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VARIATION AND CHANGE
IN GREEK AND LATIN

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Contents

Preface		i
Abbreviations		iii
Martti Leiwo	<i>Introduction: Variation with Multiple Faces</i>	1
Hilla Halla-aho	<i>What Does 'Latin' Mean? A Terminological Pamphlet</i>	13
T.V. Evans	<i>Linguistic and Stylistic Variation in the Zenon Archive</i>	25
Marja Vierros	<i>Phraseological Variation in the Agoranomic Contracts from Pathyris</i>	43
Eleanor Dickey	<i>Latin Loanwords in Greek: A Preliminary Analysis</i>	57
Paolo Poccetti	<i>Reflexes of Variations in Latin and Greek through neither Latin nor Greek Documentation: Names of Greek Religion and Mythology in the Languages of Ancient Italy</i>	71
Heikki Solin	<i>On the Use of Greek in Campania</i>	97
Rolando Ferri	<i>How to say No in Latin: Negative Turns, Politeness and Pragmatic Variation</i>	115
Giovanbattista Galdi	<i>Again on as-nominatives: A New Approach to the Problem</i>	139
Gerd V. M. Haverling	<i>Literary Late Latin and the Development of the Spoken Language</i>	153
List of Contributors		177

Linguistic and Stylistic Variation in the Zenon Archive*

T.V. Evans

Introduction

The documentary papyri recovered in great quantities from Egypt over the last hundred and thirty years offer a unique category of evidence for the history of the Greek language in the post-classical period. These fragile textual artefacts allow the most direct connection we will ever achieve with the living language of their time, and ought to be nuancing our interpretation of even the most rigorously archaizing specimens of literary Greek from the period as well.¹ The third-century BC Zenon Archive is one of the largest, oldest, and most significant dossiers of Greek documentary papyri known today.² Its linguistic evidence is very rich indeed. It is a sample of what ancient grammarians termed the Koine, the form of post-classical Greek that spread across the Hellenistic world in the wake of Alexander the Great's conquests of the 330s and 320s BC.³ Zenon was an agent of Apollonios, the finance minister of Ptolemy II Philadelphos, and he and others accumulated the documents, nearly 2,000 of them,⁴ between about 261 and 229 BC.⁵ They were found in the 1910s in mysterious circumstances somewhere on or near the site of the ancient village of Philadelphia in the north-eastern corner of the Fayum depression.⁶ Here Zenon managed a large estate for Apollonios over several years and also developed various business interests of his own.

In a series of recent studies, exploiting advances in the digital imaging of ancient documents, the present writer has developed a combined linguistic, onomastic, and palaeographic method of analysis for Zenon papyri.⁷ The aim is to investigate aspects of linguistic and stylistic diversity in the Archive. Images of original papyri are analysed in order to assess not just the accuracy of published editions, but also the actual writing hands and formats of documents. It will soon become apparent why that can be important. The Greek papyri of the Zenon Archive manifest complex patterns of linguistic and stylistic variation, both between the products of different authors or different groups of associated authors (for instance, between Egyptian workmen and government officials) and also

* It is a pleasure to thank Willy Clarysse for advice on palaeographic questions, Genevieve Young, Raffaele Luiselli, and Rosario Pintaudi for other forms of assistance in the preparation of this study, and the editors and anonymous readers for their comments.

¹ On the linguistic significance of the papyri cf. Evans and Obbink 2010, esp. 1–3, 12.

² No definitive treatment of the Zenon Archive as yet exists, but *P. L. Bat. XXI* provides an indispensable tool for advanced research, and Clarysse and Vandorpe 1995 a brief introduction (cf. also more recently Manning 2003, 110–118).

³ On the general character of the Koine and its rise see Horrocks 2010, 80–84, 88–89; cf. Colvin 2009.

⁴ The figure given by Mark Depauw's Trismegistos site, as at 4 February 2012, is 1,826 certain texts (<http://www.trismegistos.org/index.html>). It needs to be seen as approximate.

⁵ Many of the documents cannot be dated precisely; cf. Evans 2010a, 57 n. 5.

⁶ On the obscure circumstances of discovery see Edgar, *P. Mich. Zen.*, p. 1; id., *P. Cair. Zen.* I, p. v.

⁷ Evans 2007; Evans 2010a; Evans in press.

within sets of documents from specific individuals. The purpose of my research is to analyse their evidence for the tension between standard and non-standard language in the early Egyptian Koine, for bilingual influence from Egyptian on the Greek, for levels of literacy, and for the distinctive usage of individuals and social groups. In this study I shall touch lightly on all these topics. My objective is to demonstrate the general character of linguistic and stylistic diversity in the corpus and to suggest one of its principal causes. Let us start with an example of variation from the documents of a specific individual.

Greetings from Philinos

The Archive preserves 10 letters to Zenon from his friend and business-associate Philinos.⁸ Only half of them can be dated, the earliest of those (*PSI* VI 569) probably written in late February of 252 BC, the latest (*P. Cair. Zen.* III 59363) nearly a decade afterwards, on 26 November 243. Consider their greeting formulae. Seven of the 10 open with the simplest form of greeting in papyrus letters, ‘Philinos to Zenon greetings’, as shown in (1) and (2) below.

1) *PSI* VI 600 (not dated):

Φιλῖνος Ζή[νωνι]

χαίρειν. κα[λῶς]

ποιήσεις δ[οὺς]

τὸ μοσχάρ[ιον]

⁵ τῶι παρὰ Δ[ιογ-]

νήτου μοσχ[ο-]

τρόφωι, ἴν[α ἀσι-]

νὲς ἡμῖν π[αρα-]

κομισθῇι.

¹⁰ ἔρρωσο.

Philinos to Zenon greetings. Will you please give the calf to the calf-rearer from Diognetos, in order that it may be brought over for us unhurt. Farewell.

2) *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59522 (not dated):

Φιλῖνος Ζήνωνι

χαίρειν. παραμέ-

τρησαι παρὰ Ἡρα-

κλείδου πυ(ροῦ) ἀρ(τάβας) σν

⁵ καὶ κρ(ιθῆς) ἀρτ(άβας) τ

καὶ ἄς σὺν ἡμῖν

ἡγόρασας τῶν ρ (δραχμῶν),

ὅσας ποτὲ ἐπρίω,

καὶ ταύτας ἐν τῶι

¹⁰ αὐτῶι διατήρη-

⁸ The letters are *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59363, 59522, 59523, 59524; *P. Lond.* VII 2056, 2057; *P. Mich. Zen.* 51; *P. Ryl.* IV 568; *PSI* VI 569, 600.

σον, ὅπως ἀποδῶμεν
 Ἀρτεμιδώρῳ τὴν
 κριθήν, τὸν ^{δε} πύ-
 ρον ἡμεῖς ἔχουμεν.
¹⁵ λαβὲ δὲ ὡς βέλ-
 τιστον καὶ δεί-
 γματα ἡμῖν ἀπό-
 στείλον.
 ἔρρωσο.
²⁰ δίδου δὲ καὶ Διονυ-
 σίῳ ὅς ἂν ἐνδεμῇ
 ἡμέρας ἄρτων α (καὶ ἥμισυ),
 οἴνου κο(τύλας) β, καὶ τὰ
 λοιπὰ ἐπιμέλου αὐ-
²⁵ τοῦ.
 BACK: (Address) Ζήνωνι.

Philinos to Zenon greetings. Measure out from Herakleides 250 artabas of wheat and 300 artabas of barley, and the corn which you bought with us for the 100 drachmas, however much you purchased, and keep these in the same place, in order that we may give Artemidoros the barley, but we may have the wheat. Take corn of the best quality possible and send us specimens. Farewell.

Give also to Dionysios, for however many days he is staying, one and a half loaves of bread, and two kotylas of wine, and take care of him with regard to the rest.

BACK: (Address) To Zenon.

The simple type, which varies only in the order of the names of author and addressee, is by far the commonest greeting formula in the Archive.⁹ But the other three letters from Philinos, shown in (3), (4) and (5), display an extended form of greeting.

3) *P. Mich. Zen.* 51 (docketed 16 March 250 BC), ll. 1–6:

Φιλῖνος Ζήνωνι
 χαίρειν. καλῶς ἂν
 ἔχοι εἰ ἔρρωσαι· ἔρρωμαι
 δὲ καὶ αὐτός. καλῶς
⁵ [ἄ]μ ποιήσας, εἴ σοι εὖ-
 καιρόν ἐστιν, ...

Philinos to Zenon greetings. It would be good if you are well. And I am well too myself. Would you please, if it is convenient for you, ...

4) *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59363 (26 November 243 BC), ll. 1–9:

Φιλῖνος Ζήνωνι
 χαίρειν. καλῶς

⁹ Evans 2007, 299, 302–303.

ποεῖς εἰ ἔρρωσαι· ὑγίαι-
 νον δὲ καὶ ἐγώ. καλῶς
 5 ἂν ποιήσῃς ἀπο-
 στείλῃς ἐν τάχει
 τὸν πυρὸν καὶ τὴν
 κριθὴν μετὰ Μόσχου
 καὶ Σωσιθέου.

Philinos to Zenon greetings. You do well if you are well. And I was well too myself. Would you please send quickly the wheat and the barley with Moschos and Sositheos.

5) *PSI VI 569* (253/252 BC), II. 1–2:

[Φιλί]νος Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. καλῶς ἂν ἔχοι εἰ ἔρρωσαι· [ὑγίαινον/ἔρρωμαι δὲ]
 [καὶ] αὐτός. ἀπέσταλκά σοι καλιάς, ...

Philinos to Zenon greetings. It would be good if you are well. And I was/am well too myself. I have sent you nest-boxes (?),¹⁰ ...

For clarity I excerpt these five examples of greeting formulae and set them out in order in (6).

6) The greeting formulae from (1–5):

- 1) Φιλῖνος Ζή[νωνι] | χαίρειν.
- 2) Φιλῖνος Ζήνωνι | χαίρειν.
- 3) Φιλῖνος Ζήνωνι | χαίρειν. καλῶς ἂν ἔχοι εἰ ἔρρωσαι· ἔρρωμαι | δὲ καὶ αὐτός.
- 4) Φιλῖνος Ζήνωνι | χαίρειν. καλῶς | ποεῖς εἰ ἔρρωσαι· ὑγίαινον δὲ καὶ ἐγώ.
- 5) [Φιλί]νος Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. καλῶς ἂν ἔχοι εἰ ἔρρωσαι· [ὑγίαινον/ἔρρωμαι δὲ | καὶ] αὐτός.

In a previous study I described the three basic elements of the extended formula.¹¹ This type adds to the simple formula ('A to B greetings') a conditional expression, 'If you are well, it would be good' (with variations and expansions possible in both the order and the contents of the two segments), and concludes with an 'I am well too' expression (which is also variable). Notice at (6) the differences in Philinos' practice within the second and third elements of the formula in (3) and (4). In (3) he has καλῶς ἂν ἔχοι εἰ ἔρρωσαι 'it would be good if you are well'. And he finishes with ἔρρωμαι δὲ καὶ αὐτός 'and I am well too myself'. But in (4) he has καλῶς ποεῖς εἰ ἔρρωσαι 'you do well if you are well'. And he finishes here with ὑγίαινον δὲ καὶ ἐγώ 'and I was well too', using the epistolary imperfect of the verb ὑγιαίνω instead of ἔρρωμαι, the perfect form of ῥώννυμι – thus varying both tense form and choice of verb. He also uses the personal pronoun ἐγώ, instead of the intensive αὐτός seen in (3). Item (5) is less revealing because of damage to the papyrus. As far as the formula is preserved, it is identical with (3). So Philinos does not just vary his style between simple and extended formulae, he varies within the extended type as well. Flexibility in these extended greeting formulae is in fact common in the Zenon Archive, an issue to which we shall briefly return. The key point for the

¹⁰ For the probable sense of the word καλιά in this context see Evans 2010b, 193.

¹¹ Evans 2007, 303–304.

moment is that Philinos' practice demonstrates our first example of variation within the data-sample – stylistic variation within documents from the same individual.

Variation in individual authors

It leads us directly to one of the basic problems for my analysis. Any such case study drawn from the papyri raises a series of inevitable questions, which need to be addressed afresh in every single instance. Did Philinos write these letters himself? If he did not, were they copied verbatim from his dictation by scribes? Or was there some greater degree of separation between the named author and the actual process of composition? In short, the variation brought out in item (6) is clear enough, but what kind of variation is it? Does it reflect the thought of one individual, or of several persons in more or less complicated combination? In other words, is it Philinos who normally uses the simple greeting formula, but sometimes likes to employ one or another form of the extended type in a set of letters all sent to a single recipient? Or are we seeing the varying choices of a group including both Philinos and his scribes?¹²

We cannot expect to offer absolutely certain answers to these questions. We are simply too far away from the action. I would like to contend, however, that we can do rather better than simply leave them open and assume they are completely beyond resolution. And in the case of Philinos, the first of my string of questions can be answered with a measure of confidence. Did he write these letters himself? The strong probability is that he could and did write his own documents. But he definitely did not always write them. Distinguishing different writing hands in the papyri is a challenging and uncertain task, even for the experts,¹³ but it can be stated with little doubt that we have at least three and possibly more hands at work in these 10 letters.

C.C. Edgar, who among the early editors of Zenon papyri had an unrivalled familiarity with the material, identifies a 'large, untidy hand characteristic' of Philinos, explicitly in two documents, *P. Ryl.* IV 568 and *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59522 (my (2) above).¹⁴ He does not pinpoint any other examples, but did edit four more of the letters for publication. And one of those, a three-line fragment (*P. Cair. Zen.* III 59523), seems to show the same hand. It appears to occur also in a papyrus held in Florence, *PSI* VI 600 (my (1) above).¹⁵ The characteristic hand is essentially a capital script, the letters drawn individually and somewhat spaced. There is slight unevenness in direction and spacing of lines, and a tendency toward irregularity in distribution of the ink, as if the writer was careless in replenishing the pen. But when T.C. Skeat much later on published the London collection of Zenon papyri, he reported that the two letters of Philinos held there (*P. Lond.* VII 2056, 2057) were written in two different semi-cursive scripts, each of them distinct from the characteristic hand.¹⁶ I have not seen these, but the remaining two Cairo documents edited by Edgar (*P. Cair. Zen.* III 59363, 59524), another held in Florence (*PSI* VI 569),

¹² See also Evans 2004, 208; Evans 2010a, 51–52.

¹³ Evans 2010a, 59–63.

¹⁴ Edgar, *P. Ryl.* IV 568, introd.

¹⁵ Willy Clarysse observes (private communication) that this letter is written with a bad pen and that for this reason the hand has a less fluent appearance than that in *P. Ryl.* IV 568 and *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59522, but he finds significant similarities as well.

¹⁶ Skeat, *P. Lond.* VII 2056, introd.; Skeat, *P. Lond.* VII 2057, introd.

and a complete but poorly preserved piece in Michigan (*P. Mich. Zen.* 51) are all in semi-cursive hands of professional quality, probably by at least two different scribes. It seems possible, for instance, that *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59363 and *PSI* VI 569 were written by the same scribe, but *P. Mich. Zen.* 51 certainly seems to be in a different hand.¹⁷

So we have up to four letters in the characteristic hand, and six in two or more different scribal hands of professional type. How do the greeting formulae map onto these hands? It turns out that the four letters probably in the characteristic hand, including (1) and (2) above, use the simple formula. The scribal hands, however, show a mixed pattern. The two London papyri have the simple formula, as does one of the two in the Cairo collection. The other one from Cairo, that in Michigan, and the one in Florence have versions of the extended formula, as shown in (4), (3), and (5) respectively. Interestingly, the different versions of that formula seen in (4) and (5) may have been produced by the same scribe,¹⁸ according to my tentative identification above.

The characteristic hand, I suggest, is probably Philinos' autograph. There are various indications in the Archive that he was a man of considerable status, possibly holding another large estate like the one Zenon managed, definitely based somewhere near Philadelphia. It is difficult to accept that such a person would repeatedly employ a scribe who could not do better than the characteristic hand of his private letters, especially given that he had others at his disposal who could manage more polished products.¹⁹ In addition, there is every reason to suspect a link between his status and at least some attainment of traditional Greek education, and so the capacity to read and write.²⁰

If I am correct, and if the palaeographic identifications are also accurate, then we can say that Philinos shows an apparent preference for the simple formula. His scribes, on the other hand, sometimes use the simple formula, sometimes differing versions of the extended formula. We have too small a data sample to draw firm conclusions on this varied practice.²¹ It may well be, however, that in this set of documents the stylistic flourish of the extended formula is a feature owing more to the influence of professional scribes than to the personal style of Philinos himself. He would seem to prefer the simple formula in letters to Zenon (unlike some other named authors in the Archive).²²

¹⁷ My comments on the hands are based on examination of originals or images of all these papyri except the two in the London collection, for which I depend on Skeat's observations cited in n. 16 above. I am also grateful to Willy Clarysse for expert advice, though it should not be assumed that my remarks necessarily reflect his opinions, except where the latter are specifically cited. The Cairo items can be accessed via the Photographic Archive of Papyri in the Cairo Museum (<http://www.ipap.csad.ox.ac.uk>), the Michigan item via the Advanced Papyrological Information System (<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/projects/digital/apis/index.html>). Photographs of the Florence items are published in *Pap. Flor.* XXIV, pls. 59, 72.

¹⁸ For a clear case of variations within the extended formula in documents written in the same hand see Evans 2007, 306–307.

¹⁹ Cf. Evans 2010a, 68.

²⁰ Cf. Evans 2010a, 58.

²¹ Cf. Evans 2007, 302 on issues relevant to small samples.

²² Evans 2007, 304–307.

Standard Greek in the Archive

Whatever one makes of this interpretation, the fact of stylistic variation in the use of greeting formulae in Philinos' letters is beyond question. Let us turn next to the general character of his Greek. I shall offer an overall impression of his usage, which can then be contrasted with other types of composition from the corpus.

The Archive contains a large set of texts, which I use as a 'control' for evaluating standard and non-standard language. These are especially documents written in the name of Apollonios the finance minister or his senior subordinates, such as Zenon himself. They display mostly standard spelling and grammatical regularity, and are not that far removed, once differences of genre and context are taken into account, from the language of the Attic orators of the previous century. I take this 'control' group to represent the educated, standard Koine of third-century BC Egypt.²³

Philinos' characteristic hand is not the most elegant preserved in the Archive, but consider the language of the complete letters (probably both in that hand) shown in (1) and (2) above. What we find in these texts is a fairly typical sample of the educated Greek of the Archive, in keeping with the language of the 'control' group. In all four letters apparently written in the characteristic hand I find only two non-standard spellings. In the 10 documents we have from Philinos altogether there are just one or two more, and only one apparent grammatical mistake.

The non-standard spellings in the characteristic hand are ἀπέστακα = ἀπέσταλκα at *P. Ryl.* IV 568, l. 26 and ἐνδεμῆι = ἐνδημῆι at *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59522 (my (2) above), l. 21. The former is possibly a simple graphic error,²⁴ but illustrates the occasional omission of the liquids /l/ and /r/ before or after stop consonants, which seems to be an internal development of Egyptian Greek.²⁵ The latter is an example of the common third-century confusion of *epsilon* for *eta* (and vice versa),²⁶ which Willy Clarysse connects with "uneducated" writers and suspects "was at least in part due to Egyptian influence".²⁷ There may well be something in that (and as a question it deserves a study of its own), but our datum here suggests a more widespread impact of the confusion, reaching into educated circles as well. Perhaps we should not too mechanically link it with bilingual interference. We need to distinguish carefully between pronunciation and the capacity to spell correctly.

The impression I draw from both these examples within the context of Philinos' overall practice is that they are probably slips providing telltale glimpses of his pronunciation. If that is near the mark, the fact that such slips only show up rarely amid the normally traditional spelling of his letters would actually be a sign of education.²⁸ There is another at (2) above, ll. 11–14 ὅπως ἀποδῶμεν ἰ Ἀρτεμιδώρῳ τὴν ἰ κριθήν, τὸν δὲ πύλρον ἡμεῖς ἔχουμεν. Here the characteristic hand leaves out a connective δέ, but then adds it as an afterthought above the line. I have elsewhere collected evidence

²³ Evans 2010a, 57–59; Evans 2010c.

²⁴ Mayser and Schmoll 1970, 160.

²⁵ Gignac 1976, 107–108; Horrocks 2010, 112.

²⁶ Mayser and Schmoll 1970, 39–41, 46–49; cf. Gignac 1976, 242–249.

²⁷ For the connection with uneducated writers see *P. L. Bat.* XX 41, introd.; for the suspicion of Egyptian influence Clarysse 1993, 197; cf. Gignac 1976, 248–249.

²⁸ Cf. Adams 2007, e.g. 6–7, 626, 630–632, on the relationship between spelling and educational level.

that demonstrates the increasingly ‘learned’ character of connective particles by the third century.²⁹ Their inclusion in everyday documents is becoming a mark of conscious style, and even educated writers occasionally have trouble with them. The fact that the writer self-corrects here shows that he knows what standard Greek requires.

Among the scribal hands we find a third non-standard spelling, ἐπεωνιζούσας = ἐπεωνιζούσας at *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59363, ll. 14–15, which probably again reflects pronunciation, either the scribe’s or Philinos’ (if verbatim copying from dictation is involved). Dropping of the second element of the original diphthong /eu/ (seen in ε = ευ) is one indicator of a progressively narrowing articulation of that element, a development occurring already in non-standard Attic texts from the late classical period,³⁰ and apparently beginning much earlier in some ancient dialects.³¹

Meanwhile, at *PSI* VI 569, l. 4 we find ὄρνιξ φοῖνι[ξ], in a letter written in one of the semi-cursive hands. At first glance one might suspect that the spelling ὄρνιξ instead of ὄρνις, ‘bird’ is an error, perhaps influenced by the following φοῖνιξ, which is convincingly restored in the original edition – it was a ‘red bird’.³² As I have indicated elsewhere, however, a different explanation is preferable.³³ The form ὄρνιξ reflects a variant velar stem, which is not only found again elsewhere in the Archive – once (*P. Cair. Zen.* III 59375, l. 1)³⁴ – but is also the only attested form of the nominative of this word in the corpus (the oblique cases show the dental-stem reflected by ὄρνις, as at *PSI* VI 569, l. 3 ὄρνιθα ἄρσενά φοῖνικα). The velar-stem variant has a pedigree stretching back to Pindar, and was identified by Photius in the ninth century AD as Ionic and Doric (which would fit with other dialectal traces in the Archive).³⁵ I suggest we should be cautious about branding this form non-standard here. It is presumably dialectal in origin, partially embedded in the early Koine.

The same instance of ὄρνιξ marks apparent slippage from accusative into nominative in the course of a longish list of items sent by Philinos (*PSI* VI 569, ll. 2–5: ἀπέσταλκά σοι ... ὄρνιθα ἄρσενά φοῖνικα πυ[ρωπόν,] | [καὶ] ἀδελφὴν αὐτοῦ πυρωπὴν μέλαινα[ν], ἄλλος ὄρνιξ φοῖνι[ξ] 4–5 letters | [τῶν] Νάυσινικέων, καὶ ἀδελφὴ αὐτοῦ μέλαινα αἰγωπὴ ‘I have sent you ... a cock-bird, red and fiery eyed, and its sister (i.e. mate?), fiery-eyed and black, another red bird ... from those of Nausinikos, and its sister, black and goat-eyed’). One cannot be absolutely sure because of the following lacuna, but this does seem to be a mistake. It would represent an easy mental transfer, on which we should not place too much weight. The nominative would be a natural ‘default’ in a list, and the writer’s or dictator’s mind may have been more on the items than the grammar.

These four or five oddities are the only ones that I have observed in the 10 letters, which amount to 141 lines of text, 70 of them in the characteristic hand. The frequency is comparable with that found in data-sets from the Zenon Archive’s other educated authors. For instance, there are three non-standard features in the eight letters (72 lines) from

²⁹ Evans 2010c, 198–205; cf. Lee 1985, 1–8 on the μὲν ... δέ complex.

³⁰ Horrocks 2010, 163, 169; cf. Mayser and Schmoll 1970, 92–95; Gignac 1976, 226–233; Teodorsson 1977, 229–230.

³¹ Gignac 1976, 233 n. 1.

³² For discussion of the group of mysterious birds described in this letter see Evans 2010b.

³³ Evans 2010b, 193–194 n. 19.

³⁴ Edgar also restores it at *P. Cair. Zen.* IV 59608, l. 16 [ὄρ]νιξ.

³⁵ Cf. LSJ, s.v. ὄρνις. Dialectal (including Doric and Ionic) traces in the Zenon Archive are collected, together with material from other sources, at Mayser and Schmoll 1970, 4–25; cf. p. 7 on ὄρνιξ.

the doctor Artemidoros, who wrote ‘in lively, idiomatic Greek, which it is a pleasure to read.’³⁶

Non-standard usage and Egyptian Greek

Philinos’ Greek, then, is in my estimation essentially standard Greek. By contrast, varieties of language that reveal many more non-standard elements do occur in the Archive. There has been a tendency, somewhat as we have just seen with the *epsilon/eta* confusion, to link these non-standard features explicitly or implicitly with indigenous Egyptian authors or scribes. In a recent study I discussed the Archive’s 162 documents that can be associated one way or another with Egyptian authorship.³⁷ I focused on a draft-memorandum from one Petosiris, (7) below.

7) *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59499 (a series of communications from Petosiris; on or after 23 January 254 BC), Back, cols. ii-iii, ll. 85–102:

ὑπόμνημα Ζήνω-
 νι [χαίρειν] παρὰ Πετο-
 σίριοις. Πᾶεις ὁ στασιασ-
 τὲς ὁ γεωργὸς [σ νῦν] τὸν τόπον τ<οῦ>-
 [σκενοῖ σ] τον νῦν σκενοῖ.
 [ο]ὐκ αὐτοῦ ἐστ[ι]ν, ἀλλὰ βασι-

Column III

{σι}λικόν. ἔχρεσεν παρὰ μοι μέχρι με-
 νές τινες, μέχρι τὸν ἑαυτοῦ τόπον
 οἰκοδόμησε, καὶ σ[οι]³ δέδωκε (δραχμάς) κ εἰς οἰ-
 κοδομήν ταύτης τῆς οἰκίας αὐτῶι καὶ τῶι
 ἀδελφῶι, ταύτην τὴν οἰκίαν ὃ πέπρακεν Φανέσι
 ἐλαιοπώλης τὸ ἥμισον (δραχμάς) ξδ, τὸ δὲ ἥμισον
 [Κοροιβίδης] μέλλει ἀγοράσαι.
 καὶ ἄλλον τόπον ἔχει ἐν βασιλικῷ,
 καὶ τοῦτο πέπρακεν Ὡρωι τὸν ἐπὶ
 τῶν κρότωνες, καὶ οὐδαμοῦ οἰκίαν [πέ-
 πρακεν] οἰκοδόμησεν ἀλλ’ [ε] ἂ νῦν πέ-
 πρακεν.

Memorandum to Zenon [‘greetings’ is deleted] from Petosiris. Pais the weigher, the farmer, [‘now’ is deleted] this place [‘inhabits’ is deleted] now inhabits. It is not his, but belongs to the crown. He borrowed from me for several months until he built his own place, and you have given him and his brother 20 drachmas for the building of this house, this house of which he has sold half to Phanesis the oil-seller for 64 drachmas, but the other half [‘Koroibides’ is deleted] he (?) is going to buy. And he has

³⁶ Edgar, *P. Cair. Zen.* II 59225, introd. My intention, incidentally, is to present a comprehensive analysis of the usage of Philinos, Artemidoros, Iason (for whom see below), and several others in a monograph-length treatment (currently in preparation) of diversity in the Greek of the Zenon Archive.

³⁷ See Evans in press.

another place from the treasury (i.e. from crown funds?), and this he has sold to Horos, the one in charge of the castor, and he has by no means ['sold' is deleted] built a house, other than the ones that he has now sold.

Edgar memorably summarizes the papyrus in which this text is found: “the text is so mutilated and the Greek is so extraordinarily bad that it is difficult to give a clear account of what Petosiris means to say”.³⁸ Petosiris’ “extraordinarily bad” Greek undoubtedly contains some glaringly non-standard features. In my earlier treatment I examined ll. 95–97: ταύτην τὴν οἰκίαν ὃ πέπρακεν Φανέσι | ἐλαιοπώλης τὸ ἥμισον (δραχμάς) ξδ, τὸ δὲ ἥμισον | [Κοροιβίδης] μέλλει ἀγοράσαι ‘... this house, as to which he [the subject is one Pais] has sold to Phanesis the oil-seller half for 64 drachmas, but the other half [the name ‘Koroibides’ is deleted] he (?) is going to buy.’ These three lines alone contain a series of such features: the neuter relative ὃ (agreeing with following τὸ ἥμισον?) after a feminine antecedent, the vague reference of the same form’s accusative case, nominative ἐλαιοπώλης (not dative ἐλαιοπώληι) in apposition to Φανέσι, the spelling ι = ει probably in Φανέσι and certainly in μέλλει.³⁹ There are various others to be found in the petition as well.

These features may serve as an example of the extreme varieties of low-level Greek, far removed from Philinos’ usage, that one sometimes finds in the Archive. Some of the specific oddities are undoubtedly due to bilingual interference, as for instance Petosiris’ use of the relative pronoun noted above.⁴⁰ In my earlier discussion, however, I also sought to bring out the facts that examples like (7) above are relatively rare in the corpus and that Egyptian authorship does not necessarily relate to what Edgar calls bad Greek. Many documents from Egyptians are much more competent, even standard compositions,⁴¹ and even poor Petosiris gets some things right (we also need to remember that this text is a draft, and perhaps not the most careful composition of which Petosiris or his scribe was capable). Nor are the Egyptian Greek texts the only environment in which we encounter higher quantities of non-standard features. Let us now investigate an intriguing case from a quite different source.

The Greek of Iason

Iason son of Kerkion hailed from the city of Kalynda in what is now south-western Turkey, a Carian like Zenon (who came from Kaunos). First mentioned in a letter of 256 BC, Iason turns up frequently in the Archive. He is described as an agent of Zenon and played a subordinate role in the management of Apollonios’ estate, among other things

³⁸ *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59499, introd.

³⁹ For discussion see Evans in press. For ι = ει see also below and n. 48.

⁴⁰ For a persuasive explanation of this phenomenon’s Egyptian background, as found in the practice of second and first century BC notaries from Pathyris, see Vierros 2003, esp. 16–22; now also Vierros 2012. For a series of other features linked to Egyptian interference in early Ptolemaic papyri, some more persuasively than others, see Clarysse 1993, 197–200; Evans in press.

⁴¹ An example, *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59481 (to Zenon from the potter Paesis), is discussed in Evans in press; note also *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59330 (the swineherd Pennas to Zenon) and 59519 (the corn-measurer Phaneisis to Zenon, written with an Egyptian brush, on which see Clarysse 1993, esp. 186–194; Tait 1988; Depauw 2006, 297; Evans in press), and cf. Clarysse 1993, 200.

trying to sort out the cash-flow problems caused by Zenon's style of management. We have six of Iason's documents – four letters to Zenon (*P. Cair. Zen.* III 59337, 59450; *P. Lond.* VII 2006, 2008), a memorandum to one Hermon (*P. Mich. Zen.* 86), and a receipt to a man called Admetos (*PSI* IV 394). Four are dated (*P. Lond.* VII 2006; *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59337; *P. Lond.* VII 2008; *PSI* IV 394), and they belong to the period 248 to 242.

As someone with considerable responsibility for overseeing accounts, we can suspect that Iason was probably capable of reading and writing himself. Four of his surviving documents (*P. Cair. Zen.* III 59450; *P. Lond.* VII 2006, 2008; *P. Mich. Zen.* 86) are undoubtedly written in the same hand, “along the fibres in a medium-sized uncial”.⁴² Typical of it are *omega* with two clear loops, which do not descend to the lower line of other letters, and *alpha* in three strokes, well distinguished from *lambda*. The letters are nearly all separated by small spaces (there are very few ligatures), and figures are set off by even wider spaces.⁴³

Skeat observes that the valediction in *P. Lond.* VII 2008, the frank letter from which (8) below is drawn, is “in a much more cursive hand, presumably Iason's autograph”.⁴⁴ Clarysse warns that we need to be cautious about this idea. The writer may simply drop the effort to write in clear capitals and “fall back on the more usual cursive” in the valediction (l. 52: ἔρωσο. (ἔτους) λθ, Φαμενώθ ι, ‘Farewell. Year 39, Phamenoth 10’). So this is possibly a different hand, but by no means certainly so.⁴⁵ By contrast, the valediction in *P. Lond.* VII 2006 is written in the same hand as the letter-body (*P. Cair. Zen.* III 59450 is fragmentary and does not preserve a valediction, while in the memorandum *P. Mich. Zen.* 86 none is included). My own suspicion is that the hand of all these texts is Iason's autograph and that the more cursive valediction of *P. Lond.* VII 2008 does not belong to a different writer. This seems to me to fit the balance of probabilities, but our evidence is too slight for it to be more than a tentative suggestion.

8) *P. Lond.* VII 2008 (1 May 247 BC), col. i, ll. 1–21:

Ἰάσων Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. γέγραφέ σοι
πλεονάκις περί τε τῶν ἐννομίῳν
καὶ τοῦ φυλακτικοῦ τῶν ὑικῶν ἱερείων,
καὶ οὐδεμίαν οἰκονομίαν πεποίησαι [ο]

⁵ οὐδὲ χρόνον ἤτεσαι ἐν ᾧ ταξόμεθα.
ἡμῖς δὲ ᾧδε παροινούμεθα ὑπό τε
τῶν οἰκονόμω[v] καὶ πρακτόρων.
διέγνωκα οὖν καταπλεῦσαι πρὸς
σε τοὺς λόγου[ς] φέρων ἵνα μὴ Θεοφί-

¹⁰ λου παραγενομένου παροινηθῶ δι-
ὰ τὸ χειρογραφήσαι με αὐτῶι. τέτα-
γμαί δὲ ἀφ’ οὗ τὸν διάλογον ἐποιεσά-
μεν εἰς (δραχμὰς) υ. τὰ δὲ ὀφιλήματα ἔστιν

⁴² Skeat, *P. Lond.* VII 2006, introd; *P. Lond.* VII 2008, introd.

⁴³ I owe this characterization of the hand to Willy Clarysse (private communication). He also points out interesting similarities in the fold-marks on the papyri *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59450 and *P. Mich. Zen.* 86 (as well as the poor quality of the latter).

⁴⁴ Skeat, *P. Lond.* VII 2008, l. n. 52.

⁴⁵ Willy Clarysse (private communication).

ἀδύνατα. τοὺς ἐν Ἡφαιστιάδει σκορ-
¹⁵ δευτὰς παρέδωκα εἰς τὸ ἐννόμιον καὶ
 τὰ φορτία αὐτῶν Ἀριστάνδρῳ τῷ οἰκο-
 νόμῳ. Ἐτέαρχος δὲ ἔφη αὐτοῦ εἶναι τὰ ἐν
 τῇ γῇ καὶ αὐτὸς κεχορηγεκένοι, ὥς δ' ἂν
 κομίσωμαι, ἔφη, τό τε ἐκφόριον καὶ τὸ ἀνήλωμα,
²⁰ ἐάν τι καταλίπεται κομίσασθε. καὶ ἡμῖς
 ἀφήκαμεν οὖν αὐτοῦς.

Iason to Zenon greetings. I have written to you frequently about the pasturage-taxes and the guard-tax for the pigs, and you have made no arrangements, nor have you asked for time for us to reach agreements. But we are being pressured here by oeconomes and practors. So I have decided to sail down to you with the accounts in order that Theophilos doesn't turn up and I am put under pressure because I gave him a written guarantee. I have agreed to pay, from the time when I made up the account, up to 400 drachmas. But the debts are impossible. I have handed over the garlic-growers at Hephaistias for the pasturage-tax and their crops to Aristandros the oeconome. But Etearchos said that the ones in the ground were his and that he himself had provided them, but "When I recover", he said, "the rent and the outlay, if anything is left over, take that." And so we let them be.

The fifth papyrus (*P. Cair. Zen.* III 59337) shows a different hand. It too is written along the fibres, and it is an elegant semi-cursive. But there are additional lines of text squeezed in at the end in a small script showing distinctly formed letters, but with a cursive tendency. This smaller script of *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59337 has affinities with the hand of the sixth text (*PSI* IV 394). And that, my (9) below, was written at the direction of Iason by Apollodoros son of Andragathos, the Macedonian, who tells us so himself.⁴⁶

9) *PSI* IV 394 (receipt, 11 August 242 BC)

(ἔτους) ς, Παῦνι κγ. Ἰάσων

Ἀδμήτῳ χαίρειν. ἔχω

παρά σου εἰς τὴν ἐγγύην

ἣν ἐνεγυήσω Ἰόλλαν

⁵ Πυρρίου Βερενικέα κατὰ

συγγραφήν κρι(θῶν) (ἀρτάβας) λ.

ἔγραψεν Ἀπολλόδορος

Ἀνδραγάθου Μακεδόν,

συντάξαντος Ἰάσονος.

Year 6, Pauni 23. Iason to Admetos greetings. I have from you for the security that you promised for Iollas son of Pyrrhias, Berenikean, according to contract, 30 artabas of barley.

Apollodoros son of Andragathos, Macedonian, wrote this at the direction of Iason.

⁴⁶ My comments on the hands are based on examination of digital images. For my debt to Willy Clarysse's advice see again n. 17 above. The Cairo and Michigan items can be accessed via the websites cited at n. 17. A photograph of the Florence fragment of *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59337 (ll. 8–13, earlier published as *PSI* VI 650) can be found in *Pap. Flor.* XXIV, pl. 97.

It seems, then, that Iason's surviving documents were written by three different people. There is also an apparently usual hand. I suggest (with the due caution indicated above) that this may be Iason's autograph.⁴⁷ If, however, one were to accept Skeat's interpretation of the cursive valediction in *P. Lond.* VII 2008 in preference to Clarysse's, it would amount to proof that all six of Iason's documents were written by other persons for him.

Mapping the linguistic evidence onto the hands brings out striking results. Orthography was a challenge for the writer – whoever it really was – of the best-represented hand. The four documents in that hand contain a total of 101 lines of text, and in those 101 lines I count some 39 non-standard spellings. In the 30 lines of text written in the other two hands I find only two non-standard spellings.

Of the 39 instances in the usual hand, 30 involve vocalic interchanges. Most of these are phonetic in nature. The widespread itacistic interchange of *iota* and *epsilon-iota* shows up, for instance, 16 times (ι = ει 11 times, ει = ι five times).⁴⁸ Examples from (8) and from (10) below, drawn from the same long letter, are excerpted for the sake of example in (11).

10) *P. Lond.* VII 2008, col. ii, ll. 37–45 (cf. (8) above):

προσέγγειλεν ἡμῖν Τιμοκλῆς
τῶν προσβυτέρων ^{τις} ὀφίλειν σοι
τοὺς λοιποὺς πρεσβυτέρους τοὺς ἐν τῇ Διννέως Κοίτῃ

⁴⁰ [ὅ] ἀνήλωσας εἰς τὴν διώρυγα
εἰς (δραχμαῖς) νς (ὀβολὸν α) ἐφ' ᾧ ἐὰν διαλογι-
σώμεθα πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ ἔλ-
θῃ εἰς ὁμόλογον, ἀφ' [ῆ] ἐθήσεται
τὸ ἐπιβάλλον αὐτῷ μέρος

⁴⁵ ἀπὸ τῶν νς (ὀβολοῦ α), (δραχμαὶ) ς (τετρώβολον).

Timokles, one of the veterans, reported to us that the rest of the veterans in Dinneos Koite owe you what you expended for the canal, up to 56 drachmas, 1 obol, in return for which, if we draw up the account with them and it comes to an agreement, the share that falls to himself will be remitted from the 56 (drachmas), 1 obol, namely 6 drachmas, 4 obols.

11) Examples of ι = ει and ει = ι in (8) and (10) above:

- a) ll. 6, 20 of (8) ἡμῖς = ἡμεῖς (ι = ει).
- b) l. 13 of (8) ὀφιλήματ' α = ὀφειλήματ' α (ι = ει).
- c) l. 14 of (8) Ἡφαιστιάδει = Ἡφαιστιάδι (ει = ι).
- d) l. 20 of (8) καταλίπεται = καταλείπεται (ι = ει).
- e) l. 38 of (10) ὀφίλειν = ὀφείλειν (ι = ει).

Also quite common is the interchange of *epsilon* and *eta*, which we glimpsed once in Philinos' letters. We meet it again six times in items (8) and (10), excerpted at (12)

⁴⁷ Skeat may appear to slip into this very assumption at *P. Lond.* VI 2006, l. n. 13: "Possibly Iason wrote [τὸ]ν, intending to have written τὸν φόρον τόν but accidentally omitting φόρον at the end of l. 12". But other comments quoted below indicate that he imagines an amanuensis putting Iason's words onto the papyrus.

⁴⁸ Cf. Mayser and Schmoll 1970, 60–64, 66–70; Gignac 1976, 189–191.

below, and there are a total of 10 examples in the four papyri from the same hand ($\epsilon = \eta$ eight times, $\eta = \epsilon$ twice). Interestingly this writer does manifest a degree of sensitivity to the confusion, at least to the pattern *eta* for *epsilon*. At (12.e) we see it corrected to the standard spelling, six lines after the same scribe wrote προσέγγειλεν for προσήγγειλεν (12.d). If that scribe is in fact Iason himself, we have here another important indicator of the appearance of the *epsilon/eta* confusion among authors of culturally Greek background.

12) Examples of $\epsilon = \eta$ and $\eta = \epsilon$ in (8) and (10) above:

- a) l. 5 of (8) ἦιτεσαι = ἦιτησαι ($\epsilon = \eta$).
- b) ll. 12–13 of (8) ἐποιεσάμεν = ἐποιησάμην ($\epsilon = \eta$, *bis*).
- c) l. 18 of (8) κεχορηγεκέναι = κεχορηγηκέναι ($\epsilon = \eta$).
- d) l. 37 of (10) προσέγγειλεν = προσήγγειλεν ($\epsilon = \eta$).
- e) l. 43 of (10) ἀφ[η]θήσεται ($\eta = \epsilon$ before correction of ἀφηθήσεται to ἀφεθήσεται).

Isolated instances of other non-standard spellings occur in the usual hand as well. I draw attention to one, which happens to occur in (10) above, προσβυτέρων = πρεσβυτέρων in l. 38, showing *omikron* for *epsilon* (the standard spelling appears in l. 39 πρεσβυτέρους).⁴⁹ Meanwhile, omission of nasal before velar stop ($\gamma = \gamma\gamma$) can be seen in ἐνεγυήσω = ἐνεγγυήσω at l. 4 of (9), written by Apollodoros son of Andragathos (contrasting with ἐγγύην in l. 3). This feature also occurs in the memorandum written in the apparently usual hand (*P. Mich. Zen.* 86, ll. 2–3 ἀνα|γεῖλαι = ἀναγγεῖλαι, contrasting with προσέγγειλεν at l. 37 of (10) above).⁵⁰

One more orthographic peculiarity of the letter partly transcribed in (8) and (10) needs to be noted. Skeat states that “Iason writes in simple, forceful style; his amanuensis shows a marked tendency to omit syllables in the middle of words”.⁵¹ This phenomenon further reveals that we are in a markedly different environment from Philinos’ letters. Four examples of syncopated forms appear in (8), and these are listed, along with another two instances from the same letter, at (13) below.

13) Examples of Iason’s habit of syllable-omission in *P. Lond.* VII 2008 (cf. (8) above):

- a) l. 12 δι|ά|λογον, papyrus διλογον.
- b) l. 13 όφιλήμ|ατ|α, papyrus οφιλημα.
- c) ll. 16–17 οίκον|όμ|ωι, papyrus οικονωι.
- d) l. 21 άφήκα|με|ν, papyrus αφηκαν.
- e) l. 23 ά|να|τολή, papyrus ατολη.
- f) l. 32 έμβ|εβ|λήσθαι, papyrus εμβλησθαι.

Skeat also draws attention to a seventh case in a letter from one of the other scribes, *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59337, l. 5 έπαρ|ουρ|ίου.⁵² At least some of these examples of syllable

⁴⁹ Cf. Mayser and Schmoll 1970, 45; Gignac 1976, 290–292.

⁵⁰ For this specific phenomenon – loss of nasal before velar stop – and the limited evidence in general for loss of medial nasals in post-classical Greek cf. Mayser and Schmoll 1970, 163–165, esp. 164; Gignac 1976, 116–119.

⁵¹ Skeat, *P. Lond.* VII 2008, introd.

⁵² Skeat, *P. Lond.* VII 2008, introd.

loss may be explained as examples of haplography,⁵³ and although they are not all of homogeneous type, they are probably simple graphic errors, without any significance for pronunciation. The spelling οἰκονῶι (13.c), for instance, reflects a common enough error in spellings of οἰκονόμος at this period.⁵⁴ Omission of medial syllables is not a particularly frequent feature in the Zenon Archive (though by no means otherwise absent). It is therefore interesting to find six of Iason's seven cases of syncopation concentrated in one of his documents,⁵⁵ and in one of the texts in the usual hand.

All these features in combination tend in my view to confirm the impression that the best-represented hand is probably Iason's autograph. The easiest alternative would be to assume that he employed a regular scribe of rather limited competence and perhaps (as some scholars will probably find an attractive notion) of Egyptian ethnicity. That would not be an impossible scenario, but among Zenon's agents a less plausible one, and it should be noted that Egyptian scribes for whom we have evidence in the Archive and its period are mostly highly competent; "In most cases the Greek is faultless, and the Egyptian background of the scribe is only visible in some minor detail, if at all."⁵⁶

Iason's non-standard features are largely restricted to orthography. In morphology and syntax his outputs align much more closely with Philinos' usage than with Petosiris', and Skeat's observation of his "simple, forceful style" should not be allowed to obscure his capacity to produce complex constructions. The only obvious grammatical oddities involve fine details of particle usage. To give a single example, note again (8) above, ll. 20–21 καὶ ἡμῖς | ἀφῆκαμεν οὖν αὐτούς. The οὖν here is a perfectly straightforward choice of connective in the context, but it is strangely positioned within its sense-unit. The normal position for οὖν would be at the front, second or third word in the sequence.

Conclusion

The usage of Iason, then, is clearly different in its general character from that both of Philinos and of Petosiris. The material from all three manifests tension between standard and non-standard components. Philinos' Greek is the most accomplished and the most stylistically energetic (for example in the variation of greeting formulae). It does contain occasional blemishes, as we have seen, and it is not the most careful product in the Archive, but it serves as a fair example of educated standard Greek. Iason's usage is far less polished. The morphology and syntax are essentially an unvarnished variety of the standard, but his language reveals significantly more non-standard features, concentrated mostly in orthography. Petosiris' draft represents a much lower level of competence again. But although it is strewn with non-standard orthographic and grammatical features, it is not as hopeless as Edgar implies, and it too shows some pretension to correctness (for example in the deletion of χάριεν, inappropriate for the opening formula of a memorandum, in l. 86, and the correction of σοι to the standard spelling σύ in l. 93).

⁵³ Cf. Mayser and Schmoll 1970, 217–220; Gignac 1976, 312–313. I thank Hilla Halla-aho for valuable comments on this point (private communication).

⁵⁴ Mayser and Schmoll 1970, 219.

⁵⁵ Hilla Halla-aho has suggested to me that the apparent urgency of the situation may be an influence. This may well be right, though we obviously cannot do more than speculate.

⁵⁶ Clarysse 1993, 200.

One might be seduced by the very term Koine – the ‘common dialect’ – into thinking this kind of Greek is all essentially the same, or that the only significant variations within it are due to influences derived from bi- or multilingualism. When we compare (2), (7), and (8) above, however, we are observing three distinct manifestations of the early Koine, as written in the Egyptian context. And when we compare (2) and (8) directly, we observe contrasting types in two authors who are presumably both of Greek (or at least Hellenistic) background. In the case of Iason, especially if my tentative identification of his autograph is correct, it is thus more difficult to make the usual assertions about bilingual interference lying behind lower level compositions. Level of education, that of the apparently wealthy Philinos against that of the estate sub-manager Iason, to my mind most plausibly explains the differences in their Greek. This should in turn allow us to reassess the common response to very low-level products like (7). Education rather than ethnicity should be suspected, I contend, as the primary cause of its limited competence. That is not to deny that bilingual interference is a factor both in this case and more generally in non-standard Greek texts from Egyptian authors. Less educated compositions are likely, however, to reveal many more natural features of non-standard Greek than higher-register documents, and until we can demonstrate that any particular feature is owed to influence from Egyptian, we should not assume an external motivation for its deviation from standard varieties of Greek.

In this study I have sought to convey an impression of the kinds of linguistic and stylistic variation to be found in the Zenon Archive and to suggest in conclusion one of the key causes of that variation. It is worth stressing, however, that I have offered only a taste. The material is very complex. In order to achieve the fullest possible understanding of the observed variation a deal of fine sifting of the evidence remains to be accomplished.

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