

Place Date Language Material Number of texts Type Collections Find/Acquisition	<b>Ploutogeneia, wife of Paniskos</b>	ArchID 167. Version 2 (2013) Ruben Smolders
	Arsinoites (Fayum), meris of Herakleides, Philadelpheia About AD 297 Greek Papyrus 9 <b>Family correspondence</b> Ann Arbor, Michigan University Acquired from the antiquities dealer M. Nahman in 1923	

### Bibliography

- J.G. WINTER, *P. Mich.* III, 1936, p. 275-298 no. 214-221.
- J. SCHWARTZ, 'Autour du dossier de Paniskos (*P. Mich.* 214-221)', *Aegyptus* 48 (1968), p. 110-115.
- E. SEIDL, *Rechtsgeschichte Ägyptens als römischer Provinz*, Sankt Augustin, 1973, p. 65, no. 1.18 (called the archive of Paniskos).
- O. MONTEVECCHI, *La papirologia*, Milano, 1988<sup>2</sup>, p. 256-257 no. 58.
- J. ROWLANDSON (ed.), *Women and Society in Greek and Roman Egypt: A Sourcebook*, Cambridge, 1998, p. 147-151.
- The numbers in **bold** refer to *P. Mich.* III.

### Description

The nine letters of the archive of Ploutogeneia come from Philadelpheia in the Fayum and were acquired together from the antiquities dealer M. Nahman in 1923 by the University of Michigan.<sup>1</sup> They bear inventory numbers from 1362 to 1371. Seven of them were published as **214-221** (**215** is part of **219**). Although the editor of *SB XVI* 12326 overlooked the connection with the other archive texts,<sup>2</sup> this papyrus should be placed in the archive as well.<sup>3</sup> Both the inventory number (*P. Mich.* inv. 1363) and the date (late third century AD) fit with the other texts. The addressee of **221** bears the same name as the writer of *SB XVI* 12326 and the daughter's behaviour as described in *SB XVI* 12326 fits the image of Ploutogeneia in the other archive documents. P. Heilporn added the unpublished fragment *P. Mich.* inv. 2153 a to **219**<sup>4</sup> and retrieved another papyrus of this archive in the Michigan collection (*P. Mich.* inv. 1368 a + 1371).<sup>5</sup>

The graph in App. 1 gives a view of the senders and addressees of the letters. Five of the letters are addressed to Ploutogeneia, three to other members of Ploutogeneia's family.<sup>6</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *P. Mich.* III, 1936, p. 275. Against Schwartz 1968, p. 110, 113, who thinks that the archive was found in Karanis in the house of Ploutogeneia's brother Aion.

<sup>2</sup> F.T. Gignac, 'Two papyri from the Michigan collection', *BASP* 16 (1979), p. 195-197.

<sup>3</sup> Already suggested on the APIS site, see michigan.apis.1404.

<sup>4</sup> See michigan.apis.1410.

<sup>5</sup> P. Heilporn presented this new papyrus at the Congress of Papyrology in Helsinki in 2004. He kindly informed me that the papyrus bears the address 'to Philadelpheia', confirming Nahman's statement of the provenance of the archive.

<sup>6</sup> At least if Aion is a brother of Ploutogeneia and not of Paniskos. See Schwartz 1968, p. 110 (contra *P. Mich.* III, 1936, p. 276).

**217**, 3-5 Paniskos says: 'I enjoined you when I left that you should not go off to your home, and yet you went'. Ploutogeneia seems to have taken her archive to her own house. Perhaps her brother Aion, her mother Heliodora and grandmother Isidora lived in that same house, explaining the presence of letters addressed to these persons in Ploutogeneia's archive.

All letters were dictated. They are written in a fluent cursive by several professional scribes. Neither Ploutogeneia nor Paniskos add salutations in their own hand. A relative chronology of Paniskos' letters can be made on three grounds: the dates in **215** (Pharmouthi) and **216** (Pauni); internal cross-references to earlier letters (**217** refers to **216**); Paniskos' certainty that his wife will come (**214**) changing to uncertainty (**216**) and acceptance of refusal (**217**). Because the *corrector* Achilleus (mentioned in **220**, 23-24) served under Lucius Domitius Domitianus, Paniskos' letters can be dated to 297/298.<sup>7</sup>

Several times Paniskos asks his wife Ploutogeneia (**214**, **216-217**) to come to Koptos, where he stays for an unknown reason. Perhaps he is a soldier (because of his repeated request for pieces of armor, cf. **214**, 24-27; **216**, 11-13; **217**, 16-19) or a merchant engaged in the armor trade (since he appears to be a man of some means, cf. **214**, 32; **217**, 26; **218**, 9; **220**, 10-17).

Ploutogeneia appears to be a resolutely independent and at times somewhat rude woman. She does not reply to Paniskos' letters and certainly has no intention of joining him at Koptos (cf. **217**, 9-11). To her mother she writes: 'It is already eight months since I came to Alexandria, and not even one letter have you written to me. Again then you do not regard me as your daughter but as your enemy' (**221**, 4-8). Ploutogeneia's stay in Alexandria, known only from **221**, cannot be dated precisely. Since she is asked by Paniskos to attend to her cattle in **218**, 8, her stay in Alexandria did not coincide with Paniskos' stay in Koptos.

Paniskos is genuinely fond of his daughter Heliodora, remembering her constantly in his greetings, sending her money and recommending her explicitly to the care of Ploutogeneia and Aion. Paniskos' daughter was named after her maternal grandmother, who is the addressee of **221** and the writer of *SB XVI 12326*. In this papyrus, Heliodora complains to her mother Isidora about the behaviour of Ploutogeneia. Some other family members and friends mentioned in the letters certainly lived in Koptos (cf. **214**, 12 and **217**, 12).

The archive documents have been included in modern collections of Christian letters because both Paniskos and Ploutogeneia begin some letters with the phrase 'I pray for your health each day before the lord god' (**216**, 5-6 and **221**, 4: *παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ*) and *θεός* appears in the singular in **216**, **218** and **219**.<sup>8</sup> In **214**, 5-6, however, Paniskos prays for Ploutogeneia's health 'in the presence of all the gods' (*παρὰ τοῖς θεοῖς πᾶσι*). There are two possible explanations. Proving that **214** was written by a different scribe than **216**, **218** and **219**, Farid thinks that the texts show the religious affiliations of the scribes rather than those of Paniskos.<sup>9</sup> The scribe who wrote **214** would be a pagan, the scribes of the other

<sup>7</sup> For the dating of Domitianus' revolt (quelled by the emperor Diocletianus himself), see J.D. Thomas, 'A family dispute from Karanis and the revolt of Domitius Domitianus', *ZPE* 24 (1977), p. 233-240. The internal cross-references in the letters suggest that all letters date from a short period.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. M. Naldini, *Il cristianesimo in Egitto*, Doetinchem, 1968, p. 110-123 no. 14-17; G.H.R. Horsley, *New Documents illustrating Early Christianity*, II, North Ryde, 1982, p. 70 no. 22 ('Christian (?)').

<sup>9</sup> F. Farid, 'Paniskos: Christian or pagan?', in G. Giangrande (ed.), *Museum Philologum Londiniense II. Special*

documents christians. Rowlandson doubts scribal interference in religious matters. Indeed, scribes could easily adapt their writings to their customers and a sincere Christian would not choose a scribe using only pagan formulas.<sup>10</sup> Paniskos and Ploutogenia are probably not christians, but pagans using θεός or even ὁ κύριος θεός side by side with the plural ‘gods’.

Archive texts

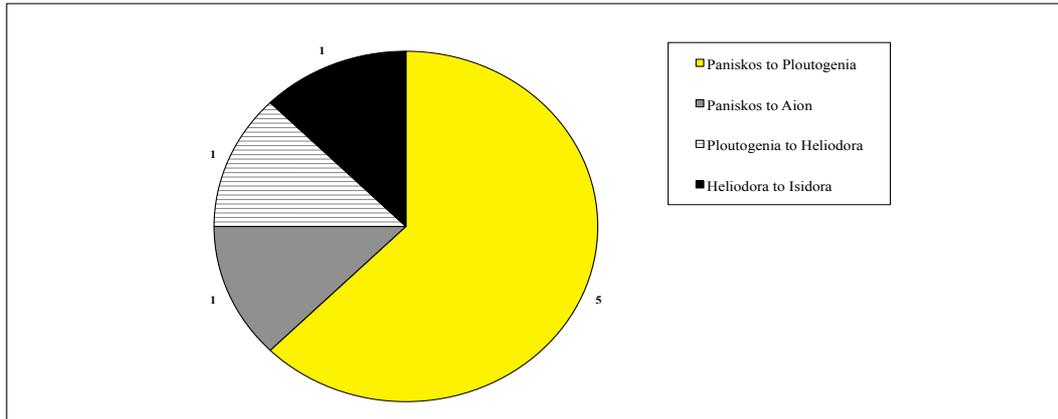
*P. Mich.* III 214-221; *P. Mich. inv.* 1371 + 1368 a; *SB XVI* 12326.

Text type

Letters = incoming and outgoing correspondence.

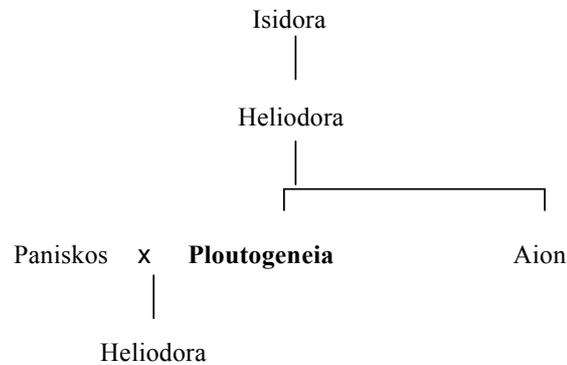
Appendices

App. 1. Senders and addressees of the letters



App. 2. Stemma of the family

Persons in italics are addressees of the letters.



*Papyrological Number*, Uithoorn, 1977, p. 109-117. This interpretation has been raised independently by E.A. Judge / S.R. Pickering, ‘Papyrus documentation of church and community in Egypt to the mid-fourth century’, *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 20 (1977), p. 53.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. also Horsley 1982, p. 70.