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Compulsion and Control in Ancient Egypt

Edited by
Alexandre Loktionov

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Proceedings of the Third Lady Wallis Budge Egyptology Symposium

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Cover: Karnak Temple relief showing Thutmosis III slaying captives from the Battle of Megiddo, 15th century BC (Photograph by Olaf Tausch, licensed under CC-BY 3.0; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Megiddo_(15th_century_BC)#/media/File:Karnak_Tempel_15.jpg). Photograph modified to extend the sky above the relief. Back cover: A tax defaulter being beaten before the officials seated within a pavilion in the cattle count model from Theban tomb 280 of Meketre (Cairo JE 46724). © Margaret Maitland.

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Abbreviations

ÄA – Ägyptologische Abhandlungen

AAR – African Archaeological Review

ÄAT – Ägypten und Altes Testament

AAWLM – Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse

ACE – Australian Centre for Egyptology

AEPHÉ – Annuaires de l'École pratique des hautes études

ÄF – Ägyptologische Forschungen

AION – Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli

AJA – American Journal of Archaeology

AJH – Athens Journal of History

AJSL – American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures

ANM – Archéologie du Nil Moyen

AnOr – Analecta Orientalia

AnPap – Analecta Papyrologica

ArOr – Archiv Orientální: Journal of African and Asian Studies

ASAÉ – Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte

ASAW – Abhandlungen der philologisch-historischen Klasse der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften

BACE – Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology

BAR – British Archaeological Reports

BASP – Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists

BdÉ – Bibliothèque d'Étude

BIFAO – Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale

BiOr – Bibliotheca Orientalis

BMSAES – British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan

BSFÉ – Bulletin de la Société française d'Égyptologie

CAJ – Cambridge Archaeological Journal

CDD – Chicago Demotic Dictionary

CdÉ – Chronique d'Égypte

CENiM – Cahiers Égypte Nilotique et méditerranéenne

CHANE – Culture and History of the Ancient Near East

CNIANES – Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Ancient Near Eastern Studies Publications

CRIPEL – Cahier de Recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille

CSSH – Comparative Studies in Society and History

CT – A. de Buck, Coffin Texts

DGÖeAW – Denkschriften der Gesamtakademie, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften

ÉAO – Égypte, Afrique et Orient

EEF – Egypt Exploration Fund
EES – Egypt Exploration Society
EESOP – Egypt Exploration Society Occasional Publications
EgUit – Egyptologische Uitgaven
ELR – Erasmus Law Review
ÉT – Études et Travaux (Académie Polonaise des Sciences)
EVO – Egitto e Vicino Oriente
FES – Frontiers in Earth Science
FIFAO – Fouilles de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale
GHP – Golden House Publications
GM – Göttinger Miszellen
GÖF – Göttinger Orientforschungen
HÄB – Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge
HES – Harvard Egyptological Studies
HPBM – Hieratic Papyri from the British Museum
IANSA – Interdisciplinaria Archaeologica Natural Sciences in Archaeology
IEJ – Israel Exploration Journal
IFAO – Institut français d'archéologie orientale
IJHA – International Journal of Historical Archaeology
IJHR – Istraživanja – Journal of Historical Researches
JAEA – Journal of Ancient Egyptian Architecture
JAEI – Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections
JAL – Journal of African Law
JAR – Journal of Archaeological Research
JARCE – Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt
JEA – Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
JEH – Journal of Egyptian History
JESHO – Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JJP – Journal of Juristic Papyrology
JNES – Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JSA – Journal of Social Archaeology
JSSEA – Journal of the Society of the Study of Egyptian Antiquities
KRI – K. A. Kitchen, Ramesside Inscriptions, Historical and Biographical
LÄ – W. Helck, E. Otto, W. Westendorf (eds), Lexikon der Ägyptologie
LAGB – Linguistics Association of Great Britain
LANE – Languages of the Ancient Near East
MDAIK – Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo
MittSAG – Mitteilungen der Sudanarchäologischen Gesellschaft
MVCAE – Material and Visual Culture of Ancient Egypt
NAR – Norwegian Archaeological Review
NINO – Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Ooosten

OBO – Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OIAR – Oriental Institute Annual Report
OIP – Oriental Institute Publications
OIS – Oriental Institute Seminars
OLA – Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OMRO – Oudheidkundige mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden
OW – Old World: Journal of Ancient Africa and Eurasia
PÄ – Probleme der Ägyptologie
PAM – Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean
PN – Die Ägyptischen Personennamen
PTA – Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen
RAD – Ramesside Administrative Documents
RdÉ – Revue d'Égyptologie
RevL – Revue du Louvre et des musées de France
RIDA – Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité
RiME – Rivista del Museo Egizio
RT – Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes
SAGA – Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens
SAK – Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur
SAOC – Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilisation
SASAÉ – Supplément aux Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte
SDAIK – Sonderschrift des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo
SHCANE – Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East
SLR – Sydney Law Review
SNR – Sudan Notes and Records
S&N – Sudan and Nubia
SSEA – Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities
TdE – Trabajos de Egiptología
URAÄ – Untersuchungen zum Rechtsleben im alten Ägypten
Urk. I – K. H. Sethe, Urkunden des Alten Reiches
Urk. IV – K. H. Sethe, Urkunden der 18. Dynastie. Abteilung IV
VOHD – Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland
Wb. – J. P. A. Erman and H. Grapow (eds), Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache
WdO – Welt des Orients
YES – Yale Egyptological Studies
ZÄS – Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde
ZPE – Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik

Preface

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This book is above all else a testament to the resilience and determination of those who have contributed to it. When the 3rd Lady Wallis Budge Egyptology Symposium was first conceived, in the autumn of 2019, it was intended as a convivial event, held in the grand surroundings of Christ's College and accompanied by excellent food and drink. Yet reality decreed otherwise: held at the height of the Covid pandemic (27th – 28th August 2020), there was no socialising, no food, and – for many delegates – no opportunity to even take a break from the proceedings by taking a walk outside. This was the year of lockdown, and this was perhaps the quintessential lockdown conference. In hindsight, given the theme of *Compulsion and Control*, this was perhaps highly appropriate – with delegates being *compelled* to maintain contact exclusively online while being subjected to hitherto unprecedented forms of epidemiological *control*. Had the event spiralled into disaster, given the circumstances, few would have blamed it.

The fact that it did not, and that both the conference itself and the work on the subsequent proceedings remained on schedule, mean that I shall remain eternally grateful to all the contributors. Each and every one set about their work with the great determination that comes with overcoming adversity, and I fervently hope that this result is one of which all can be proud. Indeed, in one noteworthy way, the outputs of the conference even exceed what would have been possible in the conventional pre-Covid context: recordings exist of the vast majority of the papers being presented. This has allowed the core content of the original conference to be preserved on an online video channel, allowing viewers to experience the event once again in the form in which it once took place. This resource – the Christ's College Egyptology Channel – is now intended to serve both as a source of reference to complement the papers in this volume and, no less importantly, to act as a tribute for those who kept Egyptology going during a notoriously dark time. The Channel can be accessed here:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCT6BxUV4TTzAYwTNLghPaGg

Three contributors to the original conference – Richard Jasnow, Hratch Papazian, and Micòl di Teodoro – were unfortunately not in a position to participate in the present volume. However, they added much scholarly value, insight, and enthusiasm to the event, and this is by no means forgotten.

Finally, alongside the contributors, great thanks must also be given to the organisations without whose generous funding and logistical support this book would never have happened. Foremost among these is Christ's College, Cambridge which has very generously supported my endeavours through the Lady Wallis Budge Fund. Robert Hunt, Senior Tutor of Christ's, deserves special mention for his bold vision of promoting the College as a place of international excellence in Egyptology, and for making the conference part of that broader vision. Additional support has also been kindly provided by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC Grant Ref: AH/V006711/1) and the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge. During the editing phase

of preparing this book, I have also benefitted from the stimulating academic environments of the HSE University Institute for Oriental and Classical Studies (Moscow) and the Department of Political Economy, King's College London. To all these bodies I am profoundly grateful.

Introduction: Pluralisms of Compulsion and Control in Ancient Egypt

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Abstract

This introduction provides an overview of the seven sections and seventeen chapters which make up the present 'Compulsion and Control' volume. It also sets out the overarching thesis of the book, rooted in the integration of studies of Egyptian compulsion into legal pluralism theory, and proposes a model for how this might be done. This model lays no claim to perfection, but is intended rather as an initial concept which might spark a broader conversation about the value of the proposed theoretical approach in the context of future Egyptological studies.

Keywords: Hierarchy; Legal Pluralism; Linguistic Analysis; Punishment; Text and Image

Introduction

Like much in Ancient Egypt, this book is marked by duality. The seventeen chapters that follow are at the same time standalone works for those seeking insight into highly specific aspects of compulsion and control at a given time, and yet simultaneously they are also pillars supporting the book's central theme: attaining a more nuanced understanding of compulsion and control through a multi-strand approach rooted in legal pluralism.[1] While this concept is currently rarely alluded to in Egyptology,[2] and is normally associated with law studies in far more modern societies, this book – through its seventeen detailed examples – hopes to illustrate that its definition can be substantially broadened to encompass Egyptological research. After summarising each of the book's sections and the papers within it, this introduction will therefore then proceed to demonstrate how each can be fitted in to the overarching legal pluralist framework, and what the implications of doing so might be.

The first section contains two papers investigating the nature of compulsion and control in and around temples. In her article, Marcella Trapani uses a detailed case study of the *Turin Indictment Papyrus* to

[1] In most studies thus far, legal pluralism has usually been used to describe and analyse societies where multiple judicial systems are in operation – for example, in postcolonial states where legal systems imposed by former imperial powers, typically centred in big cities, coexist with indigenous customary law, typically based in rural areas. For examples of such studies and associated theoretical debate, see for instance G. R. Woodman, 'Legal Pluralism and the Search for Justice', *JAL* 40 (1996), 152–167; É. Le Roy, *Les Africains et l'institution de la justice* (Paris: Dalloz, 2004) and F. Pirie, *The Anthropology of Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 38–44. For attempts at expanding legal pluralism theory into other contexts, see for instance K. von Benda-Beckmann, 'Globalisation and Legal Pluralism', *International Law FORUM du droit international* 4 (2002), 19–25; B. Z. Tamanaha, 'Understanding Legal Pluralism: Past to Present, Local to Global', *SLR* 30 (2008), 375–411 and E. Melissaris, 'From Legal Pluralism to Public Justification. *ELR* 6/3 (2013), 173–180. For an overarching discussion of the whole concept, see E. Melissaris and M. Croce, 'A Pluralism of Legal Pluralisms', *Oxford Handbooks Online*: <https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/41331/chapter/352337146>.

[2] For more detailed thoughts on this by the present writer, as well as some initial ideas on how the issue might be rectified, see A. A. Loktionov, *The Development of the Justice System in Ancient Egypt from the Old to the Middle Kingdom* (PhD diss., Robinson College, University of Cambridge, 2019), 15–19, 25–29, 49–54 and *passim*.

provide a thorough insight into the mechanisms available to Ramesside temple staff to exert their authority, with a particular focus on underhand means of doing so, such as bribery and manipulation of oracular verdicts. This contrasts with the approach taken in the second paper by Leah Mascia, which looks at much more formal, state-approved mechanisms of control within the temple sphere, with specific reference to the site of Oxyrhynchus in the Roman period. Central to both chapters is the importance of having an official affiliation to the temple setting, granting the office-holder access to specific privileges and an ability to compel others to do their bidding – whether this was through strictly legal means, or less so.

The second section moves on from the temples to the religion which they served, and how certain aspects of it yielded opportunities for compulsion and control. To this end, Anne Landborg discusses the Egyptian concept of the *bꜣ*-spirit and the associated notion of *bꜣ.w* ('might'), highlighting how these theological constructs were vested with the power to compel through curses or other supernatural manifestations of force. Renata Schiavo, meanwhile, concentrates on the 'letters to the dead' – a diverse grouping of texts pointing to a religious belief in the power of ancestors to influence, or even explicitly control, happenings in the present existence. In differing ways, these two articles emphasise the importance of the faith-based superstructure surrounding Egyptian notions of compulsion: being compelled did not have to be a physical experience enforceable by a material power on earth, but could just as effectively be derived from a religious necessity in the mind of the believer.

In the third section, attention turns to mechanisms of control at the borderlands of Egypt, starting with Adam Fagbore's exploration of Egyptian strategies for maintaining control at the Nubian border in the late Middle Kingdom. Fagbore highlights both the significance of physically altering the borderland environment through the construction of forts, and the importance of intense and often exemplary violence as a form of subjugation. These themes of forcefully bringing under control those on – or beyond – the border are also explored by Christian Langer, his paper demonstrating that the implications of this went far beyond pure ideology, having profound economic significance in the form of bonded labour. Thus, not only could built environments on the border be modified to suit the controlling needs of the state, but so could populations themselves, with deportation and resettlement serving as tools of compulsion. However, control processes on the border were not just about force: as Loretta Kilroe demonstrates in her ceramic study, populations were also capable of drawing upon multiple influences to exert self-control over their daily practices and material culture outputs, seemingly without significant threat of violent subjugation. This dichotomy between the hard and soft power manifestations of compulsion pervades the entire volume, but is perhaps most strikingly manifested in the discussions in this section.

From the borderlands discussion then shifts to administration, with two chapters constituting the fourth section of the volume. In the first of these, Fredrik Hagen explores the division of workforces into two distinct sides, building his case around a Ramesside papyrus from Kom Medinet Gurob, which lists the names and titles of various workers. He then connects this to a wider administrative practice of creating duality, as best known from workforce management strategies at Deir el-Medina, which raises intriguing questions about the conceptualisation of a body of workers as both a whole, and as a sum of two parts – smaller units, presumably easier to control. This focus on workforce management is then continued in Rune Olsen's contribution, which provides several New Kingdom case studies of scribal records kept during tomb construction, throwing into relief the complexity of the bureaucratic process and raising at present still unanswered questions about the ultimate purpose of the administrative documentation: were records kept primarily for higher authority, or as a show of force by the recording scribes themselves? In any case, what is apparent is that the power of the scribal palette should be seen as an integral part of the overall compulsion and control apparatus of Ancient Egypt, deserving as much attention as more obviously repressive measures, such as the use of direct force.

From administrative manifestations of control, the book moves to discuss its portrayal in text and image. In this fifth section, the first two chapters by Matthieu Hagenmüller and Margaret Maitland both discuss ways in which subjugation and social order could be materialised in the visual record and backed up by texts, taking as their core datasets Old and Middle Kingdom material respectively. Deploying the sociological theories of Michel Foucault around discipline and power, both authors highlight the importance of text and image as a mechanism for generating awareness of one's social status, thereby reinforcing the identities of workers as subordinate and elites as superior. A range of specific iconographic motifs and narrative devices were deployed to achieve these results, and enjoyed great longevity. Meanwhile, in the third contribution, Marta Valerio approaches the visualisation of power from a different angle – that of the physical marking of the bodies of the subjugated themselves. By drawing comparisons with well-attested instances of cattle branding, a compelling case is made for the practice being used on occasion to mark humans also, and this appears to be backed by a range of literary allusions emphasising the power of the brand. Thus, this section highlights how diverse the visual, tangible aspect of control could be: it could range from subliminal effects on consciousness via particular ways of constructing social space and interaction, right up to very physical forms of domination – such as leaving indelible marks on bodies.

As well as at state-sanctioned level, compulsion and control could also be manifested on a much smaller scale – within local communities or individual family units, and this is the focus of the penultimate section in this book. Here, Brian Muhs demonstrates the importance of patronage as a prerequisite for advancement in the legal and administrative sphere: drawing on a range of Demotic documents, he illustrates that while Ptolemaic Egypt had a very sophisticated judicial apparatus, simply obeying the letter of the law without making the right connections with influential officials was unlikely to guarantee success. These connections could take the form of social bonds or obligations derived from kinship ties, an aspect of the latter being explored further in the ensuing paper by Steffie van Gompel. Based also on predominantly Demotic material, this chapter illustrates the leverage possessed by Egyptian fathers in influencing the marriage prospects of their children; most notably eldest sons. Due to their control of family property, fathers could effectively leave their children destitute if they so wished, which gave them the capacity to engineer the marital choice of their sons. In both papers, the overarching theme is therefore one of dependent parties accepting the need to obey local superiors – by these officials or fathers – in exchange for getting what they wanted, be it a victory in court or viable family life. Such mechanisms, while not in themselves having the force of law, were effectively underpinned by law, and would have been crucial to overall control of key strata in the population in accordance with established principles. While the present volume is only able to explore this dimension of compulsion from a Demotic perspective, it is hoped that this may spark investigations into similar processes in earlier periods too.

Finally, the seventh and last section of this book explores how the various strands of compulsion and control – to a large extent discussed above – were manifested in the Egyptian language. This section differs from the others in that, rather than focussing on specific events or practices carried out to uphold given elements of compulsion, it instead concentrates more on methodological aspects of studying this topic as a phenomenon expressed in the written record – thereby giving valuable insight into what the Egyptians may have thought of compulsion and control, rather than purely what they did. The first contribution here is by Sami Uljas, wherein he offers a survey of the means of expressing compulsion in the earlier phases of Egyptian. Proceeding in chronological order, this is followed by John Tait discussing instances of compulsion and control in Demotic narrative, and finally by Victoria Fendel looking at various responses to control and repression in Coptic texts, with particular reference to Manichaean Kellis. As well as discussing contrasting periods, these three papers also offer a range of approaches to studying compulsion in the Egyptian language: that of Uljas is very much rooted in what might be termed conventional linguistics, as opposed to Tait's approach,

which is predominantly narratological. Fendel's contribution, meanwhile, sits somewhere between the two – its linguistics-driven methodology has much in common with Uljas, but its tight focus on a single corpus of textual material, rather than attempting to make broader generalisations, has more in common with Tait. Moreover, the paper also makes a range of methodological points unique to itself, especially regarding the relationship between the language of compulsion and the ordering of space. Thus, this closing section demonstrates the great variety of language-based methodologies which are deployable in the compulsion context: one might expect these to serve as inspiration for further work.

Overall, it is therefore hoped that this book will attain its two core objectives. Firstly, the extensive selection of chapters on highly diverse topics across a chronological span of over three millennia should serve as a reference for a wide range of specific factual and methodological inquiries into Ancient Egyptian forms of compulsion and control. Secondly, the sum of all these parts has a key overarching message of its own: the importance of legal pluralism, conceived as broadly as possible, as a framework for understanding the overall process whereby Egyptian society retained control over itself and its members [Figure 1].

It is important to add that Figure 1, almost certainly, has room for further addenda. Conversely, some readers might wish to merge certain categories into one. The aim of the present writer is most definitely not to smother such debates or attempt to prescribe a rigid model, but rather to provide a platform on which further work – both empirical and theoretical – can be assembled. It is very much hoped that readers might feel able to participate in this debate, and that the contributions on the following pages might serve as inspiration to do so.

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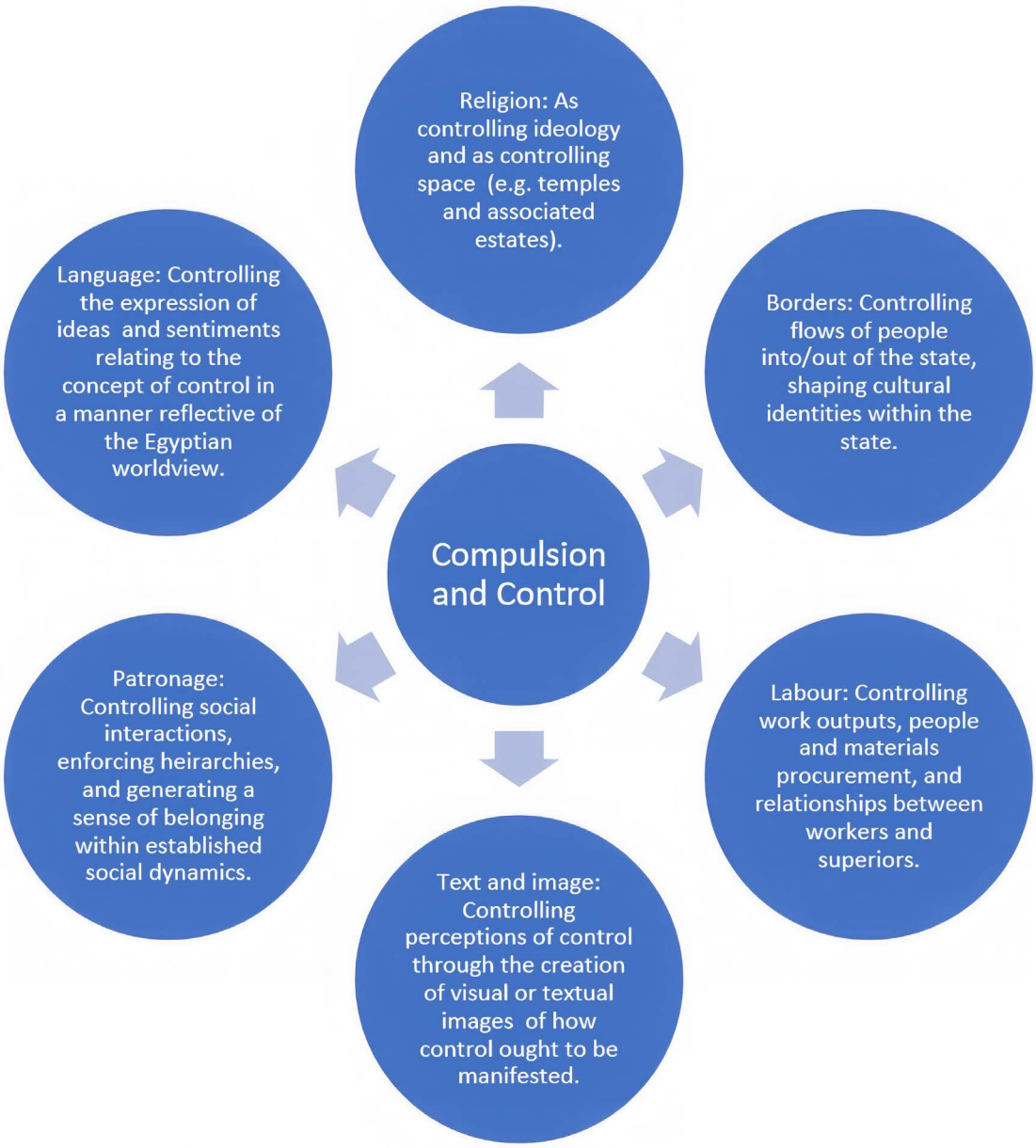

Figure 1. A model for the different strands of compulsion and control based on legal pluralism theory

I.
Compulsion and Control in the Temple Sphere

1
The *Turin Indictment Papyrus* (P. Turin C. 1887): An Enquiry about the Forms of Compulsion in the Text

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Abstract

The 'Turin Indictment Papyrus' is known since 1824, when it arrived in the Museo Egizio with the papyri of Drovetti's collection. Most of the papyri were collected in Egypt by Bernardino Drovetti, the French consul in the country during the Napoleonic empire until 1814 and, after the Restoration, from 1820 to 1929. Jean-François Champollion studied the Drovetti papyri collection only some time later, during his stay in Turin between 1824 and 1825. In his own words, many of the seventy-five papyri of the group were reduced 'à tabac d'Espagne'. The bulk of the papyri comes from Deir el-Medina. We do not possess any indication about the exact findspot of these documents on the site.

One can count the 'Turin Indictment Papyrus' among the administrative texts written on papyrus kept in the Museo Egizio, mostly dating to the 20th Dynasty. The papyrus very likely comes from Deir el-Medina, together with a lot of documents not relating directly to village life. It reports several scandals at the temple of Khnum at Elephantine during the reign of Ramesses IV (c. 1156-1150 BC) and Ramesses V (c. 1149-1144 BC). This contribution examines some passages of the text which seem relevant to the subject of compulsion and control as manifested in the Egyptian religion and worldview.

Keywords: Corruption; Elephantine; Oracles; Temples; Thefts

1. The *Papyrus Turin C. 1887*: its acquisition by the Museum in Turin (1824) and the papyrus collection

Presented here is preliminary research deriving from new study of the *Papyrus Turin C. 1887* that is now under way. The *Turin Indictment Papyrus* is known since 1824, when it arrived at the museum with the papyri collection of the French consul Bernardino Drovetti.[1] The bulk of the collection comes from the Theban region, specifically Deir el-Medina. Unfortunately, we do not possess any indication about the exact place where these documents were found at the site.[2]

2. Previous research about the *Turin Indictment Papyrus*

W. Pleyte and F. Rossi published the papyrus in 1869 for the first time. The scholars provided a facsimile and a first attempt at translation: according to them, the text was a list of revenues for the palace of

[1] Concerning Drovetti's activity and personality, see S. Guichard and L. Donatelli (eds), *Lettere di Bernardino Drovetti console di Francia ad Alessandria d'Egitto* (1803–1830) (Turin: Accademia delle Scienze, 2005).

[2] A. Roccati, 'Il quotidiano degli Egizi attraverso i papiri di Torino', *Egitto e società antica. Atti del convegno Torino 8/9 VI, 23/24 XI 1984* (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 1985), 42. For a general view of the papyri in the Museo Egizio and their digital conservation, see recently S. Töpfer, 'The Turin Papyrus Online Platform (TPOP): An Introduction', *RiME* 2 (2018), 1–11, DOI: 10.29353/rime.2018.1916. For the papyri in Turin coming from Deir el-Medina, see the database of *NINO*, Leiden University (https://dmd.wepwawet.nl), where 145 papyri of the Museo Egizio are listed.

Ramesses IV.[3] The Catalogue of the museum written in 1888 by A. Fabretti, F. Rossi and R. V. Lanzone also mentions it.[4]

Sir Alan Gardiner discovered the correct position of the fragments during his research visit to the museum in 1905 for the compilation of the *Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache*.[5] He collated the text again in 1947 and published a hieroglyphic transcription in his *Ramesside Administrative Documents*.[6] The fragments are still in Gardiner's arrangement and the papyrus is now on display in the museum.[7]

Some authors have more recently published new translations of the text, such as Alexander Peden in 1994[8] and Günther Vittmann in 1996.[9]

3. The text on the papyrus: preservation, form and writing

The papyrus is opisthographic, with two pages on the *recto* [Figure 1] and three on the *verso* [Figure 2]. It is quite well-preserved, except for some gaps in the lower part and others in the middle. The *recto* is clearly a palimpsest, traces of earlier writing still being visible, especially in the upper part of the first page [Figure 3]. On the second page of the *verso*, the scribe used red ink to write the numbers of grain sacks given as an offering to the god Khnum [Figure 4].

The papyrus is a rather dark colour, and the script is characterised by large signs. The handwriting on the first page contrasts with that on the other two pages. It is more cursive and harder to decipher. Thus, the palaeographic and orthographic differences between the texts in the different sections let us attribute the writing of the document to two or more scribes.

The lines of the text are of different length. The need for the scribe to begin each line with the same expression *sḫ3 r* ('memorandum concerning...') explains this difference. Some words or entire sentences are often interposed between the main lines of the text; they are clearly later additions or changes made by the scribe [Figure 5].

The papyrus measures 133cm in length with a height of 41cm. The height is close to standard for the administrative and juridical papyri of the Ramesside period, as the average measurements for such texts are in the range of 41-45cm.[10] Papyri containing literary texts, on the contrary, were usually shorter in height, measuring only 20-22cm.[11]

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[3] W. Pleyte and F. Rossi, *Papyrus de Turin* (Leiden: Brill, 1869–1876), 77–78; pls. LI–LX.

[4] 'Frammento di papiro ieratico, collato su cartone, (...) composto di due pagine frammentate di testo del tempo di Ra-user-ma-mer-amen (Ramesse IV), e contiene una lista di varii oggetti con parecchie date, fra le quali quella dell'anno 18, mese terzo della seconda tetramenia' (corresponding to the third month of the Peret season, note of the present author): A. Fabretti., F. Rossi and R. V. Lanzone, *Catalogo generale dei Musei di Antichità e degli oggetti d'arte raccolti nelle gallerie e biblioteche del regno*, Serie prima – Piemonte (Turin: Stamperia Reale, 1882–88), 242.

[5] A. H. Gardiner, 'Ramesside Texts relating to the Taxation and Transport of Corn', *JEA* 27 (1941), 60, n. 1.

[6] A. H. Gardiner, *RAD* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1948), 73–82 (XXV).

[7] At the time of the new display of the Museo Egizio (2015), the papyrus was exhibited in a small room devoted to written sources, which was afterwards converted to other uses. A new display opened in December 2022 as part of *Il dono di Thot*, an exhibition dedicated to Egyptian writing, and this features the papyrus in restored form [figs. 6–7].

[8] A. J. Peden, *The Reign of Ramesses IV* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1994), 69–72; 109–116.

[9] G. Vittmann, 'A5 Charges Against Several Officials (*ca.* 1150 BC) – P. Turin 1887', in B. Porten *et al.* (eds), *The Elephantine Papyri in English. Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change* (*Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui* 22 – Leiden, New York and Cologne: Brill, 1996), 46–57.

[10] See about this point J. Černý, 'The Will of Naunakhte and the Related Documents', *JEA* 31 (1945), 30, n. 5 and Y. Koenig, 'Livraison d'or et de galena au trésor du temple d'Amon sous la XXe dynastie', in J. Vercoutter (ed.), *Hommage à Serge Sauneron*, (*BdÉ* 81 – Cairo: IFAO, 1979), I, 190.

[11] See G. Möller, *Hieratische Paläographie: die ägyptische Buchschrift in ihrer Entwicklung von der fünften Dynastie bis zum Römischen Kaiserzeit 2. Von der Zeit Thutmosis III bis zum Ende der einundzwanzigsten Dynastie* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1909), 5; J. Černý, *Papers and Books in Ancient Egypt* (London: H. K. Lewis and Co. Ltd., 1952), 8, 16–17.

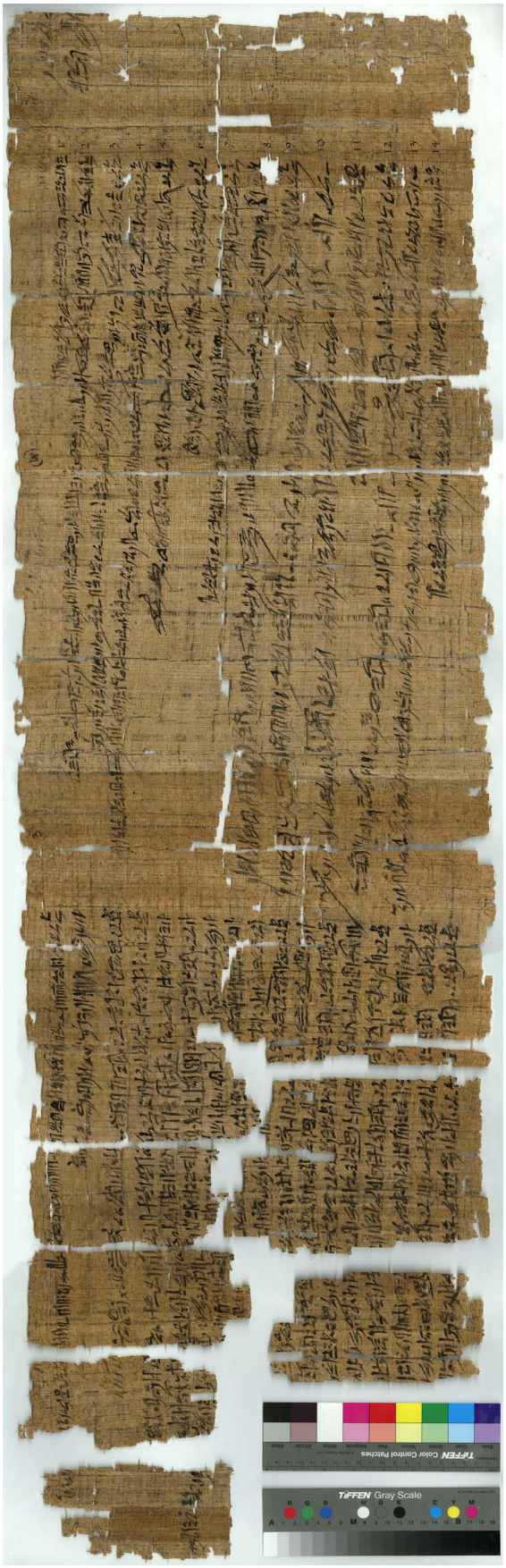


Figure 1. Two pages of the recto of Papyrus Turin C. 1887. Courtesy of © Museo Egizio, Turin.

Figure 2. Three pages of the verso of the papyrus. Courtesy of © Museo Egizio, Turin.

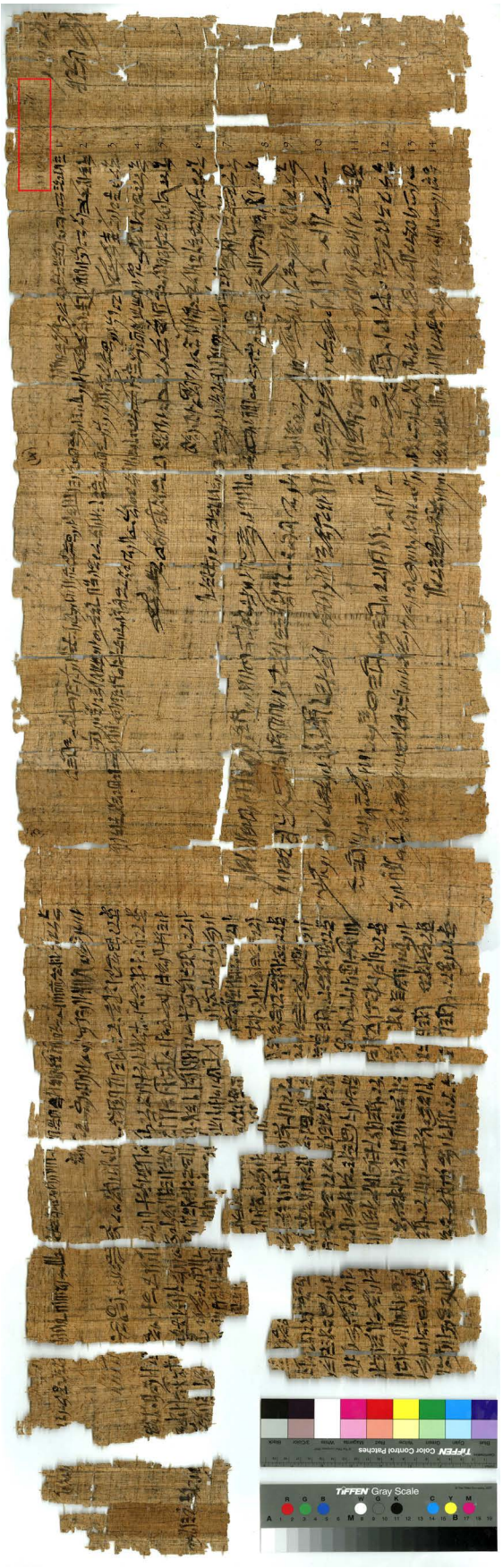


Figure 3. The recto is a palimpsest with visible traces (see red rectangle). Courtesy of © Museo Egizio, Turin.

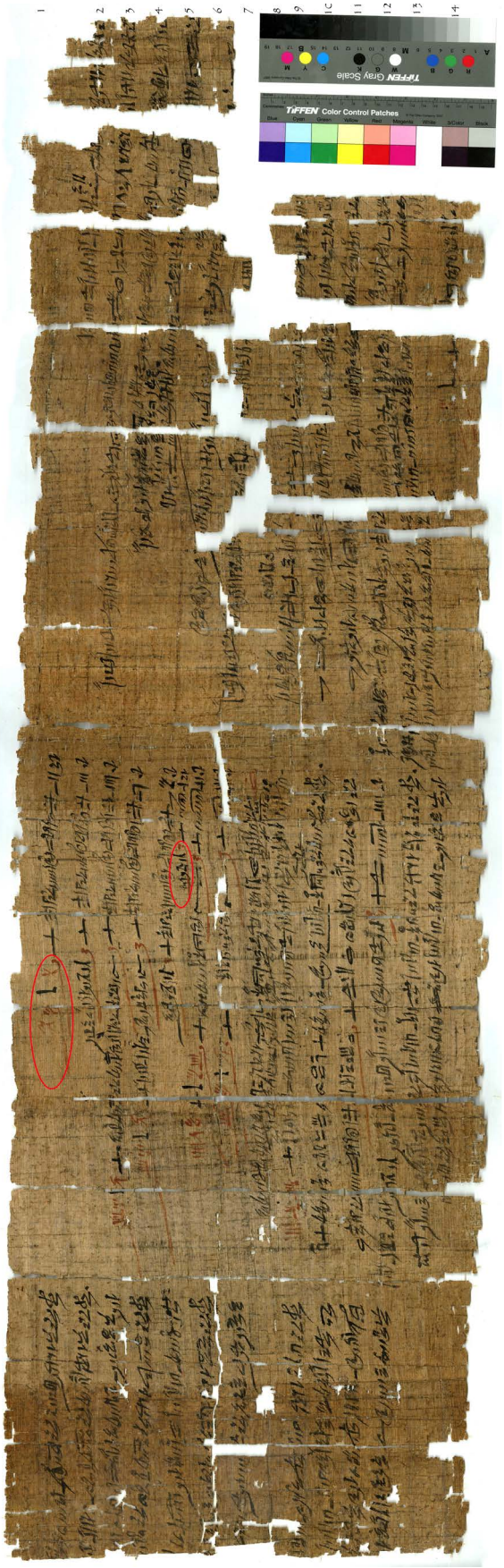


Figure 4. Detail of the second page of the verso: use of red ink. Courtesy of © Museo Egizio, Turin.

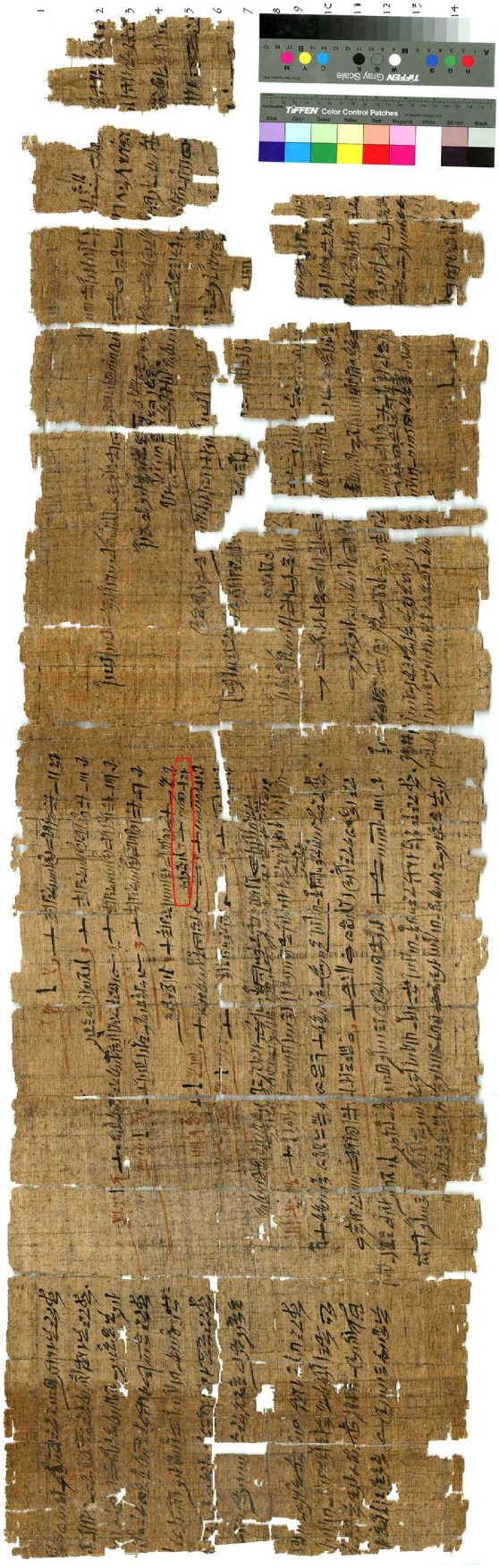


Figure 5. Detail of the interposition of a text line in the verso of the papyrus. Courtesy of © Museo Egizio, Turin.

Figures 6–7. The papyrus, following recent restoration work, as currently on display in the Il dono di Thot exhibition.

4. Nature and content of the papyrus: language, grammar and historical circumstances of its composition

The papyrus is written in the language of Egyptian official texts of the Ramesside period, 'literary Late Egyptian' or, more accurately, the Late Egyptian used for administration.[12] This is a hybrid form of Late Egyptian mixed with some Middle Egyptian words, which gives rise to a language with conventions typical of a legal or administrative context.

The composition of the text is not earlier than year 4 of the reign of Ramesses V, as year 3 of this king is mentioned on the *verso*, l. 2.8; he is defined as 'Pharaoh'; the living king. The document cites his predecessor, Ramesses IV, on the *verso*, l. 1.7, as 'the great god', a designation for the dead king.

According to Gardiner, *Papyrus Turin C. 1887* is 'the most informative document we possess in regard to the internal administration of a Ramesside temple'.[13] It is a list of indictments accusing the *wʿb*-priest Penanukis of major bribery, sexual misdeeds, causing an abortion, intimidation, excessive brutality, theft of temple property, and disrespect for the sacred as well as manipulation of the oracle. (section A: r° 1.1–2.17). Another part of the document concerns accusations against a boat captain called Khnumnakht, alleged to have embezzled over 5000 sacks of grain owed to the temple of Khnum over a period of nearly ten years (section C: v° 1.7–3.8). Finally, a small section reports the illicit activities of a group of criminals whose names are unknown (section B: v° 1.1–1.6).

The case against Penanukis can be summarised as follows:

1. In the first act of indictment, he is accused of seizing five calves sacred to Mnevis to sell them to some other priests (r° 1.2) and a calf sacred to the same god which he sold to some Medjay officers (r° 1.3);
2. Penanukis is also indicted for carrying the statue of the god Khnum when he was in a state of impurity: he had not completed his rites of purification, because he had not drunk natron for the last three days of the ritual period (r° 1.9–11). He is also accused of;
3. Misuse of a *wḏ3.t*-eye amulet together with the man who had stolen it (r° 1.7);
4. Handing over of a basket containing two unidentified objects to the god Khnum (r° 1.8);[14]
5. Theft of sixty loincloths from the temple of Khnum (r° 2.1–2.2);[15]
6. Severe mutilation of a man without royal authorisation (r° 2.3);
7. Seduction of some married women (r° 1.5–1.6);

8-9. Blinding two other women (r° 2.10–2.11);

10. Corruption of a priest: this act consisted of trying to promote three people to the rank of *wʿb*-priest to the detriment of another man by manipulating the divine oracle. These crimes were

[12] P. Grandet, *Le Papyrus Harris I (BM 9999)* (*BdÉ* 109/1-3 – Cairo: *IFAO*, 2005), 49 and 81, n. 17 discusses 'la langue des textes officiels égyptiens de l'époque ramesside, langue que l'on qualifie généralement de « néo-égyptien littéraire », mais qu'il serait plus exact de désigner, par exemple, comme de « néo-égyptien administratif standard ». This designation corresponds to what Satzinger defines as 'Černý's Late Egyptian': H. Satzinger, *'Is there not one among you who understands Egyptian?' The Late Egyptian Language: Structure of its Grammar* (*GHP* Egyptology 31 – London: Golden House Publications, 2020), 8.

[13] Gardiner, 'Ramesside Texts', 60.

[14] The actual offence appears to have been committed by an accomplice, Bakenkhonsu, but Penanukis was charged nonetheless. For more detailed discussion of this specific charge, see W. A. Ward, 'Lexicographical Miscellanies II', *SAK* 9 (1981), 365–367. The objects in the basket could be two 'witness-documents' (*mtr.w*) – this could indicate misuse of the oracular procedure.

[15] The text subsequently explains that thirty of these were recovered but it is mute about the punishment inflicted on Penanukis.

reported to Pharaoh himself, who sent the Overseer of the Treasury, Khaemtir,[16] to investigate them; especially the theft of the goods from Khnum's Treasury.

Another section refers to the crimes committed by the boat captain Khnumnakht to the detriment of the temple of Khnum. These are some substantial thefts of cereals perpetrated with the complicity of the temple staff. Khnumnakht began his career in year 28 of Ramesses IV. From the document it seems that in year 1 of Ramesses V he had started stealing large quantities of cereals during their transport by boat from the estates of the temple in the Nile Delta towards the South. He was also suspected of setting fire to a boat belonging to the temple, and corrupting the temple supervisors to avoid this accusation.

In the text of the papyrus (r° 1.12–14), one can read the following passage:

r° 1.12 *sḫꜣ r pꜣ dỉ.t ỉ.ỉr ṯꜣ.ty Nfr-rnp.t wʿb Bꜣk-n-Ḫnsw r ḥm-nṯr n Ḥnmw ỉw pꜣy wʿb ḏd n wʿb Nb-wnn=f bsỉ n=n ky 3 wʿb.w*
r° 1.13 *dỉ.n ḫꜣʿ pꜣ nṯr pꜣy šry n pꜣy šw.ty r-bnr r wʿ ỉw.tw (ḥr) smtr=f ỉw.(tw) (ḥr) gm {n}SIC (m) mꜣʿ.t ỉw.(tw)[17] (ḥr) dỉ.t n=f ʿnḫ n nb ʿ.w.s. r tm ʿḳ r ḥw.t-nṯr ỉw=f (ḥr) dỉ.t*
r° 1.14 *ỉḫ.t=f n pꜣy ḥm-nṯr r-ḏd ỉmy ʿḳ=ỉ ḫry pꜣ nṯr ỉw pꜣy ḥm-nṯr šspỉ ỉḫ.t=f ỉw=f ḥr dỉ.t ʿḳ=f ḫry {y}SIC pꜣ nṯr*

r° 1.12 Memorandum concerning the appointment of the *wʿb*-priest Bakenkhonsu as a priest of Khnum by the Vizier Neferronpet.[18] This *wʿb*-priest (Penanukis) said to the *wʿb*-priest Nebwenenef:[19] 'If only[20] we had three other *wʿb*-priests,
r° 1.13 so that we might induce the god to throw out this son of this merchant!'[21] He was examined and it was found that he had said it indeed. He was made to take an oath by (the) Lord (l.p.h) not to enter the temple, but he gave

[16] For evidence regarding this official, see W. Helck, *Zur Verwaltung des Mittleren und Neuen Reiches* (*PÄ* 3 – Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 1958), 412 and 519–520; Peden, *Ramesses IV*, 58. His first mention dates back to year 26 of Ramesses III, whereas this is the last one.

[17] Here in the text there is the falcon sign, but this seems clearly a scribal error.

[18] For more on this official, see H. Ranke, *PN* I (1935), 197, n. 18.

[19] Ranke, *PN* I, 184, n. 8. Nebwenenef is also known from some graffiti in Sehel as a High Priest of Khnum, Satis and Anukis: cf. S. Sauneron, 'Trois personnages du scandale d'Éléphantine', *RdÉ* 7 (1950), 57–60. Habachi, in his study of the graffiti on the island of Sehel, was able to prove that the Overseer of the Biga fortress Pakharu was the father of our *wʿb*-priest Nebwenenef. He pointed out the close links between the inhabitants of the fortress of Elephantine and the authorities of the nearby Biga fortress (L. Habachi, 'A Family from Armant in Aswan and in Thebes', *JEA* 51 (1965), 135–136).

[20] Interpreting *bsỉ* as a particle introducing a conditional sentence (cf. J. Černý and S. Groll, *A Late Egyptian Grammar* (Studia Pohl, Series Maior 4 - Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1993), 565–566; F. Neveu, *La langue des Ramsès. Grammaire du néo-égyptien* (Paris: Khéops, 1996), 36.3), not as a form of the verb *bsỉ*, 'to introduce', as T.E. Peet, 'A Historical Document of Ramesside Age', *JEA* 10 (1924), 121, n. 6 did, and some other authors after him (their translation was therefore: 'We will introduce another (.....) priests and we will cause the god to cast out the son of Pashuty').

[21] Lit: 'this son of this merchant'. Peden, *Ramesses IV*, 111, suggests the interpretation of *pꜣy šw.ty* as a proper name (following in this Peet) but the suitable determinative is lacking. The term seems rather to indicate an office, from which the 'son of the merchant' is expulsed retrospectively, namely from the charge of priest; the office, in this case, was conferred by oracle verdict. About the appointment by the oracle, see M. Trapani, 'Il decreto regale e l'oracolo divino nell'antico Egitto (dalle origini alla XX din.: 2472–1070 a.C.', *AION* 52 (1992), 11–18, and M. Trapani, *La dévolution des* fonctions *en Égypte pharaonique. Étude critique de la documentation disponible* (*GHP* Egyptology 22 – London: Golden House, 2015), 14–15; about the manipulation of the oracle by some priests and the efforts to avoid it, see K.P. Kuhlmann, 'Ein eigentümlichen Orakelverfahren aus der 22. Dynastie zur Schenkungsstele Kairo JE 36159', in U. Luft (ed.), *The Intellectual Heritage of Egypt. Studies presented to László Kákosy by Friends and Colleagues on the occasion of his 60th Birthday* (Studia Aegyptiaca XIV – Budapest: Univ. Loránd Eötvös, 1992), 367–372; J. F. Quack, 'Henuttawis machtlose Unschuld. Zur Deutung von LRL 37', in C. Gallois, P. Grandet and L. Pantalacci (eds), *Mélanges offerts à François Neveu par ses amis,*

r° 1.14 his things[22] to this prophet, saying: 'let me enter with the god'. This prophet accepted his things and let him enter with the god.

This occurrence shows that the post of *wʿb*-priest was quite coveted because it entailed distinguished privileges, such as access to the divine statue during celebrations in the temple and participation in offering ceremonies. In the case of some gods, the *wʿb*-priest seems to define his identity through the god he serves.[23] In any case, this post did not require permanent commitment and it could be held on a part-time basis.

As for the role of the boat captain Khnumnakht, the temple of Khnum in Elephantine, like every major temple, possessed boats to transport products, such as grain, cattle, wine, oil and fruits; every unit was directed and organised by a captain of the boat (*ḫry wsḫ.t*)[24] of the temple.[25]

5. The main instances of compulsion in the text

Some passages of the papyrus mention thefts and acts of disrespect:

r° 1.2 *sḫ3 r t3 iḫ.t km.(t) nty.(t) m-ʿ=f iw=s msi 5 ḳm3 n Mr-wr iw=f (ḥr) in.t=w iw=f (ḥr) ir.(t) h3w=w m sḫ.t iw=f šʿd ḏr.t=f im=w iw=f (ḥr) in.t=w r rsy iw=f (ḥr) di.t m šb n n3 wʿb.w*

r° 1.2 Memorandum concerning the black cow that is in his possession (i.e. belongs to Penanukis), after she had given birth to five calves of Mnevis.[26] He removed them and made use of them in the field. He seized them[27] and took them to the South where he sold[28] them to the *wʿb*-priests (i.e. **disrespect for the sacred**).

élèves et collègues à l'occasion de son soixante-quinzième anniversaire (*BdÉ* 145 – Cairo: *IFAO*, 2008), 261–263; A. von Lieven, 'Das Orakelwesen im Alten Ägypten', *Mythos* 10, n.s. (2016), 17–30 . Most recently, for the Deir el-Medina oracle, see S. Štubňová, 'Processional and Chapel Oracular Practice in the Place of Truth', *JARCE* 53 (2017), 274. This formula could be a sort of malediction in a legal context; see, about this aspect, S. Morschauser, *Threat-Formulae in Ancient Egypt. A Study of the History, Structure and Use of Threats and Curses in Ancient Egypt* (Baltimore: Halgo, 1991), xi–xiv.

[22] i.e. a tip, a payoff. The word *iḫ.t* is a term for 'bribe' used in New Kingdom legal texts: see P. Vernus, *Affaires et scandales sous les Ramsès. La crise des valeurs dans l'Égypte du Nouvel Empire* (Paris: Pygmalion Gérard Watelet, 1993), 245-46 and Trapani, *Dévolution des fonctions*, 224, n. 792.

[23] Y. Koenig, *Magie et magiciens dans l'Égypte ancienne* (Paris: Pygmalion Gérard Watelet, 1994), 27. '(...) Un prêtre se définit néanmoins en premier lieu par son attachement à la divinité qu'il sert dans la localité où son temple se trouve': L. Coulon, 'Le clergé à l'époque pharaonique: organisation, recrutement et statut', in L. Coulon and P-L. Gatier (eds), *Le clergé dans les sociétés antiques. Statut et recrutement* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2018), 35-36. For details of the cult organization, see J. F. Quack, 'Organiser le culte idéal. Le Manuel du temple', *BSFÉ* 160 (2004), 18-25. The handbook is a text of the Roman Period (I-II century AD) but it refers to older ages and it is known in hieratic, classical Egyptian and Demotic versions: Quack, 'Organiser le culte', 9-10.

[24] A. R. el-Ayedi, *Index of Egyptian Administrative, Religious and Military Titles of the New Kingdom* (Ismailia: Obelisk Publications, 2006), n. 1270: *ḫry wsḫ.t*, 'boat captain'; n. 1271: *ḫry wsḫ.t n t3 ḥw.t*, 'captain of the boat of the temple', with references coeval with our papyrus.

[25] e.g. for the temple of Amun in Thebes, see P. Harris: Grandet, *Papyrus Harris I*, I, 338 (77, 8–9): 'Parmi eux (les hommes d'équipages de grands bateaux *mensh*) se trouvaient leurs chefs de troupes de bateaux *mensh*, dirigés par les contrôleurs et assistés de sous-officiers'; for the temples in Thebes west, see B. Haring, *Divine Households. Administrative and Economic Aspects of the New Kingdom Royal Memorial Temples in Western Thebes* (*EgUit* 12 – Leiden: *NINO*, 1997), 378. See also S. L. D. Katary, *Land Tenure in the Ramesside Period* (Studies in Egyptology – London: Kegan Paul International, 1989), 184–196.

[26] For more on the sacred ox from Heliopolis, incarnation of the god Ra, see M. Moursi, 'Corpus der Mnevis-Stelen und Untersuchungen zum Kult der Mnevis-Stiere in Heliopolis', *SAK* 10 (1983), 247–267. The new ox was chosen among the male descendants of Mnevis: therefore, the oxen could not be sold nor moved away from the temple: Peet, 'A Historical Document', 124.

[27] *Lit.* 'he cut his hand by them'. For this interpretation, see Vernus, *Affaires et scandales*, 224 n. 87; he refers to a similar sentence in *P. Salt 124* (*P. BM 10055*).

[28] *Lit.* 'he gave them in exchange' or 'he gave them as a present'.

r° 1.8 *sḏ r pȝ swḏȝ i.ir ḥm-nṯr Bȝk-n-Ḫnsw wʿ ʿfd.[t r ḥw.t-nṯr]*[29] *iw [.....] 2 im=s*[30] *iw=f wnn=s iw=f iṯȝ wʿ [...] im=s 2 [...]=f wȝḥ=f m-bȝḥ Ḥnmw iw=f hȝmn*[31] *(ḥr) ḥr=f*

r° 1.8 Memorandum concerning the handing over to the temple of a basket with two [.....] documents (?) in it by the prophet Bakenkhonsu.[32] He[33] opened it and he took one [...] two in it [...] He laid it before Khnum and he assented to it (i.e. **manipulation of the oracle**).

The passage mentioned above in section 4 reveals another example of manipulation of the oracle in the sentence: *'Let me enter with the god'. This prophet accepted his things and let him enter with the god*, where the word *'things'* (*iḫ.t*) indicates a bribe given to the prophet.

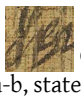
r° 2.3 *sḏ r pȝ šʿd i.ir pȝ wʿb msḏr n Sḫȝ.tw-m-nfr sȝ Bȝk-sty.t m ḫm.t [P]r-[ʿȝ] ʿ.w.s.*
r° 2.3 Memorandum concerning the severing of the ear of Sekhatuemnefer, son of Baksetyt,[34] by this *wʿb*-priest without the knowledge of Pharaoh (l.p.h) (i.e. **unauthorised mutilation conveying disrespect for Pharaoh**).[35]

v° 2.15 *sḏ r pȝ ḏȝfi i.ir pȝy ḥry-wsḫ n pr-Ḫnmw wʿ wsḫ n pr-Ḫnmw ḥnʿ pȝy=f ḫ.t-ṯȝ.w nȝy=f ḫʿ.w*
v° 2.16 *i w=f (ḥr) rdi.t iḥ.t=f n nȝ rwḏ.w n pr-Ḫnmw iw=w tm hȝb ḥr-ḥr=f bn sw (r)-šȝʿ pȝ hrw*
v° 2.15 Memorandum concerning the burning of a boat of the house of Khnum, together with its masts and its equipment by the boat captain of the house of Khnum (i.e. **disrespect for the sacred**).
v° 2.16 He gave his things to the inspectors of the house of Khnum and they did not send (any report) concerning it. There is nothing until today (i.e. **corruption of officials**).

These acts of disrespect and violence express the means of compulsion the dishonest priests used to attain their aims. Very significant examples of compulsion are the acts of manipulation of the

[29] Gardiner considers certain the word *ʿfd.t*, first identified by Peet. The following signs (*r ḥw.t-nṯr*) are doubtful.

[30] The signs  in this passage are difficult to decipher: Gardiner (*RAD*, 75a, 2a–b) was himself very cautious about offering a hypothetical rendering. For more on this passage and a proposed reading, see W. Ward, 'Lexicographical': 365-67, who reads, in the gap, the word m*tr.w*, 'witness-document':  . He cites as a parallel the *Inscription of Mes*: A.H. Gardiner, *The Inscription of Mes: a Contribution to the Study of Egyptian Judicial Procedure* (Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ägyptens 4 – Hildesheim: Olms, 1964 – 1st edn., 1905), 46, n. 13. Gardiner supports this hypothesis with the presence of the term *ʿfd.t* above, often used to indicate a basket for documents or papyri: J. Černý and A.H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Ostraca* (Oxford: Griffith Institute 1957), pl. 75, 9.

[31]  Our interpretation of these signs is entirely uncertain: It could be a hapax for the term *hnn*, as Gardiner, *RAD*, 75a, n. 3a-b, states. Ward, 'Lexicographical', 367, suggests a scribal error or a dialect variation.

[32] Ranke, *PN* I, 91, n. 13. Very frequent name in the New Kingdom. Maybe the same person is attested in a graffito in Sehel as High Priest of Khnum under Ramesses IV: cf. S. Sauneron, 'Trois personnages', 57–60.

[33] In Ward, 'Lexicographical', 366–367, it is supposed that the subject is Bakenkhonsu. However, it is more likely to be Penanukis, as all the following indictments refer to Penanukis who is at fault of opening, without permission, a basket containing some papers, in order to submit them to the divine oracle.

[34] Ranke, *PN,* I, 91 n. 19.

[35] The ablation of nose and ears is a frequent punishment during the New Kingdom. See for instance the *Turin Judicial Papyrus* (C. 1875) under Ramesses III, l. 6, 1–2: 'People who were punished by cutting off their noses and ears, because they have abandoned the good instructions given to them'. K. A. Kitchen, *KRI*, vol. 5, 359: 15. Nevertheless, Penanukis has had the affrontery to inflict a severe corporal punishment although this was an exclusive royal right: '(...) c'est au pharaon, et à lui seul, que revient le droit de prononcer une sanction corporelle en cas de faute grave. La condamnation à la peine capitale relève de son unique ressort'. B. Menu, 'Aspects de la fonction de juger dans l'Égypte pharaonique', in B. Menu (ed.), *La fonction de juger. Égypte ancienne et Mésopotamie, Droit et Cultures* 47 (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004), 137. See more recently A. A. Loktionov, '*May my nose and ears be cut off*: Practical and "supra-practical" Aspects of Mutilation in the Egyptian New Kingdom', *JESHO* 60 (2017), 273.

oracle cited in the above lines. The same goes for the act of corruption that Khnumnakht made towards the inspectors of the temple of Khnum to avoid the denunciation of his act of burning the temple boat.

6. Conclusions

One can investigate the nature of the text considering it from the lexical point of view: it shows the repetition of the term *sḫ*ꜣ at the beginning of each line of the manuscript. Only in the heading of the document (r° 1.1) does the word appear in the plural, and we have translated it as 'papers, documents'.[36] In this first occurrence, it seems to be a 'presentation' of the facts which are listed later. Below in the text, *sḫ*ꜣ has more the meaning of 'memorandum' (i.e. 'note or record for future use' or 'informal business communication').[37]

The expression *p*ꜣ*y šw.ty* in r° 1.13 presents some lexicographical problems. We have translated it as 'this merchant' and it seems to be an occupation rather than a proper name, as some authors suggest. This would be perfectly consistent with the rest of the text. The papyrus takes into account different occupations within society, including the *wꜥb*-priests (*wꜥb.w*), the Medjay police (*mḏ*ꜣ*y.w*), the controllers (*rwḏ.w*), the citizenesses (*nỉwty.w*), the Scribe of the Treasury (*sš pr-ḥḏ*), performing as Mayor of Elephantine (*ḥ*ꜣ*.ty-*ꜥ *n* ꜣ*bw*), the Vizier (*t*ꜣ*.ty*), the royal linen servant (*b*ꜣ*k.t sšr.w n(y)-sw.t*), and so on.

We are dealing here with a vivid portrait of society around the domain of Khnum in Elephantine in the age of Ramesses IV and V (1152–1142 BC). They are people involved in different ways in the affair, both as victims of an abuse, as perpetrators of a crime, or as the driving force of the action. Most of the people holding titles are occupied in the administration of the temple, but some also have roles in the civil administration [Table 1].

The text does not mention the punishments for the culprits. However, many registers in the language used are connected to the dimension of the penalty, as one can see at r° 1.4:

> **r° 1.4** *sḫ*ꜣ *r p*ꜣ *šm.t ỉ.ỉr=f r nỉw.t ỉw=f šsp nhy n mḏ*ꜣ*.wt n p*ꜣ *nty bw-pwy p*ꜣ *R*ꜥ *dỉ.t ỉry=f rwḏ r-nḥḥ ỉw=f ỉn.t=w r rsy r w*ꜣ*ḥ=w m-b*ꜣ*ḥ Ḫnmw ỉw=f tm h*ꜣ*n ḥr-ḥr=f*
>
> **r° 1.4** Memorandum concerning his going to the City (i.e. Thebes) and receiving (there) certain documents for him, whom Ra did not allow to be inspector forever.[38] He brought them to the south in order to lay them before Khnum, but (the god) did not approve[39] them.

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[36] For a different translation ('charges'), see A. McDowell, *Jurisdiction in the Workmen's Community of Deir El- Medina* (*EgUit* 5 – Leiden: *NINO*, 1990), 16–18. The term occurs for instance in P. Salt 124 to introduce one of the accusations against the chief-workmen Paneb (v° l. 6–7).

[37] A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 530.

[38] Formula of retrospective negation, similar to that occurring in two texts from the file of the 'Harem Conspiracy' (P. Rollin et Texte Rifaud E: Kitchen, *KRI*, vol. 5, 350, 15; p. 361, 1–3), studied by P. Vernus, 'Sur une formule des documents juridiques de l'époque ramesside", *RdÉ* 26 (1974), 123; according to him, it is 'une imprécation destinée à effacer rétrospectivement un fait contraire à l'ordre du monde en le niant et an attribuant sa négation au dieu, juge des hommes'. It should also have a legal effect to prevent the heirs of the criminal from exploiting the advantages deriving from their father's office. About this formula, see also Trapani, *Dévolution des fonctions,* 214 n. 753. For divine punishment and metaphysical agents for justice (gods, demons, curses), see J. Assmann, 'When Justice Fails: Jurisdiction and Imprecation in Ancient Egypt and the Near East', *JEA* 78 (1992), 149–162.

[39] The term *hn* used here is the same one used in oracular texts to express the god's approval. See J. Černý, 'Egyptian Oracles', in R. A. Parker (ed.), *A Saite Oracle Papyrus from Thebes in the Brooklyn Museum* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1962), 43–45: 'to bow, to nod' (compliance). See also Trapani, *AION* 52 (1992), 13, 17 and Trapani, *Dévolution des fonctions*, 14. See also note 31 above for a garbled writing of this term and associated remarks.

Staff of the temple	**People of the village**
wᶜb-priests (*wᶜb.w*)	Medjay police (*mḏ͗y.w*)
Agents, controllers (*rwḏ.w*)	Citizenesses (*nỉwty.w*)
Scribe of the Treasury (*sš pr-ḥḏ*) and Mayor of Elephantine (*ḥ͗.ty-ᶜ n ͗bw*)	Fisherman (*wḥᶜ*)
Prophet (*ḥm-nṯr*)	Craftsman in the Place of Truth (*ḥm.ty n st M͗ᶜ.t*)
Followers (*šms.w*)	Farmer (*iḥw.ty*)
God's father (*it-nṯr*)	Overseer of the cattle (*ỉmy-r͗ mnḫ.w*)
Guardian (*s͗.w*)	Merchant (*šw.ty*)
Controller of the Granary (*rwḏ.w n t͗ šn.wt*)	Carrier of gold(?) (*f͗y nbw*?)
Boat captain (*ḥry wsḫ*)	Sailor (*nf.w*)
Crew of the boat of Khnum (*rmṯ p͗ wsḫ Ḫnmw*)	
Scribes of the temple of Khnum (*sš.w n pr-Ḫnmw*)	

Civil servants and royal staff
Vizier (*ṯ͗.ty*)
Overseer of the Treasury (*ỉmy-r͗ pr-ḥḏ*)
Headmen/notables (*ḥry.w*)
Royal linen servant (*b͗k.t sšr.w n(y)-sw.t*)

Table 1. Social categories involved in the 'Elephantine Scandal'.

In this passage, the scribe does not specify the name of the culprit (i.e. Penanukis) nor the reason for this punishment. The god Ra inflicts the penalty, so the text moves from a narrative tone to another more elevated level, implying divine intervention in human affairs.[40] The last sentence in the line shows the submission of some papers to the god Khnum to get his approval: a consultation of the divine oracle.

Vocabulary conveying the significance of religion and its rules also appears on the *recto* at r° 1.9, where there is an allusion to the required purification rites to enter the innermost parts of the fortress of Biga.

Later in the papyrus, we encounter:

r° 1.13 *ỉw.tw (ḥr) smtr=f ỉw.(tw) (ḥr) gm ỉw ḏd=f sw {n}*[SIC] *(m) m͗ᶜ.t ỉw.(tw) (ḥr) dỉ.t n=f ᶜnḫ n nb ᶜ.w.s. r tm ᶜḳ r ḥw.t-nṯr ỉw=f (ḥr) dỉ.t*
r° 1.14 *ỉḫ.t=f n p͗y ḥm-nṯr r-ḏd ỉmy ᶜḳ=ỉ ḫry p͗ nṯr ỉw p͗y ḥm-nṯr šspỉ ỉḫ.t=f ỉw=f ḥr dỉ.t ᶜḳ=f ḫry {y}*[SIC] *p͗ nṯr*

r° 1.13 He was examined and it was found that he had said it indeed. He was made to take an oath by (the) Lord (l.p.h) not to enter the temple, but he gave
r° 1.14 his things to this prophet, saying: 'let me enter with the god'. This prophet accepted his things and let him enter with the god (i.e. **manipulation of the oracle**).

[40] For recourse to metaphysical agents in human justice, see Assmann, 'When Justice Fails', *passim*.

Here we can find the oath (*ʿnḫ n nb*)[41] by the *wʿb*-priest not to enter the temple (r° 1.13) but he breaks it in exchange for a bribe.

In other similar texts, such as the well-known *P. Salt 124*,[42] one can find the same 'oath of (the) Lord', one of the most common law instruments in Ramesside texts. The expression *ʿnḫ n nb* refers to a royal oath, as the 'lord' here is the ruling Pharaoh.[43]

Further on in the text of our papyrus, the language is in the semantic register of violence, like on the *recto*, where there is an episode of someone's ear being cut off by a fellow citizen. This punishment seems to be an exclusive right of the king;[44] at r° 2.10, the scribe describes the violence against the servant of the royal linen Mutnefret and against her daughter Baksetyt (setting fire to their house and blinding them). The register of violence returns on the *verso* where the text says that Khnumnakht burned a boat of the temple together with its equipment. The inspectors of the temple, whom Khnumnakht had conveniently bribed, did not report the event to the Vizier.

From our text it seems difficult to establish which type of court should have judged the crimes committed by Penanukis and Khnumnakht. The same types of courts probably considered crimes against religion as well as those against the administration. In the text of *Papyrus Mayer A*, for example, one can deduce that the priests were judged by the same type of court which judged the common criminals.[45] The court could deal with cases of civil crimes or penal crimes,[46] but the punishments prescribed by the judges were very different. A form of conscious distinction between a crime against a private party and a crime concerning a whole community was likely at stake.[47]

Indeed, the disrespect of the *wʿb*-priest Penanukis for the rites of purification is a violation against the community;[48] as such, it implies the disturbance of the established order, Maat.[49] The fulfilment of

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[41] For more on words associated with oaths and swearing, see McDowell, *Jurisdiction*, 33–37.

[42] *P. BM 10055*. Published in J. Černý, 'Papyrus Salt 124 (Brit. Mus. 10055)', *JEA* 15 (1929), 243–258, pls. XLII–XLVI, and *KRI*, vol. 4, 404–14. Main study: A. Théodoridès, 'Dénonciation de malversation ou requête de destitution? (P. Salt 124 = P. Brit. Mus. 10055', *RIDA* 28 (1981), 9–80.

[43] See about this kind of oath J. A. Wilson, 'The Oath in ancient Egypt', *JNES* 7 (1948), 130–136, especially 136, and, more recently, A. David, *The Legal Register of Ramesside Private Law Instruments* (*GÖF* 38 - Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 237–240 *et passim*. David states that before the Ramesside Period warranties against claims could be given without resorting to an oath: *Legal Register*, 238. About the punishments which Paneb underwent, see D. Lorton, 'The Treatment of Criminals in Ancient Egypt through the New Kingdom', *JESHO* 20 (1977), 39–40.

[44] About this penalty, see Loktionov, '*May my nose*', especially 274 for an hypothesis about the role of mutilation in legal procedure and 275-278 for practical considerations relating to survival rates of the mutilated.

[45] *P. Mayer A*, 11, 5 and 13; also 12, 15 and 16 (*P. Liverpool M 11162*); T.E. Peet, *The Great Tomb Robberies of the Twentieth Egyptian Dynasty*, I–II (Oxford: Clarendon 1930) (new edition: Hildesheim and New York: G. Olms, 1977), I, 186; II, pl. XXIV; K. A. Kitchen, *KRI*, vol. 6, 803–28.

[46] We are using here a modern-day distinction of civil cases (i.e. cases concerned with restitution for wrong to individuals) vs. criminal cases (i.e. cases concerned with offences against state law) to make intelligible a difference which does not appear to have been formulated in Egyptian law at this stage.

[47] S. Allam, 'Law', in T. A. H. Wilkinson (ed.), *The Egyptian World*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 267–268.

[48] For more on purification, see J. F. Quack, 'Concepts of Purity in Egyptian Religion', in C. Frevel and C. Nihan (eds), *Purity and the Forming of Religious Traditions in the Ancient Mediterranean World and Ancient Judaism*, (Dynamics in the History of Religion 3 – Leiden and Boston: Brill 2013), 115–158, where this passage is discussed on p. 122.

[49] See r° 1.9: 'Memorandum concerning his coming to the inside of the Fortress when he had (only) seven days of drinking natron'. About the religion and rite interdictions see S. Sauneron, 'Les possédés', *BIFAO* 60 (1960), 111–115; S. Aufrère, 'Les interdits religieux des noms dans les monographies en Égypte. Un autre regard', in J-M. Marconot et S. H. Aufrère (eds), *L'interdit et le sacré dans les religions de la Bible et de l'Égypte, Actes du Colloque Montpellier, le 20 mars 1998* (Montpellier: Université Montpellier, 1998), 69–114. In the text of the papyrus there is no trace of the word *bw.t*, often translated 'prohibition, abomination'. See also L. Coulon, 'Le clergé', 41, mentioning our text among other cases of required ritual purity of the priests, and N. Leroux, 'Les Recommandations aux prêtres: un état des lieux', *BSFÉ* 199 (2018), 73–99, about the corpus of inscriptions called 'Recommendations to priests', engraved in the side doors of Ptolemaic temples. The bibliography about Maat is very extensive:

justice, according to Egyptian texts, means to restore order and to make all the parties of a trial satisfied through the resolution of the conflict.

Crime had a moral aspect strictly linked to religion. Through his actions, the wrongdoer revealed himself as a representation of Seth or Apophis, the embodiment of chaos itself. The criminal was, perhaps, placed on the same level as the animals sacrificed in the temple or during the funerary rites to symbolise the defeat of evil forces. His punishment was part of a system for protecting society against cosmic chaos, which he represented on a small scale. Some ritual aspects thus often determined the identity of the transgressor and the treatment he deserved. At the same time, punishment for crimes played a relevant role in the maintenance of social order.[50]

A way to extend punishment to the afterlife was the 'destruction of the name' of the culprit and the retroactive removal from his office, as seen above.[51]

In conclusion, our text seems to be a record ('memoranda') of the illegal actions committed by two identified persons, Penanukis and Khnumnakht. Moreover, on the *verso* we have a list of the crimes which some unnamed men perpetrated against the temples of Khnum and Anukis. The report continues with the misdeeds of Khnumnakht: the unnamed men probably acted on his orders or were his accomplices.

However, the aforementioned misdeeds also reveal the importance of compulsion in Egyptian society, recorded – and in part enforced – through legal proceedings. The aim of the present article is to underline the ways in which the actors of an event described in a well-known administrative text achieved (or tried to achieve) a level of influence or control over each other.

In the milieu of the Khnum temple staff, both formal/institutional and informal/non-institutional means of compelling desirable behaviour are derived from religious practices and rites.

One relevant example of compulsion in the text is the duty of purity the *wꜥb*-priest Penanukis breaks before entering the innermost part of the fortress of Biga (r° 1.9): one can deduce this form of control or influence over the activity of temple staff from the description of the violation Penanukis committed.

Such compulsion could be justified through the different means highlighted above: restrictions on staff activities were couched as preventing acts of disrespect for the sacred, for instance when Penanukis is charged with transferring five calves sacred to Mnevis to the *wꜥb*-priests (r° 1.2). Here the attempted control is over the temple personnel and properties.

In the same way, the burning of a boat of the temple of Khnum is a form of influence exerted by Penanukis. This culminates in his attempt at corrupting the inspectors of the temple, to avoid any report about his criminal conduct (v° 2.15–2.16).

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see for instance E. Teeter, *The Presentation of Maat. Ritual and Legitimacy in ancient Egypt* (*SAOC* 57 – Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1997), 1, n. 1.

[50] See H. Willems, 'Crime, Cult, and Capital Punishment (Mo'alla Inscription 8)', *JEA* 76 (1990), 49–52, n. 129, for many examples dating back from the Middle to the New Kingdom; according to these texts, the execution of criminals could take place during the religious rituals of sacrifice. Assmann, *'Justice Fails'*, 149-57, on the other hand, expresses a different view of the relation between legal and symbolic/magical punishment in the legal occurrences. He also provides a critical analysis of Willems.

[51] G. Posener, 'Les criminels débaptisés et les morts sans noms', *RdÉ* 5 (1946), 55. For the retroactive removal, see in our text r° 1.4, mentioned above.

Moreover, the manipulation of the oracle is a way of controlling the supposed behaviour of the oracular statue, thereby influencing the god's verdict, thus directly affecting the life of the temple and its personnel (r° 1.8).

The same is true for the bribery of a prophet of the temple, to cover up an attempt by Penanukis to influence the appointment of the *wʿb*-priest Bakenkhonsu through the oracle (r° 1.12–1.14).

The misuse Penanukis makes of corporal punishments (ablation of the nose and ears) is another example of the attempt to compel or influence the behaviour of Sekhatuemnefer, the victim, even though it is not clear from the text to what purpose (r° 2.3). It is interesting that the accused *wʿb*-priest uses for his own purposes a violent punishment that was generally an exclusive royal right.

Based on such content, it seems likely that the *Turin Indictment Papyrus* was probably part of the archives of the temple of Khnum, later moved to Thebes (or Deir el-Medina), almost certainly for security reasons. There the emissaries of Drovetti acquired it and the papyrus began its route to Turin.

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2
The Egyptian Temples of Oxyrhynchus and their Personnel under the Roman Empire[1]

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Abstract

Oxyrhynchus is an interesting case study for reconstructing the status and role of native temples and their personnel during the Roman occupation of Egypt. The wealth of documents stemming from the highly bureaucratised imperial administration provides detailed information about the many individuals serving one of the major sanctuaries of the city, the temple of Athena-Thoeris, Isis and Serapis, and the changes to this religious organisation and other temples under the new rulers. Moreover, the University of Barcelona Archaeological Mission's recent discovery of the Osireion, almost unknown in the papyrological documentation, seems to further demonstrate that the Romans played a significant role in ensuring the continuity of local religious activities up until the beginning of the 3rd century AD.

Keywords: Osireion; Oxyrhynchus; Temple workers; Thoereion; Roman administration

1. Introduction: the impact of the Roman conquest on Egyptian society and religious institutions

The Roman conquest led to great changes in the administration of Egypt and its legal, gubernatorial and religious institutions. From birth to death, all the inhabitants of this newly conquered territory were inevitably part of a highly bureaucratised system, designed by the Romans to maintain order in the large and extremely heterogeneous domain of the empire. While affecting Egyptian society in manifold ways, these changes did not entail the demise of the Egyptian religion, but rather its adaptation to the new political and social circumstances brought about by imperial policy. Indeed, the native cults survived and were a vital presence throughout the Roman period, embedded in a multicultural environment, the distinguishing feature of Greco-Roman Egypt. The impact of the long coexistence and interaction between native and foreign traditions, and in particular the influence of Hellenistic ideas and practices, is reflected in the complex intertwining of old and new religious customs and beliefs. Evidence of this phenomenon can be found in festivals, healing and oracular cults, and various manifestations of popular and local religious traditions that flourished throughout the Egyptian *chora*.[2]

[1] My gratitude goes to Professor Dr Paola Buzi for her invaluable advice on improving this paper; it goes without saying that all errors remain my own. Based on research funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG), first as part of Sonderforschungsbereich 950 (SFB 950) and then under Germany's Excellence Strategy programme (EXC 2176 'Understanding Written Artefacts: Material, Interaction and Transmission in Manuscript Cultures', project no. 390893796). This study is part of my PhD dissertation, 'The Transition from Traditional Cults to the Affirmation of Christian Beliefs in the City of Oxyrhynchus', conducted at the University of Hamburg Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC).

[2] For a general introduction to religion in Roman Egypt, see A. Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs 332 BC – AD 642: From Alexander to the Arab Conquest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); W. Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, II, (Religion. Heidentum: Die religiösen Verhältnisse in den Provinzen 18/5) (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1995); D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); C. Riggs (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); and R. Bagnall (ed.), *Roman Egypt: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

While the Egyptian temples and their priests continued to exercise considerable influence over the native population they were, however, more severely controlled. In fact, while the conquerors were tolerant of the Egyptian religious institutions, the status and power of the native clergy was probably seen as a potential menace for the stability of the province. For this reason, the Romans, who considered religious control and political legitimacy as two sides of the same coin, introduced significant changes to the status and role of the local religious institutions. Numerous studies over the last few decades have highlighted how imperial policies substantially altered the economic subsistence of the native temples leading to land expropriation, the gradual decline of infrastructures and variations in the functions of the priesthood.[3] Moreover, the Romans increasingly strengthened their presence in the internal organisation of the temples, regulating access to the priestly class[4] and controlling the activities and liturgical services.[5] Although several of these rules and laws were based on pre-existing models already adopted by the Ptolemies, the imperial administration created a control network designed to leave nothing to chance. A section of the *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* (Regulations of the emperor's private account),[6] expressly dedicated to the Egyptian priesthood, defined the legal and social position of the native clergy following a model probably derived from the manuals of temple laws. Greek translations of handbooks belonging to the Egyptian religious institutions, such as the *Book of the Temple*,[7] were evidently produced during this historical phase. Significantly, two fragments from this manuscript, discovered at Oxyrhynchus, preserved part of a section on priestly initiation, including the transcription of several sacred oaths.[8] Moreover, on the *verso*, the papyrus contained what was probably part of a manual of temple law, including a list of rules and punishments for the temple personnel. This surviving evidence underscores how the translation of such manuals, as well as other sacred texts, was probably linked to two different phenomena. On one hand, it was symptomatic of the continuously dwindling numbers of temple personnel with high proficiency of Egyptian writing,[9] and, on the other, it might also have met the needs of the foreign administrators seeking to acquire a thorough knowledge of the internal organisation of Egyptian temples.

2. Oxyrhynchus: a paradigmatic case study

Of the various religious centres known to date, Oxyrhynchus offers a particularly detailed perspective on the lively social, economic and ritual activities around the native temples at this late stage of ancient Egyptian history. The site owes its fame to the wealth of papyrological evidence discovered between 1896 and 1907 by Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt in the ancient rubbish dumps surrounding the

[3] For an introduction to the effects of imperial policies and the administrative relationship between the Egyptian priests and the Romans, see Haase, *Aufstieg und Niedergang*; Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs*; Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*; F. Dunand and C. Zivie-Coche, *Gods and Men in Egypt: 3000 BCE to 395 CE* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004); and W. Clarysse, 'Egyptian Temples and Priests: Graeco-Roman,' in A. B. Lloyd (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Egypt* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), 274–290. See also the comprehensive study by C. Messerer, *Corpus des papyrus grecs sur les relations administratives entre le clergé égyptien et les autorités romaines*, I–III (Papyrologica Coloniensia 41/1-3 – Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2017–2020); and Bagnall, *Roman Egypt: A History*.

[4] For the evidence from the site of Oxyrhynchus, see Section 6 here: 'Control over access to the priestly class'.

[5] See Section 7: 'Financial support and control of temple economic activities'.

[6] This handbook contained a collection of laws and rules that constituted the legal background for the duties of the *idios logos*, an office already existing under the Ptolemies, but which in the Roman period became the primary instrument for the financial and legal control of the Egyptian province. Originally in Latin, the *Gnomon* was composed during the reign of Augustus and modified and enlarged in the following centuries, as is demonstrated by the opening section of *P. Oxy.* XLII 3014 (1st century AD), which has a summary of the most important rules in the manual.

[7] For an overview of this manual, see J. Quack, 'Translating the Realities of Cult: The Case of the *Book of the Temple*', in I. Rutherford (ed.), *Greco-Egyptian Interactions: Literature, Translation, and Culture, 500 BCE – 300 CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 267–286.

[8] *P. Washington Univ. inv. 138 + P. Oslo 2* is the only Greek copy of the *Book of the Temple* known to date. On its identification, see Quack, 'Translating the Realities of Cult'.

[9] See Quack, 'Translating the Realities of Cult', 281.

city. Considering the importance of these textual sources, it is not surprising that Oxyrhynchus and its religious landscape have often been presented as a paradigmatic case study for an understanding of the various dynamics of continuity and change that affected Egyptian society in the aftermath of the Roman conquest.[10] Of the thousands of papyri published so far, dozens of administrative texts pertain to Roman bureaucratic control over the local inhabitants and provide fascinating information about the lives and activities of the priests and other workers serving in the temples of the city. Indeed, by examining the documents submitted to the imperial authorities, we have learned the names, religious offices and activities of the temple personnel in the sanctuaries primarily associated with the cult of Thoeris, patroness of Oxyrhynchus.[11] Moreover, by also considering the contemporary documentation, we can reconstruct the principal means of subsistence of the local temples, as the imperial administration increasingly intervened in their economic activities.

In addition to the information gathered from the papyrological evidence, we can now rely on new data built up over three decades of archaeological investigations by the University of Barcelona Archaeological Mission.[12] Their discoveries enable us to re-assess the sources published so far, offering a wider perspective on the cults of Roman Oxyrhynchus. Studies conducted in the Osireion,[13] for example, provide tangible signs of building works carried out in the sanctuary, of which there is almost no mention in the papyrological records.[14] As we shall see, these works may have been associated with a specific redevelopment programme pursued by the imperial administration. By combining papyrological and archaeological evidence, this paper bridges the gap between past and recent studies, providing new insight into the religious institutions of Oxyrhynchus under the Roman Empire.

3. The cult of Thoeris and Osiris at Oxyrhynchus

To comprehend the information gleaned from administrative documents concerning the religious institutions of Oxyrhynchus, it is necessary to first provide a brief introduction to the most important deities venerated in the city.

Since the Late Pharaonic period, Thoeris and Osiris had been at the centre of the local religious scene, as is attested by inscriptions and other written artefacts discovered in tombs in the so-called High Necropolis of priests who officiated their cults under the Saite Dynasty.[15] The primary role of the cult

[10] This paper owes much to the various studies devoted to religion in Oxyrhynchus, especially J. Whitehorne, 'The Pagan Cults of Roman Oxyrhynchus', in W. Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt,* II (Religion. Heidentum: Die religiösen Verhältnisse in den Provinzen 18/5 – Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1995), 3050–3091. For an introduction to the city and its society in the Roman period, see P. J. Parsons, *City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish: Greek Lives in Roman Egypt* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2007); and A. Bowman *et al.* (eds), *Oxyrhynchus: A City and Its Texts* (Graeco-Roman Memoirs 93 – London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2007).

[11] On the cult of Athena-Thoeris and the temple personnel associated with the deity at Oxyrhynchus and other sites from the Ptolemaic to the Late Antique periods, see J. Quaegebeur, W. Clarysse and B. Van Maele, 'Athêna, Nêith and Thoêris in Greek Documents', *ZPE* 60 (1985), 224–230. See also Whitehorne, 'The Pagan Cults', 380–382.

[12] The site located near the modern village of el-Bahnasa has been investigated by Professor Josep Padró i Parcerisa and his team since 1992. The excavations are currently being carried out under the supervision of Dr Esther Pons Mellado and Dr Maite Mascort Roca; my deepest gratitude to the University of Barcelona Archaeological Mission for allowing me to join their team and actively collaborate in the investigations held on the site since 2020.

[13] This sanctuary was the subject of a dissertation by Dr Maite Mascort Roca; the results of her studies have been recently published, see M. Mascort (ed.), *Oxyrhynchos IV: L'Osireion d'Oxirrinc*, I–II (Nova Studia Aegyptiaca 10 – Barcelona: Publicacions i Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, 2018).

[14] Only a few references to a sanctuary associated with the cult of Osiris in the Roman phase are known to date, such as the swearing of an oath inside the Osorapeion of Oxyrhynchus in *PSI* X 1128 (3rd century AD) and a registration of a mortgage in *P. Oxy*. II 241 (c. AD 98–99).

[15] The presence of a well-established cult of Osiris has been proven by the discovery in Tomb 14 of two canopic jars belonging to Tadihor, the daughter of Heresenef, a prophet of Osiris and Amon. On the priesthood of Osiris under the Saite Dynasty, see N. Rodríguez i Corcoll, *Sacerdoci i cultes del nord de l'Egipte Mitjà durant la baixa època (segles VII-IV aC): Del nomus 14 al 22*

of Thoeris certainly endured in the Greco-Roman period, as is demonstrated by the archaeological evidence recorded in investigations across the city. Indeed, while there is still no archaeological evidence about the temples dedicated to Thoeris, the local inhabitants' devotion to this goddess is attested by numerous representations of her theriomorphic forms, namely the oxyrhynchus[16] and lepidotus fish. These iconographic motifs are a recurrent presence on tomb walls, sarcophagi, painted cartonnage and plaster mummy cases found inside Roman tombs of the High Necropolis.[17] The interpretation of the two fish as sacred animals of the goddess Thoeris[18] seems to be supported by textual and archaeological finds. For example, a Ptolemaic stela preserves an image of the two fish framing an inscription referring to the donation of a *propylaeum* to a sanctuary of Thoeris by a group of *theagoi,*[19] and in the Roman phase, the local association of net fishermen continued to make regular offerings to the temples of the goddess, apparently usually managed by religious personnel holding the office of the *theageia.*[20] Both elements are particularly significant, especially when considered in the light of the discovery of a deposit of thousands of fish – mainly oxyrhynchus and lepidotus – in a Late Period structure of the High Necropolis, partly altered in the Greco-Roman age.[21] Esther Pons Mellado and Maite Mascort have convincingly associated this deposit with the cult of Thoeris.[22] Moreover, offerings of oxyrhynchus fish are often found in funerary contexts up until the Late Antique phase.[23]

The endurance of the cult of Osiris in the Roman period is attested by the discovery of a temple-catacomb in the suburb of Oxyrhynchus[24] and a series of structures, likely cult chapels and altars, built near one of the main roads of the city.[25] As in many other Greco-Roman settlements, Osiris is also frequently

de l'Alt Egipte (Nova Studia Aegyptiaca 7) (Barcelona: Publicacions i Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, 2008), 159–163. Furthermore, Tomb 1 preserved important references to the Khoiak ritual, strictly associated with the cult of Osiris; see J. Padró (ed.), *Oxyrhynchos III: La Tombe N° 1 à la Nécropole Haute* (Nova Studia Aegyptiaca 8 – Barcelona: Publicacions i Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, 2014), 110–111. Evidence of the presence of various priests and priestesses associated with the cult of Thoeris includes the inscriptions identified in Tomb 1; see Mascort, *Oxyrhynchos IV: L'Osireion*, I, 16.

[16] The Greek name for Oxyrhynchus derives from this sacred animal, which was probably already venerated in the city in the Dynastic period.

[17] Moreover, a bronze statuette depicting an oxyrhynchus fish has been discovered in Roman Tomb 23; on the cult of this deity at Oxyrhynchus and the evidence found on the site, see M. Mascort Roca and E. Pons Mellado, 'Tueris-Oxirrinco: La diosa protectora de Per-Medyed', *TdE* 10 (2019), 241–256.

[18] On the association of the two fish with the cult of Thoeris, see J. Padró and M. Morfin, 'L'Oxyrhynque et le lépidote à el-Bahnasa', in J. A. Ramos, L. M. de Araújo and A. R. dos Santos (eds), *Percursos do Oriente Antigo: Estudos de homenagem ao professor doutor José Nunes Carreira na sua Jubilação Académica* (Lisbon: Instituto Oriental, 2004), 401–406; P. Vernus and J. Yoyotte, *Bestiaire des pharaons* (Paris: Perrin, 2005), 273–274; M. Erroux-Morfin, 'Les métamorphoses de Thouéris à l'époque tardive: De 'l'hippopotame' aux poissons', *Nilus* 15 (2006), 3–8; and L. Coulon, 'Les inscriptions des catacombes osiriennes d'Oxyrhynchos: Témoignages du culte d'Osiris sous les règnes de Ptolémée VI et Ptolémée VIII', in A. Jördens and J. F. Quack (eds), *Ägypten zwischen innerem Zwist und äußerem Druck: Die Zeit Ptolemaios' VI. bis VIII.* (Philippika 45 – Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 77–78.

[19] For an introduction to this religious office, see Section 4: 'Temple personnel in the Thoereion and other sanctuaries.' For this inscription, see É. Bernand, 'Dédicace à Thouéris,' *ZPE* 81 (1990), 200–202; and H. Heinen, 'Thoeris und heilige Fische: Eine neue griechische Inschrift für Ptolemaios X. Alexander I,' in J. Seibert (ed.), *Hellenistische Studien: Gedenkschrift für Hermann Bengtson* (Münchener Arbeiten zur Alten Geschichte 5 – München: Editio Maris, 1991), 41–53.

[20] See Section 7: 'Financial support and control of temple economic activities'.

[21] W. van Neer and J. Gonzalez, 'A Late Period Fish Deposit at Oxyrhynchus (el-Bahnasa, Egypt)', in J. Peters, G. McGlynn and V. Goebel (eds), *Animals: Cultural Identifiers in Ancient Societies?* (Documenta Archaeobiologiae 15 – Rahden: Verlag Marie Leidorf, 2019), 333.

[22] See E. Pons Mellado and M. Mascort, 'Ofrenda de peces hallada en el ámbito 32 del yacimiento arqueológico de Oxirrinco (El-Bahnasa, Egipto)', L. Burgos Bernal, A. Pérez Largacha and I. Vivas Sainz (eds), in *Actas V Congreso Ibérico de Egiptología* (Colección Estudios 157 – Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2017), 863–875. The finding of a wooden Hathoric crown, an attribute peculiar to the iconographic representation of the oxyrhynchus fish, seems to support its association with a sanctuary devoted to Thoeris; see Mascort and Pons Mellado, 'Tueris-Oxirrinco,' 249–251.

[23] See, for instance, E. Pons Mellado, 'Tombs of the Roman Period in Sector 26 of the High Necropolis: Archaeological Site of Oxyrhynchus, El-Bahnasa', *TdE* 7 (2016), 167.

[24] For an introduction to this subject, see Mascort, *Oxyrhynchos IV: L'Osireion*, I.

[25] See Mascort, *Oxyrhynchos IV: L'Osireion*, I, 37.

represented in the traditional offering scenes carved or painted on funerary chapels and sarcophagi guarding the eternal sleep of the owners of the tombs in the local necropoleis.[26]

The papyrological documentation, however, offers quite a different picture: Osiris temple personnel are only very rarely mentioned,[27] even though a sanctuary dedicated to his cult has recently been discovered, while there are abundant references to priests and other workers associated with the cult of Thoeris, despite the absence of archaeological evidence for her temples. Considering the documents published so far, the Thoereion – also known as the sanctuary of Athena-Thoeris, Isis and Serapis and all the associated gods – undoubtedly dominated the strikingly varied religious landscape of the city, which included many Egyptian temples and sanctuaries devoted to foreign deities. Interestingly, the surviving papyrological documentation also offers detailed information on the relationship between the imperial officials and the priesthood of Thoeris, mainly serving in the Thoereion, but very little evidence concerning other religious institutions. This suggests that the Thoereion personnel were usually the mediators in the administrative relationship between the imperial officials and most of the local temples. Indeed, their declarations deposited as part of their professional duties and also as private citizens seem to demonstrate that the Thoereion was the most important sanctuary in Oxyrhynchus and that various temples and cults, including several within its precinct, were probably dependent upon it.[28]

4. Temple personnel in the Thoereion and other sanctuaries

Examining the heterogeneous corpus of the Oxyrhynchus papyri throws light on the various individuals in service during the Roman phase, principally within the Thoereion and in the minor temples of the same deity, namely the Thoereion Exagoreion,[29] Sintano[30] and Thenepmoi.[31]

The *prophetai*,[32] the highest-ranking priestly class, controlled and supervised the activities of both the major sanctuaries of the city and the minor temples of the villages. However, despite their important role, apart from a few references to several unnamed *archiprophetai* preserved in the epistolary documentation,[33] only two priests bearing this title are attested at Oxyrhynchus: Harthonis[34] and Aurelius Osorapis,[35] presumably both serving in the temple of Athena-Thoeris, Isis and Serapis. The *stolistai*,[36] a

[26] For the discoveries in Tomb 3, 18 and 21, see Pons Mellado, 'Tombs of the Roman Period', 163–168, 170–171. Bronze statuettes of Osiris have been discovered near several Roman tombs in the High Necropolis; see, for instance, findings in Sector 2C, 2D and 24 partly discussed in J. Padró *et al.,* 'Informe preliminar dels treballs d'excavació i restauració realitzats al jaciment d'Oxirrinc (El-Bahnasa, Mínia) durant la campanya de 2010', *Nilus* 19 (2010), 6–9.

[27] Only two references, to my knowledge, have been found so far: *P. Oxy.* II 241 (*c.* AD 98–99), mentioning Thoonis, *archipastophoros* of Thoeris, Isis, Serapis and Osiris, and *P. Oxy.* VII 1029 (AD 107), a declaration recording the name of a certain Osmolchis, a hieroglyph carver of Osiris, and possibly of Apis.

[28] For example, this would also explain why on some occasions the *kline* of Serapis appears to have taken place in the Thoereion, as attested by the invitation ticket *P. Oxy.* XII 1484 (2nd–3rd centuries AD).

[29] On this temple, see Section 7: 'Financial support and control of temple economic activities'.

[30] The name of this sanctuary possibly means 'the seat of the fair of countenance', referring to a specific cult dedicated to Thoeris in the city; see Whitehorne, 'The Pagan Cults', 3082.

[31] This epithet, alternatively interpreted as meaning 'she of the water/the island' and 'the daughter of the lion', also points to a particular cult present in this city; see Whitehorne, 'The Pagan Cults,' 3082.

[32] On the role and duties of these priests, see Messerer, *Corpus des papyrus grecs*, II, 2–3.

[33] As in *P. Oslo* III 158 (AD 275–299), this is a letter from an *exegetes* to a local *archiprophetes*, probably concerning the deposition of gold votive offerings.

[34] *SB* X 10256 (AD 55–67).

[35] Also often mentioned as a *stolistes*, Aurelius Osorapis is probably the most important known sacred authority of Roman Oxyrhynchus. This priest, who held the titles of both *archiprophetes* and *protostolistes*, is mentioned in *PSI* IX 1039 (3rd century AD), an annual report including a list of temple personnel and their children, sent by the *hieropsaltes* of the village of Teis. He also possibly appears, but as a *stolistes*, in a payment for crown-money as the guardian of a sacred virgin, *P. Oxy.* XLIV 3177 (AD 247).

[36] As noted by Willy Clarysse, the Greek title could be translated as 'the priests who enter the *adyton* for clothing the gods'; see Clarysse, 'Egyptian Temples and Priests', 288.

priestly class of a slightly lower rank, albeit in charge of equally important sacred duties, often appear in relation to several economic activities, sometimes associated with the supervision of temple properties.[37] The office of the *pteraphoros*,[38] on the other hand, the lector priest with a key role in conveying and translating temple knowledge, is only known from a single document mentioning a certain Thoonis as being in service at the temple of Athena-Thoeris and the divine Augustus Caesar in the 2nd century AD.[39]

Priests of lower ranks, such as the *hiereis*,[40] in charge of different ritual activities connected with the care of the sanctuary and the organisation of festivals, are widely mentioned, sometimes bearing this title alone or more frequently in association with other offices.[41] It is not uncommon to encounter several *hiereis* requesting legal support from the Roman authorities, as can be seen in a rare mention of the priestly tribe of the Sarapeion requesting justice after several attacks on their religious community.[42] The *pastophoroi*[43] acted as the guardians of areas of the main sanctuary of Thoeris, as was recorded in a temple account apparently of payments for their services.[44] However, most of the documents mentioning *pastophoroi* concern their private affairs,[45] and one of these texts actually attests to the presence of a cult of Osiris within the sanctuary of Athena-Thoeris.[46] There are also fairly frequent references to *hierotektones* (temple carpenters),[47] presumably in service in the same Thoereion,[48] and also mentioned in association with the performance of religious duties.[49]

The few temple workers still attested in the 4th century AD[50] include the *moschosphragistai* (calf-sealers),[51] specialised in the care and certification of the purity of the sacrificial animals.[52] Likewise, *theagoi*[53] and other personnel,[54] mainly in charge of the care of sacred animals, recur in declarations

[37] See in particular *P. Oxy.* II 242 (AD 77), discussed in Section 7: 'Financial support and control of temple economic activities'.

[38] The Greek title 'feather bearer' corresponds to the Demotic 'scribe of the sacred books'; see Clarysse, 'Egyptian Temples and Priests', 288.

[39] *P. Mich.* XVIII 788 (AD 173); he also holds the titles of priest, temple carpenter and sealer of the sacred calves.

[40] This office inherited the duties of the *w·b* priest; see Clarysse, 'Egyptian Temples and Priests', 287–288.

[41] As in *P. Mich.* XVIII 788 but also *P. Oxy.* LXI 4116 (3rd–4th centuries AD). Among the latest documents, *P. Monts. Roca* IV 69 attests the declaration of two priests, Aurelius Pausirion and Didymos, in AD 325.

[42] *P. Oxy.* XXXI 2563 (AD 170).

[43] The Greek term *pastophoros* seems to derive from the Demotic title *ỉry-ꜥ* 'door-keeper', possibly alluding to their role in guarding and/or granting access to several temple buildings. However, they also appear to have had various religious duties; see S. E. Thomas, 'The *Pastophorion* Revisited: Owners and Users of 'Priests' Houses' in Ptolemaic Pathyris and Elsewhere in Egypt', *JEA* 100 (2014), 122–124.

[44] *P. Oxy.* VIII 1144 (1st-2nd centuries AD); the identification of this religious institution as the temple of Athena-Thoeris is implied by the mention of a Thoereion and Isieion as highlighted in a recent re-edition of the text.

[45] For instance, Eudaimon, mentioned in a will, *P. Oxy.* III 491 (AD 126). The same office is attributed to Aurelius Petosiris, *pastophoros* of Athena-Thoeris, *P. Oxy.* X 1268 (AD 249–250), in a registration of a house after its purchase.

[46] *P. Oxy.* II 241, the aforementioned registration of a mortgage taken out by the *archipastophoros* Thoonis in the sanctuary of Athena-Thoeris, Isis, Serapis and Osiris.

[47] This office indicates temple workers who probably took care of the sacred paraphernalia. On *hierotektones,* see also A. Świderek, 'Deux papyrus de la Sorbonne relatifs à des travaux effectués dans des temples de l'Héracléopolite', *JJP* 11/12 (1957–1958), 70.

[48] As in *P. Oxy.* III 579=*P. Oxy.* LXXXII 5317 (AD 131–137), an official report sent to the *strategos* and the *basilikos grammateus* by Teos and Thonis. Another citizen bearing this title, Harpaesis, is associated with the same sanctuary in *P. Rein.* II 93 (AD 159–160), a census declaration. Similarly, *P. Oxy.* XII 1550 (AD 116), a death notice, mentions various citizens holding the office in the same Thoereion.

[49] As demonstrated by *P. Rein.* II 94 (AD 194-197), a sworn declaration submitted by Harthonis and Pekysis.

[50] *PSI* V 454 (AD 320).

[51] On this office and the temple incomes derived from its functions, see Clarysse, 'Egyptian Temples and Priests', 281.

[52] Like the sons of Ampendis, both named Arthothes, referred to in a land distribution, *P. Oxy.* I 46 (AD 100). Moreover, Petosiris, a priest and sealer of sacred calves is mentioned in an order for arrest, *P. Oxy.* LXI 4116 (AD 275–325). The same title is also held by Thoonis in *P. Mich.* XVIII 788.

[53] Several individuals bearing this office in the Thoereion Exagoreion and Sintano are listed in a request for the cancellation of a loan, *SB* V 7634 (AD 249).

[54] For example, *P. Merton.* II 73 seems to attest to a κροκοδιλοβοσκός (keeper of sacred crocodiles).

and private documents. The *theagoi* associated with the cult of Thoeris were known since the Ptolemaic phase, as demonstrated by the discovery of a stela bearing witness to their donations to one of her temples.[55] Interestingly, despite the scarcity of animal cult evidence at Oxyrhynchus, the discovery of a mummified hawk in Tomb 35 in the High Necropolis[56] might constitute rare proof of the activities of the priests associated with the care of this sacred animal.[57] Several *hierai parthenoi* (sacred virgins) with significant roles in the cult of Thoeris are known from both official declarations and private documents.[58]

The office of the *pyraithes* (fire-kindler) is particularly interesting: this category of priest is peculiar to the cult of Thoeris and apparently documented only at Oxyrhynchus.[59] While almost nothing is known about their duties, their priestly title may allude to the performance of a ritual that featured the lighting of torches to ward off evil attacks, thus emulating a characteristic gesture of the deity to which they were devoted. Describing the duties of the *hieroskopos* (diviner) of Athena-Thoeris named Thoonis, mentioned in an *epikrisis* declaration, is equally problematic: while the term seems to be otherwise unattested in Egypt, some evidence does associate it with the performance of divinatory consultations.[60] The *neokoroi* (temple guardians) are an exception to this list of offices: they are known from the contemporary documents but only in relation to the cult of Serapis.[61] Similar evidence has been found in other Egyptian settlements and Roman provinces, where the *neokoroi* appear to have also been associated with the imperial cult.[62]

5. Annual declarations, γραφαὶ ἱερέων καὶ χειρισμοῦ

As with all the Egyptian religious organisations, the priesthood of the Oxyrhynchus temples were obliged to submit an annual report of their activities and expenses to the Roman administration. These declarations, known as γραφαὶ ἱερέων καὶ χειρισμοῦ,[63] presumably consisted of a list of the names (κατ' ἄνδρα) of the priests in service in the temples, followed by a χειρισμός, an inventory of the objects owned by the temples and other information.[64] The items in one such temple inventory recovered at Oxyrhynchus, *P. Oxy.* III 521Ro (2nd century AD), include gilded statues of Isis and Harpocrates, and several objects associated with Osiris, such as a wooden shrine. The mention of containers for milk suggests a daily ritual performed by the priests in honour of Osiris; traces of these offerings have apparently been found in the offering areas of the *temenos* of the Osireion.[65] The annual declarations also contained a financial statement concerning the incomes of the previous

[55] See Heinen, 'Thoeris und heilige Fische'.

[56] See Pons Mellado, 'Tombs of the Roman Period', 171.

[57] *P. Turner* I 17, a document for the repayment of a loan (AD 69), mentions Imouthes, a feeder and burier of hawks, and Harthonis, a *theagos* and hawk feeder from the same city.

[58] The Greek term referring to female attendants of deities was probably a generic title that implied the performance of various duties. This office is attested, for instance, in *P. Oxy.* XLIV 3177 (AD 247), a document submitted by the sacred virgin Aurelia Tanenteris. For other examples of similar attestations, see Section 5: 'Annual declarations, γραφαὶ ἱερέων καὶ χειρισμοῦ'.

[59] As in *P. Oxy.* XXXIV 2722 (AD 154), a mortgage contract, in which the 'fire-kindler' Thoonis declares receipt of a payment of 600 drachmae from the bank of the Sarapeion on behalf of his nephew Thoonis, a 'fire-kindler' of the same goddess. Another 'fire-kindler' is possibly mentioned in *P. Oxy.* XII 1550 (AD 116).

[60] *P. Oxy.* LXVII 4584 (AD 100–101); as noted by the editor Dominic Montserrat, this title is well known in the epigraphic documentation found at Ephesus and other Greek cities, and clearly means a diviner specialised in the inspection of animal entrails.

[61] Such as *P. Mich.* XVIII 789 (AD 190); *P. Hamb.* IV 271 (AD 100–199?); and *P. Oxy.* XL 2909 and *P. Oxy.* XL 2917, both dated between AD 268–271.

[62] Moreover, the title is often only mentioned as an honorific office; for an introduction to *neokoroi* in the Roman period, see B. Burrell, *Neokoroi: Greek Cities and Roman Emperors* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004).

[63] For this type of declaration, see, for example, C. Eckerman, 'A Temple Declaration from Early Roman Egypt', *BASP* 49 (2012), 55–56.

[64] For an introduction to these temple lists, see also F. Burkhalter, 'Le mobilier des sanctuaires d'Égypte et les « Listes des prêtres et du cheirismos »', *ZPE* 59 (1985), 123–134.

[65] See Mascort, *Oxyrhynchos IV: L'Osireion*, I, 36.

year and the expenses incurred in the daily religious celebrations and the organisation of festivals. A temple account, *P. Oxy.* VIII 1144 (1st-2nd centuries AD), listing the annual incomes and expenses and probably from the sanctuary of Athena-Thoeris, refers to the organisation of a festival in honour of the Emperor Claudius or Nero.[66] Moreover, the document also notes the expenditure for sacred banquets. This probably alludes to the festivities often celebrated within the temple precinct, documented by contemporary invitation tickets.[67] As noted by Lajos Berkes, the practice of sending written invitations to a restricted circle of guests was probably widespread throughout the Greco-Roman world.[68] Presumably, some of the celebrations recorded in these documents would have had parallels in many other cities across the Mediterranean.

Another declaration possibly from the same Thoereion, *P. Merton* II 73, was deposited between AD 163-164 by the priestess and sacred virgin Taharthonis, represented by her guardian, a priest in the same temple. Its probable identification as an annual declaration[69] is based on the use of a fairly familiar formulary, whereby the priestess declares a series of temple incomes,[70] a list of belongings[71] and mentions several temple workers.[72] The document also attests to the election of Taharthonis by the local corporation of priests as a representative of the priestly class during a festival dedicated to the emperors Antoninus and Verus. Like other similar temple declarations, this text defines the role played by the Egyptian priesthood in the imperial cult: the priests seem to have often overseen the donations of periodic offerings, the organisation of festivals and public celebrations.[73] Indeed, as mentioned above, some workers from the sanctuary of Thoeris appear to have also been in service in the temples dedicated to the imperial cult:[74] Roman and Egyptian cults were thus probably present side by side in the course of the religious festivities, when busts of the emperor, his ancestors and family, followed by the statue of a Victory were likely flanked by the effigies of traditional deities in the processions through the city.[75]

6. Control over access to the priestly class

As we saw in the introduction, Roman officials controlled the entire process of access to the priestly class, reserved only for those who were able to demonstrate their priestly descent. This also explains why several priests, evidently without heirs, resorted to adoption to continue their lineage.[76] Every

[66] See the re-edition in Messerer, *Corpus des papyrus grecs*, III, 204–212.

[67] For an introduction to these and other invitation tickets, see P. Pruneti, 'Alcune considerazioni sui biglietti di invito', *AnPap* 28 (2016), 117–128.

[68] On the origins and function of invitation tickets, see L. Berkes, 'An Unusual Party Invitation from Graeco-Roman Egypt', in T. A. Bács, A. Bollók and T. Vida (eds), *Across the Mediterranean – Along the Nile: Studies in Egyptology, Nubiology and Late Antiquity Dedicated to László Török on the Occasion of His 75th Birthday*, I (Budapest: Institute of Archaeology, Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences and Museum of Fine Arts, 2018), 277–281.

[69] The interpretation of this document remains uncertain, although it does seem most likely to be a fragment of a γραφαὶ ἱερέων καὶ χειρισμοῦ concerning the sanctuary of Athena-Thoeris, Isis and Serapis. The text has also been interpreted, however, as a petition sent by the priestess with her resignation; see M. Vandoni, 'Per una riedizione del P. Merton II 73', *Aegyptus* 47, no. 3/4 (July–December 1967), 246.

[70] As indicated in *P. Merton* II 73, l. 7, 11, possibly referring to different sources of revenues, and l. 13 mentioning a 'prophecy account'.

[71] At the end of the fragment there seems to be a temple inventory listing gilded shrines of Thoeris and other deities and several oars for sacred boats.

[72] Including a 'keeper of sacred crocodiles' and presumably another temple worker, whose office remains unknown.

[73] On the institution of the imperial cult in Egypt, see S. Pfeiffer, 'The Imperial Cult in Egypt', in C. Riggs (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 83–100.

[74] For instance, the *pteraphoros* Thoonis, *P. Mich.* XVIII 788.

[75] Bearers of the sacred statues of the imperial family are well attested in the city, as in *P. Oslo* III 94 (2nd–3rd centuries AD); *P. Oxy.* XII 1449 (AD 213-216); and *P. Oxy.* LXI 4125 (AD 322).

[76] See, for example, the land distribution in *P. Oxy.* I 46 (AD 100), which attests that Arthothes, priest and sealer of the sacred calves in the temple of Athena-Thoeris, Isis and Serapis, assigned properties to his elder brother Arthothes, the adopted son of his father Ampendis, a priest in the same temple.

member of the priestly class had to pay a tax to the Roman authorities, called the *eiskritikon*,[77] levied yearly after their admission to the temple clergy. One such declaration is a rare example of a document submitted by the temple personnel of the Thoereion Thenepmoi. In AD 165-166, Thoonis, *theagos* of Thoeris, on behalf of his son Thoonis and his nephew Thoonis, reported their status, declaring that the requirement for paying the tax for the first time had been met. At the same time, they acquired access to the office called the *theageia*.[78] Applying the regulations for access to the clergy also involved ensuring that required rituals of purity had been fulfilled, especially circumcision, which was indispensable for temple membership and entitlement to perform liturgical services.[79] The families of the candidates had to submit a request to the *strategos* in order to proceed with the ritual, which was usually followed by the documentation of the proof of their priestly descent. This was undoubtedly a complicated bureaucratic procedure. Only after a long process, if all went well, could the declaration of circumcision be finally submitted, thus granting the candidate access to the priestly class.[80] The registration by imperial officials of one of these documents, sent by a *pastophoros-moschosphragistes* probably associated with the cult of Thoeris, in AD 320 (*PSI* V 454),[81] demonstrates that this procedure continued to be used up until the beginning of Late Antiquity. The text indirectly testifies not only to the performance of a ritual rooted in the Pharaonic period, but also to the existence of a religious institution, most likely the main temple of Athena-Thoeris, which seems to have maintained its original organisation throughout the fourth century AD.

7. Financial support and control of temple economic activities

From the time of Augustus onwards, several imperial decrees resulted in the expropriation of lands belonging to temples, which were increasingly converted into public areas. Nevertheless, many of them did remain in the hands of the local priests as a substitute for the tax called *syntaxis*.[82] The existence of properties still not entirely under Roman control is in fact attested by several documents at Oxyrhynchus, such as a letter addressed by the *strategos* and royal scribe of the Oxyrhynchite *nomos* likely to the priests of the temple of Athena-Thoeris.[83] The letter cites a ruling by the *idios logos* Claudius Iustus requesting that all those with plots within the grounds of the temple precinct declare what they owned. Further evidence of the presence of consecrated lands managed by the local clergy is provided by the registration of a sale made by a woman named Thermouthion.[84] She agreed to sell various sacred lands in the neighbourhood of the temple of Serapis to several priests of the Thoereion; the contract established that the properties had to remain dedicated to Serapis, without becoming a source of income and without being transferred to another owner.

The temples of Oxyrhynchus seem to have received further earnings from the produce of their lands[85] and from other economic activities, presumably jointly controlled with the Roman authorities.[86]

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[77] For an introduction to this tax, and the evidence for it in the Egyptian province, see Messerer, *Corpus des papyrus grecs*, I, 195–200.

[78] *P. Oxy.* LIX 3974; *P. Oxy.* XLIX 3470 (AD 131) is another declaration of the same type.

[79] For an overview of this typology of documents in Roman Egypt, see Messerer, *Corpus des papyrus grecs*, I, 109–112.

[80] As testified in *P. Oxy.* L 3567 (AD 252), a declaration deposited by Aurelius Onnophris, son of Onnophris, *pyraithes* and *pastophoros* of Athena-Thoeris, declaring the performance of 'sacred duties' in the sanctuary of Thoeris. He enclosed a copy of the proof of his circumcision. A re-edition of the text has been published in Messerer, *Corpus des papyrus grecs*, I, 177–180.

[81] Although the declaration is deposited by a temple worker of an unnamed sanctuary, his office and the evidence examined here suggest a probable association with Thoeris; see also the re-edition and translation in Messerer, *Corpus des papyrus grecs*, I, 129–132.

[82] For sacred lands and *syntaxis* in the Roman period, see L. Capponi, *Augustan Egypt: The Creation of a Roman Province* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 98–99.

[83] *P. Oxy*. XLIX 3472 (AD 149).

[84] *P. Oxy*. II 242 (AD 77).

[85] For instance, *P. Oxy*. I 186 (3rd century AD), a list of payments stating the incomes derived from the produce of the temple of Serapis orchards, which were apparently rented.

[86] As in the production of linen garments (*P. Oxy*. XII 1414, AD 271–272), which partly went to the temples of Oxyrhynchus, while the rest went to the state.

However, the temples might also have benefited from lending areas dedicated to public use, for example by leasing stalls at the market in the area of the Sarapeion,[87] as is suggested by the periodic reports concerning market taxes.[88] Moreover, other revenues possibly came from the bank associated with the same temple. Substantial funding for these institutions was also provided by the citizens of Oxyrhynchus and the villagers of the *nomos*. A significant role was played by the local guilds and religious associations,[89] which may have been physically linked to a specific temple. For instance, the *kerukes* (heralds or town criers) had their headquarters in one of the sanctuaries of Thoeris, the Thoereion Exagoreion,[90] whose name probably derived from a long-standing association with this guild.[91] As we have seen, other guilds were traditionally connected with a specific deity, such as Thoeris, to whom the corporation of net fishermen was particularly devoted,[92] as evidenced by the dedication of offerings recorded in the papyrological documentation.[93] The existence of more or less periodic funds provided by the local guilds is also suggested by the declaration of the sacred virgin Taharthonis (*P. Merton* II 73). It lists several donations, including those made by the local trade corporations to the temple of Athena-Thoeris. Partly to compensate for a significant reduction in incomes and privileges, in addition to the *syntaxis* for the temples and their personnel,[94] subsidies may have been received by individual temple workers. In fact, two requests for subsidies were submitted by Calpurnius Horion, *neokoros* of Serapis between AD 268 and 271.[95]

The Sarapeion of Oxyrhynchus and possibly some other temples, as suggested by the presence of several oracular inquiries addressed to the god Thonis,[96] received further revenues from these consultations. This leads us to another important aspect of the control imposed by the Romans, which may have directly concerned the liturgical services in the Egyptian temples. The Roman authorities' interference may be reflected in the gradual switching from Egyptian to Greek in the drafting of oracular responses, found throughout Egypt.[97] Unlike the Ptolemaic phase, in which the surviving oracle tickets seem to indicate that the procedure was mainly conducted in Demotic,[98] most of the evidence dating from the Roman period, as also attested by the exemplars discovered

[87] As testified in *P. Köln.* V 228 (AD 176), a monthly report on the tax leases of the market administration of the Sarapeion in Oxyrhynchos.

[88] In fact, the market taxes in *P. Lond.* inv. 1562Vo (AD 135–136) are listed as being in the hieratic class; these revenues were presumably traditionally collected by the temples and its priesthood or by the local Roman administration and then distributed to the temples; see J. Rea, 'P.Lond.Inv.1562 Verso: Market Taxes in Oxyrhynchus', *ZPE* 46 (1982): 192–193.

[89] For an introduction to the guilds and the close association between markets, banks and temples in Oxyrhynchus, see R. Alston, *The City in Roman and Byzantine Egypt* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 207–212.

[90] As shown by *P. Heid.* IV 334 (2nd century AD?), a report of losses by the guild of heralds of this Thoereion.

[91] Indeed, as John Rea points out, 'the cognate verb, ἐξαγορεύω, has as its basic meaning 'tell out, make known, declare', while κηρυκεύω means 'perform the office of a herald' and 'proclaim, notify'. The similarity in sense is so striking that we can hardly escape the notion that this Thoereum was named from its connection with heralds or town-criers'; J. Rea, 'On κηρυκίνη: *P. Heid.* IV 334, *P. Köln.* VI 279, and *CPR* I 232,' *ZPE* 79 (1989): 202.

[92] See, for example, *P. Oxy*. LXIV 4440 (1st century AD), a document preserving a list of sacred net fishermen of Athena-Thoeris; this guild is discussed further in Section 3: 'The cult of Thoeris and Osiris at Oxyrhynchus.'

[93] Contributions to the temples of Thoeris may have been made as a series of regular payments 'to the theagos', as listed in a fishing account, *P. Oxy*. XLIX 3495 (2nd century AD).

[94] This might not have been received regularly, however, as is demonstrated by a petition submitted by the priests of the temple of Soknebtynis in the village of Tebtynis; see Messerer, *Corpus des papyrus grecs*, III, 269–279.

[95] *P. Oxy.* XL 2909 and *P. Oxy*. XL 2917. In the second half of the 3rd century AD, *P. Oxy*. XL 2899 mentions another 'temple guardian' of Serapis, Aurelius Achilleus, applying to receive the dole.

[96] See, for example, *P. Köln*. IV 202 (2nd century AD) and *P. Oxy*. L 3590 (2nd–3rd centuries AD).

[97] This linguistic shift has been discussed by many scholars, such as L. Papini, 'Domande oracolari: elenco delle attestazioni in greco ed in copto', *AnPap* 4 (1992): 21–27; and, more recently, P. Ripat, 'The Language of Oracular Inquiry in Roman Egypt', *Phoenix* 60, no. 3/4 (Fall-Winter 2006), 305.

[98] For an overview of Ptolemaic oracle tickets, see D. Valbelle and G. Husson, 'Les questions oraculaires d'Égypte: Histoire de la recherche, nouveautés et perspectives', in W. Clarysse, A. Schoors and H. Willems (eds), *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years. Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Jan Quaegebeur*, II (*OLA* 84 – Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 1998), 1055–1071.

at Oxyrhynchus,[99] was written in Greek. Various lines of thought have been developed over the last few decades on the reasons for the apparent decline of evidence showing the use of Demotic and the changes to oracular practice in Roman Egypt.[100] Some of the most interesting considerations have been made by Pauline Ripat in an important work on this subject.[101] Although many Demotic documents still await publication, meaning that the idea of the presumed decline might yet be revised, she suggested that the reason for the disappearance of inquiries composed in Egyptian may have been due to the Romans controlling oracular practice along with other 'financial' activities of the Egyptian religious organisations.[102] Nonetheless, we cannot rule out the possibility that the multicultural and multilingual clientele may also have played a part in the growing trend to use Greek instead of Egyptian.

8. The Osireion and the revival of the cult of Osiris

While papyri more closely reveal the bureaucratic aspects in the relationship between the imperial administration and the Oxyrhynchite temples, the archaeological finds seem to demonstrate the Roman emperors' important contribution to the revival of the local cult of Osiris. Indeed, excavations begun in the early 2000s in the area of the Osireion have offered a clear understanding of the religious services performed in this sanctuary from the Ptolemaic phase onwards, and brought to light substantial Roman-period rebuilding of both the internal structure and the superstructure of the temple-catacomb. In the precinct of the Osireion, extensive investigations have uncovered several structures that were probably still associated with the celebration of the *Mysteries of Osiris* in the Roman period. A foundation sub-structure, possibly of a small chapel, might have hosted the sacred boats used to carry the priests during religious processions. A nearby sacred lake played a significant role in the daily rituals performed by the Osireion priesthood and also during the celebrations of the festival of Osiris in the month of Khoiak.[103] A small mud-brick precinct, known as the 'T temple', provided access to the underground galleries of the sanctuary. The building complex, constructed in the early Ptolemaic phase but enlarged in the Roman period, comprised two halls, one with a colossal statue of Osiris, as well as two galleries meant to host the daily offerings to the god and the rituals performed during the Khoiak festival. Indeed, the construction of a new area (2E), modelled on the nearby Ptolemaic gallery (1A), was meant to ensure the continuity of the religious services performed by the Osireion clergy in the Roman period.[104] In the sacred niches[105] the priests still performed the traditional cyclical deposition of clay figurines of Osiris, limestone

[99] This control seems to have concerned mainly oracular consultations involving the sortition of tickets. Indeed, in addition to oracle tickets and a fragment of a dream book written in Greek, recently several divinatory compositions in Demotic, presumably dating to the Early Roman period, have been identified; see J. Quack, 'The Last Stand? What Remains Egyptian in Oxyrhynchus', in K. Ryholt and G. Barjamovic (eds), *Problems of Canonicity and Identity Formation in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia* (Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications 43 – Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2016), 108–109.

[100] On oracular practices in Roman Egypt, see Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt,* 145–197; Dunand and Zivie-Coche, *Gods and Men in Egypt*, 311–318; and G. Tallet, 'Oracles', in C. Riggs (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 398-418.

[101] Ripat, 'The Language of Oracular Inquiry'.

[102] See Ripat, 'The Language of Oracular Inquiry', 324 for an assessment that 'it is very easy to identify multiple reasons why the Roman administration would have desired such a change. The probability that the language shift was the result of the will of the new rulers defies the traditional characterizations of a fiscally-obsessed, but otherwise aloof, Roman administration and an unconcerned Egyptian priesthood'.

[103] See Mascort, *Oxyrhynchos IV: L'Osireion*, I, 34–36.

[104] The continuity of these offerings in the Roman phase has been documented by ceramic forms used in depositing votive offerings; see J. J. Martínez García, 'La cerámica ptolemaica del Osireion de Oxirrinco', in M. Mascort (ed.), *Oxyrhynchos IV: L'Osireion*, 215–216. Moreover, a chronology of the use of the underground galleries up until the 3rd century AD is provided by material archaeological evidence; see Mascort, *Oxyrhynchos IV: L'Osireion*, II, 33, 85–87.

[105] Unfortunately, the collapse of the vaulted ceiling has meant that the original number of preserved niches and the size of the gallery cannot be verified; see Mascort, *Oxyrhynchos IV: L'Osireion*, I, 74.

vessels inscribed in Demotic,[106] and of other sacred objects which accompanied the various stages of the Osirian celebrations.[107] It remains unclear, however, why no papyrological records concerning this priesthood have been found: perhaps this was due to the priests' gradual inclusion in the clergy of another religious institution, possibly the sanctuary of Athena-Thoeris, which also hosted a cult devoted to Osiris.

During the Roman phase the west side of the *temenos* was enlarged and further new facilities were built.[108] Two offering areas (one was located at the entrance to the T temple) included various altars[109] and over 180 fireplaces containing remnants of food offerings closely associated with the cult of Osiris.[110] The chronology of the context is provided by some coins discovered there, mainly dating to the 2nd century AD and many to the reign of Hadrian; they presumably continued to be deposited until the early 3rd century AD. In the western area of the site, several structures, possibly cult chapels flanking one of the access routes to the city, contained altars and fire spots with remains of the same offerings found in the area of the Osireion superstructure. The discovery of numerous coins also dating to the reign of Hadrian[111] appears to confirm that the construction of this complex and the creation of the offering areas at the temple of Osiris are related. The chronology based on the materials found in the different areas suggests a rebirth phase of the cult of Osiris around the 2nd century AD, and especially under the reign of Hadrian. In this sense, a possible relationship between the material evidence and the cult devoted to Osiris-Antinous,[112] promoted by Hadrian, cannot be overlooked:[113] the so-called Barberini Obelisk records the imperial decree supporting the construction of chapels in honour of this syncretic cult throughout Roman Egypt.[114] The archaeological evidence in the city of Oxyrhynchus and its Osireion thus seems to provide tangible proof of what may have been, according to textual evidence, a much broader programme of building works, which presumably also involved other sanctuaries devoted to the cult of Osiris in many Egyptian settlements.

9. Conclusion

This study has attempted to provide new insight into the status and role of the most important religious institutions of Oxyrhynchus under the Roman Empire, namely the sanctuaries of Thoeris and the temple-catacomb of Osiris. In this sense, combining texts and archaeology enables us to reconstruct the complex religious scene in the city and identify the religious institutions most affected by the changes

[106] Most of these inscriptions seem to refer to the deities protecting the four cardinal points or to Osiris as guardian of the West. Each vessel contained a magical bulla meant to protect Osiris and ward off Seth and other malevolent beings, thus favouring the ritual rebirth of Osiris; for a complete catalogue of these objects, see Mascort, *Oxyrhynchos IV: L'Osireion*, II, 242–250.

[107] See Mascort, *Oxyrhynchos IV: L'Osireion*, I, 76–78.

[108] For instance, according to Mascort, a well excavated on the south-east corner of the *temenos* may have provided water for the daily religious services of the priesthood and assured the control of the flooding of the Nile; see Mascort, *Oxyrhynchos IV: L'Osireion*, I, 31.

[109] Associated with these altars, numerous plates and other containers preserving traces of food offerings have been discovered scattered in the area; see Mascort, *Oxyrhynchos IV: L'Osireion*, I, 37–40.

[110] For example, as Mascort has shown, the ritual offering of pine-nuts has a parallel in the list of payments of an obolus in pine-nuts to the personnel of Thoeris in *P. Oxy*. VIII 1144; see Mascort, *Oxyrhynchos IV: L'Osireion*, I, 37.

[111] This chronology also seems to be confirmed by the finding of a papyrus preserving an administrative text from the 2nd century AD; see Padró *et al*., 'Memòria provisional dels treballs arqueològics realitzats al jaciment d'Oxirrinc (El-Bahnasa, Mínia) durant la campanya de 2008', *Nilus* 17 (2008), 14.

[112] A festival in honour of the deified Antinous is also attested by a calendar of cult offerings, *P. Oxy*. XXXI 2553, dated between the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD: 'and deification of Antinous... Khoiak 4 = 30 Nov. Birthday of Antinous'.

[113] On this interpretation, see Mascort, *Oxyrhynchos IV: L'Osireion*, I, 38.

[114] The inscription on the IB side reads: 'He is known to have become a god in the abatons of Egypt and chapels were built there for him [and] he is venerated as a god by the prophets and the priests of Upper and Lower Egypt and by the inhabitants of Egypt as well....' For an examination of the inscriptions of the obelisk and an introduction to the cult of Osiris-Antinous, see J.-C. Grenier, *L'Osiris Antinoos* (*CENiM* 1 – Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 2008).

that occurred under the imperial administration. After briefly examining how the Roman conquest of Egypt introduced new regulations that had a deep impact on the existing religious organisations, their consequences on the city of Oxyrhynchus were explored. In fact, the documents submitted by the temple personnel of the sanctuary of Athena-Thoeris, Isis and Serapis and other religious institutions give a good idea of the various degrees of control imposed after the Roman conquest: from the supervision of their individual members to the periodic scrutiny of temple properties and their economic and religious activities.

Nevertheless, this is only one aspect of the impact of the imperial conquest on Egyptian religious institutions. As respectful guarantors of the continuity of native cults, the Romans also promoted the construction and restoration of temples throughout the province of Egypt. These works at Oxyrhynchus are epitomised by the redevelopment of the local temple-catacomb of Osiris and the revival of its cult activities probably as a result of the decree issued by Hadrian in favour of the celebration of the cult of Osiris-Antinous. In the last analysis, the evidence examined here provides a new perspective on the history of the religious institutions of Oxyrhynchus under the Roman Empire, casting light on both sides of the complex relationship between Egyptian temples and imperial authorities.

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II.
Compulsion and Control in Religious and Funerary Thought

3
‘You Shall Not Constrain my *bꜣ*’. Control through and of the *bꜣ.(w)*

Anne Landborg

Abstract

In Ancient Egypt, the bꜣ *represented a key element of the personality and identity of gods and humans alike. Texts often describe the* bꜣ *as exercising control over both the living and the dead. In legal oaths of the Old Kingdom and later, witnesses swear to tell the truth lest the* bꜣ.(w) *of the king or a god take vengeance on them, and in mortuary texts, the* bꜣ *is occasionally sent to attack enemies and opposing entities. Conversely, the* bꜣ *itself could be subject to control and constrains of various sorts. There are a great many mortuary spells whose intent is to free the* bꜣ *from being controlled by e.g. demons or the guardians of the Afterlife and to allow it to leave the corpse and move freely wherever it pleases. Yet, the* bꜣ *of a living person could escape, e.g. if one indulged in too much drink, and there was a need to actively (self-)control it. The bꜣ could thus both act as an agent of control as well as be controlled itself. This paper presents a comprehensive overview of the role of compulsion and control* vis-à-vis *this pivotal entity in Ancient Egyptian mortuary culture and religious thought.*

Keywords: Afterlife; *Bꜣ.(w)*; Mobility; Oaths; Punishment

1. Introduction

When we discuss the *bꜣ* or *bꜣ.w* in Ancient Egyptian texts, we normally distinguish between two related concepts: *bꜣ.w*-power, and the *bꜣ*, as an aspect of a person’s identity. Control can be conducted both through the *bꜣ.w*-power and over the personal *bꜣ*, but there are also certain historical issues to take into consideration. Gods and the dead king are certainly attested with a *bꜣ* before the 6th Dynasty, when the *bꜣ* of a non-royal individual first appears.[1] It has also been debated whether the *bꜣ* of non-royal humans only came into being after death,[2] since the *bꜣ* of such individuals occurs mostly in mortuary literature. Even so, there are some examples where the *bꜣ* occurs in other instances, for example in the *Instruction of Ptahhotep*[3] and the *Instruction for King Merikare*,[4] as well as in the *Debate*

[1] The biography of Hormeru in Saqqara - see S. Hassan, *Excavations at Saqqara 1937-1938, Vol. III, Mastabas of Princess Hemet-Ra and others*, *re-edited by Z. Iskander* (Cairo: General Organisation for Government Printing Offices, 1975), pl. LVI; H. Altenmüller, ’Sein Ba möge fortdauren bei Gott’, *SAK* 20 (1993): 1–15. See also A. Loprieno, ’Drei Leben nach dem Tod. Wie viele Seelen hatten die alten Ägypter?‘, in H. Guksch, E. Hoffmann and M. Bommas (eds), *Grab und Totenkult im alten Ägypten* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2003), 216–217; C. Eyre, ‘Belief and the dead in Pharaonic Egypt’, in M-C. Poo (ed.), *Rethinking Ghosts* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 37; M. Green, ‘A means of discouraging Perjury’, *GM* 39 (1980), 35–36.

[2] See for example L. V. Žabkar, *Study of the Ba Concept in Ancient Egyptian Texts* (*SAOC* 34 – Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 51–88, 116–118; A. de Jong, ‘Coffin Texts spell 38: the case of the father and the son’, *SAK* 21 (1994), 149; N. Harrington, *Living with the Dead: Ancestor Worship and Mortuary Ritual in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2013), 3; M. Smith, *Traversing Eternity: Texts for the Afterlife from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 5. For the *bꜣ.w* as the kings’ and gods’ agency, see H. Roeder, ‘Das «Erzählen der Ba-u». Der Ba-u-Diskurs und das altägyptische Erzählen zwischen Ritual und Literatur im Mittleren Reich‘, in B. Dücker and H. Roeder (eds), *Text und Ritual. Kulturwissenschaftliche Essays und Analysen von Sesostris bis Dada* (Heidelberg: Synchron Wissenschaftsverlag der Autoren, 2005) 198–242, where he also discusses wisdom literature among other sources.

[3] E. Dévaud, *Les Maximes de Ptahhotep d’après le Papyrus Prisse, les Papyrus 10371/10435 et 10509 du British Museum, et la Tablette Carnarvon. Texte* (Fribourg: Publisher unspecified, 1916), 46, ll. 524–525.

[4] A. Volten, *Zwei altägyptische politische Schriften Die Lehre für König Merikarê (Pap. Carlsberg VI) und die Lehre des Königs Amenemhet* (Copenhagen: Einar Munksgaard, 1945), 23, line 52, 67, line 127; Richard Parkinson, *Voices from Ancient Egypt: an Anthology of Middle Kingdom Writings* (London: British Museum, 1991), 52–54.

Between a Man and his bꜣ[5] and *Papyrus Anastasi IV*.[6] The main arguments against the *bꜣ* existing during the life of non-royals have been that the instruction texts could be interpreted as meaning that deeds of a person on earth will benefit his *bꜣ* after death but not necessarily in this life, and that the *Debate* and *Anastasi IV* speak about exceptional conditions where the *bꜣ* might occur.[7] However exceptional these conditions may be, the *bꜣ* must have still have been there in order to act. It is therefore more probable that the *bꜣ* did exist in life, but that under usual conditions it was not separated from the body before death.[8]

The singular form *bꜣ* is from the Middle Kingdom onwards mainly used as an aspect of a person's identity and often misleadingly translated as 'soul'.[9] The *bꜣ* is not just a part of a person, it is representative of the whole person, in the same way as we use a name to represent a person. However, it has some specific characteristics. *Bꜣ.w*, on the other hand, can be used both as the plural of *bꜣ* when one god has many, and as a distinct collective noun, often in the context of the *bꜣ.w* of a king or a god.[10] The identity aspect seems to have developed from the concept of *bꜣ.w* as a 'manifestation of power',[11] creating two concepts which were still closely connected. *bꜣ.w* can be among other qualities to show the greatness of someone: 'You will speak to the great and powerful gods who sit in front of Heliopolis. Your *bꜣ.w* is greater than the western gods, and fear of you is more powerful than your western gods'.[12] *Bꜣ.w* is here something that belongs to a person as well as a power which is paralleled by the fear they are able to spread. Both *bꜣ.w* and *snḏ*, fear, respect or awe, have impact on a person and can be exercised over somebody. When control is exercised through the *bꜣ.w*, it is most often the collective noun that is used, meaning *bꜣ.w*-power or might, even though it can occur in the singular, especially in the Old Kingdom when the distinction was not yet made. The overlapping characteristics are also visible in that a *bꜣ* of a person can, just as the *bꜣ.w*-power, act in a similar way, being sent out and acting against an enemy. In these cases, the concepts are probably very close to each other in meaning, as will be seen below. When someone is aiming to exercise control over the *bꜣ*, it is always as an aspect of a person's identity and not the *bꜣ.w*-power, unless control is extended to include consumption of the *bꜣ.w*.[13]

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[5] J. Allen, The Debate between a Man and His Soul, A Masterpiece of Ancient Egyptian Literature (Leiden: Brill, 2011); U. Siffert 'Das Gespräch eines Mannes mit seinem Ba', in A. el-Hawary (ed.), Wenn Götter und Propheten reden – Erzählen für die Ewigkeit (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2012), 227–253; B. Ouellet, 'L'enseignement du ba à l'homme désillusionné: une praxis en rapport avec le sens de la vie', in J-C. Goyon and C. Cardin (eds), Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists: Grenoble, 6-12 septembre 2004, vol. 2 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 1437–1441; W. Barta, Das Gespräch eines Mannes mit seinem Ba (Papyrus Berlin 3024) (Berlin: Hessling, 1969); R. J. Williams, 'Reflections on the Lebensmüde', JEA 48 (1962), 49–56. Arguments have been made that the dialogue takes place in the Afterlife rather than this life, see B. Mathieu, 'Le dialogue d'un homme avec son âme: un débat d'idées dans l'Égypte ancienne', ÉAO 19 (2000), 17–36.

[6] P. Anastasi IV, ll. 11.9–11.11 in A. H. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies* (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1937), 47. The texts are discussed later in this article.

[7] Žabkar, *Ba Concept*, 117–118, n.16. See also M. Escolano-Poveda, 'New Fragments of Papyrus Berlin 3024, The Missing Beginning of the Debate between a Man and his Ba and the Continuation of the Tale of the Herdsman (P. Mallorca I and II)' ZÄS 144(1) (2017), 16-54. Loprieno, 'Drei Leben nach dem Tod', 208–209; G. Englund, *Människans Möjligheter. Om samspelet mellan kropp och själ enligt de gamla egyptierna* (Stockholm: Carlssons Förlag, 2007), 129–131. Compare Lichtheim's translation 'The wise feeds his *ba* with what endures, so that it is happy with him on earth', M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* I (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 73.

[8] J. Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, trans. D. Lorton (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 87–94. See also further under Self-control of the *bꜣ*.

[9] As in *Wb.* I, 411, but also used in many translations.

[10] Žabkar, Ba Concept, 55, 67; E. M. Wolf-Brinkmann, Versuch einer Deutung des Begriffes "ba" anhand der Überlieferung der Frühzeit und des Alten Reiches (PhD diss., University of Freiburg, 1968), 85–88; J. F. Borghouts, 'Divine Intervention in Ancient Egypt and its Manifestation (bꜣw)," in R. J. Demarée and J. J. Janssen (eds), Gleanings from Deir el-Medina (EgUit 1 – Leiden: NINO, 1982), 1; J. Janak, 'A question of size. A remark on early attestations of the ba hieroglyph', SAK 40 (2011), 146; Roeder, 'Das «Erzählen der Ba-u»', 187–242.

[11] Žabkar, *Ba Concept*, 54.

[12] Spell 839, *CT* VII 43h–i.

[13] C. Eyre, *The Cannibal Hymn: A Cultural and Literary Study* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002), 146–148.

2. Control through the *bꜣ.w*

The *bꜣ.w*-power can be used to control other people and in particular enemies. A famous example is from *Sinuhe*, where the enemies of King Senusret I flee 'before him as <before> the *bꜣ.w* of a great goddess'.[14] These kind of statements are otherwise largely associated with New Kingdom kings. Just to give a few examples, it was said about Thutmosis II, who had led his army to Kush, that 'the *bꜣ.w* of his Majesty guided it (the army)'.[15] Hatshepsut stated that 'my *bꜣ.w* cause the countries to bow down'[16] and Thutmosis III declared that 'Your enemies are fallen, all lands are in your grasp, your *bꜣ.w* reach the fortifications of heaven'.[17] Of course, Ramesses II also had great *bꜣ.w* and 'his *bꜣ.w* were in his enemies like a flaming torch' (*bꜣ.w=f im=sn mi tkꜣ ḥr nby.t*),[18] which gives a compelling visual picture of enemies fleeing before the great Ramesses. Even Akhenaten, despite his markedly different theology, used an expression about exercising control through his *bꜣ.w*, though against different enemies. Referring to the Aten, Akhenaten claimed that 'when he rises, he exercises (his) *bꜣ.w* against him who is ignorant of his teachings and (extends) his favours towards him who knows him'.[19]

Using the *bꜣ.w* against enemies also occurs in mortuary literature for non-royals: 'Your *bꜣ.w* acts for you against your enemies, and I have abandoned weeping'.[20] This spell is about Osiris, and Isis and Nephthys who help to restore him and his powers, but the rubric is for an *ꜣḫ*-spirit in the realm of the dead, so Osiris is paralleled to the dead *ꜣḫ*. This *bꜣ.w*-power is in itself an expression of the might of the king, the deceased or the god, and can be used in different ways depending on the situation. The gods' wrath can act against enemies through their *bꜣ.w* in the same way as the *bꜣ.w* of the king and the dead.[21] However, the *bꜣ.w* is not in itself a wrathful force, but depends on how it is directed. The *bꜣ.w* of the Nile deity Hapy can, for example, fertilise the land.[22] The concept here is quite close to 'might'[23]: the more *bꜣ.w*, the mightier a person or god is, with more possibilities to both exercise power or to use it in some other way. It is, however, quite often used as a vengeful force, or as a threat, as in the *Instructions of Amenemope*: 'Restrain your tongue from bad speech...and you will be spared from the god's *bꜣ.w*'.[24]

The overlapping aspects of the personal *bꜣ* and the *bꜣ.w* meaning 'might' can be seen in some texts where the intentions are the same. The *bꜣ* was separated from the body after death and not only could, but should move freely out of the tomb and in the Afterlife as well as on this earth.[25] In this context it might also have been a perfect means for the dead to reach others. This has been discussed concerning the so-called *bꜣ*-sending spells,[26] where the *bꜣ* is sent out to see 'that man' or 'god': 'Spell for a man sending

[14] R. Koch, Die Erzählung des Sinuhe (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1990), 36; Žabkar, Ba Concept, 86.
[15] *Urk.* IV, 140, l. 7.
[16] *Urk.* IV, 385, l. 11.
[17] *Urk.* IV 773, ll. 10–12.
[18] *KRI* II, 244, l. 5.
[19] M. Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten* (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1938), 86, ll. 15–16.
[20] Spell 74 *CT* I 313a. See also Žabkar's examples, *Ba Concept*, 85–89 and M. Green, '*Bꜣw* expressions in Late Egyptian', in J. Ruffle, A. Gaballa and K. A. Kitchen (eds), *Glimpses of Ancient Egypt, Studies in Honour of H. W. Fairman* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1979), 107–115 for Late Egyptian examples.
[21] A. Gardiner, 'The Gods of Thebes as Guarantors of Personal Property', JEA 48 (1962), 62, n. 3; Žabkar, Ba Concept, 86–87 and A. Joseph, 'Divine Wrath in Ancient Egypt', *ÉT* 31 (2018), 27–65.
[22] *CT* IV, 146m-p.
[23] See Roeder, 'Das «Erzählen der Ba-u»', 213–214 for a suggestion that bꜣ.w should be translated 'Macht' or 'manifestation'. Gardiner translated it 'might' as well, even though he thought it was too weak in instances of a god's punishing force - see Gardiner, 'The Gods of Thebes', 62, n. 3.
[24] H. O. Lange, Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope Aus Dem Papyrus 10, 474 des British Museum (Copenhagen: A.F. Høst og søn, 1925), 60, X 21 and XI 5; Žabkar, *Ba Concept*, 87.
[25] For example, see *Urk.* IV, 484, l. 14 and spell 20 *CT* I, 56d in the Coffin Texts.
[26] *CT* spells 98–104 and 413. See for example E. Otto, 'Die Anschauung vom *Bꜣ* nach Coffin Texts Sp. 99–104', *Miscellanea Gregoriana* (1941), 151–160; R. Nyord, *Breathing Flesh. Conceptions of the Body in the Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts* (Copenhagen: Museum

his *bꜣ* [...] against his enemy'.[27] Unfortunately, a break in part of the spell leaves it unclear if it is the *bꜣ* or something else which would be sent towards the enemies, but at least the possibility remains open. However, the parallels to the *bꜣ.w* being sent out for this purpose,[28] and the fact that in the spell it is also stated that the speaker, in first person, has power over enemies,[29] favours an interpretation that the purpose is control through the *bꜣ* over enemies.

There are also examples where the *bꜣ* can cause harm in its own right. *Coffin Text Spell 146* is for assembling a family in the realm of the dead, and the end of the spell, cited here, is a promise of what will happen to someone if they cause obstacles: 'As for any *bꜣ* or as for any god who shall cause the family of this N to be taken away from him: This N shall cause his head to be cut off on this slaughterhouse of Khnum'.[30] Spell *405* is a Ferryman Spell: '"If he shall go aboard on the bow of the ferry-boat, it is his *bꜣ* which will destroy him, but if he shall [go aboard] at the stern of the ferry-boat, the *ꜣx* is the one of those there."'[31] In these two examples, it is the *bꜣ* who either poses a threat or punich if someone acts wrong and here it is probably and here it is probably the *bꜣ* as representative for a whole person.[32] The *bꜣ* is also the aspect of a person which is the most active and has the greatest ability to move, and as such can move away from the body and act against others, just as in the cases with the king's *bꜣ.w*.

3. Legal oaths and curses

Bꜣ.w=k r=f nṯr and similar expressions occur in legal texts where the witness takes an oath. Although most examples seem to concern bꜣ.w, there are also examples with the bꜣ in singular,[33] here from the 6th Dynasty:[34]

> 'If this Sobekhotep can bring three reliable witnesses who may be trusted and they make (the oath) *bꜣ.w=k r=f nṯr* to the effect that this document was indeed made according to the words of this User (the deceased), they (the estate) will belong to Sobekhotep (because) he has brought these three witnesses in whose presence this utterance was made'.

The idea behind these oaths is that the *bꜣ.w* of a god, or in other cases of a king, will act as a punishing force against someone who makes a false statement. The function is the same as in someone sending out his *bꜣ.w* to enemies, but in those cases it was the king or god himself who did the punishing, while here it is the *bꜣ.w* of someone else who will come as a punishing element.

Tusculanum Press, 2009), 453–459; P. Eschweiler, *Bildzauber im Alten Ägypten, Die Verwendung von Bildern und Gegenständen in magischen Handlungen nach den Texten des Mittleren und Neuen Reiches* (Fribourg and Göttingen: Universitätsverlag, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1994), 214–217. For interpretation of some elements in the texts without treating them as a group, see also Žabkar, *Ba Concept*, 93–101.

[27] *CT* II, 55a S2C.

[28] Gee points to the Letters of the Dead when a *bꜣ* appears but has some more problematic interpretations of the rubric of spell 103 in relation to this – see J. Gee, 'Ba sending and its implications', in Z. Hawass (ed.), *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century: Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Egyptologists 2000*, vol. 2 (Cairo: American University Press, 2003), 230–237. See also J. Quack, 'Remarks on Egyptian rituals of dream-sending', in P. Kousoulis (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Demonology* (Leuven: Peeters Publisher and Department of Oriental Studies, 2011), 147–149.

[29] *CT* II, 56b.

[30] *CT* II, 204c-205a.

[31] *CT* V, 203g–j.

[32] One of Žabkar's main arguments in Ba Concept.

[33] Green, 'A means of discouraging Perjury', 33–39 contains examples ranging from the 6th Dynasty to Late Egyptian, where similar phrases occur. See also Gee, 'Ba sending and its implications', 230–237; John Gee, "Oracle by image: Coffin Text 103 in context," in *Magic and Divination*, eds Leda Ciraola and Johnathan Seidel (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002), 83–88, 191; Nyord, *Breathing Flesh*, 453-458; Katarina Nordh, *Aspects of Ancient Egyptian Curses and Blessings, Conceptual Background and Transmission* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1996) 94; Joseph, 'Divine Wrath', 32, where more examples can be found.

[34] Elephantine 6th Dynasty Papyrus Berlin 9010, K. H. Sethe, 'Ein Prozessurtail aus dem alten Reich', ZÄS 61 (1926), 71; Green, 'A means of discouraging Perjury', 33; Žabkar, Ba Concept, 87.

Vengeful acts through the *bꜣ.w* are also used in curses where gods can act on behalf of an owner of a monument against anyone who would destroy it. The first example is from the statue of Herihor, high priest of Amun, Dynasty 20-21: 'As for any person who will remove this statue from its place after many years: he will be in the *bꜣ.w* of Amun, Mut and Khonsu' (*iw=f m bꜣ.w n Imn Mw.t Ḫnsw*) and his name will not be in the land of Egypt'.[35] The second example is from the Third Intermediate Period stele of Tefnakht I or II:[36] 'As for anyone who will destroy (it), the *bꜣ.w* of Neith shall be against him forever and ever (*bꜣ.w Nt ḫpr r=f r nḥḥ ḏ.t*), his son will not mount his seat, and a donkey will do (i.e. violate) his wife and his children'.[37]

There are also some examples of what could happen if someone broke an oath that was sworn to a god. A particularly fine instance is the 19th Dynasty stela of Neferabu: 'I am the man who swore falsely to Ptah, lord of truth, and he caused me to see darkness in the daytime. I shall speak of his *bꜣ.w* to those who do not know him and to those who know him, to small and great people'.[38] This example is effective in showing the belief in these oaths and what consequences they thought it could have when someone swore falsely, in this case being blinded. Neferabu also mentions that he will speak of Ptah's *bꜣ.w* to warn others, which clearly shows that it is the *bꜣ.w* of Ptah that brought about the punishment.

4. Control over the *bꜣ*

A great concern in mortuary texts is the free movement of the *bꜣ*, and from the perspective of control, there are several potential hindrances and threats against this movement. The *bꜣ* follows the daily cycle of being with the corpse during the night and moving freely during the day. This is expressed in a number of *Coffin Text* spells and not seldom in terms rendering others unable to control the *bꜣ* in these circumstances, such as: 'My *bꜣ* cannot be restrained on my corpse'.[39] There are several later texts whose rubrics and content concern bringing the *bꜣ* to the body. *Book of the Dead* spells 89, 91 and 92 all call upon the *bꜣ* to rest on the corpse, to join it, or to open the tomb for the *bꜣ*. Some of the *Books of Glorifications* also focus on the same subject.[40] The purpose of these spells is clear and has a lot of parallels to other spells about the *bꜣ*: the *bꜣ* is the active aspect of a person which shall be unhindered and unrestrained in relationship to movement.

Being able to move freely is a concern that other aspects of a person's identity can share with the *bꜣ* when they occur together. The *bꜣ* and the shadow (*šw.t*) often appear together when they are threatened with restriction of movement and in the opposite way, when the desired outcome is free movement. For example, *Coffin Text spell 503* has a short text followed by a long postscript in red with instructions that if a man recites this text his heart will endure in every shape, he will have the ability to procreate, and: 'his *bꜣ* is not grabbed, his shadow is not snared'.[41] In this spell the negated threat is expressed in general and impersonal terms. Although this applies particularly to the shadow in the company of the *bꜣ*, other aspects of a person's identity are also a matter of concern, such as the corpse when it is said that it should not be restrained or wrested away.[42]

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[35] Statue Cairo *CG* 42 190; G. Lefèbvre, 'Herihor, vizir (Statue du Caire, No 42190)', *ASAÉ* 26 (1926), 66; Nordh, *Curses and Blessings*, 94.

[36] R. K. Ritner, *The Libyan Anarchy, Inscriptions from Egypt's Third Intermediate Period* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 439.

[37] Stela Athens 24.1.8: R. el-Sayed, *Documents Relatifs à Sais et ses Divinités* (Cairo: *IFAO*, 1975), 43. For parallels to the last part of the curse, see W. Spiegelberg, 'Die Tafnachthosstele des museums von Athen', *RT* 25 (1870), 190.

[38] British Museum stela EA589 (https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA589); Roeder, 'Das «Erzählen der Ba-u»', 202.

[39] Spell 333, *CT* IV, 178m.

[40] H. D. Schneider, 'Bringing the Ba to the body. A glorification spell for Padinekhtnebef', in C. Berger el-Naggar, C. Gisèle and N. Grimal (eds), *Hommages à Jean Leclant,* (Cairo: *IFAO*, 1994), 356–362.

[41] *CT* VI, 89m–n B3L is in red in both these lines.

[42] Spell 493 B3L, *CT VI*, 74f B3Bo 73k.

5. Who is trying to control the *bꜣ*?

In the Netherworld there are guardians; demons, which seem to be neither human nor gods,[43] and who do everything from preventing the *bꜣ* from moving forward to destroying it.[44] Since the *Coffin Texts* describe the character of such demons in great detail, this corpus will be the sole focus in this section. They are said to be 'trappers',[45] and the 'ones of pitchforks',[46] and 'those who are said to live on slaughter',[47] which gives an unpleasant view of their nature. Further on they are physically described as dog-faced but with human skin,[48] or that they are mysterious, hidden or unknown (*iḫm.w*) of their face.[49] They are described as being in charge of the limbs[50] and the secrets of Osiris,[51] or in charge of the *bꜣ*,[52] which then also gives these nasty beings a certain authority and control in the Afterlife. The *bꜣ*, often together with the shadow, is at risk of being put in the place of execution[53] by these beings, and imprisoned in caverns (*ḫnr.w m tpḥ.wt*).[54] Even so, the spells in this group describe the guardians and what their tasks are, but they are not thought to perform these tasks on absolutely everyone. On the contrary, the purpose of the spells is to keep the demons away from the particular person who the spell is for: 'You are not to have power to restrain me and guard my *bꜣ*, my shadow, my *ꜣḫ* or my *ḥḳꜣ*'.[55] A picture of the Afterlife is presented in these spells, in which guardians make sure that each *bꜣ* which presents a threat is restrained, and not let through. With the help of these spells, the speaker can control the outcome, since the guardians will let through those with the right knowledge.

Threats against the shadow and *bꜣ*, either generally or coming from specific entities, mostly concern restriction of movement. This is expressed through constrainment (*ḫnr*),[56] ensnarement (*grg*)[57] and, when they occur with the *ꜣḫ* and *ḥḳꜣ*, guarding (*sꜣw*).[58] The demons in the Netherworld, or a particular gate or a part of a boat, act as guardians who let through the coffin owner but keep away the unwanted dead.

These dangerous beings are named in only a few spells. One example is *Coffin Text Spell 441*, which has as its rubric: 'To drive away the two *Mrw.ty* who come to take away the *bꜣ* of a man from him'.[59] This spell belongs to a series of spells 439-450, about the 'friends' of Re,[60] to which these *Mrw.ty* belong. Although

[43] Defined as such in, for example, P. Kousoulis, 'Introduction, the demonic lore of Ancient Egypt: questions on definition', in P. Kousoulis (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Demonology* (Leuven: Peeters Publisher and Department of Oriental Studies, 2011), IX–XIV; R. Lucarelli, 'The guardian-demons of the Book of the Dead', *BMSAES* 15 (2011), 85–102; R. Lucarelli, 'Demons in the Book of the Dead', in B. Backes, I. Munro and S. Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen. Gesammelte Beiträge des 2. Internationalen Totenbuch-Symposiums 2005* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 203–212.

[44] J. Zandee, *Death as an Enemy According to Ancient Egyptian Conceptions* (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 14–20, 176–179. These beings occur frequently in spells 488–500, often threatening the *bꜣ* and shadow in combination.

[45] *CT* VI, 493 73e, 494 75l.

[46] *CT* VI, 500 84g.

[47] *CT* VI, 312c.

[48] *CT* VI, 313a–b.

[49] *CT* VI, 491 69d, or places in another version, *CT* VI 499 83b.

[50] *CT* VI, 491 69e, 491 70f, 499 83b, 500 84c, g.

[51] *CT* VI, 492 72e B4C has irw bA instead.

[52] *CT* VI, 493 72e.

[53] *CT* VI, 493 73g, 494 75o.

[54] *CT* VI, 494 B3Bo 76a.

[55] *CT* VI, 70b.

[56] See Zandee, *Death as an Enemy*, 127–128.

[57] Zandee, *Death as an Enemy,* 234.

[58] Zandee, *Death as an Enemy,* 128–130.

[59] *CT* V, 297a. *Mrw.ty* are either the same, or closely connected to Meret. Guglielmi places them in an excursus in W. Guglielmi, *Die Göttin Mr.t* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 153–173.

[60] É. Drioton, 'Le mythe des 'amies' de Rê', BiOr 12 (2) (1955): 62–66.

connected to both Re and Osiris in positive ways, these beings are also demonic and dangerous to the dead.[61] *Mrw.ty* take control of different aspects of the identity of the dead, but the speaker in this spell says that they do not have any power over him, and he has the different aspects of him intact and with him. In *Spell 335*, a gloss is given to the lines about *bꜣ.w* being taken, and the taker is named: '*As for this god who takes bꜣ.w, laps up corruption, and lives on putrefaction, it is Seth*'.[62] This description implies the threatening nature of Seth towards the dead person.[63]

When these kinds of creatures are not a particular deity, they might be named by their looks or by their actions.[64] For example, *Spell 150*: 'The Slaughterers, who eat the *bꜣ*: they eat and destroy their (own) *bꜣ.w* upon earth'.[65] These particular Slaughterers occur in the Pyramid Texts as well as in the Book of the Dead, and other New Kingdom literature.[66] Another example is the 'Swallower' who again threatens the *bꜣ.w*, [67] and the shadow, but also the corpse and the *ꜣḫ.w*.[68] Even though the people knowing these spells shall not be affected by these guardians, there are clearly others who will be, as shown in *Spell 1099*: 'I have not fallen as She-who-is-plundered. Her *bꜣ* is among those who are taken to He-whose-face-is-behind, the chopping-block of the slaughterhouse She-who-is-sharp'.[69] When these creatures are named, it is also the knowledge of the name that gives the speaker power and control over that person, so in this context, for example, the Swallower cannot affect the *bꜣ* since the Swallower is controlled through his name. The knowledge of the nature of the beings as well as their names thus makes sure that the right person will not be hindered in the passage to the Afterlife.

6. Self-control of the *bꜣ*

The *bꜣ* is not usually distinct from a person during his lifetime except in exceptional cases, such as in the *Debate Between a Man and his bꜣ*, where the *bꜣ* is trying to, if not control, then at least to influence the man. Even though the *Debate Between a Man and his bꜣ* is a literary work, the choice of the *bꜣ* is still interesting as a reference to contemporary thinking. The dialogue has been interpreted as taking place within the man himself,[70] and we now know that the man is sick,[71] so the *bꜣ* is still with the man and has not completely left. Since it is normally the heart with which a person has a dialogue, it has been discussed why the *bꜣ* is chosen here. Žabkar thinks that the *bꜣ* is an appropriate choice since it concerns the question of a person's continued existence as a *bꜣ* in the next world.[72] Both the *bꜣ* and the heart can be seen as an *alter-ego* of a person,[73] but the *bꜣ* has independence, and can leave a man, which the heart cannot,[74] based on physical limitations. On the other hand, in *Sinuhe* both the *bꜣ* and the heart are said to leave his body in the moment when he comes back to Egypt to face the king: 'my *bꜣ* had perished, my limbs trembled, my heart was not in my body. I did not know life from death'.[75] This state of fear clearly

[61] G. Englund, *Människans Möjligheter*, 124–125; T. DuQuesne, 'Raising the serpent power: some parallels between Egyptian religion and Indian tantra', in T. DuQuesne (ed.), *Hermes Aegyptiacus, Egyptological Studies for BH Stricker on his 85th birthday* (Oxford: DE Publications, 1995) 58–59; Guglielmi, *Die Göttin Mr.t,* 153–173.

[62] *CT* IV, 320e–321b.

[63] Nyord, *Breathing Flesh*, 322–323.

[64] Zandee, *Death as an Enemy*, 200–206.

[65] Spell 150, *CT* II 254p.

[66] Zandee, *Death as an Enemy*, 204–205 Lucarelli, 'Demons in the Book of the Dead', 204, also 207–210 about eating and swallowing.

[67] Zandee, *Death as an Enemy*, 158–159.

[68] Spell 384, *CT* V 51c–52b, B2Bo.

[69] *CT* VII 390c–391a, following B2L.

[70] Žabkar, *Ba Concept*, 122.

[71] Escolano-Poeda, *ZÄS* 144(1), 34.

[72] Žabkar, *Ba Concept*, 122; Allen, *The Debate between a Man and His Soul*, 6.

[73] See for example S. Hollis, 'Anubis's mortuary functions in The Tale of Two Brothers', in T. DuQuesne (ed.), *Hermes Aegyptiacus, Egyptological Studies for BH Stricker on his 85th Birthday* (Oxford: DE Publications, 1995), 97; Žabkar, *Ba Concept*, 3.

[74] Allen, *The Debate between a Man and His Soul*, 6.

[75] Koch, *Die Erzählung des Sinuhe*, 74.

shows how Sinuhe was not in control of himself. The *bꜣ* in mortuary texts represents the active aspect of a person and its absence leaves a motionless corpse in the tomb. Perhaps Sinuhe's sudden experience of his perished *bꜣ* implies that he is unable to move due to fright.

In another instance, *Papyrus Anastasi IV*, the *bꜣ* occurs in a context of self-control. In the text the writer is angry with a man who is neglecting his writings and has adopted bad behaviour:[76]

> 'You go from street to street, with the smell of beer wherever you stumble. The beer separates [you] from people. It has caused your *bꜣ* to be overturned. You are like a crooked rudder of a boat that does not obey any steering'.

It is interesting that it is the *bꜣ* which is affected by the man's drinking, but it makes sense: since the *bꜣ* can be separated from the body, the *bꜣ* can also be sent out and it seems to have its own agency to a larger extent that other aspects of a person. Again, the passage could be interpreted as a lack of mobility due to the intoxication, perhaps even to the extent of the man passing out.

7. Conclusion

The concept of *bꜣ.w* had an earlier meaning of 'power' in the Old Kingdom, and when gods and the king exercised control through the *bꜣ*-power, the term is used in the texts both in singular and plural indiscriminately. In this meaning of the term, control is not exercised over the *bꜣ.w*-power but is a king's or god's might that is used to control others. In the *Coffin Texts*, control through *bꜣ.w* is also used by non-royals, but it is in the New Kingdom that these expressions become increasingly common and are especially used by kings. Parallel to this, legal oaths involving the *bꜣ.w*, already attested in the Old Kingdom, become increasingly popular in the New Kingdom. The *bꜣ.w* acts on behalf of a person or god against enemies of the king on a battlefield, someone who destroys a monument, or someone who swears falsely. The *bꜣ.w* can in these instances act in different ways, for example guiding the army and chasing the enemy away or punishing someone who has sworn falsely.

When control is exercised over the *bꜣ*, it occurs in the Afterlife, and it is the *bꜣ* as an aspect of a person's identity, or the *bꜣ* representing a whole person. Proceeding through the obstacles of the Afterlife, the *bꜣ* needs to be able to move freely, but it is threatened by dangerous guardians who want to ensnare and trap it. This is not something that is specific only to the *bꜣ*, but since one of the most important characteristics of the *bꜣ* is free movement, multiple spells seek to ensure that this will happen; both that it will not be confined to the corpse, but also that it will have a safe passage through the gates. The guardians, as threatening as they might be, will let through the right *bꜣ*, so the spells are working as a counter-control against the controlling forces of the Afterlife. Finally, extreme situations can separate the *bꜣ* from the body in this life, a loss of self-control and perhaps also of motion.

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[76] P. Anastasi IV 11.9–11.11 in Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, 47.

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4
Ancestors as a Source of Legal Authority[1]

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Abstract

The present study focuses on the authoritative role of the ancestors within the Ancient Egyptian legal sphere by adopting a methodological approach that takes into account the notion of legal pluralism. Through an analysis of the so-called letters to the dead concerning inheritance or economic issues, the paper attempts to demonstrate the actual legal value of these documents. The ritual background behind the letters to the dead is also explored, in particular the ceremonies performed during the night preceding the burial of the deceased, and the Haker feast celebrated during the Mysteries of Osiris at Abydos. Finally, the possible historical connections between the ritual practices behind the letters to the dead and the oracular consultations which became particularly widespread after the New Kingdom are highlighted.

Keywords: Ancestor worship; Inheritance; Legal pluralism; Letters to the dead; Oracles

1. Premises and aims

According to the seminal study by J. Goody, *Death, Property and Ancestors*, the cult of the deceased forebears is strongly intertwined with the rules concerning the transmission of property. Indeed, ancestor cults provide a supernatural framework through which the power relations characterizing social order can be maintained and reinforced. Consequently, the cultic actions addressed to the dead should not be understood as simple acts of piety, but respond to a specific frame according to which the deceased worshipped as ancestors are those from whom one has inherited.[2] Although the work of Goody is focused on the LoDagaa of Northern Ghana, a strong connection between ancestor cult, legitimation of property, and inheritance systems is attested in different cultural contexts where the extended family plays a major role. One also has to keep in mind that in these contexts to inherit from the deceased head of the family often entails succeeding the latter, since the legitimate heir – usually the eldest son – has to take on the role of new family chief.[3]

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[2] J. Goody, *Death Property and the Ancestors: A Study of the Mortuary Customs of the LoDagaa of West Africa* (Stanford, Cal.: Tavistock Publications, 1962), 411–412.

[3] The list of works on this is extensive and cited here are just some main titles. Earlier works date back to the first half of the twentieth century; see for example N. Hozumi, *Ancestor Worship and Japanese Law* (Tokyo: Z. P. Maruya & Co., Ltd., 1901); K. Yang, *Recherches sur le culte des ancêtres comme principe ordonnateur de la famille chinoise: la succession au culte: la succession au patrimoine* (Lyon: Bosc frères, M. & L. Riou, 1934). One must remember that cultural evolutionist trends were certainly strong during this period, contributing to the axiom that ancestor worship was not only the 'primitive form of religion', but also the driving force behind the rise of the foremost social institutions – see E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom*, *Vol. II* (London: John Murray, 1874), 183; H. Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*. *Vol. I* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1876), 411. On the other hand, the connection between ancestor worship and rules regulating inheritance is undeniably attested in several cultures and, clearly, cannot be considered a mere abstract assumption derived from earlier anthropological thought. This theme has been the object of several studies over time. Besides the aforementioned study by J. Goody, see also J. Brugman *et al.* (eds), *Essays on oriental laws of succession* (Leiden: Brill, 1969).

Ancient Egyptian sources clearly indicate that this kind of custom played a major role not only in the ways in which the law was executed and organized[4] but also in the affirmation of differences between social groups.[5] The norm according to which 'the property is given to the one who buries' is the clearest evidence of this link between religious practices concerning death and the rules governing inheritance and succession.[6] It was also pointed out how both royal and elite tombs had a specific function in displaying the status of the deceased and in consolidating the social position of their living descendants,[7] also through legalistic inscriptions reproduced on the walls of tombs or funerary chapels.[8] The connection between the care for the dead and economic issues was also noted by ancient Greek historians such as Herodotus and Diodorus of Sicily, who reported that for the Egyptians the corpse of the deceased had a valuable economic and jural value, and mummified bodies could be used to guarantee debts.[9]

Nevertheless, there is a group of documents, undeniably linked with these aspects, whose actual legal function has not yet been thoroughly analysed: the so-called letters to the dead. These documents were linked to both funerary and mortuary rituals and some of them undoubtedly concern legal disputes. However, most scholars have shown some tendency to identify them more as a magical/performative action to ward off an opponent,[10] or, at least, as the 'final attempt of an individual to seek justice, the legal system proper having failed',[11] rather than as actual legal documents.[12]

This attitude has to be understood in the light of a wider problem. For a long time, studies concerning ancient Egyptian law barely adopted the critical tools provided by cultural anthropology and ethnographic comparison, an attitude intertwined with a tendency to superimpose categories typical of modern juridical systems onto ancient Egyptian practices. Consequently, the choice of the sources to be taken into account to reconstruct Egyptian legal procedures has been somewhat arbitrary.[13]

The entanglement between legal and religious ambit is recognizable even within modern legal systems,[14] and as regards Ancient Egypt it is beyond doubt that the boundaries between these two spheres were

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[4] M. Fitzenreiter, 'Zum Ahnenkult in Ägypten', *GM* 143 (1994), 55 and n. 22.

[5] M. Fitzenreiter, 'Grabmonument und Gesellschaft – Funeräre Kultur und Soziale Dynamik im Alten Reich', *SAK* 40 (2011).

[6] The connection between funerary rituals and inheritance in Ancient Egypt has been widely studied; see J. J. Janssen and P. W. Pestman, 'Burial and Inheritance in the Community of the Necropolis Workmen at Thebes (Pap. Bulaq x and O. Petrie I6)', *JESHO* 11(1) (1968), 137–170.

[7] M. Fitzenreiter, 'Grabmonument und Gesellschaft', 99–101.

[8] S. Allam, 'Publizität und Schutz im Rechtsverkehr', in S. Allam (ed.), *Grund und Boden in Altägypten (rechtliche und sozio-ökonomische Verhältnisse): Akten des internationalen Symposions, Tübingen, 18.-20. Juni 1990* (Tübingen: Selbstverlag des Herausgebers, 1990), 31–33.

[9] For mummification as commercial activity, see Herodotus II, 86–90; Diodorus of Sicily I, 92–93. See also G. Purpura, 'La "sorte" del debitore oltre la morte: "Nihil inter mortem distat et sortem", (Ambrogio, De Tobia X, 36–37)', *Iuris Antiqui Historia* 1 (2009): 41–60.

[10] This is the position of Ritner, who interpreted the letters to the dead as a magical action to seek vindication, comparable to execration rites, but also to certain love spells typical of Late Period or Greco-Roman Egypt. See R. K. Ritner, *The mechanics of ancient Egyptian magical practice* (*SAOC* 54 – Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1994), 180–183.

[11] R. Jasnow, 'Egypt: Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period', in R. Westbrook (ed.), *A History of Ancient Near East Law* (Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1 The Near and Middle East 72 – Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 132–133.

[12] The present author has already treated this previously; see R. Schiavo, 'Sulla Possibile Funzione Giuridica di Alcune Lettere ai Morti', *Aegyptus* 93 (2013): 125–145. See also S. Donnat Beauquier, 'Written Pleas to the Invisible World: Texts as Media between Living and Dead in Pharaonic Egypt', in A. Storch (ed.), *Perception of the Invisible. Religion, Historical Semantics and the Role of Perceptive Verbs* (Cologne: Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika 21, 2010), 68–71.

[13] S. Lippert, 'Law', in I. Shaw and E. Bloxam (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Egyptology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 797; A. A. Loktionov, *The Development of the Justice System in Ancient Egypt from the Old to the Middle Kingdom* (PhD diss., Robinson College, University of Cambridge, 2019), 25–26.

[14] For examples from different parts of the world, see B. I. Bittker (ed.), *Religion and the State in the American Law*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Rachel M. Scott, *Recasting Islamic Law, Religion and the Nation State in Egyptian Constitution Making* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2021).

even more blurred. Moreover, the involvement of preternatural entities within juridical cases is well attested in Ancient Egypt, as testified by oracular consultations, particularly widespread from the New Kingdom onwards.[15]

Nevertheless, it must be underlined that even in the case of oracular practices, various interpretations have been proposed. Even though their involvement in the resolution of legal disputes is unanimously recognized by scholars, it has been debated for what reasons certain legal issues were resolved through oracular petitions rather than through other procedures. For a long time, it has been argued that oracles were predominantly used by the lower social strata, which perceived other judicial bodies as corrupt.[16] However, more recent studies have highlighted that the involvement of oracles in legal disputes was not restricted to the poorer social groups; rather, they were mainly used to settle specific categories of legal disputes – above all, those concerning landed properties – regardless of the social background of the people involved.[17]

The existence of a certain affinity between the letters to the dead and the oracular petitions has already been highlighted by a limited number of scholars.[18] Nonetheless, this theme is worth examining further in the light of the concept of legal pluralism: the 'idea that in any one geographical space defined by the conventional boundaries of a nation state, there is more than one "law" or legal system'.[19]

This concept has indeed proven useful not only to better understand some aspects characterizing Ancient Egyptian legal procedures, but also to reconstruct the historical evolution of the justice system.[20] While the Old Kingdom was characterised by the coexistence of a centralised legal system with several local iterations, the political crisis that accompanied the rise of the First Intermediate Period saw the formalisation of local legal procedures. Finally, with the advent of the Middle Kingdom, the restoration of a centralised royal power required a more centralised legal system, with the Crown aiming at absorbing and reshaping local traditions for its own advantage.[21]

The progressive decline of the practices linked to the letters to the dead concerning inheritance issues, and the subsequent spread of oracular consultations, might be reconsidered within this general historical trend. In light of this, the present paper aims at investigating the following two areas:

- The ritual context behind the letters to the dead concerning inheritance issues and its possible juridical implications;

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[15] S. Allam, 'De la divinité dans le droit pharaonique', *BSFÉ* 68 (1973): 17–30.

[16] E. D. Bedell, *Criminal law in the Egyptian Ramesside Period* (PhD diss., Brandeis University 1973), 200–206; H. Brunner, 'Die religiöse Antwort auf die Korruption in Ägypten', in W. Schuller (ed.), *Korruption im Alterturn (Konstanzer Symposium, Oktober 1979)* (Munich and Vienna: Oldenbourg 1982), 71–77.

[17] A. McDowell, *Jurisdiction in the workmen's community of Deir el-Medîna*, (Leiden: *NINO*, 1990), 114–135.

[18] J. D. Ray, 'Ancient Egypt', in M. Loewe *et al.* (eds), Divination and oracles (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981), 174–190; R. K. Ritner, 'Necromancy in Ancient Egypt', in L. Ciraolo and J. Seidel (eds), *Magic and Divination in the Ancient World* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2002), 90; S. Donnat Beauquier, 'Le rite comme seul référent dans les lettres aux morts: nouvelle interprétation du début du Cairo Text on Linen', BIFAO 109 (2009), 61–93; J. C. Moreno García, 'Oracles, ancestor cults and letters to the dead: the involvement of the dead in the public and private family affairs in Pharaonic Egypt', in A. Storch (ed.), Perception of the Invisible: Religion, Historical Semantics and the Role of Perceptive Verbs (Cologne: Köppe, 2010), 133–153; Donnat Beauquier, 'Written Pleas', 69–70; S. Donnat Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts: enquête sur un usage rituel de l'écrit dans l'Égypte pharaonique* (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 2014), 214–215.

[19] For the definition of legal pluralism, see M. Davies, 'Legal Pluralism', in P. Cane and H. Kritzer (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Empirical Legal Research* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 806–807; for the application of this concept within Ancient Egypt, see Loktionov, *The Development of the Justice System*, 15–18.

[20] J. L. Alonso, 'The status of peregrine law in Egypt: "customary law" and legal pluralism in the Roman Empire'. *JJP* 43 (2013): 351–404; Loktionov, *The Development of the Justice System,* 152–161.

[21] Loktionov, *The Development of the Justice System,* 152–161.

- The possible historical path that links the practices behind the letters to the dead concerning inheritance issues (attested since the Old Kingdom) and the subsequent oracular consultation (which became particularly popular after the New Kingdom).

2. The letters to the dead and the letters to the dead concerning inheritance issues

The label 'letters to the dead' is employed to indicate a corpus of rather heterogeneous documents whose main characteristic is that of containing pleas addressed to the deceased in order to solve a problem. Such a practice stemmed from a religious belief, well-attested throughout the course of Egyptian history, which saw the dead as supernatural beings (often referred to as *ꜣḫ* in the written sources) able to affect the realm of the living with both benevolent and malevolent actions.[22]

There is no consensus about what can be considered a 'letter to the dead' and the number of documents included in this category varies from scholar to scholar.[23] In addition, notwithstanding the term 'letter', several of the texts included do not show the typical traits of the epistolary genre.[24]

At first sight, these documents seem to be attested throughout the entire period of pharaonic history, from the 3rd millennium to the 7st century BCE; yet, a closer analysis reveals that most of them belong to the time span between the late Old Kingdom and the first half of the Middle Kingdom.[25] This implies that most of the so-called letters to the dead should be considered expressions of the nomarchal culture typical of the First Intermediate Period and of the patronage system linked to regional elites which was still of foremost importance during the Middle Kingdom.[26] Finally, it is noteworthy that during the 3rd millennium BCE the pleas addressed to the dead regarded a wide range of problems, such as fertility and inheritance issues, or the placation of an angry spirit, but the letters to the dead of the 1st millennium BCE were mainly aimed at placating the perceived wrath of the dangerous deceased.[27]

Given this chronological particularity and the non-homogeneity of style and themes, Sylvie Donnat Beauquier has pointed out that the category 'letters to the dead' cannot be considered a literary genre created and recognized by the Egyptians, but is a modern category invented by scholars. This label therefore refers to diverse documents communicating with the deceased through a written text, a practice which was recreated more than once throughout pharaonic history.[28]

In light of these premises, it can be posited that not all the 'letters' currently known were written with the same purpose or belonged to the same ritual background. For example, a number of documents appear to have been written to appease a spirit who was angry because of her or his premature death.[29] And, thus, a parallel with an apotropaic practice turns out to be quite plausible.

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[22] R. J. Demarée, *The ꜣḫ Iqr n Rᶜ Stelae: on Ancestor Worship in Ancient Egypt* (*EgUit 3* – Leiden: *NINO*, 1983), 213–218; U. Verhoeven, 'Post ins Jenseits: Formular und Funktion altägyptischer Briefe an Tote', in A. Wagner (ed.), *Bote und Brief. Sprachliche Systeme der Informationsübermittlung im Spannungsfeld von Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit* (Frankfurt: Nordostafrikanisch/Westasiatische Studien 4, 2003), 31–33; N. Harrington, *Living with the dead: ancestor worship and mortuary cult in Ancient Egypt* (Havertown: Oxbow Books, 2012), 7–11.

[23] S. Donnat Beauquier, 'The concept of "Letters to the Dead" and Egyptian funerary culture', in R. Nyord (ed.), *Concepts in Middle Kingdom funerary culture: proceedings of the Lady Wallis Budge anniversary symposium held at Christ's College, Cambridge, 22 January 2016* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019), 52–56. For the concept and use of letters in Ancient Egypt, see also: D. Sweeney, 'Letters', in I. Shaw and E. Bloxam (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Egyptology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 1055–1057, and 1062.

[24] Donnat Beauquier, 'The concept of "letters to the dead"', 51–54.

[25] Donnat Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts,* 166–172.

[26] Moreno García, 'Oracles, ancestor cults and letters to the dead', 133–153.

[27] Donnat Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts,* 166–172.

[28] Donnat Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts*, 208–219.

[29] This is the case of the text incised on the Ahmose Sapair sculpture currently at Louvre Museum (E 15682), a hypothesis further supported by the statue being mutilated and restored in ancient times, likely during an apotropaic ritual - see C. Barbotin, 'Un intercesseur dynastique à l'aube du Nouvel Empire: La statue du prince Iâhmès', RevL 4 (2005): 19–28. Several letters have been

The letters to the dead concerning inheritance issues specifically should be considered within a broader perspective. As mentioned in the previous section, celebrating the burial and taking care of the posthumous cult of a deceased person was the essential prerequisite to claiming inheritance. The performance of the funerary rituals had thus a double value: it was a moment aimed at ensuring the passage of the deceased into the post-mortem existence, but, at the same time, it was also an act to officially legitimise the successor.[30] The eldest son of the deceased needed to act as a ritualist during the funerals, for example by assuming the role of *sm*-priest in the Opening of the Mouth Ritual.[31] This custom also entailed that if a person other than the eldest son was proclaimed as the legitimate heir, as an essential prerequisite he had to officiate during the funeral rites of the deceased.[32]

Currently, three letters to the dead are known in which the deceased is explicitly and specifically invoked to solve a dispute over his inheritance:

1. *Cairo Linen* (*Cairo JdE 25975*), end of the 6th dynasty[33]
2. *Qau bowl* (*Petrie Museum UC 16163*), First Intermediate Period[34]
3. *P. Brooklyn 37.1799 E*, 7th century BCE[35]

Despite the chronological contrast between *P. Brooklyn 37.1799 E* and the other two letters, the three documents show a common pattern: a detailed description of a past event, in which the writer explains in detail the wrong suffered (a sort of 'defence plea'), always underpinned by the quotation of a sentence pronounced by the deceased to whom the letter is addressed, in which the writer is proclaimed as the legitimate heir.[36] This common pattern is certainly noteworthy if one takes into account that the documents labelled as letters to the dead are not characterised by stylistic homogeneity. It can be argued, therefore, that this formal pattern had a specific meaning, likely linked to the function of these three documents.[37] In this regard, it has also been highlighted how certain formulaic expressions recurring in diverse First Intermediate Period letters to the dead are somehow connected to the legal sphere. One of the most remarkable examples is the term *ṯnw-rꜣ*, which indicated an 'oral procedure that should have legal consequences'.[38] Noteworthy is also that in all three documents the complaints of the writers mainly concern real estate properties, such as houses, lands or servants.[39]

Besides the three aforementioned documents, other letters to the dead appear somehow crucial in litigation procedures concerning property ownership within a context related to the mortuary

written for deceased women, some of whom might have died in childbirth; see R. Schiavo, 'Ghosts and Ancestors in a Gender Perspective', JAEI 25 (2020), 210–212.

[30] H. Willems, 'The Social and Ritual Context of a Mortuary Liturgy of the Middle Kingdom (CT Spells 30-41)', in H. Willems (ed.), *Social aspects of funerary culture in the Egyptian Old and Middle Kingdoms: proceedings of the international symposium held at Leiden University 6–7 June 1996* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 369–370.

[31] J. Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 2005), 313–314.

[32] This is particularly clear in Tutankhamun's tomb. Here Ay, not a kinsman of the monarch, is depicted while performing the Opening of the Mouth, likely to legitimize his succession. See M. Eaton-Krauss, *The Unknown Tutankhamun* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 119.

[33] A. H. Gardiner and K. H. Sethe, *Egyptian Letters to the Dead, Mainly from the Old and Middle Kingdoms* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1928), 1–3, 13–16, pl. I–I a; Donnat Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts,* 29–34.

[34] Gardiner and Sethe, Egyptian Letters to the Dead, 3–5, 17–22, pl. III and III a; Donnat Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts,* 35–40.

[35] R. Jasnow and G. Vittmann, 'An abnormal hieratic letter to the dead (P. Brooklyn 37.1799 E)', *Enchoria* 19/20 (1992–1993), 23–43; Donnat Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts*, 80–86.

[36] Schiavo, 'Sulla Possibile Funzione Giuridica di Alcune Lettere ai Morti', 140–142.

[37] Schiavo, 'Sulla Possibile Funzione Giuridica di Alcune Lettere ai Morti', 142–145.

[38] Verhoeven, 'Post ins Jenseits', 35; Donnat Beauquier, 'Written Pleas', 65–66.

[39] Schiavo, 'Sulla Possibile Funzione Giuridica di Alcune Lettere ai Morti', 144.

sphere. In the so-called *Hu bowl* (*UC 16244*, First Intermediate Period), a woman seeks the preternatural intervention of the deceased for the protection of her daughter; remarkably, the writer underlines how the latter has done nothing wrong since she cannot perform the mortuary rites due to the fact she has been deprived of her inheritance.[40] The document therefore testifies to the strict relation between the sphere of the death rituals (including both funerary and mortuary rites) and an indirect claim over an inheritance. The last two texts, the *Qubbet el-Hawa Bowl* and the *Oxford Bowl*, are particularly interesting for the issue at stake here. These are not written in epistolary style, nor can they be considered as pleas addressed to the deceased; their texts, rather, consist of a statement, which seems to imply a legal function. Several scholars do not consider them proper letters to the dead.[41] The *Qubbet el-Hawa Bowl* (*Cairo JdE 91740*, Middle Kingdom) concerns an economic transaction for the use of a tomb.[42] The *Oxford Bowl* (*Pitt-Rivers 1887.27.1*, Second Intermediate Period) contains a statement concerning the transmission of inheritance belonging to a fugitive called Meniupu to a woman who took care of his burial. Both documents undeniably address the connection between funerary rituals and property ownership and the fact that they are written on a bowl may indicate their involvement in a ritual context quite similar to those of the bowls inscribed with a plea to a deceased person.[43]

In light of the elements described above, it can be stated that diverse written sources currently labelled as 'letters to the dead' were written with a clear legal intent and, above all, according to a specific style that closely matches that of legal procedure. The question to be explored is therefore whether these written texts had an actual legal value that was officially recognised. To find an answer, it is necessary to analyse the specific ritual context behind the letters to the dead concerning legal issues.

3. The ritual context behind the letters to the dead concerning inheritance issues

The so-called letters to the dead have to be understood as material evidence of articulated ritual actions,[44] and archaeological data provides useful hints for identifying their true purpose. The aforementioned *Qau Bowl* (*Petrie Museum UC 16163*) was placed under the head of the deceased who was buried inside a small shaft tomb,[45] while the *Qubbet el-Hawa Bowl* (*Cairo JdE 91740*) was found inside the shaft tomb n. 30b of the eponymous locality.[46] Furthermore, some expressions and actions described within the three texts where the deceased is explicitly invoked to solve a dispute over his inheritance suggest that their ritual deposition happened during a ceremony performed in the necropolis.[47] Nevertheless, there is still debate about when exactly these ceremonies took place.

As for the letters concerning inheritance or other economic issues, funerals might seem the most suitable occasion and a passage from Diodorus of Sicily is particularly interesting here. The Greek historian reports that – after the embalming rites, but before the burial – the mummy was subjected to a public judgment in front of forty-nine judges, and that during this trial, the participants were allowed to come

[40] A. Roccati, 'Due Lettere ai Morti', *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 42 (1967), 326; Jasnow, 'Egypt: Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period', 132–133.

[41] Donnat Beauquier, 'The concept of "letters to the dead"', 51–54.

[42] H. Goedicke, 'The High Price of Burial', *JARCE* 25 (1988), 195–199; Donnat Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts*, 67–68.

[43] Donnat Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts,* 69–70.

[44] Donnat Beauquier, 'Written Pleas', 64. See also Verhoeven, 'Post ins Jenseits', 43–44; J. Baines, 'Practical Religion and Piety', *JEA* 73 (1987), 87.

[45] Gardiner and Sethe, *Egyptian Letters to the Dead,* 5.

[46] Goedicke, 'The High Price of Burial', 67.

[47] In the Cairo Linen it is clearly stated (cols. 8–9) that the sender is in the same place as the deceased (Donnat Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts*, 29–31). In the Qau Bowl, there is a reference (inside, cols. 9–10) to some scribes who are in the same city (the necropolis?) as the deceased (Donnat Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts*, 35–37); while in P. Brooklyn 37.1799 E, it is stated (verso, l. 1) that the letter has to be recited in front of the tomb of the deceased (Jasnow and Vittmann, 'An Abnormal Hieratic Letter to the Dead', 27).

forward and accuse the deceased.[48] According to several scholars, this ritualised judgment actually took place during the funerals.[49] Joachim Quack, for example, found significant parallels between the passage by Diodorus and the demotic *P. Insinger*,[50] while Elsa Oréal identified references to this kind of ritual in both Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom sources.[51]

While Diodorus underlined that this form of judgment concerned the moral conduct of the deceased,[52] it must be acknowledged that he described a practice of the 1st century BCE. It cannot be excluded that in earlier historical periods such public judgment had a different function.[53]

The belief in a kind of preternatural tribunal in which the deceased was invoked to punish the living is indeed a recurrent motif in the Appeals to the Living attested from the Old Kingdom onwards.[54] Another interesting source is *CT spell 149*, which describes the deceased as a preternatural being capable of turning into a hawk in order to defend the members of his family and fight against their enemy in front of the *ḏ3ḏ3.t*-court.[55] Remarkably, also in a number of letters to the dead the deceased is often asked to perform a judgment against the antagonist of the writer, who can be either a deceased or a living person.[56]

One might assume that this kind of tribunal should be interpreted as a religious metaphor to describe a performative act against enemies. Yet, this kind of belief was likely rooted in a ritual practice. In particular, Edward F. Wente has pointed out how the original function of *CT spell 149* was probably that of a liturgy to be used by a living person to ask for the preternatural help of his deceased father in the context of a legal procedure.[57] This kind of practice, therefore, would not be too different from the oracular consultations attested from the New Kingdom onwards, since it consisted in summoning a preternatural being in order to resolve a legal issue.[58] It is also noteworthy that a passage of this spell seems to suggest that this procedure took place in front of the entrance to the tomb or the funerary chapel of the deceased.[59]

The hypothesis formulated by Edward F. Wente seems particularly likely. If we maintain that to perform the burial and the mortuary cult for the deceased was a legal prerequisite to claim his inheritance, it

[48] Diodorus of Sicily, *The Library of History* I, 92, in E. Murphy (ed.), *The Antiquities of Egypt: a Translation, with Notes, of Book 1 of the Library of History of Diodorus Siculus. Revised and Expanded Edition* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction, 1990), 313–317.

[49] R. Merkelbach, 'Diodor über das Totengericht der Ägypter', *ZÄS* 120 (1993), 71–84; R. Merkelbach, 'Porphyrios über das Totengericht der Ägypter', *ZÄS* (2000): 181–183. For an alternative view, see M. A. Stadler, 'War eine dramatische Aufführung eines Totengerichts Teil der ägyptischen Totenriten?', *SAK* 29 (2001), 331–348.

[50] J. F. Quack, 'Balsamierung und Totengericht im Papyrus Insinger', *Enchoria* 25 (1999): 27–38; J. F. Quack, 'Nochmals zu Balsamierung und Totengericht im großen demotischen Weisheitsbuch', *Enchoria* 34/204 (2015): 105–118.

[51] E. Oréal, 'Jugement public des morts et accès à la sépulture: les sources égyptiennes de Diodore I, 92', in P. Collombert *et al.* (eds), *Aere Perennius: Mélanges égyptologiques en l'honneur de Pascal Vernus* (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 493–512.

[52] Diodorus of Sicily, *The Library of History* I, 92, 4–5 in Murphy, *The Antiquities of Egypt*, 313.

[53] Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, 73–77.

[54] S. B. Shubert, *Those who (still) live on Earth: a study of the ancient Egyptian appeal to the living texts*, (Ann Arbor: UMI, 2007), texts: OK 2, OK 5a, OK 9, OK 18, OK 19, OK 31, MK 12.

[55] For the *ḏ3ḏ3.t* and the judgment procedure in Ancient Egypt from the Old Kingdom to the Second Intermediate Period, see: S. Lippert, 'Law Court', in J. Dieleman *et al.* (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology,* (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2012), 2–6, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4136j3s7>. For the *ḏ3ḏ3.t* in the context of *CT* spell 149 and the letters to the dead, see H. Willems, *Historical and archaeological aspects of Egyptian funerary culture: religious ideas and ritual practice in Middle Kingdom elite cemeteries* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 186–187; E. F. Wente, 'The Beginning and End of Coffin Spell 149: A Living Person Approaches the Netherworld Tribunal', in R. K. Ritner (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat: Studies Presented to Janet H. Johnson on the Occasion of Her 70th Birthday* (*SAOC* 70 – Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2017), 399, 402.

[56] Donnat Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts,* 108–113.

[57] Wente, 'The Beginning and End of Coffin Spell 149', 400–401.

[58] Wente, 'The Beginning and End of Coffin Spell 149', 399.

[59] Wente, 'The Beginning and End of Coffin Spell 149', 401–402.

cannot be excluded that these rituals also entailed a moment during which the relatives of the deceased could object to the choice of the heir.

Diodorus reports that the judgment of the deceased had to take place between the embalming rituals and the moment of the burial and, indeed, Egyptian sources testify how a number of ceremonies occurred within the embalming hall during the night preceding the funerary procession to the tomb, above all the so-called *Night of Vindication*, already attested during the Middle Kingdom.[60] It is also known that it was customary to set up a ritual area between the Embalming Hall and the tomb, the so-called Sacred Temenos or Butic Burial, specifically meant for the performance of several ceremonies marking the passage from the realm of the living to that of the dead,[61] among which were a slaughtering ritual, an execration ritual, the performance of the *Mww*-dancers[62] and the Tekenu ritual.[63] The latter also entailed a ritual, during which the leather cover of the *Tekenu*, denominated *msḳ*, was removed.[64] This sacred area, specifically conceived as a liminal space between the worlds of the living and the dead, can certainly be considered perfect for a ritual involving communication with the deceased.

On the other hand, several scholars have pointed out that, even in the few cases in which the find-spot of the documents is known, it is not clear if they were deposited in concomitance with the funerary rituals or later. In the specific case of the so-called *Qau Bowl* (*Petrie Museum UC 16163*), the possibility exists that the tomb was purposely opened to place the letter and resealed.[65] Indeed, one also has to consider that celebrations specifically intended to commemorate the dead and visit their tombs are well-known, and that these followed the model of funerary rituals, reproducing their salient phases.[66] As suggested by Harco Willems, it would therefore be reasonable to posit that the deposition of the letters within the tombs might also be performed during these festivals, such as the *W³g*-feast attested since the Old Kingdom or the Mysteries of Osiris typical of the Middle Kingdom.[67] Given that most of the letters to the dead belong to the First Intermediate Period, another occasion for the ritual deposition of these documents may be suggested for the festivals celebrated for the posthumous cult of certain deified local rulers. Indeed, these public ceremonies, which were focused on the *k³*-chapels of the deified nomarchs, gained a certain popularity during the First Intermediate Period and, in some cases, even during the Middle Kingdom.[68]

Significant parallels from diverse traditional societies clearly highlight how funerals and other kinds of periodical commemorations in honour of the dead can often involve much more complex aims than the mere post mortem benefit of the deceased. Especially in societies where social roles or even offices are traditionally handed down within one family through generations, the rituals concerning the sphere of death can be fashioned as special occasions to publicly ratify the transmission of power from a deceased

[60] Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt,* 280–298.

[61] Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt,* 305–307; A. Wilkinson, 'Landscapes for Funerary Rituals', in C. J. Eyre *et al.* (eds), *The Unbroken Reed: studies in the culture and heritage of ancient Egypt in honour of A. F. Shore* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1994), 391–395.

[62] G. Reeder, 'The mysterious Muu and the dance they do', *KMT* 6(3) (1995), 68–77.

[63] G. West, *The Tekenu and Ancient Egyptian Funerary Ritual* (Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing Ltd., 2019), 203.

[64] West, *The Tekenu and Ancient Egyptian Funerary Ritual*, 189–190; J. M. Serrano Delgado, 'A Contribution to the Study of the Tekenu and its Role in Egyptian Funerary Ritual', *ZÄS* 138 (2011): 155–158.

[65] G. Brunton, *Qau and Badari I* (London: British School of Archaeology in Egypt, 1927), 37.

[66] M. Smith, *Following Osiris: perspectives on the Osirian afterlife from four millennia*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 232–233; D. Raue, 'Sanctuary of Heqaib', in J. Dieleman *et al.* (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2014), 12, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2dp6m9bt>.

[67] Willems, 'The Social and Ritual Context of a Mortuary Liturgy', 357–358.

[68] Willems, *Historical and archaeological aspects of Egyptian funerary culture*, 121–123; A. Dorn, *Elephantine XXXI: Kisten und Schreine im Festzug: Hinweise auf postume Kulte für hohe Beamte aus einem Depot von Kult- und anderen Gegenständen des ausgehenden 3. Jahrtausends v. Chr.; mit einem Beitrag von Erico Peintner. Archäologische Veröffentlichungen 117* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015), 121–122; J. Troche, *Death, Power and Apotheosis in Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2021), 143–147.

person to the legitimate successor in an official way, precisely because they are public ceremonies which often involves the participation of the whole community.[69] In this perspective, as stressed by the anthropologist J. R. Perodie, they can be considered foremost as a 'formal condition for political advancement'.[70]

Especially for letters to the dead regarding inheritance issues, it is reasonable to assume that the dispute would begin during the funerals, or even before. Similar customs are indeed attested in the context of African legal pluralism. For example, according to the Kenyan customary law, the rites of burial and mourning are not only meant for the deceased and his post-mortem existence, but they are above all an official public occasion for regulating succession and the division of inheritance among the family members.[71] Some of the documents analysed here could provide interesting hints in this regard. In the *Qau Bowl* (*Petrie Museum UC 16163*) the sender claims the inheritance of his deceased brother in light of the fact that he was the one who took care of his burial.[72] A similar situation can also be identified in the *Cairo Linen* (*Cairo JdE 25975*). Here, a widow reports to her deceased husband a series of abuses perpetrated by a group of persons, likely other family members, which culminated in her and her young son being excluded from the marital inheritance and, remarkably, the woman underlines that the antagonists managed to steal a piece of leather, *msḫ*, from her.[73] It can be hypothesized that this was the same *msḫ* skin as was involved in the Tekenu ritual, which, as mentioned above, was important in the funerary rites.[74] The antagonists of the widow could therefore acquire rights over the inheritance by preventing the legitimate heir from enacting the funerary rites for his deceased father.

At the same time, we can also assume that these disputes had to be long, articulated procedures and that the resolution of the conflict could take place well after the burial of the deceased; for example, during specific festivals linked to the mortuary cults. As mentioned above, it is certainly significant that archaeological evidence suggests that for the ritual deposition of the *Qau Bowl* (*Petrie Museum UC 16163*), the tomb was purposely re-opened to place the document under the corpse of the deceased.[75]

4. The *Haker*-feast during the Middle Kingdom

The oldest attestations concerning the *Haker*-feast date back to the end of the 11th dynasty.[76] This festival, understood as a commemoration for the dead and, perhaps, a ritual for their transformation into *ꜣḫ*-spirits,[77] was celebrated in conjunction with the Mysteries of Osiris, but the exact point when it was enacted is still debated. Indeed, the celebrations of the Mysteries entailed diverse processions – such as the "First Procession" and the "Great Procession" – during which the emblem of Osiris was

[69] B. Hayden, 'Fabulous Feast: a prolegomenon to the importance of feasting', in M. Dietler and B. Hayden (eds), *Feasts: archaeological and ethnographic perspectives on food, politics, and power* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 29–30.

[70] J. R. Perodie, 'Feasting for Prosperity: a Study of Southern Northwest Coast Feasting', in Dietler and Hayden (eds), *Feasts*, 205–206.

[71] P. Stamp, 'Burying Otieno: The Politics of Gender and Ethnicity in Kenya', *Signs* 16(4) (1991), 833; M. N. Wangila, 'Religion, the African concept of the Individual, and human rights discourse: an analysis', *Journal of Human Rights* 9(3) (2010), 326–343.

[72] Schiavo, 'Sulla Possibile Funzione Giuridica di Alcune Lettere ai Morti', 135–140.

[73] Schiavo, 'Sulla Possibile Funzione Giuridica di Alcune Lettere ai Morti', 132–134.

[74] Donnat Beauquier, 'Le rite comme seul référent dans les lettres aux morts', 68–70. It has also been hypothesized that the term *msḫ* could refer to a document written on a piece of leather; see Schiavo, 'Sulla Possibile Funzione Giuridica di Alcune Lettere ai Morti', 133.

[75] Brunton, *Qau and Badari*, 37; Schiavo, 'Sulla Possibile Funzione Giuridica di Alcune Lettere ai Morti, 135–140; G. Miniaci, 'Reuniting Philology and Archaeology: The "Emic" and "Etic" in the Letter of the Dead Qau Bowl UC16163 and its Context', *ZÄS* 143(1) (2016), 99; Sylvie Donnat Beauquier, 'Écrire aux morts – écrire les paroles divines: à propos d'écrits votifs et talismaniques dans l'Égypte pharaonique', *Gradhiva: revue d'anthropologie et d'histoire des arts* 32 (2021), 8.

[76] Smith, *Following Osiris*, 226–229.

[77] J. M. Iskander, 'The Haker Feast and the Transformation', *SAK* 40 (2011), 142.

carried from his temple to his tomb at Poker, where it had to spend the night.[78] The most accepted theory is that the *Haker* was performed precisely during the night spent in Poker.[79] Others, instead, maintain that the ritual was enacted before the start of the Great Procession,[80] or before the start of each procession performed within the Mysteries.[81]

Jan Assmann recognizes a strong resemblance between this phase of the Mysteries and the rituals enacted during the night preceding the funerary procession from the Embalming Hall to the tomb of the deceased.[82] The parallel is indeed convincing, since the Mysteries were structured as the funeral of the god Osiris.[83] Moreover, the *Haker*-feast was also characterized by a ritual action rather similar to the judgment of the dead taken into consideration in the previous section: it was denominated 'the counting (or numbering) of the dead'; during this ceremony, followers of Osiris could get revenge on their enemies, probably by communicating their complaints (*iw*) to Osiris himself.[84]

The Mysteries of Osiris were structured as a funerary rite performed for the god and, as mentioned above, officiating as a ritualist during the funerals was essential for claiming the inheritance of the deceased. The sources indicate that this pattern applied also to the celebrations at Abydos. It has been pointed out that acting as a ritualist during the Mysteries, for example, by assuming the role of 'beloved son of Osiris' – *sꜣ mry=f n Wsir* (a ritual office quite similar to that of the *sm*-priest) – entailed the official assignment of the state office of royal treasurer.[85] A Middle Kingdom stela from Abydos (*München Gl. WAF 35*) also reports that a high officer gained special privileges by performing a ritual slaughtering in the temple of Osiris and receiving the *mskꜣ* skins from the king.[86] As mentioned previously, the *mskꜣ* skin played a major role within the Tekenu ritual and, in the *Cairo Linen*, it seems to be linked to the rights over the inheritance of the deceased.

In a previous article, the present writer has hypothesized that the *Haker*-feast could be identified with the very ritual of deposition of the letters to the dead.[87] This possibility cannot be totally excluded and it is certainly significant that one of the most ancient attestations concerning the *Haker*-feast recurs in a letter to the dead dated to the end of the 11th Dynasty.[88] On the other hand, this previous interpretation did not consider some important aspects concerning the diachronic evolution of Ancient Egyptian social history. Indeed, several letters to the dead predate the first mentions of the *Haker*-feast and they have to be understood as an expression of the nomarchal culture. Some evidence testifies that, during the First Intermediate Period, religious beliefs concerning the preternatural powers of the deceased

[78] Z. Végh, 'Counting the Dead: Some Remarks on the Haker-Festival', in J. Corbelli *et al.* (eds), Current Research in Egyptology 2009: Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Symposium, Liverpool 7-9 January 2009 (Oxford: Oxbow, 2011), 145–148.

[79] A. Moret, *Catalogue du Musée Guimet: gallérie Égyptienne: stèles, bas-reliefs, monuments divers* (Paris: Leroux, 1909), 6; W. Helck, 'Herkunft des abydenischen Osirisrituals', *ArOr* 20 (1952), 78–79.

[80] J. Spiegel, *Die Götter von Abydos: Studien zum ägyptischen Synkretismus* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1973), 151.

[81] Végh, 'Counting the Dead', 154.

[82] Assmann, *Death and Salvation*, 276.

[83] Smith, *Following Osiris*, 232–233.

[84] For the term *iw*, translated as 'complaint' or 'problem', rather than as a 'sin', see: Z. Végh, 'Der Tag des Hörens der Sünden', in G. Neunert *et al.* (eds), Text: Wissen - Wirkung - Wahrnehmung: Beiträge des vierten Münchner Arbeitskreises Junge Ägyptologie (MAJA 4) (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015), 270–271.

[85] For the affinities between the titles of *sm*-priest and *sꜣ mry=f* priest, especially within the kind of sources examined here, see: B. Schmitz, 'Sem(priester)', *LÄ* 5, 834. For the function of this role within the Mysteries, see: E. Frood, 'Ritual Function and Priestly Narrative: The Stelae of the High Priest of Osiris, Nebwawy', *JEA* 89 (2003), 73–74.

[86] Stela of Wepwawetaa (*München Gl. WAF 35*), l. 25. For the translation, see R. Landgráfová and H. Navratilová, *It is My Good Name that You Should Remember* (Prague: Charles University, Faculty of Arts, Czech Institute of Egyptology, 2011), 162–166 (Nr. 50).

[87] R. Schiavo, 'The letters to the dead, the Haker-Feast and the oracles of the Ahmosid kings: retracing the history of a religious practice', in A. Di Natale and C. Basile (eds), *Atti del XVI Convegno di Egittologia e Papirologia: Siracusa, 29 settembre - 2 ottobre 2016* (Syracuse: Tyche, 2018), 231–254.

[88] The so-called Louvre Bowl (Louvre E61634). See Donnat Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts,* 59–60.

played a major role in the political self-presentation of regional rulers.[89] The posthumous cults devoted to certain local governors, such as Isi at Edfu or Heqaib at Elephantine, are the clearest evidence of this general trend[90] and, as mentioned above, the festival linked to their mortuary cults could be identified as an occasion for the ritual deposition of letters to the dead.

The final part of the First Intermediate Period was characterised by violent battles that opposed the rulers of Hierakonpolis to the ones of Thebes, ending with the victory of the latter. Given the great importance played by ancestor worship in legitimising various local potentates, it may not be coincidental that certain necropolises and funerary monuments – such as Thinis– suffered the excesses of soldiers. [91] On the other hand, after the restoration of the united monarchy, certain sanctuaries devoted to the mortuary cults of local rulers, such as that of Heqaib at Elephantine, experienced a renewed prosperity:[92] the Crown was not only patron of preexistent cultic places, but even founded new shrines for deified humans, such as Djefai-Hapy in Assiut.[93] These phenomena clearly show how, with the advent of the Middle Kingdom, religious practices codified for the self-presentation of local rulers were reshaped and incorporated into the restored royal ideology, most likely with the aim of centralising and controlling the diverse local traditions linked to the nomarchal power.

The rise of Abydos as one of the foremost religious centres could be seen in light of the same impetus. Although this site played an important religious role from the Archaic period onwards, the first reliable sources regarding the celebrations of the Mysteries of Osiris date back to the end of the First Intermediate Period.[94] The fact that the celebration of the Mysteries was also a tool through which the King could confer state offices clearly highlights a form of appropriation of certain practices previously used by the local rulers to legitimise and exercise their power.[95] It can also be stated that the same procedure used by elite families to establish the legitimate successor within the context of the funerary and mortuary rituals was used at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom by the royal power to appoint high officials, with the aim of reinforcing the alliance between elites and the Crown. The *Haker*-feast is therefore to be understood as a Middle Kingdom reformulation of those ceremonies (such as the ritualised judgment of the dead, or the procession that led the corpse from the embalming place to the tomb) which, in the previous historical phases, were enacted during both funerals and specific festivals linked to the mortuary cults and which served as a ritual context for the deposition of the letters to the dead.

5. Conclusions: did some letters to the dead have actual legal value? Do these documents show significant affinities with the oracular practices?

Taking care of funerals was the standard procedure for claiming the inheritance of the deceased and succeeding as legitimate heir. In light of this custom, the actual legal value of the 'letters' concerning inheritance issues should be considered: a written document, sealed and guarded within a sacred place – the tomb, which itself functioned as a monument to establish and perpetuate the social status of elite families[96] – can be considered as a fully legal document. Legal texts copied onto the walls of elite tombs are commonly considered as relevant sources pertaining to Ancient Egyptian law,[97] and there are no valid reasons to regard written texts sealed inside tombs differently.

[89] Willems, *Historical and archaeological aspects of Egyptian funerary culture*, 207–208.
[90] Dorn, *Elephantine XXXI*, 121–122; Raue, 'Sanctuary of Heqaib', 1–3.
[91] R. Gilliam, *Performance and Drama in Ancient Egypt* (London: Duckworth, 2005), 56; E. Browarski, 'Thinis', *LÄ* 6, 475–486.
[92] Raue, 'Sanctuary of Heqaib', 3–4.
[93] M. El-Khadragy, 'The Shrine of the Rock-cut Chapel of Djefaihapi I at Asyut', *GM* 212 (2007), 41–55.
[94] Smith, *Following Osiris*, 226–229.
[95] J. C. Moreno García, 'Ancestral Cults in Ancient Egypt', in J. Barton (ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 10–11.
[96] Allam, 'Publizität und Schutz', 31–33.
[97] Jasnow, 'Egypt: Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period', 97; S. Allam, 'Some Remarks on the Trial of Mose', *JEA* 75 (1989), 103–112.

From other sources it is known that private letters were usually employed as legal documents.[98] A letter was perceived as the physical evidence of a communication, which could prove what happened and what was said in specific circumstances. This was especially so if sealed and kept in an archive or elsewhere such as a tomb, which, according to the emic perspective of the Egyptians, had a rather similar function.[99] A document like the *Oxford Bowl* (*Pitt-Rivers 1887.27.1*), not written in epistolary style, can still be considered as the transcription of an important fact that can be used to claim rights over an inheritance, while the *Qubbet el-Hawa bowl* (*Cairo JdE 91740*) is clearly a document regarding an economical-juridical transaction to allow the burial of a man within a specific tomb.[100]

One has also to consider that the ritual context behind the letters to the dead could also support the hypothesis of the actual legal function of these documents. Public celebrations strictly linked to the religious sphere, such as a funeral or a periodical festival to praise the dead, can indeed be considered as one of the best occasions to officially make claims and solve disputes of various kinds in front of the whole community.[101] These kinds of oral legal procedures involving the communication with the dead were probably more common than the few written sources currently known seem to suggest.[102] Even though the first letter to the dead concerning an inheritance issue dates back to the end of the Old Kingdom, it cannot be excluded that rather similar practices relating to the administration of justice were already in use during previous historical phases, when they probably took the form of oral procedures enacted in the presence of witnesses. In this regard, it can be posited that, at the end of the 6th Dynasty, the collapse of royal power and the emergence of diverse regional states involved the rise of new legal procedures and, above all, a greater use of written documentation.[103]

Finally, the involvement of preternatural beings in the execution of justice is not alien to ancient Egyptian tradition, as evidenced by the oracular petitions and, indeed, it is possible to recognise diverse elements of affinity between the latter and the letters to the dead concerning legal issues.

Here it may be useful to briefly summarise the main dynamics characterising the oracular practices. The data suggests that their use was strictly limited to moments of cult statue processions, since one of the most common consultation procedures was based on the movements made by a sacred image during a parade.[104] Oracles were consulted for several reasons, not necessarily linked to the legal sphere.[105] On the other hand, a few written sources indicate that during the Opet Festival oracular petitions were involved in the assignment of important offices, such as those of Viziers or high priests and, in some cases, they also played a major role in legitimizing the accession to the throne of sovereigns.[106] It should be underlined that Egyptian oracles did not only involve gods, but also deceased Kings who had gained a special post mortem deification, such as Ahmose I at Abydos or Amenhotep I at Deir el-Medina.[107]

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[98] K. Baer, 'A deed of endowment in a letter of the time of *Ppjj* I", *ZÄS* 93 (1966), 1–9; Donnat Beauquier, 'Written Pleas', 65.

[99] C. J. Eyre, *The Use of Documents in Pharaonic Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 94–100.

[100] Donnat Beauquier, 'The concept of "Letters to the Dead"', 57.

[101] Hayden, 'Fabulous Feast', 29–30; P. Stamp, 'Burying Otieno', 326–343.

[102] Baines, 'Practical Religion and Piety', 87; Verhoeven, 'Post ins Jenseits', 43–44; Donnat Beauquier, 'Written Pleas', 64.

[103] Donnat Beauquier, 'Written Pleas', 69.

[104] J-M. Kruchten, 'Oracles', in D. B. Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 611–612.

[105] J. Černý, 'Nouvelle série de questions adressées aux oracles', *BIFAO* 41 (1962), 13–24; J. Černý, 'Questions adressées aux oracles', *BIFAO* 35 (1941), 41–58.

[106] M. Fukaya, 'Oracular Sessions and the Installations of Priests and Officials at the Opet Feast', *Orient* 47 (2012), 202–203.

[107] McDowell, *Jurisdiction*, 114; S. Harvey, *The Cults of King Ahmose at Abydos* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1998), 121; G. Hollender, *Amenophis I und Ahmes Nefertari: Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung ihres posthumen Kultes anhand der Privatgräber der thebanischen Nekropole* (*SDAIK* 23 – Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2009); Yasmin el-Shazly, *Royal Ancestor Worship in Deir el-Medina during the New Kingdom* (Wallasey: Abercromby Press, 2015).

The data from Deir el-Medina in particular testifies how the oracle of Amenhotep I played a foremost role within the local juridical system. Other juridical bodies are well-attested in the jurisdiction of the village, above all the *ḳnb.t*, the local court. However, it is noteworthy that the lawsuits concerning inheritance litigations and disputes about real estate were mainly solved by means of the oracle or through the cooperation of this institution with the local court.[108] Moreover, a stela from Abydos (*Cairo J.E. 43649*) – one of the most ancient sources concerning the rise of the oracular practices – shows that Ahmose I was consulted for the purpose of a lawsuit concerning landed property.[109] The data, therefore, seems to suggest a generalised connection between the oracular consultation of deceased kings and the legal issues concerning real estate.

It is therefore possible to identify some significant affinities between the letters to the dead concerning inheritance issues and the oracular practices:

- Both were linked to processions: the parade of the sacred image for the oracles, the funerary procession from the embalming place to the tomb for the letters to the dead.
- Both involved disputes concerning the possession of real estate.
- Both concerned the conferring of a social status: to legitimise the heir, to assign a state office, or to legitimise the King's divine right to rule.
- Both invoked the intervention of preternatural entities in the settlement of legal disputes or in the conferring of a social status.

As for the last point, at first glance it might seem that the kinds of preternatural beings involved were rather different: the spirit of a deceased relative for the letters to the dead concerning inheritance issues; a deified King or a god for the oracular practices. However, some considerations need to be made. First of all, the differences between a 'god', and an 'ancestor' must have been somewhat blurred for the ancient Egyptians. The word traditionally translated as 'god', *nṯr*, could refer to both the royal and non-royal dead.[110] In this regard, an analysis by Dimitri Meeks has highlighted how this term was actually used to indicate a wide range of entities, such as Kings, divine cultic images, and the corpses of both animals and human beings, which were subjected to certain special rituals.[111]

Similarly, the word *ꜣḫ*, usually translated as 'effective spirit' or 'ancestor', actually indicated a special status which could be attributed not only to a distinguished category of dead,[112] but also to certain gods.[113] Furthermore, some of the public ceremonies during which the oracular petitions were enacted, such as the Beautiful Feast of the Valley, could be considered as articulated celebrations which also involved a commemoration of the dead.[114] Thus, the procession from the Karnak Temple to the necropolis on the Theban West Bank shows significant similarities with the elite funerary processions which led the deceased from the embalming place to the tomb.[115] As for the oracles consulted during the Opet Festival,[116] it must be underlined that the latter celebration aimed mainly at establishing the divine

[108] McDowell, *Jurisdiction*, 114–135.

[109] Harvey, *The Cults of King Ahmose at Abydos*, 121.

[110] Troche, *Death, Power and Apotheosis*, 80.

[111] D. Meeks, 'Notion de "dieu" et structure du panthéon dans l'Egypte ancienne', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 205 (1988), 425–446.

[112] Demarée, *The ꜣḫ Iqr n Rᶜ Stelae*, 213–218; Verhoeven, 'Post ins Jenseits', 31–33; Donnat Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts,* 131–135; Troche, Death, Power and Apotheosis, 33–46.

[113] Demarée, *The ꜣḫ Iqr n Rᶜ Stelae*, 198–199.

[114] A. von Lieven, 'Mortuary rituals in the Valley of the Kings', in R. H. Wilkinson and K. R. Weeks (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Valley of the Kings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 298–299; Harrington, *Living with the dead*, 115–122.

[115] A significant parallel in this regard could also be established with the aforementioned processions characterising the Mysteries of Osiris at Abydos, which led the cultic image of the god from the temple to his presumed tomb at Poker. For more, see Végh, 'Counting the Dead', 154.

[116] Fukaya, 'Oracular Sessions and the Installations of Priests and Officials at the Opet Feast', 202–203.

status of the ruling King by confirming his divine ancestry as the son of the god Amun, and therefore as his earthly manifestation.[117]

Lastly, as already stressed by Sylvie Donnat Beauquier, the 'letters to the dead' weren't just addressed to the spirits of the dead; rather, some excerpts seem to suggest that these documents were also addressed to the gods and that the dead were probably invoked as mediators between the divine sphere and the world of men.[118] This interpretation could also be confirmed by some Old Kingdom sources. For example, in some Appeals to the Living, the deceased tomb owner declares that he will drag his enemies in front of a *ḏ3ḏ3.t*-court presided over by the Great God,[119] a deity which is probably to be understood as a personification of royal power, sometimes assimilated into both Ra and Osiris.[120]

The picture that emerges from the data considered here therefore suggests progressive centralisation of a certain type of legal procedures involving the authoritative role of the dead and the public ceremonies related to them. These practices found their first written attestations after the collapse of royal power (end of the 6th Dynasty) but we can reasonably suppose that they were older and more common than the written sources suggest. The spread of the so-called 'letters to the dead' during the First Intermediate Period has to be linked to the rise of the local potentates, and was an attempt to reformulate effective legal procedures in line with nomarchal ideological self-presentation. Subsequently, once the reunification of Egypt had taken place, these practices were reshaped and re-adapted to be included into the royal ideology (see, for example, the rise of the *Haker*-feast within the Mysteries of Osiris, where the same dynamics used to confirm the succession of the heir within elite funerary rituals were re-enacted for the god Osiris and used for the assignment of state offices). The rise of oracular practices during the New Kingdom can thus be seen as a further step in this general process, which substantially saw the increasing absorption of previous local traditions linked to the self-presentation of the elite into the sphere of royal ideology.

Yet, it would be a mistake to consider the oracular consultations as a direct derivation of the letters to the dead.[121] Rather, both practices testify to the importance of public celebrations in honour of the dead and the authoritative role played by certain categories of preternatural dead in the settlement of legal matters – especially in relation to landed property and the legitimation of social roles – and how these beliefs gave rise to new types of legal procedures over time.

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[117] J. C. Darnell, 'Opet Festival', in J. Dieleman *et al.* (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2010), 4–5, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4739r3fr>.

[118] Donnat Beauquier, 'Written Pleas', 69.

[119] J. P. Allen, 'Some aspects of the non-royal afterlife in the Old Kingdom', in M. Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Prague, May 31 – June 4, 2004* (Prague: Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 2006), 12.

[120] Allen, 'Some aspects of the non-royal afterlife', 11–12.

[121] Remarkably, the most recent letter to the dead regarding inheritance – P. Brooklyn 37.1799 E – is in Abnormal Hieratic of the 7th century BCE. The time lag between this and other letters to the dead is impressive. Moreover, this latter document is also contemporary with other religious practices of judicial value, such as the oracular consultations, and the so-called 'letters to the gods'. It has been stressed that a direct derivation of P. Brooklyn 37.1799 E from the previous letters to the dead should be excluded, with this form of communication with the deceased emerging in a different historical context. For more, see Donnat Beauquier, *Écrire à ses morts*, 80–86.

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III.
Compulsion and Control around Borders

5
Fort-Building and Violence as the Mode of Control of the Margins in Late Middle Kingdom Nubia[1]

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Abstract

This chapter analyses how the pharaonic Egyptians used various practices such as fort-building, desert patrolling, and the use of preventive or punitive forms of violence to remove (sometimes dangerous) nuisances that challenged pharaonic authority of the margins in Late Middle Kingdom Nubia. The establishment of a permanent system of forts at strategic points along the river, where the local topography allowed narrow passages between the First and Second Cataracts to be easily controlled, implies the Egyptians were concerned about the uncontrolled movement of people through specific river or desert routes. Fort patrols and written dispatches helped maintain surveillance over alternative routes which gave travellers the opportunity to circumvent the Nile forts, but even a strong military presence could not guarantee complete political stability. This was due to continuous competition with people who settled or grazed cattle in undeveloped areas located near the routes linking the forts to resource-rich areas. The author argues that the use of (preventive or punitive forms of) violence over resisting or encroaching groups and its practice in response to specific events which challenged (and could lead to a breakdown of) local authority (that failed to act decisively) should be seen as structural to Egyptian control of the margins in Late Middle Kingdom Nubia.

Keywords: Forts, Nubia, Patrols, Semna Dispatches, Violence

1. Introduction

Prior to the Egyptian Twelfth Dynasty (*ca.* 1985–1773 BCE), the theme of slaughter and depopulation combined with the deportations of prisoners for internal colonisation is better documented than pharaonic efforts to impose long-lasting political occupation in its borderlands.[2] James Scott has argued that the practice is characteristic of many early states, which are dependent on a settled agricultural base, but are also reliant on the uncontrolled margins as a provider of human and material resources.[3] This seems to be the context in Old Kingdom Egypt (*ca.* 2686-2160 BCE), where military expeditions were typically marked by the failure of central government to maintain control over targeted regions for prolonged periods of time. It is not necessarily true that, whenever long-lasting political occupation did

[1] I wish to thank Chris Eyre for reading a draft of this article and making suggestions for improvement.

[2] U. Matić, *Violence and Gender in Ancient Egypt* (London; New York: Routledge, 2021), 87–91; C. Langer, *Egyptian Deportations of the Late Bronze Age. A Study in Political Economy* (*ZÄS* Beiheft 13 – Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 11–16; U. Matić, *Body and Frames of War in New Kingdom Egypt: Violent Treatment of Enemies and Prisoners* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2019), 11–17; L. Bestock, *Violence and Power in Ancient Egypt: Image and Ideology before the New Kingdom* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 90–142; C. J. Eyre, 'Calculated Frightfulness and the Display of Violence', in T. A. Bács and H. Beinlich (eds), *Constructing Authority: Prestige, Reputation and the Perception of Power in Egyptian Kingship, Budapest, May 12-14, 2016. 8. Symposion zur ägyptischen Königsideologie* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017), 89–122; R. Bussmann, 'Krieg und Zwangsarbeit im pharaonischen Ägypten', in K. von Lingen and K. Gestwa (eds), *Zwangsarbeit als Kriegsressource in Europa und Asien* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2014), 57–72; K. Muhlestein, *Violence in the Service of Order. The Religious Framework for Sanctioned Killing in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011), 16–44; A. J. Spalinger, *War in Ancient Egypt: The New Kingdom* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 1–32.

[3] J. C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 150–153; Eyre, '*Calculated Frightfulness*', 108.

not occur, that this depended on the state's inability to impose it, because it might have been, and in many circumstances definitely was, a deliberate choice for a distinct mode of governance.[4] The establishment of a permanent network of fortresses constructed at strategic points between the First and Second Cataracts was part of a changing strategy which implies that the central regime held sufficient (but contested) control of desert routes that provided access to valuable sources of resource extraction. This chapter analyses social processes that derived from enforcing that degree of control such as fort-building, desert patrolling, and the use of preventive or punitive violence to remove nuisances that challenged pharaonic authority in its Nubian borderlands during the Late Middle Kingdom.

2. The Egyptian fortresses of Lower Nubia

Expeditions to Nubia that ensured Egypt had access to valuable economic resources were a major feature of the Middle Kingdom. A permanent network of huge fortresses at various strategic points between the First and Second Cataracts was completed between the reigns of Senwosret I and Senwosret III [Figure 1].[5] Most have now been submerged under the waters of the Aswan Dam,[6] but some forts remain above the waters of Lake Nasser: Uronarti, Shalfak, and the small forts at Wadi el-Hudi, El Hisnein, and Dihmit in the Eastern Desert [Figure 2].[7] The geographical location that came under the control of the forts was particularly well-suited to control the movement of people from the south because the Second Cataract region, which also included a number of rapids such as the Batn el-Hajar (Belly of Rocks), would have been difficult to traverse by boat, except during the inundation. The *Ramesseum Onomasticon* lists the ancient Egyptian names of seventeen fortresses situated between Gebel el-Silsila in Upper Egypt and Semna-South at the Second Cataract.[8] The names for those installations, dating back to the Thirteenth Dynasty (and perhaps earlier), show a regular pattern: the fortress name mentions those enemies against whom it was directed: for instance, 'repelling the Iuntyu' at Uronarti, 'repelling the Medjay' at

[4] 'Punitive' expeditions are repeatedly found in Old and Middle Kingdom military inscriptions of various officials. For Weni, see *Urk.* I, 103–104 (sections 22–27). For Harkhuf, see *Urk.* I, 126 (sections B2–4). For Pepynakht, see *Urk.* I, 133–134 (sections 4–7). For Djemi, see T. G. Allen, 'The Story of an Egyptian Politician', *AJSL* 38(1) (1921–1922), 55–62; and H. Goedicke, 'The Inscription of *Ḏmi*', *JNES* 19 (1960), 288–291. For Old and Middle Kingdom military sources, see G. Meurer, 'Das Motiv der Verwüstung Ausländischen Territoriums in Texten des Alten, Mittleren und Neuen Reiches', in A. Caris-Beatrice, I. Hafemann and A. Lohwasser (eds), *Begegnungen: Antike Kulturen im Niltal. Festgabe für Erika Endesfelder, Karl-Heinz Priese, Walter Friedrich Reinecke, and Steffen Wenig* (Leipzig: Wodtke und Stegbauer, 2001), 325–332; B. Vachala, 'Zur Frage der Kriegsgefangenen in Ägypten: Überlegungen Anhand der Schriftlichen Quellen des Alten Reiches', in E. Endesfelder (ed.), *Probleme der Frühen Gesellschaftsentwicklung im Alten Ägypten* (Berlin: ISA, 1991), 93–101. For Montuhotep II, see L. Postel, 'Une nouvelle mention des campagnes nubiennes de Montouhotep II à Karnak', in L. Gabolde (ed.), *Hommages à Jean-Claude Goyon* (Cairo: *IFAO*, 2008), 329–340; J. C. Darnell, 'A Bureaucratic Challenge? Archaeology and Administration in a Desert Environment (Second Millennium BCE)', in J. C. Moreno Garcia (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Administration* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 789–799.

[5] As the design specification (and purpose in relation to size) of the Nubian forts has been studied repeatedly, the topic will not be addressed here. See L. Bestock, 'Egyptian Fortresses and the Colonization of Lower Nubia in the Middle Kingdom', in G. Emberling and B. B. Williams (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 271–288; C. Knoblauch, 'Middle Kingdom Fortresses', in D. Raue (ed.), *Handbook of Ancient Nubia* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2019), 367–391; I. Shaw, *Ancient Egyptian Warfare: Tactics, Weapons and Ideology of the Pharaohs* (Oxford and Philadelphia: Casemate, 2019), 36–48; E. Ferreira, 'The Lower Nubian Egyptian Fortresses in the Middle Kingdom: A Strategic Point of View', *AJH* 5(1) (2019), 35–40; F. Monnier, *Les forteresses égyptiennes. Du Prédynastique au Nouvel Empire* (Brussels: Safran, 2010), 40–53, 117–164; C. Vogel, *Ägyptische Festungen und Garnisonen bis zum Ende des Mittleren Reiches* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 2004), 63–73, 119–148; B. J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: An Anatomy of a Civilisation* (London and New York: Routledge – 3rd edn., 2018), 227–242.

[6] D. N. Edwards (ed.), *The Archaeological Survey of Sudanese Nubia, 1963-69: The Pharaonic Sites* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2020).

[7] J. A. Harrell and R. E. Mittelstaedt, 'Newly Discovered Middle Kingdom Forts in Lower Nubia', *S&N* 19 (2015), 30–39; C. Knoblauch and L. Bestock, 'The Uronarti Regional Archaeological Project: Final Report of the 2012 Survey', *MDAIK* 69 (2013), 103–142; C. Näser, P. Becker, and O. K. el-Awad Karrar, 'Shalfak Archaeological Mission (SAM): The 2017 Field Season', *JEA* 103(2) (2017), 153–171; I. Shaw and R. Jameson, 'Amethyst Mining in the Eastern Desert: A Preliminary Survey at Wadi el-Hudi', *JEA* 79 (1993), 88–94; A. Fakhry, *The Egyptian Deserts: The Inscriptions of the Amethyst Quarries at Wadi El Hudi* (Cairo: *ASAÉ*, 1952), 13–14.

[8] *Papyrus Berlin 10495* – See A. H. Gardiner, 'An Ancient List of the Fortresses of Nubia', *JEA* 3(2) (1916), 189–92; A. H. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica, Vol. I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), 10–11.

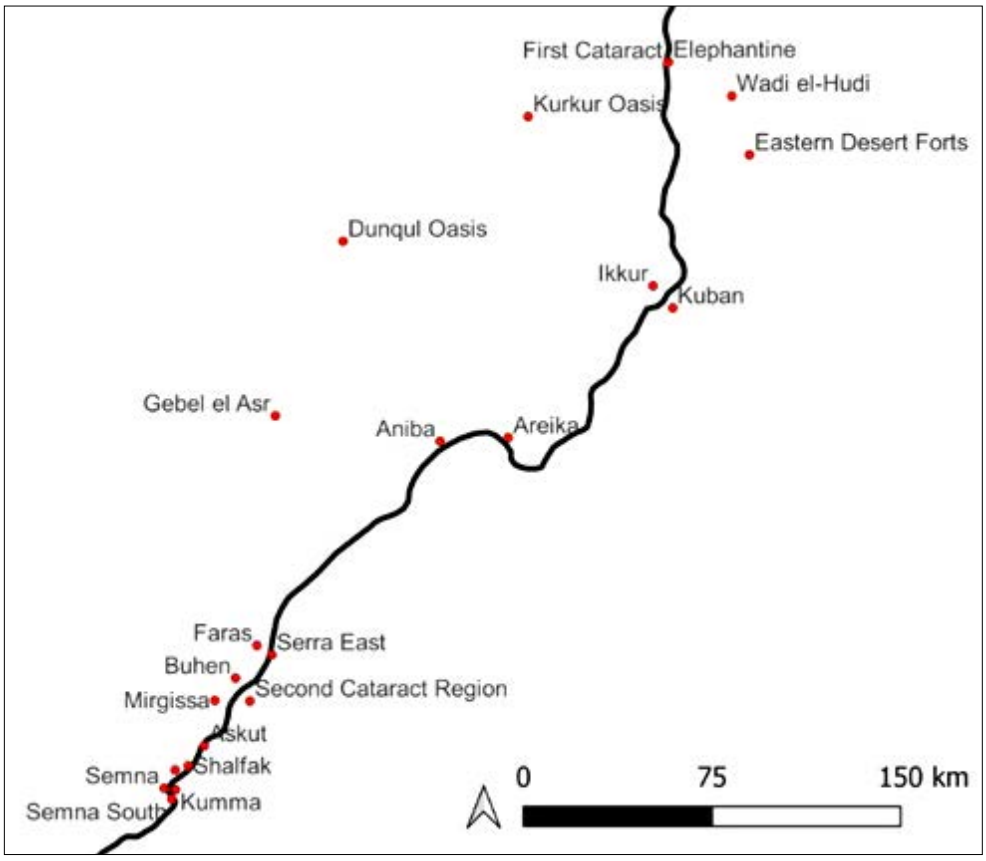

Figure 1. Map of Egyptian fortresses in Lower Nubia (present writer).

Figure 2. The present day remains of the Uronarti fort (after D. A. Welsby 2004. Hidden Treasures of Lake Nubia. S&N 8: 53–54). Courtesy of D. A. Welsby. © SARS Welsby Archive.

Serra East, or 'repelling the bows' at Semna East.[9] As inferred by their original names, some of the forts were, at least ideologically, designed primarily to control the movements of the targeted groups. The theme is also evident in contemporary literary texts such as the *Story of Sinuhe*, which asserts that the fortress Walls of the Ruler was built in the Wadi Tumilat region to keep foreigners away from Egypt's Eastern border:[10]

dmi.n=i inb.w ḥḳ3 iry.(w) r ḫsf stty.w

I reached the Walls of the Ruler which had been made to repel Asiatics.

The extent to which the Egyptians sought to prevent excursions into pharaonic areas of control is best represented in the southward facing disposition of the Semna cataract forts. The Semna Gorge is the narrowest section of the entire Nile Valley. Its strategic importance is underlined by the fact that Senwosret III built five mud-brick fortifications at this specific location: Semna West, Semna South, Kumma, Shalfak, and Uronarti.[11] The southernmost border consisted of three strategically placed installations. Semna West stood opposite Kumma at the narrowest section of the river and Semna South was located approximately a kilometer to the south of Semna West.[12] The placement of the forts Semna West and Kumma on the opposite sides of the Nile implies that they were specifically intended to block any potential movement northwards either by land or by boat. In addition, a 3 km long mudbrick wall was built along the western side of the Nile between Semna West and Semna South.[13] Although it was not physically connected to any of the forts, its high walls and towers likely hindered access to the Nile from the Western Desert.

A comparison can be made between the paired fort system in the Semna Gorge and some defensive features from the Alamat Tal Road in the Western Desert.[14] The best example is found at Gebel Tjauti, where the narrow wadi is flanked by high peaks, with semi-circle huts positioned on both side of the wadi, some from an elevated position, which could observe movement from the Western Desert into the Theban region. The dry-stone huts were constructed at strategic points along the road where the topography allowed the narrowing passage to be controlled. In addition, circular mudbrick fortification towers at the entrance of the Alamat Tal road also recall some design aspects of the Second Cataract fortresses even though the defensive structures demonstrate considerable difference in terms of design specification. Succinctly put, the Alamat Tal fortifications also exploited the local topography to control the narrowest sections of a specific route used for travelling through the region. This is how the Semna forts were also intended to work. The physical manifestation of the policy of the Semna Fortresses is not only evident in the assertion made in the Semna stela of Senwosret III (year 16) that the southern borders of Egypt had now moved to Heh (Semna) but also in the recording of the king's apprehension about the ability of his own royal sons and successors to maintain the newly-established frontier:[15]

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[9] Monnier, *Les forteresses*, 120–121. See also S. T. Smith, 'Askut's Ancient Name and Administrative System', in C. Bonnet (ed.), *Études nubiennes. Conférence de Genève: actes du VIIe Congrès international d›études nubiennes, 3-8 septembre 1990. Vol. 2* (Geneva: C. Bonnet, 1994), 37–44.

[10] Sinuhe B16–17; R. Koch, *Die Erzählung des Sinuhe* (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1990), 17. For a reference to the Walls of the Ruler being built, see Neferti 66–67; W. Helck, *Die Prophezeiung des Nfr.tj* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1992), 58, 60.

[11] D. Dunham and J. M. A. Janssen, *Second Cataract Forts I* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1960).

[12] Dunham and Janssen, *Second Cataract Forts*, 5–15, 113–22; J. Vercoutter, 'Semna South Fort and the Records of Nile Levels at Kumma', *Kush* 14 (1966), 125–64.

[13] A. J. Mills, 'The Archaeological Survey from Gemai to Dal – Report on the 1965-1966 season', *Kush* 15 (1967–1968), 206; Knoblauch and Bestock, *MDAIK* 69, 138.

[14] J. C. Darnell and D. Darnell, 'Theban Desert Road Survey', *OIAR* 1997-1998 (1999), 83–86.

[15] *Stela Berlin 1157*, 3; 17–20; K. H. Sethe, *Ägyptische Lesestücke zum Gebrauch im Akademischen Unterricht* (Leipzig: Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1924), 83–4; S. Seidlmayer, 'Zu Fundort und Aufstellungskontext der Großen Semna-Stele Sesostris III', *SAK* 28

ỉr gr.t sꜣ=ỉ nb srwḏ.ty=fy tꜣš pn ỉr.n Ḥm=ỉ sꜣ=ỉ pw ms.tw=f n Ḥm=ỉ tw.t sꜣ nḏ.ty ỉt=f srwḏ tꜣš n wtt sw ỉr gr.t fḫ.ty=fy sw tm.ty=fy ʿḥꜣ ḥr=f n sꜣ=ỉ ỉs n ms.tw=f ỉs n=ỉ

Now, as for any son of mine who shall maintain this border which My Majesty had made, he is my son: he was born to My Majesty; the image of a son, the champion of his father, (and) the maintainer of the border of (the one) who begat him. Now, as for he who shall lose it, who shall not fight for it, he is not my son: he was not born to me!

In contrast, the smaller stela (year 8) is a simple boundary stone which was intended to mark the border and to describe some features of the local administration. It states that Nubians (*nḥs.w*) must settle their trading wares within the system without advancing past Semna:[16]

tꜣš rsy ỉry.(w) m ḥsb.t-sp 8 ḫr Ḥm n n(y)-sw.t-bỉty Ḫʿ-kꜣ.w-Rʿ dỉ ʿnḫ ḏ.t r nḥḥ r tm rdỉ.(t) sn sw nḥs nb m ḫd m ḥr.t m kꜣỉ mnmn.t nb.t n.t nḥs.w wp.w-ḥr nḥs ỉw.ty=fy r ỉrỉ.t swn.t m Iḳn m wp.wt rꜣ-pw ỉrt.tw nb.t nfr.(t) ḥnʿ=sn nn sw.t rdỉ.t swꜣ kꜣỉ n nḥs.w m ḫd ḥr Ḥḥ r nḥḥ

The southern border which was made in year 8 under the majesty of the Dual King, Khakaure, given life forever and for all time, to prevent any Nubian (*nḥs.w*) to cross it by going northwards, by land, with a ship or any herds of the Nubian; apart from a Nubian who shall come to do trade in Mirgissa (Iken), or with a message; good things should be done with them, but without allowing a ship of the Nubians to pass northwards at Heh (Semna), for all time.

The stela was intended to inform the literate that the Nubian population was prohibited from advancing past Semna unless they had come to trade at Mirgissa (Iken). Thus, the function of the fortresses at the Semna Gorge was to provide military protection and regulate the movement of Nubians (*nḥs.w*) and their herds and boats to the north. Although the concern of central government about the movement of migrating people infers a clear nervousness about border security, the fortresses of the Semna Gorge were not merely designed to subjugate local peoples, but to control the narrowest sections of a specific route in the Second Cataract region.

3. The Semna Dispatches

The most important evidence for a system of written communications used to support the administration of Egypt's Nubian forts that seem to conform to the policy of the crown documented on the Semna stela is found in the Semna Dispatches.[17] These are copies of the daybook of border patrols from the Nubian borderlands, compiled into a single roll, and dated to the third year of an unnamed king (most likely Amenemhet III). They were found in a private archive, from a tomb at Thebes, where they had either been sent as part of the administrative process, or been taken from the point of compilation by the scribe who wrote – or copied – them. They typically document two types of interactions. Firstly, they record the reports of observation patrols tracking migrants whose movement in the desert was seemingly important enough to be recorded. For instance, one report

(2000), 233–42; C. J. Eyre, 'The Semna Stelae: Quotation, Genre, and Functions of Literature', in S. Israelit-Groll (ed.), *Studies in Egyptology presented to Miriam Lichtheim* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1990), 134–165.

[16] *Stela Berlin 14753*, 1–6; Sethe, *Lesestücke*, 84; C. E. Loeben, 'Bemerkungen zur Sogenannten "Kleinen Semna-Stele" (Berlin 14,753)', in Caris-Beatrice *et al.* (eds), *Begegnungen*, 273–84.

[17] For the original publication of the dispatches, see P. Smither, 'The Semnah Dispatches', *JEA* 31 (1945), 3–10. For the fragments, and other related documents, see B. Kraemer and K. Liszka, 'Evidence for Administration of the Nubian Fortresses in the Late Middle Kingdom: The Semna Dispatches', *JEH* 9(1) (2016), 12–15; B. Kraemer and K. Liszka, 'Evidence for Administration of the Nubian Fortresses in the Late Middle Kingdom: P. Ramesseum 18', *JEH* 9(2) (2016), 156–157, 160–166. See also S. Quirke, *The Administration of Egypt in the Late Middle Kingdom: The Hieratic Documents* (New Malden: SIA, 1990), 191-193. For translations, see Vogel, *Festungen*, 78–87; E. F. Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 70–72, n. 79–83.

from the follower (*šms.w*) Ameny in the fort 'repeller of the Medjay' (Serra East) to an unidentified individual in another unidentified fort, informs him that two warriors (*ʿḥ3w.ty*) had reported (*smi*) to him that the soldier (*ʿnḫ niw.t*) Khusobek, serving with the garrison (*iwʿy.t*) of Meha (near Abu Simbel), had said (*ḏd*) to them that the frontier patrol (*pḥr.t*) currently monitoring the edge of the desert had discovered the track (ʿ) of 32 men and 3 donkeys in the vicinity of Serra East.[18]

These forts, located by the river, could not physically prevent the movement of people along the desert tracks through the hills and it was possible for individuals to sneak past the forts under certain conditions.[19] The patrols which monitored the uncontrolled areas around the forts were then central to maintaining the practical measures necessary for maintaining the security of the region.[20] It is unclear whether the 32 men were actually hostile, and a threat to the Egyptians in the forts. Donkeys were required to transport products (and water) through extremely hostile desert areas, and this limited the ability of marauders, as well as trade caravans and migrating populations to escape the notice of trackers. However, the movement of large groups of men across desert routes which provided access to important natural resources – such as the route nearby that that could be accessed from the Buhen fort that led to Wadi Gabgaba and the gold mines at Umm Nabari – was a probable concern to the forts and the patrols.[21]

The other type of entry recorded in the dispatches relates to the arrival and departure of Nubians (*nḥsy*) who came to trade with the forts. For instance, *Dispatch 6* was sent from Semna West and is addressed to the lord (*nb*) who had previously written to the fortifications for an undeclared reason.[22] The local administration dealing with the Semna forts stresses that they had already sent a response in a separate dispatch concerning a group of Nubians who had previously arrived at the fort. The same event is recorded in another report that describes how a group of Nubian women arrived at Semna West in the evening to do bartering (*r irit swn.t*) before leaving in the morning.[23] The fact that the products exchanged are not recorded implies the scribe was more interested in documenting the arrival of people at the forts. The concluding passage of *Dispatch 6* describes how copies had also been sent to three named officials: the administrator and 'mouth' (*z3b r3*) of Hierakonpolis, Samontu, the village administrator (*wʿrt.w niw.t*) Ameny, and the High Steward (*imy-r3 pr wr*) Senimeri, who was based in the Kumma fort according to the concluding line of *Dispatch 8*.[24]

The first of the officials mentioned can be linked to three rock inscriptions of the administrator and 'mouth' of Hierakonpolis, Samontu (between years 6 and 9 of Amenemhat III) found in the Semna region.[25] Although *Dispatch 6* does not document the year it was sent from Semna West, it seems likely that Samontu was in Nubia at the time and that he occasionally joined up with the patrols to

[18] *Dispatch 4* (3,7–4,5): Smither, 'Dispatches', 8–9, pls. Iva–Va; Wente, *Letters*, 71–72. For the reading of ʿ as track or trace (with examples and references), see Smither, 'Dispatches', 6, n.2.

[19] As in the case of Sinuhe (B16–19) who has to sneak past the fort "Walls of the Ruler" at night to avoid the guards on watch in order to leave the Nile Valley. See Koch, *Sinuhe*, 17–18.

[20] A stela from Kurkur oasis (from the reign of Tutankhamun) describes how a Medjay patrol were to patrol over four iteru (roughly 26 miles) daily. See J. C. Darnell, 'A Stela of the Reign of Tutankhamun from the Region of Kurkur Oasis', *SAK* 31 (2003), 73–91.

[21] A. Castiglioni, A. Castiglioni and G. Negro, 'The Ancient Gold Route from Buhen to Berenice-Panchrysos', in S. Wenig and P. Andrássy (eds), *Studien zum Antiken Sudan. Akten der 7. Internationalen Tagung für Meroitistische Forschungen vom 14. bis 19. September 1992 in Gosen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), 501–510. For desert routes and their administration, see J. C. Darnell, *Egypt and the Desert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 4–40.

[22] *Dispatch 6* (5,8–10): Smither, 'Dispatches', 10, pls. VI; Wente, *Letters*, 73.

[23] *Dispatch 1* (1,8): Smither, 'Dispatches', 6–7, pls. II-IIa; Wente, *Letters*, 70-71. For trade between the forts and the Nubians, see Kraemer and Liszka, 'Evidence for Administration: The Semna Dispatches', 31, 45–48.

[24] *Dispatch 8* (6,13): Kraemer and Liszka, 'Evidence for Administration: The Semna Dispatches', 13–15.

[25] Kumma, *RI495*, *RI498-9 = RIK112*, *RIK115-6*: F. Hintze *et al.*, *Felsinschriften aus dem Sudanesischen Nubien. Publikation der Nubien-Expedition 1961–1963.* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1989).

remove threats. For instance, one graffito describes how he slaughtered (*smỉ*) opposition (*sbi*) with the patrols (see discussion below).[26] The village administrator Ameny is also known from a graffito near Semna West,[27] a stela from Uronarti which connects him with a reporting-office (*ḫỉ n smit*),[28] and he is the named recipient dealing with arrivals at Semna West in *Dispatch 8*.[29] The process of reporting migrating populations, by the patrols or their informants, then triggers the writing of dispatches from the concerned fort to officials involved in the surveillance administration of the southern forts, such as Ameny and Senimeri, so that they may then join up with the patrols to remove perceived threats with the use of preventive or punitive violence, just as Samontu did.[30]

The dispatches served as reports (or diary entries for report purposes) to a higher authority overseeing the surveillance of the Nubian forts; they were not working diaries concerned about internal on-site management, such as the Fourth Dynasty journal of Merer.[31] In the dispatches, there is no evidence connecting the administering of surveillance with a specific controlling office or a specific controlling official. As the papyri were found in a private tomb at Thebes, it is possible that they were compiled at Semna or Elephantine, it being the centre of the Nubian administration as a whole. They may even have originated in Thebes itself (based on the original reports), to act as a composite report, which the compiler subsequently retained and repurposed for private use.[32] Some of the information contained in the reports, such as the arrival and departure of various groups coming into Egyptian territory to trade with the forts, seem trivial for a central controlling office, in the sense that they probably would not have been worth inspecting several weeks or months after the described events.

Another document discovered alongside the dispatches in the Ramesseum cache records a letter warning that the official Iuwy has been sent to inspect (*sỉp*) the recipient, whose name and fort affiliation are now lost, with the concluding line advising that copies of the letter had been sent to two other officials based at the Kuban and Elephantine forts. Again, neither the controlling office nor the details of the external inspecting official are identified.[33] The best evidence for communication between the central government and the forts are royal and government seals which were used to seal letters to the forts from the royal court, the Office of the Vizier of the Southern City (*nỉw.t rsy*), and the Office of the Vizier of the Head of the South (*tp rsy*).[34] The 'Southern City' refers to Thebes, but the term 'Head of the South' refers to the geographical region of Upper Egypt which came under the authority of the southern Vizier.[35] Although the seals cannot be used to substantiate the office that was issuing the inspections in *Papyrus Ramesseum 18*, they do imply that the royal court and the two different offices of the southern vizier were sending written instructions that related to the running of the forts. The broader implication is that Thebes was not simply the seat of the Nubian

[26] Kumma, *RI499, 6-8 = RIK116, 6–8*: Hintze *et al*., *Felsinschriften*, 146.

[27] Semna West, *RI524*: Hintze *et al*., *Felsinschriften*, 157–158.

[28] *Stela Khartoum 2685*, 2: J. W. B. Barns, 'Four Khartoum Stelae', *Kush 2* (1954), 24.

[29] *Dispatch 8* (6,8): Kraemer and Liszka, 'Evidence for Administration: The Semna Dispatches', 13–15.

[30] For questions about level of occupation of the forts and how they were then used as bases for punitive or preventative expeditions, see Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, 235–236.

[31] *Papyrus Jarf A* and *B*: P. Tallet, *Les papyrus de la mer rouge I: Le journal de Merer (Papyrus Jarf A et B)* (Cairo: *IFAO*, 2017), pl. I–XXIX.

[32] Vogel, *Festungen*, 88-91.

[33] *Papyrus Ramesseum 18*, 1 (B): Kraemer and Liszka, 'Evidence for Administration: P. Ramesseum 18', 156–157, 160–166.

[34] S. T. Smith, 'Administration at the Egyptian Middle Kingdom Frontier: Sealings from Uronarti and Askut', in T. G. Palaima (ed.), *Aegean Seals, Sealings and Administration: Proceedings of the NEH-Dickson Conference of the Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory of the Department of Classics, University of Texas at Austin, January 11-13, 1989* (Liège: Université de Liège, Histoire de l'art et archéologie de la Grèce antique, 1990), 202–211. See also B. Gratien, *Mirgissa V: Les empreintes de sceaux. Aperçu sur l'administration de la Basse Nubie au Moyen Empire* (Cairo: *IFAO*, 2019); L. V. Žabkar and J. J. Žabkar, 'Semna South: A Preliminary Report on the 1966-68 Excavations of the University of Chicago Oriental Institute Expedition to Sudanese Nubia', in *JARCE* 19 (1982), 19–20, 37; Vogel, *Festungen*, 88–91.

[35] For the geographical region under the authority of the office of the vizier of *tp-rsy*, see G. P. F van den Boorn, *The Duties of the Vizier: Civil Administration in the Early New Kingdom* (London: Routledge, 2015), 211–215.

administration but was in effect the Southern Egyptian capital and the seat of the southern Vizier during the late Twelfth Dynasty.

The second prominent group that the Egyptian forts interacted with in the dispatches are the Medjay. In the Middle Kingdom, the term Medjay (*mḏ3y*) refers to (or includes) nomadic herders from the Western Desert, who may not necessarily have shared a common ethnicity or language, but were used by the Egyptians for desert patrolling for which they would seem to be qualified.[36] One report from the overseer of disputes (*ỉmy-r3 šn.t*) Sobekwer from the Mirgissa fort to an unspecified person reported that the patrol unit, made up of two 'warriors' and a Medjay patrol, had tracked a group of Medjay consisting of men, women, and children at the edge of the Nile and south of the Mirgissa fort.[37] When the patrol questioned the Medjay, they advised that they had travelled from the well in the region of Ibhayet (southeast of the second cataract). The group had managed to bypass the Semna cataract region before being tracked by the patrols somewhere south of the Mirgissa fort.

The dispatches also raise the issue of whether Medjay (and other foreigners) in Egyptian service are assumed to be prisoners of war as opposed to the possibility that some of them might have been voluntary immigrants who arrived with their families looking for patronage. One example from the fortress at Elephantine reports that a family of pastoral nomads (consisting of two Medjay men, three Medjay women, and two infants) had come down from the desert to the fort looking to enter Egyptian service.[38] The passage provides a reference to the way that Medjay (and other foreigners) could volunteer to serve the Egyptians. The recruitment of such volunteers from the margins along with other members of their family is not unknown in the Middle Kingdom. The rock inscriptions of the Nubian soldier Tjehemau from Abisko recount how he entered voluntary service (with his son) in the Egyptian army under Montuhotep II during the Eleventh Dynasty.[39] However, when the Medjay in *Dispatch 5* are questioned about conditions in the desert and they tell of the hunger and starvation that they wish to escape, they are still sent back to the desert by the Egyptians without employment.

The theme of hunger as a form of structural poverty should be taken seriously in our picture of migration in the Middle Nile.[40] Indeed, pharaonic texts often present the margins as the place wherefrom people repeatedly return for assistance because conditions were so bad. Reliefs from the causeways of Sahure and Unas depict starving Bedouin,[41] emaciated herdsmen are shown in a Middle Kingdom tomb at Meir [Figure 3],[42] and foreigners are described as living like animals in the desert because of hunger in the

[36] For issues with identifying textually documented groups with known archaeological remains, see J. Cooper, 'Between the Nile and the Red Sea: Medjay Desert Polities in the Third to First Millennium BCE', *OW* 1(1) (2021), 1–22; U. Matić, *Ethnic Identities in the Land of Pharaoh: Past and Present Approaches in Egyptology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 24–30, 38; A. de Souza, *New Horizons: The Pan-Grave Ceramic Tradition in Context* (London: Golden House Publications, 2019), 9–10; K. Liszka, 'Are the Bearers of the Pan-Grave Archaeological Culture Identical to the Medjay-People in the Egyptian Textual Record?', *JAEI* 7 (2) (2015), 43–51; K. Liszka, '"We have Come from the Well of Ibhet": Ethnogenesis of the Medjay', *JEH* 4 (2) (2011), 156–158.

[37] *Dispatch 3* (2,7–14): Smither, 'Dispatches', 7–8, pl. IIIa; Wente, *Letters*, 71.

[38] *Dispatch 5* (4,6–12): Smither, 'Dispatches', 9, pls. V–Va; Wente, *Letters*, 72.

[39] J. C. Darnell, 'The Route of Eleventh Dynasty Expansion into Nubia: An Interpretation Based on the Rock Inscriptions of Tjehemau at Abisko', *ZÄS* 131 (2004), 23–37; J. C. Darnell, 'The Rock Inscriptions of Tjehemau at Abisko', *ZÄS* 130 (2003), 31–48.

[40] C. J. Eyre, 'Economy and Society in Pharaonic Egypt', in P. Kousoulis and N. Lazaridis (eds), *Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Egyptologists, I: University of the Aegean, Rhodes. 22-29 May 2008* (Leuven: Peeters, 2015), 715–718; C. J. Eyre, 'Society, Economy, and Administrative Process in Late Ramesside Egypt', in E. H. Cline and D. O'Connor (eds), *Ramesses III: The Life and Times of Egypt's Last Hero* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 107–110.

[41] Z. Hawass and M. Verner, 'Newly Discovered Blocks from the Causeway of Sahure (Archaeological Report)', *MDAIK* 52 (1996), 177–186; A. Labrousse and A. Moussa, *La chaussée du complexe funéraire du roi Ounas* (Cairo: *IFAO*, 2002), 85–86, esp. figs. 117–118.

[42] A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir. Vol. I: The Tomb-chapel of Ukh-ḥotp's son Senbi* (London and Boston: *EEF*, 1914), 29, 32–33, pls. III, IX–X, XX 1, XXV 3, XXXI 1–2.

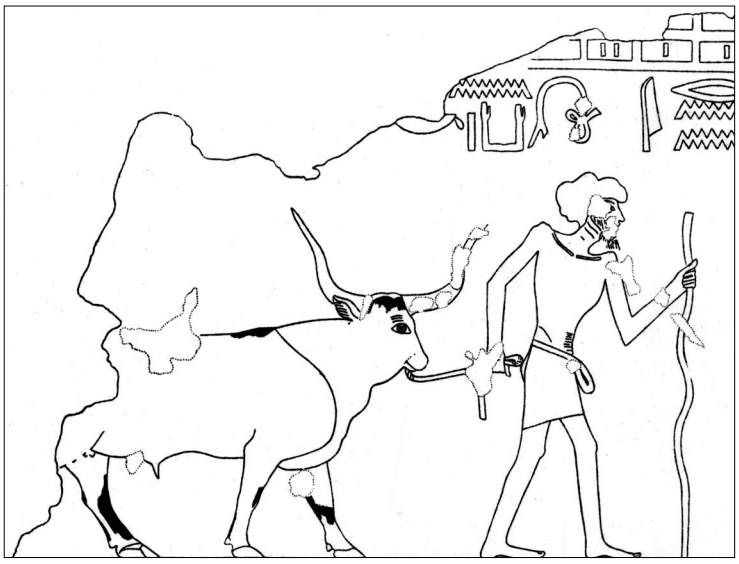

Figure 3. Emaciated herdsmen depicted in a scene from the southern wall of the Middle Kingdom tomb of Senbi at Meir (A. M. Blackman 1914. The Rock Tombs of Meir I, pl. X). Courtesy of The Egypt Exploration Society.

Memphite biography of Horemheb.[43] Raids from the outside as a strategy to meet basic sustenance requirements should be understood as a real and present danger. This is the context in which the inscriptions of Merenptah claim starvation was the principal reason for the Libyans invading Egypt.[44] Regular hunger was part of life in the margins, driving migrations of people into areas where basic sustenance needs could be met, or at least, where necessary measures could be taken to avoid starvation or further distress. This is also the context for continuing foreign immigration into Egypt, described in Middle Kingdom literary texts that emphasise the protection of borders. For instance, Merikare describes how Asiatics (*ʿ3m.w*) have to wander the desert on foot because they do not have any water or enough trees but their cautious and opportunistic behaviour means they can never be truly defeated by the Egyptians.[45] The literary theme can be related to the constant migration of Libyans into Egypt during the Ramesside period despite suffering several heavy military defeats.[46]

Somewhat later, Libyan and Meshwesh raids to secure valuable supplies from settled communities heavily disrupted life in the Theben West Bank during the late Twentieth Dynasty.[47] For example, an ostracon from year 28 of Ramesses II describes an enemy incursion that disrupted work on the royal tomb.[48] Such disruptions meant peasants sometimes went to the field armed for protection,[49] and it is implied in the *Tomb Robbery Papyri* that hunger drove the tomb robbers to exchange silver objects from the tombs for bread.[50] Sometimes, the settled communities of Kush and Punt entered into a military coalition with the Nubian tribes for the purpose of plundering temples and settlements in Egypt.[51] The

[43] *Urk. IV*, 2085,15–2086,5; G. T. Martin, *The Memphite Tomb of Ḥoremḥeb, Commander-in-chief of Tut'ankhamūn, I: The Reliefs, Inscriptions, and Commentary* (London: *EES*, 1989), 97, nr. 76, pl. 115.

[44] *Inscriptions of Merenptah*, 18–22; *KRI* IV, 4, 9–10, 14–15.

[45] *Instruction to Merikare*, 34 (P91): R. B. Parkinson, *The Tale of Sinuhe, and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems, 1940–1640 B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 223–224.

[46] For measures taken to stop Libyan and Meshwesh migrations during the Ramesside period (i.e. military action and fort-building), see S. Snape, 'The Legacy of Ramesses III and the Libyan Ascendancy', in E. H. Cline and D. O'Connor (eds), *Ramesses III: The Life and Times of Egypt's Last Hero* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 419–422.

[47] For Libyan raiding disrupting normal working activities, see Snape, 'The Legacy of Ramesses III', 422–425.

[48] *Ostracon Deir el-Medina 35*: KRI VI, 343.

[49] For peasants going to the field armed for protection, see *Admonitions of Ipuwer*, 2.1; W. Helck, *Die „Admonitions" Pap. Leiden I 344 recto* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1995), 4–5 (A9).

[50] *Papyrus BM 10052*, 6, 1–8; Eyre, 'Economy and Society', 715–718.

[51] Raids from the south are also frequently described in textual sources; see for example Ahmose, son of Ibana (29–30; *Urk*. IV, 8, 5–7) on driving away intrusions from the desert; the inscription of Thutmose II on the way from Aswan to Philae (Urk. IV,

Second Intermediate Period biography of Sobeknakht II at El-Kab claims that he led a counterattack against a Kushite raid with allies drawn from the *ꜣḥw.t*-people of Nubia, Khenthennefer, Punt and the Medjay after they had destroyed the walls of Nekheb.[52] Evidence corroborating the described events is plausibly observed in Egyptian material found in the royal tumuli and associated funerary chapels dated to the Kerma Period (contemporary to the Second Intermediate Period and the early Eighteenth Dynasty).[53]

The relationship between the settled communities of the Nile Valley and the populations of its margins was constantly renegotiating the need – sometimes with the use of violence – to maintain border regions in the face of migrating or invading populations, but this was not exclusively a pharaonic problem. The process put pressure on all settled groups inside and outside the Nile Valley. The biography of Harkhuf claims the ruler of Yam had departed to deal with another threat posed by a group of Tjemehu that had come from the Western Desert during his third expedition.[54] One of the pull and push factors behind these social processes is described in a Buhen stela that describes how the king (Akhenaten) was informed that the enemies of the land of Ikayta were planning (*kꜣy*) to rebel (*bš.t*) against the Egyptians after they had descended (*hꜣi*) into the land of the *nḥsy*-Nubians to seize (*nḥm*) their subsistence supplies (*ꜥnḫ.t it*).[55] As already discussed, hungry bellies were a major factor in driving people towards population centres where supplies of food were perceived to be held. As in the case of Egyptian raids, the plundering of resources and people was probably also another determining factor in the collapse of local hierarchies who lacked the means to repel invading groups or migrating herders. Moreover, North Africa was not yet fully desertified in antiquity, which put large pastoral populations under long-term pressures from slow climate change,[56] likely leading to waves of people coming into the Nile Valley from the Western Desert for different reasons at different stages.[57] This pattern of behaviour reflects the eventual outcome of long-term continuous pressure of uncontrolled migrations of pastoral groups that, in turn, became a real threat to local power structures (Egyptian and non-Egyptian) throughout the Nile Valley.

4. Violence as the mode of control of the margins

The common theme of the *Semna Dispatches* is the movement of peoples. The information recorded in the documentation can seem somewhat mundane, but it is clear that the patrols helped to remove nuisances from the outside that threatened Egyptian interests. As described earlier, the rock inscription of Samontu from Kumma describes how he travelled with the patrols (*pḏr.t*) downstream to hack up (*ḫbꜣ*) and slaughter (*smꜣ*) opposition (*sbi*) during year 9 of Amenemhat III:[58]

ḫd.n=(i) ḥnᶜ pḏr.t nn iw im m ḫnty.t nn rdy r ḫnr.t ḫb[ꜣ].n=(i) smꜣ.n=(i) nf n sbi.w

I travelled downstream with the frontier patrol (*pḏr.t*), without a death travelling southwards. There was not one who had been put into the fortress (*ḫnr.t*), (after) I had hacked (*hbꜣ*) and slaughtered (*smꜣ*) this opposition (*sbi.w*).

138, 15) on Kushite rebels (*sbi.t*) robbing people of Egypt; and a Late Ramesside Letter (*Urk.* IV, 1742), on gold-washers needing a military escort to guard against Bedouin (Shasu) raiders.

[52] V. Davies, 'Kush in Egypt: A New Historical Inscription', *S&N* 7 (2003), 53–54.

[53] G. A. Reisner, *Excavations at Kerma IV-V* (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum, 1923), 505–531.

[54] *Autobiography of Harkhuf*, B10–13; *Urk.* I, 125,13 – 126,1.

[55] W. Helck, 'Ein „Feldzug" unter Amenophis IV. gegen Nubien', *SAK* 8 (1980), 123, 3–5; H. S. Smith, *The Fortress of Buhen: The Inscriptions* (London: *EES*, 1976) 24–30, pls. 29, 75 [3–4].

[56] D. K. Wright, 'Humans as Agents in the Termination of the African Humid Period', *FES 5 (January 2017)* (2017), 1–14. For how the pharaonic Egyptians adapted to environmental change in the Nile Valley, see J. Bunbury and R. Rowe, *The Nile: Mobility and Management* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021), 19–60.

[57] Eyre, 'Society, Economy, and Administrative Process', 107–110.

[58] *Kumma RI499*, 6-8 = RIK116, 6–8; Hintze *et al*, *Felsinschriften*, 146.

At the highest levels of hierarchy, a *sbỉ* is one who breaks a social relationship with the King, or someone who causes the disruption of the King's order.[59] Usage of the term can be compared to medieval deployment of the term 'treason' to define crimes wherein the Crown was affected; it is a relationship based on personal abuses and the loss of resources, but not necessarily always featuring someone actively engaging in rebellion. The Egyptian term *sbỉ* covers everything from royal disfavour, failure to obey royal commands, to actual rebellion, and can even be related to low-level forms of opposition to local forms of hierarchy in the village. For instance, the decree of Pepy II from Coptos asserts that any chief or official that conscripts the workmen of the estate of the temple of Min for any 'work of the house of the King' is a *sbỉ*.[60] The term *sm*ꜣ 'slaughter' is the standard term of the killing of animals and enemies. Per Frandsen has argued that the full meaning of the term may refer to the pharaonic concept of a 'second death': the intended final destruction of an individual after death.[61] The theme is found in the *Loyalist Teaching* where anyone who expresses any form of opposition (*sbỉ*) to the King should also anticipate total destruction in the next life:[62]

nn ỉs n sbỉ ḥr ḥm=f ỉw ḫꜣ.t=f m ḳmꜣ n mw

There is no tomb for the opponent (*sbỉ*) against His Majesty. His body is cast into the water.

The practices described in the *Loyalist Teaching* are clearly rooted in ideology more than strict practicality, but the idea that any opponent (*sbỉ*) should be violently punished with not only the immediate loss of life but also with longer-term sanctions is comparable to the description of the treatment of enemies in contemporary military inscriptions. A Twelfth Dynasty graffito belonging to the Vizier Antefiker (probably from the reign of Amenemhat I, 1985–1956 BCE) from Gebel el-Girgawi in Lower Nubia describes the punitive slaughter (*sm*ꜣ) of Nubians, the plundering of barley (*ỉt*) and the cutting down of trees (*nh.wt*) in the countryside:[63]

*wn.t(w) ḥr ḳd ḫnr.t pn ꜥḥꜥ.n=(ỉ) (ḥr) sm*ꜣ *nḥs.w sp.t nb.t m W*ꜣ*wꜣ.t ꜥḥꜥ.n=ỉ ḫnt.kwỉ m nḫ.t ḥr sm*ꜣ *nḥs ḥr ỉdb=f ḫd.n=(ỉ) ḥr fd.t ỉt ḥr sw*ꜣ *sp.w nh.wt=s dy ḫt m pr.w=sn mỉ ỉr.t r sbỉ ḥr n(y)-sw.t*

Then one proceeded to build this enclosure (*ḫnr.t*). Then I proceeded to slaughter (*sm*ꜣ) all the remaining Nubians in Wawat. Then I went upstream in victory slaughtering (*sm*ꜣ) the Nubian upon his bank. I sailed downstream removing barley, cutting down their remaining trees, and fire was put in their homes like what is done to an opponent (*sbỉ*) against the King.

Such raids do not seem to have sought to permanently extend the borders of government control, but to violently enforce control over communities, cutting them off from resources as much as possible

[59] Eyre, *'Calculated Frightfulness'*, 109; R. Müller-Wollermann, *Vergehen und Strafen: Zur Sanktionierung Abweichenden Verhaltens im Alten Ägypten* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 195–208; J. Assmann, 'Ägypten und die Legitimierung des Tötens: Ideologische Grundlagen Politischer Gewalt im Alten Ägypten', in H. von Stietencron and J. Rüpke (eds), *Töten im Krieg* (Freiburg and Munich: Karl Alber, 1995), 76–77; R. B. Parkinson, 'No One is Free from Enemies: Voicing Opposition in Literary Discourse', in H. Felber (ed.), *Feinde und Aufrührer: Konzepte von Gegnerschaft in Ägyptischen Texten besonders des Mittleren Reiches* (Leipzig and Stuttgart: Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig; Hirzel, 2005), 14; D. Franke, 'Schlagworte: Über den Umgang mit Gegnern in Memorialtexten des Mittleren Reiches', in Felber (ed.) *Feinde und Aufrührer*, 95; K. Muhlestein, 'Those Who Speak Rebellion: Refining our Understanding of the Words used to Describe "Rebellion"', in Kousoulis and Lazaridis (eds), *Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Egyptologists*, 1479–1481.

[60] *Coptos B Decree* (*Cairo JE 41893*): *Urk.* I, 281, 7–16. See also N. C. Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 108.

[61] P. Frandsen, 'To kill or not to kill', in P. Collombert *et al.* (eds), *Aere Perennius: Mélanges égyptologiques en l'honneur de Pascal Vernus* (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 227–234.

[62] *Loyalist Teaching*, 6, 3–5; G. Posener, *L'enseignement Loyaliste: Sagesse égyptienne du Moyen Empire* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1976), 96–97.

[63] Korosko Rock Inscription 74, 6–10; Z. Žába, *The Rock Inscriptions of Lower Nubia* (Prague: Universita Karlova, 1979), 99.

before withdrawing.[64] The distinction between 'punitive' and conquest expeditions – as best articulated in Tacitus' *Agricola* – were absolutely normal in pre-modern ideology of warfare.[65] The reference to the establishment of a *ḫnr.t* ('enclosure') is often quoted as evidence for fortified labour camps in the region,[66] but there is uncertainty about its nature and function,[67] as well as the use of local populations in the quarries and the mines.[68] The *ḫnr.t* described in the Antefiker graffito was probably one of the Lower Nubian forts, where travelling migrants or nusiances were taken for interrogation as in the case of the dispatches or the runaway agricultural defaulters described in *Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446.69*.[69] The theme of excessive violence for the purposes of removing any opposition can be related to the office of King in contemporary royal inscriptions, as shown in the *Year 16 Stela of Senwosret III:*[70]

ḥꜣḳ.n=i ḥm.wt=sn ỉnỉ.n=ỉ ḫr.w=sn pr.(w) r ḫnm.wt=sn ḥwỉ.(w) kꜣ.w=sn wḥꜣ.(w) ỉt=sn rdỉ.(w) ḫt ỉm

I captured their women and I brought their families who had gone out to their wells. Their cattle were driven-away, their grain was cut, and fire was set there.

The establishment of the fortifications implies the central regime wanted to protect access to local resources, but those who resisted still faced being slaughtered, plundered, or resettled elsewhere for economic development.[71] In other words, the Egyptians were still responding to threats from outside the forts in very similar ways to descriptions of slaughter and depopulation of foreign opposition in private tomb biographies of the late Old Kingdom.[72] Likewise, close parallels are retained with iconographical depictions of Egyptians storming fortresses, like the late Old Kingdom Inti siege scene from Deshasha, which paints a similar picture with the slaughter of fighting men and the seizure of war captives, including women and children [Figure 4].[73] Although royal monuments of the Middle Kingdom may lack the specific descriptions of violence from the New Kingdom, they can still be quite clear about the role of violence as the mode of control of the margins, even if explicit forms of brutality are not expressed as unequivocally.[74]

The clearest example of the use of extreme forms of punishment against enemies (*ḫrwy.w*) during the Middle Kingdom is found in an inscription of Senwosret I from the temple of Tod.[75] The inscription

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[64] U. Matić, 'Scorched Earth: Violence and landscape in New Kingdom Egyptian representations of war', *IJHR* 28 (2018), 7–28; Meurer, 'das Motiv der Verwüstung', 325–332; Vachala, 'Zur Frage der Kriegsgefangenen', 93–101.

[65] See Tacitus, *Agricola*: Chapter 30.

[66] Harrell and Mittelstaedt, 'Newly Discovered Middle Kingdom Forts', 38; C. Obsomer, *Sésostris Ier: Étude chronologique et historique du règne* (Brussels: Safran), 245–249.

[67] M. Di Teodoro, *Labour Organisation in Middle Kingdom Egypt* (London: Golden House Publications, 2018), 68–73; C. J. Eyre, *The Use of Documents in Pharaonic Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 71–74; S. Quirke, 'State and Labour in the Middle Kingdom: A Reconsideration of the Term *ḫnrt*', *RdÉ* 39 (1988), 83–106; W. C. Hayes, *A Papyrus of the Late Middle Kingdom in the Brooklyn Museum* (New York: The Brooklyn Museum, 1955).

[68] E. Bloxam, 'Who were the Quarry Workers? Investigating the Origins of Stone Crafting in Egypt's Eastern Desert', in A. R. Warfe *et al.* (eds), *Dust, Demons and Pots: Studies in Honour of Colin A. Hope* (Leuven, Paris and Bristol: Peeters, 2020), 57–75; E. Bloxam, 'Miners and Mistresses: Middle Kingdom Mining on the Margins', *JSA* 6(2) (2006), 283–285, 295–296.

[69] Eyre, *Use of Documents*, 71–74; S. Quirke, *Titles and Bureaux of Egypt, 1850–1700 BC* (London: Golden House Publications, 2004), 94–95; Hayes, *A Papyrus of the Late Middle Kingdom*, 34–35, 47–56.

[70] *Stela Berlin 1157*, 14–16; Sethe, *Lesestücke*, 84.

[71] For the treatment of war captives, see Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 388–394; Matić, *Violence and Gender*, 87–112; U. Matić, 'Gender-based Violence", in A. Austin and W. Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2021), <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/118752mp>; U. Matić, '"He is looking at Bowmen like women". Gender as a Frame of War in New Kingdom Egypt (ca. 1539–1077 BC)', in A. Stieldorf *et al.* (eds), *Gender Power Sovereignty – Interdisciplinary Studies on Premodern Power* (Bonn: Bonn University Press, 2021), 113–134.

[72] For instance, see the texts of Pepynakht (*Urk.* I, 120–31) and Weni (*Urk.* I, 98–110). The themes of massacre, plundering of people, burning of settlements, and destruction of the countryside are regular in all periods. See Matić, *IJHR* 28, 7–28; Meurer, 'das Motiv der Verwüstung', 325-332; Vachala, 'Zur Frage der Kriegsgefangenen', 93–101.

[73] N. Kanawati and A. McFarlane. *Deshasha: The tombs of Inti, Shedu and Others* (Sydney: *ACE*, 1993), 24–25, pls. 2, 26–27.

[74] Bestock, *Violence and Power*, 127–142; Muhlestein, *Violence*, 34-44.

[75] C. Barbotin and J. J. Clère, 'L'inscription de Sésostris Ier à Tôd', *BIFAO* 91 (1991), 1–33. A different interpretation is made in D. B. Redford, 'The Tod Inscription of Senwosret I and Early 12th Dynasty Involvement in Nubia and the South', *JSSEA* 17(1/2)

Figure 4. A siege scene from the Fifth Dynasty tomb of Inti from Deshasha with a group of captives including women and children being marched away (after N. Kanawati and A. McFarlane 1993. *Deshasha: The tombs of Inti, Shedu and Others*, pl. 27). Courtesy of the Australian Centre for Egyptology.

claims that the king discovered the temple was in a ruinous state with bandits running amok in the countryside. The explicit concern lay with the punishment of enemies (*ḫrwy.w*) involved in the plundering of the temple by either mutilation (*dndn*)[76] or placement into a brazier (*di.w m ꜥḥ*).[77] Barbotin and Clère's translation of 'decapitation' is based on the usage of the severed head determinative for the term *ḫrwy*, but the same determinative of a headless captive appears throughout the royal inscription.[78] It may actually be the case that some foes had been decapitated, with the repeated image intended to repeat their fate in the afterlife, but the passage provides no specific proof of this. Some form of cutting (*dndn*), in the sense of butchering animals, seems to be the point of the passage: it makes no reference to the head (*tpy*) or neck of the captive, unlike examples from the New Kingdom.[79] The same sense is found in the following passage that describes the butchering (*nm.t*) of enemy children (*ms.w ḫry.w*), who are perhaps foreigners, but the text is too damaged to know for certain.[80] The point of torture

(1987), 36–55; Muhlestein, *Violence*, 37–38. Although Hannes Buchberger has questioned the dating of the text to the reign of Senwosret I because it contains some Late Egyptian elements, this does not rule out the possibility of it being restored during the New Kingdom. See for this H. Buchberger, 'Sesostris I. und die Inschrift von et-Töd?', in K. Zibelius-Chen and H-W. Fischer-Elfert *»Von reichlich ägyptischem Verstande« Festschrift für Waltraud Guglielmi zum 65. Geburtstag Eine philologische Anfrage* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), 17–22. For the mutilation and burning of (foreign) enemies and prisoners during the New Kingdom, see Matić, *Body and Frames of War*, 31–72, 100–116, n.254. For the burning of enemies on altars, whether real or symbolic, see J. Yoyotte, 'Héra d'Héliopolis et le sacrifice humain', *AEPHÉ, Ve sect.* 89 (1980–1981), 31–102; Y. Volokhine, 'Observations sur l'anthropoctonie. Le débat sur les «sacrifices humains» en Égypte ancienne', in À. A. Nagy and F. Prescendi (eds), *Sacrifices humains: Dossier, discours, comparaisons: Actes du colloque tenu à l'Université de Genève, 19 - 20 May 2011* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 39–64.

[76] *Tod Inscription of Senwosret I*, 32; Barbotin and Clère, 'L'inscription de Sésostris Ier', 24, pl. 32.

[77] *Tod Inscription of Senwosret I*, 28–31; Barbotin and Clère, 'L'inscription de Sésostris Ier', 20–23, pl. 32.

[78] Barbotin and Clère, 'L'inscription de Sésostris Ier', 24.

[79] Matić, *Body and Frames of War*, 76–90.

[80] *Tod Inscription of Senwosret I*, 32; Barbotin and Clère, 'L'inscription de Sésostris Ier', 24, pl. 32.

lies not only in punishment, but in violent display in the face of opposition, to chill the spine of the *ḫry.w*.[81] The value of the source then is in its description of harsh punishments which provides the extra contextual information about the mistreatment and punishment of enemies that is missing in military sources from earlier periods. Although these passages from the Tod inscription do not specifically refer to foreigners, they are still quite clear about the use of violence as one mode of enforcing hierarchical authority over enemies (*ḫry.w*). That can in turn be related to the treatment of opponents (*sbi*) acting against the interests of central government and its institutions during the Late Middle Kingdom.

5. Conclusion

The establishment of a network of border fortifications at various strategic points between the First and Second Cataracts was at the core of government planning to maintain pharaonic access to routes which led to important sources of resource extraction. The practice of fort-building at strategic points along the river, where the topography allows narrow passages to be easily controlled, implies the Egyptians were concerned about the uncontrolled movement of people through specific river or desert routes. Even the strongest military presence could not guarantee political stability because the Egyptians were facing continuous competition from the movement of people who settled or grazed their cattle in undeveloped areas located by the routes that linked the forts and secured access to resource-rich areas. Fort patrols attempted to maintain surveillance over alternative routes which gave travellers the opportunity to circumvent the Nile forts. In turn, fort dispatches record the arrival or tracking of Medjay and *nḥsy*-Nubians, who are questioned and turned back, despite their claims of hunger. The definition of the desert as starving and the theme of what desperate people do during times of famine may reflect pharaonic views of the reality of life in the periphery. The desperation of groups of people searching for food to avoid starvation was probably a major factor that led people from the outside towards settled populations where supplies of grain were perceived to have been held. The Egyptians could not completely prevent the movement of people into the region, even if uncontrolled migration was (at least ideologically) resisted in the Semna Stelae of Senwosret III. The larger stela from year 16 explicitly rejects any son or successor that does not fight (*ḥ3*) for this border (*t3š pn*), with the underlying theme of increasing *nḥsy*-Nubian resistance in the absence of strong authority prepared to fight (*ḥ3*) found throughout the inscription. The use of violence over resisting groups in response to specific events that challenged local pharaonic authority should be seen as structural to Egyptian control in Nubia during the Late Middle Kingdom.

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[81] Matić, *Body and Frames of War*, 199–206; Eyre, '*Calculated Frightfulness*', 110. Public displays of cruelty as the primary assertion of (royal) power and (personal) authority is normal in pre-modern laws, see M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon, 1977), 32–69.

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6
Compulsory Foreign Labour in Late Bronze Age Egypt: Towards Understanding a Forced Migration-Unfree Labour Nexus[1]

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Abstract

The paper discusses compulsory foreign labour against the backdrop of the Egyptian deportation policies of the Late Bronze Age. The general characteristics of these policies are outlined, as are the intricacies of the supply chain and the integration of the deportees into Egyptian society as cheap labour. The impact of foreign compulsory labour on Egypt and the adjacent societies is then discussed, before introducing the human factors – the deportees themselves and the deporters. A tentative theorisation of a Late Bronze Age forced migration-unfree labour nexus concludes this chapter.

Keywords: Deportation; Demography; Economy; Levant; Nubia

1. Introduction: forced migration and compulsory servitude

Earlier research has considered the impact of foreign compulsory labour on Egypt or the neighbouring regions as negligible.[2] This chapter makes the case that such assessments are misplaced and not in line with the extant evidence. Rather, the impact of forced migration and compulsory servitude and their importance to Egyptian statecraft of the Late Bronze Age should not be underestimated. Historically, forced migration and unfree labour go hand in hand and are an integral part of international relations, and this was no different in ancient Egypt. What follows seeks to enhance our understanding of the functions and intricacies of the related Egyptian policies.

2. Deportation polices of the Egyptian New Kingdom

Egypt's deportation policies during the New Kingdom present as a complex and diverse set of policies. While deportations had been a means of Egyptian foreign policy since at least the Old Kingdom,[3]

[1] My thanks go to the two anonymous reviewers for their engaging comments.

[2] See for instance S. Ahituv, 'Economic factors in the Egyptian conquest of Canaan', *IEJ* 28(1/2) (1978), 103; A. J. Spalinger, *War in Ancient Egypt: The New Kingdom* (Ancient World at War – Malden, Oxford and Carlton: Blackwell, 2005), 136; H. Altenmüller, *Zwei Annalenfragmente aus dem frühen Mittleren Reich* (*SAK* Beiheft 16 – Hamburg: Buske, 2015), 48; D. Raue, 'Cultural diversity of Nubia in the later 3rd – mid 2nd millennium BCE', in D. Raue (ed.), *Handbook of Ancient Nubia* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2019), 319. For an alternative view, see R. Bussmann, 'Krieg und Zwangsarbeit im pharaonischen Ägypten', in K. von Lingen and K. Gestwa (eds), *Zwangsarbeit als Kriegsressource in Europa und Asien* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2014). This argues that the issue is effectively beyond study, largely due to conceptual problems over how to recognise forced labour in Egyptian source material and how to disentangle potential evidence from standard working practices for the society in question. Note, however, that Bussmann, 'Krieg und Zwangsarbeit', 71 recourses in his assessment to instances of modern forced labour, as known from National Socialist Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union.

[3] On deportations before the New Kingdom, see R. Gundlach, *Die Zwangsumsiedlung auswärtiger Bevölkerung als Mittel ägyptischer Politik bis zum Ende des Mittleren Reiches* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1994); Altenmüller, *Zwei Annalenfragmente*, 67, 297–306; see also C. Langer, *Egyptian Deportations of the Late Bronze Age. A Study in Political Economy* (*ZÄS* Beiheft 13 – Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), 11–14.

they reached new levels in scale and scope from the end of the Second Intermediate Period onward. There was thus a certain continuity in the use of deportations as a political and economic tool from Kamose (*c.* 1555–1550 BCE) to at least Ramesses III (*c.* 1184–1153 BCE). During these roughly four centuries between *c.*1550 and 1150 BCE, the Egyptian state not only gained control of the Egyptian Nile Valley after a period of political fragmentation, but also expanded its control to adjacent lands, namely Southwest Asia (i.e. the Levant), marked primarily by indirect control through vassals, and Nubia (Lower and Upper), marked in turn by occupation and therefore direct control.[4] This geographic expansion of Egyptian political power was accompanied by deportations throughout its empire and, at times, beyond. Indeed, they were probably an essential factor in Egypt gaining control over foreign populations as well as land and accompanying resources.

According to the extant record – an unbalanced combination of royal sources, autobiographical texts of officials, administrative sources, and international correspondence – about 165,000 people were brought to Egypt from abroad, most of them during the Eighteenth Dynasty at roughly 142,000 individuals.[5] 67% and 18% came from Southwest Asia and Nubia respectively, reflecting the focus of Egyptian policies in these regions. The remainder originated from Anatolia, Libyan groups, and the desert regions to the south of Nubia; in turn, no viable figures are known for the Sea Peoples.[6]

Zooming into the individual reigns, it becomes clear that both the deportation activity and the numbers of people brought in peaked in the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty during the reigns of Thutmosis III (*c.* 1479–1425 BCE) and Amenhotep II (*c.* 1427–1400 BCE). Towards the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty and through to the Twentieth Dynasty, both activity levels and numbers of deportees were generally seemingly low by comparison. Yet there is indirect evidence that this impression is rather due to the fragmentary nature of the source material, which is highly variable in the quality of the information conveyed. This, for once, is due to the fact that quantifications in the Egyptian sources are often either damaged or not given at all;[7] especially after the Eighteenth Dynasty, a lack of related information is apparent. This means that the actual figures of deportees were likely higher. At the same time, there is no logical indication that Egyptian quantifications related to deportations are inflated or otherwise false, albeit oft-claimed to be by other researchers in the past.[8]

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[4] On Egyptian imperialism during the New Kingdom, see most recently E. Morris, *Ancient Egyptian Imperialism* (Hoboken and Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018); on the issue of direct/formal and indirect/informal control in Egyptian foreign policy, see C. Langer, *Aspekte des Imperialismus in der Außenpolitik der 18. Dynastie* (Nordostafrikanisch-Westasiatische Studien 7 – Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013), 98–110.

[5] See Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 82–88, 241–242; see also C. Langer, 'Forced labour and deportations in ancient Egypt: recent trends and future possibilities', *Claroscuro: Revista del Centro de Estudios sobre Diversidad Cultural* 19(2) (2020), 10. The sources on foreign labour in Egypt are collected primarily in the historical records of the Eighteenth Dynasty (*Urk. IV*), the Ramesside Inscriptions (*KRI*), the Amarna correspondence in W. M. Schniedewind and Z. Cochavi-Rainey (eds), *The El-Amarna Correspondence. A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna based on Collations of all extant Tablets* (Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1. The Near and Middle East 110 – Leiden: Brill, 2015), and the Egyptian-Hittite correspondence in E. Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache* (Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 77 – Düsseldorf: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994). While most of these sources stand on their own, they can be corelated at times, as in the case of complementary autobiographies and campaign reports from the time of Thutmosis III. Evidence from the reign of Thutmosis III is also the basis for data extrapolations to simulate more complete New Kingdom deportation datasets, that is, annual averages in deliveries of people from abroad contained solely in records of his time. For more, see Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 2–7).

[6] Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 361–364.

[7] Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 240–241.

[8] Going against for instance P. Der Manuelian, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II* (*HÄB* 26 – Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1987), 76–77 and U. Matić, *Body and Frames of War in New Kingdom Egypt. Violent Treatment of Enemies and Prisoners* (*Philippika*: Altertumswissenschaftliche Abhandlungen 134 – Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2019), 45–46 (albeit on chopped-off hands); see Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 97–100.

Another indication of likely figures being higher is the report of annual deliveries in people, cattle, and goods from the southern Levant and Nubia in the reign of Thutmosis III not being given in subsequent reigns. One can assume that these deliveries did not stop with the end of Thutmosis III's reign but rather continued. Thus, ultimately, the extant figures give only the bare minimum number of deportees. These lacunae can be partially compensated for to gain a more complete picture, though. The key is the annual deliveries of Thutmosis III's reign, the average values of which can be projected on the remainder of the New Kingdom.[9] The resulting estimates (low, middle, and high) suggest that between 230,000 and 410,000 people were deported to Egypt. The overall impression of a decline in activity and deportees after the Eighteenth Dynasty remains, although it appears less prominent.[10]

Most deportees were moved by the Egyptian military in the wake of armed conflict. The extant sources mainly revolve around military activities and therefore probably overstate the impact of the Egyptian military to a certain extent, at the expense of the logistical contribution of vassals, the administration in Nubia, and non-military actors like Egyptian temples. In turn, the latter institutions' shares grow in the projected dataset in accordance with the greater impact of annual (peacetime) deliveries to Egypt.[11] With respect to temples, there is but a single source though that implies they operated their own merchant fleet and were able to procure cheap labourers abroad on their own,[12] independently of any spoils of war captured by the Egyptian army and distributed by the King. This exception aside, the supply generally saw the King as the nominal recipient of spoils of war, including people. Procured by the Egyptian military, the administration in Nubia, or foreign agents, primarily vassal governments, and registered by the royal herald, the King then decided what to do with the plunder: keep part for himself and distribute the rest across the country.

The recipients of deportees most easily visible in the extant record are the temples, both in Egypt and in Nubia.[13] The deportees were generally assigned to those sections of the temple economy tasked with agriculture (grains and orchards), animal husbandry, the production of staple foods and textiles.[14] These were subsumed under the term *šnᶜ*, previously understood generally as grain storage facilities, production facilities/workshops, or (falsely) penal institutions.[15] These institutions oversaw arable land of varying sizes and therefore also varied in their production capacity.

Other destinations were the royal court, private estates, the Egyptian military, and foreign courts. Among these, the estates apparently received the most deportees after the temples. These were often owned or managed by esteemed military officers and civil servants who had been rewarded by the King with arable land and workers from the pool of deportees; at times, the workers comprised deportees that had been captured by the soldier himself.[16] Thus varying in size to fit the amount of arable land and

[9] Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 2–7.

[10] Langer, 'Forced labour', 11; Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 247–253.

[11] Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 253–271.

[12] P. Bologna 1086 (*KRI* IV 78–81). The papyrus contains a letter between a scribe and a priest of the temple of Thoth in Memphis over the absence of a West Asian named Naqadya, son of Saruratja. He was part of a delivery of *ḫm.w*, who came aboard a cargo ship, and was assigned to the temple as a field worker, yet failed to appear at his destination. The letter discusses an investigation into the matter.

[13] Even so, the number of foreigners assigned to temples cannot be quantified due to the fragmentary source material. See Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*: 271.

[14] Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*: 276–282.

[15] See D. Polz, 'Die *Snᶜ*-Vorsteher des Neuen Reiches', *ZÄS* 117 (1990), 47; S. S. Eichler, *Die Verwaltung des „Hauses des Amun" in der 18. Dynastie* (*SAK* Beiheft 7 – Hamburg: Buske, 2000), 102–103, 112; H. Papazian, *Domain of Pharaoh: The Structure and Components of the Economy of Old Kingdom Egypt* (*HÄB* 52 – Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 2012), 63–66. Note that the basic function of the *Sno* seems to have been relatively consistent between the Old Kingdom and New Kingdom cases discussed by those authors.

[16] As in the case of Ahmose, son of Ibana (e.g. *Urk.* IV 4:14–5:2).

the size of the workforce, the tasks foreign deportees had to fulfil on such estates were similar to those in the temples: primarily agricultural work with the likely addition of domestic servitude.[17]

Royal courts appear especially in the Amarna letters, where, for example, female cupbearers from Gezer are taken in by Akhenaten.[18] Much rarer, by comparison, are the military and foreign courts. Deportees were recruited into the King's following (*šms*) by Thutmosis III and Ramesses II (*c.* 1279–1213 BCE); the former used Nubians, the latter Sherden whom he went on to employ in the Battle of Kadesh.[19] Compelling foreigners to serve in the military not only bolstered its numbers but also diversified its field tactics.[20] The only time deportations were not directed to Egypt was when people were sent from Egypt abroad to Ugarit and Hatti under Amenhotep III (*c.* 1390–1352 BCE) and Ramesses II.[21]

3. Regional impacts of compulsory foreign labour

The general discussions of the deportation policies and their supply chains already hint at impacts on the Egyptian and adjacent societies, which are now discussed more in-depth in this section and connected with demography. In demography, forced migration features as an external factor to population growth, which manifests itself as either numerically positive for the receiving society or as numerically negative for the sending society (or area of origin).[22] According to the data, many more people came to Egypt via deportations than left Egypt, while there is no evidence precisely how many were migrating overall. In any case, the movements likely impacted Egyptian demographics and thus the workforce. The annual deliveries from West Asia and Nubia may have increased a population of an estimated 2.2 million people by roughly 0.01 to 0.04% annually;[23] in turn, wartime deportations would have accounted for a much bigger increase.[24] Irrespective of the total population size, only about 400,000 people were needed to sustain that population with agricultural produce.[25] Hence, the impact of foreign compulsory workers may have been considerably larger on the workforce.[26] That workforce may have been increasingly diverse considering the different origins of the deportees, which does not necessarily mean that Egyptian society as such was diverse or 'multicultural' at this point.[27] Compulsory labour for foreigners rather offered the ideological advantage that their 'chaos' could be controlled by having them work for the benefit of the Egyptian state in its institutions, therefore perhaps providing the Egyptian population with spiritual comfort and bolstering the regime's ideological claims of Egyptian supremacy.[28] Clearly, this was accompanied by hard economic benefits too.

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[17] On the deportees at the estates, see Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 286–293.

[18] See for instance El-Amarna letter *EA* 369: 18–20 in Schniedewind and Cochavi-Rainey (eds), *El-Amarna Correspondence*, 1250–1251, 1631.

[19] See *KRI* II 290: 2–4; *Urk*. IV 727:16–728:3.

[20] See Langer 2021: 285.

[21] *EA* 49: 19–24 in Schniedewind and Cochavi-Rainey (eds), *El-Amarna Correspondence*, 380–381, 1392; ÄHK 2 and 3 in Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz*, I, 16–17, 20–21.

[22] See J. H. Lundquist, D. L. Anderton and D. Yaukey, *Demography: The Study of Human Population* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2015 – 4th edn.), 325–344; D. L. Poston and L. F. Bouvier, *Population and Society: An Introduction to Demography* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 200–203.

[23] Population estimate taken from K. W. Butzer, *Early Hydraulic Civilization in Egypt: A Study in Cultural Ecology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 85, fig. 13. The average annual premodern population growth is assumed to be 0.04%; see Poston and Bouvier, *Population and Society*, 276.

[24] For instance, Thutmosis III's roughly 8,000 war captives would have increased the population by 0.4%, using Butzer's estimates. See Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 322.

[25] See D. A. Warburton, *The Fundamentals of Economics: Lessons from the Bronze Age Near East* (Civilisations du Proche-Orient, Série IV: Histoire-Essais 3 – Neuchâtel: Recherches et Publications, 2016), 195–197.

[26] For instance, injecting Thutmosis III's roughly 8,000 war captives into the agricultural sector would have increased the workforce by 2%; see Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 322.

[27] On the problem of multiculturalism in Late Bronze Age Egypt, see C. Langer, 'Multiculturalism and the multicultural in ancient Egypt: A preliminary assessment', *Fronteiras: Revista Catarinense de História* 40 (2022), 10-24.

[28] Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 332.

The effects of the Egyptian deportation regime were probably felt more strongly in the affected societies, however. With an estimated population around 590,000 to 600,000 people in the Late Bronze Age southern Levant,[29] the annual population loss in the area amounted to 0.03 – 0.14% in deliveries to Egypt.[30] Military operations would have had an even greater impact on local demographics correspondingly. This finding suggests a profound Egyptian impact on the local demographics that should have accrued over generations and perhaps even generated or at least exacerbated local conflicts, as outlined further below.[31]

At the same time, the Egyptians compelled foreigners to work for them abroad in the southern Levant: the vassals were obliged to provide corvée workers from as far as 70 kilometres as the crow flies to till the fields of the fertile Jezreel plain, the only area occupied by Egyptian forces in West Asia and controlled from their garrison at Beth Shan on the eastern exit to the Jordan Valley.[32] The agricultural produce was under Egyptian control correspondingly. This means that Egyptian policies not only affected local demographics, but also local food security, therefore putting a double strain on the locals – all with help of the local elites. Similar demographic effects were possibly present in occupied Nubia (estimated population: 220,000–290,000),[33] albeit offset to an unquantifiable degree by Egyptian settler colonialism,[34] where the net population loss due to yearly deliveries in people would have amounted to a lower figure of 0.01–0.04%.[35] In Nubia, the policies may have accelerated the alignment of the area with Egyptian interests.[36] Generally, the Egyptian deportation and related labour policies could be an early case of accumulation of wealth by dispossession, otherwise commonly associated with historical European colonialism and contemporary globalisation.[37]

4. The human dimension: deportees and deporters

The extant sources give the following picture regarding the composition of the foreign workers deported to Egypt. Relative to class or strata, following Trigger's categorization into elites (urban and rural), dependent specialists and the lowest strata among the wider population (or commoners),[38] the lower strata made up around 80% while elites represented around 20% of the deportees across the entire dataset. At the same time, the relatively complete dataset of Thutmosis III's reign specifically suggests that over 97% of the deportees were commoners, which aligns well with what one would expect from a premodern society in terms of stratification. In this sense, the Thutmoside data are likely more realistic than the fragmentary New Kingdom dataset as a whole.[39] These data suggest that Egypt mainly imported unskilled labour for the Egyptian economy, where elite groups were also utilized. These inferences probably hold across regions, although West Asian elites are generally more visible in the

[29] See T. M. Kennedy, *A Demographic Analysis of Late Bronze Age Canaan: Ancient Population Estimates and Insights through Archaeology* (PhD diss., University of South Africa, 2013), 579, 587.

[30] Calculating with 197 to 702 people moved from the southern Levant each year; see Langer, 'Forced labour', 9.

[31] Kennedy, *Demographic Analysis*, 573–587, based on archaeological data (settlements, cemeteries) found that the southern Levant experienced a slight population decrease, conjectured to be the result of an as yet undefined incisive event around the year 1400 BCE. That finding corresponds with Egypt's increased military activity and the establishment of its vassal regime in the second half of the fifteenth century BCE; see also Langer, 'Forced labour', 13 and Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 327–328.

[32] See El-Amarna letter *EA 365*, 10–29; Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 316.

[33] See S. T. Smith, *Wretched Kush: Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt's Nubian Empire* (London: Routledge, 2003), 75, 195; M. R. Buzon, 'A bioarchaeological perspective on Egyptian colonialism in the New Kingdom', *JEA* 94 (2008), 168.

[34] Note that I. Török, *Between Two Worlds: the Frontier between Ancient Nubia and Egypt 3700 BC–AD 500* (*PÄ* 29 – Leiden: Brill, 2009), 190 believes the Egyptian influx into Nubia was, at best, limited. Note also that West Asians, too, were settled in Nubia.

[35] Calculating with 20 to 101 people moved from Nubia each year; see Langer, 'Forced labour', 9.

[36] For an in-depth analysis of the demographic, economic, and societal implications, see Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 318–330.

[37] D. Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (London: Verso, 2006), 90–5.

[38] B. Trigger, *Understanding Early Civilizations: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 153–155; B. Trigger, *Early Civilizations: Ancient Egypt in Context* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1993), 57–59.

[39] On class and stratification among the deportees, see Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 365–370.

record than Nubian or Libyan elites. The gender-related data, in turn, suggest that men and women were affected fairly equally,[40] while the weight of age groups is not possible to ascertain due to the ambiguity of the Egyptian terminology regarding matters of physiological age and simple biological or legal descendance.[41]

Before deportees arrived in Egypt, they had to be marked as deportable and selected for deportation abroad. Any foreigner was marked as deportable by default via Egyptian ideology, which stipulated that anyone but Egyptians themselves were adherents of chaos and thus a threat to the order provided by the Egyptian state.[42] Any acts of violence against foreigners were hence framed as legitimate, especially in case foreigners did act upon their ideologically assigned role by engaging in acts of resistance against Egyptian supremacy; this naturally applied to combatants, who were transferred to Egypt, often alongside their next of kin, as war captives. Combatants were selected by the Egyptian army and registered by the *wḥm-nsw* ('royal herald') and scribes, alongside other war plunder.[43] Non-combatants could also be selected in the wake of armed conflict. Egypt as represented by its officials also selected the deportees directly in Nubia, while outside of the occupation of Nubia and war in West Asia it was the vassals who selected people for deportation. This was probably based on rough Egyptian guidelines, with the vassals perhaps even competing with each other for deportees,[44] at times attacking each other's caravans bound for Egypt.[45]

Transported mostly by land (or, within Egypt, river),[46] rarely by sea,[47] and secured with manacles or ropes,[48] the deportees made their way to Egypt under the auspices of the Egyptian military or a vassal's detachment. Transport by land generally took longer than seabound or riverine transport.[49] Once in Egypt and depending on their occupation, they were probably housed in segregated, guarded settlements if working for a temple, or purpose-built housing spatially associated with private estates, perhaps even in the house of their patron if they were occupied in the domestic sector.[50] On top of that,

[40] See Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 371–375. Matić, *Body and Frames of War*, 91 acknowledges that the gender distribution among war captives is difficult to ascertain due to a general lack of quantitative data, yet assumes that men formed the biggest group after all.

[41] See Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 375–383; see also E. Feucht, *Das Kind im Alten Ägypten* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 1995) 522–524. These arguments oppose the recent assertion about the prevalence of child labour in New Kingdom Egypt in U. Matić, 'The best of the booty of His Majesty', in C. Langer (ed.), *Global Egyptology: Negotiations in the Production of Knowledges on Ancient Egypt in Global Contexts* (*GHP* Egyptology 26 – London: Golden House Publications, 2017), 54–63, as well as the assertion that children were regulars among deportees in Matić, *Body and Frames of War*, 88–91. The latter work assumes that the order in war plunder lists indicated age next to ethnicity and gender.

[42] See J. Assmann, *Ägypten: Eine Sinngeschichte* (Vienna: Hanser, 1996), 150; C. Langer, 'The concept of 'frontier' in New Kingdom Egypt: a comparative approach to the spatiality of ideology', in G. Chantrain and J. Winand (eds), *Time and Space at Issue in Ancient Egypt* (Lingua Aegyptia Studia Monographica 19 – Hamburg: Widmaier, 2018), 50 – 51; Langer, Egyptian Deportations, 331–335.

[43] For example, Antef of Thutmosis III's reign (*Urk*. IV, 975: 11). The tomb of Horemheb in Memphis might depict such a registration on the battlefield; see G. A. T. Martin, *The Memphite Tomb of Ḥoremḥeb, Commander-in-Chief of Tutʿankhamun 1: The Reliefs, Inscriptions, and Commentary* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1989), 79, pl. 87–88; 92–93.

[44] As suggested by El-Amarna letters *EA 287*, *EA 288*; see Schniedewind and Cochavi-Rainey (eds), *El-Amarna Correspondence*, 1110–1119.

[45] Here the deportations effectively amount to divide and rule tactics; see also C. Langer, 'Deportation Policies in Egypt's Late Bronze Age Empire', in C. Coppini, G. Cyrus and H. Golestaneh (eds), *Bridging the Gap: Disciplines, Times and Spaces in Dialogue. Vol. 3. Sessions 4 and 6 from the Conference Broadening Horizons 6 Held at Freie Universität Berlin, 24 – 28 June 2019* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2022), 127–140.

[46] See H. Köpp-Junk, 'Pharaonic Prelude – Being on the Move in Ancient Egypt from Predynastic Times to the End of the New Kingdom', *JAEI* 16(4) (2017), 23.

[47] *Urk. IV*, 86: 13–16.

[48] See Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 388–389.

[49] Köpp-Junk, 'Pharaonic Prelude', 289–302.

[50] Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 395–397.

they were regularly given Egyptian names, perhaps in an attempt to erase their original identity, itself a practice that goes back to at least the Middle Kingdom.[51] The specific conditions largely depended on their occupation and the institution the deportees were assigned to. For instance, a palace servant should have a comparatively more comfortable life than the average agricultural worker, which was the lot of most deportees, though. In any case, their status as *ḥm* likely came with lifelong bondage to a particular institution or individual.[52]

Conversely, an array of Egyptian officials benefited greatly from the deportations. Those connected to deportees and their integration into the Egyptian economy and society aside,[53] the focus is on individuals that managed private estates and received deportees for a workforce. These officers and officials are assembled in Table 1.

Name	Occupation	Date	Location	Private Estate (ha)	Foreign Workforce	Source
Ahmose	Soldier	Kamose	Thebes	n/a	46	Kubisch 2008: 175–177
Ahmose Son of Ibana	Soldier	Ahmose – Thutmosis III	Elkab	19-36	19	*Urk. IV* 1–11
Amenemhab	Soldier	Thutmosis III	Thebes	n/a	2	*Urk. IV* 890–897
Humen	Overseer of works of Amun	Thutmosis III	Thebes	14	20	Habachi 1950
Minmose	Soldier	Thutmosis III	Thebes	n/a	150	*Urk. IV* 1441–1445
Sabastet	Royal barber	Thutmosis III	Bubastis	n/a	1 (at least)	*Urk. IV* 1369

Table 1. Military officers and officials with foreign deportees.

These individuals should only be seen as the tip of the iceberg and the recompense of distinguished services to the Egyptian state with land and foreign workers was probably a lot more common.[54] Soldiers especially benefited from estates and foreign workers. They made them independent of military success and paved the way for a civic career, without the need to put their lives on the line. The estate could produce surplus food and the workers were able to replace the patron in annual labour obligations; at the same time, the foreigners could be sold on or hired out for a fee, thus providing an additional source of revenue.[55] Especially the family of Ahmose, son of Ibana, demonstrates that 'old money' was created this way over generations.[56] After the royal court, the deportations and revenue stemming from them may have created a tiny stratum of officials that were able to accumulate wealth in the long term, perhaps also measured in increased leisure from outsourcing labour obligations owed to the crown.

[51] See O. D. Berlev, 'Review of Hayes, W. C. 1955. *A Papyrus of the Late Middle Kingdom in the Brooklyn Museum [Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446]*', *BiOr* 30 (1973), 208.

[52] M. Römer, 'Die *mr.(t)*-Leute: Was sich aus den Ostraka der frühen 18. Dynastie von Deir el-Bahri ergibt', *GM* 251 (2017), 79–92.

[53] Such as *ỉmy-rꜣ šnw.ty* ('overseer of the granaries'), like Ineni, or *ỉmy-rꜣ šnᶜ* ('overseer of the *šnᶜ*), like Rekhmire; see Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 293–304.

[54] Just as *P. Wilbour* attests smallholding soldiers; see S. D. Katary, 'The administration of institutional agriculture in the New Kingdom', in J. C. Moreno García (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Administration* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 725–726.

[55] See Langer, *Egyptian Deportations*, 290–293.

[56] See W. V. Davies, 'The Tomb of Ahmose Son of Ibana at Elkab: documenting the family and other observations', in W. Claes, H. de Meulenaere and S. Hendrickx (eds), *Elkab and beyond: Studies in Honour of Luc Limme* (*OLA* 191 – Leuven, Paris and Walpole: Peeters, 2009), 153–154; N. Allon and H. Navratilová, *Ancient Egyptian Scribes: A Cultural Exploration* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 16.

According to Scheidel,[57] the deportations should have increased overall inequality in Egypt. While wealth was accumulating at the top, the wider population would have stagnated.

5. Towards a Late Bronze Age forced migration-unfree labour nexus

Based on the information presented in this chapter, one can start theorising what can be called a Late Bronze Age forced migration-unfree labour nexus. In this nexus there are two distinct human trafficking or migratory regimes that exist in parallel yet can crucially intersect and fertilise each other. These can be roughly categorised as governmental and private migratory regimes. Both regimes start with the population as the pool of labour power.

The governmental branch involves foreign governments, who access the population and are one source of foreign labour power, which is transferred to the Egyptian government through deportations or diplomacy. Alternatively, the Egyptian government can access the population directly, as happened, for example, during wars, and transfer foreign labour to Egypt directly, thus bypassing foreign governments. Once with the Egyptian government, the foreigners are transferred to officials and various institutions of the state. Officials, in turn, can temporarily loan out their workers to these institutions.

The private (or non-governmental) branch sees the population enter what can be called a private slave market. This can happen through various yet similar means like human trafficking, debt bondage, etc. – for instance, individuals may seek to emigrate to Egypt due to its relatively greater food security compared to West Asia and give themselves up into servitude.[58] Once available they can be sold or transferred to the Egyptian population with the necessary means, which also includes officials, who can trade the foreign workers among each other. At this point, the foreigners can enter the governmental branch through a temporary loan to waive labour obligations. Crucially, the officials are part of both branches and represent the entry point of foreigners procured through the private migratory regime into the governmental branch and vice versa. In theory, both migratory regimes are thus interconnected and form a coherent circuit or nexus. At this point it cannot be determined to what extent such transitions between the individual regimes indeed took place, though. Nonetheless it helps to approach this as a system of forced migration and unfree labour which benefited several people – mostly the Egyptian royal court, then officials, before the sections of Egyptian society with the means necessary to acquire additional labour power – which was put even more at a disadvantage. One should reckon that this nexus coexisted with more voluntary forms of migration and labour in Egypt but is more clearly visible in the extant record.

6. Concluding remarks

The data strongly suggest that previous assessments on the impact and scope of foreign compulsory labour in Egyptian society and policymaking have to be rethought. The evidence primarily stems from source material connected to Egyptian deportation policies and thus only shows compulsory foreign labour directly connected with Egyptian state institutions. Foreigners who entered bondage or other compulsory labour relationships are therefore not visible in the record or, rather, can hardly be recognised as such, even if sources did contain related information. Future research should attempt to clarify to what extent the reliance on foreign labour power as well as the implied accumulation of wealth by dispossessing adjacent societies of their resources contributed to or perhaps even caused what we today perceive as Egypt's peak and cultural glory. By extension, one should look into how far

[57] W. Scheidel, *The Great Leveler: Violence and the History of Inequality from the Stone Age to the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017), 60–61.

[58] On various forms of forced migration apparent in Egyptian source material, see C. Langer, 'Forced migration in New Kingdom Egypt: remarks on the applicability of forced migration studies theory in Egyptology', in Langer (ed.), *Global Egyptology*, 39–51.

the Egyptian policies helped manufacture the power transition from Egyptian to Libyan elites to start the Third Intermediate Period.

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7
Unwritten Compulsion: Social Integration, Norms and Self-Control at Kurgus in Medieval Nubia[1]

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Abstract

Compulsion and control within a society is often understood to reflect high-level force controlling the populace. However, societies by their very traditions exert a different kind of self-control – via socially-accepted habitus *behaviours, social integration, and communities of practice. This paper studies this through ceramic practice in the Meroitic period, through a case study of pottery from the Nubian site of Kurgus. It presents the material and discusses how a holistic approach might inform our understanding of the Meroitic ceramic industry. Traditional models for understanding pottery manufacture in the Nile Valley typically see wheelmade wares as part of state-controlled industry, but handmade wares as domestic products. This division between mass-production and home-production implies a dichotomy between specialist and non-specialist manufacture, as well as between male and female potters. However, ethnographic parallels may expand upon this simplistic dichotomy, indicating greater complexity of specialization than traditionally assumed. While there is evidence for shared practices and iconography behind created pottery, how this transpires to methods of control is complex. Rather than focusing on the control of production centres by officials, evidence instead suggests that societal concepts of 'tradition' and 'preference' are more valuable for understanding the control inherent in ceramic industries, reflecting an unwritten compulsion of the populace to act in certain ways.*

Keywords: Foodways; *Habitus*; Handmade ceramics; Kurgus; Wheelmade ceramics

1. Introduction

How is a population controlled? A society will typically enforce laws and exact punishments, but communities also control themselves, via expected behaviour, social rules, and polite etiquette; factors that are key for ensuring cohesion within a group. These practices, often barely noticed and taken for granted, relate to a shared *habitus* – ways of understanding the world that are entrenched within a community, leading to commonalities of practice that encourage a sense of group identity.[2] This *habitus* is expressed through material culture, and is particularly prevalent in basic, everyday items that reflect the unconscious daily behaviours of individuals and groups.

Pottery, as a basic good in the ancient world, is a useful medium for assessing these common behaviours within groups. In this paper, I will apply these ideas to the medieval ceramic repertoire recovered from Sudan Archaeological Research Society excavations at Kurgus, and discuss to what extent they may

[1] This paper is based on work conducted by the author at Kurgus in 2018 with the Sudan Archaeological Research Society. All images included belong to the Sudan Archaeological Research Society.

[2] D. Hu, 'Approaches to the Archaeology of Ethnogenesis: Past and Emergent Perspectives', *JAR* 21 (2013), 371–402; See P. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 53 for a definition of *habitus* as 'systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures... principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them'. For a full discussion of *habitus*, see P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

Figure 1. Map showing the location of Kurgus.

reflect cultural habits, norms and controls within the medieval community within and around the fortress. In particular, I will focus on the dichotomy between wheelmade and handmade vessels, and suggest that these reflect the syncretism of 'Great' and 'Little' traditions and communities of practice in the fortress.

2. Kurgus

The site is located 40km south of the modern town of Abu Hamed, on the east bank of the Nile, between the 4th and 5th Cataracts [Figure 1]. Three areas of archaeological remains have been explored; KRG1, encompassing the Hagr el-Merwa and its epigraphy;[3] KRG2, the remains of a medieval fortress;[4] and

[3] W. V. Davies, 'Kurgus 2003: The Inscriptions and Rock Drawings', *S&N* 7 (2003), 55–57; W. V. Davies, 'Kurgus 2000: The Egyptian Inscriptions', *S&N* 5 (2001), 46–58; W. V. Davies, 'New Fieldwork at Kurgus: The Pharaonic Inscriptions', *S&N* 2 (1998), 26–29.

[4] M. Nicholas, 'The 2014 season of excavations at Kurgus: Excavations in the fort, site KRG2', *S&N* 18 (2014), 148–155.

KRG3, a post-Meroitic and medieval cemetery;[5] along with broader surveys of the region.[6] This allows for the placement of the fortress within a wider archaeological context.

The fortress is located 1.5km from the cemetery and the Hagr el-Merwa. Although Arkell thought that the fort's proximity to the Hagr el-Merwa suggested its construction during the New Kingdom,[7] subsequent investigation of the site by the Sudan Archaeological Research Society dated the structure to the medieval period.

Ceramic remains at KRG2 date its use across the medieval period, with Early, Classic and Terminal Christian material recovered, as well as some probable post-Meroitic fragments.[8] The collection includes a wide variety of both wheelmade and handmade forms characteristic of a medieval agricultural community. However, it also includes some finer pieces as well as imports from other areas of Sudan and, potentially, Egypt. This sits it within the repertoire commonly seen at other sites in both Lower and Upper Nubia, particularly at Old Dongola. No kiln has been identified, although one may be present in unexcavated areas.

Handmade wares are rarely given as much attention as accompanying wheelmade vessels in ceramic reports. However, the prevalence of handmade forms at Kurgus, alongside the wheelmade bowls, jars, and amphorae, suggests that this industry remained important at the fortress, particularly during the Early Christian period.

3. Handmade and wheelmade pottery at Kurgus

A total of 22,551 ceramic pieces were recovered from the site. The wheelmade pottery at the site encompassed a range of material, from utility wares such as *saqia*-pots, storage jars and amphorae, to tableware items including footed and ledge-rimmed bowls, and more unusual items such as oil bottles, pilgrim flasks, and lamps. Bowls were often slipped in red or cream, and decorated with common medieval painted motifs including guilloche friezes, zigzag and double arcade border motifs, showing parallels with medieval pottery across Nubia, particularly at Old Dongola.[9] However, none of the more complex patterns, which can be seen at sites such as Ghazali[10] or Merowe Sheriq,[11] occur here. Stamped, applied, and stand-alone painted decoration is also rare. 73 examples of graffiti were found on wheelmade vessels, primarily consisting of Greek letters or parts of names, and monograms representing the Archangel Michael, all incised save for two painted examples. Wheelmade fabrics made up 70% of the total fabric groups, but only represented approximately half of the total quantity of sherd material.

Handmade material was found in significant quantities, and included domestic items such as simple cooking pots, necked pots, basins and *dokka*, but also wedge-handled bowls, fineware bowls and beakers, jars, stands, and beer jars. The variety suggests that these vessels were in use across a range of activities.

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[5] S. Haddow, 'The 2014 season of excavations at Kurgus: Excavations in the cemetery, site KRG3', *S&N* 18 (2014), 138–147; A. Ginns, 'The 2018 season of excavations at Kurgus', *S&N* 22 (2018), 150–154; A. Ginns, 'The 2015 season of excavations at Kurgus', *S&N* 19 (2015), 139–142.

[6] I. Welsby Sjöström, 'Kurgus 2012: Report on the survey', *S&N* 18 (2014), 130–137; I. Welsby Sjöström, 'Kurgus 2002: Report on the archaeological work', *S&N* 7 (2003), 58–61; I. Welsby Sjöström, 'Excavations at Kurgus: The 2000 season Results', *S&N* 5 (2001), 59–63; I. Welsby Sjöström, 'New Fieldwork at Kurgus. The Cemetery and the Fort', *S&N* 2 (1998), 30–34;

[7] A. J. Arkell, 'Varia Sudanica', *JEA* 36 (1950), 39.

[8] Welsby Sjöström, 'Excavations at Kurgus', 59; P. Weschenfelder, 'Ceramics', *S&N* 19 (2015), 139–142; P. Weschenfelder, 'Ceramics', *S&N* 18 (2014), 152–153.

[9] e. g. K. Pluskota, 'Kiln Sites in Old Dongola', in S. Jakobielski and P. O. Scholz (eds), *Dongola-Studien. 35 Jahre polnischer Forschungen im Zentrum des makuritischen Reiches* (Warsaw: Zaś Pan, 2001), 357–365; K. Danys, 'Pottery from Dongola: A stratigraphic Assemblage from Unit B.I.41', *PAM* 25 (2016), 761–779.

[10] A. Obłuski *et al.*, 'The Winter Seasons of 2013 and 2014 in the Ghazali Monastery', *PAM* 26(1) (2017), 367– 398.

[11] E. Klimaszewska-Drabot, 'Early Makuria Research Project: the pottery', *PAM* 18 (2008), 477–491.

Handmade pottery bore distinct decoration from the wheelmade pottery, with a majority covered in red slips and burnished, but incised and impressed motifs also occurred, with cross-hatching and slashed lines added to rims and handles, finger and fingernail impressions, and a palm-leaf motif. These features do not appear on wheelmade pottery, which was mostly painted – by contrast, in only one case was a handmade vessel painted. In addition, only seven examples of graffiti were found on handmade pots. However, these did in some cases share themes with those on wheelmade pots, with two crosses and two Archangel Michael monograms found.

4. Sociological models

How do we understand the presence of both wheelmade and handmade pottery in such quantities at Kurgus? The two groups were clearly manufactured differently and featured different forms, while the fact that different decorative styles were preferred across these groups tells us that this is not simply a functional difference. Does this reflect two segregated *habitus* practices at the site, with two distinct aesthetic, tradition, and behavioural preferences – and does this relate to two different ethnicities? The correlation between specific material culture and particular ethnicities – the pots = people approach – has historically been a common conceptual paradigm within archaeology,[12] but such assumptions are problematic. The simplistic association between pottery and ethnicity skims over the fact that the modern concept of ethnicity likely did not exist in the ancient world, and moreover that identities held by individuals and communities were multi-faceted and ever-changing.[13]

It is more valuable to use the pottery to tap into broader senses of identity at the site. The repertoire rather suggests that the *same* people wanted access to both wheelmade and handmade vessels for different purposes. This implies that the handmade pottery was socially desirable and had an equal compulsion on the community to the wheelmade vessels of aesthetically more regular appearance, which in modern culture we might consider 'neater' and 'more attractive', suggesting this was not considered important in this particular context. Large quantities of handmade wares can be equally seen at other contemporary sites, such as the ecclesiastical structure at Sur in the 4th Cataract.[14] This indicates that this was a broader phenomenon in the area.

Shared practices are an expression of social cohesion, and material culture is a visual expression of these social boundaries, acting as a reinforcement of correct behaviours and commonalities of practice that individuals are brought up expected to follow.[15] The manufacture, decoration, and use of pottery are one

[12] S. Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity* (London: Routledge, 1997), 106–127; B. G. Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press – 2nd edn, 2006), 235; C. Riggs and J. Baines, 'Ethnicity', in W. Wendrich *et al* (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2012), 1, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/32r9x0jr>; J. Card, 'Introduction', in J. Card (ed.), *The Archaeology of Hybrid Material Culture* (Carbondale: South Illinois University Press, 2013), 3; U. Matić, '"Nubian" archers in Avaris: A study of culture-historical reasoning in archaeology of Egypt', *Etnoantropološki problemi (Issues in Ethnology and Anthropology)* 9.3 (2014), 697–721.

[13] e.g. S. T. Smith, *Wretched Kush. Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt's Nubian Empire* (London: Routledge, 2003); T. Schneider, 'Foreigners in Egypt: Archaeological Evidence and Cultural Context', in W. Wendrich (ed.), *Egyptian Archaeology* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 143–163; G. Moers, 'Egyptian identity? Unlikely, and never rational', in H. Amstutz *et al.* (eds), *Festschrift Fur Antonio Loprieno* (Hamburg: Widmaier Verlag, 2016), 693–704; D. Raue, 'Nubian pottery on Elephantine Island in the New Kingdom', in N. Spencer, A. Stevens and M. Binder (eds), *Nubia in the New Kingdom: lived experience, pharaonic control, and indigenous traditions* (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 525–536; U. Matić, *Ethnic Identities in the Land of the Pharaohs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 10–15.

[14] K. Pluskota, 'H.U.N.E. 2007. Pottery from islands: Sur (Site SR 22.A) and Umm Kieb. The interim report', *CRIPEL* supplement 7 (2008), 123.

[15] M. Douglas, *Thought Styles* (London: Sage Publications, 1996), 63; L. Hulin, 'Conversations between Objects: Ambience and the Egyptian ceramic world at Beth Shan', in B. Bader and M. Ownby (eds), *Functional aspects of Egyptian Ceramics in their Archaeological Context: Proceedings of a conference held at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge, July 24th - July 25th, 2009* (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 353–369.

aspect of this wider object world. These concepts have been well explored in archaeology,[16] and applying them to Kurgus provides a more holistic perspective on the social practices of the period within the fortress, particularly valuable given its location on the southern Makurian border. Domestic items are particularly useful in this context. They act as constant visual cues within a society, rather than prestige items, which often deliberately project status or ideas. Furthermore, their practical usage gives us a deeper insight into behaviours such as cooking and eating, and the cultural norms surrounding these.[17]

5. Ceramic models

Historically, ceramic production in ancient Egypt[18] has been perceived through a very particular lens. Handmade and wheelmade pottery have typically been understood as the work of two segregated industries. In this traditional model, wheelmade pottery was thought to be produced by men in specialist workshops destined for a consumer market, while handmade pottery was produced by women in the domestic sphere for the home. Handmade pottery was typically viewed as 'crude' and 'primitive' – its wider use the result of poverty or social instability – while wheelmade was seen as 'more advanced', 'attractive' and often symbolic of social organisation. Of course, this is hugely simplistic – current scholarship is increasingly demonstrating the complexities around use of any type of material culture, and in Nubia an ongoing preference for handmade alongside wheelmade pots is evident in many periods of history.

Evidence for ceramic production in Egypt is not extensive. It primarily includes the presence of workshops and firing structures, such as at Balat[19] and Amarna,[20] and images from tomb contexts,[21] as well as remnant manufacturing marks on surviving vessels. The potter's wheel was adopted in Egypt in the 4th Dynasty, and from that point on the bulk of Egyptian pottery was wheelmade, aside from vessels such as bread moulds, coarser wares, and some large pots.[22] Egyptian workshops were predominantly attached to a temple or a private estate, although examples also occur close to cemeteries and in specialist areas far from settlement sites.[23] Tomb reliefs suggest that ceramic production in these workshops was a gendered activity, with potters typically shown as male, although some New Kingdom tombs do depict women producing pots.[24] While we do need to view such scenes with caution, it is thought that representations of daily life can be used to infer tentative ethnographic information.[25] Handmade

[16] e.g. J. Webster, 'Creolising the Roman Provinces', *AJA* 105(2) (2001), 209–225; L. Hulin, *Imported wares and the presentation of self in the eastern Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age* (PhD diss., University of Reading, 2006); L. Hulin, 'Conversations'; L. Bushnell, *Precious Commodities: The socio-economic implications of the distribution of juglets in the eastern Mediterranean during the Middle and Late Bronze Age* (Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2016); K. Mata, 'Of Barbarians and Boundaries: the making and remaking of transcultural discourse', in S. Sanchez and A. Guglielmi (eds), *Romans and Barbarians Beyond the Frontiers: Archaeology, Ideology and Identities in the North* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2017), 8–33; J. Wilson, 'Et tu, Hibernia? Frontier Zones and Culture Contact – Ireland in a Roman world' in Sanchez, and Guglielmi (eds), *Romans and Barbarians*, 48–69.

[17] R. Dann, *The Archaeology of Late Antique Sudan. Aesthetics and identity in the royal X-group tombs at Qustul and Ballana* (New York: Cambria Press, 2009), 178.

[18] By extension, however problematic that may be, scholarship generally includes Nubia within Egypt too.

[19] G. Soukiassian *et al*., *Balat 3: Les ateliers de potiers d'Ayn-Asil: Fin de l'Ancien Empire, Première Période Intermédiaire* (Cairo: IFAO, 1990).

[20] P. Nicholson, 'Kilns and Firing Structures', in W. Wendrich *et al* (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2010), 1–10, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/47x6w6m0>.

[21] See R. Holthoer, *New Kingdom Pharaonic Sites: The Pottery. Vol. 5:1* (Stockholm: Berlings, 1977), fig. 50.

[22] S. K. Doherty, *The Origins and the Use of the Potter's Wheel in Ancient Egypt* (London: Archaeopress, 2013), 248.

[23] S. K. Doherty, 'Investigating Dynastic Egyptian Pottery-Making: Archaeological and Ethnographical Considerations', in A. Hodgkinson and C. Lelek Tvetmarken (eds), *Approaches to the Analysis of Production Activity at Archaeological Sites* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2020), 123.

[24] J. Bourriau *et al.,* 'Pottery', in P. Nicholson and I. Shaw (eds), *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 136.

[25] Doherty, *Origins*, 62–63.

vessels are still suggested to be produced by women in a domestic context,[26] a hypothesis based in part on modern ethnographic evidence from other areas of north Africa.[27] This gendered division of wheelmade and handmade pottery has been noted by Doherty to be a symptom of gendered economic and social societies worldwide.[28] Textual evidence further points to potters, although specialists, in general being of a low social status.[29] By the 3rd century AD, ceramic production was often large-scale, with a papyrus from Oxyrhynchus recording a potter's annual provision of 15,000 vessels for a single farmstead.[30]

The applicability of these Egyptian models to Nubian contexts such as Kurgus is dubious for pottery, since the perception of ceramics seems to have been radically different between the two regions. While pottery appears to have been low on the social wealth index in Egypt after the Predynastic period, evidence indicates that in Nubia ceramics were highly valued through time: the level of expertise necessary to achieve wafer-thin walls or fine burnishing as seen on pots from the A-Group to the Meroitic period suggests that Nubian pots were produced by specialists,[31] and contextual evidence indicates that the particularly fine Kerma beakers were likely used in elite display.[32] The continued preference for hand-produced vessels in Nubia, in spite of the availability of wheel technology after the 4th Dynasty, was likely deliberate and persists until the New Kingdom, after which distinctive wheelmade ceramic industries develop in the Napatan and Meroitic periods.[33] However, even in periods with strong wheelmade production, we see a continuing presence of handmade pottery with clear links to the traditions of earlier periods.

If we try to use evidence from ceramic workshops in Sudan as is often done in Egypt, we are limited by the very small number of these identified. A total of 18 are known, from the Middle Kingdom to the medieval period. These would of course have functioned very differently from each other, due to the wide chronological timespan. Early examples are known at Mirgissa,[34] Ashkeit,[35] Askut,[36] Kerma,[37] and Amara West.[38] Meroitic workshops are known at Musawwarat es-Sufra,[39] Site 6-B-17,

[26] M. Bietak, 'Ceramics of the C-group culture', in F. Hintze (ed.), *Africa in Antiquity* (*Meroitica* 5 – Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1979), 108–111; W. Y. Adams, *Ceramic Industries of Medieval Nubia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 38; L. Török, *Between Two Worlds. The frontier region between ancient Nubia and Egypt 3700BC-500 AD.* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 134; H-Å. Nordström, 'Pottery Production', in D. A. Welsby and J. A. Anderson (eds), *Sudan: Ancient Treasures* (London: British Museum Press, 2004), 251.

[27] e.g. H. Balfet, 'Ethnographical observations in north Africa and archaeological interpretation: The pottery of the Magreb', in F. R. Matsen (ed.), *Ceramics and Man* (New York: Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, 1965); N. Tobert, *The Ethnoarchaeology of the Zaghawa of Darfur (Sudan). Settlement and Transience* (Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 30 – Oxford: BAR, 1988).

[28] Doherty, *Origins*, 255–256.

[29] Doherty, *Origins*, 95; see Holthoer, *New Kingdom*, 18.

[30] Dann, *Archaeology*, 167.

[31] Smith, *Wretched Kush*, 34–35.

[32] D. Edwards, 'Sorghum, beer, and Kushite society', *NAR* 29.1 (1996), 73–74; D. A. Welsby, *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia: Pagans, Christians and Muslims along the Middle Nile,* (London: British Museum Press, 2002), 194; Smith, *Wretched Kush*, 34; Nördström, 'Pottery', 248; C. Walsh, 'A cup for any occasion? The materiality of drinking experiences at Kerma', in L. Steel and L. Attala (eds), *Body Matters: Exploring the materiality of the human body* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019), 173–195.

[33] S. K. Doherty, 'The Introduction of the potter's wheel to ancient Sudan', *IANSA* XII (2) (2021), 299–309.

[34] J. Vercoutter, *Mirgissa I* (Paris: Direction générale des relations culturelles, scientifiques et techniques, 1970), 79–81, fig. 23.

[35] Holthoer, *New Kingdom*, 16–17; T. Säve-Söderbergh, *The Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia: Middle Nubian Sites 4.1* (Uddevalla: Bohusläningens Boktryckeri AB, 1989), 265–267.

[36] S. T. Smith, 'A Potter's Wheelhead from Askut and the Organization of the Egyptian Ceramic Industry in Nubia', *JARCE* 50 (2014), 103–121.

[37] C. Bonnet, *Edifices et rites funéraires à Kerma.* (Paris: Éditions Errance, 2000); S. M. Ahmed, *L'Agglomération napatéenne de Kerma: enquête archéologique et ethnographique en milieu urbain* (Paris: Éditions recherche sur les civilisations, 1992), 75–86.

[38] N. Spencer, 'Building on new ground: the foundation of a colonial town at Amara West', in N. Spencer, A. Stevens, and M. Binder (eds), *Nubia in the New Kingdom: lived experience, Pharaonic control and indigenous traditions* (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 347.

[39] D. Edwards, *Musawwarat Es Sufra III. A Meroitic Pottery Workshop at Musawwarat Es Sufra: Preliminary Report on the Excavations 1997 in Courtvard 224 of the Great Enclosure* (Meroitica 17.2 – Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999).

Argin,[40] Hamadab,[41] Muweis,[42] and likely Qasr Ibrim, while a small number of Post-Meroitic kilns[43] and a workshop at Gezira Dabarosa[44] are known. Medieval workshops have been identified at Serra West,[45] Faras,[46] Debeira,[47] Abkanarti,[48] Gemai West,[49] Old Dongola,[50] Mugufil[51] and Soba East.[52] All were used for the production of wheelmade wares, and point to a complex level of specialisation in ceramic production at this time, as well as the export of certain forms across long distances. Little is known about the organisation of ceramic production during the medieval period, although a link to monastic structures has been postulated.[53]

Handmade manufacturing workshops are even more rare, with only a small number known across Sudanese history. There is no evidence for the use of complex kilns for hand-made production;[54] rather, these appear to have been produced in simple bonfires or pits, at the lower temperature of 600-800°C.[55] The C-Group site at Ashkeit may have been used for handmade pottery production in addition/instead of wheelmade. In the Late/Terminal Christian period, site 21-S-50 at Kulubnarti and Mugufil were both used to produce handmade *saqia* pots. However, the presence of other, smaller handmade pots at Mugufil was noted by Adams, perhaps suggesting production of both wheel and handmade vessels in a shared space.[56] A domestic structure at Arminna West may also have been used for handmade production.[57] This limited evidence makes it difficult to contextualise the ceramic finds at Kurgus within a production context; particularly the handmade wares, for which there is little evidence surrounding manufacture across much of Sudanese history. Is production related to gender, age, or social position? Does the dichotomy of wheelmade and handmade vessels at Kurgus suggest the importance of different contexts or groups of people? Adams[58] suggests that this dearth of evidence stems from the fact that the technology required for handmade production required no specialised equipment, rendering it in essence invisible. However, the potential production of both wheel and handmade pots at Ashkeit and Mugufil should caution us against assuming the industries were always strictly segregated.

6. Cooking pots, finewares, and beer jars at Kurgus

The term 'handmade' encompasses a range of techniques, including modelling, coiling, paddle-and-anvil, and moulding,[59] and the repertoire includes disparate items ranging from cooking pots and beer

[40] W. Y. Adams, 'Pottery Kiln excavations', *Kush* X (1962), 64–65; Adams, *Ceramic Industries*, 13.
[41] P. Wolf and U. Nowotnick, 'Hamadab – a Meroitic Urban Settlement. Excavations 2001–2003', *Archéologie du Nil Moyen* 10 (2006), 257–272.
[42] M. Buad. 'The Meroitic royal city of Muweis: first steps into an urban settlement of riverine Upper Nubia', *S&N* 12 (2008), 52–63.
[43] Adams, *Ceramic Industries*, 23–24.
[44] Adams, 'Pottery Kiln', 65.
[45] Adams, 'Pottery Kiln', 69–70; Adams, *Ceramic Industries*, 16.
[46] Adams, *Ceramic Industries*, 16–22.
[47] Adams, 'Pottery Kiln', 66–69; Adams, *Ceramic Industries*.
[48] Adams, 'Pottery Kiln'.
[49] Adams, 'Pottery Kiln'.
[50] Pluskota, 'Kiln sites'.
[51] Adams, 'Pottery Kiln', 72–74.
[52] D. A. Welsby and C. Daniels (eds), *Soba: Archaeological research at a Medieval capital on the Blue Nile* (Memoir 12 – London: British Institute in East Africa, 1991), 105, 245.
[53] Welsby, *Medieval Kingdoms*, 193–194.
[54] Welsby, *Medieval Kingdoms*, 190.
[55] Nördström, 'Pottery', 250.
[56] Adams, 'Pottery Kiln', 74.
[57] Welsby, *Medieval Kingdoms*, 194.
[58] Adams, *Ceramic Industries*, 24.
[59] Bourriau *et al*, 'Pottery', 125; P. Rice, *Pottery analysis: a sourcebook* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 135–141; R. David and M. Evina, 'Introduction à l'évolution des chaînes opératoires des céramiques méroïtiques', *Dotawo: a Journal of Nubian*

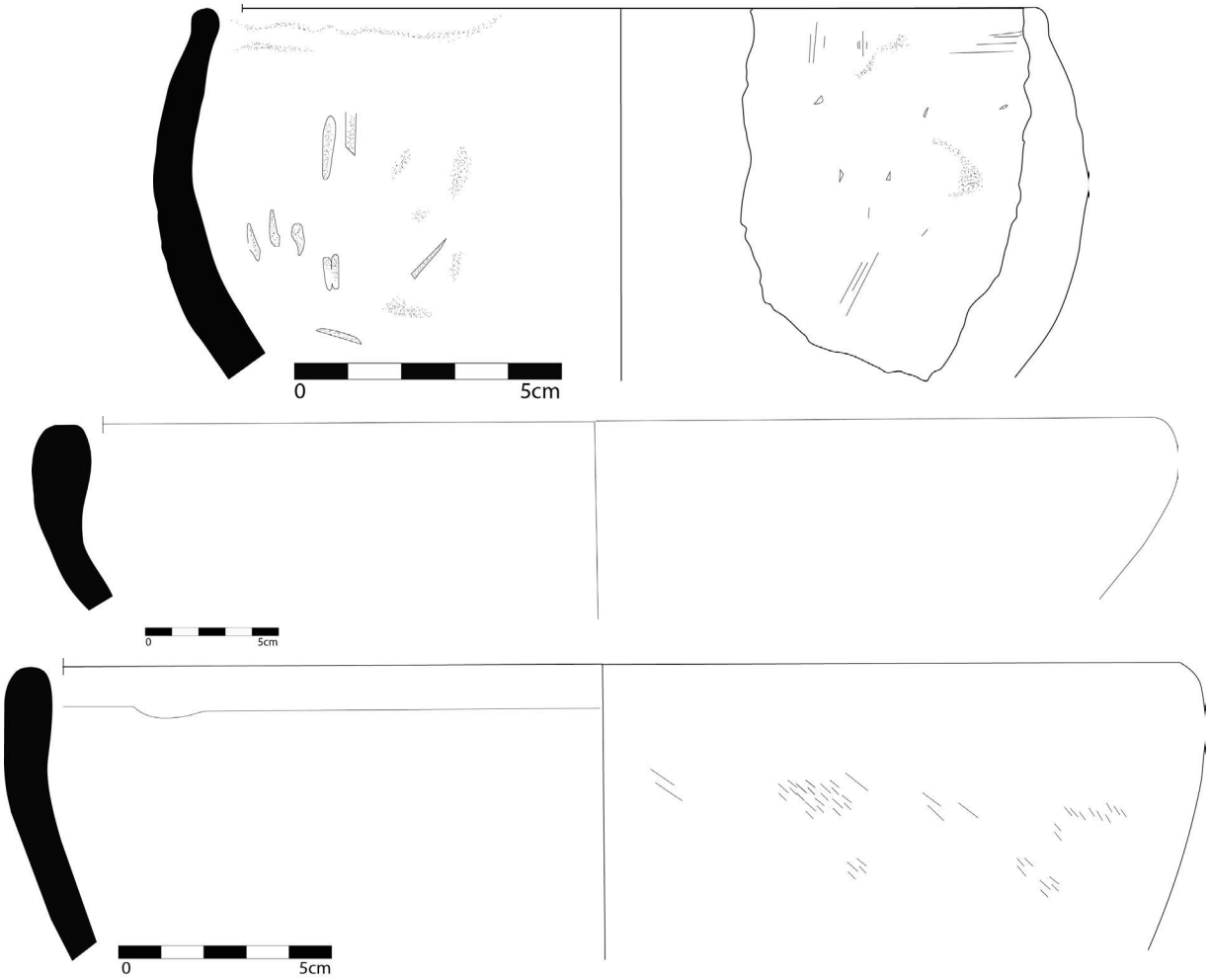

Figure 2. Selection of cooking pots from KRG2: D. 64, D. 16, D. 29. Images © Kurgus Project, Sudan Archaeological Research Society. Drawings by Petra Weschenfelder (D.64) and Virag Pabeschitz (D.16, D.29), inked by the author.

jars to fineware bowls. These are all made with different technical and stylistic methods for different purposes, suggesting a variety of manufacturing activities were in use. In order to explore the role of handmade pottery at the Kurgus fortress, I will discuss three categories of the handmade repertoire briefly: cooking pots, finewares, and beer jars.

Cooking pots at the site [Figure 2] are typically hemispherical bowls, often charred and burnt from cooking activity, although necked pots [Figure 3] were also likely used for this purpose due to their ability to distribute heat, as they still are today in the region for cooking *ful* (pers. ob.). Such vessels are rough and undecorated, and clearly produced in a domestic context for practical use, so are usually seen as having little value. However, cooking pots are a particularly important way of tracking perceived 'correct ways of doing', with foodways a strong cultural marker.[60] The persistent use of indigenous cooking pots contrasts with the use of wheelmade tableware, the use of which at Kurgus is part of a trend in ways of eating and displaying food that can be observed across Sudan and Egypt in the medieval

Studies 3 (2016), 83–126; R. David, 'Ceramic Industries of Meroitic Sudan', in D. Raue (ed.), *Handbook of Ancient Nubia* (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2019), 876.

[60] Smith, *Wretched Kush*, 189; Dann, *Archaeology*, 178.

Figure 3. Necked pot from KRG2, D.85. Photograph by A. Ginns, © Kurgus Project, Sudan Archaeological Research Society.

period. This dichotomy between indigenous handmade cooking pots and Egyptian-inspired wheelmade tableware can also be observed in other periods.[61] It has been suggested that the traditional cuisine in Sudan is markedly different from that in Egypt, with bread/beer preferred in Egypt and porridge/fermented beer in Sudan.[62] The way food is prepared and eaten reflects key ideological beliefs in a society,[63] and this is part of the *habitus* principle – how food is prepared, who is allowed to cook/eat, what utensils to use etc. The frequent presence of necked pots and high-walled, wide bowls at Kurgus supports a focus on porridge/stew foodstuffs, while the tableware suggests that this was perhaps then decanted into individual portions in keeping with practices popular further north, 'perhaps showing a potenial a merging of practices and highlighting the use of both wheelmade and handmade vessels in different aspects of community life.

Cooking pots often show mat impressions across the exterior [Figure 4]. Such impressions are also present on other vessels such as beer jars in the post-Meroitic period across the Middle Nile Region. These are not aesthetic, but a manufacturing by-product: vessels were made using a hole in the ground covered with a woven mat, which left mat impressions on the vessel wall.[64] The replication of this general

[61] e.g. Smith, *Wretched Kush*, 189–193; L. Miellé, 'Nubian traditions on the ceramics found in the Pharaonic town on Sai Island', in J. A. Anderson and D. A. Welsby (eds), *The Fourth Cataract and Beyond. Proceedings of the 12th International Conference for Nubian Studies* (Leuven, Paris and Walpole: Peeters, 2014), 389.

[62] Edwards, 'Sorghum'; R. Haaland, 'Porridge and Pot, Bread and Oven: Food Ways and Symbolism in Africa and the Near East from the Neolithic to the Present', *CAJ* 17(2) (2007), 165–182; J. Pope, 'Epigraphic evidence for a 'Porridge-and-Pot' tradition on the ancient Middle Nile', *Azania* 48(4) (2013), 473–497.

[63] Haaland, 'Porridge and pot', 168.

[64] See A. J. Arkell, 'Darfur Pottery', SNR 22 (1939), 79–88; P. Rose, 'Early 18th Dynasty Nubian pottery from the site of Sesebi, Sudan', in I. Forstner-Müller and P. Rose (eds), Nubian Pottery from Egyptian cultural contexts of the Middle and early New Kingdom. Proceedings of a workshop held at the Austrian Archaeological Institute at Cairo, 1-12 December 2010 (Vienna: Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut, 2012), 13–30; E. Czyżewska-Zalewska and Z. Kowarska, 'Modern and Ancient Pottery

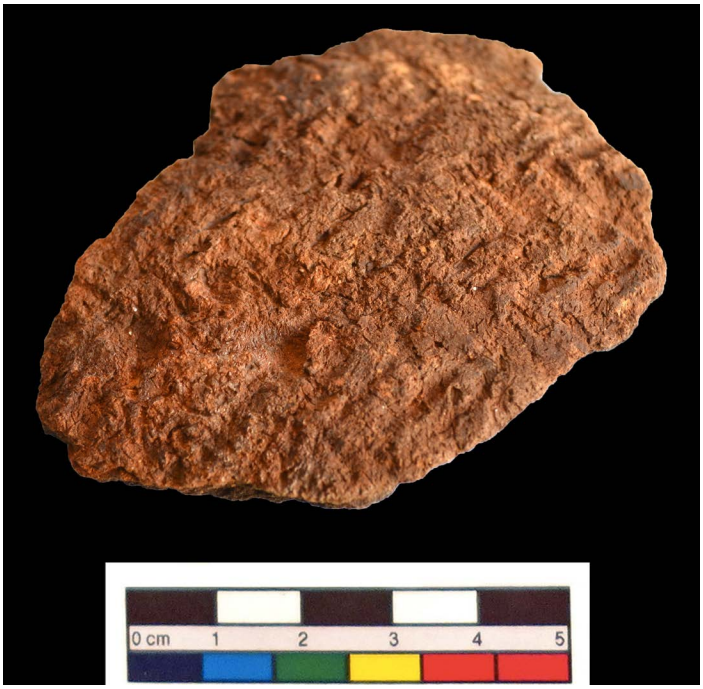

Figure 4. Fragment of cooking pot showing mat impressions, caused by manufacture of the vessel. Photograph by A. Ginns, © Kurgus Project, Sudan Archaeological Research Society.

method across long periods of time and across a wide expanse is indicative of the value of traditional skills, which were being passed down through generations – in a potentially gendered community of practice. In Egypt, women appear to have control over foodways[65] and by association, the pottery that was used in cooking, eating and storage. Such a gendered production of ceramics is visible in some modern regions of Sudan, for example Darfur, where women of the Zaghawa tribe who travel to urban areas to produce and sell vessels pass this skill down to their daughters, using matting as a base.[66] However, this is not ubiquitous across Sudan – examples of male potters are also known.[67]

These ethnographic examples are vital for our understanding of the role of handmade pottery and women in ancient contexts. The traditional inference that handmade pottery was produced by women is often part of a theoretical package in which the pottery is understood as domestic/produced only for the family, not technically adept/non-specialised, and cheap/non-valuable. It is important to stress that these features are not mutually exclusive – handmade does not necessarily mean cheap, and domestic does not necessarily mean non-specialist. Women may or may not have produced the handmade pottery at Kurgus (current evidence cannot confirm this either way), but if they did, this does not automatically make it less important in the community context.

The majority of fine tableware vessels at Kurgus [Figure 5] were wheelmade, including footed and ledge-rimmed bowls. Many vessels are clearly a legacy of Late Roman *terra sigillata* bowls inspired by contemporary pottery in Egypt,[68] with parallels at sites such as Elephantine.[69] The fact many vessels had a foot or other flat base indicates that they were designed to be placed on a flat surface, unlike the round bases on handmade bowls. In general, most wheelmade bowls had a small diameter,

Traditions in the el-Zuma and Karima Region in Sudan: An Introduction to Comparative Studies (Pots Project)', *IJHA* 24 (2020), 571–588.

[65] Smith, *Wretched Kush*, 189–190.

[66] Tobert, *Ethnoarchaeology*; for other Darfur examples, see also Arkell, 'Darfur Pottery'.

[67] e.g. Czyżewska-Zalewska and Kowarska, 'Modern and Ancient Pottery', 577.

[68] Pluskota, 'Kiln sites', 362.

[69] e.g. R. Gempeler, *Elephantine X. Die Keramik römischer bis früharabischer Zeit* (Mainz: P. von Zabern, 1992), figs 46–47.

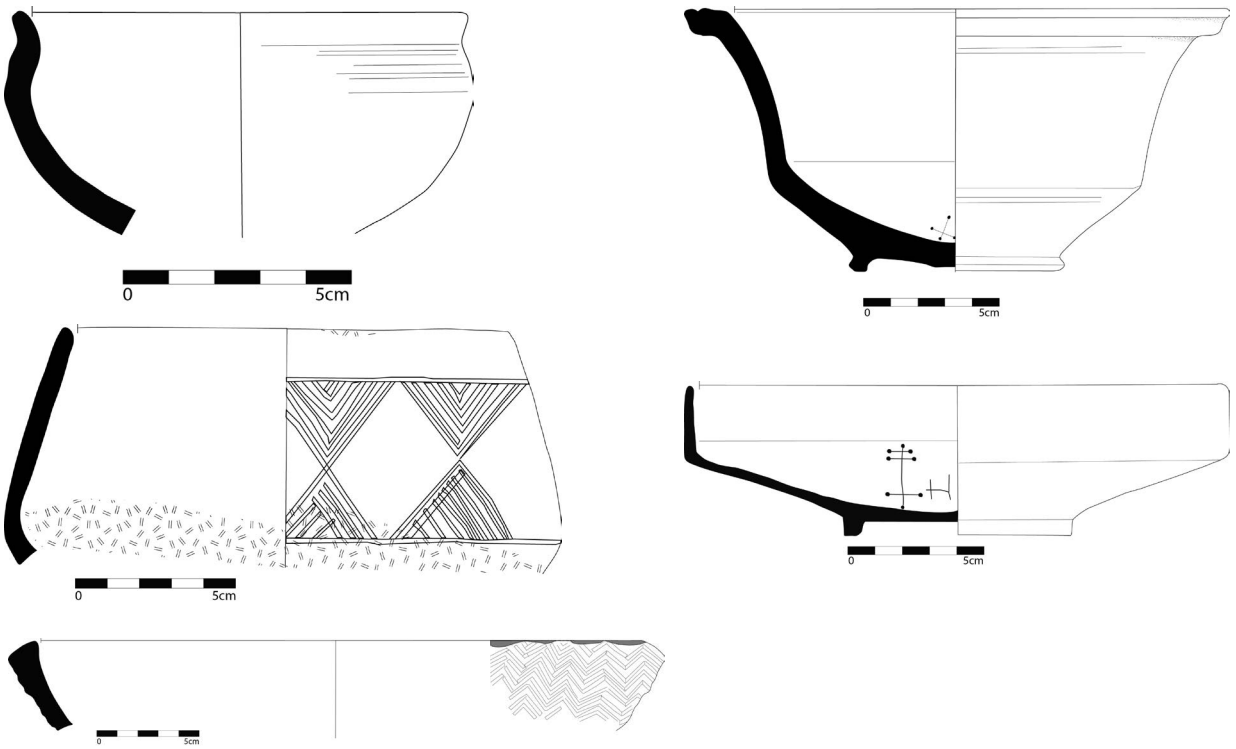

Figure 5. Examples of fineware bowls from KRG2. Left: Handmade bowls, D.295, D.374, D.309. Right: wheelmade bowls, D.198, D.34. Images © Kurgus Project, Sudan Archaeological Research Society. Drawings by the author and Virag Pabeschitz (D.34), inked by the author.

perhaps suggesting individual use during eating. However, a small number of handmade finewares were found, including fine black-burnished carinated bowls, flaring oxidised bowls with delicate impressed herringbone patterns, and thin-walled beakers with incised decoration. Some had very thin walls, showing specialist craftsmanship, and were clearly intended for display purposes, similar to the wheelmade bowls decorated with slips and painted motifs. While the fine handmade pots also had small diameters, their rarity suggests a more specialist use and these can be contrasted with handmade vessels of larger diameter, such as wedge-handled bowls, which may have been used for communal eating. This may suggest that some practices other than those around northern wheelmade traditions were retained in the community, and that these were acceptable to display in public.

Beer jars are another important handmade vessel type [Figure 6]. These are globular jars with a flaring or cup-shaped neck, often decorated with incised and impressed decoration on the circumference of the neck and the inside of the cup rim. At Kurgus they often bear incised zig-zag decoration filled with punctate impressions on the inner rim, or an incised palm-leaf motif. The palm-leaf motif has not been observed at larger medieval sites across the Dongola Reach, such as Old Dongola, where beer jars are typically painted. However, an example of a palm leaf motif on a beer jar fragment was noted on the surface of an unexcavated medieval site close to Site H25 in the northern Dongola reach (pers. ob.), so it is not restricted to Kurgus. The motif was common in the Early Christian period in Nubia, but it also has Kushitic and post-Meroitic antecedents,[70] perhaps indicating potential continuity within handmade traditions across religious change at the site,

[70] D. Bagińska, 'Pottery from Banganarti Season 2006', *PAM* 18 (2008), 410–425.

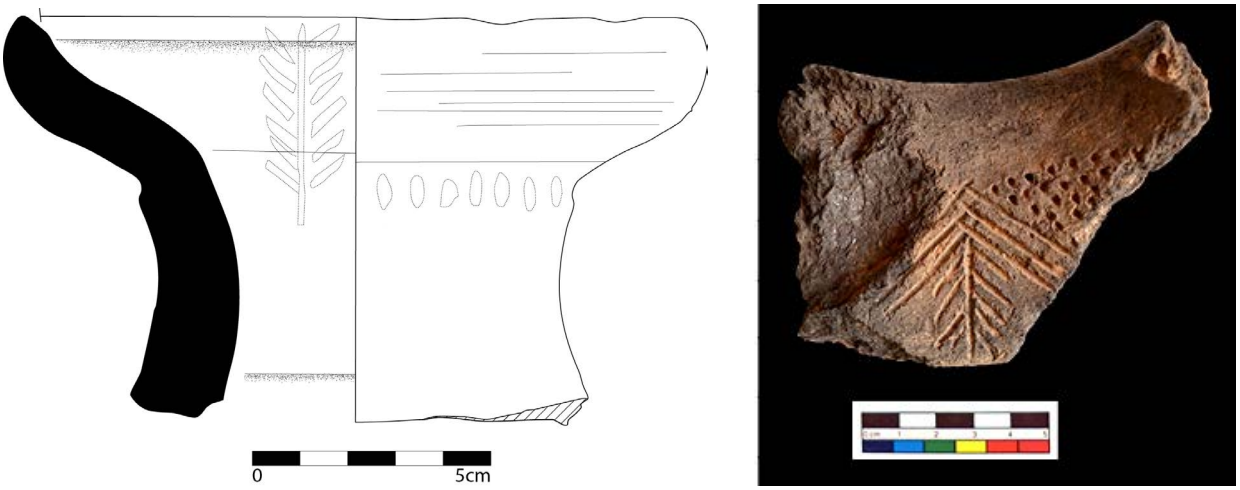

Figure 6. Left, beer jar fragment showing incised palm leaf motif (D.111); right, necked pot fragment showing similar motif (D.420). Drawing by the author; photograph by A. Ginns, © Kurgus Project, Sudan Archaeological Research Society.

while the vessel form itself has antecedents in post-Meroitic beer bottles.[71] The form is common in Upper Nubia, particularly the Dongola Reach[72] with similar shapes occurring as far south as Soba.[73] The examples at Soba were found in large quantities together, often stoppered with mud-bungs,[74] suggesting large-scale commodity movement, which may explain the presence of similar vessels at Kurgus and across Upper Nubia. However, it does not appear to have been imported into Lower Nubia, meaning that while many northern practices involving wheelmade vessels such as bowls and amphorae were adopted across the Middle Nile region and in Egypt, the behaviour surrounding these beer jars was likely specific to the Dongola Reach and further south – perhaps pointing to a Makurian-specific practice involving the contents.

Beer was an important beverage in medieval Sudan, in part because of its high nutritional value,[75] but also had an important social impact. It was an integral part of working parties across Africa in later periods and appears to have been used in a ritual mortuary context in the Kushite period, perhaps relating to funerary feasts.[76] Beer jars do occur in the nearby KRG3 cemetery at Kurgus in post-Meroitic tombs, but evidence for beer jars in burials disappears during the Christian period, both here and across Nubia. However, the presence of large quantities of beer jar fragments in the fortress at Kurgus may suggest that rather than disappearing, such practices adapted, moving out of the mortuary sphere and into the settlement.

The comparison of wheelmade and handmade traditions at Kurgus demonstrates that multiple communities of practice existed within the fortress, revealing activities and behaviours at the site. The presence of both traditions can perhaps be understood via the 'Great Tradition vs. Little Tradition' paradigm. Although this model was originally developed to religious practices and its interpretation

[71] Bagińska, 'Pottery from Banganarti', 411; M. el-Tayeb, Funerary Traditions in Nubian Early Makuria (Gdańsk: Gdańsk Archaeological Museum and Heritage Fund, 2012), 91.

[72] See for instance at Old Dongola: K. Danys, 'Pottery from Dongola', fig. 7; at Banganarti: Bagińska, 'Pottery from Banganarti', figs 1b, 2, 7; at Ghazali: Obłuski *et al.*, 'The Winter Seasons', 396, figs 19, 22.

[73] D. A. Welsby, *Soba II. Renewed Excavations within the Metropolis of the Kingdom of Alwa in Central Sudan*. (London: British Museum Press, 1998), 92; fig. 35.

[74] L. Allanson-Jones, 'The finds', in Welsby and Daniels (eds), *Soba*, 166.

[75] Welsby, *Medieval Kingdoms*, 186.

[76] Edwards, 'Sorghum, 73.

varied,[77] it can be usefully applied to social practices, particularly regarding foodways. The wheelmade wares, which show parallels with repertoires across Middle and Lower Nubia and into Egypt as well as the wider Byzantine world, are products of Great Tradition – urban, elite, centralised practices often reflected in writing. The handmade cooking and necked pots, as well as the specialist wares, are products of Little Tradition – local, oral practices that are perhaps better able to persist in periphery environments.[78] The repertoire at Kurgus shows the syncretism between these traditions, which were not differentiated by the community but merged in the life of the community – 'there are not two traditions, but simply the one which is their life'.[79]

7. Symbols and social cues

The presence of large quantities of both handmade and wheelmade pottery at Kurgus suggests that the community felt the need for both, and that specific products had to be made according to specific traditions. There are no wheelmade beer jars, cooking pots, or bread plates at Kurgus, while footed bowls were always wheelmade. Furthermore, decorative styles were generally restricted to one industry, with painted and applied decoration almost always applied to wheelmade pots, while incised, punctate, and fingernail impressions were almost always restricted to handmade vessels. Graffiti was also most commonly linked to wheelmade, rather than handmade pots – 73 examples on wheelmade vessels as opposed to 7 on handmade vessels, primarily religious in nature.[80] The preference for wheelmade vessels for this religious graffiti suggests that they were, in general but not exclusively, considered more appropriate for this practice in the community, while handmade wares were ubiquitously preferred for other specific decorative styles including punctate, finger and fingernail, and non-graffiti incisions. This points to the simultaneous expression of different identities at Kurgus via these different material culture groups.

Decoration is an important expression of community identity, used as a social cue to reinforce group *habitus*. The use of domestic material culture to reinforce identities in this way has been noted in many other historical situations.[81] In Nubia, ceramic decoration notably has been observed to have links with body decoration in earlier periods,[82] and the discovery of a tattoo symbolising the Archangel Michael on a medieval female,[83] a symbol also found on contemporary pottery, suggests this continued into the medieval period. The decoration and graffiti on the wheelmade pots at Kurgus demonstrates that the community was involved in broader belief systems and practices common across the contemporary Middle Nile Region and Egypt, with Christianity and literacy key aspects of identity.[84] The distinct nature of the forms and decoration on the handmade pottery, however, suggests that this relates to a different belief system, which was still considered relevant and was able to coexist with the Christian ideology portrayed on the wheelmade pottery. These 'communities of identity'[85] are especially visual aspects of *habitus*, suggesting that social boundaries

[77] R. Bussmann, 'Great and Little Traditions in Egyptology', in M. Ullmann (ed.), Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Ägyptische Tempel zwischen Normierung und Individualität. München, 29-31. August 2014 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016), 37–48.

[78] B. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt. Anatomy of a Civilization* (London: Routledge – 2nd edn., 2006), 111.

[79] L. Dumont and D. Pocock, 'Village Studies', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 2 (1957), 40.

[80] These findings, from a recent study of the Kurgus material, are currently being prepared for publication by the present author.

[81] e.g. Jones, *Archaeology of Ethnicity*, 134; S. Eckert, *Pottery and Practice. The expression of identity at Pottery Mound and Hummingbird Pueblo* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008).

[82] David, 'Ceramic Industries', 878; D. Edwards, 'Early Meroitic Pottery and the creation of an early imperial culture?', in A. Lohwasser and P. Wolf (eds), *Ein Forscherleben Zwischen den Welten. Zum 80.* (Berlin: *MittSAG*, 2014), 57.

[83] J. Taylor and D. Antoine, *Ancient Lives: new discoveries. Eight mummy stories* (London: British Museum Press, 2014), fig. 202.

[84] Welsby, *Medieval Kingdoms*, 237–238; A. Łatjar, 'Literacy in Christian Nubia: Perspectives from the Polish mission in Dongola', *S&N* 24 (2020), 18.

[85] Eckert, *Pottery and Practice*, 98.

at Kurgus may have changed as wheelmade material became common at the start of the Christian period. The use of both wheelmade and handmade goods by the community may reflect a tension over changing practices within the fortress over time, and attempts to coexist with new popular trends while also holding on to specific traditions – resulting in a syncretism between Great and Little Traditions in the community.

8. Conclusion

Using a holistic approach to ceramics allows us to move away from simplistic models that focus purely on the economic, rather than social, meaning of pottery, which tends to quickly segregate handmade and wheelmade pottery into categories of 'crude and domestic' and 'state-produced', and not delve into their impact more deeply. Using sociological models, we can begin to access the role that different ceramic industries played within the community at Kurgus, even without the identification of a kiln at the site. The frequent appearance of beer jars, as well as the presence of both fine and coarse wares, tells us that traditional Nubian ceramic models continued to be as relevant in the fortress as wheelmade vessels, and that both traditions were important to life in the fortress. This tells us that the two industries and traditions were coexisting aspects of the medieval behavioural system, and both were important expressions of the community identity at Kurgus. The fact that the handmade industry persisted throughout the Christian period demonstrates that traditions surrounding these were key aspects of the Kurgus *habitus* and that, even in the face of new wheelmade technologies and iconographies from Christianity, still held a compulsion over the community.

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IV.
Compulsion and Control in the Administration of Labour and Human Resources

8
Controlling Workforces at the Palace: Some Perspectives on Administrative Practice at Kom Medinet Gurob

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Abstract

There are few institutional archives extant from ancient Egypt, which makes even rather fragmentary examples important for the modelling of both scribal practices and broader questions of socio-economic structures. This paper presents some key documents, both published and unpublished, from Petrie's excavations at Kom Medinet Gurob, where he found parts of a palace archive. The focus is on administrative practice, particularly as regards the organization and control of workforces, as well as on contextualising the documents in view of the patchy record of New Kingdom institutional management.

Keywords: Administration; Archives; Duality; Kom Medinet Gurob; Workforce

1. Introduction

There has been much discussion in Egyptology regarding both the nature and extent of the Egyptian state.[1] Broadly speaking one can place most voices in the debate on a scale between two extremes: from an understanding of the Egyptian state as all-pervasive and all-powerful, to an understanding of the state as rather small, with little permanent presence in most parts of Egyptian culture and geography. Presumably few scholars would be comfortable at either end of this scale, but there is also no clear consensus on a specific middle position. The reason for this is, to no small degree, to be found in the extremely patchy record available to us. The scale of state institutions, and their ability to impose their authority on specific geographical areas, certain demographic groups, or particular aspects of culture, frequently has to be reconstructed from fragmentary sources, the interpretation of which is often contested.

[1] The literature is vast, and even an overview is beyond the scope of a single footnote: the following references are mainly restricted to works in English, and relating primarily to the New Kingdom. Some key contributions – 'key' here in that they exemplify a selection of the different perspectives in play – are J. C. Moreno García, *The State in Ancient Egypt: Power, Challenges and Dynamics* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020); B. Muhs, *The Ancient Egyptian Economy, 3000-30 BCE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); D. A. Warburton, *The Fundamentals of Economics: Lessons from the Bronze Age Near East* (Neuchâtel: Recherches et Publications, 2016); C. J. Eyre, *The Use of Documents in Pharaonic Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). The different chapters in the handbook volume edited by J. C. Moreno García, *Ancient Egyptian Administration* (Leiden: Brill, 2013) also showcase different perspectives, but to a lesser degree. My aim here is not to single out these authors for criticism, but simply to note that they differ substantially in their modelling of the Egyptian state and its economy (and, therefore, implicitly or explicitly, its scale and power). Other important voices in recent debates (and the authors above have made multiple contributions beyond the monographs mentioned) have been E. Eichler, P. Grandet, B. Haring, B. Kemp, B. Menu, R. Müller-Wollermann, and M. Römer, to name just a few: references to their work, as well as to older literature by scholars like M. Gutgesell, W. Helck, J. J. Janssen, and K. Polyani, can be found in the introduction of K. M. Cooney, *The Cost of Death: The Social and Economic Value of Funerary Art in the Ramesside Period* (*EgUit* 22 – Leiden: *NINO*, 2007), 8–12.

A useful analysis of the discussion, viewed through the lens of post-colonialism, is Chris Eyre's 'The Colonialisation of Pharaonic Egypt: The modernisation of order in Egyptian administration', where he argues that:[2]

> The ideals of European colonising regimes have provided a model for filling out the apparently defective evidence base from Egypt, in order to create a vision of ancient administration... [based on] an ideology of efficiency rooted in a cultural value judgment, and in the imposition of Eurocentric and universalising expectations of cultural evolution, which seek to write history in the false frame of a social-Darwinist conceptualisation of developmental theories about the origins of the state, and about the behaviour and working of the ancient state.

It seems clear that the 'apparently' defective evidence base is precisely that: it is very fragmentary, survives extremely unevenly, and can be frustratingly difficult to interpret. Part of the reason for the difference of opinion among scholars – but by no means the only part – can surely be traced back to the fact that the surviving material is open to different interpretations because of its fragmentary nature. An awareness of the blind spots of the archaeological record, that is to say the kind of sources that we are lacking, provides a useful warning against being too dogmatic in favour of any model: as Eyre notes, 'In the absence of any sort of administrative archive in the archaeological record, and of any extended narrative description of the use of public record, there can be no givens'. This characterisation of the archaeological record is broadly true, but with some important exceptions. While it is true that there are few extensive archives from ancient Egypt, there are institutional collections of archival material that do much to shed light on both archival practice generally, as well as on the operations of the institutions to which they belong.[3] As always, there are issues of interpretation (who wrote the documents, for what purpose and for whom, are they representative, etc.), but they contribute substantially to the debate and deserve to be taken seriously as remnants of archives. The material from Gurob is a case in point, and although my work on this is far from completed, I take this opportunity to present one case study of how this might be done in practice. My argument rests partly on direct evidence, and partly on – effectively – reading between the lines, both of which require acts of interpretation.

2. The Gurob palace archive: archaeological context and research history

The papyrus fragments from Gurob were excavated by Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie in 1889,[4] and a small handful of examples were then promptly published, along with documents from Lahun, by F. Ll. Griffith, nine years later.[5] Some years after this Sir Alan H. Gardiner transcribed a number of the fragments to train himself in Ramesside administrative hieratic, before tackling the 10-metres long and extremely cursive Wilbour Papyrus,[6] and a selection of these were duly published in his *Ramesside Administrative Documents*.[7] Many of the papyri in that volume were also translated by him in an article,[8] but notably not the Gurob documents.[9]

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[2] I am grateful to Chris Eyre for having shared a preliminary version of his article with me; it will be published in the proceedings volume of the conference *Filtering Decorum – Facing Reality* (held in Liège in 2013).

[3] For a recent overview of archives from the Old Kingdom to the Ramesside Period, see F. Hagen (with a contribution by D. Soliman), 'Archives in Ancient Egypt, 2500–1000 BCE', in A. Bausi *et al.* (eds), *Manuscripts and Archives: Comparative Views on Record-Keeping* (*Studies in Manuscript Cultures* 10 – Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), 29–127. The situation is comparable for collections of literary material, i.e. libraries: F. Hagen, 'Libraries in Ancient Egypt, c. 1600–800 BCE', in K. Ryholt and G. Barjamovic (eds), *Libraries before Alexandria: Ancient Near Eastern Traditions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 244–318.

[4] W. M. F. Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara* (London: Kegan Paul, 1890), 36.

[5] F. Ll. Griffith, *Hieratic Papyri from Kahun and Gurob (Principally of the Middle Kingdom)* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1897–1898), vol. I, 91–98; vol. II, pls. 38-40.

[6] A. H. Gardiner, *The Wilbour Papyrus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948).

[7] A. H. Gardiner, *Ramesside Administrative Documents* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1948), 14–35.

[8] A. H. Gardiner, 'Ramesside Texts Relating to the Taxation and Transport of Corn', *JEA* 27 (1941), 19–73.

[9] He did, however, publish a translation of a copy of a letter on *P. UC 32784*, a page from the palace day-book already published by Griffith (*Hieratic Papyri*, I, 94–98, II, pls. 39–40); A. H. Gardiner, 'The Harem at Miwer', *JNES* 12 (1953), 145–49.

The archaeological context of the papyri is not known in detail; in the excavation report, Petrie simply noted that 'of papyri a few were found, but none in such fine state as those of Kahun. The only royal name is that of Ramessu II. None of the roles were sealed, and many were crushed up as waste paper'.[10] They were presumably mainly found somewhere within the palace enclosure, and based on internal evidence it is clear that the administrative papyri are the remains of the archive of the institution *pr-ḫnr n Mrwr*, 'the *ḫnr*-palace of Gurob'.[11]

Today the papyri are divided between the Petrie Museum and the British Museum, with the latter having received them from Gardiner, after Petrie had assigned their publication to him.[12]

The management of workforces: a name-list and its implications

In this section I briefly present an unpublished document from the palace, and try to contextualise it both in terms of the archive itself, as well as in relation to New Kingdom administrative practice more broadly.

The papyrus in question is *BM EA* 10776 [Figures 1–4], a relatively well-preserved document, which originally would, in all likelihood, have been associated with the palace day-book. At 30 x 18cm it is shorter than the full height of the day-book roll itself (which is 42cm in height), but local scribes appear to have simply appended name lists to (or filed them with) the day-book roll, rather than copy long lists of personal names into it,[13] so the discrepancy in height does not suggest a different archival context. It is essentially a name-list, a category of document well-attested among Ramesside administrative documents, but its state of preservation and the way it is laid out provides welcome information about both the organisation of workforces at the palace, and scribal practices there. Although it is unpublished, Gardiner had transcribed it in his notebooks, initially as part of his work for the *Wörterbuch*, and it was mentioned in passing by both Helck in his *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, and Ranke in his *Personennamen*.[14]

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[10] Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara*, 36. A more detailed discussion of the archaeological context, including data from Petrie's field-journal, will be found in the final publication of the papyri (in preparation), but the only probable identification of fragments mentioned there are some pieces found in a tomb (no. 267) which may correspond to *P. UC 32801*, a short Book of the Dead manuscript, perhaps of the Third Intermediate Period. See also the discussion in S. Quirke and F. Hagen, 'New Kingdom Hieratic in the UCL Petrie Museum of Egyptian and Sudanese Archaeology: Collection-level summary, and a preliminary report on the Gurob papyri', in A. Fanciulli *et al.* (eds), *New Kingdom Hieratic Collections around the World* (Aegyptiaca Leodiensia – Liège: Presses Universitaires de Liège, forthcoming) and the remarks on the work of Petrie at Gurob in B. J. Kemp, 'The Harim-Palace at Medinet el-Ghurab', *ZÄS* 105 (1978), 124–126; M. Serpico, 'Gurob', in J. Picton and I. Pridden (eds), *Unseen Images: Archive Photographs in the Petrie Museum* (London: Golden House Publications, 2008), 20–23.

[11] The key term is consistently spelled *ḫnty* in the Gurob papyri, but this is simply a different way to represent the phonetic value of the word (*Wb.* 3, 297). The origin and meaning of the term *ḫnr* is debated: see E. Reiser, *Der königliche Harim im alten Ägypten und seine Verwaltung* (Vienna: Notring, 1972); D. Nord, 'The Term chener: "Harem" or "Musical Performers"?', in W. K. Simpson (ed.), *Studies in Ancient Egypt, the Aegean, and the Sudan: Essays in Honor of Dows Dunham on the Occasion of his 90th Birthday, June 1, 1980* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1981), 137–145; J. G. Callender, 'The Nature of the Egyptian "Harem": Dynasties 1–20', *BACE* 5 (1994), 7–25; S. E. Fantechi and A. P. Zingarelli, 'Singers and Musicians in New Kingdom Egypt', *GM* 186 (2002), 27–35. Whatever the precise nuance of the term might be, the traditional translation "harem" seems misleading to me given both the modern popular understanding of the word and its specific historical meaning in relation to Ottoman palaces. As applied to the Gurob palace it clearly indicates a royal residence where parts of the royal family – of both sexes – lived, and I am not aware of any evidence suggesting that the palace was "harem"-like in the sense of implying a segregation of gender; the existence of a certain level of control over access to the royal family is a given in most monarchies, and not enough to label their residence a "harem".

[12] For the history of the papyri, see Gardiner, *RAD*, viii-ix. Those in the Petrie Museum are identified by the inventory numbers beginning 'UC', and those in the British Museum with number beginning 'BM EA'.

[13] The full height is demonstrated by *P. UC 32784* = 'P. Gurob III' (Griffith, *Hieratic Papyri*, I, 94–98, II, pls. 39–40). For the practice of omitting the name-list proper from the day-book, see *recto* 2.10: "Copy of the (list of) every servant who is working in the *pr-ḫnt* in Merwer, beginning from year 2, month 3 of Akhet, day 14", which is followed by a short blank space and then another dated entry, instead of an actual name-list; see Gardiner, *RAD* 15.4–5.

[14] W. Helck, *Materialen zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Neuen Reiches* (*AAWLM* 1960/10 – Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1961–1969), 253; H. Ranke, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen, vol. I: Verzeichnis der Namen* (Glückstadt: J. J. Augustin, 1935), 282.15, 392.22,

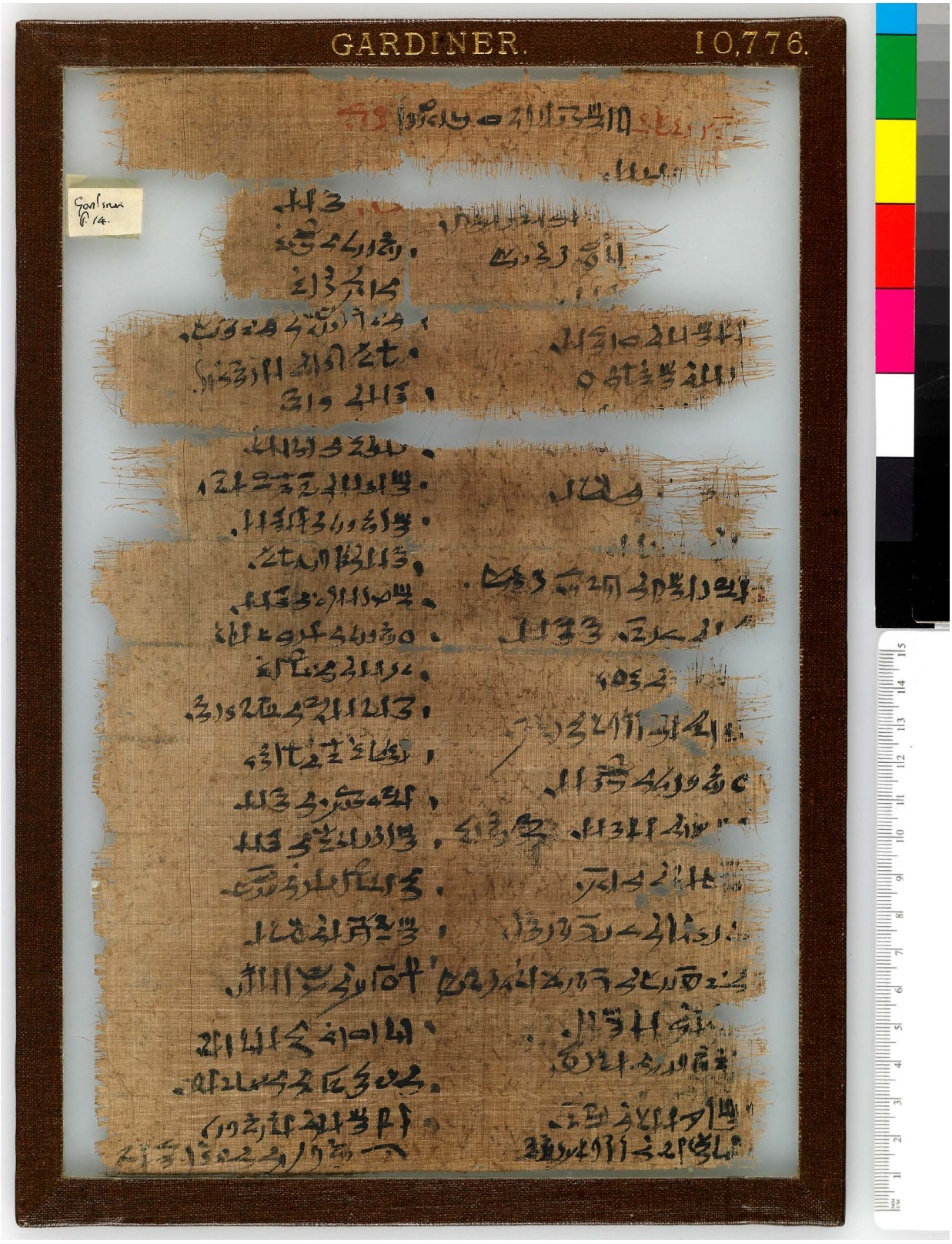

Figure 1. Recto of P. BM EA 10776.

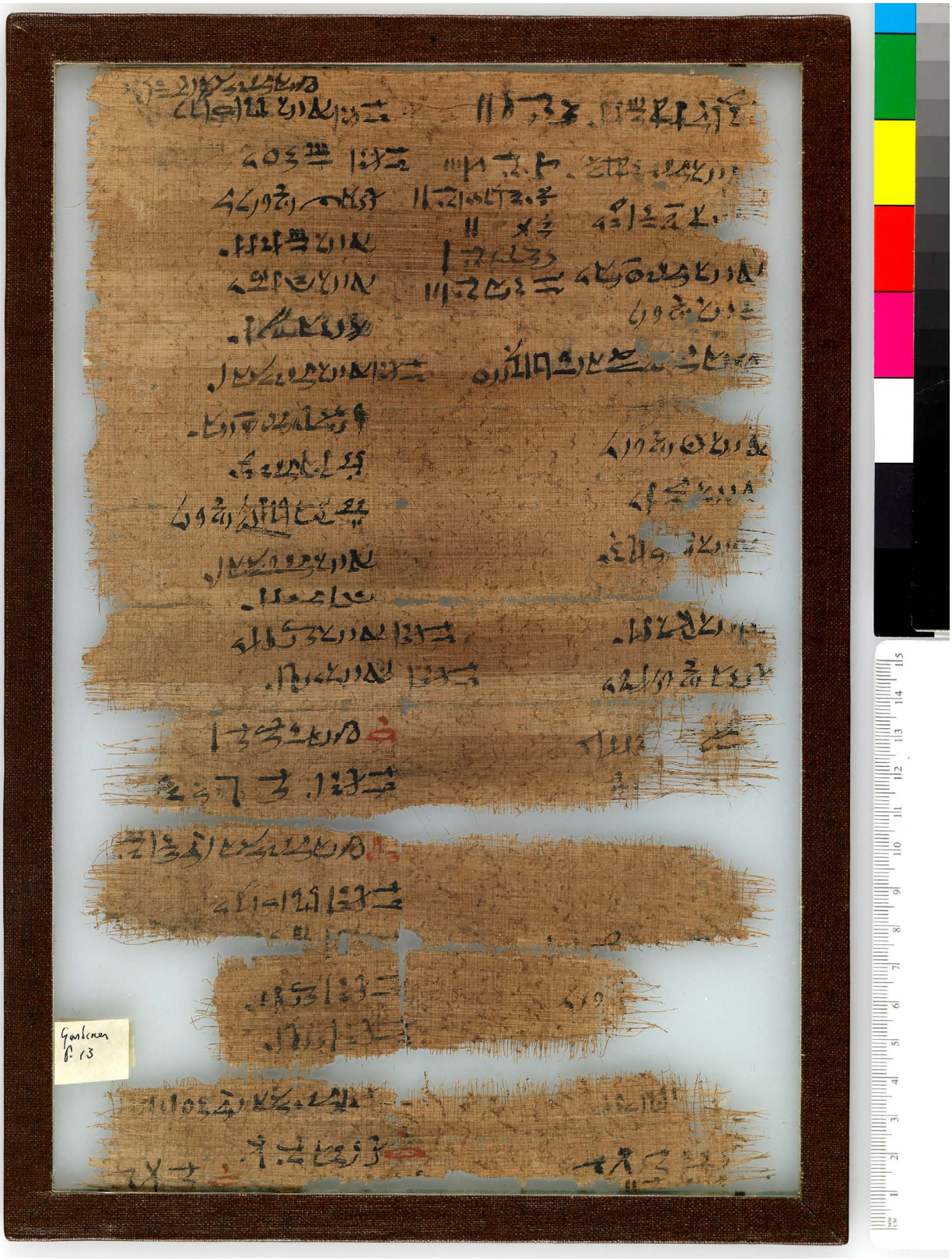

Figure 2. Verso of P. BM EA 10776.

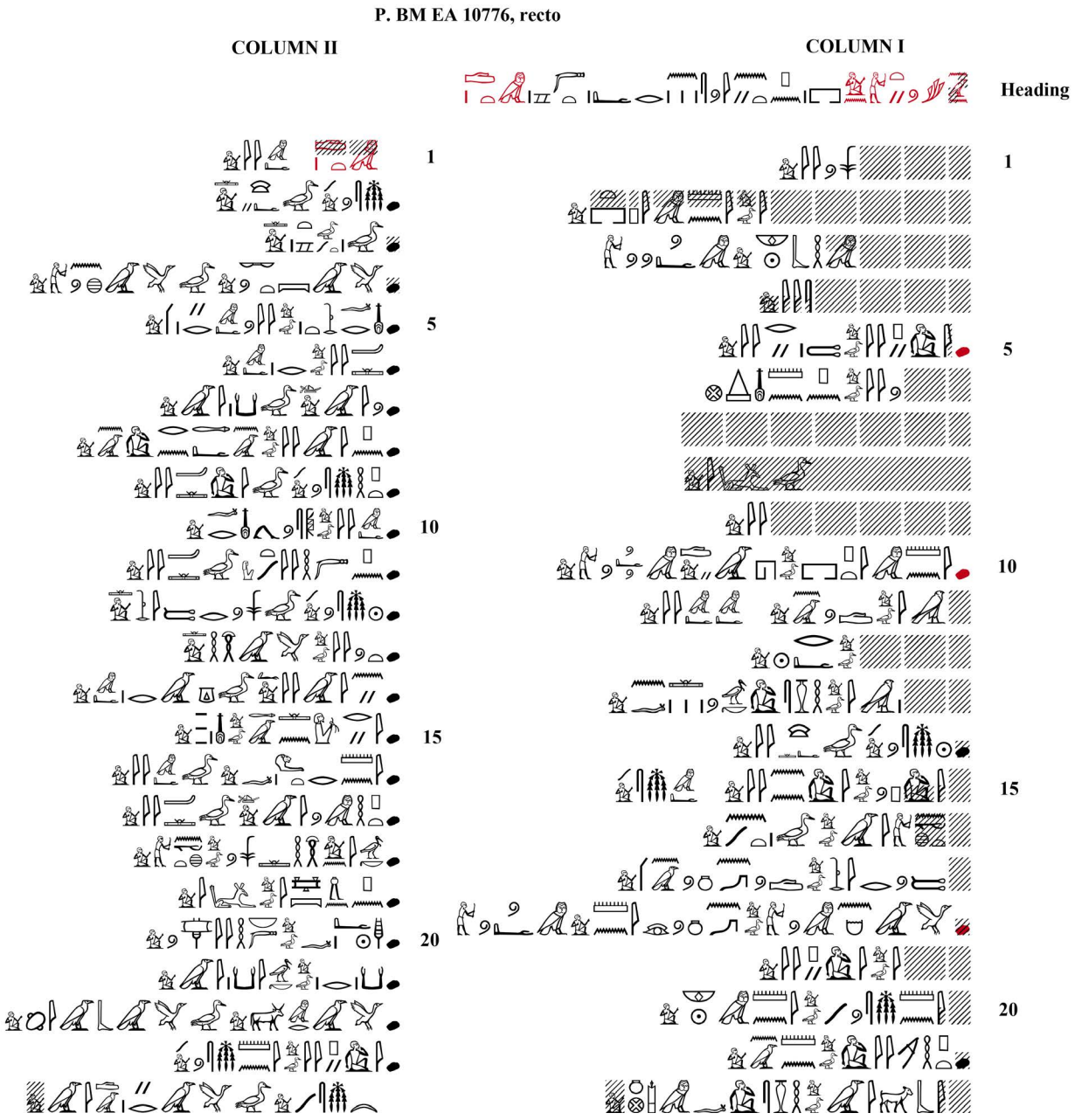

Figure 3. Transcription of recto of P. BM EA 10776.

Translation of *P. BM EA* 10776

Notes and comments on the following translation have been kept to a minimum pending the full publication of the archive, and focus mainly on issues impacting my argument about the organisation of workforces.[15] The layout of the original document is respected as far as possible in the presentation

400.13, and *passim*; Gardiner's notebook is now in the British Museum. Note that Ranke consistently refers to *recto* as "verso", and vice versa.

[15] For reasons of space the presentation of the document is cursory in many respects, and readers will have to wait for the final edition for detailed information on materiality, the transcription, the high proportion of foreign names, the presence of checkmarks, etc.

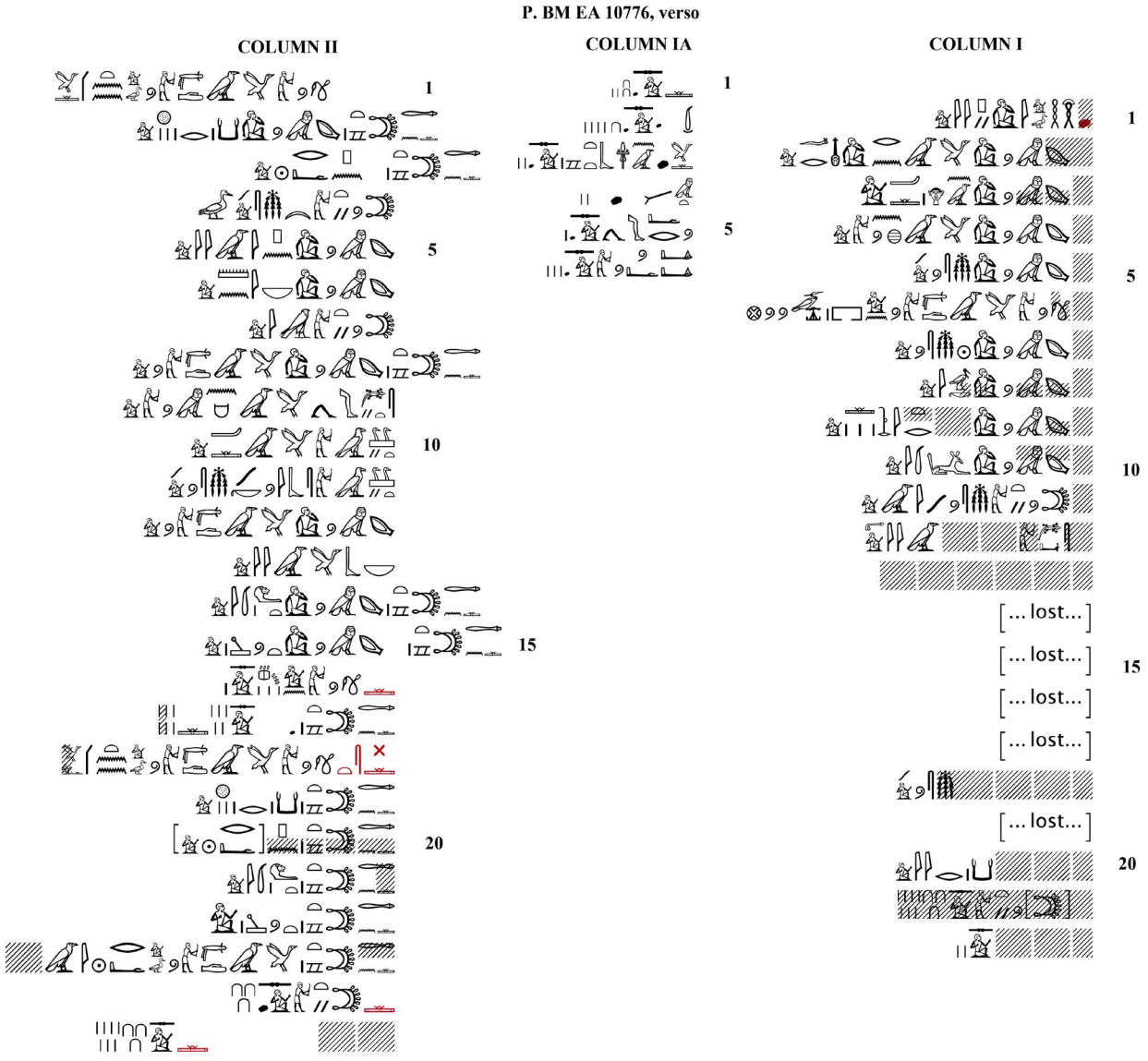

Figure 4. Transcription of verso of P. BM EA 10776.

of the translation, with the exception of col. IA on the *verso*, which is reproduced separately for reasons of space: its original position, as seen in Figure 2, is in the margin between col. I and II.

RECTO

The Cultivators of this house who are for the northern region. Under the authority of:

	(Column I)		(Column II)
(1)	[...]suy	(1)	Under the authority of May:
(2)	[...]i, son of Amenemope.	(2)	Mose, son of Khay.
(3)	[...]emheb; (drafted) as soldier.	(3)	Sasatu.
(4)	[...]sy.	(4)	Paheripedjet, son of Panakhu.
(5)	Ipy, son of Tjary.	(5)	Neferrenpet, son of Ymar.
(6)	[...]wy, son of Penmenefer.	(6)	Huy, son Rema.
(7)	[...]	(7)	Wia, son of Kaia.
(8)	[...], son of Seti.	(8)	Peniay, son of Naarenna.
(9)	[...]y.	(9)	Ptahmose, son of Ihuy.
(10)	... Amenemope, son of Hady; (drafted) as soldier.	(10)	May, son of Shemsunefer.
(11)	Hor, son of Duna: with May.	(11)	Penmehyt, son of Huy.
(12)	[...], son of Re.	(12)	Ramose, son of Surtji.
(13)	[...]hori, son of Hesbakuenef.	(13)	Tuy, son of Pawah.
(14)	Ramose, son of Khay.	(14)	Niay, son of Garum.
(15)	Ipu, son of Ineny; with Mose.	(15)	Iryenaa, son of Neferu.
(16)	Nakhtia, son of Sanut.	(16)	Amenerhatef, son of May.
(17)	Tjuri, son of Dununa.	(17)	Ptahemwia, son of Huy.
(18)	Panehemu, son of Nuamun; (drafted) as soldier.	(18)	Bakienwahsu, son of Nakht.
(19)	[...]i, son of Ipy.	(19)	Peninhery, son of Sethi.
(20)	Amenmose, son of Amenemheb.	(20)	Ahaef, son of Nebmehyt.
(21)	Meryptah, son of Menna.	(21)	Kar, son of Bakikai.
(22)	Ibia, son of Hesefemiunu.	(22)	Pamerihu, son of Pabai.
		(23)	Ipy, son of Amenmose.
		(24)	Ahmose, son of Pardai.

VERSO

	(Column I)		(Column II)
(1)	Wah, son of Ipy.	(1)	The controller Pashedu, son of Tenen.
(2)	The servant Parennefer.	(2)	The great of fields and servant Karkar.
(3)	The servant Naherhu.	(3)	The great of fields Penra.
(4)	The servant Panakhu.	(4)	The cultivator Ahmose.
(5)	The servant Mose.	(5)	The servant Peniay.
(6)	The controller Pashedu of the House of Bahu (?).	(6)	The servant Nebamen.
(7)	The servant Ramose.	(7)	The cultivator Hori.
(8)	The servant Baki.	(8)	The great of fields and servant Pashedu.
(9)	The servant [...]teri.	(9)	The guard Panehem.
(10)	The servant Sethi.	(10)	The washerman Pahu.

(Column I)		(Column II)	
(11)	The cultivator Mosia.	(11)	The washerman Sebikmose.
(12)	The guard (?) [...]ay.	(12)	The servant Pashedu.
(13)	[...traces only...]	(13)	<The servant?> Nebpay.
(14)	[...traces only...]	(14)	The great of fields and servant Hati.
(15)	[...traces only...]	(15)	The great of fields and servant Tusa.
(16)	[...traces only...]	(16)	TOTAL: Controller of grain: 1 man
(17)	[...traces only...]	(17)	Great of fields: 5 men; 6 in all.
(18)	[...]mose.	(18)	LISTING OF THEM: The controller Pashedu, son of Tenen
(19)	[...traces only...]	(19)	The great of fields Karkar
(20)	[...]kary.	(20)	The great of fields Penr[a]
(21)	[Cul]tivators: 37 men.	(21)	The great of fields Hati.
(22)	[...] 2 men.	(22)	The great of fields Tusa.
		(23)	The great of fields Pashedu, son of Raia[...]
		(24)	TOTAL: Cultivators: 30 men
		(25)	TOTAL (ALTOGETHER): 37 men

(Column IA)

(1) Total: 22 men

(2) Remaining: 14 men

(3) Absent, those <in> the East: 2 men.

(4) Dead: 2

(5) Escaped: 1 man

(6) Drafted as soldiers: 3 men

Notes and comments

The document is a name-list providing data on individuals from the palace ("this house") who were sent out to "the northern region" for some unspecified work. It is divided into two columns on both the front and the back, which should be understood to be read continuously, i.e. col. I on the front continues as col. I on the back, as the scribe simply turned the papyrus over on the horizontal axis when he reached the bottom of the page. The continuity is confirmed by the additions made at the bottom of both columns on the back. Upon turning the page, the scribe (probably a single individual as the hand seems identical on both sides) not only continued his list, but he also changed the way in which he identified the individual workers. On the front he had listed everyone by name and filiation ('X son of Y'), whereas on the back, with the exception of the first individual in both columns, he decided to list people by title instead ('the servant NN').

At the head of each column is the name of the individual under whose authority the groups of workers are organised: col. I has only the final signs of the name preserved ([...]suy), whereas col. II has the name "May". Neither of these are identified by title or filiation; they may have been well-known to the scribe and the palace administration and so did not require further identification, or they may have been less important for the purpose of record-keeping, for example if the focus was on the workers themselves (see below).

At one point the scribe added a preliminary calculation in the margin between the two columns on the back (*verso* IA), which relates to the workers listed in *recto* I. This calculation starts by adding the individuals listed in *recto* I, which yields the number 22. However, this initial list was clearly an ideal in that it deals with people assigned to the work, not all of whom could take part. Fourteen of them did show up, but eight did not: these are identified as such on the *recto* itself, in some cases, by the addition of various phrases after their names. Three were "(drafted) as soldiers" (*m wꜥw*; I.3, 10 and 18), and these are described as "put to soldiering" on the *verso* (*dd <m?> wꜥw*; *verso* IA.6). Two are simply said to be "with" other individuals (*m-ꜥ* NN; I.11, 15), and these presumably correspond to those said to be 'absent, those in the East' on the *verso* (*wsf nꜣ <m?> iꜣbtt*; *verso* IA.3). The remaining absentees – the two individuals who are said to be "dead" (*mwt*; *verso* IA.4) and one who had "fled" (*wꜥr*; *verso* IA.5) – are not readily identified on the *recto*; presumably the missing check-marks in the right-hand margin would have indicated which ones were meant. The mention of someone having "fled" probably suggests that whatever agricultural task these people were recruited for may have been some kind of forced labour, so that part of the purpose of the name-list was to keep track of fulfilment of work obligations.

The numbers given at the end of each column on the *verso* seem to be adding up the individuals listed above, and although these lines are partly damaged for col. I, it is clear in the tallying of numbers at the bottom that both groups of workers amounted to 37 individuals in total. In the list of names in col. II on the *verso*, there is a repetition of some names at the end. The initial list includes five people who, in addition to their regular title of "servant", are also described in the margin with the phrase "great of fields"' (*ꜥꜣ n iḫ.w*; *verso* II.2, 3, 8, 14, and 15; or perhaps "great of cultivators"?), seemingly added as an afterthought. It also includes an individual added later at the top of the column ("the controller <of grain>", *rwḏ <n ỉt>*). These six people are all tallied in *verso* II.16 and 17, and their names listed again immediately underneath (*verso* II.18–23). Then, at the very end, the total of "cultivators" is given as 30 (*verso* II.24), which – when added to the five people described as "great of fields" and the "controller of grain" – is calculated (wrongly) as a grand total of 37 workers (*verso* II.25), the same number as in the other column (*verso* I.21). It is not straightforward to correlate these totals with the number of names in the document as currently preserved, but for the purposes of my focus in this article this is less important – the main point is that the workers are clearly being organised in two groups where the number of workers was calculated as 37, and both groups were "under the authority of" two separate individuals.[16]

Perspectives on the management of workforces

The organisation of workforces into two groups is also detectable in another document from the palace archive. *P. UC 32784*, which is the best-preserved page from the day-book,[17] contains a wide range of texts. The *recto* is dominated by a copy of a letter sent from a female administrator at the palace to the king (Seti II), dealing with the need for manpower, followed by dated daybook-entries relating to the management of workforces (an omitted name-list) and the delivery of fish from the local governor. The *verso* continues with dated entries dealing with similar topics, but notably also includes a long table detailing the issue of oil to workers. Frustratingly, the beginnings of the lines are missing, so that the crucial terminology employed in the headings for this transaction is not recoverable, but the

[16] On the implications of this organisation, see Concluding remarks below. The problem with relating the numbers at the end of the columns (as well as the numbers between columns I and II) to the actual name-list is primarily due to the loss of a 1-cm strip at the right-hand margin of *recto* and *verso* I, which means that most of the checkmarks here are missing. The importance of these checkmarks becomes clear in *recto* I.10 and I.18, where the marks were made in red ink rather than the usual black; in both these cases the individual is also explicitly notes as "drafted as a soldier". The use of red ink for the checkmarks in *recto* I.5 and *verso* I.1 then strongly suggests that these individuals were also absent, despite no descriptive text next to their names (they might be dead, or have fled, as noted in *verso* IA.4–5).

[17] Fn. 13 above; and cf. Helck, *Materialien*, 697.

basic process is clear: different amounts of olive oil (*nḥḥ*) and moringa oil (*bꜣḳ*) are given to various individuals.[18] Just above the table itself are a few lines explaining that its purpose is to provide details of oil issued: here the numbers show that the grand total was 130 *hnw* (*c.* 62 litres) of moringa oil and 2286.25 *hnw* (*c.* 1097 litres) of olive oil, a considerable volume. The initial columns of the table – where the headings are missing – deal with a group of only two individuals who each are issued 5 *hnw* of olive oil, and 5 *hnw* of moringa oil.[19] Griffith suggested, no doubt correctly, that these two men would have been some kind of overseers or foremen. The remaining columns deal with the "men of the palace" who are each issued 2.5 *hnw* of olive oil. In terms of olive oil these workers are, in other words, paid only half of what the overseers received, which is the same proportional relationship seen in much of the documentation from Deir el-Medina, where the 'foremen' or 'captains' (*ḫry isw.t*, *ḥn.tiw*) are normally paid twice as much oil as 'workmen' (*rmṯ n isw.t*).[20] However, at Gurob the overseers also received an additional amount of moringa oil which the workers do not get, so in practice they get four times as much oil (which might represent a much higher value because there are no recorded prices of moringa oil).[21]

There are several aspects of the table that remain uncertain. The precise range of time covered, for example, is unknown: Griffith suggested that the fifteen lines of the table itself "relate to fifteen days, or half a month", whereas Helck suggested that each line should be interpreted as a week (i.e. ten days).[22] There is also some confusion in the interpretation of lines I.14 and I.16 where the calculations do not match the number of overseers – either the total of oil is wrong, or there was in fact two and not one overseer present in those cases, despite the information in the personnel column.[23] However, it leaves little doubt that "men of the palace" were being rewarded for unspecified work and, significantly for my argument, that they were divided into two groups under two overseers. These two groups vary in size: over the fourteen lines the mean is 61 men, and the median is 67.5, which is suggestive given the 74

[18] The precise nature of *nḥḥ* oil is much debated, with olive oil or sesame oil the most probable alternatives, but it may also simply be a generic term for vegetable oil (as opposed to oil or fat from animals), rather than a specific type of oil; see M. Müller, 'Es werde Licht? Eine kurze Geschichte von Öl und Fett in Deir el-Medina in der 20. Dynastie', in B. J. J. Haring, O. E. Kaper and R. van Walsem (eds), *The Workman's Progress: Studies in the Village of Deir el-Medina and Other Documents from Western Thebes in Honour of Rob Demarée* (Leiden: *NINO*, 2014), 180–81.

[19] Gardiner, *RAD*, 16–17. One *hnw* amounts to *c.* 0.48 litres. The 'half' man recorded in I.14 is probably, as Griffith suggested, a boy who was paid less, as we know from other records of reimbursement of work: J. J. Janssen, 'Rations and Rank', in J. J. Janssen (ed.), *Village Varia: Ten Studies on the History and Administration of Deir el-Medina* (*EgUit* 11 – Leiden: *NINO*, 1997), 19–21.

[20] See Müller, 'Es werde Licht?', 188, where three of four sources have these proportions (the last has 16:6). To these examples add R. Demarée and D. Valbelle, *Les registres de recensement du village de Deir el-Médineh (le "Stato Civile"* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), pl. 8, where foremen are given 28 *hnw* of oil (*sḳnn*), and workmen 14 *hnw*. However, it is worth noting that the difference between foremen and workers in terms of grain wages at Deir el-Medina is much less (7.5:5.5), and as Janssen warned, administrative records are often fragmentary, scribal mistakes abound, and it is not straight-forward to extract firm principles on wages from the material: see Janssen, 'Rations and Rank', 13–17.

[21] Its absence in the Deir el-Medina material has been remarked on, with the inference that it was quite expensive: Helck, *Materialien*, 700.

[22] Griffith, *Hieratic Papyri*, I, 96; Helck, *Materialien*, 697. Note that Griffith's restoration of *ḥr.t-hrw* ('daily') in the line above the table (*Hieratic Papyri*, I, 96), on which his interpretation of the table may have been based, is "quite impossible" given the traces (Gardiner, *RAD*, 15). The value of the olive oil issued to the workers (2.5 *hnw*) is roughly equivalent to just over one sack (*ḥꜣr* = 76.88 litres) of barley or emmer; see J. J. Janssen, *Commodity Prices from the Ramessid Period: An Economic Study of the Village of Necropolis Workmen at Thebes* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 119, 333. If each line in the table was for one week, this would yield a monthly issue of oil worth about three and a half sacks of grain for the "men of the palace", which might be compared with the monthly salary of Deir el-Medina workers – normally seen as well-paid – at four sacks of emmer and one and a half sacks of barley (in addition to other commodities). Sailors were paid significantly less, with *P. Amiens* recording one sack of grain per month (half or three quarters for boys): see J. J. Janssen, *Grain Transport in the Ramesside Period: Papyrus Baldwin (BM EA 10061) and Papyrus Amiens* (*HPBM* 8 – London: British Museum Press, 2004), 24, 29–30, 56.

[23] If the total amount of oil given in the lines above the table are correct, then there was only one overseer present in lines I.14 and I.16, and the amount in the relevant column should be "5" instead of "10" there. The final line is also odd, in that it only records two "men of the palace" and no overseers, but with no explanation.

workers in P. BM EA 10776 (there divided into two groups of 37 men).[24] The number in the latter papyrus falls comfortably within the range attested in the table in the temple day-book, and is not too far removed from the size of the famous Deir el-Medina crew under most kings (*c.* 40-60).[25] Notwithstanding the lack of contextual information about the kind of work being done at Gurob – "perhaps cultivation of land, repair of dykes, brick-making, or what not", as Griffith suggested[26] – the basic underlying structure of the organisation of workforces at the palace seems to have been duality.

The papyri from the palace archive also shed light on an aspect of administration that is important from a methodological perspective, but which, for reasons of space, I cannot go into in any detail here. This relates to the use and meaning of titles, and their usefulness (or otherwise) for writing social history. The ubiquity of titles in the archaeological record is a rich resource for researchers interested in the structure of Egyptian society, and it can be tempting to mine this material for databases of hierarchies, sometimes almost amounting to modern organisational charts. However, as people like Stephen Quirke have cautioned, titles – however one chooses to define them *vis-á-vis* epithets and ranks – cannot be used as short-hand for roles and responsibilities.[27] *P. BM EA 10776* is a case in point: here the sum in col. II line 24 specifies that the people listed above are all working as "cultivators" (*ꜥḥ.wtiw*)[28] in this particular instance, despite bearing titles such as "servant", "guard" or even "washerman". Similarly, in a fragmentary list of people delivering large numbers of bricks to a building project "inside" the palace (?), the individuals are identified not only as "builders" but also "coppersmiths", "sandal-makers", and even a "guardian of the granary"; professions that one would not normally associate with brick production.[29] Such examples suggest a complex and dynamic system of administration where titles are as much about providing an identifier as about describing areas of responsibility; one potentially fruitful way forward might then be to look at the tasks and activities of individuals, to map actual areas of practice. That is not to say that titles are irrelevant in the reconstruction of social history, but that any such reconstruction needs to acknowledge the fluidity and *ad hoc* nature of the underlying reality, and this is where archives and administrative documents of practice provide a useful complement to the monumental record of tomb inscriptions and stelae.

Concluding remarks

The palace archive from Gurob is fragmentary, but it is an important corpus for historians interested in the social and administrative history of the New Kingdom. As I hope I have shown with this short presentation of one of the unpublished documents from the site, it has the potential to shed light on

[24] This calculation excludes the final line in the table, which is clearly an outlier: no overseers are present, and only two workmen.

[25] There was some variation in the precise number of workmen in the village over time: see B. G. Davies, 'Variations in the size of the Deir el-Medina workforce', in C. Di Biase-Dyson and L. Donovan (eds), *The Cultural Manifestations of Religious Experience: Studies in Honour of Boyo G. Ockinga* (*ÄAT* 85 – Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2017), 205–12.

[26] Griffith, *Hieratic Papyri*, I, 96.

[27] S. Quirke, *Titles and bureaux of Egypt, 1850-1700* (London: Golden House Publications, 2004), 1–5.

[28] The word, which is attested in a number of variant spellings, is usually transcribed *ꜥḥ.wti* or *iḥ.wti* (*Wb*. 1, 214.7–9), and broadly means somebody involved in agricultural activities.

[29] *P. UC 32133G* = 'P. Gurob Fragment Z'; see Gardiner, *RAD*, 34. The fact that groups of these professions are listed there (as opposed to individuals bearing the titles) may suggest that the organisational context here is forced labour, which is also likely for *P. UC 32784*. The methodological point about title and actual tasks still stands, however: at issue is what activities any individual bearing a title might be involved in. At the lower end of the hierarchy, *corvée* duty complicates the issue, not least because the precise nature of the system is still unknown (e.g. categories of personnel affected, frequency and duration of service), but also because even at higher levels the situation is likely to be fluid in view of social relationships, patronage, and ad-hoc assignments based on these; see in general K. A. Kóthay, 'Categorisation, Classification, and Social Reality: Administrative Control and Interaction with the Population', in J. C. Moreno García (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Administration* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 487–498; J. C. Moreno García, 'The 'Other' Administration: Patronage, Factions, and Informal Networks of Power in Ancient Egypt', in Moreno García (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Administration*, 1042–1063.

a range of different issues, not least that of the organisation of workforces. The duality evident at Gurob lends further support to the hypothesis that this was the dominant organisational model in the New Kingdom. This model is perhaps most famously attested in the 'right' and 'left' side of the crew of workers from Deir el-Medina who were responsible for building the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings,[30] but it is attested more broadly both chronologically and geographically. Mounir Megally demonstrated almost fifty years ago that the dual structure is also observable in two 18th Dynasty papyri, one dealing with date production (*P. Louvre* E.3226),[31] and one recording temple traders (*P. Boulaq* 18),[32] as well as in ostraca from the contemporary construction work at Deir el-Bahri, where workers are said to be "divided" (*pssˇ*) into two groups "under the charge of" (*nty m-ᶜ*) officials.[33] Other explicit references to the 'right' or 'left' side of work crews have been found in connection with temple building at Abydos, where an ostracon is headed "account of the work done by the left side of the crew" (*ḳrw n smḥ*), as well as from building blocks of the monument of Khaemwaset at North Saqqara during the reign of Ramesses II where individuals belonged to a 'right' or 'left' side.[34]

The Ramesside archive at Gurob adds welcome evidence of this duality in a different social context, namely manual labour for a royal palace. Although the work is not always specified (e.g. in the case of the oil issued in *P. UC* 32784), the name-list of *P. BM EA* 10776, published here for the first time, suggests a similar division in the case of agricultural work.

Appendix: Transliteration of the text

RECTO

[...] nꜣ ᶜḥ.wtỉ n pr pn nty ỉw=sn r ᶜ mḥ.t m ḏr.t

	(Column I)		**(Column II)**
(1)	*[...]swy*	(1)	*m ḏr.t Mᶜy*
(2)	*[...]ỉ sꜣ Imn-m-ỉp.t*	(2)	*Msw sꜣ Ḫᶜy*
(3)	*[...]-m-Ḥb m wᶜw*	(3)	*Sꜣ-sꜣ-tw*
(4)	*[...]sy*	(4)	*Pꜣ-ḥry-pḏ.t sꜣ Pꜣ-nḫw*
(5)	*... Ipy sꜣ Ṯry*	(5)	*Nfr-rnp.t sꜣ Ywmᶜr*
(6)	*[...] wy sꜣ P(ỉ)-n-mn-nfr*	(6)	*Ḥwy sꜣ Rmᶜ*
(7)	*[... traces only ...]*	(7)	*Wỉꜣ sꜣ Kꜣỉꜣ*
(8)	*[...] sꜣ Stḫ*	(8)	*P(ỉ)-n-ỉꜣy sꜣ Nꜣ-ᶜꜣ-rn-nꜣ*
(9)	*[...]y.*	(9)	*Ptḥ-msw sꜣ Iḥwy*
(10)	*... Imn-m-ỉpt sꜣ Hꜣdy m wᶜw*	(10)	*Mᶜy sꜣ Šmsw-nfr*

[30] J. Černý, *A Community of Workmen at Thebes in the Ramesside Period* (Cairo: *IFAO*, 2004), 101–103.

[31] M. Megally, 'À propos de l'organisation administrative des ouvriers à la XVIIIe dynastie', in L. Kákosy and E. Gaal (eds), *Studia Aegyptiaca I: Recueil d'études dédiées à Vilmos Wessetzky à l'occasion de son 65e anniversaire* (Budapest: Université Loránd Eötvös, 1974), 297–311; M. Megally, 'À propos de la dualité dans l'administration au nouvel empire', in G. Posener (ed.), *Actes du XXIXe Congrès international des Orientalistes* (Paris: L'Asiathèque, 1975), vol. 2, 76–81; M. Megally, *Recherches sur l'économie, l'administration et la comptabilité égyptiennes à la XVIIIe dynastie d'après le papyrus E.3226 du Louvre* (BdÉ 71 – Cairo: IFAO, 1977), 267.

[32] M. Megally, 'À propos du *CGC 57070* (*papyrus Boulaq XI*)', *BIFAO* 74 (1974): 163–164; M. Megally, 'Le papyrus *CGC 58081*, suite du *papyrus CGC 57070* (*papyrus Boulaq XI*)', *BIFAO* 75 (1975), 165–81.

[33] *O. MMA Field no. 27057.2*; See W. C. Hayes, 'A Selection of Tuthmosid Ostraca from Dēr el-Bahri', *JEA* 46 (1960): 39–41, pl. XI n. 13; cf. M. Megally, 'À propos de l'organisation administrative des ouvriers à la XVIIIe dynastie', in Kákosy and Gaal (eds), *Studia Aegyptiaca I*, 298–301.

[34] S. Akiyama and I. H. Takamiya, 'Hieratic Dockets from the Monument of Khaemwaset at North Saqqara: A Preliminary Report (1)', *Orient* 33 (1998), 54.

(Column I)		(Column II)	
(11)	*[...] Ḥrỉ sꜣ Dwnꜣ m-ˁ Mˁy*	(11)	*P(ꜣ)-n-mḫyt sꜣ Ḥwy*
(12)	*[...] sꜣ Rˁ*	(12)	*Rˁ-ms sꜣ Sw-r-ṯỉ*
(13)	*[...] Ḥri sꜣ Ḥs-bꜣkw-n-f*	(13)	*Twy sꜣ Pꜣ-wꜣḥ*
(14)	*... Rˁ-msw sꜣ Ḫˁy*	(14)	*Nỉꜣy sꜣ Gꜣrꜣmˁ*
(15)	*... Ipw sꜣ Inny m-ˁ Msw*	(15)	*Iry-n-ˁꜣ Nfrw.*
(16)	*... Nḫt-ỉꜣ sꜣ Sꜣnt*	(16)	*Imn-r-ḥꜣt-f sꜣ Mˁy*
(17)	*... Ṯwrỉ sꜣ Dw-nw-nꜣ*	(17)	*Ptḥ-m-wỉꜣ sꜣ Ḥwy*
(18)	*... Pꜣ-nḥmw sꜣ Nw-Imn m wˁw*	(18)	*Bꜣkỉ-n-wꜣḥ-sw sꜣ Nḫt*
(19)	*[...]ỉ sꜣ Ipy*	(19)	*P(ꜣ)-n-ỉn-ḥrỉ sꜣ Stḫ*
(20)	*... Imn-msw sꜣ Imn-m-ḥb*	(20)	*ˁḥˁ-f sꜣ Nb-mḫyt*
(21)	*... Mry-Ptḥ sꜣ Mnnꜣ*	(21)	*Kꜣr sꜣ Bꜣkỉ-kꜣỉ*
(22)	*... Ibỉꜣ sꜣ Ḥs-f-m-ỉwnw*	(22)	*Pꜣ-imy-rꜣ-iḥ.w-ỉḫw sꜣ Pꜣbꜣỉ*
		(23)	*Ipy sꜣ Imn-msw*
		(24)	*Iˁḥ-msw sꜣ Pꜣyrdꜣiꜣ*

VERSO

(Column I)		(Column II)	
(1)	*... Wꜣḥ sꜣ Ipy*	(1)	*rwḏw Pꜣ-šdw sꜣ Tnn*
(2)	*sḏmw Pꜣ-rn-nfr*	(2)	*ˁꜣ n ˁḥ.wt sḏmw Kꜣrkꜣr*
(3)	*sḏmw Nꜣ-ḥr-ḥw*	(3)	*ˁꜣ n ˁḥ.wt P(ꜣ)-n-Rˁ*
(4)	*sḏmw Pꜣ-nḫw*	(4)	*ˁḥ.wty Iˁḥ-msw*
(5)	*sḏmw Msw*	(5)	*sḏmw P(ꜣ)-n-ỉꜣy*
(6)	*rwḏw Pꜣ-šdw n pr Bˁḥw*	(6)	*sḏmw Nb-Imn*
(7)	*sḏmw Rˁ-msw*	(7)	*ˁḥ.wty Ḥrỉ*
(8)	*sḏmw Bꜣkỉ*	(8)	*ˁꜣ n ˁḥ.wt sḏmw Pꜣ-šdw*
(9)	*sḏmw [...]trỉ*	(9)	*sˁšꜣ.ty Pꜣ-nḥm*
(10)	*sḏmw Stḫ*	(10)	*rḫ.ty Pꜣḥw*
(11)	*ˁḥ.wty Mswiꜣ*	(11)	*rḫ.ty Sbỉk-msw*
(12)	*sˁšꜣ.ty [...]ꜣy*	(12)	*sḏmw Pꜣ-šdw*
(13)	[...traces only...]	(13)	*Nb-pꜣy*
(14)	[...traces only...]	(14)	*ˁꜣ n ˁḥ.wt sḏmw Ḥꜣtỉ*
(15)	[...traces only...]	(15)	*ˁꜣ n ˁḥ.wt sḏmw Twsꜣ*
(16)	[...traces only...]	(16)	*dmḏ rwḏw n it s 1*
(17)	[...traces only...]	(17)	*ˁꜣ n ˁḥ.wt s 5 dmḏ 6*
(18)	*[...] Msw*	(18)	*wp st rwḏw Pꜣ-šdw sꜣ Tnn*
(19)	[...traces only...]	(19)	*ˁꜣ n ˁḥ.wty Kꜣrkꜣr*
(20)	*[...] Kꜣry*	(20)	*[ˁꜣ n] ˁḥ.wt P(ꜣ)-n-Rˁ*
(21)	*[dmḏ ˁḥ].wty s 37*	(21)	*ˁꜣ n ˁḥ.wt Ḥꜣtỉ*

(Column I)

(22) *[...] s 2*

(Column II)

(22) *ꜣ n ḥ.wt Twsꜣ*

(23) *ꜣ n ḥ.wt Pꜣ-šdw sꜣ Rꜥꜣ[...]*

(24) *dmḏ: ḥ.wty s 30*

(25) *dmḏ: s 37*

(Column IA)

(1) *dmḏ s 22*

(2) *mn s 14*

(3) *wsf nꜣ <m> iꜣbt.t s 2*

(4) *mwt 2*

(5) *wꜥr s 1*

(6) *dd <m> wꜥw: s 3*

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9
Bureaucratic Control of New Kingdom Tomb Building Projects[1]

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Abstract

Based on a number of textual sources it is clear that activities of workers on tomb projects were closely monitored by scribes, but it is less clear what the purpose of this monitoring was. Perhaps it was a means for the scribe to stay in an elevated position and in control, wielding a potential 'threat by read pen' over less educated workers that compelled them to work. However, as seen in the material from Deir el-Medina, the recording of workers being unable to attend work in the Valley of the Kings seemingly had no punitive consequences for the individual person nor had any financial implications for the community at large. Another more practical objective was very likely, if not definitively determined: to keep a written record of the overall progress of a project, maintaining a forward momentum in production. This paper will attempt to gauge this line of extra-textual information by comparing ostraca and papyri documents from private and royal tomb building projects. From 18th Dynasty Thebes come ostraca with daily entries of excavation output, and from 20th Dynasty Saqqara come a set of tomb construction papyri written as a personal notebook, which includes several other aspects not specifically related to the project. Both documents were discarded on or near the tomb building sites, suggesting a transfer of information into a larger and more focused report similar to P. Harris I, P. Abbott and P. BM 10056.

Keywords: Bureaucracy; Measurement; Reporting; Tomb construction; Scribes

1. Introduction

Identifying evidence for control and compulsion aspects in New Kingdom tomb construction projects based on textual sources is a challenge and can only be achieved by applying various degrees of interpretation to the surviving material. One aspect is more easily recognised: control is seemingly more prevalent than compulsion in the textual material relating to tomb building. There is at times an undertone of compulsion in the descriptions, but never clearly marked or explained. The aspect of control, however, is represented in several different ways.

This article focuses on textual sources for the construction of tombs and the dilemma of whether these texts demonstrate a closely controlled and monitored process or if they constitute an *ad hoc* approach to building where construction only continued if and when resources were available. On the one hand, we have the tomb builders' community of Deir el-Medina where daily commodities, such as rations of food and water, and resources for tomb building were recorded by the scribes and officials, which seems to indicate a tight control of the village and the associated necropoleis as well as control of the construction process of the individual tomb. On the other hand, because the administrative scribes chose to focus on

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a narrow set of items and aspects of village life in their writings, one may speculate they kept a loose bureaucratic control.[2] This may also be argued for the scribes monitoring the construction of the non-royal tombs, as only a few aspects out of a wide variety were recorded in the documentary texts. Few sites have yielded textual evidence pertaining to the construction of private tombs during the New Kingdom. Among the documents that have so far been published are the 18th Dynasty ostraca from the tombs of Senenmut on Sheikh Abd el-Qurna and Deir el-Bahri in the Theban necropolis, and a set of papyri from Saqqara dating to the reign of Ramesses III that deal with the building of a tomb for an army officer named May. It is the texts from these two tomb construction projects on which the current article is based.

Before moving on, some basic questions have first to be addressed:

- Why would tomb building need to be controlled?
- What was controlled and how was it controlled?

The answers to the first question are many and of varying degrees of complexity. What the answers have in common, though, is that they all depend on the interpretation of the material and none of them have any irrefutable evidence to back them up. The way in which projects were controlled and administered may have been based on economic motivation or on social necessity and/or tradition. Perhaps writing was used to control building progress for the purpose of being able to pay the workers only for the results they achieved, maybe the texts documented the presence of workers to explain their absence elsewhere, or perhaps the scribes simply wrote because they could – demonstrating and confirming their higher status among less educated men, empowering and securing the role of the scribe in an otherwise illiterate society.

Matters relating to the second question of what and how are easier to identify in the material, and as such will constitute the focus of the article.

2. Ostraca from the tombs of Senenmut

If we assume that the general hieratic administrative ostraca created during the New Kingdom had a purpose, apart from simply occupying the time of the scribe and demonstrating his abilities as an administrator, then the information recorded would have been used beyond the confines of the moment in which it was created: either by the scribe or passed on in some way or form to a recipient. The use of limestone flakes and discarded pottery pieces as a medium for writing in Deir el-Medina is often understood as mere drafts, used on the spot, later to be copied onto papyrus destined for an archive, either local or in the central administration.[3] As demonstrated by S. Allam in 1968,[4] this was indeed the case in some examples, but mostly in cases connected to the judicial sphere. K. Donker van Heel has suggested that the copying was perhaps outside the scope of the local administration's official daily practice and drafts of daily administrative texts may not have been a common phenomenon.[5] He argues that the exception to this was the practice of copying name-lists, which is a logical necessity for keeping track of and controlling any large number of people. C. Eyre also has his reservations about ostraca being used only as drafts, as it is not clearly and consistently demonstrable that they were copied onto other materials, whereas the opposite

[2] For discussions on the scribal practices and use of documentary texts at Deir el-Medina, see K. Donker van Heel and B. J. J. Haring, *Writing in a Workmen's Village: Scribal Practice in Ramesside Deir el-Medina* (Leiden: *NINO*, 2003) and C. J. Eyre, *The Use of Documents in Pharaonic Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 30.

[3] W. C. Hayes, 'A Selection of Tuthmoside Ostraca from Dēr el-Baḥri', *JEA* 46 (1960), 37.

[4] S. Allam, 'Sind die Nichtliterarischen Schriftostraka Brouillons?', *JEA* 54 (1968), 121–128.

[5] Donker van Heel and Haring, *Writing in a Workmen's Village*, 18.

(i.e. an ostracon being used as the finished or only version) does occur.[6] One likely example of a hieratic document that may have been copied is *O. Ashmolean Museum 7* (*O. Gardiner 7*), which has a large *spḫr*-sign written across the text on both sides of the limestone flake, possibly indicating that the information had been copied to another medium.[7] However, the ostracon is, as F. Hagen points out, the only example from the Deir el-Medina administrative corpus to utilise the *spḫr*-sign in this way and, as such, the practice was perhaps not that common. Nonetheless, while it cannot be demonstrated where the records found in tomb building documents, such as *O. Ashmolean Museum 7*, were ultimately transferred, the level of detail found within the texts strongly suggests that the information was passed on.

The different kinds of information preserved on the ostraca from the two tombs of Senenmut (*TT71* and *TT353*) also suggest that it was supposed to be conveyed to a recipient.[8] From the first tomb (*TT71*), 153 ostraca were published by W. C. Hayes in his 1942 *Ostraka and Name Stones*, the bulk of which (149) was found during the excavations of the Metropolitan Museum in 1930–1931 and 1935–1936. Hayes divides the ostraca into two main categories: drawings and inscriptions, and subdivides the latter category into hieroglyphic and hieratic ostraca.[9] In 1960, Hayes published another group of 21 ostraca from a much larger corpus of 400 found by the Metropolitan Museum's excavations in the 1920's and 30's in Deir el-Bahri. Four of these ostraca concern Senenmut's second tomb (*TT353*) and were found close to its entrance in the quarry in front of the temple of Hatshepsut.

While these ostraca in all probability were created in close proximity to either of the two tombs of Senenmut, using the most suitable limestone flakes from tomb construction debris, the purpose of the texts is somewhat harder to determine. The many drawings of figures and patterns on the ostraca, some even within the distinctive and well-known grid system, were very likely preliminary sketches before being drawn and painted in full size in the tomb. The same is true for the ostraca bearing hieroglyphic texts of funerary compositions, hymns to gods, and offering lists, which seem to be working or initial drafts to be transferred onto the tomb walls. However, not all texts, or even all drawings or patterns, can be found on what remains of the tomb decoration. The discovery of hieratic literary and religious texts in the same context as ostraca describing tomb construction is explained by Hayes as the activity of scribal pupils.[10] These pupils would presumably have followed their master or tutor to the construction site and copied various pieces of literary or religious texts onto ostraca, which were then deposited alongside the other tomb construction documents.

The majority of the hieratic ostraca from the tombs of Senenmut are daily entries on tomb building activities. Some are simple but important lists of names, some are distribution lists that reveal who contributed to the project and with how much, and finally there are the ostraca that describe the elements of construction. The latter type records the activity or tasks of individual workers and the result of their efforts. Sometimes, this is given as a single measure of length in cubits or *nbi*, the latter being a linear measuring device of approximately 70 cm and used as often as the cubit in the design of rock-cut tombs at Thebes. Much more commonly, however, the daily results were given as a three-dimensional measure known as the *dni*. The *dni* is equal to one cubic cubit, or 145 litres, and as such, the *dni* was clearly a measure for the productivity of excavation rather than for the decoration of the tomb.[11]

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[6] C. J. Eyre, *Use of Documents*, 30.

[7] F. Hagen, 'The hieratic dockets on the cuneiform tablets from Amarna', *JEA* 97 (2011), 215.

[8] Possible recipients include individual persons, offices of administration, and tomb walls.

[9] W. C. Hayes, *Ostraka and Name Stones. From the Tomb of Sen-Mut (No. 71) at Thebes* (Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition Volume XV – New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1942), 5.

[10] Hayes, *Ostraka and Name Stones*, 3.

[11] J. Černý, *The Valley of the Kings* (*BdÉ* 61 – Cairo: *IFAO*, 1973), 20–21.

J. Černý came to this conclusion in 1973 and refuted the translation of the *dnỉ* as 'area' by drawing attention to *O. Gardiner 51* (*O. Ashmolean Museum 57*) and *O. Gardiner 26* (*O. Ashmolean Museum 26*).[12] The latter text contains a line (*l.* 5), which reads: "6 cubits by 2 cubits (by) 4 cubits (in) depth, making 48 *dnỉ*",[13] clearly demonstrating the three-dimensional aspect of the *dnỉ*-measure. From the two texts, Černý concluded that the *dnỉ* must be equal to a measure of capacity of 1 cubic cubit, most probably a basket.[14]

Archaeological evidence for the *dnỉ* as a container may come from the Middle Kingdom in the form of ancient baskets.[15] These baskets were found in connection to the temple of Montuhotep II at Deir el-Bahri from the 11th Dynasty and were still filled with ancient limestone flakes and sand. According to the excavators, the baskets were left in this position between two building phases and not removed when work recommenced because they were too rotten and therefore impossible to move while filled. As a result they were simply covered and incorporated into the later building phases.[16] The baskets were most likely lined up in this manner in order for the foreman or scribe in charge of the temple building project to get an overview of what and how much had been excavated, making it possible for him to stay in control of the temple construction. The task of counting the baskets and subsequent recording of numbers was probably never achieved, as one would assume that the containers would then have been emptied and reused elsewhere. Nonetheless, a similar approach to keeping track of production and controlling construction was arguably utilised in the building of the tomb chapel of Senenmut (*TT71*) as well as the other Theban private tombs of the 18th Dynasty.

The dimensions of one cubic cubit mean that a *dnỉ*-basket filled to the brim with limestone chips and rubble would have weighed in the vicinity of 300-350 kilograms. Rather than having workers attempt to lift such full containers, a more plausible scenario would have the *dnỉ*-baskets lined up outside the tomb entrance. Workers tasked with collecting the limestone rubble, created by the more skilled stonecutters in the deepest part of the tomb, would have used smaller baskets or leather sacks, first filling them with limestone and rubble using scrapers and then carrying them outside to the *dnỉ*-baskets, which would then be filled, counted, recorded, and then emptied for reuse. Evidence of such smaller baskets and scrapers has been found in the quarry where Senenmut's other tomb, *TT353*, is located.[17] The task of collecting and carrying rubble is described in the textual material as *ḫmᶜ*, and although it is not present in the Senenmut ostraca, it is mentioned in similar construction documents.[18] The *ḫmᶜ*-task is also described in the Saqqara Dossier (see below).

The *dnỉ* was important for the early New Kingdom builders because it showed them how much material had been excavated and how much progress had been made in the overall construction of the tomb, enabling the scribe and/or foreman to stay in control of the process. It is therefore no surprise to find the *dnỉ*-unit being utilised in documents pertaining to royal tomb building projects from the Ramesside Period as well; e.g. *P. Turin CGT 55002* which describes the tomb of Ramesses IV (*KV2*),[19] or *P. Turin 1923* which describes the remaining amount of stone yet to be excavated in *KV9* (Ramesses V-VI).[20]

[12] Černý, Valley of the Kings, 20–21.
[13] Černý, *Valley of the Kings*, 20, n.5 cautions that only a tiny trace of the hieratic figure for 8 in 48 remains in the text.
[14] R. Olsen, 'The *dnỉ*-Measure in Ancient Egyptian Tomb Construction Projects', *JEA* 106, 164–166.
[15] Olsen, The *dnỉ*-Measure, 164–166.
[16] D. Arnold, *The Temple of Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahri* (Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition Volume XXI – Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1979), 62.
[17] P. Dorman, *The Tombs of Senenmut. The Architecture and Decoration of Tombs 71 and 353* (Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition Volume XXIV – New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), 91.
[18] For example, *O. Cairo SR 12204* (early 18th Dynasty and found relatively close to TT71) – see M. Megally, 'Un intéressant ostracon de la XVIIIe dynastie de Thèbes', *BIFAO 81.1* (1981), 293–312. For other examples see Olsen, 'The *dnỉ*-Measure', 163.
[19] S. Demichelis, 'Le projet initial de la tombe de Ramsès IV?', *ZÄS* 131 (2004), 114–133.
[20] R. Ventura, 'The Largest Project for a Royal Tomb in the Valley of the Kings', *JEA* 74 (1988), 137–156.

Writing for writing's sake, or empowering of the scribe, does not seem to have been the main point of the ostraca from *TT71* or Deir el-Bahri, although it may certainly have played its part in the construction process. In the end, however, there are simply too many production-related details and specific values for the construction progress recorded, which indicates a further purpose beyond the worksite; perhaps, as Hayes suggested, the information was "entered in a permanent record book or its content reported to the high command".[21] Of course, any evidence for such passing on of information to a higher authority is yet to be revealed.

3. The Saqqara Dossier

The second set of New Kingdom documents concerning private tomb construction consists of four papyri, three of which are in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (*P. Cairo JE 52002*, *52003*, and *52004*),[22] while the fourth is divided between the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.[23] The three papyri in Cairo were found in 1926 by Cecil Mallaby Firth in one of the rooms of the Old Kingdom mastaba belonging to a man named Niankhba.[24] The papyri cover a period of seven months during the reign of Ramesses III and are the work of a scribe called Buqentuf, who was charged with the task of building a tomb on behalf of an army general (*ỉmy-rꜣ mšʿ*) by the name of May. The tomb itself has yet to be discovered but may be located in the vicinity of the mastaba tomb where the Cairo papyri were found.[25]

We do not know why Buqentuf was put in charge of the tomb building project, but he was evidently – and based on the content of the dossier – a skilled administrator and a man who could be trusted. An indication of both qualities is a draft letter on the verso of *P. Cairo JE 52003*, in which Buqentuf addresses the future tomb owner, reporting that he is diligently following the orders of May. Whether such reporting by letter was common practice or one of the instructions given by May, Buqentuf clearly felt compelled to pen a report on the situation from his point of view. Regardless of whether Buqentuf managed to send a version of the draft letter to placate the general, he was still in control of the tomb building project and documenting its progress approximately six months later.[26] Perhaps marking his own importance, stating it no less than seven times throughout *P. Cairo JE 52002* and *52003*, Buqentuf makes it clear that the workmen performing various tomb building tasks were "under the authority/supervision of the scribe Buqentuf". This may be a way of differentiating them from other workmen of Saqqara, although no other crews are mentioned in any of the papyri, or it may be the way in which Buqentuf reminds himself that he is the one who is actually in charge of the project. The papyri are, in essence, the personal notebook of Buqentuf, and as such differ in several ways from the Senenmut ostraca: Buqentuf includes many more aspects of his responsibilities beyond the scope of building activities in the tomb itself.

The first page of *P. Cairo JE 52002* is basically a diary of the preparations that Buqentuf needed to take care of and be in control of before construction of the tomb could commence. He begins, however, by

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[21] Hayes, *Ostraka and Name Stones*, 3.

[22] P. Posener-Kriéger, 'Construire une tombe à l'ouest de Mn-nfr (P. Caire 52002)', *RdÉ* 33 (1981), 47–58; K. Kitchen, *KRI* VII (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, 1989), 263–268; P. Posener-Kriéger, 'Au plaisir des paléographes *Papyrus Caire JE 52003*', in P. der Manuelian (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1996), 655–664; *P. Cairo JE 52004* is currently unpublished.

[23] *P. MMA 3569* and *P. Vienna 3934+3937+9352a+9352b*. For the latter papyrus, see E. R. von Bergmann, *Hieratische und Hieratisch-Demotische Texte der Sammlung aegyptischer Alterthümer des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, (Vienna: Verlag von Adolf Holzhauser, 1886), pl. VII. For transcriptions of both papyri, see Kitchen, *KRI* VII, 268–273.

[24] Cf. J. E. Quibell and A. Olver, 'An Ancient Egyptian Horse', *ASAÉ* 26 (1926), 172; and B. Gunn, 'Additions to the Collections of the Egyptian Museum during 1928', 95. *ASAÉ* 29 (1929), 95.

[25] R. J. Demarée, 'Reports on Tomb-Construction at Saqqara in the New Kingdom', *Saqqara Newsletter* 6 (2008), 7–10.

[26] This is assuming that Buqentuf wrote the draft letter on the verso of *P. Cairo JE 52003* during or immediately after the activities recorded on the recto of the same papyrus, which are dated to the first month of Shemu during the 15th regnal year of Ramesses III.

describing his arrival at Saqqara with the expectation of finding workers already having begun building, but instead he finds an empty site, the workers having gone home. Buqentuf seems powerless in this moment as he tries to recall the workers and he is clearly not in control. The day after, the workers seem to have returned, but instead of starting construction on the tomb, Buqentuf sets off on a boat trip to get provisions. This trip was possibly undertaken on the suggestion of a Chantress of Thoth, named Ta-Renenut, who may have been the wife or daughter of the Vizier Hori. Whether Buqentuf acted on her orders or was following his own plan is not made clear, but he certainly had no control over Ta-Renenut, who was also at Saqqara to ensure the completion of a tomb, very possibly the tomb of the Vizier. She may even have (re-)appropriated the workers on site to finish this tomb. In any event, Buqentuf then concentrated on the procurement of materials and tools as well as rations for the workers while carefully noting from where these things came, prioritising the description of the aspects of which he is in full control. At the end of the page, we are told that the rations are carried to a warehouse (*mḫr*) for safekeeping, suggesting that a permanent building for such a purpose existed at Saqqara. This may have had a similar role to the *ḫtm n pȝ ḫr* of Deir el-Medina,[27] serving both as a checkpoint and area of control as well as a storage facility.

On the verso of *P. Cairo JE 52002*, the initial construction of the tomb is recorded. It seems that the chosen area was first cleared of older debris and rubble; a procedure that is labelled *ḫmᶜ*. The result of the first day of clearing is noted by Buqentuf as follows: "beginning of the ordered (work) by the workmen clearing (*ḫmᶜ.t*) in the forecourt which is in the slope/hill(?), before the masons (can begin), by the workmen who are under the supervision of the scribe Buqentuf. That which was done in clearing (*ḫmᶜ*) this day: (length): 12 cubits, width: 6 cubits, depth: 3 cubits, making 21 cubits."[28] Just as in the Theban material, the result is here measured in three dimensions, although Buqentuf does not seem to realise this fact and erroneously adds the three measurements together. The result of the expected multiplication is 216 cubic cubits, or *dni.w*, which is equal to 31.26m^3 or about 50 tons if the cleared material consisted mostly of sand. In the next line, and the day after, the clearing continues, but no result is recorded. The papyrus ends and there is a gap of 24 unrecorded days before we are told at the beginning of *P. Cairo JE 52003* that clearing continued, but the results of the labour were left blank for two days. Then the task shifted to "preparing the ground" (*trr*),[29] possibly for later transportation of large stones, and the results of this type of work are recorded as an area, although Buqentuf still struggled to comprehend the underlying mathematics.[30] He recorded the following: "What was done in 'preparing the ground' this day: (in length) 12 cubits, (in) width 5 cubits and 5 palms. Making: 17 cubits and 5 palms."[31] The correct result should have been 68.6 square cubits, or 18.9m^2.

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[27] R. Ventura, *Living in a City of the Dead. A Selection of Topographical and Administrative Terms in the Documents of the Theban Necropolis* (*OBO* 69 – Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1986), 83–106; A. G. McDowell, *Jurisdiction in the Workmen's Community of Deir el-Medina* (*EgUit* 5 – Leiden: *NINO*, 1990), 93–105; G. Burkard, 'Das *ḫtm n pȝ ḫr* von Deir el-Medine. Seine Funktion und die Frage seiner Lokalisierung', in A. Dorn and T. Hofmann (eds), *Living and Writing in Deir el-Medine: Socio-historical Embodiment of Deir el-Medine Texts* (*Aegyptiaca Helvetica* 19 – Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2006), 31–42; A. J. Koh, 'Locating the *ḫtm n pȝ ḫr* of the Workmen's Village at Deir el-Medina', *JARCE 42* (2006), 95–101; R. Olsen, 'The Medjay Leaders of the New Kingdom', in C. Graves *et al.* (eds), *Current Research in Egyptology 13 (2012), Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Symposium* (Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2013), 151–155.

[28] *P. Cairo JE 52002*, *verso*, *ll.* 2–3.

[29] J. van Dijk proposed the translation of *trr* as "levelling the bedrock with a layer of rubble" – see J. van Dijk, *The New Kingdom Necropolis of Memphis: Historical and Iconographical Studies* (Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 1993), 25.

[30] The dissonance between the precision of the recorded measurements in the dossier and the inability of the scribe to do basic arithmetic is curious. One may ask, for whom did Buqentuf calculate the results? Was it a trait of his scribal training that compelled him to add the numbers together, and does this reflect the general level of scribal training? Did he make the calculations for his own enjoyment or attempting to uphold the image of a learned scribe? Were the calculations for a higher authority, and would they have been able to recognise the mistakes? And if they did not, would they have any use for the linear measurements other than as a record of general construction progress? Unfortunately, these and a multitude of related questions cannot presently be answered and remain speculative until further evidence is unearthed.

[31] *P. Cairo JE 52003*, *recto l.* 13.

The following day, the workers start building in stone, and the daily result is therefore given as numbers of stone blocks with their three-dimensional proportions. Buqentuf records: "What was done in building this day: 8 stone 'bricks' (of) 2 cubits and 5 palms (in length), width (of) 1 (cubit) and 2 palms, and thickness (of) 6 palms."[32] This means that they would have weighed around 1100 kg each,[33] which explains the need for transporting them to the building site on a special surface constructed in the days before. As the daily activities shifted, so did the result of the building progress that Buqentuf recorded. At the beginning of the project, he recorded the procurement of tools and materials, but this aspect seems to have been less important than recording the daily results of the building activities that followed. There are no indications to suggest why this shift in focus occurred, but one may speculate that the tomb owner, May, was more interested in reports about progress on the tomb rather than the expenses incurred by the building project. Of course, this is assuming that he was kept up to date through regular communications by Buqentuf, an assumption that cannot be substantiated by the dossier alone.

Nonetheless, there are good indications for the interpretation that Buqentuf intended to make use of the information he recorded. On the margin of the recto of both *P. Cairo JE 52002* and *52003*, there are a series of horizontal strokes, each in front of the beginning of a line. These are very likely checkmarks, indicating that Buqentuf re-read the information to make sure that it was correct. The marks could also be considered copying marks, made when copying out the text or synthesizing the information onto a new document, thus keeping track of which line was being reworked. Similar marks are also present on ostraca from one of the tombs of Senenmut, *TT353*. Here, lines of text have been struck through, possibly because the information was wrong to begin with or no longer applicable, but in either case demonstrating that the text had been checked and edited, enabling the scribe to stay in control. The mere fact that texts were checked and edited strongly indicates that the information was transferred onto another medium or at the very least passed on orally, but without the copies this interpretation will remain unsubstantiated.

4. Concluding comments

Do the texts from 18th Dynasty Thebes and 20th Dynasty Saqqara describe a tight bureaucratic control of men and resources or are they to be taken as evidence for *ad hoc* approaches that record some but not all aspects of tomb construction, and not consistently or convincingly by our modern standards? For the present, the answer frustratingly seems to depend on the eye of the beholder and the envisioned documentary purpose.

The control exercised by the scribes in tomb construction projects during the New Kingdom may be defined by what they chose to record in writing, by how they did this in practice and by providing plausible answers to the question of why they did so. Presented above are some of the features that were recorded in two projects with regards to the daily results of construction, which in both cases focused on the aspects that could be physically measured. This brings us back to the difficult question of why. That the scribes attempted to control the construction process by keeping track of daily results is clear, but why focus on this aspect and not, for example, the consumption of building materials or distribution of water and rations, which must have been important for any project? For example, enormous quantities of mud-plaster, or *muna*, were made for the rock-cut tombs of Thebes, and in *TT71* alone, the builders would have had to apply about 100 tons of it, but there is vanishingly little evidence for its production.

[32] *P. Cairo JE 52003*, *recto l.* 15.

[33] 2 cubits and 5 palms (142.5 cm) x 1 cubit and 2 palms (67.5 cm) x 6 palms (45 cm) = 0.433 m^3. This multiplied by the density of limestone, which is between 2600 and 2800 kg/m^3, gives a result of either 1125.8 kg (0.433 x 2600 kg/m^3) or 1212.4 kg (0.433 x 2800 kg/m^3). The average is 1169.1 kg. For the density of limestone see, O. V. Rasmussen, *Kemiske og Fysiske Tabeller* [Chemical and Physical Charts] (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2003), 56.

On the one hand, the Saqqara Dossier reads as the personal notebook or diary of Buqentuf. On the other hand, the papyri give the impression of being a work journal written by an objective observer, whose overall goal was to report with accuracy on the progress of the construction of the tomb of May. The presence of the draft letter addressed to the general within the dossier may suggest that he was regularly updated on the building progress by Buqentuf. Similarly, the daily results on ostraca from the tomb of Senenmut, along with the lists of institutional suppliers and lists of names and goods, may on a regular basis have been brought to the attention of the tomb owner himself, keeping him up to speed on progress and expenses. Textual evidence for this type of personal control of the administration of tomb construction projects is, for the moment at least, out of our reach.

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V.
Compulsion and Control in Text and Image

10
Images of Control and Submission in Old Kingdom Funerary Iconography: The Egyptian Tomb as a 'Disciplinary Institution'[1]

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Abstract

I argue that funerary scenes can be studied as what Michel Foucault called 'disciplinary institutions'. They aimed at showing the audience, not only an ideal version of the world, but also a social order where everything revolves around the owner, and where one has to comply with the social position that has been prescribed for him. Thus, they contain an ideological discourse, whose aim is to praise control and submission as fair values. I have chosen to focus on two specific patterns: rendering of accounts, when the scribes check the workers' accounts, and punishments. My study is limited to Old Kingdom tombs.

Keywords: Discipline; Iconography; Old Kingdom tombs; Rendering of accounts; Violence

1. Introduction

Ancient Egyptian funerary iconography relies on a precise set of images, themes and figures. From the 3rd Dynasty onwards, decorative scenes were carved on tombs' walls in order to offer the right environment to the deceased, to praise his way of life and to create a religious area where cult was to be accomplished. A first sight, the tombs depict a perfect world: everything is where it belongs, and the world shown is structured by the notion of Maat.[2] However, this overall frame still allows for the representation of inconvenient and abnormal behaviours. As Pascal Vernus noted, Maat ideology involves a tendency to deviate, to escape for a moment from the perfect picture, only to be later punished and reintegrated.[3] Consequently, funerary scenes must not be understood as a perfect and immutable cosmos, but as a dynamic field where order, embodied in the deceased administrator who represents the king, is enforced on the rest of the population.

The ideas developed by Michel Foucault during the 1970s offer a fertile theoretical frame for the study of funerary images.[4] He developed the notion of 'disciplinary institution', primarily to describe psychiatric

[1] I would like first to thank Dr Alex Loktionov and Christ's College, Cambridge, for giving me my first opportunity to speak at a research symposium. I also thank him for his remarks on the first version of my article. I want to thank Chloé Ragazzoli, my PhD supervisor, for the pieces of advice she gave me after reading this article. Finally, I am very grateful to Virginie Trachsler for helping me with the English language.

[2] J. Assmann, *Maât, l'Égypte pharaonique et l'idée de justice sociale* (Paris: Julliard, 1989).

[3] P. Vernus, 'Stratégie d'épure et stratégie d'appogiature dans les productions dites « artistiques » à l'usage des dominants. Le papyrus dit « érotique » de Turin et la mise à distance des dominés', in K. A. Kothay (ed.), *Art and Society, Ancient and Modern Contexts of Egyptian Art, Proceedings of the International Conference held at the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, 13–15 May 2010* (Budapest: Museum of Fine Arts, 2012), 109–122; 'Autobiographie et scènes dites « de la vie quotidienne »', in R. Legros (ed.), *50 ans d'éternité* (BdÉ 162 – Cairo: *IFAO*, 2015), 309–321.

[4] M. Foucault, *Surveiller et Punir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975). See also his lectures at the Collège de France: M. Foucault, *La Société punitive. 1972-1973* (Paris: Seuil-Gallimard, 2013); M. Foucault, *Le Pouvoir psychiatrique. 1973-1974* (Paris: Seuil-Gallimard, 2003),

hospitals and prisons, but also all kinds of normative institutions, such as schools or factories. The phrase describes spaces where individuals are submitted to a double process of domination and acculturation. In these institutions, an authority claims to exert constant control on people, and in this control lies the very aim of the institution. The control applies to the individuals' movements, but also to their gestures, their habits, and their thoughts. That is not to say that agents of control are actually keeping a watch on everyone, but that individuals believe it and behave accordingly. The aim is to have impact on people's behaviours, so that they conform to the vision a dominant group wants or needs for the targeted population. It is therefore impossible to dissociate it from social strategies to enforce the domination of one group over another, but this does not mean that the institution is willingly thought of as a tool for domination.

As far as funerary images are concerned, individuals are not directly controlled by an institution. However, as a coherent set of themes and values, and because the Egyptian audience believed in their reality, tomb images produced socio-ideological effects in those who saw them.[5] Indeed, throughout ancient Egyptian history, the tombs of high-ranking officials were open to at least some visitors:[6] family, members of one's estate, artists seeking inspiration, colleagues, etc. Only a tiny elite could build a decorated tomb, which was regarded as a royal favour. The group of tomb owners is consequently quite homogeneous, defined by an ability to gather wealth and by their link to the king. The images' agency comes from the fact that the dominant ideology was not uniformly shared by the whole society.[7] Following M. Foucault's concept of 'civil war',[8] I assume that Egyptian society was not homogeneous in beliefs and that the legitimising of social order also took the form of an ideological struggle. I thus see funerary scenes as places where people outside the inner elite saw themselves as they were supposed to be according to official ideology: this concerned at least the outer elite, rather than the entire population, but one can assume that this process of acculturation was intended to extend toward the lower classes. This social perspective does not however contradict other interpretations, such as religious or 'daily-life' ones.

The theme of control takes many forms in funerary scenes. For the scope of this paper, I chose to focus on two specific themes: rendering of accounts and punishment. There are nevertheless other ways through which control is transfigured into stone. The first and most striking aspect is that the deceased is everywhere: his figure, larger than any other, reminds everyone that he is not only the centre of the tomb, but also the reason why all the others are there. Secondly, most people carry out tasks for the deceased. Rather than taking care of themselves, eating, drinking, or chatting, they serve the owner: the integration into Maat happens through working. Thirdly, many activities include an idea of control: hunting, fishing, or butchery. Finally, and more specifically, the human body is submitted to a process of control, and a lot of scenes show people dancing or wrestling.[9] The images thus create an orthopraxy for their audience, differentiating good and bad ways to use one's body.

41–88; M. Foucault, *Les Anormaux. 1974-1975* (Paris: Seuil-Gallimard, 1999), 3–97; S. Lemoine, *Le sujet dans les dispositifs de pouvoir* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013), 25–35.

[5] See U. Matić, 'Out of the word and out of the picture? Keftiu and materializations of "Minoans"', in I-M. B. Danielsson, F. Fahlander, and Y. Sjöstrand (eds), *Encountering Imagery: Materialities, Perceptions, Relations* (Stockholm Studies in Egyptology 57 – Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2012), 246–248.

[6] R. J. Leprohon, 'Ideology and Propaganda', in M. Hartwig (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Egyptian Art* (Chichester: Wiley, 2015), 311; M. Hartwig, *Tomb Painting and Identity in Ancient Thebes, 1419-1372 BCE* (Monumenta Aegyptiaca 10 – Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 7–15.

[7] J. Assmann, *Stein und Zeit. Mensch und Gesellschaft im Alten Ägypten* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1995), 17; J. Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[8] M. Foucault, *Il faut défendre la société. 1975-1976* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 17.

[9] For example, see Y. M. Harpur & P. J. Scremin, *The Chapel of Ptahhotep: Scene Details* (Oxford: Oxford Expedition to Egypt, 2008), 360.

I limit the scope of this paper to Old Kingdom iconography. Although evidence from the Middle and New Kingdom is available, the 3rd Millennium is the richest period in terms of scenes of control. From a total of 67 scenes, 51 date from the Old Kingdom [Table 1]. The first scenes of punishment and rendering of accounts both appeared during the 4th Dynasty, but the 5th was unequivocally the genre's climax, which is consistent with the overall chronological distribution of tombs. No less than 31 scenes date from this period, forming almost half the entire body of evidence. These scenes come from a large range of tombs, some belonging to the high officials of the court in Memphis, such as the vast tombs of Ti and Mereruka in Saqqara, others to middle-elite or provincial officials.[10] These two patterns were thus quite common features inside the funerary repertoire. This paper will first focus on renderings of accounts, then explore the field of punishment.

Necropolis/ Dynasty	4th Dynasty	5th Dynasty	6th Dynasty	Total
Giza	4	9		**13**
Saqqara	1	18	6	**25**
Abusir		1		**1**
Deshasha		1		**1**
Sheikh Saïd		1	1	**2**
el-Hawawish		1	1	**2**
Meir			2	**2**
Deir el-Gebrawi			3	**3**
Naga ed-Deir			1	**1**
Aswan			1	**1**
Unidentified		1		**1**
Total	**5**	**32**	**15**	**52**

Table 1. Scenes of control in Old Kingdom iconography, by site and dynasty.

2. The 'rendering of accounts' scenes: control in motion

The phrase was coined early on in Egyptological research to describe a particular scene, whose representation remained quite unchanged from the 4th to the 12th Dynasty.[11] It has traditionally been associated with 'production scenes'[12] and not usually studied as a distinct pattern, with its own rules, characters, and vocabulary. The rendering of accounts is the display before the estate's authority figure – whether the deceased himself or his scribes – of people giving an account of their work, while surrounded by authoritative guards leading them to court. Although some tombs display ambiguous scenes, the genre is, especially during the Old Kingdom, well-differentiated from other patterns.

2.1. The 4th Dynasty: birth of a pattern

At least two scenes date back to the 4th Dynasty: the oldest was found in the tomb of Seneb, a director of weaving in the palace (*ỉmy-rꜣ mr pr-ꜥꜣ*) and director of the dwarfs in charge of clothes (*ḫrp dng.w sšr.w*)

[10] For the social frame of this study, see J. Baines, *High Culture and Experience in Ancient Egypt* (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2013), 8–17.

[11] P. Montet, *Les scènes de la vie privée dans les tombeaux égyptiens de l'Ancien Empire* (Paris: Presse Belles Lettres, 1924), 147–149; J. Vandier, *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne*, vol. V (Paris: Picard, 1952–1979), 13–58.

[12] See the online scene details database of the Oxford Expedition to Egypt, which classifies both patterns under the category "Commerce, including the management of workers".

during the reign of Djedefre.[13] The two registers are thematically linked. In the lower part the rendering of accounts is unfolding: although this is the oldest occurrence, the three main protagonists are already present. To the left, a sitting scribe is writing and interrogating the man seated in front of him. In the middle, two men are brought to court to be heard: I will call them "controlled people". To the right an armed guard puts his hand on the controlled man's head: I will call him "officer". In the upper register, a scribe, probably the same as in the lower register, is delivering the accounts to the deceased, Seneb. The texts confirm this interpretation: at the bottom, the inscription reads *ḥsb mnỉ.w*, "calculate (about) the herdsmen", and at the top *ỉr.t ỉr.w*, "do the cattle tax". In real life, the workers of the estate were first inspected by a bureau of scribes, and then these scribes made their report for the estate owner. These two actions, which were probably linked in a distant temporality, are combined on the same wall: the owner, sitting under a kiosk with his two dogs and displaying his power through his chair, legitimises the control established by the scribes on the men below.

The second oldest scene comes from the tomb of Queen Meresankh III, Khafre's wife.[14] The queen is just above the scene, much taller, and her presence gives a hint of control and legitimacy to the entire wall. The scene is more developed than Seneb's. Five scribes are writing, supervised by the chief of the bureau. One officer with a stick drives a man before them, whereas four others sit waiting for their turn. The scribes make up the first of three categories; they are called *ḏ3ḏ3.t n.t pr-ḏt* ("the high court of the estate of eternity"). A *ḏ3ḏ3.t* is, from the Old Kingdom onwards, a court managing an institution, combining administrative and judicial occupations;[15] the scribes work for the owner as his substitutes and assist him in the management of the estate. Here the *pr-ḏt* is twofold: on the one hand it evokes the real estate given by the king to an official, but it is also the envisaged estate represented in the tomb to provide the owner with food and offerings for eternity. The second group is made up by the officers: the only term describing them in the Old Kingdom is *s3 pr*, ("son of the estate"). They cannot be called 'police officers' because they were private guards working for the dignitary or his estate, specialised in the management of workers.[16]

Finally, who were the controlled people, who are being roughly handled on these walls? Although they were herdsmen in Seneb's tomb, the most frequent group is composed of *ḥḳ3.w* ("chiefs") as in the tomb of Meresankh, or alternatively *ḥḳ3.w ḥwt* ("chiefs of the estate") or *ḥḳ3.w nỉwt* ("chiefs of the village") in 19 tombs.[17] It is not this paper's purpose to explore the different hypotheses regarding their status, but it is clear that they were control officials, responsible for teams of workers.[18] The scribes did not directly investigate mere workers, such as peasants, but rather those controlling them. On a practical basis, this shows that official control went through intermediaries and that dignitaries needed some local intelligence. However, these chiefs also act as metonymies for the entire work force, so as to make clear to the tomb's visitors that everyone, even the smaller title-bearers, is subjected to top-down control.

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[13] H. Junker, *Giza V, Die Mastaba des Snb (Seneb) und die umliegenden Gräber* (Vienna and Leipzig: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1941), 76.

[14] D. Dunham and W. K. Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1974), fig. 9.

[15] J. C. Moreno García, Études sur l'administration, le pouvoir et l'idéologie en Égypte, de l'Ancien au Moyen Empire (Aegyptiaca Leodiensia 4 – Liège: Université de Liège, 1997), 132–140; E. Martinet, L'administration provinciale sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien (PÄ 38 – Boston: Brill, 2019), 324–326; A. Philip-Stéphan, Dire le droit en Égypte pharaonique (Brussels: Safran, 2008), 24–27; A. A. Loktionov, The Development of the Justice System in Ancient Egypt from the Old to the Middle Kingdom (PhD diss., Robinson College, University of Cambridge, 2019), 81–83.

[16] G. Andreu, *Enquête sur la police en Égypte pharaonique. Étude de titres apparus avant la fin du Moyen Empire* (PhD diss., Paris, 1978); J. Yoyotte, 'Un corps de police dans l'Égypte pharaonique', *RdÉ* 9 (1952): 139–151.

[17] B. Porter and R. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs and paintings* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1960), vol. 3(1): 80; 114; 197; 207; 3/2: 461; 467; 474; 483; 494; 495; 508; 521; 525; 599; 617; 639; 641; 645; 4: 254; vol. 5: 19.

[18] J. C. Moreno García, 'The Territorial Administration of the Kingdom in the 3rd Millennium', in J. C. Moreno García (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Administration* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 124–129; N. Grimal, *Les termes de la propagande royale égyptienne* (Paris: Institut de France, 1986), 572–585; J. Florès, *Les céréales. Analyse d'une gestion au Protodynastique et à l'Ancien Empire* (*SAK* Beiheft 17 – Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag, 2015), 321–323.

Thus, as early as the 4th Dynasty, the features of the patterns were established, and they did not change significantly, neither during the 5th nor the 6th Dynasty.

2.2. Signs of submission: the theme of control in the rendering of accounts

Funerary images carry heavy systems of signification and use multiple signs to create an organised discourse,[19] which aims at legitimising the domination of the administration over the rest of the population. It is firstly a matter of defining categories through visual signs. Baldness is one of them: the controlled men are often (in half of the scenes) partially bald, but never completely, whereas scribes and officers have homogeneous hair [Figure 1]. As well as a mark of old age, this can be interpreted as a symptom of incompleteness and imperfection,[20] in comparison to the perfect bodies of the administrators. As Foucault argued, it also pertains to the disciplinary aspect of power: physical peculiarity which brings into focus the low rung of the social ladder.[21]

The opposition between controlled workers and scribes also uses knowledge effects, that is to say that their social position is reinforced by their mastering of specific techniques, as a result of training, such as writing and counting. The verb *ḥsb* ('to count') is present in eleven tombs,[22] as well as *ỉp* ('to count') in four[23] and *sš* ('to write') in three.[24] The object of these verbs is always the *ḥḳ3.w*, that is the controlled people. The control of the workers by the administration is thus made possible through technical skills. The knowledge of the administrators not only differentiates them from their subordinates but becomes the very instrument through which their domination is made effective.[25] The estate is being ordered, and beyond it, so is the entire Egyptian countryside. The position of the scribes can also be reinforced by the column hall, a rather rare sign, as in Sopduhotep's tomb.[26] The verticality of the columns creates a close and stable space for the scribes, which contrasts with the oblique lines formed by the controlled figures.[27] One world is more stable than the other.

The other group that faces the controlled men is the officers. Their function is embodied by their staff, in most of the scenes – twenty-seven tombs,[28] sometimes ending with a hand [Figure 2].[29] Just as the scribes' writing equipment, it distinguishes the officers from the rest of the population and functions as a symbol of their power. The instrument is obviously not neutral: the possibility of violence contributes to their status. The potential beating of anyone who would disobey is omnipresent on the walls.

Control cannot be reduced to abstract signs: there is also a physical side of submission. In Meresankh's tomb,[30] there are two lines of people: five scribes sitting on the right and four controlled figures on the

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[19] V. Angenot, 'Pour une herméneutique de l'image égyptienne', *CdÉ* 80 (159/160), 11–35; R. Tefnin, 'Eléments pour une sémiologie de l'image égyptienne', *CdÉ* 66 (131/132), 60–88.

[20] J-J. Clère, *Les chauves d'Hathor* (*OLA* 63 – Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 1–5; On abnormality and transgressions in funerary iconography, see P. Vernus, 'Stratégie d'épure et stratégie d'appogiature dans les productions dites « artistiques » à l'usage des dominants. Le papyrus dit « érotique » de Turin et la mise à distance des dominés', in Kothay (ed.), *Art and Society*, 109–122.

[21] M. Foucault, *Le Pouvoir psychiatrique. 1973-1974* (Paris: Seuil-Gallimard, 2003), 46–47.

[22] Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, vol. 3(1): 101; 197; 3/2: 461; 467; 474; 495; 521; 599; 639; vol. 4: 243; vol. 5: 19.

[23] Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, vol. 3(1): 87; 169; vol. 3(2): 474; 645.

[24] Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, vol. 3(1): 169; vol. 3(2): 639; 641.

[25] K. A. Kothay, 'Categorisation, Classification and Social Reality: Administrative Control and Interaction with the Population', in J. C. Moreno García (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Administration* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 479–520.

[26] M. Mogensen, *La Glyptothèque NY Carlsberg. La Collection égyptienne* (Copenhagen: Levin and Munksgaard, 1930), pl. 92.

[27] For a medieval comparison, see R. Jacob and N. Marchal-Jacob, 'Chapitre 1. Jalons pour une Histoire de l'architecture judiciaire', in Association Française pour l'Histoire de la Justice (ed.), *La Justice en ses temples* (Paris: Errance, 1992) 27–28.

[28] Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, vol. 3(1): 20; 85; 101; 114; 170; 197; 200; vol. 3(2): 467; 468; 481; 485; 512; 525; 617; 639; 641; 645; 699; vol. 4: 243; 254; vol. 5: 235.

[29] Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, vol. 3(1): 169; vol. 3(2): 483; 518; 599; vol. 5: 19.

[30] Dunham and Simpson, *Mastaba*, fig. 9.

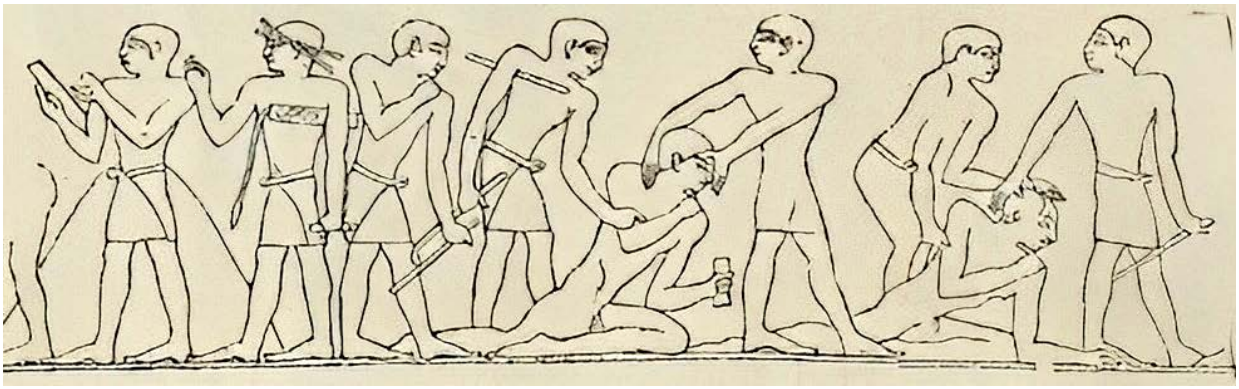

Figure 1. Detail from the tomb of Kayemrehu. Reproduced from G. Perrot and C. Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité, tome 1* (Paris: Hachette, 1882), 30.

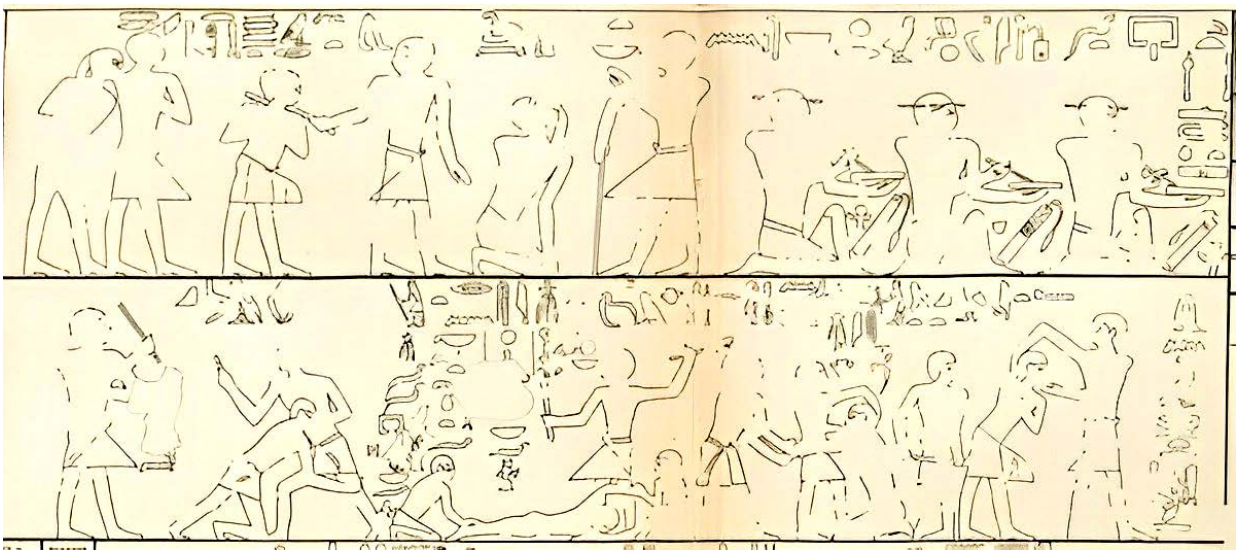

Figure 2. Detail from the tomb of Aba. Reproduced from N. de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of Deir el-Gebrawi* (Archaeological Survey of Egypt 11 – London: Cambridge University Press, 1902), pl. 8.

left. The scribes keep some distance between them, every one of them performing the same gesture, heads turned in the same direction. On the contrary, the four chiefs are very close to one another, knees or feet touching their front neighbour. Two are looking ahead and two behind them, and each has a different arm position. This is no coincidence. The group of chiefs is depicted as disorganized and unstable, whereas the scribes are perfectly ordered: the hearing of workers before the *ḏ3ḏ3.t* is a way to order the formless groups of workers.[31] This can be interpreted as the administration's ordering function, which does not only check accounts, but also enforces a suitable behaviour. The rendering of accounts is a place of acculturation, where the workers of the estate change their *habitus*, and adopt one deemed more suitable by the dominant ideology.

The controlled men are also submitted to the officers' physical control. The latter usually stand up straight while the former are bowing. Although some controlled people bow voluntarily, most of them

[31] For comparisons in images of royal domination, see V. Davies, 'The Treatment of Foreigners in Seti's Battle Reliefs', *JEA* 98 (2012), 80–81 and R. Schulz, 'Remarks on the Composition of Hunting and Battle Scenes on the Chest of Tutankhamun', in S. Sherratt (ed.), *Proceedings of the First International Symposium. The Wall Paintings of Thera* (Athens: Idryma Theras, 2000), 252.

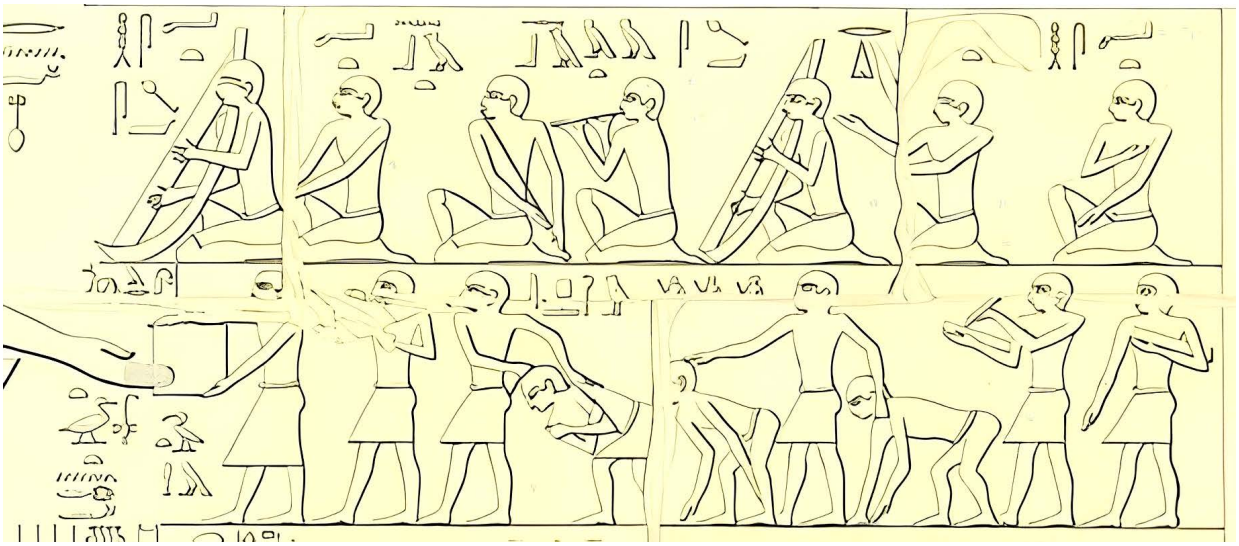

Figure 3. Detail from the tomb of Senedjemib-Mehi. Reproduced from K. R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien*, Part 2 (Berlin: Nicolaische Buchhandlung, 1849), pl. 75-c.

are forced to do so by the officers' pressure, sometimes at a 90° angle. An unnatural and uncomfortable position is imposed on their bodies, creating a sensation of pain since they are forced to walk like this.[32] The officers usually put their hand on the necks or heads of the workers, which shows they use specific techniques of control. Distorting the body is the first aspect of physical control: an impression of pain is felt by the onlooker at the sight of the workers in Senedjemib Mehi's scene [Figure 3].[33] The line separating those on whom the pain is inflicted and those inflicting it socially divides individuals into categories defined by their ability to use violence against others, or to suffer from it. The second aspect of physical constraint is that it makes people do what one wants them to. The second most frequent verb in the scenes is *ỉnỉ,* ('to bring'), in six tombs.[34] The officers control the movements of the workers and their task is mostly to make them go from one place to another (from their workplaces to the court). The association of the two verbs, *ỉnỉ* and *ḥsb*, clearly describes the aims of the ceremony: mastering the movements of people, supervising them, and finally changing their habits.

Finally, most of the controlled people walk, stand or sit with standard arm positions [Figures 1–6]. Most of the time both arms are folded, hands near the opposite shoulder or elbow, or one arm folded and the other hanging toward the legs. These attitudes show humility and contrition because no hand or elbow points outwards or threatens anyone. A precise orthopraxy is asked of the controlled men, to fit the scribes' expectations. The rendering of accounts is thus one of the classic Old Kingdom funerary themes where an ideology of control is developed, and workers are acculturated. It works as a 'disciplinary device' because it shows every visitor that the estate's institutions – representing the owner – are watching everything and have the means to compel the inferiors to submit.[35] That does not mean that they were actually watching everyone and had a total power on workers, but this exhibition of panoptical knowledge and of physical strength pertains to a disciplinary power. Inside the envisaged estate on the tomb's walls, the control is proved effective, and this view of a perfect order impacts on real-life practices.

[32] To compare with royal iconography, see M. D. Janzen, *The Iconography or Humiliation: the Depiction and Treatment of bound Foreigners in New Kingdom Egypt* (PhD diss., Memphis, 2013), 58–67.

[33] K. R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien*, Part 2 (Berlin: Nicolaische Buchhandlung, 1849), pl. 75-c.

[34] Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, vol. 3(1): 197; vol. 3(2): 467; 494; 599; vol. 4: 243.

[35] See the study of panoptic devices in Foucault, *Surveiller et Punir*, 228–231.

3. Punishment scenes: the active side of control

Punishments are less numerous than renderings of accounts. A total of 17 scenes have been preserved, among which four are associated with the latter. It is thus quite a rare pattern, which also remains enigmatic in many ways. Some are controversial because a punishment is not always easily recognized, and so it is likely that others have disappeared. Before suggesting an overall analysis of the genre, I will describe the three attested categories of punishments in the Old Kingdom.

3.1. Typology of punishments

The most frequent is the spanking scene, with 11 occurrences.[36] It is also the oldest, as it dates from the 4th Dynasty and is not attested after the 5th. It has sometimes been interpreted as part of children's education,[37] and therefore as a light form of punishment. This view - likely derived from the contemporary upbringing of some modern scholars rather than the Egyptians themselves – is not based on any serious evidence and needs to be abandoned. The pattern also frequently contains the same elements: some phrases or figures are found in several tombs. The scenes are organized around three types of people: the punished man, the punisher and the supervisor. Based on Nimaatre's[38] and Hetep-her-akhti's[39] scene, the punished man is generally kneeling, whereas a standing man spanks him with his hand. This pattern is found coherently in other tombs, with two variations: the punisher can hold himself more or less upright or lean toward his victim; and the victim tries to resist [Figure 2] or accepts the spanking passively [Figures 4–5]. The supervisor is always standing and leaning on a staff in a collected pose. He may be half-bald, which emphasizes an age gap.

The significance of such scenes has often been studied,[40] without reaching any firm conclusion. My first assumption is that it is not a judicial act, but rather a part of the management of workers. Punishments always take place in a context of agricultural production, often cattle-breeding in the marshes. It is thus not the consequence of a trial: apart from the supervisor's presence, nothing marks the scene as official. However, neither is it just children playing or being punished by an adult. Nothing would explain why children are being dealt with in this manner. Furthermore, in several tombs (Hetep-Her-Akhti,[41] or Ptahhotep[42]) a title-bearing officer orders the punisher to beat the victim, asking that it be strong. Furthermore, the punished men do not possess any characteristics associated with children, such as small size or the sidelock of youth. That does not correspond to situations pertaining to the education of children. I assume that some workers are being punished for an unknown mistake, probably in relation to their work. In two tombs,[43] the supervisor is a *ḫrp mnỉ.w* ('controller of herdsmen'): he is responsible for a team of workers and thus can chastise them if they make errors. Phrases like "Beat him hard!" indicate that spanking did not only have symbolic effects but was quite painful.

The second category consists of bastinados – beating with a stick. It appeared during the 5th Dynasty and continued into the 6th, but most scenes are incomplete. The oldest comes from Inti's tomb,[44] in a context of cattle-breeding work, which may indicate a thematic link with spanking in early occurrences of the pattern. The most famous bastinado scene comes from Aba's tomb in Deir el-Gebrawi, from Pepy

[36] Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, vol. 3(1): 69; 70; 230; 340; vol. 3(2): 593; 600; 637; 639; 655; vol. 5: 28; 34.
[37] H. T. Mohr, *The Mastaba of Hetep-Her-Akhti* (Leiden: Brill, 1943), 62.
[38] A. M. Roth, *A Cemetery of Palace Attendants. Giza Mastabas 6* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1995), fig. 185.
[39] Mohr, *Mastaba*, pl. 32.
[40] Mohr, *Mastaba*, pl. 32; Roth, *Cemetery*, 45.
[41] Mohr, *Mastaba*, pl. 32.
[42] Harpur and Scremin, *Chapel*, 178.
[43] Harpur and Scremin, *Chapel*, 178; Roth, *Cemetery*, 45.
[44] N. Kanawati & Ann McFarlane, *Deshasha The Tombs of Inti, Shedu and Others,* (*ACE* Reports 5 – Sydney: Macquarie University, 1993), pl. 9.

Figure 4. Detail from the tomb of Nimaatre. Reproduced from A. M. Roth, *A Cemetery of Palace Attendants. Giza Mastabas 6* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1995), fig. 185.

Figure 5. Detail from the tomb of Hetep-Her-Akhti. Reproduced from H. T. Mohr, *Een vechtpartij te Leiden. Vorm en inhoud van een reliëf in de mastaba van Ḥtp-Ḥr-3ḫtj* (*Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux* 7, 1940), 547, fig. 38.

II's reign [Figure 2].[45] Here, it is not a matter of management within a team of workers anymore. Despite the scene's ambiguity, I argue that the punishment precedes any trial. One has to look first at the bottom register, where on the left a man called Rensi is resisting the officer who leads him to the scribes. For that he is chastised and afterwards people help him stand on his feet before introducing him to the scribes in the upper register. This is the first and only evidence of such a resistance to the estate's authorities in the Old Kingdom.[46] The punisher holds two 'hand-staffs',[47] which can also be held during rendering of accounts: it proves that the same group of people, the *sꜣ.w pr*, worked for the bureau of scribes, led the inspection of workers and punished those who were not docile enough. The bastinado punishment, found in three tombs of the 5th and 6th Dynasty,[48] has every reason to be particularly painful. Although it is difficult to compare two very different bodies of evidence, palaeopathological studies can help to understand images of violence: based on a study on Old Kingdom remains from Elephantine,[49] we can assume that these bastinados could cause bone fractures, but little bones were more frequently targeted than large ones, because

[45] N. de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of Deir el-Gebrawi* (Archaeological Survey of Egypt 11 – London: Cambridge University Press, 1902), pl. 8.

[46] For a similar scene in the 11th Dynasty, see N. Kanawati and L. Evans, *Beni Hassan, Vol. IV. The Tomb of Baqet*, (*ACE* Reports 42 – Sydney: Macquarie University, 2018), 40.

[47] On this tool, see C. Sourdive, *La main dans l'Égypte pharaonique* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1994), 129–131.

[48] Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, vol. 4: 19; 121; 243.

[49] J. Gresky, *et al.*, '„Folter" im Alten Reich? Untersuchungen zu den Ursachen und der Häufigkeit von Traumata bei der altägyptischen Population von Elephantine', in D. Raue, S. Seidlmayer and P. Speiser (eds), *The First Cataract of the Nile. One Region*

Figure 6. Detail from the tomb of Mereruka. Reproduced from N. Kanawati, *Mereruka and his Family, Part III: 1* (*ACE* Reports 29 – Sydney: Macquarie University), pl. 78.

they heal more quickly. Bone analysis is nevertheless insufficient, because the blows could reasonably have left injuries on skin and muscles.[50]

The third type of punishment has drawn scholarly attention since the 19th century,[51] and it is not this paper's aim to describe it in detail. The bastinado at the pillory is only found in three tombs of the 6th Dynasty; the oldest is Mereruka's in Saqqara [Figure 6],[52] which I assume was imitated by Khentika in the same necropolis,[53] then by Henqu in Deir el-Gebrawi.[54] In this case, the punishment seems to follow a trial by the scribes. The chastised people have been convicted of a crime, probably pertaining to the management of resources. The person attached and beaten at the pillory must have been deemed guilty by the scribes and bears the same titles, chief of the estate (*ḥḳꜣ ḥwt*) and director of the scribes of the fields (*imy-rꜣ sš.w ꜣḫ.wt*) as the controlled men on the left. It is thus the oldest association of punishment and rendering of accounts scenes: after nearly two centuries of stand-alone scenes, the inspection of workers can be followed by visible negative consequences. Nevertheless, this pattern had no posterity, and disappeared after the 6th Dynasty. It is undoubtedly a harsh beating, which probably left marks, but it is not a capital execution, as some authors argued until recently:[55] the attached man will not be beheaded.

4. Concluding comments: the function of punishment imagery in the funerary scenes

I have chosen to study these two patterns – renderings of accounts and actual punishments – jointly, as both contain physical violence. However, it is striking that initially they appeared separately and finally joined several generations later, during the 6th Dynasty. I suggest three explanations. On a sociological level, the tombs wherein the two patterns are associated belonged to high-ranking officials, such as Viziers for Mereruka and Khentika, and the Director of Upper Egypt (*imy-rꜣ Šmʿ.w*) for Aba. It required great power and confidence to show one's own agents beating workers. On the other hand, it is possible that there was some religious reluctance on the part of the artists and the owners in representing harsh punishments because the tombs had to show an ideal world that would accompany the deceased through eternity. Spanking scenes are thus represented among other moments of the workers' everyday life, and it seems quite a mild punishment, compared to a bastinado. The absence of any capital executions,

– *diverse perspectives* (*SDAIK* 36 – Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 77–89. See also U. Matić, 'Review of: Bestock, L. (2017) *Violence and Power in Ancient Egypt: Image and Ideology before the New Kingdom. London: Routledge*', *Archäologische Informationen* 42 (2019), 1–5.

[50] Gresky *et al.*, '„Folter"', 89.

[51] N. Beaux, 'Ennemis étrangers et malfaiteurs égyptiens. La signification du châtiment au pilori', *BIFAO* 91 (1991), 33–53.

[52] N. Kanawati, *Mereruka and his Family*, *Part III: 1* (*ACE* Reports 29 – Sydney: Macquarie University, 2010), pl. 78.

[53] T. G. H. James, *The Mastaba of Khentika called Ikhekhi,* (Archaeological Survey of Egypt 30 – London: Cambridge University Press, 1953), pl. 9.

[54] N. Kanawati, *Deir el-Gebrawi, vol. 1: the Northern Cliff* (*ACE* Reports 23 – Sydney: Macquarie University, 2005), pl. 55.

[55] J. Capart, 'Note sur la décapitation en Égypte', *ZÄS* 36 (1898); E. D. Bedell, *Criminal Law in the Egyptian Ramesside Period*, (PhD diss., Brandeis University, 1973), 157; K. Muhlestein, *Violence in the Service of Order: The Religious Framework for Sanctioned Killing in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 2011), 17–18.

which we know were carried out at that time,[56] can also be explained by a taboo around the depiction of harsh violence.

Finally, this is consistent with my interpretation that disciplinary control is a major goal of funerary scenes. The choice to represent a rendering of accounts is in itself legitimising, so that inferiors know they are checked and observed at all times. It is not certain that the same social categories that were represented being controlled on the walls could themselves visit the tombs, however what matters is the internalisation of top-down control and its legitimacy. The depiction does not need punishments purely to be visually effective. Its point is to show control enacted by the authority on people.

One may wonder why punishment scenes do exist. They mostly act as examples of bodily submission. The simple situation of one person beating another establishes a mere social fact: some are given punishments and others give them. This discriminating line, based on the potential violence that can be inflicted on anyone, creates a social order. I argue that, in Egypt, legitimate violence was not absolute. It was not the property of a single group such as the police, but it was relational: an act of violence is legitimate when – among other criteria – it is used by a superior on an inferior. One must not be misled by the rarity of punishment scenes. They show the power any superior has on his inferiors. During the 5th Dynasty, no tomb owner dared to have his own guard chastise people, so punishments remained a matter of labour management.

One final difficulty arises in these scenes: one never knows what these people did that justifies their punishment. The total absence of inscriptions cannot be attributed to mere chance: what matters here is not the chain of consequences leading from a crime to a punishment, but the fact that any misdeed will be seen and dealt with. The scenes do not purposefully seek to conceal the original crime, but they find their purpose in themselves, as images of control. It could also be argued that the notion of crime is not adequate here, at least in the scenes of spanking: punishment has to be studied as a "complex social fact" and not only the answer to crime.[57]

The theme of control is thus an important aspect of funerary scenes, whose main patterns are renderings of accounts and punishments. When studying them, one must not try to explain every detail by an external 'real' reference, but rather trust the ideological discourse which aims at defending the deceased's control over his people. As a whole, the tombs worked as disciplinary institutions, and served a purpose of acculturation. A pacified vision of social order was praised, which did not resemble the actual power relations in the Egyptian countryside but contributed to shape them in a manner suitable to the elite.

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[56] K. Muhlestein, *Violence in the Service of Order*, 16–25.

[57] Foucault, *Surveiller et Punir*, 31. See also G. Rusche and O. Kirchheimer, *Peine et structure sociale* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1994), 121–125.

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11
Social Control in Middle Kingdom Egypt: Embodied Experience and Symbolic Violence[1]

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Abstract

Pharaonic Egypt's highly unequal social organisation was maintained not only through the use of physical coercion, but also through embodied daily practice and symbolic violence (Bourdieu). The control of space and physical interactions influenced how ancient Egyptians saw themselves in relation to the rest of society. This paper explores Middle Kingdom visual and written culture through a sociological lens to investigate how social interaction was managed and how this served to reproduce the existing social structure. Through body language, gestures, and spatial relationships, members of society learned to 'know their place'. Intermediaries were used to manage interactions between higher and lower members of society in order to maintain social separation and preserve awe around the high elite (Goffman).

The use of architecture to facilitate surveillance and overseers to supervise workers produced a sense of potential deviancy (Durkheim) that reinforced social divisions and created a form of 'disciplinary power', which encouraged individuals to self-monitor (Foucault). Public spectacles, such as the cattle count and petitioning, were carefully managed arenas of interaction that collapsed the distance between the state and the individual and served as platforms for visually modelling social hierarchy. These often included highly visible displays of state-sanctioned violence, which encouraged individuals to internalise symbolic violence and to self-discipline, even in the absence of constant surveillance and coercive force.

Keywords: Deviance; Middle Kingdom art and texts; Punishment; Social distancing; Submission

1. Introduction

In societies, social dynamics are expressed and embedded through embodied practice, through individuals' movements, gestures, interactions, their experiences of physical spaces, and the emotions evoked through those experiences. Through their daily practices, individuals both experience and enact their positions in society. In pharaonic Egypt's very unequal society, hierarchical social control was maintained by a relatively small group of elite, sometimes through physical coercion, but often much more subtly. Embodied experience contributed to the cultivation of compliance in ancient Egyptian society, which was arguably more powerful than physical violence.[2]

[1] Warm thanks to the organisers of the Lady Wallis Budge Symposium on compulsion and control, Alex Loktionov and Christ's College Cambridge, as well as the other participants for their stimulating contributions, and the reviewers for their helpful suggestions. This paper builds on research from my DPhil thesis, for which I thank my supervisors Professor John Baines and Professor Richard B. Parkinson, the Queen's College and Worcester College at the University of Oxford, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada: M. Maitland, *Representations of Social Identity and Hierarchy in the Elite Culture of Middle Kingdom Egypt* (DPhil diss., University of Oxford, 2016). Thanks to the Ministry of Antiquities in Egypt, especially Hisham el-Leithy and Marwa Abdel Razek, for arranging photography permissions at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo and in Middle Egypt, and also Valentina Gasperini for kind assistance. Thanks also to my National Museums Scotland colleagues, especially Daniel M. Potter for his helpful comments on a draft of this article.

[2] Physical punishment, forced labour, and imprisonment retained significance in social control: for example, see D. Lorton, 'The Treatment of Criminals in Ancient Egypt: Through the New Kingdom', *JESHO* 20 (1977), 2–64; A. A. Loktionov, 'May My Nose and Ears Be Cut Off: Practical and "Supra-practical" Aspects of Mutilation in the Egyptian New Kingdom', *JESHO* 60/3 (2017),

Although we cannot directly access ancient Egyptian lived experience, a combination of sources and theoretical approaches can help reconstruct something of them. This paper examines evidence from both textual and visual sources, in the form of literary texts, tomb decoration, and tomb models dating roughly to the Middle Kingdom (*c.* 1975–1630 BC),[3] through a sociological lens, incorporating concepts from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002), Erving Goffman (1922–1982), Michel Foucault (1926–1984), and others. Ancient representations offer glimpses into elite worldview and how this served to reinforce the existing social structure. This approach will consider some of the intangible psychological, emotional, and embodied aspects of social control in Middle Kingdom Egypt. Ultimately, physical interactions with people and place shaped ancient Egyptians' experience of their position in society and influenced how they saw themselves and others, reinforcing the social status quo.

The concepts of 'habitus' and 'symbolic violence' developed by Bourdieu are useful in considering how social control in ancient Egypt may have been maintained. Bourdieu viewed the body as a mnemonic device in which the basics of culture are imprinted through a socialising and learning process that begins in childhood.[4] Bourdieu defined the concept of 'habitus' as "a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks" and as "the universalizing mediation which causes an individual agent's practices, without either explicit reason or signifying intent, to be none the less 'sensible' and 'reasonable'".[5] Thus habitus integrates past experiences to shape an individual's perceptions and actions, limiting their future behavioural possibilities. Habitus captures "the permanent internalisation of the social order in the human body" which predisposes individuals to act in a certain manner.[6] 'Symbolic violence', through cultural expressions and experiences, unconsciously convinces people that the existing social organization is natural and justified, legitimising domination.[7] Thus, social control is accepted and maintained, and the existing social structure reproduced through indirect, cumulative cultural processes rather than overt coercion. In Middle Kingdom Egypt, spatial control, surveillance and, on a much broader scale, spectacle[8] served as manifestations of elite power: through embodied experiences of these, people internalised social control and learned to self-subordinate.

2. Spatial control and body language

Elite Egyptian worldview perceived society as hierarchically structured.[9] This is evidenced in the list-like structure used occasionally in literary texts such as the *Teaching of Ptahhotep*, which presents its

263–291; D. Mazzone, 'The Dark Side of a Model Community: The "Ghetto" of el-Lahun', *JAEA* 2 (2017), 34–44. On other forms of physical violence in ancient Egypt, see U. Matić, *Body and Frames of War in New Kingdom Egypt: Violent Treatment of Enemies and Prisoners* (*Philippika*: Altertumswissenschaftliche Abhandlungen 134 – Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2019); U. Matić, *Violence and Gender in Ancient Egypt* (London and New York: Routledge, 2021).

[3] The Middle Kingdom decorated tomb chapels at Beni Hassan and Meir were studied *in situ*, but I also refer to the original publications for reference and draw on evidence from Deir el-Bersha, Qubbet el-Hawa, and Thebes. The Middle Kingdom literary corpus has more recently drawn controversy surrounding the dating of texts. The oldest known manuscripts are of the mid- to late-Twelfth Dynasty (*Teaching of Ptahhotep, Eloquent Peasant, Tale of Sinuhe*), while other literary texts only survive in copies dating to the New Kingdom but have features that may suggest earlier dates of composition. The *Dialogue of Ipuwer and the Lord of All* has been argued to date between Senwosret III and the late Second Intermediate Period, and the *Teaching of Khety* between the mid-Thirteenth Dynasty and the early Eighteenth Dynasty: A. Stauder, *Linguistic Dating of Middle Egyptian Literary Texts* (*Lingua Aegyptia, Studia Monographica* 12 – Hamburg: Widmaier, 2013), 79–83, 87–90, 145–48, 384–88, 510.

[4] P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 75, 93–94.

[5] Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory*, 82–83, 79.

[6] T. H. Eriksen and F. S. Nielsen, *A History of Anthropology* (London and Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2001), 130.

[7] P. Bourdieu and J-C. Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, trans. R. Nice (Revised edn., Theory, Culture and Society Series – London: Sage, 1990), esp. 5; R. Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu* (London: Routledge, 2002), 104.

[8] On later spectacles of violence in the context of war, see U. Matić, *Body and Frames of War*.

[9] M. Maitland, 'Dirt, Purity, and Spatial Control: Anthropological Perspectives on Ancient Egyptian Society and Culture in the Middle Kingdom', *JAEI* 17 (2018), 57–58; M. Maitland, 'Fishing and Fowling for Pleasure versus Produce: Ancient Egyptian

advice on social interactions organised in a sequence from the highest to the lowest-ranking individual.[10] Similarly, onomastica (compositions consisting of lists of words organised into categories) and lists of property, including both people and animals, were organised according to perceived worth, making such forms of hierarchical structure seem objective and natural.[11] This structure is disrupted in the literary text the *Dialogue of Ipuwer and the Lord of All*, which laments a reversal of the social order in an upturned world: "look, every office (*iꜣw.t*) is not in its place (*st*)".[12] Members of Egyptian society learned to 'know their place' through body language, gestures, and spatial relationships, as well as representations of these.

Society's hierarchical structure was embodied through spatial positioning. For example, the *Teaching of Ptahhotep* describes how one's professional position and status should dictate seating arrangements: "if you are a member of the courts (*rwyt*), stand and sit according to your position (*ḥꜥ ḥms r nmt.t nb.t*)".[13] This is reflected in the hierarchical arrangement of officials in processions depicted in tomb chapel decoration and tomb models, including the relative hierarchies of sitting and standing: sitting, especially on chairs, is more privileged than standing [Figures 1, 10].[14]

In tomb decoration, hierarchy dictated a sequential organization within registers according to rank. Intimates and family members of the tomb owner are given the highest ranking, alongside the most senior administrative positions and posts with royal associations. For example, in Beni Hassan tomb no. 3, a depiction of Khnumhotep II seated on a chair with his officials standing in a row behind him is arranged in descending order of rank, from those closest to him [Figure 1]. The names and titles read from left to right: "acquaintance of his lord, Nakht", "steward, Netjeruhotep", "scribe, Ameny", "scribe, Khnumhotep", an untitled attendant who carries a chair in the space where the others have their names recorded, and "[mat]-spreader (*ps[š]ty*), Senwosret". In the rendering of accounts scene in the same tomb, tax defaulters are brought before four scribes, arranged in descending order of status. The first official on the left wears a wig while the others do not, and the first two are seated at writing tables or boards, while the third scribe holds two papyri, and the fourth holds one papyrus. Their titles read, from left to right: "steward of the estate (*ḏꜣt.t*)", "royal scribe", and the last two simply "scribe".[15] Although these are ultimately only visual representations, they may also give an indication of what was expected as part of official settings and public events. To be expected to position oneself according to hierarchical status was to physically experience one's rank in society, a form of symbolic violence that would have helped reinforce the existing social order.

Furthermore, different forms of physical deference were expected according to one's social status. In social interactions, various gestures were used to show respect towards higher-ranking individuals,

Representations of Social Status in Relation to Animals and the Natural Environment', in C. Geisen *et al.* (eds), *His Good Name. Essays on Identity and Self-Presentation in Ancient Egypt in Honor of Ronald J. Leprohon* (*MVCAE* 5 – Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2021), 279–81.

[10] Z. Žába, *Les maximes de Ptaḥḥotep* (Prague: Éditions de l'Académie Tchécoslovaque des Sciences, 1956), 21–23, *ll.* 60–83; R. B. Parkinson, *The Tale of Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems, 1940–1640 BC* (Oxford World's Classics – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 251.

[11] A. H. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947); Maitland, 'Dirt, Purity, and Spatial Control', 61–62; Maitland, 'Fishing and Fowling', 280.

[12] R. Enmarch, *A World Upturned: Commentary on and Analysis of The Dialogue of Ipuwer and the Lord of All* (British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship Monograph Series – Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2008), 147–48, *l.* 9.2.

[13] Žába, *Ptaḥḥotep*, 33, *ll.* 220–221; Parkinson, *Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems*, 254.

[14] G. Robins, 'Some Principles of Compositional Dominance and Gender Hierarchy in Egyptian Art,' *JARCE* 31 (1994), 39; Maitland, *Representations*. See also P. E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan* I (Archaeological Survey of Egypt 1 – London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1893), pl. 33; A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir III: The Tomb-chapel of Ukh-hotp and Mersi (B, No. 4)* (Archaeological Survey of Egypt 24 – London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1915), pls. 10–11; P. E. Newberry, *El Bersheh* I (Archaeological Survey of Egypt 3 – London: Egypt Exploration Fund), pls. 12, 17.

[15] Newberry, *Beni Hasan* I, pl. 30 [6th reg. right].

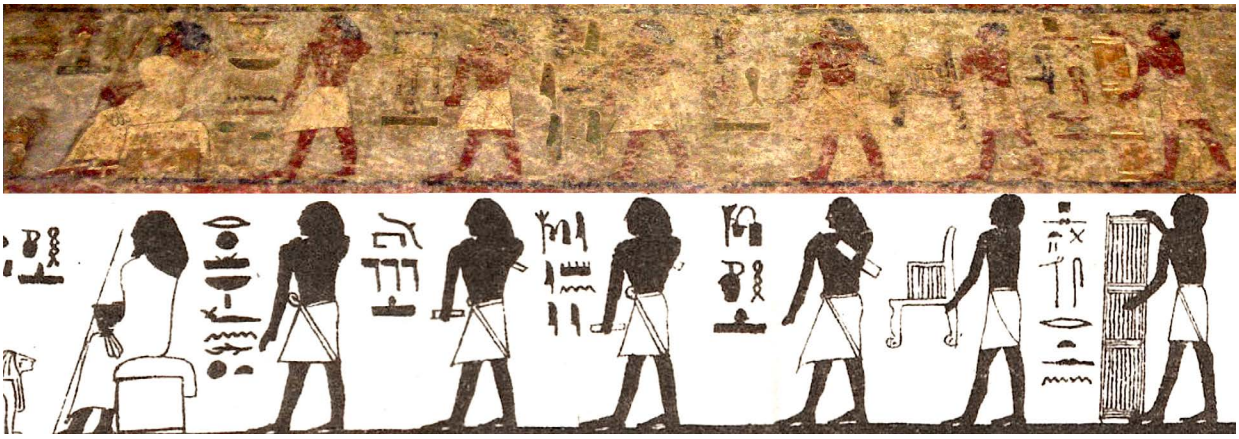

Figure 1. Hierarchical sequence of officials, Tomb no. 3 of Khnumhotep II, west wall, Beni Hassan. © Margaret Maitland. With detail from Newberry, *Beni Hasan* I, pl. 29 [2nd reg. centre].

ranging from just bending the arm, to also bending the back in a slight or deep bow, or even prostration on the ground for more significant differences in status.[16] Both elite and non-elite could be expected to bow. For example, the epithet used in biographical texts, "one to whom the great ones (*wrw*) come bowing (*ksw*)",[17] commonly expresses a high official's stature among his peers, or "one who bends his arm to his superiors",[18] describing the typical gesture of respect.[19] This kind of downward orientation, literally a 'de-gradation', can create feelings of humility and deference, and the routine repetition of this habitualised motion would have reinforced the sense of subordination.[20] This degradation would likely have been internalised to some extent, even though bowing could also be done cynically.

Literary texts encourage conformity through the practice of self-lowering but suggest that some anxiety existed amongst their elite audience about the extent of their required debasement. The *Teaching of Ptahhotep* refers to this a number of times, for example: "if you encounter a disputant in his moment, an authoritative man, who is better off than you, bend your arms (*ḫꜣm ꜥ.wy=k*), bow your back (*ḫms sꜣ=k*)!".[21] Moreover, 'bow your back (*ḫms sꜣ=k*) to your superiors (*ḥry.w-tp=k*), and your overseer from the palace!'.[22] The text also offers reassurance that compliance need not be considered shameful, even though it served as a sign of submission: "the arm is not sprained (?) by baring it (*n ḫꜣ.n ḳꜥḥ n kf.t=f*)".[23]

However, while elite monuments and literary texts frequently refer to officials bowing, in tomb decoration, they are only ever shown making the more restrained gesture of respect, holding their arm to their chest, even when standing directly before the tomb owner. Only labourers are shown physically lowering themselves in a bow. For example, in Beni Hassan tomb no. 15, both an official and a herdsman make a gesture of respect to Baqt III, but while the herdsman bows, the official stands erect [Figure 2].[24] This suggests that differences in bowing were used to visually distinguish the elite and non-elite, and

[16] B. Dominicus, *Gesten und Gebärden in Darstellungen des Alten und Mittleren Reiches* (*SAGA* 10 – Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 1994), 18–28.

[17] D. M. Doxey, *Egyptian Non-royal Epithets in the Middle Kingdom: A Social and Historical Analysis* (*PÄ* 12 – Leiden: Brill, 1998), 169–71.

[18] *BM EA 572*, *l.* 2: M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom: A Study and an Anthology* (*OBO* 84 – Fribourg and Göttingen: Universitätsverlag, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), 67; Doxey, *Non-royal Epithets*, 353.

[19] Dominicus, *Gesten und Gebärden*, 5–9, figs. 1–7.

[20] E. Linder, *Making Enemies: Humiliation and International Conflict* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), 21; D. Smith, 'Organisations and Humiliation: Looking Beyond Elias,' *Organization* 8/3 (2001), 543–44, 557 n. 23.

[21] Žába, *Ptaḥḥotep*, 21, *ll.* 60–62; Parkinson, *Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems*, 251.

[22] Žába, *Ptaḥḥotep*, 51, *ll.* 441–442; Parkinson, *Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems*, 260.

[23] Žába, *Ptaḥḥotep*, 51, *l.* 447; Parkinson, *Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems*, 260.

[24] For a similar example, see also Blackman, *Meir* III, pl. 3 [1st reg. centre].

Figure 2. An official making a gesture of respect to Baqt III, followed a herdsman who both bows and makes a gesture of respect, Tomb of Baqt III, Beni Hassan. See Newberry, *Beni Hassan* II, pl. 4 [4th reg. left]. © Margaret Maitland.

Figure 3. A forced bow before a scribe seated in a pavilion in the rendering of accounts scene, tomb no. 2 of Amenemhat, Beni Hassan. See Newberry, *Beni Hassan* I, pl. 13 [6th reg. centre]. © Margaret Maitland.

these representations were ultimately constructs intended to uphold the status of the tomb owner and his courtiers. This divergence illuminates officials' possible anxieties concerning the preservation and display of their position in society, as well as the challenges of negotiating status within the elite while maintaining their distinction from the non-elite. Before kings and gods though, even the high elite could be shown prostrating themselves.[25]

In tomb chapel decoration, scenes that depict the punishment of tax evaders show some bowing voluntarily, while others are forced into a bow [Figure 3].[26] These displays of force may be similar to

[25] e.g. The main protagonist in *Sinuhe* is described variously before the king/palace/royal decree: "kissing the earth" (*sn=k tꜣ*) (B 188), "touching the earth" (B 201; B 249), and "stretched out on my belly" (*dwn.kwi ḥr ḫt=i*) (i.e. totally prostrate) (B 252, also B 200): J. P. Allen, *Middle Egyptian Literature: Eight Literary Works of the Middle Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 117, 123, 137. See also a statue of two provincial governors prostrate before a higher authority (Walters Art Museum 22.373): R. Schulz and M. Seidel, *Egyptian Art: The Walters Art Museum* (Baltimore: Walters Art Museum, 2009), 42.

[26] See also Dominicus, *Gesten und Gebärden*, 9–25.

displays of royal control over foreign enemies, but on a provincial scale. Individuals being forced into a bow may represent instances of resistance; a refusal to conform to social expectations, but these selective displays of coercive control may also have been intended to communicate the necessity of compliance and futility of resistance. While voluntary self-lowering expressed deference and acceptance, forcible lowering, especially in public, would likely be denigrating and potentially shameful.

3. Separation and social control

Status was measured by one's apparent closeness to the king, or to a lesser extent to other high officials, but actual proximity to the elite was carefully managed and controlled. The stela of Intef describes his role in maintaining social divisions through physical separation, referring to him as: "one who acts as a door for what is and what is not" (*nt.t ỉwt.t*), favourite of the king in his palace in keeping commoners (*rmṯ*) distant (*sḫrỉ*) from him".[27] While tomb chapel decoration depicts the elite and their dependants together in the idyllic setting of the tomb owner's estate, there is little direct interaction shown between tomb owners and their subordinates. The tomb owner is almost always shown apart, separated from the rest of society by various means such as a huge offering table,[28] his staff, which marks a dividing line between him and his workers,[29] vertical columns writing his titles and name,[30] a combination of those two [Figure 4], or occasionally, the columns of a pavilion.[31]

Physical distance psychologically reinforces social distance.[32] In particular, physical separation would have aided officials in cultivating the emotional distancing that they idealised in their roles, similar to the dispassionate objectivity deemed necessary for arbitrators and judges in many societies, discussed by George Simmel (1858–1918).[33] For example, elite epithets in self-presentations assert self-control and emotional detachment, such as "cool-tempered (*ḳb.w*)", and "calm/self-controlled (*hrw-ỉb*)", which is often followed by 'free from passion (*šw m pr.t-ỉb*)".[34] *Ptahhotep* advises: "suppress your heart, control your mouth, so that your affairs (*sḫr=k*) will be among the officials (*sr.w*)!".[35] This probably aided the elite in their administrative roles, but also likely increased their capacity for control. Social distance and emotional detachment may have contributed to the elite's willingness to mete out punishment and helped to legitimise their appropriation of resources.[36]

Spatial control was used to enforce social boundaries[37] and the preservation of physical separation between different ranks served to maintain deference. The *Teaching of Khety* counsels keeping an appropriate distance from higher officials: "if you walk in attendance on great ones (*sr.w*), approach (*tkn*)

[27] MMA 57.95, *l.* 5–6; Lichtheim, *Autobiographies*, 50.

[28] e.g. Newberry, *Beni Hasan* I, pls. 17, 27, 28, 35; P. E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan II* (Archaeological Survey of Egypt 2 – London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1893), pl. 17 [left]; A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir II: The Tomb-chapel of Senbi's Son Ukh-hotp (B, No. 2)* (Archaeological Survey of Egypt 23 – London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1915), pls. 10, 15; Blackman, *Meir III*, pls. 2, 15, 17; Newberry, *Bersheh* I, pls. 32, 34.

[29] e.g. Newberry, *Beni Hasan I*, pl. 30; A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir I: The Tomb-chapel of Ukh-hotp's Son Senbi* (Archaeological Survey of Egypt 22 – London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1914), pls. 2, 6, 11, 13, 14; Blackman, *Meir III*, pl. 14.

[30] e.g. Newberry, *Beni Hasan I*, pls. 13, 46; Newberry, *Beni Hasan II*, pls. 4, 6, 16, 22A, 31; Blackman, *Meir I*, pl. 9; Blackman, *Meir II*, pl. 6; Newberry, *Bersheh I*, pls. 7, 20.

[31] e.g. Newberry, *Bersheh I*, pls. 12, 19; Blackman, *Meir III*, pls. 11, 18.

[32] e.g. J. R. Hipp and A. J. Perrin, 'The Simultaneous Effect of Social Distance and Physical Distance on the Formation of Neighborhood Ties', *City and Community* 8/1 (2009), 5–25.

[33] G. Simmel, "The Stranger," in D. Levine (ed.), *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 143–50.

[34] Doxey, *Non-royal Epithets*, 60.

[35] Žába, *Ptaḥḥotep*, 63, *ll.* 618–619; Parkinson, *Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems*, 264.

[36] Compare e.g. J. C. Magee and P. K. Smith, 'The Social Distance Theory of Power', *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 17/2 (2013): 158–86.

[37] Maitland, 'Dirt, Purity, and Spatial Control', 59–61.

Figure 4. The tomb owner separated from other figures by his staff and titles, Tomb of Senbi I, Meir. See Blackman, *Meir* I, pls. 2–3 [1st reg., 2nd reg. left]. © Margaret Maitland.

from afar, behind the end rank (*nfry.t*)!".[38] Sociologist Erving Goffman termed the creation of physical separation in order to maintain social distance and encourage a sense of awe, 'mystification'. Goffman saw restriction of access as a key element in generating deference, resulting in the audience cooperating and acting in a respectful fashion.[39] The *Dialogue of Ipuwer* refers positively to this tension between elite visibility and separation, where in an idealised world, the elite stand apart from the general celebration, observing rather than participating: "the distinguished ones (*bw3.w*) of the estates stand watching the jubilation from their houses, clad in best quality linen (*ḥbs.w m ḥ3ti.w*), (holding) staves (*twry.t*) before (them)".[40] The sense of awe cultivated by this elite display was heightened through use of elaborate clothing, adornment, regalia, and the symbolic decoration of elite architecture.[41]

Access to restricted knowledge was similarly controlled by the elite, thus serving as a status-enhancing instrument of power.[42] The existence of this knowledge as the exclusive preserve of the elite was not kept secret though, but rather displayed; texts such as *Ptahhotep* and the *Loyalist Teaching of Kaires* promote the idea of the elite as possessors of powerful, secret knowledge, passed from the gods to the ancestors and then their children (*Kaires* 1.3–8).[43] Their protection of this knowledge is emphasised; for example, the *Teaching of Khety* says: "speak no secret matters (*md.t n h3p*)!".[44] The exclusivity of restricted knowledge cultivated not only awe, but also a sense of elite superiority and greater merit, especially in relation to religious knowledge.

[38] S. Jäger, *Altägyptische Berufstypologien* (*Lingua Aegyptia*, *Studia Monographica* 4 – Göttingen: Seminar für Ägyptologie und Koptologie, 2004), 110–11, 150–51, 184, LXXIX, *ll.* 24.1–2.

[39] E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1959), 67, 74–75.

[40] Enmarch, *World Upturned*, 198–99, *ll.* 13.14–14.1.

[41] Maitland, *Representations*; on clothing, see G. Vogelsang-Eastwood, *Pharaonic Egyptian Clothing* (Studies in Textile and Costume History 2 – Leiden; New York: Brill, 1993), esp. 2, 6, 22, 26–30, 41–46, 70, 76, 86, 125–29, 162.

[42] J. Baines, 'Restricted Knowledge, Hierarchy, and Decorum: Modern Perceptions and Ancient Institutions', *JARCE* 27 (1990), esp. 6–7, 21–22.

[43] Žába, *Ptaḥḥotep*, 17, ll. 30–31; G. Posener, *L'Enseignement Loyaliste: sagesse égyptienne du Moyen Empire* (Centre de Recherches d'Histoire et de Philologie de la IVe Section de l'École pratique des Hautes Etudes II, Hautes Études Orientales 5 – Geneva: Droz, 1976), 17, §1.2–1.8.

[44] Jäger, *Altägyptische Berufstypologien*, LXXXI, *ll.* 25.2.

Figure 5. Overseer standing over a labourer, Tomb no. 2 of Amenemhat, Beni Hassan. See Newberry, *Beni Hassan* I, pl. 12 [5th reg. centre]. © Margaret Maitland.

Methods of separation were most often controlled by the elite. Maintaining distance and personal boundaries was a privilege accorded only to them. The position of overseer is well-documented in ancient Egypt, serving a supervisory role in the administrative structure.[45] Overseers' observation of labourers may have intentionally induced a sense of unease and loss of control through the overseers' infringement on labourers' personal space. Anthropologist E. T. Hall (1914–2009) argued that each individual carries about them a 'proxemic bubble' that represents our personal three-dimensional space.[46] If someone unfamiliar enters this space, we feel threatened. Tomb decoration and models often represent levels of proximity between overseers and labourers that the labourers may have found intrusive or intimidating. Furthermore, the majority of overseers are depicted facing workers' backs, as it were standing over them from behind, a position which meant that the workers could not see them, or anticipate their actions, including possible corporal punishment.[47] On the west wall in the tomb of Amenemhat at Beni Hassan, fifteen of the overseers are shown standing behind labourers [Figure 5], while only three face them directly.[48] All of them either hold a stick, or point in a gesture of command, sometimes both. Generally, overseers shown brandishing sticks or even beating workers are depicted striking from behind.[49] Furthermore, overseers are always male, even when the labourers are female. In tomb models, overseer figures also generally stand over workers, often positioned behind them [Figures 6, 10].[50] Standing over someone conveys dominance and

[45] e.g. S. Quirke, *Titles and Bureaux of Egypt 1850–1700 BC* (*GHP* Egyptology 1 – London: Golden House Publications, 2004), esp. 3.

[46] E. T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1966), 13–14.

[47] e.g. N. de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Antefoker, Vizier of Sesostris I, and of his Wife, Senet (No. 60)* (Theban Tombs Series 2 – London: Allen and Unwin, 1920), pl. 9 [2nd reg. left]; Newberry, *Beni Hasan* I, pl. 29 [2nd reg. left, 6th reg. left]; Newberry, *Beni Hasan* II, pl. 29 [6th reg. left]; H. W. Müller, *Die Felsengräber der Fürsten von Elephantine aus der Zeit des Mittleren Reiches* (*ÄF* 9; Glückstadt: J. J. Augustin, 1940), fig. 27.

[48] Newberry, *Beni Hasan* I, pls. 11–12.

[49] e.g. Newberry, *Beni Hasan* I, pls. 13 [6th reg. centre], 30 [6th reg. right].

[50] e.g. model granary from tomb of Gemniemhat at Saqqara (AEIN 1630): M. Jørgensen, *Gravskatte fra det gamle Ægypten = Tomb Treasures from Ancient Egypt* (Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 2002), 80–81, no. 20; model slaughterhouse from Theban tomb 280 of Meketre (MMA 20.3.10): A. Oppenheim *et al.* (eds), *Ancient Egypt Transformed: The Middle Kingdom* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015), 208, cat. no. 143; Do. Arnold, 'The Architecture of Meketre's Slaughterhouse and Other Early Twelfth

Figure 6. Overseer standing over a labourer, brandishing a stick in the model slaughterhouse from the tomb of Meketre (MMA 20.3.10).

coercive control, and the unseen presence of a dominant figure could induce a sense of unease and loss of control.[51]

4. The role of intermediaries in maintaining separation and control

Subordinate officials[52] likely played a key role in maintaining social control, not only in their ability to use coercion, but also in acting as intermediaries on behalf of the high elite. This allowed the latter to extend the reach of their control, while also preserving their separation from the rest of society in order to maintain a sense of mystification.

Scenes in tomb decoration show social interaction on the estate being carried out via intermediaries; presumably direct contact between the highest and lowest social ranks, even in visual representations, was deemed inappropriate according to standards of decorum.[53] Within the organization of a wall's decorative scheme, the tomb owner is usually positioned at one end of a wall in order to observe all the activity, and the majority of the figures are oriented towards him, but generally it is only subordinate officials who approach him directly. When leading or presenting labourers to the tomb owner, these officials face their superior with their backs towards the labourers, thereby serving to bridge the social divide. For example, on the north wall in the tomb no. 2 of Amenemhat at Beni Hassan, five officials in different registers are represented as intermediaries between labourers and the tomb owner or

Dynasty Wooden Models', in P. Jánosi (ed.), *Structure and Significance: Thoughts on Ancient Egyptian Architecture* (*Festschrift Dieter Arnold* – Denkschriften der Gesamtakademie 33, Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes 25 – Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2005), 1–76, esp. pls. 1–3.

[51] e.g. N. M. Henley and S. Harmon, 'The Nonverbal Semantics of Power and Gender: A Perceptual Study', in S. L. Ellyson and J. F. Dovidio (eds), *Power, Dominance, and Nonverbal Behavior* (Springer Series in Social Psychology – New York: Springer, 1985), 151–64.

[52] e.g. Quirke, *Titles and Bureaux*, 10–13.

[53] On decorum, see J. Baines, 'Restricted Knowledge', 17–21; J. Baines, 'Visual, Written, Decorum', in J. Baines (ed.), *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 15–16.

Figure 7. Official acting as an intermediary between the tomb owner and a labourer, Tomb no. 2 of Amenemhat, Beni Hassan. See Newberry, *Beni Hassan* I, pl. 13 [6th reg. right]. © Margaret Maitland.

scribes taking accounts [Figure 7].[54] The subordinate officials' bodies are oriented forwards towards the higher-ranking individual, while their heads turn backwards to face the labourers, conveying a sense of interaction and transition. Most of these officials simultaneously use both a gesture of respect towards the tomb owner and a beckoning gesture towards the labourers, conveying their role as intermediaries.

The additional distance created by the use of intermediaries was managed to suit the elite. It could be bridged through the presence of scribes who could keep a written record, formalising any infraction, and transmitting it to higher authorities. On the other hand, this distance probably actually made it more difficult for labourers to defend themselves. In the *Eloquent Peasant*, when Khunanup pleads with the official who is robbing him, noting that the high steward punishes thieves, the villainous official says, "I'm the one who speaks to you",[55] implying that his position as an intermediary means that he can potentially block the peasant's access to justice.

5. Surveillance and deviancy: a cycle of control and resistance

Ancient Egyptian architecture, from both tomb models and archaeological evidence, indicates an intentional configuration of access and elevation for the purposes of control and surveillance.[56] Elevation facilitated the observation of labourers. Most model granaries feature upper stories with overseers and/or scribes watching from above,[57] as do some depictions of granaries in tomb decoration.[58] Architecture rarely features in Egyptian visual culture, so the choice to display the control of space in granaries is noteworthy. In the granary model from the tomb of Meketre, the scribes occupy a different position of control by sitting along the sides of a long vestibule [Figure 8].[59] Dorothea Arnold has noted that the

[54] Newberry, *Beni Hasan* I, pl. 13 [3rd, 4th, 6th regs. right, 6th reg. centre].
[55] Parkinson, *Eloquent Peasant*, 52–53, *ll.* B1 51–52.
[56] Maitland, 'Dirt, Purity, and Spatial Control', 59–61; on architecture designed for observation, see M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1977 [1975]), 170–77.
[57] e.g. AEIN 1630: Jørgensen, *Tomb Treasures*, 80–81; Liverpool 55.82.2 and Ashmolean E2310: J. Garstang, *The Burial Customs of Ancient Egypt* (London: Constable, 1907), 124–25, figs. 44, 121.
[58] Newberry, *Beni Hasan* I, pls. 13 [6th reg. left], 17 [3rd reg. right].
[59] Oppenheim *et al.*, *Ancient Egypt Transformed*, 158–59, cat. no. 93.

organization of workers in elongated, corridor-like rooms would have been easy to oversee and this may have been used to enforce control, similar to some of the buildings found in the earlier workmen's village at Giza.[60]

In the Middle Kingdom purpose-built pyramid town of Lahun, a dividing wall formed a physical barrier between the large elite residences and administrative buildings of the eastern section, and the much smaller houses of the western section, pointing to clear separation between the ruling class and the rest of the inhabitants. The western area's high density and relative narrowness of streets "may have conveyed a feeling of bureaucratic control", while the monumental enclosure walls may have been more symbolic than defensive, generating awe and possibly facilitating surveillance.[61]

Figure 8. A doorkeeper and scribes seated along the vestibule in the model granary from Theban tomb 280 of Meketre (MMA 20.3.11).

Evidence also suggests that doorkeepers were employed on estates, not only to protect access to resources inside food processing and storage facilities, but also to control the movement of workers. Doorkeepers are depicted in some representations of granaries in tomb chapel decoration[62] and of estate buildings in wooden tomb models [Figure 9].[63] Literary texts refer to doorkeepers severely curtailing labourers' freedom of movement; for example the *Teaching of Khety* suggests that some workers were virtually imprisoned and had to resort to bribing their guards: the mat-maker "has to give provisions to the doorkeeper (*iry-ʿ*) to let him see daylight (*ḥḏ.wt*)".[64]

In tomb decoration, sometimes multiple levels of supervision are depicted, as in a scene in the tomb of Khnumhotep II that depicts washermen with an unnamed 'overseer of washermen', who works alongside them and presumably serves as a foreman, while the group as a whole is supervised by a 'sealer' named

[60] Arnold, 'Meketre's Slaughterhouse', 50.

[61] Mazzone, 'The "Ghetto" of el-Lahun', 24. See also S. Quirke, *Lahun: A Town in Egypt 1800 BC, and the History of its Landscape* (Egyptian Sites – London: Golden House Publications, 2005).

[62] Müller, *Felsengräber der Fürsten von Elephantine*, pl. 27; Newberry, *Beni Hassan* I, pl. 13 [6th reg. left].

[63] e.g. Meketre's model slaughterhouse (MMA 20.3.10): Oppenheim *et al.*, *Ancient Egypt Transformed*, 208, cat. no. 143; Arnold, 'Meketre's Slaughterhouse', esp. pls. 1-3; and bakery/brewery (MMA 20.3.12): H. E. Winlock, *Models of Daily Life in Ancient Egypt, from the Tomb of Meket-Re' at Thebes* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, Egyptian Expedition 18 – Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1955), 27–29, pls. 22–23; two granaries from Saqqara Tomb 2757: J. E. Quibell and A. G. K. Hayter, *Excavations at Saqqara: Teti Pyramid, North Side* (Cairo: *IFAO*, 1927), 13–14, 41, pl. 25.1.

[64] Jäger, *Berufstypologien*, 142–43, 175, *ll.* 14.3–4; compare also *Ipuwer l.* 4.9: Enmarch, *World Upturned*, 99.

Figure 9. Doorkeeper in the model cattle stable from Theban tomb 280 of Meketre (MMA 20.3.9).

Hetepruwa, who stands observing their work.[65] These multiple levels of accountability via officials and subordinates, also documented in administrative texts,[66] imply that workers were believed to require supervision to protect valuable resources and to ensure that they continued working. This assumption of idleness is also expressed in *Ipuwer*, which characterises washermen as lazily neglectful: "the washerman has no [intent]ion of carrying his load".[67] The assumption of deviance amongst labourers, who were often negatively stereotyped,[68] justified the need for supervision.

The use of surveillance would likely have fostered a sense of authority amongst the observing, but also a sense of suspected deviancy amongst the observed. The decision to watch someone would transform that person into someone who is potentially untrustworthy and inherently more morally suspect than the observer. This may have fed a cycle of distrust between overseers and labourers, a cycle of control and resistance, reinforcing social distance and legitimising the need for coercion. The expectation of deviance may have fostered both suspicion and even deviance itself,[69] as a form of resistance; for example, the casual cruelty of the officials who presume the *Eloquent Peasant* must be an untrustworthy run-away,[70] and the agricultural labourers who flee mistreatment in the *Loyalist Teaching of Kaires*.[71] This distrust may have been negatively internalised by labourers as a form of symbolic violence. Foucault's concept of 'disciplinary power' is also relevant, in which individuals under surveillance are pressured to conform and end up self-monitoring their own behaviour, in

[65] Newberry, *Beni Hasan* I, pl. 29 [2nd reg. left].

[66] e.g. *P. Harageh 3*: P. C. Smither, 'A Tax-Assessor's Journal of the Middle Kingdom', *JEA* 27 (1941), 74–76; S. Quirke, *The Administration of Egypt in the Late Middle Kingdom: The Hieratic Documents* (New Malden: SIA, 1990), 175.

[67] Enmarch, *World Upturned*, 66, *l.* 1.2.

[68] M. Maitland, 'Stigma and Occupational Stereotypes in Middle Kingdom Tomb Art and Literature', conference presentation at the International Congress of Egyptologists XII, Cairo, Egypt, 3-8 November 2019.

[69] Termed 'secondary deviance': E. Lemert, *Human Deviance, Social Problems and Social Control* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967).

[70] R. B. Parkinson, *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant: A Reader's Commentary* (*Lingua Aegyptia, Studia Monographica* 10 – Hamburg: Widmaier, 2012), 62–65, *ll.* B1 75–78.

[71] Posener, *L'Enseignement Loyaliste*, 41–43, *ll.* 11.9–12.

effect, disciplining themselves.[72] Ultimately, labourers' consciousness of their surveillance would likely have contributed to their social conformity.

6. The punishable: deviancy and identity

As noted by sociologist Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), deviance and its punishment help to reinforce existing social norms,[73] which in turn reinforced positions in the social hierarchy. In the *Eloquent Peasant*, punishment is presented as something that is done to those who deserve it. Khunanup urges: "Deal punishment (*ỉr-ḫsf.t*) to the punishable (*ḫsf.w.n=f*)!".[74] To punish is to make deviant. The punishable become so through the application of punishment. Furthermore, texts such as *Ipuwer* suggest that corporal punishment was not considered appropriate for the elite, who in the description of a world upturned, "are beaten wrongly" (*ḥwỉ.tw m ḏ3.wt*), presumably by those considered not fit to judge.[75] The implication is that such degrading treatment only befitted labourers, whose identities became linked with inferiority and deviance.

Automatic suspicion against lower-ranking individuals as potentially deviant and naturally deserving of punishment is exemplified in the *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*. When the peasant Khunanup presents his case to the high steward against the official who robbed him, he is immediately suspected of fabricating his claim.[76] Even though his claim is eventually believed, he is *still* administered a beating,[77] simply as a matter of course, presumably to reinforce his subordinance in a situation where he is essentially challenging the social order. The punishment of social defiance is also cited in *Ptahhotep*, which states that "the man who opposes (*ỉtn.w*) a superior (*ḥry-tp*) will feel pain (*ḳsn*)".[78] This kind of identification of lower-ranking individuals with deviance and deserved punishment likely discouraged them from defending themselves; most would probably have been put off pursuing grievances. Indeed, more detailed evidence from much later in Egyptian history, during the Roman Period, indicates that very few petitions were made by lower-ranking individuals.[79]

Through corporal punishment, lower-ranking individuals were degraded and confirmed as potentially deviant, suited to their position in society. These relatively rare displays of violence reinforced status-based identities and would have helped induce a psychological state in which all members of society were taught to know their place. That this was often experienced communally, together, as part of public displays, demonstrated a shared tolerance of this system.

7. Public spectacles: displays of violence in the legitimation of elite control

The rural domain in which most of the Egyptian population lived and laboured would have had very limited opportunities for surveillance, which was probably mostly restricted to state buildings and provincial estates. This would have made public demonstrations of power and authority all the more necessary, with highly organised spectacles serving as visible manifestations of elite power.[80] In particular, the state cattle count, as well as lesser renderings of accounts, when livestock were rounded up, counted, and taxed,[81] served as important opportunities to gather the populace and put

[72] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 170, 182–83.
[73] É. Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, trans. George Simpson (New York: Macmillan, 1933 [1893]), 70–110.
[74] Parkinson, *Eloquent Peasant*, 152, B1 178.
[75] Enmarch, *World Upturned*, 99–100, *l.* 4.9.
[76] Parkinson, *Eloquent Peasant,* 63, *ll.* B1 74–77.
[77] Parkinson, *Eloquent Peasant*, 183, *ll.* B1 217–218.
[78] Žába, *Ptaḥḥotep*, 51, *l.* 446; Parkinson, *Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems*, 260.
[79] B. Kelly, *Petitions, Litigation, and Social Control in Roman Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 124.
[80] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* 217.
[81] B. Muhs, *The Ancient Egyptian Economy 3000–30 BCE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 109.

Figure 10. A tax defaulter being beaten before the officials seated within a pavilion in the cattle count model from Theban tomb 280 of Meketre (Cairo JE 46724). © Margaret Maitland.

elite authority and control on display. Public spectacles like these provided the rare occasions when a broad swath of Egyptian society was present and able to interact. However, representations of the cattle count in tomb decoration and tomb models show that they were very carefully managed arenas of interaction, in which social distance was maintained through architecture and intermediaries, to visually and emotionally reinforce social subordination.

An important feature of the cattle count was the public corporal punishment of tax evaders. They are shown being subjected to dehumanising treatment, sometimes being roped and herded with sticks like the cattle in their charge, before being beaten. For example, the cattle count model from the tomb of Meketre shows an intermediary beating a tax evader directly before the high official who sits in judgement within a raised pavilion [Figure 10]. Elaborate, elevated architecture signalled the authority of the elite and physically distanced them from their audience, while the use of intermediaries to administer the punishments on their behalf, gave emotional distance and moral authority to the process of violent coercion. In a scene from the tomb of Baqt III, the speech caption of an overseer instructing a beating reads 'may you put him to the ground because (it is) my wish(?)' [Figure 11]. This is one of the most extreme images of punishment from ancient Egypt. However, this has not previously been recognized, as the scene has rarely been accurately reproduced in publications. A stick is shown lodged between the man's chin and his outstretched arms, while the beating is administered. As he is held on the ground, his arms are pulled forward, which would have forced the stick against his throat, choking him. This would have made breathing difficult and rendered the beating more terrifying and even potentially life-threatening. The choice to display this within an elite funerary monument indicates that it was considered a legitimate display of justice and authority. While the actual physical interaction in the scene is carried out by intermediaries, the display of elite observation and instruction demonstrates the official authorisation of the punishment.

Figure 11. A man being held on the ground and beaten in the rendering of accounts scene in tomb no. 15 of Baqt III, Beni Hassan. See Newberry, *Beni Hassan* II, pl. 7 [2nd reg. left]. © Margaret Maitland.

Even though the physical punishment of wrongdoers was proudly displayed on elite monuments, similarly to representations of the domination of animals and foreigners,[82] the former were handled differently to the latter, where the violence was carried out directly by the elite themselves, and even kings. Violence by Egyptians against Egyptians was obviously more complicated and presented a need to clearly preserve and make visible the distinctions between different levels of Egyptian society. The hierarchical organisation of this process via a chain of authority gave legitimacy to the punishment, allowing lower-ranking officials to distance themselves from the responsibility of judgement, while high officials were distanced from the violence itself. The arrangement probably made the use of coercive control more acceptable to both sides. This is somewhat similar to the physical distancing in scenes of elite hunting, where it is the subordinates who do the 'dirty work' of actually handling the carcasses.[83] The distance provided by the chain of authority legitimised elite violence, referred to as "the officials' punishment" (*ḫsf n sr.w*),[84] distinguishing it from generic violent behaviour associated with labourers (e.g. fighting boatmen).[85]

8. Conclusions

It was not just the threat of physical violence that maintained social control in Middle Kingdom Egypt, but also more subtle symbolic violence, which helped foster self-subordination. Physical separation and social distancing, facilitated by intermediaries, allowed the elite to maintain a sense of mystification, while overseers' infringement of the personal space of labourers likely induced a sense of lack of control. Gestures and bowing cultivated deference, communicating and reinforcing social status. Thus, hierarchy became engrained in everyday practices so that everyone experienced their status both physically and mentally.

Forms of surveillance such as overseers and architecture of control created a sense of moral authority in opposition to the potential deviancy that became associated with non-elite identity. Public displays of official state-sanctioned violence, such as the cattle count, collapsed the distance between the state and the individual, while carefully maintaining social distinctions. These events may have encouraged

[82] J. Baines, 'Modelling the Integration of Elite and Other Social Groups in Old Kingdom Egypt', in J. C. Moreno García (ed.), *Élites et pouvoir en Égypte ancienne* (*CRIPEL* 28 – Lille: Université Charles-de-Gaulle III, 2010), 129.

[83] Maitland, 'Fishing and Fowling', 272.

[84] *Teaching of Ptahhotep*: Žába, *Ptaḥḥotep*, 23, *l.* 83; Parkinson, *Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems*, 251.

[85] M. Herb, *Der Wettkampf in den Marschen* (Hildesheim: Weidmann, 2001); Maitland, 'Fishing and Fowling', 276.

individuals to internalise notions of social control and thus self-monitor outside any immediate state supervision. The administration of violence by intermediaries provided distance, allowing the elite to maintain their authority and objectivity, while the communal experience of such events demonstrated a certain level of public tolerance, thus legitimising the violence and social status quo.

Exposure to the punishment of others would have reminded observers that they too were subject to the authority of the elite; once internalised as symbolic violence, labourers would learn to respect the social order even in the absence of constant coercive force. Thus, the *Teaching of Merikare* was realised: "you should punish (*ḫsf*) ... this land will be founded (*grg*) through this".[86] Punishment and control became part of the foundations of Egyptian society.

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[86] Stephen Quirke, *Egyptian Literature 1800 BC: Questions and Readings* (*GHP* Egyptology 2 – London: Golden House, 2004), 114, E 48–49; Parkinson, *Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems*, 220.

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12
Human Branding Practices during the New Kingdom: A Form of Control between Metaphor and Reality

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Abstract

In Egyptian sources the practice of branding with a hot iron refers mostly to animals. The technique appears in the Old Kingdom as a sign of economic control, and during the New Kingdom it sees an increase in its use, being attested in iconographical, written and archaeological sources. As some attestations from the New Kingdom seem to refer to the branding activity applied to humans, this article discusses whether the reported practice should be understood as happening in reality or whether it has to be considered only in a metaphoric way, as a strong sign of influence or possession.

Keywords: Cattle branding; Control; Human branding; New Kingdom; Prisoners of War

Introduction

On the exterior of the northern wall of the Medinet Habu temple,[1] there is a series of military scenes. These show the year 8 military campaign of Ramesses III against the Sea Peoples, including the naval battle and the subsequent activities of capture, deportation, presentation and registration of prisoners of war. Amongst these scenes, one can observe the 'marking' of two prisoners on the right shoulder, during their registration [Figure 1].[2] The Egyptian officers who perform this seem to hold a writing tool, identical to the one used by the scribes on the same register. Does this scene suggest the affixing of a permanent mark, for example with a hot iron? More generally, was human branding attested in Ancient Egypt and what was the purpose of this action?

While some scholars suggest that human branding was attested and that punishment was its main purpose, a survey of the sources available on the subject allows to further complicate and problematize this theme. In this article, I will start from an analysis of written, iconographical and archaeological sources concerning cattle branding to understand the purpose of this activity and how it was performed on animals. The results of this survey on animal branding will then be used to search for, analyse and interpret sources dealing with humans.

The word used to refer to the action of branding is  (*ꜣb*, 'to brand'), while *ꜣb.w* / *ꜣb.t* means 'brand, branding iron'. Both words relate to the use of fire, which can be deduced from their determinative  (Gardiner Sign List Q7).[3]

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[1] Epigraphic Survey, *Medinet Habu* I. *Earlier Historical Records of Ramses III* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1930), pl. 36–43.

[2] Epigraphic Survey, *Medinet Habu* I, pl. 42.

[3] *Wb*. I, 6,18–22; D. Meeks, *Année lexicographique: Égypte Ancienne. Tome 2. (1978)* (Paris: Librairie Cybèle, 1981), 78.0017; D. Meeks, *Année lexicographique: Égypte Ancienne. Tome 3. (1979)* (Paris: Librairie Cybèle, 1982), 2, 79.0017; H. Brugsch, '  abu', *ZÄS* 14, (1876), 35–38; D. Meeks, 'Notes de Lexicographie (§1)', *RdÉ* 26, (1974) 63–65.

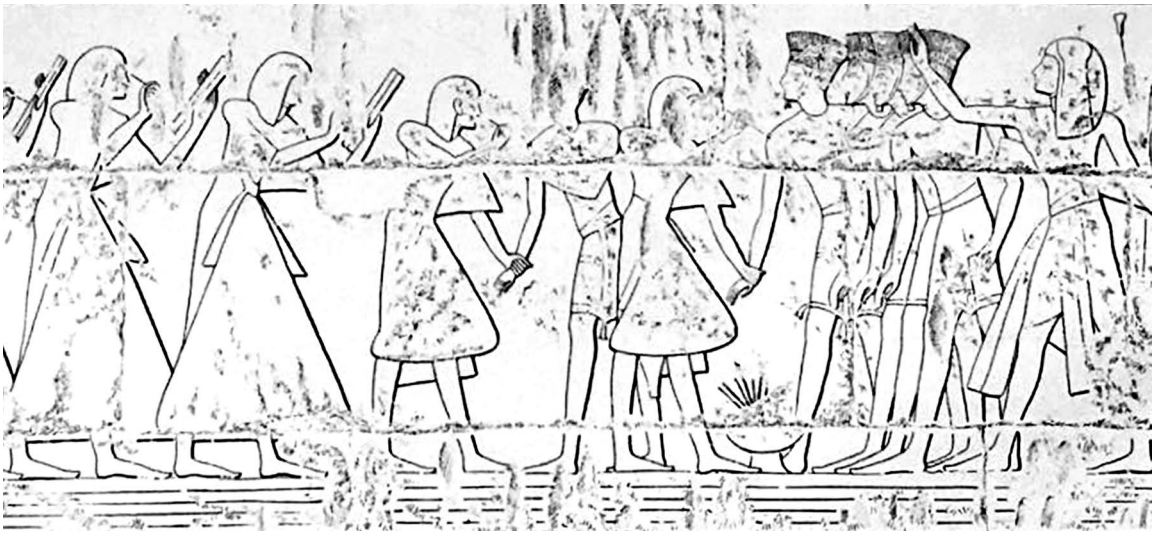


Figure 1. Registration of the prisoners of war after Ramesses III's victory over the Sea Peoples. Detail from Epigraphic Survey, *Medinet Habu* I. *Earlier Historical Records of Ramses III* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1930): pl. 42 (Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago).

1. Cattle branding

Cattle branding with a fire-heated brand is a technique attested in Egypt since the end of the Old Kingdom,[4] to meet the need of affixing marks as signs of ownership. Since each symbol marked possession by institutions and private individuals, we can consider it as an evident sign of economic control.

The importance of this practice, and its increased use during the New Kingdom, is attested by some branding scenes and images of branded animals, recognizable on several private and royal monuments. Moreover, the existence of some titles connected with these activities, such as the 'Bearer of the branding instrument of the Lord of Two Lands' (*t3y 3b.w n nb t3.wy*), documented in Sipair's tomb at Saqqara,[5] and the 'Bearer of the branding instrument' (*t3y 3b.w*), attested in *P. Wilbour* (37,18),[6] are further pieces of evidence.

1.1. Representation of the practice

Branding scenes are represented in several New Kingdom tombs, such as those of Userhat (*TT 56*), Kenamun (*TT 93*), Nebamun (*TT 90*), Huy (*TT 40*) and Neferhotep (*TT* 49)[7] in Thebes, and also that

[4] For this technique in Ancient Egypt please refer to J. Vandier, *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne: Bas-reliefs et peintures, scènes de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 5 (Paris: Picard, 1969), 280–283; A. Eggebrecht, 'Brandstempel', *LÄ* 1, col. 850–852.

[5] J. Malek, 'An Early Eighteenth Dynasty Monument of Sipair from Saqqâra', *JEA* 75 (1989), 71, n. 35. Sipair was also in charge of the collection of crown taxes, a duty that was probably related to the title of 'Bearer of the branding instrument of the Lord of Two Lands'.

[6] A. H. Gardiner, *The Wilbour Papyrus II: Commentary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 82–83; A. H. Gardiner, *The Wilbour Papyrus III: Translation* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 39.

[7] B. Porter and R. L. B. Moss, *Topographical bibliography of Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs and paintings. The Theban Necropolis: Private Tombs*, vol. 1.1 (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1970), 93 (15) – (16); N. De Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nefer-hotep at Thebes* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1933): 33–34, pl. XLIII. Here the cattle branding is not clearly visible, because of the fragmentary state of the scene, but we follow the interpretation of the author. For some remarks on this scene see also U. Matić, *Body and Frames of War in New Kingdom Egypt. Violent Treatment of Enemies and Prisoners* (*Philippika:* Altertumswissenschaftliche Abhandlungen 134 – Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2019), 284–285.

Figure 2. Cattle branding scene form the tomb of Nebamun (*TT 90*).
Detail from N. De Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Two Officials of Tuthmosis the Fourth (nos. 75 and 90)* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1923): pl. XXXI
(Courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society).

of Pahery (*T 3*)[8] in Elkab. These representations are useful for understanding the actual practice of branding and the instruments used for this purpose.

In the tomb of the viceroy Huy (*TT 40*),[9] a scene, now very poorly preserved, depicts all phases of cattle branding. Here, a cartouche-shaped mark with the name of the pharaoh Tutankhamun (*Nb-ḫpr.w-Rᶜ*) is shown twice: the first is on a brazier in front of two scribes taking notes (probably related to cattle registration), and the second is on his carrying box, next to a bull waiting to be marked.

Rectangular irons extended by punch tools, shaped like the hieroglyph 𓏏 (*mn*), are seen in a scene from the tomb of Nebamun (*TT 90*) [Figure 2].[10] There, a man is shown heating up a branding iron on a brazier,[11] two cattle are being marked and a third one has already undergone this treatment.

The scene from the tomb of Kenamun (*TT 93*)[12] shows three marks with a twisted handle placed on a casket: one with the shape of the cartouche of Amenhotep II (*ʾ-ḫpr.w-Rᶜ*), another eye-shaped and the third possibly bearing the inscription 𓉐𓏏 *pr-nfr*.[13] An eye-shaped mark is also visible in the Userhat

[8] B. Porter and R. L. B. Moss, *Topographical bibliography of Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs and paintings. Upper Egypt: Sites*, vol. 5. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1962), 178–179 (5) – (6); J. J. Tylor and F. Ll. Griffith, *The Tomb of Paheri at El Kab* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1894), pl. III. The scene is severely damaged, only the position of the two men holding the animal, which is crouched on the ground and tied up, is recognizable.

[9] Porter and Moss, *Topographical bibliography*, vol. 1.1, 76–77 (8); N. De Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Huy, viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tutankhamun (No. 40)* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), pl. VIII, XL.

[10] Porter and Moss, *Topographical bibliography*, vol 1.1, 184-185 (8); N. De Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Two Officials of Tuthmosis the Fourth (nos. 75 and 90)* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1923), pl. XXXI–XXXII.

[11] The drawing of the man in charge of heating the branding iron is probably wrong: he places his right hand on the brazier (!) and with his left holds a fan and a branding iron. See Vandier, *Manuel d'archéologie,* 281.

[12] Porter and Moss, *Topographical bibliography*, vol. 1.1, 191 (11); N. De Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Ken-Amun at Thebes* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1930), pl. XXVII–XXVIII.

[13] The reading and interpretation of the hieroglyphs on the mark are uncertain because of the state of preservation of the scene. On this see, Davies, *The Tomb of Ken-Amun*, 33, n. 3.

Figure 3. Procession of branded oxen during a festival represented in the first courtyard of Ramesses II in the temple of Luxor (image of the author).

tomb paintings (*TT 56*).[14] It is possible that this mark was an abbreviation of  (*ir.w*),[15] a word which designates a specific type of tax on cattle[16] or, according to some scholars, the cattle census.[17]

All these scenes allow us to identify the different shapes of the branding irons. Attached to a twisted or to a straight handle they have a brand with a cartouche shape (e.g. of Tutankhamun or Amenhotep II), or others symbols and inscriptions, possibly related to some institutions or to the purpose of brandings. Brands are always distinctly shown in the representation and, at least in two cases (in the tomb of Huy and of Nebamun), they are heated on a brazier full of burning embers. These branding tools clearly look different from the those depicted on the Medinet Habu wall, that are more reminiscent of long needles and seem easier (and lighter) to handle.

Apart from these marking scenes, there are not many representations of marks on the bodies of animals.[18] One of the known scenes comes from the southwest corner of the first courtyard of Ramesses II in the temple of Luxor,[19] where it is possible to observe a group of oxen marked on their backs. The context is that of a festival procession, when the animals are adorned and fattened for the occasion and

[14] Porter and Moss, *Topographical bibliography*, vol. 1.1, 111 (3); C. Beinlich-Seeber and A. G. Shedid, *Das Grab des Userhat (TT 56)* (Mainz am Rhein: Zabern, 1987), 44–46, pl. 28.

[15] *Wb.* I, 114,5.

[16] De Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Ken-Amun*, 33. According to him, here it could indicate the tithe of Amun.

[17] J-M. Kruchten, *Le décret d'Horemheb: Traduction, commentaire épigraphique, philologique et institutionnel* (Brussels: Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1981), 85–88; S. Allam, 'Taxe (?) sur le bétail dans l'Égypte Ancienne', in A. Zanardo (ed.), *Stato Economia Lavoro nel Vicino Oriente Antico* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1988), 52–70; É. Martinet, 'La structure administrative du 14ème nome de Haute-Égypte et le développement de l'administration supra-provinciale sous la VIe dynastie', *BIFAO* 115 (2016), 312, n. 144. Kenamun bears different titles dealing with cattle and in this scene he is represented in the act of inspecting some estates in the Delta.

[18] J. Leclant, 'La "Mascarade" des bœufs gras et le triomphe de l'Égypte', *MDAIK* 14 (1956), 133, n. 5 points out that on a block from the courtyard of Maanefer's tomb in Saqqara (LS 17), from the Old Kingdom, two bovines are depicted and the hindquarters of one are marked with numbers. This block was recovered by Lepsius and is now at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Inv. No. ÄM 1115. See K. R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien. Text: Unteraegypten und Memphis*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1897), 172; B. Porter and R. L. B. Moss, *Topographical bibliography of Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, statues, reliefs and paintings. Memphis: Saqqara to Dahshur*, vol. 3.2. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1981), 575 (1).

[19] B. Porter and R. L. B. Moss, *Topographical bibliography of Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, statues, reliefs and paintings: Theban temples*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 308 (29); H. H. Nelson, *Key Plans Showing Locations of Theban Temple Decorations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), pl. XXI, n. 46-47.

Figure 4. Procession of branded oxen during a festival represented in the first courtyard of Ramses II in the temple of Luxor (image of the author).

on their backs are the two recognizable branding shapes: one,  (*ḥb ỉp.t*, 'Opet Festival'), is visible on five of them [Figure 3]; another  (*mḏt ỉnn*, 'brought (from) the byres'), on three others [Figure 4].[20] These brands seem therefore to correspond to the purpose for which the owner institutions prepared and offered the animals (in this case the Opet festival), but also to the owner institutions themselves. This practice resembles the list of the varieties of cattle contained in the *Ramesseum Onomasticon B 3*, where each bull is preceded by symbols, possibly abbreviations used in inventories, some of them referring to the destination of the animal.[21]

Another interesting and unusual example is that of the Wadi Mahamid bulls;[22] New Kingdom (or later) petroglyphs from the region of Elkab (now destroyed) representing two fattened sacrificial bulls, facing each other and branded on their backs with a sign resembling the hieroglyph  (*mn*); the same sign is visible on the mark in the Nebamun tomb. Once again this mark might mean that these bulls belonged to a large farming estate of the crown or to a temple domain.[23]

1.2. The practice in written sources

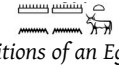
The analysis of the written documentation provides us with additional information about the purpose of affixing brand marks.

In the *Admonitions of Ipuwer* (*P. Leiden I 344*), a Second Intermediate Period text[24] which describes a country in chaos, a passage mentions the importance of affixing property signs on cattle for

[20] Leclant, 'La "Mascarade"', 133, n. 5, pl. VII, figs. 1–2 and VIII, fig. 2; S. Schott, 'The Feasts of Thebes', in H. H. Nelson and U. Hölscher (eds), *Work in Western Thebes, 1931-33* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), 71, 73, fig. 29; K. A. Kitchen, *KRI*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), 609, *ll.* 12–14.

[21] See A. H. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), 22–23. To better understand the difference between the practice of branding and marking the victims of sacrifice in the temple with a seal, see F. Labrique, 'Le bras de Sakhmet', in S. Georgoudi, R. K. Piettre and F. Schmidt (eds), *La cuisine de l'autel: les sacrifices en questions dans les sociétés de la Méditerranée ancienne* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 168–169.

[22] D. Huyge, '"Battered bulls": rock art destruction in Egypt', *AAR* 15/1 (1998), 3–11, esp. 9.

[23] It could also be a reference to the word 'cattle'  (*mnmnt*).

[24] *P. Leiden I 344*, 9, *ll.* 2-3 ; A. H. Gardiner, *Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage from a Hieratic Papyrus in Leiden (Pap. Leiden 344 recto)* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1969), 67, pl. 9; R. *Enmarch, The Dialogue of Ipuwer and the Lord of All* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 2005) pl. 43; R. Enmarch, *A World Upturned: Commentary and Analysis of the Ancient Egyptian Dialogue of Ipuwer and the Lord of All* (Oxford and New

organizational reasons. With this method, owners can recognize their animals and bring them back to their estates:[25]

> Behold, cattle are left to stray, and there is none to gather them together. Each man fetches for himself those that are branded with his name (*ỉb.w m rn=f*).

This organizational and economic function is also evident in cases of misappropriation. The roles played by affixed marks during the seizure of third-party property and in complaints brought by the actual owners are attested in some sources.

The 'Horemheb Decree'[26] contains provisions against the misuse of marks in order to allow the skins of the Pharaoh's herds to be inspected and collected efficiently. This text sought to end the dishonesty of certain soldiers who seized the skins of the Pharaoh's cattle by affixing their marks, thus making these skins impossible to find and thereby preventing successful inspections of cattle.[27]

Furthermore, a papyrus fragment from the reign of Ramesses III, now kept at the Auguste Grasset Museum in Varzy (France), offers another example of illegal appropriation of cattle. This hieratic document was probably a minute from a legal archive concerning two cases, the first of them dealing with falsification of the marks on small livestock:[28]

> ... He caused the branding marks (*ỉb.w*) to be erased; he grabbed the (scribe's) palette in his hand and made a *rwḏ*-sign with a *ỉwn*-sign inside it [...] What you branded (*ỉb.w*) is all my small livestock, with this brand which  says: (*rwḏ-ỉwn* 'Heliopolis is strong!'). Example of the design of the marks.[...] *rwḏ-ỉwn*.[29]

The fragmentary state of this text makes it difficult to understand what the practical meaning of the act of 'erasing' was (i.e. whether branding marks were effectively 'erased' from the livestock skins by affixing a new mark on them, or if the erasing referred to an administrative procedure). Nevertheless, given the crucial importance to the lawsuit of detailing the shape of the brand, the text clearly indicates the meaning of the mark (written in hieroglyphs) and also gives a graphic reproduction of it. These are vital details for carrying out surveys and investigations about brandings.

Moreover, it is interesting to note that the Late Period documentation provides additional data to support the importance of branding as a means to identify and control cattle. The analysis of demotic documents relating to transactions like the purchase, sale or rental of cattle allowed Eugene Cruz-Uribe to note that each registered animal was carefully described in the written sources.[30] These preferably mentioned sex, state of health (including pregnancy in cows), economic utility, name(s)

York: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2008), 148; J. Van Seters, 'A Date for the "Admonitions" in the Second Intermediate Period', *JEA* 50 (1964), 13–23.

[25] Translation follows Gardiner, *Admonitions*, 67.

[26] Kruchten, *Le décret d'Horemheb*, 80–95, *ll*. 23-27. See also W. Helck, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie: Inschriften der Könige von Amenophis 3. bis Haremheb und Ihrer Zeitgenossen*, vol. 22 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1958), 2147,17–2149,13.

[27] Kruchten, *Le Décret d'Horemheb*, 81–84.

[28] *N° d'inventaire VA 122* – see A. H. Gardiner, *RAD* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), XVIII–XIX, 59–60 (§XX); V. Matoïan and H. Loffet, *Les Antiquités égyptiennes et assyriennes du musée Auguste Grasset de Varzy* (Nevers: Musées de la Nièvre, 1997), 18–21; H. Loffet and V. Matoïan, 'Le papyrus de Varzy', *RdÉ* 47 (1996), 29–36.

[29] For the translation see Loffet and Matoïan, 'Le papyrus de Varzy', 34; B. J. J. Haring, *From Single Sign to Pseudo-Script: An Ancient Egyptian System of Workmen's Identity Marks* (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 93 – Leiden: Brill, 2018), 39–40. See also the remarks concerning the three different graphic codes (hieratic, hieroglyphic and marks) used in these unique documents.

[30] E. Cruz-Uribe, *Saite and Persian Demotic Cattle Documents. A Study in Legal Forms and Principles in Ancient Egypt* (Chicago: Scholars Press, 1985).

carried by the animal, as well as the possible presence and form of a brand (*i3b*).[31] These marks often bear gods' names, a practice that could be explained, according to Cruz-Uribe, by the connection of the animal's owner with the cult of that deity or simply by the use of symbols common at the time.[32] This practice could also be extended to other animals such as donkeys, for which transfer contracts mentioning the type of mark and its location are attested.[33] It is possible to assume the existence of directories of these brands, although they have not been found yet.[34]

1.3. Archaeological data for the practice

In some private and museum collections, there are New Kingdom branding irons which could be used for cattle branding.[35] All of these appear quite similar to the irons represented in the aforementioned tombs of Huy and Kenamun, having a twisted handle and marks of various shapes at one end, like symbols relating to deities, pharaohs or institutions.[36] An example from the British Museum[37] bears the symbol of a lion's head, probably connected to a temple domain linked to the cult of Sekhmet.

To sum up, in the case of animals (especially bulls and donkeys) metal brands were used to imprint symbols on their bodies and specific terms described this practice: *3b* for the action and *3b.w* for the result of the action (the brand). Brands could have varied shapes, including royal cartouches and were heated on braziers. They functioned as visible signs of ownership and control for organizational and economic reasons.

2. Human branding

The information collected from sources concerning the cattle branding practice will be a starting point to understand if and when the same practice could be applied to humans.

Several written sources from the New Kingdom seem to allude to fire branding of people and especially of prisoners of war. However, the allusion to this practice is sometimes only a metaphor for something else.[38]

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[31] W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1954), 17; J. H. Johnson (ed.), *Demotic Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), *i*, 10–11. Please note that the confusion between the sign R15 () and U23 () that occurred from the 18th Dynasty onwards in the writing of *3b* probably resulted in the demotic word *i3b*.

[32] Cruz-Uribe, *Demotic Cattle Documents,* 50–51. The relevant sources, citing the marks are: *P. Loeb 41*; *P. Berlin 13571*; *P. Louvre E9292*; *P. Turin 2128*; *P. BM 10846A*; *P. Caire 50146*.

[33] See *P. Loeb 34* – S. P. Vleeming, *The Gooseherds of Hou (Pap. Hou): a dossier relating to various agricultural affairs from provincial Egypt of the early Fifth Century B.C.* (Leuven: Peeters, 1991), 132–133, n. ii. Likewise, in the publication of two contracts for the sale of cows contained in two demotic papyri from the reign of Nectanebo II, B. Menu detected the possibility of juxtaposing different brands bearing the symbols of people (or institutions) who share the property or usufruct of the animal concerned. See B. Menu, 'Deux contrats de vente datés du règne de Nectanébo II *[P. dém. IFAO 901* et *902]*', *BIFAO* 81 (1981), 50–52.

[34] U. Verhoeven, *Das Saitische Totenbuch der Iahtesnacht* (Bonn: Habelt, 1993), 215, n. 1.

[35] See, for example, one in the Petrie Museum collection, in the shape of a duck (*UC 63717*), published in W. M. F. Petrie, *Tools and Weapons: Illustrated by the Egyptian Collection in University College, London* (London: Quaritch, 1917), 57, pl. 71; one from Tell el-Amarna, now at the Staatliche Sammlung Ägyptischer Kunst, Munich (5520), published in R. E. Freed, *Egypt's Golden Age: the Art of Living in the New Kingdom., 1558-1085 BC: Catalogue of the exposition* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1981), 49. See also the Amarna brand in a private collection mentioned in Labrique, 'Le bras de Sakhmet', 169 and n. 44, and the two brands of the Eton Myers collection (*ECM 1770-2010*, *1771-2010*).

[36] Staatliche Sammlung Ägyptischer Kunst, Munich (5520) – see Freed, *Egypt's Golden Age*, 49.

[37] *British Museum EA 57321*; M. Stead, *Egyptian Life* (London: British Museum Press, 1986), 32. In the British Museum there is also a brand from Tell el-Amarna, with the shape of the hieroglyphic sign  (*EA58817*). See B. J. Kemp, *The City of Akhenaten and Nefertiti: Amarna and its People* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2012), 210.

[38] See also Matić, *Body and Frames of War,* 34–35.

Unfortunately, no archaeological attestation for human branding is currently known, but this is unsurprising given that branding would not show up on skeletal remains. Furthermore, the people who would be branded are unlikely to have been of a social status deemed worthy of mummification. Only one possible iconographic scene from a royal context and several written sources give information on it, as explained below.

2.1. Branding of prisoners of war in 'historical' texts

P. Harris I, a very long text relating to the main events and deeds of the reign of Ramesses III, provides an interesting testimony of the practice. Following the Libyan campaign of year 11, the Pharaoh reports having brought prisoners to Egypt, employing them – or at least those deemed the best – as servants or soldiers. In this text,[39] the verb *ꜣb* ('to mark, to brand') is applied to captives, either men, women or children: they were organized in groups, and all of them received the same treatment, including marks with the name of the Pharaoh, as can be read in the source:[40]

> I gave them captains of archers, and chief men of the tribes, branded (*ꜣb.w*) and made into slaves, impressed (*mnšy.w*) with my name (*ḥr rn=i*); their wives and their children were made likewise.

A similar treatment is described by the same Pharaoh in a more concise text, inscribed on a wall of the second court of the Medinet Habu temple, as a celebration of the Libyan campaign of year 5:[41]

> The Libyans' back is broken for an era of everlasting. Their feet have ceased to tread Egypt's frontier: their leaders were settled and organized into communities, in strongholds, and branded ('cartouched') (*mnš.w*) with the mighty name of His Majesty.

Indeed, the inscription seems to allude to the same operation described in *P. Harris I*, even if the two texts slightly differ in their choice of words referring to the action of marking. In *P. Harris I,* the verb  *ꜣb* ('to brand') is used alongside the word  *mnš* ('to cartouche'),[42] while in the Medinet Habu inscription, the meaning is the same but only *mnš* is used. The verb *ꜣb* refers specifically to fire branding, while the word *mnš*, typically a noun, but here used as a verb, does not allude to the use of fire. Its first meaning is simply that of 'cartouche'. For this reason one could suggest that this word is used here to refer to the cartouche shape of the iron used on the skin of prisoners or, in general, the shape of the mark affixed without specifying the application technique.[43] The fact that in *P. Harris I* the two terms are used together underlines that, probably due to the fire branding, the name of the victorious Pharaoh is attached to his prisoners. The Medinet Habu text therefore simply omits the word *ꜣb*, emphasising the royal cartouche printed by the king on his vanquished enemies.

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[39] *P. Harris I 77*, *ll.* 3–6; W. Erichsen, *Papyrus Harris I: hieroglyphische Transkription* (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1933), 94; P. Grandet, *Le Papyrus Harris (BM 9999)*, vol. 1 (Cairo: *IFAO*, 1996), 337.

[40] J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents: The Twentieth to the Twenty-Sixth Dynasties*, vol. 4 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1906), 202, §405.

[41] K. A. Kitchen, *KRI*, vol. 5 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 24, *ll.* 2–3; Epigraphic Survey, *Medinet Habu* I. *Earlier Historical Records of Ramses III* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), pl. 28, 40; W. F. Edgerton and J. A. Wilson, *Historical Records of Ramses III. The Texts in Medinet Habu. Volumes I and II, translated with explanatory notes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), 27, n. 40a.

[42] *Wb.* II, 89,2; 89,5. L. H. Lesko and B. S. Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian*, vol. 1 (Berkley: B. C. Scribe Publications, 1982), 222.

[43] Grandet, *Le Papyrus Harris (BM 9999)*, vol. 2 (Cairo: *IFAO*, 1996), 253, n. 929; W. Spiegelberg, 'Miszellen-*mnS* Königsring', *ZÄS* 43 (1906), 158. The only other known example of *mnš* used as a verb is an inscription from the reign of Augustus. It consists of a very damaged text on the base of the southern outer wall of the temple of Opet in Karnak. Unfortunately, the meaning of this very incomplete text is not easily understood; see Porter and Moss, *Topographical bibliography* vol. 2, 252 (53–54); C. De Wit, *Les inscriptions du temple d'Opet, à Karnak* (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1958), 317 (left), 63rd scene; C. De Wit, *Les inscriptions du temple d'Opet, à Karnak*, vol. 2 (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1962), pl. 37a; Projet *Karnak*, CFEETK / UMR 5140, Équipe ENiM, KIU 3903, viewed 21 August 2023, <http://sith.huma-num.fr/karnak/3903>.

2.2. Human branding in religious and literary texts

It is interesting to note that a literary text from the Ramesside period also seems to refer, in one sense or another, to the practice of human branding. In a passage from *P. Anastasi V*,[44] which describes the state of mind of a soldier at the end of a military campaign, the author mentions some *šms.w*-attendants[45] who at the end of the fight received a mark:

> Praised be thou! When lotuses unfold and *wrd*-birds are caught by the wing, the army is dismissed to the country, and their attendants (*šms.w*) are branded (*ỉb.w*). For thy heat (*šm*) is like the might of Amun; it is man's abomination. The sun rises not in his presence, the inundation that finds no place of refuge. He is like a bird caught by the wing in a man's hand and cannot fly. [46]

In this context, even if there are no precise references, it can be assumed, as suggested by Caminos, that the 'branded' or the 'marked' peoples were prisoners put into the service of the army as *šms.w*, according to a common practice of the time. The stylistic choice to relate the '*ỉb*-brand' to the '*šm*-heat', as a manifestation of the aura of Amun, evokes, through a metaphor, the submission to the will of the god.[47]

P. Cairo 58054[48] contains a letter from the standard bearer Mai-Seth to the soldier Hat. Among different issues, he deals with the situation of conscripts (defined as *ḏbỉ.w* 'those sealed') who might escape after the enlistment. The text continues with a mention of 'branded grooms' (*ỉb.w nỉ-n mry*).[49] The text is quite obscure, also because of a lacuna, but another mention of a 'branded groom' is attested in *P. Bologna 1094*.[50] It is a letter sent by the priest Haru to the royal scribe Ptahemhab, dealing with the situation of Paser, stable master and shield bearer returned from Syria. The communication concerns Paser's young brother:

> The major-domo will cause this younger brother of his to be branded for him as a groom.[51]

Here the meaning of the expression is probably the idea of 'marking' him with the function of groom. Meanwhile, another passage of *P. Anastasi V*,[52] concerning a prayer to the god Thoth, contains an example of the verb *ỉb* used in a broad sense: children are mentioned as placed before Thoth, in order to put them on the right path of the profession of scribe:

> ... Then they shall come with their children in order to brand (*ỉb*) them for thy calling, a calling good to the lord of victory: happy is he that has exercised it.[53]

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[44] *P. Anastasi V*, 7,5-8,1 – see A. H. Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies* (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1937), 59. A duplicate of this text can be found in *P. Chester Beatty V*, 6,8–9 - see A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum*, III (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 47, pl. 25.

[45] *Wb*. IV, 485,6–486,7; P-M. Chevereau, *Prosopographie des cadres militaires égyptiens du Nouvel Empire* (Paris: Mistral Photo, 1994), 92–93.

[46] Translation by R. A. Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 230.

[47] Here there is an explicit reference to the use of fire in relation to Amun, but this image is also used for the Pharaoh in the act of conquest. See L. Gabolde and J.-C. Goyon, 'Une stèle en granit noir remployée sur le parvis de la chapelle d' "Osiris-qui-inaugure-l'arbre-iched"', *Kyphi* 6 (2008), 5–23 (esp. 9). On the fiery powers of the king, see Matić, *Body and Frames of War*, 101–103.

[48] *P. Cairo 58054*, *verso l.* 8; K. A. Kitchen, *KRI*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975), 324, *ll.* 5-6; A. M. Bakir, *Egyptian Epistolography from the Eighteenth to the Twenty-First Dynasty* (Cairo: *IFAO*, 1970), pl. 3; S. Allam, 'Trois missives d'un commandant (*P. CGC 58053–5*)', *ASAÉ* 71 (1985), 13–20.

[49] J. E. Hoch, *Semitic Words in Egyptian Texts of the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 132–134.

[50] *P. Bologna 1094*, 9, *l.* 6; Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*, 8–9a.

[51] Translation by Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies,* 24.

[52] P. Anastasi V, 10, *l.* 2; see Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies,* 60; Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies,* 233.

[53] Translation from Caminos, *Late-Egyptian,* 233. For the figurative sense of the verb *ỉb*, H. Wild, 'Statue de Hor-Néfer au Musée de Beaux-Arts de Lausanne', *BIFAO* 54 (1954), 200; *Wb.* I, 6,20.

Here it is interesting to note that the verb *ꜣb* can indeed have a figurative meaning in Ancient Egyptian language, as for the English 'mark' or 'to earmark'.[54]

This meaning of the verb *ꜣb* is also found in the so-called 'Decree (or Blessing) of Ptah upon Ramesses II–III', known from five stelae from Karnak, Abu Simbel, Aksha, Amara West and Medinet Habu.[55] The relevant passage is most complete in the Abu Simbel version, concluding a series of statements made by Ramesses to Ptah-Tatenen:

> I brand for you (*ỉr=ỉ n=k ꜣb*) the people and Nine Bows, the whole land in your name, that they may be at your will eternally, according as it was you who created them, by decree of this your Son, the chief of your throne![56]

The purpose of the king's speech, following the god's address, is to celebrate his own deeds, accomplished in favour of Ptah-Tatenen[57] and his temple, and he ends this listing with the image of the marking of his people and his enemies as well.[58] This example confirms the ideological strength of this expression.

In *P. Chester Beatty I*,[59] the metaphorical meaning of the term *ꜣb.t* applies to the context of the romantic relationship:

> How skilled is my beloved in throwing the snare,
> Although a breeder of cattle did not beget her.
> With her tresses she throws the snare at me,
> With her eyes she entraps me,
> With her necklace she binds me,
> And with her signet ring she brands me (*ꜣb.t=s m pꜣy=s ḫtm*).[60]

In this poetic context, the man borrows imagery from the world of breeding and compares himself to a bull tamed by his beloved, who catches and marks him. Here, there is a play on words between the brand – *ꜣb.t*, and the signet ring – *ḫtm*: by affixing her sign on him, the man becomes her property, as he bears a mark that makes him recognizable.[61] It is also interesting to note the possible link between the burn of the mark and the heat of the feeling of love.

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[54] See Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies,* 234; Matić, *Body and Frames of War*, 32–33.

[55] Kitchen, *KRI*, vol. 2, 13–14. The Medinet Habu version, written by Ramesses III on the I pylon façade, is a parallel of the text of Ramesses II. See also Epigraphic Survey, *Medinet Habu* II. *Later Historical Records of Ramses III* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932), 104–106; Edgerton and Wilson, *Historical Records,* 119–120; K. A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated: Notes and Comments* II: *Ramesses II, Royal inscriptions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 159–163 (68).

[56] Translation by K A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated. Translations: Ramesses II, Royal Inscriptions*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 109.

[57] On the growing importance of Ptah under Ramesses II and the rise of Ptah-Tatenen from year 30 of his reign see K. A. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant: the Life and Times of Ramesses II* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1982), 178–182; H. A. Schlögl, *Der Gott Tatenen: nach Texten und Bildern des Neuen Reiches* (Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag, 1980), 54–63. See also O. Goelet, 'The Blessing of Ptah', in E. Bleiberg and R. E. Freed (eds), *Fragments of a shattered visage: the Proceedings of the International Symposium of Ramesses the Great* (Memphis: Memphis State University, 1991), 29, n. 5–6.

[58] Here, the action of 'branding' (or, even better, 'marking') is a metaphor to describe the influence and power of Ptah-Tatenen on the population of Egypt and the whole world. See also Matić, *Body and Frames of War*, 266–267.

[59] *P. Chester Beatty* I, *recto l.* 17,2–4; A. H. Gardiner, *Chester Beatty Gifts,* vol. 1 (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1935), 3, pl. XVIIA; W. Boochs, *Siegel und Siegeln im Alten Ägypten* (Sankt Augustin: Hans Richarz, 1982), 30 and n. 1.

[60] Translation by V. A. Tobin, 'The Love Songs and the Song of the Harper', in W. K. Simpson (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, and Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 330. See also B. Mathieu, *La poésie amoureuse de l'Égypte ancienne. Recherches sur un genre littéraire au Nouvel Empire* (Cairo: *IFAO*, 1996), 33–34.

[61] On this, see the remarks of Meeks, 'Notes de Lexicographie (§1)', 64, n. 9.

The metaphorical use of the firebrand as a symbol of subjugation and influence of the gods or Pharaoh on someone has already been underlined by H. Grapow,[62] who related it to the image of the Pharaoh (or the god) as a 'good shepherd': in this way people become members of his flock. The existence of this concept in Egyptian thought may therefore explain the use of the image of marking in the aforementioned situations.

2.3. Branding as a punishment in juridical, mythological and funerary documents

The affixing of marks with a hot iron could also be used as a punishment. The only known source about this practice is *O. Berlin 12654vs*,[63] dating to the reign of Ramesses VI and originating from Deir el Medina.[64] The text reports an argument between the scribe Paser and the artist Nebnefer, which ends with Nebnefer's conviction and corporal punishment. The text reads:

> Give him one hundred blows with a stick and ten brand marks (*ỉb.w*) and put him to break stone in the Place of truth, until the Vizier shall forgive him.[65]

In this case, the use of branding has a double function: the sanction is indeed both physical (and therefore painful) and social, because the traces of the punishment are lasting and visible, such as in some kind of punishment involving mutilations.[66]

The affixing of the mark (the *ỉb.t*-action) as a corporal punishment is also applied to the god Seth in one of the legends contained in *P. Jumilhac* (II, *ll.* 8–15), namely the one concerning the origin of the *sem*-priest.[67] Here the god Anubis marks the skin of Seth with a hot iron creating the spots that characterise the leopard skin, the typical robe of the *sem*-priest.[68] It is also noteworthy that Chapter 146 of the *Book of the Dead*, dealing with gates, mentions the brand mark as one of the possible tortures awaiting the dead in the Underworld.[69]

2.3. Iconographic and archaeological evidence

If, for the branding of animals, several iconographic and archaeological sources help us to reconstruct the practice and technique of affixing marks, with regard to the fire branding of humans, the only

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[62] H. Grapow, *Die bildlichen Ausdrücke des Ägyptischen*: vom Denken und dichten einer altorientalischen Sprache (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1924), 156.

[63] Matić (*Body and Frames of War*, 33) cites also *P. DeM 26* (*verso*) and *P. Berlin P. 10496*, where 'one hundred blows (*sḫ.t*) and five brandings' are mentioned as possible (and actual) punishments. However, here there is no question of 'brandings' (*ỉb.w*), as the word used is *wbn*, generally translated as 'piercing' or 'bleeding wound' (*Wb.* I, 294,15–295,2). For the texts see Kitchen, *KRI*, vol. 5, 465,1; 466,10 (*P. DeM 26*); 478,9 (*P. Berlin P. 10496*).

[64] *O. Berlin 12654, verso l.* 10; K. A. Kitchen, Ramesside Inscriptions: historical and biographical, vol. 6 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 345,1; S. Allam, *Hieratische Ostraka und Papyri aus der Ramessidenzeit: Text*, vol. 1 (Tübingen: Selbstverlag, 1973), 37 n. 10; J. Černý, *Hieratische Ostraka und Papyri aus der Ramessidenzeit: Tafelteil* , vol. 2 (Tübingen: Selbstverlag, 1973), pl. 13,10; J. Černý, *Community of Workmen at Thebes in the Ramesside Period* (Cairo: IFAO, 1973), 60.

[65] Translation by C. J. Eyre, *Employment and Labour Relations in the Theban Necropolis in the Ramesside Period* (PhD diss., The Queen's College, University of Oxford, 1980), 154.

[66] On the practice and the symbolic significance of the severing of nose and ears in New Kingdom Egypt, see A. A. Loktionov, 'May my Nose and Ears be Cut Off: Practical and "Supra-practical" Aspects of Mutilation in the Egyptian New Kingdom', *JESHO* 60 (2017), 263–291 and Matić, *Body and Frames of War*, 35–36.

[67] *P. Louvre E 17110*; J. Vandier, *Le Papyrus Jumilhac* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1962), 114 and 147 n. 47.

[68] Vandier, *Le Papyrus Jumilhac*, 249, n. 1059; J. Zandee, *Death as an Enemy According to Ancient Egyptian Conception* (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 225. This an aetiological myth that explains the origin of the spots of the leopard skin with a word play between  *ỉb* (*Wb.* I, 7,11–14 'leopard') and  *ỉb* ('to brand').

[69] See also the use of *ỉb.t* in *PT 675b*. See Zandee, *Death as an Enemy,* 225. For more sources mentioning branding in the Underworld, see Matić, *Body and Frames of War*, 34.

possible representation is the aforementioned scene from Medinet Habu,[70] whose interpretation remains uncertain. According to the French scholar B. Menu, it is possible to observe how, in the ten narrative segments identified by the author on the wall, the prisoners pass from a condition of disorder to one of order. This could indicate their integration into the Egyptian administrative system.[71] As a result of capture, the prisoners are tied up and brought by soldiers, but just before their registration by the scribes, they are freed from ropes and march neatly towards the Egyptian officers who, with a sort of *calamus* in hand, mark them on the shoulder. In this scene the importance of the 'gesture of writing' as a means of order management is evident, either in the scribes' registration or in the marking of prisoners.[72]

Bearing in mind the aforementioned texts from the reign of Ramesses III, it would be very tempting to see in this scene an iron branding scene. It is therefore difficult to establish the marking method used on these prisoners, because the shape of the branding irons used on humans has no certain archaeological attestation.[73] In the Medinet Habu scene a receptacle (that evokes to us a brazier, even if it differs from those represented in cattle branding scenes) is clearly visible. It contains several long needles which are unlike the branding irons used for cattle and more closely resemble the scribes' reed pens represented in the same scene.[74]

Conclusions

At the end of this investigation, it is possible to draw some preliminary conclusions on the fire-branding of humans. From the analysed sources, it can be argued that some prisoners of war may have been forced to undergo this treatment. Putting the Pharaoh's name on the bodies of prisoners had both practical and ideological significance. This action made it possible to ratify the transition to the status of serfs subject to the Pharaoh, whose printed name provided a permanent and visible sign of these people's status.[75] This conclusion may also be partly valid for the marks affixed as punishment, since the external signs were persistent, painful and evident.[76] Thus, the forced affixing of marks was used both as a punishment and as a means of organization.

The values of durability and subjection which are specific to cattle branding are also pursued in the texts which use the metaphor of affixing marks to signify submission to someone's will or influence (whether a god or a loved one). This applies a broader meaning of the verb *ỉb* as 'to earmark' or 'to mark'.

[70] Epigraphic Survey, *Medinet Habu* I, 42. According to Edgerton and Wilson, *Historical Records*, 42, another possible iconographical source for this practice is an ivory label from the reign of the king Aha. See W. M. F. Petrie, *The Royal Tombs of the Earliest dynasties*, vol. II (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1901), pl. III, 6.

[71] B. Menu, 'Captifs de guerre et dépendance rurale dans l'Égypte du Nouvel Empire', in B. Menu (ed.), *La dépendance rurale dans l'Antiquité égyptienne et proche-orientale, Colloque Aidea, Banyuls-sur-Mer 2001* (Cairo: *IFAO*, 2004), 196–198, figs. 1–11. See also M. Valerio, 'The Egyptians' ambivalent relationship with foreigners: the case of the prisoners of war', in J. Mynářová, M. Kilani and S. Alivernini (eds), *A Stranger in the House – the Crossroads III. Proceedings of an International Conference on Foreigners in Ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern Societies of the Bronze Age held in Prague, September 10–13, 2018* (Prague: Charles University, Faculty of Arts, 2019), 374–376.

[72] Menu, 'Captifs de guerre', 199.

[73] Due to lack of information, it is impossible to establish whether the marks affixed as sanctions were simple pieces of heated iron affixed to the skin of the convicts or were specific forms of marks used in these circumstances.

[74] On the interpretation of this scene, see also Matić, *Body and Frames of War,* 302–304 (and the previous bibliography cited by the author); C. J. Eyre, *'Calculated Frightfulness and the Display of Violence',* in T. A. Bács and H. Beinlich (eds), *8th Symposium on Egyptian Royal Ideology: Constructing Authority. Prestige, Reputation and the Perception of Power in Egyptian Kingship. Budapest, May 12-14, 2016* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017), 103.

[75] Meeks, 'Notes de Lexicographie (§1)', 64; Menu, 'Captifs de guerre', 196. For a different interpretation, see Matić, *Body and Frames of War,* 34 and 284–285.

[76] We do not know the shapes of affixed brands, but they were, perhaps, standardized signs related to the type of crime committed. A visible mark is probably the basic idea behind the already cited practice of mutilating the nose or ears. On this see Loktionov 'May my Nose'.

It is therefore difficult to give a definitive interpretation to the marking scene represented at Medinet Habu. As said above, through the 'gesture of writing', prisoners are both marked on the shoulder and recorded on lists, probably drawn up to serve as directories of workers. In this context it could be possible to mention two techniques attested in Ancient Egypt, considered by B. Menu[77] as more relevant options: tattooing and scarification.[78] However, as argued also by other authors, such techniques would be more appropriate for the affixing of semi-permanent marks.[79] Of course, the durability and visibility of the Pharaoh's brand could be an important message (an element which is also found in texts of the same period), but the shape of the supposed 'brazier' and of the long needles (more likely reed pens) is not fully satisfying for a conclusion that either a branding or a tattoo definitively took place in this scene.[80]

To conclude, brand marking of people might have been practiced in New Kingdom Egypt in a small number of cases, which required a self-evident mark on the individual. This practice implied a strong subjugation, but the symbolic meaning of this action is often summoned to signify domination and control by a person or a god.

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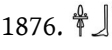
Brugsch, H. 1876.  Abu. *ZÄS* 14: 35–38.

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[78] The tattoo is suggested in this case also by L. Renaut, 'Signation chrétienne et marquage des captifs dans le monde antique', in J-C. Caron, N. Planas and L. Lamoine (eds), *Entre traces mémorielles et marques corporelles. Regards sur l'ennemi de l'Antiquité à nos jours* (Clermont-Ferrand: PUBP, 2014), 275–276; A. Lohwasser, 'Haut als Medium im antiken Nordostafrika. Temporäre und permanente Modifikationen der Körperoberfläche', in A. Berlejung, J. Dietrich and J. F. Quack (eds), *Menschenbilder und Körperkonzepte im Alten Israel, in Ägypten und im Alten Orient* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 531. On tattoos in Ancient Egypt, see L. Keimer, *Remarques sur le tatouage dans l'Égypte ancienne* (Cairo: *IFAO*, 1948); R. S. Bianchi, 'Tattoo in Ancient Egypt', in A. Rubin (ed.), *Marks of Civilization. Artistic Transformations of the Human Body* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1988), 21–28; G. J. Tassie, 'Identifying the Practice of Tattooing in Ancient Egypt and Nubia', *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology* 14 (2003), 85–101; J. Yoyotte, 'Signes du corps chez les anciens Égyptiens', in C. Falgayrettes-Leveau (ed.), *Les signes du corps* (Paris: Musée Dapper, 2004), 135–147; K. W. C. Poon and T. I. Quickenden, 'A review of tattooing in ancient Egypt', *BACE* 17 (2006), 123–136; Lohwasser, 'Haut als Medium', 527–559. On scarification, see T. Kendall, 'Scarification in the Nile Valley from Antiquity to Present', in T. Celenko (ed.), *Egypt in Africa* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1996), 84–85.

[79] The use of henna could be mentioned in this context, but unfortunately this plant seems to have been introduced into Egypt only after the middle of the 1st millennium BC and therefore cannot have been used in the Ramesside period. See L. Renaut, 'Recherches sur le henné antique', *JNES* 68 (2009), 205–206.

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VI.
Compulsion and Control through Patronage and Unequal Status Relationships

13
Patronage and Protection in Late Pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt

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Abstract

Legal jurisdictions of officials and courts in Late Pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt were weakly defined and overlapping. Consequently, individuals and groups were frequently obliged to provide services and favours to an official in return for legal protection against other officials and their followers, thereby enhancing the authority and control of officials over their subjects.

Reciprocity was expected, and officials were criticized for failing to provide legal protection to their followers, suggesting that the institution had become normalised. It was also believed that individuals could enter into similar relationships with Egyptian deities. Many Demotic texts either beg deities for protection in return for loyal service or payment, or they recommend service to deities as the best protection, suggesting that the Ptolemaic Egyptian practices of legal asylum and seclusion in temples might have been conceptualised as divine legal protection.

Keywords: Letters to deities; Patronage; Protection; Self-dedication; Wisdom literature

1. Introduction

This paper proposes that differential access to justice was a source of social control in Ancient Egypt. Not only were the complaints of the wealthy more likely to receive a favourable hearing than those of the poor or socially isolated, but the wealthy or socially connected could also use their wealth and connections to help resolve or obstruct the complaints of the poor or socially isolated. Non-elites therefore had a strong incentive to become subordinates of elites in return for patronage or protection from other elites and their subordinates. Superiors could then manipulate their subordinates by offering or threatening to withhold patronage and protection, even as their subordinates expected patronage and protection from their superiors as a reward for their service.[1]

Demotic texts from the Saite (664–526 BCE), Persian (526–332 BCE), and Ptolemaic (332–30 BCE) Periods frequently use the verb 'to strengthen' (*nḫt*) to describe patronage and protection, most often in the *Petition of Pediese* and in letters to deities, and in wisdom literature.[2] The use of this verb in the Persian Period *Petition of Pediese* reveals that superiors regularly expected concrete compensation from their subordinates before providing patronage and protection. The use of the same verb in Saite and Persian Period letters to deities and later wisdom literature shows that subordinates also understood that they had to provide compensation to their divine superiors before receiving patronage and protection, though the subordinates often invoked their previous service to the deities rather than concrete compensation. The same verb also appears in Ptolemaic Period letters to deities and self-dedication contracts, however, which indicate that compensation for divine patronage and protection could take the form of money payments as well as service.

[1] B. P. Muhs, *The Ancient Egyptian Economy, 3000-30BCE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 61–62, 102–103, 180–182, 219–220.

[2] G. Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil II. Kommentare und Indizes* (*ÄAT* 38/2 – Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998), 382–385.

2. The *Petition of Pediese*

Papyrus Rylands 9, also known as the *Petition of Pediese*, is an early Demotic papyrus from El-Hibeh or Teudjoi, dated to Year 9 of the Persian king Darius I (513 BCE). It describes a multi-generational dispute between the family of Pediese and the other priests of Amun of Teudjoi, mentioning multiple cases of nepotism, patronage and protection in late Pharaonic Egypt.

The dispute began in Year 4 of king Psammetichus I (661 BCE), when the shipping master (*ꜣ n mry.t*) in Herakleopolis found the priesthood of Amun of Teudjoi nearly vacant and appointed his cousin Pediese I to be prophet in the temple of Amun of Teudjoi.[3] The office of shipping master was eventually discontinued, however, and the temple of Amun at Teudjoi fell under the authority of the provincial supervisor (*ḥry*) of Herakleopolis. The family of Pediese I thus lost their patron and protector, and when Pediese I's grandson and heir Pediese II went on campaign in the Levant with king Psammetichus II in his Year 4 (592 BC), the other priests of Amun of Teudjoi persuaded the new supervisor of Herakleopolis, Horudja son of Horkheb, to reassign a share of the offices in the temple of Amun from Pediese II to his own son Ptahnefer son of Horudja, a priest of Sobek. Horudja son of Horkheb did so, and implicitly became patron to the other priests of Amun of Teudjoi.[4]

When Pediese II returned to Teudjoi from the Levant, he tried to recover his positions through legal action. He went to the house of judgment (*ꜥ.wy n wpy*) and pleaded before the Vizier and the judges, but they ruled against him, saying that the share of the offices in the temple of Amun that Horudja son of Horkheb had reassigned to his son were 'shares of Pharaoh', that is state property. Pediese II then collected money from his relatives in Thebes in order to go to court again, but he was told that he did not have enough money: "There is no profit to go to the house of judges. Your opponent is richer than you. Even if you had 100 silver deben he would win against you". The implication is that without great wealth or a powerful patron, Pediese II could not rely on the court system to protect his rights.[5]

This dispute took a curious turn in Year 15 of king Amasis (556 BCE), when the overseer of fields (*mr ꜣḫ*) came to Herakleopolis and asked the provincial scribes if Hormaakheru son of Ptahirdis had an annuity in the province, because the overseer of fields was angry with him and evidently wanted to take vengeance on him. One of the provincial scribes told him that Hormaakheru had no annuity there, but if the overseer of fields wished to harm Hormaakheru, there was something that would make him angrier than an annuity.[6] The overseer of fields told the provincial scribe to continue, and he explained that Hormaakheru had appointed his brothers to be priests of Amun of Teudjoi, and they received revenues from an island of 1000 arouras that was only registered as 484 arouras for tax purposes. So the overseer of fields had the island surveyed and measured, and then he confiscated the revenues from the island from the priests of Amun of Teudjoi because of their tax underpayment.[7]

The priests of Amun of Teudjoi then travelled north, presumably to Memphis, to find an official who would protect their revenues from the island. The priests were told that the only official who could protect them was Khorkhonsu son of Hor.[8]

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[3] *P. Rylands 9, col.* 8, *ll.* 1–3. See G. Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil I. Text und Übersetzung* (*ÄAT* 38/1– Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998), 138–139 and Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil II*, 424–427.

[4] *P. Rylands 9, col.* 14, *l.* 16 – *col.* 15, *l.* 7. See Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil I*, 162–167 and Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil II*, 502–508.

[5] *P. Rylands 9, col.* 15, *ll.* 7–19. See Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil I*, 166–169 and Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil II*, 508–515.

[6] *P. Rylands 9, col.* 16, *ll.* 1–5. See Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil I*, 168–169 and Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil II*, 516–519.

[7] *P. Rylands 9, col.* 16, *ll.* 5–7. See Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil I*, 168–171 and Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil II*, 519.

[8] *P. Rylands 9, col.* 16, *ll.* 14–16. See Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil I*, 170–173 and Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil II*, 525–527.

P. Rylands 9, col. 16, ll. 14–16:

> The priests hastened northward to the entry of the House of Pharaoh, (and) the pastophoros of Ptah, in whose house they purified themselves, said to them: "There is no man belonging to Pharaoh **who is able to protect you** (*ỉw ỉw=f rḫ nḫt.t=tnw*) except Khorkhonsu son of Hor. He is a man who visits Pharaoh in the bedchamber. They do not say there is a man in the House of Pharaoh who is heard about a matter like him".

The priests of Amun of Teudjoi then approached Khorkhonsu son of Hor with an offer of annual payments, if he protected their revenue from the island.[9]

P. Rylands 9, col. 16, ll. 16–19:

> They caused the pastophoros of Ptah to go after Horkheb the eunuch of Khorkhonsu, (and) they stood with him, (and) they said to him: "If Khorkhonsu **protects us** (*nḫt.t=n*)[10] in our matter, and he causes that they give to us this island which is received for Amun, we will give to him in total specification 300 (sacks) of emmer, 200 hin of castor, 50 hin of honey, and 30 geese to complete his stipend annually".

Khorkhonsu son of Hor did not trust the priests of Amun of Teudjoi to pay him annually after he protected their revenue from the island, so he made a counteroffer to them. If they made his brother a prophet in the temple of Amun first, then he would protect their revenue from the island.[11]

P. Rylands 9, col. 16, l. 19 – col. 17, l. 1:

> Horkheb went, (and) he said it to Khorkhonsu, (and) Khorkhonsu said: "These southern men, their mouths, their emptiness is great. Cause that they give it to me this year. When they know it, that **I protect them** (*nḫt.ṯ(=y) st*), they will not give to me. Say it to them that I act as a priest of Horus of Pe and Wadjet. There belongs to me my brother, he is a priest of Horus of Pe. Write for him one office as prophet in your house, and you should write for him to give these things as its stipend each year, (and) **I will protect you** (*nḫt.ṯ(=y) tnw*) in your matter".

The priests of Amun then approached the prophet of Amun of Teudjoi, Nekau son of Ptahnefer, the grandson of the former supervisor of Herakleopolis, Horudja son of Horkheb, who had received the prophetship that had formerly belonged to Pediese II. The priests asked Nekau to provide them protection, and they reminded him that they had made his father Ptahnefer son of Horudja a prophet of Amun on the condition that Horudja son of Horkheb protect them.[12]

P. Rylands 9, col. 17, ll. 1–6:

> Now it befell that Nekau son of Ptahnefer the priest of Sobek who was prophet of Amun of Teudjoi was in Memphis. The priests went to him, (and) they said to him: "Nekau, the endowment of Amun of Teudjoi, the overseer of fields has returned it to the ration-field. **Are you able to protect us** (*ỉn ỉw=k rḫ nḫt.ṯ=n*)?[13] If not, behold, when we went to an official, he said to us: "write for me a title to the share of the prophet of Amun so that **I may protect you** (*nḫt.ṯ(=y) tnw*) in every affair of yours". For you know the fact that we were they who wrote for your father Ptahnefer son of Horudja a title to the share of

[9] *P. Rylands 9*, *col.* 16, *ll.* 16–19. See Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil I*, 172–173 and Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil II*, 526–533.
[10] Written *nḫt.ṯ=tn*.
[11] *P. Rylands 9*, *col.* 16, *l.* 19 – *col.* 17, *l.* 1. See Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil I*, 172–173 and Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil II*, 532–534.
[12] *P. Rylands 9*, *col.* 17, *ll.* 1–6. See Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil I*, 172–175 and Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil II*, 534–535.
[13] Written *ỉn ỉw=k rḫ nḫt.ṯ=tn*.

> the prophet of Amun, when his father Horudja son of Horkheb was chief of Herakleopolis, (though) it is not a share that belonged to him. We gave it to him saying: "He will protect us (*iw=f r nḫt.ṯ=n*)"".[14]

Nekau son of Ptahnefer was not in a position to provide protection to the priests of Amun, because his grandfather was no longer supervisor of Herakleopolis, so Nekau agreed to transfer his office of prophet of Amun to whomever could protect the priests of Amun. The priests then wrote a document to transfer the office to Khorkhonsu's brother, and presented the document to Khorkhonsu son of Hor.[15]

> *P. Rylands 9, col. 17, ll. 6–9:*
>
> Nekau son of Ptahnefer said to them: "Go, write a title for any man **who will protect you** (*iw=w r nḫt.ṯ=tnw*) for the share of the prophet of Amun. Sobek is with you! Bring to me the document that you shall make, so that I may subscribe to it". The priests went to Horkheb son of Irethareru, the man of Khorkhonsu, (and) they wrote a title to the share of the prophet of Amun for Psamtekmenempe son of Hor, the brother of Khorkhonsu, (and) they took the writing to Khorkhonsu.

Khorkhonsu son of Hor then acted as patron and protector for the priests of Amun of Teudjoi and disputed with the overseer of fields. He was unable to recover the island that the overseer of fields had confiscated, but he did obtain a different plot of land measuring 484 arouras for the temple of Amun of Teudjoi.[16] Khorkhonsu's brother Psamtekmenempe son of Hor then became a priest of Amun of Teudjoi, bringing him into conflict with the descendants of Pediese II whose position he took, leading them to compose the *Petition of Pediese*.[17]

3. Saite and Persian Period letters to deities

The Saite and Persian Periods saw the appearance of letters to deities asking them to provide protection, deploying the same terminology used for human patronage and protection (*nḫt*) in the *Petition of Pediese*.[18] The writers of these letters to deities often reciprocally linked the requested protection to their status as subordinates or servants (*bꜣk*; *bꜣk.t*) of the deities, and to the status of the deities as their superiors (*ḥry*),[19] using terminology applied in secular contexts to enslaved people.[20] Most such letters requested protection from physical abuse and legal threats from other people, even though they were addressed to deities.[21]

Papyrus Oriental Institute Museum 19422 is a Demotic letter dated to the Persian Period, specifically Year 20, probably of Darius I (502 BCE). In it, Iufau son of Horneferkheb writes to Thoth the twice great, Lord of Hermopolis, to complain about his colleague Psenteehe son of Monthotep, whom he accuses of taking his money and his food, and of depriving him of his stipend by law; and to request that Thoth protect him on account of his service to the Ibis.[22]

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[14] Written *iw=f r nḫt.ṯ=tn*.

[15] *P. Rylands 9*, *col.* 17, *ll.* 6–9. See Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil I*, 174–175 and Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil II*, 535.

[16] *P. Rylands 9*, *col.* 17, *l.* 9 – *col.* 18, *l.* 4. See Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil I*, 174–177 and Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil II*, 535–540.

[17] *P. Rylands 9*, *col.* 18, *ll.* 4–22. See Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil I*, 176–181 and Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil II*, 540–547.

[18] Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil II*, 382–385.

[19] G. R. Hughes, 'A Demotic Plea to Thoth in the Library of G. Michaelides', *JEA* 54 (1968), 179 and A. G. Migahid, *Demotische Briefe an Götter von der Spät- bis zur Römerzeit, Band II. Briefstil* (PhD diss., Bayerischen Julius-Maximilians-Universität, Würzburg, 1986), 59–60.

[20] A. M. Bakir, *Slavery in Pharaonic Egypt* (*SASAÉ* 18 – Cairo: IFAO, 1952), 15–22 and T. Hofmann, *Zur sozialen Bedeutung Zweier Begriffe für "diener": bꜣk und ḥm* (*Aegyptiaca Helvetica* 18 – Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2005), 243–244.

[21] Migahid, *Demotische Briefe II*, 80–84.

[22] G. R. Hughes, 'A Demotic Letter to Thoth', *JNES* 17 (1958), 1–12 and A. G. Migahid, *Demotische Briefe an Götter von der Spät- bis zur Römerzeit, Band I. Die Texte der Urkunden* (PhD diss., Bayerischen Julius-Maximilians-Universität, Würzburg, 1986), 38–44 (*Urk.* 2).

P. OIM 19422:

l. 3: I (now) have no **human superior** (*ḥry rmt*). If the heart be stout, **one will be protected** (*iw=w r nḫt.ṯ=w*) in the presence of Thoth, twice great, Lord of Hermopolis!

l. 6: If the heart be stout, **one will be protected** (*iw=w r nḫt.ṯ=w*) in the presence of Thoth, Twice Great, Lord of Hermopolis!

l. 8: **Let me be protected** (*my nḫt.ṯ=w (ṯ=y)*) from Psenteehe son of Monthotep.

Papyrus Cairo Catalogue Général 31045 is a Demotic letter from Saqqara, dated to the Saite Period. An anonymous writer requests that Oserapis protect him and avenge him against an unnamed enemy.[23]

P. Cairo CG 31045:

l. 1: I complain before Oserapis today. **Protect me** (*nḫt ṯ(=y)*)!

ll. 3–4: I am injured, **protect me** (*nḫt ṯ(=y)*), **the one who complains to his superior and wise man** (*pꜣ nty smy (n) pꜣy=f ḥry-rmṯ-rḫ*), **protect him** (*nḫt ṯ=f*) immediately, **protect me** (*nḫt ṯ(=y)*)!

A linen cloth in Cambridge University Library, formerly in the Michaelides collection, is a Demotic letter dated to the Persian Period. A servant of the ibis, Pedikhonsu, writes to Thoth to complain about a colleague, Pedibast, who has interfered with his work for the ibis, and to ask for protection from him.[24]

L. CUL Michaelides:

l. 9: Our great lord, **protect me** (*nḫt ṯ(=y)*) yourself, do not allow my harm!

Linen Cloth British Museum 73786 is a Demotic letter, dated to the Persian Period. An anonymous writer requests that Thoth protect him from Wahibremen and Tadipahutnefer, who were loaned grain but did not repay it.[25]

L. BM EA 73786:

l. 4: **Protect me** (*nḫt ṯ(=y)*); there is no **protection** (*nḫṯ.t*) for a **little man** (*rm.t-ḫm*) except Thoth.

A few Saite and Persian Period letters to deities requested protection from supernatural threats. *Linen Cloth British Museum 73785* is a Demotic letter dated to the Persian Period. In it, Nesnakenebau son of Hor writes to Thoth the twice great, Lord of Hermopolis, to request protection from unspecified evil on account of his service to Thoth.[26]

L BM EA 73785:

[23] W. Spiegelberg, *Die Demotischen Denkmaler II – Die Demotische Papyrus, Tafeln. Catalogue Général des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire 30601-31270, 50001-50022* (Strassburg: Elsässische Druckerei und Verlagsanstalt vorm G. Fischbach, 1906), pl. 80; W. Spiegelberg, *Die Demotischen Denkmaler II – Die Demotische Papyrus, Text. Catalogue Général des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire 30601-31270, 50001-50022* (Strassburg: Buchdruckerei M. Dumont Schauberg, 1908), 237 and Migahid, *Demotische Briefe I*, 45–53 (*Urk.* 3).

[24] G. Vittmann, 'Zwei demotische Briefe an den Gott Thot', *Enchoria* 22 (1995), 169–173.

[25] A. G. Migahid and G. Vittmann, 'Zwei weitere frühdemotische Briefe an Thot', *RdÉ* 54 (2003), 53–56.

[26] Hughes, 'Demotic Plea', 176–182 and Migahid, *Demotische Briefe I*, 137–139 (*Urk.* 13).

ll. 2–3: A servant (*bꜣk*) who is mistreated, **his superior is the one who protects him** (*pꜣy=f ḥry pꜣ nty nḫt.ṯ=f*). **Protect me** (*nḫt ṯ(=y)*) from it!

4. Wisdom literature

The surviving manuscripts of Demotic wisdom literature date to the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, but they express attitudes towards patronage and protection similar to those in Saite and Persian Period sources. *Papyrus British Museum 10508*, known as the *Instructions of Onchesheshonqy*, comes from Akhmim and dates to the first century BCE. Like the *Petition of Pediese*, it advises against taking legal action against a superior without protection, and like the letters to deities it advises serving a deity to obtain protection.[27]

P. BM EA 10508:

Col. 6, l. 1: Serve [your god], **so that he may protect you** (*ỉr=f n=k tym*).

Col. 8, l. 11: Do not take legal action with the one greater than you, **while there does not belong to you protection** (*ỉw mn mtw=k nḫṯ.t*) against him.

Papyrus Leiden Rijksmuseum van Oudheden 1895/5.1, also known as *Papyrus Insinger*, likewise comes from Akhmim and dates to the first century CE. It ostensibly devotes a chapter to protection, though the subject is treated sporadically there and elsewhere in the papyrus. It advises taking protection against physical and legal threats and obtaining it by serving a deity.[28]

P. Leiden RMO 1895/5.1:

Col. 9, l. 21: The Eleventh Instruction. The teaching **to acquire protection for yourself** (*tỉ ḫpr n=k nḫṯ.t*) so that you are not harmed.

Col. 10, l. 1: [It is the god **who**] **gives protection** (*[pꜣ nt] tỉ nḫṯ.t*) to the wise man because of service.

Col. 10, l. 5: It is a fool **who has no protection** (*ỉw wn*[29] *nḫṯ.t*) who sleeps in prison.

Col. 10, l. 6: The one who finds his asylum (*lit.* **the house of his protection** – *pꜣ ꜥ.wy n tꜣy=f nḫṯ.t*), they do not take him with force.

Col. 10, l. 7: **It is the one who gives something for protection** (*pꜣ nt tỉ nkꜣ.w r-ḏbꜣ nḫṯ.t*) who sleeps safely in the street.

Col. 11, ll. 13–14: **There is no true protection** (*mn nḫṯ.t r mꜣꜥ.t*) except the work of the god; there is no true servant except the one who serves him.

Col. 12, l. 2: The god blesses trust[30] with **protection** (*nḫṯ.t*).

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[27] *P. BM EA 10508*, *col.* 6, *l.* 1 and *col.* 8, *l.* 11. See S. R. K. Glanville, *The Instructions of ʻOnchsheshonqy* (Catalogue of Demotic Papyri in the British Museum 2 – London: British Museum Press, 1955), 18–19, 22–23; M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Vol. III: The Late Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 164, 166 and M. Lichtheim, *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context. A Study of Demotic Instructions* (*OBO* 52 – Freiburg and Göttingen: Universitätsverlag-Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1983), 71, 73.

[28] *P. Leiden RMO 1895/5.1*, *col.* 9, *l.* 21, *col.* 10, *ll.* 1, 5–7, *col.* 11, *ll.* 13–14 and *col.* 12, *l.* 2. See F. Lexa, *Papyrus Insinger* (Paris: Librairie orientaliste P. Geuthner, 1926), 29–31, 35–36; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature III*, 193 (n. 33), 194 (n. 39) and Lichtheim, *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature*, 206 (n. 180), 208 (n. 183).

[29] Written *wn* instead of *mn*.

[30] Here written as *nḫṯ.t* instead of the expected *nḫṯ.t*.

5. Ptolemaic Period divine protection

Demotic letters to deities continued to be written in the Ptolemaic Period. Some of these letters used the same terminology for protection (*nḫt*) found in the *Petition of Pediese* and in the Saite and Persian letters to deities.[31] A few Ptolemaic letters to deities still request protection from physical abuse and legal threats from other people. *Papyrus British Museum 10845* is a Demotic letter dated to the Ptolemaic Period. Two children, Psenthotes and Naneferho, write to the Ibis, Falcon and Baboon and the gods who rest with them in the resting place of the Ibis, the great god who dwells in Hermopolis. They complain that their father Harpakeme has deprived them of food, shelter and their inheritance, and ask the gods to protect them.[32]

P. BM EA 10845, l. 14:

> We have not found anyone who will make us protection (*tym*) from him except you; **it is you who protects us** (*mtw=tn i.ir nḫṯ.t=n*).

More Ptolemaic letters to deities request protection from or assistance in supernatural matters, however. Such letters are often transactional, offering to pay the deities for their 'work'.[33] For example, a wooden tablet formerly in the Michaelides collection is a Demotic letter from Thebes, dated to the Ptolemaic Period, specifically to Year 3, probably of Ptolemy IV (218 BCE). In it, the god's father and prophet of Amun-Re King of the Gods, Osoroeris son of Horos son of Osoroeris, writes to **his superior** (*pꜣy=f ḥry*), the deified royal scribe, Amenothes son of Hapu, the great god. He offers to pay the god if the woman Taypet becomes pregnant and gives birth, and he reminds the god that "**I am your servant (and) the son of your servant**" (*ỉnk pꜣy=k bꜣk pꜣ šr pꜣy=k bꜣk*).[34]

T. Michaelides, ll. 3–9:

> If it occurs that Taypet daughter of Petemestous has become pregnant, I will give 1 deben makes 5 staters makes 1 deben again. If she has given birth, I will give another 1 deben makes 5 staters makes 1 deben again, to complete 2 deben for the cost on the day which is decreed for me.

The Michaelides tablet is not unique. *Papyrus British Museum 10857* is a Demotic letter from Tuna el-Gebel, dated to the Ptolemaic Period, specifically to a Year 4. In it, Thotnachthes son of Komoapis writes to the Ibis, and offers to pay the god if Komoapis, possibly his father, recovers from his illness and does not die.[35]

P. BM EA 10857, ll. 3–8:

> If it happens that Komoapis, **your servant** (*pꜣy=k bꜣk*), has become well, (and) has not died from the illness which is in him, I shall give [*x* kite makes *y* staters makes *x* kite again for the] burial of the Ibis, each 1 kite per month.

Closely related to Ptolemaic letters to deities are self-dedication contracts, in which individuals dedicate their service and a monthly fee to deities in return for 'protection' from supernatural threats.[36] *Papyrus*

[31] Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9. Teil II*, 382–385.

[32] G. R. Hughes, 'The Cruel Father: A Demotic Papyrus in the Library of G. Michaelides', in E. B. Hauser (ed.), *Studies in Honor of John A. Wilson* (*SAOC* 35 – Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1969), 43–54; Migahid, *Demotische Briefe I*, 117–121 (*Urk.* 9) and J. F. Quack, 'Zum Partizip im Demotischen', *Lingua Aegyptia* 17 (2009), 239, (n. 49).

[33] Hughes. 'Demotic Plea', 179 and Migahid, *Demotische Briefe II*, 85–89.

[34] M. Malinine, 'Une lettre démotique à Aménothès, fils de Hapou', *RdÉ* 14 (1962), 37–43 and Migahid, *Demotische Briefe I*, 134–135 (*Urk.* 12).

[35] Migahid, *Demotische Briefe I*, 122–129 (*Urk.* 10).

[36] H. Thompson, 'Two Demotic Self-Dedications', *JEA* 26 (1941), 68–69.

British Museum 10622 is a Demotic self-dedication contract from Tebtunis, dated to Year 33 of Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra II (137 BCE). In it, the woman Tapnebtunis dedicates herself and her children as a servant to the god Sobek, and she says she will never be free in his temple.[37]

P. BM EA 10622, ll. 7–10:

> The female servant (*bꜣk.t sḫm.t*) Tapnebtunis, daughter of Sokomenis, her mother is Esoeris, said before **my superior** (*pꜣy=(y) ḥry*) Sobek Lord of Tebtunis, the great god: "**I am your servant** (*ỉnk tꜣy=k bꜣk.t*) together with my children and the children of my children; **I will not be able to act as an independent person** (*bn ỉw=y rḫ ỉr rmt ḫ.t-nmḥ*) in your temple, eternally, forever.

The woman Tapnebtunis then says that she expects the god Sobek to protect her from various supernatural threats, invoking the obligation of superiors to their subordinates:

P. BM EA 10622, ll. 10–14:

> **You shall protect me** (*mtw=k nḫt.ṯy*), you shall save me, you shall guard me, you shall cause that I am healthy, **you shall protect me** (*mtw=k nḫt.ṯy*) from every spirit, every female spirit, every man who is sleeping, every ghost, every drowned man, every other, every divine power, every dead man, every man of the river, every man of the riverside, every demon, every red one, every evil genius, every breath of pestilence.

The woman Tapnebtunis then offers to pay the god Sobek for his protection, in addition to serving him in his temple.

P. BM EA 10622, ll. 14–16:

> I shall give you 1¼ kite, its half is ⅝ makes 1¼ kite again, in bronze money, 24 obols corresponding to 2 kite, as wages of service, every month from Year 33, Mekheir, until the completion of 99 years makes 1204½ months, makes 99 years again, and I shall give it to your priests every month.

6. Conclusions

The preceding survey suggests that patronage and protection relationships between superiors and subordinates served as a form of social control in Saite, Persian and Ptolemaic Period Egypt. The *Petition of Pediese* shows that superiors expected their subordinates to provide them with service or compensation in return for protection from physical and legal attacks, and subordinates expected such protection in return for their service or favours. Superiors could also deny protection to subordinates who did not provide sufficient service or compensation, while subordinates could withdraw their service and favours from superiors who failed to provide protection. Furthermore, Saite and Persian Period letters to deities reveal that human subordinates attributed the same reciprocal expectations and obligations to divine superiors as they did to human ones, frequently describing the petitioner as a servant, and invoking the reciprocal obligation of superiors to protect their subordinates from physical and legal threats. Later wisdom literature expressed sentiments similar to the earlier letters to deities, but starting in the Ptolemaic Period, appeals to deities increasingly requested supernatural protection or intervention, and began to include offers of gifts or payments in addition to reminders of service, as did the related self-dedication contracts.

[37] Thompson, 'Self-Dedications', 69–71, with corrections in K-T. Zauzich, 'Die schlimme Geschichte von dem Mann der Gottesmutter, der ein Gespenst war', *Enchoria* 6 (1976), 79–80. See more recently M. A. Stadler, *Totenpapyrus des Pa-Month (P. Bibl. Nat. 149)* (Studien zu Altägyptischen Totenbuch 6 – Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), 74–75 and J. F. Quack, 'Dämonen und andere höhere Wesen in der Magie als Feinde und Helfer', in A. Jördens (ed.), *Ägyptische Magie und ihre Umwelt* (Philippika: Altertumswissenschaftliche Abhandlungen 80 – Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015), 110, (n. 46).

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14
‘When Dad Says No’: Paternal Authority and Control in the Context of Egyptian Men’s First Marriages[1]

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Abstract

First marriage was an important step in the lifecourse of Egyptian youths. Egyptian family traditions suggest that fathers exercised control over the first marriages of sons as well as daughters, and over that of the ‘eldest son’ heir-successor in particular. Sons generally married for the first time while their fathers were alive, and they could exert influence by withholding permission for the use of future inheritance in the marriage. This is supported by consents from fathers to their sons’ marriage documents. A preference for patrilocal residence after marriage could further increase paternal control over the heir-successor.

Keywords: Family; Inheritance; Legal documents; Marriage; Social Structure

1. Introduction

First marriage was a pivotal moment in the lifecourse of men and women in ancient historical societies. Marriage was the realm of legitimate reproduction, and involved the wealth and aspirations of both the marrying couple and their close kin, particularly their respective parents. This article considers a single aspect of Egyptian marriage tradition, namely the way in which Egyptian fathers attempted to assert control over their sons’ first marriages. It predominantly employs sources from the New Kingdom until the end of the Ptolemaic Period, during which the family practices discussed appear to have been relatively constant. The discussion pertains only to Egyptian families of the propertied sections of society, in which men received at least some formal education.

Reconstructing social structures and social dynamics through (legal) documentary sources and archaeological remains presents many difficulties. Nuances that existed in past family life escape the modern scientist. However, by considering information derived from different types of sources, it is possible to paint a clearer picture of the interpersonal relationships in the ancient Egyptian family, even if only in very broad strokes.

Marriage-related documents from the first millennium BCE, numbering around 150 complete texts and fragments, are the main informative sources for Egyptian marriage.[2] Most come from the Ptolemaic

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[2] The standard works on these texts remain E. Lüddeckens, *Ägyptische Eheverträge* (*ÄA* 1 – Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1960) and P. W. Pestman, *Marriage and Matrimonial Property in Ancient Egypt. A Contribution to the Establishing of the Legal Position of the Woman* (Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava 9 – Leiden: Brill, 1961). The number of documents available for study has roughly doubled since these publications.

Period, during which private legal documents were produced at a rate never before seen in Egypt. Marriage-related documents come in different formats, but are all contracts that record a property arrangement[3] between the two parties involved in a marriage,[4] with a strong focus on the wife's property rights during the marriage and in case of divorce. They could be made at the point of marriage or at a later point in time. Almost nothing is known about possible forms of 'engagement' before marriage.[5]

The earliest marriage documents written in the abnormal Hieratic script, and a few early Demotic documents,[6] are constructed as an agreement between a husband and his father-in-law: the wife is represented by her father in the contract. All later documents show the husband and wife as the two contracting parties. Yet it appears that parents and especially fathers, as head of the family and the parental household, remained involved in arranging their daughters' first marriages.

During all periods of Egyptian history, terminology around marriage envisioned husbands and fathers-in-law 'giving' and 'making' wives.[7] Most Egyptian women appear to have married for the first time while their fathers were alive, and fathers were expected to provide (most of) their daughters' marriage endowment. In New Kingdom Deir el-Medina, a practice of *f3y.t g3w.t* ('carrying a bundle') is attested, in which a man 'carried a bundle' to the father of a woman he desired to marry.[8] The semi-literary early Demotic *Petition of Pediese* contains a passage in which a father arranges the marriage of his daughter with a priest who asked for her hand.[9] The Demotic *Instructions of Onchsheshonqy* also envision fathers arranging the marriages of their daughters.[10]

By contrast, from most sources it appears that sons acted independently in arranging and contracting their marriages.[11] They are presented as the declarant *Party A* in marriage documents, addressing the wife or her father.[12] Yet there are indications that young men too may have been subject to their father's control in the making of their first marriage.

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[3] Only the earliest marriage texts in the abnormal Hieratic script contain a clause that references moral behaviour, namely the possibility of infidelity on the part of the wife leading to a divorce. This clause is included because this situation would have financial consequences for the wife.

[4] These texts are referred to by different terms in the literature, including 'marriage contracts', 'Eheurkunden', 'marital property settlements', and for one particular type of text 'annuity' or 'endowment contract'. This is not the place to discuss the validity of these terms, and in this article the broad designation 'marriage-(related) document' is used for ease of reading.

[5] For some insight here, see the 'marriage promise' in *O. Dush 5573/O. 2419* and P. W. Pestman, *The Archive of the Theban Choachytes (Second Century B.C.): A Survey of the Demotic and Greek Papyri Contained in the Archive* (*Studia Demotica* 2 – Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 146 (text 41 – *P. Survey*).

[6] For abnormal hieratic, see *P. Eheverträge* 1–4; for Demotic, see *P. Eheverträge* 2D, *Bodleian Library MS. Egypt.* a. 40 (P), *P. Ägyptisches Museum P. 23697*. For comparison see also *O. Dush 5573/O. 2419*. Of these, *P. Eheverträge* 2D is the most recent text (316 BCE), but it is based on an earlier contractual format also preserved in the secondary legal text *P. Mattha recto* ('*Codex Hermopolis*'), *cols*. 0407–0409.

[7] J. Toivari-Viitala, 'Marriage and Divorce', in E. Frood and W. Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2013), 4–5, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/68f6w5gw>, Pestman, *Marriage*, 9.

[8] Toivari-Viitala, 'Marriage and Divorce', 8.

[9] *P. Rylands 9*, *col*. 8, *ll*. 7–14; *col.* 9, *ll*. 3–4.

[10] *Onchsheshonqy, col.* 22, *l.* 4, *col.* 25, *l.* 15. *Editio princeps:* S. R. K. Glanville, *The Instructions of 'Onchsheshonqy* (Catalogue of Demotic Papyri in the British Museum 2 – London: British Museum Press, 1955), and see further H. J. Thissen, *Die Lehre des Anchscheschonqi (P. BM 10508)* (*PTA* 32 – Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1984) and F. Hoffmann and J. F. Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur. Einführungen und Quellentexte zur Ägyptologie* (*LIT* 4 – Berlin and Münster: LIT Verlag, 2018), 308–335.

[11] In Pestman, *Marriage*, 13, fn. 5 and S. Allam, 'Ehe', *LÄ* 1, 1169 it is noted that no attestation of a father interfering in the marriage of his son exists, but a father's influence cannot be excluded. See also Toivari-Viitala, 'Marriage and Divorce', 7–8 for a suggestion that the households of both future spouses probably took part in the marriage arrangements.

[12] With the exception of *P. Saqqara EES S. H5-DP 486*, *P. Eheverträge 7*, *P. Eheverträge 9*, and *P. Ägyptisches Museum P. 23698*, in which the wife is *Party A* and declarant.

Demotic Instruction literature portrays two different ways in which men arrange marriages or take a wife: one in which a man acts independently,[13] and one in which a father chooses a spouse for his son. *P. Louvre 2414* (mid-second century BCE) declares why a father should control his son's marriage: "do not let your son take a wife after his own heart. Not letting him create misery is what you will do by it".[14] The *Instructions of Onchsheshonqy* declare that a father should prevent his son from taking a wife from another town for his own benefit ("do not let your son take a wife from another town lest one take him from you"),[15] and further envisions a father marrying off his son in a puzzling passage: "give your daughter as wife to the son of a goldsmith. [Do not] give [your son to] his daughter."[16]

Moreover, the common Egyptian family hierarchy and the preferred inheritance and succession practices employed by Egyptian propertied families suggest that a father's control over his sons' marriages may have been higher in reality than documentary texts suggest.

2. Fathers, headship and authority

In Egyptian families authority was vested in the head of the household,[17] normally the father.[18] Detlef Franke aptly described Egyptian society as "father-oriented".[19] The head made decisions for his household and family,[20] represented them in public, and functioned as manager of jointly held family property. While all legitimate children of the head were under normal circumstances entitled to a share of his estate, property-owning families aimed to keep the estate together and managed by the head to prevent loss or dispersal through inheritance, marriages or alienation by individual family members.[21] The head was to compensate all family members with a claim to the family property according to their rightful share, while property was held jointly.

While Egyptian kinship and descent were always reckoned bilaterally,[22] succession and inheritance was patrilineal[23] in practice and ideology. The term 'patrilineal' as used here refers only to the dominant

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[13] *Onchsheshonqy, cols.* 11, *l.* 7, 13, *l.* 12, 16, *l.* 10. In earlier instructions men are portrayed as taking a wife independently. See for instance the *Instruction of Ani* (B 16,1–2 and 21,1) – J. F. Quack, *Die Lehren des Ani. Ein neuägyptischer Weisheitstext in seinem kulturellen Umfeld* (*OBO* 141 – Freiburg and Göttingen: Universitätsverlag-Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1994) and the *Instructions of Hordjedef* – M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Vol. I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2006), 58. See also the *Instructions of Ptahhotep* – Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, 73 (n. 37).

[14] *P. Louvre 2414*, *col.* 3, *ll.* 4–5: *m-ir di.t ṯ3y n=f p3y=k šr ḥm.t ḫr ḥ3.ṯ =f ḥ‹=f tm di.t ir=f 3yt p3 nty iw=k ir=f.*

[15] *Onchsheshonqy, col.* 15, *l.* 15*: m-ir di.t ir n=f p3y=k šr ḥm.t (n) ky tmy bw-ir=w ṯ3y.ṯ=f mtw=k.*

[16] *Onchsheshonqy, col.* 22, *l.* 4*: my t3y=k šr.t n ḥm.t n s3 n nb [m-ir] di.t [p3y=k šr(?) n] t3y=f šr.t.* The reconstruction in Glanville, *'Onchsheshonqy*, 51 appears sound from context and is accepted by Hoffman and Quack, *Anthologie*, 329 and Thissen, *Anchscheschonqi*, 34. Perhaps rather than a comment on the profession of the father-in-law, this is a warning against marrying off children to the same in-laws. What the objection against this would be is unclear.

[17] In this discussion, a 'household' is defined as 'a group of close kin that partake in the same domestic economy and function as a taxable economic unit'. Servants, clients and other non-kin dependants often attached to wealthier households are excluded, as they did not have decision-making power about matters of marriage and inheritance in the household they were attached to.

[18] S. Allam, 'Familie(struktur). A. Bürgerlich', *LÄ* 2, 106–107.

[19] D. Franke, 'Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen', *LÄ* 6, 1034.

[20] J. H. Johnson, 'Women, Wealth and Work in Egyptian Society of the Ptolemaic Period', in W. Clarysse, A. Schoors and H. Willems (eds), *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years. Studies dedicated to the Memory of Jan Quaegebeur* (*OLA* 85 – Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 1416.

[21] C. J. Eyre, 'The Adoption Papyrus in Social Context', *JEA* 78 (1992), 215–217; S. Allam, 'Les Obligations et la famille dans la société égyptienne ancienne', *Oriens Antiquus* 16 (1977), 96–97; P. W. Pestman, 'The Law of Succession in Ancient Egypt', in J. Brugman *et al.* (eds), *Essays on Oriental Laws of Succession* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 64–65. For the role of the head in land-owning families in particular, see C. J. Eyre, 'Feudal Tenure and Absentee Landlords', in S. Allam (ed.), *Grund und Boden in Altägypten (rechtliche und sozio-ökonomische Verhältnisse). Akten des internationalen Symposions, Tübingen, 18.-20. Juni 1990* (*URAÄ* 2 – Tübingen: Selbstverlag, 1994), 107–133, esp. 113, 117, 124.

[22] Franke, 'Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen', 1033–1035.

[23] The Egyptian preference for patrilineality was already noted by Franke, 'Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen', 1034.

and preferred method of transmission between generations in Egyptian society, legally, socially and economically – it does not exclude other forms of transmission, for example between mothers and children. It was, nonetheless, expected that a father would pass on his occupation, professional position and role as head of household and family to his eldest son, who would 'replace' him in both a legal and social sense.[24] Depending on the type of occupation a father held, other sons could succeed to it as well,[25] but only the eldest became heir-successor as head and property-manager of the family. It has long been recognised that the position of 'eldest son' was a role as well as a biological reality. In the absence of a (capable) biological eldest son another person could act as one, which allowed for flexibility in practice while ideology about proper succession was maintained.[26]

In the paradigm of historical Eurasian family systems, these characteristics reflect a 'stem family system': the 'stem' referring to the fact that in this system only one child of the family was allowed to succeed and continue the parental household; the others leaving at marriage or remaining in the parental household unmarried.[27] The parents, the succeeding child, and their spouse usually cohabited for a time. Stem family systems are by nature authoritarian, keeping decision-making power in the parental generation until the head or both parents retire or pass away. The marriage of the son or daughter who is to succeed to headship is of the utmost importance, and in some societies the succeeding child marries younger on average than the other children.

In Egyptian society the authority of the head-of-household was legally and socially reinforced, and must have been significant. Even siblings of the head could struggle to assert themselves towards him, as they were in a structurally subordinate position.

Pharaonic sources show a strong focus on the father-eldest son dynamic, while junior sons of the family only really come to the forefront in Demotic private legal texts. However, the social and legal reinforcement of the position of the head and his successor remained strong even during the first millennium BCE. Thus, secondary legal text *P. Mattha recto* states that only the eldest son can assert his rights to his father's property simply by claiming that he is the eldest son of his father.[28] And if a father acknowledges his eldest son and does not make inheritance dispositions in writing for his younger sons, the younger sons cannot complain to their elder brother about their shares after their father's death.[29] In *Onchsheshonqy*, a man is cautioned to not hand over his property to his younger brother, so that he cannot derive authority from it.[30]

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[24] For an overview of Egyptian inheritance and succession practice, see S. L. Lippert, 'Inheritance', in E. Frood and W. Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2013), 1–20 <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/30h78901>; and earlier studies in Pestman, 'Law of Succession', 58–77 and P. W. Pestman, '"Inheriting" in the archive of the Theban Choachytes (2nd cent. BC)', in S. P. Vleeming (ed.), *Aspects of Demotic Lexicography: Acts of the Second International Conference for Demotic Studies, Leiden, 19-21 September 1984* (*Studia Demotica* 1 – Leuven: Peeters, 1987), 57–73.

[25] This depended on whether a father held an office that could only be passed to one person, or if his occupation was tied to land, endowments or rights to priestly service that could be divided among multiple heirs. For this distinction, see for instance B. P. Muhs, 'Of Priests and Pastophoroi', in K.-T. Zauzich (ed.), *Akten der 8. Internationalen Konferenz für Demotischen Studien. Würzburg 27.-30. August 2002* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2019), 141–144.

[26] Lippert, 'Inheritance', 3–4; Pestman, 'Law of Succession', 71; J. J. Janssen and P. W. Pestman, 'Burial and Inheritance in the Community of the Necropolis Workmen at Thebes (*Pap. Bulaq X* and *O. Petrie 16*)', *JESHO* 11/2 (1968), 167–170.

[27] The argument that the dominant Egyptian family system among propertied families should be identified as a 'stem' family system rather than a 'nuclear' family system is the subject of current research shortly to be published by the present writer. For the basic characteristics of this complex family system that produced both 'nuclear' and 'stem' households during different phases of its domestic cycle, see G. W. Skinner, 'Family Systems and Demographic Processes', in D. I. Kertzer and T. Fricke (eds), *Anthropological Demography: Toward a New Synthesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 55–60.

[28] *P. Mattha recto*, *cols*. 0932–0933.

[29] *P. Mattha recto*, *cols*. 0921–0922; i.e. their elder brother was allowed to determine their shares, as the family's new head.

[30] *Onchsheshonqy, col.* 13, *l.* 10.

While junior siblings could initiate legal proceedings against their elder brother, it is unclear how often they did, or if they would usually be successful. *P. Berlin P. 3047* describes a lawsuit by a man Neferabet against his brother Nya, who was acting as the representative (*rwḏw*) and head of his sibling group.[31] Neferabet's brothers would not give him his share of the income of the jointly held family fields, and he wanted to lease his share to a prophet of the Mut temple instead. Faced with a court case involving the temple, his brother Nya gave in.[32] Even so, one wonders what else Neferabet had tried before it came to involving the temple. The priest Heqanakht who lived at the beginning of the 12th Dynasty wielded authority not just over his employees but also over his own (adult) brothers, who held a subordinate position in Heqanakht's household.[33]

In an analysis of New Kingdom houses in the city of Amarna, Kate Spence showed that the position of the head of the family in the household was also reinforced through architectural elements.[34] Physical space in Amarna houses was not primarily structured functionally, according to domestic activity, but was rather ordered around social practices that focussed on the presentation of the head in structured settings. The architectural patterning of the house emphasised the importance of the head of household, who also inhabited the most comfortable spaces. Spence argued that this was the dominant way in which ancient Egyptians, at least in the Middle and New Kingdoms, understood and created their domestic settings.[35]

The authority exercised by fathers was vested in their ability to control the family estate, and to grant or withhold property, professional positions, and education. While Egyptian children had an automatic claim on their father's estate by virtue of being born in a legal marriage, this does not appear to have counteracted the authority of the father. Parents remained in control of their own property while they lived, and could choose to disinherit children[36] or make new dispositions for their property.

In New Kingdom Deir el-Medina, the lady Naunakhte disinherited some of her children from her personal property and from her share of joint marital property at the end of her life, because they had not behaved properly towards her.[37] In the context of paternal authority, a poignant example is *P. BM EA 10845*,[38] a late Ptolemaic appeal to the Ibis, Falcon and Baboon. In this text, two youngsters, a boy and a girl, complained that their father had caused their mother's death and kicked them out of his house when he remarried. Their father was withholding their mother's marriage endowment from them and did not support them despite being able to, rendering them destitute. These children were apparently not 'officially' disinherited, but it did not matter, as their father simply threw them out and refused to support them. According to Egyptian family law, the children were at least legally entitled to the

[31] W. Helck, 'Der Papyrus Berlin P. 3047', *JARCE* 2 (1963), 65 – 73; K. A. Kitchen, *KRI*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), 803–806 (n. 285); Eyre, 'Feudal Tenure', 118–119.

[32] Helck, 'Papyrus Berlin P. 3047', 67–68, 70. It might be noted that a prophet of the Mut temple was part of the college of judges presiding over the case, which raises some questions about the overall fairness of these proceedings.

[33] J. P. Allen, *The Heqanakht Papyri* (Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition 27 – New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002), 105–120; Allam, 'Familie(struktur)', 107; Eyre, 'Feudal Tenure', 111.

[34] K. Spence, 'Ancient Egyptian Houses and Households: Architecture, Artifacts, Conceptualization, and Interpretation', in M. Müller (ed.), *Household Studies in Complex Societies: (Micro) Archaeological and Textual Approaches* (*OIS* 10 – Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2015), 83–99.

[35] Spence, 'Ancient Egyptian Houses', 93. For similar structures in Late Middle Kingdom Avaris, see M. Müller, 'Late Middle Kingdom Society in a Neighbourhood of Tell el-Daba'a/Avaris', in M. Müller (ed.), *Household Studies in Complex Societies: (Micro) Archaeological and Textual Approaches* (*OIS* 10 – Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2015), 352–353.

[36] Pestman, 'Law of Succession', 67–68 (7); Lippert, 'Inheritance', 9.

[37] J. Černý, 'The Will of Naunakhte and the Related Documents', *JEA* 31 (1945), 29–53; K. A. Kitchen, *KRI*, vol. 6 (Oxford, Blackwell, 1983), 236–243 (n. 20).

[38] G. R. Hughes, 'The Cruel Father: A Demotic Papyrus in the Library of G. Michaelides', in E. B. Hauser (ed.), *Studies in Honor of John A. Wilson* (*SAOC* 35 – Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1969), 43–54.

property of their deceased mother,[39] but they were not able to wrest it from their father who had a superior social and legal position.

3. The moment of succession and first marriage

Egyptian fathers generally seemed to have held on to their authority and headship until death, and they could make decisions about their estate and succession up and until this time.[40] An example of a father exercising his authority well into old age is the Theban choachyte Horos.[41] Horos lived 71 years and made (at least) 4 dispositions about his property for his heirs during his lifetime (in 124, 116, 114, and 113 BCE).[42] The final disposition was made only 18 months before his death, while the first of the preserved dispositions was made when Horos was 58 years old. Horos' eldest son was around 47 years old when his father died. He may have been acting head of the family already, as he bought out a brother from the joint family business in 124 BCE and acted on behalf of the family starting in 126–127 BCE.[43] However, Horos' (partial) withdrawal from the family business was unrelated to the complete transfer of headship and property, as he continued to make decisions about his estate. While some sources speak of fathers withdrawing from their office, or receiving support or rations from their sons, it is unclear if this 'withdrawal' represented a complete transfer of authority and headship.[44]

If succession and transfer of headship was represented by the death of the father, that means that for Egyptian men the moment of succession and of true financial and legal independence was not connected to first marriage. By contrast, in first millennium BCE Babylonia and Assyria, a marriage pattern existed in which men married after their fathers had died and they had become socially and financially independent, between ages 26–32.[45] This pattern with a high age at first marriage for men is also attested for Classical Athens.[46] It has been called the 'Mediterranean' pattern of marriage and domestic group formation in historical demography.[47] However, it must not be assumed to be the only possible marriage pattern for those ancient societies.[48]

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[39] Under normal circumstances a husband was obliged to return his wife's marital property to her heirs (usually her parents or siblings) if she died childless, or to pass it on to her children after her death.

[40] In division of property *P. Moscow 123*, the cavalryman Heti states outright that it does not become effective until after his lifetime (*m-sḏ pḏy(=y) ʿḥʿ*) and that certain actions should be performed only after the day of his death (*ṯ3y pḏ hrw mwt*). For more on this topic, see A. McDowell, 'Legal Aspects of Care of the Elderly in Egypt to the End of the New Kingdom', in M. Stol and S. P. Vleeming (eds), *The Care of the Elderly in the Ancient Near East* (*SHCANE* 14 – Leiden, Boston and Cologne: Brill, 1998), 199–221.

[41] Horos' family archive is discussed in Pestman, 'Inheriting', 57–73, and Pestman, *P. Survey*, *vol. 1*, 10–12, 20–21, 128 (Family B).

[42] *P. Survey*, texts 34–36, 49, 52, 54.

[43] For the buying out of relatives, see fn. 81 in the present work and Pestman, 'Inheriting', 61.

[44] Support arrangements for parents are preserved in *P. Hawara Lüddeckens 10* and *P. BM EA 10648 text D* – the latter states that it was made in response to the creation of a document of division (of inheritance). These texts imply that it was possible for Egyptian parents to retreat into some form of 'retirement'. See further, McDowell, 'Care of the Elderly', 210–212 for workmen in New Kingdom Deir el-Medina resigning in favour of their sons in return for receiving a stipend. For the institution of a 'staff of old age' for elderly officials, McDowell, 'Care of the Elderly', 201–203, 208–209 and H. Brunner, 'Stab des Alters', *LÄ* 5, 1224.

[45] M. T. Roth, 'Age at Marriage and the Household: A Study of Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian Forms', *CSSH* 29/4 (1987), 715–747. In this marriage pattern, women married for the first time between ages 14–20 while men married for the first time between ages 26–32 (737). It appeared among free urban Babylonians as well as dependent rural Assyrians (722–723).

[46] S. B. Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece: Representations and Realities* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 5–6, and D. Cohen, *Law, Sexuality, and Society: The Enforcement of Morals in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 169. Both works suggest that girls aged around 14 married men aged around 30. See also Roth, 'Age at Marriage', 737, fn. 58.

[47] P. Laslett, 'Family and Household as a work group and a kin group: Areas of traditional Europe compared', in R. Wall, J. Robin and P. Laslett (eds), *Family Forms in Historic Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), table 17.5, 526–527.

[48] For example, deviating from Roth's findings (fn. 45 above), Gehlken found a marriage pattern among temple craftsmen in Babylonian Sippar in which men seem to have married around age 20 or younger – see E. Gehlken, 'Childhood and youth, work

Reading through Egyptian archives from the Ptolemaic Period, and texts that inform us about family relations from earlier Egyptian periods, one rather gets the impression that both sons and daughters in propertied families generally married for the first time while their fathers were still alive. First marriage for men must then not have been too 'late'. An analysis of the very scant data on age differentials between spouses suggests that many Egyptian men married for the first time in their early- to mid twenties, while women married around five years earlier.[49] Consents given by fathers to the marriage documents of their eldest sons confirm that these sons certainly married while their fathers were still alive. The *Instructions of Onchsheshonqy* propose that men marry at age 20.[50]

The limited data from the end of the first millennium BCE in fact shows two main patterns of age distribution in marriage. In the first pattern, spouses are close in age or the same age, and women marry for the first time around the end of their teens or early twenties, while men marry in their early- to-mid twenties. In the second pattern, the husband is significantly older than his wife. The former pattern is somewhat more prevalent. Only in a small minority of cases is a wife older than her husband. As an explanation for these patterns, Sandra Lippert and Maren Schentuleit suggested that most men married for the first time around age 20–25, and women a few years earlier. Later in life, men around ages 35–45, at the peak of their careers, would take a wife who was significantly younger than them if they had lost or divorced their wife.[51]

In a family system in which patrilineal succession from father to son was strongly preferred, it is imperative that generations were not too 'long' to prevent sons from losing their fathers at a young age. This required that men did not delay their first marriage for too long. Losing a father in childhood in Egyptian society was highly problematic. A mother could not replace a father in education and socialisation, and the patrilineal inheritance and succession system did not encourage collateral male relatives to take over.

This problem is illustrated in a family of Memphite high priests who lived at the end of the Ptolemaic Period, although this family was certainly exceptional as they were part of the country's native top elite. In this family, two generations of young men succeeded to high office at an increasingly young

and old age in Babylonia – a statistical analysis', in H. D. Baker and M. Jursa (eds), *Approaching the Babylonian Economy: Proceedings of the START Project Symposium Held in Vienna, 1-3 July 2004* (Veröffentlichungen zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte Babyloniens im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr. Band 2. Alter Orient und Altes Testament. Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments Band 300 – Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2005), 102–103, 108.

[49] Sources familiar to the present writer that provide age data from which age differentials between spouses and between parents and children can be deduced are *P. Trophitis, P. Count 9, P. Mich II 121*, and *P. Dime 3*. Recorded ages come predominantly from Greek subscriptions to Demotic legal documents or from Greek summaries or abstracts of Demotic documents, and they are often rounded. *P. Count 9* is a Demotic household record that contains unrounded ages. Furthermore, the biographies of the family of high priests of Memphis contain references to birth, death and marriage dates - see E. A. E. Reymond, *From the Records of a Priestly Family from Memphis,* (*ÄA* 38 – Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz-Verlag, 1981); J. Quaegebeur, 'The Genealogy of the Memphite High Priest Family and the Hellenistic Period', in D. Crawford, J. Quaegebeur and W. Clarysse (eds), Studies on Ptolemaic Memphis, (Studia Hellenistica 24 – Louvain: Peeters, 1980), 43–81. Age is occasionally recorded in single legal documents, or it can be derived from context: e.g. from the archive of the Theban choachyte Horos it can be deduced that his eldest son was born when he was 24 years old, and this son had his first child at age 26, suggesting both men most likely married somewhat before they reached those ages – see Pestman, *P. Survey*, vol. 1, 9. All sources cited come from the Ptolemaic and early Roman periods, and age data from earlier periods of Egyptian history is lacking. There is nevertheless no reason to assume from the outset that age at first marriage would have been radically different in earlier periods of Egyptian history, when other family practices appear relatively constant.

[50] *Onchsheshonqy*, *col.* 11, *l.* 7: "Make for yourself a wife when you are 20 years old, that you may create a son while you are young" (*iw.iry n=k ḥm.t ir=k ʿḥʿ rnp.(t) 20.t ḫpr n=k šr ir=k ḫl*). The New Kingdom *Instruction of Ani* advises: "Make for yourself a wife while you are a youth (*(m) ʿḏd*), so she will conceive a son for you, who will be born to you while you are (still) young (*iw=k n rnn*) – see Quack, *Die Lehren des Ani*, B 16, *ll.* 1–2 and L 2, *ll.* 6–7. However, the text gives no target age. In another section of *Ani*, a man is told to marry when he is a youth or adolescent (*mnḥ*) – B 21, *l.* 1.

[51] *P. Dime* 3, *l.* 114.

age, apparently due to adverse demographic circumstances. The priest Psherenptah was born when his father was already 30 years old, lost his father when he was 13 years old, and was then appointed high priest at age 14. Psherenptah himself did not have a son until he was 44 years old, although he had a daughter at age 25. He died at age 49, when his son was 5. This son then 'succeeded' as high priest when he was only 7.[52]

4. Forms of paternal control

If we consider the dominant patrilineal Egyptian succession and inheritance system, in which (*a*) the eldest son as heir-successor must marry to perpetuate the family line and (*b*) the preference is to marry off (most) children during the lifetime of the father, it becomes highly likely that Egyptian fathers would attempt to control the first marriage of their sons, and especially that of the eldest son. The most effective way to do this was by pledging or withholding the property a son needed to establish his first marriage. In addition, a father could choose to keep his eldest son close through patrilocal residence after marriage.

5. Consent to marriage and financial support

Paternal control through pledging or withholding property can be seen in consent clauses added to Demotic marriage documents. A 'consent clause'[53] could be added to the body of a private legal document in which some form of property transfer took place. Consent clauses appear in sources from the Persian Period until the first century CE, in contracts of sale or donation, division of inheritance, marriage, etc. In a consent clause, people who are involved with *Party A*, the declarant party that makes out the document, are presented as verbally agreeing to the property transfer that is recorded in it.

These clauses were studied in-depth by Josef Partsch[54] who concluded that two forms existed. In the first form, a person who had a claim to property that was being transferred or pledged through a document agreed to the transfer. Through this agreement they ceded their rights and assured the receiving party that they would not instigate legal proceedings against them in the future. In the second form, the person who consented agreed to the document and the property transfer, but also declared outright (or was implied through social context) to be liable to help fulfil the obligations of *Party A*. Both forms of consent clause occur in the context of marriage documents and marital property.

The first form of consent as it appears in marriage documents is essentially a statement of no-title given by (ex)-wives or children of a man who had a claim on his property [examples 1–2]. This consent was often tied to a previously made marriage document consisting of clauses known specifically as a *sḫ-n-sʿnḫ* and a *sḫ-n-ḏbʾ-ḥḏ*, in which a husband's entire property was pledged as security for his financial obligations to the marriage. In the clause the consenters waive their rights to the property that their husband or father is pledging or transferring. When (former) wives consent, they may note explicitly that they derive their claims to the property from a previously made marriage document. When children consent, this is usually in the context of their father's remarriage: as a second marriage and the birth of half-siblings would essentially diminish their inheritance, it was prudent to have them consent to the pledging of part of the husband's estate to the new marriage to prevent conflict in the future. In both situations, the consenting parties acknowledge and waive their claims to the property being pledged or transferred only.[55]

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[52] Reymond, *Priestly Family,* stelae cat. 17, cat. 18, cat. 19, cat. 25, cat. 26.

[53] Also known as 'Beitrittserklärung' or 'assent clause'.

[54] K. H. Sethe and J. Partsch, *Demotische Urkunden zum ägyptischen Bürgschaftsrechte vorzüglich der Ptolemäerzeit* (*ASAW* 32 – Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1920), 683–763. See further Pestman, *Marriage*, 128–142, 158–160, and Allam, 'Obligations et la famille', 92–94.

[55] When eldest sons consented to a marriage document for their father's second (or later) marriage, they took on a limited liability, however: when a father had died, his eldest son was obliged to return his widow's marriage endowment to her (*P. Mattha recto*, 0530–0531).

This is not the case in consents of the second type. These were given by parents who consented to a marriage document in which their child was the declarant *Party A*, almost always the husband.[56]

In this type of consent clause, a parent does not only agree to the marriage document and to the pledging of property, but they also make themselves liable for their child's obligations. This liability is expressed in four consent clauses to marriage documents, two given by fathers of the husband, two by mothers [examples 4, 6].[57] At other times, the parents' liability is not explicitly mentioned [example 3]. A father may also acknowledge the inheritance rights his son derived from a marriage document that he had previously made for his mother [example 5].

Partsch argued that liability by the consenting party was only really confirmed when the term *ỉr ꜥš* (*lit.* 'do a calling, consent') was used, but suggested that when the consent clause included more than only the statement 'my heart is satisfied', some liability by the consenting party was implied.[58] I would argue that the acknowledgement of liability is implied in any consent given by a father (and possibly also by a widowed mother, if she retained a claim on her deceased husband's property), even when not written out explicitly,[59] due to how Egyptian families managed property and inheritance. In all marriage documents, husbands pledged certain properties to their wives. In marriage documents consisting of a *sḫ-n-sꜥnḫ*, or a *sḫ-n-ḏbꜣ-ḥḏ*, the husband pledged all that he owned and would acquire in the future as the security for his financial obligations to his wife. However, when a young man married and made a marriage document while his father was still alive, he was essentially pledging property that he hoped to one day inherit, but that was still under his father's control.[60] In some consent clauses, a father describes in some detail which share of his estate, or even exactly which properties, his son would inherit from him [example 5].[61]

In a small family archive from the Persian Period, another form of this type of consent can be seen.[62] In this family, a man made out a *sḫ-n-sꜥnḫ* marriage document on behalf of his (future) wife. Here, instead of adding a consent clause to his son's marriage document, this man's father made out a second document, also on the wife's behalf. The father's contract served to entail the future inheritance the husband hoped to receive, while at the same time expressing the father's agreement to the financial arrangement in the son's contract.[63] Janet Johnson considered that the father could have been helping to provide the support payments the wife was entitled to, until his son came into his own financially.[64]

There are limits to the information that can be derived from consent clauses, as they were seemingly not obligatory.[65] Thus we cannot draw the conclusion that when a marriage document contained a

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[56] As an exception, note *P. Saqqara EES S. H5-DP 486* – this is a marriage document in which the wife is contractual *Party A*, and her mother consents.

[57] Fathers: *P. Eheverträge 6Z*; *P. BM EA 10229*. Mothers: *P. Dime 3 39*; *P. Dem. Memphis 6*.

[58] Sethe and Partsch, *Demotische Urkunden zum ägyptischen Bürgschaftsrechte*, 748–751, 761–762, 696–697. Pestman, *Marriage*, 158–160.

[59] So also Pestman, *Marriage*, 159–160.

[60] J. H. Johnson, 'The Legal Status of Women in Ancient Egypt', in A. K. Capel and G. E. Markoe (eds), *Mistress of the House, Mistress of Heaven, Women in Ancient Egypt, catalogue accompanying the exhibit "Women in Ancient Egypt" organized by the Cincinnati Art Museum* (New York: Hudson Hills Press with Cincinnati Art Museum, 1997), 184.

[61] Compare also, for example, marriage document *P. Eheverträge 11D* (and see fn. 855) – this does not have a consent clause, and instead the husband describes "my share that will devolve up on me" (i.e. his inheritance share), which consists of an extensive list of properties.

[62] J. H. Johnson, '"Annuity Contracts" and Marriage', in D. P. Silverman (ed.), *For His Ka, Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer,* (*SAOC* 55 – Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1994), 113–132.

[63] Johnson, "Annuity Contracts", 123–124.

[64] Johnson, "Annuity Contracts", 123, fn. 43.

[65] There were different ways to include a form of third party consent or agreement in Demotic legal documents, and Egyptian scribes were quite flexible in their use: the type of consent in which a third party waives their claims to certain property could

consent clause by a father this means he was alive, and that when a consent clause was absent this means that the husband's father was deceased. This precludes a statistical analysis of how many men had living fathers based on marriage documents. In the about 150 marriage documents and fragments that are sufficiently preserved to determine if a consent clause was present, only 29 contain a consent clause.[66] The majority of consents are given by the husband's father: in eleven cases, he gives his consent on behalf of his eldest son.[67] Three times the husband's father consents on behalf of his 'son'.[68] In three clauses, the position of the son is unclear as the relevant passage is broken.[69] In addition, in two cessions of marriage documents, it is stated that these had originally been consented to by the husband's father and by both parents, respectively, but it is not stated if the husband was 'eldest son' or not.[70] Lastly, in Greek abstracts of Demotic marriage documents collected in *P. Trophitis*, eight consent clauses are recorded and in all cases the consenting party states that the husband is their 'eldest son'.[71] Consent by the husband's mother is given in three marriage documents, in two of which she consents for her 'eldest son'.[72] The husband's mother could give her consent for two reasons: either because the husband's father was deceased and she was temporarily in control of the family property, or because she had a claim on her son as his father's heir to provide her with financial support and whatever property she was entitled to deriving from her marriage and/or her marriage document, if one was made for her.

In the context of the relationship between Egyptian fathers and sons in propertied families, consent clauses offer some notable insights. The father's consent for the use of future inheritance by his (eldest) son solidified the son's claims to his inheritance share. Nonetheless, it also reflects the financial control a father had over a son's (first) marriage. If a father disagreed with his son's choice of partner, he could refuse to allow the pledging of future inheritance and other financial support, making it very difficult for a young man at the start of his career, with limited wealth of his own, to attract a good wife.

Through the creation of a marriage document in which a husband pledged certain payments and property to his wife, an outside party became involved in the passing of property down the family line, and the father became liable to pay for his heir if he did or could not. This made a father's involvement in marriage arrangements imperative. It is then not surprising to find that most fathers are consenting on behalf of their eldest sons, as this marriage was of importance for the entire family.

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be performed in at least four different ways, as shown in Pestman, *Marriage*, 131 and M. Depauw, 'Autograph confirmation in Demotic private contracts', *CdÉ* 78 (2003), 67–68.

[66] Consent by fathers: *P. Eheverträge 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 33, 35, 6Z*; *P. BM EA 10229*; *P. Köln 15 635*; *P. Nationalbibliothek D 10099 a-b*; *P. Sorbonne Institut de Papyrologie 1447*; *P. Hawara OI 1*; *P. Hawara Lüddeckens 8bis*, *12* and *15*; Egyptian Museum TR 24/11/62/1 [unpublished]. Consent by mothers: *P. Dime 3 39*; *P. Dem. Memphis 6*; *P. Saqqara EES S. H5-DP 486*; *P. Nationalbibliothek D 10099 a-b*. Consent by the eldest son of the husband: *P. Eheverträge 5D*. Consent by the daughter of the husband: *P. Eheverträge 9 D/Z*. Consent by a previous wife of the husband(?): *P. Hawara Lüddeckens 1*; *P. Ashmolean Museum 1968-07 [A-B] + Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 1968-08 [A-B] + 1968-11 [A-B]*. Consent by a brother of the husband(?): *Denkmäler II CG 31207*. Clauses too broken to tell who is consenting: *P. Köln 15 638*; *P. Köln 15 636*; *P. Ägyptisches Museum P. 23506* [unpublished]; *P. BM EA 10990 [11]* [unpublished]; *P. Heidelberg 737 b + 751 b + 797 d* (*n. b.* the edition does not read a consent clause in this text, I read the beginning of one in *l.* x+3). In a collection of Greek abstracts of Demotic marriage documents (*P. Trophitis*), consent clauses appear in eight abstracts and are absent in sixteen. In all consents, the husband is the 'eldest son' of the consenting party. At least four consents were issued by fathers, two by mothers, two are unclear. For a transcription of the clause used in this document, see D. G. Herring, *P. Trophitis: New Ptolemaic Papyri Relating to Egyptian Alimentary and Sale Contracts. Greek Abstracts from a 'Kibotos' Archive Edited and Analyzed* (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1989), 9–10, *l.* 5, 190.

[67] *P. Eheverträge 17, 20, 22, 33, 35, 6Z*; *P. Hawara OI 1*; *P. Hawara Lüddeckens 8bis, 12, 15*; *P. Nationalbibliothek D 10099 a–b*. See also *P. Trophitis* in fn. 66, above.

[68] *P. Eheverträge 21*; *P. BM EA 10229*; *Egyptian Museum TR 24/11/62/1* [unpublished].

[69] *P. Eheverträge 24*; *P. Köln 15 635*; *P. Sorbonne Institut de Papyrologie 1447*.

[70] Consented to by the husband's father: *P. Hawara Lüddeckens 18*, and by both parents: *P. Hawara Lüddeckens 13*.

[71] See fn. 66, above.

[72] 'Eldest son': *P. Dem. Memphis 6*; *P. Nationalbibliothek D 10099 a–b*; 'son': *P. Dime 3 39*.

6. Patrilocal residence after marriage

Another way fathers could assert control over their eldest son was by keeping him physically close through patrilocal residence after marriage. Evidence for patrilocal residence in wealthy families comes from settlements in the Middle Kingdom, the New Kingdom, and the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE suggesting this practice was not foreign to Egyptian society, although how common it may have been is unknown.

Kate Spence has noted that in larger residential establishments in Amarna it was common to find a second house within the enclosure wall that was smaller than the 'main house' from which the whole establishment was controlled. The second largest house may have belonged to "a deputy of the head of household, perhaps often his eldest son" in a nested or subsidiary household connected to the main household.[73] In a type of large walled estate in Middle Kingdom El-Lahun, the private quarters of the main house were connected to the second-biggest house on the estate through a door.[74] This second house likely belonged to the eldest son and his family, until he was ready to take over his father's household.[75] In Ptolemaic household and tax records from the 3rd and 2nd century BCE,[76] most recorded Egyptian households were nuclear in form (consisting of one married couple and unmarried children), but the dominant form of 'extension' of households was vertical. This was often due to a mother cohabiting with her son and his wife after the death of her husband, the previous head. Conversely, some single fathers headed households and cohabited with their adult (married) children. Households that contained more than one married couple were predominantly formed by a parental couple and a married son.[77]

In the household registers from Deir el-Medina, known as the 'Stato Civile', cohabitation of fathers and a married son does not commonly occur. Households recorded most often contain one married couple (with additional unmarried relatives) or no married couple (single men). A single example of a household with two married couples consisted of the head and his wife cohabiting with their married son and an unmarried daughter.[78]

However, in Deir el-Medina inhabiting a village house was directly connected to having an official employment position, which may have dictated the shape of households regardless of family preferences.

Although this limited evidence should not be extrapolated to all Egyptian families at all times, these examples suggest that propertied Egyptian fathers at least in some places would keep their heir-successor close, and presumably under their authority, through physical proximity.

7. Synthesis

A number of Egyptian family strategies, namely how families managed property, succession and inheritance practices, and a preference for marriage during the lifetime of the father, granted a father

[73] Spence, 'Ancient Egyptian Houses', 85, and fig. 4.4.

[74] M. Bietak, 'Zum Raumprogramm ägyptischer Wohnhäuser des Mittleren und des Neuen Reiches', in M. Bietak (ed.), *Haus und Palast im Alten Ägypten. Internationales Symposium 8. bis 11. April 1992 in Kairo* (*DGÖeAW* 14 – Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996), 34 and fig. 12, 'Kahun housetype 1'. In Bietak's 'Kahun housetype 2', there was no direct connection between the two largest houses on the estate, but the secondary house was 'especially shielded', and only accessible through the courtyard of the main house – Bietak, 'Zum Raumprogramm', 35.

[75] Fn. 74 above, and also H. Willems, 'Family life in the Hereafter according to Coffin Text Spells 131–146: A Study in the Structure of Ancient Egyptian Domestic Groups', in R. Nyord and K. Ryholt (eds), *Lotus and Laurel: Studies on Egyptian Language and Religion in Honour of Paul John Frandsen* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2015), 468.

[76] W. Clarysse and D. J. Thompson, *Counting the people in Hellenistic Egypt. Vol. 1: Population registers, Vol. 2: Historical Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[77] Clarysse and Thompson, *Counting the People*, 253–254; 259; 296; 315 (*P. Count 2*).

[78] R. J. Demarée and D. Valbelle, *Les registres de recensement du village de Deir el-Médineh (Le "Stato Civile")* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 56–57, SC 20 a. Men seem to usually marry only after receiving an official appointment – Demarée and Valbelle, *Le "Stato Civile"*, 74.

and head-of-household a high level of effective control over his male heirs. This subordinate position of sons in early life is, however, not really expressed in marriage documents or other documentary sources.[79] A father's control may have been further reinforced by the limited options for young men from wealthier families to find good employment outside of the family's sphere of influence.[80] Unless a youth was willing to risk being disinherited and having to build a life for himself independently, there would have been few options open to him other than to obey his father and to follow the marriage and family strategies set out by him.

How strictly a father's control manifested itself may have depended on one's position in the family hierarchy.[81] As junior sons, like daughters, apparently left the parental household at marriage, perhaps a father would exert less control over them and their first marriages. Yet junior sons too would have derived much of their wealth in early life from their father. Egyptian family ideology tends to portray the relationship between a father and his eldest son as harmonious and as one of cooperation, father and son working together, with the son succeeding his father and honouring him in life and after death. However, under a family system in which patrilineal heirship and succession was strongly preferred and the head of the family controlled the family's wealth as well as the professional training of his sons, with an ability to disinherit disobeying heirs, authority and social control was in reality placed almost fully in the hands of the father while his offspring was still starting out in life. As an eldest son progressed through his own life course and gained wealth and a family himself, while his father aged, it is likely that this relationship transformed into one that was more balanced. Whether this relationship was considered stifling or reassuring by the young heir apparent remains unknown.

Appendix: Examples of consent clauses

Example 1 – A wife consents to her husband's donation of inheritance:

ỉw s.ḥm.t Šꜣʿ-ḫpry (...) ḏd šp pꜣ sḫ (n) ḏr.ṯ (...) Ḥr (...) pꜣy(=y) hy nty ḥry r dỉ.t ỉr=f r-ḫ md nb nty ḥry ḥꜣ.ṯ=y mtry.w n-ỉm=w ỉwṯy sḫ nb

While the woman *Šꜣʿ-ḫpry* (...) says: "Receive the document (from) the hand of (...) *Ḥr* (...) my husband, abovementioned, to cause that he act according to every word that is above. My heart is satisfied with them, without any obstruction". (*P. Berlin 3100 recto, ll.* 16–17 = *P. Survey 35*, Thebes, 124 BCE).

Example 2 – A son consents to his father's marriage document:

šr ꜥꜣ n s.ḥm.t n sʿnḫ (...) ʿḥʿ ỉw=f ḏd šp pꜣ sḫ n ḏr.ṯ (...) Pꜣ-dỉ-Itm (...) pꜣy(=y) ỉt.ṯ nty ḥry my ỉr=f r-ḫ md nb nty ḥry ḥꜣ.ṯ=y mtry.w n-ỉm=w

The eldest son of a *sʿnḫ*-woman (...) is present, saying: "Receive the document from the hand of (...) *Pꜣ-dỉ-Itm* (...), my father, abovementioned. Cause that he act according to every word that is above. My heart is satisfied with them". (*P. Eheverträge 5D, ll.* 8–10, Asyut, 181 BCE).

[79] On how legal documents reflect reality, see P. W. Pestman, 'Appearance and Reality in Written Contracts: Evidence from Bilingual Family Archives', in M. J. Geller, H. Maehler and A. D. E. Lewis (eds), *Legal Documents of the Hellenistic World: Papers from a Seminar arranged by the Institute of Classical Studies, the Institute of Jewish Studies and the Warburg Institute, University of London, February to May 1986* (London: Warburg Institute; Institute of Jewish Studies, 1995), 79–87.

[80] *P. Survey 31A–B* (two copies of the same text, *P. BM EA 10413* and *P. Leiden I 375*) is a cession by a man called Harpocrates, who was bought out of the property and business of his choachyte family because he had become a soldier. Likewise, in *P. Moscow 123*, a son is bought out of his share of his father's land, but it is not made clear why. Whether the 'buying out' of junior sons was common in Egyptian families remains unclear.

[81] Johnson, 'Legal Status', 184–185.

Example 3 – Consents by fathers to their sons’ marriage documents:

ỉw (...) ꜥnḫ-Ḥp ḏd.ṯ n=f P3y-dỉ-Wsỉr (...) p3y=f ỉt ḏd šp (...) ꜥnḫ-mr-wr p3y(=y) šr ꜥ (...) r dỉ.t ỉr=f n=ṯ n p3 sḫ n sꜥnḫ nty ḥry mtw=f ỉr n=t p3y=f hp ỉw=f ḏd ꜥn ỉw.ỉr md nb nty ḥry ḥ3.ṯ=y mtry.w n-ỉm=w

While (...) *ꜥnḫ-Ḥp* who is called *P3y-dỉ-Wsỉr* (...) his father, says: “Receive (...) *ꜥnḫ-mr-wr*, my eldest son (...) to cause that he act for you (according) to the document of *sꜥnḫ* that is above, and that he will execute its law for you.” He says, again: “Do every word that is above. My heart is satisfied with them.” (*P. Hawara OI 1 recto, ll.* 3–4, Hawara, 365 BCE).

ỉw ỉry-ꜥ (...) P3-nfr (...) p3y=f ỉt.ṯ ḏd šp sḫ n ḏr.ṯ P3-ḫṯ s3 P3-nfr p3y(=y) šr ꜥ nty ḥry r dỉ.t ỉr=f r-ḫ md nb nty ḥry ḥ3.ṯ=y mtry.w n-ỉm=w ỉwṯ ḏd qnb.t nb md nb p3 t3 ỉrm=t

While the doorkeeper (...) *P3-nfr* (...) his father, says: “Receive (the) document from the hand of *P3-ḫṯ*, son of *P3-nfr*, my eldest son, who is above, to cause that he act according to every word that is above. My heart is satisfied with them, without disputing any legal document (or) any claim on earth with you.” (*P. Eheverträge 20 recto, ll.* 4–5, Thebes, 223 BCE).

ỉw (...) Šp-mnw (...) p3y=f ỉt.ṯ ꜥḥꜥ ḏd šp p3 sḫ ḥm.t ꜥq-ḥbs n ḥḏ 20 nty ḥry n ḏr.ṯ (...) Iy-m-ḥtp (...) p3y=y šr ꜥ nty ḥry r dỉ.t ỉr=f r-ḫ md nb nty ḥry ḥ3.ṯ=y mtry.w n-ỉm=w

While (...) *Šp-mnw* (...) his father, is present, saying: “Receive the document of wife (and) food-and-clothing of 20 silver (deben) that is above, from the hand (of) (...) *Iy-m-ḥtp* (...) my eldest son, who is above, to cause that he act according to every word that is above. My heart is satisfied with them.” (*P. Eheverträge 17 recto, l.* 3, Akhmim, 230 BCE).

Example 4 – Consent with the father’s liability expressed:

r (...) Ḥr-wḏ3 (...) ḏd ỉw.ỉr(y) md nb nty ḥry ḥ3.ṯ=y mtry.w n-ỉm=w šp p3 sḫ (nty) ḥry n ḏr.ṯ (...) p3y(=y) šr nty ḥ[ry m]y ỉr=f [n]=t r-ḫ md nb nty ḥry p3 nty ỉw bn ỉw=f ỉr=f n=t n-ỉm=w ỉw=y ỉr=f n=t ḫn hrw-5 m-s3 p3 hrw-30 nty ḥry n ḥtr.ṯ [ỉwṯ] mn

While (...) *Ḥr-wḏ3* (...), says: “Do every word that is above, my heart is satisfied with them. Receive the document (that is) above from the hand (of) (...) my son, a[bov]ementioned. [Ca]use that he act [for] you according to every word that is above. That which he will not do for you regarding them, I will do it for you within 5 days after the 30 days[82] that are above – compulsorily, [without] delay.” (*P. BM EA 10229 recto, ll.* 11–14, Memphis, 78 BCE).

Example 5 – A father’s consent that describes future inheritance in more detail:

ỉw ḫtm.w wyt [Qll... p3y=f ỉt.ṯ ḏd P3-ms]ḥ p3y(=y) šr ꜥ[3 nty ḥry p3 n]b t3 dnỉ.t [pšy p3y(=y)] ꜥ.wy (...) t3 dnỉ.t pšy p3y(=y) ḫtm (...) ḥnꜥ t3 dnỉ.t pšy p3y=f ỉnḥ (...) ḥnꜥ t3 dnỉ.t pšy n t3y(=y) dnỉ.t 1/3 1/15 p3 ꜥ.wy nty ḫrḫr (...) ḥnꜥ t3 dnỉ.t 1/2 1/10 nty ỉr dnỉ.t 3.t ḫn 5.t n t3y(=y) dnỉ.t 1/3 1/15 p3 sꜥnḫ ḫtm.w wyt (...) ḥnꜥ t3 dnỉ.t 1/2 1/10 n t3y(=y) dnỉ.t 1/3 1/15 (...) ḥnꜥ t[3]y=ỉ dnỉ.t 1/2 1/10 p3y=w ꜥq n3y=w ỉwf.w p3y=w ỉrp p3y=w ḥbs p3y=w mtḥy p3y=w ꜥwꜥy nty nb nk.t nb nty ỉw=w dỉ.t st rn=w

(...)

[ḥ3.ṯ=y] mtry.w n-ỉm=w ỉw=f m[-s3=y p3 h]p p3 sḫ sꜥnḫ r.ỉr=y n s.ḥm.t Ta-nꜥy t3y=f mw.t r ỉr n=f p3y=f hp mtw=y ỉr p3 hp (n) p3 ꜥš nty ḥry

[82] Earlier in this text it is recorded that if the husband divorced his wife or if she left, he would return the value of her marriage payment within 30 days. His father now pledges to do this himself, if his son fails to do so.

While the sealbearer and embalmer [*Qll*... his father, says: "... *Pȝ-ms*]*ḥ* my el[dest] son [abovementioned, the ow]ner (of) the [half]-share [of my] house (...) the half-share of my enclosure (...) and the half-share of its courtyard (...) and the half share of my 1/3 1/15 share of the house that is dilapidated (...) and the 1/2 1/10 share, which makes 3 shares out of 5, of my 1/3 1/15 share of the endowment of a sealbearer and embalmer (...) and the 1/2 1/10 share of my 1/3 1/15 share (...) and [m]y 1/2 1/10 share of their bread, their meat, their wine, their clothes, their oil, their embalming-linen(?), and everything that is given in their name.

(...)

[My heart] is satisfied with them. While he (i.e. *Pȝ-msḥ*) [has a claim on me (through) the l]aw (of) the document of *sʿnḫ* that I made for the woman *Ta-nʿy*, his mother, to execute for him its law. And I will perform the law (of) the consent, that is above." (*P. Hawara Lüddeckens 12 recto, ll.* 3–6, Hawara, 100 BCE).

[pȝy=f] ỉt.ṯ ʿḥʿ ỉw=f ḏd sḫ ỉry r-ḫ md nb nty ḥry ḥȝ.ṯ=y mtry.w n-ỉm=w šp pȝ sḫ sʿnḫ (...) n ḏr.ṯ Pȝ-šr-ỉw.ỉr-ʿȝ (...) pȝy(=y) šr pȝ nb tȝ dnỉ.t 2.t n 5.t n nk.t nb mtw=y ḥnʿ nȝ nty ỉw=y dỉ.t ḫpr=w my ỉr=f pȝy=f hp my ỉr=f [r]-ḫ md nb nty ḥry ḥȝ.ṯ=y [mtr.w n-ỉm=w]

[His] father is present and he says: "Write and act according to every word that is above. My heart is satisfied with them. Receive the document of *sʿnḫ* (...) from the hand of *Pȝ-šr-ỉw.ỉr-ʿȝ* (...), my son, the owner of the 2 out of 5 shares of everything that is mine, together with the things that I will cause to come into being. Cause that he executes its laws, cause that he act [ac]cording to every word that is above. My heart [is satisfied with them]." (*P. Nationalbibliothek D 10099a recto, ll.* 5–6, Dime, 142 BCE).

Example 6 – An extensive consent clause to a receipt of dowry, in which a father states that he had previously consented to the marriage document of his son, now consents to the receipt of dowry, and is liable to help his son execute both contracts:

ỉw [... pȝy=f] ỉt.ṯ ʿḥʿ ḏd sḫ ỉw.ỉry md nb nty ḥry ḥ[ȝ.ṯ=y mtry].w [n-ỉm]=w š[p pȝ] sḫ nty ḥry n ḏr[.ṯ Pȝ-dỉ-Ist pȝy(=y) šr ʿȝ...] my ỉr=f r-ḫ [md nb] nty ḥry ḥȝ.ṯ=y mtry.w n-ỉm=w ỉw=y ỉr pȝ ʿš nty ḥry ỉw=t m-sȝ=y ʿn pȝ hp pȝ ʿš r.ỉr=y n=t ḥr pȝ sḫ sʿnḫ (...) r.ỉr n=t Pȝ-dỉ-Ist pȝy=(y) šr ʿȝ (...) pȝ bnr pȝ hp pȝ ʿš nty ḥry ỉw mḥ ʿš-2 mtw=y ỉr n=t pȝy=w hp

While [... his] father is present, saying: "Write and do every word that is above. My he[art is satisfied with th]em. Re[ceive the] abovementioned document from the han[d of *Pȝ-dỉ-Ist*, my eldest son...] Cause that he act according to [every word] that is above. My heart is satisfied with them. I will do the consent that is above, while you (i.e. the son's wife) have a claim on me again (through) the law (of) the consent that I have done for you about the document of *sʿnḫ* (...) that *Pȝ-dỉ-Ist* my eldest son made for you (...) aside from the law of the consent that is above, to complete 2 consents. And I will execute their laws for you." (*P. Eheverträge 6Z recto, ll.* 15–19, Arsinoite nome, 153 BCE).

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VII.
The Language of Compulsion and Control

15
Words That Bind: Earlier Egyptian Language of Compulsion and Control

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Abstract

The present paper provides an overview of the linguistic expression of compulsion in earlier (Old and Middle) Egyptian. It is shown that modal meanings such as deontic possibility ('may') and necessity ('must') that fall under this wider heading were not strongly grammaticalised and that pragmatics played a notable role in conveying them. This, however, was largely the case in the affirmative, whereas in the negative the level of grammaticalisation of modality in the expression of compulsion was considerably higher. This unusual feature once again underscores the value of Egyptian as a resource for cross-linguistic and typological studies.

Keywords: Compulsive illocution; Deontic modality; Earlier Egyptian; Negation; Subjunctive

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide a brief overview of the linguistic expression of compulsion and control in ancient Egypt, with a focus on the Earlier (Old and Middle) Egyptian language phase.[1] Linguistic 'compulsion and control' may be understood to be largely tantamount to what Givón has termed "extended manipulation", i.e. an attempt by language users to impose their will (typically but not exclusively) on others and thereby to direct them, through words, into adopting some desired course of action.[2] Conceived in this way, linguistic compulsion and control excludes such prototypically implicative, non-linguistic notions as (successful) causation and prevention,[3] but includes all kinds of hortative, jussive, injunctive, and generally directive speech acts that fall within the category of deontic modality and contain an element of the speaker's will.[4] The notional basis of the phenomenon thus

[1] The glosses used in the examples are mostly those in C. Di Biase-Dyson, F. Kammerzell and D. Werning, 'Glossing Ancient Egyptian: Suggestions for adapting the Leipzig Glossing Rules', *Lingua Aegyptia* 17 (2009), 343–366 but note the following: GEM = 'geminating'; NC = 'negatival complement'; PPA = 'participle, perfective active'; Q = 'question particle'; RLT = 'relational' (*nisbe*). 'Particle' is PTC, not PTCL; 'stative' is STA, not STAT; 'subjunctive' is SUB, not SBJV.

[2] T. Givón, *Syntax*. 2 vols (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins, 2000), vol. I, 316–321; vol. II, 44.

[3] For Earlier Egyptian, see most recently S. Štubňová, 'Where syntax and semantics meet: A typological investigation of Old Egyptian causatives', *Lingua Aegyptia* 27 (2019). For some recent remarks on the interplay of causation/prevention and positive vs. negative implicative in Earlier Egyptian *rdi*-causatives, see S. Uljas, 'Iconicity and semantic-structural mapping in Earlier Egyptian complementation', *Lingua Aegyptia* 29 (2021), 221–223.

[4] Since the late 1980s, the category 'deontic' has in linguistic studies often been split between the larger categories 'agent-oriented' and 'speaker-oriented' modality – see J. Bybee, *Morphology: A Study of the Relation between Meaning and Form* (Typological Studies in Language 9 – Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1985), 166–169; J. Bybee, R. Perkins and W. Pagliuca, *The Evolution of Grammar: Tense, Aspect, and Modality in the Languages of the World* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 176–179, 181–195. 'Agent-oriented' encompasses not only 'will-based' modalities such as desire and obligation, but all meanings that predicate 'conditions on an agent', including also ability, permission, and intention. 'Speaker-oriented' modalities are mostly directive and include commands, demands, prohibitions, etc. This rearrangement is motivated by the observation that 'agent-oriented' meanings are but rarely expressed by specialised inflectional mood as well as the cross-

seems reasonably clear, but its transfer to linguistic categories and particularly its grammaticalisation are considerably less so. Very broadly, the main typological division in the expression of modal notions is that between languages using primarily inflectional mood versus ones preferring lexical and periphrastic (auxiliary) means. Modern English is a classic example of a language with a modal system based almost entirely on auxiliaries whereas, for instance, Spanish largely displays a contrast between indicative and subjunctive mood. However, English modal verbs such as *may* and *must* are not specialised for the expression of deontic modality alone, and the Spanish subjunctive is seldom used for that purpose but is much more commonly associated with other types of non-assertive speech acts such as doubt, disbelief, presupposition, and so forth:[5]

We must have met before!	Dudo que sea (SUB) verdad – "I doubt whether it's true"
This may be 2012 Bollinger	Es falso que existan (SUB) las hadas – "It's not true that fairies exist"
	Siento mucho que pienses (SUB) eso – "I'm really sorry you think so"

2. Use of the subjunctive

Typologically, Earlier Egyptian resembles Spanish in that it too possessed a special modally marked inflectional mood known as the subjunctive *sḏm-f*. It is now well-nigh certain that the subjunctive represented a distinct verb form that was inflected regularly and in the same way of all roots in the lexicon and that was *marked* for a well-delineated function through its morphology (stress on the final syllable) which differed from all other forms of the *sḏm-f*.[6] The function associated with the subjunctive, which remained the sole modal type of *sḏm-f* after the disappearance of the so-called 'prospective' paradigm,[7] was the same as with subjunctive forms the world over – namely non-assertion. Consequently, when used initially, it could express various kinds of jussive, hortative, and generally directive, obligative, and 'compulsive' deontic speech acts:

(1a) Having failed to discover a divine secret, King Khufu ordered his son to fetch a magician whom the latter had said to possess the desired information:

ḏs-k=ỉrf	*Ḥrddf*	*sꜣ-ỉ*	*int{w}-k=n-ỉ=sw*
self-2MS=PTC	NN	son-1S	bring.SUB-2MS=to-1S=3MS

'So, my son Hardedef – you must bring him to me yourself!' (*P. Westcar* 7, 8–9)

(1b) Words of a field-worker to his beast in a threshing-scene:

mꜣ-k	*ỉr-t-k*
see.SUB-2MS	do.REL.FUT-F-2MS

See what you are about to do! (Erman, *Reden und Rufe*, 26)

linguistically well-documented diachronic development of some deontic expressions into epistemic notions and of others into futures. These issues are, however, largely immaterial to the present discussion.

[5] Spanish examples from J. Butt and C. Benjamin, *A New Reference Grammar of Modern Spanish* (London: Routledge, 2013 – 5th edn), 254, 257, 258.

[6] See most recently A. Stauder, 'Interpreting written morphology: The sḏm.n=f in the Pyramid Texts', JNES 73/2 (2014), 262; S. Uljas, 'To see an invisible form. Parallels, paradigms, and practises once again', in J. P. Allen, M. Collier and A. Stauder (eds), Coping with Obscurity: The Brown Workshop on Earlier Egyptian Grammar (Wilbour Studies in Egyptology and Assyriology 4 – Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2016), 99–100; S. Uljas, 'The so-called prothetic *ỉ*- and the Earlier Egyptian sḏm-f paradigm(s)', Lingua Aegyptia 27 (2019), 221. If a self-quote be allowed, 'It is not rare in Egyptological linguistics to label the subjunctive a "marked" form, but the precise meaning intended is seldom made clear. The "markedness" of the subjunctive lies in its formal-functional characteristics: it has a single "subjunctive" function that matches a single final-stress form' (Uljas, 'prothetic *ỉ*-', 222).

[7] For reasons of space, the vexed question of the interrelationship between the subjunctive and the prospective (which, even more confusingly, denote more or less the same thing in many particularly earlier studies) will not be discussed here at length. Suffice it to say that the latter appears also to have been associated with non-assertive function(s), but its status as a distinct morphological (rather than merely functional) entity is unclear.

(1c) Having given him the kingship over all the land, Amun says to the king:

nsy-k=sw	*mi̯-wn-i̯*	*m-nswbi̯t(y)*
rule.SUB-2MS=3MS	like-AUX-1S	as-dual.king

Rule over it as if I were the dual king. (*Urk.* IV, 1675, 18)

Nevertheless, and in keeping with its peers in other languages, the subjunctive *sḏm-f* appeared also in other non-assertive or -indicative environments. These included, for instance, final clauses and causative constructions (2a–b below) where the form did not express any directive illocutionary force, and even in initial use the subjunctive quite often expressed wishes, promises, and various other types of non-assertive illocution of which only some are modally deontic and none are particularly 'compulsive' (2c–d):

(2a) A strange act by the deceased towards a divinity:

i̯w	*psg-n*	*NN=pn*	*ḥr-sm͗=pn*	*n(y)-tm*	*qb-f*
AUX	spit-PST	NN=DEM.M	on-brow=DEM.M	of[-M]-NN	cool.SUB-3MS

This NN has spat on this brow of Atum so that it may be cool. (*CT* VI, 224m)

(2b) The author of a letter informs his superior of measures taken to evaluate some fish:

i̯w	*rdi̯-n*	*bi͗k-i̯m*	*i̯wt*	*it͗*	*ḥr-s*
AUX	cause-PST	servant-there	come.SUB	NN	on-3FS

Yours truly has sent Ita concerning it. (*P. UC 32205*, 19)

(2c) The author begins his letter

i̯ry=n-k	*ḥršf*	*nb*	*nnnsw*	*i̯b-k*
do.SUB=to-2MS	NN	lord	NN	heart-2MS

May Herishef, Lord of Herakleopolis, realise your wish(es)! (*P. UC* 32206, 1–3)

(2d) The shipwrecked sailor prepares to leave the phantom island; the snake wishes him goodbye:

snb-t(i)	*spsn*	*nḏs*	*r-pr-k*	*m͗-k*	*ḫrd-w-k*
healthy-STA	twice	commoner	to-house-2MS	see.SUB	child-PL-2MS

Farewell, farewell little man to your home; you will see your children. (*Shipwrecked Sailor*, 158–159)

That is, the deontic and 'compulsive' nuances of the Earlier Egyptian subjunctive were a function of a certain (initial) syntactic use thereof, but they were only one part of its complete functional profile. The 'compulsive' meaning was not a 'marked' feature of the subjunctive, even if the form was indeed marked for modality.[8]

3. Use of the geminating *sḏm-f*

Something similar may perhaps be said also of the geminating *sḏm-f*, but here one is on much less secure grounds. As has been often noted, in initial use the said form is often interpretable as expressing an injunction or obligation (3a–b below), but this is by no means always so (3c–e):

(3a) Having passed a decree of exemption to a certain temple, the king orders the receiving official:

i̯rr-k	*ḫ-t*	*ḫft*
do.GEM-2MS	thing-F	accordingly

You are to carry out the task accordingly. (*Urk.* I 283, 7)

[8] Thus *contra* for instance A. Loprieno, 'Focus, mood and negative forms: Middle Egyptian syntactic paradigms and diachrony', *Lingua Aegyptia* 1 (1991), 210–217 who interpreted the subjunctive "originally" as a "mood of command" that later became a purely "syntactic mood", or T. Ritter, *Das Verbalsystem der königlichen und privaten Inschriften XVIII. Dynastie bis einschließlich Amenophis III* (Göttinger Orientforschungen IV/30 – Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1995), 174 who viewed the subjunctive as universally deontic in character.

(3b) Heqanakhte instructs his deputy on the cultivation of a certain field-plot:

irr-k=grt	*pꜣ-š*	*m-it*	*mḥ*	*m=iri*	*bty*	*im*
do.GEM-2MS=PTC	DEF.M-field	in-barley	full	NEG.AUX.SOW.NC	emmer	there

Cultivate the field with full barley – do not sow emmer there. (*Heqanakhte* I *verso*, 11)

(3c) Title of the CT spell 352:

ḫpp	*s*	*m-imꜣḫy*	*ḫr-nṯr*
depart.GEM	man	as-honoured	before-god

Man departs honoured before the god. (*CT* IV, 390a)

(3d) The Appeal of the Living of Ipepi begins:

mrr=ṯn	*nṯr-w=ṯn*	*nw-t-w*	*di=ṯn*	*ḫr*	*n(-y)-ḥn-w=ṯn*
love=2P	god-PL=2P	town-F-RLT	give.SUB=2P	bottom	of[-M]-vessel-PL=2P

As you love your local gods, may you give (from) the bottom of your vessels. (*Brooklyn 57.140*, b)

(3e) Kaiemtjennet tells how the king noted his strength in rowing, uttering:

[ṯwt]=is	*wr*	*pḥ-t*	*irr-k*	*ḫ-t*	*r-pḥ-t*	*ḫꜣ*
2MS=PTC	great	strength-F	do-2MS	thing-F	to-strong-F	1000

[You] are truly one great of strength. You achieve more than a thousand strongmen!' (*Urk.* I 182, 5–6)

This suggests that 'compulsive' and other deontic nuances of the geminating *sḏm-f* were merely a contextual implication that could arise in appropriate circumstances, such as when second person subjects were addressed, when the situation referred to was currently non-realised or the co-text contained other orders to the same addressee, and so forth. What allowed such an implication is, however, another issue. With initial subjunctives, the appearance of similar meaning is easy to understand because deontic modality befits the form's general non-assertive profile. By contrast, there are serious problems with trying to pin down the illocutionary or modal character of the geminating *sḏm-f*, and it is not even known whether the form was inflected equally of all root-classes in the lexicon.[9]

4. Use of the 'hortative' stative

A further pattern that could occasionally be used to express injunctions and exhortations was the bare second (rarely third) person 'hortative' stative:[10]

(4a) The deceased is told:

ḫʿ-t(i)	*m-sbꜣ*	*wʿty*	...	*rs-t(i)*	*ḥr-ḫꜣ-t-k*
appear-STA	as-star	lone	...	be.awake-STA	on-corpse-F-2MS

Arise as the Lone Star... be watchful of your corpse! (*CT* I, 182a–c/B10C[b])

(4b) The deceased says to his father:[11]

siꜣ-tiꜣ=rk	*r-iꜣ-w-t*	*pw*
go-STA=PTC	to-mound-PL-F	NN

Be gone to the mounds of Pe! (*CT* I, 276g–77a/T2C)

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[9] Again, this eternal question is best left aside for now. The problem is, in principle, that of trying to deduce whether strong roots such as *sḏm* reduplicated, for instance, the penultimate radical without a medial vowel or whether 'geminating' forms of reduplicating roots such as *qbb-f* were or were not syncretic with identically written forms in other paradigms.

[10] A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1957 – 3rd edn), 239, §313; see also J. Borghouts, 'On certain uses of the stative', *Lingua Aegyptia* 9 (2001), 11–35.

[11] Written thus in all variants except *T9C*, which has the imperative *is=rk*.

However, the stative did, of course, have a range of other uses as well, and the 'hortative' employment was merely one among them.[12] Moreover, even in this use the illocutionary force was not always 'compulsive'.[13] Indeed, the only Earlier Egyptian affirmative verb form exclusively used to communicate 'compulsive' meaning was the imperative:

(5a) The peasant exhorts the high steward:

ḏd	*mꜣᶜ-t*	*irỉ*	*mꜣᶜ-t*
say.IMP	right-F	do.IMP	right-F

Speak righteousness, perform righteousness! (*Eloquent Peasant* B1, 351)

(5b) Reddjedet orders her maidservant to take some of the singers' barley in the pantry:

hꜣ	*ỉn*	*ỉm-f*
descend.IMP	bring.IM	in-3MS

Go down and bring (some) of it! (*P. Westcar* 11, 25)

(5c) Having told his fantastic tale, the shipwrecked sailor turns to the captain:

mꜣ=wi
see.IMP=1S
See me (now). (*Shipwrecked Sailor*, 179)

5. Use of the imperative

As a verbal expression used only for performative deontic speech acts that make a direct appeal to a hearer or hearers to fulfil a desire by the speaker,[14] the imperative is without question an archetypal example of expressing linguistic compulsion. That, however, is not to say that it was marked for such function in Earlier Egyptian or generally. There are languages that integrate the imperative fully or partly into their system of grammaticalised modality,[15] but usually the imperative is completely unmarked. And so it was also in Earlier Egyptian, where the imperative is simply the shortest form of the verbal root bereft of any special concatenative or other type of inflection. It could, on occasion, show plural inflection for person, and in the earliest language it was sometimes associated with an *ỉ*-prefix.[16] However, plural inflection naturally has to do with person rather than illocution, and the prefix was a short-lived and apparently phonological phenomenon restricted to roots (mostly *2rad*) showing the same feature also in the *sḏm-f*, the stative, and the participles.[17] In all, the Earlier Egyptian

[12] Particularly interesting in this respect is the analysis by C. Reintges, 'The Older Egyptian stative revisited', *Lingua Aegyptia* 14 (2006), 123–128, which views the deontic instances of the bare stative as based on conversational implicatures associated with the use of a modally unspecified verb form in reference to currently non-actualised events.

[13] The hortative stative is most common with intransitive state verbs such as *ꜥnḫ* ('live'), *ꜣḫ* ('be spiritual'), and *wr* ('be great'). See also example 2d above with *snb-t(i)* ('Farewell', lit. 'be healthy').

[14] V. Xrakovskij, 'Hortative constructions', in M. Haspelmath. E. König, W. Oesterreicher and W. Raible (eds), *Language Typology and Language Universals* (Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft 20 – Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2001), 1029.

[15] For example, in Central Pomo all imperatives are marked as modally *irrealis* and as *realis* (!) in Maricopa – see M. Mithun, 'On the relativity of irreality', in J. Bybee and S. Fleischman (eds), *Modality in Grammar and Discourse* (Typological Studies in Language 32 – Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1995), 376. In Caddo affirmative imperatives are *realis* but negatives *irrealis* – see W. Chafe, 'The *realis-irrealis* distinction in Caddo, the Northern Iroquoian languages, and English', in Mithun and Fleischman, *Modality in Grammar*, 358. Some languages have no separate imperatives but use inflected *irrealis*/subjunctive forms for all commands – see for instance Nahuatl, discussed in F. Palmer, *Mood and Modality* (Cambridge Textbooks in Classics – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000 – 2nd edn), 142.

[16] Gardiner, *Grammar*, 257–259, §§335–336; E. Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik* (*AnOr* 34, 36 – Rome: Pontificum Istitutum Publicum, 1955–1964), 289–293, §§598–605; J. P. Allen, *The Inflection of the Verb in the Pyramid Texts* (*Bibliotheca Aegyptia* II – Malibu: Undena, 1984), 415–416, §599. There is no evidence in Earlier Egyptian of imperative gender-distinctions.

[17] See Uljas, 'prothetic i-'; S. Uljas, 'The so-called Prothetic *i*- and the *sḏm-f* Paradigms II: The 'nominal' *sḏm-f* and a reappraisal', *Lingua Aegyptia* 28 (2020), 259–264; S. Uljas, 'The so-called Old Egyptian Prothetic *i*- Part III: The Participles', in V. Almansa-Villatoro, S. Štubňová Nigrelli, and M. Lehner (eds), *In the House of Heqanakht: Text and Context in Ancient Egypt. Studies Presented in*

imperative, although used to express compulsion and nothing but compulsion, was not associated with special morphological marking for this function.

6. Other mechanisms for expressing compulsion

Earlier Egyptian displays a handful of other non-lexical means of expressing compulsive illocution that represent harbingers of more grammaticalised constructions of the later language. Perhaps the most interesting of these is the pattern *i̯w-f r-sḏm*, which has many names in Egyptological linguistics, including, most recently, 'allative future'.[18] In Earlier Egyptian this construction expressed firmly asserted statements of future facts, as opposed to the subjunctive *sḏm-f*:[19]

(6a) The snake tells the sailor what will happen soon:

mk=tw	*r-spr*	*r-ḫnw*	*n-ꜣbd*	*2*
PTC=2MS	FUT-arrive.INF	to-home	of-month	2

Look, you are going to return home in two months. (*Shipwrecked Sailor*, 168)

(6b) A conclusion in a medical papyrus discussing certain symptoms of pregnancy:

i̯w-s	*r-mst*	*wḏf*
AUX-2FS	FUT-bear.INF	late

She is going to give birth late. (*P. UC 32057*, 3.14)

(6c) Sinuhe says concerning the foreign policies of Senwosret I:

i̯w-f	*r-itt*	*tꜣ-w*	*rs-w*
AUX-3MS	FUT-seize.INF	land-PL	southern-RLT

He is going to seize the southern lands. (*Sinuhe* B, 71–72)

Yet in later Old Egyptian and in the First Intermediate Period, the *i̯w-f r-sḏm* is sometimes used in the so-called Appeal to the Living, whose pivot is often a request to the readers or hearers of the text to recite an offering formula on behalf of the deceased. The request usually takes the form of the subjunctive *sḏm-f* (7a below), but from the Sixth Dynasty onwards there are instances using the *iw-f r-sḏm* instead (7b):[20]

Honor of James P. Allen (Harvard Egyptological Studies – Leiden and New York: Brill, 2023), 387–399. It also occurs in the *sḏm-n-f* – see Stauder, 'Interpreting written morphology', 255–262), but there its occurrence seems to be conditioned by parameters other than phonology.

[18] E. Grossman and S. Polis, 'On the pragmatics of subjectification: The grammaticalisation of verbless allative futures (with a case study in Ancient Egyptian)', *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia* 46 (2014), 25–63; E. Grossman, G. Lescuyer and S. Polis, 'Contexts and inferences: The grammaticalisation of the Later Egyptian allative future', in E. Grossman, S. Polis, A. Stauder and J. Winand (eds), *On Forms and Functions: Studies on Ancient Egyptian Grammar* (*Lingua Aegyptia Studia Monographica* 15 – Hamburg: Widmaier Verlag, 2014), 89–90.

[19] P. Vernus, *Future at Issue: Tense, Mood and Aspect in Middle Egyptian: Studies in Syntax and Semantics* (*YES* 4 – New Haven: Yale Egyptological Seminar, 1990), 9–12 views the assertive tone of *i̯w-f r-sḏm* as deriving from the idea that the future event is something ineluctably necessary or that the subject is bound to carry it out under an external pressure. For comparison, see J. P. Allen, *Middle Egyptian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 176; H. Satzinger, 'Verbal modality in Egyptian and elsewhere', in N. Grimal, A. Kamel and C. May-Sheikholeslami (eds), *Hommages à Fayza Haikal* (*BdÉ 138* – Cairo: *IFAO*, 2003), 246; but alternatively see Grossman and Polis, 'Subjectification', 47. This is close to suggesting that the pattern always expresses compulsion. Yet what seems to be more decisive, such as in the examples cited here as well as in general, is that the speakers feel themselves sufficiently certain of the future situation's eventual realisation that they 'dare' to assert them. That is, the speaker in (6a) is an omniscient god capable of foreseeing things to come whereas in (6b) the accuracy of the prognosis has surely been proved incalculable times in the past. In (6c), Sinuhe, as a former official of the royal court, must have been privy to His Majesty's foreign policy plans (and, as it happens, history shows that he was right). Matters such as these are context-dependent, but in each case the key to understanding why the pattern was used instead of the subjunctive has to do with the commitment felt by the speaker towards the future state of affairs.

[20] For further examples and discussion, see G. Roquet, 'Formes verbales à distribution équivalente. Modalité déprécative de la forme *i(w)=f r sḏm*, ϵ≠ϥ ϵ/ⲁ ϲⲱⲧⲙ', *BIFAO* 78 (1978), 509–522. There is also further variation between the two patterns noted as well as the imperative, the geminating *sḏm-f*, the *sḏm-kꜣ-f*, and the *sḏm-ḫr-f*.

(7a) Appeal to the Living of Sehetepibra:

m-mr=tn	*nṯr=tn*	*nw-t(-y)*	*ḏd=tn*	*ḫ*ꜣ	*t*ꜣ	*ḥnḳ-t*
as-love.SUB=2P	god=2P	town-F[-RLT]	say.SUB=2P	1000	bread	beer-F

As you will love your local god, may you say: 'Thousand bread and beer...' (*Heqaib*, 48f/*pl.* 124)

(7b) Appeal to the Living of Heneni:

mi[-mr]r=ṯn	*ḥs=ṯn [...]*	*nt(-y)=ṯn*	*ḫr-f*	*iw=ṯn*	*r-rdit=n(-i)*	*t*ꜣ	*ḥnḳ-t*
like-love=2P	praise.SUB=2P	REL[-M]=2P	under-3MS	AUX=2P	FUT-give.INF=to[-1S]	bread	beer-F

Just as you desire to be favoured by [...] under whom you are, you shall give me bread and beer... (*RdÉ* 2, 44–45)

This same variation occurs also in the part of the appeal where the deceased first asks the visitors to the tomb to make a real offering and then, if they have brought nothing, to recite the offering formula verbally:

(8a) In the Appeal to the Living of an Meru:

ỉr	*nfr*	*n-wnn*	Ø	*m-ꜥ=ṯn*	*ḏd=ṯn*	*m-r*ꜣ*=ṯn*
if	NEG	to-AUX	Ø	in-arm=2P	say.SUB=2P	with-mouth=2P

If there be nothing in your hand, may you say with your mouth(s)... (*Turin* 1447, 7)

(8b) In the Appeal to the Living of Khuw:

ỉr	*nfr*	*n-wnn*	Ø	*m-ꜥ=ṯn*	*iw=ṯn*	*r-ḏd*	*m-r*ꜣ*=ṯn*
if	NEG	to-AUX	Ø	in-arm=2P	AUX=2P	FUT-say.INF	with-mouth=2P

If there be nothing in your hand, you shall say with your mouth(s)... (*CG* 20003, 3–4)

The idea in (7a) and (8b) is surely not to portray the visitors' future recitation of the formula as an asserted fact. Instead, the *ỉw-f r-sḏm* in these variants undoubtedly carries a nuance similar to but probably not exactly the same as that associated with the subjunctive in the more usual formulation. Vernus has argued that examples such as (8b) express future obligations,[21] which is probably very close to the truth: If one has brought no actual offerings, it follows as a necessity that one has to use oral means instead and *must* merely recite the formula. Then again, this does not necessarily suit the earlier part of the Appeal equally well. In any case, and as Vernus points out, one should not draw a direct line between these early examples of *ỉw-f r-sḏm* and the injunctive force associated with the much later Demotic and Coptic successors of the pattern. In most Earlier and even Later Egyptian, *iw-f r-sḏm* is still very strongly an assertive future that only very exceptionally was used to express compulsive illocutionary force.[22]

A further pattern that should be mentioned here is the hortative construction *ỉmỉ sḏm-f*:[23]

(9a) Hearing of a challenge put to him by a rival, Sinuhe utters:

ỉmỉ	*ḏd-f*	*ḫr-t*	*ỉb-f*
give.IMP	say.SUB-3MS	matter-F	heart-3MS

Let him speak up his mind! (*Sinuhe* B, 125)

[21] Vernus, *Future at Issue*, 15.

[22] The 'Third Future' begins to display definite optative features only in Late Egyptian – see Grossman and Polis, 'Subjectification', 54–55 and Grossman, Lescuyer and Polis, 'Context and inferences', 90.

[23] H. Grapow, *Wie die alten Ägypter sich anredeten, wie sie sich grüßten und wie sie miteinader sprachen III: Zu Verwendung von Anrufen, Wünschen und Grüßen* (Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1941), 74–75; Gardiner, *Grammar*, 259, §338.2.

(9b) Thutmosis III's reply to his generals, who had suggested an alternative route of attack against an enemy:

ỉmỉ	šm	*nty*	*ỉb-f*	*ỉm=ṯn*	*ḥr-nꜣ-n-mṯn-w...*	
give.IMP	go-SUB	REL	heart-3MS	in=2P	on-DEM.PL	of-road-PL
ỉmỉ	*ỉwt*	*nty*	*ỉb-f*	*ỉm=ṯn*	*m-šmsw-t*	*ḥm-ỉ*
give.IMP	come.SUB	REL	heart-3MS	in=2P	in-following-F	majesty-1S

Let him who among you wants go on those roads... and let him who among you wants come in the following of my majesty. (*Urk.* IV 651, 7–9)

This construction was built of the imperative *ỉmỉ* of the causative root *rdỉ* plus the subjunctive *sḏm-f* and is very close to the English 'let us V'. Early examples such as those above are harbingers to the later Coptic Injunctive conjugation ⲙⲁⲣⲉϥⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄, but they are still at a very early stage of development. Positioning of clitics between *ỉmỉ* and the *sḏm-f* shows that the two still constituted separate prosodic units (i.e. they had not merged phonologically),[24] and the *sḏm-f* had not yet been replaced by the analytic pattern *ỉrỉ-f sḏm*, which lies at the root of Coptic ⲙⲁⲣⲉϥⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄ and became standard only in late Demotic.[25] One cannot thus yet speak of a particularly evolved or grammaticalised pattern of expressing compulsion here, let alone of an injunctive conjugation.

There is little else to say about Earlier Egyptian means of expressing affirmative compulsion. At this stage the language possessed no inflectional forms specialised and/or marked for deontic modality. Interestingly enough, it seems to have had next to no affirmative *lexical* means of expressing obligation or compulsion either: One searches in vain for words like 'may', 'must' or 'have to' in the Earlier Egyptian lexicon. A partial exception here is the verb *wḏ* ('order'), which appears to have been used to express the meaning 'to be permitted' and, in the negative, 'to be forbidden, must not':[26]

(10a) A question by an indignant town official over fiscal duties:

(i)nỉw	*wḏ*	*sḏm*	*ỉṯꜣ*	*ỉn*	*r(m)-t=nb-t*	*wpwḥr-mr*	*šn-t*
Q	order.PASS	hear.INF	thief	AGT	people-F=QU-F	except-overseer	dispute

Is it allowed that a thief be interrogated by anyone except the overseer of disputes? (*P. UC 32200*, 7–10)

(10b) Djedji protested against King Khufu's suggestion to decapitate a prisoner for fun:

mk	*n-wḏ-tw*	*ỉrt*	*mn-t=ỉr-y*	*n-tꜣ-ꜥw-t*	*šps-t*
PTC	NEG-order-PASS	do.INF	thing-F=to-RLT	to-flock-F	noble-F

One must not do such a thing to the noble flock! (*P. Westcar* 8, 17)

Here it arguably does not make good sense to translate the sentences as affirmations or denials that something is or was 'ordered'. That is, in (10a) the matter questioned is surely not whether the examination of a thief by others than those holding the appropriate office has been *ordered*, and in the *locus classicus* (10b) Djedji's point is certainly not to state that there has been no 'order' to decapitate humans. What appears to be meant instead is that the things mentioned must or must not happen: thus, *wḏ* is used to convey the sense of affirmative or negative compulsion.

The grammatical oeuvre of Old and Middle Egyptian for the expression of compulsion seems thus rather unexciting, but this in fact holds only insofar as *affirmative* forms and constructions are at issue. In the *negative* domain there is something more interesting and typologically unusual to be found, even though here too the total number of patterns is low.

[24] E.g. *Urk.* IV 1113, 1 with *ỉmỉ=grt aq iꜣ-t=nb-t* – 'Moreover, let every office pass'.

[25] See J. F. Quack, 'En route vers le copte. Notes sur l'évolution du démotique tardif', *Faits de langues* 27/1 (2006), 200–203.

[26] See most recently P. Beylage, *Middle Egyptian* (*LANE* 9 – Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns, 2018), 677.

7. Compulsion in negative contexts

Of the many Earlier Egyptian negations, the negative verb *ỉmỉ* is in many ways perhaps the most special. It had a very restricted range of morphological forms, appearing only in the imperative form *m* and in the immutable finite form *ỉmỉ*:

(11a) The peasant uses standard phrases of correct behaviour when petitioning to the high steward:

m=wšb	*nfr-t*	*m-bỉn-t*	*m=rdỉ*	*k-t*	*m-s-t*	*k-t*
NEG.AUX.IMP=answer.NC	good-F	in-bad-F	NEG.AUX.IMP=put.NC	other-F	in-place-F	other-F

Do not answer good with evil; do not put one (thing) in the place of another. (Peas B1, 182–83)

(11b) The deceased says about a spirit who had harmed him:

ỉmỉ-f=ỉw
AUX.NEG-3MS=come.NC
May he not come! (*P. Nu/BoD* 78, 10)

(11c) The king is protected from evil influences:

ỉmỉ=ỉw	*stš*
AUX.NEG=come.NC	NN

May Seth not come! (*Pyramid Texts*, §1269a)

The construction *m-rdỉ sḏm=f* provides the negation of the 'proto-injunctive' *ỉmỉ sḏm=f* noted above:[27]

(12) The generals of Thutmosis III disliked a certain route of attack:

m=rdỉ	*šm=n*	*ḥr-mṯn=p[f*	*š]tȝ*
NEG.AUX.IMP=cause.NC	go.SUB=1P	on-path=DEM.M	difficult

Let us not go on that difficult road. (*Urk.* IV 650, 14)

The diachronic development of *ỉmỉ* may be followed over time,[28] but in most Earlier Egyptian it is a clear auxiliary. It had no lexical content of its own, carried all inflection, and was morphologically bound to the following negatival complement, which in fact cliticised to the auxiliary, as shown from the way in which only suffix subjects of the complex could be attached to *ỉmỉ* whereas nouns were placed after the negatival complement (for comparison, see examples 11b and 11c above). Yet what is truly interesting about *ỉmỉ* is its illocutionary character and function. Negative verbs are not unusual cross-linguistically,[29] but a negative auxiliary reserved exclusively for the expression of deontic modality, and hence compulsion, is a considerable rarity. Yet whether appearing in its sole finite form or as the imperative, *ỉmỉ* was exclusively used to convey the speaker's will ('do not hear'; 'you must/should/may not hear') even there are instances where it is equally well interpreted as a negative final clause.[30]

[27] Gardiner, *Grammar*, 260, §340.3.

[28] For full discussion and examples, see S. Uljas, 'On the formal typology of Earlier Egyptian negations", in E. Oréal and M. Müller (eds), *Negation in Ancient Egyptian* (in preparation). Briefly put, in the Pyramid- and Coffin Texts *m/ỉmỉ* sometimes occur with a following fully inflected *sḏm-f* – see Allen, *Inflection*, 107, §203A; 224, §342 and W. Schenkel, 'Die Endungen des Negativkomplements im Spiegel der Befunde der Sargtexte', *Lingua Aegyptia* 7 (2000), 3–7. These uses probably represent a stage where the *sḏm-f* served as a clausal subject complement to a governing negative verb, but it later lost its inflection, which was transferred to *ỉmỉ* – for further discussion, see Allen, *Inflection*, 479–482, §687. The *sḏm-f* paradigm in question appears to be that of the prospective, which thus seems to represent the diachronic origin of the negatival complement. An intermediary stage in this development is perhaps to be seen in examples such as *CT* V 333i–j showing (co-referential) 'double inflection' on both *ỉmỉ* and the following lexical verb.

[29] They are particularly common in Finno-Ugric languages such as Finnish, Estonian, and the various types of Sa(a)mi.

[30] Allen, *Middle Egyptian*, 256.

Accordingly, Earlier Egyptian possessed a negative auxiliary apparently marked for deontic modality and compulsive illocution. This gives reason to expect that further things of similar sort might be found on the negative side of the polarity divide. Alas, this turns out not to be the case. In fact, other than *ỉmỉ*, the expression of negative compulsion was in Earlier Egyptian carried out by lexical means. The use of the (negated) verb *wḏ* ('order') was already noted above. Imperative and hortative stative forms of the verbs *sꜣw* ('guard'), *ʿḥꜣ*, ('fight'), and *ḥr(i)* ('be distant') were used in negative warnings and denials of permission:[31]

(13a) Ptahhotep gives advice on how to clear disputes:

mdwy-k	*m-rdỉ*	*ḥr-gs*	*sꜣw*	*ḏd-f*	*sḫr-f*
speak.SUB-2MS	in-put.PPA	on-side	guard.IMP	say-3MS	plan-3MS

Should you contest with someone who is biased, let him not make his point. (*Ptahhotep* 418–19)

(13b) Ptahhotep recommends civilised behaviour when visiting the homes of friends:

ʿḥꜣ-t(i)	*m-tkn*	*m-ḥm-w-t*
fight-STA	in-approach.INF	in-wife.PL-F

Take care not to approach married women. (*Ptahhotep*, 281)

(13c) The peasant warns the high steward:

ḥr-t(i)	*r-ỉrt*	*ỉy-t*
be.far-STA	from-do.INF	evil-F

Keep clear from doing evil! (*Eloquent Peasant* B1, 337)

8. Concluding comments

To sum up, in Earlier Egyptian the level of specialised grammaticalisation of deontic modality and of compulsive illocution is relatively low. Such nuances are largely context-reliant and, with the exception of the highly unusual auxiliary *ỉmỉ*, associated with forms and patterns not specialised for the expression of the deontic. Typologically, this is perfectly in keeping with what is standard in languages more generally: With the exception of grammaticalised optatives and jussives, conveying deontic and more broadly 'agent-oriented' modality by inflectional means is notably rare.[32] However, lexical expressions coding the relevant meanings are similarly infrequent in Earlier Egyptian, which is more surprising. Nevertheless, this situation changed over time. The language grammaticalised a modal injunctive out of the old *ỉmỉ sḏm-f*, and Coptic also displays a wide array of (often borrowed) lexical items such as (т)ⲁⲛⲁⲅⲕ (тє), ⲟⲩⲕ ⲉⲝⲉⲥⲧⲓ, ⲧⲉⲭⲣⲓⲁ (тє), ⲉⲁⲡⲥ (пє), ⲯⲩⲉ, and ᴮᶠⲉⲱϯ, as well as the pre-verbal modifier (or quasi-auxiliary) ⲁⲡⲉ- and the cataphoric ⲥ-ⲉⲣⲟ⸗ + complement, used to express necessity and compulsion.[33] Overall, the later language is richer in specialised grammatical and lexical means of communicating modal and non-assertive illocution in general and deontic in particular. This is, in turn, a small but significant part of its overall diachronic trend towards increasing markedness of both semantic-pragmatic and grammatical function.

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[31] Gardiner, *Grammar*, 259, §338.3. Again, examples of *sꜣw* apparently used in negative final clauses are not rare – see Allen, *Middle Egyptian*, 253.
[32] Bybee, *Morphology*, 166 and *passim*.
[33] See Satzinger, 'Verbal modality', 251–252 and M. Müller, 'Expressing necessity in Sahidic Coptic', in Grossman *et al.* (eds), *Forms and Functions*, 137–172.

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16
How to Tell of Compulsion and Control in Demotic: A Prospect from Contextual Narratology[1]

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Abstract

This paper investigates expressions in Demotic for the exercise of manipulation and coercion. The chief focus is upon Demotic literary compositions and especially narratives, although letters and other types of document receive some consideration. The procedures adopted border upon lexicology and pragmatics, but this paper is not intended as a substantive contribution to these disciplines. Rather, the methods that inform it belong in narratology. The present writer has previously discussed briefly the use in Demotic stories of expressions for "making someone do something" or "having something done". Unsurprisingly, these can play a role in the way in which a narrative is constructed and given cohesion. Of course, in themselves, such idioms hardly convey 'compulsion' in any strong sense. However, here a far broader range of turns of phrase is taken into account, all involving the concept of coercion. This facilitates an overview of how Egyptian storytellers used the notion of compulsion and the emotions aroused by it as a device in narrative, and invites reflection as to whether or not they might have viewed this whole web of ideas as constituting a theme in itself.

Keywords: Causation; Demotic Literature; Narratology; Phraseology; Setna Cycle

1. Aims

The overall aim of this contribution is to begin to survey what can be said about Egyptian attitudes to the theme of the Symposium, *compulsion and control*, from the viewpoint of the writer's current research, which seeks to exploit the evidence of Demotic letters and especially of Demotic narratives.

A starting point will be the expressions in Demotic for *making people do things*, and a consideration of how these may convey ideas of the exercise of power, of manipulation, and of coercion. The examples offered here may be able to hint at some ways in which it is possible to link details of phraseology in Demotic narratives with the overall themes that the texts are keen to bring out. They may serve to illustrate that the simplest vocabulary can, in context, imply ideas that, in other literary traditions, might be expected to be spelled out. Even if we cannot point to specific terminology for 'compulsion', the concept can yet still have a role to play in the compositions.

The treatment of these types of expression will be at a more general level than anything that would normally be regarded as lexicography, or even lexicology. It makes no claim to emulate proper research within linguistics, even though related investigations could be done in the field of pragmatics. Because of the writer's particular interests in narratological approaches (especially in the directions in which

[1] I am extremely grateful to Christ's College and to Alex Loktionov, the organiser of the third Lady Wallis Budge Egyptology Symposium, for the opportunity to join in the discussion of a topic that is relevant to numerous aspects of ancient Egyptian society and culture, and to the anonymous reviewers for their stimulating comments. The translations from Demotic given throughout this contribution are those of the present writer, and are deliberately very literal, and designed to bring out the features under scrutiny, rather than aimed at any kind of elegance.

this kind of work has developed over the last twenty years), and in view of his current investigations of the exploitation of emotions in textual material, the discussion will try to explore what light these can throw upon our topic. In this way, attention may be drawn to how Egyptian storytellers used the notion of compulsion and the emotions aroused by it as a device in narrative, and the question raised whether or not this could have been a significant theme for the literature.

2. Demotic narrative

First, some very brief comments on relevant factors raised by the nature of Demotic. The Demotic script first came into widespread use in the Saite Period (somewhat before the middle of the first millennium BCE), for the recording of documentary material, to serve the interests of the Egyptian elite. It may very quickly have begun to be employed to write down literary texts, although we have hardly any firm evidence for this until the fourth century BCE. By then, Egypt had already had a history of written literature stretching over a span of a millennium and a half. Although the survival of manuscripts over these preceding centuries is patchy, considerable continuities can be seen, both in form and content, right through into the Demotic period. Narrative literature in Demotic was alive for, at the very least, six centuries. Demotic is also the name of the stage of the Egyptian language found in the literature. It is generally argued to embody a formal register of language, perhaps originally suited to legal documents. Demotic stories no doubt are somehow linked to traditions and practices of oral story-telling, but the tradition we can observe is not only (obviously) written, but firmly based in written culture. The social context of the narratives lay within a literate elite; by the early Roman period, the maintenance of literature in Demotic seems to have become confined to the personnel of the Egyptian temples and those who associated themselves with their traditions.

Although it is hoped that this contribution will not only be of interest to those familiar with Demotic narratives, it might perhaps be gratuitous to offer here an extensive description of the Demotic language and script, as broad accounts of both have been provided by a number of demotists,[2] while several studies of Demotic literature offer background information on aspects of language and script as they relate to the literature.[3]

[2] See F. de Cenival, 'L'écriture démotique', in S. Sauneron (ed.), *Textes et langages de l'Égypte pharaonique: cent cinquante années de recherches, 1822–1972: hommage à Jean-François Champollion, vol. 1* (*BdÉ* 64 – Cairo: *IFAO*, 1972), 37–44; A. F. Shore, 'Demotic', in *Textes et langages*, *vol. 1*, 143–50; E. Lüddeckens, 'Demotisch', *LÄ* 1, cols 1052–1056; U. Luft, *A Démotikus nyelv: bevezetés as I. évezred második felében használt egyiptomi írásba és nyelvbe* (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1983), 12–20; D. Devauchelle, 'Le démotique: bilan et perspectives', in M. Dewachter and A. Fouchard (eds), *L'égyptologie et les Champollion: recueil d'études publié par Michel Dewachter et Alain Fouchard à l'occasion du Colloque international célébrant le bicentenaire de la naissance de Jean-François Champollion "De l'Égypte des Pharaons à celle de 1990, Hommage de Grenoble aux frères Champollion" (Université Pierre Mendès-France, Grenoble 2, 29 novembre – 1er décembre 1990)* (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1994), 311–317; M. Depauw, *A Companion to Demotic Studies* (*Papyrologica Bruxellensia* 28 – Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1997), 17–39; J. H. Johnson, 'Demotic', in D. B. Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), vol. 3, 210–214; E. Bresciani, *Nozioni elementari di grammatica demotica, con liste grafiche e letture demotiche di Angiolo Menchetti* (Biblioteca di Studi Egittologici 2 – Pisa: ETS, 2002), 13–16; and J. F. Quack, 'Bemerkungen zur Struktur der demotischen Schrift und zur Umschrift des Demotischen', in M. Depauw and Y. Broux (eds), *Acts of the Tenth International Congress of Demotic Studies, Leuven, 26–30 August 2008* (*OLA* 231 – Leuven, Paris and Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2014), 207–242.

[3] See for example F. Hoffmann, 'Die Entstehung der demotischen Erzähllliteratur: Beobachtungen zum überlieferungsgeschichtlichen Kontext', in H. Roeder (ed.), Das Erzählen in frühen Hochkulturen: 1. Der Fall Ägypten (Ägyptologie und Kulturwissenschaft 1 – München: Fink, 2009), 351–54; K. S. B. Ryholt, 'Late Period Literature', in A. B. Lloyd (ed.) A Companion to Ancient Egypt (Chichester and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 709–10; D. Agut-Labordère and M. Chauveau, Héros, magiciens et sages oubliés de l'Égypte ancienne: une anthologie de la littérature en Égyptien Démotique: textes traduits et présentés (La roue à livres – Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2011), xi–xvi; J. F. Quack, Einführung in die altägyptische Literaturgeschichte 3: die demotische und gräko-ägyptische Literatur: dritte, erneut veränderte Auflage (Einführungen und Quellentexte zur Ägyptologie 3 – Berlin and Münster: LIT Verlag, 2016), 3–7; and F. Hoffmann and J. F. Quack, Anthologie der demotischen Literatur: zweite, neubearbeitete und erheblich erweiterte Auflage (Einführungen und Quellentexte zur Ägyptologie 4 – Berlin and Münster: LIT Verlag, 2018), 5–7.

One much-discussed aspect of the language is, however, of significance for the present study: in 1994, Ray outlined a view that Demotic, as found in our written sources of all types, should not be seen as closely representing the contemporary spoken language.[4] Ray particularly noted the general scarcity of Greek loan-words, at least until the later Roman Period. We might assume that Greek vocabulary would have been copiously adopted in speech, at any rate by the second century BCE. When written Coptic emerges (after 200 CE), an abundance of Greek words is to be seen in texts of all kinds. Ray gave consideration to the explanation that the writers of the Demotic texts made a deliberate choice to avoid Greek words. This aspect has been widely debated; one possibility for narrative material is that the conventional style and tone of Demotic story-telling was established long before Greek-speakers had a conspicuous presence in Egypt, and many aspects of the language to be employed had been standardised before Greek vocabulary had become commonplace.[5] For the present purpose, it can be suggested that there was nothing more artificial about the way in which the Demotic stories were expressed than that which may be expected in a literary register of language as found in many cultures.

It may be as well to admit frankly that the Demotic narratives are not the easiest place to look for material relevant to the topic. First, some stories from earlier dynastic periods offer ample scope for the discussion of compulsion and control. However, the Demotic material presents a larger corpus, so that it is easier to draw representative conclusions — and it would be awkward and even risky to try to combine evidence from a date-range of over a millennium; any conclusions would need a great deal of justification and qualification. Secondly, explicit treatments of compulsion can be found in the Demotic wisdom texts, and perhaps to an even greater extent in earlier wisdom literature. The wisdom texts, however, must by their nature take a prejudiced and self-conscious approach to the topic. It can be more rewarding to see what the narratives can reveal in passing, when they are not deliberately addressing the issue. Thus concentrating upon Demotic narratives presents both a challenge and an opportunity.

3. Vocabulary and phraseology

Demotic does not lack vocabulary for 'to compel' and 'compulsion': the obvious word for it is *ḥtr*, and its range of meanings is clear. The *Chicago Demotic Dictionary* has substantial entries for the verb and noun.[6] However, it is not a term that is much used in narrative texts[7] — and almost the same could be said about the corpus of letters in Demotic. Of course, that does not in any way mean that the concept is lacking in the texts: it is expressed in quite other ways, or, rather commonly, implied. So the position is similar to that of the terminology for the emotions in narratives and in personal letters: the emotions, too, are more often implied than explicitly stated.[8]

The present writer has on previous occasions[9] discussed the extremely common use in Demotic stories of expressions for 'making someone do something' or 'having something done', employing the verb

[4] See J. D. Ray, 'How Demotic is Demotic?', *EVO* 17 (1994), 251–264.

[5] The issues have been touched upon by many; see for example Quack, *Einführung*, esp. 3–5. The topic is widely discussed in J. E. Jay, *Orality and Literacy in the Demotic Tales* (*CHANE* 81 – Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), esp. Chapter 3.

[6] *CDD*, *Ḥ*, 313–318: *transitive verb* 'to compel'; *intransitive verb* 'to be necessary, obliged, compelled'; *noun* 'compulsion, necessity'.

[7] The *First Setna Story* (discussed below) does not contain the word, nor do several of our better preserved narratives. The *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*, demotic, s.v. *ḥtr*, 'müssen', cites two debateable occurrences, one at *P. Cairo 30692*, l. 2, and one at *P. Spiegelberg*, col. 15, l. 19 <http://aaew2.bbaw.de/tla/index.html>.

[8] For letters, see W. J. Tait, 'Examining the Exploitation of the Emotions in Demotic Egyptian Letter-writing', in A. Chaniotis (ed.), *Unveiling Emotions III: Arousal, Display, and Performance of Emotions in the Greek World* (Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien 63 – Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2021), 231–242.

[9] In published form, a brief mention occurs in W. J. Tait, 'On the Singularity of Wenamun,' in E. Frood and A. McDonald (eds), *Decorum and Experience: Essays in Ancient Culture for John Baines* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 2013), 74–75.

di̯.[10] Unsurprisingly, these can play a significant role in the way in which a narrative is constructed and is given cohesion. Of course, in themselves, such idioms do not necessarily convey 'compulsion' in any strong sense, but they can do so. There seem to be no principles of syntax in play to pinpoint the meaning. For each individual occurrence, we must judge how it is to be understood on the basis of its immediate context within the discourse of the narrative, and our grasp of the thrust of the story – following as best we can in the footsteps of the ancient audiences.

These idioms for 'causing something to happen' have a long history in the Egyptian language.[11] Their use grew over time. By the Coptic stage of the language, they were employed widely in fossilised (grammaticalised) forms called the 'Finalis' and 'Causative Infinitive' in traditional terminology,[12] in which the 'cause' element had become almost hidden, and was surely never given any thought by speakers of the language.[13] It could be suggested on the basis of the range of usage that this stage had not yet been reached in Demotic, especially as – at least for writers and readers – the normal Demotic writings include the verb 'to cause' in a recognisable form.

A simple use would be when a character in a story makes a series of events happen: they *cause* other people to do things. The advantage of this kind of expression for the story-teller is that a sequence of happenings and actions (perhaps carried out by several characters) can be narrated while the grammatical subject in the passage remains unchanged (it is the main character who continues to do things). This makes the story easier to follow than if the subject of the verbs changes, perhaps several times over. Moreover, it may suit the narrator if the chief character remains the centre of attention, and also if their agency is emphasized. It is remarkable that such passages often also involve the so-called Demotic 'passive', that is, the use of a third person plural pronoun 'they', where the 'they' has vague or indefinite reference: the effect of such phraseology is to simplify the narrative, and to focus attention on the chief characters.[14]

In the space available here, there will be much to be said for (almost entirely) confining the examples offered to just the *First Setna Story,*[15] because it has been much studied, and because it is generally agreed

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[10] The verb has a very wide range of usages. See W. C. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1954), 604.7–607: *tj* (*dj*), 'geben'; *CDD*, *T*, 62–81: *ti̯*, 'to give, place, cause, allow'; compare the imperative form *my*: Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar*, 150.16; *CDD*, *M*, 52. Detailed comments on aspects of the causative usage within the priestly decrees are offered by R. S. Simpson, *Demotic Grammar in the Ptolemaic Sacerdotal Decrees* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1996), 106–108, 120–123.

[11] See for example J. H. Johnson, *The Demotic Verbal System* (*SAOC* 38 – Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 270–279 and second printing, with corrections, 2004, 173–179; A. Loprieno, *Ancient Egyptian: A Linguistic Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 223–224.

[12] In English, see for example J. M. Plumley, *An Introductory Coptic Grammar (Sahidic Dialect)* (London: Home & Van Thal, 1948), 101–102, 114–115, 119–120; for comparison see W. C. Till, *Koptische Grammatik (Saïdischer Dialekt) mit Bibliographie, Lesestücken und Wörterverzeichnissen*, 2. verbesserte Aufl. (Lehrbücher für das Studium der Orientalischen Sprachen – Leipzig: Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1961), 157–158, 173–174. Recent usage varies: see for example Bentley Layton, *A Coptic Grammar, Sahidic Dialect, with Chrestomathy and Glossary, Second Edition, Revised and Expanded, with an Index of Citations* (Porta Linguarum Orientalium, Neue Serie 20 – Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004), 286–290 ('The causative infinitive ⲧⲣⲉ-'), 283–285 ('The future conjunctive ⲧⲁⲣⲉ-') and, for comparison, 268–269 ('The jussive ⲙⲁⲣⲉ-'). See also C. H. Reintges, *Coptic Egyptian (Sahidic Dialect): a Learner's Grammar* (Afrikawissenschaftliche Lehrbücher 15 – Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2004), 323–325, 527 ('ⲧⲣⲉ-causatives').

[13] I leave out of account the causative forms that Johnson terms 'compound verbs', in which the verb *d*(*i*) is already quite fossilised in Demotic: see Johnson, *Demotic Verbal System*, 63–64; 272–274; Second Printing, 43–44; 175–176; compare with Layton, *Coptic Grammar*, 156: 'Class V' (ⲧⲁⲕⲟ).

[14] See for example the first passage below cited from the *First Setna Story* (*col.* 4, *ll.* 10–11). The (literal) translations 'we caused them to carry him' and 'we caused him to be carried' are both defensible: the former style has been adopted here consistently. The presence or absence of such passives does not seem to have any bearing on whether or not a sense of compulsion is involved.

[15] Most recently edited in S. Vinson, *The Craft of a Good Scribe: History, Narrative, and Meaning in the First Tale of Setne Khaemwas* (*HES* 3 – Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018), 113–129 (transliteration and translation). A full index was provided by S. Goldbrunner, *Der Verblendete Gelehrte: Der Erste Setna-Roman (P. Kairo 30646): Umschrift, Übersetzung und Glossar* (Demotische Studien 13 – Sommerhausen: Gisela Zauzich Verlag, 2006), 32–94. G. Vittmann has contributed the text to the 'Datenbank demotischer Texte' of the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*: <http://aaew2.bbaw.de/tla/index.html>.

to have been composed with considerable ingenuity; a single composition might be expected to show a consistent pattern in its vocabulary and phraseology, and the framing of its themes.

4. The Setna 'cycle'

'Cycles' have been recognized for over a century as a typical feature of Demotic narrative — definitely as early as Spiegelberg.[16] Those that have been long familiar are the Inaros Cycle and the Setna Khaemwese Cycle; others have come to be acknowledged, and more may emerge in the future.[17] Clearly, the term 'cycle' is used in different ways by different scholars; here, there is no intention to imply a very strong sense of 'cycle': that the separate compositions of a cycle were meant to be appreciated together as a single work.[18] In the case of both the recognized Demotic cycles, the major characters include real persons — and real persons who lived in periods long before the time of the surviving manuscripts. In the Inaros Cycle, the general understanding now is that many of the major characters are based upon (or, at least, recall) actual historical figures from the seventh century BCE.[19]

In the Setna cycle, Setna Khaemwese himself is plainly based upon the real figure of the fourth son of Ramesses II of the New Kingdom, and the texts reveal some appreciation of the actual activities of the historical Khaemwese. The Setna stories appear (as far as our surviving evidence runs) to follow, as their core, a remarkably set pattern. Setna enters the tomb of a powerful nobleman of the past, with powers which we have tended to call 'magic', and learns from him of a misfortune or injustice that he had suffered, which Setna can still put to rights in the real world. Encounters by individuals of high status with a troubled 'ghost' form a theme already known from fragments of earlier stories.[20] The Setna stories seem to display a considerable dimension of seriousness. The stories (especially that known as the *First Setna Story*) have been studied for their humour, which is undoubtedly a feature, and Setna has even been seen as an anti-hero, or comic figure.[21] However, they also raise moral issues beyond the traditions from which they derive.[22]

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[16] There was no hint of 'cycles' in W. Spiegelberg, *Die Novelle im Alten Aegypten* (Strassburg: K. J. Trübner, 1898): in this early study Demotic made only a brief appearance, and, besides, solid evidence pointing to the existence of different stories involving the same characters was yet to come to light. However, by the time of W. Spiegelberg, *Der Sagenkreis des Königs Petubastis nach dem Strassburger Demotischen Papyrus sowie den Wiener und Pariser Bruchstücken* (Demotische Studien 3 – Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1910), the idea of a 'cycle' was built into the very title of the book.

[17] See for example Ryholt, 'Late Period Literature', 713–717.

[18] Difficulties that arise in employing the term 'cycle' are discussed by Jay, *Orality and Literacy*, esp. 153–157.

[19] See for example K. S. B. Ryholt, 'The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt in Egyptian Literary Tradition: a Survey of the Narrative Source Material', in J. G. Dercksen (ed.), *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen* (Uitgaven van het Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten te Leiden 100 – Leiden: *NINO*, 2004), 483–510; J. F. Quack, 'Inaros, Held von Athribis', in R. Rollinger and B. Truschnegg (eds), *Altertum und Mittelmeerraum: die antike Welt diesseits und jenseits der Levante; Festschrift für Peter W. Haider zum 60. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 499–505; and K. S. B. Ryholt, 'Egyptian Historical Literature from the Greco-Roman Period', in M. Fitzenreiter (ed.), *Das Ereignis: Geschichtsschreibung zwischen Vorfall und Befund. Workshop vom 03.10. bis 05.10.08* (London: Golden House Publications, 2009), 231–238.

[20] See Khonsuemhab's encounter with the spirit of Niutbusemekh, inscribed upon pots of the Ramesside period – see J. von Beckerath, 'Zur Geschichte von Chonsemhab und dem Geist', *ZÄS* 119 (1992), 90–109; English translation by E. F. Wente in W. K. Simpson (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: an Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry, with Translations by Robert R. Ritner, William Kelly Simpson, Vincent A. Tobin, and Edward F. Wente, Jr.* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003 – 3rd edn), 112–115; for comparison, see the encounter of a king with the spirit of Khentyka in *P. Chassinat II = P. Louvre E 25352*, a story that may stem from the late Middle Kingdom – G. Posener, 'Une nouvelle histoire de revenant', *RdÉ* 12 (1960), 75–82; English translation by S. G. Quirke, *Egyptian Literature 1800 BC: Questions and Readings* (*GHP* Egyptology 2 – London: Golden House Publications, 2004), 179.

[21] Griffith commented briefly 'In the demotic stories Khamuas is not presented in a very heroic light: they relate his misfortunes and seem rather to scoff at his learning....' – see F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis, the Sethon of Herodotus, and the Demotic Tales of Khamuas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), 3. For substantial discussions of the role of comedy in the ethos of *First Setna*, see R. Jasnow, '"And Pharaoh Laughed...": Reflections on Humor in Setne 1 and Late Period Egyptian Literature', *Enchoria* 27 (2001), 62–81, and Vinson, *The Craft of a Good Scribe*, Chapter 8, esp. 220–25.

[22] It is striking how often, when *First Setna* touches upon issues that for us are ethical issues, the forms of expression used are — for us — enigmatic. This might in part be due to our missing the nuances of the wording; but our problems may also lie in not appreciating how the Egyptians handled the basic concepts that underlie the presentation.

In the *First Setna Story*, the nobleman and 'magician' of the past that Setna encounters is Naneferkaptah. A relatively simple example of 'causing something to happen' may be offered (in a translation that is in some ways intentionally over-literal):

Example 1

Naneferkaptah and his wife Iehwere (the 'we' of this extract) see to the burial of their son Merib(ptah), whose tragic drowning has been the first step in the god Thoth's revenge for Naneferkaptah's theft of his book of ritual power:

> *The First Setna Story* (*col.* 4, *ll.* 10–11)
>
> We returned to Coptos with him; we *caused* them to carry him to the embalming shop; we *caused* them to attend to him; we *caused* them to embalm him in the style of a superior, elite person; we *caused* him to repose in his sarcophagus in the necropolis of Coptos.[23]

An example showing more complexity[24] is here presented from a fragmentary Setna-story housed in Copenhagen:

Example 2

> *P. Carlsberg 207*[25] (*col.* x+2, *ll.* 19–20)
>
> Setna called to one of his assistants: '*Cause* that they *cause* the herald to proclaim in Abydos: "Everyone who belongs to Petese's household, *cause* them to come into the temple, because Pharaoh has *caused* that I (i.e. Setna) should *give*[26] (bestow) incense and offerings, which he (i.e. Pharaoh) has *given* (granted) to Petese and all his household...."'.[27]

This passage involves the luring of the family and household of the villain of the story, Petese, into the temple of Isis, so that they may readily be imprisoned and executed. As elsewhere in the Setna cycle, it seems to be assumed that, because Setna is a son of the king, Ramesses II, once he has obtained his father's consent, he can order action of this brutal kind without further formality.

Many occurrences in the *First Setna Story* need not be seen as bearing any specific sense of compulsion. Some of those that do, or might do, are problematic, as is the case with the next two examples.

Example 3

Pharaoh's only son and his only daughter have, it seems, fallen in love with each other. With a rhetorical question expecting the answer 'no', Pharaoh explains why he would naturally plan for his children each

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[23] Published translations naturally vary in how they handle such repetitions of 'cause', mostly preferring to employ some kind of variation; in the present passage, R. K. Ritner has perhaps been alone in choosing to reproduce the repetitiveness fully: see Simpson (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, 460.

[24] The complexity lies especially in the number of agents involved and implied.

[25] See W. J. Tait, '*P. Carlsberg 207*: Two Columns of a Setna Text', P. J. Frandsen (ed.), *Demotic Texts from the Collection* (The Carlsberg Papyri 1; Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications 15 – Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1991), 19–46; and J. F. Quack and K. S. B. Ryholt, 'Notes on the Setne Story P. Carlsberg 207', in P. J. Frandsen and K. S. B. Ryholt (eds), *A Miscellany of Demotic Texts and Studies, with Contributions by J. F. Quack, K. Ryholt, M. Smith, W. J. Tait, [and] K.-Th. Zauzich* (The Carlsberg Papyri 3; Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications 22 – Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2000), 141–163.

[26] The frequent juxtaposition of *d(i)* in the sense of 'cause', and in the sense of 'give' is an interesting phenomenon, but cannot be explored here.

[27] The translation given here includes restorations on the basis of a parallel passage and parallel phrases within the same column.

to marry the child of one of his generals, so that the size of his family should expand.[28] The passage has been understood in various ways, for example:

> *The First Setna Story* (*col.* 3, *l.* 1)
>
> As I have no child except for two children, is it the custom (or the law) to cause them to marry each other?

However, it has also been interpreted along the lines of:

> ...does custom cause (dictate? allow?) that they should marry each other?[29]

A much-discussed passage in the *First Setna Story* concerns an indisputably high-handed piece of behaviour by Setna. Strolling outside the temple of Ptah, and thus, to a certain extent, in public, Setna encounters a strange woman, beautiful and evidently very rich and well-connected, and he is instantly infatuated with her. Immediately, in public, he sends his servant to ask her to sleep with him. The details of the phraseology are unfortunately debatable, but unquestionably he flaunts his rank and his behaviour is represented as shocking. This is a turning point in the story, and ultimately Setna is humiliated as a result. Here, therefore, is an additional reason for suggesting that mis-use of arbitrary power is a theme of the whole composition:

Example 4

Setna crudely attempts to back up his proposition:

> *The First Setna Story* (*col.* 5, *ll.* 4–5, with parallel, *ll.* 7–8)
>
> I shall *give* you 10 *deben* of gold. Or, if you have a plea of rape/abuse, I shall *cause* them to do it to/for you. I shall *cause* them to take you to a hidden spot, where no one on earth will find[30] you.

The offer of a large sum of gold is obviously an inducement, but what follows has been understood in a variety of ways. It could all (or certainly the last part) be taken as an offer to guarantee complete secrecy,[31] or it might all constitute a threat, in case she tries to refuse.[32]

The phraseology with 'cause' is also used to express 'magical'/ritual power and compulsion:

Example 5

In order to be conveyed to the hiding place in the 'sea of Coptos' of the god Thoth's ritual compendium, Naneferkaptah makes a wax boat with its crew:

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[28] It may be worth clarifying, that, as far as we can tell (the previous two columns of the manuscript are lost) Pharaoh has no objection to a brother-sister marriage (or, possibly, a half-brother-sister marriage may be in question), but is concerned only for the continuation of his line.

[29] This is the approach taken by (among others) Vinson, *The Craft of a Good Scribe*, 113: '...does custom mandate that one of them settle down with the other?'; compare with his comment on 131.

[30] The English word 'find' might seem to fit with the idea of a threat, but *gm* might perhaps be translated here as 'see' or 'find out about'; compare the usages listed in *CDD*, *G*, 26–28.

[31] As recently argued by J. F. Quack, 'Ein neuer ägyptischer Weisheitstext: Rezensionsartikel zu R. Jasnow, A Late Period Hieratic Wisdom Text (*P. Brooklyn 47.218.135*) (*SAOC* 52, Chicago 1992)', *WdO* 24 (1993), 16, n. 63.

[32] See notably J. W. B. Barns, 'Some Readings and Interpretations in Sundry Egyptian Texts', *JEA* 58 (1972), 165–166, who suggested that Setna's proposition must surely show a degree of consistency. Vinson, *The Craft of a Good Scribe*, 160–161 provides an overview; his translation (123) is perhaps intended to be quite as ambiguous as that offered here.

The First Setna Story (*col.* 3, *l.* 28)

He recited a text over them and he *caused* them to come to life; he *gave* them breath.

The equivalent negative phraseology is found in the same episode:

Example 6

The First Setna Story (*col.* 3, *l.* 31)

He recited a text over the miles and miles of snakes, scorpions, and all kinds of reptiles that were around the chest, and he *did not allow* them to leap up (*prevented* them from attacking).

When Setna has stolen Thoth's book from Naneferkaptah's tomb, Naneferkaptah consoles his wife:

Example 7

The First Setna Story (*col.* 4, *l.* 35)

Do not be sad at heart: I will *cause* him to bring this book (back) here.[33]

This enforcement of Naneferkaptah's will forms the substance of all the rest of the narrative.

5. Conclusion

For present-day literatures, it is of course commonplace to try to identify what a work of fiction is *about* – what it is *getting at* – what its main *theme* is. Notoriously, readers may sometimes not agree with an author as to what their book is about, but established authors usually have a definite idea as to the chief theme they are trying to put across, and this is often nowadays thought to be necessary in order for a book to be taken seriously as a work of literature.

For Demotic narrative literature, we do not have to hand the opinions of the authors, nor those of the readers. As a separate consideration, the impersonal narrators of texts scarcely ever comment on the action. However, there are ways in which we can try to address such questions. Where we can recognize a group of texts that are related to one-another (an obvious instance being cycles), we can try to see whether there are themes that recur, and therefore are deliberately being explored. Themes may be stressed by various means: for example, by the use of repetition; by the use of language that implies emphasis or emotion; and by the placing of ideas at key moments in the plot.

Merely 'causing' something to happen can point to concepts of agency, and above all of accountability. In some of the *First Setna Story* passages we have considered, questions of compulsion, and of the responsibility borne by those who exercise it, can be argued to be both significant and highlighted. The actual phraseology employed in the stories may not spell out implications and consequences in any way that we might expect, but the ancient audiences may nevertheless have been exercised by them.

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[33] There is similar phraseology at *col.* 4, *l.* 37.

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17
Perceptions of Liberty in the Coptic Period: Affective Responses to Socio-Religious Pressures in the Western Desert

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Abstract

This paper investigates passages that reflect emotional involvement as a response to socio-religious pressures. It correlates these affective responses with theories of liberty, thus adding a new perspective to the complexities of space and spatiality in Late Antique Kellis. An affective response is any subjectively evaluative response to an event or state; pressures are influences that are conceptualised as negative; socio-religious circumstances characterise the individual's societal surroundings. Hence, we look for negative responses to outsiders or the outside world as opposed to the in-group (the Kellian villagers) in private letters on papyrus from the fourth century CE.

Positive and negative emotional states impact very differently on speech production, for instance as regards the speaker's perspective and scope of attention. This paper focuses on (1) the attention paid to form vs function (.e. grammatical correctness vs meaning conveyed) and (2) the degree of detail provided in affective responses. Concretely, in order to access the letter writers' perspective towards the outside world and its agents, we focus on Verb Phrases in the first-person ('I do' and 'we do') and on attributive phrases ('the dangerous man') that describe outsiders, incomers, and the world around Kellis.

The paper draws on functional and sociolinguistic frameworks. Two distinctions are particularly important: one between (what we believe is) the objective truth and contemporaries' subjective perception, and a second between psychological states and their manifestation in the linguistic output. The paper correlates the affective responses in the data with philosophical theories of liberty in order to describe further the subjective perception of socio-religious pressures by the villagers of Kellis.

Keywords: Affective utterances; Coptic private letters; Kellis; Lexicology; Manichaeism

1. Introduction

In fourth-century CE Egypt, pressures on groups practising minority beliefs were mounting. One such group was the Manichaeans of Kellis, a small village in the western desert. From the villagers' epistolary correspondence, we can gather how they perceived and evaluated their surroundings. Their description of the socio-religious landscape of the period lets us glimpse at the perspective of religious minority groups. By contrast, the perspective of the majority oppressors is well-documented in literature and documents (such as letters, petitions, contracts, wills, and reports).

The present chapter delves into perception, affection, and projection. Perception refers to the way people view, react to and conceptualise events. Since the same event can be perceived differently, someone's perception is different from the objective truth, the actual event. Affection refers to people's evaluation of events. Evaluation, whether positive or negative, is always subjective and thus differs between individuals. Projection refers to the way people conflate their own perception and affective response to an event with the objective truth. Projection is natural as nobody is ever in possession of the whole truth or has an outside perspective when involved or affected by events.

The central hypothesis is the Kellis axiom: *x (the villagers of Kellis) is free from y (socio-religious pressures) to do z (practice their beliefs) through z*ing (forming a close-knit social network*). To test this hypothesis, we explore the actual manifestation of subjective responses to an as objective conceptualised state. In other words, we look at the written correspondence the villagers left behind and specifically at their reactions to the outside world. Unlike Uljas' contribution on morphological means of expressing compulsion and control, the present chapter takes a rather lexical approach to the matter, focussing on psych verbs, a clearly defined category of lexical items.

The chapter is based on the concepts of spatiality, liberty, and emotions [Section 2]. These concepts are used to explore the Kellis axiom [Section 3]. The chapter relies on three data samples drawn from the documentary evidence from Kellis [Section 4]. To prove or disprove our hypothesis, the chapter uncovers and explains correlations between spatiality, liberty, and emotions in the context of the Manichaean community of Kellis [Section 5]. It finishes with a brief summary and conclusion [Section 6].

2. Key concepts

The three key concepts relate to perception, affection, and projection, the parameters needed to assess affective responses to socio-religious pressures in the western desert. Space and spatiality relate to the effects of the location of Kellis in the western desert (perception). Liberty relates to the conceptualisation of socio-religious pressures and obstacles in the Manichaean community (projection). Emotions and their link to language and cognition are our key to people's responses to their surroundings (affection).

2.1 Spatiality – Kellis

Britain[1] shows space to be a multi-layered concept consisting of geometric, manmade, and attitudinally conditioned space:

> "1 **Euclidean space** – the objective, geometric, socially divorced space of mathematics and physics. When we measure the land area of New Zealand or the as-the-crow-flies distance from Portland to Pittsburgh, it is Euclidean space that we are measuring.
>
> 2 **Social space** – the space shaped by social organisation and human agency, by the human manipulation of the landscape, by the creation of a built environment and by the relationship of these to the way the state spatially organises and controls at a political level.
>
> 3 **Perceived space** – how civil society perceives its immediate and not so immediate environments – important given the way people's environmental perceptions and attitudes construct and are constructed by everyday practice."[2]

This tripartite model of space accounts for borders and boundaries of several kinds. Neither borders nor boundaries exist in Euclidean space, but only a large distance between places would indicate that contact between two places is unlikely; political, social, economic, and religious boundaries and borders exist in social space, where manmade physical obstacles are considered; boundaries and borders of an attitudinal or ideological kind are relevant at the level of perceived space.

[1] D. Britain, 'Space, Diffusion, and Mobility', in J. K. Chambers and N. Schilling (eds), *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change* (Blackwell Handbooks in Linguistics 80 – Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013 – 2nd edn), 364–373.

[2] Britain, 'Space, Diffusion, and Mobility', 472.

For illustration, Britain uses the boundary between two major isoglosses in England, that is the ʊ / ʌ in 'some' and æ / ɑ: in 'chaff'.[3] The dialect boundary runs through the Fens in East Anglia and the Midlands. Euclidean space cannot explain the location of this dialect boundary as it is neither the exact middle of England or the United Kingdom nor are there any other geometric reasons. Social space holds the key, including the location of major roads, railways, waterways, bus lines, and the population density in the areas in question. These connections, or the lack thereof, explain why contact in the transition zone surrounding the boundary line is sparse, such that different isoglosses exist on either side of this manmade boundary. Perceived space explains the persistence of the dialect boundary. Due to the lack of manmade connecting lines and due to local identities, which manifest themselves partly in people's speech, the dialect boundary is not getting blurred through people establishing regular contact and convergence patterns.

The link between people's linguistic choices and their social surroundings is reciprocal.[4] One may model their linguistic choices on a social setting (e.g. the use of *vous* vis-à-vis *tu* in French when conversing with someone less familiar), or shape their social surroundings by means of linguistic choices (e.g. the use of *leet* in the IT community to refer to someone who is technologically skilled, a lexical item that is nonsensical outside the in-group). Thus, linguistic choices can create unity and separation. The more groups of people are in contact, the more opportunity there is to negotiate, adopt, and assimilate the others' linguistic choices. Conversely, the less contact, the less opportunity there is.

Our location of interest is the village of Kellis in the Dakhla Oasis in the western Egyptian desert.[5] The Dakhla Oasis is one of several, comparatively well-linked oases in the western desert. Yet, travel to the nearest city in the Nile valley (Thebes) took approximately two weeks, under ideal travel conditions.[6] Nonetheless, contacts with the Nile valley were apparently nurtured by the villagers for economic and religious reasons.[7] In particular, business involving wool and dye as well as supplies for further processing is frequently discussed in letters (*P. Kell. Copt*. 12, 19, 37, 71, 75, 76, 78, 79, 96, 105, and 109). Our textual witnesses from Kellis date from the second half of the fourth century CE[8] and are written in a specific dialect of Coptic, L*. L* is a Southern Egyptian dialect with some distinctive regionalisms.[9]

The village covers an area of about one square kilometre with structures consisting of mud brick. The area can be subdivided into (i) Houses 1–3 and the North Building, (ii) House 4, and (iii) the Temple area.[10] These areas may represent smaller subordinate social networks (i.e. (extended) families).[11] Kellis was home to a Manichaean community with the Teacher as its pivotal figure.[12] He remains ill-defined in textual sources, perhaps deliberately for security-related reasons.

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[3] L. McKenzie, G. Bailey and D. Turton, 'Our Dialects: Mapping variation in English in the UK', in L. McKenzie, G. Bailey and D. Turton (eds), *Our Dialects: Mapping variation in English in the UK* (Manchester: University of Manchester, 2016), <https://projects.alc.manchester.ac.uk/ukdialectmaps/>.

[4] J. Hamers and M. Blanc, *Bilinguality and Bilingualism*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000 – 2nd edn), 9; Y. Matras, *Language Contact* (Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 53–57; Y. Matras, 'Why Is the Borrowing of Inflectional Morphology Dispreferred?', in F. Gardani, P. Arkadiev and N. Amiridze (eds), *Borrowed Morphology* (Berlin and Boston: Mouton de Gruyter, 2015), 47–80; F. Meakins, 'Mixed Languages', in P. Bakker and Y. Matras (eds), *Contact Languages: A Comprehensive Guide, vol. 6: Language Contact and Bilingualism* (Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter, 2013), 186; S. Thomason, *Language Contact* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), 47.

[5] R. Talbert, *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), fig. 79.

[6] W. Scheidel and E. Meeks, 'ORBIS', Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World (Stanford: Stanford University, 2013), <http://orbis.stanford.edu/orbis2012/>.

[7] I. Gardner *et al.*, *Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis, vol. 9: Monograph Dakhleh Oasis Project* (Oxford: Oxbow, 1999), 11–14.

[8] Gardner *et al.*, 9:8–12.

[9] V. Fendel, 'The Paradox of Kellis (Western Egyptian Desert)', *Journal for Graeco-Roman Studies* 58/3 (2019), 101–133.

[10] Gardner *et al.*, *Coptic Documentary Texts*; I. Gardner *et al.*, *Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis, vol. 16: Monograph Dakhleh Oasis Project* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2014).

[11] H. S. F. Teigen, *The Manichaean Church in Kellis* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2021), 98–106.

[12] I. Gardner, 'A Letter from the Teacher: Some Comments on Letter-Writing and the Manichaean Community of IVth Century Egypt', in L. Painchaud and P-H. Poirier (eds), *Coptica – Gnostica – Manichaica: Mélanges offerts à Wolf-Peter Funk, vol. 7* (Bibliothèque

2.2 Liberty – Manichaeism

We conceptualise compulsion and control by means of theories of liberty.[13] MacCallum famously established the triadic relation *x is (not) free from y to (not) do / become z*.[14] *X* is an agent, usually a human individual; *y* is an obstacle or constraint of some kind; *z* is the agent's liberty, that which the agent could do if there was not *y*.

We are specifically interested in the *y* component. Berlin, in his framework of negative liberty, defines the *y* component as external artificial interference, such as a fence or a security guard.[15] In his framework of positive liberty, Taylor defines the *y* component as inauthentic forces including internal obstacles, such as desires.[16] Correlated with Britain's three perspectives on space, Berlin's *y* component falls into the category of social space and Taylor's into the category of perceived space.

Building on McCallum's work, Taylor established the quadratic relation *x is (not) free from y to (not) do / become z in or through z*-ing*.[17] The *z** component refers to the exercise of some ability by the agent. There are two schools of thought: Arendt advocates a non-instrumental exercise concept, that is 'in *z**-ing';[18] Skinner is in favour of an instrumental exercise concept, that is 'through *z**-ing'.[19] In essence, Arendt considers the agent's actions constitutive of freedom, whereas Skinner considers the agent's actions instrumental to freedom.

In the context of the Kellian villagers, we can define *x* and *z* unambiguously, thus our main interest lies with the nature of the *y* and *z** components. To explore these, we need to look at Manichaeism and the majority-minority relationships in Kellis.

Manichaeism is a belief based on the basic dualism between light and darkness. The community of believers has clear hierarchical structures: There are larger groups called *ecclesiae*, superiors called elects, inferiors called *catechumens*,[20] along with believers and followers. There seem to be several *catechumens* amongst the Kellian villagers. Moreover, the Teacher, who remains unnamed, may represent one of the elects. He certainly holds a comparatively high position within the Kellian community of believers. The Teacher is mentioned in *P. Kell. Copt*. 19, 20, 24, 25, and 29, while *P. Kell. Copt*. 31 is written by the Teacher.[21]

With Christianity spreading and gaining in importance, as is obvious from the Edicts of Milan (313 CE) and Thessalonica (380 CE),[22] Manichaeism faced criticism and perhaps prosecution. The numerous anti-Manichaean literary texts attest to this, including Hegemonius' *Acta Archelai* and Augustine's *De natura boni*.[23] Brand attributes mentions of suffering in the letters from Kellis to a 'discourse of suffering' which

Copte de Nag Hammadi Études – Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2006), 317–323; Gardner *et al.*, *Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis*, 1999, 9:75.

[13] J. Filling, 'Liberty', in M. Gibbons (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Political Thought* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015).

[14] G. MacCallum, 'Negative and Positive Freedom', *Philosophical Review* 76/3 (1967), 312–334.

[15] I. Berlin, *Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002 – ed. H. Hardy).

[16] C. Taylor, 'What's Wrong with Negative Liberty', in D. Miller (ed.), *Liberty Reader* (London: Routledge, 2016), 141–62.

[17] Taylor, 'What's Wrong with Negative Liberty'.

[18] H. Arendt, *On Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin – Pelican Books, 1973).

[19] Q. Skinner, 'The Paradoxes of Political Liberty', in D. Miller (ed.), *Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 183–205.

[20] Gardner *et al.*, *Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis*, 1999, 9:74; Samuel Lieu, 'Manichaeism', in S. A. Harvey and D. Hunter (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 221–36.

[21] Gardner, 'A Letter from the Teacher', in Gardner *et al.*, *Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis*, 2014, 16:207–208.

[22] M. Depauw and W. Clarysse, 'How Christian Was Fourth Century Egypt? Onomastic Perspectives on Conversion', *Vigiliae Christianae* 67/4 (2013), 407–435; E. Wipszycka, 'The Institutional Church', in R. Bagnall (ed.), *Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300–700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 331–349.

[23] Lieu, 'Manichaeism', 231–233.

he considers essential in the Manichaean worldview.[24] Conversely, Teigen holds that 'threats and abuse are enough to create an atmosphere of persecution, and strengthen in/out group dynamics'.[25] Given the increasing political pressures on the Manichaeans in the fifth century CE[26] *vis-à-vis* the increasing importance of Christian institutions,[27] we side with Teigen. Manichaean communities had coping mechanisms, such as maintaining members' anonymity and dissociating themselves from others.[28] The latter strategy is, linguistically speaking, not as pronounced in Kellis.[29]

Within the village boundaries, Manichaeism touched most likely every inhabitant, whether they were ardent followers or had loose ties to the Manichaean aspect of communal life. The village community is small enough to make this assumption feasible. While an exact estimate of the population size is difficult, data on population density and its extremes nowadays can give us a ballpark figure.[30] Most likely, the population size was somewhere between 500 and 1000. Moreover, Teigen casts doubt on whether καθολική in the Kellis documents refers to a mainstream religion ('catholic') or is to be taken as 'main / principal'.[31] Kaper highlights that the temples in the western oases show stylistic mixtures that seem 'less bound by tradition', thus indicating an open-minded community.[32] Members of the community, even if not adhering to Manichaeism, must have tolerated Manichaean culture.

Once the villagers left their safe haven, where they held a majority, the situation radically changed. In the whole of Egypt, Christianity was spreading and the Manichaeans formed a very small group of non-mainstream believers. Thus, in absolute terms (i.e. measured against the entire population of Egypt), the villagers represented a minority that was subject to compulsion.

2.3 Emotions – Dataset

The villagers' response to external pressures manifests itself in their emotional responses to strangers, borders and journeys out of their safe haven. Emotion is 'an imprecise term for any affective psychological state, including happiness, sadness, anger, disgust, surprise, and fear'.[33] Linguistically, these psychological states can manifest in three types of outputs: Expressive utterances reflect the speaker's feelings directly, such as 'yike! / yuk!' as an expression of disgust when tasting food.[34] Emotive utterances trigger a reaction, such as advertisement slogans or charity appeals. Affective utterances subjectively evaluate a situation, such as 'I find that food disgusting'.[35] The villagers' affective utterances regarding strangers, borders, and journeys out of Kellis reflect their perception of compulsion generated by their surroundings.

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[24] Mattias Brand, 'In the Footsteps of the Apostles of Light: Persecution and the Manichaean Discourse of Suffering', in W. Mayer and É. Fournier (eds), *Heirs of Roman Persecution* (London: Routledge, 2019), 123–125.

[25] Teigen, *Manichaean Church*, 176.

[26] Brand, 'In the Footsteps of the Apostles of Light', 112.

[27] e.g. J.-L. Fournet, *The Rise of Coptic: Egyptian versus Greek in Late Antiquity* (Rostovtzeff Lectures – Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2019), chapter 4; Wipszycka, 'The Institutional Church'.

[28] R. Hickey, 'Supraregionalisation and Dissociation', in J. Chambers and N. Schilling (eds), *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 537–554.

[29] Fendel, 'The Paradox of Kellis'.

[30] H. Ritchie, 'Which Countries Are Most Densely Populated?', *Our World in Data* (Oxford: University of Oxford and Global Change Data Lab, 2019), <https://ourworldindata.org/most-densely-populated-countries>.

[31] Teigen, *Manichaean Church*, 169–171.

[32] O. Kaper, 'The Western Oases', in C. Riggs (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 721–725.

[33] D. Chandler and R. Munday, *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[34] A. Foolen, 'The Relevance of Emotion for Language and Linguistics', in A. Foolen *et al.* (eds), *Moving Ourselves, Moving Others: Motion and Emotion in Intersubjectivity, Consciousness and Language*, *vol. 6*: *Consciousness and Emotion* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2012), 349–350.

[35] Foolen, 'Relevance of Emotion', 349–350.

Following Out *et al.*, we assess the strength of emotion by exploring two biases.[36] Attentional bias refers to the cognitive scope with regard to an emotion. The cognitive scope is the number of aspects one considers. Generally speaking, positive emotions broaden cognitive scope, whereas negative emotions narrow it. Emotions of low motivational intensity broaden cognitive scope, whereas emotions of high motivational intensity narrow it. Thus, when looking at responses to compulsion and control, we expect negative emotions of high motivational intensity and thus a narrow cognitive scope. Egocentricity bias refers to using not one's own but the interlocutor's perspective as a reference point. Generally speaking, positive emotions make this shift in perspective less likely, whereas negative emotions make it more likely. Thus, when looking at responses to compulsion and control, we expect shifts to the interlocutor's perspective.

Three aspects make affective utterances a challenging source: (i) their form and acceptability are culturally and situationally conditioned, (ii) they are subjective responses to a state (which may differ from the actual state), and (iii) they constitute a category with blurry boundaries because they are personal. These are aspects to account for in the data analysis.

The dataset is designed to allow for exploration of the actual manifestation of subjective responses to an as objective conceptualised state. We therefore choose the genre 'letter' and the register 'private'. A genre is a culturally defined text type. Genre markers usually appear only at the beginning and end of a text. Apart from letters, fairy tales are a good example (*Once upon a time …*).[37] A register is a situationally conditioned language variety. Register-related features appear throughout the spoken or written linguistic output in question. An example is the grammatical register *vous* vs *tu* in French.[38] The pool of data is the Coptic private letters from Kellis.[39] The genre 'letter' is minimally formalised, in that genre markers are limited to the beginning and end whereas the letter body is formulated freely by the writer. The register 'private' maximises the chance of affective utterances in writing. They are less likely in more formal registers, such as official documents.[40]

We examine the linguistic output reflecting emotional involvement because we cannot access internalised feelings. We examine affective responses to an event or state because these show people's subjective evaluation of a situation based on their own perception. We thus inevitably look at an as objective conceptualised state, which may differ from the historical reality.[41] This state is socio-religious pressures on the Manichaean community from largely Christian surroundings.

Pressures, compulsion, and control are all situated in the negative section of the semantic field of influence and impact. Therefore, we look at verbs that describe a psychological state (psych verbs)

[36] C. Out, M. Goudbeek, and E. Krahmer, 'Do Speaker's Emotions Influence Their Language Production? Studying the Influence of Disgust and Amusement on Alignment in Interactive Reference', in R. Granger, U. Hahn and R. Sutton (eds), *Proceedings of the 39th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society: Computational Foundations of Cognition* (London: Cognitive Science Society, 2017), 2846.

[37] D. Biber and S. Conrad, *Register, Genre, and Style* (Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2.

[38] Biber and Conrad, *Register, Genre, and Style*, 6–11 and 40.

[39] The only individuals from whom letters in Greek and Coptic are preserved are Pekysis and Pamour. The Greek letters are overall either phatic or business-focused (incl. *P. Kell.* 1 74 and 76 on debt payments). Clerical institutions are profiled as places of education (e.g. *P. Kell.* 1 12 and 72). Many expressions of emotion are pragmaticalised (e.g. θαυμάζω πῶς / ὅπως 'I am surprised that').

[40] F. Heylighen and J.-M. Dewaele, 'Variation in the Contextuality of Language: An Empirical Measure', *Foundations of Science* 7/3 (2002): 293–340; F. Heylighen and J.-M. Dewaele, 'Formality of Language: Definition, Measurement and Behavioral Determinants', *Internal Report, Center 'Leo Apostel', Free University of Brussels* (1999), 1–38.

[41] An example close to home for the organisers of the conference is the often-quadrangular open spaces in Cambridge and Oxford colleges. They are referred to as 'quads' in Oxford and 'courts' in Cambridge. The architectural units do not show marked differences, but the local tradition has defined different terms. Thus, we have an actual reality (an architectural unit) and conceptualisations of this reality in the form of terminology. The choice of terminology is affective.

referring to negative emotions, specifically physical pain and mental distress. We consider verb phrases in the first person singular and plural as well as semantically equivalent structures, such as ⲡⲁ-ϩⲏⲧ (*pa-hēt*, 'my heart') in the subject slot, in order to access our writers' perspective as well as negative and causative imperatives that clearly project the emotion onto the addressee. The agents of pressures, compulsion, and control are located in the outside world. Therefore, we look at affective utterances referring to or involving references to strangers, borders, and journeys out of the safe haven of the village.

3. Hypothesis

3.1 The Kellis Axiom

The Kellis axiom is in the form of a quadratic relation, an adaptation of the conceptualisation of liberty in the republican tradition, that is *(1) x, the citizen, is free (2) from y, domination, (3*) through z*-ing, acting virtuously, (3) to z, act as she otherwise could*.[42] We take domination in the widest possible sense, akin to arbitrary unconstrained interference.

> *The Kellis axiom: x (the villagers of Kellis) is free from y (socio-religious pressures) to do z (practice their beliefs) through z*ing (forming a close-knit social network)*

The nature of the y and z* components is to be evaluated. As a starting point, the y component refers to compulsion and control due to the villagers' belief and the z* component is taken as instrumental assuming that the villagers react to / counteract the external interference with their way of life. They form an in-group, a close-knit social network, with strong ties between members.[43] Teigen's network analysis of the Kellis documents shows a close-knit (i.e. a high-degree of mutual conversance) multiplex (i.e. multiple links between individuals) socio-centric (i.e. not centred on one individual) social network.[44] Thus, there is support from within and dissociation from the outside.

Two small data samples serve to illustrate the interrelations between the villagers. Sample one consists of trust-issue passages, such as *P. Kell. Copt.* 26.5 ⲧ-ⲉϯ-ⲕⲁ-ϩⲧⲁⲓ-ⲧ ⲁⲣⲁ-ⲥ ⲙⲛⲛⲥⲁ ⲡ-ϫⲁⲓⲥ (*t-eti-ka-htai-t ara-s mnnsa p-dʲais*, 'The one who I trust after the lord'). Trust-issue passages appear primarily in the fourth-century CE monastic archives of Apa Nepheros and Apa John,[45] where we observe a subtle hierarchy between the monastic figure and the writer. Conversely, relevant passages in the letters from Kellis do not reflect any hierarchy between the villagers. The passages highlight the close-knit social network in the village community which is based on mutual trust and reliability.

Sample two consists of passages referring to and written by The Teacher. The Teacher seems to travel and lets villagers join him in order for them to gain education, such as Piene in the passage below (also the writer and his brother in *P. Kell. Copt.* 25, and the writer of *P. Kell. Copt.* 29):

P. Kell. Copt. 20.24–26

ⲡⲓⲉⲛⲉ	ⲇⲉ	ⲁ	ⲡ-ⲛⲁⲃ	ⲡ-ⲥⲁϩ	ⲕⲁ-ⲫ	ⲉ-ⲫ- ⲙ[ⲁϩ]ⲉ	ⲛⲉⲙⲉ-ⲫ
Piene	*de*	*a*	*p-nakʲ*	*p-sah*	*ka-f*	*e-f-m[ah]e*	*neme-f*

[42] Filling, 'Liberty', 9.

[43] A. Bergs, 'The Uniformitarian Principle and the Risk of Anachronisms in Language and Social History', in J. H. Campoy and J. C. Silvestre (eds), *The Handbook of Historical Sociolinguistics* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 93–96; J. Milroy and L. Milroy, *Authority in Language: Investigating Standard English* (Routledge Linguistics Classics – London: Routledge, 2012 – 4th edn), 49–50.

[44] Teigen, *Manichaean Church*, 97–106.

[45] The only exception is *P. Cair. Masp. 1.67068*, *l.* 9 from the sixth-century CE archive of the nobleman Dioscoros.

ⲁ-ⲧⲣⲉ-ⲩ-ⲍⲓ-ⲥⲃⲱ	ⲁ-ⲙⲛⲧ-ⲣⲱⲙⲁⲓⲟⲥ	ⲩ-ⲧⲥⲉⲃⲟ	ⲙⲙⲁ-ⲩ	ⲕⲁⲗⲱⲥ
a-tre-f-ǯi-sbō	*a-mnt-rōmaios*	*f-tsebo*	*mma-f*	*kalōs*

‘But Piene, **the great teacher** let him go with him so he may learn the Roman language / Latin. **He educates him well.’**

The Teacher thus forms the centre of a community of practice. A community of practice is a group of people that interact in order to share knowledge and/or experience.[46] Schools are prime examples.

The letter written by the Teacher to some villagers reveals why he remains unnamed:

P. Kell. Copt. 31.53–55

ⲉ-ϣⲁⲧⲉ-ⲟⲩⲱ	ⲉ-ⲧⲉ-ⲱϣ	ⲙⲙⲁ-[ⲥ]	ⲍⲁⲩ-ⲥ	ⲁⲛ	ⲙ-ⲡⲁ-ϣⲏⲣⲉ
e-šate-ouō	*e-te-ōš*	*mma-[s]*	*ǯau-s*	*an*	*m-pa-šēre*
ⲯⲛ	ⲟⲩ-ⲱⲣⲍ	ⲙⲛⲧⲣⲉ-ⲧⲛ-ⲕⲁ-ⲥ	ⲯⲁⲧⲛ-ⲧⲏⲛⲉ	ⲥ-ⲯⲉⲓⲉ	ⲁ-ⲧⲟⲧ-ⲩ
hn	*ou-ōrǯ*	*mntre-tn-ka-s*	*hatn-tēne*	*s-heie*	*a-tot-f*
ⲁ-ⲣⲱⲙⲉ	ⲉⲩ	ⲣⲱ	ⲧⲉ	ϯ-ⲕⲉ-ⲁⲛⲁⲅⲕⲏ	
a-rōme	*eu*	*rō*	*te*	*ti-ke-anagkē*	

‘As soon as you have finished reading it, send it to my son for sure. Do not let yourself keep it with you. It (might) fall into somebody’s hand. What a constraint!’

The Manichaeans’ desire for anonymity and dissociation from society is explicable given the ongoing criticism as expressed in contemporary literature and the prosecution of non-mainstream faiths especially after the fourth-century CE edicts, which favoured Christianity.

3.2 Caveats and mediators

Two sets of caveats are necessary. The first relates to the circumstances in and around Kellis, the second to the modern researcher’s view on the data.

Contact with the Nile valley as a result of business transactions and educational ambitions existed and is referenced in the letters from Kellis. There was apparently no physical restraint on leaving the village. Moreover, the Kellian variety of Coptic is a general Southern Egyptian variety with some regionalisms.[47] Thus, there is no evidence for an attempt at a complete breakdown of communication with the world outside the village.[48] In addition, Gardner *et al.* emphasise that this is a village community practicing the Manichaean belief rather than clerical superiors.[49] Naturally, such a community draws less attention to their religious practices than clerical superiors. Taken together, these three caveats show that the nature of the *y* component of the axiom is in the sense of positive rather than negative liberty and that we are unlikely to find extreme opinions reflected in the data.

[46] L. Unwin, J. Hughes and N. Jewson, *Communities of Practice: Critical Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2007).
[47] Fendel, ‘The Paradox of Kellis’.
[48] See e.g. B. Blake, *Secret Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), chapter 4; J. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
[49] Gardner *et al.*, *Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis*, 1999, 9:79.

People's opinions are often internalised feelings and only those that are written down are accessible to us. Questions of genre and register as well as social pressures mediate the acceptability of affective utterances in writing. While we can select a genre and register with minimal restrictions attached, we cannot control for social pressures but only observe them, often in the form of missing values in the data. Moreover, linguistic developments including grammaticalisation (i.e. the process by which an item moves from the lexical into the grammatical domain),[50] pragmaticalisation (i.e. the process by which an item moves from the lexical or grammatical domains into the pragmatic domain),[51] and lexicalisation (i.e. the process by which an item moves further into the lexical domain and usually loses semantic compositionality),[52] expose the modern researcher to the risk of false positives. For example, 'I am afraid' in 'I am afraid I cannot help you' is a pragmaticalised hedge in English rather than an affective utterance. A hedge is any lexical or structural element that induces tentativeness into the expression.[53] Other English examples include *sort of*, *more or less* and parenthetical *I mean*.[54]

4. Data

4.1 Psych verbs

The data collection concerning psych verbs in the Coptic private letters from Kellis (89 letters) was done through a verb index. Lemmata (i.e. the dictionary forms of lexical stems) relating to physical pain and mental distress were extracted: ⲗⲱϫϩ (*lōdʲh*, 'to be in anguish'), (ϫⲓ)ⲙⲕⲁϩ (*(dʲi) mkah* 'to suffer pain'), ⲯⲱⲛⲉ (*šōne* 'to be ill'), ⲣ-ⲓⲁⲃⲉ (*r-iabe* 'to develop pus'); (ⲣ-ⲡ)ⲋⲓⲥⲉ (*(r-p)hise* 'to be troubled'), ⲯⲧⲟⲣⲧⲣ (*štortr* 'to be disturbed'), ⲣ-ⲗⲩⲡⲏ (*r-lupē* 'to grieve'), ⲣ-ⲫⲑⲟⲛⲓ (*r-pʰtoni* 'to be ill-willed'). The relevant instances were checked for being (i) in the first person singular or plural and (ii) intransitive[55] so as to ensure that the writer is detailing their own emotional involvement. This results in 34 relevant instances, of which 13 relate to physical pain and 21 to mental distress.[56] This number is small compared to the number of lemmata (326) and verb phrases (2999) in the sample.

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[50] T. Breban, 'Diagnosing Grammatical Change in English', in *LAGB 2019* (London: LAGB Annual Meeting, 2019), <https://lagb.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Breban.pdf>; P. Hopper and E. Traugott, *Grammaticalization* (Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003 – 2nd edn); C. Marchello-Nizia, *Grammaticalisation et changement linguistique* (Brussels: De Boeck & Larcier, 2006); E. Traugott and G. Trousdale, *Gradience, Gradualness and Grammaticalization* (Typological Studies in Language 90 – Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2010).

[51] J-M. Debaisieux, 'Les Conjonctions En Emplois Discursifs: Pragmaticalisation Ou Polyfonctionnalite Structurelle', in G. Dostie and F. Lefeuvre (eds), *Lexique, Grammaire, Discours: Les Marqueurs Discursifs* (Paris: Honoré Champion éditeur, 2017), 343–363; H-J. Deulofeu, 'Quel statut pour l'élément QUE en français contemporain ?', *Langue française* 158/2 (2008), 29–52; A. Patard, 'Réflexions sur l'origine de l'insubordination. Le cas de trois insubordonnées hypothétiques du français', *Langages* 196/4 (2014), 109–130.

[52] Hopper and Traugott, *Grammaticalization*; L. Lipka, 'Lexicalization and Institutionalization in English and German', *Linguistica Pragensia* 1 (1992), 1–13; Traugott and Trousdale, *Gradience, Gradualness and Grammaticalization*.

[53] S. Hulleberg Johansen, 'A Contrastive Approach to the Types of Hedging Strategies Used in Norwegian and English Informal Spoken Conversations', *Contrastive Pragmatics* 2/1 (2021), 82.

[54] D. Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, Language Library (Language Library – Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 2008 – 6th edn), 227.

[55] Intransitive here refers to the fact that there is no direct object (i.e. an entity affected by the action, but that the action affects the subject, for example 'I am hurting' vs 'I am hurting him').

[56] Physical pain: *P. Kell. Copt.* 31.30–34; *P. Kell. Copt.* 71.39; *P. Kell. Copt.* 80.15; *P. Kell. Copt.* 110.25–26; *P. Kell. Copt.* 128.18–19; *P. Kell. Copt.* 31.47–48; *P. Kell. Copt.* 64.31; *P. Kell. Copt.* 115.17–19; *P. Kell. Copt.* 24.21–22; *P. Kell. Copt.* 80.23; *P. Kell. Copt.* 40.24; *P. Kell. Copt.* 72.33–34; *P. Kell. Copt.* 82.13–14. Mental distress: *P. Kell. Copt.* 20.16; *P. Kell. Copt.* 24.5; *P. Kell. Copt.* 32.46; *P. Kell. Copt.* 68.36; *P. Kell. Copt.* 70.34; *P. Kell. Copt.* 70.40–41; *P. Kell. Copt.* 78.40; *P. Kell. Copt.* 79.39; *P. Kell. Copt.* 90.10–11; *P. Kell. Copt.* 124.9–10; *P. Kell. Copt.* 34.18–19; *P. Kell. Copt.* 81.10–12; *P. Kell. Copt.* 78.46–47; *P. Kell. Copt.* 31.51; *P. Kell. Copt.* 22.68; *P. Kell. Copt.* 20.16; *P. Kell. Copt.* 40.30; *P. Kell. Copt.* 25.52–56; *P. Kell. Copt.* 50.25–27; *P. Kell. Copt.* 50.30–31; *P. Kell. Copt.* 105.25–26.

4.2 The outside

The data collection concerning the outside world was done through an index of lemmata, the psych verb passages, and passages relating to the Teacher already collected, as well as translations[57] of the whole corpus of texts. These resources were searched for 'stranger' / 'strange' / 'foreigner' / 'foreign', 'border', 'outside' / 'outsider', and their Coptic equivalents. Instances are conspicuously few, only seven in number.

The instances reflect three approaches to outsiders and the outside world: We see cooperation, in that foreigners can serve as couriers (*P. Kell. Copt.* 17.14–15) and are occasionally included in greetings (*P. Kell. Copt*. 92.37–38). We witness suspicion, as poignantly in *P. Kell. Copt*. 31.53–55 [Section 3.1] and *P. Kell. Copt*. 122.19, when the writer pleads with the addressee not to stay with a barbarian. Finally, we observe safety concerns particularly regarding ventures out of the familiar sphere. In *P. Kell. Copt*. 50.25–31, the writer describes his unfair treatment at a border; in *P. Kell. Copt*. 105.25–26, the writer complains about being harassed while outside; in *P. Kell. Copt*. 105.45–46, the writer almost nostalgically adds that he will not forget his village.

It can be questioned how these passages reflect social tensions. On the one hand, as Teigen notes, small acts of violence or trouble create an atmosphere of threats and discomfort,[58] similarly to modern-day discrimination against, or even economic sanctions on, groups of people. On the other hand, writers select their topics carefully. Phatic letters exist (i.e. written only in order to maintain contact), but most letters aim to solve a problem by requesting the addressee's help, understanding, or the like. *P. Kell. Copt*. 50 and 105 reflect writers' difficulties in the world outside the village community. They report back as a warning and so as to seek help or sympathy.

4.3 Biases

The egocentricity bias and the attentional bias [Section 2.3] were operationalised on the data collected. Attentional bias refers to the cognitive scope with regard to an emotion. This scope is narrow for intensive negative emotions. Hence, we expect someone to focus on one emotion extensively. Therefore, the number of words used to expand on each relevant instance of a psych verb was used as a measure. The more words, the more attentionally biased the instance. For example, in *P. Kell. Copt*. 31.47–48 ⲡ-ⲙⲁ ⲙⲁϧⲥ ⲧⲟⲛⲟⲩ (*p-ma mak^{h}h tonou*, 'the place is very painful'), we count one word added to the psych verb (ⲧⲟⲛⲟⲩ, *tonou*). There are numerous traditions of word division in Coptic. Here, grammatical items were considered words, such as prepositions, articles, nouns, and verbs. The numeric summary for this is given below [Table 1]:

Attentional bias →

Number of items added to the psych verb	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
(i) Physical pain (13 instances)	39%	23%	ø	Ø	15%	23%
(ii) Mental distress (21 instances)	47%	14%	5%	5%	10%	19%

Table 1. Numeric summary for the number of items added to psych verbs in specific contexts.

Most instances in each category, namely pain and distress, show no strong attentional bias. However, six letters (*P. Kell. Copt*. 20, 24, 31, 40, 78 and 80) show a gradual progression in attentional bias, in that

[57] All translations are my own.

[58] Teigen, *Manichaean Church*, 176.

the first relevant instance of an expression of pain or distress does not show any added elements, whereas the second (and, in *P. Kell. Copt.* 31, the third) shows several added elements. Furthermore, *P. Kell. Copt.* 50 accounts for two instances of maximum attentional bias. Both instances relate to the writer and his travel companion being held up at a border and treated discourteously. These observations show that affective utterances when present are often not strongly attentionally biased.

Egocentricity bias refers to using not one's own but the interlocutor's perspective as a reference point. This shift in perspective is more likely with negative than with positive emotions. Thus, we expect people to shift perspectives when expressing distress or pain. The pragmatic context of all relevant psych verbs was analysed for contrasts, counterpoints and references to the other. For example, in *P. Kell. Copt.* 32.46–48: ϵ-ι-ρ-λγπн· ⲁλλⲁ т-ογϵⲱтϵ м-п-ноγтϵ пⲁϫϵ-γ ϫϵ ⲁ-ϯ ⲁ-п-ογϫϵιтϵ (*e-i-r-lupē alla t-ouešte m-p-noute pad*ʲ*e-u d*ʲ*e a-ti a-p-oud*ʲ*eite*, 'I was distressed, but – thank god – they said that you have recovered'). The writer switches from the expression of his own mental distress to the addressee's situation. The numeric summary for such cases is shown below [Table 2]:

Egocentricity bias

Perspective taken	Selfish (i.e. sticking to one perspective)	Neutral (i.e. start of a new section)	Other (i.e. shift in perspective)	Lost
(i) Physical pain (13 instances)	46%	31%	15%	8%
(ii) Mental distress (21 instances)	66%	5%	24%	5%

Table 2. Numeric summary for attestations of different perspectives in relation to egocentricity bias.

The proportion of instances that show a shift in perspective is comparatively small. Instances of retaining the initially adopted perspective are clearly more frequent in expressions of mental distress than in those of physical pain. This difference could be culturally conditioned. The acceptability and preference for expressing types of feelings varies by culture (and language).[59] Perhaps, the expression of physical pain was socio-culturally more acceptable than that of mental distress. Overall, we see comparatively few changes in perspective, which would indicate that emotions were processed more shallowly due to being less intense in most instances. This aligns with our findings regarding attentional bias.

Finally, we correlate the findings for both biases [Table 3]. An accumulation of relevant instances of psych verbs correlates strongly with a high number of additional elements in instances and gradual progression of attentional bias. Conversely, shifts of attention hardly correlate with the former two categories.[60]

The two exceptions (bold in Table 3) are *P. Kell. Copt.* 31, which is a long and well-planned letter written by the Teacher to a group of believers,[61] and *P. Kell. Copt. 80*, which is a comparatively long letter asking the addressee to take care of some business and to keep up contacts. The letter uses greeting formulae

[59] e.g. J-M. Dewaele, 'Culture and Emotional Language', in F. Sharifian (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Language and Culture* (Routledge Handbooks in Linguistics – London: Routledge, 2014 – 1st edn), 357–370.

[60] *P. Kell. Copt.* 34.18–19 and *P. Kell. Copt.* 31.51 show weak attentional bias (i.e. one additional element), *P. Kell. Copt.* 115.17–19 might show some attentional bias implicitly: ⲁ н-ⲩнр[ϵ] н-ноннⲁ ⲩⲱнϵ ⲁ-γ-ноγ ⲁ-ι-ρ ιⲁвϵ ⲉⲱт мп-‹ι›-бн ⲑϵ н-ϵι 'Nonna's children were sick. They died. I developed pus. I did not find a way to come.'

[61] Relevant passages: *P. Kell. Copt.* 31.30–34 (pain, neither bias), 47–48 (pain, attentional bias), 51 (distress, attentional bias, shift of perspective).

Letters with ≥ 2 relevant instances	Letters ≥ 2 relevant instances and these instances relating to physical pain and mental distress	Instances with ≥ 2 additions	Instances with ≥ 2 additions & in letters that show progression in attentional bias	Instances with a shift in perspective following
P. Kell. Copt. 20	*P. Kell. Copt. 24*	*P. Kell. Copt. 20.16*	*P. Kell. Copt. 20.16*	***P. Kell. Copt. 31.51***
P. Kell. Copt. 24	*P. Kell. Copt. 31*	*P. Kell. Copt. 22.68*	*P. Kell. Copt. 24.21–22*	*P. Kell. Copt. 32.46*
P. Kell. Copt. 31	*P. Kell. Copt. 40*	*P. Kell. Copt. 24.21–22*	*P. Kell. Copt. 31.51*	*P. Kell. Copt. 34.18–19*
P. Kell. Copt. 40		*P. Kell. Copt. 25.52–56*	*P. Kell. Copt. 40.24*	*P. Kell. Copt. 70.34*
P. Kell. Copt. 50		*P. Kell. Copt. 31.51*	*P. Kell. Copt. 40.30*	***P. Kell. Copt. 80.15***
P. Kell. Copt. 68		*P. Kell. Copt. 40.24*	*P. Kell. Copt. 80.23*	*P. Kell. Copt. 90.10–11*
P. Kell. Copt. 78		*P. Kell. Copt. 40.30*		*P. Kell. Copt. 115.17–19*
P. Kell. Copt. 80		*P. Kell. Copt. 50.25–27*		
		P. Kell. Copt. 50.30–31		
		P. Kell. Copt. 72.33–34		
		P. Kell. Copt. 80.23		
		P. Kell. Copt. 82.13–14		
		P. Kell. Copt. 105.25–26		
8	3	13	6	7

Table 3. combined findings for both attentional and egocentricity bias.

as structural dividers. Both letters are clearly sectioned, which explains differences in tone in different instances of the same letter.

The lack of correlation between the two biases could be explained by the cognitive scope. When attentional bias is present, the cognitive scope is narrow and thus a shift in perspective is unlikely. When attentional bias is not present, the cognitive scope is wider and thus a shift in perspective becomes probable. If we have neither attentional bias nor a shift in perspective, the emotion is apparently processed shallowly. It is not very intense nor clearly negative. Generally speaking, emotions are apparently not expressed freely, as the generally low emotional involvement in relevant instances and the small number of relevant instances overall show.

5. Correlations

We consider the references to outsiders and the outside world in the context of this generally low level of emotional involvement in affective utterances. In total, there are seven relevant passages that cover three approaches to outsiders and the outside world [Section 4.2].

5.1 Journeys and borders

The way villagers come in contact with the outside world and its agents is by travelling. Journeys for business are comparatively common but usually do not elicit affective utterances from the writers. Yet, in *P. Kell. Copt.* 50 and *P. Kell. Copt.* 105, travellers evaluate their journeys as burdensome. These passages show attentional bias.

The writer of *P. Kell. Copt.* 50.25–31 paints a picture of random harassment at a border summing up the experience ⲉ-ⲛ-ⲉⲓⲥⲉ ϣⲁⲛⲧ-ⲟⲩ-ⲁⲡ-ⲛ ⲁ-ϣⲉ ⲁ-ⲛ-ⲉⲱⲣ ⲁ-ⲩ-ϣⲟⲩⲓⲧ (***h-n hise*** *šant-ou-ap-n a-še a-n-hōr a-u-*

šouit, '**We suffered** until they deemed us worthy of going to the storehouses, which were empty'). The writer of *P. Kell. Copt.* 105 states candidly that he will never forget his village (*l.* 45) after bemoaning his travel experience (*ll.* 25–26).

The outside world seems to be conceptualised as averse, a barrier, while attentional bias can be observed. This feeds into the *y* component of our axiom.

5.2 Foreigners and strangers

How the villagers interact with outsiders seems to vary by situation. The Teacher sends a clear message of suspicion against outsiders to his followers in *P. Kell. Copt.* 31.53–55, when he warns them of the danger involved in having a letter written by him in one's possession [Section 3.1]. This passage itself reflects little emotional involvement. Yet, an affective utterance referring to mental distress immediately precedes and shows attentional bias: *P. Kell. Copt.* 31.51 ⲙⲛ-ⲧⲣ-ⲟⲩ-ⲣ-ϕⲑⲟⲛⲓ ⲁⲣⲱ-ⲧⲛ ... (*mn-tr-ou-r-pʰtʰoni arō-tn* ..., 'Do not let them envy you ...'). The negative causative imperative projects the emotion onto the addressees. The Teacher's subsequent warning shifts the point of reference to the primary recipient of the letter, a woman who remains unnamed. Except for this passage, neither attentional bias nor a shift in perspective affects any passage discussing outsiders, including *P. Kell. Copt.* 122.19, when the addressee is warned not to stay with a barbarian. The writer of *P. Kell. Copt.* 17 implies that outsiders may be trusted as messengers (*ll.* 14–15) and the writer of *P. Kell. Copt.* 92 includes some outsiders in his greetings.

Apparently, no societal stigmata and thus attitudinal boundaries strong enough to cut off interaction with the outside world existed. Affective utterances are subjective and individual. Therefore, different approaches to the outside world can coexist unless an overriding stigma or impenetrable barrier exists.

6. Summary and conclusion

To summarise, we defined an axiom to describe compulsion and control affecting the villagers of Kellis due to their Manichaean belief. The axiom relies on theories of spatiality and liberty, in that we are interested in the kind of barriers the villagers have to overcome (*y* component) and their coping strategies (*z** component). The axiom was tested by investigating the affective utterances in the corpus of Coptic private letters from Kellis and correlating these utterances with mentions of foreigners, strangers and the outside world.

The *y* component (the barrier or obstacle) seems to be in the sense of positive liberty and thus falls into the domain of perceived space. There is no evidence for physical attacks; the evidence shows attitudinal barriers, including fears, towards leaving the safe haven of the village. The *z** component seems to be instrumental in light of comments by, for example, the Teacher, who encourages people to work together as a close-knit community (esp. *P. Kell. Copt.* 31.53–55).

Overall, missing values seem to abound, in that emotional involvement often remains unexpressed. This ties in with the tendency towards anonymity in Manichaean circles. In essence, this community tried to fly under the radar, whether consciously or subconsciously. There are not many mentions of either the in-group or the outside world. This agrees with Parsons' observation that the big events of history remain unmentioned in the papyri.[62]

A final word of caution relates to the risk of false positives due to grammaticalisation or regionalisms that we are not aware of. Borderline cases in the data sample include *P. Kell. Copt.* 40.30, *P. Kell. Copt.* 78.40 and 46–47, all with the lemma ⲯⲧⲟⲣⲧⲣ (*štortr*, 'to be troubled').

[62] P. Parsons, *The City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish: Greek Lives in Roman Egypt* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007), 134.

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