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THE INITIATION OF THE MAGICIAN

Transition and power in Graeco-Egyptian ritual

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The category of "magical initiation" is an anomaly. Scholars generally identify initiation as a social phenomenon: the passage of initiands from one social group to another through a ritual process of separation, liminality, and reintegration.[1] The magician, however, is usually understood as a more solitary figure, and in many cultures as permanently marginal.[2] These considerations did not, however, prevent Arnold Van Gennep from treating the magician's initiation as a variety of *rite de passage*, since he recognized the homologies between the induction of the magician into his profession and other forms of initiation.[3] Interpreters of magical initiations in the Greco-Roman world have similarly recognized the hermeneutic value of these homologies in their work: the aspiring magician of antiquity had to undergo a rite of initiation before taking up the profession, and the structure of this rite, it has been argued, is more or less analogous to that of Graeco-Roman mystery initiations, and features a good deal of the separation and marginality we have come to expect from a *rite de passage*. Though the third, integrative stage of Van Gennep's tripartite ritual process was not as salient as in age-group initiations or those of cult associations, certain rites described in literary sources and the magical papyri were undoubtedly meant to confer on the initiand the status and prerogatives of the magician.[4]

These comparisons – to a modern scholarly paradigm and to a related class of phenomena in the ancient world – have helped to identify and to differentiate a certain class of rites, but only as an imperfect subspecies or parallel phenomenon. The inadequacy of this approach, I suggest, lies in the choice of *comparanda*. Comparing "magical initiations" with the Graeco-Roman mysteries is somewhat problematic, since most of the evidence for these rites, though in the Greek language, is an amalgam drawn from Egyptian and Graeco-Roman cultures. I shall re-examine two examples of

magical initiation, one a ritual (*PGM* I.1–42) and another a narrative (the prologue of a treatise on astrological botany attributed to Thessalos of Tralles), using Egyptian ritual practices as comparanda rather than those of Graeco-Roman mystery initiations. My aim is to elucidate the transvaluations of traditional Egyptian religious structures, which result in a "magical initiation". This examination will reveal certain parallels with patterns of Egyptian priestly initiation and the traditional prerogatives of access to the divine which suggest that these magical initiations are part of a discourse of claims to magical authority in which traditional religious structures are adapted to new social and cultural uses. The adaptation and manipulation of these traditional patterns suggest a second-order awareness of initiation as a category and a self-consciousness in the creation of new rituals and narratives of initiation.[5]

A magical ritual for obtaining quasi-priestly status.

The ritual instructions given in a Greek magical handbook of late-antique date (*PGM* I.1–42) are indeed readily comprehensible as a magical initiation from the perspective of a Greek or Roman.[6] The aim of the rite is to gain a daemonic assistant, one "who will reveal everything to you clearly," and even share your meals and bed – a servant and companion, whose presence confers the status and power of a magician on to the practitioner. The practitioner first drowns a falcon in the milk of a black cow,[7] mixed with Attic honey, and then mummifies it in wrappings of undyed cloth and a coating of old wine and myrrh. Beside the falcon are put the practitioner's fingernail clippings and hair, along with a short magical formula written on a piece of pure papyrus. Shortly before sunrise, the initiand drinks the milk and honey, sets up the mummified falcon in a shrine made of juniper wood, and crowns the shrine. Thereafter, he makes an offering of non-animal foods, and recites an invocation directly to the falcon before reclining with it. When dismissed (presumably by the divinity invoked), the magician departs, retracing his steps,[8] and enjoys a meal with his new daemonic assistant. Supplementary instructions enjoin the reader to keep the rite a secret, and to maintain purity for seven days. This last instruction makes more sense if it is carried out closer to the beginning of the rite, whether before the initial preparations or before the actual performance.[9]

Upon completion, the magician was thought to gain supernatural knowledge, and direct contact with the divine, mediated through a demonic assistant. It is clear that a transition has taken place, bringing the practitioner into closer contact with the divine world from which he draws newfound power. But is it appropriate to understand the ritual process as characterized by acts of separation and a symbolism of marginality? The rite revolves around the creation and worship of a mummified falcon. Killing the falcon, it has been argued, is a rite of separation, since the magician moves away from

human normalcy by harming a sacred animal.[10] But the particular way the practitioner kills the falcon is significant. In Egyptian culture, death by drowning had long been associated with the mythology of Osiris, and conferred special status on the deceased as a "praised one" (Egyptian *hesy*).[11] Herodotus reports that those who drowned in the Nile were treated as a special category of dead, as though "something more than human."[12] Demotic legal documents, which transfer the duties and income of funeral cult, at times specify whether the tomb in question belongs to a *hesy*, suggesting particular honors for the drowned.[13] The Demotic magical papyri, moreover, make it explicit that the process of drowning a creature is intended to create a *hesy*.[14] The term (transliterated into Greek as *hesiês*) also appears in the Greek magical papyri with the same meaning.[15] Though it was undoubtedly small comfort to the falcon, drowning functioned as an apotheosis, elevating the creature to divine status.[16] Drinking the milk in which the falcon was drowned connected the practitioner to the divine. This process of absorbing supernatural power is familiar from the Late Egyptian use of water poured over curative and apotropaic images such as the well-known Horus cippi.[17] Indeed, the reader of the text is told "there will be something divine in your heart."

The divine identity of the falcon is confirmed by the treatment the bird received after its apotheosis by drowning. The mummification, enshrinement, and offerings to the falcon in this rite have a direct relationship to one of the most typically Egyptian forms of religious worship in the Late Period: the cult of divine animals. At sites such as Saqqara, Tûna el-Gebel, and many others besides, various birds and animals were raised in sacred precincts and then mummified and buried in subterranean galleries, usually as dedications made by pilgrims.[18] The most well known of these sacred animals was the Apis bull, the emanation or soul of Ptah. Tended, embalmed and buried at Memphis, the bull became identified in death with Osiris as Oserapis. Smaller animals, and especially birds such as the ibis and the falcon were also enormously popular in this form of worship. It is estimated that some four million ibises are buried in the catacombs of Saqqara alone. Texts from the archive of Hor of Sebennytos, one of the priests responsible for the cult at Saqqara, reveal that the ibis was regarded primarily as an emanation of Thoth, while the falcon was considered the emanation of a number of divinities, including Ptah, Apis, Osiris, Horus, Isis and others.[19] Inscriptions on some ibis coffins at Tûna el-Gebel identify the deceased bird with the god Thoth.[20] The acts of drowning and then mummifying the falcon in the *PGM* ritual were clearly meant to mark the creature as a divine emanation.[21]

The invocation addressed directly to the bird,[22] which confers a number of divine names, epithets and attributes, dispels any doubts as to whether these ritual actions were intended to effect a divinization. The falcon is, of course, most commonly associated with the god Horus in his various forms, but as in

the animal cult at Saqqara the falcon could be identified with a number of divinities. The invocation refers to various aspects of the god Horus and other figures closely associated with him. After a series of vowels, he is first addressed with the general epithets, "Good Husbandman," and "Agathos Daimon."[23] The first words of the *voces magicae* ("magical utterences") that follow are probably to be rendered *Harpon Knouphi*. A proposed derivation from the Egyptian phrase "Horus the pillar of Kenmet" – the decan rising with the sun at the time of the Nile flood[24] – would tie this phrase to the invocation immediately following the rest of the *voces magicae*, where the falcon is addressed as the constellation Orion, which Plutarch identifies as the soul of Horus.[25] Orion was known in Coptic as the "star of Horus."[26] Far more frequently, however, Orion was associated with Osiris. In the late period, Orion could even be depicted in the form of a mummy, owing to a pun on the Egyptian name of Orion, and the word for mummy.[27] Osiris was believed to ascend to heaven and become Orion, and the king likewise ascended to heaven through the power of Orion.[28] The subsequent invocations refer to the fecundity of the Nile brought about by Osiris, the solar cycle, the emergence of the creator from the primordial waters, and the cosmic creation.[29] The references to Osiris in the underworld are particularly apt, since deceased and embalmed animals in the cults of Saqqara and Tûna el-Gebel, like their human counterparts, were often identified as "the Osiris NN."[30] Clearly, the mummified falcon set up in its juniper wood shrine was an image of Horus, linked through this invocation to the underworld god Osiris, the solar god Re (or Horus' own solar manifestations), and the creator god Re-Atum.

The divine nature of the mummified falcon is critical to understanding the initiation process undertaken by the prospective "magician," since acts of approaching and offering worship to an embodiment of a god, whether a mummified "soul of Horus" or a cult statue, were the traditional prerogatives of the Egyptian *priest*. The *PGM* rite seems to elide the distinction between the cult of sacred animals and the worship of a divine image by setting the falcon up in a wooden shrine, rather than interring it in coffin and tomb; but either way – by creating a manifestation of the divine and then offering it sacrifice and a hymn the practitioner confers upon himself a quasi-priestly status. In traditional Egyptian practice, the day of the priest's first entrance to the interior shrine of the temple, and the privilege of access to the divine image which that act created, constituted initiation into priestly status. The evidence for the initiation of Egyptian priests is scattered and allusive, but a significant corpus of inscriptions set up by priests at Karnak to commemorate the "day of initiation" survives from the Third Intermediate Period (Dynasties XXI–XXIII, ranging in date from 983 BC to as late as ca. 750 BC).[31] Entering into sacred space and viewing the sacred image constituted the most significant elements of the rite. Crossing the boundary between the profane world and the inner sanctuary served also to cross the limit between human and divine worlds, owing to an equation between sacred space and the

heavenly realm in Egyptian religious thought. This equation is made explicit in some of the testimonia which conclude the initiation texts.[32]

As Kruchten has shown in his extensive analysis of the uses of the verb *besi* and substantives derived from it, this notion of ascent, or emergence from a lower level to a higher is central to the basic meaning of the word. The word is written phonetically and followed by a fish,[33] and walking legs determinative, perhaps representing a fish leaping or breaching the water's surface. Derived from this verb is the substantive *bes,* which denotes the particular image of the god capable of crossing the boundary between earth and the realm of the gods.[34] Access to this image was restricted to those who had been "initiated" into the appropriate status, through an introduction (*bes*) into its presence.[35] This power of crossing boundaries appears to inhere in the image itself, and it is tempting (if perhaps speculative) in the context of the present discussion of the mummified falcon at the center of the *PGM* rite, to trace a connection to the daimon *besy* in the Litany of Re, who introduces the deceased king to the heavens and is represented as a mummiform falcon.[36] In any case, the use of the term *bes* in all its meanings continues in hieroglyphic inscriptions well into the Graeco-Roman period. The word is attested in this particular initiatory sense in the hieroglyphic portion of the trilingual Canopus decree of 238 BCE, where it denotes the legitimacy of one properly inducted into office. Twice it refers to the induction of the king, and in one of the cases, it is used to describe Ptolemy III as a "legitimate ruler" (*heqa en bes*).[37] The verb *bes* in the Canopus decree also refers to the initiation of priests.[38]

Temple inscriptions of the Graeco-Roman period also employ the term frequently. At the Ptolemaic temple of Horus at Edfu, it is the *bes*-image upon which the god Horus settles, or with which he unites in his "shrine" or his "Great palace."[39] At the temple of Dendera (late first century BCE), priests are given the epithet "initiated (*bes*) into their duty/office".[40] Particularly relevant for understanding the ritual creation and worship of a divine figure described in *PGM* I.1–42 is a set of inscriptions at the temple of Dendera relating to the workshop in which divine images were crafted.[41] According to these texts, apparently drawn from a manual of procedures for creating cult images, different stages of the work were completed in different areas, with the final acts of consecration to take place in the "House of Gold." Though the text lists a number of craftsmen required for fashioning the physical forms of the statues, they are explicitly excluded from the "secret work" of the House of Gold, since they are uninitiated.[42] Only priests were permitted access to the divine image during this crucial phase of the liturgy in which the ceremony of Opening the Mouth was performed, and the statue made into a living image.[43] The ritual instructions of *PGM* I.1–42 do not include any rite resembling the Opening of the Mouth, but the title given to a ritual invocation in another spell is significant in this regard. *PGM* XII.270–350 provides instructions for the magical consecration of a ring whose stone is carved with an image of the god Helios (Re). After the main body of

instructions, a supplementary rite is appended. This second invocation, called the *ouphôr*, purports to give the practitioner the power to command the gods and make statues, engravings and carved stones come alive. The name of the rite appears to derive from the Egyptian *wep-ra,* "Opening of the Mouth."[44] Like *PGM* I.1–42, this spell aims at creating special status and power for the practitioner through the creation of a divine image, and rites parallel to those normally considered the preserve of Egyptian priests.

When set against a background of Egyptian priestly initiations and the priest's exclusive privilege of access to the divine image, the central elements of the *PGM* I.1–42 rite appear to be further examples of the "miniaturization" of ritual typical of the magical papyri. As J.Z. Smith has observed, the texts of the Greek magical papyri "display ... a thoroughly domesticated understanding of sacrifice" in which procedures carried out on small tables, altars, and shrines are to be understood "as replacements of (and for) temple space and rituals."[45] This observation applies to initiatory ritual as well as sacrificial. Here the cult image, its shrine and the drama surrounding them have been reduced in scale to serve a transitional function in an individualistic practice, apart from the traditional locus of divine access, the temple.[46] By constructing a personal divine image and offering it worship and hymns, the practitioner is assuming the functions and prerogatives of the priest, and thereby the powers which seemed to inhere in the office. The recognized power which results from achieving such a transition is implicit in *PGM* IV.930–1114, a "charm which produces a direct vision." There, the practitioner is instructed, "Whenever you seek divinations, be dressed in the garb of a prophet (*prophêtês* = Egyptian *hem-netjer*, "god's servant"), shod with the fibers of the doum palm ...." By assuming the guise of an Egyptian priest, the practitioner enhanced his magical powers.

Appropriating priestly status through a narrative of magical initiation

Direct access to the divine, and the priest's privilege of approaching the divine image is also a central element of the narrative ascribed to Thessalos of Tralles. In the prologue to a work on astrological botany, Thessalos relates the marvelous tale of his quest for magical knowledge, which led him to the Upper Egyptian city of Thebes, and an encounter with the divine.[47] The ritual means by which Thessalos gains magical knowledge are portrayed as an initiation into the powers and status of a magician.[48] The pattern is similar to the less serious account at the beginning of Lucian's tale of the sorcerer's apprentice, and Thessalos' narrative could be analyzed according to the conventional terminology of the *rite de passage*.[49] But as in the magical recipe discussed in the previous section, the ritual framework to which Thessalos' narrative refers is more specific: the Egyptian priest's exclusive access to the divine, and Egyptian priestly initiation. In this case, however, the perspective

is decidedly an outsider's. Though Thessalos' aim to gain *magical* knowledge is made explicit, the process by which he achieved his direct revelation of the god Asclepius (= Egyptian "Imhotep") is *religious*, since it is conducted by an Egyptian priest as a traditional form of religious rite.[50] The value of this Egyptian rite, however, undergoes a transformation in the way Thessalos represents his interaction with the Egyptian priest. Though the rite itself is not an initiation, Thessalos, in the course of his narrative, appropriates the prerogatives of direct access to the divine normally reserved for the Egyptian priestly class. The quasi-priestly status, power, and esoteric knowledge that this entails is then passed off as if it were magical.[51]

As he describes his adventure, Thessalos reveals an awareness of similar narratives current in literature of the period, which record the tribulations of a hero passing from one fount of wisdom to another, and eventually arriving at his goal.[52] Thessalos' tale takes the form of a letter addressed to the Roman emperor (either Claudius or Nero), in which he claims to have outstripped all others in the search for the miraculous.[53] According to this epistolary prologue, he set out from his home in Asia Minor with a large amount of money, and devoted himself to the study of philosophy and medicine in Alexandria. After assiduously following the lectures of theoretical physicians (*dialektikôn iatrôn*), he made the rounds of the libraries in preparation for his departure. There he came upon a book attributed to the legendary king and astrologer Nechepso. It contained a collection of miraculous remedies based on the sympathies of plants and stones with signs of the zodiac, and promised amazing results to the bearer of its arcane knowledge.[54]

Unfortunately, Thessalos' attempt to put the remedies of Nechepso into practice ended in complete failure – a failure made worse by a hasty proclamation of his discovery to friends and relations in Asia Minor. Rather than face the ridicule of his Alexandrian colleagues, or the disappointed expectations of the folks back home, he consigned himself to wandering in Egypt until he should be able to accomplish something of his rash promises. Eventually he arrived in the Upper Egyptian city of Thebes (Diospolis), where – in order to discover magical powers – he tried to ingratiate himself with the priests, most of whom were scandalized at his propositions:

> And so I came to Diospolis – the oldest city of Egypt, containing many temples – and spent some time there. For there were many scholarly high priests [there] and [elders] adorned with subtle learning. As time passed and my friendship with them grew, I inquired if some sort of magical operation was still preserved. The majority of them, I observed, were indignant at my rashness in such undertakings.[55] But I was not shaken from the friendship of one of them, who could be trusted because of the impressiveness of his character and the extent of his age. This man professed to have the ability to perform direct divination by means of a bowl.[56]

Thessalos drew aside this one priest who did not reject him outright. In a secluded grove away from the city, the desperate Greek implored the Theban priest to assist him with his predicament. The priest agreed and at his bidding Thessalos maintained purity for three days. He then met the priest at dawn on the third day – having first concealed on his person a papyrus and some ink! The priest led Thessalos to a pure house which he had prepared, and asked the Greek with whom would he like to converse – some spirit of the dead or a god. Thessalos then revealed his intentions: to speak one on one (*monôi moi pros monon homilein*) with the god Asclepius (Imhotep).[57] The priest was visibly displeased. Nevertheless, he had promised, and so he carried out the rite. He seated Thessalos before the place where the god was to appear, summoned Asclepius (Imhotep) with his ineffable names,[58] and left the physician to question the god about the herbal remedies of Nechepso that he had studied in Alexandria. Soon the god appeared in a spectacular vision and spoke to Thessalos, telling him that the book of king Nechepso was of limited use, because it required supplementary knowledge of the correct times at which to harvest the herbs – knowledge that could only be acquired directly from Asclepius himself. Thessalos claims, of course, that the material collected in his treatise on astrological botany was in fact written down during this session with the god and therefore far superior to Nechepso's book and any other.

This Nechepso was a pseudonymous Hellenistic literary figure to whom great wisdom in matters of astrology was attributed.[59] In Thessalos' self-aggrandizing narrative, however, the Alexandrian sage proves to be insufficient, and it is no coincidence that Thessalos turns his search for knowledge toward the south, toward Upper Egypt. In the passage from Alexandria to Thebes, a geography of cultural authenticity is invoked. Upper Egypt was in many respects "more Egyptian" than the Delta and Faiyum regions, which had been more thoroughly penetrated by Greek settlers in the Ptolemaic period. Studies of ethnicity in Ptolemaic Egypt have detected a general tendency toward adopting Egyptian names and language among Greek settlers in the predominantly Egyptian milieu of Upper Egypt.[60] Thebes itself was the center of several native Egyptian revolts in the second and first centuries BC, one of which resulted in a twenty-year period of revived Pharaonic rule over the Thebaid.[61] The great seat of the god Ammon, therefore, was a focus of native resistance to foreign rule and the preservation of cultural identity. Thessalos expressly describes Thebes as "the oldest city of Egypt, containing many temples" and observes that "there were many scholarly high priests [there] and [elders] adorned with subtle learning."[62] A couple of centuries after Thessalos' visit, Thebes does indeed seem to have been a center in which traditional magico-religious knowledge was preserved. The Anastasi papyri, which comprise the bulk of the ritual materials known as the Greek and Demotic magical papyri, are Theban in origin.[63] This later reputation of Thebes was, it seems, already established in Thessalos' day. The city serves in his narrative as the geographic and cultural location in which revelation is to be found.

When he reaches this great center, however, Thessalos' difficulties are only beginning. He encounters resistance from the Theban priests as he seeks their expertise, and Thessalos' eventual success in the face of this resistance is critical to the initiation narrative. The priests' reaction to Thessalos' inquiry has been a focus of debate over the interpretation of this text. It has been suggested that the reaction of the priests to Thessalos' propositions derived from a lost faith in the efficacy of traditional ritual powers.[64] This interpretation of the admittedly difficult Greek,[65] seems to put too much weight on a fourteenth century Latin translation, which though a century earlier than the best Greek manuscripts is a very loose approximation of the Greek text.[66] It seems unlikely that the priests were ridiculing Thessalos for his continued belief in the extinct power of magic. The traditional religious and magical practice of Egypt, which serves as the background to Thessalos' narrative, was still quite vigorous.[67] Some scholars, on the other hand, have proposed that the priests' indignation and unwillingness to help Thessalos was a reflection of their fears of prosecution on charges of magic.[68] While it is true that Thessalos seeks "some magical operation" (*ti tês magikês energeias*), it is doubtful whether Egyptian priests would have viewed the procedure by which Thessalos acquires a revelation as magical in the illicit and subversive sense.[69] A priest such as the one with whom Thessalos dealt in Thebes would have produced this ritual within an entirely different cognitive framework, by virtue of the fact that he was still an Egyptian priest, and that the divination rite (*peh-netjer*), which he performed fell into a clearly defined sphere of traditional priestly activity.[70] If, in fact, these rites were viewed as illicit, it could only have been from the perspective of Roman political and judicial authorities. Despite their own beliefs, Egyptian priests may have feared prosecution through Roman misunderstanding of their religious activities. Roman attitudes and legal restrictions, it has been argued, may have driven certain Egyptian religious practices "underground," to be practiced away from the potential scrutiny of Roman officials.[71] Nevertheless, Roman regulation of Egyptian religion, despite progressive economic and social restrictions on the Egyptian priesthood, does not seem to have included specific legislation against the practices of Egyptian religion before the end of the second century.[72] Thus, there is little reason to suppose that Egyptian priests would have feared prosecution on a day-to-day basis for carrying on traditional religious practices.

An alternative interpretation of the priests' unwillingness to assist Thessalos is more likely. The narrative makes more sense if the shocked reaction of the priests was not the result of fear or disbelief, so much as chagrin at the audacity (*propeteia*) of an outsider who wished entrée into the besieged yet still privileged world of the Egyptian priesthood and its ritual secrets.[73] An existing religious tendency to secrecy and esotericism, perhaps exaggerated by progressive Roman interference in the administration of Egyptian priesthoods, and later the practice of Egyptian religion itself, would have made the priests unwilling to allow any outsider, much less a foreigner,

to witness the mysteries of their ritual practice. Certainly, the Egyptian Demotic magical recipes that so closely resemble the *praxis* of Thessalos' revelation are written in a Demotic script that belongs to a priestly milieu.[74] They are consciously archaizing in their frequent use of hieratic signs, and some passages are written in an Egyptian cipher script, measures perhaps intended to protect the underground practice of Egyptian religion even from casual Egyptian knowledge.[75] But well before the historical conditions which produced the Demotic magical spells, there existed a priestly and cultural imperative to bar the uninitiated from Egyptian sacred rites and spaces. A number of texts, in addition to the inscriptions cited in the discussion of *PGM* I.1–42 above, convey the secrecy and exclusivity of Egyptian priests. A hieroglyphic and hieratic ritual papyrus of Persian or Ptolemaic date, contains a passage describing the temple scriptorium or "House of Life," as a place that must remain secret and closed to outsiders: "An Asiatic [a general term for foreigners from the East] must not enter it; he must not see it."[76] General injunctions to secrecy were inscribed on the doorposts of passages through which priests would enter the Ptolemaic temple of Edfu: "Do not reveal anything you see in the temple which is secret" and, "Be discreet at the appearance in his sacred throne; do not go out with what you have seen."[77] The latter is especially pertinent to Thessalos' vision of the enthroned Asclepius (Imhotep). A text from one of the crypts of the Graeco-Roman temple of Hathor at Dendera reads, "No Phoenician should approach it, no Greek enter it, no Bedouin tread it, its magic (*heka*) should not be seen within it."[78] This and other more or less contemporary expressions of the same sentiment provide the best cultural and historical explanation for the reaction of the Egyptian priests to Thessalos' inquiries. Their indignation and unwillingness to provide a direct revelation to the Greek doctor derives from traditional religious restrictions on entering sacred space, and viewing manifestations of the divinity.[79]

Though this evidence of a traditional priestly tendency towards secrecy supplies the necessary cultural information to understand the shocked reaction of the Theban priests at Thessalos' initial inquiries, it does not explain the non-traditional activity of the one priest who actually does perform a *peh-netjer* rite for the Greek physician. The secrecy which surrounds Thessalos' solicitation of this one priest, and the peripheral place of its performance are neither traditional secrecy, aimed at protecting the rite from non-priests and outsiders, nor avoidance of Roman prosecution. They are necessitated by the Egyptian priest's transgression of an Egyptian priestly restriction in order to provide a ritual service for a non-priest and a foreigner. Thessalos and the priest must be circumspect because of the disapproval of the other priests. The narrative at several points draws attention to Thessalos' transgression of normal restrictions on contact with the divine, and his infiltration of the Egyptian priest's secretive domain. He not only tells how he circumvented the secrecy of the Egyptian priesthood by finding a priest who was willing

to assist him in his inquiries, he also claims that he hid on his person papyrus and pen to record the knowledge he hoped to gain (Book 1, *proem*. 21); and that, at the last minute, he sprang on the apparently unsuspecting priest a request for a direct encounter "one on one" with Asclepius (*ibid*. 22: *monôi moi pros monon*). Thessalos' narrative portrays the priest as visibly upset at this imposition (*ibid*. 23: "Even so he was not pleased [*oukh hêdeôs*] for the features of his face revealed this"). The direct encounter with the god removes the mediating function of the priest, gaining for Thessalos a quasi-priestly status. Thessalos, after all, is telling the tale of his revelation experience with the intention of establishing his authority, and thereby adding value to his treatise on magico-medicinal uses of plants. This value derives not only from the status and cultural location of the Egyptian priest as a guardian of exotic eastern wisdom, but also Thessalos' claimed success in manipulating the priest in order to appropriate his status. From Thessalos' perspective, in other words, this is the story of "how I went to great lengths to trick one of those notoriously tight-lipped Egyptian priests into initiating me into divine revelations normally reserved for that secretive priesthood – revelations which I can now pass on to you, the reader."

Unfortunately, the Greek manuscript[80] breaks off in the fourth chapter of the first book, so the results of the initiation process are not entirely certain. Two Latin versions of Thessalos' narrative, however, continue the story after Asclepius' revelation of magico-medical wisdom.[81] These manuscripts contain some errors of translation when comparison with the Greek text is possible, but their contents are worth cautious consideration.[82] In section 15 of the epilogue, immediately following his account of the god's revelation, Thessalos writes: "Having spoken these words, the god ascended to heaven. And so I returned with the priest in the middle of the night, and on the following day, receiving money sufficient for myself, as well as some requisites, I was dismissed by the priest."[83] In this brief conclusion to the initiation process, the narrator seems to portray himself as a pupil who has completed his course of study with the master, and graduates with everything necessary to take up his new vocation.[84] Thessalos, however, seems to push his new status a little further. He asks the priest to accompany him to Alexandria in order to test the magical remedies revealed by the god, and they depart from Thebes almost as colleagues. In Alexandria, Thessalos does seem to have acquired greater authority, and the last scenes of the narrative show him demonstrating his powers and amazing the doubters. The defeat and disillusionment with which he began his quest for magical power are replaced by apparent success and prestige in the great transcultural center of the Hellenistic world.[85] Thessalos the Greek doctor has been elevated to the status of magician by penetrating the secret world of the Egyptian priests, and gaining a direct encounter with the divine.

Just as Thessalos is transformed by his infiltration of the Egyptian priesthood, the status of the Egyptian priest and his religious practice is

transformed when implicated in Thessalos' initiation narrative. The Egyptian priest's divination ritual is understood as a means of access to the divine, and when Thessalos claims to have entered the purified space and confronted the god directly, he is assuming the role of the Egyptian priest as mediator between the divine and human worlds. Thessalos, however, from his Graeco-Roman perspective represents this privilege of access and the status it implies as the source of his authority in matters magical. The transformation from oracular religious rite to magical initiation in the context of a cross-cultural encounter is not solely a passive function of the cultural distance between Thessalos and the priest, but a strategy on the part of the narrator to repackage a quasi-priestly status as magical in order to enhance the authority of the text. The entire narrative is framed as a letter to the Emperor, in which Thessalos professes to have defeated all rivals in his field, including the pseudonymous king Nechepso, thereby establishing himself as the preeminent arbiter of magical knowledge, a connoisseur of the trans-mundane, and a merchant of foreign wisdom. There is, in other words, an active dimension to the commonplace that one culture's religion is another's magic. "Magic" in the Hellenistic world is not only a polemical category, but also an appropriative category. The magical initiation, in this case, is created out of a tendentious reinterpretation of the Egyptian priestly structures of inclusion and exclusion.

Conclusion

Both the ritual and the narrative of magical initiation I have explored share a central concern with direct access to the divine, the *sine qua non* of authentic magical power in the vertical and utopian cosmological arrangements of Late Antiquity. Yet each derives the basic premises of its ritual pattern from a transvaluation of archaic Egyptian religious elements. In the first example, the practitioner contrives an encounter with the divine through the miniaturization of central elements of the Egyptian temple. He creates a divinized image of the god in the form of a mummified falcon, and sets it up in its own miniature shrine. By fabricating this locus of divine access, and invoking the god to descend to him in that place and grant him supernatural power, he takes over the logic of traditional Egyptian priestly initiation, as embodied in the term *besi*. As J.Z. Smith has suggested, the reduction in scale evident in the magical papyri requires at the same time a selection and exaggeration of the significant or the essential in the traditional temple-based rituals. Since ritual, in the first case, is a miniaturization and exaggeration of everyday actions, the texts of the magical papyri represent a meta-ritual discourse.[86] In the case of the initiation described in *PGM* I.1–42, the structure and details of the rite reveal a second order awareness of the essential elements in Egyptian priestly initiation. Rather than the liminality often regarded as typical of the ritual process in modern scholarly discourse

on initiations, the primary concern in the emic meta-ritual discourse of this text is entering into sacred space, and approaching the divine image. The Thessalos narrative, likewise, shows an awareness of these privileges of the priestly initiate, though from the perspective of an outsider. The status created by the exclusive prerogatives and secrecy of the Egyptian priesthood is appropriated for Thessalos' own purposes, and only through its implication in his narrative does it become "magical" and acquire a liminal quality according to a Graeco-Roman cultural perspective. In both cases, the spatial metaphor of the *rite de passage*, so insightfully elaborated by Van Gennep, and so clear in the traditional "day of introduction" (*herv en bes*) of the Egyptian priest, structures the differentiation of status. One is "in" or "out". But the transformation of this traditional structure, and its use in new narratives and rituals, suggest that a theoretical understanding of initiation as a category is not solely the prerogative of the modern scholar.

Notes

1 See the contribution of Graf to this volume on the application of this sense of the term "initiation" to classical Greek evidence.

2 On the social place of magic and the magical practitioner, see especially Mauss (1972). Bronislaw Malinowski considered initiation "typically religious" – that is to say, social – inasmuch as it serves to reproduce and reinforce the practices, knowledge and cultural values of a group and its civilization. Within the framework of definitions of religion and magic that rely on a dichotomy between the primarily social qualities of the former, and the individualistic, self-interested motives of the latter, Malinowski distinguished religious rites such as initiation from the more functional rites of magic. Malinowski (1948) 38–40.

3 Van Gennep (1909) 17 and 152–5, quoted in part by Grottanelli in this volume.

4 Graf (1994).

5 This approach draws on the arguments of Smith (1995), to whom I refer in more detail below. Graf's contribution to this volume raises Brelich's notion of "rites with an initiatory background" or "rites developed out of an initiatory context." In this chapter, I shall develop observations along these lines, though emphasizing the conscious adaptation of existing structures in the creation of new rituals or narratives, rather than historical development or evolution.

6 Graf (1994) 169 and (1997) 109ff. For the text, see Preisendanz (1973) 1.2–5; translated in Betz (1992) 3–4.

7 The same ritual prescription also appears in the Demotic magical papyri. See *PDM* xiv.88 in Betz (1992).

8 The Greek participle *anapodisas* is translated as "walking backwards" in both Preisendanz (1973) 5 and Betz (1992) 4, and this interpretation is followed by Graf (1994) 168; but Johnston (2002a) 354 n. 27 points out that this translation is incorrect and misleading. The use of the term does, however, suggest a deliberate action of walking or stepping back from the site of sacrifice. In the daily ritual of an Egyptian temple, the careful sweeping away of footprints upon leaving the sanctuary was called

"Bringing the Foot". See Erman and Grapow (1926–63) 1.91, and Nelson (1949). Perhaps the Greek verb *anapodizein* describes a similar ritual action.

9 Graf (1994) 168.

10 Graf (1994) 169

11 The Greek at this point explicitly represents this process not simply as drowning but deification (*PGM* I.4–5): "Take a sacred falcon and deify it (*apoth[e]ôson*) in the milk of a black cow." In general see *LdÄ* s.v. "Ertrinken/Ertränken"; Griffith (1909); Spiegelberg (1917); Griffiths (1970) 273.

12 Herodotus 2.90: "When anyone, be he Egyptian or stranger, is known to have been carried off by a crocodile or drowned in the river itself, such a one must by all means be embalmed and tended as fairly as may be and buried in a sacred coffin by the townsmen of the place where he is cast up; nor may any of his kinsmen or his friends touch him, but his body is deemed something more than human, and is handled and buried by the priests of the Nile themselves."

13 See Griffith (1909).

14 E.g. *PDM* xiv.88: "and cause him [the scarab beetle] to attain the status of *hesy*"; cf. *PDM* xiv.376ff., 638–9.

15 E.g., *PGM* V.269, 270.

16 As it did for Hadrian's beloved Antinous in 130 AD during the emperor's celebrated journey along the Nile. See also the tale of Naneferkaptah in Setne I, in which the magician Naneferkaptah, his wife Ihwere, and their son Merib each become "praised ones of Re" upon falling in the Nile and drowning. For an English translation, see Lichtheim (1980) 127–37.

17 Ritner (1993) 106–10, who also notes that the ingestion of Egyptianizing ram-, goat-, and bull-faced images is used for initiatory purposes in the "Eighth Book of Moses" (*PGM* XIII.31–7).

18 In general, see Thompson (1988) 190–209, and Ray (1976) 136–46.

19 Ray (1976) no. 19 Recto 4–8: "The benefit which is performed for the Ibis, the soul of Thoth, the three times great, is made (for) the Hawk also, the soul of Ptah, the soul of Apis, the soul of Pre, the soul of Shu, [the soul of Tefnut], the soul of Geb, the soul of Osiris, the soul of Horus, the soul of Isis, the soul of Nephthys, [the great gods (of) Egypt] the Ibis (and) the Hawk." See also *ibid.* p. 137.

20 See Nur-el-Din (1992) 253–4.

21 One tradition reported by Pliny *Natural History* 8.184 (cf. Plutarch *Isis and Osiris* 56) holds that after twenty-five years of life the Apis bull was drowned, then embalmed and buried. There does not appear to be any Egyptian evidence to support this practice, but it is possible that the notion may have later influenced the *PGM* rite under discussion.

22 *PGM* I.24: *lege antikrus autou tou ptênou* . . .

23 For the former, see the note of Ritner in Betz (1992) *ad loc*. Agathos Daimon had become a designation for several gods in Graeco-Roman Egypt.

24 *LdÄ* s.v. "Harponknuphi." The phrase also appears at *PDM* xiv.465 (col. XVI.6), as a Coptic gloss to a Demotic phrase written phonetically with a divine determinative. This suggests to me that in this case the phrase may have been retranscribed into Demotic from a Greek source.

25 *Isis and Osiris* 21.

26 Crum 1939 (368b).

27 *LdÄ* s.v. "Orion".

28 See Griffiths (1970) 372 for various references; in the litany of Re, Orion is identified with Osiris "Lo, King N knows what is there in the Netherworld! He is the great one, the lord of life, Osiris, the ruler of the West. He is like Osiris, his cleverness is like that of Osiris, his power is like that of Osiris, his might is like that of Osiris, his club is like that of the One at the Head of the West. His scepter is that of Orion." See Piankoff (1964) 39 for the text and his notes. Cf. Pyramid Texts §882bc: "Thou art the great star, the companion of Orion, who traverses the sky with Orion, who travels over the Netherworld with Osiris."

29 *PGM* I.30–6 (trans. O'Neil in Betz [1992]) "[you who lie] in the north, / who cause [the] currents of [the] Nile to roll down and mingle with the sea, [transforming them with life] as it does man's seed in sexual intercourse, you who have established the world on an indestructible . . . [foundation], who are young in the morning and [old in the evening], who journey through the subterranean sphere and [rise], breathing fire, you who have parted the seas in the first / month, who [ejaculate] seeds into the [sacred fig] tree of Heliopolis continually. [This] is your authoritative name: *arbath abaôth bakchabrê*."

30 See Nur-el-Din (1992) for inscriptions on ibis coffins from Tûna el-Gebel.

31 The dates are given by Kruchten (1989) 239–43, who suggests that the absence of "textes d'*introduction*" later than the Third Intermediate period could be explained by a change in recording practice, rather than an institutional or religious change. The practice of recording these initiations may also relate to the historical conditions of the Third Intermediate period. The hereditary principle of the Egyptian priesthood familiar from Herodotus developed only late in Egyptian history (ca. Dynasty XX). Moreover, with the advent of Libyan influence in the Twenty-Second Dynasty, there was a great concern among the priesthood for defining the legitimacy of their priestly status through elaborate genealogical records. The records of the "Day of Introduction" (*herv en bes)* stem, no doubt from the same impulse. Nevertheless, there is some evidence of continuity in the practice in the form of Demotic graffiti at Medinet Habu which record the initiation of priests. See Thissen (1989) 18–29 especially p. 21, n. 1.

32 The "god's-father" Pa-di-Amun addresses those who will follow in his footsteps: "O you who will come after me and enter into Ipet-Sut (the temple of Karnak), that is the Ennead of the living (gods)" Kruchten (1989) fragment 1, p. 28. The vizier Harsiese describes his introduction "into the great and venerable seat of Amun, which is the sky/heaven" – Kruchten (1989) fragment 7, p. 62. The initiation, therefore, is envisioned in decidedly vertical terms. The passage is from below to on high, a quality which is evident in the architecture of late sanctuaries such as the Ptolemaic temple of Horus at Edfu, where the ground level gradually rises along the primary axis as one approaches the inner *naos*.

33 Gardiner's sign-list (1957) K5.

34 The term could be qualified by the adjectives for "secret" or "holy", but on its own, the *bes*-image carried connotations of secrecy and exclusivity. See Wilson (1997) 331.

35 There is even a pun on this association in *Edfu* VIII 145, 5; see Wilson (1997) 331–2.

36 Hornung (1976) 42: "May you introduce the king X, may you cause him to go to heaven."

37 For the hieroglyphic text of the Canopus decree, see *Urk.* II.124–54; the examples cited are at lines 23 and 16. Scenes of the introduction of the pharaoh into the presence of the god are relatively common in temple reliefs, and were continued without interruption

into the Hellenistic period, beginning with Alexander the Great. A relief on the sanctuary of Alexander at Luxor shows the Macedonian conqueror as a pharaoh being introduced (*bes*) into the presence of the god Amun. For bibliography, see Porter and Moss (1972) 324–5.

38 Lines 14 and 34. Curiously, the term does not appear to have been retained in the Demotic script. At the relevant places in the Canopus decree, *bes* is replaced with a more prosaic turn of phrase in Demotic. For example, at line 34 *bes sen* ("they were initiated") is rendered "they became priests." In one instance the relationship between initiation and the priestly prerogatives of entering the temple and performing rites there are made explicit. The decree proclaims the creation of a fifth phyle of priests in honor of Berenice, and the privileges to be accorded these priests, who "shall share . . . in every rite of entering (*bes*) in order to perform rites of purification in the temple" (line 16). The Demotic version leaves out the term *bes*, and states only that the priests shall have a share in "the rites of purification." The Greek likewise only states *metekhein de kai tous ek tês pemptês phulês . . . tôn hagneiôn*. I know of no other certain attestations of the term in Demotic. A possible late reference to a *bes*-image in a second-century CE papyrus may refer to an image of the god Bes; see Reymond (1977) 111–16. Another possible attestation (also second century CE) may fall into the same category; see Reymond (1977) 66–7 and 104. A tantalizing possibility exists in a suitable initiatory context at col. 1, l.12 of the Demotic story of Setne Khamwas and Si-Osire, but the word transliterated as *bes* by Griffith (1900) is damaged, and the writing is uncertain in any case.

39 Several references in Wilson (1997) 331.

40 *Dendera* I.42.9 (text in Cauville [1998]); X.13.4; X.268.13 (in Cauville [1997]). Note also *Dendera* I, pl. 64d, discussed by Sauneron (1962), which forbids the initiation (*bes*) of anyone who is not literate.

41 See Derchain (1990).

42 Derchain (1990) 234 translates "En ce qui concerne le «Château de l'Or» et la naissance des idoles . . . il y a là: [there follows a list of craftsmen] en tout douze hommes en service mensuel, soit en tout 48 hommes. Ils ne sont pas initiés (*bes*) auprès du dieu. Ce sont eux qui font venir au monde les statues. Il est inaccessible comme les statues de tout dieu qui se trouve dans le temple . . . Quand on en vient à l'Œuvre secret en toute chose, c'est l'affaire des officiants initiés auprès du dieu, qui sont membres du clergé . . ."

43 See Derchain (1990) 227–8.

44 The translation in Betz (1992) 164–5 is misleading, since it presumes that *ouphôr* is the name of a divinity invoked. For the derivation of *ouphôr*, see Thissen (1991) 299–300 and Vergote (1961) 213–14. As Ritner has noted in Betz (1992) *ad loc*., the second part of the *ouphôr* is a series of invocations each beginning with *êi ieou*, a Greek transliteration of the Egyptian phrase "O, hail!". There are several other names and words in this hymn which appear to be of Egyptian origin. See Thissen, *op. cit*.

45 Smith (1995) 20ff.

46 The absence of "integration", as noted by Graf (1994) 169–70, while it does perhaps reflect the solitary nature of the rite, is perhaps also due to the vertical nature of the rite – any *réaggregation* is with the gods, through a common meal. In priestly terms this was indicated by partaking of the offerings to the god (note one priestly initiate's concern to be included in the sacrificial offering: Kruchten [1989] 62–3).

47 Friedrich (1968) 43–65.

48 On revelation and divine wisdom as part of an initiation experience, cf. Grottanelli in this volume.

49 Lucian *Philopsuedes* 34–6, briefly discussed by Graf (1994) 161.

50 The comments of Ritner (1993) 219–20, and (1995) 3356–8 respond to the essay of J.Z. Smith (1978), in which the latter explored a shift from *locative* to *utopian* modes of religious practice – from the temple to the magician – as the locus of access to the divine.

51 See Moyer (2003).

52 Examples of this sort of tale are found in Plutarch *Moralia* 410a–b and 421a–b; Justin *Dialogue with Trypho* 1–8; and Harpocration *Cyranides* (prologue 30–68 = Kaimakis [1976] 15–17); more comical versions are found in Lucian *Menippus*, (Ps.)-Lucian *Onos*, and Apuleius *Metamorphoses*. For parallels to the spiritual quest in search of the alien wisdom of Egypt, see the Ps.-Clementine *Recognitions*, and Lucian *Philopseudes* 34–6. A native Egyptian parallel is found in the story of Setne Khamwas and Naneferkaptah; for an English translation, see Lichtheim (1980) 127–37.

53 "(1) . . . Many in their lives have tried, august Caesar, to deliver many marvelous things, and not a one has been able to bring his undertakings to completion, owing to the darkness of fate pressing upon their thoughts, but I believe I alone of the men of this age have been able to accomplish something marvelous [and known to few]." Thessalos, Book 1, *proem* 1 (= Friedrich [1968] 45).

54 Thessalos, Book 1, *proem*. 3–6 (Friedrich [1968] 45–7).

55 The translation of this phrase poses some difficulty. I have more or less followed Festugière (1939) 60, who translated the phrase "*epangelias omoias têi propeteia mou [epi]pherontôn*" as "s'indignaient de ma témérité à concevoir de telles espérances" considering the construction a variant of *pherein* with an adverb (*khalepôs*, e.g.) and the dative case. Cf. *LSJ* s.v. *pherô* III.2. Cumont (1918) 92 seems to have favored the restoration *[epi]pherontôn*, translating "reprochent."

56 Thessalos, Book 1 *proem*. 12–14 (= Friedrich [1968] 49–51).

57 Thessalos, Book 1 *proem*. 22 (= Friedrich [1968] 53).

58 Many of the words and phrases in the Greek magical papyri described originally by Preisendanz as "Zauberworte" have, on closer examination, turned out to be transcriptions of Egyptian words or divine names; see the notes of Ritner in Betz (1992) *passim*.

59 On the identity of Nechepso, see Fraser (1972) I.437, who follows Kroll *RE* 16.2160–7; cf. Ray (1974), and Krauss and Fecht (1981).

60 Lewis (1986) 155; Goudriaan (1988) 91.

61 The Theban dynasty of Haronnophris and Chaonnophris (205–186 BC) is treated by Pestman (1995). For the subsequent revolts led by Petosiris in 164 and Harsiesis in 130 BCE, see Turner (1984) 162 and Thompson (1984) 313. According to Pausanias 1.9.3, a final Theban revolt against the Ptolemies in 88 BCE resulted in considerable damage to the city. Thompson (1984) 316–17.

62 Thessalos, Book 1, *proem*. 12.

63 See Tait (1995), and Fowden (1986) 186ff. Johnson (1976) concludes on the basis of Demotic orthography and morphology and the dialect of Coptic glosses that the Demotic magical papyrus of London and Leiden was indeed written in the Theban area. Fowden (1986) 173 links the Theban magical archive, the alchemical papyri of Leiden and Stockholm, and the Nag Hammadi Gnostic library as products of an Upper Egyptian milieu related to Hermetism.

64 Smith (1978) 179.

65 See n. 53 above.

66 The Latin phrase *et quidam eorum faciebant ridiculum de me* ("and some of them mocked me") is clearly a gloss for the rather more obscure Greek in Thessalos *proem*. 13 (see Friedrich [1968] 50). Though Friedrich and others have used the Latin manuscript (Codex Montepessulanus fac. med. 277) to provide restorations elsewhere, it is in general more abbreviated than the Greek – especially here. Smith (1978) 179 n. 33, however, considers this an apt paraphrase. He also emphasizes that the priest who comes to Thessalos' aid "gives Thessalos the 'assurance' (a term which makes sense only if the interpretation of Thessalos' audacity just offered be accepted) that he has the power to produce a vision . . ." At *proem*. 14, however, the term is simply *epêngeilato*, "professed." Perhaps the term *parêgorêsas* "comforted, consoled" in *proem*. 18 is meant. There, however, the context is Thessalos' emotional appeal to the priest.

67 Ritner (1995) 3357, who notes that the Egyptian concept of *heka* continued to be of religious importance in the Roman period. See also Ritner (1998) 9, and Frankfurter (1998) 37ff. and 199 for further evidence of the vitality of Egyptian religion. Second-century literary discussions portray the religion and priests of Egypt as active: Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*; Clement of Alexandria *Stromata* 6.4.35, 37; *Paed*. 3.2.4; *Protrept*. 2.39.

68 Cumont (1918) 92 writes, "La plupart des prêtres lui reprochent de concevoir des espérances téméraires; car la magie était sous les Romains une science réprouvée, et l'exercice de cet art était sévèrement prohibé par les lois pénales." Cf. Festugière (1939) 60 n. 16; Graux (1878) 67f. Smith (1978) 179 rejects this interpretation, though it has been revived by Ritner (see below).

69 As Ritner (1993) 14–28 has shown, the Egyptian concept of "magic" (*heka*) was an important divine attribute and a divinity itself in religious texts as early as the Fifth Dynasty. Magic in the Egyptian understanding was clearly not illicit.

70 As argued by Ritner (1993) 219–20, and (1995) 3356–8. Thessalos' priest initially professed that he could procure a vision through lekanomancy (bowl divination). A number of such rituals, called *shen hen* or "vessel inquiry," are preserved in the Demotic magical papyri: *PDM* xiv.1–92; 239–95; 295–308; 395–427; 528–53; 627–35; 670–4; 695–700; 805–40; 841–50; 851–5; 1110–29. When the appointed day arrives, however, Thessalos requests a direct interview with the god, and in the description of the revelation that follows there is no mention of a bowl. In the Demotic magical papyri, such a rite in which the god is seen in a direct vision is usually called a *peh-netjer* ("god's arrival"). See Johnson (1977), the original publication of the text appearing in Betz (1992) as *PDM* Suppl. The term appears as follows: *PDM* xiv.117 (5/1), 145 (5/29), 170 (6/20), 176 (6/26), 232 (8/12), 828 (27/24), 833 (27/29), 836 (27/32); *PDM* Suppl. 130, 149, 168. Numbers in parentheses refer to column and line number of *PDM* xiv as published in Griffith and Thompson (1905). The *peh-netjer* was a type of rite, which from the New Kingdom onward consisted of an oracular petition to a divine image. This was a normal religious method of making decisions and seeking the help or advice of a divinity in Egyptian religion.

71 Ritner (1995) 3355–6.

72 In 199 AD, Q. Aemilius Saturninus issued a prohibition of several native Egyptian forms of divination, which is preserved in *P. Yale* inv. 299, for which see Paráglossou (1976). The efficacy of such decrees is not beyond doubt, however, and some prohibited practices seem to have continued after this legislation. See Frankfurter (1998) 153ff.

73 This interpretation was originally proposed by Ritner (1993) 219 n. 102 and (1995) 3357.

74 See n. 68 above.

75 See, e.g. Johnson (1992) lv; and Ritner's comments (1995) 3356.

76 *P. Salt* 825 (= B.M. 10051) VII.5; Derchain (1965) 140 and 168. In this regard, it is relevant to note that the downfall of Setne Kham was in the tale of Setne and Naneferkaptah begins just after the phrase (Setne I 4/38) "there was no occupation on earth for Setne besides unrolling the scroll [of Thoth] and reading it to everyone"; for an English translation see Lichtheim (1980) 133.

77 The former text is among the general injunctions on the south doorpost of the eastern entrance to the pronaos (Chassinat 1928) 360.12–362.4 and Alliot 1954: 185); and the latter is among the texts on the north doorpost of the southeastern entrance to the courtyard (Chassinat 1930: 343.13–344.11). For translations of both texts, see Kurth (1994) 148 and 151. Another injunction to maintaining ritual secrecy is found in the above mentioned ritual papyrus; see Derchain (1965) 139. Other examples are also noted in Ritner (1993) 203–4; see especially the Esna inscription 197, l.20, in Sauneron (1968) 12: "Do not permit any Asiatic to enter the temple whether he be old or young."

78 Chassinat (1952) 60/10–61/2. See also *ibid.* 54, lines 6–8, and 97, l.4.

79 Assmann (1992) 11 remarks that Late Period Egyptian temples differ from earlier ones in the box principle of their design. At Edfu, for example, five concentric walls and intervening zones protect the inner sanctuary from the outside world. The traditional idea of unapproachability and secretness was exacerbated in later periods by a "Profanationsangst".

80 Codex Matritensis Bibl. nat. 4631 (T).

81 Codex Montepessulanus fac. med 277 (M), and Codex Vindobonensis 3124 (V).

82 See above, p. 14.

83 Thessalos, Epilogue 15 (M): *his autem dictis deus in celum ascendit. et sic reversus sum in media nocte ad sacerdotem et in die crastino recipiens aurum mihi sufficiens et res necessarias licentiatus sum a sacerdote*. (V): *quibus dictis deus ascendit in celum. et sic reversus sum media nocte cum sacerdote et die crastina recipiens aurum mihi sufficiens et res necessarias licentiatus sum a sacerdote*. Friedrich (1968) 271–2.

84 The term *licentiatus* in this medieval Latin translation of the Greek text, may simply mean "dismissed," but it is also tempting to read it in the sense of the medieval licentiate, which conferred permission to teach. Perhaps underlying this paraphrase is an element of the Greek text, which suggested the formalization of a new status or the completion of the initiation.

85 M (epilogue 16): "*verum tamen rogabam ipsum, ut veniret mecum, ut probaremus simul virtutes herbarum traditarum a deo, postquam venerit tempus collectionis*" ("Nevertheless, I asked him to come with me, so that we could demonstrate together the powers of the plants transmitted by the god, after the time for gathering came.") V (epilogue 16–19): "*rogavi tamen ipsum, ut veniret ad probandum mecum virtutem herbarum a deo mihi traditarum. et postquam advenit tempus colligendi herbas, veni in Alexandriam et colligens herbe sucum habentis maiorem probavi virtutem et inveni sicut dictum est. admiratus sum et sic expertus sum virtutem omnium in spatio anni unius et certificatus scripsi librum, per quem promisi hominem in spatio brevi medicum facere. quidam tamen ignorantes virtutem herbarum, que tradite erant per librum, reprehendebant nescientes finem, sed [postquam] tempus advenit, probavi coram eis, sicut promisi, et certificati sunt*" ("Nevertheless, I asked him to come so as to prove with me the power of the herbs transmitted to me by the god. And after the time for collecting herbs arrived, I came

to Alexandria and collecting plants containing sap, I demonstrated the greater power and found it to be as was proclaimed. I was astonished and so I tested the power of them all in the space of one year and having become convinced, I wrote a book, through which I promised to make a man a doctor in a short time. Some, however, ignorant of the power of the plants transmitted in the book were full of reproach, not knowing the result, but [after] the time came, I demonstrated it before them, just as I promised and they were convinced.")

86 Smith (1995) 27.