ΘΑΥΜΑΖΩ: AN EXPRESSION OF PERPLEXITY IN SOME EXAMPLES FROM PAPYRI LETTERS

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ABSTRACT
An analysis of twenty-five available examples of θαυμάζω in papyri letters was undertaken. In four cases, referring to 'something' it was found to represent three different meanings: wondering about something, being amazed by something, and being surprised by something. In two cases the meaning represented was: be in doubt about. In nineteen cases the meaning expressed was: be perplexed (by some act or the lack thereof on the part of the recipient). In a few cases where irony was detected, it had no bearing on either the meaning represented or the form, which remained fluid.

1 INTRODUCTION
My reason for engaging in the following material stems from research on Galatians 1:6 with a view to presenting a paper (to appear later in Neotestamentica) on the persuasive force of the emotive argumentation employed in the second periscope of that letter. An important array of scholars argue that θαυμάζω in Galatians 1:6 was used ironically, defining this term in some such expression as: Paul is not at all astonished; rather he is irritated (see Mullins 1972:358; also Ridderbos 1953:46; Oepke 1964:20; Betz 1979:46-47; Lategan 1986:23-24). In discussing the so-called ironic use of the verb reference was made by some of the above mentioned scholars to six examples of θαυμάζω in papyri letters where the verb appeared mostly in the opening sections of the letters, as is the case in Galatians 1:6 (see also Moulton & Milligan 1930, sv).

It is not my purpose to review here the scholarly opinion of the above mentioned since I plan to deal with it in the paper referred to above. My purpose here is another. Not being satisfied with the conclusion that θαυμάζω was used ironically in Galatians, I decided to examine the papyri examples more closely and search for additional examples in which θαυμάζω occurs. My purpose here is to present an analysis of the formal aspects of the twenty-five available examples which I could trace, and at the same time to determine whether an ironic use of the verb was prevalent in any of the examples — which of course implies determining the meaning which θαυμάζω represents in these cases — then, last, to face the question whether the occurrence of irony in any way determines the form of the expression.

My interest in the question of irony should be apparent in view of the scholarly debate referred to earlier. As to the formal aspects an explanation may be added. Initially White (1971:96) stated that the expression of astonishment in Galatians and in papyri letters should be viewed as a formula with two formulaic items: the verb of astonishment, plus the object
An expression of perplexity of astonishment, 'usually a statement regarding the addressee's failure to write, introduced either by ὅτι or πῶς.' Mullins (1972:358) opposed the idea of a formula in this case, stating that the 'form' would consist simply of verb + object — thereby rendering any reference to form meaningless. He did, however, go on to say that the expression was occasionally used ironically, and that, where this happened, a form was present: 'This ironical use is an essential element in the form' (1972:358). So, having found a number of occurrences of θαυμάζω which had not, as far as I know, been previously discussed, this naturally led me to enquire after the formal usage to be observed in a larger number of cases.

It is quite difficult to treat adequately the usage of θαυμάζω or to supply a satisfying translational equivalent to distinguish between the positive and the negative meanings to which it was applied. The reason for this is to be found in the fact that, as is the case with the Greek verb, its translational equivalents and their synonyms seem to bear a positive as well as a negative sense both in English and in Afrikaans. And this may be true of many other languages. According to Louw & Nida (1988a:312) one can translate θαυμάζω in the New Testament by means of 'to wonder', 'to be amazed', 'to marvel', expressing the meaning: 'to wonder or marvel at some event or object.' This reaction, however, can be either favourable or unfavourable, but whether it is the one or the other depends entirely on the context. The verb is dealt with under the semantic domain of attitudes and emotions, and the specific subdomain surprise, astonish. The cases treated here suggest that the authors, by referring to favourable and unfavourable reactions, meant to differentiate between marvelling at some event or object by feeling/expressing praise, or by being startled, afraid, shocked, appalled. One may well ask whether these examples of unfavourable reaction should not be placed in a different subdomain. Be that as it may, it should be noted that this description of θαυμάζω does not take into account its usage for the meaning perplexity. Louw and Nida (1988a:380-381) treat the meaning be perplexed under the semantic domain understand and the subdomain with the same designation. The only two entries in this field (be perplexed) are ἄπορος/ἄπορια, expressing doubt with the implication of serious anxiety, and διαπόρος, indicating great perplexity, confusion about what to do, leading to the explanation concerning Luke 9:7 that the subject was thoroughly perplexed, since he did not understand what was going on because some people said that John had risen from the dead.

It is my contention that θαυμάζω was used for exactly this meaning (be perplexed) in Galatians 1:6, and the purpose of this paper is to point out this same usage in a number of papyri letters. In this connection it is again important to state what is my purpose, and what is not. I do not intend to lay out the whole semantic field of the verb θαυμάζω. I am aware of a number of meanings for which it was used, including that which was signalled by Louw and Nida: a) it expresses a feeling of elated wonderment, joyous surprise, awesome astonishment; and b) a feeling of fearsome awe in view of experiencing that which is wondrous. There are of course other meanings as well, such as a more or less neutral wonderment about something that was experienced — see P0xy2783 in the accompanying table 1: I was amazed at the price of oil; or the many laudatory references found at the royal burial sites stating the admiration of the
subject for the marvelous buildings — see for example the graffiti SB 1873; 1899; 1900; 6629: I admired/ I was impressed (abbreviations for the papyri and related material are those found in Hengstl 1978:391-421, except that no periods were used). However, analysing and mapping out this whole field is not my intention, although I will be attempting this for the New Testament in the near future. My intention is rather to look closely at a number of available letters from the Hellenistic period as are to be found in the papyri, and in which θαυμάζω also occurs, in order to establish the meaning in which this verb was employed as well as whether it had ironic undertones, and additionally, to look for any formal elements that may point to a recurring pattern.

TABLE 1

USAGE OF θαυμάζω IN SOME PAPYRI LETTERS

(The abbreviations for the papyri are those used by Hengstl 1978:391-421. Regarding the form of the verb the abbreviations signify: first person praesens singular, or aorist plural, etc. 'Object' signifies the object of the verb. In these examples it is mostly an event, where for example 'lack of action' indicates perplexity on account of somebody's neglect to do something. 'Circumstance: matter' indicates that the writer noted some fact or other relating to the case in hand. 'Circumstance: writer' indicates that the writer mentioned his own circumstances relating to the matter in hand.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Papyrus</th>
<th>Form of verb</th>
<th>Introduc-</th>
<th>Quali-</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Circum-</th>
<th>Circum-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PMich 479</td>
<td>lstp p s</td>
<td>πῶς</td>
<td>lack of action</td>
<td>part clause</td>
<td>anxiety expression</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PMerton 80</td>
<td>lstp p s</td>
<td>πῶς</td>
<td>lack of action</td>
<td>gen abs</td>
<td>part cl + ὅτι + need expression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POxy 113</td>
<td>lstp p s</td>
<td>πῶς</td>
<td>negative action</td>
<td>περί + gen + action</td>
<td>need expression</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>POxy 123</td>
<td>lstp p s</td>
<td>πάνυ</td>
<td>lack of action</td>
<td>διά phrase</td>
<td>need expression</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>POxy 223</td>
<td>lstp p s</td>
<td>εἴπερ</td>
<td>action</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>POxy1348</td>
<td>lstp p s</td>
<td>ὅτι</td>
<td>lack of action</td>
<td>ὅτι + verb</td>
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<td>POxy2783</td>
<td>lstp p s</td>
<td>ὅτι</td>
<td>something: price of oil</td>
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<tr>
<td>POxy3063</td>
<td>lstp p s</td>
<td>εἰ</td>
<td>something: need for more oxen</td>
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<tr>
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<td>lstp p s</td>
<td>πῶς</td>
<td>ὑπὲρ τῆν πολλὴν</td>
<td>negative action</td>
<td></td>
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<td>ὅπως</td>
<td>negative action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SB6222</td>
<td>lstp p s</td>
<td>πῶς</td>
<td>lack of action</td>
<td>καίπερ + gen abs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SB7176</td>
<td>lstp aor s</td>
<td>πόθεν</td>
<td>something: origin or conduct</td>
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<td>SB8244</td>
<td>lstp p s</td>
<td>εἰ</td>
<td>ind ques</td>
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<td>SB9106</td>
<td>lstp aor s</td>
<td>πῶς</td>
<td>negative action</td>
<td>gen abs</td>
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<td>εἰ</td>
<td>action</td>
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<td>πῶς</td>
<td>lack of action</td>
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<td>PHib159</td>
<td>lstp p s</td>
<td>εἰ</td>
<td>ind ques</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PCairo lstp aor
Zen59056 pl

some-
thing:
reason
for lack
of action

PCairo 2ndp p s ei
Zen59060

negative
action

PCairo p inf ei
Zen59061

negative
action

BGU1041 lstp p s πῶς

lack of
action

PRyl345 lstp aor s πῶς

lack of
action

PAlex lstp aor s ei
Giss38

action acc+inf part cl

2 OCCURRENCES NOT REFLECTED IN THE LIST

There are occurrences in related material which have not been mentioned in table 1. POxy471 is no letter but a speech by an advocate. The function of θαυμάζω here is totally different from what is usual in the letters, but it is comparable to PCairoZen59056 (see below, 3.1.1). The speaker says that he will mention another fact, then adds: 'I think, my lord, that you will find it puzzling (θαυμάζω) and unbelievable, until we have read the documents.' On the other hand the occurrence in PHarris56, a magical spell, is not comparable, whilst that in PHarris154 is corrupt in the essential context. SB9684 is also corrupt, whilst SB10647 is the same papyrus as PAlexGiss38.

3 THE VARIOUS MEANINGS REPRESENTED IN THE LIST

A perusal of the list and the documents mentioned in it, will, as I shall point out shortly, lead to the conclusion that in most of the cases θαυμάζω represents the same meaning (see on meaning Vorster 1979:1-25; Louw 1976, passim). A clue to this (which is probably circumstantial, due to the limited number of examples) is to be found in the column marked 'object'. Where the object is 'something' (instead of 'action', 'negative action' or 'lack of action') the meaning is a different one. The same applies where the object is an indirect question (but this could again be circumstantial).

3.1 Where in the list the object is 'something'

3.1.1 Wondering about something

We have already had reason to mention PCairoZen59056, a letter from Apollodotos to Zenon inviting him to let him know whether he, as a personal favour, could do anything more for his father and brothers whom he had been entertaining. He then τονωτα this off with: νῦν μὲν γὰρ παρὰ
An expression of perplexity

Quite clearly this has nothing whatsoever to do with the idea of wondering, marvelling at, being amazed by an event or object. This is excluded by τι τὸ αἰτίον. What he expresses is: We wondered about, gave thought to, were curious about, what on your part the reason could be for not writing about this as yet. This is a meaning in what Louw and Nida (1988a:349,355) call the semantic domain think, especially the subdomain to think about, but without the implication of appropriate response.

Another example illustrates the same meaning: in SB7176 it is the question whence a certain way of doing business originated, which is pondered by the subject. Artemidoros did not make payment as was agreed, leading to the cutting remark by Kresilaos: ἐδαυμάζομεν οὖν, πόθεν ἐπηλθέν σοι τοιούτον τι συντελεῖσθαι.

3.1.2 Amazed by something
I have previously referred to POxy2783 where the object is 'something', the price of oil, requiring the meaning of surprised amazement: the price was surprisingly high and it amazed him.

3.1.3 Surprised by something
A similar, but not identical case, is presented by POxy3063, the very amusing letter from Diogenes to Apollogenes instructing him for the umptieth time to cut out the vineyards (repeated five times). This is followed by: θαυμάζω εἰ χρεία ἐστὶ τριῶν ζευγάρων εἰς ἐπιστλησμὸν τῆς ἐν χαλόθει ἀμέλειοι εἰς ὁλίγου περιστατικῆς. Apollogenes requested an additional, third, pair of oxen to water the vineyard at Chalothis. That this could have been required, was not suspected by Diogenes. The request therefore came as an unexpected surprise. As in the previous case we have the diagnostic differentials of unexpectedness and surprise, but not the more emotive element of being overwhelmed which is expressed as amazement. One could translate: I am surprised that three pairs of oxen are needed....

3.2 Where in the list the object is an indirect question

3.2.1 Be in doubt about
In two cases, both constructed with εἰ, the particle has the force of 'whether' and introduces an indirect question (see Dana & Mantey 1957:246; see also Blass, Debrunner & Rehkopf 1976:384). PHib159 states that all...was received, but proved useless; then: θαυμάζω οὖν εἰ πιστεύεις. In SB8244 Zenon recounts the message brought to him, then says: θαυμάζω οὖν, εἰ οὕτως . It should be quite clear that in neither of these cases θαυμάζω represent the same meaning as is suggested here for the remaining examples in the list. These subjects are not stating their perplexity; they are using the verb to express their doubt. They are saying: It will really surprise me if this happens, or, it will really surprise me if that is the case. (The Afrikaans: 'dit sal my verwonder as...', does not seem to have a ready equivalent which cannot be misunderstood.) This meaning thus falls within the semantic domain designated by Louw and Nida (1988a:365,370): to hold a view, believe, trust, and the specific subdomain: believe to be true. In these cases, however, the expressing of doubt does not
necessarily imply uncertainty; they seem to be stating their firm beliefs, which is brought out quite well by the Afrikaans expression: 'dit sal my verwonder as...', or the English: 'I have my doubts about...'.

3.3 Where in the list the object is an event
The other cases in our list are of the same kind in that the object taken into view by θαυμάζω is an event. In this group θαυμάζω is used to express perplexity.

3.3.1 Be perplexed by
An analysis of the nineteen remaining occurrences in our list shows that the event is either something that someone did, or refrained from doing. In the majority of cases it is the neglect to do something, for instance, write a letter (lack of action). Occasionally it is something someone does, whether positive or negative. It may be that he finds something as in POxy1223 (action). Alternatively the action may be perceived as negative, for example the case where persons allowed someone to pester the writer as in POxy3417 (negative action). In all these cases, no matter what category of event is in focus, the meaning for which θαυμάζω was used, is the same: the writer expresses his being perplexed by whatever happened or did not happen (see the reference to Louw and Nida at the end of section 1: Introduction). In these cases the diagnostic differential is the fact that the writer cannot understand the event at hand. He is at a loss to comprehend how another person could or could not do this or that. Let us apply this to the remaining examples.

3.3.1.1 Be perplexed by someone's action
In POxy1223 (where the object is 'action') the writer says that he is, or will be, perplexed in the event of his messenger finding the landlord's boat in his brother's yard: it would be something that he could not understand. How could such a thing be possible? Incomprehensible! (For further discussion see 3.4 below. The only other clear example in this category is SB9628. PAlexGiss38 seems to fall in this category, but it is very corrupt. PHib159 was dealt with under another heading - see 3.2.1).

3.3.1.2 Be perplexed by someone's negative action
In POxy3417 the writer is as perplexed by the negative action of his brothers who allow yet another brother to keep bothering him about something known to all of them. Again the focal point is that he cannot understand how they could act in such a way.

In the midst of various instructions and random remarks directed at Heraklides, in POxy113 we see the same picture: peri de sou gegevven dia korbólanos péwits mou θαυμάζω pòws ouk édikaiwós mou péwntai, kai taúta émou xerízontos eis édrpso. The author is truly baffled by the negative action on the part of his correspondent. Mention of his perplexity, especially coupled to the fact that the writer had gone to great pains to see that a needed key reached Heraklides, succeeds to rebuke and chide; he had done his part; his partner had not, leaving him with a feeling of disappointment expressed in the statement about his perplexity and containing a subtle reproach of his partner. (See further to this 3.5 below. The other examples of negative action are POxy3420; SB9106; PCairoZen59060 and
3.3.1.3 Be perplexed by someone’s lack of action

In the remaining examples the writers express their perplexity, which arises from the fact that the addressee had refrained from an action which could rightly have been expected from him (lack of action). The focal point, however, is again to be found in the writer not understanding this inaction.

1) The failure to write a letter

In a number of examples it is the neglect of persons in writing a letter of clarification, information, or requesting something, which leads to the perplexity of the writer. PMich479 an early second century AD letter, from Terentianos to his father Tiberianos is an example of such neglect. Directly on the letter opening and formula _valetudinis_ follows: θαυμάζω πὼς ἀναπλεύσας οὐκ ἀντέγραψας μοι περὶ τῆς σωτηρίας σου, ἀλλὰ ἕως σήμερον ἁγανίω διότι ἀπεθανούμενος ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ ἐξῆλθες. On returning to base after visiting his son Terentianos, Tiberianos showed signs of illness. Later he sailed further up-river without alerting his son about his health. This resulted in the letter (PMich479) in which Terentianos expresses his incomprehension of his father’s action, or rather, his inaction. He is clearly perplexed. How could his father do this to him? How could he not write to him about his health considering he was ill even before he had left? (Other examples where the lack of action concerns the neglect of writing a letter can be found in POxy123, POxy2729, SB6222, BGU1041, whilst the same is implied by POxy2728, and PRyl345).

2) Various other neglected actions

In PMerton80 the perplexity of the subject was caused by the neglect of the addressee to send him someone whom he needed: θαυμάζω πὼς τοιούτων ἄνελθοσσαν μετὰ καὶ κτητῶν κενῶν οὐκ ἔπεμψας Σαραπάμμωνα, εἴδως ὅτι χρίκαυ αὐτοῦ ἐστίν ἐνοχὸς. In this case Achillas writes to his father Apollonios who seems to be hiding in Alexandria. Matters get worse in his absence and his son urgently needs help. In his letter he expresses his surprise that his father had not sent Sarapammon to his aid, knowing full well how much he was needed and that he could have travelled on one of the many unladen animals which had been brought up country. Achillas is clearly exasperated with the conduct of his father and tells him so in expressing his perplexity.

In SB9654b the inaction lies in the addressee’s failure to pay attention to matters as requested. In POxy1348 it was the fact that the addressee did not come to their assistance as he well knew that custom required.

3.4 The question of irony

The occurrence of irony does not change the meaning represented by the verb; it does, however imply a changed meaning to be communicated by the sentence of which it is part (see Johl 1988:13-44). The change in meaning may be the implication of the opposite or, more subtle, contraposition. I am discussing this figure of speech at this point (under the main heading of the various meanings represented by the verb), since the subtle presence of irony can be determined only once the meaning represented by
the verb has been established. The probable occurrences are noted here in view of the statement by Mullins (see above 1: Introduction) that the occurrence of irony constitutes a form in the usage of θευμάζω. (We shall return to this whole question of irony and form at a later stage — see 4 below).

Of the twenty-five instances discussed here, twenty-two clearly communicate the literal force of the verb. The writers are saying, for example, that they are perplexed by, cannot understand, the action or inaction of the recipients. In only three cases irony may be implied. I accept the probability of this interpretation.

To my mind there can hardly be doubt about the irony of saying θευμάζω εἶπε... in POxy1223. Hermias seems to be having a hard time. And now the landlord’s boat is missing. To his brother Horion he writes: 'I am (that is, I will be) perplexed if indeed the one I sent to you finds the landlord’s boat at your place.' With his following πλὴν ἕων ... it becomes clear that he indeed suspects that the boat will be found at his brother’s place, because he now gives detailed instructions about what is to be done in that case. He mentions possible carelessness which might have led to the boat being there after all. Twice he warns not to be careless in sending it back at once, and gives detailed directions about the sailor returning it together with his messenger. But should the weather prevent the immediate return, the sailor at least should himself return directly to sign a bond. Hermias is really troubled and fears adverse action against their house if his brother should again be negligent in this matter.

It must be clear from the context that Hermias actually thinks the boat is there and will be found at his brother’s place. When he communicates this and adds: θευμάζω εἶπε..., he ironically stresses the unacceptability of his brother’s negligence. He is perplexed by his brother’s actions. The irony lies in the fact that he says his representative will not find the boat at his brother’s place while his total communication makes clear that he thinks it may well be there, and in fact will be found there.

PCairoZen59060 and PCairoZen59061 are different drafts of the same letter, both of which were sent to Zenon (see the editor’s notes, referring to a third draft that is also available). Zenon had to supply Hierokles with certain items and reminded him of the fact that these items were liable to toll tax. Hierokles replies: ἔγραψας δὲ μοι θαυμάζεις εἰ μὴ κατέχω ὅτι τούτοις πᾶσι τέλος ἀκολουθεῖ. Zenon was in fact saying that he would have been perplexed had Hierokles not known that the goods were taxable. The way he says it clearly implies that Hierokles would indeed know this. Nevertheless, he reminds him of the fact. The irony of the communication does not change the meaning of θευμάζω (being perplexed), but brings home most forcefully Zeno’s intention. This is confirmed when Hierokles himself replies that he knows about the tax and that Zenon will prove his capability by organising matters in such a way that the goods would be sent to him in the most profitable way.

3.5 The broader semantic value
We have determined the various meanings represented by θευμάζω in the available list of papyri. It now remains to ask the question why writers
used this expression in their letters. The first four meanings represented by the verb (wondering about something, be amazed by something, be surprised by something, be in doubt about) can be seen to lie on the conversational level. The expression here communicates the writer's interest, his feelings, his uncertainty.

In the examples where θαυμάζω was used for the meaning be perplexed the case is different. In all these examples (and certainly not only in cases of irony as Mullins 1972 submitted) the writer expresses his perplexity with a particular purpose in mind. When he says that he is perplexed by the action or lack of action on the part of the recipient, he implies a) that the recipient is in the wrong and b) that he is taking him to task for this. That this is the case is borne out by the sentence and broader context which also determines the degree of censure on the level of implicature: it can range from mild reproach or chiding to severe rebuke. An example of the last can be found in P0xy3420 where the writer is so exasperated by the incomplete information in the letter he received that he threatens to burn all the products and says that he will be not to blame for the consequences if ever again he receives a letter of this nature. The same can be seen from BGU1041 where the recipient got into trouble on account of drunkenness and is taken to task on various matters. In future the law is going to be laid down for him. The fact that the writer states his perplexity at the lack of a letter from the recipient in a time of difficulty implies a stern rebuke, since the writer's business is affected by this lack of action. Reproaches of a milder nature are implied in family letters requesting the recipient to write back.

It may appear as if the element of reproach is absent from the two drafts of the letter sent to Zenon, PCairoZen59060 and PCairoZen59061, since, judging by the context, the implication is rather that of a reminder. However, taking our cue from the other examples, we should perhaps read between the lines that Zenon had a problem with the additional money involved due to the taxation which Hierokles seemingly had ignored. Read in this way his reminder was indeed meant as a reprimand. This seems to be borne out by the easy way in which Hierokles shrugs off the matter by saying: you take care of it.

On this broader, or deeper, level of communication one other remark has to be made. As far as the recipient is concerned the expression of the subject's perplexity communicates the failure of the former and the reproach or rebuke of the latter. As far as the subject himself is concerned, however, the expression of his perplexity signals his disappointment in the action of the recipient. It is thus accompanied by the further implication of a feeling of being let down on the part of the subject.

4 FORMAL ELEMENTS OF THE EXPRESSION

From the available material it transpires that we indeed do not simply have the pattern of verb followed by the object, as Mullins (see above 1: Introduction) concluded and which led him to say that at this rate any verb followed by ὅτι plus object would have to be regarded as a form.

At least as far as the instances are concerned where the meaning in question is 'be perplexed', we should note the following:-
The verb is followed by a particle, followed by the object as an event, seen either as an action, a negative action, or the lack of action.

The verb appears mostly in the first person praesens singular, now and then in a future sense. Due to style of writing this could occasionally change to the aorist or perfect; the plural could be used, or even the infinitive.

The introductory particle could be παρά (11 times); εἰ or εἰπερ (7 times); δἰ (twice); ἀπόκειται and ποθεῖ (once each). Once, when followed by a direct object, the construction needed no particle, and once the particle was simply omitted (POxyl23).

The addition of a qualifier to the verb (twice only: POxyl23; POxy3417) occurs too seldom (at least as far as the list is concerned) to be regarded as typical to the 'form'.

Although they are of interest, the same holds true of expressions describing the circumstances of the matter at hand (eight times), as well as expressions describing the circumstances of the writer (four times).

The circumstances surrounding the matter itself are qualified by various means:
(a) δἰ plus verb (POxyl348);
(b) genitive absolute (PMerton80; POxy2728; SB9106; καίπερ plus genitive absolute: SB6222);
(c) reference by means of περὶ plus genitive to previous communication on the matter, followed by a δἰα phrase (POxy113);
(d) participial clause (PMich479);
(e) accusative and infinitive (PAlexGiss38).

The circumstances of the writer with regard to the case are also elucidated by various means, as can be seen from the following:
(a) participial clause of knowing — recipient as subject — followed by δἰ to indicate need (PMerton80);
(b) expression of need (POxy113);
(c) expression of anxiety (PMich479);
(d) participial clause (PAlexGiss38).

A last remark should be made here regarding the question whether the presence of irony in any way determines the form. From the three examples discussed, it should be clear that their form shows no signs of irony having any bearing on it. Another type of problem arises here. Whether the verb is used ironically has to be determined from the context. It belongs to the contents of the saying as deducted from the context by implication. It is thus not a formal element of the saying and should not be used as a determinant in establishing a form.

5. CONCLUSION
The results of our analysis lead to the following conclusions:
1) The answer to the question whether the presence of irony has bearing on the form, or constitutes a form, has been found to be negative.
2) With regard to the question whether a definite form (in the sense of genre, literary form) is discernable, the conclusion should be that, while no characteristic form emerged, the usage in letters to express perplexity
shows a tendency towards formalisation. In these cases the verb represents the meaning *be perplexed*; the verb is mostly in the first person praesens; the event about which the writer is perplexed is almost always introduced by particles such as πώς, εἰ, εἴπερ, ὅτι, ὅπως, πόθεν and the object is an event in the form of action, negative action, or lack of action. The verb is sometimes qualified by an adverb; the circumstances surrounding the case are occasionally mentioned and the circumstances of the writer are indicated from time to time.

3) As to the meaning represented by θαυμάζω in the available examples, it was possible to distinguish between five denotations (see also table 2). It transpired that the available examples allowed themselves to be ordered according to the type of object used in conjunction with the verb, although this was thought to probably be of an incidental nature.

a) In nineteen of the examples the meaning for which θαυμάζω was used, is to be *perplexed* by some event (in the form of an action, whether positive or negative, or the lack of action), accompanied, on the side of the recipient, by the implications of misdemeanor and consequential reproach, and, on the side of the writer, by a feeling of being let down.

b) In two examples where the verb was followed by an indirect question, the meaning was to be *in doubt about*.

c) In four examples, where the object proved to be 'something', three different meanings were found to be represented by the verb:

i) two examples pointed to the meaning *wondering about something*;

ii) in one example it was that of being *amazed by something*; and

iii) in the last it was that of being *surprised by something*.

### TABLE 2

THE MEANINGS REPRESENTED BY θαυμάζω IN THE LETTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Something</th>
<th>Something</th>
<th>Something</th>
<th>Ind Quest</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Wonder about</td>
<td>Amazed by</td>
<td>Surprised by</td>
<td>be in doubt</td>
<td>be perplexed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papyrus</td>
<td>PCairoZen 59056</td>
<td>POxy2783</td>
<td>POxy3063</td>
<td>PHibl59</td>
<td>Action</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>SB8244</td>
<td>POxy1223</td>
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<td>59061</td>
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WORKS CONSULTED


An expression of perplexity

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