

PTOLEMAIC BUREAUCRACY FROM AN EGYPTIAN POINT OF VIEW

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Bureaucracy is a chronic problem throughout the world, but perhaps nowhere is it more frustrating than here in Egypt. The Egyptian government's overstuffed, inefficient agencies produce waste and corruption that drain the scarce resources of the Egyptian economy. The problem is so pervasive, says one Western diplomat, that objecting to it is "like complaining about the dust." . . .

Many analysts argue that the bureaucratic mentality here dates back over 4,000 years, to the centralized administration developed by the Pharaohs

One theory holds that such a culture was a result of the "hydropolitics" of the Nile: that in a river society, rigid rules were necessary to harness the annual flooding. Other historians blame foreign invaders—the French and the British—for creating the modern bureaucracy.¹

This same question, the origin of the bureaucracy, is the first basic question asked about Ptolemaic bureaucracy: Was it inherited from Pharaonic times or introduced by the Greeks? Directly opposite opinions have been expressed by two of the most famous historians of Ptolemaic Egypt.² Préaux argued that the the Ptolemaic system of administration was based on the Pharaonic one, ". . . les formes et les techniques grecques imposées à l'administration égyptienne n'ont modifié ni les problèmes fondamentaux ni l'antique mouvement de la vie égyptienne."³ Such an opinion is in very sharp contrast with that of Rostovtzeff,

No doubt the bureaucratic machinery of the Ptolemies . . . was in part inherited from the past. To a certain extent, but to a certain extent only, it was a continuation and hellenization of Oriental bureaucracy. . . . how much more refined, more logical and coherent the latter [i.e., the bureaucratic machinery of the Ptolemies] was, and how many new Greek features it contained. This new Greek element was not confined to the Greek names of the offices, to the elaborate Greek administrative and financial terminology . . . ; nor to the use of the Greek language in administration and taxation; nor to the Greek accounting system; it consisted above all in the general design of the administration and the spirit that permeated it.⁴

1. David Ignatius, *Wall Street Journal*, vol. 63, no. 114 [March 24, 1983] 1.

2. See also the summary of early discussions in C. Bradford Welles, "The Ptolemaic Administration in Egypt," *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 3 (1949) 21-47.

3. Claire Préaux, *L'Économie royale des Lagides* (Brussels, 1939) 570.

4. M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (Oxford, 1941) 1079.

A cautionary note was sounded by Thomas, who noted that,

The nature of our source material also crucially affects one major problem which must be faced in studying the Ptolemaic administration, namely the extent to which this administration was based on Pharaonic models. . . . The student of Hellenistic Egypt seeking to find out about the immediate antecedents of his period finds it impossible to discover more than a handful of facts. Furthermore . . . , there is virtually no evidence for the administration during the first fifty years of Ptolemaic rule. Therefore often the best one can hope to do is to compare the situation under the New Kingdom with that prevailing at about 250 B.C. [ca. 1000 years later]. Many changes will be observed, but we usually have very little idea whether these changes are due to the Saite dynasty, the Persians, or the Ptolemies.⁵

These discussions and conclusions are generally based on information collected from Greek papyri and it is well to note the comments of Clarysse,⁶

With Alexander the Great and the Ptolemies the rise of a Greek administration and colonisation marks for us a break in the history of Egypt. This is, I think, mainly due to the sudden appearance of a mass of Greek papyri and inscriptions, which have attracted the attention of classical scholars to this period.

From the Egyptian point of view, however, the break is not really all that important. The Egyptians were used to foreign domination since several generations and the replacement of the Persian ruler by a Macedonian king did not necessitate a change in their attitude. Under the Ptolemies . . . the life of the common people hardly changed except for a few regions such as Alexandria and the Fayum.

Especially on the life of the temples and on all that was connected with them, that is to say, most of native cultural life, the "changes of dynasties, the wars and invasions had remarkably little effect."⁷

If we look at documents written in Egyptian, we can find a few specific cases by which we can begin to answer the question. For instance, there are pre-conquest examples of people bearing the title *sh n pr-ꜥ3* "king's scribe" or *sh n p3 tš* "scribe of the nome," which in the Ptolemaic period is the demotic equivalent of the Greek title *βασιλικός γραμματεὺς* "king's scribe." There is even an Egyptian family from Thebes with members holding this title both pre-conquest and post-conquest,⁸ suggesting that some Ptolemaic positions were direct continuations of pre-Ptolemaic ones.

5. J. David Thomas, "Aspects of the Ptolemaic Civil Service: The Dioiketes and the Nomarch," in Herwig Maehler and Volker Michael Strocka, eds., *Das ptolemäische Ägypten: Akten des Internationalen Symposions 27.-29. September 1976 in Berlin* (Mainz am Rhein, 1978) 188.

6. Willy Clarysse, "Prosopography and the Dating of Egyptian Monuments of the Ptolemaic Period," *ibid.*, p. 239.

7. Quoting from B. V. Bothmer, "Introduction," to The Brooklyn Museum, *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period 700 B.C. to A.D. 100* (New York, 1960) xxxi.

8. See P. W. Pestman, "A Family of Egyptian Scribes," *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 5 (1968) 61.

A second basic question about Ptolemaic bureaucracy is: After it had been set up, whatever its origin, what was the relationship between Egyptians and Greeks in the bureaucracy and what was the relationship of the average Egyptian to the bureaucracy? The first thing which must be borne in mind in trying to answer this question is that the Ptolemaic bureaucracy, as most bureaucracies, was differentiated and, at least in part, a hierarchical structure.

It is an oversimplification, but not, I think, one that is seriously misleading, to regard the Ptolemaic administration as composed of three layers: at the top, we have officials who controlled the whole of Egypt, usually in fact the whole of the Ptolemaic domain; in the middle we have officials who operated at the level of a nome; while at the bottom we have officials who controlled a village.⁹

Although in all periods in Ptolemaic Egypt the majority of people in the top layer had Greek names, by far the majority of bureaucrats, and the majority of people with whom the average Egyptian had to deal in the course of his life, were the people in the middle and lower levels of the bureaucracy. Here there are many people with Egyptian names (in some jobs the majority or all known holders of the position have Egyptian names). We shall return later to the question whether a name in Egyptian or Greek papyri is a reliable indication of ethnic background of the individual named. Here it should only be noted that, especially on the local level and in jobs dealing directly with the Egyptian populace, bureaucrats tended to have Egyptian names; e.g., king's scribes (mentioned above), scribes of the district, scribes of the village, village heads, etc., consistently had Egyptian names throughout the Ptolemaic period.¹⁰ In an important study of a large number of Greek papyri from el-Hibeh, Samuel was able to show that,

Once the non-Greeks had learned Greek and were prepared to operate in that language, they suffered no impediment from their ethnic origin, or indeed, from the ethnic nature of their names.

. . . They had more or less equal opportunity, at least at the local level, to join the ranks of officials.

Indeed, not only does the opportunity to join seem to have been equal, but the opportunity to rise seems to have been there as well. I see no differentiation in the types of jobs held. Non-Greeks became nomarchs, basilikoi grammateis, and filled a variety of important offices. The ranks of the local bureaucracy seem to have been filled indifferently by Greeks or non-Greeks

What does all this mean? In the first place, it seems clear that it was not difficult for a non-Greek to enter the bureaucracy, and that there was neither necessity, pressure, nor even a tendency for non-Greeks to change their names to Greek. . . . There does not seem to be any indication of a policy here, unless one calls complete indifference to ethnic origin a policy. The evidence shows an

9. Thomas, "Aspects," p. 188.

10. W. Peremans, "Egyptiens et étrangers dans l'administration civile et financière de l'Égypte ptolémaïque," *Ancient Society* 2 (1971) 33-45. W. Clarysse, "Greeks and Egyptians in the Ptolemaic Army and Administration," *Aegyptus* 65 (1985) 57-66, has shown that some jobs seem to have been "felt to be Egyptian in character" while others were "felt to be Greek" and that people in government service with both Greek and Egyptian names used the name appropriate to the job.

openness of the bureaucracy to non-Greeks, and we seem to have a situation in which the only requirement for full participation in the life of the country is knowledge of the dominant language.¹¹

El-Hibeh, with which Samuel was dealing, was an old town with a fairly large number of both Greeks and Egyptians. Bingen has studied documents from the Fayum, where there were a large number of new settlements by the Ptolemies. He has shown that the Greeks tended to live in the nome capitals, leaving the villages to develop (or perpetuate) a class of little notables, largely Egyptians, who entered the Ptolemaic system as bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, or (in the second half of the Ptolemaic period especially) soldiers. He would characterize the Egyptians in the urban population as largely priests and long-established bureaucrats.¹²

One clear example of how knowledge of Greek, even imperfect Greek, could open the door to the Ptolemaic bureaucracy for people whose native language was Egyptian is seen in a study of the office of *agoranomos* at Gebelein. In the early Ptolemaic period, both Greek and Egyptian legal documents recorded a transaction which was signed by a scribe and accompanied by a list of witnesses, who could be called in case of a dispute about the transaction. In the course of the Ptolemaic period, the Ptolemies introduced the office of *agoranomos*, who was not merely a scribe but a notary, authenticating what he recorded in the document so that there was no need for witnesses. This has been called one of the most typically "Greek" jobs in the Ptolemaic administration. The *agoranomos* always wrote Greek and had a Greek name; it has even been suggested that the Ptolemies created the position of *agoranomos* "to combat the prestige of the native scribes." But at Gebelein (which is a double city, the residents of Pathyris being mainly Egyptian, those of Crocodilopolis being mainly Greek) the earliest *agoranomos* had a father with an Egyptian name and all the rest of the *agoranomoi* to the end of the second century in Gebelein were members of one family—two brothers, each with a son who succeeded him in the office. They were all Egyptians who had learned Greek to become *agoranomoi*. All took Greek names based on their Egyptian names for use in their professional duties; their personal archives included both Greek and demotic documents, but some of them wrote horrible Greek (although good demotic). "S'il est vrai que la création de l'agoranomie était dirigée, fût-ce en partie, contre les scribes égyptiens, les Égyptiens n'en ont pas moins habilement réussi à s'emparer de cet instrument qui aurait été dirigé contre les scribes égyptiens."¹³

11. Alan E. Samuel, "The Greek Element in the Ptolemaic Bureaucracy," in *Proceedings of the XII International Congress of Papyrology*, American Studies in Papyrology, vol. 7 (1970) 450–52. For a short study of bilingualism in the Ptolemaic administration, see also Willy Peremans, "Le Bilinguisme dans les relations gréco-égyptiennes sous les Lagides," in E. Van't Dack, P. Van Dessel, and W. Van Gucht, eds., *Egypt and the Hellenistic World*, *Studia Hellenistica*, vol. 27 (Leuven, 1983) 268–73.

12. Jean Bingen, "Le milieu urbain dans la Chôra égyptienne à l'époque ptolémaïque," in *Proceedings of the XIV International Congress of Papyrology*, *Graeco-Roman Memoirs*, vol. 61 (1975) 367–73.

13. P. W. Pestman, "L'Agoranomie: Un avant-poste de l'administration grecque enlevé par les égyptiens?," in Herwig Maehler and Volker Michael Strocka, eds., *Das ptolemäische Ägypten, Akten des Internationalen Symposions 27.–29. September 1976 in Berlin (Mainz am Rhein, 1978)* 210.

Crawford, in an interesting study of the recruitment and training of Ptolemaic bureaucrats, found that, in selection, moral qualities received the greatest emphasis; basically, the bureaucrat learned through on-the-job training. She concluded,

Some intellectual ability (*'ακρίβεια* and *πρόνοια*) but no prior specialist knowledge was necessary for an official. . . .

There is only one area in which specific skills were required of the Ptolemaic official. This of course was the question of language and arises directly from the fact of conquest. At the top level of the administration appointments were made by the king or by his representative the *διοικητής* who was expected to vet all lower appointments also. Whereas it was to be expected that Greeks would fill the senior appointments, in any post where contact with Egyptians was necessary, and this was true of nearly all local appointments, an Egyptian was the obvious choice. It is not, I think, so much a policy of positive non-discrimination which leads to the equal opportunities for Egyptians at a local level, as the practical need for a sufficient number of men with knowledge of local conditions and the means of communication with the peasants whose function in life was to serve the interests of the king.¹⁴

But all of this is still based on Greek documents. From the Old Kingdom on, Egyptian inscriptions show two conflicting ideals: A man should be able to rise in accordance with his ability but at the same time he wants to be able to pass on to his son everything which he has gained. There is a corollary to the second ideal: Extended families often controlled a wide range of jobs. Examples of both types of recruitment abound throughout the Pharaonic period; when one looks at Egyptian documents from the Ptolemaic period, one still sees both ideals. The example of the *agoranomai* from Gebelein discussed above illustrates one family's monopoly of a specific job. Further examples are found throughout Ptolemaic Egyptian documents. Prime examples of important families collecting a large number of titles, at least some of which reflected considerable influence, and passing on their positions to their children are found in the religious sphere which, although in the Ptolemaic period a separate bureaucratic system from the secular system so far discussed, reflects the same organizational scheme. As an example one may mention the family controlling the position of High Priest of Ptah in Memphis, the highest religious position in Ptolemaic Egypt derived from the older, Pharaonic period. A large number of funerary stele, funerary papyri, sarcophagi, and statues inscribed in hieroglyphs and/or demotic belonging to members of this family show that there were thirteen High Priests of Ptah from Ptolemy I through Augustus (a period of nearly 300 years). Eleven of these were members of one family, ten generations from father to son and one pair of brothers. The twelfth was the brother-in-law of the preceding and the thirteenth was his son.¹⁵ Each of these men amassed a large number of titles (e.g., in the Alexander inscription of Psenptais, Psenptais already had 24 titles and he had not yet become the High Priest);¹⁶ in

14. Dorothy J. Crawford, "The Good Official of Ptolemaic Egypt," *ibid.*, pp. 196 and 198.

15. See the chart in Jan Quaegebeur, "The Genealogy of the Memphite High Priest Family in the Hellenistic Period," in Dorothy J. Crawford, Jan Quaegebeur, and Willy Clarysse, *Studies on Ptolemaic Memphis*, *Studia Hellenistica*, vol. 24 (1980) 52.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

addition, the siblings, in-laws, wives, and daughters of the High Priests also amassed a large number of titles, largely religious. One can easily see how this family had accrued a great amount of religious and even secular power and how anyone wishing to deal with the temple of Ptah in Memphis had to go through a member of this family. This same pattern was identified by Crawford in her description of the "way in which Egyptian society worked,"

Besides being a highly centralised country with an administration organised for the maximisation of the royal revenues Egypt was, and remained, a traditional peasant society in which primary social relations, those of family and friend, of patron and client, remained of supreme importance. The focus of loyalty was the village and within the village community there were traditional groupings and ties, obligations and expectations. . . .

The traditional ties of family were equally strong in Egyptian rural society and the administration could not avoid this influence among its officials. Attempts might be made to control such an influence but they probably had little effect. . . . The realisation that family connections within the ranks of officialdom and the inheritance of posts might not be desirable was not sufficient to check the practice.¹⁷

Rather than continuing with generalities, I would like to turn, finally, to the question of the bureaucrats with whom the "average" "middle class" Egyptian had to deal. To do this, we shall look at the channels followed in the legal suit recorded in the so-called Family Archive from Siut.¹⁸ In this case, a woman named Khertiankh sued her brother-in-law for property which this younger half-brother of her husband had inherited from his father but which she thought should have been inherited by her husband. Here we are not concerned with the legal questions, although the documents and the law around which the decision turns are interesting. We shall look, rather, at the channels followed by the principals and the roles of people with Egyptian and Greek names.

Before we begin, we must deal with a question mentioned above: whether or not names accurately reflect ethnic origin. When Greek papyrologists assume that large numbers of Egyptians were taking Greek names in order to acquire jobs in the bureaucracy and advance within it, they have to question whether a man with a Greek name was "really" Greek. But we have seen that the assumption of mass "conversion" for the sake of bureaucratic jobs is unsupported. In addition, studies based on Greek papyri of both ethnics (which give the part of the Greek world from which the family of an individual derived) and patronymics (whether parents of people with Greek names had Greek or Egyptian names) show that we can, for the most part, take the names seriously. Indeed, statistically there are more examples of people with Greek names giving their children Egyptian names than there are examples of people with Egyptian names giving their children Greek names, although examples of either are quite rare;¹⁹ the number of people with both Greek and Egyptian names is also small.

17. Crawford, "The Good Official," pp. 199-201.

18. Sir Herbert Thompson, *A Family Archive from Siut from Papyri in the British Museum* (Oxford, 1934).

19. W. Peremans, "Sur l'identification des égyptiens et des étrangers dans l'Égypte des Lagides," *Ancient Society* 1 (1970) 30.

If one looks at the patronymics in the Family Archive from Siut, one finds 156 people with Egyptians names whose father (and occasionally the mother's name is given) had Egyptian names and eleven people with Greek names whose fathers had Greek names. There is only one clear case of a person with a Greek name whose parents had Egyptian names, this being a man who is said to have worked as herdsman for a high official with a Greek name. There is also one man with an Egyptian name whose father's name is very unusual and may perhaps be Greek. These two possible cases, out of 170 in the archive, allow us to conclude that, in the Family Archive from Siut, names accurately reflected ethnic origin.

All documents in the case (at least all the preserved documents) were written in demotic by a scribe with an Egyptian name. The deeds, etc., were signed by the person initiating the transfer and, when appropriate, by any members of the family having a vested interest in the property concerned. In addition to the people mentioned in the following outline of the action in the case, it should be noted that there are numerous Egyptians and some Greeks mentioned as owners of land adjacent to land owned by members of the disputing family. In addition, the plot of land most consistently disputed by the half-brothers was leased by the two Egyptians to three Greeks to be farmed. These leases were written in demotic, not Greek.

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

Year 8 of Ptolemy VI Philometor (173 B.C.)

The young half-brother Tefhapy sued to gain his inheritance from his father. Although the property was in Siut, he petitioned the Greek Theomnestos, the Strategos (originally a military title but by now that of the senior civil official) of the Nome of Thebes, with whom Tefhapy had an "in" since his uncles worked for Theomnestos. Theomnestos sent to another Greek with the title Strategos of the District of Siut to hear the case. Thus, the personal contact to Theomnestos was passed through channels to the person in whose jurisdiction the contested property lay. Khertiankh's husband Tot wrote a deed to the property to Tefhapy without going to court since he was "unable to go to the Registry Office" with his younger half-brother. Presumably it was at this time that the two half-brothers submitted to the "hp (law, jurisdiction) of the Elders and Chief Overseers . . . of the Temple of Wepwawet (the god of Siut)" to which reference is made later in the text.

Year 11 of Ptolemy VI Philometor (170 B.C.)

Tefhapy petitioned to an Egyptian with the Egyptian titles Overseer of Pharaoh and Prophet of Thoth to get his inherited land which his half-brother was still holding. He sent another copy of the petition to an Egyptian with the Egyptian title Scribe of the Town. The Greek Theomnestos, Strategos of the Nome of Thebes, who by implication was partial to Tefhapy, had by year 11 "gone north" and the Strategos of the District of Siut "reported concerning the matters," evidently as a result of another petition from Tefhapy. The woman Khertiankh petitioned the Greek Numenios, the new Strategos of the Nome of Thebes, and had him send to the judges of Siut (in whose jurisdiction the property lay) to hear the case. We have the preserved transcript of this case, in which the judges were the three Egyptian priests of Wepwawet, the god of Siut. Tefhapy noted in his reply to Khertiankh that the fact that the Strategos requested the judges to hear

the case proved nothing about the legitimacy of her claim since it was simply the job of the Strategos, when anyone complained to him, to refer the question to the appropriate office.

The procedure of the court case involved written statements by the plaintiff and defendant; both parties then appeared before the judges and verified their statements as read aloud by the scribe of the judges. Any further comments were added and they were asked to produce the actual documents and contracts cited in their statements. These were read into the court record. Following a summary of the arguments, the decree was made, in this case in favor of the defendant Tefhapy. The judges gave an order to an Egyptian with the Egyptian title translated Bailiff, who worked for or in concert with a Greek with the Greek title *Eisagogeus*, which means literally "introducer," he being the one who introduced cases in court. The Bailiff was ordered to put Tefhapy in possession of the disputed property and to have Tot, the husband of Khertiankh, make a quit claim deed to the property. The document ends with the signature and title of the scribe who made the record, an Egyptian with the title Scribe of the Judges and Priests of Wepwawet, and with the signatures and titles of the three judges, all Egyptian, as noted above.

Khertiankh was not satisfied. She sent another petition to the judges "in the place where Theomnestos, the Strategos, was" and sent a copy to the strategos requesting that Tefhapy be brought to Ptolemais (north of Thebes; Ptolemais was the administrative center of Upper Egypt during the Ptolemaic period). The judges turned the petition over to a Greek with the Greek title *Epistates* (a high financial and administrative position often associated with a temple but appointed from outside) of the District of Siut. Khertiankh claimed that an Egyptian Bailiff and the Greek *Andromachos* (probably the *Eisagogeus* with or for whom this Bailiff was said above to work) went to the prison with an Egyptian called the Scribe of the Records with an order to write a quit claim deed. Eventually the judges found against Khertiankh but relieved her husband Tot of any responsibility. The decree was pronounced by another Greek who also had the Greek title *Eisagogeus* "introducer." In the meantime, Tefhapy sent another petition to an Egyptian with the Egyptian titles *Overseer of Pharaoh* and *Prophet of Thoth* and to an Egyptian Scribe of the Town of the West of the District of Siut. In it, he complained that, although the judgment of the court was in his favor, his half-brother was still holding on to the property. This is the end of the archive, although presumably not the end of the fight.

On the verso of the papyrus recording this court case is a copy of a petition and supporting documentation concerning a dispute between the priests of Isis at Aswan and two private individuals with the non-Egyptian (and non-Greek) names *Htyβ* and *Wrgy(r)*. While the case was being adjudicated, a Greek called the Strategos of the the Places around Aswan ordered the relevant documents to be held by a Greek with the Greek titles of *Strategos of the Nome of Thebes* and *Archisomatophylax* (Chief of the Bodyguard). He was to keep the documents in the name of the king. The said documents were submitted to this individual together with a petition to him from the priests of Isis asking judgment in their favor. After a favorable decision, the priests sent another petition asking for their documents back. In this same petition, the priests ask this high Greek official to write to a fellow Greek who bears an Egyptian title translated Chief of Police by the editor of the text although it is not the normal title for Chief of Police. This man also had the Greek title *Epistates*. The priests were asking that he be requested to "satisfy the banks" (i.e., "the royal granaries where [the tax] payments in

kind were delivered")²⁰ with regard to the wine from the vineyard under dispute but to "hold up" the rest of the wine until the priests come up with a "fixed plan." The petition notes that it was written in the presence of an Egyptian named Tot (a different Tot from the one in the first case since they had different fathers). This Tot may have had a vested interest in the wine but he also wrote to the priests of Onuris (the god of the ancient capital of This, 12 miles south of Ptolemais which, being a Greek foundation, had no local Egyptian temple) in their capacity as judges, recounting the petition of the priests about having the wine "held up," and indicating that he, Tot, should be consulted about legal aspects of the case.

Thompson points out that, although Egyptian, Tot must have been in a position to act as intermediary and advocate of the priests of Aswan with the court. If he were the Chief Prophet and Lesonis (the highest administrative positions in the temple), the text would have said so. Therefore Thompson suggested that he might have been an official of the Ptolemaic Court sent from Ptolemais to Aswan to find out the facts of the case and put them into correct form as a petition for the priests.²¹

Whatever the explanation, and whatever the relationship between the two different suits which led them to be copied onto the same papyrus, one can reach certain general conclusions: The highest officials, functioning on a district level, were generally Greek, with titles written in demotic texts in transliteration from the Greek—e.g., the Strategos and Epistates. But these people had no direct influence on the court case: When they received a request, either through personal lines of communication or formal written petition, they simply referred it to the appropriate local officials for action.

Similarly, the other position mentioned in these texts regularly held by a Greek, with a title transliterated from Greek, was the Eisagogeus, who merely "introduced" cases. He had no judicial or investigative powers. The only Greek in the documents with "executionary" powers was the man who has one Greek title (Epistates) and one Egyptian title (here translated Chief of Police).

The officials who actually are seen taking part in the investigations, making decisions, recording decisions, and implementing decisions were Egyptians. Thus the judges were the priests of Wepwawet; the Bailiff who was to put Tefhape in possession of the property and who was to secure a quit claim deed from Khertiankh and Tot was an Egyptian; the Overseer (perhaps Overseer of Farmlands) of Pharaoh was an Egyptian, as were all the scribes met in the documents. All the titles these men bear are old Egyptian titles.

This is just one case and it can certainly not be concluded that Greeks never had any contact with, or influence over, Egyptians. Clearly that was not the case. But from an Egyptian point of view things may not have changed as much in Ptolemaic Egypt as a study of only the Greek records would suggest. Egypt remained, as Crawford pointed out, a traditional peasant society where immediate loyalty went to one's family and friends and to one's village, and personal contacts based on these ties were used whenever possible.²² Thus one almost must agree with Préaux that the Ptolemies brought with them no fundamental changes in the structure of Egyptian society, including bureaucracy.

20. Thompson, *Family Archive*, p. 51, n. 27.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

22. "The Good Official," p. 199.