



Register variation and personal interaction in the Zenon Archive

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ABSTRACT

Zenon, the secretary of Apollonios ὁ διοικητής, sent, received and collected all kinds of correspondence – letters of recommendation, requests for assistance, business reports – which illustrates a cross-section of everyday life in Ptolemaic Egypt during the third century BC. The elements which mostly influence linguistic and stylistic variation in the Zenon archive are pragmatic as well as sociolinguistic. The most important are the sender's purpose and the relationship, or the social gap, between sender and recipient. In this respect, in a pragmatic and textual linguistic perspective, crossed with sociolinguistics, some features of this kind of correspondence will be examined, such as opening greetings, expressions of requests and closing formulas.

KEYWORDS: Zenon archive, register variation, epistolary style.

1. *Introduction: what kind of variation?*

As it is known, the Zenon Archive is the largest and best preserved papyri archive we have. It contains the vast correspondence (about 1750 papyri) of Zenon¹, the secretary of Apollonios ὁ διοικητής who was in charge of the economic affairs of the state, at the time of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.

When speaking of linguistic variation in the Zenon Archive we can refer to the diastratic and the diaphasic levels² of sociolinguistics, respectively linked with the writers' linguistic competence and the communicative context³. We can use also the text-linguistics model and, specifically, we can refer to the three standards of textuality linked to pragmatics: intentionality, i.e. the text receiver's attitude; acceptability, i.e. the text producer's attitude and intentions; and situationality, related to the communicative context⁴.

¹ For papyri archives and, particularly, Zenon archive, see TURNER (1984: 65-66) and VANDORPE (2011: 226, 234-235).

² These sociolinguistic levels have been defined and titled by COSERIU (1973).

³ A further criterion could concern the use- and user-related variations as in LEIWO (2012: 1-2).

⁴ See DE BEAUGRANDE and DRESSLER (1981).

Given the type of correspondence, the elements which mostly influence its linguistic and stylistic variation are pragmatic as well as sociolinguistic:

- the most important element is certainly the sender’s purpose: who writes to Zenon usually has a problem or asks for something;
- the second element is the relationship or the social gap between sender and recipient.

Most of the letters are written between Zenon and other people belonging to the bureaucracy world at the time of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, who can be considered ‘equals’: officials, religious ministers and clerks write to Zenon about matters of ‘business as usual’. Then there is a small group of letters where the sender has a higher social status than the recipient: it’s the case of Apollonios’ letters to Zenon, his secretary. Finally, there are very few letters addressed to Zenon from people of a lower social class⁵.

The aim of this research is to evaluate whether the parameters mentioned above (the sender’s purpose and the social gap between sender and recipient) are reflected in the formulaic expressions of the epistolary style, that is: in the opening greetings, in the closing formulas⁶, in the ways of expressing requests.

The corpus we used for our study is the Columbia University papyri edition by Westermann *et al.*⁷, made up 118 papyri. The English translations of the texts mentioned in this paper is taken off this edition.

In the greetings, which Evans (2007) has dealt with, there is a base form (a) which occurs in 83% of cases⁸ and which can be extended with a conditional clause of the Latin type *si tu vales, bene est; ego valeo*⁹, as in (b) and (c):

- (a) Ἀττινὰς Ζήνωνι χαιρεῖν. (P.Col.Zen. 3,12)
 “Attinas to Zenon, greeting.”

⁵ About the role of Zenon and the context in which these documents were produced, see, among others, ORRIEUX (1981), FALIVENE (1991), CLARYSSE and VANDORPE (1995).

⁶ Here the generic label of ‘formula’ is applied to every recurring expressions of the epistolary style, including softening or intensifying phrases, which modify the nuances of an expression, labelled as ‘chichés’ by STEEN (1938).

⁷ WESTERMANN and HASENOEHL (1934), WESTERMANN, KEYES and LIEBESNY (1940).

⁸ According to EVANS (2007: 302), who analyses papyri of Zenon archive not only of Columbia University, but also those of London collection, Cairus collection etc.

⁹ See also EVANS (2012: 28).

- (b) Φιλωνίδης ὁ ἱερεὺς τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. εἰ ἔρρωσαι, εὖ ἂν ἔχοι. ὑγιαίνομεν δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς. (P.Col.Zen. 3,7)
 “Philonides, priest of Asklepios, to Zenon, greeting. If you are in great condition, it would be well. I myself am in good health.”
- (c) Ἀλέξανδρος Ζήνωνι χαίρειν, εἰ ἔρρωσαί τε καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς [κατὰ νοῦν ἀπαλλάσεις, εἴη ἂν ὡς ἡμεῖς βουλόμεθα. Ἐρρώμεθα δὲ καὶ αὐτοί. (P.Col.Zen. 3,9)
 “Alexandros to Zenon, greeting. If your health is good and your affairs move (according to your desire) it would be a pleasure to me. I am well.”

Evans (2007) focused on the linguistic features showed by the style of some senders. For instance, he points out how, despite the fact that in the 83% of the occurrences the letters of the Zenon archive have the short greetings formula, the doctor Ἀρτεμίδωρος uses every time the long one. In this case, it can be referred to as individual style or propensity towards certain ways of writing.

However, what is more interesting is to understand if the choice of these formulas could be somehow linked to the writers communicative intentions, having then a pragmatic function, or if it is also determined by the specific communicative situation. Evans himself considers his own work as introductory and writes: «To what extent are register and chronology controlling factors in the diversity observed?» (Evans, 2007: 308).

In the salutations there is an alternation between the imperative ἔρρωσο and the imperative εὐτύχει, which will be considered in details further on.

In as far as register variation is concerned, the element to be analysed in greatest detail is the expression of request¹⁰, as this is where variation is most highly displayed.

To start with, we must distinguish between two types of requests: requests the expected response to which is ‘yes’ (or the realisation of the request) and requests the acceptance of which depends entirely on the recipient’s discretion.

¹⁰ For a complete study of the expressions of request, see LEIWO (2010), about the imperial age *ostraka*, found out in Mons Claudianus.

2. *The first group of letters: orders, matters of 'business as usual'*

In the first group there are Apollonios' orders to Zenon expressed in the imperative, such as Pap.Col.Zen. 3,31¹¹, a letter of Apollonios sending Midas to work under Zenon:

Ἀπολλώνιος Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. ἀπεστάλκαμεν πρὸς σε Μίδα τὸν ἡμιονηγόν. χρῶ οὖν [...] αὐτῷ πρὸς τοῖς ἡμιόνοις καὶ σύνταξον τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν αὐτῶν ποιείσθαι. δίδου δ' αὐτῷ τὸ τε ὀψώνιον καὶ τὸ σιτάριον τὸ συντετάγμενον εὐτάκτως. τὸν μὲν γὰρ ἱματισμὸν ἀπέχει πὰρ ἡμῶν καὶ τὸ ὀψώνιον κεκέμισται ἕως τοῦ Δίου μηνός. ἔρρωσο.

"Apollonios to Zenon, greeting. I have sent Midas, the muleteer, to you. Make use of him, therefore, in connection with the mules and order him to take over the care of them. Give him the fixed wages and food allowance punctually. For he has obtained his clothing allowance from me and has received his wages up to the month Dios. Good-by."

Apollonios' letters are homogeneous texts with an invariable structure: an opening brief greeting expression Ἀπολλώνιος Ζήνωνι χαίρειν, a sequence of orders in the imperative (χρῶ, σύνταξον, δίδου), closing formula with ἔρρωσο. The relationship between Apollonios and Zenon is asymmetrical because the former is the latter's superior; consequently the orders he gives are not softened by any expressions of courtesy.

From a linguistic point of view this text belongs to what Trevor Evans calls the 'control group', that is a group of texts which can be set apart within the Zenon Archive as a plausible model of written Greek used by upper-middle-class Greeks of Egypt in the mid-third century BC¹².

Another group of requests, the expected response to which is 'yes' (or the realisation of the request), is the informative type letters, which contain a request relevant to their topic.

The matters dealt with are of 'business as usual' and the relationship between sender and recipient is among 'equals' as in Pap.Col.Zen. 3,12 and 17.

In the first evidence, Attinas¹³ writes about arrears owing to his brother,

¹¹ The same overall structure and features in the Columbia collection from Zenon archive in Pap.Col.Zen. 3,14-34 and 42.

¹² See EVANS (2012: 31). About standard koiné Greek in Ptolemaic period, see also EVANS (2010).

¹³ Another letter written by the same individual is retained in the archive concerning a payment, as well (Pap.Cair.Zen. IV, 59542).

who asks for them to be paid to such a Apollonios.

Ἀττινὰς Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. περὶ τοῦ γινομέ[νου] ὀψωνίου Ἑρμίππου τῷ ἀδελφῷ καλῶς ἂν ποιήσῃς φροντίσας ὅ[πως] Ἑρμίππου εὐκαίρως ἀποδόθῃ Ἀπολλωνίω κα[τὰ] τὸ γεγραμμένον αὐτῷ πρόσταγμα πρὸς Ἀπολλόδωρον τὸν οἰκόνομ[ον] ἀποδόθῃ αὐτῷ καὶ εἰς τὸ λοιπὸν ὅπως εὐτάκτῃτ[αι] Ἑρμίππου(?) [ἔρρωσο.

“Attinas to Zenon, greeting. Regarding the (wages) which have accrued for my brother, please take care that (the accumulated [?]) wages of Hermippos be paid at your convenience to Apollonios in accordance with the order (written) for him and addressed to Apollodoros, the steward. (See to it that) it is handed over to him and that it be paid with regularity (to Hermippos?) in future. Good-by.”

The formula to make requests on matters of ‘business as usual’ and requests that are bound to be accepted is *καλῶς ἂν ποιήσῃς* + the aorist participle. We can translate this expression “I would ask you to [...]; please [...]”.

The second letter, Pap.Col.Zen. 3,17 belongs to a correspondence that involves other papyri. It is about some mattresses with certain features, which Apollonides should have given to Kriton, according to a Zenon order and a following rectification. Unfortunately, the rectification letter arrived late, while Apollonides had already delivered different mattresses. In his letter, he asks Zenon, who is the receiver – Ἀπολλωνίδης Ζήνωνι χαίρειν –, to give the money back to Kriton, provided that he sent him back the mattresses – *καλῶς ἂν ποιήσῃς α[...]*¹⁴ *τῶν (πεντηκοντα)μν(αίων) εἰ κεκόμισαι παρὰ Κρίτωνος* “Please (pay back to Kriton?) his expenditure upon the fifty-mina mattresses if you have received them from him [...]”. There is not any closing formula.

Both these correspondences are related to everyday matters and do not show any stylistic characterisation; requests are expressed by using the less marked courtesy form¹⁵: *καλῶς ἂν ποιήσῃς* + the aorist participle, and do not have any closing formula but the salutation *ἔρρωσο*¹⁶. They can easily be compared to the letters of Apollonios, except for the use of the courtesy form, which replaces the imperative.

In the analysed corpus, the imperative is used almost only by Apollo-

¹⁴ The verb which expresses the request is missing, due to the bad state of the papyrus. Arguably, it might have been the aorist participle.

¹⁵ For a survey of the politeness and courtesy expressions in Greek language see POCETTI (2013).

¹⁶ Sometimes not even *ἔρρωσο*, as in Pap.Col.Zen. 3,17 already analysed. See *infra* footnote 19.

nios: as we have already said, the relationship Apollonios → Zenon is clearly asymmetrical; Apollonios is the boss, so he gives orders, without softening them by using courtesy forms¹⁷.

Two imperative forms occur also in the Pap.Col.Zen. 4,70, but their use is somehow depowered. The writer is Sosos, an officer of Apollonios, who is often mentioned in the letters and is described as a usual traveller through Egypt. While he is in Memphis, he meets Menippos, who tells him about the celebrations of the king's birthday; so, he writes a letter to Zenon, in order to inform him about this event and about some other matters:

Σώσος Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. γινώσκει ἡμᾶς κατεσχημένους ἐν Μέμφει ἡμέρας πέντε διὰ τὰς ψιλὰς καὶ διὰ τὰς ὄρνιθας. κατελάβομεν δὲ ἐν Μέμφει Μένιππον καὶ ἀνήγγελλεν διότι ἀναβέβληται τὰ γενέσια ἡμέρας ὀκτώ. γινώσκει δὲ καὶ Διονύσιον τὸν γεωργὸν τὴν ὄλυραν ἣν μεμέτρηται εἰς χορτοκοπίαν πεπράκوتا [...] ἔρρωσο.

“Sosos to Zenon greeting. Know that I was detained five days in Memphis because of the smooth rugs and the fowl. I found Menippos in Memphis and he reported that the birthday celebration had been put off for eight days. Know also that Dionysios, the farmer, has sold the olyra which he has measured out for the hay cutting [...] Good-by.”

Considering the very few occurrences of the imperative in texts which are different from Apollonios ones, the imperative would be supposed to be used here with a specific illocutive force. Conversely, Sosos seems to talk about everyday matters. In fact, the imperative occurs in a disclosure phrase, with introductory purposes, and this is quite common, in the Ptolemaic age, in those letters which have the purpose of «the imparting/seeking of information» (White, 1982: 95; see also White, 1982: 98). In conclusion, the imperative, considering also the meaning of the verb *γινώσκω*, appears to be, in this specific case, a way among many others to introduce a list¹⁸ and it has nothing to do with requests.

¹⁷ In the analysed corpus, the imperative forms are not used, normally, as request's expression. They mark the different social status between the sender and the receiver. The use of the plain imperative between equals, instead of the courtesy form *καλῶς ἂν ποιήσεις* + the aorist participle, is attested, throughout the Imperial age, in the *ostraka* of Mons Claudianus (LEIWO, 2010: 106).

¹⁸ «The same phrase may be employed subsequently within the body to make a transition to a new subject, by adding the required conjunction (e.g., “Know *also* that [...]”)» (WHITE, 1982: 98).

3. *The second group of letters: favours, recommendations, entreaties*

If we consider the second group of requests, those the acceptance of which depends entirely on the recipient's discretion, we will notice a change in the style. Besides the general requests of favours, we can find two sub-types: the *ἐπιστολή συστατική*, or letter of recommendation, and the *ἔντευξις*, or petition/entreaty.

3.1. *Favours and Recommendations*

A relevant example of mixed text is in the Pap.Col.Zen. 3,3. Basically, it seems to be an informative text, but it shows several formal features, all typical of the letters for favours' requests. The opening formula is simple: *Φιλώτας Ζήνωνι χάρειν*. Philotas writes to Zenon in order to inform him about a request of Apollophanes and another agent, that he should bring about an agreement with the tax collectors, regarding payment of taxes upon some runaway slaves. A detailed report of the events anticipates the disclosure statement *γέγραφα οὖν σοι ὅπως ἂν εἰδήῃς* "I have therefore written you that you may be informed".

Philotas takes the opportunity to remind Zenon of a previous request left without any reply: *χαρίζοιο δ' ἄμ μοι περὶ ὧν σο[ι ἤδη γέγραφα ἀ]γοράσας καὶ ἀποστείλας μοι* "You would do me a favour by purchasing and sending to me the things about which (I have already written) you". In this papyrus there is also a formula of exchanging favours *καὶ σὺ δὲ γράφε πρὸς ἡμᾶς περὶ ὧν ἂν βούλη[ι ὡς ποιήσοντάς σοι] προθύμως* "You also write regarding any favours which you may desire, (knowing that I will do them for you) eagerly". Exchanging favours formula, a typical feature of the letters of request between people of the same social level, acknowledges, on one hand, equality in the relations between sender and recipient; and, on the other, it shows that the request will not necessarily be accepted, but that it is subject to the recipient's discretion and this requires the use of a more formal register. In Pa.Col. 3,3 there is not the closure *ἔρρωσο/εὐτύχει*¹⁹.

A typical recommendation letter is the one in the Pap.Col.Zen. 3,7:

¹⁹ The absence of the closing formula might be linked either to the text's typology, like in the case of other memorandum, or to the rapidity of the conversation (BRUNO, 2015: 45), or to the style of the sender (EVANS, 2005) or to the lack of the space on the papyrus or, like in this case, it might have any specific motivation.

Φιλωνίδης ὁ ἱερεὺς τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ Ζήνωνι χ[αίρειν. εἰ ἔρρωσαι, εὖ ἂν ἔχοι. ὑγιαίνομεν δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς. Πτολεμαῖος ὁ κομίζων σοι [τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἐστίν μου φίλος καὶ ἀναγκαῖος. καλῶς ἂν σὺν ποιήσῃς σὺν [...] ἄμ.[...] τοῦτο δὲ ποιῶν χαρίζοι ἂν καὶ ἐμοὶ καὶ τῷ θεῷ[ι. γράψον δὲ μοι ὧν ἂν χρεῖαν ἔχῃς ὡς ἐσόμενόν σοι. [ἔρρωσο.

“Philonides, priest of Asklepios, to Zenon, greeting. (If you are in good condition, it would be well.) I myself am in good health. Ptolemaios, who is bringing (this letter) to you, (is a friend and) intimate of mine. Please [...]. By doing this you would do a favour both to me and to the god. (Write to me if you have need of anything), on the understanding that you will have it.”

Pap.Col.Zen. 3,7 starts with a long opening greeting we have already come across; it contains a request expressed in the usual formula *καλῶς ἂν ποιήσῃς*; due to the bad condition of the papyrus we don't know exactly what Philonides asks for, but it is certainly a request for recommendation.

Further on there is the optative *χαρίζοι ἂν*, in *τοῦτο δὲ ποιῶν χαρίζοι ἂν καὶ ἐμοὶ καὶ τῷ θεῷ*, which often occurs in this type of requests, stressing the idea of the favour.

A typical element of requests which depend on the recipient's discretion appears in this text: a formula of exchanging favours *γράψον δὲ μοι ὧν ἂν χρεῖαν ἔχῃς ὡς ἐσόμενόν σοι*.

The letter shows a plain structure and represents a prototype of the recommendation letter²⁰. In this kind of letters, the level of formality is a little bit higher than in the first group: the writer is a religious minister and, although this could be considered a conversation among equals, from a social point of view, the degree of acquaintance and of familiarity between sender and recipient can't be strong enough to justify a more informal tone.

If sender and receiver know very well each other, the letter's scheme could be even more concise, with a simple opening formula, avoiding completely the formula for the exchange of favours, which is usually a fixed part in the *ἐπιστολὴ συστατικὴ*. This is the case of Pap.Col.Zen. 3,41. However, this papyrus cannot be considered a model; it actually does not represent a common way of writing a recommendation letter:

²⁰ WHITE (1982: 96) about the structure of the *ἐπιστολὴ συστατικὴ*: «The writer introduces/recommends the letter carrier to the recipient; stating the carrier's relation to the writer and/or his credentials. Then, the writer requests the recipient to assist the recommended person in whatever respect the situation demands. Thereupon, the writer expresses appreciation to the recipient for attending to the request, by stating that he will be “favored” by addressee's assistance and/or by offering to repay the favour».

Φιλίας Ζήνωνι χαιρε[ι]ν²¹. προσήλθον τ[ιν]ές ἡμῖν τῶν γνωρίμων ὑπὲρ Μητροδώρου τοῦ ἀποδιδόντος [σο]ι τὴν [ἐ]πιστολὴν ἀξιούντες γράψαι πρὸς σε. χαιρεῖ οὐμ μοι ἔρανον αὐτ[ῶ]ι ποιήσα[ς] παρὰ τε σαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν γνωρίμων. φανερός δέ σοι ἔσται ὁ ἀνθρωπος ἀπὸ τῆς ἐσθήτος ὃς ἔστιν. ἔρρωσο.

“Phileas to Zenon, greeting. Certain of my acquaintances have come to me in behalf of Metrodoros, the man who is handing this letter to you, requesting me to write to you. You will, therefore, do me a favor by making him a collective loan from yourself and your acquaintances. It will be clear to you what sort of man he is from his dress. Good-by.”

An even more formal style can be found in Pap.Col.Zen. 3,9. The writer is Alexandros, the cavalry commander. He asks to Zenon for his intervention with Apollonios, in order to receive arrears of allowances owing to him.

We have already mentioned the opening greeting formula, using it as an example of a particularly complex extended formula. Request for a favour is never very explicit: καλῶς δ' ἔχειν ὑπέλαβον καὶ σοι γράψαι ὅπως ἂν τινά σο χρει[αν] τὰ παρόντα ἔχη συναντιλάβη φιλοτίμως καὶ ἡμῶν ἔνεκεν καὶ Μενέτου “I have concluded that it would be well to write also to you in order that, if the matter requires your assistance, you may cooperate zealously both on my account and that of Menetos”.

The sender insists on using expressions of courtesy such as οἶα ἂν ἀιτήσωμέν σου βουληθέντος πάντα ἡμῖν τὰ φιλόανθρωπα ἔσται παρ' Ἀπολλωνίου “Whatever I may ask, if you desire it, will meet with every favor from Apollonios”. He actually wants to say ‘I know you can plead with Apollonios for my requests, if you want. So do it!’.

The sender also uses a very complex exchanging favours formula: περὶ ὧν σπουδάσομεν καὶ αὐτοὶ καθ' ὅσον [ἡμῖ]ν κ[...] τὰς χάριτας ἀποδίδοναί σοι “regarding these favours I also shall endeavor, in so far as possible, to make return of gratitude to you”.

To sum up, this is a clear example of the fact that when someone wants to obtain something, they certainly don't spare their words.

This papyrus ends with εὐτύχει, instead of the more common ἔρρωσο.

²¹ A difference between the two recommendation letters Pap.Col.Zen. 3,7 and Pap.Col.Zen. 3,41 comes out in the first words: Phileas does not need to be introduced, on the contrary Philonides needs to specify his title ‘priest of Asklepios’, arguably because he does not often write to Zenon or maybe because he has not written to him so far. On Phileas, the editor remarks: «The tone of complete equality which the writer, Phileas, adopts toward Zenon in this *epistole systatike* marks him as a personage of some importance» (WESTERMANN and HASENOEHL, 1934: 103).

It is a much more formal closing greeting formula²². In the choice between εὐτύχει and ἔρρωσο, it is not only the formality of the text which is relevant, but also the relation among the people involved in the communication. Who uses εὐτύχει may not know Zenon personally, or might have never had a personal or a professional relation with him, or belongs to a lower social class than him.

The equivalent in Italian could be the distinction between *distinti saluti*, which implicates a social gap and *cordiali saluti*, which implicate a slighter social gap or equality among the people involved in communication. Nevertheless *cordiali saluti* can be used in formal context as ἔρρωσο is used in letters of recommendation, such as Pap.Col.Zen. 3,7 and Pap.Col.Zen. 3,41 we have already seen.

We can find εὐτύχει at the end of Pap.Col.Zen. 4,64, ἐπιστολὴ συστατικὴ which contains the longest opening formula in our corpus, X Ζήνωνι χά] ιρ[ε]ι]ν. [εἰ ἔ]ρρωσαι σύ τε καὶ οὓς προαιρεῖ καὶ τ[ὰ λοιπὰ σοι κατὰ νοῦν ἐστίν, εἴη ἄν] ὡς τοῖς θεοῖς εὐχομαι. ὑγιαίνω δὲ καὶ [αὐ]τ[ός]. “X to Zenon, greeting. If you and your friends are well, and everything else is as you desire, it would be as I pray to the gods. I myself am well”.

This proves that both elements – extended opening formula and closure with εὐτύχει – are typical of a formal register and for this reason they can be often found together.

Pap.Col.Zen. 4,64 is a recommendation letter from an unknown sender, who has previously been recommended to Nikanor and Hekataios by Zenon and asks him to tell Nikanor and Hekataios to keep on taking care of him.

The request is expressed through the unmarked formula: καλῶς ἂν οὖν ποιοῖς μὴ ἀφοκνῶν γράφειν πρὸς τε Νικάνορα καὶ πρὸς Ἑκαταῖον “be kind enough to write without delay both to Nikanor and to Hekataios”.

In the final part of the letter an actual exchange of favours is not mentioned, it is rather a benevolence the sender showed, a proof that he was worthy of Zenon’s support: τὴν δὲ λοιπὴν εὐνοίαν ὡς ἔχω πρὸς σε ἀναγγέλει σοι Κρότος. καὶ γὰρ εἰς ὅσα ἡμᾶς παρεκαλεῖ συναρῆσθαι αὐτῷ ἀμέμπτως, καὶ ὅσων χρεῖαν εἶχεν ἐποιούμεεν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἀφοκνοῦντες διὰ σε “Krotos will give you further assurance of my good will toward you. For in every matter in which he has been calling upon me, I have helped him blamelessly, and whatever he has needed I have done ungrudgingly for your sake”.

Among the examined texts the highest level of formality can be found

²² See BRUNO (2015: 44).

in Pap.Col.Zen. 3,11. Three men from Caunus ask Zenon to accompany Apollonides and another man to present a letter to Apollonios. They ask also for Zenon's good offices in helping them to obtain consideration for their proposal about their city Caunus:

Ζήνων Πρωτογένης [Απολλ]ωνίδης Ζήνωνι χείρειν. [...] π[αρακ]αλοῦμεν σε τήν τε ἐπιστολήν ἣν δεδώκαμεν Ἀπολλωνίδει οὐσαν πᾶσιν ἡ[μῶν] χρησίμην ἀποδοῦναι μετὰ Πυρρίου καὶ Ἀπολλωνίδου Ἀπολλωνίωι, κα[ὶ] ἐάν τ[ι] ἄλλο δύνῃσι συνεργῆσαι ἡμῖν ὅπως λόγου τύχωμεν εἰδῶς ἀκριβῶς ὅτ[ι] πορευ[θέντες] εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν οὐκ ἀμνημονήσομεν τούτων ἀλλὰ τῶι τε δῆμ[ωι] ἀντεμφανιοῦμεν ὥστε σοι φανερόν γένεσθαι καὶ αὐτοὶ πειρασ[όμεθα] χάριν ἀποδοῦναι. εὐτύχει.

“Zenon, Protogenes and Apollonides to Zenon greeting. ... we beg you, along with Pyrrhias and Apollonides, to present to Apollonios the letter which we have given to Apollonides, [a letter] which is useful to us all. And if you are able in any other way to work with us to the end that we may obtain consideration, [we request you to do so] with the full knowledge that when we return to our own city we shall not be unmindful of these things, but will in turn disclose them to the assembly so that it is clear to you [that we are not unmindful]. And we will personally, also try to return the favour. Good-by.”

The opening greeting formula is in the base form; the request is expressed with *παρακαλέω*, which is one of the typical verbs of petitions and entreaties, which we are talking about in the next paragraph. The style is very elegant and formal; the letter ends with the exchanging favours formula and *εὐτύχει*.

3.2. *Petitions / Entreaties*

The last group to take into consideration is the one that can be assimilated to the *ἐντεῦξεις*. White (1982: 96-97) describes very well the contents and structure of this kind of letters:

The plaintiff customarily introduces the body of the letter by stating that he/she has been unjustly treated by someone ... or by providing some similar account of the circumstances which occasion the petition. Following this “background”, the writer entreats the king or some lower official to rectify the situation, employing such as verbs of petition as *ἄξιῶ*, *δέομαι*, *ικετεύω* and *παρακαλῶ*. (White, 1982: 96-97)

The most typical examples of this kind of letters in our corpus are

Pap.Col.Zen. 3,6 «A worried to Zenon» and Pap.Col.Zen. 4,66 «Ill-treatment of a non-Greek»²³.

Let's start from the first mentioned example. Simale is worried because her son, who works under Olympichos, has been ill-treated. She introduces this background in the first part of the letter:

Σιμάλη Ἡροφάντου μήτηρ Ζήνωνι χαίρειν.
 ἀκούσασα ἠνώγλησθαι μου τ[ὸ παιδάριον καὶ σφοδρότερον, παρεγενόμενην
 πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ἐλθοῦσα ἤθελον ἐντυχεῖν σοι ὑπὲρ τῶν αὐτῶν τούτων. ἐπεὶ δέ
 με Ὀλύμπιχ[ος] ἐκώλυσεν τοῦ μὴ ἰδεῖν σε, εἰ[σεκομίσθην] πρὸς τὸ παιδίον ὡς
 ποτ' ἠδυνάμην, καὶ εὔρον αὐτὸν καὶ μάλα γελοιώσα[σ]α κείμενον καὶ ἤ[δη] ἱκανόμ
 μοι ἦν ὀρώσαν ἐκείνον λυπεῖσται. ἀλλ' ἐπιπαραγενόμενος Ὀλύμπιχος ἔφη αὐτὸν
 τύπτων σαπρὸν ποιή[σε]ιν ἢ πεπο[ί]ηκεν ὅς ἤδη σχεδὸν ἦν.

“Simale, mother of Herophantos, to Zenon, greeting.

Since I heard that my boy had been quite badly treated, I came to you; and when I came, I desired to complain to you about these matters. –When Olympichos hindered me from seeing you, I got admission to the boy as best I could, and although I laughed heartily at him, I found him lying ill; and the first sight of him was enough to grieve me. But when Olympichos joined us, he said that he would beat him till he wore him out - or he had done so, since he was nearly that already[?].”

Then she asks for the intervention of Zenon, in order to obtain an immediate modification of this situation:

εὐπρεπῶς δέομαι οὖν σου καὶ ἰκετεύω ἐπιστροφὴν ποιήσασθαι περὶ τούτων καὶ
 ἀναγγεῖλαι Ἀπολλωνίῳ ὅν [τινα τρόπον μου ὑβρίζομεν τὸ παιδίον διατετέληκεν
 ὑπ' Ὀλυμπίχου ὡς καὶ τῆς νόσου τ[ούτου] μεταίτιον γεγέννησθαι.

“Properly, therefore, I beg and beseech you to bring about a change in these matters and to report to Apollonios in what manner my boy has been constantly insulted by Olympichos, as if he, indeed, were to blame for his sickness.”

Moreover, neither she nor he have received the owing wages; so, Simale asks Zenon they should be paid to herself:

Ἐγὼ γὰρ πρὸς τῷ μηδ' εἰληφέναι μηθὲν ἐνιαυτοῦ ἤδ[η] ἀλλ' ἢ τὴν μνᾶν καὶ τρεῖς
 ἀρτάβας σίτου τοῦ Δύστρου μηνὸς οὐ εἰσπόμενται Ἡρόφα[ντος] πρὸς ὑμᾶς. τὴν
 μὲν οὖν Ἀπολλωνίου εὐνοῖαν καὶ τὴν σὴν ἀναγγέλλει μοι αὐτὸ τὸ παι[δάριον] ἦν

²³ Titles of the editors: WESTERMANN and HASENOEHRL (1934) for Pap.Col.Zen. 3,6; WESTERMANN, KEYES and LIEBESNY (1940) for Pap.Col.Zen. 4,66.

ἔχοντες διατελείτε εἰς αὐτόν. ἀξιῶ οὖν σε ἅμα δὲ καὶ δέομαι εἴ τι συντε[λείν τέταξε
 Ἀπολλώνιος αὐτῷ ὀψώνιον ἀποδοθῆναι μοι. [...] εὐτύχει.

“I also [wish to point out?] that I have received nothing for a year now except the mina and three artabs of wheat since the month Dystros, when Herophantos came to you. The boy himself tells me of the good will of Apollonios and yourself which you have constantly shown toward him. I ask you, therefore, and beg that, if Apollonios has given orders to pay him anything, his wages be paid to me. Good-by.”

Differently from what we can imagine, the relationship between Zenon and Simale is not asymmetrical. Simale obviously belongs to a high social class as revealed by the way of addressing Zenon and, for example, by the fact that she writes her names before Zenon's in opening formula²⁴. Thus, she is not an inferior, from the social point of view, but she writes, in this situation, in the position of an inferior²⁵. According to the content of her message, she is respectful of the structure of the ἔντευξις by applying the typical strings of coordinated verbs normally used for expressing requests in this kind of texts: δέομαι οὖν σου καὶ ἰκετεύω and ἀξιῶ οὖν σε ἅμα δὲ καὶ δέομαι.

Although the text as a whole is not particularly formal – if we compare, for example, to Pap.Col.Zen. 3,9 – and Simale goes straight to the point, it still ends with εὐτύχει, which is much more appropriate than ἔρρωσο for an ἔντευξις.

The most famous ἔντευξις in the Zenon archive is Pap.Col.Zen. 4,66; it is written by somebody who defines himself as a βάρβαρος and complains being treated unfairly for this reason. The letter starts with an extended greeting formula, which is followed by the background of the petition and by the formulaic phrase “I want you to know it”.

[...] δ[...]. Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. καλῶς ποιεῖς εἰ ἔρρωσαι. ἔρρωμαι δὲ καὶ αὐτός. ἐπίστασαι ὡς κατέλιπές με ἐν Συρίαι μετὰ Κρότου καὶ ἐποίουν πάντα τὰ προστασόμενα τὰ κατὰ <τὰ> καμήλους καὶ ἡμην σο[ι] ἀνέγκλητ[ο]ς. σοῦ δὲ προσταξάντος μοι

²⁴ The order in which sender (A) and recipient (B) are introduced in the greeting formula is relevant, because the unmarked structure ‘A to B χαίρειν’ is replaced by ‘To B (from) A χαίρειν’ in the petitions and entreaties (WHITE, 1982: 93-94). The fact that Simale's name is placed before Zenon's is regarded to by commentators as an evidence of the high social level of the woman (WESTERMANN and HASENOEHL, 1934: 35); «Moreover, the fact that her son's regular allotment of castor oil [...], while on tour with Apollonios, had been changed to the higher grade olive oil [...] also suggests the status of the family» (WHITE, 1986: 33).

²⁵ According to WHITE (1982: 97): «The petitioners writes in the position of an inferior, whereas the author of the letter of commendation writes as an equal».

ὀψώνιον διδόναι ἃ σὺ συνέταξας οὐκ ἐδίδου μοι οὐθέν. ἐπεὶ δὴ πολλάκ[ι]ς μου δεομένου διδόναι μοι ἃ σὺ συνέταξας οὐκ ἐδίδου μοι οὐθέν Κρότος, ἀλλ' ἔκελευέμ με ἀπαλλάσσεσθαι, χρόνον μὲν οὖν πολὺν ἐκαρτέρου σε προσδεχόμενος, ἐπεὶ δὲ τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἐνδεής ἤμην καὶ οὐθέν ἡδυνάμην οὐθαμόθεν πορίζειν, ἡναγκάσθη ἀποτρέχειν εἰς Συρίαν ἵνα μὴ τῷ λιμῷ παραπολῶμαι. ἔγραψα οὖν σοι ἵνα εἰδήῃς ὅτι Κρότος αἴτιος.

[...] to Zenon greeting. You do well if you keep your health. I too am well. You know that you left me in Syria with Krotos and I did everything that was ordered in respect to the camels and was blameless toward you. When you sent an order to give me pay, he gave nothing of what you ordered. When I asked repeatedly that he give me what you ordered and Krotos gave me nothing, but kept telling me to remove myself, I held out for a long time waiting for you; but when I was in want of necessities and could get nothing anywhere, I was compelled to run away into Syria so that I might not perish of hunger. So I wrote you that you might know that Krotos was the cause of it.”

When performing the request, the sender also specifies his disapproval towards the supposed discrimination he was victim of, because he is not Greek:

ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ θέρος καὶ χειμῶνα ἐν τῷ πονῶι γίνομαι. [...] ἀλλὰ κατεγνώκασίμ μου ὅτι ἐμὶ βάρβαρος. δέομαι οὖν σου σύνταξαι εἴ σοι δοκεῖ αὐτοῖς ὅπως τὰ ὀφειλόμενα κομίσωμαι καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ εὐτάκτωσιν μοι ἵνα μὴ τῷ λιμῷ παραπολῶμαι ὅτι οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι ἐλληγίζειν. σὺ οὖν καλῶς ἂν ποιήσαις ἐπιστροφὴν μου ποιησάμενος.

“And I am in difficulty both summer and winter. [...] Well, they have treated me with scorn because I am a ‘barbarian’. I beg you therefore, if it seems good to you, to give them orders that I am to obtain what is owing and that in future they pay me in full, in order that I may not perish of hunger because I do not know how to act the Hellene. You, therefore, kindly cause a change in attitude toward me.”

The meaning of βάρβαρος in this text has largely been dealt with²⁶. If we consider that the sender is competent enough in Greek, it is probable that ‘his being barbaros’ refers to his lack of standard grammar or to a more general difficulty in fitting into the Greek social environment²⁷. From an orthographic and phonetic point of view, in this text there are typical phenomena of the written Greek of that time, such as the confusion of ω, ο and ου (like in

²⁶ See ROCHETTE (1996).

²⁷ According to ROCHETTE (1996) and WHITE (1986: 21).

the future forms *παραπολώμαι* instead of *παραπολούμαι*, *κομίσωμαι* instead of *κομίσομαι*) and other well known phenomena, such as the consonants cluster simplification $\gamma\nu > \nu$ (*γίνομαι* instead of *γίγνομαι*), the assimilation of ν to μ in phono-syntactic contact with μ (*ἔκελευέμ με* instead of *ἔκελευεν*, *κατεγνώκασίμ μου* instead of *κατεγνώκασιν*), etc. Anyhow, we can confirm that the writer has enough competency, even if not very good, of the Greek language and, although he concludes the letter with *ἔρρωσο* in lieu of the more appropriate *εὐτύχει* and although he puts his name before Zenon's in the greetings formula, he makes a great effort to follow the epistolary style²⁸.

4. Conclusions

We can sum up in a chart the findings of this paper:

PEOPLE (social level) →	From HIGHER > to lower	Inter PARES	From LOWER > to higher
CONTENTS ↓			
<p>- <i>Orders / matters of 'business as usual'</i></p> <p>Expected response: 'yes' (or the realisation of request)</p>	<p>- Short and plain text</p> <p>- base opening greeting formula 'A to B greetings'</p> <p>- request: imperative</p> <p>- closing formula: ἔρρωσο</p>	<p>- Short and plain text</p> <p>- base opening greeting formula 'A to B greetings'</p> <p>- request: καλῶς ἂν ποιήσῃς + aorist participle</p> <p>- closing formula: ἔρρωσο</p>	X
<p>- <i>Favours, recommendation and entreaties</i></p> <p>Response under recipient's discretion</p>	X	<p><i>Register variation (formal/informal)</i></p> <p>- Short/long text</p> <p>- Base or extended opening greeting formula 'A to B greetings'</p> <p>- request: χαρίζοι, παρακαλέω</p> <p>- exchanging favours formula</p> <p>- closing formula: εὐτύχει / ἔρρωσο</p>	<p><i>Diastratic variation (dependent on sender's competencies)</i></p> <p>- Base or extended opening greeting formula 'B from A greetings'</p> <p>- request: ἀξιώ, δέομαι, ἱκετεύω, παρακαλώ</p> <p>- closing formula: εὐτύχει</p>

Table 1. *To sum up.*

²⁸ About the sender of this letter, the editors claim «his handwriting is crude», «in its grammatical structure the letter is not bad, and the writer certainly had some knowledge of the customary form of an official complaint or enteuxis» (WESTERMANN, KEYES and LIEBESNY, 1940: 16-17).

Requests the expected response to which is ‘yes’ (or the realisation of request) are usually short and plain texts. They start with brief greeting formulas and end with ἔρρωσο. Requests are expressed with the basic politeness form καλῶς ἂν ποιήσαις, if the sender and the recipient belong to the same social level, which is the most frequent case. The use of the imperative in giving orders is a prerogative of Apollonios’s letters to Zenon. In these cases the relation between sender and recipient is asymmetrical in favour of the former. Obviously there are no letters of this kind sent by lower class writers to higher class recipients.

Inversely, letters containing an authentic request of a favour, recommendation or entreaty, and subject to the recipient discretion, naturally are not typical of a higher class senders to a lower class recipient. We will never come across a letter from Apollonios asking Zenon for a favour; whoever writes to Zenon for a favour will be an equal or of a lower class. In fact, the majority of the letters is written among equals. The cases in which we can be sure that who writes belongs to a very low social class are very rare; among these, there is the famous Pap.Col.Zen. 4,66, the one just analysed.

The letters of requests for favours are those where we can really find linguistic or stylistic variations; and it is only in this type of letters where real differentiations of the registers occur.

In particular, the extended opening formula and the closing formula in εὐτύχει highlight a higher register. A typical feature of this type of letters is the exchanging favours formula which sometimes can reach a high level of formality, as we have seen for example in Pap.Col.Zen. 3,9.

Among the request for favour letters, we can distinguish the letters for recommendation, which are in itself *inter pares*, and the entreaties, that rarely involve equals (as in Pap.Col.Zen. 3,6 where Simale is not an inferior but writes as an inferior) and that can be written by somebody from the lower class to somebody from the higher class. In this last case we can find variations dependent on the linguistic and stylistic competency of the writer, who should respect the ἐντευξις structure (B from A greeting, ending with εὐτύχει) though sometimes he does not do that, as in Pap.Col.Zen. 4,66.

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