

	Python, royal banker at Krokodilopolis	ArchID 376. Version 2 (2012) Karolien Geens
Place	Arsinoites (Fayum), Krokodilopolis	
Date	253-237 BC	
Language	Greek and Demotic	
Material	Papyrus	
Number of texts	13 certain, 2 uncertain	
Type	Official archive	
Collections	Oxford, Bodleian Library; Dublin, Trinity College	
Find/Acquisition	Extracted from mummy cartonnage found by Petrie at Gurob in 1889	

Bibliography

R. BOGAERT, 'Banques et banquiers dans l'Arsinoïte à l'époque ptolémaïque', *ZPE* 68 (1987), p. 35-75 (esp. p. 43-61) (= R. BOGAERT, *Trapezitica Aegyptiaca. Recueil de recherches sur la banque en Égypte gréco-romaine (Pap. Flor. 25)*, Florence, 1994, p. 289-327) (information on the banker Python).

O. MONTEVECCHI, *La papirologia*, Milano, 1988², p. 249 no. 3 [b].

The numbers in **bold** refer to *P. Petrie III*.

Description

Among the Petrie papyri extracted from the mummy cartonnages found by Petrie in Gurob some 10 receipts relate to the banker Python, as well as a diary and accounts of money. Python was royal banker at Krokodilopolis for at least 17 years (253-237 BC);¹ he is frequently mentioned in the Zenon papyri. Other Petrie papyri may well be part of Python's archive or that of his successors, but the exact composition of the archive is hard to reconstruct.

Of ten receipts for payment of money through the bank (cf. the formula ὁμολογεῖ ἔχειν), six have been found in the same coffin (**64 a (1)-(6)**). Two groups of receipts may be distinguished (see App. 1): the older group (**64 a (1), (2), (7), (8)**), containing double documents, belongs to the reign of Ptolemaios II Philadelphos. The receipts acknowledge the payment of money through the banks of the villages Ptolemais Hormou and Arsinoe (kat' Ammoniada), respectively. Both are affiliated to the royal bank at Krokodilopolis, which was directed by Python himself. The younger group (**64 a (3)-(6)**, *SB XVIII 14040*, *P. Petrie TCD Boxes Cahier 3231.115 ined.*)² are double receipts written on two separate sheets of papyrus; the money is received through Polemon, director of the royal bank at Ptolemais, another subordinate of Python. As head of the royal bank in the nome metropolis Python kept the receipts issued to his subordinates at the village offices of the bank; there were at least two, one at Ptolemais Hormou and one at Arsinoe.

In **91**, l. 1-2 may be read χ τοῦ παρὰ [Πύθ]ωνος τραπεζίτου ἀπὸ τῆς ἐν Πτολεμαίδι τραπεζῆς. Though all letters in [Πύθ]ωνος are doubtful, the formula is identical with the other receipts and suggests that the text is part of the archive. However, **91** acknowledges the receipt of 65 drachmas connected with 500 artabas of wheat. The other receipts, by contrast,

¹ *Pros. Ptol.* I+VIII 1271 (possibly identical with *Pros. Ptol.* VI 16465, the Python who accompanied Zenon to Palestine).

² Cf. the transcriptions and notes of W. Clarysse.

relate to public works (εις τὰ ἔργα) in Ptolemais. All the receipts of the younger group acknowledge the payment of money for θρύον (rush) and κάλαμος (reed), both frequently used in irrigation and work on dikes. **64 a (2)** mentions a canal. They may be related to the contemporary archive of the engineers (*architektones*) Kleon and Theodoros, which was also found among the Gurob papyri (ArchID 122).

Apart from receipts, several fragments of a diary with the summary of a number of transactions through the bank of Python, all written out as one continuous text, also belong to his archive (**64 d Vo**).³ The document contained several columns, but only parts of two consecutive columns are preserved. The preserved fragments mention transactions for year 11 of Ptolemy III Euergetes, 15 and 16 Mecheir (see App. 2). After an order for payment through Akesion, Python's subordinate, the diary records 6 receipts with the formula ὁμολογεῖ ἔχειν and an order for payment addressed to Python by Nikanor, probably the nomarch (l. 13-20). The latter document is very similar to another order for payment, also addressed to Python by Nikanor (*SB XVIII 14041*), which may well be a part of the same diary.

63 Vo contains four separate accounts of money spent by the royal bank. The first account is for wages, the other three for payments of several sums for the three merides. The text refers to year 3 of king Ptolemy, no doubt Euergetes, i.e. 245/244 BC.⁴ At this period, Python was director of the royal bank at Krokodilopolis, but it is uncertain whether the text is part of his archive. The same counts for **66 b**, portions of the register of payments received by the royal bank in Krokodilopolis with names of oil dealers.

Archive texts *P. Petrie* III 64 a (1)-(8), 64 d Vo, 91; *P. Petrie TCD Boxes Cahier 3231.115* ined.; *SB XVIII 14040, 14041*; *uncertain*: *P. Petrie* III 63 Vo, 66 b; related: *P. Tebt.* III 720 and 814; *P. Halle* 15.

Text types Bank receipts (10), order for payment (1), official diary (1), official account (1 uncertain), register of payments (1 uncertain) = incoming and internal documents.

Appendices **App. 1. Receipts for money transferred through one of Python's agents**

Text	Date (BC)	Acknowledger	Banker	Bank of	Subject
64 a (7)	Y. 33, 17 Thoth = 253, 10 Nov.	Apollonios	[.....]tos	Ptolemais	ἔργα
64 a (8) = Vo of 64 a (7)	Y. 33, 17 Thoth = 253, 10 Nov.	Apollonios, agent of Apollonides	Pasis(?), son of Paos	Arsinoe	?
64 a (1) = double receipt	Y. 33 = 253/252	Nikandros and Glauk[]?	[.....]tos? ⁵	Ptolemais	ἔργα?
64 a (2) = double	252/251? ⁶	Lysimachos?	Artemidoros	Ptolemais?	διῶρυξ

³ See U. Wilcken, in *UPZ I*, 1927, p. 607 n. 2.

⁴ Bogaert 1987, p. 60.

⁵ The text seems to suggest that Maimachos is the banker at Ptolemais in year 33 of Ptolemaios II, but this is impossible for in this year a man named [.....]tos (in the genitive), was banker at Ptolemais; cf. **64 a (7)**, l. 3-4. Maimachos is probably the nomarch who issues the receipt.

⁶ See Bogaert 1987, p. 45.

receipt					
64 a (3)	Y. 8, 30 Pharm. = 240, 18 June	Archidemos, son of Limnaios	Polemon	Ptolemais	θρύον
64 a (4)	Y. 8, 30 Pharm. = 240, 18 June	Archidemos, son of Limnaios	Polemon	Ptolemais	θρύα
SB XVIII 14040	Y. 8, 30 Pharm. = 240, 18 June	Ateis, son of E[] + Pasis, son of Petobastis	Polemon	Ptolemais	θρύον
64 a (5)	Y. 8, 30 Pharm. = 240, 18 June	Diophantos, son of Apollodoros	Polemon	Ptolemais	κάλαμος
64 a (6)	Y. 8, 30 Pharm. = 240, 18 June	Diophantos, son of Apollodoros	Polemon	Ptolemais	κάλαμος
91	?	Dionysios	χ τοῦ παρὰ [Πύθ]ωνος (uncertain)	Ptolemais	σπέρματα πυρῶν

App. 2. Daybook of Python

Text	Type	Date (BC)	Sender	Banker	Subject
64 d Vo, l. 1-3 (Oxford)	Order for payment: χρημάτισον	Y. 11, 15 Mecheir = 237, 4 April	Asklepiades	Akeson	?
64 d Vo, l. 4-6 (Oxford)	Receipt: ὁμολογεῖ ἔχειν	Y. 11, 16 Mecheir = 237, 5 April	Dorion, <i>naukleros</i>	?	ἀγωγή ⁷
64 d Vo, l. 7 (Oxford)	Receipt: ὁμολογεῖ ἔχειν	idem	Dorion, <i>n[aukleros]</i>	?	?
64 d Vo, l. 8-9 (Oxford)	Receipt: ὁμολογεῖ ἔ[χειν]	idem	Dion, agent of Nikanor	?	?
64 d Vo, l. 10 (Oxford)	Receipt: ὁμολογεῖ [ἔχειν]	idem	Akeson, agent of Asklepiades	?	?
64 d Vo, l. 11 (Oxford)	Receipt: ὁμολογεῖ ἔχει<v>	idem	Apollodoros	Python?	?
64 d Vo, l. 12 (Oxford)	Receipt: ἔχειν	idem	Kallikrates Dorion?	?	?
64 d Vo, l. 13-20 (Oxford)	Order for payment: Δ[ιάγραφον]	idem	Nikanor, <i>nomarches?</i>	Python	sesam
SB XVIII 14041 (Dublin)	Order for payment: Διά[γραφον]	idem	Nikanor, <i>nomarches?</i>	Python	sesam

⁷ T. Reekmans, 'Parerga Papyrologica', *CdE* 27 (1952), p. 410.