

CHAPTER SIX

OF PRIESTS AND PRESTIGE THE NEED FOR AN AUTHORITATIVE TRADITION

6.1. *Introduction*

The Greek section of P. Leiden I 384 verso closes with a text that is likely to draw immediate attention on the part of a modern reader due to its rather bizarre contents (PGM XII.401–444). Unlike the foregoing eighteen spells, the text is not concerned with procuring a magical effect itself, but claims to provide a translation key for a proper understanding of the ingredients prescribed in magical recipes. The text, which will be given in full in the following section, is actually a catalogue listing a fair number of rather repulsive bodily fluids and body parts of animals and gods like crocodile dung, lion semen, a hawk's heart, semen of Hermes, and Kronos' blood. These items occur only in the left column of the list, whereas the right column consists of herbs, minerals and animal substances that are known from other contemporary magical and medicinal sources. The list, consisting of thirty-seven entries, presents thus nothing more than encoded ingredients with their respective decoded solutions. In this way, crocodile dung appears to be Ethiopian soil, while semen of Hermes is a code name for the herb dill: the unusual character of the ingredients is thus only superficial. In fact, these ingredients must have been easily available in Egypt or in any flourishing harbour town of the Roman Empire. In this respect, the text should have been an indispensable tool for any magician who did not want to be misled by the encoded recipes of his magical books.

The catalogue is preceded by a short introduction that not only explains the function of the list, but also tries to take away any suspicion on the part of the reader about the nature and reliability of the list. It runs as follows.

Interpretations (ἐρμηνεύματα) translated (μεθερμηνευμένα) from the holy (writings), of which the temple scribes (ἱερογραμματεῖς) made use. Because of the nosiness (περιεργίαν) of the masses, they (the temple scribes) wrote the (names of the) herbs and other things that they made use of

on statues of gods in order that they (the masses), since they do not take precautions (μὴ εὐλαβούμενοι), do not meddle (περιεργάζονται)¹ at all, due to the inevitable result of their mistake. However, we have collected the solutions (λύσεις) from many copies, all of them secret.

[PGM XII.401–407]

The rather densely written introduction claims that the list derives from holy writings that were in use by the *hierogrammateis*, a common technical term for Egyptian priests who wrote the native language and scripts.² The reader is made to believe that these priests used to encode the names of necessary ritual ingredients to prevent untrained laymen from performing any kind of ritual activity. Since the lay masses would be excessively curious about rituals, the priests encoded the ingredients and wrote them on statues of gods. If then, for whatever reason, any uninitiated might ever get hold of the ritual texts, he would nonetheless be unable to perform any magical feat, since he would only make harmless errors out of ignorance. To counter this problem, the present list pretends to give the necessary solutions as they were found in an impressive amount of secret, and thus authentic, Egyptian documents. Who could still mistrust the authenticity of the list after having read the introduction?

These introductory lines and its following list raise some fundamental questions about the social and cultural embedding of the magical manuscripts that have been studied so far. First of all, statues engraved with the names of ingredients for magical rituals as described in the introductory text are not attested in Egypt for any time period. Egyptian statues were indeed provided with texts in the majority of cases, but, in the case of private statuary, only the owner's name, titles and sometimes a biographical account were written on the statue, whereas cult statues were only provided with their name, if at all, or attributes. The so-called healing statues and *Horus cippi* were written all over with magical spells for curing snakebites and scorpion stings, but none of the preserved specimens contains a list of ingredients. In fact, these statues could do without ritual prescriptions, because the patient was only required to drink the water that he or she had first poured over the

¹ The verb περιεργάζειν has a derived meaning 'assiduously investigating and performing rituals', the overtones of which are certainly brought into play in the present passage; cf. 'Zauberei treiben', Preisendanz, *PGM II*, 84, and 'practice magic', Betz and Scarborough in *GMPT*, 167. In 1Ep.Cor.9.13 ἐργάζειν denotes 'performing rituals'.

² See for a more detailed description of the duties of these priests section 6.3.1.

statue.³ It is therefore warranted to conclude that the present introductory lines attribute to the Egyptian temple scribes a custom that was factually not extant in antiquity.⁴

It is clear that the introductory lines serve for the intended reader as a validation of the decoded list's trustworthiness. As with the introductory text to the *Ouphôr* rite, the present text tries to impress and to take away any suspicion on the reader's part by stressing the Egyptian origin and secret character of the list. Since the advertising text refers to a priestly custom that was not extant in historical reality, it should be considered a fiction, a marketing technique, which anticipates the client's needs, aspirations and expectations. The question is then who this client or intended reader was. In view of the false claim about Egyptian statues, it is very unlikely that the text aims at convincing Egyptian priests, who would of course have known that ingredients were not written on statues of gods. However, this observation seems at odds with the conclusion of the previous chapters that the two handbooks must have circulated among Egyptian priests. Who else than Egyptian priests could have consulted these bilingual manuscripts with their multiple Egyptian scripts?

To complicate matters further, the narrator of the introductory lines sets Egyptian priests apart from himself and his readership by speaking about 'them', the temple scribes, and 'us', the compilers and readers of the present text. According to the text, 'we' have collected a number of 'their' secret books to translate them and share their content with other members of 'our' group. In this fashion, the text constructs an image of the temple scribes that is based on notions of separation, secrecy, translation and professional knowledge—knowledge that the narrator and his in-group deeply desire. A similar dichotomy seems to be evoked in a recipe that describes the ritual techniques for a correct picking of plants (PGM IV.2967–3006), which is preserved in the Great Magical Papyrus of Paris, which manuscript formed part of the Theban Magical Library

³ A valuable overview is given in László Kákosy, *Egyptian Healing Statues in Three Museums in Italy (Turin, Florence, Naples)* (Catalogo del Museo Egizio di Torino, Serie prima—monumenti e testi IX; Turin 1999) 9–34.

⁴ Nonetheless, it is very likely that the author of the text meant to refer to the *Horus cippi*, because this type of magical statues was very popular in the Late and Greco-Roman period. Any inhabitant of Egypt, regardless of his or her religious inclinations, must have been generally familiar with their design. The *Horus cippi* known to date are collected in Heike Sternberg-El Hotabi, *Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der Horusstelen. Ein Beitrag zur Religionsgeschichte Ägyptens im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* 2 Vols. (ÄgAbh 62; Wiesbaden 1999).

with certitude. A purification ritual, a libation of milk and an invocation of all deities involved in the growth of the plant must precede the picking of the plant to ensure the effectiveness of the herb.⁵ The following statement introduces the description of the ritual techniques:

Among the Egyptians, herbs are always obtained in the following manner [PGM IV.2967f.]

Written in this fashion the clause seems to posit ‘the Egyptians’ as a category distinct from the narrator and his implied audience, who are willing to adopt, or learn about, the idiosyncratic ritual techniques of this ethnic category.

In order to come to a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms of the marketing strategy, it is necessary to examine the introductory text and its wider cultural and historical context, a task taken up in the present chapter. The contents and form of the text belong to a current of thought that was widespread in the Roman period, so that it will not suffice to concentrate fully on the Egyptian priests themselves. Greek and Roman sources will have to be taken into account as well, since they throw light on the existence and the form of widespread stereotyped images of the Egyptian priesthood. The topic will be addressed from a variety of angles in order to subdivide the problem and to discuss a range of suggestions. Four questions will serve as pillars to the discussion and, at the same time, as successive stages of the line of argument.

1. What is this text about?
2. About whom is the text speaking?
3. In what way does the text acquire authority and prestige for what kind of reader?
4. Who is speaking?

The first three questions will be considered in the following three sections of the present chapter. Since this book is not only concerned with Egyptologists, the discussion of the tasks and concepts of the Egyptian

⁵ Knowledge of the rituals to preserve a plant’s magical power when picking it was considered indispensable for any magician of the Greco-Roman period. The Great Magical Papyrus of Paris contains two more recipes that give ritual directions for the picking of plants: PGM IV.286–295 and 3172–3208. For a collection and analysis of ancient sources, see, A. Delatte, *Herbarius. Recherches sur le cérémonial usité chez les anciens pour la cueillette des simples et des plantes magiques* (3rd ed.; Brussels 1961). The techniques described in this spell are undoubtedly of Egyptian origin, see, Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 39f.

priesthood is given ample attention. These three fairly independent sections will finally enable a discussion of the pertinent and most tenacious question that haunts this study from the outset: who is speaking, or, to whom did this all make sense? The next chapter will address this subject and present a hypothesis as conclusion to this study of the sociological context of the *Demotic* and *Greek Magical Papyri*.

6.2. *Compound plant names and ancient botany*

In my youth, I met Apion the Grammarian, who informed me that the herb *Dog's Head* (cynocephalia), known in Egypt as *Osiritis*, was a source of divination and a protection against all black magic.

[Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 30.6.18]⁶

The text in question, PGM XII.401–444, consists of an explanatory introduction (401–407) and a list of ingredients (408–444), which is made up of thirty-seven entries that are conveniently arranged on the manuscript in two straight columns, of which the left contains the encrypted name and the right the decoded equivalent. The text starts in about the middle of the twelfth Greek column and occupies in its entirety the following column thirteen, which, being the final Greek column of the manuscript, is followed by four more columns in Demotic before the papyrus breaks off. In relation to the margin of the column, the text is markedly indented as if the scribe meant to add a drawing as he did at the top of the column next to a list of *voces magicae* that are identically indented (PGM XII.386–395; the drawing in question is fig. 2.2). The present section will study the nature of the list and demonstrate that it is not an idiosyncratic second or third century invention, but that, in fact, it contains remnants of botanical jargon that Egyptian priests of the pharaonic period used in their medical and magical texts. Parts of this jargon are also preserved in the book *On Botany* written in the first century CE by Pamphilus, a lexicographer

⁶ Tr. John F. Healey. Apion the Grammarian was a scholar in Alexandria, born in El-Kharga Oasis, who wrote on Egypt and Homer. He was sent to Rome as member of a delegation of Greek citizens to plead their cause in front of emperor Caligula after severe anti-Jewish riots in Alexandria. Josephus critiqued him severely in *Against Apion*. For similar plant synonyms, see, Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris*, 37, 365E and 62, 376B.

from Alexandria, whose botanical glossary was used by an anonymous redactor of Dioscorides' *On the Materials of Medicine*. This link with pharaonic botany and Pamphilus reveals that the PGM list fits in with a discourse on botany and pharmacology that exceeds the historical and geographical borders of Roman Thebes and the discursive boundaries of the *Greek Magical Papyri*. This conclusion sheds of course an intriguing light on the statements made in the Greek introduction about the secret and priestly character of the list.

The list runs as follows:

Here they are:		(407)
A snake's head:	a leech	
A snake's 'ball of thread':	this means soapstone	
Blood of a snake:	hematite	(410)
A bone of an ibis:	this is buckthorn	
Blood of a hyrax:	truly of a hyrax	
'Tears' of a baboon:	dill juice	
Crocodile dung:	Ethiopian soil	
Blood of a baboon:	blood of a spotted gecko	(415)
Lion semen:	human semen	
Blood of Hephaistos:	wormwood	
Hairs of a baboon:	dill seed	
Semen of Hermes:	dill	
Blood of Ares:	purslane	(420)
Blood of an eye:	tamarisk gall	
Blood from a shoulder:	bear's breach	
From the loins:	camomile	
A man's bile:	turnip sap	
A pig's tail:	scorpion's tail ⁷	(425)
A physician's bone:	sandstone	
Blood of Hestia:	camomile	
An eagle:	wild garlic (?)	
Blood of a goose:	a mulberry tree's 'milk'	
Kronos' spice:	piglet's milk	(430)
A lion's hair:	'tongue' of a turnip	
Kronos' blood:	?. of cedar	
Semen of Helios:	white hellebore	
Semen of Herakles:	this is mustard-rocket	
A Titan's (blood): ⁸	wild lettuce	(435)

⁷ I prefer to translate literally unlike Scarborough who replaces it with 'leopard's bane' on the basis of ancient parallels, *GMPT*, 168, fn. 101.

⁸ The copyist mistakenly omitted the word 'blood' in this line (435), but wrote it two lines further below (437) to delete it again and replace it with the correct word 'semen' ('a bull's semen' instead of 'a bull's blood'). Scarborough puts the wording 'a Titan's'

Blood from a head:	lupine	
A bull's semen:	egg of a blister beetle	
A hawk's heart:	heart of wormwood	
Semen of Hephaistos:	this is fleabane	
Semen of Ammon:	houseleek	(440)
Semen of Ares:	clover	
Fat from a head:	spurge	
From the belly:	earth-apple	
From the foot:	houseleek	[PGM XII.408–444] ⁹

The title of the introduction calls the items in the list ἐξηρμηνεύματα (interpretations), which was otherwise used as a generic term for Greek-Latin school texts that present lists of words (alphabetically or thematically arranged), idiomatic expressions, proverbs and exercise material.¹⁰ A papyrus fragment of the third century BCE testifies that Greek-Egyptian wordlists for everyday purposes were in use as well, probably among Greek mercenaries who were forced to settle in the Egyptian countryside.¹¹ Each entry consists of a Greek word, mainly household items like 'door', 'bed', 'talent', 'axe', 'iron', 'sword/knife', 'footstool' and 'pigeon', followed by its Egyptian equivalent, in this case its most literal translation, written phonetically in Greek characters. The PGM XII list should thus be read as a lexicographical study with this difference that it principally lists 'mysterious' and decoded terms that were in use in the field of magic and medicine. The items given in the left column (A) are said to derive from ancient temple texts as compiled by temple priests, whereas the right column (B) contains the solutions. It is not possible to discover an overall order in the list except for certain alphabetic and thematic groupings, which suggests that the list is compiled from several older manuscripts (or fragments of manuscripts?).¹² The reading direction of the list is unmistakably from left to right as follows from additions like 'this means' and 'this is' in column B.

incorrectly between square brackets in his translation, thus suggesting it is a restoration of a lacuna (*GMPT*, 168). In fact, the words are well preserved.

⁹ tr. John Scarborough, *GMPT*, 167–169 (with explanatory notes), slightly modified.

¹⁰ Johannes Kramer, *Glossaria Bilinguia Altera (C. Gloss. Biling. II)* (AfP Beiheft 8; Leipzig, Munich 2001) 15–18. The earliest known text of this kind dates to the early Roman Principate.

¹¹ Hans Quecke, 'Eine griechisch-ägyptische Wörterliste vermutlich des 3. Jh. v. Chr. (P. Heid. Inv.-Nr. G 414)' *ZPE* 116 (1997) 67–80.

¹² Three thematic groupings can be found in column A: 408–410 (snake), 420–423 (blood), 439–441 (semen). Column B contains three alphabetically arranged clusters: 414–423/4, 433–440, 441–444.

Despite the apparent disordered arrangement of the list, the forms of the names of column A exhibit a clear pattern: inner organs and bodily fluids of man, animal or god, preferably items that have a strong stench or are tabooed in daily life.¹³ The inclusion of animals such as ibis, baboon, crocodile, lion and hawk demonstrates that the Egyptian fauna served as a source of inspiration to the devisers of the encoded names.¹⁴ These animals were not only visibly present in Egypt, they were also venerated as aspects or terrestrial images of gods since early times.¹⁵ Moreover, each of the Greek god names of the list has an Egyptian equivalent, except for the ‘Titan’ that is mentioned in line 435. These observations make it plausible that the items mentioned in column A have indeed an Egyptian origin.

In a recent study Lynn R. LiDonnici wishes to demonstrate that the claims about the indispensability of the list made in the introduction, are senseless pretensions.¹⁶ She argues that none of the items of column A save one occur in recipes of the *Greek Magical Papyri*, whereas several items of column B are openly called for. In other words, ‘the list provides explanation where explanation is not needed, and provides mystification rather than clarity’.¹⁷ If applied to the available evidence this conclusion is correct, and she continues suggesting ‘that the list “interprets” substances from a formulary that is lost, or that it does not interpret PGM-style materials at all, but belongs in a quite different

¹³ Because of its rather bizarre items, the list is reminiscent of the so-called *Dreck-Apotheke*, which was particularly popular from the seventeenth century CE onwards and has its roots in medieval and classical sources. Take for example the title of a highly influential treatise: Kristian Frantz Paullini, *Neu-vermehrte, heilsame Dreck-Apotheke, wie nehmlich mit Koht und Urin fast alle, ja auch die schwerste, giftigste Kranckheiten, und bezauberte Schaeden vom Haupt biss zun Fuessen, inn- und aeusserlich, gluecklich curiret worden ...* (Frankfurt am Main 1699). The term is also used in egyptology by W. Westendorf, *Handbuch der altägyptischen Medizin I* (Handbuch der Orientalistik 1. Abt., Bd. 36; Leiden, Cologne, New York 1999) 515.

¹⁴ The ‘hyrax’ (412) and the ‘eagle’ (428) were not particularly well known in Egypt. In fact, the Greek word for hyrax is only known from the LXX: *GMPT*, 168, fn. 96. The eagle became a symbol of authority and kingship in Egypt only after its introduction by Alexander the Great and his Ptolemaic successors, who saw it as the sacred bird of Zeus, king of the gods: Emma Brunner-Traut, ‘Adler’ *LÄ I*, 64f.

¹⁵ Dimitri Meeks and Christine Favard-Meeks, *Daily Life of the Egyptian Gods* (Ithaca, London 1996) 60–63 [translated from: *La vie quotidienne des dieux égyptiens* (Paris 1993)].

¹⁶ Lynn R. LiDonnici, ‘Beans, Fleawort, and the Blood of a Hamadryas Baboon: Recipe Ingredients in Greco-Roman Magical Materials’, in: Paul Mirecki and Marvin Meyer (eds.), *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 141; Leiden 2002) 359–377.

¹⁷ DiLonnici, ‘Beans, Fleawort, and the Blood of a Hamadryas Baboon’, 374–375.

context, one that remains unknown'.¹⁸ This second conclusion, however, is in need of substantial refining, since it does not do justice to the cultural and textual context of the list. The following three arguments can be raised against the second conclusion:

1. Only a fraction of the magical literature of antiquity is preserved. What cannot be found in the extant sources could very well have been present in manuscripts now lost.
2. The disguising device is in fact attested in PGM XIII.1066–1067.¹⁹ The items 'blood of a baboon' (415) and 'semen of Helios' (433) are attested in respectively PGM XIII.316 and PGM III.332, PDM xiv.889 (= P. London-Leiden verso 1/4).²⁰
3. The information provided by the introduction should certainly not be taken at face value, but, at the same time, it should not be dismissed too rashly as pretentious bogus, since the method of using fanciful and repulsive names for plant and mineral species was already in use among priests in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia.

A direct parallel to the PGM XII list is not known from ancient Egypt as might be expected from the introduction to the list, but a similar device is attested in a cuneiform botanical treatise called Uru-anna=*maštakal*, which, according to its introduction, was compiled from older texts during the reign of the Assyrian king Assurbanipal (668–627 BCE).²¹ The handbook, preserved in several redactions, is a list of *materia medica* consisting of plants, minerals, dairy products and animals. Each entry gives a name in Sumerian or Akkadian followed by a second term, which is probably a so-called *succedaneum*, an alternative with identical medicinal properties that could be applied in case the

¹⁸ Op. cit.

¹⁹ 'Taking the navel of a male crocodile (it means pondweed) and the egg of a scarab and a heart of a baboon (it means myrrh, perfume of lilies), put these into a blue-green faïence vessel' [PGM XIII.1065–1069].

²⁰ LiDonnici mentions these occurrences, but concludes from the low number of attestations that the use of the device was negligible. Given the limited number of preserved manuscripts, I hesitate to accept this conclusion and prefer to stress the fact that it was indeed in use.

²¹ The majority of the texts is published (without translation) in R.C. Thompson *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum* 14 (1902) and Franz Köcher, *Keilschrifttexte zur assyrisch-babylonischen Drogen- und Pflanzenkunde* (1955). See also Köcher, 'Ein Text medizinischen Inhalts aus dem neubabylonischen Grab 405', in: R.M. Boehmer, F.Pedde, B. Salje (eds.), *Uruk: die Gräber* (Deutsches Arch. Institut, Baghdad 1995) 203–217. I am highly indebted for this paragraph to professor M. Stol who generously translated the text for me and patiently answered my questions.

first mentioned plant or mineral was not available.²² The third tablet contains a list of 138 entries that differ in character from the *succedanea*. Instead of the usual determinative for ‘plant, herb, drug’, a Sumero-gram meaning ‘secret’ precedes each entry of the second column, indicating that the second column does not provide alternatives but secret code names or *Decknamen*.²³ These code names are similar in design to, but save for one item never identical with, the code names of PGM XII: for example, tail of a mongoose (III, 1), faeces of man (III, 5), dust of crossroads burnt in fire (III, 19), bone of man (III, 34), tongue of a multicoloured snake (III, 59), tallow of chameleon (III, 67), head of a male sheep (III, 108), scorpion tail (III, 122 = PGM XII.425, column B!), saliva of a dog (III, 128). Each of these items is followed by the name for an ordinary herb, mineral or liquid as in the PGM XII list. Given this exact correspondence between the device of the PGM XII list and the third tablet of the Uru-anna=*maštakal*, it might seem obvious to assume that the Greek text is a reflection of Mesopotamian influence in the *Greek Magical Papyri*. However, this conclusion is probably not correct: if Mesopotamian influence were to be found in the Greek text, it might probably only be circuitous via Egyptian priests (who were particularly receptive to new ideas from Mesopotamia since the first period of Persian domination²⁴). In fact, Egyptian priests made already use of fanciful names to describe plant species since at least the New Kingdom. In one case, even an exact parallel between the PGM XII list and a pharaonic text is available. To understand correctly the relevance of the Egyptian priesthood to the subject, it is necessary to deal first with pharaonic botany before continuing the discussion.

²² The *succedanea* were an important field of research in ancient medicine. Lists can be found in Galen, *Book on the Substitutes* [C.G. Kühn (ed.), *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia* (Leipzig 1830) vol. 19, 721–747] and Paul of Aegina [I.L. Heiberg (ed.), *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum* (Leipzig 1924) vol. 19.2, 401–408]. Scarborough is wrong in calling these lists similar to the PGM XII list, since the latter’s entries do not consist of alternatives but of encoded and decoded terms (*GMPT*, 167, fn. 95).

²³ Köcher, ‘Ein Text medizinischen Inhalts’, 204.

²⁴ See on the reform of the House-of-Life and the introduction of astrology in Egypt during the Persian period: Jacco Dieleman, ‘Claiming the Stars: Egyptian Priests facing the Sky’ *Aegyptiaca Helvetica* 17 (2003) 277–289.

EXCURSUS: PHARAONIC BOTANY & PHARMACOLOGY

In the light of the present discussion, the following observations regarding pharaonic botany and pharmacology are particularly relevant:²⁵

1. It can be concluded from the fact that medical and magical texts frequently prescribe plant and mineral substances as ingredients for offerings, potions, unguents, or amulets, that a form of botany was existent in pharaonic Egypt.
2. Plant species are occasionally given names similar in form to those in column A of the PGM XII list.
3. Medical and magical texts were written and consulted by priests, so that the fanciful plant names were known, if not invented, by Egyptian priests.

Testimonies of pharaonic botany are very few as regards detailed descriptions or meticulous drawings of plants, but occasional descriptions in medical books demonstrate that priests had at least developed a rudimentary descriptive format.²⁶ Nonetheless, pharaonic drug therapy relied heavily on the use of plants and minerals, so that it is justified to conclude that priests of the pharaonic period were knowledgeable in the identification and use of plant species. It is only from the Roman period that a botanical treatise systematically listing descriptions of herbs is preserved. The manuscript, now in a very fragmented state, dates to the second century CE, is written in Demotic and once formed part of the Tebtunis temple library.²⁷ Each heading is provided with a number, of which 86 is the highest to be recognised (possibly even 99), and the name of a herb, after which the herb's outward appearance, florescence, place of growth, medicinal properties and use are given. The herb and plant names, of which only about a dozen are

²⁵ Introductions to pharaonic botany and pharmacology are: W.R. Dawson, 'Studies in medical history: (a) The origin of the herbal, (b) Castor-oil in antiquity' *Aegyptus* 10 (1929) 47–72; M.C. Betrò, 'Erbari nell'antico Egitto' *EVO* 11 (1988) 71–110 and Lise Manniche, *An Ancient Egyptian Herbal* (London 1989). A useful bibliography can be found in: W.J. Tait, 'P. Carlsberg 230: Eleven Fragments from a Demotic Herbal', in: P.J. Frandsen (ed.), *The Carlsberg Papyri 1: Demotic Texts from the Collection* (CNI Publications 15; Copenhagen 1991) 47–92, 54f.

²⁶ Westendorf, *Handbuch der altägyptischen Medizin*, 492. See for pharaonic botanical descriptions: P. Ebers §§28, 128, 294; P. Berlin 3038 §118; P. Brooklyn 47.218.48+85 §§65c, 66a, 90a.

²⁷ Publication: Tait, 'P. Carlsberg 230: Eleven Fragments from a Demotic Herbal'.

preserved,²⁸ seem genuinely Egyptian without showing any act of translation from the Greek as is the case in the first five columns on the verso of P. London-Leiden, which preserve a bilingual collection of short descriptions of plants and minerals.²⁹ Despite this bilingual flavour, the magical handbook belongs undoubtedly to the same priestly current of botanical thought as the Demotic herbal from the Tebtunis temple library. Firstly, the two texts share an identical descriptive format and, secondly, the remarkable plant name ‘Great-inundation’ occurs in both manuscripts (PDM xiv 953–955 = P. London-Leiden V 5/1–3 and P. Carlsberg 230, fragment 8/x + 7).

Some of the herb or plant names given in botanical descriptions or medicinal recipes are rather figurative or evocative like the names in column A of the PGM XII list. Such names occur already in medical texts of the New Kingdom as in the Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus, the Berlin Medical Book and Papyrus Ebers, and continue to be used in the Snake Book of the 26th dynasty³⁰ and the Demotic Herbal and P. London-Leiden of the Roman period. An arbitrary selection of these names is given in the following table to gain an idea of their nature and form.³¹

Ear-of-the- <i>hḏr.t</i> animal	P. Smith 20/18
Phallus-of-a-donkey	P. Berlin 3038 §124 (= 10/12)
Head-of-a-donkey	P. Ebers §106 (= 25/15)
Tail-of-a-mouse	P. Ebers §160 (= 33/11); frequently in the Snake Book ³²
My-arm-grasps-my-arm-seizes	P. Ebers §166 (= 34/5)

²⁸ *Op. cit.*; an overview of these names is given in tables 1 and 2 on pages 52 and 55.

²⁹ For these first five columns, see, chapter 4.3.1.

³⁰ See for the Snake Book: Serge Sauneron, *Un traité égyptien d'ophiologie: papyrus du Brooklyn Museum 47.218.48 et 85* (PIFAO BibGén. 11; Cairo 1989). Ursula Verhoeven argues convincingly for a date in the second half of the 26th dynasty instead of the early Ptolemaic period as suggested by Sauneron: Ursula Verhoeven, *Untersuchungen zur späthieratischen Buchschrift* (OLA 99; Leuven 2001) 306.

³¹ The occurrences of such fancy names in pharaonic medical and magical texts are few. The editors of the *Grundriß der Medizin* list only 13 names, from which *t3 msh* has to be deleted: H. von Deines, H. Grapow and W. Westendorf, *Ergänzungen. Drogenquanten, Sachgruppen, Nachträge, Bibliographie, Generalregister* (Grundriß der Medizin der alten Ägypter 9; Berlin 1973) 55. See also H. Grapow, *Von den medizinischen Texten. Art, Inhalt, Sprache und Stil der medizinischen Einzeltexte sowie Überlieferung, Bestand und Analyse der medizinischen Papyri* (Grundriß der Medizin der alten Ägypter 2, Berlin 1955) 79. See for a few additions to this list: Joachim F. Quack, ‘Das Pavianshaar und die Taten des Thoth (pBrooklyn 47.218.48 + 85 3,1–6)’ *SAK* 23 (1996) 305–333, 313 fn. 32.

³² For attestations in the Snake Book, see, Sauneron, *Un traité égyptien d'ophiologie*, 229.

<i>Ph.t</i> -of-a-donkey ³³	P. Ebers §334 (= 55/17); Snake Book §61a (= 4/7)
Ear-of-a-donkey	P. Ebers §770 (= 92/6)
Scorpion-herb	P. Turin CG 54051 (dupl. 1993) rt. 4/4 Snake Book §46g (= 3/15)
Image-of-Horus	SNAKE BOOK §65a (= 4/12)
Image-of-Seth	SNAKE BOOK §65b (= 4/12)
Daughter-of-the-one-who-is-asleep	P. Carlsberg 230 fr. 1/10
My-name-cannot-be-found	P. Carlsberg 230 fr. 4 + 5/x + 2/13
Great-of-Amun	P. London-Leiden 10/32 (= PDM xiv 305)
The-footprint-of-Isis	P. London-Leiden 10/32 (= PDM xiv 305)
There-is-none-better-than-I	P. London-Leiden V 2/3 (=PDM xiv 899)

The table shows that the plant names are either short clauses or compounds consisting of a body part in combination with the name of an animal or god. Identification of the plant species is hardly possible and greatly hindered by the lack of descriptions or explanatory glosses. Only in two cases the figurative name is provided with such a gloss. The first example is taken from the Snake Book; the second is from a New Kingdom magical spell.

‘Living-Flesh’ is the name of the *ḫrw.t* plant [Snake Book §90b = 5/25]

A ‘Hair-of-the-chin-of-Osiris’, which is called ‘twig’ by its name
[P. Leiden I 348 recto 11/9]

It is unclear whether the names were popular designations like ‘forget-me-not’, ‘sunflower’ and ‘wolf’s claw’ or institutionalised jargon that was meant to exclude outsiders from participating in priestly medical knowledge. The two above given glosses might indicate that the figurative names were indeed not generally known, although both passages are seemingly not concerned with keeping the glosses secret. Whatever the case, according to the introduction to the collection of medical recipes of P. Ebers, medical knowledge was considered secret knowledge.³⁴

Unlike the names in column A of the PGM XII list, none of the compound plant names contains substances like bile, blood, dung, se-

³³ The word *ph.t* has the phallus determinative in P. Ebers. See also Sauneron, *Un traité égyptien d’ophiologie*, 85.

³⁴ Morenz, ‘(Magische) Sprache der geheimen Kunst’; Westendorf, *Handbuch der altägyptischen Medizin* I, 99f.

men, or fat as element. However, these substances are frequently called for as ingredients in medical or magical recipes of the pharaonic period.³⁵ In analogy with the PGM XII list, one might now be inclined to interpret these ingredients likewise as code names for ordinary herbs or minerals, but there are no reasons to distrust a literal reading of those recipes and to assume an ingredient in disguise. First, none of these bodily items are connected with a god's name as in 'Semen of Hermes' in the PGM XII list and, secondly, the animal substances seem to be practical and reasonable components for potions and unguents in each case, irrespective of any scientifically proven medical effect. The following recipe from the snake book testifies unequivocally to the application of goat's blood, since it prescribes to lead the goat back to its mother.

Remedy against (the bite of) a female snake. *Qebu* plant, **1/4**; mix with honey, **1/4**; blood of a young goat, **1/8**; he has to be taken alive without being slaughtered; beer, **2** hin; absorb; give freedom to the said goat (to let him return) to his mother; very good, (tested) a million times; it is used against any snake. [Snake Book §70 = 4/18–19]

END OF EXCURSUS

It has been said above that, in all probability, the PGM XII list draws directly on Egyptian priestly knowledge instead of on the Mesopotamian *Uru-anna=maštakal*. This conclusion follows not only from the Egyptian fauna mentioned in the list, but is also confirmed by the fact that the item 'hairs of a baboon' mentioned in line 418 of column A occurs already in the Snake Book, which is dated to the 26th dynasty, about eight centuries earlier than PGM XII.³⁶

Another prescription that is made for a man who suffers from a bite of whatever snake: 'Hair-of-a-baboon' plant **1/8**; cumin **1/8**; *s3-wr* resin **1/64**; honey **1/8**; sweet beer **1/32**; filter and to be swallowed by him who suffers from the bite. [Snake Book §43a = 3/1–2]

³⁵ A helpful tool to study Egyptian drugs is H. von Deines and H. Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Drogenamen* (Grundriss der Medizin der alten Ägypter 6; Berlin 1959). See for bile: pp. 145–146 (*wdd*), 170–171 (*bnf*), 460–461 (*shw*); for blood: 444–448 (*snf*) and for dung: 358–363 (*hs*). See also the indices in Sauneron, *Un traité égyptien d'ophiologie* and E.A.E. Reymond, *A Medical Book from Crocodilopolis. P. Vindob. D. 6257* (Vienna 1976).

³⁶ Joachim F. Quack already pointed out the occurrence of hair-of-a-baboon in both the PGM XII list and the snake book: Quack, 'Das Pavianshaar und die Taten des Thoth', 313.

Although the term Hair-of-a-baboon can be identified with certitude as a plant name because of the hieratic plant determinative, it remains uncertain whether the name refers to dill seed as the PGM XII list dictates. Anyhow, the link between hairs-of-a-baboon and dill is not an idiosyncratic invention of the copyist of the P. Leiden I 384 verso manuscript, since both occur also as synonym in the alphabetised revision of Dioscorides' *On the Materials of Medicine* (written around 65 CE). This work, a five-book catalogue in Greek of about 700 plants and 1000 drugs employed in medicine, is the culmination of a scientific trend, which started with Theophrastus' *Inquiry into Plants* around 300 BCE, that tried to classify the natural world by a strict appliance of rational and empirical methods.³⁷ The revision of the treatise, which was undertaken sometime at the end of the first century CE, consisted on the one hand of the alphabetisation of Dioscorides' ingenious arrangement of materials according to drug affinities and, on the other, the interpolation of long lists of synonyms that were excerpted from Pamphilus' lexicographical work *On Botany*.³⁸ Very little is known of Pamphilus, a resident of Alexandria in the first century CE, who wrote a number of lexica of which not much more than the title is preserved.³⁹ His work *On Botany*, consisting of six books, was an alphabetically arranged collection of plant names, each entry provided with synonyms, descriptions of outer appearance, discussions of medicinal properties, methods of application and folklore knowledge. The famous physician Galen (129-ca.216 CE) accused him of having written a book on botany full of uncritical observations and fairytales without ever

³⁷ The *On the Materials of Medicine* is published in Max Wellmann, *Die Schrift des Dioskurides Περί ἁπλων φαρμάκων: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Medizin* 3 volumes (Berlin 1914). A useful historical overview of Greco-Roman botany and pharmacology is given in John Scarborough, 'The Pharmacology of sacred Plants, Herbs, and Roots', in: C.A. Faraone and D. Obbink (eds.), *Magika Hiera. Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (New York, Oxford 1991) 138–174 and F. Pfister, 'Pflanzenaberglaube' *PRE* 19.2 (1938) 1446–1456. Theophrastus' followers are discussed in John Scarborough, *Pharmacy's Ancient Heritage: Theophrastus, Nicander, and Dioscorides* (The distinguished lectures, College of Pharmacy, University of Kentucky 1984).

³⁸ See for a discussion of the original arrangement of Dioscorides' botanical treatise: John M. Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine* (Austin 1985) 176–180. Max Wellmann was able to establish the date of the redaction and to identify Pamphilus' *On Botany* as source of the numerous synonyms: Max Wellmann, 'Die Pflanzennamen des Dioskurides' *Hermes* 33 (1898) 360–422, 369f.

³⁹ The available material is collected in Hans Diller, 'Pamphilos [25]' *PRE* 18.2 (1949) 336–349.

having seen the described plants himself and having properly tested their medicinal properties.⁴⁰ Whatever the scientific merit of Pamphilus' work, the long lists of synonyms found their way into the revised edition of Dioscorides' botanical treatise and allow identifying with certitude the Egyptian priestly character of the list of ingredients in PGM XII.

In the revised edition of Dioscorides' treatise, each entry is provided with an arbitrary number of synonyms that can be distinguished into three categories:⁴¹

1. Language or dialect of origin
i.e. Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Syrians, Africans, Spaniards, Gauls, people from Dacia, from Armenia, from Boeotia, Capadocia, Sicily, etc.
2. Authoritative Greek physicians and botanists
i.e. Andreas, Erasistratus, Hippocrates, Krateuas, Nikandros, Theophrastus, etc.
3. Authoritative masters of the occult arts (Greco-Roman perception)
i.e. Demokritos, Ostanes, Pythagoras, Zoroaster and the prophets

The following two passages illustrate the descriptive format. The added strings of synonyms are put between square brackets to bring Pamphilus' contribution to light.

Dill [manageable dill, some call it Polyeidōs, others Aniketōn, the prophets call it Semen-of-a-baboon, also Hairs-of-a-baboon, others Semen-of-Hermes, the Egyptians say Arachou, the Romans say Anatum, the Africans say Sikkiria, the Dacians say Polpum]

Drinking the decoction of the foliage and the fruit of dry dill draws down milk, stops twisting of the bowels and flatulence, eases the belly and suppresses slight vomiting, stimulates urinating and soothes hiccup. When drinking it continually, it produces loss of eyesight and suppresses the libido. Its decoction is also of use to hysterical women as sitz bath. Its burnt seed applied as poultice stops distensions.

[Dioscorides, *On the Materials of Medicine*, III.58]

Ironwort, some call it Herakleia [the prophets call it Semen-of-a-scorpion, some Blood-of-a-Titan, others Tail-of-a-scorpion; Pythagoras calls it Parmoron; Andreas calls it Xanthophaneia; Ostanes calls it Bouththallon; the Egyptians say Senôdionôr; the Romans say Vertumnus, some

⁴⁰ Galen gives a description of the contents and method of Pamphilus' *On Botany* in the introduction to *De Simpl. Med. Temp. ac Fac.* (XI 792–798 Kühn).

⁴¹ The number of categories adds up to 25. They are listed in Wellmann, *Die Schrift des Dioskurides*, 327–358 (notice that number 3 is mistakenly skipped).

Mulcetrum, others Soleastrum, others Intubum Silbatikum; the Africans say Oudodonnî].

It is a herb with leaves like horehound, but longer like those of the salvia or the oak although smaller and rougher. It grows square stems measuring a span or longer, not distasteful, although somewhat astringent, on which are by intervals wreaths (of flowers) in which a black seed. It grows on rocky spots. The leaves have the power as a poultice to close up wounds and prevent inflammation.

[Dioscorides, *On the Materials of Medicine*, IV.33]

The two passages demonstrate clearly that the category of the terms coined by the 'prophets' contains compound plant names that are similar in design to those of the pharaonic medical texts and the PGM XII list that were discussed above. In fact, three pharaonic and seven PGM XII compound plant names recur in the revised *On the Materials of Medicine* as synonyms that were in use among these circles. It will be demonstrated with the help of administrative documents in section 6.3.1 that the category 'prophets' refers to the highest class of Egyptian priests, the so-called 'god's servants', not in the least to Biblical prophets. Given this specific professional designation and the correspondence of the plant names, it is justified to conclude that Pamphilus' synonyms reflect Egyptian priestly knowledge. In the case of Hairs-of-a-baboon the tradition reaches back for about 800 years, as was said above; in the case of Feather-of-ibis/Thoth and Tail-of-a-mouse the tradition even goes back for more than 1600 years.

The following two compound plant names are attested in both pharaonic medical texts and in the revised *On the Materials of Medicine* (Dioscorides' name and the modern scientific designation are given in the right column):

Tail of a mouse	P. Ebers 160 + Snake Book	Diosc II.118 mallow (<i>Malva silvestris</i>)
Hair of a baboon	SNAKE BOOK 43a	Diosc III.58 dill (<i>Anethum graveolens</i>)

Compound plant names that are attested in both the list of ingredients in PGM XII and the revised *On the Materials of Medicine* are:

Hairs of a baboon	PGM XII.418	Diosc III.58 dill (<i>Anethum graveolens</i>)
Semen of Hermes	PGM XII.419	Diosc III.58 & III.139 dill & ox-eye (<i>Anacyclus radiatus</i>)

Blood of Ares	PGM XII.420	Diosc I.10 & III.102 Hazelwort (<i>Asarum europaeum</i>) & white lily (<i>Lilium candidum</i>)
Blood of an eye	PGM XII.421	Diosc II.178 pimpernel (<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>)
Tail of a scorpion	PGM XII.425	Diosc IV.33 ironwort (<i>Sideritis romana</i>)
Semen of Herakles	PGM XII.434	Diosc IV.144 & IV.148 butcher's broom (<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>) & white hellebore (<i>Veratrum album</i>)
⟨Blood⟩ of a Titan	PGM XII.435	Diosc II.136; IV.33; IV.37 wild lettuce (<i>Lactuca scariola</i>) & ironwort (<i>Sideritis romana</i>) & bramble (<i>Rubus ulmifolius</i>)

In the case of 'Hairs of a baboon', 'Semen of Hermes' and 'Blood of a Titan', not only the compound plant name is identical, but also Dioscorides' name corresponds with the respective decoded ingredient given in column B of the PGM XII list, which proves that Pamphilus and the editor of the PGM XII list made use of similar priestly sources that were rooted in an Egyptian tradition reaching back for more than one and a half millennium.⁴² One should therefore beware of dismissing the list of interpretations too rashly as material irrelevant to the study of the PGM. Instead, we must acknowledge that the list of PGM XII opens up a textual field with an extensive geographical and historical reach. It was certainly not idiosyncratic bogus confined to the Theban hills, because at least parts of it were already known among Hellenistic scholars in Alexandria in the first century CE and, in all likelihood, through Pamphilus' *On Botany* and the revised edition of *On the Materials of Medicine* also in other scholarly centres of the Roman world such as Athens, Rome, Ephesus and Antioch.

The foregoing pages have provided an answer to the first of the four questions that were formulated in the introductory section, that is, to the question 'what is this text about?' The text is a list of encoded and decoded names of plants, minerals and animal material similar to the Mesopotamian Uruanna=*maštakal*. Despite the correspondence with a Mesopotamian treatise, it reflects authentic Egyptian priestly

⁴² It is also noteworthy that one herb mentioned in P. London-Leiden recurs as well in the *On the Materials of Medicine*. This is Semen of Helios (PDM xiv 88g = P. London-Leiden VI/4 and Diosc III 140).

knowledge as is demonstrated by the indigenous fauna of which the compound names are made up and the occurrence of similar or even identical names in pharaonic medical texts. In the light of these Egyptian roots, the introduction to the list is actually a highly peculiar piece. On the one hand, it is indeed correct in its claiming to introduce a list of pharmacological jargon that was in use among Egyptian priests, but, on the other hand, its allegation that this jargon was inscribed on the statues of gods is nonsense. The latter claim betrays that the author of these lines was either ill-informed himself as regards the origin of his authentic word list or that he wanted to address a reader who was only partly familiar with Egyptian priestly practice. Whatever the case, the text exploits the idea that Egyptian priestly knowledge is highly valuable and, simultaneously, evokes the idea that the narrator and reader do not belong to the inner-circle of temple scribes, as I argued in the introduction to this chapter. To gain an understanding of how Egyptian priests can function as prestigious marketing elements to promote magical knowledge, the following section will study the Egyptian priesthood's duties and obligations in Egyptian society and its perception in the imagination of the day.

6.3. *Temple scribes, prophets and the like*

In the introduction to the list of interpretations, the narrator ascribes the idea of disguising the names of ritual ingredients to the 'temple scribes' (ἱερογγραμματοῖς), who, as he says, have devised the method to delude the curious and uninitiated masses. The somewhat bizarre compound plant names that were added posthumously to Dioscorides' *On the Materials of Medicine*, deriving from a lost botanical treatise by Pamphilus, are consistently regarded as jargon of the 'prophets' (προφῆται), who figure as an autonomous category among linguistic groups, Greek botanists and famous masters of the occult arts. In chapter 5.2.2 a long invocation to the anonymous All-Lord was studied that contains as its climax a list of divine names (PGM XII.263–267). The list, which was discussed in connection with the motif of 'the Names of the Nations', consists of five entries of which all but one are specifically ascribed to an ethnic or linguistic group, making it therefore comparable in design to Pamphilus' catalogue. In the case of this spell, the category 'high priests' (ἄρχιερεῖς) occurs next to the Egyptians, Jews, Greeks and Parthians.

In each of these three sources, the priestly titles are treated as autonomous categories of considerable prestige that are self-evident. Apparently, the sole occurrence of these titles was sufficient to convince the readership of the day of the efficacy of the spell or wording given by the text. In this respect, the titles are an essential part of the text's rhetorical structure, aimed at silencing from the outset any possible critical comment on the reader's part. This marketing strategy of investing the text with overwhelming authority could only have been effective if the values attached to these titles were widely shared within the intended group of readers. What were these values and to which culture group do these values appeal? It goes without saying that these complex questions can only be answered after having established the precise meaning of the titles and their cultural origin. Fortunately, this is not a difficult task and it can be made quite clear that the titles refer to specific ranks within the Egyptian priesthood with the help of trilingual priestly decrees that were set up in Egyptian temples during the Ptolemaic period. These decrees can only provide a description of the administrative structure of the priestly institution in historical reality, so that, to know more about the values and judgements attached to the native priesthood, religious and literary sources have to be taken into account as well. By studying these texts, the present section will answer the second question formulated in the introductory section: about whom is this text speaking?

This chapter consists of four separate sections. The first studies the Egyptian priestly titles as administrative categories so as to gain an understanding of the priestly hierarchy and the obligations pertaining to the titles. The next section focuses on the specific duties of Egyptian priests in the temple as well as in their local community by way of analysing temple texts and steles that priests set up in the vicinity of the temple building. The information provided by these texts should be regarded as a conscious effort on the part of the priests to construe an ideal and official image of priestly life for the outer world. The section is thus concerned with issues of priestly self-presentation. The inner view or the way Egyptian priests imagined their own position and qualities can be studied with the help of Egyptian literary narratives, in which priests play a prominent role—the subject of the third section. The fourth section assesses the images of Egyptian priests in Greek and Latin literary texts of the Roman period to make out in what way the governing elite of the day perceived the Egyptian priesthood.

6.3.1. *Egyptian priestly titles as social classes*

The Greek titles ‘temple scribe’, ‘prophet’ and ‘high priest’ can easily and unambiguously be interpreted as Egyptian priestly titles that were precisely defined within the hierarchy of the native priesthood and carried on a tradition of more than two millennia.⁴³ The priestly titles mentioned in the magical texts can thus firmly be situated within historical reality. The correspondence between the Egyptian and Greek form of the priestly titles can be studied at best with the help of the trilingual decrees that were set up as steles in the main native temples by order of the Ptolemaic king to record decisions taken at priestly synods convened by the king to discuss matters of cult and state.⁴⁴ The decrees were inscribed on a stone slab in a hieroglyphic, Demotic and Greek version, from top to bottom, uniting the language of religion and tradition, the vernacular and the language of the conqueror within one frame. In all three versions, an elaborate dating formula and a hierarchical listing of the different classes of the Egyptian priesthood precedes the actual account of the decisions taken. The introduction

⁴³ The priestly titles discussed in this section were in use from the Old Kingdom until the disappearance of the Egyptian temple religion in late antiquity. Information about the form and nature of priestly titles in the Old and Middle Kingdom can be gained from the Abusir archive, a collection of administrative documents from the mortuary temple of king Neferirkare-Kakai (5th dynasty) and from administrative documentation found in the Middle Kingdom workman’s village of Lahun. An overview is given in: Wolfgang Helck, ‘Priester, Priesterorganisation, Priestertitel’ *LdÄ* IV, 1084–1097 and B.J.J. Haring, *Divine Households. Administrative and economic aspects of the New Kingdom royal memorial temples in Western Thebes* (Egyptologische Uitgaven 12; Leiden 1997) 3–7. For the New Kingdom, the *Onomasticon of Amenemope* (earliest manuscripts dated to the end of the New Kingdom) is of help. It gives the following succession of priestly titles: god’s servant (*hm-ntr*), god’s father (*it-ntr*), priest (*w'b*), lector priest (*hry-hb*), temple scribe (*ss' hw.t-ntr*) and scribe of the god’s book (*ss' mdz.t-ntr*): Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, vol. 1, 47*–59*. The Tebtunis onomastica of the second century CE are unfortunately in a sad state of preservation; only one fragmentary manuscript preserves a list of regional priestly titles: Osing, *Hieratische Papyri aus Tebtunis I*, 157–162. The survival of the titles into the Byzantine period is testified by the Demotic and hieroglyphic graffiti inscribed in the temples of the Dodecaschoenus, ‘Twelve Mile Land’, a region to the south of Aswan: F. Ll. Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Graffiti of the Dodecaschoenus* Vol. 1 (Oxford 1937).

⁴⁴ Trilingual decrees, of which seventeen are known to date, are attested from Ptolemy II Philadelphos until the end of the second century BCE. See for an overview of the sources and relevant literature: W. Huß, ‘Die in ptolemäischer Zeit verfaßten Synodal-Dekrete der ägyptischen Priester’ *ZPE* 88 (1991) 189–208. For the political and cultural context of the decrees, see, Joachim Kügler, ‘Priestersynoden im hellenistischen Ägypten. Ein Vorschlag zu ihrer sozio-historischen Deutung’ *GM* 139 (1994) 53–60.

identifies thus the legal parties of the decree and attempts to create the impression that the decisions were taken with one accord and were, therefore, legally valid and binding for the Egyptian priesthood as a group. The following three passages give the hierarchical listing of the native priesthood in respectively the hieroglyphic, Demotic and Greek versions as found on the Memphis Decree (March 27, 196 BCE).⁴⁵

[Hieroglyphic] ¹The leaders of the temple complexes (*imy.w-r3 gs.w-pr.w*) and ²the god's servants (*hm.w-ntr*) and ³the overseers of secrets, the purified ones of the god, who enter into the sanctuary to dress the gods with their clothing and ⁴the scribes of the divine book (*ss.w md3.t-ntr*) and ⁵the staff-members of the House-of-Life (*ty.w Pr-ny*) and ⁶the other priests (*wb.w*) who have come from the temples of Egypt to Memphis (...) have said:

[Demotic] ¹The lesônes (*mr-šn.w*) and ²the god's servants (*hm.w-ntr*) and ³the priests who enter the sanctuary to perform clothing rituals for the gods and ⁴the scribes of the divine book (*sh.w mdy-ntr*) and ⁵the scribes of the House-of-Life (*sh.w Pr-ny*) and ⁶the other priests (*wb.w*) who have come from the temples of Egypt [to Memphis] (...) have said:

[Greek] ¹The high priests (ἄρχιερεῖς) and ²prophets (προφῆται) and ³the (priests) who enter the holy shrine to clothe the gods and ⁴feather bearers (πτεροφόροι) and ⁵temple scribes (ιερογραμματεῖς) and all ⁶the other priests (ιερεῖς) who had come from the temples throughout Egypt to Memphis (...) have said: [Rosetta Decree 6–7]

The hierarchical listing makes a division into six distinct classes, declining in importance, among which, in the Greek version, the titles 'high priest', 'prophet' and 'temple scribe' appear as equivalents to traditional Egyptian titles as they are given in the hieroglyphic and Demotic version.⁴⁶

<i>Greek</i>	<i>Hieroglyphic</i>	<i>Demotic</i>
High priest	leader of the temple complex	lesônīs
Prophet	god's servant	god's servant
Temple scribe	staff member of the House-of-Life	scribe of the House-of-Life

The administrative and ritual functions of each of the six priestly positions can be briefly described in the following terms.⁴⁷ The high priest

⁴⁵ The Canopus Decree (March 7, 238 BCE) gives an almost identical list.

⁴⁶ The Greek titles and their corresponding Egyptian terms are studied in detail in François Daumas, *Les Moyens d'expression du grec et de l'égyptien comparés dans les décrets de Canope et de Memphis* (ASAE Suppl. 16; Cairo 1952) 179–185.

⁴⁷ An important overview, although out of date in many respects, of the functions

(leader of the temple complex, lesônīs⁴⁸) was responsible for the administration of the temple complex, in which function he was assisted or supervised by an ἐπιστατής, 'overseer', who was appointed by the king, while religious authority lay in the hands of the prophets (god's servant) who conducted the cult on the main festival days. The third rank, those who were responsible for clothing, washing and anointing the divine statues, called in Greek documentary sources στολισταί, 'clothing priests',⁴⁹ were important actors in the daily ritual and during religious festivals when processions were held and a number of rituals had to be performed. The hieroglyphic description, 'The overseers of secrets, the purified ones of the god, who enter into the sanctuary to dress the gods with their clothing' explicates the crucial role of these priests in the temple cult by stressing the notions of secrecy and purity. The lector priests (scribes of the divine book, feather bearers) assisted these clothing priests in the performance of the ritual as those responsible for the ritual texts and guardians of a correct performance of rites and a faultless recitation of hymns and invocations.⁵⁰ The fifth title, temple scribe (staff-member of the House-of-Life, scribe of the House-of-Life), refers to those who took care of the religious and scholarly literature that was composed and copied in the temple libraries and the House-of-Life, the cultic library that housed those texts that were seen as the emanations of the sun god Re, magical and medical texts among others.⁵¹ The sixth

and obligations of the individual native priestly classes in Ptolemaic Egypt is: Walter Otto, *Priester und Tempel im Hellenistischen Ägypten: ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte des Hellenismus* 2 vols. (Leipzig and Berlin 1905–1908; reprint Rome 1971) 17–172. A general presentation is given in Serge Sauneron, *The Priests of Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca, London 2000) 51–74 [translated from *Prêtres de l'ancienne Égypte* (Paris 1957)].

⁴⁸ For the etymology of this word and the nature of this priestly function, see, K.-Th. Zauzich, 'Lesonis' *LÄ* III, 1008–1009 and F. de Cenival, *Les associations religieuses en Égypte d'après les documents démotiques* (BdE 46; Cairo 1972) 154–159.

⁴⁹ G. Vittmann, 'Stolist' *LÄ* VI, 63–65; Daumas, *Moyens d'expression du grec et de l'égyptien*, 182, fn. 2.

⁵⁰ In earlier periods the lector priest was usually called 'he who is in charge of the festival roll' (*hry-hb*). The Greek title 'feather bearer' is derived from the two feathers that these priests wore on their head as distinctive markers of their profession in the Late Period. See for a representation of such a priest: Dendera, Mammisi, plate 87. Note that the accompanying hieroglyphic text speaks of a lector priest (*hry-hb*). In a temple text from Esna, this priest is described as having only one feather: Esna V, 134 (284, 11). See also Olaf E. Kaper, *Temples and Gods in Roman Dakhleh. Studies in the indigenous cults of an Egyptian oasis* (unpublished PhD thesis, Groningen 1997) 113.

⁵¹ Gardiner, 'The House of Life'. The hieroglyphic version of the Canopus Decree calls this priestly position *rh-h.t*, a title that is already attested since the Middle Kingdom. The title means merely 'he who knows things', but is better translated as 'scholar'

and final class of the list in the Memphis decree is more or less a rest category. It groups together the priests of lower rank by means of a general term for priest, in Greek as well as in Egyptian.

These priestly titles were kept in use during the following Roman period as is testified by an important administrative document that defined the legal and societal position of the native priesthood in more detail: the so-called *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* (Regulations of the emperor's private account). The *Idios Logos* was a department (or the title of its main functionary) in the administration of the Ptolemaic and Roman Empire charged with supervision over the sale of government property as well as confiscated or abandoned private property.⁵² It constituted some sort of parallel account of irregular income to the royal treasury: so to say, the private account of the king or emperor. Substantial parts of the *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* are preserved in a document of the late second century CE, which an anonymous scribe wrote as an aide-mémoire for an anonymous friend or colleague (BGU 5 1210).⁵³ These regulations of Greek, Roman and Egyptian law make up a legal compendium of rules and jurisprudence concerning disputes between heirs over legacies, charges of ritual impropriety, and infractions against the laws and ordinances regulating civil privileges.⁵⁴ Paragraphs 71–97 deal specifically with the sale or inheritance of priestly positions, the requirements for holding these ranks and some ritual and procedural infractions that were liable to fines due to the treasury of the *Idios Logos*.⁵⁵ A study of these paragraphs reveals that the duties, requirements and rules of admission were narrowly defined to such an extent that, in the Roman period, the native priestly class had factually become a closed-off and marked-out community without civil duties in society. That this Roman policy of subordination and marginalisation was a

or 'intellectual'. It denotes a person who is not only versed in writing, but more importantly, has a broad knowledge of scholarly literature in general; see, Ludwig D. Morenz, *Beiträge zur Schriftlichkeitskultur im Mittleren Reich und in der 2. Zwischenzeit* (ÄAT 29; Wiesbaden 1996) 142–143.

⁵² Paul R. Swarney, *The Ptolemaic and Roman Idios Logos* (ASP 8; Toronto 1970), see on temple and priests pp. 57–59 and 83–96; See also Strabo, *Geography*, 17.1.12.

⁵³ The text is published in W. Schubart, *Der Gnomon des Idios Logos* vol. 1 (BGU 5,1; Berlin 1919) 29–35; the accompanying commentary can be found in Woldemar Graf Uxkull-Gyllenband, *Der Gnomon des Idios Logos* vol. 2 (Berlin 1934). A section is also preserved in P.Oxy. XLII 3014, first century CE.

⁵⁴ Swarney, *op. cit.*, 123.

⁵⁵ Swarney, *op. cit.*, 83–96.

conscious act, is demonstrated by emperor Augustus' decision to place the office of high priest in the hands of a Roman official, resident in Alexandria, as a means to keep tight control over the activities and organization of the native priesthood.⁵⁶ Applications for membership to the native priesthood had to be submitted to his bureau together with proofs of priestly descent, circumcision and an unblemished physical appearance.⁵⁷ The rules were stringent since admission to the priesthood meant exemption from the poll tax. Next to the installation of a Roman civil servant as head of the native priesthood, emperor Augustus decreed as well the abolishment of the system of temple-owned estates, which had provided the main income of the Egyptian temples in the pharaonic period.⁵⁸ In the Roman period, all land fell to the state and the native temples were dependent on state intervention, either in the form of small plots of land or subsidies, which diminished rapidly from the third century CE onwards.⁵⁹

The opening paragraph of the section on Egyptian priests interdicts the priestly class activities outside the religious sphere and obliges them to wear white linen clothing and to go baldhead.⁶⁰ Given the extraordinary high rate of the charged fine in the following piece of jurisprudence, the authorities took these regulations very seriously.

71 For priests (ἱερεῦσι) it is not allowed to have another occupation than the cult of the gods, neither to go forth in woollen clothing and neither to have long hair, even not when they are away from the divine procession.

[BGU 5 1210, 181–187]

⁵⁶ Otto, *Priester und Tempel im Hellenistischen Ägypten*, 58–72.

⁵⁷ Two applications for permission to circumcise are found in BGU 1 347 (Primer, nr. 48); see also M. Kaimio in P. Rainer Cent. P. 340; applications for permission to circumcise are P. Tebt 292 and 293 (cf. 314), see also BGU 82, P. Strassb. 60; Wilcken Archiv, ii, 4ff.; Otto, *Priester und Tempel im Hellenistischen Ägypten*, 213ff. Take also note of text 10 in Klaas A. Worp, 'Short Texts from the Main Temple', in: Colin A. Hope and Gillian E. Bowen (eds.), *Dakhleh Oasis Project: preliminary reports on the 1994–1995 to 1998–1999 field seasons* (Dakhleh Oasis Project: Monograph 11; Oxford 2002) 333–349, 346.

⁵⁸ László Kákosy, 'Probleme der Religion in römerzeitlichen Ägypten' *ANRW* II 18.5 (1995) 2894–3049, 2904.

⁵⁹ Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 262ff.; Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 27ff.

⁶⁰ White linen clothing and a shaven head were originally meant as outward signs of purity, resulting from the idea that bodily hair attracts lice and that clothes made of living beings would pollute its wearer, see Sauneron, *The Priests of Ancient Egypt*, 35–42. However, in the mind of the Roman administrators, the possibility to mark out native priests as a distinctive group within society might have taken precedence.

76 A priest (ἱερεὺς) who wore woollen clothing and had long hair (was fined) 1000 drachmas. [BGU 5 1210, 188]

Of major importance to the Roman authorities were the rules pertaining to the conveyance of priestly positions. The position of prophet could ideally only be transferred by inheritance (§§ 77–78), whereas the rank of *stolistes* was sellable (§80). This means that some of the upper ranks of the native priesthood were reserved for a small circle of candidates: relatives and persons with a certain amount of wealth. Since priests of the Greek and Roman cults were not professionals, but affluent laymen performing a tour of duty,⁶¹ the organisation of the Egyptian priesthood contrasted sharply with the customs of the ruling elite, in particular with respect to its closed-off character. A letter from Tebtunis, written in 162 CE, indicates that membership of the priestly class, because of its financial benefits, was carefully monitored by the authorities. The text is the official account of a judicial examination in which three priests of Soknebtunis had to give proof of their priestly status. Two persons handed over written proofs of priestly descent, while one of them was even able to produce a document proving circumcision. The third candidate was handed over a divine book to show competence in the Egyptian language and scripts (hieratic and Demotic).⁶²

Marsisouchos, son of Mar[sisouchos?], whose mother is Thenkebkis, has given proof of being proficient in the sacred ([ἱε]ρατικά) and Egyptian (Αἰγύπτια) scripts from a sacred book which the priestly scribes (ἱερογραμματοεῖς) had given, in conformity with the memorandum of the 12th of the month Tybi of the present second (regnal) year.

[P. Tebt. 291, 40–45]

The *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* makes thus clear that the native priesthood had become entirely subordinate to the Roman administration. First of all, a Roman administrator, appointed by the prefect, held the function of high priest, so that this previously highest priestly position had become an extension of Roman bureaucracy. One of his tasks was to keep tight control over the transference of priestly positions. In case of conveyance or sale of these functions the parties had to show proofs of

⁶¹ Otto, *Priester und Tempel im Hellenistischen Ägypten*, 133f. A general overview is given in Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge 1985) 95–98. See also Alan K. Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs, 332 BC–AD 642 from Alexander to the Arab Conquest* (London 1986) 183.

⁶² See also S. Sauneron, 'Les conditions d'accès à la fonction sacerdotale à l'époque gréco-romaine' *BIFAO* 61 (1962) 55–57.

priestly descent, circumcision and the absence of any physical defect. The Roman authorities had not invented these regulations. On the contrary, they were traditional elements of native priestly identity that had already been in use during the pharaonic period. However, they had acquired a new meaning and usage in the eyes of the Roman administration. Instead of elements of prestige they were turned into tools to mark out and subjugate the Egyptian priestly class.

6.3.2. *Egyptian priests as actors in cult and community*

The preceding section dealt with the position of Egyptian priests within the administration of the Ptolemaic and Roman period. The documentary sources concerned are silent about the active role Egyptian priests played within their own circles or about the terms in which the priests defined their own position. The following two sections will survey the ways in which the native priesthood presented itself in texts that were written and transmitted within its own circle. The present section will primarily be concerned with texts that were part of the official temple ideology. These texts could be termed 'official' as far as they were inscribed in stone (temple wall, stele or statue) and written in Classical Egyptian in hieroglyphs. These texts were thus meant to be preserved and to create and confirm traditional Egyptian ideas, imagery and values.

First and foremost, Egyptian priests were ritual experts who conducted their rituals in the innermost chambers of the temple to ensure the preservation of the cosmic order. According to Egyptian theology, purity was of central concern to the effectiveness of any ritual.⁶³ Since Egyptian state religion consisted mainly of a regular performance of rituals and sacrifices, strictly scheduled by a festive calendar, to guarantee the vitality of the divine cosmic order, purity was of major importance to the institution.⁶⁴ In Egyptian terms, purity could be defined as the physical and mental condition required to enter a sacred place, either a temple, tomb, palace or any spot where a ritual is conducted

⁶³ See for a general discussion of the term and concept 'purity' in Egyptian culture: Dimitri Meeks, 'Pureté et purification en Égypte', in: *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Supplément 9 (Paris 1979) 430–452.

⁶⁴ See for a comprehensive description of Egyptian cult: Assmann, *Ägypten. Theologie und Frömmigkeit*, 25–66.

for the occasion.⁶⁵ The Egyptian term for purity is *w'b*, the opposite of *bw.t*, which latter entails everything the gods abominate, ranging from a certain conduct to specific food products, animals, regions, peoples, etc.⁶⁶ On a cosmic level, a similar distinction is at work between the divine order (*m3'.t*) established by an act of creation, either by a god (cosmos) or a king (temple building), and the primordial chaos (*3sf.t*) and everything associated with it. Since the gods are the creators of the ordered cosmos, they are pure by definition and live on *ma'at*. Moreover, according to temple doctrine, each temple building stands on the primeval mound on which creation was enacted; a pure place *par excellence* thus. As a result, Egyptian temple architecture is mainly a translation into stone of the anxiety for pollution: fortifications with a sequence of entrance towers, in which the sacred shrine is enclosed on three sides by a succession of defensive layers of chapels and ambulatories.⁶⁷ In the Late Period instruction text of Onkhsheshonqi it is put as bluntly as:

Purity (*w'b*) is the essential element (*rnn.t*) of a temple (*hw.t-ntr*)

[P. BM. 10.508 8/18]

It goes without saying that those who were interacting with the divine, who were ritually enacting the perpetual cosmic battle against chaos, were required to be pure when entering the temple building. The general Egyptian term for priest presupposes this requirement from the outset. The word for priest derives from the same root as the word for purity, *w'b*, meaning in this case 'a pure one', thus making clear

⁶⁵ The *locus classicus* for this definition is the victory stele of king Piye/Piankhi in which two Egyptian kings are forbidden entrance to the royal palace for not having been circumcised and eating fish: 'They could not enter the palace because they were not circumcised and eat fish. King Nimlot, however, entered the palace because he was a clean one (*w'b*) and did not eat fish. They stood (there) and (but) one entered the palace' [lines 150–153 = Urk. I, 50/16–51/1]. See for a full publication of the stele: N.-C. Grimal, *La stèle triomphale de Pi(ankh)y au Musée du Caire, JÉ 48862 et 47086–47089* (PIFAO; Cairo 1981). See also: Elke Blumenthal, 'Die "Reinheit" des Grabschänders', in: U. Verhoeven and E. Graefe (eds.), *Religion und Philosophie im Alten Ägypten* Fs. Derchain (OLA 39; Leuven 1991) 47–56. See for discussions about a definition of ritual purity in Egyptian terms: R. Grieshammer, 'Reinheit, kultische' *LÄ V* 212–213; John L. Gee, *The Requirements of Ritual Purity in Ancient Egypt* (unpublished dissertation; Yale University, May 1998).

⁶⁶ P. Montet, 'Le fruit défendu' *Kēmi* 11 (1950) 85–116; Paul John Frandsen, 'On the Origin of the Notion of Evil in Ancient Egypt' *GM* 179 (2000) 9–34, 12f.

⁶⁷ This architectural idea finds its culmination in the Ptolemaic and Roman period, but developed out of a format from the pharaonic period: Assmann, *Ägypten. Theologie und Frömmigkeit*, 39–43.

that purity is indeed the defining criterion of the function or profession. Since it is at the same time a designation for the lowest priestly rank, specific knowledge and skills were apparently only necessary for promotion to a higher rank and contributed thus less to priestly identity as such. In the temple of Edfu, on the doorpost of a side entrance in the eastern wall, through which priests entered the building to bring the god offerings, a text is inscribed to remind the priests again of the requirement.

Everybody who enters through this gate, beware of entering in impurity because god loves purity more than a million precious objects or hundred thousand gold pieces. His food is *ma'at*; he is satisfied with that. His heart is content with great purity. [Edfu VI: 349/4–6]

Ritual purity was regarded as a physical and moral state of being that could be attained by a combination of observing a number of commandments and abstaining from certain conduct.⁶⁸ To be allowed entrance to the holy shrine, the body had to be in a healthy condition, free from physical or mental illness or any form of pollution.⁶⁹ Priests were therefore required to wash themselves in the temple lake before entering the temple and had to have all bodily hair removed. From the Late Period onwards, and maybe even earlier, circumcision was obligatory as well. Because the ritual in the temple consisted of presenting offerings and reciting hymns, hands and mouth had to be washed carefully. Chewing on a piece of natron salt and spitting it out cleansed the mouth. The route from the entrance gate to the innermost shrine was characterised by a gradual increase in severity of the requirements. The deeper a priest had to enter the temple, the longer he should have abstained from sexual intercourse. Animal products were not allowed as material for clothing: sandals were made of papyrus while clothes had to be made of white linen. The priestly diet was also subject to strict rules. Each province, city, temple had its own food taboos that found their justification in a myth. Animals like fish and donkeys were by and large forbidden to the priesthood, although local divergences did occur.⁷⁰ A text on a pillar in the pronaos of the temple of Esna,

⁶⁸ See for a general overview: Sauneron, *The Priests of Ancient Egypt*, 35–42.

⁶⁹ The Egyptian views on circumcision and food taboos are discussed and compared with religious customs in ancient Israel in P. Galpaz-Feller, 'The Piye Stela: a brief Consideration of "Clean" and "Unclean" in Ancient Egypt and the Bible' *RB* 102 (1995) 506–521.

⁷⁰ See Ingrid Gamer-Wallert, 'Fische, religiös' *LdÄ* II, 228–234.

inscribed during the reign of emperor Trajan, illustrates the present description rather well. It is an account of rituals to be performed at the 19th of the month Epiphi. Participants have to observe a number of intriguing rules, of which only a selection is given here:⁷¹

All men have to be purified (*twr.tw*) from female contact for a (period of) purity of one day. They have to be purified, they have to be washed, they have to be clothed (as is ordained). Do not let anybody enter it (the temple) who is possessed or under a curse⁷² (...). [Esna III, n° 197/16]

Shave (your) body, cut (your) nails, shave (your) head, you who enter it (the temple). Be clothed in fine linen, you who go inside it. (Purify) with natron water, you who dwell in it. [Esna III, n° 197/18]

These liturgical rules were translated into a more personal and societal morality in texts of priestly self-presentation. Central to this ethical discourse is again the distinction between pure and impure, in this case defined in the following terms and oppositions:

To act justly	<i>ir nfr</i>	:	to do evil	<i>ir dw</i>
The wise man	<i>rmṯ rh</i>	:	the fool	<i>swg / lg</i>
The godly man	<i>rmṯ ntr</i>	:	the impious man	<i>szb3</i>

These three oppositions can best be illustrated with the help of a temple text from Edfu and a short passage from an instruction text whose principal manuscript is known as P. Insinger. Both texts are structured according to a well-articulated paradigmatic polarity of good and evil, each in its own way. The Edfu text is inscribed on a door lintel in the eastern face of the forecourt and belongs to a ritual scene of the Offering of Ma'at (*m3't*).⁷³ The scene presents the standard image of the king offering the symbol of Ma'at to a god, in this case Horus the

⁷¹ Serge Sauneron, *Les fêtes religieuses d'Esna aux derniers siècles du paganisme* [Esna V] (PIFAO; Cairo 1962) 340–349.

⁷² Sauneron takes this passage as a reference to people suffering from epilepsy: S. Sauneron, 'Les possédés' BIFAO 60 (1960) 111–115.

⁷³ H.W. Fairman, 'A Scene of the Offering of Truth in the Temple of Edfu' *MDAIK* 16² (1958) [Fs. H. Junker] 86–92. The ritual's primary importance is illustrated by the central position afforded to the relief scenes in the temple building, see Sylvie Cauville, *Essai sur la théologie du temple d'Horus à Edfou* 2 vols. (BdE 102; Cairo 1987) 6 and figure 2. See for a discussion of the meaning and history of the ritual in the light of New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period material: Emily Teeter, *The Presentation of Maat. Ritual and Legitimacy in Ancient Egypt* (SAOC 57; Chicago 1997). A translation of a cultic text of the Offering of Ma'at scene, found on the inner side of the north wall of the naos of the Edfu temple, can be found in Kurth, *Treffpunkt der Götter*, 94–96, [nr. 4], notes on p. 341f.

Behdetite accompanied by his consort Hathor. Behind the king stands Seshat, the goddess of writing, who addresses Horus with the following words:

[I have] come [to thee], O Behdetite, (you) with the dappled plumage to set down in writing for you the evildoer (*ir dw*) and who acts justly (*ir nfr*):

- (1) He who leads inside (initiates) wrongfully,
 - (2) [He who enters] when unclean (*sst*),
 - (3) He who speaks falsehood in your house,
 - (4) He who knows right (*gs-db*) from wrong (*isf.t*),
 - (5) He who is pure (*b*),
 - (6) He who is accurate and walks in accordance with the divine order (*m3'.t*),
 - (7) [He who does every good] deed [for] your servants in your city,
 - (8) He who loves your staff exceedingly,
 - (9) He who takes bribes,
 - (10) He who discriminates between [a rich man] and a poor man,
 - (11) He who covets property of your house,
 - (12) He who is careful,
 - (13) He who does not take rewards or the share of any man.
- I write down good for the one who acts justly in your city, (whereas) I reject the character of the evildoer [...]. You [do not harm your] people. [He who acts justly] in [your] house is enduring forever, (but) who does evil perishes everlastingly. [Edfu V: 334/1–6]

In this text the evildoer is placed in opposition to the one who does good. Lines 1–3 and 9–11 define the evildoer as one who trespasses the moral rules of the temple doctrine, whereas his opposite, described in lines 4–8 and 12–13, respects its rules. The opposition between the two characters is defined by a set of taboos and is ultimately about ritual purity and impurity, defining who is allowed to enter the temple.⁷⁴ By

⁷⁴ Compare this text with the addresses to the officiating priests in the Ptolemaic temples; Maurice Alliot, *Le culte d'Horus à Edfou au temps des Ptolémées* 2 Vols. (BdE 20; Cairo 1969) 181–195; Adolphe Gutbub, *Textes Fondamentaux de la théologie de Kom Ombo* 2 Vols. (BdE 47; Cairo 1973) 146–148; Hermann Junker, 'Vorschriften für den Tempelkult in Philä', in: *Studia Biblica et Orientalia III: Oriens Antiquus*, Analecta Biblica 12 (Rome 1959) 151–160. Relevant are also the so-called 'negative confession' of *Book of the Dead* spell 125 and the priestly oath; Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (München 1992) 185–190; J. Gwyn Griffiths, *The Divine Verdict. A Study of Divine Judgement in the Ancient Religions* (Studies in the History of Religions 52; Leiden 1991) 218–222. Recently the Egyptian version of the priestly oath, which is only known in a Greek version to date, has come to light: J.F. Quack, 'Ein ägyptisches Handbuch des Tempels und seine griechische Übersetzung' *ZPE* 119 (1997) 297–300. For the Greek version of the oath, see, Maria Totti, *Ausgewählte Texte der Isis- und Sarapis-Religion* (Hildesheim 1985) 24 [nr. 9]. Totti's collection of texts includes P. Oslo 2 (4th century CE) as a second priestly oath [text nr.10]. The text is mistakenly known among the *Greek Magical Papyri* as PGM XXXVII.

saying these words over the pharaoh's head the goddess implies that he is a pure person worthy to be accepted by Horus. However, the final lines go beyond a strict cultic interpretation by introducing the idea of punishment and reward in terms of failure and success in life. This idea is central to the instruction texts, a corpus of texts belonging to the generic category of rhetorical-didactic literature.⁷⁵ The main aim of the instruction texts is to teach its reader to lead a successful life within his family and local community. It is therefore more concerned with wisdom, knowledge about life and society, than with temple religion, knowledge about the taboos. P. Insinger, an impressive Demotic manuscript of 35 extant columns dating from the end of the Ptolemaic period⁷⁶ and originating from native priestly circles,⁷⁷ explicates this wisdom discourse by building its arguments consistently upon the distinction between the 'man of knowledge' (*rmṯ rh*) and the 'man of stupidity' (*rmṯ swg*, *lh*, *hne*).⁷⁸ The wise man is the one who is successful in life, whereas the fool fails because of his character. Main characteristic of the wise man is his reliance on god as a guide in life, so that he can also be called the 'godly man' (*rmṯ ntr*) in opposition to the 'impious man' (*s3b3*), shifting the emphasis from knowledge to piety. The following passage illustrates well the distinction between the two types and assigns a pivotal role to god as the judge of good and evil characters.

God places the heart (*h3.t*) on the scales opposite the weight.

He knows the infamous man (*s3b3*) from the godly man (*rmṯ ntr*) because of his (their) heart.

Curse and blessing are in the character (*3my.t*) that was given to him.

The commandments that god ordained for those who are good are (to be found) in the character. [P. Insinger 5/7–10]

⁷⁵ For the generic term rhetorical-didactic literature, see, Gerald Moers, *Fingierte Welten in der ägyptischen Literatur des 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr. Grenzüberschreitung, Reisemotiv und Fiktionalität* (PdÄ 19; Leiden 2001) 167–188.

⁷⁶ Until recently P. Insinger was dated to the first century CE; see now, K.A. Worp, 'The Greek Text on the P.Dem. Insinger: A Note on the Date' *OMRO* 63 (1982) 39–41 and Friedhelm Hoffmann, 'Neue Fragmente zu den drei grossen Inaros-Petubastis-Texten' *Enchoria* 22 (1995) 27–39, 38f.

⁷⁷ John Tait, 'Demotic Literature and Egyptian Society', in: Janet H. Johnson (ed.), *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society. Egypt from Cambyes to Constantine and beyond* (SAOC 51; Chicago 1992) 303–310.

⁷⁸ Miriam Lichtheim, *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context. A study of Demotic Instructions* (OBO 52; Freiburg, Göttingen 1983) 116–121; see pp. 1–12 for a discussion of the specific character of Demotic instruction texts compared to earlier ones of the pharaonic period.

God and character are pivotal notions in the biographical inscriptions of the Late and Greco-Roman period.⁷⁹ Piety pervades these accounts as the right attitude to life, the sole guarantee and cause of a successful life. These texts can only be considered private documents in so far as that they were commissioned for an individual as part of a person's burial equipment. Instead of being private accounts of an individual's life, the majority of the texts present a collection of fixed topics like prayers for offerings, an address to the living to exhort them to give offerings, and an enumeration of the virtues of the deceased, made up of stock phrases that are part of a longstanding native funerary and literary tradition. In those rare cases that an individual elaborates on his personal achievements, the boundaries of the generic norms and values are never transgressed. This means that these texts allude to an idealised image of an Egyptian (mainly male) elite and can only provide insight into the conscious effort of this elite to construct an identity. In her study of a collection of priestly biographical inscriptions on statues and funerary stelae from Ptolemaic Akhmim, Edfu and Dendera, Maria-Theresa Derchain-Urtel distinguishes twelve topics that recur in a variety of combinations in the inscriptions.⁸⁰ Statements about the priestly virtues of the deceased abound next to invocations of the gods, prayers for offerings, genealogies, addresses to colleague priests, and excerpts from Book of the Dead spell 15. These priestly virtues are a combination of formal requirements and additional moral achieve-

⁷⁹ A systematic collection of funerary biographies of the Late and Greco-Roman period is not available. The most important, although selective, collection of translated biographies is E. Otto, *Die biographischen Inschriften der ägyptischen Spätzeit. Ihre geistesgeschichtliche und literarische Bedeutung* (PdÄ 2; Leiden 1954); See also Ph. Derchain, *Les impondérables de l'hellénisation. Littérature d'hérogammates* (Monographies Reine Elisabeth 7; Turnhout 2000). A discussion of the genre within Egyptian literature is Andrea M. Gnirs, 'Die ägyptische Autobiographie', in: Antonio Loprieno (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Literature. History and Forms* (Leiden 1996) 191–241. Note that she pays minimal attention to the Late and Greco-Roman period, which is regrettable. A convenient grouping of the standard themes, although limited to the Old Kingdom, is given in Nicole Kloth, *Die (auto-) biographischen Inschriften des ägyptischen Alten Reiches: Untersuchungen zu Phraseologie und Entwicklung* (SAK Beiheft 8; Hamburg 2002).

⁸⁰ M.-Th. Derchain-Urtel, *Priester im Tempel: die Rezeption der Theologie der Tempel von Edfu und Dendera in den Privatdokumenten aus ptolemäischer Zeit* (GOF IV/19; Wiesbaden 1989) 103–245. Note that she groups these topics together under the heading of 'the Akhmim formulary' as if all of these themes were specific to the Akhmim region, which is not the case. See for some important philological corrections to the translations: A. Egberts, *BiOr* 51 (1994) 536–544.

ments like voluntary presence in the temple and providing teaching for posterity. Concerning the formal requirements, Derchain-Urtel identifies the following recurring topics:⁸¹

1. Purity
2. Rectitude in performing priestly duties
3. Denial of theft from offerings
4. Righteousness (social solidarity)
5. Proper speech

Accordingly, these five points can be considered the main constituents of priestly self-presentation in the Late and Greco-Roman period.⁸² Each of the five topics was already common in earlier periods, albeit less pronounced, but the underlying morality of Late Period biographies stresses human responsibility and accountability as never before. Much stress is laid on one's individual achievements in such a way that personal responsibility and accountability are suitable key-terms to describe its discourse. The royal institution has almost completely disappeared from these accounts. Instead, the deceased presents himself as a capable leader of his local community on whose initiative all kinds of works were undertaken. The deceased even takes all the credit for having built or renovated temple structures, which earlier formed part of the cultic role of the pharaoh. The city god has also replaced pharaoh as the point of reference in life. The biographies emphasise the deceased's piety and propagate, often in digressions of a general moral nature, the reliance on god as guide in life, as in the instruction texts. In this way, the deceased portrays himself as a wise man, successful in life and knowledgeable in rhetorical-didactic literary forms (proper speech), and, ultimately, as a godly man, whose success in life is entirely dependent upon his piety and respect for his city god. In this way, self-presentation and didactic literature collide, both propagating the idea that social cohesion within the community is ultimately also about god.

⁸¹ Derchain-Urtel, *Priester im Tempel*, 198.

⁸² See also Stele Manchester Museum n° inv. 2965, dated to the Saite period, in which this sequence occurs already. Lines 5–7 contain a series of four negations concerning priestly duties in the temple which are reminiscent of the earlier *Book of the Dead* spell 125 and the addresses to the priests of the Ptolemaic temples. Olivier Perdu, 'Exemple de stèle archaïsante pour un prêtre modèle' *RdE* 52 (2001) 183–216; the four negations are discussed on pgs. 200–207.

Since entrance to the temple was not allowed to laity, a local community's access to the divine was seriously restricted. In such a setting, priests could function as intermediaries between temple and laity by means of their mastery of traditional idiom and knowledge of scripts and language. As a result of this, the local community could very well accredit them with a prestige or charisma that went beyond a strict interpretation of their priestly duties within the temple hierarchy. Moreover, their distinctive physical appearance and way of life made them into models of divine contiguity and reciprocity. They could therefore serve as ritual experts with considerable prestige.⁸³ Local needs were primarily concerned with issues of daily life such as fertility, childbirth, protective amulets, blessings and curses, and charms against demons and sorcerers. All sorts of forms of applied magic that testify to these activities have been found in abundant numbers. Unfortunately, the scattered sources do not allow a precise identification of the priests who took on this role. Moreover, it remains unclear through which channels and in what way the magical lore of the temple reached the world outside the *temenos* wall. Some information can be gleaned from the concluding words on the healing statue of the priest Djed-Hor from Athribis.⁸⁴ Healing statues portray the private individual who commissioned the statue and are covered with magical spells against bites and stings of venomous animals. They provided a means for the uninitiated and illiterate to share in the magical knowledge of the priests, because drinking the water that had been poured over the statue was believed to cure poisonous bites and stings.⁸⁵ The priest (*hm*) Wah-ib-Re

⁸³ See for a similar sociological model: Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 210–214. However, Frankfurter is far too positive in assigning these roles to the priestly office of lector priest. The ancient sources provide a much more complex and even conflicting picture.

⁸⁴ For this statue, see, E. Jelínková-Reymond, *Les inscriptions de la statue guérisseuse de Djed-Hor-le-Sauveur* (BdE 23; Cairo 1956). The Oriental Institute in Chicago houses the base of a parallel statue that was placed in the necropolis of Athribis: Elizabeth J. Sherman, 'Djedhor the Saviour Statue Base OI 10589' *JEA* 67 (1981) 82–102. A naophoric statue representing Djedhor has also been preserved, Cairo 4/6/19/1. The three sources are also listed in Pascal Vernus, *Athribis. Textes et documents relatifs à la géographie, aux cultes et à l'histoire d'une ville du Delta égyptien à l'époque pharaonique* (BdE 74; Cairo 1978) 193–195 [documents 160–162].

⁸⁵ Note that Djed-Hor's biographical account contains all the elements of the priestly self-presentation outlined above. He presents himself as a righteous and god-fearing man, who acted as a leader for his local community. On account of these qualities, Djed-Hor embodies the ritual purity required for the efficacy of the spells.

states proudly that he inscribed Djed-Hor's statue conforming what was found in the books:

I put the writings on this statue conforming to what is written in *The excerpts*⁸⁶ from the *Bau of Re* and in *Every work of the Kherep-Serket* to bring all humans and animals back to life with them.

[Djed-Hor, Biography §14, ll. 161f.]

By inscribing the statue with spells taken from two priestly handbooks, a bridge between the ritual world of the temple and the needs of the local community is established.

The passage does not specify which priestly class was concerned with composing and copying these handbooks. Two of the six titles mentioned in the trilingual decrees qualify. The lector priests, known in the trilingual decrees as 'scribes of the divine book' (in Egyptian) and 'feather bearers' (in Greek), played in all likelihood a major role in the transfer and translation of temple knowledge, because they were in charge of the ritual texts used in the cult. During public religious festivals and funerals they displayed their knowledge of ritual language and acts in front of the laity, possibly with the result that the local community recognized them as masters of the occult arts. Since the House-of-Life, the institutionalised cultic library in service to the temple, functioned as archive of magical and medical texts, its members, the 'scribes of the House-of-Life' (in Egyptian) or 'temple scribes' (in Greek), may also have acted as providers of charms and amulets to the lay public. It is therefore noteworthy that the introduction to the list of bizarre ingredients (PGM XII.401–444) pretends that it makes available information of exactly this class of priests.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ This is a tentative translation of the technical term *ḥnj-r*. See on book titles with this term: Siegfried Schott, *Bücher und Bibliotheken im Alten Ägypten. Verzeichnis der Buch- und Spruchtitel und der Termini technici* (Wiesbaden 1990) 13 [nr. 25].

⁸⁷ Egyptian sources from the pharaonic until the Late Period indicate that the House-of-Life knew a more refined disciplinary division than the term 'scribe of the House-of-Life' suggests. In the case of medicine, at least three different classes with a distinctive hierarchy were recognized: *swmw* priests, *ḥrp* priests of the goddess Serket and *w'b* priests of the goddess Sekhmet. The exact division of tasks between these professional groups remains a matter of debate, although the *ḥrp* priests of the goddess Serket seem to have been particularly involved with curing venomous snake bites. Sources pertaining to the *ḥrp* priests of Serket and the *w'b* priests of Sekhmet are collected in Frédérique von Känel, *Les prêtres-ouâb de Sekhmet et les conjurateurs de Serket* (Paris 1984); the titles are discussed in relation to the *swmw* on pp. 302ff. For the *wab* priest of Sekhmet, see also, Heinz Engelmann and Jochen Hallof, 'Der Sachmetpriester, ein früher Repräsentant der Hygiene und des Seuchenschutzes' *SAK* 23 (1996) 103–143. For the *ḥrp* priests of Serket, see also, Sauneron, *Un traité égyptien d'ophiologie*; 198–201.

6.3.3. *Egyptian priests as characters in the literary imagination*

The following two sections are concerned with the images of Egyptian priests in respectively Egyptian literature and Greek and Latin texts of the Roman period. In both traditions, the Egyptian priest was a favoured literary type that acts according to a limited number of generic conventions. These images should be understood as verbal representations, a way of speaking about, or referring to, Egyptian priests. As such, they are not directly related to reality, but mediated by an author, who passes a judgement on reality or, in the case of fictional narratives, creates a new (textual) reality altogether. It is therefore inevitable that societal interests, prejudices and power relations of the author or the group he represents influence the form and content of the representation. In the case of Egyptian literary works, it is highly probable that literary production and reception was more or less confined to priestly circles, so that these texts in all likelihood provide information about the way Egyptian priests viewed themselves.⁸⁸ The Greek and Latin texts were produced outside Egypt for an audience that was only aware of the country along the banks of the Nile by way of hearsay, imperial propaganda and classical literary and historiographical texts such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Herodotus' *Histories*. In the Roman period texts, Egyptian priests tend to be portrayed as outsiders who are feared or revered for their outstanding knowledge of ritual texts, which tension betrays a pervasive Hellenistic debate on defining self and otherness.

For the *swenw* priests, see, John F. Nunn, *Ancient Egyptian Medicine* (London 1996) 113–135, take notice of appendix B on pp. 211–214 for a chronological listing of known doctors. See also Westendorf, *Handbuch der altägyptischen Medizin*, vol. 1, 472–481 and Joachim F. Quack, 'Das Buch vom Tempel und verwandte Texte: ein Vorbericht' *ARG* 2 (2000) 1–20, 13f.

⁸⁸ Due to a lack of relevant sources, the sociology of literary production in ancient Egypt is still far from understood. For example, virtually nothing is known about authorship in Egypt: Philippe Derchain, 'Auteur et société', in: A. Loprieno (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Literature. History and Forms* (PdÄ 10; Leiden 1996) 83–94. In the Greco-Roman period, literary life was probably restricted to the native temple: Tait, 'Demotic Literature and Egyptian Society' and Idem, 'Demotic Literature: Forms and Genre', in: Loprieno (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 175–187, 178–180.

6.3.3.1. *Egyptian priests in Egyptian literary texts*

If you desire to read writings, come along with me and I will let you be taken to the place where that book is that Thoth wrote with his own hand when he came down following the gods [Setne I, 3/12]

Egyptian priests are prominent characters in Egyptian literary texts. These fictional characters can be distinguished into two separate literary types, complying with two generic text categories. In rhetorical-didactic texts, Egyptian priests function as sages who, on account of their knowledge of religious texts and rhetorical forms, act as guardians of morality and just speech.⁸⁹ The priest functions as an embedded narrator who instructs a pupil in proper rules of conduct or converses with his heart or pharaoh about the state of affairs in Egypt.⁹⁰ In this way, the priest remains outside the story told and his textual role is restricted to rendering the message of the embedded text trustworthy, authoritative and prestigious for its audience by means of his priestly title. In fictional narratives, Egyptian priests act as miracle workers who are concerned with solving their own particular problems or satisfying their curiosity for magical texts, thereby frequently trespassing ideal rules of conduct. An external narrator recounts the course of events that are undergone and influenced by the priestly character. These stories could conveniently be called ‘Tales of Wonder’, because of the high number of episodes entailing magical tricks and miraculous objects.⁹¹ Both textual categories are attested for the early as well as later phases of ancient Egyptian history. The extant record of tales, however, suggests a fair increase in popularity of the ritual expert type in the Greco-Roman period.

⁸⁹ For the term rhetorical-didactic literature, see, Moers, *Fingierte Welten in der ägyptischen Literatur des 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr. Grenzüberschreitung, Reisemotiv und Fiktionalität* (PdÄ 19; Leiden 2001) 167–188.

⁹⁰ The narratological terminology used in the present and the following section is taken from Mieke Bal, *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (2nd ed.; Toronto 1997).

⁹¹ See for a rather impressionistic discussion of such tales in Egyptian literature: Susan Tower Hollis, ‘Tales of Magic and Wonder from Ancient Egypt’, in: Jack M. Sasson, *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* 4 vols. (New York 1995) 2255–2264. One must beware of considering this designation a generic literary term with heuristic value.

This section discusses the role of the ritual expert type in the fictional narratives. Three stories have been selected as instructive examples for their relative length, detailed descriptions and fairly well preserved state: *Tale of King Khufu's Court*, *Setne and the Book of Thoth* (Setne 1), *Setne and Sa-Osiris* (Setne 2). Before treating each story in more detail, the following tenets as regards the literary construct of the ritual expert can be listed:

1. The figures are related to the Egyptian priesthood.
2. The royal court is the arena of display and conflict.
3. Magic is not condemned on moral grounds.
4. Egyptian ritual experts are decent members of society.
5. The priest's knowledge is based on the consultation of books.
6. Effective magical texts are written by the god Thoth.
7. Books written in Thoth's own hand are carefully kept from mortals.
8. Powerful ritual experts are of the past.
9. The described magical techniques are also prescribed and explained in extant contemporary magic handbooks.

The *Tale of King Khufu's Court* is a cycle of wondrous stories partly preserved on a manuscript from the late Second Intermediate Period (around 1640–1532 BCE).⁹² King Khufu's sons take turns telling their father of some miraculous feat done in the past. Each story evolves around a figure that holds the title 'chief lector priest' (*hry-hb hry-tp*), perhaps better translated in this context as 'magician'. One of them, Ubainer, made a crocodile out of wax to seize the man who seduced his wife,⁹³ while another, Djadjaemankh (who is also 'scribe of the book'), put one side of a lake on top of the other to retrieve a fish-pendant that one of the king's rowing girls had dropped into the water. After each embedded story, king Khufu orders to give copious funerary offerings to the deceased ritual expert, because 'I have seen his deed of wisdom (*sp=f n rh*)' (P. Westcar 1/16, 4/16–7 and 6/21). To outdo his royal

⁹² The manuscript is known as P. Westcar: A.M. Blackman, *The Story of King Kheops and the Magicians. Transcribed from Papyrus Westcar (Berlin Papyrus 3033)* (Reading 1988).

⁹³ The manipulation of human or animal figurines made out of wax or mud was a common technique in Egyptian ritual. The method is attested for execration and funerary rituals from the Middle Kingdom onwards. See for an overview and relevant sources: M.J. Raven, 'Magic and Symbolic Aspects of Certain Materials in Ancient Egypt' *JA* 4 (1988) 237–242 and Idem, 'Wax in Egyptian Magic and Symbolism' *OMRO* 64 (1983) 7–47.

brothers, Prince Hordedef chooses not to tell his father a story about the past, because ‘truth cannot be known from falsehood’ (P. Westcar 6/23f.). Instead, he prefers to lead a contemporary before his father, a certain Djedi.

He is a commoner (*nḏs*), a hundred and ten years old.
 He eats five hundred loaves of bread,
 A shoulder of ox for meat,
 And also drinks a hundred jars of beer,
 Up to this day.
 He knows how to rejoin a severed head.
 He knows how to make a lion walk behind him with its leash on the ground.
 He knows the number of the Chambers of the Sanctuary of Thoth.
[P. Westcar 7/1–6]⁹⁴

Khufu orders his son Hordedef to bring this man to the court immediately, whereupon Djedi arrives with his children and books in due course. Although Djedi does not have a priestly title, he knows ‘his words of magic’ (*ḏd.w.t=f m ḥkz.w*; P. Westcar 8/20 and 25) like the lector priests in the foregoing stories, so that he is able to perform all feats with ease. Instead of telling pharaoh the number of the Chambers of the Sanctuary of Thoth, he reveals that the text is kept in a flint casket in a room in Heliopolis, where only the first three kings of the following dynasty will find it. At this point the tale relates in detail the wondrous birth of these children but, unfortunately, the physical manuscript breaks off before anything further has been said about the Sanctuary of Thoth.

In the above quoted passage, the embedded narrator prince Hordedef, who was not only a historic but also a celebrated figure with his own literary tradition for the audience of the day,⁹⁵ introduces the

⁹⁴ Tr. R.B. Parkinson.

⁹⁵ Prince Hordedef was also known as the author of an instruction text and was remembered as a classical author of high merit at least until the end of the New Kingdom (the *Harper's Song* from the tomb of king Antef [preserved in three New Kingdom copies] and P. Chester Beatty IV verso 3/5; see D. Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep. Gottwerdung im alten Ägypten* (MÄS 36; Munich 1977) 21–29). In *Hori's Satirical Letter* (time of Ramsesses II), knowledge of the exact wording of one of Hordedef's verses serves as a criterion of education in an intellectual contest between two scribes (P. Anastasi I 11/1): H.-W. Fischer-Elfert, *Die Satirische Streitschrift des Papyrus Anastasi I* (ÄgAbh 44; Wiesbaden 1986) 94–96. He was also remembered as the discoverer of *Book of the Dead* spells 30B, 64, 137A and 148; see for collected sources (17th dynasty until Ptolemaic period): D. Wildung, *Die Rolle ägyptischer Könige im Bewußtsein ihrer Nachwelt* (MÄS 17; Berlin 1969) 218–221 and P. Vernus, *Essai sur la conscience de l'histoire dans l'Égypte*

magician Djedi by enumerating a number of interesting constituents. Djedi is set off from ordinary humans by his old age (110 years) and his extraordinary income or appetite (500 loaves of bread, a shoulder of ox, 100 jars of beer).⁹⁶ He knows a number of magical tricks and holds secret knowledge about the sanctuary of Thoth, the god of magic. Djedi is brought from his residential town Djed-Sneferu⁹⁷ in the vicinity of modern Meidum to the royal court in Memphis together with his books. Djedi's mastery of script and language and his connection with Thoth make him a prototypical Egyptian intellectual.⁹⁸ Apparently, an Egyptian audience considered these the constitutive elements of a person knowledgeable in the occult arts.

For the Late and Greco-Roman Period, the number of preserved narratives featuring ritual experts increases considerably, possibly indicating a rise in popularity of this literary type among the audience of Egyptian narratives. Like all the fictional narratives composed in this later period, the stories are set in a glorious past when Egypt was still traditionally ruled by an indigenous pharaoh. The scattered sources allow identifying two favoured historical and priestly settings for the events to take place: the high priests of Ptah in Memphis around the time of

pharaonique (Paris 1995) 113f. According to the introductions or postscripts to these spells, Hordedef made his discoveries in the course of an inspection of the temples in the country. In the Greco-Roman period he was accredited with having discovered the *Book of the Temple*: J.F. Quack, 'Der historisch Abschnitt des Buches vom Tempel', in: Jan Assmann and Elke Blumenthal (eds.), *Literatur und Politik im pharaonischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten* (BdE 127; Cairo 1999) 267–278, 274f. and 277.

⁹⁶ Djedi's age and daily diet were probably not randomly chosen. In fact, 110 years was considered in ancient Egypt to be the ideal life span reserved for righteous persons. These 110 years make Djedi a member of a generation of a bygone age. In this respect, it may not be coincidental that the bread, ox and beer are reminiscent of common funerary offerings. In other words, Djedi is a figure of the past although still alive. Note that the same holds true for Sa-Osiris, the main character in *Setne and Sa-Osiris* (Setne 2).

⁹⁷ Djed-Sneferu was the priestly settlement attached to king Snefru's pyramid in Meidum. King Snefru was remembered as a beneficent king who ruled Egypt in a time of prosperity. The author of the tale intended in all likelihood to associate Snefru's beneficial character and the fictional character Djedi. See on the Egyptian memory of king Snefru: Dietrich Wildung, *Die Rolle ägyptischer Könige im Bewußtsein ihrer Nachwelt* (MÄS 17; Berlin 1969) 114–124 and E. Graefe, 'Die gute Reputation des Königs Snofru', in: S. Israelit-Groll (ed.), *Studies in Egyptology Presented to Miriam Lichtheim* 2 vols. (Jerusalem 1990) vol. 1, 257–263.

⁹⁸ A detailed discussion of Djedi as *homme de lettres* can be found in Morenz, *Beiträge zur Schriftlichkeitskultur*, 107–123.

pharaoh Ramesses II (1290–1224 BCE) and the priesthood of Atum-Re in Heliopolis in a yet undefined past. The literary characters either hold the priestly title ‘high priest’ (*hm ntr*) or ‘chief’ (*hry-tp*), an abbreviated form of the common title ‘chief lector priest’ (*hry-hb hry-tp*) that the ritual experts featuring in the *Tale of King Khufu’s Court* held.⁹⁹ Main characters of the stories of the priesthood of Heliopolis that could be identified so far are Petese, son of Petetum, a certain Horpaouensh, who appears as well in an Aramaic version, and Hareus, son of Tjainefer.¹⁰⁰ However, the stories of the high priests of Ptah, evolving around the character Setne Khamwase, are better suited for a discussion, because of the good state of preservation of two manuscripts that contain the stories *Setne and the Book of Thoth* and *Setne and Sa-Osiris*.¹⁰¹ The priestly title ‘Sem’ or, since the nineteenth dynasty, ‘Setem’, which the high priest of Ptah traditionally held in addition to the title ‘chief of the leaders of the craftsmen’, had become a fixed name ‘Setne’ in the Demotic narratives about the Memphite priesthood.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ The exact reading of the Demotic group *hry-tp* was settled by Wilhelm Spiegelberg, ‘Demotica I’ *SBAW* 6. Abhandlung (1925) 4–7. See also Gardiner, ‘The House of Life’, 164 and Idem, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, vol.1, 56*. Also take notice of Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 220f., fn. 1025.

¹⁰⁰ See for Petese, son of Petetum: Kim Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 4, The Story of Petese son of Petetum and Seventy Other Good and Bad Stories* (CNI Publications 23; Copenhagen 1999). The story of Horpaouensh is still unpublished: Karl-Th. Zauzich, ‘Neue literarische Texte in demotischer Schrift’ *Enchoria* 8.2 (1978) 33–38, 36. The story featuring Hareus, son of Tjainefer is partly published in Kim Ryholt, ‘An Elusive Narrative belonging to the Cycle of Stories about the Priesthood at Heliopolis’, in: Kim Ryholt (ed.), *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies* (CNI Publications 27; Copenhagen 2002) 361–366.

¹⁰¹ The story *Setne and the Book of Thoth* (Setne 1) is preserved complete except for the first two columns on P. Cairo 30646 (of Ptolemaic date). The second Setne tale, *Setne and Sa-Osiris*, only misses the opening of the story. It is preserved on P. BM. 10822 [604 verso] (of Roman date). Both texts are published in F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis* 2 vols. (Oxford 1900).

¹⁰² A story badly preserved on a manuscript from the Tebtunis temple library evolves around a certain Setne: W.J. Tait, ‘P. Carlsberg 207: Two Columns of a Setna Text’, in: Frandsen (ed.), *The Carlsberg papyri* 1, 19–46 and J.F. Quack and K. Ryholt, ‘Notes on P. Carlsberg 207’, in: Frandsen and Ryholt (eds.), *The Carlsberg Papyri* 3, 141–164. Another setem priest, a certain Ptahhotep, appears in P. Cairo CG 30758 and P. Dem. Saq. 1. See for the former manuscript: W. Spiegelberg, *Demotische Denkmäler II* (Cairo 1906–1908) 145–148, pl. LVIII; the latter can be found in H.S. Smith and W.J. Tait, *Saqqâra Demotic Papyri I* (EES Texts from Excavations 7; London 1983) 1–69, pls. 1–3. Setne Khamwase occurs possibly in one of the short stories contained in the cycle of Seventy Good and Bad Stories in the Story of Petese, son of Petetum: K. Ryholt, *The Carlsberg Papyri 4, The Story of Petese son of Petetum and Seventy Other Good and Bad Stories* (CNI Publications 23; Copenhagen 1999) 84f.

For an Egyptian audience of the Late and Greco-Roman period, Setne Khamwase was as much a celebrated historic figure as the embedded narrator prince Hordedef in the *Tale of Khufu's Court* was for an audience of the Middle and New Kingdom. The fictional character Setne Khamwase was based on the historical prince Khaemwaset, who lived in the thirteenth century BCE as fourth son of pharaoh Ramesses II the Great and served as high priest of Ptah in Memphis.¹⁰³ His father reigned for about 66 years, built or renovated dozens of temples and claimed as many military successes, which were lavishly laid out in text and relief on the outside walls of the major temples of Egypt. At the time of his death, Ramesses left Egypt scattered with statues and monumental texts glorifying his name and deeds, which guaranteed his endurance in Egypt's collective memory.¹⁰⁴ Like his father, Khaemwaset remained in the minds of the literate elite. He was not remembered as a conqueror and powerful ruler, but as a scholar and collector of ancient texts on account of his activities as high priest of Ptah in the Memphite area. First, he ordered the construction of an underground burial complex for the Apis bulls in the Saqqara desert, nowadays known as the Serapeum, which complex remained in use until the Roman period. Secondly, in his name renovation works were undertaken at the millennium-old pyramid complexes of the pharaohs of the Old Kingdom that were located in the vicinity of Memphis. Both activities were commemorated in monumental texts that remained clearly visible for the generations to come.¹⁰⁵ As a result, he entered the imagination as a sage and scholarly priest anxious for old texts of sacred knowledge. For example, Book of the Dead spell 167 *supplémentaire*, preserved on two manuscripts from the Ptolemaic period, is presented as a text found by Khaemwaset under the head of a mummy in the Memphite desert.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ See for sources relating to the historical Khaemwaset and a detailed account of his life: Marjorie M. Fisher, *The Sons of Ramesses II* 2 vols. (ÄA 53; Wiesbaden 2001) 89–105 [vol. 1] and 89–143 [vol. 2]. See also: Farouk Gomaà, *Chaemwese. Sohn Ramses II. Und Hoherpriester von Memphis* (ÄgAbh 27; Wiesbaden 1973) and K.A. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant. The Life and Times of Ramesses II, King of Egypt* (Warminster 1982) 103–109.

¹⁰⁴ See as introduction to this topic: Robert S. Bianchi, 'Graeco-Roman uses and abuses of Ramesside traditions', in: E. Bleiberg and R. Freed (eds.), *Fragments of a Shattered Visage: the proceedings of the international symposium of Ramesses the Great* (Memphis 1991), 1–8.

¹⁰⁵ See for translations of these texts: Gomaà, *Chaemwese*, 44, 63 (hieroglyphic transcriptions are found on pages 110f. and 101–106) and Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant*, 105–107.

¹⁰⁶ The date of composition of spell 167 and the other *chapitres supplémentaires* is

The writings of the ointment bowl (*mh.t*) that had found the king's son, the chief [lector priest] (*hry-tp*) Khaemwaset under the head of a blessed spirit (*shw*) to the west of Memphis.

It is more divine than any (other) bowl from the House-of-Life. It was made in the gate of fire between the blessed spirits and the dead in order to prevent the aggressor (*ph-sw*) reaching them there. [Tested] a million times.

The book (*š.t*) 'Secret of forms' that had found the king's scribe, the chief [lector priest] (*hry-tp*) Amenhotep son of Hapu, true of voice. He made (it) for himself (as) an amulet (litt. protection for (his) members).

It remains a matter of debate whether the advertising introduction is a posthumous fiction to render the spell authentic and prestigious or a historically correct record of the discovery of an ancient text by Khaemwaset during his renovation works in the Memphite desert. The reference to Amenhotep son of Hapu in the final paragraph indicates rather a Theban instead of Memphite origin of the spell. After his death, Amenhotep son of Hapu, a favourite official of pharaoh Amenhotep III (1391–1353 BCE), had become an object of cult in the Theban region, which became particularly prominent in the Greco-Roman period.¹⁰⁷ Whatever the case, the Book of the Dead tradition continued the image of Khamwaset as a priest, antiquarian and bibliophile into the Ptolemaic period.

The tale *Setne and the Book of Thoth* (Setne 1) tells the unfortunate love story of Naneferkaptah and Ihweret, son and daughter of pharaoh Merneptah, who were untimely separated in death due to Naneferkaptah's obsessive desire to possess the Book of Thoth. The extant version of the story starts in the burial chamber of Naneferkaptah's tomb in the Memphite desert, where Ihweret's ghost, as embedded narrator,

unclear. Yoyotte argues for a Ramesside date, whereas Lesko proposes the 21st dynasty: Jean Yoyotte, 'Contribution à l'histoire du chapitre 162 du Livre des Morts' *RdE* 29 (1977) 194–202 and Leonard H. Lesko, 'Some Further Thoughts on Chapter 162 of the *Book of the Dead*', in: E. Teeter and J.A. Larson (eds.), *Gold of Praise. Fs. E.F. Wente* (SAOC 58; Chicago 1999) 255–259. Pleyte's edition of spell 167 *suppl.* is based on two manuscripts from the Ptolemaic period (P. Leiden T 30 and P. hiérat. Louvre Inv. 3248): W. Pleyte, *Chapitres supplémentaires du Livre des Morts, 162 à 174* 3 vols. (Leiden 1881–1882); see for a hieroglyphic transcription of the hieratic text: Gomaà, *Chaemwese*, 134, plate 34.

¹⁰⁷ See for sources pertaining to Amenhotep son of Hapu: Dietrich Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep. Gottwerdung im alten Ägypten* (MÄS 36; Munich 1977) 251–297, the present text is discussed on pages 272f. (§176).

tries to keep Setne from taking the Book of Thoth. Setne had discovered the book in the burial chamber and the ghost tells him about the misfortune that befell her family on account of the book. Many years ago, an old priest had talked to her husband Naneferkaptah in vivid terms about a magical book written by Thoth himself. In exchange for a fee amounting to the costs of a proper burial, the old priest gave away that the book was hidden on an island in the vicinity of Coptos, whereupon Naneferkaptah decided to travel with his wife Ihweret and newly born son Merib from Memphis to southern Coptos to take possession of the book. In Coptos, the priests of Isis welcomed them warmly and took care of them. After the prerequisite offerings to Isis and Harpocrates and four days of feasting with the priests, Naneferkaptah made a boat and its crew out of wax to set off to the island where the book was kept. On the island, the book was defended by the pre-eminent chthonic enemies: a six mile barrier of snakes, scorpions and worms, and an ever living serpent coiled around the box in which the book was kept. Naneferkaptah overcame the defences of the book by the use of his magical tricks.¹⁰⁸ On the way back to Memphis, however, the god Thoth punished him severely for his intrusion. His son and wife drowned in the Nile and were buried in Coptos, while Naneferkaptah drowned as well afterwards and was buried together with the book in Memphis. When Ihweret finishes her story, Setne is still determined to take the book from the tomb. In a final desperate effort to keep the book, Naneferkaptah proposes to play a game of *Senet* over the book, which Setne willingly accepts.¹⁰⁹ However, Setne is easily outplayed and is only saved in the nick of time with the help of his amulets and magic handbooks, which his foster brother Inaros brings to the tomb. When Setne escapes from the tomb with the book of Thoth, he leaves Naneferkaptah and Ihweret's ghost in darkness and distress. Thereupon, Naneferkaptah sends Setne a bad dream in which he is seduced and humiliated by Tabubu, the daughter of the high priest of

¹⁰⁸ The number of attested spells to repel venomous animals is small. Unfortunately, the sources have not yet been collected systematically. See for some relevant literature: Christian Leitz, 'Die Schlangensprüche in den Pyramidentexten' *Orientalia* 65 (1996) 381–427. Charms to ward off these animals occur as early as the Pyramid Texts (spells 226–243, 276–299, 314, 375–399, 499–500, 502, 538, 549–551, 727–733) and continue through the Coffin Texts into the Book of the Dead (spells 31–40).

¹⁰⁹ For the identification of the game as *Senet*, see, Peter A. Piccione, 'The Gaming Episode in the *Tale of Setne Khamwas* as Religious Metaphor', in: David. P. Silverman, *For his Ka. Fs. Klaus Baer* (SAOC 55; Chicago 1994) 197–204, 199f.

Bastet, who forces him to sign a maintenance contract and to throw his children to the dogs.¹¹⁰ When Setne wakes up from this nightmare in the street, naked and lying in front of pharaoh (Naneferkaptah in disguise), he understands his mistake. He returns the book and orders the corpses of Merib and Ihweret to be transferred from Coptos to Memphis, so that the family is reunited, now forever.

The main theme of this Demotic narrative is the inevitable failure of any human endeavour to get hold of divine knowledge for reasons of sheer curiosity. The tale's message is that Books of Thoth are not meant to be readings for mortals. The division between the divine and human spheres should be respected and maintained. This division is clearly specified in the distribution of space in both the primary and secondary fabula. The divine sphere is located on the island in the Theban region (line 4/19) and in the tomb of Naneferkaptah in the desert to the west of Memphis, whereas the royal court in Memphis represents the human sphere. The respective spheres of actions are ideally separated and their borders become blurred the moment a human, Naneferkaptah or Setne, introduces into the human world an object from the divine realm, in this case the Book of Thoth. The underlying structure of the literary topography in the embedded narrative is given in the following table. It clearly shows that transgressing the spatial rule blurs the established oppositions and, as a consequence, is doomed to bring trouble.

<i>Court in Memphis</i>	<i>Island beyond Coptos</i>
pharaoh	Thoth
human sphere	divine sphere
order	chaos (animals)
safety	danger
life	death

By bringing the Book of Thoth back to the court in Memphis, Naneferkaptah and Setne intermingle the two separate spheres and thus pose a potential threat to the social order at the royal court. This idea is most clearly brought into the open at the moment that, after his son

¹¹⁰ Spells to send a (bad) dream or to obtain a revelatory dream abound in the *Demotic* and *Greek Magical Papyri*, see Brashear, 'The *Greek Magical Papyri*', 3502. Examples in the two manuscripts under discussion are PGM XII.107–121; 121–143; 144–152; 190–192 and PDM xiv.706–749 (12 short recipes); 912–916; 917–919; 1070–1077.

Merib and wife Ihweret drowned, Naneferkaptah understands his mistake and, on the way back home, explicates the dichotomy between Memphis and the Theban region in terms of life and death.

‘Could I return to Coptos and dwell there also? If I go to Memphis now and Pharaoh asks me about his children, what shall I say to him? Can I say to him, ‘I took your children to the region of Thebes; I killed them and stayed alive, and I have come to Memphis yet alive?’

[P. Cairo 30646 4/17–19]

The Book of Thoth is thus literature reserved to gods (the island) and the deceased (Naneferkaptah’s tomb). Whenever mortals take the book out of its secluded context into the world of the living, they call down interference from the world of the gods or deceased upon themselves. Only by restoring the dichotomy between human and divine spheres, the tale can come to a happy ending.

Both the external narrator and the embedded narrator Ihweret present their story from a Memphite perspective. They perceive the Theban region as a dangerous place of magic and wonder opposed to the human conditions in Memphis. Ihweret brings this view to the fore when she describes her reaction to her husband’s plan to seize the Book of Thoth. In all likelihood, Ihweret’s comments are meant to articulate the audience’s thoughts, so that it can identify with her and feel the rise of tension within the story.

He [said] to me: ‘I will go to Coptos, I will bring this book, hastening back to the north again’. But I chided the priest, saying: ‘May Neith curse you for having told him these [dreadful things. You have brought] me combat, you have brought me strife. The region of Thebes, I now find it [abhorrent]’. I did what I could with Naneferkaptah to prevent him from going to Coptos; he did not listen to me.

[P. Cairo 30646 3/21–22]¹¹¹

This passage may thus be a reflection of a shared view among the native priesthood of the Late and Greco-Roman period that the Theban region in the south was an extraordinary place of magic and wonder.

The tale exhibits a number of prominent similarities with the *Tale of King Khufu’s Court* with respect to the handling of books. First of all, Djedi’s concern for his books is paralleled in Naneferkaptah’s roaming through the western desert of Memphis to read the texts on the ancient tombs and steles until the priest tells him of the Book of Thoth in

¹¹¹ Tr. M. Lichtheim.

Coptos. In both tales, the magician is portrayed as an intellectual whose knowledge is based on the consultation of texts. Unlike Djedi, who is also aware of a book kept in a flint box in the temple of Heliopolis but does not collect it, Naneferkaptah does not respect the set borders between the human and the divine. Djedi makes use of his books to perform magical feats at pharaoh Khufu's court, while Setne draws on his magic books to save himself from Naneferkaptah's attacks in the *Senet* game episode. This means that the possession and consultation of magic books was not considered forbidden as such. Naneferkaptah and Setne are punished because they breach a religious law and act contrary to the ideal rules of conduct set out in rhetorical-didactic texts, which have been discussed in the previous section.¹¹² However, the Book of Thoth is not a recipe book for a variety of apotropaic and healing rites, but rather reminiscent of mortuary literature.¹¹³ Mortuary texts were placed in the deceased's tomb to enable him or her, having become god-like after the glorification rites,¹¹⁴ to participate in the mysteries of the daily journey of the sun barge through the sky and the netherworld.¹¹⁵ The funerary character of the Book of Thoth is borne out first by the way it is defended against mortals on the island and, second, by its content. The episode in which Naneferkaptah finds the book on the island is full of funerary imagery.

He not only found a span of six miles of serpents, scorpions and worms around the place in which the book was, he also found an ever-living serpent around the said chest (*thy.t*¹¹⁶). (... he defeats the animals; jd ...) Naneferkaptah went to the place where the chest was [and found that

¹¹² The behaviour of Naneferkaptah and Setne is reminiscent of the portrayal of the fool (*swg, lg*) in contemporary Demotic instruction texts. They do not listen to advice, do not respect hierarchy and act on impulse. In his relationship to Tabubu, the following maxim is well applicable to Setne: 'The [fool] brings danger to his life because of his phallus' [P. Insinger 8/1]. The tale held thus a moral lesson for its audience.

¹¹³ Ritner interprets the Book of Thoth likewise as a collection of funerary spells: Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 63f. Ritner refers to *Book of the Dead* spells 133–134 as instructive parallels to the fictive spells of the tale. However, these *Book of the Dead* spells prescribe ritual manipulation of objects and images unlike the fictive spells. The fictive spells are less about ritual as about knowledge.

¹¹⁴ See on these rites: Jan Assmann, *Tod und Jenseits im Alten Ägypten* (Munich 2001) 321ff.

¹¹⁵ See for an overview of the texts: Erik Hornung, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife* (Ithaca, London 1999) 26ff. [translation from: *Altägyptische Jenseitsbücher. Ein einführender Überblick* (Darmstadt 1997)]. The possible use of these texts by a selected group of initiates during lifetime is discussed by Edward F. Wente, 'Mysticism in Pharaonic Egypt?' *JNES* 41 (1982) 161–179 and Assmann, *Tod und Jenseits*, 504–517.

¹¹⁶ Note that the first meaning of the word *thy.t* is 'sarcophagus'.

it was a chest of] iron. He opened it and found a chest of copper. He opened it and found a chest of juniper wood. He opened it and found a chest of ivory and ebony. [He opened it and found a chest of] silver. He opened it and found a chest of gold. He opened it and found the book inside it.
[P. Cairo 30646 3/30–35]

To an Egyptian audience the image of the island may have evoked an association with Osiris' tomb that was located on an island.¹¹⁷ The protective ever-living serpent is reminiscent of the Ouroboros snake, which played in different functions, and under different names, an important role in mortuary texts and was occasionally depicted along the rim of royal sarcophagi.¹¹⁸ The series of chests corresponds with a burial assemblage of several sarcophagi.¹¹⁹

The Book of Thoth is not used as a recipe book for magical rites, but treated as a container of knowledge. The characters read the text aloud and share its contents with others (lines 3/40 and 4/38). Naneferkaptah even incorporates its contents literally by way of drinking the water in which the ink of the freshly written spells has been dissolved (lines 4/3–4).¹²⁰ This stress on knowledge is highly reminiscent of mortuary literature, which operated on the basis that knowledge of the workings of nature enabled participation in the cosmic cycle of death and rebirth. The opening of the *Book of the hidden Room* (Amduat) explicates this notion clearly.¹²¹

To know the souls (*b3.w*) of the netherworld,
To know the secret souls,
To know the gates and the roads on which the greatest god goes,
To know what is done,
To know what is in the hours together with their gods,
To know the course of the hours together with their gods,
To know their glorifications for Re,
To know what he says to them,
To know the honoured ones and the damned ones

[*Amduat*, title, ll. 3–8]

¹¹⁷ Hans Bonnet, *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin 1952) 576a–77a.

¹¹⁸ L. Kákosy, 'Uroboros', *LdÄ* VI, 886–893 and Piccione, 'Gaming Episode in the *Tale of Setne Khamwas*', 201f.

¹¹⁹ Piccione, 'Gaming Episode in the *Tale of Setne Khamwas*', 201f.

¹²⁰ The connection between ritually eating or swallowing and knowledge is attested since the Pyramid Texts, see: Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 102–110.

¹²¹ See for a philological commentary on this passage: Siegfried Schott, *Die Schrift der verborgenen Kammer in Königsgräbern* (NAWG 4; Göttingen 1958) 342ff.

The two spells of the fictive Book of Thoth provide its reader knowledge about the cosmos in a similar vein, as illustrated in the following passage:

He (Naneferkaptah) put the book in my hand (Ihweret). I recited a written spell (*hpe n sh*) from it. I charmed (*phr*) the heaven, earth, underworld, the mountains and the waters. I discovered (*gmj*) all that the birds of the sky, the fish of the deep and the beasts were saying. I recited another written spell. I saw (*nwj*) Pre appearing in the sky with his Ennead. I saw the Moon rising with all the stars of heaven in their form. I saw the fish of the deep, although there were twenty-one divine cubits of water over them.
[P. Cairo 30646 3/40–4/3]

The central verbs of this passage—*phr*, *gmj*, *nwj*—indicate the nature of the Book of Thoth. The latter two verbs (‘to discover’ and ‘to see’) describe a moment of recognition and insight, a personal experience. The first verb is translated as ‘to charm’, but means actually something like ‘to have ritual control over an object so as to make it work properly’.¹²² The two spells thus allow the practitioner to have control over the cosmos and to witness the mystery of the travels of the divine heavenly bodies. According to one of the closing statements of the *Book of the hidden Room* it was prohibited to share this kind of knowledge with ordinary humans:

The choice guidebook (*ft.t ‘nd.t*),¹²³ the secret transcript of the underworld that is unknown to any human except for the select few (*‘nd*).
[*Amduat*, short version, 292f.]¹²⁴

It is exactly this rule that Naneferkaptah and Setne violate.

The tale *Setne and Sa-Osiris* (Setne II) is the story of Setne’s wondrous son Sa-Osiris, who saved Egypt from a loss of face by winning a magic contest between Egypt and Nubia. An external narrator relates that Sa-Osiris was conceived after Setne’s wife Mehsehet had received divine directions, possibly from Imhotep, in an incubation dream.¹²⁵ The boy

¹²² Ritner, *The Mechanics of Egyptian Magical Practice*, 57–67.

¹²³ The translation is tentative; Schott, *Die Schrift der verborgenen Kammer*, 348–350.

¹²⁴ Erik Hornung, *Das Amduat. Die Schrift des verborgenen Raumes* 3 vols. (ÄA 13; Wiesbaden 1963–1967) vol. 3, 25–26.

¹²⁵ Temple incubation was a common institution in Greco-Roman Egypt. Compare this episode with the biographical account of Tayimhotep’s funerary stele (BM EA147) dated to 42 BCE. Tayimhotep relates that she was granted a male child, after her husband, the high priest of Ptah Pasherentpah, had fulfilled the directions given by Imhotep in a dream: E.A.E. Raymond, *From the Records of a Priestly Family in Memphis*

was exceptional for his fast intellectual growth and his talent for the sacred writings, which he discussed with the scribes of the House-of-Life. After an episode in which Sa-Osiris guides his father through the netherworld to show him the fate of men after the divine judgement, the tale shifts to the court of pharaoh Ramsesses II in Memphis where a Nubian chieftain is challenging the Egyptian court to read a sealed letter without opening it.¹²⁶ In case no Egyptian will be able to perform the feat, he threatens to bring the shame of Egypt back to Nubia. Sa-Osiris saves his father Setne, who is assigned the task but does not know how to carry it out, by reading out loud the unopened letter. As embedded narrator, Sa-Osiris tells the story of a magic contest between Nubia and Egypt in the bygone days of pharaoh Menkh-Pre-Siamun.¹²⁷ A Nubian king started the contest as he allowed one of his chieftains (*ḥry-tp*) to execute his evil plans against Egypt. The chief, Horus-son-of-the-Nubian-woman, modelled a bier and four bearers out of wax and, after having recited a magical spell, sent them off to Egypt in order to collect pharaoh and beat him with 500 blows of the stick in front of the Nubian ruler. The morning after, the beaten and frightened pharaoh, meanwhile returned to his own palace, asked his ritual expert (*hry-tp*) Horus-son-of-Paneshe to find a remedy against these attacks. The ritual expert went to the temple of Thoth in Hermopolis and was told by Thoth in a dream about a magical handbook for amulets written by the god himself hidden in the library of the temple. The following evening the amulets proved able to ward off the Nubian threats, while the Egyptian ritual expert inflicted identical punishment on the Nubian ruler for the next three days. Thereupon, the Nubian chieftain came

2 Vols. (ÄgAbh 38; Wiesbaden 1981) vol.1, cat. nr. 20. Spells to acquire dream revelations abound in the PGM: S. Eitrem, 'Dreams and Divination in Magical Ritual', in: Faraone and Obbink (eds.), *Magika Hiera*, 175–187. Manuals for dream interpretation are attested for the Ramesside (P. Chester Beatty IIIa) and the Greco-Roman period (best known are P. Carlsberg XIII and XIV verso). See: A. Volten, *Demotische Traumdeutung (Pap. Carlsberg XIII und XIV Verso)* (AnAe 3; Copenhagen 1942) and K.-Th. Zauzich, 'Aus zwei demotischen Traumbüchern' *AJP* 27 (1980) 91–98. The institution of temple incubation in Roman Egypt is discussed in Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 162–169. See for an early Roman incubation structure attached to the temple of Denderah: F. Daumas, 'Le Sanatorium de Dendera' *BIFAO* 56 (1957) 35–57.

¹²⁶ Spell PGM V.213–303, a recipe to make a magical ring, claims to enable the practitioner to read sealed letters (line 301). The Demotic spell PDM Suppl. 168–184 has probably the same purpose.

¹²⁷ The pharaoh's name is in all likelihood a corruption of pharaoh Thutmose III's throne name Men-Kheperu-Re (1479–1425 BCE). This king lived actually only about 200 years instead of 1500 years earlier than pharaoh Ramsesses II.

down to the Egyptian court where he engaged in a magic contest with Horus-son-of-Paneshe. The Nubian chieftain set fire in court, clouded the sky over and placed a great vault of stone above pharaoh and his court, but Horus-son-of-Paneshe undid each trick. In the end, the mother of the Nubian chieftain came flying from Nubia to her son's aid to no avail. When a fowler was about to kill her and her son who had assumed the form of a goose and a gander, she asked for mercy and promised not to return to Egypt for 1500 years. When Sa-Osiris finishes reading the letter, he explains that the 1500 years have passed and that the Nubian letter carrier is nobody else but Horus-son-of-the-Nubian-woman who has come back to Egypt for revenge. Thereupon Sa-Osiris reveals that he is actually Horus-son-of-Paneshe having returned to earth to counter the Nubian sorcerer. He slays the Nubian with fire and vanishes while leaving Setne and the court at a loss.

In *Setne and Sa-Osiris*, magic from an unfamiliar environment poses a threat to the stable social community at the royal court in Memphis as in the first tale of Setne. In this case, the threat is not the result of an infraction of a religious rule but of a foreign intruder with malicious intent. The god Thoth acts therefore not as an antagonist but as a helper who willingly shares his magical spells with the Egyptian protagonist. For an Egyptian audience, Nubia was a credible aggressor, since the Nubian kingdom of Meroe was a continuous menace to the territory of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt in historical reality.¹²⁸ Moreover, Nubia was traditionally considered one of the nine traditional foes in Egyptian religion.¹²⁹ The tale is thus not only an exciting story about two contesting magicians in a distant yet glorious past, but can also be read as an attempt to confirm Egypt's territorial integrity and cultural superiority vis-à-vis an intruding foreign power in a fictive setting that bears on a historical and ideological reality. In the light of contemporary Greco-Roman hegemony, this subtext plausibly addressed pertinent political questions of the day for a native audience.¹³⁰ The magical tricks and the glorious past should therefore not

¹²⁸ Josef Locher, 'Die Anfänge der römischen Herrschaft in Nubien und der Konflikt zwischen Rom und Meroe' *Ancient Society* 32 (2002) 73–133.

¹²⁹ For the image of Nubia in pharaonic and Greco-Roman Egypt, see, chapter 4.4.4.

¹³⁰ A similar idea is expressed in Richard Gordon, 'Reporting the Marvellous: Private Divination in the *Greek Magical Papyri*', in: Peter Schäfer and Hans G. Kippenberg (eds.), *Envisioning Magic. A Princeton Seminar and Symposium* (Studies in the History of Religions

be dismissed as mere folklore motives, but be regarded as the stake of a serious priestly effort to define Egypt's uniqueness and supremacy. For the author and his audience magic was not a silly and improper category, but a means to compel admiration and respect: magic as national pride. This notion is plainly present in the following passage, which is included in the embedded story to raise tension about the outcome of the impending encounter between the Nubian and Egyptian magician. At the same time, it resonates with the nationalistic discourse. The chieftain's mother warns her son for the power of Egyptian magic before he embarks on his trip to Egypt.

If you go down to Egypt to do sorcery there, guard yourself against the people of Egypt. You will not be able to fight (*ḥ' ḥrm*) with them. Do not get caught in their hands (?), lest you cannot retreat to the land of Nubia ever.
[P. BM. 10.822 6/1-2]¹³¹

In both the primary and secondary fabula, the Egyptian hero (Sa-Osiris and Horus-son-of-Paneshe) is called a 'good scribe and wise man' (*sh nfr rmt rh*), a man of high moral and intellectual standing. The wording of this idiomatic expression is notably reminiscent of the ethical discourse in the priestly self-presentation that was discussed in the foregoing section. The Egyptian hero is thus a character similar to the image that the contemporary priestly audience of the tale propagated in biographies and temple texts. The occurrence of the expression in the following passage is highly instructive as regards the valorisation of magical knowledge among the native priesthood. Horus-son-of-Paneshe explains to pharaoh's court why he came back as Sa-Osiris to Egypt after 1500 years.

When I found out in the Netherworld that the Nubian fiend (*szb'z n 'Igs'*) was going to cast his sorceries (*hyk.w*) here, while there was not a good scribe and wise man (*sh nfr rmt rh*) in Egypt at this time who would be able to contend with him, I begged Osiris in the Netherworld to let me come up again, so as to prevent him from taking the shame of Egypt to the land of Nubia.
[P. BM. 10822 6/35-7/1]¹³²

The passage brings two important points to the fore. First of all, the Nubian magician is defined as an aggressor, whereas the Egyptian magician acts as a 'good scribe and wise man'. This implies that knowledge of magic is not condemned in itself: the criterion is the goal

75; Leiden 1997) 65-92, 76.

¹³¹ Translation modified from M. Lichtheim.

¹³² Tr. M. Lichtheim.

towards which the knowledge is applied. Because the Nubian sorcerer uses his knowledge in an attempt to subvert pharaonic rule, he acts as the villain in the story. His Egyptian opponent is a man of god, highly educated in the temple writings, who, by virtue of his way of life, acquires apotropaeic magical spells from the god Thoth. In this way, the contest is elevated to the level of a battle, in Egyptian theological terms, between good and evil or order and chaos. Egypt's answer to chaotic upheaval within the ordered community of men and gods is a priest who sticks strictly to the religious taboos and moral rules. The second point of importance is the fact that no good scribe and wise man was available in the days of Ramesses II. The same expression is used in *Setne and the Book of Thoth* for Naneferkaptah, who is likewise a skilful magician from a distant past. Both tales express thus the idea that highly skilled ritual experts belong to the past. Could this be interpreted as a reflection of a pessimistic view on contemporary society?

The foregoing pages have demonstrated that magic and miracle workers were favoured topics in Egyptian fictional narratives. The priestly morality as set forth in the 'official' temple texts, biographies and instruction texts governs the stories' plot and its outcome to a large degree. The characters are portrayed as well educated priests, whose engagement with books and ritual texts is repeatedly emphasised. Their knowledge of magic is not rejected on moral grounds, neither by a narrator, nor a character within the story. On the contrary, magic is perceived as a category that bestows prestige on the person who is knowledgeable about it. In the case of the tale *Setne and Sa-Osiris*, magic operates even as a category to construct a national priestly identity in response to foreign intrusion. The god Thoth plays a prominent role as the provider of effective magical texts. However, his texts are not self-evidently available to humans: Thoth will only share his texts with righteous priests who will make use of the knowledge to come to the aid of pharaoh or the country. Djedi's reluctance to collect the flint casket in the temple of Heliopolis and the punishment of Naneferkaptah and Setne demonstrate that sheer curiosity for secret knowledge was considered inappropriate. The ritual expert was thus a reality for an Egyptian audience, but not an ordinary type.

6.3.3.2. *Egyptian priests in Greek and Latin texts of the Roman period*

In a word, there was nothing Egyptian into which they did not inquire, for anything heard or told of Egypt has a special charm for Greek listeners.

[Heliodorus, *Aithiopika* 2, 27.3]¹³³

We had heard of Alexandria, now we know it! It is the home of all tricks, the home, I say, of all deceits. Yes, it is from its inhabitants that writers of farces draw all their plots.

[Cicero, *Pro C. Rabirio Postumo*, 12.35]¹³⁴

The idea of Egyptian priests being ritual experts was persistent and widespread among Hellenised elites during the Roman period as the frequent occurrence of such images in texts written in Greek or Latin testify. This image consists of a number of stereotypes on Egypt, its religion and its priests. The arrangement of these stereotypes or, so to say, the structure of the representation, is governed by a dominant Hellenistic perspective that observes from without phenomena that are actually specific for, and only meaningful within, an Egyptian context, without giving voice to the subordinate Egyptian object itself. Consequently, images of Egyptian priests in Hellenistic texts reveal a Hellenistic debate on defining self and otherness. Depending upon the rules of the genre, the author's intention, and his religious or philosophical inclinations, the image was positively or negatively coloured: either the Egyptian priest was represented as a philosopher who had acquired close contact with the divine by renouncing earthly pleasures or he was constructed as a wandering fraudulent wizard who deceived his credulous clientele willing to pay for healings and contact with the divine. This distinction lays bare a fundamental trait of the Roman-period preoccupation with Egypt in Hellenistic elite circles: the oscillation between the opposing attitudes 'fascination' and 'rejection'.¹³⁵ The

¹³³ Tr.: M. Hadas.

¹³⁴ Translation taken over from K.A.D. Smelik and E.A. Hemelrijk, "Who know not what monsters demented Egypt worships?" Opinions on Egyptian animal worship in Antiquity as part of the ancient conception of Egypt' *ANRW* II 17.4 (1984) 1852–2000, 1921f.

¹³⁵ The major themes of the Greco-Roman discourse on Egypt are summarized in Assmann, *Weisheit und Mysterium*, 31–73. The antique fascination for Egypt is discussed by Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt*, 38–56 and by Siegfried Morenz, *Die Begegnung Europas mit Ägypten* (2nd ed.; Zürich 1969) 67–105; also of interest is James Stevens Curl, *Egyptomania*.

aim of this section is to trace the constitutive elements of these widely shared Hellenistic images of the Egyptian priest and to compare it with the conclusions of the foregoing section on the images of Egyptian priests in Egyptian literature. Ultimately, both images will have to be confronted with the ideas on Egyptian priests found in the introductions to the magical recipes in the *Greek Magical Papyri*. In which way and to what extent do they relate to the Egyptian and Hellenised stereotypes?

Two well-known passages will serve as examples to the discussion.¹³⁶ The first passage is taken from an embedded story in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (written around 170 CE¹³⁷). A certain Thelyphron relates the embedded story to Lucius, the main character of the *Metamorphoses*, during a supper with some notables of the city of Hypata in Thessaly, 'the native land of those spells of the magic art which are unanimously praised throughout the entire world' (2.1). He tells the story of a young widow in Thessalian Larissa who poisoned her husband to inherit his wealth and to share her bed with her new lover. To find out the truth, the deceased's father called for an Egyptian priest, a certain Zatchlas, to raise his son briefly from the dead.

Consequently the old man spoke up again. 'Let us put the judgement of the truth,' he said, 'into the hands of divine Providence. There is a man here named Zatchlas, an Egyptian prophet of the first rank (*Aegyptius propheta primarius*), who has already contracted with me for a great price to bring my nephew's spirit back from the dead for a brief time and reanimate his body as it was before his death.' At this point he

The Egyptian Revival: a Recurring Theme in the History of Taste (2nd ed.; Manchester 1994) 1–56. See for the Roman negative attitude towards Egypt: Smelik and Hemelrijk, "Who know not what monsters demented Egypt worships?" and M.J. Versluys, *Aegyptiaca Romana. Nilotic Scenes and the Roman Views of Egypt* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 144; Leiden 2002) 422–443. See on the general issue of the Hellenistic attitude towards foreign cultures: Arnaldo Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom. The Limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge 1975) and Paul Cartledge, *The Greeks: a Portrait of Self and Others* (2nd ed.; Oxford 2002) 36–77.

¹³⁶ These passages have been chosen because they are short though explicit. Three further instructive examples are (1) Paapis, the villainous priest in Antonius Diogenes' novel *The Incredible Wonders beyond Thule* (first century CE), (2) pharaoh Nectanebo II in Ps-Callisthenes' *Alexander-Romance* (sometime before third century CE) and (3) the Memphite priest Kalasiris in Heliodorus' *Aithiopica* (probably third century CE). See for a discussion and bibliographical references: Fulvio De Salvia, 'La figura del mago egizio nella tradizione letteraria Greco-romana', in: A. Roccati and A. Siliotti (eds.), *La magia in Egitto ai tempi dei faraoni* (Mailand 1987) 343–365.

¹³⁷ See for a discussion on dating the *Metamorphoses*: J. Gwyn Griffiths, *Apuleius of Madauros. The Isis-Book (Metamorphoses, Book XI)* (EPRO 39; Leiden 1975) 7–14.

introduced a young man dressed in long linen robes and wearing sandals woven from palm leaves. His head was completely shaven. The old man kissed his hands at length and even touched his knees. "Mercy, priest, mercy!", he begged, 'In the name of the stars of heaven and the spirits of hell, in the name of the elements of nature and the silences of night and the sanctuaries in Coptos (*adyta Coptitica*), in the name of the Nile's risings (*incrementa Nilotica*) and Memphis' mysteries (*arcana Memphitica*) and Pharos' sistra (*sistra Phariaca*): grant a short borrowing of the sun and pour a little light into eyes closed for eternity. We make no resistance, nor do we deny the Earth her property; we beg only for a tiny period of life to furnish the consolation of revenge.' [Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* II.28]¹³⁸

The second example is a passage from Lucian's *Philopseudes* (written in the second half of the second century CE), a satirical dialogue between adherents of different philosophical schools on supernatural phenomena and on the existence of spirits and phantoms. One of the conversation partners, Tychiades, is sceptical about the existence of these phenomena, so that the others try to convince him by telling fanciful stories that they believe occurred in reality. In this passage, Eucrates tells Tychiades about his encounter with the priest Pancrates in Egypt. This same priest appears to be the teacher of Arignotus, another member of the conversation.

'When I was living in Egypt during my youth (my father had sent me travelling for the purpose of completing my education), I took it into my head to sail up to Coptos and go from there to the statue of Memnon in order to hear it sound that marvellous salutation to the rising sun. (...) But on the voyage up, there chanced to be sailing with us a man from Memphis, one of the scribes of the temple (ἀνὴρ τῶν ἱερῶν γραμματέων), wonderfully learned, familiar with all the culture of the Egyptians. He was said to have lived underground for twenty-three years in their sanctuaries, learning magic from Isis.' 'You mean Pancrates,' said Arignotus, 'my own teacher, a holy man (ἄνδρα ἱερόν), clean shaven, in white linen, always deep in thought, speaking imperfect Greek, tall, flat-nosed, with protruding lips and thinnish legs.' 'That self-same Pancrates,' he replied: 'and at first I did not know who he was, but when I saw him working all sorts of wonders whenever we anchored the boat, particularly riding on crocodiles and swimming in company with the beasts, while they fawned and wagged their tails, I recognised that he was some holy man (ἱερόν τινα ἄνθρωπον), and by

¹³⁸ Tr. J.A. Hanson. See for a philological commentary on this passage: D. van Mal-Maeder, *Apuleius Madaurensis, Metamorphoses, Livre II* (Groningen Commentaries on Apuleius; Groningen 2001) 367–375.

degrees, through my friendly behaviour, I became his companion and associate, so that he shared all his secret knowledge (ἀπορρητών) with me.’
[Lucian, *Philopseudes*, 33–34]¹³⁹

Despite the fact that the function of Apuleius’ and Lucian’s images within their textual context differs,¹⁴⁰ certain constitutive elements recur, which are reflections as well of a social reality of wandering ritual experts of all sorts throughout the Roman empire¹⁴¹ as of a Hellenistic discourse on Egypt in general and Egyptian priests in particular. Both texts make use of, and play upon, ideas about Egyptian priests that were shared among their Hellenistic audience. The features, by which the audience would have immediately recognised the literary type, are the priestly titles and the description of their outward appearance. Zatchlas is a ‘prophet’, which, as has already been shown, is a Greek translation of the Egyptian title ‘god’s servant’ (*hm-ntr*), while Pancrates is a ‘scribe of the temple’, holding the same title as the one used in the introduction to the list of ingredients (PGM XII.401–444), which is the Greek rendering of the title ‘scribe of the House-of-Life’ (*sh Pr-nh*). The description of their outward appearance is limited to the most conspicuous elements of the Egyptian priestly attire: bald-headed, white linen clothing and, in the case of Zatchlas, sandals of palm leaves.¹⁴²

In these two passages, both priests function as wizards who are able to perform extraordinary magical feats because of their acquaintance with the divine. Zatchlas is represented as an object of divine contiguity by the wording of the old man’s prayer, which is merely an instance of name-dropping that is supposed to convey the old man’s intimate knowledge of the mysteries of Egyptian religion. The list shows that the image of Egypt as land of mysteries and miracles could be invoked for a Hellenistic audience by a limited number of stereotypes concerning cosmography, Egyptian topography and religious phenom-

¹³⁹ Tr. A.M. Harmon.

¹⁴⁰ In the *Metamorphoses*, Zatchlas is introduced to add suspense to the story and to heighten the idea of the miraculous, one of the main themes of the novel, whereas Lucian uses Pancrates to parody the priestly type and the credulity of his contemporaries in general.

¹⁴¹ The extant archaeological and textual sources provide little reliable information on itinerant ritualists within the Roman Empire. Ethnic origins, methods, gender, and social standing in local communities are far from clear. See for a sociological description (which has to be used with caution): M.W. Dickey, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London, New York 2001) 202–250.

¹⁴² See for sandals of palm leaves in Egyptian religion: Griffiths, *The Isis-Book*, 136.

ena. The rather arbitrary association between topography and religious phenomenon, itemized in the table below, demonstrates the metonymic character of each individual term. Every term for itself would have been sufficient to call Egypt to mind; in combination, the terms evoke an exotic image of a country condensed into the toponyms Alexandria, Memphis and Coptos, flooded by the Nile, and filled with temples where mysterious rites are conducted. Each pair was possibly meant to suggest a link with the Isis cult, as is indicated by the bold lettering.¹⁴³

<i>religious phenomena</i>	<i>topography</i>	<i>associated deity</i>
sanctuaries	Coptos	(Isis)
flooding	the Nile	(Osiris)
mysteries	Memphis	(Isis)
sistra	Pharos	(Isis)
	(Alexandrian Lighthouse)	

Of major importance to the present discussion is Zatchlas' economic relation with the Greek old man. It is only for a considerable fee that the Egyptian priest performs necromancy, in this case by placing some herb on the corpse's mouth and chest, while invoking the sun. The priest sells off his knowledge to those in need of assistance from the divine.

The image of Pancrates should first be understood as a weapon in Lucian's attack on the credulity and superstition of his contemporaries. By exaggerating and ridiculing stereotypes on Egyptian magicians, he ridicules the conversation partners, thereby criticizing the intellectualism and presumed rationality of their respective philosophical schools.

¹⁴³ Coptos was widely known for its temple dedicated to Isis, Min and Horus; C. Traunecker, *Coptos: hommes et dieux sur le parvis de Geb* (OLA 43; Leuven 1992) 333–335; note that it are the Isis priests of Coptos who welcome warmly Naneferkaptah in *Selne I* (3/25f.). The flooding of the Nile was associated with, and attributed to, Osiris, especially so in Elephantine which became a major cult place of Isis in the Greco-Roman period; Hermann Junker, *Das Götterdekret über das Abaton* (Vienna 1913) 37–44. Memphis played an important role in the dissemination and Hellenisation of the Isis cult; M. Malaise, 'Le problème de l'hellénisation d'Isis', in: L. Bricault (ed.), *De Memphis à Rome. Actes du Ier colloque international sur les études isiaques* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 140; Leiden 2000) 1–19, 17f. The sistrum was a musical instrument used as rattle in religious ceremonies. It was closely connected with the goddesses Isis and Hathor, so that, with the spread of the Isis cult throughout the Roman Empire, it became a typical feature of the Isiac religion in the Greco-Roman perception. As for the lighthouse, in Alexandria Isis was venerated as Isis Pharia, the protector of the harbour and navigation.

In doing so, he confirms the existence of these stereotypes and gives insight into his audience's expectations and fixed ideas regarding Egyptian priests. His mockery could hardly have been successful if the images he ridicules were not widely shared and immediately recognised by the readership of the day. The stereotypic motives he makes use of are the following:

1. Memphis as home of the magician.
2. The Egyptian temple as a place of learning and initiation.
3. Isis as mistress of magic.
4. The Egyptian priest as holder of secret knowledge.

The ironic and singular part of the representation is the exaggerated length (23 years) and place of initiation (in an underground structure) and Pancrates' application of his arcane knowledge towards riding on crocodiles and turning a door bar, broom or pestle into a house servant (*Philopseudes*, 35).

Two further elements of Lucian's description deserve particular attention. First, by mentioning Pancrates' imperfect command of Greek, the priest is firmly placed outside the social group of the author and his audience whose common identity is based to a large degree on their knowledge of Greek language and culture. Pancrates is an alien in the Greek language as Zatchlas is an alien in a Greek region. Both representations touch thus upon the Hellenistic debate on otherness. A discourse that reveals a tension between the desire for magical feats, occult knowledge, and initiations situated outside one's one culture group on the one hand, and the prohibition to transgress fixed social and cultural borders on the other. Second, Eucrates calls Pancrates a 'holy man' indicating that he attaches much value to the priest's knowledge and morality. Lucian introduces the term 'holy man' into the text to take position in the debate about magic and miracles, which was lively discussed among Hellenistic authors of the Roman period. The central issue of this debate was the question whether persons who performed magical feats or pretended to be able to do so were frauds or genuine sages and miracle workers touched by the divine. It goes without saying that this debate cannot be disconnected from the Roman-period discourse on otherness. Lucian's use of the term 'holy man' is highly ambivalent in this particular context. Within Eucrates' and Arignotus' embedded focalisation the term is positively connoted, reflecting their belief in, and reverence for, Oriental wisdom, but within the context of the complete dialogue Eucrates' tale stands out as an outrageous story

unworthy of any credibility. From the author's perspective, the term becomes thus synonymous with false pretence, a crucial term denoting, but also proving, Eucrates' and Arignotus' credulity.

Lucian ridicules another type of miracle worker in the figure of Arignotus, who shortly interrupted Eucrates' story, to inform the conversation partners of the fact that the Egyptian priest was actually his teacher. This type is a key figure to understand Roman-period ideas on magicians. The sceptical Tychiades describes him in the following words at the moment that Arignotus joined the conversation, a few minutes before Eucrates started telling his story.

At this juncture Arignotus the Pythagorean came in, the man with the long hair and the majestic face—you know the one who is renowned for wisdom (τῇ σοφίᾳ), who is called the holy (man) (τὸν ἱερόν). As I caught sight of him, I drew a breath of relief thinking that this one came to me as an axe against (their) lies. 'For,' I said, 'the wise man (ὁ σοφὸς ἀνὴρ) will put a stop to them telling such prodigious yarns.' As the saying is, like a *deus ex machina* I considered him to be brought in to me by Fortune (Τύχης). [Lucian, *Philopseudes*, 29]¹⁴⁴

Arignotus is represented as a philosopher of the Pythagorean School, recognisable by his long hair, a symbol of reason and wisdom. Tychiades hopes that the presence of a man of learning will bring some reason and sense to the discussion. However, these expectations appear to be illusory as soon as Arignotus takes an active part in the conversation, because he tells that he once expelled a spirit from a house by use of spells in the Egyptian language from his Egyptian books (*Philopseudes*, 31) and confesses to be one of Pancrates' students. The elements of wisdom, study in Egypt, and occult knowledge would have evoked for a Hellenistic audience a familiar type. The well-known author and rhetorician Apuleius of Madaura, or shadowy figures known for their compilations of occult lore such as Bolos of Mendes, Anaxilaus of Larissa, and Nigidius Figulus, or a fictional character like Thessalos of Tralles fall within this category.¹⁴⁵ The constitutive elements of this type are the following:

¹⁴⁴ Translation modified from A.M. Harmon.

¹⁴⁵ Dickey has coined the term 'learned magician' for this category, which inappropriately foregrounds the element of 'magic' over learnedness or curiosity (for the workings of nature); M.W. Dickey, 'The Learned Magician and the Collection and Transmission of Magical Lore', in: Jordan (eds.), *The World of Ancient Magic*, 163–193 and Idem, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World*, 117f. (note that Dickey calls the term 'something of a misnomer' here).

1. Hellenistic identity: The identity is based on a set of shared Hellenistic cultural forms; the persons are not necessarily ethnically Greek or Roman. From a Hellenistic perspective, such a person is hence culturally not a foreigner or outsider. He is knowledgeable in general Hellenistic cultural forms and expresses himself in a Hellenistic idiom.
2. Philosophy: Adherent of Neopythagorean or Platonic movement.¹⁴⁶
3. Initiation: Knowledge is taught by a sage, in most cases an Egyptian priest. It was a persistent Greco-Roman conception that esoteric knowledge could only be acquired by travelling to foreign religious masters, as there were the Persian Magoi, the Indian Brahmins, the Babylonian Chaldeans or, particularly popular in the Roman period, Egyptian priests. The tradition that Pythagoras, Plato, Eudoxos, and Democritus spent several years in Egypt studying the Egyptian teachings from the priests provided the basis for this idea.¹⁴⁷
4. Books: Knowledge is based on the consultation and collection of texts of revealed occult knowledge.

Lucian introduces Arignotus into the dialogue to pass his negative judgement on this intellectual type. Arignotus may have the air of wisdom and learning because of his adherence to philosophy, but from Lucian's perspective he is a quack and as credulous as the other conversation partners. Arignotus' characterization as 'holy man' and *deus ex machina* is thus charged with irony from the outset.

Lucian's negative judgement of the magical abilities of Egyptian priests and Hellenistic 'purveyors of the occult' should be contrasted

¹⁴⁶ Neopythagoreanism was an eclectic current of thought that became popular from the Hellenistic period onwards basing its teachings, influenced by Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic philosophy, on texts supposed to have been written by Pythagoras, whose authority was undisputed. The movement had a strong religious component and prescribed certain rules of conduct like asceticism and vegetarianism. Platonism remained popular during the Roman period and, due to a strong religious inclination, developed an interest in theurgy as a way to contact the divine (Neoplatonism).

¹⁴⁷ The main sources for this literary tradition are: Strabo, *Geography*, 17.1.29; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, 3.6; 8.3; 8.87; 9.35; Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries of Egypt*, I 1 (2, 10–12). Note that there are no historical records to support the literary tradition.

with Philostratus' account of the life of Apollonius of Tyana, written sometime during the first decades of the third century CE.¹⁴⁸ The aim of the work is to rehabilitate Apollonius, citizen from Tyana in Cappadocia, modern Turkey, who had been active as a Neopythagorean wandering sage and miracle worker during the second half of the first century CE, and to defend him against the charge that he had been a fraud and sorcerer. In the introduction to the actual account of Apollonius' travels and wonders, Philostratus touches upon several points that belong to the above described type. Unlike Lucian, Philostratus does not use these elements to discredit his subject, but, instead, to underscore Apollonius' remarkable and sincere character. Philostratus' argumentation is as follows:¹⁴⁹

1. Apollonius was no wizard because he never resorted to the black arts (and was never interested in financial gain [VA 8.7.3]): his interest into the divine was *religiously* motivated.
2. The argument that his visits to Babylonian, Indian and Egyptian priests turn him into a quack does not hold, because several Greek philosophers of high esteem made similar travels: his interest in foreign wisdom was *philosophically* motivated.

For quite akin to theirs [Neopythagorean philosophers, *jd*] was the ideal which Apollonius pursued. Being more god-like (θεϊότερον) than Pythagoras, he wooed wisdom and soared above tyrants; and lived in times not long gone by nor again quite of our own day; yet men know him not because of the true wisdom, which he practised as a sage and sanely. One person praises this, another that (aspect) of the man, while others, because he had interviews with the wizards (μάγοις) of Babylon and with the Brahmins of India, and with the nude ascetics (Γυμνοῖς) of Egypt, put him down as a wizard (μάγον), and spread the calumny that he

¹⁴⁸ A general assessment of the antique interest in Apollonius of Tyana is given in E.L. Bowie, 'Apollonius of Tyana: Tradition and Reality' *ANRW* II 16.2 (1978) 1652–1699 and M. Dzielska, *Apollonius of Tyana in Legend and History* (Problemi e ricerche di storia antica 10; Rome 1986). Morton Smith discusses Philostratus' biography in the light of the Hellenistic debate on magicians: *Jesus the Magician: Charlatan or Son of God?* (San Francisco 1978) 111–123. Lucian and Philostratus are also compared in F. Gascó, 'Magia, religion o filosofia, una comparacion entre el *Philopseudes* de Luciano y la *Vida de Apolonio de Tiana* de Filostrato' *Habis* 17 (1986) 271–281 [non vidi].

¹⁴⁹ Philostratus' line of reasoning is very similar to Apuleius' argumentation in the *Apologia* or *Defence Against Magic* (about 158 CE). Apuleius defends himself against the accusation of magic not by denying the charges brought in against him, but by stressing the religious and philosophical character of his interest into the divine, thereby accusing his litigants of irreligiosity and ignorance. See: F. Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World* (Revealing Antiquity 10; Cambridge Mass. 1997) 83f.

was a sage (σοφόν) of an illegitimate kind, judging of him ill. However, Empedocles and Pythagoras himself and Democritus consorted with wizards (μάγοις) and uttered many supernatural truths, but they were never subsumed under (the category of) black art (οὐπω ὑπήχθησαν τῇ τέχνῃ). Moreover, Plato went to Egypt and mingled with his own discourses much of (what he heard from) the prophets and priests there; and though, like a painter, he laid his own colours on to their rough sketches, yet he never passed for a wizard, but, instead, was envied above all mankind for his wisdom.

[Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, 1.2]¹⁵⁰

The underlying question of this short passage, which summarizes the essential elements of the Greco-Roman perceptions of magic and magicians, is that for the nature of true wisdom. Philostratus responds to a view widely accepted during the Roman period that constructs a rigid distinction between *magos* (wizard) and *sophos* (sage), of which the latter is the positive member, associated with Greek philosophy and Hellenic culture in general. The former member is coupled with foreignness that is rejected on the ground of a general dislike towards cultural forms and religious views that are alien and felt to be dangerous to Hellenic culture. This view is strongly opposed against otherness and defines an oriental culture like Egypt in terms of decadence, trickery, deceit, treachery, cruelty and abstruse religious customs. Philostratus counters this view by introducing the element of personal intentions: a sage is only of the illegitimate sort when he turns towards the black arts and sells off his knowledge.¹⁵¹ In his view, interest in oriental wisdom is very positive since it stood at the basis of Greek philosophy itself. For him, Apollonius of Tyana is a holy man leading a contemplative life of a high moral standard and combining Greek and oriental wisdom in one person, thereby emulating the ancient Greek philosophers. Philostratus is thus not necessarily opposed against foreignness; on the contrary, he holds the foreign sages in high esteem for their particular knowledge that is lacking in Hellenic culture.

¹⁵⁰ Translation modified from F.C. Conybeare.

¹⁵¹ This argument is as well taken up by Heliodorus in his *Aithiopika*, when he makes the fictional Memphite priest Kalasiris explain to a Greek the twofold nature of Egyptian wisdom (*Aithiopika*, 3.16). The vulgar form is concerned with idols, herbs, incantations and necromancy producing illusion instead of reality, whereas the second form, 'the true Egyptian wisdom', is directed towards companionship with the gods. The second form 'is remote from the earthy matters of our world, and concerns itself with all that is noble and profitable for mankind' (*Aithiopika*, 3, 16.4; tr. M. Hadas).

It has become clear by now that, in the Greco-Roman writings on magic and miracles, advocates and opponents alike based their arguments on a stereotypic image of Egypt and its priests. Depending on their viewpoint, Egyptian priests were either perceived as fraudulent wizards solely interested in financial gain or as prestigious philosophers who had served as teachers to the famous Greek philosophers (and still served as teachers to those interested in esoteric lore) deriving their wisdom from their ancient texts stored in their temples. When this image is compared with the images of Egyptian priests found in Egyptian texts, a number of important differences can be observed:

1. In Egyptian texts, the discussion whether the priest is a fraud or genuine religious master is absent.
2. The idea of performing magical feats for financial gain is likewise absent.
3. In Egyptian literary texts, ritual experts are respected members of society, whereas in Greek or Latin texts Egyptian priests are alienated from society and function as exotic gurus or miracle workers.
4. The royal court as the arena of display and contest is absent in the Greco-Roman texts.
5. In Egyptian literary texts, ritual experts are mostly projected back into the remote past, whereas they are set in a time period more or less contemporary with the reader's time in Greek or Latin texts.
6. In Egyptian fictional narratives, magicians are actors who focalise and speak, whereas in Greek or Latin texts Egyptian priests are mainly passive objects subordinated to a Hellenistic view-point.

Despite these differences, the Egyptian and Greco-Roman images have certain elements in common as well:

1. The priest is recognised by his title (prophet, temple scribe) and dress (white linen clothing, sandals of palm leaves or papyrus, baldhead).
2. Priestly knowledge is based on the consultation of books.
3. This knowledge is kept secret from laity.

In the light of these correspondences, the question wherefrom Hellenistic authors drew their knowledge about Egypt becomes highly relevant. Unfortunately, little is known about the nature of the transfer of this knowledge and its actors. The following four sources could at least be suggested:

1. Classical Greek literature.
2. Egyptian priests writing in Greek.
3. Spread of the Isis-Sarapis cult throughout the Roman empire.
4. Tourism to Egypt.

The first two members of this list are solely discursive in nature, whereas the other two imply actual contact between the two different culture groups, either in the form of an Egyptian Isis or Sarapis priest working for Greco-Roman adherents outside Egypt or in the form of Greco-Roman tourists travelling through Egypt. The opinions on Egypt of classical Greek authors like Homer, Herodotus and Plato remained authoritative during the Hellenistic and Roman period, which led to an image of the country and its priests detached from contemporary reality.¹⁵² Unfortunately, very little is preserved of the works in Greek written by Egyptian priests, of whom Manetho (third century BCE) and Chaeremon (first century CE) are best known,¹⁵³ so that it is almost impossible to judge whether these works responded to the distorted although highly influential classical Greek image.¹⁵⁴ As little is known about the reception of these Greco-Egyptian works in Hellenistic elite circles,¹⁵⁵ Chaeremon's description of Egyptian priestly life (first century CE) was probably well known among scholarly elites, since it was quoted as an authoritative text in Porphyry's *On Abstinence* (second half of third century CE).¹⁵⁶ Chaeremon's text should be seen as an active attempt to inscribe Egyptian priestly culture into Hellenistic thought by way of casting his account in Stoic terms. He describes Egyptian priestly life as an ascetic life in seclusion characterised by notions such

¹⁵² See for the image of Egypt in classical Greek literature: C. Froidefond, *Le mirage égyptien dans la littérature grecque d'Homère à Aristote* (Paris 1971); S.M. Burstein, *Graeco-Africana: Studies in the History of Greek Relations with Egypt and Nubia* (New Rochelle 1995) 3–27; Idem, 'Images of Egypt in Greek Historiography', in: Loprieno (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 591–604; Phiroze Vasunia, *The Gift of the Nile. Hellenizing Egypt from Aeschylus to Alexander* (Classics and Contemporary Thought 8; Berkeley 2001).

¹⁵³ A useful overview is given in Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 52–57.

¹⁵⁴ One of Manetho's works is called *Against Herodotus*, suggesting a polemic stance on the part of the Egyptian priest. See also: Verbrugge and Wickersham, *Berosos and Manetho*, 100f.

¹⁵⁵ Manetho and Apion were severely attacked in Flavius Josephus' *Against Apion* (shortly after 94 CE), which testifies to the fact that their works were known outside Egypt. See for Manetho's reception in Josephus and the Christian chronographers: R. Laqueur, 'Manetho' *PRE* 27 (1928) 1060–1101; see also: Verbrugge and Wickersham, *Berosos and Manetho*, 115–118.

¹⁵⁶ Van der Horst, *Chaeremon. Egyptian Priest and Stoic Philosopher*.

as self-control, contemplation, strict observance of religious rules, and vision of the divine.¹⁵⁷ He presents Egyptian priests as Stoic philosophers whose secluded life is directed towards the divine and who show no interest in such mundane matters as erotic magic or necromancy. The following two fragments are illustrative of Chaeremon's endeavour at connecting Egyptian and Hellenic culture: he combines the notion of philosophy (characteristic for the Greco-Roman discourse on Egyptian priests and magic) and the idea of purification (characteristic for Egyptian priestly self-presentation). The second fragment contains again the Egyptian priestly titles in Greek that were found in the trilingual priestly decrees of Canopus and Memphis.

Chaeremon the Stoic tells in his exposé about the Egyptian priests, who, he says, were considered also as philosophers (φιλοσόφους) among the Egyptians, that they chose the temples as the place to philosophise. For to live close to their shrines was fitting to their whole desire of contemplation, and it gave them security because of the reverence for the divine, since all people honoured the philosophers as if they were a sort of sacred animals.

[Porphyry, *On Abstinence* 4.6]

The true philosophising was found among the prophets (προφήταις), the priests who had charge of the sacred vestments (ιεροστολισταῖς), the temple scribes (ιερογραμματεῦσιν) as well as hour-priests (ὥρολόγοις). However, the rest of the priests, the crowd of shrine bearers, temple wardens and assistants, perform the same purification rites for the gods, although not with such precision and self-control.

[Porphyry, *On Abstinence* 4.8]¹⁵⁸

These written accounts will certainly have had their effect on the Hellenistic image of Egypt and its priesthood, but the actual presence of Egyptian priests in centres of the Hellenistic world like Athens, Antioch, Rome, will probably have been more important. With the spread of the Isis-Sarapis cult throughout the Hellenistic world, which became particularly predominant in the Roman period, Egyptian priests, temples, artefacts and iconography entered the Hellenistic *oikumene* in large num-

¹⁵⁷ Chaeremon's account of Egyptian priestly life is highly reminiscent of *On the Contemplative Life* by Philo of Alexandria (lived within the period of 25 BCE – 45 CE) that describes a Jewish ascetic group called the Therapeutae living in seclusion south of Alexandria near Lake Mareotis. See: R. Barraclough, 'Philo's Politics. Roman Rule and Hellenistic Judaism' *ANRW* II 21.1 (1984) 417–553; 544–550. Both works should be seen as attempts to explain in favourable terms familiar to a Hellenistic audience the particularities of Egyptian and Jewish religious thought.

¹⁵⁸ Translations slightly modified from P.W. van der Horst.

bers.¹⁵⁹ This will certainly have stimulated direct contact between Egyptian priests and Greco-Romans interested in Egyptian religion, but the form and frequency of such contacts is mostly unknown. Book 11 of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* and Plutarch's *On Isis and Osiris* (written around 120 CE) reveal a sincere interest and detailed knowledge of Egyptian religious thought, although cast in a Hellenistic idiom.¹⁶⁰ Both works testify to the wide interest in Egyptian mysteries and initiations among Hellenistic elites during the Roman period. This fascination for Egyptian religious experiences led some to undertake a journey to Egypt to witness the wonders of the country of the Nile. It appears from historical accounts and Greek graffiti left by these tourists on Egyptian monuments that the tourists followed a standard route from Alexandria in the north to Philae in the far south via Memphis, Abydos and Thebes.¹⁶¹ These visits had a strong religious component as is testified

¹⁵⁹ See for a general overview of the Isis-Sarapis cult in the Greco-Roman world: Sarolta A. Takacs, *Isis and Sarapis in the Roman World* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 124; Leiden 1995) and, although rather idiosyncratic, Reinhold Merkelbach, *Isis Regina—Zeus Sarapis. Die griechisch-ägyptische Religion nach den Quellen dargestellt* (Stuttgart and Leipzig 1995). An important assessment of the legend about the discovery of the Sarapis cult statue and its installment in Alexandria in the light of historical sources is Philippe Borgeaud and Youri Volokhine, 'La formation de la légende de Sarapis: une approche transculturelle' ARG 2 (2000) 37–76. See for a discussion of the theology and spread of the cult of Sarapis and Isis in the Greco-Roman world: Ladislav Vidman, *Isis and Sarapis bei den Griechen und Römern. Epigraphische Studien zur Verbreitung und zu den Trägern des ägyptischen Kultes* (RGVV 29; Berlin 1970); John E. Stambaugh, *Sarapis under the Early Ptolemies* (EPRO 25; Leiden 1972); F. Dunand, *Le Culte d'Isis dans le bassin oriental de la Méditerranée* 3 Vols. (EPRO 26; Leiden 1973) and on Egyptian cults in general: M. Malaise, *Les conditions de pénétration et de diffusion des cultes égyptiens en Italie* (EPRO 22; Leiden 1972). A collection of sources pertaining to the cult and testimonies of reverence can be found in: Ladislaus Vidmann, *Sylloge inscriptionum religionis Isiaca et Sarapiacae* (RGVV 28; Berlin 1969) and Maria Totti, *Ausgewählte Texte der Isis- und Sarapis-Religion* (Subsidia Epigraphica 12; Hildesheim 1985). Egyptian and egyptianizing artefacts in the Greco-Roman world are discussed in: A. Roulet, *The Egyptian and Egyptianizing Monuments of Imperial Rome* (EPRO 20; Leiden 1972); G.J.F. Kater-Sibbes, *Preliminary Catalogue of Sarapis Monuments* (EPRO 36; Leiden 1973); Versluys, *Aegyptiaca Romana*, 32–139 (Nilotic scenes) and 182–230 (Aegyptiaca Romana). Also of interest is: E.A. Arslan (ed.), *Iside. Il mito, il mistero, la magia* (exhibition catalogue; Mailand 1997).

¹⁶⁰ J. Gwyn Griffiths, *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* (Cardiff 1970) and Idem, *Apuleius of Madaura. The Isis-Book (Metamorphoses, Book XI)* (EPRO 39; Leiden 1975).

¹⁶¹ An account of this tour is given in Strabo's *Geography* 17.1 and 2, 1–5. He undertook this tour in the reign of Augustus as companion to the Roman prefect of Egypt Aelius Gallus, see: Jean Yoyotte and Pascal Charvet, *Strabon—Le Voyage en Égypte. Un regard romain* (Paris 1997) 47–57. Prince Germanicus (during the reign of Tiberius; Tacitus, *Annals* II, 59) and Emperor Hadrian (130 CE) made a similar trip through the country to visit the ancient sites. Their travels are confirmed by graffiti and ostraca mentioning the preparations made for them in Thebes, see: Chrest.Wilck., 412 (=

by the graffiti that record prayers, thanksgivings for healings or religious experiences and hopes for oracular utterances. As in the Greek or Latin fictional narratives, the relationship between Greek subject and Egyptian priest was unequal and largely economic in nature: religious experiences could be obtained from Egyptian priests, either for money or for supplications,¹⁶² as Thessalos of Tralles found out when he wanted an Egyptian priest to arrange for him an encounter with the god Asclepius.¹⁶³ In the perception of some tourists, if not the majority, Egyptian priests will have functioned as religious masters and miracle workers very similar to the images found in Hellenistic literary works.

It is difficult to trace the provenance of the Greco-Roman image of Egyptian priests as ritual masters and wizards, but it seems justified to see it as the result of an interaction between ideas expressed in texts on the one hand and experiences of actual encounters between Egyptian priests and Greco-Roman elites on the other. It is important to note that a dominant Hellenistic perspective determines the Greco-Roman images of Egyptian priests, but nevertheless Egyptian priests may have played an active role in formulating this image. Egyptian priests like Manetho and Chaeremon wrote apologetic works for the Hellenistic elite, while priests of Isis and Sarapis were actively present outside Egypt itself. Inside the country, Egyptian priests met the demands of Greco-Roman tourists, who came in search of revelations and initia-

O. Stras. 452) and 413; Pestman, *Prim.*, 34. See for a general discussion of tourism in Roman Egypt: J. Grafton Milne, 'Greek and Roman Tourists in Egypt' *JEA* 3 (1916) 76–80, N. Hohlwein, 'Déplacements et tourisme dans l'Égypte romaine' *CdE* 30 (1940) 253–278 and Smelik, Hemelrijk, "Who know not what monsters demented Egypt worships?", 1938–1945.

¹⁶² See also the quotation from Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitions* 1.5 in Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 218.

¹⁶³ This act of divination is described in the narrative introduction to an astrobotanical treatise *On the Plants Governed by the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac and the Planets*, which is preserved in several Greek and Latin redactions. The treatise is fictitiously ascribed to Thessalos of Tralles, who is historically attested as a physician of the Methodist school living in Rome during the first half of the first century CE. In the introduction, the fictive Thessalos claims having obtained his information from Asklepius himself, after an Egyptian priest in Thebes had carried out a bowl divination ritual; Moyer, 'Thessalos of Tralles and Cultural Exchange'. For the Greek and Latin texts, see, Hans Veit Friedrich, *Thessalos von Tralles: griechisch und lateinisch* (Meisenheim am Glan 1968). The introductory letter is translated, together with philological commentary, in: A.-J. Festugière, 'L'expérience religieuse du médecin Thessalos' *RevBibl* 48 (1939) 45–77. The translation is reprinted in: idem, *L'astrologie et les sciences occultes*, 56–58.

tions. It is well possible that these native priests were prepared to act in accordance with the preconceived ideas these tourists had about Egyptian religion and its priests, in order to guarantee a reasonable fee from the tourists. David Frankfurter has introduced the term ‘stereotype appropriation’ to describe this mechanism.¹⁶⁴ According to Frankfurter the term refers ‘to the manifold ways indigenous cultures embrace and act out the stereotypes woven by a colonial or otherwise dominant alien culture. While the latter creates its images of the exotic out of its own needs, aspirations, and insufficiencies (and only to some degree the realia of the indigenous culture), the indigenous cultures appropriate those same images as a means of gaining political and economic status in a broader culture now dominated by, in this case, Rome’.¹⁶⁵ It has to be shown in the remaining part of this chapter whether this term is applicable to the images found in the introductions to the *Greek Magical Papyri*.

6.4. *Packaging the text: rhetorical strategies in the introductions to the recipes*

It has been tested
[P. London-Leiden 4/23]

The world has had nothing greater
than this
[PGM XII.277]

This section is a study of the rhetorical techniques that are used in the *Demotic* and *Greek Magical Papyri* as means to make their implied reader to believe from the outset in the reliability, trustworthiness and efficacy of a magical recipe. As such, it deals with the third question formulated in the introductory section to this chapter: how does the text succeed in acquiring authority and prestige, and for what kind of reader? The goal of the section is to gain an understanding of the social formation and cultural make-up of the intended readers by way of analysing what Wolfgang Iser calls the repertoire and strategies of the text, two heuristic terms that describe the conventions and procedures

¹⁶⁴ Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 225ff. and Idem, ‘The Consequences of Hellenism in Late Antique Egypt’, 162–194. See also chapter 1.1 of the present book.

¹⁶⁵ *Op. cit.*, 225.

which enable communication between reader and text.¹⁶⁶ Iser defines the two terms and their interaction as follows:

Das Textrepertoire bezeichnet das selektierte Material, durch das der Text auf die Systeme seiner Umwelt bezogen ist, die im Prinzip solche der sozialen Lebenswelt und solche vorangegangener Literatur sind. Einkapselte Normen und literarische Bezugnahmen setzen den Horizont des Textes, durch den ein bestimmter Verweisungszusammenhang der gewählten Repertoire-Elementen vorgegeben ist, aus dem das Äquivalenzsystem des Textes gebildet werden muß. Zur Konkretisierung dieser virtuell gebliebenen Äquivalenz des Repertoires bedarf es der Organisation, die von den Textstrategien geleistet wird. [*Der Akt des Lesens*, 143]

This section, then, presents an analysis of the set of social, historical and cultural norms that the magical text and reader share and of the textual procedures by means of which these conventions are communicated from text to reader. Therefore, the central question is here: to what kind of reader is the text speaking? In which way do the magical recipes address the implied reader's expectations and aspirations and do they make use of culturally specific text formats and knowledge? The most obvious sources to provide clues for answering these questions are the 'marketing' statements contained in the magical spells. A considerable number of magical recipes are introduced by short advertising texts stressing the reliability of the following recipe, its efficacy and its extraordinary character. These guarantees, or quality marks, can easily be disguised as utter instances of window-dressing aimed at rendering the recipe beyond all doubt and critique. The texts are, so to speak, wrapped in an attractive package as an appeal to impress their readers and to attract attention among the many alternative spells that must have been available in antiquity. Since these advertisements could only have been successful if they address the expectations and aspirations of the intended readers and share the audience's ideas and values regarding magic and ritual, they provide valuable information about the social and cultural identity of their implied audience.

The *Demotic and Greek Magical Papyri* make use of a uniform set of rhetorical techniques to mystify magical recipes. Each of these methods was already known in pharaonic Egypt, but in many cases the items that were deemed prestigious and authoritative fall outside a specific

¹⁶⁶ Wolfgang Iser, *Der Akt des Lesens. Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung* (Uni-Taschenbücher 636; Munich 1976) 87–175. Translated as *The Act of Reading. A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore 1978); for a loose translation of the quote, see, page 86.

Egyptian framework.¹⁶⁷ One could thus say that the outer form was in line with an existing tradition, while the contents of this form could diverge from it. In a few instances an advertising introduction even combines motifs deriving from separate cultural traditions that would strictly speaking be mutually exclusive, as if the author of the spell intended an (cross-cultural) accumulation of prestige. In the following pages the different methods and motifs will be discussed by means of tables listing the occurrences in the magical spells. Since the two manuscripts under study do not deviate in this respect from the other manuscripts contained in the corpus of Magical Papyri, the entire corpus is taken into account, so that it is possible to study the mechanism of mystification in more detail. Ultimately, the conclusions will be confronted with the conclusions of the previous sections to determine to which degree the implied reader of the Demotic and Greek magical spells is identical with the implied reader of any of the literary traditions.

6.4.1. *Advertising introductions to the actual magical recipes*

To gain an idea of the nature and the possible textual formats of the advertising introductions one might consider the following six passages, which have been selected for their explicitness and relative length. The different methods and motifs will be considered in more detail later.

(a) The first passage is the one that triggered the questions of the present chapter. According to this short explanatory preface, the following list of encoded ingredients is the result of the consultation and translation of a considerable number of secret temple texts kept and written by the Egyptian temple scribes.

Interpretations (ἔρμηνεύματα) translated (μεθηρμηνευμένα) from the holy (writings), of which the temple scribes (ιερογραμματεῖς) made use. Because of the nosiness (περιεργίαν) of the masses, they (the temple scribes)

¹⁶⁷ An overview of the different textual techniques employed in the PGM to inscribe magical recipes with authority is given in Hans D. Betz, "The Formation of Authoritative Tradition in the *Greek Magical Papyri*", in: Ben F. Meyer and E.P. Sanders (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition. Volume Three: Self-Definition in the Graeco-Roman World* (London 1982) 161–170. Note that Betz does not take the Egyptian background of the magical spells fully into account.

wrote the (names of the) herbs and other things that they made use of on statues of gods in order that they (the masses), since they do not take precautions (μὴ εὐλαβούμενοι), do not meddle (περιεργάζονται)¹⁶⁸ at all, due to the inevitable result of their mistake. However, we have collected the solutions (λύσεις) from many copies, all of them secret.

[PGM XII.401–407]

(b) The second example is the introduction to the *Ouphōr* rite, which has already been discussed as part of an elaborate and complex ring spell in chapter 5.3. The passage claims the *Ouphōr* to be a holy rite, which has been written down carefully, devoid of lies or verbosity unlike alternative spells. A certain *Ourbikos*, who is otherwise unknown, is said to have made use of the spell. The reader is ordered to keep the text secret.

Whenever you want to command the god, give command after you have said the great *Ouphōr* and he (i.e. the god¹⁶⁹) fulfills: you have the rite of the greatest and divine execution (ἐνεργήματος). This is the *Ouphōr* of which *Ourbikos* made use. The holy *Ouphōr*, the true one, has carefully (ἀληθῶς) been written down in complete conciseness, through which all moulded figures (πλάσματα) and engraved images (γλυφαί) and carved statues (ξόανα) become imbued with life (ζωοπυρεῖται): because this is the true one, the others, that carry on at great length, bring lies while containing idle length. And keep it in secrecy as a great mystery. Conceal, conceal.

[PGM XII.316–322]

(c) The following passage is taken from a spell to acquire a divine assistant (PGM I.42–195).¹⁷⁰ The recipe is packaged into a letter written by a temple scribe *Pnouthis*, whose name is correct Egyptian although unattested,¹⁷¹ addressed to a certain *Keryx*, who is related to *Pnouthis* as a student to a mentor. The priest tells that the spell has been chosen from an infinite number of (sacred) books, implying that this specific

¹⁶⁸ The verb *περιεργάζειν* has a derived meaning ‘assiduously investigating and performing rituals’, the overtones of which are certainly brought into play in the present passage; cf. ‘Zauberei treiben’, Preisendanz, *PGM II*, 84, and ‘practice magic’, Betz and Scarborough in *GMPT*, 167. In 1Ep.Cor.9.13 *εργάζειν* denotes ‘performing rituals’.

¹⁶⁹ The ring itself could be meant as well.

¹⁷⁰ For this passage, see also, Gordon, ‘Reporting the Marvellous’, 73ff.

¹⁷¹ Thissen suggests that the name is rather an invention than a real personal name. Its meaning ‘The-god’ or ‘He-of-the-god’ (< *P3-ntr* or *Pa-ntr*) would render a sense of trustworthiness to the text; Thissen, ‘Ägyptologische Beiträge zu den griechischen magischen Papyri’, 295.

spell is of exceptional quality. Moreover, he seems to suggest in a poorly preserved part of the passage that the spell is god-given.

The spell of Pnouthis, the temple scribe (ιερογραμματέως), for acquiring an assistant: [...] Pnouthios greets Keryx, the god-[fearing man]. As one who knows, I have prescribed for you [this spell for acquiring an assistant] to prevent your failing as you carry out [this rite]. After detaching all the prescriptions [bequeathed to us in] countless books (βίβλοις μυρίαις), [one out of all ...] I have shown (you) this spell for acquiring an assistant [as one that is serviceable] to you [...] that you (pl.) take this holy [assistant] and only [...]. O friend of aerial spirits that mo[ve ...] having persuaded¹⁷² me with god-given (θεολογουμένοις) spells [...] but [now] I have dispatched this book so that you may learn thoroughly; for the spell of Pnouthis [has the power] to persuade the gods and all [the goddesses]. [I shall write] you from it about [acquiring] an assistant.

[PGM I.42–54]¹⁷³

The elaborate ritual instructions are concluded by a demand to keep the contents of the spell concealed and a farewell greeting.¹⁷⁴

Therefore share these things with no one except [your] legitimate son alone when he asks you for the magic powers imparted [by] us. Farewell.

[PGM I.192–194]¹⁷⁵

(d) The fourth citation introduces a spell for bowl divination (PGM IV. 154–285). A certain Nephotes, who is probably an Egyptian priest given his Egyptian name,¹⁷⁶ recommends the magical recipe in a letter addressed to a certain king Psammetichos, under which name three pharaohs of the 26th dynasty (664–525 BCE) are known. The reliability and efficacy of the spell is suggested by Nephotes' assurance that Psammetichos will be amazed after having tested the spell. Near the end of the recipe Nephotes exhorts the king to keep the spell secret.

¹⁷² This participle refers to the aerial spirits.

¹⁷³ Tr. E.N. O'Neil, with slight modifications.

¹⁷⁴ The demand for secrecy occurs already several lines earlier in a short address to the reader as a conclusion to a long, detailed and fanciful description of the possibilities offered by the spell: 'Share this great mystery with no one [else], but conceal it, by Helios, since you have been deemed worthy by the lord [god]' [PGM I.130f.]. It occurs again in a prescription to engrave a magical name on a stone [PGM I.146].

¹⁷⁵ Tr. E.N. O'Neil. See for the translation 'legitimate son' GMPT, 8, fn. 37.

¹⁷⁶ Thissen, 'Ägyptologische Beiträge zu den griechischen magischen Papyri', 295. The name (< *Nfr-htp*) is actually only known as epithet to Osiris or, in later periods, as a divine name.

Nephotes greets Psammetichos, immortal¹⁷⁷ king of Egypt. Since the great god has appointed you immortal king and nature has made (you) the best wise man (ἄριστον σοφιστήν), I too, with a desire to show the industry in me, have sent you this rite that, with complete ease, produces a holy power. And after you have tested it, you too will be amazed at the miraculous nature of this magical operation. [PGM IV.154–162]

Let this spell, mighty king, be transmitted to you alone, guarded by you, unshared. [PGM IV.254–256]¹⁷⁸

(e) The fifth passage is the opening to the so-called *Mithras Liturgy*, an elaborate spell for an initiatory accession through several heavenly layers to meet the supreme god Helios Mithras (PGM IV.475–829). The text is laid out as a teaching of an anonymous religious master to a female initiate. The address to the divine entities Providence and Psyche to come to the aid of the author is reminiscent of the invocation of the muses in classical literature. The text is said to derive from the supreme god himself.

Be Gracious to me, O Providence and Psyche, as I write these mysteries handed down (not) for gain; and for an only child I request immortality, O initiates of this our power (furthermore, it is necessary for you, O daughter, to take the juices of herbs and spices, which will (be made known) to you at the end of my holy treatise), which the great god Helios Mithras ordered to be revealed to me by his archangel, so that I alone may ascend into heaven as an inquirer and behold the universe.

[PGM IV.475–485]¹⁷⁹

At two instances the narrator bears witness to the efficacy of the given spell.

I have not found a greater spell than this in the world [PGM IV.776]

Many times have I used the spell, and have wondered greatly
[PGM IV. 790f.]¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ The Greek αἰωνοβίω is a literal translation of Egyptian (*nty*) *ḥꜥ d.t.*, ‘who lives forever’, an epithet attached to the name of the reigning pharaoh in Demotic documentary texts of the Ptolemaic period; F.Ll. Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library Manchester* 3 vols. (Manchester, London 1909) vol. 3, 127, fn. 4. For a list of occurrences, see, Mark Depauw, *The Archive of Teos and Thabis from Early Ptolemaic Thebes. P.Brux.Dem.Inv. E 8252–8256* (Monographies Reine Élisabeth 8; Brussels 2000) 134f., note (h).

¹⁷⁸ Tr. E.N. O’Neil, with slight modifications.

¹⁷⁹ Tr. M.W. Meyer. Meyer translates ‘mysteries handed down (not) for gain but for instruction’, although the clause ‘but for instruction’ is not present in the Greek text. For this reason I have deleted the clause from the translation given here.

¹⁸⁰ Tr. M.W. Meyer.

(f) The sixth excerpt is an anecdote incorporated into a spell of attraction (PGM IV.2441–2621). Before giving the instructions for a burnt offering, the text relates how the Egyptian high priest Pakhrates¹⁸¹ was given a double fee by emperor Hadrian (who indeed visited Egypt in 130 CE) because of the miraculous effect of the spell.¹⁸²

Pakhrates, the high priest (προφήτης) of Heliopolis, revealed [it] to the emperor Hadrian, revealing the power of his very own divine magic (τῆς θείας αὐτοῦ μαγείας). For it attracted in one hour; it made someone sick in 2 hours; it destroyed in 7 hours, sent the emperor himself dreams as he thoroughly tested the whole truth of the magic within his power. And marvelling at the prophet, he ordered double fees to be given to him.

[PGM IV.2446–2455]¹⁸³

This short narrative interruption of the recipe serves as evidence to the claims made by the text in the advertising introduction.

It attracts those who are uncontrollable, requiring no magical material, within one day. It inflicts sickness excellently and destroys powerfully, sends dreams beautifully, accomplishes dream revelations marvellously and in its many demonstrations has been marvelled at for having no failure in these matters.

[PGM IV.2442–2446]¹⁸⁴

These passages stand out among the available advertising introductions because of their explicitness and relative length. The texts make use of several textual strategies: they can take the form of a justifying, almost philological, preface, a letter or an anecdote, while the invoked communication situation is one between an Egyptian priest and an Egyptian king or between a mentor and a student in the occult arts. However, in most cases, a spell is made attractive only by its title, like, for example, *Charm of Agathokles for sending dreams* (PGM XII.107–121), *Ḳminis' of Tentyra's spell for sending dreams* (PGM XII.121–143), *Charm of Solomon that produces a trance* (PGM IV.850–929), *Apollonius of Tyana's old serving woman* (PGM XI.a.1–40), *Hidden stele* (PGM IV.1115–1166) or *'Great is the mistress Isis'; Copy of a holy book found in the archives of*

¹⁸¹ This character may be identical with the Pancrates described in Lucian's *Philopseudes* 34 (see the preceding section). However, there are no historical documents to support this claim. The name derives from *Pa-hyd*, 'He-of-the-(divine)-child (= Harpokrates)', Thissen, *Ägyptologische Beiträge zu den griechischen magischen Papyri*, 296.

¹⁸² The passage has attracted considerable scholarly attention as a testimony of Egyptian cultural pride vis-à-vis Roman economic and political hegemony; R. Gordon, 'Reporting the Marvellous', 77ff. and Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 227ff.

¹⁸³ Tr. E.N. O'Neil.

¹⁸⁴ Tr. E.N. O'Neil, with slight modifications.

Hermes (PGM XXIVa.1–25). The sole reference to a famous magician, a hidden Egyptian text or a divinity was apparently deemed sufficient to impart to the reader a feeling of confidence in the efficacy of the spell.

6.4.2. *Analysis of the mystifying motifs*

The advertising introductions make use of four motifs to mystify a magical recipe. These motifs have here been separated for clarity's sake, but recur in a variety of combinations in the actual spells.¹⁸⁵

1. Origin of the text (pseudepigraphy)
 - a. God-given or attributed to a god
 - b. Famous author (philosopher, magician)
2. Authenticity of the message
 - a. 'Original' letter, suggesting actual correspondence between two magicians
 - b. Testimony of text's discovery in temple or on stele
 - c. Testimony of text's translation from Egyptian into Greek
3. Proof of efficacy
4. Importance to maintain secrecy

In the following, the distribution and the nature of each of the above listed motifs will be considered in closer detail by means of tables listing the occurrences in the *Demotic* and *Greek Magical Papyri*. The following conclusions can be given beforehand:

1. The idea to render a text authoritative and prestigious by means of mystification was already known in the pharaonic period.
2. There seems to be no strict relationship between the rite's purpose and authorship.
3. The pseudepigraphy motif makes use of several distinct cultural traditions (Egyptian, Greek, Jewish, Persian).

¹⁸⁵ This breakdown by subjects diverges slightly from the subdivision proposed by Wolfgang Speyer, whose theoretical work on pseudepigraphy and literary forgery in antiquity remains the standard. Wolfgang Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum. Ein Versuch ihrer Deutung* (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft I.2; Munich 1971); for his subdivision, see, chapter A.IV 'Die Mittel der Echtheitsbeglaubigung' pp. 44–84.

1a. 1. The text is god-given

<i>Spell</i>	<i>Subject Matter</i>	<i>God</i>
PGM III.424–466	Foreknowledge and Memory	Osiris (440)
PGM IV.475–829	Initiation (Mithras Liturgy)	Helios Mithras (482ff.)
PGM IV.850–929	Exorcism	Hermes Trismegistos (885ff.)
PGM VII.862–918	Lunar spell (of attraction)	The Twelve Olympic Gods and Aphrodite Urania (863ff.)

1a. 2. The text is attributed to a god¹⁸⁶

<i>Spell</i>	<i>Subject Matter</i>	<i>God</i>
PGM X.36–50	Restraining spell	Apollo (36)
PDM xiv.93–114	Divination	Imhotep (93 ¹⁸⁷)
PDM lxi.100–105	Spell of attraction	Nephthys (100 ¹⁸⁸)

These two tables demonstrate that both the *Demotic* and *Greek Magical Papyri* contain spells that are said to have a divine origin. The Demotic spells refer solely to Egyptian divinities, whereas the Greek spells make also use of gods of Hellenic origin (the twelve Olympic gods, Apollo) and syncretistic divinities that were particularly popular during and throughout the Roman Empire (Helios Mithras, Hermes Trismegistos).

The idea of religious pseudepigraphy was well known in Egypt since early pharaonic times.¹⁸⁹ In theory, all cultic texts were viewed as cre-

¹⁸⁶ Not included in this table are spells of which the title contains a god's name to identify the god addressed in the rite. These are: *Oracle of Kronos* (PGM IV.3086–3124), *Saucer divination of Aphrodite* (PGM IV.3209–3254), *Oracle of Sarapis* (PGM V.1–53), *Stele of Aphrodite* (PGM VII.215–218), *Hermes's ring* (PGM V.213–303), *Request for a dream oracle from Besas* (PGM VII.222–249), *Hermes' wondrous victory charm* (PGM VII.919–924), *Vessel inquiry of Khonsu* (PDM xiv.239–295), *Vessel inquiry of Osiris* (PDM xiv.627–635), *Spell of the Goat One of Five* (PDM xiv.670–674), *God's arrival of Osiris* (PDM Suppl. 130–138), *God's arrival of Thoth* (PDM Suppl. 149–162), *God's arrival of Imhotep* (PDM Suppl. 168–184).

¹⁸⁷ P. London-Leiden 4/1.

¹⁸⁸ P. BM 10588 7/6.

¹⁸⁹ See for the concept of religious pseudepigraphy: Wolfgang Speyer, 'Religiöse Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung im Altertum' *JAC* 8/9 (1965/66) 88–125, 91f. [reprinted in: Norbert Brox (ed.), *Pseudepigraphie in der heidnischen und jüdisch-christlichen Antike* (Darmstadt 1977) 195–263]. See also Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum*, 35–37.

ations of Thoth, the god of language and writing,¹⁹⁰ but, in certain cases, texts were explicitly ascribed to a divinity. For example, Book of the Dead spells 30b, 101 and 184 are presented as compositions of Thoth himself, whereas Book of the Dead spell 148 is called 'Wennefer's roll' in certain redactions. The so-called *Oracular Amuletic Decrees*, which were worn rolled-up around the neck as phylacteries, were considered written records of a god's promise to ward off evil.¹⁹¹ Certain *Documents of Breathing*, a class of mortuary compositions dating to the Greco-Roman period, were explicitly ascribed to Isis or Thoth.¹⁹²

1b. The text is attributed to a famous author (magician or philosopher)

This motif is frequently attested in the two manuscripts under study as shown by the following table, in which the attestations are presented in their order of appearance. The authors attested in the other *Greek Magical Papyri* are distinguished into ethnic categories below.

<i>Spell</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Known as</i>
PGM XII.96–106	spell to acquire business	Himerios (96)	unknown ¹⁹³
PGM XII.107–121	dream sending	Agathokles (107) Apollobex (121)	unknown ¹⁹⁴ famous magician ¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁰ Patrick Boylan, *Thoth, the Hermes of Egypt. A Study of Some Aspects of Theological Thought in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford 1922) 92ff. C.J. Bleeker, *Hathor and Thoth. Two Key Figures of the Ancient Egyptian Religion* (Studies in the History of Religions 26; Leiden 1973) 140ff. Highly instructive is Siegfried Schott's collection of Egyptian book titles: *Bücher und Bibliotheken im Alten Ägypten*, a long list of references to Thoth can be found in the index on page 536.

¹⁹¹ Edwards, *Oracular Amuletic Decrees of the Late New Kingdom*.

¹⁹² See for a classification of this group of mortuary texts: Mark Coenen, 'Books of Breathing: More than a Terminological Question?' *OLP* 26 (1995) 29–34 and Martin A. Stadler, 'The Funerary Texts of Papyrus Turin N. 766: A Demotic Book of Breathing (part II)' *Enchoria* 26 (2000) 110–124, 114f.

¹⁹³ Preisendanz suggests to identify the author with a fourth-century physician, see *GMPT*, 156, fn. 24. This identification is a mere guess.

¹⁹⁴ No magician or priest of this name is known to date. The name was widely used as a personal name during the Roman period.

¹⁹⁵ Apuleius (*Apologia* 90) and Plinius (*Nat.Hist.* 30.9) include Apollobex in a list of famous magicians next to Persian Magoi, Greek philosophers and Jewish magicians. If the name were indeed a free Greek rendering of the Egyptian name *Hr-bik* 'Horus-the-falcon' (the god Apollo was identified with Horus), Apollobex might be identical with Pibechis (< *P3-bik* 'The-Falcon' or *Pa-bik* 'He-of-the-falcon', see, Thissen, 'Ägyptologische Beiträge zu den griechischen magischen Papyri', 295) who is mentioned in

<i>Spell</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Known as</i>
PGM XII.121–143	dream sending	Zminis of Tentyra (121) Ostanes (122)	unknown ¹⁹⁶ Persian magos ¹⁹⁷
PGM XII.316–350	Ouphôr	Ourbikos (318)	unknown ¹⁹⁸
PGM XII.351–364	‘Sphere’, prognostic of life and death	Demokritos (351)	Greek philosopher ¹⁹⁹
PDM xiv.1–92	vessel divination	[A physician] in the Oxyrhynchite nome (1) ²⁰⁰	anonymous ²⁰¹

PGM IV.3007–3086 as author of a spell for exorcism. Hopfner, *Griechische Offenbarungszauber*, vol. 1, §210, 102; Karl Preisendanz, ‘Pibechis’ *PRE* 20 (1941) 1310–1312.

¹⁹⁶ Given this person’s name (Zminis < *Ns-Mn* ‘He-who-belongs-to-(the-god)-Min’, Demot.Nb., 647) and his stated origin from the city Dendera, 60 kilometres to the north of Thebes, he is likely to be Egyptian.

¹⁹⁷ Ostanes, together with his fellow magoi Zoroaster, Hystaspes and Astrampsouchos, was considered an authority in the field of magic and alchemy by the Hellenistic elite. It was thought that he had accompanied the Persian king Xerxes during the second Persian campaign against Greece (480/79 BCE). A large body of pharmacological and alchemical literature circulated under his name during the Roman period. He was particularly well known for knowledge in the field of necromancy. In general, see, Jack Lindsay, *The Origins of Alchemy in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (London 1970) 131–158. For a list of secondary literature, see, Hopfner, *Griechische Offenbarungszauber*, vol. 2, §370, 160–161. See for an overview and ancient sources: Joseph Bidez and Franz Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés. Zoroastre, Ostanès et Hystaspe d’après la tradition grecque* 2 vols. (Paris 1938) vol.1, 167–212 and vol. 2, 267–356. For the nature and function of the pseudepigraphy of the Persian magoi, see, Roger Beck, ‘Thus Spake not Zarathustra. Zoroastrian Pseudepigrapha of the Greco-Roman Period’, in: M. Boyce and F. Grenet, *A History of Zoroastrianism* 3 vols. (HdO, 1. Abt., VIII.1,2,2,3; Leiden 1975–1991) vol. 3, 490–565.

¹⁹⁸ See also chapter 5.3.

¹⁹⁹ In the Hellenistic and Roman period Demokritos of Abdera (second half of the fifth century BCE), was promoted from philosopher particularly known for his atomic theory of matter to renowned alchemist and purveyor of the magical arts and considered a follower of Pythagoras. Like Plato, Pythagoras and Eudoxus, he was thought to have studied with the Egyptian priests. Festugière, *L’Astrologie et les sciences occultes*, 25–26; Lindsay, *The Origins of Alchemy*, 90–100; Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World*, 119–123, 195.

²⁰⁰ P. London-Leiden 1/1

²⁰¹ See for the connection between physicians (*swn.w*) and magic and a table of Egyptian physicians holding priestly titles: John F. Nunn, *Ancient Egyptian Medicine* (London 1996) 120f. Oxyrhynchus was the capital of the 19th Upper Egyptian nome, about 280 kilometres to the north of Thebes. Nothing is known about the perception of Oxyrhynchus regarding magic and mystery. Several magical texts were found in Oxyrhynchus, see, Brashear, ‘The *Greek Magical Papyri*’, 3485 s.v. Not included in Brashear’s list is P. BM 10808, an Egyptian magical text dating to the second century CE, of

<i>Spell</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Known as</i>
PDM xiv.232–238	divination (<i>ph-ntr</i>)	Paysakh, the priest from Cusae (232) ²⁰²	unknown ²⁰³
PDM xiv.309–334	spell for honour and praise	pharaoh [Darius] (334) ²⁰⁴	Persian ruler over Egypt ²⁰⁵
PDM xiv.528–553	Vessel divination	A physician in the Oxyrhynchite nome (528) ²⁰⁶	Anonymous

PGM XII presents an international mix of authoritative magicians (Egyptian, Greek, Persian), whereas the persons referred to in P. London-Leiden are firmly rooted in Egypt itself, geographically or historically. It is unclear whether the highly specific references to ‘a physician in the Oxyrhynchite nome’ and ‘Paysakh, the priest from Cusae’ are instances of fictitious window dressing or historically correct records of factual exchange of magical texts between priests. Such exchange is testified by a Demotic letter of Ptolemaic date, in which a certain Miysis asks a priest of Thoth to return a medical and pharmacological book.²⁰⁷ A similar clause occurs twice rather casually in PGM V.370–

which only one column is preserved, belonging to the corpus of *Demotic Magical Papyri*; Dieleman, ‘Ein spätägyptisches magisches Handbuch’.

²⁰² P. London-Leiden 8/12.

²⁰³ The name Paysakh is otherwise unattested. The name, which is written without the seated man determinative, consists of the demonstrative or possessive article *ḫꜣ* and the substantive *sh*, ‘gall’ (the alternative meaning ‘bitterness’ is less likely given the flesh determinative). Since the name’s meaning ‘He-of-the-gall’ is rather odd, it is doubtful whether this reading is correct. Cusae (*Ks* in Egyptian) was the capital of the 14th Upper Egyptian nome in Middle Egypt, about 200 kilometres to the north of Thebes. Nothing is known about its economic, political or religious significance in the Greco-Roman period.

²⁰⁴ P. London-Leiden 11/26. See for the restoration of the name Griffith and Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden*, vol. 1, 86, fn. to line 26.

²⁰⁵ The Persian king Darius I (521–486 BCE) ruled over Egypt as second pharaoh of the 27th dynasty (521–486 BCE); Georges Posener, *La première domination perse en Égypte: recueil d’inscriptions hiéroglyphiques* (BdE 11; Cairo 1936) 175–190. He was remembered by the Egyptians as law-giver, pious king and, eventually, magician; see Diodorus of Sicily I.95, 5 and Porphyrius, *On Abstinence*, IV.16. His name is possibly also mentioned in a Demotic text on solar and lunar omens (2nd century CE); Richard A. Parker, *A Vienna Demotic Papyrus on Eclipse- and Lunar-Omens* (Brown Egyptological Studies 2; Providence 1959) 21 [text A, IV, 10].

²⁰⁶ P. London-Leiden 18/7.

²⁰⁷ Karl-Th. Zauzich, ‘Zwei Briefe von Bücherfreunden’, in: Frandsen and Ryholt (eds.), *The Carlsberg Papyrus* 3, 53–57. The text in question is P. Carlsberg 21. Compare this with a fourth century CE Coptic letter from Kellis, the Dakhleh Oasis, which

446, a recipe for a dream divination of the god Hermes. The clauses are meant to give trustworthiness to alternative ingredients: 'But I have heard from a certain man from Herakleopolis, that he takes 28 new sprouts from an olive tree, which is cultivated, the famous one' (372–375) and 'Again, just (as I heard) from the man from Herakleopolis' (383).²⁰⁸ It is very probable that such clauses refer to real individuals, testifying to a lively exchange of books and information about rituals among Egyptian priests. As such, these clauses are fundamentally different from the introductions mentioning highly acclaimed magicians. The individuals are not accredited with authorship but with advice based on empirically established knowledge.

As in PGM XII, pseudepigraphy is very frequent in the other *Greek Magical Papyri*. The instances are classified according to ethnicity in the following tables to gain a clear insight into the favoured groups.

Egyptian priest

<i>Spell</i>	<i>Subject Matter</i>	<i>Author</i>
PGM I.42–195	Acquiring an assistant	Pnouthis, the sacred scribe (42) ²⁰⁹
PGM III.424–466	Foreknowledge and charm	Manetho (440) ²¹⁰
PGM IV.154–285	Bowl divination	Nephotes (154) ²¹¹
PGM IV.1928–2005	Necromancy	(King) Pitys (1928) ²¹²

contains a copy of a magical spell: Paul Mirecki, Iain Gardner, and Anthony Alcock, 'Magical Spell, Manichaean Letter', in: Paul Mirecki and Jason BeDuhn (eds.), *Emerging from Darkness. Studies in the Recovery of Manichaean Sources* (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 43; Leiden 1997) 1–32.

²⁰⁸ Tr. E.N. O'Neil.

²⁰⁹ See example *c* and footnote 171.

²¹⁰ Egyptian high priest of, in all probability, Heliopolis (native of the town Sebenytos in the eastern Delta) who wrote in Greek about Egyptian history and religion in the early Ptolemaic period. He is also accredited with having played a decisive role in the establishment of the Sarapis cult in Alexandria (Plutarch, *About Isis and Osiris*, 28; 362A). In the Roman period a book on astrology circulated under his name. Verbrughe and Wickersham, *Berosos and Manetho*, 95–102 and Heinz-J. Thissen, 'Manetho' *LdÄ* 3, 1180f.

²¹¹ See example *d* and footnote 176.

²¹² Pitys is probably identical with the Egyptian high priest (προφήτης) Bitys who, according to Iamblichus (*On the Mysteries of Egypt*, VIII.5 and X.7), translated hieroglyphic hermetic texts into Greek. The name derives from *Pa-t3*; 'He-who-belongs-to-the-country (Egypt)', see Thissen, 'Ägyptologische Beiträge zu den griechischen magis-

<i>Spell</i>	<i>Subject Matter</i>	<i>Author</i>
PGM IV.2006–2125	Acquiring an assistant	Pitys (2006)
PGM IV.2140–2144	Necromancy	Pitys (the Thessalian) (2140)
PGM IV.3007–3086	Exorcism	Pibechis (3007) ²¹³
PGM V.96–172	Exorcism	Ieu, the painter (96) ²¹⁴

Greek philosopher or holy man

<i>Spell</i>	<i>Subject Matter</i>	<i>Author</i>
PGM IV.1716–1870	Spell of attraction	Dardanos (1716) ²¹⁵
PGM VII.167–186	Table tricks	Demokritos (167)
PGM VII.795–845	Dream divination	Demokritos (795)
Idem	Request for dream oracle	Pythagoras (795)
PGM VII.862–918	Lunar spell (of attraction)	Claudianus (862) ²¹⁶
PGM XIa.1–40	Acquiring an assistant	Apollonius of Tyana (1) ²¹⁷
PGM XX.13–19	Remedy against headache	Philinna the Thessalian (13) ²¹⁸

chen Papyri', 295. His identification as king or Thessalian should probably be understood as secondary buildings.

²¹³ Pibechis (< *P3-bik* 'The-Falcon' or *Pa-bik* 'He-of-the-falcon'; Thissen, 'Ägyptologische Beiträge zu den griechischen magischen Papyri', 295) was a famous magician and alchemist. He may be identical with Apollobex who is mentioned in PGM XII.121 (see footnote 195). As alchemist he was associated with the Persian magos Ostanēs; Preisendanz, 'Pibechis'.

²¹⁴ Ieu's professional title, ζωγῳ(ά)φος, is usually translated as 'hieroglyphist', but it means actually 'painter'; cf. *GMPT*, 103 fn. 11 and Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, vol.1, 184f. fn. to lines 96–171. The term 'hieroglyphist' occurs in the tale *The Dream of King Nectanebo*, which is partly preserved in a Greek and Demotic version. The Demotic version has *hmtw-n-s'nh*, whereas the Greek version has ἱερόγλυφος. See also P. Oxy 1029, 5–8. It is therefore improbable that Ieu's professional title should be translated as 'hieroglyphist'. It is more likely that the title refers to a painter of mummy masks or portraits.

²¹⁵ Dardanos is the mythical ancestor of the Trojan kings and was considered to be the founder of the mystery rites of the Kabeiroi on Samothrace, see: Diodorus of Sicily, 5.48–49 and A. Hermann, 'Dardanus' *RAC* 3 (1957) 593f. Pliny the Elder considers him a great magician, *Nat. Hist.* 30.9.

²¹⁶ This same name is mentioned in a list of alchemists in Berthelot and Ruelle, *Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs*, 26, 1.1 (taken from *GMPT*, 141, fn. 140).

²¹⁷ See chapter 6.3.3.2.

²¹⁸ This woman is otherwise unknown. The name is attested in a Late-Hellenistic collection of magical spells nowadays generally known as the 'Philinna Papyrus' (PGM XX). Faraone argues to see the collection as one of the earliest preserved specimens

Semitic magician

<i>Spell</i>	<i>Subject Matter</i>	<i>Author</i>
PGM IV.850–929	Divination through medium	Solomon (850) ²¹⁹
PGM VII.619–627	Invisibility or love spell	Moses (619) ²²⁰
PGM XX.4–12	Remedy against inflammation	Syrian woman of Gadara (4) ²²¹
PGM XXIIIb.1–26	Prayer for protection	Jacob (1, 26)

Persian magos

<i>Spell</i>	<i>Subject Matter</i>	<i>Author</i>
PGM VIII.1–63	Spell of attraction	Astrampsouchos (1) ²²²

Except for the Semitic magicians, the international range of presumed authors is identical with PGM XII.²²³ Noteworthy is the absence of a

of Greco-Egyptian magic handbooks, which still preserves certain distinctly Greek conceptions of a magical charm: Christopher A. Faraone, 'Handbooks and Anthologies: The Collection of Greek and Egyptian Incantations in Late Hellenistic Egypt' *ARG* 2 (2000) 195–214, 209ff.

²¹⁹ King Solomon was known as a sage, astrologer and magician among the Hellenised elites of the Greco-Roman period, see, Pablo A. Torijano, *Solomon the Esoteric King. From King to Magus, Development of a Tradition* (JSJS 73; Leiden 2002) and Karl Preisendanz, 'Salomo' *PRE* Suppl. 8 (1956) 660–704.

²²⁰ Moses was promoted from a culture hero to a powerful magician in the Greco-Roman period, see, John G. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (SBL Monograph Series 16; Nashville 1972) 134–161.

²²¹ This woman is otherwise unknown. See also footnote 218.

²²² In the actual manuscript the name 'Astrapsoukos' is given. This must be a corrupted writing of the name Astrampsouchos, a famous Persian magos. In Diogenes Laertius I.2 he is listed as magos next to Ostanes, Gobryas and Pazatas. See E. Riess, 'Astrampsouchos' *PRE* 2 (1896) 1796f. An oracle book containing answers to a set of 90 to 110 different questions pertaining to issues of private life circulated in the third to fifth century CE under the name of Astrampsouchos (*Sortes Astrampsychi*), see on this oracle book and its method of divining the appropriate answer to a question: Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 181ff. Frankfurter calls Astrampsouchos incorrectly a 'legendary Egyptian seer' (p. 182). See for relevant literature to the *Sortes Astrampsychi*: *GMPT*, 265.

²²³ Despite the fact that PGM XII lacks titles mentioning Moses or king Solomon, the manuscript contains clear reflections of a great reverence for Jewish magic, which was widespread in the Roman Empire. As in PDM xiv, references to Moses and the Holy Mount occur in coercive invocations: PGM XII.92f. and PDM xiv.130f., 1031f. See also Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 140–146. For discussions on the form and nature of Jewish influence on the *Greek Magical Papyri*, see, Morton Smith, 'The Jewish Elements in the Magical Papyri', in: Idem, *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 130; Leiden 1996) vol.2, 242–256 [improved version of

category of Chaldaeans, the name under which the astronomer priests of Babylonia were known among the Hellenistic elites. Like Persian magoi, Egyptian priests and Jewish magicians, the Chaldaeans were highly esteemed as ritual experts, mainly in the field of astrology and theurgy.²²⁴ Nonetheless, the widely shared respect for their knowledge did not find its way into the *Greek Magical Papyri*.

2a. The text is presented as an original letter

<i>Spell</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Sender</i>	<i>Addressee</i>
PGM I.42–195	Acquiring an assistant	Phouthios, the temple scribe ²²⁵	Keryx ²²⁶
PGM IV.154–285	Bowl divination	Nephotes ²²⁷	King Psammetichus
PGM IV.2006–2125	Acquiring an assistant ²²⁸	Pitys	King Ostanes
PGM V.96–172	Exorcism	Ieu, the painter	– Not mentioned –

the same article in *SBL Seminar Papers* 25 (1986) 455–462]; Hans Dieter Betz, 'Jewish Magic in the *Greek Magical Papyri* (PGM VII.260–271)', in: Schäfer and Kippenberg (eds.), *Envisioning Magic*, 45–63 and Gideon Bohak, 'Greek, Coptic and Jewish Magic in the Cairo Genizah' *BASP* 36 (1999) 27–44.

²²⁴ Dicky, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World*, 110f.

²²⁵ See example *c* and footnote 171.

²²⁶ Keryx is actually not a personal name but a designation of the herald at a procession or sacrifice in ancient Greece. In the Eleusinian Mysteries the sacred herald (ἱεροκήρυξ) played an important role and was chosen exclusively from the *Kerykes* family. The link with the mystery rites is significant in this particular case, because Phouthios addresses his student Keryx, while describing the extraordinary character of the rite, as 'bl[essed] initiate of the sacred magic' (PGM I.127) and commands him to 'share with no one [else] (...) this great mystery' (PGM I.130f.). See on the use of language deriving from mystery religions in the PGM: Hans Dieter Betz, 'Magic and Mystery in the *Greek Magical Papyri*', in: Faraone and Obbink (eds.), *Magika Hiera*, 244–259. However, Ritner regards these Greek terms as mere translations of Egyptian concepts like *ššt* that do not carry any of the connotations of Greek mystery-cult theology. Note that he does not explain the personal name Keryx. Ritner, 'Egyptian Magical Practice under the Roman Empire', 3365f.

²²⁷ See example *d* and footnote 176.

²²⁸ Although the spell's title is 'Pitys' spell of attraction', the rite is meant to procure a daimôn who is capable of fulfilling a variety of commands. The spell is the second in a cluster of three dealing with necromancy and the interrogation of skulls, which are ascribed to Pitys. On this cluster, see, Christopher A. Faraone, 'When Necromancy goes Underground: Skull- and Corpse-Divination in the Paris Magical Papyrus (PGM IV.1928–2144)', in: P. Struck and S. Johnston (eds.), *Greek and Roman Divination* (Leiden, forthcoming 2004).

The custom to ascribe fictitious letters to a famous person of an earlier period was a widespread phenomenon in the Hellenistic and Roman period. Collections of letters attributed to figures such as Socrates, Plato, Apollonius of Tyana circulated throughout the Roman Empire.²²⁹ The method was particularly popular in Christian, Hermetic and alchemical circles as a means to render new texts and opinions authoritative by giving them the air of tradition and authenticity. The idea of fictitious letters was already extant in pharaonic Egypt as is testified by the literary *Wermai's Letter* (beginning 21st dynasty) and the semi-literary school letters of the so-called *Late Egyptian Miscellanies* (late New Kingdom).²³⁰ Of particular interest are two letters out of a set of Demotic fictional letters written on the outer surface of three jars dating to the late Ptolemaic or early Roman period.²³¹ The first letter (O. Krug. A,a), of which the sender's name is lost, is addressed to pharaoh and relates the tale of a certain magician (*hry-tp*) Hyhor who was detained in prison and received help from two birds. The second letter (O. Krug. A,d) is sent by the king of Arabia to pharaoh and contains a fable of a swallow and the sea.²³² The format of these letters is very similar to the letters in the PGM: in the first letter, pharaoh functions as the receiving partner in the exchange of knowledge on magic, while the second letter is an instance of correspondence between kings as in the case of Pitys and Ostanes (PGM IV.2006–2125).²³³

²²⁹ Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung*, 79–81.

²³⁰ For *Wermai's Letter*, see, Ricardo A. Caminos, *A Tale of Woe. Papyrus Pushkin 127* (Oxford 1977) and Moers, *Fingierte Welten*, 101, 273ff. The *Late Egyptian Miscellanies* can be found in Alan H. Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies* (Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca 7; Brussels 1937). Translations of certain texts can be found in Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley 1976) 110–114 and 168–175 and Nikolaus Tacke, *Verspunkte als Gliederungsmittel in ramesidischen Schülerhandschriften* (SAGA 22; Heidelberg 2001).

²³¹ Since only jar A is completely preserved, the total number of letters cannot be established. The first jar (A) contains four letters (a–d), of the second jar (B) two letters are partly preserved. See: Wilhelm Spiegelberg, *Demotische Texte auf Krügen* (Leipzig 1912). Note that the opening address of the letters should be read as *hryw b3k NN m-b3h NN*, ‘the voice of the servant NN to NN’; Mark Depauw, ‘The Demotic Epistolary Formulae’ *EVO* 17 (1994) 87–94.

²³² A re-edition of this text considerably improved Spiegelberg's publication: Philippe Collombert, ‘Le conte de l'hirondelle et de la mer’, in: Ryholt (ed.), *Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies*, 59–76.

²³³ Pitys is not called king in this spell, but is so in the preceding spell (PGM IV.1928–2005).

2b. Testimony of text's discovery in temple or on stele

<i>Spell</i>	<i>Subject Matter</i>	<i>Original Location</i>
PGM III.424–466	Foreknowledge and memory	Holy book (424) ²³⁴
PGM IV.850–929	Spell for exorcism	Hermes Trismegistos wrote the holy name in Heliopolis in hieroglyphs (885f.)
PGM IV.III15–II166	Prayer	Hidden stele (II15) ²³⁵
PGM IV.I167–I226	Prayer for protection and blessing	Stele (I167)
PGM V.96–172	Spell for exorcism	Stele (96)
PGM VII.862–918	Lunar spell (of attraction)	Found in temple in Aphroditopolis next to statue of Aphrodite Urania (864f.) ²³⁶
PGM VIII.I–63	Business spell to attract customers	True name was inscribed on sacred stele in the innermost shrine (of temple) in Hermopolis (41f.)
PGM XII.401–444	List of encoded ingredients	Statues of the gods in temple (404)

²³⁴ The term 'holy book' ἱερά βιβλος is a designation for a papyrus roll containing an Egyptian ritual text (*md3.t ntr*). These texts were written in hieratic or, from the Roman period onwards, in Demotic by the lector priests and temple scribes and kept in the House-of-Life and temple library. Therefore, the use of the word 'holy book' in the title of a magical spell in Greek implies an act of appropriation and translation.

²³⁵ A stele is a stone slab inscribed with a commemorative text. In Egypt, steles were usually inscribed with a hieroglyphic text and erected in temples or at the entrance to a tomb.

²³⁶ Three cities were under the name Aphroditopolis in Greco-Roman Egypt: (1) Atfih, lying about 400 kilometres to the north of Thebes at the height of the Fayum region, (2) Kom Ishqaw, about 200 kilometres to the north of Thebes and (3) Dzebelein (Pathyris), about 30 kilometres to the south of Thebes. All three of them had a cult for the goddess Hathor (Aphrodite in Greek). The magical spell refers in all probability to Atfih, which was known, nation-wide, for its cult of the white cow *Hesat*, which goddess was assimilated with Isis-Hathor; R. Grieshammer, 'Atfih' *LdÄ* I, 519. The main character of the tale *Nectanebo's Dream*, which is partly preserved in both Demotic and Greek, is a resident of this same Aphroditopolis (in Demotic *Pr-nbt.t-tp-ih*). Since this character is fond of wine and women, the city of Hathor, goddess of love and merriment, is probably deliberately chosen in this tale. For the texts, see, Jörg-Dieter Gauger, 'Der "Traum des Nektanebos"—die griechische Fassung —', in: Blasius and Schipper (eds.), *Apokalyptik und Ägypten*, 189–219 and Kim Ryholt, 'Nectanebo's Dream or the Prophecy of Petesis', *op. cit.*, 221–241.

<i>Spell</i>	<i>Subject Matter</i>	<i>Original Location</i>
PGM XXIVa.1–25	Description of oracular rite	Holy book found in the archives of Hermes (2ff.)
PGM CXXII.1–55	Magic handbook	Holy book called <i>Hermes</i> found in innermost shrine of the temple in Heliopolis (1ff.)

The fiction of the discovery of an old and lost ritual text does not occur in the *Demotic Magical Papyri*, but is frequent in the *Greek Magical Papyri*. In each case, an Egyptian ritual text is concerned, either written on a papyrus roll or inscribed on a stele, which had been found in a temple shrine or a temple library.²³⁷ The geographical location of the temple, Heliopolis, Hermopolis or Aphroditopolis, is not arbitrarily chosen but determined by the religious prestige the city held within Egypt and even abroad. The god Thoth (Hermes, in Greek) and his cult centre Hermopolis are clearly favoured topics. This rhetorical strategy was already in use in religious and magical texts of the pharaonic period. The idea is attested as early as in spell 577 of the *Coffin Texts* where it is stated that the spell was found under the flank of (a statue of) Anubis. It is also prominent in the *Book of the Dead* and texts of technical priestly knowledge of different periods.²³⁸ The so-called *Memphite Theology*, a cos-

²³⁷ Speyer distinguishes between books fallen from heaven, books found in tombs (written either on a papyrus roll or a stele) and books found in temple archives or libraries: Wolfgang Speyer, *Bücherfunde in der Glaubenswerbung der Antike* (Hypomnemata 24; Göttingen 1970). In the case of the *Greek Magical Papyri*, the Egyptian temple is the sole place of discovery of ritual papyri or steles. Nonetheless, the other motifs were also used in pharaonic Egypt (see next footnote).

²³⁸ Certain *Book of the Dead* manuscripts have postscripts to spells that attribute the discovery of spells to prince Hordedef, son of pharaoh Khufu, who would have found the spells during an inspection of temples in the time of pharaoh Menkaure: BD 30B, 64, 137A, 148; for the sources, see, Dietrich Wildung, *Die Rolle ägyptischer Könige im Bewußtsein ihrer Nachwelt I* (MÄS 17; Berlin 1969) 217–221. Variant manuscripts set the discovery of spells BD 64 and 130 back to the times of king Khasti, the fifth king of the first dynasty: Wildung, *op. cit.*, 25–28. BD Pleyte 166 is said to be found around the neck of the mummy of king User-Ma'at-Re (Ramses II); the introduction to BD Pleyte 167 claims that Khamwaset, son of Ramses II, found the spell under the head of a mummy and that it had earlier been used by Amenhotep son of Hapu. A portion of the so-called *Vessel Book*, preserved in two varying redactions in the New Kingdom medical compendia P. Ebers (§§854–855 and 856) and P. Berlin 3038 (§163) was purportedly found in a manuscript lying under the feet of a statue of the god Anubis in Letopolis (Egyptian *Khem*) in the days of pharaoh Khasti, see: Wildung, *op. cit.*, 21–25. The second section of the Brooklyn Snake Book was discovered in the time of pharaoh Neferkare (probably Pepi II): Sauneron, *Un traité égyptien d'ophiologie*, 60. The so-called *Book-of-the-*

mogonical account inscribed on the Shabaka Stone, brings the significance of this rhetorical strategy in Egyptian religious discourse most prominently to the fore. The introduction to the actual cosmogony does not only state that pharaoh Shabaka (first king of the 25th dynasty) ordered that a faithful copy of the ancient worm-eaten papyrus must be made, the orthography and grammar of the text display as well as a number of archaizing features. Despite these archaic elements the text is clearly the product of the 25th dynasty (c. 715–657 BCE) and thus represents an attempt on the part of the Memphite priesthood to acquire prestige and authority by means of presumed tradition.²³⁹

In the Greek-speaking world the motif of discovery became popular only from the fourth century BCE onwards, to become pervasive in the Roman period, particularly so in works of occult knowledge.²⁴⁰ In the majority of cases the fictitious discovery is situated on the periphery of the Greco-Roman world, for example, in Egypt or Mesopotamia, where temples and graves were thought to abound in magical charms

Temple, a treatise on the ideal arrangement of the temple building and its institution, which is preserved in a large number of hieratic and Demotic redactions, is said to be found by prince Hordedef in the temple of the god Atum in Heliopolis in the days of pharaoh Khufu: Joachim F. Quack, 'Der historische Abschnitt des Buches vom Tempel', in: Jan Assmann and Elke Blumenthal (eds.), *Literatur und Politik im pharaonischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten* (BdE 127; Cairo 1999) 267–278, 274. The idea of a text fallen from heaven is attested in a New Kingdom medical prescription (London Medical Papyrus §60) in which is stated that the spell descended into the court of the temple of Coptos the moon shining upon it in the days of king Khufu. According to a passage in the foundation account of the temple of Edfu, the architectural plan of the temple had fallen from heaven to the north of Memphis (Edfu VI, 6,4).

²³⁹ Friedrich Junge, 'Zur Fehlдатierung des sog. Denkmals memphitischer Theologie oder Der Beitrag der ägyptischen Theologie zur Geistesgeschichte der Spätzeit' *MDAIK* 29 (1973) 195–204. This text is not the sole example of the Egyptian priesthood employing the mystifying technique with the aim of religious propaganda. The *Bentresh Stele* and the *Famine Stele* are two obvious cases in point. The *Bentresh Stele* is a forgery of the Persian or Ptolemaic period, which relates the miraculous cure of a princess Bentresh of Bakhtan by the Theban god Knonsu-the-provider-in-Thebes in the time of pharaoh Ramses II, see: Michèle Broze, *La princesse de Bakhtan. Essai d'analyse stylistique* (Monographies Reine Élisabeth 6; Brussels 1989). The *Famine Stele*, composed in the Ptolemaic period, pretends to be a decree of pharaoh Djoser of the third dynasty to grant revenues of Nubia to the temple of Khnum-Re in Elephantine as a reward for Khnum's willingness to end a seven year period of drought, see, Paul Barguet, *La Stèle de la Famine à Séhel*, (BdE 24; Cairo 1953). Both texts are translated in Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume III the Late Period* (Berkeley 1980) 90–103.

²⁴⁰ Speyer, *Bücherfunde*, 110ff. and Idem, *Die literarische Fälschung*, 67–70. On the occurrence of this motive in esoteric texts, see, Speyer, *Bücherfunde*, 72ff. and R.P. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismegiste I. L'astrologie et les sciences occultes* (Paris 1943) 319–324.

and steles in the native languages and scripts.²⁴¹ Therefore, the motif of translation was closely related to the motif of discovery.²⁴²

2c. Testimony of text's translation from Egyptian into Greek

<i>Spell</i>	<i>Subject Matter</i>	<i>Language Concerned</i>
PGM III.424–466	Foreknowledge and memory	Copy of holy book (Egyptian) (424)
PGM IV.850–929	Spell for exorcism	Holy name was written in hieroglyphs (885f.)
PGM XII.401–444	Encoded ingredients	Holy books (Egyptian) (407)
PGM CXXII.1–55	Magic handbook	Holy book called <i>Hermes</i> was written in hieroglyphs and translated into Greek (1ff.)

One should beware of dismissing too rashly all claims of Greek translations from Egyptian as Hellenic attempts to appropriate Egypt's prestige and authority regarding the occult, because the motif of translation was equally important in the propaganda of Egyptian cults in the Hellenistic world. Since Egyptian priests were important and active partners in this enterprise, accounts of translations of Egyptian hymns into Greek could be genuine in certain cases.²⁴³ Moreover, that the transla-

²⁴¹ The story of Euhemerus (preserved in Diodorus of Sicily, VI, 1.4–7) is a case in point. Euhemerus sailed southward from Arabia and reached an island called Panchaea where he found a stele of gold, set up in the sanctuary of Zeus Triphylus. The stele contained, in the script and language of the Panchaeans, an account of the deeds of the Greek creator gods.

²⁴² Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung*, 70f.

²⁴³ Cases in point are the famous Isis aretalogy and the four hymns to Isis of Isidorus of Narmuthis. The Isis aretalogy, preserved in several redactions (Kyme, Thessaloniki, Ios, Andros and a variant version in Diodorus of Sicily I, 27.3–6), is said to be copied from the stele that stood next to the Ptah temple in Memphis. For the texts, see, Totti, *Ausgewählte Texte der Isis- und Sarpis-Religion*, nrs. 1 and 2. For an attempt to translate back into Demotic, see, Joachim F. Quack, “Ich bin Isis, die Herrin der beiden Länder” Versuch zum demotischen Hintergrund der Memphitischen Isisaretalogie”, in: Sibylle Meyer (ed.), *Egypt—Temple of the Whole World. Fs. Jan Assmann* (Studies in the History of Religions 97; Leiden 2003) 319–365, 336ff.; see also, Thomas M. Dousa, ‘Imagining Isis: on some Continuities and Discontinuities in the Image of Isis in Greek Isis Hymns and Demotic Texts’, in: Ryholt (ed.), *Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies*, 149–184. Isidorus’ hymns to Isis were inscribed on a stone placed in the temple of the goddess Renenutet in Narmuthis, the Fayum, sometime in the late Ptolemaic period. In the fourth hymn, Isidorus relates that he got his information from those who read the sacred scripts; Vera F. Vanderlip, *The Four Greek Hymns of Isidorus and the Cult of Isis* (American Studies in Papyrology 12; Toronto 1972).

tion of Egyptian texts into Greek was not merely a topos but a reality as well is proven by a number of priestly texts of which sections are preserved in both an Egyptian and Greek version.²⁴⁴ Egyptian priests were thus engaged in translation work and it is highly probable that they consciously used the motif of translation as a means to impress their Greek-speaking public and to render their message authentic, irrespective of the fact whether the claim to translation was genuine or made up.²⁴⁵

3. Proof of efficacy

In the *Demotic* and *Greek Magical Papyri*, proofs of a spell's efficacy are numerous and standardised to such an extent that there is no need to list the occurrences in a table. These proofs can take the following forms:

1. Addition to the title or recipe of an adjective such as 'tested' or a clause such as 'nothing is better in the world'²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ These texts are the *Myth of the Sun's Eye* (a mythological narrative), *Nectanebo's Dream* (a prophetic text of Egyptian nationalistic character) and the *Book of the Temple* (treatise on the ideal arrangement of the temple). See for the *Myth of the Sun's Eye*: S. West, 'The Greek Version of the Legend of Tefnut' *JEA* 55 (1969) 161–183. For *Nectanebo's Dream*, see, Gauger, 'Der "Traum des Nektanebos"', in: Blasius and Schipper (eds.), *Apokalyptik und Ägypten*, 189–219 and Ryholt, 'Nectanebo's Dream or the Prophecy of Petesis', *op. cit.*, 221–241. For the *Book of the Temple*, see, Joachim F. Quack, 'Ein ägyptisches Handbuch des Tempels und seine griechische Übersetzung' *ZPE* 119 (1997) 297–300.

²⁴⁵ The extent to which Egyptian priests were actively involved in the production of Greek texts glorifying Egyptian gods is still a matter of debate. In recent years scholarship tends to give major credit to the Egyptian priesthood arguing that these Greek texts should be viewed as part of an Egyptian discourse for the benefit of a Greek-speaking audience. Important contributions to the discussion are: Jan Bergman, *Ich bin Isis. Studien zum Memphitischen Hintergrund der griechischen Isisaretalogien* (Acta Universitatis Upsalensis, Historia Religionum 3; Uppsala 1968); Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 45–74; Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 241–248.

²⁴⁶ In P. London-Leiden a spell is said to be tested by the wordings 'it has been tested' (*ḥw=f dnt*), 'tested' (*ḥp(.w)*), 'good' (*nfr*), 'very good' (*nfr nfr*), 'excellent' (*m-šs*). In P. Louvre E3229 and P. BM 10588 the wording '(it is) very good' (*nfr nfr (pw)*) is used. In the *Greek Magical Papyri* the idea is expressed by δόκιμος, which is probably a literal translation of Egyptian *ḥw=f dnt* or *ḥp(.w)*. Advertising clauses claiming there is nothing better in the world can be found in P. London-Leiden 3/35, 11/26, 22/1 (=PDM xiv 92, 334, 671) and P. Louvre E3229 6/6 (=PDM Suppl. 149). Greek spells make use of clauses such as 'a great work', 'there is nothing better', 'excellent', 'accomplishes everything', 'the power of the spell is strong', etc. In PGM XII are used: 'Apollobex used this as well' (121), 'according to Ostanēs' (122), 'an exact method for everything' (145), 'very effective' (203), 'it contains a first-rate name' (273), 'the world has had nothing greater than this' (277).

2. Listing of possible applications²⁴⁷
3. Eyewitness account²⁴⁸
4. Anecdote²⁴⁹

This method was also common in magical and medical texts of the pharaonic period.²⁵⁰

4. Importance of maintaining secrecy

Commands to keep a spell concealed from laity often occur in the *Greek Magical Papyri*, but are remarkably missing in the Demotic spells.²⁵¹ Such orders to keep a recipe secret are either given in the form of an imperative like ‘hide, hide!’ or as a short clause explaining that the spell may not be shared with any uninitiated because of its divine character. Since secrecy was an important constituent of Egyptian cultic life, directives about concealing magical spells are frequent in magical texts of the pharaonic period.²⁵²

6.4.3. *Combination of separate cultural traditions*

It has already been said that an advertising introduction may combine a number of the mystifying motifs listed above. The motifs are

²⁴⁷ This method is very frequent in the Greek spells of the corpus, but lacking in the Demotic spells. It can take the form of a short and straightforward listing of alternative applications or be transformed into an elaborate and fanciful catalogue as in PGM I.96–130 or IV.2152–2178; see Gordon, ‘Reporting the Marvellous’, 70–76. In PGM XII a listing occurs only once in 277–282.

²⁴⁸ See above examples *d*, *e* and *f*; see also, Gordon, ‘Reporting the Marvellous’, 86ff.

²⁴⁹ See above example *f*.

²⁵⁰ J.F. Borghouts, ‘The Magical Texts of Papyrus Leiden I 348’ *OMRO* 51 (1972) 105, note 202. Examples are *Book of the Dead* spells 17, 68, 71, 72, 86, 91, 99B, 100, 125, 134, 137A, 144, 148, 155, 156 and 175; Borghouts, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*, nrs. 46, 53, 68, 71, 72, 81, 84. For the medical texts, see, Westendorf, *Handbuch der altägyptischen Medizin*, 98f.

²⁵¹ The Demotic spells are only interested in secrecy as far as the ritual itself is concerned. Several spells prescribe to conduct a divination ritual in a secret room or to store a magical potion in a hidden spot: P. London-Leiden 16/23 (hidden place for divination); P. London-Leiden 5/26.29; 12/12.31; 23.31; 27/26.29 (to keep a substance on a secret spot). For the warnings of secrecy in the Greek spells, see, Hans Dieter Betz, ‘Secrecy in the *Greek Magical Papyri*’, in: Kippenberg and Stroumsa, *Secrecy and Concealment*, 153–175.

²⁵² See also chapter 3.4. Examples can be found in the following magical spells: BD spells 137A, 147, 148, 156, 161, 190; Borghouts, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*, nr. 126. See for the medical texts: Westendorf, *Handbuch der altägyptischen Medizin*, 99f.

not strictly kept separate and, in combination, aim at reinforcing the authority of the spell. However, a few Greek spells combine elements which, from a modern historian's viewpoint, would be mutually exclusive. These cases need to be addressed, because they demonstrate conclusively that the advertising statements do not relate to historical reality, but to a universe of preconceived ideas about authority and ritual power. Moreover, they testify to the fact that the compilers and authors of the Greek magical spells were not striving for exclusive cultural or ethnic categories when composing the spells. According to them, a spell's efficacy did not depend on upholding a rigid separation between ritual traditions. This attitude is paralleled in the practice in the Demotic magical spells to combine occasionally scripts and languages that derive from different generic and cultural contexts.

(1) A cluster of magical spells (PGM IV.1928–2144) dealing with necromantic rites is attributed to a certain Pitys, who is variably identified as king (1928), writer of a letter to king Ostanes (2006) and as originating from Thessaly (2140).²⁵³ These varying designations indicate that Pitys' identity was changeable, thus raising a legitimate modern mistrust of the veracity of the statements. In fact, contrary to the information provided by the magical text, it is tempting to identify Pitys with a certain Bitys who was neither a king nor originated from Thessaly, but an Egyptian priest who translated Egyptian hermetic texts into Greek.²⁵⁴ If this were true, the various attributions reveal a preference for an accumulation of prestige that trifles with cultural and ethnic boundaries. For example, the designation 'Pitys of Thessaly' (PGM IV.2140) combines the prestige and authority that was granted to Egyptian priests in both the Egyptian and Greco-Roman mind with the Hellenistic image of Thessaly as the home of all efficacious herbs, potions, spells and witches.²⁵⁵ What could be better than a magical spell written by an Egyptian priest from Thessaly? Pitys' letter to king Ostanes is also a

²⁵³ On the relationship between the different spells within this cluster, see, Faraone, 'When Necromancy goes Underground'.

²⁵⁴ Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries of Egypt*, VIII.5 and X.7; Thissen, 'Ägyptologische Beiträge zu den griechischen magischen Papyri', 295f.; Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 150–153. See also footnote 212.

²⁵⁵ Thessaly was notorious for its witches and serves in a number of Greek and Latin literary works as the home of all magic. For example, it is the action place in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* and it is the homeland of the witch Erichtho who performs necromancy on Pompey's son's order in Lucan, *The Civil War*, 6.413–830. See also Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII.221–233.

case in point. Ostanēs was not a king but a Persian magos who, according to tradition, had accompanied the Persian king Xerxes on the second Persian campaign against Greece in 480/79 BCE.²⁵⁶ In the Roman period, Ostanēs was remembered among Hellenistic elites as one of the greatest magicians and alchemists so that, in alchemical circles, he could be called ‘the prince of all the magoi’ or ‘king of the seven vowels’.²⁵⁷ Several antique works on alchemy relate that Ostanēs shared his knowledge with Egyptian priests in Memphis after the Persian king had sent him to Egypt as supervisor to its priests.²⁵⁸ In this way, the title ‘Pitys’ letter to king Ostanēs’ draws for its effect upon the combination of, on the one hand, the image of Egyptian priests and, on the other, the Roman period tradition according to which the great Ostanēs had resided in Egypt: a magical spell given by an Egyptian priest to Ostanēs can only be of the highest quality.

Like Pitys’ identity, the necromantic recipes themselves are composite, betraying several layers of redaction and containing excerpts that recur in other parts of the PGM.²⁵⁹ This shows that the spells are not unique compositions and that compilers of magical lore were willing to edit spells and manipulate information about the spell’s origin.

(2) Egyptian and Jewish traditions are combined in a divination spell that claims to establish communication with Osiris by means of an ecstatic seizure of an adult or boy medium (PGM IV.850–929). The spell’s title ascribes the procedure to the Old Testament king Solomon: ‘Solomon’s collapse’ (850) and ‘the procedure of Solomon’ (853). However, the ritual techniques, mythological references and *voces magicae* are unmistakably Egyptian in nature. The medium should be seated on unbaked bricks (as in the majority of the Demotic divination spells), while holding an ‘Anubian ear of corn’ and a ‘falconweed plant’ in

²⁵⁶ See footnote 197.

²⁵⁷ Bidez, Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés*, I 169. The title ‘king of the seven vowels’ has come down to us in a citation given by Porphyry in his *Philosophy from Oracles*. The passage is fragment 11 in Bidez, Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés*, II 284. See for the ‘seven vowels’ chapter 3.3.2. Pliny the Elder blames Ostanēs for having introduced the vile art of magic to the Greeks: *Natural History*, 28.6 and 30.7. Apuleius numbers Ostanēs among Epimenides, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato: *Apologia*, 27.

²⁵⁸ This fictional account is preserved by Syncellus, Synesius and in the introduction to the standard antique alchemic work *Physika kai Mystika* (Ps. Demokritos). The relevant passages are collected as fragments A 3–7 in Bidez, Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés*, II 311–321.

²⁵⁹ Faraone, ‘When Necromancy goes Underground’.

his hands as phylacteries (900–903). Although nothing is known about these phylacteries, they are surely meant to invoke the guarding powers of the dog-faced god *Anubis*, god of the embalmment and guardian of Isis after the murder of Osiris,²⁶⁰ and the *falcon* god Horus, son of Osiris. The link with Anubis is even reinforced by the prescription to awaken the medium from his trance by barking like a dog (929). The invocation calls upon Osiris as *Hesies*, a Greek transcription of the Egyptian epithet *ḥs.y*, ‘the praised one’ or ‘the drowned one’, which refers to Osiris’ drowning in the Nile and subsequent resurrection.²⁶¹ The strings of *voces magicae* consist of a mix of incomprehensible names, muddled Osirian epithets and the repetition of Osiris’ name, either on its own or in combination with another divine name.²⁶² According to the text, Hermes Trismegistos wrote the third and final string of these names in hieroglyphs in Heliopolis. Thus, given the purely Egyptian character of these ritual techniques and mythological references, the attribution to the Jewish king Solomon is rather remarkable. However, the occurrence of Solomon’s name in a magical text of the Roman period is not unusual, since, among Hellenised Jewish circles in Alexandria of the second century BCE onwards, the Biblical figure Solomon had been transformed from a wise king to a powerful astrologer and magician who exerted control over a wide range of demons.²⁶³ As a result of this, Solomon became a favoured pseudepigraphic author of magical and astrological treatises in Greek and Hebrew during the Roman period.²⁶⁴ This particular magical spell thus has its roots in Egyptian ritual while, at the same time, it shares in the prestige that was attributed to the Jewish king Solomon among the Hellenistic elites of the Roman period.

²⁶⁰ Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris*, 14, 356F and 44, 368E–F.

²⁶¹ The epithet could be applied to any deceased after the necessary mortuary rituals by which the deceased was transformed into an Osiris were conducted. See for the term ‘(H)esies’: *GMPT*, 334.

²⁶² See for the series of compound divine names whose second element is ‘Osiris’: *GMPT*, 55, fn. 120 [R.K.R.].

²⁶³ For a chronology of this development, see, Torijano, *Solomon the Esoteric King*, 225–230.

²⁶⁴ See for example the *Hygromanteia of Solomon* and *Testament of Solomon*. The *Sepher ha-Razim* (Book of Mysteries) was, according to its introduction, handed down from Noah to the patriarchs and finally to Solomon. *Hygromanteia of Solomon*: Torijano, *Solomon the Esoteric King*, 151–175 and 231–309 (translation and synopsis); *Testament of Solomon*: C.C. McCown, *The Testament of Solomon* (Leipzig 1922); *Sepher ha-Razim*: M.A. Morgan, *Sepher Ha-Razim: the Book of the Mysteries* (SBL Texts and Translations 25; Chico 1983).

(3) The reverse of what has just been said can be observed in a spell to drive out demons (PGM IV.3007–3086). According to the spell's title, the famous Egyptian magician Pibechis²⁶⁵ is its author: 'A tested charm of Pibechis for those possessed by demons' (3007). However, the invocation itself contains but few Egyptian elements (restricted to the *voces magicae*), while abounding in Jewish and Biblical references.²⁶⁶ The Jewish character of the spell is reinforced by the closing statement 'this charm is Hebraic'. Whatever the veracity of this statement, the spell combines the authority of the Egyptian priest Pibechis with the prestige that was afforded to Jewish magic.²⁶⁷

6.5. *What about priests and prestige?*

This chapter started out with a discussion of the advertising introduction to the list of encoded ingredients (PGM XII.401–407) and expanded to a wide-ranging study of the nature, function and perception of the Egyptian priesthood in the Greco-Roman period. This comprehensive discussion was necessary to bring out sharply the tension between what the text claims to be and historical reality. The results of the analyses are brought together and confronted with the conclusions of the chapters 1–5 in the following and final chapter. Before continuing, however, it is opportune to summarise and evaluate what has been said about Egyptian priests and the textual devices to bestow magical spells with prestige.

²⁶⁵ See footnote 213.

²⁶⁶ The Biblical references are given in *GMPT*, 96f. It goes without saying that the Jewish or Christian character of the spell has attracted considerable attention, not in the least because of the opening of the invocation 'I conjure you by the god of the Hebrews, Jesus' (3019f.). It is unclear whether the text is the product of a Jewish or pagan author, but scholars seem to favour the latter possibility because of certain inconsistencies in the text. An analysis of the invocation in the light of the New Testament can be found in S. Eitrem, *Some Notes on the Demonology in the New Testament* (Symb.Osloensis Suppl. 20; 2nd ed.; Oslo 1966) 15–30. A bibliography is given in Brashear, 'The Greek Magical Papyri', 3526f.; add to the list: Morton Smith, 'The Jewish Elements in the Magical Papyri', 250.

²⁶⁷ A noteworthy parallel is PGM V.96–172, a spell to acquire a demon as assistant attributed to an Egyptian person named Ieu the painter. The practitioner identifies himself with 'Moses, your prophet to whom you have transmitted your mysteries celebrated by Israel' (109–111) and he claims to know the true name 'which has been transmitted to the prophets of Israel' (116f.).

The foregoing pages have demonstrated that, in the *Demotic* and *Greek Magical Papyri*, the rhetorical strategies used to invest a spell with prestige and authority are limited in number and were rooted in Egyptian priestly tradition. The repertoire of the Greek advertising texts, the set of social, historical and cultural norms, can be described as follows. Efficacious magical spells are either given directly by a god, found in a temple in Egypt, or were in the possession of persons who were in contact with the divine in their capacity as priest, physician, king or philosopher. These persons are preferably historic figures widely accepted as outstanding authorities in the fields of magic, alchemy, astrology or philosophy. The cultural or ethnic origin of these figures is not restricted to one particular category, but ranges from Egyptian priests, Jewish culture heroes and Persian magoi to Greek philosophers. Nor are the ritual traditions represented by these categories treated as mutually exclusive, but can be combined in an attempt to share in an abundance of authority. It is remarkable that this cultural and ethnic diversity holds solely for the motif of pseudepigraphy, whereas, in contrast, the discovery of a magical spell is always situated in a temple in Egypt, the Nile valley to be exact, and the act of translation is always from Egyptian into Greek.

When comparing these conclusions with the repertoire of the Demotic spells, a divergence in frequency and quality can be observed. In the Demotic spells, quality marks are short and limited to statements about a text's origin and proofs of efficacy, of which only the latter is frequently applied. In a few cases a spell's origin is explicitly ascribed to a god or mortal, but the attributions are never international. Even in the case of the Persian king Darius I (P. London-Leiden 11/26), the attribution is to be understood in the light of the fact that the Egyptian priesthood remembered Darius as a pious and righteous pharaoh. This divergence in repertoire between the Demotic and Greek spells cannot be without meaning in view of the question what kind of reader the magical texts address, since, as has been said in the introduction to this section, the structure and nature of the advertising statements is indicative of the social formation and cultural make-up of the audience. In case of the Demotic spells, knowledge of Egyptian culture is sufficient to rate the advertising statements at their true value. However, the Greek spells demand from their implied reader familiarity with international gods and authors. The spells take for granted that the reader knows of, and values highly, the authority of Egyptian priests, Jewish culture heroes, Persian magoi and Greek philosophers alike. Thus, the

difference between the Demotic and Greek magical spells is not only a matter of language but also of implied audience. Given the fact that the two groups can be found together on one and the same manuscript, as in the case of P. Leiden 384 verso, this conclusion is highly significant. Were the Greek spells initially designed for an audience different from the users of the Demotic recipes?

It is important to emphasise that the international range of gods and authors is embedded in rhetorical devices in use in Egyptian ritual texts since as early as the redaction of the *Coffin Texts* (around 2100 BCE). Thus, the format as such did not change: it was the contents of the device that was adapted in the Greek spells. In addition to this link with older Egyptian rhetorical devices, the Greek advertising texts bear also a resemblance to Egyptian ideas and images of magic as expressed, for example, in the fictional narratives that were discussed earlier:

1. The Egyptian priest is a miracle worker
2. Efficacious magical texts are written by Thoth-Hermes and hidden from laity inside an Egyptian temple
3. The royal court is the receiving partner in the exchange of knowledge on magic

The resemblance with the Egyptian literary image of the ritual expert is evident and not in need of further comments. These elements were already productive in introductions or postscripts to magical or medical texts of the pharaonic period. The following two passages of the New Kingdom may serve to illustrate the effective use of the motifs of divine origin, discovery in a temple, secrecy and proofs of efficacy in such pedigrees of pharaonic date. In both cases, the royal court is the arena of display and the time of discovery is set in the remote past, that is to say, the Old Kingdom, a period that was perceived as ideal and exemplary since the Middle Kingdom. In the first passage, a historic figure is accredited with the discovery, whereas the second refers to the work of an anonymous temple scribe.

This spell was found in Hermopolis on a brick of the ore of Upper Egypt, incised in real lapis lazuli, under the feet (of the statue) of this god in the time of the majesty of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Menkaure, by the king's son Hordedef,²⁶⁸ who found it when he was going about to make inspections of the temples, a military force being

²⁶⁸ On this historic figure, see, footnote 95 and chapter 6.3.3.1.

with him on that account. He obtained it by entreaty and brought it like a marvel to the king when he saw that it was a great secret, unseen and unbeheld. [Postscript to BD 30B]²⁶⁹

Beginning of the collection (of prescriptions) to abate inflammations (*h3(2).t whd.w*²⁷⁰), which was found in old writings in a chest for documents under the feet of (a statue of) Anubis in Letopolis in the time of the majesty of Upper and Lower Egypt Khasti, justified. After he had fallen ill, it was brought to the majesty of Upper and Lower Egypt Senedj, justified, because of its excellence. Thereupon this book loosened the feet that were bound (? *h3tm.w*) through (the work of) a scribe of the divine book (*s3 md.w.t n3tr*), chief physician, excellent one who satisfies the god.²⁷¹ (Because of) the book a procession was held at dawn and offerings (were given) of bread, beer and incense on the fire in the name of the great Isis, Horus-khenty-khety, Khonsu-Thoth, the god who is in the belly.

[P. Berlin 3038 15/1–5, § 163a]

The presence of these same elements in the Greek spells suggests a familiarity with Egyptian ideas about ritual and magic on the part of the authors and users of the spells. However, there are also elements that are reminiscent of the Hellenistic discussions on magic, which were analysed in the previous section.

1. Authoritative magicians are not only to be found among Egyptian priests, but among Jewish culture heroes, Persian magoi and Greek philosophers as well
2. Objectification or even alienation of Egyptian priesthood
3. Pursuit of financial profit
4. Awareness of fraudulence and truly effective rituals

Despite these similarities with a Hellenistic discourse that was created and maintained outside Egypt, the *Greek Magical Papyri* originated in all likelihood in Egypt. Reasons for this are:

1. The advertising introductions reveal rather detailed knowledge of native cultic topography of the Nile Valley. In Greek and Latin texts, Memphis, to a lesser degree Thebes, function as the centre of occult knowledge.²⁷²

²⁶⁹ Tr. Thomas G. Allen.

²⁷⁰ For a discussion of the word *whd*, see, Westendorf, *Handbuch der altägyptischen Medizin*, vol. 1, 329ff.

²⁷¹ For this list of titles, see, Hermann Grapow, *Kranker, Krankheiten und Arzt* (Grundriss der Medizin der alten Ägypter 3; Berlin 1956) 87f.

²⁷² Memphis is given pride of place in these texts, because it was considered the place of origin of the Isis cult in the Greco-Roman world. The place name must therefore

2. The spells are always presented as being translated from Egyptian, never from another language.
3. Many texts contain truly Egyptian priestly knowledge; for example, the list of ingredients (PGM XII.401–444).

In view of what has been said above, it seems warranted to conclude that the *Greek Magical Papyri* address an audience, resident in Egypt, that views ritual and magic from a slightly different perspective than the users of the Demotic spells. The following chapter will address this apparent discrepancy and formulate a model of textual transmission to come to terms with the differences between the *Demotic* and *Greek Magical Papyri*.

have been widely known among Hellenised elites of the Roman Empire. Place names like Herakleopolis (PGM V.372 and 382) and Aphroditopolis (PGM VII.864) were probably unknown and therefore without advertising effect for an audience outside Egypt.