

## CAPITOLO DECIMO

# INTERPRETING THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE TEMENOS: DEMOTIC PAPYRI AND THE CULT IN SOKNOPAIYOU NESOS\*

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### ABSTRACT

This article will present papyri that refer to the temple's architecture and decoration. The material may be divided into two sub-categories: first, texts that describe the wall's decoration directly, and second, ritual and liturgical texts from which information about the ritually determined architectural layout may be gained indirectly. In a third step I will discuss the architectural context in which the rituals may have been performed and try to link it to the temple's archaeological remains. The identification of a cult on the temple's roof and of a contra-temple demonstrates that the temple followed patterns that are common to other Egyptian temples. This is also the context for the edition of an oracular question which was found in the temple by the Archaeological Mission in Egypt of the University of the Salento, Lecce. Fourth, I will investigate the Isis-cult in Soknopaiou Nesos, which is also relevant to some of the texts already considered in the course of the chapter's argument.

### I. PAPYRI DESCRIBING THE TEMPLE'S DECORATION

CURRENTLY there are two papyri known which tell us directly what parts of the temple might have looked like. Both papyri are now kept in the papyrus collection of the Austrian National Library in Vienna. The first one, pVienna Aeg. 9976, was published by Erich Winter in 1967.<sup>1</sup> It presents the hieroglyphic inscriptions according to their layout on a gate or door. The door's inscription as given in the papyrus refers to Soknopaios as «the one who comes to him who calls upon him, the one who listens to the prayers<sup>2</sup> of those who are and those who are not, who lets him breathe whose throat is constricted in the midst of adverse wind» (*ỉ n ʕš-n=f sdm nḫ.wt n nty<.w> ỉwty<.w> ỉ.snf g3 ỉḫty.t ḫr-ỉb ỉwn nḫ3*). Alongside Soknopaios the text also mentions Horus who dwells in Shedet, and the king Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II with his two wives Cleopatra II and III. The text may therefore be dated either to 140-131 or to the years after 124 B.C. Yet this is not necessarily the date when the papyrus was inscribed. Based on Winter's publication it is generally assumed that the manuscript is Roman,<sup>3</sup> although – strictly speaking – Winter only discussed whether pVienna Aeg. 9976 is a fragment that pertains to the Vienna witness of the *Book of the Fayum*,<sup>4</sup> and argues convincingly that it should be kept apart. Then he mentions the date of the Viennese *Book of the Fayum* which was thought to be Roman;<sup>5</sup> he does not further comment on the chronology of pVienna Aeg. 9976. Thus the question of its age is open. Lacking a de-

tailed and systematic palaeographical study of hieroglyphic papyri from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, it cannot be excluded that the papyrus is even Ptolemaic. According to Winter the papyrus' function is that it served as a model which the craftsmen may have used to carve the inscriptions onto the stone to decorate the gate. However, it is not clear whether it was written for the inscription of a *naos* or a proper temple gate. Winter favoured the former rather than the latter. If the date of the papyrus is indeed Roman, the inscription copied onto the papyrus would be some 100 years older. After having presented two other texts I should like to come back to this point and comment on this interpretation in more detail.

Another noteworthy text, pVienna D 10100, has been published and identified by Günter Vittmann as the draft of a sanctuary's decoration.<sup>6</sup> The papyrus is demotic and enumerates the names and epithets of deities, kings and queens according to their distribution in the registers, counting the registers from top to bottom (contrary to the Egyptological convention of counting the registers from bottom to top).<sup>7</sup> Besides these wall inscriptions, those for the door, with theological contents, are preserved as well as the captions for a ruler named Ptolemy, who is not further specified and who performs some rituals before rows of usually seven deities. For the bottom register, the *soubassement*, the Nile gods are listed which perfectly matches the typical decoration in an Egyptian temple. The Vienna text thus roughly parallels the well-known inscription in the temple of Edfu which gives a description of the temple's design and decoration.<sup>8</sup>

That raises the question of whether such a description can be compared with wall decorations in the temple. Indeed the excavations have revealed some wall reliefs in the hall of the offering table (room F) facing towards the central hall (room L) just in front of the sanctuary proper (FIG. 1).<sup>9</sup>

Although the king is offering something – the offering is lost with the upper parts of the scene, and captions are missing – before a row of gods, which concurs with the demotic papyrus, there is a significant difference between the text and the reliefs in that: the wall does not have a *soubassement* with Nile gods (TAV. 15).

Therefore the demotic papyrus cannot refer to this particular scene. This problem cannot be resolved by the fact that pVienna D 10100 may refer to the sanctuary or any other inner room of the temple and not to the central hall (room L), because the walls in this area are void except for

\* Thanks are due to Dr. Christina Riggs (University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK) for correcting my English.

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<sup>1</sup> WINTER 1967, pp. 59-80; KOCKELMANN 2011, pp. 23-24.

<sup>2</sup> For this epithet and variants see LGG VI 736a-737a.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. [http://www.trismegistos.org/hhp/detail.php?tm=105746] (December 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Nowadays pLouvre AF number unknown + Berlin P 14406 a + pVienna Aeg. 9975. See BEINLICH 1996, pp. 10-17.

<sup>5</sup> WINTER 1967, pp. 73-74.

<sup>6</sup> VITTMANN 2002-2003, pp. 106-136.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. e.g. HEERMA VAN VOSS 2006, pp. 115-120, and ID. 2006-2007, pp. 41-42, who argues that the vignette of BD spell 110 should be read from bottom to top.

<sup>8</sup> KURTH 1994 a.

<sup>9</sup> The naming of the different rooms here follows the Egyptian terminology known from Edfu: *Edfou* VII 15-17; DE WIT 1961, pp. 277-320; KURTH 1994 a = ID. 1994 b, pp. 76-78; ID. 2004, pp. 20-24.

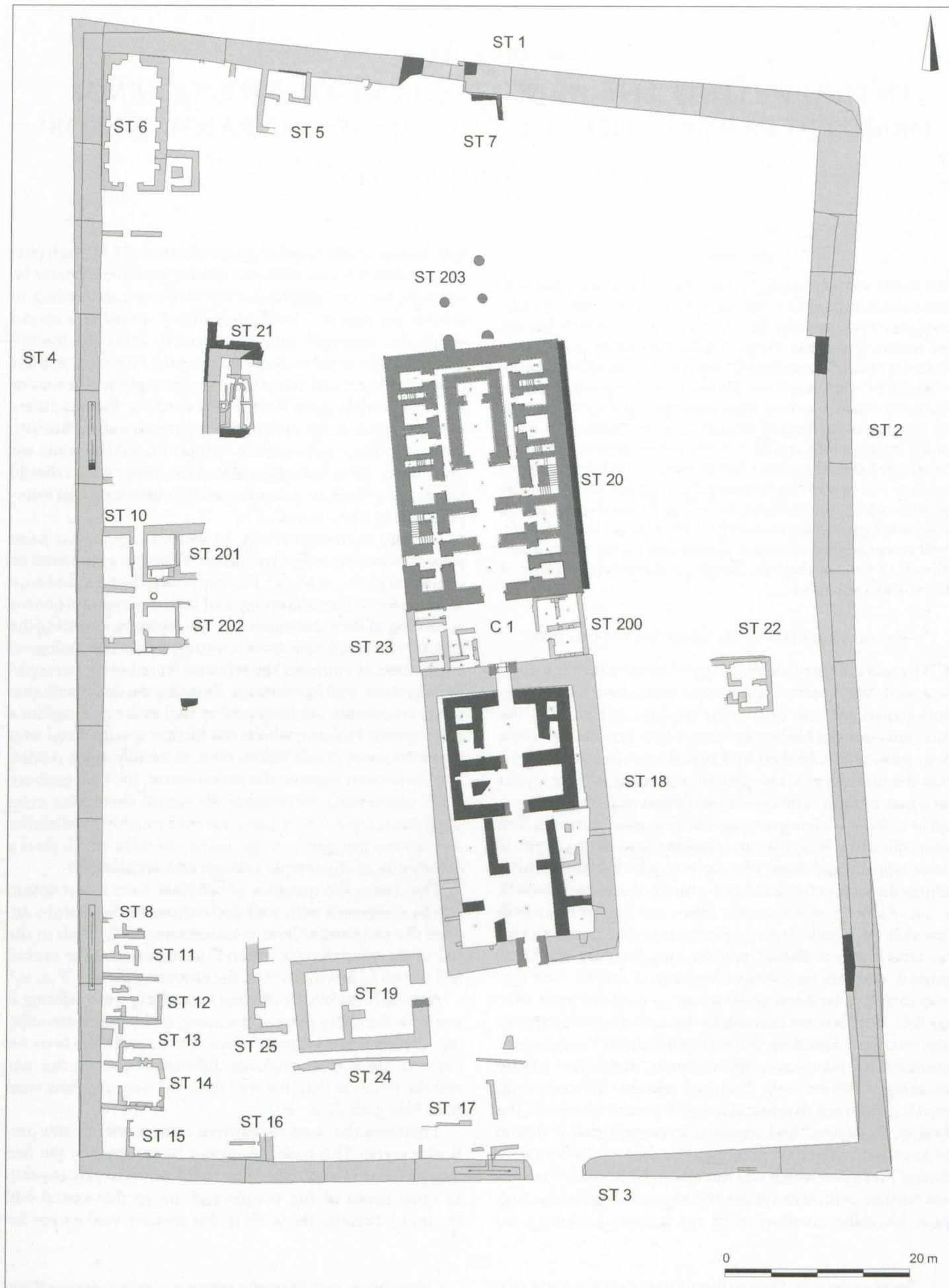


FIG. 1. The temple of Soknopaios.

the frame of the sanctuary's door.<sup>1</sup> Was the papyrus merely a draft of an ideal decoration without any reference to the

actual temple? Was the papyrus written to keep a record of the Hellenistic sanctuary, which was partly destroyed when

<sup>1</sup> On the reliefs see Paola Davoli's contribution in the present volume, chapter 4.

extending the temple? Were the scenes and inscriptions then to be copied to the new rooms? However, as Paola Davoli points out in her contribution, the extension was begun already in the late Ptolemaic era. But why then was this papyrus written in the Roman period? If we accept a Ptolemaic date for the alteration, the function of the papyrus cannot be that of a pattern book, unless the extension remained undecorated until the Roman period, but followed Ptolemaic patterns. Thus the priests would have been conservative and would have wished to have the same decoration in the new sanctuary as in the old one.

Yet, on the one hand, such a feature of being intentionally old-fashioned seems to be surprising and exceptional in terms of what is known about Egyptian temple reliefs and their epigraphic design. On the other hand, at Philae, Kalabsha and Dakke queens are erroneously depicted behind sacrificing figures of Augustus and Tiberius.<sup>1</sup> In Dakke the relief of Ergamenes was completely replaced by a new one in which the queen is even anachronistically designated as Kleopatra, whereas the queens in Philae and Kalabsha remain anonymous. Therefore it cannot be excluded that also at Soknopaiou Nesos the sculptors followed a Ptolemaic model in the initial phases of the Roman period. This leaves us with a certain caveat against dating the reliefs which were found on the site to the Ptolemaic period. However, in pVienna D 10100 A 3 and C 13 the king is explicitly called Ptolemy, and thus the text refers to a Ptolemaic relief.

The demotic text's unetymological orthography may provide a clue as to how to interpret pVienna D 10100. Although there are some unetymological demotic texts from Soknopaiou Nesos for which no clear parallels in older sources have been identified so far,<sup>2</sup> other unetymological papyri have been proven to be adaptations of texts much older than the demotic script.<sup>3</sup> Therefore I would interpret the unetymological orthography of the demotic text on pVienna D 10100 as an indicator that the text predates the papyrus. Then pVienna D 10100 would not be the draft for a wall's decoration – as Vittmann has proposed – but the copy of such a manuscript or a description of some decoration out of an antiquarian interest. A further example of the latter genre may be found in the Tebtynis library, which includes descriptions of Asyut tombs.<sup>4</sup> The aforementioned pVienna Aeg. 9976 (accepting a Roman date for the papyrus) could be a further instance for such a replication of a substantially older inscription.

One could argue that the unetymological writings of pVienna D 10100 are not the result of copying an earlier text from another papyrus and transcribing it into demotic, but that they are due to the process of transcribing the hieroglyphic text that the author found on the temple's walls. If this were the case, it raises the question of whether the papyri stem from a purely archival tradition, which essentially goes back to the original draft produced for the monument, or whether the original text was written down as an *aide-mémoire* for a visitor or for a priest who wanted to keep a record of the wall's decoration? There is some evidence for the ancient Egyptians' appreciation for their own historic monuments, including 'sightseeing' which might have been

accompanied by the act of taking notes about what has been visited: (a) From literary works such as the first Setnatale we know that priests went to the necropolis or wandered around in the temple to read (‘s’) the inscriptions.<sup>5</sup> (b) In some tombs a grid system is found which later copyists applied to study older proportions.<sup>6</sup> (c) The *Words of Heliopolis* are a copy of a *dipinto* or *graffito* that stood once on a relief presumably of a Heliopolitan sanctuary,<sup>7</sup> and finally (d) numerous graffiti give witness to ancient tourism and antiquarian interest.<sup>8</sup>

Bearing these sources in mind, from the two alternative interpretations I have presented, I would favour the latter rather than the former, i.e. pVienna D 10100 could be the original or, entering into the archival tradition thereafter, the copy of notes which a person took during his visit to the temple, rather than being a draft – both Winter and Vittmann used the term ‘Entwurf’ – for the decoration of a temple. The antiquarian interpretation would explain why a Ptolemaic scene is described in two papyri which are certainly (pVienna D 10100) and possibly (pVienna Aeg. 9976) of Roman date. Yet the decoration in the great Augustan temple of Kalabsha advises caution. There, in exceptional instances, Amenhotep II and Ptolemy IX are shown as officiants in two adjacent ritual scenes that were carved under Augustus, who is depicted and designated as *pr-ʿ3* on the same wall.<sup>9</sup> Thus it was possible to depict predecessor kings who were of some importance to a certain sanctuary as acting ritualists alongside the reigning king. For the interpretation of pVienna Aeg. 9976 and pVienna D 10100, this means that a Roman date for the inscriptions given in these papyri cannot be ruled out despite mentioning a Ptolemaic king, although the consistent appearance of a Ptolemy in pVienna D 10100, in contrast to the isolated Ptolemy IX in the Augustan Kalabsha temple, makes this less likely to be a factor in understanding the demotic texts.

## II. RITUAL TEXTS FROM SOKNOPAIU NESOS

Apart from these papyri with their very clear reference to the decoration of the building, there are texts that have a completely different purpose than describing wall scenes but that nevertheless provide information about the temple architecture and can contribute to its theoretical reconstruction, too. One of those texts is the daily offering ritual of Soknopaiou Nesos.<sup>10</sup> At present eleven copies are known from the site, with pBerlin P 8043+30030 being the most extensive manuscript among them. For the daily offering ritual, the officiant had to enter the temple and pass by various architectural elements. The text itself chiefly provides the spells which this priest had to recite when approaching the sanctuary. The contents are deeply rooted in traditional Egyptian theology and go back at least as far as the New Kingdom. The spells' titles, however, seem to belong to a redactional phase which is closely connected to their use at Soknopaiou Nesos, as they specify the locations where the words were to be spoken. There are five spells to be recited at successive gates, followed by a spell for entering the *wsh.t-*

<sup>1</sup> GAUTHIER 1911, pp. 40-42; ID. 1914, Pl. 14; HÖLBL 2004, p. 62 Fig. 79, p. 128 Fig. 184, p. 142 Fig. 208; ROEDER 1930 a, pp. 191-197; ID. 1930 b, Pl. 77; WINTER 2003, pp. 197-212, esp. pp. 208-209.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., pVienna D 6951 (HOFFMANN 2002, pp. 219-228) and – despite some quotes from older sources – pBerlin P 6750 and P 8765 (WIDMER 2005, pp. 171-184; EAD. in press).

<sup>3</sup> For an example see the next section.

<sup>4</sup> OSING-ROSATI 1998, pp. 55-100.

<sup>5</sup> I Kh. III 9 (GOLDBRUNNER 2006, pp. 4 s.; HOFFMANN-QUACK 2007, p. 139. Cf. LIEVEN 2002, pp. 75-89).

<sup>6</sup> ROBINS 1994, pp. 169-170.

<sup>7</sup> OSING 1983, pp. 347-361; ID. 1991, pp. 257-279; SITZLER 1995, pp. 53-60.

<sup>8</sup> PEDEN 2001.

<sup>9</sup> LD IV 84b; GAUTHIER 1911, pp. 215-218; ID. 1914, Pl. 76; WINTER 2003, pp. 202-203.

<sup>10</sup> STADLER 2005, pp. 150-163; ID. 2007, pp. 284-302.

hall, i.e. the so-called broad hall.<sup>1</sup> Since the content of this spell is a hymn to Nut, the translation as «hall» rather than «courtyard» is preferable.<sup>2</sup>

The Salento University excavations have shown that the Hellenistic sanctuary ST18 was altered and new structures added. This yields five gates and would mean that the courtyard C 1 is the *pronaos* of the temple in its last phase, followed by the broad hall / *wsh.t* – the *wsh.t wr.t* «great hall» in the Edfu terminology. On the basis of the ritual text, which gives the spell for entering the broad hall after the officiant has passed five gates, one would expect this layout in the temple architecture, and in fact in November 2005 the broad hall (room A) was excavated.<sup>3</sup> In this case, philology has helped to identify the excavated rooms, and archaeology provides a relative date for the text's compilation, since the ritual only parallels the architecture in the sanctuary's last phase.

The contents of pBerlin P 6750 and its partial parallel pBerlin P 8765, which was published by Spiegelberg in 1902 without any translation and commentary, provide another example of how new excavations allow to contextualize a text and better understand it. The papyrus on which Ghislaine Widmer wrote her as yet unpublished PhD-thesis is a collection of liturgical texts which the Berlin papyri contain and may introduce us to the festivals celebrated at Soknopaiou Nesos.<sup>4</sup> The first part of pBerlin P 6750 focuses on Osiris and his resurrection, whereas the second half concentrates on Horus, his birth and his accession to kingship. Widmer has wondered about the connection to Soknopaiou Nesos and the text's relevance for the crocodile god who was chiefly worshipped in that town. She convincingly suggests a correlation to different Sobek-manifestations and connects the papyrus with the two Sobek-forms Soknopiais and Soknopaios, who are mentioned side by side in the textual documentation. In this view Soknopiais is the old crocodile and represents the Osiris-function, whereas Soknopaios is the young and new crocodile that is enthroned as divine king during the feast of the *genesia* at the town, in the same way as in Edfu a real falcon is enthroned every year.<sup>5</sup> Thus due to Sobek's character as a solar and cosmic deity in the Fayyum, the god performs regular death, rejuvenation and rebirth. This cycle would have been ritually re-enacted with living crocodiles in Soknopaiou Nesos.

### III. INTERPRETATION OF THE TEMPLE'S ARCHITECTURE ON THE BASIS OF THE AFOREMENTIONED TEXTS

Ghislaine Widmer has tentatively proposed that the architectural context of such a ritual could be the structure at the rear of the temple proper, which can already be seen on Lepsius' map and which also appears on the new maps of the Lecce excavations.<sup>6</sup> However, based on the evidence from other Egyptian temples, ceremonies similar to that set out in the text of pBerlin P 6750 and its parallel usually took place on the temple's roof, where the mummy of the divine animal united with the sun's rays; thus the temple's chief

deity was symbolically recharged with cosmic energy and a new, young manifestation was enthroned. In Edfu this was at the New Year's feast.<sup>7</sup> Therefore I would suggest that the architectural context for the liturgical compendium of pBerlin P 6750 should be reconsidered and correlated with the new finds. In fact the discovery of two staircases in Soknopaiou Nesos temple points to the necessity of having access to the roof (rooms H and P in FIG. 1). Thus parts of the Berlin compendium could well have been used there. Such roof chapels are known from Upper Egyptian temples as well as the Hibis temples and – closer to Soknopaiou Nesos – the temple of Dionysias in the Fayyum.<sup>8</sup> The date of the feast at Edfu for enthroning the new falcon is different from the *genesia* in Soknopaiou Nesos; however, the festival calendar of Soknopaiou Nesos significantly differs from other temple calendars. For instance, at Soknopaiou Nesos the *Khoiak* rituals were not performed in the month of *Khoiak*.<sup>9</sup> The reason must be the influence of local theology on the particular calendar.

But what was then the function of the structure immediately adjacent to the rear of the sanctuary, if it were not used for the transition of power from the old to the new divine crocodile? This brings us back to pVienna Aeg. 9976. Calling Soknopaios «the one who comes to him who calls upon him, the one who listens to the prayers of those who are and those who are not, who lets him breathe whose throat is constricted in the midst of adverse wind» evokes Soknopaios as judge as well as an oracular deity and a god who assuages anxiety. Although the expression *i.snf g3 ihty.t hr-ib iwn nh3* «who lets him breathe whose throat is constricted in the midst of adverse wind» is not exactly identical, it reminds one of the judicial term *rdi t3w* «to let breathe» for «to acquit of something».<sup>10</sup> Gates of temples are traditionally the places for trials and appeals to the god by the commoners, who were not admitted to the *temenos* or the temple proper.<sup>11</sup> This practice was still known during the early Roman period, since pRhind I 5 h 6 f. refers to a gate as the place of a judgement.<sup>12</sup> Such a gate was also the setting where worshippers would utter their prayers to the god and where they could come closer to the deity. They may have submitted oracular questions to a priest there as well.

An oracular cult of Soknopaios is indeed attested in Soknopaiou Nesos. A series of Greek and Demotic oracular questions on papyri dating to the Ptolemaic period (the Demotic) and the Roman period (the Greek) are already known.<sup>13</sup> During the excavations in 2006 a further oracular question was discovered (ST05/256/1369; 11,9 cm broad, 3,2 cm high; FIG. 2).

It was found rolled up in room E, adjacent to the broad hall, of the extension ST 20 in a stratum which is near US 251.<sup>14</sup> In addition to seven demotic oracular questions from Hermoupolis and five from Soknopaiou Nesos, this find is a further attestation of oracular questions documented as rolled-up papyri.<sup>15</sup> From Soknopaiou Nesos just 17 demotic oracular questions are known up to now, all of which date

<sup>1</sup> For the term: KONRAD 2006, pp. 77-84, which should be consulted with caution; cf. the review by LEITZ 2008, pp. 237-242.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Edfu* v 6, 1. <sup>3</sup> STADLER 2007, pp. 284-302.

<sup>4</sup> WIDMER 1998, pp. 83-91; EAD. 2003, pp. 15-18; EAD. 2005, pp. 171-184.

<sup>5</sup> For Edfu see ALLIOT 1949, pp. 303-433. Corrections by FAIRMAN 1954-1955, pp. 165-203, esp. pp. 189-192.

<sup>6</sup> LD II, pp. 35-41; Taf. 1 Bl. 52, 54; DAVOLI 2005 b, pp. 29-39; EAD. 2007, p. 112.

<sup>7</sup> For Edfu see e.g. *Edfu* VII 16, 6-17, 3. KURTH 1994 a, p. 55 = Id. 1994 b, pp. 76-77; Id. 2004, pp. 22-23.

<sup>8</sup> DAVOLI 1998 a, pp. 301-323, esp. p. 315.

<sup>9</sup> WIDMER 2005, p. 177.

<sup>10</sup> LIPPERT 2008, p. 81.

<sup>11</sup> SAUNERON 1954, pp. 117-127; BRUNNER 1988, pp. 248-270; esp. p. 250 and p. 256; QUAEGBEUR 1993, pp. 201-220; GUGLIELMI 1994, pp. 55-68; DERCHAIN 1995, pp. 1-12; CABROL 2001, pp. 734-738, 749-754.

<sup>12</sup> SMITH 2009, p. 324 n. 123, who corrects MÖLLER 1913, p. 27. See also DERCHAIN 1995, pp. 1-12, and CABROL 2001, pp. 734-738, 749-754.

<sup>13</sup> MARTIN 2004, pp. 414 s.; see Mario Capasso's contribution in the present volume, chapter 5.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. FIG. 1, in the present volume, chapter 6.

<sup>15</sup> MARTIN 2004, pp. 414-415.

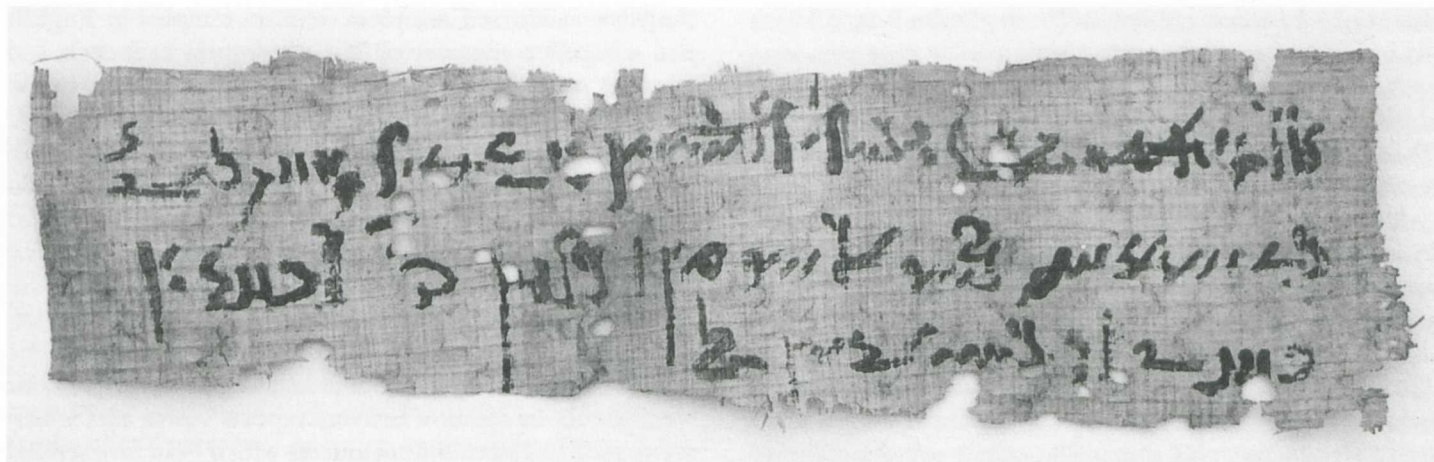


FIG. 2. ST05/256/1369: demotic oracular question.

to the middle Ptolemaic period (2nd century B.C.).<sup>1</sup> The palaeography of ST05/256/1369 is similar to those previously known, but the word for wheat is written *sw*<sup>3</sup> – the form which is current during the Roman period – instead of the Ptolemaic *sw*. Therefore I would date the oracular question ST05/256/1369 to the Late Ptolemaic/Early Roman period, *i.e.* the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. Thus ST05/256/1369 is the youngest demotic oracular question known from Soknopaiou Nesos so far.<sup>2</sup> Despite its brevity it poses some problems<sup>3</sup> and runs as follows:

- (1) *hrw bk m-b*ḥ *Sbk nb Pay p*ṣ *ntr* ʿ3 *n-d*r(.t) *Htb*(3) *sp-sn* *iw=f* *hpr iw=k* (?)
- (2) *wty n-*im*=y r tm* *šp-d*r.t *sw*<sup>3</sup> (*rtb*) 80 '½' (*n*) *Htr*
- (3) *my in=w-n=y pay bk bnr*

«(1) Oracular question in the presence of Sobek, the lord of Pai, the great god, through Kheteb(a), son of the likewise named: If you (?) (2) command me not to act as a guarantor (for) Heter, (with) wheat 80 '½' (artabas), (3) (then) make this document to be brought outside.»

#### Commentary

– 1. 1.

*Htb*(3) is written *Htb*(3) with a divine determinative, – *Sp-sn* resembles the flesh determinative in this writing which is unusual in filiations, as here *sp-sn* normally is written

*iw=k*: The reading is dubious because of the form of the =*k*. The sign looks more like a *p*, *q* or a lotus determinative. Other readings (ʿ*m*ṣ, ʿ*h*, 29) do not make sense here. I have considered the reading 29 as an element of a numbering system, perhaps to help identify the oracular questions in the daily oracular service of the temple, *i.e.* ST05/256/1369 might be the 29<sup>th</sup> oracular question of the day. But this would not work in practice, as the number would have been invisible to the priest, who carried the papyrus rolled up. In any case a circumstantial sentence after *iw=fhpr* should be expected, since this is the usual con-

struction in general and in the Soknopaiou Nesos oracular questions in particular.<sup>5</sup>

– 1. 2.

Translating *wty* as «to command» is required by the preceding, albeit uncertain *iw=k*. Addressing the god, it cannot be a writing for *w*ḏḏ «to prosper, to be fortunate». Furthermore «if .?. is fortunate for me to ...» would be \**iw=fhpr iw* .?. *wty-n=y* rather than *n-*im*=y* which is the oblique object in a present circumstantial. The verb *w*t / *wty* «to command» is rarely attested in demotic sources from Soknopaiou Nesos. Its determinative in the oracular question in pOx. Griffith M 7 recto 6 is damaged and could be the writing determinative.<sup>6</sup> Therefore the writings of the verb *w*t / *wty* «command» are different from each other in both papyri.

After *n-*im*=y* the scribe appears to have corrected the hastily written =*y r* by redrawing the third stroke of the *y*, which is considerably thicker than the first two.

For *šp-d*r.t «to act as a guarantor for» cf. SETHE-PARTSCH 1920, pp. 496-513.

*Htr* could either be a personal name (Ἀθρης, Ἀτρες) or one of the other words *htr* («twins», «tax, fee», «horse»). The translation «tax, fee» is excluded, because this *htr* is usually written with the complement of a loop-*h* over *t*. Exceptions, however, are pBerlin P 23714 A 4, pBerlin P 15505 l. 8 and pVienna D 6842 l. 5 without such a complement.<sup>7</sup> Similar is *htr* «tax, fee» in Ptolemaic Soknopaiou Nesos, yet it has the beating arm determinative with this meaning, not seen here.<sup>8</sup> The lack of an animal determinative also contradicts the translation «horse, horse team»; instead a sign follows which remotely looks like the determinative of *htr* «twins» followed by stroke and a dot. Is this a short version of the animal determinative?<sup>9</sup> The personal name Hat(h)res is only rarely attested in demotic sources from Soknopaiou Nesos, nor is it found in the Ptolemaic documents from the site or in the receipts and contracts dated to the Roman period. Once it occurs in *ostrakon* Berlin 20595 I x+2, and a second time in *ostrakon* Berlin 30583 II x+3, but this Heter is

<sup>1</sup> BRESCIANI 1975, pp. 2-11 (nos. 1-12); ZAUZICH 1976, p. 133; MARTIN 2004, pp. 413-426.

<sup>2</sup> For *sw* in Ptolemaic documents from Soknopaiou Nesos see BRESCIANI 1975, pp. 84-85 no. 60, pp. 88-91 no. 64, pp. 66-67 no. 66 and pp. 94-95 no. 68, versus *sw*<sup>3</sup> (variants *sw*<sup>c</sup> and *sw*<sup>e</sup>) in Roman receipts – LIPPERT-SCHENTULEIT 2006 a, p. 256 (glossary).

<sup>3</sup> I thank Sandra Lippert for discussing them with me.

<sup>4</sup> LIPPERT-SCHENTULEIT 2006 a, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> In pAsh. D. 42 l. 4/5 *iw=fhpr r p*ṣy=y ʿ*s-shn nfr* should be read, the circumstantial converter *r* being written at the beginning of l. 5. The first editor has just *iw=fhpr p*ṣy=y ʿ*s-shn nfr* (MARTIN 2004, p. 421 Pl. 34).

<sup>6</sup> BRESCIANI 1975, pp. 6 s. no. 7.

<sup>7</sup> LIPPERT-SCHENTULEIT 2006 a, pp. 30-32 no. 32 Pl. 8, pp. 48-49 no. 54 Pl. 18 and p. 59 no. 67 Pl. 21. Compare also *htr* without the complements, SCHENTULEIT-VITTMANN 2009, p. 159 (glossary).

<sup>8</sup> Cf., however, also BRESCIANI 1975, pp. 43-44 no. 43 l. 4, pp. 98-99 no. 71 l. 16.

<sup>9</sup> Ptolemaic writings in ERICHSEN 1954, p. 342. Cf., however, the clear writing of the animal determinative in *htry* in pBerlin P 23512 B 6 (LIPPERT-SCHENTULEIT 2006 a, pp. 34-35 no. 34 Pl. 10).

doubtful.<sup>1</sup> A further example is *Htr* in pBerlin P 23545 l. 13, a list of names from Soknopaiou Nesos in the 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D., which parallels the writing in ST05/256/1369 most closely with only minor differences in the determinative.<sup>2</sup> Therefore it is most likely that it should be taken as the personal name *Htr*.

½ has been added above the line. The writing – cf. e.g. ½ in *ostrakon* Berlin 20097 –<sup>3</sup> seems to comprise a rather small and damaged 3. A reading 70 is also possible, but puzzling after the number 80.

The new oracular question differs from most other Soknopaiou Nesos specimens known so far, not only in its transverse rectangular shape (the others are quadratic to upright oblong), but also in its formulary. Contrary to the others from Soknopaiou Nesos it does not contain *in p3y=y* ‘š-šhn nfr/šw=f hpr r p3y=y ‘š-šhn nfr «If it is my good fortune, ...» or the like. Similar to pAsh. D. 48 it instead puts forward its problem directly and in this is closer to oracular questions from Tebtynis, where a series of such immediate oracular questions were unearthed.<sup>4</sup> As Kheteba is uncertain whether he should guarantee for Heter, the new oracular question is a document of a private petition that is concerned with a juristic problem.<sup>5</sup>

These little papyri such as ST05/256/1369 prove that the epithet «the one who comes to him who calls upon him, the one who listens to the prayers of those who are and those who are not, who lets him breathe whose throat is constricted in the midst of adverse wind» for Soknopaios in pVienna Aeg. 9976 is not a theoretical contention of some priests, but is to be seen against the background of an actual oracular cult in Soknopaiou Nesos. As ST05/256/1369 was found in the temple proper one might wonder whether pVienna Aeg. 9976 is a draft for the decoration of a gate on the main axis of the temple. However, apart from gates Egyptian temples had particular edifices for the purpose of turning in petitions. The temple of Ptah in Memphis and that of Amun-Re in Karnak, for example, had buildings at the rear of the main temple where «Ptah, who listens to the prayers», and «Amun, who listens to the prayers», were worshipped respectively.<sup>6</sup> The relative phrase «who listens to the prayers» is also assigned to Soknopaios in pVienna Aeg. 9976. Such structures may also be found at the temple of Mut and the temple of Monthu at Karnak, all being New Kingdom in date.<sup>7</sup> Later temples of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, both in Upper Egypt and in the oases, had similar buildings for which various terms are used in Egyptology such as «addorsed

chapels», «addorsed temples», «contra-temple» in English and «chapelles adossée» or «Gegentempel» in French and German respectively.<sup>8</sup> Examples of Roman temples in the oases and the Fayyum are attested at Ayn Birbija, Douch, Ismant el-Kharab and Medinet Madi.<sup>9</sup> There are clear parallels between the structures there and the one in Soknopaiou Nesos (ST203): a smaller sanctuary has been attached back to back to the main temple, without any passage from one building to the other. In most cases the presence of petitioners seeking divine advice is shown by the find of votive *stelae*. In the area of the decorated niche at the rear of the Ptolemaic temple in Deir el-Medineh, for example, numerous ear *stelae* were found. In addition Bruyère reports votive ears which are related to a door's lintel and on which Ptah is described as a listener to prayers. The finds indicate oracular practice at Deir el-Medineh based around that niche, which in conclusion served as a form of addorsed chapel.<sup>10</sup> The northern temple at Karanis in the Fayyum provides a parallel for such a addorsed chapel reduced to a niche.

Therefore I would modify both Winter's interpretation of pVienna Aeg. 9976 and Widmer's of pBerlin P 6750 and propose that the particular epithet of Soknopaios in pVienna Aeg. 9976 indicates that the text was meant for a real gate. The gate belonged – I would think – to a sanctuary for the oracular cult of 'Soknopaios who listens to the prayers'. Its location is somewhat uncertain. It could be the addorsed chapel at the rear of the main temple, but at the moment it can neither be proven nor excluded whether there was an entrance in the north of the *temenos* wall.<sup>11</sup> Such a gate would have given immediate access to the addorsed chapel for ordinary people. In any case it is more likely that Soknopaios<sup>12</sup> was not worshipped here, but on the temple's roof. The temple of Kom Ombo corroborates the new contextualization of pVienna Aeg. 9976:<sup>13</sup> although Sobek may be addressed as a deity who answers prayers or who comes to the petitioner elsewhere in the temple,<sup>14</sup> the well-known relief of the four winds is found on the enclosure wall behind the sanctuaries, but on the *inner* side, whereas the reliefs on other addorsed chapels or niches face outwards. At Kom Ombo, a niche in a wall is framed by depictions of ears and eyes, which refer to the divine reception of prayers. From both sides the chief deities Sobek(-Ra) and Haroëris approach, and Sobek, on the left-hand side, bears the epithet *ii n nš-n=f n m3<sup>c</sup>.t* «the one who comes to him who appeals to him truly» – closely resembling the Vienna papyrus' formulation *šw n* ‘š-šhn nfr «the one who comes to him who calls upon him».<sup>15</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LIPPERT-SCHENTULEIT 2006 a, p. 47 no. 52, p. 64 no. 76.

<sup>2</sup> ZAUZICH 1977, pp. 166-169 Pl. 25; *Demot. Nh* 1 851, no. 20.

<sup>3</sup> LIPPERT-SCHENTULEIT 2006 a, p. 107 no. 180 Pl. 38.

<sup>4</sup> MARTIN 2004, pp. 425 s.; ZAUZICH 2000, pp. 1-25.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. LIPPERT 2008, pp. 189-190.

<sup>6</sup> BARGUET 1962, pp. 223-242; SADEK 1987, pp. 16-19; CARLOTTI-GALLET 2007, pp. 271-282.

<sup>7</sup> Further examples are listed by ARNOLD 2003, p. 5 (*Addorsed chapel, addorsed temple*).

<sup>8</sup> ARNOLD 1994, p. 91 (*Gegenkapelle*); MILLS 2002, p. 27; ARNOLD 2003, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> DOBROWOLSKI 2002, pp. 121-128; MILLS 2002, p. 27; REDDÉ-BALLET-LEMAIRE-BONNET 2004, pp. 107-108, 118-119, Plan h. t. 3; HÖLBL 2005, pp. 60, 71, 74, 79-80, 87, 88.

<sup>10</sup> BRUYÈRE 1952, p. 42 no. 117, pp. 60-61; DU BOURGUET 2002, pp. 173-175 nos. 184-185. However, LAROCHE-TRAUNECKER 1980, p. 194, followed by FAZZINI-O'ROURKE 2008, pp. 142-143, doubt on contingent grounds that such structures should be connected with a popular and oracular cult. Several sources contradict this: KLOTZ 2008, pp. 63-77, who argues that the addorsed chapel at Karnak combined solar theology with the option for the populace to interact with the deity.

<sup>11</sup> See, in this volume, chapter 1.

<sup>12</sup> Hypothesis of WIDMER 2003, p. 18, WIDMER 2005, pp. 183-184.

<sup>13</sup> DE MORGAN-BOURIANT-LEGRAIN-JEQUIER 1909, no. 938; GUTBUB 1977, pp. 328-353; LGG 1 121a.

<sup>14</sup> In the hypostyle (*šdm nh.wt n.t* ‘š-šhn nfr: DE MORGAN-BOURIANT-LEGRAIN-JEQUIER 1895, no. 233; LGG VI 736c; *šdm spr.w n.w* ‘š-šhn nfr: DE MORGAN-BOURIANT-LEGRAIN-JEQUIER 1895, no. 222, 7; LGG VI 738c; *šdm spr.w*: DE MORGAN-BOURIANT-LEGRAIN-JEQUIER 1895, no. 252, 5; LGG VI 738b), in the following hall B (*ii n* ‘š-šhn nfr: DE MORGAN-BOURIANT-LEGRAIN-JEQUIER 1895, no. 407; LGG I 188c; *šdm spr.w n.w* ‘š-šhn nfr: DE MORGAN-BOURIANT-LEGRAIN-JEQUIER 1895, no. 425, 12-13; LGG VI 738c; *šdm spr.w n.w ntr.w rmt*: DE MORGAN-BOURIANT-LEGRAIN-JEQUIER 1909, no. 513; LGG VI 738c), the ensuing Hall of the Ennead (*šdm m3<sup>c</sup>*: DE MORGAN-BOURIANT-LEGRAIN-JEQUIER 1909, no. 789 = GUTBUB 1995, no. 189, 7-8; LGG VI 735c) and at the gate to his sanctuary (*ii nš-n=f*: DE MORGAN-BOURIANT-LEGRAIN-JEQUIER 1909, no. 834, 3-4 = GUTBUB 1995, no. 54, 3; LGG I 120c).

<sup>15</sup> FINK 2011, p. 177. This epithet is resumed in DE MORGAN-BOURIANT-LEGRAIN-JEQUIER 1909, no. 939 = JUNKER 1931, p. 55. Haroëris, with whom Sobek is worshipped in Kom Ombo, is also praised as *im3 ib n nh m<sup>c</sup> = f* «merciful to him who pleads from him» in this spot.

## IV. THE CULT OF ISIS AT SOKNOPAIU NESOS

Another aspect of pBerlin P 6750 deserves a closer examination, and that is the birth of Horus and his accession to power. Considering the evidence for a specific Harpokrates cult and procession,<sup>1</sup> one might also speculate whether Widmer's theory about the text's adaptation to Soknopaias and Soknopaios is the only possible interpretation. It could be far easier to assume a simple application of the text to the Harpokrates cult, which is clearly attested in Soknopaiou Nesos. The worship of Isis and that of Harpokrates refer to each other intrinsically, because the child's birth requires the mother's presence. As much as the daily ritual of Soknopaios draws upon a much older corpus, the Berlin papyrus also refers back to the famous birth myth. Though this seems to be done less directly, nevertheless the liturgical texts may be set into the context of the celebration of Horus' birth and his acknowledgement as the son of Amun and of the sungod Pre. The child is then solarized, which fits into the framework of the birth myth that was first visualized in Hatshepsut's Deir el-Bahri temple.<sup>2</sup> In the New Kingdom that myth was intended to propagate the divine descent of the king, who acted as a saviour from the evil powers of *chaos* that permanently threaten Egypt and the divine order, Ma'at. Later, when the rulers of Egypt were foreign-born, the myth was transformed to narrate the birth of the divine child in any temple. The most famous realizations are those in the so-called *mammisis*, or birth-houses, of Edfu, Dendera, Philae and Kom Ombo.<sup>3</sup> Normally the *mammisi* is situated with its axis rectangular to the axis of the main temple.

In 2005 Paola Davoli described a structure at the southwest angle of the temple of Soknopaios which would fit those requirements.<sup>4</sup> This building (ST19) may have served as a *mammisi*; however, we cannot be sure whether it is the edifice where parts of the liturgies as preserved in pBerlin P 6750 were recited. I would favour a performance in a setting that is more focused on Horus and think of an area around the aforementioned Isis-temple or -chapel, which is known from texts but whose location cannot be archaeologically determined at present.<sup>5</sup> Such a setting is also supported by the fact that pBerlin P 6750 refers to a «venerable statue» of Isis, which, according to Widmer, is a cult statue of Isis.

The textual evidence for Isis-worship at Soknopaiou Nesos and the popularity of the *Isia* (Isis feast) in the Ptolemaic and Roman Fayyum<sup>6</sup> invites the question of where Isis was worshipped in the town, especially given her overwhelming importance within the Egyptian *pantheon*. A temple inventory mentions a series of objects pertaining to the Isis cult as well as a *h3*-chapel of Isis whose location is uncertain, and which could also be a portable shrine.<sup>7</sup> Further documentary sources hint at a cult of Isis at Soknopaiou Nesos,<sup>8</sup> as

do the theophoric Isis-based names that were popular in this *kome*, and a long hymn to Isis (pVienna D. 6297+6329+10101) which probably came from Soknopaiou Nesos.<sup>9</sup> The close conjunction of the Isis- and Horus-cult can also be illustrated by another important text, found on the recto of pVienna D. 12006 and dated by palaeography to the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.<sup>10</sup> There are fragments of a hieratic parallel from Middle Egypt in the Berlin papyrus collection (4<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.) and a small piece of a second demotic manuscript again from Soknopaiou Nesos (1<sup>st</sup> cent. A.D.), indicating that the text had a certain importance to the population. The 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. version shows the text's age and long-standing tradition. The composition is unique in its content and, like pBerlin P 6750, bipartite. The first part is a dialogue. Isis is interviewing a boy who must be divine, because the Egyptian word for boy seems to be written with a sun-determinative and might etymologically be derived from *l̥r* «to ascend». Throughout Egyptian history Egyptians perceived an association between *l̥r* and *R̥*, «Rê», suggesting the solar implications of *l̥(w)*.<sup>11</sup> And in fact a closer investigation of the term's attestations in other demotic and even in Sahidic Coptic sources reveals that *l̥(w)* – the term that is used for the boy – must denote a special supernatural boy: in Coptic it is usually Jesus Christ or a Gnostic saviour boy.<sup>12</sup> Thus the text presents Isis in conversation with her unborn son.

The translation of the term designating the answering entity has been challenged and interpreted as a stone rather than a boy,<sup>13</sup> but the arguments put forward to substantiate such a translation do not withstand closer examination.<sup>14</sup> In fact palaeography, orthography, scribal customs in Soknopaiou Nesos, the history of the term, and, last but not least, mythological concepts in Ancient Egypt are all in favour of a reading as «child» rather than «stone». Furthermore that meaning becomes evident from allusions to the papyrus thicket where Isis and her child Harpokrates, the posthumous son of Osiris and legitimate heir, hid themselves. After mentioning the thicket the boy refers to it as «here» and thus makes it clear that the setting is Isis with Horus in their refuge, hidden away from Seth's evil attempts to find and kill the child. Another clue is that both Isis and the boy speak of themselves in the first person plural. Therefore, the conversation develops the Horus-myth in the form of a dialogue, *i.e.* the theme of Horus' accession to power, the overcoming of the evil forces in the world and the maintenance of the world's divine order. Some answers allude to the birth of the sun-child Harpokrates as having taken place in the Fayyum-lake. That the *l̥(w)* remains anonymous, but through its allusion to *l̥r/R̥* is solarised, might be purposeful, since it leaves the option to interpret the god in terms of Sobek, who was worshipped as a cosmic and thus sun-god, just as the liturgical manual of pBerlin P 6750 can be seen as a text which takes the Osiris-Horus-con-

<sup>1</sup> STADLER 2004, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> BRUNNER 1986.

<sup>3</sup> DAUMAS 1958.

<sup>4</sup> DAVOLI 2007, p. 108.

<sup>5</sup> For references see in this page nn. 7-8.

<sup>6</sup> WIDMER 2005, p. 178.

<sup>7</sup> DOUSA-GAUDARD-JOHNSON 2004, pp. 146 s., 178-180.

<sup>8</sup> JÖRDENS 1998, pp. 27, 29. LIPPERT-SCHENTULEIT 2006 a, p. 122 no. 198: Attestation of a prophet of Isis who receives beer. LIPPERT 2007, p. 153: Sanctuary of Isis Nepherses.

<sup>9</sup> STADLER 2009; ID. (in press).

<sup>10</sup> ID. 2004.

<sup>11</sup> ID. 2007, esp. pp. 198-201.

<sup>12</sup> ID. 2002, pp. 109-125.

<sup>13</sup> QUACK 2005, pp. 174-179; ID. 2006, pp. 175-188; ID. 2008, pp. 362-363 demonstrates the difficulties of the text, since the author (who criticized some unclear translations in the *editio princeps*; see QUACK 2005, p. 177) is

unable to provide understandable translations, even for his selected excerpts from the papyrus. See for instance, «Der Stein sagte ihr auf die Frage: "Ein Ertasten von zwei Drittel ertastet ein Drittel, ein Keltern von einem Drittel keltert. Taste, sei nicht untastend! (...)"» (QUACK 2008, p. 364, rendering «untastend» for Demotic *tm-gmgm* (III 18), *contra* QUACK 2005, p. 177, which maintained that *tm* should not be translated by German «un-»). See also DEVAUCHELLE 2008, pp. 242-245.

<sup>14</sup> WINKLER 2007, pp. 359-364 and STADLER 2007, pp. 187-207. Cf. also JASNOW 2008, pp. 239-245, and DIELEMAN 2009, col. 227-228. Somewhat self-contradictory is RICHTER 2008, pp. 380-386, esp. p. 381, who is reluctant to translate *l̥* as «pebble» although he deems Quack's argument (QUACK 2005, pp. 174-176) as «conclusive», concedes that there are significant aspects in STADLER 2007, pp. 187-207 to consider.

stellation and adapts it for the cult of Soknopaios and Soknopaios by projection. In other words certain Egyptian principal mythic events are localized in the Fayyum, which Fayyum-theology perceived as the centre of the world and the starting point of creation.

The text's function, its *Sitz im Leben*, is unclear so far. On the one hand, certain features are paralleled elsewhere, such as the catalogue of the days of the month for appropriate use (hemerology), which resembles PGM VII 155-167, although that catalogue of days for divination differs in detail.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand we learn about an oracle in the temple of Sobek, the lord of Ra-sehui, in the *Book of the Fayyum*.<sup>2</sup> This Isis-oracle, which is among other things concerned with Horus' future, is not an oracle for everyday problems, but presumably part of the temple's ritual to enforce Ma'at, and Horus' rule is an essential part of Ma'at.<sup>3</sup> I think that pVienna 12006 preserves such a ritual oracle rather than a text for private divination. In the Vienna papyrus the roles are just distributed the other way round: Isis is the one who asks questions of her child, who, from the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. onwards, was assimilated to the all-knowing Thoth.<sup>4</sup> Such an identification with Thoth also explains the unusual situation of Isis questioning her child.

This might also be compared with the Greek Hymn to Delos by Kallimachos. Although the text is based on Homeric precursors, Kallimachos inserts in his Hymn to Delos a long prophecy of the unborn Apollo. The god describes his own future and rise to power. That mytheme is not explicable through Greek mythology, but can be understood as an Egyptian element which Kallimachos deliberately brought into his poem to merge Greek and Egyptian mythology within the Graeco-Egyptian environment in which he wrote his poem.<sup>5</sup> The hymn's intention is to praise the divinely wished-for rule of the Ptolemaic king as a new Apollo, who at the same time can be perceived as the *interpretatio Graeca* of Horus. Therefore the constellations,

situations, intentions and contents of the Hymn to Delos parallel the first part of pVienna D. 12006 recto so closely that this text could be the Egyptian prophecy (or an offspring thereof) that Ludwig Koenen postulated in 1983 to be the source of inspiration for the Kallimachean hymn.<sup>6</sup> It also corroborates Susan Stephens' comparison of the Kallimachean hymn with Egyptian myths.<sup>7</sup> Following Koenen, she put forward the idea that the hymn interweaves Greek and Egyptian mythology, which is now attested in pVienna D. 12006 recto.

## V. CONCLUSION

The site of Soknopaiou Nesos is equally important to Greek Papyrologists as to Egyptologists and among the latter in particular those specializing in demotic. Discussing just a small selection of textual sources (pVienna Aeg. 9976, pVienna D 10100, pVienna D. 12006 recto, pBerlin P6750/P8765, pBerlin P 8043 +30030 and its parallels), I hope I have been able to demonstrate how demotic religious papyri from the site, heretofore insufficiently studied, can provide valuable information for understanding Soknopaiou Nesos's *temenos*. The papyri also underline the Egyptianness of the temple, for they show how the temple of Soknopaios functioned in terms of Egyptian ritual as developed over the centuries. Egyptologists who focus on dynastic Egypt can thus learn a great deal about the strength and creativity of Egyptian religion from the demotic sources of Soknopaiou Nesos. The texts shed an interesting light on the Alexandrian court's attempt to form a particular Graeco-Egyptian culture in the earlier part of their rule, and although all the non-documentary demotic papyri date to the Roman period, they provide evidence for texts that are probably much older, and are otherwise lost. Therefore Soknopaiou Nesos can, without hesitation, be called a true treasure house for our knowledge of Egyptian religion.

<sup>1</sup> GRESE-BETZ 1986, p. 119. Cf. NAETHER 2010, esp. pp. 330-331, 333-336.

<sup>2</sup> BEINLICH 1991, pp. 240-241, ll. 1021-1038.

<sup>3</sup> STADLER 2004, pp. 269-273; QUACK 2005, pp. 174-179, rejects and DIELEMAN 2009, coll. 225-231, favours the temple ritual context for pVienna D. 12006 recto.

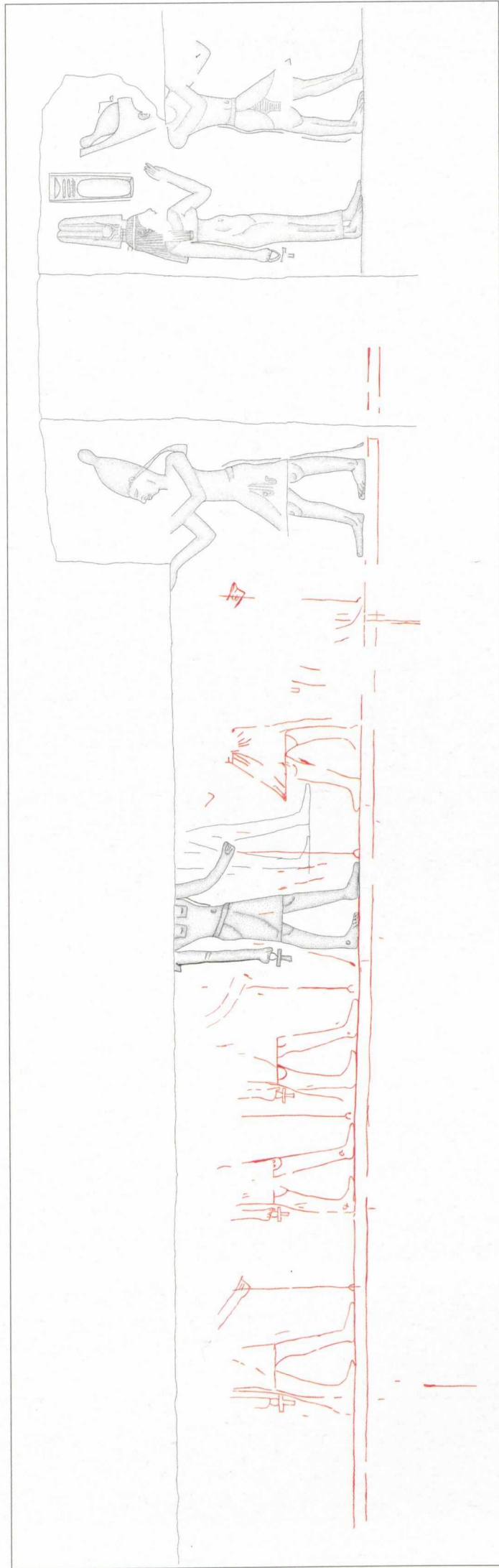
<sup>4</sup> STADLER 2007, pp. 190, 201.

<sup>5</sup> SCHLEGELMILCH 2009, pp. 187-210 (not concerned with the discussion around 'I, although familiar with it – personal communication); WINKLER 2007, pp. 359-364.

<sup>6</sup> KOENEN 1983, pp. 143-190, esp. pp. 177-190; Id. 1993, pp. 25-115, esp. pp. 48-80; SCHLEGELMILCH 2009, pp. 187-210.

<sup>7</sup> STEPHENS 2002, pp. 114-121.





TAV. 15. Rilievo raffigurante una coppia di sovrani tolemaici e due scene di offerta, situato nella stanza F di ST 20 (scala 1:10).