

Labour and Family Separation in Roman Egypt

by

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Dedication

In loving memory of Colin Montgomery and John Nabney

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Abbreviations

Citations of papyri are abbreviated according to the Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic, and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca, and Tablets, which is accessible at the following link:

<http://papyri.info/docs/checklist> (accessed 25th November 2020).

Editorial Conventions

The transcription of Greek texts follow the Leiden conventions:

[$\alpha\beta\gamma$] Characters lost and restored by the editor

$\alpha(\beta\gamma)$ Modern expansion of an abbreviation or symbol

{ $\alpha\beta\gamma$ } Superfluous letters removed by the modern editor

< $\alpha\beta\gamma$ > Characters erroneously omitted by the original writer and restored by a modern editor

[] Characters deleted by an ancient writer

\ $\alpha\beta\gamma$ / Text added above the line by an ancient writer

$\alpha\beta\gamma$ Damaged or uncertain characters

... Illegible characters

A full list of the Leiden conventions is available at the following link:

<http://papyri.info/conventions.html> (accessed 25th November 2020).

Abstract

This dissertation examines the experience of families who were separated when one or more members left home to work in Roman Egypt, with a focus on the second century CE. These effects range from practical concerns such as maintaining communication links between family members and protecting vulnerable family members from exploitation by employers, to the emotional consequences of separation.

Chapter 2 compares how different families approached the problem of maintaining communication while separated, and how they organised the transportation of various items needed for work or personal use. In contrast to previous scholarship, I emphasize the difficulty of maintaining contact with absent family members. The various precautions taken by individuals to ensure the safe delivery of items provide evidence for difficulties in transportation. Less wealthy families used many different methods to ensure the safe transportation of the goods they sent each other, such as describing the contents of a package in an accompanying letter to reduce the risk of tampering. By contrast, wealthy families freely exchanged letters and other items without any mention of how these items were transported. This suggests they had access to secure communication methods which were unavailable to less wealthy families, most likely a personal letter-carrier. Wealth was therefore a significant factor in determining the ease of communication.

Chapter 3 examines the emotional effects of separation on families. Emotional expressions in letters have often been disregarded in previous scholarship as they are usually formulaic: however, there are compelling examples where formulaic greetings clearly carried

emotional weight. This chapter contains a discussion of the various techniques through which emotion is conveyed in letters, and it examines the types of emotion most commonly found in letters sent between separated family members. Negative emotions are prominent, such as anxiety concerning the health of absent family members and frustration over slow and difficult communication. Vulnerable family members such as children, the elderly and pregnant women were sources of special anxiety. These expressions of concern indicate that many letter writers cared deeply for their absent family members: individuals who receive good news from their family express their relief and describe their excitement at the prospect of being reunited with their family.

The fourth chapter discusses the various types of conflict created when family members were separated, such as disagreements with employers, with other individuals outside the family, and internal conflict between family members. Contrary to the common ancient trope of the male household head acting as a protector for the women and children of his household, evidence from letters indicates that women were often able to manage household affairs and lead the family through crises when their husbands or sons were absent for work. On the other hand, children sent away to work separately from the adult members of their household were very vulnerable to exploitation. Young workers often struggled to receive the correct compensation for their work and sometimes contended with more serious issues such as physical abuse from their supervisors. This suggests that the presence of the male head of household was not crucial to the safety of vulnerable family members, but the protection of an adult of any gender was valuable. Comparing these case studies with the patriarchal norms of the legal and administrative structures of Roman Egypt suggests the latter did not always reflect lived reality.

Chapter 1 Introduction

In the ancient world, there were many factors which threatened the cohesion of a family unit. Some common areas of stress which could lead to disintegration included interpersonal difficulties leading to events such as divorce, and the high mortality rate across the entire ancient world, especially among infants and women during childbirth.¹ This resulted in many families having a patchwork or composite structure: for instance, one household in Oxyrhynchos contained an orphan girl and her two maternal uncles (*P.Oxy.* 34.2713, Oxyrhynchos, c. 297 CE). Labour was another destabilising factor that could threaten family cohesion, but this has received relatively little attention in previous studies of the family in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt (3rd century BCE-7th century CE).

The demands of labour had the potential to result in family separation when one or more family members were required to leave home in order to work in a different location. The circumstances of these separations display significant variation in duration, distance and family configuration. The case studies in this dissertation involve separations lasting for various lengths of time. Some would have consisted of only a few weeks for a short business trip, while others lasted many months or even years: for instance, two work contracts for Harthotes' daughter Tahaunes show that she left home to work, first for a two-year period, and then a second period of two-and-a-half years.² Since her place of employment was a day's journey from her family home it is possible that she did not return there between the two contracts and remained

¹ Rowlandson and Lippert 2019, 327.

² *P.Mich. inv.* 4346+4446f and *P.Mich. inv.* 931 + *P.Col.* 10.249. See further Chapter 4 below and Claytor, Litinas and Nabney 2016, 104-117.

separated from her family for five years. Distance is another important variable which could shape a family's experience with separation, since travel in the ancient world was slow, difficult and potentially dangerous. The papyri attest to separation across a range of distances, from apprentices living with their master in the same village as their family home, to soldiers being sent hundreds of miles from their families.

Another significant variation in the evidence is which family member (or members) departed from the household. The two patterns of separation found most commonly are the male head of household leaving the family home to find work elsewhere, as in the cases of Apollonios *strategos* and the soldiers Tiberianus and Terentianus, or a child being sent away from home to work as attested in the contracts relating to the priest and public farmer Harthotes and several times in the administrative papers of Zenon. The effects of different family members leaving the household will be examined in detail in Chapter 4. A family's wealth and social status could also significantly impact their experience of separation: wealthy families such as that of Apollonios *strategos* could communicate easily and travel to visit each other frequently, a luxury which was not available to many of the other families discussed below.

This dissertation examines the effects of separation caused by the demands of labour on families whose lives are documented in papyri originating from Roman Egypt. These effects ranged from concerns about communication and transporting items between separated family members, to the emotional effects of separation. In addition to the primary documentary evidence, I also interact with previous scholarship on the family, labour and the economy, and transportation networks, both in Roman Egypt and in the Roman world in general. This dissertation fills a gap in the existing scholarship by analysing how labour could disrupt family life, both in the short term by creating stress over communication between separated family

members, and in the long term by permanently destabilising family relationships. I also examine how families adapted to the absence of individual members in different ways. My research adds to past scholarship on the Roman family, which has primarily focused on questions concerning family life cycles, processes of inheritance and the role of individual family members such as children, mothers or the elderly. Some previous studies have touched on the role of labour in the Roman family, but this has mostly involved examining how certain professions were passed down within families, and other methods by which children were trained for work (such as apprenticeships). There has been relatively little discussion of family separation, and so this dissertation fills a gap in the scholarship by examining this facet of family life in depth.

Defining the ancient family

Previous scholarship on the ancient family has drawn a distinction between a household and an extended family. The former is defined as a group of people living together, some of whom may not be related by blood if the household included servants or other live-in staff, whereas an extended family would include a wider group of relatives who lived in multiple locations.³ Nevett 2011 notes that the distinction between household and family is particularly important in archaeology, since it is almost never possible to know for certain whether all the inhabitants of an excavated house were related by blood. Conversely, many textual sources allow the reconstruction of a family tree but do not specify where different family members were living.⁴ Although the papyri fall into the latter category and in some instances it is certainly difficult to discern where family members are located, a significant number of texts provide information about family locations, particularly when multiple texts survive which relate to the

³ For further discussion of these terms, see Rowlandson and Lippert 2019, 327-328 and Nevett 2011, 16.

⁴ Nevett 2011, 16.

same family. Certain genres of text are also more likely to provide information about the locations of family members: for instance, work contracts usually mention the location of employment, and letters sometimes include references to the whereabouts of the sender, the recipient, or both.

On the other hand, reconstructing family relationships from papyri is often far from straightforward: one of the most challenging aspects of the evidence from the papyri is the fact that letter writers in Roman Egypt used familial terms in a much more loose manner than their strictly literal meanings. For instance, it was common for a wife to address her husband as ‘brother’ (as Aline does several times with her husband Apollonios).⁵ This practice makes reconstructing family relationships within a group of documents a very challenging task, and in many cases it is simply impossible to know for certain how literally familial terms should be interpreted. Much ink has been spilt over the exact nature of some of the relationships in the documents discussed in this dissertation. For example, the soldier Terentianus sometimes addresses Tiberianus as his father (e.g. *P.Mich.* 8.467 verso), but he also calls a man called Ptolemaios his father multiple times in his letters (e.g. *P.Mich.* 8.467 line 32 and *P.Mich.* 8.471 line 21, lines 28-29). On several occasions, Terentianus refers to both men as ‘father’ in a single document, as in *P.Mich.* 8.467 line 1 (Tiberianus) and line 32 (Ptolemaios). Various solutions have been proposed, such as that Tiberianus was Terentianus’ adopted father whereas Ptolemaios was his biological father.⁶

Rather than entering into these protracted debates for the documents in this project, I shall instead use a very loose definition of what constitutes a ‘family’ in order to circumvent

⁵ e.g. *P.Giss.Apoll.* 8 line 1; *P.Giss.Apoll.* 11 lines 1-2. For more discussion of the non-literal use of kin terms in Greek, see Dickey 2004.

⁶ For an overview of the debate, see the Trismegistos archive summary, available at the following link: www.trismegistos.org/archive/54 (accessed January 19th 2021).

these issues. For the purpose of this project, a ‘family’ denotes a group of individuals who relied on each other for emotional support, communicated frequently when separated, and had shared economic interests. It is common to find evidence of extended family groups beyond a single nuclear family engaging in a variety of activities: for instance, in the documents concerning the family of Philsarapis (Tebtynis, 89-224 CE), a man and his brother leased a plot of land jointly with their three cousins (*P.Fam.Tebt.* 44), and years later collaborated with more cousins to provide housing for various extended family members (*P.Fam.Tebt.* 48). There is also evidence for strong emotional ties existing with extended family members: for instance, *I.Hermop.Magna* 71 describes two cousins as having a very devoted relationship, as if they were brothers, or father and son.

Under this definition, a group of people designated as ‘family’ may not be related by blood or through formal adoption, and may not even have cohabited at any point in their lives. It is therefore possible that some of the archives discussed below feature groups that would not have been considered a ‘family’ by ancient standards. However, people in the ancient world did acknowledge that individuals who were not related by blood could have very strong ties, even outside the formal adoption system. For instance, in *P.Oxy.* 50.3555 (Oxyrhynchos, first or second century CE) an elderly woman named Thermouthion describes how she raised a slave girl in her house and views her as her own daughter and even expects to receive care in her old age from this girl as was customary in the Greek world:

θεραπαινίδιον μου οικογενέ[ς], | οὗ ἔστιν ὄνομα Πείνα, ἠγάπη|σα καὶ ἐτημέλησα ὡς
 θυγάτριον(ν) | ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι τοῦ ἡλικίας γενόμε|νον ἔχειν με γηροβοσκόν, | γυναῖκα
 ἀβοήθητον οὕσαν | καὶ μόνην.

I loved a slave girl, whose name is Peina and who was born in my house, and I looked after her like a daughter in the hope that when she reached maturity she would take care of me in my old age, since I am a woman without any help, and I am alone (lines 4-10).⁷

⁷ Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this dissertation are my own.

Papyri and the ancient family

The valuable contribution of papyrological evidence to the study of the ancient family has long been recognised and numerous studies on the ancient family make significant use of papyrus evidence. Recent edited volumes compiled by Rawson 2011 and Evans Grubbs and Parkin 2013 provide overviews of the current state of studies of the family and childhood in the ancient world and draw on papyrus evidence throughout. Dixon's important 1992 monograph on the Roman family also cites papyri at several key points.⁸ One major recent study on the subject of the family in Roman Egypt specifically is Sabine Huebner's 2013 volume, which investigates family life cycles with a particular emphasis on strategies people employed to ensure their care during old age, should they be fortunate enough to reach it.⁹ Huebner examines the differences between urban and rural families as well as the effects of the cultural and economic background of Roman Egypt on families. Huebner has also edited volumes which examine the effects of parental mortality or absence on families: fatherless families are discussed in Huebner 2009, and motherless families will receive the same treatment in Huebner 2021. Demographic studies such as Bagnall and Frier 1994, and Clarysse and Thompson 2006 are hugely valuable since aggregate data from census records can provide insights into various subjects such as family life cycles and what household sizes were most common.

Some aspects of the relationship between labour and the ancient family have been examined in previous scholarship. In relation to Roman Egypt, one topic which has received particular attention is the heritability of various professions within families, as examined by

⁸ e.g. 65-66 in a discussion of marriage contracts.

⁹ The concept of the 'family cycle' was popularised by Chayanov 1966, 254-256. See also Dixon 1992, 6 and Huebner 2013, 47.

Arlt 2011 for families of notaries in Ptolemaic Thebes and Uytterhoeven 2009, 330-339 for undertakers at Hawara. There have also been studies of apprenticeships and other methods for training children for work. The classic study of child labour is Bradley 1985, and updated examinations of the same subject can now be found in Laes 2011 and Vuolanto 2015.¹⁰ Women's labour has also received scholarly attention in a brief article by Van Minnen,¹¹ and numerous sources written by women relating to their own and others' labour are collected in Bagnall and Cribiore 2006.

There have also been various studies of economic aspects of the Roman family outside Egypt, notably Richard Saller's work on property inheritance.¹² Gardner and Wiedemann's 1991 sourcebook contains a chapter grouping some of the major sources on the topic.¹³ Most of the families discussed in this dissertation were not part of the elite ruling class, and it is part of the attraction of the papyri that they provide a wealth of evidence for this large group who are underrepresented in other sources. In recent years the non-elite family has received increased scholarly attention: some groups that have received particular attention include soldiers' families (e.g. Phang 2001, Allison 2011), families of slaves and freedmen (e.g. Mouritsen 2011), and families in rural areas of Italy (e.g. Dyson 2011).¹⁴ These studies draw on a variety of sources and methodologies: one type of source that has received special attention is the contribution of tombstones.¹⁵

The papyri are a very valuable source for the day-to-day incidents of family life, as well as significant events in a family's life cycle such as births, marriages, divorces and deaths, and

¹⁰ 148-221.

¹¹ Van Minnen 1998, 201-203.

¹² Saller 1997 and Saller 2011.

¹³ Chapter 4, 68-85.

¹⁴ Dixon 1992 also discusses slave families and military families briefly at 53-4 and 55-57 respectively.

¹⁵ Saller and Shaw 1984, Martin 1996.

times of crisis such as various interactions with the legal system. It is however important to acknowledge that the evidence from the papyri is not fully representative of every type of person who lived in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. For instance, both the poorest and wealthiest social levels in Egypt are underrepresented in the papyri, since very poor families would be unable to access literacy even second-hand through a scribe, and very little evidence survives from Alexandria where the wealthiest families would have lived.¹⁶

Types of evidence

Different genres of documentary text can provide varied types of evidence for certain aspects of family life, and each family archive discussed in this dissertation contains different proportions of these document types. This dissertation makes use of texts from numerous different genres to build up a picture of family separation.¹⁷ Work contracts supply practical information about the terms of employment for family members, such as the duration of a job and working conditions. *Paramone* contracts are a subset of these work contracts: they consist of a special type of arrangement where the employee works to pay off a loan or loan interest, usually over a period of several years.¹⁸ These contracts typically contain specific formulaic clauses relating to the working conditions of employees and appear prominently in Chapter 4. Census returns supply evidence for family life cycles, especially when several returns are preserved for the same family (as in the documents of Harthotes discussed in Chapter 4), and in aggregate can also provide insights into typical family sizes and habitation patterns.¹⁹ Petitions

¹⁶ See Rowlandson and Lippert 2019, 328.

¹⁷ The genres discussed below are only a small subset of the different types of documentary papyri, which are listed and discussed in detail in Palme 2009.

¹⁸ Adams 1964 provides a detailed examination of *paramone* contracts as a documentary genre.

¹⁹ See Bagnall and Frier 1994 and Clarysse and Thompson 2006 for detailed examinations of how census data, along with other evidence, can be used to reconstruct the demography of Roman and Ptolemaic Egypt respectively. For more on the Roman census, see Bagnall 1991.

(such as those sent to Zenon in Chapter 4) generally document moments of crisis where an outside authority is needed to resolve a situation: for instance, when an employee experiences abuse at work. The power dynamic that existed between the people involved in a document is crucial to its interpretation. For instance, it was common for petition writers to exaggerate the negative aspects of their situation in order to elicit sympathy from their reader, and it is therefore important to exercise caution before accepting claims made in this type of document.

Letters

Much of the evidence in this dissertation is drawn from papyrus letters, primarily from the Roman period (1st century BCE-7th century CE).²⁰ Most of the letters discussed in this dissertation are exchanged between members of the same family for a variety of purposes: the most common are checking the safety of the recipient; providing reassurances of the sender's health; arranging transportation of items or people; and conveying important news such as the birth of a child or completion of a building project at home. The exception to this are the letters from the documents of Zenon discussed in Chapter 4, where a number of different families interact with the same employer to resolve various problems: most commonly, an employee has not received wages or other provisions which were part of the terms of their employment, or has been suffering abuse at work. Letters also provide unique insight into aspects of the ancient economy which cannot be studied through other documents such as contracts and receipts, primarily by giving insight into the process of economic decision-making. For instance, letters can provide evidence of individuals and families strategizing their approach to various economic situations, and the factors and considerations involved in making economic decisions.

²⁰ For further lengthy discussion on the definition of the letter as a documentary genre, see Reinard 2016, 57-126.

There are some limitations to the evidence which can be drawn from letters. It is worth noting that the vast majority of papyrus letters (more than 90 percent) do not contain a date, especially those from the Roman period.²¹ The documents of Zenon are one important exception, because Zenon himself noted the date of receipt on each letter. As a result, most of the dates mentioned in this dissertation are approximate and generally result from palaeographic dating of a document's hand, a process which is not always reliable.²² Some undated letters from archives can be assigned a date based on other factors: for instance, the letters sent by the family of Apollonios *strategos* can be dated within a relatively narrow timeframe because other documents in the archive contain precise dates, and some historical events are also mentioned in the letters (principally events from the Second Roman-Jewish War). The papyri also only enable the study of a relatively small geographical area, since for the most part they only represent areas of Egypt outside Alexandria and the Nile Delta. Those regions, as well as most areas outside Egypt do not have the arid climactic conditions conducive to the preservation of papyrus and therefore very few papyri survive to provide evidence from those regions.

Most previous scholarship on papyrus letters has focused primarily on questions of language and form: for instance, Eleanor Dickey's 2004 volume on forms of address in letters. Other aspects of ancient letters are beginning to receive more attention in modern scholarship: for instance, the materiality of letters is the subject of a recent monograph by Antonia Sarri.²³ The content of papyrus letters received relatively little attention until Bagnall and Cribiore's study of women's letters which was first published in 2006. Another important monograph

²¹ Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 91-92.

²² For a discussion of the special challenges involved in the palaeographic dating of letters, see Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 92-93.

²³ Sarri 2018.

focusing on the content of papyrus letters is Reinard's 2016 study of the evidence about the ancient economy which is supplied by papyrus letters.

Outside papyrology, scholarship on letters is significantly more diverse, and the importance of letters for investigating labour and family separation has long been recognised.²⁴ Some of the first historical studies to make extensive use of collections of letters were those by Thomas and Znaniecki 1918, 1919–1920, 1927 examining Polish peasants, and their methodology went on to become hugely influential. Subsequent works such as Stephenson 1929 and Blegen 1931 on Scandinavian migrants cemented the importance of letters as a way to include the perspectives of migrants themselves into the study of migration. Evidence from letters can provide unique evidence about the lived experience of migrants, motives for migration and migrants' adaptation to their new location.²⁵ Another scholarly development which is significant for this dissertation is the advent of the New Social History, where historians began to reassess the importance of various features of migrant letters which had previously been dismissed as trivial, such as queries about health, personal greetings to friends and other family members.²⁶

Archives

Most of the documents discussed in this dissertation are drawn from larger groups of written texts known as archives. A papyrus archive is a group of documents collected by an individual or family, stored together and subsequently rediscovered.²⁷ These groups range in size

²⁴ For a comprehensive recent bibliography on migrant letters, see Sanfilippo 2015, Chapter 2. For a summary of trends in scholarship on the subject of migrant letters, see Borges and Cancian 2016.

²⁵ Borges and Cancian 2016, 282.

²⁶ See for example Gerber 2006, 55.

²⁷ Most archives were recovered either through excavation or dismantling papyrus cartonnage. For further discussion of the relevance of evidence from archives for the study of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, see Waebens 2019, Vandorpe 2009 and Posner 1972.

from a handful of letters to hundreds of documents across multiple genres, and at the time of writing a total of 576 papyrus archives have been identified, dating from the 3rd century BCE to the 8th century CE.²⁸ Reasons for preservation vary by archive: many archives consisting of family letters were probably saved for sentimental reasons, but other family archives containing contracts and administrative documents (such as the Harthotes Archive) were preserved to provide proof of certain transactions or to ensure a family's legal rights. The Zenon Archive differs from the other archives in this dissertation as it documents an employer rather than a family. The evidence from this archive, discussed in Chapter 4, provides valuable insights into how multiple families interacted with the same employer.

Archives also vary in the perspective they provide on a situation of separation: most only preserve one side of a correspondence and so in some cases an archive will only supply insight into the migrant's situation, or the situation of the family they left behind, but not both.²⁹ For example, the letters in the Archive of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia were all sent by Paniskos, who is travelling, to his wife Ploutogeneia at home. There are, however, plenty of exceptions to this dichotomy of migrant versus family perspectives in the papyri. For instance, most of the letters in the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus were sent between two migrants, who were both travelling away from their families while serving in the military. Additionally, the locations of family members and the combinations of people cohabiting do not always remain static over the course of an archive. For example, the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* contains letters written to Apollonios, which he sometimes received while living with his wife and children and at other

²⁸ According to the Trismegistos archive database, accessible at <https://www.trismegistos.org/arch/> (accessed February 3rd 2021).

²⁹ This simplistic division into 'migrant' or 'home' perspectives is a feature of some scholarship on migrant letters across a variety of historical and geographic scopes. It is common for scholarship on migrant letters to focus on the perspective of the migrants and neglect that of the family left at home: see Borges and Cancian 2016, 282.

times when he was travelling alone. The majority of the letters in the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus are sent between the two men, but their locations changed repeatedly throughout their correspondence.

For the purposes of this dissertation, it was not practical to collect and study every document relevant to family separation and labour, as this would produce a data set containing many thousands of items. As a comparison, Reinard's comprehensive study of every papyrus letter containing evidence concerning the ancient economy runs to over 1100 pages, and devotes almost 300 pages to discussing five archives in great depth.³⁰ For similar reasons, it was also not possible to examine all 576 currently known papyrus archives. Furthermore, new documents relevant to the subject of this dissertation are published constantly; therefore, any attempt at a thoroughly comprehensive study would rapidly become outdated. Instead, after a general review of the available evidence I selected a small number of archives to use as case studies.³¹

The archives in this dissertation were chosen to represent a diverse range of family circumstances, wealth, and occupations. With one exception (the Zenon Archive, which features in Chapter 4), the archives selected date from the Roman period and are mostly from the second century CE. A very large proportion of the surviving papyri from Roman Egypt date to this century and it is therefore common for studies using papyrus evidence to focus heavily on this century due since there is plentiful evidence available. Where it is appropriate, I have also included evidence from individual papyri which do not belong to archives: these texts cover a broader timespan and enable some inferences concerning continuity with the Ptolemaic period and Late Antiquity. Although these individual documents may lack the broader context available

³⁰ 483-768.

³¹ For a recent general overview of archives as a historical source, see Waebens 2019.

with documents drawn from archives, they can assist with establishing that an archival case study is indicative of broader trends.

Overview

This dissertation is made up of three body chapters, each of which examines one aspect of the experience of families who were separated when one or more members left home to work. These effects range from practical concerns such as maintaining communication and transportation links between family members and protecting vulnerable family members from exploitation by employers, to the emotional consequences of separation.

Chapter 2 uses three case studies to compare how different families approached the problem of maintaining communication while separated and organised the transportation of various items needed for work or personal use. In contrast to previous scholarship, I emphasise the significant challenges of maintaining contact with absent family members in the ancient world. Tracing instances of failed communication is a difficult task since undelivered letters are generally not preserved in archives, and so the most plentiful source of evidence for the difficulties of the communication process are the various precautions taken by individuals to ensure the safe delivery of items.

The Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus shows how two men used their extensive network of military contacts to send each other a huge variety of items, many of which were clearly unrelated to their work in the military and must therefore have either been supplied as favours to friends and family members, or have been exchanged as part of a small trading operation. Tiberianus and Terentianus use a variety of elaborate methods to ensure the safe transportation of the goods they send each other, including seals and detailed descriptions of the

contents of a package in an accompanying letter to reduce the risk of tampering. The one-sided correspondence of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia involves similar techniques to ensure the safe transportation of items, though most of their communication problems are in fact attributable to interpersonal difficulties.

These archives are contrasted with the much wealthier family of Apollonios *strategos*, who exchanged numerous letters and other items without any mention of how they were transported between two locations around 150km apart. A comparison of these archives shows that a family's wealth was a significant factor in determining the ease of communication between family members: the silence on the subject of transportation in the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* suggests that the family had access to an easy and secure method to convey letters and other goods, most likely a servant who was tasked with carrying items between the two locations. The occupation of family members could also be a significant determiner of the size of their network: families with military connections such as Tiberianus and Terentianus or those with government positions or trade contacts would likely have more contacts across a larger geographic area.

In the third chapter, I examine the emotional effects of separation on families using letters drawn from several different archives. Evidence relating to emotion drawn from letters on this subject is often dismissed due to the formulaic nature of much of the evidence: however, there are compelling examples where formulaic greetings clearly carried emotional weight since a writer notices their absence in a previous letter with consternation. This chapter also contains a discussion of the various techniques through which emotion is conveyed in letters, before examining the types of emotion most commonly found in letters sent between separated family members. Negative emotions are very prominent: anxiety over the health and safety of absent

family members is frequently expressed, and frustration over slow and difficult communication is another common theme. Vulnerable family members such as children, the elderly and pregnant women were sources of special anxiety, as was anyone travelling to a particularly hazardous location. However, these expressions of concern indicate that letter writers cared deeply for their absent family members, especially parents and children. Individuals who receive news that their family is safe and well express their joy and relief. There are also examples where letter writers describe their excitement at the prospect of being eventually reunited with their family.

The fourth chapter discusses the various types of conflict created when family members were separated, such as disagreements with employers, with other individuals outside the family, and also internal conflict between family members. Contrary to the common ancient trope of the male household head acting as a protector for the women and children of his household, evidence from letters indicates that women were often able to manage household affairs and lead the family through crises when their husbands or sons were absent for work. This is exemplified by the Archive of Apollonios *strategos*, where Apollonios' mother Eudaimonis is seen running the family weaving business and handling various other family matters while her son, the male head of the family, was away undertaking government duties. On the other hand, children sent away from the adult members of their household to work were especially vulnerable to exploitation. Evidence from the Zenon Archive indicates that young workers often struggled to receive the correct compensation for their work and sometimes contended with more serious issues in the workplace such as physical abuse from their supervisors. These risks could be mitigated by sending a child to work for a trusted friend, as seems to be the case in the Harthotes Archive. A comparison of these three archives suggests that the presence of the male head of household was not a crucial factor for the safety of the rest of the family. Instead, the protection of an adult of

any gender could be effective: for instance, the Zenon Archive provides evidence of a woman named Simale intervening to stop her son's abuse at the hands of his employer. Comparing these case studies with the patriarchal norms of the legal and administrative structures of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt suggests that these structures did not always reflect the lived reality of families in the ancient world.

Chapter 2 Transportation and Communication

This chapter examines the processes by which separated family members arranged transportation of letters and various other items needed for work, trade or personal use. By comparing three case studies, I explore the factors that influenced various aspects of a family's network. A family's wealth was the single most important factor in determining the size of their communication network and the ease and frequency with which they were able to make use of it to transport letters and other items. Money could ease communication in a variety of ways, for instance by enabling a family to use labour from their own personal slaves to convey letters and items, and also providing easier access to scribes, writing materials and literacy skills in general. Rich families were also much more likely to travel in person for non-essential visits to family members since they could more easily afford the expenses involved. Another important factor that determined the size and uses of a family's network was occupation: people involved in the military, government positions and trade would naturally have had larger networks than those with less mobile occupations.

Most of the evidence in this chapter is drawn from archives, since these provide more complete information concerning the networks surrounding an individual family, following the progress of items from sending to receipt, and sequences involving multiple exchanges of items or repeat requests for the same item. This type of information cannot usually be obtained from single letters or from other document types. The portions of family correspondence dealing with transportation of goods represent an information exchange between various family members, with information falling into three categories that mark distinct stages of a transaction of this

sort: descriptions of items that were requested, items that were sent (with or without a request from the receiving party) and items that were received. In some instances, different stages of multiple transactions are described in the same letter: for instance, a letter writer may acknowledge receipt of some items sent by the letter's recipient, whilst also describing items they are sending in return, or requesting additional items be sent to them.

It is rare however that more than one of these stages of a specific transaction is documented in multiple documents in a family archive, which may have occurred for several different reasons. Most of the archives discussed in this chapter only preserve one side of a correspondence, so it is common to find references to either sending or receiving a particular item, but not both. Letter writers frequently request that their family members send them items, but it is often impossible to determine whether these requests were fulfilled, the method of transportation used or how long it would take for a requested item to be received. Another limitation of the evidence is that it only preserves information concerning transactions that was written down. It is doubtless true that family members sent many letters and other items to each other without explicitly noting the fact in a letter, either because they trusted the messenger or because they conveyed the items to the required destination in person. Alternatively, one or more of the stages could have been communicated through a verbal message passed on by a trusted third party such as another family member, friend or other person known to be reliable: this could have occurred separately from or together with the transfer of the items in question. For example, it is possible to imagine that someone receiving an item would send verbal confirmation of receipt back with the messenger if they were returning back to the location of the sender. This is documented in the Archive of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia, news of a letter's safe

receipt is passed back to Paniskos without Ploutogeneia's consent, and it is implied that Paniskos obtained this information by asking the letter carrier in person.

The three archives which form the primary focus of this chapter have been selected to showcase the diverse ways a family could use their communication network, and also the limitations of these networks. The Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus (Karani, first quarter of the second century CE) shows how two men with a close personal bond,³² both employed in the military, received supplies from home for their personal use, but also sent each other an assortment of goods which appear to have had no relation to their military careers.³³ This may indicate that the men were involved in a small-scale trading operation (perhaps taking advantage of price differences in the various locations through which they passed). Some of their transactions were certainly to obtain items as a favour for friends, extended family members, or military colleagues and their families while on their travels: one example of this is mentioned in *P.Mich.* 8.469 lines 4-8, where Terentianus passes on a message from his mother asking Tiberianus to buy several items for her, if they are available at a reasonable price. Although the distances involved were for the most part relatively small, they used a variety of complicated methods to send their items (which will be discussed further below). In some instances, a family member brought supplies to Tiberianus in person (*P.Mich.* 8.474 lines 8-9); at other times, the men sent packages with friends or acquaintances who were travelling in the right direction and used seals and descriptions of the contents in their letters to ensure the safe transportation of their items. Many of the messengers who facilitated these transactions were soldiers or army

³² For more discussion of the relationship between Tiberianus and Terentianus, see the Introduction.

³³ For a complete list of all items sent, received and requested in this archive, see Table 1.

veterans,³⁴ suggesting that the two men were taking advantage of an informal social network which existed amongst members of the military.³⁵

The letters of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia (Philadelphia, end of the third century CE) show a husband who travelled to Koptos on business sending and receiving various goods from his wife who was probably located in Philadelphia, across a distance of around 500km.³⁶ The precise nature of Paniskos' employment and the reason for his extended stay in Koptos are both unclear. The family appears to have been moderately financially prosperous: Ploutogeneia owns gold jewellery which must be concealed when she is travelling (*P.Mich.* 3.214 lines 32-34); Paniskos leaves instructions to make gold anklets for his daughter (*P.Mich.* 3.218 line 9) and there are often references to large sums of money in the texts (for instance, *P.Mich.* 3.216 line 16; *P.Mich.* 3.217 line 26; *P.Mich.* 3.218 line 9; *P.Mich.* 3.220 lines 10-17). Several of the letters are clearly written by different professional scribes, another indication that the family had significant resources. Although the exchange of items in this archive is considerably less complicated than the transactions in the archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus, Paniskos and Ploutogeneia can be observed using similar strategies for the safe transportation of their goods. Like Tiberianus and Terentianus, they mostly rely on acquaintances to carry items between Koptos and Philadelphia, unless it is possible for one of them to convey the items in person. Paniskos and Ploutogeneia experience severe difficulties in communication by letter, although this cannot be attributed to the most obvious possible cause, that letters were going astray in transit and never reaching their intended recipient. In *P.Mich.* 3.217, Paniskos complains that he has written several letters to Ploutogeneia but has not received a response from her for some time. He claims that the letter

³⁴ For example, an unnamed soldier at *P.Mich.* 8.476 lines 6-7, and a veteran whose name is lost in lacuna at *P.Mich.* 8.468 lines 4-6.

³⁵ Reinard 2016, 693-768.

³⁶ For a complete list of all items sent, received and requested in this archive, see Table 2.

carrier told him that his letters were delivered, and so he knows that they did not get lost in transit and she is deliberately ignoring him (lines 20-25). Therefore the communication problems in this archive seem to stem from interpersonal difficulties rather than a failure of the family's transportation network.

In the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* (Hermopolis, first quarter of the second century CE), the separation of the family of Apollonios was caused by his appointment as *strategos* of the Apollonopolites Heptakomia in Upper Egypt.³⁷ Part of his family, including his wife and younger children, moved to Heptakomia with him, but his mother and eldest daughter remained behind to manage the family estate and weaving business in Hermopolis. The two parts of the family sent items back and forth occasionally, but unlike the other two archives where a variety of items are sent and requested, every item mentioned in the family's letters is a piece of clothing, or another textile-related item: some items may have been related to the weaving business, and others were probably personal items. In contrast to the other two archives, there is a noticeable silence within the archive on the subject of precisely how these items were transported over the 150 km distance between the two towns, suggesting that Apollonios' family had access to a reliable method of transportation that was not available to Tiberianus and his family. Given the family's significant wealth and high social status, it is probable that they used family slaves or servants to convey letters and other items between Hermopolis and Heptakomia, thereby creating their own family transportation network. The family certainly owned slaves, since one is mentioned in *P.Giss.Apoll.* 9 (see below for further discussion). Slaves were very rare in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, making up less than 4% of the population, and only the most wealthy Greek families would have owned them.³⁸ Therefore this strategy was unavailable

³⁷ For a complete list of all items sent, received and requested in this archive, see Table 3.

³⁸ Clarysse and Thompson 2006 vol. 2, 262-284.

to the vast majority of families in Egypt, including those represented by the two archives mentioned above, but Apollonios' family evidently considered that the ease of communication was worth the expense.

The most important recent study of transportation in the papyri is Patrick Reinard's 2016 book *Kommunikation und Ökonomie*. This comprehensive work examines in detail the evidence concerning the ancient economy which can be extracted from papyrus letters, which has until recently been severely underestimated. Reinard brought attention to the valuable information which letters can provide concerning communication networks linking employers and employees, business associates, and family members with common economic interests.³⁹

Papyrus letters preserve numerous requests for items from places at some distance from the location of the sender. These requests may indicate local shortages, or that goods were transported for an economic purpose: for instance, to take advantage of higher or lower prices commanded by a particular commodity in a certain location.⁴⁰ One instance of the former can be found in the ostraka from Mons Claudianus in the Eastern Desert region of Egypt: in *O.Claud.* 2.285 a man named Iason asks his brother to send him bread because he is unable to buy any in his current location. The Archive of Apollonios *strategos* supplies evidence for strategic purchasing of certain goods, where a woman named Arsis writes to Apollonios describing how she bought some linen cloths near Apollonios' location because she heard that they were cheap there (*P.Giss.Apoll.* 21 lines 11-14). For certain goods such as clothing or food, it is also possible that such requests had an emotional dimension rather than (or in addition to) a practical or economic purpose: a family member might prefer home-cooked food or clothing made specially for them by their mother or wife over items purchased in their current location. Although goods

³⁹ Reinard 2016, 1003-15.

⁴⁰ Reinard 2016, 1003-15.

were sometimes transported in bulk, it was most common for items to be conveyed in small quantities by messengers, who usually had another primary reason for making a journey: many examples of this can be seen throughout this chapter.

Reinard discusses two of the three archives featured in this chapter at considerable length, namely, the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* (pp. 563-692) and the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus (pp. 693-768). He focuses on analysing each archive in detail, determining various aspects of the network displayed in the archive such as the locations of individual family members, how frequently they changed locations, the types of connections each person had and the methods each family used to move letters and goods around their network. While many of these details cannot be determined for certain and could be subject for further debate, this chapter will instead take a broader view and primarily focus on comparing the transportation networks of the three families to see how different occupations and levels of wealth impacted the size of these networks and how frequently they were used. Reinard devotes only three pages to comparing the five archives he examines in his book, and his analysis focuses primarily on confirming larger trends in transportation to support his thesis of relatively easy and efficient networks of communication throughout Egypt.⁴¹ Therefore there is more to be said on how differing family circumstances impacted the size and nature of their networks and how families used them.

Furthermore, Reinard's interest in emphasising the relative ease of transportation leads him to give less attention to archives where communication is difficult and transportation runs into problems, and thus situations of this sort require further attention. Terpstra has more to say on the risks of transportation and the slow speed and difficulty of information transfer in his

⁴¹ 769-771.

2013 monograph on trade networks in the Roman world, but he draws evidence primarily from Italian towns and the province of Asia and makes only a few glancing references to the situation in Egypt and evidence from the papyri. However, the task of tracing transportation difficulties is by no means straightforward, since instances of failed communication leave little or no trace in the documentation in many cases: for example, letters which were lost in transit and therefore never delivered would be unlikely to end up in archives, and if such letters survive to the present day they would also be indistinguishable from other finds of individual documents caused by dumping or other processes, or those found in cartonnage.

One major source of evidence for transportation difficulties in the ancient world is supplied by the frequent indications that individuals sending and receiving letters and other items experienced a significant degree of anxiety concerning their successful transportation, and felt the need to take various precautions to ensure the safety of their items while in transit. Security of items is frequently raised as a concern in the papyri (including the archives discussed below), and some of the measures taken to ensure safe transportation of items are familiar from methods used to ensure document security in many ancient cultures.

On a very basic level, most items or documents would require protection from the elements during transportation: for small items this could be supplied by a bag, a box or any other container repurposed from a variety of uses, whereas for documents this protection could take the form of an outer casing of papyrus or a wrapper made of some other material. Some of the protective measures in the examples below include placing items in a basket (*P.Mich.* 8.481 lines 5-8), sewing items inside a cloth bag (*P.Mich.* 8.468 lines 8-11) or even packing them in a chicken coop (*P.Mich.* 8.468 lines 15-20). One example of a measure taken to protect a

document can be supplied by *P.Mich. inv. 5739* (September 3, 71 BCE).⁴² When this contract was excavated from a private dwelling in Karanis, it was enclosed in a leather pouch which was clearly designed to protect this important document during storage, and possibly also during transport.

The use of seals to secure bags or other containers holding multiple items is described in several of the archives examined below. The authority of an unbroken seal with a familiar design known to belong to the sender as a demonstration of the safe transportation of the items inside a container would have been understood by the parties involved in the transaction due to the commonplace use of seals on documents across many ancient cultures.⁴³ For instance, in *P.Mich. 8.467* lines 23-25, Terentianus instructs his father to describe the seals on any packages he sends so he knows they have not been tampered with during transportation.

Another strategy to ensure security of items sent between various locations is the use of multiple copies of the same information. In the case of document security, the use of multiple copies is attested in Ptolemaic double documents. Two copies of the same text were made on the same sheet of papyrus: one was rolled up and sealed and the second was left visible for consultation. If there was a dispute about the contents of the visible document, the sealed document could be opened and read to confirm the contents. A similar technique was used in the Roman period for military diplomas written on bronze.⁴⁴ In the case of object security, a package containing multiple items was accompanied by a letter listing the contents: the two could be compared upon receipt to ensure that the items listed were found in the parcel. This occurs frequently in the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus: for instance in *P.Mich. 8.481*, a letter

⁴² An edition of this text by J. Wegner and W. G. Claytor is forthcoming.

⁴³ Walker 2007, 151.

⁴⁴ For further discussion of bronze military diplomas, see Waebens 2019, 209-210.

accompanying a basket of goods, Terentianus asks Tasoucharion to write back and describe the contents of the basket, presumably so that he can confirm that everything he put in the basket reached her safely without being subject to tampering (lines 5-8). Similarly, many letters in these archives contain passages describing other letters which had recently been sent to the same person, or confirming the receipt of previous letters from the letter's recipient. For instance, in *P.Mich.* 3.220 Paniskos mentions to his wife that he sent another letter containing the same information with a different messenger, but he is repeating the message again in case Ploutogeneia did not receive his other letter (lines 4-11).

What items were sent, and why?

It is very common to find various items being sent and requested by the senders of papyrus letters: Reinard 2016 supplies a table listing all items sent and requested in all papyrus letters and ostraka that were published at the time of writing, arranged alphabetically by the word used for the designated item, which runs for 200 pages.⁴⁵ Tables listing all items sent, received and requested between family members in the three archives under discussion have been included at the end of this chapter. For the purposes of this chapter, I have restricted the analysis to items which were exchanged directly between family members, rather than every item mentioned within an archive. This has the largest effect on the Archive of Apollonios *strategos*, since documents from that archive make references to items sent by or received from various family friends, employees, and other individuals whose relationship to the family is unclear. The exclusion of these items allows a more direct comparison between this archive and the two other archives in this chapter which are both focused more closely on a small family group.

⁴⁵ 130-330.

The most common items sent and requested across all papyrus letters are various foodstuffs such as grains, bread, honey, olives and oil. Surprisingly, this also includes perishable items such as meat, fruit and vegetables.⁴⁶ Clothing and other textiles are also commonly mentioned. These trends are borne out to a certain degree in the three archives examined in this chapter: the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus and the Archive of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia both include many mentions of food and clothing. Every named item transported directly between family members in the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* is an item of clothing or textile-related in some way: this may partially be ascribed to influence from the family's weaving business, but as will be discussed below many of the items were more likely intended for personal use. The prevalence of clothing and textile-related items in this archive may also be due to the fact that the majority of the letters are exchanged between Apollonios and his wife and mother, the two women in his life who would be responsible for keeping him clothed, whereas most of the letters in the other two archives are sent by men (though even letters sent between two men can contain references to clothing).⁴⁷

Imported goods and luxury items do not appear frequently among the items sent and requested in any of the three archives, and such items rarely appear in the rest of the papyri also.⁴⁸ One exception to this may be found in the Archive of Apollonios *strategos*, where Eudaimonis mentions that her son asked her to look for (and presumably send him) a *λακόνιον*, a 'Laconian garment', but she was unable to find it and could only produce a worn-out *ἄτταλιανόν*, 'Attalian garment' (*P.Giss.Apoll.* 1 lines 5-6). It is unsurprising that this archive

⁴⁶ Reinard 2016, 331-355.

⁴⁷ For instance, *P.Mich.* 8.467 and *P.Mich.* 8.468.

⁴⁸ Reinard 2016, 331.

furnishes references to foreign imports given the higher wealth and status of Apollonios' family compared with the other families discussed in this chapter.

Some of the items transported by these families were clearly required as part of the employment or business concerns that took the family member away from home, or were intended for personal use by the recipient; however, many items cannot be easily placed in one of these categories. For instance, in the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus, items of clothing may be part of a military uniform and in the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* clothing items may relate to the family's weaving business; alternatively, these items of clothing may have been intended for personal use.

It is also important to distinguish items which one family member requested another to send in their surviving correspondence from those items which were confirmed as being sent or received in letters. It is not usually possible to discern whether requests made in the letters were carried out, even in archives which preserve correspondence between the same two people over an extended period of time. One exception to this is found in two letters from Terentianus to his father Tiberianus: in *P.Mich.* 8.467, Terentianus asks his father to send him a pickaxe (lines 23-27), and in a later letter (*P.Mich.* 8.468) he describes how the pickaxe which Tiberianus previously sent (presumably in response to *P.Mich.* 8.467) was taken away by the adjutant (*optio*), though unfortunately further explanation of the incident is in lacuna (lines 27-29). By contrast, the Archive of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia preserves several requests by Paniskos for Ploutogeneia at first to visit him and bring a large number of items and later to send the items to him. Since some of the same items are listed in multiple letters it is clear that Paniskos did not receive the items the first time he asked for them.

It is also worth noting that the differences in the items sent and received in these three archives would also have been influenced by the locations of the various parties involved: for instance, Reinard 2016 notes that requests originating from the Eastern Desert differ significantly from those from other parts of Egypt due to differences in local markets.⁴⁹ This phenomenon can certainly be observed in the archives discussed in this chapter, as well as an awareness of price differentials between different locations (as seen in *P.Giss.Apoll.* 21 discussed above). However, most of the items sent between family members in the archives in this chapter are common necessities such as food and clothing, which would certainly have been easily obtainable almost everywhere (though perhaps at a lower quality in more remote areas).

Items relating to employment

The reason behind the sending and requesting of items in these archives is not stated in the vast majority of cases. Some of the items sent and requested in the three archives are clearly required for the recipient's work, and a few are clearly intended for personal use. Many more items are ambiguous in purpose, and it is often difficult to determine why certain items were requested or sent, and why these particular items were not available wherever the recipient was located.

Many of the items sent between various family members in the archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus are related to the military lifestyle of both men. For instance, Terentianus acknowledges receipt of a cloak, tunic and some other clothing in a letter to Tiberianus (*P.Mich.* 8.467 lines 5-6). The source from which he received these supplies is not preserved in the text, but it is likely he is acknowledging receipt of the clothing because it was Tiberianus who sent it.

⁴⁹ 352-355.

Later in the same letter, Terentianus asks Tiberianus to send him a list of items, using a man named Valerius as a go-between (lines 19-21): parts of the list are in lacuna, but it certainly includes a sword, a pickaxe, a grappling hook, two spears and various clothing items (a cloak, a girdled tunic and trousers). Some of these items are clearly related to his employment in the military, but others seem out of place: one wonders what use Terentianus would find for an agricultural implement like a pickaxe in the navy. Furthermore, Terentianus' tone when requesting these items is surprisingly emotional: *oro et rogo | te pater nem[i]nem habeo enim karum*⁵⁰ *nisi secundum deos te*, 'I beg and ask you, father, for I have nobody dear to me except you, the gods excepted' (lines 17-18). There is no indication that the items requested have any emotional significance and so Terentianus' fraught tone can most probably be ascribed to his imminent departure for Syria (lines 8-9), but it seems that Tiberianus is the only person with whom Terentianus has a close enough relationship that he is able to request important supplies for his journey.

Some other examples where members of this family sent each other items related to their employment in the military include *P.Mich.* 8.468, where after sending a chicken coop full of goods to his father, Terentianus requests that Tiberianus sends him a pair of boots, socks and a pickaxe in return (lines 23-27), and in *P.Mich.* 8.474, Tiberianus' daughter Segathis sends her brother Isidorus to Tiberianus with βάλτια (lines 8-9).⁵¹ In *P.Mich.* 8.473, Tabetheus asked Tiberianus to deliver three *minae* of linen to her son Saturnilus, but Tiberianus did not follow through with the delivery (lines 5-9). In the same letter, she mentions sending Tiberianus an item of clothing (συνθεσίδιον), though she was apparently unable to send him one the previous year

⁵⁰ Read *carum*.

⁵¹ βάλτια are also mentioned in two other documents from this archive, *P.Mich.* 8.470 line 6 and *P.Mich.* 8.474 line 8, and also in *P.Mich.* 8.464 line 18 and *P.Mich.* 3.217 line 19 as items of military equipment.

because she sold it to another person instead (lines 9-12). Work-related requests in military families were not restricted to clothing and tools: in *P.Mich.* 8.473, Tiberianus receives ἐπιμήνια (‘provisions’) from Tabetheus, and it is plausible that she also sent monthly provisions to her son Saturnilus (line 22). She also describes sending the previous year’s supplies in a shipment from Alexandria (lines 24-25).

Other texts from outside this archive indicate that soldiers typically depended on their families to send ἐπιμήνια and clothing supplies: for instance, in *P.Mich.* 3.203 a soldier receives provisions from his mother (lines 3-4); *P.Mich.* 8.465 preserves a soldier’s request for λίνα στυπέα, which were needed because of the intense heat he was experiencing in his posting in Bostra (lines 28-29); and in *BGU* 3.814 a soldier complains his mother has neglected to send him supplies, and asks that she send them as soon as possible (lines 12-13). Both Tiberianus and Terentianus receive supplies from their female relatives at home in a similar fashion, but their situation is somewhat unusual in that they send each other many essential items for military life such as weapons, clothing and food.

The Archive of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia may also contain references to items relating to Paniskos’ employment, but it is difficult to say for certain because the precise nature of his occupation is unclear. In *P.Mich.* 3.214, Paniskos sends a detailed list of weapons, clothing and food he wants Ploutogeneia to bring with her when she comes to join him in Koptos: ten fleeces, six jars of olives, four jars of honey and his helmet, lances, tent fittings and new shield (lines 21-27). He also asks her to bring all their clothes to Koptos, which implies that he expects their stay will be long in duration (lines 30-31). In the same letter, he also mentions that she should bring her gold jewellery with her, but not wear it openly when she is travelling on the boat (lines 31-32). Later, when Paniskos prompts Ploutogeneia for an answer again, he repeats his request for

some of these items: the helmet, five lances, tent fittings and the new shield (*P.Mich.* 3.216 lines 10-13). Presumably these items are repeated because they are the most important: Paniskos also repeats his request for more clothing (at least, this is one possible interpretation of σύνε[ρ]γα in line 22), even if Ploutogeneia has to bring the materials and cut them in Koptos (lines 22-23).

When Paniskos has been informed that Ploutogeneia does not intend to join him in Koptos, he still requests that she send him some of the pieces of armour he previously asked her to bring him (his helmet, shield and five lances) and adds some extra weaponry, his breastplate and belt (*P.Mich.* 3.217 lines 16-19). Again, it appears that the weapons were the most pressing items he originally asked for, though his needs changed slightly since his previous letters, or he realized he needed additional items. By the time Paniskos sent *P.Mich.* 3.218, it appears that he received the items he requested since he makes no mention of needing Ploutogeneia to send anything. It is possible that Paniskos never received the items in question and simply abandoned any hope of Ploutogeneia ever sending them, though this circumstance is rendered less likely by the conciliatory tone of the letter, contrasting with the frustrated tone of his previous correspondence.

Paniskos makes numerous references to different pieces of armour in his letters (*P.Mich.* 3.214 lines 24-27; *P.Mich.* 3.216 lines 11-13; *P.Mich.* 3.217 lines 16-19), and so one possible interpretation is that he was a soldier who was stationed in Koptos. In support of this analysis, soldiers are mentioned in one of his letters (*P.Mich.* 3.216 lines 20-21), though the mutilated text does not provide any further context. The level of wealth displayed by the family is not incompatible with a soldier's typical salary. However, there are significant difficulties with this interpretation. Some of the weaponry quantities mentioned in the letters are incompatible with the operations of a single soldier: in *P.Mich.* 3.216, Paniskos mentions in a postscript that

Ploutogeneia wrote to him that she had over twenty shields.⁵² Another difficulty is that Paniskos requests that Ploutogeneia bring items to him which one would expect a soldier to carry regularly at all times, such as a shield and tent fittings (unless he is requesting that she bring spares). Similarly, some of the items Paniskos requests seem strange if he was on military service: for instance, he asks Ploutogeneia to bring her jewellery with her. It has therefore also been proposed that Paniskos was an armour merchant, which accounts for the family's significant wealth surplus and the large number of shields mentioned in *P.Mich.* 3.216. Again, there are difficulties with this interpretation, since it is not obvious why a merchant would ask for tent fittings unless perhaps he was planning a long journey, making camp along the way. Nevertheless, this explanation seems on the whole plausible, since it is difficult to explain the large number of shields mentioned in the archive through other means.

The items sent between family members in the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* are all textile-related in some way, but it is debatable whether any of these items was associated with the family weaving business located in Hermopolis. In *P.Giss.Apoll.* 1 (first quarter of the second century CE), it appears that Apollonios previously asked Eudaimonis to look for a 'Lacanian garment', but she claims that she was not able to find anything matching this description, only a worn-out 'Attalian garment' (lines 5-6). Although it is possible that these garments bore some relation to the weaving business, given the specific nature of the request, and the fact that it relates to a single item, it seems likely that Apollonios was asking Eudaimonis to send a personal garment to him in Heptakomia. Apollonios also sent some material to Eudaimonis so that she could turn it into a white garment, and apparently then send it back to him. However, Eudaimonis complains that he did not send enough material, so he must buy some more and send

⁵² The number has been restored as 'εἴκοσι [τρι]α', *twenty-three* (line 33), so although the exact number of shields is uncertain, it is certainly more than twenty.

it to her. Given that the family had their own weaving business in Hermopolis, it seems strange that Apollonios would send cloth from Heptakomia, unless it was a special type of material which his workshop was unable to manufacture. Also, it is difficult to understand why Apollonios sent the material to Hermopolis to have it made into a garment and then sent back again, rather than assigning the task to one of the women in his household in Heptakomia or some other tradesperson in his more immediate vicinity.

In *P.Giss.Apoll.* 11 (first quarter of the second century CE), Aline describes her progress on a project involving wool which had been previously requested by Apollonios. She asks him either to describe what colour he would like the finished product to be, or to send a small sample of the colour to her (lines 14-16). It seems probable that this was probably a garment for personal use rather than anything to do with the weaving business since Aline was handling the request herself rather than delegating it to Apollonios' employees. Since other parts of the letter describe various matters of estate business to Apollonios, it can be inferred that Aline was located in Hermopolis when this was written, though Apollonios' location or the reason for his absence on this particular occasion is not clear from the content of the letter. Once again, it seems surprising that Apollonios would have taken colour samples with him to Heptakomia or on his other travels, unless he obtained the samples in his current location.

Other items

In addition to the items discussed above, which could possibly have some relation to the work of someone in the family, there are also mentions in the archives of items which clearly bear no relation either to employment or to basic supplies of food and clothing needed for work. For instance, in *P.Mich.* 3.214, when Paniskos is still hopeful that Ploutogeneia will come to

him, he requests that Ploutogeneia bring fleeces, olives, honey and her gold jewellery with her on the boat. He is later forced to slim down his list to a few essential items when in subsequent letters it becomes clear that Ploutogeneia has no intention of joining him.

References to additional items are particularly numerous in the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus: many of the items mentioned in the letters have no clear connection to their military lifestyles. These items are so numerous that it seems unlikely that the two men required them all for personal use, but rather it is plausible that they were executing a large number of favours for friends, family members and military colleagues, or that they were possibly involved in some kind of small-scale trading operation. It is notable that most of these additional items are being sent to Tiberianus: by contrast, most of Terentianus' requests and received items are compatible with the requirements of military life. For instance, in *P.Mich.* 8.468, Terentianus opens the letter by confirming receipt of some items including a short cloak (*palliolum*) which Tiberianus sent via Numesianus and a veteran whose name is not preserved (lines 4-7). Unusually, both for this archive and for the other archives in this study, Terentianus takes a moment to thank his father for sending the items: *ago tibi gratias quod me dign[um] | habuisti ed⁵³ securum⁵⁴ fecisti*, 'I thank you because you considered me worthy and you have made me safe' (lines 7-8). Later in the letter, Terentianus describes how he sent a large amount of clothing and glassware to his father, along with other assorted items: two bowls, a dozen goblets, two papyrus rolls for school use, ink, five pens and twenty Alexandrian loaves (lines 15-20). These items were transported in a chicken coop, presumably packed carefully to protect the fragile objects inside. Although this is one of the largest packages recorded in any of the three archives, Terentianus accompanies this list with an apology to his father and blames his current illness for not being able to send more

⁵³ Read et.

⁵⁴ Read securum.

items: *rogo te [p]a[t]er | ud⁵⁵ contentus sis ista m[o]do si non ia[c]uisse⁵⁶ | speraba⁵⁷ me pluriam⁵⁸ tibi missiturum⁵⁹ [et] | itarum⁶⁰ spero si vixero*, ‘I beg, father, that you be content in this way. If I had not been lying ill, I was hoping that I could send you more and I hope I shall again if I live’ (lines 20-23).

Terentianus and Tiberianus were not the only two people in the family to send and receive large numbers of items. In *P.Mich.* 8.469, Terentianus conveys various messages from his mother to Tiberianus, many of which relate to acquiring and sending goods. Although the letter is fragmentary, it is clear that Terentianus’ mother asked him to buy various items for her, repeatedly stressing that they should only be purchased at a reasonable price (lines 3-9). Terentianus describes how he did not want to seek out these items himself, and so he promised to write to Tiberianus and ask him to find them in his stead (lines 14-18). The letter *P.Mich.* 8.481 accompanied a basket from Terentianus to Tasoucharion, and in the letter Terentianus mentions that he has sent another basket via Valerius the goldsmith (lines 5-8). He also asks Tasoucharion to supply him with wheat and radish oil, and mentions that he sent her marjoram to accompany another portion of oil (lines 15-20). In the same letter, he also requests that his father sends him a fresh bundle of asparagus via a man named Melas (lines 32-34).

Overall, given the large variety of goods and very small quantities of each item that are transported in this archive, it seems most plausible that Tiberianus and Terentianus used their network of military contacts to procure items for family members and friends rather than having any involvement in trade. Most of these miscellaneous items were sent to Tiberianus, whose

⁵⁵ Read ut.

⁵⁶ Read ia[c]uisse.

⁵⁷ Read sperabam.

⁵⁸ Read plura.

⁵⁹ Read missurum.

⁶⁰ Read iterum.

location is rarely specified in the letters in the archive. However, since the archive was excavated in Karanis, one possible interpretation is that Tiberianus retired there but continued to use his and Terentianus' military network to source items from Alexandria and the Nile Delta region, where Terentianus was frequently stationed, though this is by no means certain.

One type of item sent between households that is worth examining separately is money, a crucial resource to send between family members when one or more was absent for work. Like jewellery, it was a small item and therefore easily concealable, and there are several instances where money is sent directly between family members via a messenger, but it is also possible to observe families using other more complex methods to transfer money. Paniskos sent Ploutogeneia one talent part way through his absence from home, using a third party, Antoninus, as a go-between (*P.Mich.* 3.216 lines 17-18). Paniskos sends Ploutogeneia an additional talent at a later point via the same man, but in this case he says it originally comes from someone called Psinestes (*P.Mich.* 3.217 lines 25-26). Later, Paniskos uses a debt owed to him by a man named Dioskoros as a means to send Ploutogeneia more money (*P.Mich.* 3.220). Dioskoros owed Paniskos a talent and so Paniskos has him repay this debt to Ploutogeneia after travelling from Koptos to her location, rather than collecting the debt in Koptos and sending the money to her by some other method (lines 4-7). In *P.Mich.* 3.218, Paniskos sends Ploutogeneia an unspecified number of fleeces which he tells her she can sell if she needs money for herself (lines 6-8). He gives no indication of how he obtained them, or why he chose to send bulky fleeces to Ploutogeneia instead of more portable items to sell, or the money itself. Perhaps Ploutogeneia was in a better position to sell the fleeces or to get a better price; alternatively, large items are also more difficult to steal so this may have been a safety precaution.

Transportation methods

All three of the archives include at least some instances where items are mentioned as being sent or received by the correspondents without any description of how this movement of goods was achieved. When there is mention of the means by which items were transported between two locations in a document, these items are most commonly described as being conveyed by a named individual. There is usually no other identifying information given about these people except for their name and possibly their occupation, which implies that the person was a mutual acquaintance or friend of the two parties sending and receiving the item. Occasionally one of the corresponding parties or an immediate family member is described as transporting items personally between two locations, but it is much more common for the person conveying items to be an individual who happened to be travelling to the correct location. It is hard to determine exactly how difficult it would have been to find an informal messenger, but this presumably varied depending on location and perhaps also on the time of year.⁶¹ There are also a very small number of references to sending items as part of a ‘shipment’: for instance, in *P.Mich.* 8.473 Tiberianus receives ἐπιμήνια from Tabetheus, and she also describes sending the previous year’s supplies in a shipment from Alexandria (lines 24-25).

No matter which transportation method is used, the correspondents in many of these archives remain very concerned with the safety of their goods, and in some cases describe the precautions they took to avoid items being stolen or damaged on the journey. Even when items were conveyed by a family member, transportation was not completely hazard-free.

Descriptions of these precautionary measures are particularly prevalent in the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus which features several descriptions of the methods used to ensure

⁶¹ Reinard 2016, 357-482.

safe transportation of items, including systems of seals, describing the contents of packages in a separate letter and the various ways multiple items could be packed in order to transport them conveniently.

Transportation by friends and acquaintances

By far the most frequently described method for transporting goods involves sending them with a named individual who is not identifiable as an immediate family member. Usually no other information is included other than their name, though on some occasions the occupation of the person may be included: for example, in the letter *P.Mich.* 8.481, which accompanied a basket from Terentianus to Tasoucharion, Terentianus mentions that he has sent another basket via Valerius the goldsmith (lines 5-8). This inclusion of Valerius' occupation could be a way to distinguish between multiple men named Valerius known to the family, or it could act as a reminder for Tasoucharion if she was not very familiar with him.

The Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus contains a large number of such messengers, all but one of whom are mentioned only once. In *P.Mich.* 8.477, Terentianus receives a basket plus a letter from his father via a man named Aurelius (lines 21-22) and a second basket from Anubion's father which may also have been sent by Tiberianus (lines 32-35). Terentianus opens another letter to his father by confirming receipt of some items including a short cloak (*palliolum*) which Tiberianus sent via Numesianus and a veteran whose name is not preserved (*P.Mich.* 8.468 lines 4-7). In *P.Mich.* 8.481 Terentianus requests that his father sends him a fresh bundle of asparagus via a man named Melas (lines 32-34) and in *P.Mich.* 8.468 Terentianus describes how he sent Tiberianus a number of items sewn into a cloth bag which he has entrusted to Martialis (lines 8-11). Valerius the goldsmith appears in two letters, *P.Mich.* 8.481 discussed

above, and also in *P.Mich.* 8.467: in this letter, Terentianus asks Tiberianus to send him a list of items, using Valerius as a go-between: parts of the list are in lacuna, but it certainly includes a sword, a pickaxe, a grappling hook, two spears and various clothing items (a cloak, a girdled tunic and trousers) (lines 19-21).

Transportation by a family member

This method of transportation is described relatively rarely, presumably because it was an unusual occurrence that a close family member happened to be travelling in the right direction. This could be interpreted as implying that it was rare for people at this time and in this social class to visit family members in other places, even if the distances involved were relatively short (as in the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus). An alternative explanation is that family members would be less likely to write to each other about a transaction which had taken place in person and therefore exchanges of this sort would appear less frequently in the documentation (though there would still have been numerous opportunities to mention this type of transportation in correspondence, for instance when one family member requests another to bring certain items as in the Archive of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia).

One perceived advantage of this transportation method is that it increased the likelihood that the goods would be taken care of well on the journey. An example can be found in the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* in *P.Giss.Apoll.* 24 (117 CE). In this letter from an unnamed woman to her husband, the sender describes how her husband's 'brother' Apollonios brought some hooded cloaks from Alexandria, and describes how he took care of them well on the journey (column iv, lines 2-5). In this instance, it appears that the sender of the letter links the personal transportation by Apollonios with the good condition in which the items arrived. In

P.Mich. 8.479, Terentianus asks Tiberianus to deliver a letter from the *dioiketes* to Tabetheus so that she can pass it on to the *strategos* and receive a speedy reply to the letter (lines 10-15).

Terentianus does not elaborate on the contents of the letter, or why it is so important for the letter to be transported in this way. It is plausible that the contents were so sensitive that Terentianus did not wish to entrust it to any person other than a close family member.

Safety precautions

Travel in the ancient world was hazardous and even items accompanied by a family member or trusted friend could be stolen, lost or damaged. For instance, in *P.Mich.* 8.468 Terentianus describes how a mattress and pillow were stolen from him while he was lying ill on a ship (lines 12-13). There are a few mentions in these archives of precautions taken by travellers to safeguard items they were carrying with them while travelling. If an item was small enough, one simple strategy was to hide it from view. For example, in *P.Mich.* 3.214, Paniskos instructs his wife Ploutogeneia to bring her gold jewellery, along with a list of many other items, with her when she travels from Philadelphia to Koptos. However he cautions her that she should not wear her jewellery openly when she is travelling on the boat (lines 31-32). Travelling with other companions was also a strategy employed to ensure the safe transportation of goods. In the same letter, Paniskos also instructs Ploutogeneia to bring ‘good men’ (ἀνθρώπων καλῶν, line 28) with her, though it is unclear whether the purpose of this escort is to protect Ploutogeneia on her journey or to perform some service for Paniskos upon their arrival in Koptos. The ‘good men’ selected to accompany Ploutogeneia might also have proved useful to help carry the numerous bulky items which Paniskos requested she bring with her. In *P.Mich.* 8.474, a letter where the sender’s name is not preserved but is likely Tabetheus, the sender demonstrates concern that

Isidorus should travel with other soldiers while bringing Tiberius some military supplies, presumably as a safety measure (line 9).

One method used to ensure the safe transportation of items carried by a third party was for either the sender or recipient to confirm the items by listing them in a separate letter. When Terentianus sends a basket with an accompanying letter to Tasoucharion in *P.Mich.* 8.481, he asks her to write back and describe the contents of the basket, presumably so that he can confirm that everything he put in the basket reached her safely without being subject to tampering (lines 5-8). In *P.Mich.* 8.467 Terentianus describes the process by which his father will send a variety of relatively important and expensive items to him in Alexandria: *si quid missurus es inscribe omnia et | signa mihi scribe in e[p]istula ne quit⁶² mute[t]ur dum adfer|tur*, ‘if you are going to send anything, write (the direction) on everything and write about the seals to me in a letter so that nothing can be changed while it is being transported’ (lines 23-25).

Another method for ensuring the safe transportation of items was to use seals to prevent tampering with parcels. In *P.Mich.* 8.468, Terentianus describes how he sent Tiberianus a number of items sewn into a cloth bag.⁶³ The bag is described as containing two mantles (*amicla*), two capes (*amictoria*), two linen towels, two sacks and a wooden bed, as well as a cape sent by Terentianus’ mother, so it must have been a capacious one (lines 8-11 and lines 14-15). After describing how he originally bought a mattress and pillow to go along with the bed, but they were stolen while he was lying ill on a ship, Terentianus explains that the bag was sealed when he gave it to Martialis, and it is therefore implied that if the bag is not sealed when it reaches Tiberianus, he will know that the contents have been tampered with (lines 8-11).

⁶² Read *quid*.

⁶³ For further examples of the transportation of items in sealed bags, see *P.Oxy.* 1.116 lines 10-13; *P.Oxy.* 6.932 lines 5-6; *P.Oxy.* 7.1062 lines 16-18.

There are also occasional instances where failed attempts at communication or sending items are explicitly noted in an archive. For instance, in *P.Mich.* 8.477 from the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus, Terentianus describes to his father how he received a letter from him saying he sent an item (which is in lacuna) to Terentianus via Anubion, but he says that Anubion has no knowledge of the item and had nothing to give him (lines 18-20). Presumably this means that Terentianus asked Anubion about this item on the basis of the letter he received from Tiberianus, but Tiberianus forgot to give the item to Anubion, decided to send it by a different method but was unable to update the letter, or Anubion did not deliver the item and kept it for himself. A possible sequel to this incident occurs later in the same letter, where Terentianus mentions that, after writing the first part of the letter, Anubion's father brought round a basket, which may have been the undelivered item mentioned earlier in the letter (lines 32-35). However, if it is indeed the same item, he does not specify a reason for the delayed delivery: if Anubion attempted to steal the item it is possible that his father discovered the theft and then returned the item to Terentianus. Later in the same letter, Terentianus mentions that he has been unable to find a messenger to send to his father because he has been ill, and therefore asks his father to sail down and visit him in person (lines 35-37).

One archive where discussion of safety precautions is noticeably absent is the Archive of Apollonios *strategos*. This may be ascribed in part to the relatively small number of items which are discussed in the archive as sent or received directly between family members.⁶⁴ This in itself is somewhat puzzling since Apollonios was away on military service for part of the time period covered by the archive, which would seem to be a time when he would need supplies from home: as has already been mentioned above, it was common for soldiers' family members to send them

⁶⁴ See Table 3 for a full list of these items.

items while they were away from home (see above). It is possible that the family sent other items which did not end up being mentioned in the letters, perhaps because they did not require special explanation. The items which do appear in the letters generally require some context to be added by the sender: for instance, in *P.Giss.Apoll.* 1, Eudaimonis explains to her son that she was unable to find the Laconian garment he requested, but only an Attalian garment instead (lines 4-7). She makes no mention of whether she has sent him this second garment in place of the one Apollonios asked for, or whether she did not send him anything since she could not find the garment he requested.

The lack of discussion of transportation methods cannot solely be ascribed to the small number of items mentioned: although relatively few sent and received items are named in the letters, the letters themselves were also physical objects that needed to be transported between locations. This suggests that Apollonios' family were able to send each other letters and other items without worrying about transportation, unlike the families in the other two archives discussed above. Since Apollonios' family were wealthy and had high social status, the most likely explanation is that they used family slaves or servants to convey items between Hermopolis and Heptakomia. The family certainly owned slaves, since one is mentioned in *P.Giss.Apoll.* 9 (Hermopolis, 117 CE). In this letter, a man from Apollonios' household in Heptakomia writes to Herakleios, the steward of Apollonios' estate in Hermopolis, describing how he heard news of Apollonios from a man who had heard it from a slave of Apollonios. The slave had been sent from Memphis specifically to bring the news of Apollonios and the Roman forces' victory, although the letter does not specify who was intended to receive this news (lines 3-7).

It was very rare for families to own slaves in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt: Clarysse and Thompson note that slaves comprised less than 4% of the population in Ptolemaic Egypt.⁶⁵ Therefore only very wealthy families such as that of Apollonios would have had the means to use personal slaves to transport items, whom they presumably would have trusted to convey things safely without the need for other forms of protection such as listing items in an accompanying letter. This method of transportation was unavailable to most families, including those in the other two archives discussed in this chapter, as it would have been prohibitively expensive for all but the privileged few. Presumably, Apollonios' family were wealthy enough that the ease of communication provided by trusted slaves was worth the expense.

Conclusion

It is generally rare to find instances of completely failed communication and transportation in these archives, aside from the examples listed above from the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus. In the Archive of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia, although Paniskos initially suspects that Ploutogeneia has not been responding to his letters because she has not been receiving them, he confirms with the letter carrier that the letters have been safely delivered and therefore the communication failure is due to relationship problems between the husband and wife.

Tiberianus and Terentianus clearly experienced considerable anxiety over how to convey items between different family members in a secure manner. The letters between the two men are full of references to what containers they used, the people to whom they gave the items, what seals and other security measures they used, and an inventory of the precise contents of each

⁶⁵ Clarysse and Thompson 2006 vol. 2, 262-284.

parcel. Like Tiberianus' family, Paniskos and Ploutogeneia mostly relied on friends or acquaintances to carry items when they were not in a position (or in Ploutogeneia's case were apparently unwilling) to transport them in person. This archive also shows how money was sometimes transported in the same manner as other goods, but could also be passed between individuals in more creative ways (as in *P.Mich.* 3.220). Since a large part of the correspondence in the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus and the Archive of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia is devoted to issues surrounding the transportation of items, it is therefore surprising that similar concerns are not found in the Apollonios archive, where the family is in a similar position of arranging the transportation of various items across much larger distances. It is possible that wealthier families like Apollonios' family did not need to worry about such matters because they could employ trustworthy messengers to deliver their items: one can imagine numerous members of their household travelling occasionally between the two locations with letters and packages, or possibly one or more of their staff exclusively dedicated to enabling communications between the two sites. Alternatively, the family may have delegated responsibility for the practicalities of transportation to members of their household staff and so did not feel the need communicate them to family members in letters. Less wealthy families, such as that of Tiberianus and Terentianus, had to use less reliable methods of transportation such as acquaintances who happened to be travelling in the right direction, and to take more precautions to protect the goods they were sending.

Table 1: Items sent, received and requested in the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus

Document	Item	Sender	Receiver/ Requester	Status	Messenger
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.467	olives	Terentianus	Tiberianus	sent	
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.467	clothing	Tiberianus (?)	Terentianus	received	
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.467	sword, pickaxe, spears, grappling hook, clothing, breeding animals	Terentianus	Tiberianus	requested	Valerius
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.468	cloak	Tiberianus	Terentianus	received	Numesianus
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.468	bag containing clothing, towels, sacks, wooden bed	Terentianus	Tiberianus	sent	Martialis
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.468	chicken coop containing glassware, bowls, goblets, papyrus, ink, pens, bread	Terentianus	Tiberianus	sent	Martialis (?)
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.468	boots, socks, pickaxe	Tiberianus	Terentianus	requested	
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.473	linen, robe, rations	Tabetheus	Tiberianus	sent	
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.474	belt	Tabetheus (?)	Tiberianus	sent	Isidorus
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.476	two baskets, one containing bread and dates	Tiberianus (?)	Terentianus	received	Achillas (?)
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.476	two small baskets, sword sheath	Tiberianus (?)	Terentianus	received	the father of Julius (?)
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.476	8 <i>drachmae</i>	Terentianus	Tiberianus	sent	
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.477	basket, letter	Tiberianus	Terentianus	received	Aurelius
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.477	item in lacuna	Tiberianus	Terentianus	sent, not received	Anubion
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.477	basket	Tiberianus	Terentianus	received	Anubion's father

<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.477	sandals, item(s) in lacuna	Tiberianus	Terentianus	requested	
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.481	basket, marjoram	Terentianus	Tasoucharion	sent	
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.481	basket	Terentianus	Tasoucharion	sent	Valerius the goldsmith
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.481	wheat, radish oil	Terentianus	Tasoucharion	requested	
<i>P.Mich.</i> 8.481	asparagus	Terentianus	Tiberianus (?)	requested	Melas

Table 2: Items sent, received and requested in the Archive of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia

Document	Item	Sender	Receiver/ Requester	Status	Messenger
<i>P.Mich.</i> 3.214	fleeces, olives, honey, shield, helmet, lances, tent fittings, clothes, jewellery	Ploutogeneia	Paniskos	requested	Ploutogeneia
<i>P.Mich.</i> 3.216	shield, helmet, lances, tent fittings, clothing	Ploutogeneia	Paniskos	requested	Ploutogeneia
<i>P.Mich.</i> 3.216	money	Paniskos	Ploutogeneia	sent	Antoninus
<i>P.Mich.</i> 3.217	helmet, shield, lances, breastplate, belt	Ploutogeneia	Paniskos	requested	
<i>P.Mich.</i> 3.217	money	Paniskos	Ploutogeneia	sent	Antoninus
<i>P.Mich.</i> 3.218	fleeces	Paniskos	Ploutogeneia	sent	

Table 3: Items sent, received and requested between family members in the Archive of Apollonios *strategos*

Document	Item	Sender	Receiver/ Requester	Status	Messenger
<i>P.Giss.Apoll.</i> 1	clothing	Eudaimonis	Apollonios	requested	
<i>P.Giss.Apoll.</i> 1	fabric	Apollonios	Eudaimonis	requested	
<i>P.Giss.Apoll.</i> 11	colour sample	Apollonios	Aline	requested	

Note that items represented in this table are restricted to those where both the sender and recipient are members of Apollonios' nuclear family. References to other items where the sender or recipient is a family friend or employee, or has an undetermined relationship with the family have not been included, as this chapter is focused on the interchange of items between family members.

Chapter 3 Emotions

Introduction

In this chapter I examine the types of emotions that are commonly displayed in Greek papyrus letters sent between family members who were separated due to the demands of labour. Previous scholarship on emotions in the papyri such as Kotsifou 2012 and Clarysse 2017 has focused primarily on how to locate emotions in the papyri and the composition techniques through which emotions are expressed in letters and other documents. This chapter builds on this work to investigate what kinds of emotions were commonly expressed in letters when a person was separated from their family in the ancient world, and possible reasons why these emotions may have been expressed.

In general, most of the emotions described or displayed in letters of this sort are negative: by far the most common emotion expressed is anxiety about the health and safety of absent family members. There are also many expressions of annoyance and frustration over slow or difficult communication, whether due to the external difficulties of transmitting letters or because one party was deliberately refusing to correspond. In some cases, separation may have further exacerbated relationships that were already tense, or it caused difficulties in previously functional family relationships.

Despite these various difficulties, and the feelings of frustration and powerlessness they invoked, some positive emotional expressions can be found in the letters. Alternatively, concerns for safety can be interpreted as indicating the high value people placed on family relationships. This is particularly common in cases where people write about vulnerable family members such

as children, pregnant women, and the elderly. Additionally, there are several cases where the resolution of negative emotions results in positive feelings: for instance, letter writers demonstrate their feelings of joy and relief when they hear that a relative is safe, or feelings of excitement at the prospect of being reunited with their family members.

Barriers to emotional expression in letters

There are however significant barriers to modern scholars' understanding of emotions in the ancient world, as Clarysse is quick to point out.⁶⁶ Modern scholars are only able to rely on the written word when examining the emotions of letter writers, while other methods of conveying emotion such as facial expressions and tone of voice are lost.⁶⁷ In this respect, the modern scholar is in a similar position to the ancient recipient, who could also for the most part only rely on the words on the page to understand the emotions of a letter's sender. The ancient recipient of the letter would, however, have had some additional context unavailable to the modern scholar, such as personal knowledge of the sender, as well as a fuller understanding of the sequence of events leading to the sending of the letter. In addition, in most cases the ancient recipient would have received a complete document whereas modern scholars frequently have to work from damaged texts.

Aside from difficulties experienced by modern scholars, the experience of writing letters presented barriers to ancient letter writers expressing their emotions. There were two main aspects of letter-writing which could create barriers for the expression of emotions: the use of formulaic expressions in letter writing and the intervention of various third parties in the correspondence, principally scribes but also people who read letters on behalf of illiterate

⁶⁶ Clarysse 2017, 63.

⁶⁷ Clarysse 2017, 63.

recipients, letter carriers and other literate family members who could potentially eavesdrop on a letter.

Formulae in letters

Formulaic expressions were very commonly used in composing letters of all kinds, including private letters. Numerous formulae existed for the beginning, middle and end portions of letters, and some of these formulae describe emotions commonly experienced by people who are separated: for instance, concern about the health of family members.⁶⁸ Although there are some notable exceptions, such as Teeus' striking expression of her anxiety and longing for Apollonios in *P.Giss. Apoll.* 13 (first quarter of the second century CE), large portions of many of the letters cited in this chapter are composed of formulae or other "unoriginal" descriptions of emotion which are repeatedly found throughout ancient letters. For example, the portions of letters where greetings are sent and received are in most cases largely composed of formulaic elements which can seem increasingly routine and unremarkable to a modern scholar reading through dozens of letters in one sitting. Outside the field of papyrology, it was until relatively recently a common practice to omit these portions of letters when publishing them in collections of historical sources.⁶⁹ More recent scholarship such as Gerber 2006 has begun to recognise the importance of personal inquiries in letters. In the papyri there are clear examples indicating that these formulaic greetings could convey a great deal of significance for those who exchanged them, as shown by Aline's anxiety in the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* that her daughter

⁶⁸ White 1986, 189-213.

⁶⁹ For instance, in Thomas and Znaniecki's 1918, 1919-1920 and 1927 works on Polish migrant letters, though Gerber 2006 does claim that their omission of the greetings portions of letters does not necessarily indicate that they thought these passages were unimportant, but in fact greetings are crucial to their central thesis that the purpose of these letters was maintaining family solidarity.

Heraidous did not send her greetings in her last letter (*P.Giss.Apoll.* 16, first quarter of the second century CE). Aline does not know why she did this, but she assumes that it was a deliberate omission and wishes to know what caused it (lines 7-8).

The following piece of comparative evidence also illustrates the potentially enormous emotional relevance of family greetings in letters. The short story *The Regards* by the Ottoman Greek writer and educator Alexandra Papadopoulou (1867-1906) is narrated from the perspective of Konstantella, a woman who regularly writes letters home for her family's maid Amersouda, who is presumably illiterate.⁷⁰ She describes the process of writing out greetings to two full pages of family members as 'an unbearable torment' (204). This list dwarfs the other 'original' content of her maid's letters, which are described as 'a few couplets' (204), and clearly have great emotional significance to Amersouda, who is described as 'kissing the letter and saying "Tell my *manoula* that I kissed it right here, here right on top of the regards"' (205). Since the narrator does not believe it is important to list the first and last names of each person, they usually omit half the names (204) and on one occasion is so impatient that they omit them entirely (205). The serious consequences of this omission only become apparent later in the story: when Konstantella visits Amersouda's family, her maid's elderly grandmother begins to weep when the letter is read to her and she does not hear her name mentioned in the regards section (206). By contrast, Amersouda's other family members, including her godmother, react with bitterness and complaints: 'when they leave home they forget everything, village, relative and friend' (206). Konstantella manages to remedy the situation by inventing the fiction that she was unable to write out all the regards because the boat she was on was leaving. Konstantella's

⁷⁰ I would like to thank Artemis Leontis for bringing this short story to my attention. The Greek text is available at https://www.sarantakos.com/kibwtos/mazi/papadop_xairetism.htm and a translation by Yianna Liatsos can be found in Leontis 1995, 204-208. Page references in this paragraph refer to this translation.

assurances that Amersouda has not forgotten any of her family members and sent them all regards smooths the ruffled feathers of her family and even produces a smile from Amersouda's grandmother. Although this story was written thousands of years after the papyrus letters in this study, it provides an important reminder that real people existed behind the lists of names in the letters: 'How was I to imagine that those two pages of regards that I had disregarded would come to life right here before me, in two human rows staring plaintively at me?' (206).

Furthermore, looking beyond the greetings portion of letters to the rest of their content, it is a common conception that the formulaic nature of many ancient letters precludes them from conveying any 'real' emotion behind their repetitive and clichéd language. For instance, Palme claims that 'because of the widespread clichés only a few really emotional comments appear' in papyrus letters.⁷¹ Such accusations have been levelled at many other formulaic aspects of ancient composition, such as the formulaic elements of Homeric epic. There has, however, been a tendency in more recent scholarship to move away from the assumption that writing created largely from formulae is necessarily less subtle or expressive than writing composed from 'original' phrases. In fact, some studies such as Schneider's 2005 examination of letters in early modern England have suggested that sets of predictable formulae were deliberately used to reduce misunderstandings between the sender and receiver of a letter, especially among those who were distrustful of written communication and did not believe that it could adequately replace face-to-face communication.⁷²

A significant number of letters survive which consist entirely of greetings, routine enquiries about the health of various family members and reassurances about the health of the sender, with no additional information or non-formulaic language. These letters were not simply

⁷¹ Palme 2009, 362.

⁷² See 22-142, and James and O'Leary 2020, 257.

formalities: people in the ancient world could not take the continued good health of their friends and family for granted and it was therefore perfectly understandable that individuals would write simply to seek reassurance on this matter. Furthermore, maintaining networks of friends and family members was also important for a family's economic and employment prospects.⁷³ The emotions underlying the use of a formulaic expression are not necessarily less meaningful simply because the same words have been used by others. Even in the modern world, where communication is infinitely easier, faster and more secure and the general population has a much higher degree of literacy, not everyone is an inspired wordsmith and formulaic expressions of affection are still very commonly used. Just as not everyone in a modern society is an inspired original writer, so the same was doubtless true in the ancient world.

One additional indication that formulae were an important part of ancient communication is their absence in some letters. When examining letters sent from upper class writers to people whom they considered their subordinates, Clarysse 2017 notes that letters of this sort tend to omit many of the opening and closing formulae which are commonly found in letters sent between social equals, such as enquiries about health and greetings to family members and other third parties. This suggests that these formulaic expressions were not a routine part of all communication, but were rather reserved for moments where the sender did genuinely care about the health of the recipient and their family.

There are also some instances where letter writers deviate strongly away from formulaic expressions, which may be interpreted as a deliberate attempt to express strong emotion outside the normal bounds of experience. Alternatively, the sender of the letter (or, less plausibly, the scribe who composed the letter) may not have been aware of the standard formulae and therefore

⁷³ See for instance Reinard 2016, 57-126.

used other words to express the relevant emotions. In addition, writers could modify formulaic expressions to convey various emotions.

Third parties in the correspondence

Many of the letters cited in this chapter would have been composed with the aid of a scribe, which complicates the relationship between the sender of the letter and the text as composed by the scribe. Depending on the individual scribe, it is likely that the scribe would have had a certain level of input into the formulation of the text in many instances, though this would have varied on a sliding scale from directly transcribing the dictation of the letter's sender to essentially complete control over the wording of the document.⁷⁴ It is also very likely that people would compose a letter differently knowing that at least one third party was going to read its contents, and possibly more than one third party, for instance if the receiver of the letter was illiterate and required another person to read the letter for them.

Another factor which would have had a significant impact on the formulation of a letter is the unsecure nature of most correspondence in the ancient world. Although there were various measures available to ancient letter writers to help ensure their words remained unread by anyone other than the intended recipient, predominantly the use of seals, ultimately in the ancient world sending a letter was a significant act of trust in the person transporting the letter, since it would be very easy for them to read the contents or not even deliver the letter to the recipient.

⁷⁴ Kotsifou 2012, 61.

Techniques for indicating emotion in letters

Despite the various barriers to emotional expression discussed above, as well as the additional hindrances present for modern readers interpreting incomplete ancient texts, it is clear that emotions are expressed in the papyri through a variety of methods ranging from direct description of emotions and the physical actions associated with them, to aspects of the structure and word choice of the letter itself.

Some letters and petitions include descriptions of various physical actions associated with emotions, such as snorting, heavy breathing⁷⁵ and hand gestures which are all used to indicate anger, in addition to violent actions such as tearing clothes and other types of assault.⁷⁶ Feelings of sadness are expressed by descriptions of tears, as in *BGU* 4.1131 lines 27-28: ἦ⁷⁷ ἦν δάκρυα σοὶ γράφειν, γεγραφήκειν ἂν ἀπὸ τῶν δακρῶν, *if it was possible to write tears to you, I would have written from my tears.*

Grief could also be expressed through self-neglect, such as by rejecting food and drink, sleep, personal hygiene or clothing.⁷⁸ This occurs in the letters of Aline in the Archive of Apollonios *strategos*, where she describes her distress at her husband's absence in the following terms in *P.Giss.Apoll.* 8 (115 CE), οὔτε πο[. . . ο]ὔτε [σε]ιτίοις ἠδέως προσέρχομαι, | [ἀλλὰ συν]εχῶς ἀγρυπνοῦσα νυκτὸς ἢ[μέρας μ]ίαν μέριμναν ἔχω τὴν περὶ | [τῆς σωτ]ηρίας σου, *I do not enjoy food or drink, but continually lying awake night and day, I have only one thought, concerning your safety* (lines 5-9). Aline mentions that her father has been caring for her, specifically, encouraging her to eat despite her disinterest in food, and his care is the only thing

⁷⁵ For more discussion of the nose as a locus of negative emotions such as contempt and distress, see Bryen 2008, 193.

⁷⁶ Bryen 2008, 195.

⁷⁷ Read εἰ.

⁷⁸ Kotsifou 2012, 84-85. See discussion of *BGU* 3.846 and *P.Oxy.* 18.2190 below.

which brings her comfort: μόνη δὲ ἡ τοῦ πατρὸς | [μου πολ]υωρία [[ε]] \ἀ/νεγείρει με καὶ τῆι α | [ἡμέρᾳ] τοῦ νέου ἔτους, νῆ τὴν σὴν | [σωτη]ρίαν, ἄ[γ]ευστος ἐκοιμώμην, | [εἰ μὴ ὁ π]ατήρ μου εἰσελθὼν ἐβιάσατό | [με. *Only my father's care encourages me and on the first day of the new year, by your safety, I would have lain without eating if my father had not entered and forced me to eat* (lines 9-14). While it is possible that Aline's anxiety for Apollonios did literally incapacitate her physically as she describes in this letter, it is also conceivable that this is a rhetorical device, designed to vividly convey to Apollonios her worry and longing for his return.

As a further example, in *P.Oxy.* 3.528 (second century CE), a man named Serenus writes to a woman he addresses as his sister, expressing his distress at her leaving him by describing how he has lost sleep due to weeping over her absence, and how he did not bathe for a full month because of his grief: γινώσκειν⁷⁹ | σε θέλω ἀφ' ὧς ἐκζῆλθες⁸⁰ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ | πένθος ἡγούμην νυκτὸς κλέων⁸¹ | ἡμέρας δὲ πενθῶ⁸². ιβ Φαῶφι ἀφ' ὅτε | ἐλουσάμην μετ' ἐσοῦ οὐκ ἐλουσάμην | οὐκ ἤλιμε⁸³ μέχρι⁸⁴ ιβ Ἄθύρ, *I want you to know that from the time when you left me I have been in mourning, weeping at night and grieving by day. Since I bathed with you on Phaophi 12 I did not wash or anoint myself until Hathyr 12* (lines 6-11). This letter implies that bathing together could have special significance for family members, in addition to grief being expressed through not bathing.

Another method for indicating a variety of feelings such as concern, anxiety, relief or joy in papyrus letters is descriptions of prayers, religious offerings or other superstitious behaviours undertaken by the sender. A typical example occurs in *P.Mert.* 2.82 (late second century CE), a

⁷⁹ Read γινώσκειν.

⁸⁰ Read ἐζῆλθες.

⁸¹ Read κλαίων.

⁸² Read πενθῶ<ν>.

⁸³ Read ἤλιμι<μ>αι.

⁸⁴ Read μέχρι.

letter from Nike to her ‘sister’ Berenike. Nike begins her letter as follows: πρὸ μὲν πά[ν]των εὐχομαί σε | ὑγιαίνειν καὶ ὑ[π]έρ σου τὸ προσκύνημα | ποιῶ παρὰ το[ῖς] ἐνθάδε θεοῖς εὐχομένη σοί τὰ ἐν βίῳ ἀγαθὰ ὑπαρ[χθῆ]ναι, *before everything I pray that you are well and I perform obeisances on your behalf before the gods here, praying that you may receive good things in life* (lines 3-7).

Descriptions of religious observances are found prominently in the Archive of Apollonios *strategos*, where Apollonios’ mother Eudaimonis frequently describes the religious practices she uses to cope with the anxiety caused by her knowledge that her son is in danger. For instance, in 116 CE she wrote about her anxieties for her son as follows (*P.Giss.Apoll.* 10 = *P.Alex.Giss.* 58): οὐ | καρτε[ρ]ῶ νυκτ[ὸ]ς ἡμέρας ε[ὐ]χ[ο-]μένη τοῖς θεο[ῖς] πᾶσι καὶ π[ά]σαις | [ὄ]πως [σε] δ[ι]ασυ[λ]λα[β]ῶσι, *I am not patient, praying to all the gods and goddesses night and day to assist you* (lines 3-6). In another short note, *P.Alex.Giss.* 60 (first quarter of the second century CE), Eudaimonis mentions that she wants Apollonios to know that she did not cut her hair: leaving hair uncut has been associated with vows to the gods, so this may be an attempt on Eudaimonis’ part to ensure Apollonios’ safety.⁸⁵

At other points in the correspondence, Eudaimonis is so distressed about her son’s welfare that she is unable to worship the gods: for instance, in *P.Brem.* 63: ἴσθι δὲ | ὅτι οὐ μέλλω θεῶι σχολάζειν, | εἰ μὴ πρότερον ἀπαρτίσω τὸν | υἱόν μου. *Know that I do not intend to devote myself to god until I get my son back safe* (lines 25-28), and also in *P.Flor.* 3.332: οὐτ[ε] ἐ]λουσάμην [οὔ]τε προσε|κύνησα θεοὺς φοβουμένη σου τὸ | μετέωρον, *I did not wash nor did I worship the gods, fearing the uncertainty hanging over you* (lines 11-13). In another letter to Apollonios (*P.Giss.Apoll.* 2, first quarter of the second century CE), Eudaimonis looks forward

⁸⁵ Bagnall and Crihiore 2008, Letter 35.

to his return to Hermopolis, and describes his safe return as a ἀμοιβ[ή]ν | [ἤδη] τῆς εὐσεβείας μου, *a recompense for my piety* (lines 6-7). Her religious practice was calculated with a specific return in mind; she expects the gods to reward her piety by ensuring Apollonios' continued safety and good health.⁸⁶

Religious observance is also used in papyrus letters to indicate that one party feels a strong sense of duty towards a family member, often as a prelude to a request or a search for parental approval. For instance in *P.Mich.* 8.476 (first quarter of the second century CE), a letter from the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus, Terentianus begins the letter by describing in detail how he prays to the gods daily that his father should keep in good health: πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομαί σε ὑγιαίνειν καὶ εὐτυχεῖν μοι, ὅ μοι εὐκταῖόν ἐστιν, | ὑγιαίνω δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ποιούμενός σου τὸ προσκύνημα καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν | παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ Σεράπιδι καὶ τοῖς συννάοις θεοῖς. *Before all things I pray that you are healthy and prosperous, which is what I pray for. I myself am healthy and I make an offering for you each day in the presence of Lord Serapis and the gods who share his temple* (lines 3-5). Following this display of filial piety, Terentianus proceeds to seek Tiberianus' approval to bring a woman into his house, which is clearly the main purpose of the letter (lines 10-20).

The structure of a letter can indicate the emotional state of the person composing it.⁸⁷ Strong emotions can result in disjointed narratives in letters, such as in *P.Mich.* 3.217 (297 CE), one of Paniskos' letters to his wife Ploutogeneia. In this letter Paniskos switches rapidly among multiple topics and points in time. Paniskos begins by discussing the past, before he left home (lines 3-5), then switches to talking about Ploutogeneia's character, and then his mother's involvement in the situation in quick succession (lines 5-8), before returning back to

⁸⁶ For more discussion of religious expressions in the Apollonios archive, see Whitehorne 1994.

⁸⁷ Kotsifou 2012, 67, Cribiore 2002, 150 and 154-5.

Ploutogeneia's present conduct (lines 8-11). He then returns to past time by describing how Ploutogeneia's sister forced him to write the previous letters he sent (lines 11-13), briefly exhorts Ploutogeneia to write to him on any subject she pleases (lines 13-15) whilst also indicating that he has heard about her from other sources (lines 15-16). He interrupts this train of thought to ask her to send him some items (lines 16-19) and greet Ploutogeneia's mother (lines 19-20), but then returns to his previous assertion that he has heard about her from other sources by describing how the letter carrier told him that his letters were delivered, and so he knows that they did not get lost in transit and she is deliberately ignoring him (lines 20-25). He then switches back to a matter of present business, briefly mentioning that he sent her some money via a third party before concluding the letter.

Another example of this phenomenon occurs in a document from the archive of Apollonios *strategos*, *P.Brem.* 61 (first quarter of the second century CE). The papyrus contains three letters, the first of which was sent to Apollonios by a woman whose name is lost, but who addresses Apollonios as 'brother' (line 2), Eudaimonis as 'mother' (line 22), and asks Apollonios to greet Aline as a sister (ἀδελ[φ]ικῶς, line 21). Although this does not necessarily imply a literal brother-sister relationship with Apollonios, the familiar tone adopted by the letter's sender and her reference to a recent visit to Apollonios (lines 3-5) implies that she was a relation or at least a very close family friend; it is also possible that the letter was sent by Apollonios' sister Soeris. The letter describes the sender's reactions to a theft from her house and its aftermath, which resulted in her having to contact the *strategos* of Hermopolis in an attempt to recover her stolen property. The writer begins the letter by immediately diving into her story (lines 3-13), before returning to enquiries about Apollonios' health and asking for news from him (lines 13-20) and sending greetings to other members of his family and ending the letter in the standard fashion

(lines 20-24).⁸⁸ By doing so, the sender deviates from the standard letter structure where the writer first makes enquiries about the recipient's health and then proceeds to their own news. The writer of this letter also continues writing after formally concluding the letter with a postscript alluding to some trouble she is receiving from a μωρός *fool* (line 25). Postscripts are relatively unusual in papyrus letters, and this continuation of the letter after the formal ending also suggests the sender was in an emotional state.

Detailed descriptions of an event in a letter was another technique often employed to convey emotion surrounding the event being described, especially when direct speech is used in the description.⁸⁹ For instance, in *P.Mich.* 3.217 (297 CE), Paniskos describes how he discovered that his wife Ploutogeneia had indeed been receiving his letters in considerable detail: εἶπέν | [μοι] ἀναβάς πρὸς ἐμὲ ὁ ἐπιστολοφόρος | [ὅτ]ι ὅτε ἔμελλον ἐξελθεῖν εἶπον τῇ | [γυν]αικὶ καὶ τῇ μητρὶ αὐτῆς ὅτι δότε | [μοι] ἐπιστολὴν ἀπενεγκεῖν τῷ Πανίσ|[κω] καὶ οὐ δεδώκασι, *When he came to me, the letter-carrier said "When I was about to leave I said to your wife and her mother "Give me a letter to take to Paniskos" and they did not give one"* (lines 20-25). By describing this scene in dramatic detail, including direct speech, Paniskos attempts to invoke feelings of shame in Ploutogeneia, though it is unclear whether this attempt was successful.

Irony was another tool used occasionally to indicate emotion, generally negative in nature, for instance frustration or contempt. It is, however, challenging to locate places where irony is certainly intended: one possible instance occurs in a text from the Archive of Apollonios *strategos*, *P.Brem.* 59 (first quarter of the second century CE).⁹⁰ In this letter, a woman whose name is not preserved writes to Apollonios concerning a head covering he had requested her to

⁸⁸ Criatore 2002, 157-8.

⁸⁹ Kotsifou 2012, 67.

⁹⁰ Criatore 2002, 158-9.

make for him. Towards the end of the letter, the woman sends greetings from her son whom she describes as a ποιητῆς αὐτόλυρος, *a poet who plays his own lyre* (line 14). While it is possible to interpret this adjective as indicating the woman's genuine pride in her son's musical accomplishments, the similar word αὐτολυρίζων is used with a strongly derogatory sense in Lucian (*DMeretr.* 14.4) and it is therefore plausible that the woman is mocking her son's musical pretensions.⁹¹

Repetition of words or phrases is a tool commonly employed by ancient letter writers to emphasize a passage, and this technique can be used to highlight the expression of certain emotions such as distress or annoyance. For example, in the postscript to *P.Brem.* 61 discussed above, after the writer complains of experiencing trouble from a μωρός (line 25), she asserts that this person is only behaving foolishly (μωραίνων) because Apollonios is not present: οὐκ ἔχων σε | τὸν ἐκτινάξοντα αὐτοῦ τὴν μωρίαν, *since you were not present to shake off his foolishness* (lines 27-28). The irregular structure of the rest of the letter indicates that the writer is in a state of considerable emotion (as discussed above), and the repeated use of μωρ- words in the postscript serves to further convey her distressed state. Similarly, a father writing to his son uses repetition of words from the same stem to convey his anxiety over a difficult business transaction in *BGU* 2.417 (second half of the first century CE). The father Chairemon uses the adjective μετέωρος (unsettled, in suspense) and other words derived from the same root no fewer than four times in the first part of the letter (lines 3, 4, 6 and 7).

Certain vocabulary items frequently occur in passages in letters that describe the emotions of the sender, and they may also be intended to evoke certain emotions in response on the part of the letter's recipient. The verb ἀγωνιάω (to be distressed, to be worried) is frequently

⁹¹ See Kotsifou 2012, 67 n. 171 for further examples of irony in the papyri.

used in family letters for the purpose of manipulating the emotions of the letter's recipient. In these letters, this anxiety is most commonly due to health and financial issues of the family or to the distance separating different family members.⁹² For instance, in the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* several members of Apollonios' family wrote to him about the anxiety they experienced when they heard about an illness he recently suffered, vividly illustrating the frustrations and anxiety that resulted when family members were separated by long distances. In *P.Giss.* 17 (first quarter of the second century CE) Teeus describes her distress upon hearing that Apollonios was ill: ἠγωνίασα, κύριε, οὐ μετρίως, ἵνα ἀκούσω | ὅτι ἐνώθρευσας, *I was greatly distressed, my lord, when I heard that you were ill* (lines 5-6). Teeus repeats ἀγωνιῶ later in the same letter: ὄφελον | εἰ ἐδυνάμεθα πετᾶσθαι καὶ ἐλθεῖν καὶ προσκυνῆσαί σε· ἀγωνιῶμεν γὰρ μὲ⁹³ [βλ.]έπου|[σ]αί σε, *I wish we could fly and come and greet you; for we desire to see you* (lines 10-13). The word ἀγωνιάω recurs elsewhere in the archive: for instance, in *P.Giss.Apoll.* 8 (115 CE), Apollonios' wife Aline describes her feelings when she heard news about his involvement in the Second Jewish-Roman War in the following terms: μεγάλως [ἀγ]ωνιῶσα περὶ σου διὰ τὰ ὄν|[τα τ]οῦ καιρ[ο]ῦ φημιζόμενα καὶ ὅτι ἐξ|[ἀφ]νω⁹⁴ ἐ[ξῆ]λθες ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, *I was greatly distressed concerning you because of the things being reported about what is happening and because you left me suddenly* (lines 3-5). Likewise, in *P.Brem.* 61 (first quarter of the second century CE), the unnamed female sender, who may be Apollonios' sister or other close relation, describes her constant anxiety caused by their separation: ἐγὼ δὲ | ἀγωνι[ῶ κα]θ' ἡμέραν, μὴ πάλιν | νωθ[ρ]ῶ[ς] ἦς, *I am distressed every day in case you are ill again* (lines 13-15).

⁹² Kotsifou 2012, 81.

⁹³ Read μὴ.

⁹⁴ Read ἐξάφνης.

The verb ἀγωνιάω is also found outside the Archive of Apollonios *strategos*. For instance, in *P.Wisc.* 2.84, a letter in the Archive of Saturnila, Sempronius writes to his brother Saturnilus about his reaction to hearing in a letter that their mother had been dangerously ill. According to his own description, the troubling news he received caused him to be unable to sleep due to worry: γείνωσκε⁹⁵ οὖν, ἀδε[λ]φέ, ἱκανῶς με ἀγων[ι]ᾶν | ἅμα μηδὲ τὰς νύκκτ[α]ς⁹⁶ κοιμώμενον ἄχρε[ι]ς⁹⁷ οὐ | μοι δηλώσης πῶς δι[ά]γει ἐν τούτῳ τῷ ἀέρι, *so brother, realise that I am sufficiently distressed and at the same time I do not sleep in the nights until you tell me how she is faring in this weather* (lines 7-9). In *New Docs.* 1.13 (98-117 CE) a soldier who is away from his family on military service expounds his worries about his family and some financial matters which may be debts to his wife, and asks her to take great care of a child (presumably their own child, though this is not explicit in the text) in the following words: τὸ παιδὶν ἐπίβλεψον ὡς λύχνον, ἐπιδὼν ἀγωνιῶι περὶ ὑμῶν, *as for the child, look after him like a lamp, because I am worried about you both* (lines 5-7).

Independent of the actual contents of a document, the act of sending or receiving a letter in itself could also invoke emotions in the sender and recipient. There are several instances in papyrus letters where the simple act of exchanging a letter is described as giving pleasure and bringing people closer together. For instance, in *P.Oxy.* 42.3067 (third century CE) a man named Achillion writes to his brother about the positive feelings he experiences when he receives a letter from him: τοῦτο γὰρ ποιήσας ἔσει μοι | [χαρι]σάμενος. δόξομεν γὰρ διὰ | [τῶν γ]ραμμάτων ἀλλήλους ὁρᾶν. *If you do this [send me a letter] you will be doing me a favour. For through the letters we shall seem to see each other* (lines 11-13).

⁹⁵ Read γίγνωσκε.

⁹⁶ Read νύκτας.

⁹⁷ Read ἄχρισ.

Greetings and enquiries about health and welfare

The emotion most commonly expressed in papyrus letters in situations where family members are separated is anxiety over the welfare of absent family members, and to a lesser extent the corresponding feelings of joy upon hearing that they are in good health. In the correspondence which passed between family members separated due to the demands of work, it is very common to find exchanges of greetings between family members and enquiries about the health of family members and more distant relations. Almost every letter examined as part of this study includes greetings from additional family members or friends, and hopes for the health and physical safety of various friends and family members. While these expressions may seem to a modern audience to be so repetitive and formulaic that they are rendered virtually meaningless, it is clear that they meant a great deal to their ancient recipients (as discussed above).

There are also numerous instances when personal letters between separated family members indicate that individuals were anxious for their relatives' safety beyond the standard exchange of formulaic wishes for good health. Such anxieties are perhaps most vividly displayed in the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* (Hermopolis, first quarter of the second century CE), which shows the impact of military service on family members left behind at home. Apollonios performed military service during the Second Roman-Jewish War (also known as the Kitos War), and numerous letters were sent to him during this period by his family, friends and employees who express their concern for his safety in various ways reaching beyond standard formulae.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ For a detailed timeline of the events of the war and how they interact with the archive, see Honigman 2019, 323-324.

As discussed above, Eudaimonis expresses her anxiety for her son by describing the religious observances she is performing to ensure his safe return (*P.Giss.Apoll.* 10, lines 3-6). She continues with an exhortation asking Apollonios to be careful during the disturbances: σεαυ[τὸ]ν διάγ[α]γε μέχρι οὗ πρ[ο]σ[ταθ[ωσι αἰ] τοῦ καιροῦ τούτου ταραχῶν, *keep yourself safe until the disturbances of this time [are past]* (lines 8-9). She relies heavily on descriptions of religious activity to show her concern for her son: prayers and offerings to the gods for Apollonios' safety feature frequently in her letters, as described above. By contrast, Apollonios' wife Aline describes her anxiety for her husband's safety by detailing how she is unable to eat, drink or sleep. While it is possible that Aline's anxiety for Apollonios did literally incapacitate her physically as she describes in this letter, it is also conceivable that this is a rhetorical device, designed to vividly convey to Apollonios her worry and longing for his return.

A letter from Teeus to Apollonios also vividly illustrates the frustrations and anxiety which resulted when family members were separated by long distances.⁹⁹ In *P.Giss.* 17 (first quarter of the second century CE), she expresses her desire for him to return in terms that are simultaneously very dramatic and expressive, while still being qualified by a power differential: παρακαλῶ σε, κύριε, ἐάν σοι δόξη, καὶ πέμψαι ἐφ' ἡμᾶς, εἰ δὲ μή, ἀποθνήσκομεν | ὅτι οὐ βλέπομέν σε καθ' ἡμέραν. *I beg you, my lord, if it seems good to you, to also send to us, and if you don't, we die because we do not see you every day* (lines 7-10). Teeus makes repeated use of

⁹⁹ Teeus appears in the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* but her exact relationship to Apollonios' family is uncertain. It is clear that she had a close relationship with Apollonios, his wife and his sister, but she appears to be dependent on the family to a certain extent: in *P.Giss.Apoll.* 15 (first quarter of the second century CE), Teeus writes to Aline to express gratitude to her for sending her a dress, thanking her profusely for clothing her (lines 6-8). It has been suggested that Teeus may have been involved in caring for Apollonios when he was a child, perhaps as a servant of his parents, and remained a fixture in his family circle even after he reached maturity: this is one way to account for the close bond between two apparently unrelated people.

the verb ἀγωνιάω (to be distressed, to be worried) in this letter to emphasize her concern for Apollonios (line 5, 12).¹⁰⁰

Apollonios' family were able to communicate frequently across a long distance: many other families in similar situations were not so lucky and had to endure long periods without reassurance that their relatives were alive and healthy. In one letter from the Archive of Satornila (SB 3.6263 = *Sel. Pap.* 1.121, last quarter of the second century CE), Satornila's son Sempronius complains that he has sent his mother many letters without receiving a response and describes how this is causing him to feel anxious about her welfare: ἐρωτηθεῖσ<α>, ἡ κυρία μου, ἀνόκως | μοι γράφειν περὶ τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν ἵνα κἀγὼ ἀμε|ριμνότερα διάγω, *I ask you, my lady, do not be slow to write to me about your safety so that I may live more free from care* (lines 8-10). This anxiety recurs in another letter from Sempronius to his mother (*P.Mich.* 15.751 lines 8-10), in which he mentions how hearing from his mother after some time with no news reduced his anxiety about her welfare and encourages her to write more frequently in the future.

In the Archive of Claudius Tiberianus (Karanis, first quarter of the second century CE), Terentianus expresses concern for his father Tiberianus' safety beyond the usual formulaic good wishes several times in their correspondence. For instance, in *P.Mich.* 8.468 he asks Tiberianus to write back immediately (*continuo*) with news of his health, and explains that if he does not hear from his father he will be worried about trouble at home (lines 31-35). Similarly, Terentianus becomes anxious concerning his father's health in *P.Mich.* 8.479, when Tiberianus became ill while visiting Terentianus and he then did not hear from him for some time afterwards (lines 4-10).

¹⁰⁰ See above for further discussion of this verb.

In many letters, the sender's hopes for good health for their families are accompanied by assurances of their own good health and exhortations that their family should not worry about them. For instance, in *New Docs.* 1.13 (98-117 CE) the sender Heraklas, a soldier who is separated from his wife and child because he is away on military service encourages his wife not to worry about him (line 2).

Special care for certain family members

Although ancient letter writers express worry about family members of all ages and genders, certain family members are frequently brought up in papyrus letters as cause for special concern. Pregnant women, children, and the elderly feature very prominently, which is unsurprising given that these were the three most hazardous life stages in the ancient world. Child mortality rates were high, with one in three infants not reaching their first birthday.¹⁰¹ Old age was another highly hazardous stage of life, if a person was lucky enough to reach it at all: only four percent of people recorded in Egyptian censuses were aged 60 or over, and only 15% of census records contain families with three generations.¹⁰²

Concerns for pregnant women and special arrangements for their care during childbirth are common, as in *BGU* 2.665 (first century CE) in which a man writes to his father asking him to help care for his friend's pregnant wife.¹⁰³ The friend has been detained away from home while attempting to recover a legacy which is owed to him (lines 4-6). Unfortunately the part of the text where the sender describes the assistance he is asking his father to provide the pregnant woman is not well preserved, but from the surviving fragments it appears that the sender is

¹⁰¹ Rowlandson 1998, 296-297.

¹⁰² Rowlandson and Lippert 2019, 329.

¹⁰³ For more papyrus sources concerning pregnancy and childbirth see Rowlandson 1998, 282-299.

requesting that his father be present around the time when the woman is expecting to give birth (lines 11-15). In *P.Münch.* 3.57 (second century BCE), a mother writes to her daughter describing her relief that her daughter safely escaped the danger of childbirth and how she prayed daily for her safety during that hazardous period (lines 9-12), as well as expressing affection for her new grand-daughter by suggesting a name for her (lines 18-20).¹⁰⁴

Children were often a significant focus of emotion in ancient households: for instance, Verhoogt 2009 notes the importance of including children in the greeting portions of family letters. General expressions of care for children are commonly found in papyrus letters and they are frequently included in formulaic greetings towards the end of a letter.¹⁰⁵ In addition to the formulaic expressions which are used very frequently, there are also some striking non-formulaic expressions of concern for children to be found in papyrus letters. One can be found at *New Docs.* 1.13 lines 5-7, discussed above. Another example of parental affection expressed towards a child occurs in the Archive of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia (295-296 CE), where their daughter Heliadora is mentioned in several letters. In addition to inquiring after Heliadora in formulaic greetings (for instance, *P.Mich.* 3.214 line 34, *P.Mich.* 3.216 lines 1-6 and lines 24-27, *P.Mich.* 3.218 lines 2-4), Paniskos makes a special request of both his wife Ploutogeneia (*P.Mich.* 3.218 lines 2-3) and his brother Aion (*P.Mich.* 3.219 lines 6-7) to look after her. Paniskos asks Aion to look after any needs Heliadora might have (*P.Mich.* 3.219 lines 5-7), but he also asks his brother to discipline his daughter if necessary: *μάλιστα[α] δὲ ἐπιτάξα[τε] αὐτῇ καὶ ἥαν*¹⁰⁶ | *ἀντιε[ἰ]πη ἡμεῖν*,¹⁰⁷ *impose your commands on her even if she contradicts us* (lines 8-9). Paniskos also

¹⁰⁴ Some other texts indicating concern for pregnant women include *P.Oxy.* 46.3312 (Oxyrhynchos, second century CE), *PSI* 8.895 (Oxyrhynchos, late third to early fourth century CE)

¹⁰⁵ For bibliography on emotional attachments within the Roman and Late Antique family see Kotsifou 2009, 340-44.

¹⁰⁶ Read *ἕαν*.

¹⁰⁷ The edition suggests that this reading should be corrected to *ὕμιν*, but there is no reason why the *ἡμεῖν* from the original text cannot be read here.

arranges for three gold coins to be melted down to make gold anklets for Heliodora (*P.Mich.* 3.218 lines 9-10), an act which implies Paniskos cared for his daughter since he is willing to give her a valuable gift.

It is, however, not universal that all absent parents express concern for their children: one very famous example of this is a letter from Oxyrhynchus sent by Hilarion to his wife Alis (*P.Oxy.* 4.744, 2 BCE), Hilarion describes his plans to remain in Alexandria while waiting to be paid, presumably for some work project which was now complete. Although he expresses concern for an unnamed child, he proceeds to instruct Alis that if she gives birth she should keep the child if it is a boy but expose it if it is a girl.¹⁰⁸

Among upper class families, education is frequently mentioned as a cause of anxiety both for parents and children. In papyrus letters, children are concerned with the cost of their education, the quality of their teachers and receiving parental approval for their studies. Parents express concern that their children are working hard and made good use of the opportunities which their parents obtained for them, often at considerable expense.¹⁰⁹ Queries about whether children are persevering in their studies are commonly found in family archives where children are present: for instance they appear frequently in the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* (Hermopolis, first quarter of the second century CE), for instance in *P.Brem.* 63 (117 CE, lines 24-25) and *P.Lond. inv.* 1228 (first quarter of the second century CE, lines 5-6), though in both cases the identity of the children in question is not specified. There are several additional references to education where the family's eldest daughter Heraidous is certainly the child in question: *P.Giss.* 80 lines 7-12; *P.Giss.* 85 lines 12-15.

¹⁰⁸ For more discussion on this letter, see West 1998.

¹⁰⁹ Kotsifou 2012, 64.

There are also a few instances where a letter from a child to a parent is preserved, although this occurs relatively rarely. Letters of this sort are often clearly written in the child's own inexperienced hand and frequently express the writer's emotions in non-formulaic words. For example, *P.Oxy.* 1.119 (second or third century CE) contains a letter to Theon from his son, also named Theon. The boy expresses his displeasure that his father did not bring him to Alexandria (lines 2-3), though the reason why the elder Theon travelled there is not specified in the letter, nor does the younger Theon provide any reason why he expected to accompany his father there. The younger Theon expresses his frustration at being left behind by threatening to cut off both spoken and written communication with his father: ἢ¹¹⁰ οὐ θέλεις¹¹¹ ἀπενεγκεῖν¹¹² <με> με|τῆ¹¹³ σοῦ εἰς Ἀλεξάνδριαν οὐ μὴ γράψω σε¹¹⁴ ἐπιστολὴν οὔτε λαλῶ σε¹¹⁵ οὔτε υἱγενῶ¹¹⁶ σε, | εἶτα ἄν δὲ ἔλθῃς εἰς Ἀλεξάνδριαν οὐ | μὴ λάβω χειρὰν¹¹⁷ παρὰ [σ]οῦ οὔτε πάλι χαίρω | σε. *If you don't take me with you to Alexandria I will not write a letter to you and I will not speak to you and I will not say goodbye to you, and if you go to Alexandria I won't take your hand and I won't greet you ever again* (lines 3-8). At the end of his letter, the younger Theon demands that his father send him a lyre and petulantly threatens his father that he will refuse food and drink if he does not receive his present: ἄμ¹¹⁸ μὴ πέμψῃς οὐ μὴ φά|γω, οὐ μὴ πείνω¹¹⁹ ταῦτα. *If you don't send it, I won't eat, I won't drink, so there!* (lines 14-15).

¹¹⁰ Read εἰ.

¹¹¹ Read θέλεις.

¹¹² Read ἀπενεγκεῖν.

¹¹³ Read με|τῆ.

¹¹⁴ Read σοι.

¹¹⁵ Read σοι.

¹¹⁶ Read υἱγαίνω.

¹¹⁷ Read χεῖρα.

¹¹⁸ Read ἄν.

¹¹⁹ Read πίνω.

Grown up children often express concern for their parents in letters, much as parents are seen to do for children of all ages. In the Greek world it was considered very important for children to care for aging parents in return for the care they received as a child, and this concept also appears in the papyri.¹²⁰ One example of this concern from grown children for a parent occurs the Archive of Saturnila and her sons (last quarter of the second century CE). Most of the letters in this archive were sent by Sempronius, the eldest of Saturnila's sons, to his mother and brothers (eight of eleven total preserved letters). Sempronius was travelling away from home for an unknown reason: in *P.Mich.* 3.206 (lines 3-10) he is described as transporting bread to soldiers in Taposiris, a settlement located one day's journey from Alexandria which may hint at his absences being due to business concerns in the Delta.¹²¹ Saturnila's other sons also contributed letters when they were away from home, for instance Maximus sends greetings to his mother in *SB* 26.16578.

During his absence, Sempronius frequently reminds his brothers of their duty to care for their mother, often using strong language in his reminders: for instance, in *SB* 3.6263 = *Sel. Pap.* 1.121, Sempronius rebukes his brother Maximus for only grudgingly caring for their mother in the following terms:

μετέλαβον, ὅτι βαρέως δουλεύουτε¹²² | τὴν κυρίαν ἡμῶν μητέρα.¹²³ ἐρωτηθεῖς, ἄδελφε
 γλυκύταται,¹²⁴ ἐν μηδενεὶ¹²⁵ αὐτὴν λύπει. εἰ δέ τις τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἀντιλέγει αὐτῇ, σὺ
 ὀφείλεις αὐτοὺς κολαφίζει[ν]. ἤδη γὰρ πατήρ ὀφίλεις¹²⁶ καλεῖσθαι. ἐπέισταμε,¹²⁷ | ὅτι

¹²⁰ Kotsifou 2012, 78. For further discussion of care for the elderly in Roman Egypt, see Huebner 2013, 107-140 and 162-198.

¹²¹ Another piece of evidence for Sempronius' location is *P.Mich.* 15.751 lines 3-4 (Sempronius will make daily obeisance to Serapis on behalf of Saturnila, most likely at the Serapeum in Alexandria commonly mentioned in correspondence from that city).

¹²² Read δουλεύετε.

¹²³ Read μητέρα.

¹²⁴ Read γλυκύταται.

¹²⁵ Read μηδενί.

¹²⁶ Read ὀφείλει.

¹²⁷ Read ἐπίσταμαι.

χωρὶς τῶν γραμμάτων μου δυνατὸς εἶ, αὐτῇ | ἀρέσει.¹²⁸ ἀλλὰ μὴ βαρέως ἔχε μου τὰ
γράμματα νοθε|τοῦν[τ]ά σε. ὀφείλομεν¹²⁹ γὰρ σέβεσθαι τὴν τεκοῦσαν ὡς | θε[όν],
μάλιστα¹³⁰ τοιαύτην οὖσαν ἀγαθὴν. ταῦτά σοι ἔ|γραψα, ἄδελφε, ἐπιστάμενος¹³¹ τὴν
γλυκασίαν τῶν | κυ[ρί]ων γονέων.

I found out that you are treating our lady mother harshly. Please, sweetest brother, do not grieve her in any matter. If one of our brothers talks back to her you ought to smack them. For now you ought to be called father. I know that you can please her without my writings. But do not take badly my letters advising you. For we ought to honour the one who bore us like a goddess, especially a mother so good as ours. I wrote this to you, brother, knowing the sweetness of our respected parents. (lines 20-30)

While this theme is expressed in the greatest detail in *SB 3.6263 = Sel. Pap. 1.121*, it also recurs more briefly in several other letters in the archive: for instance, in *P. Wisc. 2.84* (lines 4-9, 22-26).

Another letter indicating the importance that adult children gave to their duty of caring for their parents is *P. Petr. 3.42 H (5)* (252 BCE). In this letter, Philonides encourages his father Kleon to retire from his post as an engineer and return home to his family so that Philonides can fulfil the obligation of a dutiful son and repay the care his father gave him during his youth.

Philonides describes how he wishes to care for his father as follows: οὐ] μὴν οὐθὲν ἐμοὶ | [ἔσται
με]ῖζον ἢ σοῦ προστατῆσα[ι τὸν] ἐ[π]ίλοιπον βίον, ἀξίως | [μὲ]ν σοῦ, ἀξίως δ' ἐμοῦ, *Nothing will be of greater importance to me than caring for you for the rest of your life in a manner worthy of you and of myself* (lines 3-5). He also details how he will continue to care for Kleon even after his death: καὶ ἐάν τι τῶν κατ' ἄνθρωπον γίνηται, | τυχεῖν σε πάντων τῶν καλῶν. ὁ ἐμοὶ
[μ]έγιστον ἔσται καλ[λ]ῶς σου | προστατῆσαι καὶ ζῶντός σου καὶ εἰς θεοῦς ἀπελθόντος, *and if the fate of mortals occurs, I shall see that you receive all good things. This will be most*

¹²⁸ Read ἀρέσαι.

¹²⁹ Read ὀφείλομεν.

¹³⁰ Read μάλιστα.

¹³¹ Read ἐπιστάμενος.

important to me, to care for you well both while you are alive and when you have departed to the gods (lines 5-7).

A grown-up child's duty to repay the care they received during childhood to their aging parents was considered to be very important by Greek-influenced families, and if a parent did not feel that this duty was being discharged in a satisfactory manner this could result in serious friction. Complaints about children not fulfilling their duty of care for a parent are common subjects of petitions. For instance, in *P.enteux*. 26 (221 BCE) a man named Ktesikles writes a petition to the king because his daughter Nike did not help him when he lost his health and his eyesight, despite the care he took in raising her and giving her an education (lines 2-4). Ktesikles describes how he sought justice for his daughter's neglect in Alexandria; she initially swore an oath at the temple of Arsinoe to pay him twenty drachmas, which she was supposed to earn by her own labour (lines 4-7). At the time the petition was composed, however, Ktesikles claims that Nike has been neglecting her oath because she has been seduced by a man named Dionysios (lines 8-10). Ktesikles asks King Ptolemy to compel his daughter to do justice by him (lines 13-14): his description of what exactly this would entail is unfortunately in lacuna, but it seems most likely that he wanted her to resume her monthly payments. From the previous incident described in the petition as well as the petition itself, it is clear that Ktesikles strongly believed that his daughter owed him financial support to repay the care he gave her when she was a child, and he was willing to expend significant effort to ensure she fulfilled this duty.

In addition, a petition from the Zenon archive details the practical and emotional difficulties caused to a mother by the loss of her daughter's help: however, these difficulties appear to result mostly from a loss of income because she cannot rely on her daughter's assistance when running her business, rather than the mother needing her daughter to care for her

in other ways. The letter *P.Lond.* 7.1976 (253 BCE) was sent to Zenon by a woman called Haynchis concerning her daughter, who she claims was abducted by a vine-dresser named Demetrios.¹³² Haynchis supplies few details of the work undertaken by her daughter in the beer shop, describing it merely as ‘managing the shop and supporting me’ (αὐτὴ δὲ συνένεμε | τὸ ἐργαστήριον καὶ ἐμὲ | ἔτρεφεν, lines 11-13). However, her daughter’s labour was apparently crucial to the profitable operation of the shop given its decline in her absence. In this petition, Haynchis complains that she is unable to run her business without her daughter’s help because she is too old, and is thus experiencing a loss of income and is unable to afford basic necessities (lines 11-17). She asks Zenon to help retrieve her daughter, concluding once again on the pathetic note of her old age and implicit helplessness in the matter (lines 20-22). Haynchis’ claim to old age may also be artistic license on her part to make her plight seem more sympathetic to the audience of her petition. Complaints of old age, infirmity and destitution are very common in petitions, and while some are likely to be true, the frequency of these complaints does suggest a certain expected petition language and it is therefore naïve to completely trust in the literal veracity of Haynchis’ claim to advanced age.

There is also no information about whether Haynchis’ daughter was compensated for her labour in ways other than food and lodging. It seems unlikely that she was paid a fair wage for her work, given how the business struggled in her absence (though this also could be an exaggeration or fiction designed to evoke pity in Haynchis’ audience). If Haynchis’ daughter was paid a competitive salary, Haynchis could have hired another employee in her place with the

¹³² Although Haynchis’ daughter appears as a passive entity in this supposed abduction, other aspects of the account suggest that she was not an unwilling participant and likely possessed more agency than her mother believes. Haynchis twice describes her daughter as being deceived by Demetrios (ἀπατήσας in line 7 and ἠπάτησεν in line 20), and implies indirectly that he has offered her daughter marriage. Haynchis claims that this is impossible as Demetrios has a wife and child already (lines 17-20), though it is unclear how she knows this while her daughter remains ignorant of the same information. This again suggests that the daughter is less likely to be the unwitting victim of her mother’s portrayal, and more that she willingly ran away from her mother.

money she previously paid to her daughter. The daughter's possible complicity in her own 'abduction' may point to poor working conditions and lack of pay, but could equally well indicate that she was simply bored or unhappy with her current daily existence and sought something better as the wife or mistress of Demetrios.¹³³

This petition documents a very different situation from most of the archives discussed in this dissertation: in this case, at least in the manner it is presented by Haynchis, her daughter is required to remain with the family in order to ensure the viability of the family business. By contrast, in most of the situations discussed elsewhere, a family member is required to travel away from home in order to support the rest of the family by working in a different location.

However, this does not necessarily imply that situations where a family member left home to work were significantly more common than family members remaining at home while working, since cases where an individual left home to work would be much more likely to generate documentation in the papyrological record than cases where individuals continued to live with their family while working. Individuals leaving home would have resulted in many opportunities for letters and other documents to be sent between family members, whereas individuals living at home with their families while working resulted in fewer opportunities for documentation of their working life to occur. The case of Haynchis' daughter is representative of numerous other similar young workers whose labour would have gone completely undocumented. Unlike labour for an external employer which is likely to leave written evidence in contracts, accounts and other documents, there would be no contract drawn up for labour

¹³³ If Demetrios was successful in his profession, it is certainly plausible that he could have maintained Haynchis' daughter in comfort in addition to his original household, as indicated by *P.Cair.Zen.* 2.59269 (252 BCE), a vinedresser's account involving substantial sums of money and land holdings.

within a family business, and it is therefore more difficult to find evidence for this type of work in the papyrological record.

Another emotion commonly found in letters sent by children to their parents is a longing for parental approval, even once the child has reached adulthood. This is clearly visible in the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus (first quarter of the second century CE). After he became a legionary, Terentianus wrote to Tiberianus, a man whom he addresses as ‘father’ from Alexandria asking permission to take a woman into his house, and in the letter he seems genuinely concerned to receive his approval (*P.Mich.* 8.476).¹³⁴ Terentianus seems to believe he will face strong opposition to his decision, and so defends his position strongly and stresses his obedience to his ‘father’. He describes how he has desired to take a woman into his house for a long time, claiming he has wanted to take this step for two years but was restrained then as now by requiring Tiberianus’ approval for such an action (lines 10-13). Terentianus is careful to assure Tiberianus that he will ensure that the woman he brings into his house is an appropriate one and will satisfy Tiberianus (lines 19-20). He also mentions that having a woman in his house will benefit Tiberianus, because a woman would be able to take better care of him than Terentianus himself could (lines 13-15). Terentianus puts his case to Tiberianus in a persuasive manner, describing how he relieved his father of difficulties and stressing that if his father does not approve of the woman he has chosen he will respect and abide by his decision and never marry (lines 13-20). In addition to this matter, Terentianus repeatedly expresses his desire for Tiberianus’ approval in other letters in this archive, even in relatively trivial matters: for example, he asks his father to send him a pair of boots and socks, but only if Tiberianus approves the idea (*P.Mich.* 8.468, lines 23-24).

¹³⁴ This arrangement was probably not a marriage in the legal sense, since foot soldiers in the Roman army were not permitted to marry.

Friction due to or as evidenced by poor communication

Difficulties in communication could be a source of frustration and resentment between family members, but the reasons behind such gaps in correspondence could vary. In many cases, it is likely that they resulted from genuine failures in the transmission of letters between the two locations, but there are also instances where lack of communication resulted from the laziness of one or more parties in the correspondence, or alternatively a deliberate withholding of communication by one party. Typical reactions to a lack of correspondence which are found in papyrus letters range from regret and disappointment (for instance in a letter from an unnamed man to his mother from the second century CE, *BGU* 3.845 lines 8-9), to serious concern for the non-corresponding party (as in a letter from Gerontius to his brother Ammonios from the late third century CE, *SB* 22.15603 lines 7-9) or even anger.¹³⁵

Accusations and reproaches over lack of correspondence are found very frequently in ancient correspondence, as are responses from people who received such complaints from a family member. For example, in one letter from the Archive of Sabinus and Apollinarius (P.Mich. inv. 5838i+5838l, 26th March 107 CE),¹³⁶ the soldier Apollinarius rebukes his mother Tasoucharion for not responding to his letters: ἀλ[λὰ ο]ὐκ ἔγραψας μοι καὶ ἔτι | γράψαν[τ]ός μου ἀπὸ Πηλουσίου | [εἶνα¹³⁷ καὶ] ἐγὼ ἀναψύξ[ω] γεινώσ[κων¹³⁸ ὅτι ὑμ]ῖ[ς]¹³⁹ ἔρρωσθε. *But you did not write to me even though I wrote from Pelusium [so that] I could relax knowing that you are well* (lines 7-10). Apollinarius describes his surprise that he has not received a response to his

¹³⁵ Clarysse 2017, 65.

¹³⁶ This text is currently being prepared for publication and I thank Graham Claytor for allowing me to see a draft edition in advance.

¹³⁷ Read ἴνα.

¹³⁸ Read γινώσκων.

¹³⁹ Read ὑμεῖς.

numerous letters: ἤδη δέ σοι· | [ἐπιστολήν] εἰκοστήν γράφω καὶ θαυ[[μάζω πάνυ ὅτ]ι οὐπω οὐδεμίαν ἐκο[[μισάμην *But I am now writing the twentieth [letter] to you and I am very amazed that I have not yet received a single letter* (lines 10-12). It is very plausible that Apollinarius is exaggerating the number of letters he sent to his mother for dramatic effect, but it is not totally implausible that his letters or responses from his mother were repeatedly lost in transit.

Reproaches on this subject or responses to such reproaches can sometimes supply the primary content of a letter, and can result in dramatic descriptions detailing the reasons why letters were not received. For instance, in *P.Mert.* 2.82 (late second century CE), Nike writes back to her ‘sister’ Berenike to refute her accusations that she is neglectful of their correspondence, and instead places the blame firmly on her letters not being delivered: ἔγραψά σοι, κυρία ἀδελφή, | [ἄ]λλα δις χω[ρ]ίς του¹⁴⁰ καὶ τάχα σοι οὐ[[δέ]ν ἐδόθη. κ[α]ὶ ἔγραψάς μοι ὅτι οὐ | καθάπαξ μο[ι] ἔτι γ[ρ]άφεις· οὕτως δὲ | [ἐγ]ὼ ἦν ἀμαθὴς ὥστε σοι μὴ γρά[[ψα]ι; ἡμεῖς γὰρ καθάπαξ γράφομέν | [σο]ι· τάχα ὑμῖν οὐκ ἀναδιδούσι. *Lady sister, I wrote to you twice apart from this, and perhaps nothing was given to you. And you wrote to me that “You didn’t even write to me once!”*, but was I so foolish that I didn’t write to you? For I write to you every time, but perhaps they don’t deliver it to you (lines 7-13). Similarly, in *P.Oxy.* 58.3932 (sixth century CE), a shorthand writer named Paul writes to his mother, Mary: οὐκ ὀφείλετε δὲ μέμψασθαί με ὡς ὅτιπερ πρ[ῶ]τον | καὶ δεύτερον καὶ τρίτον ἐγράψατέ μοι καὶ τῶν ἀμ[οι]β[α]ίων οὐκ ἐτύχατε. θεὸς γὰρ | οἶδεν ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ἐξ ὅτου ἐξῆλθον τῆς Ὀξυρυγχιτῶν εἰ μὴ ταύτην καὶ | μόνην τὴν ἐπιστολήν οὐκ ἐδεξάμην ὑμῶν. *You should not blame me because you wrote to me a first, second and third time and did not receive anything in return. For God Almighty knows that I only received this letter of yours, from the time when I left Oxyrhynchus* (lines 7-10).

¹⁴⁰ Read τού<του>.

In many cases where one correspondent accuses another of neglecting to write, there is no indication that the lack of correspondence created significant negative feelings on the part of the person expressing the reproach (see below on the Archive of Satornila). There are exceptions to this however: for instance, the letters of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia indicate that this family experienced severe difficulties in communication, not due to logistical issues surrounding the distance separating them but rather due to interpersonal difficulties. In his letters, Paniskos is persistent in his requests for Ploutogeneia to join him in Koptos, but he is forced to use persuasion rather than direct compulsion to encourage her to join him. In *P.Mich.* 3.214 (297 CE), the earliest letter sent from Koptos, Paniskos informs Ploutogeneia of his arrival in Koptos and that she should prepare to join him as soon as he sends word (lines 19-20). Paniskos provides detailed information on his precise location (lines 7-11) and includes several reasons why she should come to join him (lines 11-17): Ploutogeneia should not be grieved (λπηθῆς) about coming to Koptos because she has siblings there, Ploutogeneia and her sister mutually have a strong and constant desire to see each other, and her sister wishes to see her mother.

By the time he wrote *P.Mich.* 3.216 (16th June 297), Paniskos is clearly frustrated that Ploutogeneia has not come to Koptos despite his earlier attempts at persuasion. He complains that he has asked her to join him twice but she has not come (lines 6-9). Paniskos asks Ploutogeneia to send him a definitive answer if she does not want to come (lines 9-10). It appears that Ploutogeneia had written a response ignoring his invitation to travel to join him because Paniskos quotes something she wrote to him in lines 13-15.¹⁴¹ He has however not totally given

¹⁴¹ The papyrus is severely mutilated at this point in the text, so it is unclear what Ploutogeneia wrote. It is also possible, though less likely, that Ploutogeneia had not responded at all, and that he is quoting her correspondence from some previous occasion.

up on the idea that she might be persuaded to come to Koptos, because he still asks her to bring him some of the items he requested in *P.Mich.* 3.214 (lines 10-13).

In a subsequent letter (*P.Mich.* 3.217, 297 CE), Paniskos responds to Ploutogeneia's decision not to join him in Koptos with frustration, but also acceptance: εἰ μὲν | [ο]ὐ θέλεις ἀναβῆναι πρὸς ἐμέ, οὐδεὶς | [σε ἀν]αγκάζει[1], *if you do not wish to come to me, nobody is forcing you* (lines 9-11). He still wants at least some of the items he originally asked her to bring, and so he requests that she send them to him (lines 16-19). The change of the verb in his request to πέμψον (*send*) from ἔνεγκον (*bring*) is significant, as it indicates that Paniskos no longer believes Ploutogeneia will come to Koptos.¹⁴² He also remains anxious to hear Ploutogeneia's news, even if she has no intention of travelling to Koptos (lines 13-15).

Paniskos complains that he has written three letters to Ploutogeneia and has received no reply (lines 8-9) and that he only wrote to her so many times because her sister forced him to do so (lines 11-13). This may suggest that Ploutogeneia's sister could have been the driving force behind Paniskos' repeated requests for Ploutogeneia to visit Koptos, though he may also have inserted this remark to disguise his own hurt feelings: Ploutogeneia's sister was presumably able to communicate with her sister without Paniskos as an intermediary. The time frame during which these unanswered letters were sent is unclear, but enough time has passed that Paniskos is not only expecting a reply, but also has had time to hear from another source that she received the letters.

He also expresses frustration that she went away to her house, when he explicitly asked her not to do so: εἴ τι θέλεις | ποιεῖς, λογιῶν¹⁴³ μου μὴ ἔχουσαν¹⁴⁴, *if you want something you do*

¹⁴² *P.Mich.* 3.217 p. 284; Kotsifou 2012, 41.

¹⁴³ Read λόγον.

¹⁴⁴ Read ἔχουσα.

it, taking no account of me (lines 5-6). The rest of this letter continues in this frustrated vein: Paniskos tells Ploutogeneia that nobody is forcing her to come to Koptos if she does not want to do so (lines 9-11); later he hints that he is deliberately withholding information from Ploutogeneia, presumably to provoke her into responding: ἄλλα ἤκουσα τὰ | [μὴ] ἀνήκοντά σοι, *but I heard things which do not concern you* (lines 15-16). However, at one point he briefly moves away from attacking Ploutogeneia and blames his own mother for Ploutogeneia's behaviour (lines 7-8), though he does not offer any explanation as to why he thinks it is her fault, and his mother is never mentioned again in the surviving correspondence. As discussed above, Paniskos describes how he discovered that Ploutogeneia had indeed been receiving his letters in considerable detail in lines 20-25. By describing this scene in dramatic detail, Paniskos attempts to invoke feelings of shame in Ploutogeneia, though it appears that this attempt was once again unsuccessful. Despite his frustration with her behaviour, Paniskos is still concerned about Ploutogeneia's welfare: he asks her to send news about herself even if she does not plan to visit (lines 13-16).

Although Paniskos' initial persuasive appeal to Ploutogeneia in *P.Mich.* 3.214 suggests that he was not confident that she would decide to join him, he quickly becomes frustrated, first because she did not come to Koptos as he requested (*P.Mich.* 3.216 lines 6-10), and later because he has not received a response from her for some time. He has heard, however, that his subsequent letters were delivered. Thus, he knows that they did not get lost in transit and that she is deliberately ignoring him (*P.Mich.* 3.217 lines 20-25).

Paniskos was not the only family member who experienced difficulties in communication in the Archive of Ploutogeneia. In *P.Mich.* 3.221 (c. 296 CE), Ploutogeneia writes to Heliodora, complaining that she although she has been in Alexandria for eight months she has not received

any letters from her (lines 4-6). Ploutogeneia is frustrated by what she perceives as a deliberate lack of communication, and interprets this as another instance of Heliadora treating her badly: *πάλι οὖν | οὐκ ἔχεις¹⁴⁵ με ὡς θυγατέραν¹⁴⁶ σου <ἀλλὰ> ὡς ἐχθράν | σου, again, you do not treat me like your daughter, but rather, like your enemy* (lines 6-8). She then proceeds to give various instructions about household, farming and financial matters that need to be taken care of (lines 8-15), and finally discusses some family matters (lines 15-20). There are no traces of resentment in either of these sections, so it is likely that Ploutogeneia's resentment in the opening of the letter is less genuine sentiment and more for dramatic effect.

Similar sentiments are expressed in a letter between Heliadora and her 'mother' Isidora (*SB* 16.12326), when Heliadora complains that she has not received news from Isidora since they parted company: *εὐ-|τόνω[ς] πικρένομέ¹⁴⁷ σοι ὅτι οὐτέ¹⁴⁸ φάσις¹⁴⁹ [λαβεῖν] | διὰ γραμμάτων σου κατηξίωσάς με [ἀφ' ὅτε] | ἐξῆλθα ἀπὸ σοῦ, I am thoroughly irritated at you because you did not deem me worthy to receive information through your letters ever since I left you* (lines 1-4). The duration of the two women's separation is uncertain, as is the cause of their separation, but this complaint fits in well with the other letters in this archive. Unlike some of the other letters discussed in this section, Heliadora's irritated tone continues for most of the letter, which mostly consists of complaints about her daughter's behaviour.

In *P.Mich.* 3.220, Paniskos also indicates that he has had difficulty communicating with Ploutogeneia's brother Hermeias, who is described as being located *ἐν τῷ πέρα | μετὰ τοῦ ἐπάρχου, in the country beyond with the prefect* (lines 19-20). Later in the letter, Paniskos

¹⁴⁵ Read ἔχεις.

¹⁴⁶ Read θυγατέρα.

¹⁴⁷ Read πικραίνομαί.

¹⁴⁸ Read οὐδέ.

¹⁴⁹ Read φάσεις.

describes how he repeatedly (πολλάκις, line 20) sent word to Hermeias that he could come to a certain *corrector* but Hermeias has not yet made the journey. Hermeias' lack of response should most likely be ascribed to his not receiving Paniskos' letters, perhaps because he was travelling in a remote location in the prefect's retinue. It is also possible that he was unable to travel away from his post, or that, like his sister Ploutogeneia, he was deliberately ignoring Paniskos' correspondence.

Another instance where interrupted communication caused family relations to become strained can be found in *P.Oxy.* 59.3994 (first quarter of the third century CE). In this letter, a man named Calocaerus writes to a woman he refers to as his sister, asking her to find out what his wife Aleis is doing because she has not written to him and has all his property. Calocaerus makes contradictory assertions in rapid succession, alternately asserting that he does not care about his wife (lines 8-9) and that he is concerned about her (lines 10-12). Although Calocaerus' letter is brief, the irregular structure and curt tone of the letter indicates his anger and displeasure at the situation.¹⁵⁰

Difficulties in communication surface in other archives where the relationships between family members are less strained than in the examples above. For instance, in the Archive of Satornila (last quarter of the second century CE) one of Satornila's sons Saturnilus rebukes another of her sons (Sempronius) for not answering letters from his family: he claims that he has sent Sempronius two letters but has received no response (*P.Mich.* 3.209 lines 6-9). This is a little surprising given that most of the surviving letters in the archive were written by Sempronius to other family members (eight out of eleven letters). Although this may well be an accident of preservation, this suggests that he was not a reluctant correspondent and therefore his

¹⁵⁰ Kotsifou 2012, 41 n. 5.

lack of response is most likely attributed to genuine difficulties with sending letters (for instance, being unable to find someone travelling in the direction of his family, or third party letter carriers not delivering his letters).

In one instance when Sempronius was away in the Delta, the family received no communication from him for a significant period. At one point, his brother Maximus sent him a *chiton* but did not receive a response. This caused his brothers to become so worried for his safety that they sent a man named Tiberinus to search for him. *P.Mich.* 3.206 (second century CE) is a letter from another of Saturnila's sons Longinus to Maximus, in which he describes the outcome of Tiberinus' search: he located Sempronius, who was journeying between Alexandria and the nearby settlement Taposiris by boat because he had encountered a business opportunity to supply bread to soldiers there (lines 4-13). Although Saturnila's family presumably trusted Tiberinus to a certain degree since they asked him to search for their missing relative, it appears that there was some concern over whether Tiberinus had located the real Sempronius. In the same letter, Longinus mentions that he wrote to Tiberinus and requested that he send him the girdle of the *chiton* sent to Sempronius by Maximus, as proof of identity (lines 13-16).

In his turn, Sempronius reproaches his mother for not responding to his letters on multiple occasions in the archive. For instance, in *SB* 3.6263 = *Sel. Pap.* 1.121 lines 6-8, Sempronius describes writing to his mother multiple times without receiving a response. Likewise in *P.Mich.* 15.751, Sempronius describes his surprise when he spoke to two letter carriers frequently used by his family and found that neither of them had a letter from Saturnila for him (lines 4-7). This further hints at difficulties in the transportation of letters: unlike the Archive of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia, the letters in this archive are friendly in tone and it is

therefore unlikely that participants in this correspondence were deliberately refusing to answer their family members.

Excitement at the prospect of being reunited

There are several cases where the resolution of negative emotions (or the anticipation of this resolution) results in more positive feelings. Letter writers frequently describe their feelings of joy and relief when they hear that a relative is safe after a period of anxiety. This anxiety may have resulted from a period without communication (as in the Archive of Satornila, last quarter of the second century CE) or from the certain knowledge that a family member was experiencing a hazardous situation (as is seen for instance in the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* when Apollonios performed military service during the Roman-Jewish war and experienced illness several times, or in *P.Münch.* 3.57 (second century BCE), in which a mother writes to her daughter expressing her joy on the safe birth of her grand-daughter in lines 5-12).

Positive emotion is also expressed by letter writers in their feelings of excitement at the prospect of being reunited with their family members in the future. In the Archive of Claudius Tiberianus (first quarter of the second century CE), a woman whose name is in a lacuna asks Tiberianus to visit her while he is in Alexandria, since he has been away for a considerable length of time (*P.Mich.* 8.474, lines 2-3). She describes her feelings on learning that Tiberianus is close by: [πυθομένη ὅτι παρ]εγένου ε[ί]ς Ἀλεξάνδρ[ει]αν λίαν ἐχάρην [μ]ετὰ [τῶ]ν ἐμ[ῶν] πάντων, *after learning that you came to Alexandria I was very overjoyed, together with all my family* (line 2). She reiterates multiple times in the letter that he should try to come quickly and indicates the anticipation his visit is causing by describing the suspense of waiting with the children for his visit: καὶ τὰ ἕως ἄρτι κα|[θ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν] περιμένομέν σε μετὰ τῶν παιδίων.

And until now we are waiting for you [each day] with the children (lines 4-5). This suggests that he was not often near enough Alexandria to visit, and that his visits were the occasion of considerable excitement for the household.

In the Archive of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia, Paniskos frequently expresses his desire to be reunited with Ploutogeneia. For instance, in *P.Mich.* 3.214 (297 CE), Paniskos describes how Ploutogeneia's sister is excited to be reunited with her and the similar desire he assumes Ploutogeneia has to see her sister in return: ὅπερ καὶ σὺ | πάντως βούλῃ αὐτὴν ἀσπά|σαστε¹⁵¹ {αὐτὴν} πολλά, τοῖς θεοῖς | εὔχετε¹⁵² καθ' ἡμέραν βουλομένη | σε ἀσπάζε[σ]θαι¹⁵³ μετὰ τῆς μητρός | σου. *And just as you desire greatly to greet her many times, so she prays daily to the gods, wishing to greet you with your mother* (lines 12-17). However, it appears that if Ploutogeneia did indeed wish to see her sister, this desire was not strong enough to cause her to travel to Koptos where her husband and sister were located.

Conclusion

Despite the difficulties surrounding emotional expression in ancient letters and the challenges that interpreting ancient emotions present to the modern scholar, it is clear that letters provided many opportunities for extended families to communicate a range of emotions using a variety of techniques. From the material examined in this chapter, it is clear that families who were separated when one or more members relocated for work purposes were placed under a great deal of stress for a variety of reasons: separation from family and friends was the primary source of strain on both those travelling and those who were left behind. These feelings were

¹⁵¹ Read ἀσπά|σασθαι.

¹⁵² Read εὔχεται.

¹⁵³ Read ἀσπάζε[σ]θαι.

especially acute concerning vulnerable family members such as children, elderly parents and pregnant women, as well as those travelling to a hazardous location such as Apollonios. Slow and unreliable communication could cause anxiety, sadness or anger depending on whether someone believed that their correspondent was deliberately withholding communication, or alternatively was unable to communicate due to illness or other peril. A common theme across many of the letters is a feeling of powerlessness in the face of situations which are out of the sender's control, such as illness, warfare and unreliable communication.

Although negative emotions such as anxiety and frustration predominate in the letters of families separated due to the demands of labour, a small respite from this relatively bleak outlook is found in expressions of relief and joy when separated family members receive news of the safety of their loved ones or contemplate the prospect of being reunited with them. Despite this, the emotions on display in the majority of the cases discussed above, whether positive or negative, indicate the high value people placed on familial relationships. This high value could manifest in a variety of forms, such as extreme anxiety when a husband went away to war (as in the Archive of Apollonios *strategos*), sending out a search party to locate a missing son (as in the Archive of Saturnila), waiting with excited children for an anticipated visit (as in the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus), or even a husband entreating his wife multiple times to join him despite her apparent indifference (as in the Archive of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia).

Chapter 4 Conflicts Resulting from Family Separation

Introduction

In this chapter I examine some of the practical consequences experienced by families in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt when individuals from a household were separated due to their working commitments. In the papyri, family separation frequently results in conflict with employers, with officials or other individuals outside the household, and also between members of the same family. Separation produced negative consequences most commonly when young family members were removed from the protection of their older relatives: young workers experienced hazards ranging from problems receiving compensation to physical abuse from their supervisors. Although Ptolemaic and Roman administrative structures highlight the importance of the male head of household as the main protector of a family and its main connection with the outside world, evidence from personal letters suggests that, in many cases, the women in a family were able to fill this role when the male head of household was absent for work. The material in this chapter complements the discussion of the emotional results of family separation in Chapter 3: many of the emotions reflected in the documentary evidence result from negative practical consequences due to a family member's absence (or fear concerning potential negative outcomes).

The demands of labour had the potential to introduce many new forms of conflict into the lives of separated family members. Two patterns of family separation commonly occur in evidence from the papyri, both of which had the potential to introduce conflict into a family by separating members traditionally considered to be vulnerable from those who were tasked with

their protection. Firstly, the head of household was sometimes required to travel away from home to work leaving his wife, children and other family members (such as his parents) behind; and secondly, individual children could leave the rest of the household to work in another location on apprenticeship, *paramone*, or other types of labour contracts.

In the Greek and Roman world, the male head of household functioned as the link between the family and external institutions such as the government,¹⁵⁴ and was commonly perceived to protect other family members from dangers from sources external to the house.¹⁵⁵ He was also expected to provide for the family financially. The importance of the male head of household appears to be confirmed by various features of the administration: for instance, in Ptolemaic tax lists, the head of a household is always listed first and the other members of the household are described according to their relationship with him. His tax status was extended to all other adults in the house.¹⁵⁶ In traditional Greek culture, freeborn women were not permitted to work outside the household, except for a small number of female-only jobs such as nurses and *hetairai*, and a few select other jobs such as musicians and dancers.¹⁵⁷ A Greek woman would typically pass from the legal guardianship of her father to her husband: by contrast, Egyptian women had a greater degree of legal freedom.

It therefore might seem reasonable to assume that the separation of family members due to the demands of labour would not only disrupt personal relationships, but would also cause special difficulties for any members who were separated from the protection given by their head of household. However, this assumption is not straightforwardly confirmed by the evidence: although there are certainly some instances where family members experience serious problems

¹⁵⁴ Pomeroy 1997, 204.

¹⁵⁵ Huebner in ed. Huebner and Ratzan 2009, 64.

¹⁵⁶ Clarysse and Thompson 2006, vol. 2, 230.

¹⁵⁷ Pomeroy 1997, 202-3.

due to the absence of their head of household, it is far more common to see female household members, such as the head of household's wife or mother, take over his role with a large degree of success. This suggests that the patriarchal image of the family seen in official documentation such as tax records was not borne out in practice in day-to-day life.

It is also important to note that households were not always restricted to a single nuclear family: for instance, taxation and census records also show that *frérèches* where several adult siblings housed their spouses and children in the same house occurred with some regularity,¹⁵⁸ as were households containing both parents and one or more married children and their own families, and households containing a nuclear family plus the widowed mother of either of the parents (or both).¹⁵⁹ In Ptolemaic Egypt, a little over 25% of households contained an extended family or multiple families, as opposed to 44% containing a single conjugal family.¹⁶⁰ Polygamy also occurred with some regularity, as did brother-sister marriage. However, households containing only two adults were most common: in Ptolemaic Egypt around 40% of all households had two adults (at least 75% of which were a husband and wife pair),¹⁶¹ as compared to around 18% with one adult, 20% with three, 12% with four and a little over 10% with five or more.¹⁶² In multiple-family households, it is natural to assume that another male family member would fill the role of household head if the designated head of household was required to leave

¹⁵⁸ Some examples of *frérèches* from the papyri can be found in *P.Sorb. inv.* 331, col. i lines 29-35, 36-43; in lines 49-54, a couple and both their married sons all live together. *P.Count.* 50 lines 153-159 (first half of the second century BCE) records a family where a husband, wife and their three sons and their wives all cohabited.

¹⁵⁹ Pomeroy 1997, 194 and 206-7; for data on family sizes in Ptolemaic Egypt, see Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 237.

¹⁶⁰ Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 248, Table 7:8. For the family classification terms used here, see Bagnall and Frier 1994, 59.

¹⁶¹ Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 242.

¹⁶² Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 238, Table 7:2. It should be noted that Greek and Egyptian families (that is, families where the head of household has a Greek or Egyptian name) display different distributions of family structure.

for work: similarly, if other male relatives lived close by to a family whose head was temporarily absent, it is likely that these men would have temporarily assumed the role of head of household.

Children who left home to work at a significant distance from their family encountered many more problems than those who remained at home. This could happen even if their father remained in the family home, though in many of the examples cited below there are no signs of paternal intervention in the difficulties a child is facing, and it is therefore most likely that the father was dead by the time his child began working outside the house. These examples are not restricted to children from lower social classes, as even aristocratic children were sometimes encountered difficulties when they were sent away from home to complete gymnasial training.¹⁶³

Most of the evidence discussed in this chapter is drawn from three archives: the Archive of Apollonios *strategos*, the Zenon Archive and the Harthotes Archive. Two of these archives show how the departure of one or more family members from home affected various individuals in the family. The Archive of Apollonios *strategos* shows the impact that the removal of the male head of household had on the family members who were left behind. By contrast, the documents in the Harthotes Archive show the effects of children leaving the family home to work in a different location from their parents across three generations. The Zenon Archive provides information about how multiple families interacted with the same employer. Each family appears in a handful of documents in the archive at most, and most families only feature in one incident.

The information which is obtainable from these archives is strongly influenced by the document types preserved in each archive: the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* mainly contains personal letters sent to Apollonios from his wife and mother; the Zenon Archive contains a wide

¹⁶³ See the section on the Zenon Archive below for more details.

variety of document types, but most of the relevant evidence discussed below is drawn from petitions and business letters from employees addressed to their employer. Most of the relevant information from the Harthotes Archive is drawn from work contracts and census returns. Due to these differences in document types, the evidence from the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* enables insight into areas of family life which can only be speculated about in the other archives in this chapter: for instance, minor incidents of everyday life, emotional reactions to events, and various problems experienced by the family that did not impact their relationship with an employer. In most of the letters discussed below, the sender and recipient have a similar level of power, since the letters were sent between family members. This contrasts with the other two archives: the power differential between the sender and addressee of documents is much greater in the Zenon Archive, since the relationship in that case is between employees and their employer. There is a similar power differential in the relationship between Theon and Tahaunes (and her father Harthotes) in the Harthotes Archive. Although the language of the contracts is sparse and formulaic, the standard *paramone* conditions placed on Tahaunes' employment still reflect the unequal power dynamic between her and her employer (P.Mich. inv. 931 + *P.Col.*

10.249 lines 10-19):

ἄμα δὲ κ[αί] | [δι]ατρίβουσιν καὶ ποι[ο]ῦσιν τὰ ἐπιτασσόμενα πάντα οὐ γινομένην | ἀπόκριτον οὐδ' ἀφήμερον ἀλλὰ καὶ συνακλουθοῦσιν α[ὐ]τῶι | πάντα γῆ κατὰ τὸν ν[ο]μὸν τρεφομένη καὶ ἱματιζομένη ὑ[πὸ] | Θεῶνος. ἐκάστης δὲ ἡμέρας ἧς ἐὰν ἀπαλλαγῆ ἐντὸς τοῦ | χρόνου ἐκτίσι δραχμὴν μίαν. μὴ ἐξέστωι οὖν τῶι Ἀρθώτη[ι] | ἐντὸς τοῦ χρόν[ο]υ ἄ[πο]σπᾶν τὴν θυγατέρα μὴδ' αὐτὴν ἀπαλ[λα-][γῆ]ναι. ἐὰν δ' ἀποσπάσῃ καὶ αὐτὴ ἢ θυγάτηρ ἀπαλλαγῆ ἢ κλέ-|[π]τουσα ἢ καταβλάπτουσα ἢ νοσφιζομένη ἀλίσκηται τ[ῶν] | [Θ]έωνος...

...as well as staying and doing everything that is ordered, not being absent by night or by day, but following him everywhere throughout the nome, being fed and clothed by Theon. And for each day on which she is absent within the period. And for each day on which she is absent within the period he will pay one drachma. So it shall not be permissible for Harthotes to remove his daughter within the period nor for her to leave. If they remove

her or the daughter herself leaves or she is caught stealing or damaging or removing anything belonging to Theon...

Absence of the head of household

In the ancient world, the father of a family acted as the head of the household, the main provider of income and the house's primary representative in transactions and other dealings with the outside world. If the head of a household was required to travel away from his family for work, his absence could sometimes result in challenges for those who stayed at home. These effects could be mitigated by the presence of a strong network of family friends and relatives, or by combining households with extended family members, but conversely would be felt more acutely by families who did not possess this support network. For instance, *P.Oxy.* 36.2789 (second half of the third century CE, Oxyrhynchus) contains two letters from a woman named Kleopatra: in the first, addressed to her father, she describes how she is being harassed by a *dekaprotos* (tax collector)¹⁶⁴ and her fears that she will be thrown in jail. She requests that her father hand over five *artabas* of barley to a mason named Moros. In her second letter on the same sheet, Kleopatra writes to Moros (whom she addresses as 'brother' but who was probably not a blood relation) informing him of her request to her father and asking that he use the barley to settle the matter with the *dekaprotos*. Moros' connection to the situation is unclear, but in any case it is clear that Kleopatra relied heavily on her father's assistance to resolve the issue. In another letter, *BGU* 16.2618 (7 BCE), Tryphas writes to her son Athenodoros about the consequences she and other household members are suffering due to a fine or debt that he has not paid. Tryphas claims she is being harassed by two *statores* (bailiffs) every day and their

¹⁶⁴ The *dekaprotos* were a short-lived institution in Egypt, existing from the mid-240s CE until 302 CE. The group of tax collectors was responsible for collecting grain taxes on all land within a *nome*.

slaves have been imprisoned, and she is concerned they will die in prison unless her son intervenes.

In *P.Oxy.* 48.3403 (mid-fourth century CE) Maria writes to her son Papnouthis, a tax collector and estate manager, accusing him of persistent neglect and failing to respond with some information which she previously requested from him. She asks him to send her money, though she does not specify what the money is to be used for. She also includes a message from Papnouthis' wife, requesting that he send her money to pay the wages of wool workers who were presumably employed by the family. In a brief letter *O.Stras.* 788 (second century CE), Thaubastis urgently requests a man named Kephalos, who may be her father, to return to her quickly. The details of her situation are sparse, but it appears she has refused to pay additional tax because she has the receipt for her original payment, and presumably needs Kephalos' assistance to avoid a negative consequence for this refusal, such as imprisonment.

The Archive of Apollonios *strategos* (first quarter of the second century CE) enables a more detailed study of the effects when a male head of household left his home for an extended period. The letters from the archive indicate that Apollonios' mother, Eudaimonis, remained in the family home in Hermopolis while her son, daughter-in-law and some of their children moved temporarily to Apollonopolites Heptakomia in Upper Egypt so that Apollonios could take up an appointment as *strategos* there.¹⁶⁵ Apollonios' sister Soeris and at least one of Eudaimonis' grandchildren remained in Hermopolis, and it is possible that other family members also stayed behind.

In a wealthy household such as that of Apollonios, household management was not limited to ensuring that the needs of the immediate family members in the house were met. For

¹⁶⁵ On the personality of Eudaimonis as inferred from her letters, see Criboire 2002, 151.

Apollonios' family, it would also have included managing household slaves and looking after other property and business concerns owned by the family, such as managing agricultural land and the crops and animals it produced, dealing with tenants, or supervising workshop employees and the goods they produced. Although the family was wealthy enough to employ an ἐπίτροπος (steward and financial manager)¹⁶⁶ and a ἰστωνάρχης (manager for the weaving business),¹⁶⁷ Eudaimonis' letters suggest that she had significant involvement in managing the estate and overseeing the family business concerns. For instance, in *P.Brem.* 63 (117 CE), Eudaimonis wrote to Aline about a project she was working on with Aline's slave girls (lines 9-11). Although the details of the project are vague, her next remark suggests that this project was a response to a disturbance among the regular workers at the weaving business: περι|ώδευσαν γὰρ οἱ ἡμῶν ὅλην | τὴν πόλιν [π]ροσπεύδοντες¹⁶⁸ | πλέον μισθόν, *For our workers marched round the whole city, being eager for more wages* (lines 14-17). The most likely scenario is that Eudaimonis was struggling to find enough workers for the weaving business, perhaps due to the unrest surrounding the Second Jewish-Roman War, and so turned to family slaves who were not usually involved in the weaving operation for assistance, perhaps in order to complete some urgent orders.

Aside from the emotional distress and anxiety caused by the separation from her son (on which see Chapter 3), it is difficult to judge to what extent Apollonios' absence caused difficulties for Eudaimonis' management of the family business and estate, and in other personal matters. There are however some definite instances where she encounters difficulties which she explicitly ascribes to Apollonios' absence from Hermopolis. In *P.Flor.* 3.332 (first quarter of the

¹⁶⁶ The steward Herakleios is mentioned in *P.Giss.* 23, *P.Giss.* 67 and *P.Brem* 48; he was the recipient of *P.Giss.* 26 and 27.

¹⁶⁷ For further discussion of the business manager Chairemon, see Kortus, *P.Giss.* 12.

¹⁶⁸ Read [π]ρο<σ>σπεύδοντες.

second century CE), Eudaimonis describes how her brother Diskas, whom she characterises as ἄτακτον, *undisciplined* (line 4),¹⁶⁹ has banded together with some of his friends from the gymnasium to attack her (lines 3-8).¹⁷⁰ Eudaimonis believes that Diskas is taking advantage of Apollonios' absence to further his unjust agenda (lines 8-10); she even anticipates legal trouble will result from their quarrel (lines 14-15). It is implied that Apollonios' absence is making the situation more difficult for her, because Eudaimonis fears she will be targeted since Apollonios is not present to respond to Diskas in person.¹⁷¹

On the other hand, in a postscript to the same letter, she mentions that her nephew, Diskas' son Nilos, is getting married, and that she should give him a wedding present in return for the cash gift Diskas' wife gave Apollonios on the occasion of his own marriage, despite the quarrel which currently exists between them (lines 22-25). In the postscript, Eudaimonis downplays the seriousness of the quarrel which she was initially very anxious about, referring back to it with the diminutive ζ[η]τημάτιά, *little dispute* (line 26). Perhaps this postscript represents a change of heart after a little time has passed, or possibly Eudaimonis exaggerated the seriousness of the dispute in the main body of the letter in order to attract Apollonios' attention and sympathy.

Another incident where Apollonios' absence may have caused difficulties for his family in Hermopolis is reported in *P.Brem.* 61 (first quarter of the second century CE). The papyrus contains three letters, the first of which was sent to Apollonios by a woman whose name is lost, but who addresses Apollonios as 'brother' (line 2), Eudaimonis as 'mother' (line 22), and asks Apollonios to greet Aline as a sister (ἀδελ[φ]ικῶς, line 21). Although this does not necessarily

¹⁶⁹ A rare adjective in documentary papyri according to Bagnall and Cribiore 2008, notes to Letter 43.

¹⁷⁰ Or friends who are simply athletic: see Bagnall and Cribiore 2008, notes to Letter 43.

¹⁷¹ Bagnall and Cribiore 2008, notes to Letter 43.

imply a literal brother-sister relationship with Apollonios, the familiar tone adopted by the letter's sender and her reference to a recent visit to Apollonios (lines 3-5) implies that she was a relation or at least a very close family friend; it is also possible that the letter was sent by Apollonios' sister Soeris. The letter describes the sender's reactions to a theft from her house and its aftermath, which resulted in her having to contact the *strategos* of Hermopolis in an attempt to recover her stolen property. Although the letter's author does not specifically mention that Apollonios' absence created additional difficulties when she was dealing with the repercussions of the robbery, in the postscript she alludes to some trouble she is receiving from a μωρός, *fool* (line 25). The nature of the trouble is left vague: the only information provided by the letter's sender is that it was caused because of someone's mother (line 26). She asserts that this person is only behaving foolishly (μωραίνων) because Apollonios is not present: οὐκ ἔχων σε | τὸν ἐκτινάξοντα αὐτοῦ τὴν μωρίαν, *since you were not present to shake off his foolishness* (lines 27-28). This letter is also unusual because it is one of surprisingly few sent to Apollonios from Hermopolis where the main focus is personal news from the sender, as opposed to business matters or enquiries about Apollonios' health.

Although there are certainly instances where families experienced special difficulties which they attributed to the absence of the head of household, there are many more examples where family members write to their head of household with much more trivial requests. This can be seen in many of the sources cited in Chapter 2 where family members ask their absent head of household to send them various items. In *SB* 6.9026 (second century CE) Areskousa writes to her brother Herakles asking him to send cotton so she can make clothes for their siblings. She also asks his opinion on costs surrounding a sow and its piglets which they own. Other minor requests include *BGU* 3.822 (second-third century CE), which is a letter from a

woman named Thermouthas. She asks her brother to assist her by writing a letter concerning rent due to them. However, most of the letter consists of reassurances that her brother should not be concerned with various business matters relating to taxes which Thermouthas is handling on her own.

It is also common to find evidence of women successfully running a household in the absence of their male relatives.¹⁷² Many of Eudaimonis' letters (aside from those cited above) contain simple progress updates on projects: for instance, in *P.Giss.* 21 she writes to her son about the status of several garments. In addition to Eudaimonis' management of her family's business concerns in Hermopolis, in *P.Mich.* 8.464 (99 CE) Apollonous writes to a man absent on military service, who is probably her husband, to reassure him that the family's agricultural concerns and children are both well attended to. It was reasonably common for women to own and manage their own property independently of their male relatives, even when they were present in the same household: a few examples include *P.Oxy.* 14.1758 (second century CE), *PSI* 1.95 (third century CE), *P.Oxy.* 6.932 (late second century CE) and *P.Oxy.* 33.2680 (second-third century CE). Women were mostly able to handle encounters with officials without the need for their absent head of household to intervene: for instance, in *P.Mert.* 2.63 (57 CE) a woman named Herennia asks her father Pompeius to make a payment to the temple of Souchos which collectors are attempting to obtain from her, but she indicates that she will handle the payment if he does not do so.

On balance, the documentary evidence does not suggest that the male head of household was as crucial to a family's protection as legal and administrative sources claim. While there are certainly some incidents in the evidence where a writer claims that a situation they are

¹⁷² Bagnall and Cribiore 2006, 79-80.

experiencing has been made especially difficult due to the absence of their head of household, more of the evidence contains minor requests to the head of household or progress updates on how situations are being handled by family members who remained at home. It is unsurprising that women sometimes play a significant role in family administration when their husbands or sons were absent for work because a significant number of households in Roman Egypt were permanently headed by women. Although maternal mortality rates were high, men tended to marry at an older age than women and it was common for women to be widowed in their twenties and thirties.¹⁷³ These women became head of their household with young children to care for, and could not always rely on another male relative for support.

Absence of a child

Children were normally considered capable of starting work in their early teens, or sometimes a little younger: for instance, apprenticeship contracts were typically drawn up when the apprentice was approaching fourteen years old.¹⁷⁴ However, there is epigraphic evidence for children beginning work as young as nine; some child entertainers were aged five or even younger. When information about the ages of young workers is available, the papyri tell a similar story: for instance the discussion of the Harthotes Archive below will show that one of the children began work aged six. Freeborn children typically learned the skills they needed from their parents within the home and often also inherited their trade.¹⁷⁵ There are however numerous instances where children were sent to work outside the home.¹⁷⁶ In some cases, the purpose may

¹⁷³ According to Bagnall and Frier 2006, 116, the average age of a man on his first marriage was 25 years old. Drawing an example from an archive discussed later in the chapter, Harthotes was 40 years old when his daughter Tahaunes was born.

¹⁷⁴ Vuolanto 2015, 99.

¹⁷⁵ Vuolanto 2015, 97.

¹⁷⁶ For an overview of child labour contracts see Vuolanto 2015.

have been to diversify a family's potential sources of income by having children acquire additional skills outside the household.¹⁷⁷

There has been no systematic study of children pledged to work outside their homes outside of the apprenticeship system, mainly due to the fact that evidence for these kind of working arrangements is both sparse and scattered across documents of different genres.¹⁷⁸ The evidence discussed below suggests that children most frequently left home to work when there was already disruption to the typical family structure. In general, families involving widowed mothers appear relatively often, but given the piecemeal nature of the evidence, it is difficult to say for certain whether they appear more frequently than expected, or that sending children away to work was a common family strategy for coping with the loss of their breadwinner. There are two instances of children being sent away to work after the death of their father in the Harthotes Archive, but there is also one case in the archive where this occurs to a child with an absent mother. It is certainly true that it was relatively common for children to lose a parent at a relatively young age: according to Walter Scheidel, 30% of children lost their fathers by age thirteen and this figure rose to 40% by age sixteen across the Roman Empire.¹⁷⁹

Aside from disruption to the structure of the family caused by parental mortality, another factor which may have influenced a family's decision to place their child in employment outside the home was the additional income their labour could provide the family. The financial benefits of child work extended beyond the wages they received for their labour: in the vast majority of contracts, child workers were fed, clothed and housed by their employer and therefore their family would save a significant sum of money which would otherwise be required for the child's

¹⁷⁷ Vuolanto 2015, 98.

¹⁷⁸ Including, but not limited to *paramone* contracts, letters and literary sources.

¹⁷⁹ Scheidel 2009, 34-36.

maintenance (see the discussion on the Harthotes Archive below for more information on maintenance costs). Although in many cases it is impossible to determine the exact social and economic status of the families involved in these transactions, from the few cases with more context it appears that the majority of families were small-scale farmers, craftspeople and merchants of middling status, with less representation from elites or people in poverty.¹⁸⁰ However, the absence of the poor in the documentary evidence probably does not imply that they did not rely on child work for financial survival: it is highly plausible that they were involved in similar transactions without the formality of a contract to provide protection for the young worker or that children were abandoned or sold into slavery, either at birth or later in life, rather than sent away to work on a temporary basis. Families who took this course of action were often, though not always in a precarious financial position compared to the norm: for instance, various texts from the Zenon Archive document cases where children worked to support their mothers, who were presumably widowed or abandoned by their husbands and therefore likely experiencing financial difficulties. Similarly, three generations of the family documented in the Harthotes Archive sent children away to work on *paramone* contracts in order to alleviate financial issues. However, there are other instances where children were sent to work outside their family for more routine reasons, such as apprenticeships.

A significant portion of the evidence for child work in the ancient world concerns conflicts between employers and the families of the young people they employed (or the young people themselves). One frequent source of contention was the working conditions for child employees. This surfaces in both archives discussed below, as well as in apprenticeship contracts, where six out of thirty surviving contracts set conditions about the length of the

¹⁸⁰ Vuolanto 2015, 102.

apprentice's working day (three contracts limit working hours from sunrise to sunset).¹⁸¹ Another potential cause for concern was harassment or abuse from the child's employer. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, a 5th century CE Byzantine theologian provides a comparative case from a literary source outside Egypt. He narrates the story of a girl who worked for an elderly veteran near Antioch: after experiencing sexual harassment from her employer, the girl ran away to her widowed mother's house and eventually sought refuge in a convent.¹⁸² There are also a few instances of parents who sent their children away to work struggling to redeem them after their contract was over, either because they were unable to repay the loan which was part of the contract, or due to an abuse of power by the employer. For instance, *BGU* 4.1154 (Alexandria, 10 BCE) documents the release of a boy from an employment lasting seven years because his parents were unable to pay off the loan earlier. The petition *BGU* 4.1139 (Alexandria, 5 BCE) documents the case of a girl who was taken back from her parents although she had previously served out the term of her *paramone* contract.

The prominence of contentious relationships between employers and their young workers (and their families) can be at least partly ascribed to the increased documentation surrounding failed relationships in the forms of petitions and lawsuits. Documents of this sort would not exist when working arrangements were functional and proceeded as planned. However, it also seems reasonable to assume that children separated from older family members were particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse by their employers and other people they encountered while working.

There are also a small number of examples where a breakdown in a relationship between an employer and their young employee is blamed on the employee (rather than the employer).

¹⁸¹ Vuolanto 2015, 107 and n. 58.

¹⁸² Theod. Cyr. *Hist. rel.* 9.12 (430 CE).

One example of this can be found in the petition *P.Ryl.* 2.128 (30 CE, Euhemereia), where an oil maker makes a complaint to an official, claiming that a girl Soueris, who worked for him on a *paramone* contract as a *παρεμβάλλουσα*,¹⁸³ was encouraged by her father to abandon her work and to steal money and a cloak from him (lines 17-20). However, it is important to remember that the account comes from the biased perspective of the oil maker, and it is possible that he intentionally exaggerated or even fictionalised the events in question in order to create a more emotive narrative and increase the chances that his petition would be successful: perhaps the money and cloak were owed to Soueris in wages which had not been paid by her employer.

Conflicts in the Zenon Archive

The Zenon Archive (Philadelphia, 260-240 BCE) provides evidence for multiple young employees and their family members interacting with a single large-scale employer. The archive is a very rich source for private documents from Ptolemaic Egypt, containing numerous petitions, letters, contracts and accounts. Zenon was from Caunos in Caria, but he spent many years working in Egypt for Apollonios, the *dioiketes* of Ptolemy II. While working for Apollonios, he also travelled to Palestine and Syria to import goods. There are no letters addressed to or sent from other members of Zenon's family preserved in the archive. Since other members of Zenon's family only appear when mentioned by third parties corresponding with Zenon, it is difficult to tell what effect Zenon's relocation from Caria to Egypt and his other travels may have had on his family.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ For a discussion of the precise nature of the job designated by the term *παρεμβάλλουσα* see Claytor, Litinas and Nabney 2016, 114-115.

¹⁸⁴ For a discussion of Zenon's family, see Świderek 1956.

The member of Zenon's family who appears most often in the archive is Zenon's younger brother Epharmostus, who was sent to school in Alexandria and later lived with Zenon in Philadelphia. Epharmostus was involved with various business ventures along with Zenon and was also included on the payroll of Apollonios' estate, through which he received food rations. A third brother also joined Zenon in Egypt at some point, following a pattern of family migration which was common among Greeks and other inhabitants of the ancient Mediterranean.¹⁸⁵ Although it is difficult to discern how frequently the brothers communicated with their family in Caria, it appears that the three of them associated with each other in business matters and also socially: for instance, at one point Zenon received a party invitation for all three brothers (*P.Ryl.* 4.568 lines 16-17).

Although Zenon's own family does not feature prominently in the archive, other families briefly appear when they come into contact with Zenon or Apollonios, and several instances of family members separated due to the demands of work can be found in the documents from the archive. There are numerous documents where young employees of Zenon write to him because they are having difficulties receiving payment or ὀψωνίων for their services. In translations, the word ὀψωνίων is generally rendered as 'provisions', but other documents in the Zenon Archive indicate that it could be used to refer to a variety of things, including money. For instance, in *P.Cairo.Zen.* 3.59440 (mid-third century BCE), a musician in training for public competitions named Herakleotes requests an advance of two months' provisions from Zenon, which includes oil, wine, and money. In *PSI* 5.528 (mid-third century BCE), Cleon requests the following items from Zenon as ὀψωνίων for himself and his mother, totalling seventeen drachmae in value: an unspecified amount of oil, six *choes* and three *kotylae* of wine and some supplies necessary for

¹⁸⁵ See Friedl 1976.

two festivals, the Hermaia¹⁸⁶ and the Mouseia,¹⁸⁷ but no mention is made of money. In another letter to Zenon (*P.Cairo.Zen.* 3.59457, mid-third century BCE), Cleon makes another request for ὀψώνιον for the month of Epeiph, but this time the list is more extensive, including small amounts of money for purchasing oil and meat (five drachmae), fish (two drachmae, three obols), castor oil (three and three quarter obols), seasonings (one and a half obols), and two amounts of money, one for clothes washing (three obols) and another for his mother (three drachmae and three quarter obols), amounting to twelve drachmae in total.¹⁸⁸

One example where a young employee interacts with Zenon is a ὑπόμνημα (memorandum) sent by Pyrrhos, who complains that he has not received his wages or rations and asks to be paid (*P.Cair.Zen.* 3.59507, mid third-century BCE). Pyrrhos describes how he has received nothing from the time when Hermon¹⁸⁹ sailed down the river: as a result, he had no provisions for a journey he made to visit Zenon (lines 2-9). His mother was thus forced to pawn a cloak for 1½ drachmae and he also had to extract twelve drachmae from a man named Iason in Kerke,¹⁹⁰ which apparently took some effort to accomplish (lines 9-14). Presumably both sums of money were required for Pyrrhos' travel expenses, though this is not specifically stated in the memorandum. Pyrrhos also mentions that his mother has not received the ὀψώνιον due to her for the last fourteen months (lines 22-26). He requests that Zenon should arrange for him to be paid

¹⁸⁶ For further information on the Hermaia, see Perpillou-Thomas 1993, 91-3 and Casarico 1958, 122-124. The festival is an appropriate one for Cleon to celebrate since Hermes was the god of the gymnasium (see *P.Oxy.* 7.1015). The date of the festival is unknown, but it may have taken place during the month Thoth (September). *PSI* 4.391 (third century CE) mentions that one of the items required to celebrate the festival is honey (lines 23-25); Plutarch *De Iside et Osiride* 533-534 also mentions honey and adds figs, which are presumably the supplies Cleon requests from Zenon in his letter.

¹⁸⁷ For further information on the Mouseia, see Perpillou-Thomas 1993, 113 and Casarico 1958, 124-126. Little is known about this festival, and this text is the only certain Ptolemaic attestation. It may be linked with a Coan procession in honour of the Muses which occurred in Artemisios (March): if so, it seems strange that Cleon requested supplies for two festivals which took place five months apart in the same letter.

¹⁸⁸ Twelve drachmae was a substantial sum, equivalent to seventy-two days' wages for an unskilled labourer in the third century BCE, who typically received one obol per day. See further von Reden 2010, 74.

¹⁸⁹ For more on Hermon, see Pestman et al. 1981, 327.

¹⁹⁰ For more on Iason, see Pestman et al. 1981, 345-346.

what he is owed, and ensure that he receives his wages and clothing allowance regularly in the future, in return for which he will perform his duties in exemplary fashion (lines 14-21).

Pyrrhos clearly states that his wages and clothing allowance are to be paid to him (ἀποδοθῆ|ναί μοι, lines 16-17), and payments to his mother are treated completely separately in lines 22-26. This implies that Pyrrhos had passed the age of majority by the time he sent this memorandum to Zenon (see the discussion on *P.Col.Zen.* 1.6 below for payments to workers versus payments to parents). It is possible that Pyrrhos' mother also worked for Apollonius separately from her son and was thus entitled to her own ὀψώνιον. However, the similarity of the terms and wording of the request compared to Satyra's and Cleon's discussed below, as well as the fact that Pyrrhos is asking for his mother's allowance on her behalf suggests that his mother's support was part of the terms of his employment rather than the result of a separate contract. The separation of the payments to mother and son in the memorandum suggests that payments were sent to each of them independently, though there is no explicit statement to that effect. This contrasts with Satyra's arrangement for the clothing allowance for herself and her mother discussed below, where Satyra appears to receive both allowances herself. It also suggests that the mother and son probably did not live together, as this would explain why the two allowances were distributed separately. As with both examples discussed previously, no mention is made of Pyrrhos' father, who is therefore presumably dead or otherwise no longer involved with the family.

Few details of the nature of Pyrrhos' work are revealed in the memorandum: the journey mentioned in lines 7-14 may have been related to business, but this is not a certainty. Additional details may be supplied from other documents, but this must be done with a certain degree of caution as there are multiple figures in the Zenon Archive who have the name Pyrrhos, including

a farmer (mentioned in the agricultural account *P.Cair.Zen.* 2.59268) and a slave (appearing in multiple documents).¹⁹¹ The two most promising documents which may feature the same Pyrrhos as the memorandum are *P.Cair.Zen.* 1.59060 and 59061, both letters concerning a boy being educated in Alexandria and also training to compete in the public games.

The main difficulty with equating these two figures is that the Pyrrhos of the memorandum seems to be established in the countryside rather than in Alexandria, particularly in light of his closing requests for a hut and rafters which would probably have been located in Kerke, since Iason is mentioned earlier in the memorandum in connection with that location. However, it is possible to imagine various scenarios which could account for this discrepancy: for instance, the hut and rafters may not be for Pyrrhos' own personal use; alternatively, the memorandum could originate from a later point in Pyrrhos' career when he had moved away from Alexandria (due to the uncertain date of the memorandum it is impossible to know for certain).

It appears that the arrangement between the Pyrrhos of *P.Cair.Zen.* 1.59060 and 59061 and Zenon followed a recognisable pattern associated with gymnasial training in the Greek world. A wealthy man would provide financial support for young men while they undertook athletic or musical training at a gymnasium. The patron benefitted from the arrangement by receiving glory when his charges succeeded in athletic or musical competitions: for instance, Pyrrhos confidently states that Zenon will receive a crown for his performance (*P.Cair.Zen.* 3.59060 line 7, 257 BCE).

Several of the young men associated with the gymnasium in the Zenon Archive appear to have been in a vulnerable position, physically separated from other family members and

¹⁹¹ For a list of documents relating to Pyrrhos the slave, see Reekmans 1966, 92-93.

probably also responsible for the maintenance of a widowed mother. The young men in the gymnasium seem to have been dependent on Zenon or other guardians for protection. For instance, a young musician named Herakleotes appeals to Zenon for assistance when his instrument was seized as security for a loan. Pomeroy raises the possibility that the young men in the palaestra were sexually exploited in exchange for their training, though there is no solid evidence for this inference in the Zenon Archive.¹⁹² However, Zenon also sent his brother Epharmostus to train in the palaestra, though he did send a *paidagogos* Styrax to accompany and protect him.

One point in favour of the identification of the Pyrrhos from the memorandum with the one discussed in these two letters is the similarity between the memorandum to a similar document sent to Zenon by Cleon, who also reminds Zenon about allowances due to himself and his mother (*P.Cair.Zen.* 3.59457, mid third-century BCE).¹⁹³ Like Pyrrhos, Cleon also appears to have been responsible for supporting his mother financially, likely because she was widowed. When he claims his twelve drachma allowance, he mentions that his mother is owed three drachmae and six obols. It is possible that Pyrrhos' and Cleon's mothers were themselves employed by Zenon and their sons were merely communicating on their behalf to assist them in receiving their own wages, but this could also be an allowance given to the two mothers as part of their sons' contracts.

Another letter in the archive that concerns the employment of a young person by Apollonius is *P.Cair.Zen.* 1.59028 (258-257 BCE (?)). In this letter, Satyra asks Zenon to remind Apollonius of two currently unfulfilled obligations owed to her and her mother. Firstly, she asks for a clothing allowance (ἱματισμόν) for herself and her mother, which may refer either to

¹⁹² Pomeroy 1997, 216-218.

¹⁹³ For additional discussion of the identification of the Pyrrhos in *P.Cair.Zen.* 3.59507, see the *editio princeps*.

provision of clothing or an allowance of money intended for the purchase of clothing (in this instance, Satyra eventually received the clothing itself, not money). Apollonios is said to have ordered the clothing allowance over a year previously, but Satyra claims that neither she nor her mother have received anything. She mentions that this arrangement was included in a memorandum (ὑπόμνημα) previously written by Apollonius, though it is unclear whether this memorandum refers only to the clothing provision aspect of the relationship, or was more wide-ranging and also included the rest of the terms of her employment. In addition to her request to Zenon to investigate the situation and arrange for her to receive her clothing allocation, she also asks him to look into the payment of her provisions (ὄψωνιον, on which term see above), which she claims that she has not received in full since the festival of Demeter.¹⁹⁴

Two more letters in the Zenon archive, *P.Cair.Zen.* 1.59059 and 59087, fill in additional details about Satyra and the sequel to her request: *P.Cair.Zen.* 1.59059 (257 BCE) is a letter from Aristeus¹⁹⁵ to Zenon indicating that he has paid Satyra and numerous other people according to instructions he received in a letter from Apollonios; *P.Cair.Zen.* 1.59087 (258-257 BCE) is an account of linen kept by Zenon, in which Satyra makes two appearances, in both of which she is accompanied by the designation κίθαραιδῶτι. Thus the reason for her employment by Apollonios is finally apparent: she works as a kithara-player. Satyra appears in the account once on Xandikos 20th = 23rd May 257 (line 17) and again on Daisios 19th = 19th July 257 (line 23): the first time she receives one fine linen tunic (although the numeral α is restored in the text in line 18, the garment is described as a χιτῶν βύσσινος earlier in the line and it is therefore clearly a

¹⁹⁴ For further details on this festival, which was apparently a continuation of the Athenian Thesmophoria, see Perpillou-Thomas 1993, 78-81. The dating of the festival is problematic: evidence from other documents in the Zenon archive suggests a date at the beginning of Phaophi (end of November), but this contradicts the Roman evidence. Several documents (*P.Col.Zen.* 19, *P.Flor.* 3.388, *P.Tebt.* 3.1079) suggest that the festival was a time of gift-giving; the loan agreement *P.Giss.* 1.49 (mid third-century CE) indicates that at least some of these gifts were part of contractual arrangements, which seems also to be the case with Satyra.

¹⁹⁵ Aristeus was an employee of Apollonios in Alexandria. For more on Aristeus see Pestman et al. 1981, 297.

single tunic); in the second entry the item she received is lost in a lacuna. Based on Satyra's previous request to Zenon and the repetitive nature of the other entries in the account, it is likely that she was also given a single χιτῶν βύσσινος on her second appearance in the account. The two garments would fulfil her original request for clothing for herself and her mother. It is unclear why the two dispensations were made separately within a two-month period of each other, but this could be explained in a variety of ways. For instance, it could have been that provision was made for Satyra, but her mother was forgotten and Satyra had to remind Zenon and Apollonius of the arrangement again, or that there were not sufficient tunics to hand for Satyra to be able to receive the two she was owed at the same time, and so one had to be given to her later instead. Alternatively, the separate dispensations could indicate that Satyra and her mother did not live together and therefore separate arrangements had to be made to send each of them their clothing allowance.

In his brief discussion of the documents concerning Satyra, Reekmans assumes that at the time of her letter to Zenon she was an adolescent slave, but this assumption is problematic for a variety of reasons.¹⁹⁶ No indication of Satyra's age is given in the body of the letter, but the docket on the back refers to her as a κοράσιον. The term, although it literally means 'young girl', could in practice be used to refer to women up to the age of twenty (as in BGU 3.913). However, it is generally found of girls under the age of twelve, as in *P.Turner* 22 (142 CE; ten-year-old girl), *BGU* 3.887 (151 CE; twelve-year-old girl) and *P.Mich. inv.* 931 (10 CE, nine-year-old girl).¹⁹⁷ Although the application of this term to a twenty-year-old slave woman in *BGU* 3.913 is possibly attributable to the common use of diminutives and other infantilising terms to refer to adult slaves, it does allow for some doubt concerning Satyra's age, and additionally her status as

¹⁹⁶ 1966, 93.

¹⁹⁷ For further discussion of the term κοράσιον, see Claytor, Litinas and Nabney 2016, 116-117.

free or slave (on which see further below). The only other indication of Satyra's age is her appearance in two ration lists from the archive, *P.Cair.Zen.* 59699 and 59700, where she twice receives the ration for adult females in lines 23 and 6 respectively.¹⁹⁸ However, since neither of the ration lists can be dated, this information does not help with determining her age when she wrote her letter to Zenon in 258/7 BCE, a date which is likewise not secure. Overall, the evidence points to a much broader potential age range for Satyra than Reekmans' label of adolescence, with a greater likelihood of her being younger than age twelve.

In many of the cases where the status of a girl referred to as a κοράσιον can be determined, the girl in question is a slave: this includes the slave sales *BGU* 3.913, *P.Turner* 22 and *BGU* 3.887 cited above, as well as and the following documents which are closer in time to Satyra's letter: *P.Hamb.* 4.238.24 (159 BCE), *P.IFAO* 2.24 (30 BCE-14 CE) and *P.Stras.* 1.79 (16-15 BCE). However, the phrase 'κοράσιον δουλικόν' in *P.Stras.* 1.79 line 2 implies that the term κοράσιον did not inherently imply slave status, and there are also a few examples where a free girl is designated as a κοράσιον: *P.Mich. inv.* 931 (10 CE) and probably *P.Polit.Iud.* 7.37 (134 BCE). In both these examples, the girl in question, although of free status, has been placed in a position of dependence reminiscent of slavery in many aspects: in *P.Mich. inv.* 931, a girl is entered into a service contract in which she has a primary task but is also required to follow her employer anywhere in the *nome* and do any other task ordered of her (lines 30-33); in *P.Polit.Iud.* 7, a girl Phillipa is handed over to her maternal uncle to perform duties which are only vaguely described (the document reads προσπαρέδω|κέν μοι τὴν Φίλιππαν, ὅπως παρ' ἐμοὶ ᾤη, *he handed Phillipa over to me to be with me*), but are intended to offset the cost of her parents' maintenance, since her father is sick and incapable of supporting the family himself.

¹⁹⁸ Reekmans 1966, 93.

In comparison to these situations, Satyra appears to have a significant degree of personal agency: she writes a letter on her own behalf directly to her employer (unlike the example of Simale and Herophantos discussed below when a mother writes on behalf of her son), she has clear expectations concerning the treatment she expects, and she cites written documentation to support her claims (a *ὑπόμνημα* is mentioned in line 2, though it is not clear whether this refers to a formal contract delineating all the terms of Satyra's employment, or a memorandum dealing only with the clothing provision for herself and her mother). The precise nature of the agreement between Satyra and Apollonius is somewhat unclear from the details supplied by the letter. Her requests for clothing and provisions are reminiscent of a typical clause in *paramone* and apprenticeship contracts stipulating that the worker or apprentice is to be fed and clothed by their employer.¹⁹⁹ However, the inclusion of other family members in addition to the employee in arrangements of this sort is not often specified, though it is paralleled in at least two other figures in the Zenon Archive (see above on Cleon and Pyrrhos).

Overall, Satyra's personal request to Zenon in writing, the inclusion of her mother in her maintenance and the similarity of her situation to *paramone* and apprenticeship contracts which more often relate to free persons than slaves seem to tell against Reekmans' assumption of slave status: while it was not impossible for a slave who was trained in a desirable skill such as music to command significant respect and a much greater degree of personal freedom than the vast majority of the slave population, it seems highly unlikely that a slave would be capable of commanding the resources which are at Satyra's disposal. Another question raised by this text is where Satyra, her mother and any other family members are located in relation to each other.

¹⁹⁹ The standard clause in a *paramone* contract is *τρεφομένη καὶ ἱματιζομένη* (P.Mich. inv. 931 line 13).

P.Cair.Zen. 1.59059 indicates that Satyra is in Alexandria,²⁰⁰ but although it seems plausible that she and her mother are located together, it is also possible that her mother lives elsewhere and Satyra heard that she had not received her clothing allowance either through a letter from her mother, or because the allowance for both mother and daughter was sent to Satyra, who would then send her mother's share to wherever her mother was located herself. It is notable that this case involves a daughter supporting her mother: daughters were obliged to support elderly parents under Egyptian law, but sons were not required to do the same. However, the cases of Pyrrhos discussed above and Herophantos discussed below suggest that it was not uncommon for sons to do the same, even though it was not legally required.

In some extreme circumstances, a child separated from their family could be at risk of physical harm at the hands of their employer. One alleged instance of an employer abusing a young employee is documented in a letter sent to Zenon by a woman named Simale (*P.Col.Zen.* 1.6, March 257 BCE). In this letter, Simale complains that her son Herophantos, whom she contracted to work for Apollonius, has been physically abused while in his employment (lines 5-6). The man whom Simale claims is responsible is named Olympichos, and although his role and occupation are not precisely stated, it appears that he was a member of Apollonius' staff with enough power to prevent Simale from gaining access to Zenon when she came to petition him concerning Herophantos' poor treatment (line 3). Simale claims in emotive terms that Olympichos threatened violence against her son when he was already unwell (lines 5-6). Later in the letter this complaint is enlarged to one of continuous maltreatment by Olympichos, though the precise nature of the abuse is still not described (lines 8-9). The letter implies that Simale has removed her son from his employer, and she says she will return Herophantos to Zenon 'as soon

²⁰⁰ This can be inferred because she receives payment from Aristeus, an employee of Apollonios in Alexandria. For more on Aristeus see Pestman et al. 1981, 297.

as the god releases him' (by which she presumably means when he has sufficiently recovered from his illness and mistreatment), but does not specify whether he will be returning to work or whether she only intends to bring him with her to see Zenon as further evidence for her complaint.

Another document in the Zenon Archive (*P. Corn.* 1, 256 BCE, lines 216-217) indicates that Olympichos was given an oil ration on behalf of the mother of Herophantos on Audnaios 23 (January 17th), around a fortnight before the date of her letter to Zenon on Peritios 6 (January 30th).²⁰¹ This suggests that Simale stayed with Apollonius' retinue for at least one night, during which she would have made use of her oil ration. Her stay may possibly have been longer than a single night given that the monthly oil ration for a hand lamp was apparently seven and a half *kotylai* (cf. e.g. lines 133-4, 137-8) and Simale received a half *kotyla* measure from Olympichos, an amount which should last about two days according to the monthly ration. Simale was still present in Berenikes Hormos when she sent her letter to Zenon two weeks after her overnight stay with Apollonius' retinue, as shown by the address on the verso. It is likely that she was no longer staying with Apollonius' retinue since no additional allocations of oil are found in the register to cover an extended stay. This may indicate Herophantos was too severely incapacitated to be moved from the town after Simale removed him from Olympichos' reach. Alternatively, Simale's continued presence in Berenikes Hormos may be attributed to a desire to present her written petition to Zenon in person, and probably also to remain near Zenon in order to be able to receive the response to her complaint, as this was standard procedure for petitions in the Ptolemaic era. Either way, this implies that Simale possessed resources and connections beyond Apollonius and Zenon in order to be able to afford the expense of waiting in Berenikes Hormos

²⁰¹ Herophantos himself appears elsewhere in this document (lines 18, 137), receiving a regular oil ration as an employee of Apollonius, though the nature of his service is still frustratingly unspecified.

for the intervening fortnight between her visit and her complaint to Zenon, and perhaps even longer than that in order to receive Zenon's answer. Nevertheless, she remained eager to stay in the good graces of Zenon and Apollonius, stressing how she valued their goodwill towards Herophantos (lines 11-12).

Although the main purpose of this letter is an emotive complaint about her son's mistreatment at the hands of Olympichos, Simale also reveals a number of details about his working arrangement in Apollonius' retinue. Simale claims that she has received no payment after a lump sum of cash and wheat in the month Dystros (line 10), almost a year before this letter was written. This may have been an initial payment when Herophantos began working for Apollonius, and the size of the payment implies that it was intended to compensate for a significant period of labour (see below). However, it seems that regular future payments were not necessarily part of the original arrangement, but were nevertheless still hoped for: in lines 12-13, Simale talks about further payments in conditional terms, 'if Apollonius has ordered them'.

Evidence from apprenticeship contracts also suggests that when a mother organized apprenticeships for her offspring and received payment for their work it generally indicated that she did not have a husband present: in *P.Tebt.* 2.385 the woman making the contract lists her brother as her guardian; in *C.Pap.Gr.* 1.17 (after 42 CE?) an adult son fulfils this function. The reason for the husband's absence from the contract is not discernible in any of these examples, so it is unclear whether it is due to death, desertion, other absence from home or divorce (though this is less likely since one would expect any children of a divorced couple to remain with their father, in which case it would be he who arranged contracts of this sort).²⁰² By contrast, contracts such as *P.Wisc.* 1.4 (53 CE) and *P.Fouad* 1.37 suggest that a child was generally apprenticed by

²⁰² On fatherless families, see Huebner and Ratzan 2011.

his father or other male guardian, who would receive any wages paid to the apprentice. No male guardian is mentioned in Simale's letter: the only designation she is given in the document is Ἡροφάντου μητῆρ (l. 1). It seems that Simale is in a similar position to the women in *P.Tebt.* 2.385 and *C.Pap.Gr.* 1.17, with no husband or male guardian to make the case to Zenon on her behalf.

Additionally, the situation delineated in this document has a number of unusual features: Simale makes no mention of a written contract for Herophantos' employment, though it would be normal for her to quote the terms of an agreement if one existed. She also stresses Apollonius' goodwill towards her son (l. 11), and seems to regard further payments from Apollonius as probable but not completely certain to occur. The lump cash sum mentioned in line 10 is reminiscent of a *paramone* contract, a type of arrangement which involves a labour contract of several years to pay off a loan or loan interest.²⁰³ However, if some kind of *paramone* arrangement was involved in this instance, it seems doubly strange that no documentation is mentioned, given the sizeable upfront payment in lieu of several years' worth of labour which such contracts generally involved. Another element of this arrangement which differs from a *paramone* contract is that Simale was apparently free to remove Herophantos from his workplace without any serious ramifications, whereas a typical *paramone* contract generally included a clause which in theory prevented the employee from leaving their place of employment for the entire duration of their contract (though it is possible that she has removed him as an act of protest against his treatment despite written conditions forbidding this course of action, or she was wealthy enough to afford the fine which was due if the employee left their post).²⁰⁴

²⁰³ For further information on *paramone* contracts, see Adams 1964 and Samuel 1965.

²⁰⁴ The typical wording of this clause is exemplified in P.Mich. inv. 931 lines 11-12: [δι]ατρίβουσιν καὶ ποι[ο]ῦσιν τὰ ἐπιτασσόμενα πάντα οὐ γινομ[ένην] | ἀπόκοιτον οὐδ' ἀφήμερον, on which see Claytor, Litinas and Nabney 2016, 98-99 and 115.

Another oddity is the large amount of wheat allotted to Simale along with the lump cash sum (l. 10): this seems far too large for a month's ration, but it is unclear exactly what time period this allocation was expected to last.²⁰⁵ It is also uncertain precisely what role Herophantos undertook in lieu of these payments to his mother: the presence of an oil ration under his name in *P.Corn* 1 (lines 18 and 137) indicates that the boy accompanied Apollonius on his travels around Egypt for at least two months before Simale wrote this letter. The familiar tone of this letter and a sequel to this incident where Simale travels to Berenikes Hormos and stays overnight on a boat in the *dioiketes*' fleet (*P.Corn.* 1, 216-7) suggests that Simale and her son were of a similar social rank to Zenon, and therefore this arrangement was probably an atypical one in comparison to the majority of child labour represented in the Zenon archive.

A literary parallel to this situation can be found in Lucian *de somno* 1: on the first day of his apprenticeship to learn stone masonry from his maternal uncle, Lucian breaks a slab and his uncle proceeds to beat him violently. Lucian runs away and his mother does not allow him to return to work for his uncle. Examination of sources outside the Zenon Archive provides more evidence for an older family member stepping in to remove a younger employee from an unsafe working environment. For instance, in *P.Coll. Youtie* 92 (560-70 CE), a woman named Martha describes how her father was forced to put her sister Procla under a *paramone* contract because of their family's extreme poverty. After their father died, Martha removed Procla from her original contract because she was being overworked. However, at that time she was unable to pay off half the debt, so she contracted Procla to work for another employer until she could collect funds to pay off the remaining debt.

²⁰⁵ Reekmans 1966, 30.

One noticeable characteristic of these labour arrangements is the variety in working arrangements for young people in the Zenon Archive: some continue to live with or close to their families (possibly Satyra) while others travel long distances away from home in the company of their employers (Herophantos and possibly Pyrrhos); some are paid to develop skills (potentially Pyrrhos), while some are already skilled (Satyra) and there were surely others who engaged in unskilled labour. The relatively small number of occupations are represented here (musician, athlete) do not come close to representing the full range of labour undertaken by children in antiquity: major omissions include farm work, shop work, household chores, caring for younger siblings and assisting a craftsman parent, tasks which are even more likely to go unrecorded than those found in these case studies.

There is also some variation in personal circumstances: some of the young workers come from privileged backgrounds (Herophantos) while others probably more humble origins (Satyra). Fathers are noticeably absent in all four examples, especially in circumstances where their intervention would be valuable (as in Simale and Herophantos' situation in the first example). While this omission does not necessarily indicate total absence from the family, it does seem probable that children offering financial support to their mothers by working was most common when no father was available to support her himself. The likelihood of a young person's family containing a widowed mother was high since men generally married later in life than women and therefore it can be calculated that almost a quarter of children lost their father by age ten, and more than half by age twenty.²⁰⁶ In the census data for Ptolemaic Egypt collected by Clarysse and Thompson, 6.2% of the 403 households were headed by women: of these twenty-five cases, most are single person households, and there are also four (possibly five) mother-daughter

²⁰⁶ Clarysse and Thompson 2006.

arrangements. However, it is difficult to separate instances of single parent households from adults living alone, since most of the demographic evidence is drawn from tax records which do not record children.²⁰⁷ It is therefore difficult to estimate how many women were in a similar position to the widowed mothers in the Zenon Archive who relied on their children for financial support. It is also possible that people living in the same household were financially supported by different individuals, or that one person might receive financial support from multiple people. For instance, there are several examples discussed below where young workers receive an allowance to support their mother, who was most likely widowed and in some cases definitely did not live with their child. It is not however necessary to assume that these widows lived alone, or only received financial assistance from a single child who worked in another location. For instance, it is possible that a widow could move in with the family of her sibling (or other relative) but receive maintenance from her child, or that a single widow could receive some income from multiple children, or that a widow could supplement her child's income with money from other family members, or her own business ventures. The case studies from the Zenon Archive discussed above could fall into either of these categories, depending on whether the young worker lived with their mother or supported her living in her own separate household in another location. It is also possible that some of the mothers in these case studies lived in households with other family members (where the household heads would be their brothers, fathers etc.) but were partially or entirely supported financially by their children.

²⁰⁷ Clarysse and Thompson 2006, 249.

Child workers in the Harthotes Archive

Another issue that faced families when children left home to work was whether these children would be willing and able return to their family after their period of employment was over. Children who worked at a significant distance from the family home may not have had consistent contact with their families for years at a time, and so it was possible for their ties with their family would weaken during this period of separation and they could choose not to return to them after their period of employment was completed. Furthermore, if a child was contracted to work in lieu of the interest on a loan but the loan principal was not repaid, the child would usually have been forced to continue working for their employer at least until the loan was repaid. This situation occurs in *BGU* 4.1154 (Alexandria, 10 BCE), where a boy is finally released from a contract after seven years because his parents had only just managed to repay the loan they took out at the start of the contract.

A group of documents from the Harthotes Archive provides several examples within the same family where children left home to work and the effects this had on the family across multiple generations.²⁰⁸ Harthotes was a public farmer and priest whose family lived in Theadelphia in the first century BCE and first century CE. Unlike the majority of the archives in this study, the Harthotes Archive does not contain any letters but instead primarily consists of contracts, petitions and receipts. The documents in the archive cover an eighty-year period in the family's history, beginning with Harthotes as a young man in 20/19 BCE and continuing to document the activities of his children and grandchildren until 60/61 CE.

²⁰⁸ An overview of the Harthotes Archive can be found in Claytor, Litinas and Nabney 2016, 79-119, in addition to Geens 2013, <http://www.trismegistos.org/arch/archives/pdf/99.pdf>, and Vandorpe, Clarysse and Verreth 2015, 158-161.

The most valuable part of the archive for the purposes of this study is formed of three *paramone* contracts that document work arrangements for several of the younger members of the family.²⁰⁹ In 20/19 BCE, Harthotes' mother Esersythis arranged to send his younger brother Marsisouchos (aged around sixteen) to work in the household of Soterichos, another inhabitant of Theadelphia in exchange for an interest-free loan (P.Mich. inv. 4299).²¹⁰ Harthotes (aged twenty four) acts as her *kyrios* for the transaction (lines 2-3): Esersythis' husband Marres was presumably dead or had abandoned the family since, under normal circumstances, he would be the one to draw up a contract like this. In this document, Marsisouchos is contracted to work for four years for an interest-free loan of only 48 *drachmae*, which is one of the lowest rates of compensation in any known *paramone* contract. As a comparison, in P.Mich. 10.587 (Tebtynis, c. 24/25 CE), a man receives an interest-free loan of 48 *drachmae* in exchange for one year of his daughter's labour. In alternative terms, a standard interest rate of 12% would have produced a little over 23 *drachmae* of interest on a 48-*drachma* loan over the course of four years of Marsisouchos' employment. Although an unskilled worker could make 23 *drachmae* for a month's work, if work was scarce and the family had a pressing need for the money this may have been their only option to raise the funds quickly. Furthermore, a hidden benefit of this arrangement was that Marsisouchos' employer would have been responsible for feeding and clothing him, and therefore his family would have saved around 500 *drachmae* in maintenance costs over the course of the four years of his contract.²¹¹ Most widows did not remarry,²¹² and it was not uncommon for them to struggle to feed and clothe their children.²¹³ They were

²⁰⁹ The main important works on *paramone* contracts in general are Adams 1964, Samuel 1965, 299-306, Hengstl 1972, 9-34 and Jördens, *P.Heid.* 5, pp. 285-295.

²¹⁰ All ages in this archive are calculated using inclusive reckoning, on which see Kruit 1998, 37-58.

²¹¹ According to the estimated annual maintenance costs in Huebner 2013, 61, Table 3.1.

²¹² Bagnall and Frier 1994, 123-7.

²¹³ For a general discussion of widows see Beaucamp 1985 and Krause 1994.

sometimes forced to take extreme measures to ensure their children's survival: for instance, in *P.Oxy.* 16.1895 (554 CE) a widow puts her nine-year-old daughter up for adoption because she is unable to feed her, and in *P.Oxy.* 34.2711 (268-271 CE) a dead man's children are taken in by his uncle because they were left destitute. More extreme alternatives included selling children into prostitution or slavery.²¹⁴ Although Marsisouchos was required to leave his home to work, the terms of the *paramone* contract specify that he will remain in Theadelphia while he works for Soterichos, which would have enabled his family to visit if they chose to do so.

In 7 CE, Harthotes sent his young daughter, Tahaunes, to the village of Philagris, around 10 km south-east of Theadelphia,²¹⁵ to work at an oil press on an imperial estate for an initial period of two years (*P.Mich. inv.* 4346+4446f), and then, six months after the first contract expired, he extended the arrangement for another two and a half years (*P.Mich. inv.* 931 + *P.Col.* 10.249, 10 CE). Tahaunes does not appear in the family's census declaration from 12 CE (*SB* 20.14440). Before the discovery of *P.Mich. inv.* 931 + *P.Col.* 10.249, Bagnall suggested this was because she had married and was living in her husband's house.²¹⁶ However, it is now clear that she was living and working on the imperial estate in Philagris at this time, which accounts for her absence from the 12 CE census declaration. Based on *P.Mil.* 1².7 (38 CE) where she is listed as thirty-eight years old, Tahaunes may have been as young as six years old when she began to work in Philagris at the start of her first contract in 7 CE, and then eight years old at the start of the second contract. Tahaunes worked as a *παρεμβάλλουσα* (*P.Mich. inv.* 931 + *P.Col.* 10.249 line 10), a term whose exact meaning is debated but is generally interpreted as feeding olives

²¹⁴ See Huebner in ed. Huebner and Ratzan 2009, 63.

²¹⁵ For more on Philagris and its possible identification with the modern village Hamuli, see Clarysse and Van Beek 2002.

²¹⁶ Bagnall 1991, 257.

into an oil press.²¹⁷ She was to be supervised by and live in the house of a man named Theon, a foreman on the estate.

The two *paramone* contracts for Tahaunes' work in Philagris are particularly unusual documents, firstly because the evidence for free-born female children working outside their own household is very limited (though increasing),²¹⁸ but more so because of Tahaunes' very young age when she first began work. Most children were not considered capable of productive work until the age of ten, though some slave children were put to work as young as age five.²¹⁹ Some aspects of the arrangement are more favourable than Marsisouchos' *paramone* from over 25 years earlier: the rate of recompense for Tahaunes' labour is much higher at 80 *drachmae* for two and a half years' work. However, Tahaunes was required to live at a greater distance from her family in Theadelphia and also travel with Theon anywhere within the *nome* (P.Mich. inv. 931 + *P.Col.* 10.249 line 13), whereas Marsisouchos, although about ten years older than Tahaunes at the start of the contract, was required to remain in his home village.

Another unusual aspect of this arrangement is the fact that a female child is being contracted to work for a man. As a point of comparison, of the four surviving apprenticeship contracts where a freeborn girl is being apprenticed, only one involves an apprenticeship to a male employer.²²⁰ This contract differs from the other three for freeborn girls because the girl's labour is pledged in lieu of interest on a loan of 400 *drachmae* from the girl's employer to her

²¹⁷ For further discussion of this term, see Claytor, Litinas and Nabney 2016, 114-115.

²¹⁸ See Bradley 1985, 326 for a discussion of the relatively rare appearances of freeborn girls in work contracts from Roman Egypt. Van Minnen 1998, 201-203 finds three instances of freeborn girls in apprenticeship contracts, and a fourth has been published since his article, *P.Oxy.* 67.4596 (264 CE?). Further evidence for freeborn girls working outside the home can be found in *P.Fay.* 102 (Euhemeria, c. 105 CE) and *BGU* 3.894 (Arsinoite, 109 CE).

²¹⁹ See Vuolanto 2003, 198 n. 86 for children beginning work at age ten, and Bradley 1985, 325 for slave boys working from age five.

²²⁰ *P.Oxy.* 67.4596 (264 CE?). For the other three contracts, two girls were apprenticed to a woman, and the third was apprenticed to a woman and her husband. For more on this topic see Vuolanto 2015, 106, who suggests that this was a method to reduce the risk of sexual harassment.

father, so her situation is similar to the contracts for Marsisouchos and Tahaunes. Although the contract was made with Theon, it is possible that he did not act as Tahaunes' direct supervisor, but that his wife or another female employee at the oil press filled that role. It is also possible that the few surviving apprenticeship contracts involving girls are not representative of general practices in Roman Egypt.

One possible explanation for this unusual arrangement is that Harthotes may have had additional personal or business connections with the estate where he sent his daughter. In 26 CE, years after his daughter concluded her employment on the estate, Harthotes leased a papyrus concession from a contractor on the same imperial estate (*P.Mil.* 1².6). However, it is not possible to prove that Harthotes had a link with the estate before he sent his daughter to work there, and it is equally likely that he formed this relationship with the estate as a result of his daughter's work there. In any case, the renewal of the contract after the first two years implies that Tahaunes' working conditions were at least enduring and that Theon was also content with the arrangement. The contract renewal implies that, if Harthotes and Theon were not already well-acquainted, they had built a relationship of trust over the course of Tahaunes' initial period of employment in Philagris.

At some point after her employment in Philagris, Tahaunes returned to her family in Theadelphia and married her cousin Harthotes, son of Marsisouchos. It is possible (though unprovable using the evidence which is currently available) that the 80 *drachmae* from her *paramone* contract went on to become her dowry, which was still a requirement even when marrying within one's own family.²²¹ Harthotes died at some point between 26 CE and 38 CE, as

²²¹ For an example of a dowry for a brother-sister marriage, see *P.Kron.* 52 (Tebynis, 138 CE). According to Yiftach-Firanko 2003, 284-289, Appendix 1, Table 4c, a typical dowry in the Arsinoite *nome* during the first century CE was around 60-80 *drachmae*. Some comparative evidence that supports the inference that Tahaunes was put to work to earn her own dowry is supplied by the short story *The Regards* by the Ottoman Greek writer and educator

did his son Harpatothoes. In 38 CE, Tahaunes paid back two loans (*P.Mil.* 1².7), one of which involved a *paramone* contract (lines 17-18). In this document her son acts as her *kyrios*, which indicates that her father, husband and brother had all died by this point (the death of her brother Harpatothoes is explicitly mentioned in lines 14-15). Although the person who undertook the *paramone* is not named, given the small number of family members who remained alive at this point it is very likely that one of Tahaunes' sons performed the labour for this contract, following the pattern of previous generations in her family where first her uncle and then Tahaunes herself fulfilled this function.

There has been some discussion of the family's frequent use of child labour as a financial strategy, and what exactly this indicates about the family's economic status. Most previous scholarship on the Harthotes Archive has taken the view that the family's frequent recourse to cash loans in exchange for future goods or services²²² indicates that the family constantly struggled financially.²²³ However, all the loans attached to this archive were repaid, and the family also leased significant sections of agricultural land and participated in a range of economic and activities which were rarely undertaken by families which were struggling financially.²²⁴ For instance, Marsisouchos mentions in a petition that he was in possession of a large plot of public land, consisting of 24 *arourae*: this amount of land would generate significant income, more than enough to support a family (two versions of this petition exist,

Alexandra Papadopoulou (1867-1906). A Greek text of the story is available at https://www.sarantakos.com/kibwtos/mazi/papadop_xairetism.htm and a translation by Yianna Liatsos can be found in Leontis 1995, 204-208. The narrator of the story describes how her family's maid Amersouda left her own family in Mytilini to earn money to enable her to marry: 'The girl left so they could repay their debt and finish building her home, for in our parts every girl must have a home with a complete household, even woolen covers for the calves; without these, she cannot marry' (205).

²²² See Claytor, Litinas and Nabney 2016, 87 n. 26 for a list of documents from the archive featuring advance sales of goods (crops, land and wine).

²²³ See Claytor, Litinas and Nabney 2016, 87 n. 25 for a more detailed summary of previous scholarly remarks on this issue.

²²⁴ Rowlandson 2005, 189.

addressed to two different officials: *P.Mert.* 1.8 + *P.Mil.* 2.43 and *P.Col.* 8.209, dated to 3 CE).

Loans were also a very common financial strategy in Roman Egypt, even among relatively prosperous families, and therefore their prevalence in the Harthotes Archive does not necessarily indicate financial instability throughout the whole period the family is visible to us.

Nevertheless, money was likely a significant motivation for the decision to send the family's children away to work, especially in the case of Marsisouchos where the presumed loss of Marres, the family's primary breadwinner, and the exceedingly poor terms of the contract suggest that the family was most likely struggling financially at that point. Although the family finances were probably more stable by the time Tahaunes started work, as mentioned above, it is possible that the money from Tahaunes' contracts was needed for her dowry when she married. Furthermore, these contracts also represent significant savings on the cost of food and clothing for both children during the period of their employment.²²⁵ However, this strategy was certainly not risk-free: there was a chance that children who were contracted to work in lieu of loan interest would not be returned to their families at the end of the contract if the family were unable to repay the loan. While this would not have applied in Tahaunes' case since her labour covered the principal of the loan as well as the interest, Marsisouchos could have been in this position if Harthotes was unable to repay the loan by the end of his contract. There are other situations documented in the papyri which are along similar lines, such as the case of the wine merchant Pamonthios, who was unable to pay off a loan to the local magistrates who then took his small children.²²⁶

²²⁵ For a list of documents outside the Harthotes Archive where the inability to bring up a child is a contributing factor to sending them away to work, see Vuolanto 2015, 106 n. 52.

²²⁶ *P.Lond.* 6.1915-1916 (330-340 CE).

Marsisouchos and Tahaunes may also have been sent to work outside the household to gain additional skills or business connections which would diversify the family's sources of income. Although Marsisouchos' tasks are not mentioned in his *paramone* contract and Tahaunes married a few years after returning from Philagris, it is clear that Harthotes had an interest in obtaining income from a variety of sources. Harthotes' diverse economic interests outside of farming included serving as a priest (*SB* 20.14440 and other documents), producing papyrus baskets (*P.Mil.* 1².6) and organizing labour for the harvest (*P.Mich. inv.* 4436g + 4344), in addition to sending his relatives to work on *paramone* contracts. These activities took place not only in his home village of Theadelpheia, but also in neighbouring villages such as Apias and Philagris.

As in the documents discussed in the previous section, it was very common for the children who were sent away to work to be missing a parent, though not always a father. In *P.Mich. inv.* 4299, Marsisouchos is contracted to work by his brother and mother, but since there is no mention of his father Marres in the document it is safe to assume that his father was deceased at this point. If Marres and Esersythis were divorced, their children would have lived with their father and any work contracts would have been arranged by Marres, rather than his wife and son. Harthotes' wife Taanchoriphis also stops appearing in the archive when her children were young, most likely because she was dead or Harthotes had divorced her.²²⁷ Given Tahaunes' young age at the start of her first contract, sending her away from the household may have also represented a significant time saving for household members who would otherwise have been occupied by childcare. The family's census declaration from 12 CE (*SB* 20.14440) lists only Harthotes (then aged 55), Esersythis (aged 70) and Harpatothoes (aged 9), since

²²⁷ For instance, she does not appear in the family census declaration from 12 CE, *SB* 20.14440.

Tahaunes was working in Philagris when the census was taken. It is possible that caring for two young children put a significant strain on Harthotes' elderly mother and this may have provided further motivation to send Tahaunes away from the household and place the burden of her care on others. Tahaunes herself was widowed by the time the *paramone* contract mentioned in *P.Mil.* 1².7 concluded, though it is possible that her husband was still alive when the *paramone* contract was initially drawn up several years previously.

Although Harthotes' family experienced parental loss and financial difficulties and its younger members were required to leave home to work for extended periods, the family managed to remain a coherent unit through all these vicissitudes (unlike some of the other families discussed above). After their periods of employment were over, both Marsisouchos and Tahaunes returned to their family and were reincorporated into its structure. Marsisouchos named his son after his older brother, and after returning from her employment in Philagris Tahaunes went on to marry this Harthotes.

Conclusion

Many aspects of the administrative structure in Greek and Roman Egypt suggest the importance of the male head of household as the protector of the other family members and their main link with the outside world and administrative structures: for instance, the order family members are listed in tax lists and census returns. Therefore, if the head of a household left the family home to work in another location, it seems plausible to expect that the absence of this key figure would cause those family members who were left behind to experience some difficulties in their daily lives and especially when dealing with administrative matters.

Although it is certainly possible to find personal letters where family members request assistance from their head of household in a variety of matters, these are not very common and often the requests are relatively mundane (as for instance with Areskousa' request for cotton or Herennia's request for her father to arrange a payment). It is much more common to find the remaining adults in a family, such as the wife or mother of the male head of household, taking over the management of the family (as seen for instance with Apollonios' mother Eudaimonis taking charge of the family's business concerns in Hermopolis while her son was absent). This suggests that the role of the male head of household in family operations was not as crucial as administrative documents might suggest, and that legal and administrative norms did not always reflect the lived reality of families in the ancient world.

Children who were separated from the adult members of their family and sent to work outside the family home were in a much more vulnerable position, and documented instances of young employees encountering difficulties when receiving wages or being subject to abuse by employers are relatively common. This can be partially ascribed to the nature of documentary evidence from the ancient world, since instances where working situations went awry would naturally generate a lot more written evidence due to the resulting petitions, personal letters and legal cases in comparison to situations which ran more smoothly. However, the evidence from the Zenon Archive indicates that young employees had persistent problems in receiving payment for their services and sometimes experienced more serious difficulties while separated from their families. There are also examples of functional working arrangements for children: it seems reasonable to assume that the renewal of Tahaunes' contract at the imperial estate at Philagris indicates that the arrangement was satisfactory and did not create any major difficulties for Tahaunes or her family, unless the family's financial situation was truly desperate enough that

they required the income (and the relief from the cost of Tahaunes' maintenance) despite problems with her work contract.

Overall, it seems reasonable to conclude that the importance of having a male head of household present in the family home to a family's general safety and wellbeing is somewhat exaggerated by the ancient evidence: it was more important for younger family members to have the protection of an adult family member of any gender to avoid being taken advantage of by their adult employers.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Previous scholarship on the Roman family has primarily focused on topics such as family life cycles, inheritance patterns and the role and status of individual family members such as the *paterfamilias*, children or the elderly.²²⁸ Scholarship on economics and the ancient family has examined how children were trained for work and the heritability of professions within families.²²⁹ Until now, relatively little attention has been given to how labour could disrupt family life and household cohesion. This dissertation fills this gap by exploring how the occupation of one individual could impact a whole family when they were required to undergo long periods of separation.

For most families, separation was a necessary evil which introduced much additional stress and inconvenience into their lives. Despite the scepticism of some previous scholars concerning whether it is possible to identify real emotion in papyrus letters, the emotional toll of separation is clearly visible in the correspondence of separated families (as seen in Chapter 3). Previous scholarship on emotions in the papyri such as Kotsifou 2012 and Clarysse 2017 has given little attention to which emotions are commonly mentioned in specific circumstances but instead focuses on demonstrating that emotional expression was achievable in ancient written correspondence despite the intervention of scribes and the common use of formulaic language in these texts. Chapter 3 examines the epistolographic performance of emotions in letters sent

²²⁸ For instance, Huebner 2013 and Dixon 1992.

²²⁹ On the former, see Bradley 1985, Laes 2011 and Vuolanto 2015; on the latter, see Arlt 2011 and Uytterhoeven 2009, 330-339.

between individuals in one very specific situation, namely those sent between family members who were separated due to work.

Separated family members use numerous compositional techniques to enact emotional rituals that would normally take place in person and reinforce familial bonds despite the difficulties of separation. Anxiety for absent family and friends is sometimes stated explicitly, and at other times can be inferred from elements such as routine greetings and formulaic wishes for good health. Vulnerable family members such as pregnant women, children, elderly parents and those travelling to hazardous locations receive special attention, but the risk of disease, injury or death was high even for people outside those categories, so it is unsurprising that anxiety permeates the correspondence of separated families who were powerless in the face of these hazards.

Slow and unreliable communication is frequently cited as a source of frustration, anxiety or even anger in the letters discussed above. As seen in Chapter 2, the process of communication itself was fraught with difficulties for all but the most privileged few, ranging from problems finding a suitable messenger who was travelling in the right direction, to maintaining the privacy of letters and protecting items from theft and damage while they were in transit. This contrasts with the optimistic view provided by Reinard's recent major study of transportation in the papyri.²³⁰

The complex nature of transportation in the ancient world is vividly illustrated by the letters of Tiberianus and Terentianus, where much ink is spilled over the contents of each parcel, which messenger carried it and how it was packed up to ensure secure transportation. However, despite the complexity of the arrangements for transportation seen in this archive, and in others, documented cases of non-delivery of letters or theft or damage of transported goods are

²³⁰ Reinard 2016.

relatively rare. In the Archive of Paniskos and Ploutogeneia, Paniskos considers the possibility that he has not received a response from his wife because his letters are going astray in transit, but after the letter carrier confirms that his letters were delivered, he comes to the belief that Ploutogeneia is deliberately refusing to write to him due to interpersonal difficulties between the couple. There is also one instance of theft described in the Archive of Tiberianus and Terentianus (*P.Mich.* 8.468 lines 12-13), when Terentianus falls ill during a journey by boat. Aside from these two exceptions, despite the complexities involved in transportation, the majority of deliveries appear to have been successful.

In his 2016 book, Reinard analyses individual archives in great detail, but spends little time comparing the networks found in the different archives he discusses. In Chapter 2, I build on this work by comparing the communication networks of three families and discussing how these networks were impacted by different family circumstances. I conclude that wealth and social status were major factors which shaped the experiences of separated families. A family's wealth determined the types of documentation they produced: wealthier families were able to correspond frequently by letter. By contrast, less well-off families such as that of Harthotes may not have had the resources to send each other letters, and therefore it is necessary to reconstruct their movements from work contracts and census records (which provide very different information than letters). Families who were poorer still, or enslaved, would have produced even scantier documentation, and it is difficult to even catch glimpses of these people in the documentary evidence.

While it is true that wealthy families such as that of Apollonios would have had to manage more complicated households, farms and businesses since they had larger operations than families with more modest means, they also had much greater resources to assist with

managing these assets. Some of these are explicitly noted in the archive, for instance the family steward Herakleios, who is the addressee of two letters and is mentioned in several others and who handled various aspects of the estate in Hermopolis on behalf of the family. The likely presence of other assistance can be inferred from aspects that differentiate this archive from the others examined in this dissertation: for instance, the absence of discussion of letter carriers and security measures for items transported in this archive suggests that the family had regular access to a trusted letter carrier, who was probably a family employee. Despite the advantages supplied by wealth, this does not mean that separation was easy for this family, as the archive contains some of the most lengthy and unique descriptions of the mental and even physical strain resulting from the family's separation and worry about Apollonios' uncertain status during wartime. This can be at least partially ascribed to a higher level of literacy among the correspondents than in the other archives examined in this dissertation.

Various additional factors aside from wealth could further shape a family's experience of separation. For instance, Tiberianus' and Terentianus' military employment gave them access to a large network of veterans and other military contacts which they appear to have used frequently, but which would not be available to migrant workers in most other professions. Separation seems to have exacerbated the already strained relationship between Paniskos and Ploutogeneia, as the tone of his letters becomes increasingly annoyed over the course of their one-sided correspondence. It seems natural to assume that the duration of separation and the size of the distances involved would also have affected how easily a family would have coped with separation, though it is difficult to pinpoint instances where this is reflected in the archives discussed above.

On the other hand, the papyri do provide good evidence for the effects of different patterns of family separation, which could also have a significant impact on how many difficulties a family faced while they were apart. Though there are exceptions, most families in the archives examined in this dissertation were either faced with the absence of their household head (for instance, the Archive of Apollonios *strategos*), or with that of a child or young adult who was sent away to work (as in the Harthotes Archive or the families in the Zenon Archive discussed above). Evidence from the Archive of Apollonios *strategos* and the Zenon Archive indicates that in the absence of a male head of household, for the most part women such as his mother or wife were able to fill the role themselves without the assistance of a male relative. The papyri do preserve some requests for assistance sent by women in this position to their male relatives, but the vast majority of these requests are relatively mundane. This contradicts the traditional perception of the male head of household acting as a family's only representation in the outside world, particularly in administrative and legal matters. This conclusion also indicates that legal and administrative norms did not accurately reflect the reality of life in the ancient world.

By contrast, children who were separated from their families and sent away to work often suffered from exploitation at the hands of their employers since they did not have the benefit of the protection of an adult family member of any gender. Chapter 4 documents numerous examples of children struggling to receive wages or being subject to physical abuse by their employers, and the interventions made on their behalf by their parents. The fact that the intervening parent is often their mother suggests that these young workers may have been forced into undesirable work situations due to the death of their father and the need to support their widowed mother. This is not to say that all child work arrangements were exploitative: the case

of Tahaunes in the Harthotes Archive provides an example of an apparently functional arrangement between Harthotes and Tahaunes' employer Theon, though since the two work contracts are the only evidence available it cannot be said for certain that there were no negative consequences associated with her employment. Overall, it would appear that the legal and administrative prioritization of the male head of household as the protector of the rest of the family was not borne out in the lived reality of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, though young workers were vulnerable to exploitation when they were separated from the protection of adult family members.

Future developments

There are many potential avenues for further exploration of the themes raised and trends examined in this dissertation. Firstly, it would be desirable to expand this study beyond the small number of archives which have formed the primary focus thus far. The archives in this dissertation were selected as case studies to provide examples of more general trends in the papyri, but there are numerous archives which could also be incorporated to affirm or complicate the conclusions drawn in this study. For instance, the Archive of the Engineer Kleon (260-237 BCE) documents the personal and professional life of an engineer working in the Fayum and communicating with his wife and sons who lived in Alexandria. Like Paniskos, Kleon at one point asks his wife to join him but does not receive a positive response (*P.Kleon*. 3). The Archive of Tryphon (Oxyrhynchos, 11-66 CE) supplies evidence about sending children away from the family on apprenticeship contracts, which could be compared with the experiences of the young workers in the Zenon Archive and Tahaunes in the Harthotes Archive.

Incorporating a larger volume of evidence would also make various types of statistical analysis more viable (with an increased sample size leading to more significant statistics), and more accurately representative of general trends. Increasing the number of archives would also allow coverage of a larger timespan: this dissertation has primarily focused on the Roman period, and although a few pieces of evidence from the Ptolemaic period and Late Antiquity have been discussed above, there is more material from these periods which warrants further examination.

Another aspect of the evidence which has potential for further study when more archives are introduced is that of ethnicity. Previous work on the family in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt has noted some significant differences between Greek and Egyptian families: for instance, census data for Greek households records fewer female household members than that for Egyptian households, which may be ascribed to underreporting or the Greek practice of infant exposure.²³¹ Egyptian households also included multiple nuclear family groups much more frequently than Greek households. Huebner 2013 attributes this to cultural differences between Greek and Egyptian families such as differences in the laws of inheritance,²³² though other studies suggest this statistical difference may simply be a quirk of the evidence.²³³ If enough evidence can be found after examining more documents, including some in Demotic, it would be interesting to draw comparisons between how Greek and Egyptian families handled situations where they were forced to separate and determine whether any discrepancies can be ascribed to cultural differences. Similarly, it may also be possible to consider how geographic differences contributed to family response to separation, if enough data can be found: for instance, comparing families in urban areas with those in the villages.

²³¹ Rowlandson and Lippert 2019, 328.

²³² 31-37. See also Rowlandson and Lippert 2019, 329.

²³³ Clarysse and Thompson 2006, vol. 2, 254.

It would also be possible to examine evidence from outside Egypt: although no other location provides a similarly rich body of evidence for family separation and economic life, it would be possible to compare material from the Vindolanda tablets with the archive of the soldiers Tiberianus and Terentianus, or the letters of Cicero and Pliny with the archive of the aristocratic Apollonios. Evidence from the papyri is frequently dismissed by historians of other parts of the ancient Mediterranean, who claim that Egypt is a ‘special case’, differing significantly from other provinces, and therefore evidence from the papyri is irrelevant when studying other regions. The generally accepted view among papyrologists is that although local variations in behaviour and practices certainly existed, different provinces in the Roman Empire had much in common.²³⁴

²³⁴ Reinard 2016, 947-1002 discusses the relevance of Egyptian evidence in relation to communication and transportation networks across the Empire at length, but it would be worth asking the same question for many other aspects of this dissertation.

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