The Textualization of Women's Letters from Roman Egypt: Analyzing Historical Framing Practices from a Multi-Modal Point of View*

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Introduction

The status and role of women in antiquity, as well as the social construction of gender, has become an expanding field of study since the 1970s, not only in classics, but also in related fields such as ancient history, archeology, and art history.[1] As most of our textual evidence originates from Egypt, particular attention has been paid to the position of women there. Studies have focused on places[2] and periods[3] that are specific to Egypt, but at the same time findings from Egypt have also been included in studies of women's relationship to broader societal topics, such as women and the law,[4] women as widows,[5] women and motherhood,[6] women and Christianity,[7] and women and education,[8] among others.

Scholars have also dedicated considerable energy to making available the textual corpora that we have: important sourcebooks were published by Mary Lefkowitz and Maureen Fant,[9] Jane Rowlandson,[10] and Roger Bagnall and Raffaella Cribiore.[11] In this chapter, I will engage in particular with Bagnall and Cribiore, a publication that goes beyond the traditional sourcebook in the sense that the authors also offer a concise commentary on the linguistic, paleographical, and material characteristics of each text, in order to compensate for the relatively little we know about the context of writing.[12] The book thus offers an important stepping stone for research into the *textualization* of women's letters; that is, the study of how consciousness and thought materialize into text.[13] Research of this type has a long tradition when it comes to literary texts with an oral background, such as the Homeric epics or the New Testament, but in the area of documentary culture has attracted relatively little attention so far.[14]

Bagnall and Cribiore most explicitly address questions of textualization in the introduction to their volume, where they make an argument for using late medieval letters as comparative evidence to alleviate the lack of context one is confronted with in Greco-Roman and late antique

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[1] See, e.g., McClure 2001, 3; James and Dillon 2012, 1.

[2] See, e.g., Wilfong 2002.

[3] See, e.g., Pomeroy 1984 (Hellenistic); Salmenkivi 2017 (Roman); Fournet 2012 (late antique).

[4] See, e.g., Arjava 1996.

[5] See, e.g., Krause 1995.

[6] See, e.g., Nifosi 2019.

[7] See, e.g., Krawiec 2002.

[8] See, e.g., Haines-Eitzen 2000.

[9] Lefkowitz and Fant [1982] 2016.

[10] Rowlandson 1998.

[11] Bagnall and Cribiore 2006 (also see the expanded online edition from 2008).

[12] Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 25.

[13] Ready 2019 distinguishes "textualization" from "entextualization," the latter referring to how an instance of discourse is made detachable from its original, local context (e.g., how the Homeric epics took shape, independently from medial considerations).

[14] Scholarly attention has mostly focused on scribes and dictation. See, e.g., Verhoogt 2009; Evans 2012; Halla-aho 2018.

women's letters. They do not engage with modern scholarship in fields such as linguistics, semiotics, and communication theory, however, and *vice versa*, modern scholarship in these fields has hardly paid any attention to our subject. In this chapter, I want to argue that the consideration of insights and concepts developed in these fields has the potential to substantially enrich ongoing discussions. One concept I want to focus on is that of "framing."[15] Social semioticians such as Gunther Kress view *semiosis* (that which I referred to as consciousness and thought above) as an ongoing, endless activity, which can be materialized and actualized in particular social situations through texts belonging to various generic types ("textualized"). Frames in this context refer to "the formal semiotic resources which separate one semiotic entity from its environment "pre-frame" or from other semiotic entities";[16] by doing so, they provide unity and coherence to what is framed, and guide and enable interpretation by the reader.[17]

This chapter is structured as follows: after more extensively discussing the concept of framing and its relationship to central terms such as "textualization" and "literacy/orality" (§ 1), I present different types of framing practices in women's letters (§ 2), distinguishing between documents with "maximal" vs. "minimal" discourse planning. Rather than maintaining a strict separation between these two types, I argue that they are best viewed in terms of a continuum (§ 3). I conclude the chapter by discussing the relationship between textualization and social context (§ 4), drawing attention to differences in communicative functions. Rather than analyzing the entire corpus of women's letters, I focus on texts from the Roman period (I–III CE), the period from which most of our letters stem.[18]

1. Textualization and Discourse Planning

Previous scholarship has suggested that written texts could come about in a variety of ways in antiquity. For example, situating the composition and writing of St. Paul's letters in the broader context of first-century letter writing, Ernest Richards suggested that secretaries could take on various roles, including that of transcriber, contributor, or composer.[19] A similar conception underlies Bagnall and Cribiore's work, where three main scenarios are suggested for the coming into being of women's letters:[20] 1) a woman could provide a scribe with general directions on the matter she wanted to communicate, not participating in the writing event herself; 2) a woman could dictate a letter to a professional scribe or member of the family, adding the final salutation and perhaps also

[15] The notion "frame" has had a long history in a broad range of fields, including philosophy, psychology, sociology, artificial intelligence, narratology, and linguistics, without there being a "unified frame theory with specific terms and definitions" (Bednarek 2005, 688). Space does not permit extensive discussion here. For a good introduction, see, e.g., MacLachlan and Reid 1994.

[16] Kress 2010, 149.

[17] Compare the physical frames around paintings.

[18] There are about 170 Greek letters from this period. Some of the letters discussed here were not included in Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, or the 2008 online edition of that volume: new letters have been edited since then, and some letters also seem to have been overlooked. Not included in the present study are letters where it is uncertain whether the sender is female, either because of the state of preservation (e.g., Ἰσιδώρᾳ in SB VI 9165 [1–50 CE]) or the status of the name as male or female (e.g., Αὐνῆν in P.Louvre I 67, l. 2 [275–299 CE]). Also not included are party invitations by women (e.g., P.Coll.Youtie I 52 [II–III CE]), which are rather short and stereotypical.

[19] Richards 2004, 56–67.

[20] Cf. Huebner 2018, 165.

the date herself; and 3) when she had an education, was able to write with a certain ease, and thought the circumstances justified it, a woman might decide to write the letter herself.

Bagnall and Cribiore's approach is explicitly oriented towards the medial process of committing thought/speech to paper (*Verschriftung*), focusing as it does on who did the writing. The (complementary) approach that I want to develop in this chapter is instead focused more on the conceptual mechanisms that make a document a *text* (*Verschriftlichung*).[21] This means closely investigating the linguistic and typographic[22] features that characterize those texts, and more generally looking at the different types of textuality that are attested.

An interesting starting point in regard to those different types of textuality is the ever-growing scholarship on orality and literacy: whereas previously orality was strictly related to the medium of communication, more recently scholars have argued for a distinction between "medial" and "conceptual" orality. Particularly well-known in this regard is the work of Peter Koch and Wulf Oesterreicher, who consider conceptual orality in terms of a continuum, ranging from informal/oral on the one hand to formal/literate on the other. They characterize these two poles (known as "Sprache der Nähe" and "Sprache der Distanz" respectively) in terms of an open-ended set of emotive and situational dichotomies, such as private vs. public, dialogue vs. monologue, spontaneity vs. reflection, and involvement vs. detachment.[23] In what follows, I would like to add depth and breadth to the discussion, by suggesting 1) that conceptual orality and literacy need not be limited to language (§ 1.1), and 2) that types of discourse are best studied by taking into account relevant communicative functions, categories, and levels (§§ 1.2–3).

1.1. Extending conceptions of orality and literacy

A conceptual distinction between orality and literacy need not be confined to language: other semiotic resources[24] ("codes") also form an inherent part of textuality, and can, therefore, be included in the discussion. This seems to be recognized by Koch and Oesterreicher, who place text types on a horizontal continuum ranging from "Konzeption gesprochen" to "Konzeption geschrieben," also acknowledging that these two types can be further classified as having either a graphic code or phonic code.[25] In an earlier discussion, Oesterreicher had already noted that the written production of so-called "Schreibnovizen" clearly illustrates the conceptual continuum of graphic realization:

> Wenn wir uns für einen Augenblick einmal allein dem konzeptionellen Kontinuum in graphischer Realisierung zuwenden, so zeigt uns die Textproduktion der sogenannten Schreibnovizen, also ungeübter oder ungebildeter Schreiber, mit großer Klarheit, in welchen Punkten von ihnen die Möglichkeiten der Schriftkommunikation nicht genutzt

[21] For *Verschriftung* and *Verschriftlichung*, see, e.g., Oesterreicher 1993.
[22] I use "typography" here in a broad sense (and following Sue Walker) "to refer to the visual organization of written language in whatever way it is produced" (2001, 2).
[23] See, e.g., Oesterreicher 1993, 269–70; Koch and Oesterreicher 2007, 351.
[24] For the notion of "semiotic resource," see, e.g., Kress 2010, 5–8.
[25] Koch and Oesterreicher 2007, 349.

werden (können). In ihren Texten erfüllen sie nicht oder nur mangehalft die Anforderungen einer distanzsprachlichen Schriftkommunikation.[26]

Such a continuum approach towards the graphic code fits in nicely with paleographical observations regarding documentary sources from antiquity. Bagnall and Cribiore, for example, recognize three types of handwriting, called "documentary" (rapid, ligatured), "secretarial" (legible, well-spaced), and "personal" (lack of expertise).[27] They argue that these three types form a continuum, ranging from very experienced to very inexperienced. A similar argument was made by Alan Mugridge,[28] who assigns Greek handwriting from the fourth century BCE to the fourth century CE to two spectra, one of *writing* ("book" hand vs. "documentary" hand) and one of *writers* ("professional" vs. "non-professional"). With regard to the latter, he notes that "it would seem fair to posit a spectrum between the most regular work of a professional scribe and the most irregular work of an ordinary writer."[29]

Oesterreicher relates graphic properties to the notion of "Sprache der Distanz"; for example, when he refers to "die anforderungen einer distanzsprachlichen schriftkommunikation." Since I find this terminology somewhat vague and ambiguous, especially when it comes to typographic properties, I will refer to *planned* vs. *unplanned* discourse instead, following an earlier proposal by Elinor Ochs.[30] In her formulation, planned discourse "has been thought out and organized (designed) prior to its expression," whereas unplanned discourse "lacks forethought and organizational preparation."[31] Ochs explicitly notes that the distinction should be thought of as a continuum, and that "most of the discourse we encounter in the course of day-to-day communications falls at neither extreme. We usually find ourselves producing and listening to language that is relatively unplanned or relatively planned."[32]

1.2. Communicative functions and systems

As Ochs notes, it would be somewhat simplistic to refer to planned vs. unplanned discourse without further qualification, as "to characterize a discourse simply as planned or unplanned underrates the social behavior carried out and the breadth of planning demanded in particular situations."[33] Ochs therefore proposes to refine her observations by distinguishing between two categories, called the "referential" function of language (the use of language to refer and to predicate), and the "non-referential" function of language.

A similar argument has been made in Systemic Functional Linguistics, where it is claimed that language serves three major functions: ideational (construing our experience of the world and our consciousness; e.g., "pen" = instrument for writing), textual (organizing discourse and creating continuity and flow in texts; e.g., "I love music, so I will go to the festival," with *so* indicating a

[26] Oesterreicher 1993, 280.
[27] Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 42–45.
[28] Mugridge 2010.
[29] Mugridge 2010, 580.
[30] Ochs 1979.
[31] Ochs 1979, 55.
[32] Ochs 1979, 55.
[33] Ochs 1979, 56.

consequential relationship between two clauses), and interpersonal (enacting personal and social relations; e.g., "I might go," with *might* indicating the probability of realization). Social semioticians have argued that the same three functions are relevant for other semiotic resources, too. A ground-breaking study in this regard was Kress and Theo van Leeuwen's *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*,[34] a book that intended to set out a "grammar" of the meaning-making possibilities available in visual-based communicative artifacts. Kress and van Leeuwen did so by discussing the systems of choice available for each of these three functions, recognizing, for example, for the textual function, the systems of "information value," "salience," and "framing."

Whereas earlier studies viewed framing as specific to visual communication, more recent scholarship has come to realize that framing is essential to meaning making in all *modes*, not only linguistic but also visual. This extension of the concept is explicitly recognized by van Leeuwen when he writes that "in *Reading Images* (1996), Gunther Kress and I discussed framing as something specific to visual communication. Since then it has become clear to us that framing is a multimodal principle."[35] Fuller discussion of framing has been taken up by Kress in particular,[36] who underscores the importance of framing for meaning making in general. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, Kress relates framing to the materialization of semiosis, text representing "the focal formal unit of social-semiotic punctuation." Kress has raised a number of important issues in this regard, such as the extension of the concept of "intertextuality," the trade-off between semiotic resources in textualization, the specific kinds of textual framings that exist (at the level of the text and below), and the historical development of frames and framings, among others.

1.3. Levels of discourse

Apart from relating planned and unplanned discourse to communicative functions and categories (such as the textual function and framing), it is also beneficial to relate it to distinct communicative levels. As is generally acknowledged, discourse does not come as an undivided whole: it is built up from smaller "building blocks" ("segments" or "chunks"), which together make up a coherent whole.[37] There is no consensus as to what the smallest building blocks look like, and how they are related to each other. In their discussion on the function of conjunctions, for example, Stanley Porter and Matthew O'Donnell, basing themselves on the Systemic Functional model, recognize at the smallest discourse level the conjoining of words, moving from there to the conjoining of word groups, clauses, clause complexes, paragraphs, and discourses.[38] Michel Buijs, on the other hand, in his discussion of clause combining in narrative, only recognizes three hierarchical levels, called the "development unit," "build up unit," and paragraph.[39]

Another problem surrounding discourse segmentation is the fact that it has often been seen as a purely linguistic phenomenon. As Anna Bonifazi and David Elmer recognize, however, "discourse marking is an inherently multi-modal activity, involving linguistic, para-linguistic, and

[34] Kress and van Leeuwen 1996.
[35] van Leeuwen 2005, 14.
[36] E.g., Kress 2000; 2004, 122–39; 2010, 149–54.
[37] See, e.g., Ronald Langacker (2001), who proposes the notion of a "current discourse space," which is continually updated as expressions are encountered.
[38] Porter and O'Donnell 2007, 8–9.
[39] Buijs 2005, 139.

extra-linguistic features."[40] The means by which discourse boundaries are created may reinforce each other, but this is not necessarily the case: as Bonifazi and Elmer again note, "they can often be at odds, creating expressive tensions that complicate efforts to describe a single, unambiguous organizational scheme."[41]

When it comes to Ancient Greek, studies have mostly focused on prosody. Much less work has been done in the visual domain, for which we can turn to recent studies in multimodality, which have started to analyze compatibilities and mismatches between semiotic resources, language, and typography, in particular, and have also made an effort to distinguish relevant typographic units. Paul Thibault, for example, has proposed a "graphological" rank scale, on a par with a linguistic rank scale, distinguishing between as many as eight different levels.[42] For our present purposes, I will limit myself to distinguishing between three levels for both language and typography: units at each of these levels can be seen as a type of "framing,"[43] with their own framing features, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Multi-modal discourse segmentation.

	Language	**Framing features**	**Typography**	**Framing features**
Micro-level framing	Clause/sentence	E.g., particles, subordinating conjunctions	Line	E.g., line fillers, word splitting, enlargement of letters
Meso-level framing	Thematic unit	E.g., particles, formulaic phrases	Lay-out unit	E.g., blank space, alignment, lectional signs
Macro-level framing	Generic part	E.g., formulaic phrases	Lay-out part	E.g., blank space, alignment, lectional signs, indentation
	Text	E.g., formulaic phrases	Page	E.g., margins, material substrate

At the micro-level, the smallest linguistic unit of analysis (at least in this chapter) is the clause, whose relevant framing features include subordinating and coordinating conjunctions (particles). Typographically speaking, the relevant unit of analysis is not the clause but the line: framing features include word-splitting at the end of the line, line fillers, and the enlargement of letters. At the meso-level, thematic units are relevant and can be indicated by coordinating conjunctions, or by certain formulaic phrases. Corresponding to these thematic units from a typographical point of view are lay-out units; that is, the visual clustering of lines. Lay-out units are

[40] Bonifazi and Elmer 2012, 91.
[41] Bonifazi and Elmer 2012, 91.
[42] Thibault 2007.
[43] I follow Wolf 2006 in restricting the term "frame" to abstract, conceptual entities (that is, elements of thought), and "framings" to the codings of those abstract entities. This is in contrast to Kress (2004, 122), who argues that frames can be both concrete and material (such as a full stop or semicolon) and intangible (such as social and cultural frames).

distinguishable by a number of typographical features, such as the use of blank spaces, alignment, and lectional signs. At the macro-level, we can recognize generic parts such as the "opening," "body," or "closing" of letters as the relevant unit of analysis. Such generic parts are typically introduced by formulaic phrases.

Corresponding to these generic parts from a typographical point of view are lay-out parts, the largest type of visual clustering below the level of the text as a whole. The features that effect such clustering are partly similar to those that indicate lay-out units. As can be seen in Table 1, I have also included "text" in its entirety under the macro-level: one could argue that formulaic phrases (especially initial ones) do not simply introduce a generic part, but also indicate that a document belongs to a generic type. The typographic equivalent would be the page, which is framed by elements such as the margins or the material substrate (a potsherd framing in a different way than a papyrus).[44]

Finally, although this proposed scheme covers many features, both linguistic and typographical,[45] it leaves out others, such as handwriting, lexical choice, and orthographic and morphological "correctness." Such features may be considered conceptually different for two reasons. First, they are more concerned with quality of execution than with the way thought is organized and are therefore less narrowly related to framing. Second, they concern levels of writing below the ones that are considered here, such as the grapheme, morpheme, and word.

2. Discourse Planning in Women's Letters

Having now established the analytical framework for multi-modal discourse segmentation, I can combine it with usage evidence drawn from our corpus. In the following, I will look first at maximal (§ 2.1) and then at minimal discourse planning (§ 2.2), considering the micro-level, meso-level, and macro-level for each, with further divisions in terms of language and typography.

2.1. Maximal discourse planning

2.1.1. The micro-level

Language. Asyndeton is avoided, and clauses/sentences are explicitly related through the use of various particles,[46] particularly καί and δέ (additive relations), γάρ and οὖν (causal relations), and ἀλλά (adversative relations). Combinations of particles, well known from Classical Greek, are not unattested: they include καὶ γάρ, λοιπὸν οὖν, and διὸ οὖν, as well correlative particles such as οὔτε ... οὔτε, μήτε ... μήτε, and μέν ... δέ. In a limited number of letters, rhetorically heavier combinations can be found, such as οὐ μόνον ... ἀλλὰ καί (e.g., P.Ryl. II 243, ll. 4–5 [II CE]),[47] πρῶτον μέν ... ἔπειτα (e.g., P.Oxy. IX 1217, ll. 4–5 [III CE]), and τοίνυν (e.g., P.Flor. III 332, l. 14 [113–120 CE]).

Writers can integrate clauses more narrowly by opting for clause complexing[48] (adverbial subordination and complementation), rather than clause combining. The highest degree of clausal

[44] See Torallas Tovar, this volume.
[45] These features are discussed in Bagnall and Cribiore 2006.
[46] My use of the term "particle" includes what some scholars call a "conjunction."
[47] References to papyri include the edition: http://papyri.info/docs/checklist.
[48] The terminology is that of Christian Matthiessen (2002), who distinguishes between clause combining (co-ordination), clause complexing (adverbial subordination/complementation), and clause embedding (relativization). I will not further go into clause embedding for reasons of space.

integration[49] in this regard is achieved through non-finite strategies: so, for example, conjunct participles are used rather than combining finite verbs, as in καλῶς οὖν ποιήσαντες⏐δότε (P.Oxy. I 116, ll. 5–6 [II CE]) "please give," or ἔρρωσο ἀσπαζόμενός μου λείαν τὰ⏐τέκνα (P.Princ. II 67, ll. 5–6 [I – II CE]) "farewell, greeting my children warmly" (trans. Bagnall and Cribiore). In a couple of letters, a series of conjunct participles is connected with the main verb, as in διὸ ἐρωτηθεὶς ἐκλαβὼν⏐ἀντί-γραφον καὶ βαλὼν εἰς ἀγγῖον (l. ἀγγεῖον) ⏐σφρᾰ́γι[σ]ον (P.Gen. II 1, 74, ll. 8–10 [139–145 CE]) "therefore please take a copy, seal it and deposit it in a jar," where the imperative σφρᾰ́γι[σ]ον is preceded by three aorist participles, the temporal order of which does not seem to be entirely straightforward.[50] A high degree of clausal integration can also be achieved through non-finite complementation: for example, writers sometimes use the polite καλῶς ποιέω as a complement-taking verb, rather than as a conjunct participle, as in καλῶς⏐πυήσις (l. ποιήσεις) τοῖς ἀναδιδουντί (l. ἀναδιδοῦσί) συ (l. σοι) ταῦτά μου τὰ γράμματα δοῦνε̣ (l. δοῦναι) (P.Oxy. XIV 1773, ll. 16–18 [III CE]) "please give the people who deliver to you this letter of mine" (trans. Bagnall and Cribiore) or καλῶς οὖν ποιήσεις μείνας παρὰ σοί (PSI IX 1042, ll. 6–7 [III CE]) "please stay where you are" (trans. Bagnall and Cribiore).

Such non-finite complementation strategies are employed quite frequently, the nominative/accusative with infinitive in particular, after verb classes such as manipulative verbs (ἀναγκάζω, ἐπιτρέπω, ποιέω, etc.), verbs of communication (γράφω, ἐρωτάω, λέγω, etc.), and psychological verbs (δοκέω, θέλω, οἴομαι, etc.), rather than the combination of a complementizer and a finite verb, such as ὅτι with the indicative or ἵνα with the subjunctive. The situation is different when it comes to adverbial subordination, where the use of an adverbial subordinator and a finite verb is more standard and reflects the broad range of adverbial relations that may hold between a subordinate and a main clause. A broad range of such patterns can be found in the areas of causality (e.g., ἐπεί, ἐπειδή, ἐπείπερ, ὅτι, ὡς with the indicative), condition (e.g., εἰ/ἐάν with the indicative/subjunctive/optative), and purpose (e.g., ἵνα, ὅπως with the subjunctive). It is interesting to note, however, that in the areas of time, cause, and purpose, writers sometimes use the substantivized infinitive as an alternative to finite subordination patterns, as in διὰ τὸ μὴ βλέπεσθαί σε ὑπ' ἐμοῦ (P.Oxy. XLII 3059, l. 4 [II CE]) "because you are not being seen by me."[51]

Typography. At the micro-level, explicit attention is paid to the main typographic unit, the line, its ending in particular. Writers often attempt to reduce the space between the last letter of the line and the right margin, and thus to end the line in a more "harmonious" way,[52] by using line fillers. Such line fillers usually appear as extensions of the final stroke of the last letter,[53] in particular letters

[49] On degrees of clausal integration, see, e.g., Chafe 1985; Matthiessen 2002.

[50] The genitive absolute construction is also attested in our corpus. See, e.g., P.Oxy. XXXIII 2680, ll. 3–4 (I–III CE); P.Flor.III 332, l. 8 (113–120 CE); P.Oxy. XIV 1773, ll. 9–10 (III CE).

[51] For similar examples, see, e.g., SB VI 9026, ll. 4–5 (II CE); P.Ryl. II 232, l. 3 (II CE); P.Oxy. XXXIII 2680, l. 23 (II–III CE); P.Oxy. X 1295, l. 4 (II–III CE).

[52] Cf. Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 343.

[53] Occasionally, strokes are introduced that are separate from the last letter, as in P.Oxy. XXXVI 2789 (242–299 CE), a document containing two letters from a certain Cleopatra, where lines 8 (the last line of the first letter) and 11 (the third line of the second letter) end in a separate stroke.

such as *alpha*, *sigma*, *tau*, and *upsilon*. An example can be seen in Figure 1, where *alpha* has been extended three times in five lines.[54]

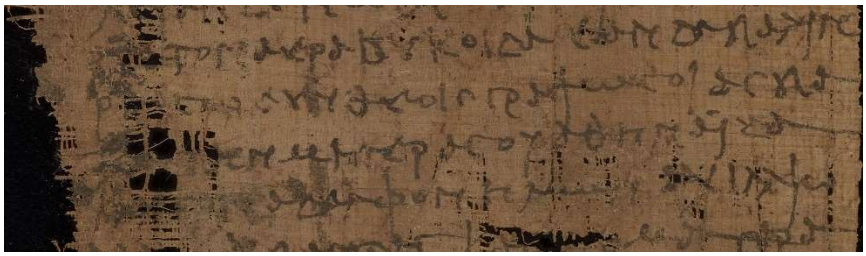

Fig. 1. Line fillers in P.Mert. II 82, ll. 15–19. © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (CBL MP 82).

When it comes to the beginning of the line, initial letters are aligned vertically. Occasionally, however, writers make an attempt to mark the beginning of the line by enlarging letters: this can be seen in documents such as P.Gen. II 1 74 (139–145 CE) and SB VI 9120 (ca. 31–64 CE).[55] A similar practice can sometimes be found at the end of the line, though less consistently. In P.Giss. Apoll. 8 (115 CE), for example, the final *nu* seems to be written in a larger size (especially on lines 11, 12, and 14).[56]

In other documents, rather than (or in combination with) extending or enlarging letters, space is reduced by writing until the right edge of the document and, if necessary, splitting words over two lines. Word splitting occurs rather frequently in a number of documents,[57] such as P.Oxy. LXXV 5062 (III CE), with fifteen word splits in thirty-eight lines;[58] P.Oxy. VI 930 (II–III CE), with thirteen word splits in twenty-eight lines; P.Oxy. XIV 1773 (III CE), with seventeen word splits in thirty-nine lines; P.Mert. II 81 (II CE), with seventeen word splits in forty-two lines, and P.Flor. III 332 (ca. 113–120 CE), with eleven word splits in twenty-six lines. Whereas in these letters one word split occurs on average every 2.5 lines, other writers seem to avoid word splitting. Several letters in our corpus only have one or two word splits, and some (usually shorter letters) even have none, including P.Oxy. IX 1217 (III CE) and PSI IX 1080 (III CE?).

As is well-known, literary and non-literary documents from our period were written in *scriptio continua* (that is, without modern word, clause, and sentence division), so that the line, rather than the sentence, served as the main unit of visual perception.[59] Although it is sometimes said that *scriptio continua* had no punctuation, this must be qualified. William Johnson, for example, notes that it is not true that ancient books lacked punctuation; rather, their punctuation system was much less elaborated (and less systematic), and mostly focused on major points of division, such as the marking of periods or changes between speakers in drama and dialogue, for instance.[60] Scholars

[54] For similar examples, see SB VI 9271 (I–II CE); SB XIV 12024 (II CE); P.Mert. II 81 (II CE).
[55] Other examples include P.Ryl. II 243 (II CE); P.Oxy. XII 1581 (II CE); P.Oxy. LXXV 5062 (III CE).
[56] On the enlargement of individual letters, compare Sarri 2018, 118–20.
[57] Word splitting/syllabification has not received a lot of scholarly attention (but see now Depauw, this volume). Some observations can be found in the standard grammars.
[58] Line counts do not include the address on the verso side.
[59] See, e.g., Turner 1987, 7.
[60] Johnson 2011.

of non-literary sources have observed an increasing tendency to adopt diacritical signs (accents, breathings, punctuation marks) in letters and petitions starting from the fourth century CE,[61] a tendency which is also reflected in women's letters from this period.[62]

Even before the late antique period, a number of diacritical signs appear in non-literary papyri, such as the *diaeresis* to separate vowels, and the *apostrophe* and *diastole* to separate syllables and words.[63] In several letters from our corpus, too, *diaeresis* is used,[64] both in its proper, "organic" use,[65] to separate vowels that do not belong together, and in its "inorganic" use, to mark an initial vowel. In P.Mert. II 83 (175–199 CE), for example, *diaeresis* occurs fourteen times in twenty-five lines, always with ι and υ, often to disambiguate vowels between and inside words, as in καὶ ὑφειρηκέναι (ὕφειρηκεναι papyrus; l. 6) or ὁ υἱός (ὕϊ̣ος papyrus; l. 15). Interestingly, however, *diaeresis* is also used four times with ἵνα, only once to disambiguate between vowels (l. 10). In the other three cases, *diaeresis* marks the start of the function word, and thus also of the subordinate clause.

Blank spaces were also used as a lay-out device.[66] Again, this mostly seems to have been the case for macro-level framing purposes. Eric Turner refers to the use of blank spaces to separate a lemma from a comment, to close a period, or to indicate a change of speaker in dramatic texts.[67] Interestingly, there are several documents in our corpus which make use of blank spaces at the micro-level: in P.Hamb. II 192 (III CE), for example, each new sentence of the body is preceded by a significant space (ll. 9, 14, 17, 23, 25; see Fig. 2). The same can be observed in P.Oxy. XII 1581 (II CE), where each of the three new sentences in the part of the body that is completely preserved is preceded by a space. In PSI IX 1080 (III CE), blank spaces are placed between almost every word (and sentence); in a number of cases, clauses/sentences are separated by a horizontal line extending from the final stroke of the final letter of the previous clause/sentence (ll. 4, 7, 10).[68]

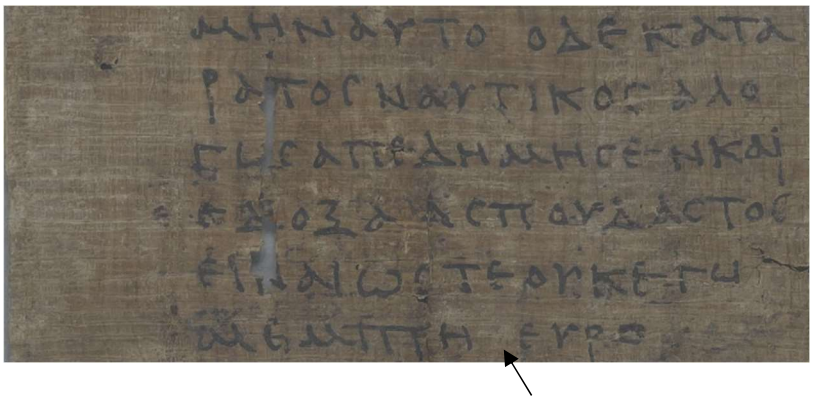

Fig. 2. Word spaces in P.Hamb. II 192, ll. 9–14 (III CE). © Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg (Gr. 404).

[61] See, e.g., Fournet 1994; 2009, 36.
[62] See, e.g., SB XVIII 13612 (IV CE); SB XVIII 13762 (550–599 CE).
[63] See Turner 1987, 10–11, and more recently Fournet 2020.
[64] The use of the apostrophe is less common in our corpus: see, e.g., BGU VII 1680, l. 8 (III CE).
[65] The terminology is Eric Turner's (1987, 10).
[66] Turner 1987, 8.
[67] Raffaele Luiselli (2008, 688), however, notes that "epistolary texts of documentary character admit blank spaces between words more frequently than literary manuscripts."
[68] On this practice, compare Turner 1987, 8.

2.1.2. The meso-level

Language. Generally speaking, the meso-level is less heavily marked than the micro- or macro-level. A number of linguistic features are used to distinguish between thematic units in the body. Most notable in this regard is the alternation between καί and δέ, indicating thematic continuity vs. discontinuity in the Classical period.[69] Whereas such pragmatic distinctions were breaking down in the post-classical period, in the lower registers in particular, some writers still made use of them. Thus, for example P.Oxy. X 1291 (30 CE) contains two thematic units (ll. 3–8, bread; ll. 8–12, going to Alexandria), which are separated by δέ. Similarly, SB XVI 12589 (II CE) has three thematic units (ll. 4–5, you are well; ll. 5–13, message for Par…?; l. 14, additional request), the last two of which are introduced by δέ. Inside the second (and longest) thematic unit, καί and δέ are used to indicate lower level continuity vs. discontinuity.[70]

In some letters, the use of δέ is over-extended, at least in comparison to Classical usage: in PSI IX 1080 (III CE), for example, δέ is used six times[71] in just twelve lines, even when there is very little thematic change. In the body of this text, the two main thematic units (ll. 3–7, a new house; ll. 8–11, Bolphius), are separated not just by δέ, but additionally by the introductory formula εἰδέναι σε θέλω, "I want you to know," which is more often used at the beginning of the body (sometimes with γινώσκειν instead of εἰδέναι).[72] The shorter form of this formula, the imperative γεινώσκετε (l. γινώσκετε), "know," appears in the middle of the body of another document from our corpus, P.Mich. VIII 507, ll. 8–9 (ca. 107–185 CE).

Typography. There is relatively little evidence for typographic framing at the meso-level:[73] one could argue that the introduction of blank spaces between sentences[74] is in fact a feature of framing at the meso- rather than micro-level, since letters from our corpus are often relatively short, and the introduction of two or three significant blank spaces can already give the suggestion of a meso-level structure. An interesting letter from this perspective is P.Mert. II 83 (175–199 CE), where three significant spaces split up the main lay-out part of the text.

Another type of meso-level typographic framing can be found in letters where the opening and/or closing greetings are not placed on a separate line, but rather belong to the main lay-out part of the text, being slightly separated through the use of a vertical blank space. An interesting example is P.Princ. II 67 (I–II CE), a short letter from Theanô to her husband Dionysius, which starts with the usual opening greeting on lines one and two. Whereas some care has been taken to insert blank spaces between the major constituents of this greeting, the body of the letter continues on line 2, right after χαίρειν, and the repeated closing greeting (ἔρρωσο … πάλιν ἔρρωσο) is not visually

[69] See, e.g., Bakker (1993) for δέ as a boundary marker. As Buijs (2005, 137–38) notes, thematic discontinuity typically co-occurs with a break in one or more coherence strands, such as a change of participants (referential coherence), time period (temporal coherence), location (locational coherence), or type of event, such as background vs. foreground (action-event coherence).

[70] For similar examples, see P.Oxy. XIV 1758 (II CE); P.Oxy. XLII 3059 (II CE); PSI IX 1042 (III CE); PSI IX 1080 (III CE).

[71] Or seven times, if we assume that the uncertain reading of lines 9 to 10 (ἔπεμψά σοι δ̣ετριο̣ν [....]) includes a form of δέ.

[72] See, e.g., SB VI 9120, l. 3 (ca. 31–64 CE); P.Oxy. XIV 1773, ll. 5–6 (III CE); BGU VII 1680, l. 3 (III CE).

[73] Compare Luiselli 2008, 689.

[74] As noted in § 2.1.1.

separated either: only the date on line 6 is slightly separated visually through a blank vertical space.[75]

What happens more often is that the initial and final lay-out parts are internally structured. P.Oxy. X 1291 (30 CE), for example, has three lay-out parts, two of which seem to be internally structured above the sentence-level: the main lay-out part consists of the body, which also has on its last line (l. 12) the closing greeting ἔρρω(σο), which is visually separated through a vertical blank space (*vacat*). The final lay-out part consists of the date, which is placed on two separate lines (one for the year, one for the month), with a *paragraphos* between. Whereas the first part of the date has the regular left–right alignment, the second part is aligned to the right, which underscores typographic structuring at the meso-level.

2.1.3. The macro-level

Language. In documentary genres such as letters, petitions, and contracts, macro-level framing is done through a set of formulaic phrases.[76] Such formulaic phrases not only set apart the opening and closing from its body, but also signal to the reader the genre to which a text belongs: in petitions, for example, a different closing greeting is used than in letters (διευτύχει vs. ἔρρωσο). This is not to say that generic parts are always framed in the same way, as writers could, for example, add intensifiers or forms of address, as well combining formulaic phrases, omitting them, or using shorter variants.[77]

Apart from the name of the initiator, addressee, and opening greeting, the opening part may also include a health wish and *proskynêma* formula.[78] An elaborate, eight-line opening can be found, for example, in P.Oxy. XIV 1758 (II CE).[79] Similarly, in the closing the farewell greeting can be accompanied by elements such as a health wish, salutations, and the date. In P.Flor. III 332, ll. 15–21 (ca. 113–120 CE), for example, the farewell greeting is preceded by a health wish and a personal request that the addressee write about his health.

Sometimes, writers attempt to introduce some originality in the closing. In P.Princ. II 67, ll. 5–6 (I–II CE), for example, the writer integrated the farewell greeting and salutations more closely than usual by using a participle for the salutations, but then felt obliged to formally close the letter by using another farewell greeting, accompanied by the date: ἔρρωσο ἀσπαζόμενός μου λείαν | τὰ τέκνα. πάλιν ἔρρωσο. Φαρμοῦθι κς΄ "Farewell, greeting my children warmly; again—farewell. Pharmouthi 26" [trans. Bagnall and Cribiore].

Typography. Writers not only linguistically separated the opening and closing of the letter, but also visually set apart an initial and final part that is distinct from its main lay-out part. Such visual structuring is absent from the earliest, Ptolemaic letters: the practice seems to have been adopted

[75] Compare SB XX 15180 (ca. 150 CE); P.Oxy. XXXVI 2789 (242–299 CE); BGU VII 1680 (III CE).
[76] See, e.g., Nachtergaele 2015, with references.
[77] See Luiselli 2008; Nachtergaele 2015.
[78] Luiselli (2008, 700) considers these elements to be part of the body, rather than opening, but does not adequately distinguish between linguistic and typographic framing.
[79] For other texts with both a *proskynêma* formula and health wish, see P.Mert.2.82 (175–199 CE); SB XXII 15453 (II CE).

in formal letter writing first, and then adopted in informal writing, too.[80] In most cases, linguistic and typographical structure do not entirely correspond: since it would be difficult to visually highlight some of the (very) long openings and closings, writers usually only set apart the most important parts; that is, the opening and closing greetings.

The initial lay-out part in particular, usually consisting of one or two lines (known as the "prescript"),[81] is typographically set apart through a variety of techniques:[82] it may have wider horizontal and vertical spacing (e.g., P.Mert. II 82 [175–199 CE]; P.Hamb. II 192 [III CE]); it may be separated from the main lay-out part by a line space (e.g., P.Oxy. IX 1217 [III CE]); it may have a different alignment than the main lay-out part, such as both lines or the second line being centered (e.g., P.Flor. III 332 [ca. 113–120 CE]); its first or second line may be indented (*eisthesis*) or outdented (*ekthesis*) (e.g., Chr.Wilck. 499 [II CE]; P.Giss.Apoll. 15 [113–120 CE]); or its first or last letter may be enlarged (e.g., P.Col. VIII 212 [49 CE]; P.Ryl. II 243 [II CE]). Less often, the initial lay-out part is separated from the main lay-out part through a lectional sign such as the *paragraphos* (e.g., P.Mich. VIII 507 [ca. 107–185 CE]). Whereas some letters are limited to one or two of these typographic techniques, often several are used at the same time.

Most of these typographic techniques can also be used to distinguish the final lay-out part, even though it is usually somewhat less elaborate: it may be separated from the main part through a line space (e.g., P.Giss.Apoll. 15 [113–120 CE]); it may be differently aligned from the main text, mostly in the center or on the right (e.g., P.Hamb. II 192 [III CE]); or it may be indented (e.g., P.Mert. II 82 [175–199 CE]; P.Oxy. X 1295 [II–III CE]). Rather than being written very spaciously, the final lay-out part is sometimes set apart from the main lay-out part through the use of more narrow horizontal and vertical spacing (e.g., P.Giss.Apoll. 1 [ca. 115–117 CE]).

At the macro-level, written text is of course in its entirety framed by the material substrate, which can be vertically or horizontally oriented, thus providing different types of frames.[83] Another element worth drawing attention to are margins: as we have seen, the right margin tends to be rather small, but a substantial amount of blank space is often left on top and at the left, with one document displaying an upper margin of 2.8 cm (P.Col. VIII 212 [49 CE]), and another a left margin of 4 cm (P.Giss. Apoll. 1 [ca. 115–117 CE]). Even more striking is the amount of space that is left at the bottom: there are several documents with more than 5 cm of blank space (e.g., P.Col. VIII 212 [49 CE]; PSI IX 1042 [III CE]) and one with more than 8 cm (P.Mich. VIII 507 [ca. 107–185 CE]).[84] The substantial amount of space that is left blank in such documents not only functions as a typographic framing device at the macro-level, but at the same time signals towards the receiver that the initiator is sending a well-planned message.[85]

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[80] Antonia Sarri (2018, 114) notes that the layout and palaeography of letters started being more sophisticated "from about the end of the first century BC and the early years of the first century AD."

[81] For an initial lay-out part with three lines, see P.Oxy. LXXV 5062 (III CE).

[82] See Sarri 2018, 114–20.

[83] Most letters have vertical orientation (that is, they are longer than wide), but not always: see, e.g., P.Oxy. I 115 (II CE); BGU VII 1680 (III CE); P.Oxy. IX 1217 (III CE). For further discussion about changes in writing direction and orientation, see Fournet 2007, 2009; Sarri 2018, 87–113.

[84] I have calculated as the lower margin the space below the final part of the letter (typically the closing greeting). The lower margin would be even larger if counting from the bottom of the main part of the letter.

[85] Alternatively, when too much blank space was left at the bottom, it could be taken as an indication that the scribe could not calibrate the message very well.

Whereas the sort of macro-level framing discussed here obviously works best with papyrus as a substrate, there are a couple of ostraca in our corpus of women's letters in which similar principles are adopted. [86]A good example is SB VI 9271 (I–II CE), a rectangular-shaped ostracon with a substantial left and especially upper margin (1.95 cm), which sets apart the initial lay-out part from the main lay-out part through indentation.[87] It also places the closing greeting on a separate line (in a smaller letter size).

2.2. Minimal discourse planning

To some extent, minimal discourse planning represents a *contradictio in terminis*, since without planning and framing, there can be no written communication. Writers cannot get their message across without adopting the form of clauses, for example. In what follows, I outline what a minimal amount of linguistic and typographic framing at the three different levels looks like.

2.2.1. The micro-level

Language. At the micro-level, writers use a much less wide-ranging variety of particles: additive καί is most frequently used, not only to connect clauses, but also sentences. In P.Koeln. I 56, ll. 3–9 (I CE), for example, the letter body consists of clauses and sentences that are connected through καί: γινώσκιν (l. γινώσκειν) σε θέλω, ὅτι δεκαταῖοι ἐπτάκαμεν (l. ἐφθάκαμεν) εἰς τὴν μητρόπο-| λιν⟦ν⟧· καὶ εὐθέως ἀνέβην πρὸς | τὴν ἀδελφήν σου· καὶ εἰθὺς (l. εὐθὺς) | ἔγραψά σοι, ὅτι ἀπρόσκοπός ἴμιν (l. ἤμην) καὶ ἐσώθημεν τῶν θηῶν (l. θεῶν) | θελόντων, "I want you to know that it is ten days that we came first to the metropolis and I went straightaway to your sister and right away I wrote to you that I am free from harm and we were saved with the gods' will" [trans. Bagnall and Cribiore]. The next four lines with the salutations contain five more instances of καί and are followed by a request that is again structured through καί.

Perhaps in an attempt to limit the use of καί, other writers keep repeating the same particle to connect clauses and sentences. In SB III 6264, ll. 8–19 (II CE), for example, the causal particle γάρ is used multiple times in an additive sense, a relatively uncommon usage:[88] ἀνερχόμενος δὲ ἔδωκά σοι κ̣ερμάτιον, | ὅτι δέξασα τὰ | σιτάρια ἐν αὐτῷ | γὰρ τῷ μηνὶ [οὐ]χ εὗρον δῶναί (l. δοῦναί) ϛ[οι]. | οὐδέν σε γὰρ | ὑποστέλλομε (l. ὑποστέλλομαι), | πάντ̣α σοι γὰρ | πιστεύω, ἡ γὰρ | γυνή σου λέγι (l. λέγει) κτλ. "when you came up, I gave you small coins because I received some grain; but this month I could not find (anything) to give you. I am keeping nothing back from you because I trust you in everything. Your wife says etc." [trans. Bagnall and Cribiore]

Even more common in our corpus is the complete absence of particles, particularly when it comes to relating sentences. In some letters, particles are almost entirely absent, as for example in SB V 7572 (104 CE): in this entire letter, καί is used three times at the beginning of a sentence, but most often there is no sentence connection at all.[89] Even between clauses, particles are sometimes omitted, as in πρό|λαβε οὖν τὴν ἄλω ἵν' εὐθέως ἀπο|λάβῃς ἐκλείσῃς (P.Sel.Warga. 12, ll. 7–9 [II CE]) "take the threshing floor beforehand so that you may take and lock it up immediately" (trans.

[86] Also see Torallas Tovar, this volume.
[87] Compare O.Did. 427 (125–140 CE).
[88] See Bentein 2016, 92–95.
[89] For similar examples, see P.Bad. II 35 (87 CE); O.Did. 360 (88–96 CE); P.Col. VIII 215 (ca. 100 CE); BGU III 827 (II–III CE).

Bagnall and Cribiore). The use of asyndeton also extends to subordinating relations, particularly complementation with verbs of communication and manipulative verbs, as in κα|λῶς οὖν πυήσεις (l. ποιήσεις) ἐπ’ ὀνόμα|τος Σαραπίωνο[ς] μονος (l. μόνου) | καταχωρη[σῃ]ς (l. καταχωρίσῃς) [τα]ῦτα (l. [τα]ῦτα) (P.Giss. 97, ll. 7–10 [II CE]) “you will do well to register these things in the name of Sarapion only” or εἶπον αὐτῷ πένψον (l. πέμψον) τὸν | παῖδα (O.Did. 360, ll. 11–12 [ca. 88–96 CE]) “say to him: send the child.” With verbs of communication, one also frequently finds the use of ὅτι in its “recitative” function, without adaptation of personal references/pronouns, tense, and mood.[90]

Typography. Not a lot of attention is paid to line endings. There is often considerable variation between the lines, with some running to the right edge of the document, and others leaving a considerable amount of space, which is not filled by line fillers. Examples of letters with such variability include P.Mert. II 63 (57 CE; Fig. 3), P.Mich. III 202 (105 CE), P.Oxf. 19 (208 CE), and PSI XIV 1418 (III CE). In such documents, we often see other alignment problems, too: writers struggle to vertically align the initial letter of each new line,[91] and they have problems keeping text horizontally level, resulting in what Bagnall and Cribiore refer to as “wavering lines.”[92]

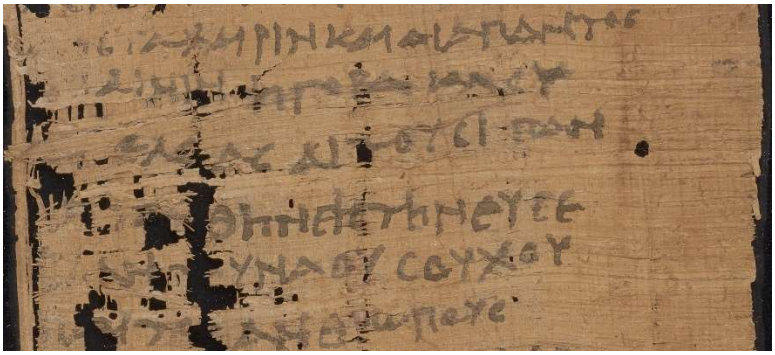
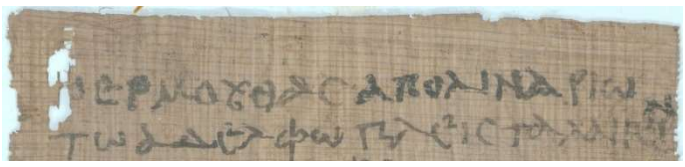


Fig. 3. Variable line endings in P.Mert. II 63, ll. 2–7 (57 CE). © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (CBL MP 63).

Due to a lack of planning, writers sometimes had to resort to a smaller letter size towards the end of the line, or to decrease spaces between letters. Alternatively, we see that these writers sometimes placed one or more final letters above the line. In BGU I 261 (105 CE), for example, shown here in Figure 4, the writer had to place the final *nu* of χαίρειν (l. 2) above the line, which forms a remarkable contrast with the amount of attention that this central word receives in documents with maximal discourse planning.[93]



[90] For some examples, see SB XIV 11585, ll. 9–11 (59 CE); P.Bad. II 35, ll. 10–12 (87 CE); BGU II 602, ll. 5–6 (II CE).
[91] See, e.g., P.Mich. III 202 (105 CE).
[92] See, e.g., BGU II 380 (III CE).
[93] The same can be seen in SB V 7572, l. 10 (104 CE) with the final *nu* of τόν (l. 10) written above the line.

Fig. 4. Opening of BGU I 261, ll. 1–2 (105 CE). © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung (P 6837).

More often, writers resorted to word splitting: several documents in our corpus contain a high number of word splits, such as BGU I 261 (105 CE), with nineteen word splits in thirty-four lines; BGU III 827 (II–III CE), with twenty word splits in thirty lines; and SB XX 14132 (I CE), with eighteen word splits in forty-two lines. Whereas word splitting is not absent from maximally planned documents, it is interesting to note that syllabification seems to play less of a role for word splitting decisions. For example, the writer of SB XX 14132 (I CE) splits right after the first letter of the word on multiple occasions, resulting in word splits such as ε|[ὕ]χωμέ (ll. 4–5), κ|[αί (ll. 6–7), σ|α[ν]δαλι (ll. 32–33), and σ|ου (ll. 39–40). The same writer also splits before the last letter of words: twice we find γὰ|[ρ (ll. 11, 19).[94]

2.2.2. The meso-level

Language. Because writers tend to overuse the same particle (καί in particular), distinctions between thematic units are often not clearly highlighted. An amusing example can be found in SB V 7572 (104 CE): Thermouthas starts the body of her letter (ll. 2–8) by informing the addressee, her mother, about goods that have been received, and also requesting she sends goods. Surprisingly, right before the greetings in line nine, Thermouthas mentions the fact that she is seven months pregnant: κὲ (l. καὶ) αἰπτάμηνον (l. ἑπτάμηνον) εἰμῖν (l. ἡμῖν) ἄρτι "we have just been seven months pregnant" [trans. Bagnall and Cribiore]. Rather than drawing attention to this presumably significant fact through the use of a formula (γινώσκε) or a particle such as δέ, Thermouthas employs καί, effecting for the modern reader a parallel between the goods and the seven-month-old fetus. Somewhat more discourse planning can be found in SB XIV 11585 (59 CE), a document which deals with three different topics related to Lucius's return home. Each of these topics is introduced by περί (l. 3, περὶ τοῦ σάκκου αὐτοῦ τοῦ παχέ̣ως "about his smock of coarse sackcloth"; l. 8, περὶ τῶν μισθῶν τῶν πυμένον (l. ποιμένων) "about the shepherds' wages"; l. 14, περὶ τῆς ἄμης "about the shovel"), but the different topics themselves are connected through καί.

Apart from thematic breaks being less well indicated, the thematic structure is also much more chaotic. Statements are less clearly grouped in thematic units, as can be seen in P.Col. VIII 215 (ca. 100 CE), a letter with two broad topics, the health of the recipient and that of a young girl who has been ill on the one hand, and the sending and buying of goods on the other. Statements related to these topics occur in a very disordered fashion, with references to the young girl in lines 8–12, 17–20, 21–24, and 28–31 being interrupted with other news and requests. Another noticeable tendency is for afterthoughts related to the text's main body to occur right before or after the closing greeting. In P.Koeln. I 56 (I CE), for example, Diodora informs Valerius Maximus that she has arrived in an unspecified nome capital. She then sends salutations to various people (ll. 9–12), but instead of closing the letter she afterwards returns to the topic of her travels, noting that she will sail down to Valerius as soon as she has finished her business in the nome capital (ll. 12–15). Only then follow the date and closing greeting.

[94] For similar examples, see O.Did. 360, ll. 6–7 (ca. 88–96 CE); P.Leid.Inst. 42, ll. 5–6 (II CE); P.Tebt. II 413, ll. 9–10 (175–199 CE).

Generic parts other than the body also often give a rather chaotic impression. In P.Col. VIII 215 (ca. 100 CE), for example, Apollonous sends salutations to a broad range of people (ll. 31–33), then closes the letter with the farewell greeting ἔρρωσ(ο), only to remember that she had more people to salute (l. 34: ἐπισκοποῦμε (l. ἐπισκοποῦμαι) Ἠρᾶν ⟦.⟧ καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς "I send regards to Hera and her children"), followed by the date. The same can be seen in O.Did. 451 (ca. 176–210 CE), where we have salutations in lines 14 to 17, then a closing greeting (ll. 17–19), more salutations (ll. 20–22), and a second closing greeting (ll. 23–24). An even more striking example is found in P.Oxy. I 114 (II–III CE), where the writer closes the letter with salutations, a farewell greeting, and then puts another name belonging to the salutations right after the farewell greeting: ἄσπασαι πολλὰ Ἀίαν καὶ Εὐτυχίαν | ἐρρῶσθαί [σ]ε [ε]ὔχομαι. καὶ Ἀλεξάνδραν (ll. 16–17) "many salutations to Aia and Eutychia. Farewell. And (salutations to) Alexandra."

Typography. Lay-out parts are not structured in different lay-out units through the use of blank spaces, or lectional signs, for example. This is not to say that there is no visual structuring, but it is unintended: through a lack of space (and planning), writers are often forced to continue writing in places which in maximally planned documents remain blank, such as the margins or verso. Several documents in our corpus have writing in the margins,[95] ranging from one or two lines (e.g., P.Petaus. 29, l. 15 [II CE]; P.Giss.Apoll. 5, ll. 31–32 [113–120 CE]) to five lines (P.Col. VIII 215, ll. 30–34 [ca. 100 CE]); in the latter case, marginal writing includes a part of the body, salutations, final greetings, and the date. P.Col. VIII 215 is interesting not only for the length of what is written in the margins, but also for the fact that writing is found in the right, rather than the left margin, as is common practice.[96] Ostraca, too, often have writing in the margins: an interesting example is SB XXII 15453 (II CE), a document which not only has writing in the left margin, but also in the upper margin (written upside down).[97]

Alternatively, some writers continue writing on the back of the document, which is usually reserved for the address. For example, having concluded his letter with salutations and a farewell greeting, the writer of O.Did. 451 (ca. 176–210 CE) extended the closing section by adding more salutations and another greeting on the concave side of the ostracon. Other writers use both the margins and the verso to gain as much space as possible: in BGU IV 1097 (41–67 CE), for example, the writer puts a first part of the closing (the date) in the margin, and then continues with the salutations as well as the address on the verso side.

2.2.3. The macro-level

Language. As we have seen above in 2.1.3, writers of maximally planned documents make an explicit effort to embed the body of the letter in an opening and a closing. Much less embedding can be found in minimally planned documents, especially in the closing.[98] Quite a few letters in our corpus, for example, end with the salutations, without an explicit closing formula. BGU II 385 (II–III

[95] For further discussion, see Homann 2012.

[96] Homann (2012, 69–70) notes that there are only five texts in the entire papyrological corpus with writing in the right margin.

[97] Compare P.Tebt. II 414 (II CE).

[98] This foreshadows later developments of the epistolary frame in late antiquity, on which see, e.g., Fournet 2009.

CE) simply ends with καὶ ἀσπάζομαι | τὴν μητέρα μου καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου καὶ Σεμπρῶνιν | καὶ τοὺς παρ' αὐτοῦ "and I greet my mother and my brothers and Sempronius and his people" [trans. Bagnall and Cribiore].[99] Other letters end, somewhat unusually, with a health wish (P.Oxy.Hels. 45, ll. 15–16 [I CE]) or *proskynêma* formula (P.Leid.Inst. 42, ll. 26–27 [II CE]). Still other letters do not have a closing at all (not even salutations): this can be seen, among others, in P.Oxf. 19 (208 CE) and SB XIV 11580 (175–299 CE). Contrary to the closing greeting, the opening greeting is usually maintained: occasionally, however, only the name of the initiator and addressee are mentioned, without χαίρειν, as in BGU III 801 (II CE), Νειλος (l. Νείλῳ) τῷ ἀδελφῷ | παρὰ Τασουχαρίου, "to Neilos her brother, from Tasoucharion."

Openings and closings often have a somewhat unusual appearance, which can be related to lesser experience with writing (and framing). In BGU II 380 (ll. 23–25 [III CE]), for example, we find two sets of openings and closings: Hegelochus is addressed first by his mother, and then very briefly by his son: Αὐρήλιος Πτο|λεμινῳ τῷ πατρεὶ (l. πατρὶ) χαίριν (l. χαίρειν) πεῖ|σον Διονύσιον χα[ί]ρειν τέχν(ον) (l. τέκν(ον)) "Aurelius Ptoleminos to his father, greetings. Persuade Dionysios. Farewell, child (?)."[100] Here it is noteworthy that χαίρειν is used both for the opening and closing greeting, contrary to common practice.

Problems with framing at the micro- and meso-level also contribute to the unusual outlook of some openings and closings. So, for example, letter writers tend to integrate different elements of the opening or closing section more narrowly than is usually done: they may either place them within one sentence, as in ἔρροσο (l. ἔρρωσο), πρὸ πάντων σατοῦ (l. σαυτοῦ) ἐπιμελοῦ, ἵνα ὑγ[ιαί]νῃς (P.Bad. II 35, l. 26 [87 CE]), "above all, take care of yourself so that you may be well,"[101] or explicitly connect sentences with a particle, as in Ταρεμ.αι Χαιρημῶν (l. Χαιρήμονι) τῷ πατρὶ πλ|εῖστα χαίρειν. καὶ πρὸ μὲν πάντων | εὔχομέ (l. εὔχομαί) σαι (l. σε) ὑγιαίνειν κτλ. (SB V 8027, ll. 1–3 [II–III CE]), "Tarem … to Chairemon her father, very many greetings and before everything I pray for your health" [trans. Bagnall and Cribiore].[102]

Typography. As Bagnall and Cribiore note,[103] the use of typographic frames at the macro-level was quite popular in informal letters, too, even in those written by less-educated people. Nevertheless, there are quite a few letters in our corpus that do not visually distinguish a main lay-out part from an initial and final part: this includes documents such as BGU I 261 (105 CE), P.Tebt. II 413 (175–199 CE), and BGU II 385 (II–III CE). Other documents in our corpus display more of an effort towards typographic structuring, but only distinguish two lay-out parts, rather than three. Several letters visually separate the final lay-out part of the letter from its main part, employing some of the typographic techniques outlined above in 2.1.3. In P.Mich. III 202 (105 CE), for example, no effort is made to separate the opening of the letter from the body, but the two constituent parts of the closing—that is, the farewell greeting and the date—are each placed on a new line, with different degrees of indentation. Similarly, in BGU III 827 (II–III CE), no effort is made to separate the opening

[99] For similar examples, see O.Did. 386 (120–125 CE); P.Tebt. II 413 (175–199 CE); SB XXII 15453 (II CE); SB V 8027 (II–III CE).
[100] It is unclear why Hegelochus is first addressed as "father" and then as "child" (τέκν(ον)).
[101] Compare P.Mert. II 82, ll. 22–23 (175–199 CE).
[102] For a combination of both, see P.Mich. VIII 464, ll. 21–24 (99 CE).
[103] Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 46.

from the rest of the text, but there is a considerable space between the salutations and the final line (in a second hand), with the farewell greeting and date.

Other letters do the contrary, and only highlight the initial lay-out part: in BGU II 380 (III CE), for example, the (clearly inexperienced) writer makes an explicit effort to separate the opening greeting from the rest of the letter, setting apart and centering χαίρειν on the second line. The same writer makes no effort, however, to visually distinguish the end of the letter, which is remarkable, given that we are dealing here with a double letter, in which the receiver is not only addressed by his mother but also by his son.[104] Another example is BGU II 602 (II CE): as can be seen in Figure 5, the names of the initiator and addressee are highlighted by slightly outdenting the first line and leaving a substantial part of the line blank. The rest of the opening, however, is placed on the second line together with the remainder of the text—πλεῖτα (l. πλεῖ<σ>τα) χαίριν (l. χαίρειν). πρὸ μὲν πάντων κτλ.—separated only by a small *vacat*.

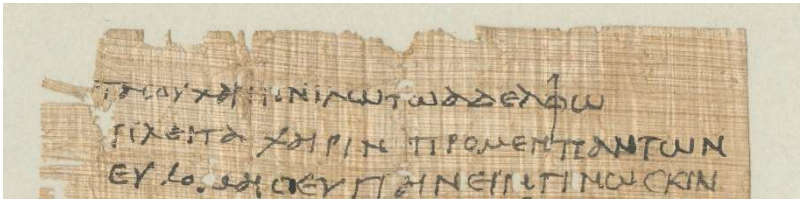


Figure 5. BGU II 380, ll. 1–3 (III CE). © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung (P 6699).

As noted in 2.1.3 above, margins work as a macro-level framing device. Blank space is less substantial in minimally planned documents, however, since writers are often in need of additional writing space, and therefore use the margins (even the top and right margin) as well as the verso. Even without additional writing appearing there, some of the documents in our corpus display minimal margins: an overall small document such as P.Koeln. I 56 (I CE), which measures 11.5 by 10.4 cm, for example, has no right margin, and only tiny left, top, and lower margins. The same can be seen in larger documents, too: SB V 7572 (104 CE), for example, has an overall size of 23 by 14.4 cm, has a small upper margin, but virtually no left, right, or lower margins. The absence of margins is even more striking in documents written on ostracon:[105] often, writers left no blank spaces at all, as can be seen in O.Did. 360 (88–96 CE) and O.Did. 451 (176–210 CE).[106]

Whereas writers usually employed new sheets that were blank on both sides,[107] in one case, P.Oxf.19 (208 CE), a person used the lower margin of a document that had become obsolete (a receipt),[108] to write a short letter. As Bagnall and Cribiore note,[109] an attempt had first been made to wash out the previous text, but this was given up, and the sheet was simply turned, with the lower margin now on top.

[104] Other double letters make more of an effort towards visual structure: see, e.g., SB XX 14132 (I CE); P.Leid.Inst. 42 (II CE).
[105] On ostraca, see Torallas Tovar, this volume.
[106] For an ostracon with a tiny left and bottom margin, see O.Did. 386 (120–125 CE).
[107] See Luiselli 2008, 686.
[108] The receipt was published as P.Oxf. 9 (208 CE?).
[109] Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 35.

3. Discourse Planning as a Continuum

In the previous section I discussed features of maximal and minimal discourse planning; however, in doing so, I may have created the wrongful impression that all documents in our corpus can be categorized as either maximally or minimally planned, or that the documents that were mentioned to illustrate a specific feature display maximal or minimal planning across the board. In reality, maximal and minimal discourse planning are best viewed in terms of a continuum, with exemplary ("prototypical") instances of each category at each end.

It is not uncommon to find documents in our corpus that are not completely homogeneous when it comes to discourse planning:[110] at first sight, for example, PSI XIV 1418 (III CE) demonstrates little discourse planning, especially from a typographic point of view, with variable line alignment, no clear visual distinction of the opening, and small left and upper margins. From a linguistic point of view, however, the letter shows much more attention to discourse planning: the writer makes frequent use of the particle δέ, as well as subordinating conjunctions such as ἐάν and ὅπως; the letter body is divided into thematic units through the repetition of the formula γινώσκειν σε θέλω (ll. 17–18), which is also used to introduce the body of the text (ll. 8–9); and there is much attention given to the opening of the letter (consisting of no fewer than seven lines), with an opening greeting, a health wish, and a *proskynêma* formula. The separation of the opening from the body is not only supported by the use of the formula γινώσκειν σε θέλω, but also by a subtle *paragraphos*.

Documents that are less straightforward to classify as maximal or minimal discourse planning may not only display different degrees of attention to the two main semiotic resources that are involved (language and typography), but also to the three different levels of discourse planning (micro, meso, and macro). That the linguistic characteristics of a document are not always completely homogeneous has been observed by a number of other scholars, too. Patrick James,[111] for example, has noted that one and the same letter writer may display different levels of proficiency in the areas of orthography and syntax, and Hilla Halla-aho[112] has suggested that even in one and the same area it may be possible to identify different registers occurring next to each other (standard letter phrases being combined with colloquial syntax, for example). Less attention has been paid to divergences between semiotic resources, in part perhaps because of a lack of an adequate conceptual apparatus. Such questions have started to be addressed in scholarship on multimodality under the heading of "intersemiotic complementarity,"[113] however, with the primary focus on how visual and verbal meanings can complement each other.

When it comes to intersemiotic complementarity in the corpus of women's letters, Bagnall and Cribiore have drawn attention to the fact that there is a group of documents with more systematic divergences between the two major semiotic resources involved, in the sense that there is significantly more attention to typography than there is to language.[114] Bagnall and Cribiore

[110] To complicate matters further, writers do not always maintain the same amount of attention to framing throughout their letters. I will not go further into this here.

[111] James 2014, 14.

[112] Halla-aho 2010, 172.

[113] See, e.g., Royce 2007.

[114] This is particularly true for syntax and lexis, less so for orthography and morphology (Halla-aho 2018). The question is less relevant for framing, so I will not go further into it here.

interpret this as a sign of dictation, with an experienced writer penning literally what a female initiator is saying, while at the same time paying attention to typography (in other words, a scribe adopting a mixed approach towards textualization). Quite often, in such letters the closing greeting is in a second hand (the hand of the initiator herself),[115] or is first written by the scribe and then repeated in a second hand.[116] Space does not permit me to fully explore the nature and extent of these divergences in the corpus of women's letters, and the papyrological corpus more generally speaking, so I will limit myself to commenting on three sample documents, with the intention of assessing, in a preliminary fashion, systematic divergences across the two semiotic resources (and three levels).

The first document I want to discuss here, P.Mich. III 221 (297 CE; Appendix 1), is a letter from Ploutogenia to her mother Heliodora, which is of a relatively large size (25.9 × 12.5 cm). Typographically speaking, this is one of the most elegantly written documents in our corpus: it was written in Alexandria by a professional scribe familiar with the Chancery style,[117] as indicated by the upright, elongated letters. The disposition of the letter is well thought through, with a significant left margin (ranging from 1.4 to 2.6 cm) and especially lower margin (ca. 7 cm). Particularly noteworthy are the well elaborated initial and final lay-out parts: the former is highlighted through horizontal and vertical spacing, with χαίρειν as the only word on the second line, while the latter, consisting of the long closing greeting ἐρρῶσθαι ὑμᾶς | εὔχομαι πολλοῖς | χρόνοις (ll. 20–22), "I wish you well for many years," is equally well elaborated: it is right aligned, with the first letter of each new line (twice *epsilon*) enlarged,[118] and the last letter of each elongated (three times *sigma*).

Explicit attention has also been paid to framing at the micro-level: lines either run until the right edge of the document, or line fillers are used (with letters such as *alpha*, *epsilon*, and *sigma*). The scribe avoids word splitting, with only one word split in lines 14 to 15 (σκυλῆ|ν[αι]). The first letter of each new line seems to be slightly enlarged; given the considerable amount of attention paid to visual appearance, it is noteworthy that the initial letters are not placed on a perfectly straight vertical line, but rather form a curve.

In contrast, typographic framing at the meso-level seems to play a less important role: there is a blank space before the beginning of the salutations (ἀσπάζομαί σε, l. 17), but there are other blank spaces which seem to be less relevant (after μίαν μοι on l. 6, after οὐκ on l. 7). From a linguistic point of view, the letter is much less elaborated: it is well framed at the macro-level, with long opening and closing sections, consisting respectively of an opening greeting and health wish, and salutations and a long closing greeting. At the micro-level, however, the text mostly consists of short commands that are connected asyndetically or through the use of καί. Thus, for example, lines 10 to 15: καὶ γράψον | μοι πόσον κέρμα ἔλαβες παρὰ | Κουπ̣ινήρι καὶ μὴ ἀμελήσῃς. πρόσεχε | τῇ μεχανῇ (l. μηχανῇ) καὶ τοῖς κτῆσεί (l. κτῆσί) σου, μὴ | ὀκνήσῃς καὶ μὴ θελήσῃς σκυλῆ|ν̣[αι] "and write to me how much money you got from Koupineris, and do not neglect it. Attend to the irrigation wheel and to your cattle; do not hesitate and do not wish to trouble" [trans. Bagnall and Cribiore]. As Bagnall and Cribiore observe, "the scribe took down what this woman told him without much

[115] See Halla-aho 2018, 228.
[116] On double farewell greetings, see Sarri 2018, 184–88.
[117] See Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 294.
[118] ἐρρῶσθαι is not at the beginning of a line, but the closing greeting is right aligned.

reworking."[119] Apart from the elaborate opening and closing sections, the text does contain an instance of δέ thematically separating lines 15 to 17 from the rest of the body.

Our next document, P.Mich. VIII 514 (Appendix 2), shows a lot of similarities with the first: this, too, is a letter from a daughter to her mother (Isidora to Sarapias), of even larger size (ca. 36 × 12 cm), also written in third-century Alexandria. Visually speaking, this letter gives a somewhat less elegant impression than P.Mich. III 221: it was written by a "proficient and elegant hand,"[120] but in a much less exuberant style.[121] The difference is primarily noticeable at the macro-level: margins are smaller, with a narrow upper and left margin (0.86 and 0.68 cm respectively), but a more spacious lower margin (5.98 cm). Typographically speaking, this document has a two-line initial lay-out part that is modestly set apart from the main section, mainly because of the vertical blank space (*vacat*) before χαίρειν. The text does not have a formal closing, but the scribe has made an effort to visually set apart the relatively long salutations (ll. 31–38) from the main part of the text, through the introduction of a line space between lines 30 and 31.

The same sort of sensitivity to framing can be seen in the opening section of the text: the scribe has separated the health wish and *proskynêma* formula from the rest of the text by not filling out the last line of the opening section (l. 7). The scribe has filled out all the other lines of the text, either by writing until the edge of the document or through the use of line fillers, especially with letters such as *alpha* and *upsilon*. Compared to our previous sample document, the scribe of P.Mich. VIII 514 is much less hesitant to split words, with eleven in thirty-eight lines. The most noticeable word split in this regard can be found in the prescript, where the kinship term θυ|γατρὶ is split over two lines (ll. 1–2), thus making the initial lay-out part visually less attractive. Linguistically speaking, there is some attention to macro-level framing, with an elaborate opening section, containing both a health wish and a *proskynêma* formula.

The closing section is less diverse since it only contains salutations. At the micro-level, the asyndetic connection of sentences is very noticeable: καί is used only once, at the beginning of line 15. Sentences and clauses are often rather short, as can be seen in lines 20 to 26: πέμ|ψον αὐτὸν παρ' αὐτόν· ἠὰν (l. ἐὰν) ἀναβῶ | κυβερνήσω αὐτ[ὸ]ν πάλιν. μένω | Ἀπολλῶν. τάχα στρατεύσηται· | στρατευθῇ μὴ σ[τ]ρατευθῇ δῖ (l. δεῖ) με | ἀναβῆναι. γράψον μοι περὶ τῆς | σωτηρείας (l. σωτηρίας) σου ἐν τάχει "send him to his own place; if I go upcountry I shall manage him again. I am waiting for Apollos. Perhaps he will enlist in the army; whether he enlists or not, I must go upcountry. Write to me soon about your well-being" [trans. Bagnall and Cribiore].[122] The text also contains some subordinate clauses, which are not, however, very diverse: ὅτι is used five times, three times for a complement clause, and two times for a causal clause. Because of the use of recitative ὅτι (ll. 12–13), the text gives an impression of directness, which is reinforced by the direct address of one of the people who are saluted, Onnophris (ll. 35–37). Even though the body of the text contains various thematic elements (a brother who has died, the sending of goods, problems with the husband/

[119] Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 294.
[120] Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 269.
[121] As Bagnall and Cribiore (2006, 269) note, there is some variation in the handwriting, which becomes smaller, faster, and more bent to the right towards the end of the letter. The document also contains a number of corrections.
[122] Particularly noticeable is the phrase στρατευθῇ μὴ σ[τ]ρατευθῇ (l. 24), where asyndeton is employed for a disjunctive semantic relation ("whether … or …").

father, another brother who is thinking of enlisting), no effort seems to be made to linguistically structure the text.

Our third sample document, SB VI 9122 (ca. 31–64 CE; Appendix 3), is also a family letter, sent by Herennia to her father Pompeius. Visually speaking, this document is perhaps the least attractive of the three discussed here: rather than the typical rectangular shape, it takes a square form, with height and width of almost equal size (14.6 × 15.4 cm). The document has significant margins, especially at the bottom (4.41 cm), where the closing greeting has been written, presumably by Herennia herself. The upper margin is slightly larger than in our previous two sample documents (1.68 cm); the left margin is relatively small (0.89 cm).

Typographically, this document only highlights two, rather than three lay-out parts: the closing greeting is separated from the main part of the text through multiple line spaces. There is a significant gap in the middle of the document, so that it is difficult to ascertain whether attention was paid to framing at the meso-level: this does not seem to have been the case. A lack of attention to typographic framing can also be spotted at the micro-level: no effort has been made to use line fillers or to write until the right edge of the document, resulting in variable line endings. The scribe splits words five times in thirteen lines, with a noticeable non-syllabic word split at lines 6 to 7 (μ-|ή). Initial letters of each new line do not seem to be perfectly vertically aligned, while horizontally, lines waver somewhat.

Linguistically speaking, the macro-level framing is quite elaborate: the opening section contains a greeting, health wish, and salutation, but everything is connected through καί in one long sentence: Ἑρε̣[ννία] Π̣ομπηίῳ τῷ [. . . . .] [π]λεῖστα χαίριν (l. χαίρειν) καὶ διὰ |παν[τὸς] ὑ̣γενειν (l. ὑγιαίνειν), κα[ὶ τὴν] [μη]τ̣έραν (l. [μη]τέρα) μου ἀσπάζομαι “Herennia to Pompeius ... very many greetings and all good wishes for his health, and I salute my mother.” The closing section consists of salutations, a farewell greeting, and a date. Similar to our first document, P.Mich. III 221, sentences mainly consist of short commands that are connected asyndetacally or through καί. The body of the letter does start with two instances of δέ (l. 3: ἐρωτ[ῶ] δὲ …; l. 4: πληρόθητι (l. πληρώθητι) δέ): the first could perhaps be taken to signal the start of the body, but it is not clear why δέ should be used in the second sentence, and not for any of the other commands in the body.[123] Lack of attention to thematic structure can also be seen in the closing section (ll. 11–14), where the salutations are suddenly interrupted by the phrase μὴ ἡμῶν ἐπιλάθηστε (l. ἐπιλάθησθε) (l. 12), “do not forget us,” presumably referring to the set of commands/requests made in the letter body.

Obviously, no definitive conclusions can be drawn about framing and dictation on the basis of three sample documents. The discussion above did bring a number of elements to light, however, that may be elaborated, confirmed, or refuted by follow-up research. Typographically speaking, writers pay most attention to framing at the macro-level, adopting significant margins and structuring the text in two or three lay-out parts. When it comes to the micro- and meso-levels, our sample documents gave a less homogeneous picture: writers pay most attention to the micro-level, especially the end of the line; explicit attention was paid to the meso-level in only one document. Linguistically, there is least divergence from typography when it comes to macro-level framing: all

[123] Perhaps the scribe was not able to maintain the use of δέ while writing down Herennia’s words?

three sample documents have elaborate openings and closings; arguably, these would have been easiest for the scribe to interfere with.[124] A noticeable lack of attention to linguistic framing can be found at the micro-level, however, with lots of short clauses and sentences that are asyndetically connected. At the meso-level, the thematic structure of the documents that we have discussed is not clearly signaled: it is often chaotic and rather unclear.

4. Discourse Planning as a Communicative Strategy

As mentioned in Section 1, the main reason why Bagnall and Cribiore pay such attention to the linguistic and typographical characteristics of women's letters is that there is not much contextual information available. By paying attention to these features, they hope to learn more about the *conditions* behind the textualization of women's letters. That is, they hope to ascertain the degree to which women participated in the writing event, by either not participating in the writing event (giving a scribe directions), directly participating (writing the letters themselves), or indirectly participating (dictating to a scribe).

These different types of involvement have in turn been connected to degrees of literacy,[125] which ranged from completely illiterate over "slow writers" to literate. Although opportunities for Greek women to obtain an education began to expand in the fourth century and in the Hellenistic period,[126] in general it has been assumed that women were less literate than men,[127] and that therefore "the level of female literacy in Graeco-Roman Egypt was negligible."[128] Factors that would have determined whether a girl was educated include social and economic class, as well as geographical place and historical time.[129] During the Roman period, for example, opportunities for a Greek education were more plentiful in the *metropoleis* than in the villages, and were more available to the elite classes who could afford private tutoring for their children.[130]

While female literacy is of course an important factor to take into account, I would like to suggest that we approach textualization in a less deterministic fashion. If we take the example of a fully literate woman, textualization would have involved a considerable element of choice: she would have to decide whether to write herself or to employ a scribe; in both cases, various degrees of discourse planning would have been possible. In this context, I believe we should pay closer attention to the correlation between textualization (discourse planning) and aspects of social context. Recent papyrological scholarship has drawn attention to the social relevance of communicative features: Jean-Luc Fournet, for example, has argued that "l'analyse matérielle d'un document peut être porteuse de sens,"[131] not only when it comes to text type, but also with regard to the socio-cultural context of writing and the provenance of the document.[132] It is important to realize, however, that the relevance of such material features (among others) goes beyond modern-day

[124] Compare Halla-aho 2018, 235: "the opening salutations are those parts in a letter that most easily could reflect the practices of the scribe instead of those of the author."
[125] See, e.g., Huebner 2018, 165.
[126] See Pomeroy 1981, 310.
[127] See, e.g., Sheridan 1998, 189.
[128] Sheridan 1998, 191.
[129] See Pomeroy 1981, 314.
[130] See Rowlandson 1998, 300.
[131] Fournet 2007, 353.
[132] Compare Bentein 2017 and 2019 from a linguistic point of view.

scholarship: since we are dealing with autographs, we must assume that variation in communicative features also carried social meaning in antiquity, and that the original addressee(s), too, would have been able to draw meaning from particular communicative choices. From that point of view, a lesser degree of discourse planning should not necessarily be viewed as a communication failure resulting from an imperfect degree of literacy (a perspective sometimes adopted by modern editors); rather, it may alternatively be viewed as a communicative choice conveying, for example, a heightened sense of involvement.

To conclude this chapter, I want to highlight the social contexts from which particular textualization strategies originated, without attempting an in-depth treatment of the matter. In previous research I have started from very specific social factors, such as social distance, agentive role, or degree of imposition.[133] Here, however, I want to take a wider view and start from the different functions communication may have, and how textualization supports these.

As mentioned in Section 1.2, social semioticians recognize three main functions, "ideational," "textual," and "interpersonal," which they connect with different contextual parameters, called the "field" (what the discourse is about), "mode" (the ways in which interactants come into contact), and "tenor" (the interactants and their relationship) respectively.[134] Framing as a system is of course narrowly connected to the textual function (and mode), but this does not exclude correlations with other functions and parameters of context.[135] A similar approach was recently applied to Middle English letters by Alexander Bergs,[136] who argued that letters can be divided into different socio-pragmatic text types, depending on the degree to which the ideational and interpersonal functions play a role,[137] the linguistic features of which he then goes on to investigate.[138] Basing his thinking on the work of Karl Bühler,[139] Bergs refers to the ideational function as "descriptive" (relating states or events in the world), and splits up the interpersonal function into "expressive" (relating the thoughts or feelings of the speaker) and "appellative" (invoking a reaction in the hearer), terminology that I adopt here.

In what follows, I briefly outline the relationship between degrees of discourse planning in the corpus of women's letters and the three functions of communication distinguished by Bergs. In doing so, it is important to keep in mind that 1) multiple social factors will have played a role in determining a textualization strategy, and 2) purely practical factors, such as the availability of a scribe, place of writing, financial situation, will have played a role, too.[140]

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[133] See, e.g., Bentein 2017.

[134] For further background, see, e.g., Hasan 1999.

[135] Compare Matthiessen 2002 on the relevance of clause complexing at the textual and interpersonal level.

[136] Bergs 2004.

[137] As Bergs (2004, 210) notes, these different functions rarely occur in an isolated fashion: letters can simultaneously describe an event, express a person's thoughts and feelings, and invoke a reaction in the hearer. Compare Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 13 on women's letters being perfect examples of what the epistolary theorists call "the mixed style" (that is, they do not focus on a single main subject). Good examples from our corpus include, e.g., SB V 7572 (104 CE); P.Giss.Apoll. 21 (117 CE); P.Bour.23 (140–144 CE).

[138] For comparable approaches in the field of papyrology, see, e.g., Logozzo 2015; Clarysse 2018.

[139] Bühler 1934.

[140] Cf. Halla-aho 2018, 230.

4.1. The appellative function

Bergs recognizes the importance of the appellative function in two types of letters, called "orders" and "requests." With these two types, the social relation between the interactants is usually unequal: orders being made by superiors and requests by inferiors. As Bergs notes, people making requests will typically try to avoid language use that may be somehow offensive to the addressee, which contrasts with people giving orders.[141]

The relevance of this principle was recently explored by Clarysse with regard to Greek papyrus letters written by landowners and other types of superiors to their stewards and agents.[142] Clarysse shows that in these letters, few philophronetic formulae and polite phrases are used. Such letters are also attested in our corpus, which contains about ten letters written by women in a superior position. In line with Clarysse's observations, most of these show a moderate degree of discourse planning, especially linguistically speaking: they tend to be limited to a short opening and closing formula, and consist of short commands that are asyndetically connected.[143] Some of these letters pay more attention to typographic framing, an attempt being made to visually structure the text at the macro-level.[144]

The reverse situation, requests made by inferiors to superiors, is less clearly present in our corpus, the prototypical instantiation of which would be petitions written by women to an official. The requests that are made in our corpus are typically formulated to an equal (family, friend, acquaintance) and involve a relatively low degree of imposition: to buy and send things (e.g., SB VI 9122 [ca. 31–64 CE]), to take care of someone (e.g., P.Col. VIII 215 [100 CE]), to register something (e.g., P.Giss. 97 [II CE]), to come over (e.g., SB XVI 12981 [191–209 CE]), to send money (e.g., SB V 7743 [I–II CE]), and so on. It should therefore come as no surprise that such letters are often rather minimal in terms of discourse planning, with little attention to linguistic and often also typographic framing.

In Bergs's framework, a request "involves asking the person for vital, important things, and a strong dependence on the fulfilment of this request,"[145] so that one could doubt whether the above-mentioned documents should really be classified as requests. Letters in which more vital requests are made can be found in our corpus, too: in P.Oxy. XXXVI 2789 (242–299 CE), for example, Cleopatra asks her father to give 5 *artabas* of barley to a mason because she is being harassed by a *dekaprôtos* (a tax collector) and is about to be thrown in jail; in P.Giss.Apoll. 21 (117 CE), Arsis writes to Apollonios the *strategos* that her son Chaeremon needs a second burial,[146] and that she can turn to nobody except Apollonios; and in SB VI 9271 (I–II CE), Paulina asks her brother Titus to come quickly because she is being mistreated by her husband. The generally much higher degree of linguistic and typographic discourse planning in these documents may be taken to reflect the urgency of the matters at hand, even when requests are made to family members and

[141] Bergs 2004, 212.
[142] Clarysse 2018.
[143] See, e.g., P.Bad. II 35 (87 CE); SB VI 9610 (II CE); P.Oxy. LVI 3855 (280–281 CE).
[144] See, e.g., P.Mil.Vogl. II 76 (ca. 138–147 CE); P.Sel.Warga. 12 (II CE); P.Oxy. VI 932 (175–199 CE). Contrast, however, P.Bad. II 35 (87 CE).
[145] Bergs 2004, 215.
[146] δευτέρα ταφή is interpreted by Michael Kortus (1999, 201) as "second mummy-wrapping," which could be connected to Arsis' request in the second part of the letter to buy linen.

acquaintances. A good example of this is SB VI 9271: despite the fact that Paulina is writing to her brother and guardian, and that she is using an ostracon to do so, an effort has been made to copy visual framing practices that are typical for papyrus letters.

4.2. The expressive function

A second major function of letters is for initiators to express their feelings and thoughts towards the addressee. Such letters are different from orders and requests in the sense that they are usually written between equals, and that maximal and minimal discourse planning need not indicate degree of respect towards the addressee. On the contrary, studies by Wallace Chafe and Deborah Tannen[147] have drawn attention to the close relationship that exists between oral strategies in language and the degree of involvement between the initiator and the addressee, a factor that is also taken into account by Cribiore with regard to women's letters when she notes that "sometimes … the sender cared to have a more active part in writing the epistle and dictated the whole body of the letter word for word."[148] Similarly, Halla-aho has suggested that female authors may have preferred to write without the help of a scribe when they wanted to convey personal information or private emotions.[149]

Arguably the most evident case of letters with an expressive function in our corpus are so-called philophronetic letters, the main function of which is to maintain contact between the initiator and the addressee. As a result, a real letter body is often lacking, with such letters mainly consisting of formulaic phrases.[150] A good example is P.Oxy. IX 1217 (III CE), a letter from Eudaemonis to Ptolemaeus, which, apart from an opening and closing greeting (with salutation), consists of a single sentence at lines 3 to 7, καὶ νῦν διὰ τούτων μου τῶν γραμμάτων | γράφω σοι, πρῶτον μὲν ἀσπαζομένη ϙ[ε], | ἔπιτα (l. ἔπειτα) εὐχομένη παρὰ πᾶσι θεοῖς ὑγιαίνον[τά] | σε καὶ εὖ διάγοντα ἀπολαβεῖν μετὰ | τῶν ἡμῶν πάντων, "I am again writing you this my letter, first sending you salutations, and second praying to all the gods that you may receive them in health and prosperity along with all our friends" [trans. Hunt]. Because of their brevity, such letters are not always easy to characterize in terms of maximal or minimal discourse planning, especially linguistically speaking. Typographically, they are often well presented.[151]

Letters often combine multiple communicative functions,[152] with our corpus containing various documents, for example, which are philophronetic in nature, but in which the initiator also makes a small request related to the maintenance of contact. For example, this might be to write back (e.g., P.Giss.Apoll. 10 [113–120 CE]), to remain in a certain place (e.g., PSI IX 1042 [III CE]), to send information (e.g., SB XVIII 13591 [III CE]), or to stay out of danger (e.g., P.Giss. Apoll. 10 [ca. 113–120 CE]). Such letters, too, are often well framed, both from a linguistic and typographic point of view.

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[147] See, e.g., Chafe 1982; Chafe and Tannen 1987.

[148] Cribiore 2002, 150.

[149] Halla-aho 2018, 230.

[150] Bagnall and Cribiore (2006, 389–94) discuss philophronetic letters under the heading "epistolary types: just greetings and good wishes."

[151] See, e.g., P.Giss.Apoll. 15 (113–120 CE); P.Oxy. IX 1217 (III CE). For philophronetic letters with less discourse planning, see, e.g., O.Did. 386 (120–125 CE); P.Oxy. XIV 1761 (175–299 CE).

[152] See n. 137 above.

Our corpus also contains quite a few documents where the body contains more substantial requests or descriptions, but where the expressive function still plays an important part because of the initiator's request[153] to greet a broad range of people.[154] Interestingly, such letters very often display minimal discourse planning, especially linguistically but sometimes also typographically.[155] This could, perhaps, be connected to the role of the descriptive function (see further below).

An alternative approach would be to look at participant structure: Arthur Verhoogt has drawn attention to letter writing practices in modern-day Mali,[156] noting that there it is not a solidary activity, and that apart from the initiator and addressee, several people are involved, most evidently a scribe, but also family members engaging in conversation with the initiator during the letter writing, or directly addressing the scribe. Similarly, when the letter is read to the addressee, other people are present. Verhoogt argues that the large number of salutations in women's letters suggests a similar context of writing, with other people saluting the addressee, and the initiator saluting other people in the addressee's circle. While Verhoogt's argument does not exclude the possibility of other contexts of writing,[157] it helps to explain the lack of discourse planning in some of the letters in our corpus, both from the perspective of writing (dictation, use of a scribe) and of reading (reading out loud to a group of people, no need for elaborate visual frames).

More genuine/private emotions are also expressed in women's letters. For example, women send their thanks (e.g., P.Oxy. VI 963 [II–III CE]); urge secrecy (e.g., SB VI 9610 [II CE]); blame people (e.g., P.Giss.Apoll. 19 [113–120 CE]; P.Brem. 64 [113–120 CE]); express their worries and concerns (e.g., P.Giss.Apoll. 8 [115 CE]), as well as their disagreement (e.g., P.Bad. II 35 [87 CE]; Chr.Wilck. 483 [275–299 CE]); express desire and longing for someone (e.g., P.Giss.Apoll. 13 [113–120 CE]); and defend themselves against other people (e.g., SB III 6264 [II CE]). Textualization strategies in these letters vary: for example, there are two letters of condolence in our corpus, BGU III 801 (II CE) and P.Oxy. I 115 (II CE). The second of these engages much more with discourse planning, which corresponds to a different social relationship between the interactants: in BGU III 801 Tasoucharion writes to her brother, while in P.Oxy. I 115 Eirene addresses acquaintances. While it is difficult to make any generalizations, it would seem that especially letters conveying negative emotions (blaming, disagreeing, urging, worrying) invest less in textualization: in such cases, a lesser degree of discourse planning may help to convey the negative message. A striking example is PSI III 177 (II–III CE), a letter in which Isidora urges her husband Hermias to come home because she fears that their son, who hasn't been eating for six days, is dying. Isidora underlines the urgency of the matter by threatening to commit suicide if their son dies in Hermias's absence. The lack of discourse planning, too, may be taken to convey the general sense of urgency.

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[153] Other people may also offer greetings to the addressee, although Arthur Verhoogt (2009) argues that this is less often the case in women's letters than in men's.

[154] Most often, this is done at the end of the letter, but there are also letters which begin with the greetings (see, e.g., PSI XIV 1420, ll. 4–6 [III CE]). People are mostly greeted individually, but sometimes also more generally: see, e.g., SB VI 9026, ll. 15–16 (II CE); P.Mich. III 221, ll. 18–20 (297 CE). On greetings, see further Nachtergaele 2015, 63–120.

[155] For similar examples, see P.Col. VIII 215 (ca. 100 CE); O.Did. 386 (120–125 CE); BGU II 601 (II CE); BGU III 827 (II–III CE); SB V 8027 (II–III CE); P.Mich. VIII 514 (III CE).

[156] Verhoogt 2009.

[157] Verhoogt (2009) notes that in autograph letters, too, one sometimes finds greetings by other people, and interprets this as writing not only being an oral activity, but also a social activity, with other people present while one person wrote their own letter.

4.3. The descriptive function

To conclude this short discussion, it is worth observing that many of the letters in our corpus also have a descriptive function; that is, they describe facts or states of affairs. Bergs refers to letters with this function as "reports,"[158] and considers them "neutral" compared to other text types such as requests, orders, and phatic letters. Indeed, one could consider the descriptive function different in nature from the appellative and expressive functions: whereas the former is ideational, the latter two are both interpersonal. Given the "neutrality" of the descriptive function, there does not seem to be an inherent need for maximal discourse planning. Letters reporting on business matters, for example, often show little discourse planning. In fact, Bagnall and Cribiore refer to letters with a moderate attention to discourse planning as "business prose,"[159] sometimes also describing writers' linguistic and handwriting skills as "businesslike."[160]

The descriptive function is not limited to business letters, however: it can also be found in letters that report on personal matters. For example, we have letters reporting on a safe arrival (e.g., BGU VII 1680 [III CE]), on the arrival of a corpse (e.g., Chr.Wilck. 499 [II CE]), on problems in the household (e.g., P.Mich. VIII 514 [III CE]; SB XVI 12326 [ca. 297 CE]), on a brother being away (Pap.Choix. 13 [127 CE]), on moving to a new house (e.g., PSI IX 1080 [III CE]), on clothing that is being sent (e.g., P.Oxy. XIV 1679 [III CE]), on problems encountered with sending items (e.g., P.Hamb. II 192 [III CE]), and on health and illness (e.g., P.Brem.64 [113–120 CE]). Contrary to what we see in business contexts, such letters do not always adopt minimal discourse planning. PSI IX 1080, for example, a letter from Diogenis to Alexandros about Diogenis' moving into a new house, has been mentioned on several occasions in this chapter for the great deal of attention paid to both typographic and linguistic framing.

Maximal discourse planning is employed in particular in letters that make longer reports about (important) events that have happened, typically in the legal sphere. In such documents, maximal discourse planning may have been adopted in order to guarantee maximal comprehensibility, or to reflect the importance of the topic. Letters of this type are not very frequent in our corpus:[161] examples include P.Oxy. XLIII 3094 (217–218 CE), with 39 lines, outlining legal proceedings involving three successive prefects; P.Oxy. LXXV 5062 (III CE), with 38 lines, concerning problems with a debtor called Cephalon; and P.Mert. II 83 (175–199 CE), with 25 lines, where the initiator is being summoned because of an attack that she would have made.[162]

It is worth making a comparison with two other documents reporting on legal matters: P.Gen. II 1 74 (139–145 CE), with 26 lines, part of the dossier concerning the trial of Drusilla, and P.Mich. VIII 473 (100–125 CE), with 32 lines, a letter from Tabetheus about her son being guilty of murder. These two letters are also well planned typographically, but much less so linguistically, with sentences often connected through καί or asyndetically, speech represented directly, and a chaotic thematic structure. Both letters were written by a single person to a family member: they give the

[158] Bergs 2004, 214.
[159] See, e.g., Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 350, 401.
[160] See, e.g., Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 386, 399.
[161] Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 305–23 has a separate section on letters concerning legal matters.
[162] A much shorter document involving legal matters is P.Ryl. II 232 (II CE).

impression that the expressive function had a more important role to play, especially P.Mich. VIII 473.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have proposed a novel approach towards the analysis of women's letters: drawing on insights from social semiotics and multimodality, I have suggested that the notion of "framing" is central towards our understanding of communication practices in antiquity, in particular how everyday documents took shape (their "textualization"). I have argued for a complex understanding of the notion, making a division between linguistic and typographic framing, and relating framing features to three different levels. Analyzing framing practices in our corpus, I have proposed that letters can be placed on a continuum ranging from maximal discourse planning (with full attention to how information is framed) to minimal discourse planning (with little to no attention to how information is framed). While many of the letters in our corpus seem to be oriented towards one of these poles, others are more heterogeneous.

Paying attention to notions such as framing, discourse planning, and textualization naturally leads one to consider not only the *who* and *how* of letter writing, but also the *why*; that is, why did an initiator opt for a particular type of discourse planning? Whereas previous scholarship has mainly focused on the connection between textualization and literacy, I have attempted to place textualization in its wider social context by exploring its relationship to three main communicative functions (appellative, expressive, descriptive). In this way, we can reinterpret different types of textualization as (potentially) communicative strategies, rather than seeing them as the direct result of (a lack of) education.

Employing a modern conceptual framework for communication practices in antiquity not only helps to clarify questions concerning textualization, it also systematizes them: previous scholarship did not have a conceptual apparatus to directly compare the linguistic and typographic appearance of letters, beyond commenting on the quality of execution. Evidently, this does not mean that the topic has been exhaustively treated: for example, it would be interesting to expand the notion of framing to lower levels, viewing lexical items or letter clusters as lower-level linguistic and typographic framing features; to compare standards of letter writing and their relationship to framing across different time periods; to further analyze the relationship between textualization and social context, by more explicitly comparing letters sent by or addressed to one and the same person; or to further our understanding of gender divisions in Egypt by comparing contemporaneous letters written by both women and men.

More generally, what was presented and discussed in this chapter is also relevant for our understanding of textuality in antiquity. Specifically, it offers a challenge to the view, expressed by Ken Morrison, that one can speak of "text" and written culture only with the introduction of a standardized layout in the fifth century AD; before that period, the notion of "alphabetic writing" would apply.[163] According to Morrison, for the Greeks (and Romans) texts were never more than "a variant of oral utterance … and oral dictation … due to the lack of procedures for transforming

[163] Morrison 1987, focusing on literary texts.

writing into *text*."[164] As I have tried to show in this chapter, textualization, even in documentary sources, was considerably less homogeneous.

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[164] Morrison 1987, 244.

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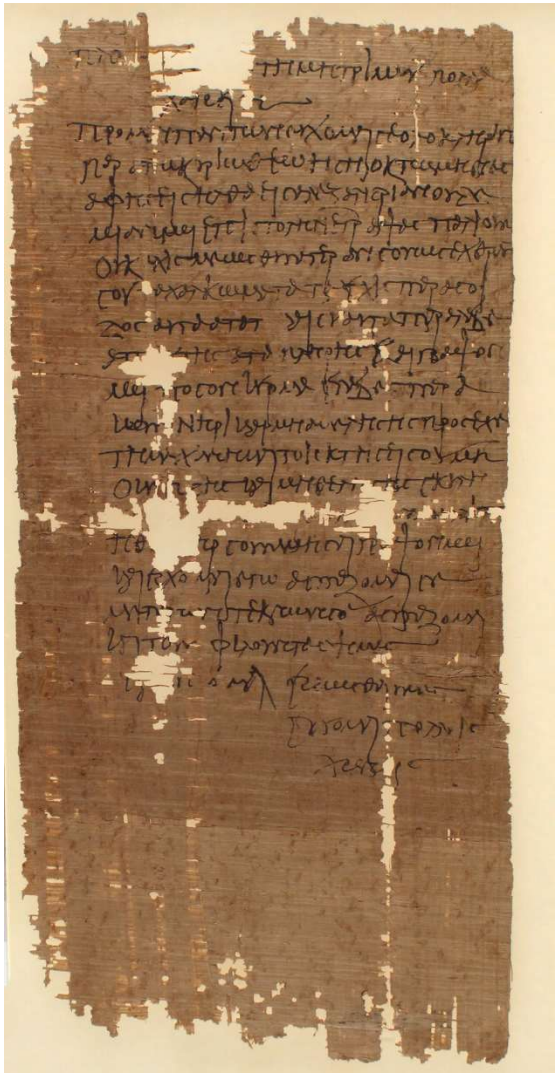
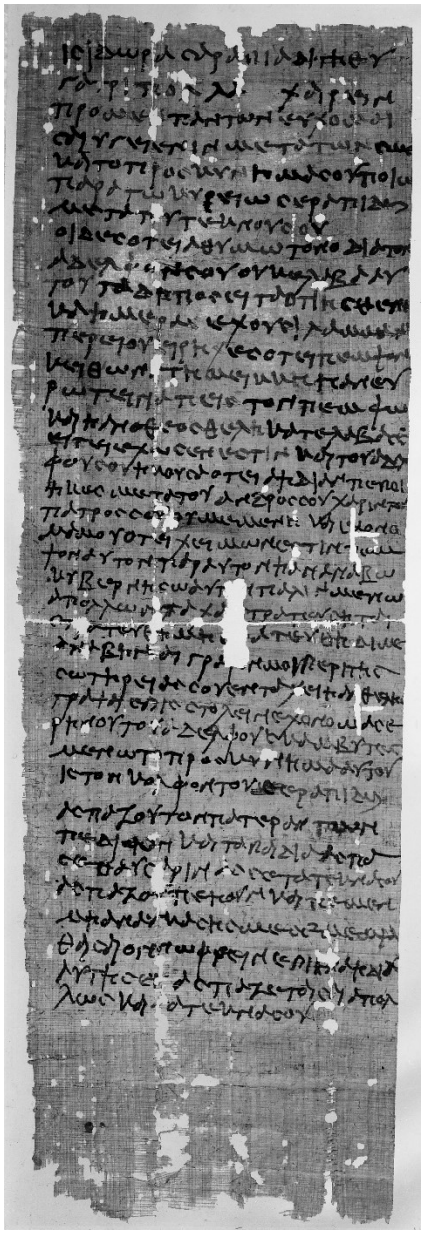
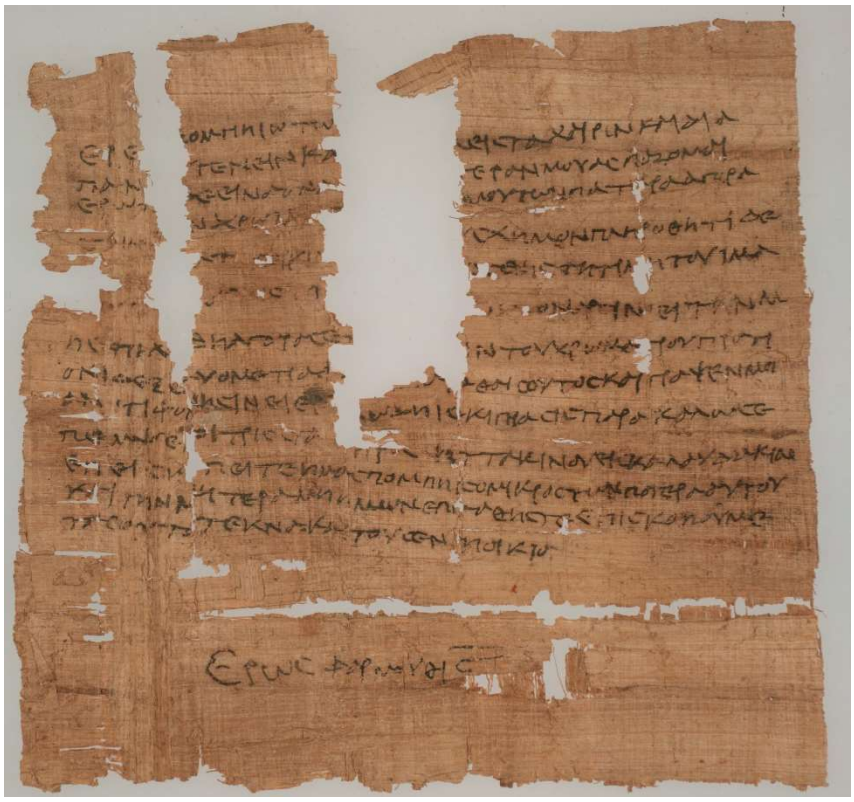
Appendix: Selected images of women's letters



1. P.Mich. III 221 (ca. 297 AD).
© University of Michigan Papyrus Collection (P.Mich.inv. 1362).



2. P.Mich. VIII 514 (III AD).
© University of Michigan Papyrus Collection (P.Mich.inv. 5805).



3. SB VI 9122 (= TM 25289 [ca. 31–64 AD]). © University of Oslo papyrus collection (P. 1444).