

57?

'BROTHERS' USING A 'SAFE FRIEND'

Album 80

P.Ryl. 4.604

provenance unknown

III

Manchester, John Rylands Library. Ed. pr. C.H. Roberts and E.G. Turner (1952); *R.W. Daniel, 'Notes on the guilds and army in Roman Egypt', *BASP* 16 (1979) 37-46, with improvements to the text by H.C. Youtie, *Scriptiunculae* I 237ff.

Single sheet, 11(B) x 26(H) cm. Only fragments remain of the upper portion (ll.1-9). Recto (→): Diairesis (15, 17, 20); apostrophe (35); interlinear correction (30). Main hand a rapid documentary cursive with some ligaturing which ed.pr. placed in the third century 'probably early or middle rather than late'; mid III Tibiletti. *Nomina sacra*: none. Verso (↓): address.

Recto (→):

1	[1	
	Ἀ[μμώνιος(?) Ἀνδρονίκω χαίρειν]		A[mmonius? to Andronicus, greetings]
	line lost		
	ἐλπ[ι	4	
	2 lines lost		
	τ[7	
	ε. [
	τα [.....]. [
	λαβ[... ἐ]χορήγε[ι... ἐ]ξ ἀρχῆ[ς]	10	... that
	καπ[...]. ρηυλα [...]ς ὡς εὖ		my lord hegemon is doing well.
	πράσσει ὁ κύρι[ος] μου ἡγεμῶ[ν].		And so now I have written to
	καὶ νῦν οὖν Εὐτολμίω τ[ῶ]		brother Eutolmius about him,
	ἀδελφ[ῶ] ἔγραψ[α] περὶ τούτο[υ],		and about brother Heraiscus
	καὶ π[ερὶ] Ἡραίσ[κ]ου τοῦ	15	
	ἀδελφ[οῦ]		
	τῶ αὐτῶ Εὐτολμίω ἔγρα[α-]		I have written to the same Eutolmius,
	ψά συνιστῶν αὐτόν. ὅτ[ε]		recommending him. When
	μέλλεις ἐπιδοῦναι τὸ ἐπιστ[ό-]		you are going to give the letter,
	λειον, παρέστω ἅμα σοι Ἡρά-		let Heraiscus be present together with you.
	ισκος. πρόσεχε τοῖς παι-	20	Attend to your children
	δίοις καὶ τῇ οἰκείᾳ καθὼς ἡ-		and your household as
	ξίωσά σε, καὶ περὶ ὧν βούλει		I asked you, and about the things you want
	ἐνταῦθα ἐν τῇ Ἀντινόου		here in Antinoopolis,
	ἐπίστειλον μοι ἡδέως ἔχον-		write to me and I will do it gladly.
	τι. προσεῖπε τὰ ἀβάσκαν-	25	Greet your children and may
	τά σου παιδιά ἅμα τῇ συμ-		they be preserved from harm – together with
	βίῳ σου. προσαγορεύει		your wife. Brother Aphynchis
	σε ὁ ἀδελφός Ἀφυγχις. τὸ συν-		sends his regards. Send
	δεδεμένον ἐπιστόλιον ἐσφρα-		the enclosed letter sealed
	γισμένον λα' τ'κιω ἀπόστειλον	30	with a ring-seal
	εἰς Ἀλεξανδρίαν τῶ ἀδελφῶ		to Alexandria to the brother
	Ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὐχομαι	m.2	I pray for your health,
	ἀδελφέ.		brother.
	Θεοδοσίῳ δι' ἀσφαλοῦς φίλου	m.1	Theodosius by a safe friend
	διὰ τάχους ἐπιδὴ ἀναγκαῖά	35	speedily because it is vital
	ἔστιν πρὸς τοὺς φίλους.		for our friends

Verso (↓):

Ἀμμ[ώνιος(?)] ξυστάρχης
Ἀνδρονίκω ἀδελφῶ.
From Amm(oni)us?, systarch, to brother
Andronicus.

11 εῖ ed.pr. 12 ἡγεμῶ[ν] ed.pr. 15 Ηραῖσκον 17 pap. συνῦστων οἷ[ς] ed.pr. 17-19 αὐτον - παρέστω
 punctuation Youtie 20 pap. Ηραῖσκος 28 Ἄπυργις ed.pr., Daniel 30 l. δακτυλίω Youtie Λατ'κίω ed.pr.
 31-4 punctuation Youtie 35 l. ἐπειδὴ pap. αναγ' καια 37 ζυστάρχης Daniel ζυστοφο... ed. pr.

Three points suggested to the original editor(s) that this could possibly be a Christian letter: the references to brothers, the sense of secrecy together with the need for introductions, and the name Theodosius (Jewish or Christian; on onomastics cf. Introduction VI 3; Section III). On the other hand it was argued that the *abaskantos* wish (25) was something that 'a Christian should not employ'. However, the *abaskantos* wish is not a definite indicator of paganism (cf. Introduction, 6.4 (ii)). The editors also felt the term *xystophoros*, which they read on the verso, might possibly have been a pagan cult title. However, in his 'Early Christianity in Egypt', Roberts was prepared to allow the letter as a 'possible, but unlikely addition to the list of Christian letters' (95, n.2).

There are four references to brothers (*adelphoi*) in the extant part of this papyrus (of which the first nine lines are lost). The letter comes from a man (possibly Ammonius though the reading is not certain) to Andronicus, and enclosed two other letters, one for Eutolmius and containing an introduction for Heraiscus, and one for Theodosius. A 'brotherhood' is evident, as Eutolmius (13), Heraiscus (l.15), Aphynchis (28) and the addressee Andronicus (31 and back) are all called *adelphos*. The original editors also considered the possibility that these references could fit a military as well as a Christian context, and the reference to ὁ κυριός μου ἡγεμῶν (12) would accord with a military context (on the term 'brother' cf. K.H. Schelkle, 'Bruder', *RAC* sv.).

However, a detailed study of the papyrus by Daniel showed that ζυστάρχης and not ζυστοφόρος (unattested elsewhere in the papyri and not a cult term in any case; Daniel, 39; *LSJ* s.v.) was the correct reading at l.37, and adduced a close parallel from PSI 3.236. ζυστάρχης was an honorific title for an important official of an athletic guild who presided over contests (Daniel, 40). The 'brothers' are fellow guild-members; ἡγεμῶν can refer to the president of a guild (Daniel, 40-1). The letter, then, should be placed in a guild context, rather than a military or Christian one. The similarity of the terminology nevertheless illustrates the degree to which Christian communities can be compared with such 'associations' (cf. E.A. Judge, 'The ecumenical synod of Dionysiac artists', *New Docs* 9, 2002, §23).

Ed.pr. took the lines from τὸ συνδεδεμένον in ll.29-30 to the foot of the front as comprising a sentence to ἀδελφῶ (31), the farewell (in Ammonius' own hand), followed by a post-script. Yet as Youtie noted, it makes more sense for ll.29-36 to be read as a single sentence, continuing past the farewell formula. For a parallel to sentences continuing past the farewell formula, see P.Kell. 5 Copt. 17 and 22. It is possible Ammonius signed the letter before it was written. Youtie also suggested λατ'κίω (30), which ed.pr. took as a personal name, was a mistake for δακτυλίω; for a parallel, see PSI 4.333 (257/6): ἐσφραγισμένοι τῶι ἐμῶι δακτυλίωι.