Andreas Winkler

Priests Petitioning the Police (P.Brit.Mus. EA 10650)

Temple Taxes, Temple Land, and Withheld Yields

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Summary: The article contains the edition and discussion of a rarely encountered form of petition (*ḥn-smṯ*) from the Ptolemaic Fayum, which today is kept by the British Museum in London. The text was submitted by a *lesonis* of Soknebtunis to the chief of police in Mouchis. The document concerns a dispute between two priests from two different localities, Kerkeneith and Tebtunis, over agricultural lands and a harvest. The text is not only an addition to the small corpus of such petitions but also informs about juridical, economic, and religious life in the Fayum under the Ptolemies. It furthermore sheds light on business connections among members of various crocodile priesthoods in the Fayum.

Keywords: Demotic – Fayum – Papyrus

Introduction

P.Brit.Mus. EA 10650 (figure 1) is a Demotic petition or report (*ḥn-smṯ*)¹. At first glance, the papyrus appears to be a rather unassuming piece, but one should not be misled by its apparent inconspicuousness. The text is not only an addition to the slim corpus of such documents; it is also informative about juridical, economic, and religious life in the Fayum under the Ptolemies. It, furthermore, provides information about, for instance, the ancient settlements Mouchis and Kerkeneith and sheds light on business connections among members of various crocodile priesthoods in the Fayum in the Hellenistic period.

The document was submitted to the chief of police in Mouchis by a *lesonis*, serving the temple of Soknebtunis. The writer of the document has, according to the text, engaged in a business agreement with another individual, another priest (*wḥb*) from a nearby village, Kerkeneith. They had entered into the arrangement by the beginning

of the year in order to cultivate some fields together, which the accused party had let before deciding to enter the partnership with the complainant. No request for action is present (see below), but it appears as if the associate from Kerkeneith was accused of having acted duplicitously, since it seems that he claimed the crops from the mentioned lands instead of allocating the rightful share to his companion, the priest of Soknebtunis. Although the text is partially lacunose, it appears that the *lesonis* informed the chief of police about the events so that he later on would take the appropriate action.

Physical description

The papyrus is, as expected from a document of this kind, a rather narrow piece containing seventeen lines of text in addition to a date at its very bottom. It measures ca. 10.5 cm in width and 32 cm in height². The writing is for the most part clear, though not particularly carefully executed. It is a typical “administrative hand”, and the scribe seems to have used a medium-thick brush. The papyrus is of intermediate quality and is only inscribed on the recto (along the fibres). It can be noted that a thin strip with the fibres running vertically is glued to the recto side of the piece. It is clearly not a *kollesis*; the strip runs down from line three until the beginning of line sixteen. The thin strip does not seem to be a mending of any kind and thus it appears to be a production error; the verso does not show any traces of a crack, crease, or ridge.

Though the piece is preserved in its full length and the extant surface only contains a few minor wormholes, part of the edges of the papyrus are broken off. On the right side, the beginnings of lines four to eight and ten to eleven are missing. But it is only in lines seven and eight that the damage impedes the reading. On the left side, however, a far more substantial piece is missing from line eight down to line fifteen. The damage unfortunately hinders a completely satisfactory reconstruction of the text.

¹ E. g., G. Baetens, ‘Demotic Petitioning’, *JJP* 44 (2014), 47–49.

Andreas Winkler: email: andreas.winkler@antiken.su.se

² The frame in which the papyrus is mounted measures 16 cm in width and 38 cm in height.

Figure 1: Picture of the papyrus (P.Brit.Mus. EA 10650 recto).

Provenance

No clear archaeological provenance can be attributed to the papyrus in question; no find spot has been recorded. But there is both internal and external evidence that could indicate its place of origin. There are two main sites from which the current piece may come, either the site of ancient Tebtunis or Mouchis. Internal evidence suggests that it was most likely drawn up in the former settlement; the plaintiff serves the god associated with the mentioned site³, but the text is addressed to an official in Mouchis. If the text indeed was dispatched to that settlement, the present papyrus may have been found there, but it is more probable that we are dealing with a copy of the original text or possibly, but less plausibly, a draft upon the basis of which a Greek text was supposed to be written and sent off⁴. In that case, it would have been found at Tebtunis.

P.Brit.Mus. EA 10650 was registered in the museum collection in 1931, as indicated by the registration number 1931.0509.33 written on the frame in which the papyrus is kept. The piece belongs to a lot of texts acquired from Maurice Nahman, a well-known antiquities dealer⁵. The greater part of the items in the lot to which the papyrus belongs come from Tebtunis⁶. This fact also suggests that the papyrus was found at the same locality as the other texts. The provenance can therefore be regarded as virtually secure.

Date

The papyrus dates to year 20 of an unmentioned Ptolemaic ruler. Though the script is mostly rather undistinguished, it resembles a second-century BC hand, but it cannot be excluded that the text in fact dates to the previous century. The early first century BC is a possible date but unlikely. If one accepts the second century or the early first century, the most probable dates are thus either regnal year 20 of Ptolemy V Epiphanes (186/185 BC), Ptolemy VI Philometor (162/161 BC), or possibly, but less likely, of Ptolemy X Alexander I (95/94 BC). The lot of papyri to which P.Brit.Mus. EA 10650 belongs date principally to the period between the reigns of Epiphanes and Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II⁷. Since there are far more documents known from the reign of Philometor among those papyri, it is also more probable to date the present piece to his reign. Yet, if the third century were preferred (cf., e.g., P.Berl. 13637⁸ [262/261 BC] from Tebtunis), another date range appears probable, namely regnal year 20 of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (266/265 BC) or Ptolemy III Euergetes (229/228 BC). The form and content of the text might favour either one of the older dates (see below).

Edition

Transliteration

|(1) w^c c_n-sm^yi n By³nⁱⁱ p³ ts^{|(2)} rsyⁱⁱⁱ (n) dmy Sbk P³-mhy^{iv} |(3)
(n)-dr.t P(a)-hy^v (s') Sbk-h^cpy^{vi} p³ mr-šn (n) Sbk-nb-tny
|(4) hpr hsb.t 20.t^{vii} tpy 3h.t ir^zy hbr (n) Tr.t- |(5) hr-r-^wviii
(s') Dhwt^y-lw^{ix} nty hn n³ w^cb.w n Sbk (n) Pr-grg-N.t^x |(6)
[r n³] 3h.w nty hn p³ w³h^{xi} n t³ pylstr³(.t)^{xii} |(7) [nty] [hn^{xiii} p³]
htp-nt^{xiv} (n) Sbk r.s[hn]fⁱ.ir-hr[...]xv |(8) ---[...]|striking arm xvi p³
sn.nw^{xvii} tn^{xviii} t³ dny.t p³y [n n³ 3h.w^{xix} rn^zw r-r^zf^{xx} |(9) tn t³
dny.t p³y r-hr^zy [mtw^zn mh]^{xxi} [t³y^zw md.t-]|(10) hw.t-nt^{xii}
p³y^zw šmw mh^zy p³ rmt^z (n) rn[^zf n t³y^zy dny.t]^{xxiii} |(11) [p³.t]
(n) grg^{xxiv} ih pr.^{xxv} [---xxvi |(12) sk^{xxvii} hpr p³y^zs ssw n ph p³
[rd ---xxviii |(13) n³ 3h.w n rn^zw 3sh^zst [p³ shn nfr st ir-]^{xxix} |(14)
rh-s^{xxx} iw^zy dⁱ.t n^zk p³ c_n-s[my]^{xxxi} [r p³]^{xxxii} |(15) hn n-dr.t^zw
xxxiii irm p³y^zw wth^{xxxiv} [...] xxxv |(16) ir^zf^{xxxvi} sh^y n.im^zf^zc-tw^zy
ip |(17) n³y^zy rd.w r-r^zf

|(18) sh n hsb.t 20.t ibd-4 n pr.t sw 26

3 It cannot be excluded, however, that the plaintiff in fact served the primary god of Tebtunis in Crocodilopolis; the nome capital had its own temple dedicated to Soknebtunis (see, e.g., H. Kockelmann, *Der Herr der Seen, Sümpfe und Flußläufe: Untersuchungen zum Gott Sobek und den ägyptischen Krokodilgötter-Kulten von den Anfängen bis zur Römerzeit* [ÄA 74; Wiesbaden, 2017], 2:371; W. J. R. Rübsam, *Götter und Kulte in Faiyum während der griechisch-römisch-byzantinischen Zeit* [Bonn, 1974], 35).

4 Cf. Baetens, *JJP* 44, 49.

5 See J. Capart, 'Necrology: Maurice Nahman', *CdÉ* 22 (1947), 300–301; M. J. Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology* (4th ed., London, 2012), 397. See also T. Hickey, A. Maravela, and M. Zellmann-Rohrer, 'Historical and Textual Notes on Magical Texts in the Papyrus Collection of the University of Oslo Library', *Symbolae Osloenses* 89 (2015), 158–159 and 162.

6 See, e.g., C. J. Martin, 'How to Write a Demotic Legal Document: P. BM EA 10648', in Gh. Widmer and D. Devauchelle (eds.), *Actes du IX^e Congrès international des études démotiques* (BdÉ 147; Cairo, 2009), 195–196; A. Monson, 'Priests of Soknebtunis and Sokonopis: P. BM EA 10647', *JEA* 92 (2006), 205–206; H. Thompson, 'Two Demotic Self Dedications', *JEA* 26 (1941), 68.

7 Thompson, *JEA* 26, 68.

8 W. Erichsen, 'Ein demotischer Königseid aus Tebtunis', *ZÄS* 74 (1938), 139–141.

Translation

⁽¹⁾A report for Bion, the chief ⁽²⁾ of police in the Souchos village Mouchis, ⁽³⁾ from Pachois, son of Sokonopis, the *Lesonis* of Soknebtunis. ⁽⁴⁾In regnal year 20, the month of Thoth, I became the associate (of) In-⁽⁵⁾aros, son of Thoteus, who is among the priests of Souchos of Kerke-neith, ⁽⁶⁾[regarding the] fields, which are part of the area of the *Palaistra* ⁽⁷⁾ (being) part of the sacred revenues of Souchos, which he leased before [...] ⁽⁸⁾[...] the second one: the (first) half part of the field in question was allocated [to him] ⁽⁹⁾ and the (other) half part was allocated to me, and [we were to pay] [their] ⁽¹⁰⁾ temple [taxes] and their rent. I furnished the mentioned man [with] ⁽¹¹⁾ [my] [half] [part] of the equipment, oxen, seed [...] ⁽¹²⁾ cultivating. Its time of reaching [ripening] came [...] ⁽¹³⁾ the mentioned fields. He harvested them. [The good order, may] ⁽¹⁴⁾ it be known, for I am submitting the [report] to you [regarding] ⁽¹⁵⁾ [the] agreement concerning them (the fields) and their fruit [...] ⁽¹⁶⁾ he has control over it until I assign ⁽¹⁷⁾ my yields to him.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Written in regnal year 20, Pharmuthi, day 26.

Textual Notes

i. The Demotic term *ʿn-smy*, “report” (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 32; *P.Sorb.* IV 148 comm.; Baetens, *JJP* 44, 47–49; M. Depauw, *The Demotic Letter: A Study of Epistolographic Scribal Traditions against their Intra- and Intercultural Background* [Dem.Stud. 14; Sommerhausen, 2006], 330), describes a writing, which is often directed to authorities, in particular police officials. The Egyptian collocation *ʿn-smy* is believed to correspond to the Greek προσάγγελμα (e.g., *P.Sorb.* III 128.10–11n.). This type of text usually contains a statement about an event in which the writer claims to have been wronged. In the text of this kind from the third century BC, there is rarely any request for action, however (see note xxxv below).

ii. The Demotic spelling *Byʿn* is not attested in the *NB Dem.*, but the name is undoubtedly a rendering of the Greek Βίων (Foraboschi, *Onomasticon*, 1:81; Preisigke, *NB*, 76).

iii. The Demotic term *ʿs-rsy*, lit. “Commander of the Watch”, could be the Egyptian equivalent of the Greek title ἀρχιφυλακίτης, “Chief of the Police” (see J. Bauschatz, *Law and Enforcement in Ptolemaic Egypt* [Cambridge, 2013], 68–78; id., “Archiphylakitai in Ptolemaic Egypt: A Hierarchy of Equals?”, *Syllecta Classica* 18 [2007], 181–211). In the documentation, both titles appear to be associated with the same kind of duties and they often have the same type of local qualification; both titles are connected to villages.

The Egyptian title is attested in, for instance, *P.Bürgsch.* 22 (244/243 BC) and 23 (243 BC) and already K. Sethe and J. Partsch, *Demotische Urkunden zum ägyptischen Bürgschaftsrechte vorzüglich der Ptolemäerzeit* (ASAW 32; Leipzig, 1920), 469–479, 70, recognised its meaning, though without suggesting a Greek equivalent. It is possible that ʿʒ-*n-rsy* is another variant in Demotic of the same title (cf. Baetens, *JJP* 44, 59–60 n. 113). The present individual seems not to be attested in any other source.

iv. *Pʿ-mhy*, “Mouchis”, is literally to be translated as “The Barn” or “The Storehouse”, which explains the penultimate sign, a house determinative. A similar writing is found in, e.g., *P.Haw.* 14.6 (98 BC), but the house determinative has been misread as a final s, i.e. **mwhys*, by the editor.

It is probable that the masculine definite article in the beginning was not pronounced despite being written out in Egyptian. If it were, one would assume that it would have been carried over into the Greek rendering of the village name, as it was in some other cases of the same toponym denoting other places throughout Egypt. In, for instance, the Coptite and Panopolite nomes, where similarly named localities are attested, π is written out in the Greek rendering of the toponym (Πμοῦχis). The letter can also survive as such in Coptic, as settlements based on the same noun are referred to as πμοῦωε or πμοῦω (e.g., A. Calderini, *Dizionario dei nomi geografici e topografici dell’Egitto greco-romano* [Milan, 1983], 4:163; S. Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit* [TAVO Beih. 41; Wiesbaden, 1988] 4:1986–1987) instead of the simple Μοῦχis as in the Fayum.

v. *P(a)-hy* (Gr. Παχόis), “Pachois” (*NB Dem.*, 404–405) is the most probable reading of the personal name in question. It is well known that the first element *Pa-*, “He of”, can occasionally be rendered as a simple *p*. The writing *p* for *pa* seems, however, by and large to be confined to Hawara, e.g., *P(a)-n-ʿIs.t* (Gr. Φανῆσις [vel sim.]), “Phanesis” (*NB Dem.*, 354; *P.Ashm.* 10.4 [98 BC]); *P(a)-wʿ* (Gr. Παῦis), “Paues” (*NB Dem.*, 357; *P.Haw.* 5b.6 [217 BC]); *P(a)-pʿ-hr* (*NB Dem.*, 366; *P.Haw.* 5a.2 [217 BC]); *P(a)-hy* (Gr. Παῖis), “Pais” (*NB Dem.*, 398; *ST* II 1066); *P(a)-hr* (Gr. Παῶis), “Paous” (*NB Dem.*, 401; *P.Haw.* 14.6 [98 BC]); *P(a)-sy(i)* (Gr. Πᾶσις), “Pasis” (*NB Dem.*, 412; *P.Haw.* 3.3; 6.7 [233 BC]). Whether the shape of *p* – the more expansive form with two half loops on the left upper part – not used elsewhere in the text opposes such a reading is unclear, but it should be noted that this is the variant used in Hawara. If this is the correct rendering of the name, perhaps the scribe was associated with the same scribal school as the clerks at Hawara. A less plausible reading would be to take the name as a variant of ʿʒ-(i)hy (Gr. Ἀσουχis), “Asouchis”

(*NB Dem.*, 108; A. Winkler, ‘Third Time’s the Charm? A Document from the Reign of Claudius and the Councillor Priests, Redux’, *JARCE* 51 [2015], 90). The second suggestion suffers from the fact that it presupposes an emendation of an initial vowel in what would be read as *ihy*, “possessions”. Nevertheless, when pronounced it would have elided with the final vowel in *‘š*, if the first sign is to be read as such.

vi. The name of the *lesonis* is here transcribed as *Sbk-hʿpy* (Gr. Σοκονῶπις), “Sokonopis” (*NB Dem.*, 918–919), but other readings of this onomastic have been discussed. See: *BL Dem.* B, 824–825 (§ 36); W. Clarysse, ‘Dionysos, Souchos, and Sarapis as Personal Names?’, *ZPE* 186 (2013), 263; Kockelmann, *Herr der Seen*, 1:41–43; Monson, *JEA* 92, 209; J. F. Quack, ‘Sokonopis als Gott und Mensch’, *Enchoria* 30 (2006/2007), 75–87, for the reading of the name in question.

vii. See G. Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands* 9 (ÄAT 38; Wiesbaden, 1998), 266–267, for *hpr* connected to temporal phrases, such as regnal years. It is apparently common in *mqmq*-type memoranda (G. Baetens and P.-L. Angeles, ‘A Demotic Memorandum to the Village Epistates with a Greek Subscription (P. dem. mon. 5)’, *CdE* 93 [2018], 290) and, therefore, probably also in *‘n-smy* documents; it also appears in, for instance, *P.Sorb.* IV 148.4–5.

viii. See *NB Dem.*, 72–73, for the name Inaros.

ix. See *NB Dem.*, 1298–1299, for the name Thoteus.

x. *Sbk (n) Pr-grg-N.t.*: “Souchos of Kerkeneith”. Although it is possible that the divinity mentioned could be a local variant of the Crocodile god (cf., e.g., *Sbk-(n)-Pr-hnm.w* [Winkler, ‘Mouchis and its Crocodiles: Topography, Toponymy, and Theonymy’, *BASP* 55 (2018), 246–247]), such a deity is hitherto unattested. It is therefore more probable that the passage refers to Souchos, the main god of the Arsinoite nome, and his local cult in the mentioned village.

For *Pr-grg-N.t.*, see Erichsen, *Glossar*, 134; H. Kockelmann, ‘Theophore Toponyme des Fayyûm: Wert und Bedeutung als Quellen für die Kulte der Region’, in C. Arlt and M. Stadler (eds.), *Das Fayyûm in Hellenismus und Kaiserzeit: Fallstudien zu multikulturellem Leben in der Antike* (Wiesbaden, 2013), 80–82; K.-Th. Zauzich, ‘Zwei neue demotische Ortsnamen’, *Enchoria* 7 (1977), 195. Even if the second element, *grg*, “establishment” (cf. Erichsen, *Glossar*, 586–587), is slightly lost in a lacuna and appears to be written in a somewhat odd fashion, finishing with a vertical stroke, which is probably a plant determinative, the reading seems clear. The toponym *Pr-grg-N.t* is attested in a number of papyri, e.g., *P.Loeb* 8.24 (309 BC); 9.42 (309 BC); *P.Lille.Dem.* II 78.1 (224/223 BC); *P.Sorb.* IV 156 (2nd to 1st cent. BC); P.Lüddeckens 13.3 (244/243 BC) *script. int.* and 4 *script. ext.* (G. Vittmann, ‘Eine Doppelurkunde

aus dem Fayum über Pacht von „Bierarbeit“’, in H. Knuf, Ch. Leitz, and D. von Recklinghausen [eds.], *Honi soit qui mal y pense: Studien zum pharaonischen, griechisch-römischen und spätantiken Ägypten zu Ehren von Heinz-Josef Thissen* [OLA 194; Leuven, 2010], 475). It is generally recognised that the village mentioned in the two Loeb papyri is situated near Akoris, in the vicinity of Tehne, in the Hermetopolitan nome, while the locality found in the other texts was located in the *meris* of Polemon, near Ghoran and Magdola. In P.Lüddeckens 13, the village is designated as belonging to Souchos (*dmy Sbk*; see below). Since Inaros, son of Thoteus, was priest of Souchos in Kerkeneith (see above), an identification of the two instances as referring to the same locality is plausible, though it is not entirely clear whether the designation indicates that there was an established crocodile cult in each such vicinity (see below).

xi. The house determinative assures the reading of this group as *wʿh*, “establishment”, “region”, “settlement”, “area” (H.-J. Thissen, ‘Zu *Pʿ-hr-n-Imn* = Ποανεμοῦνις’, *Enchoria* 1 [1970], 75–78), rather than *hr*, “side” (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 318); the latter is commonly written with the flesh determinative.

xii. *tʿ pylstrʿ(.t)* written with a house determinative ought to be a Demotic rendering of the Greek noun παλαίστρα, “wrestling-school”. The reading makes sense in light of the fact that Mouchis apparently had a *gymnasion* in the Hellenistic period (e.g., *P.Sorb.* III 105 comm. [= *SB XVIII* 13837]; W. Clarysse, ‘Graeco-Roman Oxyrhyncha, a Village in the Arsinoite Nome’, in S.L. Lippert and M. Schentuleit [eds.], *Graeco-Roman Fayum: Texts and Archaeology* [Wiesbaden, 2008], 61; Ch. Fischer-Bovet, *Army and Society in Ptolemaic Egypt* [Cambridge 2014], 282 n. 208; W. Habermann, ‘Gymnasien im ptolemäischen Ägypten – eine Skizze’, in D. Kah and P. Scholz [eds.], *Das hellenistische Gymnasion* [Wissenskultur und gesellschaftlicher Wandel 8; Berlin, 2004], 338), and as such should have been equipped with this edifice. It is thus not imprudent to assume that the agricultural grounds in question were contiguous to such an institution or building, at least with lands that were bordering such a structure and, therefore, were named after it (see below). It cannot be excluded, however, that the area in question was simply a flat surface, which had borrowed its name from a gymnasium’s levelled ground, because of physical resemblance. Some fields going by the same name are attested in the Fayumic document *SB VIII* 9830.15 dating to AD 84–96 (see J. M. S. Cowey, ‘Remarks on Various Papyri III’, *ZPE* 132 [2000], 242). Both texts probably refer to the same agricultural area.

xiii. The beginning of this line is damaged, which hampers the reading of the first signs. The preserved

traces suggest a house determinative, which would fit with *hn*, “in(side)” (*vel sim.*). The suggestion is also appropriate from a syntactical point of view. The rendering of *hn* as “part of” is an extension of the above translation.

xiv. *htp-ntr*: “sacred revenues”. In other texts from Tebtunis (e. g., P.Brit.Mus. EA 10648.2 [125–100 BC] [Martin, in Widmer and Devauchelle (eds.), *Actes*, 195–222]; *P.Cairo* II 30630.7–8 (89 BC) and 30631.8 (85 BC) (A. Winkler, ‘Swapping Lands at Tebtunis in the Ptolemaic Period: A Reassessment of P. Cairo II 30630 and 30631’, in Y. Broux and M. Depauw [eds.], *Acts of the tenth International Congress of Demotic Studies* [OLA 231; Leuven, 2014], 357–386), the word is usually written slightly differently; the divine standard read as *ntr*, “god”, is followed by a divine determinative, unlike the present instance. But since the word is qualified as belonging to Souchos (*Sbk*) no other analysis appears suitable. The same orthography is also present in, for instance, P.Berlin 13637.10 from 262/261 BC (see n. 8 above).

xv. The second part of this short word, which begins with *s*, is lost in a lacuna; only traces remain. The best restoration is to interpret it as the verb *shn*, which typically is to be translated as “to lease (out)” but can also mean “to entrust” (see, e. g., Winkler, in Broux and Depauw [eds.], *Acts*, 381 n. 81). Usually the lessee is introduced by the preposition *n*, e. g., *shn=k n=y*, “You have leased to me”, or *shn=y n=k*, “I have leased to you”. Alternatively, the combination *ir shn* is used, e. g., *ir=f n=y shn r-r=f*, “He made a lease for me concerning it” (e. g., G. R. Hughes, ‘Notes on Demotic Egyptian Leases of Property’, *JNES* 32 [1973], 154–160). The use of the preposition *i.ir-hr-(n)*, “before” (*vel sim.*), with this verb is unknown to me from other texts. The traces following the preposition are not easy to decipher: just a short horizontal stroke belonging to a now lost group. It is plausible that the ink traces represent a masculine definite article. In any case, whatever is written after it must indicate either the place where the lease was made or the entity, a person or institution, before which the transaction was completed.

xvi. The only clear part of the almost completely obliterated word is a striking-arm determinative, which is followed by a vertical stroke with curved lower end. The latter may be the third person plural suffix pronoun *=w*, or a plural stroke. Above the extreme right corner of the lacuna there is a stroke slanting down to the right, which must be part of the word that follows *i.ir-hr-(n)* on the foregoing line.

xvii. *sn.nw*, “second”, “inferior”, seems to suggest that the leased lands were divided into two main parts, a first one that was not mentioned and a second one to which the document refers.

xviii. *tn t³ dny.t pšy.t n n³ 3h.w n rn=w r-[r=f] | tn t³ dny.t r-hr=y*, lit. “at the rate of the half of the fields in question [to him] (and) at the rate of the (other) half share to me”. The construction appears to have a parallel in, for instance, *P.Dem.Memphis* 9.8 (= *UPZ* I 126) from 256 BC in which the following can be read: *n.mtw=tn [t³ dny.t 2/3] ... r tn t³ dny.t 1/3 1/12 r PN ...*: “Yours are the 2/3 part ... while the 1/3 1/12 part is allocated to PN”. Similar constructions are found in, e. g., *P.Assoc.* 2.8 (145 BC); *P.Berl.Dem.* II 3113.5 (= *P.Surv.* 75) (after 130 BC); *P.Brit.Mus.* IV 22.16 (119 BC); *P.Louvre* E 9415.10 (190 BC) (D. Devauchelle, ‘Le papyrus démotique Louvre E 9415. Un partage de biens’, *RdÉ* 31 [1979], 29–35); *P.Mosc.* 123.2 (68 BC) (M. Malinine, ‘Partage testamentaire d’une propriété familiale (Pap. Moscou No 123)’, *RdÉ* 19 [1967], 67–85); *P.Tebt.* I 227.16 (R. A. Parker, ‘An Abstract of Loan in Demotic from the Fayum’, *RdÉ* 24 [1972], 129–136). See Sethe and Partsch, *Bürgschaftsrechte*, 18–19, for the translation of *tn* as “allocate” instead of its usual rendering “at the rate of” or “each” (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 635). Note, however, that the suggested translation does not change the grammatical category of *tn*. The passage implies that the business partners had divided equally the responsibility for the plots in question.

xix. See the writing of *n³ 3h.w*, “the fields”, in ll. 6 and 13 for the reconstruction in the lacunae after *dny.t pšy(.t)*.

xx. Only traces of the left ear of *=f* survive. What remains is not sufficient to justify the proposed reading, which instead depends on the context; the third person masculine pronoun is the only element that would suit the passage referring to the accused party receiving the other part of the field. See Erichsen, *Glossar*, 237, for potentially similar writings of *r-r=f*.

xxi. The last signs before the left line break cannot be deciphered with certainty. It is possible to read the first group as *mtw=n* (*nty-iw=n*) followed by *mh*, “fill”, “pay”, or “furnish”. The reading of *mh* is only a conjecture but would make sense in the present context (see note below). The writing of the word would thus differ slightly from the one found in the line below. The interpretation of the latter sign is paleographically difficult, but considering the context, i. e. the payment of agricultural levies, no other reading seems more satisfactory.

xxii. *md.t-hw.t-ntr*: “temple tax” (Winkler, A Contribution to the Revenues of the Crocodile in the Imperial Fayum: The Temple Tax on Property Transfer Revisited’, *BASP* 52 [2015], 256–257; id., ‘The Affairs of the *Lesonis* in Roman Tebtunis and Two More Receipts Related to the Temple’, *CdÉ* 91 [2016], 271–273). The restitution of *t³y=w md.t* in the lacunae in l. 9 depends on the fact that *p³y=w šmw*, “their rent (ἐκφόριον)” (see G. R. Hughes, *Saite Demotic Land Leases* [SAOC 28; Chicago, 1952], 56; H.

Felber, *Demotische Ackerpachtverträge der Ptolemäerzeit* [ÄA 58; Wiesbaden, 1997], 151–152; A. Monson, *Agriculture and Taxation in Early Ptolemaic Egypt: Demotic Land Surveys and Accounts* [PTA 46; Bonn, 2012], 18–22), can be read after *hw.t-ntr*; a parallel construction containing the element *hw.t-ntr* is expected, i.e. one which relates to a payment for agricultural lands of some sort. The suggested term fits this criterion and the context.

xxiii. The reconstruction is suitable for the lacunae and partially depends on the phrasing found in ll. 8 to 9 (*dny.t pšy* ...).

xxiv. *grg*: “equipment” (see C. J. Martin, ‘A Demotic Land Lease from Philadelphia: P. BM 10560’, *JEA* 72 [1986], 168–169). The term can also be translated as “seeds,” but in the present context such a reading is unsatisfactory: seeds are mentioned before the line break (see note below).

xxv. The vertical group after *prt*, “seed”, is the plant determinative occasionally used to write this word.

xxvi. It is perhaps possible to supplement the lacuna with: *rmṯ stbḥ nb wy^c* (*vel sim.*), “men, and all farmer equipment” (see, e.g., *P.Ackerpacht* 2.14 [119BC]; 6.14 [= *P.Tor.Botti* 25C] [108 BC]; 7.14 [= *P.Tor.Botti* 30] [104 BC]; 12.11–12 [= *P.Burgsch.* 9] [124 BC]; 15.9 [= *P.Stras.Dem.* 9] [90 BC]; Martin, *JEA* 72, 168). A problem with this interpretation is that the phrase is not yet attested in any of the extant land-leases from the Fayum, on neither temple land (e.g., *P.Ackerpacht* 23 [190 BC]; *P.Cairo* II 30613 [94 BC]; 30614 [88 BC]; 30615 [98 BC]; 31079 [105 BC]; *P.Mil.Vogl. Dem.* III 1 [132/131 BC]) nor other types of land, e.g. P.Brit. Mus. EA 10858 (C. J. Martin, ‘A Third-Century Demotic Land Lease (P.BM EA 10858)’, in R. Jasnow and Gh. Widmer [eds.], *Illuminating Osiris: Egyptological Studies in Honor of Mark Smith* [Material and Visual Culture of Ancient Egypt 2; Atlanta GA, 2017], 247–253). In addition, the available space seems to be too short.

xxvii. *sk3*: “plough” or “cultivate”. The term must be part of a collocation, e.g., “equipment for ploughing/cultivating” or similar, and is thus the last article in the list of items provided by the writer to the accused.

xxviii. The reconstruction of *rd*, “growth” (see Sethe and Partsch, *Bürgschaftsrechte*, 14–15), or similar, after *ph* is a mere conjecture made on contextual grounds, but the passage can perhaps be compared to Canopus K 19/T 68: *ḥr hrp p3 rd ph* ..., “when the first growth arrives ...”.

xxix. See Depauw, *Demotic Letter*, 231–235, for the suggested emendation *p3 shn nfr st ḥr-rḥ-s* in l. 13. The phrase is apparently common in the closing clauses of petitions or memoranda, in so-called *mḳmq*-documents. The supplemented words also seem to fit the space of the lacuna.

xxx. The dependent pronoun *-s* is written with two extra strokes. Occasionally a short vertical stroke is added

before the sign that can be read on its own as *-s*; two strokes are more unusual, however, and makes the group resemble an early writing of *ḥw=s* (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 20 and 399).

xxxi. *ḥw=y dḥ.t n=k p3 ʿn-smṯ*. The interpretation of the line should be connected with a clause found mainly in Fayumic documents: *ḥw=y ḥr n=k p3 ḥw/shn/sh wy nty ḥry* (*vel sim.*) (K.-Th. Zauzich, *Die ägyptische Schreibertradition in Aufbau, Sprache, und Schrift der demotischen Kaufverträge aus Ptolemäischer Zeit* [ÄA 19; Wiesbaden, 1968], 153). The phrase has undergone various interpretations depending on context. In relation to sale documents, it was interpreted as a conditional by K.-Th. Zauzich, while another suggestion is to take the phrase as a circumstantial Present I (A. Winkler, ‘Collecting Income at Kerkesoucha Orous: New Light on P. Cairo II 30625’, *JEA* 96 [2011], 166–167). Both interpretations have inherent problems. The latter interpretation, though it seems to make good sense, suffers from the fact that one would expect a direct object marker (cf., e.g., R. S. Simpson, *Demotic Grammar in the Demotic Sacerdotal Decrees* [Oxford, 1996], 151–156; E. Lüddeckens, *Demotische Urkunden aus Hawara* [VOHD Suppl. 28; Stuttgart, 1998], 42). The future does not make sense, since what is expressed would already be a fact by the time it was written down or read. Note that Greek petitions (e.g., *P.Dion.* 10.12 [109 BC]; *P.Tebt.* I 39.34 [114 BC]; 46.23 [113 BC]; *P.Mich.* XV 688.13 [2nd to 1st cent. BC]) commonly use the present tense (ἐπιδίδωμι) in the equivalent clause (as pointed out to me by Gert Baetens). This shows that one may expect this tense in the Demotic texts as well. Cf., however, *P.Sorb.* IV 148.9 [195 BC] where the same phrase has been understood as a second tense, since there are a number of instances where *ḥw* followed by a suffix pronoun and verb has been read as such (e.g., *O.Tempeleide* 177.7 [104 BC]).

xxxii. The supplement after *ʿn-smṯ* is a conjecture, but it is required in order to make sense of the mutilated passage. It also fits the available space.

xxxiii. The reading of *n-dr.t-w* is tentative. The fact that another preposition would be expected to follow *hn*, “agreement”, at least in the case of the current reading, complicates the suggested analysis. Nevertheless, no other reading appears more palatable. It is virtually certain that the vertical stroke following the group is to be read as the third person plural suffix pronoun *=w*. Whether this lexeme was the intended one is unclear but may be suggested by the fact that it seems to function as an antecedent to the following possessive pronoun *p3y=w*, “their”. It should be noted, however, that a horizontal stroke is written across the sign read as *dr.t* and extends to the left below the flesh determinative. This would suggest the scribe wrote

n-dr.t=k. If this is not a mistake, which was corrected into *dr.t=w*, another understanding of the passage is required. Perhaps it should be read along the lines of “I am submitting this report to you ^[15] while the agreement is (already) with you (lit. in your hand)”. This would imply that the agreement between the two priests had already reached Bion, the chief of police at Mouchis (see n. iii above), at an earlier stage.

xxxiv. *wth*: “fruit” (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 107). It is tempting to understand the term as denoting a “crop” in the more general sense. The use of the term here may refer back to a clause occasionally found in Fayumic land leases (e. g., *P.Cairo* II 30631.11 and 31079.16–17; *P.Mil.Vogl.Dem.* III 1.7). Although the documents refer to grain-bearing lands, the following clause is found: *mtw=k/tn tȝy pȝ šn pȝ wth (iwt=f hpr hn=w) (vel sim.)*, “To you belong the (their) plant(s) and the (their) fruit(s) (which will grow in them [viz. the fields])” (see Felber, *Ackerpachtverträge*, 155–156). But in light of the fact that the document is issued in Pharmuthi (l. 18), and the produce of the field must have ripened and been harvested earlier, as suggested by l. 13, we may in fact be dealing with some other crop than wheat or barley.

xxxv. Too little is preserved of the end of the line to suggest any reading. A speculative suggestion would be that the petitioner was admonishing the chief of police not to allow, or to prevent, the exercise of control by Inaros, the accused business partner, over the harvest (*ir=f shy n.im=f*). That is, something along the lines of “[Do not allow/Prevent that] ^[16] he have control over it” can perhaps be expected. However, if the piece is rather better dated to the third century BC, it is not sure that it would have contained a request for action (see, e. g., Baetens, *JJP* 44, 47).

xxxvi. *ir=f* should be taken as a subjunctive in case the suggestion in the note above is correct.

General Commentary

Agreement and complaint

The situation as reconstructed from the papyrus seems to be that Inaros, son of Thoteus, a Souchos priest from Kerkeneith, had access to agricultural lands on the sacred revenues of this god in the village of Mouchis through a lease (l. 7). These lands were later part of an agreement (l. 15) between him and the petitioner, who was a *lesonis*⁹ of

Soknebtunis, most likely in Tebtunis. These arrangements ended up generating the conflict described in the text.

Even if the document states that the priest from Kerkeneith leased the lands, it is not clearly indicated in what capacity he had access to them. Since the lands belonged to the god he was serving, it is reasonable to assume that he, as a priest of the main god of the nome, was remunerated for his duties, at least partially, by being granted access to temple land. Usually, however, one would assume that such lands were assigned in the vicinity of the locality where a priest was serving or at least not far outside that settlement. The text seems to suggest that both priests were supposed to pay rent (*šmw*) for the let lands (see below). If that indeed were the case, it could indicate that it was a regular lease rather than part of a sacerdotal prebend; priests who were remunerated by the temple were not expected to pay rent to the temple, only to remit tax payments. Nevertheless, we are left uninformed whether the lands were let directly by a temple or another priest. There is evidence for both practices in the documentation from Ptolemaic Egypt¹⁰.

Having access to the fields, Inaros, the accused party, would be able to choose to cultivate the fields himself, sublet them to someone else, or share the cultivation with

and Worship, *Proceedings of the First Round Table of the Centro di Studi Papirologici of Università del Salento, Lecce, October 9th 2013* (Edaphos 1; Lecce, 2015), 16–18; Fr. de Cénival, *Les associations religieuses en Égypte d'après les documents démotiques* (BdÉ 46; Cairo, 1972), 154–159; M.-P. Chaufray, ‘Des lésônes en action dans le temple de Soknopaios à Soknopaiou Nesos à l'époque ptolémaïque’, in Ch. Orsenigo and P. Piacentini (eds.), *Egyptian Archives* (Quaderni di Acme 111; Milan, 2009), 157–168; W. Clarysse, ‘The Archive of the Praktor Milon’, in W. Clarysse and K. Vandorpe (eds.), *Edfu, an Egyptian Provincial Capital in the Ptolemaic Period* (Brussels, 2003), 21–22; J. A. S. Evans, ‘A Social and Economic History of an Egyptian Temple in the Graeco-Roman Period’, *Yale Classical Studies* 17 (1961), 185–186; G. R. Hughes, ‘The So-Called Pherendates Correspondence’, in H.-J. Thissen and K.-Th. Zauzich (eds.) *Grammata Demotica: Festschrift für Erich Lüddeckens zum 15. Juni 1983* (Sommerhausen, 1984), 78–84; S.L. Lippert, ‘Abmachungen der Priester – Einblicke in das Leben und Arbeiten in Soknopaiou Nesos’, in M. Capasso and P. Davoli (eds.), *New Archaeological and Papyrological Researches on the Fayyum* (Pap.Lup. 14; Lecce, 2005), 152–153; S. D. Lippert and M. Schentuleit, ‘Die Tempelökonomie nach den demotischen Texten aus Soknopaiou Nesos’, in S.L. Lippert and M. Schentuleit (eds.) *Tebtynis und Soknopaiou Nesos* (Wiesbaden, 2005), 72–73; A. Monson, *From the Ptolemies to the Romans: Political and Economic Change in Egypt* (Cambridge, 2012), 212–218; G. Vittmann, *Papyrus Rylands 9*, 290–292.

10 *P.Cairo* II 30631 attests the leasing of land by temples to individuals, but the lease is internal, which means that a cleric was able to take over part of another priest's prebend. From Upper Egypt, there are a handful of texts that concern what seems to be institutional leases to individuals (e. g., Felber, *Ackerpachtverträge*, 104–106).

⁹ For the office, see, e. g., C. Arlt, ‘The Temple Administration in the Ptolemaic Soknopaiou Nesos: The Role of Tax Farming and Monopolies’, in M. Capasso and P. Davoli (eds.), *Soknopaios: The Temple*

another person. From the phrasing of the current text, it seems that he chose the last option. That is, he shared the responsibility for, and thus also the gains of, the leased fields with the author of P.Brit.Mus. EA 10650. The latter individual may have not been mentioned in the original lease between the entity that had the title to the land and Inaros. Through the phrasing on line 15 of the document, we are informed that the two priests had their business recorded in a *hn*-agreement¹¹ rather than a lease (*shn*) or similar.

As mentioned already, this implied that both were accountable for paying taxes and other fees for the land (see below), which would have been stipulated in the agreement drawn up between the two parties. The text suggests that each involved party was assigned an equal part of the responsibilities for the fields. The litigant of the current document furthermore claims to have furnished Inaros his half of the joint responsibility for the equipment (ll. 10–11), which suggests that the priest from Kerkeneith was in fact to do, or be directly responsible for, most if not all of the farm labour. This may be seen as in line with the most common type of lease agreement, which stipulates that it was the obligation of the leaseholder to provide for the equipment for cultivating the fields¹². Therefore, it is virtually certain that the agreement between Inaros and the proprietor of the fields contained the standard clauses of such a document¹³.

One must assume that the reported party expected to be rewarded in one way or another for carrying out most of the work even if he shared the responsibility for the field with the *lesonis* from Tebtunis. The circumstance in which he would be carrying out most of the work would also explain why Inaros reaped the field during the harvest without the participation of the complainant (l. 13).

At first, it might appear as if the priest from Kerkeneith was not satisfied with the outcome; instead of splitting the harvest or similar, he impugned the agreement. From what is preserved of the text, it seems that Inaros had laid claim to the crops and that the author of the document could only accept such an outcome after he himself had assigned the yield to the accused party (l. 17). Nevertheless, given that the writing under consideration contains a report of an event rather than a request for action, it is conceivable that the last episode described in the papyrus refers to common legal practice. It is possible that Inaros' last deed – taking control of the crop (*shy n. lmf*) – conformed

to a clause safeguarding the rights of lessors found in a number of Greek land leases from the third century BC until the fourth century AD¹⁴. If that is the case, it could suggest that he viewed himself in this role *vis à vis* Pachois. In these texts, the following clause, or a variant thereof, can be found: κυριεύειν τῶν καρπῶν ἕως ἂν τὰ κατ' ἔτος ὀφειλόμενα κομίσῃται, "... that (the lessor) have possession of the crops until he receives the amount owed per year" (*vel sim.*)¹⁵. It implies that the lessor of the land had a claim on the yield as long as the rent and other fees were not paid by the lessee¹⁶. It seems logical to assume that this act caused the litigant to compose the report, but this is not entirely clear.

The localities and the sacred revenues of Souchos

The text mentions two specific localities, Mouchis and Kerkeneith. Both were located in the *meris* of Polemon, in the southeast corner of the Fayum Oasis. The first one was the destination for the papyrus, whereas the second was the home of the business partner of the plaintiff. Mouchis was a village situated near the mouth of the Fayum where the Baḥr Yūsuf diverges into two canals¹⁷. Under the Ptolemies, it was one of the principal settlements in the *meris* of Polemon, functioning as the main locality in its toparchy and hosting a number of state administrative functions. These institutions include a scribal office, a bank¹⁸, a granary, an *ergasterion*¹⁹, a tax office²⁰, a brewing business, and a police station²¹.

¹⁴ It is mostly found in texts from the Oxyrhynchite nome (e.g., BGU VI 1262.15–16 [216/215 BC]; 1264.25–26 [215/214 BC]; X 1943.16 [215/214 BC]; 1944.14–15 [214/213 BC]; 1950.4–5; P.Frank. 1.25–27 [213 BC]; 2.28–29 [215/14 BC]; P.Oxy. XIV 1628.23–24 [73 BC]), but also from the Ptolemaic Fayum (BGU VI 1271.11 [180–145 BC]; P.Tebt. III 815.5r.7; 815.6r.7; 815.6r.25–26 [223/222 BC]; 819.9.33–34 [171 BC]). I thank Uri Yiftach-Firanko for directing my attention to this group of texts.

¹⁵ E.g., J. Herrmann, *Studien zur Bodenpacht im Recht der graeco-ägyptischen Papyri* (MBPR 41; Munich, 1958), 140–142.

¹⁶ A. Kränzlein, in E. Kießling and H. A. Rupprecht (eds.), *Akten des XIII. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses* (Munich, 1974), 215–224.

¹⁷ Winkler, *BASP* 55, 239.

¹⁸ R. Bogaert, 'Liste géographique des banques et des banquiers de l'Égypte ptolémaïque', *ZPE* 120 (1998), 180.

¹⁹ R. Duttonhöfer, 'Die Funktion und Stellung des ἐργαστήριον in der Getreideverwaltung der Ptolemäerzeit', *ZPE* 98 (1993), 256–257.

²⁰ Bogaert, *ZPE* 120, 180.

²¹ K. Robic, 'Les archives de l'épistate Dèmétrios (n^{os} 103–144)', in H. Cadell, W. Clarysse, and K. Robic (eds.), *Papyrus de la Sorbonne (P.Sorb. III) Nos 70–144* (Pap.Par. 1; Paris, 2011), 96–97. See also J. Bauschatz, *Law and Enforcement in Ptolemaic Egypt* (Cambridge, 2013), 68–78; C. Homoth-Kuhs, *Phylakes und Phylakon-Steuer im*

¹¹ S.L. Lippert, *Einführung in die altägyptische Rechtsgeschichte* (EQÄ 5; Berlin, 2008), 174.

¹² Felber, *Ackerpachtverträge*, 133–135; Martin, *JEA* 72, 171.

¹³ See Felber, *Ackerpachtverträge*, *passim*.

The fact that the report is submitted to the police authority in Mouchis suggests that the fields concerned must have been situated in the administrative realm of this settlement and thus under the authority of its local police chief. It would thus be more natural for the *lesonis* of Soknebtunis to submit his writing to the appropriate local official rather than for the authorities at Mouchis to have been responsible for police matters in the nome or the *meris* as a whole.

The precise location of Kerkeneith is unknown, but it has been suggested that the locality was near Magdola and Ghoran, i. e. in the south-western part of the *meris* of Polemon. Because both the two other localities concerned, Mouchis and Tebtunis, can be located on the canal that today is known as Baḥr Ġaraq, roughly equivalent to the “Desert Canal of Polemon” (ὁρεινή διώρυξ Πολέμωνος) in the Greek papyri²², it would be reasonable to assume that Kerkeneith was also adjacent to said waterway. The canals were the main transportation routes in the Fayum and efficiently connected seemingly distant villages with one another. Some villages that were closer to one another over land required more travel time to reach than those that were connected through water conduits. In addition, it has been suggested that the main land routes would have followed the waterways²³. Thus, Mouchis could have been relatively easy to reach from Kerkeneith, and this would explain why people from one settlement chose to conduct business in the other.

Kerkeneith is furthermore, similarly to Mouchis, mentioned as a so-called Souchos village in P.Lüddeckens 13. Fittingly enough, it hosted a cult of Souchos. In line five, the accused party is described as “among the priests of Souchos of Kerkeneith” (*h̄n n̄³ w^cb.w n Sbk (n) Pr-grg-N.t*). It is probable that the god he was serving was identified with the one who was also worshipped in the main temple of Crocodilopolis and not only a local apparition of this deity²⁴.

griechisch-römischen Ägypten: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des antiken Sicherheitswesens (AfP Beih. 17; Leipzig and Munich, 2005), 92–98.

²² E. g., Winkler, *BASP* 55 (2018), 238–241; L. Berkes and B. Haug, ‘Villages, Requisition, and Tax Districts: Two Greek Lists from the Eight-Century Fayum’, *BASP* 53 (2016), 204.

²³ See, e. g., C. Adams, ‘There and Back Again’: Getting Around in Roman Egypt’, in C. Adams and R. Laurence (eds.), *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (London and New York, 2001), 140 and 146; T. Derda, ‘Waterway Fayum-Alexandria: A Note on P.Lille I 1 (= P.Zen.Pest. Appendix A)’, *JJP* 36 (2006), 9–20.

²⁴ It is possible that the village was centred around a shrine to Neith (cf. W. Clarysse, ‘Toponymy of Fayyum Villages in the Ptolemaic Period’, in M. Capasso and P. Davoli [eds.], *New Archaeological and Papyrological Researches on the Fayyum* [Pap.Lup. 14; Lecce, 2007], 73. See also Kockelmann, in Arlt and Stadler [eds.], *Das Fayyûm*, 81 n. 47).

It is not entirely clear what the designation “Souchos village” implies, whether it was an appellation given to any settlement in the Fayum, signifies that the village housed a cult of the main god of Crocodilopolis or any other of his local hypostases, or just that there were “sacred revenues”, i. e. lands, belonging to a Souchos temple within the confines of such localities²⁵. In the Fayum, it seems that most villages could go by this designation, and it appears to be the only one connected to a specific god that existed in this area. For instance, Tebtunis is never called the “Soknebtunis village”, but always “Souchos village”, even if Soknebtunis seems to have been more religiously prominent at the site²⁶.

Mouchis too was such a Souchos village. It is possible that the divinity was venerated there alongside the local hypostasis of the crocodile god, Sokonporchnubis²⁷. That two crocodiles could be worshipped side by side in several of the Fayumic villages in the Graeco-Roman period or that some settlements housed several temples dedicated to different reptile deities is well known²⁸. The fact that the fields mentioned in P.Brit.Mus. EA 10650 are said to be on the “sacred revenues” of Souchos (l. 7) could suggest that the cult of this deity was present in Mouchis. Nevertheless, the village is very close to Crocodilopolis, and for comparison, it is known that the Soknebtunis temple in Tebtunis possessed lands in Kerkeosiris without there being any attestation of a cult of this god in the latter village²⁹. The two localities were situated close to each other and the land in Kerkeosiris had been dedicated to Soknebtunis by a group of veterans³⁰. Since the mentioned localities all housed a gymnasium, it is plausible to draw parallels between them.

Land in the possession of the temple that had been connected to a gymnasium is known from a number

²⁵ Cf. Kockelmann, *Herr der Seen*, 2:359–360.

²⁶ The claim that in at least two papyri the settlement is referred to as “Village of Soknebtunis” (e. g., Kockelmann, *Herr der Seen*, 1:255) is unfounded. The two instances quoted read: *dmy Sbk T³-nb.t-t³-tny*, “The Souchos Village Tebtunis”. The theonym is never written as *Sbk-t³-nb.t-t³-tny*, but rather *Sbk-nb-tny* or *Sbk-nb-t³-tny* and later on, in the Roman period, *Sbk-nb-Btnw* (W. Cheshire, ‘Demotic Writings of “Tebtnis”’, *Enchoria* 14 [1986], 31–42).

²⁷ Winkler, *BASP* 55, 241–247 and 250–251. The deity is referred to as twice great in *I.Fayoum* I 20 (see, e. g., Kockelmann, *Herr der Seen*, 1:59–60).

²⁸ E. g., H. Kockelmann, ‘Sobek doppelt und dreifach: Zum Phänomen der Krokodilgötterkonstellationen im Fayum und in anderen Kultorten Ägyptens’, in S.L. Lippert and M. Schentuleit (eds.), *Graeco-Roman Fayum: Texts and Archaeology* (Wiesbaden, 2008), 153–163.

²⁹ See, e. g., Rübsam, *Götter*, 110.

³⁰ Fischer-Bovet, *Army*, 343.

of inscriptions. It is known that Souchos received land dedications from former *ephebes*, as is illustrated by, for example, *I.Fayoum* III 200 (= *SB* V 8885 = *W.Chrest.* 141 = *OGIS* I 176) from 98 BC and *I.Fayoum* III 201 (= *SB* V 8887 = *W.Chrest.* 142 = *OGIS* I 178) from 95 BC³¹. A similar act is recorded in favour of Soknebtunis in *I.Fayoum* III 202 (= *SEG* VIII 498 = *SB* V 7784) from 94 BC³². In this inscription, a group of former *ephebes* donate a parcel of land (τόπος) to the god³³.

Ch. Fischer-Bovet proposes that the above-mentioned inscriptions suggest that the gymnasium and the temple may have bordered one another and that this was one of the reasons for the donation³⁴. But it is unclear whether such assumptions would be valid for the present case. It should be noted that the lots donated to the god in the first two inscriptions are all rather small, which suggests that they were not agricultural plots³⁵. The Greek term τόπος in *I.Fayoum* III 202 is not provided with measurements, however, and due to the multivalence of the Greek word, it may refer to land or to, for instance, a sacred or civic edifice³⁶. Assuming that the wrestling ground (*palaistra*)

could indeed define the gymnasium, the current papyrus may support the suggestion, but only if the designation refers to an institution rather than pointing to physical resemblance between an agricultural area and a wrestling ground. One must further assume that this designation was given to the lands because they were adjoining the wrestling grounds of the gymnasium.

The “sacred revenues” of Souchos found in this papyrus may also be mentioned in another Ptolemaic text from the locality. In *P.Sorb.* III 107 (219 BC), it is stated that five arourai of land were attached to a sanctuary of a crocodile burial ground. The identity of the mummified crocodiles is not made explicit, however. In most cases, the god who was the focus of attention of this sort of cultic activity was Souchos³⁷, i.e. the place would thus be a so-called *Soucheion*³⁸. Nonetheless, there are cases where local hypostases seem to have been mummified and buried. Examples include Sokonpichonsis³⁹ (*BGU* IV 1023 [AD 185/186]) in Tebtunis and Soknopaios (*W.Chrest.* 92 = *BGU* I 337 [2nd cent. AD]) in Niloupolis⁴⁰.

Even if it is possible that the lands mentioned in the Greek papyrus were part of the fields belonging to the temple’s revenues referred to in P.Brit.Mus. EA 10650, such an equation is not entirely without problems. In addition to the slight insecurity about the divinity’s identity, *P.Sorb.* III 107 never refers to the land as “sacred revenues”. Even if it is supposed that the same divinity was the owner of the fields, it is possible that the lands were parts of different estates, since we still do not know whether Mouchis only housed a temple of Sokonporchnubis (e.g., *I.Fayoum* I 20 [1st cent. BC]; *BGU* XIII 2215 [AD 113/114]; *P.Vindob.Barb.* inv. 34⁴¹ [223 BC]) or whether there was another one as well, perhaps to Souchos or just a *Soucheion*. Neverthe-

31 The provenance of the two inscriptions is unclear. Both the localities Euhemeria and Crocodilopolis have been suggested as places of origin (M. Launey, *Recherches sur les armées hellénistiques*, 2nd ed. [BEFAR 169; Paris, 1987], 2:842; Fischer-Bovet, *Army*, 285 n. 224 and 348 n. 79). It should be noted that said localities are only hypothetical and any other place having both a Souchos sanctuary and a gymnasium would be a potential candidate.

32 Fischer-Bovet, *Army*, 282 n. 208; Launey, *Recherches*, 2:841.

33 The find spot of this inscription is not entirely certain either; the stele was acquired on the antiquities market (e.g., B. Legras, *Néotès: recherches sur les jeunes grecs dans l’Égypte ptolémaïque et romaine* [Hautes études du monde gréco-romain 26; Geneva, 1999], 136 n. 20). Tebtunis would seem to be the best suggestion, however, since the probability that it would come from any other site is minimal, though Crocodilopolis cannot be excluded (cf. n. 3 above).

34 Cf. Fischer-Bovet, *Army*, 348.

35 Fischer-Bovet, *Army*, 348.

36 It has been assumed that Tebtunis had a gymnasium, though this building has not been securely identified. Yet it can be assumed that the gymnasium in Tebtunis was situated next to the Soknebtunis temple. Hitherto all claims for the existence of a gymnasium in that locality have rested on *I.Fayoum* III 202. Willy Clarysse has with some reservation in a conversation suggested that there is potential additional evidence for a gymnasium and a *palaistra* in Tebtunis. Northwest of the Soknebtunis temple there is a Greek style building, which is referred to as the *maison à peristyle* (see, e.g., N. Grimal, ‘Travaux de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale en 1994–1995’, *BIFAO* 95 [1995], 590–591; G. Hadji-Minaglou, ‘L’habitat à Tebtunis à la lumière des fouilles récentes: I^{er} s. av. – I^{er} s. apr. J.-C.’, in S.L. Lippert and M. Schentuleit (eds.), *Graeco-Roman Fayum – Texts and Archaeology* (Wiesbaden, 2008), 126–127, 129, and 132). Though its function has not been described, its architecture strongly resembles that of a gymnasium; the building contains a peristyle court (hence its name), which is fronted by a colonnade to the east, i.e. facing the

dromos leading up to the temple. To the north there are four rooms surrounding a central hall. There seem to be three exits from this part of the building, one to the east, one to the north, and one to the west, which leads to another area which was also connected to the peristyle court. This seems to have been an open area, but in the Roman period a tower building was erected there. It is thus plausible that the peristyle hall with adjoining structures was the Hellenistic village gymnasium in Tebtunis, which later on would have acquired another function. If this identification is correct, it does not seem that this edifice would have been located close to any agricultural lands. But that does not exclude that such could be the case in Mouchis.

37 Kockelmann, *Herr der Seen*, 2:583–585 and 2:596–627.

38 Kockelmann, *Herr der Seen*, 2:621–625.

39 Kockelmann, *Herr der Seen*, 1:45–46; Rübsam, *Götter*, 36 and 183–184.

40 Cf. Kockelmann, *Herr der Seen*, 2:584.

41 H. Harrauer and R. Pintaudi, ‘„Mein Haus ist leer!“: Enteuxis gegen die eigene Frau P.Vindob. Barbara Inv. 34’, *Aegyptus* 92 (2012), 3–12.

less, it should be noted that the person associated with the local god of Mouchis in *P.Assoc.* 7 ii 15 is mentioned as his “caller” (ꜥꜣš). In a cultic setting, the title seems to be restricted to the sphere of religious associations, which often were associated with entombing mummified animals⁴². This fact enhances the chances that a local divinity was the proprietor of the lands connected with the crocodile burial sanctuary mentioned in *P.Sorb.* III 107 because of the close connection between the caller’s title and the funerary cult. If that were the case, the lands mentioned in P.Brit.Mus. EA 10650 must belong to another estate.

Rent and taxes

As mentioned, the land that the two priests cultivated belonged to Souchos, and consequently it can be assumed that a religious institution of this god had the right to extract the levies that are mentioned in the document. P.Brit.Mus. EA 10650 shows that the two priests had to surrender payments for the lease, the rent (*šmw*) and what has been referred to as the temple tax (*md.t-ḥw.t-ntr*). The latter payment is hitherto only securely attested in a few documents from both Ptolemaic and Roman Tebtunis.

The present instance of the “Temple Tax” is clearly the oldest one, while the latest dates to the Roman period (*P.Zauz.* 61.4 [2nd cent. AD]). Unfortunately, the latter text is a rather fragmentary receipt issued by the priesthood of Soknebtunis in which the term appears in a lacunose context. The receipt shows that the levy filled the coffers of the temple – still under the Nerva-Antonine dynasty – but does not provide any additional specifics⁴³. The two other texts in which the term appears relate to temple land in Tebtunis. In the oldest of these two texts, *P.Cairo* II 30630.14, an exchange agreement on sacerdotal land, it is said that the fields in the transaction should not be encumbered with other lease agreements (*šḥn*), pledges (*ḥwy.t*), or unpaid taxes, among which the “Temple Tax” is mentioned along with the “State Tax” (*md.t-pr-ꜥ*). The latter was an annual per aroura tax on agricultural lands paid to the state, ἀρταβ(ι)εία⁴⁴. It may be noted that the

exchange agreement stipulates that the two parties swapping lands were supposed to release the same payment as they had done before the exchange, but the text then only refers to the so-called State Tax for future payments. In *P.Tebt.Botti* 1.16 (AD 4)⁴⁵, a lease on temple lands between two priests, it is likewise stated that the lessor should keep the fields unburdened by the same two taxes for the lessee.

It is clear from the cited instances that the remittance is a levy connected to agriculture, but whether it was an annual payment, a levy recurring each year, or a sort of initiation fee for beginning to cultivate temple land, remains unclear. Since the charge is not mentioned in the future obligations of the two parties in the exchange agreement, it is possible that it was not supposed to be paid regularly by any of the parties after the swap had taken place, or it was simply not mentioned in the further stipulations but still assumed to be paid as before. As mentioned above, in P.Brit.Mus. EA 10650 the “Temple Tax” accompanies the rent (*šmw*), which is equated with the Greek term ἐκφόριον, “rent (in kind)”⁴⁶. This levy was usually paid on an annual basis, which at first glance would counterweigh the argument advanced above, but the text concerns a newly commenced lease. Therefore, nothing conclusive can be said about the tax in question⁴⁷.

⁴⁵ For the latest treatment of this text, see C. J. Martin, ‘Ptolemaic Demotic Land Leases’, in J. G. Keenan, J. G. Manning, and U. Yiftach-Firanko (eds.), *Law and Legal Practice from Alexander to the Arab Conquest: A Selection of Papyrological Sources in Translation with Introductions and Commentary* (Cambridge, 2014), 361–363.

⁴⁶ Note that the term, which literally means “harvest”, can refer to crops from many types of land.

⁴⁷ If A. J. Connor, *Temples as Economic Agents in Early Roman Egypt: The Case of Tebtunis and Soknopaiou Nesos* (PhD-thesis; Cincinnati, OH, 2014), 213–222, is correct in that several of the land sale documents from Roman Tebtunis (e.g., *P.Mich.* V 254/5 [AD 30/31], 256 [AD 29/30], 263 [AD 35/35], and *P.Kron.* 48 [= *P.Mich.* V 260/1] from AD 35) in fact are conveyances or long-term lease rights on temple land, one would expect that the tax under discussion should be mentioned there. This appears not to be the case, however. But part of the absence could perhaps be explained by Connor’s hypothesis, if true. He postulates that a separate agreement could have been entered between the temple and the lessee. Alternatively, it may be assumed that the “temple tax” was subsumed under one of the more general levies or fees often mentioned in said texts. It should furthermore be noted that the tax is not identified in the long-term leases on royal temple land (γῆ βασιλικῇ ἱερευτικῇ) from Roman period Tebtunis (e.g., *PSI* X 1143 [AD 164] and *P.Mil.Vogl.* VI 274 [AD 144–165]), but that may depend on the fact that these grounds were another category of land. As a side note, if it is correct that rights to long-term leases could be bought and sold, it is probable that inherited temple land in Tebtunis, as found in, e.g., *P.Cairo* III 50109, which is of Ptolemaic date, if so it is, was not in private ownership, but the right to cultivate the fields was passed down as inheritance (cf. Winkler, *BASP* 52, 255 n. 68).

⁴² de Cenival, *Les associations religieuses*, 168; Kockelmann, *Herr der Seen*, 1:590. See also Monson, ‘The Private Associations in the Ptolemaic Fayum: The Evidence of Demotic Accounts’, in M. Capasso and P. Davoli (eds.), *New Archaeological and Papyrological Researches on the Fayyum* (Pap.Lup. 14; Lecce, 2007), 181–196.

⁴³ Winkler, *BASP* 52, 256–257; id., *CdÉ* 91, 271–273.

⁴⁴ A. Monson, *From the Ptolemies to the Romans*, 175–176; K. Vandorpe, ‘The Ptolemaic Epigraphic or Harvest Tax (Shemu)’, *AJP* 46 (2000), 174–175 and 197–199.

It is possible that the reference to “keeping the god away” (*dl.t wy p3 ntr r-hr=y*) from the lessee in *P.Ackerpacht* 1.7 (177 BC), a lease contract from Djeme, and the promise to pay the taxes to the king and the god, i.e. the state and the temple (*mtw=n mh pr-3.w.s. p3 ntr*) in *P.Ryl.Dem.* 34.9 (2nd century BC), a similar document from Pathyris, refer to this tax payment or a variant thereof⁴⁸.

In addition, it may be noted that the text does not mention the “State Tax”⁴⁹. By itself, the absence could suggest that the tax was not paid on these temple lands, that the mentioned tax was not paid on the crop that was cultivated in the fields, or that the petitioner did not bother to mention each obligation he shared with his felonious business partner; the gist would likely have been clear to the recipient of the missive anyway. The latter interpretation does not seem improbable in light of the fact that sacerdotal land belonging to the temple estate of Soknebtunis in Tebtunis was subject to the “State Tax”. *Ipso facto*, by analogy, it would also be reasonable to assume that the same conditions applied to temple lands of Souchos in Mouchis. A related possibility exists, however, namely that this levy was not mentioned because it is occasionally the case in other Fayumic leases of agricultural lands that the lessor was supposed to take care of the “State Tax”⁵⁰. If Inaros had let the land it would imply that his landlord was paying the state tax, ostensibly from the rent paid by the lessees⁵¹. Perhaps the same was frequently the case for the “Temple Tax”, but not in the present case⁵².

Extra-local activities

That priests were engaged in agricultural business is a well attested fact, but we rarely find evidence of activities that reach beyond the locality in which they were active in their

sacerdotal role. The text shows that a priest, who is designated as being among the “Souchos priests in Kerkeneith” (*hn n3 wcb.w (n) Pr-grg-N.t*), had access to agricultural land in another locality, Mouchis, which belonged to the same god that he was serving (*htp-ntr (n) Sbk*). That is, the fields were in another part of the *meris* than he lived, assuming that he resided in the locality to whose temple he was assigned. Furthermore, another priest, a priest of Soknebtunis, joined him in the farming business. He was therefore also from a locality other than Mouchis. The text thus attests to what presumably can be regarded as the commercial expansion of these individuals, namely that they increased their economic portfolio by cultivating fields outside their home towns. In this case, it is unlikely that they were the people tending the fields themselves, at least on a daily basis. It is possible that Inaros was responsible for this, but since he presumably lived elsewhere, he may have engaged local labourers. But there is no such information in the present papyrus; likely there was no legal implication of such an action for the current case.

The fact that people in Graeco-Roman Egypt were engaged in agricultural activities outside their own place of residence is attested many times, where, for instance, the so-called Archive of the Descendants of Patron may serve as a prime example of people engaging in extra-local economic activities⁵³. That priests were active in other localities than their own in various capacities can be seen from a number of documents. It is known, for instance, that one of the priests serving Soknebtunis at Tebtunis in the Ptolemaic period, Sokonoppmois, son of Sokonoppmois, was also connected to the priesthood in Soknopaiou Nesos; according to one text (*P.Cairo* II 30626 [93 BC]), he has the title *nb wcb hry sy W3d-wr N3-nfr-ir-sy*⁵⁴, which can be translated as: “Lord of Purity, Master of the Lake of Green of Nefersatis”⁵⁵, in addition to the regular one associated with Soknebtunis in Ptolemaic Tebtunis: *rp3y m-ntry hry sy qm3 hry sy rsy n Nb-imnt*, “*Rp3y* and *M-ntry* and Chief of the Lake of Creation and Chief of the Southern Lake of the Lord of the West”⁵⁶. Fayum priests also held offices outside the nome. Marsisouchos, son of Pakeb-

48 Hughes, *Land Leases*, 38. Cf. K. Vandorpe, ‘Agriculture, Temples and Tax Law in Ptolemaic Egypt’, *CRIPEL* 25 (2005), 167–168

49 E. g., Vandorpe, *CRIPEL* 25, 167.

50 Felber, *Ackerpachtverträge*, 143 and 149; Martin, *JEA* 72, 171; W. Wegner, ‘Die private Geschäfte zweier Soknebtynis-Priester’, in Y. Broux and M. Depauw (eds.), *Acts of the tenth International Congress of Demotic Studies* (OLA 231; Leuven, 2014), 351–353.

51 It cannot be entirely excluded, however, though it must be deemed as tentative at best, that *šmw* in this case is in fact an abbreviation of *šmw pr-3*, “State Harvest Tax”, which is a local alternative form of *md.t-pr-3* (see, e. g., Felber, *Ackerpachtverträge*, 143; Wegner, in Broux and Depauw (eds.), *Acts*, 349). If that were the case, the phrase here may be regarded as parallel to the one found in the above-mentioned lease contracts from Tebtunis. That would also imply that the plaintiff is not mentioning any rental payments.

52 Based on the dating of the text, it is possible that this state levy had not yet been introduced, but see Vandorpe, *CRIPEL* 25, 167.

53 E. g., R. Smolders, ‘The Family Archive of Patron’s Descendants’, in K. Vandorpe, W. Clarysse, and H. Verreth (eds.), *Graeco-Roman Archives from the Fayum* (Collectanea Hellenistica 6; Leuven, 2015), 271–279.

54 A. Monson, ‘Sacred Land in Ptolemaic and Roman Tebtunis’, in S.L. Lippert and M. Schentuleit (eds.), *Tebtynis und Soknopaiou Nesos: Leben im römerzeitlichen Fajum* (Wiesbaden, 2005), 81.

55 See S.L. Lippert and M. Schentuleit, *Quittungen* (DDD 2; Wiesbaden, 2006), 15, for the title in question.

56 Monson, in Lippert and Schentuleit (eds.), *Tebtynis und Soknopaiou Nesos*, 81. See also *PSI* XVII 1715.2n.

kis, who during the second century AD was the prophet of Soknebtunis in Tebtunis, was also active in Akoris in a similar position serving, among other, both Souchos and Amun⁵⁷. That the priests of Soknopaiou Nesos extended their affairs to other localities is also well attested for both the Ptolemaic and Roman periods⁵⁸.

In conclusion, it can be said that P.Brit.Mus. EA 10650 provides another witness to the broad and often widespread financial networks of priests and farmers in the Fayum during the Graeco-Roman period. The papyrus is another piece of the great jigsaw puzzle that helps us to understand the dynamics of this period, the geography of individual economic portfolios, and how such business was carried out.

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⁵⁷ W. Wegner, ‘Ein bislang unerkannter Beleg für eine Personalunion der Prophetenstellen der Tempel von Tebtynis und Akoris’, *SEP* 8 (2011), 113–116.

⁵⁸ E.g., Arlt, in Capasso and Davoli (eds.), *Soknopaios*, 20–21; Lippert, in Capasso and Davoli (eds.), *New Archaeological and Papyrological Researches*, 152–153; Lippert and Schentuleit, in Lippert and Schentuleit (eds.), *Tebtnis und Soknopaiou Nesos*, 72–77.

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