

# THE THIN LINE BETWEEN *MISE EN PAGE* AND *MISE EN ABYME*: AN EXAMINATION OF THE LAYOUT OF MULTIPLE LETTERS ON PAPYRUS (1ST–6TH CENTURIES CE)\*

Yasmine Amory

The writing and delivery of a letter in antiquity depended on a range of unpredictable factors, from having the appropriate writing material at one’s disposal<sup>1</sup> to actually being able to write the message, and, if not, looking for a person who could. Once the letter was drafted, an individual would still have to find a letter-carrier – in most cases, this was someone who simply happened to be going in the right direction.<sup>2</sup> However, despite all these efforts, a letter would not always reach its final destination, as can be observed from a great number of private letters that contain complaints concerning missing correspondence and failed deliveries.<sup>3</sup> To ensure the successful receipt of the document, an individual could therefore opt to pen multiple letters to close addressees on the same sheet of papyrus. In the same way, a few

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\* This research was conducted within the framework of the ERC project “Everyday Writing in Graeco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt (I–VIII AD): A Socio-Semiotic Study of Communicative Variation” (PI: Klaas Bentein). It has been funded by the European Research Council (Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, Starting Grant Nr. 756487) and the Special Research Fund (Bijzonder Onderzoeksfonds) of Ghent University. All dates in this chapter are CE. I would like to thank the editors of the volume for their suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the sender of BGU III 822 (Arsinoites, after May 5, 105, according to Azzarello 2008, 32), who asks the addressee to send her some blank papyrus in order to be able to write a letter (ll. 28–29: καὶ [ἐὰ] σοι φανῆ, πέμψον μοι ἄγραφον χάρτιν, ἵνα εὔρο[με]ν (l. εὔρωμεν) ἐπιστολ[ῆ]ν | γράψαι), and Klaudios Terentianos, who sends some papyrus alongside his letter to be sure that his sister Tasoucharion has what is needed to write him about her health (P.Mich. VIII 481 [Alexandria?, early 2nd c.], ll. 35–36: ἔπεμψά σοι χάρτιν ἵνα ἔχῃς μοι | [γρά]φειν περὶ τῆς ὑγίας (l. ὑγιείας) ὑμῶν).

<sup>2</sup> On the search for a letter-carrier, see most recently Schubert 2021, 28–29, and Head 2009, 283–284.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. P.Mich. XV 752 (?), late 2nd c.), ll. 29–32: ἐ[κ]ομισάμην (l. ἐ[κ]ομισάμην) σου | ἐπιστόλιον δι’ [οὔ] μοι γρ[άφ]ει[ς] δ[ὲ] ἔπισ | τολάς μοι ἀπεσταλκένε (l. ἀπεσταλκέναι). ἴσθι, ἄδελφε, ὅτι | μείαν (l. μίαν) μόνην ἔκομισάμην (l. ἔκομισάμην), “I have received your letter by which you write to me that you sent me two letters. Know, brother, that I received only one”.

Yasmine Amory, Ghent University, Belgium, yasmine.amory@ugent.be, 0000-0002-4590-5781

Referee List (DOI 10.36253/fup\_referee\_list)

FUP Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing (DOI 10.36253/fup\_best\_practice)

Yasmine Amory, *The Thin Line Between mise en page and mise en abyme: An Examination of the Layout of Multiple Letters on Papyrus (1st–6th Centuries CE)*, © Author(s), CC BY 4.0, DOI 10.36253/979-12-215-0456-9.08, in Davide Amendola, Cristina Carusi, Francesca Maltomini, Emilio Rosamilia (edited by), *Text, Layout, and Medium. Documents from the Greco-Roman World between Epigraphy and Papyrology*, pp. 101–119, 2024, published by Firenze University Press, ISBN 979-12-215-0456-9, DOI 10.36253/979-12-215-0456-9

people could decide to group together letters that were addressed to the same person on the same papyrus. Additionally, this practice allowed paper and time to be saved.

In spite of these benefits, the habit of using a single writing medium for more than one letter was not frequently adopted in antiquity,<sup>4</sup> probably because this system did not allow for much privacy between the sender and the recipient. While most letters that made use of this format appear to be penned by the same person, showing that at least one of the messages was dictated – and, consequently, that the scribe knew the content of the whole document –, one can assume that letters containing multiple messages – the so-called “multiple letter” – were usually read in full when they arrived at their destination. These circumstances presumably explain why this specific writing format was mostly preferred by people who knew each other, were part of the same family or shared close connections, or lived together or in close proximity.<sup>5</sup> All the information contained in the letters could then be shared between family members or business partners.<sup>6</sup> In light of these elements, Roger S. Bagnall and Raffaella Cribiore have written that “multiple letters ... need to be considered together, almost as single texts”,<sup>7</sup> and, as such, they have suggested thinking about them as small archives. In this chapter, I would like to develop this approach and inquire into whether multiple letters were conceived as a single text by the scribes themselves and, if so, how this conception shaped the layout of the document. In other words, I am interested in the question whether the unity of messages in a multiple letter, which mirrors the unity of the relationships between the correspondents, was also reflected in the visual aspect of the text.

## 1. THE CORPUS

A list of multiple letters has been compiled by Raffaele Luiselli in his fundamental article on Greek letters on papyrus from the Graeco-Roman period and Late Antiquity.<sup>8</sup> This list includes eighteen texts dating from the first to the sixth centuries. Fifteen of them comprise two letters, two contain three letters (P.Brem. 61,

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<sup>4</sup> This consideration refers, here and throughout, to private letters. Administrative letters show a different pattern, namely the so-called system of “cascade letters”, which was widely used in public offices. This system consisted in appending copies of letters within other letters (on this practice during the Ptolemaic period, see Mirizio 2021).

<sup>5</sup> As has been noticed by Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 36–37, and Reinard 2016, 98–113, who retraces the relationships and physical proximity of the addresses through the exchange of goods mentioned in the letters.

<sup>6</sup> See also Winter 1933, 49 n. 1: “The practice attests the unity of family life as well the lack of privacy in correspondence”.

<sup>7</sup> Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 36.

<sup>8</sup> Luiselli 2008, 685 n. 40.

P.Wisc. II 84<sup>9</sup>) and one consists of four messages (SB III 7244). This list constituted the starting point for the construction of my corpus, although I chose not to take into consideration P.Leid.Inst. 42 (Philadelphia, 2nd c.) and P.Oxy. XXXVI 2789 (3rd c.), since they present a different situation. The Leiden papyrus contains in fact two letters, but these are Heras' letter to her sister Taphes (ll. 1-19) and Taphes' reply to her sister Heras (ll. 20-27). As noticed by the editors, Taphes decided to use the blank lower margin of the letter to write her answer and asked the letter-carrier, who seems to have penned both letters, to bring it back to Heras.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, P.Leid.Inst. 42 is not a proper "dual letter", as I am understanding the term. As for the Oxyrhynchos document, it consists of two letters of Kleopatra to her father and the builder Moros on a common matter. In the first one, Kleopatra urges her father to give Moros five artabas of barley, otherwise she will be locked up. In the second, she informs Moros that she wrote to her father about the five artabas and gives him further instructions. The impression is that the two letters have been drafted in a hurry, one after the other, but were not meant to be delivered together.<sup>11</sup> They were probably supposed to be separated and dispatched as single letters.<sup>12</sup> The fact that they have been preserved on the same sheet, in addition to the lack of any address on the back, suggests that the letters were either a draft or were never delivered.

In a similar manner, it can be questioned whether BGU II 615, a letter of Ammonous to her father followed by a letter of Keler to his brother Antonios, was originally conceived as a double letter. To start with, the address on the back of the text only shows the names of the correspondents of the first message. Moreover, in the last lines of the first message (ll. 15-16) "Keler and all his people" greet Ammonous' father, suggesting that Keler decided to dictate his letter as an afterthought, by taking advantage of the departure of the occasional messenger in the right direction. This is confirmed by ll. 35-36, where Keler states: *αὐτῆς ὥρα (l. ὥρας) κ[ο]μισάμενός σου τὸ ἐπιλσ/τόλειον (l. ἐπιλσ/τόλιον) ἀντέγραψα ἀφορ[μ]ῆν εὐρών*, "at the same hour that I received your letter I found an opportunity and wrote back". In this case, the disposition of multiple texts on the same medium did not depend on a premeditated

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<sup>9</sup> In Luiselli's list, P.Wisc. II 84 (? , late 2nd c.) was considered as a double letter, since its edition contains two private letters (addressed respectively to Satornilos and his mother Satornila). However, in the material description of the papyrus on top of the text transcription, P.J. Sijpesteijn has observed that the left bottom margin of the papyrus contains the end of ten lines, which probably make up the rest of a lost letter. The external address seems to confirm this hypothesis, since it shows Satornilos and Valerianos as the addressees of the document, suggesting that the first missing letter was addressed to Valerianos (on this supposition, see Sijpesteijn 1976, 171 n. 10).

<sup>10</sup> For an image of the letter, see P.Leid.Inst., pl. XXVII, and <<https://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.leid.inst.;42>>.

<sup>11</sup> An image of the papyrus can be found at <[https://portal.sds.ox.ac.uk/articles/online\\_resource/P\\_Oxy\\_XXXVI\\_2789\\_Two\\_Letters\\_of\\_Cleopatra/21165991](https://portal.sds.ox.ac.uk/articles/online_resource/P_Oxy_XXXVI_2789_Two_Letters_of_Cleopatra/21165991)>.

<sup>12</sup> See also Bagnall and Criore 2006, 401: "These two letters were written on a single sheet and never detached".

ed choice of the scribe. Nevertheless, as this double letter has been delivered as such to the final destination, I included it in the corpus.

In addition to the sixteen multiple letters already listed by Luiselli and included in my survey, I was able to collect seven more, which are all double letters except for one, the three-letter P.Vet.Aelii 18–19.<sup>13</sup> Of the main ensemble, which consists of twenty-three texts (see Appendix), only one is written on a tablet (T.Vindol. III 643), three on ostraca (O.Krok. II 296, O.Did. 383, O.Did. 417), and the rest on papyrus. All are in Greek, except two that are in Latin (T.Vindol. III 643 and O. Did. 417). Among these, one comes from Vindolanda. Despite the small number of examples, the Latin letters show that this epistolary practice was not exclusive to Egypt and a Greek-speaking milieu.<sup>14</sup>

This chronological overview shows that the practice of writing multiple letters is mainly attested in the Roman period, especially in the second century, and not so much in the third century, with only two attestations from the Byzantine period: P.Grenf. I 53 (4th c.) and P.Oxy. XVI 1829 (577–583).<sup>15</sup> Different factors may have contributed to this. On the one hand, the new format of the letter, which switched from a vertical strip in the Roman period to a narrow and horizontal shape in the Byzantine period,<sup>16</sup> was probably less suitable for copying more than one message. On the other hand, the rise of Coptic from the late third century and its progressive adoption for private communication may have also played a contributing role. As already mentioned, the drafting of multiple letters on the same medium was mainly employed by members of the same family or people who were closely connected. If multiple letters were still drafted in Late Antiquity, these might therefore be found in the Coptic documentation.

The family context of multiple letters also explains the unusually high percentage of messages from and to women, who were often mothers or sisters of the sender

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<sup>13</sup> In chronological order: T.Vindol. III 643 (Vindolanda, 97–105?), O.Krok. II 296 (Krokodilo, 98–117), O.Did. 383 (Didymoi, 110–115), O.Did. 417 (Didymoi, ca. 120–125), P.Lond. inv. 2133 (Arsinoites?, 2nd or 3rd c.; edited in Zellmann-Rohrer 2017, 136–143), P.Vet.Aelii 18–19 (Ankyron? [Herakleopolites], ca. 222–255), P.Oxy. I 120 = Sel.Pap. I 162 (Oxyrhynchos, 3rd c.).

<sup>14</sup> On the peculiar context of O.Did. 417, which involves a woman named Demetrous asking the soldier Noumosis to write a letter in Latin to Klaudios, a fellow soldier, on her behalf, see also Speidel 2018, 186–189.

<sup>15</sup> In the Byzantine archive of Dioskoros of Aphrodite there are two more papyri containing multiple letters, but they do not properly fit our criteria. These letters were not, in fact, originally conceived to be sent together on a single sheet to one or more senders, but they were assembled and copied on the same papyrus by Dioskoros himself for literary or administrative purposes. Thus, P.Cair.Masp. III 67295 is a collection composed of the petition by the philosopher Horapollon and three letters in high-register Greek (see Fournet 2009, 61–63, for more details on the anthology), while P.Cair. SR 3733 (2) is a dossier of four letters concerning the same fiscal problem encountered by the village (on this, see Fournet 2001, 481–482).

<sup>16</sup> On this format shift, see Fournet 2009.

or addressee. This suggests that the practice of dictating a letter was quite common among women, as well as the habit of reading a letter out loud to someone illiterate. It is indeed a challenging task to assess the relationship between the use of multiple letters and the degree of literacy of the women involved. However, for at least one case, it seems that these two factors were connected: in the Roman archive of Satornila and her sons (TM ArchID 212), which consists of eight papyri (all private letters between the members of a family of Roman citizens), there are two double letters (P.Mich. XV 752 and SB III 6263) and a triple one (P.Wisc. II 84). The sender of these multiple letters is always Sempronios, one of Satornila's sons, while the addressees are his mother and brothers. As these letters are always and only addressed to the brothers, it has been claimed that Satornila was illiterate and that the letters were read to her. This is confirmed by P.Mich. XV 751 (Alexandria?, late 2nd c.), a letter of Sempronios to Satornila, whose external address shows that, even on this occasion, Maximos, Sempronios' brother, was the recipient of the message.<sup>17</sup>

## 2. THE LAYOUT OF MULTIPLE LETTERS

Whereas the layout and material aspects of ancient letters on papyrus have been recently analysed in detail,<sup>18</sup> little attention has been paid to the layout of private multiple letters. While editing multiple letters, scholars generally refer to other attestations of this practice in the papyrological evidence, but they never examine the layout or outline possible differences between the quoted examples. To my knowledge, the only remark on the subject has been made so far by Raffaele Luiselli: "As it happens, there exist cases of a multiplicity of epistolary texts being penned on one side of a single sheet of papyrus, and arranged either in single vertical file, one on top of another, or (on one occasion only) side by side in two facing columns".<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, a closer analysis will show a wider range of possible layout arrangements: I have now identified four different options that were used for arranging multiple letters.

### 2.1 One on Top of Another

Before examining the first typology, it might be useful to briefly recall the typical layout of a letter in the Roman period, since all multiple letters but two belong to this era. At this time, a letter was characterized by a vertical format (also known as the *pagina* format),<sup>20</sup> in which its height corresponds to the height of the papyrus scroll from which it was cut, and by a clear visual distinction of the main parts of the text. Thus, the prescript, which occupied the first line(s), was visually sepa-

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<sup>17</sup> On this hypothesis and an overview of the family archive, see Van Beek 2013, 2.

<sup>18</sup> See Sarri 2018 for the Greco-Roman period and Fournet 2009 for the Byzantine period.

<sup>19</sup> Luiselli 2008, 685.

<sup>20</sup> On the *pagina* format, see Sarri 2018, 97-107.

rated from the body of the letter with the help of different strategies, e.g. through some small vacant space, by being put in *ekthesis*, or by being placed on the top on separate lines. The *soma* of the letter then followed as a vertical block of text, while the closing farewell greeting was usually placed in *eisthesis* on a separate line. In the event that the final greeting, which was generally limited to ἔρωσο, was further developed, the sentence would expand in *eisthesis*, forming almost a small column of text. Finally, the external address containing the names of the addressee and the sender would be penned on the back of the letter.<sup>21</sup>

In the Graeco-Roman period, the main parts of the letter were thus stretched along the vertical format of the document. It was then quite logical and convenient for the scribe to take advantage of this format by arranging multiple letters on the same sheet (using the verso was usually not an option to be considered, since it would have exposed the writing to unwanted eyes, once the letter was enrolled). The scribe would then simply dispose one letter on top of another on the recto, leaving some vacant space between the two texts. This layout is employed in PSI IV 317 (? , 95),<sup>22</sup> P.Giss. I 81 (Apollonopolites Heptakomias, ca. 113–120),<sup>23</sup> P.Oxy. XLIX 3503 (late 1st c.),<sup>24</sup> BGU II 615 (Arsinoites, 2nd c.), SB III 6263 (Alexandria?, second half of the 2nd c.),<sup>25</sup> P.Mich. XV 752 (Alexandria?, late 2nd c.),<sup>26</sup> and P.Vet. Aelii 19 (Ankyron?, ca. 222–225).<sup>27</sup> With the exception of P.Giss. I 81, all the letters are drafted by an experienced hand.

The scribe would reproduce the typical layout of the letter for each message, so that, when opening the letter, the addressee(s) would realise at first sight that there were two different texts inside. The disposition of the texts could depend on a deliberate choice of the scribe or on other circumstances. The first option seems to be adopted in the case of Sempronios' letters: of the five letters he sent to his family, three of them are multiple letters written in this way. A few reasons have already been suggested to explain this: Sempronios might have been a "parsimonious man",<sup>28</sup> he may have been taking advantage of a person going in the right direction to deliver

<sup>21</sup> The layout of the letter in the Roman period is analysed in detail in Sarri 2018, 107–124.

<sup>22</sup> An image of the papyrus is available at <<http://www.psi-online.it/documents/psi;4;317>>.

<sup>23</sup> For an image of the papyrus, see <[https://papyri.uni-leipzig.de/receive/GiePapyri\\_schrift\\_00001740](https://papyri.uni-leipzig.de/receive/GiePapyri_schrift_00001740)>.

<sup>24</sup> Image available at <[https://portal.sds.ox.ac.uk/articles/online\\_resource/P\\_Oxy\\_XLIX\\_3503\\_Double\\_Letter/21168607](https://portal.sds.ox.ac.uk/articles/online_resource/P_Oxy_XLIX_3503_Double_Letter/21168607)>.

<sup>25</sup> On the date, see Deissmann 1908, 159–160.

<sup>26</sup> An image of the letter can be found in Sijpesteijn 1976, pl. III, and at <<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/apis/x-1635>>.

<sup>27</sup> P.Vet.Aelii 18–19 contains three letters, one on the recto (18) and two on the verso (19). I refer here to the layout of the letters on the verso. For images of this multiple letter, see P.Vet.Aelii, pl. XIII–XIV, and <[https://digital.onb.ac.at/RepViewer/viewer.faces?doc=DOD\\_%2BZ117617304&order=1&view=SINGLE](https://digital.onb.ac.at/RepViewer/viewer.faces?doc=DOD_%2BZ117617304&order=1&view=SINGLE)>.

<sup>28</sup> See Sijpesteijn 1976, 171.

his letters, or, knowing that the letter was going to be read to his mother Saturnila, he might have strategically placed the letter to her before or after the others, trying to control the information she would have heard.<sup>29</sup> While a combination of these three factors cannot be excluded, the latter seems to be the most plausible. In SB III 6263 (Fig. 28), Sempronios addresses his mother in the first letter, in which he begs her to let him know about her welfare. In the second letter, he harshly addresses his brother Maximos, rebuking him for treating their mother as a slave.<sup>30</sup> As already suggested by Winter, this letter is clearly intended for Maximos' eyes only.<sup>31</sup> The distinct layout of these letters would therefore have contributed to guide the addressee through the structure of the document: in opening the letter, they would be able to differentiate the letters immediately, and, after having identified them through the prescript, they could select which one to read out loud and which one to keep for themselves. The external address of these letters, which never shows Saturnila as the addressee, strengthens the idea that the recipient of the document was responsible for managing the whole correspondence.

## 2.2 Side by Side

Sometimes multiple letters are arranged in columns, side by side. In the case of T.Vindol. III 643 (Vindolanda, 97-105?), this seems to follow a common trend of the writing medium found in this region. Generally, the Latin letters from Vindolanda were written on two columns of a wooden leaf-tablet that was horizontally oriented.<sup>32</sup> As the letter was then scored in the middle so that it could be more easily folded, it has been suggested that the arrangement of the text in columns allowed the content to be better preserved, since the fold would ideally run through the intercolumnar space. However, Alan K. Bowman and J. David Thomas have also observed that the left-hand column was generally broader than the right-hand one, causing the fold to interfere with the text.<sup>33</sup> Whatever the reasons for this peculiar text arrangement, the layout of the double-letter T.Vindol. III 643 fits accordingly with this pattern and is therefore not surprising in this context.<sup>34</sup> Its left-hand column is entirely dedicated to the first letter, a message of a certain Florus to Calavir(us), while the right-hand one contains the beginning of Florus' letter to Titus, which continues on the back. It is also worth noticing

<sup>29</sup> See Hanson and van Minnen 1998, 144, and Bell 1950, 38-39.

<sup>30</sup> Ll. 20-21: μετέλαβον, ὅτι βαρέως δουλευούετε (l. δουλεύετε) | τὴν κυρίαν ἡμῶν μητέρα (l. μητέρα).

<sup>31</sup> See Winter 1933, 49. On the patronizing behavior of Saturnila's sons, who decided what their mother should or should not know, see also Huebner 2018, 174-176.

<sup>32</sup> See Bowman and Thomas, T.Vindol. II, introduction at 40-41, and Sarri 2018, 83-84 and 110-111.

<sup>33</sup> See Bowman and Thomas, T.Vindol. I, introduction at 38.

<sup>34</sup> For images of the document, see T.Vindol. III, pl. 15, and <<https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/inscriptions/TabVindol643>>.

that the address on the back only mentions the name of Calavir(us) as the recipient of the tablet (back, l. 5: *Caelouiro dabeş*). The visual disposition might suggest that the scribe made a conscious choice to visually separate the texts. However, the editors have noticed that the layout of the letter does not follow the expected graphic conventions, according to which *salutem* should be placed in *eisthesis* and on a separate line, in order to visually enclose the prescript. Moreover, the scribe's untidiness with respect to the layout seems to reflect the equally poor orthography of the text, which leads one to doubt whether they were aware of the visual structure of the text in the first place.

As for papyri, arranging a letter in columns was far more unusual. Considering our corpus, the side-by-side disposition most frequently appears when the scribe needed to fit more than two letters on a single page. When a multiple letter is arranged in this way, each message usually occupies a new column. This is the case, for example, of the fragmentary SB XIV 12182 (Oxyrhynchites, 3rd c.), which contains the remains of two private letters by the same hand on the back of a grain account,<sup>35</sup> as well as of P.Wisc. II 84 (? , late 2nd c.), the aforementioned triple letter from Sempronios to his brothers Valerios and Satornilos, and his mother Satornila. Even if only the end of the last lines is preserved from the first letter, it is clear that the three letters were originally arranged side-by-side, each one on a different column.<sup>36</sup> Once again, Sempronios makes use of the layout to separate the different letters visually, thereby guiding the addressees (Valerios and Satornilos, as shown by the back of the document) through the selective reading of the messages.

The only other case of a three-letter papyrus, P.Brem. 61 (Hermopolis?, 113-120), belongs to the archive of the *strategos* Apollonios (TM ArchID 19) and is arranged in columns, although the right-hand one contains two messages, one on top of the other (Fig. 29). The first two letters were dictated to the same scribe respectively by a woman, perhaps the sister of Apollonios, and a certain Chairas. At the end of their letters, they both added greetings in their own hand. After Chairas' letter on the second column, Diskas, Apollonios' uncle, penned his own message, leaving quite a large amount of blank space between the two letters in order to visually differentiate them. The second column is much narrower than the first, which initially gives a sense of irregularity and disproportion. This way of organising the text was however deliberate, since a narrower column would allow the author to reach the end of the sheet and have two columns of text of the

<sup>35</sup> An image of the letter can be found at the end of Youtie 1978 (pl. Va).

<sup>36</sup> An image is available in P.Wisc. II, pl. XXXIX, and at <<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/i/image/api/image/apis/X-5448/W44R.TIF/full/large/0/native.jpg>>.



same length.<sup>37</sup> It has been suggested that Chairas and Diskas decided to add their short letters, which express their distress about Apollonios' health, afterwards, taking advantage of the letter that the anonymous woman was already about to send to Apollonios.<sup>38</sup> Thus, we can assume that the main scribe and Diskas had a clear awareness of the layout of the entire document, as they attempted to properly arrange the three letters in different ways, i.e. by reducing the width of the second column and by leaving a larger blank space after the second letter, so that the third one could reach the bottom of the sheet. At the same time, all the three letters are clearly separated. Despite the fact that the back of P.Brem. 61 only contains the name of Apollonios as the addressee and does not mention the other senders, the layout of the triple letter immediately suggests its multiple content.

### 2.3 Recto/verso

On six occasions, both faces of a writing medium were used to draft and dispose multiple letters.<sup>39</sup> As four out of six dual letters were written on ostraca or wooden-tablets, it seems that this choice of layout might have been partly influenced by the material of these writing media, whose fixed dimensions could not be adapted beforehand to the length of the text. A scribe would have likely been more inclined to use the back of a potsherd than the verso of a papyrus. Moreover, the effort that a scribe would usually put in fitting the whole text onto the same sheet of papyrus, in order to preserve the privacy of the correspondents, is, for obvious reasons, different in the case of an ostrakon. It is therefore not surprising that most of the occurrences of this layout are on potsherd.

In P.Oxy. I 120 (= Sel.Pap. I 162, 3rd c.) and O.Krok. II 296 (Krokodilo, 98-117), the distribution of the messages is perfectly managed: the first letter is written on one side (that is, the recto of the papyrus and the convex face of the ostrakon), the second one on the other side. Each message is visually perceived as an individual one thanks to the physical separation of the letters on the two sides of the potsherd. In O.Krok. II 296, the letters do not seem to share any content; they are conceived as separate letters to different addressees, and as such they are also distinguished visually (Figs. 30-31). The intention to keep the two messages apart seems to be confirmed by the text arrangement of the first letter: here, the scribe prefers to draft the end of the message (ll. 16-21) on the left margin of the ostrakon, perpendicular to the main text, rather than continuing on the other side, as it happens

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<sup>37</sup> On this stylistic feature that is typical of the Roman period, see Sarri 2018, 111-112.

<sup>38</sup> See Criboire 2002, 155-156.

<sup>39</sup> P.Oxy. I 120 (= Sel.Pap. I 162), P.Vet.Aelii 18-19, O.Krok. II 296, O.Did. 383, O.Did. 417, and T.Vindol. III 643. The latter, which combines different layout arrangements, has been analysed in the previous section.

sometimes.<sup>40</sup> The two letters share, however, the same writing medium: since the addressees likely lived in the same place, Krokodilo, it was probably convenient to arrange a single dispatch for the two messages. As for P.Vet.Aelii 18–19, the arrangement on the two sides of the papyrus clearly depended on a casual sequence of events: the papyrus was meant to enclose only the letter on the recto, which occupies the entire sheet, then Syrion’s mother decided to take advantage of the courier and added two letters, one on top of the other, on the only space left blank, that is the verso. When this happened, the address had already been penned on the back, in the bottom right corner. This explains why the address only shows the names of the senders of the first letter as well as why the second letter has shorter lines and occupies the left side of the sheet.

A different situation is found in the case of O.Did. 383 (Didymoi, 110–115) and O.Did. 417 (Didymoi, ca. 120–125). In both these instances, the two sides of the ostrakon are drafted; however, the letters are not clearly separated as in O.Krok. II 296, but, visually speaking, rather continue one another. In O.Did. 417, the second letter starts just where the first one ends, on the convex side, and then finishes on the back.<sup>41</sup> There is no visual separation between the two letters; at first sight, they might look like a single one. A similar arrangement can be observed in O.Did. 383, where the first letter continues onto the back, and the second one follows just underneath, resuming on the same line and with only a small vacant space to separate one letter from the other (ll. 19–25: τὴν εὐτὴν (l. αὐτὴν) ἐχόμενά μοι (l. μοι). vac. Φιλοκλῆς Καππάρη (l. Καππάρει) | τῷ ἀδε<λ>φῷ | χ(αίρειν)). The handwriting of the sender, Philokles, is quite uncertain, clumsy, and expanded, so that the vacant space barely stands up as a sign of separation; the general impression is that the ostrakon contains one single letter written on both sides.<sup>42</sup>

For this peculiarity, the last two cases belong more appropriately to the last typology of layout, that is the “shell letter”.

#### 2.4 The “Shell Letter”

There is one further kind of layout that a scribe could choose to arrange multiple letters, which has previously been subject to misunderstanding. The visual arrangements I have so far discussed show a clear organization of the texts, according to which the recipient of the document was able to identify and differentiate the texts as soon as they unfolded (or turned) the letter. In the case of the “shell letter”

<sup>40</sup> On the practice of writing *versiculi transversi* on the left margin of the writing medium, see Homann 2012.

<sup>41</sup> Images of the ostrakon are available at O.Did., p. 417, and, online, at <<https://www.ifao.egnet.net/bases/publications/fifao67/?os=441>> and <<https://www.ifao.egnet.net/bases/publications/fifao67/?os=442>>.

<sup>42</sup> Images of the ostrakon are available at <<https://www.ifao.egnet.net/bases/publications/fifao67/docs/zooms/383a.jpg>> and <<https://www.ifao.egnet.net/bases/publications/fifao67/docs/zooms/383b.jpg>>.

layout, however, multiple letters are not visually separated, but are combined to be arranged as a single letter. As instances of this type I will consider SB III 7244 (first half of 3rd c., Tebtynis),<sup>43</sup> which, uniquely in the entire papyrological record, contains four letters: the first is from Herakleides to his “son” Didymos (ll. 1-13); the second from Takybis to her “daughter” Helene (ll. 14-30); the third from Hadrianos to Didymos (ll. 30-40); and the fourth from Kollouthos to Didymos (ll. 41-47). The four letters are not placed on top of one another, nor side by side or between the recto and the verso, as we might expect. Rather, all of them are shaped together in one single letter, which preserves the classical layout of a letter from the Roman period and serves as an empty shell, or mould, for the different messages. For this reason, I propose to name this fictive letter, which has no content *per se* but that of the hosted letters, as the “shell letter”.

To provide such a layout, the scribe needs to adapt and modify the visual arrangement and the structure of the single letters. Thus, the prescript of the first letter (ll. 1-2) is used as the prescript of the “shell letter” (ll. 1-2), and is displayed as such: in the first line, the name of the addressee is preceded by a small vacant space to draw attention to it, while the second line, which contains the greeting *χαίρειν*, is put in *eisthesis*, so as to visually separate this section from the rest. To additionally separate this part of the letter, a larger interlinear space is placed between the end of the prescript (l. 2) and the beginning of the main text (l. 3). Then comes the body of the “shell letter” (ll. 3-39), which is displayed as a vertical block of text and is in fact composed of the body of the first letter (ll. 3-13), the prescript and body of the second letter (ll. 14-33), and the prescript and body of the third letter (ll. 33-39). The final greetings of the first and second letters are missing, thus enhancing the impression that we are dealing with a single letter. After a blank space, the final greetings of the “shell letter” are put in *eisthesis* (ll. 40-46). They are shaped in a narrow vertical column on the right side and, at first sight, they look like the developed final greeting that can be found in some contemporary letters.<sup>44</sup> However, they are actually made of the final greeting of the third letter (l. 40) and the prescript and body of the fourth letter (ll. 41-46). Again, the final greeting of the fourth letter is missing.

To facilitate the understanding of this peculiar layout, I here transcribe the full text of SB III 7244 complete with some annotations on the layout. On the right side, I have set apart the four letters; on the left, I have selected the main parts of the “shell letter”. The text should be compared with the image of the letter (Fig. 32).

<sup>43</sup> For a new edition of the letter and a discussion of the particular layout of the “shell letter”, see Amory 2022, 109-136.

<sup>44</sup> See, e.g., SB XVIII 14057 (? , second half of the 2nd c.) and PSI XII 1246 (Hermopolites?, ca. 219-222).

ll. 1-2: Prescript of the “shell letter”	Ἡρακ[λ]εΐδης Διδύμω τῷ υἱῷ πολλὰ χαίρειν.	
5	γράφω σοι ὅτι μὴ ἀμελήσης ὕπαγε π[ρὸς] Παμοῦτιν Πτιεκλ’ ἕνεκα τῶν ἀρουρῶν εἰς μ[ί]σθωσιν ἢ αὐτὸν ἢ τοὺς παρὰ Πρω- τ[ά]ρ[χο]υ ἢ τὸν ἀραβατοζότην, καὶ τὸ [[ηρκα]] μεταβεβλ[ή]καμεν ὁμοῦ πέμψον αὐτί- κα Παμ[οῦ]τι τὰ ἐνθάδε. εἶπον γὰρ[ρ] τῷ ν[α]υ- τ[ί]κ[ῳ] ἴνα ἐνβάλῃται αὐτό. κόμ[ι]σον παρὰ 10 Ἄρπο[κ]ρα[τί]ωνος λικύθιν μεστήν ἐλαίου [. ]ρα τ. κ[. . .]λον. μὴ ἀμελήσης δὲ πέμψας πε- ρὶ τοῦ [ἀδε]λφ[ο]ῦ καί, ἐὰν δύνη, πέμψε σύ[νο]λον αὐ[τῷ]. [π]έμψον ἕς τιμῆς ἐστὶν ἐνθάδε. Τακυβι[ς] Ἡλενήτι τῇ θυγατρὶ χαίρειν.	First letter
ll. 3-39: Body of the “shell letter”	15 κόμ[ι]σον παρὰ Ἀρποκρατίωνος ἀρώμα[τ]α ἄε . [ . . ]ος κα[ί] τὰ ἀρώματα τὰ λαγάν[ι]α ἄε . [κ]αὶ δὸς Τυραννίτι, τὰ δὲ ἄλλας [ἀρ]ώμα[τ]α δὸς Τυραννίτι. αὐτῆς ἔστιν [ . . ]ρ[ . . . ] α χαρτάρια τῶν ἀρωμάτων. δὸς 20 [ο]ῦ[ν] Καλλιόπῃ τι καὶ τὸ λιπόμενον ἄλλο δὸς σὺν τῷ ἔχεις παρὰ σοι Χαιρίδι τῇ γαμβρᾷ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου. κόμισον παρὰ Ἀρποκρατίω- νος τὰ χάλκινα. δέξε μοι αὐτὰ ἐρίδια καὶ πέμ- ψον μοι αὐτά. Ἡρακλείδης . . . . [ . ] ἐὰν τέ- 25 [η]ς τὸ κολόβιον, πέμψον μοι αὐτό, ἐὰν μὴ θέ- λης τεμῖν αὐτό, πέμψον μοι λίνα πέντε. καὶ κόμ[ι]σον παρὰ Ἀρποκρατίωνος τὸ τρίχινον [ . . ]λον καὶ πέμψον μοι ζεύγη ψωμίων πέν- τε. ἄσπ[α]σον τὴν μητέραν σου πολλὰ 30 καὶ Τυράννιν καὶ Ἀοῦσταν καὶ Νιννοῦ[τ]α καὶ τ[οῦ]ς ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ πάντας κατ’ ὄνομα. ἄσπ[α]σον Ἰσιδώραν πολλὰ, ἄσπασον Καλ[ι]ό- πην. <i>vac.</i> Ἀδριανὸς Διδύμω χαίρειν. ιδέν[αι] σ[ι]α θέλω [ῶ]τι συνεζήτησεν Ἀγαθὸς 35 Δαίμ[ων] μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἕνεκα τῶν (δραχμῶν) ἵ καὶ μ[ε]τὰ τῆς ἀδελφῆς αὐτοῦ. ὤμασα{σα} σοι, ἐὰν π[ρ]οσέλθῃ σοι ὁ πρᾶκτωρ τῆς Θεογονί- δ[ος, τε]λέσαι Πλουσία (δραχμὰς) ἕξ καὶ τὸ λιπὸν τῆς [ . . . ] [ . . . ]ς.	Second letter
	<i>vac.</i>	
ll. 40-46: Final greeting of the “shell letter”	40 ἐρῶσθαι ὑμᾶς εὐχομ(αι). Κολλοῦθος Διδύμω χαίρειν. μὴ ἀ- μελήσης περὶ τῶν (δραχμῶν) ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ Μεχ- χειρ μέχρι Μεσορῆ γίνονται (δραχμαὶ) ἵ. ἐὰν θέλῃς πέμψαι τὰ λίνα, 45 πέμψον, καὶ ἐγὼ δῶ τὸ κέρμα ὑπὲρ σου.	Third letter     Fourth letter

The structure of SB III 7244 clearly shows that the “shell letter” is an illusionary layout, in the sense that the visual disposition of the texts gives the illusion that the addressee has received a single letter. The multiple letters arranged in the “shell letter” layout visually appear as a single text, and only by reading the document will one discover that it actually contains multiple letters. There is thus a subtle interplay between the construction of a more comprehensive layout and the re-arrangement of the single letters for composing it; a thin line runs between the *mise en page* and the *mise en abyme* of these texts, whose features vanish into a “shell letter”. The illusion of dealing with a single letter is strengthened in different ways: the whole text is drafted by a single hand; there is no final greeting in most of the letters, which connect immediately with one another, giving a sense of continuity; and, finally, both the address on the back (l. 47: ἀπόδ(ος) Διδύμω *vac.* ⊗ π[(αρά)] Ἡρακλ[είδ]ου) and the general prescript show Herakleides and Didymos as the sole correspondents of the “shell letter”, while in fact they are the correspondents of the first letter alone. Upon delivery of the letter, Didymos would first read the external address, thinking that he has received a letter from Herakleides. While unfolding the message, the layout of the document would still confirm this impression, as it would visually show a long and single letter with his name and that of Herakleides in the general prescript. It is only when reading the content that Didymos would notice that the letter contains four different messages.

There are, however, some subtle strategies that are put in place by the scribe to guide the recipient through the complex structure of the document. The beginning of the second letter, for example, is arranged in a slight *ekthesis*, with the τ of Τᾶκυβ[ι][ς] (l. 14) being indented from the main block of text. The beginning of the third letter, despite starting on the same line as the end of the second (l. 33), is also separated by a two-letter wide blank space. As for the fourth letter, it begins on a new line (l. 41).

The “shell letter” layout can be identified in nine additional multiple letters of our corpus.<sup>45</sup> They are all dual letters. With little variation, they all present the main (structural and visual) characteristics of the layout: they are penned by the same hand, they are visually structured in one single letter, the external address – if there is one – generally shows the names of the correspondents of the first letter,<sup>46</sup> and the final greeting is missing in the first letter. These letters also adopt the same or similar micro-strategies as SB III 7244 to guide the recipient through the reading of the document. Thus, in O.Did. 383, the prescript of the second

<sup>45</sup> O.Did. 383, O.Did. 417, P.Grenf. I 53 (?), 4th c.), P.Lond. inv. 2133 (Arsinoites?, 2nd or 3rd c.), P.Oxy. XVI 1829 (577–583, according to Palme, BL XI, 152), P.Oxy. LXII 4340 (ca. 250–275, according to Bagnall, BL XI, 172), P.Tebr. II 416 (Alexandria, 3rd c.), SB XX 14132 (Alexandria?, 1st c.), and P.Mich. VIII 508 (?), 2nd/3rd c.).

<sup>46</sup> Exceptionally, P.Oxy. LXII 4340 shows the names of the two senders on the external address.

letter, which directly follows the end of the first one (l. 22), is marked by a small blank space, while the second letter of O.Did. 417 starts on a separate line (l. 10). In P.Lond. inv. 2133, the opening of the second letter has been put in *eisthesis* (l. 11),<sup>47</sup> while in P.Oxy. LXII 4340 the scribe makes use of a *paragraphos* written in the shape of a short, horizontal stroke at the left margin between ll. 14 and 15, to separate the two messages and mark the beginning of the second letter.<sup>48</sup> A space is often deliberately left blank and placed between two letters for the same purpose.<sup>49</sup> The blank space is usually of the same size as a line of text, but can also be larger, as in P.Oxy. XVI 1829.

As this last text constitutes the only Byzantine example of a multiple letter arranged in the “shell letter” layout, it deserves closer scrutiny. In the Byzantine period, letters underwent some drastic changes that impacted their structure and layout: both the prescript and the *formula valedicendi* were taken out, while the typical vertical format was dismissed in favour of a horizontal format. The two letters included in P.Oxy. XVI 1829 are therefore displayed according to the visual conventions of the time, as two horizontal blocks of text. They were written by the same hand and placed on top of one another, with a large blank space between them.<sup>50</sup> One could say that they are simply arranged in a sequential order, as was common for multiple letters. However, the text of the letters suggests that the messages were perceived as a single one. The two letters, one of which was addressed to Flavius Strategios and the other to his wife, present the very same message with minor changes related to the different recipient (Strategios is, for example, addressed with the honorific predicate *ἐξουσία*, his wife with *ὑπεροχή*). There is, however, one striking difference between the two letters: only the latter ends with a final sentence of greeting to the addressee and their children (ll. 22–23, τὸ δὲ κεφάλαιον τῆς ἐπιστολῆς πολλὰ προσκυνῶ τὴν ὑμετέραν | ἐξουσίαν καὶ τὰ γλυκύτατα παιδιά, translated by the editor as “The principal object of my letter is to greet your ladyship and your sweetest children many times”). It is remarkable that the scribe used *ἐξουσίαν* instead of the expected *ὑπεροχὴν*, which shows that the greeting was supposed to close the first letter. In the same way as the other letters that are arranged in a “shell letter” layout, the first letter of P.Oxy. XVI

<sup>47</sup> An image of the letter is available in Zellmann–Rohrer 2017, 139.

<sup>48</sup> An image of the double letter is available at <[https://portal.sds.ox.ac.uk/articles/online\\_resource/P\\_Oxy\\_LXII\\_4340\\_Two\\_Letters\\_to\\_Didyme/21178402](https://portal.sds.ox.ac.uk/articles/online_resource/P_Oxy_LXII_4340_Two_Letters_to_Didyme/21178402)>. On the use of the *paragraphos* in paraliterary and documentary papyri, see Barbis Lupi 1994 and Criboire 1996, 81–82 (in school exercises).

<sup>49</sup> See P.Grenf. I 53, P.Lond. inv. 2133, P.Oxy. XVI 1829, P.Tebt. II 416, SB XX 14132, and P.Mich. VIII 508. I did not have access to an image of P.Grenf. I 53, but the edition of the text shows a blank space at the end of the first letter, after l. 12, which reflects the original layout of the papyrus. On the practice of using blank spaces to structure a text, see Martin 2020.

<sup>50</sup> Images of the papyrus are available at <[https://portal.sds.ox.ac.uk/articles/online\\_resource/P\\_Oxy\\_XVI\\_1829\\_Letters\\_to\\_Flavius\\_Strategios\\_and\\_his\\_Wife/21133156](https://portal.sds.ox.ac.uk/articles/online_resource/P_Oxy_XVI_1829_Letters_to_Flavius_Strategios_and_his_Wife/21133156)>.

1829 has lost the final greeting. The greeting of the second letter therefore coincides with the final greeting of the “shell letter”. The translation of the greeting should therefore take into account the illusion carried out by the “shell letter” and be translated: “The principal object of my letter is to greet your lordship and your sweetest children many times”. The address on the back, which shows Flavios Strategios as the recipient of the document, corroborates the view that we are dealing with a “shell letter”.

To sum up, the main features of the “shell letter” layout involve shaping multiple messages as a single letter and giving them a sense of unity. The reasons why a scribe would prefer to use this particular layout remain uncertain. We could think of the “shell letter” layout as a *divertissement* of the scribe; however, the hesitant handwriting and the rather ungrammatical Greek of some of the multiple letters do not support this possibility. In antiquity, each documentary type respected a standard layout, and these conventions were well-established in the mind of a scribe. We could therefore assume that, when they needed to pen a letter, scribes would more easily and naturally turn to the standard layout they always used, even when they were asked to pen multiple messages. Another possible explanation could be that multiple letters were somehow considered as a single text, and were consequently arranged as such.

As the “shell letter” layout had not been identified until now, papyrologists have sometimes had some difficulties in recognizing it.<sup>51</sup> Hopefully this analysis will help to identify texts arranged within this particular layout more easily.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

The practice of using a single sheet to pen multiple letters was adopted by closed circles of people, who were usually different senders writing to the same person or one sender writing to different individuals who lived together or nearby. It was a convenient way to save time and paper, as well as to reduce the risk of losing the letter. Despite its advantages, this communication practice only has twenty-three attestations in the papyrological record, mostly from the Roman period.

Multiple letters written on papyri can be arranged in four different types of layout: by placing the messages one on top of another; in columns, side-by-side; by using the two faces of the writing medium; or by shaping them into a single letter. The preference for a specific layout depended on several factors. Some were subordinated to external circumstances: an individual might have decided

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<sup>51</sup> See recently Zellmann-Rohrer 2017, 138, on P.Lond. inv. 2133, a double letter of Taria and Tapsais to Apollon: “I know of no exact parallels for this arrangement. It is akin to but distinct from the true double letter, in which two separate letters to the same person, with independent salutations, are written on the same sheet”.

to add their message afterwards and drafted the message where there was some vacant space, below the first letter (BGU II 615), on its right side (P.Brem. 61), or even on the verso (P.Vet.Aelii 19). The side-by-side arrangement, which is rather uncommon in papyri, was the norm for the Vindolanda letters and it is therefore not surprising that the only double letter from Vindolanda follows this pattern (T.Vindol. III 643). As for the recto/verso arrangement, it mostly depended on the type of medium. Since the pre-set dimensions of an ostrakon or a tablet did not easily allow multiple messages to be arranged on the same face, the scribe was more inclined to use both faces when dealing with this type of writing medium rather than with a papyrus, whose dimensions could be more easily adapted to every situation.

Yet, the layout could also depend on the deliberate choice of a scribe; this is evident in the letters of Sempronios to his family, where the arrangement of the messages on papyrus was functional to the reading of the document. The clear separation of Sempronios' letters, which are either arranged one on top of another or in columns, allowed his brothers to select what to read out loud to their mother.

Finally, there was one last choice a scribe could make in arranging multiple letters on a single sheet. This kind of layout, which has so far been overlooked, consists of combining together the messages to give the reader the impression that there was only one letter. This fictive single letter would not have any content of its own and would exist only as a visual entity. It is an empty shell, and, as such, I have suggested naming it the "shell letter". Differently from other layout arrangements, where each letter is clearly separated from the others, this one presents multiple letters as a single text. The illusion is also confirmed by the internal textual structure of the messages, since the first letter(s) usually lost the final greeting in order to create continuity from one text to the next. All these elements concur to convey a sense of unity among the various texts. The closeness of the correspondents is, then, somehow visually represented by the layout itself, in which their sense of unity is visually translated in the "shell letter" layout. This type of layout most vividly confirms the intuition of Bagnall and Criore that ancient individuals perceived multiple letters as a single text and that, therefore, they should be considered as such.<sup>52</sup>

Despite the small number of attestations of multiple letters, this corpus represents how the layout of a document could vary according to different factors and situations. It also underlines the importance of understanding the diplomatic dynamics of a papyrological text, which encompasses both its visual aspects and its social context.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Bagnall and Criore 2006, 36.

<sup>53</sup> On this approach, which rehabilitates the visual and material aspects of a document by pointing to its semiotic value, see Fournet 2007.



APPENDIX: A LIST OF MULTIPLE LETTERS (CLASSIFIED BY DATE)

Multiple letter	Date	Provenance	Epistolary correspondents
SB XX 14132 (TM 26168)	1st c.	Alexandria?	1. Ptolema to her mother Belleous 2. Ptolema to her sister Heros
PSI IV 317 (TM 69142)	95	?	1. Kastor to Ptolllis 2. Asklepiades to Ptolllis
T.Vindol. III 643 (TM 130276)	97-105?	Vindolanda	1. Florus to Calavir(us) 2. Florus to Titus
O.Krok. II 296 (TM 704581)	98-117	Krokodilo	1. Ischyra? to NN 2. Ischyra to Kapparis
P.Oxy. XLIX 3503 (TM 24965)	late 1st c.	Oxyrhynchos	1. NN to a woman 2. NN to his "brother" Zoilos
O.Did. 383 (TM 144944)	110-115	Didymoi	1. Philokles to his "sister" Sknips 2. Philokles to his "brother" Kapparis
P.Giss. 81 (TM 25461)	ca. 113-120	Apollonopolites Heptakomias	1. NN to their sister Teoubais? 2. Temis to her mother Teoubais
O.Did. 417 (TM 144978)	ca. 120-125	Didymoi	1. Demetrous to Klaudios 2. Noumosis to her brother Klaudios
BGU II 615 (TM 28191)	2nd c.	Arsinoites	1. Ammonous to her father NN 2. Keler to his brother Antonios
P.Brem. 61 (TM 19646)	2nd c.	Hermopolis?	1. NN to Apollonios 2. Chairas to her brother Apollonios 3. Diskas to Apollonios
SB III 6263 (TM 27792)	second half of the 2nd c.	Alexandria?	1. Sempronios to his mother Satornila 2. Sempronios to his brother Maximos
P.Mich. XV 752 (TM 28821)	late 2nd c.	Alexandria?	1. Sempronios to his mother Satornila 2. Sempronios to his brother Maximos
P.Wisc. II 84 (TM 26689)	late 2nd c.	?	1. Sempronios to his brother Valerios? 2. Sempronios to his brother Satornilos 3. Sempronios to his mother Satornila
P.Mich. VIII 508 (TM 27118)	2nd/3rd c.	?	1. Thaisarion to her brothers Serenos and NN 2. Thaisarion to her sister Serapous and her brothers
P.Lond. inv. 2133 (TM 704792)	2nd or 3rd c.	Arsinoites?	1. Taria to her brother Apollos 2. Tapsais to Apollos (?)
P.Vet.Aelii 18-19 (TM 131746-131747)	ca. 222-255	Ankyron? (Herakleopolites)	1. NN to Syrion and Kyrillos 2. Syrion's mother to her son Syrion 3. Syrion's mother to her daughter Eudaimonis

Multiple letter	Date	Provenance	Epistolary correspondents
SB III 7244 (TM 31058)	first half of the 3rd c.	Tebtynis	1. Herakleides to his “son” Didymos 2. Takybis to her “daughter” Helene 3. Hadrianos to Didymos 4. Kollouthos to Didymos
P.Oxy. I 120 = Sel.Pap. I 162 (TM 31346)	3rd c.	Oxyrhynchos	1. Hermias to his sister NN 2. Hermias to his son Gounthos
P.Tebr. II 416 (TM 31360)	3rd c.	Alexandria	1. Kalma to his sister Sarapias 2. Kalma to his sister Protous
SB XIV 12182 (TM 30924)	3rd c.	Oxyrhynchites	1. NN to NN 2. NN to NN
P.Oxy. LXII 4340 (TM 31664)	ca. 250–275	Oxyrhynchos	1. Petosiris to Didyme 2. Thaesis to her daughter Didyme
P.Grenf. I 53 (TM 33767)	4th c.	?	1. Artemis to her husband Theodoros 2. Artemis to Sarapion
P.Oxy. XVI 1829 (TM 22007)	577–583	Oxyrhynchos	1. NN to Flavios Strategios 2. NN to Flavios Strategios’ wife

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