

Joanna Wilimowska

SACRED ANIMAL CULTWORKERS IN THE PTOLEMAIC FAYUM*

1. INTRODUCTION

THE ANIMAL CULT WAS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT of ancient Egyptian religion throughout its history. It flourished especially in later periods, from the New Kingdom (c. 1550–1069 BC) onwards, reaching its peak of popularity in Graeco-Roman times (332 BC – AD 324). The current literature concerning sacred animal cults is quite extensive.¹ Most publications to date tend to focus chiefly on beliefs and ritual practices while far too

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¹ K. A. D. SMELIK, 'The cult of the ibis in the Graeco-Roman period', [in:] M. J. VERMASEREN (ed.), *Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain* [= *Studies in Hellenistic Religions* 78], Leiden 1976, pp. 225–243; J. RAY, *The Archive of Hor*, London 1976; D. KESSLER, *Die heiligen Tiere und der König: Beiträge zu Organisation, Kult und Theologie der spätzeitlichen Tierfriedhöfe* [= *Ägypten und Altes Testament* 16], Wiesbaden 1989; S. DAVIES, 'The organization, administration and functioning of the sacred animal cults at North Saqqara as revealed by the demotic papyri from the site', [in:] K. RYHOLT (ed.), *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies. Copenhagen, 23–27 August 1999*, Copenhagen 2002, pp. 77–84; M. MOLCHO, 'Crocodile breeding in the crocodile cults of the Graeco-Roman Fayum', *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 100 (2014), pp. 181–193.

little attention has been paid to the organization of the animal cults and their staff.

Clergy occupied a prominent position in Egyptian society and research regarding this group is at the heart of our understanding of the social, political, and economic role they played within the Ptolemaic administration. Therefore, this paper seeks to expand our knowledge concerning animal cult personnel, which will help to address these research gaps. Sacred animals were served by a specific group of priests who performed different functions and occupations. The main goal of this study is to discuss all the categories of the sacred animal functionaries, and if possible, the role they played within local society and the economy. This paper aims to explore mainly the non-religious activities of these priests, which may shed light on the organization of the animal cult and its temples. Religious rituals and beliefs are not a primary concern of this study.

Our knowledge of the personnel who worked within the animal cults in the Fayum comes mostly from official documents produced usually for the use of state bureaucracy: complaints, petitions, sureties, reports, and accounts, as well as, a limited number of texts of a private nature, for example letters. Papyri published as *P. Count.*, that have been edited by Willy Clarysse and Dorothy Thompson are particularly significant.² This publication comprises tax records and lists of households (*kat'ethnos* and *kat'oikian*) within which many different occupations related to animal cults are to be found. However, these texts usually only mention the actual priestly titles and do not provide detailed information about the activities of their holders. Individuals who appear in documents are sometimes identified by personal names. Lists of occupations occasionally refer to the entire group of workers and usually contain the total number of priests, which gives us an idea about the size of a given priestly category. Finally, this publication incorporated papyri that were written in both the

² W. CLARYSSE & D. J. THOMPSON, *Counting the People in Hellenistic Egypt*, vols. I–II, Cambridge 2006; IDEM, 'P. Count. 2 continued: a Ptolemaic population register from the Arsinoite Nome', [in:] K. D. VAN HEEL, F. A. J. HOOGENDIJK, & C. J. MARTIN (eds.), *Hieratic, Demotic and Greek Studies and Text Editions. Of Making Many Books There is No End: Festschrift in Honour of Sven P. Vleeming* [= *Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava* 34], Leiden – Boston 2018, pp. 162–189.

Greek language and Demotic script, which is especially valuable for this study. Generally, the terms and titles used to describe priestly occupations are predominantly known from Greek documents. Our knowledge of the original Egyptian titles is very limited because the Greek papyri constitute the major portion of the preserved documents. Therefore, the Demotic texts published in *P. Count.* offer an excellent opportunity to identify the Egyptian titles of priestly occupations.

The archive of Menches, the village scribe of Kerkeosiris (139–107 BC), is another important set of documents, which enumerates different occupations related to animal cults in the Fayum. This archive comprises official texts that describe non-religious activities of the animal cult staff. Moreover, it provides a valuable insight into the organization and types of the animal chapels in the area. A considerable portion of documents regarding animal cult personnel is spread also among different publications. Some individual documents, both official and private, can be found among papyri published in *P. Sorb.*, *P. Lille Dem.*, *P. Lille Gr.*, *P. Turku*, and *P. Petrie*.

The collected material imposes certain methodological limitations on this study. Many of the texts that refer to individuals who belonged to these categories record only the titles of their particular occupations. Some of the texts are unclear because of their state of preservation and certain details that are available to us are out of context. Additionally, a number of the occupations presented in this study (e.g. *κνυβοσκόος*) are known only from one source. Therefore, it was often difficult to explore the range of duties performed by these priests.

This study also occasionally incorporates information provided by Greek authors as well as data derived from archaeological material that supports the documentary evidence. Herodotus, Diodorus, and Strabo give accounts of the animal cult in Egypt.³ There is a large chronological gap between Herodotus' works (5th cent. BC) and that of Diodorus (1st cent. BC) and Strabo (1st cent. BC / 1st cent. AD). Additionally, their accounts are not always fully reliable, as they offer a Greek perspective of the native Egyptian cults that often paints a distorted picture of Egyptian temple workers. Moreover, their works are often general in nature and

³ Hdt. 2.65–76; Str. 17.1.38–40; Diod. Sic. 1.83–90.

do not provide a detailed account of the non-religious activity of temple personnel. Finally, archaeological evidence such as the animal mummies that were discovered in cemeteries in the Fayum reveal the scale of local animal cults.

2. THE SACRED ANIMAL CULTS

A number of different animals were worshipped in ancient Egypt and they can be divided into two general categories. The most sacred group comprises of individual species, which, according to beliefs, were dwelt by the spirit (*b3*) of a god.⁴ These animals were kept in sanctuaries and worshipped as the incarnation of a given god. Dieter Kessler suggests that in later periods the sacred animals represented the apotheosis of the pharaoh.⁵ The best-known examples are: the Apis bull of Memphis, the Bouchis bull of Armant, the Mnevis bull of Heliopolis, the Hesis cow of Aphroditopolis (Atfih), the sacred ram called Banebdjed at Mendes, and the sacred crocodiles worshipped in the Fayumic temples as embodiments of Sobek.⁶ It was believed that the sacred animals possessed certain extraordinary abilities such as oracular powers associated with their divine origin. The Apis bull and the ram god Banebdjed, for instance, were said to provide prophecies and dream interpretations.⁷ An individual animal was chosen from other species on the basis on its special features that characterized

⁴ R. O. FAULKNER, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, Oxford 1991, s.v. *b3*; S. IKRAM, *Death and Burial in Ancient Egypt*, New York 2015, pp. 83–89.

⁵ KESSLER, *Die heiligen Tiere* (cit. n. 1), pp. 253–290.

⁶ W. CLARYSSE, ‘Egyptian religion and magic in the papyri’, [in:] R. BAGNALL (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, Oxford 2011, pp. 569–570; IKRAM, *Death and Burial* (cit. n. 4), pp. 83–89; studies on various sacred animals in Egypt are provided by different authors in a publication edited by S. IKRAM, *Divine Creatures: Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt*, Cairo 2005.

⁷ G. H. RENBERG, *Where Dreams May Come. Incubation Sanctuaries in the Greco-Roman World*, vol. I [= *Religions in the Graeco-Roman World* 184], Leiden – Boston 2017; IKRAM, *Death and Burial* (cit. n. 4), pp. 8–9; L. KÁKOSY, ‘Prophecies of ram gods’, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 19/3 (1966), pp. 341–358; D. J. THOMPSON, *Memphis under the Ptolemies*, Princeton – Oxford 2012, p. 183.

animals considered as divine incarnations. However, selection criteria for each divine animal are virtually unknown. Sources describe only features of the Apis bull, which was black and recognized by a white triangle on the forehead (Hdt. 2.28).

The second group of the sacred animals comprised the entire species that were usually associated with the cult of a particular god: cats were devoted to Bastet, jackals (dogs) to Anubis, ibises and baboons to Thoth, hawks to Horus, cows to Hathor, and crocodiles to Sobek.⁸ Several species (such as ibises or hawks) were worshipped all over Egypt, while other cults were only popular in certain regions. Crocodiles, for instance, were venerated exclusively in the Fayum, Kom Ombo in Upper Egypt and in the Theban area. Animals that fit into this category were not worshipped in temples as living images of gods, instead they were mummified and intended as votive offerings. This category presumably comprised of both wild animals that were found dead or animals bred in captivity for this specific purpose.⁹

Sacred animals were protected by Egyptian law and the harming or killing of such beasts was severely punished. The text of a legal Demotic handbook from Panopolis includes certain regulations that refer to the harming of sacred animals.¹⁰ This document mentions at least ten sacred species and the legal consequences of violating of sacred animals. Unfortunately, precise details as to the punishment remain unknown because this text is partially damaged. According to Herodotus, an individual who killed a 'divine' animal was usually charged, while those responsible for killing an ibis or a hawk were sentenced to death (Hdt. 2.65). Moreover, the respect held for the sacred animals went beyond legal means at times, an example being Diodorus' account of a Roman soldier who was murdered by an angry

⁸ CLARYSSE, 'Egyptian religion' (cit. n. 6), pp. 569–570; THOMPSON, *Memphis* (cit. n. 7), pp. 177–178.

⁹ S. M. PORCIER *et alii*, 'Wild crocodiles hunted to make mummies in Roman Egypt: evidence from synchrotron imaging', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 110 (2019), DOI: 10.1016/j.jas.2019.105009, accessible on-line at <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0305440319300950>> (accessed 15 May 2020).

¹⁰ S. L. LIPPERT, *Ein demotisches juristisches Lehrbuch. Untersuchungen zu Papyrus Berlin P 23757 rto* [= *Ägyptologische Abhandlungen* 66], Wiesbaden 2004.

crowd after accidentally killing a cat (Diod. Sic. 1.83). A necropolis worker (ἐνταφιαστής) named Onnophris in a letter to an official (ἐπιστάτης) tried to avoid being punished for harming the sacred animals (*P. Köln Gr. XV 594* [202 or 178 BC]). He reported that he was trying to save several kittens after they were rejected by their mother. He planned to give them to the temple of Bastet at Tanis (located in the Fayum area, in the division of Herakleides), however the kittens were harmed by a tomcat before he could hand them over. Onnophris gave injured or, as the editor of the document suggests, dead animals to the temple, and then he wrote a petition explaining exactly what happened. Undoubtedly, the main purpose of this letter was to escape punishment. The above examples demonstrate the considerable respect that Egyptian society had for sacred animals and they also prove that animal cults were taken highly seriously indeed.

The case of Onnophris may also help to demonstrate the division that existed between an animal cult and the cult of a particular god. Onnophris gave the kittens to the σώμφεις (dancer priests) at the temple of Bastet in Tanis. There is no direct evidence that the aforementioned temple took part in breeding or burying the sacred cats. Therefore, Onnophris might simply have chosen the temple of Bastet, to whom the cats were devoted, as the safest place for their rescue. On the other hand, a document from Thebes attests to a group of σώμφεις αἰλουροτάφοι. The σώμφεις (*tnf*) is linked by scholars with the cult of Bastet while the title αἰλουροτάφος is interpreted as a ‘cat burier’. The combined title may imply that the priests were in charge of both temple rituals and entombing the sacred cats.¹¹ Overall, it is important to note that animal cultic activity was often practiced separately from the actual cult of a given deity.¹²

¹¹ UPZ II 157 = *Chrest. Wilck.* 385 (241 BC); for the term σώμφεις/*tnf*, see J. QUAEGBEUR, ‘Le terme *tnf(j)* “danseur” en démotique’, [in:] H.-J. THIESSEN & K. Th. ZAUZICH (eds.), *Grammata Demotica. Festschrift für Erich Lüdtdeckens zum 15. Juni 1983*, Würzburg 1984, pp. 157–170; W. CLARYSSE & P. J. SIJPESTEIJN, ‘A letter from a dancer of Boubastis’, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 41 (1995), pp. 56–61.

¹² Boundaries between the cult of Souchos and mummified crocodiles are emphasised by A. WINKLER, ‘Mouchis and its crocodiles: topography, toponymy, and theonymy’, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 55 (2018), pp. 241–242.

3. THE ANIMAL CULTS IN THE FAYUM AREA

The geographical scope of this study has been limited to the Fayum. This region gained particular significance during the Ptolemaic period. The settlement and land reclamation project undertaken by the Ptolemies led to significant development of the region.¹³ Thanks to population growth and increasing incorporation of state bureaucracy, a lot of evidence has been generated in this region, offering great source of knowledge. Despite the strong influence of Greek culture and language, traditional Egyptian cults and beliefs were still commonly practised in the Fayum. Sacred animal cults and their functionaries are widely attested in the Fayum, the province of which was dominated by the crocodile cult. The region comprised many water basins with tributaries, canals and marshlands, which created favourable living conditions for crocodiles. Thus, these reptiles were commonly found in the Fayumic landscape, where they were associated with the cult of the god Sobek (Egyptian: *Sbk*, Greek: *Σοῦχος*) who was the main deity of the region. This deity was often portrayed as a human with crocodile features, as a crocodile or a mummified crocodile.¹⁴ Sobek was especially associated with the capital city Shedet (Krokodilon Polis), but local variants were worshipped in other villages of the region.¹⁵

¹³ R. S. BAGNALL 'The origin of Ptolemaic cleruchs', *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 21 (1984), pp. 7–20; D. RATHBONE, 'Villages, land and population in Graeco-Roman Egypt', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 216 = 36 NS (1990), pp. 103–142; D. RATHBONE, 'Surface survey and the settlement history of the ancient Fayum', [in:] C. BASILE & A. DI NATALE (eds.), *Archeologia e papiri nel Fayyum. Storia della ricerca, problemi e prospettive. Atti del convegno internazionale: Siracusa, 24–25 Maggio 1996*, Syracuse 1997, pp. 7–19; D. J. THOMPSON, 'Irrigation and drainage in the early Ptolemaic Fayyum', [in:] A. K. BOWMAN & E. ROGAN (eds.), *Agriculture in Egypt: From Pharaonic to Modern Times* [= *Proceedings of the British Academy* 96], Oxford 1999, pp. 107–122; K. MUELLER, *Settlements of the Ptolemies. City Foundations and New Settlement in the Hellenistic World*, Leuven 2006, pp. 23–30.

¹⁴ LGG, s.v. *Sbk*; C. DOLZANI, *Il Dio Sobk*, Rome 1961; W. J. R. RÜBSAM, *Götter und Kulte in Faiyum während der griechisch-römisch-byzantinischen Zeit*, Marburg 1974.

¹⁵ M. ZECCHI, *Sobek of Shedet. The Crocodile God in the Fayyum in the Dynastic Period*, Todi 2010; H. KOCKELMANN, *Der Herr der Seen, Sümpfe und Flußläufe. Untersuchungen zum Gott Sobek und den ägyptischen Krokodilgötter-Kulten von den Anfängen bis zur Römerzeit*, vols. I–III, Wiesbaden 2017; WINKLER, 'Mouchis' (cit. n. 12), pp. 241–247.

Beside crocodiles, other animal species were venerated in the Fayum. The evidence provides a catalogue of different functions linked to the cults of ibises, falcons, dogs, cats, rams, and cattle. This study gathered and considered 17 occupation titles that were possibly related to animal worship. Among these, 11 are preserved in Greek: *ἰβιοβοσκός*, *ἰβιοτάφος*, *ἱερακοβοσκός*, *ἱερακοτάφος*, *σαυρήτης*, *κυνοβοσκός*, *κυνοτάφος*, *κριοτάφος*, *βουτάφος*, *θεαγός*, *θαλλοφόρος*, while the other six titles come from Demotic texts: *sdm p3 hb*, *swrd.t p3 hb*, *sdm p3 bik*, *mn-iry.t t3 mi.t*, *f3y mhn*, *t3y (n3) ntr.w*. Among these, it is possible to identify the only certain Greek and Egyptian counterparts for the function of the bearer of a god: *θεαγός* / *t3y (n3) ntr.w*.

4. THE ORGANIZATION OF SACRED ANIMAL CULTS

Divine animals were kept and worshipped in special chapels that at times may have constituted a part of a sanctuary associated with a god to whom they were devoted. All activities related to animal cults such as religious rites, breeding and funerary practices were frequently performed in the same place, especially in the case of minor shrines.¹⁶ However, there is evidence that sheds light on special categories of shrines and sacred enclosures devoted to animals that functioned in the Ptolemaic Fayum. Unfortunately, designations referring to the animal shrines are rarely mentioned and are used in documents interchangeably, which makes it difficult to ascertain the real range of their activities.

Cults associated with sacred birds in Egypt were quite popular and the textual evidence reveals various terms that refer to ibis shrines, hawk shrines or other places associated with avian cults. An 'ibis chapel' (*ἰβιῶν τροφή*) could refer to a shrine or a place where sacred ibises were raised and fed.¹⁷ However, this term might also refer to the arable land, which adjoined an ibis sanctuary and provided crops for maintenance of the

¹⁶ D. J. THOMPSON (CRAWFORD), *Kerkeosiris. An Egyptian Village in the Ptolemaic Period*, Cambridge 1971, p. 88; SMELIK, 'The cult of the ibis' (cit. n. 1), p. 227.

¹⁷ SMELIK, 'The cult of the ibis' (cit. n. 1), pp. 227–230.

birds. An example of this can be found in a Demotic petition (*mḳmḳ*) of unknown origin that describes a piece of land as a ‘feeding place of the ibises’ (Demotic: *t3 hr.t n n3 hb.w*).¹⁸ Scholars generally argue that the Demotic expression: *t3 hr.t n n3 hb.w* was rendered into Greek as the *ἰβιών τροφή*.¹⁹ The evidence reveals that in the Fayum *ἰβιών τροφαί* were located for example in Tebtynis, Kerkeosiris, Magdola, Oxyrhyncha, and at Soknopaiou Nesos.²⁰ Occasionally an ibis chapel was referred to simply as *ἰβιών*, but this may constitute an abbreviated variant of the term *ἰβιών τροφή* as both terms were used interchangeably (*P. Tebt.* I 62 [119–118 BC], ll. 19–24).

Another Greek term *ἰβιοταφείον* literally means ‘a tomb of the sacred ibis’ and this was presumably applied to places that embalmed and buried the ibises.²¹ *P. Tebt.* III.2 1002 (2nd cent. BC), a fragmentary list of crops originating from the village of Oxyrhyncha, distinguishes between *ἰβιοταφείον* (fr. 2, l. 9) and *ἰβιών τροφή* (fr. 2, l. 10). This implies that these places functioned as separate units in the aforementioned village and were engaged in different aspects of the ibis cult.

Greek sources from the Fayum mention the term *ἕρμαιον*, which was generally interpreted as ‘the temple of Hermes’, a building which was also associated with the cult of the sacred birds. In light of *interpretatio Graeca* the Egyptian god Thoth was identified with the Greek Hermes due to a general resemblance in their nature, for example they were both regarded as divine messengers. In the Hellenistic period these two deities

¹⁸ E. A. E. REYMOND, ‘Two demotic memoranda’, *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 58 (1972), pp. 254–267; G. R. HUGHES, ‘On two demotic Egyptian memoranda’, *Serapis* 6 (1980), pp. 63–68; *CDD*, s.v. *hr.t n n3 hb.w*.

¹⁹ REYMOND, ‘Two demotic memoranda’ (cit. n. 18), pp. 254–267; SMELIK, ‘The cult of the ibis’ (cit. n. 1), p. 230.

²⁰ Tebtynis: *P. Petrie* III 87a (266–255 or 228–227 BC); Kerkeosiris: *P. Tebt.* I 62 (119–118 BC), ll. 19, 21, 23; *P. Tebt.* IV 1110 (115 BC) = *P. Tebt.* I 141 recto, ll. 29–31; Magdola: *P. Tebt.* I 82 = *Chrest. Wilck.* 232 (115 BC); Oxyrhyncha: *P. Tebt.* III 1002 descr. (2nd cent. BC); Soknopaiou Nesos: *BGU* II 387 (AD 177–180), l. 22; THOMPSON, *Kerkeosiris* (cit. n. 16), p. 88; SMELIK, ‘The cult of the ibis’ (cit. n. 1), pp. 228–229.

²¹ LSJ, s.v. *ἰβιοταφείον*, ‘tomb of the sacred ibises’, and *τάφος*, ‘funeral rites, tomb’; *ἰβιοταφείον* is also recorded in *P. Tebt.* I 87 (116–115 BC), l. 101.

merged into the new syncretic god Hermes Trismegistos.²² The presence of the ibis cult (birds devoted to Thoth) in the *ἔρμαιον* may be attributed to the fusion of Hermes and Thoth during this period. Moreover, these chapels probably performed funerary rites related to the cults of ibises and hawks. In the Fayum region these chapels were located at Tebtynis and Kerkeosiris. Undertakers of the sacred ibises and hawks (*ιβιοτάφοι* and *ἱερακοτάφοι*) were employed in the *ἔρμαιον* in the village of Tebtynis, which proves that mortuary rituals took place in this temple.²³ Moreover, *P. Tebt.* I 88 = *Chrest. Wilck.* 67 (115 BC), a list of temples in the village of Kerkeosiris records the *ἔρμαιον* together with the *ιβιοταφείον* (ll. 53 ff.), which again attests the connection between the *ἔρμαιον* and burial practices. In this particular case the *ιβιοταφείον* could have simply functioned as a tomb for birds, while the *ἔρμαιον* could have served as a place that conducted religious ceremonies.

Scholars generally believe that the designations: *ιβιών* (*τροφή*), *ιβιοταφείον*, and *ἔρμαιον* were applied interchangeably to both places of feeding and places that buried animals.²⁴ This inconsistency may be attributed to problems with translation of Egyptian terms into Greek. Two texts from the Menches archive: *P. Tebt.* I 62 (119–118 BC) and *P. Tebt.* I 88 = *Chrest. Wilck.* 67 (115 BC) mention, for instance, three temples located in the village of Kerkeosiris that were associated with the ibis cult. Undoubtedly, both of these documents refer to the same shrines, as they mention by name the same individuals who were in charge: Herieus, Cheyris and Pnepheros son of Peteimouthes.²⁵ As it is clearly set out in Table 1, the terminology applied in both texts is inconsistent. The terms used in *P. Tebt.* I 62 suggest that these temples were feeding places of the sacred ibises, while *P. Tebt.* I 88 mentions the temple of Hermes and a place related to funerary rites.

²² G. FOWDEN, *The Egyptian Hermes. A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind*, Princeton 1993; L. ΚΑΚΟΣΥ, 'Hermes and Egypt', [in:] A. B. LLOYD (ed.), *Studies in Pharaonic Religion and Society in Honour of J. Gwyn Griffiths*, London 1992, pp. 258–261.

²³ *P. Strash. Gr.* II 91 (86 BC); SMELIK, 'The cult of the ibis' (cit. n. 1), p. 227.

²⁴ THOMPSON, *Kerkeosiris* (cit. n. 16), p. 88; SMELIK, 'The cult of the ibis' (cit. n. 1), pp. 227–228; cf. W. ΟΤΤΟ, *Priester und Tempel im Hellenistischen Ägypten*, vol. I, Leipzig – Berlin 1905, p. 416.

²⁵ SMELIK, 'The cult of the ibis' (cit. n. 1), p. 227.

These texts provide the clearest example of the problems associated with the terminology that appears in Greek documents.

P. Tebt. I 62, ll. 19–24

ἰβίω(ν) τροφῆς δι' Ἐργέως καὶ τῶν
 με(τόχων) δ, γεω(μετρία), σπό(ρος)
 (πυρῶι) [--] β ἀρά(κωι) β.
 ἄλλου διὰ Χεύριος καὶ τῶν ἀδελ(φῶν) ε,
 γεω(μετρία), σπό(ρος) (πυρῶι).
 ἄλλου ἰβίω(νος) διὰ Πνεφερώτος τοῦ
Πτεμμούθου καὶ τῶν ἀδελ(φῶν) ε,
 γεω(μετρία) γύ(ου) β ἴσο(ν), σπόρος
 φα(κῶι).

P. Tebt. I 88 = *Chrest. Wilck.* 67, ll. 53–63

ἰβηοταφίον καὶ Ἐρμαίου δι' Ἐργέως καὶ
 τῶν με(τόχων) ἡμε(ρῶν) λει(τουργικῶν)
 λ [[εἰ]], ὑπάρχει ἐν ἱερᾷ γῆι ἐλ(ασσόνων) ἐν
 ὑ[πολό(γωι)] (ἄρουραι) δ, πρόσφο(ρον) ἄλλο
 μηθὲν ἔχε[ι].
 ἄλλου Ἐρμαίου διὰ Χεύριος καὶ τῶν
ἀδελ(φῶν) ἡμε(ρῶν) λει(τουργικῶν) λ,
 ὑπάρχει ἐν ἱε[ρᾷ] γῆι ἐλ(ασσόνων) ἱερῶν ἐν
 ὑπολό(γωι) (ἄρουραι) ε, πρόσφορον μηθὲν
 ἔχε[ι].
 ἄλλου διὰ Πνεφερώτος καὶ τῶν ἀδελ(φῶν)
 ἡμε(ρῶν) λει(τουργικῶν) λ, ὑπάρχει ἐν
 ἱερᾷ γῆι ἐλ(ασσόνων) ἱερῶν ἐν ὑπολό(γωι)
 (ἄρουραι) ε, πρόσφορον μηθὲν ἔχε[ι].

Table 1. Attestations referring to ibis chapels in Kerkeosiris

Remarkably, the aforementioned ἔρμαιον located in the village of Tebtynis employed undertakers of both ibises and hawks (*P. Strasb. Gr.* II 91 [86 BC]). This example proves that shrines dedicated to the sacred birds took care of both ibises and hawks, which could have resulted from the similarities in methods of breeding and embalming. Hence, identifying differences between particular bird sanctuaries and gaining a realistic understanding of the real range of activities associated with these temples in the Fayum is difficult.

The joint cult of ibises and hawks was presumably also practiced in the *θαρησιεῖον*. This temple has been identified by scholars with the ἔρησιεῖον, the temple of Horus.²⁶ The term *θαρησιεῖον* appears in the letter *SB XVI 12551* = *SB VI 9628* recording a dispute between a temple worker (Stotoetis)

²⁶ For a detailed interpretation of *θαρησιεῖον*, see W. CLARYSSE & J. QUAEGBEUR, 'Ibion, Isieion and Tharesieion in two Oslo papyri', *Symbolae Osloenses* 57 (1982), pp. 77–81.

and a woman who was admitted to the temple against its rules.²⁷ Stotoetis was a mortuary priest of sacred ibises, not hawks, which were traditionally devoted to Horus. Hence, the *έρησιείον* might have served both hawks and ibises.

Another category of the hawk shrine, the *ιερακεῖον*, was located in the village of Oxyrhyncha, in the division of Polemon. This chapel is mentioned in the archive of a hawk keeper (*ιερακοβοσκόος*) named Petosiris. The shrine was presumably small as it was maintained by only two priests: a certain Petosiris and his nephew, who oversaw all elements of the hawk cult.²⁸

The evidence attests to only one specific designation referring to a place engaged in the keeping or burying of crocodiles, the patron animals of the Fayum. *P. Tebt.* I 88, a list of temples and shrines in Kerkeosiris, attests a *κορκοδιλοταφείον*, which has been recorded together with the *Souchieion* (ll. 10, 53). Various scholars believe that the term *Souchieion* ('House of Sobek') applied to entire temple complex, which comprised various buildings and chapels devoted to Sobek.²⁹ This may imply that a place of embalmed and interred sacred crocodiles was associated with the religious sanctuary devoted to Souchos (or functioned as part of this temple).³⁰ Archaeological material has provided certain valuable information regarding places that were involved in breeding the sacred crocodiles. Excavations conducted in Narmouthis (Medinet Madi) uncovered two buildings that were located near the main temple. They were presumably used as crocodile hatcheries and nurseries, which is assumed based on the discovery of crocodile eggs that were originally stored in these build-

²⁷ A. TRAVERSA, 'Ibiotáphoi, ibioboskoí, e un cartonage inedito della collezione osolense', *Symbolae Osloenses* 36 (1960), pp. 49–64; CLARYSSE & QUAEGBEUR, 'Ibion, Isieion and Tharesieion' (cit. n. 26), pp. 70–71.

²⁸ The archive of Petosiris son of Petosiris, the hawk keeper: *SB XXVI 16742–16744* (140–139 BC); J. D. SOSIN, 'Abduction at the threshing floor: P. Duk. Inv. 714–716', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 127 (1999), pp. 131–140.

²⁹ A. M. F. W. VERHOOGT, *Menches, Komogrammateus of Kerkeosiris: The Doings and Dealings of a Village Scribe in the Late Ptolemaic Period (120–110 BC)* [= *Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava* 29], Leiden – New York – Cologne 1997, pp. 8–9.

³⁰ THOMPSON, *Kerkeosiris* (cit. n. 16), p. 95.

ings during the incubation period.³¹ Crocodiles generally require specific natural conditions to live (such as the close vicinity of water basins), and for this reason the marshlands that appeared alongside the canals in the Fayum were probably adopted as places where sacred crocodiles could be safely kept.³² This would explain the limited number of attestations that refer to specific crocodile shrines in the Fayum area.

The animal cult pertained to both animals that were venerated as representations of a given deity and to animals that were bred, mummified, and used as votive offerings. Remarkably, millions of animal mummies were found all over Egypt in cemeteries dated mostly to the Graeco-Roman period. The size of this phenomenon is also illustrated in the archive of priest Ḥor, who was in charge of the animal necropolis at North Saqqara. The archive document mentions 60,000 ibises that were to be prepared for mummification.³³ The sacred animal necropolis at North Saqqara is the most famous animal cemetery in Egypt, where thousands of mummified ibises, hawks, baboons, and dogs have been excavated. Another important animal necropolis was located at Tuna el-Gebel near Hermoupolis (El-Ashmunein).³⁴ Excavations carried out in the Fayum have uncovered all sorts of animals that were embalmed and buried, including ibises, hawks, cats

³¹ MOLCHO, 'Crocodile breeding' (cit. n. 1), pp. 181–193; excavations at Narmouthis: E. BRESCIANNI, 'Sobek, Lord of the Land of the Lake', [in:] IKRAM, *Divine Creatures* (cit. n. 6), pp. 199–206; E. BRESCIANNI & A. GIAMMARUSTI, 'Religione. La nursery per i coccodrilli Sobek nel Tempio C (1999). Gli ultimi coccodrilli di Medinet Madi', [in:] E. BRESCIANNI *et alii* (eds.), *Medinet Madi. Venti anni di esplorazione archeologica (1984–2005)*, Pisa 2006, pp. 271–295.

³² T. A. BRADY, *The Reception of the Egyptian Cults by the Greeks (330–30 B.C.)*, Columbia, MO 1935, p. 37; THOMPSON, *Kerkeosiris* (cit. n. 16), p. 95; MOLCHO, 'Crocodile breeding' (cit. n. 1), p. 190.

³³ RAY, *The Archive of Hor* (cit. n. 1), no. 8 recto, pp. 18–19; THOMPSON, *Memphis* (cit. n. 7), p. 192.

³⁴ Findings from the necropolis at Herakleopolis Megale are listed in *PM* IV 169–175; for the cemetery at Tuna el-Gebel, see D. KESSLER & A. H. NUR EL-DIN, 'Tuna al-Gebel. Millions of ibises and other animals', [in:] IKRAM, *Divine Creatures* (cit. n. 6), pp. 120–163; for the temple complex of the ibises and the hawks at North Saqqara, see RAY, *The Archive of Hor* (cit. n. 1); W. B. EMERY, 'Preliminary report on the excavations at North Saqqara, 1969–70', *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 57 (1971), pp. 3–13.

and most of all, crocodiles. The main animal cemeteries in the Fayum were located at Tebtynis, Soknopaiou Nesos, Magdola, Hawara, and Lahun.³⁵

The commonly accepted theory holds that animals were bred in captivity and upon death (which was usually violent) were embalmed by the relevant personnel. Animal mummies produced by temple specialists were sold to believers who used them as votive offerings, whereas the manifestations of gods, for example the Apis, the Buchis and the sacred crocodiles of the Fayum, usually met their end naturally; the animals used as votive offerings usually did not die from natural causes.³⁶ The x-rays of animal mummies buried *en masse* in cemeteries proved that birds and cats had broken necks or fractured skulls.³⁷ This group of the sacred species were raised for the sole purpose of being killed, embalmed, and mummified in order to be used for religious purposes. In view of all that has been mentioned so far, one may assume that the animal cults functioned as a large-scale business. Keeping and embalming the sacred species presumably constituted a significant source of income for temples and their workers. Therefore, besides the obvious religious aspect of an animal cult, the evidence also reveals that there was an economic side to this phenomenon.

5. THE PERSONNEL

The functionaries of animal cults are typically easy to identify in texts because their professional titles have a specific character. Those individuals who worked in the cults held priestly rank and can be grouped into two

³⁵ Crocodile cemeteries in the Fayum: Tebtynis: B. P. GRENFELL, A. S. HUNT, & J. G. SMYLY, *The Tebtunis Papyri* I, London 1902, pp. vi–vii (*P. Tebt.* I); VERHOOGT, *Menches* (cit. n. 29), pp. 12–15; Soknopaiou Nesos: B. P. GRENFELL & A. S. HUNT, ‘Graeco-Roman branch: excavations in the Fayum’, [in:] F. L. GRIFFITH (ed.), *Archaeological Report 1900–1901*, London 1901, pp. 4–7; Magdola: P. JOUGUET, ‘Rapport sur deux missions au Fayôum’, *Comptes rendus de l’Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 1 (1902), pp. 349–350; Hawara: I. UYTTERHOEVEN, *Hawara in the Graeco-Roman Period. Life and Death in a Fayum Village* [= *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 174], Leuven – Paris – Walpole, MA 2009, pp. 73–74; Lahun: W. M. F. PETRIE, G. BRUNTON, & M. A. MURRAY, *Lahun* II, London 1923.

³⁶ MOLCHO, ‘Crocodile breeding’ (cit. n. 1); IKRAM, *Death and Burial* (cit. n. 4), pp. 90–93.

³⁷ IKRAM, *Death and Burial* (cit. n. 4), p. 91.

broad categories according to their performed duties.³⁸ The first group comprises the ‘keepers’ of the sacred beasts whose main tasks included taking care of the animals and providing them with food. The second category comprised the ‘undertakers’ (in recent publications regarding this topic they are often referred to as ‘buriers’) who took charge of the animals upon their dead and whose basic tasks presumably included carrying out the mummification process and burying the dead animals.³⁹ Accordingly, the bulk of the functions that are attested both in Greek and Demotic documents fall into one of these two categories. Moreover, the evidence reveals other occupations that were related to animal cults that cannot be placed into the two major groups. Hence, this article hopes to identify the role they played in the animal worship.

5.1. *Keepers of the sacred animals*

The main duty of these animal cult workers was to feed the animals. Papyri attest that temples belonging to an animal cult owned land, which was harvested in order to provide maintenance for the animals. This information is also mentioned by Diodorus: *πρώτον μὲν γὰρ ἑκάστῳ γένει τῶν σεβασμοῦ τυγχανόντων ζώων ἀφιέρωται χώρα φέρουσα πρόσδοτον ἀρκοῦσαν εἰς ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ τροφήν αὐτῶν.*⁴⁰ A register of land at the village of Kerkeosiris includes crops (grain, aracus, and lentils) that had been harvested from the land owned by the ibis temples (*P. Tebt.* I 62 [119–118 BC], ll. 19–24). Land cultivation was probably performed by temple personnel and thus, besides feeding the animals, they were in charge of producing and securing their food supply.⁴¹

³⁸ OTTO, *Priester und Tempel* (cit. n. 24), pp. 110–112; CLARYSSE & THOMPSON, *Counting the People* (cit. n. 2), vol. II, p. 179.

³⁹ CLARYSSE & THOMPSON, *Counting the People* (cit. n. 2), vol. II, p. 179.

⁴⁰ Diod. Sic. 1.83.2: ‘In the first place, for each kind of animal that is accorded this worship there has been consecrated a portion of land which returns a revenue sufficient for their care and sustenance’ (transl. by C. H. OLDFATHER [*Loeb Classical Library* 303]).

⁴¹ For an example from outside the Fayum, see RAY, *The Archive of Hor* (cit. n. 1), no. 8 recto, p. 136; SMELIK, ‘The cult of the ibis’ (cit. n. 1), pp. 230–231.

Strabo, when referring to the individuals who fed the sacred crocodiles at Krokodilon Polis used the title: οἱ ἱερεῖς, ‘priests’ (Str. 17.1.38). However, documents from the Fayum area reveal a special type of function that related to animal keepers. In Greek texts, designations ending with the suffix: -βοσκός were usually applied to workers who were in charge of looking after animals.⁴² Sources from the Ptolemaic Fayum mention the keepers of sacred ibises, hawks, crocodiles (or more probably reptiles), and dogs. The title of the cat keepers (αἰλουροβοσκοῖ) is not attested in Greek sources from the Ptolemaic Fayum but the Demotic material reveals at least one certain occupation related to the cult of sacred cats.

5.1.1. ἰβιοβοσκός

The ibis cult was widespread throughout Egypt and it is probably the best-documented animal cult.⁴³ Functionaries of the ibis cult form the most numerous group of animal priests in documents from the Ptolemaic Fayum. The function of the ἰβιοβοσκοί, ‘ibis keepers’, is mentioned in at least thirteen Greek texts, all of which were produced by official bureaucracy.

There is documentary evidence that reveals the role of ibis keepers in agricultural production. Among these documents there are reports concerning the cultivations of land: two of which date to the third whilst two to the second century BC. The first report, *P. Petrie* III 82 (243/2 BC), mentions Horos son of Harmais, the ἰβιοβοσκός, who cultivated the temple land at Theadelphia. The second report, *P. Petrie* III 87 (266/5 or 228/7 BC), lists five individuals who were probably attached to the ibis cult. This text is fragmented but the phrase τροφήν τῶν ἰβίων can be deciphered, which may be interpreted as ‘a food for the sacred ibises’. Although, the document does not provide the official occupations of these individuals, they were probably keepers of sacred ibises because they were in charge of the provisions for the sacred ibises. Two crop reports from Kerkeosiris,

⁴² LSJ, s.v. βοσκός, ‘herdsman’.

⁴³ TRAVERSA, ‘Ibiotáphoi, ibioboskoí’ (cit. n. 27), pp. 52–55; SMELIK, ‘The cult of the ibis’ (cit. n. 1), pp. 228–230; THOMPSON, *Kerkeosiris* (cit. n. 16), p. 88.

P. Tebt. I 61b (117 BC) and *P. Tebt.* I 72 + *P. Tebt.* IV 1113 (113 BC), provide us with a particularly interesting example of a man called Marres who held two priestly positions, as he was both an ibis keeper (ἰβιοβοσκός) and a ram burier (κριοτάφος). He also probably derived an income from agricultural production, as he was responsible for the land in the village of Kerkeosiris.

P. Tebt. I 88 records three shrines, referred to as ἔρμια that were probably devoted to the ibis cult (ll. 53–63). This text reveals that groups of individuals were assigned to each temple: Herieus and his companions (μέτοχοι) were assigned to the first shrine, Cheyris and his brothers (ἀδελφοί) to the second, whilst Pnepheros and his brothers (ἀδελφοί) were assigned to the third one.⁴⁴ As Table 1 shows, these individuals were also mentioned by *P. Tebt.* I 61 (119–118 BC) and were attached to the same temples recorded in these documents under different names. This may imply that they oversaw the temples for several years. In *P. Tebt.* I 88, all of the individuals are listed under the general heading of ‘prophets’. This designation was presumably used in this case to emphasize the priestly rank of the workers and it did not refer to their actual function. Although this document does not provide the official occupations of these individuals, they can be identified as functionaries of the ibis cult because they are linked to ibis shrines.⁴⁵ It is not possible to identify the range of their duties, but among other tasks, they might have acted as keepers of sacred ibises. The three temples in question were of the second rank (ἐλάσσονα ἱερά) and they all owned land: the first shrine possessed 4 *arouras* (c. 1.1 ha), while the other two temples owned 5 *arouras* (c. 1.4 ha). The text also specifies that certain liturgies were performed by these individuals for thirty days. Unfortunately, the nature of the services they provided is obscure. According to one possible interpretation, these functionaries might have obtained the rights to derive an income from temple property in return for cultivating the land and ensuring food supplies for the birds.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Herieus: *PP* 05523 = *PP* 05528 = *PP* 10705 = *PP* 06935 = *PP* 07051; Cheyris: *PP* 05869 = *PP* 11109; Pnepheros: *PP* 05780 = *PP* 10988 = *PP* 07064.

⁴⁵ THOMPSON, *Kerkeosiris* (cit. n. 16), pp. 91–92; SMELIK, ‘The cult of the ibis’ (cit. n. 1), pp. 228–229.

⁴⁶ THOMPSON, *Kerkeosiris* (cit. n. 16), pp. 91–93.

The evidence also reveals that ibis keepers were engaged in various financial affairs. Thenes, another ibis keeper, is recorded as the surety in the list of payment *P. Petrie* III 58e (236 BC). In another case, *P. Enteux*. 50 = *P. Lille Gr.* II 19 (221 BC), a complaint letter sheds light on a dispute between Pasis son of Hareus who was ibis keeper and a certain Horos. Pasis denied having signed a promissory note for 420 *deben* to the daughter of Horos demanding judgement. The keepers of sacred ibises are attested in a list of payment from second-century BC Theadelphia (*P. Turku* 65 = *SB XXII* 15548). However, this document is fragmented and it does not contain any details regarding the payment.

Finally, three tax registers attest to the presence of *ἰβιοβοσκοί* in different Fayumic settlements, for instance Trikomia, and Anoubias.⁴⁷ An ibis keeper is mentioned in an alimentary contract between a husband and his wife, which aimed to ensure that the wife and their mutual offspring received the rights to the husband's property (*SB XX* 14474 = *P. Trophitis* V verso [159 BC]).

5.1.2. ἱερακοβοσκός

The occupation of keepers of sacred hawks (*ἱερακοβοσκοί*) is attested primarily by the archive of the hawk keeper named Petosiris from the village of Oxyrhyncha. This archive consists of three petitions addressed to three different officials: Sarapion the *archisomatophylax* (*SB XXVI* 16742), an official whose name is unknown (*SB XXVI* 16743) and finally the *strategos* Phantias (*SB XXVI* 16744).⁴⁸ The editor notes that all the texts were found in the same cartonnage, which implies that these documents were probably copies or drafts of issued documents.⁴⁹ The petition describes events that took place at the hawk shrine (*ἱερακεῖον*) at Oxyrhyncha,

⁴⁷ Register for Trikomia: *P. Count.* 26 = *CPR XIII* 4 = *CPS I* 23 (254–231 BC), ll. 204–208, 238; register for Anoubias: *P. Count.* 28 = *CPR XIII* 26 + *CPR XIII* 3 (254–232 BC), l. 7; household record: *P. Count.* 6 recto = *SB XII* 10860 (before 232 BC), fr. 17, ll. 551–558.

⁴⁸ *SB XXVI* 16742–16744 = *P. Duke inv.* 714–116 (140/39 BC): *SOSIN*, 'Abduction at the threshing floor' (cit. n. 28), pp. 131–140.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 132, no. 2.

where the hawk keeper Petosiris along with his nephew performed religious duties. According to Petosiris' version of events, the deputy *strategos* Apollonios entered the temple searching for grain but found nothing (*οὐθὲν εὐρόντος*).⁵⁰ Moreover, the nephew of Petosiris, who also served as a priest in the temple, was arrested by companions of Apollonios. Generally, these texts reflect the consequences of a poor harvest as the incident resulted from problems with the supply of grain.⁵¹ The petition of Petosiris partially sheds light on how animal shrines functioned. Undoubtedly, the breeding of these birds was an important activity of this temple. Apollonios was searching for grain that may have been stored in the temple as food for the ibises. Petosiris insisted on the release of his nephew Pais, indicating that it was not possible to perform his duties without him. According to the text, they were responsible not only for organizing the daily religious prayers but they also had to feed and bury the sacred hawks: ἅμα τε καὶ ἐπιτελοῦμεν / τὰ ψώμισμα καὶ τὰς ταφὰς / τῶν ἱεράκων.⁵² Thus, Petosiris and his nephew were practically engaged in different aspects of the temple's functioning, even though they are described in the texts as *ἱερακοβοσκοί* (hawk keepers). This example clearly shows that titles and official designations do not always reflect the actual range of duties of their bearers.

A combined title of the priest of Horus, keeper of the sacred ibises and keeper of the sacred hawks (*ἱερεὺς Ἀρήσιος καὶ ἰβιβοσκός καὶ ἱερακοβοσκός*) is attested in a letter of complaint dated to the second century BC (*P. Turku* 2 = *SB XXII* 15545 + *P. Turku* 3 recto = *SB XXII* 15546).⁵³ This title was held by two individuals in the village of Archelais located near Theadelphia, in the division of Themistos. The letter is addressed to the *epimeletes* and was written by two priests, Thotomous son of Phamenemos and Inaroy, who complained about their loss of revenue from the temple estate. Priests derived income of 3 *artabae* per *aroura* from the

⁵⁰ Title of the Apollonios ὁ πρὸς τῆι στρατηγία; *ibidem*, pp. 134–135.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 132–133; cf. *P. Tebt.* I 61b, ll. 351–378.

⁵² *SB XXVI* 16742, ll. 11–13 = *P. Duke* inv. 714: 'Also at the same time we are tending to the feeding and the tombs of the hawks' (transl. SOSIN, 'Abduction at the threshing floor' [cit. n. 28], p. 137).

⁵³ H. KOSKENNIEMI, 'Neue Texte zum Ibiskult aus dem 2 Jh. v. Chr', [in:] *PapCongr.* XX, pp. 246–255.

temple land. However, Sarapion (probably a village official) imposed taxes on their revenue, which led to a reduction of their priestly income, and consequently, to the reaction of the priests.⁵⁴ This appropriation of a part of priestly income might have been linked to a situation that occurred in the division of Polemon, which suffered from poor harvest around 140/39 BC. The results of this crisis can be observable in the aforementioned archive of the hawk keeper Petosiris.

Moreover, at least two texts attest to hawk keepers (*ἱερακοβοσκοί*) working as farmers: a crop report from Gurob (*P. Petrie* III 99 recto [249–248 BC]) and a list of landholders from Tebtynis (*P. Tebt.* III.2 1016 descr. [125–100 BC]). Hawk keepers also appear in two tax records: the Greek household record *P. Count.* 6 fr. 18, l. 568 = *SB XII* 10860 (232 BC), and the list of occupations from the village of Boubastis *P. Count.* 15, l. 18 (220–150 BC), attesting their presence in the area. Unfortunately, both texts are partially preserved, and they provide us only with their occupation.

5.1.3. *σαυρήτης*

The Fayum was the main centre of the crocodile cult that was associated with the god Sobek (Greek equivalent: Souchos). Various local embodiments of Sobek had names that were usually linked to the places where they were worshipped, for example: Soknopaios (Demotic: *Sbk nb Py*, ‘Souchos lord of the island’) in Soknopaiou Nesos, or Soknebtynis (Demotic: *Sbk-nb-t3-tn*, ‘Souchos lord of Tynis’) in Tebtynis.⁵⁵ The names of the divine crocodiles venerated as living (or mummified) deities often correspond to the names of these local incarnations of Sobek. However, a surprisingly limited number of functions linked to the keeping of sacred crocodiles can be found among the material from the Fayum. As Michal Molcho notes,

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 245–246.

⁵⁵ CLARYSSE, ‘Egyptian religion’ (cit. n. 6), p. 365; Soknopaios: *P. Oxf. Griffith* I 54; Soknebtynis: P. BM EA 10647 = A. MONSON, ‘Priests of Soknebtunis and Sokonopis: P. BM EA 10647’, *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 92 (2006), pp. 205–216; W. CHESHIRE, ‘Demotic writings of “Tebtynis”’, *Enchoria* 14 (1986), pp. 31–42; cf. KOCKELMANN, *Der Herr der Seen* (cit. n. 15), pp. 28–31.

based on extrapolation from titles linked to other sacred animal cults, a keeper of sacred crocodiles should be known as a *κροκοδιλοβοσκός*. The earliest editions of two papyri both dated to the Roman period, seem to attest to this title, the relevant texts read as follows: *P. Mert.* II 73 (Oxyrhynchos, 163–164 BC), l. 7: *κρο[κ]ωιδι[λοβοσκοῦ]*, and *BGU* III 734 (Hermoupolis Megale, AD 235), l. 33: *κροκοδιλ(ό)β(οσκῶν)*.⁵⁶ However, as Molcho points out, later editions of these texts have been corrected and the editors did not follow these readings. Therefore, the title *κροκοδιλοβοσκός* is not attested in any evidence from Egypt.⁵⁷

On the other hand, sources from the Fayum provide us with the title *σαυρήτης*, which is attested twice in documents from Tebtynis: a fragmentary account (*P. Tebt.* I 57 = *Chrest. Wilck.* 69 [114 BC]) and a private letter (*P. Tebt.* I 211 descr. [99 BC]). The editors of these documents suggest that *σαυρήτης* may be translated as keeper of sacred crocodiles or as keeper of lizards. In Greek, *σαύρα* literally means ‘lizard’, and there is no attestation of the use of this word with regard to ‘crocodile’, while the Greek word *κροκόδιλος* refers to both ‘lizard’ and ‘crocodile’.⁵⁸ It is assumed that *κροκόδιλος* and *σαύρα* were used interchangeably, which implies that a *σαυρήτης* may be considered as the crocodile keeper.⁵⁹ However, if *σαύρα* did indeed refer to crocodiles, one would expect to see considerably more occurrences of the title *σαυρήτης* in the Fayum, which was the major centre of the crocodile cult in Egypt. According to another possible interpretation, the *σαυρήτης* might have referred to keepers of other reptiles such as lizards, which might have been worshipped in the Fayum due to their resemblance to crocodiles (*P. Tebt.* I 57, l. 4 n.).

Additionally, various other sources shed light on the cult of sacred crocodiles in the area. In the Fayum, crocodiles were kept in the temples of Sobek (and his local incarnations). They were bred in special places, and in due time were mummified and buried in the cemeteries in Tebtynis,

⁵⁶ MOLCHO, ‘Crocodile breeding’ (cit. n. 1), pp. 184–185; a correct reading: *P. Mert.* II 73, l. 7: *πρὸς [τ]ῷ ἰδ[ί]ω λόγῳ*, and *BGU* III 734, l. 33: *καὶ λεσωνίας κροκοδιλ(ων)*.

⁵⁷ MOLCHO, ‘Crocodile breeding’ (cit. n. 1), p. 185.

⁵⁸ *P. Tebt.* I 57; LSJ, s.vv. *σαύρα*, *κροκόδιλος*; MOLCHO, ‘Crocodile breeding’ (cit. n. 1), p. 185.

⁵⁹ MOLCHO, ‘Crocodile breeding’ (cit. n. 1), p. 185.

Soknopaiou Nesos, Magdola, and Hawara.⁶⁰ Unquestionably, there must have been officials who were in charge of these reptiles. A quite plausible explanation for the complete lack of titles linked to the crocodile cult seems obvious. The crocodile was directly connected with Sobek, the chief deity of the Fayum. Therefore, it is possible, that among various other duties, priests who were employed in the numerous temples of Sobek in this area also took care of the sacred crocodiles.

5.1.4. κυνοβοσκός

Dogs (or jackals) were sacred to the god Anubis. Only one text from the Fayum reveals the existence of a dog cult in the area by mentioning its personnel. Temples of Anubis were located near the most famous necropoleis of the Fayum: Hawara and Philadelpheia.⁶¹ An inscription from Philadelpheia, mentions the occupation of *κυνοβοσκός*, 'keeper of sacred dogs', which is the only attestation of this occupation in the entire catalogue of documents in Egypt. The main text of this inscription is engraved in Greek but the stele includes the image of Anubis along with a short hieroglyphic text. The dedication was issued on behalf of the *dioiketes* Apollonios along with his secretary Zenon by a dog keeper (*κυνοβοσκός*) named Pasos.⁶² Although the Fayum was not a significant centre of the Anubis cult, Apollonios and Zenon presumably supported the construction of the *Anoubieion* in Philadelpheia. It seems that the aforementioned stele was erected by Pasos as an expression of gratitude. This text illustrates the special attention that was paid to Egyptian beliefs and culture by the highest Greek officials, who presumably acted as benefactors towards the native cult temples.⁶³ The text provides us with an interesting example of the interactions between priests of the sacred animal cult and the Greek-speaking

⁶⁰ Str. 17.1.38; crocodile hatcheries at Narmouthis: BRESCIANNI, 'Sobek, Lord of the Land' (cit. n. 31), pp. 199–206; BRESCIANI & GIAMMARUSTI, 'Religione. La nursery per i cocodrilli' (cit. n. 31); MOLCHO, 'Crocodile breeding' (cit. n. 1), pp. 181–182.

⁶¹ UYTTERHOEVEN, *Hawara* (cit. n. 35), pp. 453–454.

⁶² *I. Fayoum* I 98 = *P.L. Bat.* XX Suppl. F = *SB* I 5796 = *SEG* XX 647 (256–247 BC).

⁶³ M. ROSTOVITZEFF, *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, vol. I, Oxford 1941, p. 319; see *I. Fayoum* I 98 commentary.

element of the population. However, this text is particularly significant because it attests to the existence of the dog cult in the Fayum, which was possibly practiced in the temple of Anubis in Philadelphia.

5.1.5. *mn-iry.t t3 mi.t*

Cats were sacred to the goddess Bastet. The main centre of the Bastet cult was located in Boubastos (Tell Basta) in Lower Egypt. Sanctuaries of Bastet have also been found in the Fayum, located at Bakchias, Dionysias, Kerkeosiris, Krokodilon Polis, Tebtynis, Hawara, and Theadelphia.⁶⁴ There are Greek examples of keepers of sacred cats (*αἰλουροβοσκοί*) in evidence found outside the Fayum.⁶⁵ However, no attestation of this Greek title is preserved in the texts from the Fayum. On the other hand, sources from this area inform us about a Demotic designation, which presumably refers to individuals who took care of sacred cats. This Demotic title *mn-iry.t t3 mi.t* is literally translated as a ‘nurse of cats’.⁶⁶ A nurse of cats (*mn-iry.t t3 mi.t*) is attested in two texts and this function was fulfilled by women: Haynchis daughter of Nechthenibis, and Obestertaios daughter of Petenouris.⁶⁷ Bastet was the patron goddess of fertility and her cultic functions were primarily performed by women, this may explain the presence of women in this particular cult. Both attestations of this function appear in lists of payment presumably related to the activity of a cultic guild. For this reason, it is difficult to unravel the real role of these women. It is uncertain whether nurses of cats were practically involved in temple

⁶⁴ For the cult of Bastet in the Graeco-Roman period, see J. QUAEGBEUR, ‘Le culte de Boubastis-Bastet en Égypte gréco-romaine’, [in:] L. DELVAUX & E. WARMENBOL (eds.), *Les divins chats d’Égypte: un air subtil, un dangereux parfum*, Leuven 1991.

⁶⁵ *P. Cairo Zen.* III 59451 = *PSI IV* 440 (Psophthis, 247–240 BC); *UPZ II* 157 = *Cbrest. Wilck.* 385 = *P. Petrie III*, pp. 339–347 = *P. Paris*, pp. 378–382, no. 66 (Thebes, 241 BC).

⁶⁶ *CDD*, s.v. *mn-iry*.

⁶⁷ *P. Lille Dem.* I 31 (3rd cent. BC); *P. Sorb.* IV 159 = *P. Lille Dem.* 98 (245 BC), l. 17; F. DE CENIVAL, ‘Deux papyrus inédits de Lille’, *Enchoria* 7 (1997), pp. 1–49; Haynchis: *PP* 07049 = *PP* 07050c add. = *PP* 07351 = *PP* 07351c add.; Obestertaios daughter of Petenouris: *PP* 07055d add.; G. PINCH, *Handbook of Egyptian Mythology*, Santa Barbara – Denver – Oxford 2002, pp. 115–117.

and cult functions or whether they were connected exclusively to the religious activity of their association. Overall, they certainly performed a religious role, but their actual duties remain unknown. According to another possible interpretation, those who served as the *mn-iry.t t3 mi.t*, ‘nurses of cats’, were responsible for feeding the cats. In this case, the Greek title *αἰλουροβοσκός*, ‘keeper of the cat’, presumably corresponded to the Demotic *mn-iry.t t3 mi.t*. On the other hand, their role could have been limited only to religious tasks and thus they did not take part in the actual breeding process.

5.1.6. *f3y mhn*

Evidence from the Fayum attests the occupation of *f3y mhn*, which is translated as ‘milk carriers’. The title *f3y mhn* is linked by some scholars to the cult of sacred cats and identified with the Greek *γαλακτοφόρος*.⁶⁸ A group of milk carriers is mentioned in *P. Count. 2* verso (229 BC), col. xxviii, new l. 628, which attests to three females and one male performing this duty. This occupation is associated by the editors of this document with the cult of Bastet. However, *P. Count. 2* does not provide any details regarding their activities, therefore their role in the animal cult remains unclear.

5.2. *After death*

After their death, the sacred animals were treated in a similar way to human cadavers. Hence, a substantial number of sources refer to individuals with priestly titles being in charge of mortuary practices related to the sacred species. Diodorus briefly describes the treatment of dead animals (Diod. Sic. I.83.5):

ὅταν δ' ἀποθάνῃ τι τῶν εἰρημένων, συνδόνι κατακαλύψαντες καὶ μετ' οἰμωγῆς τὰ στήθη καταπληξάμενοι φέρουσιν εἰς τὰς ταριχείας: ἔπειτα θερα-

⁶⁸ CLARYSSE & THOMPSON, ‘P. Count. 2 continued’ (cit. n. 2), p. 188.

πευθέντων αὐτῶν κεδρία καὶ τοῖς δυναμένοις εὐωδίαν παρέχεσθαι καὶ πολυχρόνιον τοῦ σώματος τήρησιν θάπτουσι ἐν ἱεραῖς θήκαις.

When one of these animals dies, they wrap it in fine linen and then, wailing and beating their breasts, carry it off to be embalmed; and after it has been treated with cedar oil and such spices as have the quality of imparting a pleasant odour and of preserving the body for a long time. (transl. by C. H. Oldfather)

Several mummification methods existed in ancient Egypt, which were dependent on the economic criteria, style and skills of the embalmers, as well as their popularity in different periods.⁶⁹ During the mummification process, the animal's body was usually eviscerated, then placed in salt or natron in order to desiccate, and finally, the body was anointed and wrapped. However, often (especially in the case of smaller animals) the viscera were not removed, and after the desiccation the bodies were placed in a black substance (oil, pitch, bitumen), which aimed to protect the body from decomposition. Sometimes, living animals were immersed in this black substance, while other methods involved excarnation, due to which an animal mummy consisted of bones wrapped in linen.⁷⁰

Evidence from the Ptolemaic Fayum attests to several titles that refer to mortuary personnel engaged in animal cults. In Greek documents, the title of the occupation that was linked to burial activities ends with the suffix: -τάφος.⁷¹ However, the sources reveal virtually nothing about the range of their duties. It remains unknown if they were involved in the entire mummification. The evidence indicates that they were probably in charge of funerary practices and burial, and that they took care of the animals' tombs. In comparison with animal keepers, occupations associated with the burial of sacred animals are poorly represented in the material from the Fayum.

⁶⁹ S. IKRAM, 'Manufacturing divinity. The technology of mummification', [in:] IKRAM, *Divine Creatures* (cit. n. 6), pp. 16-43, at p. 27.

⁷⁰ Methods of mummification are described by A. DODSON & S. IKRAM, *The Mummy in Ancient Egypt: Equipping the Dead for Eternity*, Cairo 1998, pp. 131-136; IKRAM, 'Manufacturing divinity' (cit. n. 69), pp. 16-43.

⁷¹ ΟΤΤΟ, *Priester und Tempel* (cit. n. 24), p. 109.

5.2.1. *ιβιοτάφος*

The *ιβιοτάφοι*, ‘undertakers of ibises’, are attested only in four documents. This group is primarily mentioned in the Greek section of a bilingual salt tax record found at Ghoran, which records eleven individuals who held this office.⁷² Moreover, this profession is also attested in two letters of complaint. The first letter is a partially damaged complaint written by an ibis burier from Tebtynis (*P. Tebt.* III.2 963 descr. [199–175 BC]). The second text was written on behalf of an ibis burier by a higher official (*SB XVI 12551 = SB VI 9628*).⁷³ However, these texts do not provide information about the activities of these functionaries.

The letter of complaint from Tebtynis (*P. Strasb. Gr.* II 91 [86 BC]) mentions the function of the ibis burier (*ιβιοτάφος*) as combined with the occupation of the hawk burier (*ιέρακοτάφος*). They were attached to a *ἔρμαιοιον* in the village of Tebtynis. The complaint was addressed to the *laarches* and it concerns a temple robbery. A group arrived at the temple and attacked the priests who were on duty, they then stole the fine linens that were used to clothe the divine images of ibises and hawks (these were most likely statues, but they might have been mummified specimens). After the event, the priests said that the lack of linens would affect the religious procession that was scheduled for New Year, which was subsequently cancelled for the first time in thirty years. Due to the cancellation, the priests demanded 40 silver talents as compensation. This text partially reveals the duties of the *ιβιοτάφοι* and *ιέρακοτάφοι* that were employed at the temple. They not only organized and attended religious festivals but also fulfilled non-religious tasks. The document mentions, for instance, that before the robbery, the linens (*τὰ βύσσινα*) were washed by a priest named Harmiysis. Therefore, the priests were generally responsible for maintaining the functions of the temple and performing sacred rituals. However, this text does not refer to the entombing of the sacred species, as one would expect. Nevertheless, it is particularly significant because it

⁷² *P. Count.* 2 + *P. Count.* 3 + *P. Count.* 2 revised; *P. Count.* 3, l. 42 = *P. Lille Dem.* III 99 (299 BC); CLARYSSE & THOMPSON, ‘*P. Count.* 2 continued’ (cit. n. 2).

⁷³ CLARYSSE & QUAEGBEUR, ‘Ibion, Isieion and Tharesieion’ (cit. n. 26).

contains the only preserved example of this function in the material that is dated to the Ptolemaic period. Overall, there are only two known attestations of the title *ἱερακοτάφος*. Another document that mentions this title comes from Oxyrhynchos (Bahnasa) and it is dated to the Roman period (*P. Turner* 17 [AD 69]).

5.2.2. *sdm p3 hb* and *sdm p3 bik*

Demotic documents from the Fayum also contain titles and functions that were linked to the animal cults. In Demotic texts occupations that were related to animal cults consist of the word *sdm*, ‘servant’, and the name of a particular animal or god. In the evidence from the Fayum, titles that include *sdm* are attested only in relation to cults involving sacred birds: ibis (*sdm p3 hb*) and hawk (*sdm p3 bik*). Several scholars argue that the Egyptian term *sdm* may represent those occupations that in Greek texts end with the suffix *-τάφος*. It is assumed that these occupations referred to priests who dealt with animals after their death, such as those involved with the mummification process and other funeral activities.⁷⁴ Accordingly, the title *sdm p3 hb* have corresponded with the Greek title *ἰβιοτάφος*, while *ἱερακοτάφος* may be equated to the title *sdm p3 bik*.

Servants of ibises (*sdm n3 hb(.w)*) are attested in three Demotic documents: a population register (*P. Count.* 2), and two household records (*P. Count.* 4 and 10).⁷⁵ These texts provide us with valuable information concerning the number of workers who fulfilled this function. *P. Count.* 2 reveals that 232 out of the 10,876 listed individuals were servants of ibises, which constituted over 2% of the total population recorded in this document.⁷⁶ Because this number is unexpectedly high, the editors suggest that it includes every individual employed by the cult, both ‘buriers’ and ‘keepers’. Moreover, this number also probably referred to personnel from

⁷⁴ CLARYSSE & THOMPSON, *Counting the People* (cit. n. 2), vol. II, p. 179.

⁷⁵ *P. Count.* 2 (229 BC), recto, old col. iii, ll. 82, 83, and new col. iv, l. 99; verso, new col. xxiii, l. 541; *P. Count.* 4 = *P. Lille Dem.* III 101 (231–254 BC), ll. 124 and 145; *P. Count.* 10 (299–100 BC), l. 22.

⁷⁶ *P. Count.* 2 verso, new col. xxiii, l. 541.

the entire district, not only one village.⁷⁷ On the other hand, servants of sacred hawks in this document are not so numerous as ibis servants. Hawk servants are attested only once in *P. Count.* 2, and the text lists eighteen individuals who held this title.⁷⁸

5.2.3. *swrd p3 hb*

Demotic evidence mentions another function, which has been interpreted by the editors as ‘caretaker of the ibis’ (*swrd p3 hb*). This function is attested in the Fayum in two documents: *P. Count.* 2 (229 BC), verso, new col. xxiii, l. 548, and *P. Count.* 8 (243–217 BC), l. 8. Both texts provide only the total number of priests who served as the caretakers: five (three male, two female) are recorded in the first document, while two are mentioned in the second. In the light of the evidence from the Fayum, the duties related to the occupation of *swrd p3 hb* remain unknown. However, two Demotic complaints from Hermoupolis (El-Ashmunein) link this occupation with funerary rituals, particularly with the mummification and burial of the ibises.⁷⁹ A priest named Herieus who held the function of *swrd p3 hb*, complained about problems that were associated with the performance of religious rituals. These texts clearly state that he was in charge of embalming and entombing the sacred ibises. Remarkably, both documents are dated to the end of the Ptolemaic period, which makes them with regards to the discussion on the nature of this occupation in the Ptolemaic Fayum. Thus, *swrd p3 hb* may be interpreted simply as an ibis embalmer and it possibly better compared to Greek titles end with *-τάφος*. Papyri from the Fayum clearly distinguished between ‘caretaker’ of the ibis (*swrd p3 hb*) and ‘servant’ of the ibis (*sdm p3 hb*), therefore these priests performed different tasks in the ibis cult. Unfortunately, the differences between these two occupations are difficult to explain based on the preserved evidence. Thus, another interpretation for the function of *sdm p3 hb* should be sought. It is

⁷⁷ CLARYSSE & THOMPSON, ‘*P. Count.* 2 continued’ (cit. n. 2), pp. 167, 187.

⁷⁸ *P. Count.* 2 = *P. Lille Dem.* III 99 (229 BC), verso, new col. xxiv, l. 550 = old l. 531.

⁷⁹ J. D. RAY, ‘The complaint of Herieus’, *Revue d’Égyptologie* 29 (1977), pp. 97–116.

possible that the title *sdm n3 hb(.w) / bik(.w)* referred to keepers of sacred ibises/hawks, rather than to workers involved with funerary rituals.

5.2.4. *κννοτάφος*

The function of *κννοτάφος*, ‘dog burier’, is attested in two texts. However, these documents do not provide any details concerning the activity of the priests involved in burying the sacred dogs. A petition from Philadelphiea (*P. Lips.* II 125 [173 BC]) mentions a certain *κννοτάφος* named Onnophris, who was also a cultivator of the royal land. This text implies that the *Anou-bieion* at Philadelphiea was a place that both kept and buried the sacred dogs. This occupation is also listed in a salt tax record (*P. Count.* 6 = *SB XII* 10860 [232 BC], fr. 2, l. 295), which presumably comes from Magdola or Ptolemais Hormou, unfortunately, however, this text provides us only with the name of this function.

5.2.5. *κρριοτάφος*

Functionaries that were responsible for burying the sacred rams (*κρριοτάφοι*) appear twice in documents from the Ptolemaic Fayum. Generally, this occupation is poorly documented in the evidence. There is only one further attestation of *κρριοτάφος* from outside the Fayum, which appears in a text from Latopolis dated to the Roman period (*P. L. Bat.* XXXIII 7 [Latopolis, 1st cent. AD]). Documents from the Fayum mention two functionaries who were attached to the mortuary cult of sacred rams. A certain Marres, who was related to the ram cult, appears in two crop reports from the village of Kerkeosiris. The case of Marres has been previously discussed in this study, as he held two functions: *ιβιοβοσκός και κρριοτάφος*, ‘ibis keeper and ram burier’ (*P. Tebt.* I 61b, l. 401 [117 BC], and *P. Tebt.* I 72, ll. 410–411 [113 BC]). Moreover, according to these documents he was also engaged in agricultural work. The second attestation of *κρριοτάφος* appears in a Greek record from the village of Trikomia in the division of Themistos (*P. Count.* 23 = *CPR XIII* 2 + *CPR XIII* 5 recto [254–231 BC], l. 120). This

text refers to a *κριοτάφος* named Teos, however again, the document does not provide us with further details about this official.

Overall, the sacred ram cult was not popular in the Fayum, which may explain the limited number of priests belonging to this cult. The Ram deity's main centre of worship was located in Mednes in Lower Egypt.⁸⁰ The presence of personnel engaged in this cult in the Fayum may be linked to the ram cult attached to Amun, which is attested in this region. Temples of Amun were located for example at Philadelphiea and Kerkeosiris.⁸¹ Moreover, Vincent Rondot indicates that Amun was probably worshipped in temple of Soknebtunis at Tebtynis.⁸² A Demotic land lease from Philadelphiea mentions a temple official who held two functions: *wlt* of the sacred rams (*wlt [n] p3 i[s]w*) and *w^cb*-priest of Amenemope (*w^cb n Imn-[ip]y*).⁸³ A *wlt* of Sacred Rams is interpreted by scholars as being a 'guardian' of sacred rams that were associated with the god Amun. This priest was in charge of the flocks that belonged to the temple. However, several scholars suggest that he was not involved in the breeding or burying of the sacred animals. Hence, this occupation is not included in this study.⁸⁴

5.2.6. βουτάφος

Cows were devoted to the goddess Hathor, who was worshipped primarily in Tentyris and whose cult was not very popular in the Fayum area. The occupation of *βουτάφος*, 'cow burier', only appears once in the Fayum, in a fragmentary Greek text, which presumably comes from Boubastos

⁸⁰ The ram cult at Mendes: S. REDFORD & D. B. REDFORD, 'The cult and necropolis of the Sacred Ram at Mendes', [in:] IKRAM, *Divine Creatures* (cit. n. 6), pp. 44–71.

⁸¹ RÜBSAM, *Götter und Kulte* (cit. n. 14), pp. 140–141; *P. Tebt.* I 88, l. 50.

⁸² V. RONDOT, *Le temple de Soknebtynis et son Dromos*, Cairo 2004, pp. 40–46.

⁸³ C. J. MARTIN, 'A demotic land lease from Philadelphia: P. BM 10560', *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 72 (1986), pp. 159–173.

⁸⁴ DE CENIVAL, 'Deux papyrus' (cit. n. 67), p. 26; MARTIN, 'A demotic land lease' (cit. n. 83), p. 167; D. AGUT-LABORDÈRE, 'The wool of Naukratis. About the stela Michigan Kelsey Museum 0.2.5803', *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* 24 (2019), pp. 91–104, at p. 97.

(*P. Count.* 15 [220–150 BC]). The text provides a list of ethnics and occupations, among which a group of cow buriers (*βουτάφοι*) are listed in line 17. However, the text is fragmentary, and the title was reconstructed by the editors. Hence, the presence of the cow cult and its personnel in the Fayum is not certain.

5.3. *Other functions*

Documents from the Fayum mention two priestly occupations that cannot be placed in the categories presented above. However, despite this, they have been included in this study because their religious role was partially tied to the sacred animals. The palm bearers (*θαλλοφόροι*) and the bearers of the gods (Greek: *θεαγοί* / Egyptian: *t3j (n3) ntr.w*) belonged to a category of minor priests who performed certain religious duties. However, they were not as directly engaged with the animal cult as keepers or buriers. Certain scholars argue that these occupations were presumably only part-time jobs. Priests who belonged to this group carried out their religious duties only occasionally as attendants of religious festivals and processions.⁸⁵ As pointed out in the introduction to this paper, animal cults were widely popular during the Graeco-Roman period. Sacred animals were worshipped in temples as living incarnations of deities and they frequently took part in religious rituals that were performed in honour of these gods.⁸⁶ Generally, palm bearers and bearers of the gods were primarily involved in the cults of particular deities, not an animal cult itself. In other words, they were only linked to sacred animals because animal worship constituted an important element of the religious practices that were devoted to a particular god. For this reason, the bearers of these functions are recognized in this study as secondary religious personnel of animal cult and are investigated separately.

⁸⁵ P. DILS, 'Les *t3j (n3) ntr.w* ou *θεαγοί*. Fonction religieuse et place dans le vie civile', *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 95 (1995), pp. 153–171, at p. 167; CLARYSSE & THOMPSON, *Counting the People* (cit. n. 2), vol. II, pp. 181–184.

⁸⁶ CLARYSSE & THOMPSON, *Counting the People* (cit. n. 2), vol. II, pp. 181–184.

5.3.1. *θεαγοί / t3y (n3) ntr.w*

The bearers of the gods (*θεαγοί / t3y (n3) ntr.w*) took part in sacred rituals, however they were not involved in cultic activity that was performed in the inner sanctuary.⁸⁷ Instead, during temple ceremonies and processions, they carried out the images of the gods that were represented by the patron animal of this deity in the form of a statue/figurine, a living specimen, or an embalmed animal. Peter Dils argues that *θεαγοί* were also in charge of transporting the sacred animals to the places where they were embalmed and entombed.⁸⁸ The relationship between animal necropoleis and funerary cult is illustrated, for example, in *P. Sorb.* III 107 (219 BC), a petition from the village of Mouchis that was written by a bearer of the gods of crocodile (*θεαγός κροκοδίων*). This document shows that the main duties of this priest involved controlling (*κατέχω*) the sanctuary in the village and performing religious rituals. He was also responsible for the places where sacred crocodiles were buried in Mouchis. This text provides us with the only known attestation of *θεαγός κροκοδίων* in Ptolemaic Egypt. Various scholars generally associate this function with the cult of the crocodile god Sobek, the chief god of the Fayum area.⁸⁹

The occupation of bearer of the god is frequently mentioned in texts from Ptolemaic Egypt and the evidence from the Fayum indicates that it was a large group. A population register *P. Count.* 2 records around 209 individuals who held this function, the largest group of which 131 priests were associated with the god Sobek (*θεαγοί Σούχου* and *t3y ntr.w Sbk*). Additionally, this function can be found in at least five other texts from this area.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ J. QUAEGBEUR, 'La désignation "porteur(s) des dieux" et le culte des dieux-crocodiles dans les textes des époques tardives', [in:] F. DAUMAS (ed.), *Mélanges Adolphe Gutbub*, Montpellier 1984, pp. 161–176; R. SCHOLL, 'θεαγός Σούχου / t3j ntr.w Sbk', *Enchoria* 16 (1988), pp. 135–136; DILS, 'Les t3j (n3) ntr.w' (cit. n. 85), pp. 153–171.

⁸⁸ DILS, 'Les t3j (n3) ntr.w' (cit. n. 85), pp. 164–165.

⁸⁹ E.g. WINKLER, 'Mouchis' (cit. n. 12), pp. 241–242.

⁹⁰ *P. Count.* 2 = *P. Lille Dem.* III 99, verso, new ll. 525–539 + *P. Count.* 3, ll. 180, 190; bearers of gods of Sobek are also attested in *P. Count.* 30 = *CPR XIII* 11 + *CPR XIII* 12 verso (254–231 BC), l. 76; *P. Count.* 50 (200–159 BC), ll. 45, 374; *P. Count.* 15 (220–150 BC), l. 10; *P. Tebt.* I 133

Another group of the god bearers was linked to the hippopotamus goddess Thoeris who, according to beliefs, was considered the mother of Sobek.⁹¹ Being the mother of the area's main deity resulted in her cult also being popular in the Fayum. The bearers of the gods of Thoeris (*θεαγοί θοήριος* and *ἕϥ n3 ntr.w T3-wr.t*) are attested in six texts from the Fayum. *P. Count.* 2 records around 76 individuals who performed this function.⁹² *P. Count.* 2 is also the only document from the Ptolemaic Fayum that attests to bearers of the gods of Geb (verso, new col. xxii, l. 532 = old col. xxiii, l. 523; *ἕϥ ntr.w Gb*).

Bearers of the gods were engaged in activities that were performed outside of the temples. For example, they are mentioned as cultivators of royal land in at least two documents from the Ptolemaic Fayum, *P. Petrie* III 99 recto (249–248 BC) and *P. Tebt.* I 133 (c. 115–112 BC). Certain documents from the Fayum may suggest the economic status of bearers of the gods. The Greek inscription *SEG* XL 1573 = *SEG* LVIII 1816 (2) (101–83 BC), which probably comes from the Fayum area (another possible place of origin is Oxyrhynchos), attests to the dedication of a propylon in the temple of Thoeris made by a group of *θεαγοί*.⁹³ This example suggests that priests were wealthy enough to fund construction projects in the temple.

5.3.2. θαλλοφόροι

There is no evidence to be found concerning palm bearers (*θαλλοφόροι*) in Egypt, thus it is difficult to ascertain the duties they performed. Moreover, their role in animal cults remains unclear. They presumably attended

(c. 115–112 BC); *P. Tebt.* I 121 (94 or 61 BC); CLARYSSE & THOMPSON, *Counting the People* (cit. n. 2), vol. II, p. 181.

⁹¹ PINCH, *Handbook of Egyptian Mythology* (cit. n. 67), pp. 141–143.

⁹² THOMPSON, *Kerkeosiris* (cit. n. 16), p. 88; *P. Count.* 10 (3rd–2nd cent. BC), l. 46; *P. Lille Dem.* II 49 (244 BC); *P. Count.* 2 = *P. Lille Dem.* III 99 (229 BC), verso, new col. xxii, l. 533 = old col. xxiii, l. 524; *P. Count.* 15 (220–150 BC), l. 11; *SB* XX 14473 = *P. Trophitis* 4 (*P. Aust. Herr.* 4) (159 BC); *P. Tebt.* I 61b (117 BC).

⁹³ É. BERNAND, 'Dedicace a Thoueris', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 81 (1990), pp. 200–202.

religious rituals where their main task was to wave palm fronds during ceremonies. Hence, their profession is often considered as a part-time job that was performed only occasionally.⁹⁴ *Θαλλοφόροι* are attested in a Greek household register from Ghoran (*P. Count.* 6, fr. 16 and 19 = *SB XII* 10860 [232 BC]), which mentions two groups that were related to different cults: palm bearers of (sacred) dogs (*θαλλοφόροι κυνῶν*) and palm bearers of Hermes (*θαλλοφόροι Ἑρμοῦ*). The palm bearers of dogs (*θαλλοφόροι κυνῶν*) mentioned in the text were obviously connected to an animal cult, however there is no evidence to suggest that the palm bearers of Hermes were the part of an animal cult. Palm bearers that did belong to an animal cult were not involved in the breeding and burying the sacred animals and their function was presumably limited to ritual practices.

Palm bearers may have attended rituals that were devoted to deities that were represented by their animal incarnations. Sacred dogs were associated primarily with Anubis, thus *θαλλοφόροι κυνῶν* may have been involved with his cult. Moreover, Hermes was the equivalent of the Egyptian god Thoth, who was often represented by an ibis or a baboon. An interpretation of the function of *θαλλοφόρος* can be found in the peculiar link that existed between all three deities during the Graeco-Roman period. The Greek god Hermes shared certain similarities with the Egyptian gods Thoth and Anubis, which consequently led to the emergence of new syncretic deities during the Ptolemaic era: Hermes Trismegistos and Hermanubis.⁹⁵ There is evidence that suggests palm fronds may have played an important role in the cult of Hermes/Thoth/Anubis, which implies that the aforementioned palm bearers were specifically attached to these deities' cults. Françoise Dunand, for instance, emphasises the peculiar role that palm branches played in the cult of Hermes/Thoth based on an image of the god depicted on a terracotta plaque dated to the Roman period (before 2nd cent. AD).⁹⁶ Terracotta plaques were hung on the walls of private residences in order to show personal piety, or they were donated

⁹⁴ CLARYSSE & THOMPSON, *Counting the People* (cit. n. 2), vol. II, p. 184.

⁹⁵ FOWDEN, *The Egyptian Hermes* (cit. n. 22), pp. 14–22.

⁹⁶ F. DUNAND, 'Le babouin Thot et la palme. À propos d'une terre cuite d'Égypte', *Chronique d'Égypte* 66 (1991), pp. 341–348.

to temples as votive offerings. Thoth is represented on the plaque in the form of a baboon holding a palm frond in its hand. During the Pharaonic period, palm fronds were considered to be an attribute of Thoth-ibis, who according to tradition recorded on a palm frond the kings' reign and also how long certain people lived.⁹⁷ Depictions of Anubis holding palm branches also appear on various objects such as lamps, terracotta figurines, figures, and amulets. However, according to Dunand these images became widespread during the Roman period, and there is no evidence to suggest that Anubis was represented in the same manner during the Ptolemaic period.⁹⁸ Various scholars suggest that palm fronds did not belong specifically to the cults of Thoth and Anubis, arguing that they were used also in other cults.⁹⁹ These examples do not support the view that palm bearers were attached exclusively to animal cults. However, this discussion may imply that palm bearers were engaged in the cults of Thoth/Hermes and Anubis who were portrayed in animal form.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The evidence from the Fayum distinguishes at least seventeen occupational titles that were associated with animal cults. These titles have been recorded in both Greek and Demotic Egyptian. The list of occupations presented here represents only an outline, which, however, may still help to further our understanding of animal cult personnel. Sacred animal cult workers formed a peculiar category of priests in ancient Egypt, which was comprised of numerous individuals who were responsible for different aspects of the cult. It is often difficult to ascertain the real range of duties performed by these priests. Many of the examples provided in this study prove that priests fulfilled various tasks, which frequently were not associated with religious rituals. It was common practice for the functionaries of animal cults to perform both religious and non-religious duties, especially

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 345–348.

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 345–346.

⁹⁹ CLARYSSE & THOMPSON, *Counting the People* (cit. n. 2), vol. II, p. 182.

in minor temples that had limited personnel. The keepers of the sacred species, for example, were often responsible for both feeding the animals and cultivating the temple's land to produce the necessary crops that were used to feed the animals.

Administrative documents produced by state, especially tax records, indicate that animal cult workers constituted a large group. In fact, being a priest was highly profitable and temple workers were usually entitled to tax exemptions. According to one possible interpretation, some of these individuals may have been recorded in tax lists as priests simply because they provided animal sanctuaries with certain services. For example, farmers who regularly contributed animal feed to temple may have appeared in tax records as priests.¹⁰⁰

It should be remembered that this study is based entirely on material that originate from the Fayum. Unquestionably, further discussion regarding animal cult personnel in Ptolemaic Egypt outside the Fayum is needed. It is important to bear in mind that the prevailing portion of occupations gathered in this study comes from Greek texts, which do not always fully reflect the real nature of these functions. The current state of research regarding temples and priests should be enriched primarily by information obtained from Demotic papyri that are still to be published. These Demotic documents may broaden our knowledge concerning both religious and non-religious tasks that were performed by temple personnel. Additionally, because many of Demotic texts were documents that were produced by the temple, they may reveal other temple occupations that do not appear in the Greek evidence.

Joanna Wilimowska

University of Wrocław
 Faculty of Historical and Pedagogical Sciences
 Institute of History
 Szewska 49
 50-120 Wrocław
 POLAND

e-mail: joanna.wilimowska@gmail.com

¹⁰⁰ CLARYSSE & THOMPSON, *Counting the People* (cit. n. 2), vol. II, pp. 177–186.

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Abstract: This study investigates linguistic and scriptal variation in notary signatures found in late antique contracts from Egypt, seeking to identify and interpret the potential relationship between choices in language and script. To answer this, theoretical concepts and methods from sociolinguistics, social semiotics, and multilingual studies are used, with the objective of adding a new, more linguistically-oriented perspective to existing research on notarial signatures. On the one hand, this research demonstrates how the Latin script seems to restrict notaries, resulting in transliterated Greek signatures with very homogeneous content. The familiarity of notaries with the Greek language and writing is, on the other hand, reflected in signatures written in the Greek alphabet, which are much more diverse and at times adjusted to the circumstances under which specific documents were composed. Even if notaries seem to lack confidence in freely producing text in the Latin script, they choose to do so due to its functional values, which are conveyed and perceived visually. Latin letters create an association between signatories and Roman law, adding to the trustworthiness and prestige of the signatures. Differentiating between script and language allows us to understand how the Latin script maintained the connotations that formerly accompanied the Latin language, gradually replacing it in the form of transliterated passages, at a time when the language was disappearing from papyrological

documentation. In this sense, sociolinguistics, and especially social semiotics, prove useful when dealing with visual aspects of language in papyri, as they prevent their functions and meanings from being overlooked.

Keywords: notary, social semiotics, digraphia, diglossia, *di emou* signatures

Amin BENAÏSSA

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Keywords: *coloni adscripticii*, *enapographoi georgoi*, Apion estate (Oxyrhynchus), tenancy, viticulture in late-antique Egypt

Willy CLARYSSE & Christelle FISCHER-BOVET

Greek papyri of the Classics Department at Stanford (P. Stan. Class.) – Part II 67

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Keywords: Ptolemaic papyri, petitions, letters, oil contraband, tax farming, Arsinoite nome, prisoners of war

Jean-Luc FOURNET

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Keywords: Monastery of the Metanoia, *anmona civilis*, shipping receipts, Dioscorus archive

Edward M. HARRIS

Legal expertise and legal experts in Athenian democracy 149

Abstract: This essay refutes the view that the Athenians of the Classical period were hostile to legal expertise. The Athenians had much respect for the Areopagus and the Exegetai, who were experts in law and religion. The legal expert Phanodemus was often praised and entrusted with important responsibilities. Litigants in public cases often show their legal knowledge by copious citation of statutes. They sometimes accuse their opponents of deceitful use of rhetoric never attack them for legal expertise. In the speech of Lysias *Against Nicomachus*, the accuser charges the defendant with illegally modifying the rules about sacrifices but never arouses suspicions about his legal expertise.

Keywords: expertise, Areopagus, Exegetai, Phanodemus, Apollodorus, son of Pasion, *anagrapheis* (inscribers), Lysias *Against Nicomachus*

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Keywords: Latin papyri, Roman citizens, Egypt, business, trade, land

Andrea JÖRDENS

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Keywords: murder, pre-trial detention, priests, Soknopaiou Nesos

Adam ŁAJTAR

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Keywords: Deir el-Bahari, Amenhotep son of Hapu, Greek inscriptions

Adam ŁUKASZEWICZ

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Keywords: Alexandria, Mark Antony, Cleopatra VII, Antyllus, 'Inimitables'

Grzegorz OCHAŁA

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texts originally published by Giovanni Ruffini. The former is a list of witnesses to a deed of land sale (*P. Qasr Ibrim* IV 65) and the latter an account (*P. Qasr Ibrim* IV 80). While the main subject of the paper are personal names that can be found in the two documents, other elements, such as grammar, lexicon, and – especially for *P. Qasr Ibrim* IV 80 – the matter of the document are also duly treated. By identifying ghost-names in Ruffini's edition and proposing the identification of new Old Nubian substantives, the paper enhances our knowledge about the vocabulary of the language. Last but not least, the new interpretation of *P. Qasr Ibrim* IV 80, which – for the first time in medieval Nubia – appears to explicitly state the value of certain commodities in dirhams, is an important contribution to the studies on the monetisation of Nubian economy.

Keywords: medieval Nubia, Qasr Ibrim, Old Nubian documents, onomastics, ghost-names, account, Nubian economy

Joanna WILIMOWSKA

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Keywords: animal cult, priests, temple personnel, Egyptian temples, Ptolemaic period, Fayum area

Ewa WIPSZYCKA

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Abstract: The main question that the present paper tries to answer is as follows: since two discordant precepts concerning work were to be found in the New Testament, how did monks behave? One precept treated work as a duty, the other recommended not to care about one's maintenance. The monks followed in their behaviour either the first or the second precept. As a result of disputes that took place in the fourth century the opinion prevailed that work was the better choice. It is important for us to find out when and under what circumstances that choice was done by the majority of the monastic movement in the East. It is also important to see what arguments were used by the monks of Late Antiquity in order to settle the conflict between the two discordant precepts. This conflict worried many and caused a renewal of

a dispute that seemed to have been closed. Two ways of reasoning in favour of monastic work were generally used: monks might and should pray and work at the same time, satisfying both precepts; monks ought to work in order to be able to give alms, and this conferred to work a meaning that went beyond immediate usefulness. Praying and working at the same time was not always feasible in actual practice, but this did not bother authors of ascetic treatises.

Keywords: voluntary poverty, St. Anthony, Pachomius, Hirsiesee, Basil of Caesarea, Evagrius of Pontus, John Cassian, *melete*, Messalians, 'wandering and begging' monks, Rabbula, Syriac monastic rules, almsgiving