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Tomasz Derda

NECROPOLIS WORKERS IN GRAECO-ROMAN EGYPT  
IN THE LIGHT OF THE GREEK PAPYRI\*

The papyrological literature has not yet had a monograph study discussing all the groups of people who are arbitrarily called "necropolis workers" in the title of this paper. This term includes all those whose occupational chores resulted from the funerary customs and the cult of the dead which existed in Egypt. Despite what is suggested by the term "necropolis workers", all these workers might also carry out their tasks elsewhere; the necropolis, however, was always the most important place from the point of view of their occupation.

The Greek documents used in this paper cover the period of almost an entire millenium (from the 3rd century B.C. to the 6th century A.D.). Because of this wide chronological scatter of sources combined with a relatively small number of them, it is impossible to trace fully the evolution that took place in the range of competence, the organization of work or, finally, in the social status of those employed on the necropolis. Some of the specialties discussed (e.g., *paraschistai*) are known from only one source - for this is how, from the historical point of view, one should treat the private archives, i.e., a set of documents covering a relatively short period, collected by one man.

Another qualification regarding the collected material results from its territorial scatter. The burial customs and the cult of the dead, with their tradition of many centuries, were different, often in essential points, depending on the part of the country. In turn, these regional differences must have brought about differences also in the range of tasks and the way of carrying them out by necropolis workers in particular parts of Egypt, but this phenomenon cannot be documented in detail by the papyrologist.

Much information on the problem raised here is to be found in demotic documents. Unfortunately, many of them, often of primary significance, still await publication, others, published many years ago, already require re-edition. In this study I have only used those demotic documents which were strictly connected to the Greek documents quoted, e.g., the demotic papyri from the bilingual archive of the *paraschistes* Amenotes. The edition of the documents from

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this archive by P.W. Pestman<sup>1</sup> can serve as a pattern for other editors undertaking the preparation of bilingual archives. The archive of Theban *choachytai* has not yet been published in such a way, and the otherwise splendid edition of Greek papyri prepared by U. Wilcken (UPZ ii 160-190) should be complemented, at least, with a full publication of the demotic texts<sup>2</sup>.

The previous papyrological literature has included only one attempt at a broader discussion of the occupations related to the functioning of the necropolis, but its author, A. Bataille, studying only the complex of the Theban necropoleis, only used such documents from the other parts of Egypt as were helpful in the reconstruction of the Theban phenomena; therefore, these occupations that were not known to exist in the Theban necropoleis were hardly mentioned by A. Bataille<sup>3</sup>. At this point, it is also interesting to note the introductions to the two editions of sizeable archives; in fact, these introductions form monographs on the *paraschistai* and on the embalmers of the Hawara Necropolis<sup>4</sup>.

The order of the sections of this study follows the succession in which these necropolis workers carried out their work and the chronological limitation (as far as they can be determined) of the occurrence of particular groups among them. Thus, the first section has been reserved for (i) *γραμματεῖς* who began the process of mummifying corpses. Subsequent sections discuss the work of (ii) *παρασχίσται*, (iii) *ταριχευταί*, (iv) *στολισταί* and (v) *ιατροί*, all of whom were connected with the process of mummifying and embalming bodies. Another section has been devoted to the characteristics of (vi) *χοαχύται* - the priests responsible in the Ptolemaic Period for interring the mummy into the grave and the observance of the cult of the dead. Further sections characterize the activity of (vii) *νεκροτάφοι*, (viii) *ἐνταφιασταί* and (ix) *θρηνηταί*, members of necropolis workers' corporations in the Roman Period. The last section is devoted to the term (x) *ἐξωπυλίται*, the term found in documents beginning in the 3rd century A.D., which enables one to define a necropolis worker.

<sup>1</sup> P. W. Pestman, *L'archivio di Amenotes figlio di Horos (P. Tor. Amenotes). Testi demotici e greci relativi ad una famiglia di imbalsamatori del secondo sec. a.C.*, Milano 1981.

<sup>2</sup> P. W. Pestman is preparing a publication of all the texts from the *choachytai* archive; cf. P. W. Pestman, "Inheriting" in the Archive of Theban Choachytes (2nd cent. B.C.), [in:] *Aspects of Demotic Lexicography. Acts of the Second International Conference for Demotic Studies, Leiden, 19-21 September 1984*, Leiden 1987, pp. 57-73.

<sup>3</sup> A. Bataille, *Les Memnonia. Recherches de papyrologie et d'épigraphie grecques sur la nécropole de la Thèbes d'Égypte aux époques hellénistique et romaine*, Le Caire 1952, pp. 198-270.

<sup>4</sup> P. W. Pestman, op. cit. (n. 1), pp. 1-15; E. A. E. Reymond, *Embalmer's' Archives from Hawara (= Catalogue of Demotic Papyri in the Ashmolean Museum, vol. i)*, Oxford 1973, pp. 22-39.

## (i) γραμματεῖς

According to Diodorus, a *grammateus* began the process of mummification. When the body had been laid on the ground, he circumscribed on the left flank the extent of the incision which would then be done by the *paraschistes*<sup>5</sup>. Although neither Herodotus nor the Greek papyri mention a *grammateus* in such a role, A. Bataille suggests that, in addition to the function described above, this individual might direct the process of enveloping the mummy with shrouds and bandages. In this case the *grammateus* would be the author of the technical indications written on these shrouds and bandages<sup>6</sup>.

The title *γραμματεὺς* attributed by Diodorus to this man might suggest that, apart from his ritual role, he might work as a scribe of the necropolis workers' corporation.

## (ii) παρασχίσται

The title *παρασχίστης* originated from the verb *παρασχίζω* ("to rip up lengthwise, to slit up"<sup>7</sup>). Their function during the mummifying process is clearly described by Diodorus: they exercised the ritual incision on the left-hand side of the corpse, in the place which had been marked up by the *grammateus*<sup>8</sup>. The ritual act done by the *paraschistai* is also mentioned by Herodotus but he, as the context suggests, attributed this to the *taricheutai*<sup>9</sup>.

The instrument of work of the *paraschistai* was the λίθος Αἰθιοπικὸς ὀξύς, i.e., the knife of "Ethiopian stone". The expression seems to refer to obsidian which is not found in Egypt and was imported from Abyssinia<sup>10</sup> but there are no knives of this material which can be dated to the historical period (there are

<sup>5</sup> D.S. I.91.4: καὶ πρῶτος μὲν ὁ γραμματεὺς λεγόμενος τεθέντος χαμαὶ τοῦ σώματος ἐπὶ τὴν λαγὸνα περιγράφει τὴν εὐώνυμον ὅσον δεῖ διατεμεῖν. It was a rule that the embalming wound was made on left side of the corpse. W. Dawson, *Making a Mummy*, JEA 13, 1927, p. 42, knew of only two examples where the incision was made on the right-hand side. The direction and precise position of the wound show some variation are useful means of determining a mummy's date.

<sup>6</sup> In grave 1407 in Deir el-Medineh French archaeologists found several intact mummies (B. Bruyère, A. Bataille, *Une tombe gréco-romaine de Deir el-Médineh*, BIFAO 36, 1936-37, pp. 145-174; BIFAO 38, 1939, pp. 73-107). Three of them were wrapped with bandages and shrouds covered with inscriptions of a technical sense. A. Bataille, who analyzed these inscriptions (BIFAO 38, 1939, pp. 90-107), believed them to have been the work of a *grammateus* who supervised the whole complicated process of wrapping up mummies; these indications prevented the embalmers from wrapping up a mummy with bandages and shrouds meant for another mummy or from a wrong order of executing the necessary activities (ibidem, pp. 105-107; cf. A. Bataille, op. cit. (n. 3), pp. 211-212).

<sup>7</sup> LSJ, s.v. παρασχίζω.

<sup>8</sup> D.S. I.91.4: ἔπειτα δ' ὁ λεγόμενος παρασχίστης λίθον ἔχων Αἰθιοπικὸν καὶ διατεμὼν ὡς ὁ νόμος κελεύει τὴν σάρκα.

<sup>9</sup> Hdt. II.86.4: μετὰ δὲ λίθῳ Αἰθιοπικῷ ὄξει παρασχίσαντες παρὰ τὴν λαπάρην.

<sup>10</sup> A. Lucas, J. Harris, *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries*, 4th ed., London 1962, p. 416.

only examples of prehistoric date)<sup>11</sup>. The fact that both Herodotus and Diodorus used the same name for this instrument could suggest that this traditional name survived through religious conservatism. The stone that is most likely to form the material of ritual knives is flint; flint knives were often used for certain ceremonial purposes (for example, circumcision)<sup>12</sup>.

After the *paraschistes* had made the incision, he took flight while the deceased's relatives who had been present at the ceremony hurled stones after him. According to Diodorus (I.91.4), it was an old practice that anyone who applied violence to the body of a man of the same tribe was the object of hatred. Possibly, the *paraschistai* were priests of a low position in hierarchy (as it has been claimed by W. Otto<sup>13</sup>), although to date there is no evidence to support such a hypothesis. On the contrary, the *paraschistai*, as Diodorus suggests, were considered to be defiled and thus outside the regular hierarchy<sup>14</sup>.

All the Greek papyri concerned with the occupation of the *paraschistai* come from one archive. This is the bilingual archive of Amenothos, son of Horos, who in the Greek texts is actually called a *παρασχίστης*. All the documents which form part of this archive date from the period 171-116 B.C.<sup>15</sup>

The papyri treating the occupation of Amenothos<sup>16</sup> mention another *paraschistes* - Petenephotos, also called Lolous<sup>17</sup>, son of Petenephotos. In demotic papyri, Amenothos, Petenephotos and their ancestors were known as: *hr-hb tpj n t3 h.3s.t n Dm3*. P.W. Pestman translates this Egyptian title as "capo ritualista della necropoli di Djeme"<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> A. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II. Commentary* (=EPRO 43), Leiden 1976, vol. ii, pp. 357-358.

<sup>12</sup> A. Lucas, J. Harris, op. cit. (n. 10), p. 411.

<sup>13</sup> W. Otto, *Priester und Tempel im hellenistischen Ägypten*, Bd. I, Leipzig-Berlin 1905, pp. 105-108.

<sup>14</sup> D.S. I.91.4-5 places the social position of the *taricheutai* in opposition to that of the *paraschistai*. Contrary to them, the *taricheutai* were worthy of every honour and had the right to come and to go in the temples without hindrance, since they were pure.

<sup>15</sup> Editio princeps (Greek papyri only): A. Peyron, P. Tor. 6-8, 12; re-edition: U. Wilcken, UPZ ii 194-197. The complete edition, including the demotic papyri has recently been published by P. W. Pestman as P. Tor. Amenothos (n. 1).

<sup>16</sup> P. Tor. Amenothos 4 (demotic); 5 (a reconstruction of the agreement between Amenothos and Petenephotos); 6 (=UPZ ii 194); 7 (=UPZ ii 195); 8 (=UPZ ii 196).

<sup>17</sup> The second name of Petenephotos, Lolous appears in the Greek papyri only once - P. Amh. ii 53, v. 3: *πὰρ Λολούτος τοῦ Πετνεφώτου*. This document is a banker's docket on a demotic contract that has not yet been published, but P. W. Pestman, P. Tor. Amenothos 15, p. 133, note (d) gives a transliteration of the demotic full name of that man; Egyptian equivalent of the name Lolous is *Lwlw* (P. Tor. Amenothos 4, vv. 1, 2, 3, 5; 15 verso, v. 17).

<sup>18</sup> P. W. Pestman, op. cit. (n. 1), pp. 6-7. Except Amenothos, son of Horos, and Petenephotos, this Egyptian title was also given to Horos, son of Petenephotos, father of the former and half brother of the latter (P. Tor. Amenothos 1, vv. 3, 9) and Petenephotos, son of Horos, father of the latter and grandfather of the former (P. Tor. Amenothos 1, v. 8).

From the beginning of Egypt's history, the title *hr(j) hb(.t)*, "he who holds the ritual book", meant a reader-priest who took part in cult ceremonies<sup>19</sup>. The documents from Amenothès' archive do not define in detail his occupational tasks; it is certain, however, that they were not limited only to the execution of the first act in the mummification process<sup>20</sup>. In the Siut necropolis, priest with the title *hr-hb* organized and supervised the whole process of body mummification<sup>21</sup>. It is, therefore, hardly likely that Amenothès and Petenephtes, the heads of reader-priests from the Djeme necropolis were engaged in the act of cutting the body considered impure. Further there survives a document in which the Egyptian title *hrj-hb* is expressed by the Greek term *ταριχευτής*<sup>22</sup>. It seems, therefore, that the demotic title *hrj-hb* would be represented better by the Greek term *ταριχευτής*, at the very least as the *taricheutes* was present throughout the process of body mummification and embalming and as he was pure in ritual terms<sup>23</sup>.

Irrespective of the range of chores carried out by Amenothès and Petenephtes, the Greek texts called them *παρασχιστική* or *παρασχιστεία θεραπεία* (P. Tor. Amenothès 6, v. 12; 8, vv. 14, 20-21). Apart from activities strictly related to body mummifying, Amenothès and Petenephtes were engaged perhaps in the administration of medicaments for the living too<sup>24</sup>.

For a dozen or so years at least, Amenothès and Petenephtes carried out their occupation jointly, sharing the income and paying the related costs together (P. Tor. Amenothès 4, dem., is a list of income and costs of the two *paraschistai* in 133/2 and 132/1 B.C.). In about 120 B.C., for unknown reasons, they quarrelled. This row led to a strict separation of their working zones in a contract signed on July 1, 119 B.C.<sup>25</sup> The area divided by the two *paraschistai* occupied much of Thebais. Specifically, Petenephtes obtained the villages si-

<sup>19</sup> Cf. W. O t t o, *Cheriheb*, [in:] *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, Bd. I, Lfg. 6, Wiesbaden 1974, coll. 940-943.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. P. W. P e s t m a n, op. cit. (n. 1), pp. 7-8.

<sup>21</sup> P. BM inv. 10561, edited by A. F. S h o r e, H. S. S m i t h, *A Demotic Embalmers' Agreement*, "Acta Orientalia" 25, 1960, pp. 277-294.

<sup>22</sup> P. dem. Berl. 3116 (ed. W. E r i c h s e n, *Der demotische Papyrus Berlin 3116*, "Aegyptus" 32, 1952, pp. 10-32), col. ii, v. 23: *n3 hr-hb.w t3 kbh* (read: *kh*) *Kbt*; this phrase has been translated in Greek thus: [σκυτέων] ταριχευτῶν τῶν ἐκ τοῦ Κοπ(τίτου) (UPZ ii 180a, col. iii, v. 9).

<sup>23</sup> P. W. P e s t m a n, op. cit. (n.1), pp. 7-8. In this case, the analysis of the papyri from the archive of Amenothès should accompany the consideration of the profession of the *taricheutai*. However, for the sake of clear presentation of the material, we keep the literal sound of the Greek documents, with the qualification that all conclusions on the nature of the occupations of Amenothès and his co-workers are relevant to the *taricheutai*, or rather the reader-priests *hr-hb*.

<sup>24</sup> P. Tor. Amenothès 4 (dem.), vv. 4-5 (translation, §2); cf. P. W. P e s t m a n, com. ad loc. cit. (note h).

<sup>25</sup> P. Tor. Amenothès 5 is a reconstruction of the text of this perished contract made by P. W. P e s t m a n on the basis of numerous references to it in P. Tor. Amenothès 6, 7, 8. It is difficult to find an answer to the question why the contract was not preserved in the archive, after all it was very important for both parties and substantially formed the basis for the mutual accusations of the two *paraschistai*.

tuated on the west bank of the Nile, and Amenothos had those on the east bank, except Psameris and the Temple of Amon in Thebes (P. Tor. Amenothos 5, §7). This division was so strict that, according to its clauses, the village Poonpois for example was separated from its necropolis (the village belonged to Amenothos, the necropolis to Petenephtotes; P. Tor. Amenothos 8, vv. 27-31). In the area divided between the two *paraschistai*, there were certainly numerous villages and even towns (Hermonthis and Koptos) which were not mentioned in the contract - they were the activity range of other *paraschistai*<sup>26</sup>. It seems that a *paraschistes* had the exclusive right of doing his job in the area given him. So the inhabitants had no right of choice and were forced to give away the body of the deceased to the *paraschistes* in whose domain a given locality was. Moreover, this order applied not only to those born there, but also to the resident newcomers<sup>27</sup>. The bodies of those who died in the course of a trip should, in theory at least, be handed over to the *paraschistes* responsible for their permanent residence (P. Tor. Amenothos 8, vv. 21-23).

Despite the making of such a detailed contract, soon there were three further conflicts between Amenothos and Petenephtotes. It turned out that they resulted from less than precise principles of operations for the two *paraschistai* in exceptional cases. The first quarrel came as early as November of 119 B.C., about the slaves set free by priests of Amon and the legitimate and illegitimate sons of these priests. Petenephtotes pretended to have the right to take care of their bodies, whereas the contract of July 1, 119 B.C., ceded to Amenothos all the inhabitants of Thebes except the priests of Amon themselves and their slaves (P. Tor. Amenothos 6, vv. 6-19). Yet another controversial case was related to the Temple of Amon: Amenothos took over the bodies of the patients who died there, since, however, they were "foreigners" not included in the contract (although, in theory, they were the responsibility of the *paraschistai* operating at their place of permanent residence), Petenephtotes could not prevent this (P. Tor. Amenothos 8, vv. 40-50). The history of these two conflicts suggests that Petenephtotes considered the Temple of Amon his exclusive domain whilst the inaccurate formulations of the contract made it possible for Amenothos to have partial gains from practising the *παρασχιστική θεραπεία* at this temple.

The third conflict between the two *paraschistai*, which took place in 116 B.C., was over the body of Herieus - an inhabitant of the village of Pois who died in Thebes (P. Tor. Amenothos 8, vv. 50-91). Amenothos took charge of his body and, since Pois was within Petenephtotes' domain, this was a distinct breach of the contract (P. Tor. Amenothos 5, §8).

The first editor of the Greek papyri from Amenothos' archive, A. Peyron, stated that the two *paraschistai* occurring in them headed two different corporations. W. Otto agreed with A. Peyron and M. San Nicolò repeated this view<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. U. Wilckens, UPZ ii, p. 200.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. P. W. Pestman, P. Tor. Amenothos 5 (introd.), p. 52.

<sup>28</sup> A. Peyron, P. Tor. ii, p. 57: "principes duorum collegiorum Paraschistarum"; W. Otto, op. cit. (n. 13), Bd. I, p. 108: "Vorsteher ihre Gruppen"; M. San Ni -

It is very probable that *paraschistai* formed corporations, nevertheless this cannot be inferred from Amenothēs' documents<sup>29</sup>. On the contrary, both *paraschistai* were to pay each other the possible fines for breaches of the contract (P. Tor. Amenothēs 7, vv. 13-15; 8, vv. 35-37), whereas in a similar case *nekrotaphoi* paid them to the treasury of the corporation<sup>30</sup>. It was, however, impossible for Amenothēs and Petenephotēs to carry out their occupational chores (no matter what their range) alone in such a large area. They must have had collaborators, and one of Petenephotēs' helpers was his wife (P. Tor. Amenothēs 7, v. 19)<sup>31</sup>.

Although both Amenothēs and Petenephotēs called themselves *παρασχίσται τῶν ἀπὸ Διὸς πόλεως τῆς Μεγάλης* (P. Tor. Amenothēs 7, vv. 3-4, 8, vv. 3-4), the very fact that the contract was signed in the *ξενικὸν ἀγορανόμιον* (P. Tor. Amenothēs 5, §4 = 8, v. 6; 7, vv. 7-8) suggests that they were not permanent residents of Thebes. Just as others working on bodies, they probably lived within the necropolis<sup>32</sup>.

### (iii) *ταριχευταί*

The term *ταριχευτής* comes from the verb *ταριχεύω*, and according to its two meanings (1. "to preserve the body by artificial means, to embalm"; 2. "to preserve meat or fish by salting, pickling or smoking"<sup>33</sup>) can denote either somebody who mummifies the body or somebody who salts meat or fish to ensure their preservation. Many documents from Egypt mention the *taricheutai* in a context which does not allow the actual occupation to be certainly determined<sup>34</sup>.

Speaking of the *taricheutai*, Herodotus did not use the term, but defined them as *οἱ ἐπ' αὐτῷ τούτῳ* (i.e., for mummifying) *κατέεργον* (Hdt. II.86.1). According to the mutually complementary communications of Herodotus (II.86) and Diodorus (I.91.5-7), the activity of the *taricheutai* covered the whole process of mummifying and embalming proper, the washing of already prepared mummified bodies, the smearing of them with perfumed ointments and finally the wrapping up of the mummy with bandages and shrouds. Porphyry (De Abst. IV. 10) added that during their work *taricheutai* recited ritual prayers - exactly this ritual aspect of their job is suggested by the demotic title *hr-hb*, probably equivalent to the term *ταριχευτής*<sup>35</sup>.

colò, *Ägyptisches Vereinswesen zur Zeit der Ptolemäer und Römer*, Bd. I, München 1913, p. 97.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. U. Wilcken, UPZ ii, pp. 200-201.

<sup>30</sup> P. Ryl. ii 65; cf. infra, p. 28.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. P. W. Pestman, op. cit. (n. 1), p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. P. W. Pestman, P. Tor. Amenothēs 5, com. ad §5. Amenothēs had a house and a building lot (*ψιλὸς τόπος*) within the necropolis (P. Tor. Amenothēs 12 = UPZ ii 197). At the end of the 2nd century B.C. the *taricheutai* were required to live on the necropolis, having been resettled there on the king's order (cf. infra, p. 20).

<sup>33</sup> LSJ, s.v.

<sup>34</sup> E.g., P. Fay. 13; P. Lond. ii 258 (p. 28); cf. W. Otto, op. cit. (n. 13), Bd. II, p. 248 n. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. supra, pp. 16-17.

The *taricheutai* (in the sense of those who mummify bodies) occur in Greek papyri until the end of the 1st century A.D.<sup>36</sup> The Greek documents suggest that in the Ptolemaic Period the *taricheutai* belonged to the priest and were part of the temple personnel<sup>37</sup>, although the embalmers in the Late Period, before the arrival of the Greeks probably were not priests, a situation perhaps confirmed by Herodotus, who seems to have viewed them as lay specialist employed in the necropolis<sup>38</sup>. In the social hierarchy the *taricheutai* stood a little higher than did the *paraschistai*, as is indicated by their ritual purity<sup>39</sup>. For this reason they could live, up to about 120 B.C., among those who dwelled either in town or in the country. The order for the resettlement of the *taricheutai* from Thebes in the area of the necropoleis must have had sanitary rather than religious reasons, as may be assumed from the fact that this order was given by the town physician (*βασιλικὸς ἰατρός*)<sup>40</sup>. Even after their resettlement away from the city of Thebes, the *taricheutai* enjoyed personal immunity (as *ἀπαρενόχλητοι*) and kept the right to dispose freely of their property in town (UPZ ii 162, col. viii, vv. 22-28).

The decree to resettle the *taricheutai* in the area of the necropolis neither covered, nor was observed in all localities in Egypt; still at the end of the 2nd century B.C. the *taricheutai* could dwell among the ordinary inhabitants of the country<sup>41</sup>.

According to Diodorus (I.91.3), the occupation of the *taricheutai* was hereditary. This occupation was also carried out by women who perhaps could only mummify female bodies<sup>42</sup>. However, Herodotus who did not mention women embalmers, said that female bodies were mummified by men (Hdt. II.89). For their

<sup>36</sup> The latest document is P. Amh. ii 125 - an account of funeral expenses, including the payment of the services of the *taricheutes* (v. 7: τῶν ταριχευτῆ (δραχμαί) ια).

<sup>37</sup> P. Ryl. iv 577, vv. 2-3: ταριχευτῆς τῶν ἐ[κ] τοῦ Λαβυρίνθου; on relations of the embalmers with the Labyrinth, cf. E. A. E. R e y m o n d, op. cit. (n.4), pp. 23-26, 146; on those with the Serapeum in Memphis, cf. U. W i l c k e n, UPZ i, pp. 48, 594 (com. ad UPZ i 125, v. 9); W. O t t o, op. cit. (n. 13), Bd. I, pp. 107-108.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. A. L l o y d, op. cit. (n. 11), vol. II, pp. 354-356.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. supra, n. 14.

<sup>40</sup> Information of this decree is to be found in UPZ ii 162. The counsel for Hermias in his suit against the family of Theban *choachytai* tried to identify, in the eyes of the *epistates* of the Peri Theban nome, the opponents of his client with the *taricheutai*. His intentions are transparent; if the device had worked, on the strength of the royal order passed by the municipal physician, as *taricheutai* Horos and his family would have had to leave Thebes, thus ceding to Hermias the house in question (col. ii, vv. 23-27).

<sup>41</sup> P. Tebt. iii 967 is a petition addressed to the *epistates* of Oxyrhyncha by the *taricheutai* (vv. 1-5: Λεωνίδει ἐπιστάτει [Ἰ]οῦρνού[γ]λων παρὰ Πιτώτος ..... καὶ μετόχων τ[α]ρ[ι]χευ[τ]ῶν [τῶν] ἐκ τῆς αὐτ[ῆς] κώ[μης]). That these *taricheutai* were mummy-embalmers is indicated by the reference to τὸ ὄρος - in Egypt this precise word denotes a necropolis (cf. H. C a d e l l, R. R é m o n d o n, *Sens et emplois de τὸ ὄρος dans les documents papyrologiques*, REG 80, 1967, pp. 343-349). The last preserved sentence of P. Tebt. iii 967 (vv. 6-7: [πλ]ειο[ν]άκισ [ῆ]μ[ων] παραχι[νομέ]νων [ἐπὶ τ]ὸ ὄρος, ὃ ἐστίν [....]) seems to suggest that the *taricheutai* often came ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος but did not necessarily live there.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. U. W i l c k e n, UPZ ii 180a, com. ad col. iii, v. 6.

work the *taricheutai* received rather modest fees and, in addition, they were also required to pay taxes<sup>43</sup>. The *taricheutai* formed corporations known as *ἔθνη* and also ad hoc groups for the execution of a specific job<sup>44</sup>.

(iv) *στολισταί, νεκροστολισταί*

At the beginning of the Ptolemaic Period the term *στολιστής* meant, according to its etymology (*στολίσ*, "garment, robe"; *στολίζω*, "1. put in trim; 2. equip, dress"<sup>45</sup>), a priest related to a given god and responsible for the dressing up of his statue. Such *stolistai* were among the priests with high standing in the hierarchy of the temple<sup>46</sup>.

In the Roman Period the *stolistai* also took care of the mummies of holy beasts<sup>47</sup>, and it is exactly in this fact that one should see the reason why those engaged professionally in the mummification and embalming of bodies began to be called the *stolistai*. Two papyri: PSI vii 857 and SB i 5216 (both dated to the 1st century B.C.)<sup>48</sup> speak of such functions for *stolistai*. One of them is a letter: a son of a certain Zenon asks the *stolistai* from the Labyrinth (vv. 2-3: Πάσιτι καὶ τοῖς ἀλλ[ο]ῖς στολ[ισ]ταῖς [τοῦ] Λαβυρίνθου), to charge three of their assistants, in whom one should probably see *taricheutai*<sup>49</sup>, with the mummification (*θερα-*

<sup>43</sup> Information about the income of the *taricheutai* is provided by papyri containing accounts of funeral expenses: P. Amh. ii 125, vv. 7, 13 (cf. supra, n. 36); perhaps also P. Tebt. i 182, if τοῖς ἐν Τακονά mentioned in this document were really *taricheutai* as suggested by A. B a t a i l l e, op. cit. (n. 3), p. 219. In the case of receipts for taxes, it is usually difficult to determine if the *taricheutai* were embalmers or picklers. According to Sh. L. W a l l a c e, *Taxation in Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian*, Princeton 1938, p. 206 et p. 441 n. 76, just one papyrus speaks of embalmers - BGU i 337, v. 21: the *taricheutai* paid a tax to the temple in Soknopaiou Nesos; on the other hand, however, one should remember that there was a lot of fishing at Soknopaiou Nesos and many picklers had to live there. Perhaps ἀργύριον ἀπὸ τῶν ταριχείων (P. Eleph. 8, vv. 8-9) was a tax paid by the *taricheutai*-embalmers, as F. P r e i - s i g k e suggested by his reference to this document in WB, s.v. ταριχεία, "das Einbalsamieren der Mumie".

<sup>44</sup> UPZ ii 162, col. ii, v. 24: ἔθνος (sc. τῶν ταριχευτῶν); P. Tebt. iii 967 (cf. supra, n. 41)

<sup>45</sup> LSJ, s.vv.

<sup>46</sup> W. D i t t e n b e r g e r, OGIS i 56, v. 4: οἱ (sc. στολισταί) εἰς τὸ ἄδυτον εἰσπορεύομενοι πρὸς τὸν στολισμὸν τῶν θεῶν; OGIS i 90, v. 6; cf. R. R é m o n d o n, *A propos de deux graffiti grecs d'une tombe Siwite*, CE 26, 1951, pp. 156-161; W. O t t o, op. cit. (n. 13), Bd. I, pp. 83-88.

<sup>47</sup> P. Fay. 246 (1st-2nd century A.D.): ἰβιστολ(ιστής); P. Tebt. ii 313 (210/11 A.D.): the *stolistai* receive *byssus* necessary for wrapping up the mummy of Mnevis.

<sup>48</sup> PSI vii 857 - re-edition: C. C. E d g a r, *The Stolistae of Labyrinth*, APF 13, 1939, pp. 76-77; this document was included by its Italian editors among the papyri from Zenon's archive, but - according to C. C. E d g a r - PSI vii 857 was written in a hand characteristic of the latter part of the Ptolemaic Period.

SB i 5216 - editio princeps: G. L e f e b v r e, BSAA 14, 1912, pp. 194-195.

<sup>49</sup> What is of crucial significance for the understanding of the whole letter is the interpretation of the word *θεραπεία* (vv. 4-5: προϊστασθαι τῆς θεραπείας Ζήνωνος τοῦ πατρός μου). C. C. E d g a r, op. cit. (n. 48), p. 77, believes that here the word *θεραπεία* means the mummification of a corpse (just as in UPZ ii 162, col. ii, v. 22: νεκρὰ σώματα καὶ οἱ ταῦτα θεραπεύοντες); cf. P. B o t t i g e l l i, *Repertorio topografico dei templi e dei sacerdoti*, "Aegyptus" 22, 1942, pp. 182-183.

πέαια) of his father's body. Thus, the *stolistai* directed the work of the *taricheutai*, wrapping up perhaps themselves the mummified bodies with bandages and shrouds (this would be connected with the original function of the *stolistai*).

SB i 5216 is a further letter which was sent to the *stolistai* from the Labyrinth by Ἀθηναγόρας ὁ ἀρχιατρός. One of the collaborators of Athenagoras died in the course of a trip and the ἀρχιατρός asked the *stolistai* from the Labyrinth to send the deceased's body to Ptolemais Hormou where, as one may presume, the subordinates of Athenagoras would take it over. Athenagoras addressed his letter τοῖς ἱερεῦσι τῶν ἐν τῷ[ι] Λαβυρίνθωι στολιστῶν καὶ τοῖς στολ[ισ]ταῖς (vv. 1-3), which would suggest that not all of the *stolistai* engaged in mummifying were priests. Athenagoras wrote that the body of his deceased collaborator was ἐν ταῖς παρ' ὑμῖν νεκρίαις (v. 5), therefore, *stolistai* lived, and perhaps also worked, within the necropolis, where they directed the work of others, organized the whole process of the mummification and transport of corpses, and probably even headed the corporation of all those employed there<sup>50</sup>.

Apart from the Labyrinth, there were also *stolistai* in Alexandria. The *archiatros* Athenagoras told the *stolistai* from the Labyrinth that the *stolistai* from Alexandria had also written to them about the body of his deceased subordinate (vv. 11-12: [γ]ἔγραψαν δὲ ὑμῖν καὶ οἱ ἀπ' Ἀλεξανδρείας στολ[ισ]ταὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ (i.e., τοῦ νεκροῦ). Thus, the context of SB i 5216 seems to suggest that the *stolistai* had no right to give out a body without a guarantee that it would be taken over by other competent workers (in this case, the *stolistai* in Alexandria).

It is from the Siwa Oasis that there comes a graffiti (1st century A.D.) including the term νεκροστολιστής; the *nekrostolistai* probably had functions similar to those of the *stolistai*<sup>51</sup>.

#### (v) ἱατροί

On the basis of just one document (P. Oxy. i 40), it was for a long time believed that in the Roman Period physicians ἱατροί could also mummify bodies. It was only H.C. Youtie who brought this view into question with a different reading of the end of this document<sup>52</sup>. On the other hand, P.M. Fraser suggested that physicians could have supervised the work of the *taricheutai* and *stolistai*<sup>53</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. R. R é m o n d o n, op. cit. (n. 46), pp. 159-160.

<sup>51</sup> SB viii 9729b (editio princeps: R. R é m o n d o n, op. cit. (n. 46): νεκρωσωλιστής (read: νεκροστολιστής).

<sup>52</sup> H. C. Y o u t i e, *A Reconsideration of P. Oxy. i 40*, [in:] *Studien zur Papyrologie und antiken Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Friedrich Oertel gewidmet*, Bonn 1964, pp. 20-29 (= *Scriptiunculae*, Amsterdam 1975, pp. 878-888).

<sup>53</sup> Referring to SB i 5216, P. M. F r a s e r, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Oxford 1972, vol. I, p. 373; vol. II, p. 549, nn. 313-314, claimed that the *archiatros* residing in Alexandria was the supreme head of the *stolistai* and *taricheutai*. To the arguments proposed by P. M. F r a s e r, one may also add UPZ ii 162, col. ii, vv. 25-27: the municipal physician (βασιλικὸς ἱατρός) passes the decree of the resettlement of the *taricheutai* from Thebes (cf. supra, p. 20). But, if this hypothesis is correct, why did the *archiatros* add the letter (confirmation?) from the *stolistai* from Alexandria to his order for the *stolistai* from the Labyrinth?

(vi) *χοαχύται*

The reading and consequently the interpretation of the term *χοαχύτης* was controversial for a long time. This word was present only in papyrus documents from the Ptolemaic Period where the letters *alpha* and *lambda* resemble one another and, therefore, this term used to be read as *χολχύτης*. Its etymology has been sought in the Egyptian root, known from the Coptic *χολ* and meaning the act of wrapping up. On such an interpretation, the *cholchytai* would then be engaged in the wrapping up of mummies in bandages and shrouds. Simultaneous to this hypothesis, there developed a further one, based on the reading *χοαχύτης* and deriving this term from the Greek words *χέω* and *χοή*. In keeping with this etymology, the *choachytai* were engaged in officiating liquid offerings<sup>54</sup>. A convincing proof in favour of the second interpretation was found by U. Wilcken: in one of the documents from the 3rd century B.C. (UPZ ii 157) the word *χοαχύτης* was written with such a form of the letter *alpha* (the so-called "Hakenalpha") that cannot be mistaken for *lambda*<sup>55</sup>.

The Greek papyrus documentation involving *choachytai* encompasses an ample bilingual family archive found in one of the Theban graves. The documents from this archive cover the history of a family of Theban *choachytai* for almost the whole 2nd century B.C. (with the earliest document, UPZ ii 163 coming from 182 B.C., and the latest, UPZ ii 190, from 98 B.C.).

The Theban *choachytai* were priests with a lower standing in the hierarchy and the Greek documents from their archive say nothing about their relation to any temple<sup>56</sup>. The role implemented by the *choachytai* in the cult of the dead consisted in the liquid and solid offerings, and as they carried out their duties they recited the appropriate prayers and ritual formulae<sup>57</sup>. Their cult custody embraced both the mummies already interred and those still awaiting the ceremonial entombment<sup>58</sup>.

The performance of the cult of the dead in the documents from the *choachytai* archive is called *λειτουργία*<sup>59</sup>, and the income from this source was defined by two different terms, each of which defined a different form of pay obtained from the family of the deceased:

<sup>54</sup> On the reading and interpretation of the term *χοαχύτης/χολχύτης*, cf. W. O t t o, op. cit. (n. 13), Bd. I, p. 99 n. 1.

<sup>55</sup> UPZ ii 157 is an official report on the work on the cleaning of canals; *choachytai* too had to perform this work (col. ii, v. 35).

<sup>56</sup> Cf. W. O t t o, op. cit. (n. 13), Bd. I, pp. 100-105.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. A. B a t a i l l e, op. cit. (n. 3), p. 249; W. D a w s o n, op. cit. (n. 5), p. 46.

<sup>58</sup> In the contract of the *choachytes* Horos II and his children (UPZ ii 180a), the two deceased are described in the following way: 'Αρμάϊς προφήτης [κατὰ τὸ (τρίτου) ἕως τῆς ταφῆς, [μ]ετὰ τὴν ταφῆς (read: ταφῆν) Ὀσοροήριος καὶ Νεχθμώνθου κατὰ τὸ (ἡμισυ) (col. iii, v. 1); Ἰμούθης Ζμίν<ι>ος, ἕκασ(τος) κατὰ τὸ (τρίτου) ἕως τῆς ταφῆς, <μετὰ τὴν> ταφῆν εἶναι Πετοσίριος καὶ Νεχμώνθου <κατὰ τὸ ἡμισυ> (col. iii, vv. 7-8). Both these fragments were repeated in literal form as the parts of father's property due to other sons of Horos II, Nechthmonthes and Petosiris (col. xvii, v. 9; col. xxix, vv. 9-10; col. xxx, v. 1); cf. U. W i l c k e n, com. ad loc. cit.

<sup>59</sup> UPZ ii 162, col. i, vv. 20-21: τῶν (sc. *χοαχύτων*) τὰς λειτουργίας ἐν ταῖς νεκρίαις παρεχομένων; col. viii, v. 21; 175a, vv. 9, 17, 42; 175b, v. 2; 175c, v. 5; 177, vv. 26, 31.

1. *λογεῖται* - a sort of fee paid out in money;
2. *καρπείται* - a form of income paid in kind, including bread, meat, beer and olive oil (at least, theoretically, these goods were meant as offerings to the dead person)<sup>60</sup>.

Carrying out their tasks, the *choachytai* had to do with mummies which had been ritually purified in the course of the mummifying process, so there was no reason why these priests should not live in town, among the living<sup>61</sup>. It was precisely in Thebes that the *choachytai* had numerous houses<sup>62</sup> (one of which formed the object of the conflict with Hermias: UPZ ii 160-169) where they stored mummies brought in from around the town and awaiting the funeral ceremony<sup>63</sup>. The *choachytai* stored the mummies of the deceased inhabitants of Thebes in others of their houses situated within the necropolis<sup>64</sup>; they could also store them in large graves which were not necessarily meant to be the places of their ultimate stay<sup>65</sup>. Perhaps the *choachytai* used in this way the free space in large graves which was not fit for burial for unknown reasons.

The ritual care of the *choachytai* also included those mummies that were stored at their family homes, where the priests of the cult of the dead came from time to time to perform their chores<sup>66</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> The meaning of these terms was determined by W. Otto, op. cit. (n. 13), Bd. II, pp. 175-179 and U. Wilckens, UPZ ii, p. 130.

<sup>61</sup> This fact can be confirmed by UPZ ii 161, an official record of the trial before the *epistates* held *πρὸς Ἐφρον καὶ τὸν μετ' αὐτοῦ χραχύτας τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Διὸς πόλεως* (vv. 5-6).

<sup>62</sup> UPZ ii 162, vv. 18-23: the objects of the controversy in the *choachytai* family are two houses, one of which is in Thebes, the other within the necropolis; UPZ ii 180a, col. i, vv. 5-8; 180b, col. ii, vv. 10-13 mention also the houses in Thebes among other real estate passed by Horos II to his children.

<sup>63</sup> A. Bataille, op. cit. (n. 3), pp. 249-250, based on UPZ ii 162, vv. 18-23, believed that in Hermias' house the *choachytai* kept unummified bodies before taking them to the left bank of the Nile and passing them over to the *taricheutai*. If it had been so, however, certainly the royal decree enforcing the resettlement of the *taricheutai* from Thebes (cf. supra, p. 20) would also have been applied to the *choachytai*. Thus, one should recognize the validity of the argument put forth by U. Wilckens (com. ad loc. cit.), when he attributed the use by the counsel for Hermias of ambiguous expressions *νεκροί* (v. 18) and *νέκρα σώματα* (v. 22) to his wish to suggest to the Greek judges that the *choachytai* were engaged in body mummifying, and therefore should be resettled in the necropolis area.

<sup>64</sup> The houses within the necropolis which were the property of the *choachytai* are mentioned in UPZ ii 184; 188 and 189 (cf. supra, n. 62).

<sup>65</sup> UPZ ii 187 is a complaint directed by the *choachytes* Osoroëris to the chief of police (*archiphylakites*) of the Peri-Theban nome. One of the graves belonging to Osoroëris, containing *ἀταφα σώματα*, "unburied mummies" (vv. 20-21), had been plundered.

<sup>66</sup> Dividing his property, the *choachytes* Horos II mentions *σωμάτων μεταγομένων εἰς τοὺς τάφους* (UPZ ii 180a, col. ii, v. 3). The use of the present participle at this point indicates that the mummies mentioned were not yet in the graves meant for them, so, according to suggestions of U. Wilckens, UPZ ii 180a, introd., pp. 147-148, and A. Bataille, op. cit. (n. 3), p. 223, they were still in the family homes of the dead. It seems, however, that it cannot be excluded that at the moment when the contract between Horos II and his children was signed, these mummies were in one of the houses belonging to the *choachytai*, either in the necropolis, or in Thebes.

The *choachytai* were also the owners of the graves where were buried the dead under their ritual custody<sup>67</sup>. In addition to houses and graves, the *choachytai* had numerous building lots (*ψιλλοὶ τοποί*) which were situated both in town and within the necropolis<sup>68</sup>. On one of such lots, bought in 105 B.C., the *choachytes* Nechoutes built a house which he sold as early as 102 B.C. (UPZ ii 181; 184).

What still remains unexplained in detail is the legal relation between the *choachytai* and the mummy for which they carried out their cult duties. They could certainly dispose of them freely, cede them to others, buy or transfer them to their children. The mummy or rather the right to execute certain cult acts for it and to obtain a fee for these could be divided between several *choachytai*; in the case of dividing property among children, this practice was reasonably frequent<sup>69</sup>.

The performance of the cult of the dead was inherited through the family of the *choachytai*; we know of no one of this family who would not inherit this function from his parents<sup>70</sup>. The function of *choachytai* was also performed by women (*χοαχύτιδες*) whose rights and duties did not differ from those of men<sup>71</sup>.

The fact that mummies of dead relatives were kept in private houses was so peculiar that it drew attention of many ancient writers (Hdt. II.86.7; D.S. I.92.6; S.Emp., *Pyrrhoniaron Institutiones* III.206; Cic. *Tusc.* I.45.108; Pomponius Mela, *De Chorografia* I.9). It seems that this custom was a result of necessity - more and more people could afford the mummification of their relatives, with the result that for many mummies there was now not enough space in large, re-used tombs of the Pharaonic Period, and not all of them could afford their own family graves (cf. A. B a t a i l l e, *op. cit.* (n. 3), pp. 183-196).

<sup>67</sup> UPZ ii 177 is a Greek translation of P. dem. Berlin 5507, a demotic contract involving the sale of rights to perform the *choachytes* functions. The demotic formula used in contracts of this type was faithfully translated in Greek thus: ὥστε [σοὺς <εἶναι> τοὺς] τάφους καὶ <τὰ> κατάγια] (vv. 23-24); cf. U. W i l c k e n, *com. ad loc. cit.* Another document suggesting that the *choachytai* were the owners of graves is UPZ ii 187 (cf. *supra*, n. 65), where the *choachytes* Osoroëris informs the *archiphylakites* that thieves had attacked ἐφ' ἐν[α] τάφον τῶν [ὑπαρ]χόντων μοι ἐν τῷ Περ[ὶ Θή(βας)] (vv. 9-10).

<sup>68</sup> UPZ ii 166; 167; 173; 174; 176 and 181 - all these documents are receipts of taxes paid by the *choachytai* for the purchase of building lots in Thebes (the first three) and within the necropolis.

<sup>69</sup> In fact, the only document in Greek to speak though indirectly of this question is the above mentioned (nn. 62, 66) UPZ ii 180, contract made between Horos II and his children about the division of the estate. Horos II divided between his children, apart from the other things, τὴν προστασίαν τῶν ἐπιβαλλόντων αὐτῷ (sc. Ὄρωι) σωματίων (UPZ ii 180a, col. ii, vv. 2-3). Therefore, the word *προστασία*, which U. W i l c k e n (*com. ad loc. cit.*) understands as "Verfügungsrecht", is of crucial significance. A different view is held by A. B a t a i l l e, *op. cit.* (n. 3), pp. 255-256, who believes that the mummies were simply the property of the *choachytai* and as such they could not only be divided and sold, but also serve as mortgage deposits. The list of graves and mummies listed in appendix to UPZ ii 180a (coll. iii-1) mentions many divided mummies - e.g., col. xiv, vv. 7-9; col. xxvii, vv. 1-3; col. xxxix, vv. 4-6.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. U. W i l c k e n, UPZ ii, pp. 38-41 (especially p. 40 - the genealogical tree of the family of Theban *choachytai*).

<sup>71</sup> UPZ ii 177 is a contract of a sale of the rights to the performance of the cult of the dead; the two parties of the deal were two related women - *χοαχύτιδες*; UPZ ii

In demotic papyri the *choachytai* - members of the family of Horos were always called "*pastophoroi* of Amon from Opet". In its Greek version (*παστοφόροι Ἀμενώφιος τοῦ ἐν τοῖς Μεμμονεῖοις*) this title occurs in three documents (UPZ ii 191-193) in which it is used by Osoroëris, son of Horos II, who appears in other papyri as a *choachytes*. Osoroëris introduces himself in these documents as *pastophoros* of Amon from Opet, when the documents are concerned with exactly this second range of his activity. The position of the *pastophoroi* of Amon has nothing to do with the range of competence of the *choachytai*; the members of the Horos' family simply combined these two different priestly functions<sup>72</sup>.

The *choachytai* executed their cult custody of the dead coming from the middle-income strata of Egyptian society<sup>73</sup>. In the Ptolemaic Period, apart from the *choachytai*, these must have existed still other priests of the cult of the dead who took care of the dead coming from rich families<sup>74</sup>. Considering the position and significance of the *choachytai*, one should remember that we know the history of the Horos' family only due to a fortunate chance and the abundance of documents should not lead one to over-emphasize the role of these priests. Apart from Thebes, the existence of the *choachytai* is only otherwise known for the necropolis of Memphis<sup>75</sup>.

The *choachytai* are not mentioned by any of the Greek authors. The silence probably has various causes: the role of the *choachytai* was not so important as the rich sources seem to suggest, nor were these priests concerned with the rich deceased who enjoyed a high social standing while they lived, and, finally, the cult activities of the *choachytai* were not so interesting or strange to the Greeks who after all knew the custom of offering liquids to the deceased.

#### (vii) νεκροτάφοι

The oldest known document where the term *νεκροτάφος* may appear is P. Sorb. inv. 331, dated from the beginning of the second half of the 3rd century B.C. Even if we accept the validity of the supplement made by the editor of this text (B. Boyaval), the document says nothing about the character of the work and

180a, coll. xl-xlix - part of the estate of Horos II inherited by his daughter Tages; UPZ ii 188 ia a complaint addressed to the *epistates* of the Pathyric nome by a woman Tasemis who called herself *χοαχύτις* (v. 4). Tasemis sues her stepmother and the controversy is over the inheritance from the father of the former and the husband of the latter.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. U. W i l c k e n, UPZ ii, p. 39.

<sup>73</sup> A. B a t a i l l e, *A propos d'une étiquette de momie inédite*, RA 25, 1946, pp. 43-56, and op. cit. (n. 3), pp. 252-254, identifies the social stratum for which the *choachytai* worked with that the members of which used in the Roman Period mummy labels as a cheap substitute for a tombstone.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. W. O t t o, op. cit. (n. 13), Bd. I, p. 103 et n. 4.

<sup>75</sup> The demotic documents from Thebes do not include the word *w3h-mw*, equivalent to the Greek term *choachytes*. The term *w3h-mw* is known from demotic documents from Memphis. A detailed analysis of the local community of undertakers and necropolis workers is given by D. J. T h o m p s o n, *Memphis Under the Ptolemies*, Princeton 1988, pp. 155-189.

the range of duties of the *nekrotaphoi*<sup>76</sup>. On the whole, given the uncertainty of the supplement, it seems best to ignore this papyrus unless further examples occur.

UPZ ii 185 - a papyrus from the archive of the Theban *choachytai* - mentions people with *νεκροταφική προστασία* who are, however, not called *νεκροτάφοι*. The bad state of preservation of this document prevents its full understanding and even precise dating<sup>77</sup>. There is no doubt, however, that it represents the protocol to the record of a trial before the *epistates* of the Pathyrite nome where the defendants were six men with *νεκροταφική προστασία* and the plaintiffs were eight *choachytai* headed there by their family leader Horos II (vv. 1-11: ἐντυχ[όντων] ..... τῶν ἐξ [τῶν ἐχόντων(?) τῆν] νεκρο[αφικῆν] προστασίαν πάντων(?) τῶν σωμαίων τῶν ἀπογινομένων ἐν τῆι κ[άτω] τοπαρ[χίαι] κατὰ [᾽ Ω]ρου τοῦ ᾽Ωρου ..... τῶν ἐκ τ[ῆς αὐτῆς κάτω] τοπα[ρχίας] καὶ τῶν Μεμμον[είων] χ[λοαχ]υτῶν) The object in question remains unclear - those with *νεκροταφική προστασία* (*nekrotaphoi*?) demand 2/3 of the sum but, unfortunately, we do not know for what service (vv. 12-13: τὸ δῖμορον [τῶν γ]νωμέ[ν]ων ὑπὸ τῶν ...ων τ[ῶ]ν τε<τε>[λευτ]η[κῶ]των(?)). It would then follow that the *nekrotaphoi* and *choachytai* jointly obtained some sum which they then divided: 2/3 for the former and 1/3 for the latter. U. Wilcken considered these to be the fees from the family of the deceased for preparing the burial (in which the *nekrotaphoi* were engaged) and for the performance of cult (by the *choachytai*)<sup>78</sup>. A. Bataille extended this interpretation in his suggestion that this was probably evidence for a conflict taking place within the corporation of the necropolis workers which included both *nekrotaphoi* and *choachytai*<sup>79</sup>. It should be stressed once more, however, that the word *νεκροτάφοι* does not actually appear in UPZ ii 185. Whether or not the ἔχοντες(?) *νεκροταφικὴν προστασίαν* may be identified with the *nekrotaphoi* of the Late Ptolemaic and Roman Periods must remain an open question<sup>80</sup>.

<sup>76</sup> P. Sorb. inv. 331 has been published by B. Boyaval, *Papyrus ptolémaïques inédits de Ghôran et Magdôla*, CRIPEL 1, 1973, pp. 223-248, and reprinted as SB xii 10860. This papyrus contains 39 fragments of a list of names sometimes with occupations added of those mentioned; it was probably prepared for taxation purposes. In B. Boyaval's publication, fragm. xxxvii, v. 393 reads as follows: [...νεκροτάφος ᾽Ωρος [...]]. Recognizing the supplementation by the editor as most likely, one cannot, however, exclude other possibilities: [...κριστάφος, [.ἱερακ]στάφος or [.αἰλουρ]στάφος.

<sup>77</sup> UPZ ii 185 is dated ἔτους λ[.] (col. i, v. 1). It is, therefore, the 30th-39th year of the rule of a king unknown by name. Since, however, this papyrus comes from the *choachytai* archive, only Philometor (indicating 152/1-146/5 B.C.) or Euergetes (141/0-132/1 B.C.) could stand here. The second of these possibilities is argued for by the fact that at that time the *choachytai* were already headed by Horos II - the very same person who a dozen or so years later would be their leader in the suit against Hermias (126/5-117/6 B.C.); cf. U. Wilcken, UPZ ii 185, introd.

<sup>78</sup> U. Wilcken, UPZ ii 185, com. ad col. i, vv. 12-17.

<sup>79</sup> A. Bataille, op. cit. (n. 3), pp. 248-249.

<sup>80</sup> U. Wilcken had no doubts about it; he headed the edition of this papyrus: "Protokoll einer Verhandlung vor dem *Epistates* des Pathyrites (*νεκροτάφοι* gegen *χοαχύται*)". If, on the other hand, we reject the unreliable evidence for the existence of the *nekrotaphoi* as early as the 3rd century B.C. (P. Sorb. inv. 331; cf. supra, n. 76), UPZ ii 185 will be the earliest document confirming the presence of the occupational group of the *nekrotaphoi*, earlier by 60 years at least than P. Ryl. ii 65 - the first

For the first time in a way which is clear of doubt, the *nekrotaphoi* are mentioned in P. Ryl. ii 65. This document, perhaps from Oxyrhynchus, contains the sentence passed by the court of the *chrematistai* to which the *nekrotaphoi*, the members of the corporation, turned in appeal for the punishment of one of them for usurping, against the statute of the association made out in Egyptian, the right to take care of the dead who were not in his charge. The 14th year in which this sentence was passed probably refers to the reign of Neus Dionysus (57 B.C.).

On the other hand, the *nekrotaphoi* are known above all from documents coming from the Roman and even the Byzantine Periods (the latest mentions of *nekrotaphoi* can be found in P. Hamb. i 56 and P. Cairo Masp. ii 143 dating from the 6th century A.D.). In this period, when there were no longer *choachytai*, within their corporations the *nekrotaphoi* organized the whole of the funeral ceremonies. As responsible for the burial of the mummy, they were addressees on mummy labels (e.g., CEMG 1936 = SB i 5538; CEMG 2051 = SB i 5766; CEMG 2052 = SB i 5767; CEMG 1956 = SB vi 9211), yet they could also transport bodies<sup>81</sup>. The *nekrotaphoi* did not take cult functions over from the *choachytai* - it seems that in the Roman Period the care for offerings to the deceased was the exclusive domain of his family<sup>82</sup>.

The position of the *nekrotaphoi* in society was very low: it was no accident that Manetho the Astrologer called them *ἄσεμνοι* (Apotelesmata VI 459); it was no accident either that *νεκροτάφοι* appear next to *οἰκ(οδόμοι)* and *ὄνη(λάται)* on a list of persons partly grouped according to trades (P. Tebt. ii 589, late 1st century A.D.).

document confirming explicitly the existence of the *nekrotaphoi*. We can thus imagine that the *nekrotaphoi*, an occupational group of necropolis workers which was distinctly separate and occurs frequently in documents from the Roman Period, had just been taking shape in the end of the Ptolemaic Period. In a natural way, the function of the *nekrotaphoi* filled the gap between the ranges of duty of the embalmers (*tari-cheutai*) and the priests of the cult of the dead (*choachytai*). As long as the dead were buried in old tombs, even in houses, the existence of a group of people taking care of the technical side of the preparation for and the execution of the funeral was not necessary, and the mummies could be laid in those places by the priests of the cult of the dead. It was only as mummification became more popular (and, as a result, cheaper), that the old tombs were no longer enough, and there emerged the necessity for creating new ones, as a rule very cheap ones, available to the wide mass of the population. It was exactly this that became the task of the *nekrotaphoi*, people with a very low social position, whose competence did not cover the cult, but was limited to only the technical side of the undertaking.

<sup>81</sup> P. Grenf. ii 77, vv. 3-5: ἀπέστειλα ὑμῖν [διὰ τοῦ νεκροτάφου] τὸ σῶμα; P. Grenf. ii 73, vv. 7-8 (both these papyri come from the archive of the *nekrotaphoi* from the Great Oasis; cf. infra, pp. 29-31).

<sup>82</sup> Cf. P. Ryl. ii 153 (a will from the reign of Antoninus Pius), vv. 5-6: a freedman was obliged to execute cult for his former master; BGU vii 1655 (169 A.D.): for the rest of his life the slave who is not the property of any of the inheritors will execute cult for his deceased master; cf. A. B a t a i l l e, op. cit. (n. 3), pp. 262-264.

The *nekrotaphoi* lived far away from town, within the necropolis<sup>83</sup>. Published by Cl. Préaux, O. Wilb. 76 (2nd century A.D.) is an ἔγλογο(s) ἐπιτηρήσεως ὑπαρχ(όντων) (πρότερον) νεκροτάφων) ὄντων ἐν ταῖς νεκρί(αις) (vv. 1-2), "solde de la gestion des biens ayant appartenu aux nécrotaphes de la nécropole". Without interpreting in detail this unique ostrakon, it can be said that the area of the necropolis was exploited by the *nekrotaphoi*, at least to the extent that the fruit of the trees growing there belonged to them<sup>84</sup>.

Perhaps the *nekrotaphoi* had to pay tax on the income from their trade. O. Tait i, p. 60, no. 51 (8 A.D.) is a receipt for the payment of a tax called τὸ τέλλ(ος) τῶν νεκροτάφων). The lease of some tax connected with the occupation of the *nekrotaphoi* is mentioned in P. Ryl. ii 95, but the state of preservation of this papyrus makes it impossible to determine for what and by whom this tax was levied<sup>85</sup>.

A dozen or so papyri make possible a picture of the community of the *nekrotaphoi* working at the Great Oasis in the period 240-306 A.D.<sup>86</sup> As the documents indicate, these men worked in the necropolis of Kysis (now Dûsh)<sup>87</sup>, although not all the *nekrotaphoi* came from that village, ἀπὸ κώμης Κύσεως. The papyri from the Great Oasis mention 15 *nekrotaphoi*, including two women (P. Grenf. ii 71, v. 8: νεκροτάφη; 76, v. 2: νεκροταφίς). It is interesting to note that over a short period, from 240 to 250 A.D., five new persons began to carry out the duties of the *nekrotaphoi*. According to F. Dunand, this fact may be explained by a distinct increase of the mortality rate among the inhabitants of the Great Oasis at that time<sup>88</sup>.

<sup>83</sup> SB i 4651, v. 25; 4653, vv. 2-3: ἐκτὸς τῶν προαστείων; P. Grenf. ii 77, v. 14: [τ]ῷ νεκροτάφῳ εἰς τὸ ὄρος (on the meaning of the noun τὸ ὄρος, cf. supra, n. 41); SPP xx 11 - in his census declaration, a *nekrotaphos* defined his place of residence as *is* (read εἰς) τοὺς ἀσκήνους.

<sup>84</sup> O. Wilb. 76 records the sale of 11 artabae of dates at 5 drachmae an artaba (55 drachmae in total) and 56300 (sic!!) κούκεα for the total sum of 840 drachmae 2 1/2 obols. In the view of Cl. Préaux, this fruit was coconuts, but in this case the number mentioned in the document would be astonishingly large. Probably the word κούκεα simply means here the fruit of the wild doum-palm (with the botanical name *Hyphaena Thebaica*, the Latin name: *cuci* - Plin. HN XIII.62, the Greek name τὸ κούκι - P. Baden i 35, v. 23); in this case the number is less surprising.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Sh. L. Wallace, op. cit. (n. 43), pp. 284, 289.

<sup>86</sup> A full list of the papyri from the *nekrotaphoi* archive has been given by J. Bingen, *Une cession de charge nécrotaphique dans la Grande Oasis*, CE 39, 1964, pp. 157-158.

<sup>87</sup> In the necropolis of Kysis (Dûsh), since 1976 research work has been carried out by a mission of the Institute Français d'Archéologie Orientale. The results of the archaeological excavations were compared with the papyri from the *nekrotaphoi* archive by a participant in these excavations - F. Dunand, *Les nécrotaphes de Kysis*, CRIPEL 7, 1985, pp. 117-127. The first part of her study (pp. 117-122) contains a thorough analysis of the community of the *nekrotaphoi* from Kysis based on the papyri preserved. The characterization of this community presented below takes account only of the problems most relevant to the present study, with a view to avoiding unnecessary repetitions.

<sup>88</sup> F. Dunand, op. cit. (n. 87), pp. 117-118, 124.

Most *nekrotaphoi* from the Great Oasis were connected by family ties, which was typical of that period when most occupations were passed from father to son. Perhaps, however, the fact that the occupation of the *nekrotaphoi* was performed and passed within a relatively closed community (a feature also of necropolis workers in the Ptolemaic Period) may partly be explained by the very low social position of these people<sup>89</sup>.

In the papyri from the Great Oasis the function of the *nekrotaphoi* is defined as *κηδεία νεκροταφική* (P. Grenf. ii 68, v. 6; 71, col. i, v. 15) or *ὑπηρεσία νεκροταφική* (P. Grenf. ii 71, col. ii, v. 3; SB viii 9873, v. 4: *ὑπηρεσία καὶ κηδεία νεκροταφική*). The *nekrotaphos* Petechon son of Mersis defined the trade which he plied by the expression *τάξις ἐνταφιαστική* (SB iii 7205)<sup>90</sup>.

The papyri from Kysis provide little information on the material situation of the *nekrotaphoi*. In this respect the community was probably strongly differentiated; it is interesting to note the figure of the freedman Polydeukes who in a few years took over functions belonging previously to other *nekrotaphoi* (SB i 4653, 4654+4655). This fact may suggest that it was profitable to ply the occupation of the *nekrotaphoi* and that Polydeukes became a relatively rich man; on the other hand, one cannot exclude another interpretation - that it was only the concentration of a few functions in one person's hands that ensured a modest living<sup>91</sup>.

Another interesting figure from the *nekrotaphoi* community in Kysis was Petechon son of Petosiris. P. Grenf. ii 71 is a deed by which his sons, Petosiris and Petechon, authorize Aurelius Marianus of Kysis to make public before the *archidikastes* at Alexandria a cession of property to themselves by their father. The ceded property included, in addition to *κηδεία νεκροταφική* also *ὑδρεύματα* (the wells with *sakieh*?), *τόποι κυνηγικοί* (hunting grounds) and probably some houses (vv. 14-18). This real estate was situated in Hibis, in villages nearby and in those around Kysis. Thus, Petechon son of Petosiris, was not a poor man, but his fairly large property may have been an exception rather than the rule in this community of *nekrotaphoi*<sup>92</sup>.

Of the papyri from the Great Oasis, only one contains information on the revenues which the *nekrotaphoi* obtained for his work. P. Grenf. ii 77 is a letter addressed to Sarapion and Silvanus by Melas. The writer states that he had dispatched to them the mummy (body?) of their brother Phibion and paid to a *nekrotaphos* the expenses of the carriage. For the transport of the body (unfortunately, we do not know where to), the *nekrotaphos* was paid 340 drachmae *παλαιού νομίσματος* (i.e., prior to the new coinage of Diocletian). Moreover, the *nekrotaphos* was paid 20 drachmae for the linen used for wrapping up the mummy and in addition some payments in kind: one chous of wine, two chous of olive oil and one artaba of corn. However, on the basis of just this papyrus, it is

<sup>89</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 118-119; *supra*, p. 28.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 32.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. F. D u n a n d, *op. cit.* (n. 87), p. 120.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, *loc. cit.*

impossible to determine how profitable the occupation of the *nekrotaphoi* was. At any rate, it seems that one may agree with F. Dunand that the *nekrotaphoi* were not poverty-stricken and that their occupation permitted at least some of them to become relatively well-off<sup>93</sup>.

Of the fifteen *nekrotaphoi* from Kysis, seven could not sign their own name, and the documents were signed instead by others for them<sup>94</sup>. Also the census declaration of a *nekrotaphos* Peteamounis from the Memphite nome - SPP xx 11 (175 A.D.), was written by somebody else since Peteamounis was illiterate. It does not seem, however, that in this respect the *nekrotaphoi* were any different from other inhabitants of the *χώρα* in the 3rd-4th centuries A.D.

One of the mummy labels includes the address: *παραδὸς εἰς* (read *εἰς*) *Πανῶ(ν) τῷ υἱῷ Πανεχάτου νεκροάρτου τὴν τακὴν* (read *ταφὴν*) *κτλ.* (CEMG 2054 = SB i 5774). The term *νεκροάρτης* was probably synonymous to the word *νεκροτάφος*<sup>95</sup>.

### (viii) *ἐνταφιασταί*

The earliest document in which the term *ἐνταφιαστής* occurs is UPZ ii 190 - a papyrus from the archive of the Theban *choachytai*. In 98 B.C. a certain Hersiesis, son of Horos, a *choachytes*, lent 22 1/2 artabae of wheat to a woman called Asklepias, also known by the name Senimouthis; as her *kyrios* appeared Harpaësis, son of Chesthotes, *τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς Διὸς πόλεως ἐνταφιαστῶν* (vv. 5-6). Although UPZ ii 190 says nothing of the range of duties of the *entaphiastai*, M. San Nicolò was of the opinion that this papyrus confirmed the existence in Thebes of a corporation of the *entaphiastai*, different from the family association of the *choachytai*<sup>96</sup>.

The term *ἐνταφιαστής* deriving from the verb *ἐνταφιάζω* ("prepare for burial"<sup>97</sup>) might denote the person whose main task was to prepare the body for burial after it had been mummified. Unfortunately, the documents from the Roman Period do not make it possible to determine accurately the competence of the *entaphiastai*<sup>98</sup>. Just as the *nekrotaphoi*, they occur as addressees on a few mummy labels (e.g., CEMG 2022 = SB i 25; CEMG 2034 = SB i 3442; CEMG 2111 = SB i 5144), this would suggest that the *entaphiastai* were concerned with placing the prepared mummies in graves rather than with actually mummifying bodies. The fact that the *entaphiastai* obtained mummies already prepared is confirmed by P. Hamb. i 74 (173 or 174 A.D.). This document with its unique content is a very peculiar receipt: the helmsman of a Nile boat states that he has taken on board

<sup>93</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 120-121.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 121.

<sup>95</sup> The content of this label included *ὁ υἱὸς Πανεχάτου νεκροάρτου* as the addressee, perhaps because the sender of the mummy did not know the name of the son of Panechates, who took over function from his deceased(?) father.

<sup>96</sup> M. S a n N i c o l ò, *op. cit.* (n. 28), Bd. I, p. 98.

<sup>97</sup> LSJ, s.v.

<sup>98</sup> The view expressed by H. C. Y o u t i e, *Notes on O. Mich. I*, TAPA 71, 1940, p. 654 n. 112 = *Scriptiunculae*, Amsterdam 1975, p. 94 n. 112, is based on the etymology of the two terms rather than on the preserved documents.

a mummy already wrapped up in bandages and shrouds (σῶμα εἰλισμένον) and undertakes to deliver it to the port of Kerke in the Memphite nome and to hand it over to an *entaphiastes* (v. 8: [καὶ παρα]δώσω Θακαρις (sic!) ἐνταφια[στῆ]).

Yet another papyrus on the occupation of the *entaphiastai* is unique in character. The small but complete P. Köln ii 113<sup>99</sup> (3rd century A.D.) contains a request for the *entaphiastai* to lay in the grave the body (or mummy) of the priest Harsas (ἐνταφιασταῖς ἐκκομίσατε σῶμα Ἄρσᾶ ἱερέως, translated by L. Koenen as: "Den Bestatten! Tragt die Leiche des Priesters Harsas zu Grabe"). The noun σῶμα is of crucial significance for the understanding of the content of P. Köln ii 113. If this word denotes the unmummified body (as L. Koenen seems to suggest with his translation), the verb ἐκκομίσατε could represent not only the very act of laying the mummy in the grave but also the mummification process proper which in such a situation would be carried out by the *entaphiastai*. However, one cannot exclude another possibility that the noun σῶμα here denotes a mummy already prepared<sup>100</sup> - in such a situation the *entaphiastai* would only have been engaged in its interment.

In P. Oxy. iii 476 (159 A.D.) the *entaphiastai* appear in a most untypical role. This papyrus contains a report made by two *entaphiastai* from Oxyrhynchus who on order of the *strategos* undertake to perform the inspection of the body of the deceased Apis, son of Pausis, probably in order to determine the cause of his death. We know a few documents of similar character, but in other cases it was always the *δημόσιοι ἰατροί* who examined the body of the deceased (P. Oxy. i 51; P. Rein. ii 92) The reason why in P. Oxy. iii 476 this function was undertaken by the *entaphiastai* remains unclear<sup>101</sup>.

Unfortunately, none of these documents specifies the duties of the *entaphiastai*. Slightly more information is offered by SB iii 7205 - one of the papyri from the archive of the *nekrotaphoi* from the Great Oasis: a certain *nekrotaphos*, Petechon son of Meusis, recalls that he has inherited from his father the *τάξις ἐνταφιαστική* (v. 6). It seems, therefore, that in the 3rd century A.D. the terms *νεκροτάφος* and *ἐνταφιαστής* may have been used alternatively, and the additional argument for accepting this hypothesis may be the fact that the *entaphiastai* occur in a few cases as the addressees on mummy labels<sup>102</sup>. Also, at this

<sup>99</sup> Editio princeps: L. Koenen, *Anweisung an die Totengräber*, ZPE 9, 1970, pp. 20-21 (=SB xii 10998).

<sup>100</sup> The expression σῶμα τοῦ δέινος often occurs on mummy labels (e.g., CEMG 1660); however, even in such a context the meaning of the noun σῶμα is by no means clear. Namely, the mummy label may have served not only to identify the already prepared mummy, but also aimed at the identification of the body in the process of mummifying (cf. J. Quaegebeur, *Mummy Labels: An Orientation*, Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava 19, Lugdunum Batavorum 1978, pp. 234-238). It is only the expression σῶμα εἰλισμένον (P. Hamb. i 74, v. 5) that is unambiguous - it must have meant a mummy already prepared, wrapped up with bandages and shrouds.

<sup>101</sup> One may recall here the figure of the *paraschistes* Amenothos who, apart from his professional duties, also cured people (cf. supra, p. 17), and the possible relations of physicians (ἰατροί) with mummification of the body (cf. supra, p. 22).

<sup>102</sup> The terms *ἐνταφιαστής* and *νεκροτάφος* were recognized as synonyms by W. C r ö - n e r t, *De critici arte in papyris exercenda*, [in:] *Raccolta di scritti in onore di Giacomo Lumbroso*, Milano 1925, p. 523; H. C. Y o u t i e, op. cit. (n. 98), p. 653

point, it is interesting to note that beginning from the 3rd century A.D. both the *entaphiastai* and *nekrotaphoi* may have been called *ἐξωπυλίται*<sup>103</sup>. However, the problem of whether the term *ἐνταφιαστής* had earlier been synonymous also with *νεκροτάφος* cannot be solved on the basis of papyrus documentation.

(ix) *θρηνητρίαι, θρηνηταί*

Already in the Old Kingdom, Egyptian funeral ceremonies included mourners' lamentations. This was undertaken by relations, friends and servants of the deceased, also, to make the ceremony more splendid, professional mourners might be employed<sup>104</sup>. The mourners were frequently represented on reliefs, usually as women with their hair let down and their hands raised, sometimes also in the gesture of tearing their faces with their hands (e.g., the reliefs in the sepulchre of the visier Ramose in West Thebes, 18th Dynasty).

The custom of employing professional mourners in the Graeco-Roman Period has been confirmed in fact by just one inscription found in the necropolis area of Hermoupolis Magna. Dating from the 3rd century A.D., SB v 7871 is a metric epitaph composed in the form of a speech by Epimachos who died when young. The deceased expressed his wishes on the course of his funeral ceremony; he was a distinct opponent of Egyptian customs and, therefore, categorically opposed to the participation of mourners (*θρηνητρίαι*) at his burial (vv. 17-18: *ἐκέλευσα μηδὲ τὰς καλουμένας θρηνητρίας μοι τὸν Φιληρμῆν παραλαβεῖν*, translated by Ét. Bernard as "j'ai demandé de ne pas utiliser pour moi les femmes appelées pleureuses au cher Philhermès")<sup>105</sup>. We should understand these *threnetriaí* as professional mourners engaged for funerals rather than as women from the family of Epimachos, who considered himself a Greek.

In one of the several preserved accounts for funeral expenses (*λόγος κηδείας*) - SPP xxii 56 (3rd century A.D.), there is the item *θρ[η]νηταί* (*δραχμαί*) λβ (col. ii, v. 27). It seems therefore, that in the Roman Period men too might be employed

n. 105, p. 654 n. 112, and, although with certain doubts, by A. B a t a i l l e, op. cit. (n. 3), pp. 272-273. Following a suggestion of W. O t t o, op. cit. (n. 13), Bd. I, p. 107 n. 3, the editor of P. Hamb. i 74, P. M e y e r, understood the term *ἐνταφιαστής* to have a broader meaning, covering all the people engaged in mummification of the body and the organization of funeral ceremonies.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>104</sup> Ch. S e e b e r, *Klagefrau*, [in:] *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, Bd. III Lfg. 3, Wiesbaden 1978, coll. 444-447; U. R ö s s l e r - K ö h l e r, *Totenklage*, [in:] *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, Bd. V Lfg. 5, Wiesbaden 1985, coll. 657-658; both of these entries cite a rich literature on the subject. In this context it is interesting to note that for the Old Kingdom the existence of professional mourners has not been confirmed directly.

The information of Herodotus (II.85), quite often quoted as evidence for the presence of weepers at Egyptian funerals, refers only to the first stage of the ceremony, a stage which took place even before the body was handed over to the embalmers.

<sup>105</sup> For the most recent edition of the Epimachos epitaph see: Ét. B e r n a n d, *Inscriptions métriques de l'Égypte gréco-romaine*, Paris 1969, No. 97, pp. 377-386; see there too for a list of the many studies devoted to this inscription.

as mourners<sup>106</sup>. The *threnetai* are also mentioned, among other necropolis workers (*nekrotaphoi* and *exorylitai*), in BGU i 34 (first half of the 4th century A.D.)<sup>107</sup>.

### (x) ἔξωφυλίται

For a long time, the interpretation of the term ἔξωφυλίτης was a matter of controversy. It was taken literally as: "he who lives outside of the gate (i.e., out of town)", but the people thus called were attributed to various trades<sup>108</sup>. It was only H.C. Youtie who, it seems, finally determined the meaning of this dubious term; in his view, the term ἔξωφυλίτης, which occurred in papyri from the 3rd century to the 8th century A.D., might denote all men working and living on the grounds of a necropolis<sup>109</sup>.

The term ἔξωφυλίτης occurred for the first time in several papyri from the archive of the *nekrotaphoi* corporation in the second half of the 3rd century A.D. at the Great Oasis. P. Grenf. ii 72 is a receipt for a loan granted to ἔξωφυλίτη Διοσπό(λλεως) καταμένοντι ἐν νεκρ( ) Ἀπτύτεως (vv. 4-5). The editors of this papyrus (B.P. Grenfell, A.S. Hunt) understood the abbreviation thus: ἐν νεκρ(οτάφοις), but there is yet another possibility: ἐν νεκρ(ιαίς)<sup>110</sup>. Therefore, depending on the interpretation of the abbreviation, the *exorylites* spent time among the *nekrotaphoi* or on the necropolis; probably for the author of P. Grenf. ii 72, the words ἔξωφυλίτης and νεκροτάφος were simply synonymous.

Another papyrus from the *nekrotaphoi* archive mentioning the *exorylitai* is SB iii 7205. The *nekrotaphos* Petechon son of Mersis is afraid that a group of five *exorylitai* may take over the τάξις ἐνταφιαστική which belongs to him. It is dif-

<sup>106</sup> The noun *θρηνητής* occurs only in two papyri; F. P r e i s i g k e, WB, s.v., translated it as "Klagemann, Beulmann". In the Greek literature, the noun *θρηνητήρ* was used in this sense (e.g., Aischyl. Pers. 938).

<sup>107</sup> Cf. infra, p. 35.

<sup>108</sup> F. P r e i s i g k e, *Fachwörterbuch*, s.v. ἔξωφυλίτης, "wer ausserhalb der Ringmauer wohnhaft ist"; B. P. G r e n f e l l, A. S. H u n t, P. Grenf. ii 72, com. ad v. 4, believed that ἔξωφυλίτης denoted a member of the garrison stationed at a fort distant from the town; they based their interpretation on the late Byzantine meaning of the word ἔξώφυλον, "outlying fort"; H. I. B e l l, P. Lond. iv 1419, com. ad v. 1219, recognized the term ἔξωφυλίτης as synonymous with the word ἔξωπράτης - on such an interpretation the term in question would denote "one who brings commodities into a city and sells them there" (E. A. S o p h o c l e s, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, s.v. ἔξωπράτης); influenced by H.I. Bell, P. M e y e r, P. Hamb. i 56, introd., p. 204, recognized that the word ἔξωφυλίτης denoted the man who does trade in the provision of food ("die ἔξωφυλίται wohnen vor der πύλη, dem Torzollhaus, ihnen liegt die Versorgung des Dorfes mit bestimmten Lebensmitteln ob"); influenced by the interpretation of H.I. Bell and P. Meyer, F. P r e i s i g k e changed his mind somewhat in the *Wörterbuch*, s.v. ἔξωφυλίτης, "Mitglied einer vor dem Ortstoren wohnhaften, zunftartig geschlossenen Gruppe von Leuten, denen die Lebensmittelversorgung oblag"; and M. H o m b e r t, publishing several papyri from the archive of the Great Oasis *nekrotaphoi* also assumed such an interpretation (RBPh 4, 1926, p. 668).

<sup>109</sup> H. C. Y o u t i e, op. cit. (n. 98), pp. 650-657.

<sup>110</sup> Ibidem, p. 653 n. 106.

difficult to imagine that these *exopylitai* were others than the competitive group of *nekrotaphoi* or *entaphiastai*<sup>111</sup>.

BGU i 34, dated from the first half of the 4th century A.D.<sup>112</sup>, is a lengthy account perhaps representing the business of a corporation of embalmers (in col. v expenditures for aromatic herbs, balsam, honey, wine and oil are mentioned - all these substances were necessary for mummifying bodies). Coll. ii-iv mention supplies of wine, e.g., for the *exopylitai* (col. ii, vv. 20, 31; col. iii, vv. 7, 16; col. iv, v. 13), *threnetes* (col. ii, v. 20; col. iv, v. 4), *nekrotaphoi* (col. iv, v. 8), *εἰς τὸ ὄρος* (i.e., "for the necropolis"<sup>113</sup>, col. ii, v. 10) and *Σαραπίωνι εἰς τὰ νεκροτάφ(ια)* (col. iv, v. 17). Thus, BGU i 34 suggests that the *exopylitai*, *nekrotaphoi* and *threnetai* were necropolis workers and, in one way or another, each of these groups was connected with the mummification of bodies and preparation of funerals<sup>114</sup>.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that the terms *νεκροτάφοι* and *ἐξωπυλίται* were used alternatively in P. Hamb. i 56 (6th-7th centuries A.D.). This papyrus contains a list of taxes paid by different corporations: the *exopylitai* (col. v, v. 8) paid the same tax as did the *nekrotaphoi* in the following year (col. vi, v. 10). Moreover, col. v includes no *nekrotaphoi*, nor are the *exopylitai* present in col. vi.

The characterization of particular groups of necropolis workers presented here is only an outline, moreover (something which should be borne in mind), it is one based exclusively on Greek documents. It should again be pointed out that many demotic papyri, often of high significance for the subject in question, have not yet been published. As soon as they become part of the literature on the subject, these documents may essentially change the general view of the problem of competence and ways of working of different groups of necropolis workers. At the present, many questions remain unsolved and it is necessary, therefore, to exercise much caution in the formulation of any conclusions based on the material presented above.

Bearing all these qualifications in mind, one can state, however, that a relatively distinct division in competence between particular groups of necropolis workers still existed in the Ptolemaic Period. Later such boundaries became so vague that it is not easy to determine the competence of the *nekrotaphoi* and *entaphiastai*, despite a quite large number of references to them. The disappearance of differences between particular specialties can be shown from the fact that from the 3rd century A.D. everyone who lived within a necropolis community and was employed in the mummification and burial of the dead might be called *ἐξωπυλίτης*. It is evident that this evolution is likely to have been related to changes taking place in burial rituals in this period, which consisted in

<sup>111</sup> On the alternative use of the terms *νεκροτάφος* and *ἐνταφιαστής*, cf. supra, pp. 32-33.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. BL V, p. 9.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. supra, n. 41.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. H. C. Youtie, op. cit. (n. 98), p. 653.

