Connecting Intersubjectivity, Politeness and Stance with Wishes in the Post-Classical Greek Papyri

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Abstract The language of the papyri is rife with intersubjectively marked phraseology, i.e. phrases aimed at the epistemic or social self of the addressee(s). Yet, there are few linguistic investigations of intersubjective expressions in Greek papyri. In this contribution, I pave the way for the *historical pragmatic* analysis of intersubjectivity in the papyri by assessing the types of intersubjectivity that are encoded by wishes in different periods of the Post-Classical Greek papyri (III BCE-VI CE). Focusing on wishes expressed by wish optatives and by performatives, I demonstrate that wishes are one of the key linguistic means to perform so-called 'stance taking' in the papyri (i.e. positioning the self and others with respect to objects of communication) and may but need not encode intersubjective attention towards the addressee as part of polite and politic strategies.

Keywords Intersubjectivity. Stance. Politeness. Wishes. Performatives.

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1 A Historical Pragmatic Approach to Connect Intersubjectivity, Stance and Politeness in the Post-classical Greek Papyri

For papyrologists working on Post-Classical Greek papyri, encounters with phrases such as 'I wish that you are well' or 'I pray for your health' are so common that such expressions generally do not become the object of investigation themselves (a notable exception is Nachtergaele[1] who investigates these wishes in a corpus of private letters); instead, papyrologists have generally focused their attention on two aspects of these expressions, their formulaic or cliché status and their connection to specific parts of private letters.[2] A dimension of these wishes that in my view has been explored to a lesser extent is their *intersubjective dimension*. These expressions generally provide a relatively direct encoding of a positive relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Compare how in example 1 Ptolemaios closes his petition with a wish that good may come to Sarapion, the person that he is petitioning. Note how Sarapion is explicitly marked as recipient of good things in return (*viz.* σοὶ δὲ {σοι} γίνοιτο ἀνθ᾽ ὧν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον). This is obviously part of a rhetorical tactic, a type of *do-ut-des* formulation to amplify his petition.

1. σοὶ δὲ {σοι} γίνοιτο ἀνθ᾽ ὧν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ὁσίως διάκεισαι καὶ τον (= τῶν) ἱεροδούλων καὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ ἱερῶι (= corr. ex σερωι) πάντων ἀντιλαμβάνηι (= corr. ex ανταλαμβανηι) ἐπαφροδισία χάρις μορφὴ εὐημερίαι (= εὐημερία) ⟦ ⟧ καὶ <ἐν> τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐ̣ τυχίαι (= εὐτυχία) εὐτυύχει (= εὐτύχει) (*Upz.* I 34, 12-14, 161 BCE, petition)

   May you receive in return, for your pious disposition towards the divine, grace in matters of love, assistance from all the temple servants and those in the temple, and a blessed form and prosperity. And may you be fortunate in other matters as well.[3]

In the field of linguistics, more attention has been paid to the intersubjective dimensions of language, partly because much of the language that we use every day serves a host of interpersonal goals. To illustrate, Tantucci[4] has recently suggested that examples like 2 are

1 Nachtergaele 2023.
2 Cf. Exler 1976; Steen 1938; Sarri 2018; Nachtergaele 2023.
3 The translations used in this paper are my own unless mentioned otherwise.
4 Tantucci 2021, 3-4.

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much less likely to take place in everyday communication than examples like 3.

2. a: Where is the town centre?
    b: There.

3. a: Hi, excuse me, uhm, would you mind telling me what is the way to the town centre?
    b: Hi, sure. Well, you just need to walk down this way for, say a hundred metres. That over there, right after uhm that white building, is Market Square, can you see it? That is the town centre.

After all, we make use of formulae that are socially required (e.g. 'excuse me', 'hi, sure') and commonly anticipate what the hearer may want or not want, cf. 'would you mind telling me'. In other words, as Tantucci notes, the more common version, version 2, is "intersubjectively marked", meaning that it has elements which go beyond reference to parts of our reality (e.g. that, there, town centre), with elements encoding special linguistic attention, as it were, from us as speakers to our addressees.

   In the subfield of pragmatics (i.e. the study of language use in its situational context), intersubjectivity is commonly conceptualised as having two dimensions, an epistemic one and a social one.[5] The epistemic dimension of intersubjectivity refers to what the speaker assumes that the addressee knows, whereas the social one refers to the attention to the social 'face' of the addressee. As such, linguistic intersubjectivity can be defined as the semantic coding of attention to the social and/or epistemic self of the addressee. Classic examples of the encoding of epistemic intersubjectivity are the pragmatic markers *you know* and *of course* in English, which encode that the addressee knows something that is relevant to ongoing discourse.[6] By contrast, encoding intersubjective attention to the *social* self of the hearer typically relates to forms of politeness, such as the use of specific pronouns to signal politeness distinctions (also called T/V distinctions), forms of address or other politeness expressions that address the face needs of the addressee.[7]

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5   Traugott, Trousdale 2010, 32; Ghesquière, Brems, Van de Velde 2012, 130-2; Traugott 2003, 129-30. Alternatively, there are broader definitions of intersubjectivity, for example as the intersubjective coordination between the speaker and hearer (Verhagen 2005, 1). However, such a definition would have a more significant overlap with pragmatics, since much of the pragmatics of language can be put under the umbrella of intersubjective coordination efforts of the speaker and hearer.

6   See la Roi 2022 for the parallel functions which Ancient Greek ἀμέλει 'of course' develops over time from its original command function 'do not worry'.

7   See Berger, Unceta Gómez 2022 for a state-of-the-art on politeness research for Ancient Greek and Latin; and Bruno 2022 for politeness research on Greek papyri.

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If we reconsider the wish formulae in the papyri and example 1 in particular, we can now deduce that wishes in the papyri may have a profoundly intersubjective orientation. Moreover, the intersubjective dimension of wishes covers not only their role in politeness, *viz.* that they project a positive relationship with the addressee (cf. example 1 above), but also that speakers explicitly put their *stance* on the interpersonal stage with such wishes (see § 2.1. for a detailed overview of the role of wishes in the "stance triangle").[8] At the same time, given the notable frequency of certain wish strategies in the Post-Classical Greek papyri, we should consider the possibility that some wish strategies perhaps do not function as reflections of *polite* but rather as *politic* behaviour.[9] Instead of encoding deference, consideration or courtesy (i.e. politeness), politic means that they encode to be expected communicative behaviour, much like a greeting with *Hi* to open a communicative exchange. Also, an additional reason for focusing on wishes is that scholars have generally paid more attention to other speech acts in Ancient Greek such as directives.[10]

Another dimension that has remained underexplored is the *diachronic* one, in particular the impact of diachrony on the use and distribution of specific speech acts. One motivation for this is that the majority of the research on politeness in Ancient Greek has taken a *synchronic* approach, focusing on which relationships with (im)politeness exist between specific linguistic elements and the contexts in which they are used.[11] The most important reason why we need to take into account this diachronic dimension is that forms of politic and polite behaviour do not stay the same across time and space; instead, the forms used for these purposes inevitably change in use and distribution. I suggest that we can investigate this diachronic dimension when we adopt a methodology inspired by the field of *historical pragmatics*.

In the field of historical pragmatics, we seek to

> understand the patterns of intentional human interaction (as determined by the conditions of society) of earlier periods, the historical developments of these patterns, and the general principles underlying such developments. It is based on an empirical study of historical data in all the diversity in which it has survived. Written texts are seen as communicative acts in their own right.[12]

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8   The term comes from Du Bois 2007, 163.

9   Watts 2003, 163.

10   E.g. Denizot 2011; Leiwo 2010; Bruno 2020.

11   Cf. e.g. the studies contained in Berger and Unceta Gómez 2022.

12   Jucker 2008, 894.

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Thus, a historical pragmatic approach helps us verify the diachronic developments which specific strategies of wishing undergo in Post-Classical Greek (III BCE-VI CE)[13] and the *pragmatic principles* that lie behind them, such as intersubjectivity, stance taking and politeness. In this way, wishes can be seen as one important functional domain for which there are different forms of expression that are in functional competition.

Therefore, this paper seeks to answer the following three interrelated questions for wishes in the papyri from the Post-Classical Greek period:

- What is the role of wishes in stance taking? (§ 2.1)
- What are the different uses, morphosyntactic changes and intersubjective orientations of wishes in the wish optative? (§ 2.2)
- What are the different uses, morphosyntactic changes and intersubjective orientations of wishes with performative εὔχομαι? (§ 2.3)

In § 2.1, I discuss the role of wishes in stance taking (§ 2.1) and exemplify how the intersubjective relationships between the speaker and its addressee(s) are encoded linguistically or not in the use of wishes. Next, I provide a detailed examination of two morphosyntactic types of wish strategies in Post-Classical Greek (III BCE-VI CE), the use of wish optatives (§ 2.2) and the use of performative verbs of wishing, focusing on εὔχομαι in the first person singular or plural (§ 2.3). In each analysis, I first briefly discuss the role of wishes in stance taking, in encoding politic and/or polite behaviour, and the role of wishes in interpersonal pragmatics. I also pay explicit attention to differences in the intersubjective orientations of the wishes that we find across the periods of Post-Classical Greek.

The corpus evidence for this analysis was collected by means of morphological searches in *Trismegistos Words*.[14] One drawback of this tool is that it is a subscription-only service, comparable to how the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* works for everyone that uses it when working on literary texts. Yet, Trismegistos words not only has the benefit that one can export and annotate the results (which the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae does not), but crucially also that other researchers can easily replicate the same results. In the research on Post-Classical Greek, it is unfortunately still quite common to adopt philological methods that are out of sync with contemporary requirements of quantitative linguistic research. In a recent review article of an edited volume on Post-Classical Greek, I have pinpointed several

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13   I use the periodisation into Early (III-I BCE), Middle (I-III CE) and Late (IV-VI CE) Post-Classical Greek, as proposed by Lee 2007, 113.

14   https://www.trismegistos.org/words/.

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principles for progress in the research on Post-Classical Greek,[15] such as using (i) replicable results, (ii) clearly-periodised data, and (iii) corpus-representative data (e.g. not generalising from one author/text to a whole period, as frequently done for the New Testament for the whole of Post-Classical Greek).

2 Connecting Wishes, Intersubjectivity and Politeness in Post-Classical Greek Papyri

2.1 The Intersubjective Dimensions of Wishes

One of the likely reasons why wishes have often been neglected in (historical) pragmatic research is that, as a speech act, they defy easy mapping onto relatively accepted speech act labels such as directives or expressives. As a result, scholars have adopted different approaches in dealing with wish speech acts: (i) they classified wishes as directives even though not all wishes serve to get the addressee to do something,[16] (ii) they classified wishes as transitory type between expressives and directives,[17] or, instead, (iii) they delimitated a more abstract function of wishes (*viz.* expressing the speaker's psychological commitment to the occurrence of the state of affairs) which subsequently may serve different interactive purposes in context.[18]

Another reason for the lack of agreement on how to interpret wish speech acts, I argue, is that wishes display a large degree of variation across different domains: semantically, wishes differ in their realizability, with realizable wishes typically being expressed by moods with a non-past temporal reference in Post-Classical Greek and counterfactual ones using the past tense;[19] syntactically, wishes occur in a large set of different constructions in Post-Classical Greek, such as the independent optative, performative wish constructions (see below) or so-called insubordinate constructions that use a syntactic expression with its origins in subordination;[20] finally, wish expressions are used by speakers for a large variety of interpersonal reasons, e.g. to make an oath, say goodbye, persuade someone to do something, which is the focus of the current investigation.

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15 la Roi 2020b.
16 See Willmott 2007, 134 for discussion and references.
17 E.g. Risselada 1993, 41.
18 Cf. la Roi 2020a, 224-9 on realizable wishes with the optative in Classical Greek.
19 la Roi 2024.
20 la Roi 2021.

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I propose that we can tease apart these pragmatic differences by mapping the intersubjective relationships between speaker and addressee(s) that wishes explicitly encode. To do so, I suggest that we can make use of insights from interactional linguistics, in particular research on *stance taking*.[21] Following Du Bois,[22] stance can be defined as "a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the socio-cultural field". According to Du Bois, this complex set of interrelationships between a speaker, addressee(s) and objects of evaluation can be conceptualised as a triangle, as shown in figure 1 below:
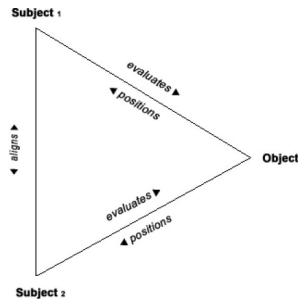

Figure 1
The stance triangle

When speakers take a stance, they may provide information on three subdimensions of stance:
1. they evaluate an object,
2. they position a subject (usually the self), and
3. they align with other subjects (e.g. the addressee(s))

These subdimensions may be illustrated with an example discussed by Du Bois (with the example in his punctuation).[23]

4. (Hey Cutie-Pie *SB*C028:49.985-53.355)
   1. JEFF; Are you guys having fun?
   2. JILL; Y:es:.
   3. (0.6)
   4. JEFF; (TSK) I'm so glad.

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[21] Du Bois 2007.
[22] Du Bois 2007, 163.
[23] Du Bois 2007, 154.

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Jeff is the stance taker. He takes a stance about the fact that Jill and the others are having fun (*viz.* he is "glad"), a stance which he formulated in direct response to Jill's "yes" to his question. The intersubjective strategy can be summarised in a tabular structure as shown below where I document the stance taking of Jeff's "I'm so glad"-statement from example 4. Note that some elements are not put forward explicitly by Jeff, but are present in the immediate linguistic common ground.[24] Therefore I put that information in square brackets. I use a dash to indicate absence of explicit linguistic elements, as for example for the aligning of the stance taker with other subjects since only the full context can be said to serve this purpose.

Table 1 An intersubjective alignment grid for stance taking

Dimension	Stance taking procedures	Linguistic elements
I. Stance taker evaluates Object	Jeff positively evaluates that they are having fun	*I'm so glad* [that you are having fun]
II. Stance taker positions a subject (usually the self)	Jeff positions himself	I'm
III. Stance taker aligns with other Subjects	Jeff aligns positive stance with Jill and others	-

Let us also consider some other interactional settings in which the stance triangle may help us interpret the coordinative behaviour of speaker(s) and addressee(s). Speaker and hearer may choose to align their subjective stances consecutively, as in example 5:

5. (This Retirement Bit SBC011: 444.12-446.30)
    1. SAM; I don't like those.
    2. (0.2)
    3. ANGELA; I don't either.

Note that there are further linguistic cues for alignment here: Angela reproduces a similar structure as Sam's statement (*viz.* "I don't" with "those" being left implicit), using the pragmatic marker *either* to anchor her reaction to the immediate linguistic common ground. Indeed, speakers may choose to put their stance on the communicative stage by using pragmatic cues that signal an explicit awareness of what both speaker and addressee know, i.e. their common ground.[25]

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24 Common ground may be defined as "the sum of [interlocutors'] mutual, common or joint knowledge beliefs, and suppositions"(Clark 1996, 96).

25 For Ancient Greek, recent research has pointed out the use of certain particles to mark information available in the common ground, such as τοι and δή (Allan 2021) or

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Alternatively, speakers may simply choose to explicitly put forward their attention to what the addressee(s) knows for specific pragmatic purposes. Imagine the following fictional exchange between a wife and a husband, where the husband makes his assertion intersubjectively marked in order to explicitly deny the awkward possibility that he does not know his wife.

6. Wife   I am not sure that you know me very well…
   Husband   Of course I know you. I am your husband.

An important difference between example 5 and 6 is that 6 is explicitly intersubjectively marked, since the husband uses "Of course" to mark attention to what his wife (the addressee) knows, whereas Angela leaves that implicit in example 5, marking common ground information only. Thus, though both sentences serve interpersonal purposes, only example 6 seems to be intersubjectively marked in the strict sense. In the remainder of this paper, I apply this pragmatic perspective to the wish expressions under study in order to map the intersubjective dimensions which these wish expressions have in the papyri.

2.2   Wish Optatives

Taking a bird-eye perspective, it should first be observed that the wish optative has its own distinctive distribution, diachronic stability and change in the Post-Classical Greek papyri. In table 2 below, we can observe that wishes were expressed by means of a wish optative across the different periods, with a notable increase in the Late Post-Classical Greek period. NRO stands for Normed Rate of Occurrence, i.e. the occurrence of the construction every 1000 words. The total number of words for the different periods used are respectively: 886,198; 2,396,693 and 1,005,421 words. The data for optatives was collected by means of a morphological search for all optatives in *Trismegistos words* after which the optatives were coded functionally (e.g. wish optative versus potential optative).

Table 2   The wish optative in the Post-Classical Greek papyri

Period	Frequency of the wish optative
Early Post-Classical Greek (III-I BCE)	102 (NRO 0.115)
Middle Post-Classical Greek (I-III AD)	336 (NRO 0.139)
Late Post-Classical Greek (IV-VI AD)	278 (NRO 0.276)

ἀμέλει (la Roi 2022), or to contrast novel ideas to those available in the common ground (see Thijs 2017 on μήν).

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Despite the distributional frequencies, we should note the impact of *formulaicity* on the usages of the wish optative to express wishes in Post-Classical Greek. Formulaicity comprises at least two dimensions, *formal* restrictions and *distributional* restrictions. The former refers to formulae that "are not amenable to lexical and structural re-formulations",[26] whereas restricted distribution means that "formulae tend to occur in particular styles of language tied to particular communicative situations".[27]

We can notice the impact of formal restrictions in the high proportion of the lemma εἰμί 'to be' in wish optatives: it is responsible for 508 of the 716 occurrences of the wish optative, comprising 71% of the occurrences. In fact, out of the total number of 716 recorded lemmas only a surprising 90 are unique, which covers about 13% of the total occurrences. As for distributional restrictions, we see that wish optatives recur in groups of formulaic contexts across the different periods, such as a health formula group or an oath formula group (i.e. 'groups' because the groups serve similar goals but their individual patterns are subject to minute variations such as person and argument structure). At the same time, they also occur in a group allowing free usage across the different periods (e.g. May X happen for Y, as in ex. 1 above and ex. 9 below). In what follows, I assess to what degree wishes are intersubjectively marked (in Tantucci's terminology) in the different periods in these groups.

In Early Post-Classical Greek, we may distinguish three groups, each of which distinguishes itself in how and to which degree it is explicitly marked intersubjectively: health wishes (35%), oath wishes (41%) and free wishes (24%). The health wishes expressed by the wish optative in this period are of a particular kind, as they typically occur in contractual settings, especially in testaments, as in example 7 below.

7. εἴη μέμ (= μέν) μοι ὑγιαίνοντι αὐτὸν τ[ὰ] [ἐμα]υτοῦ διοικεῖν. ἐὰν δέ τι ἀνθρώπινον πάσχω (*P.Petr.* II 11, 11-12, testament, 238-237 BCE)

    May it be that I manage my own affairs myself in good health. If I suffer some mortal fate,

As illustrated by the example, these wishes are not intersubjectively marked, since the stance taker is positioning himself at himself, as it were, positively evaluating being in good health to manage his own affairs. In other words, there is no intersubjective alignment with other subjects (dimension iii in the grid above), either explicit or even

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26 Corrigan et al. 2009, xiii-xiv.
27 Corrigan et al. 2009, xiv.

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implicit. Similarly for oaths we find that oaths are wishes oriented at the stance taking subject self, as in example 8 where the wish for good for the one who swears truly is clearly oriented at the speaker.

8. ὅρκον ὃν ὤμοσον καὶ ἐπεχειρογράφησεν (= ὑπεχειρογρά|φησεν) Γοιρήνιος Πετεσούχου ἐκ τοῦ Μεμφίτου Θοτεῖ Ἀρυώτου τοῦ παρὰ Ζήνωνος ποήσειν (= ποιή|σειν) ἡμέ(ρας) λ ἀλοῶντα ἐμ (= ἐν) Φιλαδελφείαι τοῦ Ἀρσι[νοίτου] νομοῦ ὑπὲρ Σεμθοῦς Τεῶτος ἔξω ἱ\ε/ροῦ βωμοῦ σκέπης πάσης. εὐορκοῦντι μέν μοι εὖ εἴη, ἐφιορκοῦντι δὲ ἔνοχός εἰμι τῆι ἀσεβείαι. (*Psi.* V 515, 8-18, testament, 251 BCE)

    The oath which Goirenios, son of Petesouchos, from the Memphite district, swore and signed (underwrote) for Thotes, son of Ariotes, who is with Zeno, to carry out for 30 days the threshing in Philadelphia of the Arsinoite nome, outside the sacred altar's shelter, on behalf of Semthes, son of Teos, from the Thoeris region of Arsinoe. <u>If I keep my oath, may it go well with me; but if I break my oath, I am guilty of impiety.</u>

As a result, there is no explicit intersubjective alignment with another subject, but only *indirect* alignment, in that the speaker is bound by the oath to carry out the activity to which he swore the oath. A similar situation is found in those infrequent cases from Early Post-Classical Greek of writers expressing that they are to be held liable in case certain conditions are not met (e.g. ἐάν τι πάθῃ, ἔνοχος εἴη τῶι φόνωι *P.Tebt.* 3.2.960, 9-10, petition, II BCE).

Lastly, we should consider those wishes which seem to belong to a free group, since they are not equally restricted formally or distributionally. The wishes in this group are intersubjectively marked,[28] since they typically express that the speaker wishes positive things for the addressee, as in examples 9 and 10:

9. <u>σοὶ δὲ γίνοιτο</u> ἀνθ᾽ ὧν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ὁσίως διάκ[ει]σαι (*Upz.* I 36, 21-2, petition, 161 BCE)

    <u>May it happen to you</u> according to what is divine to perform piously

In example 9, the speaker not only puts his positive evaluation forward (*viz.* I wish that you may undergo divine things), but also explicitly aligns with the other subject of the addressee (see σοὶ). In example 10, we find a similarly intersubjectively marked structure. In fact, in example 10, the 'free wish' is part of a larger set of intersubjectively

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28 An exception seems to be *Upz.* I 77, 31 which is oriented at the speaker himself.

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marked strategies: the addressee marking (τῶι κυρίωι) and the wish for good health, fortune and success (the εὔχομαι-wish).

10. τῶι κυρίωι παρὰ τῆς παρὰ σοῦ σώμφεως. εὔχομαι πᾶσι τοῖς θεοῖς ὑγείήάν (= ὑγίειάν) [σο]ι δῶναι (= δοῦναι) καὶ εὐημερείαν (= εὐημερίαν) καὶ εὐπραξίαν ἀεὶ μίζονα (= μείζονα) παρὰ τοῖς βασιλεῦσι. δοίησάν σοι χάριν μορφὴν εὐπραξίαν καὶ ἡ Βούβαστις δοίη ὑγίηαν (= ὑγίειαν) (*SB*. XXII 15324, 1-7, private letter, II-I BCE)

To my lord, from your(?) dancer. I pray to all gods that they may give you health and good fortune and ever greater success with the kings, may they give you favour and standing and success; and may the goddess Boubastis give you health - - - (APIS translation)

In Middle Post-Classical Greek, we witness an increased distributional formulaicity for wish optatives, since 300 of the 336 wishes belong to five groups: (i) health formulae, (ii) oath formulae, (iii) interjectional formulae ('if, which I wish not to happen, X, then Y'), (iv) greeting formulae (χαίροις) and (v) free wishes. In comparison with the previous period, we therefore witness certain distributional innovations, such as the interjectional and greeting wishes. As for health formulae, we typically find the same lacking intersubjective orientation, as those wishes are pointed at the stance taking subject in contractual settings. An exception is example 11, where the health wish is used to align with Chaeremon and his kin (mentioned in the preceding lines), wishing that they remain in health.

11. συνφερομένων δ᾽ αὐτῶν εἴη μὲν ὑγεία (*P.Oxy*. III 497, marriage contract, 100-125 CE)

If they benefit from this, let there be health for them

These oath formulae are often found with wish optatives in the first person, expressing that the speaker wishes to be held liable if breaking the oath (see example 12). As such, it lacks an explicit intersubjective alignment with another subject even though the oath functions as a promise to another party.

12. μηδὲν διεψεῦσθαι ἢ ἔνοχος εἴην τῷ ὅρκωι (*P.Wisc*. II 80, 195-6, account, 114 CE)

to deceive in no way or may I be found guilty of (breaking) the oath

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In fact, as shown in example 13, the addressee of such an oath may also be kept intentionally vague.

13. εὐορκοῦσι μὲν ἡμῖν εὖ εἴη, ἐφιορκοῦσι δὲ τὰ ἐναντία (*P.Fouad.* 18, 16-17, contract, 54 CE)

They who swear honestly towards us, let it be well for us; but they who swear falsely, let the opposite befall them

An innovative usage that turns up especially in contractual settings is the use of wishes in parenthetical syntactic contexts. These wishes serve as a means for the speaker to explicitly put their stance forward about a possible negative outcome in a contract, drought in the case of example 14.

14. ἐὰν δέ τις, ὃ μὴ εἴη, τῷ ἑξῆς ἔτ[ει] ἄβροχος γένηται ἐπαντλ[ήσει ὁ] μεμισθωμέν[ο]ς ἐπάναγκ[ες] [ἰδίαις] ἑαυτοῦ δαπάναις καὶ τελέσει (= N. Gonis (from photo) (via PN): τέλεσι prev. ed.) δίμοιρον μέρος τῶν ἐπὶ νειλοβρόχου (= νιλοβρό|χου) ἐκφορίων καὶ φόρων. (*P.Wisc.* I 7, 23-8, lease, III CE)

If, which God forbid, in the following period of time the land is not reached by the flooding of the Nile, the lease-holder must irrigate at his own cost and expense two-thirds of the land which he would have had to cultivate in case of inundation by the flooding of the Nile (APIS translation)[29]

Note, however, that the person affected by the negative outcome is either not explicitly addressed (cf. "the lease holder" in 14) or is the speaker self (e.g. καὶ ἐάν, ὅ μὴ εἴη, ἀπαλλαγὴ γένηται, ἀποδώσω "and if – which heaven forbid – separation take place, I will restore" in a marriage contract, *P.Oxy.* X 1273, 52-3, contract, 260 CE).

By contrast, the remaining wish groups are more typically intersubjectively marked, even though not exclusively. An innovation particular to papyri from the Middle Post-Classical Greek period is the use of χαίροις "the very best of greetings" to express a polite greeting. There are several indications that this wish structure had a politeness dimension: (i) the wish is an explicit alternative to the more standard χαίρειν greeting which uses the infinitive independently,[30] (ii) the greeting was originally used only in high register contexts in Early Post-Classical Greek poetry (sc. Her. 4.1-11 addressing gods or

29 I corrected the error 'must needs' in the APIS translation.

30 The independent use of this infinitive falls under the header of insubordination, for which see la Roi 2021.

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Theoc. 18.49-53 addressing a bride) from which it was *repurposed* in letter writing in the papyri, and (iii) the greeting clusters with other intersubjectively marked strategies of politeness.[31]

To illustrate the last point, we can consider example 15, where the wish greeting occurs with a plethora of intersubjectively marked strategies (marked in bold), all of which contribute to a combined effort to get the speaker what he wants from the strategos Apollonius:

15. χαίροις, κύριέ μου Ἀπολλώνιε. περὶ οὗ σε παρεκάλεσα κατ' ὄψιν, τειμιώτατε (= τιμιώτατε), καὶ ἐκ τύχης Ἁρπ[ο-]κρατίωνος ἐλθόντος πρὸς Δεῖον, συνέβαλλον/ (= corr. ex) \αὐ/[τῷ] καὶ ὑπερεθέμεθα εἰς τ[ὴν] σὴν διάγνωσιν, ἵνα (= ἵνα papyrus), ὃ ἐπιδικαιώσῃς, τοῦτο γένηται. τὸ μὲν φανέν σοι, κύριε, δηλώσεις [μο]ι. (hand 2) ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὔχομαι, Ἀπολλώνιε τιμιώτατε. (*P.Brem.* XIX 1-12, 113-120 CE, private letter)

The very best of greetings, my lord Apollonius. Regarding what I requested of you in person, most honoured one, and with the arrival of Harpokration by chance before Deion, I have discussed with him and we have agreed to present it to your judgement, so that, if you deem it worthy, it may come to pass. The visible matter, my lord, you will reveal to me. (hand 2) I pray for your good health, Apollonius, most honoured one.
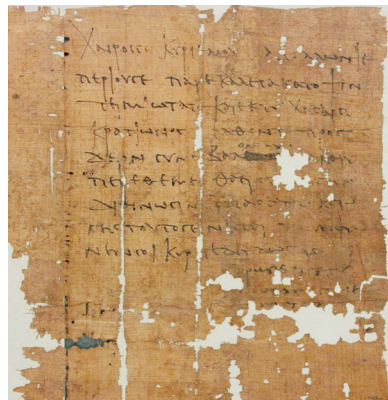

Figure 1
P.Brem. 19. Link to image in public domain: https://brema. suub.uni-bremen.de/papyri content/titleinfo/770780

The speaker marks the asymmetric relationship with Apollonius on various occasions with flattering forms of address, hedges the outcome (*viz.* ὃ ἐπιδικαιώσῃς), and closes the letter with a similarly polite wish that explicitly aligns the speaker's positive view with the addressee (*viz.* ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὔχομαι, Ἀπολλώνιε τιμιώτατε "I pray

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31 See la Roi forthcoming for a discussion of this pattern.

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for your good health, Apollonius, most honoured one"). Though the use of greetings would essentially be politic behaviour, the context of the creation of this alternative greeting and its use with other politeness strategies strongly suggest that this wish strategy was a way to make a politic function explicitly polite.[32]

In the group of free wishes, we find both intersubjectively marked wish strategies (as in examples 16 and 17) and those that lack it (e.g. in a school exercise such as *SB*. XXII 15809, addressing the arm to write).

16. ἐν τῷ τοῦ Ἀπολλωνιανοῦ, καθὼς ἐπέστειλέν σοι ἡ ἀγαθὴ Ἡρωδίαινα, εἴ τι ἔχεις ἢ οἶδας ἢ συμβουλεῦσαι δύνασαι, ταῦτα προθύμως καὶ εἰς ἐμὴν τιμὴν ποιήσεις. καὶ γὰρ ὁ ἀνὴρ ἄξιος ... [.] τῆς σῆς ἀγαθῆς προαιρέσεως καὶ τῆς πρὸς πάντας σπουδῆς. οὐδὲν [οὖν] ἀλλότριον πράξειας. ἡ μήτηρ μου καὶ ὁ ἀδελφὸς πολλά σε προσαγορεύουσιν, ὃν καὶ ποθοῦσιν ἰδεῖν. (*Psi*. XII 1261, 13-21)

In the matter of Apollonianus, as the noble Herodian has written to you, if you have anything or know anything, or can advise, you will willingly and to my honour do these things. For the man is worthy of your good disposition and of your eagerness toward all. Hence, I wish that you would not do anything unfitting. My mother and brother greatly address you, whom they also desire to see.

Note also how the intersubjective strategy in 17 is in a second hand, at the end of the letter.

17. (hand 2) θεοί σε σώσειαν διὰ παντὸς πανοικησίᾳ (*P.Oxy*. LV 3812, 13-14, private letter, III AD)

May the gods protect you through every prosperity

In Late Post-Classical Greek, the total of 278 wishes with the wish optative (see table 2 above) get limited to mainly three groups: (i) interjectional wishes (58 instances), oath wishes (119 instances) and free ones (101 instances). The increase in formulaicity thereby becomes especially clear here; the wish optatives of two groups occur in the same formal variant, that is, third person forms of γίγνομαι or εἰμί in interjectional wishes first person singular or plural forms of only εἰμί in oath formulae. While we see little innovation in these two groups,

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32 An additional point of evidence for the politeness of this structure is semiotic in nature: χαίροις is written much bigger than the rest of the line and the writing is relatively neat (see the image above).

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there is considerable innovation in the relatively large group of free wishes, testifying to the continued importance of the wish optative across all periods of Post-Classical Greek. We find novel circumlocutions for health, such as example 18 or, luck (e.g. εὐδαιμονοῖς, *SB*. XIV 11666, 14, IV CE).

18. ἐρρωμένος ε|gap=1|θυμ|gap=1| διατελοίης τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον, δέσποτα (*P.Stras*. IV 286, 14-18, private letter, middle IV CE)

    May you continue to be well for all time, master

Also, there is a considerable group of new protective wishes that depend on Christian ideas of protection by god (e.g. ὁ Θεὸς or ὁ κύριος) or abstract forms of morality, for which compare examples 19 and 20 below.

19. ἐρρωμένην σε ὁ κύριος διαφυλάττοι μακροῖς καὶ εἰρηνικοῖς χρόνοις (*P.Bour*. 25,16-17, private letter, IV-V CE)

    May the lord keep you well in long and peaceful times

20. ὁ π[α]ντοκ[ράτωρ] θεὸς καὶ ὁ Χρι[στὸς] αὐτοῦ <u>δοίη</u> τὴν σὴν θεοσέβειαν π[α]ραμένιν (= παραμένειν) ἡ[μῖν] πολὺν [χ]ρό[νον] καὶ μεμνῆσ̣[θ]αι ἡμῶν ἐν ταῖς σαῖς προσε̣[υχαῖς]· (*P.lond*. VI 1929, 3-5, private letter, middle IV CE)

    <u>May</u> the Almighty God and his Christ <u>grant</u> that your piety endure for us for a long time, and that they remember us in your prayers

Thus, most of these free wishes have a marked intersubjective orientation, as they are used by speakers to wish for a positive future for the addressee, explicitly aligning their stance with the addressee.

To summarise, we have detailed the different intersubjective dimensions that are contained in the use of wishes in the papyri from Early to Late Post-Classical Greek and how these change over time. A picture has emerged of both increased formulaicity (both formally and distributionally) as well as continued innovation, e.g. polite greetings in Middle and Christian protection wishes in Late Post-Classical Greek. Most crucially, it has been shown that only a subset of wishes have a fully intersubjective and hence politeness function, since only some explicitly align stance with another subject (e.g. polite greetings and wishes for benefits to the addressee). In other words, there is a direct link between the type of intersubjective alignment in the stance taking expressed by wishes, on the one hand, and politeness, on the other hand.

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2.3 Performative Wishes: The Case of εὔχομαι

The most frequent performative verb used to express wishes in the Post-Classical Greek papyri seems to have been εὔχομαι (in the first person singular or plural): 34 in Early Post-Classical Greek (NRO 0,038), 1,451 in Middle Post-Classical Greek (NRO 0,605) and 645 in Late Post-Classical Greek (NRO 0,642). The data for εὔχομαι (in the first person singular or plural) was again collected using Trismegistos Words, using a lemmatised search and selecting for the first person. Diachronically, there is a significant increase in the usage of εὔχομαι to express wishes from Middle Post-Classical Greek onwards, which is something that requires further consideration below. Generally speaking, though, there is also a remarkable consistency in the use of εὔχομαι to express wishes, especially because they occur only in three pragmatic contexts, some of which are even notably absent in specific periods: (i) comparative clauses (i.e. 'X is as I wish'), (ii) health formulae ('I wish that you are well/healthy'), and (iii) a very minor group of free wishes, with only 8 attestations in total. Based only on the distributional frequencies we thus can already observe that this performative strategy was particularly subject to formulaicity. Let us next consider the different periods consecutively.

In Early Post-Classical Greek, we find 26 comparative clause wishes (example 21), 7 health wishes (example 22) and 1 free wish (example 23).

21. Ἀπολλώνιος Πετεύρει χαίρειν. εἰ τῶι τε σώματι ὑγιαίνεις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις κατὰ λόγον ἀπαλλάσσεις εἴη ἂν ὡς εὔχομαι. ὑγίαινον δὲ καὶ αὐτός. (*P.Köln* VI 266, 1-4, business letter, 221-205 BCE)

   Apollonius greets Peteuris. If you are healthy in body and in other things you are faring reasonably, it would be as I wish. I am well myself as well.

22. ἐγὼ δὲ εὔχομαι πᾶσι τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ τῶι δαίμονι τοῦ βασιλέως σε ὑγιαίνειν καὶ ἐλθεῖν τὸ τάχος πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὅπως αὐτὸς ἰδῇις ὅτι ἀνέγκλητός εἰμι. ἔρρωσο. (*P.Col.* II 66, 22-5, private letter, 256-255 BCE)

   I pray to all the gods and to the guardian divinity of the King that you remain well and come to us soon so that you may yourself see that I am blameless. Farewell[33] (APIS translation)

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[33] The farewell greeting was left untranslated in the APIS translation, which is why I inserted it here.

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23. Ζήνωνι χαίρειν οἱ ἱερεῖς Ἀστάρτ[ης τῆς τῶν ἐν Μέ]μφει Φοινικαιγυπτίων. <u>εὐχόμεθά σοι</u> παρὰ τῆι Ἀστάρτηι <u>δοῦναι σοι</u> ἐπ[αφροδισίαν πρὸ]ς τὸν βασιλέα. (*Psi.* V 531, 1-2, private letter, middle III BCE)

To Zenon, greetings from the priests of Astarte of those in Memphis, Phoenicians of Egypt. <u>We wish</u> to Astarte <u>to grant you</u> a pleasant meeting with the king.

What differentiates these wishes are their intersubjective dimensions: whereas the health wish and the free wish explicitly align the positive attitude of the speaker with the addressee, the comparative wish clause only does so implicitly in the whole sentence, *viz.* the addressee oriented conditional clause preceding the matrix clause to which the comparative clause is appended. In other words, in the comparative wish clauses, the speaker only puts forth the evaluation of the object and positions himself without providing explicit alignment with the addressee. Finally, it should be noted that already in Early Post-Classical Greek, health wishes become formally connected to specific structural parts of the letter, as shown by the use of the health wish in example 22 at the closing of the letter. In later periods, the link with specific structural parts of documents becomes even stronger, as detailed below.

In Middle Post-Classical Greek, the wishes expressed with εὔχομαι almost predominantly concern health wishes, since there are 1,443 health wishes, but there is only 1 comparative clause wish (*BGU* 1 332, 6) and 7 free wishes. As illustrated by example 24, those free wishes are not necessarily intersubjectively aligning.

24. Θερμουθᾶς (= BL 1.34: Θερμοῦθισ prev. ed) Ἀπολιναρίῳ τῷ ἀδελφῷ πλεῖστα χαίρειν. γεινώσκειν (= γιγνώσκειν) σε θέλω ἐγὼ καὶ Οὐαλερία, ἐὰν Ἡροὶς (= Ἡρωὶς) τέκῃ, <u>εὐχόμεθα ἐλθεῖν</u> πρὸς σέ. (*BGU* I 261, 1-6, private letter, 105 CE)

Thermouthas to Apolinarios her brother, many greetings. I want you to know, I and Valeria, if Herois gives birth, <u>we are praying to come</u> to you;[34]

By contrast, the health wishes all answer to the three dimensions of stance taking, as they explicitly mark the addressee to which the stance taking subject is aligning positive stance, as in example 25.

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34   The translation is by Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 189.

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25. Παρᾶις Διονυ[σί]ῳ τῷ φ[ι]λτάτῳ χαίρειν. πρὸ μὲν πάντων [ε]ὔχομαί σε ὑγιαίνειν μετὰ τῶν σῶν πάντ[ω]ν (*P.Merton* I 23, 1-3, business letter, late II CE)

Greetings to my best Paris Dionysius. Above all, I wish you to be well along with all your loved ones

Nevertheless, these health wishes are subject to some diachronic variations. First and foremost, it had been variously proposed that such health wishes from the Middle Post-Classical Greek period may have been the result of contact with Latin (esp. *opto te bene valere*), but the wish had already been there before in Greek.[35] We do start to find dative for accusative interchange in the marking of the addressee (see e.g. *P.Oxy.* VII 1068, 28).[36] Furthermore, the Middle Post-Classical Greek period seems to be the period in which these health wishes start to undergo a process of functional specialisation towards specific parts of the textual structure, in particular the closing of texts. Though the health wish is by no means absent from letter openings,[37] we increasingly start to find these wishes in letter closings, even on an ostracon as in example 26.

26. ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὔχομαι. διευτύχει. (*O.Claud*. II 279, 20-2, private letter, II CE)

I wish that you are well. Prosper.

Finally, we should consider the question whether these health wishes may always have been considered polite behaviour. Sarri[38] had suggested that the choice to use such health wishes in farewells depended on the relationship between the correspondents, where the use only from higher officials to subordinates would be considered normal, but between "minor officials or in private letters" it "would be regarded as too impolite", prompting personalised and eloquent farewells instead. While it could be true that any deviation from expected behaviour may trigger an impoliteness reading,[39] I would argue that the distributional evidence seems to suggest that this health wish still had a politeness function, one which it derived from its

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35 See Nachtergaele 2023, 152-3 for an overview of the literature; *pace* e.g. Sarri 2018, 48-9.

36 See also Nachtergaele 2023, 248-9.

37 Cf. Bentein 2023, 441 whose corpus study shows the health wish to be almost thrice as frequent in openings.

38 Sarri 2018, 191.

39 See Bruno 2022, 47 for this point with reference to Ptolemaic papyri.

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intersubjective orientation. After all, in Middle Post-Classical Greek, such health wishes were by no means obligatory in farewells nor were they the only place where writers could choose to insert these health wishes (see above). In other words, at least for Middle Post-Classical Greek, it would be hard to make the case quantitatively that these health wishes already constituted politic behaviour.

In Late Post-Classical Greek, the process of specialisation has completed itself, since εὔχομαι is used exclusively in health wishes (644 times). An innovation particular to this period is that, due to contact with Latin,[40] we find novel syntactic variations in the health wish, as in example 27 with πολλοῖς χρόνοις.[41]

27. ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὔχομαι, κ[ύ]ριέ μου, πολλοῖς χρόνοις. (*P.Kellis* I 81, 13-16, private letter, VI CE)

   I wish that you are well, my lord, for many years

Moreover, there is a huge shift towards letter closings in this period, as these health wishes now seem to occur only in roughly 10% of the openings. This demonstrates the strong functional specialisation that these health wishes have received in the Late Post-Classical Greek period, as these distributions are significantly different from Middle Post-Classical Greek (discussed above). Another important piece of evidence for the functional specialisation of the health wish to letter closings is the use of other hands to write just this health wish.[42] This might also explain why we find direct repetitions of this health wish in closings, to underline the intersubjective alignment rather than the actual request, as in example 28. Rhetorically, this strategy is of course an effective tactic: the speaker makes the willingness of the addressee to complete the request dependent upon the reciprocity of wishing each other the best instead.

28. ἀξιῶ σε μαθεῖν πόσου ἡμῖν συναλλάσσει κριθὴν ⟦ἡμῖν⟧ ὁ τρόφιμος τοῦ Διονύσιος(*) ὁ (= τοῦ) ἐπισφραγιστὴς (= σφραγιστοῦ) τῆς Ταμπέμου, ἵνα προνοήσωμαι ἀργυρίου. <u>ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὔχομαι, ἄδελφε</u>.

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40 Adams 2003, 507; Nachtergaele 2023, 259.

41 In fact, the innovation of πολλοῖς χρόνοις has been considered a 'Latinism', cf. Nachtergaele 2023, 254.

42 See e.g. *P.Mich.* XI 622, 15 and Sarri 2018, 365. In fact, this procedure is not limited to Late Post-Classical Greek, but occurs already in the previous period, for which see *P.Brem.* 21, 12, private letter, 113-120 CE (discussed in Sarri 2018, 118-19).

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(hand 2) ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὔχομαι, ἄδελφε. (*P.Oxy.* XII 1491, private letter, early IV CE)

I beg you to find out at what price the foster-son of Dionysius, the sealer of Taampemou, is contracting to get barley for me, in order that I may provide for the money. I pray for your health, brother. (Signed) I pray for your health, brother.

Thus, the abundant use of these health wishes in letter closings seems to suggest that this structure has lost its polite value which it has exchanged for a politic value, as this became one of the expected procedures to close a letter.

Finally, it should be noted that there also seems to be some metalinguistic evidence from this period for the formulaic status of this health wish: the following exercise text suggests that the health wish was practiced by different hands in the same formulaic structure.

29. (hand 1) [-ca.?-] σε εὔχομ[α]ι ἡγεμὼν [κύριε -ca.?-]
(hand 2) [-ca.?-] [-ca.?- εὔ]χομαι ἡγεμὼν κύ[ριε -ca.?-]
(hand 3) [-ca.?- σ]ε εὔχομαι ἡγεμὼν [κύριε -ca.?-]
(hand 4) [-ca.?-]ζ ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὔχομαι ἡγεμ[ὼν κύριε -ca.?-]
(hand 5) [-ca.?-] ιζ εTraces
(hand 6) [-ca.?-] . . . [-ca.?- ἡ]γεμὼν κύριε
(hand 7) [-ca.?-] ιζ [ἐρ]ρῶσθαί σε εὔχομαι ἡγεμὼν κ[ύ]ριε
(hand 8) [-ca.?-] ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὔχομαι ἡγεμὼν κύριε
(hand 9) [-ca.?-]ιζ ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὔχομαι ἡγεμὼν κύριε
10(hand 10) [-ca.?-] . . . ἐρρῶσθέ (= ἐρρῶσθαί) σε εὔχομε (= εὔχομαι) ἡγεμὼν κύριε
(hand 11) [-ca.?-]ζ ἐρρῶσθέ (= ἐρρῶσθαί) σεε (= σε) εὔ[χ]ομε (= εὔχομαι) ἡγεμὼν κύριε
(hand 12) [-ca.?-] . [. .] . υχομαι ἡγεμὼν κύ[ρ]ιε
(hand 13) [-ca.?-] ἐρρῶσθέ (= ἐρρῶσθαί) σαι (= σε) εὔχομαι ἡγεμὼν κ[ύρ]ιε
(hand 14) [-ca.?- ἐρρῶσ]θαί σε εὔχομαι ἡγεμὼν κύριε
(hand 15) [-ca.?- ἐ]ρρῶσθ[αί] σε εὔχομαι ἡγεμὼν κύριε
(hand 16) [-ca.?- ἐρρ]ῶσθαί σε εὔχομαι ἡγεμὼν κύριε
(hand 17) [-ca.?- ἐρρῶ]σθαί σε αιὔχομε (= εὔχομαι) ἡγεμὼν κύριε (*BGU* 13.2212, exercise, III CE)
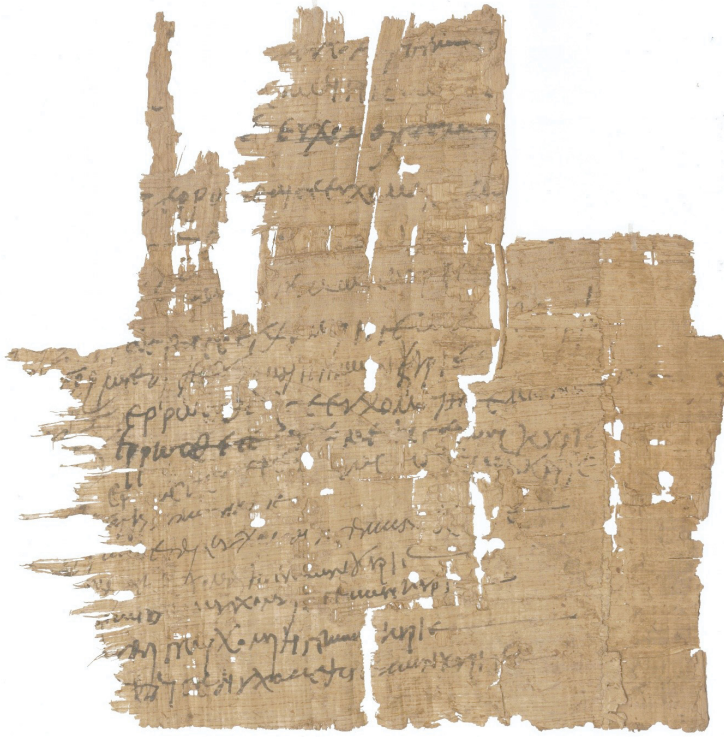'I pray that you are healthy, lord'

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To sum up, the wishes introduced by εὔχομαι in the Post-Classical Greek papyri undergo several important changes which have been detailed above. While there were wishes without an explicitly intersubjective orientation in Early Post-Classical Greek (e.g. in comparative clauses), the vast majority was then and, even more so from Middle Post-Classical Greek onwards, used to express intersubjectively marked health wishes, as a form of politeness. Though these health wishes were strongly subject to formal formulaicity (despite minor morphosyntactic and orthographic variation of course), it was shown that their distributional formulaicity is a much more complex matter. Whereas these health wishes occurred predominantly as politeness strategy in openings in the Middle Post-Classical Greek period, we can witness a major shift away from this in Late Post-Classical Greek, because these health wishes became strongly specialised for letter closings (as also supported by palaeographical and metalinguistic evidence). This long process has different historical pragmatic

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motivations, such as the development of politic behaviour out of polite behaviour as well as changes in letter writing conventions.

3 Concluding Remarks

At the start of this paper, I set out to investigate the underexplored role of wishes in stance taking, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the connections of specific wish strategies in the Post-Classical Greek papyri with intersubjectivity and polite and politic behaviour. By adopting a historical pragmatic analysis, I have shown that these connections are subject to a variety of changes in the different periods of Post-Classical Greek (III BCE-VI CE).

First, I demonstrated that we can use a tripartite stance grid inspired by work in interactional linguistics to distinguish intersubjectively marked wishes from those that lack this orientation (e.g. speaker-centred oaths or hopes in contractual settings): we should only speak of intersubjectively marked wishes if wishes explicitly encode an alignment of the positive attitude of the speaker toward another subject (i.e. the addressee). In fact, these intersubjectively marked wishes often concern intersubjectivity of the social kind, since they express attention from the speaker towards the face needs of the hearer, i.e. a form of politeness (cf. the frequent 'I wish that you are well' health wishes). Thus, there is a common pragmatic link between addressee-oriented alignment and politeness.

Next, I highlighted that wish strategies do not have the same form and function across different periods, including their relationship with polite and politic behaviour. The diachronic analysis of the two wish strategies in question in the Post-Classical Greek papyri revealed a remarkable range of changes:

a. *increases in formal formulaicity* (e.g. the limitation of wish optatives to the lemma εἰμί 'to be' or of health wishes with εὔχομαι to the same morphosyntactic structure of complement and infinitive);

b. *different kinds of distributional formulaicity*, as shown by the increasing limitation of the wish optative to a select group of uses;

c. the *creation of polite strategies*, such as the χαίροις greeting as polite alternative to other, more standard politic greetings);

d. *loss of explicit politeness*, as shown by the previously polite εὔχομαι health wish formula that became a form of politic behaviour, since it is so commonly used only in closings in Post-Classical Greek that it is unlikely that it was still perceived as explicitly polite behaviour.

In other words, only when we consider the pragmatic dimensions of wish strategies historically from multiple perspectives (e.g.

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morphosyntactic form, intersubjective orientation, and politeness) do we stand to gain a more complete picture of what Post-Classical Greek speakers wished to accomplish with their wishes in the papyri.

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