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Textile production in the papyri: the case of private request letters

Aikaterini Koroli¹

Introduction

Throughout the “papyrological millennium”, that is from the 3rd century BC to the 8th century AD, both administrative and private life in Egypt were largely based on letters. Apart from oral communication, letter writing, mostly on papyri and ostraca, was the only available form of communication for the inhabitants of the land of Nile when they needed to get in touch and exchange information with people who did not live in their immediate surroundings. Papyrus letters, written by and sent to private, ordinary people and not to the authorities, composed in the Greek vernacular and intended to fulfill a wide range of communicative goals, fall into the category of Greek private correspondence. These short, authentic, non-literary letters deal mainly with the practicalities of everyday life, including, of course, craftwork, business and financial issues. It is not, therefore, surprising that a considerable percentage

of them are related to textile production and use. Textiles are, of course, but one of the numerous recurring topics to which these letters refer; yet both the quantity and quality of this evidence should not be ignored. The special value and interest of private papyrus letters — as compared to other kinds of non-literary papyri also containing information on ancient fabrics — lies in that they make it possible for us to explore the words or phrases of interest within a helpful linguistic environment. Moreover, letters often contain enough clues to enable the reconstruction of the situational context, especially when they are well preserved.

The present paper focuses on a distinct category of private papyrus correspondence, that of request letters.² My special focus will be on letters referring to demanding, urgent situations; these letters constitute striking proof of the crucial and irreplaceable role that request papyrus letters played in the processes of manufacturing, trading and use of Egyptian fabrics.

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1. FWF-Research Project “Texts and Textiles in Late Antique Egypt” (P-28282), Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW), Vienna (Austria).
2. For a thorough analysis of requesting in private papyrus letters, see my text-driven study (Κορολή 2016), which is based on a vast corpus of c. 8000 private letters on papyri and ostraca dated to the Roman (31 BC–AD 330), Byzantine (AD 330–AD 641) and early Arab periods (AD 641–AD 799) of Egypt. In both that study and the present article, business letters are considered to be a sub-category of private letters. Business activities constitute an integral part of private life. Furthermore, very often business is family business. Finally, topics related with business and financial life are interwoven with other issues of private life, so a line cannot really be drawn between private and business correspondence (Κορολή 2016, p. 45).

In the present paper, letters dated from the Ptolemaic period (323 BC–31 BC) have also been included. The terms “directive” and “request” are used indiscriminately as general terms denoting all ranges of directive speech acts. The interpretation and translation of the passages cited are the ones offered in the papyrological editions and/or the secondary bibliography; where none is available, translations are my own.

Theoretical framework and methodological considerations

The frequency of requesting and the classification of private papyrus letters

As already noted, private papyrus letters correspond to the various, everyday communicative needs of their senders, both practical and social. Requesting is by far the most common of these communicative purposes. The high frequency of directive speech acts in the main body of private letters is one of the most noticeable features of these texts.

Requests in papyrus correspondence are direct, since their formulation points unequivocally to the communicative intention of the senders, and, consequently, are easy to locate.³ In the core of the directives there are verbs either in the imperative or the subjunctive mood (more rarely their infinitive or simple future), *i.e.* grammatical markers of deontic modality.⁴ Alternatively, the infinitive, the

participle, the imperative, the subjunctive or the future of these verbs, or a subordinate clause of purpose which include them depend on performative verbs, for example ἐρωτῶ and παρακαλῶ (in the first person indicative, in the second or third person subjunctive, or as participles),⁵ verbs such as θέλω and καταξιώω (in the imperative or subjunctive),⁶ verbal phrases including ποιέω (*e.g.* πᾶν ποιήσον, καλῶς/εὖ ποιήσεις),⁷ or, much less frequently, deontic verbs (*e.g.* δεῖ, χρή and ὀφείλω)⁸ or other verbs combined with purpose clauses.⁹

Being so frequent, directives can serve as the basis for the classification of private papyrus letters in the following categories:

- a) request letters, *i.e.* letters in which requesting constitutes the main or one of the main communicative goals of the ancient writers and
- b) letters where requesting is not the main or one of the main communicative purposes.¹⁰

3. For a thorough presentation of the formulation of requests in private papyrus letters (including rarer cases) with many examples, see Κορολή 2016, p. 100–126. Indirect requesting is very rare in papyrus letters; for examples, see Κορολή 2016, p. 211–217.
4. Cf. the use of imperative, subjunctive and simple future, respectively, in the following examples: *BGU* III 822, 9–10 (after May 5, AD 105?; see HGV): γράψον Κουπανηοῦτι | περὶ τῆς οἰκίας (“write to Koupaneus about the house”; see Bagnall & Cribiore 2006, p. 191); *P. Rain.Cent.* 162, 6 (7th century AD?; see BL XII 165): καὶ γράψης μοι τὸ πρᾶγμα (“Und schreibe mir, wie es sich entwickelt”; see edition); *O. Claud.* I 139, 5–7 (c. AD 110): λοιπὸν γράψεις μοι ποίας τιμῆς αὐτὰ ἔλαβες (“Now, write to me at what price you bought them”; see edition).
5. Cf., *e.g.*, *P. Tebt.* II 408, 5–11 (AD 3): παρακαλῶ σε περὶ υἱῶν | μου τῇ φιλοστοργίᾳ τῶν περὶ Σωτήριχον μὴ ἔδσαι | πυρὸν αὐτοῖς δοθῆναι (“... I entreat you about my sons, not to allow that, out of their regard for Soterichus and his people, wheat be given to them”; see edition); *O. Claud.* I 155, 5–6 (2nd century AD): ἐρωτῶ σε πέμψεις μοι αὐτήν (“I ask you to send it to me”; see edition); *P. Flor.* III 303, 2 with BL XII 72 (6th century AD): π[ι]ρ[α]κ[α]λ[ω] τὴν σὴν ἀρετὴν ὅπως ἀγοράσῃς τὰ πεντακισχίλια κοῦφα (“I beseech your excellence to buy the five thousand empty jars”; translated by A. Koroli); *P. Oxy.* VIII 1165, 11 (= *Sel.Pap.* I 167) (6th century AD): παρακληθῆτε (hand 2) οὐδὲν, (hand 1) ..., ποιῆσαι αὐτοὺς ἀπολυθῆναι (“... be persuaded ... to have them released”; see the edition); *P. Oxy.* XII 1581, 4–7 (2nd century AD): ἐρωτηθεὶς, ἀδελφέ, | Σαραπίωνα μὴ ἀφῆς ἀργεῖν | καὶ ῥέμβεσθαι, ἀλλὰ εἰς ἐργασίαν αὐτὸν βάλε (“At my request, brother, do not let Sarapion be idle and roam aimlessly, but put him to work”; see Bagnall & Cribiore 2006, p. 362).
6. Cf., *e.g.*, *P. Stras.* IV 286, 4–7 (mid-4th century AD): καταξιώσάτω σου ἡ φιλαδελφικὴ | διάθεσις, δέσποτα, Στέφανον | διαφέροντα τῇ ἐμῇ βραχύτητι | τοῦτον ἀφεθῆ[να] (“Si degni, o signore, la tua fraterna disposizione di congedare questo Stephanos, che è importante per la mia pochezza”; see Tibiletti, 1979, p. 188); *P. Oxy.* XVI 1941, 5–7 (5th century AD): θέλη[ν] ἀποστῆναι τῆς γεωργίας μηχανῆς Στύμονος (“Haz el favor de retirarte del campo de labranza de Estimón”; see O’Callaghan 1963, p. 129).
7. Cf., *e.g.*, *P. Freib.* IV 56, 5–9 (1st/2nd century AD): εὖ ποιήσεις προνοήσασα κοπήναι τὸ καλάμι|διον προχρήσασα τοὺς | μισθοὺς μέχρι οὐ κατέλ|θω | (“... you will do well to arrange for the reeds to be cut, advancing the wages until I come down”; see edition); *P. Iand.* VI 102, 23 (6th century AD): πᾶν π[ο]ίησον, πώλησον (“... tue alles, um sie, wenn möglich, zu verkaufen”; see edition).
8. Cf., *e.g.*, *P. Oxy.* XIV 1678, 10 (3rd century AD): δεῖ σε αὐτὸν προσέ[σ]χειν (“... you ought to beware of him”; see edition).
9. *P. Alex.* 26, 19–21 (2nd/3rd century AD): τα[υ]τὰ μὲν σοι γράφω, | ἵνα τὴν χώραν μου ἀ[να]πληρώσῃς | [ἐν] τούτῳ τῷ ἔργῳ (“I’m writing to you these words, so that you represent me / take my place in this task”; translated by A. Koroli).
10. The occurrence of commonplace, stereotypical exhortations to the recipient to greet one or more persons or take care of his/her health is not enough to consider a private letter as a request letter. These exhortations belong to the standardised/formulaic elements of private papyrus correspondence through which the senders express their concern for the recipient and his or her relatives; cf. *O. Did.* 373 (before c. AD 88–97): Ἀλέξανδρος Κασσίωι κονδοῦκ[τορι] | χ[α]ίρειν | περὶ τοῦ κρεαδίου, οὐ μοι εἴρηκες (l. εἴρηκας) «δέξει (l. δέξει) [παρὰ] | Νιλάτος πέντε {εἰ} στατήρων», οὐδὲ ἐξ αὐ[τοῦ] | πέπρακεν· καὶ ἤθελεν (l. ἤθελον) οἱ στρατιῶται (l. στρατιῶται) ἀγοράσαι | καὶ οὐκ ἤθελε πωλῆσαι, ἀλλὰ λέγει ὅτι «εἰς | Βερ<ε>νίκην αὐτὸ πέμπω.» ἄσπασαι | Σαβῖνον καὶ Γάιον καὶ Πρίσκον (l. Πρίσκον). | ἔρρωσο. ς (or ἔρρωσο {ς}) (“Alexandros to Cassius conductor, greetings. Concerning the meat, (about) which you said to me: ‘Take five staters’ worth from Nilas’, but he has not sold from it and the soldiers wanted to buy and he would not sell, but says: ‘I sent it to Berenike’. Greet Sabinus and Gaius and Priscus. Farewell. The 6th (?)”; see edition); see Κορολή, 2016, p. 193–202, where more examples are offered.

The first of the two aforementioned categories is the broadest. Requesting seems to be the most common reason why a letter would be composed. It is often combined with providing information, which also constitutes a good reason for writing and sending a letter.¹¹ Private letters related to fabrics are not an exception.

A small percentage of letters providing information on fabrics do not include any requests. This is the case, for instance, regarding *O. Claud.* II 293 with BL XI 295; XII 296 (c. AD 142/143); its sender provides the recipient with varied, practical information and assures him that he has done everything he had asked:

Νειλίῳ Πετεροῦ τῷ υἱῷ πολ(λὰ) χα(ίρειν).
| καθὼς ἐνετείλου μοι, εὐθὺς ἔτι <ε>ἰσῆλθε
Ἀπολλῶς, τὸ ἱμάτιόν μου τέθεικα καὶ δέδωκα
αὐτῷ (δραχμὰς) η. αὐτῷ | τὸ ἱμάτιον δέδωκα. οὐ
γὰρ ἡμέλουν | εἶπας σοι. Παρθενοπαῖος δὲ ὧς
ἄρτι | οὐ δέδωκε τὰ χάλκινα. | ἀσπάζε(αί) σε
Σαραπίδωρος πολλά. | ἔρρωσο. | λέγει δὲ καὶ ὁ
Δριλλόμυς ὅτι «<ε>ἰς τρίτην | ἐνεγκῶ (l. ἐνέγκω)
σοι τὰς δύο κοτύλας τοῦ | ἐλαίου». ἐγὼ δὲ σὲ οὐ
κατακεχρω|μάτικα ἀλλὰ πεμπομέ|νου, ἐπὶ σε [-
 -]κα | . . . α. κα.¹²

Similarly, the sole purpose of the sender of the very short *O. Claud.* II 296 (second half of 2nd century AD) is to send a piece of information:

Ἀχιλλᾶτι. ἔπεμψά σοι τὸ πάλλι|όν σου
ἐπιγεγραμ|μενῷ (l. ἐπιγεγραμμένον) ὁμόμα|τί σου
πλατέ|οις γράμ|μασιν.¹³

Nevertheless, in most cases, letters referring to fabrics are full of directives. The correspondents involved used request letters to co-operate, to make decisions, to divide labour, to merchandise, to negotiate and to solve problems.

In the following three letters from the Ptolemaic, Roman and Byzantine period respectively, requesting is the main communicative goal of the sender, which is obvious from the content of their main body. All three texts are related to fabrics either partly or exclusively:

P. Mich. I 13, 1-5 (= *PSI VI* 556; 257 BC):
εὖ ἂν ἔχοι εἰ ἔρρωται Ἀπ[ολλ]ώνιος τε καὶ σὺ
[ἔ]ρρω[σαι]· ὑγιαίνομεν δὲ καὶ | ἡμεῖς, ἐκομισάμεν
παρ' Ἱατροκλείους ἐρίων ὀλκὴν (τάλαντα) β.
γράφ[ον] οὖμ (l. οὖν) μοι εἰ τεσσαρακοντ[αμναῖα
γ ἢ ταλαντεῖα] | γένηται δύο στρώματα, ἢ
ταλαντεῖον ποιῶμεν καὶ τὸ [(τάλαντον) τὸ] ἄλλο
φυλάττω[μεν ἕως ἂν ὑμεῖς παραγένησθε]· | καὶ
τὴν ταχίστην τοῦτο **ποίησον**. **γράφον** δὲ καὶ πότε
ὑ[πο]δεχόμεθα [Ἀπολλώνιον, ἵνα κατὰ καιρὸν
παρα]σκευασθῇ αὐτῷ ἡ οἴκησις.¹⁴

P. Oslo II 56, 3-8 with BL II.2 212; BL III 123
(2nd century AD): εὖ ποιήσεις ἀγορά<σας>

11. Expressing the sender's interest, reverence or even affection for the recipient and sometimes others such as the recipient's relatives, mostly by means of greeting, wishing, thanking or flattering the recipient, demonstrates the need to maintain family and social bonds and is an element inherent in the very composition of private letters. It is found either in the main body of the letter or in other parts of it, like the opening and closing formulas and the verso containing the information about the addressee. Nonetheless, this is very rarely the purpose of the letter writing; for a rare example, see *P. Köln* II 108 (= *SB XII* 11243; 3rd century AD): Φ[ιλόνεικος] . . . | [- - -] | Κυρίλλα χαίρειν. | πρὸ τῶν ὅλων ἀσπάζομαι σε καὶ τὸν κύρι[όν] | μου Ζωῖλον καὶ Πλου[τίαναν] καὶ Πανταρχίδα | καὶ Θερμοῦθιν καὶ Σωτηρίδα καὶ Εὐτυχίαν καὶ Καλόμελλον καὶ Ἡρακλέωνα καὶ Ἀρεοῦν, Εὐθη[νίαν], Σαραποδόραν, Κύριλλαν τὴν μεγάλην καὶ τοὺς παρ' ἡμῶν πάντας. ἀσπάζεται Πλου[τίων] Ἡρακλέωνα. ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὖχο(μαι). | [Κυρ]ύλλα π(αρά) Φιλόνεικου ("Philonikos ... grüßt Kyrilla. Vor allem grüße ich dich und meinen Herrn Zoilos und Plutaiina, Pantarchis, Thermuthis, Soteris, Eutychia, Kalomallos, Herakleon, Hareus, Euthenia, Sarapodora, die große Kyrilla und alle unsere Hausgenossen. Pluton grüßt Herakleon. Ich wünsche dir Wohlergehen. An Kyrilla von Philonikos"; see edition, as well as the Italian translation offered by Tibiletti 1979, p. 157); for more examples, see Koroğlu 2016, p. 260–262.
12. "Neiliôn à son fils Petearoëris, un grand salut. Comme tu me l'as enjoint, aussitôt qu'Apollôs est arrivé, j' ai mis mon vêtement en gage et je lui ai donné 8 drachmes. Je lui ai donné le vêtement. Car, je ne négligeais pas la chose, puisque je te l'ai dit (?). Jusqu'ici Parthénopaïos n'a pas donné les sous. Toutes les amitiés de Sarapiodôros. Porte-toi bien. Notre Drillomys dit aussi 'je t' apporterai dans deux jours les deux cotyles d'huile'. Moi je ne t'ai pas - - -"; see edition. The verb κατακεχρωμάτικα at the end of the preserved fragment (ll. 12–13), which is neither fully transcribed nor translated by the editor, could mean "colour completely". Given the bad condition of the writing material here, it is not certain whether it refers to textiles.
13. "À Achilles. Je t'ai envoyé ton manteau marqué de ton nom en grosses lettres"; see edition.
14. "If Apollonios and you are both well, it would be good. I myself am keeping well. I received from Iatrokles two talents' weight of wool. Write to me then if it is to be made into three mattresses of 40 minas each or two of one talent each, or if we are to make one mattress of one talent and keep the other talent until you yourselves arrive; and do this as quickly as possible. Write to me also when we are to expect the visit of Apollonios, in order that the house may be made ready for him in good time"; see edition.

μοι ἐν Βουσῖρι χιτῶ(νας) | λινούδς δύο
στερεὰ καθάρει<ι>α καλὰ | ἔως (δραχμῶν) μ,
ἐπικαρσίω(ν) Διοσπόλως ζευ|γος καλῶν
(l. καλόν), βαλανάριν μοναχόν, ἱμι|τύλιν
(l. ἡμιτύλιν) καλὸν εἴ τι μεῖζω — βλέπε οὖν μὴ |
ἀμελήσης — ἄλλο χεῖρω τῆς Σάεως.¹⁵

P. Rain.Cent. 77, 2-21 (5th–6th century AD):
σφυρα στεμματ [- - -] κ | τὰ ἐλαφρ() [- - -] |
καὶ ἑτερ() σφυρ() ἄλλη χρω . δ | καὶ ἑτέρας
ἄλλας χρ[- - -] . γ | καὶ δεσμ(ιδιον) στεμμα()
γ | στιχάρ<ο>ν α | στρώματα β | μαφόρτια β |
προσκεφάλ(αιον) α | ἰθμὸς χαλκούμ(ενος) α |
δέξασθαι (l. δέξασθε) ταῦτα π(αρὰ) Ψαίου τοῦ
| ναύτου τοῦ δεσποτικοῦ | καὶ κελεύσατε ταῦτα
πεμφθῆ[ναι] | [εἰ]ς τὴν οἰκίαν μ'οὐ ἄνω [ε]ἰς
Ἑρμ[οῦ] | [πό]λιν καὶ ἀντιγράψαι [μο]ι περὶ |
ὑποδ[ο]χῆς τούτων· σὺν θεῷ γὰρ | ἔπομαι τούτοις
μο[υ] τοῖς γράμμασιν· καὶ φρόντισαι δὲ περὶ τῆς
{παρα} | παρακλήσεως ὧν ἐπαρεκάλεσά | σοι
δ(ιὰ) γραμμάτων ἔνεκεν ἐμοῦ.¹⁶

The sender of *P. Mich.* I 13 asks the recipient to send him a letter containing specific instructions about the manufacturing of mattresses (ll. 2-3), and to do so as soon as possible (l. 4), whereas in ll. 4-5 he submits a request irrelevant to fabrics. The sender of *P. Oslo* II 56 asks the recipient to send him a long list of both garments and furnishing textiles (ll. 3-7) and asks the recipient not to be neglectful (ll. 7-8). Finally, the sender of *P. Rain.Cent.* 77, 2-21 asks the recipient to receive some products, to order their transfer to the sender's home and the sending of a letter to him,

and, in general, to take care of everything he has asked by means of his letters.

Directives such as the one attested in *P. Mich.* I 13, 4 (καὶ τὴν ταχίστην τοῦτο ποιήσον, “and do as quickly as possible”) and the stereotypical request in *P. Oslo* II 56, 7–8 (βλέπε οὖν μὴ | ἀμελήσης; “see to it that you don't forget anything”) play a subsidiary role, in the sense that they merely stress the necessity of the satisfaction of other (i.e. the basic) requests. Ancient writers often include this kind of directive in their request letters to make sure that the recipients will not be neglectful.

In all three aforementioned request letters, the directives dealing with textiles refer to the same topic. Nevertheless, this is not always the case. For example, the two directives contained in *P. Mich.* III 218 (= *SB* III 7250), 10–12; 13–14 (AD 296) concern different topics although they are both related to fabrics: καὶ ἐτοίμασον τὰ σύνεργα τοῦ κιθωνίου σου | καὶ τοῦ {ε}ἱματίου...καὶ ἐτόμασον (l. ἐτοίμασον) τὸ δερματικ[ι]<ό>ν μου.¹⁷

Frequently, requesting is not the only main communicative goal of the sender. In some request letters the directives related to textiles co-exist with information related to textiles but also concerning different topics; cf., e.g. the information provided in ll. 6-8 (with *BL* VI 81) of the aforementioned *P. Mich.* III 218: καὶ ἀφῆκα τὰ ἐρίδια | σεαυτῇ ἵνα ῆ (l. εἴ) τι θέλ<ε>ς ἀναλώσης σε|αυτῇ.¹⁸

Finally, in request letters like *P. Oxy.* LVI 3855 (c. 280/281), the directives contained in ll. 8-19 are irrelevant to textiles, whereas the information provided by the sender in ll. 4-5 concerns the preparation of a *chitonion* (τὸ κιθώνι<ό>ν σου ἐποίησα | τμηθῆναι).¹⁹

15. “You will do good to buy for me in Bousiris two linen sturdy clean *chitonas* of good quality that cost no more than forty drachmas, a pair of checkered clothes of good quality from Diospolis, only one bath-towel / bag (?), a good half-sized cushion, if you find a larger — see to it that you don't forget anything — and another cheaper one from Sais”; ll. 3–6 (until μοναχόν) are translated by A. Koroli; for the translation of ll. 6–8, the meaning of ἡμιτύλιον or ἡμιτύλιν, as well as the meaning of καθάρεια, see Bogensperger & Koroli 2018 and Bogensperger & Koroli 2019a; the interpretation and translation of ἐπικάρσια as “checkered clothes” is offered by Droß-Krüpe 2018.
16. “Körbe (?) mit Kränzen (?): 20, und zwar die leichten: und weitere Körbe mit anders gefärbten: 4; und weitere andere ...: 3; und Bündel von Kränzen: 3; Hemd: 1; Deeken: 2; Kopftücher: 2; Kopfkissen: 1; kupfernes Sieb: 1. Nehmt diese Sachen in Empfang von Psaios, dem Schiffer des kaiserlichen (Schiffes), und gebt Anweisung, dass sie geschickt werden zu deinem Haus, nach Hermupolis hinauf, und dass man mir Antwort schicke betreffend den Empfang dieser Sachen. Denn mit Gottes Hilfe werde ich diesem meinem Brief folgen. Und kümmere dich auch um meine Bitte, d.h. um die Dinge, um die ich brieflich gebeten hatte, um meinetwillen”; see edition.
17. “Also prepare the material for your tunic and your overcloak ... Also get my leather coat ready”; see Rowlandson 1998, p. 150, no. 114; on σύνεργα, see, among others, Gonis 1998, p. 185 (n. to l. 17), who suggests the translation “materials”, and specifically “yarn for weaving”.
18. “I dispatched the fleeces for you, so that, if you want, you can use them for yourself”; see Rowlandson 1998, p. 150, no. 114, who offers a different interpretation of the passage as compared with that offered in the edition.
19. “I have had your tunic cut [from the loom?]”; see edition; on vocabulary concerning tunics, see Mossakowska-Gaubert 2017.

Request letters as a distinct category of private papyrus letters

As expected, diversity is one of basic characteristics of private papyrus correspondence in general and of request letters in particular. At the same time however request letters bear common features, in the sense that their writers seem to draw from the same source of rhetorical patterns, expressive means and strategies in order to succeed in their aim, *i.e.* to be convincing. This is why request papyrus letters constitute a distinct text type among private papyrus letters and non-literary papyri in general.

In addition to the recurrent ways of formulation already discussed above, the typical features of requesting in papyrus letters can be sought in the structure, *i.e.* the organization of the epistolary text. Direct requests constitute the core of thematic textual units. These units contain the thematically relevant co-text of the requests, if any, which functions as the preparation or supplement of the requests submitted. The organization of these thematic textual units is therefore based on the following rhetorical pattern: *preparation for the directive – formulation of the directive – supplement of the directive*. Thematically relevant directives belong to the same textual unit.

The above-mentioned organisational pattern varies, of course, depending on whether it is complete as well as on the special function of the preparation and/or the supplement, as is obvious from the following, characteristic examples.

In *P. Oxy.* LVI 3871, 2-4 (6th/7th century AD), the supplement of the request justifies its submission:

directive: αἰτῶ τὴν ὑμετέραν γνησίαν ἀδελφότητα
τὸ ὀλαίγε<ι>ον καρακάλλιν τὸ παλαιόν, ὅπερ
| ἔλαβεν ἀπὸ τοῦ κναφέως, πέμψ[α]ι μοι δ[ι]ὰ
Θεοδώρου τοῦ λαμπροτάτου μειζοτέρου²⁰
supplement: ἐπειδή, ὡς οἶδεν, ἡλλάγησαν οἱ
ἄερες²¹

In *P. Mich.* I 13 (= *PSI* VI 556), 2 the sender provides the recipient with useful information before submitting the two thematically relevant requests in ll. 2-4:

preparation: ἐκομισάμην παρ' Ἰατροκλείους
ἐρίων ὀλκὴν (τάλαντα) β
directive₁: γράψ[ον] οὐμ (l. οὖν) μοι εἰ
τεσσαρακοντ[αμναία γ ἢ ἑταλάντιαι] | γένηται
δύο στρώματα, ἢ ταλαντιεῖον ποιῶμεν καὶ τὸ
[(τάλαντον) τὸ] ἄλλο φυλλάττω[μεν ἕως ἂν
ὑμεῖς παραγένησθε]
directive₂ (repetition of directive₁): καὶ τὴν
ταχίστην τοῦτο ποιήσον²²

In *P. Mert.* III 114, 3-25 (late 2nd century AD), the above-mentioned structural pattern is attested in full. The function of the preparation for the two directives contained in this letter is different. The sender here tries to impose psychological pressure regarding the recipients by expressing his certainty about their concern for his own and his father's clothes. The first directive is supported by detailed information; the second, thematically relevant and equally basic request is supplemented by the assurance of the sender that he will do whatever is necessary.

preparation_{1,2}: καὶ χωρὶς τοῦ γράφειν με | οἶμαι
καὶ ὑμᾶς πεφρον|τικῆναι τῶν ἱματίων | μου [ἔ]
γβάντων τῶν | τοῦ πατρός μου, εἰδό|τες
(l. εἰδυίας) μου τὴν προαίρεσιν ὡς αἰσθανομέ|νω
ποιούσαι (l. ποιούσας)²³
directive₁: ὥστε | οὖν γράφ[ω] ὑμ[ε]ῖν δ[ι]πως
ἐνεργοῦσαι αὐ|τὰ λ[ε]ῖ|αν ἰσχυροτέ|ραν κρόκη
ποιήσ[η]ται (l. ποιήσετε) αὐτά²⁴
supplement₁: ἐπειδὴ γὰρ | εὖρον στήμονα πρὸς |
(δραχμὰς) ἢ τὸ ἀν' εἴκοσι στα|θμιον καὶ
λ[ε]ῖ|αν ἰσ|χνόν. καὶ γὰρ ἀγορά|ζω ἐκεῖ πορφύραν
| πρὸς (δραχμὰς) δ τὸν στατήρα | ὀλκῆς δ²⁵
directive₂: ν[.] . | . θ[.] . υ[.] | σαι δὲ αὐτὰ δηλώ|σατέ μοι²⁶
supplement₂: κ[αὶ] ὃ δέ|ον ἐ<σ>τὶ πο[ι]ήσω{ι}²⁷

20. "I request your true brotherliness to spend me the old pure goat-hair cape with the hood, which you got from the fuller, by Theodorus the most splendid μειζότερος ..."; see edition.

21. "... since, as you know, the weather has changed"; *ibid.*

22. For the translation of the passage, see n. 14.

23. "Even without my writing to you I imagine that you have begun to think about my clothes now that my father's are finished (?), since you know my wishes and that you are making them for a person of discrimination"; see edition.

24. "And so I'm writing to you in order that when you are working on them you make the thread for the woof very much finer"; *ibid.*

25. "... because I have discovered a thread for the warp at 8 dr. the . . . stathmion and it is very fine. For I am buying purple there at 4 dr. the stater's weight"; *ibid.*

26. "When you are engaged on spinning them (?) let me know..."; *ibid.*

27. "... and I will do what is necessary"; *ibid.*

Finally, there are request letters such as the above-cited *P. Oslo II* 56, 3-8, where the directives are not framed by any kind of preparation and/or supplement:

*directive*₁: εὖ ποιήσεις ἀγορά<σας> μοι ἐν
Βουσίρι χιτῶ(νας) | λινούς δύο στερεὰ
καθάρε<ι>α καλὰ | ἔως (δραχμῶν) μ,
ἐπικαρσίω(ν) Διοσπόλεως ζεῦ|γος καλῶν (l.
καλόν), βαλανάριν μοναχόν, ἱμι|τύλιν
(l. ἡμιτύλιν) καλὸν εἴ τι μείζω ... ἄλλο χεῖρον
τῆς Σάεως
*directive*₂ (repetition of *directive*₁): βλέπε οὖν
μὴ | ἀμελήσης²⁸

It should be noted that the writers of all of the aforementioned examples try to be as clear as possible for the recipient by using specifications concerning the fabrics either in the directive itself or in its framing. Because of the difficulties involved in letter sending, they tried to avoid any misunderstanding due to insufficient information.

The object of the requests that are related to fabrics

As already noted, private papyrus letters deal almost exclusively with the practical side of life, nevertheless, the diversity of topics is noteworthy. The object of requests concerns various everyday, practical and/or family or social issues.²⁹ This thematic diversity is also apparent in the objects of the requests related to fabrics, which can be classified as shown in the Table at the end of the article.

Usually, request letters dealing with textiles contain requests falling into different thematic categories, even if they concern the same topic; cf., e.g., *O. Did.* 353, 3-10 (before? c. AD 77-92):

μὴ οὖν, ἄδελφε, ἀμελήσης μου ἀλλὰ δέξαι | τὸν
γαννάκην παρὰ Λογγεῖνου καὶ τὰς ἐξήκο|ντα
δραχμὰς καὶ δὸς τὸν γαννάκην καὶ | βάψον αὐτὸν

κόκκινον (l. κόκκινον). δὸς αὐτὸν Χρησίμ|ῳ τῷ
Δέξκτ<ρ>ου τοῦ μεσσικίου. μὴ οὖν ἀμελήσης ἥαν
(l. ἥαν) σοι δοῖ (l. δῶ). εἰ δὲ μὴ, γράψον μοι καὶ ἐρῶ
| τῷ κεντυρίωνι τούτῳ (l. τοῦτο [or τούτῳ]) λέγων·
«δέξαι [αὐτὸ?]ν εἰς οἰκίαν μου.»³⁰ (receiving, giving, dyeing of the same finished garment, as well as the sending of a letter about it).

Similar instances are furnished by *P. Oxy.* III 531 (= *W. Chr.* 482; *C. Pap. Hengstl* 83), 12-15 (2nd century AD):

κόμ[ι]σαι διὰ Ὀν|νωφρᾶ τὰ ἱμάτια τὰ λευκὰ
τὰ δυ[ν]άμενα | μετὰ τῶν πορφυρῶν φορεῖσθαι
φαινολίων, | τὰ ἄλλα μετὰ τῶν μουρσίνων
φορέσεις (receiving and use of garments);³¹

P. Oxy. LXVII 4629, 13-15 (6th/7th century AD):

καὶ περὶ τῶν δύο μνᾶς (l. μνῶν) ἐρέας |
παρακαλῶ ζητῆσαι παρὰ Λιμενίου καὶ | αὐτὰ<ς>
πέμψον μοι (production of an oral text and
sending of materials).³²

Letters like these are informative as far as the whole process of manufacturing and the transactions are concerned.

It is also possible that one and the same request belongs to more than one of the aforementioned thematic categories; cf., e.g., *P. Oxy.* LVI 3853, 4-6 (3rd century AD):

τὰ ἱμά|τια ἐὰν ᾦν (l. ᾦ) γεγονότα μὴ [δ]ιαπέμψης
μοι ἄχρις | ἂν δηλώσω σοι περὶ αὐτῶν (send-
ing of garments and production of an oral or
written text).³³

It is also possible that the sender asks for fabrics along with different kinds of goods; cf., e.g., *P. Oxy.* VI 937, 26-27 (3rd century AD):

[π]έμψον τὸν μα|φόρτην σου καὶ τὸ κεράμιογ τοῦ
γάρους καὶ δικότυλον ἐλαίου χρηστοῦ.³⁴

28. For the translation of the passage, see n. 15.

29. What is requested becomes obvious either in the directive itself and/or its framing, i.e. its thematically relevant co-text functioning as either its preparation or supplement.

30. "Now, don't neglect me, but receive this cloak from Longinus and the sixty drachmas and give the cloak and have it dyed scarlet. Give it to Chresimos the slave of Dexter, the discharged soldier. So, do not neglect this if he gives it to you. If not, write to me and I shall tell the centurion ... receive [him?] into my house ..."; see edition.

31. "Receive by Onnophris the white robes which are to be worn with the purple cloaks, the others you should wear with the myrtle-coloured (?) ones"; see edition; cf. the German translations offered by Hengstl 1978, p. 212 and Schubart 1923, p. 87.

32. "... and concerning the two *minae* of wool, please seek them from Limenius and send them to me"; see edition; cf. Bagnall & Cribiore 2006, p. 231.

33. "When the clothes are finished, don't send them over to me until I let you know about them"; see edition.

34. "Send your cloak and the jar of pickled fish and two *cotylae* of good oil"; see edition.

Finally, there are rarer cases of requests, which do not pertain to any of the above presented broader thematic categories; cf., e.g., *P. Mich.* III 201, 4-9 with BL IX 159 (AD 99):

καλῶς ο<ῖ>ν ποιήσασθαι (l. ποιήσετε) μελήσαιτε
(l. μελήσετε) ἡμῖν περὶ τῶν ἀλ[ο]υρ<γ>ῶν τῶν
δοῦ|ω (l. δύο), μὴ νὰ (l. ἵνα μὴ) ἄλλος ἐκξενίκη
(l. ἐξεενίκη) αὐτὰ | καὶ τὰ {ε}ίματι[α] τὰ σουβρίκια
καὶ | τὼ (l. τὸ) παλλιόλιν (l. παλλιόλιον) αὐτῶν
(l. ὑμῶν αὐτῶν?). The sender asks the recipient
“to take thought about the two purple robes
(?), in order that no one else may take them
away”;³⁵

P. Oxy. VII 1069, 18-20 (3rd century AD):

τὴν | πεδείσκην (l. παιδίσκην) μου δὲ πρὸ<ς>
λόγον | ἀνάγκασον φειλοπονείσθαι
(l. φιλοπονείσθαι). The sender asks the
recipient to ensure that his slave-girl “be
properly industrious”.³⁶

Requesting in an imperative tone: two case studies

As is obvious from the above cited examples, the senders of request letters try to strike a balance between two kinds of linguistic strategies, namely the strategies giving the epistolary text an imperative tone and the politeness strategies, i.e. various expressions of friendliness, reverence, admiration or even affection. The latter compensate the recipient for having to satisfy the request submitted by the sender. The imperative tone is codified in various ways, either commonplace or unusual. Using these linguistic strategies, the senders express very clearly and intensely their will; by doing so, they aim at the immediate reaction of the recipient.³⁷

The imperative tone is striking in a considerable proportion of letters, including letters related to fabrics. This is the case when one or more of the requests submitted

by the sender concern an urgency and/or when its sender wants to adopt a strict or even accusatory attitude towards the recipient, if a problem has been caused because of his/her negligence, irresponsibility or malevolence. This imperative style of writing therefore echoes the worries or the fears, the anger or the indignation that the senders experience due to difficulties or problematic situations. Request letters, like all private papyrus letters, reflect in a very vivid manner the internal world of their senders.

Focusing on the imperative tone helps us to comprehend the importance of private correspondence in the textile industry. In what follows, I will present two characteristic examples dated from Roman times and dealing with the transfer of warp and weft, namely *P. Berl.Zill.* 9 (AD 68) and *SB VI* 9026 (2nd century AD). The senders of the letters in question are facing demanding, urgent situations. Their requests concern problems that must be solved. Their intention is to make their texts effective, i.e. convincing, so that the recipient satisfies their request as soon as possible. The strategies to which they resort in order to achieve their goal are very frequent in documentary papyri.

The main body of *P. Berl.Zill.* 9 (ll. 3-14) deals only with one topic, i.e. the transfer of warp and weft in an imperative and criticising tone. The text is structured as follows:

*preparation*_{1,2,3}: ἐτάξον μοι πρὸ τῆς ᾧ τοῦ Φαῶφι
| ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ τὰς κρόκας καὶ τὸν στή|μονα τῶν
ἱματίων, καὶ οὐκ ἦλθες (ll. 3-5)³⁸

*directive*₁: καλῶς οὖν ποιήσης ἐξαυτῆς ἐλεύ|ση
πρὸς ἐμέ (ll. 6-7)³⁹

*supplement*₁/*preparation*₂: δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὰ ἕως
| τῆς δεκάτης ἐκμηθῆναι, | μὴ ποτε χρεῖα
γένηται κατα|πλεῦσαί με εἰς πόλιν (ll. 7-10)⁴⁰

*directive*₂: ἐὰν δὲ μὴ | μέλλης ἔρχεσθαι, πάλιν μοι
| ἐξαυτῆς φάσιν πέμψον (ll. 10-12)⁴¹

*supplement*₂: ἵνα | ᾧδε αὐτὰ ἀναβαλῶ
(ll. 12-13)⁴²

35. “Please be so good as to take thought about the two purple robes (?), in order that no one else may take them away, and the clothing, the hoods and their mantle”; see edition; cf. White 1986, p. 156.

36. “Make my girl be properly industrious”; see edition.

37. The interaction of these linguistic strategies with linguistic strategies of politeness gives a request letter its particular tone and style: on this topic, see Koroğlu 2016, p. 231–256; see Koroğlu’s forthcoming article offering a thorough discussion about the function and interaction of politeness and imperative tone markers in request papyrus letters.

38. “Du hast dich mir gegenüber verpflichtet, vor dem 1. Phaophi zu kommen, um die Einschlagfäden und Kettenfäden für die Mäntel zu holen, bist jedoch nicht gekommen”; see edition.

39. “Du wirst also gut tun, sogleich zu mir zu kommen”; *ibid.*

40. “Man muss nämlich dieselben vor dem 10. ausschneiden, damit es nicht nötig werde, dass ich mich zur Stadt einschiffe”; *ibid.*

41. “Wenn du aber nicht zu kommen beabsichtigst, dann sende mir sofort abermals Nachricht, ...”; *ibid.*

42. “... damit ich (selbst) sie in dieser Weise auf den Webstuhl aufschlage”; *ibid.*

*directive*₃ (repetition₂): βλέπε | οὖν, μὴ ἄλλως
ποιήσης (ll. 13-14)⁴³

The imperative tone is codified in various ways. First of all, the sender starts his letter with a complaint concerning the inconsistent behaviour of the recipient; the latter had promised that he would come to get the warp and weft but did not keep his promise. The adverb ἐξαυτῆς (“immediately”; l. 6), contained in the first directive, stresses the urgency. The reason for the sender’s worries is mentioned in ll. 7-10 functioning as the supplement of the *directive*₁ and, at the same time, as preparation of *directive*₂: these materials have to be cut by the tenth of the month. The imperative tone becomes more obvious with the submission of the second request; the recipient is asked to send a message should he not appear. The sender chooses to close his letter with a commonplace request, formulated only to stress the necessity of the satisfaction of the other two directives; in doing so, he asks the recipient not to be neglectful (again). It seems that the sender has no other way to contact his collaborator except by correspondence; this is also the case for his collaborator (cf. ll. 10-12).

The main body of the second example, SB VI 9026 (ll. 3-19) contains two directives (one basic and one subsidiary) related to the sending of *kroke*. This textual unit (ll. 10-15) is structured as follows:

*directive*₁: πά[ν]τη πάντως μοι πέμψης τῷ ἀγωγίῳ
| τούτῳ ἐριοξύλου δραχμὰς εἴκοσι σπουδαίας
κρόκης (ll. 10-12)⁴⁴

*directive*₂ (repetition₁): ἀλλ’ ὅρα μὴ ἀμελήσης
(l. 12)⁴⁵

*supplement*_{1,2}: ἐπεὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί σου ἐπενιδύτην
οὐκ ἔχουσι ἐκτριβέντων τῶν ἐριοξύλων αὐτῶν,
καὶ χρεῖαν ἔχουσι ὡς οἶδας καθὰ | πάντοτε ἐν
ἀγρῷ διατρ[ε]ῖβουσι (ll. 12-15)⁴⁶

The female sender of this request letter asks for twenty drachmas of *kroke* of high quality cotton. Her letter is written in a rather imperative style. There are two imperative tone markers, namely a. the pleonastic adverbial phrase consisting of two deontic markers πά[ν]τη πάντως (“by all means”; l. 10), and b. the use of the commonplace, stereotypical directive ἀλλ’ ὅρα μὴ ἀμελήσης (l. 12), which emphasises the necessity to satisfy the basic request. The reason for the sender’s worry is mentioned in the lines that function as supplements to the two directives; the recipient’s brothers’ outer garments are worn out, and new ones are needed for their everyday activities in the fields.⁴⁷ The verb οὐκ ἔχουσι, the participle ἐκτριβέντων, and the verbal phrase χρεῖαν ἔχουσι point to an urgency. The present request letter is the only means available to this woman, who is probably a professional,⁴⁸ to solve the practical difficulty she encounters.

Conclusions – further discussion

The speech act of requesting is fundamental in textile production. Being the only means of written communication, request papyrus letters form a part of every aspect of textile production and use in late antique Egypt. The ancient writers asked – sometimes in an intense, if not desperate, manner – for materials, products, money, ideas or solutions to their problems. The heterogeneity of these texts

43. “Siehe zu, dass du nicht anders handelst”; *ibid.*

44. “By all means send me by this shipment twenty drachmae’s worth of good cotton thread”; see Winter & Youtie 1944, p. 258.

45. “See that you do not neglect it ...”; *ibid.*

46. “... since your brothers have no outer garments, now that their cotton ones are worn out, and they need them, as you know, inasmuch as they spend all their time in the field”; *ibid.*

47. The verb ἐκτρίβω means “to rub out” or “to wear out” (cf. *LSJ*⁹ s.v.), i.e. destroy to a large extent. However, the possibility that the garments in question are very worn-out but still usable cannot be excluded. Words like τρίβω or its morphological diminutives τριβώνιον and τριβωνάριον (“worn-out garment, possibly a cloak”), τριβακός (“rubbed”, “worn-out”), and ἡμιτριβής/μεσοτριβής/μεσοτριβακός (“half-worn”) that also belong to the word family of τρίβω (“to rub”, “to wear out”) are used in the papyri to denote the rubbed but still usable clothes. What is more, worn-out clothes could be repaired; cf. the participle τεθεραπευμένη (mended < θεραπεύω) attested in another request letter, *P. Oxy.* XLII 3060, 2-4 with BL VIII 265 (2nd century AD): ἐκομι[σά]μην ἐρίππ[ια?] παρὰ Σαραπάτος καὶ | σύνθε[σι]ν σπανὴν ἡ[μι]τριβῆ[ν] {v} | [τεθ]εραπευμένην | καὶ ἐπικ[ά]ρσιον ὁμοίως ἡμιτριβῆ[ν] {v} (“I have received a saddle-cloth from Sarapas, and a Spanish outfit, half-worn and repaired, and a striped (?) garment, likewise half-worn”; see edition). On the topics of “wear and tear” and of repairing worn-out clothes, cf. see Bogensperger & Koroli 2018 and Bogensperger & Koroli 2020a. However, the big quantity of *kroke* requested lessens the possibility that the sender is interested in repairing the rubbed garments and rather points to the making of new ones (I would like to thank Ines Bogensperger for our discussion and this remark). A comment on SB VI 9026 as a source of information regarding cotton textiles in Antiquity is offered by Bogensperger 2016, p. 261-262.

48. Cf. Bagnall & Cribiore 2006, p. 356.

in both content and style allows us to explore many aspects of the ancient textile industry such as manufacturing, utilizing, transferring and merchandizing. The suggested model of analysis brings to the fore the common features of these letters, which are hidden behind their thematic and stylistic diversity, and therefore allows the examination of the information they contain in a systematic manner. The location of the recurrent rhetorical patterns and linguistic strategies makes possible a more satisfying classification and interpretation of the information available, and allows us to speak of recognizable commonplace tactics used by the people who were involved in textile manufacture and industry.

The presentation of the examples in the last chapter made it clear that in order to take full advantage of these valuable textual sources, the situational framework within which they have been produced must be explored further. First and foremost, the social profile of the correspondents and that of the persons also mentioned in the epistolary text (are they male or female? are they professionals or not?), their relationship (is it personal and/or professional? is there any social, financial and/or business distance between them?), along with the exact involvement of these persons in the mentioned activities should be determined. At the same time, it is necessary to make assumptions with regard to the work place (are the mentioned activities carried out at home and/or at a workshop?). Finally, the exact qualities and function of the mentioned articles (either the materials, the tools and the samples or the fabrics as finished products), the nature and purpose of the mentioned activities should be worked out. The combination of this intratextual information about the situational context with textile and financial history sheds light on the broader, cultural context of the letters under study.

Furthermore, the wealth of information contained in request letters should be combined with that attested in other kinds of documentary papyri (e.g. the *logoi himation*, i.e. the long inventories of fabrics with prices and/or other specifications) or semi-literary papyri, as well as the information furnished by Greek late antique and Byzantine literature. Etymological analysis is also particularly helpful for understanding puzzling terminology. Finally, a joint examination of the textual findings together with the archaeological evidence, i.e. the textiles excavated in Egypt, would definitely enable us to reach more solid conclusions on the topic of requesting.

However, such a synthetic analysis of the whole corpus of request papyrus letters remains a *desideratum* for both papyrologists and textile researchers.⁴⁹

Abbreviations

All papyrological works and all references to papyri, ostraca, etc. follow J.F. Oates, R.S. Bagnall, S.J. Clackson, A.A. O'Brien, J.D. Sosin, T.G. Wilfong & K.A. Worp (eds.), *Checklist of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*. Available at: https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/papyrus/texts/clist_papyri.html (continually updated)

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49. For an example of a multi-faceted analysis of a 2nd-century private request letter, see Bogensperger & Koroli 2019b on the meaning of the term *entype* in the private request letter P. Giss. Apoll. 20.

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Table: Thematic diversity in the objects of the requests related to fabrics

giving/sending or receiving	a) fabrics as finished products	<i>e.g. O.Claud.</i> I 177.2-5 (2 nd century AD): κόμισαι παρὰ Κωλ τὸν ἀμαξέα τὴν λώδι καν καὶ κ() \κ θώνιν (l. χιτώνιον) καὶ πάλ λιν. ⁵⁰
	b) goods to be used for the manufacturing of fabrics, <i>i.e.</i> raw materials, dyes, tools, samples, etc.	<i>e.g. P.Berl.Zill.</i> 11.16-19 (3 rd century AD): πέμψον διὰ τῶν κτηνῶν ἃ εἶπον σοι μνᾶς δύο πορφύρας καὶ τὴν πορφύ ραν τῶν ἱματίων, καὶ ὁμοίως πέμψον Ἑρα κλείδη πορφύρας μνᾶς (l. μνᾶν) α μεγάλων κύκλων; ⁵¹ <i>P. Kellis</i> I 71, 48 with BL XII 94 (mid-4 th century AD): ἀξιῶ δέξαι παρὰ Καμὲ τοὺς δέκα στατήρας στήμονος καὶ δὸς Ψάι ς} Τρυφάνους. ⁵²
	c) money (selling or buying of finished products, materials and/or dyes or payment for services)	<i>e.g. BGU</i> III 948, 18-20 with BL VI 13-14 (4 th -5 th century AD): θέλησον [ο]ῦν υἱέ μου Θεόδουλε ἀγοράς<ε>ιν μοι ᾠ λί(τρας) ἐριδίου μέλα[νο]ς, ἵνα (l. ἵνα) ποιήσω <ε>μα<υ>τῇ μαφό ριον καὶ ἀποστελῶ [σο]ι τὸ κέρμα ὅσου αὐτὰ ἀγορᾶ. ⁵³
	d) written texts (mostly letters)	<i>e.g. P. Oxy.</i> XLII 3057, 22-24 (1 st /2 nd century AD; see HGV): τὰ ἔρια ἂν ἥς εἰλη φὼς παρὰ Σαλβίου πλήρη καὶ ἡ σοι ἀρεσι τά, ἀντίγραφόν μοι. ⁵⁴
	e) people (professionals or not)	<i>e.g. P. Oxy.</i> LIX 3991, 13-18 (2 nd /3 rd century AD): τὸν χιτῶνά σοι τὸν ἐριό[ξ]υλον ἢ μήτηρ σου κ[α]τεσκεύασε. ἐζητ[ο]ῦμεν σοι τὸν δυνάμενον κομίσαι ἀσφαλῆ {ν}. ⁵⁵
other activities	a) tasks related to the process of manufacturing	<i>e.g. P. Oxy.</i> VII 1069, 23-28 (3 rd century AD): σπούδα σον γὰρ τὸ κ{ε}ιθών{ε}ιν μου γενέστε (l. γενέσθαι) πρὸ<ς> λόγον, καὶ κ[α] λὰ μέτρα αὐτῷ βαλέτωσαν καὶ μεγάλε (l. μεγάλοι?) ἔστωσαν ἐπ{ε}ὶ ρείδης (l. ρίζης) αὐτοῦ. ⁵⁶
	b) activities related to already made fabrics (use, cleaning and conservation, further elaboration), etc.	<i>e.g. P. Mil.Vogl.</i> II 77, 13-14 (2 nd century AD): τὰ κρόκια καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια ἐκτίνας σε . ⁵⁷
	c) production of oral texts (the sender asks the recipient to provide information, to submit a request or to pose a question to a third person)	<i>e.g. P. Mich.</i> III 201, 9-12 (AD 99): καὶ ἐρωτήσεται (l. ἐρωτήσατε) Ἀπίνα (l. Ἀπίωνα?) περὶ τῶν φαιν ωλῶν (l. φαινολῶν), καὶ ἐρωτήσεται (l. ἐρωτήσατε) αὐτῶν (l. αὐτὸν) ὅτι πόσον δαπανήσουσιν ὕφανδρα (l. ὕφαντρα). ⁵⁸

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50. "Receive from the wagoner Kol the blanket and a *chiton* and a *pallium*"; see edition.
51. "Sende mit den Lasttieren was ich Dir gesagt gabe, zwei Minen Purpur and den Purpur für die Mäntel, und sende ebenfalls dem Herakleides eine Mine Purpur für grosse Binden"; see edition.
52. "Please get ten staters of thread from Kame and give them to Psais, the son of Tryphanes"; see edition.
53. "Please then, my son Theodoulos, buy for me 6 pounds of black wool, so that I may make a hooded cloak for myself, and I will send you the money for the money you spend on it"; see Bagnall & Cribiore 2006, p. 224.
54. "If you've received the wool from Salvius to the full amount, and if it's satisfactory, write back to me"; see edition.
55. "Your mother made you the cotton tunic. We were looking for someone reliable who could deliver it"; see edition, as well as Bagnall & Cribiore 2006, p. 355.
56. "Be careful to have my tunic made properly, and let them put good measure into it, and be large-handed in the colouring"; see edition.
57. "Shake out the woollen cloths and the cloths"; see Bagnall & Cribiore 2006, p. 186.
58. "And ask Apion about the cloaks, and ask him: 'How much will the cost of weaving be?'" ; see edition; cf. White 1986, p. 156.