

	Farm estate in the Panopolite nome
Place	Panopolites
Date	AD 200 - 250
Language	Greek
Material	Ostrakon
Number of texts	63 + 5 unpublished
Type	Bookkeeping archive with orders for delivery, receipts, registrations of outgoing products
Collections	former collection Michaelides (Cairo)
Find/Acquisition	[find/acquisition]

Bibliography

D.S. CRAWFORD, *P.Michaël*. 63-124, introduction.

Description

The collection of Mr. G.A. Michaïlidis of Cairo contained a homogeneous group of ostraca which have been purchased together and originate from a single site, i.e. Achmim. 62 are published in *P.Michael*. 63-124¹; 5 are still unpublished. These are now, together with **79**, **83**, **97**, **98**, **103**, **107**, **108**, **111**, **115**, **117**, **120** and **123** in a private Egyptian collection. The other ostraca are scattered among several museums and institutes; e.g. **92** and **118** have been acquired by the University of Milan. Gallazzi established that O.Palau Rib. 1 (Barcelona), also belongs to this group (= *SB XVI 12984*)².

According to their formula, three types of documents, similar to those in *O.Edfa* (= *SB X 10990*), found in Edfa near Achmim, can be distinguished among this bookkeeping archive, which is clearly pertained to a single estate:

- (1) By far the largest group are orders for delivery (cf. the imperative δὸς), authorizing the issue of farm produce (wheat, lentils and *arax*) to various people and for various purposes (**63-78**, **80-84**, **86-96**, **98-101**, **104-115** and *SB XVI 12984*).
- (2) **123** and **124** and maybe **122** are receipts or accounts of goods (cf. ἐλαβεν in **123**).
- (3) **79**, **85**, **97** and **103** do not have any verb. These are registrations of outgoing farm produce. All have been issued in Mesore, except for **85**, which does not indicate a month. **116-121** are incomplete.

D.S Crawford suggests a date in the first half or middle of the 3rd century. He distinguishes five groups of handwritings, indicated by the letters (A) to (E). These groups indicate similar, but not necessarily identical hands, for it is not always clear whether two ostraca are written by the same person or not, due to the nature of the material³. Ostraca written in hand A were issued in all months, except Choiak and Pachon. Hand E does not indicate a month name. Probably the collection belongs to a single year, and was thrown away together. *P.Michael*. 125 was purchased among this group of ostraca and may have come from Achmim : it is similar in content and in the use of ἀρτάβη for ἀρτάβην but the writing is not the same.

Except for a gift to a priest (**87**), deliveries for use in the household (**110-113**) and for sale (**106-109**), the issues are wages to either people employed on the estate (**63-78**: shepherds, cowherds, gardeners, gooseherd and bakers), or to persons who had been hired for their services (περὶ γνα(πτῶν?) (**84**), a *capsarius* (**85**), for vintage (εἰς τρύγην) (**115**) and *kathemenitai*⁴ (**103-104**). Others recipients are only mentioned by name (see table fig. 1). Sometimes the formula περὶ (= ὑπὲρ) ὄψουλου (for salary) is added. It seems clear that the wages, mainly deliveries of wheat, are for a month each, except perhaps in **65** and **72**, where the double rates may have covered two months. The women received less than the men. The deliveries of lentils to feed the chickens (**80-83**), indicate that there were also poultry

farmers employed on the estate. Maybe there is a connection between this domain and the poultry farm in *O.Edfa* 1-58, for the latter collection of ostraca contains receipts issued by two poultry farmers of the metropolis.

¹ The numbers in bold refer to the number in *P.Michael*.

² C. GALLAZZI, *O.Palau Rib. 1 = SB X 10473: Un nuovo testo della serie P.Michael. 63-124*, *Stud.Pap.* 22 (1983), pp.141-143. There have been other negotiations between Michaelidis and San Cugat; cf. S. BARTINA, *Set o el horrendo y gruñidor jabali verrugoso*, *Stud.Pap.* 6 (1967), pp.109-121.

³ D.S. CRAWFORD, introduction to *P.Michael*. 63-124.

⁴ The *kathementai* were probably involved with horizontal weaving; cf. Z. BORKOWSKI, *P.Berl.Bork.*, note to III 20 (vs. N. LEWIS, *Cl.Ph.* 53 (1958), p. 43: squatter?). The seated position was considered in Antiquity as typical of this kind of profession. Moreover, Panopolis was famous for its tissues, as noticed by Strabo XVII 1.41 .