
THE ECONOMICAL AND THEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE-IBIS

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ABSTRACT

The article gives a new explanation for the masses of sacred ibises and their remains inside the Egyptian ibis burial places (Ibiotapheia) especially in Ptolemaic times. We find no traces of a continuous flow of pilgrims visiting sanctuaries of Thot and offering single ibis mummies to venerate Thot privately. The many new Ptolemaic nourishing places of the ibis (Ibiotropheia/Ibion) are economically closely connected to the distribution of new Fields of the ibis, sold by the administration also to foreigners like kleruchoi-soldiers. This happened in combination with the installation of many new cult places and cult statues of Ibis- and Baboon-gods, all maintained by an Ibion-organisation. Every newly founded local ibion in the Nile valley delivered selected sacred ibises to a new local Greek-Egyptian Hermaion where they fulfilled roles of gods during feast days and oracle procedures. Collection of dead ibises from the Ibion and their deification, then the mass burial of all animal remains and finally the rebirth of young sacred ibises inside an Ibion secured the immortality of the Ibis-god. This Ibis-god protected all over Egypt the pharaoh's New Year feast and his enthronisation corresponding to the mythological role of the ibises as supporters of Thot during the first creation.

KEYWORDS

Sacred ibis(es), Ibises of the first creation, birthplace of the Ibis - Ibion / Ibiotropheion, Taricheion, Ibion taphe / Ibiotapheion, Deified ibises, Hermaion, Hermes-Thot, Fields of the ibis, Organisation of The-Ibis, Feast of Sokar-Osiris, Royal New Year feast, Royal endowments, theory of pilgrimage, ibis mummies, Hermopolis Magna, Tuna el-Gebel

LA IMPORTANCIA ECONÓMICA Y TEOLÓGICA DEL LUGAR DE NACIMIENTO DE EL IBIS

RESUMEN

El presente artículo ofrece una explicación nueva de las inmensas cantidades de ibis sagrados y sus restos en el interior de los enterramientos de ibis (Ibiotapheia) egipcios, sobre todo en época ptolemaica. No hallamos restos de un flujo continuo de peregrinos que visiten los santuarios de Thot y que ofrezcan una momia de ibis para venerar a Thot de manera privada. Los numerosos lugares de cría de los ibis (Ibiotropheia / Ibion) de nueva creación en el periodo ptolemaico se encuentran estrechamente conectados desde el punto de vista económico con la distribución de nuevos Campos de los ibis, vendidos por la administración incluso a extranjeros como soldados clerucos. Esto ocurrió en combinación con la instalación de nuevos lugares de culto y estatuas de culto de dioses ibis y babuinos en gran cantidad, todos ellos mantenidos por una organización Ibion. Cada nuevo ibion local que se fundaba en el Valle del Nilo proporcionaba ibis sagrados seleccionados a un nuevo Hermaion local grecoegipcio, donde desempeñaban el papel de dioses durante los días de fiesta y los procedimientos oraculares. La reunión de ibis muertos desde el Ibion y su deificación, luego el enterramiento en masa de todos los restos animales y, finalmente, el renacimiento de ibis sagrados jóvenes en el interior de un Ibion aseguraba la inmortalidad del dios Ibis. Este dios Ibis protegía la fiesta del Año Nuevo del faraón en todo Egipto y su entronización, en correspondencia con el papel mitológico de los ibis como seguidores de Thot en el primer momento de la creación.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Ibis sagrado, Ibis primigenio, lugar de nacimiento del Ibis - Ibion / Ibiotropheion, Taricheion, Ibion taphé / Ibiotapheion, Ibis deificados, Hermaion, Hermes-Thot, Campos de los Ibis, Organización de El Ibis, Fiesta de Sokar-Osiris, Fiesta regia del Año Nuevo, Donaciones reales, teoría del peregrinaje, momias de ibis, Hermopolis Magna, Tuna el-Gebel

The aim of this article is to inspire discussion on a topic that requires more detailed study. It offers a new explanation for the fact that at the end of the 30th dynasty, and especially under the first Ptolemies, the number of feeding places for sacred ibises increased in number. The common assumption that a flow of thousands of pious pilgrims to sanctuaries demanded an enormous number of ibis mummies for their private offerings, which in turn caused new feeding places (*ibiotropheia*) to be established, is not supported by Egyptian texts. There are two main reasons for new ibis (and falcon) feeding places in Egypt, both unconnected with visits of pilgrims. One was an enormous economic factor, and the other was a growing theological importance of keeping flocks of sacred animals on a special sacred place. Firstly, the extension of The-Ibis organisations all over Egypt, especially in Ptolemaic times, led to a large number of new cult places that were sold and leased for money for the profit of the state. Secondly, in Ptolemaic times, each new chapel, combined with oracles (i.e. a Greek Hermaion) and installed by the state in a centrally administered *nomos* area, always needed special sacred animals. These came from newly founded and legally well-defined, local, sacred feeding areas with special cultic servants, chapels and local cult leaders. Near local chapels of Thot (Hermaia for the Greeks) special sacred ibises had been used in the role of a god-e.g. during the oracle ceremonies and feast events. They could be chosen only from an already existing feeding place, from which had come other sacred ibises. Those were in turn offspring of former sacred animals again and had to be made to gods afterwards. At the *ibiotropheia* even the scantiest remains of sacred animals had to be collected. This constant process of rebirth, life and death, with subsequent deification guaranteed the continuation of a religious cycle that ended in the appearance of gods and king on the days of their feasts, condensed in formulas such as rejuvenation (*rnpjt*) or 'Giving of Life'. The young god of the birthplace of The-Ibis (cultplace of Thot-mes-the-Ibis), was theologically closely connected with the creator god Thot, who created the young ibis on the primeval hill. To this belongs the birth of the first male and female ibises from two eggs and the stately feast processions with the animals on poles. These animal-gods belong to the realm of the first creation.

1. The theory of pilgrims offering ibis mummies

Increasingly, ibis mummies originating from museum collections, or excavated or collected from one of the more than one hundred Ptolemaic animal cemeteries are being examined and x-rayed¹. There is simply no Egyptian cemetery area without ibis mummies, even if archaeological research is still lagging behind.² Nevertheless, the numerous ibises and

¹ A spectacular three-dimensional x-ray of an ibis from Abydos (?) shows the stomach filled with plant remains; see E. Keefer, Spurensuche. Die Mumie eines Heiligen Ibisses im industriellen Computertomografen, in *Ägyptische Mumien, Unsterblichkeit im Land der Pharaonen*, Landesmuseum Württemberg, Ausstellung 6. Oktober 2007 bis 24. März 2008, Mainz 2007, 311-317.

² According to S. Ikram, *Divine Creatures: Animal Mummies*, in S. Ikram (editor), *Divine Creatures: Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt*, Cairo 2005, 32 animal cemeteries containing ibis mummies are known from archaeological research. Many more can be assumed indirectly from demotic texts and by structural considerations. I think that every animal cemetery and their sanctuaries were part of the processions during festivals of Thot, Osiris and the Pharaoh and must have inevitably contained a concomitant ensemble of

other birds taken from the ‘feeding places of the ibises’ are rarely considered as an integral part of the Egyptian temple cult. Their mummies are still exhibited isolated, as curiosities, in our museums. Earlier Egyptologists did not much appreciate the mass of ibis and falcon mummies. They were irritated by what they regarded as a primitive belief³ which seemed to have produced an absurdly high number of mummies. At best, the veneration of single living animals and the alleged veneration of a whole species⁴ were attributed to a certain popular misunderstanding of a highly speculative temple theology with its special sacred temple animals. Proof for a veneration of an animal species seemed to be mainly the high numbers of ibis mummies. The interdependence between the numerous statues of animals and the groups of living sacred animals used inside the Egyptian temple areas is full of mystery due to the lack of explanatory texts. All temple rites and the theological embedding of sacred animals seemed to be a matter of the class of Knowing People (*rhw* and priests). On the other hand, the mass of animal mummies were attributed to the lower class. Generally, animals were claimed to belong to a timeless primitive rural sphere. But it could not be totally neglected that demotic texts reveal an involvement of certain priests and even of the government. Finally, this led to the conclusion that lower priests communicated with the common folk by selling them animal mummies as a kind of visible mediator-god, intermittent between the god of the high temple theology and the popular belief.

The dominant theory as mainly promoted in the English-speaking scientific community interprets the mass of animal mummies as votive offerings of pious pilgrims given to their personally chosen gods when they privately visited smaller sanctuaries: *The votive mummy is generally identified as an offering consisting of a specified mummified animal that was dedicated to its corresponding divinity so that the donor’s prayers would be addressed to the god throughout eternity. Votive mummies acted much in the same way as the candles purchased and burned in churches...and were purchased and offered by pilgrims at shrines dedicated to the relevant gods.*⁵

With regard to the animal cemeteries in North Saqqara, a much more detailed explanation of how ibises came into the animal galleries is given:⁶

The quality of the bandaging and appliqué decoration of the mummies themselves naturally vary considerably and indicate that a range of specimens was available for purchase, perhaps from boots or shops in or near the temple enclosure, their treatment and cost varying according to the wealth of the intending purchase of dedicant.....

‘mummies’ of ibis and falcon, cat and dog and others, sometimes also antagonistic animals (shrew, ichneumon, snakes etc.), in a firm theological connection with the animal forms of the first creation.

³ Lloyd, Herodotus Book II Commentary 1-98, Leiden 1976, 293 summarizes the older views: *‘Nevertheless, it is amongst the lowest classes of society that animal worship endured in its most primitive aspects...’*.

⁴ E. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen*, Darmstadt 1971, 127; E. Hornung, E., *Die Bedeutung des Tieres im alten Ägypten*, in *Studium Generale* 20 (1967), 73; cf. D. Kessler, D., *Die heiligen Tiere und der König*, ÄÄT 16, Wiesbaden 1989, 3f. Hornung avoids the word ‘Tierverehrung’ (animal worship) in connection with the ‘Tierkult’ (animal cult). But he uses the term ‘Tierkult’ again in connection with the veneration of a whole animal species. In our opinion, an Egyptian animal cult did not exist on its own, but was part of an official cult in front of temples and sanctuaries that used different sacred animals.

⁵ S. Ikram, *Divine Creatures: Animal Mummies*, in S. Ikram (editor), *Divine Creatures: Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt*, Cairo 2005, 9.

⁶ G. Martin, *The Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara, The Southern Dependencies of the Main Temple Complex*, EES, London 1981, 9. Arguments against this view were already given by Kessler, *die heiligen Tiere und der König*, 236f.

Despite the admitted lack of documentary evidence, it was stated that the purchased animal mummies were stored in sealed pottery jars, kept for a long time: *The examples of pots containing a few bones only may reflect pious acts on the part of humble folk unable to afford more elaborate offerings'. The pots being mass produced, must have been relatively cheap.* The containers were interred in the catacombs once a year without the participation of the alleged dedicant.⁷

In comparison to Saqqara, the intensive survey inside the animal galleries of Tuna el-Gebel has rendered only a few special mummies with applications or elaborated wrappings. These mummies appear to be limited chronologically. To judge from their admittedly often uncertain original discovery locations, they can be dated as roughly from between the end of the 30th dynasty to the beginning of the Ptolemaic period. Further evidence for varying qualities of mummies could not be found. Even the Ptolemaic single mummies in special and surely more expensive limestone coffins or pottery containers show no traces of special treatment or forms of wrapping.

An effort has been made to distinguish clearly between two groups of sacred animals as defined by the new UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology⁸: *Two kinds of cult animal existed in ancient Egypt: specific faunal representation of a given deity that lived in a temple and were ceremonially interred, and creatures killed and mummified to act as votive offerings. The former are attested from the earliest times, while the latter date from the Late Period and later.*

The term “sacred animal” refers to the temple animals, while the other animals were considered to be votive animals only. The following sentences in the Encyclopedia concerning the Egyptian animal cult are mixing facts and traditional egyptological notions: *It seems clear that votive animals were bred specifically for the purpose on an industrial scale, killed when they reached a certain size, and then mummified for sale to pilgrims at a number of sacred places around Egypt....It seems that they were deposited in a temple by pilgrims — perhaps by a prayer to the god whispered in its ear— and when the temple became cluttered, they were taken to an appropriate burial place.*

None of this is actually certain. While the ritual mass killing of certain sacred animals is more or less proven by texts and archaeological work,⁹ the idea is still speculative that the mass killing of animals was done for one purpose only, i.e. to fulfil an increasing demand of pious pilgrims to obtain animal mummies by buying them in front of sanctuaries, where they could offer them as personal mediators to their god. Furthermore, examination of the age and the content of ibis mummies in Tuna el-Gebel does not support the statement that the animals were allowed to grow to a certain size before the killing started.¹⁰ Also, it seems very speculative to me that priests later interred animals from different temples inside a common animal cemetery as in Tuna el-Gebel. We have to be exact: Until now, the ritual killing of sacred animals is reported only for groups of sacred animals used during temple rituals. Here

⁷ G. Martin, op. cit., 9

⁸ A. Dodson, Rituals Related to Animal Cult, <http://escholarshiporg/uc/item/bwk541n0>

⁹ The killing of ibises of a special red-brownish colour (like the glossy Ibis?) cannot be proven at present. Best known is the killing of sacred cats, c.f. P. L. Armitage & J. A. Clutton Brock, A Radiological and Histological Investigation into the Mummification of Cats from Ancient Egypt, in *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 8 (1981) 185-196; Kessler, die heiligen Tiere und der König, 151; A. Charron, Massacre d'animaux á la Basse Époque, in *RdE* 41 (1990) 209-213. To this involves the dismembering of single parts of the bodies of cats, observed also in Tuna el-Gebel since Dynasty 26. There we have found no complete skeleton of a cat.

¹⁰ A. von den Driesch - D. Kessler - F. Steinmann - V. Berteaux - J. Peters, Mummified, Deified and Buried at Hermopolis Magna - The sacred birds from Tuna el-Gebel, Middle Egypt, in: *Ägypten und Levante* 15 (2006) 214f.

they could have been killed as dangerous animals of Seth or Bastet or as dangerous animals threatening the annual repetition of the New Year cycle.

Until now it has not been documented that ibises were deliberately killed at their breeding places. It seems odd that they should have been deified by the act of opening the mouth to be the gods Osiris-Ibis (and Osiris-Falcon) and were then distributed from the *taricheion* to smaller sanctuaries in the necropolis area. The question arises as to how they might have been distributed. Ibises to sanctuaries of Thot and falcons to sanctuaries of Horus? Usually, Egyptian gods were not allowed into the hands of unauthorized common people. The demotic texts refer to the animal mummies as gods, and gods were always kept exclusive. Deified buried animals rested inside the resting place attributed to a god (*pꜣ ꜥwj n ḥtp n Pꜣ-hb*), as in an Osirian context. As gods they join the daily movements of the evening and morning barques of Atum and Re and as gods they are present during the feast days of Thot, Osiris and others. Following the textual evidence, only selected people from the class of cult servants of The-Ibis (and in most cases associated with The-Falcon) could transport gods in the form of animal bundles or animal mummies between the feeding places of the living animals, the embalming place (*taricheion*) and the burial place, the ‘Resting Place of The-Ibis’.¹¹ Having a special, well-defined legal position, as was already the case in the New Kingdom, the cult servants (*sdm ꜥš* or *sdm*) and the different kinds of objects they deposited later in animal cemeteries should not be mixed up with the *ex votis* of common people or pilgrims.

In this article I aim to demonstrate the strong institutional and theological connection of the ibis feeding places and subsequent mass production of ibis mummies with the temple area. This requires a closer look at the temple area and the general definition of the Egyptian *rꜣ-pr*. The general importance of one or a group of sacred animals in the frame of the official cult is becoming much clearer.¹² The demotic texts and new archaeological research are increasingly calling in question the assumed demarcation between the approach of a peasant’s society to living animals of their habitat and the allegedly restricted access to the Egyptian temple area. But it is still an Egyptological tradition to reduce the Egyptian temple area to the narrow realm of an Egyptian class of priests acting behind the high walls of the stone temple and behind the pylon. The extended Egyptian temple area was never dominated and controlled by priests but always by the superiors of the Egyptian state. Philological tradition laid the focus on hieroglyphic temple texts and sacred writings as the main source of knowledge concerning the Egyptian temple theology and religion. Now the demotic texts begin to reveal that the administration of the state, e.g. the governor of the nomos as cult leader (the Ptolemaic archiereus) and his staff acted also inside the temple precinct. Sacred animals and their institutions with their leaders also belonged to this. The scribes of the king and especially the *mr ꜣḥt* perhaps acting in every nomos metropolis seem to have been responsible for the taxation of the fields of The-Ibis and the The-Falcon and their organisations, and therefore also for the feeding places of The-Ibis.¹³ A so-called hieroglyphic donation stele, probably

¹¹ Probably carcasses of ibises or falcons found outside the Ibia had to be collected too, see Fl. Petrie, Papyrus Gizeh and Rifeh, London 1907, Papyrus B 7. Sacred ibises and falcons released into the sky during royal enthronement rites may also have been specially protected by law, probably because of their role as messenger birds.

¹² J. Quack, Die Rolle des heiligen Tieres im Buch vom Tempel, in M. Fitzenreiter-S. Kirchner (editors), Tierkulte im pharaonischen Ägypten und im Kulturvergleich. Workshop 7.6 und 8.6. 2002; Internet-Beiträge zur Ägyptologie und Sudanarchäologie IV, Berlin, 2003, 116.

¹³ pLoeb 4,6 from Tehna el-Gebel (W. Spiegelberg, Die demotischen Papyri Loeb, München 1931) and also papyrus fragments from the priest’s house in Tuna el-Gebel (TG 3697) seem to reveal the involvement of a (probably Hermopolitan) *mr ꜣḥt*. The question of whether a *mr ꜣḥt* existed in every nome needs further study.

originating from the temple precinct of the Lower Egyptian Hermopolis (Tell Baqlieh, time Nekho II), mentions ‘fields of the ibises’ in the countryside given by the responsible leader (*h3tj-ꜥ*) of the ibis organisation for a certain person with the title *sdm(-ꜥš?)*.¹⁴ The ‘donation’ is of course not a pious private act, but is certainly based on an official papyrus contract between one of the highest ranking administrators of The-Ibis organisations in the Delta controlling the temple precinct of Thot in Tell Baqlieh and a simpler person who may have been appointed as a new keeper of the already-existing main feeding place for sacred ibises of the nomos centre.¹⁵

In my opinion no contradiction exists between the fact that fields of The-Ibis, The-Falcon or *sr*-birds were listed as coming under the administration of the *hꜥp-nꜥr* of a certain larger temple precinct, e.g. in Edfu¹⁶ or Hermopolis¹⁷, and demotic texts revealing that the central nomos administration of the state sold cult places for The-Ibis and The-Falcon, including their tax income from fields, simply to make money.¹⁸ The temple and their priests never owned and administered the *hꜥp-nꜥr*,¹⁹ even it was registered in the name of a (solar) high god. The ‘temple ownership’ of the the temple endowment²⁰ was more or less virtual.

¹⁴ A.-P. Zivie, *Hermopolis et le nome de l’ibis. Recherches sur la province du dieu Thot en Basse Égypte*, I, Caire (1972), 88, doc. 23, l. 2-3 and l. 7.

¹⁵ Zivie, *ibidem*, 88-92; D. A. Pressi, *Beamte und Soldaten, Die Verwaltung in der 26. Dynastie in Ägypten (664-525 v. Chr.)*, Europäische Hochschulschriften Reihe III, Bd./Vol. 779, 224. Neshor is one of the highest military leaders in the Delta area and also in control of the organisation of The-Ibis in Tell Baqlieh.

¹⁶ D. Meeks, *Le grand texte des donations au temple d’Edfou*, BdE 59, 74, 8* 13-15. In my opinion Horus Behedeti should not be confused with the local god of Edfu residing in the interior local shrine, but rather represents the king’s paternal god (the reigning king as son of Horus Behedeti residing in the sky). Behedet was also the name of the special sacred area of the primeval hill site in the necropolis area west of Edfu, where the royal ancestors were reborn and again crowned as king; see the summary of the western site by D. Kurth, *Treffpunkt der Götter, Inschriften aus dem Tempel von Edfu*, Zürich-München 1994, 156f.

¹⁷ See also A. G. Migahid - G. Vittmann, *Zwei weitere frühdemotische Briefe an Thot*, in RdE 54 (2003) 48. The fields of The-Ibis are part of the *hꜥp-nꜥr*. I believe that the universal twice-great god Thot, the god in whose name the Ptolemaic royal decrees were written, has to be carefully distinguished, also institutionally, from the local god of Hermopolis and from the creator god Thot (Kessler, *Die heiligen Tiere und der König*, 198f.). The mythical Hermopolis, seat of the twice-great god, lord of the sky, should not be confused with the local site of Hermopolis Magna, nor even with the hidden scenery of the first creation. The sacred writings of Re, written by Thot, are documents of the assembly of the reigning god of the primeval hill situation - they were not written by the visible sky god!

¹⁸ Cf. U. Wilcken, U., *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit II*, 154 und 155; Kessler, *Die heiligen Tiere und der König*, 163f.

¹⁹ It is a common view, especially since Walter Otto’s two volumes ‘*Priester und Tempel im hellenistischen Ägypten*, Leipzig and Berlin 1905-8’, that the great Egyptian temple did not pay tax to the state in Ptolemaic time. But the more-or-less western notion and definition of what a temple should be, divides the temple from the direct impact of the state. It does not consider the complexity of the extended temple area. Even if their income, i.e. formally a participation in god’s offerings, was guaranteed by sacred state laws, all the income from fields of a domain attributed to a high god were regulated, taxed and distributed de facto by the nomos administration to other lesser installations. The temple area of the nome metropolis seems to me at the same time the sacred centre of the nome administration, even for the Greeks. In reality most owners of formal temple fields benefiting directly by their output had to pay taxes. Even the fields of the great Theban temples in the New Kingdom were mostly administered from outside, see B. J. J. Haring, *Divine Households, Administrative and Economic Aspects of the New Kingdom Royal Memorial Temples in Western Thebes*, *Egyptologische Utgaven*, 12, Leiden 1997, 391 (‘external administration’); cf. Kessler, *pr+Göttername als Sakralbereich der staatlichen Administration im Neuen Reich*, in F. Adrom, K. and A. Schlüter, *Altägyptische Weltansichten, Akten des Symposiums zur historischen Topographie und Toponymie Altägyptens vom 12.-14. Mai in München*, ÄAT 68, Wiesbaden 2008, 83ff.

²⁰ Cf. in general J.G. Manning, *Land and Power in Ptolemaic Egypt: The Structure of Land Tenure*, Cambridge 2003.

The ritual annual fixing of the heir (*smn jw^ct*) and of the laws (*smn hpw*) transferred all goods to the Horus-Pharaoh again, legally the son and heir of the high god, who had a solar connotation and was his father-god. Sacred laws were given by the state administration, including the guarantees of the Horus-Pharaoh as religious leader, set down inviolably in sacred writings. A certain law of the state concerning sacred matters of temple areas in Pre-Ptolemaic and Ptolemaic times seems to have existed.²¹ The *h_{tp}-n_{tr}* of a royal high god was then distributed to many other local sacred institutions in the surroundings of the main temple area. In the majority, the number of new fields given to the *h_{tp}-n_{tr}* of a greater temple were for the benefit of the pharaoh's men, his officers and administrators, who were often the superiors of smaller cultic groups in or outside a temple precinct.²² In my opinion, this included also the taxation of certain fields attributed to the *h_{tp}-n_{tr}* of a royal father-god, the amount of tax paid probably in different classes of taxation. Control of such fields by the *mr 3ht*, as well as control of fees, transfer of goods from the fields to the main granaries in the sacred area of a temple and finally the delivery to other institutions was renewed and perpetuated all within annually repeated feast acts and processions in and between sanctuaries, especially between metropolis and necropolis and back.²³ Legally, the reigning king could alter the conditions and distribution of the fields of every *h_{tp}-n_{tr}*.²⁴

In spite of increasing evidence that sacred animals were an integral part of feast days in the temple areas and were used during a multiplicity of events, there is still a tendency to maintain the traditional view that the visible remains of animal mummies were the result of popular religious beliefs. The usual answer to the question of why there are so many animal mummies stored in cemeteries sounds reasonable at first: i.e. that millions of gods in the form of animal mummies can only have been brought together by the myriad efforts of the common Egyptian folk. Automatically this led to the notion that pilgrims, in a continuous stream of visits to different sanctuaries, were eager to themselves obtain an animal mummy. A further logical conclusion was then that in Ptolemaic times the mummified animal was produced on

²¹ W. Spiegelberg, Die sogenannte demotische Chronik. Leipzig 1914, 30 col. 11; fixed rules of the state for the sacred ibis and other sacred animals see Sandra Lippert, Ein demotisches juristisches Lehrbuch (Untersuchungen zu Papyrus Berlin P23758 rto), Wiesbaden 2004, wo u.a. ein Verbot für das Quälen des heiligen Teres vorkommt.

²² W. Huss, Der makedonische König und die ägyptischen Priester, Historia Einzelschriften 85, Stuttgart 1994, 49f. argues that the Ptolemaic State either tolerated or supported private cult associations and supervised their privately written rules only superficially. A free will of village people outside the administration of the temple precinct to organize themselves in private cult associations and to choose individually a personal god seems to me highly speculative.

²³ The Edfu texts reveal the active presence of all important groups of state employees during the processions between the main temple and the necropolis sanctuaries, see D. Kurth, Treffpunkt der Götter, Inschriften aus dem Tempel des Horus von Edfu, Zürich-München 1994, 153ff. We may assume numerous lesser gods in administrative offices, workshops etc. in and outside the temple precinct of Thot, their superiors acting in a priestly function. The Edfu texts reveal clearly, that the larger temple area of Horus Behedeti included non-priestly administrative stuff, too (Kurth, op. cit., 148). We simply have to avoid the temptation to equate the wider sacred area (*r3-pr*) of Horus Behedeti, as the king's solar father god, which contained numerous sanctuaries of different gods, workshops, etc., with the inner *hwt-n_{tr}* of Horus of Edfu behind the pylons.

²⁴ Hieroglyphic lists of *H_{tp}-n_{tr}* as shown on walls in Edfu are never juridical documents to demonstrate once for all time the possession of fields of a certain temple in the interest of the priests. The lists were not meant to be read as documents. Who could read and understand such texts in Late Period when coming from outside the temple schools and their special group of pterophors? The lists of fields of the temple inscriptions, maybe copied from older sources, perpetuated magically the everlasting cyclic event of the cultic do ut des between king and his father god. This can be shown by the hieroglyphic lists of (already obsolete) offerings already in New Kingdom temples, see Kessler, op. cit., 79-81. Their numbers and then also the given aroura sizes of those special fields in Edfu, written I hieroglyphs, must have been anachronistic soon.

demand²⁵, i.e. the sacred animal bred and killed at its feeding place for its eventual role as a kind of offering and mediator god to the high god. Mummies, wrapped mostly in the shape of an ibis or a falcon with apparently no real content or animal parts inside (the pseudo or fake mummy), were explained as being priestly fraud. The priests seemed to have been in need of more and more animal mummies.

The standard theory postulates that for peasants there was an inherent attractiveness in the animal form. Taken as more or less unspoken proof of this are -besides the animal mummies themselves,- the animal bronzes, animal statues and statuettes and especially the representations on stelae picturing the alleged 'veneration' of animals (in reality gods). In most cases, the animals on stelae or some bronzes show hybrid forms, some of them in a quasi-naturalistic, but nevertheless when carefully considered, pseudo-naturalistic mode. The traditional idea of the private or votive Egyptian stelae (and of personal piety as defined already for the New Kingdom) led philologists to a common explanation of the animal forms. The different representations of animals in a certain relation to a high god, as mentioned in the text of the stelae, must -they concluded- have been chosen individually by a private person and represented an intimate relation between him and his god. I doubt this.

2. The alleged connection between ibis mummies and pilgrims

The idea of individual animal mummies being handed over to certain pious pilgrims was inspired anew by the archaeological findings in the ibis and falcon catacombs of Saqqara,²⁶ where always single mummies in individual pots were found, i.e. 'one god in one vessel'.²⁷ This was in keeping with the notion of individual pilgrims' mummies. The technical prescription for this was written down in connection with the reforms after Antiochos IV, but is not valid for other Egyptian animal cemeteries. In the earlier galleries of Tuna el-Gebel, as the only known ibis cemetery before the end of the 30th dynasty, totally mummified animals in the outer shape of an ibis did not exist at all. We find as a rule no intact animals inside pottery vessels, at least not before the Ptolemaic period.²⁸ The formless pre-Ptolemaic bundles sent from all over Egypt contain only various bones and parts of sacred animals, often a mixture of different species. The single complete votive mummy with its feathers like in Saqqara cannot be verified in earlier Tuna el-Gebel, nor even a flow of thousands of pilgrims as assumed for Saqqara. The cadavers of birds soaked with turpentine oil or bitumen is part of a change in embalming technique²⁹: the soaking of parts or nearly intact corpses of birds in such fluids was intensified at the beginning of the Ptolemaic period, the outer linen

²⁵ The mass of ibis eggs found in jars in a forecourt of galleries in Saqqara-Nord was also attributed to artificial (industrial) breeding. The idea was used to support the argument for the pilgrim's mummy, cf. J. D. Ray, *The Archive of Hor, Texts from Excavations 2*, Egypt Exploration Society, London 1976, 139. Collected at the ibion trophe nearby, the eggs could have been deposited here simply for further transport into the galleries. For the idea of artificial breeding, see also D. Meeks, *Les couveuses artificielles en Égypte*, in *Techniques et économie antiques et médiévales*, Colloque international Aix-en-Provence, 21-23 Mai 1996, *Travaux du Centre Camille Jullian*, 21 (1997) 132-134.

²⁶ Until now the chronology of the two ibis cemeteries in Saqqara cannot be set back before the 30th dynasty.

²⁷ Ray, *The Archive of Hor*, T. 19 vs., 8.

²⁸ In one case, the contents of a large, once beautifully and multi-coloured wrapped mummy (from G-C-B-2) with an ibis head made of bronze was one single feather. For a summary of the findings regarding the ibises of Tuna el-Gebel, see A. von den Driesch, A - D.Kessler - F. Steinmann - V. Berteaux - J. Peters, *Mummified, Deified and Buried at Hermopolis Magna - The sacred birds from Tuna el-Gebel, Middle Egypt*, in *Ägypten und Levante* 15 (2006) 203-244; Boessneck, J., editor, *Tuna el Gebel I. Die Tiergalerien*, HÄB 24, Hildesheim 1987, 37ff.

²⁹ Starting in Persian times, when the bundles containing single bones were treated with turpentine oil or bitumen; see von den Driesch et alii, in *Levante und der Orient* 15 (2006), 228.

wrappings now indicating (only for Egyptologists) a complete ibis or a falcon inside. Tuna el-Gebel reveals that jars from Ptolemaic galleries also contained often heaps of single bones of many different animals collected in a linen cloth.

In reality not one single text, not even in Saqqara, mentions pilgrims buying or offering individual animal mummies in front of sanctuaries. Not one document reveals that lesser temples sold animal mummies to pilgrims. There is no evidence for the offering of animal mummies in different qualities, nor is there any textual or archaeological indications that there were temple boutiques open to the public. There is no proof for the claim that the Ptolemaic ibis organisations financed themselves privately by selling votive objects to pilgrims.³⁰ This was also never proven for animal bronzes and animal statuettes made of wood, stone or faience. There can be found no archaeological indications that animal bronzes were offered by individuals to their personal god in front of sanctuaries or that they were then kept inside a temple room.³¹ It is a fact that animal mummies, animal bronzes, animal statuettes, amulets and so on were found partly in groups, mostly inside (Osirian) animal cemeteries, or buried in (Osirian) cachettes in a temple area.³² But their presence there cannot be explained convincingly by the speculation that the temple must have been filled with too many mummies, bronzes or other statuettes which therefore had to later be removed and placed permanently in subterranean animal cemeteries.³³

Finally, no textual reports mention private stelae placed individually in front of temples or in front of sanctuaries of lesser gods who preferred the form of animals.³⁴ The idea that stelae were erected by individuals out of an internal personal need ('Nothelferstelen'), somewhere in the precinct of a temple or near temple doors, contradicts the archaeological evidence. Even if we do not know the original position of most stelae, we may observe that they had to be placed in a decisive position between darkness and light in a changing hidden (Osirian) and cosmic solar context. The Serapeum stelae were placed immediately behind

³⁰ E.g. Ray, *The Archive of Hor*, 145: 'donations of pilgrims'; Smelik, *op. cit.*, 236. Therefore we would expect an increasing number of votive objects in the Ptolemaic period. This contradicts the archaeological situation in Tuna el-Gebel: compared to pre-Ptolemaic times, Ptolemaic objects (bronzes, wooden statuettes, amulets etc.) inside the now largely extended galleries are much more limited in number and variation. Mostly we find bronzes of the Osiris family inside the catacombs.

³¹ Cf. D. Kessler, *Einwickeln und unterirdische Ablage von Bronzen im Tierfriedhof von Tuna el-Gebel*, in *Zur Zierde gereicht...*, Festschrift Bettina Schmitz 2008, A. Spiekermann (editor), Hildesheim 2008, 153-163, especially p. 155.

³² A few single bronzes were found in houses (mostly pastophoria and workplaces) belonging to the realm of the members of The-Ibis organisations, e.g. in North-Saqqara (e.g. G. Martin, *The Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara*, 33 no. 334-335). In general, we cannot see bronzes used as objects of personal piety and are also not able to distinguish between objects from the debris and those from floor layers. We assume that people as members of The-Ibis organisation had the possibility to deposit objects inside the animal cemetery. This allowed them not only to be included into the permanent Osirian rejuvenation but also into the unification between Thot and Osiris during the feast of Thot in the secret place of the ancestors in the necropolis. See Kessler, *op. cit.*, 161. I believe that bronzes are to be seen as multifunctional.

³³ Cf. S. Davis, *Bronzes from the Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara*, in: M. Hill (editor), *Gifts for the Gods, Images from Egyptian Temples*, New York 2007, 174-183. She argues for practical reasons for their subterranean position: *the shrines had to be kept free* (p. 181).

³⁴ It is pure speculation that visitors came to a temple of Horus, buying there widely different kinds of falcon figures, which were then deposited inside the falcon galleries as indicated e.g. by S. Davies, S. - H. S. Smith, *The Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara - The Falcon Complex and Catacomb*, EM 73, London 2005, 61. According to such theories, pilgrims in front of a temple of Thot would have offered various forms of Thot figures or his animal forms, visitors to a Bes sanctuary would have offered figures of Bes, and so on. All this does not explain why we find bronzes of all these gods assembled together, with a majority of Osiris figures and with Aegis, staves, Menat, etc. inside a common animal cemetery.

the subterranean door of the bull galleries, which could only be entered by special priestly persons.³⁵ By the time of the New Kingdom, the stelae of Meresger with snakes, and those inside other (rock) chapels in Der el-Medine³⁶, were more-or-less hidden or unreadable - not to mention the bulk of stelae from the necropolis of Assiut. Many Late Period stelae were found in or near animal cemeteries. The stelae hidden inside pastophoria, chapels and even in niches of houses, which were often interpreted as totally private, are actually in most cases related to more than one person.³⁷ As far as we know, no common Egyptian peasant ever kept a hieroglyphic stela privately in his house, performing here daily prayers on his own. A cult servant, dependent on the pharaonic state and its privileges, who could perform cultic acts in Der el-Medine and later - at least in a formal way in a chapel for his family group and his servants - was not automatically a lower class Egyptian. His status was influenced by his duties. The leaders of the gangs in Der el-Medine and elsewhere were present at different feasts and acted *ex officio* at many sanctuaries and chapels of Egyptian gods. An Egyptian stela could not function without being installed officially with a stately donation and with permanent official cult activities performed by the authorized persons of a community during the numerous feast days. The notion of alleged personal veneration of gods seen on stelae cites the stelae directly as evidence for personal piety, totally neglecting their position and repeated magical function during official cult rites and feasts. Stelae would seem to have secured the religious, social and economic participation of owners of chapels and their families during feast days.

In my opinion the hieroglyphic stela with ibises and others belongs in an official religious context and fulfils magically the always theologically hidden festival act of the continuous 'Giving of Life'. Stelae containing varying forms of naturalistic animals instead of the usual solar (high) deities be seen have their special function especially as indicators of the hidden primeval scenery (see below ch. 5). Common persons mentioned on stelae with animals, acting often for a group and depending on superiors in the Late Period, seem to mostly have been members of a cult group or cult association controlled by the state and installed for the benefit of the state. Stelae of persons who seem to belong to lower class people are in most cases members of a hierarchically structured organisation.³⁸ Many persons

³⁵ It is not justified to conclude from the numerous stelae found inside the bull galleries that Osiris-Apis was a popular god on his own, venerated intensively only by common people (sc. outnumbering the veneration of Apis) as claimed recently by St. Schmidt, *Serapis, ein neuer Gott für die Griechen in Ägypten, in Ägypten, Griechenland, Rom, Abwehr und Berührung*, Catalogue Exhibition Städel Museum Frankfurt 2005-2006, 292. The majority of stelae belong to the cult servants of the responsible organisation of the Living-Apis (stone cutters, *sdm-š* etc.) and to procession members of higher rank, some of those *hrj-sšt* in connection with the death of an Apis bull and participating in activities in an Egyptian Wabet building. The bronzes from the galleries in Saqqara reveal the truth. Bronzes of the recumbent Osiris-Apis are rare. The walking Apis bull god (*hp-nḥ*) is more frequent. Most abundant is the Osiris family. The common people wanted to be associated especially with the resurrection of Osiris, Isis and Harpokrates, even if they were officially members of other organisations. The persons of the stelae tended to join repeatedly the yearly Osirian resurrection in the temple above, not the burial of a single bull. We simply have to avoid the interpretation of stelae as personal votive objects.

³⁶ D. Kessler, *Die Interpretation der ägyptischen Kultstele in Der el-Medine*, in *Festschrift für Günter Burkard, Texte - Theben - Tonfragmente, Ägypten und Altes Testament*, Bd. 76, Wiesbaden 2009, 254-270.

³⁷ The question of cultic service by a patron for his family group and his servants in houses and on estates (in house compounds like in Amarna), in townhouses or in houses of certain more prominent cult servants in Der el-Medine and Tell el-Amarna needs more studies. In my opinion, the rock stelae in desert areas and quarries also belong to the daily evening and morning cult of a group of workers or members of an expedition, headed by a person who could perform the evening and morning rites and who could memorize religious formulas.

³⁸ The Ramesside Mnevis stelae in Heliopolis were attributed to lower-class people. Probably they belonged to

mentioned on stelae and other objects in animal cemeteries are cult servants or belong to the leadership of the organisations. The many ‘private names’ referring to Thot or The-Ibis³⁹ are indicators for their common all-Egyptian institutional inscription. In my eyes, the common Egyptian pilgrim, free to visit an Egyptian sanctuary, free to erect a stela for his personal god or free to privately solicit oracle answers before the sanctuary of an individually chosen personal god, is a phantom figure.⁴⁰

3. The economical and theological reasons for installing a new Ibion

Having removed animal mummies, bronzes, statues, and even stelae showing forms of animals from the grip of the individual pilgrim and their personal religious needs, we still have to explain why so many animals were kept and also fed at the feeding places, to be brought directly into the animal cemetery without the vehicle of pilgrims. What we know is that special living sacred animals were used in connection with oracle procedures in front of many new chapels.⁴¹ They were always kept in combination with statues, often in the form of the animal before the chapel (the statues are often in composite forms) and with regular cultic rituals inside the chapel. We find no indications that common folk were attracted by animal forms more than by the high god of their local chapels. Directives not to kill ibises do not seem to me a reaction of the state to growing popular religious needs.⁴² The large number of animal mummies aside, we have no evidence that Thot and Horus or their animal forms were personal favourites of the peasants in the countryside.⁴³ Ibises and falcons belonged

the burial chapel of the deified Mnevis bull-god and were fabricated by a certain group of cult servants. Their exact spot is not clearly reported; we suspect a closed space. In my opinion the Mnevis stelae are not documents showing an individual and emotional ‘veneration’ of the living Mnevis bull, cf. D. Raue, *Heliopolis und das Haus des Re*, ADAIK Bd. 16, 1999, 61f. For me it seems methodically dangerous to interpret texts and pictures on such stelae by completely isolating them from their context in cultic space and time. We should consider their comprehensive and multiple cultic embedment in the continuous daily, weekly, monthly and yearly cult cycle. I assume that such stelae are part of the constant cycle of feast events held between the Osirian place of the Mnevis god in the necropolis (also with the place of the mythical re-birth on the primeval hill site) and the use of the Mnevis-bull during the feasts of appearance of Mnevis during certain processions in the sacred temple area of Heliopolis. The installation of gods of the birth place and the sacred flock with mother cow and calves must have had a theological importance from the beginning. Later, they appear as ‘children of Mnevis/ Apis bull’ with statues of *Pꜣ gm/km*, the god of the organisation responsible for the sacred flock, too, in Saqqara, Tuna el-Gebel and elsewhere.

³⁹ The frequent interchange of names citing Horus or the Falcon god in the same family can best be explained by a close administrative and theological connection between the organisations of The-Ibis and The-Falcon; the son of Thot in Hermopolis is the falcon-headed god Hornefer, see Kessler, *Die heiligen Tiere*, 132f.

⁴⁰ Jean Yoyotte, *Les pèlerinages dans l’Égypte ancienne Sources Orientales* 3, Paris 1960, 19-74, has early made clear that no pilgrims in our modern sense existed in Egypt. Nevertheless the words pilgrimage or pèlerinage are often used mainly by authors in the Late Period to describe the bulk of visitors participating in big Egyptian feast events like those in Bubastis or Mendes. But they do not make a difference between common folk of the town and its surroundings and common people from other parts of Egypt. Mainly they mention the spectacular festival processions but do not report about personal prayers inside sanctuaries.

⁴¹ Gods like It-speaks-the-face-of-the-Ibis, It-speaks-the-face-of-the-Falcon, It-speaks-the-face-of-the-Baboon, It-speaks-the-face-of-the-Red, and oracle gods belonging to The-Ram, The-Gem etc., all needed special sacred animals. Best known from Tuna el-Gebel is the living sacred ibis belonging to It-speaks-the-face-of-the-Ibis (Teephibus), whose burial place was discovered inside the galleries (G-B-A-22 (24)); see Kessler, *Die heiligen Tiere*, 217f. and pl. 10.

⁴² Arguments that the animal cult was an inner Egyptian reaction by a rural population against a growing foreign influence in Egypt (e.g. Lloyd, A.B., *Herodotos Book II, Commentary* 1-98, Leiden 1976, 293) do not seem valid. At Tuna el-Gebel we also observe the involvement of foreigners. Names of Greek kleruchoi from Elis and Macedonia appear on wooden ibis sarcophagi (see below adn. 74).

⁴³ On the other hand, see S. Davies, S. - H. S. Smith, *The Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara*, 54, who

exclusively to the royal sphere and were used e.g. as messenger birds between earth and sky, also as visible gods on standard poles, protecting the enthronement of Osiris and following royal enthronement of Horus and the city god in the metropolis.⁴⁴ Participants in the major Egyptian feasts of a town could observe the use of groups of sacred animals and also the animal statues and poles representing and accompanying the feasts of gods of Egypt. It was surely a very emotional event when a new falcon or ibis was shown and finally enthroned. Theologically at this moment the living god became identical with the city-god in the shape of an ibis or a falcon, and was shown together with statues of the Horus-Pharaoh and other gods. Such events unified the ethnically mixed inhabitants of a metropolis. But we cannot find any documents indicating a special, regular and personal veneration of this sacred animal by inhabitants of the cities.⁴⁵

The establishment of the The-Ibis feeding place,⁴⁶ from which sacred animals were selected, is indirectly known from the bundles with single bones from Tuna el-Gebel, which appear at the beginning of the 26th dynasty.⁴⁷ The first demotic texts (petitions) are from Persian times.⁴⁸ The *tꜣ hrt n Pꜣ-hb* ('The-Ibis') or of *nꜣ hbw* ('the ibises') comprises all matters concerning fields and the cult staff, and reveals a fully established organisation. Included is a cultic chapel directly at the feeding places, a sacred place⁴⁹ for birds and also a burial place with cult chapels. The cult servants, both of the birth and burial places of The-Ibis, all belonged to the organisation of (Thot-) The-Ibis. They lived in villages near the feeding place(s) or settled in the necropolis area around the necropolis sanctuaries. The administrative and religious leaders (the great men) of the The-Ibis organisation in the Hermopolite nome were centred in the precinct of Thot in Hermopolis already in Persian times.⁵⁰ There we can assume a central cultic representation and administration of The-Ibis and its fields. The Saitic linen bundles containing single bones show that from the beginning all kinds of birds (and

claim that *like the falcon...the ibis played a central role in Egyptian life and religion.*

⁴⁴ For glimpses of the use of different sacred birds during ceremonial enthronement rites, see J. Cl. Goyon, *Confirmation du pouvoir royal au Nouvel An* (Brooklyn Museum Pap. 47.218.50), BdE 52, Cairo 1972, 77f.

⁴⁵ In Memphis there existed surely a small professional group of persons attending the god Apis around the Apieion, who may have been in contact with the god and the animal of its processions during the days of the oracle, cf. Kessler, *Die heiligen Tiere*, 61. We should not confuse their institutional involvement and the possibility they had to join as members of a corporation the theologically founded rejuvenation feasts by fixing small stelae in the galleries with ideas about common personal piety and affiliation with animal forms. When judging the animal cult, we also should not rely on the mostly foreign Roman and Greek authors, who reported an increasing interest of tourists in some of the more prominent sacred animals such as the Apis-bull or the crocodiles in the Fayum. Automatically these authors assumed a general veneration of animals in Egypt. In most cases they did not know much about the inherent cultic background.

⁴⁶ For the ibion trophe see K. A. Smelik, *The Cult of The-Ibis in the Greco-Roman Period with special attention to the data from the papyri*, in Vermaseren, M.J. (ed.), *Studies in Hellenistic Religions. Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain* 78 (1979) 224-243; Kessler, *Die heiligen Tiere*, 262-66 und 288ff.; P. Gallo, *A proposal del termine demotico 'hjt et dell'eventuale corrispondenza greca ibion*, in *EVO* 9 (1986) 45-48; M. Ebeid, *Demotic Inscriptions from the Galleries of Tuna el-Gebel*, BIFAO 106 (2006) 64.

⁴⁷ Naguib Michail, 'Abadat Thot fi Hermubolis al gharbiya, unpublished dissertation in Arabic, Cairo 1942, gives the text of a bronze laid down in the Saitic parts of the galleries in the name of a 'son of a leader of the Ma'.

⁴⁸ Cf. H. O. el Zaghoul, *Frühdemotische Urkunden aus Hermupolis*, *Bulletin of the Center of Papyrological Studies* 2, Cairo 1985 (the author dates the letters to the Saitic period, but they seem to belong to year 15 of Darius I).

⁴⁹ An *ꜥwj wnm* for ibises see G. Vittmann, *Zwei demotische Briefe an den Gott Thot*, in *Enchoria* 22 (1995), text p. 170 l. 4. For the feeding of ibises, see also E. Bresciani, E., *Kom Madi 1977 e 1978. Le pitture murali del cenotafio di Alessandro Magno*, Pisa 1980.

⁵⁰ A. Megahid - G. Vittmann, *Zwei weitere frühdemotische Briefe an Thot*, in *RdE* 54 (2003), 48, l.7.

all their remains) living around a local *ibiotropheion* in the nomes of Egypt were collected, deified and brought to the burial place in Tuna el-Gebel. The relatively high number of living birds and additional feeding places also automatically means that there will be many dead birds, deserted nests and eggs, or parts of birds torn by foxes and other wild animals. Many bones are those from migration birds made residential, probably by feeding on grain around a lake. It is highly probable that even in the 26th dynasty there existed in each nomos unit a *t3 hrt* with fields and employees from which special ibises were selected for the local temples. All this is in accordance to Herodotus' note that (those) ibises were brought - to their burial - in Hermopolis from all over Egypt.⁵¹ The archaeological results confirm this. Tuna el-Gebel, with its origin at the start of the 26th dynasty, seems to have been the only resting place of The-Ibis (*p3 ʿwj n htp n p3 hb*), at least in Upper Egypt before the end of the 30th dynasty.

In Ptolemaic times, demotic texts mention feeding and burial places of The-Ibis and The-Falcon all over Egypt as *ʿhjt n Kmt* ('Chapels of Egypt'), indicating written state laws and control.⁵² Extending from Elephantine Island to the edge of the Mediterranean Sea, they are divided into chapels (*ʿhjt*) of the birthplace (*ms*) and those of the *tpjw* (chapels of the first ones).⁵³ It is highly probable that this toponymy corresponds with the Greek *ibiotropheion/ibion trophe* and the *ibiotapheion/ibion taphe* and refers to their chapels, too. No trophe or taphe could exist without an adjacent sanctuary, statues, an acting Wab-priest and cult servants. The Greek *Ibion* sites are of course more frequent in and are best known from the Hermopolite nome.⁵⁴ The *Ibion* seems to be identical with the birthplace of the god The-Ibis and its sacred animals in the countryside, probably located near a small lake. Sometimes the *Ibion* lies near a bigger village (inside the Hermopolites, e.g. near Tanup, today's Tanuf⁵⁵ or Chysis, today's Schuscha⁵⁶) or it is registered officially as an *Ibion* of a certain private person, either Greek or Egyptian. Legally, the *Ibion* must have been a well-defined area as shown by their long existence. The fact that Greek *kleruchoi* could have fields on the land of an *Ibion*, that they could buy cult places inside an ibis organisation and could own an *Ibion* for themselves shows that the *Ibion* and the central organisation of The-Ibis controlling the different *Ibia* was not restricted to indigenous people. Selling ibis places with their income to a Greek or to an Egyptian apparently made no difference for the temple administration in Hermopolis, Thebes or elsewhere. Such sources of income could be sold again or redistributed to other Egyptians with a certain financial background. Those could again lease the cult place to other more prominent or wealthier people. The duty of the Wab-priest could be divided into three parts, corresponding to the cultic calendar.⁵⁷ Every financial transaction concerning the distribution of temporary jobs for Wab-priests seems to have been under the general responsibility of the organisation of The-Ibis. This must have been profitable for the central administration of The-Ibis in the realm of the temple of Hermopolis and elsewhere, as well. The motivation of the state to introduce systematically new cult places was obviously an

⁵¹ Herodot, Histories, II, 67.

⁵² Ray, The Archive of Hor, T. 16, r. 6.

⁵³ Ray, The Archive of Hor, Text 16, r. 9-11. See in general K. van Dorpe, Les villages des Ibis dans la toponymie tardive, in *Enchoria* 18 (1991) 115-122, who mentions (p. 117) also *t3 ʿhjt n ms + hwtj-p3-hb* in Saqqara.

⁵⁴ M. Marie Drew Bear, M., Le nome Hermopolite, toponymes et sites, *American Studies in Papyrology* 21, Ann Arbor 1979, 122-132.

⁵⁵ M. Drew Bear, Le nome Hermopolite, 129.

⁵⁶ M. Drew-Bear, Le nome Hermopolite, 131-2.

⁵⁷ For Tuna el-Gebel we are better informed about the leasing of subterranean cult places for special baboons, see A. Farid, Two Demotic Annuity Contracts, in: Daoud, Khaled (editor), *Studies in Honor of Ali Radwan*, CSAE 34/1, 323-346; E. Lüddeckens, in *Akten des XIII Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses Marburg 1971*, München 1974, 238.

economic one. I assume that as early as the 30th dynasty the pharaohs financed themselves mainly by erecting hundreds of new, small sanctuaries and even installing new gods; this would explain the sudden extension of the smaller institutions with animal forms of gods all over Egypt.⁵⁸

The Ptolemaic system followed the reforms of the 30th dynasty.⁵⁹ Ptolemy I and II must have established and sold hundreds if not thousands of new, small cult places with statues of ibises, falcons, cats, dogs, etc., near temples and necropolis areas and also in the countryside. We have a lot of Ibiion toponyms in Egypt. The nomos administration, dominated by Greeks, was aware of the economic advantage for the state. The higher number of new local Ptolemaic ibis and falcon organisations forced large parts of the Egyptian population in towns, villages und necropolis districts to be inscribed as members of The-Ibis community. They had to work and to pay for The-Ibis and their leaders.⁶⁰ But they also received the possibility of appealing to the god Thot in their Hermaion nearby, where they received oracular answers for their personal needs. Animal statues together with a sacred oracle animal in front of a chapel, guaranteed the immortality of a lesser god, incorporated into a whole group of gods protecting the high gods. At these cultic spots oracle questions and petitions of the members of a cult group could be handed over to their priest on duty. These lesser gods should not be confused with the reigning high god ('*Allgott*') acting as a judge for oracle questions or dream oracles during the assembly of high gods, appealed to by the priest on duty inside the chapel on the night before the feast day of appearance. All these ibis communities, including all members administering numerous ibis and baboon gods inside their own production areas, could participate in the feasts of the resurrection of Osiris or Isis in the necropolis. Here all members could ask those who entered the galleries to deposit for them bronzes or statuettes of ibises or more often those of Osiris, Isis and Harpokrates.⁶¹

⁵⁸ See a passage of the so called Demotic Chronicle, Spiegelberg, op. cit., 4,5; newly translated by F. Hoffmann - F. Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur*, Berlin 2007, 188. The text may be interpreted in connection with new sacred laws, bringing new cult groups and new field units into the control of the king's temple administration. The character of the main subterranean passages for ibises and baboons in Tuna el-Gebel changes rapidly at the end of the 30th dynasty. Unfortunately, the new inscribed limestone slabs for special baboons and ibises in passage C-C-10 ff. do not give exact year datings.

⁵⁹ I do not believe that all-Egyptian gods like Osiris-Ibis and even Osiris-Teephibis were installed as a logical consequence of popular animal forms or of deified ibis mummies. A Ptolemaic bakery in house TG2010.K.5 in Tuna el-Gebel, excavated 2010, had rooms containing a special cult place (as shown by finds of a bronze situla, an offering stand made of stone and the lower part of a wall painting showing a Wab-priest serving in front of the enthroned (Osiris-baboon? on a sledge), like similar scenes inside the ibis galleries. There had perhaps been a niche for a small cult image in one of the walls. It is highly probably that earlier the owner, acting as a Wab-priest with a small statue for his own small community, part of The-Ibis-group, had to pay for his cult job. Probably he participated in baking bread. The bakery could have delivered fixed amounts of bread for other Wab-priests. The number of similar, new, small cult establishments must have been very high. Another Ptolemaic *pastophorion* (TG20052.K.3), probably with a *naos* (of Osiris-baboon), was excavated 2002-2004, see Kessler, Tuna el-Gebel 2004-2005, in Sokar 11,2, 2005, 64.

⁶⁰ The bulk of demotic lists and ostraca with payments, deliveries of goods, sometimes with notations referring to the cultic duties are still not comprehensively treated or understood; see e.g. M. Ebeid, A clay bowl with Demotic Inscriptions from Tuna el-Gebel, in O. el-Aguizy - M. S. Ali (editors), *Echo of Eternity*, Studies presented to Gaballa Aly Gaballa, Wiesbaden 2010, 163-174. In my opinion it is too early to write the economic history of the Ptolemaic period without a study of the new demotic material from Tuna el-Gebel still in the process of publishing.

⁶¹ The few inscribed bronzes from the galleries in Tuna el-Gebel amount to about 20 (only 12 are mentioned in the unpublished dissertation of Naguib Michail, op.cit.), compared to the hundreds of bronzes without inscriptions. The explanation for these bronzes was that temple boutiques sold bronzes that were not inscribed, kept ready for the mass of pilgrims. The numbers of ibis bronzes are not very high if we distribute the number of

The condensed formula asking for the 'Giving of Life' given by a high god to a special person 'after a high age' was included in the frame of the yearly cultic events, e.g. the cultic rebirth by the creator god and the rejuvenation of all high gods until their coronation as ancestor kings. It comprised also the rebirth of Horus-Pharaoh. The formula simply transferred in a typical Egyptian form of analogy the repeated secret and visible cultic rejuvenation acts, performed by priestly persons to the participating members of the organisations of The-Ibis and other members of cult groups. It was not important whether the object was inscribed by name or not. Hieroglyphic inscriptions, for example on bronzes, were no longer readable for common persons of the The-Ibis organisation. Individual private persons were embedded in a fixed social group, often belonging to the cultic servants of The-Ibis or to the group 'who could enter' the secret places. High officers and other employees of the state were active companions of the processions between town and secret necropolis areas.

The higher number of new Ptolemaic breeding places for The-Ibis in the countryside meant that large numbers of the indigenous population living in villages around these sacred areas were involved as workmen and payers in the care of the sacred birds. As long as the state gave the offering and embalming materials and the grain for bread baking to the owners of ibis chapels, and gave them new cult statues supported in form of the obligatory royal syntaxis, the system could stay in balance.⁶² Laws must have prescribed that the remains of each kind of sacred bird residing near a local *Ibion* also had to be collected, deified and wrapped. This explains the high number of different kinds of bird mummy and also the many Ptolemaic jars containing mixed parts of different birds, feathers or heaps of bones. If the state could not deliver the embalming materials to the *taricheuts*, the deification and burial of the mass of remains of sacred animals, collected in the *Ibia*, was immediately halted.⁶³

The intended participation of Greeks in the Egyptian royal cult under the first Ptolemies needed new versions of rules in Demotic and Greek. The Greeks from the cities could participate in the state processions between the prominent feast days of Osiris and the New Year or the feast of Thot in their ethnic groups, as every foreigner in Hermopolis and elsewhere did at least from dynasty 26th onwards. Greeks would never have adored an Egyptian god in the form of an ibis, but only Hermes, related to the Egyptian creator and cosmic royal high god Thot. Ptolemy I introduced the new dynastic god Serapis for the Greeks and built a Serapeion adjacent also to the places of the creator god Thot as he clearly did in Tuna el-Gebel and Hermopolis.⁶⁴ As a matter of course, statues of The-Ibis and The-Falcon, and the use of sacred animals, became familiar for foreigners in Egypt too. It is possible that the establishment of numerous small new Hermaia in the countryside, especially in the Hermopolites, were deliberately favoured by the earlier Ptolemies because Hermes-Thot was their most prominent oracle god. The afflux of many new Greek soldiers and other foreigners to Hermopolis Magna was high. It was a possibility to fulfill their demand of a certain material

known ibis bronzes over the 600 years of ibis burials in Tuna el-Gebel. As mentioned above, most of them date to pre-Ptolemaic periods. Common members of the organisations of The-Ibis living in the vicinity of the burial places knew each other. They did not have to write down their names on bronzes, especially in hieroglyphs they could not read.

⁶² The current excavations to the east of the *Osireion* and the *Ibiotapheion* in Tuna el-Gebel are revealing numerous administrative buildings, granaries and bakeries.

⁶³ In Tuna el-Gebel we observe a certain hiatus, probably in the time of Augustus, concerning the input of masses of ibis mummies. This seems similar to the situation with the ibis burials in Saqqara (apparently last dated inscription 89 BC).

⁶⁴ For the Serapeion added to the primeval hill temple in Tuna-South, see D. Kessler, *Das hellenistische Serapeum in Alexandria und Ägypten in ägyptologischer Sicht*, in *Ägypten und der östliche Mittelmeerraum*, ed. M. Görg - G. Hölbl, Wiesbaden 2000, 219-222.

security to make them to landowners. The state distributed and sold land to Greek cleruchoi and other wealthy persons being already legally under the kings' administration. A number of Ibia, some with names of Greek as owners of their fields, is also known from the Fayum area as proven e.g. by toponyms like Ibion Eikosipentarouron, perhaps also in Medinet Madi,⁶⁵ with fields given to kleruchoi. In accordance to the numerous ibis mummies in Tuna el-Gebel originating from the Fayum in Ptolemaic and already Pre-Ptolemaic time (see below), it was always the king who finally installed new fields for the benefit of his cult and his newly settled Greek soldiers.⁶⁶ Hermes-Thot was a god agreeable for genuine Greeks. Somehow Hermes-Thot as messenger god between deities and humans became the ideal mediator for both ethnic groups. Official religious declarations of the state for Greeks and Egyptians were given in his name; ibis and falcon announced the royal domination throughout Egypt.⁶⁷

4. The theology behind the *Ibion* and its sacred ibises

Without discussion, recent Egyptology is still adhering to an older scientific classification of sacred animals, dividing them into one prominent animal only, and less important '*heilige Artgenossen*' (sacred fellow-species member) of a sacred flock.⁶⁸ Focus was laid on the most prominent sacred animal used specially during the temple feast of the 1st Tybi in the nomos centres.⁶⁹ This animal was distinguished by special colours from the others and kept till it died.⁷⁰ But even the more prominent animals of the royal New Year feast, distinguished by their colours, were taken from a sacred flock or were kept there before they were used in a small group of sacred animals in the wider temple precinct. We have knowledge of ten living dogs kept for certain in a group at the temple in Assiut, representing by their colours different

⁶⁵ See adn.48. I consider the building in Kom Madi as not connected with an Alexander cult but as installed for a Greek and an Egyptian ibis group (of a local Ibion) in close connection with the Osiris feast (Greek and Egyptian forms of apotheosis with Dionysos and Osiris) for both ethnicities. For a joint shrine of Thot and Hermes in the Fayum (a Hermaion) see also Dorothy J. Crowford, *Kerkeosiris, An Egyptian village in the Ptolemaic Period*, Cambridge 2007, 87f.

⁶⁶ The papyri mention numerous Ptolemaic Ibia especially in the Heracleopoite nome, too. Interestingly, in contrast to the Fayum mummies, ibises from the Heracleopolites can't be verified until now in Tuna el-Gebel.

⁶⁷ In my opinion, the universal twice-great god Thot, the god in whose name the Ptolemaic royal decrees were written, has to be carefully distinguished, also institutionally, from the local god of Hermopolis Magna and from the creator god Thot. The Greeks would never have accepted that their Hermes corresponded to a local god. The primeval hill site of the necropolis and that of the temple have the same mythological parts (*hwt-jbt* and *hsrt*). The local temple site is also shown by the Edfu texts as a copy of the primary hill because here the secret rites of the first creation were also performed. I think that the writings of Re written down by Thot are documents of the assembly of the reigning god of the primeval hill situation!

⁶⁸ Th. Hopfner, *Der Tierkult der Alten Ägypter nach den griechisch-römischen Berichten und den wichtigeren Denkmälern*, Vienna 1913, 12f.

⁶⁹ Hopfner and others classify this most sacred animal as an 'animal incorporated by a god' (Inkorporationstier). For himself he was not quite sure if the incorporation of a god in a sacred animal existed constantly or only during cultic events. The texts mention the Apis (god) as an incarnation of a range of gods, as Ptah, Osiris, Re or Horus (Harsiese). We think that the various Ba-predications refer to the statue of the Apis god and its cyclic renewals as a god, and not to the living bull, cf. Kessler, *Die heiligen Tiere und der König*, 9ff.

⁷⁰ I think that there was no need to replace or even kill the sacred falcon of Edfu or an ibis annually for the repetition of New Year feast. It would have been totally impractical to search for a new falcon-like bird with specially coloured feathers each year in advance. The falcon of Edfu was surely not a common falcon but maybe another bird of prey or a parrot with specially coloured feathers. Different colours are reported for the special ibis in Hermopolis as well. The introduction of a new animal for Edfu or Philae from the south was probably a cultic act between a southern (Meroitic?) sacred place and the northern Edfu and Philae temple area. The difference between the special colours of the prominent sacred falcon and the neutral form of the cult statue with its embedment in the cyclic cult of the falcon god (*hr pꜣ bjk*) and its changing Ba-forms seems to me of highly theological importance.

gods.⁷¹ We know about baboons and monkeys, where the name and origin of the mother animal was carefully recorded. In Memphis, they were kept near the temple precinct of Ptah in a sacred garden area.⁷² The situation must have been similar for the baboons and ibises at Hermopolis. Here the mother animal and the other monkeys of the Hermopolitan group were included in the Osirian cult and interred inside the burial place, at least in Tuna el-Gebel.⁷³ We assume that every larger temple area possessed special places where single groups of sacred animals were kept to use during other feast events⁷⁴ performed inside the wider temple area. It would have been impractical to select sacred animals every time from remote locations. We also have to count these animals as animals incorporated by a god, if we prefer to maintain the traditional egyptological classification.

The animals of the feeding place were judged traditionally to be of secondary importance, especially when considered as evidence for the idea of common pilgrimage. But the usual distinction between first and second class animals or between the *animal sacrée* of the temple and the *animal sacralisée*⁷⁵ of the feeding place is not supported by Egyptian texts. It makes no difference if a sacred animal was used according to its colouring as Ba of Harsiese, Horus, Atum, Re, Ptah, Thot, Osiris or Seth in temple areas or near the chapels in the rural area. In my opinion, the individual living animal was seen in both groups by common Egyptians as *ꜥwt ntrj* and used as incorporated by a god during official oracle procedures or processions.⁷⁶

The 'heilige Artgenossen' did not live in the shadow of a prominent temple animal. Their inherent theological importance is just the opposite. The prominent sacred animal could act as a god inside a temple area only if it was selected before and taken from a sacred flock. The

⁷¹ J. Vandier, *Le Papyrus Jumilhac*, Paris 1961, 127 f., XV,2 - XVI, 22. One of those dogs, a special wolf-like animal, represented the local city-god of the town of Assiut (greek Lykopolis) and its whole nome (Lykopolites). The city god - the prominent wolf being a sacred animal belonging to the local god inside the temple - has to be sharply distinguished from the royal 'Dog (*p3-jwꜥw*) of Horus', present in every city of Egypt and being part of the royal New Year feast.

⁷² H. S. Smith, *A Visit to Ancient Egypt. Life at Memphis and Saqqara* (ca. 500-30 BC), Warminster 1974, 42; S. Davies, *The Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara. The Mother of Apis and Baboon Catacombs*, EEF 75, London 2007, 78; J. Goudsmith - G. Brandon Jones, G., *Evidence from the Baboon Catacombs on North Saqqara for a West Mediterranean Monkey Trade Route to Ptolemaic Alexandria*, in *JEA* 86 (2000) 111-119.

⁷³ von den Driesch, A. et alii, *Mummified Baboons and other Primates from the Saitic-Ptolemaic Animal Necropolis of Tuna el-Gebel, Middle Egypt*, in *Documenta Archaeobiologiae, conservation policy and current research*, Bd. 2, ed. Grupe, G. & Peters, J. Rahden/Westf., 2004, 231-280, especially p. 257f.

⁷⁴ *Zu Riten des Thotfestes mit lebendigen Ibis, Falke und Geier* s. Clère, *La porte d'Évergète à Karnak* 1961, Tf. 41.

⁷⁵ See e.g. F. Dunand - R. Lichtenberg - A. Charron, *Des animaux et des hommes: une symbiose égyptienne*, Paris 2005, 165.

⁷⁶ I think that it is not justified to take passages of sacred writings like the *Book of the Temple*, where Apis is mentioned as a *ntr* (to be published by F. Quack) as an argument against the view (cf. Kessler, *Die heiligen Tiere und der König*, 8ff.) that the living Apis bull had also always been considered as a sacred animal by the population. Apis is mentioned as a god when shown in action outside his Sekos or when being buried. Sacred books written by gods and belonging to a quite special kind of temple literature cannot be simply taken as testimony for the common Egyptian view. Even the bull of Apis oscillated between his role as a sacred animal (*ꜥwt ntrj*), offspring again of a sacred animal and born of a sacred cow taken from a sacred flock (all of them deified) and his role as a god during the feasts of appearance in combination with a statue. The sacred animal was needed during rituals on special feast days and regularly for oracular purposes. This seems to me the specific character of all sacred animals kept near statues and the correct reason for their use. Without the shift between animal and god, the sacred animals could not be chosen to be killed as animal offerings (we know of bulls sacrificed for the Apis, see Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 73) and could not express the cyclic regeneration between the fate of Osiris (performed on the Osireion of the necropolis), the *creatio continua* (performed on the primeval hill site in the necropolis), the hidden rejuvenation of Osiris and Horus, and the new enthronement of Horus, performed in the metropolis during the New Year feast.

flock itself again consisted of animals that were already offspring of other sacred animals. The performance of the everlasting religious cycle, including the continuous rebirth of Egyptian gods, simply required the life and death sequence of sacred animals.⁷⁷ Simply using common animals living in the open countryside for sacred purposes must have been prohibited. It was of great importance for the permanent revival of the Egyptian gods that the rites of life, death and rebirth used a sacred group of animals bred from the sacred animals that had already functioned as gods in former times. Unfortunately, we do not know much about ibis colonies kept near the temples during the New Kingdom.⁷⁸ For this period, we are much better informed about the sacred herd of cattle, mother cow and calves, apparently buried from the beginning near the prominent bull.⁷⁹ Even the bull of Apis and the Mnevis bull had to be taken out of a long-existing sacred herd.⁸⁰ The keeping of such herds and their sacred offspring was carefully observed in Egypt.⁸¹ The 26th dynasty must have developed new rules for the maintenance and administration of sacred ibises and also of the bovines. It should be kept in mind that also the sacrificed animals of Seth must have been taken from a sacred flock according to their exactly noted colours. Otherwise, their following deification is not to be understood.⁸²

The young ibis god had a highly theological importance. The ritual use of sacred ibises finally guaranteed the immortality of the god (Thot-) The-Ibis.⁸³ Thot-The-Ibis, often on a pole, also protected the rejuvenation of a god like Thot of Hermopolis when he visited the temple of the primeval hill and his ancestor god Thot in the necropolis area. The rebirth of the first male and female ibis out of a pair of ibis eggs⁸⁴ was an act during the first creation. The combination of Thot-Hermes, the creator god, with the newly born ibis (the animal of the god Thot of the birthplace, i.e. in a feeding place), as visible on Roman coins⁸⁵, combines the birthplace of The-Ibis theologically with the creation of The-Ibis on the primeval hill. Later, Thot and the reigning god ('Allgott') upon the primary hill used the power of the ibises to fight against the snakes of the enemy god - this made the ibis into a snake-killer in ancient literature. The *ḥjt* of the *tpjw* are to be seen together with the mysterious *bꜣw ꜥꜣw ꜥnhw* (the revived great/old Bas,

⁷⁷ The basic arguments, never discussed, are already to be found in Kessler, *Die heiligen Tiere und der König*, 289f.

⁷⁸ A possible ibis colony in Abydos in New Kingdom(?) see W. Spiegelberg, *Neue Urkunden zum ägyptischen Tierkultus*, in *Sitzungsberichte Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften*, München 1928, 14ff. Tf. 2b.

⁷⁹ Cf. D. Raue, D., *Heliopolis und das Haus des Re*, *ADAIK* Bd. 16, 1999, 61; V. Lortet - Gaillard, *La faune momifiée de l'ancienne Égypte*, Lyon 1903, 64.

⁸⁰ In my opinion, the yearly introduction of the living Apis bull to the cows of his sacred flock and the following birth of sacred Apis children, all of them deified after death, continued the line descending from deities and guaranteed the immortality of the god Apis. Similarly, the practice of carefully marking young cattle descendents of deities with colouring corresponding to that noted in sacred writings, may have also been observed in other sacred flocks in Egypt.

⁸¹ Cf. the Elephantine scandal concerning a *km*-bull, see A. H. Gardiner, *Ramesside Administrative Documents*, Brüssel 1948, 74.

⁸² The work of the (*hier*)*moschosphragistai* should be seen as also theologically founded; cf. pOxy. VI, 923, concerning the offering of a bull for Serapis.

⁸³ Generally cf. Kessler, *Die heiligen Tiere und der König*, 13. For the fuller form of the god as Thot-the-Ibis, see now Foy Scalf, *Resurrecting an Ibis Cult. A collection of Demotic Votive Texts from the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago*, in: Fayza Heikal (ed.), *Mélanges offerts à Ola el-Aguizy*, BdE 164, IFAO Cairo 2015, 361-388. Scalf considers the inscriptions as votive offerings made by more or less private sponsors.

⁸⁴ *The Temple of Hibis* vol. III, pl. IV; E. Cruz-Urbe, E., *Hibis Temple Project I, Translations, Commentary, Discussions and Sign List*, San Antonio 1988, 32.

⁸⁵ A solitary ibis appears for the first time on a bronze coin of Augustus (RIC = Roman Imperial Coins, London, no. 5022). Hermes standing with a small ibis and a small baboon characterizes Hermopolitan nomos coins of Trajan and Hadrian. Interchanging ibis or baboon images appear in one hand of Hermes, the other animal placed at his feet.

having a *hwt-ntr* in Tuna-South).⁸⁶ An ibis god on a pole, protecting the enthronement of Osiris and the Horus-king, is to be seen in close connection with the creator and primeval god, who created the power of both animal forms. The creator god Thot was probably formally described in the sacred demotic and Greek writings of The-Ibis organisations, sometimes mentioning him —as I believe— as Thrice Great Thot or Hermes Trismegistos.⁸⁷

In some cases, Greek *kleruchoi* may have bought and owned Ibions near Egyptian villages in the countryside, even if in reality they lived in Hermopolis Magna. Certainly they participated on the all-Egyptian feast processions. This is now indirectly shown by two Greek inscriptions in the animal cemetery of Tuna el-Gebel, written on wooden ibis sarcophagi.⁸⁸ Of course they performed purely Greek forms of meetings, cult meals and oracular practices, and used the Macedonian calendar. On the other hand, they could assemble, culturally separated but in close alliance with the indigenous population, at a newly founded Hermaion. At the Hermaion, oracles were offered to foreigners and Egyptians according to their religious practises and calendars. The oracle questions sent in by a Greek may have been handed over to the responsible persons before the god Teephibis in Tuna el-Gebel⁸⁹, and elsewhere.⁹⁰ Less important gods, visible in an ibis statue such as Teephibis in Tuna el-Gebel, served as gods of the oracle procedure. A sacred ibis of Teephibis, chosen because of his specific colour, was kept here, perhaps delivered from an Ibion trophe nearby.⁹¹ Stone statues of The-Ibis certainly stood in front of each Hermaion, where a group of selected sacred ibises would also have been kept. More important demotic oracle answers probably had to be translated into Greek as well. Especially the Sokar-Osiris and Thot feasts must have seen the presence of the Greek administrative leaders in the necropolis area, when they officially visited the Osireia and Hermaia and participated in the cult during the feast days.

In my opinion it is dangerous to introduce an indigenous Ptolemaic ‘Cult of The Ibis’⁹² without considering the firm administrative Greek control or to separate The-Ibis from the

⁸⁶ G. Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris*, Cairo 1924, inscr. 125.

⁸⁷ The oldest reference to the three-times-great Thot is to be found written in a mixture of hieroglyphic and demotic text on an ibis pot from the catacombs of Tuna el-Gebel, see Sami Gabra, *Chez les derniers adorateurs du Trismegiste*, Kairo 1971, 113. Other unpublished pottery jars mentioning this god are kept in the magazine in el-Ashmunein. To judge by the form of the large containers, a date before Ptolemy I is highly probable. A comprehensive article is in preparation; some jars from Tuna el-Gebel will be published by Mahmoud Ebeid in a forthcoming publication).

⁸⁸ TG 2542 and TG 3188; two Greek inscriptions on wooden sarcophagi boards of Osiris-Ibis from the main passage G-B-E, written in the name of *kleruchoi* from Macedonia and Elis, were identified by Veith Vaelske, Berlin. The appeal of the Greeks (probably time of Ptolemy II) goes to Hermes *megas megas megas* (article in preparation).

⁸⁹ U. Kaplony-Heckel, U., *Neue Demotische Orakelfragen*, in *Forschungen und Berichte Berlin* 14 (1972) 85-90; K. Th. Zauzich, *Teephibis als Orakelgott*, in *Enchoria* 4 (1974) 163.

⁹⁰ J. Volokhine, *Le dieu Thot à Qasr el-Agouz: Djed-her-pa-heb, Djehuty-setem*, in *BIFAO* 101 (2002) 405-423; J. Quaegebeur, *Teephibis, dieu oraculaire?*, in *Enchoria* 5 (1975) 19-24.

⁹¹ Cf. in general the ancient Greek and Roman representations of living ibises in front of shrines in Egyptian landscapes. A scribe of the divine book of The-Ibis in Saqqara-North was also responsible for the funerary cult inside The-Ibis and the falcon galleries, see S. Davies, S. - H. S. Smith, *The Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara - The Falcon Complex and Catacomb*, EM 73, London 2005, 113. We also know about a demotic communication by an Egyptian scribe, surely an administrator of a chapel of Thot, with a Greek, for whom he cites Hermes Trismegistos. He could read the god's book of Thot, see P. Reinach 7, 17; E. Boswinkel - P. W. Pestman, *Les archives privées de Dionysos, fils de Kephala* (P.L. Bat. 22), Leiden 1982, 129-133. The local sanctuary of Thot belongs to a village in the northern Hermopolitan toparchy of Mochites.

⁹² So e.g. Smelik, *op. cit.*; cf. adn. 30. Contingent on the diversity of animals in Tuna el-Gebel and in other animal cemeteries, we would be forced to envisage other popular animal cults throughout all of Egypt, e.g. popular cults of gods in the form of a shrew, ichneumon, lion, ram, snake, frog, numerous kinds of fishes, etc.

great temple and the officially established Egyptian chapels with its pantheon of Egyptian gods. Regular oracular practices were carried out in front and inside chapels during the stately feast days, when the whole population, of whatever nationality, was involved. Even the lesser known and smaller Egyptian cult places and their newly established cult associations around gods with the characteristics of cats, lions, dogs, rams, crocodiles, fish, ichneumons, flamingos, and so on, cannot be regarded separately and divided from the religion of the state and its temples. Otherwise we would reduce the Late Egyptian Religion into a myriad of private gods of lesser importance. Egyptologists should consider the fact that all of these animal forms play an important role in the scenery of the first creation on their primeval hill sanctuaries, during the Osirian rejuvenation of all gods, the revival of the Horus-Pharaoh included. But I do not visualize (acknowledge the likelihood of) the introduction of private religious ibis associations for common peasants in Egypt.⁹³ The villagers around an Ibion and the peasants inscribed as cult personal were bound to the official religion and their oracle chapels by sacred laws. Yet even among the numerous Egyptian cult servants we might find foreigners living around the local Ibia and ministering to the sacred animals.⁹⁴ I see the local birthplaces of The-Ibis founded in increasing numbers in Ptolemaic time may in close connection with a newly erected or already existing Hermaion nearby. It is highly probable that a new Ibion, e.g. that of the village of Sesymbythis in the toparchy Patre Kato within the Hermopolite nome⁹⁵, was established in close association with a village sanctuary of Thot. We may assume the presence of a Hermaion for Egyptians and Greeks in Sesymbythis as known from the Fayum area. Fields of Greek *kleruchoi* also existed near Sesymbythis. The special living ibises used in front of the Hermaion in Sesymbythis for the oracle god in the shape of an ibis or a baboon were probably brought along from the birthplace of god The-Ibis near Sesymbythis, with presumably its own cult chapel and probably with its ibis or baboon statues made of stone and standing outside. Generally, we assume that a newly founded Ibion needed sacred animals taken from an already existing or newly installed feeding place. The Greek and Roman Nile landscapes show stereotypically (sacred) ibises in front of rural sanctuaries and often depict statues of Hermes.⁹⁶ This may reflect the common picture of many new rural sanctuaries of Thot-Hermes, established by the Ptolemaic administration.

⁹³ It has been claimed that even as early as the 26th dynasty, private animal cults were being practiced quite apart from the Egyptian temple organisation, see e.g. Huss, *Der makedonische König und die ägyptischen Priester*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 85, Stuttgart 1994, 49f. Huss's argument is clearly in line with the traditional notion that animal cults were part of the popular sphere and that the associations were introduced privately using a generous religious freedom granted by the Saitic rulers. But it seems difficult to make a division between the different animal bones inside the bundles that contain combinations of animals in the 26th dynasty cemetery of Tuna el-Gebel brought from many Egyptian sites. Otherwise we have to attribute these to various private associations with their own private network in Egypt. In my opinion, the postulated private animal cult is based, as I tried to show above, on a very narrow definition of the Egyptian temple (*r3-pr*) and seems heavily influenced by introducing Greek cult associations.

⁹⁴ The cult servants of the Ibion trophe and taphe, mostly fellahin living in villages nearby, may have mostly been Egyptians. But we also sometimes find foreigners in the organisation. A weaver of linen, participating in the Bucheum cult, was a *Wjnn* getting the regular feast contributions, s. R. Mond - O. H. Myers, *The Bucheum*, *Egypt Exploration Fund*, London 1934, vol. II, O.30, l. 8, p 58.

⁹⁵ M. Drew-Bear, *Le nome Hermopolite*, 127-129.

⁹⁶ As early as in the Hellenistic Palestrina mosaic, Egyptian obelisks are shown before a Hellenistic temple with a flock of sacred ibises nearby, cf. the detail in G. Vörös, *Taposiris Magna, Port of Isis*, Budapest 2001, 118. The persons depicted may represent acting Egyptian priests and Greeks. Vörös attributes the main temple scenery of the mosaic to the area of Taposiris Magna and the Mediterranean Sea.

5. Transfer of ibises from the Ibion *trophe* to temple areas and their Ibion *taphe*

Apparently the local birthplace of The-Ibis delivered special sacred animals to local Hermaia and to other Egyptian sanctuaries. Cult servants of the village *t3 st-Šsnk* brought special ibises to Tuna el-Gebel to be deposited later in a more precious limestone coffin.⁹⁷ The sacred ibises may have been used earlier during special feasts in a village sanctuary erected by Pharaoh Seshonq (?) in the Toparchy of Mochites, probably to the west of Tehna el-Gebel.⁹⁸ The carcasses or parts of sacred ibises collected from the local Ibion and the corpses of ibises previously used at the local sanctuary may have been kept separately. It seems probable that the mass of ibises put inside the typically large Ptolemaic lid vessels in Tuna el-Gebel were transferred from numerous local Hermopolitan Ibion places directly to the main Hermopolitan taricheion (perhaps somewhere near the lake of Tuna/Hod Tuna). After their treatment they were later collectively given into the subterranean resting place. Other temple towns, such as Tehna el-Gebel (Tenis/Akoris) in the toparchy of the Mochites within the Hermopolite nome, had their own burial places for ibises, at least founded during the Ptolemaic period.⁹⁹ The birds may all originate from one single Ibion in the vicinity of Tehna el-Gebel delivering sacred ibises for the temple feasts in Tehna. The resting place for The-Ibis in Tehna el-Gebel was filled with mummies of ibises (and probably connected with a cult of Osiris-Ibis) and other animals (falcons, rams, crocodiles). They were stored in older tomb shafts in a former necropolis area. Above the Osirian resting place and cut into the rock were erected cult chapels. We may identify at least Ammonion, Suchieion, Bubasteion, Hermaion and Asklepieion as cultic places.¹⁰⁰ The rock chapels of Tehna may have already existed in the time of Amasis.¹⁰¹ They were used for the Osiris feasts and those of the other gods uniting with Osiris on their own feast days of resurrection and rejuvenation. The burial place of the ibises in Tehna may have been established much later in the Ptolemaic period. In earlier Ptolemaic times, a Greek from Tehna could have transferred a dead sacred ibis to Tuna el-Gebel.¹⁰² The number of ibis mummies in Tehna appears quite limited.

The Ibion near Tehna el-Gebel and its distance from the main temple is not known; we have to seek better documented cases. The distance between the main birthplace of The-Ibis at the lake of Abusir and the northern and southern ibis catacombs in Saqqara-North is

⁹⁷ M. Ebeid, Demotic Inscriptions from the Galleries of Tuna el-Gebel, BIFAO 106 (2006) no.11 and 17.

⁹⁸ In the old magazine of el-Ashmunein we noted two fayence statuettes originating from Tuna el-Gebel with name of a pharaoh Sheshonk.

⁹⁹ According to the Jumilhac Papyrus, Tehna el-Gebel/*Mr-nfr.t* belonged theologically to the 18th Upper Egyptian nome (as once in the Old Kingdom), but town and cultic establishments were administered by the Hermopolite nome, see M. Drew-Bear, Le nome Hermopolite, 291-296 and Kessler, Historische Topographie der Region zwischen Mallawi und Samalut, Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients Reihe B, Nr. 30, Wiesbaden 1981, 283ff.

¹⁰⁰ Kessler, Die heiligen Tiere und der König, Abb. 22 after p. 220. An institution of the Falcon can be derived indirectly from the Loeb Papyri originating from Tehna el-Gebel, which mention mainly the god Horus of Khem, s. W. Spiegelberg, The Papyri Loeb, passim. I think it probable that the ensemble of chapels in the rock were already established by the Saitic state in close connection with a military garrison built on the rock surface in the Third Intermediate Period. Because we find similar ensembles of chapels in all necropoleis of Egypt, I do not believe that every god was venerated separately from the others by common folk. I assume there was a processional pathway between town and the rock chapels.

¹⁰¹ At least the (still as a whole unpublished) early demotic graffito at the right door jamb of the entrance to a Suchieion (Hathor columns in the hall inside the rock led to the misinterpretation as a sanctuary of Hathor) dates probably back to Amasis, whose name is mentioned there. Suchos in the necropolis, as lord of the mythical mountain *Bh*, is clearly separated from *Šbk nb Mr-nfr.t*, god of the town, see Kessler, Historische Topographie der Region zwischen Mallawi und Samalut, 276 (cf. pLoeb 10, 6-7).

¹⁰² M. Ebeid, M., op. cit., 67 (TG 2487).

extremely short. In between existed a smaller settlement (Hepnebes) of cult servants and other members, most of whom belonged to the organisations of The-Ibis and The-Falcon. Possibly the god of the feeding place with a Teephibus birth chapel in North Saqqara may be identical with the god Thotmes or Thotmes-The-Ibis (*Dḥwtj-ms pꜣ hb*), represented probably by an ibis statue and a sacred ibis collected from the feeding place at the shore of the lake of Abusir.¹⁰³ In any case, this specific ibis belonging to the god Thotmes was buried afterwards in the catacombs. The group of cult servants and their leaders associated with this god participated in the feasts of the Osireion mentioned above. Some of them also entered the galleries to perform cult rituals.¹⁰⁴ Concerning Tuna we suspect that most ibises came from the earlier main Ibion of Hermopolis around the waters of the Hod Tuna, not very far from the burial place.¹⁰⁵ During the Osirian feast days, some privileged members, also foreigners, in a procession coming from Hermopolis, may have visited the subterranean galleries in Tuna el-Gebel too, at least in the Ptolemaic period. We have also some evidence for actions in connection with Osirian rites in the Saitic galleries, for example the wooden and gilded remains of an Osirian mummy bed. The cult within the galleries in front of Osiris-Ibis and other gods was performed by people acting as temporary Wab-priests and using offering-stands made of bronze, like in Saqqara.¹⁰⁶ Only the owners of the numerous subterranean Ptolemaic baboon chapels used offering-stands made of stone.

Unfortunately, we have a lack of textual evidence about the transfer and distribution of sacred birds from a local Ibion to certain sanctuaries and their re-transport either to a new Ptolemaic local burial place or to the main burial place at Tuna el-Gebel. Thus the following sketch contains uncertainties. But we have obtained some evidence from the galleries of Tuna el-Gebel.¹⁰⁷ Special ibises from other villages and towns were put into sarcophagi made of stone, wood or clay. The inscriptions give the date of their delivery and registration by the scribes of The-Ibis organisation in Tuna el-Gebel, together often with the name of the transferring person alone, and sometimes also together with the name of another responsible person.¹⁰⁸ Other (until now unpublished) lists from the galleries on ostraca contain names of persons only.¹⁰⁹ A registration of those names makes only sense when these gods may have

¹⁰³ D. Kessler, Ibis-Vögel mit Eigennamen, in *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, Festschrift Heinz-Josef Thissen, Leuven - Paris - Walpole 2010, 268 ff.

¹⁰⁴ The reason for the deposit of cult objects (offering supports) in the falcon galleries seems unclear, cf. the remarks by Chr. Green, *The Temple Furniture from the Sacred Animal Necropolis at North-Saqqara, 1964-1976*, London 1987, 2-3; the objects either belong to pilgrims or to official representatives. Apparently the objects were used by those groups who served both the subterranean ibis and falcon burials as well as the god of the birthplace of The-Ibis near the lake of Abusir.

¹⁰⁵ D. Kessler, *Die Oberbauten des Ibiotapeion von Tuna el-Gebel: Die Nachgrabungen der Joint Mission der Universitäten Kairo und München 1989-1006*, Tuna el-Gebel Band III, München 2011, 98.213.

¹⁰⁶ At least one object, mentioned as a trumpet in the museum catalogue, kept once in the Museum of Mallawi, was a part of a bronze offering stand.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Kessler, *Die heiligen Tiere und der König*, 263-266 and p. 288 with a sketch of the organisation of the feeding place.

¹⁰⁸ H. J. Thissen, *Demotische Inschriften aus den Ibisgalerien in Tuna el-Gebel*, in *Enchoria* 18 (1991) 107-113; M. Ebeid, *Demotic Inscriptions from the Galleries of Tuna el-Gebel*, in *BIFAO* 106 (2006) 57-73.

¹⁰⁹ The Tuna inscriptions collected by H.J. Thissen 1983 will be published in Heinz-Josef Thissen – Jan Moje, *Demotische Texte aus den Ibis-Galerien von Tuna el-Gebel*. I am thankful that I could see the manuscript earlier, hopefully appearing soon in the Tuna publication series. Referring to his study I dare to mention here one of the results, that roughly far more than half of the container inscriptions are brought from the Hermopolite Nome, but about one quarter from the Fayum area. Further inscribed demotic material from Tuna el-Gebel will be published by Mahmoud Ebeid, *Demotic Inscriptions from the Subterranean Galleries of the Sacred Animals in the Tuna el-Gebel Necropolis (I)*.

been sent to Tuna el-Gebel from smaller sanctuaries (surely often Hermaia) in connection with certain feast events. It would have been useless for the scribes to register and to note private names of common people on sarcophagi or ostraca without a certain financial transaction in the interest of the fiscus in the background.¹¹⁰ Therefore I doubt that inscribed ostraca and sarcophagi inside animal galleries should be considered as purely private votive objects. We have no further information about the probably intensive cultic contact between The-Ibis organisation in Hermopolis and other ibis organisations in Egypt. Corresponding to the regulations for the falcon associations, there must have been rules written by Thot which were probably given in the name of 'Thot, Twice Great, Lord of Hermopolis' for all communities registered under The-Ibis. On some of the sarcophagi we find the titles added to the names, probably of responsible persons, of the cult associations from other Egyptian cities such as Ptolemais, Hawara or Heliopolis, but also from Hermopolis. There ibis eggs hint to a special feeding place and perhaps a new Ptolemaic or Roman taricheion for a smaller group of sacred birds used in Hermopolis.¹¹¹ In most cases the special ibises are from villages of the Hermopolite nome.¹¹² We can only speculate that between the central ibis association in larger towns and Hermopolis Magna there was extensive contact and flow of visiting administrators and cultic leaders who, for example, participated in the extended feasts of Thot in Hermopolis Magna. We have to assume that members of other ibis organisations from all of Egypt were especially present during his yearly main feast, when the local Thot of Hermopolis visited his ancestor gods in the necropolis of Tuna el-Gebel, to be united with the gods, reborn and rejuvenated again.¹¹³ Also these visitors may have brought ibises from their own feast procedures, at the interest of their own organisations.¹¹⁴ The new texts of

¹¹⁰ We should not forget, that the cultic participation of common members of the ibis groups on certain feast days was costly too and had somehow to be organised and paid. Of course deposits inside the animal galleries (amulets, bronzes, model sculptures etc.) given by the responsible people working for the ibis-group allowed them to participate more intensively on the Osiris-resurrection and the rebirth of Thot-Ibis, i.e. on the Giving of Life during the yearly repeated feasts.

¹¹¹ Abou Bakr, in *Egypt Travel Magazine* N. 8 July 1960, 27, apparently found to the west of the walls of the temple precinct. He mentions also bitumen, perhaps an indication of a small taricheion nearby. It is possible that ibises coming from Hermopolis, mentioned on sarcophagi in Tuna el-Gebel, have been embalmed here before. A limestone ibis sarcophagus found near the South Church may come from elsewhere (Donald M. Bailey, *The South Church at el-Ashmunein: Inscribed and Decorated Blocks*, in *MDAIK* 2002, 65 and Tf. 11c; reference given by P. Brose).

¹¹² Cf. Thissen, *ibidem*, p. 108 Nr. 4; Nr. 5. In some cases the persons delivering an ibis mummy have titles of local cult leaders and pastophors of ibis organisations (*wr djw, w^cb, rd, wn-pr*), see Thissen, *op. cit.*, 109, Nr. 3 and Ebeid, *op. cit.*, 60 no. 8; 61 n. 9. Others are a craftsman (of The-Ibis?, see Ebeid, p. 61 no. 10 or a fisherman of The-Ibis (*p3 why n p3 hb*), see Thissen, *op. cit.*, p. 108, Nr. 3. Many more titles and sites will be given in the demotic inscriptions in the forthcoming volumes of Thissen - Moje and Mahmoud Ebeid.

¹¹³ The presence of people from outside is indirectly shown in Saitic times by inscribed bronzes from the ibis galleries naming a participating priest of the 12th Upper Egyptian nome and military officers (see above).

¹¹⁴ The involvement of superiors like a *wr djw Dḥwtj* ordering the transfer of an ibis to Tuna el-Gebel by a Wab-priest is revealed in the inscription Ebeid, p. 65, no. 15. I think that the transfer of special ibises and the payment for limestone coffins and pottery jars, likely to be noted by the scribe in Tuna, could not be done without the consent and orders of the leaders of a local ibis organisation. We do not know the exact circumstances of the use of such ibises, possibly during feast days of Thot and during oracle ceremonies, or if these animals belonged to a group of sacred ibises kept near a local Hermaion in the countryside. Maybe they belonged to the god of a local feeding place. The pot inscription Thissen, 111, Nr. 14 mentions two gods brought by a lady who was probably the wife of a local priest owning or having leased the cult place of a *t3 hrt*. Her strange surname (*t3-hr.t- t3 hb.t*) includes the female ibis (*t3 hb.t*). She seems to be under the control of a Greek named Kallikles from Hermopolis, perhaps the official landowner of the fields of The-Ibis. They delivered at least partially grain to the feeding place. It may be that Kallikles ordered or had to pay officially the transfer and the embalming costs of the ibises of his own Ibion.

the ibis sarcophagi will reveal that the landowners of fields of The-Ibis could be wealthier Egyptians, Greek *kleruchoi* or other foreign persons. Automatically they could appeal to Thot regardless if it was the Egyptian Thot or Hermes for the Greeks. We should keep in mind that participation in the main Thot feast or in the Osiris and New Year's days gave the Egyptian cult leaders the opportunity to officially address their mysterious oracle god in the necropolis. Their objects (mummies, bronzes, statuettes, amulets etc.), announcing the event of the Giving-of-Life and deposited inside wooden chests or in jars, were used not for one feast event only. Also foreign landowners of ibis fields and owners of an Ibion, perhaps members of a local Hermaion near to a Ibion, surely needed the communication with local Egyptian workmen and the local ibis group around the Egyptian cult places. They may have supported the mummy transport of a special prominent local Ibion animal to the taricheion and then further to the burial place. The necropolis scribes were obliged to register landowners and to fix the date and the names of the person who brought the ibis from the taricheion. Probably all was part of a certain financial transaction, the only interest of every administration. Perhaps we shouldn't use modern terms like "private donators" or "sponsorship" in connection with the names of possible landowners on the more expensive sarcophagi. These persons may have had an obligation to take care of the animals of the Ibion property as supervisors and leaders of their cult group, especially when owning personally a whole Ibion site and their field income.¹¹⁵

To sum up: the Ptolemaic parts of The-Ibis cemetery at Tuna el-Gebel (see fig. 1) may have been filled with more or less complete birds or remnants (parts of bones, feathers, eggs) of:

1st Dead ibises or parts of ibises brought directly to the Hermopolitan taricheion near the desert edge from a local Ibion - breeding places - in the Hermopolitan nome. Finally, after their deification they were brought from the taricheion to the Resting Place lying under the Osireion in Tuna-South by bearers of The-Ibis or other members of ibis organisations.

2nd Living ibises transferred from a local Ibion in the Hermopolitan countryside to a temple site nearby where they were kept in a small group near other sacred animals. Afterwards, the corpses of birds used prominently in temples and sanctuaries during certain main feasts (feast of Thot, Osiris feast, New Year's feast) could have been brought by messengers of the local ibis organisation to the taricheion and were then handed over to the local members of The-Ibis organisation in Tuna el-Gebel (royal scribes etc.). Alternatively the administration of a larger temple town installed a new taricheion and a new local burial place including a cult place for the temple animals and his sacred flock.

3rd Living ibises raised in Ibia or used near cult places, later deified and traded in other towns and villages of Egypt. In Tuna el-Gebel the majority of these comes from towns or villages inside the Fayum, revealing a firm administrative practise known already from Persian times onwards. Isolated are ibises originating from other parts of Egypt, maybe brought to Tuna el-Gebel by members of other Ibis organisations during special feast days like the feast of Thot.

4th Carcasses of ibises found locally in the Hermopolitan countryside and probably handed over at some point to the local ibis organisation in Tuna el-Gebel.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ I think that members of a local Bubasteion like the cat-waitors in the Fayum addressing in a famous letter to Zenon for support, are not writing privately as poor Egyptians in a petition for generosity to a high influential foreigner, but appealed to a person involved into royal financial and administrative matters, inevitably connected with field income and syntaxis of a local Bubasteion. We don't know who gained benefit from the income.

¹¹⁶ Probably pan-Egyptian sacral laws ordered that, wherever found, dead ibises had to be transferred to the local ibis organisation and the taricheion of the burial places. See above annotation 7.

Possible relations between the Hermopolitan Ibia, temples and ibis burial places:

	Larger Ptolemaic temple towns: new own ibis group (e.g. Tehna) +own local ibion taphe (+taricheion?)
Hermopolites: Numerous local Ptolemaic Hermaia with living ibis(es) selected and brought from local Ibia. The dead ibises of the ibia transferred in most cases to main taricheion near Tuna (?)	
Living ibises: Pre-Ptolemaic main Hermopolitan Ibion near Hod Tuna (?)	Hermopolis: group of sacred ibises. with own new taricheion (?) in Ptolemaic time. Nomos administration and cult of <i>P3-hb</i> in <i>Pr-dhwtj</i> ibises, falcons, sr-birds etc. for temple feasts in Hermopolis. Control of 'Fields of the Ibis' and selling/leasing of cult jobs.
Main older Hermopolitan taricheion near Hod Tuna (?)	Immortal god <i>P3-hb</i> + sacred ibis; <i>m3rw</i> (?) in front of <i>hwt-ntr Dhwtj 3 3 nb Hmw</i> .
Settlement Kom el-Loli (= Serapeion kome?) harbour, sanctuaries (?) Cult of Nectanebos-the-Falcon; starting point of feast events	Processions Hermopolis – Tuna el-Gebel and back to Hermopolis e.g. during feast of Thot, Osiris
Main Ibion taphe of Tuna el-Gebel with Osireion (<i>hwt-ntr</i>) above; cult statues of Osiris-Ibis/Osiris-Baboon; living oracle ibis / baboon (annex building of the Osireion) +	Feast of New Year: Horus-king appearing renewed with revived protecting Ibis god and a special coloured living ibis as representative of city and nome god.
Royal <i>hwt-ntr</i> temple (+ Greek Serapeum; nymphaeum) of the creator god Thot and of the revived Great Bas - primeval hill site and place of royal coronation of royal ancestor gods. Group of living ibises/baboons (?); statue cult with god Teephibis; statue and cult of Pa-Gem, smaller chapels, pastophoria	

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