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Adam Łajtar

PROSKYNEMA INSCRIPTIONS
OF A CORPORATION OF IRON-WORKERS FROM HERMONTHIS
IN THE TEMPLE OF HATSHEPSUT IN DEIR EL-BAHARI:
NEW EVIDENCE FOR PAGAN CULTS IN EGYPT IN THE 4TH CENT. A.D.*

In 1951 André Bataille published *Les inscriptions grecques du temple de Hatshepsout à Deir el-Bahari*¹ containing some 180 mostly *proskynema*-type inscriptions (graffiti and dipinti) left behind by pilgrims visiting the sanctuary of Amenhotep son of Hapu and Imhotep, which in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods formed part of the upper terrace of the temple². Nearly forty years later from 1988 to 1990 I had the opportunity, as a member of the Polish archaeological team preparing a new and complete survey of the temple of Hatshepsut at

* The present article is a modified version of the paper prepared after two seasons of my work in Deir el-Bahari and read at the XIXth International Congress of Papyrologists in Cairo in September 1989. I did not submit it to the acts of the Congress since I planned at that time another season of documentary work on the site to have been carried out in the spring of 1990 and I hoped to document inscriptions better by using ultraviolet lighting. Unfortunately endeavours to get the ultraviolet lamp failed and what I could achieve with the naked eye was only small corrections and completions to my previous readings. In this situation I decided to publish the inscriptions in spite of their imperfect state of documentation hoping that their interesting content would make my excuse. The final season of documentary work on the Greek inscriptions, which may resolve many of the problems connected with them, is still to be carried out in the temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahari. Therefore, the present article should be treated as preliminary remarks rather than the ultimate publication of the inscriptions, which I hope to prepare in the future.

Many persons contributed in various ways to the formation of this article. J. K a r k o w s k i, Director of the Polish Archaeological and Documentation Mission in the Temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahari invited me to publish the inscriptions from the temple and helped on the site. As for readings and interpretation of the inscriptions I was offered valuable information and comments by E. W i p s z y c k a, R. S. B a g n a l l, B. B r a v o, T. D e r d a and J. K. W i n n i c k i, the egyptological material was discussed with E. L a s k o w s k a - K u s z t a l, J. K a r k o w s k i and H. t e V e l d e. To all of them I would like to express my sincere thanks. My special thanks go to Z. B o r k o w s k i for his kind assistance and discussions during all stages of my work on the inscriptions.

¹ A. B a t a i l l e, *Les inscriptions grecques du temple de Hatshepsout à Deir el-Bahari*, Le Caire 1951 (=Publications de la Société Fouad I de Papyrologie, Textes et Documents X) (quoted further as A. B a t a i l l e, *Inscriptions*).

² The sanctuary proper, with its hieroglyphic inscriptions and relief representations has been published recently by E. L a s k o w s k a - K u s z t a l, *Le sanctuaire ptolémaïque de Deir el-Bahari*, Varsovie 1984 (=Deir el-Bahari III).

Deir el-Bahari, to examine the Greek inscriptions anew³. During my stay I discovered that the number of inscriptions on the chamber walls of the upper terrace greatly surpasses that found in Bataille's book. The reason for this is twofold: (1) a certain number of blocks from the temple of Hatshepsut bearing Greek inscriptions were excavated in the 1960's by Polish archaeologists on the site of the temple of Tuthmosis III, bordering on the temple of Hatshepsut from the south and subsequently put back in place⁴; (2) some inscriptions were evidently omitted by Bataille due to either their inaccessibility or their being so ill preserved as to make Bataille doubt the possibility of reading them with any degree of certainty (this is particularly true of some extremely faded dipinti)⁵. As a result, apart from cataloguing known inscriptions, I was able in the space of nine months (4 in the 1988 season, 2 in the 1988-89 season, 3 in the 1990 season) to identify over 120 "new" texts.

These newly discovered inscriptions comprise mostly visitor's signatures and *proskynemata*. The latter are simple texts constructed according to the well-known formula τὸ προσκύνημα τοῦ δέιλος occasionally supplemented with additional information, such as the names of the deities to whom the inscription is dedicated or the name of friends and relatives of the *proskynema* writer⁶. This material does not differ essentially from that hitherto found in Deir el-Bahari or in other sites in Egypt and seems to be of onomastic value only. There are, however, among these conventional inscriptions at least four texts that stand out by virtue of length and content. They were left behind by members of the corporation of iron-workers from Hermonthis - πλῆθος σιδηρουργῶν Ἑρμώνθεως.

All four inscriptions are to be found in the fourth niche, counting from the south, of the upper terrace's west wall⁷. They were made with a thin *kalamos*

³ In 1988 and 1989 I worked as a member of the Polish-Egyptian Archaeological and Reconstruction Mission in the Temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahari directed respectively by architects W. P o ł o c z a n i n and A. M a c u r, and in 1990 as a member of the Polish Archaeological and Documentation Mission under the direction of J. K a r k o w s k i, Egyptologist.

⁴ This is the case, for example, of a long inscription dated to the beginning of the second century A.D. and describing a visit paid in Deir el-Bahari by Artemidoros, *tesserarius* of the first *vexillatio* from Coptos (= A. B a t a i l l e, *Inscriptions*, no. 126); the left bottom corner of this inscription was discovered during the excavations in the temple of Tuthmosis III and subsequently put into its original place during reconstruction of the Ptolemaic portico in the 1960's.

⁵ Most probably, such a case is of our inscription 4, see *infra*, p. 62.

⁶ Generally, on the *proskynema*-type inscriptions, G. G e r a c i, *Ricerche sul proskynema*, "Aegyptus" 51, 1971, pp. 3-162.

⁷ In this niche I was able to identify eleven inscriptions and one figural dipinto with the representation of a pharaoh sitting on a throne (no doubt the imitation of the relief representation of Tuthmosis II from the northern wall of the niche). From among these eleven inscriptions, two, namely A. B a t a i l l e, *Inscriptions*, no. 102 and the unpublished dipinto done in bright red ochre on the northern wall of the niche, come evidently from the Early Roman period, while four are the inscriptions of *siderourgoi* from Hermonthis discussed in this article. As for the remaining five, these are preserved so fragmentarily that one can state nothing sure of their content. Palaeographically, however, they resemble the *siderourgoi* inscriptions very closely. One of these badly damaged inscriptions, exceptionally written with much

8. καὶ Δίδυμος Π[αβ]ώτου καὶ Πλή(νις) ὄνηλάτου. αὐτὸς ἔσφαξε τὸν ὄνον ἔμ-
προσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ
9. κ[α]ὶ πάντες τὸ προσκύημα ὑμ[...], ἐνταῦθ' ε...τα τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ ἐποί[ησα]ν.
3. read Ἐρμώνθεως; 4. δι/ stone; read ὀμαλῶς(?); αρχ⁺ stone; αρχ⁺, stone; 5. αρχ⁺
stone; μ/ε̄; ππκοῖ stone; ζυτοπ/ stone; 6. ππκοῖ stone; κουελ⁻ stone; ππκοισιο
stone; πκοῖ stone 8. πλη⁻ stone; read ὄνηλάτης;

"1st and 2nd Tybi in the consulship of our masters, the most noble Caesars Crispus and Constantinus, for the third time. We have arrived here ... the sacrifice of a donkey, (we) the corporation of iron-workers from Hermonthis, who are listed below: Poumsi son of Askos ... archi(), second archi() Penas son of Askos ..., third archi() Lousios ... P()ρκοι(sis) brewer ..., Chollos son of Pasemis, Tyrannos son of Besas, Pesouris son of Phthoi, P()ρκοι(sis) son of Chollos, Kouel(), P()πεκοισις son of Pκοι(sis), Pesouris son of Lolous, Hatres son of Horion son of Theophanes secretary of the corporation, Didymos son of Pabotes, Ple(nis) donkey-keeper. The last named slaughtered the donkey before the god and all [...] here ... made the *proskynema* to the great god."

Lines 1-2: The first and second Tybi during the third consulate of Crispus and Constantinus correspond to December 27-28, 324 A.D. It is extremely interesting that two epithets are attached to the names of consuls, while in hitherto known documents there is only one, namely ἐπιφανέστατοι (R. S. B a g n a l l, A. C a m e r o n, S. R. S c h w a r t z, K. A. W o r p, *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire*, Atlanta 1987, pp. 182-183; R. S. B a g n a l l, K. A. W o r p, *The Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt*, Zutphen 1978, p. 109). I am indebted to Dr. R. S. B a g n a l l for the reconstruction of the second epithet εὐγενέστατοι, which in fact has the same meaning as ἐπιφανέστατοι; both are Greek equivalents of the Latin *nobilissimi*.

Line 3: The roughly nine-letter lacuna between γενόμεθα ἐνταῦθα and θυσίαν ὄνον is likely to have contained an expression introducing a final close. Z. B o r k o w s k i on the other hand suggests that the text here should read ἄγοντες εἰς θυσίαν ὄνον. The remaining fragments of letters suggest something along the lines of μετά + article, but a reading μετά τ<η>ν θυσίαν would not account for the accusative ὄνον.

πλήθος, as a technical term denoting a corporation or guild, is characteristic of Ptolemaic and Early Roman Egypt (PSI V 498.2, 5 [III cent. B.C.]: τὸ πλήθος τῶν ἀλιέων; SB I 984 [3 A.D.]: τὸ πλήθος τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀρσινοεῖτου καθαρουργῶν καὶ πλακουντοποιῶν; SB I 647 [4/5 A.D.]: τὸ πλήθος τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ μεγάλου [Κλ]εοπ(α)τρ(εῖου); P. Mich. V 244 [43 A.D.]: πλήθος ἀπολυσίμων οὐσίας Τιβερίου Κλαυδίου Καίσαρος; most probably, the same association in P. Mich. II 123, Recto XXII.44 [46 A.D.]: πλήθος ἀπολυσίμων). That a corporation of the fourth century A.D. should have used the term in relation to itself implies either its long existence (100 - 200 years) or its desire to emulate past models.

Since the word πλήθος denotes a corporation i.e. a group of people, the author treats it as a *pluralis*, which explains the use of the plural relative pronoun at the beginning of line 4; cf. also γραμματεὺς τῶν πλήθου in line 7 and a similar expression in IGFay. III 205: σύνοδος ὧν ἱερεὺς διὰ βίου and in O. Tait II 1858: Ἐχθ(εσις) συνόδου ... ὧν τὸ κατ' ἄνδρα.

It is not easy to determine the exact meaning of the word σιδηρουργός and hence what the work of the *siderourgoi* from Hermonthis consisted of. The iron-working process in Antiquity comprised the smelting of brittle and largely impure iron and its multiple hammering, through which high quality forgeable material, from which finished products were made, was obtained (A. L u c a s, *Ancient Egyptian Materials*

and Industries, 4th. ed., pp. 241-243). The different stages of the process were not necessarily the work of the same craftsmen. Two names are found in the papyri for iron-workers: *σιδηρουργός* and *σιδηροχαλκεύς*. Judging from the fact that in P. Oxy. I 84 (316 A.D.) a *κοινὸν τῶν σιδηροχαλκῶν* receives six talents of silver from the city treasury for wrought iron (*σίδηρος ἐνεργός*) intended for public use, one can assume that the task of a *σιδηροχαλκεύς* was to hammer the semi-finished material from the forge. The *σιδηρουργοί* would then be responsible for the smelting of metal from ore, which they themselves would have had to find and extract (or purchase)⁹. Finished products were probably the work of specialized craftsmen (such as *ἡλοκόπος* - nail-smith, *κλειδοποιός* - lock-smith) and possibly *σιδηροχαλκεύς*. Due to the scant amount of data concerning Egyptian metal-work and the interchangeable metallurgical terminology used in the papyri, the issue cannot be considered resolved. One cannot exclude the possibility that, especially in the late Roman and Byzantine periods *σιδηρουργοί* denoted every craftsman involved with iron.

That metallurgical activity took place in Hermonthis during the Late Roman period is confirmed by archaeological finds. Excavations conducted on the site of the town existing in the fourth and early fifth centuries within the temple of Montu brought to light i.a. "chunks of partially smelted iron with unchanged charcoal embedded in them" as well as "black vitreous light bubbly top slag from iron smelting" (R. M o n d, O. H. M y r e s, *Temples of Armant, A Preliminary Study I*, London 1940, p. 201), proving that iron had indeed been smelted there. Archaeological finds confirm to some extent the above remarks concerning the professional specialization of *siderourgoi*.

Line 4: Expressions analogous to ὦν τὸ κατ' ὄνομα δι(α)γέγραπται preceding the list of *siderourgoi* contained in lines 4-8 are to be found in the lists of priests and *χειρισμός* from Fayum: γραφῆι ἐ[ε]ρ[ε]ίων ... τῶν μὲν παραδοχίμω[ν κα]ὶ ἐπικεκρ[ε]μ[ε]νῶν ἀπολυσίμων ἀν[δρ]ῶν πεντηκοντα, ὦν τὸ [κ]α[τ'] ἀνδρα... (P. Tebt. II 298.9-11) and ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἡμῶν τῶν ἱερέων [τὸ κα]τ' ἀνδρα πάντων διαγραφάντων τὸ [εἰσ]κριτικῶν... (BGU I 162=Chrestomathie I 91.15-16); see also O. Tait II 1858 (account of payments of members of an unknown *synodos*, probably from the Hermonthis region, 66-67 A.D.): ἔχθ(εσις) συνόδ(ου) τοῦ ἱγ' L Νέρωνος τοῦ κυρίου ὦν τὸ κατ' ἀνδ(ρα)....

The list of corporation members starts with three persons referred to as ἀρχι(), which abbreviation may be interpreted in a number of ways: ἀρχι(ερεύς), ἀρχι(πρεσβύτερος), ἀρχι(συναγωγός), ἀρχι(σιδηρουργός), there is, however, no evidence in favour of any one of the readings. As the fragment of the inscription containing the ἀρχι()'s names is rather badly preserved, it is difficult to read and interpret. The first two ἀρχι() may have been brothers, since they share the same patronymic: Ἀσκού. In both cases Ἀσκού is followed by a word ending with -αλος, which I am unable to account for. This may have been the name of their grandfather, or an adjective or noun describing both ἀρχι(). Possibly we should read *ωματος* (= *ὀμαλῶς*) here, which in the case of the first ἀρχι() is palaeographically well founded, and consider their functions as ἀρχι() to have been of equal rank. The third ἀρχι(), not qualified as *ωματος* would then differ in rank from them; being mentioned in the third position he was probably of less importance than the first two ἀρχι().

The name of the first ἀρχι() - Ποῦμισι, if read correctly, is *addendum onomasticis*; see, however, the very similar Ποῦμς (F. P r e i s i g k e, *Namenbuch*, s.v.).

⁹ Iron ore is to be found in Egypt in various wadis in the Eastern Desert from Qena south to Wadi Halfa, as well as in alluvial sands of the Nile valley: W. F. H u m e, *Distribution of Iron Ores in Egypt*, [in:] *Geology of Egypt II*, Part III, Cairo 1935, pp. 848-852. We have direct proofs of mining in Antiquity only from oolitic beds some 20 kilometres north of Aswan, thus not very far from Hermonthis: R. M o s s, *Iron-mines near Aswan*, JEA 36, 1950, pp. 112-113.

The name of the second ἀρχι() - Πενᾶς, does not occur elsewhere; it may be compared to Πνᾶς, Πενᾶς (F. P r e i s i g k e, *Namenbuch*, D. F o r a b o s c h i, *Onomasticon*, s.vv.).

Concerning the abbreviation of ἀρχι() by rising the *iota* and crossing it with a horizontal bar, see A. B l a n c h a r d, *Sigles et abréviations dans les papyrus documentaires grecs*, London 1974, (=Bulletin of the Institut of Classical Studies of the University of London, Supplement 30), p. 10.

Line 5: The names of the ἀρχι() are followed by that of the brewer - Π()πκοῖ(σις), written with a gently sloping line over the initial *pi*. The same name, written almost identically, though designating other people, appears three more times in line 6 and once in inscription 2, line 8. The name's interpretation raises some doubts. Its second element - πκοῖ(σις) is clear; it is the well known name Πεκῶσις (being a transcription of the Egyptian *p3-ikš* = Nubian; see E. L ü d d e c k e n s, *Demotisches Namenbuch*, p. 160 sq., J. V e r g o t e, *Les noms propres du P. Bruxelles inv. E.7616, Essai d'interprétation*, [=Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava VII], Lugdunum Batavorum 1954, p. 14, l. 73) with a simple shift of *v* to *oi* (concerning the shift F. G i g n a c, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, vol. I, pp. 198-199; the form Πεκῶσις is found i.a. in SPP X 153.13; P. Mich. VI 396.11; H. C a u v i g n y, G. W a g n e r, *Ostraca grecs du Mons Claudianus*, ZPE 62, 1986, p. 63, n. 1, l. 3). As for the first element, the curved line above the *pi* most resembles the cursive *lambda*, which would give the abbreviation Πλ(), for which, however, there is no justification in the context discussed. The line over *pi* might have been intended also to denote the Egyptian *aleph* present in the article *p3* and usually transcribed as *epsilon* in Greek. The name would therefore be Π(ε)πκοῖ(σις). Constructions of this sort seem to exist in Graeco-Egyptian onomastics (E. B e r n a n d, *Inscriptions grecques et latines d'Akôris*, Le Caire 1988, n. 57: Ἐλένη Πεπεκῶσις [instead of the editor's Πε<πε>κῶσις i.e. Πε{πε}κῶσις]) but the notation used in our inscription is unprecedented. For this reason I only make note of the abbreviation in the text of the inscription without interpreting it.

Πασήμις, from Egyptian *p3-ḏm^c* (E. L ü d d e c k e n s, *Demotisches Namenbuch*, pp. 432-433) in which the second element is a theophoric one, is the Memnonian name *par excellence*, since *ḏm^c* was a patron god of Memnonia and after him at least part of Memnonia around the temple of Medinet Habu was called Djeme in Demotic and Coptic sources (A. B a t a i l l e, *Les Memnonia*, Le Caire 1952, p. 97 sq.).

Line 6: The name Φθότ has not been hitherto corroborated; see however the similar Φθάς, Φθείος, Φθειός, Φθεύς in F. P r e i s i g k e, *Namenbuch*, D. F o r a b o s c h i, *Onomasticon*, s.vv.; for etymology: W. S p i e g e l b e r g, *Aegyptische und Griechische Eigennamen aus Mumienetiketten der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Leipzig 1901, p. 56, s.v. ΦΘΕΥΣ.

It is difficult to establish the proper way of expanding the abbreviated name Κουελ(). The name Κουελωλ() occurs in Thebes (G. W a g n e r BIFAO 70, 1971, p. 51, n. 18; palaeographically III c. A.D.), a certain Κουαλι appears in the account of expenditures from Hermonthis (P. Lips. 97.VIII.17, cf. *apparatus* on p. 281; 338 A.D.), while P. Lond. I 125, pp. 192-194, Recto 14 (IV cent. A.D.), also from Hermonthis, contains the name Κουαλαμαντι. The latter two names are in the dative case. For the probable derivation from the Egyptian word meaning "pot", G. W a g n e r, loc.cit.

Line 7: The name Λολοῦς (from the Egyptian word meaning "young man", "lad"; see W. S p i e g e l b e r g, op.cit. p. 19, s.v. ΛΟΥΛΟΥΤΟΣ; W. E. C r u m, *Coptic Dictionary*, p. 141) is typical of the onomastics of the Theban West Bank; it appears i.a. in inscriptions from the temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahari: A. B a t a i l l e, *Inscriptions*, nos. 161 - 162.

γραμματεὺς τῶν πλήθου cannot be considered an error, since the author of the inscription evidently treats πλήθος as a plural; see commentary to lines 3-4.

Line 8: ὀνηλάτος is probably a simple misspelling for ὀνηλάτης. The name of the *one-lates*, Πλήνις, typical of the Memnonia-Hermonthis region, is a transcription of the Egyptian *p3-ljn* = "smith" (E. L ü d d e c k e n s, *Demotisches Namenbuch*, p. 199; H. d e M e u l e n a e r e, "Kemi" XVI, 1962, pp. 35-37) - an amusing coincidence in the light of his ties with the corporation of *siderourgoi* from Hermonthis. In P. Lips. 97.VIII.20-21 and XVI.1-2 (account of expenditures from Hermonthis, 338 A.D.) there appears Πλήνις Πεκύσιος ὀνοτρόφος. It would be very attractive to identify him with our Πλήνις ὀνηλάτης but the problem cannot be positively resolved because of the great popularity of the name Πλήνις in the Hermonthis region.

Most probably, αὐτός is used here in the sense of οὔτος (for this sense of αὐτός, which becomes popular since NT Greek and is standard in modern Greek, see E. S c h w y z e r, *Griechische Grammatik*, Band I, München 1953, p. 614; F. B l a s s, A. D e b r u n n e r, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, 11th ed., Göttingen 1961, § 277, 3-4) and refers to Plenis, donkey-keeper.

It is not easy to determine what the expression ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ exactly means. In papyri language, in its locative aspect, ἔμπροσθεν has purely topographical meaning which in our case would give something along the lines of "in front of the god's statue", "in front of the god's altar". It is possible, however, that the word ἔμπροσθεν has been used here in a somewhat metaphysical sense, well attested in Biblical Greek especially when a legal aspect is meant (cf. e.g. W. B a u e r, *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, Berlin-New York 1971, s.v. ἔμπροσθεν), in which case it would be renderable "in the presence of the god". The above distinction is not without consequences for the interpretation of the inscription, see *infra*, p. 69 sq.

Line 9: In *proskynema*-type inscriptions, the expression τὸ προσκύνημα ποιεῖν usually means "to write the text of an inscription, known in turn as a *proskynema*, on a wall or a stele" (G. G e r a c i, op. cit., p. 17 sq.). In our case, in the expression οἱ πάντες τὸ προσκύνημα ἐποίησαν, the word προσκύνημα must have had another meaning since the inscription was not made by all those taking part in the visit but by one man, probably the corporation secretary. *Proskynema* would then denote a purely religious act: adoration of a god, praying or something of the sort.

Inscription no. 2, Dec. 27, 333 - Jan. 26, 334 or Dec. 27, 347 - Jan. 26, 348 (fig. 2)

Inscription 2 lies directly above inscription 1. It was written on the throne of Tuthmosis III, 127 cm. from the niche's door-frame, 90 cm. above floor level¹⁰. Measurements: 26.5 by 13 cm. The inscription is very badly preserved. The entire central part of the text containing the names of the *siderourgoi* is practically illegible. The remaining fragments can be read as follows:

1. s {s} veàs i[nδ]ικτί[ο]ν[ο]s, Τῦβ[ι.....]. γ[ενόμε-]
2. θα ἐνταῦθα [-----]οῦν
3. [...].[...πλ]ήθος [σιδηρο]υρ[γῶν] Ἐρμ[ί]ων[θεω]ς
4. [ῶ]ν τὸ κατ' ὄνομα [δ]ι[α]γέγραπται). Χολλῶς Πα[σ]ήμιος ἀρχι(),

¹⁰ The relatively low position of the inscriptions 1 and 2 above the niche's floor suggests that their writer either knelt on the floor or seated on a little stool (or stone?). This fact is also confirmed by my experience from copying them.

5. β̄ ἀρχι() [-----]
 6. [-----]π.
 7. [καὶ Π]εσοῦρις [Λ]ολοῦτος [...]σ[....]νεθα[...]νπ[.....]
 8. κρ[-----] καὶ Π()πκοῖ(σις) δ[.....]αίου [.....]
 9. καὶ Ἀτρή[ς] Ὀρίο[νο]ς Θ[εο]φάνου[ς] γραμματε[ύς. α]ὐτ[ὸς].....καὶ
 10. οἱ[] πάντες τὸ προσκύνημα[] υ[.]ατωνα[....]ποίησαν(?)
 11. ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ]

1. read ἰ[νδ]ικτί[ω]ν[ο]ς; 4 αρχ⁺, stone; 5. αρχ⁺, stone; 8. π̄πκοῖ stone;

I refrain from including translation of inscriptions 2, 3 and 4 due to their deterioration.

Line 1: The expression *νέα ἰνδικτίων* used here as the only means of dating must refer to the sixth indiction within the recently commenced indiction cycle. This would suggest a date prior the year 347, around which time the expression began to refer to the coming indiction within the cycle (R. S. B a g n a l l, K. A. W o r p, op. cit., p. 34). The sixth new indiction would therefore be part of either the 327-342 or 342-357 cycle. If, as is very likely, the first date turns out to be correct, our inscription will be one of the oldest known instances of the expression *νέα ἰνδικτίων*.

Line 4: The first ἀρχι(), Χολλῶς Πασήμιος was an ordinary member of the corporation of *siderourgoi* in the year 324; see inscription 1, line 5.

Line 7: Πεσοῦρις Λολοῦτος also appears in inscription 1, line 7.

Line 9-11: On the list of *siderourgoi* Hatres son of Horion was probably mentioned last; line 10 already contains the concluding formula present in inscription 1. It is therefore very likely that Hatres was the one offering the sacrifice. The last two lines might then have to be supplemented as follows: Ἀτρή[ς] Ὀρίο[νο]ς Θ[εο]φάνου[ς] γραμματε[ύς. α]ὐτ[ὸς] ἔθυσεν (?) καὶ| οἱ[] πάντες τὸ προσκύνημα[] υ[.]ατωνα[....]ποίησαν(?) ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ]. The inscription appears to have ended with τοῦ θεοῦ, as that is the point where the vividly coloured *sematawi* emblem decorating the throne of Tuthmosis III begins and the vacant surface enabling the continuation of the inscription ends. There are also no traces of the inscription being continued below line 11.

Inscription no. 3, Dec. 27-28, 357(?) (fig. 3)

The inscription is 1 m. east of those described above, just behind the niche's door-frame, 147 cm. above floor level, i.e. at approximately eye level. Measurements: 21 by 15 cm. Only the initial fragments of each lines, protected by the niche's door-frame from the sun, which elsewhere caused the ochre to fade, have been preserved. Of the rest of the inscription only single letters, not forming a logical sequence remain. The letters are larger and less carefully written than in the other inscriptions, but the hand is the same as that of inscriptions 1, 2 and 4.

1. ἰς ἰνδικτίονος, Τῦβι ᾠ καὶ β̄, [ύ]πατε[ί]ας
 2. τῶν δε[σπ]οτῶν ἡ[μ]ῶν [Κωνσταν]τ[ί]ου Αὐγ[ούστου] τὸ θ' καὶ Ἰουλιανοῦ τοῦ
 3. ἐπιφαν[ε]στάτου Καί[σαρος] τὸ β'. γε[ν]όμεθα ἐ[ν]-
 4. ταῦθα λυγητησ θυσία[. ὄν]ου, πληθος

ΤΝ ΤΥΒΙΩ Μ Β ΥΡΤΙ ΤΩΝ ΠΑΡΟΤΩΝ Η ΜΜΗ ΚΡ. ΠΟΥ ΚΥ ΚΑ
 ΠΛΟΥΤΩΝ Ε ΣΤΩΤΩΝ ΜΥ ΕΝ Π
 Η ΜΥ Ρ ΤΙ
 ΕΠΟΜΙΘΑ ΕΜΠΥΘΑ ΜΤΟΤΩΝ ΘΥΡΩΝ ΟΜΟΝ ΠΛΗΘΟΣ ΕΠΙΡΟΥΡ: ΕΡΜΗΝΘΕ-
 ΩΠΤΟΚΑΤΟΜΟΝ ΤΩ ΟΥΜΩΣ ΚΟΥΜΩΣ ΕΡΧ ΒΑΡΧΤ ΠΕΤΟΣ ΓΣΚΟΥ ΜΑΡΟΣ
 ΕΡΧ ΛΟΓΟ ΕΣΤΗ ΜΙΤΜΕ Ε ΠΑΠΙ ΤΖΥΤΟΝ ΥΙ ΕΤΕΩΣ ΧΟΛΛΩΣ ΠΟΤΗ ΜΥ Σ ΜΥ ΤΥΡ
 ΒΗΑ ΤΩ Π ΕΣΟΥΡ ΓΣ ΦΘΟΚ Π Ε ΚΑ ΧΟΛΛΩΣ ΜΥ ΚΟΥ ΕΛ ΜΥ Π Π ΕΚΟΥΡ Γ ΚΟΥ
 ΚΑ Π ΕΣΟΥΡ ΓΣ ΧΟΛΛΩΣ ΜΥ ΕΡ Η ΣΟΥΡ Μ ΕΣ Θ Ε ΟΥΡ ΤΟΥ Σ ΓΡ Μ Μ Τ Ε Υ ΤΩ Η Π Α Π
 ΜΥ Ε Δ Υ Μ Ο Σ Α Μ Ο Υ Μ Π Π Η Ο Π Η Μ Ο Υ Ε Υ Τ Ο Σ Ε Σ Ε Σ Ε Π Τ Ο Η Ο Π Ο Η Σ Μ Π Ρ Ο Θ Ε Σ Τ Ο Υ Θ Ε Σ Υ
 Π Μ Τ Ε Σ Τ Ο Ρ Ρ Ο Σ Κ Υ Η Η Μ Υ Μ Ε Π Τ Ε Ρ Θ Ε Σ Τ Ο Υ Μ Λ Ο Υ Θ Ε Σ Υ (ΕΠΙ)



Fig. 1. Proskynema-Inscription from Deir el-Bahari, no. 1; to A. Ł a j t a r, p. 55.

ΕΣΤΗ ΕΝΕΙ ΙΚΤ Ι Α Σ ΤΥΡ Γ
 ΘΕ Ε Π Τ Μ Υ Θ Ω Ο Π
 Ι ΙΘΟΣ ΥΡ ΕΡΛ ΘΕΩ
 ΑΤΟΚΑΤΟΜΟΝ Ι ΧΟΛΛΩΣ Π Ο Η Μ Υ Ο Σ ΕΡΧ Τ
 Β Α Ρ Χ Τ
 ΕΣΟΥΡ Γ Σ Ο Λ Ο Υ Ο - Σ Μ Ε Φ Α Ι Υ Ρ
 ΚΡ Μ Π Ν Κ Ο Τ Ζ Δ Ι Ο Υ
 Μ Υ Ρ Τ Η Μ Μ Ρ Ι Ο Σ Θ Φ Α Π Ο Υ Σ Τ Ρ Α Μ Μ Η
 Ο Π Μ Τ Ε Σ Τ Ο Ρ Ρ Ο Σ Κ Υ Η Η Μ Υ Δ Τ Ω Γ Ε
 Ε Μ Π Ρ Ο Σ Θ Ε Π Τ Ο Υ Θ Ε



Fig. 2. Proskynema-Inscription from Deir el-Bahari, no. 2; to A. Ł a j t a r, p. 59.

ΙΚΣ/Ι ΠΑΚΤΙΟΝΟΟ ΑΥΒΙ/Τ/ΚΑΙ ΠΑΥ,
 ΤΥΡΙΔΙ: ΟΥΑΗΚΕ ΑΠΛ' Ι ΛΤΣ
 ΕΡΙΦΟΝ ΕΠΙ, ~~Χ~~ ~~Η~~ ~~Ι~~ ~~Λ~~ ~~Τ~~ ~~Σ~~
 ΤΥΘΟΥ ΤΥΤΗΤΕΘΥΣ, ΝΟΜΑΔ - Ε
ΟΙΙΝΛΗΘΟΣ
 ΕΠΥΟΠΡΩΕΡ ΓΘΙ Τ
 ΠΑΧΛΗΕΛΟ Α Χ⁺ Χ⁺ Π ΤΡΟΣ
 ΓΑΡΧ ΠΟΥΙΕΔ Φ ΟΥ
 ΚΥΑΡΙΩΝ
 ΠΑΤΗΡΟ
 ΚΥΡΑ, ΚΥ
 Θ(Φ)Ι ΕΡΡ ΔΤΕΥ.ΛΥΤΟΟ ΔΠΠΚΩ
 Ο/ΝΑΝ ΤΕΣΤΟΡΡ.Ο.ΗΥ ΜΥΜ Α Ε
 ΤΥΡΙΚΡΠΙ... Θ ΕΤΗ-



Fig. 3. Proskynema-Inscription from Deir el-Bahari, no. 3; to A. Ł a j t a r, p. 60.

✓ Α Ν Α ΓΓ.Ο.Μ/Κ
 Γ(ΝΟΜΕΘΑΕΑΘ ΘΥΑΘΕ
 ΠΛΗΘΟΣ ΠΑΤΕΡΟΥΡΓΩ Ε ΑΜΑΘΕΩ ΤΟΚΩ
 ΙΩΕ ΠΡ.ΡΧ⁺ ΕΙΔ.Κ.ΔΤΡΚΕΤ -
 ΜΕΚ ΔΡΚΜΑΛΑΤΑΜΑΡ ΜΡ ΠΡΑΝΤΕ Τ
 ΤΥΙΔΗΝΟΣΚΟΥΕΤ ΑΜΜΑΙΘΗΚΕΥΧΗΤΗΙ -ΥΠΝ ΙΜΣ
 ΕΠΩΒΩ ΥΠΩΔΟΥΗΙ ΠΙ ΛΥΜΟΥΙ, ΜΜΑΚΟ ΚΕ
 ΚΥΤΙΙ/ΠΕ ΚΩ ΔΠΠΚΩ ΙΟ.ΛΟΑΙ ΑΦΟΦΟΛΟ'Σ
 ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΣΥ ΠΙ ΚΩ ΠΙ



Fig. 4. Proskynema-Inscription from Deir el-Bahari, no. 4; to A. Ł a j t a r, p. 61.

5. σιδηρουργῶ<ν> Ἐρ[μώ]υθ[ε[ω]ς ὦν] τὸ [κατ' ὄνομα]
 6. δια(γέγραπται)· Ληείλο[σ...]αυ[...ἀρ]χι(), [β] ἀ[ρ]χι() Π()τροσ
 7. γ̄ ἀρχι() τ...α[-----]φ[.]ου
 8. καὶ Ὠρίων [-----]
 9. Π()τεπ[ο]ηρ[ι-----]
 10. καὶ π.υθα[.....] καὶ [.....καὶ] Ἀτρῆς Ὠ[ρίωνος]
 11. Θεοφάγ[ου]ς γρα[μμ]ατεύς. αὐτὸς [.....].[.]η[.....καὶ]
 12. οἱ πάντες τὸ προσκύ[νη]μ[α] υμ[.]θ[-----]
 13. τῶν κυρίων [θεῶν(?)] θ[.....]έποιή[σαν].

1. read *ινδικτίωνος*; 6. δι/ stone; αρ]χ⁺ stone; α[ρ]χ⁺ stone; *π̄τροσ* stone;
 7. αρχ⁺, stone; 9. *π̄τεπ* stone;

Lines 1-3: Like the previous inscriptions, this one also begins with a date: first the year given according to the system of indictions, then the day and year of the current consuls' term of office. Due to the fragmentary state of preservation of the inscription, however, its date is uncertain. All the available data: 16th indiction, the fact, that the consuls are *δεσπότες* and that at least one of them bears the epithet *ἐπιφανέστατος* suggest Dec. 27-28, 357¹¹. In dating the inscription thus, I have, however, my doubts. Such a reading would make line 2 too long, while mention of the 16th indiction points to a date closer to the introduction of the system (327/328 or 342/343), when scribes not yet fully competent in its use might have easily made the error of ignoring the fact that a new cycle had begun (R. S. B a g n a l l, K. A. W o r p, op.cit., p. 34, note 10).

Line 6: The name of the first ἀρχι() - Ληείλος, surely a variant of Λείλος.

The name of the second ἀρχι() starts with a Π, above which there is a line sloping downwards at the ends. The same form is found in inscriptions 1 and 2 in the name Π()ποκοῖ(σις), in inscription 3, line 9 in the name Π()τεπ[.]ηρ[ι... and, in an unclear context, in inscription 4, line 5. If my theory, that the line over Π represents the Egyptian *aleph* is correct, we would then get the name Π(ε)τροσ, possibly an abbreviation of Πετροσ(ζμήθις) (*metathesis* of Πετορζμήθις, as for instance in U. W i l c k e n, *Ostraka*, nos. 55, 60, 61, 68, 76). This is by no means entirely evident, especially since the shape of the final *sigma* is characteristic of line endings, precluding the use of an abbreviated form.

Line 8: Possibly Π(ε)τεπ[ο]ηρ[ι]; see commentary to line 6.

Line 11-13: The ending of the inscription appears to be exactly the same as in inscription 2: Hatres son of Horion sacrificed a donkey and the members of the corporation taking part in the ceremony made a *proskynema*. The exact wording of the ending is not, however, possible to determine. One should note the plural *κυρίων* (probably followed by *θεῶν*) as opposed to *τοῦ θεοῦ* in inscription 1 and 2.

Inscription no. 4. (fig. 4)

Inscription 4 is on the north wall of the niche, facing the inscriptions described above. It was written on an undecorated fragment of stone between the head of Tuthmosis II and the list of sacrifices offered to him, 33.5 cm. away from

¹¹ Of course unless there is some mistake in my copy or in the writer's quoting two different systems of dating; on this type of mistake, see R. S. B a g n a l l, K. A. W o r p, op.cit., pp. 64-66, with a list of attested mistakes on pp. 65-66.

the south-west corner of the niche, 130 cm. above floor level. Measurements 27.5 cm. by 14.5 cm. Dark red ochre, very faded. To the east of the inscription 4, slightly above it, is inscription no. 102 from Bataille's *Inscriptions*, who notes in his commentary, p. 70: "Deux morceaux de la même paroi Nord de cette niche ont été retrouvés en 1938 sous le sol, qu'ils avaient défoncé en tombant. Il portent des proscynèmes à l'ocre très effacés". It is highly probable that he had in mind our inscription no 4.

1. υ[.....]σ[.]ν[.]μ[.]σιποιμισ
2. γενόμεθα ἐνθ[αὔθα] θυσίας ὄ[νο.]
3. πλήθος [σ]ιδηρουργῶ[ν] 'Ε[ρμ]ώνθεω[ς ὦν] τὸ κα[τ']
4. [δ]νομα δια[γέγραπται].....]σιε[.]πρ. ἀρχι(), β̄ ἀρχι() 'Ατρῆς Ψ[.....]
5. [...]αις καὶ συρημ.ληται 'Ωρί(ων) 'Ωρί(ονος) πρ.π()π[.]τ[...]
6. Τύραννος Κουελ(), Παμώνθης .υ[.]μηυ[.]ν 'καὶ Π[ε]ταῖς
7. {σ} Παβῶτ[ο]ν 'καὶ .αι.α.ν.[.....]αι[.]ασιμου καὶ Μωνκο[ρ]ῆς
8. καὶ τ.π[ε][.....] καὶ 'Ατρῆς 'Ω[ρ]ίονος τ[οῦ] Θεοφάνους
9. blank γραμματεούς . . α . . ε ω τ γ

2. read ἐντ[αὔθα] 4. αρχ⁺ stone, αρχ⁺, stone; 5. ωρ⁺ ωρ⁺ stone; ηρδττττ / stone;
6. κουελ— stone; 7. read Μονκορῆς; 9. read γραμματεύς;

Line 1 is almost completely obliterated. By analogy to inscriptions 1-3 one can assume that the date was placed here, but it is difficult to decipher from the remaining fragments. The date might also have been contained in line 9, where horizontal lines above the traces of letters suggest numerals.

Lines 4-5: It seems that only two ἀρχι() were mentioned in the inscription. The name of the first is illegible, the second was named 'Ατρῆς, Ψ doubtless being the first letter of his patronymic, filling up the end of line 4. At the beginning of line 5 we find [...]αις, probably the ending of some name, and καὶ suggesting that this is a list of the ordinary members of the corporation, which would then leave no place for the phrase γ̄ ἀρχι().

The name 'Ωρίων has been abbreviated two times by raising the *iota* and crossing it with a horizontal bar, just as in ἀρχι(); see commentary to inscription 1, line 4.

Τύραννος Κουελ() might have been the son of Κουελ(), who took part in the visit of 324; one cannot exclude, however, that the reading here should be Τύραννος, Κουελ(). For the name Κουελ() see commentary to inscription 1, line 6.

Line 6: Παμώνθης, a theophoric name formed from the name of Montu, god of Hermonthis, is typical of the onomastics of Hermonthis and Memnonia; see for example A. B a t a i l l e, *Les Memnonia*, p. 79.

Line 7: Μωνκορῆς = Μονκορῆς, a transcription of the Egyptian *mn-k3-r^c* (E. L ü d - d e c k e n s, *Demotisches Namenbuch*, p. 590) appears almost exclusively in the Theban region. It was, i.a., the name of the father of Pamonthes - a smith and the author of an early Imperial period Demotic dedication to Montu coming probably from Hermonthis (W. S p i e g e l b e r g, *Die Demotischen Denkmäler III, Demotische Inschriften und Papyri*, [=Catalogue Général du Musée du Caire], Berlin 1932, p. 18 sq., no. 50046).

Line 9: Having recorded the name of the corporation scribe - Hatres son of Horion, whom we have already encountered, the inscription ends with several signs, which I was unable to decipher. It should be assumed that the ending here differed from that

of inscriptions 1-3, with no mention of the sacrifice of a donkey or the making of a *proskynema*.

The four inscriptions discussed above are more than simple *proskynemata*; they are the quasi-official protocols of cult gatherings held in the temple in Deir el-Bahari by a hitherto unknown corporation of craftsmen. They give one a glimpse, albeit fragmentary, of the association's structure and follow its membership over a period of 30-odd years. They also cast some light on traditional religious beliefs in Egypt during the crucial period of the decline of paganism and the victory of Christianity.

Inscription no. 1, dated to 324 A.D., seems to mention 15 people, 13 of whom (12 *siderourgoi* and the secretary) are members of the corporation; 13 corporation members also appear to be mentioned in inscription 4. Since it is difficult to imagine that a considerable part of the craftsmen in a given profession could in the fourth century play their trade outside of the relevant corporation¹², this would give Hermonthis an average number of 12-15 *siderourgoi* active professionally. It is not known, however, whether the number applies only to the city, or to the entire Hermonthian nome. Inscription no. 1, where two brothers are described as ἀρχι() would seem to suggest that the iron-worker's profession was hereditary, confirming the well known rule¹³. The lists of *siderourgoi* commence in all inscriptions with the names of those members of the corporation described as ἀρχι() (3 each in inscriptions 1, 2 and 3 and probably 2 in inscription 4). Although it is impossible to determine what the abbreviated word is, it referred beyond doubt to individuals holding some office within the corporation¹⁴. Apart

¹² This is suggested by mutual advantages both for a craftsman and for a corporation resulting from his membership in a professional union. Being an instrument for the levying of taxes, the Late Roman and Byzantine corporations were greatly interested in drawing as many craftsmen as possible, since in this way the burdens imposed on them were distributed to a greater number of persons. At the same time, the craftsman who belonged to a corporation rendered taxes much reduced compared to the non-union craftsman and he could expect help and protection from the corporation in difficult moments of his life: I. F i c h m a n, *Egiptēt na rubeže dvuch epoch. Remeslenniki i remeslennyj trud v IV-seredine VII v.*, Moskva 1965, p. 151 sq. The obligatory membership of a craftsman to an appropriate professional corporation, postulated in some older works (Cl. P r é a u x, *Restriction à la liberté du travail dans l'Égypte grecque et romaine*, Cde IX, 1934, pp. 338-345; e a d e m, *A propos des associations dans l'Égypte gréco-romaine*, RIDA I, 1948, p. 189-198; Th. R e i l, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Gewerbes im hellenistischen Ägypten*, Borna-Leipzig 1913, p. 192), seems to have existed only in the case of some professions, important from the point of view of the Roman state (supplies for the army and the capitals): E. W i p s z y c k a, *Das Textilhandwerk und der Staat im römischen Ägypten*, AfP XVIII, 1966, pp. 12-14.

As for enrollment in the professional corporations in Late Roman and Byzantine Egypt, see the material collected by I. F i c h m a n, op.cit., p. 158, note 170: PSI XII 1265 (5th century): 12 bankers in an incomplete document; P. Cair. Masp. I 67067 (Aphrodito, Byzantine period): *kefalaiotes* and 5 τυλάριοι (?); P. Strassb. IV 287 (VI century): 5 workers in tow.

¹³ See I. F i c h m a n, op.cit., p. 64 sq., who cites examples both from Roman and Byzantine Egypt.

¹⁴ Collective leadership of the Egyptian professional corporations and cult associations has been studied in detail by M, S a n N i c o l ò, *Ägyptisches Vereinswesen*

from the distinction ἀρχι(), β̄ ἀρχι(), γ̄ ἀρχι() there is no trace of any other gradation¹⁵, which suggests that their ranks were commensurate. The name of an ἀρχι() never appears in more than one inscription, which suggests that their term of office was a short one, probably not exceeding one year¹⁶. It does not seem likely for the corporation to have had one person as its head, since such an individual could not fail to have been mentioned in what amounted to semi-official documents.

Apart from the ἀρχι() the inscriptions mention one more function-holding member, namely the corporation secretary¹⁷. The post was held for over 30 years by Hatres son of Horion. The four inscriptions discussed were probably of his making; he also had important religious duties during the *siderourgoi*'s visits to Deir el-Bahari. Judging from his practised and assured handwriting and the length of his employment, one can deduce that he was a professional scribe, permanently affiliated to the corporation. The presence of a secretary is, like the name of the corporation, an archaising trait: Late Roman and Byzantine corporations did not employ secretaries, whose functions were assumed by the corporations' heads¹⁸.

We have no data concerning the professional activity of the Hermonthis iron-workers corporation; we know them only from their religious activity - one aspect of their religious activity to be precise, i.e. their visits to the temple of Deir el-Bahari. In 324 and 357 these visits took place in 1st and 2nd of Tybi, in

zur Zeit der Ptolemäer und Römer, Band II, München 1915, pp. 54-56. It was quite common in Ptolemaic and Roman periods while in later times it appeared only sporadically and was almost exclusively restricted to Oxyrynchos, where at the turn of the 3rd into the 4th century the *collegia* of *meniarchai*, exercising their functions probably within the span of one year, stayed at the head of some professional unions: I. F i c h m a n, op.cit., pp. 137 sq., 164. As for ἀρχι() in our inscriptions, everything points to their functions as being simultaneous. Therefore, they should be compared to the earlier examples rather than to the contemporary *meniarchai*.

The number of corporation heads, when quoted, varies from 2 to 6: M. S a n N i c o l ò, loc.cit.; I. F i c h m a n, op.cit., p. 164, note 301. In general, their functions may be considered commensurate. Some of the cult associations of Ptolemaic and Early Roman dates, however, as seen from their Demotic and Greek regulations, were headed by a number of persons organized in a hierarchical system: Fr. d e C e n i v a l, *Les associations religieuses en Égypte d'après les documents démotiques*, Le Caire 1972, pp. 153-175; cf. P. Mich. V 246 (list of contributions to a guild of Harpocrates, middle first century A.D.), where apart from ἡγούμενος three κλεισιάρχαι are mentioned.

¹⁵ Since the reading ωμαλος (=όμαλῶς) in inscription no. 1 is not quite sure, I do not take into consideration the possible differentiation of the rank of ἀρχι().

¹⁶ The yearly term of office of a corporation's president was almost a rule both in Ptolemaic and Roman as well as in Byzantine periods: M. S a n N i c o l ò, op.cit., II, p. 93 sqq.; Fr. d e C e n i v a l, op.cit., p. 167; I. F i c h m a n, op.cit., p. 166 sq. Sometimes, the same man was elected president anew in subsequent years. The extremely rare examples when president is elected *διὰ βίου* are listed in M. S a n N i c o l ò, op.cit., II, p. 94 sq.

¹⁷ On the duties of a corporation's secretary, M. S a n N i c o l ò, op.cit., II, p. 73 sq.

¹⁸ I. F i c h m a n, op.cit., p. 141.

332 the *siderourgoi* also visited the temple in the month of Tybi. The order of these visits, reconstructed on the basis of fragmentary information found in the inscriptions, consisted of several points. Firstly, a donkey was sacrificed ἔμψροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ. In 324 the sacrificer was Plenis the donkey-keeper¹⁹, while in other instances it was most probably Hatres son of Horion, the corporation secretary. Having offered the sacrifice, the *siderourgoi* paid homage to the gods. The word *proskynema* used to denote this in the texts of the inscriptions is too general in meaning for anything definite to be said about this part of the visit. At the end of the visit the secretary left behind an inscription describing its course. Inscriptions 1 and 3 clearly state that the visits they commemorate took place over a period of two days - 1st and 2nd of Tybi. The nights separating these days were doubtless spent in the temple and it is almost certain that ritual banquets were organised. That a banquet was held in 324 is confirmed by the presence of a brewer, who was surely responsible for the preparation and supply of the necessary amount of beer²⁰.

It has already been pointed out that both the name of the corporation and certain features of its internal structure emulate Early Roman and even Ptolemaic models. This is true to an even greater extent of the above-mentioned religious and social activities of this union. Greek and Demotic statutes of trade corporations and cult associations from ca. 300 B.C. - 100 A.D. inform us that meetings of their members were held regularly once a month "in order to drink"²¹. The im-

¹⁹ That a donkey-keeper was included into the cult gathering of the iron-workers corporation resulted, to my mind, not only from the fact that he knew how to manage a donkey, thus guaranteeing the efficiency of a sacrifice. One can imagine too, that he provided from his herd an animal needed for the sacrifice (possibly free of charge or at the reduced price) and took care of it during the pilgrimage from Hermonthis to Deir el-Bahari.

²⁰ The presence of a brewer may have resulted from the same reasons as in the case of a donkey-keeper; he prepared the necessary amount of beer and offered it as his contribution to the organization of the banquet.

That *siderourgoi* drank beer during at least one of their gatherings seems to me very significant. Beer was the everyday drink of ancient Egyptians. It was also universally drunk during various feasts and cult ceremonies in Pharaonic Egypt. In Dendera, where the "Feast of Drunkenness" commemorating the return of the goddess Hathor from Nubia to Egypt was celebrated, getting drunk with beer was of ritual character: W. H e l c k, *Das Bier im Alten Ägypten*, Berlin 1971, pp. 66-76. In Roman Egypt, with the hellenization of customs, beer was gradually replaced by wine and in the 4th century A.D. it was mentioned only sporadically. The *siderourgoi* from Hermonthis, however, whose attempts to emulate past models are clearly seen in almost every aspect of their life, consumed beer, the traditional drink of their country.

²¹ This is stated *expressis verbis* in Demotic regulations of cult associations of Ptolemaic and Early Roman periods: Fr. de C e n i v a l, op.cit., p. 178 sq. Greek documents of this kind, dated generally to the first century A.D., come mainly from Tebtunis: P. Mich. V 243-248 (cf. E. A. B o a k, *The Organization of Guilds in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, TAPA LXVIII, 1937, pp. 212-220); other Greek regulations are: C. H. R o b e r t s, T. C. S k e a t, A. D. N o c k, *The Guild of Zeus Hypsistos*, HThR 29, 1936, pp. 39-91 (=SB V 7835, Philadelphia?, first century B.C.), O. T a i t II 1861 (Thebes, 3rd century A.D.), PSI XII 1265 (5th century). All this material, both Egyptian and Greek, has been usefully collected in M. M u s z y n s k i, *Les "Associations religieuses" en Égypte d'après les sources hiéroglyphiques, démotiques et grecques*, OLP 8, 1977, pp. 145-174.

portant events in the life of associations members, like weddings, the birth of their children or death of someone from their families, were also celebrated in the form of drinking banquets. These banquets took place either on corporation premises or in a public temple; far less frequent were gatherings organised on special occasions outside the corporation centres of activity, also in the capital of the nome. The funds needed to organise banquets came from special contributions exacted from all members. Participation in the banquets was compulsory, subject to a fine, the amount of which varied depending on whether the banquet was held in or away from one's town. Comparative material of a similar nature is to be found in the registers of payments for beer, wine and lamp-oil consumed during the night-time meetings of various *σύνοδοι*²². Of greatest interest from our point of view are the accounts of the *σύνοδος* Θμουπ(), probably from the Pathyris area, which in the 2nd or 3rd century A.D. held its gatherings in the temple of Seti I in Qurna several hundred meters from Deir el-Bahari²³. The visits by the corporation of *siderourgoi* from Hermonthis to Deir el-Bahari, as documented by the inscriptions here discussed, correspond very closely to this pattern. In this respect the corporation of *siderourgoi* from Hermonthis is the direct continuator of the traditions fostered for many centuries by Egyptian trade and cult associations.

The one thing that distinguishes the *proskynemata* of the *siderourgoi* from earlier documents describing corporation gatherings is the heavy emphasis placed on the sacrifice. It seems that the sacrifice of a donkey was the main element of their visits to Deir el-Bahari and it is this element that for us is the most striking. In the common opinion of modern scholars the majority of ancient peoples, Egyptians included, considered the donkey to be ritually unclean and as such not suitable for sacrificial purposes. This is, however, an opinion which arose under the double influence of Jewish and Greek religious thoughts, while we are dealing with a group of ethnic Egyptians, who towards the decline of traditional beliefs in their country attempt in all areas of their social life to emulate past models. Therefore, the sacrifices offered by them should also in my opinion be considered in the light of native Egyptian beliefs.

Traditions of union gatherings survived in Egypt until the Byzantine period. The Christian associations of *φιλόπονοι* and *σπουδαίοι* assemble to celebrate in form of banquets important events in the life of their members: E. W i p s z y c k a, *Les confréries dans la vie religieuse de l'Égypte chrétienne*, Proceedings of the Twelfth International Congress of Papyrology, Toronto 1970, pp. 511-525 and especially p. 517; see also CPR IV 196: Coptic regulation of the association of *φιλόπονοι*.

²² SB III 6319 (Medinet el-Nahas, Late Ptolemaic: list of contributions to a banquet by members of an unknown *synodos*; are mentioned: wine, music, wreaths, oil); O. Tait II 1859-1860 (both probably from Hermonthis or Memnonia, 2nd-3rd century A.D.); SB I 4549 (*proskynema* of a *synodos* in the temple of Kalabsha, 226 A.D.); Z. B o r k o w s k i [in:] K. M y ś l i w i e c, *Keramik und Kleinfunde aus der Grabung im Tempel Sethos' I in Gurna*, Mainz am Rhein 1987, p. 92 (*σύνοδος* Ἰσιδος, *σύνοδος* Ἀπόλλωνος as well as *λυχνάψια συνόδου*, *λυχνάψια* Ἀπόλλωνος).

²³ Z. B o r k o w s k i, op.cit., p. 92, no. 4, l. 7; no. 5, l. 2.

Two types of bloody sacrifices can be distinguished in the Egyptian temple cult: those in which part of the flesh of the sacrificial animal was burnt and part consumed, and those in which all of the sacrificial animal was burnt ("Vernichtungsoffer")²⁴. Each type functions within a different ideological framework; the objective of the first is to provide the gods with nourishment, while the second aims at the total destruction of evil forces represented by the sacrificial animal. The second type of sacrifice, widespread since the Late Period, is deeply rooted in mythology. The killing of each sacrificial animal re-enacts a mythological archetype, in particular the victorious struggle for mastery over the world waged by Horus with his uncle Seth, who personified all disorder and the evil forces of nature. Such a conception of sacrifice created the theological basis for offering animals dedicated to Seth, or those with which he was identified: the hippopotamus, donkey, pig as well as all animals with red hides²⁵.

The whole evidence concerning the sacrifice of a donkey in Ancient Egypt has been collected by J. Yoyotte²⁶. It consists mostly of representations in the temples of Edfu²⁷ and Karnak²⁸, depicting the king killing a donkey in honour of, respectively, Horus of Sile and Sokaris - Osiris, reborn on Khoiak, 26th. According to the mythological papyri, sacrificing a donkey neutralized the threat posed by the guardians of the underworld²⁹. An unusual sacrifice of a donkey was mentioned by Plutarch: in Koptos a bound donkey was thrown from a *gebel* into a precipice³⁰. The same author relates that images of the bound donkey were impressed on cakes prepared as offerings during the feasts of the month of Pauni and Phaophi³¹. In light of the above examples it is entirely understandable that the *siderourgoi* from Hermonthis sacrificed donkeys.

Additional data about the ideology behind these sacrifices is, to my mind, furnished by the dates of their taking place: 1st and 2nd of Tybi. Tybi immediately follows the month of Khoiak, in which a great feast in honour of

²⁴ Generally, on the offerings and sacrifices in Pharaonic Egypt, see H. Altemüller, *Lexicon der Ägyptologie*, Band IV, Wiesbaden 1982, cols. 579-584, s.v. *Opfer*. As for bloody sacrifices, see H. Bonnet, *Reallexicon der Ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*, Berlin 1952, s.v. *Brandopfer*, especially pp. 124-125; H. Kees, *Bemerkungen zum Tieropfer der Ägypter und seine Symbolik*, "Nachrichten von der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Phil.-hist. Klasse", 1942, p. 71 sqq. *Vernichtungsoffer* are studied in detail in H. Junker, *Die Schlacht und Brandopfer im Tempelkult der Spätzeit*, ZÄS 48, 1910, pp. 69-77.

²⁵ H. Junker, op.cit., p. 70 sqq.

²⁶ J. Yoyotte, *Source grecque et religion égyptienne tardive: l'âne dans les croyances égyptiennes*, "Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Etudes, V^e section: Sciences Religieuses" 77, 1969-1970, pp. 185-191.

²⁷ E. Chassinat, *Le temple d'Edfou IV*, Le Caire 1929, pp. 77-80, cols. 234-237.

²⁸ K. Sethe, *Thebanische Tempelinschriften aus der griechisch-römischen Zeit*, Berlin 1957, no. 32.

²⁹ Al. Piankoff, N. Rambova, *Mythological Papyri*, New York 1957, no. 17.

³⁰ Plutarch, de Iside et Osiride 30.

³¹ Plutarch, loc. cit.

Sokaris-Osiris was observed³². During the feast the events from Osirian myth were symbolically celebrated: the treacherous killing of Osiris by his brother Seth, the searching for Osiris' body and the mourning after it by Isis, the triumphant resurrection of Osiris and the vanquishing of his enemies by his son Horus. The feast lasted for many days in the second half of the month Khoiak and ended on the 30th of Khoiak with the erection of two *djed*-pillars, symbolizing the final victory of Osiris who became the king of the Underworld, leaving to Horus the rule over Earth. The enthronement of Horus as a ruler of such an organized Cosmos was celebrated on the 1st of Tybi, during the *Nechebkau*-feast³³. Thus, 1st of Tybi being a natural continuation of the feast of Khoiak was at the same time considered the first day of the Egyptian New Year³⁴. The victory of Osiris over Seth was celebrated by offering Sethian animals during the high point of the feast of Khoiak, on the 26th day of that month; sources from the temples of Karnak and Edfu speak of sacrificing a donkey³⁵, those from Medinet Habu mention a pig³⁶. The feast of Khoiak and the ceremonial observance of the New Year survived in Egypt until late Antiquity³⁷. I consider it likely that the pilgrimages of *siderourgoi* from Hermonthis to Deir el-Bahari and their offering of a donkey, the holy animal of Seth, took place on the occasion of these feasts.

³² Generally, on the Khoiak feast, see G. G a b a l l a, K. K i t c h e n, *The Festival of Sokar*, "Orientalia" 38, 1969, p. 1 sqq. The most important document to reconstruct its course and symbolism is a long hieroglyphic text from the temple in Dendera, dated to the Early Roman period, which edition, translation and commentary constitutes the basis of E. C h a s s i n a t, *Le Mystère d'Osiris au Mois de Khoiak*, vol. I-II, Le Caire 1966-1968; additional informations are to be found in the feast calendar in the temple of Ramses III in Medinet Habu: H. H. N e l s o n, *Medinet Habu III, The Calendar, The "Slaughterhouse", and Minor Records of Ramses III*, Chicago 1934, pl. 158; cf. also H. H. N e l s o n, *The Calendar of Feasts and Offerings at Medinet Habu* [in:] H. H. N e l s o n, U. H ö l s c h e r, *Work in Western Thebes 1931-33*, Chicago 1934, p. 59.

³³ W. B a r t a, *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* IV, Wiesbaden 1982, col. 389, s.v. *Nechebkau(-fest)*. The feast of the 1st of Tybi were observed with particularly great solemnity in the temple of Horus in Edfu: M. A l l i o t, *Le culte d'Horus à Edfou*, vol. II, Le Caire 1954, pp. 561-676.

³⁴ On the connections between the feast of Khoiak and this of the 1st of Tybi, see A. H. G a r d i n e r, *Mesore as first month of the Egyptian year*, ZÄS 43, 1906, p. 139, who even considers them to be "but two names for one and the same festival".

³⁵ As for Karnak, cf. *supra*, note 27. In the temple of Horus in Edfu, the information on the donkey sacrifice on Khoiak 26th is contained in the so-called "Small Feast Calendar": E. C h a s s i n a t, *Le temple d'Edfou V*, Le Caire 1930, p. 399, cols. 1-6; translation in M. A l l i o t, *op.cit.*, vol. I, Le Caire 1949, p. 210: "Au moment du matin, on présente de nombreuses offrandes devant Osiris. (Puis) on amène l'âne sauvage du temple de Seth; (alors) [on] amène [.....]; les harponneurs saisissent l'épieu; le (prêtre du) roi [arrive(?)]; on égorge (la victime) devant Osiris".

³⁶ H. H. N e l s o n, *Medinet Habu III*, pl. 158; mentioned briefly by H. H. N e l s o n [in:] H. H. N e l s o n, U. H ö l s c h e r, *op.cit.*, p. 59. Contrary to other sources, the calendar from Medinet Habu speaks on the sacrifice as offered on the 24th not on the 26th of Khoiak.

³⁷ R. M e r k e l b a c h, *Isisfeste in griechisch-römischer Zeit. Daten und Riten*, Meisenheim am Glan 1963, p. 36.

The sacrifice would then have to be of "Vernichtungsoffer" type - the donkey was annihilate full and the meat for the banquet was obtained elsewhere³⁸.

It would be very interesting to know why the iron-workers from Hermonthis chose for their gatherings and sacrifices this particular temple in Deir el-Bahari, situated some 20 kilometres from their place of living. Another question is naturally connected with the previous one: who was the god (or gods?) mentioned in the inscriptions. The inscriptions themselves tell us little about it. Inscription no. 1 mentions a μέγας θεός, inscription no.3 κύριοι [θεοί(?)]. Both epithets are too common to point to a definite god or to definite gods. The interpretation of the word ἔμπροσθεν seems, to my mind, to be of fundamental meaning for resolving these problems. If, after the papyri language, we accept that ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ should be understood in a purely topographical sense, "before the god's statue" or "before the god's altar", we have to assume then that a cult of a particular god, with its representations and altars did exist in the fourth century in the temple at Deir el-Bahari and that the iron-workers made their pilgrimages and offered sacrifices in honour of this god. In this situation, the most likely candidates are of course Amenhotep, son of Hapu, and Imhotep. Amenhotep was worshipped in Deir el-Bahari from the beginning of the Ptolemaic period, Imhotep from about the end of the third or the beginning of the second century B.C.³⁹ Their cult, the centre of which was the sanctuary built under Ptolemy VIII, flourished until the second century A.D. as is proven by the Greek inscriptions published by Bataille. It is likely that it survived throughout the entire third century, for which we have no sources, and still existed at the beginning of the fourth century. The argument for Amenhotep and Imhotep is also supported by the plural form τῶν κυρίων in inscription no. 3, l. 13, the more so as both gods bear the epithet κύριοι.

³⁸ In spite of being described by the term *θυσία*, sacrifice offered by the *siderourgoi* cannot be identified with the classical Greek *θυσία*, the sacrifice which according to J. R u d h a r d t, *Notions fondamentales de la pensée religieuse et actes constitutifs du culte dans la Grèce classique*, Genève 1958, p. 321, presupposes "destruction partielle de l'objet consacré et maniement ou consommation de la partie restante". The reasons are twofold: 1. starting with the classical meaning the word *θυσία* gradually enlarged its meaning to embrace every sacrifice and offering as it does in modern Greek; 2. we are dealing here with Egyptian-type sacrifices and not with Greek ones.

That *siderourgoi*'s sacrifices should be understood as Vernichtungsoffern, being a nourishment neither for a god nor for people, seems to be suggested by the inscriptions themselves. One should notice that a donkey was sacrificed ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ and not τῷ θεῷ as if god were only a guardian of the sacrifice and would not take his part from it. It is possible, however, that the expression under consideration has been constructed under the influence of the Egyptian language; cf. the translation of the Egyptian text quoted in note 35.

³⁹ On the cult of Amenhotep son of Hapu and Imhotep in Deir el-Bahari, see A. B a t a i l l e, *Inscriptions, Introduction*, pp. XIX-XXV; id. *Amenothès, fils de Hapou à Deir el-Bahari*, BSFE 3, 1950, pp. 6-14; E. L a s k o w s k a - K u s z t a l, op. cit., pp. 64-127; D. W i l d u n g, *Amenhotep und Imhotep. Gottverdung im alten Ägypten*, München-Berlin 1977 (=Münchner Ägyptologische Studien 36), p. 193, §135; pp. 220-235, §§ 147-150; pp. 257-263, §§ 159-168.

in earlier inscriptions⁴⁰. The unusual kind of sacrifice, however, argues against the above identification. The semi-gods Amenhotep and Imhotep were satisfied with the simple offerings and remnants of sacrifices from the altars of the most powerful gods⁴¹. The sacrifice of a donkey, with such a developed ideology behind it, should be offered rather to one of the great gods of the Egyptian pantheon. Considering the above objection I would like to put forward another hypothesis. *Ἐμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ may have the meaning "in presence of the god", the god very well known to the *siderourgoi* and worshipped by them, but unfortunately mysterious to us. This does not necessarily imply his cult and its entire hinterland existing in the temple at Deir el-Bahari⁴². It was enough for him to be in mind of the *siderourgoi*, his worshippers. If that was the case, what attracted *siderourgoi* in Deir el-Bahari was probably the general holiness of the place itself, constituting part of the ancient Theban necropolis⁴³.

The inscriptions from Deir el-Bahari supplement the small amount of sources concerning the nature of pagan belief in the mid-fourth century. It seems that in spite of the spread of Christianity the population was still largely pagan⁴⁴. One can assume that certain myths were still not forgotten, traditional feasts were still observed and old deities, especially local patrons, were still worshipped. This was done, however, within the narrow circles of family, friends or professional corporations, such as the corporation of *siderourgoi* from Hermonthis. The *proskynemata* left behind by the corporation in Deir el-Bahari may therefore be treated as characteristic of Egyptian religious beliefs during the decline of paganism.

[Warszawa]

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⁴⁰ Cf. for example G. R o n c h i, *Lexicon Theonymon*, s.v. κύριος 'Ἀμνώθης, κύριος Ἀσκληπιός.

⁴¹ D. W i l d u n g, op.cit. pp. 208, 210, 230.

⁴² We even do not know if any cult did exist in Deir el-Bahari in the fourth century A.D. It is sure that at that time two lower courts of the Hatshepsut's temple were completely filled up with sand and their area was used as a necropolis: W. G o d l e w s k i, *The Late Roman Necropolis in Deir el-Bahari*, [in:] *Graeco-Coptica, Griechen und Kopten im byzantinischen Ägypten*, ed. P. Nagel, Halle 1984, pp. 111-119. The same situation can be observed in the northern part of the upper tarrace; in the court of the solar complex figural dipinto of Roman date is situated on the top of the western wall, 5 metres above the original floor level. Apart from the *proskynemata* of *siderourgoi* there are no other proofs, neither epigraphical nor archaeological, of any activity. Everything seems to point to the fact that the *siderourgoi* came to the place which was abandoned in the surrounding necropolis.

⁴³ Cf. the σύνοδος Θουμπ() which in the 2nd or 3rd century came probably from the Pathyris area to held its gatherings in the temple of Seti I in Qurna.

⁴⁴ On the religious situation in Late Antique Egypt still irreplaceable remains the article of R. R é m o n d o n, *L'Égypte et la suprême résistance au christianisme (Ve-VII^e siècles)*, BIFAO 51, 1952, pp. 63-78; cf. also E. W i p s z y c k a. *La christianisation de l'Égypte aux IV^e-VI^e siècles, Aspects sociaux et ethniques*, Aegyptus LXVIII, 1988, pp. 117-165; L. K á k o s y, *Das Ende des Heidentums in Ägypten*, [in:] *Graeco-Coptica, Griechen und Kopten im byzantinischen Ägypten*, ed. P. Nagel, Halle 1984, pp. 61-76.