

A History of the Theban Magical Library¹

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Abstract

The Theban Magical Library is widely recognised by scholars of Roman Egyptian magic as the most important surviving magical archive, but to date several inconsistent models of its contents have been proposed. This article looks at the collection history of the manuscripts, discussing the evidence for their provenance in the catalogues and associated material from their initial sales, and briefly discusses relevant features of their content. Based on these criteria, ten magical and alchemical papyri can probably be associated with the Theban Library, while a further nine, associated with the Library by various authors, can be excluded.

The existence of a single archive, containing many of the large magical handbooks from Roman Egypt, was first suggested by Caspar Reuvers in 1830 in the first of his *Lettres à M. Letronne*.² Since then, the existence and contents of this “Theban Magical Library” have become a matter of great interest to scholars of ancient Mediterranean magic. Such an archive would offer us the possibility of reconstructing the long-term collecting habits, ritual practice, and scribal and social milieu of its owner or owners in greater depth than would be possible with unrelated texts, but such projects ultimately depend upon accurately identifying its contents. There have been several important treatments of this subject in the last hundred years, and these will be discussed later in this article. Most of these, however, have relied upon secondary sources – the published remarks of Reuvers, Preisendanz, and others – rather

¹ This study would not have been possible without funding from the Macquarie University Gale Graeco-Roman Travelling Scholarship, the Macquarie University Postgraduate Research Fellowship, and the Society for the Study of Early Christianity Travel Grant, which allowed me to visit the archives holding the documents discussed in this article.

² C.J.C. Reuvers, *Lettres à M. Letronne sur les papyrus bilingues et grecs et sur quelques autres monumens gréco-égyptiens du Musée d'Antiquités de l'Université de Leide* (Leiden 1830) 145-148, third letter.

than on the documentary material which gives the most immediate access to their origins. The purpose of this discussion is first to present this evidence, adding to it the most important physical and textual details from the papyri themselves. This discussion will be followed by a survey of alternative models of the Theban Library, in order to explain why I reject several papyri often associated with this archive.

Occasionally we are lucky enough to have a clear, recorded context for Egyptian magical material: the Middle Kingdom Ramesseum Papyri were discovered in a burial beneath the funerary temple of Rameses II,³ while the Greek and Coptic magical material from Roman Kellis was uncovered in House 3 of Area A.⁴ But the majority of the magical handbooks, or formularies, which survive from the Roman period were purchased from dealers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, so that their origins can only be inferred. Such is the case with the Theban Library, and for this reason its status as an archive is only a probability rather than a certainty. Nonetheless, the balance of evidence does seem to argue for a relationship among its constituent papyri. The ten manuscripts I identify here as belonging to the Theban Library first appeared in recent history as the property of Jean d'Anastasy, the Consul-General of Sweden and Norway in Egypt from 1828-1857, who sold or donated them to several European collections.

The first sale was a lot which Anastasy originally intended to sell to his adopted homeland, Sweden,⁵ but which was purchased, after extended nego-

³ On this archive, see R.B. Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry* (Chichester/Malden, MA 2009) 138-172.

⁴ The Kellis magical papyri are *P.Kell.Gr.* 1.85 a + b, 86, 87; *P.Kell.Copt.* 35. Also of interest are *P.Kell.Gr.* 1.88, a prayer to the Christian god for good health, *P.Kell.Gr.* 1.82 and 83, two lists of good and bad days, and *P.Kell.Gr.* 1.84, a horoscope. For discussions of this material see I. Gardner, A. Alcock, and W.-P. Funk, *Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis*, vol.1 (Oxford 1999) 115-116, and M. de Haro Sanchez, "Les papyrus iatromagiques grecs de Kellis," *Lucida Intervalla* 37 (2008) 91-93. See also *P.Kell.Copt.* 56, found in a different part of Kellis (Area D, room 7, 2), a miniature codex containing a spell against snake-bite.

⁵ See for example Anastasy's letter of 17/2/1827 in *Kabinetter för brevväxlingen: Skrivelser från konsuler 1809-80* vol. 40 in the Swedish Riksarkiv; on page two of the triplicate letter he says: "... j'ajoutai, qu'au cas que S.A. eût le desir de cette acquisition, je priais Mr. Berggren de me l'apprendre à fin que je pusse en faire mettre le Catalogue sous les yeux de S. A. Royale; Je n'ai pas dû laisser ignorer que d'autres projets m'ayant été faits pour cette Collection, j'allais y répondre de manière à ne prendre aucun engagement, bien resolu de donner, sous tous les rapports, la preference à mon Prince & à ma Patrie adoptive" ("I added [in my previous letter], that in the case that His Majesty [Charles XIV & John III of Sweden and Norway] had the desire for this acquisition [of the col-

tations, by the Dutch Government for the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden in 1828. This original sale included about 5,600 objects and 147 papyri, to which Anastasy added three items as a gift to the buyer – a Byzantine helmet and two papyri.⁶ The second lot, purchased by the British Museum in 1839, consisted of approximately 1,326 items, including 44 papyri.⁷ The final lot, prepared in 1846,⁸ was sold in 1857.⁹ Held in Paris, the public nature of this auction meant that the 1,129 lots listed in the sale were purchased by several different European collections.

In addition to these sales, Anastasy also made gifts of several items in his collection. Relevant here is the alchemical codex *P.Holm.*, donated to the Stockholm Museum at some point before the 27th of August 1832, the date of a letter of thanks to Anastasy from the Kungliga Vitterhets-, Historie- och Antiquitets-Akademien (“Royal Academy of Letters, History, and Antiquities”) preserved alongside the papyrus.¹⁰ After being held at institutions in both Stockholm and Uppsala, the papyrus is now held at the Kungliga Bibliotek in Stockholm.

Within the catalogues for these three sales, nine of the ten magical/alchemical papyri had “Thebes” listed as their provenance. It is possible that this attribution is mistaken or fictitious, but the apparent care with which the

lection], I bid Mr. [Jacob] Berggren to inform me, that I might have the Catalogue put before His Royal Majesty; I did not have to conceal the fact that other offers had been made for this Collection, [since] I was going to respond to them in a manner so as to make no other commitment, resolved to give, in all respects, preference to my Prince & my adopted Homeland”).

⁶ The catalogue for this sale is held by the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden: RMO inv. 3.1.6. The additional objects are listed in the triplicate letter (*Triplicata*) written by Anastasy to his agents on 18/3/1828 (RMO Archief Humbert 19.3.1831). The fullest description of the sale is in R.B. Halbertsma, *Le Solitaire des Ruines. De archeologische reizen van Jean Emile Humbert (1771-1839) in dienst van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden* (Leiden 1995) 91-108; a briefer description in English can be found in R.B. Halbertsma, *Scholars, Travellers and Trade: The Pioneer Years of the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, 1818-1840* (London 2003) 99-107.

⁷ The catalogue for this collection is held by the British Museum, Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan: AES Ar.246. For a discussion of this sale see U. Luft, “Lepsius und der Verkauf der Sammlung d’Anastasi in den Jahren 1838/39,” in E. Freier and W.F. Reineke (eds.), Karl Richard Lepsius (1810-1884). *Akten der Tagung anlässlich seines 100. Todestages, 10.-12. 7.1984 in Halle* (Berlin 1988) 292-313.

⁸ A handwritten catalogue of the collection is held by the British Museum, Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan: AES Ar. 232.

⁹ The catalogue for this sale is F. Lenormant, *Catalogue d’une collection d’antiquités égyptiennes* (Paris 1857).

¹⁰ O. Lagercrantz, *Papyrus Graecus Holmiensis (P.Holm.)*. *Recepte für Silber, Steine und Purpur* (Uppsala 1913) 45.

diverse origins of the papyri (and only the papyri) are noted tends to suggest that we should take this geographical placement seriously.¹¹ The following list gives brief descriptions of all of the papyri which can be associated with the Theban Library with some certainty; all of the Greek magical papyri were originally edited by Preisendanz and his collaborators,¹² and translations of

¹¹ The catalogue for the 1828 sale contains papyri attributed to Thebes, Memphis, Philae, and Elephantine; the catalogue of the 1838 sale only contains papyri from Memphis and Thebes; the catalogue for the 1857 sale (AES Ar.232) contains papyri only from Thebes. The variability in the assigned provenances, as well as the presence of a large number of entries from the 1828 sale which note that no provenance for a particular papyrus was known, imply that Anastasy, or his agents, did keep notes on where papyri were purchased or said to be found, and did not simply invent them where no record existed. The correct attribution of, for example, P.Leid. I 396 to Memphis, confirms that these attributions are at times reliable, although the inherent uncertainty arising from the fact that these papyri come from an unrecorded excavation must be borne when advancing arguments about the specifically Theban nature of the Theban Library; see for example W.J. Tait's discussion ("Theban magic," in S.P. Vleeming [ed.], *Hundred-Gated Thebes: Acts of a Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban Area in the Graeco-Roman Period* [Leiden 1995] 176-179) which finds relatively few clearly local elements in the papyri, although this could equally indicate the non-Theban origin of the individual texts (as opposed to the manuscripts in which they are copied), or the cosmopolitan outlook of the material. A notable exception in this regard is PDM xiv, which names several local deities, and which displays dialectal features from the Theban region (J.H. Johnson, "The dialect of the Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden," in J.H. Johnson and E.F. Wente [eds.], *Studies in Honor of George R. Hughes* [Chicago 1977] 105-32; these features are also present in the other Demotic texts). For an interesting comparison see J. Dijkstra's discussion of the Patermouthis archive ("New Light on the Patermouthis Archive," *BASP* 44 [2007] 198-207), apparently discovered by unauthorised excavations in Aswan in 1906 and subsequently sold in two lots in 1907 and 1908, in Luxor and Cairo respectively, and originally given an incorrect provenance in Elephantine. As Dijkstra notes (p. 198, n. 74), citing E.G. Turner's (*Greek Papyri: An Introduction* [Oxford 19802] 42-53) dictum that "[a]ny statement about provenance made by a finder or dealer in antiquities is open to suspicion," papyri sold by dealers were often falsely attributed to well-known sites such as Luxor/Thebes in order to increase their prestige, and hence their price.

¹² K. Preisendanz, E. Heitsch, and A. Henrichs (eds.), *Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Stuttgart 1973-1974). For PDM xii, see J.H. Johnson, "The Demotic Magical Spells of Leiden I 384," *OMRO* 56 (1975) 29-64; for PDM xiv, see F.Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden*, 3 vols. (London 1904-1921); and for PDM Suppl., see J.H. Johnson "Louvre E3229: A Demotic Magical Text," *Enchoria* 7 (1977) 55-102.

them exist in English, Spanish, and French.¹³ The alchemical papyri have most recently been edited, with French translation, by Halleux.¹⁴ The papyri are dated palaeographically to the third and fourth centuries CE.¹⁵

PGM I

= P.Berl. Inv. 5025 + Warsaw MN 140159; Anastasy 1074 (1857)¹⁶

= Trismegistos number: 88396

A Greek magical roll. Acquired by the Königlische Museen zu Berlin as part of the 1857 sale in Paris. Shortly after the Second World War, the first of the two fragments of which this papyrus is composed was transferred to the Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, Warsaw.¹⁷ In his discussion of the Theban Library,

¹³ H.D. Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation Including the Demotic spells* (Chicago 1992 [original edition 1986]); J.L. Calvo Martínez and D. Sánchez Romero, *Textos de Magia en Papiros Griegos* (Madrid 1987); M. Martin, *Les papyrus grecs magiques* (Paris 2002).

¹⁴ R. Halleux, *Les alchimistes grecs*, vol. 1 (Paris 1981).

¹⁵ For the dating of the texts, I follow the judgements of R. Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt* (Princeton 2009) 83–85, who assigns the rolls (PGM I, II; PDM/PGM XII, XIV, Suppl.) to the third-century, and the codices (PGM IV, V, XIII; P.Holm. + PGM Va; P.Leid. I 397) to the fourth, which would accord with the general trend in manuscript formats in Roman Egypt; for more detailed discussions refer to the various editions of the texts. The dates which have been most disputed are those of PGM I, II and PDM/PGM XII, all of which are dated by Bagnall to the third-century, but by earlier editors to the fourth or even fifth. A fourth or fifth century date was given to PGM I, and a fourth century date to PGM II in PGM 1, p. 1, 18, although Preisendanz (*Papyrusfunde und Papyrusforschung* [Leipzig 1933] 95) later seems to have revised his opinion and assigned them both to the third-century. A more recent assessment of PGM I by A. Monte (“Un manuale di magia greco a Berlino: il Papyrus Berolinensis Inv. 5026,” in M. de Haro Sanchez [ed.], *Écrire la magie dans l'antiquité* [Liège 2015] 36) has returned to the fourth-century date; my own impression is that Bagnall's third-century date is probably correct for these two rolls. For an early third-century date for PDM/PGM XII see the arguments of J. Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites* (Leiden 2005) 41–44.

¹⁶ Since Preisendanz's annotated bibliography (“Die griechischen Zauberpapyri,” *APF* 8 [1927] 104–167), “Anastasy numbers” have often been attached to the papyri. While these refer to catalogue numbers, there are three catalogues involved, each with its own independent numbering system, so that to refer to PDM XII simply as “Anastasy 75” is rather misleading. To reflect this, I include the year of the auction in brackets after each number.

¹⁷ A number of Berlin papyri were sold in Warsaw in the aftermath of the Second World War, apparently from Soviet soldiers. Since many of these were found along train lines, it seems the glass in which some of them were kept was traded by the soldiers guarding the trains for food and other supplies, and the papyri abandoned. See the discussion of the other lost Berlin papyri held by the University of Warsaw in E.

Brashear excluded both this papyrus and the following *PGM* II, apparently on the basis of their format – Greek rolls were somewhat shorter than the rest of the material – but given the variety of formats, languages, and lengths in the rest of the Library, this seems unwarranted.¹⁸

PGM II^{18a}

= P.Berl. Inv. 5026; Anastasy 1075 (1828)

= Trismegistos number: 8839

A Greek magical roll. Acquired by the Königliche Museen zu Berlin as part of the 1857 sale in Paris.

PGM IV

= P.Bibl.Nat.Suppl.gr. no. 574; Anastasy 1073 (1857)

= Trismegistos number: 64343

A Greek and Old Coptic magical codex. Acquired by the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris in the 1857 sale.

PGM V

= *P.Lond.* 1.46; Anastasy 4 (1839)

= Trismegistos number: 64368

A Greek magical codex. Acquired by the British Museum Department of Manuscripts as part of the 1839 sale, and transferred to its successor, the British Library, after its creation in 1973.

P.Holm. + *PGM* Va¹⁹

= P.Holm. Royal Dep. 45

= Trismegistos number: 64429

A Greek alchemical codex, containing one loose leaf (*PGM* Va) with a ritual calling upon the sun-god for revelation. Given as a gift to the Swedish Royal

Wipszycka et al., “Papyri and Ostraca Kept in the Department of Papyrology of Warsaw University: A Web Page Project,” *JJP* 20 (2000) 265–266.

¹⁸ Brashear, “The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey: Annotated Bibliography (1928–1994),” in *ANRW* 2.18.5 (1995) 3404.

^{18a} This papyrus has recently been identified as a fragment from the same roll as *PGM* VI. See the addendum to this article for more details.

¹⁹ The idiosyncratic numbering of the *PGM*, especially among the lower numbers, is apparently due to Preisendanz’s collaborator Richard Wünsch, who established the numbering at the beginning of the project. This numbering was retained due to the working process established by the editors. In the case of *PGM* Va it appears that Wünsch believed that the leaf might have mistakenly been excerpted from *PGM* V, a codex of roughly similar dimensions; see *PGM* 2, p. v.

Academy of Letters, History, and Antiquities c.1832, it was originally held at the Statens historiska museum in Stockholm, which acquired ownership of it at some point, but in 1906 was moved to the Victoriamuseum in Uppsala.²⁰ It was returned to Stockholm in 1927, where it is kept at the Kungliga Bibliotek, which acquired ownership of the papyrus in 2013.²¹ Since it was not listed in any of Anastasy's catalogues, this is the only papyrus here without an assigned provenance, but since it shares the same hand as PGM XIII and P.Leid. I 397, we should expect it to have the same origin.

PDM xii/PGM XII

= P.Leid. I 384; Anastasy 75 + 75a (1828);²² *P.Leid.Gr.* 2 no. V

= Trismegistos numbers: 55954 (*PDM/PGM XII*) + 55946 (*Myth of the Sun's Eye*)

A bilingual Greek and Demotic roll with magical content, with an earlier Demotic literary text, *The Myth of the Sun's Eye*, on the other side (technically the front →). It was acquired by the Rijksmuseum as part of the 1828 sale. Half of the papyrus was included in the original sale, the second half was one of the additional papyri given by Anastasy as a gift.

PGM XIII

= P.Leid. I 395; Anastasy 76 (1828);²³ *P.Leid.Gr.* 2 no. W

= Trismegistos number: 64446

A Greek magical codex, acquired by the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden as one of the additional papyri given along with the main sale in 1828. The first 21 pages of this codex are written in the same hand as *P.Holm.* and P.Leid. I 397.

PDM xiv/PGM XIV

= P.Leid. I 383; Anastasy 65 (1828) + P.BM EA 10070; Anastasy 1072 (1857)

= Trismegistos number: 55955

²⁰ *P.Holm.*, p. 45.

²¹ Private communications from Hendrik Mäkelä, 2/7/2013 (citing information from the Victoriamuseet database), and from Anna Wolodarski, librarian at the Kungliga Bibliotek, 2/12/2014.

²² Strictly speaking this number is fictive, since this papyrus was not included in the auction catalogue and therefore did not have a number (it is no. 2 in the *Triplicata*). The number was assigned to it by Reuvers (n. 2) 146, third letter.

²³ Again, this number is fictive, since the papyrus was not included in the auction catalogue. This papyrus was designated as no. 3 in the *Triplicata*.

A bilingual Demotic and Greek magical roll. The Leiden half was part of the 1828 purchase, while the second part was purchased by the British Museum in the 1857 sale.

PDM Suppl.

= P.Louvre E3229; Anastasy 1061 (1857)

= Trismegistos number: 64218

Bilingual Demotic and Greek roll with magical content, acquired by the Musée du Louvre as part of the 1857 sale.

P.Leid. I 397

= Anastasy 66 (1828); *P.Leid.Gr.* 2 no. X

= Trismegistos number: 61300

An alchemical codex purchased by the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in the 1828 sale.

It would be unreasonable to expect a group of magical papyri to belong to a single archive simply because they derived from the same general area, Thebes. We would expect that there were multiple practitioners in this area at any one time, who might have left multiple textual remains.²⁴ Yet when we add to this observation the fact that they belonged to the same collector, and were dispersed in overlapping sales, it seems most likely that they do belong together – it is more probable that the collector discovered a cache than that he acquired ten similar papyri of a rather unusual type from disparate sources.²⁵ The ten papyri are similarly, and unusually, large among surviving formularies, and display a consistent interest in revelational divination and alchemy which are not present to the same extent in most other papyri from the same period.²⁶

²⁴ Compare the situation with alchemy, where alongside the owner of the Theban Library, the Thebaid of the fourth-century was also home, at least, to Zosimus of Panopolis, and perhaps his correspondent Theosebeia, and rivals Neilos and Paphnutia; see M. Mertens, “Alchemy, Hermetism and Gnosticism at Panopolis c. 300 A.D.: The Evidence of Zosimus,” in A. Egberts, B.P. Muhs and J. van der Vliet (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis: An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest: Acts of an International Symposium Held in Leiden on 16, 17 and 18 December 1998* (Leiden 2002) 169-170.

²⁵ For this point, see also the comments of Bagnall (n. 15) 82-86.

²⁶ For a discussion of the interests of the Theban Library, and the degree to which these can be considered “typical” of the period, see K. Dosoo, “Magical Discourses, Ritual Collections: Cultural Trends and Private Interests in Egyptian Handbooks and Archives,” in T. Derda et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 27th International Congress of Papyrology* (Warsaw 2016) 699-716.

Also notable is the fact that, with the exception of *PGM V* and *P.Holm.*, all the papyri were sold in two lots, each of which contained at least one papyrus (*PDM/PGM XIV*) from the group of bilingual Greek and Demotic texts:

1828 sale: *PDM/PGM XII*, *PGM XIII*, *PDM/PGM XIV* and *P.Leid. I 397*

1857 sale: *PGM I*, *II*, *IV*, *PDM/PGM XIV*, *PDM Suppl.*

In addition to this probabilistic evidence, more concrete proof can be adduced from the papyri themselves. Three of the fourth-century magical/alchemical codices – *PGM Va/P.Holm.*, *PGM XIII* and *P.Leid. I 397* – were written in the same, distinctive hand, and this writer may be responsible for an annotation on the inside cover of the similarly dated *PGM IV*.²⁷ While the bilingual Demotic/Greek papyri, *PDM/PGM XII*, *PDM/PGM XIV*, *PDM Suppl.*, do not seem to share an identical hand, there are certainly similarities in their writing of both the Greek/Old Coptic and Demotic scripts, and they all display a use of a cipher alphabet found in no other papyri.²⁸

To this evidence, we may add an annotation in the 1828 sale catalogue, repeated in Reuven's notes to *PDM/PGM XII*, which tells us that it "ce papyrus [s]e trouve avec le No 66 [*P.Leid. I 397*]"²⁹ Without access to his archives and letters,³⁰ it is unclear exactly what he meant by this, but the most obvious inter-

²⁷ Both Preisendanz (*PGM 2*, p. 64) and L. LiDonnici ("Compositional Patterns in *PGM IV*," *BASP* 40 [2003] 152) note that the writing on this first page was added later, but do not comment on the hand. The brevity of the text makes it difficult to be certain that it is related to the hand of the alchemical texts, but there are certainly notable similarities.

²⁸ Brashear has often claimed (e.g. [n. 18] 3402-3404) that the hands of all three are the same, citing Johnson (n. 12) as a reference, but in fact her opinion, stated most explicitly on pp. 88-89, is that only *PDM xii* and *xiv* are by the same scribe, and that *PDM Suppl.* is quite similar. Johnson has confirmed her opinion on this matter to me in a private communication (3/7/2013). The idea that the hands are the same has also been disputed by J.F. Quack ("Griechische und andere Dämonen in den spätdemotischen magischen Texten" in T. Schneider [ed.], *Das Ägyptische und die Sprachen Vorderasiens, Nordafrikas und der Ägäis* [Münster 2004] 429) and J. Dieleman (*Priests, Tongues, and Rites* [Leiden 2005] 28, n. 12). Since it seems that the Greek and Demotic script on each papyrus is by the same scribe, the fact that the three Greek hands are clearly different must lead us to conclude that Quack and Dieleman are correct, that the Demotic hands are similar, but belong to different scribes.

²⁹ "...this papyrus is to be found with No.66" (*Rijksmuseum van Oudheden. Inventaris 4. april 1829-okt. 1838*, p. 31); cf. "[Av]ec le no.66" (*RMO inv.3.1.6*, p. 99).

³⁰ The RMO is in the process of digitising their archive of letters (<http://archieven.rmo.nl/index.php>); hopefully examination of this resource will shed further light on any communication between Reuven and Anastasy and his agents.

pretation is that the two manuscripts were boxed, and thus probably shipped, together. This would create a further connection between two of the important groups, the “alchemical” and “bilingual Greek-Demotic” groups – those written in the same hand as P.Leid. I 397, and those written in a mixture of Demotic and Greek. There is also a connection of content here: *PGM XII* contains a brief alchemical section (ll. 193-204),³¹ making it, along with *P.Holm.*, one of only two known Greek magical papyri with related alchemical material.

Further, though less certain, evidence is supplied by François Lenormant, who wrote the catalogue to the 1857 auction, and claimed that the magical papyri from this sale belonged to the same collection as the Leiden papyri. We must question how much information he had about Anastasy’s collection, however; he does not include *PDM Suppl.* in his list of the papyri from the Theban Library, probably because he understood it to be a funerary text,³² and he tells us that Anastasy discovered the library in his excavations at Thebes.³³ In fact, Anastasy’s own clearest statement on the Library comes in the triplicate letter to his agents dated 18 March 1828, in which he describes how he acquired *PDM/PGM XII* “de la main des Arabes (qui suivant leur frauduleuse coutume l’ont probablement détaché du papyrus principal afin d’en tirer un plus grand prix par la double vente).”³⁴

We might perhaps try to reconcile the two statements, for example by postulating that one of the Egyptian excavators found the papyrus during a dig under the direction of one of Anastasy’s agents, and later attempted to sell half of it back to him, but since the triplicate letter explicitly refers to a “double sale” (“double vente”) we must assume that both portions were acquired by purchase rather than excavation. It seems most likely to me that Lenormant possessed little or no information about the Library from Anastasy or his agents, but rather made an educated guess based on his assessment of their contents, drawing upon the inferences of Reuvsens, whose *Lettres à M. Letronne* he mentions

³¹ See also ll. 401-444, a list of names for ingredients with parallels in alchemical material.

³² His description of the papyrus is as follows (Lenormant [n. 9] 86): “Assez gros manuscrit funéraire en écriture démotique.”

³³ Lenormant (n. 9) 84: “M. Anastasi, dans ses fouilles à Thèbes avait découvert la bibliothèque d’un gnostique égyptien du second siècle...”

³⁴ “... from the hand of Arabs (who following their fraudulent custom probably detached it from the principal papyrus in order to receive a greater price by the double sale).” RMO Archief Humbert 19.3.1831, p. 3.

in his discussion, going so far as to echo Reuven's assessment of the owner of the Library as a "gnostique."³⁵

Yet Anastasy's statement about the anonymous "Arabs" has its own implications; not only *PDM/PGM* XII, but also *PDM/PGM* XIV were sold as two separate fragments, so we might guess that this papyrus was also cut by the "Arabs." Anastasy's dislike of cutting papyri is suggested by the reason given in his triplicate letter for making a gift of the second half of *PDM/PGM* XII: he wanted to keep the two halves in the hands of a single collector.³⁶ If this was his policy, it is reasonable to ask why he did not also include the second half of *PDM/PGM* XIV, which in turn leads us to the possibility that he did not at that time possess it. It is indeed possible that the reason for the staggered sale of the Theban Library texts is due, not to Anastasy, but rather to the "Arabs," who may have sold him the papyri in small groups, according to financial or other exigencies. Thus, if the first collector of the Theban Library was not Anastasy, but one of the "Arabs," we may ask whether the other papyri, which I have excluded from consideration since they do not derive from Anastasy's collection (see below), might in fact belong to the Theban Library, having simply been sold by the initial collector to another buyer. Without further details about Anastasy's acquisition of the papyri – ideally in the form of primary documentation or letters mentioning the purchase(s) – we cannot rule out this possibility, but it seems unlikely on two grounds. Firstly, it is possible that Anastasy did possess all the texts of the Library as of 1828, or shortly thereafter, but was, consciously or unconsciously, not as consistent in his policy as his letter suggests. Secondly, the last secure documents from the Library were prepared for sale in 1846, and were therefore acquired by Anastasy by that year at the latest. By contrast, the most commonly cited non-Anastasy-derived papyrus attributed to the Library, *PGM* VII, was acquired by the British Museum in 1888, more than 40 years later. Thus, while it does not seem impossible that a private Egyptian might have held onto a set of texts for about 20 years (c. 1828–c. 1846), to assume that they were sold over the course of 60 years (c. 1828–1888) – an entire lifetime – seems considerably less likely.³⁷

³⁵ Lenormant (n. 9) 84: "... dans la nouvelle collection de M. Anastasi, nous avons un supplément très-important à joindre aux textes étudiés par Reuven dans ses Lettres à M. Letronne."

³⁶ RMO Archief Humbert 19.3.1831, p. 3: "... je me fais un scrupule de le réunir comme membre au corps que je crois être le sien, et j'éprouve une véritable satisfaction de pouvoir procurer au possesseur de ma collection un avantage qui peut être précieux."

³⁷ Compare the comments of Giovanni d'Athanasio on "the custom of the Arabs of not choosing to sell at one time and to the same person, all the collection of antiquities which they happen to have; preferring [*sic*] rather to sell them from time to time,

This does leave two further criteria – those of content and form – unaddressed. Unlike documentary texts, magical formularies do not generally contain names of individuals or places which would allow us to connect them unambiguously with other papyri, and while the criterion of shared hands allows some stronger links to be made between texts, it is commonplace, and indeed expected, for archives to contain multiple hands. While magical archives often contain multiple copies of individual texts – we might think here of the three recensions of the *Ogdoad of Moses* in PGM XIII (ll. 1-343, 343-346, 646-734) and the notable parallel between the demotic and Old Coptic material in PGM IV 11-25 and PDM xiv 627-635 – it is clear that material is also shared between manuscripts which have no relationship to one another – here the similarly striking parallel between PDM xiv 1219-1227 and P.Mich. MS Copt. 136 ll. 66-68 comes to mind; the first of these texts is a third-century Demotic roll, the second is a sixth-century codex from the Fayum. It seems that individual texts circulated freely within, and indeed beyond, Egypt, so that while it is worthwhile to observe and analyse the replication of textual content within archives, it is much less clear that a close relationship between particular manuscripts can be demonstrated based on shared content.

The final criterion, that of form, may lie behind the assumption of past authors that all of the large formularies containing multiple recipes should be assigned to a single archive. Within the Theban Anastasy material, there are relatively close similarities of format between PGM I and II, between the Leiden codices, and between PDM/PGM XIV and Suppl. While there are no comparable similarities of format between the Anastasy texts and other magical material, we might observe that while nearly a hundred Greek formularies are known to us, a little over a dozen are in the form of large rolls or codices, while the remainder tend to be smaller sheets, and so these larger manuscripts can thus be said to share a more general similarity of format. Since most of these large manuscripts belonged to the Theban Library, authors with more expansive models of the Library would suggest that the long-form magical manuscript was used only within the community of the Library, and that therefore all of the longer texts without clear provenance (PGM III, VII, XXXVI; PDM/PGM LXI) should also be assigned to it, with the assumption that it originally formed a single cache which was discovered or broken up over an extended

and to different travellers, in order that they may demand a higher price for them”; G. d’Athanasī, *A Brief Account of the Researches and Discoveries in Upper Egypt, Made under the Direction of Henry Salt, Esq.* (London 1836) 10. It is worth briefly noting that despite the confusion of M. Zago (in *Tebe magica e alchemica* [Padova 2010] and elsewhere), and a few others, Giovanni “Yanni” d’Athanasī and Jean d’Anastasy are different individuals, both well attested by historical documents.

period of time. But this argument is made more difficult by the existence of fragments of similar material from other contexts,³⁸ as well as by the large number of broadly similar Coptic formularies,³⁹ while the exclusion of even one of these manuscripts – the most obvious candidate here is *PGM XXXVI*, with its late sale and Fayumic provenance (see below) – would demonstrate that the long-form magical manuscript was not unique to the community of the Theban Library. It seems to me that we simply do not know enough about the development of the manuscript formats of this genre to convincingly make arguments based on general similarities, so that until more thorough synoptic analyses of the textual and physical characteristics of magical texts from Roman Egypt have been completed, the safest criterion seems to be that advanced above – belonging to the group of papyri acquired by Anastasy in Thebes – leaving the uniqueness or otherwise of the Theban Library as a proposition to be demonstrated rather than assumed.⁴⁰ This is not to say that attempts to establish relationships based on other criteria are necessarily futile, but rather that this work must begin with careful analysis of the features common to the more certain texts, in particular those absent in magical material from other contexts, and work outwards.

So far I have argued that ten papyri can be considered more-or-less certain members of the Theban Library, but a further nine have been assigned to the Theban Library in earlier publications. These are:

PGM III

= P.Louvre 2391

= Trismegistos number: 64511

A large Greek roll, usually dated to the third-century CE, consisting of four large fragments, and approximately 29 much smaller ones. This papyrus was purchased by the Musée du Louvre from Consul Jean-François Mimaout (1773-1837) in the auction following his death, held in Paris in 1837.⁴¹ There

³⁸ For example, *PGM CII*, containing the detailed instructions and formulae typical of these recipes, but uncovered in Oxyrhynchus, and *PGM LXII* and *CXXIIIa*, two shorter rolls containing multiple recipes, neither of which have been suggested to be part of the Theban Library.

³⁹ For example, *P.Macq.* 1.1; *P.Mich.* MS Copt. 136, 593; *P.Heid.* Kopt. 684, 685, 686; *Leiden Anastasi* 9; and *Rossi's Gnostic Tractate*, to mention only some of the larger codices.

⁴⁰ See also the comments at n. 57.

⁴¹ The auction catalogue is J.-J. Dubois, *Description des antiquités égyptiennes grecques et romaines, monuments coptes et arabes, composant la collection de feu M.J.F. Mimaout* (Paris 1837). *PGM III* is no. 541, and is described as follows (p. 86): "Papyrus. – Fragment d'un manuscrit grec, en lettres onciales, et dont le sujet est astrologique. Ce manu-

is no clear evidence linking this papyrus to those owned by Anastasy,⁴² and despite the general similarity of format and contents, the hand of this papyrus is noticeably different from those of the more certain manuscripts. The first scholar to link this papyrus to the Theban Library seems to have been Carl Wessely, who does not give his reasons.⁴³ In his 1933 discussion of the Library, Preisendanz noted both the aforementioned similarity and the lack of evidence for including *PGM* III,⁴⁴ and later authors have generally suggested a connection without discussing their reasons in any detail.

PGM VI^{44a}

= *P.Lond.* 1.47; Anastasy 5 (1839)

= Trismegistos number: 60673

A Greek sheet, *PGM* VI was sold by Anastasy to the British Museum alongside *PGM* V, but the papyrus was assigned a provenance in Memphis, rather than Thebes,⁴⁵ in his catalogue. Again, the lack of a more certain link to the Library leads me consider its exclusion as the safer decision. The first scholar to link *PGM* VI to the Library seems to have been Legge, who claimed that his investigations had led him to believe that all of the Anastasy magical papyri had been acquired in Thebes.⁴⁶ Later authors generally excluded *PGM* VI from the Library, with the exceptions of Gorissen and Zago; the former

scrit, divisé en un grand nombre de morceaux qui ne sont point encore assemblés, est *opistographe*, et divisé en colonnes de texte mêlé de quelques figures de formes monstrueuses, et d'une execution tout-à-fait barbare" (italics in original).

⁴² Gordon ("Memory and Authority in the Magical Papyri," in B. Dignas and R.R.R. Smith [eds.], *Historical and Religious Memory in the Ancient World* [Oxford 2012] 149) has suggested that Mimaut purchased this papyrus from Anastasy in 1837, but he seems to have inferred this from its habitual inclusion among the Theban Library rather than from any positive evidence. He makes the same claim for *PGM* VII, in which case he is certainly wrong (see below). This is further implied by the date that he gives: the only known sale by Anastasy around this time was to the British Museum in 1839, and 1837 is in fact the date of Mimaut's own sale following his death.

⁴³ C. Wessely, *Griechische Zauberpapyrus von Paris und London* (Vienna 1888) 12.

⁴⁴ Preisendanz (n. 15) 94.

^{44a} This papyrus has recently been identified as a fragment from the same roll as *PGM* II. See the addendum to this article for further details.

⁴⁵ See the notes in the relevant catalogue (AES Ar.246). Preisendanz noted that the Memphite origin was also written on the containing sleeve of the papyrus (*PGM* 1, pp. 198-199), and I was able to confirm this in a visit to the British Library on 8/8/2013.

⁴⁶ F Legge, "The Names of Demons in the Magical Papyri," *PSBA* 23 (1901) 41-42.

gives no reason, while the latter relies on Legge and her own analysis of the contents.⁴⁷

PGM VII, PGM VIII, and PGM XIa

= *P.Lond.* 1.121 (*PGM VII*), *P.Lond.* 1.122 (*PGM VIII*), *P.Lond.* 1.125 verso (*PGM XIa*)

= Trismegistos numbers: 60204 (*PGM VII*), 59324 (*PGM VIII*), 33213 + 64578 (*PGM XIa*)

PGM VII, a large Greek roll of the third or fourth-century CE is one of the papyri most often associated with the Library, but despite some intriguing connections, this seems unlikely. Alongside the matter of its length, virtually unparalleled outside the Theban Library, it shares with this archive a pronounced interest in divination. However, the papyrus was purchased, along with five other papyri, by Wallis Budge for the British Museum from Messrs Bywater, Tanqueray & Co., a London firm acting on behalf of “a native.”⁴⁸ While there is no information in the purchase records of this papyrus which might suggest its provenance, two other Greek magical papyri were included in this sale, *PGM VIII* and *PGM XIa*. Since all three papyri were purchased together, it would seem reasonable to hypothesise that, like the Theban Library, these papyri might form a single archive, and *PGM VII*’s interest in revelation is paralleled in the two shorter texts.⁴⁹ Particularly interesting is the fact that *PGM XIa* is

⁴⁷ P. Gorissen, “Ontwikkelingsgang der studies over de Grieksche magische papyri uit Egypte,” *Philologische studiën* 6 (1934-1935) 191; Zago (n. 37) 68.

⁴⁸ British Library Manuscripts Department, *Minutes: Purchases 1879-1888*, pp. 279-294. *PGM VII* is described as “A roll, 8 feet long, containing Astrological and horological matters, perhaps of the 2nd century.” The other texts were a Book of the Dead on papyrus and leather (probably P.BM EA 10471 + 10473, the papyrus of Nakht, although P.BM EA 10472 & 10477 were acquired by Budge in the same year), and a hieratic text originally described as a “religious work” (probably P.BM EA 10474, containing the *Instruction of Amenemopet*, a calendar of lucky and unlucky days, an onomasticon, and a hymn to the moon-god). A Theban origin was noted for the leather manuscript in the minutes, and has since been suggested for the other two texts. On the *Book of the Dead* of Nakht see S.R.K. Glanville, “Note on the Nature and Date of the ‘Papyri’ of Nakht, B.M. 10471 and 10473,” *JEA* 13 (1927) 50-56; for P.BM EA 10474 see the overview in François-René Herbin, “Hymne à la lune croissante,” *BIFAO* 82 (1982) 239.

⁴⁹ Of particular interest here is the presence of a dream oracle calling upon the god Bes in both *PGM VII* (ll. 222-249) and *PGM VIII* (ll. 64-110). The texts do not show clear dependence on one another, however, and their presence must be understood as an instance of the interest in collecting for comparison multiple recensions of ritual texts paralleled in other magical material. A third recension of the text is found in *PGM CII* from Oxyrhynchus.

written on the back of an account for a large estate, centred in Hermonthis.⁵⁰ This is quite close to Thebes, where it seems the Pharaonic texts purchased alongside the Greek papyri originated,⁵¹ but the lack of a direct connection – of hand, form, or content – to the Theban Library, and the fact that they were sold over 40 years after the last of the Library texts was acquired by Anastasy lead me to believe that the “Hermonthis Magical Archive” should be kept separate from the Theban Library – as I have said, there is no reason to think that there was only one magical specialist in the Thebaid who was the owner of every text we find from that region,⁵² and while the general similarities of form and content are notable, it would be necessary to first demonstrate that this similarity is not simply due to the fact that both archives originate from roughly the same historical context. A fourth, non-magical, text from this archive may be P.Lips. inv. 39 + P.Bonn inv.147, a roll on which copies of Psalms from the Septuagint are written on the back of accounts originating from the same estate as that of *PGM* XIa.

The possibility that *PGM* VII might belong to the Theban Library seems to have been first raised by Preisendanz,⁵³ but his suggestion was tentative, and he noted that the provenance was in fact unknown. The inclusion of *PGM* VIII and *PGM* XIa in the Library has been suggested only by Zago, who made her inference on the basis of their relationship to *PGM* VII.⁵⁴ While she was perhaps right to note a relationship among these three texts, the overall conclusion seems unfounded.⁵⁵

PGM XXXVI

= *P.Oslo* 1.1

= Trismegistos number: 64479

⁵⁰ The probably Theban origin of this text was perhaps first noted by A. Bataille, *Les Memnonia* (Cairo 1952) 317.

⁵¹ See n. 48 above.

⁵² It is occasionally suggested that *PGM* VII comes from the Fayum, but this is based upon a misreading of M. de Haro Sanchez, “Les papyrus iatromagiques grecs et la région thébaine,” in A. Delattre and P. Heilporn (eds.), *«Et maintenant ce ne sont plus que des villages ...» Thèbes et sa région aux époques hellénistique, romaine et byzantine: Actes du colloque tenu à Bruxelles les 2 Et 3 décembre 2005* (Brussels 2008) 102: “Or, ce papyrus provient du Fayum.” In fact, as she has confirmed in a personal communication (July 27, 2013), she is talking here about *PGM* XXXVI.

⁵³ Preisendanz (n. 15) 91-95.

⁵⁴ Zago (n. 37) 61-75.

⁵⁵ Other authors who have noted a relationship between these texts include R. Bagnall (*Egypt in Late Antiquity* [Princeton 1993] 126, n. 79) and J. Gee (“Abracadabra, Isaac and Jacob”, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7 [1995] 45, n. 135).

PGM XXXVI was acquired for the University of Oslo by Samson Eitrem in 1920, along with PGM XXXVII and XXXVIII, and it may form a small archive with the latter text (a “Fayum Magical Archive”).⁵⁶ All of the papyri are dated palaeographically to the fourth-century CE, and seem to originate from ancient Theadelphia in the Fayum. Again, Zago is the only author to have suggested that it might belong to the Theban Library,⁵⁷ based on Preisendanz’s comment on its general similarity to the Theban texts, and her own analysis of its contents.⁵⁸ Since a provenance in the Fayum is most likely for this text, its exclusion from the Library seems certain.

⁵⁶ Gee (n. 55) 37, n. 76. Gee would include in the archive both PGM XXXVII and XXXIX, the latter purchased by H.I. Bell in 1923, but this seems unwarranted. I would limit the archive to PGM XXXVI and XXXVIII, since PGM XXXVII is quite different from the other two, displaying a greater regularity in letter-height and width, containing a Greek translation of the Egyptian text known as the *Book of the Temple*, rather than magical content *per se*. On the purchase, see S. Eitrem, *Papyri Osloenses I: Magical Papyri* (Oslo 1925) 31, as well as the online acquisition history of the Oslo Papyrus Collection (<http://ub-fmsserver.uio.no/Acquisition.html>; last accessed 08/11/2013), and Bell’s *First Report on Papyri Sent by Nahman July 1923*, held at the University of Oslo.

⁵⁷ Zago (n. 37) 58, 74. I would suggest that the similarities she notes (chapters 3-4) between PGM XXXVI and the Theban Library manuscripts are better understood as characteristics of the genre of Greco-Egyptian “magical” texts rather than indication of a shared provenance; to take two of her specific examples, the *nomen barbarum* “baphrenemoun” (209-211) is certainly not limited to the (by her definition) Theban Library texts; in addition to the external occurrences she notes in PGM XIXa and LIX, we find it in numerous inscribed gems, and at least a further four texts from outside the PGM (R.W. Daniel and F. Maltomini, *Supplementum Magicum*, 2 vols. [Opladen 1989-1991], nos. 48 A, 49.1 + 3, 65, 74). Similarly, the divine name Ἀμὸὺν, discussed as suggestive of a Theban theology (205-208), is also present in PGM XIXa and XXI, the latter probably from the Fayum, and its appearance in several literary texts (e.g. Herodotus 2.42, Iamblichus, *Myst.* 8.3, Origen, *C. Cels.* 5.41, 45-46) should warn against considering it a sign of specifically Theban theology in any case; local forms of deities, such as Opet or Khonsu-in-Thebes-Neferhotep (both present in PDM xiv, at ll. 167-168, 239) are probably far more diagnostic. Given the number of texts assigned to the Library in her model – containing the vast bulk of the Greek and all of the significant published Demotic material – simple probability tells us that this mass of text would contain several features not present, or less attested, in the other, shorter, manuscripts, and the significance of any one of these must be established with great care.

⁵⁸ Preisendanz (n. 15) 94: “Im Fayumgebiet aber ist allen Anzeichen nach die letzte große Erwerbung auf diesem Gebiet niederer Literatur entstanden: die von S. Eitrem 1920 in Ägypten gekaufte Rolle I der Universitätsbibliothek Oslo.”

PDM/PGM LXI

= P.BM EA 10588

= Trismegistos number: 55956

The similarity of this bilingual Greek-Demotic roll to the Theban material was noted by its original editors, Bell, Nock, and Thompson, who thought that “[f]rom internal evidence it is not improbable that it belongs to the well-known group of Anastasi MSS”, that is, *PDM/PGM* XII, XIV, and *PDM* Suppl.⁵⁹ In this, they were really noting only that the text was similar to what were at the time the only known Demotic magical texts on papyrus. In fact, there are noticeable differences in the hand of this papyrus, as well as its format. Unfortunately there is no acquisition information available for this text; it is first recorded in the British Museum’s *Register of Unnumbered Objects from the Old Collections*, compiled in 1927.⁶⁰ The items listed in this catalogue are mainly from the nineteenth century, but sale information is only available for certain items. Again, there is no positive information linking this papyrus to the Theban Library, and we know that it did not derive from any of Anastasy’s sales, so, barring the possibility of an un-recorded gift from Anastasy to the Museum, it seems most reasonable to consider it as a unique text.

P.Leid. I 396

= Anastasy 67 (1828); P.Leid.Gr. 2 no. U; *UPZ* 1.81

= Trismegistos number: 65612

This papyrus, containing the Greco-Egyptian literary text *The Dream of Nectanebo*, dates from the mid-second century BCE, and was written by Apollonios, one of the residents of the Memphite Serapeum. It is thus highly unlikely to belong to the Theban Library, but the possibility was suggested by Reuvers, noting both its closeness in catalogue number to the Theban Texts from the 1828 sale, and its content - a story of a dream revelation similar to those described in the magical papyri.

P.Leid. I 398

= Anastasy 74a (1828); *P.Leid.Gr.* 2 no. Y; *UPZ* 1.147

= Trismegistos number: 90838 (original text) + 65586 (palimpsest)

Another text from the 1828 Anastasy sale, like the previous papyrus, this one is written in the hand of Apollonios, consisting of a Greek scribal exercise written over a Demotic palimpsest. Its attribution to the Theban Library was made by Pieter Gorissen in his discussion of the Library, in which he incor-

⁵⁹ H.I. Bell, A.D. Nock, and H. Thompson, *Magical Texts from a Bilingual Papyrus in the British Museum* (Oxford 1931) 5.

⁶⁰ Acquisition Register Volume 13, AES Ar.580, p. 67.

rectly listed it as *PGM XLI*,⁶¹ whose correct sigla is in fact P.Rain. 4 (= Vienna G. 339), a fragmentary amulet of the fifth or sixth-century, of unknown provenance.

On balance, it seems certain that the Theban Library represents a real archive – the relationships between its papyri seem too certain to easily dismiss, even if the precise nature of these relationships calls for further research into its development over time and the possibility of identifiable sub-groups. The clearest criteria – ownership by Anastasy and attribution to Thebes – are not ideal, though they are the strongest criteria available to us. This fuzziness around the edges of the archive leaves room that other material might belong to it – both magical material which cannot be securely linked, and non-magical material, whose relationship to the magical/alchemical texts would require careful work to prove, but which would nonetheless provide fascinating information to enrich our knowledge of their context. My aim here has been to provide as straightforwardly as possible all the pertinent information about the origins of the Theban Library, and to clear away some of the second-hand assumptions which have accumulated over nearly two hundred years of scholarship. Previous authors have often referred to Anastasy as a mysterious adventurer, when in fact he was one of the most prominent and well-known figures of nineteenth century Alexandria; others have imagined papyrus dealers who bundled the Theban Library as a collection in order to sell it for a higher price, when it was a scholar who first identified it as an archive after it had already been sold; many have repeated earlier claims without discussing them in detail. I hope that this brief study will provide a firmer foundation upon which future work can be built.

Table 1 (over) summarises the opinions of seventeen authors who have discussed the Library; to these could be added others, but these represent the main models, with other important authors – including Tait,⁶² Dieleman,⁶³ and de Haro Sanchez⁶⁴ – generally relying on earlier research.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Gorissen (n. 47) 191.

⁶² Tait (n. 11), 169-82.

⁶³ Dieleman (n. 15) 14-15.

⁶⁴ M. de Haro Sanchez (n. 52).

⁶⁵ The references are to Reuvs (n. 2) 145-148, third letter; Lenormant (n. 9) 84; Wessely (n. 43) 12; Legge (n. 46) 41-42; Preidendanz (n. 15) 91-95; Gorissen (n. 47) 191; Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes* (Princeton 1993) 169-171; Gee (n. 55) 38-41; Brashear (n. 18) 3402-3404; Dieleman (n. 28) 14-15; Bagnall (n. 15) 82-86; Zago (n. 37) 61-75; and Gordon (n. 42) 148-151.

Table 1: Contents of the Theban Magical Library according to modern authors

	Reuvs (1830)	Lenormant (1857)	Wessely (1888)	Legge (1901)	Preisendanz (1933)	Gorissen (1934-5)	Fowden (1993)	Gee (1995)	Brashear (1995)	Dieleman (2005)	Bagnall (2009)	Zago (2010)	Gordon (2012)	Dosoo (2016)
P.Leid I 398					Y		Y							
P.Leid I 397	Y	Y			Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y?	Y
P.Leid I 396	Y	Y?												
<i>PDM</i> Suppl.								Y	?	?	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>PGM</i> LXI					?			Y	?	?	Y	?	Y	
<i>PDM/PGM</i> XXXVI					M							?		
<i>PDM/PGM</i> XIV	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>PGM</i> XIII	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>PDM/PGM</i> XII	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>PGM</i> XIa												?		
<i>PGM</i> VIII												?		
<i>PGM</i> VII					?				?	?	Y	Y	?	
<i>PGM</i> VI				Y		Y						?		*
<i>PGM</i> Va + <i>P.Holm.</i>					Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>PGM</i> V			Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>PGM</i> IV		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>PGM</i> III			Y		?		?		?	?	Y	?	?	
<i>PGM</i> II		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	?	Y	Y	?	Y
<i>PGM</i> I		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	?	Y	Y	?	Y

Legend

- Y Accepted as probably belonging to the Theban Library.
 Y? Opinion of the writer on whether the papyrus belongs to the Theban Library unclear from their discussion, but can be inferred from their criteria.
 ? Noted as possibly belonging to the Theban Library, with uncertainty expressed.
 M Mentioned in the discussion, but not suggested to belong to the Theban Library.
 * See addendum

Appendix: A Note on Gnostic Cheese

The question of the depth of François Lenormant's knowledge of the papyri he described in his catalogue has already been raised,⁶⁶ and a further instructive instance of a possible error in his interpretation of the Theban Library texts can be found in his description of the beginning of PGM IV, specifically an Old Coptic invocation to Osiris contained in ll. 11-25:

En tête sont trois pages de copte, qui débutent par l'histoire d'un fromage mystique, pour la composition duquel s'associent Osiris, Sabaoth, Iao, Jésus et tous les autres éons. Ce fromage n'est autre que la gnose.⁶⁷

Lenormant's "mystic cheese" ("fromage mystique"), more often cited as "gnostic cheese" ("fromage gnostique"),⁶⁸ has become proverbial as an example of the dismissive attitude of scholars of the mid-nineteenth century towards magical material, cited by Preisendanz⁶⁹ and Brashear,⁷⁰ amongst others. Examples of such an attitude towards the magical papyri are not difficult to find, even among the later authors who made careers out of their study: Dieterich

⁶⁶ For example, his description of the papyri as discovered by Anastasy himself, and his characterisation of PDM Ixi as a "funerary text," discussed above.

⁶⁷ "At the beginning are three pages of Coptic, which begin with the story of a mystical cheese, for whose creation Osiris, Sabaoth, Iao, Jesus, and all the other aeons come together. This cheese is no other than gnosis." Lenormant (n. 9) 87.

⁶⁸ I thank Edward Love for having pointed out to me what seems to be the earliest instance of this alternative form, in E. Miller, "Origine des hymnes orphiques publiés en 1868 dans les *Mélanges de littérature grecque*," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 15 (1871) 356.

⁶⁹ PGM 2, pp. xvi-xvii.

⁷⁰ Brashear (n. 18) 3410, n. 119.

called PGM IV an “abschreckenden Schutthaufen,”⁷¹ while Eitrem referred to them as “relics of degenerate religions and of the human mind gone astray.”⁷² However, “fromage” in French refers only to the food made from cultured milk curd, and lacks the derogatory sense of “nonsense” which is present in the German “Käse,” and, to a lesser extent, in the English “cheese.” In fact, it seems that Lenormant believed that he really had discovered a story in which Osiris, Jesus, and the other aeons create a Gnostic cheese.

To explain why, it is necessary to present part of the text that he was referring to, PGM IV 11-17:

- 11 ΕΟΥΨΤϢ ΟΥΣΙΡΕ· ΠΕΡΟ ΝΤΗ ΠΝΗΒ ΝΤΚΑΗΣΕ
 ΠΕΤΝΠΡΗΣ ΝΤΙΝ ΕΤΠΙΟΥΩ ΝΕΒΩΤ ΠΕΤΖΑ
 ΞΦΑ ΠΝΟΥΒΣ· ΝΜΕΡΟΥΕ· ΕΤΕ ΠΕΧΕΟΥ ΝΠΑ-
 ΒΑΛΩΜ ΕΥΨΤϢ ΑΛΘΑΒΩΤ · ΕΝΙ ΣΑΒΑΩΘ ΝΑΪ
 15 ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΥΨΤϢ ΑΛΘΩΝΑΙ ΗΟΥ Ο ΑΠΑΖΤΕ
 ΕΝΙ ΜΙΧΑΗΛ ΝΑΪ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΠΙΒΑϢ ΝΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
 ΕΤΟΪ ΝΤΕΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ

“Hail, Osiris, the king of the Duat, the lord of embalming, he who is to the south of Thinis, who gives answer at Abydos, he who is beneath ... the noubs-tree in Meroe, whose glory is in Pashalom. Hail Althabot, bring Sabaoth unto me. Hail, Althonai, great Eou, very strong, bring Michael unto me, the mighty angel who is with the god.”⁷³

The crucial part here is the beginning of l.14, βαλωμ, part of the place-name transliterated here as “Pashalom.” The first letter, while resembling the *kjima* (ϣ) of standard Sahidic, is in fact an Old Coptic letter which Kasser refers to as the “6-spiraled grapheme,” having the value /ʃ/ later assigned to the standard Sahidic *shai* (ϣ).⁷⁴ But since this is a non-standard letter, it would have been quite reasonable for Lenormant to be uncertain of its value, and assign it

⁷¹ “... terrifying rubbish heap.” Dieterich, *Abraxas: Studien zur Religionsgeschichte des späteren Altertums* (Leipzig 1891) 29.

⁷² Eitrem (n. 56) 3.

⁷³ A new edition of this text will be published in in E.O.D. Love, *Code-Switching with the Gods: The Bilingual (Old Coptic-Greek) Spells of PGM IV* (P. Bibliothèque Nationale Supplément Grec. 574) and *Their Linguistic, Religious, and Socio-Cultural Context in Late Roman Egypt* (Berlin forthcoming).

⁷⁴ R. Kasser, “Alphabets, Old Coptic,” in A.S. Atiya, *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. 8 (New York 1991) 41-45.

instead the sound /h/, associated with the similar “9-spiraled grapheme,” (9),⁷⁵ and later with the standard Sahidic *hori* (2). If he did so, he would have ended up with a word identical in sound to Sahidic ⲁⲗⲗⲟⲙ, “cheese”. It is harder to understand how he might have parsed the rest of the passage. Presumably he took the preceding two letters (ⲛⲁ) as a non-standard definite article, and perhaps the preceding *nu* as the object marker.

Whatever his provisional translation of the text, the fact that he was able to so confidently assert in the catalogue a story in which gnosis took the form of a mystic cheese should warn us that here, and thus perhaps elsewhere, he was not averse to providing descriptions based upon imperfect information. It is, perhaps, a salutary lesson, both in the dangers of premature conclusions about, and the indavertant creativity that can be inspired by, the rich magical texts of Roman Egypt.

Addendum

During a meeting in Montserrat on August 8, 2016, concerning the re-edition of magical formularies from Egypt, undertaken as part of the University of Chicago project *The Transmission of Magical Knowledge in Antiquity* (http://neubauercollegium.uchicago.edu/faculty/magical_knowledge/), an important discovery was made by Eleni Chronopoulou of Pompeu Fabra University, namely that PGM II and VI were both fragments of an original, larger roll, with the first column of PGM II following immediately after the single column of PGM VI. A full report on this discovery is forthcoming.

This has important implications for the Theban Library. First, it demonstrates a link between Anastasy’s second and third sales, with two fragments of a single papyrus sold in each. At the same time it serves as a more general confirmation of the existence of relationships between the magical

⁷⁵ The 6-spiralled grapheme appears in PDM xiv at the top of verso col. 20, which was within the Leiden part of the document published by C. Leemans (*Monuments égyptiens du Musée d’Antiquités des Pays-Bas à Leide* [Leiden 1843] vol. 1, 1-80). The column is published as no. xxi on plate xiv of C. Leemans, *Papyrus égyptien démotique à transcriptions grecques du Musée d’Antiquités des Pays-Bas à Leide* (*Description raisonnée* I. 383) (Leiden 1839), although since it is not a gloss, it is not included in the tables at the end of the volume. The 9-spiralled grapheme appears once in PDM xiv, but in the London half (col. 2, l. 4); Lenormant may have seen it here while examining the manuscript, or else simply inferred its value from its loose resemblance to the Demotic *h*, which appears in several of the Greek/Old Coptic glosses in PDM xiv as ⲕ, twice at col. 25 (= Leemans col. 18), l. 34; these glosses are transcribed in table 3 (nos. 233 and 234) of Leemans’ *Papyrus égyptien démotique*.

texts collected by Anastasy, since *PGM* II and VI were hitherto linked only by this shared ownership. This discovery also complicates our understanding of Anastasy's knowledge of his papyri's provenance, since the catalogue for the sale (AES Ar.246) clearly indicates Memphis as the origin of *PGM* VI. While it is possible that the two parts were purchased, perhaps from the same dealer, in different parts of Egypt, it seems to me unlikely that texts originating in the same context and sold to the same buyer would be acquired in different areas. I think it more probable that both papyri were purchased around the same time and place, and that Anastasy or his agents were misinformed, or made an error in recording or reporting the papyrus' provenance. Nonetheless this discovery must serve as a further caution against assuming a Theban origin for the Library as a whole based on alleged find-site alone.

My re-examination of *PGM* VI's sale information has uncovered a further problem: in the folder containing the papyrus in the British Library its catalogue number is given as 5, but in the catalogue in the British Museum (AES Ar.246) the dimensions of no. 5 are given as 6.5 x 2.25 inches, which is too small to refer to the entirety of *PGM* VI. In P.Lond. 1, p.81, Kenyon gives the dimensions of *PGM* VI as 13.5 x 6.5 inches, but also mentions a smaller part, apparently the blank margin, 2.25 inches wide; my own measurements give this part a width of 6.7 inches. This fragmentary left-hand margin is therefore almost certainly no. 5, while the dimensions Kenyon gives for the main part agree closely with those of no. 3 in the sale catalogue (13.33 x 6.5 inches). *PGM* VI would seem, therefore, to have been sold in two parts, identified in the catalogue as nos. 3 and 5. This solution creates yet another mystery, however: why would the apparently blank margin (no. 5) be sold, and described in the catalogue as a "[f]ragment de Ma[nu]scr[it] grec"? *PGM* VI is mounted on paper in such a way that the text of the reverse, apparently belonging to the larger fragment (no. 3), is only visible in a small window, but it may be that the smaller margin also contains some text on its hidden back.