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Keepers of the Secrets of the Sky, the Earth, and the Underworld: The High Priests of Ptah at Memphis During the Kushite and the Saite-Persian Periods (c. 728–332 BC)

Abstract: The High Priests of Ptah at Memphis had been selected continuously for almost three thousand years and had always belonged to the social and political elites of ancient Egypt. However, the titleholders from the 25th to 30th Dynasties (c. 714–332 BC)[1] remain relatively unexplored among modern scholarship. The purpose of the present article is thus twofold. Firstly, after a careful review of seemingly disparate pieces of evidence, it proposes a new chronological list of officeholders for the same period. Secondly, the article explores the complex socio-political relations between the Memphite high priests and different royal houses, either of Egyptian ancestry or otherwise, in their historical context, highlighting their spiritual authority and ability to establish, whenever possible, family dynasties which would last for multiple generations. Indeed, royal support was essential for high priests' appointments and in turn, high priests provided kings with means towards their legitimacy, especially important for usurpers and foreign pharaohs. Consequently, the High Priests of Memphis were never completely independent from royal influence, but they were instrumental in validating royal power.

Keywords: priesthood, Memphis, first millennium BC, Ptah, socio-political history

Introduction

The highest hierarchical religious office at Memphis, one of Egypt's oldest royal, administrative, sacral, and intellectual centres,[2] is usually associated with the title 'Greatest of

1 Absolute chronology is after Hornung et al. 2006, 490 with certain new interpretations.

2 On the central royal, historical, administrative, and religious position of Memphis throughout Egyptian history, see most recently Jurman 2020, 21–73.

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the Directors of Craftsmen' ( , *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t*),[3] commonly rendered in modern scholarship as the High Priest of Ptah or the High Priest of Memphis (henceforth, HPM). The earliest known attestation of the title is from the 3rd Dynasty (c. 2592–2544 BC).[4] Originally probably an administrative position connected to royal building activities and workshops during most of the Old Kingdom (c. 2543–2120 BC),[5] the office became socially exceptionally prestigious during the Middle Kingdom (c. 1980–1630 BC).[6] During the New Kingdom (c. 1539–1076 BC), the Ptah domain had become a major religious and political institution, led by some of the country's politically and socially most prominent individuals and members of the royal court.[7] The title remained the single most important marker of collective identity and source of social prestige within Memphite society during the 1st millennium BC, reaching the pinnacles of power, prestige, and influence twice during the same period: initially, under the 21st and 22nd Dynasties (c. 1076–746 BC), monopolized by a family line related by affinity and blood to both royal houses;[8] and finally, under Ptolemaic rule (323–30 BC), when the office was again transmitted within a single family whose members are usually referred to as the leaders of the indigenous elite,[9] largely due to their consistently close and good relations with the Hellenistic royal house at Alexandria until the Roman conquest.[10] The position still existed during the Roman era, likely as late as the early 3rd century AD, perpetuating much of the previous supreme influence over the indigenous priesthoods.[11]

3 For this conventional analysis of the title, see Fischer 1976, 66–67; Freier 1976, 9–10; Fischer 1996, 238; Panov 2017a, 482–483; Broekman 2017a, 119; Cervelló Autuori 2018, 10–14; Jurman 2020, 105–108; for other interpretations, see De Meulenaere 1974, 183–184 (*ḥmww wr sḫm*); Devauchelle 1992, 207 (*wr ḥmww*); Osing 1998, 239b, Jansen-Winkeln 2005, 76 n. 76, and Jansen-Winkeln 2006a, 131 n. 29 (*wr ʿbꜣ ḥmw.t*); Colin 2002, 96 n. 190 and Klotz 2014a, 722 (*wr ʿbꜣ ḥmww*).

4 Surviving on a vase fragment found in the subterranean galleries beneath the Step Pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara; cf. Kaplony 1963, 550; Lauer/Lacau 1965, 65 (No. 157), fig. 108.

5 Freier 1976, 5–34; Maystre 1992, 51–69, 105–119, 223–250. It should be noted that the study of Charles Maystre was submitted as a doctoral dissertation in 1948 and was only partly updated for final publication in 1992. A comprehensive study about the HPM based on up-to-date material is therefore a desideratum. Most recently, doubt has been raised regarding the association of the god Ptah with the title in the Old Kingdom and the title's religious meaning. See Nuzzolo/Krejčí 2017, 369. On the other hand, Josep Carvelló Autuori (2018, 37–38) insists on dual nature of the office since the beginning.

6 Wolfram Grajetzki (2013, 258) mentions the high social profile of the HPM. For the HPM during the Middle Kingdom in general, see Fischer 1976, 57–76; Bourriau 1982, 51–55; Maystre 1992, 121–125; el-Sharkawy 2008, 24–25.

7 For the HPM during the New Kingdom, see e.g. Maystre 1992, 71–81, 127–161, 257–349; Raedler 2011, 135–154; Dalino 2018, 52.

8 Cf. most recently Jurman 2009, 125–129; Broekman 2017a; Jurman 2020, 1169–1180.

9 E.g. Baines 2004, 57.

10 Numerous studies are dedicated to the family of the Ptolemaic HPMs. See e.g. Quaegebeur 1972; Quaegebeur 1974; Quaegebeur 1980; Reymond 1981; Gorre 2009, 605–622; Panov 2011, 101–103; Thompson 2012[2], 99–143; Marković 2015a; Panov 2017a; Prada 2019; Chauveau/Gorre 2020.

11 See most recently Marković 2020, 248–250.

Yet, the situation from the mid-8th to the mid-4th centuries BC, where the documentation is problematic at best, needs serious revision. Few modern authors devoted more than a passing reference to the topic. Dietrich Wildung's list contains *only* five individuals (his numbers 79–83) holding office during the four centuries in question.[12] Charles Maystre also identified five individuals, four of them oddly being different to those mentioned in Wildung's list.[13] In his pioneering work, Herman De Meulenaere listed six secure officeholders from the 26th to early 27th Dynasties (664–486 BC, i.e. 178 years),[14] a sequence that is more or less followed in the latest list of the HPM by Basem Samir el-Sharkawy, with some dubious additions (his numbers 96–104).[15] In stark contrast, 14 high priests are identified from the late 18th Dynasty to the end of the 20th Dynasty (c. 1336–1077 BC, i.e. c. 259 years),[16] 16 are documented during the 21st and 22nd Dynasties (c. 1076–746 BC, i.e. 330 years),[17] while at least 13 are attested from the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphos until the Roman conquest of Egypt (c. 284–30 BC, i.e. c. 254 years).[18] The clear gaps with no officeholders are therefore proposed for the 25th Dynasty (c. 714–664 BC, i.e. 54 years),[19] and a politically unstable period between the deaths of the Persian king Darius I and the Hellenistic king Ptolemy I Soter (c. 486–284, i.e. 202 years).[20]

The purpose of this article is twofold. First, it reviews the available sources related to the HPM and proposes a new preliminary chronological list of the office holders from the Kushite, Saite, and Persian periods until the Ptolemaic era (c. 714–284 BC). Secondly, it aims to situate the HPM within a broader socio-political context of the era and offers several plausible interpretations of their complex relations with different rulers, either of Egyptian ancestry or otherwise, highlighting their spiritual authority and ability to establish, whenever possible, family dynasties which would last for multiple generations, significantly influencing the political climate at Mem-

12 Wildung 1977, col. 1262.

13 Maystre 1992, 172–174. Their full names are systematically abbreviated in both Wildung's and Maystre's lists; cf. comments in De Meulenaere 1985, 265 n. 16.

14 De Meulenaere 1985, 263–266.

15 Cf. el-Sharkawy 2009, 79–80. Despite De Meulenaere (1985, 264) convincingly showed that there was only one HPM named Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj, El-Sharkawy still lists two (his numbers 101 and 102), following Wildung in that assertion (his numbers 80 and 81), while also erroneously identifying King Taharka as the HPM (his number 95). The names of the 26th Dynasty HPM are also systematically abbreviated by omitting the final element *m-jnb-ḥḏ*, similar to Wildung and Maystre. It seems that the author only combined the lists of Wildung, De Meulenaere and Maystre. Similarly, his number 104 never existed, being a misunderstanding of a special form of the god Thoth in a small temple at Qasr el-Aguz, near the temple of Medinet Habu in Western Thebes, built under Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II Tryphon (r. 170–163, 145–116 BC); cf. Volokhine 2002; Traunecker 2009.

16 Raedler 2011, 136–142; Dalino 2018, 52.

17 Kitchen 1996[3], 192–194, 487; Jurman 2009, 125–129; Jurman 2020, 1169–1180.

18 Thompson 2012[2], 99–143; Panov 2017a.

19 Cf. Jurman 2009, 128–129.

20 Cf. Vittmann 2009, 89–91; Monson 2015, 28; Gorre 2018, 146; Chauveau/Gorre 2020, 245, n. 38.

phis. The Ptah precinct certainly remained a powerful institution during proposed timeframe, having already been a major centre of traditional Egyptian beliefs and values for centuries, and an uppermost position within it would have given that position's bearer great economic wealth and political influence. Yet we must keep in mind that in ancient Egypt the king was always, ideologically speaking, the power supreme, the son and successor of the creator god, the only true intermediary between gods and humankind; performing temple rituals, honouring the gods. The restoration and construction of temples were among his main duties, at least in theory.[21] In reality, highest ranking priests acted as his deputies in major temples across country. As a consequence, no high priest was ever completely independent from royal influence. However, the political realities all over Egypt were rather complex throughout the 1st millennium BC, when the country experienced numerous socio-political reductions, raptures, and transformations, as well as recurring foreign invasions and administration, which ultimately caused the progressive decline of a centuries-old official culture and growing distance between political and priestly arenas of communication. The highest echelons within the temple administration were, in fact, wielding power on a local level instead of often distant, absent, or ephemeral rulers.[22]

In addition, a larger number of sources can be connected directly or indirectly to the HPM during the same period than was previously recognized. Remarkably, although all objects mentioned in this paper have been known to scholarship for decades, many of them still await full publication and study. Unfortunately, as is the case for almost all studies of past times, the paucity of sources, their chance nature of survival, uneven distribution and quality, the lack of secure archaeological contexts and further excavations, the existence of many undiscovered, unpublished, and understudied sources, and the difficulty in the dating of the material itself are only some of the problems that make difficult to discuss the HPM during this dynamic period in the history of Egypt. The general situation in Memphis is particularly opaque for all historical periods. The ancient city, together with its numerous known temples, was systematically quarried for building material since the Late Antiquity, especially over the course of the construction of medieval Cairo,[23] resulting in total destruction and misplacement of many monuments over the centuries. Also, large parts of the city ruins were left exposed to the annual Nile flood and were used for agriculture, while the strong growth of modern urban habitation in the last three decades poses a major treat for any future study.[24] Those monuments that ultimately survived tend to be in a fragmentary state and found in already disturbed contexts, now scattered in museums and private collections all over the world. The names and titles of the HPMs are

21 For a recent general overview on Egyptian kingship, see Morris 2010.

22 For the position of temples between autonomy and state authority after the New Kingdom, see Muhs 2021.

23 Cf. Leclère 2008, 90 with earlier references.

24 For the landscape and environmental changes at Memphis, see Gonçalves 2019.

found in texts explicitly meant to be preserved for posterity, recorded on votive objects (statues and stelae) and funerary equipment. In the most cases, we do not have more than titles, names and incomplete filiations of the HPMs. In the worst cases, we know only the name of the HPM, but neither his origin nor background. Moreover, the absence of evidence, which can have various reasons, needs to be kept in mind at all times, especially since a lack of priests or priestly ancestors can be deduced simply from the dearth of sources.[25] Indeed, available epigraphic monuments that mention the HPMs are only a fraction of once excisting inscriptions and the burials of the HPMs active during this timeframe have not yet been discovered. We must therefore keep these obstacles in mind while constructing our interpretations and making assumptions regarding the HPM.

Owning to the nature of the material, which is mainly prosopographical, the discussion of their mutual interconnections is therefore limited at this stage to broad outlines. Hence, the results of this research must remain preliminary until more comprehensive work can be done. The study on complex Memphite priestly hierarchies during the 1st millennium BC is ongoing and needs to be explored further, but this preliminary analysis will, the author hopes, still be useful for any upcoming discussion.

The 25th (Kushite) Dynasty (c. 714–664 BC)

Claus Jurman is still correct to some extent when stating that "for the entire Kushite Period no person carrying the title *wr ḫrp ḥmw.t* is attested";[26] at least not attested by his personal name. This need not necessarily mean that no such priest was active then – a possibility rendered all the more plausible considering the small corpus of surviving, or better yet, identified, written sources from this era of Memphite history. Nonetheless, the title *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t* itself is attested in the inscriptions of two fragmentary statues, very likely from Memphis, tentatively dated to the 25th Dynasty:[27] a headless block statue,[28] and a fragment of a standing statuette.[29] The former bears a damaged inscription on the robe over the lower legs, invoking the title in plural (l. 3, ), as a part of the so-called 'Appeal to the Living' text,[30] among typically Mem-

25 See the warnings of Jansen-Winkeln 2009a; Gee 2010. It is noteworthy that the works of many researchers is plagued by a reliance only on the preserved evidence.

26 Jurman 2009, 128; cf. Jurman 2020, 1172.

27 It should be noted that the precise dating of both statues is far from certain. They could have been somewhat later, therefore it would be wiser to propose a wider dating of "late 25th to early 26th Dynasty".

28 Cairo, Egyptian Museum CG 659; cf. Jansen-Winkeln 2009b, 373.

29 Leipzig, Antikenmuseum der Universität Leipzig D 14; cf. Krauspe 1997, 130–131 [284], Taf. 158; De Meulenaere/Vanlathem 2010, 60.

30 'Appeal to the Living' texts are intended for passers-by educated in reading and writing (usually scribes and different congregations of priests) in order to encourage them to recite the offering for-

phite priestly congregations such as the *stm*-priests ( , *stm.w*),[31] divine fathers ( , *jt.w-nṯr*),[32] god's servants ( , *ḥm.w-nṯr*),[33] and inspectors of the *sm*-priests ( , *sḫḏ sm.w*);[34] the title *stm* preceded the title *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t*.[35] The rest of the line is unfortunately gone. The latter monument has only one surviving column of inscription on the front of the garment containing the very beginning of the 'Appeal to the Living' text, mentioning "every Greatest of Directors of Craftsmen ( , *wr ḫrp.w* [*ḥmw.t*] *nb*)". The inscriptions on both statues specifically asked for the *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t* to pronounce a simple voice offering for their owners. In addition, two statue heads, kept today at New York,[36] and Vienna,[37] have a short wig from which hangs the distinctive braided side lock attached to the right side of his head. The same type of side lock is usually represented specifically worn by the *Ỉwn-mw.t=f*-priest,[38] *stm n.j Ptḥ* and *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t*

mula for the owners of the objects and their ancestors, and were inscribed in places that could easily gain their attention, such as walls at the entrance of the tomb, on the false doors, or on stelae and statues; cf. e.g. Bommas 2010, 164.

31 On the reading and meaning of this title, see most recently Jurman 2020, 108–109, 1170–1173.

32 On the meaning of this title, see Jurman 2020, 137–139.

33 The Egyptian word *ḥm-nṯr* is usually translated in modern historiography as "prophet" or simply "priest" (Wb III, 88, 19–90, 7), but it is better suited to be taken literally as "god's servant". This title is attested in the majority of Egyptian temples and is usually considered the highest sacerdotal position apart from high priest. Nevertheless, with a specific addition, it was a designation of high priest in some temples. For example, the High Priest of Amun at Thebes is termed *ḥm-nṯr tpj n Ỉmn-Rᶜ* or first god's servant of Amun-Re. On Theban High Priests of Amun, see most recently Kubisch 2018. For an outline of the different categories of priests, see Spencer 2010, 256–260.

34 It should be also noted that the title *stm* of the god Ptah must not be confused with the title *sm* of the god Sokar, especially since the latter is far more often attested throughout the 1st millennium BC and represents a mid-rank priestly title; cf. De Meulenaere 1961, 289–290; Klotz 2014a, 723.

35 The sources strongly imply that there was only one holder of both titles at a time. The duties carried out by the title holders overlapped: both participated in the cult of Ptah at Memphis, probably being in charge of the clothing and the ornaments of the god, and in various funerary ceremonies, most often the 'Opening of the Mouth'. See the discussion in Jurman 2020, 108–109, 1170–1173. On the other hand, the title *stm* also denoted the chief priest of the royal memorial temples in Western Thebes during the New Kingdom (cf. Haring 1997, 214–220).

36 Metropolitan Museum of Art 66.99.64; see discussion in Jurman 2020, 474–475.

37 Kunsthistorisches Museum ÄS 5789; the head is, on stylistic and iconographical grounds, tentatively dated under Taharka. See further Rogge 1992, 16–19; Jurman 2020, 1175.

38 Several HPM identified themselves as "an image of Iunmutef (*tj.t n*(*.t*) *Ỉwn-mw.t=f*)" or similar during the New Kingdom, despite the fact that the concept and subsequent office are not characteristic only for Memphis. The specific notion *Ỉwn-mw.t=f* ('pillar of his mother') is usually interpreted as the form of the god Horus in his role as the caring son, who helps his father Osiris to overcome his deceased status in order to enter his existence in the afterlife. He therefore protects the divine kingship, the essential element that constitutes world order. Also, this notion labeled a human officiant, who performed during certain royal rituals (providing to the royal Ka, making food offerings, revitalizing and rejuvenating the king during the coronation ritual, the Sed-Festival and the Opening of the Mouth). On this topic, see recently Rummel 2010 and Gregory 2013.

respectively. All of these elements lead us to believe that the officeholder may have existed at the time.

It is also useful to remind ourselves that these priestly positions were often held by the same person,[39] despite the evidence which implies that the usual title combination *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t* and *stm n.j Ptḥ* sometimes could have been held separately by different contemporary individuals, though in these cases they were often members of the same family.[40] Thereby, it follows that the predominant strategy of the HPM may have been that the same person and his family control not only a ritual practice and privileged knowledge, but also direct access to the god's statue hidden deep inside the temple complex. Notably, since the late Old Kingdom onwards, every *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t* had been also the *stm*-priest, but as we shall see, not every *stm*-priest was *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t* too.[41] The separation sometimes appears to have been politically motivated.[42] Still, another reason can be the lack of preserved or identified monuments. An excel-

39 For example, a scene on the south side of an Apis bull's embalming table shows a cartouche of Shoshenq I (c. 943–923 BC), the founder of the 22nd Dynasty, and a figure of the HPM Shedsunefertem (A), son and successor of the HPM Ankhefensekhmet (A), wearing the leopard skin and side-lock, with the following label: "Doing the Opening of the Mouth for his father Osiris-Apis by the Pillar of his Mother, the Purifier of the Sanctuary (*jrj.t wpj(.t)-rʒ n jt(=f) Wsjr-Ḥp jn Ỉwn-mw.t=f wꜥb pr-wr*)". Besides the role of *Ỉwn-mw.t=f wꜥb pr-wr*, Shedsunefertem (A) bears the titles *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t stm n.j Ptḥ*. On this monument, see most recently the discussion of Jurman 2020, 409–420.

40 The title *stm n.j Ptḥ* appears to have differentiated an intended successor of the HPM: for example, Sheshonq (C), son and successor of Shedsunefertem (A), and later Takeloth (D), son of Padiese (A) under Sheshonq III (c. 842–803 BC), who likely died prematurely before he could have succeeded his father as an HPM; cf. Jurman 2020, 1171–1172. In addition, an undated fragment from the ruins of the Ptah precinct shows a kneeling figure of a *wr ḫrp.w hmw.t* before a figure of likely king followed by a standing figure of a *stm*-priest (Engelbach 1915, 33, pl. LVIII, 32).

41 Commenting on the importance of this position, Jurman argues that "the title *stm* was often connected with a higher degree of prestige than *wr ḫrp ḥmw.wt*" during the late Libyan period, concluding that both titles were sometimes adopted "temporarily on the occasion of special religious ceremonies such as the burial or initiation of an Apis bull" (Jurman 2009, 129; this view is also maintained in Jurman 2020, 1172). This suggestion must be taken with reservation since a vast majority of the preserved written sources about the HPMs come from the Serapeum. The term 'Serapeum' designates the area of North Saqqara associated with the burials of the Apis bulls, located north-west of the Pyramid of Djoser, encompassing individual tombs, gallery tombs, and different temples. The first attested Apis burial in the area is a chamber tomb with freestanding aboveground chapel dating to the reign of Amenhotep III (r. c.1390–1353 BC). This type of tomb was abandoned in the second half of the reign of Ramesses II (r. c.1279–1213 BC) in favour of the so-called Lesser Vaults, a catacomb of galleries with side chambers containing coffins for the mummified bulls, while a second gallery of chambers, the so-called Greater Vaults, was excavated under Psamtik I and further expanded and remodelled with each bull continuously until the Roman conquest. On the archaeology of the Serapeum, see Mariette 1857; Mariette 1882; Malinine et al. 1968, vii–xvii; Dodson 2005, 72–91.

42 Michael Bányai (2017–2018, 35) proposed that the presence of the 25th Dynasty kings at Memphis may have been a reason for the absence of any known officeholder, believing that the HPM could have been potentially dangerous political competition for them. The political reasons are mentioned also in Jurman 2020, 1172.

lent example is the case of the HPM Imephor Impy Nikauptah, who probably lived between the end of the Old Kingdom and the beginning of the First Intermediate Period.[43] This individual has been known to modern historiography since 1891: his name and a sole title are recorded on a weight Berlin ÄM 8032,[44] however, his inclusion in the lists of the Memphite high priests was prevented by the absence of the *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t* title; instead, he has been known only as the *stm*-priest. This has been changed only recently when the inscriptions from his looted tomb at Kom el-Khamaseen in southwest Saqqara have been recovered: he is explicitly titled as *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t* in texts on the tomb's walls. Nevertheless, we need to be careful here. Although it is rather probable that not every known *stm*-priest was the HPM, there is a distinct possibility that some of them might have been.

Given that the private statues mentioned above were most certainly dedicated within the temple context,[45] the continuation of previous traditions and priestly hierarchies seems to have prevailed over any complex political situation after the Kushite conquest. Indeed, the Ptah domain remained an important institution under the 25th Dynasty, whose kings – Shabataka (r. c.714–705 BC), Shabaka (r. 705–690 BC),[46] and Taharka (r. 690–664 BC) – were actively involved in enlargements, embellishments, and enrichments of the temple enclosure,[47] meticulously following common and previously established sets of rules. Taharka was crowned at Memphis, and he also took up residence there.[48] As a consequence, the HPM was never completely independent from the influence of any ruling kings and their actions were inseparable. Prevously, the kings of the 22nd (Libyan) Dynasty were not only related to the family of the HPM and ruled, at least in part, through their cooperation, but were also dependent on them and their communication with the king-god Ptah. We know that the HPMs installed and buried several divine Apis bulls, regarded as heralds and sons of Ptah,[49] under the successive Libyan kings (Sheshonq I, Osorkon II, Sheshonq III, Pami, Sheshonq V).[50] The main events in the life of the Apis bull incorporated into the temple-

43 On this individual and his monuments, see Cervelló Autuori 2016; Carvelló Autuori 2018, 7–9, 61–62.

44 Cf. Brugsch 1891, 1451–1452 [82]; Cervelló Autuori 2016, 18, 26–27, Fig. 1.

45 Cf. e.g. Bothmer et al. 1960; Klotz 2014b; Jansen-Winkeln 2016; Price 2019.

46 In recent years, the ongoing discussion about the exact order of the Kushite kings (Bányai 2013; Payraudeau 2015; Bányai 2015; Broekman 2015; Broekman 2017b; Broekman 2017c; Broekman 2017d; Jansen-Winkeln 2017; Jurman 2017; Bányai 2017–2018; Kahn 2020) has yielded more arguments for the order Shabataka – Shabaka over those in favour of the conventional order, therefore suggesting Shabataka as the founder of the 25th Dynasty, which is accepted in this article as better matching the chronology of the period.

47 For an overview of their building activities in Memphis, see Pope 2014, 263–264.

48 Cf. Pope 2014, 264.

49 There is no recent monograph or in-depth study of the Apis bulls. Still useful, but slightly outdated, is Otto 1938, 10–35. See also Jurman 2010a; Marković 2015b; Marković 2017; Devauchelle 2020.

50 See examples in Jurman 2010a, 230–231.

based performances – birth, installation, death, and burial – and recorded on stelae commemorating the individual bulls had been a result of a close collaboration of kings and the Ptah priesthood established already during the New Kingdom, repeated over and over again, and were highly political in nature.[51] At least three divine Apis bulls were installed at Memphis and buried at the Serapeum under the 25th Dynasty.[52]

Moreover, the prominence of Ptah was paramount in Lower Egypt since the New Kingdom. The so-called Memphite theology, which incorporated the Heliopolitan tradition of creation into the Memphite religious system and elevated Ptah to the position of the ultimate creator god probably during the Ramesside period,[53] is said to have been inscribed on a stela and preserved under Shabaka (London BM EA 498).[54] Furthermore, a strong Memphite influence may be deduced from their throne names that had been borrowed from the Old Kingdom kings buried at South Saqqara (Djedkare-Isesi for Shabataka, Pepy II for Shabaka).[55] On the other hand, Taharka supported and endowned the temple of Amun-Re – the state god of the 25th Dynasty – within the Ptah precinct, but an anonymous god's servant of Ptah was responsible for the maintenance of the cult itself.[56] The tradition that reached Herodotus of Halicarnassus in the mid-5th century BC of a priest of Ptah (ὸ ἱερεύς τοῦ Ἡφαίστου) who became the king named Sethōs (Σεθῶν) is a good illustration of the high prominence and political power of the priesthood of Ptah during the same period, no matter who this enigmatic person might have been historically.[57] Therefore, by mentioning the HPM in their votive inscriptions, the major importance of this institution in the religious and socio-political life of Memphis had been directly maintained among the ancient priestly elite from the mid-8th to the mid-7th centuries BC, although the evidence is certainly elusive.

The last known HPM before the military actions of the Kushite king Piye is usually identified with Ankhefensekhmet (B), who was active perhaps during most of the reign of Shoshenq V (r. c.783–746 BC).[58] The disappearance of Ankhefensekhmet (B) – or alternatively Takeloth (H) – and his influential family from preserved records might have

51 On various people involved in the ceremonies concerning the Apis bulls, see Jurman 2010a, 235–239; Frood 2016; Marković 2017; Devauchelle 2017; Devauchelle 2020.

52 Cf. Dodson 2005, 83; see also Depuydt 1994.

53 Accordingly, Ptah created the world through the heart and the tongue, while his teeth and lips were equated with the semen and hands of Atum, the instruments through which Atum brought creation into being. On the Memphite Theology, see most recently Ockinga 2010; Sousa 2017.

54 Jansen-Winkeln 2009b, 2.

55 Cf. Blöbaum 2006, 369–370.

56 Cf. Meeks 1979, 255; Pope 2014, 264.

57 Discussion is still ongoing. See most recently Bányai 2017–2018, 36–38.

58 Cf. Jurman 2009, 127–128 with older literature. See, however, now Jurman 2020, 336–348, 1005–1007, who proposed a different individual, Takeloth (H), as the last known HPM from this family, whom he identifies with a like-named son of the HPM Harsiese (H), himself active under Pami (r. c.789–783 BC) and probably his successor Sheshonq V. This identification is based on a several credible assumptions,

coincided with the rise of the Great Chief of the West Tefnakhte (I) during the last three years of Shoshenq V, rather than being a consequence of gaps in surviving material.[59] Himself a grandson of Basa, who was god's servant of Amun at Tanis (*ḥm-nṯr ỉmn njsw.t nṯr.w*) and the northern vizier probably under the mid-22nd Dynasty,[60] Tefnakhte (I) is attested as *stm n.j Ptḥ* and at least a temporary ruler of Memphis on the so-called triumphal stela of Piye, found at Gebel Barkal in Nubia.[61] Tefnakhte (I) appears in Lower Egyptian inscriptions for the first known time towards the end of the reign of Shoshenq V as the ruler of all western provinces (*ḥḳ3 sp3.wt jmnt.t*), i.e. the entire western Nile Delta.[62] He certainly attained the position of *stm n.j Ptḥ* sometimes after the death of Shoshenq V in c.746 BC, but certainly before Piye's conquest in c.728 BC,[63] and was no stranger to priestly duties: Tefnakhte (I) also held important priestly positions in the cults of Neith at Sais, Wadjit at Buto, Hathor at Kom el-Hisn, and Sekhmet probably at Kom Firin, all geographically close towns in the western Delta; later on, these goddesses were worshipped within their cult places at Sais, too.[64] Like other similar priestly titles elsewhere, the position of *stm n.j Ptḥ* seems to be his principal socio-political point of reference at Memphis. Tefnakhte (I)'s adoption of this important priestly position may have been more significant and had a more wide-ranging impact within the Memphite community than previously believed.

However, the reasons for Tefnakhte (I) adopting only the title *stm n.j Ptḥ* needs further study, but in the meantime we may at least permit a possibility that some other currently unknown individual held the title *wr ḫrp ḥmw.t* at the same time, perhaps represented by the New York and Vienna statue heads, although the remainings of the statues are gone or still unidentified.[65] Regardless, it seems possible that the title *stm* had been transferred to a Memphite priestly family soon after Tefnakhte (I) ascended the throne, probably following Piye's retreat to Nubia.[66] The title itself is at-

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but there is still room for different scenarios, largely due to the fragmentary nature of the source material at our disposal.

59 For the debate for and against distinguishing Tefnakht 'I' and 'II', see Gozzoli 2017, ch. 1.

60 Cf. Koch 2019, 121 with further bibliography. For the cult of Amun at Tanis, see Guermeur 2005, 265–301.

61 Grimal 1981, 36. The most recent re-evaluation of Piye's campaign is Spalinger 2020, 201–241.

62 Cf. Moje 2014, 256–259.

63 At present, various modern scholars are assigning different absolute dates for Piye's conquest of Egypt: for example, c. 728 BC (Kitchen 1996, 362), c. 734–726 BC (Jansen-Winkeln 2006b, 263), c. 732 BC (Bányai 2013, 115), 723 BC (Payraudeau 2015, 13), or c. 727 BC (Fitzenreiter 2018).

64 For the deities worshipped at Sais during the 26th Dynasty, see most recently Wilson 2019, 343–345 with previous references. It is important to note that the priestly elite in Lower Egypt in the following centuries seem to emulate the careers of Tefnakhte (I) and his likely predecessor Osorkon (C) (for him, see Moje 2014, 59, 93–94, 153) by linking together the priestly duties in Sais, Buto, Kom el-Hisn, Kom Firin, and Memphis respectively.

65 See also curatorial interpretation on https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/545931 (accessed 15 November 2020).

66 For the reign of Tefnakhte (I), see most recently Forshaw 2019, 18 with older references.

tested on a Serapeum stela of a certain Senebef (A) dedicated likely under Tefnakhte (I)'s successor and presumed son Bakenrenef (r. c.720–714 BC).[67] His family, represented in three generations, held important priestly offices at Memphis and Letopolis apparently under the same king: his grandfather Ptahhotep (A) was the *stm*-priest, his father Ankhsheshonq is referred to as divine father and inspector of the *sm*-priests,[68] while Senebef (A) himself is attested with a specific title sequence 'divine father, inspector of the *sm*-priests, High Priest of Letopolis (*wnr n Sḫm*),[69] lector priest and chief (*ḫrj-ḥb ḥrj-dp*)'.[70] While the reasons behind the rise of this family still are unknown at present, it is within the realms of the possiblity that Ptahhotep (A) officiated at the interment of the Apis bull at the Serapeum in regnal year 6 of Bakenrenef as his title implies.[71]

Another major change within a pre-existing social structure at Memphis must have occurred with Shabataka's conquest of Lower Egypt after the war against Bakenrenef.[72] Different priestly families were apparently favoured under new kings. Although only a few individuals held the title *stm* during the 25th Dynasty, they were some of the highest-ranking Kushite state officials: the northern vizier Harsiese (R), father-in-law of the future king Psamtik I (r. 664–610 BC);[73] Senebef (B), under whose auspices the burial of the Apis bull in regnal year 24 of Taharqa was conducted;[74] and another northern vizier Bakenrenef, the owner of the largest and best decorated rock-cut Saite private tomb at Saqqara (LS 24). An additional northern vizier, Djedkare, himself son of Harsiese (R), also held sev-

67 Paris, Musée du Louvre IM 5947; Jansen-Winkeln 2007, 380. The exact absolute chronology of Bakenrenef is still uncertain. For an incomplete list of contemporary monuments documenting Bakenrenef, see Moje 2014, 260–261. Bányai (2015, 128 n. 18; 2017/2018, 34 n. 13) proposes that this king was the HPM too. This suggestion is erroneously based on the suggested identification of the king with the owner of two shabti figurines kept at Berlin (ÄM 5829 and now lost 7997; cf. Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 81), which in fact belonged to the homonymous northern vizier discussed below. Bányai follows el-Sharkawy (2009, 78), who in his own right quoted Maystre 1992, 172, n. 1–2.

68 His name indicates his birth under a king named Sheshonq, likely Sheshonq V; cf. Leahy 1992, 149.

69 For the reading of the title and discussion, see most recently Klotz 2014a, 724–725. In modern scholarship, the title is conventionally rendered as 'High Priest of Letopolis' (see most recently Chauveau/Gorre 2020, 238), although the translation is perhaps misleading and seems to represent a rank rather than an office, keeping in mind how frequently it is attested throughout the Saite-Persian era divided among the members of several priestly families at Memphis. This topic needs more research.

70 For this important title, see recently Vittmann 2009, 92–94.

71 For this Apis burial, see Dodson 2005, 83.

72 On the war, see most recently Forshaw 2019, 18–19 with older references.

73 The discussion on Harsiese (R) has been extensive over the years. See Vittmann 1978, 39–43; De Meulenaere 1982a; Bierbrier 1982, 153–154; Bierbrier et al. 1982, 225–227; Kitchen 1996[3], 567–568; Payraudeau 2003, 204; Koch 2019, 123. Harsiese (R) also held important administrative positions in the 8th and 12th nomes of Upper Egypt.

74 Cf. Jansen-Winkeln 2009b, 193–194; Ritner 2009, 555–556. Despite being seldom mentioned among modern scholarship (cf. Jurman 2009, 128; Jurman 2020, 1172; not mentioned for instance in Pope 2014), the same individual could possibly be attested on a scribe statue bearing the cartouche of Psamtik I in a private collection at Bryn Athyn (Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 264).

eral titles related to Memphis and Letopolis.[75] None of them was given the title *wr ḫrp.w hmw.t*, at least not in surviving records (Tab. 1), but "one should not rule out the possibility that the contemporary officiating *stm*-priests of Ptah fulfilled the highest duties of the Memphite clergy" as Jurman put it.[76]

Tab. 1: The titles of the officials associated with Memphis during the 25th Dynasty.

Individual	Monuments	Titles
Harsiese (R)	Philadelphia E.16025[77]	*ḥrj-tp ꜥ3 3tft jmj-r3 ḥm.w-nṯr m T3-wr stm n.j Ptḥ ḥm-nṯr n.j Ptḥ t3jtj s3b ṯ3.tj*
	Cairo TN 21/11/16/10[78]	*jrj-pꜥt ḥ3tj-ꜥ ḥm Jmn wr m33.w wnr n Sḫm stm m ḥw.t-k3-Ptḥ jmj-r3 njw.t ṯ3.tj*
	Cairo TN 27/1/25/17[79]	*ḥm Jmn wr m33.w wnr n Sḫm stm m ḥw.t-k3-Ptḥ jmj-r3 njw.t ṯ3.tj*
	Private collection[80]	*stm n.j Ptḥ m Inb-ḥd wnr n Sḫm jmj-r3 njw.t ṯ3.tj*
	Chapel of Nitocris (A) at Medinet Habu[81]	*jrj-pꜥt ḥ3tj-ꜥ wr m33.w n Iwnw*
Senebef (B)	Paris, Musée du Louvre IM 2640[82]	*jrj-pꜥt ḥ3tj-ꜥ stm ḫrp šndj.t nb.t ḥm-nṯr jt-nṯr Ptḥ*
	Private collection at Bryn Athyn (?)[83]	*jrj-pꜥt ḥ3tj-ꜥ ḥtmtj-bjtj smḥr-wꜥtj n mr.t*

75 For the monuments of the vizier Djedkare, see most recently Koch 2019, 123.
76 Jurman 2009, 129.
77 Jansen-Winkeln 2009b, 374.
78 Jansen-Winkeln 2009b, 429–430.
79 Jansen-Winkeln 2009b, 429–430.
80 Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 1016.
81 Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 28–33.
82 Jansen-Winkeln 2009b, 193–194; Ritner 2009, 555–556.
83 Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 264.

Tab. 1 (continued)

Individual	Monuments	Titles
Djedkare	Vienna 3580–3583[84]	*ḥ3.tj n 3tft ḥ3tj-ˁ T3-wr jmj-jst Šw Tfnwt nb 3w.t-jb ḥsk m 3bḏw ḫrp sm.w n.j ḥ3b Rˁ ḥrj-sšt3 n ḥw.t-nbw jt-nṯr sm wnr n Sḫm jmj-r3 njw.t t3.tj*
	Private collection[85]	*jmj-r3 njw.t t3.tj*
Bakenrenef	Boston 1970.495[86]	*stm ḫrp šndj.t nb.t ḥm-nṯr jt-nṯr Skr Pthḥ ḫrp ḥw.wt ḥm Ḥr wr w3ḏ.tj rnp ḥm Jmn m Jwnw mḥw t3.tj*
	Brooklyn 82.23 + Brussels E.7049[87]	*stm jt-nṯr sm ḥm-nṯr Ỉwn-mw.t=f wˁb pr-wr*
	Private collection[88]	*jrj-pˁt ḥ3tj-ˁ wr m Nṯr.t ḥm Jmn n W3s.t mḥ.t ḫrp ḥw.wt ḥm Ḥr wr w3d.tj rnp t3.tj*
	Florence 2182 (1705)[89]	*ḥ3tj-ˁ ḥm Jmn n W3s.t mḥ.t ḫrp ḥw.wt ḥm Ḥr wr w3d.tj jmj-r3 ḥm.w-nṯr jmj-r3 njw.t t3.tj*
	Saqqara, tomb LS 24[90]	*jrj-pˁt ḥ3tj-ˁ ḥtmtj-bjtj smḥr-wˁtj n mr.t ḫrp ˁḥ stm ḫrp šndj.t nb.t jt-nṯr ḥm-nṯr Pthḥ wnr n Sḫm sm n ḥw.t Skr ḥrj-sšt3 m R3-st3w ḫrp ḥw.wt ḥm Ḥr wr w3d.tj ḥm Jmn n W3s.t mḥ.t / m Jwnw mḥw rnp n.j ḥ3b Rˁ n.j ḥ3b Skr jmj-r3 sš.w njsw.t t3jtj s3b jmj-r3 njw.t t3.tj*

The high social standing of these officials finds further confirmation in the presence of two of the highest and most prestigious ranking court titles of previous times, hereditary prince (*jrj-pˁt*) and count (*ḥ3.tj-ˁ*),[91] among their predominantly priestly offices.[92] Furthermore, several upper-level positions and epithets previously associated solely

84 Jansen-Winkeln 2009b, 564; Koch 2019, 123. Four canopic jars were offered for sale on a controversial auction by the German auction house Gorny & Mosch Giessener Münzhandlung GmbH on 22 July 2020, lot 278. They were ultimately sold (https://auktionen.gmcoinart.de/Auktion/KatalogArchiv?intAuktionsId=876&los=1667528 [accessed 15 November 2020]). See coverage at https://artcrime.blogspot.com/2020/07/auction-alert-gorny-mosch-gorny-four.html (accessed 15 November 2020).

85 Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 1016.

86 Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 264.

87 Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 76.

88 Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 76.

89 Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 82–87.

90 Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 76–81.

91 The ranking titles seem to announce a high social status at the royal court and were restricted to a small number of people at the royal court and in the provinces; cf. Franke 1984, 13.

92 Another vizier Mentuhotep, who was son-in-law of an unknown Kushite king, is given the same ranking titles. For his monuments, see Jansen-Winkeln 2009b, 564–565, and Dorion-Peyronnet 2009, 201–202. For discussion about his career and family, see Habachi 1977, 165–170; Pope 2014, 266.

with the HPM (re)appeared suddenly in our sources and were held by this selected group of individuals and their closest relatives. Apart from being the vizier and the *stm*-priest, Harsiese (R) was also god's servant of Ptah (*ḥm-nṯr n.j Ptḥ*), High Priest of Heliopolis (*wr mȝ.w n Ỉwnw*) and Letopolis respectively.[93] His son Djedkare is referred to as divine-father, the *sm*-priest, one who belongs to the festival of Re (*n.j ḥȝb Rʿ*),[94] director of the *sm*-priests of Sokar (*ḫrp sm.w*),[95] and High Priest of Letopolis. Senebef (B) was god's servant of Ptah and director of every kilt (*ḫrp šndj.t nb.t*).[96] His father Ankhwennefer and brother Ptahhotep (B) respectively held the epithet *n.j ḥȝb Rʿ* and were inspectors of the sm-priests of Sokar, giving an indirect hint for a grandfather-grandson relationship with Senebef (A). Except for the position of High Priest at Letopolis, which was apparently transferred initially to Harsiese (R) and later to his son, the family of Senebef (A) discussed above might have regained royal trust and titles towards the end of Taharka's reign, occupying offices they might have lost after the fall of the 24th Dynasty.

Since Djedkare was the throne name of Shabataka,[97] now recognized as the first king of the 25th Dynasty,[98] this official may have been born sometime during the reign of this king or slightly later, strongly indicating the loyalty of his father, Harsiese (R), towards the royal house from Kush. Precise dates for Harsiese (R)'s career are unknown,[99] but it seems likely that the family's rise to prominence began with his accession to the vizierate,[100] and that this was connected to the assertion of Kushite authority in Lower Egypt under Shabataka. At the same time, by choosing the throne name of Shabataka for the personal name of his son and successor, Harsiese (R) could have expressed his gratitude to the Kushites for many of his offices, mainly those at

93 On the position of High Priest at Heliopolis, see most recently Nuzzolo/Krejčí 2017, 366–369; Nuzzolo 2018, 482–487.

94 See the discussion in Nuzzolo/Krejčí 2017, 368–369.

95 For this title, see De Meulenaere 1961, 287–288.

96 It should be noted that this title became an integral feature of the vizier's titulary under Teti (c. 2305–2279 BC) and has been associated with the HPM in the second half of Pepy II's reign (c. 2216–2153 BC). Later on, it is again attested among the additional titles held by viziers, the earliest known example being the famous Rekhmire under Thutmose III (c. 1479–1425 BC) and early Amenhotep II (c. 1425–1400 BC), who belonged to one of the most influential Theban family circles during the early New Kingdom (cf. Shirley 2010). During the early Ramesside era (c. 1279–1198 BC), it is always attested among the titles of the HPM, although some of them were viziers too. See further Helck 1954, 35; Baud 1999, 173; Fisher 2001, 100–101; Raedler 2004, 363 (Q 5.24), 366 (Q 5.34), 388 (Q 7.5); Gnirs 2013, 645 n. 26. Before Senebef (B), it is attested only with the HPM Harsiese (H) under Pami (cf. Jurman 2020, 948, 950). Senebef (B) is not attested as vizier in any preserved source.

97 Cf. Blöbaum 2006, 373.

98 See n. 46.

99 Kitchen (1996, 567–568) assumes c. 675–660 BC, followed by Koch 2019, 123.

100 Once the position of the second in power to the king, the viziers continued to denote a person of high executive power, predominately associated with temples during the 1st millennium BC. See recently an overview of Koch 2019.

Memphis, Letopolis and Heliopolis. A similar strategy may be noticed later with the family of the HPM during the 26th Dynasty, whose onomastics are closely linked to the royal names of the ruling dynasty. Djedkare was probably appointed as his father's successor under Shabaka or more likely under Taharka.[101] He also held another specific title, *ḥrj-sšt3 n ḥw.t-nbw* ('keeper of the secrets of the mansion of gold'), that might refer to the ritual centre of the Ptah temple where cult statues underwent the Opening of the Mouth ritual and were consecrated for liturgical use,[102] a principal duty that is associated with the HPM during the Old and Middle Kingdoms.[103] Furthermore, Harsiese (R) famously married one of his daughters, Mehitenweskhet, to the future king Psamtik I, another Kushite ally and later the founder of the 26th Dynasty.[104] Nevertheless, it is a reasonable proposition that Djedkare did not inherit the position of *stm n.j Ptḥ* after the death of his father, instead losing out to Senebef (B), whose titles and activities indicate strong connections to Taharka and his court, mentioned above. Djedkare's descendants are attested as active in Middle Egypt as late as the end of the 26th Dynasty,[105] but they apparently lost their previous professional connections with Lower Egypt.

Almost all Memphite priestly titles noted above are present in the titulary of the northern vizier Bakenrenef, who also adopted a specific title *Ỉwn-mw.t=f wʿb pr-wr*, attested solely in the case of the HPM Shedsunefertem under Sheshonq I.[106] He also held two upper-level managerial administrative positions: overseer of god's servants (*jmj-r3 ḥm.w-nṯr*) and overseer of royal scribes (*jmj-r3 sš.w nsw.t*); the former was also held by his father Padineith. At present, the chronology of the titles accumulated by Bakenrenef during his career and his family background is impossible to determine precisely, but one can assume that he reached a peak under Psamtik I.[107] He may have been somehow related to the 24th Dynasty, not only because he is named after

101 His career was previously tentatively dated to 660s BC (cf. Kitchen 1996, 568; Koch 2019, 123).

102 Cf. Traunecker 1989.

103 Maystre 1992, 35–36; Arnold 2007, 14.

104 See most recently Pope 2014, 267. Another daughter of his, Naneferheres, was married to a member of the powerful Theban family of Besenmut (Vittmann 1978, 43; De Meulenaere 1982a; Bierbrier 1982; Bierbrier et al. 1982). Probably around the same time, the royal princess Meresamun, likely a daughter of Nekau I and a sibling of Psamtik I, was sent to Thebes to become the 'Songstress in the interior of the temple of Amun' (*ḫs.t n.t ḫnw n Jmn*) under the Kushite God's Wife of Amun Shepenupet II, sister of Piye (cf. Coulon/Payraudeau 2015; Jansen-Winkeln 2018; for the 'Songstresses in the interior of the temple of Amun', see Koch 2012; Li 2017, 32–35). Mehitenweskhet was the mother of Nitocris I, who was famously adopted by Shepenupet II in 656 BC as her successor (cf. Ayad 2009, 23–27).

105 The genealogy of Djedkare is preserved on the coffin of his great-great-granddaughter Iretru today kept in a private collection (cf. Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 1016).

106 See n. 39.

107 His tomb is dated to the reign of Psamtik I since cartouches of this king has been found on the ceiling of the entrance hall (Stammers 2009, 122). The detailed study of Bakenrenef is however still lacking. See also comments in Price 2019, 28.

its last king killed by Shabataka and was able to build his magnificent tomb into the steep rocks at the eastern desert edge of Saqqara. His relation to the 24th Dynasty is also obvious because of the sequence of priestly titles belonging to the temples across the western Nile Delta, including Sais (*ḫrp ḥw.wt*),[108] Buto (*ḥm Ḥr wr wꜣd.tj*),[109] Sais/Tanis (*ḥm Jmn n Wꜣs.t mḥ.t / m Jwnw mḥw*),[110] and Kom el-Hisn (*rnp*),[111] which strongly resemble the career paths of Tefnakhte (I) and his grandfather Basa, himself a northern vizier as previously noted. In other words, including Memphis and Letopolis, Bakenrenef held titles of seven separate cults located in some of the most important temples in Lower Egypt.

A summary of his Memphite titles is:

(1) the title *stm* is always attested together with the title *tꜣ.tj* on all of his monuments,[112] perhaps because he felt these were his most important and prestigious functions;

(2) a specific title *Ỉwn-mw.t=f wʿb pr-wr* is only attested on the Brooklyn/Brussels statue and perhaps was adopted for the burial of the Apis bull in regnal year 21 of Psamtik I (644 BC),[113] the successor of a bull whose burial had been officiated by Senebef (B) under Taharka;

(3) the title *ḫrp šndj.t nb.t* appears on his Boston statue given between the title stm and the sequence *jt-nṯr ḥm-nṯr Ptḥ* [*ḥm-nṯr*] *Skr*, while the title sequence *stm ḫrp šndj.t nb.t jt-nṯr ḥm-nṯr Ptḥ* is attested only on the western and southern wall of the entrance hall to his tomb;[114]

(4) the epithet *n.j ḥꜣb Rʿ* is attested on eastern and southern wall of the Room C in his tomb, while a similar epithet, *n.j ḥꜣb Skr* (the one who belongs to the festival of Sokar), is found on the western wall of Room B, indicating his privileged positions during the festivals of Re and Sokar;

(5) The title *ḫrj-sšṯꜣ m Rꜣ-stꜣw* ('keeper of the secrets of Rosetjau') emphasizes a privileged knowledge and free access to the gateways of the underworld.[115]

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108 Cf. Jelínková 1958; el-Sayed 1976; Wilson 2006, 217; Klotz 2014a, 729–730.

109 Cf. De Meulenaere 1964, 165–166; el-Sayed 1982, 149–150; Redford 1983, 87; Perdu 1988, 148–149; Traunecker 1998, 1215–1216, 1226–1229.

110 Cf. Guermeur 2005, 106–116; Guermeur 2011, 165–174.

111 Cf. Tiribilli 2018; Perdu 2020.

112 Usually translated as 'vizier'. See the most recent discussion in Dulíková 2011.

113 For this burial, see Devauchelle 1994, 99–100; Devauchelle 2011, 139.

114 LD III, 260 a, b. Similarly, on the sarcophagus of Nesptah (B), son of the well-known Theban official Montuemhat, who served at Thebes under Taharqa and Psamtik I, the sequence *stm ḫrp šndj.t nb.t* appears only among the offices related to the cult of Ptah (*jt-nṯr ḥm-nṯr Ptḥ*), probably within his small chapel at Karnak. Given that Nesptah (B) is not attested as vizier, the same titles sequence must be recognized as the part of the Ptah priesthood in this context. For the career of Montuemhat, his family, and his role, see e.g. Leclant 1961; Naunton 2011, 97–114; Coulon 2016; Lohwasser et al. 2018.

115 For the meanings of Rosetjau, the vast desert stretching between Saqqara and Giza, see most recently Staring 2015, 171–172; Jurman 2020, 69–70.

The complexity of his titulary and number of positions and epithet attested for him strongly suggest that Bakenrenef was a senior official at that time.

The 26th (Saite) to 27th (Persian) Dynasties (664–404 BC)

Padipep

The situation seems to become somewhat clearer under Psamtik I and the unification of Egypt under the royal house of Sais in 664 BC,[116] when the holders of the title *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t* become known by their names. A few epigraphic sources – a fragmentary scribe statuette,[117] a torso of a kneeling statue,[118] and perhaps a headless block statue,[119] – commemorate the career of the HPM named Padipep (Tab. 2). Cairo CG 525 was found near the southern entrance to the temple of Ptah and is usually dated to the reign of Psamtik I,[120] while the same locality and date has been proposed for an otherwise unrecorded provenance of the Aberdeen statue.[121] Cairo CG 595 was also found somewhere within the ruins of the Ptah precinct.[122]

Tab. 2: Monuments and titles of Padipep.

Monuments	Titles
Aberdeen ABDUA:21473	*ḥ3tj-ʿ wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t ḥm-nṯr B3st.t nb.t ʿnḫ-t3.wj ḥm-nṯr Mwt ḫntj.t ʿb.wj nṯr.w wr ḫrp ḥmw.t m pr.wj jrj nfr-ḥ3.t*
Cairo CG 525	*jrj-pʿt ḥ3tj-ʿ stm ḫrp šndj.t nb.t ḥm-nṯr Ptḥ ḥm-nṯr B3st.t nb.t ʿnḫ-t3.wj ḥm-nṯr ʿ3.t Šsmtt* [. . .] *rḫ njsw.t jmj-r3 pr*
Cairo CG 595	*jt-nṯr sm*

It is quite conceivable that these statues were produced at three different stages in Padipep's career: (1) the initiation as a simple priest at the Ptah precinct (Cairo CG 595), (2)

116 The most recent work on the 26th Dynasty is Forshaw 2019.

117 Aberdeen, University of Aberdeen, Human Culture Collection ABDUA:21473; cf. Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 940 with further bibliography. The statue is essentially unpublished. Special thanks are due to Neil Curtis and Caroline Mary Dempsey (Aberdeen) for providing me with high resolution images of the statue and additional information.

118 Cairo, Egyptian Museum CG 525; Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 940.

119 Cairo, Egyptian Museum CG 595; Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 940.

120 Cf. Málek 1986, 107–108.

121 Cf. Málek 1986, 108 n. 56.

122 Both Cairo statues were last published almost a century ago and need re-editing.

the first promotion to senior priestly positions (Cairo CG 525) and (3) the final promotion to the HPM (Aberdeen ABDUA:21473). Padipep is associated with five specific priestly positions of the Memphite region, serving the cults of Ptah (*wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t stm ḫrp šndj.t nb.t jt-nṯr ḥm-nṯr Ptḥ*), Sokar (*sm*), and Shesemtet (*ḥm-nṯr ʿ3.t Šsmtt*) at Memphis,[123] Mut at Hutshedabed (*ḥm-nṯr Mwt ḫntj.t ʿb.wj nṯr.w*),[124] and Bastet in North Saqqara (*ḥm-nṯr B3st.t nb.t ʿnḫ-t3.wj*), most likely within a cultic enclosure known in later Greek sources as the Bubastieion.[125] This seems to be the earliest known time that the HPM served other gods at Memphis besides Ptah, Osiris or Sokar.[126] The Aberdeen statue also bears two distinctive titles associated with the HPM during the Old Kingdom: 'greatest of directors of craftsmen in the double chamber' (*wr ḫrp ḥmw.wt m pr.wj*),[127] and 'keeper of the headdress' (*jrj nfr-ḥ3.t*).[128] Also, it is important to note that Padipep is titled as the *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t* on the Aberdeen statue, while the same title is absent from Cairo CG 525, where he is identified solely as the *stm*-priest.

Surprisingly, Padipep held almost all titles associated with the institution of the HPM – *stm ḫrp šndj.t nb.t jt-nṯr ḥm-nṯr Ptḥ wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t/wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t m pr.wj jrj nfr-ḥ3.t* – that were previously divided among several individuals and, excluding the titles *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t* and *jrj nfr-ḥ3.t*, all already present in the titulary of the vizier Bakenrenef on his statuary and several places in his tomb. Unfortunately, nothing is securely

123 Shesemtet was a leonine goddess closely connected with Bastet and Sakhmet at Memphis since the 4th Dynasty; cf. most recently Lange 2016, 308–310.

124 For this location and its priesthood in the Memphite area, somewhere to the north of the Giza plateau, see Yoyotte 1972, 7; Zivie-Coche 1976, 299–300; Zivie-Coche 1991, 217 n. 645; Jurman 2020, 863. This position is attested only for a few priests during the 1st millennium BC: Nesptah (H), one of numerous sons of the HPM Shedsunefertem (A) (Paris, Musée du Louvre N.436; Jurman 2020, 854–864), in the mid-22nd Dynasty; Ptahirdisu in the early 26th Dynasty, who also served several cults at Giza and Letopolis (for the various monuments of this individual, see Zivie-Coche 1991, 214); an anonymous priest under the 27th Dynasty (Paris, Musée du Louvre N 421/665; unpublished, but see https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010021549 [accessed 15 August 2021]); an anonymous priest under the 30th Dynasty (Verona, Museo Lapidario Maffeiano 664/583; Yoyotte 1954, 96; Clère 1973, 99); and several successive High Priests of Letopolis during the Ptolemaic era: Ahmose (died 183 BC; Panov 2017a, 271, 285); Heru II (214–164 BC; Panov 2017a, 271); and Pehemnetjer-Petehoremhab (167/66–97/96 BC; Panov 2017a, 309).

125 Cf. Pasquali 2011, 81 n. 258, with references.

126 The HPM Iyiri, whose pontificate is dated between the reigns of Sety II and Tausert (c. 1202–1191 BC; cf. Yoyotte 1962, 464–465; Roehrig 2012, 59–60), was also High Priest of Osiris, the lord of Rosetjau (*ḥm-nṯr tpj n Wsjr nb R3-stȝw*), at Giza. For the cult of Osiris at Giza, see Zivie-Coche 1991, 259–260; Jurman 2020, 770, 1023. Strangely, no known HPM during the New Kingdom is attested with the title *ḥm-nṯr n.j Ptḥ*. During the 21st and 22nd Dynasties, the role of the HPM seems to be restricted to the cult of Ptah, however, their secondary sons and their families are attested as priests of several other divinities. For example, four sons of the HPM Shedsunefertem (A) were priests of Sakhmet, Amon-Re, and Mut (cf. Jurman 2020, 1061, 1063, 1078, 1088).

127 For this title form, attested for the HPMs during the Old and Middle Kingdoms, see Maystre 1992, 35, 55–56, 63, 71, 117, 121, 226–227, 231, 237, 238, 241, 243–244, 246, 249, 250–251.

128 For the full name of this title, the keeper of the Ptah's ornaments (*jrj nfr-ḥ3.t m ḫkr.w Ptḥ*), see below.

known about Padipep's exact chronology, origins, social background, his activities as the HPM and ultimate fate. Broadly dated under Psamtik I, he might well have started his priestly career during the later years of Taharka. The presence of two distinct priestly positions provides indirect hints for his familial background, therefore enabling us to group together people who are otherwise not directly connected. On the statue Cairo CG 595, Padipep is referred as son of Padiptah, who is titled *ḥm-nṯr Bꜣst.t nb.t ꜥnḫ-tꜣ.wj*,[129] which may explain the presence of the same title in the HPM's titulary, apparently inherited directly from his father, thus confirming this identification. The family of the god's servants of Bastet is known from two Serapeum stelae and two block statues from Memphis,[130] spanning for six generations probably from the late 22nd to the early 26th Dynasties. Pasherenptah, who belongs to the first known generation of the family under the late 22nd Dynasty, is referred to as steward of the domain manager of the domain of Ptah (*jmj-rꜣ pr jdnw n pr Ptḥ*) and in that capacity probably managed the agricultural estates of the temple of Ptah,[131] which may be a full version of the title held by Padipep himself on Cairo CG 525, abbreviated there to *jmj-rꜣ pr*. The same family held the position of the god's servant of Shesemtet for generations too. While it is not clear to which branch Padipep and his father might have belonged, it remains a distinct possibility that they were members of this family.[132]

Given the presence of the title sequence *stm ḫrp šndj.t nb.t ḥm-nṯr Ptḥ* together with the positions in the cults of Bastet and Shesemtet, it is conceivable that these titles were transferred to Padipep not only after his father's death, but also after the demise of Bakenrenef. The shabti figurines of Padiptah are numerous worldwide and, so far have received little attention as a group. A comparison of several shabtis of Padiptah and Bakenrenef kept today in the British Museum shows striking similarities (material, design, style of execution, size, and text position),[133] strongly indicating that they were manufactured in the same workshop, thus permitting us to propose that they were close contemporaries, and therefore a similar timeframe for their deaths. The third shabti group corresponding to those of Padiptah and Bakenrenef is of a cer-

129 Padiptah is known for his numerous shabti figurines distributed over many museums and private collections worldwide (cf. Aubert/Aubert 1974, 216; Schneider 1977, 230). See also the listing in *Shabtis de Basse Époque (XXVIe dynastie – période lagide)* (https://www.segweb.ch/index-shabtis [accessed 18 October 2020]).

130 Paris, Musée du Louvre IM 3745 (Jansen-Winkeln 2007, 395–396); Paris, Musée du Louvre IM 3024 (Jansen-Winkeln 2007, 396); private collection in Cairo (Jansen-Winkeln 2009b, 372–373); Turin, Museo Egizio 3063 (Jansen-Winkeln 2009b, 373–374). For this family, see preliminarily Vercoutter 1962, 1–15; Vernus 1976, 2–3.

131 For the translation of the term *jdnw*, see Dalino 2019.

132 The prosopography of these families is a separate question and a project for another day.

133 Bakenrenef: BM EA 13685; Padiptah: BM EA 33969, EA 33970, EA 33971, EA 33972, and EA 33973. All are unpublished but accessible at https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection (accessed 19 October 2020).

tain Senebef, who is titled as *jt-nṯr ḥm-nṯr*,[134] probably identical to Senebef (B).[135] On the British Museum shabtis, besides the main title *ḥm-nṯr Bꜣst.t nb.t ʿnḫ-tꜣ.wj*, Padiptah is referred as *jt-nṯr sm* (EA 33970, EA 33971) and *ḥrj-sštꜣ m Rꜣ-stꜣw* (EA 33969, EA 33972, EA 33973), making him a contemporary colleague to Bakenrenef, who also held the title *ḥrj-sštꜣ m Rꜣ-stꜣw*. If this interpretation is correct, the accumulation of the titles associated with the HPM could be dated more precisely to the second half of the long reign of Psamtik I, maybe during his fourth and/or fifth decade on the throne, keeping in mind that the construction of the vaulting in the tomb of Bakenrenef was probably finished sometime after regnal year 21 of the same king,[136] permitting a possibility that he could have been alive at least a decade after the tomb's completion. Padipep therefore may have been installed in the Ptah precinct after the death of Bakenrenef and could have lost his position under Nekau II in favour of a king's close friend as will be discussed below. Finally, his tomb may have already been discovered somewhere to the west of the Pyramid of Teti at Saqqara; the exact location of the tomb is now lost.[137] Unfortunately, preserved funerary equipment (canopic jars Cairo CG 4266–4269 and numerous shabtis in museum and private collections worldwide), datable to the early 26th Dynasty,[138] reveals the name of the owner without any title. Nevertheless, it was not so uncommon that both shabtis and canopic jars mention no titles of the deceased officials buried at Saqqara during the 26th Dynasty,[139] making this identification probable.

Nekau-men-(em)-ineb-hedj

Another officeholder is attested on a canopic jar (Berlin ÄM 11641), said to have been found in a tomb somewhere at Abusir.[140] The deceased's name is Nekau-men-(em)-ineb-hedj (*Nkꜣw-mn-m-jnb-ḥḏ*) and he is mentioned only with two titles: great overlord in every city (*ḥr.j-tp ʿꜣ m njw.t nb.wt*) and *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t.* His basilophorous name liter-

134 Cf. Aubert 1988, 2.

135 The descendants of Senebef (B) and his brother Ptahhotep very likely continued to flourish at Memphis under the later part of the 26th Dynasty. Their families will be discussed elsewhere.

136 El-Nagger 1986, 17; Stammers 2009, 121.

137 Cf. PM III/2, 565, map LI (E-4). His family may have been further attested on several Serapeum inscriptions, but their prosopography will be discussed elsewhere.

138 Aubert/Aubert 1974, 217; Schneider 1977, 227. See also the listing in *Shabtis de Basse Époque (XXVIe dynastie – période lagide)* (https://www.segweb.ch/index-shabtis [accessed 18 October 2020]).

139 Good examples are Padineith, whose tomb has been found within the mortuary temple in front of the Unas Pyramid at Saqqara (Stammers 2009, 108), and Neferibresaneith, whose tomb has been found within the mortuary temple in front of the Userkaf Pyramid at Saqqara (Stammers 2009, 104–106). The inscriptions in their tombs give numerous titles for both Padineith and Neferibresaneith.

140 Müller 1974, 189; De Meulenaere 1985, 264; Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 946.

ally means "Nekau is established in Memphis".[141] This unique name is usually taken as evidence for an assumption that this individual was contemporaneous to Nekau II (r. 610–595 BC), the second king of the 26th Dynasty,[142] though it is not necessarily evident that he was born under his rule. The king's name is written as a part of the personal name within a cartouche, implying that he may have been at least active under this king.[143] Another homonymous royal candidate is Nekau I (r. 672–664 BC), Nekau II's paternal grandfather,[144] making it possible that this individual belongs more or less to the same generation as Nekau II himself,[145] although a slightly younger contemporary would be preferable given the evidence about his probable family discussed below. Nothing is otherwise known about his social and familial background, but by bearing the king's or rather future king's name (or both), Nekau-men-(em)-ineb-hedj would have probably belonged to the uppermost echelons of Lower Egyptian society, perhaps to the inner elite circles close to the royal house of Sais. If this is correct, he probably would have succeeded (or replaced) Padipep as the HPM after the accession of Nekau II.

His other title is similar in form to two past high-ranking state appointments. The first, *ḥrj-tp ꜥ3 n.j* + [specific nome name], was the usual designation of the governor of certain nomes from the late Old Kingdom to the reigns of Senwosret III/Amenemhat III during the Middle Kingdom (c. 2305–1800 BC).[146] The second, *ḥrj-tp t3.wj* (great overlord of Two Lands), was borne by the male members of the royal family, the vi-

141 PN II, 301, 22. For the diffusion of the basilophorous name types in the Saite-Persian times, see Vittmann 2002, 97–99.

142 Cf. De Meulenaere 1985, 265–266; Leahy 2011, 553; De Meulenaere 2015, 13.

143 Nekau II as a prince is attested on a statue dedicated to the goddess Neith in private possession in Paris sold at auction in 2012 (Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 37–38 with older literature). His name is written without a cartouche there, which is consistent with naming practices of the royal sons during the 26th Dynasty. Bernard Bothmer (1960, 68) believed that the writing of the king's name as a part of the personal name within a cartouche was not permissible during his lifetime, a theory criticized by De Meulenaere (1966, 33–34).

144 For the reign of Nekau I, see most recently Ryholt 2011, 123–128; Moje 2014, 19, 135–140, 262–265; Gozzoli 2017, 7–8.

145 Nekau II was likely born during the long reign of his father. On the other hand, the identity of his mother is highly problematic. According to the common opinion, she is identified with Mehitenweskhet, daughter of Harsiese (R) and mother of the God's Wife of Nitocris (A) (cf. Vittmann 1975, 376–377; see recently Dodson/Hilton 2010, 244). However, the evidence is not as straightforward as it seems. Mehitenweskhet is nowhere called the king's mother and was probably sent to Thebes with her daughter, where she died and was probably buried at Medinet Habu. For the discussion, see Leahy 1996, 162; Gozzoli 2017, 18–19. Günter Vittmann (1975, 386; 1976, 146–147; cf. Gozzoli 2017, 18–19) proposes another candidate. The present author is currently working on a re-evaluation of this question.

146 For the most recent discussion of the titles of local governors in Old and Middle Kingdom administrations, see Willems 2013; Willems 2014, 28–58. For the notion of the nomarch, see most recently Tomkins 2018.

ziers, and the HPMs from Ramesses II to Ramesses XI (1279–1077 BC).[147] His position as some kind of royal relative therefore cannot be completely ruled out. He may have also been a personal friend of the future king. According to the title's literal meaning, the HPM could have held the highest administrative position in every town. However, since this specific distinction is probably only a revival of a long-forgotten title in a slightly different form and is, to the present author's knowledge, only attested for Nekau-men-(em)-ineb-hedj, it seems plausible that it would have been created specifically for him most likely as an honorific distinction of the favoured state official, close to the royal court,[148] conveying the high rank and status that he enjoyed at that time. It would be expected that he would have had more titles, but our knowledge is limited since the evidence is fragmentary.

The same individual may also be attested on a Serapeum inscription,[149] where only the first part of his name survives. This fragmentary relief survived in the form of two registers with partially preserved human figures and only four incomplete horizontal lines of the inscriptions behind them. This type of monument is similar in form to a now lost Ramesside inscription, the so-called 'Daressy fragment',[150] a list of the HPMs from Saqqara, and the so-called Berlin genealogy (ÄM 23673), representing a single family of the Memphite priests in four incomplete registers.[151] Like there, the human figures stand in front of their titles and filiations on a Serapeum fragment. The upper register contains the preserved word "secret (*sšt3*)", probably part of the title "keeper of the secrets (*ḫrj-sšt3*)", usually associated with different Memphite temples. In the relatively better preserved lower register of the fragment, the first horizontal line contains "his son *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t, ḥm-nṯr* [*n.j Ptḥ*]" and next parallel line contains "like-entitled (*mj-nn*) Nekau-[. . .]". Since it seems that there is enough space only for the son's name in the missing lower part of the first line, Nekau-[. . .] should be recognized as the father of a HPM. It is also clear that Nekau-[. . .] held the same

147 Cf. Dalino 2018, 46–47 with earlier references.

148 Similar epithets are attested within the titularies of the highest Saite officials from Thebes and Upper Egypt: Nesptah (B) (*ḫrj-tp ꜥ3 n.j T3 Šmꜥ*, great overlord of Upper Egypt; Jansen-Winkeln 2009b, 490); Ibi (*ḫrj-tp ꜥ3 m njw.wt rsj.wt*, great overlord in southern towns; cf. Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 638; *ḫrj-tp ꜥ3 n.j T3 Šmꜥ*, great overlord of Upper Egypt; Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 656) and Pabasa (*ḫrj-tp ꜥ3 n.j T3 Šmꜥ*, great overlord of Upper Egypt; cf. Vittmann 1977, 249). Ibi and Pabasa were both chief stewards of the God's Wife of Amun, Nitocris (A), royal daughter of Psamtik I. All three individuals were appointed governors of Upper Egypt under the same king; cf. Broekman 2012, 115–119.

149 Cairo, Egyptian Museum RB 18391 (unpublished); cf. Aly et al. 1986, 36; Leahy 2011, 553. Checked on a digitalized image kindly put at my disposal by Prof. Didier Devauchelle (Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille, Université Lille 3), who is in charge of the future publication of the piece. Therefore, until the final publication, the results of this study are only preliminary.

150 Cf. Fischer 1976, fig. 3; Raedler 2011, 136 n. 5.

151 Cf. Jansen-Winkeln 2009b, 278–280; Jurman 2020, 1019–1021.

titles as his son, indirectly expressed by *mj-nn*,[152] which only speaks in favour of a possibility that this fragment in present state commemorates perhaps earlier generations of the same family mentioned in several Serapeum inscriptions that will discussed below.

Hekairaa and his son Neferibre-men-(em)-ineb-hedj

The most informative of these inscriptions, an undated Serapeum stela,[153] records four generations of the owner's family, from his great-grandfather to himself, with three HPMs. The main hieroglyphic text, in ten lines, registers the titles and identity of the owner, Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj (ll. 1–5), and his ancestors (ll. 6–8), ending with his great-grandfather, the HPM Hekairaa. Hekairaa is given only two titles here – *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t* and *ḥm-nṯr n.j Ptḥ*, both obviously regular designations of the HPM during the 26th Dynasty. Hekairaa was the father of the next HPM and his likely successor, Neferibre-men-(em)-ineb-hedj (*Nfr-jb-rᶜ-mn-m-jnb-ḥḏ*), whose basilophorous name means "Neferibre (i.e. Psamtik II) is established in Memphis".[154] So far, such a name form (KN + *mn-m-jnb-ḥḏ*) is attested exclusively within the HPMs family and there seems to be no reason to doubt that their bearers were directly connected through family relations. De Meulenaere tentatively suggested that Hekairaa could have been the same individual as Nekau-men-(em)-ineb-hedj, the second name being his 'beautiful name',[155] although he preferred to treat them as separate individuals, possibly a father and a son.[156] Given the limited space between the lower line containing titles *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t ḥm-nṯr* [*n.j Ptḥ*] and the beginning of the next one, it is quite conceivable that Hekairaa himself was mentioned in a lacuna on a fragment RB 18391 as the son of the HPM Nekau-[. . .], here identified as the same as the HPM Nekau-men-(em-)ineb-hedj, and was therefore the second HPM from the same family. We can imagine that Nekau-men-(em)-ineb-hedj was the first of a new lineage, possibly nominated by the second king of the 26th Dynasty as argued above.

152 For the expression mj-nn (variant *mj-nw*) used to mark "bearing the same/similar titles" in genealogies of officials and priests, see Ritner 2003, 168 n. 68 contra Gee 2004, 55–58; see also Quaegebeur 1994, 214 for the reading "like-ranked".

153 Paris, Musée du Louvre IM 4213 (the text is published in Maystre 1992, 380–382; for the photograph of this object, see now https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010021553 [accessed 15 August 2021]).

154 De Meulenaere 1985, 264.

155 This type of adopted name, also known as *rn nfr* or beautiful name, is bestowed upon the individual directly from the ruling king; cf. De Meulenaere 1966; De Meulenaere 1981; De Meulenaere 2002.

156 Cf. De Meulenaere 1985, 266. According to the previous view, Hekairaa would have adopted an additional name sometimes during his lifetime in order to show his individual political loyalty more explicitly and to emphase the close link between the royal house of Sais and his Memphite family.

Furthermore, because his name incorporates Psamtik II's throne name,[157] Neferibre-men-(em)-ineb-hedj, the son of Hekairaa and proposed grandson of Nekaumen(em)ineb-hedj, could not have been named before Psamtik II's accession in 595 BC. His name perhaps represents a local recognition of the accession of a new king, whose actions immediately after the death of Nekau II were apparently focused on the Ptah precinct, given that the enthronement of an Apis bull is the earliest known event from the king's reign.[158] Nekaumen-(em)-ineb-hedj is the best candidate for the main officiant during these important Memphite religious events. The birth of his grandson Neferibre-men(-em)-ineb-hedj, in the proposed scheme, might have also coincided with the accession of Psamtik II or likely his short reign (r. 595–589 BC). Seemingly, Hekairaa may have been in his twenties when his son was born,[159] while his presumed father probably was still the HPM. If so, Hekairaa was born during the later years of Psamtik I. Psamtik II perhaps confirmed the installation of Hekairaa as his father's successor, the action tolerated by Psamtik II's own son and royal successor Wahibre (r. 589–570 BC; also known as Apries), although any other age or scenario could be proposed.[160] Keeping in mind that Nekau II was likely responsible for the advancement of his family, it is not surprising that Hekairaa named his son and intended successor after a new ruling king, himself son of Nekau II, and following the same naming convention of his presumed father and the founder of the HPM dynasty at Memphis. Furthermore, Neferibre-men-(em)-ineb-hedj named his own son Nekau-meri-ptah (*Nkɜw-mrjj-Ptḥ* – Nekau is beloved of Ptah),[161] which may be the local adaptation of the golden Horus

157 Cf. Blöbaum 2006, 384.

158 Leahy 1996, 157, 160 n. 57. The previous bull died and was buried during the last days of Nekau II, probably under the auspices of the crown-prince Psamtik. For the role of the king's eldest son during the burial of an Apis bull, see Meyrat 2014a, 309–312.

159 Several examples of Memphite and Letopolite priests during the Ptolemaic times offer a good illustration of their age when the eldest child was born. For example, Anemhor (B) was 22 years old when his eldest known son Djedhor was born in 267 BC. His descendant, the HPM Padibastet (C) was 31 years old when his only known son Pasherenptah (C) was born in 90 BC. Pasherenptah (C) was 25 years old when his eldest daughter Kheredankh was born in 65 BC. On the other hand, Pehemnetjer-Petehoremhab, Ptolemaic High Priest of Letopolis, was 60 years old when his presumed eldest son Anemhor-Pashen was born in 107 BC; he also had one other son and a daughter, and died in 96/97 BC.

160 We know of several Memphite priests that reached an advanced age during the 26th Dynasty. For instance, the god's father Psamtik, son of Gemenefhorbak and lady Tjaret who lived for 71 years, 4 months, 6 days (Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 536–537; cf. Jurman 2010a, 248–250) or the god's father Psamtik, son of Iahweben and lady Ankhenites, who lived for 65 years, 10 months, 2 days (for his numerous monuments, see Jansen-Winkeln 2014a, 534–536; cf. Jurman 2010a, 250–252). Interestingly, both Psamtiks were born under Nekau II and died under Ahmose II. Furthermore, under Ptolemies, Anemhor (B) lived for 72 years, 1 month, 23 days (cf. Panov 2017a, 134; Prada 2019, 876–880).

161 Leahy 2011, 555; De Meulenaere 2015, 13.

name of Nekau II, *mrjj nṯr.w* (beloved of the gods),[162] further enhancing his family's connections and loyalty towards the royal family of Sais.

If we assume Neferibre-men-(em)-ineb-hedj was born under Psamtik II, his son Nekau-meri-ptah could have been born during the later years of Wahibre when his father was at least in his mid-twenties and had reached his own adulthood under the long reign of Ahmose II (r. 570–526 BC; also known as Amasis). During Ahmose II's reign, Nekau-meri-ptah's only known son, Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj (*Jʿḥ-ms-mn-m-jnb-ḥḏ* – 'Ahmose is established in Memphis'),[163] discussed below, may have been born and named after the ruling king according to the family's naming tradition. If so, either his great-grandfather (Hekairaa) or his grandfather (Neferibre-men-(em)-ineb-hedj) would have been the HPM at the time of the struggle between Wahibre and Ahmose II (570–567 BC) for the throne.[164] At present, it is impossible to exactly determine whose side they would have chosen, but the name of Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj is a strong indication that the family switched alliance and accepted Ahmose II as king and commemorated his establishment at Memphis by including his name into their onomastic repertoire. Their names may have been a clear indication of the family's participation in the legitimization process of new rulers at Memphis, reflecting family traditions of royal service in general. The political closeness of Ahmose II to the Ptah precinct was cemented by his marriage to Takheta, daughter of a certain Padineith, who was curiously titled *jt-nṯr ḥm-nṯr Ptḥ stm ḫrp šndj.t nb.t*.[165] As already noted in the case of Padipep, the same title sequence is usually associated with the HPM, but the title *stm* is surprisingly not attested with the family of Hekairaa until his great-grandson Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj. While we cannot be certain when exactly Padineith obtained these titles, it is entirely conceivable that his position within the Ptah precinct might have been a major reason for the royal marriage soon after Ahmose II won the throne.[166]

Unlike his father and grandfather, Nekau-meri-ptah is assigned a different set of titles (Louvre IM 4213, l. 6): divine father, *sm*-priest, keeper of the king's secrets (*ḫrj-sšt3 nsw.t*), and overseer of the chamberlains (*jmj-r3 jmj.w-ḫn.t*; lit. those who are in the forecourt). His titles reveal two complementary parts of his career: within the Ptah precinct, where his father was a high priest, and at the royal court, linking him closely to the king and his family. The title *ḫrj-sšt3 nsw.t* points to a high ceremonial status at

162 Blöbaum 2006, 381. Similar adaptation is attested for Ahmose II at Abydos, where the king is, instead of the usual "son of Neith", called "son of Osiris", the most important Abydene divinity; cf. Klotz 2010, 133 n. 42 with older literature.

163 PN II 261, 15; PN II 289, 3.

164 For the summary, see Leahy 1988; Perdu 2010, 147–148; Jansen-Winkeln 2014b.

165 Paris, Musée du Louvre IM 4034 ll. 2–3 (cf. Vercoutter 1962, 37–43).

166 Their marriage might have coincided with the burial and installation of two successive Apis bulls in Ahmose II's regnal year 4/5 (566/565 BC), soon after the civil war against Wahibre was over. For these Apis burials, see Vercoutter 1962, 20–26; Devauchelle 1994, 101; Devauchelle 2011, 140.

court and even a certain level of intimacy between the king and Nekau-meri-ptah.[167] Furthermore, during the New Kingdom, the chamberlains (*jmj.w-ḫn.t*) were primarily in charge of dressing the king, adorning him with the jewellery, and placing the crown on his head, usually associated with the *wrḥw*, "the anointer", who would also adorn and dress the king in the ceremonies of the coronation and the Sed-festival.[168] Nekau-meri-ptah might hypothetically have participated in the Sed-festival ceremonies of Ahmose II, shown on fragmentary blocks from Sais and Abydos.[169] It is striking that Nekau-meri-ptah is not given the title HPM on his son's stela. De Meulenaere offered a possibility that his name, Nekau-meri-ptah, should be interpreted as a 'beautiful name' and, if so, that his personal name could have been Khnumibresaptah, thus being the same man as an individual named on two more Serapeum stelae mentioning the same family.[170] This proposal is however untenable since Nekau-meri-ptah is nowhere attested with an additional name, while Khnumibresaptah is attested probably as son and likely immediate successor of the HPM Ahmose-men-(em-)ineb-hedj, serving between Darius I to Xerxes I (see below). The most plausible explanation is that Nekaumeriptah may have died prematurely during the reign of Ahmose II before he was able to succeed the office of his father.

Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj

The last Saite HPM is usually considered Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj, who had a very long career. However, it cannot be completely ruled out that his grandfather Neferibre-men-(em)-ineb-hedj held the office throughout Ahmose II's reign, especially since it seems likely that, being born soon after 595 BC, Neferibre-men-(em-)ineb-hedj might have belonged to the same generation as the king himself. Ahmose-men-(em-)ineb-hedj is still mentioned alive on the Serapeum stela of his son Hori that might date to the one of the Apis burials from regnal years 31 (491 BC) or 34 (488 BC) of the Persian

167 This type of designation and its several variations is not often attested during the 26th Dynasty, only among the titles of the highest state officials in contact with the royal court. See most recently Qahéri-Paquette 2014, 23 n. 64, 241 n. 814.

168 Guilmot 1964, 33–34; Goyon 1971, 79–81; Kubisch 2018, 192. Goyon (1971, 81) also proposed that the *ḫrp ḥw.wt N.t*, "director of the temples of Neith", replaced the *jmj.w-ḫn.t* during the ritual of the coronation in the 26th Dynasty. This is however highly unlikely keeping in mind the presence of the figures captioned with the *jmj.w-ḫn.t* and standing behind the figure of an unnamed king on two gateway relief fragments from the so-called Palace of Apries at Memphis, today in Copenhagen (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek ÆIN 1046) and Liverpool (World Museum 10.9.09.1), representing ceremonies of the Sed-festival. For the Memphite scenes, see Kaiser 1987, Taf. 45–46; Jurman 2010b. For a suggestion that overseer of the chamberlains might have been in charge of daily service of the royal children, see Qahéri-Paquette 2014, 38.

169 Cf. Habachi 1943, 385, fig. 105; Klotz 2010, 132, fig. 3b–c, 4a–b.

170 De Meulenaere 1985, 266.

king Darius I,[171] and a family stela, erected probably at the same time as IM 4038, if not earlier, at the Serapeum also by Hori on behalf of his extended family.[172] On IM 4038 (l. 4), Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj is attested with the 'beautiful name' Hekairaa (*rn=f nfr Ḥkȝ-jrj-ʿȝ*), which is the personal name of his great-grandfather, the HPM Hekairaa. There is also a possibility that he is owner of a shabti figurine seen on the auction in Vienna in 2001, but the reading of the name is dubious and unlikely as the shabti text is almost certainly too short to contain the full name of Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj and more likely simply reads 'Ahmose'.[173] His own Serapeum stela already mentioned above offers the fullest known title string of all HPMs in the Saite-Persian period (Tab. 3).

Tab. 3: Monuments and titles of Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj.

Monuments	Titles
Paris, Musée du Louvre IM 4213	[. . .] *ḥm-nṯr n.j Ptḥ ḫrp sm n.j ḥȝb rʿ nb nmt.t m s.t wr.t sš ʿȝ.w m kȝr štȝ jrj nfr-ḥȝ.t m ḫkrw Ptḥ jmn kȝr r jmj=f ḥrj sštȝ p.t tȝ dwȝ.t wn ʿȝ wsj m štjt rdj ḥnw ḥr mfḏ snnw n nsw.t m sʿḥʿ ḏd jrj-pʿ.t mȝʿ ḥȝtj-ʿ ḥw.t-kȝ-Ptḥ stm wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t*
Paris, Musée du Louvre IM 4044	*wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t jt-nṯr ḥm-nṯr n.j Ptḥ*
Paris, Musée du Louvre IM 4038	*wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t ḥm-nṯr n.j Ptḥ*

His privileged status is represented by a string of titles and epithets that reflect his duties within the cults of Ptah and Sokar: director of the *sm*-priests of Sokar (*ḫrp sm.w*),[174] lord of movements in the great place (*nb nmt.t m s.t wr.t*),[175] opener of doors of the secret shrine (*sš ʿȝ.w m kȝr štȝ*),[176] keeper of Ptah's headdress hidden in a shrine in the midst of it (*jrj nfr-ḥȝ.t m ḫkrw Ptḥ jmn kȝr r jmj=f*),[177] opener of doors and cracks of the under-

171 Paris, Musée du Louvre IM 4038 (unpublished); cf. Vittmann 2009, 90 n. 5. For the photograph of this object, see now https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010021534 (accessed 15 August 2021). For these Apis burials, see Marković/Ilić 2018, 97–98.

172 Paris, Musée du Louvre IM 4044 (the text is published in Maystre 1992, 382–384, but for the photograph see now https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010074022 [accessed 15 August 2021]).

173 Dorotheum 1979 (14.11.2001), lot n° 112. For another possibility, see below.

174 This title is previously attested in the titulary of the vizier Djedkare under the 25th Dynasty noted above.

175 Associated with the HPM during the New Kingdom, as late as the reign of Siamun (c. c. 986–968 BC); cf. Jurman 2020, 226.

176 The only other known attestation of this epithet is on a sarcophagus of Ahmose, High Priest of Letopolis who died in 183 BC (Berlin, ÄM 38; cf. Panov 2017a, 276).

177 The abbreviated version of this title is mentioned with the HPM Padipep mentioned above.

world/Sokar sanctuary (*wn ꜥ3 wsj m štjt*),[178] one who places the Sokar's barque upon the pedestal (*rdj ḥnw ḥr mfḏ*),[179] and second after the king at the erection of the Djed-Pillar (*snnw n nsw.t m sꜥḥꜥ ḏd*).[180] The epithet "keeper of the secrets of the sky, the earth and the underworld (*ḥrj sšt3 p.t t3 dw3.t*)" suggests perhaps a vast knowledge and excellent education associated with the HPM at the time.[181] Bearing in mind that the Persian Great Kings were physically mostly absent from Egypt after the reign of Darius I, together with their official titles, it seems logical to theorise that the HPM might replace them during major annual and occasional local religious festivals, such as the Sokar festival and the Apis coronation/burial respectively, that must have been the highlights of the Memphite calendar. His highest ranking court title, true hereditary prince (*jrj-pꜥ.t m3ꜥ*),[182] is also unconventional and attested in such form only for Ahmose-men-(em-)ineb-hedj; this is comparable to another rank title, true king's acquaintance (*rḫ-nsw.t m3ꜥ*), borne also by certain indigenous officials during the early Persian period.[183] Finally, the position of the mayor of Memphis (*ḥ3tj-ꜥ ḥw.t-k3-Ptḥ*) had never been associated with the HPM before,[184] only further suggesting favourable political circumstances for his family under the early Persians.

The brief report of appointment of Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj is recorded towards the end of the text (ll. 8–10): "His Majesty initiated me as divine father; afterwards made (me) overseer of craftsmen in the place of my ancestors, after [my father had] gone to his ka (*bsj wj ḥm=f r jt-nṯr n Ptḥ m-ḫt rdj.n* (*wj*) *jmj-r3 ḥmw.wt m s.t jt.w nw jt.w m-ḫt sbj*[*.n jt=j*] *n k3=f*)". Already Günter Vittmann noted that "two stages in the career of this man are involved: appointment as a priest in general, and later appoint-

178 The term *štjt* refers to either the sanctuary of Sokar or the tomb of Osiris, both located at Rosetjau; cf. Staring 2015, 171; Jurman 2020, 287.

179 For the barque of Sokar, see Eaton 2006, 80–84.

180 The erection of the Djed-pillar was a royal ceremony during the Sokar festival and the Sed-festival respectively (cf. Spalinger 1998, 257). The festival calendar of Ramesses III in Medinet Habu dates the erection of the Djed-pillar to the last day of the Sokar festival on the last day of the fourth month of the month of inundation, which was performed to ensure the successful rebirth of the god Osiris and the land of Egypt (cf. Staring 2015, 171–172). The same title is borne also by the HPM Pasherenptah (C) who boasted that he crowned Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos Philopator Philadelphos in 76 BC (cf. Panov 2017a, 180, 199).

181 This epithet is not associated only with the HPM; cf. Jurman 2020, 226 n. 1289.

182 This form is attested during the Old Kingdom; cf. Jones 2000, 315. For a suggestion that the addition *m3ꜥ* was an indication of special trust and favour granted by the reigning king during the Old Kingdom, see Callender 2000, 371–373.

183 De Meulenaere (1989, 569) suggested that the extension *m3ꜥ* in this title provides a dating indication for the officials who were active *after* the Persian conquest. Nevertheless, the same rank title in different forms (*rḫ nsw.t m3ꜥ / m3ꜥ mr=f*) was indeed very common during the 26th Dynasty; cf. Qahéri-Paquette 2014, 133–135.

184 'Enclosure of the ka of Ptah' (*Ḥw.t-k3-Ptḥ*) was the name of the main cult centre at Memphis, but from the New Kingdom onwards was also used to refer to the city itself; cf. Staring 2015, 169; Jurman 2020, 60–62.

ment as a High Priest of Memphis, the expression 'overseer of crafts(men)' in this context probably paraphrasing the usual designation of the Memphite High Priests".[185] On both occasions, his appointments involved the king himself, a recurring theme in biographical inscriptions of the 26th Dynasty.[186] In doing so, the king confirmed the hereditary nature of the title within the same family. It can be assumed that all HPM were appointed by the king, even if the next incumbent was a son or grandson following his father or grandfather in office. In Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj's case, certainly some time passed between these two appointments since the position of divine father usually indicates an early stage of the priestly career. On the identity of the king, Vittmann also commented: "Presumably Amasis rather than Cambyses or Darius, although the Persian King is by no means ruled out. A diplomatic, perhaps more realistic, solution would be to assume that Amasis appointed him to the office of High Priest and the Persians confirmed, or tolerated, his position".[187]

Ahmose II is a likely candidate for the king that confirmed Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj's appointment as a priest in general since, according to our reconstruction of the age of his grandfather Neferibre-men-(em-)ineb-hedj, the latter might have been born at earliest during the third decade of Ahmose II's reign (c. 550/540 BC). Strangely, although the HPM's name is basilophorous, the king's name is not written within a cartouche, in stark comparison to the names of Nekau II and Psamtik II in his ancestors' names. Under Darius I, different names of Ahmose II as parts of somebody's personal name are often written within a cartouche.[188] In the case of Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj and his family, however, the names referring to Ahmose II are consistently written without a cartouche.[189] Such consistency probably reflects the personal political stance of the HPM, who perhaps chose to distance himself from the previous royal house. It is important to note that the names of the overthrown royal family were attacked and intentionally mutilated probably, as Andrey O. Bolshakov conventionaly put it, "by order of Cambyses but under the supervision of a well-educated Egyptian".[190] Nevertheless, later Persian kings cannot be completely ruled out as responsible for these attacks. This might indicate that the king who installed Ah-

185 Vittmann 2009, 91.

186 Cf. Schütze 2020, 170.

187 Vittmann 2009, 91.

188 For example, Paris, Musée du Louvre IM 4017 (Vercoutter 1962, 59–64), IM 4129 (Vercoutter 1962, 105–108), IM 4032 (Vercoutter 1962, 88–92) or IM 4193 (unpublished; cf. PM III^2, 810; for the photograph, see now https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010075047 [accessed 15 August 2021]).

189 His sons Ahmose (A) (IM 4044 l. 7) and Khnumibresaptah (IM 4044 l. 25), as well as his grandsons Ahmose (B) (IM 4044 l. 23) and Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj (B) (IM 4038 l. 6–7).

190 Cf. Bolshakov 2010, 53. For the situation in Egypt immediately after the Persian conquest, see most recently Marković/Ilić 2018, 90–97.

mose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj was a Persian King, the most likely candidate being the infamous Cambyses II,[191] especially since the Ptah precinct was granted certain privileges during his short reign,[192] perhaps linked to the preparations for the burial of an Apis bull that died soon after the Persian conquest and usually officiated by the HPM.[193] The fierce reputation of the HPM under the Persian kings was still well-known as late as the mid-1st century BC. Accordingly, sources speak of a confrontation which happened between Darius I, the second Persian king of Egypt, and an unnamed HPM (ὁ ἱρεὺς τοῦ Ἡφαίστου of Herodotus;[194] ὁ ἀρχιερεύς of Diodorus Siculus),[195] over the former's plan to erect his own statue in front of the image of legendary king Sesostris.[196] The HPM allegedly won the argument, and Darius I was reportedly forced to abandon his plan. This individual could have easily been Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj himself.

His age during the last years of Darius I must have been advanced. His son Hori is attested with a grandson on IM 4038 (l. 8), on which Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj is mentioned still alive, therefore permitting a probability that his father was at least in his late fifties and had a roughly forty-year career spanning the reigns of Ahmose II to the later years of Darius I. Also, at least two, and perhaps three, different mothers are attested for his numerous children: Setjairetbinet, daughter of Pahemnetjer (IM 4044 ll. 15–16, 22–23), who bore his two sons, and Sekhmetneferet, daughter of Wahibreseneb (IM 4038 ll. 5–6; IM 4044 ll. 4–6, 8), who bore him another three sons, including Hori. Still, it is not clear who was the mother of Khnumibresaptah, a son attested towards the end of the inscription on IM 4044 (ll. 24–26).[197] Khnumibresaptah's own son, Ahmose (B), is also mentioned there (l. 23), while the children of Hori are mentioned on IM 4038 (ll. 6–7, 9). Khnumibresaptah bears the throne name of Ahmose II as his personal name,[198] indicating perhaps that he could have been the eldest son of the HPM, born while Ahmose II was still king. Seemingly, Hori belonged to the children of the HPM by his last wife, while Khnumibresaptah was perhaps a son from the

191 Cambyses II gets a consistently bad press from Greek sources. See most recently the discussion of Cannuyer 2020.

192 Cf. Agut-Labordère 2016, 322–323.

193 See most recently Marković/Ilić 2018, 95–96.

194 Hdt. 2.110.2–3.

195 Diod. 1.58.4.

196 Cf. Obsomer 1989, 146–158; Obsomer 1998, 1423–1442; Briant 2002, 476–477. On the statues of Darius I erected in the indigenous temples, for example, in Babylonia, see Waerzeggers 2014.

197 Maystre (1992, 384) considered divine father and god's servant of Ptah under his moringa trees Khnumibresaptah (ll. 24–25) and the HPM Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj (ll. 26–27) as the same person with two names. However, this conclusion is untenable since the 'beautiful name' is always positioned *after* the personal name. The latter's personal name is Ahmose-men-(em-)ineb-hedj in every known document. In addition, his beautiful name is Hekairaa, attested on IM 4038 (l. 4), the document not listed in Maystre's work. On the other hand, the reading of Khnumibresaptah's name (*Ḫnm-jb-rʿ-sꜣ-Ptḥ*, Khnumibre son of Ptah) and his following filiation (*sꜣ*, son) is based on the acceptance of a haplography.

198 Cf. Blöbaum 2006, 389.

first unfortunately unnamed wife. The latter's main title on IM 4044, god's servant of Ptah under his moringa tree (*ḥm-nṯr Ptḥ ḫrj bḳw=f*), is associated with the precinct of the temple of Ptah located to the north-west of Memphis, where the divine baboons resided during life and were mummified.[199] This title is particularly rarely attested.[200] Moreover, the Serapeum documents reveal several generations of Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj's descendants working within the Ptah precinct, mostly being responsible for cult and rituals. Following Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj's death, the office of the HPM appears to have passed to his eldest son, probably Khnumibresaptah.

Khnumibresaptah

This Khnumibresaptah is very likely identical with the homonymous HPM mentioned on another Serapeum stela,[201] where, in addition, he is given the 'beautiful name' Nekau. His 'beautiful name' is making this identification probable, since it likely represents the abbreviation of his grandfather's name, Nekau-meri-ptah. Both basilophorous elements of his name are written within a cartouche, unlike on the stela IM 4044. The stela IM 4098 was erected by one of his sons Psamtik and it is usually attributed to regnal year 34 of Darius I,[202] but it could be somewhat later. The stela provides us with information about his career as the HPM (Tab. 4). Khnumibresaptah clearly combined titles that structurally belong together, accumulating positions connecting him to the cult of Ptah and temple administration.

Tab. 4: Monuments and titles of Khnumibresaptah.

Monuments	Titles
Paris, Musée du Louvre IM 4044	*jt-nṯr ḥm-nṯr Ptḥ ḫrj bḳw=f*
Paris, Musée du Louvre IM 4098	*wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t n.j Ptḥ ḫrj sšt3 n s.t wr.t ḫrj sšt3 p.t t3 dw3.t drp n Ptḥ jmj-r3 ḥm. w-nṯr n.w nṯr.w Inb-ḥd jrj-pˁt ḥ3tj-ˁ s3-s.t [n Ḥp ˁnḫ] ḫrp ḥw.t-nbw*

His titles include *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t n.j Ptḥ*, keeper of the secrets of the great place (*ḫrj sšt3 n s.t wr.t*),[203] keeper of the secrets of the sky, the earth and the underworld, one who offers to Ptah (*drp n Ptḥ*), overseer of the god's servants of the gods of Memphis

199 Cf. Ray 2011, 25.
200 For the priests of Ptah under his moringa trees in the 30th Dynasty, see Smith et al. 2011, 49–56.
201 Paris, Musée du Louvre IM 4098; Chassinat 1901, 83–84 cxli.
202 Cf. PM III^2, 803.
203 For this title, see Perdu 2014, 120–121.

(*jmj-rꜣ ḥm.w-nṯr n.w nṯr.w ʾInb-ḥḏ*), hereditary prince, count, guardian [of a living Apis] (*sꜣ-s.t* [*n Ḥp ꜥnḫ*]),[204] and director of the mansion of gold (*ḫrp ḥw.t-nbw*).[205] On the other hand, the presence of the title *jmj-rꜣ ḥm.w-nṯr n.w nṯr.w ʾInb-ḥḏ* is rather surprising since the HPM has never been conferred with a high administrative authority over the temples of Memphis before.[206] He probably succeeded his father during the last years of Darius I or slightly later and therefore could have been in office under Xerxes I (486–465 BC).[207] If the chronology is correct, Khnumibresaptah might have been promoted to the head of temple administration at Memphis only by the Persian administration in order to closely control their staff and resources,[208] possibly in collaboration with the satrap Achaemenes, himself a brother of Xerxes I, who was killed during the famous Inaros revolt (c. 464–454 BC).[209] Like his father as the governor of Memphis before him, Khnumibresaptah must be considered the highest local authority at the time.

Unfortunately, the situation under Xerxes I in Egypt is unclear at best. The second Egyptian rebellion (c. 487–484 BC) in a longer series of revolts against the Persians during the fifth century BC is usually perceived to have seriously disturbed the traditional hierarchies in Egypt.[210] Indeed, the number of datable traditional monuments appears significantly reduced under Xerxes I,[211] although it must be admitted that the First Persian Period after Darius I is still not sufficiently studied and that there are serious problems regarding unpublished and wrongly dated material.[212] The general darth of datable evidence during the later 27th Dynasty may be linked to the scarce

204 For this title in connection with the living Apis bull, see Bothmer/De Meulenaere 1986, 5–6.

205 Djedkare was a keeper of the secrets of the mansion of gold as well. See above.

206 Several New Kingdom HPMs held the title *jmj-rꜣ ḥm.w-nṯr n.w nṯr.w nb.w* (*n*) *Šmꜥ Mḥ.w* ('overseer of god's servants of all gods of Upper and Lower Egypt') that may imply the administration of Memphite temples too. Cf. Maystre 1992, 76–77; Jurman 2020, 427.

207 As we have seen above, a different reconstruction is preferred by De Meulenaere 1985, 266.

208 Damian Agut-Labordère (2017, 687) sees the official with the title senti (*snṯj*) being "in charge of the management of the Egyptian religious institutions" and an "intermediary between the Persian satrap and the local sacerdotal elites" during the Persian era. This could only be correct until the end of Darius I's reign, when the senti vanishes from our sources and reappears again only with the last indigenous dynasties. Was the reason for this situation an administrative reorganisation? Unfortunately, this question cannot be answered with certainty due to a general lack of sources. For three officeholders usually dated to the 30th Dynasty, see Perdu 1998, 180–182, 184. For an overview of the senti's possible duties, see Vittmann 2009, 100–102; Agut-Labordère 2013, 1000–1002.

209 For the satrap Achaemenes, see Klinkott 2005, 503. For an overview of the Inaros revolt, see Rottpeter 2007, 17–23.

210 Ruzicka 2012, 28. For an overview of the rebellion itself, see most recently Wijnsma 2019. For the negative reputation of Xerxes in Egypt, see Klinkott 2007.

211 Cf. Agut-Labordère 2019, 211–213.

212 Aston 1999; cf. Agut-Labordère 2019, 211–213. Colburn 2020 seems to be just the beginning of the research.

textual material on the indigenous priesthood, although their activities are still traceable. Most recently, Andrew Monson has maintained that "[t]he Persian administration seems to have abolished the powerful political offices of the God's Wife of Amun and the High Priest of Memphis",[213] while also mentioning "Persian reforms in Egypt, such as the abolition of the high priesthood of Ptah in Memphis".[214] However, he did not specify when these "reforms" occurred. Regardless, it seems that the author only incorrectly refers to Günter Vittmann's earlier suggestions. Vittmann tentatively comments on a complicated situation after Darius I and the possible succession of the HPM: "Apart from this possible but, nonetheless, uncertain candidate (i.e. Khnumibresaptah), we have no direct sources for the history of the office during the Persian Period. The fact, however, that Memphis was one of the sacred places that were granted privileges by Cambyses does not speak for a (even temporary) abolition of the rank of the High Priest".[215] Therefore, no such reforms were ever implied.

Some kind of a break could be linked to the Inaros revolt, especially since Memphis was a major place in the hostilities between Persians and Egyptians during the earlier stage of the rebellion (c. 462–459 BC),[216] but there is certainly enough evidence to support the conclusion that the situation under Xerxes I and his successor Artaxerxes I (465–424 BC) for the indigenous elite shows some continuations with previous times, although maybe not as widespread nor quite as visible in the surviving material as before. To mention just one example, the activities and careers of at least three (out of six) generations of a priestly family buried within the lesser chambers of the tomb of the vizier Bakenrenef at Saqqara should be in all probability dated mostly to the 5th century BC, instead of being chronologically pushed further to the time of the short-lived 30th Dynasty (380–343 BC) as is usual.[217] Further studies would hopefully reveal previously unnoticed priestly families active throughout fifth century BC.

Ahmose (B) and (C)

Although we cannot be sure for certain what happened to Khnumibresaptah, his successor may have been one of his sons or grandsons. Both of his known sons, Ahmose (B) and Psamtik, are obviously named after the glorious kings of the 26th Dynasty, fol-

213 Monson 2015, 10.

214 Monson 2015, 28.

215 Vittmann 2009, 91.

216 For the chronology of the revolt, see Kahn 2008, 440.

217 For a comprehensive study of their burials, see Bresciani et al. 1983. This family is omitted in Vittmann 2009. For their dating to the time of the 30th Dynasty, see De Meulenaere 2002, 382. Indeed, the vizier Padineith with the 'beautiful name' Pasherentaihet died in regnal year 15 of Nectanebo I (366 BC), being probably born c. 420 BC (cf. Bresciani et al. 1983, 117–119), and it is reasonable to propose that three previous generations of his ancestors were active almost exclusively during the 5th century BC. See also n. 241.

lowing the already-established onomastic tradition of their family. Also, both were building a career within the Ptah precinct under Darius I: Ahmose (B) is attested as divine father and the *sm*-priest on a family Serapeum stela IM 4044 (l. 23), while Psamtik is assigned the same titles, in addition to one more that is partly erased (only the beginning *ḥrj* is preserved), on the stela IM 4098 (l. 1). Ahmose (B) could be the same individual as that attested on a shabti figurine seen at the auction in Vienna in 2001 noted above. The shabti owner is attested with a title sequence *jt-nṯr sm ḥm-nṯr wr ḫrp. w ḥmw.t* and his name seems to be rather Ahmose, instead of the much longer Ahmose-men-(em-)ineb-hedj.[218] The rest of the hieroglyphic signs likely show the name of his mother, probably Nebet-Wadjet (*Nb.t-wḏȝ.t*). The mother's name is not present on IM 4044, while the name of Psamtik's mother attested on IM 4098 (ll. 5, 11) is Isetreshti (*Ꜣs.t-rštj*), a rather common female name at Memphis during the Saite-Persian era.[219] This indicates several possibilities for identifying the shabti owner. If the Ahmose of the Vienna shabti is the same as Khnumibresaptah's son on IM 4044, his father therefore could have had multiple wives, which has already been attested for his grandfather, but Ahmose (B) also could have belonged to some other generation of the same family. Ultimately, he might be completely unrelated to this family, which seems unlikely, bearing in mind that nepotistic inheritance of positions was a normal occurrence at the time and that the office had been monopolised by the senior males of this family already for six generations, closely linked to the Saite and Persian royal houses and administration.

Given the long life and career of Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj, the paternal grandfather of Ahmose (B) and Psamtik, it is conceivable that his grandsons could have had their own families at the time of the composition of Serapeum inscriptions; Hori, one of the sons from the (here proposed) third marriage of their grandfather, is attested with a grandson on IM 4038. While the scant sources we currently possess are insufficient to answer this question definitively, it remains a distinct possibility that the Ahmose of the Vienna shabti belonged to the generation of Khnumibresaptah's own grandsons, therefore being an individual distinct from his son Ahmose (B). Therefore, Ahmose (C) could have been a son of either Ahmose (B) or Psamtik. The preference is here given to Psamtik, although paternity of Ahmose (B) cannot be ruled out. The brothers might have predeceased their father, but they could have also been the victims of the Inaros revolt, together with their father, leaving therefore a possibility that Ahmose (C), here identified as son of Psamtik, became the HPM sometimes during

218 The signs after the beginning of Ahmose's name are hard to read from the catalogue's photograph, but it seems certain that the owner's name is shorter and that his mother is named towards the end of the inscription.

219 For example, Hori's wife and mother of his children bear the same name on IM 4038 (ll. 7, 9). Incidentally, two Mothers of Apis cows – the first having died and been buried in 534 BC and the second having died and been buried in or sometimes after 521 BC – also bear the same name. See further Smith et al. 2011, 15–25.

the long reign of Artaxerxes I. Another possibility is that Khnumibresaptah and his sons survived into the reign of Artaxerxes I, Khnumibresaptah being at least in his seventies, and could have been dead by 450 BC. If so, his grandson, Ahmose (C), might have been overseeing the Ptah precinct in the second part of Artaxerxes' I reign or early into the reign of Darius II (424–404 BC). The possibility that Ahmose (B) or Psamtik served as the HPM cannot be completely ruled out due to the lack of evidence.

Ankh-Hep

That being said, an HPM is attested on series of mostly unprovenanced shabtis in several museum and private collections (see Tab. 5). His name is Ankh-Hep (*ꜥnḫ-Ḥp* – 'Living Apis'),[220] born to Nebet-Wadjet (*Nb.t-wḏȝ.t*). This theophoric name, clearly referring to an Apis bull living within the Ptah precinct,[221] became extremely popular at Memphis from the First Persian Period onwards. The number of attestations increased during the 29th and 30th Dynasties, further rising during the Ptolemaic period.[222] The shabtis might have come from his tomb,[223] likely somewhere in Saqqara. Also, keeping in mind all of the above, Ankh-Hep may be a younger brother of Ahmose (C), an identification based on the coincidence that both individual's mothers were called Nebet-Wadjet, which is a

Tab. 5: Shabtis of Ankh-Hep.

No.	Objects	Titles
1.	Oslo, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo inv. C47015[224]	*jt-nṯr sm wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t jmj-rȝ njw.t*
2.	Oslo, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo inv. C47016[225]	*jt-nṯr sm wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t jmj-rȝ njw.t*
3.	Cairo, Egyptian Museum CG 47507[226]	[*jt*]-*nṯr sm wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t*[227] *jmj-rȝ njw.t*

220 PN I, 65, 25.
221 For the layout of the Apis sanctuary, see Meyrat 2014b; Marković 2016.
222 See numerous examples in Smith et al. 2011; Devauchelle 2017.
223 For multi-functionality of shabtis, see Franzmeier 2014, 176–178.
224 Naguib 1985, 95–97. Special thanks are due to Marina Prusac-Lindhagen (Oslo) for providing me with images of both figurine and additional information.
225 Naguib 1985, 95–97.
226 Newberry 1937, 154.
227 Incorrectly transcribed as  by Newberry.

Tab. 5 (continued)

No.	Objects	Titles
4.	Alexandria, Graeco-Roman Museum 1757[228]	Unknown
5.	Alexandria, Graeco-Roman Museum 1759[229]	Unknown
6.	Worcester, Worcester Art Museum Corbett 2[230]	*jt-nṯr sm wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t jmj-r3 njw.t*
7.	Auction catalogue[231]	*jt-nṯr sm wr* [*ḫrp.w ḥmw.t*][232] *jmj-r3 njw.t*

rather uncommon name in Memphis. If so, his father could have been Ahmose (B) or Psamtik. If this is correct, the dynasty of the HPM is extended towards the end of the 5th century BC. The family's latest known generations thus saw Egypt pass from Achaemenid rule to newly established local royal dynasties. Ankh-Hep may have been the last representative of the old line. Nevertheless, the excistence of other yet unidentified family members cannot be completely ruled out.

Two types of shabtis can be clearly distinguished: the Oslo figurines have a single bordered column of an abbreviated version of the shabti spell on the front, while the other figurines have T-shaped impressed text on front. The T-shaped inscription is usually associated with the First Persian Period, although the same shabti style was also continuously used during the 4th century BC and even later.[233] The shabtis of Ahmose (C) and Ankh-Hep are similar in material, design, and style of execution, and are likely to have been made in the same workshop and during a short space of time. Besides the titles associated with the Ptah precinct, Ankh-Hep is assigned a high civil authority at Memphis, overseer of the city (*jmj-r3 njw.t*), being therefore the third member of his family at the similar overseeing administrative role, after his presumed great-grandfather Ahmose-men-(em-)ineb-hedj and grandfather Khnumibre-saptah. His name also shows a shift from the royal onomastics towards the divine one. He may have died after the liberation of Egypt in c. 404 BC.

228 Unpublished; cf. Naguib 1985, 95.
229 Unpublished; cf. Naguib 1985, 95.
230 Watson 2012, 148.
231 Mentioned by Vittmann 1978, 164.
232 From the photo in the catalogue itself, it is clear that the title's initial signs combination begins with GG G38 + D21 (*wr*).
233 Aubert/Aubert 1974, 237–243.

The 28th to 30th Dynasties (404–343 BC)

The situation at Memphis during the last indigenous dynasties[234] is uncertain and understudied, despite the fact that major transformations of the sacred landscape across Egypt at the same time are oftentime discussed.[235] A detailed study on the priesthood, especially in Lower Egypt, is still lacking with a few exceptions.[236]

Bakenptah

A previously unnoticed HPM is attested in an inscription on a back-pillar of a seated statuette of unfortunately unknown present location.[237] The statuette was discovered in a cache of objects found in the Main Temple terrace of the Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara, located north of the Serapeum itself. The statuette is dedicated in the name of Bakenptah (*Bꜣk-n-Ptḥ* – 'servant of Ptah'), who bears the titles *wꜥb*-priest of Ptah (*wꜥb n Ptḥ*),[238] military scribe of Memphis (*sš mšꜥ n Mn-nfr*), great one of the house (and) of the chamber (*ꜥꜣ n pr n.t tꜣ ꜥ.t*),[239] *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t*, god's servant of the

234 For discussions of the period, see most recently Wojciechowska 2016; Forgeau 2018; McKechnie/Cromwell 2018.

235 See most recently Minas-Nerpel 2018.

236 Some exceptions are *inter alia* Bresciani et al. 1983; von Känel 1984; Guermeur 2005; Spencer 2006; Manassa 2007; Smith et al. 2011; Klotz 2012; Panov 2017b.

237 Martin 1979, 58, pl. 51; cf. contra Chevereau 1985, 59, who dates the statuette to the 22nd Dynasty and Hastings 1997, 16, 80–81, who argues for a 26th Dynasty date. The reason for the later dating adopted here comes from the fact that the statuette was found in a cache of already used objects which seems to have been carefully made after the main temple was ransacked at a later date, almost certainly during the 4th century BC, either during several later renovations or perhaps destructions of some kind. The earliest phase of the Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara should be dated to the reign of Artaxerxes I, although the so-called Phase I of the sanctuary was originally placed under Ahmose II, a suggestion based solely on a mention of the death of the Mother of Apis cow Isetreshti I in 534 BC (cf. Davies 2006, 12; Smith et al. 2011, 4). However, the textual evidence is retrospective and gives this date only on a stela that in fact mentions several bovine deaths and burials which occurred under Darius I mostly, very likely commemorating a relocation of the cows' burial place from Memphis to North Saqqara under Artaxerxes I. See further the discussion in Smith et al. 2011, 15–25.

238 Maybe this title, usually rendered as a lowest rank among the priestly titles, is in fact only a specification of a collective title, known as *wꜥb m ḥw.wt nṯr.w Jnbw-ḥḏ* (*wꜥb*-priest in the temple of gods of Memphis). This title seems to appear under the Persians at earliest and was held by mid- and upper-level priests later under the last indigenous dynasties and Ptolemies. See von Känel 1984, 102.

239 The exact parallel is, to my knowledge, not attested before. Chevereau (1985, 59) and Hastings (1997, 16, 80–81) read *wr xrp.w Hmw.t* as a direct genitive after *ꜥ.t*. Hence, in their opinion, Bakenptah would be in charge of a domain (*pr*) and a chamber (*ꜥ.t*) of an HPM, rather than an HPM himself. However, the adjective *ꜥꜣ* ('great') usually referred to a distinguished social status (cf. Wb I, 161–162), inferring that this sentence should be rather understood as an epithet of a HPM, maybe indicating his elevated status in both temple and sacred chamber. Furthermore, as the statuette is dedicated to the

house of Duau preceding over *Šns* (*ḥm-nṯr n pr Dwꜣw ḫntj Šns*). It is not known if he was related to the previous HPMs since little can be said about his social and familial background, although his personal name might be an indication of a family of Memphite priests. Also, the priesthood of Duau, a hawk-like divinity associated with the god Horus venerated in the Heliopolitan region,[240] is rather rare and Bakenptah might have been somehow related to two viziers, Pasherentaihet/Padineith and his grandson Padineith/Pasherentaihet, who were god's servants of Duau too.[241] They lived between the mid-5th and the mid-4th centuries BC and were buried within the lesser chambers of the tomb of the vizier Bakenrenef at Saqqara discussed above.[242] Given that Horiraa (B), son of the former and father of the latter, is not attested with this title,[243] there is a reasonable possibility that Bakenptah could belong to his generation and might have been his relative, perhaps a younger brother, suggesting a transitional period from the late 5th to the early 4th centuries BC for the beginning of his career, i.e. mostly under the short-lived 29th Dynasty (399–380 BC). Indicative of this proposition is also the fact that Horiraa (B) is not attested with the position of the overseer of the city (*jmj-rꜣ njw.t*), that was assigned to his father and later to his son. Instead, as we have seen, the HPM Ankh-Hep is assigned this high civil authority at Memphis, perhaps after Pasherentaihet/Padineith died in the second half of the fifth century BC. If so, a socio-political rivalry between these two families can be inferred, especially since the vizier Pasherentaihet/Padineith might have been a younger contemporary of the HPM Khnumibresaptah, meaning that his career could have started with the reign of Xerxes I.[244]

Bakenptah's activities are unknown, but must be connected to the Apis bulls – at least five bulls are attested buried between 398 BC and perhaps 351 BC[245] – and military preparations during numerous wars with Persians.[246] Although it is unusual for a HPM

syncretistic god Ptah-Sokar-Tatjenen, this domain and chamber could be referring to their cult place known as Tjenenet, located somewhere at Saqqara (cf. Leahy 1998, 381–387). During the Ptolemaic and Roman eras, several Memphite priests were connected in several capacities to a "hidden chamber (*ꜥ.t jmn.t*)" of Tjenenet, three of them being the HPMs: Anemhor (B) (289–217 BC; Panov 2017a, 133), Djedhor (267–223 BC; Panov 2017a, 126), and Horemhotep (1st century AD [?]; Panov 2017a, 485). Another possibility is that the sentence is referring to the temple of Ptah and the god's cult-statue chamber.

240 For the cult of the god Duau, see Bresciani et al. 1983, 30–31; LGG VII, 506–507.

241 Bresciani et al. 1983, 30, 57, 65–66. On the other hand, De Meulenaere (2002, 389–390) believed that only Padineith/Pasherentaihet existed and is followed in conclusion most recently by Koch 2019, 134. This topic shall be discussed elsewhere by the present author.

242 For this family, see n. 217.

243 Bresciani et al. 1983, 56–57.

244 For the lack of the viziers under the Persians, see Vittmann 2009, 94–97.

245 Cf. Devauchelle 1994, 106–107; Meyrat 2014a, 306–309; Devauchelle 2017, 97–101.

246 For the historical background, see recently Ruzicka 2012; McKechnie 2018.

to be a military scribe, such a situation could be explained by a generally unstable political situation, constant fear, and militarisation of society.[247] The statuette was probably set up in the temple sometime during the first half of the 4th century BC, given that the temple complex at North Saqqara was massively reconstructed and embellished under Achoris (393–380 BC) of the 29th Dynasty, Nectanebo I (380–362 BC) and his grandson Nectanebo II (360–343 BC) of the 30th Dynasty,[248] but the exact moment shall probably forever remain a mystery. The statuette could have also been buried in the ground during the further reconstructions under the Argead dynasty (332–305 BC), when two Mothers of Apis cows were buried within the site.[249]

Udjashu

Another individual with the title *wr ḫrp.w ḥmw.t* is attested on a number of shabti figurines kept today in several museums (Angers, Musée Pincé MA 4 R 433.19;[250] Munich, Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst 616),[251] and private collections worldwide.[252] Apart from his mother's name, Tarudj (*T3-n.t-rwḏ*), nothing else is known about this individual. Udjashu is usually a female name; the mother of a king, probably Nectanebo II,[253] bears the same name. The shabtis' manufacturing style and size is usually associated with the early Ptolemaic period.[254] If we position Bakenptah mostly under the 29th Dynasty, Udjashu then must have lived during the second part of the 4th century, witnessing major historical events, such as the second Persian period (343–332 BC),[255] the Macedonian rule and the rise of the Ptolemies (323–305 BC).[256]

247 The 30th Dynasty has been compared to a military junta; cf. Ray 1986, 149.

248 Cf. Smith et al. 2011, 6–7.

249 Cf. Smith et al. 2011, 10.

250 Affholder-Gérard/Cornic 1990, 73.

251 Unpublished; cf. De Meulenaere 1985, 265. Special thanks are due to Sylvia Schoske and Arnulf Schlüter (Munich) for providing me with images of the figurine and additional information.

252 Drouot 11–12.11.2001, slot n° 233; Bonhams 27.04.2006, slot n° 423. See also the listing in *Shabtis de Basse Époque (XXVIe dynastie – période lagide)* (https://www.segweb.ch/index-shabtis [accessed 18 October 2020]).

253 Scholars disagree over her precise position in the 30th Dynasty. De Meulenaere (1963, 92) suggested she was the spouse of Nectanebo I and the mother of the ephemeral king Teos, while Vittmann (1974, 49) argues that the lack of the title *ḥm.t-nsw.t* (king's wife) indicates that she was the spouse of Tjaihepimu, who never ruled as king, and mother of Nectanebo II. Vittmann's suggestion seems more logical at present. On Udjashu, see also Engsheden 2006; Panov 2017c, 27–28, 29; Forgeau 2018, 81–82; Leroy/Devauchelle 2019.

254 Aubert/Aubert 1974, 270.

255 See most recently Colburn 2015.

256 See most recently Thompson 2018.

An epilogue

Two more priestly families associated with the duties of the HPM rose to prominence during the 4th century BC. Three brothers, Wahibremeryptah, Padiheka, and Ankhefensakhmet, were attested as *stm*-priests, probably under the 29th and 30th Dynasties, although the exact dating of their monuments is uncertain.[257] Padiheka is assigned the title *ḫrp šndj.t nb.t* as well. They belonged to a branch of a priestly family that was particularly active and prominent from the 6th to the early 5th centuries BC and claimed the illustrious lineage of Memphite priests for twenty-one generations in the past.[258] Another *stm*-priest was active most likely from the end of the 4th to the beginning of the 3rd centuries BC: Anemhor (A), himself the father of the earliest known Ptolemaic HPM, Nesisti/Padibastet I, who was selected for this duty during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphos (284–246 BC).[259] We are much better informed about Ptolemaic officeholders as noted before.

Conclusion

Generally speaking, the HPMs rose to office in large part through the support of the king and their political influence was based on a close alliance with the royal house. The officeholder normally either came from a prominent local family with strong links to local temples or was imported from outside on royal command and was never completely immune to the royal decision-making process or independent from royal influence. The relationship was however reciprocal, given that the kings heavily relied on the priestly support and their loyalty at Memphis in securing and legitimising their rule, particularly during the second half of the 1st millennium BC. The good relationship with the Ptah precinct was apparently important for *usurper-kings*, like Ahmose II or the last indigenous rulers of the 29th and 30th dynasties whose power struggles and regicides were a main political feature of the 4th century BC Egypt, and *foreign kings*, like the Persians who were mostly physically absent from the country. Under Kushite rule, however, the political situation was somewhat different, especially bearing in mind that their kings adopted Memphis as their principal residence in Egypt and were crowned there. Also, Kushites embraced and shared Egyptian culture, religion, language and writing system, while retaining ultimate political power-

257 Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano inv. 115259; cf. Limme 1985. It is not clear to whom the statue was dedicated, but it seems that it had been at least reinscribed by a son and grandsons, likely of Padiheka later. The inscription on the top of the statue base seems to be a later addition.

258 For the monuments of this family, see De Meulenaere 1989. He dated their activities in the late Saite to the early Persian era, which will be re-evaluated and contested by the present author elsewhere.

259 Cf. Panov 2017a, 157, 170.

base outside Egypt.[260] We cannot necessarily claim that no HPM was active under the 25th Dynasty as comparatively few data are available at Memphis for the same period, while several individuals and their families are known to have adopted a vast majority of the titles, offices and activities associated with the HPM before the Kushite conquest. Therefore, the major importance of the Ptah precinct and its highest priesthood in collective memory of the epoch should be considered as given.

Under the 26th Dynasty, however, overseeing the Ptah precinct quickly had become family politics. Despite the earliest known HPM under Psamtik I, Padipep, most likely belonged to a prominent local priestly family that could be traced back until the late 22nd Dynasty at earliest, his presumed successor and his family went one step further in comparison to their forerunners. The reign of Nekau II, the second king of the dynasty, might mark a turning point in the fortunes for a lineage whose members had been gradually transforming themselves into a local dynasty, amassing substantial political power, income, and prestige as they managed to keep their offices in several generations of the family. Most of their personal names – Nekau-men-(em)-ineb-hedj, Neferibre-men-(em)-ineb-hedj, Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj – reflect a family tradition of royal service and close connections to the royal court. The case of Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj also shows that they were indeed dependent on royal approval, but it is important to note that his family maintained its uppermost status throughout the period of political changes and instability accompanying both the civil war between Wahibre and Ahmose II and the Persian conquest of Egypt. The historicity of the power struggle of the Persian king Darius I and an unnamed HPM may be questionable, but it is a good illustration of *how* the highest among the Ptah priesthood was perceived at the time and in later memory. It is even possible to propose that the HPM was considered a serious political player and the highest local authority under several Persian kings after Darius I, serving as a substitute for the absent foreign rulers. Therefore, the opinion that "the high priest of Memphis had no political power at all" is undeniably misleading.[261]

Furthermore, Memphite priestly community clearly exercised considerable influence on the last dynasties. Even kingship itself had merged with the system of social hierarchy built upon ties of kinship and marriage alliances. Some rulers, such as Psamtik I and Ahmose II of the 26th Dynasty, contracted marriages with established priestly families whose members held cultic titles associated with the HPM. The fact that the marriages took place at all is recognition enough of the prieshood's own status, drawing the royal authority into a more exclusive circle at Memphis. Despite being frequently present and active in Memphis, the general-kings of the 30th Dynasty were reproachfully lectured by Memphite sacerdotal circles in the so-called Demotic

260 For a short overview of the 25th Dynasty with further references, see Pope 2019.
261 Gorre/Honigman 2013, 108.

Chronicle.[262] Present analysis demonstrates that gaps in our knowledge on the HPM (Tab. 6) most likely represent accidents of preservation and discovery. Indeed, both direct and circumstantial evidence allow us to propose genealogical continuity of the family of Ahmose-men-(em)-ineb-hedj – and the institution of the HPM – up to the end of the 5th century BC, when the rise of similarly influential priestly families might have successfully challenged their authority, strongly inferring that during the later 27th Dynasty they were forced to share their power (Tab. 6). The meagre evidence on the HPM during most of the 5th and the 4th centuries BC at least shows that the HPM were in office and retained its prestige, though the reconstruction of their familial backgrounds and further connections may be overly speculative. The earliest Ptolemaic HPM certainly belongs to the same social milieu.

Tab. 6: The High Priests of Memphis and the ruling kings.

HPM	Reign
? ?	Piye Shabataka Shabaka Taharqa
Padipep	Psamtik I
Nekau-men-(em-)ineb-hedj Hekairaa	Nekau II Psamtik II Wahibre
Neferibre-men-(em-)ineb-hedj	Ahmose II
Ahmose-men-(em-)ineb-hedj / Hekairaa	Ahmose II Psamtik III Cambyses II Darius I
Khnumibresaptah / Nekau	Darius I Xerxes I (?)
Ahmose (C)	Artaxerxes I (?)
Ankh-Hep	Artaxerxes I and Darius II (?)
Bakenptah	Dynasty 29
Udjashu	Dynasty 30/early Ptolemaic era

262 The passages of the so-called Demotic Chronicle (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale 215 Ro), a series of prophecies and oracular sayings composed in the second half of the 3rd century BC mixed with allusions to historical and dynastic events during the 4th century BC (cf. Johnson 1974; Devauchelle 1995, 73; Felber 2002, 67–69), are recognised as a treatise on Late Period kingship, i.e. what proper kingship is and how a good king acts (cf. Johnson 1983, 66–71; Gozzoli 2006, 283–290).

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