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THE FORENSIC SAVIOUR:

PETITIONS AND POWER IN GRECO-ROMAN EGYPT

A THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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Abbreviations

<i>Aegyptus</i>	Aegyptus
<i>AfP</i>	Archiv für Papyrusforschung
<i>AHB</i>	Ancient History Bulletin
<i>AHR</i>	American Historical Review
<i>AJA</i>	American Journal of Archaeology
<i>AJAH</i>	American Journal of Ancient History
<i>AJP</i>	American Journal of Philology
<i>AJS</i>	American Journal of Sociology
<i>Anc. Soc.</i>	Ancient Society
<i>ANRW</i>	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt
<i>Antiquity</i>	Antiquity
<i>Ar Rel</i>	Archiv für Religionswissenschaft
<i>ASP</i>	American Studies in Papyrology
<i>Athenaeum</i>	Athenaeum
<i>BASP</i>	Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists
<i>BCH</i>	Bulletin de Correspondence hellénique
<i>BE</i>	Bulletin épigraphique in REG
<i>BICS</i>	Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies
<i>BIFAO</i>	Bulletin-Institut Francais d'Archaeologie Orientale
<i>BJS</i>	British Journal of Sociology
<i>Chiron</i>	Chiron
<i>Chr. d'Eg.</i>	Chronique d'Égypte
<i>CJ</i>	Classical Journal
<i>Classica et Mediaevalia</i>	Classica et Mediaevalia
<i>Classicum</i>	Classicum
<i>Comm. Hum. Litt.</i>	Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum
<i>CP</i>	Classical Philology
<i>CQ</i>	Classical Quarterly
<i>CSSH</i>	Comparative Studies in Society and History
<i>Current Sociology</i>	Current Sociology
<i>CW</i>	Classical World
<i>Di Bitonto (1967)</i>	A. Di Bitonto, "Le petizioni al re", <i>Aegyptus</i> 47 (1967), 5-57.
<i>Di Bitonto (1968)</i>	A. Di Bitonto, "Le petizioni ai funzionari nel periodo tolemaico", <i>Aegyptus</i> 48 (1968), 53-107
<i>Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne</i>	Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne
<i>DT</i>	A. Audollent, <i>Defixionum Tabellae</i> (Paris, 1904)
<i>Eirene</i>	Eirene
<i>EP</i>	Études de Papyrologie
<i>G & R</i>	Greece & Rome
<i>Glotta</i>	Glotta
<i>GRBS</i>	Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies
<i>H & T</i>	History & Theory
<i>Hesp.</i>	Hesperia
<i>Historia</i>	Historia
<i>HSCP</i>	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
<i>HTR</i>	Harvard Theological Review
<i>ICS</i>	Illinois Classical Studies
<i>IJCS</i>	International Journal of Comparative Sociology
<i>IJSL</i>	International Journal of the Sociology of Language
<i>IRSH</i>	International Review of Social History
<i>JAC</i>	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum
<i>JBL</i>	Journal of Biblical Literature
<i>JCE</i>	Journal of Christian Education
<i>JEA</i>	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
<i>JHS</i>	Journal of Hellenic Studies
<i>JIH</i>	Journal of Interdisciplinary History
<i>JJP</i>	Journal of Juristic Papyrology

<i>Journal of Pragmatics</i>	Journal of Pragmatics
<i>JPeasS</i>	Journal of Peasant Studies
<i>JPS</i>	Journal of Palestine Studies
<i>JRH</i>	Journal of Religious History
<i>JRS</i>	Journal of Roman Studies
<i>JSNT</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
<i>Jura</i>	Jura
<i>Latomus</i>	Latomus
<i>Man (ns)</i>	Man (new series)
<i>MLR</i>	Modern Law Review
<i>Mnemosyne</i>	Mnemosyne
<i>New Docs 1</i>	G.H.R. Horsley (ed.), <i>New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity 1: A Review of Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1976</i> (Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie Uni, 1981)
<i>New Docs 2</i>	G.H.R. Horsley (ed.), <i>New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity 2: A Review of Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1977</i> (Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie Uni, 1982)
<i>New Docs 3</i>	G.H.R. Horsley (ed.), <i>New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity 3: A Review of Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1978</i> (Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie Uni, 1983)
<i>New Docs 4</i>	G.H.R. Horsley (ed.), <i>New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity 4: A Review of Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1979</i> (Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie Uni, 1987)
<i>New Docs 5</i>	G.H.R. Horsley (ed.), <i>New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity 5: Linguistic Essays</i> (Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie Uni, 1989)
<i>New Docs 6</i>	S.R. Llewelyn (ed.), <i>New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity 6: A Review of Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1980-81</i> (Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie Uni, 1992)
<i>New Docs 7</i>	S.R. Llewelyn (ed.), <i>New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity 7: A Review of Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1982-83</i> (Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie Uni, 1994)
<i>PBSR</i>	Papers of the British School at Rome
<i>PCPS n.s.</i>	Proceedings of Cambridge Philological Society (new series)
<i>Philosophy & Rhetoric</i>	Philosophy & Rhetoric
<i>Prudentia</i>	Prudentia
<i>RAC</i>	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum
<i>REB</i>	Revue des Études Byzantines
<i>REG</i>	Revue des Études Grecques
<i>RIDA</i>	Revue Internationale des Droits de L'antiquité
<i>RSR</i>	
<i>SDHI</i>	Studia et Documenta Historiae et Iuris
<i>SEHHW</i>	The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World
<i>SEHRE</i>	The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire
<i>Stud. Hell.</i>	Studia Hellenistica
<i>Stud. Pat.</i>	Studia Patristica
<i>Symb. Osl.</i>	Symbolae Osloensis
<i>TAPA</i>	Transactions of the American Philological Association
<i>VDI</i>	Vestnik Drevnei Istorii
<i>Wien. Stud.</i>	Wiener Studien: Zeitschrift für Klassische Philologie und Patristik
<i>YCS</i>	Yale Classical Studies
<i>ZPE</i>	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik
<i>ZSS R.A.</i>	Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Abteilung Romanistische

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Language, History and Method

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In 221 BC, when Egypt had been ruled by a Greek monarchy for almost a century, a water carrier called Eutychos sent a document to Ptolemy IV Philopator, the Greek king of Egypt, complaining about violence committed against him by "the sons of Apollonios."¹ The writer concludes the document with the words "...so that fleeing to you for refuge, king, the common saviour and benefactor of all, I may meet with assistance" (ἵνα, ἐπὶ σὲ [καταφυγών, βασιλεῦ, τὸν πάντων κοινὸν σωτῆρα καὶ εὐεργέτην [τύχῳ]...βοιηθείας). Some four hundred years later, in 170 AD, when Egypt had been part of the Roman provincial administration for nearly two centuries, Sarapion the intendant of the priestly tribes in Oxyrhynchus sent a petition to Aquilius Capitolinus the epistrategos, an official senior in the hierarchy of Roman Egypt, concerning violence and theft, which Sarapion alleges he suffered at the hands of Ploution son of Dionysodoros.² Near the end of the document the writer says "I have fled for refuge to you the common saviour and benefactor of all to hear my case" (ἐπὶ σὲ κατέφυγον τὸν πάντων σωτῆρα καὶ εὐεργέτην ἀκοῦσαί μου).

These short passages share several common features. First, they both come from a type of document called a petition and petitions form a category of non-literary papyri well known to scholars of the Hellenistic and Roman periods of Egyptian history. They constituted an important part of the judicial and administrative process and the general population of Egypt sent petitions to Ptolemaic monarchs, Greco-

1 P.Ent. 78 (221 BC) Mâgdola. It is accepted here that the restorations are sound. Eutychos also uses the verb καταφεύγω in the same petition to describe his action of seeking refuge in a temple: l. 11 ἐπὶ τὸν βωμὸν κατέφυγον[.]ν

2 P.Oxy XXXI 2563 (c170 AD).

Roman officials and even the Roman emperor to seek help for a variety of personal difficulties. Petitions from all periods are a well known primary source for the legal system and economic and social conditions. Secondly, they were both expressed in a common language, Ancient Greek. Thirdly, they both seek help from a powerful figure, though from completely different administrations. Fourthly, they characterise the petition itself as an act of supplication, and the recipient as saviour and benefactor. Those who wrote petitions used the conceptual categories of the classical rhetorical tradition to articulate aspects of social relations and especially relations of power. On the face of it at least, our opening passages therefore strongly suggest areas of continuity from Ptolemaic to Roman Egypt.

Change and continuity have been persistent themes in historical inquiry into the ancient world, varying from simple description to intensely theoretical explanation of the process.³ Greco-Roman Egypt has made itself particularly good for studies of the *longue durée* type by providing one of the most consistent streams of evidence covering many centuries in the one language, namely, Greek. Over twenty years ago the esteemed papyrologist Naphtali Lewis questioned whether, despite the *communis opinio* of papyrologists, it was correct that there once existed a social and cultural unity for almost a thousand years, from about 300 BC to 650 AD, which could be compendiously designated by the term "Greco-Roman Egypt".⁴ Such a notion assumed that Egypt was a special case within the Roman empire, standing as a continuation of Ptolemaic Egypt. Lewis accepted that the appearance of a tight continuum in a social, cultural and economic sense from Ptolemaic through Roman times had arisen "because we have been bemused partly by the unchanging pattern of

3 G.E.M. de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (Duckworth, London, 1983), 82 and *passim*.

4 N. Lewis, "'Greco-Roman Egypt': Fact or Fiction?", in *ASP* 7 (1970), 1-14 (= D.H. Samuel (ed.), *Proceedings of the Twelfth Congress of Papyrology* (A.M. Hakkert Ltd, Toronto, 1970)). "Greco-Roman Egypt" is often used to refer to the period from c 304 BC until 641 AD, during which Egypt was controlled by the Greeks and then the Romans. "Ptolemaic Egypt" means Egypt from 304 BC until the battle of Actium in 31 BC; "Roman Egypt" means Egypt from 31 BC, when Augustus declared it to be part of the Roman empire, until 325 AD when Constantine removed the capital of the empire to Constantinople; "Byzantine Egypt" refers to the period from 325 AD until the Arab conquests.

village life in the Nile valley, and even more by the continuity of the Greek language."⁵ Professor Lewis returned to this theme about fifteen years later, again noting the influence of ancient language use on modern perceptions of Greco-Roman Egypt.⁶ For example, the titles of officials in Ptolemaic and Roman times give an appearance of continuity, but this is "seen on closer examination to be an illusion of terminology" and indeed "...the phenomenon of institutional change with terminological continuity permeates the entire panorama of life in Roman Egypt."⁷

The perception of institutional change with terminological continuity raises a tension which requires resolution. But is it more than simply a question of piercing the illusion to find the true nature and extent of constitutional change? It is one thing to say that the terms στρατηγός or ἐπιστρατηγός as designations of institutional positions in Egypt meant something different in 170 AD than they did in 250 BC because of changes in jurisdiction and administrative set up.⁸ From the perspective of constitutional or administrative history, which is often the preferred perspective, we are dealing with a change in the type and extent of powers held by officials. But most agree that the majority of the population of Greco-Roman Egypt continued their village existence without much alteration to its traditional ways or values from the Greek to the Roman periods of Egyptian history.⁹ There is a question here of how we define and understand the relationship between the more abstract level of constitutional law and the daily level of the village. The tension between institutional

5 "Greco-Roman Egypt", 5

6 "The Romanity of Roman Egypt: A Growing Consensus", in *Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia* (Centro Internazionale per lo Studio dei Papiri Ercolanesi, Naples, 1984), 1077-1084.

7 At 1081-2.

8 Lewis, 'Romanity', 1080-1.

9 Ibid., citing other opinions to this effect. The following chapters, esp. 5 & 6, will attempt to demonstrate how this continuation was expressed in symbolic language. Here, in passing, we may compare two extremes of the temporal spectrum. Schubart in his study, "Das Hellenistische Königsideal nach Inschriften und Papyri" in *AJP* XII (1936), 1-26, concluded that the words "Saviour, Benefactor, and Helper" (Σωτήρ, Εὐεργέτης, Βοηθός) best expressed the ideal of Hellenistic kingship. That this cluster of symbolic expressions still had currency about six or seven hundred years later, appears from a petition by a certain Dioscorus, son of Appollos, to the Dux of the Thebaid in 567 AD on behalf of the villagers of Aphrodito, describing a very different sort of king, the Christian God, as, "the Saviour, the Helper, the true and merciful Benefactor." (τὸν δεσπότην Θεὸν σωτήρα βοηθὸν ἀληθεῖν καὶ φιλόανθρωπον εὐεργέτην) The petition is P. Cair.Masp. I.67002. See discussion of H. Bell, 'An Egyptian Village in the age of Justinian', in *JHS* 64 (1944) 21-36, with translation at 33.

change and terminological continuity is effectively a species of the general question of the relationship between the structural realities of social life in Greco-Roman Egypt and the intellectual, since the latter is surely encompassed by the specification of "ways and values".

The relationship between the structural and intellectual is very important, but especially if one assigns equal weight to both for the purposes of social analysis. Scholars have long been able to identify some of the facets of the intellectual realities of Greco-Roman Egypt. If we take as an example the concepts found in linguistic evidence, there was clearly a tradition beginning in the Ptolemaic period which drew upon a broad range of symbolic and ethical concepts to give meaning to the role of the sovereign and his officials in a context where they had the most direct involvement in the lives of ordinary people, that is, the forensic or administrative contexts where legal rights and obligations coalesced with a system of symbolic and ethical attributes. Here the sovereign as saviour, benefactor and helper was fundamental and φιλανθρωπία, ἔλεος, δικαιοσύνη and εὐνοία embodied the sort of ideas which further defined the role.¹⁰ The same general concepts defined the role of the official.¹¹ Most of these were continued into the Roman period, and appear in connection with the emperor as well as the Roman procurators in Egypt.¹²

It is well established that the motif of the Ptolemaic monarch and later the Roman emperor as saviour and benefactor had connections with their cult position and was used to characterise their religious role.¹³ In the Greek language of the ruler

10 See eg Schubart in his study, "Das Hellenistische Königsideal."; E. Goodenough, "The political philosophy of Hellenistic kingship", *YCS* 1 (1928) 53-102. For connections with the original Egyptian background see especially the works of L. Koenen, "Die Adaption ägyptischer Königsideologie am Ptolemäerhof" in W. Peremans, et al (eds.), *Egypt and the Hellenistic World* (Lovanii, 1983)(=*Studia Hellenistica* 27), 143-190; "The Ptolemaic King as Religious Figure" in A. Bulloch, et al (eds.), *Images and Ideologies: self-definition in the Hellenistic world* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1993), 25-105. See further ch. 5 below.

11 D. Crawford, "The Good Official in Ptolemaic Egypt" in H. Maehler & V.M. Strocka (ed.), *Das Ptolemäische Ägypten* (Mainz am Rhein, 1978), 201

12 L. de Blois, "Traditional Virtues and New Spiritual Qualities in the Third Century Views of Empire, Emperors and Practical Politics", in *Mnemosyne* Vol. 47, 2, (1994), 166-76.

13 P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford, 1972); F. Blumenthal, "Der ägyptische Kaiserkult", *AfP* V (1913), 317; F. Dunand, "Culte royal et culte impérial en Égypte. Continuités et ruptures", in G. Grimm et al., *Das Römisch-Byzantinische Ägypten* (Phillip von Zabern, Mainz, 1987), 47-56. See chs 6 & 8 below.

cult, as well as in its ritual, as Price has argued, the Roman emperor was placed somewhere on a spectrum between human and divine.¹⁴ This suggests that in some way the sovereign as σωτήρ καὶ εὐεργετής was an aspect of the sovereign as θεός, and of itself this observation may be largely uncontentious, except that it presents us with an interesting problem, which it is partly the object of this thesis to consider.¹⁵ By the end of the Ptolemaic period the designation σωτήρ was not confined to the sovereign. We also see officials of unknown status being addressed as θεός.¹⁶ The application of these terms to various figures who were not the objects of cults might seem to suggest some confusion amongst those who used the terms, about what they predicated. But even in the more settled conditions of the later Roman administration we can see that Roman procurators were addressed as σωτήρ καὶ εὐεργετής, and not just the prefect who is generally considered to have taken the place of the Ptolemaic monarch. The Roman epistrategos was a procurator in the provincial administration. As far as we know he was never the object of a cult in Egypt, and it would have been most unusual if he was, considering the aversion which Roman emperors seemed to feel towards religious attentions being paid to lesser mortals than themselves.¹⁷ We are left to wonder therefore about the meaning of religious language addressed to Roman officials in secular contexts and what connection it had to the same language addressed to the Ptolemaic monarch, for example. Put in this way the relationship of the intellectual to the structural is not immediately apparent.

But when the relationship has been analysed the conclusions have been a little trite. Generally speaking, there has been a marked tendency among scholars of the ancient world to view the intellectual as less important than the structural. Economics and politics are the key to understanding and the intellectual tends to be seen as inferior, as "only" ideology, a conceptual system attached to specific power interests,

14 S.R.F. Price, "Gods and emperors: The Greek Language of the Roman Imperial Cult", *JHS* 104 (1984), 80, at 85.

15 F. Dunand, "Culte royal et culte impérial en Égypte".

16 BGU IV 1197 col. I (13/12 BC).

17 See Price, "Gods and emperors", at 92.

and little more than an embellishment. But the French scholar G. Duby sees the connection between the intellectual and the structural in terms whereby intellectual life is both a reflection of and part of the institutional and other structural realities of the social world, both at given moments in time and over longer periods of change, in a dialectical relationship whereby each influences the other.¹⁸ This indicates how important the two are together because the evidence of each, especially when considered over a long period, helps us to perceive what was sufficiently crucial to remain constant in ancient society for long periods.

It could not be sensibly argued that there were not important connections between the concepts expressed in symbolic language surrounding sovereigns and their officials and the political realities of the ancient world. But there are still many problems with positing the relationship between language and power as simply an issue of politics, not only because that is too narrow but more importantly to do so relies upon a theoretical prejudice, which confuses function with consequence. There may well have been political benefits for a Greek king in Egypt being called saviour and benefactor, and if we assume that the choice of language in a petition reflected either his political purposes or in later periods those of a Roman procurator, we are left with important unanswered questions about the participation of the more invisible sections of society in the collective conceptualisations of powerful figures. If we assume on the other hand that language use was but simpering flattery we have no clear idea of why, for example, language apparently adapted from the cult of the Ptolemies was thought appropriate for address to a Roman official, or why the act of seeking assistance from both should be assimilated to the act of supplication or asylum in a temple consistently over many centuries. After all flattery can take many forms.

18 See eg. G. Duby, 'Ideologies in Social History', in J. le Goff and P. Nora, *Constructing the Past: Essays in historical methodology* (CUP, Cambridge, 1985), originally published as *Faire de l'histoire* (Gallimard, 1974), 151-165. Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text* (John Hopkins Uni Press, Balt., 1990), ch. 36, 121.

These questions are worth asking. F. W. Millar has argued several times that to understand the Roman Empire the better perspective is not to start at the centre, but to look into the centre from the provinces.¹⁹ This is an insight of great significance. It underscores the necessity of directing attention to the smaller communities of the ancient world, because their responses to the experience of power in its various forms give a more satisfying understanding of the nature of ancient society by illuminating important dimensions of ancient mentality and the way it developed. The language used to address kings, officials and magistrates in Greco-Roman Egypt stands as specific examples of the wider themes of responses to power in the ancient world and how these developed over time.²⁰

In order to address the riddles thrown up by the language of address to powerful figures we need to explore our conception of power and its connection to social analysis. The political ideology view of symbolic language reflects a conception of power which is rather unsophisticated. It is a "simple datum" imposed by the top upon the bottom of society. But it has become increasingly recognised that the part played by power in understanding the form and function of societies and the interrelations of the various groups within them is so fundamental that such an unadorned view will not suffice. Power involves a myriad of different aspects of structural, material and intellectual importance.²¹ Power can constitute such a tool for analysis only if we approach it as a facet of social life which is not limited to the political sphere.²² The view taken here is that it is unhelpful to group such language use unthinkingly into the modern category of political phenomena which we call "ideology", because although ideologies are conceptual systems with rich political

19 F. Millar, 'The Emperor, the Senate and the provinces'. *JRS* 56 (1966), 156-166, esp. at 166; *The Emperor in the Roman World* (London, 1977), generally.

20 See A.F. Wallace-Hadrill, "Roman arches and Greek honours: the language of power at Rome", *PCPS* n.s. 36 (1990) 143-181.

21 W.G. Runciman, *A Treatise on Social Theory*, Vol. II, Substantive Social Theory (CUP, Cambridge, 1989), 12 and *passim*; see also M. Mann, *The Sources of Social Power I: A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1700* (CUP, Cambridge, 1986)

22 S.R.F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (CUP, Cambridge, 1984), at 242 argues that power should be treated as a tool for analysing complex strategic situations in social relations.

implications by virtue of their association with specific power interests, they also function more broadly as symbolic systems of interacting meanings, that is, autonomous and collective conceptual systems in which individual psychologies could participate for the purpose of imposing meaning on the experience of power.²³ After all, however mean and impoverished their circumstances, it must be assumed that the lower classes of Greco-Roman Egypt existed in a cultural world of meaningful experience and, more importantly, they were the consumers of ideologies. Intellectual historians tell us that a system of meanings such as an ideology is never simply "inscribed" from above on the generality below, it is interpreted and processed in the act of reception.²⁴

It is this interpretative activity which is of considerable interest and will form an underlying theme of this thesis. Its recovery is undoubtedly difficult. At one level there are the problems posed by the polyglot influences, Egyptian, Persian, Greek and Roman, which made up the cultural world of Egypt from the beginning of the Hellenistic period and into the Roman era. But even if we limit ourselves to questions of intellectual history based only upon sources which have come down to us in Greek, the lower levels of the general population, the *humiliores*, those of lower birth and status, and in Egypt the peasantry, are much less visible, than the members of the educated elite.²⁵ Nonetheless we do have some evidence of the daily lives of small communities in Greco-Roman Egypt and their interactions with institutional power. For example, if we concentrate on written material only, scholars of social history like Naphthali Lewis have shown that papyrus documents produced in small

23 C. Geertz, 'Ideology as a Cultural System', in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Basic Books, New York, 1973), 193-233, at 207. See also F. Dunand, "Culte Royal et culte impérial en Égypte", at 55, quoting M. Godelier, *Horizons, trajets marxistes en anthropologie II* (1977), 237.

24 J.E. Toews, 'Intellectual history after the linguistic Turn: The Autonomy of Meaning and the Irreducibility of Experience', in *AHR* 92 (1987), 879-907, at 884.

25 The *sordes urbis et faex* in the phrase of Cicero *Ad Atticum*, I.xvi.11, cited by de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle*, 355. See also P. Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (OUP, Oxford, 1970); P. F. Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts* (CUP, Cambridge, 1987), 172-3. The point is well expressed by Ramsay MacMullen: "...[the peasant] has left us only brief mentions of the externals of his life, or appears through the eyes of observers quite alien to him: the literate, or rather literary, classes. They are not likely to have understood the peasant. Though he supported their own ease and cultivation he was as silent, motionless, and far below them as the great tortoise on which, in Indian mythology, the whole world ultimately rests." in *Roman Social Relations* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1974), 26.

communities say much about the material circumstances of the peasants, the reality of fiscal oppression and the burden of taxation, social class structure and local religious practices.²⁶ A basic tenet of this thesis is that the same documents which deal with economic and social issues also contain the evidence of the responses at an intellectual level of more ordinary and unremarkable folk to manifestations of social power, be they monarchs, senior officials in Alexandria, local magistrates or violent and contemptuous neighbours or people from other villages. Indeed it is mainly in such documents that we should look for answers to questions of intellectual history because the researcher can only use such surviving responses, in language or otherwise, to manifestations of power as the palpable evidence of the ancient mental state.²⁷ So one primary objective of this thesis is to investigate the ways in which language, specifically ancient Greek, was used to articulate responses to and give meaning to the experience of power in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt.

But in order to do this we must address an issue which is logically anterior to any process of interpretation, namely, methodology. Historical positivism or "common sense" are often inadequate as bases of interpretation. Most would now accept that the linear positivist approach to history, which asserts that it is possible to uncover "how it really was" in a dogmatic or absolute way, is a little unrealistic. It is hard to escape the truth that the material reality of historical situations is very largely a recovered phenomenon, something filtered through the cognitive labyrinth of the researcher's cultural background and predispositions.²⁸ The problem of setting forth such predispositions and ordering the theoretical precepts which will govern the interpretation must be addressed at the outset. The discussion so far indicates that a methodology should address several main issues. The first is the nature of social

26 N. Lewis, *Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt* (OUP, New York, 1986); *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule* (OUP, New York, 1983).

27 See S.R.F. Price, "Between Man and God: Sacrifice in the Roman Imperial Cult," *JRS* 70 (1980), 43; Diana Delia, "The Ptolemies and the Ideology of Kingship: Response" in P. Green (ed.), *Hellenistic History & Culture* (Uni. of California, Berkeley, 1993), 192-204, at 197.

28 C.R. Phillips, "The Sociology of Religious Knowledge in the Roman Empire to AD 284", *ANRW* 16.3 (1986), 2677-2773, at 2684.

structure and the problem of change. The second is the part power plays in the social structure and social analysis. The third is the role of language in mediating the connections between the intellectual and the structural. The first two of these issues do not immediately require further comment for they are addressed fully later in this chapter. The third however would benefit from some introductory remarks here, because it bears heavily on the whole problem of method.

It is natural to approach intellectual history through language. After all, language is the prime guide to intellectual life in any society. It has direct connections with the internal processes of the mind.²⁹ Language forms an integral part of the social contexts in which it is used. People use language to negotiate their daily interactions and impose meaning on them. They require language to give sense to the social structure which surrounds them and the centres of social power. They use language to typify and classify their social relations. Language is especially important for "intellectual" history, for the study of belief systems and ideology and it is true that scholars of the ancient world have always looked to vocabulary as the principal basis for the examination of the important concepts which enlivened the ancient mentality.³⁰ So any historian of intellectual phenomena must rely upon it as evidence and for the social historian particularly language use can be seen as an instantiation of historical reality just as much as it is a vehicle to carry information from the past to the present.³¹

But a difficulty arises because in historical research we are constrained to try to understand the structural as well as the intellectual through language, and this takes us into the territory of some fundamental problems of historical inquiry. Any problem of terminological illusion is also a species of the bigger riddle of the

29 A point made in passing by Price, *Rituals and Power*, 11. In sociolinguistics, it has long been argued that language and thought are inextricably related. The "Sapir-Whorf" hypothesis for example has been interpreted to mean that language determines what people think: see R.A. Hudson, *Sociolinguistics* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980), esp. ch 3.

30 Eg H Zilliacus, "Untersuchungen zu den abstrakten Anredeformen und Höflichkeitstiteln im Griechischen", *Comm. Hum. Litt.* 15.3 (1949), 4-111. See further ch. 4.

31 A good example is the work of the medievalist Brian Stock, eg., *Listening for the Text.*, (fn 16 above)

connection between language and meaning and language and historical understanding. The perception of a tension between structural change and terminology involves certain assumptions about the relationship of language to meaning. These are primarily structuralist and see language somewhat like an empty vessel which is filled with facts and brings information about material reality from the past to the present. That is exactly what language does, at one level, and this view of its function need not be a source of difficulty when our interest is limited to the ambit of the meanings of a single term, such as στρατηγός, to designate an institutional position. But if we want to look more broadly to language use, for example, to a phrase such as, ἐπὶ σὲ κατέφυγον τὸν πάντων σωτῆρα καὶ εὐεργέτην, we see what might be best described here as "symbolic" language, addressed on the one hand to Ptolemy Philopator, a Greek king, and then to Aquilius Capitolinus, a Roman epistrategos. Since both are both "saviour" and "benefactor", the question goes beyond a regular historian's interest in changes to structure and moves to a different question of meaning, specifically, the meaning to be ascribed to the *use* of the language, that is, language as action.

Modern language studies have already developed a number of theoretical schools which try to analyse language in its context of use and especially from an interactional perspective. Following these ideas historical inquiry, for some, has taken a so-called 'linguistic turn', that is, embraced the idea that because language is the primary medium of meaning, studying the past requires "a focused concern on the ways meaning is constituted in and through language."³² Intellectual historians have shown how important these considerations are to an understanding of the intellectual realities of historical societies. They have spent a good deal of their time analysing the past by considering the significance of the conceptual material apparent in various types of texts like philosophical tracts, poetic and scientific writings and public

32 For modern historians P.J. Corfield, 'Introduction: historians and language', in P.J. Corfield (ed.) *Language, History and Class*, (Blackwell, 1991), 1-29, esp. at 17-25.

documents. Effectively, they take the view that the modes of expression in public documents from historical societies are evidence of a particular type of historical actuality.³³ The fact that all these types of evidence are generally analysed one way or another through a study of the language used in them has produced a growing awareness of the importance of language in understanding the past, the 'linguistic turn' in the study of past intellectual phenomena.³⁴ In this they have drawn heavily upon the theoretical precepts of disciplines like sociolinguistics as well as the broader the social sciences, because they have much to offer on the subject of the interrelations of language and culture.³⁵

So methodology must place language in a central position, because language is given a central place in the study of societies, it is the crucial phenomenon, not "a window onto the real world but is, rather, the stuff of thought itself. Individuals are born into a society which already contains sets of institutions, practices and a common language, from which individuals construct the world and themselves."³⁶ Primarily, it will be argued, this means giving some recognition to theories which help us understand the connections between language and the social context in which it is used, since this is the only way to gain an understanding of Duby's dialectic between the conceptual and the structural realities of society. It will be suggested that

33 Eg., J. le Goff, 'Mentalities: a history of ambiguities', in J le Goff and P. Nora, *Constructing the Past*, 166-180.

34 J.E. Toews, 'Intellectual history after the linguistic turn'

35 M.A.K. Halliday, 'Language as Code and Language as Behaviour', in R.P. Fawcett et al. (eds), *The Semiotics of Language and Culture* (Francis Pinter, 1984), 3-36, esp. 5.

36 Price, *Rituals and Power*, 11. On language and thought see S.K. Ghosh, *Man, Language and Society* (The Hague, 1972); R.A. Hudson, *Sociolinguistics*, passim. Among sociologists P. Berger and T. Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Penguin, 1968), 35-6, express the centrality of language for social meaning thus, "The reality of everyday life appears ...already objectified, that is, constituted by an order of objects that have been designated as objects before my appearance on the scene. The language used in everyday life continuously provides me with the necessary objectifications and posits the order within which these make sense and within which everyday life has meaning for me." See also 51ff. M. Crick, *Explorations in Language and Meaning* (John Wiley & Sons, 1976); D. Parkin, *Semantic Anthropology*, (Academic Press, 1982); W.P. Lehmann, 'Historical linguistics and sociolinguistics', in *IJSL* 31 (1981), 11-27 at 14. The proper focus "of a student of society is on the empirical facts of language in social context: that is to say, not on linguistic constants, but on sociolinguistics variables, linguistic facts correlated with extralinguistic factors, a correlation which reveals function and form in society.", N.S. Struever, "Historiography and Linguistics", in C.G. Iggers, H.T. Parker (eds.), *International Handbook of Historical Studies: Contemporary Research and Theory* (Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1979), 128-150 at 128-9, paraphrasing W. Labov, *Sociolinguistic Patterns* (Philadelphia, 1972). This seems to be the approach taken by C. Panagopoulos, "Vocabulaire et Mentalité dans les Moralia de Plutarque", *Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne* 5 (1977), 197-235.

the sort of theory which analyses language as a form of social action, which makes social interchange meaningful, are best suited for this task.³⁷

Such an approach is especially appropriate when we remember the centrality of the rhetorical training and modes of discourse which formed the heart of education and influenced the style, structure and content of linguistic interactions in institutional contexts at almost every level in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds. The rhetorical tradition of organised argumentation helped define the forensic or judicial context for linguistic interaction as much as legal rules and procedures. The words, phrases and linguistic structures were part of and helped produce and reproduce this particular institutional context, and it endured in an identifiable form throughout the Greco-Roman period with a type of discourse which was a special domain of social meaning. The language of "official" documents, like petitions and court transcripts, betrays the articulation of collective conceptions of institutional roles like king and prefect, and their connection with symbolic conceptualisations of power and normative systems of ethics and law needed for the resolution of disputes.

The rhetoric of judicial and administrative contexts helps us to understand how Greco-Roman Egypt negotiated and mediated interactions with manifestations of institutional or formal power which were regarded as legitimate, and made sense of it as a social reality, and how it used a system of social and moral types to impose meanings on the experience of power in wider social relations, which was perceived to be outside institutional boundaries and was thus informal and illegitimate. A document like a petition often describes a snapshot of everyday life in Egypt. In such vignettes disparities of power stand out, articulated especially in social values such as honour and shame. The Russian scholar Arkady Kovel'man has pointed out the connection between the language of petitions, and the wider aspects of collective

37 Cf J. Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology and the Power of the People* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1989), 40-1.

intellectual activity in Roman Egypt.³⁸ In the documents we can see a process whereby social relations are classified and given meaning by reference to vocabularies of power. Commonly, the language sets up a tension through rhetorical types such as the petitioner who is affected by weakness (*ἀσθένεια*), or who exhibits quietness of life style (*ἀπραγμοσυνή*) or is "moderate" (*μέτριος*) on the one hand, and is oppressed by a "powerful" (*δυνατός*) local figure or is the victim of contempt and outrage (*καταφρόνησις* and *ὑβρις*) on the other. These descriptions utilised conceptual categories which were defined by ethical and moral considerations as much as by tensions created by imbalances of power within particular social relations. They had a normative function which pushed situations and people into recognised categories at a conceptual and symbolic level.³⁹ So in the rhetoric of petitions, in their linguistic formulae and even their syntactic structures, social roles and relations were typified according to particular organising concepts and metaphors which took their form and content to a large extent from the distribution of power in the relationship. Such organising concepts and metaphors have especial interest because they give some insight into what was and what remained fundamental at a collective intellectual level in the ancient mentality of the Greco-Roman period.

We will see then how relations of power intersect with the linguistic categories of rhetoric and with the conceptual categories of the legal systems of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. But more importantly, we will see that the language in administrative documents like petitions addressed not only to a cult figure such as the Ptolemaic monarch but also to a secular figure like a Roman procurator, utilised ritualistic language analogous to the ritual linguistic attributes of ancient prayer. A comparison with the content, form and purpose of a particular category of ancient

38 A.B. Kovel'man, "The Rhetoric of Petitions and its Influence on Popular Social Awareness in Roman Egypt." 168 *VDI*, 170-84 (in Russian); 'From Logos to Mythos' 28 *BASP* (1991), 135-152. He also makes the point that it is possible to see changes from Roman to Byzantine petitions. In the Roman period petitioners use social types and in the Byzantine period characters from epic or drama: 'Logos to Myth', 148. See further chapter 5.

39 Characterisation was a well known part of classical forensic argumentation: see eg E. Hall, "Law Court Dramas: The Power of Performance in Greek Forensic Oratory", *BICS* 40 (1995), 39-58, at 49.

prayer, that is, the "judicial" prayer makes this very clear.⁴⁰ If we follow other scholars and apply a theory of speech acts to the language of administrative and judicial documents, the connection with prayers is made clear and meaningful. So although the sovereign in the Roman world may have been placed somewhere between man and god generally, his lower officials specifically in the forensic context received similar treatment, at least in Egypt and this can be connected, at least partly, to a process which began in the Ptolemaic period. This is of particular interest because it shows how the ancient mentality turned to religious linguistic structures and vocabulary to make sense of the considerable power of what we would view as a secular figure, such as a Roman procurator, and to articulate their response to it. The process can be observed particularly in the institutional forensic context and it seems to have strengthened through the Roman period rather than declined. The range of ethical and symbolic characterisations of legitimate power, actualised in the terminology of the beneficent, kind, humane, and merciful sovereign or official, amounted in fact to what we might call for the moment a "secular" saviour tradition which, through lexical items and linguistic structures found often also in connection with a religious context, brought powerful temporal figures into connection with the everyday problems of ordinary people within an institutional context, which was itself treated as being of the utmost social significance, that is, the judicial or forensic context.

In the succeeding sections of this chapter it is proposed to discuss various problems of methodology, a process which will involve a number of interrelated questions. To begin it is important to understand the way scholars have traditionally tackled the relationship between language and meaning within conventional linguistics. The influence of structuralism here has been immense. But the task of identifying and grasping the interrelations between surviving traces of intellectual life in a particular historical context is not well served by structuralist approaches to

40 See further chapter 8.

language and meaning. It is very important to approach the question of meaning from a much wider perspective, by acknowledging the relationship of language and meaning to the wider social context in which language is used, because the problems of determining the relationship of language and meaning impinges on problems of structure and action, as well as the connections between the structural and the intellectual. We need a methodology which allows us to see language as part of social context and it will be argued that the notion of the model drawn from the social sciences is better adapted to explore ancient language use as a pathway to the ancient intellectual methods of negotiating various types of social power.

1.2 LANGUAGE, HISTORY AND MEANING.

1.2.1 Language as Historical Evidence

Study of language in its contexts of use immediately leads to several difficulties, especially in the area of methodology. Despite a long and splendid tradition in linguistic endeavour and historical interpretation, classical studies, like much historical investigation, has not explored with sufficient sophistication how the relationship between language and the actual context in which it is used affects the recovery of historical meanings.

The elevation of rationalist epistemology, for which the quintessential paradigm of reasoning was given by the natural sciences, to the dominant position in most areas of academic discourse meant approaches to historical empirical data have been diverted and coloured by a philosophical preference for objectivism over subjectivism, bringing a conscious or unconscious but continuous deference to versions of positivism as a form of reasoning.⁴¹ This may explain the great influence

41 Barry Barnes describes this as "the myth of rationalism", in his essay on the work of Thomas Kuhn in Q. Skinner (ed.), *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (CUP, Cambridge, 1985), 85-100. See also Kuhn's book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, 1970)². Briefly, positivism is here understood as a model of reasoning drawn particularly from the natural sciences and suggests that there are universal laws which explain events and allow predictions in specific empirical cases through 'logical deductions' from the law to a set of empirical phenomena: J Turner, 'Analytical Theorizing', in A. Giddens and J. Turner, *Social Theory Today* (Polity, Cambridge, 1987), 156-194 at 157. This basic statement of the

of what have been called the "logical-philosophical" approaches to language and meaning.⁴² The primary example must be the enormously influential ideas usually encompassed within the label "structuralism", which have dominated a great deal of thinking and research in many disciplines.⁴³ Structuralism was developed as a linguistic doctrine and is usually traced to the posthumously organised ideas of the nineteenth century linguist F. de Saussure. Structural linguistics interprets language as an abstract system capable of specialist scientific study, on the basis of a binary distinction between two fundamental aspects: one the one hand *langue*, the abstract system of language, "language as code" as it is sometimes called, appropriate for scientific study, and on the other *parole*, the contingent and idiosyncratic application of the system, that is, language in use in its historical setting.⁴⁴ This distinction has importance for the argument here because it presents a dichotomy not only between language and context, but language and history.

Logical-philosophical positions impose a distinction between the ideal and the actual on language. In its most extreme forms structuralism has contended that only the phonological, the morphological and the syntactic systems are the appropriate material for a science of language, so that even the semantic system should be left to others.⁴⁵ So linguistics has traditionally distinguished "a domain of timeless and universal structures and structuring principles" from "the contingencies of extralinguistic "reality", from context, from meaning in the sense of reference to that reality...in short, from history."⁴⁶ Such a perspective eschews a study of language as

position applies in the theory of history as much as anywhere: R.F. Atkinson, *Knowledge and Explanation in History: An Introduction to the Philosophy of History* (MacMillan, London, 1978), 29 ff.

42 M.A.K. Halliday, 'Language as Code', at 4.

43 Assuming there is a sufficiently coherent body of thought to warrant a general designation such as "structuralism", an assumption rejected by many, see eg, W. Runciman, 'What is Structuralism' in *Sociology in its Place* (CUP, Cambridge, 1970). Another leading example would be the performance theories of Noam Chomsky eg., *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (MIT Press, Cam., Mass., 1965).

44 F. de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (Fontana, London, 1974).

45 W. H. Goodenough, *Culture, Language, and Society*² (Benjamin Cummings Publishing Company, Inc, Menlo Park, Ca, 1981), 11.

46 See N.S. Struever, 'Historiography and Linguistics', at 128-9; P.J. Corfield, 'Historians and language', at 5-10. See also W. Dieckmann, 'Linguistics and social history', in R. Bartsch and Theo Vennemann, *Linguistics and Neighbouring Disciplines* (North-Holland Linguistic Series 14) (North-Holland Publishing Company, Netherlands, 1975), 113-129 at 114. The overall effect is to "drag language away from whatever connections of reference it might have with the object world", to divorce it from context of use: A Giddens,

a form of "real" social behaviour, that is, the study of language in its actual, as opposed to theoretical, contexts of use.⁴⁷

More importantly, ideal or "scientific" perspectives on language constrict our understanding of how language operates as a vehicle for actualising social meanings. Structural semantics uses a very confined perspective on meaning, that is, meanings are also part of an abstracted system, comprised of connotations, denotations and references.⁴⁸ They are, in accordance with structuralist principles, meanings which are understood as deriving from "a wholly determinate, internally defined, conception of the arbitrary or unmotivated relation of the linguistic sign to its lexical and syntactic functions."⁴⁹ Thus theoretical semantics tends to confine meaning through conceiving of linguistic items as conventional signs or referents to the external world and indicating meanings by a series of glosses.⁵⁰ Similarly, meaning in sentences is often approached from a propositional or transactional perspective, so that a sentence has meaning if it contains a proposition which is either true or false or conveys information.⁵¹ There can be no doubt that this theoretical influence has dominated in the area of classical language study. Generally speaking, in the area of classical languages, the main linguistic thrust has remained structuralist, within the broad concerns of the idealised system, namely, philology, lexicology, structures and sets of grammatical rules.⁵² Even when the area of study has moved to larger groupings of

'Structuralism, Post-Structuralism', in A Giddens and J. Turner, *Social Theory Today* (Polity, Oxford, 1987), 195-223 at 209. Similarly, schools like generative linguistics which has developed theoretical frameworks of "performance", following the ideas of Noam Chomsky, while they encompass context of use, really only extend the abstract perspective by presupposing an idealised user of language operating in ideal and homogeneous conditions. See W. Dieckmann, 'Linguistics and social history', generally.

47 M.A.K. Halliday, 'Language as Code', 3ff.

48 See the discussion in J. Lyons, *Semantics* (CUP, Cambridge, 1977).

49 P. Goodrich, 'The Role of Linguistics in Legal Analysis', 47 *MLR* (1984) 523-534 at 529.

50 That is how we usually end up with meanings in dictionaries: see S.P. Louw and E.A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (United Bible Society, New York, 1988), viii.

51 See G. Brown and G. Yule, *Discourse Analysis* (CUP, Cambridge, 1983), 1-2, referring back to Lyons, *Semantics*, 32.

52 J. Frösén, *Prolegomena to a Study of the Greek Language in the First Centuries AD. The Problem of Koine and Atticism* (Helsinki, 1974) 9-15, discusses how much of the research in Classics has been by-passed by developments in linguistics. Even the contribution of A. Bartonek, 'On the application of modern linguistic methods to the study of Classical Languages, especially Greek', *Eirene* 4 (1965) 123-132 although it discusses structuralism, neogrammarianism and neopositivism, is clearly more interested in morphology and phonology than issues about language in society. See also G.H.R. Horsley, 'Linguistics and Ancient Greek', in *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, 5 (Macquarie University, 1989), 117-121. Other studies which have forayed into sociolinguistics still tend towards changes in form and use and patterns of change,

linguistic items, like sentences and texts, the positivist paradigm with its "common sense" empiricism has dominated.

The limitations which this imposes on historical understanding are illustrated by making the point that we are not dealing with issues of meaning which can be resolved by the process of translation. The translations given at the start of the chapter do not make clear to any real extent the social or cultural significance to the writer or receiver of the appellations "saviour and benefactor", or why the petitioner should use a verb of supplication *καταφεύγω*. As is well recognised a translation relies upon a perception of semantic equivalence between words and structures in two languages. The underlying difficulty is that semantic equivalence ultimately depends upon true cultural equivalence of objects, institutions and situations.⁵³ Semantic and referential meanings of words are in reality a well-informed gloss dependant upon the wider matrix of meanings embedded in the objects, institutions and symbols of a culture. This is not a question of semantics, as the term is usually understood, so much as a question of social or cultural meaning. The cultural significance of the language used is not often apparent in the translations. It is necessary to look beyond semantic systems. Let us assume that the words of a phrase like, "I have fled for refuge to you the common saviour and benefactor of all to hear me", embodied real social or symbolic meanings, but, in the English translation, it is hard to see exactly what those might be. That is why it is necessary to turn from *langue* to *parole*, to the cultural context of the language, the objects, institutions and situations of the culture and society surrounding it.

1.2.2 Language and Historical Interpretation

eg., V. Bubenik, *Hellenistic and Roman Greece as a Sociolinguistic Area* (Current issues in Linguistic Theory 57)(John Benjamin Publishing Company, 1989). E. J. Bakker points out that the "long philological and interpretative tradition behind" the study of Greek syntax has made the field "impervious to the recent trends in language typology and discourse studies", "Foregrounding and indirect discourse: Temporal subclauses in a Herodotean short story." *Journal of Pragmatics* 16 (1991), 225-247, at 225-6.

53 See Lyons, *Semantics*, Vol. 1, 236.

Initially, this involves a change from a "scientific" linguistic focus to the interpretative traditions of historical inquiry. Cultural and social context is more the province of history. But history has no significant tradition of dealing with language as anything other than a window on material reality, that is, on to its context of use.⁵⁴ This does not address the relationship between language, context and meanings. Generally speaking, a great deal of historical writing is based upon a realist epistemology. It is produced in the intellectual framework of a rather simplistic positivism which imposes a linear narrative structure on events, in the hope of achieving an elusive objectivism in the recording of the "facts".⁵⁵ Sir Moses Finley has shown that, to a large extent, a simplistic empiricism has driven much of the use made of the sources for the study of Greco-Roman culture by ancient historians.⁵⁶ The way to historical knowledge is through clear objective deductions from the evidence. Researchers wade into the surviving sources, read and interpret them, then draw "obvious" conclusions about how things really were.⁵⁷

As a methodology this type of historical interpretation has received its fair share of criticism, usually on the basis that it resorts to the anachronistic imposition of cultural predispositions and presuppositions on the evidence by the researcher.⁵⁸ As the medievalist Brian Stock puts it "[history] has canonised a type of empiricism that is best described not as a method but as a theoretical prejudice".⁵⁹ But for present

54 Certainly, it is possible to point to some early utilisation of language for the purposes of social history (W. Dieckmann, 'Linguistics and social history', 117ff gives an introduction.) and there is now some realisation among historians that language can be very informative about historical situations, eg., see P.J. Corfield, 'Introduction: historians and language'.

55 Works on the rationalist and deductive method of history are many. A good introduction is the selections from such scholars as R.G. Collingwood contained in Alan and Barbara Donagan, *Philosophy of History* (MacMillan, New York, 1965); see also R.F. Atkinson, *Knowledge and Explanation in History: An Introduction to the Philosophy of History* (MacMillan, London, 1978).

56 M.I. Finley, *Ancient History: Evidence and Models* (Penguin, 1987).

57 M.I. Finley, *Ancient History*. Among modern historians this methodology has recently been championed by G.R. Elton, *Return to Essentials* (CUP, 1991). See also the review by L Stone *TLS* 31 January, 1992, 3.

58 C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'Reading' *Greek Culture: Texts and Images, Rituals and Myths* (OUP, 1991), esp. Part I, 4, 9-10. See also Price, *Rituals and Power*, 245; G.E.M. de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle* at 34. Stock again is concise on this matter, "Historical writing does not treat reality; it treats the interpreter's relation to it." in *Listening*, Ch. 4, 80 (= "Literary Discourse and the Social Historian," *New Literary History* 8 (1976-7), 183-94). Nor should we fail to mention the fact that, as Turner points out, 'Analytical Theorising', 158, even those who subscribe to and espouse positivism in its various guises do not, because they cannot, adhere to its tenets.

59 *Listening*, Ch. 3, 54. It is not intended to be too dogmatic about this in the face of the diversities in reasoning which historians as a group exhibit: see the useful article by C. Lloyd, 'The Methodologies of

purposes a more significant problem lies in the attitude which the realist epistemology takes to the language of documentary sources. It rather peremptorily follows the thrust of structuralism assuming for language a primarily transactional or ideational function, as the vehicle for the transmission of factual, or propositional, information. Such a view must postulate both the existence of an external reality independent of individual and collective psychologies and that for the purpose of historical inquiry the only relevant function of language is to refer to facets of that reality, which it "maps".⁶⁰ As the French historian François Furet notes, the historical source is believed to refer "to something outside itself: the historical 'fact' which naive positivism falsely sees as the reality to which the document is in some sense a testimony."⁶¹

1.2.3 Language in Greco-Roman Sources

It is not unfair to say that this is apparent in the case of the "antiquarian" approach of traditional papyrology.⁶² After reconstructing the physical form of the document, and linking it to the general corpus of papyri, the usual interest is peculiarities of diction and strange morphologies.⁶³ Similarly, more specific studies of language use, types of expressions, or notable structural features in particular document categories, tend to reflect the same basic approach, namely, collection of examples, description and classification with limited interpretation.⁶⁴

Social History: A Critical Survey and Defence of Structuralism', in *History & Theory*, 30 (1991), 180-219, but in a general sense the point is still good.

60 G.W. Grace, *The Linguistic Construction of Reality* (New York, Croom Helm, 1987). In other respects, there is some irony perhaps in the fact that Saussure was opposed to a view of language which saw it merely as a kind of nomenclature of reality, even though his distinction between *langue* and *parole* was largely responsible: see S. Clark, 'The Annales Historians', in Skinner, *Return to Grand Theory*, 179-98 at 188ff.

61 F. Furet, 'Quantitative methods in history', in le Goff and Nora (eds) *Constructing the Past*, 166-180.

62 J.G. Keenan, 'The 'New Papyrology' and Ancient History', *AHB* 5.5/6 (1991), 159-169.

63 B. Frier, 'A New Papyrology?', in *BASP* 26 (1989), 153-217 at 217.

64 Though valuable, antiquarianism is a version of "naive positivism", but, more importantly, it eschews any attempt to address the broad and difficult questions of interpretation, as Price, *Rituals and Power*, 7, notes. See, eg. the two articles of A. Di Bitonto, "Le Petizioni al re: Studio sul formulario." in *Aegyptus* 47 (1967) 5-57, (which will be referred to hereafter as "Bitonto, 1967") and "Le Petizioni ai funzionari nel periodo tolemaico: Studio sul formulario." in *Aegyptus* 48 (1968) 53-107, (which will be referred to hereafter as "Bitonto, 1968"); H.J. Frisk, *Bankakten aus dem Faijûm nebst anderen Berliner Papyri* (P. Berl. Frisk), (Göteborg, 1931), 81-91, which is a specific study of introductory sentences in Roman and Byzantine petitions, and P. Tebt. 326. The early study of P. Collomp, *Recherches sur la chancellerie et diplomatique des Lagides* (Strasbourg, 1926), in, for example, Ch ii, especially 122 and 125-130 is somewhat of an exception to this observation. Note also the procedure involving ancient documents set forth by W.F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Baltimore, 1957), 42-9, esp. at 48.

However, for present purposes it is more important to note that, to the extent to which it has been undertaken, interpretation has been unsophisticated and driven by numerous presuppositions which often help to predetermine the conclusion. For example the combination of the content of a document and the location of its discovery are very influential in classification, which is fair enough as far as it goes. A lead curse tablet or *defixio* found in a well becomes a magical or religious text while a petition to the prefect found in a rubbish dump is a secular judicial text. This is not unreasonable as a starting point. But the classification into secular and religious will usually govern the course of the discussion thereafter. The categorisation of a document as a petition for example will result in its interpretation being reduced to the imposition of two main analytical categories on its language, that is, either its language is idiosyncratic flattery or mere "rhetoric" or it is empty and formulaic. As a result some types of language use become worthless as objects of study, even though the same language used for the same purpose in a *defixio*, the redress of a wrong, would be treated quite differently. It is necessary then to examine these analytical categories a little more closely.

Traditionally, explanation of the language used to speak to sovereigns, in diplomatic documents especially, and officials takes the perspective of the centre of society. Formulae of address are really empty or "meaningless" or often appear to the modern mind to be somehow peculiar, richly embellished or absurdly pusillanimous and thus form an essentially political act, called "flattery". Or they are manifestations of ideology, which is taken to mean a sort of mindless regurgitation of concepts and viewpoints inscribed from above on the cowed psychologies of the masses below. Language used in documents addressed to or about public officials, the eulogistic vocabularies of "euergetism" in honorific inscriptions, were a form of ideological regulation.⁶⁵ This perception of political motivation makes the language of Roman

65 The word "euergetism" is now generally used to describe an aspect of the ancient economic system whereby the wealthy used their own resources to bestow "benefactions" in various forms on their towns and villages and seems to have been coined by French scholars, see Paul Veyne, *Bread and Circuses: Historical*

petitions to be variously "flattering", "praising", "honorary", "respectful", "rhetorical" or "trivial".⁶⁶ Both types of assessment are objectionable on several grounds.⁶⁷ The attribution of flattery and triviality to a language user, in petitions for example, makes tacit assumptions about that individual and his or her psychology, and trespasses on the wider question of the role of the individual in history. Price calls this "methodological individualism" and points out that it misses the opportunity to see language use "as an articulation of collective representations."⁶⁸ Further, it strains credulity to see language choices in a document like a petition as arbitrary and idiosyncratic attempts at flattery or unconnected with the wider social context in which they were made. It is surely unlikely that those who wrote and sent *libelli* and petitions to powerful figures believed that they were dealing in linguistic banalities. Certainly the apparent unending resort to stereotypical expressions may give such an impression, but such expressions also may have had symbolic values which are overlooked once terms like triviality, flattery or gratitude are applied to them. It may also be said that such conclusions probably reflect the positivist streak in all modern jurisprudence, whereby metaphorical or symbolic language is overlooked in preference for language which explicates or sheds light on administrative structures

Sociology and Political Pluralism (Penguin, London, 1990), first published in France as *Le Pain et le cirque* (Éditions du Seuil, 1976). Cf C. Panagopoulos, "Vocabulaire et Mentalité."

66 It is particularly clear in the sort of conclusion in which a petitioner is described as "losing himself afresh in general trivialities": "...verliert sich aufs neue in allgemeine Trivialitäten", Frisk, *Bankakten*, at 82, commenting on P.Berl.Frisk 3 (211-212 AD), Arsinoe, particularly the words: "every evil having been cut down by you. For your goodwill encourages those who have been wronged to approach you without fear" (πάσης κακείας ὑπό σου ἐκκοπήσεως. καὶ γὰρ ἡ σὴ εὐμένεια προτρέπεται τοὺς ἀδικηθέντας ἀφόβως σοι πρὸςσεῖναι). In similar vein the German scholar Fritz Blumenthal asserted that the designation of Augustus as Σωτήρ was done "aus bloßer Schmeichelei", "Der ägyptische Kaiserkult", *AfP* V (1913), 317, at 324. The study of Zilliaccus, "Untersuchungen zu den abstrakten Anredeformen und Höflichkeitstiteln im Griechischen", above fn 30, is one of the few studies to show some appreciation of the importance of "geschichtlich, sozial oder geistlich" factors in the assessment of titles and expressions of respect. His interest is however more the Byzantine forms of address, although he considers Ptolemaic and Roman evidence in attempting to ascertain the background of the Byzantine.

67 Indeed, despite the weight of tradition, an increasing number of scholars have expressed disquiet at an uncritical acceptance of the positivist paradigm, whether 'common sense' or otherwise Sourvinou-Inwood, *'Reading' Greek Culture*, loc. cit. In this regard one might usefully refer to the opening remarks of Dominick LaCapra in his collection of essays, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Cornell, London, 1983), 13 where he discusses the attack of Hegel on the "abstract and dubious nature of common sense that furnishes one-sided handles on reality." in W. Kaufmann (tr. and ed.), *Hegel: Texts and Commentary* (Garden City, New York, 1965), 114-8

68 *Rituals and Power*, 11

and the jurisprudence of various officials.⁶⁹ Petitions are "legal" documents, and exist to help legal and constitutional experts systematise ancient laws in accordance with the concepts of modern legal codes, so that significance is defined by the facts and the law, not by rhetorical flourishes which have no place in legal analysis.⁷⁰

To describe language use as mere "rhetoric" often has a special, confined significance in the modern world.⁷¹ It is pejorative and equates "rhetoric" with insincere and empty language and assumes that the language has been chosen by the language user solely on the basis of maximising personal advantage and therefore stands as some sort of impediment to the truth.⁷² Such views of rhetoric reflect the tradition of Plato, Descartes and Kant, separating rhetoric from philosophical discourse, that is, the form of reasoning which produces conclusions based on necessary, or logical, truths.⁷³ The mention of rhetoric is in fact highly pertinent because it conjures up a major facet of classical culture, in which generally, apart from Plato, rhetoric was treated as fundamental to social interchange. But also there is a whole body of modern thought which is alive to the metaphorical and metonymic

69 See Price, *Rituals and Power*, 11-19. Sir Moses Finley coined the phrase "the constitutional law trap" when describing a rather obsessive concentration on juristic questions the conceptual categories of which have their origin in modern not ancient jurisprudence: see *Politics in the Ancient World* (CUP, Cambridge, 1983), 56. In a rather modern legalistic way Frisk, *Bankakten*, 91 makes a distinction between the trivial and the relevant, "Dabei konnte man entweder eine ganz allgemeine and triviale Wahrheit aussprechen, die mit dem folgenden Rechtsfall in keinem näheren Zusammenhang als mit irgendwelchem anderen stand, oder auch von einer auf den konkreten Einzelfall sich beziehenden Aussage ausgehen." In relation to this, we would do well to remember the injunction of Stock, *Listening*, 80, "Let us not be deceived by the scepticism of much historical writing, that arid criticism of documents that pretends to take the reader behind their rhetorical façade and into a world of sober facts."

70 See also E.M. Harris, 'Law and Oratory', in I. Worthington (ed.) *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action* (Routledge, London, 1994), 130-151.

71 Thus R.S. Bagnall, "Official and Private Violence in Roman Egypt", in 26 (1989) *BASP* 201-216 at 211ff, describes the introductory sentence in P.Panop. 27 as a "platitude", and calls the language use "inappropriate rhetoric." The language is "inappropriate" because the petitioner, though a former magistrate who complains about fishermen, is grouped via the language of the document among those who are oppressed by powerful local interests. However, although one does wish to labour the point, it is possible that the choice of language may have little to do with the fisherman, and much to do with the type of discourse and the institutional official to whom it is addressed. In the article Bagnall is employing the comparative method which is embraced below to explain and interpret the phenomenon of violence in Roman Egypt, he, perhaps more than anyone, argues elsewhere that traditional papyrological empiricism is not broad enough in its explanatory possibilities: "Papyrology and Ptolemaic History" *CW* 76 (1982-3) 23-31. One would prefer that the acuity of his approach to Greco-Roman Egypt might encompass language use.

72 As P. Goodrich puts it in *Legal Discourse* (MacMillan, London, 1987), 85, "Ordinary usage now defines rhetoric as the specious, bombastic or deceitful use of language; rhetoric, in other words, is the abuse of language."

73 A point made clear by philosophers such as Chaim Perelman. See for example, Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric* (Notre Dame Uni. Press, Paris, 1971); On this see for example Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (OUP, New York, 1988), Ch. 3.

properties of rhetoric. These have been variously claimed by literary studies, semiotics, philosophers, poets and social theorists, including names such as Chaim Perelman, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida and Michael Foucault. The discussion of these by David Cohen shows how fruitful rhetoric has been for an enormous range of scholarly endeavours, all of which rely in some way upon the enrichment rhetorical principals bring to linguistic interaction and the creation of meaning.⁷⁴ On that basis even if it is valid to trace social types or ethical concepts, the language of supplication and pity, with corollaries of justice, help or beneficence found in Greco-Roman administrative documents to rhetorical devices copied from the forensic oratory of the Attic orators, they should *a fortiori* be treated as enhanced modes of signification.⁷⁵ Some ancient historians like Josiah Ober have realised that it is much better to approach ancient rhetorical texts as symbol systems which must be understood in relation to their receptors, and this approach to rhetoric invites a conclusion that the presence of classical rhetorical devices in Greco-Roman administrative documents would stand in fact as evidence of an interpretative process which placed received conceptual systems in new patterns and relationships for a new context, that is, Hellenistic and then Roman Egypt.⁷⁶

But the designation of language as formulaic raises some more important issues. The frequency and repetition of certain phrases leads them to be effectively quarantined from further consideration as immaterial stereotypes.⁷⁷ At their most extreme such scholarly views maintain that the formulaic language used for the composition of the vast majority of petitions is meaningless for understanding the reality of its historical context.⁷⁸ In any event, there is a wealth of indications in the

74 See also D. Cohen, 'Classical rhetoric and modern theories of discourse', in I. Worthington, *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action*, 69-82.

75 On the classical antecedents of petitions see Collomp, *Recherches*, 115-24 and chapter 4 and 6 below.

76 *Mass and Elite*, xiii. See fn 37 above.

77 It may be said that 'antiquarian' activities can promote such a conclusion. Collecting together hundreds of examples of the same linguistic phrases can foster a strong sense of unreflective repetition. See, eg., Bitonto (1967) and Bitonto (1968).

78 Indeed earlier this century W.L. Westermann referred to the "meaningless nuances" of the formulaic language of Ptolemaic petitions, in 'The Ptolemies and the Welfare of their Subjects', in *AHR* 43 (1937), 270-287 at 283 fn 43, an article in which he utilised petitions as evidence for a particular interpretation of

ancient evidence that moral and ethical language or formulaic religious constructions in "secular" documents are better seen as a form of social behaviour which repay analysis in ways analogous to other social actions, such as ritual. Magical papyri are larded with formulaic expressions. No one would denounce these as "meaningless" simply because they are formulaic. The stereotypical recitation of words was integral to the ritual and religious activity contemplated by the document. A small number of scholars have realised that a close connection existed between the language of petitions and especially some types of "judicial" prayers.⁷⁹ Why then do formulaic expressions become meaningless simply because modern scholarship places the document into a secular category? Consider the language of supplication. Supplication is a well known religious phenomenon from the ancient world and it has been appreciated that an act of supplication was taken very seriously, both acknowledging the power of the recipient and invoking his protection, perhaps in a system of gift-exchange.⁸⁰ The verb *καταφεύγω* is used to describe the ritual act of taking refuge in temples. Ritualistic or conventional combinations of language are expected and are accepted as meaningful in religious contexts. The formulaic composition of petitions raises special problems, but it will appear from later chapters that the presentation of petition to the king or emperor or even Roman procurator was assimilated through its language to a ritual act of supplication before an altar or a cult statue. This sort of language use had a performative aspect which it shared with the ritualistic language of texts, especially magical texts, which have always been seen as religious. These observations strongly indicate that any explanation of the use of formulaic language use and ethical or religious vocabulary in an administrative

the ethical standard of the Ptolemaic government of Egypt. The full sentence reads "These formulas have been collected and classified in accordance with their meaningless nuances by P. Collomp" in *Recherches* (fn 57 above). It should be said that Collomp himself does not appear to treat these formulaic expressions as "meaningless", even though at one point he makes reference to "une phrase stéréotypée" (57) and later speaks of nuances which give "une certaine impression de monotonie" (115). Indeed he makes the suggestive observation that this sort of language in petitions is one example of "l'introduction de l'idée morale et religieuse dans la prose administrative."

79 H.S. Versnel, "Beyond Cursing: The Appeal to Justice in Judicial Prayers" in Cl. A. Faraone & D. Obbink (ed.), *Magika Hiera* (OUP, New York, 1991), 60-106.

80 G. Freyburger, "Supplication grecque et supplication romaine", *Latomus* 47 (1988), 501-525

document like a petition ought to explore the relationship between the language use and correspondences in the wider cultural context.

It becomes apparent that dispatching verbal formulae as meaningless stereotypes is more a reflection of theoretical prejudice than anything else. The noted American linguist Deborah Tannen has observed that in modern American society there is a tendency to equate fixedness in speech with insincerity. That of course is only one particular cultural position. By contrast in Greek and Turkish societies, there is a strong preference for formulaic collocations of language, because they are understood both to lend legitimacy to the utterance and ensure that appropriate language is used for the situation.⁸¹ But they are no less sincerely felt by both parties. We can get a flavour that a comparable cultural difference existed between Greco-Roman Egypt and modern Western world from a number of sources from the ancient world. The substance given by formulaic expressions is clear in religious texts such as prayers and curses, or questions to oracles.⁸² It appears from a document like P.Oxy XII 1413 (270-5 AD). This is a transcript of proceedings of the senate of Oxyrhynchus for the appointment of people to magistracies. This was a solemn task, no more so than for the lucky recipient of a liturgy. In a ritualistic way the senators intoned regularly upon announcement of the name of a nominee, "upright, faithful" so-and-so (ἀγνὲ, πιστέ) and sometimes broke into spontaneous acclamation. If one was to compare this process with the proceedings of, say, a modern municipal council, it might seem somewhat ridiculous. But it clearly was not to the senators of Oxyrhynchus, as they carried out the task of laying sometimes intolerable financial burdens upon members of their community.

81 D. Tannen (ed.), *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy* (Advances in Discourse Processes IX) (Ablex Publishing Corporation, New Jersey, 1982), 5. See also D. Tannen and P.C. Oztek, 'Formulaic expressions in Turkish and Greek', in F. Coulmas (ed.), *Conversational Routine* (Mouton, The Hague, 1981). Her studies are of conversational speech, which is certainly qualitatively different from written language in public documents. The point here is the way different societies collectively react to the same phenomenon.

82 See *New Docs* 2, 38.

It may be useful to pause here and take stock of the argument so far. From the discussion in the above sections, it is apparent that the dominant and traditional approaches to the use of language to understand ancient society suffer from two main deficiencies. Predominantly, there is the problem of cultural reductionism, that is, the utilisation of modern cultural presuppositions to interpret ancient evidence. This criticism does not deny the reality that any approach to historical evidence must incorporate a set of philosophical and epistemological presuppositions and values.⁸³ Nor does it refuse any validity at all to the claim that conventional empiricism or interpretism can produce satisfactory explanations of certain historical phenomena.⁸⁴ But there is still an undoubted necessity to use methodologies which as far as possible make allowances for the differences as well as the similarities between the ancient and modern worlds.⁸⁵ For present purposes the strength and influence of the positivist paradigm has underpinned a very narrow view of language and its connection to the intellectual life of historical societies. The strong philological and interpretative tradition of classical language study tends to deal with language as an abstract system, while history has taken little notice of language as an historical and cultural phenomenon of itself. This view postulates an opposition between language and historical reality. That formulation of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used, it will be argued, imposes limitations on our historical understanding. The connection between language and context requires reformulation by seeing language as a form of social behaviour, capable of analysis in ways similar

83 The point has been made often in the recent past but see, for example, Finley, *Ancient History*, loc. cit.; G.E.M. de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle*, at 33-34; C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'Reading' *Greek Culture*, esp. Part I, 4, 9-10.

84 See the discussion in Lloyd, 'Methodologies of Social History', passim. But it should be noted that, quite apart from the fact that simple empiricist interpretations are among the most likely to exhibit cultural reductionism, it has been pointed out that, unlike political or military events or economic statistics, conceptual phenomena, like ideologies or symbolic meanings, are not well suited to simple empirical analysis or objectification through socioeconomic models. R. Chartier and D. LaCapra have criticised the tendency of the *Annales* historians to treat "mentalities" in terms of socioeconomic analysis and methodology: see the essays in D LaCapra and S. Kaplan, *Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisals and New Perspectives* (Ithaca, New York, 1982). They argue that particular historical instances of meaning production, like a trial report, should not be reduced to mere manifestations of underlying structures of meaning nor should meanings be parcelled up like commodities so as to strip them of their creative capabilities in interactions.

85 As Sir Moses Finley pointed out some time ago in *Ancient History*, esp. Ch. 3, 'How it really was.'

to other social behaviour. As a consequence neither traditional linguistics nor history has a particularly good methodology for exploring the relationship between language and its historical context of use or texts as embodying the actualisation of, rather than simply a record of, collective cognitive systems. If the importance of the latter type of historical intellectual reality is to be understood, it is essential to have a methodology which can probe the interactions between such intellectual systems and the historical environment in which they operate. Consequently, we must revise our methodology.

1.3 LANGUAGE, MODELS AND METHODOLOGY.

So where do we go from here? From what has already been said it appears that from the perspective of historical inquiry we can obtain a broader, and therefore more accurate, conception of the meanings produced through language use by attempting to understand its relationship to the social context in which it is used. The inquiry into the connection between language and its social and cultural context in large measure invokes the same issues as the question of the relationship of the intellectual to the structural realities of society. So it is suggested here that we should turn to the methodologies based upon theories which are especially equipped to analyse the structural realities, and can be related to language use.

The way to best appreciate this point is to approach it as a question of meaning. It is generally accepted to some extent that historical inquiry is the process of recovering or reconstructing meanings from the past.⁸⁶ If we couple this observation with the desire to put language in the centre of social analysis and historical research, we see that we need an expanded view of meaning. As we have observed, linguists deal with meaning largely by resort to structuralist or other

86 A. Kaplan, 'Historical Interpretation', in Y.Yovel (ed.), *Philosophy of History and Action* (D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1978) 27-37 at 29. Toews, 'Intellectual history' at 879 speaks of the traditional focus of intellectual historians being "the production, reproduction and transmission of meanings in various historical periods and cultural contexts..."

abstract theories of semantics or discourse. Under the influence of the social sciences it has become widely recognised that historical understanding can be greatly enhanced by the realisation that meaning is not produced through words or combinations of words only, in a normative and ideal system.⁸⁷ A change in thinking is required and that is provided by the simple but powerful perception that meanings are created through social *action*. Anthropologists tell us that meanings are created through social actions and interactions which are not linguistic, for example, ritual.⁸⁸ In social theory it is suggested that meaning is not constructed by the play of signifiers, but by the intersection of the production of signifiers with objects and events in the world, focused and organised through the acting individual.⁸⁹ When the idea of action and interaction is carried into the realm of language use we are presented with the means to draw out and appreciate the significance of the apparently redundant, trivial or even meaningless language in documents like petitions.

For this it is best to adopt a comparative methodology. Such an approach is now reasonably well established in classical studies, especially ancient history.⁹⁰ In more recent times dissatisfaction with conventional methodologies has already produced a trend to seek assistance from other disciplines, particularly social sciences, usually in the form of comparative use of models. M. I. Finley was an early exponent of models to understand antiquity, especially because the evidence is so uneven.⁹¹ Recently some papyrologists have expressed enthusiasm for the

87 J. Lyons, *Semantics*, esp. Ch. 1 and 6. See M Hobart, 'Meaning or Moaning', in Parkin, *Semantic Anthropology*, 39-63 for a survey of many of the theories about meaning.

88 See the very useful discussion of Sherry B. Ortner, "Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 (1984), 126-166, where she notes that theories of practice or action seek to explain the "relationship(s) that obtain between human action on the one hand, and some global entity which we may call "the system", on the other."

89 Turner, see fn 58 above.

90 Comparative use of knowledge about other societies has been around for some time in fact. For example, E.R. Dodds used comparative "ethnographic" techniques in his well known work *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, 1968)

91 See the comments in M.I. Finley, *Ancient History, passim*. An even earlier exponent of the use of models to explain antiquity was T.F. Carney, *The Shape of the Past: Models and Antiquity* (Lawrence, Kan., Coronado Press, 1975). Other examples are K. Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves, Sociological Studies in Roman History I* (Cambridge, 1978), and the well known work of G.E.M. de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*, which should be understood as the application of the Marxist model of social theory to the ancient world.

comparative use of models.⁹² There are several features of a methodology using models which are greatly beneficial for the researcher. So the following sections will attempt to do three things. First, the nature of models and their comparative use will be discussed. Secondly, the model of social context will be set forth. Thirdly, the position of language use and linguistic theory will be related to social context at a theoretical level.

1.3.1 The Idea of Models and Comparisons.

It is not uncommon to demonstrate the usefulness of models by reference to the basic research structures of the physical sciences. The three levels in scientific research, namely, description, classification and explanation, provide the guide for much historical research.⁹³ These different levels provide a paradigm of research activity and reasoning in the social sciences. Description and classification of evidence, followed by explanations or interpretations, are also regular activities in ancient history and papyrology.⁹⁴ The physical sciences developed strict techniques for the production of *scientific laws* which express in abstract terms regularities in the universe by describing constant relations between phenomena.⁹⁵ Scientific laws have great explanatory power and can be used to predict outcomes in relation to specific empirical cases.⁹⁶ For present purposes the outstanding feature of scientific laws is their universality, that is, their capacity to be applied trans-historically to any relevant body of data so as to produce explanation.⁹⁷ It is the universality of these laws that gives them such persuasive force in scientific explanations and it is their role in

See also D.P. Kehoe, 'Comparative Approaches to History', in *BASP* 26 (1989) 153-156. Models have been used with particular success in the study of ancient religious contexts: see the general discussion in C.R. Phillips, 'The Sociology of Religious Knowledge in the Roman Empire to AD 284', *ANRW* 16.3 (1986), 2677-2773; P. F. Esler, *Community and Gospel*, fn 25 above.

92 For example, the entirety of a recent part of the *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* (*BASP* 26 (1989) 153-226) entitled "Comparative Approaches to the Social History of Roman Egypt" is devoted to the development and application of theoretical models to a number of social aspects of Roman Egypt.

93 See Phillips, 'The Sociology of Religious Knowledge', at 2682-2683, fn 91 above.

94 Indeed, in a very rough way it is possible to understand the studies of Collomp and Frisk (see fn 64) as manifesting these different levels, explanations based on descriptions and classifications. De Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*, extols the virtues of the Marxist model partly on the basis of its capacity to provide explanations of historical movement, the secrets of history.

95 M. Duverger, *Introduction to the Social Sciences* (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1964), 226.

96 See the reference to Turner in fn 41.

97 I.J. Cohen, 'Structuration Theory', in Giddens and Turner, *Social Theory Today*, 280-2.

explanations that makes scientific laws so useful to scientists. The process usually begins with a set of hypotheses or a theory which it is desired to validate or invalidate, wholly or partly, by empirical testing. In the social sciences there is no agreement even on the question of whether universal social laws can possibly exist, not to mention the problem of what such laws might be.⁹⁸ In the absence of anything approaching universal laws which can be applied across cultures and societies, social scientists have been compelled to develop other techniques to produce explanations.

Much of the debate amongst sociologists about methods has been undertaken in the context of the study of contemporary social situations. When the subject matter of study is existing, the sampling of views, the issuing of questionnaires, the conducting of interviews and direct experimentation are viable means of research. They can also explore directly psychological states of mind. Such methods can produce statistics and other relevant quantitative and qualitative data which have at least the appearance of scientific rigour and might be used to produce explanations which either sustain or disprove a theory or hypothesis, even without the existence of universal social laws. At this point the intractable difficulties of studying historical situations become self-evident. Obviously, historical situations are not susceptible to these methods. In the case of past societies the only scope for empirical testing of theories and hypotheses lies in the *surviving* data. This is usually incomplete and often ambiguous. In the absence of social laws which apply across cultures and trans-historically, and from which deductions can be made, the researcher into the past is faced with the real difficulty of deriving explanations which test his theories.⁹⁹ It is in the light of this threshold problem that the comparative use of models has unique virtues. Models and comparisons have come to be an indispensable tool, because

98 See generally Giddens and Turner, *Social Theory Today*.

99 T.F. Carney, *The Shape of the Past*, at 308.

they can provide explanations which would not otherwise be possible, especially in historical situations.¹⁰⁰

Models are to be understood as conceptualisations of any given group of phenomena, "simplified and schematised" pictures of reality.¹⁰¹ They are thus theoretical *constructions*. Models also have an inherent distinguishing feature, which has been described as an inner dynamic, that is, "since they are fashioned from a set of terms in a state of inter-relatedness, the variation of one of those terms will produce a predictable response in the entire set".¹⁰² It is this feature of internal patterning that provides the capability of "generating a set of hypotheses which, once verified, may either found or substantiate a theory." Comparison is the basic method of verifying theories or hypotheses, which are being applied to historical situations. In that way it can be seen that the comparative use of models becomes one of the only viable ways to produce explanations of the relations among the surviving evidence.¹⁰³

A model can take the thinking of a researcher far beyond the confines of his or her own "common sense" and cultural categories. A good example to support this contention is the work Phillip Esler, in New Testament studies.¹⁰⁴ He has made very persuasive use of the sociological model of legitimation, which is also utilised in this thesis, to analyse the motivations of St Luke's theology. By using a model he demonstrated that social and political exigencies played a vital role in the formation

100 A point made in detail by J. Ober, 'Models and Paradigms in Ancient History', *AHB* 3.6 (1989), 134-137. For instance, historical sociologists verify their strategies either by reference to individual cases or by the method of comparison. See Theda Skocpol, "Emerging Agendas and Recurrent Strategies" in T. Skocpol (ed.) *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology* (CUP, Cambridge, 1984), esp. 376-382.

101 Turner, *Social Theory Today*, 164, defines models thus: "...a diagrammatic representation of events that includes: concepts that denote and highlight certain features of the universe; the arrangement of these concepts in visual space so as to reflect the ordering of events in the universe; symbols that mark the nature of the connections among concepts."

102 P. F. Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 9

103 Comparisons may be "close" or "distant", but for most historical situations a distant comparison is the relevant type. Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 10, explains a distant comparison as follows: "[In distant comparisons] social structures or institutions from widely different cultures are compared. These commonly consist of comparisons across distinct historical periods. Here one is looking for resemblances rather than differences investigated by the use of close comparisons..... The main focus of interest is the extent to which they are similar and the significance of those resemblances. With this form of comparison the researcher is not seeking to verify hypotheses but to generate them, because the insights which are produced by the comparisons will prompt a whole range of questions to put to the historical data under consideration."

104 See fn 25.

of Luke's theology. Biblical exegesis has as rich and authoritative a tradition as classical studies, almost its own culture one might say, but its "battery of critical approaches" were unable to achieve this insight or develop a similar cogent explanation. Another example which is perhaps more apposite for the present thesis is the work of Josiah Ober on mass and elite interaction in classical Athens.¹⁰⁵ He employed the concept of a model and insights from literary theory to demonstrate that the relationship between mass and elite in Athens was worked out through rhetoric and the deployment of rhetorical forms and symbols in political and forensic oratory, and this process helped to produce social cohesion.

1.3.2 Objections to the Use of Models

The use of models as a methodology has not escaped criticism. Frequently it has been suggested that models are arbitrarily applied, defined by reference to a particular culture, not properly tested against the empirical data, or all these.¹⁰⁶ It can be readily seen that where the object of study is a culture which is both alien and historical, there is a valuable note of caution in this. The underlying feature of models which prompts them derives from the manner in which a model is constructed. There are different views about models, but operationally one of the most important aspects of a model is its relationship to the empirical evidence to which it will be applied. Some treat models as if they have an independent reality which is not determined by the particular facts being modelled. Others believe that there exists a deterministic relationship of influence between the empirical facts and the model, so that the facts determine the structure of the model.¹⁰⁷ It has been recognised that, as mental constructs, models, especially when used in historical situations, are inevitably influenced by the available facts, because a model is constructed with a particular situation or set of facts in mind.¹⁰⁸ These will affect its form and parameters.

105 *Mass and Elite*. See fn 37.

106 Skocpol, "Emerging Agendas and Recurrent Strategies". See also E.A. Judge, "The Social Identity of the First Christians: A Question of Method in Religious History", in *JRH*, 11 (1980), 202-17.

107 See S. Gudeman and M. Penn, 'Models, Meanings and Reflexivity', in Parkin, *Semantic Anthropology*, 89-104 for a good general discussion of modelling within anthropology, much of which has a wider application.

108 Skocpol, "Emerging Agendas and Recurrent Strategies", esp. 376-382.

Therefore, it is argued, subjective choices govern the variables which are selected for the basis of the model, so in reality a model is no different from any other form of interpretism.

This is an issue which requires comment. After all, the positivist approach to the obtaining of 'pure facts' represented "a legitimate response to a major epistemological problem", namely, the fact that all knowledge of facts is "filtered through human perceptual and cognitive processes."¹⁰⁹ If models are to be preferred as a methodology they must deal with the basic epistemological problem. The answer to the suggestion of subjectivism or arbitrary application lies in the fact that the selection of variables is explicitly stated and that provides a controlling framework. The articulation of a theoretical model at the very least has the virtue of setting forth an analytical framework, but it also controls the historical discourse. In the same way the process of constructing a model in light of the empirical facts acts as a corrective to the influence of cultural categories and anachronisms. The very nature of a model, being a schematised and generalised construction, has the tendency to strip from them "spatial and temporal markings"¹¹⁰ Further, there is no necessity to test a model against the available empirical data to determine its suitability before applying it. To do so assumes the existence of some ultimate criteria to define suitability. But then we are left to wonder about the basis upon which to judge the ultimate criteria, and it becomes an infinite regression. The suitability of a model is constantly tested in the process of drawing explanations from the model. On the other hand to first ask whether a model is applicable to the data may misconceive the nature of the methodology by equating the comparative use of a model with the application of a universal law. In any event, it is hardly the case that traditional approaches to historical facts are free of these suggested deficiencies, to the extent that they are really different from the comparative use of models. Ober has even suggested that

109 Phillips, "The Sociology of Religious Knowledge", at 2684

110 Esler, *Community and Gospels*, 14

"all historians use models, whether or not they are conscious of the process."¹¹¹ Finley pointed out some time ago, historians of antiquity have always indulged their own brand of subjectivism selecting material on the basis of intuition or other hermeneutic responses to the evidence.¹¹² That type of approach has the added vice of not even attempting to set out a theoretical basis for selections and interpretations of the empirical material.¹¹³ Rather models should be judged against the criteria of "meaningfulness and usefulness"¹¹⁴ For these reasons, the fears engendered by resort to models and sociological techniques are really unwarranted, and models should be embraced as a very fruitful method for understanding the past.

1.4 THE MODEL

Having decided to make use of a model to explain the significance of language use in certain ancient texts, the next step is to set out the terms of the model. It will in fact become apparent that the model used here is in fact an integrated set of models, which Ober suggests should be called a paradigm.¹¹⁵ The model draws upon the concept of a symbolic order which comprises basic modes of signification within a society and which societies use to make sense of institutional and other forms of power. However, before the detail of the model which we apply here is dealt with, it is necessary to set a general theoretical framework within which to analyse problems of structure, change and continuity. It will become apparent that issues about the intellectual and the structural aspects of society are more easily understood if they are dealt with within a theoretical framework which addresses the problem of structure and action. There is not only a problem of identifying change, which is highlighted

111 'Models and Paradigms.', 134. One might note in this connection the method adopted by Professor R. MacMullen in *Roman Social Relations* (Yale, Mass., 1974), 14ff of defining a "model village" from modern Mediterranean villages for comparison with villages in ancient rural communities, in order "to comfort conjecture."

112 *Ancient History*, 60. Charles Phillips robustly asserts that "Value-free facts, devoid of human subjectivity do not exist: human input always functions." in "The Sociology of Religious Knowledge", at 2688.

113 See the comments of D. Cohen, *Law, Sexuality and Society: The enforcement of morals in classical Athens* (CUP, Cambridge, 1991), 10

114 Ober, "Models and Paradigms"

115 Ibid.

by Professor Lewis' reference to "the terminological illusion" of continuity, but more of explaining how change can come about. This is a well-known problem in history and is often expressed as the difference between explaining a process of change and merely describing it. De Ste Croix adverts to it by comparing the explanations produced by his Marxist model with historical descriptions based upon stratification of society through "statuses" and "orders". Reference to statuses and orders, in his view, merely describes social structure, it cannot explain change. In his mind the process of explanation in history requires the identification of "the real secrets of history: the springs and causes of human behaviour and social change", which in his opinion is the class struggle.¹¹⁶

This is something like a substantial quandary inherent in structuralist approaches to social analysis. Traditional social theory conceived of "social structure" as something rigid oppressive and deterministic of human behaviour and thought, that is, social structure "socialises" human beings. Integral to this view is the difficulty of reconciling the observable reality of social action and change with a concept of static structural mass, that is, how can change and development of the social structure take place if social action is determined by the social structure? One of the most satisfying ways out of this difficulty lies in the theory of structuration, developed by Anthony Giddens, a theory of interaction between structure and action.¹¹⁷ In structuration theory, social practices are conceived in terms of activities ordered across space and time which are continually recreated by knowledgeable social agents through the means they use to express themselves. Thus such practices are "recursive", that is, "they are not brought into being by social actors but continually recreated by them via the very means whereby they express themselves as actors."¹¹⁸ This indicates that social structure has an inherent duality. Such notions

116 *Class Struggle*, 45

117 A. Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of a Theory of Structuration* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 1984)

118 Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, 2. "...the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices that constitute those systems.", *Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory* (Macmillan, London, 1982), 36-37.

of social structure have been fruitfully utilised by researchers into the Greco-Roman world. Ian. Morris has used these ideas of social structure to explain the importance of death-ritual in classical antiquity. He paraphrases the concept of structuration thus: "[social structure] is a set of assumptions about what we should say, do and even think in given situations, but it does not determine our behaviour, everything we do is informed by learned social structure, but the structure itself is only transmitted through time and space by real people as they repeat what they themselves have learned, or react against it. It has no independent, extra-human existence."¹¹⁹ Social structure then becomes a collective phenomenon that only exists and is reproduced by the actions of the individual in the structure. Ira J. Cohen notes that one of the great virtues of structuration theory is its capacity to account for structural change, to overcome the structural "mass" versus structural change difficulty.¹²⁰ David Horrell in his discussion of the theory points out that it shows how transformation is inextricably linked to reproduction.¹²¹ The duality of the structural properties of the social system means that in the acting out the structures of the social system by social actors the possibility of change is constantly present.

The theory is very apt for the exploration of intellectual realities in an historical society. Giddens, for the purpose of analysis, divides structures into three types, structures of signification, domination and legitimation, while recognising that in reality all are usually combined in social institutions.¹²² Broadly speaking, for the purposes of this thesis, we may say that structures of signification embrace symbolic orders and modes of discourse, structures of domination embrace political and economic institutions, while structures of legitimation embrace normative regulation

119 I. Morris, *Death-Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (CUP, Cambridge, 1992), 6. See also Cohen, *Law, Sexuality and Society*, esp, 24 ff, where he uses the theory to very good effect in relation to morals in classical Athens.

120 See 'Structuration Theory and Social Praxis', in Giddens and Turner, *Social Theory Today*, 273-308

121 D.G. Horrell, "The Development of Theological Ideology in Pauline Christianity", in P.F. Esler, *Modelling Early Christianity: Social scientific studies of the New Testament in its context* (Routledge, London and New York, 1995), 224-236 at 225.

122 Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, 28-34

and legal institutions.¹²³ So the relationship between the intellectual and the structural is more than a dialectic: the intellectual, the economic, the political and the legal all coalesce to form "the social structure". According to this conception, a socio-political collectivity such as Greco-Roman Egypt was comprised of structures of signification, domination and legitimation which were instantiated through various types of social institutions, with their associated linguistic frameworks, rules, procedures and activities. That is, the administrative hierarchy, the fundamental relations of the agrarian economy, such as landlord and tenant, represented structures of domination. The systems of ideas which were drawn on to conceptualise the role of officials and local elites in the form of saviour or benefactor and basic social values such as honour and shame were part of a symbolic order and a mode of discourse which fell within structures of signification. With these, structures of signification were especially connected with structures of legitimation, constituted by the legal system, its laws, procedures and court system, by reason of the intimate relationship between the forensic context and the conceptual systems of ancient rhetoric.¹²⁴

Since structures of signification are substantially to be seen as corresponding, in a practical sense, to the intellectual realities of society, structuration theory means that they (together with structures of domination and legitimation) were constantly open to interpretation and rearrangement in the process of reproduction, despite the tendency to simple repetition. Roger Chartier has adverted to a similar process. He contends that the population even in an autocratic society does not just passively assimilate conceptual systems imposed from above, they engage in their own ongoing, interpretative activity which reorganises and transforms the received material.¹²⁵ To Chartier, by such interpretative activity in relation to intellectual

123 Ibid., 31.

124 A proposition implied to some extent by the influence which H.Schmidt saw ancient rhetoric exert over the development of law: "Einfluß der Rhetorik auf die Gestaltung der Richterlichen Entscheidungen in den Papyri", *JJP* IV (1950), 165-177.

125 R. Chartier, "Intellectual History or Sociological History? The French Trajectories", in D. LaCapra and S.L. Kaplan, *Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisals and New Perspectives* (Ithaca, New York, 1982), 34 at 37-8.

aspects of society, people invite and bring about change. This is a very important consideration because it enables us to go some way towards identifying not so much where and when change occurred, because change is to be expected, but what symbolic concepts remained vigorous, by constant reappearance and deployment in fresh linguistic patterns, in articulating responses to the experience of certain aspects of society which were inherent and fundamental, such as power. Horrell also makes the point that power is fundamental to the process of change and consequently is present in any discussion of structuration. In structuration theory disparities of power account for disparities in the capacity of social actors to bring about transformation of the structures of society, including structures of signification.¹²⁶ This connection between the possession of power and the capacity for change may help explain the apparently formulaic or stereotypical nature of the language chosen for documents addressed to powerful officials, or why the interpretative and transformative activity of language users from small settlements in Greco-Roman Egypt seems limited, that is, they resorted to many of the same elements of the symbolic order and reproduced them in similar syntactic and textual configurations constantly over many centuries, as we will see, because as between themselves and their rulers they had the least capacity for change. However, a reduced capacity for change does not rule out interpretative activity, and it shows that the symbolic order provided resources of meaning for them. This idea lies behind much of what comes in following chapters but it is important at this juncture to examine the concept of power more closely.

1.4.1 Formal and Informal Power.

It has become recognised more generally that power is a very useful analytical tool for understanding societies and their structures.¹²⁷ The present writer tends to agree with the observation of B.D. Shaw that most definitions of power in political or social theory have some degree of application.¹²⁸ So it is not the intention here to digress

126 D.G. Horrell, "The Development of Theological Ideology in Pauline Christianity", 225, 227.

127 Runciman, *Treatise* and Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*.

128 "Josephus: Roman Power and Responses to It" *Athen.* 83 (1995), 357-390 at 357.

into a long discussion of various theories of power. The remarks will be limited to some general points which seem particularly appropriate.

Many theoretical conceptualisations of social institutions and institutional roles, like kings and officials give a strong impression of the coercive aspect of power, and subconsciously favour the 'coercion' paradigm of power, that is, something centred in the state and backed by force.¹²⁹ The controlling nature of institutions and their practices and rules reinforces this view.¹³⁰ But others take a more "distributive" view of power in society. W.G. Runciman defines power as "the capacity of persons to affect through either inducements or sanctions what is thought, felt, said or done by other persons." Thus understood power is always a reciprocal relationship, which involves "domination" when one party to the relationship has a greater degree of power, and "co-operation" when the relative power is more evenly balanced. And while it is undoubtedly true that all societies are comprised of institutions and these institutions have a coercive impact upon the members of society, Runciman argues that institutional patterns and regularities express three fundamental dimensions of power, namely, economic, ideological and coercive. It is important to note that this conception of power includes all spheres of social life, not just the political and it shows that the coercive is but one dimension of power. Runciman makes the point that power "has a contingent relation to status and economic class, not a necessary one", and as Giddens says, "power is not an inherently noxious phenomenon."¹³¹ So we may agree with the views of scholars such as Simon Price who sees power as a conceptual tool for analysing "complex strategic" social situations and relationships, and diffused through the social structure,

129 See J. Ober, 'Power and Oratory in Democratic Athens', in Worthington, *Persuasion*, 85-6.

130 Runciman, *Treatise*, 2-3. Once in place, institutions operate as a vehicle of primary social control, both because they "control human conduct by setting up predefined patterns of conduct, which channel it in one direction as against the many other directions that would be theoretically possible.", and because they have a coercive power over society's members, both "by the sheer force of their facticity, and through the control mechanisms usually attached to the most important of them.", and therefore institutions constitute primary factors underlying the emergence, transmission and maintenance of a social order: see Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 72-3.

131 W.G. Runciman, "Class, Status and Power", in J.A. Jackson, *Social Stratification* (CUP, Cambridge, 1968), 25-61; Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, 32.

and Josiah Ober who relies upon the notion that power is not centralised in the state but occupies many different social spaces, to explicate the process of rhetorical interaction at Classical Athens. The concept of interactions is fundamental to an understanding of this view of power since they are bound up with a regime of power which amounts to a collective cognitive conception of truth and reality.¹³² It also helps to show that the interplay of language and power within the classical rhetorical tradition of Athenian social institutions fits into Giddens typology of structures of signification and legitimation.

When we turn more specifically to the Greco-Roman world it is helpful to adopt Shaw's typology of power. He has argued, in light of the recursive nature of social structure, that two broad ideal-types of power are most useful in understanding Eastern responses to Roman power, namely, institutional or formal power and personal or informal power.¹³³ He argues that social systems in which personal power was a dominant factor in formation logically and historically precede those in which more formal or institutional types of power are dominant. Social systems which are strongly configured by personal power are based on types of control which emanate primarily from the person, and secondarily from his or her material and institutional resources. Power depends upon things like personal charisma, physical appearance, personal style, public persona, patronage, friendship and clientage and other ritualised forms of these basic relationships.¹³⁴ The opposite, the formal power system, channels power through fixed positions within the social structure, the institutional roles within institutional attributes. It is suggested that this is a very useful dualism with which to analyse the progression from Ptolemaic to Roman Egypt, since this in a general way exhibited just such a trend from the personal power of the Ptolemaic monarch to the more institutional power of Roman officials. This is

132 Ober, 'Power and Oratory'.

133 "Josephus: Roman Power and Responses to It", see fn 128.

134 This formulation would include relationships of reciprocity which as we will see feature significantly in petitions and ancient prayer. See chapters 6 and 8 below, especially.

not to say that formal power was not a feature of Ptolemaic Egypt nor that informal power did not continue to play an important part in local communities in Roman Egypt. It does however mean that formal or institutional power became more entrenched in Roman Egypt. We will examine this idea more closely in chapter 3, but it is important to elaborate the distinction between formal and informal now by observing that at least in Greco-Roman Egypt, a balance between the personal and the formal or institutional dimensions of power tended to be the test of legitimacy. In other words, personal charisma, physical appearance, public persona, and clientage played a very significant part, but a sovereign or an official was seen as legitimate if the exercise of his formal power was circumscribed by positive ethical qualities and the rule of law, since these lead to material conditions of good government and social order. An imbalance towards personal power came, especially in the Roman period, to be portrayed as the antithesis, a breach of order and source of failure of ethical and legal standards leading to anomic social conditions. Again this matter will be discussed in more detail in later chapters, but we can see at this point how power is integral to the social problem of anomie, about which we will have something to say shortly. However, it can be seen that power is most useful when conceptualised as something more than the purely political or coercive but suffused through the social structure. The next step in the model requires explication of the notion of legitimation of power, that is, the process of making sense of it.

1.4.2 Legitimation

Scholars have always understood that a connection existed between the intellectual aspects of social life and structures of domination, the political and economic, to the extent that conceptual systems or ideologies could function as a political expedient for rulers. Even the most despotic rulers must spend some time clothing themselves in a persona acceptable to those they rule. This interrelationship between ruler and ruled was understood in the ancient world, expressed, for example, in basic ideas,

such as, εὐνοια, the basis of the king or emperor's rule.¹³⁵ In classical scholarship this interrelationship is designated by phrases such as "legitimation of rule", in which the linguistic framework is equated with the ideology of the ruling elite.¹³⁶

This raises a rather difficult problem about the appropriate theoretical view of ideology, principally its nature and function, and that is usually addressed by asking whether to approach it from either a "critical" or "neutral" perspective.¹³⁷ In structuration theory, Giddens basically takes a "critical" view of ideology, at least according to Horrell.¹³⁸ At first blush it seems that there is some correspondence between structures of signification in structuration theory and conventional views of conceptual systems in ancient history, especially views of ideology, because most scholars of the ancient world have taken a "critical" view of conceptual systems to which they have assigned a political function. Θεός, Σωτήρ, Εὐεργέτης denoted the performance of a function, and not "membership of a class in the hierarchy of beings."¹³⁹ The function was heavily political and diplomatic. But Giddens identifies three forms of ideology: the representation of sectional interests as universal ones, the denial or transmutation of contradictions and the naturalisation or reification of the present.¹⁴⁰ It will be suggested in this thesis that most scholars have placed the

135 See eg Schubart, "Das Hellenistische Königsideal"; E. Goodenough, "The political philosophy of Hellenistic kingship"; Le Blois, 'Traditional Virtues and New Spiritual Qualities in the Third Century Views of Empire, Emperors and Practical Politics', in *Mnemosyne* 47, 2, (1994), 166-76. We may compare Veyne's view that the phenomenon of euergetism in the ancient world was in truth based upon an "historical, ideological or conventional pact" between the plebs and the notables: *Bread and Circuses*, 155ff. This conception implies a degree of reliance by the elite on the people, a position alien to, say, the attitude of De Ste Croix in *Class Struggle* to the effect that the relationship between elite and general population was simply unrestrained exploitation of the latter by the former.

136 In terms of structuration theory, "legitimation of rule" would presumably refer to a perceived process of connecting asymmetries of power with symbolic orders of signification, that is, conceptual or belief systems, to legitimate the dominance of sectional interests. In this structures of signification, symbolic orders and modes of discourse, become the principle institutional locus for ideology, by which is meant asymmetries of domination "which connect signification to the legitimation of sectional interests": the *Constitution of Society*, 32-3. This question is considered further in chapter 5. There is scope for confusion here with Giddens third type of structure, structures of legitimation, by which he means legal institutions and normative regulation, see above. In this thesis, these structures will be referred to as "legal institutions, the legal system, systems of norms etc" to minimise confusion between this and the concept of legitimation taken from Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, discussed shortly.

137 These are the categories given by J.B. Thompson, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 1984).

138 "The Development of Theological Ideology in Pauline Christianity", at 225.

139 A.D. Nock, "Soter and Euergetes", in *Essays on Religion in the Ancient World* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1972), 720-735, at 722.

140 *Central Problems in Social Theory* (Macmillan, London, 1979), 193-96; Thompson, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology*, 131.

conceptual systems such as that associated with the ruler cult within the first category, whereas the work of Price and others suggests it should be placed in the third category which is generally more likely to refer to religious phenomena.¹⁴¹ This is a problem which needs to be addressed in detail because it will influence our ultimate conclusions about the significance of language use studied in this thesis. But it is actually more convenient to delay it until we consider the symbolic order of Greco-Roman Egypt in chapter 5.

What is important to say now however is that one must bear in mind the wider importance in society of symbolic orders beyond the legitimation of relations of domination for particular sectional interests, a point of some consequence for the argument of this thesis. The symbolic order of a society undoubtedly does provide the locus for ideology with political outcomes, in the sense that they may help maintain existing distributions of power, and allow those that have it to keep it. But in the view of the present writer, it is very difficult to understand the way communities used intellectual resources and language to respond to forms of what was to them immense power, such as the Hellenistic kings and Romans, if we align the intellectual only with oppression. Despite what Marxists may have once thought, societies are not essentially a cauldron of dysfunction and conflict, although they can come into such a condition. Some social theories concentrate on the integrative and socially stabilising dimension of legitimation, especially the theories of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, and it is this focus which will be explored in this thesis.¹⁴² They argue that once social institutions are established, various formulae, "consistent and comprehensive in terms of the institutional order", become necessary to legitimate the institutional order to the society and its succeeding generations. As the institutional order expands, it develops "a corresponding canopy of legitimations stretching over it a protective cover of both cognitive and normative

141 A point made by Horrell, "The Development of Theological Ideology in Pauline Christianity", 225-6 and see further chapter 5.

142 From their treatise on the sociology of knowledge *The Social Construction of Reality*.

interpretation."¹⁴³ Thus the function of legitimation is to infuse meaning into an institution, to make it "objectively available and subjectively plausible."

Berger and Luckmann distinguish, analytically between different levels of legitimation, but for our purposes other levels of legitimation are subsumed within the most comprehensive level, constituted by *symbolic universes*. A symbolic universe is defined as a body of theoretical tradition that integrates "different provinces of meaning" and encompasses "the institutional order in a symbolic totality." "Symbolic" denotes "processes of signification that refer to realities other than those of everyday experience".¹⁴⁴ So symbols are very much intellectual phenomena, abstracted concepts which expand the meanings of everyday life. Such a definition would include the meanings in any idealised system, including religion, which will be important when we come to consider terms like σωτήρ and εὐεργέτης.¹⁴⁵ It promotes a focus upon the normative, upon what ought to be rather than upon what is. Thus it overlaps with the structures of legitimation comprised in legal institutions which Giddens proffers as one of his three types of social structural properties.

It is worth pointing out that the notion of symbolic universes also has many similarities with analysis of culture in symbolic terms. Symbolic anthropologists, such as Clifford Geertz, viewed culture as a phenomenon which is embedded in public observable symbols.¹⁴⁶ Thus culture is a body of "symbols through which the members of a society communicate their world view, value-orientations, ethos, and all the rest to one another, to future generations."¹⁴⁷ Another perspective which

143 At 79.

144 113. Ian Morris has pointed out that more recent scholarship has followed two basic ways to interpret symbols, the 'direct' and the 'linguistic'. In the direct approach, symbols are just a sort of code in which X stands for Y and all the researcher need do is find out what Y is. The linguistic approach symbols are part of a semiotic system analogous to a language. Both approaches have problems: the direct approach is too simplistic and the linguistic approach involves assuming that all signs are arbitrary, which they are not. As Morris says, it is therefore better to interpret symbols through a position somewhere between the two. See *Death-Ritual and Social Structure*, 17 ff, fn 119 above.

145 P. Ricoeur, "The Symbol Gives Rise to Thought", in W.H. Capps, *Ways of Understanding Religion* (MacMillan, New York, 1972), 309-321. See further chapter 5 below.

146 C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Basic Books, New York, 1973).

147 Sherry B. Ortner, "Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties", fn 88 above.

derives from the ideas of Wittgenstein, is to say culture is the rules, norms and values which form "the logical space...in which a community of people think and see."¹⁴⁸ As such culture is a matrix of meanings and encompasses within it such things as ideology, religious beliefs and rituals, which in turn are all part of or manifestations of culture. This universe can be broken down into symbolic sub-sets, which include religious belief systems, ideologies and the specific mentalities of various groups.¹⁴⁹ Horrell also makes the point that there is a large degree of correspondence between the "symbolic universe" and Giddens symbolic orders and modes of discourse which comprise structures of signification.¹⁵⁰

But we must emphasise that it is a real virtue of Berger and Luckmann conception of legitimation that it gives an understanding of the connections between structures of signification and social stability in the face of asymmetries of domination or power. The authors argue that the most typical purpose motivating legitimation is integration in one form or another, which engenders such plausibility on two levels: first, by enabling the totality of the institutional order to make sense to participants; and secondly, by making meaningful the totality of an individual's life.¹⁵¹ In a symbolic universe of Berger and Luckmann, all the sectors of the institutional order are integrated in an all-embracing frame of reference. The process of legitimation has a cohesive effect on the collective functioning of societies because it both gives intellectual plausibility to institutional power and thereby helps to meet any underlying threat or perception of anomie.¹⁵² It is primarily this idea which indicates a way of understanding the potentially genuine religious sense of the cult of the ruler, in Greco-Roman Egypt.

148 H. McDonald, *The Normative Basis of Culture* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1986), 3

149 See section 1.4 and fn 68. R. Wuthnow, "Comparative Ideology", *IJCS* 22, 3-4 (1981), 121-140. Culture is also sometimes defined as a generalised body of socially acquired knowledge, in which case, of course, institutionalised rules and norms would form but one part: see R.A. Hudson, *Sociolinguistics*; Goodenough, *Culture, Language, and Society*.

150 D.G. Horrell, "Converging Ideologies: Berger and Luckmann and the Pastoral Epistles", *JSNT* 50 (1950), 85-103.

151 At 110.

152 Cf F. Dunand, "Pour ou contre une Science des Religions", *Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne* 2 (1976), 479-491.

Anomie itself has been an important concept in social theory. In the ancient world, the desire for peace, prosperity and the avoidance of adverse circumstances produced by internal social tensions was as an essential part of the composition of society as those tensions themselves. Marco Orru says that the concept of anomie is fundamental in a social sense because it "offers an assessment of the historical conditions of the individual-society relationship, while entertaining, implicitly or explicitly, a view of the desirable, ideal condition."¹⁵³ It will be argued that the connection between the objective plausibility of formal or institutional power, social stability and perceptions of anomie formed an essential conceptual axis in Greco-Roman Egypt, around which structures of signification, domination and legitimation were all instantiated. The antithesis between stable government and prosperity on the one hand and chaos and war on the other is a well known theme in literature from the ancient world.¹⁵⁴ But anomie need not refer only to extremities like generalised conditions of lawlessness and disorder brought about by civil unrest or war, even if these could be frequent enough within Egypt of both the Hellenistic and the Roman periods.¹⁵⁵ It is a term which can characterise the violence within small villages between individuals or groups, social disruption caused by economic stress, famine, drought, or sickness. At this point we see how it blends with the more narrow idea of breach of the law or ethical norms. In the Greek thought of the classical period ἀνομία appears in many associated ideas, such as, inhumanity, impiety and injustice. We will see that these find frequent correlates in the sources from the Greco-Roman period and their nemesis is expressed in corresponding and detoxifying positive

153 *Anomie: History and Meanings* (Allen & Unwin, Boston, 1987), 8.

154 Eg Anonymus Iamblichi fr 6.1 contrasted εὐνομία and ἀνομία; cf Isoc., *Panegy.* 39; Plut., *Moralia* 755B.

155 J. Bingen, "Les tensions structurelles de la société ptolémaïque", in *Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia, Napoli, 19-26 maggio, 1983*, vols I-III (Centro Internazionale per lo Studio dei Papiri Ercolanesi, Naples, 1984), 921-937, presents a generally accepted view that Ptolemaic Egypt had inherent structural tensions from III BC, between Greeks and Greeks and Egyptians, which grew worse in II and I BC, resulting in the weakening of the sovereign's rule, Egyptian revolts and dynastic discord. See also F.W. Walbank, *The Hellenistic World* (Fontana, 1981), 119. In the Roman period note the Alexandrian pogrom against the Jews in 38 AD, the revolt of the Jews of Egypt in 115-7 AD and the uprising, centred in the Boukolia marshes and led by an Egyptian priest, of 172-3 AD which had to be put down by the governor of Syria: See N. Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*, 201, 205. Rostovtzeff, *SEHRE*, 677 fn 52, records also the general disturbances in Egypt during the time of Antoninus Pius and the wholesale depopulation of some villages at the end of II AD. See further chapter 3.

virtues of legitimated officials, such mercy, *φιλανθρωπία* and the rule of law. So the confrontation between the legitimate and illegitimate was a basic and continuous theme in those documents from Greco-Roman which dealt with disputes, especially those arising from behaviour which involved transgression of normative values.¹⁵⁶

Consequently, the tension between *εὐνομία* and *ἀνομία* is central to the legitimation of the power of monarchs and officials. The asymmetries of domination inherent in the institutionalised position and power of monarchs and officials presented a beneficial side to the population because they were perceived as a source of stability by helping to ameliorate and neutralise the anomic effects of asymmetries of power in personal or extra-institutional social relations. Very often such responses were expressed in language which set the positive virtues of the sovereign and his officials in opposition to the illegitimacy of wrongdoers. The designation of monarchs and officials in roles defined by positive ethical and ideal attributes such as saviour, carer, father or helper were fulcrums of social stability at a conceptual level and they were given further definition by descriptions of wrongdoers as perpetrators of anomic behaviour, evil, unjust or extortionate.

Here we must introduce another concept which is directly connected with the tension between legitimacy and social instability. Institutions must be represented by and function through human agency. In bringing about the functioning of institutions these agents fill *roles*. At the heart of this concept is the observation that social individuals and groups express capacities and perform actions which are regulated or set in patterns of regularity which represent the institutional order.¹⁵⁷ The idea of people filling roles therefore involves elements of Giddens' concept of "knowledgeable social actors". Roles have an on going significance and intelligibility

156 Orru, *Anomie*, ch 2, where he notes that in early Greek thought, as portrayed in Hesiod and Sophocles, *anomia* is associated with the breach of existing social norms and customs.

157 Runciman, *Treatise* at 8, says roles are positions in society "embodying consistently recurring patterns of institutional behaviour informed by mutually shared beliefs and expectations about their incumbent's capacity directly or indirectly to influence the behaviour of each other."

derived "from their utilisation in human conduct."¹⁵⁸ Actions are performed by individuals in roles in recurring patterns, informed by a shared body of knowledge, or culture, which is comprised of such things as norms, religious and ethical systems. Because a symbolic universe transcends and includes the institutional order, institutional roles become modes of participation in it. Some roles are linguistically objectivated in "highly complex symbolisations of reality, and represent them in experience" and may symbolically represent the order in its totality, which helps integrate the various representations of institutions.¹⁵⁹ By virtue of the social roles he or she plays the social actor is inducted into specific areas of socially objectivated knowledge.¹⁶⁰ So "the institutional order is real only in so far as it is realised in performed roles" and that, "on the other hand, roles are representative of an institutional order that defines their character and from which they derive their objective sense."¹⁶¹

The importance of these notions lies in their capacity to give a cogent explanation of the creation of meanings in social interactions. It is inherent, in fact, in the idea of legitimation that interactions will take place. When social theorists speak of a "process" of giving meaning to social institutions, of making them plausible and available, they are assuming interaction between social actors and institutions. Symbolic orders, seen as coagulations of symbols, linguistic frameworks, rules and procedures instantiated in social roles can be used to explain the language which we find in petitions and extant transcripts of court proceedings. The conceptual categories of classical rhetoric became attached to the roles of lawyer and litigant, judge and jury. Petitioner or litigant was a social role in the same way as an administrative official. The petitioner was helpless (*ἀβοηθητός*) while the official

158 Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 93. This formulation would encompass the recursive practices of social actors in structuration theory.

159 *Ibid.*, 93. This was the role of the Ptolemaic sovereign, and later the Roman emperor, and to a lesser extent powerful Roman procurators in Egypt such as the prefect and epistrategos. See further examples in chapter 5.

160 *Ibid.*, 94. In the case of Ptolemaic and Roman petitioners included the linguistic framework of ancient rhetorical theory and practice, via the scribes who generally wrote petitions. See further chapter 2.

161 *Ibid.*, 96

was saviour benefactor or helper.¹⁶² The relationship between petitioner and wrongdoer was often expressed in terms of disparities of power, especially in terms of honour and shame. The role of the official therefore was cast in the ethical symbolism of the social space where good order and stability were located, the wrongdoer where disorder and chaos lurked. When social actors were categorised in the role of petitioner, wrongdoer or official through the language of the document, they became clothed in the persona and the symbolic language appropriate to these roles, drawn from the symbolic universe and deployed to make sense of the relationships of power inherent in the situation giving rise to the petition or dispute and in the interaction with the official from whom assistance was sought.

1.5 LANGUAGE, MEANING AND INTERACTION

As we have already noted language is closely connected to intellectual activity, and this indicates how the models of legitimation and structuration can be linked to language use. Both legitimation and structuration provide, amongst other things, models for understanding how the power diffused through a social structure is collectively understood and given meaning. Here it is suggested that the connection is made by seeing language as a form of social action, usually requiring interaction between two or more persons. If language is understood as a form of social activity, it becomes easier to see how its use conveys and produces meaning. Interactions can take many different forms. Most often we think of face to face dialogue in language use. Face to face interaction can take place in a highly institutionalised context, like a court room. But linguistic interactions can be written, as in the exchange of letters. A petition to an official for help embodies such an interaction.

But in order to understand the symbolic meanings which are in play we need to look at the social context of the interaction. A concentration upon language as interaction makes it apparent that the *context* of the language use is a necessary and

162 See further chapters 5, 6 and 7

integral factor in the generation and understanding of meaning. Context is crucial to theories of language like pragmatics and discourse analysis because they emphasise an interactional perspective.¹⁶³ In theories of discourse language is seen as a form of social action, language as behaviour, in particular as a way to establish and maintain social relationships or negotiate different situations.¹⁶⁴ Wittgenstein understood meaning in language to be found in the intermeshing of language and practice.¹⁶⁵ Accordingly, the meanings produced cannot be limited to a theoretical level but must also be sought in the social and cultural context in which the language is used.¹⁶⁶ On that basis, texts provide important evidence for the production, expression, reproduction and transmission of collective conceptual phenomena, and thus can be understood at the same time both as a representation of and as constitutive of material social reality.¹⁶⁷

Further, the interactional approach to language neatly connects with the theory of structuration. Language is a critical part of the social and symbolic order of a culture.¹⁶⁸ In structuralist terms, if culture is a matrix of symbolic meanings, "a semiotic construct", the semantic system, or language, should be understood and studied as one of the primary semiotic systems which encodes those meanings. Thus even if there is much in culture that is not embedded in language,¹⁶⁹ it does articulate

163 A prime example is the work of E. Beneviste, *Problems in General Linguistics* (Uni. of Miami Press, Florida, 1971). See also G. Brown and G. Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, which defines discourse in terms of pragmatics. However, it must be pointed out that the work of Beneviste and those who follow him ultimately perpetuate the distinction between language as idealised system and language in historical context. They achieve "for the category of 'parole' (as discourse), what Saussure achieved in relation to 'langue' (as system)", see P. Goodrich, *Legal Discourse*, 135.

164 G. Brown and G. Yule, *Discourse Analysis* (CUP, Cambridge, 1986)

165 Giddens, *Social Theory Today*, 205

166 B.J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (SCM Press Ltd, 1983), 1 ff; R.A. Hudson, *Sociolinguistics*, p84 ff. C. Sourvinou-Inwood, op. cit.

167 See W.J. Bowsma, "Intellectual History in the 1980s: From the History of Ideas to History of Meaning", *JIH* 12 (1981), 279ff; S. Clark, 'The Annales Historians', in Skinner, *The Return of Grand Theory*, 179-98; Toews, 'Intellectual history'; R. Wuthnow, *Communities of Discourse* (Harvard University Press, Cam., Mass., 1989).

168 Crick, *Explorations*, 65-6; B.G. Blount (ed.), *Language, Culture and Society* (Winthrop Publishers Inc., 1974), esp. Part 2. See also P. Burke and R. Porter, *The Social History of Language* (CUP, 1987), 1

169 Crick, loc. cit. Philosophers as well as anthropologists have appreciated social actions express cultural meaning and that language use should be incorporated into general theories of action. This is seen especially in "speech act" theory. See, for example, J.L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1962), J. Searle (ed.), *The Philosophy of Language* (OUP, 1971), D.M. de Souza Filho, *Language and Action: a Reassessment of Speech Act Theory* (J. Benjamin Pub. Co., 1984)

collective cognitive systems, a society's cultural perceptions and thought.¹⁷⁰ So in functional linguistics, the semantic system of language is one form of the *actualisation* of the social structure.¹⁷¹ Language in fact has a dialectical relation to society: "language is controlled by the social structure, and the social structure is maintained and transmitted through language."¹⁷² Consequently, social actors and their use of language are critical to the maintenance and reproduction of, and therefore change in, the social structure. The type of behaviour or social practice is specifically designated as *discourse*, an "exchange of meanings" in different contexts, whereby "people act out the social structure, affirming their own statuses and roles, and establishing and transmitting the shared systems of value and of knowledge."¹⁷³

All this is also very apt to illuminate the notion of legitimation. The process of making the institutional order plausible and intellectually accessible through symbolic resources must be integral to or intimately linked with the maintenance and reproduction of the social structure. Language is fundamental to the articulation and dissemination of a symbolic universe and therefore to the process of legitimation. Berger and Luckmann express it as follows, "Any significant theme that...spans spheres of reality may be defined as a symbol, and the linguistic mode by which such transcendence is achieved may be called symbolic language...Language constructs immense edifices of symbolic representations that appear to tower over the reality of everyday life like gigantic presences from another world...In this manner symbolism and symbolic language become essential constituents of the reality of everyday life and of the common sense apprehension of this reality."¹⁷⁴ "Language provides the

170 Corfield, 'Introduction: historians and language', at 14 and works cited there.

171 M.A.K. Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic* (Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd, 1978), esp. Ch. 6, 113-4, 123. There may be some similarities here with Aristotle's notion of language which "actualises" (*ὅσα ἐνεργοῦντα σημαίνει*) in rhetoric: *Rhet.*, III, 11 ff

172 *Ibid.*, 89

173 Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*, 2. Modern jurisprudence suggests that the notion of discourse is also apt to explain the processes of legal systems. Goodrich has argued persuasively that law and its processes should be seen as forms of an institutional discursive practice, that is, social and political discourse, "as a rhetoric or dialogue between legal speaker, legal institution and the various codes, contexts and audiences of the law", see P. Goodrich, *Legal Discourse*, 7.

174 *Social Construction*, 55. In many ways this is close to the ideas of Kenneth Burke, "Human beings are symbol users. Objects and events are interpreted are given meaning. The symbols that are used are ways of naming and describing. In that process selections are made and meanings is created. Language cannot be

fundamental superimposition of logic on the objectivated social world. The edifice of legitimations is built upon language and uses language as its principal instrumentality."¹⁷⁵ Therefore when language is understood as a type of social behaviour, it can be seen how it constitutes the medium for continuance and change in the social structure and institutional order and the means by which to invoke symbols to give sense and plausibility to these for the general community. This can happen not only in every day dialogue but in all types of linguistic interaction including interaction through written instruments in an epistolographical tradition.

When we come to apply these theoretical principles to Greco-Roman Egypt it will be argued that there were structures of signification, domination and institutions of law in Egypt of the Greco-Roman period. The main focus of this thesis will be aspects of the structures of signification, the symbolic order and modes of discourse through which it was articulated. The language of certain categories of document embodied and indeed instantiated elements of the symbolic order. The language found in these documents is primary evidence of how the symbolic universe was employed to legitimate and make sense of power within the institutional order and the wider social structure. Principally it will be argued that the process of legitimating the power not only of Hellenistic kings or the Roman emperor, but also Ptolemaic and Roman officials involved the rhetorical and conventional or ritualistic use of language, which far from being meaningless was given added meaning by virtue of its formulaic character, which in fact was a prime indicator of its recursive use, since the same structures and lexical items were repeated consistently over centuries, even though change was also present. The symbolic order as it was applied to the personal and institutional power of the sovereign and his officials had to be imbued with a high degree of symbolic signification to maximise their efficacy and that is why there was

separated from action because what the action means and what it is addressed to is symbolic in its content. Action cannot be separated from language because the situation within which the actor acts is defined and understood by the actor through the concepts available to him.", quoted from R. Gusfield, *Kenneth Burke: On Symbols and Society* (University of Chicago Press, 1989), 10-11.

175 At 82. See also 93, 102-5.

a persistent resort to religious models and ideas, as we will see. But what is most interesting is that it can be seen that all of the three main types of structures of structuration theory coalesced in this process. The language embodied the symbolic order, while the context for these linguistic interactions was provided by the underlying structures of the legal system, its concepts, rules and procedures, and the structures of domination were represented by the officials whose positions were, (recursively) then the object of legitimation, and the social roles, such as debtor and creditor, landlord and tenant which were implicated in the fundamental economic categories of rent, taxation and liturgies. Oppositions between social types, such as, rich and poor and weak and strong, which comprised elements of the symbolic universe were employed as part of the process of legitimating formal positions of power, while reflecting realities of the structures of domination and the legal system. The definition of the illegitimate was a necessary part of defining the legitimate. Thus the characterisation of the behaviour of a wrongdoer as οὐ μετρίως or ἀνόμως or as contemptuous of weakness placed them in the symbolic realm of anomic chaos and also formed part of the legitimation of the official to whom petitions were addressed by defining his goodness and legitimacy through a contrast with their evil.

1.6 CONCLUSION

The argument in this chapter has sought to establish several things. First, language and language use comprise a crucial form of evidence for understanding the past. Secondly, the traditional attitudes to antiquity have not adequately explored the full dimensions of language as evidence of society and culture. Thirdly, this failure has largely come about because students of antiquity have remained somewhat constricted in their pool of analytical concepts. Fourthly, the comparative use of models, as a form of analytical theory derived from the social sciences, can provide a very satisfactory alternative to address deficiencies of method, and place language at the centre of social study. These comments set the context for the development of the rest of the thesis. The next chapter will discuss the sources in more detail from the

Ptolemaic and Roman periods of Egypt, basically III BC to IV AD. Chapter 3 will descend from the theoretical and will attempt to unite the theoretical ideas of this chapter with aspects of the economic and social structure of Greco-Roman Egypt. Chapter 4 is important because it looks at aspects of textual structure in petitions, within which ritualistic, religious, legal and ethical language was used to make sense of power. It sets some examples of petitions in full so that the reader can gain a better perspective on the ritual and formulaic features of the documents. Chapter 5 deals with relevant aspects of the symbolic order of Greco-Roman Egypt, especially concepts of euergetism, saviour and benefactor, but also normative motifs about such things as justice, the rule of law and compassionate qualities like mercy and chapter 6 discusses a particularly important element, namely the relationship of reciprocity articulated in the language of supplication. Chapter 7 shows how the social relationships in petitions were often articulated in terms of disparities of power, between the strong and the weak or the rich and the poor and this was used to build a picture of illegitimate power confronting the stability of the current structure. It will be seen how petitioners used symbolic language to set their own weakness in contrast to the legitimate power of the official and the illegitimate power of the wrongdoer, which in turn established a confrontation between formal and personal power. Chapter 8 considers the connections between the language and structures of petitions and documents from other social spheres such as the religious to show that the ancient mentality used religious symbolism and concepts to respond to the power of not just monarchs but secular officials. Chapter 9 will provide a conclusion and attempt to tie the threads of the argument together.

CHAPTER 2.

SOURCES

Petitions, Speeches and Prayers

2.1 SOURCES

The model of social action which was outlined in chapter 1 suggests that the reality of social power in the ancient world was made sense of or "legitimated" through linguistic interactions which themselves exploited the content of a symbolic universe. The purpose of the present chapter is to consider the sources to which the model is to be applied. The thesis will use as its principal sources a body of documents in the category known usually as petitions, from which the opening quotations in the last chapter were taken. The reasons for this are discussed at length in what follows but we may note here that scholars have for many years been aware that petitions especially among the many types of document which have survived from the ancient world present us with a wide panorama of the mentality and customs of Greco-Roman Egypt.¹ However, the information gleaned from petitions will be compared with and supplemented with material from certain other specific sources, namely, the classical orators, transcripts of court proceedings from Greco-Roman Egypt, judicial prayers and the Greek novels. The reasons for these choices will also appear as the discussion progresses.

But first it is important to set some general parameters. To begin it is necessary to prescribe the chronological period which the evidence is to cover. The period considered in this thesis extends from about 304 BC to about mid IV AD. This temporal expanse will be broken, in discussion, into more specific intervals, following the conventions in scholastic discourse: the Ptolemaic (c.304 BC to the Battle of Actium in 31 BC), the Roman (31 BC to c. 290-305 AD or the reforms of Diocletian) and the early Byzantine (IV AD). Reference can certainly be made to

1 Eg O. Montevecchi, *La Papirologia* (Società editrice internazionale Torino, 1973)

papyri of later centuries for comparative purposes, since petitions and transcripts of court proceedings are extant until the time of the Arab conquests of Egypt in VII AD. The work of others has suggested that appropriate termination points may be II AD or III AD. The studies of Kovel'man lead him to conclude that a trend to abstract mentality in petitions began in II AD.² Zilliacus saw an important period of change in III AD.³

But there are good reasons for terminating the present study in IV AD. One reason is that scholars traditionally see the fourth century as the period of transition to what is called "late antiquity."⁴ The growth of abstract terms and conceptualisations of powerful figures in II and III AD developed out of the conceptual categories of the Ptolemaic and early Roman periods, and, as we will see in chapter 4, may indicate the influence of the Second Sophistic. But in IV AD the many substantial changes, which shaped late antiquity, or the Byzantine era, took place and the complexity of these and their relationship to the language of petitions require separate treatment, in the view of the present writer.⁵ Although many of the themes and linguistic motifs of earlier centuries continue into IV AD, one can point to the growth of Christianity and a more extensive reliance upon literary sources, such as the novels and the Christian literature, by the writers of petitions as factors which make the period late IV to VII AD apt for special treatment.⁶

We come then to the more difficult questions, which involve selection of evidence which best fits with the model set out in chapter 1. Evidence of language as

2 A.B. Kovel'man, "The Rhetoric of Petitions and its Influence on Popular Social Awareness in Roman Egypt." 168 *VDI*, 170-84 (in Russian)

3 H. Zilliacus, "Untersuchungen zu den abstrakten Anredeformen und Höflichkeitstiteln im Griechischen", *Comm. Hum. Litt.* XV.3 (1949), 1-111.

4 See for example R.S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton Uni. Press, Princeton, 1993)

5 This view is well supported by the study of H. Zilliacus, referred to in fn 3. He demonstrates how many words and concepts from the classical, Hellenistic and early Roman periods went to make up elements of the "Byzantine" style. But he also shows that IV AD was in many ways a point of departure for a new era which laid the ground for many later developments in late antiquity and the medieval period and for this reason the Byzantine style constituted a special type of language use, distinguished by its overwhelming preference for abstract concepts in address to powerful figures. See further chapter 5 below.

6 This is the point made by Kovel'man, "The Rhetoric of Petitions"; 'From Logos to Mythos' 28 *BASP* (1991) 135-152.

action presents a number of obvious problems in the study of past societies, but it is clear that the concept of linguistic interaction must be of major significance in determining the appropriate sources. On this basis alone certain types of linguistic evidence are of less utility than others. The sources must be ones in which the symbolic universe or universes of Greco-Roman Egypt can be identified, and which permit an analysis of the way language was used to make sense of social power. For historical purposes, "intellectual" phenomena can be found in a variety of cultural productions such as ritual, ceremony, and artistic works like sculpture and in architecture. Often discussion of intellectual history strays into a debate about "popular" versus "elite" forms of cultural expression. It is unnecessary here to embark upon a recitation of the elements of this problem except to note that the type of intellectual history which is envisaged in this thesis would generally be loosely classified as "popular". There have been several forays into the 'popular' dimensions of intellectual life in the ancient world. An exemplary work is the study of Greek popular morality at Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries by Sir Kenneth Dover.⁷ He used the literary genres of comedy, tragedy and rhetoric. But there are at least two major problems in trying to emulate his approach. On the one hand classical Athens was a special socio-political entity. On the other the nature of the Greco-Roman world was such that the bulk of the surviving written evidence, indeed the bulk of what we know as classical literature, was produced by a very small section of the population, a wealthy and educated elite. As a result scholars have been forced to look for intellectual material among the literary genres, especially philosophers, but also poetry and rhetoric. This has rather pushed non-literary documentation, such as the epigraphic evidence, into the background.⁸

7 K.J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford, 1974). Another example in English is L. Pearson, *Popular Ethics in Ancient Greece* (Stanford, 1962).

8 See the comments of David Whitehead, "Cardinal Virtues: the language of public approbation in democratic Athens", *Classica et Mediaevalia* 44 (1993) 37-75, esp. 38-43. It may be said however that one of the strengths of Dover's work on popular morality *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1974) is its extensive reference to rhetorical tracts. But these stand as evidence of popular attitudes because of the nature of the Athenian society and the close link between the general community and court processes provided by the jury system. Even a study such as that of C. Panagopoulos, "Vocabulaire et Mentalité dans les *Moralia* de Plutarque." in *Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne* 5 (1977) 197-

But literary genres are not likely to be the best sources for providing understanding of the more general population, at least if they are used in isolation. David Whitehead has argued, in relation to classical Athens, that any account of popular intellectual material must closely consider inscriptions as well, primarily because there is a clear disjunction between, say, a philosopher like Plato and inscriptions.⁹ The virtue of the latter type of source is that it can bring us closer to "popular" intellectual realities. If we want to study the structures of signification and legitimation, in particular the operation of symbolic systems instantiated in the language used in the smaller centres of Greco-Roman Egypt, the information comes principally from small parcels of text such as honorific inscriptions, and documents on papyrus like petitions and transcripts of court proceedings. Some examples are scratchings upon pot-shards and graffiti. But the papyri, mostly from Egypt, and the many inscriptions on stone are much more numerous and stand as an invaluable storehouse of information. They provide one of the best sources of material from which to glean an understanding of how the general populace articulated responses and attitudes on a range of matters, including their relationship to the social elite and institutional power.¹⁰

But of course not all types of document are the same. It is here that the concept of context is very significant. If we can identify a relatively stable social and institutional context which was characterised by interactive language use, especially in response to power and by which documentary sources were produced consistently over a long period, we have some good controlling parameters within which to conduct a systematic analysis. In this thesis we will use sources produced within the specific context formed by judicial and administrative institutions in Greco-Roman

235, although referring to inscriptions uses Plutarch as a kind of control to understand the language in the inscriptions.

- 9 "Cardinal Virtues, 42: "One finds immediately, for example, that half of the Platonic quartet of virtues, *andreia* and *sophia*, are scarcely referred to at all [in inscriptions], while others such as *eunoia* and *prothymia* receive a degree of attention that no reader of Plato alone could ever have forecast."
- 10 Sir Harold Bell noted the importance of petitions for social history in 1935, 'Proposals for a Social History of Greco-Roman Egypt,' *IV International Congress of Papyrology* (Florence, 1935), 39.

Egypt. These institutions are a good choice because, in structuration terms, they formed an institutional context in which structures of signification, the symbolic order, structures of domination and structures of normative regulation were all instantiated.¹¹ As we have argued, structure refers to the structural properties of social systems, which are comprised of rules and resources, and are instantiated in conduct, including linguistic conduct.¹² If we concentrate on rules for a moment, we can say that they have structuring qualities and the rules of social life are to be understood as generalised procedures, which can be formulated into legal systems. Those properties which are taken to be institutionalised, that is, to form institutions, are those with the greatest solidity across time and space.¹³ So the administrative and judicial institutions of Greco-Roman Egypt were constituted by the bundle of various rules, including laws, social values, especially the antithesis of honour and shame, and resources whereby processes such as the submitting of petitions, the formation of courts, processes of referral among officials, and the mode of rhetorical discourse in the language of petitions, were employed, enacted and reproduced. This enactment and reproduction continued for the entire period under consideration in this thesis, III BC to IV AD. This means that within the legal and administrative context, symbolic conceptualisations of powerful figures, both good and bad, coalesced with structural economic relationships, such as, landlord and tenant, or taxation, which underlay disparities of power, and with the conceptual systems of the law, and its rules and procedures, and disparities of power were given cognitive coherence through the modes of discourse, many of which were derived from ancient rhetoric.

More will be said on the economic and legal institutions in the next chapter but even though most would have a general comprehension of what these entailed, some words of caution are necessary. We can all easily assent to the suggestion that forensic institutions form a social context, but context is a problematical concept in

11 A. Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 1984), 31-3.

12 *Ibid.*, xxxi.

13 *Ibid.*, 21-24

itself. The mention of judicial and administrative context suggests one basic contextual dichotomy which is often resorted to, either consciously or unconsciously, namely, that between "public" and "private". Scholars have often classified the textual products of judicial and administrative institutions in Greco-Roman Egypt as "public" documents. However, beyond the difficulties of defining what is "private" and what is "public" in Greco-Roman Egypt, which we will mention in chapter 3, there is a very definite spatial and gender orientation in models of Mediterranean societies in which "public" equates to male space and "private" to female space.¹⁴ While this equation may be perfectly true and viable, in a discussion of language use there exists a potential for unnecessary misunderstandings which, in the view of the present writer, make the distinction unsuitable for the analysis of the collective symbolic order which was employed to make sense of power in the forensic contexts of Greco-Roman Egypt. As a consequence the question of context is best dealt with by reference to the formal or institutional versus informal or personal couplet which Shaw supports in his definitions of power, since although overlapping to some extent with an analysis based upon the "public" versus "private" dichotomy, they generally avoid its problems.¹⁵

Having said that, it is in fact relatively simple to recognise a social context in Greco-Roman Egypt to which linguistic interaction was integral and which almost by definition embraced tensions between formal, legitimate and institutional power on the one hand and informal, illegitimate and personal power on the other. In administrative and forensic areas, the Greeks and the Romans had a well developed system for the disposition of disputes and for processing the difficulties of individuals arising from their legal obligations and relations with the state. These are further discussed later, but it is well known that the volume of papyrus documents dated to the period during which the Greeks and then the Romans controlled Egypt has

14 See David Cohen, *Law, Sexuality and Society*, esp. ch. 4.

15 B.D. Shaw, "Josephus: Roman Power and Responses to It", *Athenaeum* 83 (1995), 357-390. See chapter 1, 41.

provided a vast amount of information about the administrative and judicial institutions, within which disputes were mediated and individual difficulties were confronted through the system of legal rules, social values and norms, especially ethical concepts like justice and mercy, as well as through the evocation of legitimate authority and the application of socially endorsed power, as we shall see in later chapters.¹⁶ There was between III BC and IV AD a great deal of development within administrative and legal institutions but at all times within them the amelioration of anomic tensions was critical. Thus a specific institutional environment can be identified which provides for the modern researcher a category of social context which can be treated as discrete for the purpose of analysis and within which it is possible to observe some of the particular dynamics of power relationships in Greco-Roman Egypt.

The nature and importance of administrative and legal institutions for Greco-Roman Egypt have ensured that there is available a large body of material which can be defined or classified by this institutional context. Letters, petitions and transcripts of judicial proceedings are its products and record or embody an interaction with institutional power and specifically do so not only within the framework of the legal system but also within a linguistic or rhetorical framework. So this thesis will concentrate upon the documents from the administrative and judicial context, but especially petitions. Most of these are papyrus documents or ostraka, but some are also inscribed on stone, such as petitions directed to the Roman emperor.¹⁷ There will also be some reference to sources such as inscriptions which fall outside the judicial and administrative context, for comparison and supplement. Petitions and transcripts of court proceedings contain the traces of the usually unseen lower classes,

16 See especially chapter 7, *passim*.

17 Petitions to Roman emperors inscribed in stone have survived and as will be seen in the next chapter they have substantial similarities to the structure of petitions which survive from Egypt, directed to officials such as the prefect. But it may be noted here that a petition to the prefect was clearly within the judicial and administrative context we have been discussing, while a petition to the emperor, such as the petition of the Scaptoparenians from Phrygia (*JG* Bulg IV 2236) to Gordian III (238 AD) could be said to have had a diplomatic dimension as well. Petitions on stone to lesser officials than the emperor also are found at various sites within the ancient Roman empire such as Ephesos, eg, *I Eph.* I 2.213 (88/9 AD), a petition to the proconsul Lucius Pompeius Apollonius about the Ephesian mysteries.

and something of the conceptual systems within which they operated and which they drew upon.¹⁸ However, the definition of context gives petitions and transcripts of proceedings a characteristic which is crucial.

The context defined by the institutional environment in which petitions were sent, and for that matter arguments were made in court rooms, is very important not only because it helps define the relevant evidence but also because it helps make clear the operation of the notion of social roles which was introduced in the last chapter. The language used in petitions helps demonstrate the interrelation between social roles and language use. When petitions were written and sent to a representative of the government the official was addressed in a particular role. This notion of the official or institutional role which a magistrate filled, as distinct from his informal persona, was understood in classical Athens. Demosthenes makes this clear in his speech against Meidias, saying there is a big difference between attacking a man in his capacity as a magistrate and attacking him as a private citizen. The former attack is something which concerns the entire city.¹⁹ Similarly, petitioners, as ideal typical representations of the weak and oppressed, not to mention advocates in court, filled a role. The petitioner, the wrongdoer and the official were cast in roles which provided points of access to the symbolic order which was comprised of linguistic resources within a framework of a special type of discourse. The way language was used to create these short texts took on an institutionalised character and the consistent resort to particular structures, phrases and words was in large part, though not totally, determined through association with these institutional roles and procedures.

Superficially, it is this which has given modern scholars the impression of "monotony" and stereotypical phraseology which we noted in the last chapter. But far from being inconsequential, repeated motifs and the formulaic nature of the language,

18 The role of the petition as a vehicle for the *humiliores* to articulate their problems is plain in a later Roman text like P.Cair.Isidor. 73 (314 AD) in which the petitioners call themselves ἡμεῖς ἐλάττωνας ἄγροικοι, ἐλάττονες being the Greek equivalent of *humiliores*.

19 Dem XXI.31-5. See also Cohen, *Law, Sexuality and Society*, at 71-2

especially in petitions, constitute a positive attribute, especially when used to examine how popular intellectual phenomena develop or continue over long periods.²⁰ The discourse of administrative and judicial institutions was directed towards the invocation of power and the procedures for the redress of wrongs and approaches to the government were informed by a version of truth and reality which was basic "to meaningful interchange".²¹ Sir Kenneth Dover makes this point clearly in discussing the forensic orators of Athens:²²

"A speaker in a lawcourt stood to lose money, property, his political rights, even on occasion his life...it was of the utmost importance that the speaker should adopt a *persona* which would convey a good impression. He could not afford to express or imply beliefs or principles which were likely to be offensive to the jury; at the same time, it was important that he should impose a discreditable *persona* upon his adversary. For this reason forensic oratory should be treated as our main source of data on popular morality.

In Greco-Roman Egypt, all of the roles of petitioner, official, scribe and advocate were informed by the beliefs and expectations of the prevailing culture, as they were understood to apply in the forensic or administrative context. As will be seen, this culture, at an intellectual level, drew a close connection between power and law and set up a continuous resonance between legitimate power, preservation, help and justice and good government on the one hand and illegitimate power, hybris, extortion, illegality, violence and wrongdoing on the other.²³

2.2 PETITIONS AND LETTERS

There has been no shortage of studies of petitions. Ptolemaic petitions have been given careful consideration by Di Bitonto, in a three part formal or structural analysis, the first concerning petitions to the king,²⁴ the second petitions to officials,²⁵ and the third dealing with fragments.²⁶ Although there appears to have been no exactly

20 A point made by David Whitehead in relation to inscriptions: "Cardinal Virtues", 42.

21 As Ober, 'Power and Oratory in Democratic Athens', puts it in Worthington, *Persuasion*, 87.

22 *Popular Morality*, at 5-6

23 Which is not to say that the concepts and metaphors of the forensic context were thought appropriate willy nilly to other contexts. Demosthenes XIII 17 shows that the ancient Athenians could distinguish different sets of attitudes for different contexts. In that speech the distinction is between being frightening under arms and kindly (φιλόανθρωπος) in courts. See also Dover, *Popular Morality*, 200.

24 Di Bitonto (1967), 5-57.

25 Di Bitonto (1968), 53-107.

26 "Frammenti di petizioni tolemaiche", *Aegyptus* 56 (1976), 107-143

similar structural study of petitions from the Roman period, White made a study of some seventy-one petitions on the basis of which he has drawn general conclusions about the structure of the official petition, for both the Ptolemaic and Roman periods.²⁷ More recently, Bureth undertook a detailed study of the language used in Roman petitions.²⁸ Others have examined petitions to certain specific officials: Reinmuth and Foti Talamanca considered petitions to the prefect, though as part of a more general study of the prefect;²⁹ Thomas, who examined petitions to the epistrategos in both the Ptolemaic and the Roman periods,³⁰ has also made a study of the *subscriptions* to petitions to officials of Roman Egypt.³¹ Mitteis made a more general study of the content of all the petitions available to him in 1909-10.³² One thing which is particularly obvious about these studies is their focus upon juristic and procedural concerns connected with petitions.³³

In all these studies, it is difficult to find encompassing definitions of petitions. It is true that many scholars have identified petitions by reference to a series of technical terms or juristic categories. In the Ptolemaic era, a petition to the king (and queen, as they were often invoked together) was strictly called an ἔντευξις, while petitions to lesser officials were, strictly speaking, designated by the technical term ὑπόμνημα, although Di Bitonto includes προσαγγέλματα of the second and first centuries BC in her study of petitions, on the basis that after the third century BC προσαγγέλματα lose their unique character and are confused in form with the

27 J.L. White, *The Form & Structure of the Official Petition* (Missoula, 1972), although as J.D. Thomas, "Subscriptions to Petitions to Officials in Roman Egypt." in W. Peremans (et al.) *Egypt and the Hellenistic World* (Studia Hellenistica 27)(Lovanii, 1983), 369-382, at 369 points out, White's study suffers from the relatively small number of documents which he relies upon (about 70).

28 P. Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine* (Diss. Uni de Strasbourg, 1979).

29 O.W. Reinmuth, *The Prefect of Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian* : Klio Beiheft 34 (Scientia Verlag Aalen, Leipzig, 1965); G. Foti-Talamanca, *Ricerche sul processo nell'Egitto greco-romano* I (Milano, 1974), II (Milan, 1979)

30 J. David Thomas, *The epistrategos in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt* , Part 1 "The Ptolemaic Epistrategos", 60-69, Part 2 "The Roman Epistrategos", ch. 10.

31 Thomas, "Subscriptions to Petitions to Officials in Roman Egypt.", fn 21.

32 L. Mitteis, *Zur Lehre von den Libellen* (Sitzb. Leipzig 1910), 61-126.

33 See also H. Braunert and U. Schlag, *JJP* 18 (1974), The concentration upon these sorts of legal questions can cause problems, especially when studies try to analyse petitions in terms of modern legal issues, such as whether the enteuxis introduced a "true" judicial proceeding or simply sought the intervention of an official who would use his coercive capabilities: eg, the works noted by J. Modrzejewski, "Bibliographie de Papyrologie Juridique", *AfP* 26(1978), 161-233 at 200.

ὑπόμνημα.³⁴ It is however wise to remain a little flexible on the question of terminology. For example, BGU VIII 1825 (I BC) has ἔντευξις as the word for an application to the chrematistae in a dispute over a dowry.

In the Roman period, things become more complicated. Petitions to the Emperor were generally called *libelli* in Latin.³⁵ But in Egypt Bureth identifies eight terms for complaints and requests distinguished along juristic lines, as follows. First there is the term ἀναφορά which is soon replaced by the term ἀναφορίον. These terms seem especially frequent in the Oxyrhynchite nome and the Heptanomia but after the reign of Antoninus extend to the Fayoum. According to the Bureth, these terms designate initially a "true" plaint, but later a "memorandum" as well.³⁶ Secondly, the term ἔγκλημα was used from early in the Roman period to express the document by which an accusation was made against someone.³⁷ Thirdly, there were terms deriving from the verb of request, ἀξιῶ, namely, ἀξίωμα and ἀξίωσις.³⁸ Fourthly, ἔντευξις, inherited from the Ptolemaic period, still was used as a word for petition in III-IV AD, although sometimes replaced by ἐντυχία, while the verb ἐντυγχάνω remained common³⁹ Fifthly, requests to the prefect could be in the form of either the ἐπιστολή or the ὑπόμνημα, which carried over from the Ptolemaic period as the formal designation of petitions to almost any official. Sixthly, in II AD the word βιβλίδιον became the usual term for petitions to officials and more common than ὑπόμνημα.⁴⁰

34 Di Bitonto (1968), 5, 55. Requests using the verb προσαγγέλλω continue to appear in early Roman times eg BGU II 379 (27 May 67 AD)

35 W. Williams, "The *Libellus* Procedure and the Severan Papyri," in *JRS* 64 (1974), 86-103.

36 Eg ἀναφορά: P.Oxy. I 67 (338) AD. ἀναφορίον: P.Oxy XLIV 3164 (4 Sept 73 AD); P.Oxy XLVI 3274 (99-117 AD). P. Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, 7-8. The appropriateness of this distinction may be open to debate, but it is a question for juristic experts and not necessary to enter upon here. See further the comments in chapter 3, 88, where problems about the application modern juridical categories to ancient legal systems are touched on.

37 Ibid., 8

38 ἀξίωσις see eg P.Oxy XVII 2131 (207 AD). P.Oxy XVII 2133 (Late III AD) has both ἀξίωσις and δέησις. Note P.Coll.Youtie I 12 (177 BC) in which the petitioner says (20) [δέομαί σοι μετὰ πάσης] δεήσεως.

39 Despite suggestions that the word ἔντευξις was little used for petitions, eg, Taubenschlag, *Law of Greco-Roman Egypt*, 500. For ἔντευξις see P.Oxy XII 1408 (210-214 AD); P.Oxy XII 1558 (267 AD). P.Oxy VIII 1101 (367-70 AD) is a copy on papyrus of an edict of the prefect Flavius Eutolmius Tatianus, who held office in 367-370 AD. At ll 6 ff he says that he has learned ἐξ ἐν[τ]εύξεων that some people of non-military have been submitting petitions (βιβλία at l. 10) to the local praepositus, who only deals with military matters. The inscription IG Bulg IV 2236, which contains the petition of the town of Skaptopara to Gordian III (238 AD) contains the word ἔντευξις to mean "petition" (l.110). See the discussion by K. Hallof, "Die Inschrift von Skaptopara", *Chiron* 24 (1994), 405-429, at 425.

40 Reinmuth, *Prefect*, 85-6; J. David Thomas, *The epistrategos in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt*, Part 2 "The

Some time ago Wilcken expressed the view that, in the Roman period, βιβλίδιον was the regular term for 'petition' until the start of the Byzantine period at end of the third century, when βιβλίον and λίβελλος displaced it.⁴¹ Seventh, is the term βιβλίον, which appears after mid III AD, and differs from βιβλιδίον in that it designates a series of instruments in one dossier, which supports the view of Wilcken just referred to.⁴² Finally, there were various terms which appear from time to time such as, δέησις, ἐπιστολή, and ἰκετηρία.⁴³ The formula δέησις (καὶ) ἰκεσία was used for petitions to the emperor by IV AD, and became common in late antiquity to designate petitions generally.⁴⁴ But the present writer suspects that the systematisation implied by these categories may not have been strictly applied in ancient times for the range of terms which could be utilised to describe petitions.⁴⁵ Further, reference to this terminology does little on its own to indicate the essential nature of a petition, in a sociological sense, apart from showing that the modern word encompasses a number of different types of epistolographical communications. The juristic categories do not help particularly in understanding how the relationship between the powerful and weak was conceptualised. But they are worth mentioning because they do assist us in allowing us to appreciate better aspects of the forensic framework in which the language of petitions was employed.

Among the scholastic literature only White attempts to give a succinct definition of the petition, describing it as "a written plea addressed to a public official to rectify, by due process of law, the addressor's situation."⁴⁶ This definition has the

Roman Epistrategos", 115. Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite*, 10 states his conclusion that the ὑπόμνημα becomes more confined at the moment when βιβλίδιον appears under Antoninus, and signalled further penetration of Roman law into Egypt.

41 U. Wilcken, *AfP* V, 262f

42 Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite*, 10

43 Ibid. δέησις can be found in the Ptolemaic period as in expression such as [δέομαι οὖν σου μετὰ πάσης δεήσεως προτάξαι in P.Tebt. III:1 769 (237/6-212/11 BC), 82. See also P.Oxy XII 1469 (298 AD). Bureth, *ibid.*, seems to think that ἐπιστολή refers to a document for the internal workings of the administration.

44 δέησις (καὶ) ἰκεσία: P.Ryl. IV 617 (317 AD) Constantine and Licinius; P.Oxy I 130 and 131, P.Oxy XXVIII 2479 (VI AD).

45 Compare the comments of Rosalind Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (CUP, Cambridge, 1992), at 134-5, concerning the unsystematic use of terminology for documents in the classical period.

46 White, *Form and Structure*, 2, fn 2. The elements of this definition are important, because it allows us to distinguish documents, which are also requests, in substantially similar form to a petition, but which do not seek redress for some wrong, such as the corn dole archive in P.Oxy XL 2892-2922. The editors of P.Oxy

virtue of capturing the salient characteristics of petitions: the act of writing and presenting a petition began a process the object of which was to induce the administration to intervene in the petitioner's personal situation, whether the petitioner was a group or an individual. The reference in the definition to the "public" official and the "due process of law" are important, because they allude to characteristics which distinguish petitions from other types of ordinary correspondence. However, we rejected the appellation "public" above, and the reference to "due process of law" carries connotations, which are too strong, of modern juristic concerns. If the reference to "due process" is meant to imply a series of distinctions between administrative and judicial powers, for example, among institutional officials in the Greco-Roman world, then for reasons discussed in the next chapter it can be misleading.⁴⁷ Consequently, we are better advised to recast these elements of the definition to indicate that *petitions were a type of written communication addressed to a person possessing formal or institutional and legitimate power, to exercise that power within the parameters of his role for the assistance of the petitioner in a misfortune not involving others or against a person or group which has misused or is threatening to misuse informal power against the petitioner*. Such a definition would for example cover the many letters to Zenon of III BC which were in form and content almost identical to petitions but would otherwise fall outside White's definition, because Zenon was not a "public" official, nor is it clear that he could give assistance only "by due process of law", as opposed to assistance by the exercise of a fiat attaching to his position as the agent of Apollonios which no doubt embodied a type of power, which was both personal and legitimate. But on either definition petitions certainly "reflect individual perceptions of rights and the role of government in their protection".⁴⁸ Sometimes the assistance is to take the form of direct

LVIII 3916, in their introduction suggest that the function of petitions was to obtain direct government intervention or, if offenders were unknown, to stand as an official record of wrongdoing in case the possibility of redress arose at some point in the future.

47 See chapter 3, 93 below.

48 R.L.B. Morris, "Reflections of Citizen Attitudes in Petitions from Roman Oxyrhynchus" in *Proceedings of the XVI Congress of Papyrology* July, 1980 (= ASP 23) (Scholars Press, 1981), 23-31.

intervention. At other times the purpose is to achieve some intermediate step, such a registration of the petition, pending a law suit.⁴⁹ At all events, the document itself in every period was part of a set of rational procedures in the forensic context and defined by underlying assumptions about the power of the official to whom it was addressed.

The nature of the petition as a written communication places it in the general tradition of ancient epistolography.⁵⁰ This observation is of great importance. It was made clear in the previous chapter that interaction is a fundamental part of the model of legitimation. The present work is concerned to study how meanings were produced and reproduced in certain types of linguistic interactions in Greco-Roman Egypt, but by the more general population, not so much by the ruling elite. The writing of letters was undoubtedly a very important form of linguistic interaction in the ancient world. Letters were of course fundamental for the communication of information in the ancient world. Harris suggests that the making of written complaints became a standard procedure as a result of the process of bureaucratisation in Ptolemaic Egypt, and that is a commonly held view.⁵¹ But written communication in the ancient world had other values besides the simple objective of communication. As Harris himself notes, a written text may have a partly or largely symbolic function, and the fact of writing itself lends dignity to the communication; writing had associations with the wishes and power of the government.⁵² Private letters seem often, in the early Ptolemaic period, to be inspired by some emergency and there may have been some tradition in the ancient world of utilising written letters rather than

49 This was a common form of petition from I to III AD. See the introduction to P.Ant. II 88 (221 AD).

50 This has been made clear by many scholars. See chapter 3 page 96; Collomp, *Recherches*, 72; M. Stirewalt, *Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography* (Scholars Press, 1993); J.L. White, *The Form and Structure: "The Greek Documentary Letter Tradition"*, in J.L. White, *Studies in Ancient Greek Letter Writing* (=Semeia 22) (California Uni, Chicago, 1982), 89-112; H.A. Steen, "Les Clichés épistolaires dans les Lettres sur Papyrus Grecques", *Classica et Mediaevalia* I (1938), 119-78.

51 W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Harvard, Cam. Mass., 1989), 123, "Such are the symptoms of administrative efficiency and of bureaucratic control.", although he may be speaking only about the written complaints known as προσγγέλματα. The procedure for submitting petitions was no doubt influenced by the same process.

52 *Ancient Literacy*, 28, 124. See T. Lindes, "Inscriptions and Orality", *Symb. Osl.* LXVII (1992), 27-40, who argues that temple inventories at Delos in the Hellenistic period functioned in part as memorials to the scrupulous administration of the sacred treasures of the temple, and testified to the piety of the city.

simply oral messengers to underscore the desperation of the writer and his need of help.⁵³ We may note also the comment of Koskenniemi that the function of the Ptolemaic letter was to authorise the courier to speak in the name of the sender.⁵⁴

Letters, including private letters, were usually used only for communication across large distances, and there is no evidence that they were used for communication within villages or towns in Ptolemaic or Roman times.⁵⁵ This of course is a matter of some significance, especially in a society in which communication was beset by issues of physical as well as social distance. Face to face interaction with powerful officials was physically and socially impossible for most of the population most of the time. So the written communication was one of the few ways that the general population could interact with powerful officials.⁵⁶ In a society in which the predominant method of communication in most areas was oral, it is to be expected that in many ways the model for written communication was oral communication.⁵⁷ Ancient theorists upon epistolary style drew a clear connection between oral and written communication. In the treatise *On Style* (Περὶ Ἑρμηνείας) usually attributed to Demetrius, the author has the following apposite observations to make upon letter writing:

Ἀρτέμων μὲν οὖν ὁ τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους ἀναγράψας ἐπιστολάς φησιν, ὅτι δεῖ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τρόπῳ διάλογόν τε γράφειν καὶ ἐπιστολάς· εἶναι γὰρ τὴν ἐπιστολὴν οἷον τὸ ἕτερον μέρος τοῦ διαλόγου. (224) Καὶ λέγει μὲν τι ἴσως, οὐ μὴν ἅπαν· δεῖ γὰρ ὑποκατεσκευάσθαι πῶς μᾶλλον τοῦ διαλόγου τὴν ἐπιστολήν· ὁ μὲν γὰρ μιμεῖται αὐτοσχεδιάζοντα, ἡ δὲ γράφεται καὶ δῶρον πέμπεται τρόπον τινα.

"Artemon, the editor of Aristotle's letters, says that a letter ought to be written in the same manner as a dialogue, a letter being regarded by him as one of the two sides of a dialogue. (224) There is perhaps some truth in what he says, but not the whole truth. The letter should be a little more studied than the dialogue, since the latter reproduces an extemporary utterance, while the

53 *Ancient Literacy*, 56, 128.

54 H. Koskenniemi, *Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr.* (Helsinki, 1956), at 81.

55 Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 128 and 229. See also F.X.J. Exler, *The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter: A Study in Greek Epistolography* (Catholic Uni of Am., 1923); G. Tibiletti, *Le lettere private nei papiri greci del III e IV secolo d.C.* (Milan, 1979).

56 "The letter is a written message, which is sent because the corresponding parties are separated spatially. The letter is a written means of keeping oral conversation in motion." J.L. White, "The Greek Documentary Letter Tradition", at 91.

57 See T. Lindes, "Inscriptions and Orality".

former is committed to writing and is (in a way) sent as a gift."

Although the author is mainly speaking about private letter writing, this passage indicates well how the ancient mind placed letter writing in broadly the same category as oral communication.⁵⁸

Finally we may also note that there was a physical dimension to the interaction. In the Ptolemaic period, the king was the supreme judge, so ἐντεύξεις εἰς τὸ τοῦ βασιλέως ὄνομα were handed directly to him in person or to his representative, in Alexandria or in the country.⁵⁹ In the III century BC it was permitted to submit ἐντεύξεις to the strategos or to the chrematists as delegates of the king. But this delegation was abolished for the succeeding two centuries, so that petitions to the king went directly to him.⁶⁰ Subjects could approach the Roman emperor by means of two types of written document, the letter (*epistula*) or petition (*libellus*), although, in something of a paradox, it seems petitions had to be delivered to the emperor *in person*, by the petitioner or an agent, which meant that a relative few subjects could use the *libellus* procedure.⁶¹ This made the *libellus* procedure more suitable for communities and great men, and the surviving petitions to emperors bear this out.⁶² We noted above that the prefect could be approached in writing of one of two forms: either a ὑπόμνημα, that is, "memorandum" or an ἐπιστολή, which

58 A factor which may have been relevant in this regard is that official and diplomatic letters in earlier periods in Greece were a subordinated accompaniment to the oral message of the herald or embassy: see M. Stirewalt, *Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography*, at 9. Collomp, *Recherches*, 77ff, follows Brinkman (*Rh. Mus.* LXIV (1909), 307) in noting that the τύποι ἐπιστολικοί of Demetrius left a lot of room for traditional and stereotypical language. Collomp argued that the regular enteuxis bore a strong resemblance to the συστατική, the letter of recommendation. Dem. *De Eloc.* §234 also notes that sometimes letters must be written to kings or countries, and such letters must be composed "in a slightly heightened tone" This perceived identification between oral communication and letter writing affects the way in which we view petitions, and it may suggest a way of understanding at least some aspects of the connection between written communications to other powerful figures in the ancient world, like deities, illustrated by such phenomena as *Himmelsbriefe*, letters between gods and men, which will be discussed further in chapter 8.

59 Taubenschlag, *Law of Greco-Roman Egypt*, 495ff suggests that petitions could be presented to him when he travelled διὰ θυρίδος. See also *Yale Papyri I* (=American Studies in Papyrology II)(New Haven and Toronto, 1967), at 124; Di Bitonto (1967) at 12.

60 See eg P.Tebt. III:1 790 (II BC) in which the petitioners mention that they had to sail from Oxyrhyncha to Alexandria to present a petition to the king and queen.(12ff)

61 W. Williams, 'The *libellus* Procedure and the Severan Papyri', *JRS* (1974), 86-103, at 94; 'Subscriptiones to emperors, 40 ZPE (1980), 283, disagreeing with U. Wilcken, 'Zu den Kaiserreskripten', *Hermes* iv (1920), 1-42; 'Zur *propositio libellorum*', *AfP* ix, 15-23; William's view is adopted by A. Honoré, *Emperors and Lawyers*² (Oxford, 1994), 33.

62 See P.J. Parsons, "Petitions and a letter: The Grammarian's Complaint" No. 66 in *Collectanea Papyrologica* (Bonn, 1976), 416.

was a "letter" and the more informal of the two. But, subject to questions about placing petitions at the feet of statues, a phenomenon which appears about II AD, it seems that petitions were almost always presented to Roman officials in Egypt *in person*.⁶³ The theme of personal presentation which seems to have been very durable over the Ptolemaic and Roman administrations can be seen as an important ritual dimension to the linguistic aspects of the petition and shows where the petition differed from the ordinary letter which usually lacked the face to face presentation. Petitions received responses, either in the form of a notation in the Ptolemaic period or the *subscriptions* of the Roman period.⁶⁴ The Roman emperor added subscriptions to the petitions received in his office and these were returned to the petitioner to become themselves sources of law.⁶⁵ The prefect and other officials answered petitions by means of a subscription which was analogous to the subscriptions of the emperor, at least in the case of the prefect.⁶⁶

The concept of interaction makes it clear that not all types of evidence are as apposite for the present study as others and gives powerful reinforcement to the decision to rely upon documents such as petitions which come from a clear epistolographic tradition. When seeking evidence of provincial intellectual life in the Greco-Roman world, scholars have resorted to papyrus documents, coins and inscriptions, but often in a rather undifferentiated way. That is fine depending upon the nature and objective of the particular study. But in physical and linguistic interaction petitions possess a quality which other types of evidence lack. The point can be made clearer by comparing petitions on papyri with inscriptions. They each

63 See Thomas, *The Epistrategos* II, at 116 who points out that presentation in person could mean through a representative or agent. In BGU II 467 (c 177 AD) the petitioner is a woman called Soeris who complains about the taking of some camels and says that she petitioned the strategos through her slave Melas (ὁ δὲ Μέλ[α]νος δούλου μου) since she herself was sick. From II AD it seems petitions could be placed at the feet of imperial statues. This is problematic and is discussed more fully in chapter 8.

64 For the Ptolemaic period see eg BGU VIII 1827 (52-1 BC). See also J.D. Thomas, "Subscriptions to Petitions to Officials in Roman Egypt", 369-382. Reinmuth, *Prefect of Egypt*, 89ff, where he argues that subscriptions to petitions to the prefect could take at least 6 forms. On subscriptions to petitions to the Roman epistrategos see Thomas, *The Roman Epistrategos*, 116ff.

65 A. Honoré, *Emperors and Lawyers*; W. Turpin, "Imperial Subscriptions and the Administration of Justice", *JRS* 81 (1991), 101-118, who argues that subscriptions from emperors which survive in petitions often appear to be of little value to the petitioners.

66 J.D. Thomas, "Subscriptions to Petitions to Officials in Roman Egypt." See for example P.Oxy XLIII 3094 (217-18 AD).

perform different social functions.⁶⁷ An honorary inscription is raised in public approbation, and like an inscription of the text of a law or a treaty has a quality which though static also fills a symbolic function.⁶⁸ For that reason the language of honorary inscriptions gives some insight into "popular" values, especially the language of the ideology of euergetism, which flourished especially in II to III AD.⁶⁹ There can be no doubt that the ideology of euergetism was one sub-set of the symbolic universe which played its part to legitimate elements of the social structure.⁷⁰ The language of honorary inscriptions may therefore often bear superficial similarity to language of petitions, which also defers to the prestige of the recipient.

However, inscriptions do not, usually, deal with the specific problems of ordinary lives, nor give an insight into how elements of the collective symbolic system could be manipulated to deal with those problems, as petitions and court proceedings often do. Quite the opposite. Honorific inscriptions honour the deeds of

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- 67 This distinction between petitions and inscriptions might be perhaps blurred somewhat by the existence of petitions on stone, of which there are a number of examples, mostly from the Roman period and outside Egypt, but see D.J. Crawford, "A Ptolemaic Petition on Stone", *Chr. d'Eg.* 42 (1967), 355-9 and T. Reekmans, "Une enteuxis ptolémaïque sur pierre", *Chr. d'Eg.* 43 (1968), 363-4. Petitions to Ptolemaic monarchs could be inscribed on stone as a memorial of the legal determination of the king as in the case of the laws of asylum recorded in IG Fayum 112, 113 and 136. Petitions to Roman emperors were often inscribed upon stone, for similar sorts of reasons but usually as part of a process to enhance the status of the emperor's rescript. Some well known examples are: FIRA No 258 = P.F. Girard, *Textes de droit romain* (Paris, 1937), No 199 = FIRA, No 495, a petition inscribed on limestone and found at Souk-el-Khmis in Tunisia in 1879, from tenants to Commodus; F.F. Abbott and A.C. Johnson, *Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire* (Princeton, 1926), No 139, a petition of the Skaptoparenians to Gordian III 238 AD, discovered in 1868 near Dschumaja, Bulgaria; M. Rostovzev, *ESHRE* no 556, a petition of the Aragenians, an inscription found at Yapuldjan in Asia Minor in 1897, on what was an estate in Phrygia. *MAMA* 7, 305 = a petition of the Orcistans, from part of an inscription on a pillar found in 1752 on the site of Orcistus, a town of Phrygia in Asia Minor. However, it is possible to find in other parts of the empire than Egypt the record of a petition to the emperor and the transcript of proceedings connected with it raised on stone to honour the advocate who presented the case to the emperor. The inscription is *IG Bulg IV* 2236, the only surviving copy of an entire petition to the emperor (Gordian III, 238 AD). The most complete and up to date text can be found in K. Hallof, "Die Inschrift von Skaptopara", *Chiron* 24 (1994), 405-429. The restorations of Hallof show that ll 108 to 164 of his text are taken from official proceedings at which a praetorian named Pyrrus represented his village, Skaptopara, before the governor. T. Hauken, "Reflections on New Readings in the Skaptopara Inscription (*IG Bulg IV* 2236)", *Symb. Osl.* LXX (1995), 82-94, at 89 concludes that the purpose of the inscription is to record privately or semi-officially the meritorious efforts of Aurelius Pyrrus.
- 68 See R. Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*, 84. Cf M.-T. Lenger, "La notion de «bienfait» (philanthrôpon) royal et les ordonnances des rois Lagides." in *Studi in Onore di V. Arangio-Ruiz* (Naples, 1956), 483-499, esp. 488-494; W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 28.
- 69 The studies of Whitehead, Schubart and Panagopoulos show this. Whitehead's study related to classical Athens. Schubart used inscriptions and papyri to systematise the content of the kingly ideal from the Hellenistic world, and C. Panagopoulos, "Vocabulaire et Mentalité dans les *Moralia* de Plutarque." in *Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne* 5 (1977), 197-235 relies specifically upon honorary inscriptions in connection with the works of Plutarch.
- 70 Panagopoulos, "Vocabulaire et Mentalité", concluded that honorary inscriptions were the principle ideological regulator of Greek society in the Roman period.

benefactors who were usually drawn from the ranks of the elite and the powerful. The language of euergetism in such inscriptions was not chosen or designed for interaction with the powerful figure to whom it was directed. Furthermore, the ideology of euergetism had its area of application in the collective responses of small communities to the regime of notables in their midst.⁷¹ In Egypt this would have been primarily the *metropoleis*.⁷² But many petitions in fact addressed language to social roles at a level above the notables in the metropoleis, and thus deal with quite different power relationships. This is particularly obvious in petitions in which notables request permission of the emperor or the prefect for some local benefaction.⁷³ A comparison with numismatic evidence underlines the special nature of petitions. Coins were issued by emperors and the language of imperial virtues (brief as it was) inscribed on them undoubtedly played a role as a "vehicle for the propagation of belief".⁷⁴ The symbolic virtues on coins are a prime example of the modern conception of propaganda, something originating from above. The language of approbation or adulation in petitions while certainly owing something to images and concepts from above reflected choices made by language users at the other end of the social equation, from scribes and the literate members of the small communities.

One further comparison can usefully be made. W.H. Harris noted that written material is not necessarily the best or most likely form for the transmission of intellectual phenomena, and in contexts of limited literacy oral communication is perhaps of more importance.⁷⁵ There is, of course, unlikely to be any surviving direct

71 This seems to be basically the view of Veyne, *Bread and Circuses*, 43.

72 It must be said the Veyne's definition of the regime of notables includes the statement that "a notable lives for politics but by politics.", *ibid.*, 42. It is not entirely clear what he means by this and whether he had in mind only the model of Greek cities in Greece and the East or whether the special situation of Egyptian metropoleis were supposed to be encompassed. The problem arises because it is generally thought that one feature which characterised Egyptian metropoleis under the Greeks and Romans was the absence of the traditional institutions within which political activities could be carried out, at least in the sense of town councils and broadly based elections for office, until II to III AD. However, A.K. Bowman & D. Rathbone, "Cities and Administration in Roman Egypt", *JRS* 82 (1992), 107-127, at 124-5 conclude that the Egyptian metropoleis "were to a significant degree functioning and behaving like the Greek poleis of other eastern provinces" in the Julio-Claudian period, and this may resolve the problem.

73 Eg P.Oxy IV 705 (200-2 AD) to the emperors Septimius Severus and Caracalla and P.Oxy XVII 2132 (c250 AD) to the prefect Appius Sabinus.

74 See A. Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Emperor and his Virtues', *Historia*, (1990), 298.

75 Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 231.

record of oral communication apart from the rather specialised transcripts from court proceedings or the proceedings of town councils. These cannot really tell us much about the extent to which the general population, outside those who received education, had ingested ideologies and other symbolic systems, although they can tell us a lot about the more educated section of society.

There is however at least one type of document which shows the organic dimension of linguistic interaction which honorific inscriptions lack, namely documents which report the content of public acclamations. Although very few examples survive, they provide a good comparison with honorific inscriptions because in many ways they have similar social functions, that is, the honouring of prestigious people, and with petitions because they record linguistic interaction. Two examples may be given. The first is a fragment of the acclamation received by Vespasian in Alexandria on his accession to the emperorship in 69 AD. The crowd apparently saluted him as Οὐεσπασιανὸς εἰς σωτῆρ καὶ εὐεργέτης.⁷⁶ Vespasian here is acclaimed by using the saviour and benefactor motif which we will see in chapter 5 was a staple of the language of petitions. We will see that the conception of the sovereign as saviour and benefactor was a fundamental aspect of the ruler cult in Egypt, and for the Hellenistic monarch, and thus probably the Roman emperor, the Greek words corresponded to basic indigenous ideas of the pharaoh. We will see in chapter 5 that the cult epithets σωτῆρ καὶ εὐεργέτης were used as forms of address in petitions to the Ptolemaic sovereign, the Roman emperor, prefect and epistrategos.

The second is P.Oxy. 41 (IV AD) which on its face is a report of a public meeting. It is drawn up to appear as an account of a popular demonstration made in honour of the prytanis at Oxyrhynchus on the occasion of a visit from the prefect. There is internal evidence which is highly suggestive of spontaneous language use by the people of Oxyrhynchus. At ll. 16ff, the prytanis says "I acknowledge with great

76 *AJP* 16 (1956) 111.

pleasure the honour which you do me, but I beg that these demonstrations be reserved for a legitimate occasion when you may make them with safety and I shall be justified in accepting them."⁷⁷

The editors date it to the late third or early fourth century, principally because two Roman emperors are indicated by the phrase "Αγουστοι κύριοι, meaning a period of joint rule. This and palaeographical considerations "make it probable that the κύριοι were Diocletian and Maximian." The crowd is effusive. They call the prytanis, Dioskoros, "governor for the humble" (τὸν ἄρχοντα τοῖς μετρίοις, l. 12) and the prefect (whose name does not appear) "beneficent prefect" (εὐεργ[έ]τα ἡγεμῶν, l. 14) and "saviour of the humble" (σωτήρ μετρίων, l. 22).⁷⁸ As we will see expressions like this are very reminiscent of phraseology from petitions. Furthermore, the people are asking for honours to be given to Dioskoros, and in so doing they use the verb δέομαι (ll. 9, 14, 22, 26) and the noun δέσις (ll. 9, 11) both of which are commonly used in and of petitions from the Greco-Roman period, as we saw earlier. It may be entirely a contrivance whose purpose is lost to us and circumspection is warranted.⁷⁹ But if the document even partly reflects a true historical situation, it is an indication that literacy and an education were not prerequisites for the consumption and transmission of elements of symbolic systems in the ancient world. It indicates that the more general population one way or another were cognisant of the forms of petitioning and the symbolic appellations which were used for officials and government. It is likely that the crowds in these two situations were deploying symbolic resources to create meanings for themselves as much as voicing any platitudes which the powerful official may have required.

77 "τὴν μὲν παρ' ὑμῶν τιμὴν ἀσπάζομαι καὶ γε ἐπὶ τούτῳ σφόδρα χαίρω· τὰς δὲ τοιαύταις] μαρτυρίας ἀξιῶ εἰς καιρὸν ἔννομον ὑπερτεθῆναι, ἐν [τούτῳ] καὶ ὑμῖς βεβαίως παρέχ[ον]τ[ες] καὶ ἐγὼ ἀσφαλῶ λαμβάνω". The translation is that of the editors.

78 This, it may be noted, is the designation given to the Roman emperors (it is uncertain which ones) in PSI XIV 1404, 9-10 (III AD): σωτήρων δὲ ἐμοῦ ἀνδρὸς μετρίου πολλὰ καμόντος.

79 The authenticity of the document as a genuine report of a public meeting gains support from the form of spontaneous acclamations which appear in the proceedings of the Oxyrhynchite senate, esp. P.Oxy XII 1413 and 1414 (270-5 AD), particularly 1414 in which the incumbent prytanis is also acclaimed and urged to continue in office despite being ill. See chapter 1, 27-8.

2.3 PETITIONS AND LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

Many of the same comments apply also to transcripts of legal proceedings. Legal proceedings by their nature comprise linguistic interactions which are conducted within a specialised institutional framework. Transcripts are a record of this interaction and at least in some instances, constitute a close representation of what was actually said to and by officials. R. A. Coles has undertaken the most detailed study of records of proceedings.⁸⁰ From the Ptolemaic to the Roman period these documents show a gradual change from the use of *oratio obliqua* to *oratio recta*, which becomes the standard in the first century AD. They also exhibit clear structural features, including, introductory formulae, the trial itself, the judgement (κρίσις), and a concluding section. Transcripts in *oratio obliqua* raise slightly more difficult questions because they are in reality the written form of a scribe's version of what others have said at a trial. Those in *oratio recta* are likely to show more clearly what was actually said, although the earlier surviving examples may not be verbatim reports but again a scribe's version.⁸¹ Further, a lot of the surviving papyri are private copies made from official records, so they were subject to the copyist's interpretative foibles.⁸² The point to be made however is that the transcripts on papyrus of proceedings in both courtrooms and the sittings of municipal senates in the Roman period come as close as we can get to actual linguistic interactions in institutional contexts. When the content of these transcripts is read with that of petitions we are able to build up something of a picture of the collective conceptual system which was articulated in the language.

There is of course a significant difference between spoken and written language as evidence. Indeed, a written document, like a petition, can have functional and procedural attributes, like initiating legal proceedings, which do not belong to a

80 R.A. Coles, *Reports of Proceedings in Papyri* (Pap. Brux. 4)(Brussels, 1966).

81 See Coles, *Reports of Proceedings*, Part I.

82 *Ibid.*, 16.

transcript. However, the evidence shows there were important connections between petitions and transcripts of proceedings. Petitions in the Ptolemaic period often formed part of the transcript of proceedings, because they were read at the start of the hearing, or were read onto the transcript at an early stage.⁸³ It is clear from surviving records of hearings before the Ptolemaic epistrategos that petitions were read out before him as part of the proceedings.⁸⁴ The reason for this in the Ptolemaic period may lie in the nature of the procedure for submitting petitions. The petition was drawn up and submitted, in III BC, to the strategos. In the office of the strategos copies were made either for his records or submission to the king or both. A copy might also be drawn for service on the person complained about either at this point or later. The strategos made his own subscription to the petition, and it then went to the epistates or the chrematistae, who tried to follow the suggestion in the subscription. When the accused person had presented his response at the trial the dispute was decided.⁸⁵ As we noted above, it seems that there was always a predisposition in the Roman period to require the presentation of petitions to officials *in person*, and Reinmuth follows Mitteis in suggesting that this distinguished petitions from the more informal ἐπιστολή, which could be sent as a letter to the prefect of Egypt.⁸⁶ In similar fashion to the Ptolemaic period there was a close connection between petitions and legal proceedings and it appears that the petition to the prefect was a prerequisite to taking legal proceedings against the wrongdoer. The prefect relied upon the content of the petition in deciding that the strategos, for example, should be instructed to summon a defendant to appear at court.⁸⁷ Petitions continued to fill the function of

83 Eg, UPZ II 161 (119 BC)(=P. Par. 15), UPZ II 162 (117 BC)(=P. Tor. I; Wil Chr. 31)(the "Hermiasprozess"). See *Reports of Proceedings*, at 46ff. See also P.Ent. 100 (246-221 BC); P.Ent. 101 (246-221 BC); P.Ent. 102 (III BC); P.Ent. 103 (c221 BC); P.Ent. 104 (246-221 BC); P.Ent. 105 (246-221 BC).

84 SB 4512.82-5; SB I 4638 (145-116 BC) and see Thomas, *The epistrategos*, Part I "The Ptolemaic Epistrategos", 63-4.

85 See *Yale Papyri I* (=American Studies in Papyrology II)(New Haven and Toronto, 1967), at 124.

86 Mitteis, *Ber. Ges. Wiss. Leipz.* 62 (1910), 86; *Prefect of Egypt*, 85-86. In P.Oxy II 237 Dionysia describes a communication from her father to the prefect Pomponius Faustus as an ἐπιστολή. Her father Chaeremon was an ex-gymnasiarch of Oxyrhynchus. The ἐπιστολή begins Χαρήμων Φανίου γυμνασιαρχίας τῆς Ὀξύρυγχειῶν πόλεως (Col. VI, l. 12), which is a notably different formula to that used in almost all petitions. Thomas, *The epistrategos* II, 115 expresses the view that the same distinction between petition and letter applied to the epistrategos.

87 Reinmuth, *Prefect of Egypt*, 94-5. Another way of starting proceedings was to issue a document such as P.Oxy XXXVIII 2852 Recto (104/5 AD).

laying necessary information for a trial before the relevant official, usually the prefect. Clearly the information in the petition was integral to the presentation of the petitioner's side of the dispute and its appearance in the transcript of a proceeding is quite logical. Further petitions sometimes, at least in the Roman period, incorporated the transcripts of earlier proceedings.⁸⁸ Indeed some petitions incorporate the transcript of proceedings, which itself incorporates another earlier petition.⁸⁹ So petitions were intimately linked with the articulation of the oral argument which they often preceded. As a result, the language of petitions and the language recorded in transcripts is sufficiently close to enable one to say that they record the same type of discourse governed by many of the same factors.⁹⁰

Petitions and, of course, legal proceedings exhibit clear rhetorical features, such as, discrete beginnings and conclusions, as well as distinctive structural features. They are extremely well suited for analysis in terms of the ancient rhetorical tradition, both because they involve discourse between speaker and audience designed to secure the adherence of the audience to the argument, and because they exhibit, as one would expect, many features of the classical art of rhetoric, rhetorical *topoi*, which by their nature are often the articulation of symbolic phenomena.⁹¹ This is doubly important because persuasive argumentation or rhetoric is the example *par excellence* of the crafted linguistic interaction to produce meaning.⁹² Interaction, between speaker and audience, is inherent in rhetorical argumentation. If we take up the notion of rhetoric as a set of strategic choices in language by knowledgeable social actors it becomes

88 For example, P.Oxy II 237 (186 AD); P. Strasb. 1018 (262 AD); P.Oxy XVIII 2187 (304 AD); P.Oxy LIV 3775 (342 AD).

89 SB XVI 12685 (4 Oct 139 AD).

90 Even if we do not go all the way with A.B. Kovel'man, 'Form Logos to Myth: Egyptian Petitions of the 5th-7th Centuries', in *BASP* 28 (1991) 135-152 at 137, where he says "plaintiff's speeches are identical to petitions."

91 Ober, *Mass and Elite*, 44 notes "Rhetorical topoi were repeated by different orators over time; they were therefore familiar but certainly not empty of content. Indeed, topoi were reiterated precisely because of their symbolic value and demonstrated power to influence an audience."

92 It has been noticed and argued by some in the pragmatics tradition that there is a link between classical rhetoric and pragmatics in linguistic theory. See, for example, J.B Benjamin, 'Performatives as a rhetorical construct', *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 9 (1976):84-95; B. Fraser and W. Nolen, 'The association of deference with linguistic form', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 27 (1981), 93-109; G.N. Leech, *Explorations in Semantics and Pragmatics* (J. Benjamins, Amsterdam, 1980); *Principles of Pragmatics* (Longman, London, 1983); R.D. Cherry, 'Politeness in Written Persuasion', *Journal of Pragmatics* 12 (1988) 63-81.

possible to see that language can be responsible for the creation of social contexts as much as it may refer to aspects of them. In the light of this notion rhetoric often appears in the ancient world as the principal organising system by which social knowledge, be it symbolic or otherwise, was exploited to mediate the structural relationships of particular social contexts. This proposition can be illustrated by reference to the fundamental rhetorical concepts of speaker and audience. In classical Athens these roles were filled by individual speakers and the political assemblies such as the Boule and the juries of law courts. The speakers in those contexts drew upon the reservoir of rhetorical techniques to obtain the adherence of audience to their arguments. This of course is precisely the process being adopted, although in writing, in petitions of Greco-Roman Egypt, or verbally in court proceedings. Certainly, the audience is qualitatively different, with jury being replaced by the official. But the principle is the same. The writers of petitions and the advocates who appeared in provincial court rooms drew upon and set in new patterns the body of rhetorical knowledge transmitted from each generation. Petitions usually described disputes. In the language of the description we see motifs and devices from the classical rhetorical tradition which set the powerful good official in contrast with the powerful bad wrongdoer for the benefit of the weak and humble petitioner. Concepts like "philanthropia" and euergetism, officials as upholders of the law and protectors of the weak reappear over centuries, having been reinterpreted by the Greco-Roman population to bring meaning to this basic triangular set of relationships.

Consequently, among the types of surviving documentary evidence petitions and transcripts of proceedings are most suitable for an examination of how elements of the symbolic universe were used to make sense of the experience of power and how this was done over time, as an integral part of renewing and refreshing the social structure. So while it is wise to bear in mind the warning of the late Sir Eric Turner against the danger inherent in seeking to interpret a society through a single category of document, because "there need be no correlation whatever between what is recorded and what is structurally important", it is quite feasible to attempt to

understand certain specific aspects of the ancient world through administrative or judicial documents.⁹³ Indeed it will be argued that the language and content of petitions and transcripts of proceedings give us a glimpse of what lay at the heart of the structurally important in Greco-Roman Egypt.

2.4 PETITIONS AND AUTHORSHIP

A question of fundamental importance in connection with petitions is authorship. It is of the utmost relevance to the notion of the symbolic universe and making sense of power to know who was utilising the elements of the symbolic universe in the language used in the documents. The concepts of legitimation, symbolic universes and structuration fundamentally rely upon the notion of social knowledge, its reproduction and its transmission. The transmission of social knowledge is always a complex area but for our purposes it makes ancient education a relevant concern because the question of authorship touches closely upon the problem of literacy in the Greco-Roman world. Therefore in this section we will consider the related issues of authorship, literacy in Greco-Roman Egypt and the connections between ancient education and symbolic universes.

The most recent research discloses that literacy was restricted to a relatively small section of the community in Greco-Roman Egypt, and this conclusion is reinforced by considering how widespread education was in Greco-Roman Egypt. In the Hellenistic period, it is undoubtedly true that there was greater recognition of the importance of general education than hitherto. This much is reflected in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. But there is a difference of scholarly opinion on how widespread actual education was and the extent to which smaller rural centres enjoyed the existence of dedicated institutions for the teaching of reading and writing. Despite earlier views, W.V. Harris has concluded that in Hellenistic Egypt "the city had education, and the country did not."⁹⁴ During the Roman period, the evidence

93 CAH², Vol. VII, Part 1, 260

94 W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 129ff, 134. D.J. Thomson, "Language and Literacy in Early Hellenistic Egypt", in P. Bilde et al. (ed.) *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt* (Aarhus Uni Press), 39-52, at 48 makes

suggests that the pattern remained the same, although it appears that endowments for schools decreased during the Roman occupation, as did the ideal of universal education. In larger centres such as nome capitals like Oxyrhynchus, Heracleopolis and Hermoupolis, there is evidence of the existence of elementary teachers, "but not by any means in the majority of Greek settlements in Egypt or indeed in really small places at all."⁹⁵ So the idea of *paideia* in practice remained an attribute of a wealthy elite, as did the possession of literacy. In the Byzantine period, there is evidence of a general decline in literacy throughout the Roman Empire, although the abundance of papyri from Egypt in this period also indicates that the decline was not necessarily uniform.⁹⁶ In summary it seems likely that for the relevant period, literacy and education were generally reserved only for a narrow section of the community.

Such considerations suggest the general outline of the type of knowledge that was processed and transmitted through education in Greco-Roman Egypt. It is clear that those who could write or present arguments in court came from the relatively narrow section of society from which also came the beneficiaries of education and literacy. It is also clear that the corpus of material upon which students drew to carry out their exercises brought them into direct contact with the vast body of rhetorical speeches from the classical world.⁹⁷ It stands to reason therefore that this body of knowledge should have provided many of the resources which the following generations utilised to produce their forms of rhetorical activity, whether in writing or orally in court. That is, we should expect to find that the expressions, devices and motifs of the classical orators influenced the arguments and language of petitions and court transcripts of Greco-Roman Egypt. This of course does not mean that we also find the conceptual system or ideologies of Greek city-states simply replicated unreflectively year after year in Hellenistic and Roman documents. As will be seen,

reference to early attempts to take Greek education to remoter places in Egypt.

95 Ibid., 244-4, 273.

96 Ibid., 280, 314ff

97 Thomson, "Language and Literacy in Early Hellenistic Egypt", at 50 draws attention to the content of literature copied out by the twins Ptolemaios and Apollonios whilst they were detained in the Serapeum in Memphis, including Greek tragedy and comedy.

and as might be expected, the people of Greco-Roman Egypt functioned within their own conceptual systems and used the conceptual and linguistic resources of the classical era for their own purposes, set them in new patterns and utilised them for new interactions with the different social structures and institutional roles which developed in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt.

We then come to the question of whether the educated elite was substantially responsible for the language choices which we find in the papyri and, for those trained as advocates, in argumentation before courts. If we examine the situation with petitions we can certainly say that the educated elite could have written their own petitions and perhaps some did. This would seem to reflect also the fact, which we will discuss further in chapter 3, that the process of petitioning was in fact treated as a last resort in a society which tended to rely upon self help rather than formalised governmental avenues of dispute resolution and it was utilised predominantly by the property owning classes, who were not necessarily literate.⁹⁸ This comment may however have to be limited to Roman Egypt. For example, the editors of P.Cair.Zen. II 59145 (2/8/256 BC) offer the suggestion that the petitioner Sphragis, a young woman, may be "the παιδίσκη bought by Zenon three years ago in Transjordan (see no 59003)", indicating that slaves in the confined context of a δωρεά of III BC in Ptolemaic Egypt were able to use a petitioning procedure. Whether this sort of situation appertained in II or I BC is a difficult question.

However, it is generally accepted that in Egypt there existed a special scribal class which was responsible for all manner of documents. The influence of the scribal system can be seen in private letters, and as Thomas points out, even Greeks who were literate used scribes to write their letters.⁹⁹ So it is reasonable to give

98 See ch. 3, 121 below. On individuals composing their own petitions note J.E.G. Whitehorne, "P.Mich. inv. 255: A Petition to the Epistrategos P. Marcus Crispus", *Chr. d'Eg.* 67 (1991), 250-256, which is reproduced below as document 9 in chapter 4, 168, suggest that the writer of this petition Ptolemaeus son of Diodorus probably wrote his own petitions of which several are extant and the peculiar diction reflects his own language choices.

99 R. Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece*, 153ff. On the importance of scribes in Egypt at the start of the Hellenistic period see Thomson, "Language and Literacy in Early Hellenistic Egypt", at 42.

scribes the credit for the language of most surviving petitions. The presence of scribes in the authorship equation had several important consequences. It means that issues of literacy should really be partially divorced from the question of which sections of society actually used petitions, since the language of petitions was not necessarily tied to the status, background or even the type of complaint of any particular petitioner. Emphasis is required here because some commentators have assumed that the language of the arguments used in a petition should be assessed by reference to criteria reflecting the social profile of the petitioner, that is, his or her position in society and access to material resources. And, it must be said, scholarly views that petitions were usually presented by the propertied classes would seem to constitute an endorsement of such an approach. It would have the most far reaching implications for some of the most basic conclusions of this thesis. For example, if one proceeded on the basis of a connection between the language of petitions and the propertied classes only, it would require us to assume that the language of petitions was evidence of the negotiation of power only of a relatively small section of Greco-Roman Egypt.

The intercession of scribes is a fact which exhorts us to address the problem of the relationship of the language used and the social class of the petitioner with some circumspection.¹⁰⁰ Scribes chose language which they deemed appropriate. They acted as a filter through which the written approaches to the government had to pass in the normal course. It was therefore the educational exposure which they enjoyed and their interpretative use of the social knowledge which was passed to them which primarily determined what symbolic meanings and which linguistics structures were deployed in documents such as petitions, even if the relative social position of a petitioner may have played a part. The connection of scribes to temples and the

100 It is also fraught with difficulties for other reasons. For example, if one tried to draw a connection between the language of the humble in petitions about lease disputes and the tenants themselves in Roman Egypt one would immediately run into the problems produced by the fact that some large land owners also leased plots of land and some tenants leased such relatively enormous tracts that they clearly should be seen as part of the upper class economically. See esp. D. Kehoe, "Legal Institutions and the Bargaining Power of the Tenant in Roman Egypt", *AJP* 41 (1995), 232-262, at 236. So one needs to guard against a too glib equation of membership of a juristic category such as "tenant" and membership of what is perceived to be a corresponding (oppressed) economic class.

religious milieu of Egypt may also have had a considerable influence on the language which was chosen for petitions, as many of the points made in chapter 5 seem to indicate.

So what conclusion do we come to about the extent to which the language of petitions can be regarded as the language used to negotiate power by sections of society more widespread than an extended propertied elite? It is very difficult to know, but the following observations are reasonable. First, although it may have been the case that scribes most often wrote petitions for literate or illiterate members of the propertied classes, other sections of society were not excluded from the petitioning procedure on the basis only of literacy. Some petitions were no doubt written for those from the less propertied sections of society, particularly in Ptolemaic times, as the frequent references, which we discuss in chapter 7, to weakness and oppression in the documents would suggest. Secondly, we observed above (at 76) that the slender evidence of spontaneous acclamations of powerful figures by crowds in Greco-Roman Egypt used motifs, such as the saviour and benefactor motif and protection of the humble, which were fundamental in the composition of petitions, as we will see in chapters 5 and 7. We do not know of course what social classes comprised any given crowd, but there is no particular reason to think that a crowd, either in Alexandria or a metropolis in the *chora*, would be limited to the propertied classes. As we observed above (at 78) this evidence may indicate that the symbolic concepts used in petitions were known to and used by the general population. Therefore in that sense the language used by scribes may well have reflected the language which illiterate petitioners themselves would have used to negotiate power in the language of petitions, whatever class they came from.

2.5 PETITIONS, FORMULAE AND PRAYERS.

The issue of interpretative activity brings us again to the problems raised by the formulaic nature of much of the language used in petitions. In fact this question extends to the entire structure of the documents, as we will see in chapter 5, since the

texts were built around certain basic structural features and phrases which heightened the impression of formulaic composition. The question here is how meaning may be attributed to these linguistic phrases and structures at all and especially in terms of the model which was developed in the last chapter. The problem is most apparent when we set the formulaic composition of a document like a petition against the background of literary composition so well known from the epic compositions of Homer. Contemporary theory of the formulaic composition of oral poetry sees it as the individual and spontaneous realisation of inherited traditional ideas and impulses. The oral tradition in Homer embodies associative pathways of sound and idea that yield "families" of phrases, adducing a generative model.¹⁰¹ Although the use of formulae for the oral or written composition of epic poetry is special and vastly different from the composition of other types of documents, the point to be made here is that these sorts of ideas when allied to the notion of interpretative activity involving elements of the symbolic order, which we referred to in the last chapter, can point to a way of explaining the presence of formulae in petitions and indeed stereotypical phraseology in court room speeches.

Even if in most cases a petition was drafted by a scribe, we still need to ask why the particular collocation of formulae was chosen for a specific document, since variations were frequent. Variation itself suggests some interpretative activity by the scribe but we should not cease our inquiry with that observation. It is interesting to know what significance the final choice of words and their arrangement may have had. Partly, it is suggested the answer lies in the concept of social roles. The recurring phrases and formulae which scholars have called "trivial" or "meaningless" in truth created meaning for language users because, partly at least, they were linguistic motifs which formed part of the patterns and regularities of the roles around which they clustered. This is particularly noticeable in the transference of symbolic appellations such as σωτήρ, εὐεργέτης or ἀντιλήμπτωρ from Greek kings to Roman

101 J. Miles Foley, *Oral-Formulaic Theory* (Garland, New York, 1990)

procurators, a process which is discussed in more detail in chapter 5. In each case it will appear that the role was conceptualised for the purpose of a petition as somewhere between human and divine, close to either an altar or cult statue, apposite to receive a suppliant.¹⁰² The fact that formulae and stereotypical phrases were constantly marshalled over seven centuries by language users in written communications, and sometimes in oral communications in courtroom argumentation, is more likely to be a testament to their value and authority than to their general irrelevance. As we will see later in chapter 8, under the influence of pragmatics, several scholars have noticed the performative use of ritual and conventional language in several types of text from the ancient world, especially those associated with religion and magic. The concept of ritual action which encompasses language use reinforces the conclusion that the use of formulae can in fact be of the utmost importance to produce meaning in documents like petitions. This is where comparison with some types of ancient prayer is very instructive, in particular the so-called "judicial" prayers, which were very close to petitions in form and purpose. Judicial prayers, prayers for justice or revenge formed a specific category of ancient curse, identified by the interesting work of H.S. Versnel. He has observed that 'juridical' or 'revenge' prayers from the Hellenistic and imperial periods are motivated by the inadequacies in the legal system of temporal state and sovereign, and judicial prayers were formulated as requests in the same way as petitions.¹⁰³ They, like petitions, involve a relationship of subservience before an all powerful figure and the language of supplication figures prominently.¹⁰⁴

The language of such texts is always formulaic and most would expect it to be. In fact the form of the language became so standardised that curses in blank are

102 Price of course has argued for such an understanding of the conceptualisation of the Roman emperor in the context of the imperial cult: *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (CUP, Cambridge, 1984); "Gods and emperors: The Greek Language of the Roman Imperial Cult", *JHS* 104 (1984), 80, esp. 85ff

103 "Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer", in H.S. Versnel, *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1981), 11 at 21; "Beyond Cursing: The Appeal to Justice in Judicial Prayers" in Cl. A. Faraone & D. Obbink (ed.), *Magika Hiera* (OUP, New York, 1991), 60-106. See further the discussion in chapter 8 below.

104 "Beyond Cursing", 70.

known as are sample books or professional formularies, which may have played an important part in composition.¹⁰⁵ This shows that formulaic composition is an equivocal guide to meaning. The formulaic nature of a prayer was undoubtedly seen as part of its efficacy and repetition especially added to intensity.¹⁰⁶ So it will be argued should the formulaic language of petitions. Some scholars have made significant steps forward in understanding this ritual use of language by reference to linguistic theories which see language as a type of action, particularly speech act theories. The fact that judicial prayers provide close points of comparison with petitions in purpose and language suggests that the approach of seeing the formulaic language of petitions in terms of performative utterances and ritual action is likely to be productive. We return to this in chapter 8.

2.6 LITERARY SOURCES

The sources upon which this thesis will be based are primarily papyrus documents which embody texts which are usually described as "non-literary". However, some reference to "literary" sources is also essential. Both the dictates of the judicial or forensic social and institutional context and the influence of the authors of classical rhetorical tracts on ancient education and the progress of the Second Sophistic from II AD compel us to have some regard to Demosthenes, Antiphon and others rhetoricians in assessing the language of petitions and court argumentation.¹⁰⁷ This much may seem obvious, and reference to many classical antecedents of the language of petitions will be frequent in what follows.

But there is another genre which also supplies very useful comparative material, namely, the Greek novels. The content of the Greek novelists such as Longus, Chariton, Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus indicates that they may also provide evidence of how the elements of the symbolic universe could be used to make

105 Cl. A. Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells", in *Magika Hiera*, 1-15.

106 "Religious Mentality", 34.

107 On the Second Sophistic see D. Russell, *Greek Declamation* (CUP, Cambridge, 1983), esp. 79ff; G.A. Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World* (Princeton, 1972); *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors* (Princeton, 1983)

sense of power. Unlike the classical authors, the Greek novelists wrote between I BC and III or IV AD and are therefore more contemporary with the other sources from the Roman period of Egyptian history.¹⁰⁸ It is however important to note that the novelists are not good evidence because they were written for a wide "lower class" audience, despite the views of some scholars. Susan Stephens makes the point that one cannot lose sight of the connection between wealth and education, and literacy required education, as we noted above, and in any event the record of papyrus survivals of the novels suggests, if anything, a more limited readership than the classical authors.¹⁰⁹ In particular comparison with genres which undoubtedly did have penetration into the lower classes, such as Christian literature, suggests a much closer link with classical authors.¹¹⁰ But, although written for the literate classes, the Greek novels can be of use to the present study for four main reasons. First, the novelists needed, like most novelists, to rely upon familiar details in the everyday lives of their readership, as part of the process of giving form and texture to their stories to which readers could respond. Details about religious ritual and the use of gestures formed part of the cultural background of the novels and therefore provide a fair guide to that background in the Roman period. This means that novels can be used as evidence to assist our assessment of the language of supplication in petitions. Secondly, within the novels we have prose examples of the nearest thing possible to conversational linguistic interaction, reflected in the dialogue of characters. To be sure, literary dialogue is to be treated as highly stylised, but nonetheless the dialogue is represented to the reader as conversation and consequently can be looked upon as linguistic interaction with real value for comparative purposes. Thirdly, as Suzanne McAlister has pointed out, the heroes and heroines are much more in the mould of

108 See the range of dates given by B.P. Reardon, *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Cal Uni Press, Berkeley, 1989)

109 S. Stephens, "Who read Ancient Novels" in J. Tatum (ed.), *The Search for the Ancient Greek Novel* (John Hopkins, Baltimore and London, 1994), 405-418, at 407, 412. See also Ewen Bowie, "The Readership of the Greek Novels in the Ancient World" in the same collection, 435-59, who concludes that most of the novels were primarily intended for a male readership. He makes the point at 438 that allusions in novels to classical authors such as Homer, Sappho, Euripides, Herodotus, the orators, Menander and Theocritus indicate the education of the audience. I record here my gratitude for the considerable benefit I derived from discussing the Greek novels with Dr Suzanne MacAlister.

110 *Ibid.*, at 413.

ordinary people than, say, the central characters of early Greek epic. Like the ordinary people in petitions, the characters in the Greek novels are thwarted and misused by villains who beset them with lawless deeds and general chaos.¹¹¹ This in many ways reflects many of the themes of anomie which we will meet in petitions.¹¹² Fourthly, the novels betray attitudes and symptoms of the contemporary society which produced them, and in this they bear something of the same character of forensic speeches used by Dover to study "popular" morality in the classical period of Athens.¹¹³

2.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter it has been argued that a specific category of surviving non-literary papyri, namely petitions, provides a recognisable corpus of material which embodied and formed part of the process of structuration, that is, both the language of and the procedural attributes of petitions allow the researcher to glimpse part of the process whereby structural properties of the social system of Greco-Roman Egypt, the structures of signification, were reproduced and the capacity for change was explored by the interpretative activity of the general population. Petitions operated as a form of linguistic interaction embodying a range of fundamental symbolic concepts through which the population made sense of the power located in roles in the institutional order, especially because they were the product of a very important social and institutional context, namely, the administrative and legal. The context circumscribed by legal institutions possessed certain core features which remained constant over the entire period covered in this thesis, III BC to IV AD. This is an important controlling factor in the application of the model set out in chapter 1 and allows us to observe how specific symbolic concepts were articulated in language in

111 S. MacAlister, "The Ancient Greek Novel in its Social and Cultural Context", *Classicum* XVII.2 (1991), 37-43.

112 See esp. chapter 7 below. Ken Dowden, "Heliodoros: Serious Intentions", *CQ* 46 (1996), 267-285, at 278 points out that a basic symbolic and metaphorical counterpoise between something like the Platonic "good" and anomic terror is found readily expressed in the opening passages of Heliodoros.

113 On the novels see again MacAlister, "The Ancient Greek Novel", at 31. See K.J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle*, 8ff.

response to the experience of both legitimate and illegitimate power within that context. The social and linguistic context of petitions, and hence their utility as evidence, is seen by comparison with other types of evidence, here particularly, transcripts of proceedings, the classical orators, the Greek novels and judicial or revenge prayers. In the next chapter it is proposed to consider in general outline the structural properties of the social system of Greco-Roman Egypt.

CHAPTER 3.

POWER AND STRUCTURE

Aspects of the Structural Order of Greco-Roman Egypt

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter it is proposed to investigate more deeply the contexts of structures of domination and normative regulation in Greco-Roman Egypt, so as to provide an essential point of reference when we come to consider the language of the symbolic order in later chapters. We will limit ourselves to an outline of some of the main features of the economic, legal and administrative structure of Greco-Roman Egypt, since these give the best idea of the structures of domination and normative regulation. This is very difficult subject matter which has required the input of many areas of expertise over the years and about which there are still many unanswered questions and areas of dispute. Nonetheless it is very important to give background to the argument of this thesis, by showing the basic structures within which the process of legitimation took place and developed over time. In particular a description of the administrative structure which was developed in Greco-Roman Egypt is integral to an understanding of the contours and diffusion of legitimate or formal power in that particular milieu, and by comparison, informal or personal power. Part of this process helps explicate the notion of institutions and institutional roles which were discussed in the previous chapter as a necessary facet of the model of legitimation. Positions in Greco-Roman Egypt such as the Ptolemaic monarch, the nome strategoi and Roman procurators are very suitable for analysis in terms of institutional roles, as we shall shortly see. In addition, an outline of the administrative structure is a good way of presenting important features of the general contours of Egyptian society in this period and it provides, furthermore, an understanding of the roles which enjoyed a presumption of legitimate power and in respect of which the symbolic universe had an intimate and very important operation.

But the subject matter of this chapter is especially necessary also to provide an awareness of the wider institutional framework within which the forensic context was located and the rhetorical interaction which it comprehended took place. Our model of production of meaning through linguistic interaction in a specific context cannot be adequately applied without a close consideration of the elements of the context. The administrative institutions of Greco-Roman Egypt were intimately connected with the legal institutions and it is not practical or correct to attempt a fearless differentiation of them, either factually or functionally, despite modern predispositions to do so. As will be argued later in this chapter in the ancient world the functional differences between institutions and roles were often very blurred and in reality they leave the researcher with a strong impression of their amorphous nature. Once the structures have been discussed, we will then be able to entertain some more general remarks on the concept of power as it devolved through the institutional order of Greco-Roman Egypt and the social relations which were worked under the umbrella of those institutions. This is necessary in terms of our model but also it provides the basis for a consideration in chapter 6 of certain intellectual features of ancient politics and ideology, and the connection of these to the idea of legitimation and the symbolic universe.

3.2 ADMINISTRATION, ECONOMY AND THE EXPERIENCE OF POWER IN GRECO-ROMAN EGYPT

3.2.1 Administrative Structure in Greco-Roman Egypt

Egypt in the Greco-Roman period was notable for its complex administration. A great deal of work has been done with the systemisation of administrative hierarchies and the description of various jurisdictional limits and competences of officials. But most of these studies share a characteristic which is so pervasive that it should stand as a preface to the discussion and an invitation to exercise some caution. Analyses in legal and constitutional terms are always liable to fall into "the constitutional law trap", the tendency to elevate the systemisation of jurisdictions and competences at

the expense of their experience in reality.¹ And more importantly, modern jurisprudential studies of ancient powers are often based on certain anachronistic preconceptions. As J.D. Thomas points out distinctions between civil and criminal or officials with "true" judicial competence as opposed to 'Beamtenjustiz' or judicial versus administrative powers in Greco-Roman Egypt relies upon a modern distinction which is probably inappropriate to the ancient world, and which Greek officials and Roman procurators would not have understood.² It is important therefore when studying power and institutions to bear such reservations in mind, since they allow us to see more clearly that power in Greco-Roman Egypt is not simply to be equated with legal notions of jurisdiction, however important these may be, it was a much more distributive phenomenon than is usually acknowledged, the experience of it was untidy and its exercise was capricious a lot of the time.

It is convenient to begin by considering Egypt in terms of administrative units, of which the whole country was the largest. In the Ptolemaic period, the king or queen was the highest authority over the whole of Egypt, the apex of the administrative and judicial hierarchy and the source of law, with power over the entire geographic area of Egypt.³ The king acted as a judge himself in certain types of cases, which Taubenschlag designates as *προσοδικὰ* and *βασιλικὰ ἐγκλήματα*, and the delicts of *lèse majesté*. Other cases were devolved upon lower officials.⁴ Below the monarch stood several officials with great power and authority also throughout the whole of Egypt, such as the *dioiketes* (διοικητής) who ran the royal treasury, the *hypomnematographos* (ὑπομνηματογράφος) and the *epistolographos* (ἐπιστολογράφος). The *dioiketes* is known to have received petitions, at least in III BC.⁵

1 See M.I. Finley, *Politics in the Ancient World* (CUP, Cambridge, 1983), 56.

2 *The Epistrategos*, I, 66 f, II, 138. At 140 he notes that in Roman Egypt "there was no rigid distinction between the types of case which could come in the first instance to strategos, epistrategos or prefect." See also A.K. Bowman, *JRS* 66 (1976), 163. Di Bitonto (1967) at 6 makes the point that in the Ptolemaic papyri which she studied "legal suits and administrative intervention are seen as acts of the same nature."

3 H.J. Wolff, *Das Justizwesen der Ptolemäer* (Münch. Beitr. 44, 1962).

4 R. Taubenschlag, *The Law of Greco-Roman Egypt in the Light of the Papyri (332 BC- 640 AD)* (Warsaw, 1955), 479-80. See also Wolff, *Das Justizwesen*, esp. ch. 2.

5 Bitonto (1968), 56.

Once we move below Egypt as a whole, there were several different types of administrative unit to consider. On the one hand were the new Greek cities, Alexandria and Ptolemais, of which Ptolemais definitely had a council and an assembly of the people (*ekklesia*) and both had their own magistrates, as well as the supposedly autonomous older Greek cities Naucratis and Paraetonium.⁶ On the other hand, there were the administrative districts of the country. The country (*χώρα*) was divided into administrative districts called *nomes* (*νομοί*), the capitals of which were called *μητροπόλεις*. However, it should also be said that administrative districts were often somewhat fluid in their delineation, especially early in the Ptolemaic period.⁷ There were several officials whose competence seems to have extended over a number of *nomes*. One such official was the *epistrategos*. Thomas has made the most detailed recent study of this post and concludes that when *epistrategoi* first appeared in the second century BC they were officials of overriding civil and military authority "throughout the *chora*", although later appointees to the position had more limited powers. The Ptolemaic *epistrategos* received petitions although the evidence relating to his civil and especially the judicial functions is not extensive, but such evidence as there is suggests that he had jurisdiction in civil as well as criminal matters, similar to that of the *nome strategos* including the disappearance of wheat, disputes over an inheritance, wrongful seizure of property.⁸ However, in a general sense, the *strategos* was a more important official, since there was a *strategos* always in charge of each *nome*, supplanting the pre-Ptolemaic *nomarch* (*νομάρχης*). In each *nome* there was also a representative of the central treasury called the *oikonomos* (*οικονόμος*), who seems to have been primarily responsible for the collection of tax, and officials, such as the *epistates*, the *epimeletes*, and the assistant *dioiketes* all of whom are known to have received petitions.⁹ The separate villages within *nomes*

6 The question of the *boule* and council of Alexandria in this period is very vexed. It had its own system of laws deriving probably from Attic law and a set of civic magistrates. See A.K. Bowman and D. Rathbone, "Cities and Administration in Roman Egypt", *JRS* 82 (1992), 107-127, at 108-9.

7 See most recently R.S. Bagnall, J.G. Manning, S.E. Sidebotham, R.E. Zitterkopf, "A Ptolemaic Inscription from Bir 'Iayyan", *Chr. d'Eg.* 71 (1996), 317-329.

8 Thomas, *The epistrategos*, I, 83-86, 63-69.

(κῶμαι) were administered by a komarch (κωμάρχης) and a komogrammateus (κωμογραμματεὺς), who was concerned in all local matters involving revenues and is attested as the recipient of petitions.¹⁰ The strategos and all the latter officials are attested as the recipients of petitions in many types of dispute, such as, *hybris*, including battery, illegal behaviour of officials, extortion, violence, theft, damage to property, breach of contract, non payment of rent etc.¹¹ Also, a military official, the hipparch and a police official, the archiphylakites received petitions. At the most local level nomes were further divided into smaller units (τόποι or τοπαρχίαι) under the jurisdiction of a toparch (τοπάρχος) and a topogrammateus (τοπογραμματεὺς). The administration comprised of these roles has been interpreted in various ways, some of which will be discussed at the end of this section. But we may note here that it was essentially Greek in many of its basic concepts, Greeks occupied most of the higher positions and at some time in III BC Greek became the official language of Egypt.¹²

The battle of Actium took place in 31 BC and its outcome allowed Augustus to add Egypt to his Roman empire.¹³ From 30 BC it came under the Roman imperial administration. Greek continued to be used as the official language, although Latin became necessary as well, and in a number of specific legal areas the procedures of the Ptolemaic era either continued or Roman procedures bore very close resemblance to them.¹⁴ However, in a legal and political sense the position of preeminence within Egypt was changed from the Ptolemaic monarch to the Roman emperor. But unlike the Ptolemaic king the Roman emperor was actually and conceptually foreign, a figure who dwelt in a different country. The emperor acted through his representative, the Praefectus Aegypti. The first prefect of Egypt was C. Cornelius

9 Di Bitonto (1968), 59-61.

10 Ibid. On the competence of the komogrammateus in relation the komarch see P.Yale I, 157ff.

11 See the collection of examples in Di Bitonto (1968), 74-98.

12 Rostovtzeff, *SEHRE*, 278. It must be said that the Ptolemies undoubtedly adapted and retained a number of Pharaonic administrative institutions, including the intense interest in revenue: see D. Delia, "The Ptolemies and the Ideology of Kingship: Response" in P. Green (ed.), *Hellenistic History & Culture* (Uni. of California, Berkeley, 1993), 193-4 and works cited there.

13 See *Res Gestae*, §27 "Aegyptum imperio populi Romani adieci."

14 Eg., the συγγραφοφύλαξ-deeds find very close parallels in Roman documents like P.Oxy XVII 2131 (207 AD). See P.Eleph 1-4, P.Hib 96, Wilcken *AJP* V 202.

Gallus, who held the position from 30-27/6 BC.¹⁵ In a day to day sense, as Reinmuth makes clear, the prefect substantially carried on the functions and prerogatives of the Ptolemaic monarchy, and he suggests that to the inhabitants the prefect "stood in the place of the king".¹⁶ The prefect received petitions on a wide range of subjects, including exemption from public duties or liturgies; restitution of property after violence or fraud, release from wrongful detention, personal insult and violence, breach of contract involving debt, poisoning and murder.¹⁷ But Egypt was no longer run as a kingdom. It was run by a Roman equestrian administration, by outsiders who stayed for relatively short periods. Egypt also became garrisoned by a standing Roman army of 3 then 2 legions, three *alae* of cavalry and nine cohorts of auxiliaries, the equestrian officers and centurions of which formed the prefect's military staff and undertook administrative functions.¹⁸ These facts alone would have helped foster the sense of physical and cultural distance between the smaller communities of Egypt and the high Roman officials.

In the central administration there were underneath the prefect a number of important officials: the *juridicus* (δικαιοδότης), the archidicastes, the *idios logos*, *archiereus* and *dioiketes*. The cities Naucratis, Alexandria, Ptolemais and Antinoopolis had special administrative arrangements. But in the *chora*, it is likely that some time in the reign of Augustus, Egypt was divided into three administrative divisions, the Delta, the Heptanomia, and the Thebaid.¹⁹ Thomas thinks that some time in the late second century AD the Delta was further subdivided into two. These districts were called *epistrategeia* and were presided over by the Roman *epistrategos*, a procurator appointed by the emperor from the *ordo equester* who stood immediately

15 O.W. Reinmuth, *The Prefect of Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian* (Klio Bei. z. Alt. Ges., 1935), Appendix I.

16 Reinmuth, *The Prefect of Egypt*, 1-2. The suggestion is perhaps a bit misleading. It is true that the Roman prefect resided in the former Ptolemaic palace and observed the taboo on sailing on the Nile in flood. But these observances hardly made the prefect a replacement of the king. See Bowman & Rathbone, "Cities and Administration", at 110 and fns 13 & 14 and the discussion of the Ptolemaic cult in chapter 6 below.

17 See Reinmuth, *Prefect of Egypt*, 87ff

18 Bowman & Rathbone, "Cities and Administration", at 110 W.E.H. Cockle, "State Archives in Graeco-Roman Egypt from 30 BC to the Reign of Septimius Severus", *JEA* 70 (1984), 106-122, at 108 sets out a very useful diagram of the administrative hierarchy in Roman Egypt.

19 See Thomas, *The Epistrategos* II, 19ff, who gives a very good account of the evidence and arguments for a date in the reign of Augustus.

below the prefect in the *chora*. The office is known to have received many petitions on various subjects, including official error, release from liturgy, and violence, and heard cases of two basic types: requests for some administrative step to be taken such as ordering the strategos to have persons present at a trial and private disputes over debts.²⁰ Below the epistrategos stood the nome strategoi, who continued to be based in the nome capitals. and in the villages the office of komogrammateus continued but komarchs disappeared until their reintroduction in III AD.²¹

Although the prefect and the epistrategos belonged to the Roman procuratorial class, there was an important distinction between them. The prefect was essentially based in Alexandria, while the epistrategos was based in the *chora*. This distinction has been applied broadly by some scholars to the entirety of officials with judicial activity, that is, on the one hand the Alexandrian officials such as the prefect and the iuridicus and on the other the local officials such as the epistrategos and the strategos. Thomas rejects this for reasons which are worth mentioning since they highlight the important differences between levels of officials. The epistrategos was certainly "local" in a geographical sense, being located in his epistrategeia, but he was very different from the strategos, because he was a Roman procurator. By contrast the strategos and other local officials were by the Roman period usually drawn from the local population.²² Thomas makes the point that in language and format petitions to the prefect and the epistrategos are closest and noticeably dissimilar to petitions to the strategos.²³ The distance between the prefect and the strategos is well illustrated by those subscriptions to petitions by the prefect referring the case to the strategos but threatening him with severe penalties if he does not do his job.²⁴

20 Thomas, *The Epistrategos* II, 11, Ch. 10, 133-4 and Table A.

21 C.A. Nelson, "Liturgical Nomination of ΔΗΜΟΣΙΟΙ ΤΗΣ ΚΟΜΗΣ", *Chr. d'Eg.* 71 (1996), 105-114

22 Ibid., 142. In I AD the office of strategos was monopolised by Alexandrians, but in II AD the office began to be filled by metropolitans: see Bowman & Rathbone, "Cities and Administration", at 125-6.

23 Thomas, *The Epistrategos* II, 141-2.

24 Thomas, *The Epistrategos* II, 127, citing P.Harr I 68 (225 AD) ὁ στρατηγὸς πρὸ ὀφθαλμ[ῶν] ἔχων τὸν ἴδιον κίνδυνον ἐπίτροπον τοῖς ἀφήλιξι καταστήσαι φροντιεῖ ("The strategos under pain of serious consequences to himself shall see to the appointment of a guardian for the minors") As Thomas notes ad loc., these "not surprisingly differ radically from anything the prefect ever wrote to the epistrategos."

It can be said that in the area of legal jurisdiction, in the Roman period, the control of the prefect, the epistrategos and to a lesser extent the strategos over the rules governing the presentation of petitions and their subsequent fate formed a very important aspect of how their power was perceived. According to the study of Thomas the prefect and the epistrategos could refuse to accept petitions.²⁵ But when they were accepted it was the subscription of the prefect or epistrategos which determined where the case was sent and what action the administration would take in respect of it, such as, reference to the strategos for settlement or conduct of preliminaries before being referred back to the original delegator.²⁶ Consequently, the role of the prefect and epistrategos particularly but also the strategos was critical to the furtherance of the petitioners claim, and thus its ultimate resolution.

Within the nome capitals there developed a fairly uniform hierarchy of municipal officials after a pattern such as follows: (1) hypomnematographos, (2) gymnasiarch, (3) exegetes, (4) cosmetes, (5) chief priest (archieus), (6) eutheniarch, (7) agoranomus.²⁷ These officials remained under the control of the strategos, who was drawn from the local metropolite class.²⁸ The purpose of drawing attention to this difference between the magistracies and the strategos here is that it will be apparent in later chapters that it was in part responsible for language choices in petitions. There is a pattern which, though not invariably adhered to, shows that conceptualisations of the most obviously religious or symbolic nature were usually reserved for the higher Roman procurators, such as the prefect, the epistrategos and the archidicastes.²⁹ The strategos was also the beneficiary of this sort of language on occasion perhaps because perceptions of his great power in the Ptolemaic period hung

25 Thomas, *The Epistrategos* II, 117.

26 Ibid.

27 This is the hierarchy given in P.Oxy XII, at 29. It should be borne in mind that there is some scholarly disagreement about the ranking, on which see P.Oxy XII, loc. cit. Cockle, "State Archives in Graeco-Roman Egypt from 30 BC to the Reign of Septimius Severus", at 108 seems to follow this basic scheme. He points out that this group formed a *koinon* until βουλῆ were created in c. 200 AD under Septimius Severus.

28 Bowman & Rathbone, "Cities and Administration", at 122-3.

29 See for example Table 6.4 at the end of chapter 6.

over into the Roman and in the Roman period he was the "interface" between the metropolitans in the *chora* and the prefect in Alexandria.

The middle of III AD is well known as a very troubled period in the history of the Roman empire. The death of Severus Alexander in 235 AD inaugurated a period of intense instability with civil war and barbarian invasions which lasted until the accession of Diocletian in 284 AD. During this half century the empire came close to collapse several times. There were at least 27 recognised emperors and at one point there were 30 claimants to the throne. The average reign was only several months.³⁰ The third century finished with the administration of the Roman empire being dramatically reformed by Diocletian, in several fundamental ways. The empire as a whole was reorganised into administrative units which we know as dioceses (*διοικήσεις*) under four *praefecti praetorio*. Egypt fell within the diocese *Oriens* and was therefore under the *praefectus per Orientem* who resided in Antiochia. Within Egypt three provinces were created, namely, *Aegyptus Herculia* which corresponded roughly with the areas of the old Heptanomia and the Fayûm together, *Aegyptus Jovia* which corresponded to the Delta, and *Thebaïs*. These provinces covered basically the same areas as the old epistrategiae, which were abolished, as was the office of epistrategos. Each one was administered by a *praeses* (*ἡγεμων* or *ἄρχων*) while the prefect of Egypt continued to have judicial competence over the entire province.

The former metropoleis became *civitates*, and the area of the particular nomes of which they had been capital, became the territory of each. The cities were governed by a board (*curia*), no longer a council. The powers and responsibilities in financial administration, formerly in the hands of the council, were given to the *logistes* or *curator civitatis*. The *logistes* had power throughout the whole nome, unlike the former town council, and was responsible directly to the prefect. The earliest reference to the *logistes* is from 304 AD. The official known as *syndikos* who

30 See R. MacMullen, *The Roman Government's Response to Crisis, A.D. 235-337* (Yale Uni Press, New Haven and London, 1976), 13, 38-44, 50-1, 58-60, 65-6, 69, 93-4; A. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284-602* (Uni of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1964), 23.

in the Roman period had been a kind of liaison officer for the council with other branches of the bureaucracy, particularly in legal matters, after 300 AD this official became the *defensor civitatis* with competence throughout the whole nome. Furthermore, the nome strategos began to decline in importance. During the third century the strategos was the chief executive of the central government, with responsibilities for the collection of tax and *annona militaris* and, in general, the land economy. From about 309 AD the strategos seems to start bearing the title *exactor* and his responsibilities are limited to the collection of tax.³¹ At the level of the toparchies further changes were undertaken. The toparchies, the rural areas, were subdivided into a unit called a *pagus*, and were headed by a *praepositus pagi* who became a very important official. The *exactor*, the *syndic*, the *riparius*, the *praeses* and the *beneficarius* all make their appearance as the recipients of petitions. Although these changes came into existence substantially at the end of the period with which this thesis is concerned it is still important to place them in the picture because as we will see the new "Byzantine" order was, in its early stages at least, legitimated and conceptualised in forensic discourse in familiar symbolic terms which continued from the previous periods even if they were set in new linguistic configurations.

3.2.2 Land, Villages and Revenue

A schematic description of the administrative structure such as that just given in the previous section is helpful to give a framework but it is fairly uninformative without being given further flesh by an indication of its relevance at a social level in the Egyptian communities. It becomes necessary then to examine the communities over whom this hierarchy was set and the basic structural social relationships which appertained within them. The great majority moved about rarely and with difficulty, so the highest officials were almost always somewhere else, like Alexandria and Rome. It would be fair to say that the patterns of production and economic structure militated against any free movement for most of the population or general opportunity

31 See most recently J. David Thomas, "Strategos and *exactor* in the Fourth Century: One Office or Two?" *Chr d'Eg.* 70 (1995) 230.

to come into contact with the upper echelons of society. Most of the population were agrarian peasants. What evidence there is suggests that in Egypt of the Ptolemaic period the population was somewhere between three and seven million persons, most of whom were tied peasants (λάοι) and no more than 13% of whom were slaves.³² In the Greco-Roman period generally, for most of their lives the majority of the labour force was involved in primary agricultural production, in particular in the production of the staples corn, wine and olives. Conditions in Egypt rarely allowed a ten-fold yield (often much lower) and consequently, food production "will have required the labour of at least 80% of the adult population as a whole, men or women, slave or free."³³

The pattern of land holdings and ownership is immensely important for understanding the structures of domination and power relationships in Greco-Roman Egypt. Land was the principle source of both private and public wealth at all times, so that the size of land holdings reflected differences in wealth.³⁴ The type of land referred to here is primarily agricultural land and the wealth referred to was derived from primary agricultural production. It provided the nexus for a number of fundamental structural social and economic relationships. In all periods the overall numbers in the social class possessing significant land holdings proportionally formed a small section of the entire population³⁵ This class utilised or, depending upon one's point of view, exploited the productive capacities of two basic under classes: unfree labour, represented by the categories of slaves, serfs and debt bondsmen and the labour of free men, represented by the categories of freed slaves hired labourers and small independent producers, especially peasants.³⁶ Although De Ste Croix was

32 CAH², Vol. VIII, Part 1, *The Hellenistic World*, 270-1 and fns 75 and 75.

33 Ibid., 264; R.P. Duncan-Jones, *The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies* (Cambridge 1974), 49, n. 4, and 51, n. 1. Most food produced was consumed within 30 kms of its place of production and the underlying pattern of that production was characterised by local famines and gluts, although in Egypt the Nile flood would have substantially helped to smooth out this pattern.

34 CAH², 120-133; see also R.P. Duncan-Jones, *Structure and Scale in the Roman Economy* (Cambridge 1990), Ch. 8, 'Land and landed wealth', 121-142 at 126

35 R. MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations: 50 BC to AD 284* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1974), 88-9

36 *Class Struggle*, esp. Chapter III, III(iv), 133-174, 174-204; Chapter IV passim, esp. IV(ii) and (iii), 208-259, IV(vi), 269-275.

writing about the entire ancient Greek world not just Egypt, it appears that Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt was characterised by the three categories of land cultivator which he distinguished based upon the type of land tenure: (i) freeholders; (ii) holders of land on the condition that they perform military service, who did not have a right of transfer of the land without the endorsement of the king; and (iii) tenants, for a term of years or at will.³⁷ The economic relationships which were engendered by these types of land holding were fundamental to the social structure, and this was reflected in the language of documents from the forensic context like petitions and in legal argumentation, as later chapters will show.

The Ptolemaic monarch was considered to be the owner of all the land of Egypt. Private ownership of land was restricted to several, relatively minor, situations.³⁸ The capital Alexandria had its own territory which was exempt from direct royal taxation and outsiders were legally excluded from acquiring land in it.³⁹ Grants of large estates were made in III BC to persons of influence, such as the Apollonios who employed Zenon.⁴⁰ Although some have argued that during II and I BC a concept of land ownership became broader and Greeks became not just land cultivators but also land holders (γεωῦχοι), as Bowman and Rathbone point out, in the Egyptian *chora* of Ptolemaic Egypt "there was a serious juridical and economic obstacle to the emergence of a broad and stable landowning élite."⁴¹ Such land as was held in private ownership was limited to house and garden land.⁴² Royal land and sacred land were rented in small plots to individuals, such as the "royal cultivators" (βασιλικὸν γεωργοί) or allotments (κλήροι) were granted to individuals, usually Greek military settlers, at low fixed rates of tax, in return for which they had to provide military service. Despite the fact that over time these allotments came to be held by hereditary tenure and they could be ceded for cash, it seems likely that the

37 Ibid., 213-4. See at 8 for his definition of "the ancient Greek world."

38 CAH², Vol. VII, 296

39 A.K. Bowman & D. Rathbone, "Cities and Administration" at 109.

40 F.W. Walbank, *The Hellenistic World* (Fontana, 1986), 108

41 "Cities and Administration", at 109-110. Cf M. Rostovtzeff, *SEHRE*, 282

42 Cf J. Modrzejewski, "Régime foncier et statut social dans l'Égypte ptolémaïque" in *Terre et paysans dépendants dans les sociétés antiques : Colloque Besançon 1974* (1979), 163-188.

nature of land tenure militated against significant holdings of land. More importantly, perhaps, "it remained impossible to define the public status and public duties of the individual in terms of his private landed wealth", a feature of Ptolemaic Egypt which was significantly different from the Greek (and Roman) city-state model, from which the Ptolemies had otherwise borrowed many important concepts.⁴³

For most of the population the *metropoleis* and villages were the centre of life.⁴⁴ In the Ptolemaic period the social system in the metropoleis and the villages was dominated, from the view point of administrative structure, by the local officials, such as, the strategos, the oikonomos, the komarch and komogrammateus as we have seen. These give the impression of formal power to the modern mind. But it is likely that local communities came to be dominated by individuals who held "official" appointments in the sense that they were made by the king, but also developed dimensions of personal power in particular localities.⁴⁵ They formed a class of "Egyptianizing Greeks or Hellenizing Egyptians" who held priesthoods which were tenured for life and strings of royal appointments. They held such a position of status and power because they provided a link between the Greek king and the many non-Greek peasants and in fact often became local dynasts.⁴⁶ In the metropoleis and villages there was a range of other types of non-agrarian workers such as weavers, drivers, artisans, fishermen and sailors. There were manufacturers of various kinds of goods, labourers for mines, quarries and fishing grounds.⁴⁷ Rostovtzeff, possibly driven by a strong predisposition to identify something like modern capitalism in the Hellenistic world, perceived a middle class of wealthy Greeks developing, based upon land as well as the holding of official positions, tax collecting and mercantile

43 Ibid.

44 D.J. Crawford, *Kerkeosiris: An Egyptian Village in the Ptolemaic Period* (Cambridge, 1971), 1 ff.

45 Similar perhaps to the "big man" syndrome studied by anthropologists. Cf B.D. Shaw, "Josephus: Roman Power and Responses to It", *Athen.* 83 (1995), 357-390, at 360.

46 A.K. Bowman & D. Rathbone, "Cities and administration", 109. The editors of *P.Yale* 1, 53, at 160 in their detailed discussion of the komarch and the komogrammateus comment, "The accretion of power to the komogrammateus at the expense of the komarch can probably be understood in terms of the power structure of the chora. As an officer dealing with revenues, the komogrammateus would have had more frequent and more direct contact with higher officials and as a man with more personal influence" gradually acquired more power.

47 Rostovtzeff, *SEHRE*, 273-4, who asserts that membership of one of these "professional" groups was compulsory.

enterprise.⁴⁸ Whatever the merits of such a view, discussion of which cannot be entertained here, it is certainly likely that many Greeks prospered in Egypt, especially under the early Ptolemies, and this reality found expression in literature such as Theocritus, *Idyll XV*.

When Egypt became part of the Roman empire in 30 BC some very significant changes were made to this set up. Leaving aside special areas such as Alexandria, in the *chora* ownership of land, supported by full legal recognition, became entrenched and of basic importance to the assessment of taxation and the administration of the province.⁴⁹ The crown cultivators remained lessees of the state, cultivating what was called crown or public land (γῆ βασιλική or δημοσία). The holdings of *katoikoi* however became recognised as holdings in private ownership, without the tied obligation for military service to the state.⁵⁰ Initially, important Romans took grants of large estates (οὐσάια), as Rostovtzeff notes, a move similar to the grant of δωρεαί under Ptolemy Philadelphus.⁵¹ Towards the end of I AD the large estates however started to be broken up, since they were not profitable to the government. The Romans also introduced a legally recognised system of statuses, such as Romans, Latins, Greeks, Alexandrians and Egyptians to which were tied liabilities for various fines and confiscations of property. Bowman and Rathbone point out that all this "amounts to a system of social control operated by fiscal sanctions through a status hierarchy and property qualification, to which private ownership of property, including land, is crucial."⁵²

In the metropoleis the Romans introduced two other innovations which were different from anything in the Ptolemaic period and were of major political, social and economic significance, namely, the metropolite class and the gymnasial élite. It seems that the Romans established a group of "metropolitans" in each metropolis

48 Ibid., 279; Walbank, *Hellenistic World*, 104ff.

49 A.K. Bowman & D. Rathbone, "Cities and Administration" at 112.

50 Ibid.

51 Rostovtzeff, *SEHRE*, 287-292

52 A.K. Bowman & D. Rathbone, "Cities and Administration" at 113.

probably very early in their rule.⁵³ They also established a group within the metropolitans which was defined by membership of the gymnasium, through admission to the ephebate. The original members of the gymnasium may well have been broadly coextensive with the register of the holders of katoikic land, that is the descendants of the original Greek military settlers of the Ptolemies.⁵⁴ This was designed to be an hereditary and exclusive group. The importance of these groups lay in the fact that it was among their number that the municipal magistrates and liturgical offices were selected. These were the people who held and increased land holdings, both in their local and other areas, and increased wealth by mercantile activities.⁵⁵ They were a local élite which developed wealth and spent money upon the towns and villages in the first two centuries AD and around which the ideology of euergetism most obviously gathered.⁵⁶ The towns also came to have councils late in the Roman period, which conducted proceedings and made the decisions of local importance such as appointment to liturgies.⁵⁷

One very important consequence of the nature of the economy based on landed wealth was that the interest of the state in the small communities was dominated by the need to generate revenue, the cultivation of crops and exaction of taxes, and this subject appears again and again in the surviving documents from the Ptolemaic period, and well into the Roman period. In economic terms the three main burdens imposed upon the peasant or land holder were rent, compulsory services and taxation.⁵⁸ These economic burdens provided one of the most basic social locations where the roles filled by various individuals called for the operation and utilisation of the symbolic universe to make sense of the experience of power. Rent, compulsory services and taxation involved economic relationships of credit and debt and provided

53 Ibid., 120, where they argue that the group "may have originally been defined as those registered as resident in the metropoleis in the first Roman census of Egypt whenever that was held."

54 Ibid., 121.

55 Rostovtzeff, *SEHRE*, 296.

56 C. Panagopoulos, "Vocabulaire et Mentalité dans les *Moralia* de Plutarque." in *Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne* 5 (1977) 197-235; P. Veyne, *Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism* (Penguin, London, 1990).

57 A.K. Bowman, *The Town Councils of Roman Egypt* (Amer. Stud. Pap. 11, 1971).

58 De Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*, 243

the source of many disputes and complaints of oppression, extortion and violence relating not only to officials or those who controlled capital, but all sections of society.

Rent is understood by the modern mind as a basic incident of an essentially private contractual relationship, between landlord and tenant. However, this understanding needs to be tempered by remembering that the relationship of tenancy could be relied upon equally for the generation of income by a government in an agrarian economy, such as in Ptolemaic Egypt, as we saw above. There was reason therefore for royal cultivators, especially, in the Ptolemaic period, to lump a liability for rent into the general bundle of financial burdens imposed by the government. But the changes in the nature of land tenure in the Roman period which we have just discussed brought the liability for rent more into a relationship whose juristic nature is close to the modern counterpart. A recent study by Dennis Kehoe highlights the fact that the legal institutions of the Roman period in Egypt treated the relationship of landlord and tenant as a matter of private law and allowed tenants to enjoy a certain degree of independence even when dealing with much more powerful landlords.⁵⁹ The confidence shown by both Roman landlords and tenants in conventional legal channels to resolve disputes and uphold rights indicates that tensions produced by rent and other features of the social and economic relationship brought into existence by a lease were likely to produce a significant number of instances where it is possible to observe the intersection of material circumstances of individuals, legal and economic institutions and the intellectual and symbolic aspects of Egypt at this period.

In structuration terms, we might say compulsory services and taxation were fundamental to the structures of domination, and constituted the points at which the ordinary population fell very directly into the purview of the government. Officials

59 D. Kehoe, "Legal Institutions and the Bargaining Power of the Tenant in Roman Egypt", *AfP* 41 (1995), 232-262

were responsible for the carrying out of government requirements and the supervision of regulations, but most importantly the preservation of government revenues. The mere fact that tax had to be paid and services performed placed burdens upon the population. But these were exacerbated when officials turned their activities to extortion. The issue of extortion and oppression by officials and government agents were perennial topics in the papyri.⁶⁰ The proclivity of the social and economic system to promote extortion and behaviour which we would see as corrupt is reflected in the system of Ptolemaic and Roman law. According to Taubenschlag, extortion (διασεισμός) was a delict specifically recognised in Ptolemaic law and related to the more general crime of βία.⁶¹ It was a delict which assumed premeditation and fell within the category of ἀμαρτήματα.⁶² The same terminology for a delict existed in the Roman period denoting the extortion of payments through the abuse of official positions. Many petitions in the Roman period also deal with situations in which officials have made errors, some of which are said to have been perpetrated in bad faith.⁶³ Roman law recognised that errors could be innocently perpetrated.⁶⁴

Extortion and oppression by those possessing institutional power can take many forms. In the Greco-Roman period the complaint can raise a problem like imprisonment which is said to be arbitrary and wrongful.⁶⁵ UPZ I 9 (161 BC) contains a complaint to the king and queen about oppression at the hands of the officials of the village of Psichis. These particular situations do not appear to have arisen, directly at least, from the burden of taxation. But the fiscal imperatives of tax and government

60 See the introduction to P.Coll.Youtie I 16 (14 Sept 109 BC) and further below.

61 *Law of Greco-Roman Egypt*², 450.

62 *Ibid.* Taubenschlag also makes the point that a dispute engendered by διασεισμός could be resolved by the διαλυσις procedure, citing UPZ 113, and commentary at 251ff.

63 See P. Mertens, *Les Services*, 7-16 and as examples P.Oxy VII 1032 (162 AD); P.Oxy VIII 1119 (254 AD); P.Oxy XLIII 3105 (229-35 AD); P.Oxy XLVI 3302 Recto (300-1 AD).

64 R. Taubenschlag, "Errors of Officials in Roman Egypt" in *Opera Minora II* (Warsaw, 1959), 189 discusses some examples of errors committed by officials by "ignorance" (ἀγνοία). He points out that such errors under the law of Greco-Roman Egypt were not punishable wrongs (ἀγνοήματα), except the illegal appointment to a liturgy, which was a matter for which an official could be punished, eg, SB XVI 12713 (19 Feb 10/II AD) a complaint about a strategos. According to Taubenschlag there was a legal distinction between "innocent" errors and those which were perpetrated ἐκ προνοίας, see *Law of Greco-Roman Egypt*, 430ff.

65 In P.Ent. 83 (221 BC) a woman called Thamounis mentions that the komarch of Oxyrhyncha arbitrarily put her in prison, despite the fact that she seems to have been the one who suffered violence. Cf P.Cair.Zen. III 59421 (III BC); P.Lond. VII 2045 (III BC); P.Tebt. III:1 769 (237/6-212/11 BC); P.Tebt. III:1 772 (236 BC); P.Ent. 84 (221 BC); P.Tebt. III:1 777 (Early II BC); BGU VIII 1847 (51/50 BC).

dues were clearly the structural impetus behind the problems mentioned in a majority of petitions. In II BC abuses by officials and estate administrators were the subject of specific ordinances, and we are given the impression that the collection of money is usually involved.⁶⁶ P.Tebt. III:1 788 (Mid II BC) shows a situation in which a strategos Ptolemaios was sent out to the Oxyrhynchite nome by the king and queen to give assistance (ἀντίληψις) to the victims of extortion, possibly at the hands of local epistatai. Very often petitions involve disputes which have arisen because one person responsible for a certain tax has ducked responsibility so that it has fallen on someone else.⁶⁷

But the connection between the intractable obligations to collect government dues and problems of oppression and extortion is particularly obvious in situations which directly involve the officials most closely connected with taxes and public services. The Ptolemaic system for the collection of taxation has long been known as complex and relatively sophisticated.⁶⁸ Collection of taxes relied upon tax contractors who bid at auction for the right to gather taxes from the populace. They bid for a set value for tax and effectively underwrote personally the collection of tax up to that amount, so that the government was relieved of the administrative burden of extracting the money itself.⁶⁹ However, any surplus could be kept by the contractors.⁷⁰ The officials most closely implicated in the auction and collection of tax in each nome were the oikonomos and the antigrapheus. These officials determined who would fill the posts of a further set of officials who actually carried out the collection of tax, the *logutai*, the *hyperetai* and the *symbolaphylakes*, all of whom were paid a salary by the month.⁷¹ The tax contractors relied upon these latter

66 UPZ 113 (156 BC). See also P.Tebt. III:1 792 (c. 113 BC) in which complaint is made by the komarch about a sitologos-in-chief who is ignoring the orders of the overseer of revenues. Cf P.Ent. 85 Recto (221 BC).

67 P.Ent. 55 (221 BC); P.Ent. 90 (217 BC); P.Tebt. III:1 791 (c. 116 BC); BGU VIII 1814 (61/60 BC); BGU VIII 1850 (48-46 BC).

68 "The taxes and rents imposed were extremely varied in kind and took in every possible source of revenue." Walbank, *Hellenistic World*, 107. The survival of important fiscal documents such as P.Rev.Laws and P.Par. 62 give detailed information about this.

69 G.M. Harper, "Tax Contractors and their relation to Tax Collection in Ptolemaic Egypt", *Aegyptus* 14 (1934), 49-64.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid., 52ff.

officials to collect the tax, and many of these officials from the *oikonomos* down incited complaints by their behaviour. In P.Ent. 87 (221 BC) a certain Apollodotos complains of the unjustifiable behaviour of an *oikonomos* called Mnaseas, who pretends that Apollodotos owes money to the treasury.⁷² In P.Ryl. IV 578 (58 BC) Judas the Jew, who farmed 3 *arourae* of dry land, complains to the *epimeletes* that the *komogrammateus* has wrongfully entered him for extra dues.

The law of the Ptolemaic period indicates the importance of taxation and government revenue by the number of separate delicts which appear to have been recognised in relation to its collection. Taubenschlag describes two categories of fiscal delicts which are especially connected with the collection of tax, namely, the *προσοδικὰ ἐγκλήματα*, which encroached "immediately or mediately" upon state revenues and *βασιλικὰ ἐγκλήματα* against the interests of royal domains and monopolies. These *προσοδικά* covered tax fraud by taxpayers, embezzlement, negligence, forgery and failure to collect deficits by collectors, negligence and other omissions by the officials such as the *antigrapheus* involved in tax collection.⁷³ The *βασιλικὰ ἐγκλήματα* involved things like theft, negligence and arson in relation to the *γενήματα*.⁷⁴

It is of some significance for the model of legitimation and issues of anomie which form an integral part of it that there existed a close connection between social disruption, some forms of social violence and the collection of taxation. This is not surprising. Tax collection and the social tensions generated by the burdens of taxes and liturgies involved very fundamental aspects of the disparities of power and problems of material vulnerability which are central to the concept of legitimation. The conduct and attitudes of officials collecting tax became representative of the opposition between legitimacy and illegitimacy. Tax collectors are often said to have

72 Cf P.Ent. 88 (221 BC).

73 *Law of Greco-Roman Egypt*, 464-69.

74 *Ibid.*, 470.

behaved with violence and high handedness.⁷⁵ In P.Tebt. I 41 (119 BC) the komarch Harmiusis complains to the archiphylakites about the behaviour of the topogrammateus Marres who had the habit of coming to the village with an armed band to extort money from the villagers' wives with the utmost insolence. But also responsibility for collection of rents and dues exposed the collector to hostility. In P.Tebt. I 39 (114 BC) we find a situation described where Apollodoros contracted to retail oil and collect taxes concerned with it at Kerkeosiris. He made an attempt to seize contraband oil and this resulted in considerable violence.⁷⁶ The status of the local tax collector as a private contractor meant that he had little protection in the event that the correct tax could not be gathered. P.Tebt. III:1 772 (236 BC) tells of Nechembes who was a tax collector. A plague of locusts wiped out produce and the tax for a specific area could not be collected. Nechembes was imprisoned for this and petitioned the nomarch for a hearing and to seize impounded vineyards of certain persons.⁷⁷ This shows how the government placed the responsibility upon tax collectors, who in turn were forced to pressure the cultivators in their areas of exaction.⁷⁸ Another response of the population to fiscal burdens was the well-known phenomenon of ἀναχώρησις, a sort of work boycott involving flight to a local temple. As Westermann pointed out this, this was an aspect of the right of asylum which was granted liberally by the Ptolemies to most temples.⁷⁹ Allied to this was the act of ἐκχώρησις, decamping from one's "own place" or ἰδία to another nome to escape fiscal burdens, although refuge in a temple did not seem to be involved.⁸⁰

Despite the fact that the Romans brought modifications to the system of taxation in Egypt, almost all of the observations just made about taxation in the

75 BGU VIII 1821 (51/50 BC); P.Oxy II 285 (50 AD). This involves issues of honour and shame, as we see in chapter 7.

76 Cf P.Tebt. IV 1094 (114/3 BC) in which a tax collector complains that the illicit smuggling and sale of oil by others has sent him into poverty.

77 Cf P.Coll.Youtie I 12 (177 BC).

78 Cf P.Tebt. I 40 (117 BC); P.Ryl. II 66 (Late II BC).

79 See Rostovtzeff, *SEHRE*, 274. W.L. Westermann, "The Ptolemies and the Welfare of their Subjects", *AHR* 43 (1937), 270-287, 276-7, referring to the work of F. von Woess, *Asylwesen Aegyptens* (Munich, 1923), 47-55. See further chapter 6.

80 Westermann, *ibid.*

Ptolemaic period were mirrored under the Roman administration. The Roman tax system is a very complex subject but in simple outline the Romans introduced a system of compulsory services known as liturgies and their answer to problems of collecting tax was to introduce a liturgical office called the *praktoreia*.⁸¹ The persons who filled the posts under this rubric, including the collector of the poll-tax, another Roman innovation, was appointed by the local community and had to be backed by assets to a sufficient value, which shows clearly the connection between administrative service and ownership of property.⁸² But the point was that by this system the entire community became the guarantors of the tax collector, whereas in the Ptolemaic period the equivalent backing was given by a few personal sureties.

The liturgical system was undoubtedly very onerous and it is generally believed that it became more severe in the later empire. The Roman law recognised a number of delicts similar in scope to those which applied in the Ptolemaic period, such as, fraud, peculation and interception of the *λογεῖα* to the detriment of the *fiscus*.⁸³ The populace responded, as under the Ptolemies, by taking to flight, and certainly in later periods were actually prepared to give up land to avoid public service.⁸⁴ Some French scholars viewed flight from fiscal burdens in the Roman period as an aspect of continuity from Ptolemaic Egypt.⁸⁵ Perhaps it was in a practical sense and from the point of view of the fiscally burdened. On the other hand *ἀναχώρησις* in the Roman period has been distinguished by some scholars from its Ptolemaic predecessor on the basis that it ceased to be a collectively recognised process and became "an individual counsel of despair."⁸⁶ Lewis makes the point that

81 See generally S.L. Wallace, *Taxation in Roman Egypt* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1938), still very useful.

82 A.K. Bowman & D. Rathbone, "Cities and Administration" at 111 and 126.

83 Taubenschlag, *Law of Greco-Roman Egypt*, 470.

84 The procedure of *cessio bonorum* is well attested: see P.Oxy XLIII 3105 (229-35 AD). It was not something done easily and proceedings such as those recorded in P.Ryl. II 75 (Late II AD) before the prefect Munatius show that an inquiry as the means of the person desiring cession was often undertaken, to test whether the intent was to defraud creditors. On the system generally see *New Docs* 7, 93ff with references. It can be found expressly stated that liturgies brought men to ruin eg P.Tebt II 327 (Late II AD). The devastation that liturgies brought about in the lives of lesser folk became so significant that reintegration edicts became necessary to address the problem: see *New Docs* 6 (1992) §15.

85 See F. Dunand, "Culte Royal et culte impérial en Égypte. Continuités et ruptures", in G. Grimm, *Das Römisch-Byzantinische Ägypten* (Phillip von Zabern, Mainz, 1987), 47-56, fn 4.

86 W.L. Westermann, "The Ptolemies and the Welfare of their Subjects", 277. Cf Rostovtzeff, *SEHRE*, 677 fn 52.

in the Roman period flight from fiscal burdens became more common among those higher up the social ladder and the absences became longer.⁸⁷ The displacement and dispossession of what was, though small, a relatively significant group of people in this way had a direct impact upon the level of underlying anomie because it continued endemic brigandage, which the Roman administration could never remove.⁸⁸

Until some time in the reign of Trajan, when the inhabitants of villages took to flight, the tax collectors had to assume the burden of shortfalls in government revenues. From the time of Trajan until about mid II AD the responsibility for shortfalls fell mainly upon the bouleutic and non-bouleutic inhabitants of nome capitals and the peasantry and inhabitants of villages.⁸⁹ It now seems probable that in January, 163 AD, the prefect of Egypt, M. Annius Syriacus, decreed at his conventus that such collective responsibility be at an end.⁹⁰

Irrespective of the Roman changes to the system of collection, village officials remained critical to its operation and some of the basic problems observed in the Ptolemaic period continued. This is illustrated by the fact that one official who appears frequently as the object of complaint in the Roman period is the one designated to assess property for taxation purposes and nominate for liturgies. This was the village scribe, the komogrammateus, then the amphodogrammateus between early and mid III AD, and the komarchai.⁹¹ Scribes are sometimes said to have nominated people to liturgies wrongly and for criminal reasons.⁹² More importantly the burden of fiscal dues continued to produce social violence, as in the Ptolemaic

87 *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*, 163.

88 *Ibid.*, 203-4.

89 N. Lewis, *The Compulsory Public Services of Roman Egypt* (Florence, 1982), esp 91-96; *New Docs* 7, loc. cit., see fn 83 above.

90 The evidence for this is basically found in P.Thmouis 1 (II AD).

91 See *New Docs* 7, 97-8. Nelson, "Liturgical Nomination of ΔΗΜΟΣΙΟΙ ΤΗΣ ΚΟΜΗΣ" at 110 gives a summary of the steps involved in nomination for village liturgies.

92 See eg BGU XI 2063 (II AD); P.Oxy XVII 2131 (207 AD); P.Oxy IX 1202 (217 AD). BGU I 15 (26 July 194 AD) is part of a record of proceedings before the strategos Julius Quintianus in which it appears that the komogrammateus of the city of Neilos was being summoned as a party. In P.Cair.Isidor. 68 (309/10 AD) Aurelius Isidorus alleged a conspiracy between Achilles, the secretary of Karanis, Heron, Paësius and Horion to nominate Aurelius Isidorus as chaff collector in place of Paësius as well as protecting 13 persons who are evading their obligations to the village.

period.⁹³ Tax collectors were entitled to an escort of Roman soldiers to aid them in their unpopular task.⁹⁴ There was consequently a similar resonance between structural economic burdens and a perception of anomie as in the Ptolemaic period, which as we will see, was also articulated and made sense of through a linguistic and conceptual system of ethical oppositions in petitions.

The response of violence is the most obvious way in which structural economic tensions could produce anomic conditions, and the reality of this violence was always a test for the success of the process of legitimation and a reminder that it was often fragile. But it is obvious that despite the constant threat of violence, anarchy or chaos was not the norm. Violence needs to be viewed against another response which not only provides us with our evidence of linguistic interaction but illustrates how the institutional order was legitimated despite structural tensions and difficulties. There was a consistent pattern throughout the Greco-Roman period to seek assistance from the government in the face of fiscal oppression through what might be called traditional litigation, that is, through the institutional order, and to link such assistance with the preservation of the flow of revenue to the state.⁹⁵ Many petitions refer to the detrimental effect a particular situation will have upon state revenues, presumably as a prompt to the relevant official to take action.⁹⁶ In petitions to the Ptolemaic sovereign, the explicit expression of this seems to be the exception rather than the rule. However, in petitions to Ptolemaic officials it is frequently found at the end of the request section in expressions such as ἵνα...μηθὲν τῶι βασιλεῖ διαπέσει in P.Tebt. I 49 (112-111 BC) or οὐθὲν τῶν τῶι βασιλεῖ χρησι[μ]ῶν διαπεσεῖται in P.Rein. I 18 (108 BC).⁹⁷ This may indicate a way in which

93 Bagnall, "Official and Private Violence", *BASP* 26 (1989), 201-216, at 204. P.Oxy VIII 1119 (254 AD); P.Sakaon 37 (Jan/Feb 284)(=P.Thead 18). In P.Sakaon 44 (331/2 AD)(=P.Thead 17, Sel. Pap II 295) the petitioners want the prefect to order the return of fellow villagers to help pay taxes. The petitioners had searched out these people but violence ensued.

94 Bowman & Rathbone, "Cities and Administration" at 126.

95 Kehoe shows in his article "Legal Institutions and the Bargaining Power of the Tenant in Roman Egypt", *AfP* 41 (1995), 232-262, that in the Roman period at least an enduring confidence was expressed in legal institutions.

96 See Di Bitonto (1968), 102 shows how common the theme was in the Ptolemaic period.

97 See also BGU VIII 1841 (51/50 BC); BGU VIII 1852 (1 BC).

cultivators turned fiscal pressure back onto officials. P.Tebt. III:1 769 (237/6-212/11 BC) tells of a flax cultivator who has been put under arrest for some reason which is lost. In a petition to the king he points out how important flax is to the government, calling it "most necessary" (ἀναγκαϊότατος) (Il. 5, 72-3) and asks to be allowed to resume his cultivation otherwise the production of the nome would fall off. P.Tebt. IV 1095 (113 BC) tells of the complaint to Menches the komogrammateus of Kerkeosiris, by Teos a crown cultivator whose house was broken into and he was robbed. The perpetrators were Pyrrhichos son of Dionysios a catoikic cavalryman, and a villager, Herakleios son of Poseidippos. These two are known from at least three other papyri as leaders of a large armed band who carried out raids in the daytime.⁹⁸ Teos makes the point that this impeded the collection of the tax, which may of course have been the purpose of the raid.⁹⁹ In BGU VIII 1825 (I BC) the tax collector of Tanchaïs, Proitos, asks the strategos to intervene on his behalf in a dowry dispute with his son's wife, partly on the basis that it will prevent interruption to the collection of taxes.¹⁰⁰

In the Roman period, besides flight and surrender of land, we see the response to compulsory service and taxation in the form of the many applications of protest against or for release from liturgy.¹⁰¹ However, even more contain the assertion that if assistance is provided the revenues of the government will be preserved, which indicates an important issue of basic economic continuity from the Ptolemaic to the Roman periods.¹⁰² In BGU XI 2061, 3 (207 AD) the petitioner Temas son of Phatres draws the precise connection between his role as a cultivator of land and government revenue: γεωργὸς πλυγχάνων καὶ χρήσιμος τῷ ἱερωτάτῳ ταμείῳ. R.L.B. Morris suggests that there was a growth in appeals against liturgies and threats to the

98 P.Tebt 45, 46, 47. See the introduction to P.Tebt. IV 1095 (113 BC). Cf P.Ent. 11 (221 BC) for a situation in which a cultivator named Pasis, complains of an attack by a 70 aroura clerouch. On violence generally in Roman Egypt see Bagnall, "Official and Private Violence", *passim*.

99 Cf P.Tebt. I 41 (119 BC).

100 See also P.Tebt. III:1 786 (c 138 BC).

101 See Lewis, *Compulsory Services*, 97, *passim* for the many exemptions which could be claimed, at least in the earlier empire. Note also his Table 5 on 122-7.

102 Eg SB XVI 12509 (117-138 AD); P.Wisconsin I 34 (144 AD); P.Sakaon 36 (c 280 AD)=(P.Ryl 114, Sel.Pap. II 293); P.Cair.Isidor. 78 (29 Jan 324 AD) Cf P.Oxy XXVII 2479 (VI AD).

government revenue in II AD which reflected growing "economic and administrative" instability.¹⁰³ That is no doubt right, but a broader consideration of the evidence suggests that the concerns of petitioners in petitions from II AD can find correlates in petitions from earlier periods, as we saw above. That would not exclude the possibility that issues of fiscal oppression were more intense at certain periods, eg II AD. It does however seem to be the case that the sections of society who were complaining about liturgies became more extensive during the Roman period. II AD saw an increase in the number of petitions from persons of higher social status, such as, metropolitans and estate owners.¹⁰⁴

Jean Bingen has argued that Ptolemaic Egypt was internally riven by structural tensions from III BC, which were never resolved and gradually worsened. Official abuse and financial pressure produced social dislocation and brigandage. In II BC the well known papyrus P.Tebt 5 (118 BC) records a series of legal measures undertaken by Ptolemy VIII Euergetes at the end of a period of dynastic crisis, in which all sorts of amnesties were granted, including for those who had quit their domicile and turned to brigandage. The Greek rule in Egypt was marked by a general state of dysfunction and decline until the defeat of Cleopatra by Octavian.¹⁰⁵ This is a widely held view and reflects the reality of anomie in Ptolemaic Egypt. In particular, official abuses and the loss of central effective control combined with economic structures to create a cocktail of consistent social friction. It is fair to say that de Ste Croix was quite right in suggesting that rent, taxation and compulsory services were the main burdens in a structural economic sense for most of the land holding population from III BC to mid IV AD, and in large measure the other comments about the Ptolemaic period also apply in the Roman period when problems of official abuse and financial oppression continued, even if the nature of the Roman

103 "Reflections of Citizen Attitudes in Petitions from Roman Oxyrhynchus" in *Proceedings of the XVI Congress of Papyrology, July, 1980* (ASP 23) (Scholars Press, 1981), 23-31.

104 See *New Docs*, 6, 143.

105 J. Bingen, "Les tensions structurelles de la société ptolémaïque", in *Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia, Napoli, 19-26 maggio, 1983*, vols I-III (Centro Internazionale per lo Studio dei Papiri Ercolanesi, Naples, 1984), 921-937.

administration meant that there was no experience of central decline similar to that of the Ptolemaic period. There were however, periods of unrest, constant brigandage and revolts by the native population.¹⁰⁶

This general picture of Greco-Roman Egypt is important because it portrays areas of structural reality which are critical to our understanding of the operation of the symbolic order. Specifically, it raises the whole issue of legitimacy and confidence in the system of administration. We shall consider this first through the question of access to the sovereign and his officials.

3.3 ACCESS TO HIGHER OFFICIALS AND THE LEGAL SYSTEM IN GRECO-ROMAN EGYPT

Access to powerful figures involves the notion of the contexts in which linguistic interaction could take place with powerful figures. This entails issues of physical as well as social distance between the members of smaller communities and those officials such as the Ptolemaic monarch, the Roman prefect, the epistrategoi and the nome strategoi who enjoyed the application of the positive dimensions of the symbolic universe. These, as we will see later, were the officials most likely to be the recipients of richly symbolic language.

Physical access to the monarch and higher officials in the Ptolemaic period was achieved largely through the formal process of the audience, which inherently reflected the social distance between the participants. The king had audiences in his palace in Alexandria.¹⁰⁷ Polybius V, 81, 5 records that the king gave audiences in his tent while on campaign. As we have seen, the strategos was one of the more important judicial officers and there is evidence that the strategos travelled to centres such as Diospolis and people with problems could have audiences with him there.¹⁰⁸ This is important because the concept of the physical audience in many ways provided the model for approaches to the king and other officials which were written,

106 See *SEHRE*, 298 and 677.

107 On audiences see C. Préaux, *Le monde hellénistique I* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1978), 276.

108 UPZ II 160 (119 BC). Cf Préaux, *Le monde hellénistique I*, 279.

and in particular this is apparent in the designation of petitions to the king as ἔντευξεις. The substantive is of course derived from the verb ἐντυγχάνω and as Collomp points out this verb has very deep and direct associations with the action of physical oral audience with powerful figures and supplication, which as we will see in chapter 7 was always a fundamental symbolic theme in petitions.¹⁰⁹ We saw in the last chapter how this Ptolemaic usage and its semantic associations continued its influence the Roman period.¹¹⁰

We saw in the previous section that the lower level officials with whom the general population had most frequent and direct interaction were often the same ones who became the face of government oppression. The higher officials, with whom there was little direct interaction, like the Ptolemaic monarch, the Roman prefect and epistrategos, and to a lesser extent the Ptolemaic or Roman strategos, who were conceptually and physically more distant from the ordinary people, became the focus of legitimate power, while lower officials in the nome capitals and villages, especially those associated with taxation and revenue, like the oikonomos and the komogrammateus, were usually the actual officials who perpetrated acts which came to be conceptualised as illegal and within the domains of illegitimate power. Higher officials could sometimes appear physically in nomes and villages as helper of the oppressed perhaps to deal with similar problems. In P.Tebt. III:1 788 (Mid II BC), the strategos was sent out by the king and queen to help the vexed and abused.¹¹¹ Evidence like this shows how the higher officials were set in sharp contrast with both bad village officials and local dynasts not only by physical absence but by being conceptualised in the symbolic attributions of legitimacy, which both helped to give rise to a cumulative perception of great distance from the ordinary person.¹¹²

109 *Recherches*, 51ff.

110 See chapter 2, 66 ff.

111 The petition in P.Princ. III 117 (52-3 BC) anticipates the return of the strategos for further hearings.

112 It has been observed how language use could reflect social distance in Greco-Roman Egypt. For example, several scholars have referred to language use as evidence of the growth and development of social distance between ruler and ruled. eg. the remarks of Sir Harold Bell about the Ptolemaic petition P. Hibeh. 34 in respect of which he asserts that a minor official from a small village can address the all-powerful King Ptolemy III Euergetes "without servility or verbiage, as man to man" in *Egypt from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquests* (1948), 125. This was compared to the pusillanimous and servile language of the sixth century AD from the village of Aphrodito to the Dux of the Thebaid in P.Cairo. Masp. I.67002. See also the

With the arrival of the Romans who were both culturally different and reserved for themselves the highest administrative positions the issue of social as well as physical distance could only have been exacerbated. The experience of remoteness and inaccessibility may have been, as Bagnall has noted, the product of the power structure in Roman Egypt. There was a lack of resources which prevented the higher Roman officials from intervening in the lives of the smaller communities.¹¹³ Richard Alston has recently suggested that this view should be subject to a general qualification to the extent that the system of Roman forts and the general military presence in Egypt allowed the Romans to exert considerable influence over the local populations and deal with crime with reasonable efficacy.¹¹⁴

3.3.1 The System of Law Courts

On the other hand, the fora constituted by the court system and its procedures, including of course the petitions and other written communications which formed part of those procedures, allowed a special type of institutional access to the sovereign and his officials and the prefect, his officials, the strategos, the epistrategos in the *chora* in the Roman period. It will be seen that it was in connection with this form of institutional access that the sovereign and his officials had a special signification as protectors and helpers. The Ptolemaic court system enjoyed a number of different fora for the resolution of disputes. In III BC at the village level a type of tribunal was composed of the epistates and the village elders, but its decisions may not have been recognised as having any force of law.¹¹⁵ The higher courts presided over by more powerful officials were required to exercise greater power. There were a range of courts which operated solely in the autonomous cities, but in the *chora* courts consisting of single officials are known to have been presided over by the epistrategos

discussion of the same material, quoting Bell, by G.E.M. de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle*, at 223-4. Price, *Rituals and Power*, 244-7, sees language use as indicating the way in which the ancients understood and interpreted burgeoning institutional structures and political intervention.

113 "Official and Private Violence in Roman Egypt".

114 Richard Alston, "Violence and Social Control in Roman Egypt" in A. Bülow-Jacobsen (ed.), *Proceedings of the 20th Congress of Papyrologists Copenhagen, 23-29 August, 1992* (Museum Tusculum Press, Copenhagen, 1994), 517.

115 See P.Cair.Zen. III 59520 (III BC), where one party declined to be bound by the decision.

and the strategos, who were the most important, as well as a range of other officials, such as the oikonomos, the epistates, the komarch and komogrammateus.¹¹⁶ The court of the strategos in particular would have constituted the forum in which the majority of the population were most likely to experience official power in an institutional setting. The strategos in fact from III BC had several important functions associated with dispute resolution. We have observed that he sorted out petitions, and he undertook attempts at conciliation, as well as exercising considerable power of a judicial nature.¹¹⁷

Several collegiate courts are also known, in particular, the court of the laocrites and the court of the chrematistae. The court of the laocrites is usually understood as being under the supervision of the strategos and was comprised of three priests and an eisagogeus. It dealt with civil cases between Egyptians and later Egyptians and Greeks.¹¹⁸ Recently S. Allam has argued that the λαοκρίται were in fact taken both from priests in a judicial capacity and layman from the class of notables.¹¹⁹ There is some significance in the fact that this court, according to Allam, was basically a continuation of a court that had existed for centuries in the Pharaonic period and which sat within temples, with priests being given jurisdiction over citizens, and it appears that local jurisdiction continued into the Ptolemaic period.¹²⁰ In the Ptolemaic period the court of the λαοκρίται sat in a building called the λαοκρίσιον, which was apparently not a temple, although in one source there is a reference to a "judgement house" in the local Hathor temple, so the connection with temples remained.¹²¹

There was also another collegiate court called the κοινοδίκιον, which dealt with civil cases between Greeks and Egyptians.¹²² It seems to have been composed

116 Taubenschlag, *Law of Greco-Roman Egypt*, 485-88. See also for the epistrategos, Thomas, *The epistrategos*, Part 1 "The Ptolemaic Epistrategos", 63ff.

117 C. Préaux, *Le monde hellénistique* I, 280, where she speaks of "un pouvoir coercitif" on which see the comments at 95 above.

118 Taubenschlag, *Law of Greco-Roman Egypt*, 481-2.

119 S. Allam, "Egyptian Law Courts in Pharaonic and Hellenistic Times", *JEA* 77 (1991), 109-126, 123ff.

120 *Ibid.*, esp. 121.

121 *Ibid.*, 123, 125.

122 Taubenschlag, *Law of Greco-Roman Egypt*, 483-4.

of six men one of whom presided and was assisted by an "introducer" (εἰσαγώγεις) and acted on request from the strategos. It seems to have been based an urban court model and exercised the jurisdiction of the king, because it was convoked by the strategos.¹²³ The court of the *chrematistae* was a circuit court comprised of three members appointed by the king for a fixed term and sometimes had to judge disputes under the presidency of a high official such as the βασιλικὸς γραμματεὺς or the epimeletes.¹²⁴ They formed a court which held its sessions in the autonomous cities, such as, Alexandria and Ptolemais, but also in the *metropoleis*, and dealt with a range of matters and has been described as a "most important court, which anyone, even a villager, could easily reach and appeal to."¹²⁵ This comment applies equally to the Ptolemaic and Roman periods and alerts us to an important dimension of the court system of Egypt which distinguishes it, for example, from the court system which produced the Attic orators in classical Athens. Access to the forum of a court room was impeded by problems of both physical and social distance, as we have seen. This feature of Greco-Roman Egypt helps put in perspective the importance of written communications with legitimate power by means of an epistolographic document like a petition which had heightened significance because it had to substitute for oral linguistic interaction, as we discussed in the previous chapter.

In the Roman period the institutional forensic context was constituted by a range of courts, of which the highest and most important was the court presided over by the prefect, since he became the highest and most important official in Egypt under Roman rule, apart from the emperor who was relatively rarely present in the prefecture. It was difficult to achieve physical access to the Roman prefect or his office. For most of the year people who wished to see the prefect had to travel to Alexandria. Reinmuth argues that the prefect of Egypt went on "frequent" tours of inspection of the province as well as the annual circuit known as the *conventus*, held

123 C. Préaux, *Le monde hellénistique* I, 278.

124 Ibid.

125 See the intro. to P.Heid VI 363, at 19; G. Foti-Talamanca, *Ricerche sul processo nell'Egitto greco-romano*(I (Milan, 1974), II (Milan, 1979)).

at a nome capital such as Memphis or Pelusium between January and April, for the principle purpose of auditing the accounts of local officials, as well as to carry out his judicial functions.¹²⁶ At the *conventus* each village was apparently granted an appearance with the prefect at which both administration and judicial matters were dealt with, and it was considered an honour to receive early consideration.¹²⁷ People in nomes further up the Nile had to travel to meet the prefect at the place of *conventus* and, as Reinmuth says, appearance at the court of the prefect involved great inconvenience for most inhabitants.¹²⁸ But even at the *conventus* access was restricted in a practical sense, simply by the volume of petitions. P.Yale I.61 discloses that the prefect sitting at the March *conventus* at Arsinoë in 209 AD received 1,804 petitions in just over two days. Lewis says, "It takes no great imagination to visualise the suppliants forming a long queue well before sun up and waiting as long as need be in order to tender the precious paper on which rode so many hopes and fears."¹²⁹ An added problem was that sometimes petitions were submitted at the *conventus* and decided without the relevant parties ascertaining the outcome. This required specific steps such as that apparent in P.L. Bat. XXV 41 (IIAD) in which a high official, probably the prefect, in Alexandria writes to the strategoi of the Arsinoite nome asking them to publish the letter to enable people to find out the fate of their proceedings. Access to the prefect may have been further restricted by proclamations to the effect that certain private applications were not to be made to him.¹³⁰ It is probable in fact that the higher Roman officials themselves had little interest in direct association with the population, except at the *conventus* where many Alexandrian officials, such as, the iuridicus, the idiologos and the

126 Reinmuth, *Prefect of Egypt*, 98; G. Foti-Talamanca, *Ricerche sul processo nell'Egitto greco-romano* (Milan, 1974), II (Milan, 1979).

127 Ibid., 101. In P.Cair.Isidor. 73 (314 AD) Aurelius Isidorus used the presence of the prefect Julius Julianus in the district of Karanis to petition him about the fraud and extortion committed by the local praepositus pagi and komarchs of Karanis.

128 Reinmuth, *Prefect of Egypt*, 101; N. Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule* (Oxford, 1983), 189.

129 *Life in Egypt*, 190. In P.Oxy XXII 2343 (288 AD) the petitioner Septimius Heracleides, who was the eirenarch of Oxyrhynchus, had to try no less than four times to get before the prefect to have his complaint for wrongful nomination as decaprotus heard.

130 P.Oxy II 237 (186 AD), Col. VI, ll. 6 and 35

archidicastes, were assigned to hear cases after delegation from the prefect.¹³¹ The courts of the *chrematistae*, the komogrammateus and the epistates continued to deal with matters of much the same sort as during the Ptolemaic period. Under his enhanced role the epistrategos presided over an important local court in the chora and is known to have made regular visits to the nomes in his epistrategiea, and heard cases at various localities.¹³² The strategos also travelled in the nome and heard cases although his importance declined during the empire.¹³³

3.3.2 Confidence in the Institutional Order

We may conclude this section by briefly considering the question of whether the community of Greco-Roman Egypt continued throughout our period to feel confidence in the institutional order. Confidence is a significant question because if we conclude that some conviction was felt in the efficacy of the institutional order, this is itself evidence for the success of the process of legitimation, but also it will have an impact upon what meanings we attach to the language used in its institutional contexts. In particular, if we proceed on the basis that language users in petitions felt confidence in the capacity of officials and the legal system, we are more likely to conclude that formulaic language was not a grouping of empty banalities. In a way the entire topic of this thesis is directed to aspects of collective belief in the institutional order. But here we shall refer to evidence which is not linguistic in its nature but more which constituted conduct from which conclusions can be drawn, in other words we shall look beyond the use of language to behaviour which is consistent with confidence in the established order.

Confidence in the system is not self evident. For one thing, the existence of judicial prayers or prayers for revenge could be seen as a sign of the failure of confidence, since such prayers represent resort to a god because of the incapacity of

131 Reinmuth, *Prefect of Egypt*, 102

132 Thomas, *The Epistrategos* II, 127

133 Taubenschlag, *Law of Greco-Roman Egypt*, 488ff.

the state apparatus.¹³⁴ However, here it depends somewhat upon the perception of a logical and conceptual disjunction between the sanctions of the secular state and the activities of metaphysical agents. Contrary to this some argue that revenge or juridical prayers presuppose and confirm a world view where both cosmic and social order follow the same principle of retribution. Both fall along the same spectrum of connective justice.¹³⁵ So the existence of juridical prayers do not clearly signal a crisis of confidence. For another, R.S. Bagnall used a model drawn from contemporary studies of Mediterranean and Arab societies to help understand violence in Roman Egypt which suggested that small communities eschew the formal structures of government in dealing with crime and disputes.¹³⁶ Bagnall himself however doubted whether this model was applicable to the communities of Greco-Roman Egypt which were not so loath to look to the government for assistance. That doubt is accepted here. The very fact of the large body of petitions over so many centuries which have survived shows that the role of the government in many types of problems, not just those arising from violence or other crimes, was always very important. Further, as we have already mentioned, the recent study of Dennis Kehoe which indicated a high level of confidence in the institutional order at least in the area of landlord and tenant, which was, as we have seen, structurally very important.¹³⁷

We may point also to the preparedness to continue approaching the administration, despite delays and administrative lethargy and some evidence of ineffectual decisions, to support the existence of such confidence. In the Roman period there is clear evidence that decisions of officials were often ignored, one factor

134 See chapter 8, 397.

135 J. Assmann, "When Justice Fails: Jurisdiction and Imprecation in Ancient Egypt and the Near East", *JEA* 78 (1992), 149-162. See further chapter 8, 400ff.

136 "Official and Private Violence in Roman Egypt". Compare the argument of D. Hobson in, "The Impact of Law on Village Life in Roman Egypt" in B. Halpern, D. Hobson (eds.), *Law, Politics and Society in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 1993), 193-219, at 199 where she concludes petitioning was the last stage of the disputing process in village life and at 205 where she remarks that the petitioning process existed on the perimeter of what was essentially a system of self-help rather than a penal system as we know it. See also Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton Uni. Press, Princeton, 1993), at 168.

137 "Legal Institutions and the Bargaining Power of the Tenant in Roman Egypt". Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, at 167, remarks that, at least in the period III to IV AD about which he is writing, those who petitioned were usually from the propertied classes.

which on its own might be thought likely to undermine confidence to a serious extent.¹³⁸ Further, in both the Ptolemaic and Roman periods although a petition was received by an official's office, this might mean only that a merry-go-round of official referrals was set in train, and although adjournments and delays in litigation were frequent, the population kept returning to the institutional and formal fora to litigate their disputes.¹³⁹ In P.Ent. 63 (c 221 BC), a fragmentary petition, the unknown petitioner seems to make a point of relating the lengths to which he has gone to obtain justice. P.Ent. 86 Recto (221 BC) shows that witnesses could be deterred by violence. The subject of P.Ent. 91 (221 BC) is not clear but it is certain that the petitioner is submitting a petition on his problem for a second time, so presumably the first did not achieve anything. Thomas makes the point that in the category of petitions to the Roman epistrategos seeking the hearing of a case, there was a range of responses. Sometimes the epistrategos simply grants the request for a hearing without further comment.¹⁴⁰ But there are also a number of examples of occasions when the epistrategos delays the matter or forces the petitioner to petition again. In P.Meyer 8 (16 Aug 151 AD) the epistrategos tells the petitioner to petition again after the sowing ((23) μετὰ κατασπορὰν ἔντυχέ μοι).¹⁴¹

Thomas also points out that *subscriptions* to petitions to the prefect show how many were delegated to subordinates.¹⁴² Thousands of petitions could be lodged and passed around subordinates to the Roman prefect without apparently progressing the matter. A couple of examples from the period II to III AD demonstrate this. A fairly simple claim for a debt to the archidicastes could involve at least four steps before the defendant was even summonsed to court.¹⁴³ In P.Oxy III 486 (131 AD), a

138 Thomas, *The Epistrategos* II, 137-8. We may compare the conclusion of W. Turpin, "Imperial Subscriptions and the Administration of Justice", *JRS* 81 (1991), 101-118, about subscriptions by emperors to petitions by small communities, often about abuses by local officials in the wider empire. At 114 he makes the point that, unlike the subscriptions collected by ancient jurists, most of the surviving subscriptions from emperors say very little of real value to the petitioners.

139 A point noted by Philo *In Flaccum*. 29; cf SB 5239 (14 AD)

140 Thomas, *The Epistrategos* II, 119, citing P.Oxy VII 1032 (162 AD), a petition to the prefect, but in respect of which the epistrategos acts as his delegate via the dioiketes.

141 Thomas, *The Epistrategos* II, 119-20.

142 *Ibid.*

143 In P.Oxy III 485 (178 AD) the process seems to have been: (i) Serenus, a freedman, applies to the archidicastes Antoninus also called Prudens for a claim on a debt; (ii) archidicastes appends a notification on

woman called Dionysia petitioned the epistrategos Claudius Quintianus about a property dispute with Sarapion son of Mnesitheus over a vineyard and some corn land. Quintianus heard the case and referred it to the prefect. Dionysia attended the prefect's court but Sarapion failed to appear, so the prefect sent the case back to the epistrategos, who was by then Julius Varianus. Dionysia then had to issue a further petition to Varianus to have the case heard "on the spot", where the epistrategos was, when she sailed back (from where is not clear), because she had pressing matters at home to attend to.

In P.Oxy VI 899 (200 AD) a woman called Apollonarion applied to be released from a liturgy. She petitioned an official, probably the dioiketes, some time shortly before Phamenoth 6 of the 7th year of Septimius Severus. This date seems likely because the dioiketes who received the petition wrote a letter on that date admitting the force of Apollonarion's claim.¹⁴⁴ Apollonarion then had to petition the acting strategos, Ammonianus, sometime between Phamenoth 6 and Pachon 27 of the 7th year, enclosing her original petition and the letter of the dioiketes, and she no doubt asked him to give the necessary instructions to local officials of the different villages to remove her name from the list of cultivators. On Pachon 27 of the 7th year the acting strategos Ammonianus wrote a letter to the komogrammateis of the relevant villages enclosing Apollonarion's petition to himself, the petition to the dioiketes and the dioiketes' letter, and asked for an inquiry and report. Nothing happened, apparently, for eight month's later in Tubi of the 8th year, Apollonarion sent a second petition to the dioiketes seeking that stricter instructions be given to the new strategos to order the local officials to release her from the liturgy. She enclosed an ἀναγραφή, which was a report of her land holdings. The dioiketes seems to have again replied favourably, but this did not produce results. On Thoth 1 of the 9th year she must send yet another petition to the strategos, which enclosed the whole dossier.

it to the strategos of the Oxyrhynchite nome to summon the defendant, a woman called Sarapias; (iii) Serenus then takes the petition back to the strategos; (iv) the strategos orders that the petition be served on Sarapias. Cf Hobson, "The Impact of Law", at 210.

144 See the editors introduction, P.Oxy VI, 224.

We do not know the outcome. But this procedural history shows how the power of officialdom could be slow moving and ineffectual.¹⁴⁵ P.Oxy XLIII 3094 (217-18 AD) gives a rare view of the attitude of litigant's to the experience of officials dealing with cases. It is a private letter from two women, Sarapas and Gaia, who seem to be Alexandrines, to Eutychidas in which they tell the tale of legal proceedings involving Gaia.¹⁴⁶ Gaia obtained a decision from an official called Agrippa which was ambiguous so she applied to the prefect. This seems to be another instance in which members of the community keep applying in the face of unsatisfactory decisions by officials. The decision of Agrippa was ambiguous and prolonged the proceedings.

The evidence considered in this section shows that despite inherent problems which might be thought to undermine confidence in the efficacy of the system, the population was prepared to keep having resort to it. It should be said as well that, in spite of everything, this confidence was justified to the extent that the administration showed a level of responsibility and continued to act, even if the response was somewhat plodding and inefficient.¹⁴⁷ Indeed this may have helped engender a perception of stability and a pattern of regularity which is vital to the continued functioning of a social institution. The structures of normative regulation apparent especially in Ptolemaic and Roman legal rights, rules and procedures were perceived then to play a real role in the practical ascendancy of the nomic, order and stability, over the anomic. We will see how the symbolic order was important to align the power of high officials, such as the Ptolemaic monarch and the Roman prefect and epistrategos with legal concepts, regulations and institutions, since intellectual and

145 See P.Oxy XII 1470 (336 AD) for a similar situation in IV AD. Compare P.Wisconsin II 48 (II AD) which contains a report of proceedings which is very fragmentary, but it appears that the plaintiff suffered violence and detention at the hands of soldiers, and had to petition the prefect four times about the problem (ll, 18, 24, 31, 39).

146 See the commentary by the editors on l. 5. The letter begins with a formula of obeisance to Sarapis, which usually indicates that it was written from Alexandria: *Aegyptus* 51 (1971), 172-9.

147 See D. Hobson, "The Impact of Law", at 214 says, "Again and again the petitioner describes a process where he or she is referred back and forth between one level and another of the system...I assume it is the unlikelihood of success which caused petitioners to tell their story simultaneously to two different levels of the system, eg, the centurion and the strategos." Against this we have the opinion of R.S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton Uni. Press, Princeton, 1993), 169, "...the persistent use of the petition process suggests some result. In fact responses were fairly swift."

legal structures of Greco-Roman society helped to harmonise the perception and experience of anomie, so often located within structures of domination.

Dorothy Crawford has expressed the view that the symbolic and ethical system which we find in official documents and petitions, about the "good" Ptolemaic official, was the rhetorical opposite of an entrenched delinquency of officials and amounted to an almost feckless response by a central power which was avoiding its responsibilities.¹⁴⁸ Later chapters will show that our model redefines such a formulation of the relationship between social tensions, social structures and collective cognitive systems. The language of the good official, or sovereign, was a symbolic resource to give meaning and substance to those positions in the face of financial pressure or official oppression, that is, problems with types of power, and a general sense of anomie which they produced. To paraphrase Samuel Johnson, some may call this a triumph of hope over experience, and point to the gap between what was and what should have been, between symbol and "reality". But all those petitions and court proceedings which deal with problems arising from official abuses or the tensions of the economic structure of Greco-Roman Egypt should be seen as predicated upon some meaningful sense of the legitimacy of the institutional order and embody conduct which supports the conclusion.

3.4 SOME CONCLUSIONS ON POWER AND STRUCTURE IN EGYPT

It is important to bear in mind that the systemisation of the hierarchy which is presented by scholars may give a semblance of rational order which was really absent from the administration of both Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. Despite any appearance of careful delineation of positions and jurisdictions, power was distributed unevenly throughout the social and administrative structure, but in its various forms it was always closely connected with individuals as well as roles. A.E. Samuel rejects the conception of the Ptolemaic kingdom as a directed and planned system. He conceives

148 D. Crawford, "The Good Official in Ptolemaic Egypt", in H. Maehler, V.M. Strocka (eds.), *Das ptolemäische Ägypten* (Mainz, 1978), 201

of the Ptolemaic bureaucracy, for example, not as entirely rational and tightly controlled from the centre. Rather it was a structure with power distributed among officials on an *ad hoc* and often irrational basis and operating at times independently of the monarchy. He has made the point that the Greeks in Egypt carried with them the city-state model of an organic relationship between individual and state which made a clear demarcation between "state" and "private" inappropriate.¹⁴⁹ There may not in the Ptolemaic period have been any meaningful distinction between state and private which implied a degree of functional differentiation of institutions which the modern world understands but which was not necessarily experienced in the ancient world. The activities of Zenon of Caunos seem to bear this out. As Samuel says, "Zenon himself was, of course, not an official at all; but his position as manager of the gift-estate of 10,000 arourae which Apollonios held in the Fayum meant that he was a vital cog in the private domain of an important person in Alexandria. As such, he had access to power; and such access meant that, in the realities of power, he could intervene in the activities of official appointees in the administration."¹⁵⁰ He exercised a kind of judicial function in the δωρεά of Apollonios which had some kind of internal court system.¹⁵¹ William Harris observed that in view of the great power exercised by Apollonios and his agent Zenon, and the range of their activities, the distinction between "private" and "public" may be "somewhat unreal."¹⁵² The fact of patronage (σκέπη), being the protection of individuals including tax collectors by the personal fiat of a highly placed official, also supports the view that important manifestations of power did not rely upon some "public" position in the sense that we would understand it.¹⁵³ The observation made above about the probable lack of

149 A.E. Samuel, 'Ptolemies and the Ideology of Kingship', in P. Green, *Hellenistic History and Culture* (Uni. of California Press, Berkeley, 1993), 168-192, esp. at 173-174; *The Shifting Sands of History: Interpretations of Ptolemaic Egypt* (Uni of America Press, Lanham, 1989), 59.

150 *Ibid.*, at 172

151 M. Rostovtzeff, *A Large Estate in Egypt in the Third Century BC* (Madison, 1922); C. Orrieux, *Zénon de Caunos, parépidèmos et le destin grec* (Annales Littéraires de l'Université de Besançon, 1985), 181ff.

152 W. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 119

153 On σκέπη see D.J. Crawford, "Skepe in Socnopaiou Nesos", *JJP* 18 (1974), 169-75 and P.Tebt. I 40 (117 BC) Cf P.Tebt. I 34 (100 BC) in which some high official seeks to obtain released from prison and tax liability of a tenant. Zenon himself provided σκέπη: P.Ryl. IV 569 (III BC) The idea is neatly expressed by use of the language of alliances as in P.Cair.Zen. V 59852 (III BC): ἐξ ἀρχῆς σοι μου

distinction between civil and criminal cases or military, judicial and administrative powers also accords with this perception. Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt tried from an early period to find an administrative post for themselves and thus drove the development of the bureaucracy for their own profit more than any benefit to the crown or the "state".¹⁵⁴

L. Mooren has shown that in II BC the honorific titulature connected with administrative posts appeared whereby higher officials were graded according to court rank which was different from the traditional circle of the king's "Friends"¹⁵⁵ Mooren pointed out that such an honorific hierarchy was a noticeable shift in the Ptolemaic government and is characteristic of the development of administrative structures. This can be seen as further support for the idea that the bureaucracy grew strong independently of the central monarch. The catalyst for this was the shift in power balances brought about by a combination of the death of Philopator in 204 BC and the accession of a minor, Epiphanes. As a result of this Sosibios and Agathocles, who held the position of regents, came to dominate affairs. This reinforces the view that the Ptolemaic hierarchy lay within a social system which only partly configured by power which was formal in the sense of being located most strongly in fixed positions within the social structure. The particular qualities and motivations of individuals, some of whom held positions appointed by the king and some of whom did not, and even the monarchs, tended to determine where power came to be located from time to time. Overall the impression which is left to us is that the Ptolemaic world knew and experienced formal and institutional power in the form of a strong bureaucracy but this was heavily mixed with informal or personal power of the people who held particular positions at different times. There was a constant tension between the formal and the informal powers of royal officials and figures with power

συν[απ.]συσταθέντος See also Thomas, *The Epistrategos* II, 61 fn 52 where he gives bibliographical references and notes that this sort of σκεπή is nearly always referred to in a bad sense of illegal protection.

154 Samuel, "Ideology of Kingship", 178-9, including references. At 180 he says, "In such a context the monarchy is not quite the whole government, but rather an institution making up only part of the structure, albeit nominally and conceptually at its head."

155 L. Mooren. *The Aulic Titulature in Ptolemaic Egypt: Introduction and Prosopography* (Brussels, 1975)

and influence in the localities, who held strings of appointments and came from hereditarily powerful families. It has been observed that official positions "did not have a fixed jurisdiction, but, rather, depended on the official given the appointment."¹⁵⁶ So legitimated power was not coextensive with an institutionalised position with a legally recognised jurisdiction. The manner of exercise was a very important basis of the legitimation. The exercise of power had to accord with ethical considerations as well as the rule of law.

It is true that in many ways the Roman administration was characterised by tighter control than the Ptolemaic. Partly that was inherent in the nature of the Roman administration. Egypt was no longer a kingdom under the Romans. It was administered as a Roman province. The administration was undoubtedly more controlled and directed not only in Egypt but elsewhere. Consequently, institutional and formal power became more predominant. One observation which suggests this strongly is the development and formalisation of the gymnasial and metropolite classes in the nome capitals. The katoikic land holders of Ptolemaic Egypt no doubt also had a degree of status based upon their position as Greeks in the kingdom and their enjoyment of special tax rates. But since membership of the gymnasial group within a metropolis and the development of the private land holdings were both quite closely related to the Ptolemaic katoikoi, it is likely that in the Roman period the status of the local katoikic influential figures or local "dynasts" became entrenched more firmly within the range of formal power. Similarly, the joining of qualification for municipal magistracies and liturgical office to membership of the gymnasial group within a metropolis solidified and formalised positions in the administrative hierarchy. Another trend which may be cited to support the perception of increasing institutionalisation and definition of formal power is the advancing dominance and influence of written texts in many areas of the Roman world.¹⁵⁷ This is nowhere

156 Bagnall, Manning, Sidebotham, Zitterkopf, "A Ptolemaic Inscription from Bir 'Iayyan", at 325, referring to A.E. Samuel, "The Internal Organisation of the Nomarch's Bureau in the Third Century BC" in *Essays in Honour of C. Bradford Welles* (New Haven, 1966)(=Am.Stud.Pap 1), 213-229, who observed that "appointments of officials could be to rank, with jurisdiction then assigned."

157 R. Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (CUP, Cambridge, 1992), 159ff.

more apparent than in the realm of legal decision making. The growth in the use of written precedents by Roman officials in deciding cases is has long been recognised and demonstrates a formalisation of the process of decision making, as well as a definite furtherance of the tendency to circumscribe the exercise of power by the rule of law.¹⁵⁸

In line with this, Bowman and Rathbone argue strongly that "The Romans, through the application of the *polis-chora* model to Alexandria and Egypt, set up a system of direct centralised administration which helped to break the previous local structures of power."¹⁵⁹ But on the other hand, whatever the intentions of the Romans it is another question how successful this was. There can be little doubt that the possession of local personal influence continued throughout the Roman period, was a source of specific complaint, and above all was a constant reminder of the physical and psychological distance at which the powerful figures in the hierarchy stood from the dwellers in the chora.¹⁶⁰ Clear examples of this tension can be seen in petitions which contain instances where complaints are made about local *potentes* who abuse their position, eg., P.Ryl. II 119 (54-67 AD) (Provenance unknown), in which Musaeus the local gymnasiarch is accused of scorning court orders "in virtue of his local power." (καὶ ἐν οὐδενὶ ἠγγήσατο καθὸ ὑπερισχύων ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ τῶν τόπων.) or P.Ryl. II 114 (c. 280 AD) (Provenance unknown) in which Aurelia Artemis complains to an unidentified prefect about a certain Syriion who was an (ex-?) decemprimus of the village of Thraso. Her husband and Syriion had dealt before her husband's death, but once the latter died, Syriion "rushed in" and took possession of her husband's (now her) flocks, abusing his "local power" (τῆ τοπικῆ δυναστείᾳ χρώμενος). In P.Mich. inv. 255 (22 Oct 147 AD) the accusation is that the son of an ex-gymnasiarch gads about the villages of the Arsinoite extorting excessive rates of interest from people, supported a gang who commit acts of violence, while enjoying

158 See R. Katzoff, "Precedents in the Courts of Roman Egypt", *ZSS R.A.* 89 (1972), 256-292; H.C. Youtie, "P.Mich.Inv.148, Verso: The Rule of Precedent", *ZPE* 27 (1977), 124-137.

159 "Cities and administration", at 125. We may note in passing that this conclusion indirectly supports Samuels' view that power positions in the Ptolemaic period grew up along side and perhaps in spite of the monarchy.

160 See chapter 7, 366ff below.

the connivance of cronies in the office of the strategos.¹⁶¹ This accords with the view of Bagnall who describes the Roman imperial state as having "highly concentrated central power and weak ties to local communities."¹⁶² This observation indicates where the notion of formal power gives way to the more informal. A survey by Brunt of prefects of Egypt concluded that one in three could not have been in real control of the province because they knew little or nothing of its complex infrastructure.¹⁶³ A study by Whitehorne reaches similar conclusions about the strategoi in Roman Egypt.¹⁶⁴ But powerful figures, who also held offices endorsed by the state, continued to dominate local areas in Roman times.¹⁶⁵ Local officials often ignored the directives of higher officials like the prefect to exempt certain persons from liturgies.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, the Romans do not appear to have overcome problems arising from the constant overlap between the various jurisdictions of officials which we noted above in connection with the Ptolemaic administration.¹⁶⁷

So it is probably right to agree with R.S. Bagnall, who makes the point that despite the systematising bent of historians of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, it is more correct to view ancient government as a "rather amorphous and undifferentiated group of political, administrative and judicial powers" and these were often closely tied to

161 Compare P.Fouad 26 (158-9 AD), where the petitioner complains about the influence of a person called Heron over the local jury.

162 R.S. Bagnall, "Official and Private Violence", at 203.

163 P.A. Brunt, 15 *JRS* (1976), 95-102.

164 J.E.G. Whitehorne, 'The Strategia in Administrative Continuity', in *Proceedings of the XVI Congress of Papyrology* July, 1980 (= *ASP* 23) (Scholars Press, 1981), 419-428.

165 See below chapter 7, 365ff and the intro to P.Coll.Youtie I 16 (14 Sept 109 BC). This may help explain an unusual petition in P.Ryl. II 133 (33 AD) which is addressed to Evander the priest of the emperor Tiberius, asking him to "deal with" (δπλαβεῖν) damage to a dam. He may have been approached because he was a person of great influence not because he had specific judicial or administrative competence to investigate that type of problem. Another suggestion relies upon the conclusion of Allam, above, 115, that the court of the λαοκρίται in Ptolemaic Egypt included priests as judges and this was carried over from the Pharaonic period. In the same way in the early Roman period priests may have possessed judicial functions which meant they were at least perceived to be the appropriate destination for petitions.

166 See the introduction to P.Wisconsin I 3 (257-9 AD)

167 The fluid nature of the jurisdiction of the various high officials allowed the procedures of litigation to be exploited, much no doubt as modern procedures can be. A good example is found in P.Mil.Vogliano IV 229 (140 AD) a petition to the archidicastes. The petitioner Diogenes, rashly as it turned out, quarrelled with his wife Heracleia and his married daughter Ptolema. While he was absent from Tebtynis Ptolema laid claim to some of his property, which he had left in her keeping and filed for divorce, although it is not clear how that step was supposed to harm Diogenes. He applied to the strategos who restored *patria potestas* over Ptolema and also obtained a favourable order from the epistrategos. The women then applied to the archidicastes, trying to outflank him. The surviving petition is that of Diogenes to the archidicastes as counterclaim, asking that the strategos be ordered to settle the matter.

the individual authority and power of important figures.¹⁶⁸ That conclusion has some importance for the present undertaking because it shows that the concepts articulated through language to give meaning at an intellectual and symbolic level to the experience of power would not have been so constricted by perceptions of functional differentiation as might be the case in modern societies. That is not to deny the population had a strong sense of hierarchy. But it meant that the concepts and symbols which were drawn upon for legitimation were not hide bound by limitations which appear to exist in the modern mind for the very reason that modern institutions are usually sharply differentiated for the purposes of social analysis into political, religious, judicial, economic etc. As we will see, an attitude of linguistic supplication in judicial and administrative documents was appropriate to a divine king in his cult persona but also in his judicial and administrative persona, at least in part, because of the power located in the role of monarch had both personal and formal aspects. It was appropriate to a Roman procurator for the same reasons because despite a trend to greater formal or institutionalised power in the position of prefect or epistrategos, we will see that a personal element remained highly significant.

The picture we gain shows that economic relationships connected with the generation of revenue were at all periods fundamental in Greco-Roman Egypt, and provided the social location for factual situations in which many of the tensions between normative regulation and anomic behaviour were brought to light. Further, manifestations of power intervened in the lives of the population across a broad spectrum from close and oppressive to distant and eminent. The social roles with the greatest authority and power, such as Ptolemaic kings and Roman prefects, were both actually physically distant and felt to be socially distant from the population. There is

168 "Official and Private Violence", at 209, quoting from Simon Roberts, "The Study of Dispute: Anthropological Perspectives," in John Bossy (ed.), *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West*, (Cambridge, 1983), 1-24, at 23. To some extent this is reflected in the legal categorisation of disputes involving functionaries like tax officials whom we would treat as "public" officials. Often these disputes were treated in the documentation evidently as private disputes. In P.Ent 87 (221 BC) Apollodotos complains about the tax collector Mnaeses who has pretended that Apollodotos owes more tax than he does. Gueraud noted, ad loc., that Apollodotos seems to treat his dispute as a private dispute at law. See further Taubenschlag, *Law of Greco-Roman Egypt*, 440ff, 446ff, which shows how actions of tax officials were assimilated to actions of private persons for the purpose of categorisation in legal proceedings.

no more apt expression of this than in P.Mich. inv. 255 (22 Oct 147 AD), a petition to the epistrategos by an avid petition writer, Ptolemaeus son of Diodorus, from the meris of Themistes and Polemon in the Arsinoite. Ptolemaeus, who probably wrote his own petitions, while complaining of the local power of a moneylender, says of his place of residence: (II. 5-6) πολλάκις οὖν, κύριε, βουλόμενοι ἐγδικίας τυχεῖν, ἀποροῦμεν διὰ τὸ μακρὰν εἶναι τοῦ ἐνθάδε δικαίου, "Although we have often wanted to get legal satisfaction, we are at a loss because of being far from justice here."¹⁶⁹ The conceptualisations of distant positions utilised a large number of symbolic attributes, like goodness, justice, and mercy. The experience of close or local power, being especially implicated with structures of economic domination, was often negative, oppressive and injurious to person or property. Overall we conclude that within the structures of domination of Greco-Roman Egypt there existed real tensions between the forces of control, order and stability and forces which threatened to upset the patterns of regularity, constituting εὐνομία, which the former upheld.¹⁷⁰

3.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have endeavoured to set forth the salient features of the basic economic, social and administrative structures of Greco-Roman Egypt. There are undoubtedly many areas in both the evidence and scholastic opinion where there is room for disagreement. However, the interrelationships between the economic imperatives of an agrarian economy and their social consequences can be accepted with a fair degree of confidence. This means that we have a broad understanding of structures of domination and normative regulation and specifically the material reality of power in respect of which one of the more accessible symbolic universes which obtained in Greco-Roman Egypt, that is, the conceptual system which was articulated in Greek and owed a good deal, if not everything, to a Greek cultural heritage,

169 See document 9, chapter 4, below. D. Hobson, "The Impact of Law on Village Life", compared petitions from three locations, Soknopaiou Nesos and Tebtynis, which were small villages removed from central locations, and Oxyrhynchus which was a metropolis. At 201-2 she concludes that those in the more central locations were more accessible to the machinery of judicial power than those on the periphery.

170 See further chapter 7.

fulfilled the process of legitimation. In the next chapter it is proposed to consider the general structure of petitions in some detail. It is appropriate to devote a separate chapter to this enterprise because it will allow us in passing to gain further insights into the institutional context which produced petitions.

CHAPTER 4

TEXTS AND STRUCTURES

Petitions

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present chapter is to set out examples of petitions so that their structural features are clear to the reader and so that they can provide a basis for comparisons with other document types in later chapters. The structural features of texts, even short texts like petitions, can reflect social structure and social space, and in so doing express various aspects of social relationships. At an obvious level, the epistolary nature of petitions, for example, reflects in part a perception of social space between petitioner and recipient. Furthermore, a sense of the overall structure of the documents can help provide us with some appreciation of the textual edifice in which the linguistic motifs considered in later chapters were used.

There have been many studies in the last twenty years based on the concept of the "text", especially in literary theory, although many have problems and applying them to an ancient text is risky.¹ But whatever their deficiencies, they do possess the virtue of urging us to give renewed attention to the idea that wider structures in language use can yield insights and wider perspectives on meaning.² Texts have overall structure which helps give them form and coherence as well as more complex dimensions of meaning. The structure of the documentary texts can be used to broaden the scope and nature of meanings in specific words and phrases. It has been recognised that the products of a culture, such as rituals, burial patterns and artefacts

1 Eg, R.H. Brown, *Society as Text: Essays on Rhetoric Reason and Reality* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1987); M. Phillips, *Aspects of Text Structure : An Investigation of the Lexical Organisation of Text* (Elsevier Science Publishers B.V., Amsterdam, 1985).

2 For example, E.J. Bakker has used theories of discourse to explore aspects of Ancient Greek syntax, in particular, temporal subclauses in stories reported in indirect speech in Herodotus: "Foregrounding and indirect discourse: Temporal subclauses in a Herodotean short story." *Journal of Pragmatics* 16 (1991) 225-247, at 225-6.

generally tend to reflect the social structure of their community.³ Some studies of language use and texts have drawn attention to the links between the structures of language use, the structures of whole texts and elements of the wider social structure. It will be argued here that this type of idea can be taken and applied fruitfully to texts and language use from the ancient world. Scholars of the papyri have always shown an awareness of the distinctiveness of the sections of ancient letters and petitions. We noted in chapter 2 that petitions are clearly to be placed broadly within the category of ancient letters, and this was a very important factor in determining their textual structure. The delineation of special sections, the recurrences of formulae and motifs bear witness to a definite bias towards deliberate construction according to rules or patterns in the way the ancients interacted linguistically, at least in the judicial and administrative contexts.

It will be seen that the structure of petitions from Greco-Roman Egypt reflects and was used to articulate and instantiate certain of the fundamental relationships within the social structure. These are the basic relationships of power involved in or presumed by the invitation to an official to intervene. The core relationship is that between the powerful official and the pitiful petitioner or complainant and in nature it was a relationship of reciprocity. The official has the symbolic attributes of a good, strong, kind saviour or benefactor. His role is defined by a number of capacities, particularly, to save, preserve, help and benefit. Such ethical attributes of the sovereign or official merge into a religious stature and are set in counterpoise to the humbleness, inferiority and weakness of the petitioner, which produces an enduring flavour of paternalism in the documents on the part of the government and characterised the relationship with the government as open and sympathetic. This relationship is the central reference point of the document and relied upon religious, ethical or generally symbolic language and was predicated upon the lack of power (in

3 E.g. I. Morris, *Death-Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (CUP, Cambridge, 1992).

the case of the victim or petitioner), in the face of the possession and exercise of legitimate power.

In heavy contrast the wrongdoer stands outside the sympathetic relationship in an alienated and negative position. Here again we are presented with disparities of power, but these are negative in symbolic terms. We will see that the symbolic universe of Greco-Roman culture was utilised to explain and define both the ethical and moral dimensions of, and the complainant's experience of both the legitimate and the illegitimate manifestations of power. As the Russian scholar Arkady Kovel'man puts it in his analysis of Roman petitions "The petitioner is classed with the "poor", the offender with the "powerful". The poor man lives the lonely life of the country farmer, he fears law, god and officialdom, he is mild and meek...The powerful man is greedy, wrathful, tyrannical, the fear of god and law is not in him. This rhetoric made it possible to discern moral attitudes, "typify" social relations."⁴ The language is used therefore to augment and give meaning to the real tensions in social relations which were then mediated through the legitimate and symbolic attributes of the official. The context of the request was often further defined by the confrontation between the legitimate power of the official and the illegitimate power of the wrongdoer. The petitioner is placed between the two as powerless. We will see that this position is given depth and meaning especially through religious vocabulary and related syntactical forms. The use of religious and ethical language to articulate the role and public activity of the official was basic to defining both the position of the petitioner or complainant and the wrongdoer or the particular injustice complained of. The legitimacy and symbolic ethical ascendancy of the official is enhanced by comparison with the pathetic position of the petitioner and the despicable mean and corrupt character of the wrongdoer is thrown into sharper relief.

4 A.B. Kovel'man, "The Rhetoric of Petitions and its Influence on Popular Social Awareness in Roman Egypt." 168 *VDI*, 170-84.(In Russian).

Moreover not only the words and phrases but structural elements of petitions, and for that matter, many forensic speeches, articulated these relationships in different ways. These are examples of the modes of discourse which play such an important part in the symbolic order of Greco-Roman Egypt. Most fundamentally, we can see that the essence of a petition and a court room argument can be found in the concept of the request. The structure of petitions and court room speeches was built around a request to legitimate power. That was their essential function, and therefore it is usually possible to identify such a section in the text. Within the confines of the document or speech, the request can be seen as a type of social action directed to the invocation of power represented by the assistance of the powerful government figure. This conceptualisation of the nature of petitions and courtroom speeches has importance particularly when compared to the act by which people invoked the assistance of deities in the ancient world. In this there is apparent a relationship of influence in particular with the language of documents which are more readily categorised as religious, especially prayer. This, it will be argued, is indicative of the mentality of the ancient world in which it was the conceptualisation of a powerful figure, whether deity, monarch or high official, as the distant manifestation of great and legitimate power which determined both the language choices and the structure of the text. We can see the intermingling and conscious combining of motifs from social contexts, such as the political, the judicial and the religious, which are usually sharply distinguished in modern societies. These themes are of great interest but further consideration must be delayed to a later chapter.⁵

The internal tensions set up by the language in the documents reflected social and structural realities which we canvassed in the previous chapter and were underscored and expanded by structural features in the documents. For example, the existence of enduring formulae of address to official and motifs of wretchedness on the part of the complainant are found in specific sections of the documents, which

5 See Chapter 8.

exhibit a high degree of rigidity or formality at a particular time and this tends to associate the official and the petitioner with legitimacy and order. The description of the wrongdoer lies most often in the more flexible and idiosyncratic background sections, helping to promote the sense of the wrongdoer's connection with evil and social disruption or anomie. Some of these general ideas will be explored in the following sections. Others will be examined more closely in later chapters. The next section will consider structure in petitions from the point of view of earlier studies. After that a number of examples of the documents will be discussed.

The approach adopted here involves setting out in full some 14 examples of petitions ranging in date from III BC to IV AD. A note of caution must be sounded now. The examples are taken from a total group of 786 documents. The reader may therefore feel some concern that the small sample is unrepresentative and when placed together in the text, gives a distorted view. This potential problem is recognised, and it should be stressed that the examples in this chapter have been selected on two main bases. First, they are all close to being intact. Many surviving petitions do not survive in a complete form. Secondly, they have been chosen because on balance each one contains some representative structural or textual features which can be related to the wider corpus of surviving documents.

4.2 STRUCTURE IN PETITIONS

The existence of formalised sections in petitions has been remarked upon often. Structure has always been an issue. In fact, it is fair to say that structure and formulae have been the crux of most studies of petitions. There are four main studies of petitions known to the writer, which cover petitions from the Ptolemaic period. The French scholar Lesquier in his 1912 edition of papyri from Magdôla gave consideration to questions of form and structure.⁶ Two later studies by French scholars appeared within five years of each other. One of the more thorough was that

6 J. Lesquier (ed.), *P.Lille II Papyrus de Magdôla*, Fascs. I-IV, Planches (1912) (=P.Magd.)

of Paul Collomp, who produced a comprehensive analysis of Ptolemaic petitions in 1926.⁷ Collomp divided the structure of the *enteuxis*, the petition to the king, into three parts: (i) "L'exposé", which set out the nature and facts of the complaint, often introduced by the formula ἀδικοῦμαι ὑπό;⁸ (ii) "La requête", in which the petitioner sets out the action he or she wishes the king to take;⁹ and (iii) "La motivation", the part in which the petitioner indicates the symbolic outcome, usually expressed as a moral or ethical virtue or attribute, which it is hoped the petition will achieve, such as, φιλανθρωπία, βοήθεια, τὸ δίκαιον, ἀντίληψις, ἔλεος etc.¹⁰ O. Gueraud followed in 1931, with the publication of some 113 petitions (ἐντεύξεις) addressed to the monarch. His documents ranged in date from 258 to 218 BC.¹¹ They came from two provenances only, Magdôla and Ghôran. He followed Collomp's tripartite division closely and distinguished three basic sections in the documents.¹² We may pause here to note that both scholars isolate as their second structural feature the "request" or "demand", the commencement of which is indicated by a verb such as δέομαι or, especially in petitions to lower officials, ἀξιῶ. This is important because it indicates how the concept of the request was fundamental in constructing an approach to powerful figures, and, it will be argued, gives a basis for understanding how the petition and its language can be fitted into its wider cultural context.

The studies next in time are those of the Italian scholar Anna Di Bitonto, which were undertaken in the late 1960s. Like her French predecessors, Di Bitonto restricted her study to documents from the Ptolemaic period. However, she used a larger range of documents, both in number, official and period covered, that is, 173

7 Collomp, *Recherches*.

8 Discussed by Collomp, *Recherches*, at 88-92.

9 At 92-115.

10 At 118-122.

11 O. Gueraud, 'ENTEΥΞΙΣ (Cairo, 1931) x-xiii et seq.

12 The sections are distinguished thus:-

- (i) The first sets out the facts giving rise to the petition ("la premiere expose les faits qui ont provoqué la petition");
- (ii) The second presents the demand, properly called ("la seconde presente le demande proprement dite");
- (iii) The third seeks justice or some other substantive form of the monarch's ideal attributes ("la troisieme, sorte de remerciement anticipé, affirme qu'en donnant satisfaction au solliciteur le roi temoignera de sa justice ou de sa bonté, et se montrera le refuge, le soutien, le sauveur, le bienfaiteur de ses sujets").

documents addressed to the monarch and 193 to functionaries, covering the entire Ptolemaic period, and three types of document, ἐντεύξεις, ὑπομνήματα, and προσαγγέλματα. It is apparent that Di Bitonto organises the documents into five main sections: the Prescript (1), the Exposition of the Case (2), the Demand(3), Secondary Elements in the Demand (5), the Conclusion and Final Appeal (6).¹³ This does not in fact represent a great variation upon the structure of Collomp and Gueraud. Di Bitonto has split Collomp and Gueraud's first and third sections into two, but otherwise she subscribes to the same basic divisions in the structure of the texts.¹⁴

Some detailed studies of Roman petitions of similar type have been undertaken, particularly that of the French scholar P. Bureth, although, as far as the present writer knows, his thesis is unpublished.¹⁵ Bureth seems to follow the general elements of structure of his predecessors. Apart from this study and that of White, which is dealt with shortly, there are only limited discussions in specific editions of papyri. It is interesting, however, that J. Enoch Powell analysed later Roman petitions on a more expanded scheme reminiscent of Di Bitonto.¹⁶ He describes P.Harr. I 68 as consisting of the following elements: (1) address with office and title; (2) preamble on the petitioner's confidence of obtaining justice from so enlightened a prefect; (3) brief transition to the matter in hand; (4) statement of the grounds of the petition; (5) the petition itself, with the formula εἰάν σου τῆ τύχῃ δόξῃ; (6) a statement of the desired result in two clauses, ἵνα... and πρὸς τὸ...; (7) διετυχεῖ; (8) signature of the petitioner.

Finally we come to the attempt of J.L. White to construct a paradigm of petitions through a study ranging in date from 254 BC to 458 AD.¹⁷ White relies

13 See Di Bitonto (1967), 11, 12, 15, 20, 47, 50, 55; (1968), 62, 68, 70, 74, 98, 100, 105.

14 There are eight numbered sections in both Di Bitonto's articles as follows: 1. Prescritto; 2. Esposizione del Caso; 3. Introduzione della Domanda; 4. Specificazione della domanda secondo i vari tipi di istanze o richiesta; 5. Elementi secondari della domanda; 6. Conclusione e appello finale; 7. Postilla (1967) or Note degli Uffici (1968); 8. Verso.

15 P. Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romain* (Diss. Uni de Strasbourg, 1979).

16 J. Enoch Powell (ed.), *The Rendell Harris Papyri of Woodbrooke College, Birmingham* (Cambridge, 1936) (P.Harr. I), 51.

17 See the discussion in *New Docs* 6, §18.

upon seventy-one documents, spanning the Ptolemaic and the first four centuries of the Roman period, and in that sense he extends the range of study, even if his body of evidence is smaller in number than either Gueraud or Di Bitonto. His study indicates that there was a powerful drive to conform to structural characteristics to a greater or lesser extent among the writers of petitions.¹⁸ He concluded that petitions of all periods exhibit four basic structural sections: (i) the Opening Address or Salutation; (ii) the Background containing the exposition of the facts; (iii) the Request for intervention; and (iv) the Closing Address.¹⁹ The full scheme can be set out as follows:

1. Opening:

- a. Salutation: To A from B
- b. Lineage of petitioner
- c. Vocation of petitioner
- d. Residence of petitioner

2. Background: a description of the state of affairs giving rise to the petition.

3. Petition: (e.g. 'I request', therefore, you write to the strategos to investigate the matter, if it pleases you, that I may obtain justice")

- A)
 - a. The verb of petition (e.g. 'I request' - δέομαι or ἀξιῶ)
 - b. The conjunction between the formal elements of the background and petition (e.g. 'therefore' - οὖν, διό or ὅθεν)
 - c. Pronominal object, i.e. the address to the official
- B)
 - d. The request to the official, usually in an infinitive clause
 - e. The anticipated action of the official (e.g. 'to investigate the matter')
 - f. A qualification to e. (e.g. 'if it pleases you')
- C)
 - g. Statement regarding anticipated justice (eg. 'that I may obtain justice')

4. Closing: εὐτύχει

It is clear that White took the approach of building his paradigm by trying to accommodate every occurrence of an identifiable structural feature within it. That is not itself an unreasonable thing to do but it runs into methodological problems. While

18 J.L. White, *Form & Structure*, passim, esp. 63 ff.

19 White, *Form & Structure*, xi, 9, 63. For petitions of the Roman period see further J. David Thomas, *The epistrategos in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt*, Part 2 "The Roman Epistrategos", (*Papyrologica Coloniensia* VI), Opladen, 1982, 114; O.W. Reinmuth, *The Prefect of Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian* (*Klio Beiheft* 34), Leipzig 1935, 86-7. who seem to subscribe to the basic fourfold scheme.

there may be no major objection to the overreaching fourfold structure, there is a difficulty in the delineation of sub-structural features, because they are not apparently selected against a set of systematic criteria. Ultimately, therefore, White needed to take the course of constructing a new category as new structural features are found, causing modification and expansion on a rather *ad hoc* basis. Further, the lack of a systematic set of selection criteria does not, by and large, have great significance in short documents, but it can make a difference. For example, there is no specific place for the type of introductory sentences studied by Frisk.²⁰ The earliest examples of these sentences appear in the second century AD and they grow in frequency thereafter.²¹ In White's paradigm there would need to be a separate entry at the end of 1 or in 2, since the sentences studied by Frisk, although introductory, really introduce the background, and could be seen as falling more properly into the background section.

So there are reasons to hold some reservations about all the above studies, in the sense that no one of them is adequate in every way. The first three list strongly to the Ptolemaic period while White's number of petitions is somewhat limited. There are obviously differences of perception in the scope of each structural element and as noted some aspects have not been considered by anyone. But even so, these early studies provide a very sound base for exploring more deeply the significance of the structural elements of the documents. For when we come to compare these three descriptions of structure, those of Gueraud, Di Bitonto and White, it appears that in fact the differences between them are not great. Although Collomp and Gueraud mention only three structural elements, this is because they ignore the Prescript. They seem to subsume it under the Background section. Otherwise, their three sections are basically equivalent to White 2, 3 and 4. Similarly the differences between Di Bitonto and White are not significant. For example, Di Bitonto 1 and 2 equate to White's 1

20 H.J. Frisk, *Bankakten aus dem Faijûm nebst anderen Berliner Papyri* (P.Berl.Frisk)(Göteborg, 1931), 81-91, which is a specific study of introductory sentences in Roman and Byzantine petitions, and P.Tebt. 326.

21 Frisk began his catalogue with BGU 983, a petition from Karanis to the epistrategos, and BGU 613, a petition to the prefect Volusius Maecianus from a veteran in the Faijûm, so dated to the period 160-62 AD.

and 2. Di Bitonto 3 and 5 equate to White's 3, and 6 to White's 4. Di Bitonto's 4 is a classification and incorporates a discussion based upon legal categories, which is too removed from arrangement of the linguistic components and does not reflect to any significant degree the internal organisation of particular or groups of petitions. The same observations may be made about 7 and 8. So if we return to Di Bitonto 1, 2, 3/5, and 6, it appears that this is a broader set of structural delineations, but it corresponds in general terms with the four main categories of White's paradigm. The motivation for section 5 in Di Bitonto's studies arises from her focus upon formulaic expressions and phrases within the documents. For our purposes the distinction between 3 and 5 can be ignored. There is one noteworthy difference between Di Bitonto 6 and White 4, in that White 4 incorporates only the closing, like εὐτύχει. Di Bitonto 6 seems to include expressions which fall within White 3 (C), that is, statements of the anticipated justice, benefaction or assistance. All in all they show very clearly that petitions were characterised by definite structural features, and consequently are apt for analysis in terms of an overreaching fourfold structure. A fourfold structure seems to provide a point of consensus for all the studies if we acknowledge, without trying to decide between, the differences, we can use the concept of the fourfold structure as the point from which to progress the discussion.

Accordingly, the ensuing discussion will be based upon the following four structural delineations in petitions:

1. **The Opening, including address to the official and name of the petitioner**
2. **The Background, including an Exposition of the Facts of the Case, and including introductory sentences.**²²
3. **The Request for official intervention, including the expectation of justice, kindness etc.**
4. **The Closing**

22 Such as those catalogued by Frisk, *Bankakten*. They are included here because as will appear such sentences from the Roman and Byzantine periods were employed to articulate the relationship between petitioner and official and usually finished with a phrase or sentence which introduced the second section, the background, e.g., ἔχει δὲ οὕτως ἢ τὸ δὲ πρᾶγμα ἔχει οὕτως: P.Oxy 2131 207 AD and BGU 970 (=Mitteis, Chrest. 242) 177 AD respectively.

It needs to be borne in mind that the concern of earlier studies has been to collect and describe the full contours of the ancient petition and provide a paradigm. In the view of the present writer when studying very ancient documents a degree of flexibility should be maintained because the evidence will always be incomplete and any new find can have a significant impact on the overall conclusion. Further, the current study is more concerned with ascertaining how structural features of the documents relate to wider social issues. This is an interpretative exercise which is assisted more by the isolation of an overall structure, since it provides a framework within which to analyse expressions in some documents, which may be idiosyncratic.

4.3 DOCUMENTS

If we then turn to some early examples of petitions from the Ptolemaic period we can see the elements of structure more clearly. In considering the structure it is worth remembering that scholars have usually taken the view that petitions of the Ptolemaic period, like those of the early Roman period are characterised by their "extreme simplicity."²³ We will return to the precise import of this view in the chapters which follow. But in the discussion in this chapter, we will note how the overall structure of the texts can yield insights into the social relations. It will appear that there are many subtle complexities involved. It is appropriate to bear in mind the description of the Ptolemaic administration given in the previous chapter to gain an idea of what administrative structure the texts were produced by, and then set out two documents from the collection of Gueraud.

It is of course difficult to choose examples among the plethora of officials in Ptolemaic period and the petitions sent to them. However, one requirement for this exercise must be that the text is largely or completely intact. This excludes a large number of documents which are fragmentary to a greater or lesser extent. But in any event it is convenient to begin at the top of the social and administrative hierarchy

23 Powell, *The Rendel Harris Papyri*, 51; Kovel'man, "The Rhetoric of Petitions"; 'From Logos to Mythos' 28 *BASP* (1991) 135-152. Kovel'man asserts that Ptolemaic and early Roman petitions simply stated the "essence of the business", there was no wider reference to social and moral types.

with the ἔντευξις, the petition to the monarch, since these to some extent set the pattern. P.Ent 46 is a petition to Ptolemy Philopator from a certain Theonides who complains that he sold 15 artabas of barley to Seuthes to be paid for at the next harvest. Seuthes has not paid. The provenance of the document is Magdôla. The text is as follows:

Document 1 P.Ent 46 Magdôla (221 BC)

Petition to the King

- 1 Βασιλεῖ Π[τολεμαί]ωι χαίρειν Θε[ω]νίδης, ἐξ Ἀμμωνιάδος. Ἄδικοῦμαι ὑπ[ὸ] Σεύθου ἰππέως ἑκατ[ονταροῦ]ρου, ὃς κατοικεῖ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ κ[ώ]μηι. Ὅφειλων γάρ μοι διὰ χερὸς κριθῶν (ἀρτάβας) ἰε ἄ[ς] μοι ἐτάξατο ἀποδώσειν ἀπὸ τῶν γεννημάτων τοῦ κς (ἔτους) καὶ παρεληλυθότος τοῦ χρόν[ου], πλεονάκι ἀπητημένο[ς] ὑπ' ἐμοῦ, οὐκ ἀποδίδωσίν μοι. Δέομαι
- 5 οὔν σου, βασιλεῦ, εἴ σοι δοκεῖ, προστάξει Διοφάνει τῷ στρατηγῶι γράψαι Ἀγαθοκλεῖ τῷ ἐπιστάτῃ ἀποστεῖλαι Σεύθην [ἐ]π' αὐτὸν καὶ, ἐὰν ᾗ ταῦτα ἀληθῆ, ἐπαναγκάσαι αὐτὸν ἀποδοῦναί μοι, εἰ δέ τι ἀντιλέγει, μὴ ὀφείλειν ὁμόσας μοι, ἀπολελύσθω ἵνα μὴ ἀδικηθῶ, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ σέ καταφυγών, βασιλεῦ, τὸν πάντων εὐεργέτην, τοῦ δικαίου τύχῳ. Εὐτύχει

"To king Ptolemy from Theonis from Ammonias. I am wronged by Seuthes a hundred acre knight, who lives in the same village. For owing me roughly 15 artabas of barley, which he contracted to return to me from the produce of the 26th year, when the time had passed, having been asked by me many times, he is not giving the barley back. Therefore I ask you, my king, if it seems good to you, to direct Diophanes the strategos to write to Agathocles the epistates to send Seuthes to him and, if these things were true, compel him to give back the barley to me, and if he gainsays me in some way, swearing that he is not indebted to me, let him be discharged, so that I may not be wronged, but having taken refuge with you, my king, the benefactor of all, I may meet with justice. Farewell."

Closely comparable in form and structure is P.Ent 60 also from Magdôla, dated to the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy Philopator, that is, 221 BC. The petitioner is Idomeneus, a farmer of the δωρεά of Chrysermos. He wants the king to intervene against Petobastis, son of Taos and Horos, son of Keleesis, who have caused a flood on his land. The petition is a good example of how the burdens of rental and taxation helped produce circumstances where the aid of the king was crucial.

Document 2: P.Ent 60 Magdôla (221 BC)

Petition to the King

- 1 Βασιλεῖ Πτολεμαίωι χαίρειν Ἰδομενεύς, τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Χρυσέρμου δωρεᾶς
γεωργῶν, ἐκ κώμης
Καμίνων. Ἄδικοῦμαι ὑπὸ Πετοβάστιος τοῦ Ταῶτος καὶ Ὠ[ρ]ου τοῦ
Κελεήσιος, τῶν ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς κώ-
μης. Ἐμοῦ γὰρ μισθωσαμένου ἀπὸ τῆς Χρ[υ]σέρμου δωρεᾶς [. . .]
(ἀρούρας) β καὶ κατασπείραντός μου
τὴν γῆν ἀράκωι, Πετοβάστις καὶ Ὠρος οἱ προ[ο]γεγραμμένοι κατ[έ]κλυσαν
μου τὸν σπόρον, ὥστε ἀχ[ρ]εῖ-
- 5 ὄμ μου γενέσθαι τὸν ἄρακον, καὶ μὴ δύνασθαι μηδὲ τὰ ἀνηλώματα τὰ
γενόμενα εἰς τὴν [γῆν]
κομίσασθαι με. Δέομαι οὖν σου, βασιλεῦ, εἴ σοι δοκεῖ, προστάξει Διοφάνει
τῶι στρατηγῶι γράψαι]
Ἡφαιστίῳ τῶι ἐπιστάτῃ ἀποστεῖλαι Πετοβάστιν καὶ Ὠρον τοὺς
ἐγκε(κ)λημένους εἰς Κροκο-
δίλων πόλιν, ὅπως διακριθῶ αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ Διοφάνους, καὶ ἐὰν ἐνδείξωμαι
αὐτοὺς κατακεκλυ-
κότας μου τὸν σπόρον, ἐπαναγκασθῆναι αὐτοὺς τὸν ἐμὸν σπόρον ἀναλαβεῖν
καὶ τάξασθαι αὐ-
- 10 τοὺς τὰ ἐχφόρια, ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς αὐτοῖ γεωργοῦσιν γῆς ἀντιδοθῆναί μοι τὸ
ἴσον πλήθος ἀνθ' ἧς κα[τ]τακε-
κλύκασιν. Τούτου γὰρ γενομένου, ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγών, βασιλεῦ, τὰ τε
ἐχφόρια Χρυσέρμωι δυ[ν]ήσομαι
ἀποδοῦναι. ἐγὼ τε ἔσομαι τῆς παρὰ σοῦ φιλανθρωπίας τετευχώς.
Εὐτύχει

"To king Ptolemy greetings from Idomeneus, a farmer of the δωρεά of Chrysermos, from the village Kaminoi. I am wronged by Petobastis, son of Taos and Horos son of Keleesis who are from the same village. When I leased 2 arouras from the estate of Chrysermos and sowed the land with vetch, the aforementioned Petobastis and Horos inundated the harvest, so that the vetch were destroyed, and I am unable to recover the imposts which exist for the land. I ask you therefore, my king, if it seems good to you, to direct Diophanes the strategos to write to Hephaistion the epistates to summon Petobastis and Horos, the ones who are accused, to Crocodilopolis, so that I may be judged with them before Diophanes, and if I prove that they inundated my planting, that they be compelled to make restitution of my crop, and that they be assigned the taxes, and to give to me in exchange from the land which they farm the amount of land equal to what they inundated. If this happens, my king, having sought refuge with you, I will be able to pay the rents to Chrysermos. And I will have met with kindness from you. Farewell"

We may take some time here to draw attention to a number of structural aspects which are important and can be traced in later documents. The first feature which is very obvious is the distinctly delineated opening and closing sections. The opening salutation functioned to initiate the interaction between petitioner and official and thus set its broad outlines. Both examples manifest one of the most frequently occurring opening constructions in the Ptolemaic era. It has been observed often that

petitions usually began by giving the name of the person addressed followed by his title and the geographical and residential details of the petitioner.²⁴ The variations on this theme were slight. Ἐντεύξεις to the Ptolemaic king usually employed the formula "[addressee in dative case] + χαίρειν + [name of addressor in nominative case]".²⁵ However, there are two extant variations, namely, the formula "[addressee in the dative case] + [addressor in nominative case]", for example, "βασιλεῦσι Πτολεμαῖος Γλαυκίου"²⁶ and the formula "[addressee in the dative case] + χαίρειν παρὰ + [addressor in the genitive case]", for example, Βασιλεῖ Πτολεμαίω καὶ βασιλίσσηι Κλεοπάτραι τῆι ἀδελφῆι θεοῖς Φιλομήτορσι χαίρειν παρὰ Πτολεμαίου.²⁷ The opening formula most frequently employed in ὑπομνήματα and προσαγγέλματα to lesser officials in the Ptolemaic period followed the pattern τῶι δεῖνι παρὰ τοῦ δεῖνος;²⁸ variations are: διοικητῆι χαίρειν ὁ δεῖνα,²⁹ or the simple use of παρὰ δεῖνος.³⁰ The closing section is at all times a short salutation, in the case of the above documents Εὐτύχει. The opening and closing sections are important because they indicate the epistolographical nature of ἔντεύξεις and other types of petitions, which we mentioned in chapter 2.³¹ Letters to powerful figures were a serious endeavour which required careful thought.³² So the opening and closing sections of the petitions serve to frame the communication. And one of the ways in which they not only set the parameters for the text itself is to place the communication within the epistolary style.

The background section follows and has special importance, because it is the most unstereotyped element within the structure, although certain formulas or common expressions do begin to appear.³³ It is in the background section that the author of a petition exercised the greatest scope for creativity and originality.

24 J. David Thomas, *The Epistrategos* II, 114; O.W Reinmuth, *The Prefect of Egypt*, 86-7.

25 See Bitonto (1967), especially p. 11 ff; White, *Form & Structure*, 21.

26 UPZ. I, 3.

27 UPZ. I, 6

28 White, *Form & Structure*, 21.

29 PSI. V, 538; P.Cair.Zen II, 59236; III, 59341 a

30 P.Tebt. I, 38.

31 See chapter 2, 68ff.

32 See Dem. *De Eloc.* §234

33 White, *Form & Structure*, 14, 28, 32, 34-5, 36.

Consequently, it is also in this section that we get a clear picture of how language was used to describe and classify social relations. In both documents the background section gives the description of the case and is dramatically launched with the verb ἀδικοῦμαι. The person, tense, mood and placement of this verb have some significance. The use of the present indicative and the first person gives the address to the king immediacy and personal intensity. The placement of the verb at the commencement of the section throws the reader directly into the personal world of the petitioner, a world suffused with an aura of wrongdoing. The petitioner also defines him or herself in the position of a victim, through the usage of the passive mood. These factors are enhanced in the following section of the document. This method of initiating the description of the case is particularly noticeable in enteuxeis, that is, petitions to the king, in the III BC. However, this in one area where it will be seen that petitions show considerable change and development. For example, in II BC the indicative is replaced often by a participial construction. Sometimes this begins the background section, at other times it appears elsewhere such as in the request section. Much later, as will be seen shortly, opening sentences appear in the second century AD and take the language of wrongdoing and injustice, resorting often to the participial construction. These sentences fulfil the same function of initiating the interaction, but in a more embellished fashion.³⁴ This is a good example of how the petitioners used specific language to clothe themselves in the role of the victim and how the same language and verbal forms were resorted to and recombined in new ways over many centuries.

The request section is introduced by δέομαι οὖν σου, βασιλεῦ which again places the first person indicate verb at the start of the clause. The verb δέομαι is the most common for petitions to the Ptolemaic kings, at least in III BC.³⁵ In later periods ἀξιῶ or παρακαλῶ appear but in White's view δέομαι is used so frequently

³⁴ See below at 172.

³⁵ Di Bitonto (1967), 15.

throughout the period that it is the single most indicative feature of the petition.³⁶ Steen argued in 1938 that such phrases of request in Greek letters were periphraseis designed to avoid the brusque and rude tone which would be set by use of the imperative, and were modelled on the same periphrastic use of verbs of request by the Attic orators in their *Prooimia*.³⁷

Further, the use of the vocative in such close connection with the request verb heightens the closeness of the interaction, and opens the way for the writer to develop the relationship with the king and give it deeper significance by use of the language of supplication in the next sentence. For example, in P.Ent. 60 the petitioner says τούτου γὰρ γενομένου, ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγών, βασιλεῦ. Again we have the vocative used but in connection with the verb of refuge, καταφεύγω. Although the petitioner is speaking directly to the king he is doing so as a suppliant, and his whole document takes on the quality of an act which acknowledges and takes its character from the power of the king, which will lead to the exercise of φιλανθρωπία or τὸ δίκαιον. The use of the vocative, a form of addressing the king directly as if he was present, is something which carries on right through our period and beyond. It was clearly seen at all times as an important inclusion in any petition. White is right to assert that it is in this section that phrases which metaphorically cast the petitioner in the role of a suppliant are frequent in III BC petitions.³⁸ As in Document 2 the most common and noteworthy phrase is based on ἐπὶ σὲ καταφεύγω, in an aorist or a perfect participial construction allied to concepts like φιλανθρωπία or ἔλεος.³⁹ The use of the perfect in this construction of the refuge motif is noteworthy because it denotes a completed action and must refer to the act of presenting the petition itself. It shows

36 See White, *Form & Structure*, 24, 30. See also *New Docs* 6, §18, 145ff, where verbs of request are discussed.

37 H. Steen, "Les clichés épistolaires dans les lettres sur papyrus grecques", *Classica et Mediaevalia* 1 (1938), 119-176. We may note in passing that δέομαι, followed by a vocative, as in documents 1 and 2 appears in literature of I AD as a polite form of expression among the upper classes as in δέομαί σου, ὦ δέσποτα, Chariton, *Callirhoe* II.5, and it appears in official correspondence from the strategos to the prefect as in BGU III 747 (c 139 AD), l 16. See fn 15 above, where the study of Bureth is cited. He notes that in his group of 390 Roman petitions, ἀξιῶ is most often used, rather than δέομαι. See further below, 167 and chapter 8 on δέομαι.

38 See White, *Form & Structure*, 50, 52

39 See *New Docs* 4, 30, 133. See further Table 6.1 at 273 below and ch. 8, 404ff.

therefore how the act of petitioning was from the earliest point assimilated to the action seeking asylum or taking refuge. However, in later periods, as we shall see, these motifs and themes could appear in other places in the text, such as introductory sentences.

It is possible to see in the unfolding of the fourfold structure of the documents how a relationship is established with the king, how it is developed to have specific meanings for the individual petitioner and how it is given form and depth by the verbal tense, the use of vocatives and language appropriate to supplication. It becomes apparent how these elements are constructed around the notion of the request, and combine to define the social space between the petitioner and the king and give it form and significance. As already noted, the fourfold structure of petitions, the opening, the background, the request and the closing, takes some of its elements from the epistolographic function of the document. This observation applies most obviously to the opening and closing sections.

But the point can be made here that there are also some fairly clear connections with the rhetorical tradition evident in the fourfold structure as well. That petitions may bear the signs of influence of the rhetorical tradition should cause little surprise, since, as we remarked in chapter 2, the system of education in Greco-Roman Egypt was such that it ensured that classical orators would be known and studied among the literate classes and the professional scribes.⁴⁰ Of course structure was a basic concern of professional rhetorical training. The ability to produce coherent and clearly structured speeches was a prime goal of rhetoric.⁴¹ The fourfold structure of petitions could be understood in terms of a text with a definite beginning and end, according with the periodic style which Aristotle says is best.⁴² A fourfold structure itself brings to mind the fourfold structure of speeches outlined by Aristotle,

40 See Chapter 2, section 2.2, at 65ff.

41 E.g. Arist. *Ars Rhet* III.13-14.

42 *Ars Rhet.* III.9.

*prooimium, statement of the case, proof and conclusion.*⁴³ Collomp was alive to these connections. He suggested that the elements of the fourfold structure can be found in speeches of the classical orators. For example, he expressed the view that it is almost possible to extract an "enteuxis régulière" from the opening of Isocrates' speech *Contra Leocharem*, 1-3.⁴⁴ These points are interesting, but the degree to which rhetorical structures from classical authors may have influenced the form of petitions, at least in the early Hellenistic period, is a complex question and cannot be finally resolved here. However, it seems clear that the forensic speeches of the Athenian orators at least, did have influence over many aspects of early petitions, so petitions should be seen as a part of the wider classical rhetorical tradition. It may in fact be closest to the mark to describe the ideal petition as a marriage of two traditions, a minimalist rhetorical tract, suitably modified by the inclusion of elements of epistolography to cope with its function as a written communication which literally had to travel over long distances.

Letters to persons in powerful positions apart from the king provide a useful point of comparison. The archive of Zenon contains a number of suitable documents. Zenon was employed by Apollonios, the dioiketes of Ptolemy II Philadelphus and III Euergetes. Apollonios was the finance minister for the king and clearly an official of great power. He engaged Zenon to manage his estate or *δωρεά*. The point to note is that Zenon was not an official in the king's hierarchy, but he stood high in the hierarchy of Apollonios' own little kingdom. However, Zenon had a great deal of power himself and seemed to discharge functions analogous to those of "regular" village officials at Philadelphia, and the way in which the general population spoke to him in their letters to him closely resembled petitions.⁴⁵ In P.Lond. VII 2045 we have a petition to Zenon from an Egyptian named Pais, who has been languishing in jail for

43 *Rhetoric* 1414b 5f. See R.W. Smith, *The Art of Rhetoric in Alexandria* (Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1974), 66ff.

44 *Recherches*, 130.

45 M. Rostovtzeff, *A Large Estate in Egypt in the third Century BC* (Madison, 1922), 50-3. The situation in P.Tebt. III:1 773 (Late III BC) provides an interesting comparison. The petitioner Petimuthes, cultivator of a vineyard, complains to Demetrius and Numenius about loss of his crop. The editors suggest that the latter two persons are managers similar to Zenon, such that Sebennytyus at the time was part of an extensive *δωρεά*

5 months. He offers to provide sureties for his continued stay in Philadelphia, which suggests to the editors that he was in breach of some contractual obligation.⁴⁶ He writes to Zenon in the following terms:-

Document 3: P.Lond. VII 2045 Philadelphia (III BC)

Letter to Zenon.

1 Ζήνωνι χαίρειν Πάεις ὁ τοῦ Πάτειτος ἀδελφός. ἀφ' οὗ ἤκω τοῦ(ς) τόπους
οὔτε
λελέεισμαι οὔτε κέκλοφα οὔθ' ἤκει καταβοῶν οὔθεις πρὸς σε κατὰ μου·
ἔστι δὲ ἀφ' οὗ ἀπήγμαι.]
ἤδη πεντάμηνος. ἐγγέλοιπε ἡμᾶς πάντα ὥστε καὶ τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἐνδεῆς
εἶναι.
νῦν οὖν ἰκέται καταπεφεύγαμεν πρὸς σε. οὐκ ἔχομεν βοηθὸν ἄλλον οὔθένα
ἀλλὰ σέ(ς). ὀμνύω
5 τῆν σὴν τύχην καὶ τὸν βασιλέως δαίμονα ψευδῆ ἀπήγμαι. καὶ αὐτὸς
ἐπίστη ὅτι τῶν εὐτά(κ)των.]
εἰμεί. ἐγγύησαί με σὺ παραμονῆς. ἐγὼ δέ σοι ἐξελθὼν ἐγγύους σοι
καταστήσω(ε)
εὐτύχει.

"To Zenon greeting from Pais the brother of Patis. Since I came into these parts I have neither robbed nor stolen, nor has anyone come to you making complaint against me. It is now five months since I was arrested, and I am now bereft of everything so that I lack the necessities of life. Now therefore I throw myself upon you as a suppliant. I have no other helper than yourself. I swear by your good fortune and the genius of the King that I have been falsely arrested. You yourself know that I am a man of reliability. Go bail for me, and when I am released I will provide sureties for you. May you prosper."⁴⁷

This letter is strongly reminiscent of the petitions to the king because it is cast in the language of supplication and is a type of request for assistance. However, it appears to lack some of the rigid formulaic sections which are evident in petitions to the king. Although the document amounts to a request for help, there is no clear section which introduces a request. Moreover, the request does not involve administrative actions in the chain of the hierarchy such as are contemplated in Documents 1 and 2 above. It proceeds on the assumption that Zenon can himself "fix" matters. Nonetheless the correspondences between the language addressing Zenon and the language addressing the king are very clear. It may be said that the language of supplication and the

46 F.G. Kenyon et al., *Greek Papyri in the British Museum: Catalogue with Text* Vol. VII (London, 1973).

47 Cf P.Ryl. IV 569 (III BC).

structural features of the document articulate the response of Pais to the social distance between him and Zenon, since whatever else he may have been, Zenon was associated with someone who was very powerful, and this would have determined how he was perceived. In this way it can be seen that the language of the document instantiated disparities of power between Zenon and Pais.

If we turn to a petition to a lesser official such as the strategos we see many points of identification. UPZ 8 is a petition to the strategos Dionysios from Ptolemaios the son of Glaukios. Ptolemaios is known from a number of documents which were discovered at the site of the temple of Sarapis in Memphis. He had a long running dispute with two holy twins of Sarapis from the temple.

Document 4: UPZ 8 (163 BC)

Petition to the Strategos

- 1 Διονυσίω τῶν φίλων καὶ στρατηγῶι
παρὰ Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Γλαυκίου Μακεδόνο
τῶν ὄντων ἐν κατοχῇ ἐν τῶι ἐν Μέμφει μεγάλωι
5 Σαραπειῶι ἔτος δωδέκατον. Ἦδικημένος οὐ με-
τρίως καὶ τῶι ζῆν πλειονάκις κεκινδυνευκῶς ὑπὸ
τῶν ὑπογεγραμμένων ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ καλλυντῶν ἐπὶ σὲ
τὴν καταφυγὴν ποιοῦμαι νομίζων μάλισθ' οὕτως τεύ-
ξεσθαι τῶν δικαίων. Τοῦ γὰρ κα (ἔτους) Φαῶφι ἢ παρα-
γενομένων ἐπὶ τὸ ἐν τῶι ἱερῶι Ἀσταρτεῖον, ἐν ᾧ
10 τυγχάνω ἐν τῇ κατοχῇ γεγονῶς τὰ προκείμενα
ἔτη, καὶ τινων μὲν ἐχόντων μετὰ χέρα λίθους,
ἐτέρων δὲ καὶ ῥάβδους καὶ ἐπιχειρούντων εἰσβια-
σασθαι, ὅπως διὰ παρευρέσεως τό τε ἱερὸν σκύλωσιν
ἐμέ τε παρὰ τὸ Ἑλληνα εἶναι καθάπερ οἱ ἐξ ἐπιβουλήs
15 ἐπιβαλλόμενοι τοῦ ζῆν ἀνελεῖν, καὶ τὴν μὲν
θύραν τοῦ ἱεροῦ προφθάσαντός μου καὶ κλείσαντος
μετὰ κραυγῆs τε διαστελλομένου μεθ' ἡσυχίας ἀνα-
λύειν, οὐδ' ὡς ἀπεχώρου, Δίφιλον δὲ τινα τῶν
παρακατεχομένων ὑπὸ τοῦ Σαράπιος θεραπευτῶν
20 ἀγανακτοῦντα ἐφ' οἷs διετελοῦντο ἐν τοιούτῳ ἱερῶι
ἀνώσαι τε καὶ οὐ μετρίως σκύλαι ὑβρίζοντας
καὶ τύποντας, ὥστ' ἂν τὴν παράνομον βίαν
ἅπασι εὐδηλον κατασταθῆναι. Οἱ δ' αὐτοὶ καὶ τοῦ ιθ (ἔτους)
Φαῶφι τὰ ὅμοια εἰς με διαπραξάμενοι ἐνέτυχόν σοι
25 παρ' αὐτὸν τὸν καιρόν, ὑπὲρ ᾧν παρὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν (με)
τὸν τὴν ἐντυχίαν ποιησάμενον συμβῆσαι
ἀνεπιπλήκτων αὐτῶν ὄντων εἰς μείζονα κατα-
φρόνησιν ἐλθεῖν. Ἀξιῶ οὖν σε, ἐὰν φαίνεται
συντάξαι καταστῆσαι αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ σέ. ὅπως περὶ
30 ἀπάντων τούτων τύχῳσι τῆs προσηκούσης μισοπο-
νηρίας
Εὐτύχει.

"To Dionysios, one of the friends, and strategos, from Ptolemaios son of Glaukias a Macedonian of those holding land in the great Sarapion in Memphis for the twelfth year. Having been wronged beyond fair measure and many times having been put at risk of my life by the undermentioned twins from the temple, I take refuge with you believing that I will especially meet with justice. For in the 21st year on 8 Phaophi there were present at the Astarteion in the temple, in which I happened to have lived in the precinct for the previous years, even certain persons with stones in their hands and others also with sticks, and having tried to force their way in. so that through opportunity they might plunder the temple and because I am Greek, kill me just like people who by treachery in attacking destroy life, and when I in anticipation closed the door of the temple with a cry and ordered that I be left in peace they would not thus go away, and a certain Diphilos from those who had become Therapeutai at the hands of Sarapis being angered at what they perpetrated in such a temple, he they pushed away and not in proper measure troubled, causing outrage to him and beating him, so as to demonstrate their lawless violence clearly to all. When the same men even in the 19th year in Phaophi perpetrated the same such things against me, I petitioned you immediately, but since I had no one who could make the petition it turned out that they were without admonishment and went into a state of greater contemptuousness. I ask you therefore, if it seems good, to order them to appear before you, so that concerning all these things they may meet fitting hatred of wickedness. Farewell."

German scholars in particular earlier this century drew a distinction between this type of petition and *enteuxeis* to the king which we discussed above, based on juristic considerations. To Wilcken the present document was not a complaint through which to initiate a legal process, but a plea for intervention based upon official authority.⁴⁸ This reflects the distinction between real judicial competence and "Beamtenjustiz" or judicial versus administrative powers which we discussed in chapter 3.⁴⁹ The distinction, even if appropriate, is not very important here because it had no apparent impact upon structure. We can see in l. 4 how in opening his story the writer adopts an approach which is reminiscent of the documents from III BC. Ἡδίκημένος οὐ μετρώως launches the reader squarely into an atmosphere of wrongdoing which is intended to underlie the whole description of the case. The meaning is intensified by the adverbial phrase οὐ μετρώως. This expression is noteworthy because it denotes behaviour as being beyond proper limits and by implication breaches the boundaries set by structures of normative regulation, being mainly the legal systems and ethical

48 UPZ 12, at 117 following Mitteis, *Grundzüge*, 14.

49 See above 93.

value systems of Egypt. More of this will be said in chapter 7, but we may say here that this is one example of expressions which implied strongly that the behaviour complained of was a threat to stability and therefore associated with anomic social conditions. It is clear from the study of Di Bitonto that the use of an opening verb such as ἀδικούμαι was frequent in petitions to officials below the king, however the verbal form here is participial, and made dependant upon the indicative expression ἐπὶ σὲ τὴν καταφυγὴν ποιούμαι in lines 6-7.⁵⁰ This neatly captures the notion of refuge in the face of wrongdoing, and this in turn is expanded by the appended participial phrase νομίζων μάλισθ' οὕτως τεύξεσθαι τῶν δικαίων in lines 7-8, which raises the further dimension of the strategos as dispenser of justice. These elements are all present in documents 1 and 2 which were petitions to the king, but it can be seen how the placement of the language expressing these ideas is rearranged and gathered into one linguistic parcel at the start of the description of the case, whilst in the earlier documents they were separated throughout the text. This is an interesting point and it should be kept in mind when we come to discuss the introductory sentences of Roman petitions which appear in II AD, probably under the influence of the growth of rhetoric during the Second Sophistic. On one view the sentence beginning Ἡδικημένος οὐ μετρίως... constitutes an early precursor to those sentences. The essential difference, as will be seen, is that the present sentence is constructed by reference to the specific facts of the instant case. The introductory sentences of the Roman period tended to express more abstract concepts. Finally, the request section clearly begins at line 28 but it appears shortened and less embellished, since the refuge theme has been established earlier at lines 7-8.

In II to I BC it is possible to see changes in the formulas and structure of petitions. Take for example UPZ 106, which is a papyrus containing a letter from Ptolemy Alexander to various officials in Memphis and appending a petition of Petesis. Only the text of the petition is reproduced here, which is as follows:-

50 Di Bitonto (1968), 68-70.

Document 5: UPZ 106 (c.99 BC)

Petition to the King

[B]ασιλεῖ Πτο[λεμ]αίω τῶι καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ θεῶι Φιλομήτορι καὶ
 βασ[ίλισση] Βερενίκῃ
 [τ]ῆι ἀδελ[φ]ῆι θεᾶι Φιλα[δέλ]φωι χαίρειν. Πετῆ[σις] Χενούφι[ος]
 ἀρχενταφιαστῆς]
 Ὀσοράπιος καὶ Ὀσορομνέ[υ]λιος θεῶν ἀειζώων μείγιστων. Χρείας
 πλείους καὶ ἀναγκαί[ας]
 [π]αρεχόμενος τοῖς προγεγραμμένοις θεοῖς τὰς χ[ε]ῖρας αὐτ[οῖς]
 πρ[ο]σφέ[ρων] καὶ τ[ὰς] ὑπέρ
 5 [ύ]μων, μέγιστοι θεοὶ καὶ νικηφόροι, εὐχὰς καὶ θυσία[ς] ἐπιτελώ[ν]
 διδόναι ὑμῖν ὑγίειαν
 [ν]ίκην κράτος σθένος κυριείαν τῶν [ύ]πό τὸν οὐρανὸν χωρῶν,
 σκυλλόμενος δὲ καὶ
 διασειόμενος παρ' ἕκαστον εἰκῆ καὶ ὡς ἔτυχεν [ύ]πό τινων ἐπὶ τῶν
 τόπων, τὴν
 [ἐ]φ' ὑμᾶς καταφυγὴν πεποιήμαι καὶ ἀξιῶ δεό[μενος], ἐὰν [δοκ]ῆι,
 προστάξει Φιλοκράτει
 τῶι συγγενεῖ καὶ ἐπιστολογράφῳ ἐγδοῦναι περὶ ἐμοῦ καὶ τῆς οἰκίας
 μου ἐντολὴν περι-
 10 ἔχουσαν μηθεὶν ἐξεῖναι εἰσβιάζεσθαι εἰς αὐτ[ὴν] μηδ' ἐκ [τα]ύτης
 περισπᾶν
 κ[α]τὰ μηδένα τρόπον μηδὲ διασειεῖν με μηδ' ἐπιβάλλειν [μοι] τὰς
 χεῖρας καί, (ἐὰν δοκῆι), ἐπ' αὐτῆς δὲ
 τ[ῆς] οἰκίας (μου) πρ[ο]θεῖν[α] [ἐν] λευκώμα[τι] καὶ τῶι [β]ασιλικῶι
 γραμμα[τεῖ] προσφωνηθῆν[αι],
 ἵνα τυχῶν τῆς παρ' ὑμῶν φιλ[αν]θρῶπίας ἐπιτελώ[ω] τὰς τῶν θεῶν
 λειτουργίας.

Εὐτ[υ]χεῖτε.

"To King Ptolemy Alexander the god Philometor and queen Berenice the goddess Philadelphos greetings from Petesis son of Chenouphis the chief burier of the god Osorapis and Osoromineuos the greatest everlasting gods. Having provided many services and necessities to the aforementioned gods stretching out my hands to them and for your safety, greatest and victorious gods, providing prayers and sacrifices to give to you health, victory, dominion, strength and mastery of the lands under heaven, but being vexed and oppressed at every opportunity without reason and as it happens by certain people on the spot, I take refuge with you and I ask beseeching, if it seems good, to direct Philokrates your relation and epistolographos to give out an official instruction about me and my house, that it is permitted to no one to make forced entry into it nor to remove anything from it in any way nor to oppress me nor lay hands on me and, if it seems good, at my house itself set forth on a whitened sign-board even as is set up for the royal scribe, so that meeting with kindness at your hands, I may complete the services for the gods. Farewell."

We can see in this document certain new features. Prominent among these is the appearance of cult appellations of the monarch. In 11 the writer refers to the king as

θεῶι Φιλομήτορι.⁵¹ This is an example of the appearance of the cult titles of Ptolemaic rulers which began in II BC and is usually explained on the basis that the form and content of the royal cult had not been finally determined in the third century and that in that period petitions did not actually go to the king but were directed to his office and were read by a lower official. This changed in the second century and the king did actually read petitions.⁵² The interest lies in the fact that the sovereign is addressed ostensibly in his and her cult capacity, that is, as a god. There is a significant point of analogy with ancient prayer forms which indicates why it may be more appropriate to understand this use of language as showing how the role of the monarch as "Richter" was conceived not only as consistent with his role as a cult figure but also as an aspect of that role.⁵³ This text like many of those from the UPZ collection may particularly betray the influence of their origin in the one local area, an area dominated by religious atmosphere, namely, the precincts of a temple. The formula in II. 13-4, *διδόναι ὑμῖν ὑγίειαν [νίκην κράτος σθένος κυριείαν τῶν] ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν χωρῶν* ("to give to you health, victory, dominion, strength and mastery of the lands under heaven") is probably connected with Egyptian precursors.⁵⁴ This accords with the general view that pre-Ptolemaic Egyptian culture survived most strongly among the priests and temples of Egypt. It may be noted here that in these later petitions to the sovereign the request expression commonly included references to the deified status of the rulers as in P.Tebt. I 43 (118 BC), 28: *δέομεθα, θεοὶ μέγιστοι νικηφόροι, μερίσαντας καὶ ἡμῖν ἦς ἔχετε πρὸς πάντας ἀντιληψέως.*⁵⁵ This will be further discussed in chapter 8.

The Greek domination of Egypt was to end in 31 BC. There is in existence an extensive archive of official documents from the office of the strategos at Heracleopolis, covering the approximate years 64 to 45 BC. They are published in BGU VIII. Among these papers are a number of petitions. The date and number of

51 See other examples in Di Bitonto (1967), 12.

52 Ibid.

53 H.J. Wolff, *Das Justizwesen der Ptolemäer* (Münch. Beitr. 44, 1962), ch. 2.

54 UPZ 106, commentary on II 13-4, at 461.

55 Cf IGFayum 112, 16 (93 BC), 113, 17 (93 BC): *θεότατε βασιλεῦ.*

these documents give us a good sample of the state of form and structure in petitions, to officials below the king, at least, at a point in time very close to the Roman conquest. Many in the BGU VIII series are incomplete but 1828 is well preserved even if there is a lacuna at line 11 which makes comprehension difficult. It is a petition to the strategos Seleukos, who is known as a strategos in 52-51 BC.⁵⁶

Document 6: BGU 1828 Heracleopolis (52-1 BC): Petition to the Strategos

1	Σελεύκωι συγγενεί καὶ στρατηγῶ[ι] καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν προσόδων παρὰ Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Ἐπινίκου δεσμοφύλακος τοῦ ἐν Φνεβιεῖ δεσ-	To Seleukos kinsman and strategos and in charge of the revenues from Ptolemaios son of Epinikos guard of the prison in Phnebies.
5	μωτηρίου. Γεγεωργηκότος μου ἐν τῷ ἐνεστῶτι λ τῶι (καὶ) α\$ ἀπὸ τῆς πρότερον Ἄπικκίου προσ- όδου περὶ Φνεβιεα ἐν τῶι πρό-	I have been cultivating, in the present year 45 arouras from the former revenue land of Apicius around Phnebies in the former allotment of Agelaos, 9 arouras, when the rent was established for each
10	ἐκφορίου τοῦ σταθέντος ἐκάστης ἀρούρας φακοῦ — ε παρὰ Σωτέλους προῆγμαι τὴν τοῦ ὑπομνήματος ἐπί-	aroura of lentils--at 5 (artabas?), from Soteles I arranged to make a lodgement
15	δοσιν ποιήσασθαι. Ἄξιῶ ἐὰν φαίνηται συντάξαι γράψαι Ἡρα- κλείδῃ τῶι μεριδάρχει κομισά- μενον τὸ προκείμενον τῶν ἐκφορί- ων κεφάλαιον μὴ παρενοχλεῖν με, ἵν' ᾧ τετευχῶς τῆς παρὰ σοῦ βοηθήας.	of the memorandum. I ask, if it seems good, that you direct Heracleides the meridarch that if I provide the proposed capital sum of the rents I should not be troubled so that I may meet with help at your hands.
20	Εὐτύχει	Farewell

The subject matter is obscure in this document, but the petition seems to be concerned with rent and in form the document is less adorned than earlier ones. However, it accords with the basic fourfold scheme, there is a clear opening and closing, a section which describes the basic facts of the case and a distinct request section. The opening salutation is in the common dative construction, being a straightforward (Σελεύκωι συγγενεί καὶ στρατηγῶ[ι] καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν προσόδων), and indeed the vast majority

⁵⁶ See the comment on BGU VIII 1832.

of the petitions in BGU VIII follow that pattern. We see that the request is introduced by the verb ἀξιῶ, which becomes more frequent in the Roman period.⁵⁷

The description of the case is carried out in simple language. The abrupt mention of wrongdoing which we have seen in earlier documents (such as ἀδικοῦμαι) is not present in this document. However, we can see echoes of it in other contemporaneous texts. BGU VIII 1816 (60/59) is a petition to Paniskos about some violence. The petitioner Ammonios, after the opening address, writes: Δ[... [παρ]ηγγελημένων ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου βασιλέως ἐπ[... κεκινδυνευκῶς ὑπὸ δυσσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων, at lines 2-4.⁵⁸ Again this seems to foreshadow the introductory sentences of later epochs and it suggests a direct launch into the tension between law and wrongdoing. Perhaps more recognisable are the words opening the description in BGU VIII 1831 (51-50 BC): Πολλῶν καὶ μεγάλων ἀδικημάτων συντετελεσμένων εἰς με ὑπὸ Θεοφίλου του Νικοβίου τῶν ἐκ τοῦ Σαδαλείου ("Many and great wrongs have been perpetrated against me by Theophilos and Nikobios together from the Sadaleion.")

Vocatives continue to appear in petitions to lesser officials, to lend familiarity to the relationship between strategos and petitioner. In BGU VIII 1816, mentioned just above, a petition about some act of violence committed against the petitioner, at l. 15, which lies in the section dealing with the facts of the case the editors restore [στ]ρατηγε. In the request section of BGU VIII 1843 (50/49 BC) we find the more interesting: Ἀξιούμεν, σεμνότατε στρατηγέ, ἀσθενέστεροι ὑπάρχοντες (l. 13-4). The petitioners are the royal cultivators and "the others" from the village of Tinteris, who are in some weakened position. The adjective σέμνος is unusual to find in connection with the strategos, and there is no suggestion of any aspect of the social position of the petitioners, as there may be in the case of priests, which would indicate why such ritualistic language might be used. We may compare this with the address

57 P. Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, 99ff.

58 Cf P.Tebt. I 42 (c. 114 BC).

to the strategos in BGU VIII 1837 τῷ θεοτάτῳ καὶ κυρίῳ στρατηγῷ ("to the most divine and noble strategos").⁵⁹ This is syntactically different but still involves strongly religious language. We are probably right to see in this type of address to the strategos a reflection of the local power of these officials and an indication of the general relativity of the power of the monarch, especially in the last decades of the Ptolemaic dynasty.⁶⁰ More will be said about these expressions in chapter 8, but we should make the comment here that this sort of language used in connection with a strategos, who of course was not a cult figure, shows a development in the application of a motif, which was once reserved for the sovereign.

ROMAN PETITIONS

We made the point in chapter 3 that the Roman emperor stood in a more physically inaccessible position than the Ptolemies, being present in Rome, or if not in Rome elsewhere in the empire but rarely in Egypt itself.⁶¹ The emperor relied upon written communication to administer the empire. Harris makes the point that "In manifold ways the Roman world was now dependant upon on writing, particularly with respect to political and administrative power."⁶² We drew attention to the fact in chapter 2 that the requirement for personal presentation made the *libellus* procedure more suitable for communities and great men, and the surviving petitions to emperors bear this out.⁶³ It is proposed to set out one extract of a petition to the emperor from Egypt, mainly because no other example survives on papyrus which is in a

59 Cf the much later P.Oxy XLV 3246 (297-8 AD), which through very fragmentary has ἀριστε τῶν [στ]ρατ[ηγῶ]ν. See also P.Cair.Isidor. 64 (298 AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 65 (298/9 AD) for the same formula in relation to the strategos. See Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, 214, fn 155.

60 See chapter 3 section 3.4.

61 We know of several occasions when emperors visited Egypt and their presence could cause quite a stir, eg, Vespasian went to Alexandria : Suet. *Vesp.* 7.1. The most famous must Caracalla's massacre of the Alexandrians in AD. Marcus Aurelius visited the prefecture in 176 AD, about four years after a revolt in the Delta (172 AD), which was quelled Avidius Cassius, who then proclaimed himself emperor in Egypt with the support of Egypt the eastern provinces except Cappadocia and Bithynia in 175 AD; he was murdered three months later: see Dio Cassius 72.

62 Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 209, 232.

63 Chapter 2, 69. See P.J. Parsons, "Petitions and a letter: The Grammarian's Complaint" No. 66 in *Collectanea Papyrologica* (Bonn, 1976), 416. A subscription of Antoninus Pius recorded in P.Harr I 67 (c150 AD) is interesting in this regard. The petition concerned guardianship and the emperor states that his decision was influenced by precedent and "the eminence of the petitioner", Valerius Zoilus (τῷ τοῦ ἐπιδόντος ὀνόματι).

satisfactory state of completeness. Petitions to the emperor will be discussed further below, because the surviving evidence falls mainly in the period II to III AD and is more appropriately considered together with the other texts from that general period. Within Egypt we are safe to assume that the social and physical distance which characterised the hierarchy of Roman Egypt as outlined in chapter 3, remained and we should not be surprised that the letter form remained the predominant vehicle for communication with the powerful. From Roman Egypt, the surviving petitions are addressed to officials falling into three basic categories: "the prefects of Egypt, the Roman procurators (especially the epistrategoï, but including as well the iuridicus, the dioiketes, the idios logos and the archidicastes), and the local nome officials, above all the strategoi."⁶⁴

In determining what impact the incorporation of Egypt into the Roman empire had upon the structure of petitions, we are fortunate to have examples from shortly after 31 BC. Scholarly views have tended to group Ptolemaic and Early Roman petitions together. We have noted already that they treat the language of petitions from I and II AD as very simple and in that sense similar to the Ptolemaic. We have seen that at the nome level the social and administrative structure remained much the same. The similarities can be seen in a petition to the centurion after about sixty years of Roman occupation. Although essentially a military position, the centurion exercised a number of administrative functions in Egypt.⁶⁵ In the following document Hermon, son of Demetrius complains of robbery and violence at the hands of some fishermen called Pausis, Papsious and his brother and other named individuals:-

Document 7: P.Oxy XIX 2234 (31 AD)

Petition to the Centurion.

1 Κυ[ίντ]ωι Καίωι Πάσσερι ἑκατοντάρχη
παρὰ Ἐρίμωνος τοῦ Δημητρίου. ὑπάρχει μοι πε-

64 J. David Thomas, "Subscriptions to Petitions to Officials in Roman Egypt." in W. Peremans (*et al.*) *Egypt and the Hellenistic World*, (Studia Hellenistica 27), Lovanii, 1983, 369 - 382, at p. 369.

65 See P. Meyer, *Jurist. Papyri*, 281-2, P.Mich III 175 and P.Osl II 21 and 23.

ρὶ κώμην Τῆιν τῆς Θμοισεφῶι τοπαρχίας τοῦ
 5 Ὀξυρυγχείτου παππικὸς πατρικὸς κληῖρος Δρύ-
 ου λέγομενος, ἐν [ῶ]ι δημόσιον χῶμα καὶ λάκ-
 κος κατὰ μέσον τῶν ἡμετέρων καὶ ναύβια
 καὶ ἕτερα ὑπὲρ τε πάντων τελῶν τὰ καθή-
 κοντα δημόσια, καταβιαζόμενος δὲ καὶ συν-
 αρποζόμενος ὑπὸ ἀλιέων Παύσιος καὶ {Π}
 10 Παψιούτος καὶ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ καὶ Καλεοῦς καὶ
 Μέλανος καὶ Ἀττίου καὶ Πασοίτος καὶ τῶν
 σὺν αὐ[τ]οῖς οὐκ ὄντων ὀλίγων ἐπαγαγόν-
 τες καὶ Τίτιον στρατιώτην μετὰ πολλῶν
 15 λίνων καὶ ξυστρῶν ἐπελθόντες ἐπὶ τὸν
 ἡμέτ[ε]ρον λάκκον μετὰ κολλορόβων ἠλι-
 ευσαν καὶ ἀνέσπασαν ἰχθ[ύ]ν ἄξιον ἐπὶ τὸ
 αὐτὸ [ἀ]ργυρίου Ζα, κ[α]ὶ λογοποιουμένου
 μου [αὐτοῖς] ἔγγισαν με ὡς μέλλοντές με
 20 ἐκποι[ε]ῖν. ἐπ[ε]ῖ δὲ κατὰ πολλὰ βιαζοντα(ί)
 με, τὴν ἐπὶ σε καταφυ[γ]ῆν ποιούμενος
 ἀξιῶ, ἐὰν φαίνηται, ἀχθῆναι τοὺς ἐγκαλου-
 μένου[ς] ἐπὶ σε, ὅπως ἀπ[ο]δῶσί μοι τὴν
 τιμὴν τοῦ ἰχθύος, ὡς προεῖρήται, εἰς δὲ τὸ μέλ-
 25 λον ἀποσχῶνται τῶν ἡμετέρων, ἵν' ὦ
 εὐεργετημένος διευτύχ(ει)
 Λιζ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ Παχῶν ιζ

"To Quintus Gaius Passer, centurion, from Hermon, son of Demetrius. There belongs to me near the village of Teis in the Thmoisepho toparchy of the Oxyrhynchite nome an allotment inherited from my paternal grandfather, called "of the Woodland", in which there is a public dyke, and a cistern, which is in the middle of my property, and cubic measures and other things; for the whole of which I pay all the appropriate public taxes. But I am suffering violence and being robbed by the fisherman Pausis, Papsious and his brother and Cales, Melas, Attinus, Pasois, and their companions, not a few in number. They brought also with them the soldier Titius, with many lines and knives for scaling, and coming to my cistern they fished with gaffs and drew up fish to the total value of one silver talent. And when I remonstrated with them, they approached me with the apparent intention ofing me. Because they act towards me with great violence, I have recourse to you and ask that, if it seems good to you, the accused be brought before you in order that they may pay me the price of the fish, as aforesaid, and for the future keep their hands off my property, so that I may be relieved. Farewell. The 17th year of Tiberius Caesar Augustus, Pachon 17.

It can be seen the text is very similar to document 5. The background is presented in a simple and unadorned manner. There are no vocative usages, like document 5. however, unlike document 5, the request is linked with language of supplication in a participial construction, ll. 20-1: τὴν ἐπὶ σε καταφυ[γ]ῆν ποιούμενος, which is a present construction, unlike the perfect forms which we saw in connection with the

early Ptolemaic documents. It should be noted in that connection that the translation of the editors gives καταφεύγω as "have recourse to". If this is the right meaning it suggests that the word has begun to lose its symbolic connotations of "refuge" and is becoming simply a standard term for making approach to the administration. This raises a difficult issue which is dealt with in chapter 6. In any event, the document shows that the structure and formulae of supplication and request have been carried over from the Ptolemaic to the Roman administration. Clearly the same symbolic concepts are being used to conceptualise the power of Roman officials. This may be compared with a roughly contemporary petition to the strategos.

Document 8: P.Oxy. II 285 (c. 50 AD)

Petition to the Strategos

<p>1 Τιβερίωι Κλαυδίω Πασίωι[ι] στρ(α- (τηγῶ) παρὰ Σαραπίωνος τοῦ Θεώνος τῶν ἀπ' Ὀξυρύγχων πόλεως γεργίδων λαύρας δρόμου Γυμνα- 5 σίου . Ἀπολλοφάνης γενόμενος πράκτωρ χειωναξίου γερ- δίων τῶ α (ἔτει) Τιβερίου Κλαυδίου Καίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ Γερμανικοῦ Αὐτοκράτορος πολλῇ βιᾷ χρώ- 10 μενος ἀφήρπασεν ὃν ἤμην ἐνδεδυμένο(ς) χιτῶνα λεينوῦν ἄξι(ο)ν δραχμῶν ὀκτώ, καὶ διέ- σισέν με ἄλλας δραχμάς τέσσα- ρες, καὶ ἀπὸ μηνὸς Νέου Σεβασ- 15 τοῦ ἐνάτου ἔτους Τιβερίου Κλαυδίου Καίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ Γερμανικοῦ Αὐτοκράτορος ἕως Φαρμουθι, μηνῶν ἕξ, κατὰ μῆνα δραχμάς δύο, αἱ συναγόμεναι (δραχμαὶ) κδ. 20 διὸ ἀξιῶ διαλαβεῖν κατ' αὐτοῦ ὡς ἂν σοι φαίνεται. εὐτύχει</p>	<p>To Tiberius Claudius Pasion strategus from Sarapion son of Theon a weaver from the city of Oxyrhynchus living in Gymnasium square quarter. Apolllophanes, ex-collector of the trade tax on weavers in the first year of Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus Imperator using great violence seized from me a linen tunic, which I was wearing worth eight drachmas. He also extorted from me four more drachmae and two drachmae each month during the six months from the month of Neos Sebastos in the ninth year of Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus Imperator to Pharmuthi, total, 24 Drachmae I therefore beg you to proceed against him as you may think fit Farewell</p>
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The nome strategos was the representative of the prefect in the metropoleis and in I AD he was almost certainly an Alexandrian in origin and to this extent was probably regarded in nome villages as being closer in a social sense than the Roman

procurators.⁶⁶ As we saw in chapter 3 some strategoi were still powerful, being higher than the magistrates of the metropoleis.⁶⁷ However, the address to the strategos has become very straightforward with none of the language of power or elevation which we have seen directed to strategoi towards the end of the Ptolemaic period.

This document shows a move away from the embellished language used in the petitions to the strategos of the late Ptolemaic period. The essential nature of the document is preserved, as a request, although the verb of request here is ἀξιῶ. Bureth notes that ἀξιῶ is used most frequently in his group of documents (390), and that it is sometimes combined with ἐπιδίδωμι.⁶⁸ Ἐπιδίδωμι appears on its own and often various periphraseis are employed in the Roman period, such as, τὴν ἐπίδοσιν ποιῶμαι. Bureth also makes the point that the verb δέομαι sometimes accompanied by ἀξιῶ, and sometimes not, appears throughout the Roman period and suggests a more affected tone or the tone of a prayer addressed to a deity.⁶⁹ There is great significance in this and it will be explored further in chapter 8.

If we compare document 7 with a petition to an official higher in the administration but below the prefect it is possible to see changes of usage and nuance. Document 9 is petition to the Roman epistrategos Publius Marcius Crispus, who seems to have held the office for a relatively short period, c 146 to 148 AD.⁷⁰ As we saw in chapter 3 the Roman epistrategos was an equestrian procurator so again the title of *vir egregius* or its Greek equivalent κράτιστος would be expected, and appears in the decade 110-120 AD, thereafter becoming standard until the disappearance of the office of epistrategos about the time of Diocletian.⁷¹ The petitioner in document 9 is Ptolemaeus son of Diodorus alias Dioscorus and is known

66 Bowman and Rathbone, "Cities in Administration.", at 125.

67 Above 121.

68 *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, 99ff.

69 *Ibid.*, 102.

70 See J.E.G. Whitehorne, "P.Mich. inv. 255: A Petition to the Epistrategus P. Marcius Crispus", *Chr. d'Eg.* 67 (1991), 250-256, from whom the text and translation of document 9 are taken.

71 J.D. Thomas, *The Epistrategos* II 45; 64 ff.

from other petitions. J.E.G. Whitehorne who has published this petition gives a number of reasons why the text was probably written by Ptolemaeus himself so the text is an interesting example of non scribal composition and several idiosyncrasies are noticeable.⁷²

Document 9: P.Mich. inv. 255 Arsinoite (22 Oct 147 AD)

Petition to the Epistrategos

- Ποπλίῳ Μάρκῳ Κρίσπῳ τῷ κρατίστῳ ἐπιστρατήγῳ
παρὰ Πτολεμαίου Διοδώρου τοῦ καὶ Διοκόρου τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀρσινοείτου.
πάντων αἰσχιστον τῶν ἐν βίῳ ἀτοπημάτων ἐστὶν τὸ τοὺς ἐλευθέρους τύ-
[π]τεσθαι καὶ ὑβρίζεσθαι καὶ μ[ά]λιστα ὑπὸ δούλων εὐώνων ἢ καὶ ὑπὸ ὄψωνια-
5 ζομένων. τοῦτο δὲ χεῖρόν ἐστιν ὑβρεως ἀνηκέστου. πολλάκις οὖν, κύριε, βου-
λόμενοι ἐγδικίας τυχεῖν, ἀποροῦμεν διὰ τὸ μακρὰν εἶναι τοῦ ἐνθάδε δικαίου.
ὦν
ἐστὶν Πτολεμαῖος υἱὸς Πάππου[ι] τινὸς γεγυμνασιαρχηκόςτος ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ
Ἀρσινο-
εἴτου, αὐθάδης τῷ τρόπῳ καὶ βίβλιος, δάιστιμόν βίον ζῶν καὶ πράσσω
ἀνόσια
πάν[τα] ἀπειρημένα, στατηρι[αίου]ς τόκους ἀπαιτῶν τῇ περὶ αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ νομῷ
10 δυ[ν]άμε[ι]ι, παρηγησάμενος τὰς τῶ[ι]ν ἐπάρχων κρίσεις καὶ τὰς τῶν
Αὐτοκρατόρων
ἐντολάς, ἐν οἷς κᾶμοι τὸ αὐτὸ διεπράξατο, καὶ στατηριαίους τόκους πράσσει
ἐπικατερχόμενος εἰς τὰς κῶμας μετὰ πλήθους καὶ ὑβρεὶς πλείστας τοῖς ἀπ-
τομ[έ]νοις παρεχόμενος π[ο]λλάκις οὖν κᾶμοι, κύριε, τὸ αὐτὸ ποιήσας ἀλόγους
ὑβρεὶς
15 διὰ τῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, ἐὰν βου[λ]ηθῶμεν στρατηγῷ ἐντυχεῖν περὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ βίας
τὰ ὑπάρχοντα ἕως τοῦ [ν]ῦν ἐφέλκεται ἐπὶ τὰ στρατήγια καὶ συνεδρεύουσι
τῷ δικασ-
τῇ. ἐκ τούτου συμβαίνει μὴ τυγχάνειν ἡμᾶς ἐγδικίας. ἀποδείξω δὲ αὐτὸν
(ἀποδείξω)
δάμιον ἐν μιᾷ κώμῃ ἐκδανίσαντα τρία ἡμισυ τὰ λέπτα κατὰ μέρος λαμβάνων-
τα] στατηριαῖον τόκον ὡς συνάγεσθαι κατ' ἔτος ἡμιόλιον, ὃν καὶ εὐρήσεις
παρ' ἐ-
νίων ὀκταπλάσιόν του καὶ ἄλλου εἰληφότα ἐν ὀλίγοις ἔτεσι. ὅπερ ἀπείρηται
πλε-
20 ον τοῦ ἴσου κεφαλαίου τόκον ἢ μὴ ἔκπράσσεσθαι τινα παντὶ τῷ χρόνῳ. τῶν
οὖν
τοιούτων ἐπιστάσεως ὀφιλόντων τυγχάνειν, ἐπὶ σὲ τὴν καταφυγὴν ἔποι-
ησάμην τὸν πάντων εὐεργέτην ὅπως ἐ[ν] τοῖς εὐμενεστάτοις τοῦ κυρίου
ἡμῶν Ἀντωνίνου [κ]αιροῖς (δυνηθῶ) ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ συνμένειν (καὶ) κελεύσης
γραφῆναι τῷ τῆς
Ἑρακλείδου στρ[α]τηγῷ ὅπως ἀνεπηρέαστος καὶ ἀνύβριστος ὑπὸ τοῦ
Πτολεμαίου
25 φυλαχθῶ καὶ (οὐ) ἀποδέδωκα εἰς τόκον περισσὸν τοῦ δραχμαίου εἰς κεφάλαι-
όν μοι ἔλλογηθῆναι, καὶ ἐὰν τι φανῶ αὐτῷ ὀφείλων μετὰ ταῦτα, ἰσχύσω αὐτῷ
ἀποδῶναι εὐγνωμόνως, εἰς δὲ ἀπόδιξιν τῶν προγεγραμμένων τὸν στρατηγὸν
κελεῦσαι ἀχθῆναι ἐπ' αὐτὸν Ἀφροδῖσιόν τ[ι]να καὶ Ζώλον ὄψωνιαζομένους

72 J.E.G. Whitehorne, "P.Mich. inv. 255", 251.

30 ὑπ' αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀκεραιωμ[ένων] τῆ[ς] ἐ[λ]σπράξεως τῶν τοίκων, λαμβά-
 νων αὐτῶν ἱκανὸν ἐπὶ τὴν σὴν διάγνω[σιν],
 καὶ ἐκ τούτου φανήσεται ἡ ἐκείνου ἰδία διαπρασσομένη, ἔν' ᾧ ὑπὸ σοῦ
 βεβηθημένος

διευτύχει

"To Publius Marcus (sic.) Crispus, *vir egregius*, epistrategos, from Ptolemaeus son of Diodorus alias Dioscurus of those from the Arsinoite. Worst of all offences in life is for free men to be beaten and outraged, particularly by cheap slaves or indeed by those who work for hire. This is worse than utter insolence. Although we have often wanted to get legal satisfaction, lord, we are at a loss because of being far from justice here. One of these men is Ptolemaeus, son of a certain Pappus ex-gymnasiarch, from the same Arsinoite nome, reckless in his conduct and violent, leading the life of a moneylender and committing every impious and forbidden act, by demanding interest at the rate of a stater per mina per month by virtue of the power he has in the nome, in disregard of the prefect's decisions and the ordinances of the emperors. I too am among those against whom he has committed the same act. And he exacts interest at a stater per mina per month by descending into the villages with a gang and committing very many acts of outrage against those he lights upon. Accordingly having likewise committed groundless acts of violence against me too, lord, via those under him, if ever we want to make an approach to the strategos about his violence, up until now he has been dragging the present matters before the office of the strategos and it is they who sit in council with the judge. As a result of this we are not getting legal satisfaction. And I shall lay evidence how having made a loan in one village, by successively getting three and a half obols as interest at a stater per mina per month, he is collecting annually half as much again. You will also find from others that he has got eight times the capital from someone else in a few years, although it is forbidden for anyone to exact more interest than the sum of the loan over the whole period of the loan. Accordingly, since such persons should meet with a deterrent, I have taken refuge with you the benefactor of all, that in the most gracious times of our lord Antoninus (I may be able) to remain in my place of residence and that you may order written instructions to be sent to the strategos of the meris of Heracleides so that I may be kept free from threats and acts of outrage by Ptolemaeus, and that the interest (which) I have paid in excess of a drachma per mina per month be credited for me against the principal, and if it is apparent that I owe him anything after this, I shall undertake to repay him in a reasonable manner. And that for proof of the aforementioned matters the strategos give orders for a certain Aphrodisius and Zoilus, who are in his pay, to be brought before him, along with those who are innocent of the exaction of interest, taking surety from them for your investigation, and as a result of this that person's private intrigue will be made apparent, in order that I may be benefited by you. Farewell."

The language of this document is richer with symbolic concepts than the petitions which we have seen addressed to lower officials. In particular one should note the connections between arrogance, or dishonouring behaviour, "impious acts" and the particular illegality complained of, namely, overcharging interest and the behaviour of a money lender (ll. 6-9). Another noteworthy feature is the opening sentence which expresses the outrage of Ptolemaeus, equating his treatment at the hands of Ptolemaeus son of Pappas with the hybriistic treatment of free men. This is a

manifestation of the importance of the social value of honour which is a constant theme in petitions, as we will see in chapter 7. From the structural point of view there is no precise verb of request although the expression containing the refuge motif at l. 21, ἐπὶ σὲ τὴν καταφυγὴν ἔποι- | ησάμην τὸν πάντων εὐεργέτην seems to fill this function. In a relative sense the text is quite long and gives a very interesting insight into the machinations of local power and the role which the epistrategos as the representation of legitimate power is supposed to play in them.

We may pause here to make mention of a very important cultural event which began about the end of I and flourished in II AD, and which is usually referred to as the Second Sophistic. At this time there was renewed interest in the art of rhetoric. Vespasian established publicly funded chairs of rhetoric at Rome, and the influence of rhetoric in education was greatly increased.⁷³ It was actually Flavius Philostratus who coined the term Second Sophistic, and he in fact traces it from Aeschines. In the *Lives of the Sophists* (I.19) he considers that individuals such as Nicetes in the time of Nero, followed by others like Dion of Prusa, revived the sophistic movement and rhetorical arguments became used again to prove a position (I.481)⁷⁴ According to Kennedy, we see in these developments a fresh conjunction of rhetoric and moral philosophy.⁷⁵ Philostratus (I.481) made the point that the proponents of the Second Sophistic were more interested to present moral types, such as, the rich man and the poor man, than their predecessors. We may say that such an observation finds parallels in the articulation of tensions in the real social world of Egypt, covering the range of social problems which appear in petitions, whatever the exact influence of the Second Sophistic may have been. It will be apparent that petitions become more involved conceptually through II to IV AD, and the conceptualisation of power and the construction of opposites between the legitimate and illegitimate more complex.

73 A. Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature* (Methuen, 1966), 829ff

74 *Ibid.*, 833.

75 G. Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World* (Princeton Uni Press, Princeton, 1972), 557ff.

It is important now to consider a petition to the prefect, the highest point in the internal Egyptian hierarchy. As we pointed out in chapter 2, an individual with a grievance could approach the prefect in writing by a document which could take one of two forms: either a *ὑπόμνημα*, that is, "memorandum" or an *ἐπιστολή*, which was a "letter" and the more informal of the two.⁷⁶ The petition on the other hand could be presented only during the hours which had been appointed for the reception of such documents. As we saw in chapter 3, in the case of the prefect this was usually the *conventus*. P.Mich VI 422 Recto (197 AD) is a petition to the prefect Quintus Aemilius Saturninus, who held office from spring, 197 AD to 23 September, 198 AD.⁷⁷ It is an example of the petition procedure, not the *epistula*. The editors believe that the petition "would naturally have been presented at the spring *conventus* at Memphis".⁷⁸ It tells a story of fatherless children who are victims of violence and arrogance.

Document 10: P.Mich. VI 422 Karanis (197 AD)

Petition to the Prefect

1 Κυίντω Αἰμιλλίῳ Σατουρνείνῳ
 ἐπάρχῳ Αἰγύπτου
 παρὰ Γεμέλλου τοῦ καὶ Ὀρίωνος
 Γαίου Ἀπολιναρίου Ἀντινοέως
 5 καὶ ὡς χρηματίζει γεουχοῦντ(ος)
 ἐν Καρανίδι τοῦ Ἀρσινοείτου
 νομοῦ τῆς Ἡρακλείδου μερίδ(ος).
 πρὸ πολλοῦ, κύριε, ὁ ἡμέτερος
 πατὴρ ἐτελεύτησεν ἐπ' ἐ-
 10 μοὶ καὶ ἀδελφῇ μου κληρονό-
 μοις καὶ ἀντιλήμμεθα
 τῶν ὑπαρχόντων μη-
 δενδ(ος) ἐπελθόντος. ὁμοίως
 δὲ συνέβη καὶ τὸν θεῖόν μου
 15 Γαίον Ἰούλιον Λογγεῖνον
 τελευτῆσαι πρὸ ὀκταετίας
 καὶ τούτου τὰ ὑπάρχοντα
 ἐπεκράτησα καὶ συν(ε)κομισά-
 μην τὴν πρόσοδον μηδενδ(ος)
 20 κωλύσαντος. νυνεὶ δὲ
 Ἰούλιος καὶ Σώτας ἀμφότεροι
 Εὐδάτος οὐ δεόντως βιαίω(ς)

To Quintus Aemilius Saturninus,
 prefect of Egypt
 from Gemellus, also called Horion
 son of Gaius Apolinarius, Antinoite
 and however he is styled, landholder
 at Karanis of the Arsinoite nome
 in the division of Herakleides.
 Some time ago, my lord, our
 father died, leaving me
 and my sister as heirs
 and we took over
 his possessions
 without opposition from anyone. Likewise
 it came to pass that my uncle also
 Gaius Julius Longinus
 died eight years ago
 and I entered into ownership
 of his possessions and collected
 the income, without hindrance
 from anyone. But now
 Julius and Sotas both
 sons of Eudas, wrongfully, with violence

76 Chapter 2, 72.

77 Reinmuth, *Prefect of Egypt*, 137. Reinmuth gives the start date of Quintus Aemilius Saturninus as 11 July, 197. The editors of P.Mich. VI 422, 423, 424 conclude that those petitions extend his incumbency to spring 197.

78 P.Mich. VI, at 121.

	καὶ αὐθάδως ἐπεληλύθασι	and arrogance, entered
	ἐδάφεισί μου μετὰ τὸ τὴν	my fields after I had
25	κατασπορὰν ποιήσασθαί	sown them
	με καὶ ἐκώλυσάν με	and hindered me therein
	ἐν τούτοις δυνάμι τῆ	through the power
	περὶ αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τῶν τό-	they enjoy locally
	πων, καταφρονούντων	contemptuous of me
30	τῆ(ν) περὶ τὴν ὄψιν μου	on account of my weak
	ἀσθένειαν· ὅθεν ἐπὶ σέ	vision. Wherefore I take refuge
	τὸν σωτήρα κατέφυγον,	with you the saviour
	ἀξιῶν ἐάν σου τῆ τύχῃ	asking you if it seems good
	δόξῃ ἀκοῦσαί μου πρὸς	to your fortune to hear my complaint
35	αὐτοὺς ὅπως δυνηθῶ	against them, so that I may be able
	τῶν ἰδίων ἀντιλαμβάνεσθ(αι)	to recover my property
	καὶ ὧ ὑπὸ σοῦ τοῦ κυρίου	and receive this benefaction from you the
	εὐεργ(ετημένους)	lord.
	διευτύχ(ει)	Farewell

Petitions to prefects followed many of the structural patterns established in earlier periods. In general the opening formula most frequently employed in petitions to the prefect of Egypt followed the pattern τῶι δείνι παρὰ τοῦ δείνος, whereas *epistulae* tended to follow the form ὁ δείνα τῶ δεινὶ χαίρειν.⁷⁹ In this document the opening address is plain and this is interesting. The appellatives used for the prefect in petitions usually follow the general honorific titles for Roman magistrates of similar status.⁸⁰ Thus from the time of Nero to Antoninus Pius the appellative κράτιστος was used in petitions, corresponding to the Latin title *vir egregius*.⁸¹ From Antoninus Pius to about 270 AD senators were usually appointed to the prefecture and the appellative therefore was λαμπρότατος.⁸² Between 270 AD and 334 AD διασημότατος was also used, corresponding to the Latin *vir perfectissimus*.⁸³ We see that the description of the case is presented in simple language, and the prefect is spoken to, as it were, in the vocative at line 8. But at lines 20-31 the wrongdoers, Julius and Sotas, sons of Eudas, are portrayed as arrogant and violent (οὐ δέοντως βιάίως) local grandees possessing contemptuous attitudes. This description

79 G. Foti-Talamanca, *Ricerche sul Processo nell'Egitto Greco-Romano* II (Milan, 1979), 1, 104

80 On appellatives used to address the higher powerful figures in Roman petitions, see Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, Part I, chapter I, esp. 43 ff.

81 Reinmuth, *Prefect*, pp. 9-10; P.Oxy. VII 37, VIII 8, II p. 151, 165.

82 Reinmuth, *ibid.*; P.Oxy. II 237 col. V l. 18; P.Oxy. VI 2, 14; Thomas, *The Epistrategos* II, 114, n. 4. Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, shows this was the adjective for the prefect, the epistrategos, the juridicus, and the idiologos.

83 Reinmuth, *ibid.*; P.Oxy. VI 34, VII 6.

leads into the request and the formulae for benefaction. The text has clear similarities with Ptolemaic predecessors. But this is not a petition to a king, even though we see the recapitulation of two linguistic motifs which are closely derived from the language used to address the Ptolemaic sovereign, the refuge theme in line 31-2, ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν σωτήρα κατέφυγον, together with the designation σωτήρ. Both have great importance, and are discussed in chapters 5 and 6 more fully.

As we mentioned in chapter 3 the third century AD was a very difficult time in the history of the Roman empire. But outside the political and military arena, the third century was important because the dominance of rhetoric and strands of the rhetorical organisation of linguistic interaction developed by the Second Sophistic in late I and early II AD became enhanced and the form and style of petitions seem to reflect this. The petitions from III AD however retain many of the features of the past but a more fully rhetorical style and content is clearly identifiable. Marco Orru would argue that anomic conditions of economic and social decline are matched with a tendency to concentrate upon the conceptual dimensions of social life and this may have been one factor which gave special impetus to the rhetorical content of petitions after mid III AD.⁸⁴

Document 11: P.Oxy 2131 (207 AD)

Petition to the Prefect.

1 Σουβατιανῶ Ἀκύλα ἐπάρχῳ Αἰγύπτου π(αρά) Τοτοόως χρηματίζοντος
μητρὸς Σενπετσείριου[ς ἀπ' Ὀξυρύγχων πόλειω]ς.
τῆς ἐμφύτου σου, ἡγεμῶν δέσποτα, δικαιοδοσίας δικήουσης εἰς πάντας
ἀνθρώπους καὶ αὐτὸς ἀδικηθεὶς ἐπὶ σὲ καταφεύ-
γ[ω] ἀξιῶν ἐκδικίας τυχεῖν. ἔχει δὲ οὕτω[ς ἐν] μητροπόλ(ει) τυγχάνων
ἀναγραφόμενος ἐπ' ἀμφοδου Παρεμβολῆς ἀεὶ χρη-
ματίζων τῷ πρ[ο]κειμένῳ ὀνοματίῳ, ᾧ συμφώνως ἀναδοθεὶς ἔτι ἄνωθεν
εἰς φυλακίαν ταύτην ἀμέμπτως ἐξ[έ]πτε-
5 λεσα, οὐ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ κατ' ἔτος ὀφειλόμενα ἐπικεφάλια τελῶ
γεωργικὸν [καὶ] ἀπράγμονα βίον ζῶν, ἀνεδόθην οὐ δε-
όντως ὑπὸ Ἡρακλάμμωνος τοῦ νυνὶ ἀμφοδογραμματέως πρώτης φυλῆς
εἰς δημοσίαν ὀνηλασίαν τῆς αὐτῆς πόλεω[ς]
πάνυ βαρυτάτην ρείαν ἐτέρῳ ὀνοματίῳ Σβίχῳ Ἄρμιυσιος μητρὸς
Τασεῦτος, σωματίσαντός μοι ἀνύπαρκτον πόρον
(δραχμῶν) Ἄσ· ὄθεν, κύριε, βία ἀναγκασθεὶς ταύτης τῆς ὀνηλασίας
ἀντιλαβέσθαι ἄπορος παντελῶς ὑπάρχων μηδ' ὄλως ὑπο-

84 *Anomie: History and Meanings* (Allen & Unwin, Boston, 1987).

10 στέλλων τῷ [ν]υὶ ἀμφοδογραμματεῖ ἀλλ' εἰς τοῦπιόν τοῦ ἡμετέρου
 ἀμφοδου Ἰππέως Παρεμβολῆς μέλλοντος λει[το]υ[ρ]-
 γεῖν ἀκολουθῶς τῷ γενομένῳ ὑπὸ Γαμεινίου Μοδέστ(ρι)ου τοῦ
 κρα(τίστου) ἐπιστρα(τήγου) τῶν ἀμφοδων κλήρω, [το]ῦ
 Ἡρακλάμμωνος
 ἀνόμως καὶ ρειψοκινδύνως ἀναδόντος με,] ἀξιῶ, ἐὰν σο[ῦ] τῆ
 εὐ[με]νεστάτη τύχη δόξη, διακοῦσαι μου πρὸς αὐτόν, τῆς γ[ὰ]ρ
 σῆ[ς] μεγαλειότητος ἐστὶν ἐπεξελεῖν τοῖς [ἀδίκ]ως καὶ ἀνόμω[ς]
 τετολμημένοις, ὅπως τυχῶν τῶν δικαίων δυνηθῶ εἰς
 ὕστε[ρο]ν τῷ ἐπιβάλλοντι ἔτει ἀντιλαβέ[σ]θαι τῆς ἐνχειρισθησομένης ὡς
 πρόκειται, ἵν' ᾧ εὐεργετημέν[ο]ς. διευτύχει.

"To Subatianus Aquila, prefect of Egypt, from Totoës, styled as having Senpetsiris as his mother, of the city of Oxyrhynchus. Since your ingrained justice, my lord prefect, is extended to all men, I too, having been wronged, have recourse to you, begging for redress. The matter is on this wise.

I happen to be registered in the metropolis in the Camp quarter and am always styled by the name above written, in accordance with which I was designated some time ago to the duty of guard, which I discharged blamelessly; and I have besides paid my annual personal dues, living a quiet cultivator's life. I have been wrongly designated by Heraclammon, the present district-scribe of the first tribe, for the post of public donkey-driver in the said city, a most onerous service, under another name, Sbichis son of Harmiusis and Taseus, and have had booked to me by him property to the value of 1200 drachmae which I do not possess; wherefore, my lord, as I have been compelled to take up this post of donkey-driver although I am entirely without means and am not at all subject to the present district scribe, our quarter on the contrary having presently to serve in accordance with the lot drawn for the districts by his excellency the epistrategos Geminius Modestus, and have been lawlessly and recklessly designated by Heraclammon, I beg you, if it seem good to your most benign fortune, to hear me against him, for it appertains to your power to punish the unjust and lawless deeds of daring, in order that I may obtain my rights and be able subsequently in the year that devolves upon me to take up the service with which I may be entrusted. Farewell."

This text exhibits a feature which is not present in P.Mich. VI 422, namely an introductory sentence. J. Enoch Powell describes the style of this type of petition from this period as falling "into its place in the evolution of the praefect-petition, a form in which the characteristic "Byzantine" floridity naturally made its first appearance."⁸⁵ The appearance of introductory sentences such as that in ll. 2-3 form part of a trend away from the simplicity of first and second century petitions towards the "swollen" forms which appear in the third and fourth centuries.⁸⁶ However, we

85 J. Enoch Powell (ed.), *The Rendel Harris Papyri*, 51.

86 The origin of introductory sentences is not clear, but Frisk, *Bankakten*, 90-1 makes the suggestion that these sentences were employed as a suitable starting point for petitions and show the influence of the Second Sophistic which appeared and was in circulation in II AD. One should note the similarity also between these

noted earlier that there seems to be precursors to these introductory sentences in Ptolemaic petitions. If we compare ll 4-8 of UPZ 8 (163 BC):

Ἡδίκημένος οὐ μετρίως καὶ τῶι ζῆν πλειονάκις κεκινδυνευκῶς ὑπὸ
τῶν ὑπογεγραμμένων ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ καλλυντῶν ἐπὶ σέ τὴν καταφυγὴν
ποιοῦμαι νομίζων μάλισθ' οὕτως τεύξεσθαι τῶν δικαίων

with ll 2-3 of P.Oxy 2131 (207 AD):

τῆς ἐμφύτου σου, ἡγεμῶν δέσποτα, δοκαιοδοσίας διηκούσης εἰς
πάντας ἀνθρώπους καὶ αὐτὸς ἀδικηθεὶς ἐπὶ σέ καταφεύγ[ω] ἀξιῶν
ἐκδικίας τυχεῖν. ἔχει δὲ οὕτως·

it is possible to discern both the similarities and the differences. The sentences are similar in that they combine both the refuge motif with an expectation of justice, clearly variations of a conventional theme. The sentence of the Roman petition however exchange the specific for the general, particularly in the "ingrained justice for all men" of the prefect. This no doubt may reflect in part the conjunction of rhetoric and moral philosophy of the Second Sophistic. But such a conjunction drew upon the linguistic constructions of earlier periods. Indeed, it is probably correct to see in the reference to the "ingrained justice" of the Roman prefect extended to all men, an echo of and an extension of the conceptualisation of the Ptolemaic monarch as "saviour and benefactor of all." But more of this in the next chapter.

A similar point may be made in respect of certain structural features of the text. In the study of Roman introductory sentences undertaken by Frisk, the earliest is dated to the mid second century, but we have already pointed out how certain late Ptolemaic structural features in some ways seem to anticipate the introductory sentences of Roman times.⁸⁷ The point of correspondence between the Ptolemaic phrases and these sentences is that the latter functioned as part of the way in which the interaction with the official was framed by the writer. In the present document the reference to the prefect's "ingrained justice" and the statement that the designation of the petition being an act of refuge and beseeching provides the outline of a

sentences and introductions to petition to one official which enclose a petition to a higher official as in SB XVI 12678 (27 July 179 AD).

87 See 150 above.

relationship between prefect and petitioner, with the ethical content of justice, and this provides the framework for the rest of the petition. However, there can be no doubt that, whatever its origins, the introductory sentence was a new feature. It was also a structural element of petitions which became the place where old linguistic motifs were mixed in fresh combinations and arranged at the start of the petition. In document 14 we see the vocabulary of wrongdoing, expressed in the verb ἀδικέω, which referred to the situation of the petitioner and came frequently at the start of the petition in III BC, combined with the language of supplication, expressed by the verb καταφεύγω, which in the same period came usually at the end. In the phrase ἀξιῶν ἐκδικίας τυχεῖν we also see a request directly coupled with the expectation of some ethical attribute, here "justice", as the outcome of the petition expressed by the usual verb τυγχάνω. This is a good example of old symbolic language being recycled in innovative fusions. But importantly these linguistic motifs are also combined into a package which produces a wider dimension of meanings. They are placed together to articulate the ethical dimension of the power of the position of prefect and express this as a general principle applying to all men. We can see a similar process taking place in another petition to Subatianus Aquila, BGU XI 2061 (207 AD): θαρρῶν, κύριε, τῇ σῇ ἐπαφροδίτῳ ἡγεμονίᾳ τὴν ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγὴν ποιῶμαι ἐξηγούμε(ενος) τὴν γενομένην μοι βίαν ὑπὸ τινων πολ[ι]τ[ων] [c 30] ματ εἰς· ἔχει δὲ οὕτως· γεωργὸς τυγχάνων καὶ χρήσιμος τῷ ἱερωτάτῳ ταμείῳ ἀδικουμαι ὑπὸ Ὀρσενούφειος ("Having confidence, my lord, in your gracious rule I take refuge with you explaining the violence committed against me by certain men.....; the matter is thus: Chancing to be a farmer and useful to the most holy treasury I am wronged by Orsenouphos...") This passage clearly harks back to Ptolemaic predecessors particularly in the use of the refuge motif and the presence of ἀδικοῦμαι which echoes the usage for opening the background of petitions to the Ptolemaic monarch in III BC. However, the combination of these elements in an introductory sentence is new. Introductory sentences were probably an minimalist adaptation of the type of linguistic figures found in the *Prooimia* of classical orators and show a trend towards a more abstract conceptualisation of the role of officials and

a conception of the ethical dimension of legitimate power which attains a definite complexion of universality, both of which are seen here in the phrase τῆ σῆ ἐπαφροδίτῳ ἡγεμονία.

Before examining the "swollen" Byzantine form, it is appropriate now to say something about petitions to the emperor. Petitions to the emperor in Greek appear rarely, in a relative sense, in the surviving sources.⁸⁸ It appears that at present no fully complete petition to a Roman emperor in Greek survives recorded on papyrus from Roman Egypt.⁸⁹ There are some which survive from provinces elsewhere in the empire.⁹⁰ They most often come down to us because they were inscribed on stone, and they generally derive from the period II to III AD. In fact the only complete surviving petition to an emperor or emperors is the well known inscription containing the petitions of the Scaptoparenians from Phrygia to Gordian III dated 238 AD (IGBulg IV2236)⁹¹ That document is too extensive to reproduce here. But we can reproduce the surviving text of PSI XIV 1422 (IIIAD) which contains the bulk of a petition from a former athlete to unknown emperors requesting the privilege of being κῆρυξ for the ἐπιτροπή of the Heptanomia.⁹² The provenance is also unknown, but there is sufficient text remaining to justify its reproduction here. The text is commenced from line 5, since the first 5 lines are almost totally lost.

88 J. David Thomas, "Subscriptions to Petitions to Officials in Roman Egypt." in W. Peremans (*et al.*) *Egypt and the Hellenistic World*, (Studia Hellenistica 27), Lovanii, 1983, 369.

89 Those collected by the present writer on papyrus are: SB XVI 12509 (117-138 AD); P.Oxy IV 705 (200-2 AD); P.Oxy XLVII 3366 (253-60 AD)(=P.Coll.Youtie II 66); PSI XIV 1404 (IIIAD); P.Ant. II 99 (Early IV AD); P.Ryl. IV 619 (313 AD); P.Ryl. IV 617 (317 AD); P.Ryl. IV 618 (317 AD); P.Ryl. IV 620 (IV AD); P.Ryl. IV 621 (IV AD). Among these PSI XIV 1404 (IIIAD) is the most complete.

90 For example, P.F. Girard, *Textes de droit romain* (Paris, 1937), No 199 = *Fontes Iuris Romani Antejustiniani*, No 495, a petition inscribed on limestone and found at Souk-el-Khmis in Tunisia in 1879, from tenants to Commodus; F.F. Abbott and A.C. Johnson, *Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire* (Princeton, 1926), No 139, petition of the Scaptoparenians to Gordian III 238 AD, discovered in 1868 near Dschumaja, Bulgaria; M. Rostovzev, *ESHRE* no 556, petition of the Aragenians to Phillip the Arab, an inscription found at Yapuldjan in Asia Minor in 1897, on what was an estate in Phrygia, with the rescript in Latin, petition in Greek; MAMA 7, 305 (*Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* (Manchester, 1928)), petition of the Orcistans, part of an inscription on an pillar found in 1752 on the site of Orcistus, a town of Phrygia in Asia Minor.

91 The most complete and up to date text can be found in K. Hallof, "Die Inschrift von Skaptopara", *Chiron* 24 (1994), 405-429. See also T. Hauken, "Reflections on New Readings in the Skaptopara Inscription (IG Bulg IV 2236)", *Symb. Osl.* LXX (1995), 82-94.

92 See the introduction by Mario Amelotti, 130ff, on what this reference might be, and R. Taubenschlag, "The Herald in the Law of the Papyri", in *Opera Minora* II (Warsaw, 1959), 151-157.

Col. II

5 .κ. [.....]. τουσπαρ[.]... νετ..
 τῆς δὲ [.....] παρασχού[ση]ς τὰς δόξας
 τῶν κα[.....]ν ὀλιγωτέρας [[ογκολιγιοσ]
 [[γαρχρον[οισ]] ἔσπευσα παρὰ τὰ ἴχνη ὑμῶν
 10 τῶν κυρ[ί]ων τῆς ὅλης οἰκουμένης, σωτή-
 ρων δὲ ἐμοῦ ἀνδρὸς μετρίου πολλὰ κα-
 μόντος. εἴκοσι γὰρ καὶ ὀκτῶ ἔτη μέχρι
 νῦν ἀγωνιστῆς τυγχάνω[ν] φοιτῶν ἐν τοῖς
 ἀγομένοις ἀγῶσιν ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν νεί-
 15 κης καὶ αἰωνίου διαμονῆς, καὶ ἐν τούτοις
 τρεφόμενος ἐπεύχομαι Διὶ Ὀλυμπίῳ
 ταῖς ἀειδαῖς εὐχαῖς διαφυλάττειν καὶ ἐπαύ-
 ξειν εἰς μακροὺς αἰῶνας τὴν ὑμετέ-
 ραν ἀρχὴν καὶ οὕτως [[καί]] με τυχεῖν τῆς
 {τησ} ἀφ' ὑμῶν τῶν κυρίων εὐεργεσίας. ἐ[π]εὶ γὰρ ἤδη
 20 ὑπὲρ πεντήκοντα ἔτη προβαίνω τῇ ἡ-
 λικίᾳ καὶ εἰς γῆρας τρέπομαι, πρόσει-
 μι διὰ ταύτης μου τῆς δεήσεω[ς] ἀξιῶν, ἐὰν
 δοκῇ τῇ οὐρανίῳ ὑμῶν τύχῃ, χαρίσα[σ]θαί
 μοι ὑπηρεσίας ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ τάξιν κήρυκος [[ελλ[η]νικοῦ]]
 25 παρὰ τῇ τῆς Ἑπτανομίας ἐπιτροπῇ .[[.]]
 [[ιδιωταιτυχαροῦσιν]] πάλαι τέ[τ]ακται καὶ ὑπὸ
 τῶν θεῶν προγόνων ὑμῶν τῶν κυριων ἀ[ι]λλον
 μηδένα ἐν ὑπηρεσίᾳ εἶναι, μόνους
 30 τοὺς ἐν ἀσκήσει καὶ πόνοις γεγ[ε]νημένους
 ἀγωνιστάς. ταύτης γὰρ τῆς τάξεώς μοι δο-
 θεῖσης ὑπὸ τῆς οὐρανίου ὑμῶν τύχης ..
 [.....]. ἀπὸ τῆς θεοφιλεστάτης ὑμῶν εὐεργεσίας ...

"...I hurried to the feet of you the lords of the whole world, saviours of me a humble man much wearied. For it is twenty eight years since I was a contestant continually moving back and forth among the contests which were held for your victory and eternal continuance, and in these circumstances enjoying being looked after I pray to Zeus Olympios with everlasting prayers to watch over you and increase your rule to a great age and thus that I meet with benefactions from you the lords. Now after 50 years I advance in time of life and I turn my steps to old age,I approach you through this my petition, asking, if it seems good to your heavenly Fortune, to grant to me as service the position of herald for the governorship of the Heptanomia....formerly it was decided by the divine forebears of you the lords that no other be in the service, only those being athletes in training and toil. If this position was given to me by your heavenly fortune....from your benefaction, most beloved by the gods...

Despite the gaps, this petition has many obvious similarities with structural elements from petitions to officials in Egypt. The notion of supplication which opens the surviving part of the document is particularly noteworthy (l. 8) The text is built around a request while the request phrase itself, (ll. 21-3) πρόσειμι διὰ ταύτης μου τῆς δεήσεω[ς] ἀξιῶν, ἐὰν δοκῇ τῇ οὐρανίῳ ὑμῶν τύχῃ, underlines the highly

religious tone of the language.⁹³ Overall, although the language is special in many respects, the structure and phrases which articulate the basic nature of the text are clearly related to other petitions from Egypt. Here we may briefly compare the language of a petition to an emperor from another part of the empire, *ESHRE* 556 a petition of the Araguenians to Phillip the Arab (238 AD). In particular we may note the introductory sentence which set the complaint in the context of the quietness which is said to be the general standard of life and the good order of the reign of the emperors (πάντων ἐν τοῖς μακαριωτάτοις ὑμῶν καιροῖς, εὐσεβέσ[τατοι καὶ ἀλυ]πότατοι τῶν πώποτε βασιλέων, ἡρεμον καὶ γαληνὸν τὸν βίον διαγ[όντων]). The characterisation of the petition as an act of supplication is present (τήνδε τὴν ἰκέθειαν [ὑ]μῖν προσάγομεν) as is the use of the vocative (ὦ Σεβαστε).

Several other papyrus documents from Egypt survive which carry the fragmentary text of petitions to the emperor suggest that the basic fourfold structure and other structural elements were used in *libelli* and *epistulae*. For example, P.Oxy IV 705 (200-2 AD) contains the fragmentary text of two petitions to Severus and Caracalla, and the majority of one petition survives.⁹⁴ It begins with the formula (Col. iii, ll. 54-5) τοῖς εὐμενεστάτοις Αὐτοκράτ[ο]ρσι Σε[ουήρ]ω καὶ Ἀντωνίνω τοῖς πάντων ἀνθρώπων σωτήρσιν [καὶ εὐεργέταις Αὐρήλιος Ὠείων γενόμενος στρατηγ]ός καὶ ἀρχιδικαστῆς τῆς λαμ[πι]ροτάτης πόλεως τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων χαίρειν. ("To the most gracious emperors, Severus and Antoninus, the saviours and benefactors of the world, Aurelius Horion, formerly strategos and archidicastes of the most illustrious city of Alexandria, greeting.")⁹⁵ This follows the same formula which we have seen was usual for petitions to the prefect. Shortly thereafter the emperors are addressed in a vocative phrase: (Col. iii, ll. 69-70) ὦ φιλανθρωπότατοι Αὐτοκράτορες.⁹⁶

93 See fn 90 above, and further chapter 8, 405.

94 =W. Chrest. 407.

95 Cf SB XVI 12509 (117-138 AD) in which the last 6 lines of a petition to Hadrian survive.

96 A similar vocative appears in P.Oxy XLVII 3366 (253-60 AD), a petition to the emperors Valerian and Galienus.

Powell's reference to a "swollen" form can be seen in the next three documents. These are taken from the archive of Aurelius Sakaon and cover the period from Diocletian's reforms of the empire, until the period when Christianity became more established in Egypt. The first is dated 280 AD, the second 322 AD, and the third 343 AD. On both counts therefore they give a good insight into how petitions and language use developed over a period of sixty-five years in a climate of change but within the same geographical and demographic location. But the Roman world was also developing in a way which bore the stamp of a society in which the spoken word, though important, was increasingly dominated and influenced by written texts.⁹⁷ This can be seen in petitions from this period. The penetration of Christianity was growing in Egypt and the Roman world generally. It is the view of Kovel'man that the resort to social typifications from rhetoric in petitions of the II to IV AD gave way in V to VII AD to allegory from epic or drama, particularly Christian texts and the Greek novels.⁹⁸ In part this can be viewed as a definite shift from texts which were constructed within an essentially oral linguistic tradition to texts which drew more deeply and consciously on a decidedly textual written tradition. This development was partially at least responsible for the "Byzantine" form of petition which Powell thought "swollen." In any event, this change of style and content provides a natural point after which the present study will not go. By the mid IV AD, these currents came to influence the use of language and content and deserve separate treatment. So what we will examine now is how the structure of petitions continued into the fourth century. We will examine the three texts to see how the features of earlier periods are dropped or altered, and how the changes we have mentioned are manifested.

**Document 13: P.Sak 36 c. 280 AD Theadelphia (=P.Ryl. 114;
Sel. Pap. II 293)**

Petition to the Prefect

97 This is how Rosalind Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*, 159 thinks Rome should be understood, drawing on the ideas of the medievalist Brian Stock.

98 "From Logos to Mythos", see fn 28.

- 1 [Ἀδριανίῳ Σαλλ]λου[στ]ίῳ τῷ διασημοτάτῳ ἡγεμόνι
[παρὰ Αὐρηλίας] Ἀρτέμιτος Παησίου ἀπὸ κώμης Θρασῶ
[τοῦ Ἀρσινοΐτου] νομοῦ. τὸ μετριοφιλές σου αἰσθομένη,
[δέσποτά μου ἡγεμόνων, καὶ περὶ πάντας κηδεμονίαν,
5 [μάλιστα περὶ γυναικῶν καὶ χήρας, τὴν προσέλευσιν ποι-
[οῦμαί σοι ἀξιοῦσα τῆς ἀπὸ σοῦ βοηθείας τυχεῖν. τὸ δὲ
[πράγμα οὕτως ἔχει· Συρίων γενόμενος δεκάπρωτος
[ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς κώμης Θρασῶ ἀναπίσας μου τὸν ἄν-
[δρα Καῆτ ὀνόματι ποιμένιν αὐτοῦ τὰ πρόβατα - ὅστις
10 [ἀδίκως τὰς τοῦ] προκειμένου ἀνδρὸς αἴγας καὶ πρόβατα τὸν
[ἀριθμὸν ἐξήκοῦντα συναπέσπασεν αὐτῷ. καὶ ἐφ' ὅσον μὲν
[περιῆ ὁ προκειμένος μου ἀνὴρ, ἕκαστος τὰ ἑαυτοῦ ἑκαρποῦ-
[το, ὃ τε ἐμὸς ἀνὴρ τὰ ἴδια καὶ ὁ προκειμένος τὰ ἑαυτοῦ. ἐπὶ οὖν
[κατὰ τρόπον ἀνθρώπων ἐγένετο ὁ προκειμένος μου ἀνὴρ,
15 [εἰσεπήδησε βοῦλόμενος ὁ Συρίων καὶ ἀφαρπάζειν τὰ τῶν
[νηπίων μου τέκνων τῇ τοπικῇ δυναστείᾳ χρώμενος παρὰ
[αὐτῆς τῆς κοίτης τοῦ ἀνδρὸς μου καὶ τοῦ σώματος κιμένον.
[ἐπὶ δὲ ἐσπούδασα τὰ ἡμέτερα ἀπολαβεῖν καὶ περιστείλε τὸν
[ἄνδρα μου, μετ'] ἀπλῆς με ἀπέπεμψεν καὶ μέχρι τῆς σήμε-
20 [ρον κατέχων τῆς γῆς τὰ ἡμέτερα ποιμνία. διὸ παρακαλῶ
[σε, δέσποτα, πέμψαι μοι βοηθὸν ἐκ τῆς σῆς προστάξεως, ὃ
[πῶς τὰ τε τῶν νηπίων μου τέκνων καὶ τὰ ἐμοῦ τῆς χήρας ἀπο-
[λάβω καὶ δυνηθῶ εὐμαρῶς ὑπακούειν τῷ ἀποτάκτῳ - οὐ γὰρ
[ἐν περιγραφῇ κατελήμφθη ὁ προκειμένος μου ἀνὴρ ὑπὲρ
25 [τῶν διαφερόντων] τῷ ταμίῳ, οἰκίωται δὲ τῷ προκειμένῳ Συρίῳ
[νι ἐμὲ τὴν χήραν] μετὰ νηπίων τέκνων ἀεὶ ἀποστερεῖν,
[ὥστε τὸν τοῦ τετελευτηκότος μου ἀνδρὸς σίτον λαβόντα
[διὰ . . . ο] βοηθοῦ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐπιβαλλόντων μετρη-
[μάτων σύμβολον μὴ ἐκδοῦναι - ὅπως τὰ ἴδια ἐκ τῆς σῆς,
30 [τοῦ κυρίου καὶ] πάντων εὐεργέτου φιλανθρώπου ὑπογραφῆς
[ἀπολάβω καὶ δυνηθῶ μετὰ νηπίων τέκνων ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ συν-
[μενεῖν καὶ ἀεὶ] τῇ τύχῃ σου χάριτας ὁμολογεῖν δυνηθῶ.
διευτύχει.

"To Hadrianus Sallustius, the most eminent prefect, from Aurelia Artemis Daughter of Paësos, from the village of Thraso in the Arsinoite nome.

Conscious of your love of equity, my lord prefect, and your solicitude for all, especially for women who are widows, I approach you asking to obtain your help. The matter is as follows.

Syrion, formerly decaprotus, from the said village of Thraso, had persuaded my husband, Kauet by name, to tend his flock of sheep - this man who wrongfully appropriated to himself my aforementioned husband's goats and sheep to the number of sixty. And as long as my aforementioned husband lived, each profited by his own, my husband by his property and the aforementioned person by his. Now when my aforementioned husband went the way of men, in rushed Syrion in covetousness and, making use of his local power, carried off the property of my infant children from the very bed of my husband, and his body lying there! When I endeavoured to recover our property and prepare my husband for burial, he drove me away with threats, and to this day he remains in possession of our flocks. Wherefore I beseech you, my lord, to send me a helper by your command, so that I may recover the property of my infant children and of myself the widow, and be able to discharge my tax obligations comfortably (for my aforementioned husband had not been detected in any fraudulent action touching the interests of the

treasury, while it has become a habit with the aforementioned Syrion on all occasions to rob me and my infant children, so that when he received, through.....his assistant, the corn of my deceased husband for the public imposts due from us, he gave no receipt), so that, by the kind decision of you, the lord and benefactor of all, I may recover my property and be able to remain, me and my infant children, in my village, and be able to acknowledge for ever my gratitude to your fortune. Farewell."

The text is in the well familiar form of a letter. The approach to the prefect is given immediate definition by the introductory sentence. He is addressed in the vocative construction δέσποτά μου ἡγεμών (l. 4) which becomes very common hereafter in petitions to the prefect. The construction again lends intimacy and operates to set the scene for the alienation of the position of the wrongdoers later in the text. The expectation of assistance, an old motif, appears compendiously expressed in the phrase of the introductory sentence ἀξιολύσα τῆς ἀπὸ σοῦ βοηθείας τυχεῖν, a theme which is taken up again in lines 20 to 32, where we see the request for action, here, the sending of a "helper", which will result in a desirable outcome for the petitioner, expressed in line 29ff by the words ὅπως τὰ ἴδια ἐκ τῆς σῆς. We also see the underlying conception of the universality of the prefect's role by the designation of him as helper or carer of all men. This general principle is given depth by its association with the attribute of fairness, and then specific meaning by association with particular social categories, in this case women and orphans, which as we will see later, were conventionally treated as weak in the discourse of petitions and in the law of Greco-Roman Egypt.

The next document, although from the same archive and provenance comes from a date after the reforms of Diocletian had largely been completed. The following petition is addressed to the praeses of the province Mercurian Egypt.

**Document 14: P.Sak. 41 Theadelphia (14 July 322 AD)(=P.Ryl.
IV 659)**

Petition to a Praeses

¹ Σαβ[ιν]ι[αν]ῶι τῷ διασημοτάτῳ ἡγεμ(ό)νι Μερκουριανῆς Αἰγύπτου
παρὰ Ἀρίωνος Διοσκόρου ἀπὸ κώμης Θεαδελφίας τοῦ Ἀρσινοΐτου νομοῦ.
προσέταξέν σου τὸ μεγαλεῖον, δέσποτα ἡγεμών, κατὰ θεῖον πρόσταγμα,
μηδέ-

5 να ὑπεραπαιτηθῆναι ἀλλ' ἕκαστον ὑπαντᾶν πρὸς τὰ ἴδια βάρη.
 ἐπεὶ τοίνυν συνεβίασα γυναικὶ Εἰρήνῃ καὶ ἐτεκνοποιησάμην ἕξ αὐ-
 τῆς καὶ αὐτὴ τε ἅμα τοῖς τέκνοῖς τὸν βίον μετήλλαξαν - ἐπεὶ τοίνυν
 οἱ πρακτῆρες ἐπὶ τόπων, καταφρονούντες τῆς μετριότητός μου καὶ
 ἀπραγμοσύνης ὁμοῦ τε καὶ τοῦ γήρους καὶ τῆς ἀτεκνείας μου, ἐπέρ-
 10 ξονται μοι βιάσασθαι με βουλόμενοι τῆς γῆς τοῦ πενθεροῦ μου ἕνεκεν,
 τοῦ μηδεμίαν μετουσίαν ἔχοντός μου πρὸς αὐτόν, διὰ τοῦτο δέομαι καὶ
 παρακαλῶ τῆς σῆς ἀρετῆς ὅπως οἰκτείρης μου τὸ γῆρας καὶ τὴν κατα-
 λαβοῦσάν με συμφορὰν τῶν ἀπογενομένων μου τέκνων καὶ κελεύ-
 σης δι' εὐτονωτάτης σου ὑπογραφῆς δι' οὗ ἔὰν δοκιμάσης κωλυθῆναι
 τὴν γιγνομένην κατ' ἐμοῦ βίαν ἐπὶ τόπων, ἵνα δυνηθῶ ὑπαντᾶν
 15 πρὸς τὰ ἴδια βάρη τῆς γῆς μου καὶ διὰ παντός τῇ τύχῃ σου χάριτας
 ὁμολογήσαι. διευτύχει

"To Sabinianus, the most eminent praeses of Mercurian Egypt, from Arion son of Dioskoros, from the village of Theadelphia in the Arsinoite nome.

Your majesty has commanded, my lord praeses, in conformity with an imperial command, that no one be subjected to undue levies, but that each meet his proper burdens. Since, then, I lived with my wife Eirene and begot children by her and both she and the children departed this life - since, then, the local tax collectors, in contempt of my humble station and unobtrusive way of life, as well as of my old age and lack of children, are presenting claims against me wishing to do me violence because of the land belonging to my father-in-law, although I am in no partnership whatever with him, I beg, therefore, and beseech your virtue to take pity on my old age and the disaster of my children's death that has befallen me and command by your most stringent decision that this local act of violence against me be repelled by whomever you may approve, so that I may be able to meet the burdens proper to my own land and acknowledge for ever my gratitude to you. Farewell

The petition was not written by Arion son of Dioskoros, but by someone called Isidorus. After the opening address we see the introductory form of sentence in which the praeses is addressed in a vocative construction: δέσποτα ἡγεμών (ll. 3-4). The interaction is defined by reference essentially to the rule of the law, and this prepares the way later in the document to set the criteria against which to assess the behaviour of tax collectors. The request section begins at line 10 with the words διὰ τοῦτο δέομαι καὶ παρακαλῶ, and we see the result clause retained at line 14 with the words ἵνα δυνηθῶ ὑπαντᾶν...

The last document in this archive shows a further set of developments. From about 309 AD the strategos seems to start bearing the title *exactor* and his responsibilities are limited to the collection of tax, while at the level of the toparchies, the rural areas were subdivided into a unit called a *pagus*. These were headed by a *praepositus pagi* who became a very important official. In the following petition,

Aurelius Zoilos son of Melas, deacon of principal church (meaning, of course, that he is a Christian) complains to the praepositus of violence committed against him.

Document 15: P.Sak. 48 Theadelphia (6 April 343 AD) Petition to the Praepositus Pagi

- 1 Αὐρηλίῳ Ἰσίῳνι πολ(ιτενομενω) πραιποσίτω [η] // πά[γο]υ νομοῦ
 Ἄρσι(νοΐτου)
 παρὰ [Αὐ]ρηλίου Ζωΐλου Μέλαν[ο]ς δι[α]κονος τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλη[σ]ίας
 ἀπὸ κώμης Θεαδ[ε]λφίας τοῦ αὐτοῦ νομοῦ
 οἱ τὸν ἀν[αιδ]ῆ [κα]ὶ ληστρικὸν [τρό]πον ἡμημ[έ]ν[ο]ι, καθαρῶτατε τῶν
 [ἀ]νδρῶν, δίκαι[ο]ί εἰσι <τῆς> τῶν νόμων
 ἐπεξελέ[υ]σεως τυχεῖν. ἔτι [περ]ιόντος τοῦ [μα]καρί[ου] μου υἱοῦ Γερωντίου
 τοῦνομα [συ]νήλθεν. ὡς εἶθε
- 5 μήποτε, πρὸς γάμου κοινωνίαν [γυ]ναικὶ Νόννα θυγατρὶ Ἄννουτος ἀπὸ
 τῆς αὐτῆς κώμης. νομίζων
 εὖνοιαν κα[ὶ] σ[ο]ργὴν αὐτὴν [δι]ασώ[ζ]ειν πρὸς τὴν συμβίω[σιν] μου,
 τοῦναντία διεπράξατο· τοῦ γὰρ αὐτοῦ
 προ[κι]μένου μου υἱοῦ νόσου κατακ[λι]θέν[τι]ος καὶ μέλλοντος τ[ὸ] χρεὸν τοῦ
 βίου ἀποδοῦναι, οὐκ οἶδα ὅπως
 Σακαῶν τις τοῦ νομοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς κώμης ἴδι[όν] μ[ο]υ οἶκον
 ἀναλαβόμενος ἐπιστὰς διήρπαξεν
 τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ αὐτοῦ μου υἱοῦ καὶ προκιμένην Νόνναν [καὶ] αὐτὴν
 ἀπήγαγεν εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ οἰκίαν
- 10 οὐ δεόντως καὶ παρὰ πάντας [τ]οὺς νόμους, συνεργοὺς ἐσχικῶς τῆς
 τηλικαύτης παρανομίας τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ
 ἀδελφοὺς καὶ τὴν μητέρα τῆς [γυ]ναικὸς καὶ προκιμένην Ἄννου. ἀλλὰ
 πάραυτα τοῦ αὐτοῦ μου υἱοῦ τελευ-
 τήσαντος ἐβουλόμην τότ[ε] τῆ] τῶν νόμων ἀκολουθία χρῆσασθαι περὶ οὗ
 [ἐ]τόλμησαν ῥιψοκινδύνου
 πράγματος· καὶ δὴ εἶξα τὸν [ἀ]πράγμον[α] βίον ἀσκῶν. ἀλλ' οὐκ οἶδα τίτι
 λόγῳ οἶν, τοῦ ἐτέρου μου υἱοῦ
 Πάσει τοῦνομα θεωρήσαντος τὸν ἑαυτοῦ πάππον ὑβριζόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν
 πανκακίστων ἀνδρῶν
- 15 κα[ὶ] προκιμένων ἐσθῆ[τα] αὐτοῦ καταπελεκίσαι καὶ δικαιολογουμένου πρὸς
 αὐτοὺς περὶ τούτου,
 οἱ δὲ πάλιν, ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων] ἡ[θ]ο[ς] παγκάκιστον καὶ ἀπονοίας μεστὸν
 ἀναλαβόμενοι, ἐπελθόντες
 κα[ὶ] αὐτῷ μετὰ πελεκων καὶ ῥοπάλων ἐβούλοντο αὐτῷ καὶ τοῦ ζῆν ἀνελῖν
 - εἰ μὴ γὰρ τύχης ἔργον γεγένη-
 ται, τοῦ φυγῆ αὐτὸν τὴν ζωοπόναν ποιήσασθαι, πάλε ἄν καὶ τοῦ ζῆν
 αὐτὸν ἀνίλον - καταφρονήσαντες
 τῆ]ς τῶν καιρῶν εὐνομίας καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀπραγμοσύνης. ἐπὶ τοίνυν
 καὶ ἄπερ εἶχαν ἐν μισθώσει
- 20 οἱ αὐτοὶ μου υἱοὶ πρόβατα πε[ν]τ[ε] .[.] . ια καὶ βόας ὀκτώ καὶ ὀνικά
 τετράποδα πέντε ἀφήρπαξαν καὶ διεσ-
 πάθησαν, καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὁ ἄθ<λ>ιο[ς] ἀν[α]γκίζομαι ὑπὸ τῶν δεσποτῶν ταῦτα
 ἀποδοῦναι, διὰ τοι τοῦτο
 τάδε τὰ βιβλία ἐπιδίδω[μι], ἐν [ἀ]σφαλί[α] ἀξιῶ[ν] ἀχθῆναι αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ σοί,
 κα[ὶ] πρῶτον μὲν οὗ ἔτολ-
 μησαν παρανόμου καὶ ῥιψοκινδύνου πράγματος [ἐ]κδικίας τυχεῖν, ἔπιτα
 ἐπαναγκασθῆναι αὐτοὺς
 τῆ]ν τῶν προειρημένων [τετρ]απόδων <ἀποδοσιν> ποιήσασ[θαι] εἰδεμή,
 ἐκπέπεσθαι αὐτοὺς [εἰ]ς τὸ μέγα δικασ-
- 25 τήριον τοῦ κυρίου μου διαση[μο]τά[τ]ο]υ ἡγεμόνος τῆς Αὐγουστοποταμίας
 Φλαοῦιου Ὀλυμπίου, ὅπως

ἡ δέουσα ἐπιστρέφια προ[σταχθήσεται] κατ' αὐτῶ[ν]
διευτύχει

"To Aurelius Ision, curialis, praepositus of the 8th pagus of the Arsinoite nome, from Aurelius Zoilos son of Melas, deacon of principal church, from the village of Theadelphia in the said nome.

Those who have chosen the way of shamelessness and robbery, O purest of men, deserve to experience the visitation of the laws.

While my late son, Gerontios by name, was still alive, he entered (would that he had never!) into matrimonial alliance with a woman, Nonna daughter of Annous, from the said village. I thought that she would keep goodwill and natural affection towards my family life, but brought about the opposite. For when this said aforementioned son of mine was lying in sickness and about to render up life's debt, for reasons unknown to me a certain person, Sakaon by name, from the said village, took possession of my very house and by assault abducted the wife of the said son of mine, the aforementioned Nonna, and carried her off to his own house wrongfully and defiance of all laws, having as confederates in this great illegality his brothers and the woman's mother, the aforementioned Annous. Now since the said son of mine died straightaway, I intended at the time to avail myself of the proper course of the laws with regard to the audacious act they had dared to perpetrate; and indeed I yielded and continued practicing the unobtrusive way of life. Nonetheless, for reasons unknown to me, when my other son, Pasis by name, saw his grandfather being ill-treated by these villainous men, who were about to chop up his cloak with axes, and remonstrated with them about it, they once again took up with a temper villainous and full of cruelty, set upon him too with axes and clubs, purported to deprive him of his very life (for had not an operation of fortune intervened, I mean the fact that he escaped with his life by taking to flight, they would indeed long ago have deprived him of his very life) in utter contempt of the good order prevailing in these our times and of our unobtrusive way of life. Since then they also carried off and plundered...sheep, sixteen oxen, and five asses that the said sons of mine had on lease, and I myself, poor wretch, am constrained by their owners to restore them, I submit, therefore, this petition asking that they be brought before you in custody so that first they may receive retribution for the lawless and audacious deed they have dared to perpetrate, and then that they may be forced to make restitution of the aforementioned beasts; or else, that they may be escorted to the great court of my lord Flavius Olympius, the most eminent praeses of Augustopotamia, so that the appropriate severity may be prescribed against them. Farewell."

This petition, like the previous one, was written by a scribe. It may seem strange that a church deacon is unable to write. The scribe's name is lost but it is clear from the end of the document that someone else wrote it. The request comes at ll. 21-2, and the writer adverts to the act of presenting the petition as the focus for the request, through he expresses the reality that : τὰδε τὰ βιβλία ἐπιδίδωμι, ἐν [ἀσφ]αλίᾳ ἀξιῶ[ν] ἀχθῆναι αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ σοί. We can note again how the introductory sentence is used to establish the dimensions of the interaction and adverts to the importance of the laws. A well used expression (ληστικὸν τρόπον) is coupled with the relatively

new idea of "shameful" (ἀναιδέης) and together these describe the malefactors and the syntactical arrangement has the effect of setting this in contrast with the laws (ll. 3-4) and the praepositus, who is addressed in a vocative construction, and imbued with the quality of purity: καθαρώτατε τῶν [ἀ]νδρῶν. This symbolic antithesis is followed later by an opposition, directly evoking the threat of anomie, between the εὐνομία (l. 19) of the praepositus and the lawlessness of the malefactors behaving οὐ δέοντως καὶ παρὰ πάντας τοὺς νόμους (l.10) Again old themes and concepts are rewoven in a more complex linguistic structure, representative of the period.

4.4 TRANSCRIPTS OF PROCEEDINGS

In light of the examples set out above it would be useful to say something about another type of document which will be referred to in this thesis, the transcript of proceedings in court, because, as we have noted, such documents record linguistic interactions which took place orally. It is not proposed to set out examples in full. Such documents are very long and space does not permit the replication of entire texts. But certain points can usefully be made by comparison to the structure of petitions. The structure and syntax of reports of proceedings from the Ptolemaic period present some difficulties because they are written in *oratio obliqua*, which means that the actual structure of speeches can be ascertained by a process of interpretation.⁹⁹ But it has been established that the structure of speeches of advocates in court followed many of the structural dictates of formal rhetoric.¹⁰⁰ This should not cause any surprise. The speeches of classical orators were clearly part of the general knowledge passed from generation to generation by the content of education systems, so it can be assumed that the writers of petitions in III BC Egypt were educated to know some at least of the Attic canon. Greek children were exposed to education in three stages: elementary school (διδασχάλειον), the gymnasium

99 See R.A. Coles, *Reports of Proceedings in Papyri : Pap. Brux. 4*(1966).

100 H. Schmidt, "Einfluß der Rhetorik auf die Gestaltung der Richterlichen Entscheidungen in den Papyri", *JJP* IV (1950), 165-177.

(γυμνάσιον) and for some the ephebeia (ἐφηβεία).¹⁰¹ In a broad sense education continued through the entire Greco-Roman period of Egypt, even though the relevant institutions underwent changes and there may have been declines in real levels of literacy.¹⁰² Apart from learning to read and write the ancient student was given a wide-ranging training in rhetoric. This has long been known and accepted by scholars.¹⁰³ This meant that the classical orators were studied continuously and in some detail for all of our period. It is clear from papyrus finds that classical orators such as Aeschines, Antiphon, Demosthenes, Isaeus, Isocrates were copied and studied as well as Plato and Aristotle.¹⁰⁴ Further, it is known from the papyri that advocates in court used structures for their speeches during the Greco-Roman period which follow the classical model.¹⁰⁵ For the Ptolemaic period, a good example is the well-known case of Hermias against the Keepers of the Mummies, in which Deinon's speech for the defendants exhibits the four divisions outlined by Aristotle, *prooimium*, *statement of the case*, *proof* and *conclusion*.¹⁰⁶ In the Roman period we may note the case of Dionysia against her father.¹⁰⁷ It is interesting to note that, at least by the time of the Roman Empire rhetorical training was heavily weighted towards forensic argumentation.¹⁰⁸ This no doubt meant that the argumentation in court rooms was even more likely to reflect the rhetorical tradition of forensic oratory. Schmidt has argued that rhetoric was an important influence on the development of law in Greco-Roman Egypt.¹⁰⁹

101 Smith, *The Art of Rhetoric*, 110 ff.

102 Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 129 ff, 233, ff, 306 ff.

103 See for example D.L. Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education* (New York, 1957); W. Boyd, *History of Western Education* (London, 1950).

104 Smith, *The Art of Rhetoric*, 124-5.

105 Smith, *The Art of Rhetoric*, at 59 to 72.

106 UPZ II 161 (119 BC) and UPZ II 112 (117 BC). See Arist., *Ars Rhet.* 1414b 5f; Smith, *The Art of Rhetoric*, 66ff. See the discussion of the case in H.Schmidt, "Einfluß der Rhetorik auf die Gestaltung der Richterlichen Entscheidungen in den Papyri", *JJP* IV (1950), 165-177.

107 P.Oxy 237 (186 AD).

108 Smith, *The Art of Rhetoric*, 112.

109 Ibid. It appears that the same Herwald Schmidt wrote a doctoral dissertation (non vidi) entitled *Der Einfluss der Rhetorik auf das Recht der Papyri Ägypten* (Universität Erlangen, 1949) which is mentioned by Smith, *The Art of Rhetoric*, at 59. Smith notes that the argument of Schmidt is that rhetoric exercised a strong influence on law throughout the Greco-Roman period, and that it served as the fountain of law in Roman Egypt.

Reports from the Roman period however seem often to be much closer to the actual language used and some trials are reported in a lively first person manner.¹¹⁰ Transcripts from all periods show the use of language similar to petitions including verbs of request, and standard concepts from petitions like *κακουργεία*, *ἀπαρενόχλητος*.¹¹¹ The advocate's speech is often brought a conclusion by the same request verb as appears in petitions as in P.Tebt II 287 (161-9 AD), an appeal of the fullers and dyers of the Arsinoite nome against exaction of an undue amount of tax, where the advocate for the fullers and dyers, Longinus (probably), bring his speech to a finish by a sentence beginning *δέομεθα οὐί*.¹¹² We also find the statement by advocates on behalf of their clients such as "we are assisted" (*βοηθούμεθα*), referring to the actions of an official.¹¹³

But other expressions are also indicative of the connection between petitions and reports of proceedings. BGU I 361 (184 AD) is a case about a will and the advocate Philotas who appears for Casius describes the appeal to the strategos by his client thus: (28) *ἀναγκάως ἐνέτυχεν σοί, ἀξιῶν αὐτοῦς* | *μεταπεμφθῆναι...*, which as we will see is a direct transposition of elements which were standard in petitions.¹¹⁴ The advocate Diadelphos in BGU I 15 (26 July 194 AD) opens his remarks to the epistrategos Julius Quintianus with the phrase *Ἐάν σοι δοκῆ, κάλεσον τὸν τῆς Νείλου πόλεως κωμογραμματέα, ᾧ ὁ ἡμέτερος ἐνκαλεῖ*.¹¹⁵ In P.Sakaon 34 (12 Dec 321)(=P.Thead 13) we find a transcript in which the advocate Isidoros finishes by saying: *δεόμεθα τοῦ μεγαλείου τοῦ σοῦ ἐπαναγκασθῆναι τὴν ἐνόχλησιν τὴν κατ' αὐτοῦ γιγνομένην κωλύεσθαι* ("We beseech your majesty that the harassment against this man be forcibly repelled") Some opening remarks by advocates are very reminiscent of the introductory sentences which

110 CF Coles, *Reports*. J.R. Rea, "Proceedings before Q. Maecius Laetus, Praef. Aeg., etc.", *JJP* 29 (1983), 91-101.

111 UPZ II 161 (119 BC) and UPZ II 112 (117 BC); BGU VIII 1773 (59/8 BC); P.Mil.Vogliano I 25 (127 AD); P.Yale 351 (26 Sept 171 AD)(=P.Bacchias 20). See chapter 7.

112 Or *ἀξιῶ* as in BGU III 969 (c 142 AD).

113 BGU VII 1567 (III AD).

114 See page 339 below.

115 *Ἐάν σοι δοκῆ* as a standard expression in the epistolographical tradition and is found in private correspondence such as BGU I 48 (II AD).

appeared in II AD. A good example is SB XVI 12692 (339 AD) which was a case before the syndic of the Arsinoite nome. The plaintiffs are two women Aurelia Taësis and Aurelia Herais who it seems were forced to flee their home after the death of their father, because of an inability to pay tax. At l. 15 Theodorus their advocate opens with the words-

οὐ δεόντως καὶ παρὰ τοὺς νόμους ἐνοχλούμενα[ι] [αἱ] [συνηγορούμεναι
περὶ γηδίων τῶν μὴ διαφερόντων αὐταῖς καταπεφεύγασιν διὰ
λιβέλλων ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον τὸν λαμ[πρότατον] ἑπαρχὸν τῆς Αἰγύπτου
Φλ(άουιον) Φιλάγριον

"Improperly and contrary to the laws the plaintiffs, being troubled concerning little farms which are of no importance to them, took refuge via petitions with the lord and most esteemed prefect of Egypt Flavius Philagrius"

While obviously adapted for the oral submission in court this passage bears a striking similarity to the introductory sentences which we have discussed above.

4.5 SUMMARY

We have seen that the use of the letter form as the vehicle for a written linguistic interaction was a standard feature of the communication between powerful officials and the general populace in Greco-Roman Egypt well into IV AD. The defined opening and closing sections set the frame for the interaction which was presupposed by the petitions and other communications which were sent to the government representatives. The opening section contains verbal appellations which were drawn from the wider social context in which the documents were produced. The power of officials was invoked through the linguistic interaction built around the concept of the request. The use of vocatives at certain points in the documents enhanced the sense of connection and intimacy with the power of kings, prefects and other officials in the administrative hierarchy of Greco-Roman Egypt. That is the picture which has emerged from a consideration of the general structural features of petitions, which always employed special parts and deliberate patterns. The petition falls broadly within the epistolary tradition of the ancient world, and this conclusion is appropriate for the entire period under discussion. It is an important point because it shows how the letter form was relied upon consistently to enable communication across both

geographical and social distance. The communities of Greco-Roman Egypt developed, understandably, a mentality in which access to powerful figures was achieved by a cultural product, a written text, which required movement from one place to another, and which was required to cross social as well as physical space. This idea has some significance for understanding why communications in the form of letters were used to bring about contact with other manifestations of power in the ancient social world, especially deities. This last matter is taken up in chapter 8, but it is worth mentioning here because it provides a good example of how the populace drew on elements of the symbolic universe within the same or similar physical as well as intellectual framework to legitimate and make sense of the experience of power. In the next chapter we will turn to the specific symbolic content of petitions as it relates most directly to the relationship with officials, or, to be more precise, those approached for the exercise of legitimate power.

CHAPTER 5

SAVIOUR, BENEFACTOR, HELPER: SYMBOLS & ORDER

The Symbolic Universe I

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last chapter we saw how the epistolographical style and structure of the petition betrayed its nature as an artefact principally designed to further linguistic interaction between ordinary members of the population and powerful officials. A central structural element of the petition was the request, which recognised power as the productive feature of the relationship between petitioner and official. The request and the relationship upon which it was based also presupposed a particular quality for this power, namely, that it was legitimate, a stabilising, preserving and protecting force against the chaotic and destructive power implied in the behaviour of the wrongdoer. In this chapter we are going to look at some of the principle symbolic terms applied to the sovereign and his officials in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. Bearing in mind the general structure of petitions we can move to the level of phrases and lexical constructions in the documents, to understand more clearly the ways in which the population manipulated elements of such a symbolic universe to legitimate the power of officials. However, before we do so, there is a theoretical issue which needs to be sorted out at the start, that is, the interrelationship of legitimation, symbolism and ideology, which was touched on briefly in chapter 1.

5.2 SYMBOLIC ORDER AND IDEOLOGY.

Scholars have always been aware that a complex conceptual system existed in the Hellenistic and Roman periods connected with the power interests of the ruling elite. At the start of this century Goodenough referred closely to literary works, like the extracts of the philosophers Diotogenes and Ecphantus preserved in the writings of

Stobaeus to outline the dimensions of Hellenistic kingship in terms of political philosophy.¹ This showed for example that the goodwill of his subjects was the critical foundation upon which the Hellenistic monarch's rule was built. W. Schubart turned to the vocabulary used in papyri and inscriptions to describe the public ideology of the Hellenistic state.² He was able to reconstruct a system of symbolically important concepts which were articulated in specific vocabulary, including εὐνοια, φιλανθρωπία and ἐλεημοσύνη, but concluded that the role of the Hellenistic monarch was especially defined by the fundamental concepts of Saviour, Benefactor and Helper, σωτήρ, εὐεργέτης and βοηθός. Dorothy Crawford has also shown that an extensive ethical system existed to govern the behaviour of officials in Ptolemaic Egypt.³ These together constituted an important part of the symbolic order of the Hellenistic world.

Although the Romans inherited much of this, they ushered in a new era. If we take the position of the emperor, there lay a great distinction between the concept of βασιλεία embodied in the person of the Ptolemaic king and that of Augustus and his successors as *principes* of a *res publica*.⁴ L. de Blois used the works of Cassius Dio, Herodian, Philostratus and Ps.-Aelius Aristides to understand the dimensions of ideology in the third century AD, which was a time of considerable change in the empire.⁵ His study not only demonstrates that good terminological evidence of the symbolic matrix surrounding powerful roles can be found in such evidence. More importantly, he shows that the conceptual system which surrounded the Roman emperor derived from Isocratean precedents and included the sort of concepts which Schubart identified, including the emperor as an embodiment of the rule of law, φιλανθρωπία, δικαιοσύνη and εὐνοια. He quotes Cassius Dio 52. 39, 3-4 where the

1 E. Goodenough, 'The political philosophy of Hellenistic kingship', *YCS* 1 (1928) 53-102.

2 W. Schubart, "Das Hellenistische Königsideal nach Inschriften und Papyri", *AfP* XII (1936), 1-26.

3 "The Good Official in Ptolemaic Egypt" in H. Maehler & V.M. Strocka (ed.), *Das Ptolemäische Ägypten* (Mainz am Rhein, 1978), 201.

4 J. Gaudemet, III *Ktéma* (1978), 165-75.

5 'Traditional Virtues and New Spiritual Qualities in the Third Century Views of Empire, Emperorship and Practical Politics', in *Mnemosyne* Vol. 47, 2, (1994), 166-76.

writer discusses the symbolic role of the emperor as "father" (πατήρ) and "saviour" (σωτήρ).⁶ He then suggests that after the middle of the third century other views of emperorship emerged. The goodwill (εὐνοια) of the people becomes supplanted by a monarchy based upon divine grace.⁷ Studies such as these show there was a definite vocabulary of power which was symbolic in nature. They are a good guide to the symbolic order, the conceptual systems and modes of discourse which helped to constitute some of the structures of signification within which the institutional positions of monarchs were legitimated in the Greco-Roman world.

C. Panagopoulos identified a similar symbolic order in connection with the local elites through a study which relied upon evidence of a kind similar to Schubart, namely, honorary inscriptions, although with different theoretical background. His study is interesting because it moves the search for the vocabulary of ideology away from the political centre of the Roman empire to the more ordinary experience of the general population in small local centres. He has studied the expression of ideals in the language of inscriptions registering public tributes to notable citizens in the Greek cities of the Roman empire.⁸ This is the language drawn from the economic system of "euergetism" and it is rich in eulogistic, moral and ethical terms. Panagopoulos' method was to draw this vocabulary "into a systematic order, along socio-linguistic lines, in the light of the *Moralia* of Plutarch"⁹ The language of euergetism is mostly used in relation to the members of the dominant classes, and forms a social and moral portrait of them in the Greek cities of the Empire, primarily, Panagopoulos argues, drawing their wealth, power and moral standards from their position as landed property holders.¹⁰ The unceasing production of public eulogies of notable members

6 Cf the honorific use of the title "father" in the letter of Antiochus III to his governor Zeuxis quoted in Josephus, *AJ* 12.148-52.

7 At 170 ff.

8 C. Panagopoulos, "Vocabulaire et Mentalité dans les *Moralia* de Plutarque." *Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne* 5 (1977) 197-235. On the notion of "euergetism" see Paul Veyne, *Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism* (Penguin, London, 1990), first published in France as *Le Pain et le cirque* (Éditions du Seuil, 1976); P. Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World* (CUP, Cambridge, 1988), 81ff.

9 See E.A. Judge in *New Docs* 2, at 105-6.

10 Panagopoulos, "Vocabulaire et Mentalité", at 197.

of the community can be seen as a system, which functioned as the principal ideological regulator of Greek society under the empire and were part of the "extra-economic" factors which were indispensable for maintaining cohesion amongst different levels of society.¹¹ In such a way public eulogies reflect one of the ways the populace expressed its conceptualisation of rulers and élites, and assessed their public actions.

5.2.1 Political interest, ideology, and legitimation

Such references to scholarly studies indicate quite well a large measure of correlation between the notion of symbolic universe and the ancient intellectual systems which scholars usually call "ideology". Sir Moses Finley defined ideology as "the matrix of attitudes and beliefs out of which people normally respond to the need for action...without a process of ratiocination leading them back to the attitudinal roots or justification of their response."¹² While this definition makes no explicit reference to symbols or symbolism, it implicitly relies upon the idea of intellectual activity incorporating the use of symbols to give heightened signification to, and thereby integrate responses to, external events. It also contemplates belief in the naturalisation and reification of particular social roles such as the monarch in people's basic responses to the external world. These points indicate that a discussion of ideology provides the best way to integrate scholarship about ancient conceptual systems with the notions of symbolic universes and legitimation.

Berger and Luckmann point out that when a symbolic universe is attached to a concrete power interest it becomes an ideology, and ideologies help generate social solidarity.¹³ This seems close to a conventional idea that ideology is a conceptual system designed to support sectional interests, which usually means keeping rulers in

11 Ibid., at 233.

12 See *Authority and Legitimacy in the Classical City-State* (Danske Videnskab.Selbskab. Hist.-Filos. Meddel. 50:3, Copenhagen, 1982), 17; see also *Politics in the Ancient World* (CUP, Cambridge, 1983), 122-41; *Ancient History: Evidence and Models* (London, 1985), 4-5.

13 *Social Construction*, 141, 143.

control. The symbolic systems associated with power positions in the ancient world, whether of the Hellenistic kingdoms or the Roman Empire, have usually been judged ethically as a political tool for the "legitimation of rule" exploited by rulers to deceive the populace and maintain the institutional order and thus themselves.¹⁴ By and large that is what scholars of the Greco-Roman world have had in mind when using the term "legitimation" and what they see as the function of ideology.¹⁵ Such an analysis involves, of course, an acceptance that integration of the populace is the aim of the ideology, at least in part, and it is undoubtedly true that maintenance of an existing institutional order and its positions of power was one goal and often one consequence of legitimation. But this conception of legitimation becomes excessively functionalist because it postulates the purpose of symbolic conceptual systems as being only or most importantly a political issue about the maintenance of the power position of the ruler. Legitimation is a deception undertaken by rulers, something they perpetrate on the general population.¹⁶

The problems with this view can be exposed by reference to one area where political interpretations have long had great prominence, the religious ritual of the ruler cult of the Hellenistic monarchies and the Roman emperor. Political interest theories designate ruler cult as a political phenomenon.¹⁷ Such attitudes to ruler cult have had considerable influence on the study of language use, because no doubt the "Saviour" and "Benefactor" motifs, for example, remained very much a part of the ruler cult itself, with the result that researchers tend to assimilate all examples of such

14 See for example Price, *Rituals and Power*, 240-1; de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*, 411.

15 De Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle*, 411 ff, quotes E.D. Genovese, *In Red and Black: Marxian Explorations in Southern and Afro-American History* (USA, 1968), 33, who writes, "An essential function of the ideology of a ruling class is to present to itself and to those it rules a coherent world view that is sufficiently flexible, comprehensive and mediatory to convince the subordinate classes of the justice of its hegemony."

16 Political interest theories have been very pervasive, for example in theories which deal specifically with propaganda. Thus "vertical integrative" propaganda refers to a situation where the ruler seeks to influence the population. Hence it is "vertical" or unidirectional. See J. DeR. Evans, *The Art of Persuasion: Political Propaganda from Aeneas to Brutus* (Uni. of Mich. Press, Michigan, 1992), who relies upon the theories of J. Ellul, *Propaganda* (Vintage Books, New York, 1973).

17 See below. Others have drawn attention to the complications in the case of Egypt brought about by the assimilation of the Ptolemies into the Pharaonic tradition, which is discussed further below. Nonetheless, political interest analyses tend to be the orthodoxy, see, eg., M. Carey, *A History of the Greek World 323 to 146 BC* (Methuen, London, 1963), 367.

linguistic motifs to the realm of politics after their explanation of the ruler cult. Thus in one well known work on Greek political theory we find the following: "By calling him Benefactor, Saviour, god manifest, men were partly expressing gratitude, partly asking favours. From the king's point of view too, this Ruler-cult was extremely convenient...As a political device it was successful;..."¹⁸ This presupposes that in analysing the choice of language one needs only to look to the isolated intentions of individual language users, and that those intentions or motivations were essentially political, coolly rational and informed by a calculated assessment of individual advantage. Such descriptions place the phenomenon of ruler cult and its associated symbolism firmly in the category of politics and propaganda.

But is it so clear? Fundamentally, a political interest explanation relies on modern attitudes to ideology which are built upon a long tradition of unfavourable evaluation.¹⁹ Any study which identifies a conceptual system as an ideology therefore by definition condemns it *ab initio*. But there is a more substantial objection. As we noted in chapter 1, Giddens identifies three forms of ideology: the representation of sectional interests as universal ones, the denial or transmutation of contradictions and the naturalisation or reification of the present.²⁰ The first category seems to encompass the political propaganda view of ideology. The ascription of the ruler cult and the terms associated with it to this category are reflected in a comment by a very highly respected scholar of ancient religion, A.D. Nock, who said about the signification of Soter that "at all times it denoted the performance of a function and

18 T.A. Sinclair, *A History of Greek Political Thought* (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, London, 1959), 288-9.

19 See C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Basic Books, New York, 1973), Ch. 8 'Ideology as a Cultural System', 193-233. He makes the same point in relation to "strain" theories of ideology. Strain theory sees ideologies as symptoms of and a remedies for the insoluble tensions, structural inconsistencies and chronic dysfunctions in society. Both views find expression in studies of the ancient world. Ruling elites are habitually seen as remarkably clinical and successful in the manipulation of ideas to serve their interests and keep themselves in control. On the other side of the coin the bulk of the general population is seen as caught in such a condition of brutal oppression and material destitution that they must turn to a set of integrating ideas to provide some psychological amelioration. The difference between this and the notion of the symbolic universe is that it amounts to saying the population retreats into a world of massive self delusion. There is an obvious distinction between making sense of disparities of power through symbolic significations and delusion.

20 See chapter 1, 44-45 above; *Central Problems in Social Theory* (Macmillan, London, 1979), 193-96; Thompson, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology*, 131.

not membership of a class in the hierarchy of beings."²¹ The assimilation of the performance of a function to political action is all too tempting. Do politics and domination necessarily define the purview of ideology? By adopting Giddens' categories of ideology, we also embrace his suggestion that ideology is not a type of symbolic order but more the way a symbolic order is brought into connection with the legitimation of sectional interests.²² This conception of ideology shows how a symbolic order can, both intentionally and unintentionally, sustain relations of domination, but still constitute an important resource of meaning for the dominated.²³ We should see the ideology of the ancient world, with its usual religious component, in terms of Giddens' third category. As Horrell remarks, "It is perhaps in this third form [of ideology] that religion is most likely to feature, for it has a particular opportunity to legitimate and sustain forms of social organisation. elevating such forms above the status of merely human products and reifying or naturalising them by rooting them in the divine will."²⁴ Religion and political ideology can be aspects of the same symbolic phenomenon, *σωτήρ* may well have denoted both the performance of a function as well as membership of a class in the hierarchy of beings.

The work of Simon Price seems to support this view. He has shown that the political interest interpretation of the Roman imperial cult, at least in Asia Minor, is very unsatisfactory. To treat ruler cults as secular or political phenomena really presses the historical reality of the social world of the Roman Empire into ethnocentric analytical categories of a modern Christian culture, such as, the opposition between secular and divine, and the nature of religious belief. It makes "christianising assumptions" which draw an unjustifiable distinction between the

21 A.D. Nock, "Soter and Euergetes", in *Essays on Religion in the Ancient World* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1972), 720-735, 722.

22 A. Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 1984), 32-3.

23 Strangely perhaps, this seems close to the view of ideology which Veyne arrived at, through his own special form of reasoning, in *Bread and Circuses*, 379.

24 D.G. Horrell, "The Development of Theological Ideology in Pauline Christianity", in P.F. Esler, *Modelling Early Christianity: Social scientific studies of the New Testament in its context* (Routledge, London and New York, 1995), 224-236, at 226.

secular and the divine, politics and religion.²⁵ One comes closer to an adequate understanding of ritual if one sees it as a *collective* process, something undertaken at all levels of society. The ritual of the Roman imperial cult was part of the way in which the Greek communities of Asia Minor made sense to *themselves* of a new form of power, namely the Roman Emperor, which appeared in their universe and had to be accommodated somewhere between human and divine.²⁶ Consequently, it rather misses the complexity of the whole phenomenon to speak only in terms of politics.

These conclusions have important consequences for the study of language use. Religious vocabulary and expressions in 'secular' documents embody aspects of the mentality of Greco-Roman Egypt. Thus if we agree with T.A. Sinclair that by calling the king Saviour or Benefactor with words of supplication, a petitioner was "partly expressing gratitude, partly asking favours", it is a little puzzling that he or she should choose to do so through particular language taken from a religious setting, including the language of supplication, since the Greek language was broad enough to permit the expression of gratitude without such apparently elaborate posturing. But to say that a petitioner is expressing gratitude or laying the basis for the grant of a favour by addressing a king as "Saviour and Benefactor" is an excessive form of methodological individualism, because it imputes modern and secular intentions and motivations to the ancient language user on a personal psychological level.

We get much better results if we try to be inclusive rather than exclusive. If we take power as the key concept and assume that religious systems of ritual and

25 Price, *Rituals and Power*, 15-16 and the works cited there. M. Crick, *Explorations in Language and Meaning* (John Wiley & Sons, 1976), 95 and 119 notes how such views of the relationship between symbolic representations and politics have dominated much traditional and functionalist thinking in anthropology. See I. Morris, *Death-Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (CUP, Cambridge, 1992), 15.

26 Price, *Rituals and Power*; *passim*; "Gods and emperors: The Greek Language of the Roman Imperial Cult", *JHS* 104 (1984), 80. An important fact underpinning Price's theory is that the Greek communities *initiated* the induction of cults in many places. So the cults were their response, not so much a Roman requirement. Of the Hellenistic monarchies he says "...the extension of monarchic rule over the traditional and flourishing Greek city created the tensions that generated the ruler cult." (27); "...the cities established [ruler] cults in an attempt to come to terms with a new type of power...and the cities needed to represent this new power to themselves." (29); see also 132, 145. See also Carey, *A History of the Greek World*, 369.

language were chosen to give meaning to the experience of power, it is easier to see how things fit together. Many years ago the anthropologist Clifford Geertz suggested that it is better to approach ideologies from a non-evaluative stand-point, and see them as systems of interacting meanings, a semiotic system through which individuals can collectively come to terms with their cultural world. This sort of approach overcomes the problems of theories based upon oppositions between different social spheres like religion and politics, while maintaining the advantage of encompassing disparate material in the one coherent explanation. As we argued in the section of our model dealing with structuration, it makes more sense to assume the existence of an autonomous symbolic system which embraced different institutional contexts and passed to different generations, or to put it another way was instantiated through recursive practices. The existence of old forms and new patterns over time makes any simple notion of imposition from above unworkable. The population had some choice, a discretion as to when and to whom language was addressed. Once we accept the existence of a discretion it is clear that the writers of petitions and those trained in advocacy could not simply be using language in accordance with dictates from above or for idiosyncratic personal advantage. It is more likely that the writer is deploying symbolic resources and setting them in new patterns for the purpose of a special type of discourse with legitimate power.²⁷ This latter suggestion is more satisfactory to explain both the presence of religious language in 'secular' documents and the consistent usage of identical language in relation to Ptolemaic and Roman officials over very many centuries. Again we can see the force of the contention of Roger Chartier that the meanings in an intellectual system are really never static, but they are constantly reinterpreted, evaded supplemented and revised, even in autocratic cultures.²⁸

27 The reader is referred again to the discussion of the position of Zenon in Ptolemaic Egypt (above chapter 3, 129ff) and the comparison in chapter 4 between an *ἐντευξις* to the king (Documents 1 and 2) and a petition to Zenon (Document 3).

28 See chapter 1, 39, fn 125.

All this highlights the great virtue of the theory of legitimation used here. It does not describe a simplistic unidirectional social fact, from the top to the mass below, but a collective process whereby communities make sense of the power present in their institutions and roles.²⁹ The primary concern of Berger and Luckmann is how legitimation provides social order and cohesion, that is, how it addresses the threat of anomie, not whether the content of the process meets some ethical or moral standard, even if the success of the former is linked to the latter in practice.³⁰ It therefore helps us to abandon the limited ethical stand-point of political interest legitimation, and consequently, it resolves problems which seem to be present when societies are divided into apparently exclusive spheres such as secular and divine.³¹ As a result, it becomes clear how power can provide an explanatory key of great force. This point is worth emphasising. Whatever else it may be, religion is concerned with "the systematic ordering of different kinds of power, particularly those seen as significantly beneficial or dangerous."³² A little reflection suggests that this idea holds a cogent way to explain the introduction of moral and religious ideas into administrative prose.³³ In their interactions with institutions, writers of petitions and advocates in court engaged in a process of "systematic ordering" of significant power and they drew upon symbolic, ethical and religious resources from what seem

29 This is how it is expressed by Luckmann later in "Comments on Legitimation", *Current Sociology* 35.2 (1987), 109-117, at 111-112. This does not mean that Berger and Luckmann are not alive to the political uses to which symbolic systems can be put or that generally legitimation has a political aspect. For example at 120-2 they maintain that by providing a comprehensive integration of all discrete institutional processes, symbolic universes legitimate the political order by reference to a cosmic order of power and justice, and political roles are legitimated as representations of these cosmic principles. This produces the necessity for constant reaffirmation of the institutional order. But Luckmann says, loc. cit., "Making sense to whom?...In opposition to the conventional sociological wisdom I suspect that legitimation which makes sense to both [those who exercise power and those who are subject to the exercise of power] is the most frequent case in human history."

30 Alberto Izzo, *The Sociology of Legitimation*, 48. This non-evaluative conception of legitimation is not embraced by all. One of the problems with a great deal of social scientific writing on this subject lies in the fact that it proceeds from a position of judgement on the norms which legitimate activities in society: see Izzo ad loc.

31 Price, *Rituals and Power*, 241 says "Religion and political structure are often quite explicitly aspects of a single coherent ideology, so that 'government' is not a separate sphere but merely a dimension of a total symbolic classification.": Crick, *Explorations*, 119. Cf T. Asad, 'Anthropological Conceptions of Religion: Reflections on Geertz.' in *Man* (ns) 18: 237-59. The ideas of Price find an interesting analogue in the article of W.R. Connor, '«Sacred» and «Secular»: Ἱερά καὶ ὅσια and the Classical Athenian Concept of the State', in *Anc. Soc.* 19 (1988), 161-81, in which he demonstrates that the Classical Athenians did not move from Archaic religiosity to classical secularism, and thus make an operative distinction between "sacred" and profane.'

32 BurrIDGE, *New Heaven, New Earth* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1969), 5.

33 As Collomp, *Recherches*, puts it at 115.

to us to be entirely different social spheres, which were directed towards a common purpose, namely, imposing cognitive coherence and meaning upon various forms of power. It was the fact of needing to give meaning to relations with significant social power that, in part, prompted ancient scribes and advocates to select the type of language which they did. The religious was a necessary component for conceptualising the role of the powerful, both as political actor and giver of law. And as we will see the drive to align the social roles, apart from the sovereign, which were closely connected with the rule of law, such as Roman procurators, with religious action, remained strong well into IV AD.

5.3 THE SOVEREIGN AND OFFICIAL AS SYMBOLIC FIGURE

With these ideas in mind it is now possible to proceed to examine some representative elements of the vocabulary which articulated the symbolic conceptualisations of the role of the sovereign and official in Greco-Roman Egypt. It is not proposed to provide an exhaustive list of terms. Such information can be found in other places. It is proposed to consider the history of the usage of many of these ideas and their associated language, to ascertain how they were placed in the texts of petitions as part of an interactive process by the general population. This provides the best way for the reader to gain an insight into how particular concepts were replayed and revitalised over the centuries in petitions from Greco-Roman Egypt.

Saviour, Benefactor and Helper

A number of concepts, such as εὐνοια, φιλανθρωπία, δικαιοσύνη or ἐλεημοσύνη were clearly a very important in both Ptolemaic and Roman times to both explain and give meaning to the positions of king and emperor, but it is clear that from the earliest times one of the most important motifs was that of saviour and benefactor: the king was thought to be Σωτήρ, Εὐεργετής and Βοηθός (Saviour, Benefactor and Helper) to his subjects. The French scholar Claire Préaux made the point that the sovereign as protector liberator and saviour was early an important conceptualisation of his role in

the Hellenistic world.³⁴ Another aspect of this was his function as the "nourisher" of peace, social stability and prosperity. It can be seen here how important the sovereign's role became as a bulkhead against disorder. The substantive equivalents σωτηρία and εὐεργεσία reflect the responsibilities of the sovereign to his subjects: he was to preserve and protect them, and bestow benefactions on them.

However, it is suggested here that it is not possible to discuss the signification of the monarch as saviour and benefactor without reference to the dynastic cult of the Ptolemies, of which the terms formed an integral part.³⁵ In tackling this question we must look first to the notion of the sovereign as θεός. Price has argued very convincingly that there were no uncontroversial criteria for the predication of the term θεός in Greek, at least in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, unlike the position regarding *divus* or *deus* in Latin. He established a range of indicia which demonstrate that the predication of the Roman emperor in Greek as θεός placed him in the company of the gods. One was the practice of assimilating the sovereign to particular named deities such as Zeus.³⁶ Another was the language of praise in festivals, which was "calqued on the cult of the gods", as well as prayers to the emperor.³⁷

In light of this the well known scholar of the Hellenistic period A.E. Samuel makes some highly pertinent observations about the cult of the Ptolemies. Contrary to the political interest interpretation, he suggests that the potential religious significance of the cult can be supported by a number of attributes of divinity.³⁸ In the first place the Ptolemies were designated θεός in the context of cults, which were particularly diverse. There were three dimensions to them, the dynastic cult, private cults for individual rulers and the Ptolemies as pharaohs within the indigenous

34 C. Préaux, *Le monde hellénistique I* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1978), 194 and 201ff.

35 Schubart, "Das Hellenistische Königsideal", at 3ff, and often joined with κτίστης, *ibid*, 13ff. There were also important connections with indigenous Egyptian concepts, see below 205 ff.

36 S.R.F. Price, "Gods and emperors: The Greek Language of the Roman Imperial Cult", *JHS* 104 (1984), 80, at 85ff.

37 *Ibid.*, at 90, 93.

38 A.E. Samuel, *The Shifting Sands of History: Interpretations of Ptolemaic Egypt* (Uni of America Press, Lanham, 1989), 71ff. Contra eg A.D. Nock, "Συννάος θεός", in *Essays on Religion in the Ancient World I* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1972), 202.

Egyptian religion. The dynastic cult had its origin in the cult of Alexander, and began in Alexandria.³⁹ In 279/8 BC the first *Ptolemaiea* was celebrated at Alexandria to honour Ptolemy II Philadelphus' deified parents, the "Saviour gods," Θεοὶ Σωτῆρες, Ptolemy I Soter and Berenike I.⁴⁰ In the seventh idyll of Theocritus we find reference to the institution of the cult of the dead Soter at Alexandria by 270 BC.⁴¹ It seems also that as early as 272/1 BC Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Arsinoë II assumed the appellation Θεοὶ Ἀδελφοί, the "Brother and Sister Gods" and received a cult associated with the cult of Alexander.⁴² It seems now clear that the living monarchs were venerated in cult, as well as their ancestors, as the gods mentioned above.⁴³ In the *chora* a *basileia* was held to celebrate the birthday of the sovereign.⁴⁴ The Ptolemies are well known as *synnaoi theoi* (temple-sharing gods) which amounted to a way of including them in the traditional pantheon of Egyptian religion, and the Egyptian clergy probably developed their version of the Greek dynastic cult founded by the Ptolemies.⁴⁵ Fraser has discussed how the queens of the Ptolemaic monarchs were often merged with Egyptian or Greek deities. For example, we find Arsinoë and Berenike II designated Σώζουσα, amounting to an identification with Aphrodite and Isis.⁴⁶ In I BC Ptolemy Auletes and his daughter Cleopatra VII are found as νέος Διόνυσος and νέα Ἰσις.⁴⁷ Further there were dedications connected with public cults of the sovereign unconnected with the dynastic cult itself, which show private dedication to the sovereigns either as deities themselves or as assimilated to other deities. Even more significantly, we have representations of the Ptolemies, for example, in small marble heads which could be affixed to figures made of cheaper

39 P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford, 1972), 215ff.

40 Kallixeinos in Athen. *Deipn.* 5.203a = *FGrH* III 627; E.E. Rice, *The Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus* (Oxford, 1983) The Θεοὶ Σωτῆρες continue to appear in official documents well into the Roman period such as BGU II 362 col. V (214-5 AD) a letter from the magistrates of the Arsinoite nome to two *cosmetes*.

41 17.16-17. See also Philo *Leg. ad Gaium* 138.

42 P.Hib. 199.11-17; P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford, 1972), I.215-20.

43 See the evidence discussed by J. Quaegebeur, "The Egyptian Clergy and the Ptolemaic Cult", *Anc. Soc.* 20 (1989), 92-113.

44 Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 232.

45 *Ibid.* Cf A.D. Nock, "Συννάος θεός", fn 38 above, 202 for the secular interpretation of this.

46 *Ibid.*, 238-41.

47 *Ibid.*, 244. Samuel, *The Shifting Sands of History*., 71, makes the point that the identification of a queen with Isis must have had a big impact on how she was perceived.

material like wood, and these were probably for private people, officials, soldiers or townspeople. In a similar category are the prolific terracotta and plaster representations and the faience oinochoai which were used as ritual vessels, for cult activity which was chthonic in nature.⁴⁸

But we get a much clearer view of the religious stature of the Ptolemies when we examine more closely some of the connections with the indigenous religion. In Egypt particularly the *phrase* σωτήρ καὶ εὐεργέτης is well understood as a special designation taken from the trappings of the ruler-cult. The German scholar Ludwig Koenen has shown conclusively that Greek words and ideas applied to the Ptolemaic king were concepts drawn from the indigenous Egyptian conception of the nature of the monarch, and in particular σωτήρ and εὐεργέτης were Greek equivalents of the Egyptian pharaoh as divine protector of his (or her) country or protector of the gods: "...the Greek cult-names capture more of the tenets of the Egyptian titulary than can be assumed at first glance".⁴⁹ The phrase σωτήρ καὶ εὐεργέτης maintained its cult associations for the emperor in the time of the Romans.⁵⁰ So it is frankly easiest to believe that cult appellations appear in language addressed to the Ptolemies in a forensic setting because the judicial and the religious were both conceived of as an aspect of the sovereign as θεός, and broadly speaking a similar explanation should apply to the Roman emperor, was also "saviour and benefactor".

So the view which is adopted here is that the Ptolemies as gods present us with an aspect of genuine religious sense from the ancient world. It is difficult to understand in many ways to the modern mind but that does not mean a secular interpretation must be followed. Σωτήρ was of course also especially an epithet of

48 Samuel, *ibid.* On the chthonic resonances of the ruler cult see D.B. Thompson, *Ptolemaic Oinochoai and Portraits in Faience: Aspects of the Ruler Cult* (Oxford, 1973).

49 L. Koenen, "Die Adaption ägyptischer Königsideologie am Ptolemäerhof" in W. Peremans, et al (eds.), *Egypt and the Hellenistic World* (Lovanii, 1983)(=Studia Hellenistica 27), 143-190, at 152-170; "The Ptolemaic King as Religious Figure" in A. Bulloch, et al (eds.), *Images and Ideologies: self-definition in the Hellenistic world* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1993), 25-105, at 61.

50 See 210ff below.

various gods such as Zeus, Pan and the Dioscuri, or the Egyptian god Harmachis.⁵¹ Sarapis and Isis are found also as θεοὶ Σωτῆρες.⁵² Accordingly, as gods the Ptolemies should be placed within the general phenomenon of Hellenistic saviours, and in petitions the use of the familiar saviour and benefactor motif must be seen as invoking their cult position as *theoi euergetai* or *theoi soterai*.⁵³ Against this background, it makes most sense to conclude that the monarchs were addressed in their symbolic role as cult figures as well as for their symbolic position as legal and ethical paragons. The two aspects of their role were combined and seem to have been treated as part of the same spectrum of symbolic attributes by those who sought their aid. It seems fairly clear that the sovereign as saviour and benefactor was indeed an aspect of the sovereign as θεός and this motif in petitions indicates that in the forensic context of petitions the king and queen were conceptualised at least partly in terms of their cult position as well as their secular position as law givers. This shows how the role of the Ptolemaic monarchs as addressees of petitions was brought, on a conceptual spectrum running between man to god, closer towards the role and importance of deities, when invited to provide assistance to ordinary folk in the forensic context.⁵⁴

In the Greek of petitions the saviour and benefactor motif was expressed in three main constructions. The first was a direct designation of the sovereign or official as saviour, helper or benefactor by the substantives εὐεργετής and σωτήρ and in connoting assistance like βοηθός. The second construction used various forms

51 Zeus, SB 1949 (III/IV AD); Pan SB 3448 (116 BC); Harmachis, SB 8303 (Claudius, I AD) who is designated "Ἡλιον Ἀρμ[αχ]ιν ἐπόπτην καὶ σωτήρα. Cf C. Andresen, "Erlösung", *RAC* VI.54ff.

52 SB 169 (III BC), SB 596, 597 (214-205/4 BC); SB 2136 (III BC), Alexandria, SB 4076 (III BC), Philae.

53 Cf Quaegebeur, "The Egyptian Clergy and the Ptolemaic Cult", 95. Koenen, "The Ptolemaic King as Religious Figure", above fn 49, at 61, notes that when Ptolemy Philopator "in his *nb.tj* name is called "saviour of men"..., the same Egyptian word is used that appears in the translation of θεοὶ Σωτῆρες (*ntrw nḏw*)

54 See especially Price, "Gods and emperors: The Greek Language of the Roman Imperial Cult." It is of course contrary to traditional views of the designations εὐεργετής and σωτήρ, such as those espoused by A.D. Nock, "Soter and Euergetes", see fn 21 above. Claire Préaux, whose comments on the Hellenistic world are always worth a second look, approached the issue through a distinction between "sacralité" and "divinité", where the former expresses the nature of the ruler-cult and the latter expresses the nature of deities: see *Le monde hellénistique* I, 254. It is not clear how far this really differs from Price's position.

of εὐεργετέω, φιλανθρωπέω, βοηθέω or ἀντιλαμβάνω. The third was a construction using abstract terms for benefaction, help, or sometimes safety, such as φιλανθρωπία, σωτηρία, βοήθεια and εὐεργεσία. φιλανθρωπία and εὐεργεσία both feature consistently, although Bell thinks εὐεργεσία becomes more frequent in the Roman period.⁵⁵ This was an important construction because it laid the basis for a greater development in the Roman period of the use of abstract ideas in connection with officials. It is proposed to consider each of these constructions in turn and examine how they carried into the Roman period.

The saviour motif appears in the earliest petitions usually in association with the benefactor motif. In III BC Ptolemy is addressed directly as saviour benefactor or helper in section 3 of the petition, that is, in clauses which modify a preceding vocative βασιλεῦ, but depends for its case upon a preceding prepositional construction ἐπὶ σε as in P.Ent 81 (221 BC)

(14) ἵνα, τ]ούτου γενομένου, ἐπὶ σὲ κα[τα]φουγούσα, βασιλ[εῦ, τὸν πάντων κοινὸν εὐεργέτην, τύχῳ τῆς παρὰ σοῦ φιλανθρωπ[ίας].

According to Di Bitonto in III BC the king was addressed as saviour and benefactor in phrases in the request section of the petition, in constructions substantially similar to P.Ent 81, with the following variations: τὸν κοινὸν πάντων σωτῆρα, τὸν πάντων σωτῆρα, τὸν πάντων κοινὸν σωτῆρα καὶ εὐεργέτην, τὸν πάντων κοινὸν εὐεργέτην, τὸν πάντων κοινὸν εὐεργέτην καὶ βοηθόν, τὸν πάντων βοηθόν and τὸν κοινὸν πάντων βοηθόν.⁵⁶ There seem to be no examples of such expressions directed to lower officials in Ptolemaic petitions.⁵⁷

55 H.I. Bell, "Philanthropia in the Papyri of the Roman Period", in *Hommages à Joseph Bidez et à Franz Cumont* (Collection Latomus II), 31-39 at 33. Philanthropia, although having its primary meaning as "kindliness" was always part of the central vocabulary of benefaction and euergetism. See eg M.-T. Lenger, "La notion de «bienfait» (philanthrôpon) royal et les ordonnances des rois Lagides" in *Studi in Onore di V. Arangio-Ruiz* (Naples, 1956), 483-499.

56 Di Bitonto (1967), 54-5. It may be noted that these conceptualisations of the king as saviour and helper are somewhat different from the Homeric kingly virtues with which Theocritus eulogised Ptolemy Philadelphus in the seventh idyll.

57 Cf P.Petrie III 36 Verso (III BC) a petition to the epimeletes Nikanor concerning wrongful imprisonment which concludes: ἵνα τῆς σωτηρίας τύχῳ.

It is interesting that these expressions in that position disappear entirely from petitions to the monarch in II-I BC.⁵⁸ However, it is possible to find examples from II BC of a similar device in a slightly different position in the petition. In P.Tebt. III 740 (c. 113 BC) we meet the passage on the verso (ll. 19-21) ὄθεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς τ[οῦς πάντων κ]οινοῦ σωτήρας [τὴν καταφυγὴν ποιησάμενοι] δεόμεθ' ὑμῶν τῶν μεγίστων θεῶν which is clearly very close. In this passage we can see that the saviour phrase is still in section 3, but it comes earlier, agreeing in case with the prepositional phrase ἐφ' ὑμᾶς which itself relies upon the refuge motif, which is expressed in a participial form and modifies the request verb δεόμεθα. This is in fact a quite different arrangement to III BC petitions, as we can see from P.Ent 81 (221 BC) above. In such earlier petitions, although the saviour and benefactor phrase depends upon the participial refuge passage, the latter words modify the expectation of justice or kindness, not the request verb, which comes earlier in the section. The arrangement continued into I BC as we can see from IFay 112 (70 BC) which contains the text of the petition of Phillip the Corinthian son of Timocrates to Ptolemy Auletes and Cleopatra Tryphaena for asylum rights at Theadelphia. The request clause is in the following terms: δέομαι ὑμῶν κοινῶν Σωτήρων (31-2) The association of this with the cult of Ptolemies as the θεοὶ Σωτήρες is clear. There is no reason to exclude the possibility that the author of this petition, in light of its particular subject matter and importance for the community of Theadelphia, was invoking the monarchs in their role as objects of cult as well as their role as the judicial apex, or benefactors and dispensers of φιλόανθρωπα. Di Bitonto makes the comment that these appellations of the monarchs in the request clause are those of the dynastic cult whereas the designations in the final appeal are used to define a virtue of the monarch.⁵⁹ Whatever the truth of that distinction, it was clearly used as a special way of addressing the monarchs, and not his officials and this can be seen by

58 Di Bitonto (1967), 54-5.

59 See Di Bitonto (1967), 16-17 and the examples collected there from petitions to the king. Against this is the view of E. Breccia, cited by Etienne Bernard, in his edition of the inscriptions *Recueil des inscriptions grecques du Fayoum* II (Cairo, 1981) 112, note to ll 31, that the expression κοινῶν Σωτήρων was not an

comparing UPZ I 9 (161 BC) addressed to the monarchs: (9) δέομαι ὑμῶν μεθ' ἱκετείας, θεοὶ | Σωτῆρες Εὐεργέται, with UPZ I 46 (162-1 BC) addressed to the hypodioiketes Sarapion, with the same phrase, δεόμεθά σου μετ' εἰκετείας, but no inclusion of the saviour and benefactor motif. Further in II BC the opening address in the dative begins to incorporate the appellatives of the dynastic cult by which the Ptolemies were addressed as gods, e.g. θεοῖς Φιλομήτορσι⁶⁰, θεοῖς Εὐεργέταις,⁶¹ θεοῖς Φιλομήτορσι Σωτῆρσι,⁶² θεῶι Φιλομήτορι,⁶³ θεῶι Φιλοπάτορι καὶ Φιλαδέλφωι,⁶⁴ θεοῖς Φιλοπάτορσι καὶ Φιλαδέλφοις,⁶⁵ θεᾶι Ἐπιφανεῖ.⁶⁶ It is noteworthy that the use of these appellations does not seem to be attested in ἐντευξεῖς earlier than the second century BC, before which the simple opening address Βασιλεῖ was favoured. Di Bitonto suggests that because this change is so clear as between the third century BC and the subsequent two centuries, it probably reflects both the fact that between the third and the second centuries BC the systemisation of the royal cult took place and that after that time petitions addressed to the king actually went to him and not just to the strategos, so that petitioners felt it necessary to use the specific titles of the monarch.⁶⁷

This evidence shows pretty clearly that the sovereign was invoked in the petition as a cult figure, or god, for the purpose of involvement in the individual problems of the petitioner. This accords with our observations above concerning the ruler cult and its importance for ordinary folk. So throughout the Ptolemaic period the appellations σωτῆρ καὶ εὐεργέτης articulated an aspect of the cult position of

official designation but "une formule d'adulation" used by the author and Wilcken UPZ I 9 (161 BC) l 10, referring back to UPZ I 93(164 BC), l 10 "Natürlich ist das hier nicht als Kultbeinamen aufzufassen, sondern als adulatorische Beinamen." This may be so but one can say that it is likely to have invoked the cult position of the king in the mind of the reader. We may compare the IFayum, 136 which contains the text of the petition of Dionysiodorus the Athenian, son of Athenodorus to Ptolemy XII Auletes seeking asylum rights for the sanctuary of Ammon at Euhemeria in the Arsinoite nome, l 20 δέομαι σοῦ τοῦ νικηφόρου θεοῦ, which would have produced the same response.

60 UPZ I, 19; 20; 6; 42; 9; 41; 11; 10; 14; P.Amh. II, 34; 33 ; UPZ I 15 recto; 16 verso.

61 UPZ II, 170 AB; P.Tebt. I 43; 124.

62 P.Fay. 11.

63 P.Fay. 12; SB III, 7259; 6152; 6153.

64 SB III, 6155.

65 SB III, 6236; 6154.

66 SB III, 6156.

67 Bitonto (1967), at 12 ("i suoi appellativi specifici").

the sovereign and thus an aspect of the sovereign as θεός, but also in petitions this symbolic aspect of his (and her) role was married to the symbolic dimensions of his role as representing the institutions of normative regulation, including the legal system. The sovereign's role represented the institutional order as a symbolic totality in many, if not most, respects. It is important also to note that by invoking the sovereign through cult appellatives, the general population was involving the sovereign as θεός, as a saviour and benefactor placed somewhere between human and divine, in their ordinary problems, thus making the sovereign's power meaningful to them at a level of existence far removed from the diplomatic.

Dunand makes the point that in Egypt for centuries before the Romans came, the royal position and function had been sanctified and had been given an essential role in the social order and the order of the world. This was a critical part of vital religion in 30 BC so it is not surprising that the Romans quickly became part of this political and cultural reality.⁶⁸ Roman emperors from the time of Augustus, and members of the imperial family, can be found with the designation "saviour and benefactor" in Greek speaking areas of Asia Minor.⁶⁹ In an edict of Germanicus from 19 AD preserved on papyrus he begs off acclamations of divine honours saying πρέπουσι γὰρ μόνῳ τῷ σωτήρι ὄντως καὶ εὐεργέτῃ τοῦ σύνπαντος τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένους, that is, his father Augustus.⁷⁰ But in Egypt the religious significance of the saviour and benefactor motif continued. Dunand has argued cogently that the appellations of σωτήρ καὶ εὐεργέτης were granted to Augustus as part of the imperial cult as an expression of his more than human position.⁷¹ He was addressed as θεός, and θεὸς ἐκ θεοῦ in Egypt while still alive, after the manner of

68 F. Dunand, "Culte Royal et culte impérial en Égypte. Continuités et ruptures", in G. Grimm et al., *Das Römisch-Byzantinische Ägypten* (Phillip von Zabern, Mainz, 1987), 47-56, at 55.

69 DocsAug 72 (end I BC), an inscription from Myra in Lycia in which Augustus is called τὸν εὐεργέτην καὶ σωτήρα τοῦ σύνπαντος κόσμου. In the same inscription Marcus Agrippa is called τὸν εὐεργέτην καὶ σωτήρα τοῦ ἔθνους.

70 DocsAug 320 (19 AD) (= *Sel Pap II* 211).

71 "Culte Royal et culte impérial en Égypte", at 48, contra F. Blumenthal, "Der ägyptische Kaiserkult", *AfP V* (1913), 317, who seems to have been too concerned to argue too stridently against the earlier views of W. Otto, *Priester und Tempel im Hellenistischen Ägypten* (1905-8).

the later Ptolemies, and was depicted in the same costume, with the same functions and ritual postures as the Ptolemies, and the Egyptian clergy seem to have become involved in the propagation of the emperor as god, in a line of god kings.⁷² These early adaptations of the Roman *princeps* into the Egyptian milieu were carried on in later decades. It seems from a very fragmentary papyrus that upon his accession to the emperorship in 69 AD Vespasian was acclaimed by the people of Alexandria as the Οὐεσπ[α]σιανὸς εἰς σωτῆρ καὶ εὐεργέτης ("the one saviour and benefactor").⁷³ There is also a clear tradition of Vespasian as thaumaturgos in Egypt.⁷⁴ Marcus Aurelius is found designated as εὐεργέτην καὶ σωτῆρα τῆς ὅλης οἰκουμένης on inscriptions from Egypt.⁷⁵ The same phrase was applied to Severus.⁷⁶ It is undoubtedly true that there were many areas of discontinuity between the Ptolemaic cult and the imperial cult of the emperors in Egypt.⁷⁷ But the evidence regarding the saviour and benefactor motif shows quite clearly that its signification of the sovereign's religious attributes continued in Egypt with the coming of the Romans and irrespective of whatever propaganda bonuses it produced. Dunand makes the point that whatever political consequences it might have had, it was "et en même temps un facteur de stabilisation des rapport sociaux."⁷⁸ In the Egyptian context, including the forensic context, at least the sovereign as σωτῆρ καὶ εὐεργέτης remained an aspect of the sovereign as θεός.

The designations of the Roman emperors as saviour and benefactor can be found in what remains of petitions directed to them from people in Egypt, but not necessarily in the request section, as they were usually in the Ptolemaic period in

72 Ibid.

73 *AfP* 16 (1956) 111. It is a pity that the document is so fragmentary, being a rare example of language used orally in connection with a particular emperor. Cf SB 8901 (I AD) an inscription from Philae dedicated to Vespasian.

74 A. Henrichs, "Vespasian's Visit to Alexandria", *ZPE* 3 (1968), 51-80.

75 SB 176, 2; SB 6674 (161-180 AD) Cf Trajan, *SEG* 42, no. 1261 (102-117 AD), Ilistra.

76 SB 8277 (8 Nov 212 AD).

77 Over emphasised by Blumenthal, "Der ägyptische Kaiserkult", in the view of the present writer but satisfactorily acknowledged by Dunand, "Culte royal et culte impérial en Égypte."

78 "Culte Royal et culte impérial en Égypte", 55.

petitions to the king or queen.⁷⁹ SB XVI 12509 (117-138 AD) contains the last six lines of a petition of priests to Hadrian. The first two of the surviving lines are : [Σω]τῆρα καὶ Εὐεργέτην ἐλεῆσαι ἡμᾶς καὶ τὸν ἡμέ[τερ]ον θεὸν Σόξιεν ("...the Saviour and Benefactor to have mercy upon us and our god Soxis"). From this we gain the impression that pity is a dispensation which the emperor can confer upon a deity. It may be that the preceding lost line had a request construction.⁸⁰ In P.Oxy IV 705 (200-2 AD), a petition from Aurelius Horion, strategos and archidicastes of Oxyrhynchus, the emperors are addressed in the opening section as follows: τοῖς εὐμενεστάτοις Αὐτοκρά[το]ρσι Σε[ουήρ]ω καὶ Ἀντωνίνω τοῖς πάντων ἀνθρώπων σωτήρσιν [καὶ] εὐεργέταις ("To the most gracious emperors, Severus and Antoninus, the saviours and benefactors of the world"). Whatever else may be said about them, these usages have an association with the ruler cult of the Caesars and stand as an important continuation from the Ptolemaic concepts.⁸¹ They continue in play for many centuries. By IV AD the emperors can be found as εὐεργέτης in connection with the language of supplication as in P.Ryl. IV 617 (317 AD): (10) βιλόπρατος ἐγενό[μ]ην ἀνάγκην δὲ ἔχο[υ]σα βοθη[εί]ας τυχεῖν] καὶ καταφ[υγ]ῆν ἐποίησα διὰ ταύτης μ[ου] τῆς ἀξιώ[σι]κ[ε]ως ἐπὶ τὰ ἱερὰ ὑμῶν τῶν εὐεργετῶν ἡμῶν βήματα ("I am subject to compulsory property sale and have necessity to meet with assistance...and I took refuge through this my request at the sacred tribunals (?) of you our benefactors...") In P.Mich VI 425 (198 AD) the substantive σωτήρ on its own is used to predicate the emperor unambiguously within a petition to the prefect, in the same way that θεός predicated the emperor in some inscriptions.⁸²

In Book IV.7 of the *Aethiopica* of Heliodorus (I-III AD) there is an interesting parallel which suggests that a concatenation of the significations of σωτήρ and θεός

79 Blumenthal, "Der ägyptische Kaiserkult".

80 The editors of SB XVI at 181 suggest a reconstruction something like [καὶ ἀξιοῦμεν/δεόμεθα σε Σω]τῆρα καὶ Εὐεργέτην.

81 On which see Blumenthal, "Der ägyptische Kaiserkult", *passim*.

82 See Price, "Gods and emperors", 81-2, and chapter 8, at 397 below.

had taken place quite generally, as a designation for a relationship of assistance in a situation of last resort. Charicles the father of the heroine Chariclea approaches the wily old Egyptian Calasiris for help in finding the man whom Chariclea loves and who can calm her fevered condition. He addresses Calasiris thus: πρὸς σὲ δὲ ἐγὼ δρομαῖος τὸν ἐμόν καὶ σωτήρα καὶ θεόν, ὃν μόνον εὐεργετῆσαι δύνασθαι κάκείνη γινώσκει ("...so I have come in haste to you my saviour and my god, whom both I and she acknowledge to be alone able to help us")⁸³

Bearing in mind its heavy cultic connotations in many ways the application of the saviour and benefactor motif to the Roman emperor seems understandable because he was the successor to a cult position. But what is more difficult to explain is its application to Roman procurators. In the Roman period there were limitations on usages which reflected the hierarchy. Just as the Ptolemaic official was not (usually) θεός or σωτήρ, but βοηθός, the high Roman procurators were not θεός but were often σωτήρ or εὐεργέτης, or similar language.⁸⁴ The precise saviour or benefactor phrase or the two together, often relying upon and taking its case from the prepositional phrase ἐπὶ σέ, is known in connection with the prefect, the epistrategos, and later the praeses.⁸⁵ An early example is BGU IV 1200 (2-1 BC),

83 Compare the address, in Book IX.22, to Hydaspes the king of Ethiopia by the priests of Syene upon the former's conquest of their city as "saviour and god", where the acclamation by the priests recalls the acclamation of the Alexandrians to Vespasian in 69 AD (page 211 above) and the acclamation of the prytanis in P.Oxy. 41 (IV AD), see chapter 1, 76 above.

84 The position is complicated because in the later Ptolemaic period θεός is found in connection with some officials: see chapter 8.

85 **Prefect:** BGU IV 1138 (c 18 BC): (18) ἀξιῶ σε | τὸν πάντων(ων) σωτή(ρα) καὶ ἀντιλήμπτορα; BGU IV 1139 (c 5 BC): (16) Διὸ ἀξιουμέν[σ]ε | τὸν πάντων σωτήρα καὶ ἀντιλήμπτορα; BGU IV 1140 (c 5 BC): (22) ἀξιῶ σε | τὸν πάντων(ων) σωτή(ρα) μὴ παρ[ι]δεῖν; SB XVI 12713 (19 Feb 10/11 AD): ἀξιῶ σε τὸν π[άν]των εὐ[ε]ργ[έ]την; P.Oxy I 38 (49-50 AD): ἐπὶ σὲ τοσούτων τὸν σωτήρα τῶν δικαίων τυχεῖν; P.Oxy XXII 2342 (102 AD): [ὧν χάρι]ν ἀδικούμενος ἐπὶ σε τὸν πάντων [ἀνθρώπων] εὐεργέτην κα[τα]λαφεύγω; P.Oxy XLVI 3274 (99-117 AD): ἐ[δ]ήλωσα σοι τῷ εὐεργέτη; PSI XIII 1323 (147/8 AD), Arsinoite nome: τῆς σῆς ἐπάρχου δικαίου μισοπονηρίας δεόμενος κατέφυγον ἐπὶ σε πάντων εὐεργέτην; BGU XV 2460 (II AD), Arsinoite nome: [. . υἱὸν οὖν, ἡγεμῶν κύριε, κατεφύγομεν ?] [ἐπὶ σέ] τὸν πάντων σωτήρα [δεόμενοι ? ; P.Mich III 174 (145-147 AD), Arsinoite nome: (15) ὅθεν ἐπὶ | σὲ τὸν πάντων ἀντιλήμπτορα κατέφυγον καὶ ἀξιῶ...P.Oxy VII 1032 (162 AD): (ll. 36-39) ἀναγκαίως οὖν,] ἡγεμῶν κύριε, κατεφύγομεν [ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν πάντων [σω]τήρα καὶ εὐεργέτην καὶ ἀξιούμεν, ἐάν σου τῆ τύχῃ δόξη, γράψαι; P.Mich VI 422 Recto (197 AD), Karanis: (l.31) ὅθεν ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν σωτήρα κατέφυγον, ἀξιῶν ἐάν σου τῆ τύχῃ δόξη ἀκοῦσαί μου; P.Oxy XXXIV 2713 Recto (297 AD): (ll. 19ff) τῆς σῆς ἐπαγρύπνου τύχης συναραμένης, ἀρχομένη τε] ἑμαυτὴν γνωρίζειν οὐδεὶ ἐπανε[λθεῖν] ἢ σοι τῷ ἐμῷ καὶ πάντων [εὐεργέτη] καὶ κηδεμόνι ἔσπευσα δεσηθῆναί σου... **Epistrategos:** P.Oxy XXXI 2563 (c170 AD): ἐπὶ σὲ κατέφυγον τὸν πάντων σωτήρα καὶ εὐεργέτην ἀκοῦσαί μου πρὸς αὐτόν; SB XVI 12678 (27 July 179 AD): ἀναγκαίως ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν σωτήρα κατέφυγον καὶ ἀξιῶ. **Praeses:** SB III 7205 (End III AD): τὸν πάντων

background. The participial form here in the request section is more reminiscent of a II BC petition such as UPZ I 8 (c. 163 BC), document 4 in chapter 3. It is from II AD that the epistrategos becomes the beneficiary of this language.⁸⁸ P.Oxy XXXI 2563 (c170 AD) is a clear example of the precise language being used to address the epistrategos: ἐπὶ σὲ κατέφυγον τὸν πάντων σωτήρα καὶ εὐεργέτην ἀκούσαι μου πρὸς αὐτόν. This was obviously modelled on the petition to the prefect, but it shows how this symbolic language has grown out of its original symbolic locale in the dynastic cult of the Ptolemies and has been adapted for interactions with a new administration. In late III AD it appears in introductory sentences, such as SB III 7205 (End III AD), a petition to the praeses, l. 3: Τῆ σῆ δικαιοκρῑσεῖα, δέσποτα | ἠγ[ε]μών, ἠθαρρῶ[ν], ταύτ[η]ν τὴν δέη[σιν] πρὸς [σ]ε, τὸν πάντων σωτήρα, ποιῶμαι ("Heartened by your just decision making, lord praeses, I make this request of you, the saviour of all")

Εὐεργέτης can appear on its own in the Roman period.⁸⁹ It usually appears in an accusative construction such as P.Oxy XXII 2342 (102 AD) to the prefect: (36-7) [ῶν χάρι]ν ἀδικούμενος ἐπὶ σε τὸν πάντων [ἀνθρώπ]ων εὐεργέτην κα[τ]αφεύγω or PSI XIII 1323 (147/8 AD) to the prefect: (3) Τῆς σῆς ἐπάρχου δικαίου μισοπονηρίας δεόμενος κατέφυγον ἐπὶ σε πάν[των] εὐεργέτην. P.Oxy XXXIV 2713 Recto (297 AD) is a late example which uses a dative construction: (19) τῆς σῆς ἐπαγρύπ[νου] τύχης συναραμένης, ἀρχο[μένη] τε] ἑμαυτὴν γνωρίζειν οὐδενὶ ἐπανε[λθεῖν] ἢ σοι τῷ ἐμῷ καὶ πάντων [εὐεργέτ]η καὶ κηδεμόνι ἔσπευσα δεηθῆναί σου.. and shows the extension of the basic symbolic domain of εὐεργέτης by its association with κηδέμων. This variation should clearly be located firmly within the same symbolic domain as the motif with saviour and benefactor together.

88 P. Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine* (Diss. Uni de Strasbourg, 1979), 180.

89 *Ibid.*, 176 fn 73.

We may pause here to note that the history of the saviour and benefactor motif provides a clear example of the development of a specific symbolic theme. But once a structural change was made and the position of king was removed it became more autonomous, floating, as it were, in the symbolic universe until it settled on the emperor, which may be expected, and several officials high in the Roman hierarchy, particularly the prefect and the epistrategos. These usages show how a ritualistic expression which developed for a ruler cult position gradually came to be applied to a range of non cult but powerful figures in Egypt. This is particularly noteworthy when the expression was retained and incorporated into a fresh cult association in the Roman period, namely, that of the emperor. Nonetheless, in the documents in which the lower sections of society addressed the Roman procurators the symbolic designations of saviour and benefactor remained consistently very important. This observation indicates that the general population understood the fact of institutional change and the responses to it are good evidence of an interpretative activity which adapted the saviour and benefactor concepts to a form of power which was new in the sense that it was Roman. We may say the symbolic order of Egypt retained therefore its more important structures of signification and modes of discourse despite changes to the structures of domination.

The foregoing strongly suggests that σωτήρ and εὐεργέτης both came to lie in very similar semantic and symbolic domains. So it is interesting to compare the continuation of another substantive, ἀντιλήπτωρ, which was used in the Ptolemaic period as another expression of the assistance dimension of the saviour, benefactor and helper motif. From UPZ I 14 (3 Oct 158 BC) we know that it was frequently applied to the king and queen: (16) κάθοτι οὐθαμόθεν ἔχω τὰ ἐπιτήδεια πλὴν τοῦ τὴν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς καταφυγὴν τοὺς θεοὺς μεγίστους καὶ ἀντιλήπτορας ποιησάμενον τυχεῖν. This petition expresses a sentiment which characterises the monarch as helper but helper of the last resort, which of course heightens the atmosphere of desperation and extremity. Interestingly, it seems to derive from a sentiment directed to Zenon in III BC: P.Cair.Zen. III 59447: πρὸς ἕτερον γὰρ

οὐθένα καταφυγεῖν ἐστὶ μοι καλῶς ἔχον; P.Lond. VII 2045: νῦν οὖν ἰκέται καταπεφεύγαμεν πρὸς σε. οὐκ ἔχομεν βοηθὸν ἄλλον οὐθένα ἀλλὰ σέ(ς); P.Cair.Zen. V 59852: πρὸς ἕτερον γὰρ οὐθένα καταφυγεῖν ἐστὶ μοι καλῶς ἔχον, ἐξ ἀρχῆς σοι μου συν[απ.]συσταθέντος. From II BC there is another example addressed to the sovereign: UPZ I 4 Verso (164 BC)(=P.Par.24 Verso): ἀ[ξιῶ] ὑμ[ας] οὐκ ἔ[χων] ἄλλ[η]ν β[οη]θεαν ἀλλ' ἢ | τ[ῆ]ν ἐφ' ἡμ[ᾶ]ς καταφυγῆντων..., it is also used of the hypodioiketes Sarapion in association with the god Sarapis in UPZ I 52 (161 BC): (8) Οὐθένα ἔχωμεν βοιηθὸν | ἀλλ' ἢ σὲ καὶ τὸν Σάραπιν.⁹⁰ The use of ἀντιλήμπτωρ in UPZ I 14 shows clearly that it and the sentiment of last resort became part of the conceptualisations associated with the cult position of the Ptolemies. It is important to note that the symbolic dimensions of the ordinary persons relationship with Zenon should come to be part of the symbolic attributes of the sovereign. In we may note that it perhaps once more testifies to the personal nature of Zenon's power. Ἀντιλήμπτωρ continues into the Roman period with early appearances in connection with the prefect such as CPR VII 1 (7-4 BC): (19) [ca 4 διὸ ἀξιολῶμεν σε τὸν [πάντων] σωτῆρα καὶ ἀντιλήμπτωρα ("...wherefore we ask you the saviour and helper of all...").⁹¹ But it later also appears in petitions to lower officials such as the strategos as in P.Oxy L 3555 (I-II AD): ἀναγκαίως οὖν καταπεφευγῖα ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν ἀντιλήμπτωρα.

In the Ptolemaic period according to Schubart the other major substantive to express "helper", βοηθός, had no particular connection with the Ptolemaic cult and consequently was more a designation of officials rather than the sovereign.⁹² Since the king more often than not operated through his many administrative and judicial officials they too had to meet the same standards and exhibit the same moral

90 The sentence is repeated in UPZ I 53 (161 BC).

91 See also P.Mich III 174 (145-147 AD).

92 "Das Hellenistische Königsideal.", 15. However, βοηθός can be found in association εὐεργέτης in petitions to the monarch eg Mitt., *Chr.* 10, 8-9: τούτου γὰρ γενομένου, βασιλεῦ, ἐπὶ σε π[ροσφυγῶν] τὸν κοινὸν εὐεργέτην καὶ βοηθόν, which suggests that it was also gathered into the symbolic domain of the saviour and benefactor motif.

attributes expected of the king.⁹³ Schubart concluded that, unlike the king, officials were not often revered as Σωτήρ, no doubt because in the collective mind of the populace Σωτήρ and Εὐεργέτης were higher and more divine.⁹⁴ But they were often turned to as βοηθός, more often than the king in fact, or for their φιλανθρωπία.⁹⁵ It is interesting to note that a reflection of this distinction may have been carried over into the Roman period, to the extent that βοηθός seems to be reserved for the epistrategos and the strategos, but not the prefect.⁹⁶

The role of the powerful Roman official as "lord" (κύριος) was very frequent in the Roman period and shows an important development in the symbolic order. According to the study of Bureth κύριος appears throughout the Roman period, in the several different constructions. The nominative is used throughout the period to designate the prefect, in phrases such as P.Amh. II 79 (186 AD): σὺ ὁ κύριος παραγγέλλεις. It is used to refer to the prefect, the epistrategos, the archidicastes and perhaps the strategos in accusative constructions such as P.Oxy XLIX 3466 (81-96 AD) to the archidicastes: κατὰ τὸ ἀναγκαιὸν καταφεύ[γω] ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν κύριον καὶ ἀξιῶ... The conjunction of κύριος with εὐεργέτης in phrases such as P. Brem 38 (118 AD) (23-25) ἀξιῶ σε τὸν κύριον καὶ εὐεργέτην show how it was joined into the familiar symbolic domain of the saviour and benefactor motif.⁹⁷ Several papyri have the rather remarkable designation of the strategos or idiologos as κύριον αὐτοκράτορα.⁹⁸ Κύριος also appears in genitive constructions such as BGU III 970 (c 174 AD) to the prefect: (9) καὶ μηδεμίαν βοή[θει]α[ν] | ἔχουσα εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ σοῦ τοῦ κυρίου τὴν ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγὴν ἐποιησάμην. In the genitive construction it is found in petitions to the prefect, the idiologos, the epistrategos and the strategos.⁹⁹

93 See Schubart, "Das Hellenistische Königsideal", 6-7, 8, 12, 18.

94 At 15. This limitation had disappeared by Roman times as we see below.

95 There was a practical reality expressed in deeds behind the language. In P.Tebt. III:1 788 (Mid II BC) there is reference to royal instructions given to a strategos to make a tour of the Oxyrhynchite nome to give assistance to the oppressed.

96 See further Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, 205 fn 88.

97 Ibid., 210 fn 125.

98 I.L. Forslev, "Two Papyri from the Oslo Collection", *Symb. Osf.* LVIII (1983), 123-8.

99 Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, 182.

The conceptual reach of κύριος was sometimes extended by connection with the substantive "helper". P.Oxy III 488 (II -III AD) to the epistrategos uses the dative with the variant προσφεύγω: (23-4) προσφεύγω σοι τῶι κυρίῳ καὶ πάντων βοηθῶ, which is another example of how κύριος was assimilated into the symbolic reach of the saviour, benefactor and helper motif.¹⁰⁰ Bureth examined how often it appears in a vocative form, κύριε, and this was used by writers for rhetorical effect which articulated aspects of the relationship between the petitioner and the official, allowing them to be placed side by side in the one expression, with the vocative highlighting the weakness of the petitioner: Ἡμῶν, κύριε, ἀπολυόντων οἱ Ὑπάρχει μοι, κύριε.¹⁰¹ In P. Brem 38 (118 AD) the phrase to an unknown official is σὲ τὸν κύριον καὶ εὐεργέτην. Bureth concludes that the use of κύριος is so frequent in the documents that it was little more than a simple conventional form of politeness.¹⁰² That may be true a lot of the time but on the other hand the syntactic structures where it is found, such as those cited above, place it at times in an alignment with the more symbolic and "sacral" usages of the saviour and benefactor motif.

That concludes our consideration of the use of substantives to articulate saviour elements of the symbolic universe. It is clear the saviour and benefactor motif, with variants, remained strong right through the Roman period. Especially in

100 See J.D. Thomas, *The Epistrategos* II, 115; with references. Compare P.Amh. II 79 (186 AD); BGU I 19 Verso (11 Feb. 135): ἡξίου προσφυεῖν τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιφανεστάτου αὐτοκράτορος, and P.Oxy XLVI 3274 (99-117 AD): ἐδῆλωσα σοι τῶ εὐεργέτη; P.Wisconsin I 33 (147 AD): (12) διὰ τοῦτο προσφεύγω σοι, τῶ κυρίῳ; BGU I 180 (II-III AD): Διόπερ προσφεύγειν σοι ἡναγκασθην. In this connection we should note the restorations in P.Oxy X 1252 Recto (288-95 AD) (37) κατὰ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον [προσφεύγω | ἐπὶ τὴν σὴν ἰλευκρίνειαν ἀξίων διὰ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ and P.Oxy XII 1470 (336 AD) has οὐ ἐπέδωκα λιβέλλου **προσφ[εύγω]λα** ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν τοῦ κυρίου μου Φιλαγρίου. In the view of the present writer, the restorations of προσφεύγω instead of καταφεύγω are open to some doubt. The restoration in Mitt., *Chr.* 10, 8-9: τούτου γὰρ γενομέ[νου], βασιλεῦ, ἐπὶ σε π[ροσφυγῶν] τὸν κοινὸν εὐεργέτην καὶ βοηθόν, suggests the possibility that προσφεύγω may have taken the ἐπὶ plus object construction, in the Ptolemaic period, although there must be some doubt. But there is reason to think that this was not the pattern in the Roman period. In the two examples there in only one surviving letter of προσ-, being the -σ- in P.Oxy XII 1470 (336 AD), which is itself doubtful and although the papyrus has not been sighted by the present writer, the possibility that the letter is an α should not be overlooked. Further, since both documents are from IV AD we can compare P.Oxy VIII 1101 (367-70 AD), which is an edict of the prefect Flavius Eutolmius Tatianus concerning recourse to the military *praepositi* in civil matters. In the text of the edict both προσφεύγω and καταφεύγω are used, but only καταφεύγω takes the construction with ἐπὶ while προσφεύγω takes the dative. This suggests that the restoration should usually be καταφεύγω with ἐπὶ.

101 Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, 182, 211 fn 128.. The examples are taken from SB 9238, 6 and P.FamTeb 37, 5 respectively.

102 Ibid.

the first two centuries of Roman rule there was a clear attempt to utilise the highly symbolic and religious terminology of saviour and benefactor to respond to the power of the Romans, in the context of petitions. But the phraseology of the saviour and benefactor motif, such as σωτήρ καὶ εὐεργέτης definitely becomes more scarce by III AD and a marked preference becomes evident for approaches to or refuge in abstract virtues of powerful figures, like ἀνδρεία or μισοπονηρία, rather than in their roles articulated through the substantives εὐεργέτης or σωτήρ. This is discussed further shortly.

The second construction by which the saviour, benefactor and helper concepts were expressed was in a verbal form of εὐεργετέω, φιλανθρωπέω, βοηθέω or ἀντιλαμβάνω, as in a participial periphrasis, such as, ὦ (ἔσομαι, ἐσόμεθα or ὦμεν) εὐεργετημένος, πεφιλανθρωπημένος, ἀντειλημμένος, βεβοηθημένος, with appropriate changes for gender and number.¹⁰³ These constructions continue well into the Roman period and were placed almost invariably at the end of section 3, just before the closing salutation, as in Document 10 of chapter 3 (P.Oxy XIX 2234 31 AD).¹⁰⁴ Sometimes they are combined as in BGU I 46 (May 193 AD), a petition to the strategos Artemidoros: (19) ἴν' ὦ | ὑπό σου τοῦ κυρίου εὐεργετη- | μένος καὶ βεβοηθημένος. In late III AD it is possible to find more sophisticated variations of this construction such as P.Sakaon 37 (Jan/Feb 284)(=P.Thead 18) directed to the prefect: (18) οὔ[τ]ω γὰρ δυνησόμεθα ὑ[π]ὸ σ[ο]ῦ βεβοηθημένοι διὰ παντός [σου

103 φιλανθρωπέω is found in P.Oxy XLI 2981 (II AD) a private letter in the sense "reward"

104 For the Ptolemaic period see Di Bitonto 1967, 53; 1968, 103-4, and eg ἴν' ὦ πεφιλανθρωπημένος: **Ptolemy**: SB III 7259 (95-4 BC); 6236 (70 BC); **Strategos**: BGU VII 1572 (139 AD) Philadelphia. ἴν' ὦ βεβοηθημένος: See Di Bitonto 1968, 104. For the Roman period some examples are: **Prefect**: P.Oxy XII 1467 (263 AD). **Epistrategos**: P.Meyer 8 (16 Aug 151 AD); P.Oxy. IV 718 (180-192 AD); P.Oxy III 488 (II-III AD); P.Mich IX 530 (III-IV AD)(?); **Deputy epistrategos**: P.Oxy IX 1202 (217 AD) **Centurion or Decurion**: P.Tebt II 332 (176 AD); BGU II 454 (193 AD). ἴν' ὦ εὐεργετημένος: **Ptolemy**: BGU VI 1245 (III-II BC); SB III 6152 (93 BC); 6153 (93 BC); 6155 (69-8 BC); 6156 (57 BC). This verb formation does not appear in petitions to lower officials in the Ptolemaic period. It becomes more frequent in the Roman period: **Prefect**: BGU IV 1200 (2-1 BC); SB XVI 12713 (19 Feb 10/11AD); P.Mich IX 525 (119-124 AD); P.Fay. 106 (c. 140 AD) Fāyūm; P.L. Bat. XXV 34 (140 AD); P.Ross.Georg II 20 (146 AD) Arsinoite nome; P.Oxy VII 1032 (162 AD); P.Oxy VIII 1117 (c 178 AD); P.Oxy XXXVI 2760 Recto (179/8 AD); P.Oxy VI 899 (200 AD); P.Oxy XVII 2131 (207 AD); P.Tebt II 326 (c. 266 AD); P.Oxy XVII 2133 (Late III AD). **Centurion**: P.Oxy XIX 2234 (31 AD). **Epistrategos**: P.Oxy III 486 (131 AD); BGU II 462 (138-161AD); P.Oxy III 487 (156 AD). BGU XI 2064 (173 AD); SB 5343 (182 AD); BGU I 168 (II-III AD) **Strategos**: P.Mich IX 524 (98 AD) **Unknown**: P.Mich X 582 (49/50 AD), Philadelphia; P.Strassb III 311 (24/8/123 AD), provenance unknown; P.Mich IX 534 (156 AD), Karanis; P.Oxy XXIV 2411 (c 173 AD). ἴν' ὦ ἀντειλημμένος: **Strategos**: BGU IV 1187 (I BC) **Unknown**: P.Oxy XII 1465 (I BC).

χάριτας τὰς μεγίστας ὁμολογήσειν ("thus being helped by you we shall be able for ever to acknowledge our highest gratitude to you."). The same idea can be found expressed in other verbal forms such as in P.Tebt. III:1 777 (Early II BC) in which the petitioner says of an unknown official: (8) ἀξιῶ σε, ..., καθότι διατελεῖς συναντιλαμβανόμενος, μὴ ὑπεριδεῖν με κατεφθαρμένον ("I ask you, ..., wherefore you continue to render assistance, not to suffer me being ruined..")

The third construction involved the use of abstract terms. The studies of Di Bitonto show how often Ptolemaic petitions to the king concluded with the expression of an expectation on the part of the petitioner that he or she will be the beneficiary of some moral attributes of the monarch. Often this is expressed by the verb τυγχάνω in an aorist subjunctive or future mood or participial form: τύχω, τεύξομαι or ἔσομαι τετυχώς. The result for the petitioner, usually expressed in the genitive, could be φιλανθρωπία, δίκαιον, βοήθεια, ἔλεος, ἀντίληψις, ἐπίσκεψις or combinations of these such as τεύξομαι τοῦ δικαίου καὶ ἐλεοῦ.¹⁰⁵ We may note that the principle verb form here is always in the first person which ties the action of the monarch very personally to the needs of the individual petitioner. There were often similar expressions of expectation in petitions to lower officials, including justice: τεύξομαι τοῦ δικαίου, ἵν' ᾧ τετευχῶς τῆς σῆς δικαιοσύνης; φιλανθρωπία, σωτηρία, βοήθεια, and ἀντίληψις.¹⁰⁶ This was the general construction in which the saviour and benefactor theme was expressed and provided the basic vehicle for expression in later periods, although in the late Ptolemaic period it is possible to find variations in which φιλανθρωπία is directly connected with the request verb, such as τῆς σῆς φιλανθρωπίας ἀξιῶ.¹⁰⁷

Elements of this vocabulary, especially δικαιοσύνη and ἔλεος, although closely connected to the general symbolic domain of the saviour and benefactor,

105 Di Bitonto (1967), 53.

106 Di Bitonto (1968), 103ff. ἀντίληψις is found in P.Tebt. III:1 784 (Early II BC) embellished by the adjective ὀξεῖα, translated as "energetic".

107 P.Ryl. IV 578 (58 BC).

spread to wider aspects of the legitimation, and will be discussed shortly. However, it is hard to leave the saviour and benefactor motif without discussing the concepts of φιλανθρωπία and εὐεργεσία. The acts of benefaction of the Ptolemies were invariably called φιλάνθρωπα and here we can also see the conceptual correlation between kindness and benefaction.¹⁰⁸ In the Roman period φιλανθρωπία is an attribute of the emperor. This can be seen in letters from emperors;¹⁰⁹ in letters and appeals to emperors;¹¹⁰ in private letters and legal relations,¹¹¹ and in descriptions of the emperors role in bringing stability and beneficence.¹¹² By the time of P.Oxy XIX 2235 (c 346 AD) φιλανθρωπία of the emperor has become joined with notions of piety: τὰ τῆς φιλανθρωπίας [] τῆς αἰωνί[[ων] \ου' βασιλίας τῶν δεσποτῶν τῆς οἰκουμένης τῶν εὐσεβεστάτων βασιλέων Petitions to officials in Egypt indicate the continuity of use of both forms into III to IV AD.¹¹³ The formulaic conclusions to the request section of petitions continues to be the position in the text where they most frequently appear, often in close connection with the request verb. A few examples will suffice here, SB 9168 (298 AD): [δ]εόμεθα καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν τὴν σὴν φιλανθρωπίαν ὅπως κελεύσης, in a petition from Karanis addressed to the strategos.¹¹⁴ On the other hand in BGU I 522 (II AD) the φιλανθρωπία of the centurion is mentioned in an introductory sentence. In 300 AD release from a liturgy is an indulgence referred to as φιλανθρωπία.¹¹⁵ In C.P. Herm. 52, the senate of Hermopolis appeals to the prefect against a strategos who has exceeded his powers has confidence: κατὰ τὴν ἔμφυτον αὐτοῦ πρὸς τοὺς ὑπηκόους φιλανθρωπίαν καὶ πρὸς τὰ θεῖ[α] εὐσεβ[ε]ῖ[αν] ἐπινεύσειν τῇ δεήσει. In the later Roman period

108 M.-T. Lenger, "La notion de «bienfait» (philanthrōpon) royal".

109 Claudius: P.Lond III 1178, l 23f and 27; Hadrian: BGU I 140; in edicts: P.Fay. 20, l 15f (Severus Alexander); C.P. Herm. 119 (Gallienus); P.Oxy. VI 889 (Diocletian and Maximian); BGU II 372.

110 P.Oxy IV 705 (200-2 AD) to Severus and Caracalla which contains two petitions; in the second at ll. 54-79 of Col. iii, the text of the petition is well preserved. At Col. iii, ll. 69-70, Aurelius calls the emperors ὦ φιλανθρωπότατοι Αὐτοκράτορες.

111 H.I. Bell, "Philanthropia in the Papyri of the Roman Period", in *Hommages à Joseph Bidez et à Franz Cumont* (Bruxelles, 1949), 31-39, at 33.

112 P.Oxy XX 2267 (360 AD).

113 Εὐσεβεία is mentioned in Ptolemaic petitions such as UPZ I 39 (c. 161 BC), but see 270 below.

114 See also the following: **Praepositus pagi**: P.Sakaon 46 (29 Mar 342 AD)(=P.Thead 22); P.Sakaon 47 (29 Mar 342 AD)(=P.Thead 23, P.Abinn 44). **Strategos**: PSI XIII 1327 (189/90 AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 64 (298 AD) Karanis.

115 P.Oxy VI 889.

the adjective φιλόανθρωπος is employed as an honorific title as in P.Herm.Rees 19 (392 AD): φιλόανθρωπε τῶν δικαστῶν.¹¹⁶ The same comments apply broadly to εὐεργεσία. Again a few examples will suffice: ὅπως τύχῳμεν τῆς ἀπὸ σοῦ] εὐεργεσίας;¹¹⁷ ὅπως ταύτης τῆς εὐεργεσίας ἀπολαύσω.¹¹⁸ BGU XI 2065 (I AD) has an early use of the adjective "ingrained" (ἔμφυτος) to describe the εὐεργεσία of the prefect Mettius Rufus: τὴν ἔμφυτον αὐτοῦ εὐεργεσίαν. In BGU II 613 (138-161AD) it is the εὐμένεια of the prefect Volusius Maecianus which is ingrained: τὴν ἔμφυτόν σου εὐμένειαν. Petitions from III to IV AD also show how a wider trend to abstractions recombines many earlier themes and motifs. A good example is P.Sakaon 36 (c 280 AD)(=P.Ryl 114, Sel.Pap. II 293) in which the prefect Hadrianus Sallustius is referred as follows: (29) ὅπως τὰ ἰδίᾳ ἐκ τῆς σῆς [τοῦ κυρίου καὶ] πάντων εὐεργέτου φιλανθρώπου ὑπογραφῆς [ἀπολάβω ("so that by the kind decision of you, the lord and benefactor of all I may recover my property"). It is the decision (ὑπογραφή) which is modified by the adjective φιλόανθρωπος although the prefect is called directly lord and benefactor.¹¹⁹

Assistance or help lay at the heart of what the petitioner sought from the official and are an obvious extension of the role of saviour or benefactor. Many petitions in the Ptolemaic period concluded with a reference to the abstract terms βοήθεια and ἀντίληψις to be bestowed by king or official.¹²⁰ Writers of Roman petitions continued to utilise expressions which incorporated this vocabulary.¹²¹ BGU XI 2065 (I AD) is an early example and finishes with the familiar expression of assistance clearly deriving from Ptolemaic precedents: διὸ ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγὼν [ἀξιῶ τῆς σῆς] ἀντιλήψεως τυχεῖν.¹²² By III-IV AD these concepts were often

116 See also P.Oxy VIII 1102 (367-70 AD), 7.

117 P.Amh. II 77 (139 AD); P.Monac. III 74 (31/8/158 AD), Arsinoite nome. See also P.Sakaon 42 (c. 323)(=P.Thead 20).

118 P.Herm.Rees 19 (392 AD) Hermopolis. Other examples are: P.Oxy. I 67 338 AD; P.Herm.Rees 19 (392 AD), Hermopolis.

119 Cf P.Sakaon 38 (17 Aug 312 AD)(=P.Flor 36, Mitt.Chrest II 64) in which the prefect's decision is "sacred": (27)διὰ ἱερᾶς σου ὑπογραφῆς.

120 Di Bitonto 1967, 53; 1968, 103-4.

121 Eg BGU IV 1189 (I BC-1 AD); BGU I 226 (99 AD).

122 See also BGU IV 1187 (I BC). For II AD see eg P.Oxy X 1272 (144 AD); SB 5343 (182 AD).

placed at the start of the background in the introductory sentences which became commonplace. In P.Oxy I 71.2.3 (303 AD) a woman called Aurelia petitions the prefect of Egypt with an introductory sentence: ll. 3ff *πάσι μὲν βοηθείς, ἡγεμῶν δέσποτα, καὶ πάσι τὰ ἴ[δ]ια ἀπονέμις [μάλιστα δὲ γυναιξείν διὰ τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἀσθενές· ὅθεν καὶ αὐτῆ πρόσειμι τῷ σῷ μεγαλείῳ εὐελπίς οὔσα τῆς ἀπὸ σοῦ βοηθείας τυχεῖν* ("You extend help to all, my lord prefect, and you render to all their due, but especially to women on account of their natural weakness. Therefore, I myself make this petition to your highness in the full confidence that I shall obtain assistance from you").¹²³ Very similar language can be found in judicial proceedings of the same period, spoken therefore orally to the presiding official as in P.Oxy LI 3627 (IV AD(?)) where the advocate for the plaintiff completes his argument for the return of a house with the words (l. 6): *διὰ τὴν σὴν, ἡγεμῶ[ν] κύριε, κηδεμονίαν, ἔτ[ε]λλε γὰρ μὴν διὰ τῆς αὐτῆ[ς] β[ο]η[θ]ίας* ("...on account of your solicitude, my lord governor, that through the same assistance..."). The presence of the vocative too is very reminiscent of petitions, of all periods.

The use of the saviour benefactor helper motif does not appear to have any direct connection with the subject matter of the petition, in the sense that it is used by petitioners who have a complaint of a particular type. But at times the language of saviour and benefactor is used and at other times it is not, in connection with the same type of dispute, and even to the same official. Further in a petition such as P.Oxy IV 705 (200-2 AD) the petitioner uses the motif but is not seeking assistance for a problem so much as the imprimatur of the powerful for a proposal. In the latter petition Aurelius Horion held many high offices in Alexandria and was a rich landowner in the Oxyrhynchite nome.¹²⁴ His petition seeks the approval of the emperors for the establishment of a benefaction whereby each village in the nome was to be presented with a sum of money to be invested in hay, with the yearly

123 Compare P.Panop. III 29 (24/7/332 AD). In P.Oxy XLVI 3311 Recto (373-4 AD) which shows the substantive appearing in the concluding section of the petition; P.Cair.Isidor. 67 (299 AD).

124 So say the editors at P.Oxy IV page 162.

revenue being devoted to inhabitants on whom liturgies fell. So Horion is not seeking help with a personal problem, but the endorsement of the emperors for his plan. This suggests that the resort to the saviour and benefactor motif may have been partly a gesture to convention but also was a way of acknowledging the power of the addressee. It not hard to see that the language of benefaction and euergetism, of royal and official virtue belong to a body of theoretical tradition that integrates "different provinces of meaning" and encompasses "the institutional order in a symbolic totality." These are readily explained as linguistic articulations of symbolic sub-systems within the general symbolic system of ancient culture.

Before leaving the saviour and benefactor motif it is necessary to make the point that the theme of benefaction and preservation by powerful figures in petitions should be considered, partly, in connection with the notion of benefactions and "euergetism" in wider social context of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds. It was not a theme which existed solely in connection with the relationship between individuals or small groups and institutional power in judicial or administrative contexts. In Hellenistic times, τὸ φιλόανθρωπον or τὰ φιλόανθρωπα of the sovereign denote the concrete and actual results of the exercise of the more abstract moral attributes φιλανθρωπία or εὐεργεσία. They referred often to the provision of particular royal privileges, advantages or concessions, which touch every almost every aspect of private and public rights, such as the granting of an amnesty, relief from fiscal charges, rights of asylum, guarantees against arbitrary actions and rights of protection of person and property.¹²⁵ A similar vocabulary continued in connection with actions of the Roman emperor.¹²⁶ Euergetism was a system of generosity by private wealthy citizens on behalf of their community. It is a difficult subject and it is not proposed explore euergetism in detail here except to acknowledge that it had economic and political benefits for the wealthy but to point out that the largesse of important local

125 Schubart, 'Königsideal', 10; ,M.-T. Lenger, "La notion de «bienfait»", at 495.

126 Bell, "Philanthropia".

figures was an example of the powerful helping the weak, with the consequence that their personal honour and social superiority were increased.¹²⁷ This is significant from the point of view of typologies of power because it demonstrates how in the Greco-Roman world there was a high degree of correspondence between personal wealth and personal power, and euergetism provided a socially crucial economic expression of personal power. In the Roman period, it is often thought that the institution of public benefactions (εὐεργεσία) by the senatorial, equestrian and municipal aristocracies constituted a means by which the economic surpluses accumulated by such "notables" were redistributed in their cities and communities and as a result of which they were granted the title "Benefactor" or "Saviour and Benefactor" and public honours.¹²⁸ The quid pro quo for the largesse of notables was the reward of community recognition, and this shows one point at which the language of benefaction in petitions connects with honorary inscriptions. The system of honours granted by communities, such as, inscriptions, statues and privileges, was the complement of εὐεργεσία. It is often thought that one consequence of these public expressions of gratitude for aristocratic beneficence was to consolidate the position of the upper classes and certainly, the values which are expressed in the language of public honours were a reflection both of political and economic power.¹²⁹ But however that may be, what matters is that royal benefactions and individual euergetism were linked to a fundamental value in Greco-Roman society, namely, honour and prestige and it involved an element of reciprocation, to the extent that the community received the benefaction and the benefactor received the honour.

It is probably correct to conclude that the language of benefaction as it appears in petitions shows a recognition of these underlying aspects of the more general process for the provision of help and resources to the wider community. There was

127 P. Veyne, *Bread and Circuses*, 152. P. Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World* (CUP, Cambridge, 1988), 81-3.

128 The term "notables" was coined by Finley, *The Ancient Economy*. Veyne, *Bread and Circuses*, 152 rejects this view.

129 Panagopoulos, "Vocabulaire et Mentalité", 197-8, 206, 231-2.

however an important distinction between the underlying context of honours for benefactions and the saviour and benefactor motif in petitions. The grant of honours by a city or community was a collective action for something already undertaken. In petitions the language of benefaction and preservation, was used by individuals in the hope of the exercise of power, through the legal system in their favour. Bureth in his study makes the point that the constructions in petitions to designate help, kindness or benefaction at the conclusion, relied on final particles like ἵνα or ὅπως, eg, ἵν' ὦ βεβηθημένος or ἵν' ὦ τετευχῶς τῆς σῆς φιλανθρωπίας, in such a way that the kindness or benefaction was made to be the more important outcome for the petitioner, rather than the formal vindication of a legal right. The benefaction being more personal was placed ahead of the more formal legal basis for action.¹³⁰ In this way there was an element of a personal interaction with the powerful sovereign or prefect which was to bring about a consequence in the future.¹³¹ Although Bureth does not mention this, it may be because the former was conceptualised as part of a symbolic order, incorporating the notion of the personal benefaction of the sovereign or the wealthy and prestigious local individual, which promoted honour more than the latter.¹³² So we can see that the ideal-typical formal and informal dimensions of power, could both be instantiated in the language of petitions and legitimated through the saviour and benefactor motif.¹³³

Εὐνοια, and related concepts

The conceptualisation of the king or official as saviour and benefactor was enhanced and deepened by connection with a much broader ethical and moral vocabulary. Despite a large degree of overlap, for analysis these can be grouped into three basic categories, kindness and compassion, which is already present in φιλανθρωπία,

130 Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, 177, 178.

131 This has analogies with judicial prayers. See chapter 8, 389ff.

132 This takes into the area of the basic social antithesis of honour and shame, which is discussed in both the following chapters.

133 See chapter 1, 42 above.

courage and goodness, and law and justice. The associations of φιλανθρωπία seem to have had considerable importance in the ancient world and mention of it leads us to a consideration of the many other terms which were associated with it and powerful roles. Schubart, again, made the point that, in the Ptolemaic period, at the heart of the relationship between king and subject was εὐνοια, "good sentiments" and "good will", which was manifested in πίστις, φιλανθρωπία and φιλόανθρωπα from the exercise of φιλανθρωπία, ἐπεικία, εὐγνωμοσύνη and ἔλεος. All flow from or are connected with εὐνοια.¹³⁴ Beyond εὐνοια essential prerequisites for the head of the Hellenistic state were ἀρετή, καλοκάγαθία and, as one might expect, ἀνδραγαθία. The king's ἀρετή was exhibited through εὐσέβεια and φιλοστοργία.¹³⁵ As the king was the creator, servant and protector of the law, δικαιοσύνη or τὸ δίκαιον were part of the core of a ruler's virtues. The expression of δικαιοσύνη or τὸ δίκαιον was the enactment of good and proper laws, so as to produce a condition of εὐνομία and the attribute of μισοπονηρία was the natural complement of δικαιοσύνη or τὸ δίκαιον.¹³⁶ The system of concepts appears in relation to the king's officials as well. Indeed since the king more often than not operated through his many administrative and judicial officials they too had to meet the same standards and exhibit the same moral attributes expected of the king, including δικαιοσύνη and τὸ δίκαιον.¹³⁷ Like the king, an official ought to exhibit ἀρετή, through the exercise of his εὐνοια and εὐεργεσία, which should be a continuing attitude, although the mercy of officials was not often referred to. More often it was his fairness, expressed in the terms δικαιοδοσία or δικαιοδοτής of which μισοπονηρία ("hatred of wickedness") was a natural incident.¹³⁸

134 W. Schubart, "Das Hellenistische Königsideal", at 8. ("guter Gesinnung" und "gutem Willen").

135. Ibid., at 6ff.

136. These attributes make a "sittliche und wohlgebildete König".

137 See Schubart, "Das Hellenistische Königsideal", 6-7, 8, 12, 18.

138 Schubart, loc. cit., 18 to 22. The notion of hating wickedness was also expressed in adverbial phrases like διαλαβεῖν μισοπονηρῶς as in BGU VIII 1824 (I BC); BGU VIII 1832 (I BC). See also P.Ent. 49 (221 BC); So petitioners ask for the appropriate chastisement of wrongdoers as in BGU VIII 1860 (I BC): αὐτὸν δὲ τύχασιν τῆς προσηκούσης κολάσεως. See also D. Crawford, "The Good Official in Ptolemaic Egypt", in H. Maehler, V.M. Strooka (eds.), *Das ptolemäische Ägypten* (Mainz, 1978), 201.

One way of gauging the importance to the general population of these concepts and vocabulary can be seen in the ways in they were incorporated into petitions. As pointed out in the previous section, the studies of Di Bitonto show how that the ethical and symbolic attributes of the king and officials appeared in the Ptolemaic petitions most frequently at the end of the document as part of the hoped-for outcome. This applied to a range of ideas apart from φιλανθρωπία or βοήθεια, including τὸ δίκαιον and ἔλεος.¹³⁹ τὸ δίκαιον or δικαιοσύνη were very frequent in phrases such as τύχω (τεύξομαι, ἔσομαι τετυχώς) του δικαίου, or in combinations like τεύξομαι τοῦ δικαίου καὶ βοηθείας or ἔλεοῦ, and continue into the Roman period.¹⁴⁰ Εὐσέβεια and εὐγνωμοσύνη can appear together as in UPZ I 41 (c. 161/60 BC): (9-11) Ὑμεῖς δὲ δι' ἣν ἔχετε πρὸς τὸ θεῖον εὐσέβειαν καὶ πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους εὐγνωμοσύνην προσετάξατε, and sometimes this language was expressed in verbal forms such as [ἔ]ν' ᾧ εὐγνωμονημένος, which is clearly analogous to some of the expressions of the saviour and benefactor motif discussed above.¹⁴¹ When one takes account of the position of these items of vocabulary and the surrounding syntax, it is apparent that justice, kindness mercy or succour were conceived as the outcome of the action of the king or official. This is made especially plain by the use of result clauses introduced by ἵνα or ὅπως or future conditional sentence introduced by genitive absolutes such as τούτου γὰρ γενομένου.¹⁴² In a sense the petitioner thus imposed upon the addressee, in his role as king or official, positive social and ethical outcomes and this was part of the process of making sense of his power.

Elements of this conceptual system surrounding the Ptolemaic monarch and his officials were carried over into the Roman period, although in the period II to III AD important changes took place in the way the role of the powerful official was

139 Di Bitonto (1967), 53; Di Bitonto (1968), 103ff.

140 Eg BGU I 157 (II-III AD); BGU II 515 (193 AD).

141 See also BGU VIII 1865 (I BC).

142 See for example documents 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 in chapter 3; Di Bitonto (1967), 50ff and (1968), 101ff.

articulated and conceptualised. It is useful therefore to examine how some concepts retained their importance and how new ones were introduced in the later Roman period. For example, the close connection of φιλανθρωπία or εὐεργεσία with other moral and ethical values, such as mercy (ἔλεος) seems to have remained well into the Roman period: for Plutarch φιλανθρωπία is associated not only with mercy, but also with justice, wisdom and courage and is a fundamental moral virtue.¹⁴³ We noted already that scholars have identified many significant changes in the way the Roman emperor was understood. It is worth repeating the conclusions of L. de Blois that the conceptual system which surrounded the Roman emperor derived from Isocratean precedents and included the sort of concepts which Schubart identified, including the emperor as a good example of adherence to the laws, φιλανθρωπία, δικαιοσύνη and εὐνοια. The symbolic role of the emperor as "father" (πατήρ) and "saviour" (σωτήρ) is clearly associated with this. This shows how fundamental εὐνοια remained as a basis for legitimate power, until it became supplanted by the notion of divine grace. From II AD at least there is clear evidence that similar sentiments were utilised by powerful Roman procurators of themselves in official correspondence, although this was unusual. P.L. Bat. XXV 41 (IIAD) is a letter by a high official to the strategoi of the Arsinoite nome in which he speaks of his general concern for everything which happens in the province and his φιλανθρωπία (2-4: μο[ι] πᾶν | [των τῶν... ἡ φροντίς ἐστίν... φιλανθρωπίας]).¹⁴⁴

Ἔλεος

Among other attributes of compassion and kindness, mercy has a comparatively long history in petitions. Substantival forms such as ἐλεημοσύνη and ἔλεος are found from the earliest period. From III BC we have P.Cair Zen. III 59495 where two

143 *Letter of Aristaeus*, § 208, quoted by Schubart, 'Das Hellenistische Königsideal', at 8. and Plutarch, *De virt. mor.* 461 DEF, cited by Panagopoulos, "Vocabulaire et Mentalité", at 219. P.Oxy XXXVI 2754 Recto (111 AD) is a copy of an edict which mentions the ἔλεος of Trajan.

144 The editors note that the conceptualisation of the role of the prefect in petitions often contains reference to this generalised notion of goodwill and concern. They cite a number of petitions some of which will be discussed shortly including P.Oxy XLVII 3339 (191 AD): 3-6 πρὸς τὸν ἀρχιερέα ποιοῦμενος πρὸς τὴν χάριτος μὲν Αἰγύπτου, ἐξαιρητικῶς δὲ τῆς πόλεως τῶν Ὀξυρυγχειτῶν and Dio Cassius, *Hist* 53, 12, 1.

swineherds implore Zenon to release them from prison. They are there for some fault, and do not deny that they have been rightly punished, but appeal to Zenon to have pity on them: πρὸς σὲ οὖν καταφυγγάνομεν, ἵνα ἐλεημοσύνης τύχωμεν. In similar vein another letter, P.Cair.Zen. III 59482 (III BC), shows the conceptualisation of Zenon as merciful preserver, for a man whose wife lies sick in prison: ὥσπερ οὖν διατελεῖς πάντας σώζων καὶ οὐθεις διὰ σοῦ οὐθὲν πέποσχεν ἄτοπον, καὶ ἐμὲ δεόμενόν σου ἐλέησον. The beginning of P.Ent. 43 (221 BC) is lost, but it refers to someone who has held the old age of the petitioner in contempt. The request section finishes with the declaration of an expectation of justice and mercy from the king: ἵνα ὦ, βασιλεῦ, διὰ σοῦ τοῦ δικαίου καὶ ἐλεοῦ τετευχῶς εἰς τὸ [λοῖ]πον τοῦ βιοῦ. Verbal forms especially ἐλεῶ are also in evidence from an early period. In P.Cair.Zen. II 59145 (2/8/256 BC) Sphragis petitions Zenon about a theft of two garments, some wool and a little copper money. She writes ...δέομαι οὖν σου, εἰ καὶ σοι δοκεῖ, ἐλεῆσαί με γράψας Λεοντίσκωι τῶι ἀρχιφυλακίτηι ἐπισκεψάμενον τὴν λείαν ἀποδοῦναι. In P.Cair.Zen. III 59482 (III BC) we are presented with a situation involving imprisonment as in P.Cair.Zen. III 59495. This is a memorandum from Pathiopsis to Zenon, in which Pathiopsis asks for the release of his wife from prison and appeals directly to the mercy of Zenon as the basis for so doing: ὥσπερ οὖν διατελεῖς πάντας σώζων καὶ οὐθεις διὰ σοῦ οὐθὲν πέπασχεν ἄτοπον, καὶ ἐμὲ δεόμενόν σου ἐλέησον.¹⁴⁵

At the end of the Ptolemaic period petitions to lower officials frequently refer to mercy. In BGU VIII 1850 (48-46 BC) a petition to the strategos Eurylochos from Heracleopolis, the petitioner Apollonios complains of wrongful enrolment in a compulsory service. He writes of the strategos in a context which is not entirely clear

145 See also P.Cair.Zen. III 59495 (III BC): δεόμεθα οὖν σου, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς. P.Petrie II 1 (III BC) is fragmentary but as the editor says "It is the supplication of an old man, with children, who claims to have done service, and is locked up in some fort close to a Pastophorium." At l. 18 the petitioner writes ἐλεήσαντα ἡμᾶς.

σοῦ δὲ τοῦ μεισοπονήρου ἐλεήσαντα αὐτοὺς ἀπέλυσας.¹⁴⁶ In II AD we find the prefect Gaius Avidius Heliodorus invoked as saviour who takes pity on the petitioner, a physician, Marcus Valerius Gemellus: κύριε, ὅθεν ἀξιῶ σαὶ τὸν σω[τήρα] ἐλεῆσαι με.¹⁴⁷ P.Oxy XLVIII 3394 (364-6 AD) is a petition to the prefect or praeses Augustamnicae, on a problem of debt which was acquired to pay taxes. The petitioners Aurelius Papnuthis and Aurelius Dorotheus who are humble men (μετρίοι) lack the bare necessities and because of the greed of the moneylenders (τῶν δανιστῶν πλεοναξία) may have to leave their native city. They petition the praeses or prefect so that he "may have mercy" (ὅπως ἐλεήσης). οἰκτίρω is another verb which appears late in our period in the petitions to express mercy. P.Herm.Rees 19 (392 AD) draws the connection between the humble (μετρίοι) and the mercy of the official: (12) διὰ τοῦτο καταφεύγω [15 ἐπὶ τὴν σὴν λαμπρότητα, φιλόανθρωπε τῶν δικαστῶν· οἰκτεIRAί με τὸν μέτριον.¹⁴⁸ It is worth making the point in relation to the concept of mercy as it appeared in petitions of the Greco-Roman period, that it reflects compassion through the action of the official in performing what is sought by the petitioner. This, as Sir Kenneth Dover noted in relation to classical concepts of pity, does not necessarily denote a state of mind or feeling of compassion.¹⁴⁹

Abstract Virtues

There is an identifiable trend in petitions beginning in III AD whereby petitioners move away from directing their language to the official himself in favour of reference

146 See also BGU VIII 1847 (51/50 BC), probably a petition to a strategos which is fragmentary but may refer to imprisonment, and concludes ἐπιδώσοιεντα τὸ ὑπόμνημα, ἐὰν φαίνεται ἐλεήσαντα ἡμᾶς ἀπολύσαι. We may compare the reference to mercy in the private letter BGU IV 1079 (4 Aug 41 AD) in which a person called Heracleides is at some risk of being forced to migrate by someone called Ptollarion. The writer urges Heracleides to speak to Ptollarion every day, τάχα δύναται σε ἐλεῆσαι.

147 P.Fay. 106 (c. 140 AD), Fāyūm. Compare P.Ross.Georg II 20 (146 AD) Arsinoite, also a petition to a prefect, Lucius Valerius Proclus: ἀξιῶ σε τὸν κύριον ἐλεῆσαι με ἀδικουμένην ὑπὸ τῶν κακῶπραγμ[ό]νων ἀνθρώπων.

148 Cf P.Sakaon 41 (14 July 322)(=P.Ryl IV 659), Document 14 in Chapter 4, 183 below.

149 K.J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1974), 195-6.

to an abstract attribute such as courage, majesty, virtue, grace or kindness.¹⁵⁰ This demonstrates very well how the ethical attributes of the official which had formed part of the symbolic universe by which the power of those officials was given sense, were still reproduced but the focus changed so that the petitioner appears to address the attribute rather than the official. So where the petitioner in P.Ent. 12 (242 BC) says ἐπὶ [σὲ] καταφυγών, the petitioner in PSI XIII 1337 (III AD) says ἐπὶ τὴν σὴν ἀνδρείαν καταφεύγω.¹⁵¹

Τυχὴ was an important term in both the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. In the Ptolemaic period it is also possible to find quite idiosyncratic constructions which express the saviour concept through a reference to the τύχη of an official such as UPZ I 122 (157 BC) a petition to the strategos Poseidonios: (17) Διὸ ἀξιῶ, ἐπεὶ σὺν τοῖς θεοῖς | καὶ τῆι σῆι τύχηι ἐκ θανάτου σέσωμαι, | ἔὰν φαίνηται, συντάξαι τοῖς παρά σου | μὴ κωλύειν με,... ("Wherefore I ask, since I have been saved from death with the help of the gods and your fortune"). This is an interesting example because it lumps the τύχη of the strategos, otherwise a non cult figure, in with the activities of the gods. In this we are probably right to see an earlier dimension to the process which took place in connection with the saviour and benefactor motif in the Roman period. In petitions, when the general population were seeking the intervention of the official in their ordinary problems, the tendency to conceptualise the official's role in religious terms was very strong.

Τυχὴ comes to particular prominence in the Roman period,¹⁵² and is found coupled with an adjective such as εὐμενής ("gracious"),¹⁵³ or extended by the

150 It quite possible that this is a manifestation of what Kovel'man saw as a drive to find an abstract way of thinking between II-IV AD: "The Rhetoric of Petitions and its Influence on Popular Social Awareness in Roman Egypt." 168 *VDI*, 170-84 (in Russian).

151 See also P.Oxy XII 1468 (c. 258 AD), P.Amh. II 82 (Late III or early IV AD). P.Oxy IX 1204 (299 AD) contains an interesting variant of this when the petitioner Aurelius Plutarchus describes the action of the catholicus, Pomponius Domnus, in ordering Plutarchus to give notice of judgment thus: ἐκέλευσεν τὸ μεγαλεῖον αὐτοῦ παραγγεῖλαι με.

152 For example, see also P.Oxy VII 1032 (162 AD); P.Oxy XXXVI 2760 Recto (179/8 AD); P.Oxy XXXIV 2711 Recto (268-271 AD); P.Oxy XLVI 3302 Recto (300-1 AD); P.Oxy XVIII 2187 (304 AD).

153 P.OxyXVII 2131 (207 AD): ἔὰν σοῖ[ῶ] τῆ εὐ[μ]ενεστάτη τύχη δόξη See also P.Tebt II 326 (c. 266 AD).

addition of modifying phrases like ἀπολαβ[ο]ύσα τῆ τύχῃ σου διὰ παντὸς [εὐχα]ριστεῖν.¹⁵⁴ Zilliacus has demonstrated τύχη was numbered among many abstract words which connoted or denoted compassion and kindness which were gathered into forms of address from at least the middle of III AD, including ἀρετή and φιλανθρωπία.¹⁵⁵ In P.Oxy IX 1204 (299 AD) the emperors are designated by the expression ἡ θεία τύχη. In P.Sakaon 42 (c. 323)(=P.Thead 20) the petitioners applied explicitly to the ἀρετή of the praeses, rather than the man himself: ἐντύχαμεν τῆ σῆ ἀρετῆ, κύριε. High officials like the prefect, the epistrategos and later the lesser praepositus pagi are also the embodiment of many virtues analogous to kindness and compassion, such as, εὐμενεία, ἐπιμέλεια, ἐπιεικία, καθαρότης, and προνοία which are rare in petitions before II - III AD.¹⁵⁶ In P.Oxy I 67 (338 AD) the petitioner describes the prefect having written to the "clemency and impartiality" of the proposed judge of a dispute about land, Aurelius Aëtius ex-magistrate of Oxyrhynchus (l. 6: πρὸς τὴν σὴν ἐπιείκτιαν τε καὶ καθαρότητα).¹⁵⁷ The same text shows the continuation of ἀρετή when the petitioner says of the prefect, when articulating the request: περὶ ὧν καταλα[μ]βάνοντες τὴν σὴν ἀρετὴν δεόμεθα.¹⁵⁸ Ἀρετῆ in late III to IV AD was confined to the prefect, praeses, rationalis and *dux*.¹⁵⁹ P.Oxy I 86 (338 AD) talks of a petition to be sent to "your grace" (πρὸς τὴν σὴν ἐπιμέλειαν), in reference to the logistes.¹⁶⁰

The general concept of the paternalistic ruler which to some extent is inherent in εὐνοια, itself an idea basic to the conception of monarchy, as we noted above, also found expression through language appropriate for natural feelings for children.¹⁶¹

154 BGU I 327 (1 April 166 AD) See further Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, 181.

155 H Zilliacus, "Untersuchungen zu den abstrakten Anredeformen und Höflichkeitstiteln im griechischen", *Comm. Hum. Litt.* 15.3 (1949), 4 at 44.

156 See further Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, 180-1.

157 P.Oxy XVII 2133 (Late III AD) for ἐπιείκτιαν. **Praepositus pagi**: P.Amh. II 141 (350 AD), [ἀσθε]νῆς καὶ χήρα ἐπιδίδωμι τῆ ἐπιεικείαν. Cf εὐσυνειδησία in PSI V 452 (IV AD).

158 See also P.Oxy XII 1470 (336 AD).

159 P.Oxy LIV 3858.14 n, *ZPE* 37 (1980) 237.

160 See Zilliacus, "Untersuchungen zu den abstrakten Anredeformen", 15,3: 45, 47, 67, 106; CPR V 12.5 n. **Logistes**: P.Oxy XLVI 3311 Recto (373-4 AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 79 (Early IV AD) has ἐπιμελείαν. **Beneficiarius** P.Oxy VIII 1121 (295 AD). **Unknown**: P.Oxy LIX 3981 (Feb/Mar 312 AD).

161 In P.Oxy XXXIV 2711 Recto (268-271 AD) or an edict such as BGU II 372 (29 Aug 159 AD) referring to the κηδεμονία of the emperor.

There are early signs of this as in PSI III 166, 30 (118 BC), in which a woman Sennesis complains to the hipparch about her husband saying: (30) σύνειμι ἐν τῆι σῆι κηδ[εῖα] διὸ ἀξιῶ, διὰ παντὸς καταφθειρομένη ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. ("I go into your protection, wherefore I ask, being destroyed in every way by the fellow") A similar process took place in conceptions of the prefect of Egypt. The compassionate aspects of the role were enhanced by designations as carer and protector which derived from relationships between family members such as father and children or guardian and children. This can be seen in the juxtaposition of these concepts in a petition like P.Tebt II 326 (c. 266 AD) in which the petitioner Aurelia Sarapias of Antinoë describes her brother's "kindness, fidelity and ties of kinship" (εὐνοία καὶ πίστι καὶ τῆ τοῦ γένους οἰκειότητι) to her daughter which shows how the concept of εὐνοία, well known in the political and administrative context operated at a symbolic level in overlapping domains with notions of trust and family responsibility. We see in P.Oxy XLVI 3302 Recto (300-1 AD) that the word κηδεμονία is used to express the care given by parents to children and guardianship and κηδεμών was used as the word for guardian at least in IV AD.¹⁶² In late III AD, in P.Oxy XXXIV 2713 Recto (297 AD) the prefect of Egypt becomes not only the benefactor but also the protector or carer of all: σοι τῶ ἐμῶ καὶ πάντων [εὐεργέτ]η καὶ κηδεμόνι. The role of prefect has become assimilated to the position of guardianship, with attendant notions of trust and responsibility.¹⁶³ P.Sakaon 36 (c 280 AD)=(P.Ryl 114, Sel.Pap. II 293) shows that this idea can be joined with vocabulary of similar semantic domains: the prefect as well as guardian has here "love of equity" and "solicitude for all", especially women and orphans.¹⁶⁴

(3) τὸ μετριοφιλές σου αἰσθομένη,
 [δέσποτά μου ἡ]γεμών, καὶ περὶ πάντας κηδεμονίαν,
 [μάλιστα περὶ γυναικας καὶ χῆρας, τὴν προσέλευσιν ποι-
 |οῦμαί σοι ἀξιοῦσα τῆς ἀπὸ σοῦ βοηθείας τυχεῖν.

162 P.Tebt II 326 (c. 266 AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 77 (320 AD); P.Oxy LIV 3764 (326 AD).

163 P.Cair.Isidor. 74 (315 AD).

164 P.Sakaon 40 (318-320 AD)=(P.Thead 19) asserts that vindication of wronged orphans is a special role for the praeses.

We may compare P.Oxy I 71, col. I (303 AD) in which the prefect of Egypt is the protector or carer of humble honest citizens (τῶν μετρίων κηδεμῶν),¹⁶⁵ such that the petitioner hopes to meet with "the just judgment" of his "greatness" (εὐελπὶς ὦν τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ σοῦ μεγέθους δικαιοκρισίας τυχεῖν).¹⁶⁶

The theme of the paternal preserver is particularly prevalent in the *Aethiopica* of Heliodorus. There is a scene in Book IV.17 where the hero and heroine, Theagenes and Chariclea, young lovers in the grip of ill fortune, approach the wily Calasiris seeking his aid to escape their troubles:

..., ὡς ἐμὲ δὲ λαθραῖοι καταφεύγουσι, καὶ μου τοῖς γόνασιν ἄμα προσπεσόντες ἐπὶ πλείστον εἶχοντο, τρόμῳ τε παλλόμενοι καὶ "σῶζε πάτερ" συνεχῆς ἐπιφθεγγόμενοι.

"...they fled back to me in secret, and falling down they clasped at my knees, with a tremble saying "Save us, father" together."

It is to be remembered that elsewhere in Book IV Calasiris is addressed as "saviour" and "god", and here the lovers go to him because he is perceived to know things which will bring them help.¹⁶⁷ This is an interesting parallel because it combines the traditional gesture of supplication at the knees of the powerful figure with his address as "Father". We see here how the themes of supplication and paternalism are combined in the conceptualisation of a person who is powerful through the possession of knowledge.

When we turn to abstract attributes of goodness courage and strength there were in currency in petitions a number of concepts which clearly hark back to the classical orators. After the beginning of III AD we find a particularly obvious one, namely, καλοκάγαθία which is found in connection with the prefect and acting

165 Cf P.Ryl. II 114 (c. 280 AD): (3) τὸ μετριοφιλὲς σου αἰσθομένη, [δέσποτά μου ἡ]γεμῶν.

166 See also P.Oxy XII 1467 (263 AD); P.Oxy XII 1469 (298 AD); P.Oxy XII 1470 (336 AD), in which the petitioner says διὸ δέομαι τῆς σῆς κηδαιμονίας, λαμπρότατε ἔπαρχε.

167 IV.7.

prefect.¹⁶⁸ Ἀνδρεία was prominent also from III AD.¹⁶⁹ Both these terms may reflect the influence of the Second Sophistic. In the later Roman period the attribute was resumed by the prefect when the post was restored after the defeat of Licinius, and it continued to be used by the praeses Thebaidos.¹⁷⁰ It can also be found modified by adjectives which emphasise the legitimacy and just aspects of the official. In P.Sakaon 38 (17 Aug 312 AD)(=P.Flor 36, M.Chrest II 64) it appears twice. First in an introductory sentence modified by μισοπόνηρος, which is discussed shortly in connection with justice and the rule of law, in the passage (3) τὰ παρανόμως καὶ ῥιψοκινδύνως ἐπὶ τῶν τόπων τολμώμενα, ἡγεμῶν δέσποτα, ὑφ' οὐδενὸς ἄλλου ἀνακόπτεται εἰμὴ ὑπὸ [τῆς σῆς μισο]πονήρου ἀνδρίας ("Unlawful and audacious acts perpetrated in the localities, my lord prefect, are suppressed by none other than your worthiness, who abhors wickedness"). This passage closely links the ἀνδρεία of the prefect to the bad or undesirable attitudes of wrongdoers, as does the subsequent phrase (17) τῆ σῆ ἀ[κα]ταφρονήτῳ ἀνδρία ("to your not-to-be-despised courage"). The adjective ἀκαταφρόνητος evokes by way of antithesis the attitudes of contempt expressed principally in the verb καταφρονέω. These were continuously referred to in the papyri, and were a continuation of the classical notion of *hybris*, which was the ancient articulation of the honour and shame antithesis, which we will discuss at more length in chapter 7.¹⁷¹

Close to ἀνδρεία is the notion of the "greatness" or "highness" of the official as in P.Cair.Isidor. 66 (299 AD) κ[α]τέφυ[γον ἐπὶ τὸ σὸν] μεγαλείον.¹⁷² By the period III to IV AD this concept of greatness or majesty can appear joined with the

168 P.Oxy XVII 2133 (Late III AD); P.Harr I 68 (225 AD) See Zilliacus, "Untersuchungen zu den abstrakten Anredeformen", 45.

169 See CPR V 7.9 n. P.Amh. II 82 (Late III or early IV AD); P.Sakaon 42 (c. 323)(=P.Thead 20) See further Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, 180-81

170 P.Oxy LIV 3757.9 n

171 Contempt was an expression of *hybris*, and therefore issues of honour and shame, see chapter 7, generally..

172 See CPR V 12.4 and note for a discussion. Cf Tebt. II 326 (266 AD); P.Oxy XVII 2131 (207 AD) has the noun μεγαλειότης; P.Cair.Isidor. 66 (299 AD); P.Oxy I 71.1.20 (303 AD): παραπεμφθῆναι ἐπὶ τὸ σὸν μεγαλίον; P.Oxy 71.2.4-5: πρόσειμι τῷ σῷ μεγαλείῳ; P.Oxy XLVI 3302 Recto (300-1 AD); P.Amh. II 82 (Late III or early IV AD); P.Oxy XVIII 2187 (304 AD); P.Oxy L 3574 (314-18 AD); P.Sakaon 41 (14 July 322)(=P.Ryl IV 659)

benefaction motif as in P.Oxy XVII 2133 (Late III AD): τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ σ[ο]ῦ μεγαλειοῦ εὐεργεσίας, which is a good example of the combining of old and new symbolic language in connection with the prefect. The emperors Valerian and Gallienus are given a similar attribution in the word μεγαλοφροσυνή in P.Oxy 3366 (253-60 AD).

The third category of law and justice has great importance for the current work. We discussed in chapter 1 how the process of legitimation has a cohesive effect on social groupings, partly because it meets the underlying perception of the threat of anomic situations. The importance of law and its stabilising and civilising effect were often expressed in the Greco-Roman period. Crime and violence are especially visible forms of behaviour which suggest social deviance and imply a rejection of normative regulation and therefore anomie. Thus issues of the rule of law confronting the perception of and experience of anomie formed an essential aspect of the symbolic legitimation of the sovereign and his officials. In this they were to some extent successors to the debate about *nomos* and *physis* which was deeply embedded in the history of Greek philosophical and political ideas. In the absolutism of the Hellenistic monarchy the individualism represented in *physis* lost ground in favour of normative regulation, *nomos*.¹⁷³

The concepts of law and order, justice and injustice permeate the language of petitions. The language of law and justice is very important, for the modern mind as much as the ancient mind, in setting the contours and the nature of the context in which the interaction with the powerful official takes place. The theme of justice was a very important aspect of the relationship between petitioner and official, and provided a prime point of intellectual and structural access to the official's power as protector and benefactor at both a symbolic and practical level. So it is difficult to understand how the sovereign and his officials were seen to play their part in the lives

173 M. Orru, *Anomie: History and Meanings* (Allen & Unwin, Boston, 1987), 25.

of the general population without reference to the legal system and its institutional context.

Hellenistic kingship became "a legitimate form of government, that form, in fact, which was expected to provide security, stability, relief from misfortune, protection to cities, and justice to individuals..."¹⁷⁴ In the *Letter of Aristeas* §291 a type of εὐνομία is said to be the most important facet of kingship, namely, the protection of people through the establishment of laws and swift justice. To the extent that this conceptualisation can be understood as an extension of the sovereign as saviour and benefactor it seems representative of his personal power. But the underlying notion of the application of institutionalised normative regulation was present, and indicates how his role became more fixed in the location of the institutions of law. Several scholars like Wolff and Schubart have shown that in the Ptolemaic kingdom the king was not only the source of law but was bound by the law.¹⁷⁵ We see here that the connection between social stability and the application of power in accordance with legal precepts has become a significant component of how the world was understood, and indicates a progression towards a society configured by relatively fixed locations of power in time and space.¹⁷⁶ The role of the Ptolemaic sovereign as source of law became an integral element of his role as σωτήρ, which indicates why his position as saviour had a particularly forensic dimension.

In the Roman period, the importance of laws and the powerful figure as dispenser of justice grew stronger. The emperor of course had an enormous importance in the system of Roman law. The power of officials became located more

174 A.E. Samuel, *The Promise of the West* (Routledge, London and New York, 1988), 184.

175 "Das Hellenistische Königsideal", at 7. See also H.J. Wolff, *Das Justizwesen der Ptolemäer* (München, 1962)(Münch. Beitr. 44). In an interesting extension of the usual associations of φιλανθρωπία (which is discussed elsewhere in this work) with the office and actions of sovereign and officials, in P.Oxy XVIII 2177 (III AD), which is another episode from the *Acta Alexandrinorum* the laws of Athens and Alexandria are described as (l. 15-19) πάν[των] γάρ νόμων ἰσχυρότε[ροι] ὄντες τὴν εὐκρασίαν [τῆς] φιλανθρωπίας ἔχουσι(ν). ("for they are stronger than all other laws and have the happy blend of clemency and strength").

176 See B.D. Shaw, "Josephus: Roman Power and Responses to It", *Athenaeum*. 83 (1995), 357-390.

overtly within the institutionalised framework of the legal system: the prefect and the laws for example were appealed to in petitions such that the notion of "the laws", in the form of edicts, decisions and precedents, with which the personal power of the official is seen to operate in tandem, became expressed in the conception of legitimate power in Egypt.

In petitions from the Ptolemaic period the action of the king or officials against anything from violence to breach of contract was seen as a manifestation of justice.¹⁷⁷ P.Ent. 75 (221 BC) a complaint about violence concluded with the expression of an expectation of justice and assistance: τεύξομαι τοῦ δικαίου καὶ βοηθείας. In P.Ent. 43 (221 BC) justice is joined with mercy in a complaint about maltreatment of an old man: ἴνα, ὦ βασιλεῦ, διὰ σοῦ τοῦ δικαίου καὶ ἐλεοῦ τετευχῶς εἰς τὸ [λοῦ]πον τοῦ βίου. We can see that justice was, from the start of our period, well within the same symbolic domains as the concepts of compassion and benefaction which characterise the actions of monarchs and their officials. It was clearly also an important outcome for people who petitioned lower officials.¹⁷⁸ However, we can see in the union of justice to ideas like kindness or compassion how the notion of the rule of law remained very closely tied to the power of the official as a mainly personal attribute.

This can also be seen in the utilisation of related ideas, especially μισοπονηρία ("hatred of wickedness") and associated forms which are frequent in Ptolemaic petitions especially from II and I BC.¹⁷⁹ It can appear in phrases which use an adverbial form such as P.Amh. II 35 (132 BC): διαλαβεῖν περὶ αὐτοῦ μισοπονήρως, a petition about the wrongful collection of rent by a chief priest, or a result clauses like UPZ I 8 (c. 161 BC): ὅπως περὶ ἀπάντων τούτων τύχῃσι τῆς προσηκούσης μισοπονηρίας.¹⁸⁰ It is interesting that the concept is not often found

177 See Di Bitonto (1967) and (1968) generally.

178 Di Bitonto (1968), 103-4.

179 UPZ I 8 (c. 161 BC); P.Amh. II 35 (132 BC).

180 See document 4 chapter 4. See also Di Bitonto (1968) 92.

in petitions to the monarch and seems generally to have graced approaches to lower officials. Examples seem to be rarer in the early Roman period but gain in frequency later, although BGU I 226 (99 AD), a petition to the strategos Tiberius Claudius Areius, is an early example in which a woman named Tabous complains about her brother Satabous and claims she is in need of the *μισοπονηρία* of the prefect Pompeius Planta: (9) ἐνχρηζούσης τῆς τοῦ κρατίστου ἡγεμόνο(ς) | [Πο]μπηίου Πλάντα μισοπονηρίας.¹⁸¹ In BGU XI 2061 (207 AD), a petition to the prefect about some sort of violence, the petitioner dramatically says (l. 9) τὸ μείσοπὸνῆρον σου προκαλέσωμαι εἰς ὀργήν ("I call forth your hatred of wickedness to anger").¹⁸² This is one concept where the vocabulary seems to have fairly consistent currency right through our period.

In many petitions of the Roman period, the position of the official as repository of legitimacy and power is clearly underscored by reference to the need for laws and the requirement that people obey them, as well as the fact that petitioners will rely upon their legal rights. These were often placed in the introductory sentences which appear in II AD, thereby immediately underscoring the forensic nature of the interaction. The theme of law and legal redress did not escape the general increase in the range of vocabulary and the trend to abstraction in III AD. In many ways this may simply reflect the nature of Roman rule, as we mentioned in chapter 3. But the theme of justice as an attribute of an official or the outcome of his action leads easily to the notion of the rule of law and this development is discernible in the later Roman period.¹⁸³ The greater emphasis which was given to the rule of law accords with the other trends towards the preference for abstractions which we have already remarked upon. The innate justice of the official, which is implicit in the Ptolemaic and early Roman official, becomes explicit through terms like *ἔμφυτος*

181 See also PSI XIII 1323 (147/8 AD); P.Ryl. II 113 (133 AD); P.Amh. II 83 (Late III or early IV AD).

182 Cf P.L. Bat. XXV 34 (140 AD) at 16.

183 Cf the development at Athens traced by M. Ostwald in *From Popular Sovereignty to the Sovereignty of Law* (Uni of Cal Press, Berkeley, 1986).

in the later Roman period, and was undoubtedly a key factor in giving him legitimacy in the eyes of the population. In P.Oxy XVII 2131 (207 AD) the introductory sentence contains a good example of this: (l. 7 ff) τῆς ἐμφύτου σου, ἡγεμῶν δεσποτά, δικαιοδοσίας διηκούσης εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους, καὶ αὐτὸς ἀδικηθεὶς ἐπὶ σὲ καταφεύγ[ω] ἀξιῶν ἐκδικίας τυχεῖν ("Since your ingrained justice, my lord prefect, is extended to all men, I too, having been wronged, have recourse to you, begging for redress.") In P.Oxy XVII 2133 (Late III AD) we see the descendant of the closing Ptolemaic appeal and expectation of the petitioner to meet with justice, when Aurelia Eus says to the prefect that she petitions him εἰς τὸ τῶν δικ[αί]ων τυχεῖν ὑπὸ τῆς σῆς καλοκαγαθείας ("so that I may obtain my rights from your nobleness").¹⁸⁴ Here we also see how the Ptolemaic petitioner's expectation of justice at the hands of the king is taken up and joined with an attribute (καλοκαγαθεία) which was also in play in the Hellenistic period, and set in a new pattern of linguistic expression to articulate the response to the Roman prefect.

By II or III AD the existence of rights and the importance of the laws to protect against extortion were commonly expressed in petitions.¹⁸⁵ So in P.Cair.Isidor. 68 (309/10 AD) Aurelius Isidorus, in a petition to the *praepositus pagi*, draws the connection between the laws and protection of those in modest circumstances (ll. 4-6): τὰ ἐπὶ ἀνατροπῆ(ν) καὶ φυγ[α]δίαν γινόμενα ἡμῖν τοῖς μετρίοις οἱ νόμοι κωλύουσι ("The laws forbid actions aimed at ruining us, the people of small means, and driving us to flight").¹⁸⁶ P.Sakaon 47 (29 Mar 342 AD)(=P.Thead 23, P.Abinn 44) at 15 states explicitly that it is the function of the *dux* to exact vengeance on those who behave like robbers, while in P.Sakaon 48 (6 April 343 AD)(=SB VI 9622) Aurelius Zoilus son of Melas, deacon of a Christian church opens his petition to the *praepositus pagi* with the words: οἱ τὸν ἀν[αιδ]ῆ [κ]αὶ

184 P.Oxy XXXIV 2713 Recto (297 AD).

185 This recognition is clearly expressed in the introductory sentence of P.Cair.Isidor. 69 (310 AD): πολλάκις μὲν προστέτακτε ὑπὸ τῶν νόμων ὥστε μηδένα ὑπερανακρατῆσθαι ἢ παραπράττεσθαι.

186 Cf from the same period P.Oxy XXXIII 2667 Recto (22/6/309 AD) in which a *logistes* urges an ex-*logistes* to "conform" to the command of the prefect to provide an account.

ληστρικὸν [τρο]πὸν ἠ'ρημ[έ]ν[οι], καθαρῶτατε τῶν [ἀ]νδρῶν, δίκαι[οί] εἰσι [τῆς] τῶν νόμων ἐπεξελε[ε]ύσεως τυχεῖν ("Those who have chosen the way of shamelessness and robbery, o purest of men, deserve to experience the punishment of the laws")

We have already seen an aspect of this in connection with the justice of the official. P.Oxy I 67 (338 AD) is a letter from Aurelius Ptolemaios to Aurelius Aëtius, an ex-official of high standing. Aëtius has been appointed by the prefect to judge a property dispute between Ptolemaios and Pataësis Luluntis and Panechotes of the village of Lile. The papyrus also contains the direction from the prefect Flavius Antonius Theodorus to Aëtius to decide the dispute "taking care to enforce the precepts of the law": (ll. 11-12) φρόντισσον τὰς κατὰ νόμους αὐτοῦς παραγγελίας ὑποδέξασθαι. The papyrus then goes on to record the terms of the petition to the prefect by Ptolemaios. After the opening address the petition says: (ll. 14-15) πάντα μὲν, ὡς ἔπος ἐστὶν εἰπεῖν, ὅσα εἰσχύειν τι δύν[α]τ[αι] παρὰ τὴν τῶν νόμων [ισχύ]ν πρὸς ὀλίγον εἰσχύει, ἐπανορθοῦτε δὲ ὕστερον ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν νόμων ἐπεξελεύσεως ("Everything, it may be said, that is able to withstand the power of the law withstands but for a short time then submits to the law's correcting vengeance.") This of course makes the dispute an issue about compliance with the law, as well as about the infringement of Ptolemaios' property rights. The language of this sentence is the language of a struggle between the law and whosoever seeks to resist its power. The very next sentence sets out the dispute and the parties and then Ptolemaios invites the prefect to adjudge the dispute, thereby making explicit the connection between the action of the prefect and the operation of the law. In this we can see how the mentality has moved from conceptualising the conflict between legitimate and illegitimate power as a process of direct intervention or application of coercion by the monarch or official to one in which the official acts in tandem with a more abstract concept, the rule of law.¹⁸⁷ This is explicit also, for

187 See also P.Cair.Isidor. 63 (Nov 296 AD).

example, in the intriguing text of BGU IV 1024 (IV AD), a collection of reports of proceedings. The seventh case concerns the murder of a prostitute by Diodemos, an Alexandrian senator. In the proceedings the mother (γραῦς καὶ πένης) of the dead girl makes a pitiful plea for maintenance having lost the support of her daughter. The magistrate sentences Diodemos to death for the murder and gives one tenth of his estate to the mother because "the laws suggest this to me and a sense of clemency joins in inspiring the power of the laws" (τοῦτό μοι τῶν νόμων ὑποβαλλόντων τῆς φιλανθρωπίας συνπνευσάσης τῇ τῶ[ν] νόμων ἐξουσίᾳ).¹⁸⁸ The power of the laws is specifically linked with the very resilient concept of φιλανθρωπία.

In the later Roman period there is sometimes reference to a concept closely allied to the rule of law, namely, that the activities of wrongdoers disturb the peace and harmony produced by the laws of the current rulers. This sentiment is found in P.Oxy XLVI 3302 Recto (300-1 AD), a petition from a woman named Aurelia Serenilla against influential persons who have deprived her of property contrary to decisions about ownership in her favour, adopting behaviour incompatible "with the laws and the peace granted to us in accordance with them by your Highness (l. 16: οὐδὲ ἄξια ἀλλὰ ἀνοίκεια καὶ τῶ[ν] νόμων καὶ] τῆς τούτο[ι]ς ἀκολουθῶς πρυτανευομένης ἡμεῖν ὑπὸ τοῦ σοῦ μεγαλείου [εἰρήνης]).

We may finish this section with a comment upon one way in which the role of the official was conceptualised which was embedded in the language of capacity and power of Ancient Greek. Often the notion of something close to empowerment of the petitioner by the official is present in the language of petitions. The benefit of the exercise of power by the official was also made clear by reference to the enabling effect it had upon the position of the petitioner. Words from the *δυν-* stem are very frequent both to describe what the impact of the official will be. Examples could be multiplied at great length, but it is important to mention this theme because, as we see

188 See J.G. Keenan, "Roman Criminal Law in a Berlin Papyrus Codex (BGU IV 1024-1027)", *AJP* 35 (1989), 15-23.

in chapter 7, it, like many others, is mirrored in similar vocabulary of power of wrongdoers, but with negative connotations, such as *δυναστεία*.¹⁸⁹

In the Ptolemaic period many petitions to officials conclude by stating that, if the official does something, the petitioners will be able to achieve a named objective, and particularly this is said in connection with the payment of rents and taxes, which as we saw in chapter 3, were the economic aspect of fundamental structural relationships in that period: *τούτου γενομένου δυ[νη]σόμεθα τὰ ἐκφορία παραδοῦναι*.¹⁹⁰ In P.Amh. II 35 (132 BC) the action of the strategos in dealing with a breach of pledge by the chief priest is said to permit the priests of the temple of Socnopaiou Nesos to continue with their ministrations to the gods and the king and his children: *ὅπως δυνώμεθα ἐπιτελεῖν τὰ νομιζόμενα τοῖς θεοῖς ὑπέρ τε τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τῶν βασιλικῶν τέκνων*.¹⁹¹ Closely allied to this idea is the idea of the sovereign or official "not permitting", by virtue of his power, the ruin of the petitioner, as in P.Cair.Zen. III 59520 (III BC): (8) *δέομαι οὖν [σο]υ καὶ ἱκετεύω, εἰ καὶ σοι δοκεῖ, μὴ περιδεῖν με καταφθειρόμενον ἀδίκως ἐν τῷ δεσμωτηρίῳ*.¹⁹²

The Roman period witnessed a shift in emphasis in this theme of the empowering effect of officials. In the Ptolemaic period the surviving evidence gives a flavour of petitioners stressing the action of the monarch or officials to enable them to discharge their fiscal and collective responsibilities. There develops a tone in the Roman period whereby petitioners are more inclined to stress the benefit to themselves of the government action. Examples from II AD and thereafter demonstrate this. In BGU I 340 (c. 148-9 AD) a woman Toedoutos complains that a certain Capitolinus and someone with him attacked her and tried to profit from her

189 See the collection of references in Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, 141.

190 See for example P.Lille I 8 (IIIBC); UPZ I 43 (162-1 BC); P.Tebt. III:1 786 (c 138 BC); P.Tebt. III:1 787 (c 138 BC); P.Tebt. I 41 (119 BC); P.Tebt. I 50 (112-111 BC).

191 Cf UPZ I 43 (162-1 BC); UPZ I 51 (161 BC).

192 Sometimes the verb is *ὑπεριδεῖν*, see the collection of examples in Di Bitonto (1967), 50ff, and (1968), 99ff.

inheritance. She asks the epistrategos Statilius Maximus to intervene: ἵνα δυν[η]- |
 θῶ γυνῆ μώνου συμβένιν ὑπό σου | εὐεργετηθῆσα. There is no suggestion of
 benefit to the government explicit in this. Similarly in BGU I 195 (c 161 AD) the
 action of the epistrategos will enable a legionary to be avenged for contempt, which
 as we will see in chapter 5 was a constant theme in petitions: (37) καὶ δυνηθῶ
 ἐγδικ[ασ]θῆναι | κατα[φ]ρονηθεῖς ἐκ τῆς περὶ [τῆ]ν | στρατίαν ἀπου[σί]α[ς]
 μου. ("...and I may be able to be revenged, having been held in contempt through my
 absence from the army.").¹⁹³ In P.Oxy I 69 (190 AD) the petitioner complains about
 robbery of barley. The text concludes by saying that if the official (who is unknown)
 orders the culprits to come before him and make due inquiry, the petitioner will "be
 able to recover the barley" (εἰς τὸ καὶ ἐμαὶ δύνασθαι τὴν κριθὴν ἀπολαβεῖν).¹⁹⁴
 When we come to III AD the notion of the enabling effect of the prefect is still
 expressed but the emphasis shifts back in some respects to benefits for the official not
 the petitioner. This is illustrated by a text like P.Sakaon 37 (Jan/Feb 284
 AD)(=P.Thead 18) a petition about tax collection from two children of Kaët and the
 scribe concluded by saying: (18) οὐ[τ]ῶ γὰρ δυνησόμεθα ὑ[π]ὸ σοῦ βεβοηθημένοι
 διὰ παντός [σοι χάριτας τὰς μεγίστας ὁμολογή]σειν ("and in this way, having
 been helped by you, we shall be able for ever to acknowledge our highest gratitude to
 you").¹⁹⁵

The tone set by all the uses of language in this section, from saviour and benefactor, to abstract virtues to the theme of empowerment was very personal. The power which was to be exercised by the various officials was perceived to be somehow special to them at least in the articulation of its nature in the petitions. The personal tone was set by all the types of language use but is particularly apparent in the predominant use of personal pronouns σύ, σέ, σοῦ and the possessive forms to address the official or describe his attributes and by the frequent use of vocatives. On

193 Cf BGU I 180 (II-III AD).

194 See also BGU VIII 1858 (I BC); P.Oxy 71.1 πρὸς το δυνηθῆναι με τὰ ἴδια ἀπολαβεῖν.

195 Cf P.Sakaon 36 (c 280 AD)(=P.Ryl 114, Sel.Pap. II 293).

the other hand it might be said that the trend to abstract virtues as the point of address in later petitions indicates a depersonalising trend, but this was offset by the possessive adjectives. Overall these observations suggest again that despite an obvious movement towards fixed locations of power in institutional roles in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, the personal dimension of power remained very strong.

5.4 SUMMARY

The foregoing discussion hopefully has left little room for doubt that the role of monarchs and officials in the lives of the smaller communities and individual problems of the general population were consistently conceptualised in terms of a symbolic order which was recursively instantiated, that is, reused, interpreted and set in new patterns from III BC to IV AD by the communities of Greco-Roman Egypt. This symbolic order clearly affected most aspects of social life and penetrated deeply into the multicultural realities of Egypt in this period. Elements of the symbolic order were articulated within the terms of the linguistic framework of petitions which constituted a special mode of discourse in the legal and administrative context. When individuals experienced a problem with taxation, rent, inheritance etc they entered into the role of petitioner, and this gave them access to the symbolic universe through the recognised categories, rhetorical topoi and social types which informed the judicial and administrative context of the Greco-Roman Egypt. In analytical terms this mode of discourse seems to have had four main dimensions or aspects, preservation and benefaction and help, kindness and compassion, courage and strength, the rule of law and justice, which in practice always overlapped enormously and it seems to have possessed a genuine religious signification at least in the time of the Ptolemies, but which carried over into the Roman administration, even if in a form which was diminished in the sense that direct connections with a cult position were often lacking.

The conclusion is therefore that these four dimensions were some of the principal symbolic means by which the basic social roles, the sovereign and his

officials and their forms of power were rendered legitimate, and this involved a religious dimension. We are in fact able to conclude that there was constituted a "forensic saviour" tradition through which the general population gained access to the power of the government and brought it into connection with their individual problems. It is significant that this saviour tradition had its genesis and underlying parameters in a religious context as part of the ruler cult of the Ptolemies and as part of a generalised response to power, even if its practical application to people's lives was most closely defined by the association with the institutions of the legal system and the concept of law. When it is understood as a response to power, it is possible to see that the saviour tradition, articulated most obviously in the saviour and benefactor motif, had a religious and symbolic dimension which was passed from the Ptolemies to the Roman administrators and which was not totally lost in the process, perhaps because the Roman prefect and the epistrategos continued a role in the resolution of the problems of ordinary people which had commenced with the Ptolemies. In the light of these conclusions we will turn to examine how a particular linguistic and structural component of the mode of discourse of many petitions extended the symbolic significance of the forensic saviour tradition which we have identified in this chapter, namely, the language of supplication.

CHAPTER 6

SUPPLICATION AND RECIPROCITY

The Symbolic Universe II

6.1 INTRODUCTION

We have seen how the epistolographical style and structure of the petition betrayed its nature as an artefact principally designed to establish and carry out linguistic interaction between ordinary members of the population and powerful officials. We saw that a central structural element of the petition was the request, which sought to invoke the official's power for the benefit of the petitioner and encapsulated the dependence which lay at the heart of the relationship between petitioner or litigant and official. The request recognised power as the productive feature of the relationship. The request and the relationship upon which it was based also presupposed a particular quality for this power, namely, that it was a balanced mix of personal and formal.

We have seen how the sovereign and his officials in both the Ptolemaic and Roman periods filled roles which represented a large segment of the institutional order of Greco-Roman Egypt, which enjoyed a significant presence in the administrative, legal, economic and political areas. Within the rules and resources of the administrative and legal institutions of Egypt, the king, the emperor, the prefect and their officials were conceptualised in the symbolic guise of saviour and benefactor, with positive attributes like *ἀνδρεία* or *μισοπονηρία*. So in the context of seeking help there was a presumption of legitimacy on the part of the petitioner, that is, the role of the official was conceptualised in its dimension as the stabilising, preserving and protecting force against the chaotic and destructive power implied in the behaviour of the wrongdoer.

In developing the notions of compassion, preservation and justice which we examined in the last chapter, the present chapter will argue that a central symbolic and structural element in the texts was the language of supplication or asylum. It will be argued that the notion of supplication, and in particular the conceptualisation of the petition as a written act of supplication was a fundamental expression the relationship between the official and the petitioner, that is, an instantiation of the asymmetries of power which were implanted in the structure of the social system in Greco-Roman Egypt. This is very important. The language of supplication in petitions articulated a relationship of dependence whereby the petitioner yielded up responsibility to the powerful official for help or vindication of some wrong committed. This has particular significance, as we will see in chapter 7, in connection with the honour and shame antithesis in which the role of the official was not only to apply legal concepts but to use the application of his power to uphold a person's honour. Often it involved an element of reciprocity, seen especially in the suggestion that if the official provides help the public revenue will be preserved. But we shall leave these matters for discussion in later chapters. The present chapter will deal with questions relating to supplication.

6.2 SUPPLICATION

Supplication was most commonly used to express the central facet of the relationship between petitioner and official. It signalled the power of the official, and continued throughout the period under consideration, III BC to IV AD. The request was elevated beyond the immediate connotations of a verb such as *δέομαι* or *παρακαλῶ*, by association with the language of an act of supplication or refuge corresponding to the act of seeking asylum in temples, at altars or cult statues or supplication between mortals. The concept of supplication before the powerful figure had a natural affinity with the perception of the king or official as preserver and helper of the weak in a practical sense. 111 examples of the use of supplicatory language are set out in Table 6.4 which appears at the end of this chapter. This shows that the verbs *καταφεύγω* or

προσφεύγω appear frequently throughout our period to express the act of approaching the government for help in petitions. On occasion the idea is also amplified by use of standard words for suppliant, like *ἰκέτης*, *ἰκετεύω* or *ἰκετηρία*.¹ This was a primary concept upon which were built ideas of benefaction, help, kindness, courage, grace or mercy. Collomp viewed the presence of the *καταφυγή* theme in Ptolemaic petitions as in many ways the definitive moral and religious expression of the role of Ptolemaic monarch in the context of petitions.² It is argued here that we should extend this conclusion to petitions of the Roman period as well, and this leads to the view that the petition itself was understood as and constructed as a ritual written form of an act of supplication.

The language of supplication in petitions raises a number of issues, but principle among them must be the nature of Greco-Roman supplication, and its social and religious significance and the precise relationship between the well known physical ritual actions and language use. The motif first appears in petitions of III BC directed to the Ptolemaic monarch who was of course also the object of a specific cult. There is then the issue of the continuity of usage and meaning of the supplication motif into the Roman period. This also raises a question of religious significance when the motif appears in connection with officials who had no cult status, which is raised also by other language use, such as, the use of the adjective *θεότατος* in relation the *strategos*.³ These observations indicate that the symbolic associations of the language of refuge or supplication in petitions are complex and of central importance in understanding how the general population understood the role of institutional power in their own lives. Characterising the approach to the official for help as an act of supplication or asylum shows how the role of officials, and not just the sovereign, was conceptualised by reference to religious as well as abstract,

1 See nos 5, 6, 23, 39, 91, 95, 103 in Table 6.4.

2 P. Collomp, *Recherches sur la chancellerie et diplomatique des Lagides* (Strasbourg, 1926), 124.

3 BGU VIII 1838 (51/50 BC), a petition to the *strategos* Soteles in which he is addressed *τῷ θεοτάτῳ καὶ κυρίῳ στρατηγῷ*. See further in Chapter 8.

ethical, judicial and administrative symbolic concepts. It is here particularly that problems of methodology are acute and it is therefore here that the application of fresh linguistic notions, such as the notion of speech acts, can yield a greater understanding of the ritual use of language, including written formulae. In his study of Greek supplication John Gould distinguishes ritual supplication from "figurative" supplication, with the latter encompassing the use of the language of supplication without ritual action.⁴ The question of a disjunction between language and action is, of course, something which was discussed extensively in chapter 1 where it was proposed that it is more correct to see language use as a type of action, and this approach will ultimately have a significant impact upon our assessment of what Gould called "figurative" supplication. In part this question also connects with the rhetorical forensic tradition which undoubtedly exerted great influence over the choice of language in petitions.

These issues trespass on areas of some complexity, especially those relating to the nature of supplication and the associations between language use and ritual action. They are also the ones which most benefit from the application of the methodology endorsed in this thesis. However, the consideration of the precise theories of language as action which assist the understanding of formulae in petitions, and especially the motif of supplication, are best examined in connection with forms of ancient prayer. So it is proposed to approach the evidence in the following fashion. The nature of supplication as a social and religious institution in Greece will be explored so that its general outline can be understood. The position in Egypt needs to be discussed in the light of this because there we find a set of special circumstances in which asylum in a temple had singular economic and political, as well as ritual,

4 J. Gould, "HIKETEIA", *JHS* 93 (1973), 74-103. At fn 7 he lists some of the older scholarship on supplication. Since the publication of Gould's article there have been several further studies notably: V. Pedrick, "Supplication in the Iliad and the Odyssey", *TAPA* 112 (1982), 125-140; A. Thornton, *Homer's Iliad: its composition and the motif of supplication* (Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1984); G. Freyburger, "Supplication grecque et supplication romaine", *Latomus* 47 (1988), 501; W. Pötscher, "Die Strukturen der Hikesie", *Wien. Stud.* 107/108 (1995), 51-75; U. Sinn, "Greek sanctuaries as places of refuge", in N. Marinatos, R. Hägg (eds.), *Greek Sanctuaries: New Approaches* (Routledge, London and New York, 1995), 88-109.

overtone. Then we will discuss some rhetorical antecedents of the language of petitions, and some speeches from court rooms of Greco-Roman Egypt, in particular in connection with the language of supplication. Against that background the evidence from the sources concerning supplication will be presented in a basically chronological format with discussion of some aspects of its meaning. We will defer to chapter 8 discussion of how the language of supplication links up with the language of prayers and the implications of this. It should be noted that the deferral will include a particular form of supplicatory language, namely, supplication at the feet of an official which appeared in III AD.

6.2.1 Supplication in Greece, Hellenistic and Roman Egypt

Anyone acquainted with the corpus of Greek literature, would have become aware of how frequently the language of supplication appears. This makes it somewhat strange that it has been a bit neglected as a topic of study among scholars. The article of Gould published in 1973 made a very interesting attempt to remedy the situation. His work made clear that the concept of ἱκετεία displays "a particular instance of the ritualisation of reciprocity around a value (prestige) of universally accepted significance in the society of ancient Greece."⁵ The importance of this is very great and will become clearer when we come to examine aspects of honour and shame in the next chapter, as they appear in petitions, and when we come to look at the connections between reciprocity in ancient prayer and in petitions in chapter 8. In particular, a relationship of reciprocity involves an obvious element of mutuality, in the sense that both parties to the relationship enjoy benefits and shoulder obligations. Supplication and reciprocity in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds became absolutely fundamental for the negotiation of power in institutional contexts.

Gould relied extensively upon passages in Homer, but also classical tragedians and historians, to develop his argument, but his overall conclusions about ἱκετεία are

5 Gould, "HIKETEIA", 75.

a very useful way into the problem of supplication generally. In brief, supplication was a ritual whereby the supplicated placed himself or herself under the protection of, and submitted to the power of, the supplicated, whether man or god.⁶ Supplication could be undertaken either face to face, between human and human or human and god, or through contact with an altar or holy precinct. Gould concludes that supplication was constituted by a ritual act which depended upon physical contact with parts of the body which were regarded as having a peculiar sanctity, especially hands and knees. Where physical contact did not occur, but for example words of supplication were used by the putative suppliant, we have an example of "figurative" supplication which lacked the "full ritual significance of the completed act, and are adopted either where the situation requires no more than an intensification of the language of diplomatic appeal."⁷ Further, the ritual of supplication heavily involved the value of honour but in a special fashion. The suppliant through gestures of self abasement like kneeling or crouching, coupled with words of self-abasement, sacrificed his or her own τιμή thereby "extravagantly" recognising the honour (and power) of the supplicated, whose obligation, apart from protection, was to restore honour to the suppliant by observing the obligations imposed by the ritual. Although for the supplicated this seems to have been a status elevation ritual, it also seems to have involved an inversion of the societal norm of competing for honour in almost every aspect of life.⁸

More recently the German scholar Walter Pötscher, again, mainly on the basis of Homer and the Greek tragedians, has made a further distinction between types of supplication. He maintains that there are two forms of supplication, the submissive, which corresponds to the description of Gould given above, and "aggressive" supplication in which the suppliant makes a claim upon the supplicated and can

6 G. Freyburger, "Supplication grecque et supplication romaine", at 509ff emphasises that the ritual was of religious and legal significance.

7 "HIKETEIA", at 77. We note here that this distinction seems to have immediate application to the language of petitions, which have traditionally been seen as an offshoot of the language of diplomatic encounter. But for reasons which are presented shortly such a conclusion is too trite.

8 "HIKETEIA", at 95, 100.

enforce his claim by threats.⁹ He also follows Victoria Pedrick in casting doubt upon Gould's rather rigid distinction between "complete" and "figurative" supplication, since the evidence in Homer must always be treated as subject to its location in the epic poetic genre. The exigencies of composition mean that descriptions could be incomplete and we should allow for the possibility of abbreviated forms of the ritual.¹⁰

It must be stressed that these discussions of supplication were directed to the religious and social institution as it is evidenced primarily in Greece. Although we cannot glibly apply the views of Gould and Pötscher to the Greek and then Roman periods of Egypt, their conclusions provide a theoretical framework with which to understand the language of supplication in petitions from Egypt, and when we turn to the question of the notions of Greek supplication in Egypt we can probably assume that generally it was characterised by the same basic features of submission by the weak to obtain protection before the power of the supplicated to enhance his or her honour. Among those of the general population derived from Greece one would expect understanding of supplication as a Greek social institution, although in the more pluralistic societies of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds it is likely to have performed a different range of social functions than it did in archaic and classical Greece.¹¹

But in Ptolemaic Egypt an important development took place which is often described as a process of "secularisation". In Greece every sanctuary could operate as a place of refuge, and the practice of asylum was a very deeply ingrained religious institution in the ancient world.¹² Under the Ptolemies a distinction gradually came

9 W. Pötscher, "Die Strukturen der Hikesie", at 55, 74.

10 At 51 fn 4 citing Pedrick, "Supplication in the Iliad and the Odyssey", see fn 4 above.

11 An observation borne out by the forms of supplicatory behaviour and language in Achilles Tatius and Chariton for example.

12 U. Sinn, "Greek sanctuaries as places of refuge", at 97. On asylum see K. Latte, *Heiliges Recht* (1920) 106-8; E. Schlesinger, *Die griechische Asylie* (1933); F. von Woess, *Das Asylwesen Ägyptens in der Ptolemäerzeit und die spätere Entwicklung* (1923), ch. 6; L. Robert, *Hellenica* VI 33-42; M. Rostovtzeff, *SEHHW* (Oxford, 1941), 194-202, 844-7, 901-3; S. Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (1971), 395-7; R.A. Bauman, *Impietas in Principem* (1974), 85-92.

into being between the sacred protection given by a temple and rights of asylum granted by the king, that is, irrespective of the moral or religious dimensions to the issue of refuge as they may have appertained to temples in Egypt, under the Greek administration the sovereign was recognised as the source of a right of asylum which was supported by sanctions imposed by the state, and this became an important focus for diplomatic exchanges between states.¹³ Privileges of ἀσυλία were numbered among the benefactions (εὐεργεσία) granted by Hellenistic monarchs to Greek cities and the grants of asylum were among the προστάγματα τῶν φιλανθρώπων of the Ptolemaic monarchs.¹⁴ The grant was usually made on the basis of a petition by priests or a prominent adherent, and sought a direction, usually to the strategos, for the administrative action to put the grant into effect, basically the same as petitions from individuals for assistance in their individual problems, for example the petitions to Ptolemy X Alexander from c. 93 BC, inscribed on stone, from the priests of the temple of Isis Sachypsis at Theadelphia.¹⁵ The right of asylum was rare in III and II BC, though more frequent in I BC, it was not granted to every temple or sanctuary and the territory in which it operated was carefully circumscribed.¹⁶ Bernand lists the following as known categories of suppliant: innocent persons driven there, maltreated cultivators, escaped slaves, and criminals.¹⁷ The basic formulation of the right placed prohibitions upon entering the sanctuary, disturbing those suppliants resident there and expelling them by force.¹⁸ Through a process which obviously involved the legal system, the Ptolemaic sovereign was accepted as having the power to bestow the rights of an ancient and deeply embedded religious and social institution from Greek culture upon temples in Egypt. These may have had similar rights based upon

13 L. Wenger, "Asylrecht" in *RAC* I (1950) 838ff.

14 See K. Bringmann, "The King as Benefactor: Some Remarks on Ideal Kingship in the Age of Hellenism" in A. Bulloch (ed.), *Images and Ideologies: self-definition in the Hellenistic world* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1993), 7-24, and for Egypt M.-T. Lenger, "La notion de «bienfait» (philanthrōpon) royal et les ordonnances des rois Lagides", in *Studi in Onore di V. Arangio-Ruiz* (Naples, 1956), 483-499, at 497-99.

15 Eg IFayum 2, 112, 113, 114, 136.

16 See the commentary of É. Bernand to IFayum 2, 112, at p. 33, 114, comment on l. 32.

17 Ibid., 112. l. 13. The mention of maltreated cultivators reminds us of ἀναχωρήσις which was discussed in chapter 3, see 109, above.

18 IFayum 2, 112, 13, and Bernand's note.

religious and moral considerations deriving from the Egyptian milieu, but asylum in Ptolemaic Egypt was unique. Many of the temples enjoying the right were centres of the dynastic cult especially in the Arsinoite nome, and from one point of view the grant was no doubt a "politically intelligent" move.¹⁹ In the Roman period grants of asylum, beginning with Julius Caesar are known for various parts of the empire such as Aphrodisias.²⁰ In 22 AD the Aphrodisians sent an embassy to the Roman senate seeking confirmation of the rights of asylum in their sanctuary of Aphrodite.²¹ But there was a definite trend in the Roman period for the right of asylum to be more and more confined.²² In any event, it is usually thought that a deep gap opened between the sacred *ικετεία* of authentic supplication and the political, diplomatic and legal rights of asylum granted by the state.

Hence we can see that the language of supplication in petitions, represented principally by the verb *καταφεύγω*, may have been associated with a well recognised 'secular' aspect of the sovereign as grantor of rights of asylum. This would amount to placing it within one of the categories given by Gould above, particularly, in the category of the figurative, the "intensification of the language of diplomatic appeal." A connection with political asylum has some obvious attractions. *Καταφεύγω* was always one of the main verbs used in the classical period to designate the act of seeking asylum in temples.²³ This meaning also appears in literary sources and documentary papyri of the Ptolemaic period.²⁴ In petitions seeking grants of asylum

19 É. Bernand, *IFayum* 2, 112, at 33.

20 See J. Reynolds, *Aphrodisias and Rome* (London, 1982), nos 8 and 35. See further *New Docs* 4, nos 19 and 78.

21 *Ibid.* no 38.

22 *SEHRE*, 298. R. Taubenschlag, *Das Strafrecht im Rechte der Papyri* (Scientia Verlag, Aalen, 1972), 104, "...die römische Regierung dasselbe sehr eingeschränkt hatte."

23 See eg *Hdt* 2.113 καὶ νῦν ἐστὶ Ἡρακλέος ἱερόν, ἐς τὸ ἦν καταφυγῶν οἰκέτης ὅτευ ὦν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιβάλλεται στίγματα ἰρά, ἐωυτὸν διδοὺς τῷ θεῷ, οὐκ ἔξεστι τούτου ἄψασθαι.

24 See *P.Ent.* 78 (221 BC); *P.Ent.* 80 (c 241 BC). In *P.Tebt.* III 724, a petition from 175 or 164 BC, some wine sellers are described as "taking refuge in the temple": (ll.7-8) διὰ τοῦτο [τῶν καπιήλων] καταπεφευγῶτων ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερόν; and in *P.Tebt.* III 787, petition to the strategos Phantias from c. 138 BC, some farmers have failed to sow their crops, out of fear of "the implacable Apollonios, speak of "taking refuge in the temple of Zeus at Ibion.": (ll. 34-5) ἠναγκάσμεθα [φόβω] τοῦ ἀπαραίτητου Ἀπολλωνίου καταφυ- [γεῖν εἰς τὸ ἐν Ἰβιδίῳ] τοῦ Διὸς ἱερόν. See also *UPZ* I 3 (164 BC); *UPZ* I 119 (156 BC).

the verb καταφεύγω is explicitly connected with ἰκέτης, the word for suppliant, by the priests of the temple, in the expression τοὺς εἰς τοῦτο καταφεύγοντας ἰκέτας.²⁵

However, we need to define with care what the implications are from drawing a connection between the language of supplication in petitions and rights of asylum protected by the legal system. For one thing, on the available evidence, the supplication motif in Ptolemaic enteuxeis appeared long before grants of asylum rights to temples became common. For another, there is no real reason to describe the rights of asylum granted by Hellenistic kings or protected by sanctions of the state as purely secular.²⁶ As so often in this thesis such a view depends primarily upon how the role of the Ptolemaic sovereign as θεός is viewed. If we follow the conclusions about the conceptualisation of the sovereign as a religious figure reached in the last chapter, it is better to say that the request for the grant of rights of asylum was a recognition of the personal and religiously symbolic power of the sovereign, and can be taken as a further indication that the Ptolemaic monarch was placed on a spectrum between human and divine.²⁷ This reflects the underlying mentality which positioned the king in the role of the supplicated in the language of petitions and has a clear and close connection with the compassionate, strong and just saviour and benefactor symbolism which we dealt with in the last chapter. It supports the view that the power of the sovereign was perceived as a personal, as well as a formal, attribute and involved the religious and legal dimensions of his role in much the same way as the saviour and benefactor motif, which we also examined in the previous chapter.²⁸ The punishment for transgressors of asylum rights was death in Ptolemaic Egypt, unlike

25 "Those suppliants seeking refuge in the [temple]". See also the asylum laws of Ptolemy XII Auletes = IFayum, No 114 (70 BC) and 136 (69/8 BC).

26 Cf. L. Wenger, "Asylrecht" 839.

27 Which is seen particularly in the fact that the requests were addressed to the sovereign in his or her capacity as a god, eg, IFayum, 112, 17-8, δεόμεθά σου τοῦ νικηφόρου θεοῦ, a phenomenon which we have seen in other ptolemaic papyri from II and I BC, see chapter 5, 203 above.

28 There may also be an echo of the more ancient significance of refuge at the hearth of a bronze age king, the hearth being the symbol of his personal οἶκος. See Gould, "HIKETEIA", 93, fn 101 for this idea. Egypt was of course viewed as the οἶκος of Ptolemy.

other forms of sacrilege (ἱεροσυλία).²⁹ It might be argued that this was appropriate because transgression was an affront to the king. But that could be said about any number of legal transgressions. Flight to asylum could interrupt a lawsuit or prevent the execution of a penalty by the state.³⁰ So the legal position rather underlines how religiously the right of asylum was viewed. Under the Romans transgression of asylum rights did not attract a death penalty and seems to have been placed under the general ambit of ἱεροσυλία, although flight could suspend a lawsuit and enforcement procedures as in the Ptolemaic period.³¹ However, the statue of the emperor attracted protection of the law as a place of refuge.³² So although the Romans tended to curtail rights of asylum, in view of the involvement of the Roman emperor in grants and revocations of asylum rights, and as a place of refuge through his statue, broadly speaking, asylum, even as a matter for the legal system, retained importance as a religious institution.

But whatever view we come to about asylum rights, there is good reason to think that in the language of supplication in petitions we are dealing with something different anyway. In the Roman period, at a time when the phenomenon of asylum as an institution recognised by law was on the wane, we see an intensification of the language of refuge in petitions. A glance at nos 95, 97, 103 or 106 in Table 6.4 at the end of this chapter shows this and we will see in chapter 8 that the language of supplication in petitions was very close to the language of some forms of ancient prayer. We will also see that there was in fact a convergence of petitions and prayers which is especially noticeable in the use of the language of supplication. So although the involvement of the sovereign in the grant of rights of asylum may have had an influence on the choice of language in petitions, it provides no simple answer.

29 R. Taubenschlag, *The Law of Greco-Roman Egypt in the Light of the Papyri 332 B.C. - 640 A.D.* (Warsaw, 1955), 477; *Das Strafrecht im Rechte der Papyri*, 51-2.

30 *Ibid.*, 551.

31 *Ibid.*, 477 and 552.

32 T. Mommsen, *Römische Strafrecht* (Akademie-Verlag, Berlin, 1955), 458.

We need now to return to the categories of supplication established by Gould and ask to which category, person to person or person to god, is the relationship of petitioner to sovereign most closely analogous? The question is material because Gould himself distinguishes situations of person to person from person to god supplication. The answer depends again partly upon what view is taken of ruler-cult and the signification of epithets such as saviour and benefactor which we discussed in the last chapter but that in turn also depends partly upon the perception that a clear disjunction exists between language and action. That is to say, the whole question of written supplication is subject to the issue of "complete" versus "figurative" supplication, because on their face the usages of the language of supplication in petitions were not accompanied by any ritual action and therefore were "figurative", lacking full ritual significance, and notably Gould calls the instances of Athenian orators "supplicating" a jury, the "paradigm case of 'figurative' supplication.", so he draws a close connection between the figurative and the rhetorical.³³ This makes us face squarely the whole problem of language as action, and is best examined in the context of other written forms of supplication, especially judicial prayers, in chapter 8. We may observe now that if we define the ritualistic language of a written petition as linguistic action in the same broad category as some types of ritual language in prayer and if we conclude for other reasons that the relationship between petitioner and sovereign was seen as more analogous to that between person and god than person and person, the idea of a pallid form of 'figurative' supplication becomes suspect and our ultimate conclusions about the language of supplication in petitions will be affected. But these issues will be deferred to chapter 8. In the balance of this chapter it is proposed to look at the language of supplication in petitions largely with reference to the tradition of classical forensic rhetoric, because in so doing we can put to bed enough other issues to bring the question of language as action into proper focus.

33 At 78 fn 24.

6.3 CLASSICAL ANTECEDENTS IN FORENSIC RHETORIC

The study of classical languages has an inherent bias towards classical authors. The French scholar Collomp in the 1920's made extensive comparisons between Attic orators and Ptolemaic petitions and there are three good reasons for considering the classical authors as an initial step. First, the classical corpus provides a large body of Greek against which to compare usages in papyri. Secondly, forensic speeches of Attic orators, for example, were made in a context, namely, speeches in court, comparable to the context of petitions and certainly reports of proceedings. The forensic affiliation is strong. We have already observed that the Ptolemaic monarch was at the apex of the judicial and administrative hierarchy of Egypt.³⁴ The laws of Ptolemaic Egypt were very closely linked to those of Athens and other city states.³⁵ So it would stand to reason that forensic argumentation in early Ptolemaic Egypt, including petitions, was also linked. Thirdly, as we noted in chapter 2, the speeches of classical orators were clearly part of the general knowledge passed from generation to generation by the content of education systems, so it can be assumed that the writers of petitions in III BC Egypt were educated to know some at least of the Attic canon.³⁶

When we turn to the classical orators it becomes apparent that appeals to Athenian juries in supplicatory terms, which also included the language of help, mercy and preservation, were often utilised. It is not hard to find examples of the speaker making a defence or pleading from a special position, expressing the relationship between himself and the jury in terms of refuge. A good early exemplar appears in Antiphon.³⁷ Antiphon wrote his speeches in the period 421-411 BC approximately. In *Tetralogia* B.β, actually a rhetorical exercise, not an actual speech,

34 See chapter 3, 93 above.

35 See chapter 7, 314 below.

36 Chapter 2, 84 above.

37 See Collomp, *Recherches*, Ch ii, especially . 122 and 125-130.

the speaker is making his defence against a charge of accidental homicide before the court of the Palladion. A boy was accidentally killed by a javelin while watching a youth practising in the gymnasium. His father makes the actual apology.³⁸ In the second section he says-

<p>ὑπὸ δὲ σκληρᾶς ἀνάγκης βιαζόμενος, καὶ αὐτὸς εἰς τὸν ὑμέτερον ἔλεον, ὧ ἄνδρες δικασταί, καταπεφευγῶς δέομαι ὑμῶν, ἐὰν ἀκριβέστερον ἢ ὡς σύνηθες ὑμῖν δόξω εἰπεῖν, μὴ διὰ τὰς προειρημένας τύχας <ἥττόν τι> ἀποδεξαμένου μου τὴν ἀπολογία δόξη καὶ μὴ ἀληθείᾳ τὴν κρίσιν ποιήσασθαι</p>	<p><i>"Compelled by harsh necessity, and myself having sought refuge in your mercy, men of the jury, I ask you, if I seem to you to speak more accurately than the usual, do not, having received my defence with less approval on account of the aforementioned misfortunes, make your judgment on the basis of conjecture and not truth."</i></p>
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We see in this extract two themes which are very resilient in later centuries. In one the speaker places himself in the hands of the jury under compulsion (ὑπὸ δὲ σκληρᾶς ἀνάγκης βιαζόμενος). The idea of being compelled to seek the assistance or indulgence of the state can be found in many petitions from Ptolemaic Egypt and even late into the Roman and Byzantine periods.³⁹ The speaker also takes refuge in the mercy of the jury, which as we saw in the last chapter was always a positive attribute of officials.⁴⁰

With this we may compare a passage from Andocides in his defence on charges of impiety for involvement in the profanation of the mysteries in 411 BC. In this case of course Andocides was facing the death penalty. At the end of the speech he says, εἰς ὑμᾶς καταφεύγω καὶ ἀντιβολῶ καὶ ἰκετεύω· ὑμεῖς με παρ' ὑμῶν αὐτῶν αἰτησάμενοι σώσατε,... (*I take refuge before you and I beg you and I*

38 See R. Jebb, *Selections from the Attic Orators* (MacMillan & Co, London, 1962), 202.

39 See below chapter 7, 339.

40 See chapter 6, 230ff below.

approach you as a suppliant. Having asked for me from yourselves, preserve me,)
 Apart from the use of the verb for refuge καταφεύγω, the presence of the verb σώζω in the sense of "preserve" or "save" is an early invocation of a trait or responsibility of the powerful as saviour and preserver of the weak or troubled, which we have already seen.

If then we move forward several decades there are interesting comparisons and embellishments in the works of Demosthenes. Demosthenes made several speeches on his own behalf in a lawsuit against his guardians, soon after he reached the age of eighteen in 364/3 BC. The first two were directed against the guardian Aphobus.⁴¹ The essence of the case was that Aphobus as guardian had managed to dissipate an estate worth some 14 talents at the death of Demosthenes' father, so that upon his coming of age it was worth less than one talent. In the process two profitable businesses, a cutlery business and a furniture business, "disappeared."⁴² The first speech against Aphobus is that given by Demosthenes in prosecution of his claim. Towards the end he says-

δέομαι οὖν ὑμῶν, ὦ ἄνδρες
 δικασταί, καὶ ἱκετεύω καὶ
 ἀντιβόλω, μνησθέντας καὶ τῶν
 νόμων καὶ τῶν ὄρκων οὓς
 ὁμόσαντες δικάζετε, βοηθῆσαι ἡμῖν
 τὰ δίκαια, καὶ μὴ περὶ πλείονος
 τὰς τούτου δεήσεις ἢ τὰς
 ἡμετέρας ποιήσασθαι. δίκαιοι δ'
 ἔστ' ἐλεεῖν οὐ τοὺς ἀδίκους τῶν
 ἀνθρώπων, ἀλλὰ τοὺς παραλόγως
 δυστυχοῦντας...⁴³

"I ask you, gentlemen jurors, and I approach you as a suppliant and I beseech you, remembering the laws and the oaths which having sworn you sit in judgement, to help us to get justice, and do not think more important the requests of this fellow. You are right to pity not the unjust among men, but those who have met misfortune unreasonably..."

Here we can see the passage δέομαι οὖν ὑμῶν, ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί, καὶ ἱκετεύω καὶ ἀντιβόλω initiates a request directly to the jury, through the use of the vocative phrase. As we have seen, the use of δέομαι plus a vocative is common in petitions of

41 *Against Aphobus* I and II = Dem. XXVII and XXVIII.

42 See the introduction to L. Pearson, *Demosthenes: Six Private Speeches* (Uni. Oklahoma Press, Oklahoma, 1972).

43 XXVII.68.

all periods. Further, Demosthenes couples the request with the theme of supplication in three present indicative forms. He also reminds the jury that as part of their role as the supplicated they should heed the dictates of the laws, a reference to an underlying connection between the jurors role and the rule of law, which we saw reappears in the conceptualisation of officials in Greco-Roman Egypt. He combines the concepts of "assistance" or "help" (βοηθῆσαι ἡμῖν τὰ δίκαια) and mercy (δίκαιοι δ' ἔστ' ἐλεεῖν οὐ τοὺς ἀδίκους τῶν ἀνθρώπων), and sets these themes in patterns which contrast the unjust with the unfortunate, a process which is very common in petitions.⁴⁴

These themes are replicated and developed in his reply to the speech of Aphobus. Demosthenes invokes the same ideas with the words, σώσατε, ἐλεήσατε, ἐπειδὴ μ' οὔτοι συγγενεῖς ὄντες οὐκ ἠλέησαν. εἰς ὑμᾶς καταπεφεύγαμεν, ἵκετεύω, ἀντιβολῶ πρὸς παίδων, πρὸς γυναικῶν, πρὸς τῶν ὄντων ἀγαθῶν ὑμῖν.⁴⁵ (*"Save me, pity me, since these guardians, who are relatives, have not. We have taken refuge before you. I approach as a suppliant and I beseech you by your children, by your women, by the good things that you have."*) The motifs of help, justice, mercy and preservation are all combined again in a request to the jury, phrased in the manner of the suppliant before the gods.

These few examples demonstrate that in classical forensic oratory, a symbolic relationship of supplication was recognised as a legitimate expedient which was drawn upon and articulated linguistically by litigants who wanted the juries of Athens to exercise power in their favour. It is important to note that the speakers in Antiphon and Andocides are both pleading for their lives or at least against the imposition of a serious penalty. Where the stakes are so high, it might be said that the invocation of saviours and mercy seems unsurprising. However, in his speeches, Demosthenes is seeking redress for financial wrongs done to him and other members of his family.

44 See chapter 7.

45 XXVIII.20.

On the other hand, he was only 18 at the time of the speech and approaches the jury on behalf of himself, as a young man who is inexperienced, and women and children, all categories of person who traditionally were seen as most in need of support. But at a symbolic level these passages reflect the very human reality that linguistic interaction plays a very important role in the incitement of compassion. The pleader places himself in the hands of the jury, and thereby also highlights its power and responsibility.

Before we leave the area of classical forensic oratory we may note a passage from the *Aethiopica* of Heliodorus for comparison. Although it was probably written some time in III AD, it is of passing interest that much of the action for the story is set in Egypt, apparently in the period of Persian rule, if references to the Great king and satraps are determinative.⁴⁶ In Book 1.13, the unhappy story of Knemon is told to the heroes Theagenes and Chariclea. Knemon was the victim of a trick by his treacherous step-mother which resulted in his own father, Aristippos, believing that Knemon has tried to kill him. Knemon and Aristippos are Athenians, so Aristippos takes his son before the Athenian people and makes a speech accusing Knemon of attempted parricide and asks for the appropriate punishment. The form and content of the speech are clearly drawn from the tradition of classical forensic rhetoric. Aristippos finishes by saying to the demos: καταπέφευγά τε πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ προσαγγέλλω τοῦτον, αὐτόχειρ μὲν αὐτοῦ γενέσθαι κατὰ τοὺς νόμους ἔξου οὐ βουληθείς, ὑμῖν δὲ τὸ πᾶν καταλιπών, νόμῳ βέλτιον ἡγούμενος ἢ φόνῳ παιδὸς τὴν δίκην λαμβάνειν ("I flee to you and tell of this matter, although according to the laws I might put him to death with my hand, but I do not want to, leaving the whole matter to you, believing it better to exact punishment by law than by the killing of my child") There are some obvious structural similarities between this speech and the structure of petitions. The refuge motif, expressed in the perfect tense, appears at the end in connection with the statement of the desired action by the

46 Eg. II.24.

body appealed to, in this case the Athenian demos. The echoes of the classical rhetorical antecedents which are set out earlier in this chapter are also plain, and no doubt Heliodorus drew upon them quite consciously. The fact that Heliodorus in III AD should utilise this particular motif shows that it was current and its place in the rhetorical tradition was something to which his readership might respond. It also shows that the relationship of power, originating between pleader and jury, implied by the language of Demosthenes and other orators, was something which had joined the common cultural corpus which circulated in the Greco-Roman world. It also implicitly relies upon the opposition between the stabilising and positive function of the process of law and the anomic threat lurking the brutal right which Aristippos had to slaughter his own son.

6.3.1 The Supplication Motif in the Hellenistic Period.

It is hard to deny the possible connection between the passages from the classical orators and similar language in petitions of the III BC. The prevalence of the refuge motif can be seen at a glance in Table 6.4. In the earliest petitions, refuge is sought with the king, Ptolemy, in constructions such as, ἀλλ[ὰ] ἐπί σε, βασιλεῦ, καταφυγόν[τες, τὸν πάντων] κοινὸν σωτήρα, τευξόμεθα τοῦ δικαίου in P.Ent. 2 (217 BC). This is the most common construction in III BC, with 27 of the 28 enteuxeis in Table 6.4 addressed to the sovereign in III BC exhibiting it. It was also common for the monarch to be addressed as saviour and benefactor as part of the construction, as we saw in the last chapter. The use of the aorist active tense places the act of taking refuge as a necessary anterior step to the meeting with assistance, justice or benefaction, which as we have seen, were constantly expressed as the outcome of the action of the monarch and other officials. There are two examples of the use the perfect participle such as P.Ent. 82 (221 BC): Δέομαι οὖν σου, βασιλεῦ, εἴ σοι δοκεῖ, ἰκέτις ἐπί σε καταπεφευγυῖα. Another construction is the periphrastic structure δέομαι οὖν σου, βασιλεῦ, ἐπὶ σὲ τὴν κ[ατ]αφυγὴν

ποιουμένη in P.Ent. 24 (221 BC), in which the use of the present middle participle is particularly noteworthy in view of the developments we see in the next centuries.⁴⁷ In both constructions, the use of the vocative is reminiscent also of the direct appeal to the audience, such as, an Athenian jury. These constructions all appear in the third section of the petition, the request section, with the sought after consequence.⁴⁸ In Table 6.4 there are 33 examples of the motif and all, apart from 5 examples in petitions to Zenon, which are dealt with shortly, in III BC, appear in surviving petitions only to the king.

Collomp thought it was possible to elicit the elements of an enteuxis "régulière" from the speech of Isocrates *Ad Leocharem*, both in terms of the language used and the structure.⁴⁹ Bearing in mind that works of the forensic orators of classical Athens formed a significant part of the cultural background of the Greeks who populated Egypt during the migrations of III BC, and if we limit our comments at this point to the early Hellenistic period of Egypt, it is reasonable to surmise that in this use of this linguistic motif we see the language and concepts of those orators being taken and set in fresh patterns for the purposes of interactions with the king in the new social context of Ptolemaic Egypt. The point must be emphasised that a petition was a mode of linguistic interaction very different from the making of a speech in an Athenian court, and the audience, the king, was also quite different from the Athenian jury. However, the one facet which both the Athenian jury and Ptolemaic king had in common was the possession of power vis-a-vis the speech-maker or petitioner, and the interaction took place in the forensic or judicial context. These are the points of continuity which help explain the choice of language and which suggest that it was being used in the Hellenistic period for the creation of meanings, through an interpretative process.

47 See the following sections.

48 See Di Bitonto (1967), 51-2.

49 Collomp, *Recherches*, 130.

If this view is correct it suggests that the cult position of the Ptolemaic monarch was not itself determinative of the choice of the language of supplication in petitions, even if it made such a choice seem all the more apposite. This conclusion seems strengthened by the use of the language of supplication in letters or petitions from the archive of Zenon. As we noted in chapter 3 Zenon was not an "official" in the same way as a person was *strategos* or *epistates*.⁵⁰ Nor was he the object of any organised cult. But he was and was perceived to be a person of influence. Petitions to him use the refuge motif, but with significant differences to its use in petitions to the king. Notably, the present indicative active is sometimes employed rather than an aorist participle. For example, in P.Cair.Zen III 59421 (III BC) the petitioner is Dionysios the corn-measurer, who seems to have been arrested on an accusation of dishonest practice. He appeals to Zenon to examine the case himself saying *δέομαί σου καὶ ἰκετεύω, ἐνευχ[όμε]νο[ς] σοι τ[ο]ὺς πατρικ[ο]ὺς θεοὺς καὶ τὴν ὑγίειαν τῆ[ν] Ἀπολλωνί[ου] μὴ περιδεῖν με ἀδικούμενον*. This language constructs a relationship between Zenon and Dionysios which is clothed in the same symbolic attributes as the relationship between many Ptolemaic petitioners and their king. We see this again in P.Cair Zen. III 59495 where two swineherds implore Zenon to release them from prison. They are there for some fault, and do not deny that they have been rightly punished, but appeal to Zenon to have pity on them: *οὐδὲν κύριον ἀλλὰ σέ. πρὸς σέ οὐδὲν καταφυγάνομεν, ἵνα ἐλεημοσύνης τύχωμεν*.⁵¹ P.Lond. VII 2045 also deals with release from prison but the idea of refuge is expressed in the perfect indicative. An Egyptian named Pais has been imprisoned for 5 months, wrongfully he says. The reason for the imprisonment may have been that he failed to fulfil some contractual obligation. He asks Zenon to help, casting himself as a suppliant: *νῦν οὐδὲν ἰκέται καταπεφεύγαμεν πρὸς σε. οὐκ*

50 Hence letters or petitions to Zenon do not appear in the otherwise thorough study of petitions to government officials below the king in Di Bitonto 1968, even though several petitions to Apollonios as *dioiketes* do (P.Cair.Zen. II 59236, III, 59341 a; PSI V 538; SB VIII 9800).

51 P.Cair.Zen. III 59421 (III BC) is another example: [*ἐγὼ οὐδὲν καταφεύγω ἐπὶ σέ, ἕσον κρίνων Ἀπολλωνίω*]

ἔχομεν βοηθὸν ἄλλον οὐθένα ἀλλὰ σέ[ς].⁵² But why should we assume necessarily that swineherds and corn measurers or scribes who wrote for them would look to the tradition of forensic rhetoric, either exclusively or at all, for the linguistic devices to express their relationship with an "unofficial" powerful figure?

But it may in fact be the case that the cult position of the sovereign in early Hellenistic Egypt did substantially motivate petitioners to conceptualise their written appeals as acts of supplication and express them as such, especially when we remember the later connection between the sovereign and grants of asylum, and the considerations which we canvassed in the last chapter about the cult appellatives in petitions to the sovereign.⁵³ We pointed out above that apart from Zenon, all examples of the refuge motif in III BC appear in ἐντεύξεις to the sovereign. What needs explanation is the use of the same language addressed to Zenon, and for that matter to strategoi in the later Ptolemaic period.⁵⁴ Again we may observe that the one facet in common for each of the Athenian jury, the Ptolemaic monarch and Zenon was the possession of power in the face of the language user, whether orator or writer of the petition. We noted in the last chapter how the notion of last resort and helper was applied later in II BC to the sovereign, and that this adaptation and continuity indicated the language of refuge addressed to Zenon was indicative of a strongly felt response to his (personal) power.⁵⁵ The better conclusion from all this may then be that the supplication motif in early Ptolemaic petitions represented a basic conceptualisation of a relationship of power, which appropriately articulated the submission of the weak to the protection of the strong, and further that the position of the strong was legitimated by reference to those elements of the symbolic order which we categorise as religious. Its presence in speeches by Attic orators reflects the same

52 Cf UPZ I 4 Verso (164 BC), a petition to the sovereign: ἀ[ξιῶ] ὑμ[ας] οὐκ ἔ]χων ἄλλ[η]ν βο[η]θεαν ἀλλ' ἢ | τ[ῆ]ν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς καταφυγῆν.

53 It is known that Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221 BC) granted rights of asylum to a synagogue in III BC: See IFayum 112, intro. 33.

54 Refer to Table 6.4

55 Chapter 5, 217 above.

perception of a relationship of power but in a different place and time, and the earlier did not "cause" the later. In Athens it was used by litigants to cast themselves in the role of the helpless suppliant in the face of the power of the jury. In the climate of the "democratic" ideology of Athens it is perhaps easy to believe the language of supplication used by litigants was little more than "rhetorical" window dressing. That compassion for and help for injustice through the symbolic concept of, or the act itself of, refuge was conceived as equally a feature of the human legal role of judge and divine was recognised in the aphorism of Archytas of Tarentum (IV BC) who is quoted by Aristotle as saying that "there is no difference between an arbitrator and an altar, for the wronged takes refuge with one or the other." (Ἀρχύτας ἔφη ταῦτόν εἶναι δαιτητήν καὶ βωμόν· ἐπ' ἄμφω γὰρ τὸ ἀδικούμενον καταφεύγει.)⁵⁶ The appeal to mercy in forensic argumentation was such a standard element of the interaction between pleader and jury that it was satirised in Aristophanes' *Wasps* (568-74) But when the social and political context is changed to the Hellenistic world and the milieu is Egypt, we are faced with a different ideology, an ideology, as has been noted, in which the position of the monarch is exalted and surrounded by actual religious ritual and a cluster of symbolic and religious attributes many of which defined his role as the powerful helper of the weak. Alexander the Great and then the Successors, according to A.E. Samuel, became the purveyors of and the embodiment of a "state of mind" which was "royal and aristocratic, neither supportive of nor congenial to the faint flickerings of egalitarianism implicit in the ideals of Socrates in the century before, nor to the reality of the expanded democracy of Athens of the late fifth century."⁵⁷ Against this background we can see that supplicatory appeals to the Ptolemaic monarch, for justice or mercy or assistance by the ordinary person, did more than simply ape the received devices of the classical rhetors. The king was both the object of cult and the apex of the legitimate power and legal authority and the

56 *Ar. Rhet.* III.11, 5.

57 *The Promise of the West : The Greek World, Rome and Judaism*(Routledge, London and New York, 1988), 171.

distance between him and his subjects was greater than that between an Athenian litigant and an Athenian jury.⁵⁸ The articulation of the enteuxis in terms of request and supplication, and the consequential desires for help and justice reflect in part the greater social space that had grown between the exalted monarch and the general population. Actually, as well as symbolically, the king became both the arbitrator and the altar, to paraphrase Archytas, so the language of supplication was doubly appropriate. It is suggested that through the application of the same mentality to the king's officials and to other powerful individuals such as Zenon the general population made sense of their power. In this sense the use of the language of supplication addressed to Zenon anticipated the application of the same symbolism to Roman officials. In the next sections we will attempt to substantiate this idea by tracing the passage of the motif further through the centuries.

6.3.2 The Supplication Motif in the later Ptolemaic period

It is generally accepted that anomic social conditions brought about by civil war were a strong feature of Ptolemaic Egypt at the start of the second century BC.⁵⁹ This may account for a dearth of surviving petitions until about 170 BC. But it can be seen from Table 6.4 that the language of supplication was still utilised. The motif continues to be found in connection with the king as one would expect in II and I BC. There does seem to be a change in the surviving documents to the extent that the appellations saviour benefactor and helper do not appear nearly so frequently as part of the supplication construction in petitions to the monarch in the final appeal, even if they begin to appear in other parts of the text, especially in direct connection with the request verb, such as, P.Tebt. III 740 (c. 113 BC): (19-21) ὅθεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς τοὺς πάντων κοῖνου σωτήρας [τὴν καταφυγὴν ποιησάμενοι] δεόμεθ' ὑμῶν τῶν μεγίστων θεῶν.⁶⁰

58 Wolff, *Das Justizwesen*.

59 See Pol. V 107.1-3; F.W. Walbank, *The Hellenistic World* (Fontana, 1981), 119.

60 Compare UPZ I 14 (158-7 BC): τοῦ τὴν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς καταφυγὴν τοὺς θεοὺς μεγίστους | καὶ ἀντιλήμπτους ποιησάμενον τυχεῖν.

But in the same period there is an interesting development, when we see that the supplication motif is extended more widely to officials besides the monarch. It is found in petitions to the epistrategos and strategos, with one example to the hypodioiketes, although unadorned by appellations such as saviour and benefactor, or of course any reference to cult positions.⁶¹ For the 20 petitions exhibiting the refuge motif from II and I BC the syntactical analysis is as follows. Of 9 addressed to the sovereign, 3 have idiosyncratic expressions (eg δέομαι ὑμῶν μεθ' ἰκετείας) or the precise detail is lost, 2 take a perfect indicative middle construction (τὴν καταφυγὴν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς πεποήμεθα), 2 take an aorist participle middle construction (τὴν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς καταφυγὴν τοὺς θεοὺς μεγίστους καὶ ἀντιλήμπορας ποιησάμενον) and 2 take a perfect participle middle construction (διὸ τὴν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς καταφυγὴν πεποημένος). Those to the epistrategos and hypodioiketes take a perfect indicative middle construction (τὴν ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγὴν πεπόημαι), the 7 to the strategos take either the perfect indicative, a present indicative (ἐπὶ σὲ τὴν καταφυγὴν ποιῶμαι) or a perfect participle middle construction (Διὸ τὴν καταφυγὴν πεποημένος ἄξιω). It is worth noting that in these examples the language of supplication appears earlier in the request section of the petitions, that is, more closely connected with the request verb. The use of the middle voice represents the most significant change in the construction and it seems to have become almost standard by II BC, and clearly expresses a connotation that in taking refuge the petitioner has taken action for himself or herself. It is also worth pointing out in this connection that καταφυγή often denoted a *place* of refuge, which adds an important dimension to the conceptualisation of the official who was at a symbolic level assimilated to the place of refuge.⁶²

61 **Epistrategos:** SB I 4638 (145-116 BC); Mitt Chr. 18 (116-111 BC); UPZ II 191, 192, 193 (111-110 BC). **Strategos:** SB XVI 12305 (199-150 BC); UPZ I 8 (c. 161 BC); UPZ I 12 (c. 158 BC) P.Grenf I 42 (II BC) = Wilck. Chr 447; P.Tebt. III:1 785 (c 138 BC); P.Rein I, 18 (108 BC) = Mitt. Chr. 26; BGU VIII 1836 (51/50 BC); BGU VIII 1823 (I BC); BGU VIII 1858 (I BC). It may be noted in passing that the image of the flight of the petitioner to the official is tacitly contrasted by with the flight of the wrongdoer away from justice, even if not in the same document, through verbs such as διαφεύγω, see eg P.Tebt. I 44 (114 BC).

62 On the meanings of καταφυγή see the entry in LSJ.

In light of our discussion above connecting the impetus for the choice of the supplication motif with the power of the addressee in this development we are probably right to see an expression of the perception in the general population of the power of officials beyond the monarch. The dilution of the power of the monarchy and the elevation of local powerful figures in the chora and metropoleis which we discussed in chapter 3 brought about the assimilation of symbolic conceptualisations of the monarch to the positions of epistrategoι and nome strategoi.⁶³ The orthodoxy which kept the refuge motif almost exclusively for the monarch in petitions was broken down and it was released into wider duties within the symbolic universe to be used to legitimate other positions. We find expressions which are very close in concept such as δεόμεθά σου μετ' ἰκετείας addressed to the monarchs and the hypodioiketes.⁶⁴ UPZ I 8 (c. 161 BC) shows an interesting development which anticipates Roman petitions. The refuge motif becomes expressed in the present middle indicative, while the verb expressing injustice is relegated to a subordinate participial form: (4) Ἠδικημένος οὐ μετρίως...ἐπὶ σὲ τὴν καταφυγὴν ποιοῦμαι. This is important because the verb of supplication is expressed in a mood which is closest to that which is most often indicative of ritual utterances, including invocation.⁶⁵ This is different from the largely participial constructions in petitions of III BC and even I BC, as we can see from Table 6.4, but it becomes more frequent in the centuries of the Roman occupation. This will be referred to again in Chapter 8 but we can note here that this may well have formed part of a trend whereby the language of petitions to human officials and invocations of and imprecations to unseen deities moved towards each other.⁶⁶

63 We can see a parallel process in the use of vocatives in petitions to the strategos, e.g., BGU VIII 1843 (50-49 BC), in which the strategos Soteles is called σεμνότατε στρατηγέ. See also BGU VIII 1816 (60-59 BC) and BGU IV 1187 (I BC).

64 UPZ I 9 (161 BC) to the king and queen, UPZ I 46 (162-1 BC) to the hypodioiketes.

65 See R Lesses, "The Adjuration of the Prince of Presence: Performative Utterance in the Jewish Ritual" in M. Meyer & P. Mirecki (ed.), *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (The Religions of the Greco-Roman World Vol 129)(E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1995), 185-206.

66 See further 394 below.

A table summarising the constructions used in the Ptolemaic period appears as follows. This is an important exercise because it provides a basis to assess developments in the Roman period.

Table 6.1
300 BC to 31 BC

Tense and Mood	Example	Frequency	Addressees
Present indicative	P.Cair.Zen. III 59421 (III BC): [ἐγὼ οὖν κλαταφεύγω ἐπὶ σε	2 III BC	Zenon
Perfect indicative	P.Lond. VII 2045 (III BC): νῦν οὖν ἰκέται καταπεφεύγαμεν πρὸς σε.	1 III BC	Zenon
Periphrasis using a middle present participle joined to the request verb	P.Ent. 24 (221 BC): Δέομαι οὖν σου,] βασιλεῦ, ἐπὶ σὲ τὴν κ[ατ]αφυγὴν ποιουμέ[ν]η	1 III BC	Ptolemy
Periphrasis using a middle aorist participle joined to the request verb	UPZ I 14 (158-7 BC)(=P. Lond. 23): δέωμαι ὑμῶν τῶν μεγίστων θεῶν Φιλομητόρων... πλὴν τοῦ τὴν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς καταφυγὴν τοὺς θεοὺς μεγίστους καὶ ἀντιλήμπορας ποιησάμενον τυχεῖν	3 II BC	Ptolemy
Periphrasis using a middle perfect participle joined to the request verb	UPZ I 12 (158 BC)(=P. Par. 40): Διὸ τὴν καταφυγὴν πεποημένος ἀξιῶ	5 II-I BC	Ptolemy, strategos
Periphrasis using an active present participle joined to the request verb	UPZ I 4 Verso (164 BC)(=P.Par.24 Verso): ἀ[ξιῶ] ὑμ[α]ς οὐκ ἔ[χ]ων ἄλλ[η]ν β[ο]ή[θ]εαν ἀλλ' ἢ τ[ί]ν] ἐφ' ἡμ[α]ς καταφυγὴν	1 II BC	Ptolemy
Aorist participle	P.Yale 46 col. i (246-221 BC): ἵνα ἐπὶ σε κλαταφυγῶν, βασιλεῦ, τύχω τοῦ δικαίου	21 III BC	Ptolemy, unknown
Perfect participle	P.Ent. 85 (221 BC): Τούτου γὰρ γενομένου, ἐπὶ σε, βασιλεῦ, καταπ[ε]φευγῶς τοῦ δικαίου τεύξομαι	2 III BC	Ptolemy
Present infinitive, active or middle	P.Cair.Zen. III 59447 (III BC): πρὸς ἕτερον γὰρ οἰσθέντα καταφυγεῖν ἐστὶ μοι καλῶς ἔχον.	2 III BC	Zenon
Aorist infinitive relying perfect active	BGU VIII 1836 (51/50 BC): διὸ προήγμαι τὴν ἐπὶ σ[ε] ποιήσασθαι καταφυγὴν, ἀξιῶ	2 I BC	Strategos

Periphrasis with present middle	UPZ I 8 (c. 161 BC)(=P. Lond. 24): Ἡδικημένος οὐ μετρίως...ἐπὶ σέ τήν καταφυγήν ποιούμεαι	1 II BC	Strategos
Periphrasis with perfect middle	SB XVI 12305 (199-150 BC): ἀδικουμένη οὐ μετρίως...ἐπὶ σέ τήν καταφυγήν πεποίημαι	6 II BC	Ptolemy, epistrategos, strategos

In the sample from the Ptolemaic period of 53 petitions, 37 are addressed to the sovereign (although this preponderance is a result of the large number of enteuxeis collected by Gueraud from III BC in P.Ent), 1 to the epistrategos, 1 to a hypodioiketes, 7 to the strategos, 1 unknown and 5 to Zenon. The break up of the petitioners according to rough social categories appears to be: 2 from artisans, 27 from land holders of some sort, either clerouchs, katoikoi or others, probably lessees, 3 from merchants, 1 from someone who is old or sick, 5 from a priest or other temple personnel, 5 from rural labourers, 1 from a servant, 1 from a soldier, 1 from an unemployed person, 5 unknown. The preponderance of petitioners from land holders reflects the structural realities of Ptolemaic Egypt which we discussed at length in chapter 3.

In summary then, the refuge motif appears only in connection with the sovereign and Zenon in III BC. The aorist participle is the most numerous, but is limited to III BC. In II and I BC periphrastic constructions are more prevalent, and the appearance of the middle is noteworthy signifying the idea that the petitioner is acting for him or herself.

6.3.3 The Roman Period

The period of the Roman empire until the advent of Christianity is generally viewed as a period of decline in traditional religious and spiritual forms. One might therefore expect that any spiritual or symbolic signification which the motif of refuge may have expressed, would have completely dissipated in the period 30 BC to mid IV AD. But there are interesting contraindications. From the start of the Roman period, the refuge motif remains strong. The process of diffusion throughout the administrative

hierarchy, which we saw beginning in II BC in connection with the epistrategos and strategos, becomes more obvious. The refuge motif becomes a symbolic formula of fairly general application to powerful Roman figures. Between 31 BC and the end of I AD there are examples of the motif being directed towards the centurion, the archidicastes and the prefect.⁶⁷ It continues to appear in the traditional request section of the petition, following closely the immediate predecessors in the late Ptolemaic period. The impression given by the evidence is that the writers of petitions tried to fit the early experience of the Roman domination into the linguistic framework and modes of discourse of the Ptolemaic period, as might be expected. It is clear from the examples collected in Table 6.4 that the refuge motif in late I BC and I AD had become a strong and conventional linguistic motif which provided the terms in which approaches to Ptolemaic and then Roman officials were couched. It is of some interest that the association with the designations "saviour and benefactor" or "helper" (ἀντιλήμπτωρ) becomes if anything more common than in the immediately preceding Ptolemaic century and appears to make something of a comeback in the vocabulary used for dealing with the Romans and clearly still formed some of the most important symbolic conceptualisations of legitimate power.⁶⁸

In syntactic terms however there were some developments worth discussing. The participial forms which we noted in the Ptolemaic period in petitions to the sovereign and officials, become replaced by the indicative. If we take as an arbitrary cut off point a date in II AD to obtain a representative sample of petitions from the early Principate, there are 27 texts exhibiting the language of refuge or asylum to the last year of Marcus Aurelius in 180 AD. The following table sets out the range and frequency of the constructions:

Table 6.2

67 **Centurion:** P.Oxy XIX 2234 (31 AD). **Archidicastes:** P.Oxy XLIX 3466 (81-96 AD) **Prefect:** P.Oxy I 38 (49-50 AD)

68 See for example nos 55, 60, 61, 66, 68 and 73 in Table 6.4.

30 BC to 180 AD

Tense and Mood	Example	Frequency	Addressees
Present indicative	P.Oxy XLIX 3466 (81-96 AD): κατὰ τὸ ἀνα[γκαιον κατα]φεύ[γω] ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν κύριον	6 I-II AD	Prefect, archidicastes, strategos, unknown
Perfect indicative	BGU IV 1200 (2-1 BC): ἐπὶ σὲ καταπεφεύγαμεν	1 I BC	Prefect
Aorist indicative ⁶⁹	P.Mich III 174 (145-147 AD): ὄθεν ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν πάντων ἀντιλήμπορα κατέφυγον καὶ ἀξιῶ	12 II AD	Prefect, epistrategos, strategos, unknown
Periphrasis using a middle present participle joined to the request verb	P.Oxy XIX 2234 (31 AD): τὴν ἐπὶ σε καταφυ[γ]ήν ποιούμενος ἀξιῶ	3 I AD-II AD	Epistrategos, centurion, strategos
Aorist participle	BGU XI 2065 (I AD): διὸ ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγῶν [ἀξιῶ]	1 I AD	Unknown
Perfect participle	P.Oxy L 3555 (I -II AD): ἀναγκαίως οὖν καταπεφευγῖα ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν ἀντιλήμπορα ἀξιῶ(ι)	1 I AD	Strategos
Present infinitive, active or middle			
Periphrasis with aorist middle	BGU III 970 (c 174 AD): τὴν ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγὴν ἐποιήσαμην	2 II AD	Prefect, epistrategos

A number of observations may be made here. There are 9 petitions to the prefect, 1 to the archidicastes, 7 to the epistrategos, 1 to the centurion, 3 to the strategos and 5 unknown. In the period 30 BC to say the end of I AD the refuge motif appears addressed to the prefect, the centurion, the archidicastes and the strategos. Thereafter in this group it is found only in relation to the prefect, the epistrategos and the strategos, the triumvirate of officials who, broadly speaking, were consistently most important in the chora. The petitioners break up into the following categories: 1

69 BGU VII 1572 (139 AD) is grouped here even though it has the unusual form καταφεύγαμεν which may be an error of the writer of the petition.

artisan, 1 creditor, 1 merchant, 8 metropolitans (beginning in II AD), 5 property owners of other descriptions, 1 old or sick, 2 priest or temple personnel, 2 unknown.

The use of the aorist and perfect participles which was so prevalent in III BC makes a brief reappearance in I AD. Although the most common numerically, the use of the aorist indicative did not appear until early II AD⁷⁰ The present participle middle, τὴν ἐπὶ σε καταφυγὴν ποιούμενος which first appears in III BC, remains in consistent use through the first two centuries of the Roman period directed to a range of officials. Overall the constructions which were used to 180 AD clearly drew extensively upon the Ptolemaic heritage.

6.3.4 The later Roman period.

Between II AD and IV AD the refuge motif can be found in petitions addressed to the emperor, the prefect, deputy-prefect, epistrategos, archidicastes, dikaiodotes, strategos and praeses.⁷¹ In II AD there were however a number of changes in aspects of it, which to some extent may have been connected with changes in style which we discussed in chapter 4. This was of course the century in which the influences of the Second Sophistic were starting to become very wide spread. The Russian scholar Arkady Kovel'man has been one of the few to gain an acute sense of these shifts. In his view petitions of the Ptolemaic and early Roman periods were very matter of fact. The second century saw them change from strictly practical to rhetorical

70 P.Alex.Giss. 32 (117-38AD).

71 **Prefect:** P.Oxy XXII 2342 (102 AD); PSI XIII 1323 (147/8 AD); BGU XV 2460 (II AD); P.Oxy VII 1032 (162 AD); P.Mich VI 422 Recto (197 AD); P.Oxy VI 899 Recto (200 AD); P.Oxy XVII 2131 (207 AD); BGU XI 2061 (207AD); P.Mich IX 529 (232-236 AD); PSI XIII 1337 (III AD); P.Oxy XII 1468 (c. 258 AD); P.Tebt. II 326 (c. 266 AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 66 (299 AD); P.Oxy I 71.2 Recto (303 AD); P.Oxy I 71.1 Recto (303 AD); P.Oxy XVIII 2187 (304 AD); P.Oxy XLIII 3126 (19 Aug 328 AD); P.Oxy XII 1470 (336 AD) **Deputy-prefect:** P.Oxy XII 1468 (c. 258 AD) **Epistrategos:** BGU I 340 (149-9 AD); P.Oxy XXXI 2563 (170 AD); P.Heid. IV 297 (172-5 AD); P.Tebt. II 327 (late II AD); P.Oxy III 488 (II-III AD) **Deputy-strategos:** P.Oxy IX 1202 (217 AD) **Archidicastes:** P.Oxy XLIX 3466 (81-96 AD); P.Oxy IX 1204 (299 AD) **Dikaiodotes:** P.Gen I 4 (early III AD) **Strategos:** P.Oxy L 3555 (I-II AD); BGU VII 1572 (139 AD); P.Monac. III 74 (158 AD) **Praeses:** CPR 7 15 (III AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 74 (315 AD) Roman emperors were the recipients of many petitions but the refuge motif rare in the surviving evidence. BGU I (1895) 19.21 (135 AD) when speaking of the emperor Hadrian: προσφυγῆν τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιφανεστάτου αὐτοκράτορος. See ZPE 13 (1974) 21-37.

composition.⁷² Kovel'man believes that this manifests the desire of the popular masses for rationalism and an abstract way of thinking.⁷³

It is certainly true that developments can be seen in the placement of the refuge motif. Until the mid-II AD, the petitioner usually refers to the official directly as in PSI XIII 1323 (147/8 AD): τῆς σῆς ἐπάρχου δικαίου μισοπονηρίας δέομενος κατέφυγον ἐπί σε πάν[των] εὐεργέτην. The phrase κατέφυγον ἐπί σε πάν[των] εὐεργέτην is directed to the prefect, and appears in the request section of the petition. But what is worth noting in this example is how the abstract virtue of the prefect is made the objective of the request: τῆς σῆς ἐπάρχου δικαίου μισοπονηρίας δέομενος, which is parallel to the developments in typifying social relations mentioned by Kovel'man, and is an early manifestation of the trend to the use of abstractions. The conjunction of the refuge motif and abstract conceptualisations of the official becomes more pronounced into III and IV AD, as we saw from many examples discussed in the previous chapter, and the abstract virtue becomes the place of refuge, in metaphorical terms. The motif also begins to appear in an entirely different part of the petition, namely, the opening sentence, which in fact becomes the place for the expression of many of the ideas and the use of language which previously came in the request section. This can be seen in P.Tebt. II 326 (c. 266 AD) (ll 2-4) ὑπὲρ θυγατρὸς ὀρφανῆς καὶ καταθεοῦς τὴν ἡλικίαν, δέσποτα ἡγεμόν, ἱκετηρίαν τιθεμένη ἐπὶ τὸ σὸν μέγεθος καταφεύγω ("On behalf of my orphan daughter who is under age, my lord prefect, I make this supplication and I take refuge in your strength.").

It is clear from Table 6.4 that the refuge motif continues unabated through III and into IV AD. The trend to a more richly drawn type is however quite clear. From 180 until mid IV AD there are 30 petitions with examples of the refuge motif, plus

72 A.B. Kovel'man, "The Rhetoric of Petitions and its Influence on Popular Social Awareness in Roman Egypt." 168 *VDI*, 170-84; "From Logos to Mythos", *BASP* 28 (1991), 135-152.

73 "From Logos to Mythos", 136.

P.Herm.Rees 19 (392 AD) which is included as an interesting point of comparison with the end of the fourth century AD. If we undertake a similar analysis of range and frequency the table is as follows:

Table 6.3
180 AD to mid IV AD

Tense and Mood	Example	Frequency	Addressees
Present indicative	PSI XIII 1337 (III AD): ἐπὶ τὴν σὴν ἀνδρείαν καταφεύγω	13 II-IV AD	Prefect, epistrategos, praeses, unknown
Perfect indicative			
Aorist indicative ⁷⁴	P.Mich VI 422 (197 AD): ὅθεν ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν σωτήρα κατέφυγον	5 II-IV AD	Prefect, strategos
Periphrasis using a middle present participle joined to the request verb			
Present participle	P.Oxy XII 1470 (336 AD): προσφ[εύ]ουσα ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν τοῦ κυρίου μου Φιλαγρίου τοῦ λαμπροτάτου ἐπάρχου τῆς Αἰγύπτου	1 IV AD	Prefect
Aorist participle			
Perfect participle			
Periphrasis with aorist middle			
Present infinitive, active or middle	BGU I 180 (II-III AD): Διόπερ προσφεύγειν σοι ἠναγκασθὴν δικαίαν δέ[η]σιν ποιούμενος	2 II-III AD	unknown
Periphrasis with present middle	BGU XI 2061 (207 AD): τὴν ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγὴν ποιῶμαι	6 II-IV AD	Prefect
Aorist infinitive	P.Cair.Isidor. 74 (315 AD): ἠπειχθὴν οὖν τὴν καταφυγὴν ποιήσασθαι πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς τοῦ ἐμοῦ κυρίου πόδας δεόμενος καὶ παρακαλῶν	2 III-IV AD	Praeses, unknown

74 Includes No 92, PSI XIV 1422 (IIIAD): ἔσπευσα παρὰ τὰ ἕχνα ὑμῶν τῶν κυρίων τῆς ὄλης οἰκουμένης, σωτήρων δὲ ἐμοῦ ἀνδρὸς μετρίου πολλὰ καμόντος.

Periphrasis with aorist active	P.Ryl. IV 617 (317 AD): καὶ καταφ[υγ]ήν ἐποίησα διὰ ταύτης μ[ου] τῆς ἀξι[ώ]σεως	1 IV AD	Emperor
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We may conduct a similar analysis to that undertaken after Table 6.2 In the period 180 AD to the accession of Diocletian in 284 AD the motif is found in petitions to the emperor, the prefect and the epistrategos. From the time of Diocletian until mid IV AD it is found directed to the emperor the prefect the praeses and the strategos. 2 petitions are addressed to the emperor, 17 to the prefect, 3 to the epistrategos, 1 to the strategos, 3 to the praeses, and 4 unknown. Clearly in this period there was a strong correlation between the development of the use of the refuge motif and the position of the prefect. Taking into account the rough equivalence between the office of praeses and the former epistrategos, there is an identifiable pattern here of limiting the refuge motif, beyond the emperor, to the prefect, the epistrategos or praeses and the strategos, though the latter was underrepresented. This is very consistent with the pattern we ascertained from Table 6.2 for the period after I AD. In this sense the century or so down to the end of I AD seems to have been a period of flux and perhaps experimentation, while the populace adjusted the symbolic order to the new structures of domination represented by the Romans.

14 of the petitions were sent by metropolitans, 12 by other land owners (some of whom may also have been metropolitans, 1 old or sick, 2 priests, 2 unknown. We can conclude therefore that in all periods petitions using the refuge motif came predominantly from the socio-economic class of land owners or cultivators. From II AD the metropolitan class shows an increasing representation as petitioners, so that they dominate the numbers. Throughout the period petitioners of whom one of the most prominent characteristics is old age or sickness are well represented, which is entirely appropriate for the refuge motif.

In Table 6.3 gaps have been left next to the constructions which seem to have disappeared by reference to Table 6.2. The last two constructions, aorist infinitive

and periphrasis with aorist active, were innovations which appeared in the centuries indicated. Present constructions, either a plain indicative, in a periphrasis or a participle, account for 19 of the 29 petitions. This has some significance because the present indicative is very often associated with ritual language in prayer forms and the growth of its use in relation to the refuge motif in petitions may suggest a movement of petitions and prayers closer together in the period I to IV AD, rather than the reverse. This will be considered further in chapter 8.

One of the virtues of this sort of analysis is that it helps address the question of the extent to which the verbs *καταφεύγω* or *προσφεύγω* may seem to have become bureaucratic terms with little or none of the symbolic signification which we have seen they are likely to have had in earlier periods. There is often a perception that the connotations of religious or symbolic signification faded with use over the centuries so that *καταφεύγω* in petitions from II or III AD did not carry the same connection with the act of supplication that the verb seems to have had in III BC. A number of editors of later Roman petitions opt for a translation such as "have recourse to" or "appeal to", which downplays almost to the point of extinction the religious or symbolic signification of the word.⁷⁵

If one looks at evidence of Roman bureaucratic documents it is easy to gain this impression. In texts such as reports of proceedings advocates or litigants describe the process of submitting a petition by using the verb *καταφεύγω*. P.Oxy II 237 (186 AD) is a very long petition by a woman called Dionysia to the prefect Pomponius Faustus, who was prefect in the 26th year of Commodus. The petition concerns a long running dispute between Dionysia and her father Chaeremon, who was an ex-gymnasiarch of Oxyrhynchus, and contains a lengthy recitation of the many steps each party took in the dispute. Both Chaeremon (end of Col II which was not published)⁷⁶ and Dionysia (Col. V, l. 30) use the verb *καταφεύγω* to describe the fact

75 Eg P.Oxy XVII 2131 (207 AD); P.Oxy XII 1468 (c. 258 AD).

76 See the mention at 145-6 of P.Oxy II.

of sending earlier petitions to predecessors of Pomponius.⁷⁷ The remains of P.Oxy VI 899 Verso (200 AD) seem to provide a comparison. P.Oxy VI 899 recto holds the famous petition of Apollonarian, which has been mentioned several times. On the verso there is a fragmentary ὑπομνηματισμός of which the following can be made out: (8) εἶπ(εν)· καταφυγὴν ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν κύρι, 9 ον] λέγων ἐδανε[ι]σάμην, 10 κε]φάλαιον καὶ τοὺς τόκους ("...refuge with you the lord...saying I have borrowed..principal and the interest.."). Apart from debt, it is not possible to know precisely what the case is about but it seems that the advocate or litigant him or herself opened with a refuge periphrasis like καταφυγὴν ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν κύριον ποιοῦμαι as we find in petitions. Then P. Strasb. 1018, a petition of unknown provenance from the year 262 AD, recites the record of a hearing before the prefect Theodotos, concerning violence to an old man and the stealing of produce and stock. In the report of the proceedings, the advocate for the complainant says "On account of this he [the complainant] takes refuge with you and the laws" (l. 16).⁷⁸ This of course refers back to the language of petitions. The reference may therefore be to the fact that the litigant has submitted a petition, but the inclusion of "the laws" together with the prefect as the objective of the petitions suggests the retention of the symbolic signification of refuge.

It is also interesting that we find the refuge motif in a record of proceedings outside Egypt, namely, in the petition of the Scaptoparenians from Phrygia (*IG Bulg IV 2236*) to Gordian III (238 AD). The inscription gives a record of what was said by the advocate for the town, Pyrrus, a praetorian, and the last lines of Greek (163-4) records him as saying διὰ τοῦτο ἀναγκαίως κατέφυγον ἐπὶ τὸν Σεβαστόν in reference to the town's approach to the emperor. Next we may compare P.Oxy VIII 112 (295 AD), a petition to a beneficarius Aurelius Ammonius by a woman called Aurelia Techosis. She describes a problem of theft of her inheritance by neighbours.

77 A later example of the same thing can be found in P.Oxy IX 1204 (299 AD) at l. 8.

78 Cf P.Mich. inv. 255 (22 Oct 147 AD), 7n.

Her purpose in applying to the *beneficarius* is to secure the appearance of the defendants, because she has petitioned a higher authority. The language she uses to express this latter idea is instructive. She says ἐμοῦ ἤδη τὴν πρὸς τὸν μίζονα φυγὴν ποιουμένη(ς). The phrase is an interesting variant on the more usual καταφεύγω and προσφεύγω but it clearly connotes the concept of flight to powerful authority, and implies an idea close if not the same as refuge or supplication.⁷⁹ None of these examples conclusively show a diminishment in the signification of the language of refuge in petitions.

By late IV AD we may find evidence of diminution of a semantic range which was no more than "apply to", in the text of an edict of the prefect Flavius Eutolmius Tatianus, who held office from 367-70 AD.⁸⁰ He issued an edict at some point in his incumbency, dealing with non-military persons who illegally issued petitions to *praepositi*, who had at that time jurisdiction only over soldiers. In the edict the two verbs used for petitioning are καταφεύγω and προσφεύγω. In that context it is hard to avoid the conclusion that by at least IV AD, if not earlier, both verbs had come to designate a secular and institutionalised process of petitioning, and had become an administrative term of art for it, at least in the parlance of the Greco-Roman Egyptian bureaucracy, devoid of symbolic significance.⁸¹

But there are a number of reasons for rejecting such a conclusion. The first is that καταφεύγω was used to denote the act of petitioning in official correspondence even in the Ptolemaic period, so on one view the way the term is used in Roman bureaucratic documents is simply a continuation of this and does not indicate a change in meaning one way or the other.⁸² Secondly, it is clear from Tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 above that the language of refuge was often closely connected to the verb of

79 Compare the later phrase ἐντετύξομαι τῇ μίζονι ἐξουσίᾳ in BGU III 909 (359 AD).

80 P.Oxy VIII 1102 (367-70 AD).

81 Nonetheless it should be pointed out that προσφυγή still appears in legal documents like deeds of surety in the clear sense of "refuge" in a public place as late as VI AD: see P.Oxy XLIV 3164 (1 Jan, 558 AD).

82 UPZ II 200 (2 Jun. 130 BC).

request. Thirdly, there was at all times a number of expressions available to express the process of petitioning an official with the meanings "resort to" or "have recourse to".⁸³ The verb ἐπιδίδωμι was also used for centuries in the meaning "submit" an application, memorandum or petition.⁸⁴ In a periphrastic extension of this verb similar to τὴν καταφυγὴν ποιεῖσθαι in the refuge motif we also find τὴν ἐπίδοσιν or τὴν τῶν βιβλιδίων ἐπίδοσιν ποιεῖσθαι, in the sense "make a submission" or "application."⁸⁵ In the Roman period προσερχόμαι and πρόσσειμι ("approach") appears also.⁸⁶ These facts of themselves of course do not mean that καταφεύγω did not lose its ritual and symbolic associations with the act of seeking asylum. They simply suggest that there was semantic scope for the ritual and symbolic connotations to continue, and the special connection which the motif of refuge clearly had with the prefect the epistrategos and the strategos supports this.

Fourthly, of more significance for the argument, is the use of the noun ἔντευξις and the verb ἐντυγχάνω in connection with petitioning. The verb ἐντυγχάνω was of course cognate with the Ptolemaic word for a petition to the king, ἔντευξις. Collomp discussed the meanings of the two at some length and pointed out that ἐντυγχάνω always referred to both the written supplication and oral audiences with powerful figures.⁸⁷ The written ἔντευξις reinforces the connection between the oral audience and the written supplication, and underlines the relationship between oral linguistic interactions and the petition which was the written cousin of these, as we argued in chapter 2. The document became the means by which the audience was achieved. Expressions such as ἐνετύχομεν καὶ ἐπεδώκαμεν ἔντευξιν

83 See Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, 99ff.

84 P.Amh. II 33 (157 BC); P.Tebt. IV 1098 (c 114 BC); BGU VIII 1847 (51/50 BC); P.Oxy XLVI 3274 (99-117 AD); P.Amh. II 77 (139 AD); P.Tebt II 332 (176 AD); P.Amh. II 78 (184 AD); P.Tebt II 333 (216 AD); P.Oxy XXXIII 2672 Recto (Sept/Oct 218 AD); P.Oxy LVIII 3926 (9 Feb 246); P.Oxy XLVI 3289 Recto (258-9 AD); P.Oxy XLIII 3114 (25/6-24/7/267 AD); P.Oxy XLIII 3140 (III-IV AD); P.Oxy XLVI 3296 Recto (291 AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 65 (298/9 AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 69 (310 AD); P.Oxy LIX 3981 (Feb/Mar 312 AD); P.Oxy XLIII 3126 (19 Aug 328 AD).

85 BGU VIII 1859 (I BC); BGU VIII 1829 (52/1 BC); P.Oxy XLIII 3116 (275-6 AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 62 (5 Sept 296 AD).

86 P.Cair.Isidor. 77 (320 AD) See also τὴν προσέλευσιν ποιούμεαι σοι ἄξιουσά in P.L. Bat. XXV 34 (140 AD) and P.Sakaon 36 (c 280 AD)(=P.Ryl 114, Sel.Pap. II 293).

87 *Recherches*, 51 ff.

προφερόμεναι in UPZ I 42 (163-2 BC) show that a distinction was drawn between the concepts comprised in the verb ἐντυγχάνω and the act of presenting the document, but they are both clearly within the same semantic domain. Further, the connotations of ἐντυγχάνω are also very close to many of the meanings comprised in καταφεύγω, since both embrace the notion of supplication. It is important therefore to remind ourselves that ἔντευξις remained a word designating the document sent to central authority and ἐντυγχάνω can be found in petitions to describe the act of petitioning in phrases like ἐνέτυχον διὰ βιβλιδίων right through the Roman period.⁸⁸ Sometimes this can appear in a periphrasis such as ἐγὼ ἐντυχείαις ἐχρησάμην.⁸⁹ Ἐντυγχάνω is also the verb used in opening remarks by advocates to mean "apply to the court" in proceedings.⁹⁰ In UPZ II 185 (II BC)(=P. Par. 16) it was used to introduce the transcript of proceedings. As in the Ptolemaic period, the phrase ἐνέτυχον διὰ βιβλιδίων contemplates within it the notion of the audience achieved through the written communication. This can be compared with the notion of the oral audience achieved through advocates in court which we find expressed in identical constructions, such as, in P.Mich IX 534 (156 AD): ἐνέτυχον πρὸ βήματος διὰ Ἀμμωνίου ῥήτορος ("I appealed before the court through the advocate Ammonios").

Fifthly, the idea of an oral audience is also found expressed in the language of refuge used to designate appeals to the emperor for legal decision on difficult questions, such as in BGU I 19 Verso (11 Feb. 135 AD). This interesting document is an ἀντίγραφον or transcript from the second century. There appear to be proceedings delegated to Menandros the basilicogrammateus of the Arsinoite nome from the prefect Petronius Mamertinus. The case involves the problem of Xenalexa, daughter of Alexander, an Egyptian woman, concerning the inheritance of property from her grandmother. The issue seems to be whether Egyptian grandsons or grand daughters

88 That is the phrase used in P.Oxy XLIII 3094 (217-18 AD) a private letter talking about petitioning an unknown official. See also P.Oxy L 3561 (Jan-Feb 165 AD).

89 P.Oxy XLVI 3302 Recto (300-1 AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 66 (299 AD): τὴν ἐντυχίαν ποιείσθαι.

90 P.Oxy XLIII 3117 (III AD); P.Sakaon 34 (12 Dec 321)(=P.Thead 13), 5: ἐντεύχθη τὸ μεγαλεῖον τὸ σίδν.

inherited from their paternal grandfather. Menandros cannot decide the point and says that it has been deferred for consultation with the prefect as to whether the issue of inheritance has been resolved by the charity of the emperor Hadrian. The relevant passage is taken from a letter written by Menandros to Petronius Mamertinus in which he describes the appeal to the charity of the emperor in these terms: (19) Ὑπερτέθη ἡ διάγνωσις εἰς τὴν ἀπόδειξιν, νῦν ἀναπεμφθέντες ἐπ' ἐμὲ πρὸς τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἡξίου προσφυγεῖν τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιφανεστάτου αὐτοκράτορος | (II) καὶ Αἰγυπτίους συνκεχωρημένου τὰ μαμμῶα κληρονομεῖν καὶ ἐπήνεγκ[ε] | Γελλίου Βάσσου τοῦ κρατίστου ἐπιστρατήγου ἀπόφασιν κεκρικότος. ("The decision was put off for the purpose of exposition, now having been delegated to me with respect to the same people she asked to fly for refuge to the charity of the manifest god imperator even granting that Egyptians inherit their grandmother's possessions and she cited a decision of Gellius Bassus the most powerful epistrategos..") This passage shows rather clearly that approaches to the most powerful figures like the emperor were consistently conceptualised in terms very similar to an act of asylum even when the context seemed heavily legalistic.

Sixthly, by III AD we see a very interesting augmentation of the supplicatory connotations of the verbs καταφεύγω or προσφεύγω, as in PSI XIII 1337 (III AD): ἀναγκάϊως ἐπὶ τὴν σὴν ἀνδρείαν καταφεύγω, ταύτην τὴν ἰκετηρίαν προτεινόμενος ἐπὶ σο[ῦ] τοῦ σκε[πασ]τοῦ τῶν μετρ[ί]ων. The placement of a suppliant's branch, a rod bound with wool, apart from constituting a more general act of supplication, is known from classical Athens as a means whereby any person with a public or private grievance was able to obtain a hearing at the second meeting of the Athenian ecclesia in each prytany.⁹¹ It is just possible that the appearance of this expression in petitions of III AD may refer to some actual similar procedure, but there is no other evidence known to the writer which would support such a conclusion. What seems much more likely is that the scribe or writer of the petition knew his

91 Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 43.6; Pollux viii 96; Ar. *Plut.* 383; Andok. i 110ff; Aischines ii 15; Dem. xviii.107, xliii.83.

forensic Athenian orators and adapted the classical expression τὴν ἰκετηρίαν τίθειναι to the language of supplication in Roman petitions from Egypt.⁹² The associations of the expression τὴν ἰκετηρίαν τίθειναι both with the religious act of supplication and with the articulation of complaints in Athens made it particularly apposite for employment in the language of petitions. But really the proper view seems to be that the language constructs a symbolic expression for the act of approaching a powerful figure more elaborate than we have usually seen in earlier petitions, and the expression is couched in the terms of an act itself. This no doubt reflects the "Byzantine" style but for the many reasons that already been detailed, this does not amount to a diminution of the language, but is better viewed an intensification. We will say more about this in chapter 8.

It is apparent from Achilles Tatius that the use of the suppliant's branch was a generalised gesture which could be used in situations of difficulty by people who perceived themselves to be in a position of weakness viz-à-viz a more powerful person or group. For example, in Book IV.13 of *Leucippe and Clitophon* the pirates and buccaneers of the Nile provide their old men with suppliant branches and secrete their young fighting men behind as a stratagem to deceive the general of the army of the Satrap of Egypt.⁹³ This shows how supplication was venerated as a basic social ritual gesture, and was thought appropriate to mediate disparities of power in many different social contexts. The stratagem of the pirates could only work if the Satrap's general recognised the gesture. The use of the old men as the bearers of the branches relied also upon the perception of the old as a weaker and more vulnerable section of society, suitable for a protective response, which as we will see in the next chapter was a theme consistently used by the writers of petitions also.

So in petitions themselves the verbs and associated language of supplication should be taken as continuing to have real and fundamental role in conceptualising

92 Compare P.Tebt II 326 (c. 266 AD); P.Oxy I 71.1 Recto (303 AD).

93 Compare Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, II.19.

and instantiating the relationship between the petitioner and the powerful official in situations where the petitioner sought help. There is no good reason to think that in a passage such as P.Oxy XXII 2342 (102 AD): [ὧν χάριν ἀδικούμενος ἐπὶ σε τὸν πάντων [ἀνθρώπων] εὐεργέτην κα[τ]αφεύγω, the connotation of supplication is any less real than in earlier petitions using very similar language. This is especially so because the verb καταφεύγω is coupled with the traditional designations of "benefactor of all men" and the sense of the passage is extended by another conventional usage, ἀδικέω in the participial form. The passage from PSI XIII 1337 (III AD) makes the point more obvious: ἀναγκαίως ἐπὶ τὴν σὴν ἀνδρείαν καταφεύγω, ταύτην τὴν ἱκετηρίαν προτεινόμενος ἐπὶ σοῦ τοῦ σκε[πασ]τοῦ τῶν μετρ[ί]ων ("Perforce I take refuge in your courage, tendering this supplication before you, the protector of the humble").⁹⁴ Although to the modern mind this may seem unnecessarily pompous, at the time it was written it drew upon several centuries of highly symbolic linguistic conventions in dealing the powerful. If we take the view that these sort of sentences are examples of conventional elements of the symbolic universe being recapitulated, interpreted and set in new patterns, the motif of refuge remains vigorous and continues to express a central feature of the interaction with high officials.

Further we should note that from mid III AD the refuge motif becomes enhanced in some petitions by the expression of refuge at the feet of the official.⁹⁵ This will be considered more fully in chapter 8, because it has aspects which need to be discussed in connection with other relevant religious issues. But it must have some connection with the specific action of refuge at the feet of cult statues, so the signification of supplication was if anything strengthened by its use. The correct

94 P.Herm.Rees 19 (392 AD) has a reference to the action of someone, not the petitioner, using the expression κατέφυγεν ἐπὶ τὴν προστασίαν. It is not clear to whom this refers in the context of the document but it seems to be a variant of the common theme. Cf P.Panop. III 29 (24/7/332 AD), in which the petitioner describes his own act of approaching the prefect Flavius Quintillianus on a problem involving a local potentate: κατέφυγον ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρε[τ]ὴν τοῦ κυρίου μου διασημοτάτου ἡγεμονος. On the use of ἱκετηρία see chapter 8, 402.

95 As in for example P.Cair.Isid.74 (27 December, 315 AD): οὖν τὴν καταφυγὴν ποιήσασθαι πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς τοῦ ἐμοῦ κυρίου πόδας δεόμενος καὶ παρακαλῶν ἄνθρωπος μέτριος.

conclusion therefore, on the scope of the meaning of *καταφεύγω* and the refuge motif into the later Roman period, seems to be that it retained its religious and symbolic connotations of refuge and supplication within the special tradition of petitions.

It is hoped that the reader now stands convinced that the linguistic motif of supplication remained very robust from the early Ptolemaic period until well into mid IV AD. Despite changes of position within the structure of petitions and the injection of new concepts and alterations to the original patterns of arrangement, there can be little doubt that for a period of about 700 years, in Greco-Roman Egypt, petitioners clothed themselves in the symbolic role of suppliants to approach high officials, the Ptolemaic monarch, epistrategos and strategos, the Roman emperor, the epistrategos, the strategos, the prefect, the archidicastes, the centurion and later the praeses, whose own roles were perceived to embody legitimate power. The language used to articulate this approach was the language of a deeply entrenched ritual, religious and symbolic act, the taking of refuge.

This observation deserves some emphasis. The evidence shows that it was the perception of the power of the addressee which tended to determine the use of the supplication motif. The subject matter of the petition does not seem to be a guide as to why the motif should be chosen on some occasions and not on others. Of the 358 Ptolemaic petitions in the database 51, petitions have lost their subject matter. 7 deal with official extortion and only 1 of these uses the refuge motif: P.Tebt. III:1 789 (c 140 BC) to the strategos, probably. 9 deal with false imprisonment, of which 2 use the refuge motif, P.Cair.Zen. III 59421 (III BC) and P.Cair.Zen. III 59421 (III BC), both to Zenon and 1 uses the language of mercy, BGU VIII 1847 (51/50 BC). 59 are about violence, of which 5 use the refuge motif, P.Ent. 86 (221 BC), UPZ I 106 (c 159 BC)(=P. Leid. G), UPZ II 170 (127-6 BC)(=P. Tor. 3; P. Par 14) to the king, UPZ I 8 (c. 161 BC)(=P. Lond. 24), UPZ I 12 (158 BC)(=P. Par. 40) to the strategos.

This brief survey shows clearly that other factors, some of which cannot be known in all likelihood, must have had a bearing upon the choice of the language of a

petition, especially the symbolic language chosen for the addressee. A similar analysis undertaken for the Roman period would produce similar results. However, we note also that a comparison of two petitions by the same person on the same subject about the same wrongdoers supports this. BGU I 321 (7 April 216 AD) is a petition by Aurelius Pakusis, priest, son of Tesenouphis about a theft, but addressed to the strategos. BGU I 322 (7 April 216 AD) is by the same person on the same subject and even apparently on the same date, but addressed to the prefect and it is the petition containing the refuge motif. The evidence shows then that the recipient was the single most important factor in the decision to employ the refuge motif and this represented a basic acknowledgment of certain structural disparities of power.

6.4 SUMMARY

The foregoing discussion hopefully has left little room for doubt that one of the most prevalent ways in which the role of monarchs and officials was conceptualised in lives of the smaller communities and individual problems of the general population, was in terms of and through the language of a relationship of supplication, a primary symbolic concept which was utilised continuously over the centuries to make sense of the power of officials, and became enriched over time by associations with ethical vocabulary of kindness and compassion, courage, virtue and justice, which we examined in chapter 5, natural corollaries of saving and preservation. When individuals experienced a problem with taxation, rent, inheritance or a myriad of other troubles, arising from the economic, legal or political realities of the social structure, they stepped into a role, the role of petitioner, and this gave them access to the symbolic universe through the recognised categories, rhetorical topoi and social types which informed the judicial and administrative context of the Greco-Roman Egypt. These were reused, interpreted and set in new patterns throughout the Greco-Roman period and manifestly provided a fundamental set of concepts with which the general population could make sense of the experience of powerful figures in their social world. During the Roman period, especially after II AD these symbolic elements became more complex and sophisticated, and in this we should see an intensification

of their symbolic significations rather than a necessary trend to empty verbosity. It is argued here that the function of this language was not only or even essentially "political", as the term is usually understood, but it had much wider importance at a symbolic level, which overlapped in some way with religious sense, as a response to power. The importance of the use of the language of supplication to negotiate the power of high officials cannot be stressed too much. It is appropriate to view this language, by virtue of its constancy and repetition, as itself ritualistic in nature, echoing the ritual elements of supplication. The presentation of the petition, strengthened by its nature as a form of linguistic interaction, became both an allegory and substitute for the physical gestures in the ritual. This conclusion shows us that the notion of reciprocity is absolutely fundamental to an understanding of how power was negotiated and legitimated in the Greco-Roman world, well into IV AD.

In the next chapter we will see that the strength and goodness of officials, and the enhancement of his honour through supplication was answered at both a conceptual or symbolic and a practical level by the humility and weakness of petitioners and the illegal and immoral activity of wrongdoers, especially dishonouring behaviour. Indeed, it will be seen that the whole issue of honour and shame was aligned at a very basic level with the same notion of reciprocity inherent in the relationship of supplication.

Table 6.4: Language of Supplication

Reference	Date	Provenance	Addressee	Subject of Petition	Petitioner/ Category	Text and Translation
1. P.Yale 46 col. i	246-221 BC	Unknown	Ptolemy (king)	Seizure of land	Priest of Ammon and Arsinoe, of the Theoi Adelphoi and the Theoi Euergetai Priest	(19) ἵνα ἐπί σε καταφυγῶν, βασιλεῦ, τύχω τοῦ δικαίου ...so that having taken refuge with you, my king, I may meet with justice.
2. P.Ent. 101	246-221 BC	Magdola	Ptolemy (king)	unknown	Unknown Unknown	[κατα]φυγῶν, τὸν πάντων σωτήρα, τοῦ δικαίου τρεῦξομαι ...having taken refuge [with you], the saviour of all, I shall meet with justice.
3. P.Hib II 238	c. 246-221 BC	Oxyrhynchus	Ptolemy (king)	Illegal Behaviour of Officials False registration of sheep	Unknown Unknown	(9) ἐὰν ἦ τὰ διὰ τῆς ἐντεῦξεως . . .] ἀδικῆι ἵνα ἐπί σε καταφυγῶν, βασιλεῦ ...if the matters detailed (?) in my petition ...he does wrong, so that having taken refuge with you, my king
4. P.Col.Zen II 83	245-244 BC	Philadelphia	Ptolemy (king)	False Imprisonment Overcharging interest on a loan	Antipatros Land holder	(17) ἵνα ἐπί σέ, βασιλεῦ, καταφυγῶν τοῦ δικαίου τύχω. ...so that fleeing to you, my king, I may meet justice.
5. P.Lond. VII 2045	III BC	Philadelphia	Zenon	False Imprisonment	Pais Rural labourer	νῦν οὖν ἰκέται καταπεφεύγαμεν πρὸς σε. οὐκ ἔχομεν βοήθην ἄλλον οὐθένα ἀλλὰ σέ(ς) Now therefore we have fled for refuge as suppliants to you. We have no other help than you.
6. P.Cair.Zen. III 59421	III BC	Philadelphia	Zenon	Illegal Behaviour of Officials Release from Liturgy False Imprisonment	Dionysios, the corn-measurer Artisan	(1) δέομαί σου καὶ ἰκετεύω, ἐνευχ[όμε] νο[ς] σοι το[ς] πατρικιοῦς θεοῦς καὶ τὴν υἰείαν τῆν Ἀπολλωνίου μὴ περιδεῖν με ἀδικούμενον, ἀλλὰ μάλιστα[τα] μὲν αὐτόν σε ἐπισκεψασθαι περὶ ἐμοῦ,...[ἐγὼ οὖν καταφεύγω ἐπὶ σέ, ἴσον κρίνων [Ἀπολλωνίωι I ask you and beseech, praying to the gods for you and the health of Apollonios, not to permit me to be wronged, but especially you yourself watch over me... Therefore I fly to you, judging equally to Apollonios.
7. P.Cair.Zen. III 59447	III BC	Philadelphia	Zenon	Request for work	Theon Rural labourer	(4) πρὸς ἕτερον γὰρ οὐθένα καταφυ γεῖν ἐστὶ μοι καλῶς ἔχον, ἐξ ἀρχῆς [μου σοῦ] συσταθέντος For with no other is it proper for me to take refuge, from the beginning I was allied to you
8. P.Cair.Zen. III 59495	III BC	Philadelphia	Zenon	Release from prison	Petenouris and Samoys Rural labourer	πρὸς σέ οὖν καταφυγάνομεν, ἵνα ἐλεημοσύνης τύχωμεν. We take refuge before you so that we may meet mercy.
9. P.Cair.Zen. IV 59618	III BC	Philadelphia	Zenon	Unknown	Unknown Unknown	[c ? ἐπὶ σέ καταφυγῶν τὸν κοινὸν πάντων σωτήρα c ?] εὐ[τύχει]. ..fleeing to you the common saviour of all.
10. P.Cair.Zen. V 59852	III BC	Philadelphia	Zenon	Request for work	Theon Unemployed	πρὸς ἕτερον γὰρ οὐθένα καταφυγεῖν ἐστὶ μοι καλῶς ἔχον, ἐξ ἀρχῆς σοι μου συν[απ.] συσταθέντος For it is not good for me to seek refuge with any other, since from the beginning I have been allied to you

Reference	Date	Provenance	Addressee	Subject of Petition	Petitioner/ Category	Text and Translation
11. P.Ent. 4	242 BC	Ghōran	Ptolemy (king)	Fraud	Philiskos, hecatontarouros Clerouch	(10) τούτου γὰρ γενομένου οὐκ ἀδικηθήσομαι, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ σε [καταφυγῶν, τὸν κοινὸν] πάντων εὐεργέτην, τεύξομαι τοῦ δικαίου If this happens I will not be wronged, but having taken refuge with you, the common benefactor of all, I will meet justice
12. P.Ent. 12	242 BC	Ghōran	Ptolemy (king)	Trespass to land	Bithys, a veteran of Kerdendos Clerouch	(6)...ἀποτεῖλαι αὐτὸν ἐπ' Ἀφθονήτον, ἵνα [διακριθῆ] πρὸς μέγῳ τε ἐπὶ [σὲ] καταφυγῶν, βασιλεῦ, τοῦ δικαίου τύχῳ. ...to send him to Aphthonetos, so that it may be decided for me and having sought refuge with you, my king, I may meet justice.
13. P.Ent. 13	221 BC	Magdōla	Ptolemy (king)	Theft	Asia Clerouch	(9) ..ἵνα ἐ[π]ὶ σε καταφυγοῦσα, βασιλεῦ, τοῦ δικαίου τύχῳ. ...so that having taken refuge with you, my king, I may meet with justice.
14. P.Ent. 14	221 BC	Magdōla	Ptolemy (king)	Possession of property by a mortgagee	Dizoporis, a Thracian, holder of 70 arourae Clerouch	(10) Τούτου γὰρ γενομένου, ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγῶν, βασιλεῦ, τεύξομαι τοῦ δικαίου] If the takes place, my king, having made refuge with you, my king, I will meet with justice.
15. P.Ent. 24	221 BC	Magdōla	Ptolemy (king)	Unknown	Thetosiris Land holder	(5) Δέομαι οὖν σου,] βασιλεῦ, ἐπὶ σὲ τὴν κ[ατ]αφυγὴν ποιουμένην, προστάξει Διοφάνει τῷ στρατηγῷ γράψαι] I ask you, my king, having taken refuge with you, to direct Diophanes the strategos, to write..
16. P.Ent. 26	221 BC	Magdōla	Ptolemy (king)	Refusal to pay pension	Ktesicles Old or sick	(15) Τούτων γὰρ γενομένων, οὐκ ἀδικηθήσομαι, ἀλλὰ ἐπὶ σὲ, βασιλεῦ] καταφυγῶν, τοῦ δικαίου τεύξομαι] If these things happen, we will not have been wronged, but having taken refuge with you, our king, we will meet with justice.
17. P.Ent. 46	221 BC	Magdōla	Ptolemy (king)	Breach of Contract	Theonides Clerouch	(4) Δέομαι οὖν σου, βασιλεῦ...εἰ δέ τι ἀντιλέγει, μὴ ὀφείλειν ὁμῶς μοι, ἀπολεύσθω, ἵνα μὴ ἀδικηθῶ, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγῶν, βασιλεῦ, τὸν πάντων εὐεργέτην, τοῦ δικαίου τύχῳ. I ask you, my king,...if he makes some defence, swearing that he does not owe me, let him be discharged, so that I may not be wronged, but seeking refuge with you, my king, the benefactor of all, I may meet justice.
18. P.Ent. 51	221 BC	Magdōla	Ptolemy (king)	Breach of Contract	Alexandros Unknown	(6) ἵνα μὴ ἀλλοιωθῆ, ἵνα ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγῶν ...so that he may not be changed, so that having sought refuge with you...
19. P.Ent. 62	221 BC	Magdōla	Ptolemy (king)	Lease problem	Philitos, scribe τῶν μισθοφόρων ἰππέων, lessee of land Land holder	(6) [μὴ συκοφαντηθῶ ἀπραγμ...ων, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγῶν] [φιλιανθρωπίας ὡ τετευχώς.that I may not be falsely accused, an inexperienced man..., but taking refuge with you...I may meet with kindness.
20. P.Ent. 70	221 BC	Magdola	Ptolemy (king)	Damage to pigs	Polemaios Rural labourer	(13) Τούτου γὰρ γενομένου, βασιλεῦ, ἐπὶ σὲ κ[ατ]αφυγῶν, τ[ὸν] κοινὸν εὐεργέτην, [τεύξομαι τῆς παρὰ σοῦ βοηθείας If this happens, my king, having sought refuge with you, the common benefactor, I will meet with assistance at your hands.

Reference	Date	Provenance	Addressee	Subject of Petition	Petitioner/ Category	Text and Translation
21. P.Ent. 71	221 BC	Magdola	Ptolemy (king)	Damage to pigs	Unknown Unknown	(8) Τούτου γὰρ γενομένου ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγῶν, τὸν πάντων κοινὸν εὐεργέτην, ἔσομαι τοῦ δικαίου τετευχῶς. For if this happens, my king, having sought refuge with you, the common benefactor of all, I will meet with justice.
22. P.Ent. 78	221 BC	Magdola	Ptolemy (king)	Violence	Eutychos, water carrier Rural labourer	ἵνα, ἐπὶ σὲ [καταφυγῶν, βασιλεῦ, τὸν πάντων κοινὸν σωτήρα καὶ εὐεργέτην [τύχῃ]..βοηθείας. ...so that fleeing to you for refuge, king, the common saviour and benefactor of all, I may meet with assistance
23. P.Ent. 82	221 BC	Mâgdola	Ptolemy (king)	Violence	Philistes χειρόβιος Artisan	(5) Δέομαι οὖν σου, βασιλεῦ, εἴ σοι δοκεῖ, ἰκέτις ἐπὶ σε καταπεφυγῶσα, μὴ περιιδεῖν με οὕτως ἥνομημένην, χειρόβιον οὖσαν (9) ἵν' ἐπὶ σε καταφυγούσα, βασιλεῦ, τὸν πάντων κοινὸν εὐεργέτην, τοῦ δικαίου τύχῳ. (5) I ask you therefore, my king, if it seems good to you, since I have taken refuge with you as a suppliant, not to suffer me to be unlawfully treated thus, since I live by my hands...(9) so that having taken refuge with you, my king, the common benefactor of all, I may meet with justice.
24. P.Ent. 85	221 BC	Magdôla	Ptolemy (king)	Illegal Behaviour of Officials	Plaison son of Eudoxos Unknown	(10) Τούτου γὰρ γενομένου, ἐπὶ σε, βασιλεῦ, καταπ[ε]φ[ε]υγῶς τοῦ δικαίου τεύξομαι] If this takes place, my king, having taken refuge with you, my king, I will meet with justice.
25. P.Ent. 86	221 BC	Mâgdola	Ptolemy (king)	Violence Violence against witnesses	Tetosiris Servant	(14) ἵνα, τούτου γενομένου, ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγούσα, βασιλεῦ, τὸν πάντων κοινὸν εὐεργέτην, τύχῳ τῆς παρὰ σοῦ φιλανθρωπ[ί]ας]. ...so that, if this takes place, having taken refuge with you, my king, the common benefactor of all, I may meet with kindness at your hands.
26. P.Ent. 89	221 BC	Mâgdola	Ptolemy (king)	Tax collection Debt Problems Failure to pay orchard tax	Alexandros Land holder	(10) ἵνα, ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγῶν, βασιλεῦ, τοῦ δικαίου τύχῳ. ...so that, having taken refuge with you, my king, I may meet with justice.
27. P.Heid. VI 376	2 Mar 220 BC	Heracleopolite	Ptolemy (king)	Sale supported by an arrha	Unknown Merchant	(17) ὅπως ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγῶν, βασιλεῦ, τὸν πάντων βοηθὸν καὶ εὐεργέτην, τύχῳ τοῦ δικαίου. ...so that having taken refuge with you, my king, the helper and benefactor of all, I may have met with justice.
28. P.Ent. 2	217 BC	Magdôla	Ptolemy (king)	Non-payment of money	Harmiusis, wool merchant (?) Merchant	(9) Τούτ[ο]υ γὰρ γενομένου, ἐγὼ τε οὐκ ἀδικηθῆσομαι, τὰ τε τέλη τὰ [ὀφει]λόμενα κατ' Ἀλεξανδρείαν[ι] Ἀμύν[τ]ας ἢ συνηγόρακα καὶ πλείω φόρτον, ἀλλ[ὰ] ἐπὶ σε, βασιλεῦ, καταφυγόν[τες, τὸν πάντων] κοινὸν σωτήρα, τευξόμεθα τοῦ δικαίου. If this happens, both will we not have been wronged, and the taxes owing to Alexandria [?] [...Amyn]tas by whom I have been accused and much barley, but having sought refuge with you, our king, the common saviour of all, we will meet with justice.

Reference	Date	Provenance	Addressee	Subject of Petition	Petitioner/ Category	Text and Translation
29. P.Ent. 15	217 BC	Magdola	Ptolemy (king)	Renewal of mortgage	Dizaporis, 70 aroua clerouch Clerouch	(6) Δέομαι οὖν σου, βασιλεῦ, ..., ἵνα μὴ συμβῆι, νεωτέρου μου ὄντος, ἐπικαταβολὴν γενέσθαι τοῦ ἀμπελώνος καὶ ἀποστερηθῶ πλείονος ἀξίου ὄντος, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ σέ, βασιλεῦ, καταφυγῶν, τὸν πάντων κοινὸν εὐεργέτην, τῶν εὐγνωμόνων τύχῳ. I ask you therefore, my king, so that it may not take place, since I am a young person, disaster to the vineyard and I lose more than I deserve, but having sought refuge with you, my king, the common benefactor of all, I may meet with good sentiments.
30. P.Ent. 32	217 BC	Magdola	Ptolemy (king)	Restitution Theft	Theon and Teutios sons of Philippos, Macedonians, guardians of Philippos son of Philippos Property owner	ἵνα ἐπὶ σέ καταφυγόντες, βασιλεῦ, τὸν πάντων βοιωθ[ὸν] κ[αὶ] εὐεργέτην, τοῦ δικαίου τύχωμεν, ἢ δὲ ὀρφανὴ μὴ ἀδικηθῆ[ι]. ...so that having sought refuge with you, our king, the helper and benefactor of all, we may meet justice, and the orphan may not be wronged.
31. P.Ent. 34	217 BC	Magdola	Ptolemy (king)	Short delivery of wine	Sopatros and other wine sellers Merchant	ἵνα ἐπὶ σέ καταφυγόντες, βασιλεῦ, τύχωμεν τοῦ δικαίου ...so that having sought refuge with you, our king, we may meet justice.
32. P.Ent. 60	217 BC	Magdola	Ptolemy (king)	Wrongful inundation of property	Royal cultivators Land holder	Τούτου γὰρ γενομένου, ἐπὶ σέ καταφυγῶν, βασιλεῦ, τὰ τε ἐχφόρια Χρυσέρμῳ διυλῆσομαι ἀποδοῦναι, ἐγὼ τε ἔσομαι τῆς παρὰ σου φιλανθρωπίας τετευχώς. If this happens, having taken refuge with you, my king, also I will be able to pay the rent to Chrysermos, and I will have met with kindness at your hands.
33. P.Ent. 69	217 BC	Magdola	Ptolemy (king)	Trespass on land	Hediste daughter of Nicanor Land holder	(7) Τούτου γὰρ γενομένου, ἐπὶ σέ] καταφυγοῦσα, βασιλεῦ, τεύξομαι] τῆς πασῆς βοηθείας For if this happens, having sought refuge with you, my king, I will meet with total assistance.
34. SB XVI 12305	199-150 BC	Arsinoites	Strategos	Theft	Thermuthis, daughter of Semthis Property owner	(6) ἀδικουμένη οὐ μετρίως καὶ μαστιγούμενη παρ' ἕκαστον ὑπὸ Θασώτος τῆς ἰδίας μου θυγατρος ἐπὶ σέ τὴν καταφυγὴν πεποίημαι, ὅπως ἐπίστα· θῆι τὰ κατ' αὐτὴν· παρα· θεμένης γὰρ μου αὐτῆι ἄλυσιν ἀργυρ ...being wronged beyond due limits and being flogged contrary to every law by Thasos my very own daughter, I take refuge with you, so that matters pertaining to her may be attended to.
35. UPZ I 4 Verso	164 BC	Memphis	Ptolemy (king)	Abduction and sale into slavery	Ptolemaios son of Glaukos the Macedonian Katochos	ἀξιώ] ὑμ[ας οὐκ ἔ]χων ἀλλ[η]ν] βο[ι]ή]θεαν ἀλλ' ἢ τ[ί]ν] ἐφ' ἡμ[α]ς καταφυγῆν ἠν... ...I ask you since I do not have source of help other than refuge with you..

Reference	Date	Provenance	Addressee	Subject of Petition	Petitioner/ Category	Text and Translation
36. UPZ I 17	163 BC	Memphis	Hypodoioketes	Request for an allowance of sesame oil Request for maintenance	Thaues And Taus twins performing services in the Great Serapeion at Memphis Temple personel	Ἐπεὶ οὖν τ[ὴν] καταφυγὴν ἐπὶ σὲ πε- ποιήμεθα, μὴ περιύδης ἡ μάς ἀσθενῶς διακειμένης. Since therefore we have taken refuge with you so that you may not suffer us in our pitiful condition
37. UPZ I 19	c. 163 BC	Memphis	Ptolemy (king)	Wrongs by a mother against her daughters	Thaues And Taus twins performing services in the Great Serapeion at Memphis Temple personel	(4) Ἐν πλείοσιν ἀδικούμεναι ὑπὸ Νεφόριτος καὶ Παχράτου τὴν καταφυγὴν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς πεποιημέθα, ἵνα τύχωμεν τῶν δικαίων. In multiple ways being wronged by Nephoris and Pachrates we have taken refuge with you, so that we may meet with justice.
38. UPZ I 18	c. 161 BC	unknown	Strategos	Violence	Ptolemaios son of Glaukias Katochos	(4) Ἦδικημένος οὐ μετρίως καὶ τῶι ζῆνι πλειονάκις κεκινδυνευκῶς ὑπὸ τῶν ὑπογεγραμμένων ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ καλλυντῶν ἐπὶ σὲ τὴν καταφυγὴν ποιῶμαι νομίζων μάλισθ' οὕτως τεύξεσθαι τῶν δικαίων. Being wronged beyond due limits and having been put at risk of my life many times by the undermentioned twins from the temple, I take refuge with you believing that thus I will especially meet with justice.
39. UPZ I 19	161 BC	Memphis	Ptolemy (king)	Inheritance	Ptolemaios son of Ptolemaios Katochos	(9) δέομαι ὑμῶν μεθ' ἱκετείας, θεοὶ Σωτῆρες Εὐεργέται, ἐμβλέψαντας εἷς τε ἐμέ.. ...I ask you with supplication, saviour and benefactor gods, looking upon me with consideration..
40. UPZ I 106	c 159 BC	Memphis	Ptolemy (king)	Violence	Petesis son of Chenuphis head of embalmers for Osorapis and Osoromnevis Temple personel	(14) σκυλλόμενος δὲ καὶ διασειόμενος παρ' ἕκαστον εἰκῆ καὶ ὡς ἔτυχεν [ὅ]τι τινῶν ἐπὶ τῶν τόπων, τὴν [ἐ]φ' ὑμᾶς καταφυγὴν πεποιήμαι καὶ ἀξιῶ δεόμενος.. ...Being vexed and oppressed in every way and without reason by certain people in the localities, we have taken refuge with you and begging ask..
41. UPZ I 12	158 BC	Memphis	Strategos	Violence	Apollonios son of Glaukias Katochos	(47) Διὸ τὴν καταφυγὴν πε- ποιήμενος ἀξιῶ, ἐὰν φαίνηται, παρα- γελῆναι αὐτοῖς, ὅπως τύχω τῶν δικαίων. Wherefore making the supplication I ask, if it seems good, to summon them to appear, so that I may meet with justice.
42. UPZ I 14	158-7 BC	Memphis	Ptolemy (king)	Request for a benefaction	Ptolemaios son of Glaukias Katochos	(14) δέομαι ὑμῶν τῶν μεγίστων θεῶν Φιλομητόρων ἐμβλεύσαντας εἰς τὰ προγεγραμμένα ἔτη, καθότι οὐθαμόθεν ἔχω τὰ ἐπι(τή)δῆαι πλὴν τοῦ τὴν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς καταφυγὴν τοῖς θεοῖς μεγίστους καὶ ἀντιλήμπτους ποιησάμενον τυχεῖν I ask you the greatest gods Philometores looking back the above mentioned year, since I have in no wise support except being able to take refuge with you the greatest gods and helpers..
43. P.Tebt. III:1 789	c 140 BC	Tebtynis	Strategos (?)	Extortion by Officials	Crown cultivators Land holder	(21) τῶν σπερμάτων συκοφάτηθῶμεν κέναι ἐπὶ σὲ τὴν καταφυγὴν πεποιημέθα We were extorted of the seeds....we have taken refuge with you.

Reference	Date	Provenance	Addressee	Subject of Petition	Petitioner/ Category	Text and Translation
44. P.Tebt. III:1 785	c 138 BC	Tebtynis	Strategos	Ownership of Land	Onnophrios son of Petemounis Land holder	(l 27) δι' ἣν αἰτίαν τὴν ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγὴν πεπονημένος ἀξιῶ, εἴαν φαίνηται, σύτάξει γράψαι Σαραπίωνι τῷ ἐπιστάτῃ ἐξαποστεῖλαι αὐτὴν ἐπὶ σέ, ἵν' ἐγὼ μὲν τύχω τοῦ δικαίου αὐτῆ δ' ἐπι- πληχθῆι. For which reason having taken refuge with you I ask, if it seems good, to direct Sarapion to write to the epistates to send her to you, so that I may meet with justice and she may be thrashed.
45. P.Monac. III 51	134/5 BC	Sebennytos	Ptolemy (king)	Ownership of Land Property Damage	Petesuchos son of Palus, royal cultivator Katochos	διὸ τὴν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς κ[ατα]φυγὴν πεπονημένος δέομαι ὑμῶν εἰ δοκεῖ προστάξει χρηματίσαι μου τὴν ἔντευξιν ἐπὶ Πολέμαρχ[ον] τὸν στρατηγόν. Wherefore having taken refuge with you, we ask you if it seems good to direct to help me the petition to Polemarchos the strategos...
46. UPZ II 170	127-6 BC	Thebais	Ptolemy (king)	Violence Hybris	Apollonios also called Psemmonthes, son of hermias Soldier/sailor	(30) Διὸ τὴν καταφυγὴν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ποιησά[μενος] δέομαι ὑμῶν, τῶν μεγίστων [θεῶν] καὶ νικηφόρων Wherefore taking refuge with you I ask you, the greatest and victorious gods
47. SB I 4638	145-116 BC	Thebais	Epistrategos	Violence Theft	Apopllonia and Ammonia and Heracleia, daughters of Ptolemaios, son of Hermokrates, an infantryman of Diodotos Property owner	τὴν ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγὴν πεπονημένος ...taking refuge with you
48. P.Fay. 11	115 BC	Fāyūm	Ptolemy (king)	Breach of Contract Failure to pay a debt	Demetrios, infantry soldier Katochos	(23) [. . . .] . ν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς καταφυγὴν πεπονημέν[οις] δέομαι ἀπο[σ]τεῖλαι μου τὴν ἔντευξιν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν [τ]όπων χρηματιστάς I have therefore taken refuge with you I entreat you send my petition to the local chrematistai
49. P.Tebt. III 740 Verso	c. 113 BC	Tebtynis	Ptolemy (king)	Unknown	Unknown Unknown	(19-21) ὅθεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς τοῦς πάντων κοινοῦ σωτήρας [τὴν καταφυγὴν ποιησάμενοι] δεόμεθ' ὑμῶν τῶν μεγίστων θεῶν Wherefore having taken refuge with you the common saviour of all, we ask you the greatest gods..
50. UPZ II 191	111 BC	Thebais	Epistrategos	Request for Protection	Osoroëris and the other pastophoroi of Amenophis Temple personel	(3) Ἄδικούμενοι οὐ μετρίως καὶ διασειόμενοι ὑπὸ Ἰσιδώρου τοῦ πρὸς τῆι οἰκονομίαι τοῦ Παθυρίτου τὴν ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυ- γὴν πεπόνημαι, ἵνα τύχωμεν βοηθείας. Being wronged beyond measure and oppressed by Isidoros in the oikonomia of the Pathyrite nome I have taken refuge with you so that I may meet with assistance.
51. BGU VIII 1836	51/50 BC	Heracleopolis	Strategos	Request for Protection	Unknown Land holder	(16) Ἐνοχλούμενος δὲ καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀρχιφυλακίτου ἀπαιτησιν ποιου- μενος τῶν δηλουμένων σπερμάτων [καὶ] τῶν κ[α]θ[η]κόντων ἐκφορίων, διὸ προῆγμαί τὴν ἐπὶ σ[ε] ποιήσασθαι καταφυγὴν, ἀξιῶ εἴαν φαίνεται. Being vexed by even the archiphylakites making a formal demand for return of the seeds which have been set forth and the existing produce, wherefore I have been induced to take refuge with you, I ask if it seems good ...

Reference	Date	Provenance	Addressee	Subject of Petition	Petitioner/ Category	Text and Translation
52. BGU VIII 1823	I BC	Heracleopolis	Strategos	Breach of Contract	A creditor Property owner	(23) Τῶν δὲ ἐν ἀσεβίαι πρὸς τῇ αὐτῇ λυμαγωνεῖαι καθεστῶτων ὡς ἀν ἐν τῷ τοῦ ἀσύλου καταγινομένων ἠνάγκασμαι καὶ νῦν τὴν ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγὴν ποιήσασθαι, ἀξιοῦμεν... Since they are in an impious condition in addition to their very villainy (?) as if (?) concerned in the place of asylum, we have been compelled even now to take refuge with you, we ask..
53. BGU VIII 1858	I BC	Heracleopolis	unknown	Theft	Tenants of katoikic kleroi Land holder	(13) Διὸ [τῆν] ἐπὶ σὲ πεποιημένοι καταφυγὴν ἀξιοῦμεν ἐὰν φαίνεται συντάξει καταστήσαι αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ σὲ πρὸς τὸ ἀποκαταστήσαντας... Wherefore having taken refuge with you, we ask if it seems good that you direct them to appear before you...making restoration...
54. BGU IV 1200	2-1 BC	Heracleopolis	Prefect	Illegal Behaviour of Officials	Horos son of Teos and the other priests of Apollo Priest	(24) [[δὲ] ἐπὶ σὲ καταπεφεύ] γαμεν [τὸν πάντων] σωτήρα καὶ [[ἀντιλήμπορα ἀξιοῦμεν σε τὸν πάντων] εὐεργέτην, ὅπως..] ...wherefore (?) we have taken refuge with you the saviour and helper of all (we ask you the saviour and benefactor of all) so that...
55. P.Oxy XIX 2234	31 AD	Oxyrhynchus	Centurion	Violence Theft Property Damage	Hermon, son of Demetrius Property owner	(19) ἐπ[ε]ῖ δὲ κατὰ πολλὰ βιάζοντα(ι) με, τὴν ἐπὶ σε καταφυ[γ]ῆν ποιούμενος ἀξιῶ ...since therefore they used great force against me, taking refuge with you I ask...
56. P.Oxy I 38	49-50 AD	Oxyrhynchus	Prefect	Request for Enforcement of a Judgment	Tryphon, son of Dionysius, χειρότεχνος	ἐπὶ σὲ τοσμηῶ τὸν σωτήρα τῶν δικαίων τυχεῖν ...taking refuge (?) with you, the saviour to meet with justice.
57. BGU XI 2065	I AD	unknown	unknown	Problem with a pension	Alkimos Old or sick	ὅς] κατὰ τὴν ἔμφυτον αὐτοῦ [εὐ]εργεσίαν ἐπέθετό σοι τοῦτο [.4]οαι. διὸ ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγῶν [ἀξιῶ τῆς σῆς] ἀντιλήψεως τυχεῖν] ...who according to the innate beneficence submitted this to you... Wherefore having taken refuge with you I ask to meet with your assistance.
58. BGU VII 1571	74/75 AD	Philadelphia	unknown	Unknown	Unknown Unknown	ἀναγκαίως ἐπιγνοὺς τὸν σ[τρατι]ώτην ἐπ' ὀψώνιον ἀπεληλυθότα, ὅς ὄ[λο]ν τὸν πέρυσι ἐνιαυτὸν ἐνθάδε ἦν, ἐπὶ σὲ κ[ατ]απέφευγα ...perforce discovering the soldier had been separated from his pay..having taken refuge with you
59. P.Oxy XLIX 3466	81-96 AD	Oxyrhynchus	Archidicastes	Breach of Contract	Theon Property owner	κατὰ τὸ ἀνα[γκαιον κατα]φεύ[γω] ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν κύριον καὶ ἀξιῶ... Perforce I take refuge with you the lord and I ask...
60. P.Oxy L 3555	I-II AD	Oxyrhynchus	Strategos	Injury to a Slave	Thermuthion daughter of Plutarchus Property owner	ἀναγκαίως οὖν καταπεφευγῶ ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν ἀντιλήμπορα ἀξιῶ(ι) Perforce having taken refuge with you my supporter...
61. P.Oxy XXII 2342	102 AD	Oxyrhynchus	Prefect	Breach of Contract	Apion son of Apion, wine merchant Merchant	[ὡ]ν χάρι]ν ἀδικούμενος ἐπὶ σε τὸν πάντων [ἀνθρώπων] εὐεργέτην κα[τ]αφεύγω By reason of these things, being wronged I take refuge with you the benefactor of all men..

Reference	Date	Provenance	Addressee	Subject of Petition	Petitioner/ Category	Text and Translation
62. P.Alex.Giss. 32	117-38AD	Tanyaithis	Strategos (?)	Unknown	Unknown Unknown	[4] κατέφυγον ἐπὶ [σὲ] τὸν τοῦ νομοῦ [στρατηγὸν c ?] ...I have taken refuge with you the strategos of the nome..
63. BGU VII 1572	139 AD	Philadelphia	Strategos	Release from Liturgy	Weavers of Philadelphia Artisan	ἀναγκαίως ἐπὶ σὲ κατεφύγαμεν [καὶ αἰ]τούμεν,... Perforce we have taken refuge with you and we ask...
64. P.Gen. I 6	146 AD	Arsinoites	Strategos	Money Claim	Stotoetis son of Stotoetis Creditor	(12) καὶ τὸν Πεκῦ σιν καταφρονεῖν μου τῆς ἡλικίας, εἰς σε κατέφυγον καὶ ἀξιῶ... ...and because of Pekusis holding my age in contempt, I have taken refuge with you and ask...
65. P.Mich III 174	145-147 AD	Arsinoite	Prefect	Violence Extortion by Officials	Ptolemaios son of Diodoros Land holder	(15) ὅθεν ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν πάντων ἀντιλήμπορα κατέφυγον καὶ ἀξιῶ... ...wherefore I have taken refuge with you the helper of all and ask...
66. P.Mich. inv. 255	22 Oct 147 AD	Arsinoite	Epistrategos	Debt Problems Hybris	Ptolemaeus son of Diodorus Notable/metropolite	(20) τῶν οὖν τοιούτων ἐπιστάσεως ὀφιλόντων τυγχάνειν, ἐπὶ σὲ τὴν καταφυγὴν ἔποι ἠσάμην τὸν πάντων εὐεργέτην ὅπως εἶν[ε] τοῖς εὐμενεστάτοις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἀντονίνου [κ]αιροῖς (δυνηθῶ) ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ συνμένειν Accordingly, since such persons ought to meet with a deterrent, I have taken refuge with you the benefactor of all so that in the most gracious times of our lord Antoninus (I may be able) to remain in my place of residence
67. PSI XIII 1323	147/8 AD	Arsinoites	Prefect	Extortion by Officials	Ptolemaeus son of Diodorus Notable/metropolite	(3) Τῆς σῆς ἐπάρχου δικαίου μισοπονηρίας δεόμενος κατέφυγον ἐπὶ σε πάν[των] εὐεργέτην. Asking your prefectural just hatred of evil I have taken refuge with you the benefactor of all.
68. BGU I 340	c. 148-9 AD	Fayum	Epistrategos	Violence Inheritance	Goedous daughter of Mes[...] Land holder	(20) Ἐπὶ οὖν οὗτοι οὐκ ἀφίσταν τε τῆς κατ' ἐμοῦ ἐπηρίαν, κατα φρονούν[τες] τῆς [περὶ] ἐμὲ ἀπρα γμοσύνη[ς] καὶ τῶν περὶ τῶν τοι ούτων ὑπὸ πάντων ἡγεμόνων προστεταγμένων, ὥστε μὴ παρα πράσιν, ἀναγκῆως ἐπὶ τὴν σὴν βοήθειαν κατέφυγον καὶ ἀξιῶ τούτους ἤδη ποτὲ ἀποσβέσθαι τῆς κατ' ἐμοῦ ἐπηρίας, ἵνα δυνῆ[ι] θῶ γυνὴ μωνοι συμβένειν ὑπὸ σου εὐεργετηθῆσα. Since therefore these fellows do not leave off the insult against me, holding in contempt my inexperience and the edicts of all the prefects on such matters, so that they may not profit of necessity I have taken refuge in your assistance and ask that these fellows already cease from the insult against me, so that I, a lone woman, may be able to meet with benefaction from you.
69. BGU XV 2460	II AD	Arsinoites	Prefect			[. . ν]ῶν οὖν, ἡγεμῶν κύριε, κατεφύγομεν ?] [ἐπὶ σὲ] τὸν πάντων σωτήρα [δεόμενοι ? λαβεῖν ?] [ὅ τι] δίκαιόν ἐστιν καὶ ἀξιούμ[εν] γράψαι ...now therefore, lord prefect, we have taken refuge with you the saviour of all asking (?) to take what is just and we ask you to write...

Reference	Date	Provenance	Addressee	Subject of Petition	Petitioner/ Category	Text and Translation
70. P.Meyer 8	16 Aug 151 AD	Fay0m	Epistrategos	Dispute over an inheritance	Philippos and Chariton children of Aphrodisios, a katoechos and one of the 6475 Greeks of the Fayum Notable/metropolit	(15) ἀναγκαίως τὴν ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν εὐεργέτην καταφυγὴν ποιούμενοι ἀξιούμεν] τὰ ἴδια ἡμεῖν ἀποκατασταθῆναι σὺν ταῖς τοῦ παντὸς χρήσεσιν,... Perforce taking refuge with you the benefactor we ask that our personal belongings be restored to us
71. P.Tebt II 439	151 AD	Tebtynis	Epistrategos	Dispossession	Zoilus Notable/metropolit (?)	κατέφυγον ἐπὶ σε δεόμενος ἐάν σοι δόξη κελεύσαι I have taken refuge with you asking if it seems good to you to order
72. P.Monac. III 74	31/8/158 AD	Arsinoites	Strategos			ἐπὶ σὲ κατ[ε]φύγομεν ἀβοή] θητοι ...we the ones without help have taken refuge with you...
73. SB XVI 12290	158 AD	Unknown	unknown	Release from Liturgy	Satumilus son of Sarapion, son of Dionysios, of those who have the right of intermarriage and family in the city of Antinoos Notable/metropolit	(9) ὅθεν καταφεύγω ἐπὶ σὲ ἀ[ξι]ῶν [ἐάν σοῦ τῆ τύχῃ] [δόξη κελε]ῦσαι.. ...wherefore I have taken refuge with you asking if it seems good to your fortune to order...
74. P.Oxy VII 1032	162 AD	Oxyrhynchus	Prefect	Official Error	Ammonius and Martheis, daughters of Diogenes Notable/metropolit (?)	(36-39) ἀναγκαίως οὖν,] ἡγεμῶν κύριε, κατεφύ[γο]μεν [ἐ]πὶ σὲ τὸν πάντων [σω]τήρα καὶ εὐεργέτην καὶ ἀξιούμεν, ἐάν σοι τῆ τύχῃ δόξη, γράψαι τοῖς τοῦ Ὀξυρυγχείτου στρατηγῶ καὶ βασιλικῶ] γραμμα[τέ]ι Therefore, lord prefect, we have perforce taken refuge with you, the saviour and benefactor of all, begging you, if your fortune sees fit, to write
75. P.Oxy XXXI 2563	c170 AD	Oxyrhynchus	Epistrategos	Hybris Violence Theft	Sarapion son of Hierax, intendant of the priestly tribes in Oxy. Temple personel	ἐπὶ σὲ κατέφυγον τὸν πάντων σωτήρα καὶ εὐεργέτην ἀκούσαί μου πρὸς αὐτόν. οὐδεμία βία γίνεταί ἐν τοῖς εὐτυχεστάτοις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Αὐρηλίου Ἀ[ν]τωνεῖνου καίσαρος τοῦ . . . I have sought refuge with you the saviour and benefactor of all to hear my case against him. Let no violence occur in the so happy days of our lord Aurelius Antoninus Caesar.
76. P.Heid. IV 297	172-5 AD	Ankyron	Epistrategos	Debt Problems	Taysiris, the daughter of Pareitis Property owner	ὅθεν ἐκ τούτου ἐξεσθεν[ο]ῦσα καταφεύγω ἐπὶ σὲ [ἀ]ξιούσα μὴ διανοχλεῖσθαι Wherefore having been rendered weak from this I take refuge with you asking not to be troubled..
77. BGU III 970	c 174 AD	Fayum	Prefect	Inheritance	Tapethis Widow/property holder	(7) Τῆς εἰς ἅπαντας εὐεργεσίας, ἡγεμῶν μέγιστε, καὶ αὐτὴ γυνὴ ἀβοήθητος καὶ μηδεμίαν βοή[θει]α[ν] ἔχουσα εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ σοῦ τοῦ κυρίου τὴν ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγὴν ἐποιήσαμην. Of the beneficence to all men (?), greatest prefect, both myself a helpless woman and having no assistance unless by you the lord I have taken refuge with you

Reference	Date	Provenance	Addressee	Subject of Petition	Petitioner/ Category	Text and Translation
78. SB XVI 12678	27 July 179	Karanis	Epistrategos	Tax collection Dispute with Lessee	Julia Herais, through her son Gaius Julius Priscus Notable/metropolitite (?)	(29) αὐθάδη τρόπον κεκτημένος ἐβιάσατό με βουλευθεῖς ἀπαιτῆσαι με οὐ δεόντως τέλος μὴ ὀφειλόμενον βασιλικοῦ ὑπολόγου) ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιούτου μηδεπώποτε τέλους καταβληθέντος ἀναγκαίως ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν σωτήρα κατέφυγον καὶ ἀξιῶ. Possessing a wilful character he pressed me hard wanting to claim that I improperly did not owe tax to the royal account never having paid such a tax, perforce I take refuge with you the saviour and ask..
79. P.Mich VI 422	197 AD	Karanis	Prefect	Hybris Trespass to property	Hotion, son of Gaius Apolinarius, Antinoite Notable/metropolitite	(31) ὅθεν ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν σωτήρα κατέφυγον, ἀξιῶν ἐάν σου τῇ τύχῃ δόξῃ ἀκούσαι μου πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὅπως δυνηθῶ τῶν ἰδίων ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι) καὶ ᾧ ὑπὸ σοῦ τοῦ κυρίου εὐεργετημένος) ...wherefore I have taken refuge with you the saviour, asking if it seems good to your fortune to hear my case against them so that I may have been able to take hold of my personal affairs and be benefitted by you the lord.
80. P.Tebt II 327	Late II AD	Tebtynis	Epistrategos	Official Error Wrongful assessment of tax	Cronous daughter of Zoilus Old or sick	(21) [κε]κελευσμένου οὖν, κύριε, γυναικας ἀφεῖσθαι τῶν τιοιούτων χρειῶν ἀναγκαίως γυνή οὔσα ἀβοήθητος πολλοῖς ἔτεσι βεβα ρημένη [καὶ] κινδυνεύουσα διὰ τοῦ[το κατ]αλείπειν τὴν [ιδίαν] ἐπὶ σὲ] καταφεύγω.. Wherefore, my lord, since it has been decreed that women should be exempt from such burdens, I, being a defenceless woman weighted with many years and in danger of having to leave my home on this account, perforce take refuge with you...
81. BGU I 180	II-III AD	Fajum	unknown	Release from Liturgy	Gaius Julius Apolinarius, veteran from Karanis Notable/metropolitite	(16) Διόπερ προσφεύγειν σοι ἡγάκασ θην δικαίαν δέ[ησ]ιν ποιούμενος καὶ ἀξιῶ συντηρῆσαι μοι τὸν τῆς ἀναπαύσεως ἴσον χρόνον κατὰ περὶ τούτου διατεταγμένα.. Wherefore I have been forced to fly to you making a just request, and I ask that the equal time for the ceasing (?) be allotted (?) to me according to the things decreed about this...
82. P.Oxy III 488	II-III AD	Oxyrhynchus	Epistrategos	Illegal Behaviour of Officials	Senphibis daughter of Thortaeus Property owner	κατὰ τὸ ἀνγκαῖον οὖν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπικειμένου μοι κινδυνεύουσα ἐγκαταλείψαι τῆ[ν] . . . ἂν προσφεύγω σοὶ τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ πάντων βοηθῷ, καὶ ἀξιῶ ἐάν σοι δόξῃ κελύσαι τῷ τοῦ ἰμοῦ στρατηγῷ. I am compelled therefore since the man oppresses me and I am in danger of abandoning the (land?), to take refuge with you the lord and helper of all, and I ask if it please you to order the strategos of the nome...
83. BGU XI 2061	207 AD	Alexandria	Prefect	Violence	Tema son of Phratres, cultivator Land holder	θαρρῶν, κύριε, τῇ σῇ ἐπαφροδίτῳ ἡγεμονίᾳ τὴν ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγὴν ποιῶμαι ἐξηγούμενος) τὴν γεινομένην μοι βίαν ὑπὸ τινων πολ[c ?] [c 30 ματ εἰς· ἔχει δὲ οὕτως· γεωργὸς τιγχνῶν καὶ χρήσιμος τῷ ἱερωτάτῳ ταμείῳ ἀδικούμαι ὑπὸ Ὀρσενούφους Taking courage, lord, from your gracious rule I take refuge with you relating in full the violence against me by certain persons....I happen to be a farmer and useful to the fiscus and I am wronged by Orsenouphis..

Reference	Date	Provenance	Addressee	Subject of Petition	Petitioner/ Category	Text and Translation
84. P.Oxy XVII 2131	207 AD	Oxyrhynchus	Prefect	Illegal Behaviour of Officials Wrongful nomination to liturgy	Totoës, styled as having Senpetsiris as his mother, former public donkey-driver Property owner	(7) τῆς ἐμφύτου σου, ἡγεμῶν δεσποτά, δικαιοδοσίας δικηκούσης εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους, καὶ αὐτὸς ἀδικηθεὶς ἐπὶ σὲ καταφεύω γ[ω] ἀξιῶν ἐκδικίας τυχεῖν. ...since your ingrained justice, lord prefect, comes to all men, and since I myself have been wronged I take refuge with you asking to meet with revenge.
85. P.Gen. I 4	Early III AD	Arsinoites	Dikaiodotes	Illegal Behaviour of Officials Hybris	Unknown Notable/metropolitane (?)	οὐ χ[ά]ριν ἐπὶ σὲ κατέφυγον τὸν πάντων βοηθῶν καὶ ἀξιῶ Because of this I take refuge with you the helper of all and I ask.
86. BGU I 322	7 April 216 AD	Soknopaiou N	Prefect	Theft	Aurelius Pakusis, priest, son of Tesenouphis Priest	(22) ἀναγκάτως τὴν ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγῶν γῆν ποιούμαι καὶ ἀξιῶ... ...perforce I take refuge with you and ask...
87. P.Oxy IX 1202	217 AD	Oxyrhynchus	Epistrategos	Official Error Enrolment of ephebi	Aurelius Ptolemaios Sempronius Notable/metropolitane	κατὰ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον προσφεύγω σοὶ ἀξιῶν ἐνταγῆναι καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆ τῶν ἐφήβων γραφῆ καθ' ὁμοιοτητα τῶν σὺν αὐτῷ καὶ ὡ βεβοηθημένος I perforce have recourse to you asking that my son too may be entered in the list of the ephebi in the same way as his companions that so I may be benefited.
88. P.Mich IX 529 Recto	232-236 AD	Karanis	Prefect	Exemption from Liturgy	Aurelius [?] Property owner	(13) ..γει κατέφυγον ἐπὶ τὰς πόδας σου δεόμενος σου φιλανθρωπίας τῆς λαμπροτάτης, ἐάν σοι δοῖται, ἀκούσαί μου πρὸς [αὐτοὺς καὶ] [ἐλπίζων τῆς] τοῦ κυρίου μου βοηθίας δυνηθῆναι [με τυχεῖν] I took refuge at your feet beseeching your celebrated kindness, if it seems good to you, to hear me against them and hoping that I may be able to meet with the assistance of you my lord
89. CPR VII 15	III AD	Hermopolis	Praeses	Illegal Behaviour of Officials	Unknown Property owner	ὅθεν μὴ φεροῦσα γυνὴ [χήρα] τὴν [τ]ούτων παράνομον ἀπαίτησιν καταφεύγω [πρὸς το]ῦς σοὺς τοῦ ἐμοῦ κυρίου πόδας δεομένη καὶ ἀξιούσα [προσ]τάξει σε ...wherefore as a widowed woman not tolerating the illegal demand of these fellows I take refuge at your feet, my lord, asking and begging you to order..
90. P.Ross.Georg V 24	III AD	Memphis	unknown	Unknown	Unknown Unknown	(1) ἐπὶ σε καταφυγὴν ποιησάσθαι καί ...to have taken refuge with you...
91. PSI XIII 1337	III AD	unknown	Prefect	Ownership of Land	A well educated man (?) Property owner	ἀναγκάτως ἐπὶ τὴν σὴν ἀνδρείαν καταφεύγω, ταύτην τὴν ἰκετηρίαν προτεινόμενος ἐπὶ σο[ῦ] τοῦ σκε[πασ]τοῦ τῶν μετρο[ῶ]ν, πρὸς τοῦτον ἀκουσθῆναι βουλόμενος τὴν ἐπὶ τόπων βίαν ἡ[ε]ρ οὗτος] κέχρηται...οὐκ ἐμὲ ἄνθρ Of necessity I take refuge in your courage, preferring this supplication before you the guardian of the humble, wishing to be heard against this fellow for the violence which he uses in the localities...

Reference	Date	Provenance	Addressee	Subject of Petition	Petitioner/ Category	Text and Translation
92. PSI XIV 1422		Unknown	Emperor	Application for the privilege of κήρυξ	A former athlete Notable/metropolit	(8) ἔσπευσα παρὰ τὰ ἴχνα ὑμῶν τῶν κυρρίων τῆς ὅλης οἰκουμένης, σωτή ρων δὲ ἐμοῦ ἀνδρὸς μετρίου πολλὰ κατ' μόντος I hastened before the feet of you the lords of all the world, saviours of me a humble man much wearied.
93. BGU XV 2464	III AD	Unknown	unknown			ε ?] θεὸν εὐτυχήσας τὴν [ε ? καταφεύγω τὸν πάντων [σωτήρα ε ? ἐκ τῆς αὐτοῦ ἡλικίας [ε ? ἐλπίζων τῆς ἀπὸ σοῦ] τοῦ κυρίου βοήθειας praying to god...I fly to you the saviour...from the age of him...hoping for help from you the lord
94. P.Oxy XII 1468	c. 258 AD	Oxyrhynchus	Prefect	Ownership of Slaves Inheritance Fraud	Aurelius Theoninus Property owner	(7) τοιούτου οὖν κατ' ἐμοῦ ἐπιχειρουμένου ἐπὶ τὴν σὴν ἀνδρείαν καταφεύγω θαρρῶν τεύξεσθαι τῶν προσ- όντων μοι δικαίων, ἡγεμῶν κύριε. Accordingly, being the victim of such designs I seek refuge in your nobility, confident that I shall obtain the rights due to me, my lord prefect.
95. P.Tebt II 326	c. 266 AD	Tebtynis	Prefect	Guardianship	Aurelia Sarapias Notable/metropolit	(2) ὑπὲρ θυγατρὸς ὀρφανῆς καὶ καταδεοῦς τὴν ἡλικίαν, δέσποτα ἡγεμῶν, ἱκετηρίαν τιθεμένη ἐπὶ τὸ σὸν μέγεθος καταφεύγω. On behalf of my orphan daughter who is under age, my lord prefect, placing this suppliant's branch I take refuge in your strength.
96. P.Sakaon 37	Jan/Feb 284	Arsinoites	Prefect	Tax collection Failure to pay imposts due	the Aurelii ...and Keletes, both minors, children of Kaët, acting through their mother Aurelia Artemis daughter of Paësios Notable/metropolit	(16) ὄθεν τὴν πρὸς τοὺς πόδας σου καταφυγὴν ποιούμεναι, δαιομένη καὶ παρακαλοῦσα ὑπὲρ ἀφηλίκων παίδων,... Wherefore I have fled to your feet begging and beseeching on behalf of my children who are under age...
97. P.Oxy X 1252 col. ii Verso	288-95 AD	Oxyrhynchus	Prefect	Refusal to act as eutheniarch and guarantee food supply	Prytanis, name unknown Notable/metropolit	(37) κατὰ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον [προσφεύγω ἐπὶ τὴν σὴν ἰλεικρίνειαν ἀξιῶν διὰ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ αἰητοῦς] του, of necessity I take refuge in your purity, begging you to order [them] through the strategos...
98. SB III 7205	End III AD	Great Oasis	Praeses	Expulsion from land Violence	Petechon son of Mersis, daughter of Talabon Property owner	(19) ὄθεν [προορώμενος τὰς συνεχεῖς αὐτῶν βίας [17]βίας κατ' ἐμοῦ] ποιούσι τὴν ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου καταφυ γὴν ποιούμεναι, ἡγεμῶν,] ἀξιῶν καὶ θεόμενος τὴν μὲν βίαν αὐτῶν εἰρχθῆναι ..wherefore foreseeing that their violence as continuous....they make against me, I take refuge at your feet, lord, asking and beseeching that their violence be prevented..
99. P.Cair.Isidor. 66	299 AD	Karanis	Prefect	Property Damage Arson	Aurelius Isidorus, son of Ptolemaios Property owner	καὶ περὶ τούτου ἕτερα [βιβλία ἐμα[ρτυρομένη], καὶ κ[α]τέφυγον ἐπὶ τὸ σὸν] μεγαλίον τὴν ἐντυχίαν ποιήσασθαι. ἐπεὶ οὖν, κύριε, καὶ οἱ δι' [ἐναντίας ἐνταῦθα] κατήλθαν ἀξιώ καὶ δέομαι ὅπως ..and I have borne witness in other petitions about this and I have taken refuge to your greatness to make an appeal

Reference	Date	Provenance	Addressee	Subject of Petition	Petitioner/ Category	Text and Translation
100. P.Oxy IX 1204	299 AD	Oxyrhynchus	Strategos	Official Error Release from Liturgy	Aurelius Plutarchus, excellency (κράτιστος) Notable/metropolitite	(8) καὶ ποιήσας τὰ ἐπὶ τῇ ἐκκλήτῳ δέοντα κατέφυγον πρὸς τὸν κύριόν μου τὸν διασημότατον καθολικὸν Πομπώνιον Δόμνον καὶ ἐνέτυχον αὐτῷ ἐπὶ ὑπομνημάτων αὐτὰ ταῦτα παρατιθέμενος. ...and having taken the proper steps for the appeal I took refuge with my lord the most honourable catholicus Pomponius Doomnus and applied to him in a memorandum setting these facts before him.
101. P.Amh. II 82	Late III or	Fayum	Prefect	Release from Liturgy	Didamas, ex-high priest of Arsinoë Priest	δι' ὅπερ κ[ατέφυ]γον ἐπὶ τὸ σὸν μεγαλειον ...wherefore I have taken refuge in your greatness..
102. P.Oxy I 71 col. ii Recto	303 AD	Oxyrhynchus	Prefect	Deceit by Employees	Aurelia Gle[Notable/metropolitite (?)	ὄθεν [. . .] ἦσασα τῆς ἐπ' ἀγαθοῖς [σοῦ] ἐπιδημείας] καταφεύγω πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς τ[οῦ] ἐ[μ]οῦ κυρίου πόδας ἀξιούσα [. . .] . εἴ σου δόξειεν τῇ ἀρετῇ [.] μοι δ[ι]νατωτάτης σου ὑπογραφῆςwherefore...your visit (?) in good conditions (?)...I take refuge at the feet of you my lord asking...if it seems good to your virtue..for me your most powerful subscription...
103. P.Oxy I 71.1 Recto	303 AD	Oxyrhynchus	Prefect	Debt Problems	Aurelius Demetrius, son of Nilus, late chief priest of Arsinoe Notable/metropolitite	(3-4) τῶν μετρίων κηδεμόνι σοὶ ὄντι, δέσποτα ἡγεμών, τὴν ἱκ[ε]τηρίαν προσάγω εὐελπίς ὦν τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ σοῦ μεγέθους δικαιοκρισίας τυχεῖν. ..I set before you, the carer for the humble, lord prefect, the supplication being hopeful of meeting righteous judgment from your strength.
104. P.Oxy XVIII 2187	304 AD	Oxyrhynchus	Prefect	Inheritance	Septimius Aristion Property owner	[. . . ἀναγκαιῶς τὴν καταφυγὴν ποιῶμαι πρὸς] τὸ σὸν μεγαλειον καὶ ἀξιῶ [σε], διασημό[τα]τε ἑπαρχ[ος] ...perforce I make supplication to your greatness and I ask you, most esteemed prefect..
105. P.Cair.Isidor. 74	315 AD	Karanis	Praeses	Breach of Contract Theft	Aurelius Isidorus, son of Ptolemaios Property owner	(15) ὄθεν μὴ δυνάμενος] πρὸς αὐτοὺς βιβ[λί]α ἐπιδέδωκα τῷ τοῦ [νομοῦ στρατηγῷ καὶ τῷ πραιποσίτῳ τοῦ πάγου περὶ τῆς [αὐτῶν ἀγνωμοσύνης, ἠπέιχθη] οὖν τὴν καταφυγὴν ποιήσασθαι πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς τοῦ ἐμοῦ κυρίου πόδας δεόμενος καὶ παρακαλῶν, ἄνθρωπος μέτριος Wherefore since I could do nothing with them I submitted Petitions to the strategos of the nome and to the praepositus of the pagus concerning their misconduct. I have therefore hastened to fly to your feet, my lord, begging and beseeching, as a man of most restricted means...
106. P.Ryl. IV 617	317 AD	Leontopolite	Emperor	Wrongful assessment of tax	Aurelia Isidora daughter of Paleos Notable/metropolitite	(10) βι[ό]πρατος ἐγενό[μ]ην ἀνάγκην δὲ ἔχο[υ]σα βο[η]θείας τυχεῖν] καὶ καταφυγὴν ἐποίησα διὰ ταύτης μ[ε]λου τῆς ἀξι[ώ]σεως ἐπὶ τὰ ἱερά ὑμῶν τῶν εὐεργετῶν ἡμῶν βήματα I am subject to compulsory property sale and have need to meet with assistance...and I took refuge through this my request at the sacred tribunals (?) of you our benefactors...

Reference	Date	Provenance	Addressee	Subject of Petition	Petitioner/ Category	Text and Translation
107. P.Oxy XLIII 3126	19 Aug 328 AD	Oxyrhynchus	Prefect	Ownership of Land Dispute between Co-owners	Aurelius Castor son of Parammon, from the Ammoniac Oasis Notable/metropolitane	(10) μετριώτητος καταφρονούντας, ἐκ τούτου καταφεύγω πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς πόδας του. [ἀξίων ἐλεήσαντά μου τὸ μέτριον μετὰ χίρας ἔχοντός μου τὴν εἰς ἐμαὶ γεγεννημένην... ...holding my humbleness in contempt, as a result of this I take refuge at your feet...asking that you take pity on my lowliness, since I have in my possession (the deed of sale?) that was made in my favour..
108. P.Col VII 173	330-340 AD	Karanis		Illegal sale of property	Aurelia Tapaeis Property owner	(18) τούτου χάριν ἐψῆν χήσασα [τῆς ἐπ' ἀγαθοῖς σου ἀρχῆς τὴν εἰς τοὺς πόδας σου καταφυγήν] ποιῶμαι παῖς ὀρφανὴ δεομένη, καὶ πα... [...] σοῦ ἐμοῦ ἀληθευούσης For this reason having reached your fortunate rule, I flee to your feet, a needy orphan child, praying that...
109. P.Oxy XII 1470	336 AD	Oxyrhynchus	Prefect	Ownership of Land	Aurelia Theodora, daughter of Eudaemon, formerly a veteran Notable/metropolitane	(4) [οὗ ἐπέδωκα λιβέλλου προσφ[εύγου]σα ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν τοῦ κυρίου μου Φιλαγρίου τοῦ λαμπροτάτου ἐπάρχου τῆς Αἰγύπτου A copy of the petition which I present, appealing to the nobility of my lord Philagrius, the most illustrious prefect of Egypt
110. P.Herm.Rees 19	392 AD	Hermopolis	unknown	Release from Liturgy	Aurelius Honoratus Property owner	διὰ τοῦτο καταφεύγω [15 ἐπὶ τὴν σὴν λαμπρότητα, φιλόφρονε τῶν δικαστῶν οἰκτεираί με τὸν μέτριον [25 Ἀπόλλωνος τοῦ ῥιπαρίου καὶ Θεογνώστου τῶν πολιτευομένων, ὅπως βοηθήσουσιν ...on account of this I take refuge in your splendour, kindly one among judges. Pity me who is humble...

CHAPTER 7

ANOMIE, WEAKNESS AND HONOUR

The Symbolic Universe III

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The argument so far has attempted to elucidate elements of the symbolic order of Greco-Roman Egypt which were deployed in petitions to conceptualise the Ptolemaic sovereign and his officials and then the Roman emperor and procurators, especially as saviour benefactor and helper. We have tried to make clear throughout that the reciprocal relationship of supplication was part of the basic structure of symbolic signification in Greco-Roman Egypt and was conceived to ameliorate perceptions of anomie and experiences of violence or abuse in the more day to day relations which people experienced in Greco-Roman Egypt. In the linguistic interactions of petitions these relations were characterised by disparities of power and explicit or implicit breach by wrongdoers of legal rules or relevant ethical standards. Opposites, such as, weak and strong, honest and dishonest, humble and arrogant, familiar from the language of most judicial and administrative contexts, were the constant typifications in petitions, and had a social, as well as a legal and ethical purview.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore how the power of officials was further legitimated by references to the core social value of honour in the relationship of reciprocity. To do so is quite natural, particularly in light of our earlier discussions of the sovereign and official as saviour and benefactor. As we noted in chapter 6, the benefactions underlying the system of euergetism was driven by a desire for honour. Aristotle (*Ars Rhet* 1361a28ff) notes the close relationship between honour and benefaction. To grant benefactions connotes an expression of superiority (*Nic. Eth.* 1124b9ff). But in the specific context of the petition, we saw that crucial to the notion of supplication was a denial of the suppliant's honour and a corresponding

elevation of the honour of the supplicated. In this chapter it will be shown that the honour and shame antithesis constituted a basic duality in the social relations of Greco-Roman Egypt described in petitions. It was a fundamental social pivot around which structures of signification, domination and the legal system flowed together. The whole issue of honour is closely tied into the relationship of reciprocity represented by Gould's theory of supplication, because the petitioner is weak, vulnerable and modest, disavowing his or her honour in the face of the powerful official. In accordance with this the actions of wrongdoers were audacious, evil or uncontrolled, and constituted a dishonouring and disruptive face of power both to the petitioner and the established order represented by the official.

We see here the part to be played by the sovereign and official: as saviour and benefactor he was required to revenge the honour of the petitioner. Although part of the general pattern of honour and shame and challenge and response, this was special, because vindication of dishonour was transferred to a third party social role imbued with a formal institutional type of power, that is, the sovereign, his officials and the legal system, whereas in earlier versions of honour and shame the dishonoured individual takes responsibility for his own response and seeks his own revenge. Such yielding up of responsibility for revenge to the sovereign or official helped to legitimate his role and raised his status, and at a conceptual level at least impelled the petitioner into a condition of dependence, one consequence of which was that he or she was less likely to resort to violent revenge. Thus it was a central part of the social process to contain forms of behaviour which resulted in anomie, and the linguistic motif of the act of supplication embodied the petitioner's condition of dependence.

7.2 HYBRIS, HONOUR AND SHAME

7.2.1 Honour and Shame

In the social anthropology of contemporary Mediterranean societies a great deal of emphasis is placed upon the values of honour and shame. There have been many studies from various parts of the Mediterranean world showing that the politics of reputation, involving values which can be expressed as honour and shame, occupy a

central place in these communities.¹ These values are intimately linked to economic and social factors, especially those involving male status, prestige and authority.² Some have even suggested that this is a peculiarly "Mediterranean" phenomenon, such that it is possible to assume historical continuity from past to present.³ However, there are problems in making such assumptions of historical continuity and no such assumption is made here.⁴ Nonetheless, for those interested in the Greco-Roman world the work of scholars like David Cohen has demonstrated that the notions of honour and shame can be employed comparatively to understand the ancient world, in particular to explain many of the more difficult aspects of the Athenian law of adultery and homosexuality.⁵ In a slightly different context B.J. Malina has suggested that honour and shame are fundamental to understanding the social and cultural context of the New Testament.⁶

More recently, N.R.E. Fisher has demonstrated how the classical Athenian concept of "hybris" embodies honour and shame.⁷ He has shown that in Athens hybris was "a serious assault on the honour of another, which is likely to cause shame, and lead to anger and attempts at revenge."⁸ The notion of hybris covered acts of social violence as well as undesirable attitudes and played an important part in the manoeuvring of powerful figures in the Athenian democracy through the law courts and thus in forensic argumentation. Fisher argues that hybris can be understood as an illegitimate expression of superiority or power which was perceived to be socially destabilising, and consequently a matter in which there existed a collective interest to

1 The literature on this subject is quite vast. Good examples are the works in J. Peristiany (ed.), *Honour and Shame* (Chicago, 1966). There is a good bibliography in D. Cohen, *Law, Sexuality, and Society: The Enforcement of Morals in Classical Athens* (CUP, Cambridge, 1991).

2 A useful general discussion can be found in D. Cohen, *Law, Sexuality, and Society*, 54-69.

3 An example is the book of P. Walcot, *Greek Peasants, Ancient and Modern* (Manchester, 1973).

4 Note the criticisms of M. Herzfeld, 'Honour and Shame: Problems in the Comparative Analysis of Moral Systems', in *Man* (1980), 339-51.

5 *Law, sexuality and society*, passim. Cf H. van Wees, *Status Warriors: war, violence and society in Homer and history* (J.C. Gieben, Amsterdam, 1992).

6 *The New Testament World: Insights from cultural anthropology* (John Knox Press, London, 1981). See also P. Esler, *The First Christians in their Social Worlds* (Routledge, London and New York, 1994), ch. 2.

7 *Hybris: A Study in the Values of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greece* (Aris & Phillips, Warminster, 1994).

8 At 1. S.C. Todd, *The Shape of Athenian Law* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1993), at 270 notes that hybris could even cover behaviour towards a slave, because it attacked his or her residual *time*.

intervene through the processes of law. So in the evidence from classical Athens we can find a picture of legitimate, institutional power in the form of law courts and juries set in opposition to illicit, uncontrolled and socially dangerous manifestations of power in the form of hybriistic behaviour. For that reason the concept of *hybris* has huge significance for understanding the dynamics of certain very basic relations of power in the ancient world.⁹

It will be argued in this chapter that this analysis of honour and shame provides a fruitful theoretical framework for the examination of the papyri from Egypt, and gives us a key to understanding the dynamics of relations between institutions, the symbolic order and individuals in the different social contexts of Greco-Roman Egypt. As in classical Athens, in Egypt, institutional power, legitimated at the collective level through the symbolic concepts discussed in the previous two chapters, was constantly invoked to respond to, and provide a form of revenge for challenges to honour, manifestations of illegitimate power in the form of hybriistic individuals or groups. The evidence discloses that this opposition was constructed in public documents in similar terms over many centuries, particularly through the language of *hybris*, such as ὕβρις, ὑβρίζειν or especially καταφρονέω.

7.2.2 Aristotle and Hybris

Fisher devotes a whole chapter to Aristotle's conception of *hybris* contending that his works give "an essentially accurate representation of the Greek concept, which can explain its social legal and political significance."¹⁰ He specifically linked the concepts of καταφρόνησις and ὕβρις as manifestations of "slighting" (ὀλιγωρία). In the *Art of Rhetoric* he says "Slighting is the actualisation of opinion in regard to some thing which appears valueless...Now there are three kinds of slight: disdain,

9 Aristotle clearly aligns *hybris* with dishonour which was inflicted by the upper classes on their inferiors, while some speeches such as that of Demosthenes against Meidias emphasise the connection between those with wealth or material superiority and attitudes and acts of *hybris*: see Aristotle, *Pol.*, 1269b9-11; Demosthenes XXI, *In Meidiam*. See Fisher, *Hybris*, 32 ff and D.M. MacDowell, *Demosthenes: Against Meidias (Oration 21)* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1990).

10 *Hybris*, 7 and Ch. 1 *passim*.

spitefulness and insult." (Ἐπεὶ δ' ἡ ὀλιγωρία ἐστὶν ἐνέργεια δόξης περὶ τὸ μηδενὸς ἄξιον φαινόμενον...Τρία δ' ἐστὶν εἶδη ὀλιγωρίας, καταφρόνησις τε καὶ ἐπηρεασμὸς καὶ ὕβρις. ὃ τε γὰρ καταφρονῶν ὀλιγωρεῖ)¹¹ This is a useful tripartite distinction because it provides a further refinement to the analytical framework used to approach the language used in papyri. It shows for example, that where a petition refers to *hybris* and *hybristic* acts or uses the verb *καταφρονέω* or *ὀλιγωρέω* it is articulating the values of honour and shame.

Fisher's study makes the point that Aristotle locates *hybris* firmly "inside a group of concepts essentially concerned with the honour of the individual. *Hybris* is itself behaviour designed to produce shame; dishonour is a defining characteristic of it."¹² So for Aristotle *hybris* involves intentional dishonouring, which is morally bad, for the purpose of gaining a form of personal pleasure. "*hybris* is revealed above all in the selfish, shaming enjoyment of pleasures, in the exercise of one's own power and the enjoyment of one's superiority."¹³ Not only does it invite a response but there in fact exists a moral duty to respond.¹⁴ *Hybris* is often found expressed where the three factors of wealth, youth and over-confidence are present together, but is especially noticeable among the rich.¹⁵ It can be seen how *hybris* was a concept of extraordinarily wide import which gathered within its purview the aspects of all the structural properties of Greco-Roman Egypt, the intellectual structures of the symbolic order, structures of domination, represented in the disparities of power inherent in most economic relationships and elite positions of institutional control, like tax gathering, and the structures, rules and resources of the legal system.

7.2.3 *Hybris* in forensic argumentation.

Clearly then there was a collective dimension to *hybris* which is perhaps its most important, because there were general social consequences arising from the dynamics

11 1378b

12 *Hybris*, 10.

13 *Ibid.*, 31.

14 See Fisher, *loc. cit.*

15 See *Rhetorica* 1383a1-3; 1385b19-23, 29-32; 1390b32-1391a19.

of honour and shame. For example, *hybris* has a political consequence and is dangerous because it threatens the collective stability of communities. In the *Politics* Aristotle specifically refers to *hybris* as a cause of *stasis*.¹⁶ But it was also a concept of the utmost juristic importance. Aristotle treats *hybris* as "typically and most seriously, the dishonouring by the rich, the powerful or the upper class of those they take to be their inferiors. The concept of *hybris* operates as a restraint on the strong, and a moral and legal weapon in the hands of the weak, far more than the reverse."¹⁷ Fisher forms his conclusions about *hybris* on the basis of evidence in the orators, drama and poetry. But for our purposes the specific recognition of slighting by the Athenian legal system is a point which sheds particular light on the connection between honour and shame, because the content of the term in the forensic or judicial context is more easily seen in its appearance in the same context in the later periods of Greco-Roman Egypt. ὕβρις is well known as the subject of specific laws in classical Athens, which allowed the bringing of proceedings in accordance with a "graphe" procedure.¹⁸ The legal system, represented for this purpose essentially in the jury became the vindicator of the plaintiff's honour.

Importantly, *hybris* involved disparities of power and "the attitude of the aggressor towards his victim was an essential ingredient of *hybris*."¹⁹ It is most significant for our discussion that this attitude involved the indulging of a "sense of power by humiliating another." (emphasis added)²⁰ The relevant attitude was often associated with the possession of material resources. As Dover notes, "The besetting sin of the rich was thought to be *hybris* ...Money was power, the power to buy flattery and support and to bribe witnesses."²¹ Aristotle, again, notes, "That is why the young and the rich are given to insults, for they think that, in committing them, they

16 Fisher, *Hybris*, 25-31.

17 Ibid., 32.

18 D.M. MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens* (Cornell, New York, 1978), 129 ff, where he notes that in Athenian law ὕβρις meant "indulging in conduct which is bad, or at best useless, because it is what [the perpetrator] wants to do, having no regard for the wishes or rights of other people."

19 K.J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1974), 147

20 See the note of Sir Richard Jebb on *Antiphon* III.b.2 in R.C. Jebb, *Selections from the Attic Orators*, 204

21 K.J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality*, 110-111.

show their superiority."²² The point can be seen, perhaps, most clearly in Demosthenes 21.177-80, where he describes the case of Ktesikles who was riding in a procession at a festival and upon catching sight of someone he did not like, struck him with his whip. In the ensuing court case, Ktesikles pleaded a defence of drunkenness. But the jury condemned him to death because he had "acted from *hybris* not from wine, treating free men as slaves."²³ So *hybris* involved the inference of socially dangerous attitudes from many forms of behaviour including violence, and thus constituted a very important juristic concept for the regulation of attitudes.

We noted earlier that *hybris* invoked a response of revenge and in fact it was perceived that the infliction of dishonour imposed a moral duty to respond. This indicates a very important dimension to the honour and shame social dynamic, namely, the concepts of reciprocity and revenge. Fisher notes, for example, that the expression "begin unjust hands" (ἀρχεῖν χειρῶν ἀδίκων) which was one formula of classical *hybris*, particularly places it into a long Greek legal tradition, connected probably with Greek ideas of reciprocity and revenge.²⁴ We can see here why the concept of the petition as an act of supplication was so appropriate for adoption and combination with the strength of the sovereign and his officials. Indeed, Gould's paradigm of supplication contemplates just such vindication of honour through a powerful figure.

7.3 GRECO-ROMAN PAPYRI

We can see that bound up in *hybris* are issues of social stability and the position of the weak or vulnerable were ideal for the retributive and ameliorative action of powerful kings and officials, conceptualised in symbolic terms to confront attitudes and actions

22 1378b.6. διὸ οἱ νέοι καὶ οἱ πλούσιοι ὑβριστὰὶ ὑπερέχειν γὰρ οἴονται ὑβρίζοντες.

23 See MacDowell, *Law*, p 195. Cf Dem, *In Neaeram [Sp.]*, 12, 7: ὑπὲρ ἀδελφῆς καὶ κηδεστοῦ καὶ ἀδελφιδῶν καὶ γυναικὸς ἑμαυτοῦ, μηδὲ τὴν περιφανῶς εἰς τοὺς θεοὺς ἀσεβοῦσαν καὶ εἰς τὴν πόλιν ὑβρίζουσαν καὶ τῶν νόμων καταφρονοῦσαν τῶν ὑμετέρων εἰσαγαγῶν εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ ἐξελέγξας τῷ λόγῳ ὡς ἀδικεῖ, κυρίου καταστήσω ὃ τι ἂν βούλησθε χρῆσθαι αὐτῇ.. See also XXX.2.

24 See Fisher, *Hybris*, 39 and fn 16, who notes the expression appears in Draco's homicide law (IG3 104 11.3f). Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1402a 1, in using the same expression, makes it clear that "striking the first blow" is a necessary part of *hybris* in striking a free man. On the question of reciprocity and revenge Fisher cites Gould, *Herodotus* (London, 1989), 83-5.

which perpetuated a perception of anomie. The association of *hybris* with violence as a physical manifestation of socially undesirable attitudes can be found consistently in the papyri.²⁵ Most scholars agree that the law of Ptolemaic Egypt had strong connections with Athenian law.²⁶ The law code of Ptolemaic Alexandria, the *Dikaionata*, makes specific provision for relief against various acts of violence, including threatening with an offensive weapon, and drunken offences at night or in temples and employs the language of classical *hybris* such as the expression "begin unjust hands" (ἀρχεῖν χειρῶν ἀδίκων).²⁷ A look at a standard text on Greco-Roman law, such as Taubenschlag, shows that the law of the chora was similar to the law of Alexandria in both Ptolemaic and Roman times, and recognised actions, not only for various types of violence but also, insulting officials, verbal insults and contemptuous conduct, all of which could be designated by the language of *hybris*.²⁸ It is likely then that these elements of the classical conception of *hybris* were inherited by the Greco-Roman era of Egyptian history and it came into the forensic discourse of the papyri.

In other respects from the earliest period we find mention of insulting behaviour which requires the intercession of the government. We noted above that in a petition such as UPZ II 170 (127-6 BC)(=P. Par 14) the connection between *hybristic* and violent behaviour was explicitly connected with anomie. It can be seen in documents where contempt flows from exploitation of disparities of power. In P.Tebt. III:1 790 (II BC) priests of the precinct at Arsinoë complain that tax collectors forced their way into the temple and imposed taxes and exactions "insolently and with

25 See for example Di Bitonto 1967, 22ff, 1968, 75ff for the Ptolemaic period. In the Roman period see P.Oxy XIX 2234 (31 AD); P.Oxy XXXI 2563 (c170 AD).

26 R. Taubenschlag, 'The ancient-Greek-city laws in Ptolemaic Egypt', in *Actes du Ve Congrès Internationale Papyrologie*, 471-89; *The Law of Greco-Roman Egypt in the Light of the Papyri 332 BC. - 640 AD*² (Warsaw, 1955), 435ff. This view has been corroborated quite remarkably by the survival of P.Oxy XVIII 2177 (III AD), which is a semi-literary papyrus of proceedings before an emperor as part of the *Acta Alexandrinorum*, where it is said that the laws of Athens and Alexandria are the same.

27 P. Bechtel et al, *Dikaionata: Auszüge aus alexandrinischen Gesetzen und Verordnungen in einem Papyrus des Philologischen Seminars der Universität Halle* (Berlin, 1913)(=P.Hal.), II 204ff. Fisher makes the point that this code although it obviously contains elements of Athenian legal thought, it contains legal models from other sources: *Hybris*, 83. If we turn then to the papyri we find this tradition represented. In P.Ent. 74 (221 BC) a certain Peithias complains about violence perpetrated against him by an unknown person. at l. 12 he uses the expression ὑβρῶν καὶ ἀρχῶν εἰς με χειρῶν ἀδίκων. The same expression appears in P.Ent. 79 (217 BC) to describe violent behaviour of a woman called Psenobastis.

28 *The Law of Greco-Roman Egypt*, 437ff.

injury" ((l. 11) μεθ' ὕβρεως καὶ σκυλομοῦ). In P.Fay. 12 (103 BC) Theotimus complains to the queen and king of being abused "in the most unmeasured terms" in front of a crowd (15: οὐ] τυχόντως πλείστα κακολογηθεὶς). In P.Tebt. I 41 (119 BC) the komarch complains that extortion has been perpetrated upon the wives of villagers, with the utmost insolence ([μ]ετὰ τοῦ παντὸς σκυλομοῦ) by the topogrammateus.²⁹

There are also situations described in the Roman papyri which seem very close to those which evoked the identification of *hybris* at Athens. In P.Oxy XXXVI 2758 Recto (110-2 AD) the petitioner Heraclas had to suffer the ignominy of his wife being abused and exposed by the drunken Apollos in front his house in the presence of many important men (παρόντων πλείστων ἀξιοχρέων ἀ(ν)δρῶ[ν]), a situation reminiscent of the *hybris* of drunken youths in classical Athens, noted above, and which Heraclas requires the strategos to avenge (ἐκδικηθῆναι).³⁰ Here the honour of the petitioner needs satisfaction, and the fact that he looks to the administration for this indicates how the powerful official was invoked to avenge dishonour in situations where a petitioner may have been unable to achieve this him or herself. The connection between drunkenness and wealth appears right through into IV AD. P.Cair.Isidor. 75 (24 Oct 316 AD) is a petition in which Aurelius Isidorus complains of extraordinary violence committed against his house and property by a group of fellows who were "drunk with much wine and emboldened by their wealth" ((9) μηδὲν ἔχοντες πρὸς με, οἴνω πολλῷ βεβαρη[μένοι] καὶ θαρρο[ῦν]τες ᾧ περίκινται πλούτει), the classic hallmarks of *hybris* in Athens, as we noted above.

It is worth making the point also that there is some evidence in the papyri for the presence of an aspect of honour and shame which had a very important impact upon how the individual was conceived. The noted New Testament scholar, Philip

29 Compare BGU VIII 1817 (60/59 BC).

30 Cf the "uncommon outrage" (ὑβριν μοι συνεστησάτωι οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν) suffered by Pappus as he spoke to Ancherimphus and his wife about a theft in P.Ryl. II 136 (34 AD). A similar view of the role of the strategos can be found in P.Oxy XXXVIII 2853 Recto (245 AD).

Esler, has discussed the distinction between the individualistic and introspective conceptions of worth in modern Western societies on the one hand, and societies in which honour is the central value on the other. In the latter societies the collective perception of an individual is far more important. "Persons are not oriented towards themselves as individuals, but towards the groups to which they belong."³¹ This leads to what Bruce Malina has called the "dyadic" personality.³² Such a perspective on the individual results often in classification by stereotypes, which, as we have noted, Kovel'man argued was the object of the rhetorical language of petitions from II AD.³³ In particular it is possible that the many references to problems experienced by petitioners because they are "strangers" to a particular area, including being racially different, may be a manifestation of this. In a well known passage from P.Ent. 79 (217 BC) we find both of these aspects of conflict expressed. Heracleides, a Greek man, petitions Ptolemy Philopator against violent attacks on him by an Egyptian woman called Psenobastis. He asks the king "not to allow me who is a Greek and a stranger unreasonably to suffer outrage at the hands of an Egyptian woman" (δέομαι οὖν σοῦ, βασιλεῦ, ἔι σοι δοκεῖ, [μὴ περιδεῖν με οὕτως ἀλόγως ὑπὸ Αἰγυπτίας ὑβρίζομενον, Ἕλληνα ὄντα καὶ ξένον). The impulse for the expression of contempt may have been racial but the mention of "stranger" appears on its own in other petitions. Compare P.Ent. 83 (221 BC) in which Thamounis a woman complains about the violence committed against her by Thothortaïs, who holds her in contempt because she is a stranger: (4) καταγνοῦσά μου ὅτι ξένη εἶμι. In P.Ent. 29 (217 BC) vulnerability stems from the unknown petitioner being a stranger (ξένος). This situation occurs in the later Ptolemaic petition UPZ II 160 (119 BC) in which Hermias the son of Ptolemaios complains of people who have wrongfully possessed his property holding him in contempt because the prevailing situation: (17) ἐν δὲ τῆι τῶν καιρῶν περιστάσει | [καταγνόντ[ε]ς ἐπὶ τῶι

31 *The First Christians in their Social Worlds*, 29f.

32 *The New Testament World : Insights from cultural anthropology*, 51-70.

33 A.B. Kovel'man "The Rhetoric of Petitions and its Influence on Popular Social Awareness in Roman Egypt." 168 *VDI*, 170-84; "From Logos to Mythos", *BASP* 28 (1991), 153-161 at 136. See also Esler, *The First Christians in their Social Worlds*, loc. cit.

ἄλλου τὴν | κατοικίαν [ἔ]χειν [με] ἐπελθόντες | [ἐπ]ὶ μίαν [μου τῶν] προγεγραμ- | μένων οἰκίαν. Similarly in a petition from the same period, BGU VI 1255 (I BC), Petesouchos complains that his brother has held him in contempt because he is absent from his village: (4) καταγνόντες ἐπὶ τῷ εἶναι με ἐν ἀλλοδημίαι. A racial or cultural divide also appears on its own as in P.Yale 46 col. i (246-221 BC), the well known petition to the king by an Egyptian priest where he alleges that he has been held in contempt because he is Egyptian: καταφρονήσας μου ὅτι Αἰγύπτιος εἰμί or P.Col.Zen. 66 (III BC) in which the petitioner alleges that Jason has failed to provide him with proper pay because he is a foreigner: κατεγνώκασιμ μου ὅτι εἰμὶ βάρβαρος.³⁴ Where these themes appear, the surviving evidence exhibits something of a bias towards the Hellenistic period, which may reflect a less complete process of integration between the various races in Egypt during that period. Nonetheless difficulties raised by being a stranger continued well into the Roman period. Being wronged by outsiders is the problem in the opening sentence of P.Oxy XXXIV 2713 Recto (297 AD): τὸ ὑπὸ ξένων ἀδικῆσθαι.

So we can find plenty of evidence which supports the conclusion that the value system of honour and shame which played such an important part in the forensic rhetorical tradition of the classical period was operating in judicial and administrative context of Egypt in the Greco-Roman period. Fisher makes the point that "many papyri do use *hybris* as the basis of complaints, ...and in so doing they bring out the humiliating and insulting aspects of violent assaults, of verbal abuse, of imprisonment, of emptying urine-pots and of clothes stealing, in precisely the same way as did Demosthenes or Lysias"³⁵ It is certainly true that when we meet the language of *hybris* in the papyri at one level this simply reflects the formulations and requirements of the legal system. But the discussion of *hybris* shows that, although an important juristic concept, it also reflected basic social values and forensic

34 B. Rochette, "Parce que je ne connais pas bien le grec..." P.Col.Zenon II 66", Chr. d'Eg. 71 (1996), 311-316 comments specifically on this document suggesting that the writer's problem is that he cannot *speak* Greek well.

35 *Hybris*, 85.

discourse provided a prime mode through which these were articulated. The right which *hybris* might have given to a legal remedy was but one part of the complex psychological and social matrix which honour and shame involved, even if it was the part which most obviously addressed the anomic consequences of insulting behaviour.³⁶ In the next sections we will examine how the dynamic of honour and shame operated in specific situations giving rise to petitions and litigation.

7.4 ANOMIE, ROLES & MORAL AND LEGAL TYPES

7.4.1 A Weapon in the Hands of the Weak

As we have argued so far in this thesis the role of powerful officials was conceptualised as saviour protector and helper of the weak. In fact we see that one very important juristic function of the concept of *hybris* in the dynamic of honour and shame in classical Athens was as "a moral and legal weapon" in the hands of the weak. This also seems to be its function in the papyri of Greco-Roman Egypt. When placed within the reciprocal relationship of supplication, *hybris*, as a legal concept leading to the amelioration of dishonour, was as critical a part of the symbolic role of the powerful monarch or official as saviour was to express protection of the weak, the destitute and the oppressed. Honour and shame were consequently at the heart of the sovereign's function as forensic saviour.

In this section we will begin our discussion of this function of *hybris*, and attempt to show that social tensions between weak and strong, and concepts such as oppression and exploitation, which have great familiarity to the modern mind, were constantly articulated in the Greco-Roman legal and administrative context in terms which gather up facets of the essential opposition between honour and shame. Often the opposition was predicated in petitions by reference to the petitioner's membership of a particular class among social types, which had a common feature, namely, they had symbolic conventions and legal rules connected with them in which the dominant

36 See Cohen, *Law, Sexuality, and Society*, 221ff, for a good discussion of the collective interest dimension to the regulation of socially disruptive behaviour and responses to it.

issue was capacity, or rather lack of it, or, to put it another way, asymmetries of power. These types should be seen as emblematic because they constituted the sort of social pivot where the overlap between the relationship of supplication and the honour and shame syndrome is very clear: weakness or lack of power was inherent in both. The social types in question were women, widows, old people, orphans and one based on a general type of weakness or vulnerability in either a physical or a material form, often connected with rent, taxation or liturgies and these types can be met together in the one situation.³⁷ The law in the Greco-Roman world also gave special recognition to these categories in various ways.

Women

Women appear frequently in the surviving evidence using petitions to vindicate their position.³⁸ In Mediterranean societies there are all kinds of social and cultural

37 It is well known that Roman law in particular was formulated by reference to "ideal-typical" economic or social categories, such as landlord or tenant, which simplified and idealised reality: D. Kehoe, "Legal Institutions and the Bargaining Power of the Tenant in Roman Egypt", *AfP* 41 (1995), 232-262. at 234 and refs. Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en égypte romaine*, devotes an entire chapter (V) to women.

38 The petitions from the group under study in which the petitioner is definitely a woman are, whether acting by a guardian or not, 135 in number: P.Cair.Zen. II 59145 (2/8/256 BC); P.Ent. 80 (c 241 BC); P.Ent. 20 (221 BC); P.Ent. 24 (221 BC); P.Ent. 33 (221 BC); P.Ent. 81 (221 BC); P.Ent. 86 (221 BC); P.Ent. 83 (221 BC); P.Ent. 82 (221 BC); P.Ent. 6 (221 BC); P.Ent. 7 (221 BC); P.Ent. 10 (221 BC); P.Ent. 13 (221 BC); P.Ent. 21 (217 BC); P.Ent. 22 (217 BC); P.Ent. 23 (217 BC); P.Ent. 30 (217 BC); P.Ent. 69 (217 BC); SB XVI 12305 (199-150 BC); UPZ I 17 (163 BC)=(P. Lond. 22 Recto); UPZ I 18 (163 BC)=(P. Par. 23); UPZ I 42 (163-2 BC)=(P. Par. 26); UPZ I 19 (c. 163 BC)=(P. Par. 22); UPZ I 20 (c 163 BC); UPZ I 44 (162-1 BC)=(P. Dresd V. I); UPZ I 45 (162-1 BC)=(P. Vat. D); UPZ I 46 (162-1 BC); UPZ I 47 (162-1 BC)=(P. Par. 27 Recto); UPZ I 48 (162-1 BC)=(P. Par 28); UPZ I 49 (162-1 BC)=(P. Leid E. I); UPZ I 50 (162-1 BC)=(P. Leid E. III); UPZ I 33 (161 BC)=(P. Leid. E II); UPZ I 34 (161 BC)=(P. Dresd. V II); UPZ I 40 (161 BC)=(P. Par. 33); UPZ I 51 (161 BC)=(P. Vat C); UPZ I 39 (c. 161 BC)=(P. Lond. 33); UPZ I 58 Verso (161 BC)=(P. Lond. 41 Recto & Verso); UPZ I 41 (c. 161/60 BC)=(P. Par. 29); SB I 4638 (145-116 BC); PSI III 166 (118 BC); P.Tebt. I 52 (114 BC); UPZ II 189 (112-1 BC)=(P. Tor. 11); P.Tebt. III:1 776 (II BC); P.Ryl. II 68 (89 BC); BGU VIII 1813 (62/1/BC); BGU VIII 1820 (56/5 BC); P.Princ. III 117 (52 BC); BGU VIII 1827 (52-1 BC); BGU VIII 1826 (52/1 BC); BGU VIII 1833 (51-50 BC); BGU VIII 1849 (48-6 BC); BGU VIII 1848 (48-6 BC); BGU IV 1139 (c 5 BC); P.Oxy II 281 (20-50 AD); P.Oxy XLII 3033 (45-7 AD); P.Oxy XLVI 3271 (47-54 AD); P.Ryl. IV 669 (I AD); BGU II 650 (60-1 AD); P.Oxy XLVI 3274 (99-117 AD); BGU I 226 (99 AD); P.Oxy L 3555 (I -II AD); BGU I 22 (April 114 AD); P.Mich IX 525 (119-124 AD); P.Ryl. II 122 (127 AD); P.Oxy III 486 (131 AD); P.Tebt II 329 (139 AD); SB XVI 12685 (4 Oct 139 AD); P.L. Bat. XXV 34 (140 AD); P.Oxy X 1272 (144 AD); P.Ross.Georg II 20 (146 AD); BGU I 340 (c. 148-9 AD); BGU II 522 (II AD); P.Ross.Georg II 21 (154/5 AD); P.Mich IX 526 (155 AD); PSI V 463 (157-60 AD); BGU I 327 (1 April 166 AD); P.Heid. IV 297 (172-5 AD); BGU I 298 (173-4 AD); BGU III 970 (c 174 AD); BGU II 467 (c 177 AD); SB XVI 12678 (27 July 179 AD); BGU II 648 (164-196 AD); P.Oxy II 237 (186 AD); BGU VII 1575 (189/90 AD); P.Tebt II 327 (Late II AD); P.Oxy VI 899 (200 AD); BGU I 291 (II-III AD); P.Tebt II 334 (200-1 AD); BGU I 157 (II-III AD); P.Oxy XXXIV 2709 Recto (202-7 AD); P.Oxy III 488 (II -III AD); P.Oxy VIII 1120 (Early III AD); P.Tebt II 333 (216 AD); P.Oxy XLIII 3093 (21/9/217 AD); BGU IV 1070 (218 AD); P.Oxy LX 4071 (241-4(?) AD); P.Oxy XII 1466 (245 AD); P.Oxy X 1271 (246 AD); P.Oxy LVIII 3926 (9 Feb 246); P.Oxy IV 720 (247 AD); P.Ryl. II 301 (III AD); P.Tebt II 335 (mid III AD); CPR VII 15 (III AD); P.Ross.Georg V 22 (mid III AD); P.Oxy XXXIV 2710 Recto (17/1/261 AD); P.Oxy XII 1467 (263 AD); P.Princ. II 30 (c 264 AD); P.Tebt II 326 (c. 266 AD); P.Oxy XII 1558 (267 AD); P.Ryl. II 117 (269 AD); P.Sakaon 36 (c 280 AD)=(P.Ryl 114, Sel.Pap. II 293); P.Oxy XLVI 3296 Recto (291 AD); P.Oxy XXXIV 2712 Recto (292-3 AD); P.Oxy VIII 1121 (295 AD); P.Oxy XVII 2133 (Late III AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 62 (5 Sept 296 AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 63 (Nov

conventions surrounding the place of women. David Cohen has argued that many of these applied in classical Athens, and it may also be the case that the position of women as it appears in the papyri was similar.³⁹ Women were supposed to remain in doors, and issues of sexual chastity were a constant undercurrent. In Greco-Roman Egypt women were conventionally considered to be one of the categories of weak persons in the ancient world, and at most times had to act through a guardian, a man, although in the Ptolemaic period it seems that women could act as guardians.⁴⁰ Also from P.Oxy XII 1467 (263 AD) it is clear that by mid III AD women who could write and had three children could act without a guardian. Under Roman law women had special position with respect to such things as release from cultivation of crown land.⁴¹ P.Tebt. III:1 776 (II BC) is a good example to begin with because it contains a number of formulaic elements which had a very long history in petitions. Serenis, daughter of Menelaus complains that her husband Didymus is trying to assign a house, pledged for her dowry and maintenance, as surety for a tax farmer. In the request she says: διὸ ἀξιῶ σε δεομένη γυνή οὔσα καὶ ἀβοήθητον μὴ ὑπεριδεῖν με ἀποστερηθεῖσαν τῶν ὑποκειμένων πρὸς τὴν φερνὴν διὰ τὴν τοῦ ἐγκαλουμένου ῥαδιουργία ("Wherefore I ask beseeching you being a woman and helpless not to suffer me to be deprived of what is pledged for my dowry through the misbehaviour of the accused..")⁴² We see here allied to the request verb the phrase γυνή οὔσα καὶ ἀβοήθητος. This illustrates two things. First, the fact of being a woman, γυνή οὔσα, was proffered effectively a source of vulnerability in itself, and secondly, the adjective ἀβοήθητος is used to reinforce this and acted as perfect

296 AD); P.Oxy XXXIV 2713 Recto (297 AD); P.Oxy XLV 3246 (297-8 AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 64 (298 AD); P.Oxy XLVI 3302 Recto (300-1 AD); P.Oxy I 71 col. ii Recto (303 AD); P.Oxy LX 4074 (307 AD); P.Oxy LX 4082 (307 AD); P.Ryl. IV 617 (317 AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 77 (320 AD); P.Col VII 173 (330-340 AD); P.Sakaon 44 (331/2 AD)=(P.Thead 17, Sel. Pap II 295); P.Oxy LIV 3769 (334 AD); P.Oxy LIV 3770 (26/3/334 AD); P.Oxy VI 901 (336 AD); P.Oxy XII 1470 (336 AD); P.Oxy LIV 3771 (336 AD)=(VI 901); P.Amh. II 141 (350 AD); PSI V 452 (IV AD).

39 Cohen, *Law, Sexuality, and Society: The Enforcement of Morals in classical Athens*, esp. chs. 4 and 5.

40 See BGU VIII 1813 (62/1/BC), Mitteis *Grundzüge* 252/3; Weiß, *AfP* IV 73ff.

41 BGU 648 (164-196 AD); P.Oxy VI 899 (200 AD); P.Tebt 327 (late II AD); in P.Cair.Isidor. 64 (298 AD) the petitioners refer simply to the fact that they are women and unable to meet rents on arouras of land.

42 Cf P.Ent. 30 (217 BC).

linguistic and symbolic compliment to the ruler or official as βοηθός or ἀντιλήμπτωρ.

The use of the adjective ἀβοήθητος becomes very frequent in later centuries. BGU VIII 1820 (56/5 BC) is a petition to the strategos Paniskos by a woman, Makaria, against her husband. The nature of the complaint is not recoverable but at line 12-13 she says ὁ σημαινόμενος ἀνὴρ διὰ τὸ ἀβοήθητον εἶναί με. In P.Oxy L 3555 (I -II AD) Thermuthion relates a tale about injury to the hand of her slave girl, which is touching for the degree of sentiment, in that she says that she raised the girl as a little daughter to care for her in her old age, "for I am a woman helpless and alone" (ll. 8-9: ἐτημέλησα ὡς θυγάτριον ἐπ' ἐλπίδι τοῦ ἡλικίας γενόμενον ἔχειν με γηροβοσκόν, γυναῖκα ἀβοήθητον οὔσαν καὶ μόνην).⁴³ P.Tebt II 327 (Late II AD) combines the themes of the helpless woman with old age: ἀναγκαίως γλυνὴ οὔσα ἀβοήθητος πολλοῖς ἔτεσι βεβαρημένη. The adjective ἀβοήθητος of course invites the official to fill the role of βοηθός and invokes by implication the whole symbolic array embraced by the saviour, benefactor and helper motif.

In the Roman period the symbolic dimensions of the category are extended by express reference to the "natural" or "inherent" weakness of women. It appears very early in the Roman period and the idea was so institutionalised, so it seems, that the "weakness of women" can appear in an agreement appointing a grandson as representative of his grandmother to appear in the place of her at court: P.Oxy I 261 (55 AD), in which a certain Demetria states that she cannot appear at court διὰ γυναικίαν ἀσθένειαν. In P.Oxy. I 71.2 the petitioner is a woman, Aurelia Gle[. She complained to the prefect Clodius Culcianus in 303 AD about her business managers robbing her and utilised the fact that she is a weak woman many times in the

43 Cf BGU III 970 (c 174 AD): (7) Τῆς εἰς ἅπαντας | εὐεργεσίας, ἡγεμῶν μέγιστε, καὶ αὐτὴ γυνὴ ἀβοήθητος καὶ μηδεμίαν βοήθειαν | ἔχουσα εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ σοῦ τοῦ κυρίου τὴν ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγὴν ἐποιησάμην.

document. The petition exhibits an opening sentence in which the theme of assistance is juxtaposed with that of the helpless woman: (ll. 3ff)

πάσι μὲν βοηθεῖς, ἡγεμῶν δέσποτα, καὶ πάσι τὰ ἴδ[ε]ια ἀπονέμις
 [μάλιστα
 δὲ γυναιξείν διὰ τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἀσθενές· ὄθεν καὶ αὐτὴ πρόσξιμι
 τῷ σῷ
 μεγαλείῳ εὐέλπις οὔσα τῆς ἀπὸ σοῦ βοηθείας τυχεῖν.

"You extend help to all, my lord prefect, and you render to all their due, but especially to women on account of their natural weakness. Therefore I myself make petition to your highness in full confidence that I shall obtain assistance from you."

A little later in the text Aurelia explains that she pays considerable taxes and being a defenceless widow woman with her sons in the army (ll 7-8 γυνὴ ἀσθε[ι]νῆς καὶ χήρα τυγχάνουσα τῶν τε ἡμετέρων τέκνων ἐν στρατείᾳ ὄντων) she engaged business managers, who are the source of complaint.⁴⁴

Widows in the ancient world were a recognised social category both in literature as well as the law. But this recognition was not always positive. In the culture of classical Athens, for example, protectiveness was accorded to women as an essential and highly valued element in the structure of the οἶκοι within the polis.⁴⁵ On the other hand widows were often perceived as a source of social problems, being single women bereft of the restraining presence of their husbands who exuded subversive sensuality, failing in fidelity to the memory of their dead husbands and undermining the sexual rectitude of living men, who were usually husbands.⁴⁶ However, in petitions the dominant perception of widowhood is in the protective tradition, and they are presented as vulnerable; women without husbands are without exception victims, at least when describing themselves. P.Ent. 20 (221 BC) contains a claim for a funeral indemnity by a widow. BGU VIII 1833 (51/50 BC) is a petition to the strategos Seleukos from Heracleopolis from a widow called Arsinoe in which

44 For similar language see P.Oxy VIII 1120 (Early III AD): κατὰ τοῦτο μαρτύρομαι τὴν βίαν γυνὴ χήρα καὶ ἀσθενής P.Oxy XXXIV 2713 Recto (297 AD) where Aurelia to the prefect τὸ γυναικεῖον γίενος εὐκαταφρόνητον πέφυκεν διὰ τὸ περὶ ἡμᾶς τῆς φύσεως ἀσθενές. See also BGU 522 (II AD); P.Amh. II 141 (350 AD).

45 Ø. Andersen, "The Widows the City and Thuc. II 45.2", *Symb. Osl.* LXII (1987), 33-49.

46 P. Walcot, "On Widows and Their Reputation in Antiquity", *Symb. Osl.* LXVI (1991), 5-26.

her widowed situation is obviously meant to form part of her weakness when she says:

(4) Τοῦ [ἀνδρὸς] | μετῆλλαχότος τὸν βίον ἀπολιπόντος | ἐ[μὲ σὺν] τέκνῳ καθυστεροῦσα τοῖς δέουσι | τυγχάνωι. Ἀφ' ἧς σοι συνεστησάμην | ἐντυχίας ἐ[κ]τιθεμένη τὴν περὶ ἐμ[ε] | ἀσθένειαν κέκριται πρὸς εὐεργεσίαν | τὰ ἐν τῷ ἀνδρὶ μου ἐν[οφ]ειλόμενα | αὐτὰ μόνα τὰ δοθέντα κομίσασθαι τὸν | σὸν προστάτην Βίωνα.

"After my husband departed life, having left me with a child, I happened to be short of necessities. Having exposed my weakness through the entreaty by which I have brought myself into connection with you, it was decided, with a view to benefaction, that your patron Bion receive for what was owed by my husband only the same value of the things which were sold."

The context seems to suggest that Arsinoë's weakness derives from her widowhood as much as her womanhood.⁴⁷ In P.Oxy VIII 1120 (early III AD) a widow complains of violence and *hybris* and she describes herself as "a widowed woman and weak" (γυνὴ χήρα καὶ ἀσθενής).⁴⁸ However, the notion of widowhood could be stretched beyond women whose husbands had actually died.⁴⁹

The function of *hybris* as a weapon in the hands of women in the judicial context is well attested from III BC. A woman called Asia complains to Ptolemy Euergetes in P.Ent. 13 Recto (221 BC) that Pooris a *stathmouchos* holds her in contempt because her husband is dead ((6) καταφρονῶν ὅτι ὁ ἀνὴρ μου τετελεύτηκεν).⁵⁰ P.Meyer 8 (16 Aug 151 AD) gives a situation in which a brother and sister complain about their father who has remarried after the death of their mother and appropriated her estate, (10) καταφρονῶν τῆς περὶ ἡμᾶς ἀβιοθήτου ἀσθενείας.⁵¹ In P.Oxy I 71.1 (303 AD) a second petition from a woman called Aurelia, which has been mentioned a number of times above, contains the same theme, but in relation the unobtrusive way of life: 1 16 τῶν αὐτῶν μοι χωρίων

47 Compare the same subject matter as used the same way by Tasemthis, wife of Horus, in BGU VIII 1849 (48-6 BC).

48 Cf BGU II 522 (II AD) γυνὴ χήρα καὶ ἀβοήτητος.

49 See P.Oxy LIV 3770 (26 Mar, 334) below, 325.

50 P.Ent. 68 (220 BC), 11 may have contained the suggestion of contempt of an orphan.

51 Cf BGU I 340 (c. 148-9 AD): Ἐπὶ οὖν οὗτοι οὐκ ἀφίσταιν | τε τῆς κατ' ἐμοῦ ἐπηρίαν, κατα- | φρονοῦν[τες] τῆς [περὶ] ἐμὲ ἀπρα- | γμοσύνης] καὶ τῶν περὶ τῶν τοῦ | οὐτῶν ὑπὸ πάντων ἡγεμόνων | προσεταγμένων. BGU I 291 (II-III AD): (8) Πετρώιος | δ[έ] τις Νουμήνκου, καταφρο- | νή[σ]ας μου ὡς γυναικὸς ἀ- | βοθήτου. See also P.Gen. I 81 (145 AD).

περι[φ]ρονοῦντές μου τῆς ἀπραγμοσύνης. Sometimes these are combined, for example a woman who is also an orphan. In P.Oxy XII 1470 (336 AD) Aurelia Theodora petitions the prefect about a dispute over land. She speaks of the defendant Demetrianus thus: ll. 15 τῆς δὲ ἡμετέρας ὀρφανίας καταφρονῶν. In SB XVI 12524 (19 Feb 3-10 BC) Sosinikos son of Kallinikos complains to the epistates on behalf of his brother's children who are orphans. They inherited a vineyard and Kallias broke the watering system "holding the ending of my brother's life and the orphaned state of his children in contempt, trying to be master of the property of others wrongly and contrary to what is proper" ((10) κατεγνωκῶς τῷ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου μετηλλαχέναι τὸν βίον καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ ὀρφανὰ εἶναι, ἐπιχιρῶν τῶν ἀλλοτρίων κυριεύειν οὐ δεόντως καὶ παρὰ τὸ κα[θ]ῆκον).⁵²

Some petitions are from women who say they have suffered what would now be called domestic violence, although the fact of them being women is not given special prominence. A good example is P.Oxy. II 281 (20-50 AD) in which Syra complains about her husband Sarapion: (ll. 14-23) ὁ δὲ Σαραπίων καταχρησάμενος τῆι φερνῇ εἰς ὃν ἠβούλετο λόγον οὐ διέλειπεν κακοῦχῶν με καὶ ὑβρί[ζ]ων καὶ τὰς χεῖρας ἐπιφέρων καὶ τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἐνδεῆ καθιστάς, ὕστερον δὲ καὶ ἐνκατέλιπέ με λειτῆν καθεστῶσαν. ("But Sarapion, having squandered my dowry as he pleased, continually ill-treated and insulted me, using violence towards me, and depriving me of the necessities of life; finally he deserted me leaving me in a state of destitution.") Syra is drawing upon the fact that she has been insulted and abused by her husband to invite intervention by the chief justice and superintendent of the *chrematistae* to whom the petition is addressed,⁵³ and it is obviously appropriate to place this situation in the general tradition of accusations of *hybris*.⁵⁴

52 In SB 5343 (182 AD) the weakness is being confined to a certain place.

53 Cf P.Ross.Georg II 20 (146 AD); P.Ross.Georg V 22 (mid III AD). In PSI V 463 (157-60 AD) a wife complains of her husband, describing his behaviour as "irrational": (ll. 8-9: μηδενὶ λόγῳ χρησάμενος.

54 P.Oxy II 282 (30-35 AD) a petition to the strategos Alexandrus, shows the other side of the coin. It is a complaint by a husband who has been robbed by his wife.

The connection between the inherent weakness of women and *hybris* is clearly seen in a number of related linguistic forms. In P.Oxy XXXIV 2713 Recto (297 AD) Aurelia writes to the prefect about the "easily despised" nature of women τὸ γυναικεῖον γένος εὐκαταφρόνητον πέφυκεν διὰ τὸ περὶ ἡμᾶς τῆς φύσεως ἀσθενές. The same notion appears in a number of other documents well into IV AD. CPR 7 15 (III AD) is a petition from Hermopolis to the praeses, in which the petitioner accuses the wrongdoer of holding her, the weak woman in contempt, (κατ[α]φρο[νοῦ]ντες τῆς ἀσθενοῦς μου γυναικ[είας]). Finally, P.Oxy LIV 3770 (26/3/334 AD) is a petition by Aurelia Ptolema to the syndic, and she is complaining about the behaviour of her son-in-law, Theon, who married her daughter, got her pregnant and now has left. He then had the gall to ask for the bride price back, which was a manifestation of contempt: καὶ ἐν χηρεία τὴν ἐμὴν θυγατέρα καταλείψας (10) πρᾶται καὶ τὰ ἔθνα ἅπερ τότε παρέσχευ ἀπαίτηεῖν με τῆς ἐμῆς ἀσθενίας καταφρονήσας· ὅθεν οὐ φέρουσα τὴν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀσυνειδησίαν ἐπιδίδωμι τὰ βιβλία ἀξιού[σα] εἰ τῇ αὐτῇ [αὐθ]αδία ἐπιμένειν...("and leaving my daughter as a widow he tries even to demand back from me the bride price he provided at that time scorning my powerlessness")

It should also be borne in mind that women could be the subject of complaint, like men, and accused of all sorts of contempt, violence and harassment. In P.Ent. 4 Recto (242 BC) Philiskos, a hecatontarouros, complains about a woman called Hedeia to whom he has given money and material to make two garments. She has made one but not the other and kept the money: at l 6 this behaviour is designated by the verb κακοτεχνούσα. P.Ent. 9 (217 BC) contains a complaint by Apollonios about his aunt, who will not vacate his deceased father's house so that funeral expenses can be met.⁵⁵ P.Ent. 49 (221 BC) has the story of Sopolis whose son, also Sopolis, was inveigled by a courtesan Demo to borrow 1,000 drachmas. In the series of petitions by the twins

55 Cf P.Ent. 19 (c 221 BC). BGU. VIII 1761 (51/50 BC) Note the use by the petitioner of καταφρονήσασα at l. 7, in reference to an unnamed woman. It is unfortunate the rest of the expression is lost. The editors comment, "Hinter καταφρονήσασα etwa μου τῆς ἡλικίας oder τοῦ δικαίου oder dgl., dann erst Name der Frau." (p. 39).

Thaues and Taus performing services in the Great Serapeion at Memphis we see complaints about the treatment meted out to them by their mother, Nephoris.⁵⁶ P.Tebt. III:1 771 (II BC) tells of a situation in which Asclepiades says he is being oppressed by a woman who wants to take his house. In P.Tebt. III:1 800 (142 BC) Sabbataeus, a Jew, complains that his pregnant wife Joanna has been attacked by another woman, so severely that miscarriage threatens.⁵⁷ A woman called Heraïs is accused of a violent house invasion in P.Ryl. II 151 (40 AD). In P.Ant. II 88 (221 AD) we find a complaint by a brother against his sister, about a robbery (probably).⁵⁸ In P.Ent. 9 (217 BC) an orphan complains of contempt at the hands of his aunt. The same situation appears 600 years later in P.Sakaon 40 (318-320)(=P.Thead 19) which contains allegations by an orphaned child, Aurelius Aithiopas that his great aunt is covetous of the choice animals in his inheritance and is making some claim on them, quite wrongly, so he says. Indeed when we come to IV AD we see that the "swollen" Byzantine style provided great scope for censorious language towards women. In P.Oxy LIX 3981 (Feb/Mar 312 AD) the priest of the village of Chenetoris complains about a woman called C...iphis who continually drags him to court for a debt he says he does not owe. Aurelius Thonius complains of outrageous violence committed against his wife by a certain woman called Tapesis in P.Oxy LI 3620 (326 AD). In P.Cair.Isidor. 62 (5 Sept 296 AD), a petition in which ThaëSION and KyriLLous daughters of Kopres complain about the attempts of their stepmother to dispossess them of part of the inheritance received from their father. At l.12 they describe her as ἡ πανκάκιστος γυνή.⁵⁹

These points remind us that often the language of weakness as applied to women and orphans is said to have been "somewhat conventional" and "should not be taken as evidence that the particular women who employed it were necessarily more

56 UPZ I 17 (163 BC), UPZ I 19 (c. 163 BC); UPZ I 20 (c 163 BC) Compare P.Ryl. II 116 (194 AD) in which Heracleides complains about the violence inflicted on him by his own mother.

57 Cf P.Ryl. II 68 (89 BC); P.Cair.Goodspeed 15 (362 AD).

58 BGU I 168 (II-III AD) concerns a dispute over property in which a woman refused to hand over household goods despite an order from the strategos.

59 Women could be the subject of complaint to the emperors in P.Ryl. IV 621 (IV AD).

vulnerable than others"⁶⁰ That is undoubtedly right. It seems that some women who petitioned were often not only from well to do families but quite robust in protecting their position through applications to officials. P.Oxy XLIII 3094 (217-18 AD) is a private letter in which a woman Gaia gives a long history of her attempts to overturn an unfavourable judgment against her by an official called Agrippa. It shows a degree of resoluteness and vigour in pursuing rights which belies any impression of shrinking violets which the language of weakness might suggest. By the same token genuine vulnerability must have existed. There seems to be a ring of truth in the plea of Tamusthas in BGU II 648 (164-196 AD) when she says that she is childless and not able to help herself to get back land which has been taken by her cousin and uncle: (15) ἐπεὶ καὶ ἄτεκνός] εἰμι καὶ οὐδὲ ἑμαυτῆι ἀπαρκεῖν δύναμαι. However, in P.Oxy VI 899 Recto (200 AD), a woman named Apollonarian petitions the prefect Aemilius Saturninus about exemption from cultivation and describes herself as (ll. 39-40) καὶ μὴ ἐνοχλεῖσθαί με γυναῖκα οὐσ[α]ν ἄνανδρον καὶ ἀβοήθητον. Her application is for release from the responsibility for the cultivation of royal land, and it is clear that she must have been a relatively substantial landowner, so her ἀβοήθητος condition did not derive from lack of resources. Rather it reflects the writer's resort to symbolic resources applicable to ideal typical women in the role of petitioners, and as well, these symbolic conceptualisations were appropriate, if not required, for approaches to high officials such as the prefect not only because the compliant and frail were unlikely to pose a threat to the honour of the institutional order but also because they were assimilated to the relationship of supplication which itself relied upon ideal types especially the weak and the strong.

Orphans

Orphans were clearly a persistent social problem in the ancient world, as evidenced by the many mentions of orphans in petitions and official decrees.⁶¹ Petitions often

60 See eg A.I. Connolly, *New Docs* 4, 30.

61 UPZ I 9 (161 BC); P.Oxy VI 888 (late III or early IV AD).

reflect the social and financial responsibility of guardianship.⁶² P.Ent. 32 (217 BC) has two guardians of an orphaned girl appealing to the monarch for restitution of her property. In BGU VIII 1813 (62/1 BC) the petitioner is Teteimuthes the guardian of the orphans of Heracleides (Τετειμούθιος τῆς Πτολεμαίου ἐπιτρόπου τῶν Ἡρακλείδου τέκνων ὀρφανῶν). However, she is also their mother so the description of the children as orphans refers to the lack of a father not a total lack of parents. This meaning of "orphan" is similar to the notion that a woman who has been left by her husband is a widow even if he is not dead. In the Roman period it is known that a wealthy Alexandrian, Aurelius Horion, established endowments for ephobic contests and income to lighten the burden of liturgical services in several villages.⁶³ The editors of P.Mich IX 532 (181-2 AD) suggest that the text is the surviving part of a foundation for poorer orphans, along the lines of the foundations established by Aurelius Horion.

It is clear from surviving petitions that the mere fact of being an orphan, analogous to the mere fact of being a woman, was seen as a source of vulnerability exposing a person to *hybris* and contempt. In P.Ent. 9 (217 BC) Apollonios accuses his aunt of holding him in contempt because of his orphaned status (καταφρονούσα ἐπὶ τῶι ὀρφανόμ με εἶναι). P.Meyer 8 (16 Aug 151 AD) gives a situation in which a brother and sister complain about their father who has remarried after the death of their mother and appropriated her estate, apparently preying upon their vulnerable position as effectively parentless children: (10) καταφρονῶν τῆς περὶ ἡμᾶς ἀβ[οηθή]του ἀσθενείας]. P.Cair.Isidor. 77 (320 AD) shows that neglect of responsibilities to women and orphans came to be viewed as a type of *hybris*. The request in P.Sakaon 40 (318-320 AD)(=P.Thead 19) is framed by an introductory sentence which asserts that a special part of the role of the praeses is to vindicate wronged orphans: (4) Τοὺς ἀδικουμένους ὀρφανο[ύς], ἡγεμῶν δέσποτα, ἐκδικεῖν

62 P.Oxy I 38 (49-50 AD) which revolves around an orphan who died.

63 See loc cit, and P.Oxy IV 705.

εἴωθεν τὸ μεγαλεῖον τὸ σόν ("Your greatness is accustomed to avenge orphans who are wronged, lord praeses").

Old Age

The frailty of old age is a universal human experience so we may expect it to have formed the basis for requests for help. In P.Cair.Zen. III 59447 (III BC) Theon requests work from Zenon so that he may be free from anxiety in his old age: (9-10) ἵνα μὴ πρεσβύτερος ὢν ῥέμβωμαι. P.Ent. 22 (217 BC) shows us a widow seeking the appointment of a representative because she is old and weak ((9) πρεσβυτέρα τε οὔσα καὶ ἀσθενῆς γενομένη). P.Ent 25 (220 BC) is a complaint by a father who alleges that his ungrateful son, Strouthis, has not honoured a deal that the father negotiated on his behalf, but has brutalised him. The petitioner says that his son holds him contempt because of his old age and weak eyes (καταφρονῶν μου ὅτι πρεσβυτέρος εἰμι καὶ ἀσθενῶς τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς).⁶⁴ The association of old age and weak eyes highlights the vulnerability of the position of the petitioner. Eye problems are quite common in petitions, and were often associated with old age.⁶⁵ This example is also very interesting because it shows the continuous use of two motifs which we will see many times.

The first is the language of contempt expressed in the verb καταφρονέω. Old age was often said to be the focus of hybriistic attitudes, even by daughters against their fathers as in P.Ent. 26 (221 BC). There Ktesicles complains about his daughter Nike. He has bodily infirmity and bad eyes (3) and she refuses to pay his 20 drachma pension each month despite an order to do so, (9) καταφρονού[σά μου διὰ τοῦ γλήρωσ καὶ τῆς ὑπ[αρ]χούσης μου ἀκληρίας. The second is the notion of weakness here associated with physical weakness and expressed in the word ἀσθένεια. This too, as we will see in the next section, is often resorted to as the

64 In P.Oxy XXXIV 2708 Recto (14/4/169 AD) old age is relied upon.

65 Di Bitonto (1967), 39 mentions that eye problems were endemic in Egypt. cf P.Ent. 26 (221 BC), P.Col. Zen 102 (III BC), P.Cair.Zen. III 59426 (IIIBC), which mentions an medicament for the eyes, and P.Wisconsin I 3 (257-9 AD), in which the old age and weak eyes of the petitioner provide the basis for release from a public duty.

language for the weaker side of a power relationship, and appears constantly in petitions of our period.

In the Roman period, old age was a basis for special legal status, giving release from liturgies, the great bugbear, and this undoubtedly accounts for its mention in some petitions.⁶⁶ But old age also seems to provide a basis for a wider ethical position than that recognised simply by the law. A petition such as P.Mich IX 524 (98 AD) shows that men of 65 and 60 years old were still compelled to work as cultivators to pay the rent for their small family holdings of large estates such as the Camelian estate near Karanis. P. Brem 38 (118 AD) contains the remains of a petition from an old man who says he is πένης (l. 21) and wishes to be released from his liturgical load. Similarly, in BGU I 180 (II-III AD) we find the situation of an old veteran who wishes to be removed from a liturgical burden applying to probably the prefect or epistrategos, playing upon his old and lonely condition: (20) ἵνα δυνηθῶ | καὶ ἐγὼ [τῆ]ν ἐπιμέλειαν τῶν ιδίων | ποιῆσθαι, ἄ[ν]θρ[ω]πος πρεσβύτερος | μόνος τυγχ[άν]ων, [εἰ] τῆ σου | εἰς ἀεὶ σὺ[ν] ἀρίστῳ ("...so that even I will be able to take care of my own affairs, being an old man and alone, that your fortune may ever be with the best.") Later Roman examples such as P.Sakaon 41 (14 July 322)(=P.Ryl IV 659) show how old age was one of a larger cluster of frailties. Arion son of Dioscorus wants relief from the local tax collectors who hold his moderate life, old age and childlessness in contempt:⁶⁷

1) ἐπεὶ τοίνυν
οἱ πρακτῆρες ἐπὶ τόπων, καταφρονούντες τῆς μετριότητός μου καὶ
ἀπραγμόσυνης ὁμοῦ τε καὶ του γήρους καὶ ἀτεκνείας μου, ἐπέρ-
χονταί μοι βιάσασθαι με βουλόμενοι τῆς γῆς τοῦ πενθεροῦ μου ἕνεκεν,
τοῦ μηδεμίαν μετουσίαν ἔχοντός μου πρὸς αὐτόν, διὰ τοῦτο δέομαι καὶ
παρακαλῶ τῆς ἀρετῆς ὅπως οἰκτείρης μου τὸ γῆρας καὶ τὴν κατα-
λαβοῦσάν με συμφορᾶν τῶν ἀπογενομένων μου τέκνων καὶ κελεύσης..

66 P.Oxy VI 889 (IV AD) mentions a decree of Diocletian to this effect. It should also be noted that in the same text the petitioner refers also to his bodily weakness (probably): l. 18). P.Flor 57 is a petition which mentions a rescript of Severus and Caracalla guaranteeing release from liturgy to persons over 70 years of age.

67 Cf BGU II 648 (164-196 AD). That childlessness could be a source of contempt appears also in literary sources such as Plutarch: *Theseus*, 3.7.8; *Galba*, 19.1.5. Cf Heliod, *Aethiopica*, 2.33.

"...since then the local tax collectors, in contempt of my humble station and unobtrusive way of life, as well as of my old age and lack of children, are presenting claims against me wishing to do me violence because of the land belonging to my father-in-law, although I am in no partnership with him whatsoever, I beg therefore and beseech your virtue to take pity on my old age and the disaster of my children's death which has befallen me and command.."

It can be seen that the language connected with women, old men and orphans betrays them as social categories and neatly complemented the symbolic language surrounding the officials to whom petitions were addressed. The language of weakness was institutionalised in the sense that it was a form of consistently recurring behaviour attached to the role of petitioner, and thereby provided the means of participation in the symbolic universe of Greco-Roman Egypt.

Financial or Physical Diminishment

It is noteworthy that in the case of women and the elderly the condition of weakness experienced by these social categories was dictated largely by gender or physical considerations. This then leads us into wider dimensions of weakness. Other language of weakness and vulnerability was resorted to generally by petitioners and the theme of weakness through physical disability or sickness is strong, but it also comes to embrace financial incapacity. As we saw above in connection with widows, one word often used to express this is ἀσθένεια. Ἀσθένεια means feebleness in the sense of "sick" or physically diminished. P.Cair.Zen. II 59254 (13/7/252 BC) seems to refer to ἀσθένια in the sense of sickness. It is a petition to Zenon from Philadelphia. The writer of this letter, Phantias, is often mentioned in the papyri of this period.⁶⁸ He was the grammateus of the cavalry and writes τῶι γὰρ σωματίῳ ἐτύγχανον ἀσθενῶς διακείμενος when referring to his condition of sickness.⁶⁹ In P.Ent.25 (220 BC) above, that the nature of the weakness is physical, in the eyes, and is connected with old age. About 450 years later we find a remarkable echo of this plea. P.Mich VI 422 (197 AD) is a petition from Karanis to the prefect concerning

68 P.Cair.Zen. II, 105.

69 See also BGU VIII 1773 (59/8 BC) is a petition to the strategos from Heracleopolis concerning a dispute about debt.

hybris. In this petition Gemellus known as Horion complains that two brothers Julius and Sotas sons of Eudas, have prevented him from enjoying the fruits of property which he and his sister had lawfully inherited. Gemellus describes the brothers as arrogant and accuses them of using their local influence. Gemellus is handicapped in his sight, and as in P.Ent. 25 he accuses the wrongdoers of holding him contempt by reason of his poor sight (I. 9: καταφρονούντων τῆ(ν) περὶ τὴν ὄψιν μου ἀσθένειαν).

But Ἀσθένεια can also mean "weak" either generally or in the sense of "lack of means", that is, lacking material resources, and thus provides a good example of the semantic linkage between physical and material vulnerability.⁷⁰ In the archive of documents published in BGU VIII from official records of the Heracleopolite nome we see frequent reference to weakness. BGU VIII 1815 (61/60 BC) is a petition to the strategos from Heracleopolis concerning a problem with tax collection. In this petition farmers of Machor, who are βασιλικοὶ γεωργοὶ complain about their taxes saying that they are in a weakened condition, οἱ ἀσθενῶς διακειμένοι γεωργοί. The nature of the weakened condition is not exactly clear but is likely to refer to a problem with salination of some of their land, and the failure of some other cultivators of salted land to bear their burden of the requisite taxes. In a similar vein is BGU VIII 1835 (51/50 BC) in which the priests of the temple of Semarchokratos in Hieras Nesos complain to the strategos Soteles that they are alone in preserving the temple and consequently a theft of some kind took place (I. 17). The problem is weakness or illness which is specifically associated with lack of manpower (I. 10: Νυνεὶ δὲ δι' ἀσθενείαν καὶ ὀλιανδρίαν συνέβηπάντας τοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς κώμης σὺν πανοικίᾳ ἀνακεχωρηκότητας ἐτέρους τόπους ἔτι ἀπὸ Μεσορῆ τοῦ βL)

The problem of diminishment and weakness through lack of resources is often specifically linked to its impact upon the revenues of the government. BGU VIII

70 It is used this way by Thucydides, eg., *Historiae*, Book 8, chapter 8, section 4, line 2 καὶ γὰρ τὸν πλοῦν ταύτη ἐκ τοῦ προφανοῦς ἐποιούντο, καταφρονήσαντες τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἀδυνασίαν, ὅτι ναυτικὸν οὐδὲν αὐτῶν πολὺ πω ἐφαίνετο.

1843 (50/49 BC) is a petition to the strategos Soteles from royal cultivators and "the others" of the village of Tinteris. It seems there was drought or failure of the Nile inundation which caused all the strangers in the village to return home and so the farmers who are left make their request of the strategos as the "weaker" party-

7.8 Ἀξιούμεν, σεμνότατε στρατηγέ, ἀσθενέστεροι ὑπάρχοντες καὶ ἄλιους παντελῶς κατηνητότας καὶ ταῦτα ἀπὸ πανῶλων τὰ βασιλικά το ἰθ[...]	We ask, most august strategos, being weaker and having reached an entirely small number and the royal revenues from total destruction
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We can see in this example how the solemn vocative address to the strategos is juxtaposed with the description of the farmers as ἀσθενέστεροι.⁷¹ It is worth pointing out here that much later in the Roman period a similar situation can produce similar language as in P.Sakaon 42 (c. 323)(=P.Thead 20). There a crisis of lack of water has produced an inability to pay taxes, the petitioners quote a law saying poorer villages (τὰς ἀσθενεστέρας κώμα[ς]) can be attached to richer ones.

Indeed the same language of weakness goes right through into the Roman period. The text of BGU XI 2065 (I AD) associates ἀσθενεία with the need for the provision of a pension (σίτησις). In an edict of the prefect Sempronius Liberalis (29 August 154 to December or January 158-9 AD) ἀσθενεία is specifically linked to the lack of resources producing flight from the burden of liturgies.⁷² A passage in the *Acts of the Pagan Martyrs*, namely PSI 1160 shows that ἀσθενεία could be the word used to express the consequence of the burden of taxation. The provenance of this document is unknown. There are various theories about its date and context, but on balance the better view does seem to favour a date in I AD.⁷³ Although Musurillo

71 Other examples in which the theme of weakness appears are: BGU VIII 1863 I BC is a petition of unknown context. Compare also P.Tebt. III:1 803 (II BC) in which the crown cultivators of Oxyrhyncha complain that their number has been reduced from 140 to 40 by unspecified acts of injustice.

72 BGU I 372 (29 Aug 159 AD).

73 The first possibility is a date in I BC. According to this view the text is part of an account of an audience given by Octavian (as he then was) shortly after the fall of Alexandria in 30 BC, to prominent Egyptians somewhere in Egypt. This depends upon the historical view that Alexandria had a senate (βουλή) at the time of its capture by Augustus, which he subsequently abolished (according to the editors this follows an interpretation of Cassius Dio li 17). The second is a date in I AD. Some scholars have suggested that the Alexandrians lost their senate much earlier under Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (145 - 116 BC), so that the text

concludes that the document is probably semi-literary, there is no good reason to think that the language cannot be used to construe usages in the non-literary papyri.⁷⁴

The context is a speech being made to an emperor:-

τίς καταβαρβαροῖτο παρὰ λόγον πραττόμενος ἢ ὑπὸ Ἰδίου Λόγου ἤτινος πράκτορος ἀνθρώπου ἄσ' διασειόντος, συνερχομένη ἡ βουλή πρὸς τὸν σὸν ἐπίτροπον συνεπισχύη τοῖς ἀσθενούσι, καὶ μὴ (9) δι' ἔρημίαν βοηθείας τὰ σοὶ τηρεῖσθαι δυνάμενα ὑπὸ τῶν τυχόντων ἀνθρώπων διαφορηθῆ.

"And if anyone be unreasonably burdened by taxes exacted by the Idiologos or by any other tax agent who may be oppressing the people, the Senate, in assembly before your prefect, might lend support to the weak and prevent the income that could be preserved for you from being plundered by anyone at all, simply through lack of a remedy."⁷⁵

The use of the verb *συνεπισχύω*, which Musurillo rendered "might lend support", and usually has the sense "join in helping" suggests a positive attitude to providing assistance to the object of the government action.⁷⁶ The verb appears in the period I BC to I AD as a technical term or bureaucratic term of art in the papyri by government officials to describe their own actions in intervening on behalf of individuals.⁷⁷

The objects of the official assistance are "the weak", οἱ ἀσθενούντες, defined by the context. The speaker is talking about those who are suffering capricious taxation at the hands of the government or oppression at the hands of the government's tax agents. The verb used to designate the actions of the tax agents or πράκτορες is *διασειώ* which is well attested in the meaning "intimidate" or "oppress".⁷⁸ So οἱ ἀσθενόντες seem to be free citizens who are powerless or in a

here is a record of envoys pleading for the reorganisation of a non-existent βουλή before an unidentified Roman emperor. Schubart, Bell and Oliver basically had this view, with Schubart believing that the emperor could even have been Claudius, which would link PSI 1160 to Claudius' *Letter to the Alexandrians*. This puts the text in the category of the semi-literary. See H.A. Musurillo, *Acts of the Pagan Martyrs: Acta Alexandrinum* (Oxford, 1954), 84 ff.

74 Of the fact that it may be semi-literary he says "This need not, of course, cast any doubt on the historicity of the event;..."⁷⁷.

75 Musurillo, *Acts*, 2

76 *LSJ* cite the following additional occurrences: Xen. Mem. 2.4.6.; LXX 2 Ch.32.2; Pib.6.6.10, 6.8.1., 28.5.5; BGU 1189.14 (I BC/I AD); SIG 799.19 (I AD); IG (2).1013.6.

77 BGU VIII 1823, at l 29: ἐπισχύω, BGU VIII 1827, l 4 ὅπως συνεπισχύης μοι and l 24. See also BGU. VIII 1827 (52/1 BC) BGU. VIII 1795 (48/7 BC); BGU. VIII 1761 (51/50 BC).

78 Pib.10.26.4.; OGI 519.14 ; P.Taur. I(verso) iii.13 (IIBC); and in the meaning "extort money by intimidation from a person": PPar.15.37(II BC) Ev.Luk.3.14; PTeb.41.10.(II BC); P.Oxy. 284.5 (I AD). διασεισμός was a crime. See Uxkull-Gyllenband, *Der Gnomon des Idios Logos*, ii (Berlin, 1934), 50, n. 3, 71 ff.;

weaker position because of their economic, social and/or political circumstances, not because of some physical weakness or disability.⁷⁹ This sense for ἀσθενέω is also clear from a petition to the emperors Severus and Caracalla, P.Oxy IV 705 (200-2 AD). The petitioner, Aurelius Horion is proposing a scheme to help the materially exhausted villages of the Oxyrhynchite nome. He describes them as (Col. iii, ll. 69-73) κῶμαί τινες τοῦ Ὀξυρυγχείτου νομοῦ....σφ[ό]δρα ἐξησθένησαν ἐνοχλούμεναι ὑπὸ τῶν κατ' ἔτος λειτουργιῶν τοῦ τε ταμείου καὶ τῆς παρα[φ]υ[λ]ακῆς τῶν τόπων ("Certain villages of the Oxyrhynchite nome...are utterly exhausted by the burdensome demands of the annual liturgies required for both the treasury and the protection of the districts")

The general concept of weakness in both a physical or material sense also appears consistently in petitions expressed in other ways which directly reflect the palpable reality of a petitioner's circumstances. In the Ptolemaic period, in petitions to both the king and lower officials of III BC, it is often expressed in the language of conditions such as hunger (λιμός), as in PSI IV 399 (Mid III BC): ἵνα μὴ τῶι ῥίγει καὶ τῆι λιμῶι ἀπόλωμαι, or ruin through the verb καταφθείρω, as in P.Cair Zen IV 59623: μὴ συμβ[ή]μι...καταφθαρήναι or P.Petrie II 12, 2; 3 (III BC): μὴ καταφθείρωμαι.⁸⁰ An associated concept is found in the language of lack of necessities as in P.Tebt. I 52 (114 BC): ἐνδεής οὖσα τῶν ἀναγκαιῶν]. In the III to IV AD the same idea can still be found, though expressed in different language. P.Cair.Isidor. 68 (309/10 AD) has ruin from a conspiracy by the local scribe to put Aurelius Isidorus into a liturgy he cannot afford. This he says to designed to cause him destitution : ἀνατροπή.

Taubenschlag, *The Law of Greco-Roman Egypt in the Light of the Papyri*, 342 f.; P.Oxy.1252.33 (IIIAD). See also Bell, 'The Economic Crisis in Egypt under Nero', *JRS* 28 (1938), 1-8; and S. Riccobono, *Fontes iuris romani anteiustiniani*, i (Florence, 1941), 318.

79 This view is reinforced by the fact that the copyist first wrote μήτε ἀσθενής τις in l 13, which was then changed to εὐθετός. Musurillo comments "It is just possible that the scribe was freely adapting a document which contained the word ἀσθενής; I think it more likely, however, that he was led into error by the previous ἀσθενοῦσι", *Acts of the Pagan Martyrs*, 91.

80 See Di Bitonto (1967), 49ff; (1968), 99ff. Eg P.Ent. 27 (221 BC); P.Heid. VI 376 (2 Mar 220 BC); P.Cair.Zen. III 59520 (III BC).

The disparities of power involved in taking advantage of the weakness of another is articulated in various other ways as well in the Roman period. Several examples will illustrate the point. In P.Oxy III 487 (156 AD) the petitioner Nicias is burdened with debts from some unspecified official duties. But the scribe of Oxyrhynchus, Serenus, has saddled him with a guardianship of two boys. He petitioned the epistrategos Statilius Maximus for release from the guardianship, so that "you would not make me an outcast from my property and home" (l. 19: καὶ μὴ μεταναστήσ(ης) με τῶν ἰδίων τῆς ἕδρας). This is one small attempt to prey upon the compassion of the epistrategos, but tied to the reality that release will provide a way for Nicias to pay his debts. In P.Amh. II 78 (184 AD) Stotoëtis complains about the violence of a relative by marriage, Hekusis (10) πρὸς γάμον συνελθῶν ἐν τοῖς κοινοῖς ἡμῶν ὑπάρχουσι παντοδαπῶς μου πλεονεκτῶν ἄνθρωπος ἀσθενής. ("being married to a kinswoman...takes all sorts of advantages over me, who have no power to resist, in regard to our common property") In P.Oxy I 71.1 (303 AD) the male petitioner, refers to his illiteracy as a source of weakness because it exposed him to a fraud committed by a certain Aurelius Sotas.⁸¹

Quiet, Moderate, and Humble

Disparities of power in local village relationships were not only articulated in terms of physical or material incapacity. They were also reflected in the language of trouble, vexation, coercion and pressure. Petitions and court room speeches consistently refer to the trouble, vexation or pressure which plaintiffs had been caused by the actions of wrongdoers. The verb θλίβω in passive forms or the substantive θλίψις were often used to express this idea as in UPZ I 45 (162-1 BC): μὴ ὑπεριδεῖν ἡμᾶς θλιβομένης, when speaking of the role of the hypodioiketes Sarapion. So are the verbs ἐνοχλέω or παρενοχλέω, used either in an active sense to describe the behaviour of wrongdoers or passively to describe the condition of the petitioner as

81 (II 10-11) ἐπιράθη μὲν τινα κακουργίαν ἐπὶ ἀποστερέσει τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ ποιήσασθαι διὰ τὸ ἀγράμματόν με εἶναι.

"troubled or vexed". This motif is present in the Ptolemaic period and examples are many, but mainly in language directed to officials rather than to the monarch.⁸² Its continuation in the Roman period therefore seems to be an example of a motif from the lower level of officials which had life beyond the last Ptolemy, Cleopatra. The standard format was for the petitioner to refer to his or her situation and say that action by the official will stop him or her being vexed. Consequently, it often appears in the request section in a final clause such as, ὅπως ἀπαρε[νοχλή]τως παραδῶι εἰς τ[ὸ] βασιλικὸν τά τε σπέρματα καὶ ἐκφόρ]ια (BGU VIII 1836 (51/50 BC)) or ἵνα μὴ παρενοχλώμεν (UPZ I 40 (161 BC))⁸³ We find it used of a regulation governing the relations among picklers in the transcript of court proceedings in UPZ II 161 (119 BC) and UPZ II 112 (117 BC)(= *Mitt Chr* 3, VIII, 24), the well known case of Hermias. It remained a standard way of articulating the oppressed condition of petitioners in the Roman period.⁸⁴ P.Yale 351 (26 Sept 171 AD), contains a report of proceedings before Ulpus Serenianus, the archiereus, about oppression by some unnamed officials: (3) Ἀπολλόφιλος ῥήτωρ παρεστῶς αὐτοῖς εἶπεν· οἱ πραγματικοὶ βιά[σ]-ζονται τοὺς συνηγορομέ-νους σωματικῶς ἀπεργάζεσ[τ]-θαι τὰς ἐργασίας παρὰ τὰ ὑπὸ σοῦ [καὶ]-[κ]ελευσθέντα. ἀξιούσιν οὖν κ[αὶ]-[ε]λεῦσαι σὲ ὥσπερ καὶ ἄλλους εὐερ[καὶ](γέ)τησας ἀπερενοχλήτους αὐτοὺς εἶναι. ("Apollophilos, the advocate who represented them, said: "The officials are forcing the plaintiffs to labour in person contrary to your orders. They ask therefore, just as you have benefited others, to order that they be untroubled").⁸⁵ This passage also includes the language of benefaction, showing how it could apply to minor officials in the discharge of their duties. P.Oxy XXXVIII 2849 Recto (21/5/296) is a petition in which Aurelia Apollonia asks for a report on her ox, so that she might be enabled to have peace and quiet (πρὸς τὸ δύνασθαί με

82 In P.Tebt. I 34 (100 BC) it is used to describe the effects of the grant of an official as σκέπη. Examples can be found in petitions to the monarch as in P.Tebt. III:1 770 (210 (?) BC) where Asclepiades the petitioner says he is unable to sail to be present at a lawsuit διὰ τὸ ἐνοχλεῖσθαι.

83 See also BGU VIII 1822 (I BC); BGU VIII 1828 (52-1 BC); BGU VIII 1829 (52/1 BC); BGU IV 1140 (c 5 BC).

84 SB XVI 12713 (19 Feb 10/11 AD); P.Oxy VI 899 (200 AD); P.Sakaon 37 (Jan/Feb 284)(=P.Thead 18).

85 Cf P.Ryl. II 118 (16-15 AD); P.Ross.Georg V 21 (III AD).

τὸ ἀπαρενόχλητον). The same idea can be expressed by the language of quietness as in P.Cair.Isidor. 73 (314 AD), in which the corrupt praepositus and komarchs allow the petitioners "no peace" (καὶ τὰς ἡσυχείας οὐκ ἤμ[ε]ιν ἐῶν)⁸⁶ In P.Oxy VII 1033 (392 AD), at the very end of our period, two "night-strategoi" of Oxyrhynchus ask either for assistance in their guard duty or to be untroubled (τὸ ἀνενόχλητον ἡμᾶς ἔχειν) about guarding the city.⁸⁷ It is probably right to see this theme as part of an underlying thread of disruption and anomie which appears in other language of the documents. The notion of wrongdoers causing trouble and vexation went hand in hand with the idea that they were undermining good order, εὐνομία or εὐσταθία, produced by the presence and actions of legitimate rulers. As we will see some later Roman petitions expressly make this connection between social disruption and threats to εὐνομία and this shows the point of connection with the disruptive effects of dishonouring behaviour.⁸⁸

Allied to the notion of vexation was the theme of compulsion imposed upon the petitioner. The extremity of the behaviour of wrongdoers, as well as the august nature of the official, were emphasised by the idea that the petitioner says he or she is compelled to approach the government, in the sense that it is something like an act of last resort. This is usually associated with the request section and articulated in various ways including a single adverb like ἀναγκαίως⁸⁹ or a phrase such as κατὰ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον,⁹⁰ or a verbal form such as ἀναγκασθεῖς.⁹¹ Although this is a device used by classical authors it clearly has a new role to play in the forensic context of Greco-Roman Egypt.⁹² Sometimes this notion is strengthened by the petitioner

86 Cf P.Sakaon 34 (12 Dec 321)(=P.Thead 13).

87 See P.Herm.Rees 19 (392 AD) from the same period.

88 P.Ant. I 36 (326 AD?).

89 P.Oxy IX 1203 (Late I AD); P.Oxy L 3555 (I -II AD); BGU I 340 (148-9 AD Faijûm); P.Meyer 8 (16 Aug 151 AD); P.Oxy VII 1032 (162 AD); BGU I 321 (7 April 216 AD); PSI XIII 1337 (III AD); P.Oxy XVII 2133 (Late III AD); P.Oxy VIII 1121 (295 AD); P.Oxy XVIII 2187 (304 AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 69 (310 AD); P.Sakaon 39 (7 Sept 318)(=P.Thead 21); P.Cair.Isidor. 77 (320 AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 79 (Early IV AD); P.Oxy XLVIII 3394 (364-6 AD).

90 P.Amh. II 77 (139 AD); P.Oxy L 3561 (Jan-Feb 165 AD); P.Oxy. I 69.10-11 (190 AD); III 488 (II -III AD); P.Oxy IX 1202 (217 AD).

91 P.Oxy 2131 (207 AD).

92 See ch 6 above, 262ff.

saying he or she is unable to remain calm about the behaviour of the evildoer, for example, CPR XI 7 (c 26 May 14 AD): οὐ δυνάμεν[ο]ς καθησυχάσαι ἀναγκα[ί]ω[ς] προσέ[ρ]χομαι διὰ τοῦδε τοῦ ἀναφορίου] ("..not being able to stay quiet I approach you through this petition...")⁹³ or is pushed beyond endurance: τοιαύτης ο[ὐ]ν ἀυθαδίας ἐν αὐτῷ οὔσης οὐ δυνάμενος [ἐν]καρτερεῖν ἐπιδίδωμι καὶ [ἀ]ξίῳ ἀχθῆναι αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ διακουσθῆναι ("His audacity having reached this pitch I can endure no longer, and present this petition requesting that he should be brought before you to be heard"), where the petitioner is saying that the audacity of the wrongdoer is so extreme that he is compelled to involve the government.⁹⁴ BGU III 983 (138-161 AD) has a particularly lively variant of this notion in an introductory sentence which says: (3) Ο[ὐ]κ ἄ[ν] τις [ἐ]πι τὸ | [β]ῆμά σου καταφύγοι, εἰ μὴ σφόδρα ἀ[δ]ικηθεῖη τι ("No one would take refuge at your court, unless he had especially suffered some wrong") Otherwise the writer can use a variant of less force such as, οὐ χάριν.⁹⁵ The negative combination οὐ δυνάμενος stands as a close mirror to the empowering capabilities of officials which we remarked upon in the last chapter. The idea that petitioners have been forced into extreme action by evildoers is also expressed in the language of petitions through descriptions of the great trouble which a petitioner has been forced to go to discover the perpetrators of wrongdoing. A frequent verb is πολυπραγμονέω.⁹⁶ The idea can also be found in reports of proceedings as in UPZ II 161 (119 BC), VIII, 31: πολυπραγμόνως. It can be seen then that the whole idea of petitioners being compelled to petition and to undertake great effort underscores the connection between the severity of the evildoer's behaviour and relatively stable, quiet and uncontroversial life style of the petitioner. The unobtrusive person is worthy of the assistance of the powerful figure, while the evildoer's actions imply disruption and

93 In early IV AD we see the echo of the notion of quietude expressed in the response of Aurelius Isidorus to extortion. He petitioned the office of the strategos, an act which he says amounts to "not taking quietly" the extortion (οὐκ ἀπεισύχασα) in P.Cair.Isidor. 70 (310 AD).

94 P.Amh. II 78 (184 AD), 20. Cf P.Tebt II 330 (II AD).

95 P.Gen I 4.

96 P.Sakaon 39 (7 Sept 318)(=P.Thead 21).

anomie and invite extreme censure, by reason of their challenge to the authority of the government.

Unobtrusive life style was consonant with good order, just as attacks upon such a life style were inimical to it. In a close correspondence to the vocabulary of action and effort expressed by πολυπραγμονέω, the concept of the unobtrusive was expressed by the substantive ἀπραγμοσύνη and the adjective ἀπράγμων used in relation to the petitioner or his life. J.C. Carter in his very interesting study of the notion of ἀπραγμοσύνη in classical Athens shows that to be ἀπράγμων was unusual in the context of political life because it meant eschewing honour (timē). Further there was a category of peasant farmer who made a virtue of their ἀπραγμοσύνη, their poverty kept them honest. To be moderate and modest was laudable and produced little interest in politics and thus in social disturbance.⁹⁷ This theme from the classical period finds echoes in petitions from the earliest times. P.Ent. 62 (221 BC) concerns difficulties paying rent, the exact details of which are not clear, but in the conclusion the petitioner Philitos, scribe τῶν μισθοφόρων ἵππέων, says: (6) [μὴ συκοφαντηθῶ ἀπραγμον.....ων, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ σὲ καταφυγῶν] [φι]λανθρωπίας ὧ τετευχώς ("....that I may not be falsely accused, an inexperienced man..., but taking refuge with you...I may meet with kindness.").⁹⁸ The notion seems to have gained special currency in the Roman period, when the accusation of holding the ἀπραγμοσύνη of the petitioner in contempt becomes common to express the idea that a position of weakness in the form of inexperience is being exploited. One of the earliest examples is P.Oxy XXIV 2410 (120 AD), which contains a complaint about local oppression by an unnamed person, who is accused (ll. 3-4) καταφρονῶν [ήμων τῆς ἀπραγμοσύνης. Compare BGU I 340 (c. 148-9 AD): Ἐπὶ οὖν οὗτοι οὐκ

97 J.C. Carter, *The Quiet Athenian* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1986), esp. 76ff, 84. Carter refers to Aristotle *Pol* 1292b25, 1318b10, where the philosopher indicates that the distinction between ἀπραγμοσύνη and πολυπραγμοσύνη reflected the differences between town and country.

98 The word ἀπραγμοτευτος in the following passage from UPZ I 39 (c. 161 BC) and 40 does not mean "inexperienced" according to Wilcken: τοῦ παρ' ἡμῶν διαποστελλομένου παιδαρίου Ἀπολλωνίου τοῦ συνεσταμένου σοι ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ὄντος ἀπραγματεύτου. He makes the point that the context requires the meaning "not engaged or employed"

ἀφ[ίστα]ν | τε τῆς κατ' ἐμοῦ ἐπηρίαν, κατα- | φρονοῦν[τ]ες τῆς [περὶ ἐμὲ
ἀπρα- | γμοσύνη[ς] καὶ τῶν περὶ τῶν τοι- | οῦτων ὑπὸ πάντων ἡγεμόνων |
προσεταιγμένων ("Since therefore these fellows do not leave off the insult against
me, holding in contempt my inexperience and the edicts of all the prefects on such
matters")⁹⁹ By III AD the motif is often clearly linked to the way of life of the
petitioner. In P.Oxy XVII 2131 (207 AD), Totoës after carrying out his duty as guard
says: (l. 10)...οὐ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ κατ' ἔτος ὀφειλόμενα ἐπικεφάλια τελεῶ
γεωργικὸν [καὶ] ἀπράγμονα βίον ζῶν ("and I have besides paid my annual
personal dues, living a quiet cultivator's life").¹⁰⁰ In this later period the symbolic
construction can be found as part of the repertoire of court advocates as in P.Ryl IV
654 (IV AD), where the advocate Apollinarius speaks on behalf of his client, an
apprentice linen weaver who has been torn away from his craft by builders "who are
bent upon doing a great wrong to a man who is a peaceful linen weaver" ((10)
σπουδάσζουσειν λινοῦφον τυγχάνοντ' ἀπράγμονα τολμοῦστές
παρα[ν]ομότατον)

In the second petition of P.Oxy I 71.1 Recto (303 AD) we see an interesting
instance of ἀπραγμοσύνη being juxtaposed with an inversion of the saviour/helper
theme which was so prevalent to articulate the relationship between the petitioner and
the official, that is, legitimate power. In this petition to the prefect Clodius Culcianus,
Aurelia, a widow, tells how she engaged two men to help her because her children
were away in the army. These men robbed her. After stressing her womanly
weakness she describes her employees as follows: προσελαβόμεν ἑμαυτῇ εἰς
βοήθειαν καὶ διοίκησιν τῶν πραγμάτων τὸ πρὶν μὲν Σεκοῦνδὸν τίνα ἔπιτα
δὲ καὶ Τύραννον, νομίζουσα τούτους τὴν καλήν μοι πίστειν ἀποσώζειν. ("I
engaged as my assistant and business manager first one Secundus and later Tyrannus
besides thinking they would preserve my good name") The point of this observation

99 Cf P.Oxy XXIV 2410 (120 AD): (3) καταφρονῶν [ἡμῶν τῆς ἀπραγμοσύνης. See also P.Ant. I 36 (326 AD?).

100 See also P.Oxy XLVII 3364 (209 AD); P.Oxy I 71.2 Recto (303 AD); P.Sakaon 41 (14 July 322 AD)=(P.Ryl IV 659).

is to show how the wrongdoers have violated the ethical standards of trust, assistance and preservation which they should have upheld. This stands in contrast to the putative position of the prefect who assists and preserves as part of his actual and symbolic role. Shortly thereafter she says they have robbed her: (l 16) τῶν αὐτῶν μοι χωρίων περι[φ]ρονοῦντές μου τῆς ἀπραγμοσύνης.¹⁰¹

Towards the end of our period we find P.Sakaon 48 (6 April 343 AD)(=SB VI 9622) in which a church deacon, Aurelius Zoilus son of Melas, complains about the audacity of Aurelius Sakaon in taking away his dead son's wife. He says that he intended to make a complaint at the time but "I yielded and continued practising my unobtrusive way of life" ((13) καὶ δὴ εἶξα τὸν [ἀπ]ράγμον[α βίον] ἀσκῶν) Later in the same text he refers to a subsequent incident in which the same people attacked his other son "in utter contempt of the good order prevailing in these our times and our unobtrusive way of life" ((18) καταφρονήσαντες τῆ[ς] τῶν καιρῶν εὐνομίας καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀπραγμοσύνης) This linking of the quiet life and good order implicitly suggests that contempt of the one posed a threat to the other.

This aspect also appears in some petitions when complainants comment on the motivations of their opposition. The suggestion that legal procedure or allegations of wrongdoing were made to affront the honour of the recipient has a long history. P.Tebt. III:1 785 (c 138 BC) shows us a situation in which Onnophris complains that the ex-wife of his dead brother Mestasutmis, Aunuchis, has mischievously submitted memoranda against him, wishing to extort some of his brother's property from him ((14) ἡ τοῦ Μεστασούτμιος γενομένη γυνὴ Αὐγχις, κακοσχολοῦσα καὶ διασεῖσαί με βουλομένη παρὰ τὴν σὴν προ[α]ίρεσιν καὶ τὸ καλῶς ἔχον, ἐπιδέδωκεν κατ' ἐμοῦ ὑπομνήματα...καὶ δι' ὄν πεπόηται παραλογισμὸν συμβέβηκεν περισπᾶσθαί με ἀλόγως ἀπὸ τῆς βασιλικῆς γῆς).¹⁰² The Roman period provides evidence that legal processes were utilised by people for collateral

101 Cf P.Sakaon 41 (14 July 322)(=P.Ryl IV 659).

102 Cf In P.Tebt. III:1 771 (II BC) Petesouchos complains about a woman called Stratonice who is trying to take his house from him using very similar language. (l. 14); P.Tebt. III:1 782 (153 BC).

advantages, such as P.Mich IX 522 (142-3 AD), in which the prefect Valerius Eudaemon deals with slanderous charges made anonymously without supporting proofs. In P.Oxy II 237 (186 AD), to which we have referred several times already, we are presented with a bitter dispute between Dionysia and her father Chaeremon. As part of the dispute Chaeremon wrote a letter to the prefect Pomponius Faustus, in the 26th year of Commodus, in the month Pachon.¹⁰³ The reason for the letter is to apply to take Dionysia from her husband, against her will. In the letter Chaeremon refers to an earlier application to the prefect Longaeus Rufus.¹⁰⁴ The remarkable thing about both applications is that Chaeremon states explicitly that his motivation for making them was alleged insults and outrageous behaviour by Dionysia and her husband against him. The application to Longaeus sought the repayment of debt, but Chaeremon's objective was to stop insults: (Col. VI, ll. 12-19:

τῆς θυγατρὸς μου Διονυσίας, ἡγεμῶν κύριε, [i.e. Pomponius] πολλὰ εἰς ἐμὲ ἀσεβῶς καὶ παρανόμως πραξάσης κατὰ γνώμην Ὀρίωνος Ἀπίωνος ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς, ἀνέδωκα ἐπιστολὴν Λογγαίῳ Ρούφῳ τῷ λαμπροτάτῳ, ἀξιῶν τότε ἂ προσήνεγκα αὐτῇ ἀνακομίσασθαι κατὰ τοὺς νόμους, οἰόμενος ἐκ τοῦ(του) παύσασθαι αὐτὴν τῶν ἐμὲ ὕβρεων...ἐπεὶ οὖν, κύριε, ἐπιμένει τῇ αὐτῇ ἀπονοία ἐνυβρίζων μοι, ἀξιῶ τοῦ νόμου διδόντος μοι ἐξουσίαν οὗ τὸ μέρος ὑπέταξα ἵν' εἶδης ἀπάγοντι αὐτὴν ἄκουσαν ἐκ τῆς τοῦ ἀνδρὸς οἰκίας μηδεμίαν μοι βίαν γείνεσθαι ὑφ' οὐτινος τῶν τοῦ Ὀρίωνος ἢ αὐτοῦ τοῦ Ὀρίωνος συνεχῶς ἐπαγγελλομένου.

"My daughter Dionysia, my lord prefect, having committed many impious and illegal acts against me at the instigation of her husband Horion, son of Apion, I sent to his excellency Longaeus Rufus a letter in which I claimed to recover in accordance with the laws the sums which I had made over to her, expecting that this would induce her to stop her insults...Since therefore, my lord, she continues her outrageous behaviour and insulting conduct towards me, I claim to exercise the right given me by the law, part of which I quote below for your information, of taking her away against her will from her husband's house without exposing myself to violence either on the part of any agent of Horion or of Horion himself, who is continually threatening to use it."

It is not unusual among litigants of any age to be motivated to make claims and take proceedings through a sense of outrage. But what is of most interest to any exponent of modern legal reasoning is that Chaeremon should inform a judicial or

103 Pomponius Faustus was prefect of Egypt from between Sept 185 and Jan 186 AD until c 190 AD.

104 Longaeus Rufus was prefect from sometime in early 185 AD until somewhere between Sept 185 and Jan 186 AD.

administrative officer with such candour that his twin claims both for money and to take Dionysia away from her husband are made to resist conduct which outrages his honour. It seems that Chaeremon, who was an ex-gymnasiarch of Oxyrhynchus (l. 12), believed that threat of enforcement of legal rights was a legitimate way deal with insulting behaviour committed against him and also that he believed it was appropriate to mention this to the prefect, in the expectation no doubt that it would affect the decision-making process of the prefect. This is particularly good support for the contention that in the mentality of petitions a structural shift in the honour and shame dynamic has occurred, whereby the vindication of honour has moved from the dishonoured individual to the legal system and the formal power of institutional roles. Dionysia for her part alleges that the claims of Chaeremon are motivated by malice (Col. VI, l. 21: ἐπὶ φθόνῳ δὲ μόνον [λοιδορούμενος καὶ δεινὰ πάσχων ἀπ' ἐμοῦ] and contrary to an earlier proclamation that applications concerning private suits were not to be sent to the prefect (l. 6 and 35).¹⁰⁵

In the Roman period the general idea of the quiet humble person was further expressed, with emphasis upon the lack of means of the petitioner, through the adjective μέτριος, meaning "humble" or "moderate", and indicates both an economic state as well as a type of attitude.¹⁰⁶ The substantival form is μετριοτής and especially in the III and IV AD the motif of contempt is common in such phrases as ἐπεὶ οὖν μέχρῃ νῦν διακρούεται τὰ χρήματα ἐκτίσαι καταφρονῶν μου τῆς μετριότητος, ἀξιῶ καὶ δέομαι...which could also be a source of contempt as we see in P.Oxy I 71.1 καταφρονῶν μου τῆς μετριότητος.¹⁰⁷ In P.Oxy XVII 2131 (207 AD) Totoës has been wrongly appointed to the post of public donkey driver, by

105 With this we can compare P.Oxy 2267 (360 AD), in which the motives of the catholicus Diodotus in some declaration against Flavius Herac(?) are called ἡ Διοδότου...σκευωρῖα φιλοπραγματίας ἔνεκα ἰδίας ἐαυτοῦ καὶ ἐσχροκερδίας ("the intrigues of Diodotus...who with the meddlesomeness and sordid avarice peculiar to himself...") and the situation in BGU I 168 (II-III AD).

106 See O. Guéraud and Youtie, *Chr d'Ég*, 55 (1953) 150 for a discussion of the possible interpretations of this word and associated concepts. Note the similar idea in P.Cair.Zen. V 59852 (III BC) in which a certain Theon asks Xenon for work saying: (3-4) ἀξιῶ δέ σε, εἰ καὶ σοι φαίνομαι μέτρια λέγειν, τάξει με ἐπί τινος ("I ask you, if I seem to you to speak reasonably, to appoint me to something").

107 μετριοτής was the equivalent to Latin *modicitas*, *mediocritas*: H. Zilliagus, *Unters. zu den abstrakten Anredeformen* 79, 95, 108; *ZPE* 10 (1973) 137. It is also used by officials in describing themselves, including their position in relation to higher officials.

the amphodogrammatus and draws a connection between the theme of compulsion, mentioned above, coercion and his lack of means (l. 13): ὄθεν, κυρίε, βία ἀναγκασθεὶς ταύτης τῆς ὀνηλασίας ἀντιλαβέσθαι ἄπορος παντελῶς ὑπάρχων ("Wherefore, my lord, as I have been compelled by force to take up this post of donkey-driver although I am entirely without means..")¹⁰⁸ In P.Oxy XII 1557 (255 AD) which was published as a minor document the petitioner has lost some cattle and draws the connection between the cattle and his livelihood (ll. 8-13): καὶ ἀξιῶ ἐξαυτῆς παντὶ σθένει ἀναζητηθέντα τὰ κτήνη ἀποκατασταθῆναι μοι μετρίῳ ὄντι καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν τὸ ζῆν ποριζομένῳ ("...and I ask that immediately the cattle which have been searched out with all my strength be restored to me, who is a humble man and from them provided with a life").¹⁰⁹ In P.Cair.Isidor. 74 (315 AD) the connection is expressly made between modest circumstances and living a decent life: (2) πᾶσι μέν βοηθεῖν εἴωθεν ἢ σὴ περὶ πάντα κηδεμονία, ἡγεμῶν [δέσποτα, ἐξαιρέτως δὲ ἡμῖν τοῖς μετρίοις καὶ καλῶς] εὖ βιοῦντες. ("Your universal solicitude is accustomed to be of help to all, my lord praeses, and especially to us, the people of small means and decent ways") The petitioner is Aurelius Isidorus who complains about Castor and Ammonianus stealing produce and breaching their contract with him. The petitioner in P.Oxy LIX 3981 (Feb/Mar 312 AD) is a priest who complains about a woman's harassment and seeks to make it appear the more severe because he himself is so "reasonable" (μέτριος). The idea is extended in P.Sakaon 44 (331/2 AD)(=P.Thead 17, Sel. Pap II 295) by connection with the adjective μονήρης in the description by the petitioners of themselves (15) ἄνθρωποι μέτριοι καὶ μονήρεις ("humble and solitary men").¹¹⁰

108 P.Oxy IX 1202 (217 AD) contains a complaint about the same official.

109 See also P.Oxy XXXIII 2682 Recto (III-IV AD) which is a private letter in which the writer speaks of "my humble circumstances (μου γὰρ τὸ μέτριον) P.Ryl. II 114 (c. 280 AD) shows that the concept of humbleness was directly made an issue for the role of the prefect: (3) τὸ μετριοφιλές σου αἰσθομένη, [δέσποτά μου ἡγεμῶν.

110 Like the lonely old ladies we met earlier these men may be articulating the detriment felt by lack of a family infrastructure, so important in Mediterranean societies: see Esler, *The First Christians in their Social Worlds*, 31.

This description can be used of petitioners who objectively would seem to be quite well off, since they are people who are one way or another in line for a compulsory service. This reflects, in part no doubt, the established trend in the later empire towards increasing severity in the burdens of liturgies, and thus the propertied classes of Egypt came to number themselves among the fiscally oppressed. P.Oxy VIII 1117 (178 AD) is a draft petition from six superintendents of the golden statue of Athene-Thoëris at Oxyrhynchus. They say (ll. 8-9): ἡμεῖς οὖν, κύριε, αὐτοὶ μέτριοι ὄντες ἀξιούμεν. In P.Oxy XLIII 3113 (264-5 AD), 5 the petitioner Aurelius Theon appeals against an appointment as guardian. He is an *ex-gymnasiarch* but calls himself *μετρίος* nonetheless. It is clear from other sources that this Aurelius Theon was an old man by the time of this petition, which may help explain the usage, but it suggests that people who were not necessarily badly off in a relative sense could perceive themselves as in modest circumstances. In P.Sakaon 44, (above) Isidorus was, relatively speaking, a person of means in the village of Karanis in the Arsinoite nome in the late III to early IV AD. In P.Cair.Isidor. 75 (24 Oct 316 AD) he says that "I possess a great deal of land and am occupied with its cultivation" (πλείστην γῆν κεκτημένου μου καὶ περὶ τὴν γεωποιά[ν] ὄντος μου). But the material situation of Isidorus did not apparently prevent his self perception from being that of a humble or modest person.¹¹¹ In P.Oxy XLVIII 3394 (364-6 AD) the petitioners Dorotheus and Papnuthis, having borrowed money to pay taxes, found themselves in suddenly straightened circumstances, which provide the basis for their belief that they are *μετρίοι*, although their capacity to take the loan and the business risk in the first place again suggests they were from the propertied class.

An added insight into how people in Greco-Roman Egypt came to view themselves as humble or *μετρίοι* can be gleaned from the record of some proceedings of the senate of Oxyrhynchus. P.Oxy XII 1415 (Late III AD) is record of some

111 R.S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton Uni. Press, Princeton, 1993), at 167, says of Isidorus and Sakaon, "For all their complaints they were relatively well off landowners with diverse economic interests." See also P.Cair.Isidor. 69 (310 AD).

proceedings of the senate of Oxyrhynchus, on the subject of appointments for liturgies. This must have been replayed any number of times as town councils filled vacancies in liturgies when no volunteer was forthcoming.¹¹² One passage deals with the attempt of the exegetes to appoint the incumbent chief priest to another unspecified office. This passage gives an interesting insight into the realities which lay behind the designation μέτριος in this period. At I.21 the exegetes has proposed Ptolemaios son of Damarion, who it transpires is the chief priest, and the following exchange takes place:

1) 22): Πτολεμαῖος Δαμαρίωνος ἀρχιερεὺς εἶπ(εν)· δέομαι ὑμῶν, οὐ δύναμαι. μέτριός εἰμι, παρὰ πατρὶ τρέφομαι,
 ὁ πρύτανις εἶπ(εν)· ἔτι δέετε τῆς ἀφ' ὑμῶν προτροπῆς Πτολεμαῖος,
 καὶ αὐτὸς γὰρ ἀπὸ τηλικού-
 [του λειτουργήματος ἀποφεύγει ? Εὐ]δαίμων ἐξηγητῆς εἶπ(εν)·
 καὶ Πτολεμαῖος μέτριός ἐστιν καὶ οὐ δύναται τὸ βάρος

"Ptolemaios son of Damarion, chief priest said: "I beseech you, I am not able. I am a man of modest means, I live in my father's house ["
 The prytanis said: "Ptolemaeus still requires to be pressed by you for he too shrinks from so great an office...." Eudaimon the exegetes said: "Ptolemaeus too is a man of moderate means and cannot bear the burden..."

It is not clear whether Ptolemaios wriggled out of the office. Unless it is all the most outrageous humbug, which seems unlikely, this suggests that local senators, although to the objective modern mind part of the ruling class, did not necessarily view themselves as particularly well off, and they viewed the holding of some offices, at least in the later Roman period as more of a sentence than a privilege.¹¹³ It may also reflect the fact that by late III AD μέτριος had come to denote a moral type. In this regard the comments made above about the language of weakness in relation to women is apposite.¹¹⁴

112 See eg N. Lewis, *ZPE* 51 (1983), 85-91, on the ἐκούσιος γυμνασάρχος.

113 Compare CP Herm 7 ii.

114 See 327 above.

The evidence in petitions shows that the weakness of the petitioner through lack of social resources, economic, educational even emotional, was a specific basis upon which the government was invited to provide assistance in both the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. The invitation to help was made the more persuasive by the extension of the concepts of weakness into quietude, humbleness and moderation, all of which helped elevate the status of the recipient of petitions in which they were used. This neatly demonstrates how the symbolic order could be set in a concrete relationship with the reality of a petitioner's material or physical situation, even if by its symbolic nature, it was articulated at a level beyond the individual petitioner. The petitioner's material and physical situation were enfolded within the structures of domination, where asymmetries of power were the central issue. In such a way the symbolic universe helped give meaning to experience. The experience of hunger, disease and extortion can readily be understood as generating a sense of general anomie, and individual collapse. The reality of life in Greco-Roman Egypt is likely to have constantly promoted a sense of living on the edge. Clearly then the positive compassionate attributes of the monarch and officials made sense of their power by placing it in a position to protect and assist the general population, and thereby address and ameliorate the perception of the threat of anomie. This conceptual and symbolic function was just as important, it is suggested, as the question, which many have concentrated on, of whether or not monarchs and officials actually did anything in a material sense for those who petitioned them. The cognitive structure given to the experience of asymmetries of power by the symbolic order were in many ways more important. In particular, we can see that the ideal typical weak, humble or quiet person was set up as the converse of, and by definition a rebuke to, the anomic wrongdoer. And anomic conditions were created by wrongdoers through behaviour consistently defined as dishonouring. The weak then yielded up responsibility for avenging their dishonour to the powerful, sometimes divine, sovereign or official, thereby avoiding the anomic potentialities of attempting revenge themselves. This was a very important aspect of the relationship of dependency described in the

language of supplication. So we begin to see how the conceptualisation of the sovereign as saviour or protector, in both the Greek and the Egyptian traditions, was directly linked to the social value of honour.

7.4.2 Dishonour, the Administration, and Behaviour Beyond Measure

In the preceding section, we examined how those in a position of weakness used the antithesis of honour and shame as embodied in the concept of *hybris* as a juristic and moral weapon against the illegitimate expression of power. In this section it is proposed to look more closely at the language used to characterise the behaviour of wrongdoers. *Hybris* meant forms of behaviour which most obviously involved honour and dishonour, but wrongdoing, and attendant issues of anomie, can be described in many ways, just as dishonour can result from many forms of wrongdoing. In this inquiry we are presented at one level of course with the language of the formulations of the legal code which appertained to Greco-Roman Egypt, and the language of wrongdoing, arrogance and wilfulness was undoubtedly part of the forensic mode of discourse. There was an inherent connection between the problems of petitioners and the legal system and in the Roman period this was overtly expressed through the intention of petitioners to rely upon their rights.¹¹⁵ But for all that the language of petitions also reflected other conceptual systems which, though they existed in tandem with the legal system, were analytically and in reality independent of it. In the language of wrongdoing we meet the necessary counterpoise to the positive attributes of the kindly sovereign and the good official and of the weak or dishonoured petitioner. And just as the relationship of supplication could function to ameliorate dishonour, it seems that one central element of anomie was that a challenge had been thrown down to legitimate power of the administration by the actions of the wrongdoer.

115 P.Oxy IX 1203 (Late I AD).

The idea of being wronged, although a passive condition of the petitioner expressed at the most basic level the behaviour of wrongdoers, and the verb ἀδικέω which we have already seen was used especially in the Ptolemaic period as a structural pivot, was the most usual articulation of this. It was a trademark formula for petitions to the Ptolemaic monarch in III BC, as we noted in Chapter 3.¹¹⁶ In III BC the petitioner used the phrase ἀδικουμαι ὑπό to open the description of the case, and introduce the notion of the petitioner as the victim, the one who is wronged. This idea reappears in later times, but more usually in a participial form as in P.Oxy XXII 2342 (102 AD), where the idea is expressed in the final appeal together with the refuge motif.¹¹⁷ P.Oxy XVII 2133 (Late III AD) where the petitioner Aurelia Eus says she is wronged by her uncle (ll. 5-6): ἀδικουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ οὐκ ἂν εἴποιμι θείου ("I am wronged by a man I can hardly call an uncle"). Like its Ptolemaic counterpart this expression comes at the start of the description of the case but after the introductory sentence, which was a hallmark of these later Roman petitions. It was no doubt there to perform essentially the same function as the Ptolemaic phrase, that is, suffuse the introduction with the notion of wrongdoing and victimisation.¹¹⁸

But when we turn to the language which predicates the actual wrongdoer, a general notion of "evil doing" is frequent, as one would expect. We know that in Athenian law and forensic discourse *kakourgoi* were a general class of wrongdoers, including thieves, robbers, murderers, burglars, and adulterers.¹¹⁹ This word and variations appear in the formulations of the legal system of Greco-Roman Egypt to express a negative moral type.¹²⁰ Evil doers are κακούργοι,¹²¹ or κακοπράγμων.¹²²

116 See chapter 3.

117 See Table 6.4, no. 64.

118 See also P.Oxy XXXIV 2713 Recto (297 AD) for a similar opening sentence τὸ ὑπὸ ξένων ἀδικίσθαι...

119 Cohen, *Law, Sexuality, and Society*, 111.

120 Taubenschlag, *The Law of Greco-Roman Egypt*, 429ff.

121 P.Ent. 84 (221 BC); P.Oxy LVIII 3926 (9 Feb 246); P.Cair.Isidor. 66 (299 AD); P.Amh. II 83 (Late III or early IV AD); BGU III 935 (III-IV AD). Cf P.Oxy LVIII 3916 (16/2-28/8 60 AD) κακοπράγμων.

122 P.Ross.Georg II 20 (146 AD). In an official letter such as BGU I 15 col. II (11 July 197 AD (?)) from Aemilius Saturnilus to the strategoi of the Hepta Nomoi and Arsinoite nome wrongdoers are συνκακούργοι.

Otherwise the evil doing is *κακουργία* in an enormous number of cases,¹²³ or *κακοτεχνία*.¹²⁴ Sometimes it is *ράδιουργία*, in Ptolemaic and Roman petitions.¹²⁵ UPZ II 162 (117 BC) is the transcript of a well known case brought by Hermias the soldier against certain choachytes over wrongful possession of his property. The advocate for the defendants describes the depositing of a settlement agreement by Hermias as *κακοτρόπως καὶ ἐπὶ ραδιουργίαι*. The same vocabulary can be found in Roman petitions: *κακότροπος* in P.Oxy XXII 2342 (102 AD) or compare BGU VIII 1816 (60-59 BC): (l. 13) *Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα μετανοηθεὶς τῆς κακαγωγίας* In petitions complaining of theft there is a very resilient formula describing thieves as behaving *ληστρικῶι τρόπωι*.¹²⁶ In the later Roman period this is found specifically linked with the notion of local tyranny, as in P.Sakaon 45 (7 Dec 334 AD)=(P.Thead 24): *[τυρ]αννία χρώμενοι καὶ ληστρικῶι τρόπῳ*, which we discuss further below.¹²⁷

In the Ptolemaic period the lack of proper measure in behaviour is usually expressed in an adverbial phrase such as *οὐ μετρίως*, and is often associated with the language of *hybris*. This is clear in a passage such as UPZ I 8 (c. 161 BC): (21) *οὐ μετρίως σκῦλαι ὑβρίζοντας και τύπτοντας, ὥστ' ἂν τὴν παράνομον βίαν ἅπασι εὐδηλον κατασταθῆναι*, or BGU VIII 1855 (I BC), at 11, where an unknown petitioner describes the behaviour of persons who broke a door and attacked his mother thus: *ἐξύβρισαν οὐ μετρίως*.¹²⁸ It contains the notion of that which was improper and beyond the right measure.¹²⁹ By implication it had associations with the language of weakness which we have already considered, since it undoubtedly

123 P.Oxy XII 1468 (c. 258 AD); P.Oxy 171.1 (303 AD).

124 P.Ross.Georg V 22 (mid III AD).

125 P.Tebt. III:1 776 (II BC); BGU I 226 (99 AD).

126 P.Oxy XII 1465 (I BC); BGU IV 1061 (14 AD); P.Ryl. II 127 (29 AD); P.Ryl. II 129 (30 AD); P.Ryl. II 130 (31 AD); P.Ryl. II 134 (34 AD); P.Ryl. II 138 (34 AD); P.Ryl. II 142 (37 AD); P.Ryl. II 146 (39 AD); BGU III 759 (125 AD); P.Oxy L 3561 (Jan-Feb 165 AD); P.Mil.Vogliano IV 234 (III AD); P.Oxy XLIII 3140 (III-IV AD); P.Sakaon 46 (29 Mar 342 AD)=(P.Thead 22); P.Sakaon 47 (29 Mar 342 AD)=(P.Thead 23, P.Abinn 44).

127 Compare the characterisation of violence by "dwellers outside the gates" at the Great Oasis to dispossess a petitioner in SB III 7205 (End III AD): (13) *τυραννικῶ τρόπῳ βούλονταί με ἐξωθεῖν*.

128 See also P.Ryl. II 150 (40 AD).

129 Cf UPZ I 108 (c 159 BC); BGU VIII 1855 (I BC).

carries a connotation of behaviour beyond what is appropriate for an average, or humble, person, and it is probably correct to see the Roman usage of the adjective μέτριος to describe petitioners, which we mentioned above, as a later mirror of this earlier adverbial usage, even though the earlier usage was used to describe the behaviour of wrongdoers, rather than the petitioners. Extremity of behaviour posed a challenge to the honour of the administration and a threat to social stability, and is thus closely tied up with the perception of anomie. It responds to the notion of compulsion in phrases such as κατὰ τὸ ἀνάγκαιον which we mentioned above, as portraying the petitioner as someone pushed beyond the limits. Other standard expressions in this domain are οὐ καθηκόντως in the sense "unseemly",¹³⁰ and οὐ δεόντως.¹³¹ The latter phrase commonly appears also in reports of proceedings such as P.Tebt II 287 (161-9 AD) In II AD and beyond it is expanded in various ways such as οὐ δεόντως καὶ ῥιψοκινδύνως.¹³² Again in the later Roman period this is specifically linked to socially disruptive attitudes involving audacity which requires a vengeful response by the application of the state's power: τὰ βιβλία ἐπιδιδω[μι]...πρῶτον μὲν οὐ ἐτόλμησαν παρανόμου καὶ ῥι[ψοκινδύνου] πράγματος [ἐκ]δικίας τυχεῖν.¹³³

This last example also represents the important motifs of the wrongdoer "daring" to do what he has done and the accusation that wrongdoers are acting illegally. We will examine the description of behaviour as παρανόμως and anomie in the next section. The daring of wrongdoers becomes a more usual in the Roman period, but it is clearly connected to articulations of extreme or evil behaviour. The concept of audacity stands as one of the counterpoise concepts to the good order or absence of anomie represented by the government and the quiet life style of the

130 See the discussion in P.Heid. VI 380 (209 or 192 BC).

131 SB XVI 12678 (27 July 179 AD).

132 See P.Mich VI 423 (197 AD); P.Cair.Isidor. 69 (310 AD), of the extortionate behaviour of a tax collector, Acotas son of Germanus. The same person's behaviour is called ἀνόμως καὶ ρει[ψοκινδύνως] in P.Cair.Isidor. 70 (310 AD).

133 P.Sakaon 48 (6 April 343 AD)=(SB VI 9622); cf BGU III 909 (359 AD) ῥιψοκινδύνω γνάμη.

petitioner. A principal verbal form is *τολμάω* in petitions from all periods.¹³⁴ Sometimes the audacity in question is said to be the malicious lodging of a claim, as in P.Ryl. II 144 (38 AD): (20) *καὶ δὲ ἐτόλ- | μησεν πθόνους μοι ἐπα- | γαγείν αἰτίας*. This should be linked to the more general allegation of malice in motivation for using the legal system which is discussed shortly. Often the actions of the wrongdoer are denoted by the use of the passive participle form *τὰ τολμήμενα* or *τὰ τολμηθέντα*.¹³⁵ The use of violence in local villages by villagers is expressly associated with undesirable attitudes such as arrogance as in BGU IV 1187 (I BC) where villagers are accused by the petitioner Castor of using violence and wilfulness: (21) *τῆι δὲ | περὶ ἑαυτὰς βίαι καὶ αὐθαδία | [συ]νχρησάμενοι*, and in P.Oxy XXXI 2563 (c170 AD) where Sarapion son Hierax tells of the violence of Ploution: (43-45) *οὕτως οὖν αὐθάδως χρησάμενος κωμήτης ὧν ἐπῆλθεν ἡμεῖν*.¹³⁶ P.Oxy XXXIII 2672 (218 AD) is a petition to the strategos about an assault upon a slave of Aurelius Aphynchis by Achilles the pastry cook, which he calls *τῆς τοσαυτῆς αὐτοῦ αὐθαδίας* ("his enormous insolence").¹³⁷ In SB XVI 12678 (27 July 179 AD) Julia Herais complains about a tenant who refused to pay tax saying he possessed a "wilful character" (ll. 23ff: *αὐθάδη τρ[ό]πον κεκτημέ[ν]ος ἐβιάσατό με βουλευθεῖς ἀπαιτ[ῆ]σαί με οὐ δεόντως τέλος μὴ ὀφειλ[ό]μενον βασιλικοῦ ὑπολόγου*)

Lawlessness and Anomie

But more importantly, all these concepts of extremity in behaviour lead naturally to the language most closely associated with anomie. *Νόμος* in the papyri was an essential term for the expression of the system of laws. In the Ptolemaic period it designated a law decreed by the sovereign in contrast to *διαγράμματα* and *προστάγματα*. In the Roman period it was a way of referring to the law of the Twelve Tables or old customary law, and then to imperial constitutions. In Egypt

134 BGU IV 1139 (c 5 BC); compare its use in a transcript of proceedings about 300 years later in P.Ryl IV 654 (IV AD).

135 BGU III 759 (125 AD); BGU IV 1022 (13 Aug 198 AD); BGU III 909 (359 AD).

136 Cf P.Tebt II 331 (131 AD); PSI XIII 1323 (147/8 AD); P.Mich III 175 (193 AD).

137 Compare P.Amh. II 78 (184 AD); CPR V 9 (339 AD).

especially νόμος referred to the law of the chora, ὁ τῆς χώρας νόμος, later ὁ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων νόμος.¹³⁸

So the opposites of νόμος were clearly meant to cover behaviour which was illegal in the sense that it breached the system of laws. However, the implied negative social consequence of such a breach is more our present concern and it is always present. In BGU VI 1247 (149-8 BC) we are presented with a situation in which Esoroeris complains about a soldier who was billeted with him, contrasting his own blamelessness (ἀνεγκλήτου) with the ἀνομία of the soldier:

1) καὶ αὐτοῦ ὄντος σταθμ[ο]ύχου | ἐν [μ]ὲν τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν χρ[ό]νοις
ὄντος μου αὐτῶι | ἀνεγκλήτου, νυνὶ δὲ ἐν τ[ῶ]ι Μεχειρ μηνὶ τοῦ λ[γ]
L | ἀντιλογίαν μοι συστησα[μ]ένου ἐξεπίτηδες | ἕως μὲν ἐλοιδόρει με
π[ο]λλὰ καὶ ἀσχήμονα, ἀνομί[αι] | δέ [τ]ηι χρησάμενος διέκοψεν τὰ
ἐφύπερα τ[οῦ] | ἄνω οἴκου

"...and when he was a billet in the earlier times I was blameless towards him, but now in the month of Mecheir of the 33rd year having contrived with malice a dispute with me until he abused me in many and unseemly ways, using a certain lawlessness he broke down the upper floor of the house above..."

We can see in this example the precise use of the language of "lawlessness", ἀνομία. In this situation in the underlying power relationship between the householder and the soldier, the householder saw himself in a weaker position, no doubt because he was. In a similar way we can see that disparities of power may underlie the problem of the priests of Apollo who describe as ἀνόμως behaviour of two officials from the village Line, the prostates and the sitologos, who are alleged to have given rent for the temple to the villagers of Line: (20) ἀνόμως ἀποδέδωκαν τῶ[ι]ς.¹³⁹

Variants of this basic idea were expressed in the vocabulary signalling behaviour "contrary" to the law, like παρανομία, παρανομέω, παράνομος, e.g., P.Oxy VIII 1119 (254 AD), (8) τὴν τόλμαν καὶ τὴν παρανομίαν τοῦ αὐτοῦ

138 See R. Taubenschlag, "Nomos in the Papyri", in *Opera Minora* II (Warsaw, 1959), 107-114

139 BGU IV 1200 (2-1 BC); P.Flor. 382, 49 (III AD); P.Oxy VIII 1121 (295 AD); SB 9691, 12 (IV AD) Examples of the use of cognates words from the ἀνομι- stem are frequent, such as, ἀνομέω; P.Ent. 82 (221 BC): Δέομαι οὖν σου, βασιλεῦ, ...μὴ περιδεῖν με οὕτως ἠνομημένην. See also P.Oxy XII 1465 (I BC).

ἀμφοδογραμματέως, in reference to the wrongful nomination to a liturgy. We can refer again to UPZ I 8 (c. 161 BC) (above, 252) where the petitioner Ptolemaios complains about certain twins and others with whom he seems to have had a long running dispute in the katoche at the Serapeion at Memphis. Wilcken believed there was no doubt that this dispute was derived from tensions between Greeks and Egyptians.¹⁴⁰ After describing an incident of violence Ptolemaios states that the "illegal violence" was clear to all (ὥστ' ἂν τὴν παράνομον βίαν ἅπασι εὐδηλον κατασταθῆναι). In this characterisation of the behaviour of the wrongdoers we can perceive the negative obverse of the positive virtue of the powerful legitimate figure is upholder and preserver of the law which we discussed in chapter 5. It is the other half of a fundamental symbolic opposition between good and bad which legitimated the power of Ptolemaic monarchs and Roman procurators and set up a symbolic response to the trouble and anomic social situations threatened by the illegal behaviour of evildoers. Of course at one level this language connotes "illegal" rather than "lawlessness" in the sense of wild anarchy, but the connection is close because the unspoken assumption was that in the former there lay the road to the latter.

There is a connection between lawlessness and extremity in behaviour, and we find a direct linguistic connection between behaviour described as beyond measure or decorum and anomie, through the use of the adjective κόσμος in UPZ II 170 (127-6 BC)(=P. Par 14): (26) οὐθενὶ κόσμῳ | χρῆσάμενοι, ἀφορήτῳ δὲ ἀνομίᾳ | ἐξενεχθέντες, [...] ἐκηδήσαντές μοι | καὶ μίαναντες, ὑβρίσαντές με πληγὰς | ἔδωκαν. ("...using no propriety, and carried away with unendurable lawlessness, they leapt out at me and defiling me, they insulted me and struck me with blows").¹⁴¹ In P.Mich III 174 (145-147 AD) it is alleged by Ptolemaios, a lessee of domain land and a man driven from his home with extortion, that an agent of the main evil-doer is so bad that he has already been proscribed on account of his "lawless" life: (12) καὶ

140 UPZ I at 137ff.

141 See also UPZ I 12 (158 BC).

διὰ τὸ ἀκόσμου βιοῦν προγραφέντος, which stands in contrast to the humble and quiet ideal petitioner's life described above.

Impious Behaviour

The idea of anomic and extreme behaviour is sometimes extended by the designation of wrongdoers as "impious". This is an important point because it should be seen as a direct acknowledgment of the divine and nature of the Egyptian sovereign, his officials and laws, as well as the royal and official virtue of piety, seen in designations of the Ptolemaic king or Roman emperor as εὐσεβής. In BGU VIII 1816 (60/59 BC) Ammonios, tenant of a pastophorion, says that he has been put in danger by "impious men" (ὑπὸ δυσσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων).¹⁴² UPZ I 39 (c. 161 BC) is a petition from members of the temple community of the great Sarapeion at Memphis where the εὐσέβεια of the hypodioiketes is mentioned: (4-5) Κατὰ πολλοὺς τρόπους ἀντι[λαμβα] | [[νο]λημμένου σου [ἡμῶν] δι' ἣν ἔχεις εἰς τὸ θεῖον | εὐσέβειαν, although in this instance the particular context of the temple environment may be the simple explanation of εὐσέβεια. In BGU VIII 1854 (I BC) priests (probably) complain about persons who have acted ἀσεβῶς καὶ κακουργότερον and we may compare P.Oxy II 23 (186 AD) (Col. VI, l. 13), a father complains about the "impious and illegal acts" committed against him by his daughter (πολλὰ εἰς ἐμὲ ἀσεβῶς καὶ παρανόμως πράξεως).¹⁴³ This is of some interest because aside from the possibility that the particular action complained of is impious, these expressions indicate that behaviour which was contrary to law was also conceived as being, at the symbolic level, somehow irreligious.¹⁴⁴ Thus the impious acts of

142 The editors of BGU VIII 1816 suggest that Ammonios may be a priest, and certainly later in the document, which is fragmentary, we have: θανατηφόροις εὐθύνας πρὸς ἑτέρων ἀνεμί (l. 27), which may be compared with BGU VIII 1835 ll. 5-9. Cf BGU VIII 1816 (60/59 BC), κενιδυνευκῶς ὑπὸ δυσσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων, and P.Tebt. I 42 (c. 114 BC)

143 Cf BGU VII 1578 (II-III AD) where similar language (ἀσεβία) is used by a veteran of his daughter in her failure to look after him in his old age. this is also close to the language of judicial prayers, see further chapter 8.

144 If such a conclusion is right it may affect the views of scholars like Robert who believe that the adjective θεϊός for example in edicts had no religious significance. See further ch. 6.

wrongdoers were set in direct opposition to the piety and sanctity of legitimate power and the system of laws, and therefore constituted a challenge to them

Accusations made directly against wrongdoers that they have held the laws in contempt, disobeyed laws or ignored decisions of officials or in the failure to carry out obligations, such as the collection of public taxes, are a broader version of these basic ideas.¹⁴⁵ Honour and shame clearly played an integral role in this regard. Hybris can be found as the designation for doing specific things which are contrary to the laws. In PSI III 222 (III AD) disobedience is expressly joined with παρανομία: (5) Πολλῇ ἀπειθείᾳ καὶ | [π]αρανομία χρώμενος ὄρωρος, and this is part of behaviour perpetrated (II. 14-15) μεθ' ὕβρεως καὶ λοιδο[ρι]ῶν.¹⁴⁶

There are many examples of accusations of failing to honour legal obligations or infringement of legal rights. P.Ent 48 (217 BC) from Magdôla is a petition in which Pistos is complaining about Aristocrates with whom he entered into a contract of service. The agreement provided that while Pistos was away with the army Aristocrates would remain in his service at Autodike. Pistos paid him a monthly salary, faithfully, but Aristocrates owes him 10 drachmas which he will not pay, holding him in contempt "because of his weakness" (καταφρονῶν μου) τῆς ἀσθενείας). It could mean "sickness" here, but the context suggests more strongly the situation of the superior master badly treating the weaker servant, and the servant is weaker because of his lack of resources, not from some physical disability. In UPZ II 161 (119 BC), which contains a record of proceedings before the epistates Ptolemaios, the petition of Hermias forms part of the transcript. In it he complains about certain choachytes who have possessed his property wrongfully laying claim to it and using force: (17) καὶ τῆ[ι] περὶ | ἑαυτοῦς βίαι χρώμενοι ἐπισκευάσαντες τὰ καθειρημένα μέρη [ἐ]νοικοῦσι | ἀντιποιούμενοι ἀδίκως. The theme is perhaps more clearly apparent in P.Fay. 12 (103 BC). In this petition Theotimus

145 P.Mich X 582 (49/50 AD); SB III 7205 (End III AD): (I. 14) τῆ ἐντάσι τῶν νόμων ἀπειθοῦντες.

146 P.Oxy VI 903 (IV AD), although the precise nature of this document is not clear. The editors think that it is a kind of affidavit.

complains about the assault and robbery at the hands of Diokles son of Alexander, a Persian, "not of the best class" (6: οὐ ἀπὸ τοῦ βέλτ[ι]στου). Diokles has failed to take any notice of claims already made against him by Theotimus, and in fact has increased his attacks, including roundly abusing Theotimus in front of a crowd (15: ο[ὐ] τυχόντως πλείστα κακολογηθεῖς). We see again lack of moderation, the suggestion that the wrongdoer is uncontrolled and not subject to the proper social restraints.¹⁴⁷ An interesting example is P.Ryl. II 144 (38 AD) in which a slave, who is also the creditor under a pledge, describes the brutal and shameful mishandling meted out by his debtor Silbon: (14) ὅς δὲ ἐκ τοῦ ἐναντίου ἄλογον ἀηδῖαν μοι ἐπιχειρήσας παρεχρήσατό μοι πολλὰ καὶ ἄσχημα ("..whereupon opposing me made a brutal and odious attack upon me and subjected me to much shameful mishandling..")

BGU VIII 1773 (59/8 BC) is a report of proceedings before a strategos. Imuthes complains about the behaviour of his mortgagee, Themision, who took possession of the mortgaged land while Imuthes was in prison. Imuthes describes the actions of Themision as possession by force and with contempt ((8-9) καταγνόντα βιαίως ἐμβεβατευκέναι) and then mentions that he sowed the land again after promising restitution to Imuthes, while Imuthes was sick ((13) σωματικῆι ἀσθενείαι). The text is fragmentary so it is difficult to be certain. However, the surviving passages suggest that Imuthes was complaining about Themision because he had taken advantage of a superior position. This suggestion of course goes beyond the narrow issue of whether Themision was legally entitled to do what he did. It indicates that in the argumentation Imuthes was using ethical considerations to meet the powerful position which Themision held over him.¹⁴⁸ In P.Oxy XLI 2996 (II AD) a creditor writes to his debtor demanding repayment, mentioning his insolent

147 P.Tebt. I 45 (113 BC) makes it more explicit in describing the violent behaviour of a band as "throwing off all restraint" (οὐδενὶ κόσμῳ χρησάμενοι).

148 We may note that on the other side of the coin, in P.Cair.Isidor. 76 (16 July 318 AD) failure to pay a debt is ascribed to an attitude of contempt.

quarrelling and making excuses about the loan: ἀναιδομαχῆς ἀ[γν]ωμονῶν πρὸς τὴν ἀπαίτησιν προφασιζόμενος.

Ignoring the decisions and orders of officials falls into the category of illegal behaviour, but it also carries a clear implication of behaving παράνομως. In P.Oxy. I 38 (49-50 AD) Tryphon accuses Syrus of trying to carry off Tryphon's own son, Apion, to slavery in place of a foundling whom Syrus had given into the care of Tryphon's wife and who had died. Tryphon obtained a judgment from the strategos Pasion restoring Apion to Tryphon, but Tryphon complains to the prefect that Syrus refuses to comply.¹⁴⁹ The petitioner in BGU I 340 (c. 148-9 AD) associates insult against her personally with contempt of the decisions of "all prefects" on a particular question of inheritance: Ἐπὶ οὖν οὗτοι οὐκ ἀφί[στα]ν | τε τῆς κατ' ἐμοῦ ἐπηρίαν, κατα- | φρονοῦν[τ]ες τῆς [περὶ ἐμὲ ἀπρα- | γμοσύνης] καὶ τῶν περὶ τῶν τοῦ- | οὔτων ὑπὸ πάντων ἡγεμόνων | προστεταγμένων ("Since therefore these fellows do not leave off the insult against me, holding in contempt my inexperience and the commands of all the prefects on such matters..."). Dionysia makes a similar complaint about her father in P.Oxy II 237 (186 AD), saying that he refuses to abide by a decision of the prefect Pomponius Faustianus on a property dispute (Col. V, ll. 35-38).¹⁵⁰ The implicit suggestion here is that these people are displaying a disquieting disregard for authority which should warrant the intervention of the government. Again by late III AD this becomes expressed through abstract virtues such as the justice and legality of the official punishing socially destabilising behaviour and attitudes. In P.Cair.Isidor. 62 (5 Sept 296 AD) two women complain to the beneficiarius about their step-mother and commence their petition with the sententious words (ll. 5-6): πολύτροποι τυγχάν[ου]σι ἐ τῶν ἀνδρῶν πλεονεξίαι, ἀλλ' ἐν τούτῳ καταγιννοσκόμενοι λοιπόν ἐστιν τῆς τοῦ μίζωνος ἐπισσορεφίας τὰ τωλούμενα ἐγ(ε)γδικῶν ("Manifold are the covetous acts of men;

149 (ll. 15-6) τοῦ δὲ Σύρου μὴ βουλομένου ἐνπεῖναι τοῖς κεκριμένοις. Cf P.Cair.Isidor. 63 (Nov 296 AD), an order of the beneficiarius.

150 Cf BGU I 340 (c. 148-9 AD); P.Ross.Georg II 20 (146 AD): καταφρονησας τῶν κριθέντων.

but when they are detected therein, it remains for his Highness' severity to punish what they have dared to do")¹⁵¹ There is a clear underlying connection drawn between the undesirable behaviour and attitudes represented in "covetous acts" and audacity and the application of legitimate power required by the beneficiarius. The attitudes inferred from the acts and theft are seen to be a matter which directly impinges upon the administration.

The very same ideas in similar language are found in speeches of court rooms of the same period. P.Sakaon 31 (280-1 AD)(=P.Thead 15, Sel.Pap II 262) contains the record of proceedings before the epistrategos Aurelius Heracleides. Isidorus the advocate puts the case for a woman and her sons from whom 60 sheep have been stolen by Syrion after the death of their father. The behaviour of Syrion is described as "an act of violence" (ἡ βία) since he cast "covetous eyes" (ἐποφθαλμιάσας τοῖς θρέμμασιν) on the sheep of the children. Although the epistrategos offered to give judgment if Syrion does not turn up to answer the charges, Isidorus says orders had been obtained for the return of the sheep but "see how Syrion is behaving: he resists your commands and those of the prefect" (ἀλλ' ὄρα τί διαπράττεται Συρίων· ἀντιπράττει τοῖς ὑπὸ σοῦ κελευσθεῖσιν καὶ ὑπὸ τῆς ἡγεμονίας)

7.4.3 Dishonouring the Administration

The underlying confrontation between legitimate and illegitimate, and the implied challenge to the administration and the honour of its officials was sometimes quite explicit when the object of dishonouring behaviour was the administration itself. There is evidence that a connection was drawn between behaviour which dishonoured officials and the break down of governability and thus serious anomie. It was noted above when discussing the views of Aristotle that *hybris* was socially disruptive and therefore dangerous. The idea that manifestations of contempt are dangerous for the existing order appears to have been openly acknowledged within the ranks of

151 See also P.Cair.Isidor. 65.11 (298/9 AD).

government officials. This evidence lends further support to the view that expressions of contempt were viewed as a real problem by established power positions, and as something which required a strong response. There is not a great deal of evidence which expresses the views of the government itself about the destabilising effects of dishonouring behaviour directed at the administration. But at least three documents can shed light on the question.

The first is Ptolemaic, P.Petrie IV 6, which is a complaint from an official called Demetrios to Kleon, official architect of the king. The document is dated to 255-4 BC and deals with some building works which Demetrios is overseeing and trying to get completed. At ll 14-18 Demetrios writes:-

- ...εἰ οὖν περὶ τούτων ἐπιστροφῆν μὴ ποιήσει
 1) οἱ τε λοιποὶ μοι τὰς χέρας προσοίσωσιν δι γάρ ἐστιν
 ἐν ὄχλῳ ἀτιμαζέσθαι ἐὰν γὰρ εἰδῶσιν
 ὅτι οὗτοι καταπεφρονήκασιν οὐθέν τῶν ἐργῶν
 σ
 συντελεθήσεται

"If, then, you don't take notice of this, I shall presently be personally assaulted, for it is a dreadful thing to be insulted before a crowd, and if the rest see that these fellows have despised me, none of the work shall be completed."

This clearly shows that, in the mind of Demetrios at least, insulting behaviour towards him in his official capacity could undermine the successful completion of the work.¹⁵² It is possible that Demetrios was confusing his own sense of honour with that of the administration, but in view of the conclusions about "public" versus "private" and power and structure in the Ptolemaic chora which we reached in chapter 2, it is more likely than not that they were the same thing. Obviously, in the bureaucratic climate of Ptolemaic Egypt official functioning relied upon the honour of the administration being maintained with the concomitant that dishonour produced disruption and anarchy. This view finds support in P. Tebt III 703 which is dated to the late III

152 Compare P.Ent. 75 (221 BC) in which a registrar of κλήροι complains of being attacked by shepherds.

BC.¹⁵³ The document takes the form of an official memorandum of instructions from a dioiketes to a subordinate in the administration, in which he says that failure to follow his instructions will have the following result: (ll. 161-3) διαφόρων καὶ εἰς οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν καταφρόνησιν ἤξεις, ἣν ῥαιδίως ἀναλρεῖν οὐ δυνήσῃ ("...you will fall into no ordinary contempt, which you will not easily be able to remove.") The context in which this is written suggests strongly that preservation of honour or the avoidance of dishonour were perceived to be integral to the successful functioning of the administration.

In certain, probably most, contexts, some, if not all, Roman emperors, as might be expected, did not tolerate insolence. Partly this can be seen as a political issue about the governability of the populace but it is likely that its genesis lay in the honour and shame syndrome. P.Oxy X 1242 (III AD) is an extract from the *Acts of the Pagan Martyrs*. In the text Alexandrians and Jews are present before the emperor Trajan, and the spokesman for the Alexandrians, Hermaïscus, angers Trajan, who says (ll. 40-41) μελ[τ]ῆς τὸ θανεῖν καταφρο[ν]ήσας τοῦ θανάτου [ὥστε κάμοι αὐθάδως ἀποκρινόμενος ("you are studying how to die being so contemptuous of death as to answer me insolently"). Another document shows this process in operation much lower down the hierarchy in Egypt and treats the consequences of dishonouring the administration in precisely the same way as the Ptolemaic examples in the previous paragraph. P.Beatty Panop. I (c. 298 AD) is a letter from the strategos of the Panopolite nome to Aurelius Isidorus, procurator of the Lower Thebaid, in which the strategos refers to a particularly difficult person thus (ll. 178ff): τούτου γάρ ἀρξαμένου ἀν[τ]ηλέγειν τοῖς προσταττομένοις ἕτεροι ἐπιχειροῦσιν τὸ αὐτὸ ποιεῖν, καὶ ἐκ τούτου καὶ διὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ εἰς ὑπερβόλην καταφρόνησεν τὰ πάντα ἐνεδρεύ[ε]ται ("For if this man makes a beginning of disobeying orders,

153 Fear of dishonour before a crowd appears again much later and in a different context in P.Oxy XVII 2154 (IV AD) where Heracleides, who seems to be imprisoned, asks his brother to send him "at least one basket and a little wool, in order that I may be equal to all the others and not be insulted before them all." (ll. 14-15: ἵνα καὶ γὰρ ἴσος πάντας γένομαι καὶ μὴ ὑβρισθῶ παρὰ τοὺς πάντας) The verb ὑβρίζω seems clearly used to express an attack on Heracleides' personal sense of honour. We might also note that καταφρονέω appears in the same letter, but in the sense "be neglectful".

others may try to do the same thing and through this and his unparalleled insolence the whole administration is endangered.") The sentiment here is very clear and the use of the verb ἐμδρεύομαι expresses a serious concern for the proper functioning of government.¹⁵⁴

In P.Wisconsin I 33 (147 AD), the accusation is made against a certain Sarapammon from the Heracleopolite nome, that he held the strategos of the two merides in contempt such that he was in risk of his life ((14) κ[α]θέωρα τὸν τῶν δύο μερίδων στρατηγὸν το...[.].τα...ιεθ[.].ν ὥστε κινδυνεύειν τῷ ζῆν) Later in the same petition there is a colourful description of all the pernicious activities which characterise the likes of Sarapammon: he is a person who would "be a strategos, that is, rule and prevent, and crush and beat and give a thrashing and flog the free-born like slaves" ((19)..στρατηγεῖν τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἄρχειν καὶ κωλύειν καὶ ἀλήθειν κα[ῖ] τοὺς ἐλευθέρους τύπτειν καὶ παῖειν καὶ μαστιγοῦν ὡς δοῦλο[υ]ς)¹⁵⁵ In P.Ryl. II 141 (37 AD) Petermouthis, the collector of public dues and cultivator of state land at Euhememria explains to the centurion how two shepherds attacked "shamelessly" (ἀναιδευόμενοι) when he demanded damages from them for grazing their flocks on his land. He links this to the public interest in the conclusion to the document asking them to be summoned "in order that no public interest may suffer". Although this is a stereotypical conclusion for petitions, it is unusual because it seems to link his official role with his own land, not directly with government revenues. This language clearly harks back to classical conceptions of *hybris* and the attitudes of arrogance which attended it. It is a very good example of how *hybristic* attitudes and behaviour were collectively viewed as socially threatening and a matter to which those in roles of legitimate power should respond. The notion of a free man in the Arsinoite nome of Egypt in II AD, whatever it was, may have differed widely from the notion of ἐλεύθερος in Athens of V to IV BC. But that is not of such great

154 Compare P.Oxy VI 900 (322 AD) in which Aurelius Dioscouros complains about three donkey drivers, Faustus, Horus and Chaereas who fraudulently refuse to carry out their official duties, to assist Aurelius as administrator of imperial patrimonial estates.

155 This is highly reminiscent of the charge against Ktesikles in Demosthenes 21.177-80, see 313 above.

importance here. The petitioner uses the symbolic dimensions of the notion to give sense and meaning to the experience of Sarapammon's expression of illegitimate power.

The failure to respond with an appropriate degree of fear (φόβος) and respect towards the administration becomes an explicit theme used by petitioners against their adversaries in later centuries. Fear as an appropriate response to the administration is not a sentiment which finds expression on Ptolemaic petitions with the same degree of particularity as Roman petitions, and it does not seem to have been part of the symbolic language surrounding the Ptolemaic monarch and his officials. However, the topic cannot be dealt with without reference to some precursors in the Ptolemaic period, which had obvious associations with contempt for the administration and the laws. In the Ptolemaic petition P.Tebt. III:1 787 (c 138 BC) fear of a particular official, Apollonios inspires crown cultivators to take refuge in the temple of Zeus at Ibion. (34) διὰ τὸ [μὴ οἷς ἔδει γένεσ]ιν ἐσπάρθαι ἠναγκάσμεθα [φόβῳ τοῦ ἀπαραι]τήτου Ἀπολλωνίου καταφυγεῖν εἰς τὸ ἐν Ἰβιῶνι τοῦ Διὸς ἱερόν. ("on account of not sowing for those for whom it was necessary, we were compelled in fear of the implacable Apollonios to take refuge in the temple of Zeus in Ibion."). The semantic affinities of fear in this document seem essentially negative. It contains the suggestion that the official, Apollonios, was not very nice. Six hundred years later, in IV AD φόβος is something the responsible citizen should feel towards those in authority or power.¹⁵⁶ It is now within the same semantic domain as reverence and awe.¹⁵⁷ This seems to appear in late III AD to IV AD. In P.Cair.Isidor. 69 (310 AD) it is fear of the prefect Sosianus Hierocles and the catholicus Aurelius Sarapion which the offending person does not feel.¹⁵⁸ In P.Oxy XII 1559 (341 AD) the complaint is about a certain Besammon who is said to have dared to do things unworthy of the

156 P.Cair.Isidor. 73 (314 AD) shows the other side of honour being expressed through fear. The petitioner Isidorus says he and his co-petitioner Palmon have shown appropriate fear towards the praepositus who does them great mischief nonetheless.

157 Cf *Acts* 9.31

158 (l. 22): μὴ εὐλαβηθεῖς τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου..

harmony of the fortunate times and the fear of the most gracious prefect of Augustamnica Flavius Julius Ammonius (οὐκ ἄξια τετόλμηκεν οὔτε τῆς εὐνομίας τῶν εὐτ[υ]χεστάτων τούτων καιρῶν οὐδὲ τοῦ φόβου τοῦ κυρίου μου διασημοτάτου ἡγεμόνος). Again the reference to εὐνομία evokes the lurking threat of ἀνομία and the passage clearly carries in it the suggestion that Besammon has unsatisfactory attitudes towards the administration.¹⁵⁹

7.4.4 Oppression by Officials and Local Power

There are two further aspects of the topic of dishonour and the administration which require comment. One is the problem of powerful figures in localities in the *chora* and the other is oppression by officials. These are dealt with together because often one was an aspect of the other. We saw in Chapter 3 that in the social and economic structure of Greco-Roman Egypt the creation of power bases by local figures in the *chora* was common in both the Ptolemaic and Roman periods.¹⁶⁰ The language which is used to describe and articulate the aspects of this situation is significant because it often casts the confrontation between the legitimate power of the government and illegitimate expression of dominance in a village in terms of honour and shame. Further, although the language of *hybris* may not be used, the challenge to central authority in these situations is clear, and the oppressive local figure is usually also an official misusing his power for personal gain.

In the Ptolemaic period aspects of this type of social problem were often expressed in terms of the juxtaposition of the oppression or extortion of one official with the mercy, goodness and justice of the higher official. BGU VIII 1850 (48-46 BC) is directed to the strategos Eurylochos from Apollonios about illegal behaviour of and extortion by officials. The petitioner's weakness is given intensity and

159 The same grouping of ideas appears in P.Cair.Isidor. 74 (315 AD):^a(11) οἱ [δ]ὲ αὐθαδία χρησάμενοι ἀλόγως καὶ ῥιψοκινδύνως παρὰ τοὺς νόμους, μὴ εὐλαβηθέντες τὸν φόβον σου τοῦ ἐμοῦ δεσπότη. Cf P.Sakaon 38 (17 Aug 312 AD)=(P.Flor 36, Mitt.Chrest II 64). P.Oxy XIX 2235 (c. 346 AD) is a petition from an ex-procurator of imperial estates who expresses his attitude towards his superior with the words τοῦ ὀφλι(ομένου) φόβου ἐπὶ σοῦ (l. 5). See P.Oxy XXXIV 2712 Recto (292-3 AD) for use of *τολμάω* in the same way.

160 See pages 87, 89 and 100ff above.

significance by its verbal association with the mercy and hatred of wickedness on the part of the strategos and the extortion on the part of the tax official: σοῦ δὲ τοῦ μεισοπονήρου ἐλεήσαντα αὐτοὺς ἀπέλυσας. Τινῶν δ[ὲ] περὶ τριβῆ καὶ διασεισμῶι ἐπιχειρησάντων ἐμὲ ἀντ' ἄλλον παραγράψαι ταλαντισμοῦ(ᾶν) ε καὶ ἐγνωκότες τὴν περὶ ἐμὲ ἀσθένειαν ("You the one who hates wickedness having mercy upon them let them free. When certain persons with stealth and extortion tried to enrol me instead of another for the levy on 5 arouras even knowing my weakness"). It is clear in this passage that the wrongful inclusion in a tax assessment was viewed as an exploitation of weakness, that is, the wrongful taking advantage of disparities in power, and this was expressed through words such as συκοφαντία, διασεισμός and περιτριβή. This shows rather well what role the official, here the strategos was to play in the life of the petitioner. In the Roman period the powerful forces which are arraigned against the petitioner also appear in the guise of officials. There are many examples of petitions in which people complain about officials who oppress or extort them.¹⁶¹ Oppression by officials is frequently designated by the verb συκοφαντέω.¹⁶² Sometimes the accusation is that the official has acted in bad faith.¹⁶³

We find oppression expressed in language which evokes the negative connotations of *δυναστεία*, as in P.Petrie III 36 Verso (III BC), where complaint is made to the epimeletes of wrongful imprisonment: καταδεδυναστεύομαι ἐν τῆι φυλακῆι. In P.Tebt. III:1 788 (Mid II BC) we get a flavour of the problem. The document is a petition to Ptolemaios son of Pyrrhus, a strategos, from the komarch and crown cultivators of Oxyrhyncha. In it they mention that Ptolemaios had earlier

161 An interesting early example is BGU IV 1060 (14 BC) in which unknown petitioners complain about oppression regarding a tax: (24) ὅθεν καταπεπο- | νημένοι προήγμεθα πρὸς ἀπειλαῖς. | Ἄξιουμέν ἐν μηδενὶ ἐλαττώματι | ἡμᾶς πρόνοιαν γενέσθαι. See also P.Oxy III 488 (II-III AD). See further chapter 3, 18 above.

162 P.Hib II 237 (c. 246-221 BC). See *LSJ* 1

163 Cf SB XVI 12713 (19 Feb 10/11AD) in which complaint is made to the prefect about the illegal behaviour of a strategos. See also P.Oxy VII 1032 (162 AD) where the assistant of the strategos is accused of *κακουργία* in placing a particular endorsement on the registration of a vineyard and in P.Oxy XVII 2131 (207 AD) Totoës has been wrongly appointed to the post of public donkey driver, by the *amphodogrammateus*

been sent out by the king and queen to the nome to put a stop to abuses of some kind, which amounted to oppression. It is also mentioned that this involved appointed epistatai who were "worthy of the position" (17: ἐπιστάτας δὲ τοὺς ἀξίους τῆς [χρείας ταύτης] κατέστησας) This suggests that the epistates had been responsible, partly at least, for the abuses. But in any event it seems fairly clear that some abuse of local power was taking place. The problem is more explicit in P.Coll.Youtie I 16 (14 Sept 109 BC) where Petemouthos, a machimos of 7 aroura complains that the local archiphylakites, Dionysios, lead him through the town subjecting him to violence and outrage (29) κατεγνωκῶς ἐπὶ τῷ ἀβοήθητόν με εἶναι καὶ ἀνάπειρον.¹⁶⁴ Here we see the language of contempt and its implicit dishonour articulating the experience of the misuse of power.

In the Roman period the difficulties of this nature experienced by individuals come to be expressed specifically, and allegations of local *δυναστεία* become refined. From the time of Cicero abuse of local power was a problem and the growth of local dynasts in the later empire became the target of specific laws.¹⁶⁵ Aspects of this problem are well represented in petitions from II AD onwards. An early example appears in P.Oxy XXIV 2410 (120 AD), where a certain Horion is accused of trying to take the petitioners' crown land and make it private property, and take other land which they use. Horion seems to be wealthy locally because the petitioners say that his son is advanced in years and has never had to take his share of local expenses. They say of Horion ὅθεν τούτου ὑπερισχύοντος ἡμᾶς ἐν [τῇ κώμῃ] ("Wherefore since this man is oppressing us in the village").¹⁶⁶

164 Cf UPZ II 160.18 (119 BC), P.Lond II 401.22

165 See J.A. Schlumberger, "Potentes and Potentia in the Social Thought of Late Antiquity" in F.M. Clover, R.S. Humphreys (eds.), *Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity* (Uni. Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1989), 89-104

166 Cf BGU XI 2061 (207 AD) in which the editors propose the restoration of I. 8 καταφεύγω πρὸς σε οὐ δυνάμενος πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ νομῷ περὶ τούτου εἰπεῖν διὰ τὸ αὐτοὺς ἐνκυλισθῆ. ("I take refuge with you not being able to speak against them about this in the village on account of their involvement.") The petition is about some sort of violence but the details are lost. If the restoration is correct it may indicate a local dominance of some kind.

As we might expect, problems of oppression often appear in connection with a category of weaker petitioner which we have discussed earlier in this chapter. P.Mich VI 422 Recto (197 AD) is a petition to the prefect in which Gemellus accuses Sotas and Julius the sons of Eudas of violence and arrogance and abuse of their local power and exploitation of his old age and bad eyes:

7.11 νυνεὶ δὲ
 Ἰούλιος καὶ Σώτας ἀμφότεροι
 Εὐδάτος οὐ δεόντως βιαίως)
 καὶ αὐθάδως ἐπεληλύθασι
 ἐδάφεσί μου μετὰ τὸ τὴν
 κατασπορὰν ποιήσασθαί
 με καὶ ἐκώλυσάν με
 ἐν τούτοις δυνάμι τῆ
 περὶ αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τῶν τό-
 πων, καταφρονούντων
 τῆ[ν]L περὶ τὴν ὄψιν μου
 ἀσθένειαν:

But now
 Julius and Sotas both
 sons of Eudas, wrongfully with
 violence and arrogance entered
 my fields, after I had
 sown them and
 hindered me therein
 through the power which
 they exercise in the locality
 contemptuous of me
 on account of my weak
 vision

In P.Mich VI 423 (197 AD) Gemellus follows up his petition to the prefect with a later one to the strategos about the same fellows and makes the same accusations. In P.Oxy VIII 1120 (Early III AD) a widowed woman, whose name is unknown, bemoans the hybris and violence of Eudaemon. She complained to officials but Eudaemon's "influence procured the failure of the petition, so that he should not seem indictable." (ll. 7-10: ἀλλὰ οὗτος ἐξείσχυσεν τὰ βιβλείδια ἀθετηθῆναι, ἵνα μὴ φάνη ἐπελευστικός). P.Sakaon 36 (c 280 AD)(=P.Ryl 114, Sel.Pap. II 293) Aurelia Artemis accuses Syrion of using his local *δυναστεία* against women and children.¹⁶⁷ P.Oxy XLVI 3302 Recto (300-1 AD) is a petition from Aurelia Serenilla who complains to the prefect that "violent and influential persons" have illegally detained her property (l. 5-6: τῶν καταλελιμμένων...ὑπαρχόντων ὑπὸ βιαιῶν καὶ δυναστῶν παρανόμως κρατηθέντων) and despite judgments on the ownership

167 (15) ὁ Συρίων καὶ ἀφαρπάζειν τὰ τῶν [νηπίων μου τέκνων τῆ τοπικῆ δυναστεία χρώμενος Compare the restoration of *δυναστεία* in SB XVI 12678 (27 July 179 AD). Cf P.Sakaon 45 (7 Dec 334 AD)(=P.Thead 24): τυραννία χρώμενοι καὶ ληστροικῶ τρόπῳ and the fragment BGU II 428 (II AD) which may be a petition but which also uses *δυναστεία* but the context is very unclear. See also SB XVI 12678 (27 July 179 AD), 15. Schlumberger, "Potentes and Potentia in the Social Thought of Late Antiquity", at 90, notes that in 293 AD Diocletian proclaimed a comprehensive law which forbade the misuse of *patrocinia potentiorum* in the judicial system.

question in her favour, the wrongdoers have gained confidence from their rough treatment (ll. 11-12: ἀνδρειαζόμενοι περὶ τὸ βιάζεσθαι με) and ignore legal decisions. These people have also put her name forward to the tax officials as the owner such that she has been charged with the tax and shut in the tax collector's prison. The verb ἀνδρεῖζεσθαι is derived from ἀνδρεῖος which indicates its association with the ideas of manly strength and therefore honour.¹⁶⁸

Under the influence of the Byzantine style by IV AD the description of similar situations become more sophisticated. In P.Amh. II 142 (IV AD) the exact details of the dispute are lost, but it seems to concern a dispute about land. The petitioner is Aurelius Germanus who suffers contempt not only for his quiet life but his appearance also:

πάλιν μετὰ τὸ γεωργῆσαί με αὐτὰ ἐπὶ πέντε ἔτη
] καὶ οὐκ εἴασ[ά]ν μοι πάλιν γεωργῆσαι καταφρονήσαντες τῆς περὶ
 ἐμὲ ἀπραγμοσύνης καὶ τοῦ σχήματος καὶ τῶν
] ουντές τ[ε τῶ] περὶ [αὐτ]οὺς πλούτῳ καὶ τῇ ἐπὶ τόπων τυραννίᾳ
 χρώμενοι ἐμοῦ τελοῦντος ἀπο[ι]καρποῦνται.

"Again after my farming the same land for 5 years, they did not allow me to farm them again, despising my quiet life and appearance...and using their wealth and local tyranny they reaped the harvest while I am spent."

By the mention of his appearance Germanus seems to suggest that the arrogance and wilful misuse of power by the wrongdoers displays a degree of capriciousness which should invite censure from the authorities.¹⁶⁹ In P.Oxy 1 67 (338 AD), we see an analogous description. Ptolemaios is in dispute with Pataësis Luluntis and Panechotes of the village of Lile over property which Ptolemaios inherited from his grandmother. Pataësis and Panechotes have taken possession of his property and Ptolemaios describes this as a form of oppression: (ll. 15-16) καταδυναστεύοντες ἐπέχουσιν. The use of the verb καταδυναστεύω calls to mind other petitions in which the local power of the wrongdoer is made important, and contains the implicit

168 See the commentary to l. 11.

169 See also P.Panop. III 29 (247/332 AD), 8: ἐπὶ τῶν τόπων] δυναστεύων; P.Cair.Goodspeed 15 (362 AD), 17: τυραννικῶ τρόπῳ.

suggestion that the illegitimate actions of Pataësis and Panechotes offer a challenge to the legitimacy of the laws and the government, being as we have already noted the negative compliment of the empowering effect of officials.

Oppression by officials is also found described without specific reference to a position of local power, though it may be implied. P.Tebt. III:1 777 (Early II BC) tells of a situation in which a tax farmer complains about the failure of a prison warder to let him go despite the provision of sureties, and asks the official not to allow him to be held in contempt: (10) μὴ ὑπεριδεῖν..καὶ καταπεφρονημένον ὑπὸ τῶν [...] P.Mich. 582 (49/50 AD) is a draft of a petition, with a tax list. The name of the official to whom the final version was to go is missing, although the editors suggest the prefect or the epistrategos on the basis of the appellation τὸν πάντων σωτηῆρα in ll 13-14. The petition concerns a recalcitrant tax collector. The petitioner(s) are not known but they complain about Horion, son of Petosiris, because he has failed to carry out his office of collector of public taxes. The petitioner says of Horion: καὶ πρακτωρεύσας ἀρίθμησις τέσσαρες κατεφρόνησεν, οὐκέτι τῆς [τάξεως] ἰσπράξεως ἀντεχόμενος ("and he served as collector for four *arithmeseis*, scorned his obligations, no longer undertaking the collection.") This use of καταφρονέω is an interesting extension of the honour shame concept. It should be seen as part of the censure of social disruptive attitudes, which as we have seen are an important component of the honour shame syndrome. The relevance of raising it in this document is possibly to be ascertained from the context of failure to perform the public duty. From what has been said above about the honour shame syndrome and its connection to social stability it is appropriate to interpret the text as implying that the failure to carry out the duties carries with it a threat of social disruption and trouble for the petitioners.

By late III to IV AD the tensions created by exploitation and economic vulnerability come more to the fore, usually covering serious corruption and conspiracies against other villagers. This is seen in P.Oxy VIII 1119 (254 AD)

together with a clash of attitudes between the official and persons of local importance. The petitioners are two Aurelii, Theon and Arsinoüs, who live in Antinoë, seek relief from wrongful inclusion in the list of those who pay certain taxes in Oxyrhynchus. They describe the mistake of the amphodogrammateus in so including them as "audacity and illegality" (l. 8: τὴν τόλμαν καὶ τὴν παρανομίαν).¹⁷⁰ The amphodogrammateus seems clearly wrong, in that the law exempted persons from the Antinoïte nome from paying tax elsewhere. The mere fact that Theon and Arsinoüs are in the social category which would expose them to the possibility of inclusion among those who should pay the tax suggests that they are from a wealthy family. Further the same document contains a letter from the senate and officials of Antinoë to the epistrategos Antonius Alexander in support of Theon and Arsinoüs. The use of the word "audacity" is slightly unusual, and suggests that Theon and Arsinoüs feel that it was directed at them.¹⁷¹ Compare P.Gen. I 4 (Early III AD), in which the recording of the petitioner, a metropolit, in a village outside the metropolis of the Arsinoïte nome, by the amphodarch, is said to be κατ' ἐπήρειαν, "by way of insult."

P.Oxy XII 1469 (298 AD) gives an interesting instance where the komarchs of the village of Païmis accuse a deputy strategos of corruptly understating the amount of earth dug by the inhabitants of Païmis for the repair of a dyke, 100 instead of 250 naubia. The komarchs send the petition on behalf of the whole village. They open their petition with an introductory sentence (ll. 3-5): μόλις μὲν ἄν, κύριε, τοῦ δικαίου ἐν τοῖ[ς] καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐπιτάγμασιν ὑπαρχθέντος ἡμῖν δυνηθεῖημεν ὀλοκλήρουντες παντελῶς διανύειν τὰ προσήκοντα, ἐπεὶπερ ἔαν πλεονεξία τις προχωρήσῃ καθ' [ἡ]μῶν δι' ἀδυναμίαν ἀναπόστατοι καταστη[σ]όμεθα. ("It

170 The amphodogrammateus seems to feature quite frequently as the source of official error. Cf BGU IV 1022 (13 Aug 198 AD) See P.Oxy XVII 2131 (207 AD) where the wrongful nomination to the post of public donkey-driver is placed among "unjust and lawless deeds of daring" (τοῖς ἀδίκως καὶ ἀνόμω[ς] τετολημένοις); P.Oxy IX 1202 (217 AD) deals with another mistake of an amphodogrammateus at Oxyrhynchus, Aurelius Sarapion, but he is not called arrogant or illegal.

171 A similar situation appears in P.Oxy IX 1204 (299 AD), where Aurelius Plutarchus who has the rank κράτιστος claims that his nomination for the office of decemprimus is οὐ δεόντως καὶ παρὰ πάντας τοὺς νόμους. Cf BGU XI 2063 (II AD). In P.Oxy XXII 2343 (288 AD) the nomination of the eirenarch Septimius Heracleides to the position of decaprotus is called by him as "being outrageously treated" (ἀρπαζόμενον)

is with difficulty, my lord, that even when justice is shown to us in commands concerning us, we could fully accomplish our duties, since, if any advantage is taken of us, our weakness will leave us no escape.") The juxtaposition of the *πλεονεξία* of the deputy strategos with the *ἀδυναμία* of the village neatly expresses the exposure of the general population to rapacious officials and the vulnerability of the smaller communities. *ἀδυναμία* resonates as the obverse of the empowering aspects of officials, which we discussed in the last chapter.¹⁷² This is further underlined by the adjective *ἀναπόστατοι* which expresses the reality of a small village caught in a web of powerful forces against which it can assert little or no control.¹⁷³

An archive such as the archive of Aurelius Isidorus gives a good insight into these problems in a small village, namely, Karanis in late III and early IV AD. Karanis at this time seems to have been a hot bed of scandal and corruption. In P.Cair.Isidor. 68 (309/10 AD) Aurelius Isidorus alleged a conspiracy between Achilles, the secretary of Karanis, Heron, Paësius and Horion to nominate Aurelius Isidorus as chaff collector in place of Paësius as well as protecting 13 persons who are evading their obligations to the village. About four years later in P.Cair.Isidor. 73 (314 AD), a petition to the prefect Julius Julianus, Isidorus, now tesserarius of Karanis, and Palemon, quadrarius of same village, in their official capacity allege against other officials, the *praepositus pagi*, no less, and the *komarchs* of Karanis, that they conspired to perpetrate unauthorised tax assessments and other fraud. They articulate their problem in the now familiar terms of oppression by the strong of the weak (ll. 3-5): ἡ[μεῖς ἐλάτ]τωναις ἄγροικοι τὰ δυνὰ πάσχομεν ὑ[πό τε τοῦ πραιποσίτου του πάγου Θεοδώρου καὶ τῶν κωμάρχων. καταπλήττουσιν ἡμᾶς, ὅπερ δικνύει τὴν π]ροαίρεσιν τούτων τῶν παμπονήρων ἀνδρῶν, οὔτοι

172 Compare P.Wisconsin I 3 (257-9 AD) in which an old man calls himself *ἀδύνατος* for a liturgy because of his weak eyes, and the local authorities have ignored the prefect's order of exemption.

173 Compare P.Oxy XIX 2235 (c 346 AD) a petition from Flavius Heracl() an ex-procurator against Diodotus the *ex-rationalis rei privatae* who has accused him of extortion. Schlumberger, "Potentes and Potentia in the Social Thought of Late Antiquity", 91, refers to the fact that Constantine prohibited the shifting of tax burdens by potentiores onto inferiors, in connivance with local officials, in three separate edicts in 313, 325 and 328 AD.

μὲν καταδυναστεύοντες ἐπὶ τῶν τόπων καὶ δέον φοβηθέντας αὐτοὺς τὸ μεγαλώτ[ατον] συγκρότημα καθ' ἡμῶν ποιήσαντες, καὶ ἀπ[αι]τήσις πεποιήνται ὡς βούλονται - μερισμοὺς παρανόμους πλείστους ("we, who are small farmers, suffer severely at the hands of the praepositus of the pagus Theodorus and of the komarchs. They terrorise us, and this reveals the character of these utterly wicked men, who play the tyrant locally, and while we show them due respect, do us great mischief") This passage shows how several strands, small vulnerable farmers, exploitative powerful local evildoers and anomic behaviour, are woven together to present a sorry picture which will be dealt with by the legitimate power of the prefect.

Private letters of the late Roman period shed some light on another aspect of honour and shame in dealings with the administration. P.Oxy XIV 1668 (III AD) is a letter of Charmus to Sopatrus. After describing some regulations concerning certain workshops, the workmen in which seem to have been demanding higher wages, Charmus urges Sopatrus to come since the prefect has granted an amnesty and there was no longer any danger. The reference is obscure, but may refer to ἀναχώρησις. At ll. 4 ff Charmus writes: ὁ ἡγεμῶν ἀμνησίαν ἔπεμψεν ἐνθά' ἄδελφ', καὶ οὐκέτι φόβος οὐδὲ εἷς ἔνει. ἐὰν οὖν θέλεις, ἴσσελθε καταφρονῶν, [ἐπι] ἡμεῖς γὰρ οὐκέτι δυνόμεθα ἔσω μείναι ("The prefect has sent an amnesty here, and there is no longer any fear at all; so if you will come boldly, for we are no longer able to stay indoors") In the translation of the editors, Sopatrus is urged to "go out boldly" It is possible to find καταφρονέω used in a sense of thumbing one's nose at danger or death.¹⁷⁴ In such situations it is connected with manifestations of personal courage. Here Charmus urges Sopatrus to give himself courage at the expense of the administration.

The same attitude can be seen in P.Oxy. XXXII 2730 (IV AD) which is a letter from Horion to Heraclius. Horion asks for the superior of Heraclius to seal an

174 *Polyb*, *Fragmenta ex incertis libris*, 1, 1, 1, 5, 2; *Plut*, *Apophthegmata Laconica*, Stephanus 216 C2; P.Oxy X 1242 (III AD), above, 362.

order for arrest of certain local authorities of the village of Enteiis, the estate-guard (παιδιοφύλαξ), the officers of the peace (οἱ ἐπὶ τῆς εἰρηνῆς) and the local policeman (ὁ ἀρχέφωτος) who have apparently connived in the theft of a water-wheel. At lines 14-18 he writes, μελησάτω σοι δέ, ἐπὶ ἱκανῶς καταφρονούσι τῆς οἰκίας ἡμῶν ἐν παντὶ πράγμα μάλον τοῦτον τὸν ἀρχέφωδον. ("See to it, since they have contempt enough for our house in every matter, especially this head policeman")

7.5 SUMMARY

We can see that in Greco-Roman Egypt the weak, the economically, physically or socially vulnerable were assiduous for centuries in approaching powerful and symbolically elevated officials, their godlike protectors and preservers, for help against oppressive and vexatious behaviour, in both the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, with sophistication of expression increasing in the Roman period, especially after II AD. In this more than anything we are given an insight into the role of the sovereign or official as forensic saviour. But this chapter has also shown how anomic disruptive and threatening behaviour of individuals in local contexts was consistently conceived as an issue of honour and shame in which the legitimate power of officials intervened either to ameliorate the dishonour of the wronged person or the administration itself or both. We have seen that this ties in neatly with the nature of the underlying relationship of supplication, and the general notion of reciprocity. But also it shows that an honour and shame antithesis went to the heart of the problem of anomie, and thus the process of legitimation had to address the problem of dishonour.¹⁷⁵ It can be seen that many of the basic conceptions of wrongdoers and the weakness of petitioners complimented and defined the positive and symbolic attributes of the official in the role of protector and thereby promoted the

175 D. Hobson, "The Impact of Law on Village Life in Roman Egypt" in B. Halpern, D. Hobson (eds.), *Law, Politics and Society in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 1993), 193-219, at 215, said "We see the importance attached to civilised behaviour...violence (βία) and insolence (ὑβρις) are an affront to the safety and dignity of the individual and as such must be dealt with forcefully to maintain the harmony of the community." This observation indicates well that honour was a central component of the collective system of normative regulation and went to the core of the ancient notion of anomie.

conceptualisation of the role as legitimate and this process helped make sense of the whole experience of power both illegitimate and legitimate. In the reciprocal relationship between petitioner and powerful official, the latter always expressly or implicitly had an interest by reason of the involvement of his honour and the honour of the administration. In the next chapter we shall turn to consider how these considerations link up with clearly religious matters such as prayers and ritual language.

CHAPTER 8

LETTERS, GODS AND OFFICIALS

Interactions with Power

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The discussion in the preceding chapters has tried to demonstrate the process of legitimation by exploring the language of interactions with legitimate power and the articulation of power relations in wider social relationships as they appear in petitions. But in that process there have also been allusions to parallels with other written interactions with other types of power from Greco-Roman Egypt. In this chapter we will take these up and consider them in more detail. In the view of the writer, it would be a mistake to place the language of petitions purely within a secular tradition of forensic oratory from the classical Greek world, even if that was a strong influence. In particular the divine nature of the sovereign in Egypt and the language of supplication invite investigation of religious connections. We will see that petitions were associated at a symbolic level with requests and supplications before gods and other types of unseen powers.

These matters have intrinsic interest, but they are very important for the argument of this thesis. They add a very substantial dimension of understanding to how the ancient mentality threw a wide net in the symbolic universe to make sense of power, and suggest a deep seated predisposition to conceptualise the experience of power, of all types as a reciprocal relationship depicted in religious or highly symbolic terms, particularly help, preservation and benefaction. The response to the power of gods, kings and officials meant that they could all be the objects of supplication, some by a ritual linguistic act and a physical act, others by a linguistic act alone. These ideas have already been touched upon but in this chapter it is

proposed to deal with them in more depth and we shall begin by examining the evidence for oral ritual appeals as they seem most closely to relate to petitions.

8.2 ORAL RITUAL APPEALS FOR HELP

Our understanding of the ritual and symbolic significance of the language of petitions is greatly assisted by comparisons with oral appeals for help to gods and monarchs and written appeals in the form of judicial or revenge prayers, which we will deal with in the next section. Appeals aloud to a god are well known from the ancient world. In Homer and Euripides gods come in response to the cries or shouts of their worshippers for help in the face of injustice.¹ A. Cameron argued many years ago that Sappho's prayer to Aphrodite contains passages which draw upon a similar formula of appeal.² Aphrodite "comes when she hears the βοή of her worshipper".³ There are a number of examples of people calling for help in petitions of the Ptolemaic period. The Ptolemies are known to have been summoned aloud by their subjects in much the same way as Sappho summoned Aphrodite. Such calls on the name of the king and queen are known from at least four certain examples which cover the entire Ptolemaic period: P.Cair.Zen. III 59451 and BGU III 1007 of III BC, P.Tebt. III 1, 798 of II BC and BGU VIII 1762 of I BC, in which the verb καταβοάω or βοάω was used to express the dual notions of "raise an outcry against" and "call upon for help." In P.Tebt. III:1 798 (II BC) Asclepiades, a sitologos, was attacked by bath attendants and his servant called out in the king's name: (17) τὸ δὲ περὶ ἐμὲ παιδάριον βοήσαντες τὸν βασιλέα παρεγενήθη[σα]ν πλ[ε]ί[σ]τοι[νες] ("but the servant with me having shouted for help in the king's name, several persons arrived")⁴ There is a clear connection between these linguistic expressions and cries for help to a living if divine king and cries in the name of a deity. Schubart explained calls on the king's

1 A. Cameron, 'Sappho's Prayer to Aphrodite', 32 *HTR* (1939), 1 at 10.

2 *Ibid.*

3 We should compare the reaction of the master of *Daphnis and Chloe*, IV.7 upon finding his beloved flowers destroyed by the rough, overbearing oxherd Lampis who was in love with Chloe. Upon finding the ruin of his plants he rent his cloak and "called on the gods with a great shout" (βοή δὲ μεγάλη θεοῦς ἀνεκάλει). Cf *Hel. Aethiop.*, II.23 where we find the exclamation of Calasiris upon hearing from Cnemon that Theagenes and Chariclea are alive: Ἄπολλον, ἔφη ἀναβοήσας, καὶ θεοί.

4 Sitologoi seemed to have been a frequent source of complaint eg SB XVI 12324 (Late IV AD).

name on the basis that the caller attracted immediate attention to his problem and the process had a certain legal meaning and consequence. But it also had a consequence of considerable social and ritual significance because it imposed responsibilities for assistance (Hilfspflicht) on the powerful figure thus invoked.⁵ Here we see that the oral appeal for help with its cultic associations involved a social ritual which entailed the same obligations as traditional supplication.

P.Tebt. III:1 798 (II BC) provides a good comparison with P.Tebt. III:1 804 (112 BC), since both petitions concern violent attacks which took place in roughly same period at Oxyrhyncha. In P.Tebt. III:1 804 (112 BC) a cultivator whose name is lost complains that certain persons broke into his house at night. He awoke and cried for help: βοήσαντος ἀνθρώπου.⁶ This may look like a simple cry for help to those in the vicinity. In fact the appeal for help appears in connection with the language and action of supplication which we have examined earlier, for example in the ritual act of taking refuge in a temple in P.Ent. 80 (c 241 BC). This is a petition to Ptolemy III Euergetes by Amenneus, isionomos, and his wife Stotoëtis who were attacked in the precincts of the temple of Isis; he took refuge at the altar and cried out for help: (10) ἐγὼ δὲ [κατάφυγων] ἐπὶ τὸν βωμὸν καὶ ἐβόων ἀ(ν)θρώπου, which suggest that the expression ἐβόων ἀ(ν)θρώπου denotes a ritualistic action designed to involve people nearby in rendering practical assistance under the auspices of the god of the sanctuary.⁷ In any event, the act of taking refuge at the altar and the summoning of help are naturally viewed within the same symbolic domain, that is, the cry of the weak and powerless for assistance. Petitions, at least initially perhaps,

5 "Königsideal", 16 ("eine bestimmte Rechts bedeutung mit bestimmten Wirkungen"). See also W.L. Westermann, "The Ptolemies and the Welfare of their Subjects", in *AHR* 43 (1937), 270-287 at 282.

6 Cf P.Ent. 81 (221 BC) in which an unknown woman complains of attack, and in describing the events which happened says (9) βοώσης ἀνθρώπου, καὶ πλειόνων συνελκόντων. One mentions in passing P.Oxy IV 717 (late I BC) which appears to be a complaint of some kind to an unknown official. In it the writer tells how he shouted and screamed at someone about a measure of corn. He mentions shouting and screaming (εκβοώντος δέ μου καὶ κράζοντος) no less than three times (ll. 1, 9, and 13) in 17 surviving lines but the context is obscure.

7 Cf BGU III 1007 (III BC). Compare the fuss and shouting by Clitophon at the violent abuse meted out to him by Thersander in the sanctuary of Artemis, and shame to Artemis it is said to cause in *Leucippe and Clitophon*, 8, 1-2.

were conceived of as a form of written appeal, and the existence of oral appeals or invocations of the king's name suggests such a connection. Cameron believes that it is the oral appeal which underlies the appeal to the king in Ptolemaic petitions.⁸ It is not only the nature of the appeal but the precise language used. The blunt ἀδικοῦμαι at the commencement of the background section in enteuxeis from III BC echoes the language used by victims in their ritual cries which imply an appeal for justice, such as, Euripides *Helen* 550, ἀδικούμεθ' ὦ γυναῖκες. The transfer of this oral cry to a written form is most obvious in prayers for justice and help. In her well-known curse from the early Hellenistic period, which Wilcken dates to either the time of Alexander or the first year of Ptolemy I, so from c. 340 to 283 BC,⁹ Artemisia appeals to "Oserapis and the gods who sit with Oserapis" for justice against the father of her children, and calls her request a supplication: (ll. 9-10) Κατέθηκεν Ἀρτεμισίη τὴν ἱκετηρίην τα[ύ]την: ἱκετεύουσα τὸν Ὅσ[ε]ρᾶπιν τὴν δίκην δικάσαι καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς τοῖς μετὰ τοῦ Ὅσεράπιος καθημένους. ("Artemisia placed down this supplication: beseeching Oserapis and the gods who sit with Oserapis to give justice")¹⁰ This language is strongly reminiscent of the language of supplication which was used in petitions in III BC and then later in the Roman period.¹¹

The German scholar Wilhelm Schulze remarked on the oral ritual signification of the shout, βοή, in Greek and especially its associations with suppliants and importantly its close semantic linkage with the notion of "helper" expressed in βοηθός.¹² However, it is the use of the verb καταβοάω which particularly gives us a sign of how the appeal for help in the petition drew its meaning and symbolic dimensions of signification from oral appeals for help. Καταβοάω and καταβοή appear in Thucydides in the sense "raise an outcry against", so that is a classical usage¹³ But P.Oxy XLVI 3285 is a Greek version, written down in II AD, of an

8 'Sappho's Prayer to Aphrodite'.

9 UPZ I at 97.

10 UPZ I.1.

11 Refer to Table 6.4.

12 W. Schulze, *Kleine Schriften* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1933), at 182ff.

13 Eg, 1.67, 5.47, 8.85 and see the entry in *LSJ*.

Egyptian legal code which is known in demotic from a papyrus of III BC.¹⁴ Καταβοάω is used in this code to express the process of making a complaint against another about a number of matters including ownership and access to land and buildings.¹⁵ The editor of P.Oxy. 3285 translates as "raise an outcry against" which indicates the connection to the process of invoking the king's name. Indeed, καταβοάω is precisely the verb used in P.Cair.Zen 59451 of calling on Zenon and PSI VI 551 of calling on the king, while it seems to be used in P.Lond. VII 2045 (III BC), also from the Zenon archive, in the sense "make a complaint."¹⁶ It appears in an edict of the prefect Tiberius Julius Alexander in the same sense.¹⁷ Again in Artemisia's curse she uses the word καταβοή as the designation of her written complaint.¹⁸ We see clearly in this how, in one of its aspects, the written instrument was assimilated to the symbolic domain of the ritual cry. Wilcken showed many years ago that the form of this curse, though written in Greek, has strong parallels with a demotic Egyptian curse to Osiris-Apis from one hundred years earlier.¹⁹ It is possible therefore that the appeal to the king had precursors in Egyptian culture, which are most closely reflected in the superimposed Greek culture by the use of καταβοάω as a Greek equivalent of the demotic term used to express the notion of making a complaint as well as a ritual verbal appeal. The process of submitting a written appeal in the form of the petition became assimilated into this symbolic domain. We find at least one example in which this connection may be explicit. P.Hels. I 1 (194/3-180 BC), a petition to Ptolemy V Epiphanes and Cleopatra designates an application to the court of the Laokritai by the term καταβόησις (l. 18): πεποίηται καταβοήσιν ἐπὶ τῶν λαοκριτῶν. The significance of this becomes clearer if a recent view of S. Allam is

14 See G. Matha, *The Demotic Legal Code of Hermopolis West* (IFAO, Bibliothèque d'Étude xlv, Le Caire, 1974).

15 It is also the verb used in the sense of "make a complaint against" in P.Lond VII 2045 (III BC), from the Zenon Archive.

16 P.Cair.Zen. III 59520 (III BC); P.Cair.Zen 59451 (III BC): πρὸς ὃν γὰρ καταβοήσωμεν οὐκ ἔχομεν σοῦ παρόντος; PSI VI 551: καταβοήσαντος δέ μου τῷ βασιλεῖ.

17 BGU VII 1563 (68 AD), 9.

18 UPZ I.1.6.

19 Ibid. at 101; *AJP* V 229.

correct in his conclusion that the nature of the court of the *λαοκρίται* was a collegiate court composed of judges selected from the native Egyptian notables.²⁰

If these conclusions are correct, the ancient oral appeal also underlies the later petitions from Egypt which followed those of the Ptolemaic era. This observation can help explain how secular officials could come to be addressed in strongly religious terms. It is also known that the name of the Roman emperor were similarly invoked in later centuries.²¹ To Schulze again, appeals against injustice both to the *polis* and the Quirites at Rome became transformed into an appeal to Caesar or his agents.²² A well known edict of the Jewish prefect of Egypt Tiberius Julius Alexander (BGU 1563 68 AD) uses the verb *καταβοάω* to describe the actions of the crowds of notables and farmers who approached him with complaints about taxes "almost from the moment" he entered Alexandria. We discussed above how in the Roman period the language of supplication addressed to Roman procurators became even more ornate, with strong classical echoes produced by using the traditional image of the suppliant's olive branch. We may note an interesting parallel expression in P.Panopolis Köln. III 29 (24/7/332 AD), a petition to the *exactor civitatis* which speaks also of "invoking" or "calling in aid" the greatness of the prefect: (15) ἐπιβούμενος τὸ μεγαλεῖον τοῦ αὐτοῦ κυρίου μου δια[σημοτάτου] ἡγεμόν[ο]ς ἐπιδίδωμί σοι ταύτην τὴν ἔκκλητον ἀξιῶν.... ("Calling in aid the majesty of the same lord my most excellent prefect I submit to you the claim asking...")²³ But it seems clear that the secular and religious roles of monarchs and officials were not sharply distinguished in Greco-Roman Egypt and the language of petitions stands in some sort of dialectical relationship with language from other ritual contexts.

20 S. Allam, "Egyptian Law Courts in Pharaonic and Hellenistic Times", 77 *JEA* (1991), 109-126.

21 See Price, *Rituals and Power*, 119.

22 Schulze, *Kleine Schriften*, 160-89. We may compare here the great shout in support of a just speech recorded in Dion Hal. XI.31, 1. Of more interest perhaps is the passage in Heliod. *Aethiopia*, Book IX.24 where the prisoners of king Hydaspes invoke the "Saviour gods" (θεοὶ σωτῆρες, ἀνεβόησαν ἅμα οἱ νέοι) upon hearing that their captor is Hydaspes, the implication being that he was a good and kindly king.

23 See the entry in *LSJ* which shows ἐπιβοάω was used in the classical period in the sense "invoke" or "call on" a deity.

Evidence of actual oral invocations of deities is not, understandably, very frequent in the papyri. But a record of a dream experience which incorporates an oral request to Sarapis and Isis is recorded in the letter of Ptolemaios to Damoxenos in UPZ I 78 (c 159 BC) and shows further similarities between oral invocations or appeals and the structure and content of petitions. The text comes from a group of "dream" texts originating in the Sarapeion at Memphis. Ptolemaios tells how he fell asleep on a pile of chaff and dreamed of the two twins Thauēs and Taus who performed services for the gods there. He relates how he saw many other things and called on Sarapis and Isis: (22) Καὶ ἄλλα τινὰ εἶδον πολλὰ καὶ πάλιν ἠξίωκα τὸν | Σάραπιν καὶ τὴν Ἴσιν λέγων· "Ἐλθέ μοι θεὰ θεῶν, | εἴλεως γινομένη ἐπάκουσόν μου, ἐλέησον τὰς διδύμας, | σὺ κατέδιξας διδύμας ("And I saw many other things and again I have made request of Sarapis and Isis saying, 'Come to me, goddess of the gods, be well disposed and hear me, take pity on the twins, you appointed them as twins") One particularly points out that the gods were effectively invoked by the use of the verb ἀξιῶ, a standard verb of request, as we have seen, in the Ptolemaic and Roman petitions. The use of the perfect tense may also be highly significant because it indicates that the person calling on the gods sees himself as being in the condition of having called on the deity. The association of the tense with requests to deities is another piece of evidence which helps us to understand the significance of the frequent use of the perfect to express the motif of supplication in petitions. We return to this below.

If we turn to Achilles Tatius we find a passage apt for comparison, being an oral supplication addressed to a powerful person, not a god, and the author also shows how the substantive ἰκετηρία could be employed metaphorically to designate an oral application for help as a gesture of supplication. In Book V.17, the slave Lacaena having been beaten and assaulted by Melite's steward Sosthenes, throws herself at the feet (καὶ ἐξαίφνης προσπίπτει τοῖς γόνασιν ἡμῶν γυνή) of her mistress Melite, and says:

Ἐλέησόν με, ἔφη, δέσποινα, γύνῃ γυναῖκα, ἐλευθέραν μὲν, ὡς ἔφυν,
δούλην δὲ νῦν, ὡς δοκεῖ τῇ Τύχῃ

and after dialogue makes an oral petition thus:

ὄνομα Λάκαινα, Θετταλὴ τὸ γένος· καί σοι προσφέρω μου ταύτην τὴν
τύχην ἰκετηρίαν. ἀπόλυσόν με τῆς καθεστῶσης συμφορᾶς· πάρασχε δέ
μοι τὴν ἀσφάλειαν, ἔστ' ἂν ἀποτίσω τὰς δισχιλίας· τοσοῦτου γάρ με
ὁ Σωσθένης ἀπὸ τῶν ληστῶν ἐωνήσατο.

"My name is Lacaena, from Thessaly. I place before you this my fate with all
supplication. Save me from this threatening disaster, grant me security until I
can pay you the two thousand pieces of gold; that was the sum for which
Sosthenes bought me from the hands of the pirates."

We see in this passage familiar themes of mercy, supplication and preservation and it
is rendered in a linguistic interaction between master and slave, clearly defining one
dimension of the disparities of power in that relationship.²⁴ Lacaena describes the
telling of her tale of woe metaphorically as the bringing forward of a supplication: σοι
προσφέρω μου ταύτην τὴν τύχην ἰκετηρίαν. The connections between this and
the submission of a written petition are clear. We can see the close connection
between such oral supplication to an addressee perceived to be powerful and the
particular extension of the traditional supplication motif, in petitions which we saw
earlier utilising phrases such as ἰκετηρίαν τίθημι.²⁵

Even in these short examples it is possible perceive how the written petitions
which were built around a request to powerful figures both physical and metaphysical
utilised a structure very close to the oral supplication for help. The perception of
distance between the deity and devotee and between master and slave are obvious
factors which account for the choice of language and the structure, and the
comparison really helps to show the basic association of ritual language in petitions
with supplications in other contexts.

8.3 WRITTEN APPEALS FOR HELP

24 Compare Chariton, *Callirhoe*, 2.5.1; 4.3.9; 4.6.1.

25 Cf Table 6.4 and chapter 6, 251 above and 288-9.

In light of these connections between oral ritual language use and petitions let us now turn to the written evidence. Achilles Tatius says that both a supplication and a prayer could be found in a lover's kiss, and it will be seen that both can be found together in petitions.²⁶ Prayers and petitions present a number of points of analogy which must be explored. We may begin by making some general observations. One of the primary verbs expressing the notion of approaching the powerful figure through a written audience, ἐντυγχάνω, which we discussed in chapter 5 can also be found as the verb of approaching gods, in the Roman period.²⁷ Often prayers seek the same thing as petitions, the redress of wrongs. The apparently secular or legal nature of the subject matter of petitions in fact strengthens their religious affiliations. Petitions are quintessentially a means by which to involve powerful figures in the troubles of ordinary mortals. So too are prayers. Indeed it is clear that petitions and prayers cover very similar subject matters. The questions to oracles in the *Sortes Astrampsychi* give "an excellent idea of the fears and needs of ancient man."²⁸ Such questions covered inheritances, fears of slavery, loss of wages, contracts, money, election to office and others.²⁹ Plutarch, *Mor.* 408 C lists the most often asked questions of oracles: εἰ γαμητέον, εἰ πλευστέον, εἰ δανειτέον, περὶ ὠνῆς ἀνδραπόδου, περὶ ἐργασίας. Similarly such issues regularly produced petitions and examples could be multiplied. These factors suggest that Greco-Roman petitions conceptualised the role of deities and powerful temporal figures as performing a function which was similar in many respects, and their power was invoked to mediate the everyday problems of ordinary people.

26 *Leucippe and Clitophon*, 1.10.5.

27 BGU I 246 (II-III AD). See 286 above.

28 H.S. Versnel, 'Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer', in *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1981), 6.

29 As in P.Oxy XII 1477 (III-IV AD). See also G.M. Browne, 'The Composition of the Sortes Astrampsychi', *BICS* 17 (1970), 95 ff; *idem*, *The Papyri of the Sortes Astrampsychi* (Meisenheim, 1974); J. Hengstl, *Griechische Papyri aus Aegypten* (Tusculum, 1978), 162 ff. See *New Docs* 2 8 for a list of the papyri. See also the following prayers to pagan deities: P.Oxy VI 923 (late II or early III AD); P.Fay 137-8, BGU 229-30; Wessely, *Script. Gr. Spec.* No 26. In P.Brit. Mus 1267d (*Afp* IV, 559) the questioner puts a question to the god Soxis and his problem revolves around the fact that he is about to be examined by the epistrategos!

We discussed at length in chapters 2 and 4 the epistolographical structure of the petitions and some of the cultural implications of this and in particular that the letter was the physical vehicle to achieve interaction with powerful figures and to invoke assistance against those who strayed into illegitimate and anomic behaviour. In this section it is proposed to make some short observations about the function of written communications in the wider religious context of Greco-Roman Egypt.

Written communications had a special stature. Writing is known to have had a strongly symbolic function in certain contexts in the ancient world, and Harris has remarked upon the fact that writing was believed to add dignity to communications. Writing also was felt to have a magical quality which may explain its association with the practise of magic in the ancient world and especially in Egypt.³⁰ This uniqueness is reflected in the tradition of communication between gods and mortals by letter in the ancient world, including Ancient Egypt.³¹ The phenomenon of *Himmelsbriefe* further shows how the letter was conceived of as an appropriate and no doubt effectual means of such communication.³² *IG X 2,255* contains the story of the conversion of a certain Xenainetos to the cult of Sarapis. Sarapis sent a divine vision twice indicating in dreams that Xenainetos should give to a Eurynomos, to whom Xenainetos was politically hostile, a letter from the god the reality of which was demonstrated when Xenainetos finds under his pillow a real letter.³³

The dreamlike quality of this evidence does however gain some grounding in material reality by the survival of letters from mortals to gods. Although the literary tradition suggests that the practice was common, the only example known to the

30 W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Harvard, Cam. Mass., 1989), 28-9; D.J. Thomson, "Language and Literacy in Early Hellenistic Egypt" in P. Bilde, et al. (eds.), *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt* (Aarhus Uni Press), 39-52.

31 W. Speyer, *Bücherfunde in der Glaubenswertung in der Antike* (Göttingen, 1970) See also E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, 1968), 106-108 and n. 19, where he notes the story Paus 10.38.13 in which the dream figure of Asclepius leaves a letter behind. For Egypt note D.J. Thomson, "Language and Literacy in Early Hellenistic Egypt", at 39-40.

32 R. Merkelbach *ZPE* 10 (1973) 49-54 and F. Sokolowski, "Propagation of the Cult of Sarapis and Isis in Greece", *GRBS* 15 (1974), 441-445; *BE* (1973) 278; (1976) 394.

33 (10) καὶ ἐπεργεθεὶς τὰν τε ἐπιστολὰν εὖρε ὑπὸ τῷ ποτικεφαλαίῳ (11) καθὼς αὐτῷ ἔτεκμάρθη.

writer of a letter addressed to a god is the fragment preserved in P.Oxy XLI 2976 from II AD, of the beginning of a document which is in the form of a private letter addressed to the goddess Thoeris, who is known to have had a cult at Oxyrhynchus.³⁴

The surviving part of the document is as follows:-

1. Θοήριδι Θεᾶι μεγίστη
 ἐν τῷ εὐτυχεστάτῳ τεμένει
 σου ἐχθὲς ἅμα τοῖς φίλοις
 ἐδείπνου. ὕπνῳ ἐνεχο-
5. [μεν-]

"...To Thoeris, most great goddess. I was dining yesterday with my friends in your most fortunate precinct. Overcome by sleep....."

It is difficult to draw wide conclusions from so small a fragment. However, the reference to sleep makes it tempting to see a connection between the content of this document and the dream letters mentioned above. In any event, this is a piece of evidence which shows that a written communication presenting the epistolographical structure, the letter form, was considered in the ancient mentality as an efficacious way to interact linguistically with both the unseen and seen types of power.³⁵ The opening addresses in petitions to the Ptolemaic monarch including cult epithets from II BC which invoked religiosity are especially reminiscent of this. We saw in earlier chapters that in the majority of petitions opening formulae were fairly plain and the language seems to have served only to mark the opening of the interaction presupposed by the petition, like a simple letter. But we noted in chapter 5 that in II BC the appellatives from the dynastic cult of the Ptolemies signifying how the sovereign was invoked in his or her cult capacity in petitions, as well as their capacity as law givers.³⁶

34 P.Merton II 73 and ZPE I (1967), 123, n. 11.

35 In the Egyptian context we may compare the habit of sending letters to the dead: A.H. Gardiner, K. Sethe, *Egyptian Letters to the Dead* (London, 1928) and letters to gods: K.-Th. Zauzich, *Die demotischen Dokumente*, in *Textes et langues de l'Égypte pharaonique III* (Kairo, 1974); D. Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep. Gottwerdung im alten Ägypten* (München-Berlin, 1977).

36 See chapter 5, 204ff above.

Furthermore surviving prayers at a structural level show features which may be described as epistolary. The use of the dative construction to address the god is of course redolent of the same type of structure in letters and petitions of all periods.³⁷ The written request to oracles had a basic structure similar to petitions: address τῷ δεῖνι - ὁ δεῖνα (sometimes prayer style), the question, request for an answer.³⁸ This made very clear by SB XVI 12677 (II BC) which is a Ptolemaic question to an oracle-

...[παρὰ]	from
Πτολεμαί[ου τοῦ]	Ptolemaios your
ὑμετέρου δούλ[ου].	slave
Ἐκπεπτωκῶ[ς]	Having been banished,
5 ἐνδεῆς τῶν ἀναγκαί[ων]	in need of the necessities
σὺν τοῖς τέκνοις	with children
ἀξιῶ δεόμενος	I ask beseeching you, the
εὐεῖλατοῖ μοι καὶ τοῖς	gods most merciful to me
τέκνοις μου γενόμενο[ι]	and to my children,
10 χρηματίσαι τὸ πιττά[κιον],	to answer the tablet
εἴ μοι συμφέρει καὶ	if it profits me and
ζήσομαι σὺν τοῖς παιδί[οις]	I will live with my
μου π ...[children...
βασιλικ[

The editors note that at the start of the petition was an "Hypomnema-Präskript" with the formula we know well from petitions to officials in Ptolemaic Egypt: [Τῷ δεῖνι καὶ τῷ δεῖνι θεοῖς μεγάλοις | [παρὰ] κτλ.³⁹ The request verb, particularly the combination ἀξιῶ δεόμενος, is also a "stereotype Wendung" in hypomnemata and enteuxeis of the Ptolemaic period and petitions of the Roman period.⁴⁰ Presumably these features bear witness to a perception of distance and inaccessibility

37 See chapter 4 generally and H.S. Versnel, 'Religious Mentality', 11.

38 R.P. Salomons, *Einge Wiener Papyri* (Amsterdam, 1976, 1-7 (=P. *Vindob. Salmons* 1) says the "Die Übereinstimmung mit der Briefstruktur and vor allem mit der Bittschrift (βιβλίδιον) ist augenfällig."

39 Cf BGU 229-30; Wessely, *Script. Gr. Spec.* No 26; P. Brit. Mus 1267d (*AJP* IV, 559).

40 Eg P. Ent. 5 (221 BC), UPZ I 41 (c. 161/60 BC); UPZ 106 (c. 99 BC). See M. Gronewald and D. Hagedorn, "Eine Orakelbitte aus ptolemaischer Zeit", 41 *ZPE* (1981), 289-93. For the Roman period see eg P. Ant. I 35 (Late III AD). We may note here that in the *Aethiopica* of Heliodorus, *Aethiop.*, Book II.27 (I-III AD) we find the word ἔντευξις used to denote a question to the Pythian oracle at Cirrha.

such that a written communication was necessary for both requests to gods and high officials.

If this suggestion is right, it has some significance. It supports the view of the ruler cult which was argued in chapter 5. The presence of cult appellations in petitions were not simply (somewhat extreme) examples of honorific titles required by the ruler, even though some have argued that the syntactical arrangement of ancient letters was so standard as to tell us little.⁴¹ After all opening addresses in letters of many types took the dative form in the ancient world. But one would have thought that the correct way to look at this evidence is to note that the written communication was clearly considered the efficacious method to cross geographical, social and metaphysical distances. The presence of the cult appellations in Ptolemaic petitions is entirely consistent with this and suggests a religious sense. Indeed, the letter form of communication shows how, on a symbolic level at least, there was a process of assimilating gods to sovereigns or vice versa, by reason of the fact that each was seen to possess the attribute of great power. It underscores the dependency and reciprocity inherent in the relationship of supplication.

There is support for this conclusion in the fact that the ancient mentality used language drawn from the cult position of the monarch and applied it to his or her role as mediator of disputes and the source of law. In the modern world these spheres are usually differentiated functionally and analytically. But in the ancient world the role of monarch as cult figure and judicial and administrative exponent were seen as substantially the same and were articulated in the same terms. The language of petitions to the Roman emperor was undoubtedly "strongly religious" and certainly, in petitions of the second and third centuries the adjective θεῖος was applied to the emperor, often in the superlative form θεϊότατος and petitioners appealed to the θειοτῆς of the emperor.⁴² In Egypt the neuter term θεῖον is found in the late

41 See chapter 5, section 5.2.1, at 196ff.

42 Price, *Rituals and Power*, 243, n. 31, 246 and references.

Ptolemaic period to designate in an abstract way "the divine" in petitions such as IGFayum 112.16ff (93 BC) ἀφόσια μὲν τελούνται ἀσεβήματα παρ' ἧν ἔχεις, θεότατε βασιλεῦ, πρὸς τὸ θεῖον εὐσέβεια ("...they committed acts impious acts of sacrilege, contrary to the piety which you profess, most holy king, towards the divine.").⁴³ The eminent French epigraphist Louis Robert took the view that θεῖος is never applied to statues of gods in the Roman period and became under the empire a term signifying "imperial", when used in connection with the emperor and his activities.⁴⁴ In the context of Egypt, however, this conclusion may need some modification. Whatever view is taken of the Roman ruler cult in Egypt or elsewhere it must be conceded that Augustus became σύνναος with Egyptian gods in Egyptian temples and this was followed in connection with later emperors.⁴⁵ If the meaning of θεῖος is really limited to "imperial" it makes a vocative address like θειότατοι αὐτοκράτορες in a petition such as P.Oxy XLVII 3366 (253-60 AD)(=P.Coll.Youtie II 66) difficult to make sense of. In light of all the other religious associations in the language of petitions from all periods a translation of such a vocative as "most divine emperors" should not be ruled out. This conclusion is supported by the use in petitions of abstract expressions to refer to the emperor, such as ἡ θεία τύχη in P.Oxy IX 1204 (299 AD) or the τυχή of the emperors becomes "heavenly" as in PSI XIV 1404 (IIIAD): (21) πρόσσειμι διὰ ταύτης μου τῆς δεήσεω[ς] ἀξιῶν, ἐὰν δοκῇ τῇ οὐρανίῳ ὑμῶν τύχῃ, χαρίσα[σ]θαί.

Further the fact that petitions involved and invoked the operation of the legal system demonstrates itself why the relationship with the religious sphere should be close. We noted in chapter 5 the fundamental overlaps between social stability, the

43 Robert, describes τὸ θεῖον thus: "la façon la plus générale et la plus abstraite d'invoquer la divinité", *Anatolia III* (1958) 113 (= *Op. Min. Sel.* I, 412)).

44 Robert (1960) 317 (= *Op. Min. Sel.* II 833) expresses the view. See also I. Olympia 53; Robert, *Hell.* II (1946) 146 n. 2 and BCH (Bulletin de Correspondence hellénique) 102 (1978) 401; Robert (1960) 317 = *Op. Min. Sel.* II 833. This view has been followed by a number of scholars: J. Rougé, "θειότατος Αὔγουστος", *Rev. Phil.* (1969) 83; *PCPhS* (1980) 73, no. 2 (= Reynolds *Aphrodisias and Rome* (1982) no. 54) and Hallof, "Die Inschrift von Skaptopara", *Chiron* 24 (1994), 405-429, at 425.

45 See F. Blumenthal, "Der ägyptische Kaiserkult", *AJP* V (1913), 317. See chapter 5, 210ff.

powerful monarch, the power of the gods and the system of law.⁴⁶ The importance of the Ptolemaic monarch and the Roman emperor as the source of and administrator of the law is well known.⁴⁷ But law had a consistent religious aspect in various parts of the Hellenistic and Roman world through the belief that it was a gift of a particular god such as Isis. For example, we may refer to an aretology like SEG 821 (II-I BC) (29) [σ]ὺ νόμους ἔδωκας, θεσμοὶ δ' ἐκαλοῦντο κατὰ πρώτας· τοι[γα]ρ οὖν αἱ πόλεις εὐστάθησαν, οὐ τὴν βίαν νομικὸν ἀλλὰ [τ]ὸν νόμον ἀβίαστον εὐροῦσαι ("You gave laws, but they were called thesmoi originally. Accordingly, cities enjoyed tranquillity, having discovered not violence legalised, but law without violence")⁴⁸ In the temple inventory of BGU 2217, II, 13 from Soknopaiu Nesos, dated sometime after 161 AD, there is mention of a statue of δικαιοσύνη. Sarapis was also recognised as a law giver.⁴⁹ We see in P.Mich VI 425 (198 AD), how the role of the emperor as law giver is expressly joined with his designation as saviour: (19) διὸ σωτῆρος τάξαντος τοὺς [ἀδικουμένους] συ προσεῖναι ἀδεῶς τῶν δικαίων τευξομένος ("Wherefore, since our saviour has ordained that those who are victims of injustice shall approach you without fear in order to obtain justice") This accords with the conclusion of Marie-Thérèse Lenger, twenty years ago, that the term πρόσταγμα, was a term which covered what the modern mind would consider both secular and divine: the term applied to royal and administrative ordinances as well as "designer l'expression imperative de la volonté divine" in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt.⁵⁰ The position of the prefect in the Roman period provides another illustration. As Bureth points out his subscriptions were treated as acts emanating

⁴⁶ See 238ff.

⁴⁷ "Das Hellenistische Königsideal", at 7. See also H.J. Wolff, *Das Justizwesen*. In an interesting extension of the usual associations of φιλανθρωπία (which is discussed elsewhere in this work) with the office and actions of emperors and prefect, in P.Oxy XVIII 2177 (III AD), which is another episode from the *Acta Alexandrinorum* the laws of Athens and Alexandria are described as (l. 15-19) πάν[των] γὰρ νόμων ἰσχυρότε[ροι] ὄντες τὴν εὐκράσ[α]ν [τῆς] φιλανθρωπίας ἔχουσι[ν]. ("for they are stronger than all other laws and have the happy blend of clemency and strength").

⁴⁸ See eg ; R. Merkelbach *ZPE* 23 (1976) 234-35; F. Solmsen, *Isis Among the Greeks and Romans* (Cam., Mass., 1979), 45.

⁴⁹ See the discussion in UPZ I at 36, §15.

⁵⁰ See "Ordonnances Divines et Prostagmata", in *Proceedings of the XII International Congress of Papyrology* (A.M. Hakkert Ltd, Toronto, 1970)(=ASP 7), 255-61.

from a sacred power, clearly expressed in adjectives such as *ιερός*, *δυνατός* or *εὐτονος*,⁵¹ while his court is also described as sacred: in BGU II 613 (138-161AD) a veteran Tiberius Tiberianus designates his request to the prefect Volusius Maecianus about an inheritance: *ἀξιῶ προσκυνῶν τὸ ιερώτατον βῆμα*.⁵² In petitions such as PSI XIII 1323 (147/8 AD) we see how the sacred conceptualisation of the laws could be brought into connection with a basic element of the symbolic order, that is, honour and shame, through the concept of contempt: of the person complained of it is said, *τῶν νόμων καὶ τῶν θείων διατάξεω[ν] καταφρονεῖ*.⁵³ The point is reinforced by the frequent association of illegal or anomic behaviour with ideas of impiety which we saw in the last chapter.⁵⁴

But the argument gains even more plausibility when we consider the, admittedly few, examples of language with clear religiosity addressed to officials other than the sovereign or the prefect. These seem to be restricted to the Ptolemaic period, or very early in the Roman period. Petitions to lesser officials rarely speak to the recipients as gods, but there are some examples which place strongly religious overtones on the role of the strategos, particularly. One example which has been mentioned in earlier chapters is UPZ I 122 (157 BC) a petition to the strategos Poseidonios, in which his role as a "saviour" or "preserver" is closely connected with divine activity: (17) *Διὸ ἀξιῶ, ἐπεὶ σὺν τοῖς θεοῖς | καὶ τῇ σῆι τύχῃ ἐκ θανάτου σέσωμαι, | ἐὰν φαίνηται, συντάξαι τοῖς παρὰ σου | μὴ κωλύειν με...* ("Wherefore I ask, since I have been saved from death with the help of the gods and your fortune"). By the end of the Ptolemaic period we strike some remarkable religious language in BGU VIII 1837, which opens in the following way:-

51 *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, 183; P.Mich VI 425 (198 AD) *ιερά ὑπογραφή*; P.Oxy XVII 2133 (Late III AD): *δεομένη κελευσέσαι δι' εὐτονωτάτης σου ὑπογραφῆς*; P.Oxy I 71 col. ii Recto (303 AD): *διὰ δυνατωτάτης σου ὑπογραφῆς*.

52 See also SB 7870 (107-8 AD); SB 4416 (c 157 AD); PSI 806 (Jan-Feb 158 AD). Compare the description in some documents, such as BGU XI 2061, 3 (207 AD), of the central fiscal institution in Alexandria: *τῷ ιερωτάτῳ ταμείῳ*.

53 Cf P.Oxy VIII 1119 (254 AD), 10, 18.

54 See chapter 7, 356 above.

τῶι θεοτάτῳ καὶ κυρίῳ
στρατηγῶι
παρὰ Σεμθέως τοῦ Πετοσίριος
τῶν ἐκ κώμης Τέκμι.

"To the most divine lord strategos from Semthes, the son of Petosiris, from the village of Tekmi."

The name of the strategos is lost but the editors indicate that it was probably Soteles who was strategos for the Heracleopolite nome.⁵⁵ It is arresting to find the strategos addressed in language which was, at least in previous generations, reserved for the highest official, the monarch. These examples undoubtedly reflect the accretion of power to local strategoi which had taken place during the Ptolemaic period and which the Romans took positive steps to stamp out.⁵⁶ We see something similar in an early Roman petition, BGU IV 1197 (c 13- 12 BC) to an official called Asclepiades, whose precise position is unknown but who is likely to have been quite senior in the hierarchy: (1) Ἀσκληπιάδῃ τῷ θεῶι καὶ κυρίῳ παρὰ Στοτοσήτιος τοῦ Νούχῳως ἱερέως καὶ προφήτου Ἀρσενήσιος καὶ Σαράπιος θεῶν μεγίστων ("To Asclepiades the god and lord from Stotoetis the son of Nouchis priest and prophet Harpsenesis and Sarapis the greatest gods")⁵⁷ It is not entirely clear why the strategos or other high officials should be clothed in the language of divinity. It is unsafe categorically to extract a trend from this slight evidence, but it is tempting to infer that symbolic language attached to the role of the king, the attributes of divinity, are being reinterpreted and used for approaches to the wider administrative hierarchy, in the popular consciousness of Ptolemaic Egypt. It suggests that there may have been difficulty pinpointing where the main centre of power was, and this accords with the

55 BGU VIII 1835, 115. In this connection we should also note τῶι κυρίῳ στρατηγῶι in another document from the same archive, BGU. VIII, 1819 (60/59 BC). A correspondence between petitions to the strategos and magical papyri may be seen in BGU VIII 1833 (51/50 BC) which is a petition to the strategos Seleukos from Heracleopolis (7) Ἄφ' ἧς σοι συνεστησάμην | ἐντυχίας εἰ κτυθεμένη τὴν περὶ ἐμ[ε] | ἀσθένειαν (see 323 above). In several magical papyri ἐντυχία, which can mean "petition", is used in the sense of "prayer", P.Mag.Par I 1930, P.Mag.Leid. 4.10, while the passive of συνίστημι is also used in magical papyri in the sense "come into connection with", signifying the crossing of the divide between human and divine: P.Mag.Leid. I 29, P.Mag.Par I 1, 128.

56 See chapter 3, 133 above.

57 Compare the opening of BGU IV 1201 (2 BC) a petition to a certain Soterichos whose position is also not given: Σωτηρεῖχῳ τῶι θεῶι καὶ κυρίῳ. The editors tentatively identify this Soterichos with the priest of the same name in BGU IV 1198. If this is right Asclepiades may also be identified as a priest and this could partially help explain the use of the appellation θεός.

conclusion we noted in chapter 3 that local figures developed and were perceived to have considerable power, especially in the last decades of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

Some further support is gained from the statement by priests, in petitions, that they will continue to make libations and perform other acts of ritual in connection with the gods and the monarchs, and this was a pattern which carried over from the Ptolemaic to the Roman period.⁵⁸ But this activity was extended in the Ptolemaic period to the strategos. In BGU VIII 1835 (51/50 BC), a petition to the strategos Soteles, after the opening, which is unremarkable (Σωτέλει συγγενεῖ καὶ στρατηγῶι καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν προσόδων), the petitioners, who are the priests of the god Semarpochratos on Hiera Nesos, near Philadelphia, write:-

(5) Οὐ διαλίπομεν
καθ' ἡμέρ[α]ν ἕκαστην εὐχόμενοι
ὑπέρ τε σοῦ καὶ τῶν τέκνων
τάς τε θυσίας καὶ σπονδὰς καὶ
λυχνοκαίας.⁵⁹

"We do not cease every day praying for you and your children, making the sacrifices and libations and lighting of lamps."

The priests say that they are in serious trouble because of the sickness and lack of man power and this may explain the presence of such a clear religious influence in the language in this document, although there are no such background facts to explain the use of θεότατος in BGU VIII 1837, just discussed. We might also compare from the same group of documents BGU VIII 1854 (I BC) which is very fragmentary, but the remaining parts when enhanced by restorations seem to show the grouping of gods, kings, dioiketes and strategos together as objects of libations and ritual actions.⁶⁰ The

58 F. Dunand, "Culte Royal et culte impérial en Égypte. Continuités et ruptures", in G. Grimm et al., *Das Römisch-Byzantinische Ägypten* (Phillip von Zabern, Mainz, 1987), 47-56, at 54.

59 This is the formula used in connection with the Ptolemaic monarchs: see Di Bitonto (1967), 46 and (1968), 103 and P.Amh. II 35, 49-55 or P.Heid. VI 380 (209 or 192 BC), where the editors note that the formula is particular employed by priests in enteuxeis. The same expression is used of ministrations for Isis in P.Ent. 6 (221 BC) and P.Ent. 80 (c 241 BC). See also BGU I 287 (250 AD).

60 (II.16-18)[.....] συνέχεσθαι μέχρι τοῦ τὰς Ἰσας λυχν[οῦ] [καίας ἐκτεῖσαι ὑπὲρ τῶν θεῶν καὶ κυρίων βασιλέων καὶ τοῦ διοικητοῦ καὶ σοῦ, where σοῦ refers to the strategos. Compare the similar language of P.Oxy XLIV 3164 (4 Sept 73 AD) in connection with the Roman imperial cult, discussed further below, at 396. The addressee is lost. Some other petitions in which priests are the

editors conclude that the writer is probably a priest.⁶¹ It may have been the case that priests had an important influence upon the language of petitions, if only because there were general points of connection between priests and the activity of writing and delivery of letters. In Ptolemaic Egypt there was a tendency to draw scribes from the priestly ranks.⁶²

Finally, the language of benefaction and preservation which characterised addresses to Ptolemaic monarchs and not only the Roman emperors but even the Roman procurators of Egypt, which we discussed in chapter 5, may also have echoed at a broad symbolic level the preserving and protecting power of Greco-Egyptian deities. For example, Sarapis has a well attested role as saviour expressed in Greek by the substantive σωτήρ. UPZ II 199 (20 Nov. 131 BC) is a letter from the deputy Thebarch Dionysios to the banker Diogenes about a temple debt, and he refers to the god Amonrasonter as (9) τὸν καὶ ἀρχῆς καὶ νῦν σώζοντα ἡ[μ]ᾶς. P.Oxy XI 1381 (IIAD) is an interesting text in honour of Imouthes, the Egyptian Imhotep who was in the Roman period identified with Asclepius the god of medicine. The papyrus contains the surviving portion of a text which tells the story of the discovery of a papyrus-roll concerning the worship of Imhotep. The narrator explains that the god through dreams cured his mother of an "ungodly quartan ague" which afflicted her for three years and they rendered due thanks to their "preserver" through sacrifices (Col iv, 77-9: ἡμεῖς δὲ [[μη] τὰς εἰκουρίας διὰ θουσιῶν τῷ σώσαντι ἀπεδίδομεν χάριτας) and later speaks of "the saving power of the god" (Col x, 217: ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ δύναμις σωτήριος). These ideas are of course to be expected in connection with a god of medicine, but their importance lies in the fact that they call to mind the language of petitions which described the preserving and protecting capacities of officials leading us to consider that, in the popular mind, there was a very strong

petitioners are BGU I 1, II 362; IV, 11, 646, IV 1197, 1200; P. Ryl IV 557; SB IV 7457, Wil *CHR* 6, 70; P. Amh II 35.

61 BGU VIII 1854, 132.

62 M.R. Falivene, "Government, Management, Literacy", *Anc. Soc.* 22 (1991), 203-227 at 223.

association between religious attributes and the possession of what we would call secular power and it can be seen that they travel in a symbolic domain which also embraced the protecting and preserving conceptions of monarchs and officials. The matter of most significance is that when they collectively came to make sense of the power of kings and officials people chose the symbolic elements which encompassed both temporal and divine power. The attributes and function of protection, preservation and benefaction were central to the conception of power.

So the modern predilection for seeking meaning in function is not a satisfactory guide to the ancient world. The association in the collective mind between *εὐνομία* and the application of power regulated by laws shows why the conceptualisation in religious terms was quite natural. The role of the monarch and his officials in carrying out legal functions should be understood as symbolically and conceptually close to this aspect of deities in Greco-Roman Egypt, and in fact the evidence gives a strong impression that in the context of forensic institutions the symbolic precinct of legitimate power was occupied by gods and sovereigns, and at its periphery, by functionaries as well who were drawn into the lives of ordinary people by a written communication to help with ordinary problems.

8.3.1. Reciprocity

We must turn now to an aspect of the mentality of ancient prayer which is especially significant in light of the relationship of reciprocity, seen particularly in the language of supplication, which we have identified as underlying the relationship between the petitioner and the sovereign or official. The notion of reciprocity was fundamental also to the mentality which underlay ancient prayer. Versnel adverts to the "the tendency in popular religion to regard the relationship between gods and men as one of reciprocity. If the gods neglected their duty and afflicted their devotees, the sufferers retaliated by turning their backs on the gods."⁶³ It is possible to see

63 'Religious Mentality', at 41.

something of this in the way, which we discussed in chapter 3, petitioners from the Ptolemaic to mid IV AD at least, drew specific attention to the threat to revenue by inability to cultivate and sometimes turned their backs on the king or government by fleeing their land and financial responsibilities.⁶⁴ We have seen in earlier chapters how petitions included formulae which were full of the references to benefactors and benefactions and the frequent conclusion with expressions such as ἕν ᾧ εὐεργετημένους.⁶⁵ Bureth made the point in respect of Roman petitions that the position of these phrases at the end seems to produce a subtle emphasis in meaning, whereby the petitioner made it more important for the recipient to recognise his role as a benefactor than it was him to dispense justice.⁶⁶ This was a way of underlining the reciprocal nature of the relationship between petitioner and official. Similarly the appeal to the king or official for justice, kindness and generally assistance was constituted as a relationship which invoked the obligations and responsibilities of supplication.⁶⁷ This was a relationship of reciprocation and the mention of the connection between assistance to the petitioner and the protection of government revenues shows how the relationship between petitioner and government was balanced by an aspect of mutual benefit. If the petitioner received his help, the government got its money. Undoubtedly we should see in this a clear echo of the *do ut des* mentality of ancient prayer, if somewhat inverted, and it encapsulates the process whereby the structures of signification, the symbolic order, intersected and combined the realities of the structures domination and legal institutions. But the point is also illustrated by P.Oxy XLIV 3164 (4 Sept 73 AD), in which the threat is not to government revenue but to the continuation of sacrifices and libations. The name of the recipient of this petition is lost, but in it Sois implies a threat to the continuance of proper ritual activities for the imperial cult if his requests (which are also lost) are not met. The editors draw the analogy between this and the theme of

64 See chapter 3, 115.

65 See chapter 5, 220 fn 104.

66 Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, 177.

67 See chapters 5 and 6.

threat to the revenues of the government.⁶⁸ It points out the strength of the notion of reciprocity in the dealings with powerful figures in the ancient world. The element of exchange, often expressed in the commercial language of debt and payment, was fundamental in dealings with deities.⁶⁹ The concept of exchange has been seen as the fundamental nature of the act of supplication.⁷⁰ It is also on one view the basis the system of public benefactions by notables in the ancient world, which we touched on in chapter 5.⁷¹ So all these considerations constitute a stark reflection of how resilient the notion of reciprocation was to negotiate power. It underwrote the symbolic order which legitimated institutionalised judicial and administrative positions, community benefactors and the activities of metaphysical agents. We will explore this further in the next section.

8.3.2 Judicial and Revenge Prayers

However, it is in a particular category of ancient prayer that we can most clearly see the extent to which petitions and prayers coalesced. Petitions in the Roman period often explicitly seek revenge from the action of a powerful official, as in BGU I 195 (c 161 AD): (37) καὶ δυνηθῶ ἐγδικ[ασθ]ῆναι | κατα[φ]ρονηθεὶς ἐκ τῆς περὶ [τῆ]ν | στρατίαν ἀπου[σ]ί[α]ς μου.⁷² Prayers for revenge and curse tablets on lead are well known from the ancient world, and H.S. Versnel has made a close study of them.⁷³ He makes the observation that 'juridical' or 'revenge' prayers from the Hellenistic and imperial periods are motivated by the fact that "When the state

68 Compare UPZ 106 (c 99 BC) a petition to Ptolemy Alexander and Berenice, where the threat is to the continued services on behalf of the gods Osorapis and Osoromineuos. However, in the petition these services are linked to the safety of the king and prayers for him and his queen (5ff). See document 5, chapter 4 above.

69 Versnel, 'Religious Mentality', at 56. There may also be a connection between the public approbation of P.Oxy. 41 and *gratulationes* in Roman activity, *ibid.*, 44.

70 A point specifically noted by Freyburger, "Supplication grecque et supplication romaine", *Latomus* 47 (1988), 501-525.

71 See Veyne, *Bread and Circuses*, for a discussion, even if he does not subscribe to the idea himself. Versnel, 'Religious Mentality', at 88.

72 Some other examples are BGU I 136 (24 March 135 AD).

73 "The Appeal to Justice in Judicial Prayers", in Cl. A. Faraone, D. Obbink (eds.), *Magika Hiera* (OUP, New York, 1991), 60-106. See also, A. Audollent, *Defixionem Tabellae* (Paris, 1904).

apparatus is either lacking or incapable of enforcing the law, or when there is no such thing as a concrete proof, the god must assist."⁷⁴

Versnel distinguishes three categories of prayer from the general genus of *defixiones*, namely, prayers for justice, prayers for revenge and confession inscriptions. Prayers for justice or the intercession of gods for legal redress were formulated as requests in the same way as petitions. He refers to the *defixiones* from Knidos in Asia Minor which are DT nos 1-13 (III to I BC) and quotes DT 2:-

Ἄνιερῶι Ἄρτεμεις Δάματρι Κούραι θεοῖς παρὰ Δάματρι πᾶσι ὅστις τὰ ὑπ' ἐμοῦ καταλιθθέντα ἱμάτια καὶ ἔνδυμα καὶ ἀνάκω(λ)ον, ἐμοῦ ἀπαιτ[ησά]σας οὐκ ἀπέδ[ωκέ] μοι. ἀενέγκα[ι] αὐτὸς παρὰ Δ[άμ]ατρα καὶ εἴ τις ἄλλος] τὰμὰ ἔχ[ει πεπηρ]μένος ἐξ[αγορεύ]ων. ἐμοῖ δὲ ὅσια κ[αὶ] ἐλεύ[θερα.....] καὶ συμπιεῖν καὶ συμφαγεῖν καὶ ἐπι τὸ αὐτὸ στέγος ἐ[λθ]εῖν. ἀδίκημαι γὰρ Δέσπο[ι]να Δάματερ...

"Artemis dedicates (accurses) to Demeter, Kore all the gods together with Demeter, the person who will not return to me the articles of clothing I left with him although I asked for them. May he himself bring them back to Demeter, and if someone else now has my possessions, may he, consumed by fire, confess it publicly. But let me not infringe any divine law in this and may I be free...to drink and eat and consort under the same roof (with the accursed). For I have suffered wrong, o ruler Demeter..."

The last clause is of course reminiscent of the ἀδικοῦμαι ὑπὸ of III BC petitions of the Ptolemaic period.⁷⁵ Versnel notes this connection and says "the apologetic-sounding apostrophe ἀδίκημαι γὰρ Δέσπο[ι]να Δάματερ, which was a commonly used term in the Ptolemaic-Egyptian *enteuxeis* on which our prayer was undoubtedly based."⁷⁶ This is a very noteworthy possibility. It suggests that the language of prayer was influenced by the language of petitions, not necessarily vice versa. If that was so it means that ordinary folk took forms of expression from the legal and

74 'Religious Mentality', at 21. The blurring of the roles of legislation and curses represent a long tradition in Ancient Egypt. Jan Assmann has shown that, in the Pharaonic period curses and law are parallel in that "both establish a link between crime and punishment, the defining difference being that curses are to be enforced by superhuman powers and laws by legal institutions. In Egypt, the vizier acts as the head of legal institutions, whereas the king already belongs to the superhuman sphere." in "When Justice Fails: Jurisdiction and Imprecation in Ancient Egypt and the Near East", *JEA* 78 (1992), 149-162, at 162.

75 Cf DT 8, 20.

76 Versnel, 'Religious Mentality', at 22.

administrative spheres and adapted them for their interactions with deities. The argument is strengthened by pointing to the fact that in ancient curses from the III AD it is possible to find phrases such as ἀξιῶ ὑμᾶς κατὰ τῆς δυνάμεως ὑμῶν ἵνα ἀδυνάμους ἀβοηθήτους ποιήσατε.⁷⁷ This of course bears a very close similarity to the language of incapacity and weakness which we have seen and discussed in the request section of petitions from earlier periods and certainly from the Roman period.

The curse of Artemisia (UPZ I, 1 (IV BC)), in which she lays a curse on the father of her dead daughter, stands in a position clearly between defixiones and petitions. As Versnel says, "There are reminiscences of curse formulas, but there is no coercion, the god is master, the human subservient." This is a significant step towards the relationship of supplication, underpinned by reciprocity and dependency, which so characterised petitions.⁷⁸ The gap is further closed by a πιπτάκιον to Demeter whose purpose was to force the culprit of an unsolved crime to suffer some miraculous punishment.⁷⁹ The complaint is against Epaphroditos who incited slaves to flee with the help of evil practices. The opening passage is:-

Κυρία Δημήτηρ βασίλισσα, ἰκέτης σου προσπίπτω ἐπὶ σέ καταφεύγω σοῦ εὐλάτου τυχεῖν καὶ ποιῆσαι με τοῦ δικαίου τυχεῖν....ἐπάκουσον, θεά, καὶ κρίναι τὸ δίκαιον...βασίλισσα, ἐπάκουσον ἡμῖν παθοῦσι, κόλασαι τοὺς ἡμᾶς τοιούτους ἠδέως βλέποντας.

"Ruler Demeter, queen, I fall as a suppliant at your feet...I seek my refuge in you to ask your mercy; grant that justice be done to me.. Listen and grant, goddess, and pass righteous judgment...Queen listen and hear us sufferers, punish those who see us with joy in this condition."

In a fashion very similar to petitions the one who prays to Demeter articulates his response to the deity in terms of supplication and expresses the hope of "meeting with" justice by her involvement. The adjective εὐλάτος was one of the most frequently used attributes of deities addressed in curse tablets and we find it used of

77 DT 161.

78 See chapter 7, 348 above. H.S. Versnel, "Beyond Cursing", at 68-9.

79 This is a tablet from Amorgos published by Homolle, *BCH* 25 (1901) 413 ff (=IG XII, 7=SGD 60). There is a question about the date. J. Zingerle, *Österr. Jahrbh.* 23 (1926) 67 ff dates it to the II BC. Conversely, Homolle, *op. cit.*, and G. Björck, *Der Fluch des Christen Sabinus* (Uppsala, 1938), 129 ff, date it in the Roman period, which in some ways would be more interesting.

the Ptolemaic monarch.⁸⁰ The interpretation of Versnel is once again worth quoting:⁸¹

"...we have a humble supplication from a submissive mortal to a sovereign goddess, who is asked to show her "mercy" and to "hear" the suppliant by avenging him and punishing the guilty...here the curses are not pronounced by the writer himself but rather placed in the hands of a goddess upon whose sovereign power the writer makes himself totally dependant "

The analogy with the nature of a petition is very obvious and Versnel himself notes that in the judicial prayer the deity is presented as the all powerful being in the same manner as the sovereign in Egyptian *enteuxeis*.⁸² Thus the conclusion is confirmed that in fact petitions and judicial prayers lie at different points along the same spectrum of what Jan Assman has called "connective justice." In human law the state provides the consequence or penalty of actions which are wrong. Where human law is unable to do so, for example because of secret criminality, the divine comes into play. Curses and imprecations "extend the range and efficiency of connective justice, beyond the sphere of legal institutions into the sphere of divine maintenance of cosmic order. They presuppose and confirm a world-view where both cosmic and social order follow the same principle of retribution."⁸³

It is also worth noting that the "listen and punish" motif urged upon Demeter in the curse, finds a strong echo in later Roman petitions such as P.Mich VI 425 (198 AD), sent by a certain Gemellus Horion to the epistrategos, but enclosing a petition to the prefect. The petition to the prefect concludes with a request section thus: (19) διὸ σωτήρης τάξαντος τοὺς [ἀδικουμένους] συ προσειέναι ἀδεῶς τῶν δικαίων τευξομένος, ἀξιῶ ὑπὸ σοῦ, κύριε,] ἀκουσθῆναι καὶ ἐγδικηθῆναι ἕν' ὧ εὐεργετημένος. ("Wherefore, since our saviour has ordained that those who are victims of injustice shall approach you without fear in order to obtain justice, I

80 See SB XVI 12677 (II BC) above, 387. The collection of *defixiones* from Knidos in Caria which form nos 1-13 in DT all use it of Demeter. It is found directed to the Ptolemaic sovereign in P.Petr II (III BC) 13, 19, 3, UPZ II 199 (20 Nov. 131 BC), 8.

81 "Beyond Cursing", 70.

82 Ibid., 80.

83 J. Assmann, "When Justice Fails: Jurisdiction and Imprecation in Ancient Egypt and the Near East", JEA 78 (1992), 149-162, at 151.

request, my lord, that I be heard and avenged by you, so that I may be benefited.")⁸⁴ One is inclined to suggest tentatively that it may be possible to see an echo in this of the god who "hears" and is exalted with the epithet ἐπήκοος, which became a standard cult epithet of certain types of god, and in an inscription such as SIRIS 389 is found joined with σωτήρ and εὐεργέτης in connection with Sarapis: Διὶ Ἡλίῳ μεγάλῳ Σαράπιδι σωτήρι πλουτοδότῃ ἐπηκόῳ εὐεργέτῃ ἀνεικήτῳ Μίθρα χαριστήριον.⁸⁵ But importantly for our purposes, the link is made clear by the application of the epithet ἐπήκοος to the emperors, such as, Heliogabalus and Caracalla.⁸⁶ The hearing god becomes the god who grants requests, as we see in the invocation at the end of SGD 60, discussed above: ἐπάκουσον, θεά, καὶ κρῖναι τὸ δίκαιον, "listen and grant, goddess, and pass righteous judgement", and in this we can see a further significance of the ritual shouting discussed above.⁸⁷ And as Versnel says, "A final consequence then, was that the believer did not pray to the god but to the ears of the god."⁸⁸ Again we seem to have an interesting echo of this in SB III 7205 (End III AD), petition to the praeses, who is designated as σωτήρ in the introductory sentence (l. 4), from Petechon son of Mersis who held a piece of land from the embalmers category in the village of Chosis in the Great Oasis. He complains that certain "dwellers outside the gate" are trying to throw him off with violence. In his recitation of the facts, he suddenly makes the observation about the praeses: (8) ἀκήρατοι σου αἰ ἀκοαί, "your ears are undefiled" Precisely what this is meant to signify, is not clear. Perhaps he means that the mind of the praeses has not yet been poisoned by anything the wrongdoers might have said. But it is closely aligned with the formula of the listening and judging official and connects at yet another point with the attributes of deities.

84 Cf P.Tebt II 304 (167-8 AD); P.Oxy XXXI 2563 (c170 AD) to the epistrategos.

85 "Religious Mentality", 34-5.

86 Ibid., 36-7.

87 Ibid., 30.

88 Ibid., 36 where he notes that this religious phenomenon was particularly marked in Egypt. See eg SEC XXVI 1143 (Pisa) and SEC XLII 1628/1929 (Kanopos) for ears on votive reliefs designating the deity as ἐπήκοος, and SB VIII 10182 (I-II AD) a dedication to Ἰσιδὶ Ἀκοαῖς. Compare the criticism of traditional gods who "have no ears" in the Athenian hymn to Demetrius in II BC (*Deipnosophistae*, 253e)

But it is also of great importance that we understand how written language could be used to articulate the symbolic acts of supplication directed to actual deities, not only mortal monarchs or officials. The Amorgos pittakion (above, 399) and the language used in it became the act of supplication. Its language was not just "figurative" but constituted an action, supported by the act of submitting the petition, of supplication. The artefact itself containing the writing had ritual significance and was integral to the efficacy of the process. It was put in an appropriate place. The curse of Artemisia was placed in the temple for all to see.⁸⁹ Otherwise prayers for justice if directed to gods of the underworld were put in graves or wells.⁹⁰ If directed to the gods in the heavens they were placed, on, beside or below statues of the deity.⁹¹ As we will shortly see these factors provide a good way of understanding some dimensions of the petition as an artefact.⁹²

8.4 SUPPLICATION AGAIN

The discussion has led us naturally back to the issue of supplication, and particularly to the questions which were posed in chapter 6 about "figurative" supplication, that is, words of supplication without actions which are somehow in a different and lesser category. It is certainly true that the language of supplication in petitions seems apt to be described as the "intensification of the language of diplomatic appeal." But underlying these approaches of Gould is a conventional distinction between words and deeds.⁹³ Now of course his view would need modification if we treat language use as a form of action, and this possibility will be addressed in a moment.

But here we can make the observation, that even if we accept a category of "figurative" supplication, we need to consider in what sense its efficacy is diminished, or to approach the question from the angle of Gould, what difference the written

89 Versnel, "Beyond Cursing", 81.

90 Ibid.; "Religious Mentality", 33.

91 Ibid.

92 As G.H.R. Horsley remarks about the survival of oracle questions, "We can readily understand the survival in written form of questions if we think of them being left at the temple after presentation to the god by the petitioner." *New Docs* 2, §8, at 38.

93 See chapter 6, 253, fn 4 above.

supplication makes. For example, a scholar such as Bureth, whose study of Roman petitions has been referred to many times in this thesis, had no trouble understanding that the language of supplication and pity had an important psychological dimension.⁹⁴ The evidence from the novels supports this contention. A clear echo of the rhetorical tradition can be seen in the musings of Clitiphon in the *Leucippe and Clitiphon* of Achilles Tatius (II-III AD), after they have fallen into the hands of an Egyptian-speaking band of robbers. In considering the better chances they would have stood with Greek speaking robbers, he thinks:⁹⁵

λησπτήν γὰρ Ἑλληνα καὶ φωνὴν κατέκλασε καὶ δέησις ἐμάλαξεν· ὁ γὰρ λόγος πολλάκις τὸν ἔλεον προξενεῖ· τῷ γὰρ πονοῦντι τῆς ψυχῆς ἢ γλώττα πρὸς ἱκετηρίαν διακονουμένη τῆς τῶν ἀκουόντων ψυχῆς ἡμεροῖ τὸ θυμούμενον.

"A Greek buccaneer might be moved by the human voice, prayer might soften him: for speech is often the go-between of compassion; the tongue, ministering to him that in anguish of soul by helping him to express supplication, subdues the fury of the listener's mind."

The passage brings to mind the Greek disdain for barbarians which is a well known theme in Greek literature. But more importantly for present purposes it and the excerpts from the classical orators which were discussed in chapter 6 demonstrate that the language expressing the gesture and action of supplication constituted a type of action which produced an "intellectual" or psychological response in the hearer which presumably was thought to be a necessary part of the process to lead to the same assumption of responsibility for assistance which kneeling or falling at the feet was supposed to produce. So we must be alive to the possibility that words can have a ritual dimension beyond a "figurative" force. In prayers and invocations of deities the words are part of the ritual process, or to put it another way, they are an integral part of the ritual action.⁹⁶ This is the notion we will explore next.

8.4.1 Linguistic Performatives and Ritual Language

94 P. Bureth, *Recherches sur la plainte écrite en Egypte romaine*, 186ff.

95 Book III.10, 2.

96 Cf Versnel. "Beyond cursing", 63. Note also S. Tambiah, "The Magical Power of Words", *Man (ns)* 3 (1968), 175-208.

If we turn now to the formulaic language of petitions we can see that the language and the document could, partly at least, constitute the ritual. First as was pointed out in chapter 2, as in the case of prayers and their special placement in graves, wells or on statues, it becomes apparent that the process of petitioning was conceptualised as a ritual action which was articulated in the symbolic terms of the ritual act of supplication or seeking asylum. It is implicit in all the constructions represented in Table 6.4 for the Ptolemaic period, for example, the aorist participial phrases such as P.Col. IV 83 (245-244 BC): ἵνα ἐπὶ σέ, βασιλεῦ, καταφυγῶν τοῦ δικαίου τύχῳ, or the perfect of P.Ent. 82 (221 BC) Δέομαι οὖν σου, βασιλεῦ, εἴ σοι δοκεῖ, ἰκέτις ἐπί σε καταπεφευγῖα, and even more obvious in the present middle participle such as P.Ent. 24 (221 BC), Δέομαι οὖν σου, βασιλεῦ, ἐπὶ σέ τὴν κ[ατ]αφυγὴν ποιουμένη or present indicative, such as, P.Cair.Zen. III 59421 (III BC): [ἐγὼ οὖν κ[ατ]αφεύγω ἐπὶ σέ. Through all these constructions the petitioner is stating that he or she is in the present condition of having taken refuge and therefore in the condition of a suppliant. This is the effect of the perfect, as well as the present. The present, as we saw in chapter 6, becomes more widespread in the use of the refuge motif from I AD to IV AD as in PSI XIII 1337 (III AD): ἐπὶ τὴν σὴν ἀνδρείαν καταφεύγω.⁹⁷ It is possible that the use of the present signified the idea that the petitioner is in the process of making a supplication by the presentation of a petition. Such an idea is particularly clear in later Roman petitions such as P.Ryl. IV 617 (317 AD) to the emperors Constantinus and Valerius Licinianus Licinius, in which the petitioner says καταφυγὴν ἐποίησα διὰ ταύτης μ[ου] τῆς ἀξιό[σ]εως ἐπὶ τὰ ἱερὰ ὑμῶν τῶν εὐεργετῶν ἡμῶν βήματα: "I took refuge **through this my request** at the sacred tribunals (?) of you our benefactors..." (emphasis added).⁹⁸ This is important because it puts the symbolic conceptualisation of petitions into a position which straddles both the legal and the religious, and makes it apparent that the supplication has been achieved by the petition.

97 See Tables 6.2 and 6.3 in chapter 6.

98 Cf P.Hib II 238 (c. 246-221 BC), διὰ τῆς ἐντεύξεως

Furthermore, many verbs used to characterise the presentation of the petition are also found in the ancient world to signify ritual action in the religious context. The verb προσφέρω reflects ritualistic actions. UPZ 106 (99 BC) shows that the expression τὰς χεῖρας προσφέρω meant the ritual gesture of stretching the hands out to a deity such as Osiris.⁹⁹ We saw above (at 383) that it is found in Book V.17 of Achilles Tattius to describe the verbal presentation of a petition. SB XVI 12678 (27 July 179 AD) is a petition to the epistrategos which incorporates a petition to the prefect. The latter opens with the words (19) Προσφέρω σοι ἡγεμῶν [κύριε πρᾶγμα τῆς] σῆς ἐκδικίας δεόμενον. A very similar verb, προτείνω, is well attested in the expression προτείνω τὰς χεῖρας meaning "hold forth the hands as a suppliant."¹⁰⁰ We see the very same notion articulated in PSI XIII 1337 (III AD): ταύτην τὴν ἰκετηρίαν προτεινόμενος ἐπὶ σο[ῦ] τοῦ σκε[πασ]τοῦ τῶν μετρ[ύ]ων. We noted in chapter 6 how the expression ἰκετηρίαν τιθεμένα, used in a later Roman petition such as P.Tebt II 326 (c. 266 AD), has clear echoes of a ritual action in classical Athens connected with the process of making a complaint.¹⁰¹ Very close is P.Oxy I 71.1 Recto (303 AD): τὴν ἰκ[ετ]ηρίαν προσάγω, where the present indicative underlines the notion of the petition as a present supplication. BGU II 613 (138-161AD) contains an interesting and suggestive variant of this when the veteran Tiberius Tiberianus designates his request to the prefect Volusius Maecianus about an inheritance in terms of ritual action: ἀξιῶ προσκυνῶν τὸ ἱερώτατον βῆμα. So it is clear that in the increasing sophistication of expression in the later Roman period, the connection between the language denoting the ritual act of supplication and the petition as artefact for supplication was intensified.

But it also seems possible that the various tenses and moods had a force as "performative" use of language. The interest here lies in the connection between the mood, tense and person and the language of religious ritual, which can be very strong.

99 See Wilcken's note ad loc.

100 See the entry in LSJ ad loc.

101 See chapter 6, 287.

R. Lesses has pointed out how the theory of performative utterances developed by the philosopher J. Austin is very apt for understanding the language of religious ritual. In the performative utterance the speaker performs an action via the use of language, as well as speaking, and the most obvious form of the performative utterance is the first person singular present indicative active, very clear in the invoking verb ἐπικαλοῦμαι which opens many magical spells.¹⁰² Christopher A. Faraone has recently argued that performative tenses are present in certain early magical texts from the ancient world, in particular he identifies a "performative future".¹⁰³ Importantly for present purposes he concludes that these futures are almost exclusively concerned with "non-verbal actions, such as binding, throwing or burning", which are the very outcomes which the spells are directed to achieving.

The analogy here with the present, aorist and perfect tenses used in petitions throughout the Ptolemaic and Roman periods is fairly clear, especially when we remember the many other points of identification between petitions and curses and judicial prayers discussed above.¹⁰⁴ The present indicative use of καταφεύγω, or present middle periphrasis τὴν καταφυγὴν ποιῶμαι, including participial forms, clearly shows the ongoing nature of the ritual act of supplication, and its use in the Amorgos tablet (above, 399) shows the ritual nature of the tense and its performative dimensions. BGU XI 2061 (207 AD), a petition to the prefect Subatianus Aquila about some sort of violence, provides some very interesting verbal forms which may reflect not only a performative present indicative but a future with similar function to that discussed by Faraone. The text is badly damaged but after the refuge motif in the present indicative at l. 8 καταφεύγω πρὸς σε οὐ δυνάμενος . . . αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ νομῷ περὶ τούτου εἰπεῖν διὰ τὸ αὐτοὺς ἐνκυλιεσθ [, "I fly for refuge to you being unable to speak about this in the nome (?)...on account of their involvement

102 R. Lesses, "The Adjuration of the Prince of Presence: Performative Utterance in the Jewish Ritual", in M. Meyer, P. Mirecki (eds.), *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (The Religions of the Greco-Roman World Vol 129) (E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1995), especially at 189. See generally DT.

103 C.A. Faraone, "The 'Performative Future' in Three Hellenistic Incantations and Theocritus' Second Idyll", *CP* 90 (1995), 1-15.

104 Refer to Tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3.

(?)", the petitioner dramatically says (l. 9) τὸ μείσοπόνηρον σου προκαλέσωμαι εἰς ὀργήν ("I call forth your hatred of wickedness to anger")¹⁰⁵ The form προκαλέσωμαι appears to be a future middle, and has the sense of "I call the prefect forth on my behalf to challenge" the local power of the wrongdoers. The analogy with invocations in prayers is very close. The date of the document is also noteworthy because it shows once again how the utilisation of ritualistic language intensifies in the later Roman period.

The perfect, such as, προῆγμαί τήν ἐπὶ σ[ἐ] ποιήσασθαι καταφυγήν, or ἐπί σέ τήν καταφυγήν πεποίημαι, and the many participial forms appearing in Table 6.4, complements this because in sense they signify an action which is in a continuing condition of completion and thus a petitioner who is in a continuing state of supplication.¹⁰⁶ Even the aorist is known to have been used in a performative manner to signify an action which, though just in the process of taking place, is spoken of as if it had already happened.¹⁰⁷ The language of supplication articulated in these tenses also seems to have had a "deictic" force. The noted semantic scholar J. Lyons defined deixis as "the location and identification of persons, objects, events, processes and activities being talked about, or referred to, in relation to the spatiotemporal context created and sustained by the act of utterance."¹⁰⁸ The language and tenses of the verb of supplication created and sustained the continuing context of a relationship of reciprocity, while the almost ubiquitous prepositional phrase ἐπί σέ and its variants identified the sovereign or official as the location of the person supplicated, thus pinpointing the basic reference points of the relationship. When in II AD and thereafter σέ was replaced by an abstraction such as ἀνδρεία the

105 The restorations are firm because the text is repeated in the same papyrus at ll. 31-4.

106 M.J. Steedman, "Reference to Past Time", in R.J. Jarvella, W. Klein (eds.), *Speech, Place, and Action: Studies in Deixis and Related Topics* (John Wiley & Sons, 1982), 125-157, at 143ff, "The most basic meaning of the perfect appears to be to do with the idea that the *consequences* of the event in question are in force at the (past or present) reference time".

107 Ibid., fn 42. Cf E. Mayser, *Grammatik der Griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit* (Walter de Gruyter & Co, Berlin & Leipzig, 1926), II 1, 202.

108 J. Lyons, *Semantics*, II (CUP, London, 1977), 637.

location of the supplicated person was taken to a different level of symbolic signification.

All these factors show why the unreflective application of the "figurative" label to the language of supplication in petitions will not do. For one thing, the pressure by petitioners to vindicate rights and the implied threat to government revenue seem to be closer to Pötscher's "aggressive" type of supplication.¹⁰⁹ But beyond that it was more than merely an intensified form of the language of diplomatic appeal, although that was undoubtedly an aspect of its use. The performative and deictic character of the syntax of the refuge motif demonstrates the connection to syntactic forms in magic and other religious ritual language. They strongly suggest that we should view the language of supplication in essence as if it was performing the ritual, intensified by the presentation of the petition as artefact.

We can see at this point how the requirement of personal presentation of a petition, which we discussed in chapter 2, links up with the process of supplication. The idea of the document as both artefact and ritual supplication becomes completed.¹¹⁰ As in the case of judicial prayers, placed in graves or another appropriate place for the reaching of its destination, the petition was placed with the appropriate office or official to bring about the supplication. For these reasons it is also possible to understand how the presentation of a petition can be fitted into Gould's notion of the ritual act of supplication. The petition was not figurative because it was substituted for the physical interaction between petitioner and monarch or official, in a verbal audience. The reality of social and physical distance in Greco-Roman Egypt between the ordinary and the powerful meant that the older ritual form of supplication studied by Gould became, in the forensic and religious context of interaction with the sovereign or his powerful official, represented by a written instrument, the petition.

109 See chapter 6, 254 above.

110 See chapter 2, 72 above.

8.4.2 The Official's Feet.

In light of the ritual dimension to the language of supplication, it is necessary now to discuss a group of documents from III and IV AD which raise a special set of problems. They raise these problems because the language in question has a number of linguistic and ritual associations which help to illustrate how the language of supplication in petitions from Egypt intersected with the wider symbolic universe of the Greco-Roman world. The particular language referred to here is the refuge motif enlarged by the incorporation of reference to the official's feet in expressions such as P.Cair.Isidor. 74 (315 AD) ἠπέιχθην οὖν τὴν καταφυγὴν ποιήσασθαι πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς τοῦ ἐμοῦ κυρίου πόδας δεόμενος καὶ παρακαλῶν. This extension has been touched upon in chapter 6, since the mention of the official's feet in petitions is usually made as an aspect of the refuge motif. The problems which it poses arise in two main ways. The first is that at about the same time as the appearance of the language of supplication at the feet of officials, we find evidence that a procedure existed for leaving petitions at the feet of the statues of emperors in temples of the imperial cult. Secondly, this raises the wider question of the importance of feet in ritual in the religious context of the Greco-Roman world.

References to a procedure whereby petitions could be deposited in temples of the Caesars or at the feet of statues of the emperor in Egypt appear in III AD. CPR 20 II (250 AD) is a petition complaining about the wrongful imposition of a liturgy, and the petitioner says at II 3ff: ἐπίσταλμα δισδὸν γραφὲν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ...ἀποτίθεμαι ἐν τῷ ἐνταῦθα Σεβαστείῳ παρὰ τοῖς εἰ[χ]νεσι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ θεοφιλεστάτου Αὐτοκράτορος ("I deposited the communication written in two copies in the local Sebasteion at the feet of our lord, the most beloved of god, our Emperor")¹¹¹ P Amh. 80 (III AD) is a petition also concerning the wrongful imposition of a liturgy and at II 11-12 there appears to be a reference to placing a petition in the Hadrianeion for transmission to the prefect. Earlier this century the

¹¹¹ See also P.Vindob.Tandem 2.6.

German scholar Blumenthal made the suggestion that the Amherst text is referring to the same or a similar procedure of placing the petition at the statue's feet, as that which appears in CPR 20 II.¹¹²

The language of P.Oxy 3366 (253-60 AD) seems to draw some connection between the appearance of the linguistic motif of refuge at the feet of the emperor or official and the procedure of leaving petitions at the feet of the statue. It is a papyrus containing two draft petitions and a letter.¹¹³ The petitions are from a public *grammaticus* named "Lollianus also called Homoeus" to the emperors Valerian and Gallienus. One petition at least is enclosed in a letter to a friend or relative.¹¹⁴ Lollianus complains about his remuneration as *grammaticus*, and he wants the emperors to order that he be given a salary of 500 atticae plus an orchard within the city of Oxyrhynchus, which brings 600 atticae on lease. At ll 60ff Lollianus writes:

ἀνάγκην ἔσχ[ο]ν τὴν ἱκε-

[[μὲν προσφέρω ὑμ[ε]ῖων τοῖς ἵχν]οις, θειότατοι αὐτοκράτορες
τηρίαν ταύτην τοῖς ἵχνεσιν ὑμῶν προσενεγκεῖν ἄλυ-

μὲν
πον τῷ τῆς πόλεως...

"I find myself compelled to bring this supplication to your feet, most divine emperors, a supplication not damaging to the city fund.."

It could be that Lollianus uses this language as a reference to the fact that when the draft is finalised, it will be deposited at the feet of an imperial statue, in accordance with the procedure discussed above, that is, the language foreshadows a specific act

112 F. Blumenthal, "Der ägyptische Kaiserkult", *AfP* V (1913), 317 at 335-6. Following up Blumenthal's suggestion, the editors of P.Oxy 2130 restore the Amherst text in the following way: βιβλία ἀνεθέμην ἐν τῷ σεβ[ασ]μιωτάτῳ καὶ σεβ[α]στ[ι]ῷ Ἀδ[ρι]ανεύῳ π[ι]ε[μ]φησόμεν[ι]α τῷ λαμπροτάτῳ ἡγεμόν[ι] Μηουίῳ Ὀνωρατιανῷ ὑπὸ τῶν (l. τοῦ) στατιωνε[ί]ζοντος βενεφικ[τ]αρίου. ("I deposited petitions in the most holy and sacred Hadrianeion to be sent to the illustrious prefect Maevius Honoratianus by the resident [?] beneficarius").

113 P.J. Parsons published this document earlier in Anne Ellis Hanson (ed.) *Collectanea Papyrologica: Texts Published in Honour of H.C. Youtie*, Part II (Bonn, 1976), No 66 with an extensive commentary.

114 It cannot be certain, given the fragmentary nature of this document whether Lollianus is writing to his actual brother. Recto col. ii l. 23 contains the words ἐπιστέλλω σοι, ἄδελφε. However, ἀδελφός is well known in the papyri and elsewhere as a word which covers a number of relationships beyond blood ties, such as, "man and wife", eg, in the LXX and P.Lond. I.42.I (II BC) and "member of the same college or koinon": see P.M. Fraser, *Rhodian Funerary Monuments* (Oxford, 1977), 74. Compare the letter in P.Oxy.Hels. 47a (II AD) which underlines the uncertainty, and the comment in *New Docs*, 4, 56.

within a procedure which brought the petition to the emperors in Rome via their provincial administration.¹¹⁵

The internal evidence from P.Oxy 3366 itself counts against this. Column ii of the recto of the papyrus is largely made up of the letter by Lollianus to a person addressed as "brother", whose name is lost. But the content indicates that Lollianus has engaged two people to submit his petition. He has sent the text of the petition to "brother" so that the latter can "obtain the grant for me to provide sustenance for my children." (l. 28).¹¹⁶ "Brother" is clearly stated to be acting as the agent for Lollianus. This is reinforced by the fact that Lollianus gives as another reason for sending the text to his brother the fact that the latter will "know the consuls",¹¹⁷ suggesting that "brother" is in a better position to know the necessary official details for the petition. Parsons sees the presence of "brother" as an attempt by Lollianus to secure the success of the petition by local influence at court.¹¹⁸ It also appears that Lollianus has sent the text to a certain Ammonios, who in turn has sent the petition to "brother" via his own brother "Heraclammon the canaliclarius", "with whom you will consult first whether he has already settled the matter, so that the petition is not made twice about one and the same thing."¹¹⁹ So it seems that Heraclammon is going to try to obtain a rescript for Lollianus as well. This is the implication of the use of the verb *διανύω* in the perfect participial form, which should mean that Heraclammon perfected the process of bringing the petition to the emperors' attention. Indeed, the ensuing remark that Lollianus does not want a petition to be presented twice on the same subject, makes it clear that he has set in train two agents to present the petition

115 τοῖς ἕχ[ν]εσι would more accurately refer to "footsteps" in classical Greek. Blumenthal makes the point that in Koine Greek ἕχνος had come to mean "foot" a meaning which only appeared in poetry during the classical period: "Der ägyptische Kaiserkult", *AfP* V (1913), 317 at 335-6.

116 ἵνα μοι αὐ[τῶν] κ[α]ταπράξῃ εἰς ἐφόδια τοῖς παιδίοις. The translation is given by the editors.

117 L. 35 σὺ γὰρ κ[α]ὶ τοὺς ὑπάτους εἶσει.

118 'Complaint', 414.

119 L. 28: ὅτι καὶ κοινώσῃ προτέρ(ον) εἰ προφθάνῃ αὐτὸ διηγουκώ[ς], ἵνα μὴ δις περὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἢ αἰτησίης γίνῃται. Heraclammon held a minor position in the military bureaucracy. Parsons suspects that he was travelling to court on official business and Lollianus grabbed him as a messenger and compares his role to the praetorian and the *miles frumentarius* in the petitions of the people of Scaptopara and Argua: 'Complaint', 417-18.

in Rome. Lollianus may of course have left a petition or a copy at the feet of a statue, but our diversion into the text shows that the mention of feet is more than a banal procedural reference.

Blumenthal also suggested that the reason for the procedure lay in the fact that the petitioners in CPR 20 II and P.Amh 80 had lost their liberty which made resort to the emperor's statue in a gesture of supplication appropriate and that in Egypt there existed a procedure for delivering petitions to a temple of the imperial cult where the petitioner was also seeking to exercise a right of asylum.¹²⁰ However, the petition of Lollianus demonstrates that this explanation is too limited to account for the procedure. If we compare P.Oxy. XVII 2130 (267 AD) it is clear that Blumenthal was wrong. It is a petition to the board of gymnasiarchs from a senator of Antinoë complaining, again, about wrongful nomination to a liturgy. The petitioner, Aurelius Sarapion, says at ll 18-24: ἀνεθέμην ἐν τῷ αὐτ[ό]θι Σεβαστείῳ πρὸς τοῖς θεοῖς ἔχνεσι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Αὐτοκράτορος Γαλλιηνοῦ Σεβαστοῦ διαπεμφθησόμενα ὑπο τοῦ στατίζοντος τῷ λαμπροτάτῳ ἡγεμόνι Ἰουουενίου Γενεαλίου αὐτῷ τε τῷ στατίζοντι τὰ ἴσα ἐπιδούς,..("I deposited [the petition] in the local Sebasteion at the divine feet of our lord the Emperor Gallienus Augustus to be forwarded by the resident officer to his highness the prefect Iuvenius Genealis, giving a copy also to the resident officer himself."). But there is no suggestion that Aurelius Sarapion has been imprisoned.

It must be said that, having abandoned Blumenthal's solution, the explanation for the appearance of this procedure is difficult. It is true that the action of leaving petitions in temples or at the feet of statues of the monarch accords well in a general way with the language of supplication which, as we have seen, characterised petitions from all periods. The statues of emperors often served as places of refuge or asylum, especially for slaves, not only at Rome but throughout the empire, and in this they

120 Ibid., at 336. An intriguing possibility in light of our discussion of asylum in chapter 6, 255 above.

were assimilated to the well-known model of taking refuge in temples of the gods.¹²¹ In P.Oxy XVII 2130 (267 AD) we note that Aurelius Sarapion, who was obviously a person of some standing (ex-gymnasiarch, ex-prytanis, superintendent of the stemmata and senator of Antinoë), says that the reason for placing the petition at the statue of the emperor "to be forwarded by the resident officer to his highness the prefect Iuvenius Genealis, giving a copy also to the resident officer himself." However, the difficulty is that sending a petition to the prefect by such means is quite contrary to practically all other earlier evidence we have for the presentation of petitions. The procedure for presenting petitions was discussed in chapter 2 and the conclusion was reached that all petitions, at least by the Roman period were presented *in person*, to the epistrategos and the prefect.¹²² Despite the earlier views of Wilcken, Wynne Williams has argued conclusively that provincial governors were not in fact likely to or required to forward petitions to the emperor; rather petitions had to be delivered to the emperor *in person*, by the petitioner or an agent.¹²³

We need to return to the religious context. One part of the explanation may be that the placing of petitions at the feet of an imperial statue is an extension of a ritual whereby ordinary folk used the feet, or their statuary equivalent, of powerful figures, whether from the mortal or immortal realms, gods and emperors, as a point of distribution and, by association, communication. The notion of feet as a point of distribution finds expression in the New Testament. In *Acts* 4.35, 37 the faithful who sell up their worldly goods with one heart place the proceeds at the feet of the apostles for distribution.¹²⁴ There are several references to the feet of statues as the point of

121 See Price, *Rituals and Power*, 192-3, and reference there given.

122 Aurelius Sarapion also mentions as a reason for the procedure that his earlier petition to the epistrategos Aelius Faustus had not been accepted (μη προσθέντων τούτων). This may suggest that the placing of petitions at the feet of the emperor's statue was some sort of very final appeal, analogous to the finality of seeking refuge in a temple. But such an explanation does not deal with the problem that *personal* delivery was the normal course and usually required.

123 U. Wilcken, 'Zu den Kaiserreskripten', *Hermes* lv (1920), 1-42; 'Zur propositio libellorum', *AfP* ix, 15-23; W. Williams, 'The libellus Procedure and the Severan Papyri', *JRS* (1974), 86-103, at 94; 'Subscriptiones to emperors (?)', 40 *ZPE* (1980), 283. This view is adopted by Honoré, *Emperors and Lawyers*² (Oxford, 1994), 33.

124 We may note also the passage in Cicero *Pro Flacco* §68 "ante pedes praetoris in foro expensum est auri pondo".

distribution of letters from gods to mortals. Aristeides in his *Sacred Talks* (c. mid II AD) mentions how he was once directed to seek information about his nurse's health while at Pergamum. He entered the sanctuary and found at the feet of the statue of Asclepios a letter presumably giving a cure.¹²⁵ We should also bear in mind that letters had a variety of connections with religious sites such as temples in Greco-Roman Egypt. It seems clear that temple personnel were often the recipients of letters for third persons and Llewellyn suggests this is because temples were well known sites.¹²⁶ The practice of leaving prayers for justice in graves when directed to gods of the underworld and on statues when directed to the gods above is also well documented.¹²⁷ So it may well be the case that the procedure of leaving petitions at the feet of an imperial statue has a close model or comparison in the ritual act of leaving provisions or goods at the feet of the powerful for the purposes of distribution, as that was adapted for distribution of written communications.¹²⁸ This of course would be entirely consistent also with the practice of leaving prayers directed to deities in the heavens above on or near their cult statues, as we mentioned above.¹²⁹ If so, it seems that there must have been some relaxation of any requirement to present petitions in person, at least to the emperor. And the strong inference can be drawn that when an alternative method of presenting a petition to the living emperor was sought, the closest appropriate model was perceived to be one taken from the religious domain, and well used to send written communications on their path to unseen powers. So we see another aspect of the convergence of the way petitions and prayers were treated.

But there is a further problem. It is usually thought that feet, unlike hands and knees, were not generally the object of ritual gestures of supplication in the Greco-

125 2.394 K: καὶ ἅμα λαμβάνω τινὰ ἐπιστολὴν πρὸ ποδῶν κειμένην τοῦ Διὸς Ἀσκληπιοῦ.

126 S. Llewellyn, "The εἰς (τῆν) οἰκίαν formula and the delivery of letters to third persons or their property.", 101 *ZPE* (1994), 71-8. There is an interesting instance in P.Oxy XLIII 3094 (217-18 AD).

127 See H.S. Versnel, "Religious Mentality", 33.

128 We may also note here the idiomatic expression τὸ πρὸς ποσὶ in passages such as Soph, *OT*, 131 and *Ant* 1327, where the sense is that the matter is "before the feet" signifying "instant and pressing trouble": see the comment of Jebb loc. cit.

129 Versnel, "Religious Mentality", 36 sees this as an obvious explanation.

Roman tradition, at least when a living person was the object of the gesture.¹³⁰ There is a reference in Dionysios of Halicarnassus to an episode in the pre-imperial period of Rome when the decemvir Appius made a particularly self serving and unjust decision in a case involving the guardianship of a young girl of whom he was enamoured. When his intermediary Claudius tried to take the girl away, the crowd reacted so violently that Claudius let her go and took refuge under the feet of Appius (ὥστε δείσαντα τὴν ἐπιφορὰν αὐτῶν τὸν Κλαυδίον τὴν τε κόρην ἀφεῖναι καὶ ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας τοῦ στρατηγοῦ καταφυγεῖν).¹³¹ If one looks to artistic representations of approaches to the Roman emperor, for example, supplication by defeated enemies is directed towards the emperor's knees. In the Greek version of the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* the approaches of foreign rulers to Augustus were designated by the language of supplication familiar from petitions. In §32 Augustus remarks that a number of foreign kings including the kings of the Parthians, Tiridates and Phraates, took refuge with him as suppliants: πρὸς ἐμὲ ἰκέται κατέφυγον βασιλεῖς Πάρθων μὲν Τειριδάτης καὶ μετέπειτα Φραάτης.¹³² Many of these approaches were depicted in art. A well known example is the scene on the Boscoreale Cup showing the supplication of the defeated barbarians before Augustus, probably referring to the Pannonian triumph of 12 AD. Augustus is celebrated as world ruler and clement master. The barbarians are depicted pressing forward in supplication towards the feet of the seated Augustus.¹³³ But some caution needs to be exercised in this regard, since the gestures in these scenes are ambiguous. It is not clear that the

130 G. Freyburger, "Supplication grecque et supplication romaine", *Latomus* 47 (1988), 501-525. Knees appear as the most frequent bodily objective for suppliants in the *Aethiopica* of Heliodorus, eg, Book X.10 where Chariclea jumps from the fire and falls clasping the knees of Sisimithres, and see also IV.18, V.27. Compare Ach. Tat. *Leucippe and Clitophon*, VIII. 17, 3, where Callisthenes seeks to explain himself to Calligone with whom he has fallen in love.

131 XI.32, 1. We need to be aware of the possibility that the configuration of this posture may result more from the fact that Appius was sitting in a chair on a raised platform in the fashion of Roman magistrates than from any particular significance in the feet.

132 DocsAug No 1, § 32.

133 See R. Brilliant, *Gesture and Rank in Roman Art* (New Haven, 1963), Fig. 2.60, 73-4 AD. Cf Figs 3.11, 3.12 depicting the abasement and supplication of the Parthian king in the position of defeat at the feet of Trajan.

defeated kings are not aiming for the knees and that knees are the objective in other contexts is clear from some other images.¹³⁴

Zilliacus overcame the unusualness of the "feet" motif by placing it in a wider tradition, deriving from classical tragedy, of exalting official institutions through expressions which referred symbolically to bodily parts.¹³⁵ He compares P.Oxy X 1252.ii verso (288-95 AD) in which an unknown prytanis refers to his appointment to the office by the prefect through reference to a gesture of the prefect's right hand (αὐτὸς τοῖνυν ἐγώ, ἡγ[ε]μῶν κύριε, ὑπογύω] χειροτονη[θεῖς διὰ | τῆς εὐτυχούς σου δεξιᾶς εἰς τὴν παρὰ Ὁξυρυγ[εῖται] πρυτανείαν).¹³⁶ He is surely right to see the feet motif as a symbolic way of referring to powerful figures. But supplication involving the feet specifically has a particularly Egyptian or Near Eastern flavour. There is evidence that in Pharaonic Egypt falling at the feet of the Pharaoh was common, as a ritual action to acknowledge his power and more specifically to cloth the person approaching the Pharaoh in the attributes of a suppliant, and it became a particular convention of the Pharaonic epistolary tradition.¹³⁷ In the Greco-Roman period the gigantic statue of Serapis at Alexandria is known to have been the focus of ritual actions of kissing the foot or the knee.¹³⁸ Falling down before pagan deities is commonly found expressed in classical literature

134 Eg Brilliant, *Gesture and Rank*, no 2.55.

135 H. Zilliacus, "Untersuchungen zu den abstrakten Anredeformen und Höflichkeitstiteln im Griechischen", *Comm. Hum. Litt.* XV.3 (1949), 1-111, at 42-3.

136 It may be a misprint but Zilliacus seems to have thought that the petition came from 95 AD not 295 AD, since he describes it as coming from "Unter den früheren Beispielen dieser Erscheinung sei hier auf eine Deklaration aus dem Jahre 95 n. Chr.", at 43.

137 We may note specifically here the opening words of the (much more ancient) Amarna Letters, a series of cuneiform tablets discovered by an Egyptian woman in 1887 at Tell el-Armana in Middle Egypt, the site of Akh-en-Aton's capital in the early XIV BC. They contain letters addressed to the Pharaoh by subordinates and EA No. 234 is a good example. The writer says "To the king, my lord, the Sun-god from heaven: Thus Zatatna, prince of Accho, thy servant, the servant of the king, and...the dirt (under) his two feet, the ground which he treads. At the two feet of the king, my lord, the Sun-god from heaven, seven times, seven times I fall, both prone and supine." See J.B. Pritchard (ed.), *The Ancient Near East, Vol. 1: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton, 1958). I am very grateful to Dr Philip Esler for bringing this material to my attention. It is possible that this language has a closer connection to the actions contemplated by the Greek verb προσπίπτω. Certainly Zilliacus, "Untersuchungen zu den abstrakten Anredeformen und Höflichkeitstiteln im Griechischen", 8-9, who quotes a similar opening from another Amarna letter, places these Egyptian letters in the general cultural lineage which influenced the language of address in later Greek correspondence from Egypt. He does say however that Persian influence was greater.

138 A Henrichs, 'Vespasian's Visit to Alexandria', *ZPE* 3 (1968) 51-80. There is the tantalising survival περὶ τοῦς σοῦς πόδας in the fragmentary invocation of Sarapis in P.Mil.Vogliano I 21 (I AD), col I, l 5

by the verb προσπίπτω.¹³⁹ In the New Testament the verb is used to designate the ritual act of falling at the feet of a powerful figure.¹⁴⁰ We saw above how this verb can be found joined with the more usual verb of supplication καταφεύγω in pagan prayers, (ικέτης σου προσπίπτω ἐπὶ σὲ καταφεύγω) In *Revelation* 3.9 and 19.10 feet are specifically associated with the verb of worship προσκυνέω. There is the episode, famous in antiquity, of the newly proclaimed emperor Vespasian in the temple of Sarapis stepping on a crippled hand with his right foot and curing it.¹⁴¹ *The Oracle of Baalbek*, composed between 502 and 506 AD, speaks of worshipping the tracks of Jesus' feet (Il 44-5: καὶ τὰ ἑξαπτέρυγα τὰ ἕχνη τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ προσκυνήσουσιν).¹⁴² Alexander discussed the motif of feet in petitions to emperors and sees it as an "instance of the many transfers of features from the cult of the earthly ruler to his heavenly prototype."¹⁴³

But P.Oxy XVII 2133, which is dated to the late III AD, has a very interesting variant on the "feet" theme, which suggests that the most precise aspect of the signification of the motif is the ritual grasping of the feet of a cult statue. The document, like many others, is a petition to the prefect, although his identity is lost. The petitioner is a woman, Aurelia Eus daughter of Heraclides from Oxyrhynchus.¹⁴⁴ She complains that her paternal uncle has defrauded her and her brothers of property left by their intestate father, of which the uncle had control. A certain Aurelius Diogenes wrote the petition for her and says at ll 24ff:

ἔθεν ἀναγκαίως καταλαμβάνω τοὺς σοὺς τοῦ ἐμοῦ κυρίου πόδας διὰ ταύτης μου τῆς ἀξιώσεως καὶ δεομένη κελεύσέ σαι δι' εὐτονωτάτης

139 See *LSJ* ad loc. Compare *Hel. Aethiop.* V.26 where the verb is used to describe the posture of supplication of Phoenicians in the face of defeat at the hands of pirates, and V.27 to describe the supplicatory gesture of Characlea.

140 See *Mat.* 18.29; *Luke* 8.41, 17.16; *John* 1.32; *Acts* 4.35, 5.10, 10.25. I am indebted to Dr J.A.L. Lee for pointing out to me this theme in the NT.

141 Henrichs, 'Vespasian's Visit' at 65 and the references given there. Henrichs concludes that for the purposes of this miracle Vespasian was perceived to be, as it were, the god Sarapis.

142 P.J. Alexander, *The Oracle of Baalbek* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1967). It may be noted that the theme is fairly common in Byzantine Christian letters in Greek and Coptic: P.Oxy LIX 4006 (VI/VII AD); P.Oxy LIX 4008 (VI/VII AD).

143 *Oracle*, 31-2

144 Cf P.Sakaon 37 (Jan/Feb 284)(=P.Thead 18) from Theadelphia, also from a woman Aurelia Artemis but as guardian of her children, to the prefect: (16) ἔθεν τὴν πρὸς τοὺς πόδας σου καταφυγὴν ποιούμαι, δαιομένη καὶ παρακαλοῦσα ὑπὲρ ἀφηλίκων παίδων...

The use of the verb καταλαμβάνω is slightly unusual and gives the sense of "seizing" the prefect's feet, although we find it used in expressions such as καταλαμβάνω τὴν σὴν ἀνδρείαν in late petitions such as P.Col VII 169 (13/4/318 AD), and this comparison shows the substitution of feet for the abstract "courage" of the official, here the praeses. We may note that it is very similar to the language used to describe the ritual gesture of the heroine Callirhoe before the statue of Aphrodite in Chariton's novel *Chaereas and Callirhoe* (I AD). The action of the story has brought Callirhoe to the estate of Dionysios and her misfortunes have been such that she wants to lay many complaints before Aphrodite (III.2.6-7). Her act is described thus: προσκυνήσασα δὲ ἡ Καλλιρόη καὶ τῶν ποδῶν λαβομένη ("Kneeling in homage before Aphrodite and clinging to her feet..")¹⁴⁵ It is of great interest that the well known notion of obeisance expressed in the verb προσκυνέω is specifically tied here to the action of seizing the feet.¹⁴⁶

There is also evidence from Greek novels that, in the Roman period anyway, προσπίπτω could be used as the linguistic expression of a gesture of gratitude before mortals, even though it was recognised as derived from approaches to a god. In the *Leucippe and Clitophon* of Achilles Tatius (II-III AD) when Clitophon hears from Menelaus that his beloved Leucippe is alive, he relates that:

τὸ δ' οὖν κοινότατον, προσπεσὼν κατησπαζόμενην καὶ προσεκύουν ὡς θεόν, καὶ μου κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς ἄθροα κατεχεῖτο ἡδονή.

"I adopted the commonest form of gratitude, falling at his feet, embracing him, and worshipping him as a god, while my heart was inundated with a torrent of joy."

It is very interesting that the action of worshipping someone as a god should be called "the commonest form of gratitude." The passage shows how the ancient mentality

145 Compare I.1.7 where Callirhoe falls at the feet of the statue, kissing them: τοῖς ποσὶ προσέπεσε καὶ καταφιλοῦσα. In Hel. *Aethiop.* V.34, Calasiris finds Characlea, in a touching posture of dejection, asleep clasping the feet of the statue of Artemis: καταλαμβάνει τοῖς ἵχνεσι τοῦ ἀγάλματος προσπεφυκυῖαν. Artemis is also the goddess with whom Leucippe takes refuge in Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, VII.13, 3; 15, 17; cf VIII.8,9 where it is said, as part of a forensic speech, that Artemis alone, until that point, has had the power of affording an asylum to those who fly to her for help (αὐτῇ μόνῃ τοὺς ἐπ' αὐτὴν καταφεύγοντας ἔξεστι σώζειν).

146 See the discussion of novels as evidence in Ch. 2.

adapted the ritual acts befitting metaphysical beings to articulate responses to more temporal deeds and physical mortal individuals and shows that at a symbolic level the conceptualisation of the gestures appropriate for gratitude for the beneficence of a powerful figure involved an elision of mundane and religious spheres of social life.

The introduction of the feet motif certainly invokes the rich tradition of supplication in petitions. But its purpose seems to be to imbue the interaction effected by the petition with symbolic dimensions which broaden, give form and sense to the power of the emperor and thereby give depth and significance to the role of the emperors in their relationship to ordinary people, like Lollianus. So it is reasonable to see the mention of the feet of the emperors as constituting a conscious extension of an already religious linguistic motif, the motif of supplication, by the incorporation of specific mention of an area of the body and the action of grasping it which had cultic ritual significance. It underlines the importance of the petition as a written instrument to effectuate the ritual act of supplication with the distant power of the emperor. An example such as PSI XIV 1404 (IIIAD) supports this. It is a petition from a former successful athlete seeking a privilege from unspecified emperors: (8) ἔσπευσα παρὰ τὰ ἴχνα ὑμῶν τῶν κυρ[ί]ων τῆς ὅλης οἰκουμένης, σωτήρων δὲ ἐμοῦ ἀνδρὸς μετρίου πολλὰ καμόντος ("I hastened before the feet of you the lords of all the world, saviours of me a humble man much wearied") But it is also apparent that the incorporation of feet in the refuge motif in another example of the intensification both of the motif itself and the religiosity of the language of petitions after III AD, as a means to interact with powerful figures.

This conclusion is strengthened by other examples of the "feet" motif which appear in connection with officials lower down the hierarchy, especially the prefect and the epistrategos. In many ways this seems to echo the process we have observed in the Ptolemaic period where the refuge motif was originally reserved primarily for the sovereign but by I BC was applied to the strategos, along with other religious denotations. It is further support for the perception that the religious approaches to

the sovereign provided the model for and the signification of the approaches to higher officials. From Karanis comes P.Mich IX 529, dated to 232-236 AD, which is a petition to the prefect Maevius Honoratianus. The petitioner Aurelius, son of Chairemon, is complaining about wrongful nomination to the office of guard of the granary. At II 13ff he writes:

[. . . .] γει κατέφυγον ἐπὶ τὰς πόδας σου δεόμενός σου φιλανθρωπῶ
[πίας τῆς λα]μπροτάτης, ἐάν σοι δό[ξ]η, ἀκοῦσαί μου πρὸς [αὐτοὺς
καὶ]
[ἐλπίζων τῆς] τοῦ κυρίου μου βοη[θ]είας δυνηθῆναί [με τυχεῖν]

"...I have taken refuge at your feet, asking of your most celebrated kindness, if it seems good to you, to hear my case against them, hoping also to be able to meet with the assistance of you my lord."

The reference to the feet of the prefect is very interesting, especially since it is used in connection with the usual verb for supplication καταφεύγω.¹⁴⁷ It is also noteworthy that the substantive used for "feet" is πούς as opposed to ἵχνος, which was generally preferred in designations of the feet of cult statues, presumably including that of the emperor.¹⁴⁸

PSI IV 292 (III AD) is a petition about some kind of violence or outrage. The addressee of the petition is lost but it appears from l.5 that he was an epitropos of a large estate (οὐσία). This suggests that the recipient was the epistrategos, not the prefect for whom such abject language is usually reserved.¹⁴⁹ At l. 18 the petitioner writes: ἀναγκαίως παρὰ τὰ σὰ ἵχνη καταφεύγω ἐξιστάμενος αὐτοῖς [...] ἔχειν με τὸ σῶμα ἀνεπηρέαστον καὶ ἀνύβριστον ("Perforce I take refuge beside your feet having abandoned for them.....to make my person free of injury and outrage"). Two observations may be made. First, the passage stands as a good example of ritual language being diffused down from the emperor more widely through the administrative hierarchy, a process which we have seen in connection

147 We may compare CPR 7 in which the petitioner says: ὄθεν μὴ φέρουσα γυνή [χήρα] τὴν [τλούτων παράνομον ἀπαίτησιν καταφεύγω [πρὸς το]ῖς σοῦς τοῦ ἐμοῦ κυρίου πόδας δεομένη καὶ ἀξιόσασα [προσ]τάξαι σε.

148 ἵχνος is the word used for the feet of the statue of Artemis in Hel. *Aethiop.* V.34.

149 The epistrategos in the Roman period is known to have been addressed as ἐπιτρόπων μέγιστε; see Thomas, *Epistrategos*, II, 115.

with the supplication and other motifs. Secondly, the word for feet in this document is ἕχνος, which as we have seen was usually reserved for cult figures and in petitions usually for the emperor. This observation reinforces the first point and underlines that fact the symbolic language of supplication was apparently applicable to different powerful roles in the administration, and was not necessarily determined by the presence of cult associations.

The motif is continued into the fourth century, usually in association with higher officials such as the praeses or the prefect. P.Cair.Isid.74 (27 December, 315 AD) is a petition from the archive of Aurelius Isidorus, which tells a "familiar story of greed and opportunism"¹⁵⁰ Isidorus leased some land to Castor and Ammonianus who were brothers. They borrowed from Isidorus while he supplied seed to them for harvest. After the harvest they appropriated the entire crop and refused to make a settlement with Isidorus. He reported their behaviour to the strategos and the praepositus pagi and finally to the praeses. This latter petition was returned to him referring the matter to the *exactor civitatis*, and contains the feet motif. The petition was written for Isidorus by Aurelius Theon because Isidorus was illiterate. At ll 15 Theon writes:

(15) ὅθεν μὴ δυνάμενος] πρὸς αὐτοὺς βιβ[λία] ἐπιδέδωκα τῷ τοῦ
[νομοῦ στρατηγῷ καὶ τῷ πραιποσίτῳ τοῦ πάγου περὶ τῆς
[αὐτῶν ἀγνωμοσύνης, ἠπείχθη οὖν τὴν καταφυγὴν ποιήσασθαι πρὸς
τοὺς σοὺς τοῦ ἐμοῦ κυρίου πόδας δεόμενος καὶ παρακαλῶν.
ἄνθρωπος μέτριος

"...consequently since I could do nothing with them I submitted petitions to the strategos of the nome and praepositus of the pagus concerning their misconduct. I have therefore hastened to flee to your feet, my lord, begging and beseeching, as a man of most restricted means.."

P.Oxy 3126 is dated precisely to 19 August, 328 AD. This papyrus contains a petition to the logistes setting out facts about a dispute with a woman over ownership of part of a house. The petitioner is Aurelius Castor son of Parammon, from the

150 A.E.R. Boak. and H.C. Youtie, *The Archive of Aurelius Isidorus in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, and the University of Michigan* (Ann Arbor, 1960), 289.

Ammoniac Oasis. Aurelius originally petitioned the prefect, Septimius Zenius, about the matter and the prefect wrote to the logistes instructing him to settle the claim and see that a just division was made. The document sets out the facts and encloses the initial petition to the prefect. It is the latter petition which is of significance for us. It is clear from l. 24 of the papyrus that Aurelius Castor was illiterate so a scribe wrote the document. In the petition to the prefect at l. 10 we see the now familiar motif of the contempt expressed by the malefactor towards the humble and unassuming petitioner together with strong language of supplication:

μετριώτητος καταφρωνοῦντας, ἐκ τούτου καταφεύγω πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς πόδας του . [ἀξιῶν ἐλεήσαντά μου τὸ μέτριον μετὰ χίρας ἔχοντός μου τὴν εἰς ἐμαὶ γεγεννη[μένην ἐπικρίνης ἐπαναγκασθῆναι...

"despising my humble position, for this reason I fly for refuge to your feet...requesting that you pity my lowliness, since I have in my possession the deed that was made in my favour."

The scribe has made use of language which draws the relationship of Aurelius Castor and the prefect in the image of the abject posture of the one at the feet of the other.¹⁵¹ It is worth noting also that in the majority of these examples the motif appears in the request section of the text, which places it in the tradition of the refuge motif in similar positions in earlier petitions.

Although strictly outside the ambit of this thesis, it is interesting to see how the motif continues well into the Byzantine period. The notary Dioscouros from the village of Aphrodito is well known for the many documents which he authored during the VI AD. According to Jean Maspero, the Frenchman who did the initial work to collect the archive of Dioscouros, P.Cair.Masp. III 67279 (recto) is a petition from about 570 AD. The document is addressed to the dux of the Thebaid, Flavius Triadius Marianus Michaelius, from Apollos, complaining that he has been forced to pay taxes by the topoteretes Antaios, which should not properly be his responsibility.

¹⁵¹ Cf P.Amh. II 142 (IV AD).

The handwriting is that of Dioscouros. After the opening references, he writes (ll. 4-6):

Εὐεργέτημα μέγιστον προκείτ[α]ι πᾶσι τοῖς ἀδικουμένοις ἢ τῆ[ς]
 ὑμετέρας εὐκλείας ἐκδικία. Ἐγὼ
 τοῖνυν, του[το] αὐτὸ ἀκριβῶς ἐπι[σ]τάμενος, προσίμι τοῖ[ς] εὐκλέεσι καὶ
 ἀνεπάφοις ὑμῶ[ν] ἴχνεσι,
 βουλόμενος τῶν δικαίων τυχεῖν, ..

"The vengeance of your fame is fixed or set forth as greatest kindness for all who are wronged. Therefore since I know this precisely, I approach your celebrated and untouched footprints, desiring to meet justice."

There is also an example of what appears to be the same motif in P.Oxy XVI 1944 which is dated by the editors to the VI or VII AD. The document is fragmentary and only partly published as a minor document at the end of P.Oxy. XVI. It is the latter portion of a petition complaining of oppression.¹⁵² The fragmentary nature of what survives as well as the limited publication leave room for doubt, but the writer says at l. 5 ff:

παρακαλῶ τὸν ἀγαθὸν καὶ θεοφύλακτον δεσπότην πέμψον μοι τὸν λόγον ἵνα καὶ ἐμοῦ ἔλθῃν' (l. ἐγὼ ἔλθων) ἐλ(λ)έγχω αὐτοῦς' ἐπάνου (l. -νω) τοὺς πόδας τοῦ δεσπότη μου καὶ δυνηθῆσαι (l. -θῶ) ὑπουργῆσαι τὰ ἴδια μου δημόσια.

On balance it is reasonable to place this passage in the same tradition as the earlier documents in this section. It demonstrates that the linguistic motif was still current in the VI or VII AD, and was suitable in addresses to high officials such as the dux of the Thebaid.

The discussion of this material leaves us with the impression that seizing the feet of a cult statue was a well known gesture of supplication in Egypt, if not more generally in the Greco-Roman world, for those who needed help. Eventually it became linked with a linguistic tradition in Greco-Roman culture of referring to hands or other parts of the body of powerful figures, which had similar symbolic

152 The editors make the comment "The petitioner makes the stereotyped appeal to the fiscal interest, which would suffer by his inability to pay his taxes, but the mention of the exact amount is unusual."

connotations. Both these symbolic elements then came to be combined within the tradition in Egypt of the refuge motif in petitions, especially because of the obvious connection with the action of leaving a petition at the feet of an imperial statue. This must show that the conceptualisation of the approach to the powerful figure by the written instrument remained vibrant through the Roman period and its language came to reflect even more closely the precise ritual action which was carried out in placing petitions at the feet of cult statues and by implication the ritual action of supplication itself before a cult statue. It also accords very well with the wider conceptualisations of powerful officials as kindly, courageous protectors of the weak, which we have seen were very strong throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods. We can see in this conclusion, if it is correct, how the power of the monarch or official was very important in determining the nature of the symbolism through his role was articulated and understood at a collective level. Clearly symbolism of a deeply religious nature could be utilised to make sense of the experience of powerful figures.

8.5 SUMMARY

Certainly, it is true that the forensic mode of discourse, represented most strongly by the tradition of classical rhetoric, and the influence of the relevant legal concepts were always the most substantial element in the composition of a petition, especially in the recitation of the facts, and the identification of the outcome. Petitions were legal documents with legal consequences in some of the ways in which we understand legal consequences today. But the comparison between past and present here must not be pushed too far. This chapter has sought to illuminate some the special features of petitions which were especially indicative of the ancient mentality. The evidence and views of scholars covered in this chapter leads strongly to the conclusion that the language of petitions was influenced by not only the classical rhetorical tradition and the legal context but also by a strong tradition of ritualistic religious language. In the analytical categories of the modern world, petitions then were a special type of document being a hybrid form between the secular forensic and rhetorical tradition and the ritual language of ancient prayer. Some, if not most, petitions were more

clearly of the former type, but others show the religious dimension. Particularly the language of Greco-Roman petitions was affected by aspects of the religious and legal traditions of the indigenous Egyptian culture. This seems to have been substantially true almost from the beginning with the enteuxis addressed to the Ptolemaic sovereign. But it came to be the case with petitions to a number of highly placed officials who were not the object of cultus.

The view taken here is that the use of religious language and ideas in dealings with officials over so many centuries is good evidence on the basis of which to conclude that ancient conceptualisations of and responses to the type of immense and personal power which appeared in the form of the Hellenistic monarchies and then Roman domination, resorted to symbolism which was imbued with numerous elements of a religious nature. It is easier to assent to this conclusion in relation to gods, kings and emperors all of whom are well known as the objects of ancient religious expression in the form of ritual and cult. It is the application of these conceptualisations and their attendant language to administrative and judicial officials such as strategoi and prefects that makes the point most strongly. The language of petitions to kings and officials often was, or was close to, the language of prayers and curses invoking deities. This is a very important point to note for understanding the language and constructions in petitions and by association prayers. The formulae and linguistic nuances of the documents demonstrates a very consistent conceptualisation of appropriate responses to power, which links up very cleanly with the relationship of reciprocity and the language of supplication. Once we rid ourselves of the theoretical prejudice which sees the language of supplication towards the strategos or prefect as only a diplomatic appeal or some kind of empty flattery, it is possible to understand that the resort to the supplication motif was a representative example of a fundamental way of making sense of the power. But at the heart of this conceptualisation lay the desire of ordinary folk to be assisted, to call upon some manifestation of power external to them to assist them through the vicissitudes of life. However, we can say that unlike the assistance sought from more metaphysical agents

the succour provided by the administrative hierarchy was also linked in closely with notions of stability drawn from a belief in the rule of law.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

This thesis began by comparing two examples of language use separated by a long period of time. They presented us with particular designations of the Ptolemaic sovereign and the Roman epistrategos as saviour and benefactor in a relationship of supplication. They became the departure point for a journey through the evidence using as a guide ideas drawn from social theory and certain approaches to language. This was intended to provide a theoretical framework with four main limbs.

The first, presenting structuration theory as a general background, presented societies as comprised of structural properties, which are instantiated, reproduced and transformed by the recursive behaviour of social actors. The structural properties are divisible analytically into three, the symbolic order, structures of domination, incorporating economic and political relationships, and the system of normative regulation or law.

The second, through consideration of certain theories of language use, particularly those which approach language as discourse, and as a form of social behaviour, suggested how meaning is both expressed by and created by language as a form of social action in its context of use, as a form, that is, of the recursive social action through which the structural properties of society are instantiated, reproduced and ultimately transformed. By recursively instantiating and reproducing the structures of signification or the symbolic order, as well as other aspects of social structure, language use provides a vehicle for the creation of meaning and the transformation of the symbolic order.

The third limb treated power as a central concept in social analysis and is pivotal in understanding the features of the structural properties of a society and the capacity for its ultimate transformation into new forms. The fourth limb took us to

the more practical focus of study, namely, how the recursive use of language could ameliorate the consequences of disparities of power by the process of legitimation. The experience of power was legitimated, given sense and meaning by the symbolic universe, which was not simply a matter of political action by the ruling elite but a process helping to bring about social cohesion.

The point of doing this was to address basic problems in the way intellectual aspects of the ancient world are to be analysed. We argued that conventional methods for understanding the ancient world became deficient when the intellectual realities were the subject of study. It was deemed preferable to attempt an explanation of various significant linguistic motifs in forensic documents from Greco-Roman Egypt within an extensively explicated theoretical framework, so as to avoid anachronistic or ethnocentric distortions in the interpretation of the evidence. But also the particular model of legitimation through a symbolic universe allowed us to approach evidence, which has been assessed by others continually for many decades in different ways, with fresh perspectives and broader insights.

At the start of the Ptolemaic period, the sovereign's role was closely defined at a symbolic and conceptual level through his epithets as saviour and benefactor. These conceptualisations of the sovereign may have had their origins in the diplomatic, political and military activities in the period following the death of Alexander,¹ but they became in Egypt essential aspects of the sovereign as cult figure and θεός and must be seen as heavily imbued with whatever religious significance derives from that. This thesis favoured the views of Price, that the sovereign as θεός was placed somewhere on a spectrum between human and divine.² The conceptual range of the saviour and benefactor motif was extended by the notion of the sovereign as helper, as kindly, humanitarian, compassionate as well as strong, powerful and

1 C. Préaux, *Le monde hellénistique I* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1978), 214ff

2 S.R.F. Price, "Gods and emperors: The Greek Language of the Roman Imperial Cult", *JHS* 104 (1984), 80. See chapter 5, 204 above.

well disposed to his subjects. Although his officials were not θεός or saviour, they were similarly helpers, humanitarian, merciful and the source of beneficent action. This, it can be seen, brought them within the operative symbolic area of the sovereign as σωτήρ and εὐεργέτης and thus elevated them to a level of symbolic signification close to the sovereign.

But the sovereign was also the source of law and the highest judge. His actions were legitimated as φιλόανθρωπα, actions with legal consequences which carried with them the inherent humanity, φιλανθρωπία, of the sovereign's role. It was in this conceptual form, as preserver, protector and law giver, that the power of the sovereign and his officials was invoked by ordinary folk for assistance in their individual problems. The meaning and signification of the sovereign's role in the lives of the ordinary people were worked out primarily through interactions in a what we understand as the forensic context, with a close reference to laws or rules of normative regulation, although the amorphous nature of ancient jurisdictions and powers and the mention of positive ethical attributes like mercy and kindness as the ground of intervention show that legal rights in the modern juristic sense was not the exclusive basis of action.

Petitions were linguistic artefacts produced within the forensic context and embodied a mode of discourse which took many of its elements from the classical rhetorical tradition, but were often a special type of document being a hybrid form between the secular forensic and rhetorical tradition and the ritual language something like that of ancient prayer, at least when the recipient was the sovereign or a high official. The notion of language as action was inherent in the rhetorical nature of the petition and in the linguistic interaction which it effectuated as an epistolographic instrument, but became particularly clear when we compared petitions to certain types of ancient prayer. The composition of petitions, like some magical documents and prayers for justice, involved the conventional and ritualistic use of language, which far from being meaningless was given added meaning by virtue of its

formulaic character, which in fact was a prime indicator of its recursive use, since the same structures and lexical items were repeated consistently over centuries, even though they were rearranged and reinterpreted.

In the process represented by petitions and their language it can be seen that all of the three main types of structures of structuration theory coalesce. The symbolic order coalesced with aspects of the structures of domination and normative regulation. When it is put in those terms we are better placed to understand why the designation of sovereign and officials as saviour benefactor or helper may have been a principal resource of meaning for the population at a collective level, because the religious and secular become aspects of the same symbolic system. The language embodied the symbolic order, while the context for these linguistic interactions was provided by the underlying structures of the legal system, its concepts, rules and procedures, and the structures of domination were represented by the officials whose positions were, (recursively) then the object of legitimation, and by the social roles, such as debtor and creditor, landlord and tenant which were implicated in the fundamental economic categories of rent, taxation and liturgies.

A fundamental part of the legitimation of the sovereign and his officials was rendered through ethical oppositions between social types, such as, rich and poor and weak and strong, which set the ideal typical good sovereign and the legal system against the ideal typical evildoer and the forces of anomie. As the primary way of doing this the petitioner submitted himself to the power of the sovereign or his officials through a relationship of supplication. The wrongdoer was set against the good king or official by reference to the core values of honour and shame as well as other illegality and censurable attitudes. All these, the sovereign as saviour, the official as helper, the dishonouring evildoer and the petitioner as suppliant, were the basic symbolic conceptualisations which were brought into connection with the material experience of every day existence in the chora. Indeed, the symbolic system

represented in the role of the Ptolemaic sovereign and his officials allow us to speak in terms of the sovereign as a forensic saviour.

In II to I BC it appeared that a number of developments took place within this forensic saviour tradition. In the process of using language in petitions as recursive social action, an interpretive activity was also going on. The position of sovereign was cemented as it were in its cult and in petitions the sovereigns were even more clearly addressed as "gods" and saviour and benefactor, together in the same part of the text: P.Tebt. III 740 (c. 113 BC) (ll. 19-21) ὄθεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς τοῖς πάντων κλοινοῦ σωτηρίας[τὴν καταφυγῆ[ν ποιησάμενοι] δεόμεθ' ὑμῶν τῶ[ν μεγίστων θεῶν].³ The language of supplication was extended to other high officials, besides the sovereign, such as the hypodioiketes and the strategos. By the end of the Ptolemaic period and the early Roman period, language of divinity was being applied to strategoi and other non cult positions. This probably reflected the waning of the power of the central dynastic house and the population had difficulty pinpointed the centre of power, because there were several power structures alongside the monarchy, as Samuel suggested may have been the case at several points in time during the Ptolemaic rule. But it is important to note that at all times the predilection to respond to power with religious concepts seems to have remained constant.

We saw this when the Romans came into control of Egypt. The cult designations of the Ptolemies, saviour and benefactor, were applied both to the emperor and to his representative in Egypt the prefect. It also came to be applied to the epistrategos in time. The language of refuge remained very important. After II AD in fact there was an intensification of the connection with religious modes of discourse and the insights of speech act theory allow us to conclude that in some instances the language of petitions and the language of certain types of ancient prayers grew even closer. Thus the complexity of later Roman petitions does not

3 See chapter 5, 203 above.

merely reflect the influence of rhetorical tradition through the Second Sophistic. When we remember the vigour and resilience of the central concept of supplication and the relationship of reciprocity which it represented expressly, the intensely ritualistic language with which it became connected and articulated, and the analogy with ancient prayer, it seems that the asymmetries of power in Roman Egypt became greater and the intensified religiosity of language in petitions to Roman procurators reflects a perception of greater power on the part of the higher Roman officials and greater social distance between them and the petitioner. This may have mirrored many of the economic realities of the later empire. But again one must remark upon the fact that it was to religious forms and concepts that the populace turned to respond to the nature of Roman power. It is apparent that the forensic saviour tradition lived on to legitimate the power of the higher Roman procurators, and they continued to play the fundamental symbolic role of saviour and protector against the forces of anomie, although the "laws" as an abstraction became more important as a part of the forensic saviour tradition through a greater institutionalisation of the power of the procurators over the four centuries to mid IV AD.

So the reason why we need the model of legitimation is that it allows us to understand the importance of the forensic saviour tradition, the relationship of reciprocity, and the rhetorical language used to articulate it as part of a complex symbolic system which overlapped with and incorporated many of the structural realities of Greco-Roman Egypt. It allows us to see that the preserving, compassionate and kind sovereign, and his officials, as a symbolic construct, were integral to the functioning of Greco-Roman society, because they helped ameliorate asymmetries of power and addressed the threat of anomie, which only too often translated into the reality of local violence, sickness, famine, drought, abandonment of land or civil war. The intellectual structures of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods of Egyptian history held great significance for understanding how that society dealt with its persistent internal tensions. But legitimation allows us to see that there is no incongruity in applying religious forms to "secular" power. Religion helps gives

cognitive structure to the experience of the myriad manifestations of unseen power and the vagaries of life, and thus is part of the process of legitimation. The use of social theory and especially the notion of the symbolic universe allows us to obtain some insight into the religious sense in the legitimation of sovereign and official. His elevation to the position of symbolic and ethical ascendancy to become helper and preserver relied upon a conceptualisation as more than human which looked to religious models for its expression.

Far from being a meaningless embellishment, the language of the forensic saviour tradition was fundamental to the articulation of the responses to the relationship with social power. In particular, the relationship of reciprocity which so clearly underlay the petition represented a real point of identification between petitioner and sovereign or official, and provides a very clear reason why political interest views of the language in petitions, the resort to flattery and pusillanimity, are likely to be too narrow. Reciprocity implies an element of mutuality and one cannot ignore the fact that the general population received a benefit in the perception and belief in the immediate presence of a powerful figure who could do something for them. It here especially that we see one of the main benefits of approaching the language in petitions as a linguistic interaction. Forensic rhetorical interaction was a method assisting social harmony and order.⁴ In the different world of Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, the petitioner articulated his submission to the power of the sovereign or high official, but expected something in return. There was a nexus between justice, power and assistance which encompassed both the capacities of the sovereign and the higher officials who received petitions and the deity who received some kind of precatory address for justice and led the ancient mind to the draw on the same language and the same type of symbols. The elements of the symbolic order which

4 Josiah Ober made the point, in the context of classical Athens, that "Ideology assisted social harmony when used in legal rhetoric - the elite person was supposed to articulate his general adherence to egalitarian principles...rhetorical ploys helped smooth over power inequalities." *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology and the Power of the People* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1989) We may quibble with the use of the term "ideology" and the word "ploy" but the point is clear.

were applicable to the personal and institutional power of the sovereign and officials had to be imbued with a high degree of symbolic signification to maximise their efficacy. So the power not only of the Ptolemaic sovereign or the Roman emperor, but also to some extent Ptolemaic and Roman officials, was treated as lying on a continuum of connective justice, and at some point was understood to touch upon the metaphysical. Thus petitioners, men and women, saw their position in relation to their forensic saviour, the sovereign or official, in many of the same ways as their position in relation to Demeter or Artemis or Zeus.

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61. P.Ross.Georg V 18 (23 AD)
62. P.Ross.Georg V 21 (III AD)
63. P.Ross.Georg II 22 (154/9 AD)
64. P.Ryl. II 75 (Late II AD)
65. P.Ryl IV 653 (321 AD)
66. P.Ryl IV 654 (IV AD)
67. P.Sakaon 31 (280-1 AD)(=P.Thead 15, Sel.Pap II)
68. P.Sakaon 32 (Late III AD)(=P.Thead 14)
69. P.Sakaon 33 (3 Jun 320 AD)(=P.Ryl IV 653)
70. P.Sakaon 34 (12 Dec 321AD)(=P.Thead 13)
71. P.Sakaon 35 (332 (?) AD)(=P.Thead 16)
72. P.Tebt II 286 (121-138 AD)

73. P.Tebt II 287 (161-9 AD)
74. P.Wisconsin I 1 (Early III AD)
75. P.Wisconsin II 48 (II AD)
76. P.Yale 351 (26 Sept 171 AD)(=P.Bacchias 20)
77. SB XVI 12692 (339 AD)
78. UPZ I 118 (136 BC)(=P. Tor. 13)
79. UPZ II 185 (II BC)(=P. Par. 16)

Literary Fragment

80. P.Oxy IX 1176 (II AD)

Literary Papyrus

81. P.Oxy XI 1381 (IIAD)
82. P.Oxy XVIII 2177 (III AD)
83. PSI 1160 (I AD)

Memorandum

84. BGU II 379 (27 May 67 AD)
85. P.Cair.Zen. III 59482 (III BC)
86. P.Col VII 174 ()
87. P.Heid. VI 363 (224-218 BC)
88. P.Hib II 273 (II AD)
89. P.Oxy XII 1409 (278 AD)
90. P.Oxy XX 2267 (360 AD)
91. P.Oxy XXXVIII 2849 Recto (21/5/296)
92. P.Tebt II 703 (Late III BC)
93. P.Tebt. III:1 796 (185 BC)
94. P.Tebt. III:1 797 (II BC)

Official Instructions

95. BGU VII 1573 (141/2 AD)
96. P.Mich IX 532 (181-2 AD)
97. UPZ I 25 (162 BC)(=P. Vat G)
98. UPZ I 26 (162 BC)(=P. Lond 17c)
99. UPZ I 27 (162 BC)(=P. Lond 17b)

Official Letter

100. BGU I 15 col. II (11 July 197 AD(?))
101. BGU I 19 Verso (11 Feb. 135 AD)
102. BGU I 286 (250 AD)
103. BGU II 362 col. V (214-5 AD)
104. BGU III 747 (c 139 AD)

105. BGU VIII 1756 (59/8 BC)
 106. BGU VIII 1764 (I BC)
 107. BGU VIII 1766 (I BC)
 108. BGU VIII 1785 (I BC)
 109. BGU VIII 1789 (I BC)
 110. BGU VIII 1795 (48/7 BC)
 111. P.Ent. 97 (220 BC)
 112. P.Ent. 98 (221 BC)
 113. P.Ent. 99 (221 BC)
 114. P.L. Bat. XXV 41 (IIAD)
 115. P.Oxy XII 1412 (284 AD)
 116. P.Oxy XXXIII 2667 Recto (22/6/309 AD)
 117. P.Oxy XLIII 3088 (21/3/128 AD)
 118. P.Tebt. III 724 (175 or 164 BC)
 119. P.Tebt. III:1 774 (187 BC)
 120. PSI XIII 1327 (189/90 AD)
 121. UPZ II 199 (20 Nov. 131 BC)
 122. UPZ II 200 (2 Jun. 130 BC)(=P. Lond. XV (14))
- Oracle Question**
123. SB XVI 12677 (II BC)
- Petition**
124. BGU I 4 (II-III AD)
 125. BGU I 22 (April 114 AD)
 126. BGU I 35 (5 Apr 223 AD)
 127. BGU I 36 (223 AD)
 128. BGU I 45 (Oct 203 AD)
 129. BGU I 46 (May 193 AD)
 130. BGU I 72 (22 Feb 191 AD)
 131. BGU I 98 (211 AD)
 132. BGU I 135 (138-160 AD)
 133. BGU I 157 (II-III AD)
 134. BGU I 159 (216 AD)
 135. BGU I 161 (II AD)
 136. BGU I 168 (II-III AD)
 137. BGU I 180 (II-III AD)
 138. BGU I 181 (57 AD)
 139. BGU I 195 (c 161 AD)
 140. BGU I 226 (99 AD)
 141. BGU I 242 (c 191 AD)
 142. BGU I 256 (138-160 AD)
 143. BGU I 275 (138-160 AD)
 144. BGU I 291 (II-III AD)
 145. BGU I 298 (173-4 AD)
 146. BGU I 321 (7 April 216 AD)
 147. BGU I 322 (7 April 216 AD)
 148. BGU I 327 (1 April 166 AD)
 149. BGU I 340 (c. 148-9 AD)
 150. BGU II 378 (II-III AD)
 151. BGU II 436 (II-III AD)
 152. BGU II 437 (II-III AD)
 153. BGU II 448 (II AD)
 154. BGU II 454 (193 AD)
 155. BGU II 462 (138-161AD)
 156. BGU II 467 (c 177 AD)
 157. BGU II 515 (193 AD)
 158. BGU II 522 (II AD)
 159. BGU II 648 (164-196 AD)
 160. BGU II 650 (60-1 AD)
 161. BGU III 731 col. II (c 180 AD)
 162. BGU III 747 (c 139 AD)
 163. BGU III 759 (125 Ad)
 164. BGU III 778 (195 AD)
 165. BGU III 868 (II AD)
 166. BGU III 871 (II AD)
 167. BGU III 908 (98-117 AD)
 168. BGU III 909 (359 AD)
 169. BGU III 935 (III-IV AD)
 170. BGU III 983 (138-161 AD)
 171. BGU III 1001 (56-5 BC)
 172. BGU III 1004 (III BC)
 173. BGU III 1006 (III BC)
 174. BGU III 1007 (III BC)
 175. BGU III 1012 (II BC)
 176. BGU IV 1019 (Mid II AD)
 177. BGU IV 1022 (13 Aug 198 AD)
 178. BGU IV 1023 (185-6 AD)
 179. BGU IV 1036 (22 Jan 108 AD)
 180. BGU IV 1038 (145 AD)
 181. BGU IV 1060 (14 BC)
 182. BGU IV 1061 (14 AD)
 183. BGU IV 1070 (218 AD)
 184. BGU IV 1071 (III AD)
 185. BGU IV 1138 (c 18 BC)
 186. BGU IV 1139 (c 5 BC)
 187. BGU IV 1140 (c 5 BC)
 188. BGU IV 1187 (I BC)
 189. BGU IV 1188 (15-14 BC)
 190. BGU IV 1189 (1 BC-1 AD)
 191. BGU IV 1190 (mid I BC)
 192. BGU IV 1193 (8 BC)
 193. BGU IV 1197 col. I (13/12 BC)
 194. BGU IV 1198 col. II (5-4 BC)
 195. BGU IV 1200 (2-1 BC)
 196. BGU IV 1201 (2 BC)
 197. BGU VI 1244 (II BC)
 198. BGU VI 1245 (III-II BC)
 199. BGU VI 1246 (III BC)
 200. BGU VI 1247 (149-8 BC)
 201. BGU IV 1250 (II BC)
 202. BGU IV 1251 (II BC)
 203. BGU IV 1252 (II BC)
 204. BGU VI 1253 (II BC)
 205. BGU VI 1254 (154-3 or 145-2 BC)
 206. BGU VI 1255 (I BC)
 207. BGU VI 1256 (200-150 BC)
 208. BGU VII 1566 (198-209 AD)
 209. BGU VII 1572 (139 AD)
 210. BGU VII 1574 (176/7 AD)
 211. BGU VII 1575 (189/90 AD)
 212. BGU VII 1578 (II-III AD)
 213. BGU VIII 1779 (51/50 BC)
 214. BGU VIII 1813 (62/1/BC)
 215. BGU VIII 1814 (61/60 BC)
 216. BGU VIII 1815 (61/60 BC)
 217. BGU VIII 1816 (60/59 BC)
 218. BGU VIII 1817 (60/59 BC)
 219. BGU VIII 1818 (56/55 BC)
 220. BGU VIII 1819 (60/59 BC)
 221. BGU VIII 1820 (56/5 BC)
 222. BGU VIII 1821 (51/50 BC)
 223. BGU VIII 1822 (I BC)
 224. BGU VIII 1823 (I BC)
 225. BGU VIII 1824 (I BC)
 226. BGU VIII 1825 (I BC)
 227. BGU VIII 1826 (52/1 BC)
 228. BGU VIII 1827 (52-1 BC)
 229. BGU VIII 1828 (52-1 BC)
 230. BGU VIII 1829 (52/1 BC)

231. BGU VIII 1830 (52-1 BC)
 232. BGU VIII 1831 (51-50 BC)
 233. BGU VIII 1832 (I BC)
 234. BGU VIII 1833 (51-50 BC)
 235. BGU VIII 1834 (51-50 BC)
 236. BGU VIII 1835 (51/50 BC)
 237. BGU VIII 1836 (51/50 BC)
 238. BGU VIII 1837 (52-1 BC)
 239. BGU VIII 1838 (51/50 BC)
 240. BGU VIII 1839 (51/50 BC)
 241. BGU VIII 1840 (51/50 BC)
 242. BGU VIII 1841 (51/50 BC)
 243. BGU VIII 1842 (50-49 BC)
 244. BGU VIII 1843 (50/49 BC)
 245. BGU VIII 1844 (50-49 BC)
 246. BGU VIII 1845 (I BC)
 247. BGU VIII 1846 (51-49 BC)
 248. BGU VIII 1847 (51/50 BC)
 249. BGU VIII 1848 (48-6 BC)
 250. BGU VIII 1849 (48-6 BC)
 251. BGU VIII 1850 (48-46 BC)
 252. BGU VIII 1851 (I BC)
 253. BGU VIII 1852 (I BC)
 254. BGU VIII 1853 (46/5 BC)
 255. BGU VIII 1854 (I BC)
 256. BGU VIII 1855 (I BC)
 257. BGU VIII 1856 (I BC)
 258. BGU VIII 1857 (I BC)
 259. BGU VIII 1858 (I BC)
 260. BGU VIII 1859 (I BC)
 261. BGU VIII 1860 (I BC)
 262. BGU VIII 1861 (I BC)
 263. BGU VIII 1862 (I BC)
 264. BGU VIII 1863 (I BC)
 265. BGU VIII 1864 (I BC)
 266. BGU VIII 1865 (I BC)
 267. BGU VIII 1866 (I BC)
 268. BGU VIII 1867 (I BC)
 269. BGU VIII 1868 (I BC)
 270. BGU XI 2061 (207 AD)
 271. BGU XI 2062 (II AD)
 272. BGU XI 2063 (II AD)
 273. BGU XI 2064 (173 AD)
 274. BGU XI 2065 (I AD)
 275. BGU XI 2066 (73/4 AD)
 276. BGU XI 2067 (II AD)
 277. BGU XI 2068 (II AD)
 278. BGU XI 2069 (292 AD)
 279. BGU XV 2460 (II AD)
 280. BGU XV 2464 (III AD)
 281. C.P.Herm. 52 (IVAD)
 282. CPR VII 1 (7-4 BC)
 283. CPR XI 7 (c 26 May 14 AD)
 284. CPR XI 7 (c 26 May 14 AD)
 285. CPR V 9 (339 AD)
 286. CPR XI 7 (c 26 May 14 AD)
 287. CPR XI 7 (c 26 May 14 AD)
 288. CPR XI 7 (c 26 May 14 AD)
 289. CPR XI 7 (c 26 May 14 AD)
 290. CPR VII 15 (III AD)
 291. CPR XI 7 (c 26 May 14 AD)
 292. CPR XI 7 (c 26 May 14 AD)
 293. CPR XI 7 (c 26 May 14 AD)
 294. ESHRE 556 (247 AD)
 295. I Eph. I 2.213 (88/9 AD)
 296. IG Fayum II 112 (19.2.93 BC)
 297. IG Fayum II 113 (19.2.93 BC)
 298. IG Fayum II 114 (29.7.70 BC)
 299. IG Fayum II 136 (69-8 BC)
 300. IGBulg IV 2236 (238 AD)
 301. P.Alex.Giss. 32 (117-38AD)
 302. P.Amh. II 33 (157 BC)
 303. P.Amh. II 35 (132 BC)
 304. P.Amh. II 36 (135 BC)
 305. P.Amh. II 77 (139 AD)
 306. P.Amh. II 7E (184 AD)
 307. P.Amh. II 79 (186 AD)
 308. P.Amh. II 80 (232-3 AD)
 309. P.Amh. II 81 (247 AD)
 310. P.Amh. II 82 (Late III or early IV AD)
 311. P.Amh. II 83 (Late III or early IV AD)
 312. P.Amh. II 84 (II or III AD)
 313. P.Amh. II 141 (350 AD)
 314. P.Amh. II 142 (IV AD)
 315. P.Ant. I 35 (Late III AD)
 316. P.Ant. I 36 (326 AD?)
 317. P.Ant. II 88 (221 AD)
 318. P.Ant. II 99 (Early IV AD)
 319. P. Brem 38 (118 AD)
 320. P.Cair.Goodspeed 15 (362 AD)
 321. P.Cair.Isidor. 62 (5 Sept 296 AD)
 322. P.Cair.Isidor. 63 (Nov 296 AD)
 323. P.Cair.Isidor. 64 (298 AD)
 324. P.Cair.Isidor. 65 (298/9 AD)
 325. P.Cair.Isidor. 66 (299 AD)
 326. P.Cair.Isidor. 67 (299 AD)
 327. P.Cair.Isidor. 68 (309/10 AD)
 328. P.Cair.Isidor. 69 (310 AD)
 329. P.Cair.Isidor. 70 (310 AD)
 330. P.Cair.Isidor. 73 (314 AD)
 331. P.Cair.Isidor. 74 (315 AD)
 332. P.Cair.Isidor. 75 (24 Oct 316 AD)
 333. P.Cair.Isidor. 76 (16 July 318 AD)
 334. P.Cair.Isidor. 77 (320 AD)
 335. P.Cair.Isidor. 78 (29 Jan 324 AD)
 336. P.Cair.Isidor. 79 (Early IV AD)
 337. P.Cair.Isidor. 138 (III or IV)
 338. P.Cair.Isidor. 139 (296 AD)
 339. P.Cair.Isidor. 140 (323 AD)
 340. P.Cair.Isidor. 141 (III-IV AD)
 341. P.Cair.Isidor. 142 (23 Apr 300 AD)
 342. P.Cair.Zen. II 59145 (2/8/256 BC)
 343. P.Cair.Zen. II 59236 (254/3 BC)
 344. P.Cair.Zen. III 59341 (247 BC)
 345. P.Cair.Zen. III 59421 (III BC)
 346. P.Cair.Zen. III 59447 (III BC)
 347. P.Cair.Zen. III 59495 (III BC)
 348. P.Cair.Zen. III 59520 (III BC)
 349. P.Cair.Zen. IV 59618 (III BC)
 350. P.Cair.Zen. IV 59618 (III BC)
 351. P.Cair.Zen. IV 59618 (III BC)
 352. P.Cair.Zen. IV 59618 (III BC)
 353. P.Cair.Zen. V 59852 (III BC)
 354. P.Col VII 169 (13/4/318 AD)
 355. P.Col VII 170 (15/7/318 AD)
 356. P.Col VII 171 (324 AD)
 357. P.Col VII 172 ()

358. P.Col VII 173 (330-340 AD)
359. P.Col. IV 83 (245-244 BC)
360. P.Col. IV 102 ()
361. P.Coll.Youtie I 12 (177 BC)
362. P.Coll.Youtie I 16 (14 Sept 109 BC)
363. P.Coll.Youtie I 24 (121-122 AD)
364. P.Coll.Youtie II 77 (324 AD)
365. P.Cornell 14 (180-192 AD)
366. P.Ent. 1 (256 BC)
367. P.Ent. 2 (217 BC)
368. P.Ent. 3 (221 BC)
369. P.Ent. 4 (242 BC)
370. P.Ent. 5 (221 BC)
371. P.Ent. 6 (221 BC)
372. P.Ent. 7 (221 BC)
373. P.Ent. 8 (221 BC)
374. P.Ent. 9 (217 BC)
375. P.Ent. 10 (221 BC)
376. P.Ent. 11 (221 BC)
377. P.Ent. 12 (242 BC)
378. P.Ent. 13 (221 BC)
379. P.Ent. 14 (221 BC)
380. P.Ent. 15 (217 BC)
381. P.Ent. 16 (221 BC)
382. P.Ent. 17 (217 BC)
383. P.Ent. 18 (221 BC)
384. P.Ent. 19 (c. 221 BC)
385. P.Ent. 20 (221 BC)
386. P.Ent. 21 (217 BC)
387. P.Ent. 22 (217 BC)
388. P.Ent. 23 (217 BC)
389. P.Ent. 24 (221 BC)
390. P.Ent. 25 (220 BC)
391. P.Ent. 26 (221 BC)
392. P.Ent. 27 (221 BC)
393. P.Ent. 28 (217 BC)
394. P.Ent. 29 (217 BC)
395. P.Ent. 30 (217 BC)
396. P.Ent. 31 (221 BC)
397. P.Ent. 32 (217 BC)
398. P.Ent. 33 (221 BC)
399. P.Ent. 34 (217 BC)
400. P.Ent. 35 (221 BC)
401. P.Ent. 36 (221 BC)
402. P.Ent. 37 (221 BC)
403. P.Ent. 38 (221 BC)
404. P.Ent. 39 (221 BC)
405. P.Ent. 40 (217 BC)
406. P.Ent. 41 (221 BC)
407. P.Ent. 42 (221 BC)
408. P.Ent. 43 (221 BC)
409. P.Ent. 44 (221 BC)
410. P.Ent. 45 (221 BC)
411. P.Ent. 46 (221 BC)
412. P.Ent. 47 (221 BC)
413. P.Ent. 48 (217 BC)
414. P.Ent. 49 (221 BC)
415. P.Ent. 50 (221 BC)
416. P.Ent. 51 (221 BC)
417. P.Ent. 52 (217 BC)
418. P.Ent. 53 (217 BC)
419. P.Ent. 54 (217 BC)
420. P.Ent. 55 (221 BC)
421. P.Ent. 56 (217 BC)
422. P.Ent. 57 (217 BC)
423. P.Ent. 58 (221 BC)
424. P.Ent. 59 (221 BC)
425. P.Ent. 60 (217 BC)
426. P.Ent. 61 (c245 BC)
427. P.Ent. 62 (221 BC)
428. P.Ent. 63 (c 221 BC)
429. P.Ent. 64 (221 BC)
430. P.Ent. 65 (221 BC)
431. P.Ent. 66 (217 BC)
432. P.Ent. 67 (217 BC)
433. P.Ent. 68 (220 BC)
434. P.Ent. 69 (217 BC)
435. P.Ent. 70 (221 BC)
436. P.Ent. 71 (221 BC)
437. P.Ent. 72 (217 BC)
438. P.Ent. 73 (221 BC)
439. P.Ent. 74 (221 BC)
440. P.Ent. 75 (221 BC)
441. P.Ent. 76 (221 BC)
442. P.Ent. 77 (221 BC)
443. P.Ent. 78 (221 BC)
444. P.Ent. 79 (217 BC)
445. P.Ent. 80 (c 241 BC)
446. P.Ent. 81 (221 BC)
447. P.Ent. 82 (221 BC)
448. P.Ent. 83 (221 BC)
449. P.Ent. 84 (221 BC)
450. P.Ent. 85 (221 BC)
451. P.Ent. 86 (221 BC)
452. P.Ent. 87 (221 BC)
453. P.Ent. 88 (221 BC)
454. P.Ent. 89 (221 BC)
455. P.Ent. 90 (217 BC)
456. P.Ent. 91 (221 BC)
457. P.Ent. 92 (221 BC)
458. P.Ent. 93 (221-217 BC)
459. P.Ent. 94 (221 BC)
460. P.Ent. 95 (221 BC)
461. P.Ent. 96 (221 BC)
462. P.Ent. 113 (221 BC)
463. P.Fay. 11 (115 BC)
464. P.Fay. 12 (103 BC)
465. P.Fay. 106 (c. 140 AD)
466. P.Fay. 106 (133 AD)
467. P.Fay. 106 (171 AD)
468. P.Gen. I 4 (Early III AD)
469. P.Gen. I 4 (Early III AD)
470. P.Gen. I 4 (Early III AD)
471. P.Gen. I 81 (145 AD)
472. P.Giss. Heft 2 46 (II AD)
473. P.Giss.Univ.Bibl 1 2 (II BC)
474. P.Giss.Univ.Bibl 1 3 (II BC)
475. P.Giss.Univ.Bibl 1 4 (II BC)
476. P.Giss.Univ.Bibl 1 6 (II BC)
477. P.Giss.Univ.Bibl 1 7 (II BC)
478. P.Giss.Univ.Bibl 1 8 (132-1 BC)
479. P.Giss.Univ.Bibl 1 9 (II BC)
480. P.Grenf. I 38.1 (171/170 BC)
481. P.Grenf. I 42 (II BC)
482. P.Hamb. I 91 (167 BC)
483. P.Harr I 66 (155 AD)
484. P.Harr I 67 (c150 AD)
485. P.Harr I 68 (225 AD)
486. P.Harr I 69 (Early III AD)
487. P.Heid. IV 297 (172-5 AD)

488. P.Heid. VI 376 (2 Mar 220 BC)
 489. P.Heid. VI 377 (2nd half III BC)
 490. P.Heid. VI 378 (2nd half III BC)
 491. P.Heid. VI 379 (204 BC)
 492. P.Heid. VI 380 (209 or 192 BC)
 493. P.Heid. VI 381 (208-190 BC)
 494. P.Heid. VI 382 (158-7 BC)
 495. P.Hels. I 1 (194/3-180 BC)
 496. P.Hels. I 31 (167 BC)
 497. P.Herm.Rees 19 (392 AD)
 498. P.Herm.Rees 20 (IVAD)
 499. P.Herm.Rees 20 (IV AD)
 500. P.Hib I 34 (243-2 BC)
 501. P.Hib I 35 (250 BC)
 502. P.Hib II 201 (c 250-240 BC)
 503. P.Hib II 202 (c 250-240 BC)
 504. P.Hib II 203 (Euergetes)
 505. P.Hib II 235 (c. 250-240 BC)
 506. P.Hib II 236 (c. 250-240 BC)
 507. P.Hib II 237 (c. 246-221 BC)
 508. P.Hib II 238 (c. 246-221 BC)
 509. P.Iand. III 27 (100-1 AD)
 510. P.L. Bat. XXV 34 (140 Ad)
 511. P.Lille I 8 (III BC)
 512. P.Lond I 354 (10 BC)
 513. P.Lond II 401 (116/111 BC)
 514. P.Lond. VII 2045 (III BC)
 515. P.Merton I 5 (146/135 BC)
 516. P.Meyer 8 (16 Aug 151 AD)
 517. P.Mich III 173 (Late III BC)
 518. P.Mich III 174 (145-147 AD)
 519. P.Mich III 175 (193 AD)
 520. P.Mich VI 421 (I AD)
 521. P.Mich VI 422 (197 AD)
 522. P.Mich VI 423 (197 AD)
 523. P.Mich VI 424 (197 AD)
 524. P.Mich VI 425 (198 AD)
 525. P.Mich VI 426 (199-200 AD)
 526. P.Mich IX 523 (66 AD)
 527. P.Mich IX 524 (98 AD)
 528. P.Mich IX 525 (119-124 AD)
 529. P.Mich IX 526 (155 AD)
 530. P.Mich IX 527 (186-188 AD)
 531. P.Mich IX 528 (II AD)
 532. P.Mich IX 529 Recto (232-236 AD)
 533. P.Mich IX 530 (III-IV AD)
 534. P.Mich IX 534 (156 AD)
 535. P.Mich X 582 (49/50 AD)
 536. P.Mich. inv. 255 (22 Oct 147 AD)
 537. P.Mil.Vogliano II 97 (245 AD)
 538. P.Mil.Vogliano III 128 (119 BC)
 539. P.Mil.Vogliano III 129 (135 AD)
 540. P.Mil.Vogliano III 170 (126 AD)
 541. P.Mil.Vogliano III 180 (148 AD)
 542. P.Mil.Vogliano IV 222 (157-9 AD)
 543. P.Mil.Vogliano IV 229 (140 AD)
 544. P.Mil.Vogliano IV 233 (III AD)
 545. P.Mil.Vogliano IV 234 (III AD)
 546. P.Monac. III 50 (155 BC)
 547. P.Monac. III 51 (134/5 BC)
 548. P.Monac. III 74 (31/8/158 AD)
 549. P.Osl. III 123 (22 AD)
 550. P.Oxy I 38 (49-50 AD)
 551. P.Oxy I 67 (338 AD)
 552. P.Oxy I 69 (190 AD)
 553. P.Oxy I 70 (III AD)
 554. P.Oxy I 71 col. ii Recto (303 AD)
 555. P.Oxy I 71.1 Recto (303 AD)
 556. P.Oxy I 86 (338 AD)
 557. P.Oxy II 237 (186 AD)
 558. P.Oxy II 281 (20-50 AD)
 559. P.Oxy II 282 (30-35 AD)
 560. P.Oxy II 283 (45 AD)
 561. P.Oxy II 284 (50 AD)
 562. P.Oxy II 285 (50 AD)
 563. P.Oxy III 484 (138 AD)
 564. P.Oxy III 485 (178 AD)
 565. P.Oxy III 486 (131 AD)
 566. P.Oxy III 487 (156 AD)
 567. P.Oxy III 488 (II -III AD)
 568. P.Oxy IV 705 (200-2 AD)
 569. P.Oxy IV 717 (Late I BC)
 570. P.Oxy IV 718 (180-192 AD)
 571. P.Oxy IV 720 (247 AD)
 572. P.Oxy VI 898 (123 AD)
 573. P.Oxy VI 899 (200 AD)
 574. P.Oxy VI 900 (322 AD)
 575. P.Oxy VI 901 (336 AD)
 576. P.Oxy VI 903 (IV AD)
 577. P.Oxy VII 1031 (228 AD)
 578. P.Oxy VII 1032 (162 AD)
 579. P.Oxy VIII 1117 (c178 AD)
 580. P.Oxy VIII 1118 (late I or early II AD)
 581. P.Oxy VIII 1119 (254 AD)
 582. P.Oxy VIII 1120 (Early III AD)
 583. P.Oxy VIII 1121 (295 AD)
 584. P.Oxy IX 1201 (258 AD)
 585. P.Oxy IX 1202 (217 AD)
 586. P.Oxy IX 1203 (Late I AD)
 587. P.Oxy IX 1204 (299 AD)
 588. P.Oxy X 1252 Recto (288-95 AD)
 589. P.Oxy X 1270 (159 AD)
 590. P.Oxy X 1271 (246 AD)
 591. P.Oxy X 1272 (144 AD)
 592. P.Oxy XII 1418 (247 AD)
 593. P.Oxy XII 1465 (I BC)
 594. P.Oxy XII 1466 (245 AD)
 595. P.Oxy XII 1467 (263 AD)
 596. P.Oxy XII 1468 (c. 258 AD)
 597. P.Oxy XII 1469 (298 AD)
 598. P.Oxy XII 1470 (336 AD)
 599. P.Oxy XII 1556 (247 AD)
 600. P.Oxy XII 1557 (255 AD)
 601. P.Oxy XII 1558 (267 AD)
 602. P.Oxy XII 1559 (341 AD)
 603. P.Oxy XVII 2130 (267 AD)
 604. P.Oxy XVII 2131 (207 AD)
 605. P.Oxy XVII 2132 (c250 AD)
 606. P.Oxy XVII 2133 (Late III AD)
 607. P.Oxy XVIII 2187 (304 AD)
 608. P.Oxy XVIII 2199 (II -III AD)
 609. P.Oxy XIX 2234 (31 AD)
 610. P.Oxy XIX 2235 (c 346 AD)
 611. P.Oxy XXII 2342 (102 AD)
 612. P.Oxy XXII 2343 (288 AD)

613. P.Oxy XXII 2344 (336 AD)
614. P.Oxy XXIV 2410 (120 AD)
615. P.Oxy XXIV 2411 (c173 AD)
616. P.Oxy XXVII 2473 (229 AD)
617. P.Oxy XXXI 2563 (c170 AD)
618. P.Oxy XXXIII 2672 Recto (Sept/Oct 218 AD)
619. P.Oxy XXXIV 2708 Recto (14 Apr 169 AD)
620. P.Oxy XXXIV 2709 Recto (202-7 AD)
621. P.Oxy XXXIV 2710 Recto (17/1/261 AD)
622. P.Oxy XXXIV 2711 Recto (268-271 AD)
623. P.Oxy XXXIV 2712 Recto (292-3 AD)
624. P.Oxy XXXIV 2713 Recto (297 AD)
625. P.Oxy XXXVI 2758 Recto (110-2 AD)
626. P.Oxy XXXVI 2760 Recto (179/8 AD)
627. P.Oxy XXXVIII 2853 Recto (245 AD)
628. P.Oxy XLI 2997 (214 AD)
629. P.Oxy XLIII 3093 (21/9/217 AD)
630. P.Oxy XLIII 3110 (c253-7 AD)
631. P.Oxy XLIII 3113 (264-5 AD)
632. P.Oxy XLIII 3114 (25/6-24/7/267 AD)
633. P.Oxy XLIII 3116 (275-6 AD)
634. P.Oxy XLIII 3126 (19 Aug 328 AD)
635. P.Oxy XLIII 3140 (III-IV AD)
636. P.Oxy XLIV 3164 (4 Sept 73 AD)
637. P.Oxy XLV 3246 (297-8 AD)
638. P.Oxy XLV 3247 (298 AD)
639. P.Oxy XLVI 3274 (99-117 AD)
640. P.Oxy XLVI 3286 (222-3 AD)
641. P.Oxy XLVI 3288 Recto (252-3 AD)
642. P.Oxy XLVI 3289 Recto (258-9 AD)
643. P.Oxy XLVI 3296 Recto (291 AD)
644. P.Oxy XLVI 3302 Recto (300-1 AD)
645. P.Oxy XLVI 3311 Recto (373-4 AD)
646. P.Oxy XLVII 3339 (191 AD)
647. P.Oxy XLVII 3350 (330 AD)
648. P.Oxy XLVII 3364 (209 AD)
649. P.Oxy XLVII 3366 (253-60 AD)(=P.Coll.Youtie II 66
650. P.Oxy XLVIII 3393 (8/6/365 AD)
651. P.Oxy XLVIII 3394 (364-6 AD)
652. P.Oxy XLIX 3466 (81-96 AD)
653. P.Oxy XLIX 3467 (98 AD)
654. P.Oxy XLIX 3468 (I AD)
655. P.Oxy XLIX 3480 (360-90 AD)
656. P.Oxy L 3555 (I-II AD)
657. P.Oxy L 3561 (Jan-Feb 165 AD)
658. P.Oxy L 3574 (314-18 AD)
659. P.Oxy L 3575 (341 AD)
660. P.Oxy LI 3620 (326 AD)
661. P.Oxy LIV 3769 (334 AD)
662. P.Oxy LIV 3770 (26/3/334 AD)
663. P.Oxy LIV 3771 (336 AD)(= VI 901)
664. P.Oxy LIV 3775 (342 AD)
665. P.Oxy LVIII 3916 (16/2-28/8 60 AD)
666. P.Oxy LVIII 3926 (9 Feb 246)
667. P.Oxy LIX 3978 (249/50 AD)
668. P.Oxy LIX 3981 (Feb/Mar 312 AD)
669. P.Oxy LX 4071 (241-4(?) AD)
670. P.Oxy LX 4074 (307 AD)
671. P.Oxy LX 4082 (307 AD)
672. P.Oxy LX 4090 (12.4.352 AD)
673. P.Panopolis Köln III 29 (24/7/332 AD)
674. P.Petrie II 21 (222-1 BC)
675. P.Petrie III 25 (III BC)
676. P.Petrie III 28 (III BC)
677. P.Petrie III 29 (c. 241 BC)
678. P.Petrie III 31 (241-40 BC)
679. P.Petrie III 32 (III BC)
680. P.Petrie III 34 (III BC)
681. P.Petrie III 36 Verso (III BC)
682. P.Petrie II 101 (c. 240 BC)
683. P.Petrie II 122 (241 BC)
684. P.Petrie III 123 (c. 241 BC)
685. P.Petrie II 181 (221-220 BC)
686. P.Petrie II 322 (III BC)
687. P.Princ. II 23 (13 AD)
688. P.Princ. II 29 (258 AD)
689. P.Princ. II 77 (IV AD)
690. P.Princ. III 116 (I AD)
691. P.Princ. III 117 (52 BC)
692. P.Princ. III 118 (II AD)
693. P.Princ. III 119 (IV AD)
694. P.Princ. III 119 (Early IV AD)
695. P.Rein. I 18 (108 BC)
696. P.Ross.Georg II 20 (146 AD)
697. P.Ross.Georg II 21 (154/5 AD)
698. P.Ross.Georg V 22 (mid III AD)
699. P.Ross.Georg V 24 (Early IV AD)
700. P.Ross.Georg II 25 (159 AD)
701. P.Ross.Georg V 29 (360 AD)
702. P.Ross.Georg II 39 (II AD)
703. P.Ryl. II 66 (Late II BC)
704. P.Ryl. II 67 (Late II BC)
705. P.Ryl. II 68 (89 BC)
706. P.Ryl. II 69 (34 BC)
707. P.Ryl. II 113 (133 AD)
708. P.Ryl. II 115 (156 AD)
709. P.Ryl. II 116 (194 AD)
710. P.Ryl. II 117 (269 AD)
711. P.Ryl. II 118 (16-15 AD)
712. P.Ryl. II 119 (054-67 AD)
713. P.Ryl. II 122 (127 AD)
714. P.Ryl. II 123 (114 AD)
715. P.Ryl. II 124 (I AD)
716. P.Ryl. II 125 (28-9 AD)
717. P.Ryl. II 126 (28-9 AD)
718. P.Ryl. II 127 (29 AD)
719. P.Ryl. II 128 (30 AD)
720. P.Ryl. II 129 (30 AD)
721. P.Ryl. II 130 (31 AD)
722. P.Ryl. II 131 (31 AD)
723. P.Ryl. II 132 (32 AD)
724. P.Ryl. II 133 (33 AD)
725. P.Ryl. II 134 (34 AD)
726. P.Ryl. II 135 (34 AD)

727. P.Ryl. II 136 (34 AD)
728. P.Ryl. II 137 (34 AD)
729. P.Ryl. II 138 (34 AD)
730. P.Ryl. II 139 (34 AD)
731. P.Ryl. II 140 (36 AD)
732. P.Ryl. II 141 (37 AD)
733. P.Ryl. II 142 (37 AD)
734. P.Ryl. II 143 (38 AD)
735. P.Ryl. II 144 (38 AD)
736. P.Ryl. II 145 (38 AD)
737. P.Ryl. II 146 (39 AD)
738. P.Ryl. II 147 (39 AD)
739. P.Ryl. II 148 (40 AD)
740. P.Ryl. II 149 (039-40 AD)
741. P.Ryl. II 150 (40 AD)
742. P.Ryl. II 151 (40 AD)
743. P.Ryl. II 152 (42 AD)
744. P.Ryl. IV 569 (III BC)
745. P.Ryl. IV 570 (III BC)
746. P.Ryl. IV 577 (146 or 135 BC)
747. P.Ryl. IV 578 (58 BC)
748. P.Ryl. IV 579 (I BC)
749. P.Ryl. IV 598 (73 AD)
750. P.Ryl. IV 617 (317 AD)
751. P.Ryl. IV 669 (I AD)
752. P.Sakaon 36 (c 280 AD)(=P.Ryl 114, Sel.Pap. II 293)
753. P.Sakaon 38 (17 Aug 312 AD)(=P.Flor 36, Mitt.Chrest II
754. P.Sakaon 39 (7 Sept 318 AD)(=P.Thead 21)
755. P.Sakaon 40 (318-320 AD)(=P.Thead 19)
756. P.Sakaon 41 (14 July 322 AD)(=P.Ryl IV 659)
757. P.Sakaon 42 (c. 323 AD)(=P.Thead 20)
758. P.Sakaon 43 (6 Nov 327 AD)(=P.Thead 61, SB I 5356)
759. P.Sakaon 44 (331/2 AD)(=P.Thead 17, Sel. Pap II
760. P.Sakaon 45 (7 Dec 334 AD)(=P.Thead 24)
761. P.Sakaon 45 (7 Dec 334 AD)(=P.Thead 25)
762. P.Sakaon 46 (29 Mar 342 AD)(=P.Thead 22)
763. P.Sakaon 47 (29 Mar 342 AD)(=P.Thead 23, P.Abinn 44)
764. P.Sakaon 48 (6 April 343 AD)(=SB VI 9622)
765. P.Sorb I 13 (257/6 BC)
766. P.Strassb., Strasb 4 566 (7 AD)
767. P.Strassb., Strasb III 311 (24/8/123 AD)
768. P.Strassb., Strasb III 332 (103-117 AD)
769. P.Tebt. I 39 (114 BC)
770. P.Tebt. I 40 (117 BC)
771. P.Tebt. I 41 (119 BC)
772. P.Tebt. I 42 (c. 114 BC)
773. P.Tebt. I 43 (118 BC)
774. P.Tebt. I 44 (114 BC)
775. P.Tebt. I 45 (113 BC)
776. P.Tebt. I 46 (113 BC)
777. P.Tebt. I 47 (113 BC)
778. P.Tebt. I 48 (113 BC)
779. P.Tebt. I 49 (112-111 BC)
780. P.Tebt. I 50 (112-111 BC)
781. P.Tebt. I 51 (112-111 BC)
782. P.Tebt. I 52 (114 BC)
783. P.Tebt. I 53 (110 BC)
784. P.Tebt. I 54 (86 BC)
785. P.Tebt. I 124 (118 BC)
786. P.Tebt II 304 (167-8 AD)
787. P.Tebt II 326 (c. 266 AD)
788. P.Tebt II 327 (Late II AD)
789. P.Tebt II 328 (191-2 AD)
790. P.Tebt II 329 (139 AD)
791. P.Tebt II 330 (II AD)
792. P.Tebt II 331 (131 AD)
793. P.Tebt II 332 (176 AD)
794. P.Tebt II 333 (216 AD)
795. P.Tebt II 334 (200-1 AD)
796. P.Tebt II 335 (mid III AD)
797. P.Tebt II 439 (151 AD)
798. P.Tebt. III 740 (c. 113 BC)
799. P.Tebt. III:1 769 (237/6-212/11 BC)
800. P.Tebt. III:1 770 (210 (?) BC)
801. P.Tebt. III:1 771 (II BC)
802. P.Tebt. III:1 772 (236 BC)
803. P.Tebt. III:1 773 (Late III BC)
804. P.Tebt. III:1 775 (Early II BC)
805. P.Tebt. III:1 776 (II BC)
806. P.Tebt. III:1 777 (Early II BC)
807. P.Tebt. III:1 778 (178-7 BC)
808. P.Tebt. III:1 779 (c. 175 BC)
809. P.Tebt. III:1 780 (171 BC)
810. P.Tebt. III:1 781 (164 BC)
811. P.Tebt. III:1 782 (153 BC)
812. P.Tebt. III:1 783 (Mid II BC)
813. P.Tebt. III:1 784 (Early II BC)
814. P.Tebt. III:1 785 (c 138 BC)
815. P.Tebt. III:1 786 (c 138 BC)
816. P.Tebt. III:1 787 (c 138 BC)
817. P.Tebt. III:1 788 (Mid II BC)
818. P.Tebt. III:1 789 (c 140 BC)
819. P.Tebt. III:1 790 (II BC)
820. P.Tebt. III:1 791 (c 116 BC)
821. P.Tebt. III:1 792 (c. 113 BC)
822. P.Tebt. III:1 798 (II BC)
823. P.Tebt. III:1 799 (155-4 or 144-3 BC)
824. P.Tebt. III:1 800 (142 BC)
825. P.Tebt. III:1 802 (135 BC)
826. P.Tebt. III:1 803 (II BC)
827. P.Tebt. III:1 805 (113 BC)
828. P.Tebt. III 895 (175 BC)
829. P.Tebt. III:2 951 (136 BC)
830. P.Tebt. III:2 958 (162 BC)
831. P.Tebt. III:2 959 (140 BC)
832. P.Tebt. IV 1094 (114/3 BC)
833. P.Tebt. IV 1095 (113 BC)
834. P.Tebt. IV 1096 (113 BC)
835. P.Tebt. IV 1097 (Late II BC)
836. P.Tebt. IV 1098 (c 114 BC)
837. P.Vindob.Worp 2 (Oct.-Nov. 21 BC)
838. P.Wisconsin I 2 (Early III AD)
839. P.Wisconsin I 3 (257-9 AD)
840. P.Wisconsin I 32 (305 AD)
841. P.Wisconsin I 33 (147 AD)
842. P.Wisconsin I 34 (144 AD)
843. P.Wisconsin II 49 (II -III AD)
844. P.Wisconsin II 86 (244-246 AD)
845. P.Würzb. 5 (31 BC)
846. P.Yale 46 col. i (246-221 BC)

847. P.Yale 53 (mid.II BC)
848. PSI III 166 (118 BC)
849. PSI III 167 (118 BC)
850. PSI III 168 (118 BC)
851. PSI III 169 (118 BC)
852. PSI III 170 (118 BC)
853. PSI III 171 (II BC)
854. PSI III 172 (II BC)
855. PSI III 172 (II BC)
856. PSI III 172 (II BC)
857. PSI III 222 (III AD)
858. PSI IV 292 (III AD)
859. PSI IV 298 (IV AD)
860. PSI IV 399 (Mid III BC)
861. PSI V 452 (IV AD)
862. PSI V 463 (157-60 AD)
863. PSI V 538 (III BC)
864. PSI 806 (Jan-Feb 158 AD)
865. PSI VIII 949 (I BC)
866. PSI XIII 1317 (118 AD)
867. PSI XIII 1323 (147/8 AD)
868. PSI XIII 1337 (III AD)
869. PSI XIV 1403 (II AD)
870. PSI XIV 1422 (III AD)
871. SB 4416 (c 157 AD)
872. SB I 4638 (145-116 BC)
873. SB III 6152 (93 BC)
874. SB III 6153 (93 BC)
875. SB III 6154 (69 BC)
876. SB III 6155 (69-8 BC)
877. SB III 6156 (57 BC)
878. SB III 6236 (70 BC)
879. SB III 7205 (End III AD)
880. SB III 7259 (95-4 BC)
881. SB IV 7351 (II BC)
882. SB V 7657 (165-158 BC)
883. SB 7870 (107-8 AD)
884. SB VI 9108 (173/169 AD)
885. SB VI 9168 (298 AD)
886. SB VIII 9792 (162 BC)
887. SB VIII 9800 (III BC)
888. SB XVI 12225 (117-138 AD)
889. SB XVI 12285 (III AD)
890. SB XVI 12290 (158 AD)
891. SB XVI 12305 (199-150 BC)
892. SB XVI 12324 (Late IV AD)
893. SB XVI 12468 (2nd Half III BC)
894. SB XVI 12470 (I to II AD)
895. SB XVI 12500 (I to II AD)
896. SB XVI 12504 (23 Oct 221 AD)
897. SB XVI 12506 (15 Oct 159 BC)
898. SB XVI 12509 (117-138 AD)
899. SB XVI 12524 (6 Jul 17 BC)
900. SB XVI 12678 (27 July 179 AD)
901. SB XVI 12685 (4 Oct 139 AD)
902. SB XVI 12696 (15 Aug 140 AD)
903. SB XVI 12698 (180-92 AD)
904. SB XVI 12713 (19 Feb 10/11 AD)
905. SB XVIII 13087 (25 Jun-24 Jul 4 BC)
906. UPZ I 2 (163 BC)(=P.Lond. 24 Recto)
907. UPZ I 3 Recto (164 BC)(=P.Par.24 Recto)
908. UPZ I 4 Verso (164 BC)(=P.Par.24 Verso)
909. UPZ I 5 (163 BC)(=P.Par. 37)
910. UPZ I 6 (163 BC)(=P.Par. 35)
911. UPZ I 7 (163/2 BC)(=P. Vat. B; P. Par 36)
912. UPZ I 8 (c. 161 BC)(=P. Lond. 24)
913. UPZ I 9 (161 BC)(=P.Par. 39 Recto)
914. UPZ I 10 (160-159 BC)(=P. Lond. 45)
915. UPZ I 11 (160 BC)(=P. Par. 38)
916. UPZ I 12 (158 BC)(=P. Par. 40)
917. UPZ I 13 (158/7 BC)(=P. Par. 41)
918. UPZ I 14 (158-7 BC)(=P. Lond. 23)
919. UPZ I 15 (156 BC)(=P. Vat. E)
920. UPZ I 16 (156 BC)(=P. Vat. F)
921. UPZ I 17 (163 BC)(=P. Lond. 22 Recto)
922. UPZ I 18 (163 BC)(=P. Par. 23)
923. UPZ I 19 (c. 163 BC)(=P. Par. 22)
924. UPZ I 20 (c 163 BC)
925. UPZ I 22 (162 BC)(=P. Par. 25)
926. UPZ I 24 (c 162 BC)(=P. Lond. 21)
927. UPZ I 33 (161 BC)(=P. Leid. E II)
928. UPZ I 34 (161 BC)(=P. Dresd. V II)
929. UPZ I 35 (161 BC)(=P. Par. 30)
930. UPZ I 36 (161 BC)(=P. Leid. D)
931. UPZ I 39 (c. 161 BC)(=P. Lond. 33)
932. UPZ I 40 (161 BC)(=P. Par. 33)
933. UPZ I 41 (c. 161/60 BC)(=P. Par. 29)
934. UPZ I 42 (163-2 BC)(=P. Par. 26)
935. UPZ I 43 (162-1 BC)(=P. Dresd Recto)
936. UPZ I 44 (162-1 BC)(=P. Dresd V. I)
937. UPZ I 45 (162-1 BC)(=P. Vat. D)
938. UPZ I 46 (162-1 BC)
939. UPZ I 47 (162-1 BC)(=P. Par. 27 Recto)
940. UPZ I 48 (162-1 BC)(=P. Par 28)
941. UPZ I 49 (162-1 BC)(=P. Leid E. I)
942. UPZ I 50 (162-1 BC)(=P. Leid E. III)
943. UPZ I 51 (161 BC)(=P. Vat C)
944. UPZ I 52 (161 BC)(=P. Lond. 24 verso)
945. UPZ I 53 (161 BC)(=P. Lond. 35)
946. UPZ I 58 Verso (161 BC)(=P. Lond. 41 Recto & Verso)
947. UPZ I 122 (157 BC)(=P. Par. 12)
948. UPZ I 123 (157 BC)(=P. Par. 13)
949. UPZ I 124 (176-165/4 BC)(=P. Leid. A)
950. UPZ II 151 (259 BC)(=P. Lond. 106)
951. UPZ II 152 (III BC)(=P. Lond. 51A)
952. UPZ II 160 (119 BC)(=P. Tor. II)
953. UPZ II 170 (127-6 BC)(=P. Tor. 3; P. Par 14)
954. UPZ II 187 (127-6 BC)(=P. Par. 6)
955. UPZ II 189 (112-1 BC)(=P. Tor. 11)
956. UPZ II 191 (111 BC)(=P. Tor. 7)

957. UPZ II 192 (111-110 BC)(=P. Tor. 5)
 958. UPZ II 193 (110 BC)(=P. Tor. 6)
 959. UPZ II 195 (119-117 BC)(=P. Tor. 14)
 960. UPZ II 196 (116 BC)(=P. Tor. 8)

Petition Fragment

961. BGU II 428 (II AD)
 962. BGU III 769 (172 AD)
 963. BGU VI 1241 (III BC)
 964. BGU VII 1571 (74/75 AD)
 965. CPR VII 5 (II AD)
 966. P.Amh. II 34 (c 157 BC)
 967. P.Bour. 62 ()
 968. P.Cair.Zen. IV 59618 (III BC)
 969. P.Cair.Zen. IV 59618 (III BC)
 970. P.Cair.Zen. IV 59618 (III BC)
 971. P.Cair.Zen. IV 59618 (III BC)
 972. P.Cair.Zen. IV 59618 (III BC)
 973. P.Cair.Zen. IV 59618 (III BC)
 974. P.Cair.Zen. IV 59618 (III BC)
 975. P.Cair.Zen. IV 59618 (III BC)
 976. P.Col. IV 72 (255-250 AD)
 977. P.Ent. 106 (246-221 BC)
 978. P.Ent. 107 (221 BC)
 979. P.Ent. 108 (221 BC)
 980. P.Ent. 109 (221 BC)
 981. P.Ent. 110 (217 BC)
 982. P.Ent. 111 (221 BC)
 983. P.Ent. 112 (221 BC)
 984. P.Hamb. I 93 (121-124 AD)
 985. P.Hib II 239 (III BC)
 986. P.Hib II 272 (III BC)
 987. P.Hib II 274 (Early III AD)
 988. P.L. Bat. XXV 36 (169 AD)
 989. P.Mil.Vogliano IV 232 (II AD)
 990. P.Oxy XXXIII 2674 Recto (308 AD)
 991. P.Oxy XLI 2987 (78-9 AD)
 992. P.Oxy XLII 3033 (45-7 AD)
 993. P.Oxy XLII 3076 (c 225 AD)
 994. P.Oxy XLVI 3271 (47-54 AD)
 995. P.Princ. II 25 (I-II AD)
 996. P.Princ. II 30 (c 264 AD)
 997. P.Ross.Georg V 24 (III AD)

998. P.Ryl. II 256 (I AD)
 999. P.Ryl. II 257 (I AD)
 1000. P.Ryl. II 276 (II AD)
 1001. P.Ryl. II 277 (II AD)
 1002. P.Ryl. II 290 (I-II AD)
 1003. P.Ryl. II 293 (122 AD)
 1004. P.Ryl. II 294 (II AD)
 1005. P.Ryl. II 296 (II AD)
 1006. P.Ryl. II 297 (III AD)
 1007. P.Ryl. II 299 (I AD)
 1008. P.Ryl. II 300 (II AD)
 1009. P.Ryl. II 301 (III AD)
 1010. P.Ryl. II 302 (III AD)
 1011. P.Ryl. IV 618 (317 AD)
 1012. P.Ryl. IV 619 (313 AD)
 1013. P.Ryl. IV 620 (IV AD)
 1014. P.Ryl. IV 621 (IV AD)
 1015. P.Ryl. IV 658 (IV AD)
 1016. P.Ryl. IV 668 (II AD)
 1017. P.Ryl. IV 706 (IV AD)
 1018. PSI IV 288 (II AD)
 1019. PSI IV 298 (IV AD)
 1020. PSI V 451 (IV AD)
 1021. PSI VI 685 (IV AD)

Petition with Legal Proceedings

1022. P.Ent. 100 (246-221 BC)
 1023. P.Ent. 101 (246-221 BC)
 1024. P.Ent. 102 (III BC)
 1025. P.Ent. 103 (c221 BC)
 1026. P.Ent. 104 (246-221 BC)
 1027. P.Ent. 105 (246-221 BC)
 1028. P.Mich. inv 6060 (108-123 AD)
 1029. UPZ II 161 (119 BC)(=P. Par. 15)
 1030. UPZ II 162 (117 BC)(=P. Tor. I; Wil Chr. 31)

Petition with Memorandum

1031. BGU II 613 (138-161AD)
 1032. BGU III 970 (c 174 AD)
 1033. BGU VIII 1747 (64/3 BC)
 1034. BGU VIII 1761 (51/50 BC)
 1035. P.Sakaon 37 (Jan/Feb 284 AD)(=P.Thead 18)
 1036. SB 5343 (182 AD)

1037. UPZ I 106 (c 159 BC)(=P. Leid. G)
 1038. UPZ I 107 (c 159 BC)(=P. Leid. J)
 1039. UPZ I 108 (c 159 BC)(=P. Leid. H)

Prayer

1040. BGU I 229 (II-III AD)
 1041. BGU I 230 (II-III AD)
 1042. DT 1 (III-I BC)
 1043. DT 2 (III-I BC)
 1044. DT 3 (III-I BC)
 1045. DT 4 (III-I BC)
 1046. DT 5 (III-I BC)
 1047. DT 6 (III-I BC)
 1048. DT 7 (III-I BC)
 1049. DT 8 (III-I BC)
 1050. DT 9 (III-I BC)
 1051. DT 9 (III-I BC)
 1052. DT 9 (III-I BC)
 1053. DT 9 (III-I BC)
 1054. DT 13 (III-I BC)
 1055.
 1056. P.Mil.Vogliano I 21 (I AD)
 1057. P.Oxy VI 923 (Late II or early III AD)
 1058.

1059. UPZ I 1 (IV BC)(=P. Artem.)

Private Letter

1060. BGU I 246 (II-III AD)
 1061. BGU IV 1079 (4 Aug 41 AD)
 1062. P.Cair.Zen. II 59254 (13/7/252 BC)
 1063. P.Cair.Zen. II 59272 (17/8/251 BC)
 1064. P.Cair.Zen. II 59281.2 (250 BC)
 1065. P.Cair.Zen. III 59324 (249 BC)
 1066. P.Cair.Zen. III 59426 (III BC)
 1067. P.Cair.Zen. III 59489 (III BC)
 1068. P.Oxy XII 1477 (III-IV AD)
 1069. P.Oxy XIV 1668 (III AD)
 1070. P.Oxy XVII 2154 (IV AD)
 1071. P.Oxy XXXIII 2682 Recto (III-IV AD)
 1072. P.Oxy XXXIV 2730 Recto (IV AD)

1073. P.Oxy XLI 2976 (II AD)
 1074. P.Oxy XLI 2981 (II AD)
 1075. P.Oxy XLI 2996 (214 AD)
 1076. P.Oxy XLIII 3094 (217-18 AD)
 1077. P.Oxy XLIX 3507 (III-IV AD)
 1078. P.Tebt. I 34 (100 BC)
 1079. P.Tebt II 315 (II AD)
 1080. UPZ I 78 (c 159 BC)(=P. Par. 51)

Protocol

1081. P.Oxy XLIII 3105 (229-35 AD)
 1082. P.Oxy XLVI 3285 (2nd Half II AD)

Public Proceedings

1083. BGU II 388 (II-III AD)
 1084. P.Oxy I 41 (III-IV AD)

Religious inscription

1085. IG X 2255 (I AD)

Report

1086. P.Tebt. III:1 801 (142-1 BC)
 1087. P.Tebt. III:1 804 (112 BC)
 1088. UPZ I 119 (156 BC)(=P. Par. 11)

Senate Proceedings

1089. P.Oxy XII 1413 (270-5 AD)
 1090. P.Oxy XII 1414 (270-5 AD)
 1091. P.Oxy XII 1415 (Late III AD)

Summons for Court

1092. P.Oxy XXXVIII 2852 Recto
 (104/5 AD)
 1093. P.Yale 62 (200 AD)

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