestations of the Apollonios archive are included in this number.

petitions, an edict, an application to the senate, and official letters, including a copy of a letter from the emperor Hadrian (*P.Fay.* 19; TM 59966). The verb occurs twice in private letters in the Apollonios archive:

παρακαλῶ οὖν σε συν[ε]λθεῖν Ἑρμοφ[ί]λῳ πρὸς Ἡράκλειον τὸν τοῦ Ἀπολλωτάτος, ἵνα περισσ[ο]τέρως αὐτῷ μελήσῃ διὰ τὸ ὑμῖς αὐτὸν προτρέπεσθ[α]ι.

So I ask you to go with Hermophilos to Herakleios, the one from Apollotas, in order that he care more for it because you urge him (*P.Giss.* I 25.10–14).

καὶ σὲ δὲ προτρέπομαι ἐπιτρέπειν μοι περὶ ὧν βούλει ὅς (= ὡς) ἥδιστα ποιήσονται.

and I urge you to entrust me with what you want so that I can do it with uttermost pleasure (*P.Brem.* 21.9–11; TM 19606).

Another attestation is in a private letter in the archive of Eutychides:

[καὶ] προτρέπομαί σε τὸ αὐτὸ ποιεῖν ὑ[π]ὸ χεῖρα ἐπι[τρ]έπειν τε μοὶ περὶ ὧν ἐὰν θέλῃς ἥδιστ[α] ποιήσονται.

and I urge you to do the same at once, and to entrust me with whatever you want so that I can do it with uttermost pleasure (*P.Sarap.* 103 *ter.*4–6; TM 17147).

All three use the middle προτρέπομαι. The formula in *P.Sarap.* 103 *ter* is similar to that in *P.Brem.* 21, viz. a so-called courtesy formula in which the sender out of politeness asks if there is anything he can do for the addressee.

Also the rest of the formula, and especially the use of ἐπιτρέπω, is remarkably alike in these two letters. Like προτρέπω, ἐπιτρέπω seems to be linked to official documents. It appears regularly in petitions, official letters, and other official documents which give a formal permission: the substantive ἐπιτροπή even denotes a type of document named after the verb ἐπιτρέπω, e.g. *SB XXVI* 16584 (TM 97087). In private letters it is often found in a formulaic genitive absolute in which the subject is the gods. I quote the attestations in the archives of Apollonios and Eutychides:

καὶ ἐντυγχάνω ἐμὲ θεῶν ἐπιτρεπόντων τὸ ἐπι<ν> καὶ σὲ τ . [ . (?) ] υσα[ . . . . . ] ἐκ γράμ[μ]ατος [ - - ] . ι . [ . ] υ

I pray that I, the gods allowing, ... the threat, and that you ... from the letter (*P.Brem.* 10.5–8; Apollonios archive).

[ἐὰν δὲ] ὁ θε[ὸς] ἐπιτρέψη πολλὴν ρύσιν [ἔσεσθα]ι εἰς ἔτους, τάχα διὰ τὴν ἐσομέ[νην] εὐω[νίαν] τοῦ γενήματος ἀ[θ]υμῆ[σουσι] οἱ γεοῦχοι, δι' ἣν ἔξομεν εὐω[νεῖν] κατ' ἐπι[θυμίαν] σου.

But if God allows a large yield next season, soon, because of what will be the low price of the produce, the landowners will be discouraged, so that we will be able to buy at a low price, as you wish (*P.Giss.* I 79.12–16; transl. Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters* 162; Apollonios archive).

ἀμεριμνῶ (= ἀμεριμνῶ) νομίζων σε καλῶς τὰ ἔργα ποιεῖν καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς δάκνομαι ὅτι μοι τὰ πράγματα τῆς ἐπικρίσεως οὔτε μοι ἐπιτρέπ[ι] ἐξελθῖν οὔδ' (= οὔτε) Ἡλιοδ(ώρω) θεῶν δὲ ἐπιτρέπ[όν]των αὔριον πρ[ό]ς σε ἤξι Ἡ[λιό]δωρος.

I am care-free since I believe that you execute the works well and I myself am stung that the affairs regarding the selection did not permit me to go away and that Heliodoros won't come to you tomorrow, even if the gods allow it (*P.Sarap.* 103 bis.2–8; TM 17146; Eutychides archive).

But in the last example, ἐπιτρέπω is attested in another context as well: in the phrase μοι ἐπιτρέπ[ι] ἐξελθῖν, it has clearly a different meaning than does the stereotypical θεῶν δὲ ἐπιτρέπ[όν]των that follows. Similarly, ἐπιτρέπω appears in a request for permission to undertake a journey:

παρακαλῶ σε οὖν, κύριε, ἐπιτρέψαι μοι πρὸς τὰς διακένους ἡμέρας κατελθεῖν πρὸς τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἱερακίονος τῷ πλοίῳ[ι].

I therefore request you, master, to allow me to go to my brother in Hierakion's boat during these idle days (*P.Brem.* 15.18–21; transl. Zeev, *Diaspora* 50).

In *P.Brem.* 21 and *P.Sarap.* 103 ter, we have also seen the use ἐπιτρέπω in the courtesy formulas. Courtesy phrases are not an essential part of the private letter: my corpus of all private letters has only about 200 with courtesy phrases. The phrase never developed a standard phraseology. Often the sender just uses an imperative, e.g. ὧν ἄλλων θέλεις, γράφε μοι ὡς ἥδιστα ποιήσονται, “with regard to other things you want, write me since I will do it with uttermost pleasure” (*P.Brem.* 22.10–12; TM 19607); more indirect and more polite phrases are e.g. καὶ

σὺ δὲ γράφεις [πε]ρὶ ὧν ἂν θέλῃς, “and you write about whatever you want” (*BGU XVI* 2656.12–13; TM 23380) or καλῶς [ο]ὔν ποιήσεις γράφω[ν] ἡμῖν περὶ ὧν ἂν χ[ρ]εῖαν ἔχῃς τῶν ἐνταῦθα ἡδέως γάρ σοι πάντα ποιήσομεν, “So, you will do well when you write to us about whatever you need from here; for we will do everything for you with pleasure” (*P.Cair.Zen.* V 59843.1–6; TM 1467). This is by no means an exhaustive list of variation in this formula. But the courtesy formula with ἐπιτρέπω is rare: apart from *P.Brem.* 21 and *P.Sarap.* 103 *ter*, it is found in only four other letters, of which two are again from the Apollonios archive (the first is an official letter and the second a letter of recommendation to Apollonios in his function as *strategos*: περὶ δὲ ὧν [ – – ]ν θέλεις, ἐπιτρέπέ μοι, “Entrust me with the things you want” (*P.Alex.Giss.* 42.7–8; TM 27564); καὶ σὺ δέ μοι, ἄδελφε, π[ε]ρὶ ὧ[ν] θέλεις, ἐπιτρέπε, “and you, brother, entrust me with the things you want” (*P.Brem.* 9.20–21).

In other words, of the six occurrences of ἐπιτρέπω in the courtesy formula, three come from our archive and one from that of Eutychides.<sup>57</sup> This is another linguistic variant which seems to have been widely used by letter writers around Apollonios and Eutychides. The fact that *P.Brem.* 21 and *P.Sarap.* 103 *ter* combine the two uncommon words ἐπιτρέπω and προτρέπω in the same way in the same context of the courtesy formula seems to imply that there were linguistic overlaps between the two archives.

### Conclusion

Cribiore’s study of the women’s letters of this archive touched upon some interesting lexical features in the body of the letters: on the one hand, elements of uniformity seem to be present, but on the other, the language of individuals such as

<sup>57</sup> The other occurrences are two business letters, *P.Oslo* III 156 (TM 28917) and *SB XVI* 13058 (TM 16360), both second century. Further, the courtesy formula with ἐπιτρέπω also appears in the official letter *SB XVI* 12835 (TM 14678).

Eudaimonis was characterized by variation. In this paper I have focused on another part of the letters and studied the epistolary language. I have applied the methodology of variationist sociolinguistics to describe the variants in the epistolary language and to compare the other papyrus letters in my corpus of over 4000 private letters. Cribiore's observations about variation and uniformity also seem applicable to the epistolary language, as this paper has revealed. The epistolary language of the Apollonios archive in some aspects shows uniformity through its deviations from the common phraseology. The *proskynema* formula οὐ διαλείπω τὸ προσκύνημά σου ποιῶν is the best example of shared linguistic elements in the archive: this particular phrase is preserved only in letters from the people around Apollonios. Whereas this variant seems to have been the product of one group of letter writers—the senders of the Apollonios archive<sup>58</sup>—other elements were probably more widespread: various linguistic peculiarities in the Apollonios archive are attested in the archive of Eutyichides as well.<sup>59</sup> The fact that the two archives share a number of linguistic features is presumably due to a similar sociohistorical and socio-economical background.

Yet the epistolary language of certain individuals, especially Eudaimonis', is also marked by variation.<sup>60</sup> This is most ob-

<sup>58</sup> In this regard, study of the language of the archive also has socio-historical value. The people around Apollonios seem to have shown their love and concern for each other by inserting personally tinted epistolary formulas and by using initial greetings more frequently than in other papyri. Furthermore, their bond seems to be reflected in a number of typical, shared linguistic features.

<sup>59</sup> Also Litinas' observations on προκόπτω and προκοπή implied that this is a shared linguistic element in the archive. Further, my investigation has revealed that προκόπτω appears in a letter from the archive of Eutyichides as well: ἐρρῶσθαί σ[ε εὖ]χομαι καὶ προκόπ[τειν]" (*P.Sarap.* 100.15–16). This is another uncommon word that was used by the archives of Apollonios and Eutyichide, and further confirms our findings about the linguistic connections between the two archives.

<sup>60</sup> I have been able to list a number of eye-catching linguistic features but

vious in the initial health wishes of the archive, where the majority do not have the standard formula  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\ \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omega\upsilon\upsilon\ \epsilon\ddot{\upsilon}\chi\omicron\mu\acute{\alpha}\iota\ \sigma\epsilon\ \ddot{\upsilon}\gamma\iota\acute{\alpha}\iota\upsilon\epsilon\iota\nu$ . Letter writers differed from the common epistolary phraseology and gave a personal touch to their messages. In a number of instances, the deviation from the well-trodden epistolary paths was triggered by special circumstances: Aline's approaching delivery was the impetus for Eudaimonis to formulate a specific wish for a good birth, and the use of  $\delta\iota\alpha\sigma\acute{\omega}\zeta\omega$  in a letter to Apollonios might be inspired by the threat of the Jewish revolt and/or by his illness.

While other case studies of the language of the individual found it to be idiosyncratic because of a consistently used epistolary feature or formula, this study shows that also through variation the sender's individuality can appear: the language of the individual (Eudaimonis) is idiosyncratic in that she varies the standard phrases. In other words, this paper calls for a new appreciation of the letter writer and his means to create a characteristic epistolary style. The general conclusion is that the epistolary language is not as fixed as older studies of the formulas seem to imply. Such formulas should not be seen as a straitjacket around the body of the text. This study shows that letter writers could have a fair amount of freedom in the epistolary phrases.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> this overview does not claim to be exhaustive.

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