

**Egyptian Priests in Ptolemaic Tebtunis:
Administration, Associations, and Economy**

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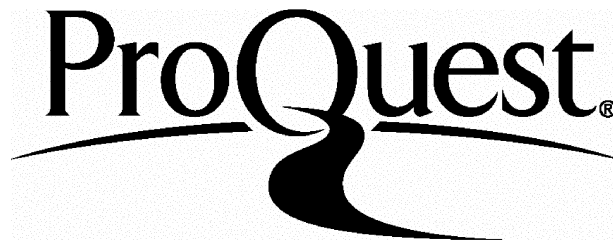
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Abstract

This thesis provides an overview and interpretation of the available documentary evidence and its material context concerning the temple of Soknebtunis in Tebtunis during the Ptolemaic period. This study comes at a time when new excavations and new projects for major collections are on the verge of considerably multiplying the amount of evidence. While the accumulation of data is welcome, it is also necessary to re-evaluate the Tebtunis papyri housed in the Cairo Museum, which have been largely neglected since they were catalogued in 1908. Based primarily on this evidence, the thesis outlines the temple personnel, including their administrative and professional duties, while attempting to illustrate the social and economic relationships of the temple of Soknebtunis with local cult associations and with a prominent family in the village.

The first chapter addresses the relationship of the Tebtunis papyri to their archaeological context through an overview of excavations and of projects to publish texts. The second chapter sketches some basic features of temple organization by analyzing priestly titles and the activities of their holders. The third chapter tries to establish the role of formal associations for social and cult gatherings in the temple community. The fourth chapter attempts to determine the social status and economic basis of a family of priests over the second and first centuries BC. Although the publication of new data may necessitate future revisions, this study provides a framework for the organization of the temple of Soknebtunis in the Ptolemaic period.

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Abbreviations

The papyrus abbreviations that cannot be found in Oates et al. (2002) are normally accompanied with references in the text. Common bibliographical abbreviations are available in the *Lexicon der Ägyptologie* or *l'Année Philologique*.

Other abbreviations include:

<i>APIS</i>	Advanced Papyrological Information Systems: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/projects/digital/apis/index.html
<i>CDD</i>	Chicago Demotic Dictionary. Preliminary on-line publication: http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/PUB/SRC/CDD/CDD.html
<i>Glossar</i>	Erichsen (1954)
<i>NB</i>	Lüddeckens (2000)
<i>Pros. Ptol.</i>	Peremans and Van't Dack (1950-1981)
<i>Wörterbuch</i>	Erman and Grapow (1926)

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Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the organization of priests in Tebtunis through a study of the relevant texts from the Ptolemaic period and their material context. Any study of the temple in Ptolemaic Egypt is bound to rely in part on outside information to fill some gaps or to offer plausible hypotheses that may clarify specific details found in the texts. However, the scope of this thesis is reduced mainly to the evidence presently available from Tebtunis in the Ptolemaic period.

Considering the rich papyrological evidence, the temple of Soknebtunis has not received the attention it deserves. The most serious limitation imposed on this study is the vast amount of unpublished demotic material. In the last decade some new projects, described in chapter 1, have begun to rectify the situation but they are far from complete.

J.A.S. Evans (1961) has been the only scholar to attempt a historical study of the temple of Soknebtunis. His model of the temple economy has been regarded as simplistic (Glare 1993: 61) but the work's most serious flaw is its complete neglect of the Egyptian papyri from the temple published by Spiegelberg (1908). These form the bulk of the evidence for the temple of Soknebtunis in the Ptolemaic period. Nevertheless, Evans is frequently cited because he provides a synthesis of the evidence for the priests, taxes, and revenues for the temple appearing in the Greek papyri.

It is important that published material be continually re-evaluated even while excavations at Tebtunis are still on-going and many texts remain unpublished. The

demotic papyri in the Cairo Museum form a significant body of evidence for the organization of the temple. Assembling this data into a general framework provides a basis for historical comparison with information from other sites. It may also provoke interest in the publication of texts that are unspectacular at first sight but that could have significant bearing on the validity of whatever preliminary conclusions are proposed. Any future study of the temple and its social and economic context will have to take these sources into account.

This project does not intend to fulfill the need for a synthesis of the general characteristics of temple organization in Egypt. Such a synthesis has not been undertaken since 1905/1908 when Otto published his two volume *Priester und Tempel im hellenistischen Ägypten*. The scope of this thesis is generally restricted to the published texts and archaeological reports as well as any unpublished sources that are available concerning the temple of Soknebtunis in the Ptolemaic period. Therefore, one must leave aside aspects of temple organization that are not well attested at Tebtunis even though some uniformity with other temples in Egypt is to be expected.

This selectivity is particularly evident in the discussion of titles. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 each have a section dedicated to the relevant titles, which are restricted to the occurrences in the Tebtunis texts. However, the definition of what constitutes a title in ancient Egypt is problematic. I have made a distinction between honorary titles and titles that refer to a position entailing duties or occupations. With the latter I include the designations for particular types of priest who earned revenue for their service as well as administrators or representatives in the temple and in cult

associations. I consider titles to be honorary when there is no evidence of special duties or entitlement to revenue. In this group I include the archaic string of titles associated with the family dossier discussed in chapter 4.

The correspondence of titles in different languages and scripts is a problem that has been discussed by Quaegebeur (1982). The context of the titles is particularly important. Hieroglyphic texts such ^{as} funerary inscriptions and dedications employ titles in a more lavish way than demotic texts and tend to preserve more detailed religious distinctions but these are hardly attested in Ptolemaic Tebtunis. Demotic texts such as contracts are by contrast usually more brief about titles, restricted usually to one's primary occupation or function. Greek texts tend to translate Egyptian titles into words that already have a wider significance and may only cautiously be equated with their Egyptian counterparts.

This study of the temple of Soknebtunis is divided into four parts. The first chapter makes a general overview of studies of the temple in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. The second chapter examines the titles associated with temple administration and uses them to draw some conclusions about the nature of hierarchy and revenues of the temple. The third chapter focuses on cult associations, defined as an organization of paying members who have duties and privileges in common that often involve religious activities. Previous scholars have underestimated the members' social status and failed to appreciate their prominent role within the temple of Soknebtunis. The fourth chapter is devoted especially to the family dossier assembled from texts published in the Cairo catalogue (Spiegelberg 1908) and some corresponding texts published by Grenfell and Hunt

(in P.Tebt. I and II). The most characteristic feature of these texts are the archaic strings of demotic titles. These and the family's economic ties with the temple of Soknebtunis provide some clues to the status of the family within the community.

Where unpublished texts have been cited the translations are my own. Other translations of demotic and Greek texts are drawn from the edition from which they come unless otherwise indicated.

Chapter 1

The Temple of Soknebtunis: Approaches in Papyrology and Archaeology

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will review the previous archaeological and papyrological approaches to the temple of Soknebtunis. The purpose of this discussion is to make the reader aware of (1) the previous excavations in the temple precinct and its environs and (2) previous publications and current studies of texts from that area. By way of examining both fieldwork reports and text editions, one may begin to explore the significant relationship between texts and archaeology.

In the account that follows of earlier excavations around the temple of Soknebtunis, particular emphasis will be placed on papyrus discoveries and their context. The material context may suggest how texts were used and discarded while topography, structures, and artifacts may clarify references in the texts. Conversely, texts may be used to aid archaeological interpretation, sometimes with direct links like names and dates for objects or structures, but at the very least with reference to material remains within their social context. Examples of both kinds of correspondence will be discussed in this chapter and may recur in later chapters when the activity of temple personnel overlaps with archaeological data.

Aside from dealing with the archaeological excavations, it is important to consider how papyri have been studied after their discovery. Grenfell and Hunt's method of publication of the Tebtunis papyri grouped texts into categories that make it convenient for studying the same type of text but create complications

when trying to reconstruct the relations between texts or with their material context. Demotic papyri from Tebtunis were published by Spiegelberg (1908) in a provisional manner to make the material available quickly. Recently, three projects – the *International Committee for the Publication of the Carlsberg Papyri*, the Milan-IFAO excavation at Tebtunis, and the *Center for the Study of Tebtunis Papyri* at Berkeley – have started to publish the important collections of demotic papyri from the temple of Soknebtunis and its necropolis. They have enlisted some of the leading scholars of demotic to collaborate on these projects. They have also stimulated research on Tebtunis papyri in other collections. Later in this chapter, I discuss the scope of these projects and the preliminary reports on the contents of the unpublished collections.

1.2 Archaeology: Excavations in the Temple and its Necropolis

a. The Excavations of Grenfell and Hunt

The historical and geographical situation of the temple of Soknebtunis and the necropolis in Tebtunis have made them particularly fertile for papyrus discoveries. However, like many Egyptian sites in the Fayum, Tebtunis has come under attack from local inhabitants wishing to make use of its deposits for fertilizer, building material, or antiquities. What once would have been the high wall of the *temenos* surrounding the precinct now rises no more than two or three meters while the temple itself has been completely leveled. Some of the damage, especially to the temple, most likely occurred in the nineteenth century when the agricultural industries, with far more political clout at that time than the antiquities department (founded in the 1850s), encouraged the removal of fertile deposits called *sebakh*. Only in the early twentieth century were efforts to curtail

sebakh removal successful but the practice has never entirely been eradicated (Bailey 1999: 212-213).

Compared with other sites in the Fayum Tebtunis has nevertheless survived rather well. Before the twentieth century, the Ptolemaic and Roman areas of the site, including the temple, escaped some of the worst *sebakh* removal and may have avoided antiquities plundering because it was on the opposite end of the ancient site from the Arab period ruins and the modern settlement of Ūmm el-Baragât (Grenfell and Hunt 1901: 376). However, once foreign excavators arrived and began working on the site, local inhabitants would soon intensify their efforts to find antiquities and to carry away *sebakh*.

Grenfell and Hunt were confronted with this situation in Egypt where antiquities were being plundered or destroyed by *sebakhin* and they proposed an innovative solution. After Petrie made several chance discoveries of papyrus in the course of his excavations elsewhere in Egypt, Grenfell and Hunt organized excavations specifically aimed at the recovery of papyrus. They were motivated by the destruction of sites by the *sebakhin* and by the looting of antiquities. They estimated that over half of all papyrus discovered in Egypt were destroyed by mistreatment in years past even as large numbers were coming into Europe through the antiquities market. "Considering the wholesale plundering of Egyptian antiquities which has marked the last twenty years, and which now at the eleventh hour real attempts are being made to check, scholars may well be thankful that so many Greek papyri from the Fayum have been safely housed in museums" (Grenfell et al. 1900: 21). Much of their work was funded by the Egypt Exploration Fund as well as several American universities eager to acquire papyrus. In 1899/1900, Grenfell and Hunt were sponsored by the University of

California-Berkeley to excavate the site of Tebtunis, in hope of repeating their earlier successes in the Fayum and at Oxyrhynchus.

Grenfell and Hunt considered themselves scientific archaeologists saving what they regarded as the most important artifacts from sites before they were destroyed. However, their idea of scientific excavation meant primarily developing the principles of where to dig for papyrus. “The method of digging for papyri in a town site presents some parallels to that of gold mining. The gold-seeker follows a vein of quartz, while the papyrus-digger has to follow a stratum, or vein, of what the natives call *afsh* ... the gold-digger does not look for gold where there is no quartz, and similarly the papyrus-seeker may practically disregard any other kind of earth than *afsh*” (Grenfell et al. 1900: 24-5). Many modern excavators would shun these excavation strategies that tend to focus on the recovery of objects rather than recording the original state of the site as it is disturbed by excavation. However, Grenfell and Hunt were limited by time and funds while faced with enormous sites rapidly being destroyed. These “principles” helped them to avoid disturbing areas that were unlikely to produce papyrus. Recently, a similar solution has been proposed to save the papyri from the rising water table (Gallazzi 1995).

In the introduction to *Fayum Towns*, and in other publications (Grenfell et al. 1900; Grenfell and Hunt 1901; cf. P.Tebt. 291), Grenfell and Hunt make a few observations about the archaeological context of papyri that they discovered in the temple of Soknebtunis and in the necropolis. They mention, for example, a small temple of Sarapis, Isis, and Osiris in Tebtunis near the main temple of Soknebtunis (Grenfell et al. 1900: 22). In their discussion of the topography of Fayum villages, they comment that all the temples they identified “date, so far as

can be judged, from the Ptolemaic period; and it is noteworthy that in nearly all of them or in their enclosures papyri of the Ptolemaic period, both Greek and demotic, have been found, but hardly anywhere else in Fayum town sites” (Grenfell et al. 1900: 22). Within the temple enclosure at Tebtunis, they identified a small temple of Soknebtunis and houses of priests along the enclosure walls but the main temple of Soknebtunis had already been destroyed (Grenfell and Hunt 1901; cf. Anti 1931; see figure 4).

Grenfell and Hunt claim that practically all of their discoveries came from the “remains of buildings which are partly filled up with or buried in rubbish” (Grenfell et al. 1900: 24-25). They note that these fall into two groups that are difficult to distinguish: (1) houses where the rubbish had some connection to the particular building and (2) houses that had already gone to ruin when the rubbish was deposited (Grenfell et al. 1900: 25). This information is valuable for piecing together the archaeological context. The impression is that houses often contained rubbish that collected while the village was in decay.

Grenfell and Hunt seem to have labeled the papyri from the temple and town site with a single series of numbers prefixed with a “T” (for Tebtunis). The T-numbers range from 1 to over 750. Scholars have recently realized that T-numbers could be an important clue to the archaeological context since they were apparently made prior to dividing the texts by genre or period. They may roughly reflect the order of recovery and therefore could aid in reconstructing groups found together (Hanson 2000). In the necropolis of Tebtunis, Grenfell and Hunt found that papyri were used to make cartonnage for crocodiles as well as human mummies. They made notes of which papyri came from the same

mummy so that this information could be used to find relationships between the texts.

The Greek texts in the dossier of the Priests of Soknebtunis (P.Tebt. 291-315) all date from the Roman period and were reportedly found “with few exceptions ... in the houses of the temple” (Grenell et al. 1907: 54). Their T-numbers range from about 1 to 200 and their place at the beginning of the sequence may correspond to the fact that Grenfell and Hunt spent the first two weeks excavating the temple area before moving to the large central mound (Grenfell and Hunt 1901). In addition to Roman texts, Grenfell and Hunt also report finding Ptolemaic papyri in the temple precinct. They comment: “at Tebtunis, though the temple itself produced no antiquities of any kind, the priests’ houses yielded, besides a large quantity of later papyri, some Greek and many more demotic documents of the Ptolemaic period” (Grenfell et al. 1900: 23; cf. Grenfell and Hunt 1901: 376).

The Ptolemaic papyri from the temple area are difficult to identify. Besides the cartonnage, only a few Greek papyri from the Ptolemaic period (P.Tebt. 42, 136-7, 279-284, 466-468) were published in their editions. Just three (P.Tebt. 42, 280-281) explicitly concern the temple of Soknebtunis while the T-numbers of seven others (P.Tebt. 136-7, 288, 466-468) fall roughly into the 1-200 range. The demotic documents from the temple of Soknebtunis are more difficult to identify because Grenfell and Hunt made little effort to keep track of them and sent many to the Cairo Museum. The editor of the Cairo texts, Spiegelberg (1908), mentions the T-numbers in only a few instances, all of which suggest a temple context: P.Cairo 31220 (T64), 31228 (T40), 31250 (T14) and 31232 (T91).

The archaeological context for the demotic texts published by Spiegelberg is, with a few exceptions, impossible to determine. He notes that 30607-30608 were rolled together and that 30605, the rules of a cult association, was found beside a crocodile. Grenfell and Hunt wrote regarding papyri from the crocodile mummies: “by a happy chance only a small proportion was written in demotic, though large demotic rolls were occasionally buried beside the crocodiles, these being, with the exception of a few pots, the only other antiquities found in their tombs” (Grenfell et al. 1902: vii). In his physical description of a few texts, Spiegelberg reports that they have come from cartonnage (30606, 30610, 30613-15, 30617, 30698, 31250). However, it is not clear on what basis Spiegelberg determines this and it is puzzling that they should, in some cases, be closely related to other texts that he does not consider cartonnage. For some texts, Spiegelberg records a number followed by a letter, the significance of which should be discussed in chapter 4 as these groups of texts belong to the family dossier.

Grenfell and Hunt report that on the first day of excavations at Tebtunis, near the temple they found “a number of demotic, Greek, and hieroglyphic papyrus fragments of the Roman period” (Grenfell and Hunt 1901: 376). A box of Roman period Egyptian and Greek papyri from Tebtunis (P.Tebt.Tait) was found among other papyri acquired by Grenfell and Hunt. The editor suggests that they purchased the papyri. “It is highly improbable that the box could have come from any of Grenfell and Hunt’s excavations, as all such material is distinct and comparatively well documented” (Tait 1977: vii). Some of these texts (e.g. Tait 2000) join with other fragments in the collection of Roman literary texts from the temple, which are now mostly in Copenhagen and Florence and whose

discovery is described below. Grenfell and Hunt did excavate some Greek medical texts from the same collection, including P.Tebt. 677 (T43) which joins to fragments in Copenhagen and Florence, and P.Tebt. 679 (T26) which may belong to the same roll as P.Tebt.Tait 39-42 (Hanson 2000).

The most compelling evidence for accepting that the Tebtunis papyri in Oxford were purchased rather than excavated is their lack of T-numbers. It would be highly unlikely for these texts to have escaped labeling and then to have been separated from the Tebtunis papyri before the latter went to Berkeley in 1938. Thus in order to match Grenfell and Hunt's description, one would expect to find the other Roman period demotic and hieroglyphic fragments from the temple of Soknebtunis in the collections of Cairo or Berkeley, neither of which have been exhaustively searched. The most probable group is the assortment of fragmentary Roman pieces that were included in Spiegelberg's volume: P. Cairo 31220 (T64), 31221, 31222, P.Tebt. 386, and two unpublished fragments (one hieroglyphic and one demotic, Spiegelberg 1908: 311 n.3).

Altogether Grenfell and Hunt spent just three weeks excavating in the temple and in the Roman town site before spending one week on a Coptic church and finally moving to the necropolis. The Roman cemetery produced a number of mummy portraits (Grenfell and Hunt 1901: 377; Bierbrier 1997: 16) but not papyrus since it was not used for cartonnage after the Ptolemaic period. Grenfell and Hunt's most famous success was their discovery of crocodile and human mummies containing Ptolemaic Greek papyri. Demotic rolls were occasionally discovered beside mummified crocodiles (Grenfell and Hunt 1901: 378) and at least one of these was the rules of a cult association (P.Cairo 30605).

b. The Excavations of Anti and Bagnani

Following Grenfell and Hunt, who finished their work at Tebtunis in 1900, others came to Tebtunis in search of *sebakh* and antiquities. In 1901, the German archaeologist, O. Rubensohn, recovered a few Roman papyri in the town site as well as the magnificent painting of Soknebtunis (Rondot 1997: 104; 1998). The majority of visitors were local *sebakhin*, looters, and ambitious dealers seeking papyrus to sell on the antiquities market. The *sebakhin* made their most concerted assault on Tebtunis between 1901 and 1929 burrowing through the Roman settlement on the central mound of the ancient site while many papyri from the site reached the antiquities market (Gallazzi 2000: 7-10). One of the largest and most important discoveries came around 1921 when an archive from the official records of office (*grapheion*) of Tebtunis dating to the first century AD was sold on the antiquities market, mostly to the University of Michigan (P.Mich II and IV) (Gallazzi 2000: 8). In 1929 E. Breccia organized an excavation at Tebtunis for the University of Florence. His aim of finding papyrus met with only modest successes, including a number of Egyptian oracle questions from near the temple (Breccia 1931; Botti 1955). He therefore turned over the concession in 1930 to Carlo Anti and his assistant Gilbert Bagnani of the University of Padua.

Anti and Bagnani had larger ambitions than the recovery of papyrus. They were the first to undertake a study of the topography and architecture of Tebtunis (Anti 1930; Davoli 1998). Unfortunately, when their work came to an end in 1936, most of their research went unpublished. Until recently, the only account of their mission was a few preliminary reports. In an important article, D.J.I. Begg (1998) has now published a large portion of the archives of Gilbert

Bagnani, housed at Trent University in Canada. Meanwhile, drawings, papers, and photographic archives from Anti and his architect F. Franco have been consulted by the Franco-Italian mission working at Tebtunis since 1988 and may soon become more widely available.

The Bagnani archives, combined with the preliminary reports and other documents, provide important clues to the archaeological context for papyrus discoveries in the 1930s. A letter by Rostovtzeff, dated 7. April 1931, reports that he learned from Cairo dealers that local inhabitants had been digging in the temple just after the Italians had left and discovered a large number of Greek and Egyptian papyri (Parassoglou 1973; Gallazzi 2000: 8 n. 13). Rostovtzeff adds that when he informed the Italians, they quickly began digging in the same place and found many more Greek and Egyptian papyri, now housed in Florence. The papyri that came onto the market from Tebtunis in 1929-1931 include one group of Ptolemaic papyri, with many self-dedication texts, that was purchased for the University of Copenhagen and the British Museum (Thompson 1940). Another large group, mostly of Roman literary texts in Egyptian scripts, came to Copenhagen around the same year. This second group corresponds to the Florence papyri excavated by Anti and Bagnani with which there are several joins and an overall similarity in content.

Until recently Anti's account of the temple and the discovery of papyri in the cellars was the fullest record of their archaeological context: "We had the good fortune to discover in two cellars part of the library belonging to the temple or to a priest" (Anti 1931). This account together with the nature of the papyri themselves has led to the assertion that the cellar in which they were found constituted the temple library, probably connected with the House of Life or

temple scriptorium (Reymond 1976: 23; Osing 1998: 19-23; Ryholt 1999: xiii; cf. Osing 1999; Gardiner 1938). Bagnani's letter to his wife, written the on same day, gives a first hand description of the excavation of these papyri on March 11, 1931.

We had been working on some houses on the east wall of the temenos of the Temple and had been finding bits of papyrus. We were very much afraid that it had already been plundered since we knew from our workmen and also from some of the Cairo dealers that some natives had dug there last year and had found a very large quantity of papyri. So we hadn't much hope, but we thought that perhaps some small cache might have been overlooked. We got down to two small cellars side by side and we began to empty them out at half past ten. At once we began to get small fragments of papyri. There was no straw in the cellar so we had little hope again of getting anything. You must know that if there is straw in the cellar it manages to preserve the papyrus, while if there is earth the papyrus is almost always in a such a condition that it cannot even be read. Very soon we found, however, that the cellar had been filled practically to the top with papyri and the quantity of them was such that they acted as a kind of straw ... We got about 18 baskets of papyri ... They seem to be written in every language under the sun: hieroglyphic, hieratic, Demotic, Greek, and apparently another language. There is certainly a page of Homer, another Greek papyrus is a list of taxes, there are a number of Greek literary texts, and a number of the Demotic ones have Greek on the back ... let everybody know that we have found about half a cubic metre of papyri. (Begg 1998: 189-191)

Begg argues based on this description that the identification of a temple library is not supported by the archaeological evidence, citing the lack of “jars, baskets, shelves, or significant distributional patterns despite fairly ideal preservation conditions” (Begg 1998: 191). This was also the opinion of Rostovtzeff after he learned about the earlier discovery by locals in the same area (Gallazzi 2000: 9 n. 13).

As an alternative to a temple library, one could plausibly suppose, as Rostovtzeff did, that the cellar was filled with papyrus as discarded rubbish while the temple was falling into ruin. However, on this point it may be relevant to compare descriptions that Bagnani gives of other papyrus discoveries. For example, he describes the famous “cantina dei papiri” where he found a large number of Roman documents and Greek literary texts in the cellar of a house: “A layer a couple of feet deep right over the cellar floor was one solid mass of

papyri, old baskets, ropes, palm fibre, and old mats, an ideal medium for the preservation of papyri” (Begg 1998: 206). The publication of these texts corroborates the conclusion that this cellar contained discarded papyri, belonging to several unrelated family archives, along with other rubbish (Clarysse 1983: 49-51). Similarly, Bagnani reports on other caches of papyri that were accompanied with rubbish both in the cellars of houses and littering the streets (Begg 1998). Grenfell and Hunt likewise found that the cellars of houses often produced papyri that had accumulated along with other rubbish after the house had gone into ruin (Grenfell et al. 1900: 25).

It is noteworthy that Bagnani stressed that the papyri were preserved by virtue of being packed together, *without* other rubbish that would normally protect them, whereas, in the case of other caches, it was obvious to Bagnani that the papyri had been thrown away as rubbish. Second, the papyri from the temple enclosure display a remarkable unity of content (literary and religious texts) that was not the case in other structures where rubbish accompanied discarded papyri that stemmed from unrelated archives.

There is thus some justification for considering that these texts were held together in antiquity for whatever reason. Other “archives” that were purchased on the antiquities market, such as the *grapheion* archive from Tebtunis, are even more questionable on archaeological grounds but still deserve to be studied as a group. By treating the collection as a group rather than as unrelated texts some historical implications emerge. For example, it tends to strengthen Peter van Minnen’s hypothesis that literary texts, especially Homer, were being read by Egyptian priests in Fayum villages (van Minnen 1998). The existence of Greek medical and astrological texts (e.g. PSI X 1180) collected along with similar

Egyptian texts is also significant from the point of view of cultural interaction. However, it is impossible to judge what social practices governed the collection that was placed in these cellars. It is plausible that it was simply a storeroom for old papyri rather than a working temple library (Clarysse 1983: 48-9).

Under the directorship of Anti, Bagnani continued to excavate at Tebtunis until 1936. The two worked with the architect F. Franco to map the site and in particular to make a plan of the temple enclosure area. This unpublished research has formed the basis for the forthcoming publication of the temple of Soknebtunis by Rondot (cf. Rondot 1997). They also excavated three structures along the dromos, which were identified as *deipneteria* by analogy with a similar structure at Karanis and by epigraphic evidence (Anti 1931; Bastianini and Gallazzi 1991; cf. Bernard 1981a: 6). Bagnani was later joined by Vogliano of the University of Milan in 1934 and the two of them directed the excavations on the west side of the dromos where they found large caches of papyri from the Roman period. In 1935, he excavated in the necropolis where he discovered more crocodile mummies buried with examples of the demotic rules of associations (Bresciani 1994) to be discussed in chapter 3.

c. The Excavations of Gallazzi and Hadji-Minaglou

Few objects or papyri that are certainly from Tebtunis have entered the antiquities market since 1936 when the first Italian mission left. Many scholars doubted that there was anything left to find after the extensive excavations at the site. However, in 1988 excavations resumed at Tebtunis by the University of Milan and the IFAO under the direction of Claudio Gallazzi and assisted by Gisèle Hadji-Minaglou. Among their aims was to publish the archaeological

record of Tebtunis by comparing the Italian archives with evidence from new excavations. The assessment of the site revealed that substantial portions of it remained intact including the southern part of the *kom* near the temple of Soknebtunis and in most cases so did the archaeological layers that lay beneath the Roman structures, which were plundered for papyri. Within areas that were relatively undisturbed, conditions were still suitable for the preservation of papyri and other material. The mission has focused on the neighborhoods north-east, east, and north-west of the temple of Soknebtunis in order to understand the urban context of this important institution (Gallazzi 2000: 17ff).

The most astonishing success of these excavations was the ability to make direct comparisons between archaeological and papyrological evidence. From 1988 to 1991, the mission excavated a cluster of houses northwest of the temple of Soknebtunis. It was possible to correlate these structures with specific information in several demotic texts from the family dossier discussed in chapter 4 and from other texts published with it. One of these structures was the sanctuary of Isis-Thermouthis mentioned in P.Cairo 30617 and 30612. As we shall see in chapter 4, P.Cairo 30617, dated to 98/97 BC, deals with the sale and cession of liturgy days for service within the sanctuary, which corresponds to the late Ptolemaic phase identified by Hadji-Minaglou as 4000-II (Hadji-Minaglou 2000: 60-61; see figures 3, 5).

The sanctuary is located on the north-west side of the intersection between the dromos of the temple of Soknebtunis and the dromos of Tefresudjty, which meet at the vestibule of the temple of Soknebtunis (see figures 2, 5). P.Cairo 30617 specifies the neighbors of the chapel: on the west, the *šš* of the dromos of Soknebtunis; on the south, the sacred path of the *šš* of the dromos of

Tefresudjty; on the north, the house of Thermouthis; on the east, the house of Nekao. Tefresudjty is mentioned as a deity in P.Cairo 30605 and 30606, the rules of associations (see chapter 3). The reading was established by Robert Ritner and seems to relate to the divine epithet associated with Osiris and some other gods (Ritner 1984: 177; Hadji-Minaglou 2000: 62 n. 8). This points to the conclusion that the dromos leads to another temple in the area that has not yet been explored (Gallazzi 2000: 20). The word *šš* is accompanied by the house determinative, indicating a structure, and may be translated “house of adoration” (Hadji-Minaglou 2000: 62 n. 7; Ritner 1984: 177). This could perhaps be the vestibule or a prior structure at the entrance to the *temenos* temple of Soknebtunis, located at the intersection in question, whose construction dates to the late Ptolemaic period (Rondot 1997; see figure 5).

The sanctuary itself has three main phases of occupation. Whether it was a sanctuary in the first phase is unclear as its design is partially obscured by later features. The walls visible today date as early as the beginning of the third century BC, roughly contemporary or slightly earlier than the *temenos* of the temple of Soknebtunis (Hadji-Minaglou 2000: 55-6). The second phase begins during the second century BC, when the alignment shifted and several walls were added. A number of objects of religious significance were uncovered including fragments of steles, an offering table, and the small door of the *naos* where the image of the god was kept (Hadji-Minaglou 2000: 54, 140-141). This suggests the use of the structure as a sanctuary as described in the demotic texts (e.g. P.Cairo 30612a). The third phase is for the most part what the present archaeological remains represent. The main additions were completed at the same time as the complete renovation of the dromos of Soknebtunis in the

second half of the first century BC. The limestone pavement was added in front of the building to connect it with the new dromos. The inner room, holding the *naos* of the god, was fitted with limestone on walls and floor while the side entrance to this room was closed off creating an architectural symmetry (Hadji-Minaglou 2000: 54-55, 57-58, 61). Unfortunately, some ^{of} the stratigraphy of this room had been disrupted by earlier activity (Hadji-Minaglou 2000: 54).

The sanctuary was probably abandoned along with other buildings in the neighborhood around the beginning of the third century AD. In one room of the structure where there were later stratified deposits, there was rubbish dating from the first century AD. By that time the outdoor pavement had also been covered with sand and debris. Nevertheless, the building was apparently in use at the end of the first century or beginning of the second when a wall was added to divide the main room. At some point later than the first century, an oven was added in a layer above the rubbish deposits just mentioned. These signs may indicate a gradual deterioration where the structures fell into brief periods of disuse before being completely abandoned (cf. Hadji-Minaglou 2000: 55, 58, 61).

Gallazzi and Hadji-Minaglou have repeatedly suggested that the southern part of the village was abandoned at the end of the second or beginning of the third century because it had been overtaken by desert (Gallazzi 2000: 20-21; Hadji-Minaglou 58). A recent survey of the southwest Fayum has pointed out that the traditional view for the abandonment of Fayum settlements is based on only a few villages in the northeast corner. Villages in the southwest Fayum like Tebtunis survived as late as the eleventh century and the main canal into the region, the modern Bahr el-Gharaq, did not fall into disuse (Kirby and Rathbone

1996). The southern part settlement of Tebtunis was probably always partially in the desert, away from the irrigated fields to protect vital agricultural land.

During the excavations of Gallazzi and Hadji-Minaglou of the surrounding houses, a small team led by V. Rondot studied the remains of the temple of Soknebtunis and its dromos. Already in the time of Grenfell and Hunt, only traces of the temple itself survived and what was left has been further eroded by a century of excavations. However, the team had at its disposal the archives from the Italian mission in the 1930s which contains valuable photos, drawings, and reports that were never published.

The team's fundamental aim was to prepare a final publication of the temple by clearing and inspecting the remains in comparison with this material. For example, they were able to establish that the subterranean pavements in the temple identified by Anti were crypts of the Ptolemaic temple rather than the remnants of a pharaonic temple. The southern kiosk on the dromos is roughly contemporary with the *naos* of the temple, dating to the third century BC. The vestibule at the entrance to the *temenos* dates to the late Ptolemaic period and the repaving of the dromos to the time of Augustus (Gallazzi: 29-30; Rondot 1997). Rondot has also come to some conclusion about the overall plan of the temple, which was comparable to the better preserved one at Qasr Qarun (Grimal 1991: 293). The final publication of these and other findings as well as photos and plans of the temple are expected to appear later this year.

Discovering the urban context of the temple of Soknebtunis through the excavation of the surrounding neighborhoods has been one of the main goals of Gallazzi's mission. In addition to the sanctuary of Isis-Thermouthis, his mission has excavated the houses surrounding it as well as the neighborhood on the west

side of the temple of Soknebtunis. In the latter area, they have uncovered several houses with some remains dating as early as the fourth century BC. On the southernmost side of this neighborhood there was a large enclosure built in the Ptolemaic period and evidently repaired in early Roman times, which was built atop an unidentified pre-Ptolemaic structure. Within this enclosure a tower was found, identified on the basis of papyri as an outpost of the *eremophulakes* or desert guards (Grimal 1994: 410-411). The presence of ovens and animal troughs in the enclosure has led Gallazzi to speculate that the space was used by passing caravans or visitors to the temple (Gallazzi 2000: 22; cf. Grimal 1991: 293). Gallazzi's mission also focused on the area northwest of the temple, where they located structures excavated by the previous Italian mission, including baths, storage areas, a building with doric and ionic columns, *deipneteria* or dining halls used by associations, and houses dating mostly to the Ptolemaic and early Roman periods (Gallazzi 2000: 23ff).

During the course of excavations on the west side of the temple at the southern edge of the village, Gallazzi's mission discovered a large rubbish dump that had escaped destruction. The area, roughly fifty meters long, thirty meters wide, and four meters deep, is defined on its north side by the enclosure wall where the tower of *eremophulakes* was situated and on the west by the *temenos* of Soknebtunis where there was a side entrance leading into the temple (see figure 4). The area has proven to be rich with human artifacts, including organic material such as papyrus. Despite seven years of excavation, the area has still not been exhausted and hundreds of papyri, mostly demotic, continue to accumulate. The contents of this collection, as is discussed below, pertains to a

large extent to the temple of Soknebtunis, which probably used the area for disposal of its rubbish.

1.3 Papyrology: Texts from the Temple and its Necropolis

The papyri from the temple of Soknebtunis and the necropolis now belong to disparate collections and have appeared in various publications. The sources that relate to the temple of Soknebtunis are located in Berkeley, Berlin, Cairo, Copenhagen, Florence, Lille, London, Lund, Milan, Oxford, and Yale. A large amount of the material remains unpublished but new projects have lately generated a resurgence of interest in the site and its papyri.

The publications of Tebtunis papyri each differ in their methods and their quality. Grenfell and Hunt's method was to assemble the Greek papyri according to the type of text – whether literature, contracts, accounts, letters, etc. – in order to facilitate cross-referencing and for convenient reference. Though this method is still emulated, it makes it difficult to reconstruct archives and find the relations between texts or with other objects.

Spiegelberg's edition of Tebtunis papyri in the Cairo catalogue series admirably made much of the material available very quickly. However, he provided transcriptions of only the main body of the texts, generally without textual notes and sometimes without translations. He made numerous errors and omissions, which are difficult to correct due to the poor quality of the photographs.

The Cairo material obviously has not received the attention it deserves. One substantial group of texts contains the business correspondence of an oil merchant, Phanesis son of Nechethor, in the third century BC (P.Cairo 31213-17,

31219, 31225, 31227, 31231, 31246-49; cf. Spiegelberg 1908: 261). The man may be identical to the one in the contract for a wet-nurse (P.Cairo 30604; Thissen 1984; docket P.Tebt. 279) who also appears in P.Cairo 30621 and 30694. The majority of the demotic texts from Tebtunis in the Cairo volume can be associated with a single family in the late second and early first centuries BC who employ a distinctive set of archaic titles. This group is discussed in chapter 4.

The extraordinary Egyptian literary texts from the temple reached multiple collections and have been published sporadically. The Oxford texts (P.Tebt.Tait) represent some of the best pieces from a larger group that remains unpublished. During the 1950s Volten was preparing an edition of some literary texts in Copenhagen, many of which relate or join to the Oxford papyri (Volten 1951; Tait 2000). Volten also made considerable efforts to organize and promote research on the collection (Tait 1991a). Botti worked on the Florence papyri (Botti 1936; 1955; 1959) and with Volten on some related Copenhagen texts (Tait 2000).

In about 1930-1931, the British Museum and the Carlsberg Foundation in Copenhagen acquired collections of documentary texts from the temple of Soknebtunis, including parts of an archive of self-dedication texts. A few self-dedication texts have been published (Thompson 1940; Bresciani 1965; Chauveau 1991: 120-127). An edition of the largest part of the archive, housed in London and Copenhagen, is in preparation (Tait 1994). Other texts that were acquired in 1931 by the British Museum with this archive, including a roster of priests of Soknebtunis by phyle (P.BM. 10647), remain unpublished (P.BM. 10640-59 plus some larger unnumbered pieces). The other documentary texts in

Copenhagen probably come from the same find since, besides their similarity in content, they were purchased from the same antiquities dealer, Maurice Nahman (Ryholt *pers. comm.*).

1.4 Papyrology: New Projects

a. The International Committee for the Publication of the Carlsberg Papyri

The papyrus collection purchased by the Carlsberg Foundation, which the University of Copenhagen now possesses, was relatively unknown until recently. Since 1988 the department of Egyptology (now the Carsten Niebuhr Institute) has undertaken a major project to publish the collection. This decision came after an extensive survey of the material by scholars from the University of Würzburg who concluded that the collection ranked as one of the world's most important (Zauzich 1991). Funding from the Carlsberg Foundation helped to organize a committee to study and conserve the papyri systematically while initiating a publication series of text-editions.

The International Committee for the Publication of the Carlsberg Papyri (ICPCP) convened for the first time in 1988. Its original membership comprised Prof. Paul Frandsen (Copenhagen), Prof. John Tait (London), Prof. K.-Th. Zauzich (Würzburg), Prof. Janet Johnson (Chicago), and Prof. Françoise de Cenival (Paris). It was later joined by Prof. Heinz Thissen (Köln), Dr. Mark Smith (Oxford), and Dr. Kim Ryholt (Copenhagen). The ICPCP has been a historic moment for demotic studies as it represents the largest international collaboration between scholars in this field (Zauzich 1991).

The publication series of Carlsberg Papyri has already reached its fifth volume with several more in preparation (Frandsen 1991; Osing 1998; Frandsen

and Ryholt 2000; Ryholt 1999; Smith 2002). Reflecting the members' interests and the perceived importance of the literary texts, the ICPCP has left aside the documents to focus its efforts on publishing the numerous and better preserved literary texts from Tebtunis. The result has been a rapid impact in the fields of late-period Egyptian literature, mythology, and religion.

Recent publications include large fragments from the Inaros cycle, a tradition of stories about the Egyptian king Petubastis (Tait 2000), as well as other well-known stories like 'Onch-Sheshonqy (Ryholt 2000a), Setna Khamaewas (Quack and Ryholt 2000), and the tale of Nectanebo (Ryholt 2000b). The collection has also produced examples of literature that were previously rarely attested or unknown, including the tale of Petese son of Petetum (Ryholt 1999) and the mythological treatise, "On the Primaeval Ocean" (Smith 2002). Large hieratic texts have also been published from the collection (Osing 1998) along with similar texts from Tebtunis in the University of Florence (Osing and Rosati 1998). Other more scattered material published recently includes oracle texts, letters, fragments of legal manuals, herbals, and word lists (Frandsen 1991; Frandsen and Ryholt 2000).

In contrast, the documentary texts in Copenhagen have not received much attention. The material is in several hundred fragments, with fewer complete texts, but they are often sizable and significant. Many relate to the temple and priests including the archive of self-dedication texts. The date of the documentary material (roughly second century BC) clearly distinguishes it from the literary texts in the collection (first century BC – second century AD). This suggests that they represent material from two separate locations, with the

Roman material corresponding to the cellars explored by Bagnani (Begg 1998: 189-191).

The content of the Ptolemaic papyri in Copenhagen gives the impression that they also came from a temple context. It is likely that they correspond to the group acquired by the British Museum in 1931, which includes part of the self-dedication archive as well as other unpublished Ptolemaic papyri (P.BM 10618-59). It is plausible that both the Copenhagen and the British Museum texts were found in the temple or its rubbish dump where the current Franco-Italian mission has revealed many large pits made this century. The hypothesis could be confirmed by comparing the newly excavated texts from Tebtunis with these collections.

b. The Milan-IFAO Papyri and Ostraka

The Franco-Italian excavation at Tebtunis that began in 1988 has furnished some surprising discoveries of written material. Already in the first seasons while excavating Roman deposits of houses east of the chapel of Isis-Thermouthis, the mission discovered many household remains including terracotta figurines of Harpocrates, a lintel with a solar disk, several Greek papyri, and also some demotic documents from the first and second century AD (Grimal 1990: 398; Posener-Krieger 1989: 312). In other buildings further south, on the east side of the temple, there were more demotic and Greek texts, both on papyrus and ostraka, from the second century BC (Grimal 1990: 398). Interestingly, one preliminary report comments: “il est déjà possible, grâce aux documents récupérés, d’affirmer qu’une partie d’entre eux [the houses east of the temple] abritaient des personnes intéressées au temple” (Grimal 1991: 293).

South of the temple in the necropolis, the mission excavated some houses in which documents were found from the first to third century AD belonging to some priests called *exopylitai*, who were in charge of embalming. In a small brick cellar dating to the Ptolemaic period a non-mummified crocodile was buried.

By far the greatest number of papyri from the recent excavations come from the rubbish dump on the southeast side of the temple near the side entrance of the *temenos*. Preliminary reports suggest that this material dates from the third century BC to the beginning of the Roman period. “Beaucoup de ces textes sont en rapport direct avec le fonctionnement du temple: consignes administratives adressées aux prêtres, contracts, comptes et billets oraculaires témoignant de la consultation du dieu local Soknebtynis. Pour le reste, on signalera quelques bribes de textes littéraires (en particulier Homère), des dipinti sur amphores et de nombreux dessins sur ostraca” (Grimal 1996: 534). In 1996, the number of texts from the rubbish dump was reported to be about 350 ostraka and 200 well-preserved papyri in hieratic, demotic, and Greek, mostly dating from the second century BC (Grimal 1997: 357). In the following year alone, 1997, two hundred oracle questions were reportedly discovered (70% in demotic, 30% in Greek) some of which provide unique forms of divination practice (Grimal 1998: 534). Hundreds more papyri have continued to be found in subsequent years with 60% or more in demotic, the rest in Greek or occasionally hieratic or hieroglyphic (Grimal 1999: 492).

The publication of most of the written material has not yet become available. The demotic papyri are being studied by P. Gallo, C. di Cerbo, and Ph. Collombert. Many texts relate to the priests; especially common are

administrative letters similar to those from Soknopaiou Nesos (Bresciani 1975). There are some examples of the admission of priests of Soknebtunis in the second century BC (cf. Glanville 1933).

It was reported 1997 that Ola El-Aguizy was preparing an edition of the demotic ostraka (Grimal 1997: 367). Nikos Litinas is preparing an edition of the Greek ostraka and dipinti. In 1997, the total number of ostraka was reported to be almost 1000 (Grimal 1997) and has continued to accumulate. This number of ostraka is unusual for the Fayum where some scholars had once speculated that the scarcity represents an actual difference from the common usage of ostraka in Upper Egypt. Part of the explanation may lie in Grenfell and Hunt's comment that their workers were not trained to search for ostraka (Grenfell et al. 1900).

c. Center for the Tebtunis Papyri

Over one century has passed since Phoebe Hearst sponsored Grenfell and Hunt's expedition to Tebtunis in 1899/1900 on behalf of the University of California-Berkeley. The artifacts went immediately in 1900 to Berkeley's Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology while the papyri were taken to Oxford except for some Egyptian texts that went to Giza and later the Cairo Museum. Grenfell and Hunt worked in Oxford along with several collaborators to prepare their text editions. In 1938, the papyri were finally shipped to Berkeley where they now lie in the Bancroft Library.

Since 1938, the collection has received little scholarly attention. E. Kase was hired in the early 1940s to organize the collection and to give the papyri inventory numbers. He unfortunately encased many texts in a plastic material called vinylite, which gave little protection and caused further damage. In the

1970s, James Keenan and John Shelton prepared an edition of some Ptolemaic Greek papyri (P.Tebt. IV) and called attention to the deteriorating state of the collection (Verhoogt 1998: 3-6).

In October 2000, the University of California-Berkeley announced the formation of the Center for the Study of Tebtunis Papyri. Their aim was to hire a papyrologist and to stimulate international collaboration on the collection. Its funding is initially for three years beginning July 1, 2001 and may be renewed for up to ten years. One of the main activities of the Center is to cooperate with the *APIS* project to digitize papyri and create a database of American collections. In addition, the Center would like to conserve and publish the papyri that have remained neglected until now:

Only 5 percent of the collection—or about 1,100 fragments—have been published or described. Roughly 1,400 fragments are mounted in glass for archival display. Several hundred more fragments have to be removed from plastic mounts, another 22,000 lie untouched in temporary folders, and an unknown number are still sitting in their original tin boxes awaiting attention. The collection is predominantly documentary, and one scholar has estimated that about 30 percent of the unstudied pieces are written in Demotic Egyptian (Berkeley 2000).

The resurgence of scholarly interest in Tebtunis, with new excavations and new studies of the papyri worldwide, has created the demand for the publication of the Berkeley papyri.

It is in the context of these papyrological projects and excavations at Tebtunis that this thesis takes shape. The variety of evidence – literary, documentary, and archaeological – and the number of institutions involved in Tebtunis studies means that collaboration is vital to gaining a complete understanding of the site. The sources that form the basis of the following chapters are mostly published papyri and the scanty archaeological observations that concern them. Re-evaluating this evidence for the temple of Soknebtunis in the Ptolemaic period forms just one avenue of research into this promising field.

As new studies appear in the years to come it will be possible to revise and elaborate on many of the points raised.

Chapter 2

Priests, Titles, and Temple Administration

2.1 Introduction

One might reasonably expect the organization of the temple of Soknebtunis to resemble other temples in Egypt. There are official and priestly titles attested at Tebtunis that were used as far back as the Old Kingdom in many periods and places in Egypt. Nevertheless, the maintenance of such traditions over the centuries should not lead one to assume that temple administration or status distinctions were ever static in Egyptian history. Nor should one necessarily expect that the temple of Soknebtunis and other minor sanctuaries in Tebtunis always matched the organization of other Egyptian temples at the same period. Though parallels with other temples may prove illustrative at several points, this chapter will focus on the evidence from Tebtunis in order to sketch some basic aspects of temple organization that emerge from the material presently available from this site.

The first part of the chapter interprets the evidence for each type of temple official and priest according to their titles paying special attention to their role in the documents in which they occur. However, the study of titles in Egypt is complicated by the different ways in which Egyptian titles were rendered in Greek. “Les exemples de transcriptions de titres sont rares et on constate que pour beaucoup de fonctions il n’existe pas d’équivalence fixé entre les titres égyptiens et grecs” (Quaegebeur 1982: 1098). In cases of titles like $\lambda\epsilon\sigma\tilde{\omega}\nu\iota\varsigma$ where it is the title is simply transcribed phonetically into Greek the equivalences are reliable as are the very straightforward translations like $\theta\epsilon\alpha\gamma\acute{o}\varsigma$ for $\text{t}^3i \text{ ntr.w}$ “bearer of the god.” However, in many instances

the Greek titles have different connotations such as ἐπιστάτης “overseer” for *p3 rmt nti sn* “the man who investigates” or προφήτης for *hm-ntr* (lit. servant of god).

While limiting the scope to those titles attested at Tebtunis (even when others may perhaps be guessed), the discussion of titles will necessarily include references to attestations from other sites. Comparing titles with other attestations may help to appreciate regional variations as well as phenomena common to other Egyptian temples. This approach sticks closely to the primary texts, tying particular titles to the persons who held them and to their activities. This analysis of titles may lead to some conclusions about the administrative procedures of the priests and temple officials.

Once the main evidence for official and priestly title holders has been presented, other more general evidence may be introduced and some preliminary conclusions may be drawn about temple administration and the status of priests. These conclusions, based primarily on the evidence from Tebtunis, may also be compared with the conceptions of other scholars about the temple’s administrative and social hierarchy. Hierarchical models of the temple personnel, such as those developed by Otto (1905) and Evans (1961), are misleading and must be refined. Certain positions, such as the ἐπιστάτης of the temples and the λεσῶνις of a particular temple, may have had special authority owing to their responsibilities to the government. However, the priests appear to administer the temple collectively without any mention of rank based on a specific priestly titles aside from the βουλευταὶ ἱερεῖς or “counselor priests” who came from the body of priests and may have had special responsibilities.

2.2 Temple Titles

p3 rmt nti sn (ἐπιστάτης): “the man who investigates”

This title occurs only once in the Tebtunis papyri from the Ptolemaic period in a letter dated to one of the last Ptolemies and addressed to the official by Khonsthot son of Ahmose (P.Cairo 30629). The official's name and titles are: *Hr-wd3 p3 hm-ntr Is.t p3 rmt nti sn n3 w3b.w n hwt.ntr Tb3-tn*, "Haryothes, the prophet of Isis, the man who investigates the priests of the temple of Tebtunis." Unfortunately, the orthography and grammar of this letter are so unusual that reading the text poses major problems despite its good condition. No translation or commentary was provided by the initial editor because of its difficulty (Spiegelberg 1908: 82).

The *p3 rmt nti sn* is an official that appears several times in the Soknopaiou Nesos texts. In 156 BC, there was a report issued to this official with the titles: "the prophet of Baset, the agent of Pharaoh who inspects (*nti-iw sn*) the temple of Sobek and the temples of the Arsinoite nome" (P.Ox.Griffith 39) The report informs him that the *λεσῶνις* prevented the priests from following their orders to see him until they had paid their fees. In a letter to this official in 133 BC (P.Ox.Griffith 74), where he is again titled "agent of pharaoh who inspects the temple of Sobk and the temples of the Arsinoite nome," the priests acknowledge their obligation to pay him 50 artaba of wheat, which is regarded as "1/6 of the temple for the bread-portion of the priests." P.Ox.Griffith 54 shows him acting with the *λεσῶνις* and the priests together in matters of temple administration.

In Greek the title appears to have been rendered ἐπιστάτης of the temples (Wilcken 1922: 44-45). Otto assumed he was the same as the *λεσῶνις* (Otto 1905: 38ff.). The word ἐπιστάτης has ^{the} general meaning of "overseer," which can occur in many administrative contexts and therefore does not correspond exactly to the Egyptian title. It is conceivable that the Greek term was used loosely to describe the *lesonis* (cf. Thompson 1988: 111-112; see the next section). However, the

documents from Soknopaiou Nesos (Bresciani 1975) and Memphis (Wilcken 1922: 44-45) seem to show the *rmꜥ nti šn* “man who investigates” or ἐπιστάτης of the temples in a given area was a distinct position. He was apparently a royal administrator, who also could hold prominent positions in other temples such as “prophet,” and who was in charge of collecting certain revenues and overseeing the financial administration of temple, which was handled locally by the *lesonis* who may have been under his direct authority.

***mr-šn* (λεσῶνις): “the chief priest”**

At Tebtunis, the title occurs in both Egyptian and Greek texts. Greek writers generally transcribed the word *mr-šn* into Greek as λεσῶνις or translated it ἄρχιερεὺς “chief priest” (Spiegelberg 1902; Zauzich 1980). The earliest example from Tebtunis is a Greek letter addressed to the *lesonis* presumably by a high ranking official as it makes stern demands for accommodation to be prepared for a visitor and his entourage (P.Polemon; van Groningen 1933). In this case, it appears that the *lesonis* was responsible for making rooms available perhaps by quartering the guests in people’s homes or by preparing other buildings for accommodation.

It must have been common practice for officials to lodge guests in private properties judging from a decree in 118 BC found at Tebtunis that prohibits one from quartering guests in the homes of soldiers, priests, crown farmers, and workers in royal industries and limits the occupation of their unused property to half the space (P.Tebt. 5: ll. 168-77). This request to the *lesonis* is similar to one made later in 113 BC to the overseer of revenues in Kerkeosiris to prepare accommodation on behalf of a Roman dignitary as well as to prepare tours for him to the labyrinth, the crocodiles,

and to watch the performance of sacrifices. In Tebtunis in the third century BC, the *lesonis* may have had similar duties with respect to official visitors.

The primary role in which the *lesonis* functions in Tebtunis in the Ptolemaic period is as an administrator of temple resources. In a demotic contract (P.Cairo 30631) dated 86/85 BC the *lesonis* (*mr-šn*) together with the priests of Soknebtunis of the five phylai issue a lease of land on the estate of Soknebtunis. The land was administered by the temple but still subject to state taxes. The man receiving the land appears, by his name and titles, to be connected with the family discussed in chapter 4. There is no mention of him owing money to the priests, only that he was responsible for paying state taxes on the property. Below the text eighteen priests left their signatures. While the *lesonis* seems to have acted as the head of the group, it appears that other priests from each phyle also deliberated on the issue.

A fictional account of a similar scenario is presented in an early Roman demotic manuscript from Tebtunis (P.Petese.Tebt. A) with the story of Petese, which is found also in other manuscripts from the Ptolemaic period (Ryholt 1999: 91). Petese comes before an assembly of his fellow priests to ask for 500 silver-pieces to pay for his burial but, while the priests approve, the *lesonis* alone is able to block his request. Afterwards, Petese inflicts magic on the *lesonis* until he finally relents (Ryholt 1999: 75-78).

The procedure by which the *lesonis* was appointed in the Ptolemaic period remains obscure and the published Tebtunis texts have nothing new to add. The best evidence comes from the fifth century BC in Elephantine where the correspondence between the priests of Khnum and the Persian satrap reveals that the *lesonis* was elected (or re-elected) annually by the *w^cb*-priests (Martin 1996: 279-281, 289-295). He was also supposed to be approved by the satrap and to pay an induction fee

(Martin 1996: 279, 281). However, the Ptolemaic evidence from Elephantine seems to contradict these procedures, revealing that the *lesonis* (*mr-šn*) was appointed by the Chief of the Thebaid, a state official, and received orders from him concerning the collection of taxes and the transfer of payments from the temple to the royal treasury (P.Berlin 13543, 15522; Martin 1996 310-314). On the other hand, it is not fully clear whether this was actually an appointment by the Chief of the Thebaid or whether he was simply approving the priests selection as the Persian satrap had done previously (Martin 1996: 310 n. 1).

The ambiguity and scarcity of evidence concerning the tenure and appointment of the *lesonis* in the Ptolemaic period has led to some debate about his official standing. Whereas Wilken (1922: 44-45) maintained that the *lesonis*, unlike the ἐπιστάτης, was a priestly appointment, Thompson has suggested that the word ἐπιστάτης could equally be used to designate the *lesonis* whom she considered “a crown official with cult responsibilities rather than a priestly representative” (Thompson 1988: 112). Similarly, Bernard (1981a: 106-108) thought that both titles might be equivalent and argued that the *lesonis* was an administrator rather than a priest. Thompson notes that in the Memphis documents from the Serapeum a certain Archomarres, who was λεσῶνις in 165 BC, was called ἐπιστάτης three years later (Thompson 1988: 111). As was noted above the title ἐπιστάτης had the general meaning in Greek of “overseer” and did not correspond exactly to any Egyptian title.

Support for Thompson’s conclusion that the *lesonis* was not elected by the priests can be found in the evidence from Soknopaiou Nesos. A fictional dispute between the *lesonis* and the priests was already noted in the story of Petese (P.Petese.Tebt. A; Ryholt 1999). There are several instances of similar disagreements in Soknopaiou Nesos. For example, P.Ox.Griffith 39 is a report to the ἐπιστάτης of

the temples in the Arsinoite nome, informing him that the λεισῶνις had prevented the priests from carrying out their duties until he received payments from their performance of rites (*thb*) in the temple. In a Greek petition dated 132 BC (P.Amherst 35), the priests of the temple complain to the *strategos* about the conduct of the lesonis, Petesouchos son of Herieu, who was reported to have broken an oath he took when appointed to office by collecting taxes on the temple's estates in Dionysias (cf. Evans 1961: 186). Petesouchos was already attested as lesonis in the previous year 133 BC (P.Ox.Griffith 26). He continued to be lesonis in 131 BC (P.Ox.Griffith 41), which suggests that either his term was longer than one year or it was a royal appointment. He probably would have found it difficult to be elected three years running given his problems with the priesthood.

The uncertain loyalties and interests of the lesonis are illustrated by his role in the formulation of the trilingual synodal decrees. Each of these was called “a decree of the *mr-šn* priests and the *hm-ntr* priests ...” The Greek versions translate the title *mr-šn* as ἀρχιερεὺς or “high priest”. Traditionally these decrees have been interpreted within the framework of state versus temple with either side making concessions to the other. However, in a recent study Clarysse (1999) argues that this framework is not valid for Ptolemaic Egypt, where temple elites might simultaneously hold prominent positions in the royal administration (cf. Collombert 2000). Based on this understanding, it would seem incorrect to assume that “high priests” and other leading temple officials exclusively represented the interests of their temples and fellow priests.

Although the Tebtunis texts do not resolve these issues, they may reveal some insight into the social and economic activities of the some holders of the office. For example, a man with the title *mr-šn* appears as an ordinary member in the accounts of

an association in Tebtunis (P.Cairo 31179; P.Hamburg.dem.1; Cenival 1972). Moreover, in P.Cairo 30631, the lesonis of Soknebtunis has a string of titles that is peculiar to the family dossier discussed in chapter 4. Therefore, we will leave this discussion and return to it in the following chapters.

w^cb.w nti tw mnk md.t (βουλευτὰ ἱερεῖς): “counselor priests”

This group is known from Tebtunis primarily through three demotic texts documenting the admission of priests to the priesthood of Soknebtunis, two of which are very fragmentary (P.Cairo 31223; 50016). The most well preserved example is P.Merton.dem. I (Glaville 1933). The text states that the priests of Soknebtunis assembled in the court (*wshy*) of the house (i.e. the temple) and unanimously declared: “We are agreed upon Pakhes son of Paapis, that he shall be a *wḏ* priest of Soknebtunis. Year 29, Tobi 5 [Dec. 31, 142 BC].” There follow the names of the priests (*p3 rn n3 w^cb.w*) according to phyle with 2-3 names per phyle and 13 men in total. These men are called: *n3 w^cb.w nti tw mnk md.t p3 irpy hry* “the priests who decide matters (i.e. counselor priests) of the aforesaid temple.”

Several details about the organization of priests in Tebtunis emerge from this document. It suggests that the group was accustomed to meet together in the court of the temple. The meeting was attended by at least two members from each phyle who were called “counselor priests” and whose names were recorded in the document. These men seem to have constituted a governing body that convened notwithstanding the ordinary system of phyle rotation whereby one phyle was on duty during its month of service (Hickmann 1982).

The best evidence for organization and function of the counselor priests comes from the trilingual decrees. When Ptolemy Euergetes and his wife Berenice created

the new fifth phyle in the Canopus decree (238 BC), the text also said: “instead of twenty counselor priests who are chosen each year from the four phylai which used to exist, (and) from which used to be taken five men from each phyle, there should be twenty-five ^{counselor} priests: the five who will be added are to be taken from the Fifth Phyle” (demotic version; Simpson 1996: 231). There the demotic phrase, *w^rb.w nti iw mnk md.t*, was translated into Greek as βουλευτὰ ἱερεῖς (Spiegelberg 1922: 70, 76). The group of twenty-five counselor priests is attested in Memphis where they give orders concerning the investigation of abuses in the Thoth-Ibis cult (Ray 1976; texts 19 and 21).

The Tebtunis texts admitting new priests seem to differ from the regulation in the Canopus decree by having only two or three *counselor* priests per phyle (13 in total) rather than five per phyle. The easiest solution is to assume that only some of the counselor priests at Tebtunis were present or were required to sign. On the other hand, it is plausible that the number of counselor priests was proportional to the size of the temple. Since the evidence for counselor priests comes mainly from Memphis and the Canopus decree, it is not possible to say with certainty that the council at Tebtunis should have had twenty-five priests, though the decree suggests it was universal.

Besides their role in the admission of a new priest, the Tebtunis texts reveal little information about the function of the counselor priests in the Ptolemaic period. Moreover, it is not altogether clear by what process the new priest was selected. It was often the case in *Egypt* that priestly offices were inherited or purchased but it seems in this case that the counselor priests were at least required to agree upon the admission. That the counselor priests were also active in other areas of temple administration such as the distribution of offerings is suggested by the Canopus

decree: “whereas the offerings are given to the priests from the temples when they are made priests, let the share be given to the female children of the priests, from the day on which they will be born, from the endowment of the gods, according to the share which the counselor priests in each of the temples are to determine in proportion to the endowment” (demotic version; Simpson 1996: 241). This is an issue which deserves further comment in the next section where the role of the priests in temple administration is considered.

w^cb.w (*n p3 5 s3.w*); (ιερεῖς) “priests (of the five phylai)”

The administrative body to which most demotic and Greek texts refer is called simply, “the priests of Soknebtunis” or just “the priests of Tebtunis”. Occasionally, this group is further classified as “of the five phylai.” The vague demotic usage finds its parallel in the Greek rendering *ιερεῖς*, which likewise is too general to form solid conclusions about the status or organization of this body. Scholars continue to maintain that *w^cb*-priest was ^α_λ specific type of priest who was hierarchically inferior to others such as the *hm-ntr* priest (προφήτης) (Lloyd 1976: 169-170). However, this distinction does not seem to exist in the Ptolemaic period.

In demotic texts, “*w^cb*-priest” was used generically to describe many kinds of specific positions within the temple. This is well illustrated in the opening lines of the synodal decrees where the term *w^cb*-priest is used to describe all types of priest who come to the synod and is used throughout the decrees in the same generic sense (Simpson 1996: 224ff.). Similarly, in an unpublished demotic text from Tebtunis (P.BM. 10647), there is a column listing “the *w^cb*-priests who act as *w^cb* priest”; under that column several men hold the title *hm-ntr*.

The *w^cb*-priests were divided into five phylai for rotation in the service of the temple (Hickmann 1982). The position of phylarch (*ʿ3 n s3*) or leader of a phyle was described in the Canopus decree but the only attestation at Tebtunis (Glanville 1933: 37 n. 10) is extremely doubtful. Glanville was confident about the reading despite the mere trace of a vertical stroke appearing. He was aware that if it were correct then the phylarch would seem not to be at the head of each phyle as described in the Canopus decree but in charge of the entire temple. A cramped writing of *nti ir sh n3 w^cb.w* “who keeps the priests’ records” might fit the space and the traces. A man of the same name is referred to later in the text with that title.

Each phyle could evidently perform some administrative functions independently. This seems to be the case in P.Cairo 30611 where the priests of the fifth phyle in Tebtunis made out a lease to four men for control of their purification rites of the fifth phyle (*thb n s3 5*) and of their shares to temple income for one month of service. The translation the “fifth phyle” is in opposition to Spiegelberg (1908: 38) who translated “Die Priester der 5 Phylen.” Like the Canopus decree, the Tebtunis texts distinguish “the fifth phyle” (*s3 5*) from “the five phylai” (*p3 5 n s3.w*) (Simpson 1996: 43, 83-4, 228-231). In this text the singular is used whereas in P.Cairo 30631 it is the plural (cf. example in Zauzich 1977: 158).

This lease of control over purification rites recalls one of the regulations concerning the creation of the fifth phyle stated in the Canopus decree: “those who are in the Fifth Phyle (*s3 5*), of the Beneficent Gods, should have a share in the purification rites (*thb*) and all the rest of the things which are in the temples” (demotic version; Simpson 1996: 231). At the bottom of the text (P.Cairo 30611) are the signatures of eight men, apparently all priests of the fifth phyle.

Holding a priesthood was a form of property from which they derived income and which could be also leased. There are several demotic texts from Soknopaiou Nesos that indicate that the priests handed over a portion of these revenues as “fees of the phylai” (*n3 hj.w p3 s3.w*) for the “treasury of the temple of Soknopaiou,” apparently managed by the *lesonis* through his agent (P.Ox.Griffith 14). In one instance the *lesonis* ran into conflict with the priests extracting their revenue (P.Ox.Griffith 39).

When they leased their offices as in P.Cairo 30611 or when they were not on rotation, priests of Soknebtunis may have engaged in private activities. Some managed their private estates, for example, as royal farmers (P.Tebt. 42), farmed taxes (P.Tebt. 281), or took positions in the state administration or in other temples (for Roman Tebtunis, cf. Melaerts 2000: 242-3). In the unpublished roster of priests from Tebtunis mentioned above (P.BM 10647), priests of Soknebtunis were registered according to phyle, with 4 to 9 men in each, apparently for service to another Sobk-god, probably Sokonopis (cf. Clarysse 1987: 22). If Clarysse is correct to distinguish abbreviated writings of *Sbk-hꜥpj* “Sokonopis” from *Sbk-m-hb*, then the god Sokonopis, who was already attested in Soknopaiou Nesos (P.Ox.Griffith 58), also appears in the rules of a cult association from Tebtunis whose members were supposed to meet during his procession (P.Cairo 30619, l. 5; *Sbk-m-hb*, *de (re)vis* 1972: 99 n. 5,2; cf. Clarysse 1987: 22; *NB* 918-19).

The collective body of the five phylai of *wꜥb*-priests, or *ιερεῖς* in Greek texts, managed affairs of the temple with the government or individuals and sent or received correspondence for the temple. This is evident in, for example, the title of the *ἐπιστάτης* in P.Cairo 30629 where he is called “the man who investigates the priests (*wꜥb.w*) of the temple of Tebtunis.” It is also evident in a demotic text where a singer

swears an oath to return the harp of Soknebtunis to the temple of Soknebtunis and into the hands of the priests (*w^cb.w*) (P.Berlin 13637; Erichsen 1938). Greek letters might also be sent to the temple of Soknebtunis addressed simply τοῖς ἐν Τεπτόναι ἱερεῦσι, “to the priests in Tebtunis” as in a letter of man declaring his “hereditary friendship” (πατρικὴ φιλία) to the temple (P.Tebt. 59; 99 BC) or in another letter apparently concerning a matter between the temple and the nome *strategos* (P.Haun. 11; third cent. BC). Temple administration documents, including receipts, contracts, and reports, such as those of Soknopaiou Nesos were regularly issued by the priests or addressed to them collectively (Bresciani 1975: *passim*); documents of this kind from Tebtunis are due to be published (cf. Grimal 1996: 534).

References to the priests are common but it remains to be proven how this collective body deliberated in practice. Although the priests continued to be divided into phylai, which probably served in the temple for monthly rotations, the phylai appear to act in concert on matters of temple administration. In the lease contract P.Cairo 30631, mentioned above, the lesonis (*mr-šn*) and the priests (*w^cb.w*) of Soknebtunis of the five phylai issue a lease of a plot of land located on the temple estate of Soknebtunis to a man connected with the family discussed in chapter 4. Below the contract are eighteen signatures, evidently all priests of Soknebtunis, with the signatures of four witnesses on the reverse. The number of priests who signed has no discernable significance as it was common at Tebtunis for priests to sign such contracts though the number of signatures varies (cf. two similar Roman period demotic receipts: 20 signatures in P.Mil.Vogl. III dem. 2; 12 or more signatures in P.Mich. 342).

It is conceivable that the counselor priests, discussed in the previous section, constituted the administrative body that made these decisions and signed such

documents. In that case, one would have to suppose that references to the “priests” (*w^cb.w*) in administrative documents was simply shorthand for the “counselor priests” (*w^cb.w nti mnk mt*). This suggestion can only be considered hypothetical as there is too little known about the function of counselor priests to determine whether they were exclusively responsible for such decisions. The general absence of any reference to them gives the impression of a larger participation among priests in the administration of the temple.

hm-ntr (προφήτης): “divine servant”

The title *hm-ntr* does not often appear in the Ptolemaic papyri from Tebtunis. Its main occurrences are in the lists of membership for cult associations discussed in the following chapter. The implications of the membership of these priests for our understanding of the character of these associations will be explored there in fuller detail. However, it is necessary to point out in what other activities the *hm-ntr* priests were active.

The number of examples of the title in documentary from Tebtunis will probably increase once the unpublished papyri become available. We have seen already that the “man who investigates the priests of Tebtunis” was also titled *hm-ntr* of Isis (P.Cairo 30629). Since it is likely that this official assumed authority over all temples in the Arsinoite nome as the Soknopaiou Nesos texts suggest (e.g. P.Ox.Griffith 39), there is no reason to assume that this man held the title of prophet at a temple in Tebtunis. One does find a prophet of Sobk in a Tebtunis papyrus (P.Tebt.258) where he seems to give orders to the *ἱβι n3 ntr.w Sbk* “bearers of the gods of Sobk,” adding a command at the end at the end: *bn-iw=tn n^cn md.t p3 ἱβ* “you shall not refuse anything at all.” In the roster of priests mentioned above (P.BM

10647 unpubl.) there are apparently several *hm-ntr* priests listed under a column headed, “the priests who act as priests of Sokonopis,” and another prophet listed with a few other names on the opposite side.

One rather illuminating text (P.Carlsberg 21) for the activities of a *hm-ntr* priest at Tebtunis is a letter between two “book friends” from the second or first century BC. Miysis son of Haryothes writes to Phanesis son of Onnophris, the *hm-ntr* of Thoth. He writes that he has made his brother, Horos son of Marres, bring back the two medical papyrus-books, which the prophet had previously given him. This text suggests that the prophet of Thoth was part of the literary community in Tebtunis. This would perhaps be appropriate for a prophet of Thoth since he was the god most associated with this tradition. Tebtunis in the early Roman period provides some good examples of such medical papyri (P.Tebt.Tait 18-20, 40-44; Tait 1991b; Hanson 2000).

The title *hm-ntr* was generally associated with leading priests in temples throughout Egypt. The three trilingual decrees of Canopus, Memphis, and Raphia were each called “a decree of the *mr-šn* and *hm-ntr* priests” as well as other priests (Canopus, demotic version, Simpson 1996: 225). The Greek versions of those decrees translate *hm-ntr* as *προφήτης* (Spiegelberg 1922). The word Greek word *προφήτης* is used very frequently in the papyri in connection with Egyptian temples but it may be misleading to interpret it as a rendering of *hm-ntr* in each case. Prophets were predominately leading members of Egyptian temples (Otto 1905: 79-83). Those who held the title often possessed many other important state and temple positions and could amass considerable wealth (Pros. Ptol. III 5425-5919). The Greek title could also designate personnel in small village shrines or minor sanctuaries (Crawford 1971: 91 n. 5).

Among the many distinctive titles that recur in the dossier discussed in chapter 4, is the title *m-ntry*, which some scholars have compared with *hm-ntr*. This title appears jointly with the slightly more familiar title *rp^cj* “prince, nobleman” (Gardiner 1947: 14-19). The title *m-ntry* was unknown to the original editor and has only been found to occur at Tebtunis and Soknopaiou Nesos. The reading is partly based on the Greek transliteration ἐμνεΐθης appearing in a text from Soknopaiou Nesos (P.BM 262; Reich 1910/1911; re-edited by Schentuleit forthcoming). Quaegebeur has interpreted it as a phonetic writing of *hm-N.t* “prophet of Neith” (see *m-ntry* in *CDD* forthcoming; cf. Quaegebeur 1975: 117-8; Schentuleit forthcoming). While this may appear to fit the context at Soknopaiou Nesos where the title appears alone, the interpretation does not seem valid for Tebtunis where the title is connected specifically with the royal cult by direct genitive (P.Cairo 34662). In this case, a phonetic writing of *hm-ntr* might seem more appropriate and must be examined further in chapter 4.

***ἔβι ν3 ntr.w* (θεαγοί): “the bearers of the gods”**

The demotic title *ἔβι ν3 ntr.w* “bearer of the gods” is attested in several Ptolemaic texts from Tebtunis. A group of *ἔβι ν3 ntr.w* appears twice in an entry with payment, along with priests of Soknebtunis and others, in a temple account that has not been completely deciphered (P.Carlsberg 473 unpubl.). The most informative demotic examples are luckily those for which photographs are available: P.Cairo 30629 and P.Tebt 258 (unpublished: photo on-line at *APIS*).

The text P.Cairo 30629 belongs to the family dossier discussed in chapter 4. Evidently, it records an offering to Soknebtunis by a man, Onnophris son of Phanesis, whose titles connect him with the dossier discussed in chapter 4 (see appendix 1).

The recipients were: two farmers (*wj^c*), one of whom was a servant (*b3k*) of Sobk and the “overseer of work” (*mr-wp.t*), two “bearers of the gods” (*t3i n3 ntr.w*), and the “elders” (*hm-^c3*) of the village *Pr-grg*, located near Tebtunis (instead of ...-*Sbk*, Spiegelberg 1908: 77; cf. writing in P.Mil.Vogl. III dem. 1; Pestman 1965: 175).

Though the editor misunderstood the text and did not translate it, the following may be considered a provisional rendering: “I (Onnophris) recognize my obligation to give you 36 talents, its half is 18, makes 36 talents again for the income of the village and its sacred bark and(?) another year of work(?) of the farmers as an offering before Soknebtunis, the great god ... 12 months at the rate of 3 talents for each month” (my trans.). The sum of money, 36 talents, is a considerable amount. The abbreviated writing *kl(kl)* “talent” seems certain. It was not in the *Glossar* but examples are cited in the on-line entry of *CDD*. Moreover, the writing is similar throughout this dossier (cf. P.Cairo 30613 l. 22; 30615 l. 22; 30631 l. 19; 31079 l. 22). Though the other readings could be substantially improved, if the interpretation is at least partially correct it would seem to indicate that some of the income to the *t3i n3 ntr.w* for carrying the sacred bark (*skt*) came from this offering (*hnk*).

The connection between the “bearers of the gods” *t3i n3 ntr.w* and the farmers (*wj^c.w*) is also apparent in an unpublished demotic text from Tebtunis (P.Tebt. 258). The text itself, dated by paleography to the second century BC, comes from a crocodile mummy and was accompanied by several unrelated Greek texts, one of which looks to have come from Kerkeosiris (P.Tebt. 56; crocodile 5). The demotic text is a letter addressed to the *t3i n3 ntr.w* of Sobk and was written by the prophet (*hm-ntr*) of Sobk. The text appears to order them “to go before the farmers of the village.” It ends by ordering them: *bn-iw=tn ʿn^cn md.t p3 t3* “you shall not refuse

anything at all.” However, since the readings and interpretation of the text are incomplete, no firm conclusions can be drawn from it.

In addition to demotic examples, the title appears to have been translated *θεαγός*, appearing in Greek documents (Dils 1995: 153). That a *theagos* could also be a royal farmer at Tebtunis is shown by a very fragmentary petition from the second century BC (P.Tebt. 132). Moreover, one *theagos* was registered as a member of an association in Tebtunis. He is the only man whose title was given; all of the members had apparently Egyptian names. This association appears to have been organized differently from the contemporary associations known from the demotic rules. Here the group was headed by about five or six *archai* who may have been elected annually (P.Tebt. 894; Hunt et al. 1938: 170).

In his article about the status of the *theagoi* in Egypt, Dils (1995) assembles all forty-seven occurrences of this title known to him in both Egyptian and Greek, expanding on an earlier article by Jan Quaegebeur (1984). He gives one example from the Ptolemaic period where the *theagos* is also called a *w^cb*-priest, possibly at Tebtunis: “bearer of the gods of Sobk in the necropolis of the crocodiles, *w^cb*-priest of Tebtunis(?) of the temple of Pnepheros, the great god” (P.dem.Michigan inv. no. 4244 unpubl.: Heliopolis in the Fayum, II cen. BC; Dils 1995: 156, 160). There is also an example from Kerkeosiris where a man inherited the position of prophet of Thoeris from his father who was also a *theagos* of Thoeris (Crawford 1971: 91)

Citing a Roman document (P.Stras. VI 770: Magdola) dated to the second century AD, which evidently lists *theagoi* and *ιερεῖς* separately, Dils argues that the *theagoi* belonged to an inferior rank of the priesthood. In the Roman texts, he suggests, the title seems closely associated with other inferior status groups, the

hieromenoi and the *pastophoroi*. However, attempting to fit priests into a hierarchy based on evidence from the Roman period is problematic (Glare 1993: 89-90).

There are several indications that the *theagoi* did not have an inferior status to *w^cb*-priests. In the Middle Kingdom, the priests in the Theban area who carried image of the god Amenophis in processions were *w^cb*-priests and were accompanied by *hm-ntr* priests (Cerný 1927: 193). Dils acknowledges that in the Roman period *theagoi* underwent the same admission procedures as other priests, with an *epikrasis* or examination to gain permission for circumcision from the *archiereus* in Alexandria (Dils 1995: 161; Glare 1993: 50-3). A Roman document from Tebtunis (BGU 1023) suggests that there was a temple of Sokopichonsis (“Sobk of Chons”; Rübsam 1974: 184) in Tebtunis where all of the priests were titled *theagoi* and submitted their report to the government like other priests (Grenfell et al. 1907: 55; cf. P.Tebt. 298). This document has been misleadingly presented as evidence that *theagoi* were excluded from regular priests in their dealings with the government (Dils 1995: 162).

Following the view that cult service in Egypt was simply a form of property, which could be accumulated for profit, the title *theagos* probably did not correspond to a rank within a temple hierarchy (Glare 1993: 89-90, 94-7; Rostovtzeff 1909: 617-8). The demotic text mentioned above (P.Mich. unpubl. 4244; Dils 1995: 167, text 15) shows that a *theagos* could at the same time be a *w^cb*-priest, an *isionomos* in the sanctuary of Isis, and also a writer of demotic contracts. One *theagos* in the Roman period even amassed enough wealth to take over the expensive liturgy of komarch, the head of the village administration (Dils 1995: 169). These details cast doubt on the thesis that a *theagos* was a lower ranking priest and suggest that they might even obtain considerable wealth and status. In chapter 3 it will be necessary to return to this discussion and to consider the arguments put by Quaegebeur (1984), Dils (1995),

Verhoogt (1998), and Muhs (2001) that *theagoi* constituted the membership of the cult associations in Tebtunis that are known from the demotic texts.

imi-wnw.t n hwt-ntr (ἄστρολόγος): “astronomer of the temple”

This Egyptian title occurs in connection with a scribal family associated with the temple of Soknebtunis. The texts where they appear belong to the dossier discussed in chapter 4. At the end of a marriage contract (P.Cairo 30607), dated 129/8 BC, the scribe calls himself: “the astronomer (*imi-wnw.t*) of the temple of Tebtunis, Haryothes son of Harmiysis.” In 124/3 BC (P.Cairo 30608-9) he drew up another contract for the same man. Thirty years later, in 94/3 (P.Cairo 30613), the same astronomer of the temple, Haryothes son of Harmiysis, drew up a contract for the lease of land on the temple estate of Soknebtunis. It is likely that his son was working as a scribe at this time since in 100/99 BC a man named Harmiysis son of Haryothes wrote the contract for the sale of liturgy days in the chapel of Isis-Thermuthis; he was still active in 79/8 BC (P.Cairo 30615-6). Meanwhile, in 94/3 BC (P.Cairo 30613) and again in 89/88 BC (P.Cairo 30614), another man, Haryothes son of Harmiysis acted as a scribe; he is perhaps the brother of Harmiysis and the son of the astronomer of the temple.

There is a strong likelihood that these three men are related. They are the only people known to act as scribes in the dossier and their names hardly appear outside of this context. The individuals for whom they make contracts belong to the same family or to their associates appearing in the dossier that was probably found within the temple of Soknebtunis. The details of the dossier and the family’s business dealings are discussed in chapter 4.

Haryothes son of Harmiysis, the astronomer of the temple

129/8 BC P.Cairo 30607
124/3 BC P.Cairo 30608/9
120/19 BC P.Cairo 30628
106/5 BC P.Cairo 31079
106/5 BC P.Cairo 31254
94/3 BC P.Cairo 30613

Harmiysis son of Haryothes
c. 100 BC P.Tebt. 42
100/99 BC P.Cairo 30620
79/8 BC P.Cairo 30615-6

Haryothes son of Haryothes
89/8 BC P.Cairo 30614

The same Harmiysis son of Haryothes probably also held the title συναλλαγματογράφος “writer of contracts” in Tebtunis. This is suggested by a petition to the *strategos* by Marres son of Marseisouchos, a priest of Soknebtunis and a royal farmer (P.Tebt. 42; end of second century BC by handwriting; the reading Marseisouchos was corrected by Zauzich; cf. on-line APIS entry for P.Tebt. 42.). He complains that Harmiysis, the συναλλαγματογράφος, cheated him by conspiring with the man leasing his land to record a lower payment on the contract. Grenfell and Hunt’s comment about the find-spot is revealing: “The papyrus ... was found together with several demotic rolls (now at Cairo) in a house within the temple area at Tebtunis” (Grenfell and Hunt 1902: 145). The demotic rolls were probably among those published by Spiegelberg and therefore probably belong to the dossier. Since Harmiysis and his brother Haryothes were the only scribes active in the dossier at the time it was likely that this was the man in question.

It may seem surprising that the *imi-wnw n hwt-ntr* “astronomer of the temple” and his family would be so involved in writing business contracts in the temple of Soknebtunis. The title is mainly associated with the special priests who recorded astronomical observations (Gardiner 1947: 61-3; Otto 1905: 89ff.; Vitmann 1998:

507). These priests were probably trained in hieratic and hieroglyphic writing in addition to demotic.

***sh mdy.t-ntr* “scribe of divine books”**

The scribe with this title appears only once in the papyri from Ptolemaic Tebtunis. He was the recipient of a letter (P.Carlsberg 22; Zauzich 2000), dating to the second or first century BC, which mentions him in the address only by his title perhaps implying there was only one “scribe of the divine books”. The name of the sender is not intact but the subject of the letter is a papyrus scroll. Everything about the document, including the formal greeting, resembles a similar demotic letter, mentioned above, to the prophet of Thoth concerning his medical papyri (P.Carlsberg 21; Zauzich 2000).

The scribe of the divine books was the one mainly responsible for writing literary and religious texts in demotic, hieratic, and hieroglyphic (Otto 1905: 75-94). The publication of new demotic texts over the past century, particularly literary and sub-literary material such as legal manuals, has greatly improved our understanding of the role of the “scribe of divine books” and the range of his activities (Quaegebeur 1981: 232-234). The evidence has clarified his connection with institution of Egyptian learning, the “house of life” (Quaegebeur 1981; Osing 1998: 19-23; 1999; Gardiner 1938).

***(p3) nti tr n3 sh.w n3 w^cb.w* “the one who keeps the records of the priests”**

This title, found just twice in the Tebtunis papyri (P.Merton.dem. 1; Glaville 1933; and P.BM 10647 unpubl.), apparently refers to the man who was in charge of handling official documents and correspondence for the priests of Soknebtunis. It

does not come as much surprise to find an official in charge of this activity. The body of priests acting collectively managed temple finances, land, and administration. They would have required scribes to manage the documents but his title need not correspond to any rank in a supposed temple hierarchy.

***ḥtmw-ntr wyt*: “god’s sealer and embalmer”**

The mortuary priests are one group that is not well attested at Tebtunis. There is nothing like the abundant archives from Memphis and Hawara. However, there is one example of a document from Tebtunis (P.Cairo 30623; early Ptolemaic) where one party bears the well-known title *ḥtmw-ntr wyt*, “god’s sealer and embalmer” (Vittman 1986). Though fragmentary, this was evidently a contract for the sale of a house between the daughter of the man so-titled and another person whose grandfather was a priest of Soknebtunis.

The archive from Memphis described by Thompson (1988: 155-189) reveals rich genealogical information about the family of embalmers and *choachytai* (the related profession of making offerings to the dead). The family appears remarkably intertwined with members from the same professional and social class. The income of such families at Memphis came largely from their control over the burial rites and the resulting compensation (Thompson 1988: 166ff.). The embalmers in Hawara were similarly tied by marriage as well as by professional associations to families with the same occupation and titles, relating to the mummification and maintenance of the dead (Reymond 1973: 23-39, 126-136; Hughes and Jasnow 1997: 12; cf. Lüddeckens 1998).

***b3k (n Sbk)* (*hierodoulos*): “slave/servant (of Sobk)”**

The title *b3k* “slave/servant”, usually followed by a divine name such as Sobk, was common in Tebtunis and elsewhere in Egypt but its interpretation is problematic. Partly the difficulties result from the same word being used in several contexts tempting scholars to relate them and to define *b3k* as a social status. There are three main usages of the word *b3k* that are considered here: (1) in self-dedication texts; (2) in oracular texts; and (3) in association with someone’s name and profession.

The first group, self-dedication texts, constitutes about forty or more documents from Tebtunis, most of which are unpublished. The Tebtunis texts seem to have formed an archive as nearly all of them came to the market together in about 1930 after being found by local diggers, presumably in the temple area where the Italian expedition in the 1930s discovered two more (P.Mil.Vogliano III.dem.3-4). Besides one text in the collection of King Fouad (Chauveau 1991) and the two in Milan, the archive is divided between the British Museum and the Carsten Niebuhr Institute in Copenhagen and is being prepared for publication by John Tait and Kim Ryholt (Thompson 1940; Tait 1995). Two examples were published by Thompson (1940) and two by Bresciani (1965). Besides at Tebtunis, self-dedication texts are extremely rare: there is just one from Soknopaiou Nesos (P.Ox.Griffith 57) and one from Philadelphia (Clarysse 1988).

The self-dedication texts from Tebtunis are contracts made out by an individual, either male or female, to the god Soknebtunis. The individuals were sometimes already designated as *b3k* or *b3k.t* “man slave or woman slave” or might often be designated *hr-ḥwt ms ḥ-nmḥ* “free-born youth” or “born in the temple precincts” (Thompson 1940: 68). It is unusual that so many people in the Tebtunis archive have unknown paternity. However, Thompson’s view that they were the children of temple prostitutes has little to recommend it. Unknown paternity may

arise for a variety of circumstances and there is no reason to suppose that all instances, such as those among the priests at Bacchias designated *apatōr* (Gilliam 1949), should be interpreted this way.

Some self-dedication texts were written on the same papyrus sheet suggesting that they were kept together by the priests in the temple where they were presumably found together (for an example, cf. Bresciani 1965). The formula of the text could be abbreviated but basically followed this example:

Has said (so-and-so) before my master (*hry*) Soknebtunis, the great god: 'I am thy servant (*b3k*) together with my children (and) my children's children; I shall not be able to be free in thy precincts for ever and ever. Thou shalt protect me, thou shalt keep me safe, thou shalt guard me, thou shalt keep me sound...

The texts continue by saying that the god shall protect him or her from a list of different malevolent influences, such as spirits, dead men, sleeping men, pestilence, etc. The text closes with the declaration of his or her monthly payment (a small sum, less than two kite), which he or she promises to pay to the god's priests for 99 years (or forever) as his *škr b3k* "rent of service" (P.BM 10622; Thompson 1940).

While there is much to learn from this archive, the status of individuals who proclaim themselves to be a servant (*b3k*) of Soknebtunis in this manner remains deeply obscure. Evans (1961: 233-6) makes the interesting suggestion that self-dedication was one variety of temple patronage whereby the monthly payments to the god were pious offerings donated to the temple (*κατ' εὐσέβειαν*) simply for spiritual protection. He considers these patrons to be the same as those who bear the title with their profession in other documentary texts. Other scholars have taken the statement that the *b3k* "shall not be able to be free in thy precincts" and the designation of some individuals "born in the temple precincts" to mean that he or she was forced to remain at all times within the temple enclosure (Thompson 1940: 68; Manning 1994: 161, 166 n. 107). According to this view they probably received some kind of additional

social or economic support in exchange for their monthly payment (Manning 1994: 161).

However, there is nothing in the texts that certainly confirms that the *b3k* was not able to leave the temple. The meaning of the term *nmh* “free” may simply mean “unhindered” in the sense of being able to use property without restrictions (Manning 1994: 159). Therefore, the self-dedication texts may only indicate that the *b3k* was not “unhindered” in the temple in the sense that he had certain obligations to the god. Moreover, one might expect the *b3k* to engage in at least enough activity to pay the priests in the temple his monthly fee as well as to have and raise children who would evidently inherit his or her status.

The second context in which the term *b3k* must be considered is in oracular questions. In a unique demotic text (P.Cairo 31312; II cen. BC; Bresciani et al. 1979; cf. Zauzich 2000a), which closely resembles a letter to god, a man addresses Soknebtunis: “Oh my great lord (*nb*), oh Soknebtunis, I am your servant (*b3k*). Do not dismiss me. I am miserable. Do not throw me on the street” (*my trans.*). The statement, “I am your servant,” may simply be a reference to one’s piety rather than a particular social status. Similar declarations are found frequently in oracle questions where the relationship between the questioner and the god was generally framed as that between servant (*b3k*) and master (*hry*) or lord (*nb*) (cf. P.Ox.Griffith 1-12; Botti 1955; Zauzich 2000a).

The employment of “servant” and “master” in oracular texts is the same as one finds in the self-dedications. This prompts one to consider whether in fact the procedure of self-dedication at Tebtunis was a local innovation (in the Fayum region) to formalize this relationship. Thus one would expect that the payments to the god’s

priests were in exchange for spiritual protection and not for another economic compensation.

The final context in which to consider the term *b3k* is in association with the name and profession of individuals in contracts. There are several examples in the demotic texts from Tebtunis. One previously mentioned text (P.Cairo 30625) is the promise to pay 36 talents, at a rate of 3 per month, to the farmers, *theagoi*, and village elders. The first farmer is called “servant (*b3k*) of Sobk” in addition to having the title “overseer of work.” Since the money is called an offering (*hmk*) before Soknebtunis, it is likely that they were involved somehow in the service of the temple (as the reference to *theagoi* would also imply).

In the property settlement after his marriage (P.Cairo 30616), another “servant of Sobk” who carries the title “overseer of canals” receives the revenues from his wife that derive from offerings and liturgy days in the temple. Though Spiegelberg regarded the office of “overseer of canals” as an important one, Lüddeckens argued: “Das halte ich für sehr unwahrscheinlich wegen der Verbingdung mit dem Titel *bk*, der doch wohl nur ein untergeordnetes Dienstverhältnis bezeichnet” (Lüddeckens 1960: 243 n. 1). From these texts a temple connection might be guessed but for other instances at Tebtunis the connection is difficult to determine on account of their fragmentary state or the unrelated business discussed in the texts (Ptolemaic examples include P.Cairo 30604, 30694, 30621, 50019).

The title occurs in dozens of other texts, both in the Fayum and in Upper Egypt (listed in Manning 1994). Some connection with the temple, either as farmers on temple land or as workers in industries related to the temple such as embalmers, is not uncommon when it can be determined. The recent study by Manning (1994) argues that, while the title holders are not to be identified with the institution of self-

dedication, the titles probably reflect a specific status in relation to the temple. Comparing the title with its pharaonic antecedent *b3k n Pr-ꜥ3* “servant of Pharaoh” and the Greek title *basilikos georgos*, which was common in the Ptolemaic period, Manning suggests that “occupation + *b3k* + divine name” was the temple equivalent for this kind of status (Manning 1994: 167). This suggestion remains plausible though the lack of evidence prohibits any confident judgment.

2.3 Priests and Temple Administration

The cult of Soknebtunis, the local manifestation of Sobk, dominated the village physically with its immense temple and also socially through its religious and economic activities. In addition, there were minor cults and sanctuaries of other Egyptian gods both within the enclosure of the temple of Soknebtunis and in the surrounding community. Such minor cults are integral to understanding the temple and priests of Soknebtunis. In Ptolemaic Egypt, holding a priestly title for a god did not exclude one from serving in another capacity or in another sanctuary for another god. One must above all think of Egyptian priesthoods as a form of property from which one could derive income and which one could inherit, buy, sell, and lease (Glare 1993: 89-90, 94-97; Rostovtzeff 1909: 617-8). The income from priestly offices was earned from shares of the offerings people made to the temple and from other revenue that accrued to the temple.

It was frequent throughout Egyptian history, especially in the late period, for wealthy Egyptians to accumulate several priesthoods as well as other civic or temple offices that might demand service periodically in exchange for income. A famous account of the struggle for rights of inheritance to various priestly revenues is presented in the petition of Petese from the Persian period (P.Rylands 9; Vittman

1998). Petese complained that other priests had taken his place and prevented him from performing his services and gaining revenues in the temple. That similar struggles could occur in the Ptolemaic period is well illustrated by a royal decree found at Tebtunis issued in response to a complaint by a temple: “others try to mix themselves up with the revenues and lay hands upon them and inhabit the temple contrary to custom” (P.Tebt. 6). The decree prohibits such activity and orders that the priests must not be hindered in receipt of their revenues.

Such royal decrees found among the papyri at Tebtunis provide important evidence for temple administration in the Ptolemaic period. One decree (P.Tebt. 5: 118 BC) concerning temples guarantees that temples continue to receive sacred revenues (*hierai prosodoi*), tithes (*apomoira*) on land and gardens, and the stipend (*syntaxis*) from the government (ll. 50-6); protects priests’ rights to temple land administration and to sacred revenues (*ierai prosodoi*), making donations tax-free (ll. 57-61); remits arrears of *epistatikon* tax and of woven cloths to the *epistatai* of temples, *archieis*, and priests (ll. 62-4); remits arrears of revenues (*karpeiai*) and penalties for acquiring too many to those holding privileged offices (*gera*) or posts as prophet or scribe or other sacred offices (*leitougiai*) in the temple (ll. 65-72); and assures that temples keep privileged offices (*gera*) and posts as prophet or scribe that they have purchased but prohibits priests from transferring them (ll. 77-82). This information about temple finance from this decree corresponds to some of the evidence from the temple of Soknebtunis.

The sacred revenues might have included the tax due to the temple on the sale of houses and vacant spaces in Tebtunis. A Greek receipt for this tax was issued in 125 BC to a priest of Soknebtunis for the tax of 1/10 “due to the temple from acquirers of houses and spaces” (P.Tebt. 281). This tax was in addition to the

enkyklion tax due to the government (P.Tebt. 280). The two receipts were reportedly found “rolled up inside the demotic contract to which they refer” (Grenfell et al. 1907: 37) but in fact this document concerns the sale of liturgy days in the chapel of Isis-Tharmuthis (P.Cairo 30620). This particular temple tax is attested elsewhere both before and after the Ptolemaic period (Evans 1961: 223) and also appears in some receipts from the later Roman period at Tebtunis (P.Mich 342; P.Carlsberg 431-432 unpubl.).

The temple of Soknebtunis probably also received a stipend (*syntaxis*) from the government (Otto 1905: 366-384). There is a little known dossier of demotic texts from an oil merchant in Tebtunis during the third century BC (Spiegelberg 1908: 261). In his occasional dealings with the royal administration (e.g. P.Cairo 31225), there is one text (P.Cairo 31219) that mentions a *syntaxis* being paid in oil; apparently the merchant was in charge of its delivery. Others have suggested that this payment was being delivered as the *syntaxis* to the temple in Tebtunis (Spiegelberg 1908: 308; Thompson 1988: 110 n. 19). However, the term *syntaxis* was also used of the tax paid by certain professions to the government, which seems to be the most likely interpretation in this case (cf. P.Tebt. 840, 841, 995, 996).

Land was held by the temple of Soknebtunis, from which it was entitled to derive income as the royal decree confirms. A group of Egyptian soldiers in enrolled under the command of the *λαρόρχης*, Chomenis, donated to the temple of Soknebtunis a large plot of land, 131 arouras, which was almost as large as the largest temple estate in Kerkeosiris, 141 ½ arouras of Souchos (P.Tebt. 60; Keenan and Shelton 1976: 12-13; Evans 1961: 240ff.). A petition from the early Roman period suggests that the temple of Soknebtunis had once held a total of 500 ¼ arouras in Tebtunis

itself (P.Tebt. 302) but it is not clear whether this was ^{the} total amount ^{held} it throughout the Ptolemaic period.

The status and procedures of temple land administration at Tebtunis are still obscure. The land held by the temple of Soknebtunis in Kerkeosiris was reportedly either cultivated by the priests themselves or leased out to others whose connection to the temple is not apparent (P.Tebt. 63; Keenan and Shelton 1976: 13). According to Manning, the demotic term *htp-ntr* or “divine endowment” corresponds to the Greek *hiera prosodos* as in the decree mentioned above (P.Tebt. 6), which he translates as “revenue-producing land” (Manning 1997: 25 n. 11). There is one demotic text from Tebtunis (P.Cairo 30631) recording the lease of land on the estate of Soknebtunis (*htp-ntr*) issued by Isonis and the priests of the five phylai to a person connected with the family discussed in chapter 4. The occasion for this lease appears to have been the death of the previous owner of the land, Sokonoppmois, which could then be redistributed by the temple to another owner (see chapter 4.4).

The exact relationship between the lessee and the temple is obscure but his titles and family connections with the temple will be discussed in chapter 4. There is no mention of any payment so it is questionable whether the land was being “leased” or simply being granted to a priest as a privilege of office (cf. Manning 1995: 242). His only obligation according to the contract is that he pay the obligatory state taxes on the land. It is puzzling that state taxes were demanded on land on “the estate of Soknebtunis.” According to Spiegelberg, Preisigke suggested that the land might have belonged to a special class of βασιλική ἱερουτικὴ γῆ or “royal temple land” (Spiegelberg 1908: 87). Grenfell and Hunt (1907: 91-2 n. 8) had previously claimed that the priests held hereditary tenure and privileges on such land but not “full ownership” like they had over ἱερὰ γῆ.

Whether such a formal intermediate category between temple and royal land existed in the Ptolemaic period is doubtful; Grenfell and Hunt's example was from the Roman period. If there was such a distinction then it was probably that between *hierage* and *hieromenêge* (Glare 1993: 75). According to Glare, only *hieromenêge* was exempt from state taxes and fully administered by the temple (Glare 1993: 75). Thus the land being leased or transferred in the demotic texts may have belonged to the category of *hierage*, which would have been considered *ge en aphesei* or land held by permission the king and subject to tax (cf. Crawford 1971: 93-96; Manning 1995: 243).

The temple revenues were probably managed by the *lesonis* in consultation with the body of priests, as the examples cited in this chapter suggest. The revenues partly went to the government, in the form of taxes and also to those priests holding "privileged offices" (*gera*) including the posts of prophet and scribe as well as those performing services (*leitougiai*) in the temple or in dependent sanctuaries like the chapel of Isis-Tharmuthis (P.Cairo 30617, 30620).

While the remuneration for personnel in the temple may have varied depending on the position they held and the amount of service they performed, there is no indication that this corresponded to any administrative hierarchy. Otto's division of the "clergy" of the temple into an upper and lower tier is problematic (Glare 1993: 89-90, 94) and it finds little support in the evidence from Tebtunis discussed in this chapter. As Rostovtzeff (1909: 617-18) argued, one does better to consider priestly positions as a form of property.

The accumulation of property may enhance power or social status generally, but need not fit into a hierarchical framework that can be reconstructed according to titles. Such hierarchies are frequently based on their order in the procession described

by Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 6.4.35.3-37.3) or by their order of appearance in the synodal decrees (Otto 1905: 75-94; Evans 1966: 183). These may simply reveal customs or ritual observances rather than status in a particular social or administrative hierarchy.

The evidence from Tebtunis suggests that any specific priest or ritual specialist could be designated simply as *w^rb*-priests or *ιερεῖς*. They were evidently organized into five phylai for rotational service in the temple. The five phylai together, acting as a group with the *lesonis* at the head, constituted the principle administrative institution governing the temple in Ptolemaic Tebtunis.

Chapter 3

The Structure and Membership of Associations in Tebtunis

3.1 Introduction

Associations in the Hellenistic and Roman world have recently been the subject of renewed interest in ancient history (van Nijf 1997; Gabrielsen 2001). However, the institution in Egypt has received less attention despite the unique and rich papyrological evidence. An association may here be defined as a group of members who share privileges and responsibilities including the payment of fees. Whereas in professional associations the group also shares a common occupation, in what are termed cult associations members are not necessarily of the same profession but generally share some religious responsibilities.

F. de Cenival (1972; 1977; 1988) has collected and studied the principle demotic texts of rules and accounts of cult associations in Egypt. In addition, some demotic epigraphic records of cult and professional associations were recently re-edited by Vleeming (2001: texts 60-1, 159, 165-8, 170-4). M. Muszynski (1977) presents a useful overview of the evidence for cult associations in both Egyptian and Greek. Nevertheless, the only book-length study of associations in Egypt is nearly one century old (San Nicolo 1912) and since then the evidence has not been adequately studied, especially not in relation to associations elsewhere in the Mediterranean world.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to consider all of the evidence for associations in Egypt together. Rather, the focus is on the organization and membership of associations in Ptolemaic Tebtunis. These associations happen to be the most extensively documented, with seven copies of the annual rules

known over a period from 178 to 137 BC. The chapter itself is divided into four parts. The first part outlines the structure of the associations at Tebtunis. The second is an analysis of the titles appearing in the texts and the third considers the implications of this evidence for the membership of the associations in Tebtunis. The fourth part attempts a comparison between the associations in Tebtunis and the economic and social function of similar associations in Upper Egypt and the Mediterranean.

The membership of the associations at Tebtunis was deeply involved in the religious activities of the village. It is evident that certain members were directly connected with the temple of Soknebtunis. However, there is insufficient evidence to suppose that the rules were “constitutions” of the temple administration itself, even if there are several points of similarity with aspects of its organization. The association appears to have been an adjunct institution of the community, a kind of social club that also participated corporately in religious festivals and rituals while raising money to sponsor communal initiatives and services for its members. This interpretation is partly drawn out by comparison with the epigraphic dossier of cult associations in Upper Egypt.

There is no reason to suppose, as Muhs (2001) has, that associations in Egypt were generally created by non-elite professionals who were denied access to the more privileged temple and state institutions. On the contrary, associations might attract the patronage of powerful priestly families in Ptolemaic and early Roman Egypt (Bowman and Rathbone 1992: 107, 109; for the later Roman period cf. Frankfurter 1998: 72-77). Similarly, aristocrats and other prominent citizens found that forming associations in Hellenistic Rhodes was an effective way to utilize their economic potential and to further their own political careers

(Gabrielsen 2001). The associations in Ptolemaic Tebtunis known from the demotic documents cannot be regarded as a single professional or social status group but rather could have been just one affiliation an individual may have had in a more multifaceted religious and social life.

3.2 The Structure of the Associations in Tebtunis

The documentary evidence for associations in Tebtunis is by far the most abundant in Egypt. Ten documents relating to associations, over half of the known examples of their kind, come from Tebtunis between the years 179/8 and 138/137 BC (the rules with accounts: P.Cairo 31178, 30606, 31179, 30605, 30619, P.Hamburg dem.1, P.Mil.Vogl.dem. Inv. 77, 78 unpubl., P.Prague.dem 1; the accounts alone: P.Cairo 30618, P.Carlsberg 538 unpubl.; see Breciani 1994; Erichsen 1959; Cenival 1972). At least three of the documents were reportedly found buried beside crocodiles in the animal necropolis at Tebtunis (Spiegelberg 1908: 18; Breciani 1994). P.Cairo 31178 was allegedly found in Tebtunis but seems to relate to an association in the Themistos district of the Fayum (Cenival 1972: 39, 42). P.Prague (Erichsen 1959), which was purchased without provenance, gives only the district, Polemon, as the village falls in a lacuna but is probably from Tebtunis since “Soknebtunis” is the god for whom payments are recorded in the account (Erichsen 1959: 21; Cenival 1972: 225-6).

Muhs (2001: 7) has argued that the Tebtunis documents relate to one and the same association, which claimed to renew its rules annually. However, a closer examination of the evidence for the structure and membership of the associations reveals that the documents represent at least three different associations.

The dates of the seven copies of rules from Tebtunis

Association 1:

179/8 BC P.Mil.Vogl. dem. Inv. 77
158/7 BC P.Cairo 30606
151/0 BC P.Hamburg dem. 1
148/7 BC P.Cairo 31179
146/5 BC P.Cairo 30605

Association 2:

138/7 BC P.Prague dem. 1

Association 3:

138/7 BC P.Cairo 30619

All of the examples from Tebtunis basically agree about the title of the document: *p3 hp r mtj n3j=w* (or *n3 w^cb.w Sbk-nb-tn) t3 6-nt* “the regulation that those of the association have agreed.” P.Mil.Vogl. (178 BC) has instead: “the priests of Soknebtunis of the association.” There are still problems with the reading and interpretation of the demotic word for association, *6-nt* (alternatively transliterated *s-nt* or *swn.t* after its pronunciation). Generally, there is agreement on Hughes’ (1958) suggestion that the writing is identical to the term for the sixth day of the lunar month (*6-nt*) (Erichsen 1959: 21; Cenival 1972: 14). However, there is still confusion over why such a term would be used to designate an association. Hughes’ only explanation was the popularity of the festival marking the sixth day. Previously, the word was read *knb.t* “council,” which was used as early as the Old Kingdom, known especially from Deir el-Medina in the New Kingdom, and still attested in Ptolemaic times (Ray 1976:

83-4; Černý 1927).¹ It is puzzling that the writing for such an appropriate word, *ḳnb.t* “council,” should look so similar even if not exactly like *ḳ-nt* “association”. Nevertheless, in the documents from Tebtunis the writing is reasonably consistent and plausibly to be read *ḳ-nt* (Cenival 1972: 14).

The structure of the rules themselves is also generally consistent among the documents from Tebtunis. The five earliest documents are almost exactly alike, with only occasional omission of rules, inversion of their order, and the expected fluctuation of money values. All of them begin with a statement that the members of the association and the *mr-mšꜥ pꜣ mshꜥ* “president of the crocodile” have met before Sobk and the gods of Sobk (i.e. the mummified crocodiles) in the crocodile necropolis during the festivals and processions of Sobk on the specified date. They also state that the duration of the regulation is to be for one year. Then they declare “unanimously” in the first person the rules of the association. The obligations that are generally common to the five earliest texts are:

- 1) to assemble on the fixed days;
- 2) to give monthly contributions and “fees of office” to the representative of the house (i.e. association)²;
- 3) to create a ration for each member worth 5 deben in resin, salt, ointment, crowns, foliage, castor oil, and wood for the funds of the house;
- 4) to make sacrifices and offerings to the royal cult, Serapis and Isis, Sobk and the gods of Sobk;
- 5) to bring (*stꜣ*) the gods of Sobk (i.e. the crocodiles) to the their tomb (P.Cairo 30605 adds “as in the previous year”);
- 6) to be in mourning when a member dies, to take him to the necropolis, and to pay for his burial and mummification;
- 7) to recover the body of a member if he dies outside the village;
- 8) to be in mourning when a member’s relation dies, to take him/her

¹ cf. P.Ox.Griffith 68 where the editor’s translation of *nꜣ wꜥb.w n ḳnb.t.w* “i sacerdoti dei documenti” is questionable. She insists that *ḳ-nt* is not to be read but the writings are very similar; if not then perhaps *ḳnb.t.w* “councils” would fit the context and the writing.

² When the members refer to the association within the rules they most frequently call it the “house” (*ḳ.wj*) in the same way as this term could refer to temples, including that of Soknebtunis (e.g. P.Merton dem. 1; cf. Gallo 1984).

- to the necropolis, and (in P.Cairo 30606) to give him 20 rations;
- 9) to drink beer and comfort the member whose son has died;
 - 10) to give five rations and to have the representative visit any member supplicating the god, in prison, or in refuge with the god;
 - 11) to testify and to give money from the contributions to any member on trial unjustly;
 - 12) to complain of any member to the association before reporting it to the police, military, or civil authorities;
 - 13) to refrain from calling any member a leper when he is not one;
 - 14) to refrain from insults or violence against ordinary members or leaders in the association;
 - 15) to give money to any member in need;
 - 16) to come before the association or court of justice if called;
 - 17) to accept the position of representative if designated by the members;
 - 18) to sit with the members on the days mentioned or after having drunk beer with the members (only in P.Mil.Vogl. 77 and P.Cairo 30606);
 - 19) to obey the authority of the representative and of these rules.

After each of the rules comes the penalty for disobedience. The fines to be paid are generally between 5 deben to several hundred depending on the offense, the most common being about 25 deben. The penalties for insults and violence (rule 14) are determined both by the rank of the victim and by the rank of the offender, with higher ranking offenders generally paying lower fines (see below the section on association titles).

The accounts that accompany the rules record the payments by individual members. The names of members are usually followed by two money amounts, a high figure (around 200-300 deben) and a lower figure (10-30 deben³). In the earliest text (P.Mil.Vogl. dem. Inv. 77), dated 178 BC, the sums are smaller probably because the money is at a higher value. Higher officials such as the *mr-^ms* "president," *mḥ-2* "second," and those titled *ḥm-ntr* "prophet" and *ʿš* "caller"

³ P.Cairo 31179 suggests that this is a monthly fee since the sum of the low figures, including the 5 deben payments by the "novices" matches the total given as "per month: 115" (Cenival 1972:

pay greater sums of money while the “novices” appear to pay only a low monthly fee (5 deben per month). These fees probably correspond to the “fees of office” and “the monthly contribution” described in the rules themselves (Cenival 1972: 207-209).

The five documents that most closely fit the structure described above are dated between 178 BC - 145 BC. Only one (P.Cairo 31179) displays significant variation in the order in which the rules appear (ordering the rules: 1-7, 11, 10, 8-9, 12-13, 15, 14, 19). Two of the rules (P.Mil.Vogl dem. Inv. 77 and P.Hamburg dem. 1) are lacunose and could potentially contain more variation but the surviving portions roughly follow the pattern. Other omissions and variations are small.⁴

The two latest examples (P.Prague dem. 1 and P.Cairo 30619) are by contrast rather unique. Both of these documents are from different months in the same year (138/7 BC) and each claims to be an annual agreement. Thus it appears that they represent the rules of different associations. Moreover, in each document the association appears to have a special name that follows the word for “association” by direct genitive in the title of the document. Erichsen hesitantly suggested the reading *Hr (n) t3 sh.t* the association of “Horus in der Feldmark” in P.Prague (Erichsen 1959: 21). Cenival, equally cautious, suggested *Imn-htp* the association of “Amonhotep” in P.Cairo 30619 (Cenival 1972: 98).

222). Out of the five similar texts, P.Mil.Vogl. dem. Inv. 77, P.Cairo 30606, P.Cairo 31179, and P.Hamburg list both figures while P.Cairo 30605 lists only the lower figure.

⁴ The orders for the other texts run as follows:

P.Mil.Vogl. dem. Inv. 77: 1-4... 11...14-15, 10, 18-19

P.Cairo 30606: 1-9, 12-16, 10-11, 17-19

P.Hamburg dem. 1: 1-5 ...

P.Cairo 30605: 1-19, without 16, 18

The titles of these associations are sufficient to suggest that they represent two different associations that were active in Tebtunis simultaneously.

In these two different associations (P.Prague and P.Cairo 30619) there are several rules suggesting that the members came from several villages rather than only Tebtunis. One rule says that they must go to another member's village to support him when he is under inquisition by the authorities (Cenival 1972: 96). Another says that when a member's relation dies they must welcome people from his village who are in mourning and must be willing to travel to his village (Cenival 1972: 96). P.Prague gives a similar impression when, in the account accompanying the rules, a man is titled "the caller to Sobk of the temple of Khnum" (Cenival 1972: 226). It is possible that such indications are absent simply by chance in the earlier examples of rules and that members likewise came from outside Tebtunis.

Many rules mentioned above are included in the two latest documents (P.Prague and P.Cairo 30619) but with variations, mixed order, and different rules interspersed. The rule stating that members should lead the crocodiles to the necropolis is absent in both of these texts despite their completeness. This is significant, as will be shown later, because other scholars have used this rule to argue that members of such associations belonged exclusively to the category of priests called *ḥi n3 ntr* or "bearers of the gods."

Another extraordinary difference between P.Cairo 30619 and the earlier texts is that the assembly of the members occurs not in the necropolis but rather "in the temples written below." The members are obliged to drink together in honor of the gods on appointed days in various villages around the Fayum, including Tebtunis, Narmuthis, and Gurob (Spiegelberg 1908: 67-8; Muhs 2001:

15 n. 29; for *Mi-wr* “Moeris” as the demotic name for Gurob see Cruz-Urbe 1992; cf. Cenival 1972: 94 for a different interpretation of the passage). Since its meetings are said to occur in many villages, this particular association may have had broader membership than just villagers in Tebtunis where the text was found.

Further variation is evident in P.Prague. There the meeting place of the members is not specified. It is the only text to say that the *mr-mš^c* “president” was obligated to supply the group with beer and wine. It also has fines against fraud concerning the beer and wine supplied by members and against beating a “novice” member. In addition to the common rule of helping a member who is unjustly accused, P.Prague goes further to require that the association testify and give rations for a member who is guilty. P.Prague also has an extraordinary fine of 1000 deben at the end of the document for breaking the rules of the association. Both the unique documents (P.Prague and P.Cairo 30619) include fines for seducing another member’s wife, which were relatively high (300 deben) (Erichsen 1959: 41-2).

The accounting procedures in these two latest demotic association documents also differ from those in the other five. P.Cairo 30619 lists only the higher sums of money paid in by each member (150 to 72 deben depending on rank). After listing the first few members, there is a puzzling statement that does not appear in the other accounts: *n (?) p3 ʿjš 5 ntj tw.w ir n3 mš^c.w n p3 ʿ.wj | p3 bnr n ḥd.w i3w.t.w ntj sh ḥrj* “Pour(?) les cinq ‘récitants’ (?) qui règlent les démarches (?) de la ‘maison’ (ou: qui font les voyages de la ‘maison’ ?) | en plus de la contribution des fonctions inscrite ci-dessus” (Cenival 1972: 227-8). It may be that this statement is simply an elaboration about the use of funds by the

“callers” (on which the earlier documents were silent); there happen to be five “callers” in this list of members though it is lacunose.

The accounting procedure in P.Prague differs even more from the accounts of the five standard documents. There again only the large sum is tabulated (230 to 72 deben per member depending on rank), except for the “novices” who each pay five deben. However, the amount for each member is usually followed by an additional phrase (sometimes abbreviated): *iw=w šp r h.t n3 mšc.w* “ils ont été reçus conformément aux dispositions (?)” (Cenival 1972: 225-6). The text states that these *dispositions* or arrangements (*n3 mšc.w*) have been dictated in advance by the president (*mr-mšc*). The arrangements (*mšc.w*) probably refer to the payments and presumably the word derives from *mšc* “to go, march, arrange” since its writing differentiates it from the word *mšc* “people, army” as it appears in the title *mr-mšc* (Erichsen 1959: 57-8).⁵ Even though the words are written distinctly, it is a striking coincidence that *mr-mšc* should designate the one in charge of dictating the *mšc.w* “arrangements”. The account in P.Prague is also unique for designating that a portion of the funds be allocated to (*m-b3h*) the god Soknebtunis (Cenival 1972: 226).

The question raised at the beginning of this section – to what extent the association rules from Tebtunis refer to the same association – has not been fully answered here. It was suggested that five of the documents display a close similarity in their organization and structure while two others are more unique. P.Cairo 30619 and P.Prague must certainly be separate from each other on account of their date. Another approach to this question is to examine the names

⁵ Similarly, the reading in P.Cairo 30611, l. 20 (a lease of liturgy days) is probably *tr mšc* “to put in order” (*Glossar*) instead of Spiegelberg’s *mr-mšc*, which he translated “*lemeeshe*-Priester”.

that recur in the various accounts that accompany the rules within the period for which there are examples.

Muhs (2001: 8-14) has conveniently listed the membership recorded in each example from Tebtunis side-by-side, highlighting the names that appear in more than one text. He concludes that all of the rules discussed above except P.Prague belonged to the same association. The accounts tend to list about 10 to 40 members but it is never clear whether the list is complete; the least fragmentary examples have about 32 (P.Mil.Vogl. dem. Inv. 77) and 35 (P.Prague) members. The earliest text (P.Mil.Vogl.), which dates to 179/8, is twenty years earlier than the next one (159/8) and not surprisingly has few members in common.

The group including, P.Cairo 30606, P.Hamburg, P.Cairo 31179, and 30605, dates within 13 years (158-145 BC). The number of members attested in each are 16+, 9+, 21+, and 31+ respectively. Only eight names recur in more than one list. However, some of the correspondences are rather convincing. For example, Paapis son of Paches appears in 158/7 (P.Cairo 30606) as the *mr-mš^c* of the association and in 151/0 BC (P.Hamburg) he held the title *mr-šn* "lesonis," which he continued to hold (or held again) in 148/7 BC (P.Cairo 31179). The correspondence of some members among these texts helps to re-enforce the conclusion that these four examples along with the earlier example belong to the same association. However, the small number of correspondences may indicate that our lists are far from complete. Unless one supposes that the members frequently came and went, the conclusion must be that the number of members exceeds the totals in the accounts.

The two latest examples of rules (P.Prague and P.Cairo 30619) as well as the account P.Cairo 30618 are dated to the same year (138/7 BC). P.Cairo 30618 also includes an account of the following year. P.Prague lists thirty-five members but none of them corresponds to the other texts in this group and only one corresponds to a name in an earlier text (P.Cairo 30605: 146/5 BC). Considering the uniqueness of its rules, discussed above, it is most likely that P.Prague represents a separate association in Tebtunis.

The membership attested in P.Cairo 30619 corresponds almost entirely to the lists of names in P.Cairo 30618. P.Cairo 30618 must be the accounts belonging to the association of P.Cairo 30619. However, not one person in any of these lists corresponds to any name in the texts from the earlier group which dates only ten to twenty years earlier. Muhs failed to observe this fact and included them with the earlier group on the basis of the names appearing “in more than one list” (Muhs 2001: 7). The differences in structure between P.Cairo 30619 and the earlier group, most noticeably its meetings in several villages, as well as the lack of any name correspondences lead to the conclusion that it was not the same association.

3.3 Association Titles

mr-mšc (λεμύσοϛ) “president” (lit. “overseer of people”)

As was observed in the previous section, the title *mr-mšc* deserves further consideration. It was commonly used in Egyptian to designate a commander in the army, as the word *mšc* can mean “army” or “expedition” in addition to its more general meaning, “multitude, people” (Černý 1976: 96; *Glossar* 181; *Worterbuch* 155). In the Hellenistic and Roman periods, it was often used to

translate the Greek word *strategos*, which designated a military commander and later a regional governor in the Ptolemaic administration. In the association texts there seems to be no suggestion that *mr-mšꜥ* designates this type of official (cf. Erichsen 1959: 22). Therefore, to aid in the interpretation of the title in the context of associations at Tebtunis, one has to rely only on the internal evidence and on comparisons with other associations and the Greek renderings λέμυσος and λαόρχης, which may be relevant to understanding the title of the leader of cult associations.

Taken literally, the title *mr-mšꜥ* may mean “overseer of people”. In Coptic, the word became *lemeesha* “warrior, champion” (Crum 1939: 143; Černý 1976: 73). How and why this title came to be employed in associations is unclear. The word *mšꜥ* “people” appears in connection with the annual procession for the burial of sacred animals in Memphis. There the people (*mšꜥ*) of the Serapeum were required to assemble and to lead the ibis and the hawk in a procession to the necropolis with the appropriate priests in attendance (Ray 1976: texts 19, 21). The rules in the Tebtunis association texts similarly require that the members assemble and bring the crocodile god Sobk to the necropolis. It is plausible that *mšꜥ* “people” in the title *mr-mšꜥ* “president” refers to such a body, which in Memphis appears to have been connected with the temple of Serapis.

In the introductory phrase of the rules from Tebtunis, *mr-mšꜥ* is followed immediately by “the crocodile” (*p3 msh*) with the divine determinative indicating that the god is meant. It is doubtful that one should follow Cenival’s interpretation (1972: 45, 59, 63, 73, 83, 172-3), “le chef de la troupe (des fidèles) du crocodile,” with the prefix *mr-* “overseer” qualifying the entire phrase. The definite article *p3* before *mšꜥ*, which she mistakenly transcribes in the general

commentary (Cenival 1972: 172-3), never appears in the texts. Moreover, the phrase “the *troupe* of the crocodile” is unparalleled and doubtfully had any meaning. It is a better interpretation, considering the frequent appearance of the title of alone, simply to take *mr-mšc* as the title and to suppose that *p3 msh* referred to the type of association. Thus one may translate: “the president of the crocodile (god)” (cf. Erichsen 1959: 22). Cenival seems to have come to this view later when she translates *t3 mr-mšc H.t-Hr* “la ‘generale’ d’Hathor” in an association of women (P.dem.Lille 97; Cenival 1977: 8-9).

The function of the *mr-mšc* in an association at Tebtunis is best described in P.Prague dem. 1 (138/7 BC). One of the rules in that document makes the *mr-mšc* responsible for contributing wine and beer to the association. In the account for that association, the *mr-mšc* is reportedly the one who has made in advance the arrangements (*mšc.w*) for the members’ payments. This might have entailed establishing the rate for each individual.

In all such accounts from Tebtunis, the *mr-mšc* paid the highest fees and was always listed first among the members. Moreover, according to the penalties for insults and violence against fellow members, the *mr-mšc* generally paid the lowest fine for committing offenses while exacting the highest fine for other members when they committed offenses against him. One may perhaps take this to suggest that, as a higher ranking and higher paying member, presumably with extra responsibility (as P.Prague suggests), he received more respect.

The title *mr-mšc* also appears occasionally in associations outside Tebtunis (e.g. P.dem.Lille 97 verso, 98) but a variety of alternative titles might also be employed (Cenival 1972: 153-164; 1977: 31). The word was probably pronounced *lemeesha*, as it was in Coptic, and there are a few instances of this

word transliterated into Greek: λεμόςος (BGU 1007; Bernand 1989: text 174), λεμεῖσα (P.Tebt. 122), λεμήσια (P.Yale 902+906; Gilliam 1940: 217). The Greek Lexicon (Liddell et al. 1968) translates it as “an Egyptian name for a kind of priest.” This is based on BGU 1007, an inscription from Silsilis in Upper Egypt, which gives two dates using the λεμόςος as an eponymous priest:

(ἔτους) <ι>ς Ἀυτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Οὐεσπασιανοῦ Σεβαστοῦ, ἐπεὶ Τυράννου Ἡρακλείδου τοῦ Ἑρμοῦ, λεμόσου Σουχοῦ θεοῦ μεγίστου.

L’an 6 de l’empereur César Vespasien Auguste, quand Tyrannos, fils d’Hérakledès et petit-fils d’Hermias était prêtre (λεμόςος) de Souchos, dieu très grand.

(ἔτους) <ι>η ἐπὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου δευτέρου Διογένους λεμόσου, ἐτέλεσαν τὸ ἱερὸν εὐιερίας καὶ ἐπικίας χάριν καὶ τὸν τῶν πάποτε θεῶν ἐπιφανέστατον Πέμσαον.

L’an 8, quand Alexandre le cadet, fils de Diogène, était prêtre (λεμόςος), on a achevé ce sanctuaire, par la piété et bonté, et (la statue) du plus manifeste de tous les dieux qui ont existé, Pemsaos (Bernand 1989: 116, text 174)

The use of λεμόςος, which Bernand translates simply “prêtre” noting its rarity, strongly suggests a cult association. The Tebtunis documents that apparently correspond to one association suggest that the *mr-mšc* was changed frequently, perhaps on an annual basis. As in the Tebtunis documents (and in P.dem.Lille 97 from Ghoran) the title λεμόςος was followed by the name of the god. If this inscription does come from an association, then it would demonstrate the role that such groups might play raising funds for the temple (see below 3.5).

The other Greek title to consider briefly in connection with *mr-mšc* is λαάρχης. The relationship here is more difficult to establish. However, the word λαάρχης appears to be a literal translation of *mr-mšc* “overseer of people”. Most examples in Ptolemaic Egypt (Pros. Ptol. II 2044-50) show that it was used

as a military title corresponding to the well established military significance of *mr-mš* “commander of troops”.

On the other hand, certain military officials with this title in the Ptolemaic period also appear to act as leaders of cult associations. One inscription, which was purchased in the Fayum, shows that an Aetolian man held the titles *λαάρχης*, *ἱππάρχης*, and *ἀρχιπροστάτης*: the first two are military titles but the last indicates that he was the leader of an association (Pros. Ptol. II 2046; I.G. Fay. 16; Bernard 1975: 52-3). Cult associations devoted to Egyptian gods within the Ptolemaic army are attested in several Fayum inscriptions (e.g. I.G. Fay. 6, 9, 17) and have been described by M. Launey (1950: 980, 1023-4).

In an inscription from Tebtunis (dated around 80/79 or 69/68 BC), a *λαάρχης* dedicated the construction of a new sanctuary and its masonry to the goddess Isis (I.G. Fay. 145; Bernard 1981b: 6 n. 2; Gallazzi 2000: 10 n. 19). In this case, Bernard (1981b: 16) is probably correct to suppose that the man in question was a well-to-do military commander. In around 118 BC, Chomenis, a military commander with the same title, and the soldiers registered in his division made a large donation of land (131 ½ arouras) to the temple of Soknebtunis in Kerkeosiris (P.Tebt. 60; Keenan and Shelton 1976: 12-13; Evans 1961: 240ff.). One should consider that such commanders and groups of soldiers might also constitute associations. However, without sufficient evidence, the connection between cult associations in the military and the title *mr-mš* found in Tebtunis remains tenuous.

mḥ-2 “second”

Almost nothing can be said about the title *p3 mh-2* “the second” and about his function (Cenival 1972: 168). The man with this title pays the second highest fees after *mr-mšc* and is listed second after him in the accounts from Tebtunis. He also pays the second lowest fines for offenses against members (rule 14 above) and exacts the second highest fine for offenses against him. The title is also employed in the same context in an association from the Theban area (P.Berlin 3115; Cenival 1972). One may suspect that he was ranked below the *mr-mšc* but held a similar position of responsibility.

hm-ntr (προφήτης) “divine servant”

Since this title was considered in the last chapter and appears outside the rules of associations, it is not necessary to discuss it again at length (see chapter 2). There is nothing to suggest that its appearance in the association texts does not refer to the well-known position of “prophet” in the Egyptian temples (Otto 1905: 79-83). The title is mainly associated with members of the elite who held other prominent positions in the temple and royal administration (Pros. Ptol. III 5425-5919), though in smaller villages prophets may have also been attached to modest sanctuaries (Crawford 1971: 91 n. 5).

In an attempt to show that the associations at Tebtunis were constituted by non-elite θεαγοί or “god bearers”, one scholar (Muhs 2001) has argued that the title cannot be interpreted this way in association texts. Citing the association of women in Ghoran (P.dem.Lille 97 verso; Cenival 1977), he claims that since women only rarely held the title *hm-ntr* it is unlikely that those holding the title in associations were really prophets. However, the argument is circular and unconvincing. Female prophets were perhaps more common in Egypt than Muhs

supposes: “Sans avoir été aussi nombreuses que les hommes, les prêtresses portant ce titre ont peut-être été moins rares, à cette époque que le petit nombre de leurs mentions, dû soit à la modestie, soit à l’irrégularité avec laquelle les documents nous ont été conservés prêts à croire” (Cenival 1977: 29). Nevertheless, all of the prophets in the Tebtunis associations happen to be men. Their appearance, like the titles *mr-šn* “lesonis” and *mr-ih* “overseer of cattle,” suggests that people holding the title could, and frequently did, become members of associations in Tebtunis.

ꜥꜥ “caller”

The title ꜥꜥ “caller” is attested almost exclusively in the rules and accounts of cult associations (Cenival 1972: 168-9). This rarity makes it problematic to define his role without undue speculation. The title is generally followed by the name of a god and there are usually callers for about five different gods in each association.

One important clue to their role is found in the account of P.Cairo 30619 where money appears to be specially allocated for them: *n (?) pꜥ ꜥꜥꜥ 5 ntj tw.w ir nꜥ mꜥꜥ.w n pꜥ ꜥ.wj | pꜥ bnr n ḥꜥ.w tꜥw.t.w ntj sh ḥrj* “Pour(?) les cinq ‘récitants’(?) qui règlent les démarches(?) de la ‘maison’ (ou: qui font les voyages de la ‘maison’ ?) | en plus de la contribution des fonctions inscrite ci-dessus” (Cenival 1972: 227-8). Neither its reading nor its translation is altogether clear but one plausible hypothesis is that their function was somehow to organized the members during the processions in which the association participated.

mnḥ.w “novices”

Almost nothing at all is known about the status of the *mnḥ.w* “novices” (Cenival 1972: 30-31; Erichsen 1959: 61). They generally appear at the end of accounts under a separate heading, which states the amount they each pay (normally five deben). In contrast, the payments for other members are listed individually and are always much higher (in the range of 50 to 200 deben). One text, P.Prague, has a rule creating a special fine against any senior member who beats one of the novice members. From these hints it seems that the “novices” had a lower status within the association but there is too little evidence to define their role any more precisely.

***mr-šn* (λεσῶνις): “lesonis” or “chief priest”**

The appearance of this title in the association texts is somewhat surprising. The title *mr-šn* was discussed at length in the previous chapter where he was considered the official in charge of temple administration. Although, the title was also used in Egypt for the president of associations (Cenival 1972: 154-159; Vleeming 2001: texts 159-173), the president in Tebtunis is always called *mr-mš^c* in demotic. It is unlikely that both the *mr-mš^c* and the *lesonis* functioned in an official capacity in the same association.

This is further emphasized by the fact that the *lesonis* only appears in two of the documents (P.Hamburg dem. 1 and P.Cairo 31179), where it is perhaps the same man, and he never appears at the head of the list. The lists always begin with the *mr-mš^c* followed by the *mḥ-2* whereas in P.Hamburg the *lesonis* comes sixth and in P.Cairo 31179 he appears in a separate column with three other names. The hesitant reading of the title *mr-šn* (Spiegelberg 1908; Muhs 2001: 11) a second time in the list of “novices” in P.Cairo 31179 (recto, column 2) is

certainly incorrect as it is quite different from the writing in column 3 and would amount to there being two lesones in one list (cf. Cenival 1972: 222 n. 2).

The title probably has nothing to do with the administration of the association. It may simply allude to the important status of this member in the temple much like the appearance of the *hm-ntr* “prophet”. He was likely the lesoneis of the temple of Soknebtunis since this is the only temple in Tebtunis for which there was one attested. Judging by the name, it appears that the same man who holds the title in both instances had at one time been the president of the association (P.Cairo 30606) and was also a counselor priest of Soknebtunis (P.Merton dem. 1; Glanville 1933). In the following section (3.4), the connections between the temple of Soknebtunis and this association are explored in greater detail.

mr-ih “overseer of cattle”

The title *p3 mr-ih* “the overseer of cattle” seems to have no relation to the administration of the association. It only appears in one text (P.Cairo 30619; 138/7 BC) for a man named Peteesis son of Horos who appears fifth in a list that includes the president, the second, and two prophets. Though they pay slightly more, he also pays a relatively large sum of money (82 deben). A man with the same name and father, who this time has the title “the caller to Petesouchos,” appears in another account from the same year belonging to the same association (P.Cairo 30618).

The title itself is hardly found in the Ptolemaic period except as a personal name (NB 188-190). In the demotic roster of priests from Tebtunis (P.BM 10647 unpubl.; second century BC), the second name in the first column

under the heading “priests (*w^cb.w*) who act as priests of Sokonopis” is Onnophris followed by *p3 mr-ih*. It is uncertain whether this is his title or his father’s name since the men before and after him have only their own name followed by the title *hm-ntr* “prophet” but others in the same list have their father’s name and no title. In the instances where the title is attested in earlier periods, the “overseer of cattle” appears to have been an important official for the state and for some larger Egyptian temples that kept herds of cattle (Gardiner 1947: 27). It is plausible that this association member in Tebtunis may have acted in this capacity for the temple of Soknebtunis or for the royal administration.

3.4 Membership and Social Status

The membership of associations in Tebtunis might include wealthy and influential people including officials and priests from the temple of Soknebtunis. This conclusion is based primarily on the titles and name correspondences in the documents. Some scholars would disagree with this assessment so it seems appropriate to present the evidence in support of it and then to point out the weaknesses in the opposing arguments.

The evidence from the titles gives the impression that the association was closely connected with the temple of Soknebtunis. In one association text from Tebtunis (P.Mil.Vogl. dem. Inv 77; 178 BC) there is an illuminating explanation of the normally terse phrase *n3i=w t3 6.nt* “those of the association.” In that text, the phrase reads *n3 w^cb.w Sbk-nb-tp-tn t3 6.nt* “the priests of Soknebtunis of the association.” The document is equally informative in the account where the list of members, which normally begins *n3i=w rn* “their names,” in this case provides a full title: [*p3 rn*] *n3i=w t3 6.nt n3 w^cb.w Sbk-bn-tp-tn* “the names of

those of the association of priests of Soknebtunis” (Bresciani 1994). There is no way to be sure that this title also applies to the other associations (in particular, to the four whose structure is most similar) where the phrase is abbreviated. However, a recently published papyrus (P.Lips. II 131) from Tebtunis gives evidence for a συνόδος ἱερέων “association of priests” of Soknebtunis in the early Roman period (Duttenhöfer 2002: 91-95).

The associations’ connection with the priests of Soknebtunis may also be reflected in the correspondence of names between P.Merton dem. 1 (the admission of a priest, Glanville 1933; 142 BC) and the contemporary group of association accounts (P.Cairo 30606; P.Hamburg; P.Cairo 31179, 30605). Cenival noted this correspondence and included the names of priests from P.Merton in the index of proper names in her edition of the association texts (Cenival 1972: 237 n. 1). The priests in P.Merton have the title *n3 w^cb.w nti iw mnk md.t* “the priests who decide matters” or “counselor priests” (see chapter 2). All but three of the thirteen counselor priests correspond to names and fathers’ names in the contemporary group of association texts.

What is even more interesting is that the corresponding individuals in the association texts are usually the ones in prominent positions. For example, Paapis son of Paches was the president (*mr-mš^c*) of the association in 157 BC (P.Cairo 30606), the lesonis (probably of the temple of Soknebtunis) in 151 BC and again in 148 BC (P.Hamburg and P.Cairo 31179), as well as a counselor priest in 142 BC (P.Merton). *Hnm-hwy* son of Marres was the president (*mr-mš^c*) of the association in 145 BC (P.Cairo 30605) and a counselor priest in 142 BC (P.Merton). Onnophris son of Petesouchos was the “second” in 157 BC (P.Cairo 30606) and a counselor priest in 142 BC (P.Merton). Sokonopis son of Paches

was prophet of the gods in 151 BC (P.Hamburg) and a counselor priest in 142 BC (P.Merton). If the names are anything to go by, then these examples of counselor priests acting at the head of associations is further confirmation of the members' high status and of their relationship to the temple of Soknebtunis.

The titles that members carry in the accounts also seem to indicate their high position. The one most frequently attested is *hm-ntr* "prophet." In the other instances where the title appears in Tebtunis it seems to be associated with the literate and influential priests in the temple (see above and chapter 2). Prophets and "callers" of many gods – including Soknebtunis, the gods of Sobk (i.e. the mummified crocodiles), Osiris and Bastis among others – became members of associations in Tebtunis. Moreover, the leading official in the temple, the *lesonis*, also became a member of an association. Another important official (perhaps of the temple), the "overseer of cattle," became a member in another association (P.Prague). The suggestion is that membership in associations was attractive even to the most important priests and officials.

It is impossible to prove that the members of these associations included all of the priests of the temple. Cenival (1972: 162) believed that they did and some support may be found in two unpublished texts from Ptolemaic Tebtunis. The unpublished roster of priests of Soknebtunis by phylai (P.BM 10647) gives a total of 36 priests but these may only be the ones who also served as priests of Sokonopis (*Sbk-h^cpj*; cf. Clarysse 1987: 22) A similar text from Tebtunis lists seven men in a column labeled "the first phyl^e" and then provides a total of 32 men, which may represent all the priests of this temple (unnumbered, in the same box as P.Tebt.Tait; cf. Tait 1977: vii)⁶. The most complete accounts of members

⁶ I thank Professor Tait for bringing it to my attention.

in associations from Tebtunis have apparently 32 men (P.Mil.Vogl.) and 35 men (P.Prague).

The Roman document (P.Lips II 131), mentioned earlier, shows there was a σύνοδος ἱερωῶν, an “association of priests,” of Soknebtunis in Tebtunis. Similarly, a Ptolemaic Greek inscription from Satis in Upper Egypt shows that the priests of the five phylai of the temple, including some who held military and other temple titles, called themselves an association (σύνοδος) in a dedication text (Bernand 1989: 260-266; text 302). One may also suspect that it was a body of priests with a *lesonis* (*mr-šn*) that constituted the associations (*ḥ-nt*) making dedications of new constructions for the temple in Dendara (see below; Vleeming 2001: texts 159-173). Nevertheless, it is not clear how the organization of priests (described in chapter 2) might fit into the structure of the multiple associations evident in the demotic rules from Tebtunis. Therefore, it seems safer to consider associations as an adjunct institution that might include within their membership priests from the temple.

An alternative suggestion was put forward by Jan Quaegebeur (1984) who emphasized the correlation between the duties described in the rules of cult associations and the activities of the *ḥi ntr.w* “god-bearers”. He noted that the meeting place of the members in most of the Tebtunis associations was the crocodile necropolis. He points to an unpublished Michigan papyrus (P.Mich. 4244; 142/16 BC) mentioning a man who was a *ḥi ntr.w* (and also in this case a *w^cb*-priest) in the crocodile necropolis. He interprets this to mean that the necropolis was where the *ḥi ntr.w* were active (Quaegebeur 1984: 170).

Moreover, the association texts from Tebtunis stipulate that the members lead the crocodile mummies to their burial. Quaegebeur argued that the words *ḥi*

ntr.w “bearers of the gods” themselves indicated that they were the ones who brought the mummified crocodiles to the necropolis. Quaegebeur noted that *t3i ntr.w* sometimes formed an association with places established for their drinking meetings (1984: 162). Resting on these threads of evidence, the connection between the *t3i ntr.w* with the rules of associations in Tebtunis is still very tenuous. He was understandably cautious with his suggestion and expressed uncertainty, in the absence of more evidence, about how to integrate the *t3i ntr.w* within the hierarchy of associations (Quaegebeur 1984: 171).

More recently, Dils (1995) has tried to expand on Quaegebeur’s arguments by introducing the Greek evidence for the title, noting that $\theta\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ translates *t3i ntr.w* and was employed in similar contexts (Dils 1995: 153). He compiled the references to the title in Egyptian and Greek and used them to determine the function and social status of its holders. Their title and their connection with the necropolis imply, according to him, that they were responsible for the burial of sacred animals, including not just crocodiles but also other animals (Dils 1995: 164-5).

Dils reiterates the similarities between the *theagoi* and the members of associations: their burial of the sacred animals, their drinking meetings, and their acting corporately with titles akin to an association (1995: 166). He also cites in support of the claim that one *theagos* features in a Greek account of an association from Tebtunis (P.Tebt. 894). However, in this case he was the only member to have the title, suggesting that the membership was probably mixed. Moreover, the organization of that association – led by six $\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\alpha\acute{\iota}$ – was different from the demotic examples. Despite the indications that he mentions, Dils is still cautious about identifying the *theagoi* with the membership in the demotic rules

of associations: “On se les imagine volontiers au sein d’une association religieuses (*sn.t*, σύννοδος, ou θίασος), mais la preuve formelle manque encore” (1995: 166).

In contrast to this cautious approach, Muhs (2001) argues strongly that the *theagoi* constituted the membership of the cult associations in Tebtunis. Moreover, he maintains that the *theagoi* represent the “non-elites” in the village:

These lower-ranking priests were denied access to many regular temple institutions open to regular temple priests, so they may have compensated by establishing private religious associations according to Hellenistic models, with hierarchies employing a mixture of priestly and military titles (Muhs 2001: 18).

Leaving aside for a moment the question of Hellenistic models, one may first of all question whether the *theagoi* were indeed “lower-ranking priests” excluded from temple institutions. The evidence for the status of *theagoi* was discussed in chapter 2. It suffices to recall here that a *theagos* could also be a *w^cb*-priest and a scribe of demotic contracts (P.Mich. unpubl. 4244; Dils 1995: 167, text 15) and that a *theagos* had to undergo an *epikrisis* to be confirmed by the *archiereus* in Alexandria like other priests (Dils 1995: 161). Moreover, there was a temple in Tebtunis of the god Sokopichonsis in which all of the priests were apparently *theagoi* (BGU 1023; Grenfell and Hunt 1907: 55). Examples like these suggest that *theagoi* were probably not excluded from temple institutions. More importantly, there is nothing to suggest that it was they who established cult associations in Tebtunis.

The evidence described earlier in this chapter gives a strong indication that regular priests participated in associations in Tebtunis. The appearance of the designations *n3 w^cb.w Sbk-nb-tn* “the priests of Soknebtunis” and *hm-ntr* “prophet,” are the clearest evidence for this fact. Muhs admits that *n3 w^cb.w* and *hm-ntr* might indicate that there were regular priests in the association but

claims: “On the other hand, the title translated as ‘guild master’ is literally the military title ‘general’ (Dem. *mr mšꜥ*), which may argue against taking these titles too literally” (Muhs 2001: 16). To further this argument he cites an association of women headed by a *mr-mšꜥ* “president” where some members have the title *ḥm-nṯr* “prophetess” (P.dem.Lille 97; Cenival 1977). “Female priestesses did exist in Egypt, including prophetesses, but they were a minority, and female generals probably did not exist, so it is perhaps more likely that they referred to positions within associations of women, than that they referred to associations of female priestesses and generals” (Muhs 2001: 16).

One fault in this argument is its circularity: if the title “prophetess” occurs only rarely that does not suggest that it has another meaning when it does occur. Another major fault is that *mr mšꜥ* does not *literally* mean “general” (Erichsen 1959: 22). As was discussed above (in the section on *mr-mšꜥ*), the word *mšꜥ* seems to have the basic sense of “multitude, people” (Černý 1976: 96; *Glossar* 181) while the word *mr* was frequently used as a prefix meaning “overseer” (*Worterbuch* 94). The example cited earlier shows that *mšꜥ* could refer to the people involved in a procession for the burial of sacred animals in Memphis (Ray 1977: texts 19, 21). It is very unlikely that members of cult associations who referred to themselves as *wꜥb*-priests and prophets were using the terms in a sense radically different from other Egyptian speakers.

The link that Muhs establishes between the *theagoi* and the cult associations in Tebtunis is not convincing. The claim rests primarily on the single rule in some of the associations that members lead the crocodiles to the necropolis. This rule is not present in two of the association texts (P.Prague and P.Cairo 30619). That *theagoi* were involved in this activity may be suggested by

their title but there is no reason to believe that other members of the temple community did not also participate in the processions for the burial of sacred animals. The event was so significant to the priests that scenes of the burial procession were carved on the walls of the vestibule in front of the temple of Soknebtunis (Rondot 1997: 114, fig. 2). The event must have been of central importance in the religious life of the community. One might expect cult associations of priests to participate.

Moreover, there is no indication in the description of the burial processions in the Memphis texts (Ray 1977: texts 19, 21) that the people (*mšꜥ*) who came from the Serapeum to participate were all titled *theagoi* nor that they were only the “lower-ranking” priests of the temple. The texts even required the appropriate priests (*wꜥb.w*) to be in attendance. Since this was an annual event of some importance in Memphis it is likely that many people of different status took part, including regular priests.

3.5 Beyond Tebtunis: Associations in Comparative Perspective

To appreciate the broader social and economic function of associations, it is useful to adopt a comparative perspective. This involves first looking at the debate over the origins of the institution. Second, one can gain an insight into the membership by comparing the composition of other associations in Egypt and the Mediterranean world. Finally, the economic impact of associations can be gleaned from their contributions to temples and religious festivals in Egypt attested in the epigraphic record.

The origin of cult associations is a contentious topic. The question frequently raised is whether there was an independent tradition of associations in

Egypt or whether it was a Greek innovation. The issue came to the fore with publication of a copy of rules of a cult association written in Greek from the late Ptolemaic period (Roberts et al. 1936). The cult was located in the Fayum and devoted to Zeus Hypsistos but the editors argued that the structure of the association was modeled on Egyptian prototypes such as the demotic rules of cult associations from Tebtunis.

The rules themselves and even their order closely resemble those found in the demotic texts. Boak published several more Greek examples of associations on this pattern from Roman Tebtunis. Although he recognized their correspondence with the demotic texts, he argued that the democratic principle of electing a representative must indicate that the institution had been imported from Greece (Boak 1937: 219-20). The view that the association developed in the Greek world had already been advanced by the historian W.W. Tarn. Trying to explain the proliferation of associations in the Hellenistic period, he argued that they were a logical consequence of the erosion of the polis (Tarn 1952: 93-5). Similarly, Westermann (1932) argued that the ancient associations arose with the rise of individualism and the disintegration of the polis, just as the polis had arisen with the rise of individualism and disintegration of the family in archaic Greece. The dialectical social theory underpinning this thesis was developed in Gustave Glotz's influential book, *La solidarité de la famille dans le droit criminel en Grèce* (1904). Like Boak, Westermann maintained that the association could not have arisen within the autocratic society of pharaonic Egypt and only appeared under Ptolemaic rule.

In addition to the demotic association texts from the Ptolemaic period, there are demotic examples accounts of associations dating as early as the sixth

century BC, which prove that Egypt probably did develop associations independently of Greece (Cevinal 1986; 1988; Muszynski 1977: 163-4). The first example of actual rules dates to the fourth century BC and has many similarities with the demotic rules from Ptolemaic Tebtunis (Cenival 1988). Muszynski claimed that the Egyptians exported their tradition of cult associations to the Greek world while Greeks introduced professional associations into Egypt (1977: 147, 161). Such an exchange seems unlikely, especially considering the overlap between the activities of professional and cult associations. Recently, Muhs has tried to revive the view that associations derive from a single tradition emanating from the Greeks (from whom they take the democratic principle) and spread by their migrations in the Hellenistic period (Muhs 2001: 5). However, Muhs admits that he cannot account for the pharaonic examples of associations in Egypt (Muhs 2001: 4-5) nor can he explain how the Greek rules came to be applied to traditional Egyptian practices (Muhs 2001: 5).

Aware of the Egyptian tradition and of the correspondence between Greek and Egyptian rules, Préaux modified the dialectical argument by speculating that the traditions might have grown up independently and gradually merged as they were in contact:

Nous croyons que, de part et d'autre, l'évolution du droit qui a dégagé puis isolé l'individu, a rendu nécessaire l'établissement de nouvelles solidarités qui remplacent celles de la famille défaillante. Que le besoin de ces solidarités, créées par contrat, apparaisse tant en Égypte qu'en Grèce, c'est là l'indice de cette lente unification spontanée des mœurs dans tout l'ensemble du monde antique, unification qui atteindra aussi les croyances puis la structure sociale et qui trouvera son reflet dans une unification graduelle et jamais achevée du droit, à laquelle tant de volontés ont travaillé depuis les cités classique jusqu'à l'empereur Justinien (Préaux 1948: 195).

Préaux's model of two independent but merging traditions, despite its sweeping grand narrative, avoids the difficulties of supposing a direct influence in either direction. Rostovtzeff held a similar view, namely, that religious associations were an Egyptian tradition connected with the temple, which he considered

common in the Near East generally, but later took on more Greek characteristics (Rostovtzeff 1941: 1388-9 n. 105). The evidence for Egyptian associations before the arrival of the Greeks makes a separate tradition almost undeniable even if its earlier history is still obscure.

The Hellenistic associations potentially offer a valuable comparative perspective on the membership and activities of associations in Tebtunis. Muhs took this approach and drew explicitly from recent research on Hellenistic and Roman associations (Muhs 2001: 1-2). He obtained his model for the members in Tebtunis being excluded from regular temple institutions from van Nijf's discussion about the low status of members in professional associations in the Roman world: "Members of these groups frequently had limited access to public offices and institutions, so associations may have provided them with an alternative and more accessible civic forum in which to obtain public recognition, honour and glory (van Nijf 1997: 3-23, 243-7)" (Muhs 2001: 2). The reasons have already been set out in the previous section for rejecting Muhs' argument that the cult associations in Tebtunis were made to compensate for the members exclusion from temple institutions. In addition, one may find that this assessment of Hellenistic and Roman associations is also misleading.

An important article by Gabrielsen (2001) shows that associations were an influential social and economic institution in Hellenistic Rhodes that attracted prominent and aristocratic members as well as non-citizen foreigners. Such associations might act as a useful way for Hellenistic states to integrate the sought-after foreigners into society and capitalize on their economic potential (Gabrielsen 2001: 221; Tarn 1952: 94-5). Far from being compensation for non-elites, associations served as key social networks for Rhodes' maritime success

and might be used to propel the public careers of aristocrats, politicians, and businessmen who became honored members and patrons. The dues collected by associations might be invested for profit amassing large sums that could be used to finance member services as well as religious activities or other public benefactions (Gabrielsen 2001: 222-236).

Associations in Egypt share this feature of enabling prominent Egyptian temple and state officials to harness the economic power of associations. The epigraphic record of dedications by associations is the most complete in Upper Egypt where the destruction of sites and the removal of stone was less systematic than in the Fayum. The site of Roman Dendera, with its magnificent Egyptian temples, provides a good case study.

An ambitious building program was undertaken there in the late first century BC by the nome *strategos* Ptolemaios son of Panas in collaboration with local cult associations (*6-nt*) (Vleeming 2001: texts 159-168; for a recent discussion cf. Dietze 2000). Among his many influential positions and titles, Ptolemaios was called: *strategos*, *syngenes*, brother of pharaoh, prophet (*hm-ntr*) of Hathor, prophet (*hm-ntr*) of Ihy, prophet (*hm-ntr*) of Isis, prophet (*hm-ntr*) of the gods of the temple of Dendera, overseer of the treasury of Hathor, of Isis, of Horos, and representative of Caesar (Vleeming 2001: text 161). The projects that were undertaken by him together with the association members include a new court or dromos (*hftḥ*) of Isis for the temple (text 161-2) and a “refectory” of Isis, which was perhaps like the *deipneteria* or “dinning halls” of associations found at Tebtunis and Karanis (Bernand 1981b: 6, text 159; Gallazzi 2000: 12).

Bowman and Rathbone discuss the case of Ptolemaios in their influential article on metropolitan elites in Roman Egypt (Bowman and Rathbone 1992).

They point out that during the Ptolemaic period it was common for members of the local elite such as Ptolemaios, acting as the head of cult associations, to be the benefactors of their temple and community (Bowman and Rathbone 1992: 107). Temple patronage in the Ptolemaic period was to a large extent the initiative of local elites and cult associations rather than the royal administration (Quaegebeur 1977; Manning 2001: 864-5). Bowman and Rathbone argue that a radical change occurred in the early Roman period when Ptolemaios was replaced as strategos.

The new strategos, Tryphon, dedicated the gateway of Isis in Dendara together with “those from the *metropolis*” with an inscription in Greek only. The style of the inscription differs from the bi- and trilingual dedications erected by Ptolemaios. For Bowman and Rathbone, this change exemplifies the centralization of Roman administration, which eroded the influence of local elites in favor of Alexandrian citizens and of local associations in favor of metropolitan councils (Bowman and Rathbone 1992).

Some recently published documents seem to suggest the opposite view, namely, that local elites and associations continued to take the lead in temple patronage. Tryphon appears in several more dedications texts – these all written in the Egyptian bilingual style – where he has many of the same Ptolemaic-style titles as Ptolemaios and he acts together with cult associations (Vleeming 2001: texts 170-173). Two other *stratego*i of the Dendarite nome in the early Roman period also appear in dedications acting with the support of associations (Vleeming 2001: texts 169, 174). Moreover, Tryphon’s gateway of Isis was composed entirely in hieroglyphic inscriptions, which continued to be enhanced under the following three emperors (Cauville 1999).

Nothing suggests that there was any decline in temple construction in Roman Egypt despite the lack of enthusiasm on the part of emperors, Romans, and Alexandrian elites. Judging by the names of emperors appearing in hieroglyphics (tabulated by length of reign), there is no indication that the construction of Egyptian monuments declined over the first centuries of Roman rule (Alston 2002: 203). There is a large dossier of bilingual dedications by a “representative (*rt*) of Isis” (probably the head of a local cult association), which extends throughout the first century AD (Vleeming 2001: 170, texts 179-202; van Minnen 2000: 446). Moreover, new temples continued to be constructed during the Roman period both in the Fayum and in Upper Egypt.

This activity suggests that local elites and associations were still able and willing to undertake such projects. In his study of the changes and resilience of Egyptian religion, Frankfurter claims: “Such religious associations provided more than just ritual ‘support’ for temples. They also provided a context for financial patronage and munificence that in the late third and early fourth centuries would have augmented the declining civil or imperial funds significantly” (Frankfurter 1998: 74). Thus the important role played by local elites and associations in temple patronage during the Ptolemaic period seems not to have diminished much under Roman rule (*cf.* van Minnen 2000).

One cannot assume that associations in Upper Egypt, or elsewhere, correspond to the structure of associations in Ptolemaic Tebtunis. In several instances where the details of the structure are identifiable, such as the titles and hierarchy of the leadership, there are clearly significant differences. Nevertheless, the broader social and economic aspects of associations may have interesting features in common. Much like associations in Rhodes and in Upper

Egypt, associations in Tebtunis seem to have attracted members from the local elite. Members of associations in Tebtunis participated in processions, such as the burial of sacred animals, as well as made offerings and sacrifices to the gods of the temple and to the royal cult. The close relationship to the temple, shown for example in the members' priestly titles, was also common in other associations. The many associations attested in Tebtunis probably attests to their cultural value as well as to their potential economic impact.

Chapter 4

The Demotic “Prince and Prophet” Family Dossier

4.1 Introduction

The “family dossier” discussed in this chapter is a way to describe about forty demotic documents in which many, though not all, of the parties can be associated by birth or by marriage with the same family. Nearly all of the male parties, even those whose relations to the family are unclear, bear the same string of titles, some of which are hardly attested outside of Tebtunis. These two characteristics – family relations and titles – define the selection of texts for the dossier considered in this chapter. Several groups within this selection may be considered as separate archives on the grounds of the rather poorly understood archaeological context or on the basis of internal evidence.

There are three goals in this chapter, which are to be reached in the following order. First, it is necessary to organize the texts for study by identifying, where possible, their archaeological context and by using prosopographical evidence to determine the relations of parties within the texts. Second, the most characteristic feature of the dossier, the archaic and obscure titles, will be addressed by comparing them with similar titles and the social position of their holders elsewhere in Egypt. Finally, one can begin to explore the economic activities of this family and their associates and to clarify their status in relation to the temple of Soknebtunis and to the sanctuary of Isis-Tharmuthis.

4.2 Assembling the Dossier

a. Archaeological Evidence

As was discussed in the first chapter, Grenfell and Hunt were the least meticulous of all major excavators at Tebtunis about recording the archaeological context of their papyrus discoveries. As classical scholars, Grenfell and Hunt were little interested in Egyptian texts. Their lack of concern creates difficulties for understanding the context of the demotic papyri. What few clues there are have to be collected from passing references in their publications and in the edition of the demotic texts in the Cairo Museum by Spiegelberg (1908).

After the excavations, the demotic texts, the bulk of which constitute the family dossier, were for the most part handed over to the Egyptian authorities and housed first in the Giza Museum and later moved to the new Cairo Museum.

The Gizeh Museum has retained, besides a representative selection of the miscellaneous antiquities, the most important of the demotic papyri, including those found in the town or buried beside the crocodiles and eight large rolls which were discovered tied up together with a Greek letter of clout (sic) 100 B.C. in some house rubbish in the Ptolemaic cemetery. The rest of the papyri have been sent to Oxford for publication. Subsequently they will be divided between the Museums of Gizeh and the University of California (Grenfell and Hunt 1901: 378).

In 1908, Spiegelberg published his catalogue of the collection in which he included the Tebtunis material (Spiegelberg 1908). His effort to provide an entry for even the small fragments and for papyri suggests that he published the complete collection or at least the material that was known to him. However, since the collection in Cairo has not been searched recently nor has the collection at the University of California-Berkeley, one cannot be sure that every text mentioned by Grenfell and Hunt has been published. Nevertheless, given their comment above and considering the importance of texts such as the eight large rolls tied up with the Greek letter and those buried beside crocodiles, one must consider it likely that these are represented in Spiegelberg's publication.

Besides the rules of cult associations, all or nearly all of the large demotic rolls in Spiegelberg's publication come from the family dossier. The archaeological context of the rules of cult associations is fairly well established with the help of some statements by Grenfell and Hunt: "[B]y a happy chance only a small proportion was written in demotic, though large demotic rolls were occasionally buried beside the crocodiles, these being, with the exception of a few pots, the only other antiquities found in their tombs (Grenfell et al. 1902: vii)." In a similar comment, they claim "At both Ûmm el Baragât and Khamsîn some of these mummies were wrapped or stuffed with the papyri, besides occasionally having demotic rolls buried with them ... The demotic papyri from these two sites, containing many complete documents will be published by Spiegelberg." These passing references to the large rolls buried beside crocodiles, are clarified by Spiegelberg who claims in his edition that one of the copies for the rules of a cult association (P.Cairo 30605) was "neben einer Krocodilemummie gefunden" while another (30606) was said to come from cartonnage. That leaves only four other texts, which probably also came from the tombs of crocodiles (as were most such texts whose find-spot is known: cf. P.Mil.Vogl. dem. Inv. 77; Bressiani 1994; Verhoogt 1998: 14 n. 49 and 51).

Excluding the association texts, the other large demotic rolls to which Grenfell and Hunt make passing reference are likely to be part of the family dossier. Unfortunately, there are precious few valuable pieces of information that can be recovered from the preliminary reports and papyrus editions. Regarding temples in the Fayum generally, they claim: "in nearly all of them or in their enclosures papyri of the Ptolemaic period, both Greek and demotic, have

been found, but hardly anywhere else in Fayum town sites” (Grenfell et al. 1900: 22). For Tebtunis in particular, their comment is:

at Tebtunis, though the temple itself produced no antiquities of any kind, the priests' houses yielded, besides a large quantity of later papyri, some Greek and many more demotic documents of the *Ptolemaic* period (my emphasis; Grenfell et al. 1900: 23; cf. Grenfell and Hunt 1901; 376).

On a few occasions, Grenfell and Hunt make revealing comments about the context of the demotic papyri from the temple in their editions of the Greek texts. For example, concerning a petition to the strategos (P.Tebt. 42; c. 100 BC) by a priest of Soknebtunis, they write: “The papyrus ... was found together with several demotic rolls (now at Cairo) in a house within the temple area at Tebtunis” (Grenfell et al. 1902: 145). It seems plausible that these “demotic rolls” were included in Spiegelberg’s catalogue of the papyri in the Cairo museum. The scribe mentioned in the complaint, Harmiusis, and his family are probably the scribes who wrote many of the contracts published in the Cairo catalogue and associated with the position of “astronomer of the temple” (see chapter 2).

The priest making the petition, Marres son of Marseisouchos, does not appear as a party in any of the texts in the dossier but the father’s name Marseisouchos (*M3^c-R^c-sj-Sbk* cf. entry for P.Tebt. 42 on *APIS*) appears in P.Cairo 30611 (94/3 BC) as the son of Marres where he and others lease liturgy days from priests of the fifth phyle. The name Marseisouchos son of Marres also appears in P.Cairo 30630 where he is in possession of land north of another plot leased by Sokonoppmois son of Sokonoppmois. However, lacking more contextual evidence it is dangerous to identify the man in each case by his name alone.

A second clue to the context of the demotic papyri from the temple area can be found in the edition of P.Tebt. 280 and 281 (126/125 BC). These texts are receipts for the taxes paid to the temple and the state on the purchase of a vacant space by a certain priest of Soknebtunis, Sokonopis son of Achoës. They were included in the edition of papyri from the town and temple and, unlike the papyri from cartonnage, were not attributed to any mummy. They probably came from the temple. "This papyrus (280) and 281 were found rolled up inside the demotic contract to which they refer" (Grenfell et al. 1907: 37). However, Grenfell and Hunt seem to have been mistaken about the nature of the demotic text that accompanied them.

Spiegelberg writes that P.Cairo 30620 (100/99 BC) was found rolled together with P.Tebt. 280 and 281 but that they have nothing to do with each other. He also labels the papyrus "11a". The significance of the label is lost but it may, on analogy with such labels discussed below, suggest that it belonged to a group with, for example, the two Greek papyri. P.Cairo 30620 is the cession of liturgy days in the chapel of Isis-Tharmuthis by two brothers to their oldest sister, which they inherited from their mother Tharmuthis daughter of Nekos and Tharmuthis.

Their mother had a brother named Sokonopis (P.Cairo 30612), also the child of Nekos and Tharmuthis. The name Nekos, first hesitantly suggested by Spiegelberg, was later re-read by Jelínková-Reymond (1954: 24-5, 29 n. 11) as $\beta k \beta$ "Aka" based on the form of the signs. Though she failed to make the connection, the reading would match the name Achoës, the father of Sokonopis in P.Tebt. 280-1, which was found rolled inside this demotic text. If the identification were correct, it would imply that this Sokonopis, who in demotic

employed the string of archaic titles discussed below, referred to himself in Greek simply as “priest of Soknebtunis.” Nevertheless, the *Demotisches Namenbuch* has preferred to read *N3-k3* “Nekos”, though surprisingly it offers no Egyptian equivalent for the name rendered in Greek as Achoës even though it was probably an Egyptian name. A certain Nekos, perhaps the man in question, lived in the neighboring house, which was owned by his children (P.Cairo 30620).

One can make another attempt at relating texts according to their archaeological context with Grenfell and Hunt’s comments about a Greek letter to the priests of Soknebtunis (P.Tebt. 59). “This papyrus was found tied up with eight good-sized demotic rolls (now in the Cairo Museum) in the remains of a building in the cemetery of Tebtunis” (Grenfell et al. 1902: 171; Grenfell and Hunt 1901: 378, quoted above). The Greek letter that accompanied them was addressed to the priests of Tebtunis by a certain Posidonius declaring: “Sokonophis and Opis, members of your body, have come down to the city, and intimate to me the hereditary friendship which you have for me of old” (Grenfell et al. 1902: 172). Verhoogt (1998: 12 n. 31) has suggested that these eight demotic rolls were the rules of cult associations from Tebtunis. However, this seems unlikely for the reason mentioned above and in the previous chapter, namely, that the regulations probably came from the tombs of crocodiles.

If one assumes that the eight demotic rolls were included in Spiegelberg’s catalogue, then they may be associated with the family dossier whose records form the bulk of the material. In his descriptions of these texts, Spiegelberg sometimes labeled the papyrus with a number followed by a letter. It is not known whether these labels had been on the papyrus itself as it was impossible to

see the originals. Eight papyri in the Cairo catalogue are labeled with the number 9, followed by a lowercase letter *a* through *h*. It is worth considering whether these might be the eight demotic rolls sent to the Giza Museum by Grenfell and Hunt (1901: 378).

- 9a = P.Cairo 30625 (79/8 BC).
Offering before Soknebtunis by the “prince and prophet” Onnophris son of Phanesis to farmers, *theagoi*, and village elders.
- 9b = P.Cairo 31079 (106/5 BC).
Land lease from “prince and prophet” Sokonoppmois son of Sokonoppmois and Esoeris to “prince and prophet” Sokonopis son of Sigeris and Tharmuthis.
- 9c = P.Cairo 30630 (90/89 BC).
Perpetual land lease from Petosiris son of Menches and *Ta-kt-t3i* to Sokonoppmois son of Sokonoppmois and Esoeris.
- 9(d) = P.Cairo 30631 (86/5 BC).
Perpetual land lease from “prince and prophet” and lesonis Phanesis together with the priests of Soknebtunis to “prince and prophet” Sokonopis son of Sigeris and Tharmuthis.
- 9e = P.Cairo 30626 (94/3? BC).
Land lease from “prince and prophet” Sokonoppmois son of Sokonoppmois and Esoeris to “prince and prophet” Sokonopis son of Sigeris and Tharmuthis.
- 9f = P.Cairo 30628 (120/19 BC).
House sale (located beside the chapel of Isis-Tharmuthis) from Taapis daughter of “prince and prophet” Sokonopis and Tasokonopis to her elder brother “prince and prophet” Nefrtefronpe(?).
- 9g “auf karton” = P.Cairo 30613 (94/3 BC).
Land lease from “prince and prophet” Sokonoppmois son of Sokonoppmois and Esoeris to “prince and prophet” Sokonopis son of Sigeris and Tharmuthis.
- 9h “auf karton” = P.Cairo 30615 (98/7 BC).
Land lease from “prince and prophet” Sokonoppmois son of Sokonoppmois and Esoeris to “prince and prophet” Sokonopis son of Sigeris and Tharmuthis.

The texts in this group have a remarkable unity. Many of them relate to the leases of temple land by Sokonopis son of Sigeris and Tharmuthis from Sokonoppmois son of Sokonoppmois and Esoeris whose activities are described below (4.4). One of them is a lease of temple land by Sokonopis from the lesonis and priests of Soknebtunis. The name of the principal character, Sokonopis, is too common to be certainly identified with Sokonophis, the priest, who appears in the Greek letter or with the husband of Tasokonopis in another demotic text from this group. Nevertheless, the coherence of the group gives reason to suspect that they were found together.

One cause of doubt however may be P.Cairo 30613 and 30615, which were labeled 9g and 9h but were also allegedly found in cartonnage. Spiegelberg noted that eight texts from Tebtunis in his catalogue (P.Cairo 30606, 30610, 30613-15, 30617, 30698, 31250) came from cartonnage but how he made this judgement is not clear. He may have simply inferred it from the condition of the papyrus. It is puzzling that texts so closely related as these land leases of Sokonopis from Sokonoppois should have come partly from cartonnage and partly from the town site. An alternative explanation might be that the entire group came from cartonnage, which perhaps Spiegelberg only bothered to note in these instances. Thus "9" might refer to crocodile number 9 in Grenfell and Hunt's publication of the Tebtunis papyri (1902) but the Greek papyri, besides being roughly the same date, do not support this conclusion since they are unrelated texts from Kerkeosiris. One must finally admit that there are problems with any interpretation of the find-spot even if the group as a whole may deserve to be considered together.

The other instances of Spiegelberg labeling texts according to this pattern are: “11a” (P.Cairo 30620), which was found with P.Tebt. 280-1; “7” (P.Cairo 30629), a letter to the epistates of the priests of Tebtunis; and the following texts with the number “8”.

- 8 = P.Cairo 30612 (97/6 BC).
House division from “prince and prophet” Sokonopis son of Nekos and Tharmuthis with his wife to “prince and prophet” Sokonopis son of *Sht-wr* and Tharmuthis.
- 8b = P.Cairo 30627 (102/1 BC).
“prince and prophet” so-and-so son of P3-sjf and Tharmuthis to *Ta-Hns* daughter of “prince and prophet” so-and-so.
- 8c = P.Cairo 30632 (97/6 BC).
House sale from “prince and prophet” so-and-so to so-and-so.

Two of the three texts in the group labeled 8 are too fragmentary to be related with any certainty to each other. None of the texts were reportedly found in cartonnage, which casts doubt on speculation that the numbers correspond to crocodiles. Since the significance of Spiegelberg’s numbering is lost, there may be no way to tell how the texts were related. Perhaps by re-examining the originals in the Cairo Museum one could determine whether the numbers are written on the papyri, as was the case of the T-numbers reported by Spiegelberg (see chapter 1), or whether some other system is intelligible.

b. Prosopographical Evidence

Since the archaeological context is mostly destroyed, one has to rely largely the internal evidence of names in the texts to assemble the family dossier. Unfortunately, Egyptian names are often generic and in the Cairo texts from Tebtunis many names are too common to depend upon for identifying

individuals. A name alone is not normally grounds for identification. There are some grounds when it is accompanied with the matching father's name. The best chance for identifying an individual is when both the mother and father are known and when other details such as titles and the name of the spouse or siblings also match.

The text that pulls together the most genealogical information for the family dossier is a division of property contract (P.Cairo 30612). One of the parties in the contract is Sokonopis, the younger, son of Nekos and Tharmuthis, together with his wife Taesis, daughter of Paapis and *Ta-kt-t3i*, and their daughter Tharmuthis. This Sokonopis and his wife Taesis represent the two main branches in the family dossier (see family tree: figure 6).

On the one side of the family are the children of Nekos and Tharmuthis. These include Sokonopis himself, the younger, his brother Sokonopis, the elder, and their sister Tharmuthis. If Spiegelberg's genealogical inference is correct, as seems likely, it was this Tharmuthis who purchased liturgy days in the chapel of Isis-Tharmuthis in 105/4 BC (P.Cairo 30617). She may have also been the one whose children inherited her liturgy days in the chapel and whose daughter agreed to buy them from her brothers in 100/99 BC (P.Cairo 30620; Spiegelberg 1908: viii; Jelínková-Reymond 1954: 27 n. 1).

On the other branch of the family there are the relatives of Sokonopis's wife Taesis, daughter of Paapis and *Ta-kt-t3i*. The documents include the settlements of property after marriage of her parents and her uncle (P.Cairo 30607, 30608-9), as well as a division of property between two of her uncles (P.Cairo 31254). The family into which Taesis's uncle, Paapis, the younger,

married is represented in the group of land leases on the estate of Soknebtunis (see below 4.4).

Spiegelberg's interpretation of the relationships in Taesis's family, represented in his diagram of the family tree, requires some revision (Spiegelberg 1908: viii). His mistake stems firstly from a misreading of the demotic subscriptions on the marriage contracts. He read the subscription to the marriage contract between Taesis's father Paapis and mother *Ta-kt-t3i* of 129/8 BC (P.Cairo 30607): "Geschrieben von Paapis, Sohn des Paapis. Er hat die Frau (*s-hmt*) entlassen (*h3^c=f*)." He therefore assumed it was the same Paapis who was married to Nebwotis in 124/3 BC (P.Cairo 30608) but even there he read in the subscription that he divorced this wife as well. Lüddeckens in his re-edition has corrected the reading to *sh Pa-h^cpj tp=f n3j* "(Was) geschrieben hat *Pa-h^cpj*, (Sohn des) *Pa-h^cpj*, eigenhändig, ist dieses" (Lüddeckens 1960: 160-1 n. 737). We learn from other texts (P.Cairo 30612, 31254) that the two men named Paapis were probably brothers, one having the second name Luma, the other (who married Nebwotis) being called "the younger" (as in P.Cairo 30608). They also had an older brother named Sokonopis (P.Cairo 31254).

The group of land leases and related texts (many in the group labeled "9a" to "9h" by Spiegelberg) may have belonged to relatives of Nebwotis, daughter of Sigeris and Tharmuthis and wife of Paapis the younger. Seidl (1962: 32-3) briefly discussed this group of texts, which he regarded as the archive of Sebekhotep, son of Sigeris and of Tharmuthis. However, the name Sebekhotep (*Sbk-h^ctp*) was a misreading by Spiegelberg (P.Cairo 30631) and should in fact be read Sokonopis (*Sbk-h^cpj*; NB 918). Sokonopis, the brother of Nebwotis, received a lease of land on the estate of Soknebtunis from the lesonis and the

priests of the five phylai (P.Cairo 30631). He is probably identical with the Sokonopis who appears most frequently in this group of documents leasing land from Sokonoppmois, son of Sokonoppmois and Esoeris.

Like Spiegelberg, Seidl thought that the husband of Nebwotis, Paapis, had previously divorced his wife *Ta-kt-t3i*. He therefore assumed that the contract from the previous marriage (P.Cairo 30607) went with the papers of Nebwotis, which he supposed were kept by her brother (Seidl 1962: 33). Such circumstances seem unlikely for the reasons mentioned.

On the present evidence, it is hazardous to guess with whom the documents were kept. Spiegelberg's information about provenance, considered above, suggests *prima facie* that some came from cartonnage while others came from the town. The family relationships point to several interrelated groups of documents: 1) those of children of Sigeris and Tharmuthis, i.e., Seidl's "Archive of Sobekhotep"; 2) those of the children of Onnophris and Taesis, i.e., Sokonopis, Paapis, and Paapis, the younger; and 3) those of the children of Nekos and Tharmuthis, i.e., Sokonopis, Sokonopis, the younger, and Tharmuthis.

As one might expect from the limitations of using names for identification, there are many individuals and smaller family clusters that cannot be related with certainty to this family. However, the records of their activities are contemporary in date, the people often come into contact with members of this family and many of them share the same titles, which may have been hereditary. Thus the titles may provide yet another criterion for assembling the family dossier.

4.3 Honorary Titles in the Family Dossier

Titles in the family dossier, by all appearances, are of a different type from titles discussed in the previous chapters. The titles in chapter 2 were with few exceptions common in Egyptian temples outside Tebtunis and generally indicated an administrative role or priestly function. Similarly, the titles in chapter 3 were characteristic of cult associations and of the temples from which they drew their membership. By contrast, there is no apparent connection between the titles discussed in this section and the holders' occupation or service in the temple. Most of these titles are attested only in the Fayum villages, Tebtunis and Soknopaiou Nesos.

rpʿj m-ntry (ἐμνειθης ὄρπαις) “prince and prophet (?)”

The two parts of this title never appear separately in the documentary texts from Tebtunis. Almost all males in the family dossier employ the title but only in the following contexts: 1) as a party in a contract, 2) as the father of a woman who appears either as a party in the contract or in the body of the contract. The title generally does not occur when males are mentioned in the body of the contract (for example, as neighbors of a property) nor does it ever occur with the signatures of parties, witnesses, or notaries. In contrast to the title *b3k* + divine name, discussed in chapter 2, the title is never employed in conjunction with a profession.

The first part of the title, *rpʿj* “prince,” has a long history that is not restricted to Tebtunis or to the Fayum region. The meaning and various orthographies of the word were discussed by Gardiner (1947: 14-19). The title was already established in the Old Kingdom: “hereditary prince, nobleman” (Jones 2000: 315). It continued to have this meaning in demotic (*Glossar* 245-6).

In the bilingual texts from Soknopaiou Nesos, *rpʿj* was transliterated into Greek as ὄρπαις (Reich 1910/11; Pestman 1965: 185). The title was almost always associated with wealthy and powerful individuals and families, including generals and high priests, in Egyptian society (Gardiner 1947: 14ff.). The famous Parthenios who executed a major building program on behalf of a temple or association in Roman Coptos was also titled *rpʿj* (Vleeming 2001: 170, text 200; cf. chapter 3). It was also used as an epithet of the god Geb (e.g. Vleeming 2001: texts 158, 186-7, 196-7, 199)

One example of the title *rpʿj* is found in the recently excavated XII dynasty tomb of Wadjet, located at Khelua in the southwest Fayum, not far from Tebtunis (Bresciani 1993; 1995). Among his many titles, Wadjet was called, “nobile (*rpʿj*) e principe, cancelliere del re del Basso Egitto, amico unico, colui che vede la bellezza del suo signore nelle sedi più private, preposto alla palude” (Bresciani 1993: 7, 13 fig. 1b) as well as “preposto ai profeti” (Bresciani 1995: 3). This example may be especially relevant to the formation of the titles in Tebtunis on account of its close geographical proximity. Bresciani speculates that the tomb may have been part of the necropolis for the village of Tebtunis or Narmuthis during the Middle Kingdom (Bresciani 1995: 1).

The title *rpʿj* as it appears in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods was probably employed as an archaic and honorific title by Egyptian elites. Lüddeckens discussed the title briefly in relation to its attestation in the Tebtunis texts: “Schon aus der Tatsache, dass ein *Lesoni* priester den Titel *rpʿj* führt, geht mit Wahrscheinlichkeit hervor, dass auch die übrigen Träger dieses Titels zu einer gehobenen Volksschicht gehört haben” (Lüddeckens 1960: 244). Similarly, Reymond argued that the title *rpʿj* was “purely honorific and was used to describe

members of the higher classes” (Reymond 1966/5: 453). The title’s meaning of “hereditary prince” – as also attested in earlier times – seems to accord well with the evidence from Tebtunis where male children seem to take the title, along with other titles discussed in the section, from their fathers.

The title *m-ntry* was unknown to Spiegelberg when he edited the Cairo texts. It was on the basis of the Greek bilingual texts from Soknopaiou Nesos that the reading was established (cf. on-line *CDD* entry for *rp^{cj} m-ntry* and forthcoming *CDD* entry for *m-ntry*). Reich’s interpretation remains today the most convincing (Reich 1910). He points out the equivalence of *rp^{cj} m-ntry* with the title rendered in Greek as ἐμνειθης ὀρπαις with the order of the titles the opposite as in the demotic usage. Reproducing every writing of the title in the texts from Tebtunis, he observes that *m-ntry* begins with the sign for *m* followed by the sign for “god” (*ntr*) and finally the sign for either *y* or *t*, ending with the divine determinative, which might indicate a word in the semantic category of divinity (Reich 1910: 273-4). However, Reich was uncertain about the word’s meaning and etymology. In his edition the bilingual contract from Soknopaiou Nesos (P.BM 262), he apparently comes to the conclusion that the title was a phonetic writing for (*h*)*m-ntr*, “prophet” (Reich 1910/11: 26; see chapter 2).

Since Reich, several other interpretations of the title have been offered but there is little agreement about the solution to the problem. Jelínková-Reymond (1954: 28-9) proposed to read the first sign as *mr* “overseer, chief” and the following as a writing of *hm-ntr* “prophet” in order to arrive at the title known in pharaonic Egypt as *imi-r3 hm-ntr* “grand-prêtre.” This title, “preposto ai profeti,” evidently appears in the Middle Kingdom tomb near Tebtunis of Wadjit, mentioned above, along with his other titles including “nobile (*rp^{cj})” and*

“preposto alla palude” (Bresciani 1995: 3, 14-5 fig. 8, 10; 1993: 7, 13 fig. 1b). However, there are real difficulties in seeing the writing in the demotic texts from Tebtunis as *mr hm-ntr* as Jelínková-Reymond herself admitted: “cette lecture que nous propose est purement conjecturale” (Jelínková-Reymond 1954: 28).

More recently, Quaegebeur has interpreted it as a phonetic writing of *hm-N.t* “prophet of Neith” based on the appearance of ἐμνειθης in P.BM 262 (see *m-ntry* entry in *CDD* forthcoming; cf. Quaegebeur 1975: 117-8; Reich 1910/11; Schentuleit forthcoming). However, this interpretation is doubtful on account of the context in Tebtunis where, as the next example will show, the title occurs in connection with the royal cult.

In sum, the title appears to have a connection with priestly service and elite status. Though the exact reading of *m-ntry* is still uncertain, the writing of *ntr* “god” appears likely as does the divine determinative. A phonetic writing of *hm-ntr* “prophet” is a possible interpretation. Similarly, the word *rpʿj* is most frequently associated with powerful priests who inherit the title. However, as Jelínková-Reymond (1954: 29) has rightly noted, the title *rpʿj m-ntry* was employed by many people at the same time in Tebtunis, mostly of the same family, and therefore probably does not designate an actual office or function in the temple. One is inclined to accept her conclusion: “il est vraisemblable que les deux titres archaïques furent adoptés dans cette région comme désignation honorifique dans le but de marquer un certain rang social” (Jelínková-Reymond 1954: 29). The same conclusion might equally hold true for each of the variations of the title to be discussed next.

rp^{cj} m-ntry n3 ntr.w nhm n3 ntr.w sn.w n3 ntr.w mnḥ n3 ntr.w mr-it=f n3 ntr.w nti pr “prince and prophet (?) of the gods Soter^ϣ, the gods Adel^ϣ, the gods Euerget^ϣ, the gods Philopater^ϣ and the gods Epiphan^ϣ.”

The title *rp^{cj} m-ntry* is sometimes followed by the titlature of the Ptolemaic kings. It appears to be followed by a direct genitive construction. This may imply that the holder was in some way connected with the cult of the deified pharaoh (Lüddeckens 1960: 244). Jelínková-Reymond noted that the connection gave strength to the idea that *m-ntry*, which she proposed to read *mr ḥm-ntr*, had a religious significance. However, she also confessed that the title *mr ḥm-ntr* was not usually associated the royal cult. “Pour expliquer pareil fait, on songe à une adjonction postérieure au groupe des deux titres anciens, adjonction fondée sur la formation d’un titre plus ou moins honorifique d’après les modèles anciens” (Jelínková-Reymond 1954: 28).

One example of the royal titlature being associated, at least indirectly, with the title *ḥm-ntr* is furnished by a papyrus from Gebelen (P.Ryl.dem. 25. Griffith 1909: 154-5, 282-3). The text itself apparently concerns a gathering of priests in the forecourt of the temple and is phrased in similar terms as those used to describe a meeting of priests in Tebtunis (Glanville 1933). The content of this fragmentary text was regarded by Griffith as the election of a representative, but what matters here is the signatures of the priests listed by phyle at the end the document. The head of each phyle was called *ḥm-ntr n Wrn.w ḥm-ntr Sm.w ḥn-k(?) n3 ntr.w mnḥ n3 ntr.w mr-it.w n3 ntr.w nti pr p3 ntr a-tny it=f p3 ntr mr-mw.t p3 ntr ḥwn mr it=f p3 ntr.w mr-mwt.w p3 Swtr* “the prophet of (Urem), prophet of (Sem), ka-priest(?) of the beneficent gods, the gods who love their father, the gods manifest, the gods whose father was noble, mother-loving god, the youthful god loving his father, the beneficent god, the gods loving their mother, the Soter”

(Griffith 1909: 283). It had been stated in the Canopus decree that the priests of the fifth phyle were required to include the names of the deified sovereigns in their own titlature (Simpson 1996: 228-31). It may be that the addition of the royal titlature to the titles of priests was exercised in a variety of ways in different locales leading to some unusual innovations such as its connection to the obscure titles *rp^cj m-ntry*.

It has already been noted that *rp^cj m-ntry* was probably not an office itself since so many individuals appear to hold it simultaneously. It was more likely an honorary title designating social status. The addition of the titlature of the Ptolemies appears as merely an extension of this more abbreviated form of the title. This is evident in a number of cases in which the same individual appears sometimes with the full title and sometimes with its more abbreviated form (see appendix 1).

rp^cj m-ntry hrj šj km3 hrj šj rs nb tmnt “prince and prophet (?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west”

Another possible extension to the title *rp^cj m-ntry* is the even more problematic string of titles designating the overseer of the pool. The word *šj* here translated as “pool” could also mean “lake” or some other body of water. Like the addition of the titlature of the Ptolemies, this string of titles may sometimes appear in its full form and sometimes be abbreviated to simply *rp^cj m-ntry* for the same person (see appendix 1). The high social status that these titles may have represented seems to be confirmed by P.Cairo 30631, as noted above, since the lesonis of the temple of Soknebtunis holds this string of titles (Lüddeckens 1960: 244).

It does not seem likely that the “overseer of the pool” is an occupational title in the Tebtunis texts. Its appearance in another context in earlier times is translated hesitantly by Gardiner as “ship-captain” (Gardiner 1917: 34 n. 9; Jones 1988: 113). Jelínková-Reymond prefers the occupational interpretation even for the Tebtunis texts. Based on some earlier examples, she suggests that it designated a regional administrator (Jelínková-Reymond 1954: 42 n. 4, 43 n. 16). However, in the documents from Tebtunis, where multiple people held the title simultaneously, such an interpretation seems untenable.

The first part of the string of titles, *ḥrj šj km3*, is translated by Lüddeckens as “Vorsteher (des) Schilfsees” (1960: 244). This interpretation, which is followed by the *CDD* (“reed-sea”; *CDD* forthcoming), might conjure the notion of the *δουμοί*, which were swampy areas known to exist in the area around Tebtunis (Bonneau 1982). In Wadjet’s tomb from the Tebtunis area of the Middle Kingdom, mentioned above, he has the title “preposto alla palude” (Bresciani 1993: 7 gives the translation; cf. Kirby and Rathbone 1995: 31 mention his title, “prince of the lake”). However, Lüddeckens himself observes that the “seas” apparently referred to “sacred pools” (Lüddeckens 1960: 244).

There is an argument for accepting a different interpretation, proposed by Reymond, instead of Lüddeckens’ “Schilfsee”. Reymond regards the word as *km3* “creation” rather than as *km3* “reed” (Reymond 1966/5: 454). The determinative for the writing in the Tebtunis examples seems to favor the former since the latter should take the plant determinative (*Glossar* 537). Reymond connects this title with the cult of the creator of the world known in Greco-Roman times but she adds: “If our suggestion is accepted, it will follow that the ritual enactment on the sacred pool required a special official of the cult and

consequently that the title *hrj šj* described an official connected with the local cults” (Reymond 1965/6: 454). With this statement Reymond oversteps the evidence since, as was noted, multiple people held the title and performed diverse activities not restricted to the service within the sanctuary of Isis-Tharmuthis to which she refers (1965/6: 454).

There have been few suggestions about the meaning of the second in the string of titles, *hrj šj rs nb imnt*, translated here as “overseer of the south pool, lord of the west.” Those who have worked on Tebtunis texts in which the title appears have always interpreted the last three words, *rs-nb-imnt*, as a compound qualifying *šj* “pool” but have been unable to translate it (Spiegleberg 1908: *passim*; Jelinková-Reymond 1954; Lüddeckens 1960: 244; cf. entry for *m-ntry* *CDD* forthcoming). However, it is better to break them into two separate titles: *hrj šj rs* “overseer of the south pool” and *nb imnt* “lord of the west”. Reymond regards the title *nb imnt* “lord of the west” to be the epithet designating the god Osiris (Reymond 1965/6: 454-5).

rp^{cj} m-ntry hrj šj km3 hrj šj rs nb imnt n3 ntr.w nhm n3 ntr.w sn.w n3 ntr.w mnḥ n3 ntr.w mr-it=f n3 ntr.w ntl pr “prince and prophet (?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west, of the gods Soter^ε, the gods Adelph^ωi, the gods Euerget^ωs, the gods Philopat^ωres, the gods Epiphane^ιs”

The title *rp^{cj} m-ntry* was apparently expanded in another novel way by the addition of the titlature of the deified Ptolemies after the string of titles involving “overseer of the pool.” This poses problems that no scholar has adequately addressed. Its usage by individuals who elsewhere employ the shorter forms (see appendix 1) again suggests that the addition of the royal titlature is an expansion or an elaboration of the more abbreviated versions that have been

discussed. As was noted earlier, other priests, such as those at Gebelen (P.Ryl.dem. 25; Griffith 1909: 154-5, 282-3) appended the titles of the Ptolemies to their own priestly titles. The unusual juxtaposition of the royal titulature with the obscure string of titles in Tebtunis may be the result of the local integration of the royal cult into this particular religious and social tradition.

rp^cj m-ntry hrj šj km3 hrj šj rs nb imnt nb w^cb hrj šj N3.w-nfr-ir-šty “prince and prophet (?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west, lord of purity, overseer of the pool of Nephersatis”

The final variation of the *rp^cj m-ntry* title from Tebtunis to consider in this chapter has not previously been noted by any scholar. Its only occurrence (P.Cairo 30626; 94/3 BC), was previously unrecognized. Spiegelberg read simply “Der *rp^cj* und ..., Vorsteher des Sees [*km3*, Vorsteher des Sees] *Rs-nb-imnt* der *Is.t n3 nfr šy* (=Isis Nepherses)” (Spiegelberg 1908: 78). The photograph in the edition is of poor quality but one may confidently read: *rp^cj m-ntry hrj šj [km3 hrj šj rs nb] imnt nb w^cb hrj šj N3.w-nfr-ir-šty* “prince and prophet (?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west, lord of purity, overseer of the pool of Nephersatis” (cf. Zauzich 1977: text 7). This new reading enables one to compare the Tebtunis titles with those known from Soknopaiou Nesos.

In the Soknopaiou Nesos texts of the Ptolemaic and early Roman periods one encounters the demotic title, “lord of purity, overseer of the pool of the sea (*W3d-wr*) of Nephersatis” (e.g. Zauzich 1977: texts 7-8; P.Ox.Griffith 52, 73; P.Ryl. III. 45). The writing in the Tebtunis example (P.Cairo 30626) is exactly the same except for the omission of the word *W3d-wr* “sea” (lit. “great green” and often used of Lake Moeris: *Glossar* 105). The Greek transliterations of this title

in bilingual texts – e.g. νεβουαπει ρισεει ρισιγετου νεφορσατι – were discussed by Griffith (1909: 301-2 n. 1). He points out that the Greek versions differ slightly from the demotic by having ρισεει (= *hrj šj* “overseer of the pool”) followed redundantly by ρισιγετου (= *hrj šj W3d-wr* “overseer of the pool of the sea”) in the genitive case, whose contrast to the dative case of the rest of the title seems inexplicable (P.Ryl. 45; 43 AD; Griffith 1909: 301 n. 1). Nephersatis appears to be the name of a goddess, usually written with the snake determinative, implying a serpent-divinity (Griffith 1909: 301 n. 1; for discussion cf. Reymond 1965/6: 456).

The evidence for people holding these titles at Soknopaiou Nesos suggests that they were members of the local elite often associated with the temple, though the titles themselves doubtfully designated a specific priestly office. Reymond’s suggestion that they were simply honorary titles, perhaps borne by priests, seems most plausible. The title *nb w^cb* “lord of purity” is attested on its own apart from the other titles in this string. It was generally borne by people who were priests or associated with the temple (Reymond 1965/6: 451-2).

In an early Roman text from Soknopaiou Nesos, the *lesonis* and the priests of the five phyle issued a receipt by to a man paying a temple tax. There the *lesonis* had the titles, “lord of purity, overseer of the pool of the sea of Nephersatis” (P.Berlin 15685; 138-161 AD; Zauzich 1977: text 7). This is strikingly similar to the example from Tebtunis (P.Cairo 30631) where a lease of temple land is issued by the priests of the five phyle and the *lesonis*, who had the titles “prince and prophet (?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west.” Another example (P.Berlin 15667; 45/6 AD;

Zauzich 1977: text 8), also from Soknopaiou Nesos, is a payment by one man with the title “lord of purity, overseer of the pool of the sea of Nephersatis” to another man with the same title who is also the administrator (*shn*) of the priests of the temple.

On the basis of the two Soknopaiou Nesos texts, Zauzich comments: “scheint die ganze Titulatur einen an der Spitze der Priesterschaft von Dime stehenden Mann zu bezeichnen” (Zauzich 1977: 159). The same conclusion would seem to apply also to the examples from Tebtunis. However, one should not assume that the titles necessarily designated a position in the priesthood. Rather, one may suppose that the titles were associated with the traditions of a particular family or social group that also happened to have an important influence within the temple.

The example from Tebtunis (P.Cairo 3062^b), based on the new reading offered above, is quite extraordinary because the Tebtunis titles and the Soknopaiou Nesos titles are joined together to designate one man. This seems almost to prove that the titles cannot designate a specific role but were more likely honorary in nature. The man in question is Sokonopmois, son of Sokonopmois and Esoeris, and is one of the principle characters in the family dossier (see appendix 1). He farmed and leased land on the temple estate of Soknebtunis in the village. The man who leased his land, “prince and prophet” Sokonopis, was a relative of the other characters in the family dossier. The economic activities of these people will be considered in the following section.

4.4 Economic Relations with the Temple of Soknebtunis

The final aspect of the family dossier to consider in this chapter is its relationship with the temple of Soknebtunis. There are two main points of intersection between the family and the temple: first, the entitlement of certain female members to revenue from the temple of Soknebtunis by means of service in the sanctuary of Isis-Tharmuthis; and second, the control of land on the estate of Soknebtunis. The first of these reveals how small local sanctuaries could be tied to the administration and economy of larger village temples. The second illustrates the various roles played by the temple and private individuals in the management of temple land in Tebtunis.

The chapel of Isis-Tharmuthis is located at the southern end of the dromos at the entrance to the temple of Soknebtunis (see figure 2). In front of the chapel there is an open area of about ten meters before the edge of the dromos, an area that is traversed by a limestone pavement, which was added in the early Roman period with the repavement of the dromos (see figure 5). Prior to that, during the Ptolemaic period, the dromos was wider.

Though the structure dates at least to the beginning of the Ptolemaic period, when the nearby temenos wall of the Soknebtunis was built, the first evidence for religious activity in the sanctuary is during the phase labelled 4000-II, roughly the second and first century BC (Hadj-Minaglou 2000: 60-61). This is also the period that corresponds to its use as a sanctuary in the demotic texts. The objects found in the excavation of this layer include fragments of steles, an offering table, and the small door of the *naos* where the image of the god was kept. They provide an insight into how the sanctuary was being used at this time (Hadj-Minaglou 2000: 54, 140-141).

The demotic texts in the family dossier provide further details about the social practices that governed the sanctuary and its relationship to the temple of Soknebtunis. In the two documents concerning liturgy days in the sanctuary (P.Cairo 30617, 30620), female members of the family are entitled to revenues from their days of service. The earlier of these texts (P.Cairo 30617; 105/4, on the date see Jelínková-Reymond 1954: 27 n. 1) records the purchase of one and a half liturgy days by Tharmuthis, daughter of the “prince and prophet” Nekos and Tharmuthis. She purchased the days from two women and a man whose mother was named Tharmuthis and whose fathers each bear the title “prince and prophet”. In the body of the contract the children state that they had inherited these liturgy days from their mother.

The woman Tharmuthis who purchased these days of service may also be the mother of the parties in the other contract (P.Cairo 30620; 100/99 BC; Spiegelberg 1908: viii; Jelínková-Reymond 1954: 27 n. 1). This text records the cession of two liturgy days in the chapel to a certain Tharmuthis from her two brothers. They claim that the revenues for these days belong to her as her “maintainence (*s^cnh*) in the name of the woman Tharmuthis, daughter of “prince and prophet” Nekos whose mother is Tharmuthis, our mother, your mother.”

The two texts (P.Cairo 30617, 30620) give the impression that women played an important role as attendants in the sanctuary of Isis-Tharmuthis. The inheritance of the liturgy days was in both cases matrilineal. Moreover, within this family the female theophoric name, Tharmuthis, is unusually common. It probably reflects their association with the cult of Isis-Tharmuthis.

The revenue to which one was entitled for service in the sanctuary seems to have derived at least in part from the temple of Soknebtunis. P.Cairo 30617 lists the rights of the new owner of the liturgy days:

À toi ceci appartient : le 'jour liturgique' ci-dessus mentionné, un et demi, avec sa spécification ; l'oratoire qui est bâti, <couvert> et qui est pourvu de poutres et de portes [en haut et en bas] avec sa spécification ; les livraisons, les rations, les attributions, les denrées (en) argent et (en) céréales de toute sorte avec leur spécification ; les revenus (dépendant) du temple (avec les revenus dépendant) du Domaine Royal, les offrandes du temple principal ci-dessus mentionné (et qui viendront) du champ, de la ville, du fleuve, de (tout) endroit (appartenant) au temple ou de tout autre lieu au monde, ainsi que ce qui leur sera ajouté dès ce jour dorénavant (Jelínková-Reymond 1954: 26).

Jelínková-Reymond is probably correct to interpret the references to the principal temple as an indication that the sanctuary was "la dépendance d'un centre administrative" (Jelínková-Reymond 1954: 33 n. 31). Thus the chapel of Isis-Tharmuthis was probably associated with the temple of Soknebtunis not only by its proximity but also by its administrative structure. The relationship between small sanctuaries such as this one and large village temples has been discussed by Otto who concludes that they were almost invariably satellite dependencies (Otto 1905: chap. 2 sec. 1.A). The recently published ostraca from Narmuthis provide a good illustration. Priests from there went to the neighboring villages to supply small sanctuaries that depended on the temple in Narmuthis for their maintenance (Gallo 1992).

Relatives of the family who served in the chapel of Isis-Tharmuthis have also left documents concerning their relationship with the temple of Soknebtunis. The most important group of such texts is the series of land leases by Sokonopis son of Sigeris and Tharmuthis. This group was labeled by Seidl as the archive of Sobekhotep but the reading should be corrected to Sokonopis (Seidl 1962: 32-3). The archive has been neglected by most previous scholars, partly because of the preliminary manner in which it is published. Since the readings and

translations require thorough revision only some aspects of the archive may be treated here.

Most of the texts in this group concern the business between Sokonopis son of Sigeris and Tharmuthis and Sokonoppmois son of Sokonoppmois and Tharmuthis. Both of these men have the strings of titles beginning with *rp^cj m-ntry* “prince and prophet” discussed above. Sokonoppmois is the only one to appear in the Tebtunis texts with additional titles known from Soknopaiou Nesos, “lord of purity, overseer of the pool of Nephersatis” (P.Cairo 3062~~6~~). In the previous section it was suggested that such titles are generally associated with members of the local elite and temple personnel though they doubtfully designated a specific office.

Sokonoppmois appears to have controlled a significant amount of land in Tebtunis. Much of his land was on the divine endowment (*htp-ntr*) of Soknebtunis but it was evidently under his control, at least during his lifetime, as he was able to lease it and collect rent (P.Cairo 30613, 30614, 30615, 30626, 31079, 30630, cf. 30631). A few of the surviving documents are apparently the successive renewals of the lease on one area of temple land to Sokonopis between 98 BC and 88 BC (P.Cairo 30615, 30613, 30626, 30614). An earlier transaction between the two men concerns a one-year lease of a different plot that was not temple land but was adjacent to the Sokonopis’s other fields (P.Cairo 30679; 106/5 BC).

In 90/89 BC, Sokonoppmois obtained a plot of land from a certain Petosiris who held the same honorary titles, and he apparently held this land in perpetuity: *hsb.t 27 š^c dt* “(from) year 27 for ever” (P.Cairo 30630 1.11). Spiegelberg interprets it as an “Erbpacht (als Priesterlehen)” (Spiegelberg 1908:

83). Crawford refers to this text as an example of “priests ceding domains on perpetual lease” (Crawford 1972: 96 n. 3). It is conceivable that Sokonopmois acquired his temple land by virtue of some privileges for priestly offices that he may have held as was sometimes the case in other temples (Manning 1995: 242). However, whatever rights he had over the temple land, it may have fallen short of real ownership since it seems to have gone back under the control of the temple after his death.

The redistribution of some of Sokonopmois’s land was evidently the occasion for the contract, mentioned several times above, that the lesonis and the priests of the five phylai of the temple of Soknebtunis issued in the year 86/5 (P.Cairo 30631). Spiegelberg interprets the text again as an “Erbpacht (als Priesterlehen)” and the recipient is Sokonopis, the same man who used to lease the land belonging to Sokonopmois. The text has several lacunae and difficult readings but it refers to Sokonopmois in two places in connection with the land (ll. 9, 10), the second of which apparently alludes to his death: “Du nimmst ihre Bäume und ihre Früchte von dem Wuchs des Jahres 33 an, so wie(?) es zu der Lebenszeit des Sokonopmois war – und es sind 3 Jahre her, dass er starb ...” (Spiegelberg 1908: 86; cf. Crawford 1972: 96 n. 3). If this interpretation is correct, it may imply that the temple of Soknebtunis distributed land on its estate to individuals who assumed control of it, including the right to lease it and collect rent, during their lifetime but regained control when the individual died.

These connections between the characters in the family dossier and the temple of Soknebtunis are just two aspects of the rich economic data available in the published demotic papyri from Tebtunis. The family profited economically from their relations with the temple by their service in the sanctuary of Isis-

Tharmuthis and by their control of land on the divine endowment of Soknebtunis. This relationship of family with the temple may be reflected in the strings of titles employed by people in the documents. It may also explain why some of the texts were probably found inside the temple enclosure together with Greek texts relating to the priests. This sketch of the family dossier does not exhaust the information available. Further study and a new edition of the texts may provide even more insight into the organization of the temple of Soknebtunis in the Ptolemaic period.

Appendix 1

Prosopography of “Prince and Prophet” Title Holders in Tebtunis¹

Wn-nfr (Onnophris)

30607 (129/8 BC)

rp^cj m-ntry n3 ntr.w nti nhm n3 ntr.w sn.w n3 ntr.w mnḥ. “prince and prophet(?) of the gods Soter^ε, the gods Adelphoi, and the gods Euergetai .”

Spouse: Taesis

Children: *Ta-kt-t3j*

Wn-nfr (Onnophris)

30625 (79/8 BC)

rp^cj m-ntry ḥrj šj km3 ḥrj šj rs nb imnt. “prince and prophet(?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west” (30625).

Parents: Phanesis

P3-di-Wsir (Petosiris)

30630 (90/89 BC), 30631 (86/5 BC)

rp^cj m-ntry ḥrj šj km3 ḥrj šj rs nb imnt. “prince and prophet(?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west” (30630).

Parents: Menches and *Ta-kt-t3j*

P3-di-Wsir (Petosiris), the elder

30620 (100/99 BC)

rp^cj m-ntry ḥrj šj km3 ḥrj šj rs nb imnt. “prince and prophet(?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west” (30620).

Parents: Petosiris and Tharmuthis

Siblings: Petosiris (younger), Triphis

P3-di-Wsir (Petosiris)

30620 (100/99 BC)

rp^cj m-ntry “prince and prophet(?)” (30620).

Spouse: Tharmuthis

Children: Petosiris (elder), Petosiris (younger), *T3j-n-rp^cy*

Pa-n-Is.t (Phanesis)

30610 (66/5 BC)

rp^cj m-ntry “prince and prophet(?)” (30610).

Parents: Petosiris

Pa-n-Is.t (Phanesis)

30631 (86/5 BC)

¹ The text numbers on the second line of each entry are all P.Cairo (Spiegelberg 1908).

rpʿj m-ntry hrj šj km3 hrj šj rs nb imnt. “prince and prophet(?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west.” *mr-šn n Sbk-nb-tn p3 ntr ʿ3* “lesonis of Soknebtunis, the great god” (30631).

Parents: Phanesis

Pa-hʿpj (Paapis), the elder, also *Lwm3*

30607 (129/8 BC), 30612 (97/6 BC)

rpʿj m-ntry n3 ntr.w nti nhm n3 ntr.w sn.w n3 ntr.w mnḥ n3 ntr.w mr-it=f n3 ntr.w nti pr. “prince and prophet(?) of the gods Soter^{ε6}, the gods Adelphoi, the gods Euergetai, the gods Philopatō^{ε5} and the gods Epiphaneis” (30607). *rpʿj m-ntry*. “prince and prophet(?)” (30612).

Parents: Paapis and Tasokonopis

Siblings: Paapis (younger), Sokonopis

Spouse: *Ta-kt-t3j*

Children: Taesis

Pa-hʿpj (Paapis), the younger

30608-9 (124/3 BC), 31254 (106/5 BC)

rpʿj m-ntry hrj šj km3 hrj šj rs nb imnt n3 ntr.w nhm n3 ntr.w sn.w n3 ntr.w mnḥ. “prince and prophet(?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west, of the gods Soter^{ε6}, the gods Adelphoi, and the gods Euergetai” (30608-9). *rpʿj m-ntry hrj šj km3 hrj šj rs nb imnt*. “prince and prophet(?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west” (31254).

Parents: Paapis and Tasokonopis

Siblings: Paapis (elder), Sokonopis

Spouse: Nebwotis

Pa-hʿpj (Paapis)

30617 (105/4? BC)

rpʿj m-ntry “prince and prophet(?)” (30617).

Spouse: Tasokonopis

Children: Taapis

N3-nfr-t3j=f-rmp.t (?)

30628 (120/19 BC)

rpʿj ... [...hrj] šj [r]s nb imnt n3 ntr.w nhm “prince ... [... overseer of the sou]th pool, lord of the west of the gods Soter” (30628).

Parents: Sokonopis and Tasokonopis

Siblings: Taapis

N3-k3 (Nekos)

30617 (105/4? BC), 30612 (96/7 BC), 30620 (100/99)

rpʿj m-ntry “prince and prophet(?)” (30617, 30620).

Parents: Paapis

Spouse: Tharmouthis

Children: Sokonopis (elder), Sokonopis (younger), Tharmuthis

Sj-wr (Sigeris)

30608-9 (124/3 BC), 30615 (98/7 BC), 30613, 30626 (94/3 BC), 30614 (89/8 BC), 30631 (86/5 BC)

rpʿj m-ntry. “prince and prophet(?)” (30608-9).

Spouse: Tharmuthis

Children: Nebwotis, Sokonopis

Sbk-hʿpj (Sokonopis)

31254 (106/5 BC)

rpʿj m-ntry hrj šj km3 hrj šj rs nb imnt. “prince and prophet(?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west” (31254).

Parents: Paapis and Tasokonopis

Siblings: Paapis (elder), Paapis (younger)

Sbk-hʿpj (Sokonopis), the younger, also *Nni3*

30612 (97/96 BC)

rpʿj m-ntry hrj šj km3 hrj šj rs nb imnt. “prince and prophet(?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west” (30612)

Parents: Nekos and Tharmuthis

Siblings: Sokonopis (elder), Tharmuthis

Spouse: Taesis

Children: Tharmuthis

Sbk-hʿpj (Sokonopis), the third, also *B13* (Bela)

30617 (105/4? BC)

rpʿj m-ntry “prince and prophet(?)” (30617).

Parents: Onnophis

Spouse: Taapis

Children: *Ta-kt-t3j*, Taesis

Sbk-hʿpj-p3-m3ʿ (Sokonoppmois)

31079 (106/5 BC), 30615 (98/7 BC), 30613, 30626 (94/3 BC), 30630 (90/89 BC), 30614 (89/8 BC), 30631 (86/5 BC)

rpʿj m-ntry hrj šj km3 hrj šj rs nb imnt. “prince and prophet(?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west” (31079, 30615, 30630). *rpʿj m-ntry*. “prince and prophet(?)” (30613). *rpʿj m-ntry hrj šj [km3 hrj šj] rs nb imnt nb wʿb hrj šj N3-nfr-ir-štj*. “prince and prophet(?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west, lord of purity, overseer of the pool of Nephersatis (30626).

Parents: Sokonoppmois and Esoeris

Sbk-hʿpj (Sokonopis)

31079 (106/5), 30615 (98/7 BC), 30613, 30626 (94/3 BC), 30614 (89/8 BC), 30631 (86/5 BC)

rpʿj m-ntry hrj šj km3 hrj šj rs nb imnt. “prince and prophet(?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west” (31079, 30615, 30613, 30626, 30631).

Parents: Sigeris and Tharmuthis

Siblings: Nebwotis

Sbk-h^cpj (Sokonopis)
30628 (120/19 BC)
rp^cj m-ntry “prince and prophet(?)”
Spouse: Tasokonopis
Children: *N3-nfr-t3j=f-rmp.t* (?), Taapis

Sbk-h^cpj (Sokonopis)
30612 (97/6 BC)
rp^cj m-ntry hrj šj km3 hrj šj rs-nb-imnt n3 ntr.w nhm n3 ntr.w sn.w n3 ntr.w mnḥ.
“prince and prophet(?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west of the gods Sotef^{es}, the gods Adelphoi, and the gods Euergetai” (30612).
Parents: *Sh^t(?)-wr* and Tharmuthis

...
30627 (102/1 BC)
rp^cj m-ntry hrj šj km3 hrj šj rs nb imnt. “prince and prophet(?), overseer of the pool of creation, overseer of the south pool, lord of the west”
Parents: *Pa-sif* and Tharmuthis

...
30627 (102/1 BC)
rp^cj m-ntry “prince and prophet(?)”
Spouse: ...
Children: *Ta-hns*

Illustrations

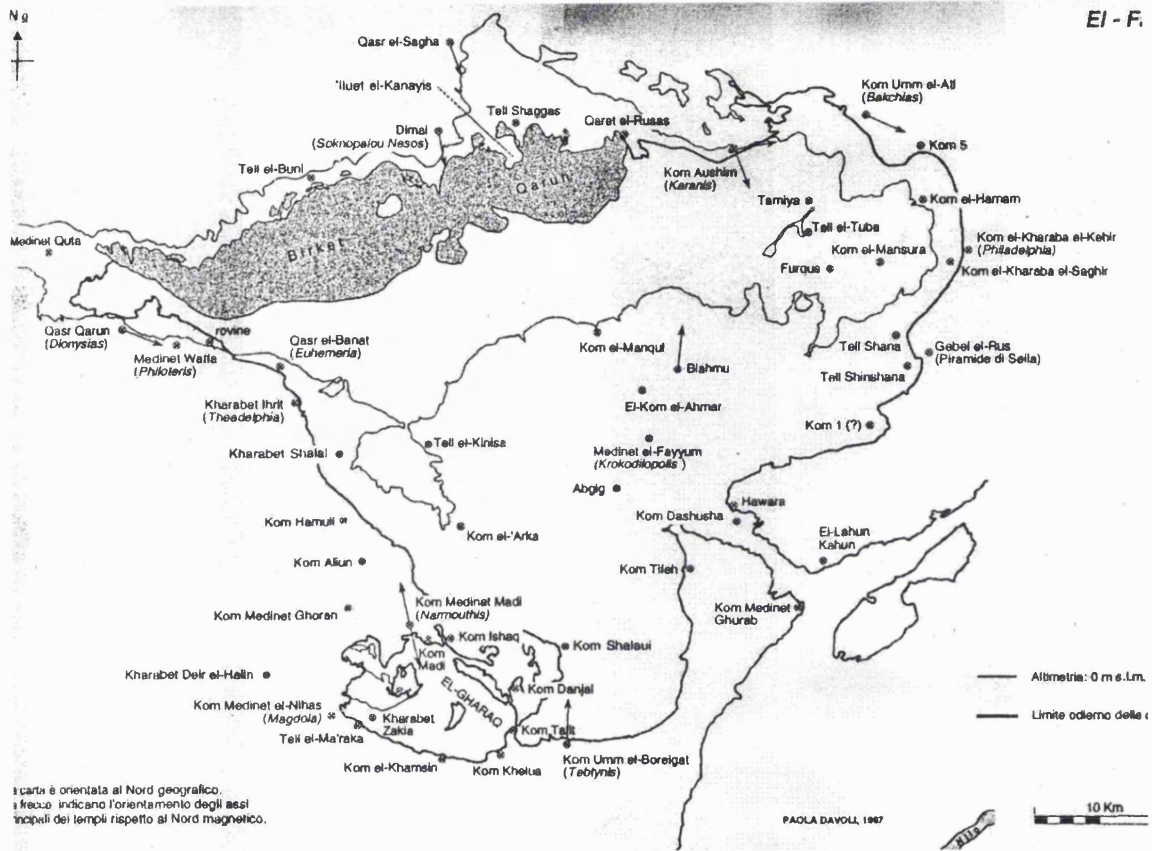


Figure 1: Map of the Fayum (from Davoli 1998)



FIG. 1.
Extrait du plan topographique
du site de Tebtunis.
Échelle, 1/1250.

Figure 2: Map of Tebtunis (from Hadji-Minaglou 2000)

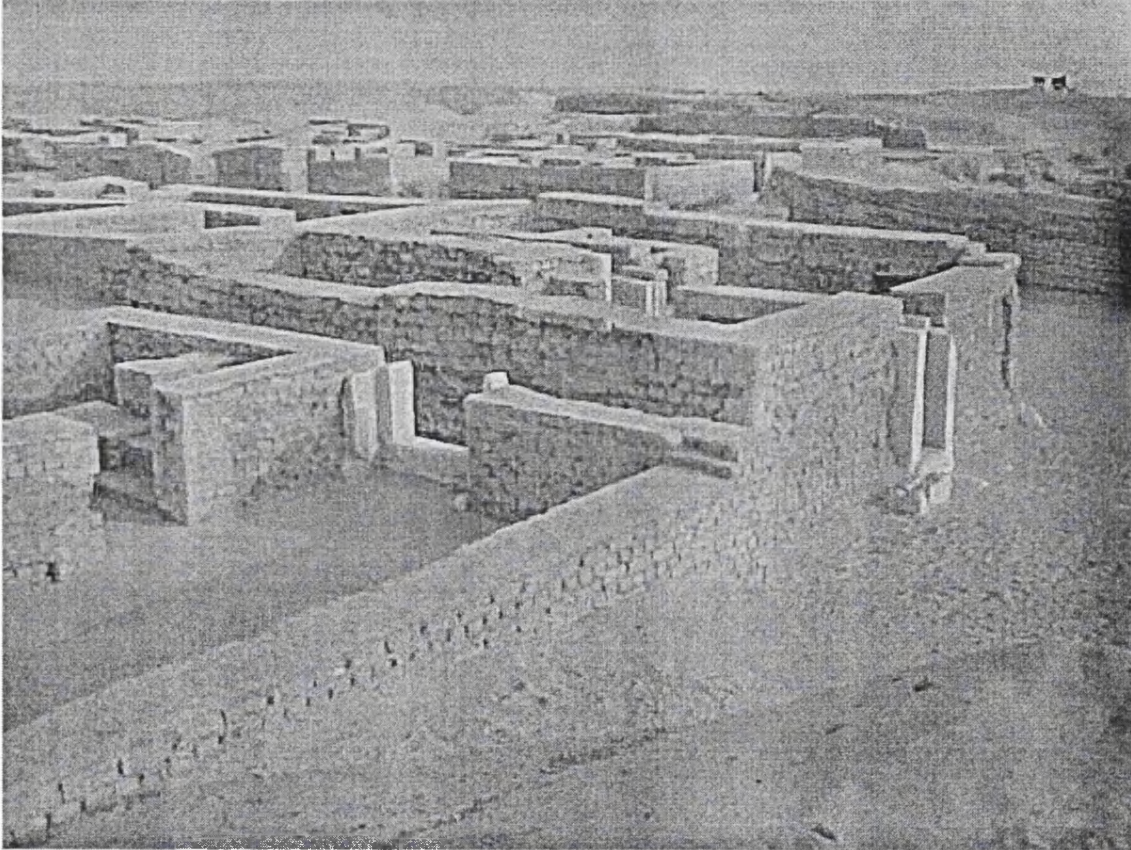


Figure 3: Chapel of Isis-Tharmuthis

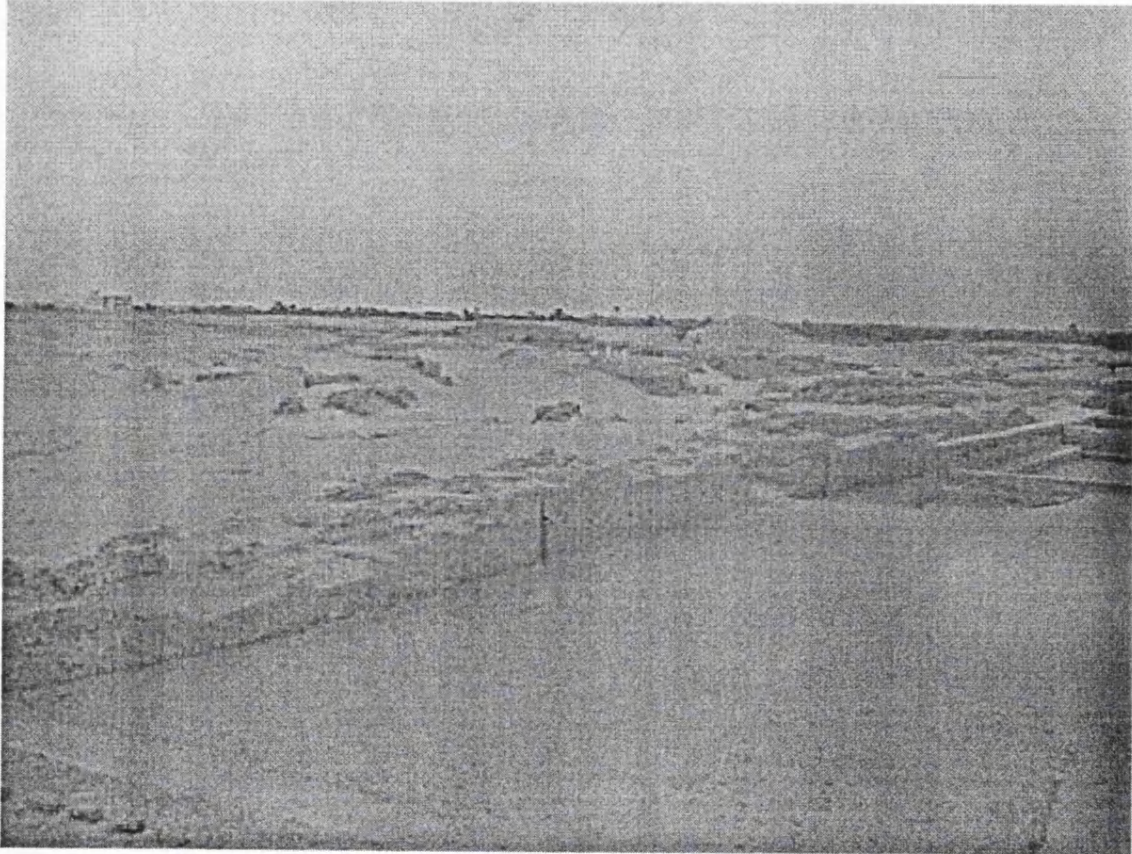


Figure 4: Enclosure of the Temple of Soknebtunis



Figure 5: Chapel of Isis-Tharmuthis (foreground) and Temple Entrance

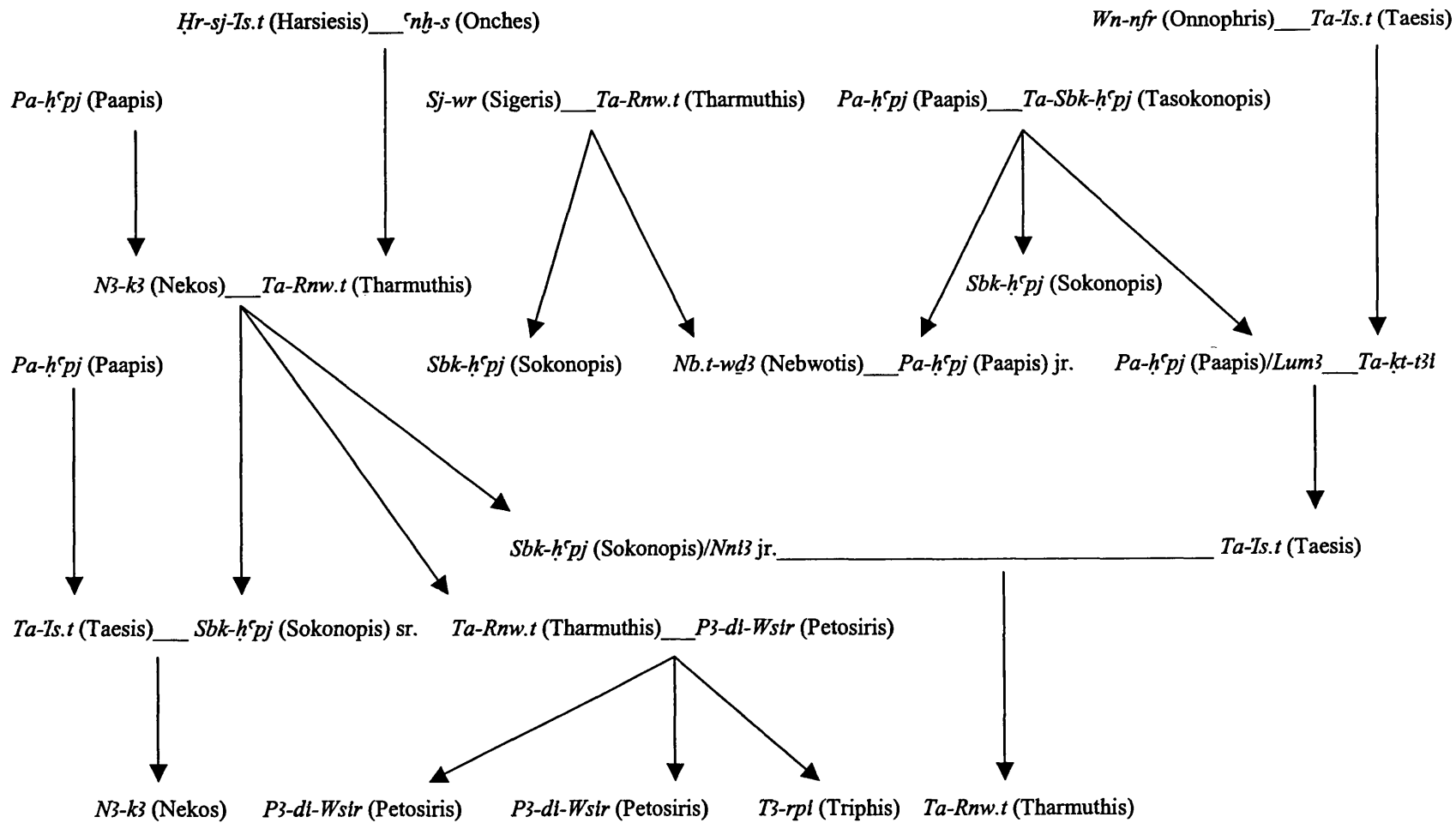


Figure 6: Family Tree of the "Prince and Prophet" Dossier

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