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Letter from a Soldier in Pannonia

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

This private letter comes from the expedition of Grenfell and Hunt at Tebtynis, which began on December 3, 1899. The T-number written on it prior to shipment, T520, indicates that the letter was found before the excavators turned to the cemeteries on January 5, 1900; that the T-number is high suggests that the find spot was the Roman town somewhere outside the temple.1 Right and left margins are more or less intact, as is much of the top. However, the bottom of the papyrus breaks off before the end of the salutation and the closing formula, with some lines missing. There is one damaged line of text, which could be a postscript, running up the left margin at 90 degrees.2 It does not carry over onto the back, which seems to feature a double address, one longer, perhaps with delivery instructions, now mostly illegible, followed by another, shorter, third-party address. Lacunae are numerous throughout, especially in the left half (back: top half) of the papyrus.

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

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3 Categorization based on the typology in R. Bagnall and R. Cribiore, Women’s Letters from Ancient Egypt, 300 BC-AD 800 (Ann Arbor 2006) 45.
general slope downward to the right. Grenfell, Hunt, and Goodspeed frankly describe it as “a rude uncial hand” and the Greek as “very poor.”

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

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

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

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

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

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⁸ M. Speidel, *Roman Army Studies* 1 (Amsterdam 1984) 131, n.16.
¹⁰ Llewelyn (n. 6) 47.
44-45 (but see commentary on line 39), as if the veteran's name alone were sufficient for delivery and the carrier knew where to find him.\textsuperscript{11}

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

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

\textsuperscript{11} Discussion of third parties in addresses in S. Llewelyn, "The \textit{εἰς (τὸν) οἰκίαν} Formula and the Delivery of Letters to Third Persons or to Their Property," \textit{ZPE} 101 (1994) 71-78. However it should be noted that the \textit{εἰς (τὸν) οἰκίαν} formula is quite different from \textit{εἰ(ς) πατρείδα} on the papyrus.


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

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

\[\text{Letter from a Soldier in Pannonia}^{83}\]

P.Tebt. 2.583 descr. Second/third century CE

Verhoogt, Klaas Worp (in alphabetical order); the Humanities Research Center at Rice University for added funding; and the BASP editors and an anonymous reader for their review and further suggestions.
καὶ Ὄρσινος [ψειν καὶ τοῦς ύγειούς τῆς ἁδελφής τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ Ἐ]γερόφυνε καὶ Οὐργοφέ
35 τὸν καὶ πρὸ.. [.. ca. 10 ]... του Αὐρηλείους [.. ca. 19 ].. φειν την φειτ— [ca. 27 ].. δ[ ca. 5 ]

Left margin, across the fibers:
38 [- -]ψ[- -]ε[.. ] την [έ]πιστολή[v .. ].. δοτ..

Back, along the fibers:
39 ... [..]ειν τεπ. ....... τοῖς ύγειοίς [καὶ] Σεινυψει τῇ ἀρτοφωλείσα .. κυνγων[ς [- - ]
40 ... ΟΠλεώνος στρατείοτον λεγειώνος β βοηθο[ψ .. ]... [- - ]
41 [ c. 10 ]... [..]......... ψ...[..].. χ[ c. 7 ]... 
42 ... [..]................. ψ...[..]...[ c. 10 ].. θ[..][..].[- - ]
43 [.. τ]ῆς Παννονιας τῆς κάτω [..]...[..]...[ c. 7 ].. η ..
44 [..]...[..]...[ c. 5 ].. [- - ]

vacat

44 [ἀπ]όδος Άκουτονε Δεων [ο]ύτρανω λειγει[ῶ]γ[ος - - -]
45 Αὐρήλειος Πολείνος - στρατεῖότη λεγειώνος β βοηθοῦ εἶνα πέμψῃ εἰ(ς) πατρείδ[α - - -]

1. Αὐρήλειος Πολιών στρατιώτης λεγειώνος 2. "Ἡρωνι 3. μητρί, ἀρτοπωλή- 

di, κυρία(?) 4. λυγαίνειν 6-7 l. ἀναπαύομαι 7 l. ύμων ύμεις, νούν; οὐχ corr. 

from ούκ; l. έχετε 8 l. ύμων 9 l. ἀναπαύομαι 10 l. ύμως 10-11 l. ύμετέρας 

σωτηρίας 12 l. ύμων, γράμματα πολλάκις 13 l. ἵνα εἰδότος ἓν τω εἰδώ(?)? 

ύμας 14 l. ἀπόντος ἓν ἔπων(?), Παννονία 15 l. ύμως ύμεις 16 l. ἐξελθόν-

tα 17 l. στρατίαν, ύμων 18 l. τις(?), στρατίαν 20 l. ἐπιστολάς ύμως, ἵνε 

21 l. λήψομαι κομμεῖτον 22 l. ὑπατικοῦ, ἵνα 23 l. ύμων 24 l. ύμων, στρα-

tίαν 25 l. λογίζομαι ύμως ὅτι, ύμων 26 l. ύμων(?)? ἵνε 27 l. ύμων(?), ύμεις 

27-28 l. ἀντιγράφατε 28 l. τις(?) ἐὰν(? 29 l. ύμων(?)? πέμψατε 30 l. ἀσπασαι, 

Ἀρροδίσιον, Ἀτήσιον 33 l. ύμως 34 l. Ξενοφώντα; Οὐργοφέ: O corr. from 

A 35 l. Αὐρήλειος 39. l. ύιος, ἀρτοπωλίσσα 40 l. Πολιώνος στρατιωτοῦ 

λεγιώνος 43 l. Παννονίας 44 l. οὐστρανῷ λεγειώνος 45 l. Αὐρήλειος Πο-

λίωνος στρατιώτου λεγιώνος, ἵνα, πατρίδα

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

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

1-2 λε]γιῶ[νος β βοηθοῦ: The sender’s legion is given here as well as in lines 40 and 45, all damaged. In their description of the letter, Grenfell, Hunt, and Goodspeed identify Polion as a soldier of legio II Adiutrix based on line 40, where they state that “the number of the legion is preserved.”15 There, β is not clear to me. Still, from the traces it is more conceivable than α. Here, β is perhaps clearer, the bottom stroke being visible at the end of line 1.

- βοηθοῦ Ἡρωνεῖ: the function of the interpunct is to divide the sender from the addressees in the prescript. Compare, vice-versa, the address in T.Vindol. 2.260 (late first/early second century CE): Flauio Ceriali praef(ecto) coh(ortis) · a Iustino col(lega).16

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15 Grenfell, Hunt, Goodspeed (n. 4) 325.
16 See Adams (n. 5) 209.
2-3 The number of addressees and their relation to the sender are not obvious.17 These lines should be read together with line 39, where Seinouphis reappears.

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

- μητρὲ [ . . ] Σεινούφει: after Ἡρωνεὶ τῷ ἀδελφῷ Πλουτοῦ τῇ ἀδελφῆ, the expected pattern would be: name, definite article, familial relation. Instead, no article precedes μητρὲ, and it is followed by a name.

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

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

6-7 ἀνα|πάωμαι: interchange of αυ and α.19

8 ἀλλὰ ´γω: inverse elision of ε-.20

10-11 πε[ρί] τῆς ἡμετέρας · σωτ[ηρίας π]ῶς ἔχετε: the phrase περὶ τῆς σωτηρίας and its equivalents are common in private letters.21 The phrase πῶς + a form of ἔχω and its equivalents are relatively rare, occurring, for instance, in SB 1.4630 (113-120 CE) and P.Oxy.12.1488 (second century CE). They occur together in P.Brem. 61 (early second century CE), where the sender asks πῶς δ᾽ ἔχεις and a few lines later wants to be informed περὶ τῆς σωτηρίας your; in P.Oxy. 9.1216 (second/third century CE), where the sender wants to be informed [πε]ρὶ τῆς σωτηρίας σου/ καὶ πῶς σοι ἔστων τὰ πρὸς τὸν πενθερ[ὸν]; and in P.Gron. 18 (third/fourth century CE), where the sender wants to be informed περὶ σοῦ καὶ περὶ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ Ὡρίωνος πῶς ἔχων, λεια[ν/ γὰρ φιλ]ω

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19 Gignac (n. 18) 227.
20 Gignac (n. 18) 319.
21 Discussion and examples in H. Koskenniemi, Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr. (Helsinki 1956) 71-73, 128-130.
αὐτόν. In the lacuna between ἡμετέρας and ἔχετε on the papyrus, there is space for approximately seven letters, thus σωτηρείας π̣̣φς.

- ἡμετέρας · σωτηρείας: the function of the interpunct is unclear. But compare T.Vindol. 2.211 (late first, early second century CE): de hac - re, where the preposition and a modifier are divided from the object, because the preposition is proclitic.22

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

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

14 ἀπώντας: again, Polion must be the subject of the clause despite the apparent plural form. If εἰδω[τ]ες is meant to be the verb of the εἴνα clause in line 13, a nominative would be expected here. Perhaps ἀπώντας is meant to be genitive in agreement with εἰδω[τ]ες, if that is meant as a genitive. Whatever the syntax, compare the use of ἄπειμι in military context in BGU 7.1655 (testament, 169 CE): τέκνα μου στρατευόμ(ενα), ἐπειδ’ διὰ τὸν στρατείαν ἄπεισιν.

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

22 See Adams (n. 5) 208.
15-16 με ἔχετε | ὡς ξένον α . . . [. . .]. ἐξηλθότα: perhaps restore άγδρα, which would better fit if spelled άγδρα with vowel development as in O. Tβτ. 1 (tax receipt, first/second century CE).25 However, the word is spelled without vowel development in line 32. There is a general parallel to this construction in P.Ryl. 4.691 (private letter, third century CE), although the opposite scenario: ἵνα μὴ ὡς ξένον [άλ]’ ὡς υἱὸν ἡμῶν αὐτόν ἐξωσιν. Rendered causally, ἐξηλθότα would suggest that Polion’s family did not want him to join the military. But it is also possible that their treatment of him as a stranger began before he departed. At any rate, in SB 4.7354 (private letter, second century CE) a father threatens to disown his son if he does not enlist: εὖ οὖν ποιήσεις εἰς καλή στρατεύσαι.

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

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

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

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

20 ἔξ. ἡδέ: the function of the interpunct is to divide main clauses.26

20-21 ἡδέ ύμεις | με κατὰ νοῦ [. . .] . . λῆψωμαι: coming up to the very edge of the papyrus, the final characters of ύμεις are cramped; the strokes of ει also resemble θ, and ς is hardly rounded. If indeed the pronoun is nominative, a verb would be expected, comparable to line 7 (εἴμεις δὲ κατὰ νοῦ με οὖχ

25 Gignac (n. 18) 311.
26 See Adams (n. 5) 209.
ἔχεται). However, space does not seem to allow for ὑμεῖς | με κατὰ νοῦν οὐκ ἔχετε much less a conjunction before λήψωμαι. Perhaps οὐκ has been omitted by mistake. As for the apparent lack of conjunction, it would not be a problem if λήψωμαι is actually the main verb after ἦδε, and ὑμεῖς is meant to be genitive followed by a circumstantial participle.

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

24 [. . .] τῆσα: perhaps restore [ἀπ]εἴητησα, i.e., ἀπήτησα.

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

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

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

30 ἄσπαισαι: interchange of αι and α in medial position.29

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

- Ἀφροδείσεως: declension -ις, -ιου, -ιφ, -ιν.30


33 υγειούς: inserted γ as vowel glide.31

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

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

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

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

29 Gignac (n. 18) 195.
30 Gignac (n. 18) 25-26.
31 Gignac (n. 18) 72.
particular. At the end of the line, -δοτ. . could be read -δοτοῦ. Perhaps it is a name, such as Ἑρμοδότου or Ζηνοδότου.

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

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

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

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

- τῇ ἀρτοφωλείᾳ: in the prescript, Seinouphis’ occupation is indicated by the noun ἀρτοπόλι, presumably for ἀρτοπώλιδι.33

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

43 τῆς Παννονείας τῆς κάτω: legio II Adiutrix was ἐν Παννονίᾳ τῇ κάτω according to Dio (55.24.3). To be more specific, the legion was stationed at Aquincum. CIL 8.25740 reads: veteranus leg. II adiutricis piae fidelis quae habitat in Panonia inferiore Acinco.34

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

32 See Llewelyn (n. 6) 29-41.
34 See Ritterling (n. 7) 1446.
longing to legio II Adiutrix and another for a trumpeter belonging to legio I Adiutrix, the latter named Aurelius Surus, presumably of Syrian birth. In his discussion of the tombstones, M. Speidel hypothesizes that legio II Adiutrix especially was mobile.35

44 ἀπὸδος: the vocative subject of this imperative would be the unmentioned carrier of the letter who was to deliver it to the veteran, so that the veteran could then send (εἶνα πέμψῃ) it to the addressees proper.36

- Ἀκουτόνει: though it appears to be vocative, the case must be dative, given ύτρανψ. Compare the name Akoutas occurring in the body of P.Tebt. 2.416 (private letter, third century CE): Ἀκουτάτι τῷ ἀδελφῷ; also in the address of P.Tebt. 2.422 (private letter, third century CE): ἀπόδ(ος) Ἀκουτάτι. Closer are the names Akoutianos and Akoution. For instance, there is a soldier named Acutianus in Chr.Mitt. 372.6 (second century CE): Ἀκουτιανῷ. Perhaps the veteran that was to forward Polion’s letter had as a Latin name either Acutius or Acutianus.

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

- ύτρανψ: omission of ε.37

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

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

35 Speidel (n. 8) 132.
36 See Llewelyn (n. 6) 35.
37 Gignac (n. 18) 305-306.
38 Grenfell, Hunt, Goodspeed (n. 4) 325.
39 See Adams (n. 5) 209, with other instances from Wadi Fawakhir.
Letter from a Soldier in Pannonia

Recto (Image courtesy of Ancient Textual Imaging, Brigham Young University)
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