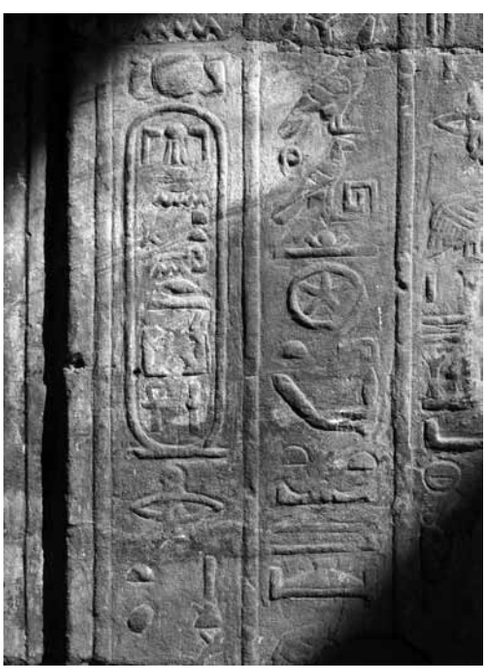
OCCASIONAL PROCEEDINGS OF
THE THEBAN WORKSHOP

PERSPECTIVES ON PTOLEMAIC THEBES

edited by

PETER F. DORMAN *and* BETSY M. BRYAN

Papers from the Theban Workshop 2006



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Part of a cosmogonical inscription of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II at Medinet Habu (MH.B 155).
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PREFACE

PETER F. DORMAN, THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE
BETSY M. BRYAN, JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

The region of Thebes during the Ptolemaic period has been regarded by many writers, with amply argued justification, as a province that was separate both politically and culturally from the direct influence of the ruling dynasts resident in Alexandria and the north. The distinctive nature of the population of the Thebaid seems most notably signaled by the violence of the two Theban revolts at the end of the third century and the beginning of the first century B.C., which required significant military force to quell successfully and left considerable destruction in their wake. Support for a certain separateness might also be seen in the economic situation of the city of Thebes, which boasted a markedly lesser enjoyment of Ptolemaic endowments, for example, as compared with the greater focus on vast royal agricultural developments elsewhere, such as those in and around the Fayum. By reason of such contrasts, the political and economic topography of the country would seem to point to the diminishment of importance, even marginalization, of the great city of Thebes itself.

The nature of the separateness of the Thebaid and the context of interaction between the civilizations presented by the Macedonian rulers and their Egyptian subjects are the themes that unify the papers published in this volume, which is the second to appear in the SAOC series under the subtitle "Occasional Proceedings of the Theban Workshop." Seven scholars gathered at the University of Chicago on October 14, 2006, through the co-sponsorship of the Franke Institute for the Humanities of the University of Chicago. Their contributions are presented in this volume according to thematic content, framed by the papers of Joseph Manning and Ian Moyer, each of whom offers an overarching perspective to the cultural brew of Ptolemaic Egypt and how it can be approached.

Joseph Manning deals directly with the dilemma of the early Ptolemaic kings in the creation of a ruling cadre in proximity to the throne and, at the same time, the partial co-optation of an existing native elite that was, necessarily, at some degree removed from it. Thebes, a center of regional power for centuries even under Egyptian pharaohs, had long enjoyed inherent political and economic importance of its own, especially through its temple hierarchies. Yet such institutions, which could be viewed as potential centers of resistance, were vital to the Ptolemaic economic system. The "capture" of the Thebaid, suggests Manning, had as much to do with the strategy of rebuilding major temples under royal patronage and establishing economic centers and bases in the south that would supplant Theban influence as effectively as the military suppression of the two great revolts.

Carolin Arlt provides a thorough examination of several scribal offices and Theban stemmae to examine family longevity in office, which had a decidedly nepotistic basis, as well as the thorough domination of official functions in Thebes by resident Egyptians. Ptolemaic efforts to promote cooperation with existing administrative structures were in place at an early time, and she traces disruptions in certain scribal families and the rise and fall of documentation to two periods of crisis, corresponding roughly to the time of the two Theban revolts.

Christina Di Cerbo and Richard Jasnow discuss the recording of a large number Demotic graffiti at the mortuary temple of Ramesses III, in particular those inscribed on roofing blocks of the first court of the great temple. Distributed over large areas of the roof but concentrated in discrete areas, these modest texts contain the names and titles of officials, with the occasional votive formulas, and shed light on the nature of devotion in the Thebaid of this period.

Sabine Albersmeier takes as her subject matter a distinctive type of priestess statuette that appears at Thebes in the Ptolemaic period. These sculptures are carved from limestone and show traces of polychrome and gilding, and the lily scepter and long flowing garment that are distinctive attributes of this group have clear antecedents in the iconography of the God's Wives of Amun during the New Kingdom. Entirely pharaonic in outward form, the statuettes are clearly products of a local workshop and are expressive of a strong priestly community in Thebes that deliberately harked back to the great years of sacerdotal pre-eminence.

Brett McClain's contribution explores the transformation of a single monument in western Thebes: the renovations to the small temple at Medinet Habu by Ptolemy VIII, which crystalizes its cultic function in definitive ways. At this time, the façade of the temple was recarved and the main axis expanded and redecorated to accommodate new

religious texts, while preserving, as much as possible, the original New Kingdom figural decoration. McClain analyzes these largely unpublished texts, which attest to the powers of resident god, Amen-Ra, lauded as the local demiurge, together with his Ogdoad. The cosmogonical aspects of the inscriptions, though hymnic in structure, are couched within what are functionally banal compositions.

Robert Ritner turns a fresh spotlight on a neglected aspect of the Ptolemaic period: royal protocols and the importance of accurately recording them. The central concern of his paper is the split reign of Ptolemy IX Soter II, whose prenomen in particular was modified for propagandistic reasons following his return to power. As Ritner demonstrates, meticulous attention to the reading of royal titles can lead to significant revision of historical conclusions. In this case, the previously assumed monumental absence of Soter II in Thebes following the second Theban revolt is clearly in error.

Ian Moyer's paper characterizes prior approaches to the Ptolemaic period as efforts to understand the often uncomfortable melding of two cultures — one Greek and one Egyptian — that were separate and distinct by virtue of irreconcilable political, economic, religious, and legal traditions. He argues that, instead of two dialectically opposed poles that could only clash head on, the cultural dynamic may have operated differently, and in more productive ways, to find an accommodation, or "middle ground," that would serve respective interests on a mutual basis. Moyer proposes that a different historiographic approach may yield greater insights into the nature of Ptolemaic Thebes, one that would eschew traditional notions of separateness, dualistic dichotomies, or varying degrees of assimilation, in favor of models of self-presentation and identity among populations in flux.

1

THE CAPTURE OF THE THEBAID

JOSEPH G. MANNING, STANFORD UNIVERSITY*

This paper has two aims. First, it seeks to correct the idea, as far as I know first suggested by Rostovtzeff in his great work on Hellenistic history, that Upper Egypt was not a "constituent part" of the Ptolemaic state (1941, 1053).[1] A quick glance at new Ptolemaic foundations in the Fayum as compared to Upper Egypt would indeed tend to give the impression of less direct interest in the Nile Valley by the Ptolemies. That, however, was not the case. The south was not only a constituent part of the Ptolemaic state, despite major revolts, but was in fact economically and politically vital to it. Building projects at ancient temple centers, and the creation of new fiscal institutions, for example, coinage, banks and tax receipts, are sufficient to demonstrate this. Late Ptolemaic royal visits to the area, as Ritner (this volume) highlights, show continued interest.[2] The building program, an ancient pharaonic practice, and the new Greek fiscality went hand in hand, perhaps part of the bargain, in coalition building between local elites and the new state.

The second aim is to set the context of Ptolemaic political and economic action within the framework of what Butzer (1976, p. 103) has termed Egypt's "regional particularism." Unlike the Fayum, an area that was reclaimed and extensively settled in the third century B.C., land in Upper Egypt was historically dominated by major temple estates. Although the political control of this region required the same basic strategy of building (settlements, roads, temples), the far lower density of Ptolemaic foundations in the south (Mueller 2006, pp. 60–61, 84) and the serious revolts in Upper Egypt, especially the great revolt between 205 and 186 B.C., show that these two regions followed different historical paths.[3] The political exigencies of coalition building that the Ptolemies, as all authoritarian rulers, had to undertake altered the political map, and indeed the landscape itself, of Upper Egypt. Thebes had been the political center of the south in the New Kingdom, and a powerful theocratic state under priestly warlords in the early first millennium B.C. The Ptolemies faced new realities and had to accommodate both old and new social groups. The new political center established at Ptolemais, just above modern Sohag, reflects the new Hellenistic realities. This shift in political economic geography, perhaps already underway in the Saite period, explains in part (the serious unrest and subsequent treatment of the city by the Ptolemaic army in the 80s B.C., discussed by Ritner in this volume, had no small role either) how Thebes devolved from a great imperial center under the New Kingdom pharaohs to a "ville-musée" (Vandorpe 1995, p. 235) by early Roman times.[4]

THE THEBAID AS A REGION

Thebes, and its vast hinterland, was a distinctive region, historically dominated by the temple of Amun at Karnak and its priesthood. The entire region supported a dense population (Butzer 1976), a significant reason for the lack of new Ptolemaic foundations. On the west side of the river an entire district of temples and tombs dedicated to the memory of the kings of the New Kingdom was situated. On the east side, the settlement side of The-

* At time of writing, Stanford University, now Yale University, Departments of History and Classics. I thank Mr. Cary Martin for his thoughtful comments on a draft of this article. The following now serves as a précis of ideas more fully developed in Manning 2010.

[1] "… the upper course of the Nile retained its pre-Ptolemaic social structure and cultural features. These regions [he also refers in the previous sentence to Arabia and Iran], however, were never, or only for short periods, constituent parts of the Hellenistic monarchies." I assume that by "upper course of the Nile" Rostovtzeff meant the Egyptian, and not the Nubian, Nile Valley.

[2] For a full study of Ptolemaic rulers' travels to the interior, see Clarysse 2000. On later Ptolemaic activity in temples, see also Caßor-Pfeiffer 2008.

[3] On the Theban revolt, see Véïsse 2004.

[4] I explore Ptolemaic state formation at length in Manning 2010.

bes, lay the mighty temple of Amun-Re, "king of the gods." Throughout much of its history the temple, and the priests who administered it, controlled a significant percentage of the natural resources of the southern Nile Valley.[5] The control of the resources of the Nile Valley by priesthoods reached its height in the late New Kingdom.

The ancient temple city of Thebes, prominent in Egyptian history indeed since the Middle Kingdom, was the center of an important region known in Greek sources as the Thebaid. The entire stretch of the Egyptian Nile Valley from roughly Asyut up to Aswan was governed as a single territory, called in Egyptian *P3-tš-n-Niw.t*, "the district of Thebes," a phrase that retains the historic echoes of the importance of the city throughout Upper Egypt. The extent of the Thebaid and its institutions of governance probably varied historically. The Persian administration, for example, divided the southern Nile Valley into two districts (with uncertain boundaries between them), with centers at Thebes and Elephantine (Briant 2002, p. 472; Porten 1996, p. 82). Under the Ptolemies, it seems that while the term "Thebaid" could be used informally to refer to the Nile Valley as a whole, in Ptolemaic administrative geographic vocabulary it referred to the region south of Hermopolis (Thomas 1975, appendix 2).

The Ptolemies continued basic administrative practice. The extensive documentary material from the Theban area, including the large family archives of low-level (Choachyte) priests, certainly informs us of the continuity of religious and economic practice.[6] The restoration of ancient buildings, and the building of new gates at the ancient temple complexes, beginning in earnest under Ptolemy II, are only the most obvious signs of Ptolemaic-period building activity.[7] Brian Muhs' 2003 study of early Ptolemaic tax receipts from Thebes clearly demonstrates Ptolemaic success in establishing Ptolemaic fiscal institutions by the reign of Ptolemy II at the latest.

Whatever attention various temple towns in the south received, Ptolemaic interest in them was driven by the twofold concern of controlling resources and trade flows (e.g., taxation, gold, elephants, and other commodities via the Red Sea and Elephantine) and obtaining loyalty from key constituent groups of society. The ancient tradition of kingship, on display in Thebes as few other places in Egypt, was a major mechanism of both. The Ptolemaic attitude toward kingship suggests a special connection to New Kingdom royal ideology, the last imperial age of Egypt. It should come as no surprise then that Ptolemaic texts suggest a conscious borrowing, or remembering, of the language and imagery of the imperial pharaohs. The behavior of Ptolemy IV in the Raphia decree (217 B.C.) reads like the much earlier description of Ramesses II's battle of Kadesh.[8] In a similar fashion, reading Polybius (*Histories* 5.85.8) one almost has the feeling that the historian had been studying the Abu Simbel reliefs of Ramesses II when he was writing his description of the battle. In Kallimachos' *Hymn to Delos*, to move from narrative to poetical circles, we read that Ptolemy II is described as a king "beneath whose crown shall come — not loth to be ruled by a Macedonian — both continents and the lands which are set in the sea, far as where the end of the earth is."[9] At the opposite end of the social spectrum, a religious recluse living in the Serapeum at Saqqara ends his petition to the king by saying:

> Therefore I ask you, O Sun King!, not to overlook me, who is in seclusion, but, if it seems right to you, to write to Poseidonius the body guard and *strategos*, to make him (the petitioner's brother) be free from his duties of service so he can be with me. May Isis and Serapis, the greatest of the gods, give you and to your children the domain of every land on which the sun shines forever (*UPZ* 1 15).[10]

This imagery of the Egyptian king ruling over every land on which the sun shines occurs in a variety of texts and contexts, from priestly decrees to the historical account of Polybius, and clearly goes back to New Kingdom imperial ideology, and, finding its way into a royal petition, it must have been part of the *zeitgeist* under the Ptolemies.[11] This is a fascinating reminder of the strong currents of culture that are not always present in our documentation, but which were certainly part of the political and cultural landscape.[12]

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[5] On the economic reach of the temple and its subsidiaries even in the first millennium B.C., see Vleeming 1991.

[6] A good orientation to the large *Choachyte* family archive is provided in Pestman 1993.

[7] On Ptolemaic temple-building activity, see Arnold 1999, pp. 154–224 and 320–23. For activity at Thebes, see Golvin 1995; McClain 2002. For new settlements along the Red Sea coast, see Mueller 2006, pp. 151–57.

[8] Raphia decree: Thissen 1966; Simpson 1996, pp. 242–57.

[9] Translation from Mair 1921. On this fourth hymn of Kallimachos, see, inter alia, Mineur 1984.

[10] For the background to this text, see Thompson 1988.

[11] Such imagery of course was also carefully adapted by earlier invaders. The Piye stela, an important document of the Nubian king and again borrowing directly from New Kingdom texts, is one such parallel. On the Piye stela (Cairo JE 48862, 47086–47089), see Grimal 1981; Gozzoli 2006; and the transliteration and English translation in Eide et al. 1994, pp. 62–119.

[12] On the New Kingdom ideology, see, for example, the Horemheb coronation inscription (Turin 1379 = *Urk.* IV, 2119, line 8–2120, line 17) treated in Gardiner 1953. The famous Adulis inscription (*OGIS* 54), originally dating to the reign of Ptolemy III, now lost but preserved by the sixth-century geographer Cosmas Indicopleustes (*Christian Topography* 2.58–59), is not without historic echoes of

PTOLEMAIC STRATEGY

The early kings (and their queens, who had no small role throughout the period) had two primary aims (in addition to fending off rivals): (1) mobilizing support for the new politically centralized state and (2) mobilizing resources. The bureaucracy and the military were the two organizations necessary for the stable extraction of surplus (Chaudhuri 1990, p. 90). In a sense, Ptolemaic Egypt was as much a "soldier state" (Brett 2001, p. 342) as the Fatimid state was.[13] Outside of their realm, the Ptolemies faced a highly competitive and fluid international environment that at times put them under severe pressure. The kings needed to recruit a new bureaucratic elite, maintain an army, and create a monopoly of prestige, for which Egyptian priests and temple ritual were important.

The end result of the early kings' promotion of a new bureaucratic and military elite was mixed. By the end of the Ptolemaic period, an entrenched elite, often associated with temples, was clearly well established in positions of local authority. What is altogether less clear from the evidence that we have is the extent to which this reflects a social evolution (as it clearly did under the Fatimids when the military grew in strength because of the *iqta* system, stipendiary grants of revenue from the land) or the status quo throughout the period.[14] In any case, early Ptolemaic strategy was based on well-established patterns of coalition building.

COALITION BUILDING

In Haber's analysis of authoritarian governments, a political takeover is analyzed as a game played between the ruler and key constituent groups:

> Neither side in this game plays from a state of nature: they inherit a pre-existing set of political institutions and organizations, along with an economy and society. This means that the game has multiple outcomes. A close reading of the case study literature indicates, however, that the set of the dictator's winning strategies is small. He may terrorize launching organization's leadership, co-opt them by providing them with private goods, or raise their costs of collective action by proliferating yet more organizations. Each of these strategies generates quite different property rights systems, and each of those property rights systems have consequences for economic growth and distribution (Haber 2006).

The launching organization that Haber refers to was the military, already clearly established in the army's declaration of Ptolemy as king in 306 B.C., and at least some of the key priesthoods. All three strategies, terror, cooptation, and raising the cost of collective action, may have been in play. To be sure, Ptolemy co-opted elites and created parallel institutions that competed against each other, thus making coordination at the local level difficult.[15] Such strategy is revealed across the gamut of Ptolemaic society, in the military sphere, in warfare and military privilege, in the support of temples, and also in the economic and legal spheres.[16] Such a system created, at least to the modern observer, "structural tensions" in Ptolemaic society and the conflicts between

> the interests of the agricultural administration, the financial administration, the controllers who supervised this financial administration, the more or less independent businessmen who farmed the royal revenues, the small local contractors, and all the guarantors who were involved in the tax-farming system of the third century (Bingen 2007, p. 191).

A new Greek bureaucratic order was established to re-align loyalties of the key constituent groups of the ruling classes.[17] There was the inner circle of the court, the "friends" of the king as they were called, the Greco-Macedonian bodyguard and the military class generally, and high officials in charge of diplomatic matters, correspondence, and military and civil administration.[18] This Greco-Macedonian "ethno-class," to borrow Briant's term

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New Kingdom military glory. The text records the extensive conquest of Ptolemy III during the Third Syrian War, reaching eastward as far as Bactria. Recent English translations may be found in Burstein 1985 (text 99); Bagnall and Derow 2004 (text 26); and Austin 2006 (text 268).

[13] Details in Fischer-Bovet 2008.

[14] On Fatimid state formation, see Lev 1991; Sanders 1998; Brett 2001.

[15] It is possible to see in the increasing exemptions from the salt tax that some collective bargaining between groups and the state was at work here; see Clarysse and Thompson 2006, vol. 1, pp. 56–59.

[16] Soldiers received a kind of diplomatic immunity from lawsuits in Alexandria, a law preserved in P. Hal. 1 124–65 (mid-third century B.C.).

[17] For a general comparative analysis, see Eisenstadt 1993, pp. 13–32. For state formation in the Hellenistic context, see Mileta 2002.

[18] On the king's inner circle in the Hellenistic kingdoms, see Habicht 1958; Mooren 1977; Herman 1980–81; McKechnie 1989, pp. 204–15.

of the Achaemenid ruling elite, was clearly the power surrounding the throne initially.[19] We know little about this inner circle beyond the literary representations of some of the more notorious figures (Rowlandson 2007).

Ma (2003), following Briant's analysis of Hellenistic kings extending the traditions of the Persian kings in ruling over diverse local populations, makes much use of the images of ruling elite power even in local Egyptian contexts such as the depiction of Ptolemy IV in the Raphia stela. But how much impact this really had on local populations is anyone's guess. The point is that the Ptolemies, as other Hellenistic kings, created a uniform ideology that associated their rule with ancient traditions. Thus Ptolemy IV, shown in Macedonian military dress on a rearing horse in the Raphia decree, is the visual equivalent of the text of Manetho's Egyptian history that inserted the Ptolemies into the long line of legitimate Egyptian kings, and the Ptolemaic "gating" of the ancient temples at Thebes. Image-making was one aspect of the broader strategy of building of political coalitions.

Details of the first fifty years of Ptolemaic rule are few and far between, but a general outline can be established. Between the years 321 and 305 B.C., Egypt went from a "splinter" of the Persian empire to a nascent independent state with two new political centers. What sources we have, for example, Kleomenes' behavior regarding Egyptian grain, hint at the continuation of the traditional Egyptian economic structure despite the political disturbances that rocked Egypt in these heady days between revolts, Persian retreat from Egypt, Alexander's invasion, and the formation of the new state by Ptolemy.[20]

Ptolemy quickly replaced Kleomenes as satrap, thus making him, not Alexander, "the last of the Achaemenids."[21] There were certainly Egyptians in the inner circle (the "launching organization") at the capital (Lloyd 2002). Greeks had after all served in the Saite administration and been an important military force for them, and the Athenian Chabrias, served as advisor to Egyptian kings in the fourth century B.C. (Falivene 1991). There were men of action, too, who must have helped Ptolemy, not the least among whom was the military commander Nectanebo, a relative of King Nectanebo I (380–362 B.C.).[22] Greek culture was not unfamiliar to the highest level of Egyptian priests in the early Ptolemaic period (Derchain 2000).[23] Priests and soldiers were the two principal landholding classes (the king being in a class by himself; see Diodorus, *Bibliotheca historica* 1.73). Egyptian priests, many of whom were literate, were the mediators between the ruler and his circle on one hand, and between temples and agricultural production on the other. The priests, at least a certain percentage of them, were actively involved in the formation of the dynasty, in the acceptance of the ruler cult within the temples, in gathering in the king's honor, even in collecting revenues.[24] Egyptian priests were probably not a unified political body although the Ptolemaic creation of synodal meetings may have promoted at least this possibility. They were a very important element in the first millennium B.C. when politics was so fragmented and uncertain, acting as guardians of tradition. They were also those responsible for literary texts such as the literary tradition of *Chaosbeschreibung* that may have fomented certain sentiments against foreign rule (Dillery 2005).[25] Later on, in the synods or statewide meetings of priests, the politics between ruler and the body of priests shows itself in the clear light of day. We can hope to know more about this elite, and their relationships to the rulers, when more of the biographical inscriptions are studied.[26] But we shall perhaps never know the extent of Egyptian (and others') involvement with the highest level of state administration because of the practice of many persons adopting and using Greek names (Clarysse 1985).

UPPER EGYPT

To establish sovereignty throughout Egypt, the Ptolemies needed to "overcome the rule of regional institutions and elites" (Barkey 1994, p. 3). "Regional institutions and elites," in the Egyptian context, meant temples

[19] Briant 2002, with Ma 2003.

[20] On Kleomenes, see Vogt 1971; Seibert 1979; Pseudo-Aristotle, *Oikonomika* 2.2.33; Demosthenes, *Against Dionysodorus*.

[21] Briant 1982, p. 330; Briant 2002, p. 876.

[22] On Egyptian elite in the early Ptolemaic period, see Peremans 1977; Lloyd 2002; and, more broadly, Baines 2004.

[23] See further Falivene 1991, p. 205, on the pre-Ptolemaic Greek involvement with the Egyptian economy.

[24] On Dynastic/temple relations, see Thompson 1988, pp. 106–54; among important priests, Somtutefnakhte and Manetho no doubt the most famous. For the former, see *Urk*. II, 1–6 (Naples Museum 1035), translated in Lichtheim 1980, pp. 41–44. On Manetho, see Verbrugghe and Wickersham 1996; Dillery 1999; Gozzoli 2006, pp. 191–225.

[25] The literary tradition originates in New Kingdom literature and has a long history well beyond Ptolemaic times. See further Venticinque 2006 and the literature cited therein. On the ambiguous role of religious groups, see Eisenstadt 1993, pp. 189–93.

[26] Lloyd 2002; Baines 2004.

and priesthoods in Upper Egypt. This "overcoming" operated on many different levels among the most important of which was re-inscription of the landscape in order to claim it as Ptolemaic territory. Such examples of the process abound and occurred throughout the period.

An examination of Upper Egyptian temples, for example, shows how intimately connected culture and economics were. In some areas, new temples were built, in other areas, Karnak in Thebes for example, sacred precincts were enclosed by Ptolemaic gates. A claim to legitimate royal territory went hand in hand with economic development. Ptolemy II's expansion into the Western and Eastern deserts and Red Sea coast shows that southern Egypt and the roads out to the coast, and through the oases, were vital to the early Ptolemaic state's interests. In both cases, it was the control of trade flows, just as was the case of Ptolemy I's expansion west of Cyrenaica was about caravan trade flows (Hölbl 2001, p. 18), that the rulers wanted to secure.[27] The building of road networks in the deserts (not entirely new with the Ptolemies, but there was certainly extensive new activity, particularly by Ptolemy II, for example, the important Edfu–Berenike highway; Strabo, *Geographica* 17.1.45), and the founding of towns on the Red Sea coast, show just how important the southern Nile Valley and the Eastern Desert was to Ptolemaic trade traffic, especially in gold and elephants (and the related ivory).[28] In turn, peoples such as the Blemmyes, well known in the Eastern Desert, were incorporated into the state in various capacities. All this aided in "connectivity" between southern Egypt, the Red Sea, and the Mediterranean.[29] Cultural politics and economic development were not separate processes but indeed one and the same.

New foundations and settlement of soldiers throughout the Nile Valley were fundamentally important for Ptolemaic control of the region and expansion into the Eastern Desert to secure Red Sea trade routes. Greek soldiers were certainly established at the key military town of Elephantine/Aswan, but probably elsewhere as well, although early documentation is lacking. The entire process of gaining control of the region seems to have been gradual and targeted. When faced with serious resistance, I think in part because of this political process of gaining control, the Ptolemies responded in a stronger way by placing more officials there to monitor the area, and by establishing more military settlements.[30] Thebes, the site of the great Amun temple, seems to have had only a small number of Greeks, and little new building activity except, importantly, for gates at several important temples.[31] Thebes itself, from an economic and presumably therefore also from a religious point of view, may have been less important to the Ptolemies than were sites such as Edfu, an important terminus for Eastern Desert traffic, and of course the Ptah temple at Memphis, which had been a vital nexus between Egyptian priests and the legitimacy of Persian provincial government and played a vital role under the Ptolemies.[32] Nevertheless the changes in Thebes, while perhaps subtler than elsewhere, reflected a profound transformation of Upper Egypt into Ptolemaic imperial territory.

PTOLEMAIS

An early and important step in the process of controlling the Thebaid was the foundation by Ptolemy I of the new city of Ptolemais Hermiou (Demotic *Pa-Sy*, modern el-Manshah).[33] A Cyrenaean city of the same name was also established by Ptolemy (Kraeling 1962; Mueller 2006, pp. 143–46).[34] Akhmim (Panopolis), a large and important Egyptian city with a mixed Greco-Egyptian population (Lloyd 1969, p. 85), was nearby but we do not know much about the connections between the two.[35] Panopolis was the site of major unrest in the second century B.C. and was seemingly excluded from rebuilding its houses and temples in the amnesty decree of Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra II and III in 118 B.C. (P. Tebt. 5 136–38).

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[27] On the troops used to secure the desert roads, see Hennig 2003.

[28] Murray 1967; Scullard 1974, pp. 123–37; Krebs 1973; Burstein 1996; Mueller 2006, pp. 151–57. On the Eastern Desert road network, see Sidebotham and Wendrich 1996; Bagnall et al. 1996; Sidebotham 2000; Alcock, Gates, and Rempel 2005; and Gates-Foster 2006.

[29] On the issue of connectivity to the Mediterranean, see Bresson 2005.

[30] Settlements at Pathyris and Krocodilopolis are good examples of the new military foundations.

[31] See, for example, P. Grenf. 1 21 (second century B.C. = P. L. Bat. 19 4 ii 1–25; *Select papyri* 1, 83), mentioning very few Greeks available to write Greek. On building activity at Karnak specifically, see Aufrère 2000. On Greeks at Thebes, see Clarysse 1995.

[32] On the temple of priests of Ptah at Memphis, see Crawford 1980; Thompson 1988.

[33] See Mueller 2006, pp. 166–67, on the founding of Ptolemais.

[34] Laronde 1987. On Ptolemy and Cyrenaica, see Mørkholm 1980.

[35] For Akhmim and its environs, see the very general survey by Kanawati 1990; Kanawati 1999; Kuhlmann 1983; Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet 2002. Akhmim was a center of textile production and quarrying. On Ptolemais, see Plaumann 1910; Vandorpe 1995, p. 210; Abd el-Ghani 2001.

The founding of a new administrative center at Ptolemais was probably not intended to counterbalance Thebes, nor is it likely that its primary purpose was to "Hellenize" (if we mean by the term the specific policy of spreading Greek culture) the Thebaid (Abd el-Ghani 2001), although Greek cultural influence was obviously reinforced in this region as a result. The founding of a new royal city in the south mirrors in many ways the history of Hellenistic Asia Minor, where "colonies had often been founded on, or adjacent to, the site of a pre-existing indigenous village or city" (Mileta 2002, p. 166). The main purpose was to establish a "royal area" in strategic locations. Political, legal, and economic control was the main issue, not Hellenization. Ptolemais would appear to be another case of this Hellenistic practice, certainly serving as a foothold of Ptolemaic control of Upper Egypt.

Whether we follow Leo Africanus (*Descrittione dell'Africa* 1.734) in believing that Akhmim was the oldest of Egyptian cities, it was certainly in this region that Egyptian civilization originated, as the important and very ancient town of Thinis (modern Girga) and the Abydos necropolis on the west bank of the river confirm. Limestone quarries, whence stone to build Ptolemais came, are located across the river on the east bank, especially in the vicinity of Sheikh Musa.[36] Hints of a pre-Ptolemaic Greek settlement on the site are found in a famous passage in Herodotus (*The Histories* 2.91), which mentions a "new city" (*Neapolis*) situated very near Akhmim. The name suggests a Greek foundation, and Lloyd has cogently argued (1969, p. 80) that the reference to a Greek city located near Akhmim must indicate that a pre-Ptolemaic settlement was located on the future site of Ptolemais.[37] If this thesis is correct, and we have no way of confirming it at the moment, it would be another example of the Ptolemies continuing cultural and economic patterns established during the seventh to fifth centuries B.C. An administrative center for the south at a site where there had already been Greek settlement would be both logical and the path of least resistance in establishing a Ptolemaic presence in the south. The fact that Greeks, probably soldiers, were settled earlier in the millennium, perhaps under the Saites, at the future site of Ptolemais points to an important Ptolemaic strategy. Because Ptolemais sat at an important terminus into which trade routes came from the western oases chain, which led west and north out to Cyrenaica, and from Nubia to the south, the kings "gated" key trade junctions along the Nile River in the south at an early date. Such "gating" is also clearly seen at Edfu, with its new temple begun in 237 B.C., and at Philae, both important termini of key trade routes from the east and south.

Rostovtzeff (1941, p. 156) believed that the city was intended to become a second Alexandria. It never became quite that. Whether it was built on a Hippodamian grid plan or not we do not know but it would seem likely that it was. Ptolemy is reported to have built a wall around the town itself, but the town was not walled off from its surroundings. Its institutional "Greekness" and status as a *polis* is certain (Plaumann 1910; Fraser 1972). It had tax-free land, a theater, a cult of the founder Ptolemy I, and was a seat, from the time of Ptolemy IV, of dynastic priests in whose names both Greek and Demotic legal instruments were usually dated. The lost history of Ptolemais by Istrus might have been written to support the Greek community there just as the new priesthood did (Fraser 1972, p. 512). Ptolemais effectively sat at the crossroads of Greek, Egyptian, and Nubian culture, no doubt a reflection of the trade flow. Its early population may well have reflected that fact. Although much of the early history of this city remains shrouded in darkness, Ptolemaic intentions in founding and settling Greeks there are clear: to establish control of the south. The city became the seat not only of a garrison but also of all the Ptolemaic regional administrators including an important branch of the *chrematistai*, a royal court that received petitions from throughout the Thebaid. From Strabo's description of the city in the first century B.C., the foundation, at least in his day, was sizeable:

> Then one comes to the city of Ptolemais, which is the largest of the cities in the Thebais, is no smaller than Memphis, and also has a form of government modeled on that of the Greeks (*Geographica* 17.1.42).

There are hints of the origins of the Greeks who settled the city, but it seems increasingly unlikely that it had a "purely Greek character" (Fraser 1972, p. 512).[38] Rather, Ptolemais appears similar to Naukratis and Alexandria in the north as a Greek city and trade center, but with an Egyptian temple precinct and a mixed population.

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[36] Morgan, Bouriant, and Legrain 1894. Demotic, Greek, and Latin graffiti are documented in the quarries.

[37] There were certainly close economic connections between Akhmim and Ptolemais and other parts of Upper Egypt. See, for example, P. Berlin 13534 (= Martin 1996, text C34, 2 B.C.), a sale of shares of houses in Akhmim and in Ptolemais by a priest of the god Khnum at Elephantine.

[38] The location of the Isis temple outside the city walls remains to be proven. Plaumann (1910, p. 58) made the suggestion on the basis of St. Petersburg inscription Golenischeff, a granite stela found at the site and dated 76/5 B.C.

There were, from a legal point of view, clearly defined social lines drawn between citizens of the new city and non-citizens, but the purpose of the foundation (or re-foundation) was the interaction between government representatives of the state and local populations in the region.

The founding of the city is sufficient to show that Ptolemy understood that the Thebaid required a separate administrative center to govern Egypt as a whole. Just as Thebes counterbalanced Memphis in antiquity, so too Ptolemais served (theoretically) as a stabilizing counterweight to Alexandria in the north. The massive and ugly revolt, and the formation of an independent state in the Thebaid between 205 and 186 B.C., is sufficient evidence to show that there were natural fault lines between the upper Egyptian Nile Valley and the north.

EGYPTIAN TEMPLES AND PTOLEMAIC FISCAL INSTITUTIONS

Clearly Egyptian temples as institutions remained vital for the legitimization of Ptolemaic rule, and the Egyptian priesthoods as a body, through a series of synods and multilingual decrees, showed support for the rulers. The kings allowed the priesthoods and the temples to be maintained in exchange for loyalty to the regime. The Canopus decree, issued in 238 B.C. by Ptolemy III Euergetes and his consort Berenike II, provides important evidence on the one hand for the royal piety toward temples, toward the maintenance of temple rituals and public processions associated with many of the local religious festivals, and, on the other hand, for the deliberate Ptolemaic policy of incorporating the temples within the state structure.[39] The decree established that the priests should all add as part of their priestly titles the epithet "Priest of the Beneficent gods (i.e., Ptolemy III Euergetes and Berenike II)," rules for a new *phylai* of priests in each temple, an annual procession in honor of the king and queen, the reform of the calendar in order to establish a regular time for festivals, and a new festival in honor of the royal couple's deceased daughter Berenike. The new temple building in the Thebaid, I believe, was a means by which the Ptolemies gained control of the south.

One year later, in 237 B.C., the town of Edfu received special attention with the re-building of the Horus temple. The temple and the surrounding town was already an important place, as the pre-Ptolemaic land donations show (Meeks 1972). One cannot help but think that the rebuilding of the temple was a strategic move, given the importance of the town in controlling trade flows from the Eastern Desert.[40] The finances of the temple were placed in charge of a *praktor*. The direct interest of the crown with the temple finances is shown in two letters from Euphronios,[41] *praktor* of temples (of the entire Thebaid?), writing from Thebes,[42] to his assistant Milon, *praktor* of the temples in Edfu,[43] dated August 222 B.C. The first suggests that the financial administration had institutions of banking and granaries within the temple itself, and that the financial information gathered by Milon from them should be forwarded to "the city," presumably Alexandria:

> Euphronios to Milon, greetings. As soon as you read this letter, having taken the deposits from the bankers in the temples, for the temple in Edfu, and as much also of the measured grain from those in charge of the granaries, from the earliest time up to the present, by month and year, let them also specify the years for which payment (was made). Having done this carefully, send to us on account of this succession so that we may not be therefore prevented from sending down to the city the accounts of the rest of the things that are ready. The payments are to be inspected by Theos and Andron. Fare[well. Year] 25 Payni 24 (P. Berlin 13516 (= P. Eleph. 10; Wilcken *Chrest.* 1 182).
>
> Verso: To Milon

[39] Pfeiffer 2004. The decree is preserved in two main exemplars, one from Kom el-Hisn, now in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo CG 22186, and one from Tanis, CG 22187. There are four fragmentary stelae, Louvre C 122, one now erected at the third pylon at the Karnak temple, another in Cairo, temp. number 17/3/46/1, and a fourth in the Port Said Museum, inv. no. 493. A new copy of the text was discovered in 2004 at Bubastis. See Tietze, Lange, and Halloff 2005. For a grammatical analysis and an English translation of the Demotic text, see Simpson 1996.

[40] On Ptolemaic Edfu and its documentation, see Manning 2003a.

[41] *PP* III 7399.

[42] The second letter, P. Berlin 13519, written one week later (15 August), rather plaintively asking Milon to stop delaying sending the accounts, mentions that Euphronios is in Thebes. At the same time, on the 14th of August, we learn that Milon had been attacked (P. Berlin 13518).

[43] *PP* III 7419.

There are several other features of the Ptolemaic financial administration of the south that appear to change at about the same time as these letters from Euphronios that, taken together, suggest that there was a connection between these events, a connection perhaps linked to the financing of the new temple and the establishment of Ptolemaic financial control of the Thebaid. These financial institutions become regular features of the state structure of the Thebaid. It may be that some of this activity began earlier and can be associated with the new reign of Ptolemy II and his reforms, but the evidence associated with Edfu suggests that at least here the royal interest may be connected to the temple. The first mention of the public auction, a method of disposing of unclaimed or derelict land and other property introduced by the Ptolemies, occurs in 223 B.C. at Edfu.[44] The announcement may be related to other texts from the same archive (the archive of Milon) in which land had been purchased by priests from Edfu and subsequently transferred to another party.[45] In 221/220 B.C., an agreement for the acquisition of land between sixteen parties also took place at Edfu (P. Hausw. 16). The auction was in charge of the *thebarch*, a financial official based in Ptolemais, with the proceeds going to the king's privy purse, the *idios logos*, known to have been in existence in the second century, but this text suggests that it may have been functioning by the end of the third. The harvest tax receipts (Demotic *šmw*) and the closely associated receipts of land holding (Demotic *r-rḫ≥w*) are also first attested at Thebes in 220 B.C.[46] Presumably, the temples themselves were used to collect and book the harvest tax receipts before this date, but the new receipts show that the state, the "scribes of pharaoh," was now collecting this tax on grain land.[47] Katelijn Vandorpe's fastidious study of Demotic and Greek tax receipts from another community in Upper Egypt, Pathyris, demonstrates the strong link between the political economy of Upper Egypt, language, and tax collection. The institution of tax collection was complex, and we can follow, occasionally in some details, the flow of taxes in this period because of the issuance of tax receipts, an innovation associated with royal banks, and perhaps used to protect taxpayers from predatory tax collectors. The switch from the use of Demotic to Greek in the tax receipts may perhaps be linked to the imposition of stronger state control of the south in the wake of a series of rebellions. Vandorpe derives the following historical scheme:

1. After the revolt of the Thebaid (205–186 B.C.) when the region was recaptured, taxes were again collected, by Egyptian officials.
2. After another brief period of unrest in the 160s B.C. (the effects of the invasion of Antiochus IV), Greek officials were in charge of tax collection while Egyptian scribes were reduced to countersigning the tax receipts.
3. By around 160 B.C., the collection of taxes was split into several different collection points. But the collection of taxes never appears to have been stable over the long run, with problems emerging again in the early first century B.C.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I have argued that Upper Egypt was a constituent and important part of the Ptolemaic state for much of the history of the dynasty. The Ptolemaic state, indeed, was very active in the south, supporting the building of temples as well as roads, and founding new settlements in the Nile Valley and along the Red Sea coast. Despite unrest and revolt, and occasionally the loss of tax revenue, the image of the kings throughout the region on temple walls, the presence of the state and its officials in the collection of taxes and tolls, and in the installation of banks and the issuance of tax receipts, and the trade routes (and trade flows) coming in from the Eastern Desert prove unequivocally that the upper reaches of the Egyptian Nile, regions that the kings themselves sometimes visited, were successfully captured by the Ptolemaic state. At the same time, the emphasis on the new political center at Ptolemais, and the control of Red Sea trade via towns like Edfu, may have hastened the decline of the old capital of the south, Thebes.

[44] On the auction, see Manning 1999.

[45] For an excellent précis of the Milon archive, see Clarysse 2003.

[46] O. Tait Bodl. 1 147, O. Wilck. 1253. For the tax and the land receipts, see the study of Vandorpe 2000.

[47] Vandorpe 2000, p. 177.

ABBREVIATIONS

OGIS	Wilhelm Dittenberger. *Orientis graeci inscriptiones selectae: Supplementum Sylloges inscriptionum graecarum*. 2 volumes. Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1903–05.
O. Tait Bodl. 1	John Gavin Tait, ed. *Greek Ostraca in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Various Other Collections*, Volume 1. Egypt Exploration Society, Graeco-Roman Memoirs 21. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1930.
O. Wilck.	Ulrich Wilcken, ed. *Griechische Ostraka aus Aegypten und Nubien*, Volume 2. Berlin: Giesecke & Devrient, 1899.
P. Berlin	Papyrus Berlin, cited by inventory number.
P. Eleph.	O. Rubensohn. *Elephantine-Papyri*. Ägyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen Museen in Berlin, Griechische Urkunden, Sonderheft. Berlin: Weidmann, 1907.
P. Grenf. 1	Bernard P. Grenfell. *An Alexandrian Erotic Fragment and other Greek Papyri, Chiefly Ptolemaic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896.
P. Hal. 1	Graeca Halensis, ed. *Dikaiomata: Auszüge aus alexandrinischen Gesetzen und Verodnungen, in einem Papyrus des Philologischen Seminars der Universität Halle*. Berlin: Weidmann, 1913.
P. Hausw.	Joseph G. Manning. *The Hauswaldt Papyri: A Third Century B.C. Family Dossier from Edfu*. Demotische Studien 12. Sommerhausen: Gisela Zauzich, 1997.
P. L. Bat. 19	E. Boswinkel and P. W. Pestman, eds. *Textes grecs, démotiques et bilingues*. Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava 19. Leiden: Brill, 1978.
P. Tebt.	Bernard P. Grenfell, Arthur S. Hunt, and J. Gilbert Smyly. *The Tebtunis Papyri* 1. Egypt Exploration Fund, Graeco-Roman Memoirs 4. London: Henry Frowde, 1902.
PP III	Willy Peremans and E. Van 't Dack. *Prosopographia Ptolemaica* 3: *Le clergé, le notariat, les tribunaux*. Studia Hellenistica 11. Leiden: Brill, 1956.
Select papyri 1	Arthur S. Hunt and Campbell C. Edgar. *Select Papyri*, Volume 1: *Private Affairs*. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932.
UPZ	Ulrich Wilcken, ed. *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit (ältere Funde)*, Volume 1: *Papyri aus Unterägypten*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1927.
Wilcken *Chrest.*	Ludwig Mitteis and Ulrich Wilcken. *Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde*. 2 parts. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1912.

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