

Appendix: P.Oxy. 2190

C. H. Roberts was the original editor of the text, which required considerable restoration of the first nineteen lines of the left-hand side of the first column, *P.Oxy. 2190*, XVIII.145-47. Some alternative readings of the papyrus were proposed by M. David, B. A. van Groningen and E. Kiessling (eds.), *Berichtigungsliste der Griechischen Papyruskunden aus Ägypten* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), vol. IV, p. 63. E. G. Turner, 'Oxyrhynchus and Rome', *HSCP* 79 (1975), 7-9, nn. 17-25, weighed such suggestions and commented further on the text. J. Rea, 'A Student's Letter to His Father: P.Oxy. XVIII 2190 Revised', *ZPE* 99 (1993), 75-88, recently presented a substantial revision of the text. His reconstruction of the first column of the papyrus where it diverges from Roberts is reproduced under each line of the main text. While there are differences between these two leading papyrologists, the discussion in chapter 1 is not materially affected. The only exception is in lines 10-11, where Roberts' reconstruction suggests that the young student has smashed up his father's chariot. I incline more to Rea's reconstruction, which makes a reference to the fact that he regards the teachers of Alexandria as 'trash'.

Rea helpfully points to evidence that φιλόλογος was a term used in funerary inscriptions for brilliant young men who died before they fulfilled their potential, and could be used of members of the Alexandrian Museum. His view that the word is not a personal name, 'Philologos', as suggested by Roberts, is accepted, but his translation of the term as 'tutor' is not. It is suggested that word would best be rendered 'scholar', that is, 'For now in my search for a scholar', line 7, and 'since the scholar whose classes they used to attend has died', line 25. The student is clearly searching for someone whom he could emulate and would see a sophist as such a person. His problem is that he has been unable to secure entry into a school run by someone of sufficient stat-

ure. Rea's rendering of καθηγητής as 'teacher' is rejected, as is his translation of φιλόλογος in lines 7 and 25 as 'tutor'. φιλόλογος does not convey the duties understood in the first century of a tutor whose ad hoc role is explained in part of the letter itself. (See pp. 29-30.)

?Νεῖλος Θ]έωνι τῶι κυρίωι πατρὶ
 πλεῖστα] χαίρειν
 τῆς μὲν παρούσης ἀθυμίας ἀπήλλαξας ἡμᾶς δηλώσας ὡς
 ἐστὶ σοι ἀδιά]φορα τὰ γενόμενα περὶ τοῦ θεάτρου.
 ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν φ]θάσας καταπλεῦσαι τυχεῖν λαμπρῶν 5
 ἤλπιζον δὲ φ]
ἄξιό]ν τι τῆς προθυμίας ἔπρα[ξ]α. νῦν
 ἀγαθῶν, καὶ τί ἀ]ντι
 γὰρ ἐπιζητῶ]ν φιλόλογον καὶ Χαιρήμονα τὸν καθη-
 γητὴν καὶ Δίδ]υμον τὸν τοῦ Ἀριστοκλέο[υς], παρ' οἷς
 ἐλπίς ἦν καὶ ἐμ]έ τι κατορθῶσαι, οὐκέτι ἐν τῇ πόλει
 εὔρον, ἀλλὰ τ]ὰ ἄρματα {παρ'} οἷς τῇ εὐθείαι ὁδῶι χρῆ 10
 εὔρον, ἀλλὰ κα]θάρματα
 ἀνελθεῖν πρόχθ]ες διεφθορόσι <ὡς> καὶ πρότερόν σοι ἔγρα-
 σάμενοι οἱ πλείον]ες
 ψα.....]ἔγραψα τοῖς περὶ Φιλόξενον ἔπι-
 ψα, καθάπερ καὶ]
 τρεπτέον τὸ πρᾶ]γμα καὶ ὑπ' ἐκείνων τῶι εὐδοκιμοῦν-
 σκέψασθαι τὸ πρᾶ]
 τι.....ὥστ' ἐ]μὲ παραιτησάμενον Θέωνα εὐθύς
 τι συνεστάθην, δ κ]αὶ
 καθηγητοῦ τυγχάνει]ν κ[α]ὐτὸς κατεγνωκῶς αὐτοῦ 15
 ἀπεδοκίμασας ο]ἶ[ο]ν
ὡς ἀμ]ελῶς ἔ[χ]οντος τὴν ἕξιν. μεταδόν-
 ῶς ἐνδεῆ πάντ]
 τος δέ μου Φι]λοξένωι τὴν σὴν γνώμην τὰ αὐτὰ μὲν
 ἐπήγει...α]ὐτὴν μόνην τὴν τῶν σοφιστῶν ἀ-
 ἐφρόνει, διὰ τα]
 πορ[ί]αν συνπαθεῖν τῇ π[ό]λει φάσκων, καταπλε[ύ]σο]ν-
 τα δὲ τὸν Δί]δυμον, ὡς ἔ[ο]ικεν, φίλον ὄντα αὐτῶι καὶ 20
 σχολὴν ἔχοντα, ἔλεγεν ἐπιμελήσεσθαι τῶν ἄλ-
 λων μᾶλλον καὶ τοῦ Ἀπολλωνίου τοῦ {του} Ἡρώ-

δου παραβαλε[ἴν] ἔπειθεν αὐτῶι καὺτοὶ γὰρ με[τ]ὰ τού-
του δεξι[ἴ]ωτερον καθηγητὴν ἕως τοῦ νῦν ἐπιζητ[ο]ῦ-
δεινότερον¹

- σ[ἴ]ν ἀπαθανόντος φιλολόγου ᾧ παρέβαλλον εὐ- 25
ξάμενο[ς] δ' ἂν ἔγωγε εἶπερ ἀξιους λόγου καθηγητὰς
εὔρον μηδὲ ἐξ ἀπόπτου Δίδυμον ἰδεῖν, τοῦτο αὐ-
τὸ ἀθυμῶ ὅτι ἔδοξεν εἰς σύγκρισιν τοῖς ἄλλο[ις]
ἔρχεθαι οὗτος ὃς ἐπὶ τῆς χώρας καθηγεῖτο.
τοῦτο οὖν εἰδὼς ὅτι πλὴν τοῦ μάτην μισθοὺς πλείονας 30
τελεῖν ἀπὸ καθηγητοῦ οὐδὲν ὄφελος, ἀλλὰ ἀπ' ἑμαυτοῦ
ἔχω. τάχεως ὃ τι ἑάν σοι δοκῆι γράψον. ἔχω δὲ
τὸν Δίδυμον, ὡς καὶ φιλόξενος λέλει, αἰί μοι προ[ο]σ[ε]υ-
καιροῦντα καὶ πᾶν ὅτι δύναται παρεχόμενον, [ἔ]τι δὲ] 35
τῶν ἐπιδεικνυμένων ἀκροώμενος, ὧν ἐστὶν ὁ Πο-
σεδώνιος τάχα θεῶν θελόντων καλῶς πράξομαι.
ἢ δ' ἐπὶ τούτοις ἀθυμία ἐστὶν ἢ ὀλιγωρεῖν τοῦ σώματος
ἡμᾶς ἀναγκάζουσα, ὡς οὐδ' ἐπιμελεῖσθαι δέον αὐτῶν
[τ]οὺς μήπω πράσσοντας καὶ μάλιστα ὅτε οὐ[δ]ὲ οἱ 40
χαλκὸν εἰσφέροντες εἰσίν· τότε μὲν γὰρ πρὸς ἡμέρας
χρήσιμος Ἡρακλᾶς, κακὸς κακῶς, ὀβόλους ἐπ[ε]ισ-
έφερεν, νῦν δὲ ἅμα τῷ δεθῆναι ὑπὸ Ἰσιδώρου, ὡσ[π]ερ
ἦν ἄξιον, ἔφυγεν καὶ ἀνήλθεν, ὡς δοκῶ, πρὸς σέ· ὃν
εὔ[θ]ισθι μηδ' ἂν ὀκνήσοντά σοί ποτε ἐπιβουλεύσεια.
οὐ γὰρ ἡσχύνετο πρὸ πάντων μετὰ χαρᾶς τὰ περὶ τοῦ 45
θεάτρου ἐν τῇ πόλει φημίζων καὶ λαλῶν τὰ ψεύ-
δη ἃ οὐδ' ἂν κατήγορος εἴποι καὶ ταῦτα μηδὲν ἄξι-
ον αὐτοῦ πάσχων ἀλλὰ λελυμένος καὶ ὡς ἐλευθε-
ρος πάντα ποιῶν. ἀλλ' ὅμως δύνη εἰ μὴ πέμπεις αὐ-
τὸν παραδοῦναί γε τέκονι, ἀκούω γὰρ ὅτι νεάκι- 50
σκος δύο δραχάμας τῆς ἡμέρας ποιεῖ, ἢ συνζεῦ-
ξον αὐτὸν ἄλλωι ἔργωι ὅθεν πλείονα χαλκὸν λή-
ψεται ἵνα τὸ μισθάριον αὐτοῦ συνλεγόμενον
πέμπηται ἡμῖν διὰ χρόνου. οἶδας γὰρ ὅτι καὶ ὁ Δι
ογᾶς γράμματα μανθάνει. ἐν ᾧ τὸν μεικρὸν πέμ- 55
πεις, πλατύτερον ἐν οἰκίαι ἰδιωτικῇ τόπον ὀφόμεθα·

1. Roberts reads 'cleverer', while Rea's 'more stylish' is also possible.

ἵνα γὰρ γειτνιευσῶμεν Διονυσίῳ ἐν μεικρῶι λείαν
τόπωι γεγόναμεν. ἐκομισάμεθα τὸν κοῖκα ἀ[κ]ρι-
ἄσφα-

[βῶ]ς ὅσα ἔγραψας ἔχοντα καὶ τὰ ἄγγη σὺν τῶι ἡμικαδίῳ
[λῶ]ς

ἐν οἷς εὖρομεν ἀντὶ χοέων ἡ κβ· καὶ ὧν ἔγραψας ἔπεμ- 60
ψα μετ' ἐπιστολῆς ἐκάστῳι ἡμικάδιον τοῦ ὀλοφάκου.

τὰ ἔξ μέ(τρα) ἔλαβον καὶ κῶον ὄζους πληρῆς καὶ ταριχηρὰ
κρέα ρκς καὶ τὰ ἐν τῷ κάδῳι καὶ τὰ ὄπτα λ̄.

ἔρρωσο. Χοιάκ δ.

Verso (along the fibres)

]έθει Νείλου.

65

Translation

Neilus to Theon, his lord and father, very many greetings. . . . You have released me from my present despondency by making it plain that the business about the theatre was a matter of indifference to you. For my part, I've lost no time in sailing down stream to find distinguished . . . and I have achieved something in return for my eagerness. I was looking for a scholar (φιλόλογος) and Chaeremon the tutor (καθηγητής) and Didymus the son of Aristocles as I thought that with them I too might still meet with success, but found them no longer in the city, but (only) trash, in whose hands most pupils have taken the straight road to having their talent spoiled.²

I have written to Philoxenus and his friends telling them that they, too, must leave the matter in the hands of the esteemed . . . so that I, after rejecting Theon, may find a teacher as soon as possible, for I myself formed a bad opinion of him . . . as possessing a completely inadequate training. When I informed Philoxenus of your view he began to be of the same opinion, saying that it was on account of a shortage of sophists (σοφιστής) . . . was in the same

2. Rea's reconstruction of lines 10-11 is accepted, ἀλλὰ καθ'ἀρματα παρ' οἷς τῆι εὐθείαι ὁδῶι χρη[σάμενοι οἱ πλείο]νες διεφθορόσα, 'but (only) trash, in whose hands most pupils have taken the straight road to having their talent spoiled'. It is more plausible than Roberts', which read 'and the chariots in which the direct journey up to them has to be made were smashed up', ἀλλὰ τ]ὰ ἀρματα {παρ'} οἷς τῆι εὐθείαι ὁδῶι χρη ἀνελεθεῖν πρόχθ]ες διεφθορόσι.

condition as the city, but he said that Didymus, who, it appears, is a friend of his and has a school (σχολή), would be sailing down and would take more care than the others. He persuaded the sons of Apollonius son of Herodes to go to enrol [in the school of Didymus].

And after this they, too, together with Philoxenus, have been searching until now for a more stylish tutor (καθηγητής) since the scholar (φιλόλογος), to whom they used to go, has died. As for myself, if only I had found some decent teacher (καθηγητής), I would pray never to set eyes on Didymus, even from a distance — what makes me despair is that this fellow who used to be a mere provincial sees fit to compete with the rest.

However, knowing as I do that apart from paying useless and excessive fees there is no good to be had from a tutor (καθηγητής), I am depending on myself. If you have any opinions on the matter, write to me soon. As Philoxenus also says, I have Didymus always ready to spend his time on me and do everything to help within his capabilities, and by hearing the orators declaiming, of whom Posidonius is one, I shall, with the help of the gods, do well for myself.

The cause of my despondency about this, which is making me neglect my health, is that those who have not yet succeeded ought not to concern themselves with these matters, especially when there are none who are bringing in any money. For at that time the useful Heraclas — curse him! — used daily to contribute some obols, but now, what with his being imprisoned by Isidorus, as he deserved, he's escaped and gone back, I think, to you. Be assured that he would never hesitate to intrigue against you, for, of all things, he felt no shame at gleefully spreading reports in the city about the incident in the theatre and telling lies such as would not come even from the mouth of an accuser and that too when, so far from suffering what he deserves, he's been released and behaves in every respect like a free man. All the same, if you are not sending him back, you could at any rate hand him over to a carpenter — for I'm told that a young fellow makes two drachmas a day — or put him to some other employment at which he'll earn more money; his wages can then be collected and in due course sent to us, for you know that Diogas, too, is studying. While you are sending the little one, we will look about for more spacious rooms in a private house; for in order to be near to Dionysius we've been living in rooms much too small. We received the basket containing exactly the articles you mentioned and the vessels together with the half-*cadus* jar in which we found 22 *choes* instead of 18. To each of the people of whom you wrote I have sent a half-*cadua* of lentils accompanied by a letter. I have received the six measures and a full *coion* of vinegar and 126 lbs. of salted meat and contents of the *cadus* and the 30 baked loaves. Farewell. Choiak 4.