

ABSTRACTS

Conference

The Island of the Divine Crocodile –

Recent Research on Textual and Other Archaeological Remains from Soknopaiou Nesos

(Leiden, 10-12 October 2019)

Vom Priester zum Gutsverwalter. Aurelius Pakysis und die Krise von Soknopaiou Nesos

Andrea JÖRDENS

Das im Norden des Moerissees gelegene Soknopaiou Nesos erlebte in der Kaiserzeit eine ungeahnte Blüte, die wesentlich auf den florierenden Kult- und Festbetrieb des Soknopaios-Heiligtums zurückzuführen war. Die antoninische Pest, der im Frühjahr 178 ein Drittel der Priesterschaft zum Opfer fiel, läutete gleich in zweifacher Hinsicht den Niedergang des Ortes ein: Zum einen war der Festbetrieb nicht mehr in derselben Weise aufrechtzuerhalten, zum anderen wurden auch die Besucherströme dezimiert. Vermutlich begann sich der Ort im Laufe der Zeit wieder zu erholen, doch sollten politische Entscheidungen der Jahrhundertwende – neben dem vom Präfekten Qu. Aemilius Saturninus verkündeten Verbot traditioneller Festrитуale vor allem die Verleihung der Ratsverfassung an die Gauhauptstädte durch Kaiser Septimius Severus – die bisherige Lebensgrundlage zerstören. Der Wechsel des Priesters Aurelius Pakysis in die Gutsverwaltung erscheint insofern symptomatisch, der daher im Mittelpunkt der hiesigen Ausführungen stehen soll. An seinem Beispiel läßt sich besonders deutlich zeigen, welche Auswirkungen politische Maßnahmen entgegen den ursprünglichen Intentionen auch auf wirtschaftlichem Gebiet zu zeitigen vermögen.

The Cult of Soknopaios: Text and Sound of an Ancient Egyptian Ritual in Space and Image

Martin Andreas STADLER

In the temple of Soknopaios in Dimê, as in every Egyptian temple, priests daily performed a sacrificial ritual and a ritual, during which the cult image was newly dressed. This Daily Ritual has been handed down from the Soknopaios Temple in a series of demotic manuscripts of the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D., whereby the text was noted in a peculiar way, namely "unetymologically", in order to inscribe additional levels of meaning on the one hand, and to record the sound of the text on the other. The Egyptians attributed a special cultic efficacy to the sound. However, these unetymological writings represent - apart from the partly bad state of preservation of the papyri--enormous challenges for deciphering, which I can only overcome by parallels in other Egyptian writings (hieroglyphs and

hieratic) and ritual scenes, i.e. pictorial representations of the cult in connection with inscriptions, on the walls of other Egyptian temples. The edition of the Soknopaios ritual, on which I am working, can therefore only succeed through an intermedial approach.

Recent Discoveries in the Soknopaios Temple Area

Paola DAVOLI

The Soknopaiou Nesos Project has been working in the temple of Soknopaios since 2004. After completing the excavation of the temple built in limestone blocks (ST 20) at the center of the *temenos*, the excavation moved on its rear where parts of columns were visible on the sand surface. The contra-temple was the focus of the last two excavation seasons. This kind of sanctuary was usually devoted to the god in his function of listening to the prayers and therefore was open to common people. In Dime the building (14.66 x 12.30 m) has a somewhat unusual architectural shape, similar to a kiosk but roofed and with columns inside it. It is preserved to a maximum height of 2 m, being demolished for the recovery of the limestone blocks with which it is built. The building, probably founded in the 1st century AD, was restored and modified probably during a phase of general renovation of the sanctuary during the 2nd century, with the addition of a pseudo-peripteral chapel, internal walls and a gate. Evidence of the presence of people and animals inside the contra-temple testifies to its use by Christians after the abandonment of the town.

A remarkable find is a three-dimensional architectural model representing in scale the contra-temple in its original shape. In total, some fifty pieces have been recovered so far.

Soknopaiou Nesos 2003-2017: The Greek and Figured Papyri and the Figured Ostraka

Mario CAPASSO

During fourteen Excavations Seasons carried out in the Archaeological site of Soknopaiou Nesos/Dime es-Seba hundreds of Greek and figured papyri and some figured *ostraka* have been recovered. The Greek papyri are fragmentary and they mostly keep short portions of text. They have been found inside the area of stone temple dedicated to the crocodile-god Soknopaios and they are connected with the priests of the sanctuary and their activities. In the same area also figured ostraka were found; on one of them a male figure is sketched.

Soknopaiou Nesos 2003-2017: The Greek Ostraka

Natascia PELLÉ

The Greek *ostraka* found at Soknopaiou Nesos/Dime es-Seba during the fourteen Excavation Seasons carried out by the Archaeological Mission of Centro di Studi Papirologici at Salento University are less numerous than the Demotic ones and they keep a very short texts. We are talking about 18 Greek *ostraka* plus a bilingual one, with a demotic text on one side and a greek text on the other one. 14 *tituli picti* complete the list. As for materials recovered between 2003 and 2009 Mario Capasso has already published a description, some transcriptions with translations and some interesting textual observations in a rich article recently appeared in the volume M. Capasso-P. Davoli (eds.), *Soknopaiou Nesos Project. (2003-2009)*, Pisa-Roma 2012. My aim is now to integrate the previous documentation by giving a description, some textual observations and, where it is possible, a critical transcription with translation and notes of the Greek materials found between 2010 and 2017 (being 11 *ostraka* and 2 *tituli picti*).

The 'Diaspora' of Papyri Found at Soknopaiou Nesos.

Alberto BUONFINO

The papyri produced in Egypt during the Greek-Roman period are several tens of thousands. Many of them, recovered in the ancient Egyptian settlements between the 19th century and the second half of the 20th century, are nowadays kept in the most important museums and institutions in the world. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to go back to the origins of these texts, because of the unscientific methods through which they were recovered and because of the ways they were sold on the antiques market and bought by private and public collections.

One of the sites where a lot of literary and documentary texts written on papyrus come from is Soknopaiou Nesos/Dime es-Seba (Fayyum, Egypt): all the papyri found during the numerous official and clandestine explorations from the second half of the 19th century, are now stored in museums and collections around the world.

The Grapheion of Soknopaiou Nesos in Comparative Perspective

Graham CLAYTOR

This paper examines the *grapheion* (local notarial office) of Soknopaiou Nesos, which is one of the village's best documented institutions. The evidence from Soknopaiou Nesos is set against the backdrop of institutional developments across Egypt between the establishment of the office in the

middle of the second century BCE and the demise of local *grapheia* in the Fayum towards the end of the second century CE.

Unpublished Greek Texts from the 1931/2 Michigan Excavation of Dime

Francisca HOOGENDIJK

Only some of the Greek papyri discovered during the Michigan excavations of Soknopaiou Nesos have been published afterwards. For the NWO Internationalisation Project 'Text in Context' (2017-2019) we have started the study of the remaining Greek papyri, ostraca and waxed tablets found in the Eastern part of the excavation. In this paper I intend to give an overview of the published and unpublished Greek texts from this eastern part and to present a few of them in more detail.

Unpublished Ceramic Materials Discovered by the Soknopaiou Nesos Project

Clementina CAPUTO

The Greco-Roman site of Dime/Soknopaiou Nesos located north of the lake in the pseudo-oasis of the Fayum (Egypt) was a religious center that grew around the temple of the god Soknopaios. Papyrological evidence attests foundation of the *kōmē* in the 3rd century BCE and suggests that it was abandoned in the 3rd century CE. Intensive field surveys and stratigraphic excavations carried out during the last 14 years by the Soknopaiou Nesos Project (University of Salento-Lecce) on the site and in the sacred area (*temenos*) have brought to light a considerable quantity of pottery and objects dated to the Hellenistic and Roman periods, but also a cluster of Late Roman/Byzantine pottery, which came exclusively from within the area of the *temenos*.

The work conducted in the field by the SNP has allowed us to produce a first sample book of the main ceramic types and to classify the petro-fabrics associated with these types, used for the identification of all ceramic fragments currently found on the site, including the inscribed sherds. In this contribution, I will provide an overview of the newly found ceramic materials, in order to show the most attested typologies at Soknopaiou Nesos, both Egyptian and imported from the Mediterranean, during the different periods of its life.

Unpublished Materials in Plant Fibers and Wood Discovered by the Soknopaiou Nesos Project

Roberta PETRILLI

The site of Dime es-Seba / Soknopaiou Nesos is in the desert, on the north of Lake Qarun, in Fayyum (Egypt); this circumstance allowed the conservation of a large quantity of objects made of organic material, such as those made of plant fiber (such as sandals, baskets, ropes) and wood (such as musical instruments, structural elements, vases, hinges, bolts, furniture). This research aims to create a catalogue of materials found during the excavations from 2003 to 2017. The archaeological excavations concern in particular, but not only, the area located within the *temenos* of the temple of the crocodile god Soknopaios and the finds date back to the Hellenistic and Roman periods, with particular concentration between the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. The analysis of objects, found in hundreds, has allowed the definition of precise typologies, characteristic of the site in which they were recorded, which date mostly to the Roman era. The urban context (not funerary as usually happens) of the findings offers the opportunity to study objects actually used in everyday life by the inhabitants of the city of Soknopaiou Nesos.

Unpublished Materials in Faïence and Glass Discovered by the Soknopaiou Nesos Project

Stefania ALFARANO

This contribution will be an overview of the faïence and glass materials found by the archaeologists of University of Salento in the Graeco-Roman site of Soknopaiou Nesos, today known as Dime es-Seba. Since 2004, the intensive field surveys and stratigraphic excavations in the temple area have brought to light a considerable quantity of different classes of glass and faïence objects dated to the Hellenistic and Roman periods. However, only the recent stratigraphic excavations and the study of these materials, in association with the different types of pottery found on the site, allow to date all the objects analyzed between the 1st and the 3rd century CE.

The analysis of glass and faïence finds was able to identify several types of objects, like jewellery, amulets and vessels, and permit to study the different techniques applied in the production of these artefacts. Finally, these classes of objects have been compared to those found in Dime between the end of 1931 and the beginning of 1932 by the archaeologists of University of Michigan. This comparison allows to point out the different use cases of the faïence and glass materials both in religious and domestic contexts.

Demotic Letters in the Temple Archive of Soknopaiou Nesos

Carolin Arlt

There are about eighty-five Demotic letters among the papyri in the Griffith archive in Oxford, more than two thirds of them unpublished. This paper will present some of these unpublished letters and examine them in combination with the published material to determine what they can tell us about temple administration in Ptolemaic Egypt and the activities of the priesthood in Soknopaiou Nesos in the second century BCE.

**Demotic papyri from Soknopaiou Nesos in the
Utrecht University Library**

Charlotte DIETRICH - Elena L. HERTEL

In 2017 the Leiden Papyrological Institute was informed about the existence of some Egyptian papyri kept at the Utrecht University Library. The manuscripts were purchased from the private collection of the German coptologist Carl Schmidt in 1956. The corpus consists foremost of Greek and Coptic manuscripts, but contains also some fragments with demotic script. Although rather fragmentary, some of the papyri are identifiable as texts written in Soknopaiou Nesos due to their distinctive handwriting. The papyri in question entail a large portion of a contract concerning property, and five small fragments which seem to be parts of accounts and contracts. Thanks to the collaboration of the Utrecht University Library and the Papyrological Institute the fragments were transported to Leiden for restauration and study. The aim is to present the papyri and their history in European collections as well as to give preliminary readings and translations which are open to discussion. Despite the restricted size of the corpus and the fragmentary condition of the texts, the publication of these fragments might help the reconstruction of papyri kept in other collections and thus contribute to the understanding of the distribution of Soknopaiou Nesos papyri in European collections.

**Research on Economic Activities of the Soknopaios Temple
According to the Demotic Texts – 16 Years On**

Sandra LIPPERT – Maren SCHENTULEIT

In 2000, Karl-Theodor Zauzich initiated a five-year research project which aimed at the edition of the late Demotic documentary texts from Dime/Soknopaiou Nesos (30 BCE to 2nd century CE). In the context of this project, we presented a paper on the economy of the temple of Soknopaios at the 1st International Fayoum Congress in Sommerhausen in 2003 and published two volumes of text

editions pertaining to the temple's financial administration (DDD I: Ostraka and DDD II: Quittungen) in 2006. At the time of our first overview article, two text types which are essential to this subject, were still largely unexplored: accounts and *henu*-agreements, both of which are very well represented in the Demotic material from Soknopaiou Nesos. In 2018, Würzburg and Bordeaux Universities launched a project directed by Martin Stadler and Marie-Pierre Chaufray that is concentrating on the first of these two text types. Additionally, we have resumed our work on the *henu*-agreements in view of a future edition project this year. The paper will show the progress we have made in reconstructing and understanding the temple economy of Soknopaiou Nesos over the past 16 years.

Temple Accounts from Dime: A New Working Tool for New Documents

Déborah VIGNOT-KOTT – Nathalie PRÉVÔT – Marie-Pierre CHAUFRAY

The Demotic accounts of the temple of Soknopaios in Dime are still largely unpublished. This corpus of more than 800 documents contains rolls of more than 1m long as well as small fragments which are scattered over several papyri collections in Europe (Berlin, Vienna, Paris, London, Manchester, Geneva, Heidelberg, etc.). The texts were probably part of the temple archives or kept in the private archives of priests who served as scribes for the temple. They are interesting for the knowledge of the internal economic functioning of a regional Egyptian temple in the Roman period and for the study of the religious life in Dime and in the surrounding sanctuaries.

The objective of the French-German project DimeData (ANR/DFG) is to renew our knowledge of the economic life of Egyptian temples in Roman times, through the publication of this rich documentation on an online publishing platform. All the texts entered in the database will be precisely encoded following the TEI/Epidoc guidelines. Thus, the platform will not only give the texts as in a paper edition but it will also allow different kinds of lexical, prosopographical and statistic researches.

Streets Don't Change but Maybe the Names: How Onomastic Mirrors Social Dynamics and Helps to Date the 'Namenostraka' and Further Texts from Soknopaiou Nesos

Benjamin SIPPEL

Over the course of the first and second century, several of previously well-attested personal names disappeared from the prosopography of Soknopaiou Nesos. This paper argues that the disappearance of those names was not merely an effect of the coincidence of preservation, but a consequence of local social dynamics. Following this course of argument, the paper suggests that texts mentioning these names were inscribed latest in the late first or early second century.

The onomastical tradition among the inhabitants of Soknopaiou Nesos is a curious case: Documentary papyri, ostraca and inscriptions repeat thousands of times, almost notoriously, the same few Egyptian names, such as Harpagathes, Stotoetis, Panephremmis or Tesenouphis. Indeed, these names were almost exclusively attested among local families, while other Egyptian or Greek names barely appear in the historical record of the village. Therefore, from a bird's eye perspective, one gets the impression that the people of Soknopaiou Nesos intermarried frequently and only among themselves.

However, a closer look at the local prosopography reveals a more dynamic picture: As it turns out, some names vanished completely from the local record in the late first or early second century, although they were previously quite well attested. For instance, the last living man under the name Kalatytes appeared in about 50 CE, the last living person named Nestnephis in about 90 CE. Both names survived as father's names for some more decades in the documentary record. But they disappeared ultimately in the early second century – although the papyrological tradition peaks at that time! Hence, the disappearance of these names was hardly a matter of vanishing sources, but the result of local social dynamics. For an explanation of these dynamics, it is necessary to discuss the effect of local marriage patterns among priestly families and the impact of the local theology concerning gods and "holy men". Thus, it becomes plausible that some names really disappeared from Soknopaiou Nesos in the second century.

Based on this finding, the paper proposes to narrow down the chronological scope of texts that are, so far, only dated by means of paleographical assumptions. In particular, this is proposed for the so-called Demotic 'Namenostraka', which have been found in large numbers by a German excavation in 1909/10 in Soknopaiou Nesos. These texts have been dated roughly to the Roman period, based only on paleographical criteria. Yet, a significant number of these potsherds mention names that disappeared in the later Roman period from Soknopaiou Nesos. Hence, they might have been inscribed and discarded some time before the early second century. The method of dating texts by means of onomastical data has the potential to be useful to date further sources as well. Specifying the chronological scope of previously amply dated sources offers two perspectives: One may determine paleographical characteristics of a certain period more clearly. Or one may specify at which particular time certain events, mentioned within a text, have happened.

**Perspectives on Experience: The Daily Life of Workmen at Dime
During the University of Michigan's Excavation**

Bianca GALLINA – Josiah OLAH – Arthur VERHOOGT

As part of the University of Michigan's excavations in the Fayoum, Dime was excavated for the field season of 1931-32. While the actions of university staff have since been well documented and researched, very little attention has been given to the native workmen employed by the university. This paper examines the 1931-32 field season from the perspective of these workmen in order to draw attention to their essential contributions and experiences during the excavation. The workmen were irreplaceable members of the excavation who, unlike the university staff, provided the physical labor necessary to carry out the field season. As part of an effort to digitize the University of Michigan's materials on Dime, archival research on workmen experiences was conducted using the archives of the Bentley Historical Library and the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology. Letters between university staff, field reports, financial accounts, and workmen letters have allowed the experiences of workmen at Dime to be better understood. The paper examines aspects of workers' lives at Dime in the form of illness, injuries, duties, daily life, housing and explores their various roles in excavation and artifact recovery, as well as construction and infrastructure.