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Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt

by
James P. Allen
Jan Assmann
Alan B. Lloyd
Robert K. Ritner
David P. Silverman

Yale Egyptological Studies 3

edited by
William Kelly Simpson

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Preface

The study of Ancient Egyptian Religion in America has not been particularly productive during the last generation of American Egyptologists. They have in general concentrated more on epigraphy, philology, art, and archaeology. It seemed appropriate therefore to have a symposium on this subject on the occasion of the visit of Jan Assmann to Yale University as a visiting lecturer. Yale's first Egyptologist, James Henry Breasted, devoted a considerable part of his career to the study of Egyptian religion, beginning with his 1894 treatise, *De hymnis in solen sub rege Amenophide IV conceptis*, written during his subsequent studies in Germany.

Three of our authors, Messrs. Allen, Ritner, and Silverman, studied at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, where Henri Frankfort made significant contributions to the understanding of Egyptian religion in his *Kingship and the Gods* and his chapters in *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* later reissued as *Before Philosophy*. Our other authors, Jan Assmann of the University of Heidelberg, and Alan Lloyd of the University of Swansea, Wales, have written extensively on the subject.

Of the seven essays presented in this volume, the first six were delivered as part of a symposium held at the Whitney Humanities Center of Yale University on October 1, 1988, under the sponsorship of the Whitney Center, the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, and the Department of Religious Studies. The seventh essay, by Professor Assmann, is included at his suggestion as a pendant to Alan Lloyd's discussion of the mortuary cult. It had previously appeared in German in a source now out of print. For the translation we are indebted to Markus Grauer, Yale '91, and R. Meyer, with changes by the undersigned.

The expenses of the symposium and the publication of this volume were made possible by the Yale Endowment for Egyptology funded by the Marilyn M. Simpson Charitable Trust. Mrs. Simpson's grandfather, John D. Rockefeller Jr., had been the principal supporter of Breasted's work, and this set of essays is respectfully dedicated to the memory of Breasted, Rockefeller, and Marilyn Simpson.

William Kelly Simpson
New Haven
December 31, 1988

THE COSMOLOGY OF THE PYRAMID TEXTS

James P. Allen

The destiny of the deceased king in the Pyramid Texts is to "go forth to the sky among the imperishable stars" (Pyr. 1123a) and "go around the sky like the Sun" (Pyr. 130d). For the Pyramid Texts, this celestial vision of the afterlife is a single-minded goal. Even what used to be viewed as a separate "Osirian" destiny of the king in these texts has more recently been recognized as one aspect of his celestial cycle—the regenerative phase through which he passes before "rising in the eastern side of the sky like the Sun" (Pyr. 1465d-e).¹

These concepts reflect what can be called a cosmology of the afterlife. Its diverse elements have been recognized for a long time: the Duat and *3/4* from which the king rises with the sun and stars, and the sky through whose fields and waterways he travels with them "in the proper form of a living akh" (Pyr. 318c). Less well appreciated is the degree to which this cosmology reflects a single, coherent vision of the afterlife. There are multiple images in the texts themselves, and our knowledge of the grammar, lexicon, and cultural context of the texts is far from complete. These undoubtedly make the cosmology of the afterlife seem more ambiguous and ill-defined to us than they were to the authors of the Pyramid Texts. But with careful analysis it is still possible to determine something of the global vision that must have existed in the minds of the Egyptians who built and inscribed the Old Kingdom pyramids.

Implicit in that vision are two fundamental changes that distinguish the king's next life from that which he had enjoyed on earth. The first of these is in the form of his personal existence. From a mutable being whose lifetime is measured in years and marked by inevitable physical changes, he now becomes eternal and immutable, changing only as and when he likes:

The King's lifetime is Eternal Recurrence,
his limit is Eternal Sameness,

¹ Bara 1981, 149–50.

in this his privilege of "When he likes, he acts;
when he dislikes, he doesn't have to act." (Pyr. 412a-b)²

Immutability is the hallmark of the king's new existence, and is captured in the persistent image of his identification with the "imperishable stars":

those northern gods of the sky,
who cannot perish—he will not perish,
who cannot grow fatigued—he will not grow fatigued,
who cannot pass away—the King will not pass away. (Pyr. 1080a-d)

The Pyramid Texts also associate this concept with the mummy and the pyramid complex of the deceased king:

You shall grab onto the arm of the imperishable stars.
Your bones will not perish,
your flesh will not suffer, O King.
Your parts will not be far from you,
for you are one of the gods. (Pyr. 724d-725c)

Oh, Great Ennead in Heliopolis!
You will cause the King to be sturdy
by causing this pyramid of the King and this his construction to be sturdy for
the span of Eternal Sameness. (Pyr. 1660a-b)³

Perhaps even more than the desire for preservation, the need to ensure immutability undoubtedly also governed the practice of mummification and the massive funerary architecture of the pyramids.

As opposed to his mummified body, the king himself lives in the next world as an "imperishable akh" (Pyr. 152-66)—that is, in an immutable (*jḥm-skyw*) form effectively (*3ḥj*) adapted to the afterlife.⁴ Although the living can be described as "effective" (*3ḥj*), the state of existence identified by the noun "akh" (*3ḥj*) is one that is reached only after death.⁵ In the Pyramid Texts, the deceased king is "one who has gone to become akh"⁶

² For a discussion of this passage and its terms, see Assmann 1975, 11-18; Bara 1981, 148-49. For the grammar, see Allen 1984, §§ 262, 436C, 437.

³ For the grammar of this passage see Allen 1984, § 391.

⁴ See Friedman 1984-85.

⁵ Cf. Pyr. 833a-b, 1566-67a. For the noun form see Osing 1976, 193.

⁶ *z 3ḥj*, Pyr. 62a, cf. 472c, 1167c.

among the akh-gods.
The King will see how they become akh,
and the King will become akh in the same way. (Pyr. 1566d-67a)⁷

This goal is reflected in the generic term for funerary texts, *s3ḥw* 'akh-makers'.⁸

The second change that marks the king's afterlife is in the new world in which he now lives as an akh. The Pyramid Texts express the change concisely in the words "akh to the sky, corpse to the earth" (Pyr. 474a). The deceased king is encouraged to leave this world behind and to assume a new celestial existence:

Go in the following of your Sun ...
that you may be beside the god,
and leave your house to your son of your begetting. (Pyr. 137a-d)⁹

The king's new world is most often identified by the word *pt* 'sky'. In the Pyramid Texts this refers almost always to a domain rather than—or in addition—to a constituent element of the visible universe, and is contrasted as such with the world of the living.¹⁰

As a domain, the sky harbors both beings and structures. The latter are few: the Pyramid Texts mention only its two shrines, an "enclosure of Horus belonging to the sky," and a "house of the King belonging to the sky," none of which are localized.¹¹ The former are more numerous. They are called generically "those of the sky," "those in the sky," and "foremost of the sky," and more specifically "the gods of/in the sky."¹² Although gods may also belong to the earth,¹³ the sky is their domain *par excellence*. Pyr. 1208c speaks of the time, "when the sky was split from the earth and the gods went to the sky."¹⁴ Among the individual gods that the Pyramid Texts place in the sky

⁷ See Allen 1984, § 229.

⁸ See Bara 1981, 63-64, 67-68, 104. Cf. Pyr. 2106a-b.

⁹ See Allen 1984, § 370B and p. 530 n. 308.

¹⁰ As visible sky perhaps only in connection with meteorological phenomena: 281a, 336b, 393a, 1440a. Nt 654 = Ou 144 (CT VI 108K; cf. Pyr. 324c). For the contrast between sky and earth, see Pyr. 462a-b, 604e-f, 890a-b, 1208c.

¹¹ Pyr. 757b, 1025c, 1026c, 1027c, 458d (cf. *1765a-b).

¹² *jrw pt* 292b, 1488a, N 1308+3; also *jrw* 'wt pt' 1151a, *jrw pt* 406a, 2115b, *ḥm/jrw pt* 2038b, *ḥm/jrw pt* 478a, 941c, 1473b, 1834a; also *ptd/jrw pt* 1116d, *nrrw jrw pt* 1168a, 1490a, 1522a, 1523c; cf. also 459b, 462b, 463a, 546c, 550c, 736c, 1101d, 1114a-b, *1585b, *1926a.

¹³ *ḥm/jrw jrw pt* 478a, 941c, 1473c, 1522a, 1523c.

¹⁴ Cf. Hornung 1973, 223-24 (= 1982, 227).

are the Sun, Geb(?) and Nut, Osiris, and Horus.¹⁵ Other divine residents include birds, ka's, and akhs.¹⁶

The sky is also the domain of the stars in general and the circumpolar ("imperishable") stars in particular.¹⁷ The latter are called both gods and akhs.¹⁸ The particularly close relationship between sky and stars is also reflected in the term *shdw* 'starry expanse', occasionally written with the sky determinative.¹⁹ This word is related to *shd*, a kind of star, and may be nothing more than the plural *shdw* 'stars'.²⁰ It is frequently used either in parallel with *pt* or in the expression *shdw pt*.²¹ From the association with stars, it is likely that *shdw* is a term with particular reference to the sky at night.²²

Exactly what was envisioned in the term *pt* has been a matter of some discussion.²³ Its location above the earth is clear from the verbs and images that are used to describe the means by which it is reached²⁴ —

j3q 'climb' (1431c, 1474b)²⁵
jc 'ascend' (369, 462c)
p3j 'fly' (459b, 463a, 1235c, *1951b)

15 *ꜥ* 34a, 37b, 121d, 357b, 362a, 461a, 804b, 856c, 1016c, 1169a, 1170a, 1469b, 1719c; *gbb* 655d; *nwt* 1030d; *w3j* 1419c; *hꜣw* 888c. Also *nꜣꜥ* 3 *70c.

16 *b3kwt nꜣꜥ* 137b; cf. 913a, 1844c. *k3w jꜣw pt* 1220d. For the akhs, see Pyr. 474a, cited above. Pyr. 1566c-d refers to the elevation of the king 'to the sky ... among the akh-gods'; cf. also 748a, 1143-44, 1231-32, 1508. For the relationship between akhs and gods, note Pyr. 969b P *nꜣꜣw nꜣꜥ(j)w* 'gods who have become divine' = MN *3jꜣw nꜣꜥ(j)w* 'divine akhs'.

17 *sb3w* 251a, 347a, 362b, 877c, 882b-c, 940a, 1123a, 1253c, 1366c, 1455a, *1926a, *1944b, 2061b, N 1350+57; *shd* *1585b; *3jꜣw M fr Or* 46 (1977) pl. 12 (14+15):12 = N 1055+31 (pl. 15 fr. 28:7) = N 654 = Ou 145 (CT VI 109a). *jꜣmw-sꜣꜣw* 940a, 1000d, 1080a-b, 1123a, 1220b, *1944b, N 1350+57.

18 Gods: 1080a; cf. *1926a PNt *sb3w jꜣmw pt* = N^aAba *nꜣꜣw*. Akhs: 656c, 759c, 900d, 1220a, *1947b. The phrase *3jꜣw jꜣmw-sꜣꜣw* is clearly one expression in 1220a, though the two elements are distinct in 1228b, 1721b, 1994b, 2104. Cf. also Pyr. 152-66, where the king is called *3jꜣ jꜣmw-sk*.

19 Pyr. 334c WTN, 449b W, 727a T, 907b P, 1474c PM.

20 For *shd* see 506a, 698a-b, 889d, *1585b. *shdw* appears with three stars as determinative in 2001a NNt and 721a NNt. For the latter, T has a single star and the sky-sign as determinatives. The plural 'stars' seems likely in Pyr. 658e, where *shdw* and *3kꜣw* 'horizons' are used in parallel.

21 In parallel with *pt*, 727a, 1474c P, 2001a. *shdw pt* 449a, 2090c, 2091b.

22 See Bara 1981, 83. The term *msꜣꜣ shdw* 'beaten path of stars', which probably refers to the Milky Way, also evokes the night sky; see below.

23 See especially Kees 1956, 59-97, Hornung 1977, Roßler-Köhler 1978, 257-58; Bara 1981, 82-99.

24 See Assmann 1977a.

25 Cf. also Pyr. 971-79, and the references to a stairway in 365a, 1749b, *1944a.

sꜣꜣ 'jump' (980c)
swj 'go up'²⁶ (1038, 1231b, 1303-27, 1517b, *1926a) —

and from its synonym *hꜣꜣ* 'that which is far above'.²⁷ The Pyramid Texts assure the king that he "will not fail to earth from the sky" (Pyr. 2058d) and that those who take him to the sky "cannot drop him to earth" (Pyr. 1345a, 2171b). The sky is supported above the earth not only by the god Shu but also by pillars or four sceptres.²⁸

Like the earth, the celestial world is an expanse (*pꜣt*), with cardinal directions and limits, which can be circumnavigated.²⁹ On each side is a doorway that keeps out commoners and foreigners but through which the gods and the king can gain access to the sky.³⁰ The sky itself has an upper limit that can be reached.³¹ Sethe identified this "zenith" with the term *jꜣkn*,³² but that refers more probably to a region on the west and perhaps also the east of the sky. The sun descends into the night-bark from it, and from it calls the king to be established as the morning star.³³ The Pyramid Texts mark the *jꜣkn* as a body of water or a strip of land: in the Coffin Texts it regularly has the determinative of desert (or foreign) land.³⁴ The term *wꜣꜣꜣ* 'desert flank' is also used of one or more regions at the sky's edge.³⁵ A passage from the Coffin Texts refers to "the

26 Possibly denominated from the image of the god Shu supporting the sky; cf. Pyr. 275f and 1101b-c.

27 Pyr. 152-58c, 645d, 785d, 879a, 1171b. With determinative of the sky in 152-58c Nt, 785d MNnt, 1171b N.

28 For Shu see 1101b-c; *pt jꜣmw* 1143b; *ꜣꜣmw pt* 348a-b. The image of the sky resting on sceptres is familiar as the frame of many reliefs and inscriptions. For some contemporary examples, see James 1974, pls. 23-25.

29 *pꜣt* 1443a (M with sky determinative); *pꜣꜣꜣ* 393b, 801b, 1486a, 1490b; cf. *mn(i) pt* 889c-c. Directions: south 1497b-c, 2158a; north 405a, 814b, 1000d, 1016b, 1080a, 1220b, 2158b, N pl. 15 fr. 29:18; east 339c, 341b, 344a, 353a, 355c, 360d, 362a, 595b, 596b, 599d, 600b, 821b, 877c, 883a, 916b, 923c, 928a, 934a, 947a-b, 1000c, 1104d, 1105b, 1206b, *1382c, *1383a/c, *1384b, 1433c, 1465d-e, 1469c, 1496b-c, 1530a, 1541b, 1708b, 2079d, 2200b-c, N 1350+42; west 821c, 1469c; also middle 1498b-c. Limits: 324c. Circumnavigation: 130d, 406c, 1019b, 1094c (*dbn pt*); 854d (*mn pt*).

30 All four doorways are mentioned in 1252c-f. For the doorways barring (*hsꜣ*) commoners *ꜣhꜣꜣ* and foreigners (*ꜣhꜣw*, *ꜣhꜣw*), see 876b, 1726a-b, *1916a, *1949b, N 1055+33; cf. Bara 1981, 97-98. For the king and gods passing through these doors, see 659a, 981-85, 1408-11, *1929a-b, N 1055+44 = N 692. Besides the ubiquitous term *ꜣꜣꜣꜣꜣꜣ pt*, the doors are also called *sb3(w) pt* (799a, 1115b, 1252c-f, 1720b) and *ꜣꜣꜣꜣꜣꜣ pt* (727a, 1474c).

31 Pyr. 335a, 949b (*ꜣꜣw pt*); 854c (*wꜣꜣ pt*).

32 Pyr. 496b, 804b, 1016b, 1170a, 1719c. Sethe 1935:39, II 338; also Bara 1981, 84.

33 Pyr. 496b-97a, 804b-805a, 1719c-f.

34 Pyr. 1170a P, 1719c M, CT IV 164j, 359b, VII 196d.

35 Pyr. 751b, 1168b, 1202d, N 1308+25 (with fig. 15 fr. a/f). For the term see Zibielius 1978, 62-63.

great *w'rt* in front of the *jk'n*" (CT IV 359b), and a reference to "the *w'rt* of the imperishable stars" in Pyr. 1201d suggests a northern location.

The Pyramid Texts describe a number of fields (*šm*) in connection with the next world.³⁶ Two of these—the Field of Reeds (*štr j3rw*) and Field of Offering (*štr htp*)—are mentioned in specific association with the sky.³⁷ In some instances these localities seem to lie outside the region of the sky proper. The sky may be reached (on its east) from the Field of Reeds:

Your third is Sothis, pure of places:
she will lead you from the Field of Reeds to the perfect routes in the sky. (Pyr. 822)³⁸

The Field of Offering lies to the north of this field and can be reached from it (Pyr. 1086c-87a) or directly by a journey across the sky:

Travel the sky to the Field of Reeds,
make your abode in the Field of Offering, among the imperishable stars. (Pyr. 749c-e)³⁹

The relationship between the circumpolar stars and the Field of Offering implied in this passage is confirmed by another that refers to "the big island in the midst of the Field of Offering on which the swallow-gods are caused to alight—the swallows are the imperishable stars" (Pyr. 1216a-c). This same relationship, in turn, suggests a more precise location for the Field of Offering, on the sky's northeast side: "Where the King crosses is to his position on the eastern side of the sky in its northern arm, among the imperishable stars" (Pyr. 1000c-d). As the abode of stars, the Field of Offering can therefore be identified as a part of the sky.⁴⁰ The same is probably true of the Field of Reeds, since it can harbor the morning star.⁴¹

36 See Lesko 1971-72; Mueller 1972; Barra 1981, 89-92.

37 See Leclant 1975, 1156-57.

38 See also Pyr. 275, 1421-22, and 1430, where the king bathes in the Field of Reeds before being elevated to the sky. In 340c-41b, 343-44a, 352-53a, and 359-60a the Field of Reeds is flooded so that the king may cross to the east of the sky. Pyr. 525-29, 981-85, 1132-37, and 1408-11 describe how Horus and the king emerge at dawn after bathing in the Field of Reeds.

39 Similarly, 1165a. See also 873c-d, 1123.

40 Note also 1253d-e "let his arm be taken to Field of Offering, that he may sit among the stars that are in the sky." For the relationship between the sky and the imperishable stars, see Pyr. 940a, 1080a-b, 1123a, 1220b, *1944b, N 1350+57.

41 Pyr. 805a, 1719f. See Leclant 1975, 1156; Granelle 1980.

Apart from its fields, the only body of land associated with the sky is the *msqt šdhw* 'beaten path of stars', our Milky Way.⁴² The texts place it at the sky's zenith:

The King has reached the sky's height:
the Great Ones of the Mace-Chapel cannot bar him from the beaten path of stars. (Pyr. 949b-c; sim., 334c-35a)

The term *msqt* derives from *sqj* 'beat' and is given determinatives of a strip of land or desert.⁴³ Besides the phrase *msqt šdhw* it also occurs—with desert-land determinative—in Pyr. 279d as something that is crossed by boat, suggesting that the determinatives may not be a literal sign of its nature.⁴⁴

The chief feature of the sky in the Pyramid Texts is water. At least one passage makes direct reference to "the waters ... that are in the sky" (Pyr. 2063a), and two others mention its shores.⁴⁵ More often, the sky's watery nature is implicit in the verbs that are used to describe a journey across it—

nmj 'traverse' (543a, 749c, 882c, 1048d; with boat determinative in 882c PMN)

hnz 'travel' (with boat determinative: 130d WN, 881a, 1165a, 1250a N, 1777b, N 1016+3 = *2135c)⁴⁶

hnj 'row' (with boat determinative: 367b, 383b, 917b, 2122c-d)

d3j 'cross' (with boat determinative: 128b, P fr. Or 41 (1972) pl. 14 (12):12)—

as well as in the image of the "reed-floats of the sky" on which the king and gods cross.⁴⁷ Parts of the sky are also associated with water: both the Field of Reeds and the Field of Offering can be flooded, and one passage speaks of a lake or canal excavated for the king in the Field of Reeds.⁴⁸ Numerous canals and lakes also lie among these

42 For the identification see Sethe 1935-39, II 20.

43 Pyr. 949c PMN; 334c WTN. For 334c W see Plankoff 1968, pl. 22. For the verb *sqj* see Allen 1984, 563. It is used with object of land in Pyr. 1394b, and of a stairway (*š-rdw*) in 365a, 1090b, 1108a-b, 1322a, 1325a, 1717a, 1749b.

44 Pyr. 279d has a parallel in CT VI 231q, where *msqt* has determinatives of water and a cauldron or bowl (Gardiner 1957, Sign-List W6 or W7).

45 Pyr. 1167b, 1169a (*gdhw*). For 2063a, cf. also 667, 688, 694.

46 Also with walking-legs determinative in 130d TML, 1152a PMN, 1250a PM. This probably indicates motion in general rather than specifically by foot. Pyr. 1165a P uses both boat and walking legs as determinatives.

47 Pyr. 337, 342, 351, 358, 926-28, 932-34, 994b-1000a, 1084c-86b, 1103, 1179a, 1705-1706, 2126-27, N pl. 15 fr. 1-7. See Jacq 1986, 123-25.

48 Flooding: 343b, 352b, 359a, 1102c, 1205c-d, 1704a, P F/Se 92 = N 1308+24, N pl. 15 fr. 1-8. See

fields.⁴⁹ One of these may be the body of water called *prw* or *prtf*, which is specifically associated with the sky in Pyr. 468a.⁵⁰ Like the sky it can be crossed by boat, and like the Nile on earth it arises from caverns.⁵¹

Two terms in particular that are used in the Pyramid Texts suggest an image of the sky as a body of water. The most common of these is *qbhw* 'Fresh Water', which is given the determinative of the sky in a number of instances.⁵² It occurs most often in the sentence "The door of the sky has been opened, the door of Fresh Water has been drawn aside."⁵³ Its identification with the sky is also reflected in the phrase "Fresh Water of the stars" (Pyr. 138b)⁵⁴ and in a passage that mentions Osiris's "going forth to the sky, crossing to the Fresh Water" (Pyr. 465a-b). A number of the sky's structures and inhabitants also occur in association with the "Fresh Water."⁵⁵ As "Fresh Water," the sky can be traversed by boat, and the king can bathe in it.⁵⁶ Two passages that mention a canal or lake of Fresh Water suggest that *qbhw* may not be so much a name for the celestial domain as a general description of its nature.⁵⁷

Barta 1981, 87-89. The *šj* or *mr* excavated in 289a may be the *šj* *šrw* mentioned in 519a, 1247a, and 1421.

49 See Barta 1981, 88-89.

50 With canal or lake determinative in 1138c and P fr. Or 38 (1969) pl. 23 (27); 7. Cf. the Delta canal or tributary *prtf* mentioned in New Kingdom documents: Gauthier 1925-31, II 156. The meaning may be, literally, "Looking Waters" — i.e., reflecting.

51 Pyr. 1138c; cf. also CT I 267a, IV 367m. For the caverns see Pyr. 852d, 1078b, 1680b, P fr. Or 37 (1968) pl. 22 (24a) + Or 38 (1969) pl. 22 (24b); 8 (*qbhw*). Cf. Wb V 365, 11-16. The same image is probably corrupted in the *tp-fwt* of CT III 214-15c/e, VI 94a. The door ("3w") mentioned in Pyr. 1203c may be the opening of these caverns; cf. also CT III 215g.

52 Pyr. 841b PnL, 876a P, 1327b P, *1765c Aba.

53 Pyr. 525-29, 756c, 862b, 873c, 876a, 981-85, 1132-37, 1291c, 1361a, 1408-11, 1480a, *1929a, *1946d, P fr. Or 37 (1968) pl. 23 (25b); 3, N pl. 15 fr. 18-2; cf. also 255a, 907a, 1141b.

Like the door of the sky, that of the *qbhw* also "bats commoners" (N 1055+33).

54 *qbhw šbšw*, spelled out in N (709+52-53) and most Middle Kingdom copies.

55 Structures: 1278b, 1327b (*hwt hrw jnt qbhw*); also *msfr* *š* 1180a. Inhabitants: 374c (*jmw qbhw*); *1765c (*š*); *70c (*hrw*); 465b (*gr* *š* — cf. 467c).

56 Pyr. 1049a (*hwt qbhw*); cf. also 374c, 1990b. Bathing: 138b, 841b, 1979a.

57 Pyr. 1301b, 1979a. Barta argues that *qbhw* is the eastern sky (1981, 93). His analysis is based primarily on two passages in which the term appears in a description of the king's appearance at dawn. Pyr. 1979a (*prn kl m šj n šbšw wšb (šj m šj) qbhw*) can be interpreted as suggested here: "You have emerged from the Lake of Life, clean from the Fresh Water Lake" (restoration based on Middle Kingdom copies; T1.C⁰ and a parallel in CT VI 3831-m write *šj qbhw*). In Pyr. 2035a the sequence of actions Barta suggests ("mun steig' zum pt-Himmel auf, nachdem man den *qbhw*-Himmel geöffnet ... hat") is not specifically borne out by the text: *ja NN prf jr pt, wšb NN qbhw, jmd NN hr n šf š*. The King has come that he might go forth to the sky: The King

A less frequent term for the sky, *bjš*, meaning 'Basin' or the like, is also associated with water, both in its ubiquitous determinative of the "well" of water and in the fact that it is crossed by boat (Pyr. 1121a).⁵⁸ Pyr. 305a "The King will take possession of the sky and split its Basin" indicates that *bjš* is a part of the sky, and Pyr. 907b calls it *bjš jm šdw*. 'Basin that is in the Stars'. In a partially-preserved copy of the latter passage (Pyr. 1575b), *bjš* is written with the desert/foreign-land determinative. This may derive from the term's association with *bjš* 'meteoric iron', reflected also in its usual determinative of a lump of ore and its occasional spelling with the determinative of a sledge bearing ore.⁵⁹

These sparse indications from the Pyramid Texts suggest an early image of the celestial domain as an expanse (*prdw*) of water (*bjš*, *qbhw*) above the earth (*hrt*), whose shores (*šdw pr*) consist of marshland (*šft šrw, šft hrp*) with canals (*mrw, prw/prtf*) and lakes (*šjw*), bordered perhaps by desert (*wšrt, jškn*). The extent to which this domain was visualized as water may be gleaned from the description of the circumpolar stars alighting on an island in the midst of the Field of Offering (Pyr. 1216a-c, cited above). At the latitude of Cairo, the north celestial pole lies about 30° above the horizon.⁶⁰ Of the 180° from one horizon to its opposite, therefore, some 30° on either side are occupied by shoreland, leaving a maximum arc of some 120° covered by open water—perhaps the image expressed in the term *bjš* 'Basin'. The only land that can be located with certainty in this central portion of the sky is the "beaten path of stars" (*msqt šdw*), and this may have been seen as an island or series of islands. The "routes of the sky" mentioned in two passages are not localized, and could in any case refer to routes over water rather than land.⁶¹

The image of the sky as mostly water fits well with the impression given by the texts, that it is primarily a domain of passage rather than residence. Most of the verbs of motion associated with it refer, either lexically or in their determinatives, specifically to passage by boat. Fixed structures in the sky are few, and these may be

will open the Fresh Water, the King will greet his father the Sun'. Like *pr*, *qbhw* seems to be a general term for the sky, as Barta admits (1981, 93 n. 119).

58 For the term see Gräfe 1971, 40-66. It appears in Pyr. 305a, 907b, 1121a, 1575b, and *1948f. In the phrase *hndw bjš* 'bjš-throne' (573b, 736a, 770c, 800d, 865a, 873a, 1016a, 1124a, 1165c, 1293a, 1301b, 1364b, 1562b, 1721a, 1735a, *1927b, *1935d, 1992c, 1996b, 2012a, 2091a, P FSe 95, P fr. Or 37 (1968) pl. 22 (24a) + Or 38 (1969) pl. 22 (24b); 2) the term probably refers to the celestial substance of which the throne is made. The determinative of *bjš*, at least in the pyramid of Unis, is Gardiner 1957, Sign-List N42; compare Plankoff 1968, pl. 19 (Pyr. 305a) with pls. 24 (Pyr. 369 *jpm*), 25 (Pyr. 371a *šbm*), and 26 (Pyr. 389a *šb*).

59 See Harris 1961, 58-60, 166-68. The sledge-determinative appears in *1948f P, also in the phrase *hndw bjš* (800d P).

60 Neugebauer and Parker 1960, 126.

61 Pyr. 822b, 2062c (*wšrt nfr jmt pt*). In the latter, the routes are also qualified as "of the Field of Offering." For *wš* indicating a water route, see Heick 1970, 24 (Ylb-c = pPet. 1116B, 27-28).

limited to its rim—in particular, to the unchanging region of the circumpolar stars, in the Field of Offering.⁶² As the domain of sun, stars, gods and akhs, the sky is a world distinct from that of the living “who are upon earth.”⁶³ The deceased king has access to both worlds:—“Your foot has no limit in the sky, you cannot be barred from the earth” (Pyr. 622d)—though his proper place is in the sky: “He is not for the earth: the King is for the sky” (Pyr. 890d).

The sky is also separate from a third constituent of the Pyramid Texts’ universe, the Abyss (*nw, mnw*). Pyr. 1778b speaks of “isolating the sky from the earth and the Abyss,”⁶⁴ and Pyr. 1040 (translated below) indicates that the Abyss preceded the existence of both sky and earth. The location of the Abyss, however, is indicated by the use of the sky-sign as its determinative. This occurs once in the Pyramid Texts (Nt 15 = *1584d), and is usual in later texts. Like the sky, the Abyss has an expanse and doorways.⁶⁵ It is also associated with water. Pyr. 268d mentions its “cavern,”⁶⁶ Pyr. 551d uses it in parallel with the term “floodwaters” (*3gbj*), and a third passage describes it as the source of water:

Hail, waters that Shu brought ... in which Geb bathed his limbs ...
you who were born in/from the Abyss
before the sky developed,
before the earth developed. (Pyr. 1039-40b)⁶⁷

The Abyss is also associated with darkness or night: Pyr. 132a-c describe the king as “conceived in night and born in/from night ... conceived in the Abyss and born in/from the Abyss.”

These features are consonant with passages in the Coffin Texts that couple the Abyss with the terms *hbw* ‘flood’ and *kw* ‘darkness,’ and with the frequent use of water as a determinative of the word in these and later texts.⁶⁸ Despite its association with the sky and darkness, however, the Abyss is not simply a conceptualization of the night sky. Its precise location is indicated by a description in the so-called “Book of

Nut,” the earliest copy of which appears in the cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos:

How the upper side of this sky exists is in uniform darkness,
the southern, northern, western and eastern limits of which are unknown,
these having been fixed in the Abyss, in ineffectness.
There is no light there ...
(a place) whose south, north, west and east land is unknown by the gods or
akhs,
there being no brightness there.⁶⁹

The image given by this text is that of an unfathomable expanse existing above the sky in perpetual darkness, unvisited by any of the inhabitants of the celestial world—sun, gods or akhs. The hieroglyphic representation of the sky is essentially that of a flat body of water resting at either end on an extension that presumably rests, in turn, if not directly on the earth then on the pillars or scapulae that support it.⁷⁰ The concern in the Pyramid Texts is with the surface of that body—the “belly of the sky”—which serves both as a medium for the daily passage of the sun and stars and as the location of the king’s new, “imperishable” abode. What lies beyond—“above”—that surface is the Abyss, the unfathomable depths of the celestial ocean.

The word translated here as “Abyss” has been plausibly related to the root that appears in the words *nw/j* and *nw/jt* ‘waters,’ and which may also underlie the hieroglyph with the consonantal value *n*.⁷¹ In the Pyramid Texts, as later, it is regularly written with three *nw*-jars. These are usually, though not always, complemented by an initial *n* and final *w*,⁷² indicating the value *nw*.⁷³ The full form of the name may be *nw/j*, perhaps a misbe meaning “watery one” or the like: (1) a form with final double

62 Cf. Pyr. 749d-e and 1165b, where the king is encouraged to make his abode (*ym, mnw*) in the Field of Offering.

63 Pyr. 293e, 1557a, *1821c, *1945d, N 1055+30 (CT VI 105c), N 1350+41.

64 *šsr pt jr t3 mnw*. See Hoffmeier 1985, 30-31. For the distinction between the Abyss and the sky, see also Pyr. 604a-c. In 310a-b = 314a-b, “above with the Sun” is contrasted with “in the Abyss”: compare 121d, 717b, 1072b, 2156c.

65 Pyr. 1078c *mnwt mnw*; 392a *‘rtwt nt nw*; *1584d *šb/3nw jnw mnw*.

66 *jph mnw*; cf. n. 51 above.

67 For the translation see Allen 1984, § 64. Pyr. 1964a, partially preserved in N 756, may have referred to “the waters in the Abyss”: compare the parallel in CT VI 309d.

68 CT II 5c, 6c, 8a, 10c, 15a; V 166b; cf. Horning 1963-67, I 192 = III 24. See Allen 1988, 4, 14, and 20.

69 Frankfurt 1933, II pl. 81; Neugebauer and Parker 1960, pl. 46. See Horning 1972, 485-86; Allen 1988, 1-2 and 74-75.

70 Compare, for example, the sky-sign with the determinative of a boat on water in Pyr. 128b W (Piankoff 1968, pl. 56).

71 Gardiner 1957, Sign-List N35. The word *nw(j)t* occurs in Pyr. 1162c.

72 Spellings without final *w* are standard in Units 132c, 237a, 268d, 310b, 318b, 319c, except in 392a W; also in *1074e P, 1517a P. Spellings without initial *n* appear in 310b T, 604a N (after *wj*), 1446a PM, *1584d Nt, 1678b N, 1701a N (after *jnt*), 1964d N. Spellings without either complement occur in 872d MN, 1446a N. A form with only two *nw*-jars may appear in 392a Nt; Jéquier 1936, I pl. 1, col. 156 shows two, but Sethe’s copy (Pyr. 392a) has three. A final divine determinative (falcon on standard) appears in 132c N, 237a N, 310b T, 392a N, 551b N, 593b N, 603c N, 604a N, 872d MN, 1040a N, *1074e N, 1166b N, 1446a MN, 1486a N, *1584d Nt, 1678b N, 1701a N, 1964d N.

73 Cf. Edel 1955-64, § 50. Note also the spellings of *zhpw* in Pyr. 600c, 1242a, 1280c-d, N 1055+38, N fig. 15 ff. 1; cf. Allen 1984, §§ 113, 645.

reed-leaf in 1525 P *mwj* may represent the nisbe *mwj* plus a second nisbe ending *j*, meaning "of the watery one," in reference to the king;⁷⁴ (2) the word written *mmw* in Pyr. 1460a PM could represent a nisbe *mwj*;⁷⁵ (3) the name written *n-over-j-w* in Pyr. 207b and 446a can be read *mwj* as well.⁷⁶ A second form, with two initial *n*-signs, also appears in the Pyramid Texts.⁷⁷ This is probably to be read *mmw*, a form preserved much later in the Coptic and Greek vocalization *nomw*.⁷⁸ Rather than a variant form of *mw(j)*, *mmw* may be an epithet "inert one," derived from the frequent association of the Abyss with the concept of inertness (*mmw*), as in the text from Seii I's cenotaph translated above.⁷⁹

In Pyr. 1446a M, the word *nw* is determined by an inverted sky-sign. This sign is more often used as the regular determinative of the feminine *nwt* and *mmwt*.⁸⁰ The more frequent form of this word is spelled with the village ("city") sign preceded by an initial *n* and followed by an optional *t*, indicating the value *nwt*.⁸¹ The same basic spelling appears once with two initial *n*-signs, suggesting the value *mmwt*; more often, this form is written with two rushes (*nn*).⁸² Pyr. 149b, in which P *nnw/wt* varies with W *nwt*, shows that the two forms refer to the same thing. They appear to be feminine counterparts of *mwj* and *mmw*; *mwj* and *mmwt* are paired in 207b, 446a, and 1691b.

Despite this etymological relationship, however, *mmwt/mmwt* appears in the Pyramid Texts most often in a role contrastive with that of the sky, and can be translated as "nether sky." At least one passage contrasts "going forth to the sky" with "descending to the nether sky."⁸³ Like the sky, the nether sky has inhabitants, called either "those in

the nether sky" or "the nether-sky gods," and stars.⁸⁴ Pyr. 1346b refers to its "field to the front of this land of the Field of Reeds." These indications, coupled with the graphic determinative of an inverted sky, point to the concept of a nether sky lying inverted beneath the earth.⁸⁵ The etymological relationship with *mw/mmwt*, as well as the use of the inverted sky as determinative of *nw* in 1446a M, further suggest that this nether sky was envisioned as an ocean of water lying beneath the earth. Both *nwt* and *mmwt* can be determined in writing as a body of water.⁸⁶ The existence of its fields and stars indicate that this nether sky was visualized as having a surface, like the sky above the earth, and not simply as an ocean upon which the flat plain of the earth floats. Two passages in the Pyramid Texts make indirect reference to the netherworld that lies between the earth and the nether sky. Pyr. 323a asserts that "what the King abominates is to travel in darkness: he will not see those who are upside down."⁸⁷ Pyr. 1405a says that "the earth is heightened beneath Nut by your arms, Tefnut" (*t3 q3 hr nwt jn 'wjt tft*), suggesting that Tefnut may perform the role of atmosphere in the lower world analogous to that of her counterpart Shu in the upper world.

The picture that emerges from these texts is that of a world bounded above and below by the surface of an infinite ocean within which it floats, with the earth as a flat plain of land midway between the upper and lower surfaces of this ocean. In the upper world, the atmosphere is a dry void (Shu) that both maintains the separation of the infinite ocean from the earth and defines the surface of the ocean—the sky—above the earth. The analogue of this situation seems to have been envisioned for the lower world, although we are less well informed about the character of the nether earth and its sky. This dual construct apparently existed, in the Egyptian mind, only since the creation, "when the sky was parted from the earth" (Pyr. 1208c). Before that, there existed only "the waters ... that were born in the Abyss" (Pyr. 1039-40a).

There is no evidence that the Pyramid Texts envisioned either the upper or the lower sky as anything but stationary. The sky itself does not move; what moves are its inhabitants, the sun and stars, that cross it by day and night. Passages that mention "the two skies" and "the skies" (plural) probably do not refer to changing skies but to portions of the sky analogous to the lands beneath them, as shown by the terms with which they are contrasted: "two shores" and "two lands" (i.e., Egypt), and "southern and northern lands."⁸⁸ The same is probably true for the single mention of "two nether skies" (Pyr. 1346b).

References to "the imperishable star-gods of the nether sky" (see n. 84) and to the king "descending to the nether sky" (Pyr. 149b, 1275b) suggest that the authors of the Pyramid Texts thought of the celestial bodies—including the deceased

84 *jmw n(n)wt* 166c, 1466a; *n(w)w mwjw* 1456b, 1457b, 1458b, 1467b, 1485a, N 1350+21; cf. also 1275b-c. Its stars are the *nbt mw(j)* (332c T) and *n(w)w mwjw j jmw-wk* (1456b, 1457b, 1458b).

85 Cf. 164d-66, where "those in the nether sky" are contrasted with "those in the land."

86 Pyr. 207b Nt, 1458b P^b. Cf. Hornung 1963-67, 1 192, 6.

87 Cf. Pyr. 2155b. For the translation, see the later copy in CT VI 189f, Allen 1984, § 360A.

88 Pyr. 406a *ptj* ... *jbtwjt*, 541c *ptj* ... *t3wjt*, 514b *ptw* ... *t3w rsw mhtjw*.

74 Pyr. 132c and 1701a describe the king's birth *in*/from the Abyss.

75 *jmsr prt m mwj* 'redness that emerged from the Abyss': cf. 237a *sgl prt m nw* 'fire that emerged from the Abyss'. For the writing of *mwj* as a "false dual" see Edel 1955-64, § 344.

76 Sethe 1908-22, IV 18-22. In both passages, *mwj* is paired with *mmwt*; see below.

77 Pyr. 1078c, 1778b, *1780a. Later versions of 1778b in CT VI 310 1 and CT VII 199f show the regular form *nw*.

78 Sethe 1929, § 127.

79 The association is first explicit in CT IV 1821-k; V 312e-f, 316f-g; Cf. *Wb* II 214; Sethe 1929, § 127.

80 The inverted sky is omitted in 1458b P^a and is replaced by the determinative of a body of water in 1458b P^b.

81 Pyr. 149b MN, 332c T, 1456b/1457b/1458b PMN, 1466a P, 1467b P, 1485a P, N 1350+21. The word *nwt* 'village,' which is also written with the village sign (Gardiner 1957, Sign-List 049), never shows an initial *n*: 138a WNOU, 192a WPNT, 485c WP, 514d W, 755c PMN, 951c PMN, 993a N, *1075j PNL, 1475b PM, 1522c P, 1595/1596b PN, 1597c PN, 1605b N, 1678a PM, P ft. Or 37 (1968) pl. 24 (26a) 3, P F/Se 99 = N pl. 15 ft. 1-9 (CT I 280e), N fig. 15 ft. b-1; also nisbe *mwj* 891a PN, P F/Se 93. For the reading *nwt* see Osing 1976, 378.

82 N pl. 15 ft. 18-3; with two rushes 149b P, 166c WPNT, 207b WNN, 446a W, 1346b P, 1691b M. The village sign is omitted in 149b P, 166c NNL, 207b NL, 1691b M.

83 Pyr. 149a-b; probably also 1275-76.

king—travelling through a circuit from upper to lower sky each day. The stars are described as “preceding” or “following” the sun,⁸⁸ an image repeated in detail in the cenotaph of Seti I:

As he sails inside the dusk
these stars are behind him ...
these sailing stars enter after him
and come forth after him.⁸⁹

The king, like the sun and stars, is said to be conceived and given birth by the sky.⁹⁰ The Abyss is also described as the king's birthplace, and the nether sky as a mother who conceives him.⁹¹ The image is apparently that of the king rising, like the sun at creation, from the waters of the Abyss into the day-sky of the newly created world.

The concepts surrounding the king's daily rebirth are central, not only to the purpose for which the Pyramid Texts were composed but also to an understanding of their cosmology. In the Pyramid Texts the king is given birth in or from not only the Abyss and the sky but also the goddess Nut, the *3hr*, and the Duat. The motif of celestial birth that ties these various cosmological elements together is one reason why they appear to us as somewhat fluid and overlapping concepts. Yet each has a specific function in the cosmology of the afterlife, revealed not only in the texts but also in the king's funerary complex as a whole.

In the Pyramid Texts both the Abyss and the nether sky can be treated not only as constituent elements of the universe but also as gods.⁹² The term *pr* ‘sky’, however, is used almost exclusively with geographic reference. Instances in which it is characterized as a living being are few. Expressions such as “the sky weeps” (Pyr. 1365c) may be either figurative or used in the collective sense, of all the sky's inhabitants.⁹³ The same may be true of the sky as mother of the king, sun and stars.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Pyr. 132b, 269a; also 732a, preceding the morning star. For the king, cf. 733a.

⁹⁰ Frankfort 1933, II pl. 81; Neugebauer and Parker 1960, pl. 49 (Text Bb). See Allen 1988, 2 and 75-76.

⁹¹ Pyr. 532a-b, 820c-d, 1029b, 1207b, 1443b, 1527, 1835a, 2116b, P F/Se 90.

⁹² Pyr. 132c, 1701a, 1466a.

⁹³ For *nw* with divine determinative see n. 72 above; *nwn* has the same determinative in 1078c Nt, 1778b N, *1780a N. The Abyss is addressed directly in 603c, 872d, 1446a, 1517a. The nether sky has the divine determinative and is addressed in N pl. 15 fr. 183.

⁹⁴ Cf. Assmann 1984, 84-90. Besides *nmj*, *pr* occurs as subject of *mdw* ‘speak’ (549a, 1110a, 1120a), *nhrn* ‘roar’ (1150a, 1771b, N 709+22 = Ap fr. 223:1), *cd* ‘become agitated’ (956a, *1937c), *sd* ‘tremble’ (143a, 862a), *nwn/3wr* ‘shake’ (924a, *1935a, 2109), and *hnp* ‘come to rest’ (1773a, *1938c); also *jj* ‘come’ (834b Nt).

⁹⁵ Besides the instances noted in n. 91 above, also 1082a, 1835a. The sky's belly (*hr pr*) is mentioned in 347a, 357b, 2061b more in the sense of “underside” (Wb III 357, 17) than “womb”.

Unlike the Abyss and the nether sky, the sky as *pr* is not written with divine determinative. It is addressed directly (as *pr wrr* ‘Great Sky’) only once.⁹⁶

In the Pyramid Texts, most instances in which the sky is personified as a living being involve the goddess Nut. Nut appears throughout these texts in the role of a mother who gives birth to the king, sun, stars, and other celestial beings.⁹⁷ Although her name does not occur with divine determinative, she is frequently addressed and can be envisioned as a living being, either human or cow.⁹⁸

Nut's identification with the sky is evident in the spelling of her name, which regularly has the sky determinative.⁹⁹ Her name and the word *pr* sometimes appear as textual variants.¹⁰⁰ Even when personified, Nut can be envisioned in geographic terms. Like the sky she is above the earth, supported by the atmosphere, Shu, beneath her.¹⁰¹ She has both a north and an east side, as well as doorways and routes.¹⁰² There are stars in her midst, in connection with which she is said to have a thousand manifestations (*ḥ3 b3.s*).¹⁰³ Finally, like the sky, Nut is described as water—both directly, as the location of “great floodwaters,” a sea, canals, and an island; and

⁹⁶ Pyr. 2034a. For *pr wrr* see also Pyr. 1469. For the sky's “arms” mentioned in 2034a, see also P fr. Or 38 (1969) pl. 23 (27):5 (Pyr. *2135c).

⁹⁷ As mother of the king: 1a, 2a, 4a, 5a, 7b, 8f, 171a, 179a, 208b, 530b, 580c, 616d, 623a, 626b, 638a, 741a-b, 756a, 765c, 777a/c, 778a-b, 823a, 825a/d, 827b, 834b, 838a, 842d, 883c P, 902d, 941a, 1021b, 1030d, 1145a, 1184b, 1300a, 1328c, 1416b-17b, 1479c, 1516a, 1607a, 1629, 1702a, 1703a, 1835c, *1960b-c, *1964a-b, 2028a, 2052b, 2057, 2107a, P F/Se 90; of the sun: 1479c P, 1688b; of stars: 2057(7); of gods: 441b, 2113c. Giving birth to the king: 623a, 626b, 883c P, 1184b, 1428e, 1703a, *1960b-c, *1964b, 2172a, P F/Se 90; to the sun: 1688b; to stars: 883c P, 2172a; to gods: 1428e. Nut's belly (*hr*) is usually mentioned in the generative sense (1a, 7b, 8f, 530b, 990a, 1416c).

⁹⁸ Addressed directly in Pyr. 171a, 179a, 519c, 777-85, 823a, 1036b, 1247d, 1416b-17b, 1422b, 1430d, 1516, 1596a-b. Pyr. 1426 mentions her dress, Pyr. 1344a and 2171a her breasts. She is called “long-horred” in Pyr. 1344a. Other features such as her womb (n. 97), heart (5a), thighs (1188f), and copulation (1321a) are ambiguous. The two images are not always separable: Pyr. 1344a calls her “long of horn, with pendulous breast”.

⁹⁹ Without determinative in 25b N, 171a W, 179a W/Nt, 208b W/Nt, 250a W/TNt, 251b W, 383b W, 519c P, 580b-c T, 626b Ou, 638a P, 698b N, 756a P, 777a-b P, 778a P, 779a P, 780b P, 1082b P, 1090e P, 1145a P, 1328c Nt, 1344a P, 1629a Nt, 1655b MN, 1664a M, *1792x (N 473+9), 1835c N.

¹⁰⁰ Pyr. 834b PMN ~ Nt, 883c P ~ M, 902d PMN/Nt ~ Nt, 933a P ~ MN (and 932-34 PMN), 1016b M ~ N, 1101c M ~ PN. See also Kurt 1981, 535. These account for some of the instances in which the sky (*pr*) is treated as a living being.

¹⁰¹ Pyr. 519c, 782c, 784a, 785d, 1405a, 299a, 784a-b, 1101c, 1454a, 1471b, 2091a.

¹⁰² Pyr. 802a, 1016b (*mhr nwt*); *1960b (*gs j3b n nwt*); 603a (*nwt nwt*), 1361b (*3wj nwt*), 541e (*w3wj nwt*).

¹⁰³ Pyr. 785d, 1048b, 1283a, 1303c. See Zakkari 1968, 14-15.

indirectly, as a region that is crossed by boat.¹⁰⁴

In line with these features, there are a few indications that the Pyramid Texts already envisioned Nut in the manner of later representations, as a cow astride the earth or a woman bending over it, touching its cardinal points with her legs and hands.¹⁰⁵ Pyr. 1188d-f speaks of "that island of land to which the King has swum and arrived, which is between Nut's thighs." She is said to "spread herself" over the king,¹⁰⁶ and Pyr. 782c-d, addressing her as the sky, states that

the land is under you to its limit,
for you have taken possession of it.

You have encircled the land and everything within your embrace.

In this connection may be mentioned the term *mhjt wrt* 'Great Flood', which—though not directly associated with Nut in the Pyramid Texts—encapsulates an image of the sky as both water and a cow.¹⁰⁷ Pyr. 508a-b describes the Great Flood as having "canals in the shore of (its) floodwaters."

Insofar as it exists, the distinction between Nut and the sky (*pr*) in the Pyramid Texts therefore seems to be mainly one of personification. Barta has suggested that Nut was originally a feminine counterpart of the Abyss (*mwj*), primarily in the role of mother-goddess.¹⁰⁸ Despite the apparent phonological similarity between *mwj* and *mwj*, however, the Pyramid Texts consistently spell the two names differently. Nut's name is regularly written with a single *mw-jar* and *t*, occasionally with an initial complementary *n*.¹⁰⁹ In a few instances two *mw-jars* are used,¹¹⁰ but never (in the Pyramid Texts) three as in the name of the Abyss, *mw(j)*. At most this might suggest not the feminine of *mwj* (*mwj*), but a nisse formed from the masculine name: i.e., *mwjt*, meaning 'ball' or 'oval,' which appears in later funerary texts.¹¹¹ An oval, in fact, is used in place of the sky sign to determine her name in two instances in the Pyramid

Texts, and in others a round sign is used in place of the *mw-jar*.¹¹² In the later texts, the oval holds the body of Sokar or Osiris, with whom the sun is united in the depths of night before being reborn at dawn. In the Pyramid Texts, as later, Nut as mother of the deceased is identified not only with the sky but even more specifically with the coffin, sarcophagus, and tomb in which the deceased's body lies:

You are given to your mother Nut, in her identity of the coffin.
She has gathered you up, in her identity of the sarcophagus.
You are ascended to her, in her identity of the tomb. (Pyr. 616d-f)¹¹³

Given these indications and Nut's consistent association with the sky and its waters, it is possible that her specific function originally may have been that of the sky conceived as a cosmic amniotic sac, from which the deceased king, like the sun, was born each day. In this connection it is interesting to note that the Pyramid Texts often describe Nut as giving birth, but only once is she said to conceive, and that indirectly.¹¹⁴

Besides Nut, the *3hr* is also described as a cosmic birthplace. Both it and "the eastern side of the sky" are called "the place where the gods are born."¹¹⁵ The phrase *3hr nt* identifies it as a part of the sky, a relationship also reflected in one instance in which the sky-sign is used as determinative of *3hr*.¹¹⁶ The standard spelling of the word in the Pyramid Texts uses an oval determinative like the sign for "island" or that which occasionally determines the name of Nut.¹¹⁷ Like the sky, the *3hr* is a place, with

112 Oval determinative in 902d P, 1629a N. Round sign in 179a W, 778a Nb, 1664a N, 2028a N; with initial *n* in N 473+9 (Pyr. *1792x). This is not the village sign: cf. Plankoff 1968, pl. 47 (Pyr. 179a). The same sign appears in 956a N *mwj* and 1633a N *bw(w)k*; for the latter see Allen 1984, 569.

113 See also PT 1-7 and 11, inscribed on the sarcophagi of Teti and Pepi II, respectively. In Pyr. 786a Nut is called the "Granary" (?) of the deceased (identified as Osiris); see the determinative in N 583+10 and compare Pyr. 179a-b, cf. also the determinative in Pyr. 1419a. This function of Nut is perhaps reflected also in her epithet "Great Encloser" (*hnt wrt*) or "Encloser of the Great One" (*hnt wrt*): 827b-c, 834b-c, 838a, 842d, 1608a; cf. 8a, 1300a.

114 Pyr. *1960b-c (N 750). "The King is bound for the eastern side of Nut: it is there that the King will be conceived; it is there that the King will be born." See Allen 1984, § 518.

115 *3hr*: 1704c, 1705b, 1706b, g; *3hr n pr*: 344a-b, 353a-b, 919a, 928a, 934a, *1383c-d, cf. 1435a. For the relationship between these two terms, cf. also 341a-b, 1541b.

116 Pyr. *1584c (P 797 [Sethe's 1582b] = N 14-15). Pyr. 999c M.

117 For the latter, see the preceding paragraph. The oval determinative of *3hr* is thicker than the sign used to write *3* 'land' or as determinative of *gr* 'eternal sameness': see Plankoff 1968, pl. 30 (Pyr. 412c, 414c).

104 Pyr. 1173a (cf. 802b); 802a (cf. 1169a, 1174a); 1188d-f, Pyr. 383a, 597b (*hnt*); 543a (*gr*); N pl. 15 fr. 14.5(*hnt*).

105 The human representation does not appear before the New Kingdom; Hornung 1977, 1216.

106 Pyr. 580c, 638a, 777a, 825a, 1607a.

107 With determinative of water in 289c T, 508a W, *1059d PNN, *1065d P, 1131b M; of a cow in 289c WT, *1059d PN, *1065d P, 1131b PM. See the illustration from the shrine of Tut-ankh-amun; Plankoff 1955, pl. facing p. 27.

108 Barta 1973, 100-101.

109 The latter in 171a Nt, 1036b P.

110 Pyr. 208b P, 250a N, 825a N, 842a Nt, 1174a N, 1184b M, 1454a P, 1479c M, 1758a NNt, 2037a N, 2041a N. With initial *n*, 1173a N.

111 Wb II 217, 9. Hornung 1963-67, II 105-106.

limits, an interior, and an east side.¹¹⁸ It has a doorway, routes, and "a place of rest green with fields."¹¹⁹ It is also associated with water. The texts mention its shores, and the word itself is once determined with a body of water.¹²⁰ The king and the sun bathe in it and are rowed in it.¹²¹ It has fixed structures like the sky: several passages refer to its "two shrines" (which may be the same as the "two shrines of the sky"), and the king is encouraged to make his abode there as well as in the Field of Offering.¹²² The beings associated with it are described as "those in the *3ḥt*," "those of the *3ḥt*," or "the *3ḥt*-gods," and include, among others, the sun.¹²³

Apart from a general association with the east of the sky, there are a few more specific clues in the Pyramid Texts as to the precise location of the *3ḥt*. Pyr. 879a places it "in the limit of the above," and that image is strengthened by several instances that suggest passage from the *3ḥt* to the sky proper:

Stand at the door of the *3ḥt*,
draw aside the door of the Fresh Water. (Pyr. 255a)

A door has been opened to you in the sky to the *3ḥt*.

The gods' heart(s) rejoice(?) at meeting you,
and they take you to the sky. (Pyr. 799a-c; sim. 1720a-c)

Ho King! Stand up! Welcome ...

as you go to the sky and emerge from the gateway of the *3ḥt* (Pyr. 2095a-b)

Such indications seem to support the common interpretation of the *3ḥt* as a region lying at the junction of earth and sky—as usually translated, "horizon."¹²⁴ The Pyramid Texts, however, associate the *3ḥt* with the sky and not the earth, and other passages are even more specific in locating it within the sky itself. The *3ḥt* is reached, probably exclusively, by boat.¹²⁵ The king, along with the sun and other gods, is said to row or

118 Pyr. 412c, 416a (*ḥrw 3ḥt*); 1961a (*3ḥt ḥmwt*); 341a (*gs 3ḥt n 3ḥt*).

119 Pyr. 255a, 496a, 2095b; 2028b; 508b.

120 Pyr. 509a; 2028b N.

121 Pyr. 151a-c, 208c; Pyr. 374c; cf. 711c-d.

122 Pyr. 1541b, 1862b, 1992a (*ḥrt 3ḥt*); cf. 757b (*ḥrt p*); Pyr. 2028b-c; cf. n. 62 above.

123 Pyr. 374c, 407d, *1584c (*ḥmḥw 3ḥt*); 1155b (*3ḥtḥw*); 879a, N pl. 15 fr. 1:78 (*ḥrw 3ḥtḥw*) For the last see also Pyr. 2045b. For the sun see 756b. Pyr. 1179c and 1206d refer to the sun emerging "from his *3ḥt*." Also 277a *nb 3ḥt*.

124 See Assmann 1977b, 3.

125 References to the "route to the *3ḥt*" (*w3t jr 3ḥt*; 756b, P F/Se 95) do not necessarily indicate a land route: see n. 61 above. Mention of "going" (*sm*) to the *3ḥt* (Pyr. 1206c-f, P F/Se 80 = *1958c) is similarly ambiguous: note especially 1206c-f, where the "going" is by means of reed-floats.

sail to it.¹²⁶ Most often it is a place to which the king and the gods are ferried, usually by means of "the two reed-floats of the sky."¹²⁷ A passage that appears in three spells makes it clear that this transition is from the Field of Reeds to the *3ḥt*—therefore, from the margins of the sky itself and not, as might otherwise be conjectured, from night-sky to day-sky:

The Nurse canal has been opened up,
the Field of Reeds is under water,
the Winding canal has been flooded,
that this King might be ferried therein to the *3ḥt*. (Pyr. 359-60a)¹²⁸

The parallel in Pyr. 340c-41b indicates that the goal of this crossing is "the eastern side of the *3ḥt* ... the eastern side of the sky." From this it is probable that the *3ḥt* was thought to lie within the sky itself, as a zone of transition from the edge of the sky's eastern fields to the great ocean in its center.

The *3ḥt* itself, however, is more than just a zone of transition. Its specific function is shown by a number of passages that associate it with the process of becoming akh:

You two (Re-Atum and the King) shall rise from the *3ḥt*,
from the place in which you have become akh. (Pyr. 152d ff.)

He has become akh in the *3ḥt*. (Pyr. 350c; sim. 1046b, 1261b)

You are filled with your akh,
you are emerged from the *3ḥt*. (Pyr. 455b)

You are become akh, in your identity of the *3ḥt* from which the Sun emerges. (Pyr. 621b)

Horus has become akh through you, in your identity of the *3ḥt* from which the Sun emerges. (Pyr. 585a; sim. 636c, *1886b)¹²⁹

The *3ḥt* is the place in which the king, like the sun and other celestial beings, undergoes the final transformation from the inertness of death and night to the form

126 Pyr. 1687a-b, 2045-46a.

127 Pyr. 341a, 360a, 387c P, 448c, 1704a-c (*ḥḥt*); 337a-c, 342, 351, 358, 926-27, 932-33, 999b-1000b, 1084c-86b, 1705-1706b, M fr. Or 42 (1973) pl. 15 (21):9, N pl. 15 fr. 1:7 (*ḥmḥr 3ḥtḥw p*).

128 Similarly, 340c-41b, 1704a-c; cf. 343-44a, 352-53a. In Pyr. 926-27 and 932-33, the reed-floats on which the king and the gods cross are said to be set in place by the day-boat.

129 For the verb *3ḥt*, see Friedman 1984-85, 43-45.

that allows him to live effectively—that is, as an *akh*—in his new world. It is for this reason that the king and his celestial companions are said to “rise from the *3hr*,” and not because the *3hr* is a place on the horizon or—as some have suggested—because it is a place of light.¹³⁰

It is an interesting commentary on the role of Nut in the Pyramid Texts that she is said to lead the king to the *3hr* and guide him on its routes.¹³¹ Given the salient association of Nut with childbirth, this suggests that the *3hr* is a place reached after birth—“the place *into* which the gods are born.” That image apparently underlies the description of the newborn sun in Seti I’s cenotaph:

The redness after birth,
as he becomes pure in the embrace of his father Osiris.
Then his father lives,
as he becomes *akh* again through him,
as he opens in his splitting
and swims in his redness.¹³²

The sequence is even more specifically described in the final hour of the New Kingdom “Book of Night”:

Emerging from the Duat, coming to rest in the day-bark,
and sailing the Abyss at the hour of the Sun (called) “Seeing the Perfection of Her Lord.”
Becoming Khepri, climbing to the *3hr*,
having entered the mouth and emerged from the crotch.
Rising from the doorway of the *3hr* at the hour (called) “Causing the Sun’s Perfection to Appear.”¹³³

The author(s) of this description evidently envisioned the sun as being born (“having emerged from the crotch”) in the final hour of night, then preceding to the *3hr*—where,

130 The spelling of *3hr* in the Pyramid Texts (with the *3h*-bird) is consistently different from the (purely “alphabetical”) spelling of words derived from the root *3hr*: ‘light’: *3hrw* ‘sunlight’ (304c, 507c, 513a, 751a, 889d, *1059b, *1061f, 1078d, 1108a, 1231a, 1680c, *1779a, P fr. Or 37 (1968) pl. 22 (24b) + Or 38 (1969) pl. 22 (24b):3), possibly also *3h3hrw* stars (1143b, P F/Se 42 = N 1055+31 (pl. 15 fr. 28:7) = Nt 654 = Ou 145 (CT VI 109a)).

131 Pyr. 2028a-c, 756a-b.

132 Frankfort 1933, II pl. 81; Neugebauer and Parker 1960, pl. 44 (Texts G, F, and E). See Allen 1988, 3 and 76. Cf. Pyr. 636, *1886.

133 Plankoff 1942, 80; Plankoff 1954, I 428, II pls. 149 and 196. See Homung 1972, 493. The two hours mentioned are, respectively, the last hour of night and the first hour of day; Plankoff 1942, 2-3; Homung, 1963-67, I 193, I-2, II 16-17.

in the line that Seti I’s text cites from the Pyramid Texts, “he becomes *akh* again”—before rising into the sky in the first hour of day. Apart from any theological significance, this sequence has a practical value in explaining why the sky gets light before the sun actually rises.

In the “Book of Night” the place from which the sun emerges into the *3hr* is identified as the Duat. In the Pyramid Texts this word usually appears in the form *d3r*, written “alphabetically” and determined by the image of a star within a circle or ellipse.¹³⁴ Occasionally a star alone, without surrounding circle, may appear as determinative.¹³⁵ The image of the usual determinative is reflected in Pyr. 151a-b, which describes how Orion and Sothis are “encircled by the Duat when the living one becomes pure in the *3hr*”—apparently a reference to the stars becoming invisible at sunrise.¹³⁶ The Duat is closely associated with stars: it is described as “the place where Orion is” and its beings—“those of the Duat”—are “labelled in writing as stars.”¹³⁷

As a part of the universe, the Duat has the typical features we have seen for other cosmological elements. Its gate is mentioned in Pyr. 1014a P. It is associated with water both as a place traversed by boat and in the existence of “Duat lakes”; the word *d3r* itself is twice determined by the sign for a body of water.¹³⁸ Besides Orion and “those of the Duat,” its gods include in particular “Horns of the Duat” and “Osiris, lord of the Duat.”¹³⁹ Osiris in particular is associated with the Duat. Besides being called its “lord,” he is also the god with whom the king rows through the Duat—like Orion, with whom the king sails through the night sky before dawn, or the sun, with whom the king travels the day sky.¹⁴⁰ In the Book of Gates, Osiris is said to “encircle the Duat” and the Amduat describes the body of Osiris as “that which is in (or ‘is’) the Duat.”¹⁴¹

These features make it possible to confirm two apparently related words in the Pyramid Texts as variants of the more common *d3r*. The pyramid of Unis uses as

134 For the latter see Leclant 1979, plate, col. 31 (P 151+8 = *1677b). Pyr. 151a Ou uses the village determinative, probably in error: the village sign is extended to that of the encircled star in 257c W (Plankoff 1968, pl. 11). Pyr. 151c P is a unique example without determinative (P F/Se 7).

135 Pyr. 151c N (N 709+59 – vs. regular determinative in 151a-b N), 372a N, *1677b N (N 709+42).

136 Cf. Neugebauer and Parker 1960, 41 and 84-86. For the phrase “*nh m 3hr*” see Pyr. 1172c.

137 Pyr. 802c, 1717a, 953a (*d3hrw*, with determinative of three stars).

138 Pyr. 882c (*3hr*), *1677b (*nm3r*), *3hrw d3hrw* in 372c, 1164c, 1432b, 1530c, 1987b, 2170a, “lake” determinative in 882c M and 1987b N.

139 *d3hrw* 306a, 453a, *nmw d3r* 2084, *s3hr* 802c, 1717a, *hrw d3hr* 5b, 148a, 330a/331a-b, 362b, 877d, 1134a, 1207a, 1258b, 1301a, 1734b, *1926c, *wsjr nb d3r* 8d (cf. 882c). Also *wr sk3r hr jb d3r* (282a), *bjk ... hr jb d3r* (1959a), *3hr jm d3r* (1172b, cf. *1677a-b, 1986b).

140 Pyr. 882c; cf. 130d, 367b.

141 Homung 1979-80, I 410, II 290-91 (*wsjr pw 3hr dw3r*); Homung 1963-67, I 57, 9 (*wsjr ... d3r f mnt dw3r*).

variant form *dwj3*, with encircled-star determinative, in three passages.¹⁴² This is undoubtedly the fuller form of the word normally spelled *d3r*.¹⁴³ The form *dwj3* also appears with a star as determinative a few times in the pyramids of Unis's successors.¹⁴⁴ References to its lakes in two passages identify this form, as well, as a writing of "Duat."¹⁴⁵

The Duat is clearly envisioned by the Pyramid Texts as a cosmic region.¹⁴⁶ It is traversed by boat, and gods are said to be in it or in its midst.¹⁴⁷ The deceased emerges from it, and it is said to give birth to him along with other gods.¹⁴⁸ In connection with the image of birth it is interesting that Nut, who is usually the mother of celestial beings, appears in one passage to give birth through the Duat:

The sky has become pregnant with wine:
behold, Nut has given birth through her daughter, the Duat. (Pyr. 1082a-b MN)¹⁴⁹

In the cenotaph texts of Seti I, the Duat is clearly envisioned as lying within the body of the sky (Nut):

When the Incarnation of this god enters her mouth, inside the Duat,
it stays open after he sails inside her,
so that these sailing stars may enter after him
and come forth after him ...

¹⁴² Pyr. 257c W, 272a W, 341c W.

¹⁴³ See Fecht 1960, 121 n. 365, 185; Osing 1976, 266. For 257c W *dwj3* the Middle Kingdom copy of Sesostus-ankh has the form *d3r*, which also appears in 151a Ou as a variant of WPNNiAp *d3r*.

other Middle Kingdom copies of Pyr. 257c, and the parallel in CT IV 381c, have the usual later ideographic spelling with star or encircled star. The ideographic spelling also appears in Middle Kingdom copies of 272a W *dwj3*. Pyr. 272a mentions the *n3rw jmw dwj3*; cf. 306a, 953a, 2084.

¹⁴⁴ Pyr. 820c6 PMN, 1082b PMNNi, 1083a PMNNi, 1152c PNNi, 1527a/c P N fig. 14 fr. d:2, N 696.

¹⁴⁵ Pyr. 1083a, 1152c. Note that *d3r* can also be determined by a star (n. 134 above).

¹⁴⁶ There is no firm basis in these texts for the translation of *dwj3* as "morning star". The occasional use of this form in terms of a living being — as sibling of the king (341c, with encircled star determinative; cf. 357a, 935c, 1001b, 1707a), mother of the king and gods (820c6, 1082b, 1527a/c, with star determinative), and daughter of Nut (1082b, with star determinative) — is analogous to that attested for other cosmic regions, such as the Abyss, the nether sky, and Nut.

¹⁴⁷ Pyr. 882c, 1677b, 272a, 282a, 1172b, 1959a, 2084.

¹⁴⁸ Pyr. 257c, 1973d, 1986b, 820c-e, 1527.

¹⁴⁹ The variant without *m* 'through' in 1082b PNi can be translated "Nut has caused her daughter the Duat to give birth." See Allen 1984, §§ 130, 372 for the grammar of this passage.

When the Incarnation of this god comes forth from the Duat,
these stars come forth after him at the birthplace.¹⁵⁰

But apart from Pyr. 1082a-b (cited above)—which is none too specific—the only indication that the Pyramid Texts associated the Duat with the sky is a single instance in which the word *d3r* is determined by the sky sign (Pyr. 802c P). More often, in these texts, the Duat seems to be related to the earth.¹⁵¹ A passage cited three times in the Pyramid Texts describes how "the earth speaks, the door of the horizon (Aker) has been opened, the door of Geb has been made to draw aside" for the king's emergence; in one of these, "the doorway of the Duat" appears as a variant.¹⁵² In Pyr. 1986b, the deceased is called "this akh that emerged from the Duat, Osiris who emerged from Geb." Pyr. 1972-73d, which describes how the door of the sky is opened "for this great one who has emerged from the Duat," suggests that the Duat is separate from, and is reached prior to, the sky itself. Pyr. 1987b-c specifically locates it before the Field of Reeds: "You shall become pure in the Duat lake, you shall take your seat in the Field of Reeds."

These passages indicate a location in the east, below the Field of Reeds that lies on the sky's rim. This location may be reflected in the name Duat itself, apparently derived from the root *dwj3* 'morning'.¹⁵³ Because the Duat is closely associated with Orion, a southern constellation, it may be located even more precisely at the southeastern rim of the sky.¹⁵⁴ The entrance to the Duat, however, lies at the opposite end of the sky, in the northwest. Pyr. 802 describes how the king reaches it after sailing on "the Winding canal in the north of Nut, as a star that crosses the sea that is under Nut's belly," and Pyr. 306a states that "when the King rests from life in the west, those of the Duat attend him."¹⁵⁵

From these various bits of evidence it is possible to conclude that the authors of the Pyramid Texts visualized the Duat primarily, if not exclusively, as lying in the region beneath the earth—a location reflected in the precise term "lower Duat" that appears

¹⁵⁰ Frankfort 1933, II pl. 81; Neugebauer and Parker 1960, pls. 49 and 45 (Texts Bb and J). See Allen 1988, 2-3 and 75, 77.

¹⁵¹ See Hornung 1974, 994.

¹⁵² Pyr. 796a-b, 1014a-b (MN *r3 k3r* = P *r3 d3r*), 1713a.

¹⁵³ Bara 1981, 95-96. Cf. the association of "Horus of the Duat" with "Horus of the East at daybreak" (Pyr. 1132/1134) and with "the morning-star god" (Pyr. 1207a: treated as singular in 1207b).

¹⁵⁴ For the association see Pyr. 151a, 802c, 820d-e, 1717a. Pyr. 950d-e calls Orion "head of the Nile Valley" (*hntj t3 sm'w*). For the identification of *s3h* as Orion see Neugebauer and Parker 1960, 24-25.

¹⁵⁵ For the latter, cf. Pyr. 953. The texts from Seti I's cenotaph also mention the opening "to the Duat that is on her northern side"; Frankfort 1933, II pl. 81; Neugebauer and Parker 1960, pl. 50 (Text Dd).

in the Coffin Texts.¹⁵⁶ Its exit, and probably also its entrance, are situated beneath the rim of what the Pyramid Texts envision as the sky. This location is perhaps one reason why the Pyramid Texts, which often identify the deceased king with Osiris ("lord of the Duat"), also assert that he is not to be given to Osiris:

I have claimed him from the Lower One,
I have not given him to Osiris.
The doors that bar have been opened to him,
and I have done what should be done for him as a star unique and without
second among them, the gods. (Pyr. *1949a-c)¹⁵⁷

The sense of such passages, on one level, is apparently that the king's celestial travels are not restricted to Osiris's domain, the Duat. Though he may visit the lower world, he is also free to leave it for the sky:

When he wants to descend to the nether sky, he descends ...
when he wants to go forth to the sky, he goes forth. (Pyr. 1275b-76b)¹⁵⁸

As a celestial being, the king looks down from the sky on the region governed by Osiris:

You shall open up your place in the sky among the stars of the sky,
for you are a unique star at Nut's shoulder.
May you look down upon Osiris as he governs the akhs,
while you yourself are positioned far above him.
You are not of them,
you will not be of them. (Pyr. 251)¹⁵⁹

Whether the Duat was thought to lie beneath the earth or, as in Seti I's cenotaph texts, within the body of Nut, its location is of secondary importance in the Pyramid Texts to its function as the place where king spends the night awaiting rebirth at dawn. Seti's texts describe it in general terms as that part of the world that is neither sky nor earth:

156 CT II 191i; IV 114c. This also seems to be the location in most New Kingdom texts: see Hornung 1974, 994, Barta 1985, 176-84.

157 P F/Se 75 = N 488 and 779 = N 737; cf. Pyr. 350. The "Lower One" (*hrj*) is a ferryman (Pyr. 445a) associated with the Duat: the Amhar calls him *hrj dñ* (Hornung 1963-67, I 162, no. 668; II 158). See Kaplony 1974, 944-45. His name may derive from the designation of the Duat as "lower."

158 Cf. Pyr. 149a-b.

159 See Allen 1984, § 300.

"as for every place void of sky and void of land, that is the entire Duat."¹⁶⁰ Like sky and earth, it lies within the space enclosed by the waters of the Abyss. But because it is neither of these visible parts of the world, it is outside the realm of human experience—a purely speculative region, secret (*šr*) from the living.¹⁶¹ Within it, as Osiris, the king is "secret of places," inaccessible even to his son Horus:

I have come to you, secret of places,
seeking you for the sky.
He is secret: I cannot find him
in the sky's resting place,
in the earth's resting place. (Pyr. *1938a-c)¹⁶²

The Pyramid Texts associate the concept "secret of places" not only with the celestial afterlife but also with the tomb.¹⁶³ Here, as Spiegel pointed out, the cosmology of the Pyramid Texts comes together in a coherent, concrete expression of the king's new world.¹⁶⁴ At the tomb's center, the king's now imperishable body lies awaiting rebirth in the amniotic sac that is "Nut in her identity of the coffin" (Pyr. 610d-e). This, in turn, lies within the innermost chamber of the pyramid (beneath the earth), like the body of Osiris within the Duat. Only in this room—at least in the pyramid of Unis—is the king addressed as "Osiris Unis." From it, he emerges into the *3hr*, identified with the antechamber. In Unis's pyramid the final spell in the passage leading from the sarcophagus chamber to the antechamber tells the king to "stand at the door of the *3hr*" (Pyr. 255a), and the first spell in the antechamber addresses him "as you emerge from the Duat" (Pyr. 257c). Within the *3hr* he is transformed from death into his "proper form of a living akh" (Pyr. 318c). Finally, having "become akh in the *3hr*" (Pyr. 350c), he emerges into his new celestial life in the sky. The final lines in the antechamber speak of opening "the door of the *3hr* for the emergence of the day-bark" (Pyr. 496a), and the first spell in the corridor that leads from the antechamber to the outside world instructs the king to "pull back the phallus of Baboon [the doorbolt], open the door of the sky" (Pyr. 502a).

Understood in this light, the architecture of the tomb, like the texts inscribed within it, reveals a coherent and unified picture of the new life envisioned for the king and the new world in which he is to live. Immutably in its form and pattern, this new life is nonetheless cyclical, like the celestial cycle on which it is modeled. Whether as a star

160 Frankfort 1933, II pl. 81; Neugebauer and Parker 1960, pl. 46 (Text L). See Allen 1988, 5 and 75. Note also the New Kingdom summary of the world as *pr t3 dwt3*; Hornung 1974, 994.

161 Cf. Wb IV 551, 14-15; 553, 8, 16-17.

162 P F/Se 70 = N 730 = N 767. For the king as *šr swt*, see also Pyr. *1946c, *1952a, *1956a-b/d.

163 Pyr. 900d "akh, imperishable stars, those secret of places"; cf. *1581, Pyr. 1641a "those in the tombs, secret of places"; cf. 747a-b.

164 Spiegel 1971, 25 and fig. 2.

or in company with the sun, each day the king re-enters the Duat to be born again into the sky. Given its cosmic associations, the tomb is therefore more than just the final resting place of the king. It is his personal Duat like its cosmic counterpart, secret and inaccessible to the living (at least, as much as ancient technology could make it so). And it is the womb and *3jrt* that assure him daily rebirth into the sky to begin his eternal cycle of celestial life anew. It is for this reason that the king's pyramid is intended to "remain for the span of eternal sameness" (Pyr. 1622).

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TEXTUAL CRITICISM IN THE COFFIN TEXTS*

David P. Silverman

Ancient Egypt has long been described as a land where consistency reigned supreme. Once a system was developed, little change occurred over the thousands of years of civilization. This uniformity of structure and its continuity are often considered the hallmarks of Egyptian culture. Egyptian art, in two dimensions, for example, demonstrates a style that is as recognizable in the Second dynasty as it is in the Late Period. Canons of proportion in the work produced by the artisans were clearly responsible for the effect.¹ Statuary was also created according to rigid guidelines. Yet despite these facts, and they are all demonstrable, there are some inconsistencies. It is only when we delve below a superficial survey of the art, that we see not only the changes, but developing styles, characteristic traits,² and experiments against the norm.³ Looking at the broad picture, what at first may appear as a totally homogeneous system is in reality an evolving structure.

Egyptian religion is also prone to similar misconceptions about its conservatism, given the longevity and seeming immutability of its concepts, deities, and texts. But here too, evolution was taking place: early abstract notions of supreme forces and powers develop into concrete anthropomorphized deities. Mythologies are created to link the divine with the human element. Specific deities were emphasized at some

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- 1 E. Iversen, 1971, 55-81.
- 2 See the discussion by W.S. Smith, 1965 and 1978, and C. Aldred, 1980, whose studies are based on the progressive evolution of style. Note, even during the relatively short period of the Amarna heresy, there is a similar development, C. Aldred, 1973, pp. 58-66.
- 3 There are occasional examples of frontal face figures, but they usually are of servants, foreigners, or animals (TT 201 has a frontal face cow). There are a few rare examples of the use of perspective and foreshortening (TT 100 has a serving girl posing in a three-quarter stance). See also the change in the Amarna period discussed in Aldred, 1973.

times, deemphasized or eliminated at others. Some gods retained their identity; others were syncretized. Some local divinities soared to national recognition; others remained provincial.⁴ There is movement, change and evolution in the religion; it is not static.

It is difficult to accept the frequently quoted or paraphrased remark by Frankfort:

The peculiar character of Egyptian religion appears to derive precisely from an implicit assumption that only the changeless is ultimately significant.⁵

But what about the texts from which we derive much of our information? Are they not consistent, carefully copied down by the scribes and handed down intact from generation to generation? After all, hieroglyphs were considered to be words of the gods, and as such, should not have been altered, once they were carved in stone.⁶ Indeed, we can find Pyramid Texts, which first occurred on the walls of the funerary monument of Unas, recopied faithfully, although only in part, on two of the walls of a tomb belonging to a private individual from the Middle Kingdom.⁷ There are even later sources for some of these spells, including tombs of post New Kingdom officials, stela, offering tables, and *simulacra*.⁸

With such a long-standing tradition, the religious texts might appear to be unchanging, at least as far as the Pyramid Texts are concerned. But we must consider that the ancient Egyptians, who already had a tendency toward retention of concepts from the past, were especially fond of reusing older texts and even making them appear as if they were indeed the ancient object. As such, these archaized treatises would be all the more powerful. Changing them might reduce their efficacy. Moreover, at least in regard to the Pyramid Texts, they were the property of royalty and contained the subject matter relating to divinity. Keeping them intact when used later for lower classes of society would allow them to retain their value.

That the Egyptians thought highly of such writings is indicated perhaps by the introduction to the text written on the Shabaka Stone, wherein it states:

This writing was copied out anew by his majesty ... for his majesty found it to be a work of the ancestors which was worn-eaten, so that it could not be

⁴ For a discussion of the process, D.P. Silverman, forthcoming 1.

⁵ H. Frankfort, 1948, viii. He does go on to admit "that Egyptian beliefs were in themselves subject to change," *ibid.*

⁶ The writing system itself was subject to much change, and there are observable developments and distinctions that occurred over the passage of time and from one area to another.

⁷ See J.P. Allen, 1976, 28-9. See the list of some other Middle Kingdom coffins with Pyramid Texts in T.G. Allen, 1950, p. 2, n. 9. L.H. Lesko, 1979, indicates all of the Pyramid Texts utilized by each specific coffin he included.

⁸ See T.G. Allen, 1950, 12-47, for all the sources he used.

understood from beginning to end. His majesty copied it anew so that it became better than it was before in order that his name might endure ... so that he might live forever.⁹

Whether the text is accurate or not in its description of the "original" source is not a critical point.¹⁰ What is noteworthy is that the process of recopying older texts is being referred to and that such action undoubtedly took place often.

The later use of earlier religious texts is by no means limited to Pyramid Texts, and a quick glance of the monuments belonging to the New Kingdom Royal Butler *Z3wy* gives some indication of the extent of the practice. One two-sided stela belonging to him contained an appeal to the living, a text that originated much earlier; another had on it Pyramid Texts; and an offering table had both Pyramid and Coffin Texts inscribed on it.¹¹ *Z3wy* used a particular spell from the Coffin Texts that had been copied a bit earlier, in the New Kingdom, in the tomb of Rekhmure. In addition, there is also a garbled version of it in the temple of Seti I at Abydos.

Most of the versions, that is, the actual Middle Kingdom Coffin Text and the two earlier New Kingdom copies, appear to be much the same. The consistency among at least three of the versions, despite the disparity in time, can be attributed to an extremely carefully run, attended, and monitored organization. The system had to have had master-copies for each of the important religious inscriptions, and it must have been responsible for maintaining these papyri in good condition and copying them when necessary.¹² Perhaps Papyrus Gardiner II, III, and IV, which contain many Coffin Text spells, are just such examples.¹³ The New Kingdom mortuary texts, now called *The Book of the Dead*, probably also derive from a stored master collection of

⁹ The translation of the inscription is adapted from M. Lichtheim, 1973, 52.

¹⁰ F. Junge, 1973, 195-204. See also, however, H. Schlogl, 1980, 110-17, and H. Te Velde, 1982, 12 for the suggestion of a date in the Ramesside period. P. Vernus, in an oral presentation at the University of Pennsylvania in 1986-87, noted his feeling that there was an original text as referred to in the inscription and that the gaps in the narrative might correspond to breaks in an earlier original, the only copy of which was preserved in a damaged state.

¹¹ For a recent bibliography of the individual, see E. Brovanski (editor), 1987, 42, and 107. See also, D.P. Silverman, 1982, 68-70. Other examples are common; in some cases even more ingenuity was used. One scribe of the New Kingdom condensed phrases from 18th Dynasty offering formulae to compose what was supposed to look like a sun hymn. It was to be inscribed on a stela, borne by a figure, and this surface typically held solar hymns (D.P. Silverman 1976, 201-208).

¹² A repository may have existed in most temples. See the discussion of and further references for the *pr'wh* by D. Kessler, 1982, 929.

¹³ For these papyri, see A. de Buck, 1938-1961. It may be of interest to note that some of the later royal funerary texts occur first on tomb walls that are papyrus-colored and have inscriptions inked in cursive hieroglyphs and some hieratic signs (see the tombs of Amenhotep II and

scrolls that together included all the known spells from which only a relative few were utilized for any one book. (T.G. Allen in his publication listed 192 spells; some examples contain only a few spells; others have several spells.)¹⁴ Keep in mind that someone must have made the choice of which texts were used. It is true that many examples of such papyri were produced *en masse* and in advance, with the owner's name, titles, and sometimes that of family members, inserted later. Some, however, on the basis of paleography, can be shown to have been custom made,¹⁵ and they indicate that specific choices and judgements had to have been made from among the many available spells.

This factor raises an important issue. If someone was choosing which spells were utilized, that person had to be acting as a critic of sorts. The text that resulted was not a simple copying of what was available; it was a selection from among many possibilities. Since such was undoubtedly the case in regard to the *Books of the Dead*, given the information above, it stands to reason that the situation with earlier texts was also the same. Also justifiable then is the conclusion that these religious texts were not simply slavishly copied and recopied; there was some interest in and knowledge of the specific content of the material. For without such information, how could an adequate choice be made?

The extent of the concern over what was written is further indicated in the case of the funerary texts that occur in the Middle Kingdom tombs of Siese and Senwosret-ankh and their presumable origin in the Pyramid of Unas. While it is clear that all three sources utilize the same spell of the Pyramid Texts,¹⁶ it is equally evident that the later ones were not "copied" from the earlier source. The Middle Kingdom scribes/artisans used for their source a text ostensibly on papyrus that ultimately derived from an early master copy. Those spells on the walls of Unas's chamber originally also came from a master copy. The interesting aspect of this transmission of religious material across time is that the later copies are more "original" than the original (i.e. Unas's texts). For in the pyramid of Unas, particular passages were carved and then recarved subsequently to make desired alterations, while in the Middle Kingdom versions there occurs the first, unadulterated text. But the "corrections" themselves are of specific interest, for they are another indication of active participation in the ongoing process of composing and editing, rather than

simply recopying spells. They were not just handed down.

Take into consideration also the well-known fact that the Pyramid Texts, as originally introduced, were written in the first person. Soon after their appearance, however, the third person in the form of the name of the king was substituted for it.¹⁷ Note that early Coffin Texts occur without titles; later ones usually include such a rubric.¹⁸ Pyramid Texts had no illustrations, but vignettes begin appearing in some Coffin Texts, and they become common in the *Books of the Dead*. The connection among all three sources of funerary texts are well-known, and scholars¹⁹ have already noted that some Pyramid Texts occur almost verbatim in later collections; some are slightly edited, and some do not recur. Further, there are those early spells that appear to be an inspiration or model for a later one, but for some reason, were altered enough to convince the modern editor that they should be considered original compositions.²⁰ There are even those spells that can be completely original and were used only in one collection.²¹

Modern textual critics have attempted to sort out the confusion and distinguish among all the variable elements. Sethe²² published the main sources of the Pyramid Texts in parallel rows and began a commentary and translation of the spells, but it unfortunately remains incomplete. De Buck,²³ in a seven volume series copied the variants for each of the more than 1100 Coffin Texts spells, but unfortunately, he did not live to complete a translation and a commentary. *The Book of the Dead*, has fared somewhat better, and with editors such as Budge, Naville, and T. G. Allen, its contents and variations have been treated with some degree of completeness.²⁴

This last scholar also treated the problem of the interrelationship among the three collections of funerary inscriptions in his book that lists the occurrences of the Pyramid Texts and his volumes on the *Book of the Dead*.²⁵ De Buck indicated those interrelations that occurred among the different collections of funerary literature in the introductory sections of his seven volumes of the Coffin Texts.²⁶ And other scholars,

17 K. Sethe, 1908, xi.

18 CT Spell 902, which appears in a New Kingdom tomb, has a title; the original in the Middle Kingdom Coffin Sq2C does not (Silverman, 1982, 68).

19 Among them are T.G. Allen, 1950, A. de Buck, 1938-1961, and K. Sethe, 1908-1922 and 1950. Note, as T.G. Allen, 1974, 2, has stated, other funerary texts can contribute to or take inspiration from these three. See, also the comments by A. de Buck, 1938-1961, xi-xii. See also the references in note 7, above and note 39, below.

20 *Ibid.* xi.

21 Coffin Texts Spell 902 appears to be such a case (see above notes 11 and 18).

22 K. Sethe, 1908-1922 and 1950.

23 A. de Buck, 1938-1961.

24 See M. Heerma Van Voss, 1985, 641-643, for sources.

25 T.G. Allen, 1950, 1974, and 1960.

26 A. de Buck, 1938-1961.

Thutmosis III). Accompanying vignettes are simply drawn in red and black outline and usually have few inner details. The entire effect is that of a papyrus rolled out on a wall.

14 See T.G. Allen, 1974, 1-2, and note that he indicates that it was not until very late, that a set order became standard. It was a regular practice, however, to utilize a particular spell on a specific amulet (such as a heart scarab, Spell 30B) and a figurine (for example, a Shawabti, Spell 6).

15 In regard to the former, see the Papyrus of Neferrenpet, in the University Museum, most recently published by H. Milde, 1988. For the latter, a good example would be the Book of Ani in the British Museum.

16 See J.P. Allen, 1976, 29.

such as Lesko, Grieshammer, Schenkel, Heerma Van Voss, Kees, etc. have isolated and studied groups of spells or lengthy single ones for which they have included both any sources or successors.²⁷ Allemittler, Barta, and most recently, S. Thompson of Brown University, have investigated the problem of which of the Pyramid Texts served as a model for use in the coffins of the Middle Kingdom.²⁸ In some cases, the modern textual critic has attempted to indicate the best text from those available or has had to "compose" what in his mind might have been the best text from the remaining variants.²⁹

From the remarks and references above regarding funerary literature and the changes that took place in it, one can easily see that the subject of textual criticism is one with which Egyptologists have been and are concerned. Perhaps, even more interesting is that it was also practiced by the ancient editors of religious texts. This last point should not be surprising to us, since textual criticism is a well-known tradition in the Ancient Near East and Greece. One can perhaps see it best (and also most frequently) in regard to Biblical literature, where many ancient editors, commentators, and critics recorded their views, explanations, and versions of the text with which they were dealing. In ancient Egypt, the practice may have been more subtle, but there are indications, even in the earliest of the religious writings, that is the Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts, of attempts at explaining or interpreting a particular spell or passage, and, as noted above, full editing. Some glosses for explanation do occur early, albeit rarely, but these become more common in the late religious and magical texts, when they are placed in the margins or spaces between lines.³⁰ In the more formative stages of the religious texts, the ancient editor/commentator was no less aware of the need for clarification, and it was he who was responsible for the phrase commonly found in both the Pyramid and Coffin Texts at the end of a verbal pun: *sdm.f pw*, translated as "This means that ..." or "That is how. ..." Such expressions often occur after several descriptive phrases, and sometimes they are used at the end of "etymologies" of god's names and epithets. For example:

CT 335 IV 286a-288c Who actually is this great cat? It is Re himself. He was called cat when Sia said of him: Is he catlike in this which he does? That is how his name of cat came into being.³¹

27 L.H. Lesko, 1971-1972, 89-101; 1971, 30-43; 1972, R. Grieshammer, 1974. See also the references in M. Heerma van Voss, 1983, 468-471.

28 H. Allemittler, 1972; W. Barta, 1986, 28; and S. Thompson, 1987.

29 Nore K. Sethe, 1950; S.A.B. Mercer, 1952; and R.O. Faulkner, 1973-1978.

30 A.F. Shore, 1971, 420-21; and see J. Osing, 1976, 628-629, and the references therein.

31 D.P. Silverman, 1980, 59, ex. 4, and 1985, 269-285.

The Egyptian language also had different emphasizing constructions to bring attention to something which they felt needed stress, and editors could rephrase earlier texts utilizing stylistic devices such as *jr* + a nominal construction which could, by anticipatory emphasis, stress a particular (nominal) part of a spell. The editor could also make use of the "second tenses" to indicate the importance of an adverbial expression.³² These and other devices would probably have appeared to be less subtle than *sdm.f pw*.

More obvious would be the rubrics or titles that could occur at the beginning or at the end of a spell. The tradition of using such explicit labels began in the Coffin Texts and became the rule in the later *Book of the Dead*. For example, Spell 1055 (CT VII 187a): "This is a spell for passing by," and one of the sources of Spell 1082 (CT VII 354c) has the label: "Spell for being in Rosetau." These titles attempt to explicate the exact purpose of the spell, but there are some explanatory phrases similarly placed that do not identify themselves as such. They are expressed differently and sometimes employ one of the constructions noted above, for example, *jr*: "As for any man who is seen there alive, he cannot ever perish, since he knows the spell ..." (Spell 1081, CT VII 354a-b).

Such devices for simplifying and clarifying difficult texts would undoubtedly be crucial to the editors of the Coffin Texts, since they were adapting material directly in some cases or indirectly in others from an audience of one (i.e., the king or queen) to one of many (i.e., the nobility). To a lesser extent, the editors of the Pyramid Texts faced a similar situation when they had to alter these texts from the first person to the third. The existence of spells or recitations for use in the afterlife was, of course, known in the Old Kingdom, and a private person could and often did claim knowledge of such information that could be used for his own benefit. Therefore, it would seem natural to assume that there was a collection of such material. Edel has gathered these standardized expressions that occur in biographical inscriptions,³³ but there are others that are not as common, such as one from Aswan, where an individual claims knowledge of a spell to ascend to the great god, lord of heaven.³⁴ Presenting material and then explaining it to an audience (no matter what size) was not a style limited to religious texts, and if one examines the medical papyri, one can see this process in perhaps its best form. Other types of didactic texts, although not limited to this specific pattern, follow a similar style.

Our focus here, however, is on the largest body of funerary literature, the Coffin Texts, and we are fortunate to have the exemplary work of de Buck, which provides

32 See CT VI 241c-d, where only one variant used the extra phrase *jr w33i jr pw jmnt m R^c*, and for the second tense, note D.P. Silverman, 1980, 3-4 and 9. For the verbal constructions after *jr* see the references in E. Dorel, 1986, n. 77.

33 E. Edel, 1945, 20-26.

34 L. Habachi, 1977, 40. See also the discussion of this expression in regard to a different matter by R. Demaree, 1983, 213.

the known variants of those texts he considered to be distinct enough from the Pyramid Texts to form a separate group of spells. By such an action, however, he omitted a major portion of textual material that occurs on the coffins. Therefore, one might erroneously assume that the choice of the specific Pyramid Texts, the extent and nature of the editing done to them, and their location in the Middle Kingdom coffins were perhaps not important issues. The index that Lesko produced corrects that impression to a great degree, for he lists all the inscriptions on each source.³⁵ Moreover, Sethe commented on several aspects of the Middle Kingdom versions of Pyramid Texts.³⁶ Even leaving out the Pyramid Texts, de Buck still included almost 1200 spells, and dealing with those alone was a gargantuan task.

In looking back in time, it would seem that the individuals from the Old Kingdom who were responsible for the preparation of these new funerary texts also had a difficult task, but they probably had more creative latitude in dealing with their subject matter than did their predecessors, the editors and composers of the Pyramid Texts. Now the Heliopolitan emphasis of the Memphite area was declining, or at least leveling out, and the importance of Osiris and other deities was increasing. The clientele for whom they were writing was more varied than that before, i.e., the class of royalty. As democratization of royal prerogatives took place, there could be more divine associations, relationships and identifications and different levels of each for the deceased individual. The surface for inscribing the Coffin Texts consisted of the walls of coffins and tomb chambers, but these walls may have been a limiting factor, since their area was less extensive than that provided by the walls of pyramid chambers. Another distinction between the two collections of funerary texts was their geographic distribution. Pyramid Texts in the Old Kingdom were relatively limited, occurring in the Memphite area, while Coffin Texts, although clustering in Middle Egypt, can be found as well in sites in the north and south. Moreover, with the discovery of Coffin Texts on a shroud in the 6th Dynasty tomb of Medunefert³⁷ in Saqqara, the temporal dimension becomes vast, spanning the Old Kingdom through the Middle Kingdom.

In the volumes of Coffin Texts, one can see easily, without even reading the texts, that some spells or groups of spells occur more regularly in certain geographic locations and in certain places in the coffin. Obviously someone had to make the decision as to what went where, for there clearly is some consistency. Lesko's *Index*³⁸ lists in order each spell that occurs on a particular part of each coffin and, thereby, one can see some plan and rationale. He, Paul Barguet, and others have noted some

preferences in the different proveniences.³⁹ The Siat coffins alone have certain of the spells for transforming the deceased into a falcon (CT 147). However, one can also find other examples of falcon texts that occur elsewhere in Middle Egypt (CT 148-149). The coffins from locations in the north seem to omit spells of transformation into the god Shu, and those of Bersheth from the Heliopolitan nome were partial to Field of Heh spells.⁴⁰ The spell for assembling family members is represented best by CT 146, all examples of which derive from Bersheth. However there are similar spells (CT 131-145) that occur in Saqqara and Gebelín. On the other hand, some spells such as CT 335, (Going Forth by Day),⁴¹ apparently had mass appeal and occur throughout Egypt.

The popularity of spell 335 and its significance were undoubtedly factors influencing the number of glosses and parenthetical expressions within the text. Since sources occurred throughout Egypt, regional preference and understanding must have played some role. Almost each time a deity is mentioned, some variant text has an explication. For example, where the main statement is: "I am the great one who came into being himself" (CT IV 188-189a), a gloss (B9Ca) adds: "Who is he, the great one who came into being himself? He is Nun, the primeval water." In case the reader didn't know which deity was being referred to, the gloss makes it perfectly clear. In another part of the same spell, the main message is: "Mine is yesterday. I know tomorrow" (CT IV 192a-193a). Several glosses occur (CT IV 192-193b-c), but only one variant from Beni Hasan clearly explains it: "As for yesterday, it is Osiris. As for today, it is Re." One of the variants, using a similar gloss to that just mentioned, omitted the direct reference to Re and substituted in its place "divine sun-shine" (H-Leningrad). Two others, both from Meir, inscribed the god Atum in place of Re. In some cases, the explanations take up more space than the original text. "I raised the hair from the sacred *wáfr* eye in the time of rage" (CT IV 238a-239c) is the line of text. Most of the sources felt the need for explication: "What really is the sacred *wáfr* eye in the time of rage?" (and) "Who actually raised the hair from it? It is the right eye of Re." (In this answer some variants omit "right," some say: "the eye which is on the right, of Re;" one says: "It is the eye which was punished by Re.") One of the sources makes the statement more emphatic with: "As for the sacred *wáfr* eye, it is the right eye of Re."

There are some spells that the deceased needs in order to escape the net (CT 473-481), and their origin is Middle Egypt. A similar set of instructions occurs in another spell (CT 343), where one of the sources is Theban.⁴² There are relatively few texts dealing with overall protection of the body, and even fewer variants; interest in such

35 L.H. Lesko, 1979.

36 K. Sethe, 1950.

37 M. Valloguin, 1986, 74-75.

38 L.H. Lesko, 1979.

39 P. Barguet, 1986, 19ff. See also L.H. Lesko, 1974, 161-197.

40 L.H. Lesko, 1971-72, 89.

41 M. Heerma van Voss, 1963; R. Gundlach and W. Schenkel, 1970; and R. Faulkner, 1973-78, 262.

42 P. Barguet, 1986, 22.

inscriptions never seemed to reach the Memphite area.⁴³

One of the most important groups of spells, entitled *The Book of Two Ways* may also be one of the earliest compositions of the Coffin Texts. All its major sources are from Bersheh in Middle Egypt.⁴⁴ *The Book of Two Ways* occurs in at least eighteen coffins, is usually placed on the floor boards at the bottom, and receives its name from an accompanying map showing two pathways. Lesko grouped the spells into nine sections in which there are three versions: A and B are longer; C is shorter.⁴⁵ His conclusions were based on a comparison of all the sources and an identification of both the similar and the contrasting elements. That they all belong to one overall group is undeniable, and that there were several distinct versions is also clear. There is consistency within each of the three versions, and it would appear that conscious editing might account for the characteristics distinguishing one version from the other. But even with each subgroup, there are distinctions among the original sources. Seemingly unimportant clauses can be omitted. For example, in CT VII 260a-b, "that I might sail in it to Nut" is left out of one coffin (B1L) of the B version. Apparently, one editor added what appears to be an unnecessary modifier at the end of the rubric in CT VII 261b (B1C) "every day." Occasionally, an editorial change can be significant: in CT VI 264b-265b, the A version has "I have seen the one who proceeded to Maat, having fallen by means of the ones sacred of forms who are in the midst of the sacred lake." The B version alters the ending to: "The ones who are in coffins(?)". Clearly, the two versions are different, but it is difficult to suggest what the distinction means.

Although some differences can be attributed to errors in copying, there are cases of only one source that shows a deviation that cannot be considered such a mistake. In CT 1034 VII 279b, only one of fifteen sources does not have: "I am (or this person is) a dignitary of Re." B1Bo has instead "the deceased is Re." This latter clause shows more of a direct identification with the deity than do the others. Further on in the spell (CT VII 280c), most of the sources use a clause with direct identification: "I am (or this N is) Re, a god greater than you." Here, B1Bo has simply: "Re is a god greater than you," since the identification with that deity had already been made. Each source in CT 1038 VII 287d refers to the demon who guards the gate as "one sad of voice." In one coffin (B4Bo) there is an added explanation that unfortunately is subtle enough so that the modern reader has difficulty discerning whether it refers to this spell or the following one: "This is a spell for passing by him (and) that which (or who) is under him."

In CT 1040 VII 289b-290a, almost all of the sources of both versions have "My dignity is in Re." They then part company with most of one group, utilizing the expression "at the time that I purify Osiris," the other preferring a different phrase: "just as Osiris is pure." In one version of the spell "Re-Horakhty" is mentioned by name, while in the other, the epithet "lord of the horizon" is preferred (VII 289b).

43 *Ibid.* 36-48.

44 L.H. Lesko, 1972, 3.

Despite the difference between these versions, the similarities that do exist and the same context underlying them all show their inherent unity clearly.

It is possible, however, to see just how close the versions of these spells were to each other, if we compare them to another set of spells that appears to parallel parts of *The Book of Two Ways*. But unlike those discussed thus far, this collection is not from Bersheh, nor does it occur on the floor boards of a coffin. These inscriptions were carved on the walls of the funerary chamber of H_{sw} the Elder, whose tomb was located at modern Kom el-Hisn in the western Delta.⁴⁶ The specific group of spells that relates to *The Book of Two Ways* takes up only a small part of the more than eight hundred lines that appear on the south, west, and east walls of the chamber. Given the subject matter of the present investigation and the discussion thus far, it should be informative to examine and compare this particular set of texts from the Delta. Further, they comprise the only known Coffin Texts from the area, and, as such, should provide some interesting textual critiques.

On the west wall of the chamber are three registers of texts, and the second of these contains 110 lines that closely, but not exactly, resemble Coffin Texts spells 1100-1113. These spells, therefore, correspond to Lesko's section VIII of *The Book of Two Ways*. They comprise the group of texts that presents information that the deceased had to know about the seven doors/gates, and they list the names of the guardians. KeH,⁴⁷ like some of the Bersheh sources, omits a title in spell 1100, but this omission is a consistent trait in KeH.⁴⁸ In looking only at the KeH version of the spell for a few minutes and comparing it to the Bersheh sources, there are clear distinctions between the two that are readily visible. Based only on the Bersheh versions, the basic text can be translated as follows:

It is after I had taken away the knives(?) of the knife-thrower from him that I have come here in the great valley. The Butcher, sharp of the striking power, who has no opposition. I am the one who drives away the evil ones that have no opposition. Do not descend upon me, Stretcher of the prow rope, Vigilant One. Let him not bring about bleariness in the sun people on the day of the clarity of the god. If you come against me as with any type of worm, then Re will die, and then Apopis will be hostile. It is in it, in the midst of the slaughter place of the protector that things should be done.⁴⁹

45 *Ibid.* 4-5.

46 D.P. Silverman, 1988, and forthcoming 3.

47 KeH is the abbreviation of the texts from Kom el-Hisn.

48 See figure 1, where most of the Bersheh texts begin the spell with the name of the gatekeeper. Figures 1-4 list first the Bersheh versions, then KeH follows; the last column is a parallel from Beni Hassan discussed below (see n. 54).

49 See the translation and comments of L.H. Lesko, 1972, 109-110, and Faulkner, 1978, 157. See J.P. Allen, 1984, 343, and 360-1, for a discussion of the prospective passive form.

The first few lines of KeH (255-258, figs. 1-2, second column from right) correspond fairly closely to those from Bersheh (CT VII 416b-417a), but then KeH (259-260)⁵⁰ differs somewhat, especially in regard to the participial statement. KeH is distinct again, after the introduction of the conditional sentence (begun in KeH 265 and CT VII 418c). The following is a rendering of this part of the spell:

If you come accompanying/after this (and) [Apophis is slaughtered],⁵¹ then you should do things in accordance with i/ʾnim in the [slaughterhouse] of the one who was protected by the destroyer of his father?⁵²

Contrasting this translation with the one given previously for spell 1100 indicates that the context of the two versions is similar, but a comparative analysis of the composition of each demonstrates that the means of expressing the ideas were often distinct. In the protasis, KeH adds a phrase (265) and then perhaps continues it with a following clause introduced by *jw*; it does not, however, contain any references to worms mentioned in the Bersheh sources.⁵³ The apodosis in both versions takes the form of a *šdm k3f*, KeH using the verb *jri* (266), Bersheh, *mwt* (CT VII 419b). It is noteworthy that the latter word and the expression in which it occurs is absent in KeH. Perhaps, the northern location of the tomb and hence its proximity to Heliopolis, the mainstay of the powerful solar cult, could account for this omission. While references to aging and passing away of divinities do occur, the recording of the actual death of a god was not common, and Homung noted the conscious avoidance of any references to it, especially in regard to the deity Osiris.⁵⁴ It is important to note that it may have been the texts from Bersheh that were edited rather than those from KeH. Perhaps, the versions from Middle Egypt were augmented to include this passage in an attempt to adhere more closely to Heliopolitan theology.

At the end of the text, it is KeH that appears to have added a phrase (267-268). A parallel for the conclusion of the KeH version may exist in another spell, not included by de Buck among the Bersheh sources of the *The Book of Two Ways*.⁵⁵ Spell 901 (CT VII 107k-108i), unlike those sources discussed above, comes from Beni Hasan. Like them, however, it is concerned with gates and even mentions the names of seven chambers. Considering the similarity in context to Spell 1100, perhaps the title (113-

⁵⁰ Note the absence of *ʾt* in KeH as well as in some of the Bersheh texts.

⁵¹ The traces at the end of 265 would also suit *jw šd-ʾr(w)*. See below notes 54 and 55.

⁵² CT VII 419a.

⁵³ E. Homung, 1982, 151-153. He, *ibid.* 155, felt that this passage from *The Book of Two Ways* was used to threaten "the possibility that the sun god might die."

⁵⁴ P. Bagnert, 1986, 36-37, has listed it under a group of spells for the general protection of the body and the viscera. It appears on figs. 1-4, under the heading BH4C and will be referred to as such.

114) should be translated: "Spell for Proceeding to the Gates (and) the Guardian of the Outer Gate," rather than the traditional rendering that refers to the last expression as "Gates of the Tomb."⁵⁶ If this suggestion is accepted, then the end of the title in BH4C is similar to that found in many of the Bersheh sources (See fig. 1). The following line (115, fig. 2 far right) is damaged in part, and, in comparison to the other texts, extremely abbreviated. The negative at the end of the line follows the Bersheh sources, as does the use of the first person independent pronoun that introduces the participial statement. The following participle, however, is *mds*, the same used in KeH (259), not *hsf* as in Bersheh. Both of these versions omit the passage about the death of Re;⁵⁷ and the conclusion of both seems to have many similarities. Unlike Bersheh and KeH, BH4C continues its text with names for each of the seven chambers. The Bersheh spells following 1100 on the contrary deal mainly with the keepers of the seven gates. Still, there is a similarity of context amongst the three versions which indicates perhaps a relationship among them. Because of the distinctiveness of the BH4C, however, it would appear that it represents yet another version of the spell, i.e. two Bersheh versions, one KeH, and one from Beni Hasan. Spell 901 from BH4C in its entirety might even have been considered an abbreviated rendering of Section VIII of *The Book of Two Ways*.

In continuing with the KeH text, 269-279, we find what clearly is a close version of Spell 1101. The next lines, 288-300, seem to be a heavily edited version of Spell 1103, and its position here, and the similarities to the Bersheh sources supported such an attribution.⁵⁸ With lines 301-311, however, KeH does not follow the sequence, and our parallel appears not to be a single spell, but a consolidation of Bersheh spells 1109-1110. Such changes in the order of the spells is not unheard of in these texts.⁵⁹ The next KeH lines 311-321 are unparalleled in the Bersheh version, and consist of a spell in which Re is mentioned, as well as "the one who nourishes the common folk," perhaps an epithet for the same god.

KeH then follows with lines 322-328, apparently returning to the order in Bersheh, and this text parallels Spell 1104. As might be expected, Bersheh Spells 1105-1106 appear to be the parallels to KeH lines 328-342. There are many shifts in the KeH version, and the editor for the Delta version apparently treated the two spells as one. An interesting note on textual criticism is the use of the synonym *k3w* in KeH, while Bersheh has *kaw* (both words meaning "darkness"). KeH lines 342-356 then advance to what appears to be an equivalent to Bersheh Spell 1112. This skipping ahead can be explained, since KeH had already included Spells 1109-1110 earlier. Perhaps the editor felt that Spells 1107 and 1111 could be omitted since they were so short and

⁵⁵ R. Faulkner, 1978, 56, and P. Bagnert, 1986, 36, have both understood *h3r* to mean "tomb" in this case and "gate" in CT VII 416a. *ibid.* 651, and R. Faulkner, 1978, 157.

⁵⁶ Note the use of the added direct reference to Re in only the Beni Hasan source of CT 335 IV 192-3b.

⁵⁷ We will return below to these lines, with another parallel.

⁵⁸ L.H. Lesko, 1972, 3.

consisted basically of a few words that were repeated several times. In fact, many Bersheh sources also leave them out. The omission of Spell 1108 is more difficult to rationalize, except for the fact that it also does not occur in several Bersheh coffins.

Apparently Spell 1112 was critical, since KeH (342-356) continues with a version of it. Here, however, KeH must have followed a totally different copy. The Bersheh text is the one that serves as the ancestor of BD 135. KeH clearly seems to have worked from a quite different source; it contains an elaborate emphasis on Re that is omitted at Bersheh, and it even replaces a reference to Horus in the Bersheh version with one to Re. With the next lines (356-364), KeH concludes *The Book of Two Ways* with Spell 1113, but it does not follow Bersheh closely, and it is augmented with references to Re. Even though KeH omits Spell 1114, the concluding text of Section VIII, other Bersheh versions also leave it out. It is important to note that although KeH did not include this last spell, it does have a passage with a remark regarding the beauty of Re in its concluding spell (parallel to 1113) that occurs in Bersheh Spell 1114, but not in the Bersheh versions of Spell 1113.

Before concluding, it would, perhaps, be informative to look at the texts that are organized in figures 5 and 6. Listed there are CT 1103 and the corresponding KeH lines 288-300. As mentioned above, this identification was made on the basis of the position of these lines among the others of KeH that paralleled spells of *The Book of Two Ways* and because of the similarities in context between the two versions. There are, however, many instances where the KeH text appears to have unusual readings. At first glance such distinctions could be attributed to a corrupt copy, but there was apparently another reason for the differences. KeH represents another tradition, and there may be yet a further parallel in another spell, one that has not been identified as belonging to *The Book of Two Ways*.⁵⁹ It is CT 579 VI 194j-q, and it is listed as the third parallel on figs. 5 and 6. As was the case with the new parallel for Spell 1100, the source is a single coffin from Beni Hasan.

That the text on the coffin from Beni Hasan is closer to KeH than to Bersheh is clear in a number of cases, most obviously in the strange phrase beginning with KeH line 293: "Retreat because this white crown which, itself, caused the Nubian to be born." Bersheh has "the white crown and the nemes have retreated."⁶⁰ If one reads the text aloud, the three versions seem to sound similar, and this observation points to a possible confusion that may have resulted when one scribe taking the dictation heard one thing, and another scribe heard something else. From that point, editors who received the copies may have tried to force some sense into the affected passages. One cannot, however, make the same conclusion in regard to the use of the word *nir* "god" in both KeH line 297 and the Beni Hasan version, while Bersheh has *Djwty* "Thoth." Two distinct trends are indicated, and the texts with *nir* may reflect a desire to edit out

the reference to the Hermopolitan deity. As mentioned above, in regard to Spell 1100, Helipolitan influences might have been at the root, although one might have expected the text then to read "Re." It is of course also possible, as noted above, that it was the Bersheh text that was edited to reflect Hermopolitan doctrines. Whatever the reason, it is interesting to note that the text from Beni Hasan again is closer to that of KeH. One might have assumed *a priori* that the texts from Beni Hasan, because of a closer proximity to Bersheh, might have favored Hermopolitan influences.

I should also like to bring attention to two other features common to KeH and Beni Hasan that have nothing to do with textual criticism:

- (1) On the table of offerings carved on the east wall of *Hsw's* tomb is a vessel with flowers projecting out of three spouts. In the tomb of Amenemhet from Beni Hasan (Pl. XVII) is similar scene with the same object occurs.
- (2) Among *Hsw's* titles are the two designations: *hw-ꜥ* "Protector" and *hꜥ3 b3t* "Ruler of the *b3t*;" the same designations together are also accorded to Amenemhet from Beni Hasan (Pl. XVII).

As more texts from the Delta become available for examination, more light will be shed on the reasons underlying the relationship that appears to exist among these three sites.

Textual criticism and editing did exist in the Coffin Texts, as examples in the previous discussion have shown. Critics and editors surely had to deal with a variety of problems including correcting errors made by scribes who didn't listen carefully to dictation presented by their master. They also had to revise the mistaken texts recorded by careless copyists. In some cases, errors might have been so severe that creative editing had to be resorted to in order to make any sense out of the passages. If a copy of such a text survived and was edited further, it might have been the basis for a new version of a spell. It was perhaps the critic and/or editor who was responsible for adapting spells to reflect new ideologies or regional preferences. Many more motives and reasons for changes must have existed.

For the modern critic to learn more about these ancient traditions and to be able to discern variants from versions, he must examine and compare carefully all the sources of a particular spell — not only the texts from different areas, but also the parallel texts from the same location. Once these investigations have been made, it may be possible to conclude why some of the sources for the popular Coffin Text 335 (V 2b-c) recorded that the goddess Seshat built the house, while other sources noted that the builder was Sekhmet or Ptah. One may be able to decide what the reason was for the

⁵⁹ See D.P. Silverman, forthcoming 3, for a full discussion of this spell.

⁶⁰ R. Faulkner, 1973-78, 158 and Lesko, 1972, 112.

⁶¹ D.P. Silverman, 1981-1982, 6-12. See also Ward, 1982, 130, and H.G. Fischer, 1985, 73, n. 1123-1124.

omission in the Surt coffins in CT 343 IV 350 b of the phrase *m pr*. Space may have been a factor or, the underlying reason might have been that a well-read nobleman had personal preferences as to how a spell should be recorded on his coffin. As work progresses on the Coffin Texts, and more detailed studies are made, we will discover more and more information about textual criticism in ancient Egypt.

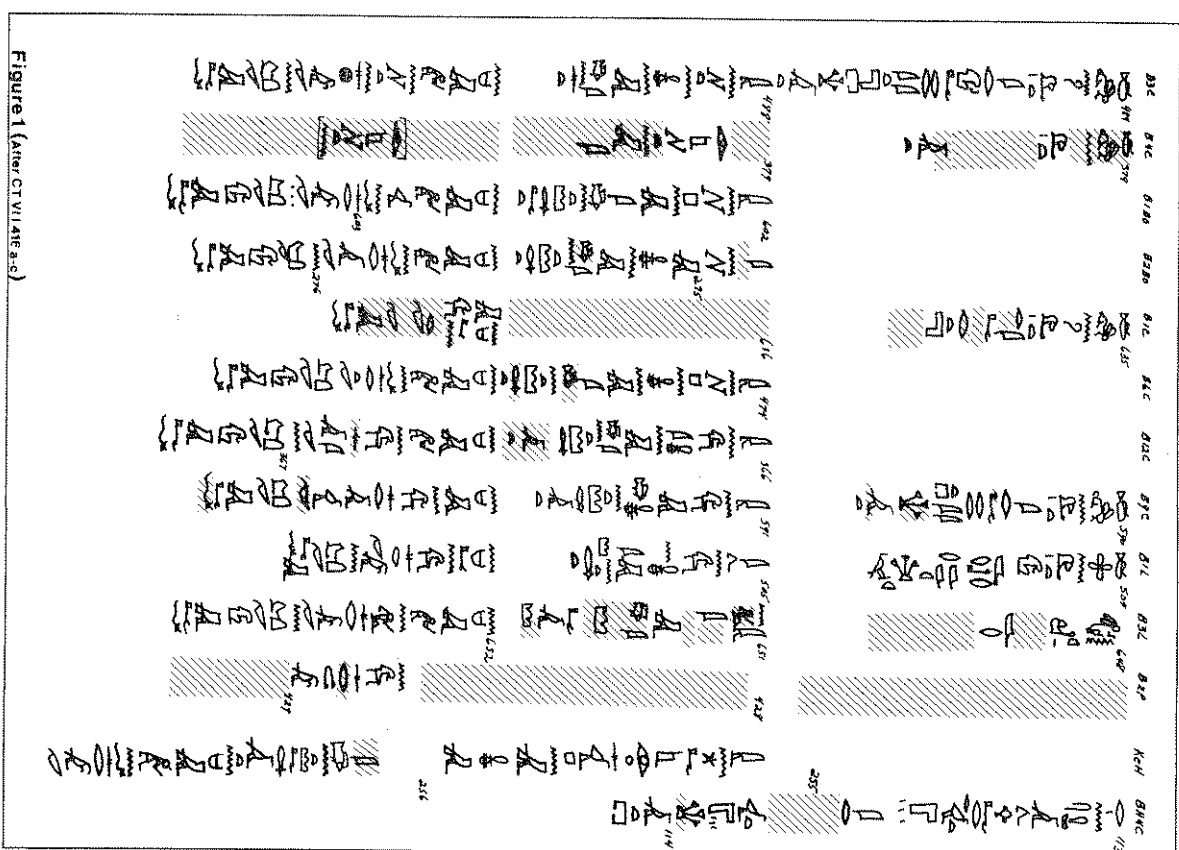
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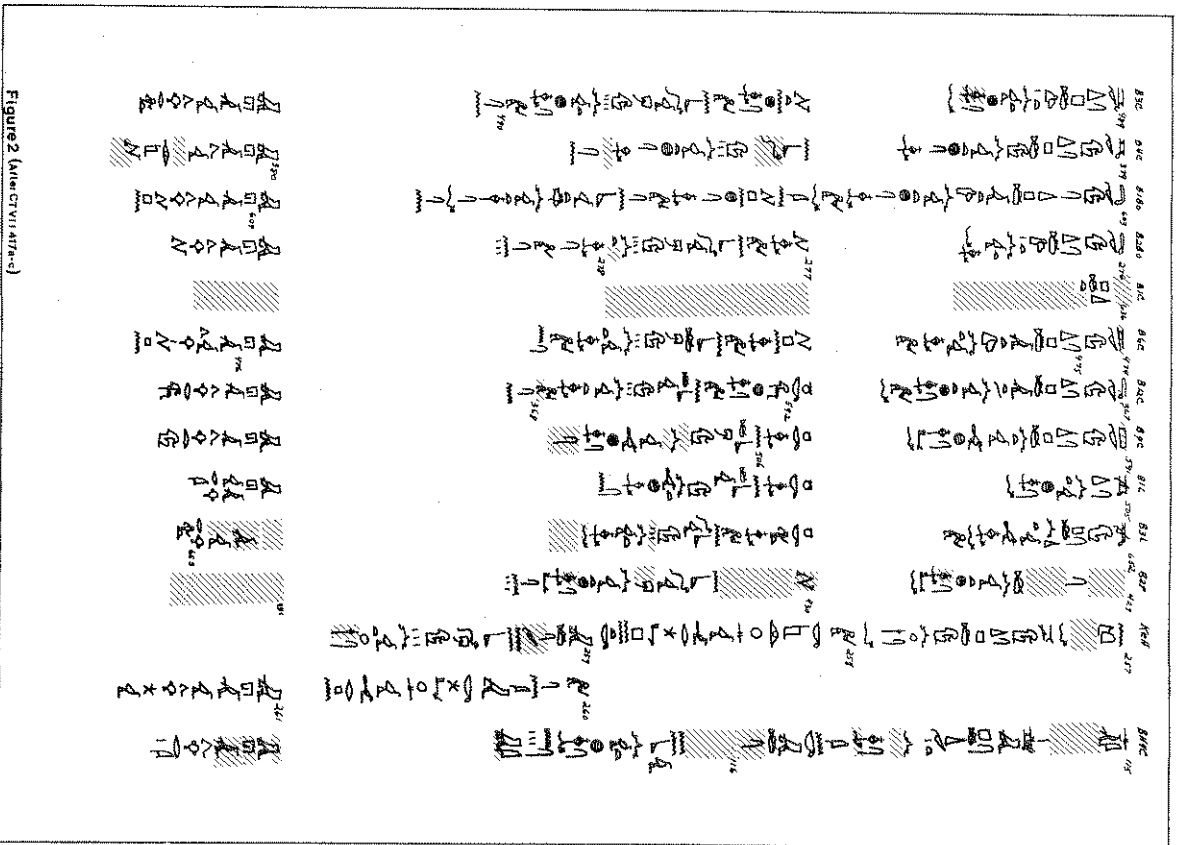
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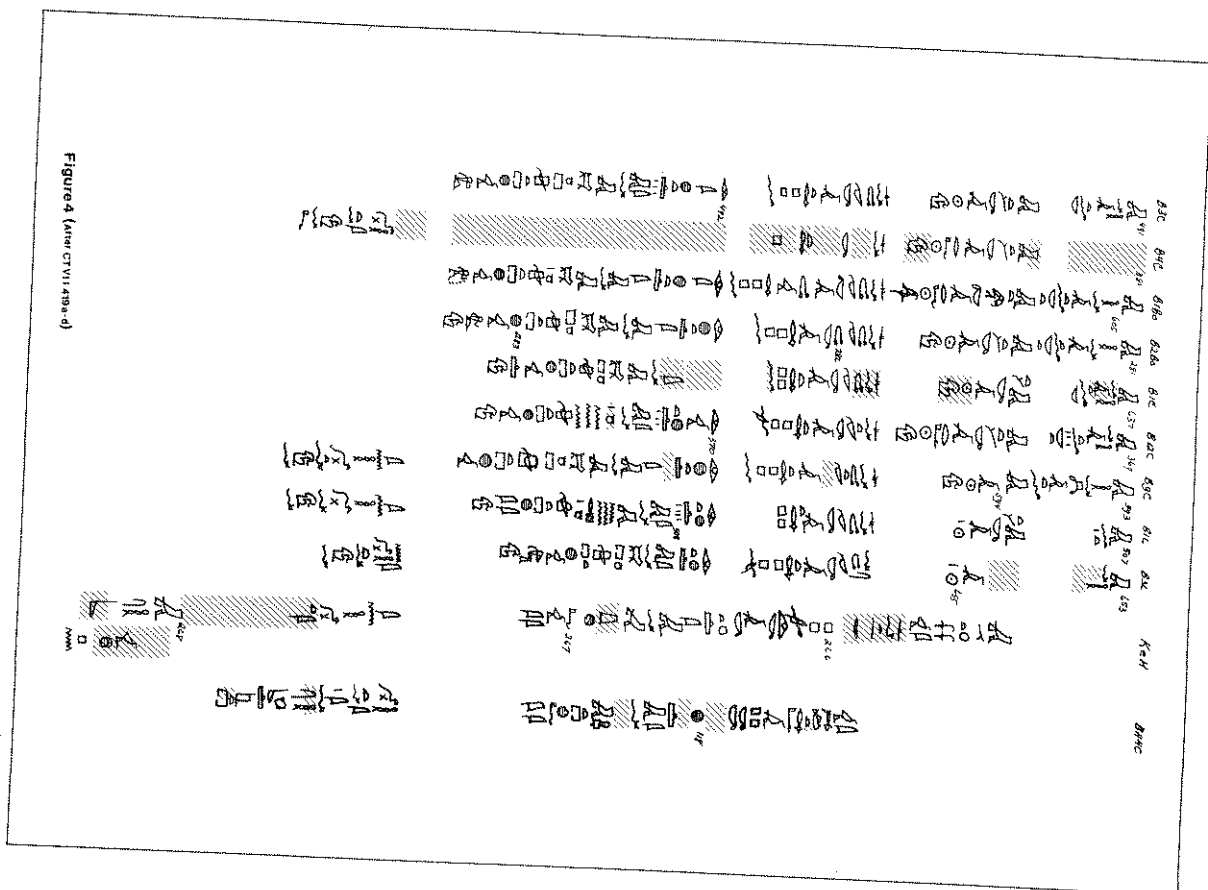
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KeH 294	Ber. vii 427 c	BH vi 194 m	
KeH 293	Ber. vii 428a 427c	BH vi 194 l-m	
KeH 292	Ber. vii 428 a	BH vi 194 l	
KeH 291	Ber. vii 427 b-c	BH vi 194	
KeH 290	Ber. vii 427 a-b	BH vi 194 k	
KeH 289	Ber. vii 427 c	BH vi 194 j-k	
KeH 288			

Figure 5

BH VI 194 q	
KeH 295	
Ber. VI 428 a-b	
BH VI 194 n	
KeH 296	
Ber. VI 428 c	
BH VI 194 o	
KeH 297	
Ber. VI 428 d	
BH VI 194 p	
KeH 298	
Ber. VI 428 e	
BH VI 194 q	
KeH 300	
BH VI 194 r	

Figure 6

<u>BERSHEH</u>	<u>KOM EL HISSN</u>	<u>BENI HASAN</u>
1100	255-268	901
1101	268-279	
1102	280-288	
1103	288-300	597
1104	322-328	
1105-1106	328-342	
1109-1110	301-311	
1112	342-356	
1113	356-364	

Figure 7

STATE AND RELIGION IN THE NEW KINGDOM

Jan Assmann

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With regard to ancient Egypt, 'state' and 'religion' are anachronistic concepts. They cannot be distinguished and confronted one to another. The political system of pharaonic kingship is a kind of religion quite in the same way as Egyptian religion is a form of political organization. They are aspects or dimensions of one single, indivisible theopolitical unity. Nothing would be more inadequate with regard to ancient Egypt than the idea of a conflict between 'church' and 'state,' as has been repeatedly proposed to account for the very fundamental, even revolutionary changes to be observed during the New Kingdom, especially the Amarna Period. There is no possibility of translating these notions into Egyptian concepts.

Nevertheless, unity does not preclude tension and even conflict. In this essay I will try a different interpretation. In my opinion, the conflict is to be located, not within the theopolitical unity, but between different conceptions of this unity. These conflicting conceptions or world-views should be reconstructed as 5-dimensional, including the religions, the cosmic, the political, the social and the anthropological dimension. They imply a theology, cosmology (or 'natural philosophy' in the sense of J. Allen), political, sociology and anthropology. Changes in any of these aspects or dimensions affect the whole conception of reality, precisely because there is no clear-cut institutional and conceptual differentiation.

In the course of the 18th Dynasty, we observe a growing tension between three different conceptions, leading eventually to the manifest and violent conflict of the Amarna revolution. The first I will call the 'classical conception,' inherited from the Middle Kingdom and in large part dating back to the Old Kingdom. The second is represented by the 'Amarna conception,' which opposed the classical conception with so much violence and persecution. The third is known under the inadequate label of Personal Piety, and it is the main purpose of this paper to find a more adequate location and interpretation of this movement within the religious, intellectual and institutional history of ancient Egypt.¹ The dissection of these three conflicting paradigms within the whole of Egyptian history in the New Kingdom may appear

¹ This study is an investigation into what might be called the 'political theology' of Ancient Egypt, taking up a line of research started by the late Jacob Taubes in a series of conferences (see Taubes 1983, 1984, 1987). Important in this respect is also the notion of 'political religion,' introduced by Voegelin 1938, and, of course, Schmitt 1922, who reinvented the term of Alcida Assmann who first pointed out to me the relationship between 'negative anthropology' and political authoritarianism. The study is not based on specific research but rather a draft of what I think to be a possible perspective of historical reconstruction which needs of course to be worked out in greater detail. It profited very much of the stimulating atmosphere at Yale and my warmest thanks are due to W. Kelly Simpson for having provided this context with so much care and devotion.

artificial or over-precise. It might even be argued that in view of their notorious 'multiplicity of approaches' the ancient Egyptians were quite unable to experience conflict and cognitive dissonance. A descriptionist view of Ancient Egyptian history will tend to include all these seemingly contradictory phenomena in its colourful picture of a bygone reality. But the possibility of everything at any time excludes meaning and consequently understanding. Meaning presupposes negation. The interpretative approach to culture therefore attempts to find out the relevant negations. It might sometimes go too far or in the wrong direction, but, as Francis Bacon has it, "*cilios emergit veritas ex errore quam ex confusione*".

1. The classical Conception: the theo-politology of maintenance²

1.1 The Text

As far as the 'classical conception' is concerned, we are in a privileged position, having at our disposal a text which can duly be regarded as fundamental in its exposition of the central concepts. The text has been known since 1970³, but its relevance to royal ideology does not seem to have been recognized.⁴ It is not a recitation but a treatise dealing with the general conditions of the solar cult and the role of the king as a priest of the sun god. It contains 44 verses and is divided into three stanzas. The first stanza of 10 verses describes the rising of the sun in the style of Egyptian cosmographical literature⁵, the second stanza specifies in 20 verses the knowledge of the king, who by his initiation into the arcana of the solar circuit is enabled and legitimized to accompany the cosmic process with cultic action and recitation.⁶ The third stanza deals with the legitimization of the king in a more general way.⁷ The king is authorized for his office not only by his knowledge but above all because he has been installed on earth by the sun god himself.

- 2 For general outlines of the royal ideology cf. Hornung 1982, Léciant 1980 with extensive bibliography p.65 n.15, Vernus 1986b, Assmann 1984c.
- 3 Assmann 1970; id., 1983b, p.48f. The text exists in 11 versions, 3 originating from royal temples of the NK.
- 4 The text is not mentioned in Boulton & Fardieu 1988. In Goyon 1979 it is treated as a variant of BD chapter 15. Grimal 1986, p.50 mentions the Taharqa version and seems to regard the text as belonging to the royal propaganda of the 25th dyn.
- 5 Hornung 1984. The use of these 'books' for the decoration of royal tombs as a kind of exclusively royal funerary literature has to be interpreted as a secondary adaptation, *pace* Barta 1985.
- 6 Cf. the emphasis on 'knowledge' in the title of the *Amduat*, which has to be regarded as a codification of precisely the same knowledge which in our text the king is said to possess.
- 7 Cf. Otto 1969.

jw nḏj n R'w nḏswt N
tp t3 n 'nḏw
r nḏh nḏt ḏt
hr wḏt mḏw hr ship nḏw
hr ship m3't hr ship jzft
jw ḏt f hipwt n nḏw
prt-ḏw n 3ḏw

Re has installed king N
 upon the earth of the living
 for ever and eternity
 judging men, satisfying gods,
 realizing Maat, annihilating Isfet.
 He gives offerings to the gods
 and mortuary offerings to the dead.

Verses 1-5 form one complex sentence which requires closer analysis. We are dealing with a PSO clause to which no less than six adverbial adjuncts are annexed. Complexity is created by the fact that only the first two of these adverbials relate to the verbal predicate, specifying the action of Re in its local (on the earth of the living) and temporal (for all eternity) frame. The other four adverbials relate to the object, the king, and are in fact postponed attributes:

(Action 1) P-S-O-Adv
 |
 (Action 2) S-P-O

Structurally, the sentence is analogous to phrases like

ḏt nḏw n.k jrt.k hr m33
 Your eyes are given to you (your eyes which are) looking

The point is that the sentence comprises two actions, which differ widely as to tense, aspect and *Aktionsart*,⁸ and that the king plays a double role in it, being object of one

8 In my use of these terms I am following Koschnieder 1929, referring by the term *tense* to the well known triad past-present-future (with sub-divisions like plusquamperfect, present perfect etc.), by the term *aspect* to the binary opposition of perfective-imperfective (or accompli/inaccompli) and by the term *Aktionsart* to the opposition durative-punctual, which has to be supplemented by the opposition iterative (repeated action): semelfactive (singular action). All these categories are relevant in the verbal system of Middle Egyptian, even if partly neutralized (as the category of 'tense' in the *hp*+Inf-form), but need not be developed here in greater detail. Cf. Junge 1970 and Vernus 1986.

and subject of the other action resp. set of actions:

	Subject	Object	Tense	Aspect	<i>Aktionsart</i>
Action 1	Re	King	perfect	perfective	punctual semelfactive
Actions 2	King	<i>mḏw</i>	0	imperfective	durative
		<i>nḏw</i> <i>M3't</i> <i>jzft</i>			iterative

Both actions or set of actions are transitive-causative. The god causes a set of actions, the king causes a set of states. The action of the god can be classified as initial causing or initializing. He acts once and for all. The actions of the king are incessantly going on, they are to be classified as maintaining. The maintaining actions of the king, causing a state, are subordinated to the initial action of the god, causing an activity. This is the main point of the sentence. Let us now proceed to its semantic analysis.

The God causes not only the activity of the king, but also its spatio-temporal frame. The king is acting 'on the earth of the living' and 'for ever and ever'. This implies that there can be only one state in space and time. Plurality is categorically excluded, both synchronically, as a plurality of coexistent states, and diachronically, as a succession of different empires. This view of theopolitical order precludes not only foreign policy, but also history in the sense of change, development, evolution. The temporal frame — *nḏh* and *ḏt*: eternal repetition and eternal duration — is filled not with 'history' in the sense of a meaningful process (like, e.g., 'ḏw, the life-span of an individual) but with keeping the world going by actions which have constantly to be repeated. The basic idea is maintenance, not progress.⁹ Political action is conceived as an iterative process of maintaining a state, which is specified in four different actions:

- judging men: i.e. causing men to be provided with justice,
- satisfying gods: i.e. causing gods to be provided with worship and offerings,
- realizing Maat,
- annihilating Isfet.

The four actions of the king are arranged in pairs, and the pairs are correlated in an explicative *parallelismus membrorum*. The first pair specifies the second, the second summarizes the first. Realizing Maat and Annihilating Isfet consist in judging men and satisfying gods. Let us deal with these actions separately and first turn to the judging of men.

9 Cf., however, the ideas of 'proceeding beyond the achievements of the fathers' and of 'enlarging of the borders,' which seem to contradict this view cf. Homung 1957 and Blumenthal 1970, 164-69 and 187f. For the idea of maintenance cf. Derchain 1961.

1.2. The implications of the classical Conception

1.2.1 *wf' mṯw*: 'negative anthropology'.

The Egyptian idea of justice implies an idea of injustice, which in its turn implies a whole anthropology. It is closely linked to the idea of inequality. "To judge men" means: to establish equality among them, in order to protect the weak against the strong. Justice, in fact, means protection. This results from another text, which deals with the same concepts in a slightly more explicit way. Book of the Dead Chapter 126 is a spell which addresses the four baboons sitting at the prow of the solar bark:

who cause Maat to ascend to the Lord of the Universe,
who judge both the miserable and the mighty,
who satisfy the gods with the breath of their mouth,
who give divine offerings to the gods
and mortuary offerings to the dead,
who live on maat and sip on maat,
who lie not and whose abomination is sin.

Thus, the expression *wf' mṯw* 'judging men' is to be specified and to be understood as 'judging between the miserable (*mṣr*) and the powerful (*wsr*)', and not — as one would expect — between the righteous and the criminal (*ḥsr*), and not — as one *zaddiq we rasha'*, in terms of Biblical Hebrew. This phrase occurs again and again in several genres of Egyptian texts¹⁰ and has terminological significance. Judgment is always between the weak and the strong, the miserable and the powerful, the poor and the rich. Instead of *ḥn*, 'and, together with,' the texts have more often *m*, 'from the hand of,' making quite clear, that by this judgment the poor, weak and miserable are to be rescued 'from the hand of' the strong, rich and powerful, and implying, that it is the strong one, who is the *rasha'*, the criminal, and inequality as such is injustice.

One of these texts is Coffin Texts Spell 1130 which has unanimously and justly been recognized as one of the fundamental texts of Egyptian philosophy. Here, the creator speaks, and he states expressly, that, among other good deeds, he has created men equal to each other:

I made everyman equal to his fellow
and I forbade them to do Isfet.
But their hearts disobeyed what I had said.¹¹

¹⁰ Janssen 1946 I, 72; II Bb, Edel 1944, 42 §36; Vandier 1950, 242; Ono 1954, 95. For the king see e.g. Grittal 1986, 309 (pHarris I 78.13–79.1: 'I rescue (the weak) from the hand of the strong who oppresses him').

¹¹ CT VII 463 f — 464 c, cf. Schenkel 1983.

Isfet, as disobedience to equality, can only refer to inequality, created not by god but by the disobedient heart of men. Further on in the same text the creator asserts:

I judge the miserable 'from the hand of' the powerful.¹²

Here — and this is absolutely exceptional in an Middle Kingdom text — it is the god who charges himself with a task which, in the context of the 'classical conception' — devolves on the king.¹³ The charge of the king is to counteract this unjust state of inequality by rescuing the weak from the hand of the strong and by setting Maat in the place of Isfet, as it appears to be the role of the king as early as in the Pyramid Texts, where Unas is said to arrive in heaven after

having set Maat in the place of Isfet
in the island of flames.¹⁴

This idea of the world of the living as an island of flames where the weak are always oppressed by the strong is reminiscent of 'the law of the fishes' in the Vedic tradition: the big ones eating the smaller ones. There, as in Egypt, this pessimistic view of human nature serves as an argument for forceful government, legitimizing the *kshatriya* (warrior) caste.¹⁵ Another parallel is that of Thomas Hobbes, whose view of man's natural state as a *bellum omnium contra omnes* corresponds as closely as possible to the way the Egyptian texts depict a world without kingship.¹⁶ The pessimistic literature which had formerly been dated mostly to the First Intermediate Period now more and more evidently belongs to the Middle Kingdom and probably to its latter half,¹⁷ which is notorious for its strong centralistic, absolutistic and perhaps even oppressive tendencies,¹⁸ thus confirming the link between 'negative anthropology' and 'absolutism.' The idea is, that without rule, there is no order possible, implying confidence, amity, community; and without order, there is no life possible, because the weak would be slain by the strong:

¹² CT VII 466 e — 467 d cf. Assmann 1983a, 178 and 279f. The same phrase occurs in pCairo 58038 (the famous Boulqad hymn) cf. Assmann 1983a, 177.

¹³ This exception is best explained by the literary character of the text and its function as an answer to the 'Vorwurf an Gott', cf. Ono 1950; Fecht 1972; Assmann 1983 a, 268ff.

¹⁴ Pyr 265 b, cf. Pyr 1775 b-c.

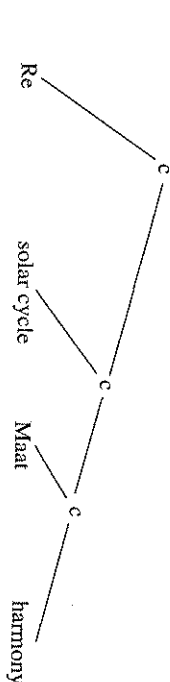
¹⁵ Incidentally, classical India provides an example for that differentiation between the religious and the political spheres, which in ancient Egypt was categorically excluded. For in India, the respective powers are divided between the Brahmin and the Kshatriya castes.

¹⁶ For Th.Hobbes see Strauss 1952, cf. also Schmitt 1922 and 1932.

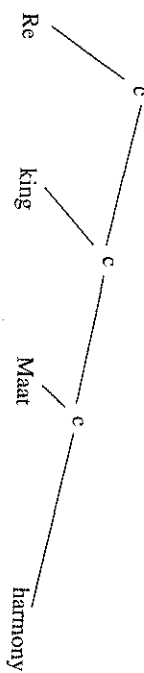
¹⁷ Berlev 1987; Cruz-Urbe 1987. See also Junge 1977.

¹⁸ Helck (1986) perhaps goes too far in this interpretation. But the suppression of feudal nomarchy under Sesostris III is an established fact. See Delia 1980 and Cruz-Urbe 1987.

pharaonic kingship in order to do the same on earth. One 'organization' mirrors the other. We may formalize this concept, using 'C' for 'causation', in the following way:



Model 1: causation of cosmic order



Model 2: causation of social order

This correspondence or homology between the cosmic process — the solar cycle — and the political institution of pharaonic kingship finds its expression in the political imagery of the sun hymns and cosmographic literature²⁵, as well as in the cosmic imagery of royal inscriptions.²⁷ Consequently, expressions like *jm nstsr* 'island of flames', *mr nh3w* 'lake of knives', *lzt nt* 'pp' 'sandbank of Apep' and the like refer both to the celestial and to the terrestrial spheres.²⁸

The sun god appears twice in model 1: in the role of 'creator' and in the role of protagonist in the solar cycle. This duplication is mythologically dealt with in the 'Book of the Heavenly Cow' where the installation of the solar cycle by the creator is

25 The concept of causality is of course quite foreign to Egyptian thought. In Egyptian conceptualizing, 'causation' is linked with magic power (*hek*, 'magic'; cf. Ritner, in this volume). Magic is conceived as a positive force to counteract the 'negativity' of the world: stand-still, disintegration, death, illness, in short everything opposing the cosmic process.

26 Cf. Assmann 1969, 268–71; 306–309 etc.

27 Redford 1967, 3–27; Schunk 1985, 63–86.

28 Cf. Assmann 1969, 271f.; 295–298.

narrated²⁹, and it is reflected in the sun-hymns as well.³⁰ What is decisive is the complete homology of the cosmic and the political sphere. In both spheres we have the distinction between initial causation and ongoing maintenance. Let us call this principle 'indirect causation' and briefly summarize its implications:

1. Life, cosmic as well as social, is dependent on order. Order, however, cannot generate and persist by itself. It has to be imposed from outside and constantly to be defended against Isfet, a natural tendency towards chaos, disintegration and death which is innate in man, society and nature. This principle we have labelled as 'negative anthropo-/cosmology'.
2. Negative anthropology necessitates authoritative government imposing and maintaining order upon earth. Because it cannot grow from 'below' it has to be installed from 'above'.³¹
3. The solar cycle, representing the Egyptian view of the world in its cosmic dimension, has a definite meaning: it is government, imposing order, justice, coherence on a world which would otherwise collapse. As a form of action, the solar cycle is a polytheistic concept, implying a plurality of actors and opponents, it is a 'concerted' action and a 'constellative' conception. The government which the sun god exerts in his daily motion through heaven and underworld is confined to the divine sphere. It is 'anthropomorphic' in its complete homology with pharaonic rule, but not 'anthropocentric'.
4. The state is the exact imitation of this cosmic government on earth.³² But the cosmic governance cannot be reflected and life-ensuring order cannot be realized on earth otherwise than by a single ruler, son and representative of the sun-god himself. Every other form of political organization would destroy the perfect homology. The idea of 'state' is a *singularium tantum*.
5. The world does not need to be 'saved' or 'redeemed' but merely to be ruled. The salvation is not out of reach but quite to the contrary constantly realized by the combined efforts of gods and kings. There is no room for 'messianic' hope and expectation.³³ The implied anthropo-/cosmology is 'negative' only in a weak sense

29 Homung 1982. The Egyptian concept of a 'fallen state of the world' (see Kakosy 1964) is linked with the idea, not of 'fall' but of 'separation' or 'splitting': the separation between heaven and earth, and between gods and men. It is this idea of a 'split world' which is at the base of the 'negative cosmology' of the ancient Egyptians.

30 In the more complex sun-hymns, verbal passages refer to the solar cycle and nominal passages to the creator, cf. Assmann 1969, 1–13.

31 In this respect, Hobbes, supporting a contract theory of socio-political order, differs from the Egyptian paradigm.

32 For the idea of the king being 'the image of god' which expresses this relationship of imitation in Egyptian concepts, cf. Ockinga 1984.

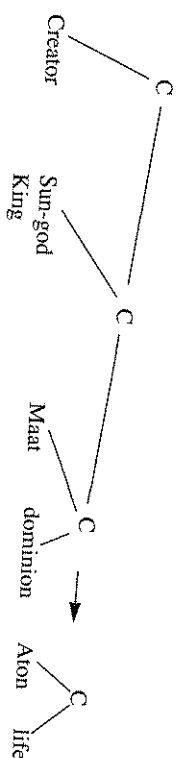
33 Cf. Assmann 1983d.

as compared with e.g. gnostic cosmology or Christian anthropology. But it is precisely this confidence in the retrievability of Maat which wanes with the end of the New Kingdom.

2. Amarna: theo-politology of life.

The ideology of the Amarna Religion contradicts the classical conceptions in the following points:

1. The solar cycle loses its political meaning. There is no mention of an enemy opposing Aten in His daily motion. The Amarna Religion is built upon a positive cosmology. It presupposes a world which, in the words of Vernus and Yoyotte, is "toute beauté, toute sécurité".³⁴ Such a world does not need to be 'ruled' in the strict sense of an imposition of order against an intrinsic tendency towards chaos, but merely to be kept alive.
2. In the same way as the concept of 'rule' implies plurality, the concept of 'life-giving' or 'vivification' implies singularity. The vivifying god who fills the world with light and time, is alone in the sky. This vivifying process cannot be reflected on earth by royal governance. The homology breaks down. With homology, complexity breaks down. The complexity of 'indirect causation' becomes extremely reduced, because there is no need for it in a positive cosmology:



There is no difference between primordial and continuous causation.³⁵ The world has not be to be 'maintained', because there are no antagonistic forces to be constantly overcome.

³⁴ Vernus & Yoyotte 1988.

³⁵ Needless to stress the obvious fact that the very concept of causation (rendered by 'C' in the diagram) changes most fundamentally, too, by passing from the traditional to the Amarna paradigm. It loses its 'magic' implications and becomes a 'natural' principle (cf. Allen, in this volume). The apparent disregard for 'primeval creation/causation' in the Amarna texts is best explained by this merging of primeval and continuous causation (=direct causation) which, in the traditional paradigm, are separated by the 'Fall'.

3. The relation of 'anthropomorphic' homology, placing cosmic and social order in mutual reflection, gives way to a unified universe where mankind becomes the sole partner of divine action. Anthropomorphism is replaced by anthropocentrism. The whole solar cycle is performed for the sake of men: *n.sn, n.jb.sn, n.mwt.sn*.³⁶
4. The concept of order is fading in the all-overpowering concept of 'life'. In the context of a positive anthropo-/cosmology there is no need for order, to be imposed onto it from above by a superior authority. On the cosmic level, the concept of Maat disappears, on the social level, it assumes the meaning of 'truth'. This point should be developed separately:

- 4.1 The sun, by its motion and radiation, administers life to the world. It is absolutely indifferent regarding ethical problems and simply not concerned with the weak, the poor and the miserable. The whole phraseology of protection is lacking in the Amarna hymns in a most conspicuous way.
- 4.2 The king monopolizes Maat; he bears the divine epithet 'who lives on Maat' as part of his royal nomenclature.³⁷ But by Maat he does not understand 'justice' in the classical sense of protecting the weak against the strong, but 'truth' in the sense of the orthodox interpretation of revealed knowledge.³⁸ 'Evil' now assumes the meaning of opposition to the doctrine of Akhenaten who

shows his wrath (*b3w*) against him who ignores his doctrine but his favour unto him who recognizes him.³⁹

This leads to a depoliticalization both of cosmic as well as of sociopolitical order which now assumes the character of a religion and an orthodoxy.⁴⁰

What is the role of the king in this picture of the world? Certainly not that of a prophet, as has often been stated. The notion of prophet presupposes a divine will or purpose to be revealed. Prophets are the spokesmen of God. But Aten does not speak nor does he wish anyone to speak in his stead, to interpret his plans, projects,

³⁶ Cf. Assmann 1983a, 118–23. It is this anthropocentric perspective which conveys a religious meaning to the creative action of the sun. In this respect, the Amarna religion differs from Ionian philosophy in its interpretation of nature. Cf. Allen, in this volume.

³⁷ Anthes 1952.

³⁸ The notion of revelation with regard to Amarna is somewhat problematical, because this truth is not revealed by speech but by insight into the speechless evidence of nature. But the claim of the king being the only one to 'know' the god and the intolerance typical of an orthodox interpretation of knowledge are dominant features of Amarna religion.

³⁹ Sandman 1938, 86, 15–16.

⁴⁰ This development is particularly well illustrated by the total neglect of foreign affairs during the Amarna period, see Moran 1987 (political correspondence).

decisions. There is nothing to be proclaimed, it is all there in sheer, overwhelming evidence. The king, it is true, interprets the evidence, translating radiation and motion in terms of religious meaning, answering them by cultic action and speaking to a god who expresses himself in a strictly 'heliomorphic' way. But this is not 'prophecy' in the strict sense.⁴¹

The role of the king is that of a coregent.⁴² Since the king cannot 'reflect' the divine action of creative vivification, he can only share in it. As we already know, the god does not 'rule' by establishing justice and peace, but by animating the world by his radiance and his time-generating motion. It is the *dependence* of everything existing on light and time which is interpreted as *subjection* to the Aten. It is absolute subjection excluding the possibility of rebellion. Thus, it has no proper political significance. The king associates himself to this 'rule' as a kind of junior partner, bearing the title of 'son' while the god is called 'father'. The names of both god and king are written in cartouches. The traditional unity of religion and state is even more emphasized. But it is a different conception of this unity.⁴³

The point of conflict between the Amarna and the classical conception seems to be the negative anthropo-/cosmology which has been replaced in Amarna by a positive one. But some elements in this picture, the emphasis on anthropocentric instead of anthropomorphic interpretations, the fading of the figure of Apep and the concept of a cosmic combat, are to be found outside the Amarna period and seem to be characteristic of the 18th Dynasty in general. The sharp and total rejection of the 'pessimistic' Middle Kingdom style in portraiture may possibly point in the same direction. Thus it is probable that the Amarna revolution is just the final eruption of an ongoing conflict between Middle Kingdom and 'modern' conceptions.

3. 'Personal Piety': Theology of Volition.

The same observation applies to another movement in the New Kingdom which first came to be known through a group of stelae from Deir el-Medina and was therefore interpreted as a kind of popular religion⁴⁴ or even a 'religion of the poor'.⁴⁵ But Breasted already recognized in these texts a typical expression of the Ramessid age, which he accordingly baptized 'the age of personal piety'.⁴⁶ Recent research has enlarged our view of the evidence in two different ways:

41 The silence of the god who expresses himself visually is balanced by the 'voice' of the king which plays such an important part in the inscriptions. The king is the 'speaking god', spreading truth (Maat) upon earth as the Aten spreads light and life.

42 cf. Zakar 1954.

43 Important in this respect: Voegelin 1938.

44 Ertman 1911.

45 Gunn 1916.

46 Breasted 1912, 344-370.

1. It is not restricted to certain groups of monuments, e.g. ex-voto stelae, or literary genres⁴⁷, or social groups or classes but pervades the whole of Ramessid culture, from royal to private monuments, from literature to art and religious institutions.
2. It dates in its origins back to the 18th Dynasty. The typical terminology appears in different kinds of sources as early as the times of Hatshepsut, Thutmose III and Amenophis II.⁴⁸ Its roots may even reach back into the First Intermediate Period. The movement appears as a kind of under-current in the classical periods of Middle Kingdom and early New Kingdom to break through into full dominance only after the collapse of the Amarna religion.

3.1 Fore-runners and foreshadowings

3.1.1 The First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom

The central idea seems to be a new and more personal conception of deity, of gods intervening in life and history, manifesting a personal will, intention and purpose. Therefore a term like 'theology of volition, or intention' seems to me more adequate. The first instances of this conception of god occur in the First Intermediate Period and in the Middle Kingdom:

1. Ankhutty reports in his tomb at Mo'allia to have been summoned by the god Horus of Edfu to intervene in the Edfu nome.⁴⁹
 2. The god Min is reported, in two famous inscriptions in the Wadi Hammamat, to have worked miracles in favour of king Mentuhotep IV.⁵⁰
 3. Horemkhauf reports in his Hierakonpolis stela to have been summoned by the god Horus-Avenger-of-his-father to bring the statues of himself and his mother Isis from the residence of Ithowe to Hierakonpolis.⁵¹
- These examples have been selected at random and can certainly be multiplied by systematic research. But I do not think that they would ever amount to more than exceptions from the rule, manifestations of an undercurrent.⁵²

There are some literary texts which point in the same direction, the most famous being of course the biography of Sinuhe and the Shipwrecked Sailor. In the

47 Fecht 1965.

48 Posener 1975, 195-210; Assmann 1984, 225-232.

49 Vandier 1950, 163ff.; Schenkel 1965, 45ff.; Fecht 1967, 50ff.

50 Couyat-Monnet 1912 #110 and #191; Schenkel 1965, 263ff.; 267f.

51 Hayes 1947.

52 I am not in favour with the generalizing stance, taken e.g. by Griffiths 1988, who holds the idea of "divine impact on human affairs" to be a feature typical and common of all periods of Egyptian history.

Shipwrecked Sailor we encounter a god appearing in person and revealing past and future, thus a kind of revelation.⁵³ Simuhe is driven into exile by what he identifies as 'the plan of a god', a god who intervenes in his life but who remains unidentified throughout the story.⁵⁴ All these examples are situated outside the pharaonic sphere. The literary examples locate the action in foreign regions, the historical examples do either the same (the miracles in the Wadi Hammamat) or they date from periods when pharaonic power was waning or collapsing.

In the official sphere, the idea of divine intention or volition is confined, as one might expect, to the concept of initial installation. The text which is most explicit in this respect is the Berlin leather-roll pBerlin 3029, an 18th Dynasty copy of a building inscription of Sesostris I.⁵⁵ The idea of divine purpose is very prominent:

That he created me was to do what he has done,
to implement what he has ordered to be done.
That he installed me as shepherd of this land was
because he had recognized that I would organize it for him.

r 'in order to' repeated three times; emphatic constructions; verbs like *msj* 'to bring forth, create', *wꜥ* 'to order', *rdj* 'to install', *rhj* 'to recognize'; all this relates very strongly and explicitly to the idea of divine intention. But it remains within the frame of 'initialization', thus of 'indirect causation.' But there are, a bit more off the center of official text production, some indications of a somewhat different theology, foreshadowing what will be common conviction in the New Kingdom:

1. The strong emphasis on the creational rather than the cosmogonical aspect of 'genesis' in some Coffin Texts, especially the theology of Shu in the Hermopolitan tradition (El Bersheb) where Shu is explicitly stated to be created 'by the heart and by the efficacy' of Atum.⁵⁶ The most important text in this respect is the 'arealogy' of the Universal Lord in CT 1130 where the creator justifies his creation.⁵⁷
2. The strong emphasis on the anthropocentric rather than the anthropomorphic significance of the solar circuit, as exposed in the closing hymn of the Instruction for Merikare. This text, coming as close as possible to similar convictions in the later 18th Dynasty, is preserved exclusively on papyri dating from that period.⁵⁸

3. The tale of the miraculous birth of the first three kings of the 5th Dynasty as related in the latter part of pWestcar seems at first sight in keeping with the classical conception. But Re does not install the institution of kingship, but individual kings, thus intervening in the course of history and bringing about what is to be seen as a 'Heilswende' (salvatory turn, *metabole epi to betton*).⁵⁹ The difference between the tale and the official dogma (as it is demonstrated e.g. in pBerlin 3029) is difficult to grasp, because it is always an individual king NIN who is conceived, born and installed upon earth by god as an embodiment of the institution of kingship. But there is a nuance towards the individual aspect which will become virulent in the New Kingdom.

3.1.2 The case of Queen Hatshepsut

Queen Hatshepsut seems to have played an important role in the development of a new idea of divine intentionality. We must not forget that the text which we hold to be fundamental for the classical conception occurs also in the temple of Der el Bahari. Her inscriptions include four different allusions to a theology of volition:

1. The elective oracle which the Der el Bahari and Chapelle Rouge inscriptions represent as an extraordinary and unprecedented event;⁶⁰
2. The Punt oracle, manifesting a divine intention which is not confined to initial installation;⁶¹
3. The idea of 'divine command', as it occurs in the Speos Artemidos inscriptions: the Hyksos ruled 'without Re' and Re reciprocally 'did not act by divine order' until her own reign.⁶²
4. The pictorial cycle of the miraculous birth which, although in keeping with the classical dogma, stresses the aspect of 'Heilswende' in the same sense as pWestcar.⁶³

Hatshepsut herself coins an epithet which expresses the new idea of divine intention in the most concise way when she addresses the god in the Chapelle Rouge inscription as 'he who plans everything existent' (*(k)jw nm nbw*):

Oh my father who plans all that exists,
what is it that you want to come about?
I shall do it according to your order!⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Cf. Assmann 1982a.

⁶⁰ See Rösner 1987. In my present account of the development, which is more detailed than in Assmann 1984a I profit from Rösner's critical remarks.

⁶¹ Utk IV 342.

⁶² Utk IV 290; Gardiner 1946.

⁶³ cf. Brunner 1986 and Assmann 1982.

⁶⁴ Lacau-Chevrier 1977, 99. (*kj*) 'to plan' and (*wꜥ*) 'to order' are precisely the actions by which the

⁵³ Simpson 1983, cf the bibliography in Kurth 1987.

⁵⁴ Cf. Loprieno 1988, 41–59 and Griffiths 1988, 93f.

⁵⁵ de Buck 1938; Goedicke 1974; Abd el Azim El Adly 1984.

⁵⁶ CT I 336–338. See Assmann 1984a, 213–15; 1984b; Allen 1988.

⁵⁷ Assmann 1984, 204–8; Allen 1988.

⁵⁸ Merikare: cf. Assmann 1983, 168; 1984a, 201–4. Generally cf. Blumenthal 1980.

Taken isolatedly, these instances do not seem very revolutionary. But in their accumulation they do mark the beginning of a new development, leading first to the Amarna revolution, which has to be seen as a reactionary opposition against this movement, and then to its full break-through in the immediate post-Amarna age.

3.2 Aspects of the new conception

3.2.1 Anthropology of will

a) The first stage belongs entirely to the Classical Conception in its Middle Kingdom form. This is the 'doctrine of the heart'.⁶⁵ In clear opposition to the Old Kingdom concept of man, where man seems to act exclusively on royal orders, where the king seems to monopolize initiative, planning and motivation and where the notion of 'heart' is conspicuously absent in the biographical inscriptions, the Middle Kingdom biographies present a concept where man is inwardly directed by his heart as the seat of character, virtue, principles, competence, motivation, intention and will. If he serves the king, it is his heart guiding him to do so. The problem of intention and responsibility is treated in the story of Sinuhe in a way that shows its vital importance in the context of the anthropological philosophy of the time.

The ideal of virtue or 'inward quality' (*ḥrꜥw*) is wisdom. This concept is to be understood as insight into the rules which ensure social and political harmony, viz. Maat. The Egyptian expression is 'silence' and 'the silent one,' denoting the sage who not only 'knows' but also subordinates himself to or 'complies with' (*ḥtp ḥr*) Maat.⁶⁶

b) The second stage is marked by the replacement of Maat (=the will of the community) by the will of god, entailing the replacement of 'wisdom' by 'piety'.⁶⁷ The relevant expressions are '*ꜣḏj m jb*' and '*ḥrj ḥr mw*': 'to place god into one's heart' and 'to act on his water', i.e. to act in a way which is loyal and faithful to his will. These expressions make their first appearance already in the reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III:

(God is) father and mother unto him who places him into his heart,
but he turns his back unto him who neglects his city.
He who is guided by him cannot fail.⁶⁸

creator, according to the Memphite Theology, created the world: by words which were 'designed' (*ḏj*) by the heart and 'ordered' (*wꜣ*) by the tongue.

65 For the Egyptian conception of the heart as the seat of intention see Piankoff 1930, Brunner 1988, 3-41; Assmann 1982b, 1987, 221-232.

66 For the ideal of 'silence' cf. Brunner-Traut 1984, Assmann 1983c, 195-201.

67 See Assmann 1979

68 Stela of Anet, presumably from TT 164, cf. ÄHG, Nr.75.23-24; 1983b Nr.165.

(God) gives breath to him who worships him
and success to him who acts on his water.⁶⁹

Reciprocity which is the core of Maat and the base of social harmony, is now transferred from the social sphere to the man-god-relationship. This shift from the principle of Maat to the will of god entails a general transfer of notions from the social to the religious sphere. The most important transfers concern (a) obedience and (b) confidence.

a) obedience and subordination: The wise man, who by his insight is capable of attuning himself to the principles of social order, is succeeded by the pious man who attunes and subordinates himself to the will of god. The ideal of 'silence' now refers to humiliation and obedience to god. Thus, the idea of self-subordination and integration is transferred from the individual-society-relationship to the man-god-relationship.

b) protection and confidence: the quintessence of the idea of Maat has always been the protection of the weak (to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, to ferry the shipless, to bury the heirless, to shelter the widow and the orphan etc.) Solidarity as it is established by Maat operates vertically: in the form of protection from above and confidence and 'love' from below. Precisely this vertical axis is now transferred to the man-god-relationship, putting god in the position of the protector, the 'good shepherd', and man in the position of the poor and the weak. Already in one of the early prayers of Personal Piety, dating from the time of Amenophis II we read:

I have placed you into my heart because you are strong,
[...] protector (*ḥrꜥw*),
behold: my fear (*snꜥ*) is gone.⁷⁰

Several of the Ramessid texts point out that there is no protector among men but that a deity — Amun, Mut etc. — is the only protector on which a human heart can rely:

I did not seek for myself an official for a protector;
I do not associate myself with a rich man,
I do not give my portion under the strong arm of a man who was in the
house of [the king].
My lord is my protector,
I know his strength.
Protector with a strong arm, he is the only strong one.⁷¹

69 TT 11 cf. ÄHG Nr. 83.6-7; 1983b Nr.13.

70 oCairo 12.217 no ed. Posener 1975, 206-7.

71 PAnastasi II, 9.2-10.1 ed. Gardner 1937, 17f., Fecht 1965, 46-52; cf. ÄHG Nr.177

This transfer of confidence, from the human to the divine sphere, has very practical consequences, as is most clearly evidenced by the case of Zimut named Kiki who not only considered

to find himself a protector,
and he found Mut to be at the top of the gods.⁷²

but who consequently bequeathed all his property to her.⁷³ This is an early case of self-dedication which in later time became quite customary.⁷⁴ The position inversely correspondent to protection is weakness, poverty, misery which now become self-definitions of the pious one,⁷⁵ along with 'silence';⁷⁶ god is 'the protector of the silent one, the saviour of the poor'⁷⁶ or 'the lord of the silent one who comes at the voice of the poor'.⁷⁷

'Confidence in god', connected with expressions like *mh-jb* ('to fill the heart with somebody') and *hmr* ('to lean against somebody') now becomes a common notion. The most typical expression of this attitude is the notion of placing oneself into the hands of god, which is a recurrent theme in the teaching of Amenemope⁷⁸ but is already very prominent in the inscriptions of the statue Berlin 6919 of Amenemope (temp. of Seti I) which begin: 'How beautiful is it to sit in the hand of Amun' and which close with the wish 'to be safe in your hand'.⁷⁹

The most innovative aspect of Ramessid anthropology is perhaps the concept of sin, of culpability with respect to god.⁸⁰ Man now becomes capable of guilt towards god. This leads to a new genre of self-thematization which is the very opposite of the traditional tomb-biography. Biographical events become 'readable' as signs of divine favour or disgrace. In either case man is elicited to erect a stela proclaiming this event of divine manifestation (*šdd b3w*). Personal experience gains a new interest. Life is exposed to constant divine judgement. God is omniscient and will distribute his favour or disgrace in strict reciprocity to human attitude and behaviour.

72 AeHG Nr. 173.11-17, the concept of the election of the goddess Mut as a personal protector recurs in

the same text over and over again, cf. especially verses 42f., 62f., 66f., 102f.

73 Vernus 1978.

74 Thompson JEA 26, 68ff.; Posener, RDE 22, 204.

75 cf. Brunner 1961 = 1988, 189-214.

76 Berlin 6910 (temp. Seti I) from TT 215 cf. Assmann STG Nr. 206.

77 Berlin 20377 cf. AeHG Nr. 148, 15f.

78 Amenemope 22.8, 23.11, 24.19f. etc. cf. Grunmach 1972.

79 STG, p. 283. Cf. also the very remarkable text AeHG Nr. 186.

80 Griffiths 1988.

81 Assmann 1973; Borghouts 1982, n.163.

3.2.2 Theology of will

Many of the anthropological notions like silence, poverty and confidence are just one side of corresponding theological notions like omnipotent disposition and protection. Personal Piety corresponds to Personal Deity. The idea of god assumes the characteristics of an inner personality and individuality: will, intention, decision, judgment. The most typical roles are the saviour of the oppressed⁸² and the judge of the poor,⁸³ both related to the idea of protection. We shall not go into details here, because this side of the deity has already become apparent from the corresponding anthropological conceptions.

Instead I will try to treat the concept of divine will, intention and intervention in a more general way. In my opinion, there is a clear opposition between the classical concept of Maat (implying indirect causation) and the concept of the will of god, implying direct causation and intervention. The classical conception with its category of 'indirect causation' confines the will of god to the pattern of reality which he has installed by his initial action. Divine will is committed to the cosmic cycle, he cannot 'will' otherwise than the eternal repetition and the identical reproduction of the pattern; he is bound to the roles or functions in which the gods are believed to be immanent and manifest in reality.⁸⁴ For the classical dogma, god's will becomes manifest, not in the exception, the miracle, the singular event, but in the pattern, in the miraculous precision of repetition. This is as much as a negation of divine will. God is not free to dispose, nor of the cosmic cycles, nor of the rules underlying social life, viz. Maat.

The theology of will requires absolute sovereignty. God has to be separated from the roles and functions of the 'pattern' he once installed. He cannot be bound to the mere maintenance of cosmic order.⁸⁵ In the new frame of a theology of will, it is not the repeated pattern, but the singular event which manifests the will of god. These events can be interpreted as manifestations of favour — in Egyptian *ḥzw*: 'favour',

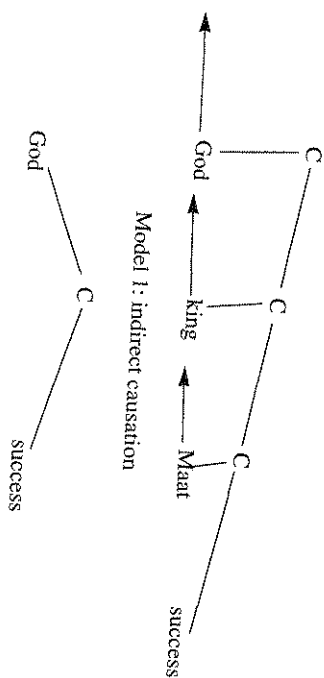
82 cf. Otto 1971; Brunner 1958 = 1988, 173-188.

83 Posener 1971.

84 The function-conformity of the gods precludes intentionality and personality: this is the reason why Egyptian mythology is so poor as compared with Babylonian or Greek mythology where the gods seem much less involved in the functioning of reality. But see Dhile 1985, 9f., for similar conceptions of unintentional role-conformity in Greek philosophy.

85 This leads to the problem of transcendence as explained especially by Morenz 1964. Morenz clearly overemphasized this aspect of the Ramessid conception of god. The separation of god and his 'mundane' functions went never so far as to think of god external to the world. He remains inside but not coextensive with the world; he exceeds it, cf. Assmann 1983, 200 ff. Egypt holds an intermediate position between Greece, where the gods are fully committed to cosmic order, and Israel, where God fully transcends it. The world, in the Egyptian comprehension, is a manifestation of god, both as cosmos and as history.

'blessing'⁸⁶ — rewarding the pious one, or as manifestations of wrath — in Egyptian *h3w* 'power'⁸⁷, punishing the frivolous. Success and failure are now no longer seen as a consequence of Maat, i.e. of social coherence and solidarity, but of direct divine intervention. In this respect, the reduction of indirect to direct causation becomes most conspicuous and has often been observed.⁸⁸



In the model of direct causation, god disposes of Maat as he chooses and is himself the instance of judgment and justice. He is the 'lord of justice' in a double sense: 1) in the sense of protection, related to the weak/strong opposition and the problem of legality; and 2) in the sense of jurisdiction, related to the right/wrong opposition and the problem of sin. He is omniscient, constantly observing and judging human actions, and both blessings and punishments in his hands,⁸⁹ in strict reciprocity to human attitude and behaviour:

His *h3w* (punishing power) is vehement,
he is more powerful than Sakhmet,
like fire in a storm;

his mercy is high, he takes care of him who adores him,

Cf. Assmann 1975, 60–64 and 1979, 31 for this concept.
Cf. Borghouts 1982.

Otto 1954, 22ff.; Bruner 1963; Vernus 1985.

This concept has to be distinguished from 'Anun, judge of the poor', the latter being concerned with the ancient concept of protecting the weak against the strong and not with the idea of reward vs. punishment. One could perhaps make use of the ingenious Aristotelian distinction between *iustitia distributiva* (protecting the poor) and *iustitia commutativa* (judging man's actions) to account for the difference between the two concepts of 'protector' and 'judge' which are conflated in the Egyptian terminology.

he turns to heal his suffering.
For he looks upon men, there is no one whom he does not know,
and he listens to millions of them.
Who could resist thy wrath who avert the fury of thy power?⁹⁰

The classical text is the teaching of Amenemope. Here Maat is explicitly put into free disposition of god, thus identified with the will of god and treated as a synonym of *h3w* 'favour':

As for Maat, the great gift of god:
he gives it to whom he likes.⁹¹

This amounts to a disappearance of the concept of Maat. The concepts of Maat and of divine intervention seem to be mutually exclusive.

The anthropocentric reading of 'fate' and 'history', interpreting success as manifestations of favour (*h3w*, *h3pw*) and failure as manifestations of wrath (*h3w*),⁹² leads to the concept of God as the 'designer of history'. The flow of events (eg. *h3pw* 'what happens') becomes understood as the immediate implementation of god's will: *k3 k h3pw nbw* 'Your 'Ka' (will, intention, design) is everything that happens (=history)'⁹³ or *wd n k pw h3pw nbw* 'Everything that happens is what you have ordered'.⁹⁴ This is a new vision of history. The traditional attitude towards history — this term always to be understood in the sense of *h3pw* 'the flow of events' with regard rather to the future than to the past — was skeptic and pessimistic. 'You can not know what will happen,'⁹⁵ 'there are no limits to what will happen,'⁹⁶ 'You cannot know what will happen so that you might recognize the morrow,'⁹⁷ 'According to the instruction for Merikare, god gave man magic as a weapon to shield off 'the blow of

⁹⁰ Stela Louvre C 256 (Bamishment) ed. v. Beckerath 1968.

⁹¹ Amenemope 21.5–6; Grunmach 1972, 134. In the interpretation of this passage I am following Bruner 1963.

⁹² Borghouts 1982.

⁹³ TT 23 cf. Assmann 1983b Nr.17, pp. 18–23. Similarly Luxor inscription of Ramesses II, KRI II, 346.8:

k3 f wmt nbt 'His Ka is everything what exists', pLciden I 350, v.17; *k3 f wmt nbt jny r3 f* 'His Ka is everything existing as utterance in his mouth'.

⁹⁴ Hittite Marriage, KRI II, 249.10.

⁹⁵ Kagemni: pPrise II.2 cf. pRamesseum I.18.

⁹⁶ Letter to the Dead from Naga ed-Der, ed. Simpson 1966.

⁹⁷ Prahotepe 343, cf. 345 in the London #2 version; 'there is no one who knows his condition (his luck) when he plans the morrow' which corresponds verbatim to pRamesseum I B1.6 cf. Barns 1956, 6.

what will happen.¹⁰⁸ This concept of *hprw*, 'what will happen' seems bare of any religious significance. It is not conceived of as a realm of divine intention and manifestation. This is precisely what changes with the New Kingdom. Instead of the traditional attitude of a somewhat fatalistic pessimism which is so prominent, e.g. in epistolary style ("Today I am fine, but my condition of tomorrow I do not know"), we now find pious compliance with god's plans ("Today I am fine; the morrow is in the hand of God").¹⁰⁹

3.2.3 *Politics of divine will.*

Movements must be interpreted according to what they lead to. In the case of the theology of will, this is the establishment of direct theocracy. The Theban theocracy — being the 21st Dynasty — lies outside the scope of the present investigation, but as its ultimate consequence, it is present in the movement as such. Seen in this light, the theology of will appears to have been destructive with regard to the vision of political order implied in the classical conception. The classical conception can be characterized as a 'representative theocracy,' god ruling through the king as his representative, by 'indirect causation.' His own kingship is confined (a) to the mythical, and (b) to the celestial sphere: he ruled once, in a 'Golden Age,' directly on earth, when heaven and earth had not been separated and gods and men lived together, and he exerts now, after the separation of heaven and earth, gods and men, his rule by means of the solar cycle.¹⁰⁰ Most of the instances where Re or AmunRe are called 'king' refer either to mythical¹⁰¹ or to celestial kingship.¹⁰² But there are hymns which accumulate royal epithets in a way which cannot be explained in terms of mythical or celestial kingship: they obviously refer to political kingship, insinuating that god, since he is the only protector and saviour, is the only true king as well. The most explicit hymns in this respect, alas unpublished, are written on the verso of the Leiden Papyrus of the Admonitions — of all places.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁸ P 136-7. For the concept of Magic as being a weapon, cf. also Derchain 1987.

¹⁰⁹ See Assmann 1975, 66.

¹⁰⁰ The most explicit account of the Golden Age and its decline is contained in the Book of the Heavenly Cow, see Homung 1982; cf. Kakosy 1964.

¹⁰¹ These instances have been collected and carefully analyzed by Luft 1978.

¹⁰² I understand the term 'celestial kingship' to include the title 'king of gods,' constantly associated with Amun(Re) and relating to the idea of presidency over the divine world. This concept is common both to the Classical Dogma and to Near Eastern religions in general where there is always a chief of the pantheon. To denote this structure, E. Voegelin has coined the term 'summodeism.'

¹⁰³ Zandee 1975. Zandee does not make the necessary distinctions between mythical, 'celestial' and political kingship (let alone eschatological which is the Judeo-Christian concept) and thus confuses the issues considerably. But his paper gives a certain idea of the otherwise unpublished text.

As is well known, Amun rules his state by giving oracles. This institution, too, becomes increasingly common already during the New Kingdom. Oracles are only the institutionalized form of divine manifestations including dreams, omens, and those interventions which are subsumed under the term *h3w* 'manifestation of (punishing) power,'¹⁰⁴ all of these being characteristic of Ramessid culture and affecting its political structure. The base of royal legitimization changes. The 'initial installation' comes to appear insufficient: what counts is *h3w*, 'favour, blessing, success,' as in the private sphere. Ramses II builds his image not so much on his 'initial installation' than on a divine intervention in his favour, the event in Kadesh,¹⁰⁵ and is followed in this respect by Merenptah and Ramses III. Merenptah interprets his victory over the Libyans as a sign, that 'Re has turned his face again towards Egypt'¹⁰⁶ and in a hymn to Ramses VI we read 'Amun has turned his face toward Egypt.'¹⁰⁷ History ceases to be a 'ritual,'¹⁰⁸ it becomes the test and the touching stone of a king's legitimacy and gains a quite new significance.¹⁰⁹

The king, being reduced to the necessity of gaining god's favour and by this fact being subject to god's judgment of his actions as everybody else has recourse to the virtues of piety, too. The piety of the king is of course a very central idea also in the context of the Classical Dogma. But there it is regarded as a question of engagement in temple building and donations and not so much as a question of inner attitude. This changes already remarkably with Hatshepsut whose inscriptions profess a peculiar devotion. But all this is still a far cry from the confession of personal piety which Ramses III¹¹⁰ had inscribed on a tablet of silver and dedicated to his memorial temple in Karnak,¹¹¹ or from the text on another stela:

In your great name I trust,
with your designs I fill myself,
doing benefactions for you with loving heart.
You are the great lord of him who trusts in him,
the protector of him who approaches him.

¹⁰⁴ Borghouts 1982. See now also Griffiths 1988.

¹⁰⁵ Assmann 83/84; Ockinga 1987; Goedicke (ed.) 1985.

¹⁰⁶ KRI IV, 19.1

¹⁰⁷ Condon 1978, 12 line 4; 20; 30. Note that already Simile 'read' his victory over the champion of Retenu as a sign of god's reconciliation.

¹⁰⁸ Homung 1966.

¹⁰⁹ See especially Albrektson 1967 for similar conceptions in the Near East. Cf. also Assmann 1983d.

¹¹⁰ But Ramses III., in the Great Harris Papyrus redacted in his name by his son Ramses IV., provides also the best illustration for the ever increasing importance of donations and temple building in the frame of the new concept of piety. All this is too well known to need fuller treatment here.

¹¹¹ AeHG Nr. 196

Breath, water and life are in your grasp.
Salvation and Health are with you.¹¹²

The king puts himself in the same position of the weak, looking for a protector, as do the other people. He even urges god: "Be my protector!"¹¹³

In the context of the new theology of the will, metaphorically speaking, the 'palace' fades and the 'temple' grows. With the classical conception Egypt loses her political vision, her 'Staatsidee'.¹¹⁴ There does not seem to be any political vision of particular importance to be implied in the new theology. Its increasing influence leads to a rapid disintegration of the state and to a shrinking of political horizon from 'empire' to 'temple' (in the sense of *pr jmn*, the temple estate). The theocracy of the 21st Dynasty which has also been connected with a similarly abrupt shrinking of horizon. There seems to be a link between direct theocracy and the reduction of radius. But in every other respect, the contrast to Amarna is perfect: nothing more absurd than the idea of Aten giving oracles, intervening in daily affairs.

3.2.4 Sociology of divine will.

With regard to the sociological implications of the new theology, we may try the same operation as for the political aspect: start from the end. There can be no doubt about the ultimate consequences of the theology of will. The final state of Egyptian civilization could be characterized by the term of 'clericalization' of society. The priests form the leading intellectual and economic elite,¹¹⁵ the temples become the centers of both economic and spiritual-intellectual wealth. This process evidently starts already in the New Kingdom.¹¹⁶

There are two observations to be made. 1) The replacement of 'wisdom' by 'piety.' The old elite was based on the concept of Maat and the ideal of the wise official who achieves harmony in his own affairs and in society in general. The new elite is based not on social wisdom but on piety, which does not seem to imply a strong idea of social obligations. On the contrary: the intensification of the god-man-relationship is at the expense of social coherence, quite in the same way as the political significance of divine rule drains the concept of pharaonic empire. Corruption and social insecurity grow during the Ramessid period to an alarming degree.¹¹⁷

112 KRI V, 239; Assmann 1983a, 265f.

113 pHarris, AeHG Nr.197.

114 Brunner 1982 = 1988, 103ff.

115 J. Johnson 1986. See generally Eisenstadt 1985.

116 Kees 1953; Samerion 1957 who, however, disregards the historical dimension.
117 cf. Brunner 1982 and Helek 1982.

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2. The rise of clerics.¹¹⁸ The will of god needs to be interpreted and to be translated into actions and institutions. A theology of will inevitably would give rise to the emergence of a new class of diviners, interpreters and prophets. This is what can be observed to happen during the course of the New Kingdom. The oracular priest, preparing and recording the oracular decisions is quite a common figure in Ramessid society. Priests were also occupied in finding out the cause of a calamity and in fixing the conditions of possibly reconciling the offended deity.¹¹⁹ But what is more decisive still is the emergence of divination, which seems to have been quite foreign to ancient Egypt, in contrast to Mesopotamia. Diviners are repeatedly mentioned¹²⁰ and a divination manual has been found at Der el Medinah.¹²¹ Above all, the entourage of Pharaoh seems now to acquire its characteristic appearance, which is so familiar to us from the biblical records. The *harrummin*, who surround Pharaoh in the stories about Moses and Joseph in the function of councillors, dream-readers, diviners and magicians, correspond etymologically and functionally to the *hryw tp* who appear in the dedicatory inscription of Ramesses II,¹²² in pVandier¹²³ and in the Setne novel.¹²⁴

The sources of the period and above all pVandier draw a picture of the social life in the time of later New Kingdom which is rather sinister. The temples prosper from the donations of pious kings, whereas the people, bereft of the protection and confidence in Maat, suffered from violence, distrust and poverty. Such a hiatus between the prosperity of the temples and that of the people seems unthinkable in official ideology, but it is exactly what is depicted in the tale of pVandier. The accumulating scandals and affairs fit perfectly into the picture of social corruption and disintegration.

Egypt, during this ongoing crisis, proved incapable of finding an alternative to the waning concept of Maat. The movement of Personal Piety and the theology of will did not break through towards a novel vision of political and social order, to be based on religious ideas. The history of the late New Kingdom thus provides an impressive example of the destructive forces which a theology of will and its human counterpart, piety, may imply. The exclusive self-commitment to the will of God may foster social and political disintegration, as long as solidarity and brotherhood are not expressly recognized to be just what God wants man to realize. This is obviously the achievement not of Egypt but of Israel. It seems to me very symbolic that Israelite

118 See esp. Eisenstadt 1985.

119 For the institutions of 'Personal Piety' see Borghouts 1982. Note, however, that the 'wise woman' (*h3 rht*) who specialized in finding out the identity of offended deities was not a professional priest, see Borghouts *ibid.* 24-27.

120 Brunner 1973 = 1988, 224-229 and 1977, 45f. Cf. also Leclant 1968.

121 pDer el Medinah I ed. Carny & Posener 1978.

122 KRI II 326.7

123 Posener 1985, 19.

124 For the etymology of *harrummin* see Quaegebeur 1985 and 1987.

religion, which according to the scriptures went through its decisive formative phase in Egypt, can be regarded as the solution to the problem which had arisen in Egypt and caused its decline. The solution is the command to love your fellow like yourself (Leviticus 19,18). The man-society-relationship cannot be transferred to the man-god-relationship (and vice-versa). A new form of social linkage must be found and established, wherein both relations are retained in mutual reinforcement. This new form is 'religion' in the strong sense which Israel seems to have been the first to realize. It always establishes a triangular relationship: God — Man — Community. The Hebrew concept of covenant (*berit*) and the corresponding inner attitude of encompasses the attitudes of Man towards God and towards the community, and of God toward individual Man and the People. In Egypt, the concept of 'people' in the — is missing, where the collectivity as a possible partner of God is embodied in, and thus monopolized by Pharaoh. Maat had in fact established a 'triangular relationship' between Man, God, and Community. After the decline of the concept of Maat, a similar order could only be established by converting the collective identity embodied in 'Pharaoh' into the idea of religious brotherhood.

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THE NATURAL PHILOSOPHY OF AKHENATEN

James P. Allen

It has long been recognized that Akhenaten's religious revolution had its intellectual roots in the solar theology that developed earlier in the 18th Dynasty.¹ We owe to Prof. Assmann both the delineation of this "new solar theology" and its precise relationship to Akhenaten's religion.² The brief but comprehensive analysis that appears in his 1984 study of Egyptian theology and piety provides the basis for any future attempts to understand the intellectual content and motivation of Amarna.

Among the scores of new insights that this groundbreaking study has given us into the phenomenon of Akhenaten's movement, one of the most perceptive is Assmann's observation that

Amarna theology concentrates on the one aspect of god as life, and occupies itself with a uniquely explicit and forceful description of visible reality, so as to lead everything back to the one source of life in the sun. We stand here at the origin less of the monotheistic world religions than of a natural philosophy. If this religion had succeeded, we should have expected it to produce a Thales rather than a Moses.³

Much has been written about the religious meaning of Akhenaten's revolution, little about its natural philosophy, and even less about the relationship between these two aspects of the new religion. This paper is intended to offer a few thoughts about that relationship. Much of what it will use as the basis for discussion has been said before, by Assmann and others. The few suggestions I have to make here are not meant to rehash old arguments. Instead, I hope that they will prove useful in further building our appreciation of Akhenaten's thought on the substantial groundwork that Assmann has already laid.

¹ E.g., Breasted 1912, 315–21. Cf. Redford 1976.

² Assmann 1972, 1983, 145–88; 1984, 232–57.

³ Assmann 1984, 248–49.

Thales, who flourished in the beginning of the sixth century BC, is the first Greek philosopher known to have speculated on the existence of a single governing principle underlying the diversity of nature.⁴ The identity of this principle was the central philosophical question for Thales and his immediate successors. The various candidates they proposed—among them, water, air, or fire—differ in nature, but within their respective philosophical systems each can be characterized by four key features. For the early Greek philosophers, the fundamental principle of reality, whatever its identity, was

single, as opposed to the plurality of visible nature; governing, determining the form and existence of all things; natural—that is, inherent in and deducible from the operation of the physical universe; and underlying, as the source of all “the things that are and have been and shall be, the gods and things divine.”⁵

In one way or another, these same qualities characterize most of the divine principles that the Egyptians envisioned as determining life and existence—reflected in such familiar epithets as “unique one without second,” “who created all that exists,” and “lord of all.”⁶ The same is true of the principle embodied in Akhenaten’s god.

For the most part, our appreciation of these characteristics has been largely theological—perhaps best illustrated by the continuing discussion on the nature and extent of Amarna “monotheism.” Yet no less than Greek philosophy, Egyptian religion is (also) testimony to an ancient attempt to understand the nature and meaning of reality. This wider dimension is particularly significant for the religion of the Amarna period, given the deliberate change in established perceptions that the new theology entailed. Akhenaten introduced not just a new definition of divinity, but a new perception of the way in which the divine operates in the world. The symbolism and textual imagery of the Amarna period must therefore be understood on both levels—as religion *and* as natural philosophy.

1. The Divine Principle as Single

The dominant feature of Amarna religion is without question its emphasis on the singleness of the divine principle. Akhenaten’s god is not just “unique, with no other of his kind,” like other Egyptian gods; it is exclusively so: “there is no other except him.”⁷ The preclusive manifestation of this concept in the religious sphere is well

4 Coplston 1946, 138–39.

5 Anaximenes, cited in Coplston 1946, 142.

6 See Homung 1973, 180, 142–43, 230–31 (= 1982, 185, 149, 234–35).

7 Sandman 1938, 94, 17 (*ḥꜣ nṯ wꜣ m ḥꜣ hr ḥw-fꜣ*; 7, 7/8 (*m ḥꜣ wꜣw hr-fꜣ*)). Cf. Homung 1973, 180 (=

1982, 185).

known, particularly for the later years of Akhenaten’s rule. The alteration of the plural “gods” to the singular “god” and the suppression of the divine element in such words as *m3ꜣt* (Maat) and *mjwꜣt* ‘mother’ (Mut) are two obvious examples. Yet the prohibition of other gods seems to be less a matter of consistent theological policy than a phenomenon of religious interpretation, directed primarily against the Theban triad, as Hari recently demonstrated.⁸ Other gods appear occasionally in the early royal inscriptions, and even in the later iconoclastic years their names are still tolerated, for example, in the names of Amarna officials.⁹

The explanation of this apparent ambivalence can be found in the distinction between religion and natural philosophy. The uniqueness of Akhenaten’s god is not so much a religious as a philosophical doctrine. It has less to do with man’s relationship to god than with his understanding of the fundamental nature of reality. With the exception of Amun and his circle, the traditional gods are apparently still tolerated, even if their worship is not exactly encouraged. The new god is meant to replace them not in a religious function (what Assmann calls the “local or cult dimension”)¹⁰ but in their cosmic role as the principles that determine the makeup and operation of nature. In Amarna there is no longer a multiplicity of such principles: only the single principle embodied in the character of the new god. It is in this sense that “there is no other except him.” As the determining principle of life, his nature is one and indivisible, and therefore incapable of the syncretism that is characteristic of the traditional gods. What was anathema in Akhenaten’s *philosophy* was not the existence of other gods but rather the intellectual notion that such gods could represent an apportionment or even a manifestation of the single principle embodied in his god.¹¹ The religious implications of this exclusiveness are another matter, and will be dealt with later.

2. The Divine Principle as Governing

The appearance of other gods in some of Akhenaten’s earliest inscriptions suggests that the notion of the divine principle as exclusive developed over the course of his reign. (Whether this reflects a true philosophical development or merely an expedient means of introducing the new theology is a moot point). In the earliest reliefs, the new god appears with the name and iconography of Re-Horakhti,¹² already reflecting its role as the dominant natural principle (the sun) that rules (Horus) the universe. Sometime before the jubilee celebrated in Akhenaten’s Karnak temple,¹³ the regal

8 Hari 1984.

9 Urk. IV 1974, 20; cf. 1968, 15. Smith and Redford 1977, 99–100, pls. 41, 85.1. Hari 1984, 1043–44.

10 Assmann 1984, 25–36. Cf. Assmann 1984, 245–46, though with a different interpretation than that suggested here.

11 See Homung 1973, 246 (=1983, 249).

12 E.g., Aldred 1988, pl. 27; Redford 1984, 64 pl. 4.5. Cf. Aldred 1959.

13 Based on the relief style and iconography of talatat from the second and tenth pylons: Aldred 1988,

character of the god becomes marked by the appearance of its name in cartouches. Initially this may have signalled the dominance of the new divine principle over others represented in the (still-present) traditional gods—in particular, over Amun-Re “king of the gods.” The cartouches persist, however, even long after the other gods have disappeared from official reliefs. That this is not merely the survival of an established iconography is shown by the “*dnbar*” scene in the tomb of Huyu, which is dated, like a regnal year, to year 12 of the god.¹⁴

The persistence of these royal features can only reflect the absolute rule that the new principle is understood to exercise over all of nature. The ubiquitous epithets that accompany the god’s cartouches indicate as much: “lord of all that the disk encircles, lord of the sky, lord of the land.” The divine principle is not only exclusive—it is also the governing force behind the universe as a whole. Redford’s characterization of the god’s kingship as “a pale reflection of [Akhenaten’s] own on earth, projected heavenward”¹⁵ misses the point by a full 180°. As the texts themselves make clear, Akhenaten’s rule reflects that of the god, not the other way round: “he gives him eternal recurrence in kingship like the disk.”¹⁶

3. The Divine Principle as Natural

The single divine principle that Akhenaten understood to govern all of nature is unlike any other Egyptian god. From the first, it is silent: in no surviving text or inscription of the Amarna period does it speak, to the king or anyone else.¹⁷ It is therefore not a god with whom either the king or man can communicate in the traditional manner. Its cult seems to consist solely of offering rites performed by the king and queen in the open air, with none of the elaborate ritual of contact with the divine reflected in the traditional temple reliefs.¹⁸ The traditional media of such communication are also absent. In the earliest reliefs the god is represented in the image of the sun-god (see n. 12) but for most of the Amarna period, from about year 4 onward, its only representation is the sun-disk through which it appears in nature. It has no statues. Akhenaten boasts that “no craftsman knows him.”¹⁹

From the viewpoint of traditional Egyptian conceptions of divinity, these features reveal a god that is remarkably insubstantial and distant—more an abstraction than a

god. Its name is an abstraction as well, an explicit assertion of the god’s dissociation from both the material and the human spheres.²⁰

(*ḥꜣḥꜣ ḥꜣw 3ḥꜣḥꜣ ḥꜣḥꜣ m 3ḥꜣ*) ‘The living one, Sun Horus of the 3ḥꜣ, who becomes aroused in the 3ḥꜣ’
(*m ḥꜣḥꜣ m šw mḥ m jḥꜣ*) ‘in his identity as the light that is in the sun-disk.’

The two elements of this “didactic” name clearly correspond to the two cartouches of pharaohs. The first element, like the pharaoh’s throne name, is a theological statement of its owner’s function: the divine principle is that of life (*ḥꜣḥꜣ*), manifest in the sun (*ḥꜣ*) as ruler of the universe (*ḥꜣw*), which becomes active in the world at sunrise (*3ḥꜣ ḥꜣḥꜣ m 3ḥꜣ*).²¹ The second cartouche, corresponding to the pharaoh’s personal name, reveals the god’s identity: it is light, which operates through the physical medium of the sun.²² More concisely stated, the didactic name expresses Akhenaten’s perception that the single governing principle of nature is light. The principle is identified as light “not in the sense that it is called ‘light’ but in the sense that light encompasses everything that can be said about the god.”²³ As Assmann has recognized, this is also the meaning of the god’s sole form of representation in Amarna art: ‘the conceptual symbol of the ‘rayed Aton’ is clearly derived from a hieroglyph signifying, in fact, not ‘sun’ but ‘light’.”²⁴

As abstract as this formulation is, it becomes even more so in the revised version of the didactic name that appears in the second half of Akhenaten’s reign:

(*ḥꜣḥꜣ ḥꜣḥꜣ 3ḥꜣḥꜣ ḥꜣḥꜣ m 3ḥꜣ*) ‘The living one, Sun ruler of the 3ḥꜣ, who becomes aroused in the 3ḥꜣ’
(*m ḥꜣḥꜣ m ḥ3ḥꜣ ḥꜣ m jḥꜣ*) ‘in his identity as the light that comes in the sun-disk.’

It has long been recognized that the result—and presumably also the intention—of this change is to remove all trace of the traditional conception of divinity from the name. “Horus” is replaced by the generic “ruler,” and the term *šw* for “light” (associated with

20 For discussion of the name see Gunn 1923; Fecht 1960, 91–118; Anthes 1963; Bennet 1965; Assmann 1973, 529–30; Bonifant 1983.

21 The phrase *ḥꜣḥꜣ m 3ḥꜣ* is used of the rising sun in BD 133 (DYN. 18; Naville 1886, pl. 146, 5–6). Assmann (1984, 245) also sees in this phrase a reference to the god’s cult-place as cosmic rather than earthly.

22 For a counter-argument to Fecht’s objection to *šw* as ‘light’ (1967, 48 n. 48), see Assmann 1980, 17 n. 82.

23 Assmann 1984, 246.

24 Assmann 1984, 244.

25 For the latter see Bennet 1965, 208.

pl. 28; Redford 1984, 65, pl. 4.6.

14 Urk. IV 2006, 11–12. The same event is dated to year 12 of Akhenaten in Merne Pt’s tomb: Urk. IV 2003, 5–6. Compare the dating of the boundary stelae of years 5–6: Urk. IV 1965, 8–11; 1981, 9–12.

15 Redford 1984, 178.

16 Sandman 1938, 91, 11.

17 Assmann 1973, 529; 1984, 255.

18 Assmann 1973, 531.

19 Urk. IV 1971, 13.

the god Shu) by its unmarked synonym *h3jrt*.²⁶ The process, however, has a further effect: it also removes the didactic name even farther from the sphere of the divine and toward that of a pure philosophical principle. This is clearly also the import of the change in wording of the phrase that describes the function of the disk. Light is now no longer "in" the disk (*nj m jin*): it is a separate entity, which comes into the world through the disk (*ij m jin*). The relationship characterized by the earlier phrase (*nj m jin*) is also reflected in hymns addressed to the earlier form of the didactic name:

whn k m hprw k n jin 'nh 'You rise in your development of the living disk'²⁶
pw k m jin n hnw hr tp f3 'You are in the disk of daytime, above the land'²⁷
pw k m f' 'You are in the sun.'²⁸

Given the equivalence of inheritance and identity in Egyptian, the relationship expressed by the preposition *m* 'in/as' could be understood as tantamount to calling the disk a god. That does not appear to be Akhenaten's intention. To be sure, the distinction between the disk and the god is blurred by the frequent use of the term "disk" as an object of direct address—even after the didactic name has been changed²⁹—but this is no more than a case of signifier for signified. The god itself is other than the disk,³⁰ and the change in the didactic name underscores that distinction.

The "de-divinization" of the didactic name is part of a process that Assmann has characterized as the "demythologizing" of solar theology and the "demythification" of the Egyptian concept of the universe. In place of the traditional world-view, the Egyptians established a "religious 'phenomenology' that proceeds from the visible manifestation of divine action"; "the world of images is discarded, thereby making way for the vision of a new reality."³¹ The images discarded are those of the gods—even the traditional notion of "god" (*ntr*) itself³²—and the new vision is that of a world governed by the single natural principle of light.

4. The Divine Principle as Underlying

The "Great Hymn" from the Amarna tomb of Aya details the manner in which light operates in nature. The body of the text—between its "title" and conclusion—is essentially a "Naturlehre" (natural philosophy) developed around four major themes.

²⁶ Sandman 1938, 76, 5; sim., 76, 7–8, 95, 11–12.

²⁷ Sandman 1938, 95, 14.

²⁸ Sandman 1938, 93, 15.

²⁹ E.g., Sandman 1938, 3, 9 vs. 3, 15–4, 14.

³⁰ The word *jin* itself is not written with the divine determinative that can mark the word *ntr* referring to the god itself (Sandman 1938, 94, 17). The same is true of the word *f'* 'sun'.

³¹ Assmann 1984, 239.

³² See Hornung 1973, 244 and n. 83 (= 1982, 246 and n. 106).

*The principle animates all things.*³³ It appears in the world through the natural phenomenon of the sun:

You are beautiful, great, glittering, high above every land,
 while your rays enfold the lands to the end of all you have made.
 You are in the sun,
 reaching to their end.

The absence of this natural medium deprives the world of animation: it becomes "dark and obscured, the land in stillness ... in the manner of death." Its return, with the sunrise (*h'f m 3ht*), reanimates nature—a concept that the hymn vividly captures in a series of natural images: "the entire land doing their work ... trees and plants growing, birds in flight from their nests ... all the animals prancing on their feet ... ships going up and downstream ... fish in the river leaping to your face."

*The principle creates all things.*³⁴ It is "the one who causes sperm to develop in women, who makes semen into people." More than human beings, it creates the entire diversity of nature—a diversity that contrasts with the principle's own singularity:

How manifold is that which you make,
 even those hidden from view!
 The one god, with no other of his kind.
 You create the land to your concept, while you are single.

In Amarna, the concept of creation refers to a phenomenon of daily life rather than to the process that produced the world in the beginning. This is surely a reflection of Akhenaten's emphasis on the visible and immediate, as Assmann has noted.³⁵ But it is probably too narrow an interpretation of Akhenaten's vision to conclude that "the restriction to the visible forbids all speculation on creation theology."³⁶ The texts themselves occasionally make clear reference to the past creative activity of the divine principle.³⁷ In this case, Assmann's earlier analysis is closer to the truth: "The creation concept of the Aton religion is preservative: what is important to the texts is not that

³³ Sandman 1938, 93, 12–94, 10.

³⁴ Sandman 1938, 94, 10–95, 2.

³⁵ Assmann 1984, 246.

³⁶ Assmann 1984, 246.

³⁷ For example, the "Great Hymn," *jin k pt w3 tj r whn jin s* 'You have made the sky far away, to rise in' (Sandman 1938, 95, 10–11). Elsewhere, *nht jr nj wn t jr mn r 3w, pr n w m rk* 'It is you who made when there was no one who had made all these things: it is from your mouth that they have emerged' (Sandman 1938, 46, 15).

the Aten created the world in the beginning but that he continually creates it through his rays."³⁸

*The principle sustains all things*³⁹ by providing the continuing means of life, for the entire world:

How functional are your designs, lord of eternal recurrence —
an inundation of your own from the sky for the foreigners
and for the animals of every foreign land, that go on feet;
and an inundation coming from the Duat for Egypt;
with your rays nursing every cultivation:
when you rise, they live and grow for you.

The universality of this vision, as Assmann has noted, is not peculiar to Amarna: it is instead indicative "of the spirit of the era—of a cognitive revolution that finds theological expression already before Amarna and dominates the entire religion of the New Kingdom."⁴⁰ Nonetheless, its inclusion here underlines the universal relevance that Akhenaten's new vision of reality was meant to have—a universality not of religion but of natural philosophy.

The principle determines the cycle of life.⁴¹ In its animating, creating, and sustaining function, light makes all life possible. The fourth theme in the "Great Hymn" consolidates this notion in the concept of recurrence, which, like all things in nature, derives from the one underlying principle: "You make the seasons, to cause the development of all that you make."⁴²

These four themes in the "Great Hymn" not only elaborate the operation of light in the universe, they also stress its character as the single determinant of all reality. This more fundamental concept is explained in the first part of the hymn's conclusion:

You have made the sky far away, to rise in
and see all that you make, while you are One,
risen in your development in the living disk,
apparent and shining, far yet near.
You make millions of developments of your single self —
villages and districts, fields and river-courses.
Every eye glimpses you in relation to them,
while you are in the disk of daytime, above the land.

38 Assmann 1973, 532.

39 Sandman 1938, 95, 2-9.

40 Assmann 1984, 240.

41 Sandman 1938, 95, 9-10.

42 See Assmann 1975, 54-57. Note the epithet *nb nḥh* 'lord of eternal recurrence' in the passage translated just above (Sandman 1938, 95, 7).

When you have gone, no eye exists,
for you create their sight so as not to be seen [your]self.⁴³

The message in these lines is clear. All things in nature derive from a single source: "You make millions of developments of your single self" (*ḥr k ḥḥw n ḥprw jm k w^c ḥrj*). And only in and through the diversity of the natural universe is the source itself perceptible: "Every eye glimpses you in relation to them ... for you create their sight so as not to be seen [your]self" (*gmḥ ḥw jrt nb r^c ḥrj sn ... qm3 k ḥr st r tm k m3 ḥc ḥrj*).

These ideas are not all new to Amarna. What is new is the exclusive adherence to the notion of unity underlying diversity. Though light operates within the life and the substance of all things, it remains undiversified itself. This is the difference between the doctrine of Amarna and the "new solar theology." The themes of animation, creation, and the recurrence of life can be found, for example, in the hymn of Suti and Hor, long recognized as a forerunner of Amarna phraseology. In the earlier hymn, however, the themes are diversified into the functions of a number of divinities: determination, through Re;⁴⁴ creation, through Horus, Khnum, Amun and Ptah;⁴⁵ and the Amarna, that of Suti and Hor is addressed to a single divine principle—in this case, "Amun when he rises as Horus of the *3ḥr*."⁴⁶ The two texts differ fundamentally, however, in the way in which they view the operation of this principle in nature. The earlier theology accepts a diversification of the underlying principle into a number of coequal principles that determine life—embodied in the names and characters of various gods. Amarna theology does not.

5. Natural Philosophy and Religion

One further difference between the "new solar theology" and that of Amarna lies in the realm of epistemology. Both theologies emphasize the distinction between reality and perception. The divine principle is "far yet near,"⁴⁸ beyond the realm of human experience yet perceptible in the way in which it operates in nature. For the earlier human beings, an individual can claim to "know his god" (*ḥḥ nḥrj*).⁴⁹ In Amarna, this is a privilege reserved to the king alone, and is the final theme of the "Great Hymn":

43 Sandman 1938, 95, 10-15.

44 Urk. IV 1942, 16 - 1945, 1.

45 Urk. IV 1945, 7-14.

46 Urk. IV 1945, 18 - 1946, 6.

47 Urk. IV 1943, 12.

48 For this concept in the "new solar theology," see Assmann 1983, 104-106.

49 Urk. IV 1799, 7-8; *sim*, 1182, 14. See Assmann 1976, 772-773; 1980, 29.

You are in my heart,
and no one knows you except your son *nfr-ḥprw-rʿ wʿ-n-rʿ*,
whom you have made aware of your designs and your might.⁵⁰

The reservation of knowledge of the true nature of reality to the king alone explains the emphasis on Akhenaten's "teaching" (*sb3jiti*) in the Amarna texts.⁵¹ It also underlies the unique role that Akhenaten envisioned for himself:

I am your son, who is effective for you (*3ḥ n.k*),
who displays your name and your might,
with your force fixed in my heart.⁵²

Through Akhenaten, knowledge of reality is not only transmitted, it is also made "effective" in the world. The king's role is conceptualized in the new name he adopted for his *personal* identity: *3ḥ-n-jm* both "displays the name" (*wfz m*) of the divine principle (i.e., *jm*) and proclaims the king's role as "effective" agent (*3ḥ*) of that principle in the world.

Friedman has characterized the notion of *3ḥ* as one of "pragmatic effectiveness implicit in daily affairs ... A reciprocal relationship between god and king, father and son, is frequently the vehicle through which the *3ḥ*-concept operates."⁵³ Reciprocity is the hallmark of Akhenaten's relationship with the divine principle: he is "effective for the one who is effective for him" (*3ḥ n 3ḥ n.f*).⁵⁴ The god's "effectiveness" consists in creating and sustaining all things for the king:

[You] make [them] grow for the King ...
and sustain them for your son, who came from yourself.⁵⁵

The king, in turn, is the "effective" means whereby the divine principle operates in the world of man.

The hymn in the tomb of Maya characterizes Akhenaten as the "effective sign" (*ijt k 3ḥ*) of the god.⁵⁶ Hatshepsut had used the same terminology earlier to describe her relationship to Amun.⁵⁷ In Amarna, however, it takes on a special new significance. In

⁵⁰ Sandman 1938, 16–17.

⁵¹ E.g., Sandman 1938, 60, 1–7; 86, 12–16; 91, 18–92, 3. See Assmann 1980, 20–21 and 21 n. 94, with earlier references.

⁵² Sandman 1938, 14, 13/16–15, 1/3.

⁵³ Friedman 1984–85, 40.

⁵⁴ Sandman 1938, 91, 9–10.

⁵⁵ Sandman 1938, 95, 19–96, 2; cf. 21, 9–16.

⁵⁶ Sandman 1938, 59, 10–11.

⁵⁷ Urk. IV 228, 14; 275, 5; 361, 8.

the absence of all representations of the divine principle (how does one depict light?), Akhenaten himself is the only image of the god. Apparently by design, therefore, it is Akhenaten—and not Akhenaten's god—that replaces the traditional images of the Akhenaten—as the medium for human contact with the divine.⁵⁸ Akhenaten's teaching gods as the attempt to appropriate to the king's image (which for him meant: to himself as a person) the new forms of a direct connection between god and man—to transform the meaning of piety into loyalty and the relationship between god and man into one between king and follower.⁵⁹ Akhenaten is for human beings what light is for nature: animator, creator, sustainer, and determinant of recurrent life. The texts make this abundantly clear:

Praise the lord of the Two Lands, effective form of the disk.⁶⁰
fate who gives life, lord of commands;
light for every land, in whose season one lives;
Inundation for the whole land, through whose ka one is sated,
god who makes the great and builds the lowly;
air for every nose, through whom one breathes.⁶¹

The parallel with the phraseology used to describe the operation of light in nature is hardly accidental. It is precisely at this point that Akhenaten's natural philosophy becomes religion.

Assmann has characterized Amarna theology as a "doctrine of two persons," representing the two poles of Akhenaten's thought.⁶² The person of the god, manifest in the sun, embodies the fundamental nature of reality, which is the life-giving power of light. The person of Akhenaten himself embodies the medium through which that life-giving power is made "effective" on the human plane. The difference between the two is the difference between natural philosophy and religion. In fact, as Assmann has noted, the introduction of a new "religion" is not sufficient in itself to account for the radical changes that Akhenaten introduced into the whole of Egyptian culture.⁶³ The new artistic style, new architecture, and new written language each reflect in their own way a fundamentally new view of nature, as immediate and real rather than timeless and symbolic. These are hallmarks of an intellectual movement, not a religion. Akhenaten's teaching about the nature and significance of reality is a philosophical system. Its fundamental principle, that of light, is a natural concept—in fact, superior to those which the early Greek philosophers came up with—and not a god in the

⁵⁸ For the practical manifestations of this phenomenon, see Assmann 1984, 254–55.

⁵⁹ Assmann 1980, 30.

⁶⁰ *3ḥ n jm*, without cartouche.

⁶¹ Sandman 1938, 24, 5–7.

⁶² Assmann 1980, 24. See also Assmann 1972, 122–24; 1975, 58–61.

⁶³ Assmann 1984, 243.

traditional Egyptian sense of divinity. The god of Akhenaten's *religion* is Akhenaten himself.

The practical effect of this duality was to separate man's understanding of the universe (natural philosophy) from man's relationship to the universe (religion). Hornung's characterization of this effect is particularly insightful:

The shift in thought which can be observed here was a leap away from the central tradition, and it did not survive the reign of Akhenaten. But it renders Akhenaten's proclamation fundamentally different from everything that preceded it, which otherwise appears similar in many ways. The change in logic is surely the intellectual core of his revolution—which for a few years anticipated western modes of thought.⁶⁴

Hornung has also characterized Akhenaten's doctrine with the formula "There is no god but Aton, and Akhenaten is his prophet."⁶⁵ Here, however, he misses the point. The true message of Akhenaten's teaching is even more radical than this paraphrase from Islam would suggest: "There is no natural principle but light, and no god but Akhenaten."

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HORUS ON THE CROCODILES: A JUNCTURE OF RELIGION AND MAGIC IN LATE DYNASTIC EGYPT

Robert K. Ritner

No discussion of late Egyptian religion can fail to consider the question of "magical practices." Indeed, scholars have frequently insisted that such practices became central features of the age, dominating and ultimately supplanting the popular significance of traditional temple cult. Underlying this belief are the common suppositions that "magic" is inherently opposed to "true religion," that Egyptian religion suffered an intellectual decline comparable to Egypt's political decline, and that the presence of magic is an index — or a direct cause — of this decline. Such a scheme generally posits a religious "golden age" in the New Kingdom, followed by a steady increase of magic at the expense of religion. This process is said to culminate in a debased cult and foreign-inspired magic of the Greco-Roman eras, a collection of moribund superstitions which readily collapsed before a vigorous Christianity.¹

While this scheme might seem to provide a concise explanation for the ultimate disappearance of Egyptian religion, none of its tenets are without dispute, and the relationship of magic and religion remains a particularly difficult problem to resolve. The first difficulty confronting any investigation of the role of Egyptian magic is the absence of a commonly-shared definition of just what constitutes magic.² Most often, the theoretical distinction between "magic" and "religion" has relied solely upon a subjective assessment of the presumed attitude of the ancient practitioner. Thus a recitation or ritual action which appears humble, pious and designed for general benefit has been styled "religious," in contrast to "magical" texts or rites which are deemed boastful and threatening, serving limited, personal goals. In actual practice, however, this distinction has proved quite unworkable, for the same text may serve both as "mainstream" religious hymn and as private spell,³ while both temple and private ritual may use identical operations.⁴

1 Eg. *Curto*, 1984, p. 731; *Kadry*, 1982, p. 204; *Kakosy*, 1977, col. 1110; *idem.*, 1974, p. 39; *Bell*, 1953, pp. 13 and 71-74.

2 Cf. *Gutkunst*, 1986; *Lexa*, 1925, vol. 1, pp. 12-15.

3 Eg. *Lange*, 1927, pp. 35-36, and 43-44.

4 See the varying classifications of P. Salt 825, in *Birch*, 1863; *Derchain*, 1965; *Borghouts*, 1974, pp. 15-16; and for the problem in general, *Ritner*, forthcoming.

Moreover, this derogatory attitude toward magic reflects a purely western conception inherited from the Greco-Roman world,⁵ and in no way corresponds to the Egyptian understanding of its closest term *hek*, an amoral, divine force used legally by both gods and men to maintain the created order and to bring about divine intervention in the affairs of earth, heaven and the underworld.⁶ No opposition between religion and magic can be framed in Egyptian terms, for if *hek* provides a rough approximation for our term "magic," no Egyptian word corresponds to the English "religion." The nearest Egyptian concept might be the common notion of "serving" (*sm*) a deity, but such service regularly entailed practices which partook of *hek*, and which would readily be viewed as "magical" by a western audience (eg. exorcism rituals vs. Apep & foreigners). For the purposes of this discussion, any activity which seeks to obtain its goal outside the presently-accepted laws of cause and effect will be considered "magical" in the western sense. The Egyptian notion of *hek* will be left untranslated.

The problem is no easier when one looks at the evidence offered for the supposed increase in magic during the Late Period: more frequent mention of the god of magic, Heka, within theological texts, and a proliferation of amulets, healing statues, magico-religious papyri and incantations within medical texts. These developments cannot be said to reflect a fundamental, *qualitative* change in Egyptian thought or practice. At best, they document only a *quantitative* increase in elements which had long been in the Old and Middle Kingdoms,⁷ while incantations accompany medical recipes in the oldest medical texts,⁸ and amulets, images and spells were used for healing and protection throughout Egyptian history. The increased *availability* of these traditional features should not be explained as cultural innovations, but as a result of the so-called "democratization" of Egyptian religious prerogatives which had earlier led to the progressive spread of funerary literature from the restricted royal Pyramid Texts to the common *Book of the Dead* and related compositions. The wider dissemination of these artifacts in the New Kingdom reflects economic prosperity, not spiritual crisis. The development in the New Kingdom of a town-centered bureaucratic and artisan desirable goods. Had peasants of previous periods been able to afford such objects, an industry would have certainly developed to provide them. Amulets were no less desirable — and no less "magical" — in the Old Kingdom than in the New. Even the "foreign element" noted in the latest magical spells is consistent with traditional Egyptian practice, for it simply continues the syncretistic nature of Egyptian theology, absorbing Nubian, Greek and Semitic elements as the New Kingdom had assimilated

the deities (Baal, Asarte, Reshep, Huruna) and spells of its neighbors (Cretan and Semitic).⁹

If the basic operative principles of Egyptian practice remained constant, there were, however, innovations in the forms in which these principles were applied. One of the most significant of these innovations was the development of the type of healing statue now known as cippi of Horus, or simply "Horus on the Crocodiles," which may be traced from the Eighteenth Dynasty to the Roman era,¹⁰ and which provide a ready focus for examining the interaction of magic and religion in late dynastic Egypt. In the best examples, the stela are distinguished by a central representation of the youthful god Horus standing atop two or more crocodiles, grasping in his hands snakes, scorpions, lions and gazelles. A prominent head of the god Bes hovers above Horus, and flanking him are the lotus of Nefertum and a falcon-topped papyrus column. An assortment of smaller deities and subordinate scenes file across front and back, and a canonical set of texts blanket the remaining surfaces.

The protective purpose of the stela is straightforwardly expressed by image and text, where Horus, the prototype of the suffering patient, tramples the hapless crocodiles beneath his feet "like pebbles in the street" and throttles the potentially destructive desert creatures to "seal their mouths" against biting. Subsidiary figures, often including Heka, bolster and frequently reenact the protective gestures of the central motif. A particularly appropriate counterpart for Horus is found in the guardian iconography was the inspiration for the posture of Horus.¹¹ Scenes and spells derive from traditional mythology, principally the defeat of Seth who had wounded Horus with an army of scorpions before attacking him in the form of a crocodile, and the defeat of Apep, the serpent of chaos who nightly threatens the boat of the sun. By identifying the terrestrial scorpions, crocodiles and serpents with demons, the spells guarantee their defeat, by identifying the fate of the wounded patient with that of the victorious god, the spells guarantee a cure. Using a technique attested in Egypt from the Old Kingdom through the Byzantine era, the texts declare flatly that the patient is the injured god, and that he shall be cured likewise. Achieving great popularity, Horus cippi were made for kings and commoners, and vary accordingly in quality from large, wood. Surviving examples are extremely common; most major Egyptian collections contain several cippi, and specimens have often been published.¹²

Designed to avert or heal the wounds of scorpions, snakes, lions, crocodiles and any other biting animal, the stela were adapted for various situations. Often incorporated within a "healing statue" representing a donor, larger stela were set up

5 Segal, 1981.

6 Te Velde, 1969-70.

7 Gardiner, 1915; Kakosy, 1977.

8 Griffith, 1898, p. 10.

9 Borghouts, 1978, p. 37; Goedicke, 1984; Lange, 1977, pp. 93-94 and 98; P. Ebers 422.

10 Kakosy, 1980; Johnson, 1975, pp. 143-46; Sternberg-el-Horani, 1987, pp. 26-28.

11 Allemüller, 1975.

12 Kakosy, 1980.

in public areas — perhaps before a temple — to serve the general community as a healing shrine and to elicit prayers on behalf of the donor(s). The most elaborate form of such a shrine was noted in 1983 at the Mut temple complex at Luxor, where the texts which normally accompany Horus cippi had been carved on the walls of a narrow chapel (184 cm high x 134 cm wide x 150 cm long). Dating from the XXVth or XXVIth Dynasty, the chapel was probably constructed to house a Horus stela or healing statue.¹³ The association of Horus cippi with temples is apparent elsewhere at Luxor: at the Momu temple where a carved graffiti of the Late Period depicts a priest offering to Horus upon the crocodiles,¹⁴ at the Opet temple where a base survives for a healing statue within a naos, and at the Amon temple which has yielded both a statue base and a block from the door of a separate healing shrine.¹⁵ The connection is seen as well at the Ptolemaic temple of Edfu, where the resident god Horus is shown in the act of "sealing the mouth" of snakes, scorpions and crocodiles.¹⁶ Equally significant in this regard is the fact that the donors of large stelae and statues are frequently priests, and in one case a group of three priests.¹⁷

Smaller and lighter examples in stone or wood (roughly a foot high and shorter) may have been placed in gardens or homes to repel noxious animals and treat their bites, while many stelae only a few inches long with holes or lugs for suspension seem to have served as Egyptian "Saint Christopher medals," designed to protect the bearer during travel.¹⁸ That such stelae did accompany Egyptian travelers abroad is suggested by the finds of Horus cippi at Nippur in Iraq, Byblos in Lebanon, Hama in Syria, Merre in the Sudan, Axum in Ethiopia and at Rome.¹⁹ The connection of these figures with travel is underscored by the appearance of cippi texts on a statue of Ramesses III, erected by the king at the eastern desert outpost of Almazah for the benefit of passing caravans.²⁰

Despite the standard presence of spells upon these stelae, the primary method of using them did not involve reading the texts. If the present assessment of literacy in ancient Egypt is correct — approximately 1%, of the population — this would have been virtually impossible for most of the statues' users.²¹ Rather, the efficacy of the spells and images was transferred to a more practical medium by pouring water over the stela or statue, and perhaps by immersing the smaller stela in bowls. The power inherent in the cippus was drawn into the offered water, which was then drunk by the

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patient in hopes of a cure. The significance of the fluid medium is obvious on a cippus example in Cairo, carved directly on the side of a stone vase,²² and a Louvre healing statue denotes the patient expressly as "this man who drinks this water."²³ Several healing statues and stelae were provided with basins to collect this curative water, and similar receptacles are indicated at the healing shrines at Karnak by the remains of insect basins, conduits and jars.²⁴

The technique of "swallowing" words is a characteristic feature of Egyptian magic at all periods. In the infamous "cannibal hymn" of the Pyramid Texts (PT 273-74), the king devours gods to absorb their power, and in the subsequent Coffin Texts the deceased is regularly said to "swallow *hꜥꜥ*" to have "filled his body with *hꜥꜥ*," or even to have "flooded his body with *hꜥꜥ*" (eg. CT 30, 33-37, 650 & 1017). In keeping with these phrases, the directions of CT 341 dictate a procedure which becomes standard in healing spells, and is the direct antecedent of the cippus procedure:

"This spell is to be spoken over 7 sketched eyes of Horus, washed off in beer and natron and drunk by the man."

The same technique continues in usage for over 2,000 years, appearing in the Demotic literary tales of Setna from about the first century BC to the first century AD, in which the hero's illiterate wife masters a spell once it has been reduced to ash and drunk with beer (Setna I, 4/4), while Setna's son is noted for having "swallowed *hꜥꜥ*" like the owners of the Middle Kingdom Coffin Texts (Setna II, 6/5). The Egyptian practice influences the Greek magical papyri of IVth to VIth century Egypt as well, in which written texts are dissolved (*απολυσον*) with milk or wine in a mixing bowl and then drunk.²⁵ Coptic Christian treatment of a deceased saint probably carries this technique to new and unpleasant extremes when water used to wash the hands and feet of the corpse becomes blessed by contact and is put into a cistern and drunk by the faithful to cure disease.²⁶ Even less appetizing tales have the faithful thronging about the bed of the tubercular saint in hopes of swallowing the dying holy man's last explosive burst of phlegm, or rushing to scoop up and swallow bloody handfuls of saints ground to pulp between millstones.²⁷ The nadir of this technique is reached in the Coptic-influenced medieval saints' lives of Ethiopia, in which the truly desperate hero lunges during his last rites after the regurgitated, sacramental host.²⁸

13 Traunecker, 1983.

14 Sauneron, 1953; *PM* II 2nd ed. [1972]: 184 [loc. 555c].

15 Traunecker, 1983, p. 75.

16 Brugsch, 1883-91, vol. 4, p. 777.

17 Louvre E. 10777, *Lefebvre*, 1930, pp. 95-96.

18 Sternberg-el-Hachbi, 1987, pp. 27-28.

19 Johnson, 1975; Sternberg-el-Hachbi, 1987, p. 28 [taken as export goods].

20 Drioton, 1939 and 1957.

21 Baines and Eyre, 1983.

22 #18490, see Bisping, 1907, pp. 97-98, & pl. 3.

23 Lefebvre, 1930.

24 Lacau, 1921-22; see also Traunecker, 1983, pp. 74-75; and Sternberg-el-Hachbi, 1987, p. 28.

25 Betz, 1986, pp. 175 [PGM XIII, 133-35] and 307; Wotmann, 1966, pp. 102-104.

26 Kuhn, 1978, vol. 394, p. 37, § 20 and 395, p. 28, § 20.

27 Kuhn, 1978, vol. 394, pp. 35-36, and 395, p. 27; Raymond and Barnes, 1973, pp. 219-20.

28 Conti Rossini, 1910, pp. 73-74; F. Praetorius, 1911, p. 782.

Behind all of this practice is the Egyptian magical connection between the physical act of "swallowing" a thing and a resultant "knowledge" and control over it. While this conception is almost universally common, and falls within Frazier's old category of "magic by contagion," the notion is legitimized in Egypt in a striking way, for the verb "to swallow" (*ʿm*) acquires by the New Kingdom the nuance of "to know," and by the Coptic period (as *EIME*) it had completely supplanted the older verb of "knowing." This constitutes a specifically Egyptian development, and contrasts sharply with the English term "gullibility" ("having a tendency to swallow") and with American slang where "swallowing" signifies not knowledge, but foolish belief. Egyptian notions of magical swallowing, knowing and *hk3* are conjoined in the New Kingdom ritual known as the *Book of the Heavenly Cow*, designed to protect any individual performer and the universe as a whole, in which the sun god states that the power of *hk3* resides within the spell and the one who swallows/knows it has the god's own power.²⁹ In similar fashion, the verb "to taste" (*ḏp*) possesses the nuance "to experience," and is perhaps reflected in the parallel technique of "licking" a spell or image to obtain its power.³⁰

The worn surface so notable on many Horus stelae might have resulted from this usage, or from kissing or rubbing the stela to impart the curative power directly onto the patient. The rubbing of images to transmit power is clearly attested by the condition of statues of the saintly intercessor Amenhotep son of Hapu, whose lap — like the polished foot of the statue of Saint Peter in the Vatican — is worn smooth by the passing of many hands.³¹ This method is perhaps suggested in the only surviving rubric to standard cippus text A:

"This spell is to be said over a statue of Horus with a snake in his right hand & [his] left hand [...] their heads, and a crocodile under his right foot, a scorpion under his left foot [...] of tamarisk wood. Bread, beer and burning incense are to be offered (to it). Its mouth is to be opened, and its purification is to be carried out. To be put at the throat [of a man ...] This spell is [...] to ward off [any biting] snake."³²

These directions detail the preparation and consecration of a cippus with recited spell, offerings, purifications and the ceremonial opening of the mouth of the figure. The last rite is of particular importance since it enables the figures to speak, and in the texts it is the gods — not the patient — who act as speaker, and it is the gods' words of power which effect the cure. Nor are these ritual actions performed by the patient, but by a literate priest. The patient is noted only at the end, where it is stipulated that

the finished product is to be placed, or perhaps worn, on the neck. The role of the priest in the design, consecration and donation of these images, like the placement of cippi and healing statues within temple precincts, stresses the religious orthodoxy of "Horus on the Crocodiles." The traditional magical techniques of swallowing, licking and rubbing used with the stelae cannot then be opposed to religion, since they are inherent in the Egyptian religious world view, its rites and its speech.

The significance of speech has already been noted as the medium in which the divine power of *hk3* resides, and it is this power of speech which was selected to characterize the central deity of the cippus. In the earliest cippi, this god is often named Shed, later identified with Horus as Horus-Shed. From the initial study of this deity by Moret in 1915, the name Shed has been translated almost without question as "Savior," with Horus-Shed understood as "Horus the Savior." This interpretation fit the purpose of the stelae, and current theories about the rise of personal "savior gods." The root meaning of the Egyptian word *šd* seems to be "to extract" or "pull up," used of extracting dirt to mean "dig," extracting individuals from harm to mean "save," and extracting words from texts to mean "recite" (*WB* 4, 560–64). Though the various meanings can be distinguished in the hieroglyphic script by specific determinatives, the spelling of the god's name is usually ambiguous, with no determinative or only the indication that a god is meant. In the New Kingdom stela of *P3-hry-pd* from Deir el-Medineh, however, an unambiguous spelling shows that the name was understood as "Reciter."³³ The spelling is paralleled on a Ptolemaic cippus in the Brooklyn Museum, though the editor emended the translation to "Savior" without comment.³⁴ A further New Kingdom example within a spell against crocodiles in the Harris Magical Papyrus was also emended by the editor,³⁵ though the passage clearly stresses the role of recitation: "Let this be recited (*šd*) over water. I am Horus the Reciter (*šdy*).³⁶" On the texts of the cippi themselves, the same concept is evident in such phrases as "I am Thoḥ who recites (*šd*) for this god," and "it is by means of your magic that I have recited (*šd*).³⁷" Most telling in this regard is the fact that the term "recite" comes to signify "enchant" as well. In the form "Enchantress," it is a common title of Isis in the Late Period, and the presence of Isis-Shed and Horus-Shed on the same cippus suggests that in both cases Shed should be understood as "Reciter" or "Enchanter," rather than "Savior."³⁸ The notion of "Savior" cannot be completely eliminated, however, for on one unpublished stela known to me the badly battered traces of Horus-Shed suggest the "strong-arm" determinative of "savior."

This stela, no. 31737 of the Field Museum, Chicago, presents a number of distinctive features, and as I am in the process of publishing the piece I would like to present an overview of its more interesting aspects which are of significance for the

²⁹ Homung, 1982, pp. 20 and 44 [11, 218–20].

³⁰ *WB* V, 444/13; van Voss, 1984.

³¹ Wildung, 1977, p. 297.

³² See Borghouts, 1978, pp. 83–84, #123.

³³ Bruyère, 1930, p. 166; Ritner, 1986, pp. 103–104 and 106 for this and following sources.

³⁴ Jacquet-Gordon, 1965–66, pp. 60 and 62.

³⁵ Lange, 1927, pp. 65–67.

³⁶ Ritner, 1986, pp. 103–104.

corpus of cippi, the nature of Shed and the general question of magic. Acquired from an antiquities dealer in 1899, the round-topped stela stands 76 cm high, 51 cm wide and with a maximum thickness at the protruding base of 20.5 cm. Once dominated by a large, carefully carved central relief of Horus striding atop two crocodiles, the stela has suffered obvious damage at the hands of an early Christian or Moslem iconoclast when a blow to this central figure split the stone into several fragments which were rejoined by the modern dealer. The remaining front surface and base are covered with depictions of protective deities, while carved cippus texts cover the top, sides and, beneath a file of deities, the back. The stela often presents an epigraphic nightmare, with a surface marred by ancient damage, severe abrasion, pitting, erupting crystals, encrustations and overlapping modern plaster carelessly applied by the dealer. Though the stela is guessed to be Ptolemaic in the museum records, the few close parallels in terms of size and carving date from the Third Intermediate or Late Period. The large size and weight of the piece distinguish it as a public monument, and since the texts on back and sides descend to the bottom edge and a mounting slot is present on the underside, it seems that the cippus originally stood on a separate base, perhaps equipped with a basin. The stela's donor is depicted on the front upper left-hand corner in the act of adorning the god Amon "who repels the Rough-faced (Apep serpent), and repulses every snake like no other." The name, filiation and titles of the donor were originally carved in two columns behind his figure, but these have been intentionally hacked out, leaving only faint traces and deep gouges. This mutilation was very thorough, for though the name and filiation appeared at least 7 times among the texts of the stela, only the mother's name, Isis, escaped complete erasure. Traces suggest that the donor's name may have begun with "Amon," and the remnants of his titles establish him as a priest: a phylarch (*ḥrj-tp s3*) and supervisor of cloth (*l...-mnh.t*). The erasures were particularly severe on the bottom front of the stela, where not merely the name and titles are removed, but the entire surface has been smoothed away. Two signs at the lower right are all that remain of what was perhaps a biographical text. This sort of erasure is well-known in ancient Egypt, and served to deprive the donor of any spiritual benefit from his monument by nullifying his image. There are no indications that the stela was usurped by another, however, and the reasons for any personal animosity are unknown. The destruction of the Horus figure reflects the continuation of this pattern in Christian and Islamic Egypt, in which the force of the deity — now seen as a demon — is similarly nullified.

The secondary deities on the stela were thematically selected for their powers of protection against the enemies of gods and men, and include "The Lady of Life (*Nb.t-ḥny*) who drives all hostility (*ḏ3.t*) from the road," "Horus who slays the enemy of his father," "Opet who protects the land," "Horus upon the back of his enemy, the lord of strength," "Khnum the great" shown in the act of spearing Seth as a crocodile, "Onuris ... who repels the Rough-faced" (Apep), and "Isis the great, the god's mother who saves (*šd*) [...].heaven." Particularly interesting are the four crocodile-headed genii who, like the scorpion goddess Selket in the middle register, guarantee control over

the beasts which they represent. Triumph over afflictions by Seth and Apep (and thus over crocodiles, scorpions and snakes) is further indicated by the adoration of the risen Djed-column of Osiris, symbol of the god's victory in death over his murderer Seth, and by the archer Shed in his chariot shooting the fleeing beasts of the desert.

An inscription identifies the broken central image as Shed as well, and the name reappears in the largely erased text of the base which begins: "Words spoken by the gods who are in Shed, that he might give a good life united with health and long years without distress (literally, "broken heart") to the spirit of [...]." While the Egyptian expression "who are in" can rarely signify "who are with" (*Wb I 72/17*), the following pronoun "he" should indicate a single deity who would thus contain other gods within himself. As unusual as this might seem, it is perhaps confirmed by texts, iconography and parallels. One of the most common spells upon cippi opens with an invocation of "the aged god who rejuvenates himself at his season, the old man who becomes a youth" (Text B). This invoked cippus deity who appears as both an old and a young god should refer, I believe, to the two most prominent gods on the stela: the older Bes and the youthful Horus, whose close connection in terms of function and posture I have noted above. The invariable depiction of the disembodied Bes-head floating like a nimbus above Horus suggests an even closer relationship, and a statue in the Walters Art Gallery at Baltimore confirms it.³⁷ This striding, Bes-headed figure is labeled "Horus the child" in hieroglyphs, and though its publisher believed that the Egyptian engraver had made a mistake, the identity now makes sense and can be carried further. In the Late Period, there appear many examples in statuary, papyri and on cippi of so-called "pantheistic gods" with the face of Bes atop which sprouts a series of secondary heads, indicating an infinite projection of forms from the single "godhead." These have generally been taken to represent the meeting of monotheism and polytheism, the union of the many gods with their primordial creator.³⁸ Like the cippi in which they appear, these images are used primarily for protective purposes, and duplicate the central cippus motif by treading underfoot the standard group of hostile animals who are trapped within an enclosing serpent. This, I would argue, is the Shed envisioned by the author of the Field Museum text — a protective god of enchantment who contains within himself the power of all the gods who surround him, and who is perhaps an image of the universal creator.

Objections to this understanding could be raised by Sauneron's 1960 study of the Ptolemaic and Roman god Tutu who defends against disease and, like the "pantheistic" gods, sprouts multiple heads. Sauneron recognized that Tutu was the leader of a group of disease spirits, and thus decided that the images with multiple heads were "artistic shorthand" for depicting the whole group and not a representation of a god with many forms. What Sauneron did not recognize, however, is that Tutu's name should mean "collection," "composite" or even "image," perfect labels for a god

37 Steindorff, 1946, pp. 143–44, plate 95, no. 625.

38 Altenmüller, 1975.

who subsumes others.³⁹ Moreover, the presence of gods beside their creator does not mean that the gods cannot be projections from that creator. As Tutu is at once the leader and summation of protective forces against disease, so the god of the cippi is at once leader and summation of protective forces against hostile animals.

The final feature of the Chicago stela which I would like to note concerns the texts themselves. Because of the size of the stela, the sculptor was able to include the two standard cippus texts, two others which are rare, and a fifth which to my knowledge is unique and provides a new myth detailing the origin of venom. Carved in two vertical and eleven abraded horizontal columns on the right thickness of the stela, the fragmentary tale recounts the visit of an unnamed goddess to the sea to bathe. When she removes her clothing, the sea god Nun is inflamed with passion, summons the crocodiles of his realm, and devises a stratagem. Once the goddess has entered the water, the crocodiles are to attack her, allowing the god to materialize suddenly as her protector. The goddess will presumably rush helplessly into his arms, and he will sweep her off in triumph. It doesn't work, though a similar technique is recommended in a Demotic love spell in which the man releases an irritated shrewmouse in the lady's bathroom and then stands outside with open arms and a supply of amulets.⁴⁰ The goddess, however, is anything but defenseless. Raging like a storm, she sends forth a blast of fire which scatters the crocodiles and effectively puts to rest the passion of Nun. Her own inflammation is washed away in the waters of the sea. A provisional translation runs as follows:

The poison is purified in its moment of its burning!
 The Goddess is purified in her moment of her burning,
 all her limbs overlaid with flame like molten copper [...]
 If she is at peace, then she is like Nubia.
 If she rages, then she is like Asia.
 It is the poison which she made upon the river for her putting
 to rest the desire of her father Nun, when she stripped off her
 pure garments to the ground and (he) saw that she was
 beautiful in her whole form and in all her limbs [...]
 His [heart] went forth after this goddess to mount her body through
 desire of her.
 He summoned the crocodiles who were in the water.
 The great god said to the crocodile(s): "My heart has gone
 forth after this goddess. Go to her, O crocodile. Then she
 will be afraid of you and I shall rescue her from [you ...].
 I have [summoned(?)] every crocodile in this your name of
 crocodile. May you go after her being great in this your
 name of Sutekh. May you ...] after her in this your name of

39 Eriksen, *Glossur*, p. 616.

40 Griffith and Thompson, 1904, pp. 94–98, col. 13/13–16.

Impurity(?) [May you ...] in this your name of [...]
 [There came the] great crocodile.
 Then the goddess [...] water of her throat.
 All the crocodiles came.
 He opened his mouth against her and he(?) was wild(?) ...
 [...] her fiery blast [...] this goddess [...]
 [...] ... crocodiles(?) of the water [...] again [...]
 like the going forth of a storm wind (*dꜥꜣ*),
 like [...] like [...]

Though unique in its present form, the tale has obvious similarities to the stories surrounding the semitic goddesses Astarte and Anat who were adopted into the Egyptian pantheon in the New Kingdom, and whose myths were adapted for an Egyptian audience.⁴¹ Both goddesses are attacked on the shore; Astarte is covered by the sea (*ym*) during a struggle between the gods, and the warlike Anat is raped by Seth while she is bathing. A description of the cippus goddess as raging "like Asia" may point to this semitic origin, though her moments of calm like pacified Nubia probably reflect an assimilation with Hathor and Isis who appear in magical contexts as Nubian healers.⁴² The crocodiles which appear in the new tale are called "impurities" (*snmꜣ*), cf. *Wb* 3, 46(12–3), and provide the source of the goddess's inflammation and the mythological counterparts to the animals which could threaten the user of the stela. The water which washes away the fire of the goddess has its counterpart in the water used in the stela procedure. Water poured over the stela would again wash the poison from the goddess; when drunk, the water would extinguish the burning of the patient.

It is by no means surprising that a new mythological narrative should appear within a magical context, since magical texts (PT, CT, BD, P, Bremner-Rhind etc.) are often our best native source for information on Egyptian mythology and theological speculation. One should resist the common temptation to class such mythic spells as personal distortions of "official mythology" for specific practical ends. Spells and theology both derive from the same literate priestly authors, were conserved together in the temple scriptoria ("Houses of Life"), and have equal claims to "official" status.⁴³ If hymns and spells can interchange, accompanied by rites both public and private, it is because both constitute legitimate, traditional "applied theology."⁴⁴ "Magic" cannot grow at the expense of Egyptian "religion," since it is inherent in Egyptian religion. The development of new types of healing statues does not imply religious decline, but religious creativity. The presence of new mythic spells in later Egypt does not signal intellectual stagnation, but continued theological speculation. If my understanding of

41 Stadelmann, 1975; Roccati, 1972.

42 Koenig, 1987; Borghouts, 1970, p. 151, n. 359.

43 Gardiner, 1938.

44 Te Velde, 1969–70, p. 176.

the composite nature of the cippus deity and Tithi be correct, later Egyptian theology — even within magical texts — cannot be dismissed as simplistic, but acknowledged as complex, a conclusion confirmed by the elaborate theological systems known from such Greco-Roman temples as Edfu, Kom Ombo and Esna, and from philosophizing Egyptian priests like the Stoic Chaeremon.⁴⁵

It is this very complexity of later Egyptian religion which may be one of the many factors responsible for its downfall. Far from relapsing into "moribund superstition," the latest Egyptian theologians — like their contemporaries the Greek philosophers — seem to have produced a religion too intellectually sophisticated for general understanding. The contrasting simplicity of Christianity was undoubtedly a factor in its success. In any case, "magic" cannot be blamed for the decline in Egyptian popular religion, since the continued vitality of "magical" concepts throughout the Christian centuries has been noted in the tales of the saints, and it is instructive to learn that the cippus motif was equally hardy and had influence outside Egypt. The posture of trampling crocodiles was selected by the Greek writer Lucian of the second century to depict the Egyptian magician Panocrates whose feats include crossing the Nile by riding atop crocodiles (*Philopseudes* 34). The Roman emperor Hadrian issued coinage showing himself as Horus, spearing a crocodile which he tramples beneath his foot.⁴⁶ Horus as a mounted Roman centurian slaying the crocodile Seth provided a direct antecedent for illustrations of Saint George and the dragon, and the medieval collection "Physiologus" may preserve among its animal fables the memories of the young naked Horus repelling serpents.⁴⁷ The most striking examples of these survivals appear on certain Byzantine gems and amulets, where crocodiles are trampled underfoot by a nude youthful figure provided with a halo and surrounded by saints: "Christ on the Crocodiles."⁴⁸

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- 45 Cauville, 1983 and 1987; Gutbub, 1973; Sauneron, 1962; Van der Horst, 1984.
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PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIETY IN THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CULT OF THE DEAD

Alan B. Lloyd

Much of the substantial corpus of scholarly work devoted to the Ancient Egyptian mortuary cult and its ramifications is concerned with the minute study of details of belief and practice. Whilst acknowledging fully the heavy debt which I owe to this earlier Egyptological research, I wish to raise in this paper questions of a rather different nature. These are essentially directed at one single aim: to elucidate as precisely as possible the psychological and sociological factors which determined the character of the Ancient Egyptian cult of the dead, above all as it manifested itself in the early New Kingdom.

A survey of the religious systems of any society would probably indicate that the nature of funerary beliefs and practice is determined by at least five factors: the concept which a society holds of the nature of man, i.e. the component parts of his personal identity; the society's concept of the relationship between the individual and his social context; the society's concept of the position of man within the cosmos; basic human reactions to the phenomenon of bereavement which modern psychological and anthropological research has shown to follow a consistent pattern irrespective of culture; and, finally, the society's beliefs on the nature of the afterlife. We can do no better than conduct our analysis on the basis of these five perspectives.

The Egyptian Concept of the Nature of Man

Any society's conception of what happens after death and, *ipso facto*, its ritual responses must clearly be determined to a considerable extent by its ideas on the nature of the human organism. To take a familiar example, Christianity has inherited from Greek thought the conviction that man is composed of two elements: the body, which is material, and the soul, which is not. If we consider Christian ideas on the fate of the dead, we find that they consistently centre around the question of the fate of these elements and that the twin concepts of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body have become key principles of Christian eschatology.

¹ See, e.g., Badham, 1976, pp. 47 ff.

The Egyptians were no exception to the rule. Written and archaeological evidence clearly reveals that they regarded the human being as a complex composite of many parts, all of which were essential to his existence as a person. The loss of one meant the loss of all. Many of these elements were believed to exist while he was still alive, whilst others appeared or, at least, only assumed importance after death.

Some of the most illuminating texts in this respect are to be found in the tomb of the Eighteenth Dynasty scribe Amenemhet (no. 82) in the Theban necropolis.² They occur in the north and south walls of the shrine and function as a commentary to representations of offering-bearers serving the deceased owner. In the text on the south wall, which is severely damaged, the offerings are said to be brought to a series of entities connected with Amenemhet which are almost entirely items of significance from the time of the individual's conception until his death. The relevant section reads: '... for his *k3*, for his stela belonging to this tomb which is in the necropolis, for his fate (*h3*), for his lifetime, for his Meskenet, for his Renenet, and for his Khnum. May these gods cause him to have control of them (sc. the offerings), be rich with them, be triumphant with them. ...' Some of these entities are connected with his birth and rearing (*Mshut*, *Rent*, *Hmnw*);³ two with his life and its character (*s3*, *h*) and one is the focal point of the cult ('*b3*').⁴ The text on the north wall, also damaged, refers to aspects of the person which assumed importance after death: '... for his *k3*, for his stela ... [for] his [*b3*], for his *h3*, for his corpse (*h3t*), for his shadow (*šwt*), and for all his manifestations (*hprw*). May these gods <cause> him to have superabundance of these (sc. offerings), that he should be joined with them, that he should eat of them and drink of them like the ancestors for ever.' These entities are all presented to us on exactly the same terms, and all are treated as divinities capable of receiving offerings and conferring them upon the deceased, but the majority are integral elements of Amenemhet as a person which recur frequently in Egyptian texts (*k3*, *b3*, *h3t*, *šwt*, *hprw*).

The *k3* is a much discussed concept.⁵ It is often personified as a person's double and

- 2 De Garis Davies and Gardiner, 1915, pls. XIX-XX, XXII-III, with pp. 98 ff.
- 3 Clearly three divinities, *Mshut* being the goddess presiding over birth, *Rent* being the child's nurse, and *Hmnw* being responsible for the fashioning of its body. Gardiner translates *Mshut* as 'birth-place' and *Rent* as 'upbringing' which are certainly possible renderings, but they are much less likely than those favoured in the text. The facts that Khnum is indubitably a birth god and that *Mshut* and *Rent* frequently feature as divinities associated with birth and its aftermath prove that the three entities must be treated as deities. We, therefore, have an intriguing non-royal parallel to the description of the birth of the Fifth Dynasty kings in the Westcar Papyrus (Sethe, 1928, pp. 32 ff.; Simpson (ed.), 1977, pp. 26 ff.).
- 4 The stela, whatever its form and whether set up in isolation or as part of a tomb, functioned as a liminal point where contact between the living and the dead became possible (cf. Bonnet, 1952, pp. 260 ff.; Martin in Helck *et alii* (eds.), 1975-76, VI, 1 ff.
- 5 Bonnet, 1952, pp. 357 ff.; Greven, 1952; Sainte Fare Garnot, 1955, pp. 17 ff.; Kees, 1956 (1980), pp.

is probably best described as the vital element within a human being. It was believed to have been born with him; it remained with him all his life; and it lived on after death. The *b3* is best described as 'vital power'.⁶ It certainly existed during a man's life (*Prahlope*, 524-5; *Lebensmilde*, *passim*)⁷ but assumed major importance after his death when it was regarded as being closely linked to the body, though separable from it. Its capacity for action and movement is a prominent theme which doubtless explains why it is frequently depicted as a human-headed bird. The body, or physical form, can be denoted by a variety of terms. During life it is usually called the *ht*, which refers to the body simply as a physical entity, but it can also be described as *jrw*, 'form, appearance', which emphasizes the fact that the body is the physical form in which someone appears and is effective in life. In death, the favourite terms are *h3t*, 'corpse', or *s' h* 'mummy'.⁸ The emphasis on the *šwt* or shadow is one of the less expected aspects of the Egyptian concept of the person, though anthropologists would have no difficulty in finding parallels;⁹ whilst it was regarded as an essential part of the living person, it is most often mentioned in connection with the dead. It has close affinities with the mummy and shows the earthly silhouette of the deceased, but it is black in colour.

There are, however, two other essential elements of the personality which do not feature in the Amenemhet texts, though they figure prominently in the mortuary literature, i.e. the *rn*, 'name', and the *jb* or *h3yt*, 'the heart'. It is quite clear that to the Ancient Egyptian the name was not simply a phonetic symbol applied to somebody or something, but was part of his or its very essence.¹⁰ For a man's name to be destroyed or forgotten meant his total destruction. The heart is another element frequently mentioned.¹¹ To the Egyptians it was both the seat of the intellect and also the seat of a man's moral being. If a man were to survive as a moral, thinking agent, the heart's survival had to be guaranteed.

The *h3t* differs in character from all the entities just discussed since it was not regarded as part of the individual but represented the total person in a state of

- 44 ff.; Schweitzer, 1956; Zandee, 1960, p. 184.
- 6 Bonnet, 1952, pp. 74; Sainte Fare Garnot, 1955, pp. 22 ff.; Kees, 1956 (1980), pp. 36 ff.; Zandee, 1960, pp. 176 ff.; Wolf-Brinkmann, 1968; Zakkai, 1968; Goedicke, 1970, pp. 20 ff.
- 7 Zäba, 1956, pp. 100, 162; Simpson (ed.), 1977, pp. 159 ff., 201 ff.; Goedicke, 1970, p. 25.
- 8 Bonnet, 1952, pp. 675 ff.; Kees, 1956 (1980), pp. 52 ff.; Zandee, 1960, pp. 182 ff.; George, 1970.
- 9 Obbink, 1925; Bonnet, 1952, pp. 501 ff.; Sainte Fare Garnot, 1955, p. 18; Kees, 1956 (1980), pp. 52 ff.; Zandee, 1960, pp. 179 ff.
- 10 Plankoff, 1930; Bonnet, 1952, pp. 296 ff.; Kees, 1956 (1980), pp. 54 ff.; Zandee, 1960, pp. 174 ff., 180 ff.; Brunner, 1965, pp. 81 ff. The words *ht* and *h3yt* both occur from an early period, but the latter becomes progressively more common. Insofar as a distinction is made by the Egyptians, *h3yt* tends to refer to the heart as a physical entity whilst *ht* denotes the heart as the centre of a human being's moral and intellectual being.

beatitude and power beyond the grave, i.e. it is nothing less than the deceased reconstituted and placed in all respects in a position where he can function according to the Egyptian concept of the blessed dead.¹¹

None of any of this need surprise us, though Egyptian thinking on the matter has not infrequently been regarded as a rather exotic, if not positively bizarre, phenomenon. Essentially, the Egyptians were engaging in a process of particularly concrete conceptualisation of their perception or experience of different aspects of the person. All of these entities could be described as *hprw*, 'manifestations', as implied by the word-order of the text on the north wall of Amenemhat's shrine, though they far from exhaust the possible modes of revelation available to the dead.¹² Essentially, the *k3* is the individual's vitality, his *b3* the capacity for movement and effectiveness, the *h1* and *rn* represent his individuality in terms of physical appearance and personality respectively, the *swt* was a mysterious physical entity which appeared to belong to an individual but came and went in different forms and sizes, and the *jb/h3y* described the intellectual/emotional/moral dimension of the personality. They can all be depicted or described as having the capacity to function apart from each other, but they were ultimately regarded as integral parts of a complex psycho-physical system making up the individual.

Individual and Society

Most men are enmeshed, to a greater or lesser degree, in a network of personal relationships and, within this context, their demise will normally be experienced as a seriously disruptive event, both psychologically and socially. The gap created in the nexus of family relations compels its members to undertake a process of reorientation and readjustment which may require a considerable time to accomplish; dispersal of the deceased's property is frequently a matter of consuming concern and the subject of elaborate social convention and legal regulation. It is, however, psychological readjustment which constitutes the most immediate problem. All societies generate institutional structures for dealing with these issues, e.g. rituals of mourning, laws of inheritance, and rites of commemoration, but, since societies differ greatly in their organization and conception of social relations, it is hardly surprising that they show considerable divergence in their reactions to these problems.¹³

In Ancient Egypt the nuclear family was of central importance and was cemented by a keen awareness of kinship in blood, an acute sense of mutual obligation, and, ideally at any rate, by close bonds of mutual affection to which the texts frequently

11 Bonnet, 1952, p. 4; Kees, 1956 (1980), pp. 36 ff.; Zandee, 1960, p. 174; Englund, 1978; Demaree, 1983; Friedman, 1985.

12 'Trt *hprw* spells, i.e. spells for 'making manifestations' in a variety of different forms are a significant element in the mortuary literature (e.g. BD 76-88).

13 See, e.g., Freud, 1955, pp. 51 ff.; Mead, 1952; Goody, 1962.

refer. Age was of great importance, and the young were expected to revere their elders.¹⁴ However, the perception of death within the family is far from the end of the matter. Each individual functioned, in addition, as a member of a particular community or district.¹⁵ It is also important to remember that each was acutely aware of being a subject of Pharaoh and of the role of Pharaoh as the central institution, indeed the integrating mechanism, in Egyptian society.¹⁶ It would, therefore, be reasonable to expect that perceptions of these extra-familial affinities would also leave their stamp on Egyptian mortuary belief and practice.

Man and the Cosmos

All men have some conception, however dim, of their position within the cosmos, though they might not choose to speak in such terms and often would not be able to formulate their ideas or feelings on the matter in a particularly coherent way. Such concepts may be entirely materialistic and mechanistic: the universe, including man, may be regarded as the product of nothing more than the interplay of physical forces. Alternatively, the orientation may be religious, and the individual may consider his world as the creation of a divine being or beings who continue to function within it and with whom he enjoys a permanent relationship. If he regards his position simply as that of one piece of matter within a totally material cosmos, his concept of death and his reaction to it will be very different from that of a man who is convinced of the existence and relevance of a concerned and beneficent divine order, and, if one is committed to a belief in such an order, the concept of the *nature* of that divine order must also be of cardinal importance.

The Egyptian, in the main, was convinced that the universe in which he functioned was characterized by a moral order and that the divine beings immanent within it were generally concerned with the maintenance of that divine order. He was also convinced that the cosmos was populated by several orders of being, four of which dominated the tradition: the gods, *akhw* (*3hw*), the dead, the men.¹⁷ It is, however, crucially important to remember that there was no unbridgeable gulf set between any of these 'tiers'; the best way to describe their relationship is as a continuum of being rather than a

14 Gardiner, 1935, pp. 19 ff.; Lloyd, 1983, pp. 310 ff.

15 E.g. it is not uncommon to find late Old Kingdom, First Intermediate Period, and Middle Kingdom tomb inscriptions in which the dead make statements like: 'I came from my city and went down from my home' where the loss of the departed is being seen in the context of the local community as whole (Polotsky, 1929, p. 27). This point of emphasis probably arises at this stage in Egyptian history because the relative decentralization of political power had led to a stronger focus on local affairs.

16 The bibliography on Egyptian kingship is substantial: see, *inter alios*, Moret, 1902; Bonnet, 1952, pp. 380 ff.; Posener, 1960; Homung, 1966; Helck *et alii* (eds.), 1975-; III, 462 ff., 475 ff., 526 ff.; Trigger *et al.*, 1983, pp. 71 ff., 186 ff., 288 ff.

17 Cf. CT I, 207c; II, 152c; III, 8a; IV, 19d, 75a-b; VI, 204, 1, 300j; BD 175, 71; Gardiner, 1935, p. 10.

hierarchy whose elements are characterized by a fundamental difference of essence. Death transferred man to the status of one of the dead; once dead, the Egyptian hoped for transmutation into one of the *3ḥw*, and in certain rare cases an *3ḥ* might become a *mr*. The great divide was death: the dead were in a liminal state mediating between that of being members of the living and one of the two higher and more potent orders of being.

There are, however, two further ideas of importance: first, the relationship between man and the other three groups was one of mutual need in which the principle of reciprocity played an important role: man needed them and they needed man; for the gods and the *akhw* were not immortal in an absolute sense; their immortality was dependent upon their receiving offerings, rituals, and incantations within temples, shrines, or some other liminal area where contact could be made.¹⁸ Secondly, the Egyptian was convinced that, through words of power and ritual action (*heka*), he had the capacity to affect his relationship with the gods and also his situation within the cosmos in general. *Heka* was obtained by knowledge of the incantations and action systems which were believed to be capable of achieving particular ends.¹⁹

On the basis of this analysis we should expect the following features in the cult of the dead: a pervasive awareness of a divinely ordered and morally structured cosmos; recognition that post-mortem status, once attained, was not definitively attained but was dependent on assistance from the living; and a heavy emphasis on the knowledge of ritual and incantations of power to attain the purposes of the living and the dead.

The Psychology of Grief

Studies conducted both by psychologists and social anthropologists have isolated several important and consistent elements in human reactions to bereavement.²⁰ Here I should like to insist on four points:

- (a) Reactions are frequently characterized by an ambivalence which is composed of two elements: a sense of loss, on the one hand, and a sense of fear and hostility, on the other; in addition, feelings of guilt and even anger can frequently be identified. At what point within this range of possibilities a given society will place its main emphasis must be culturally determined. Almost always the bereaved will experience a sense of loss, and, in modern western society, that is the main focus of interest. Where this happens, there is usually strong social pressure to restrain any negative attitude, but negative responses can have a noticeable effect on the way in which people perceive and react to a

¹⁸ Gardiner, 1935, pp. 10 ff.

¹⁹ Zandee, 1960, pp. 181 ff.; Te Velde, 1970, pp. 175 ff.; Hornung, 1982, pp. 208 ff.; Demarée, 1983, p. 231.

²⁰ PinCUS, 1976; Parkes, 1980; Raphael, 1984; Osterweis *et alii* (eds.), 1984.

bereavement. In the words of Margaret Mead: '... in cases where strong hostility and death wishes have been felt, what may be merely a conscious conflict in many individuals, may show itself as severe disturbance in others.' Fear and or hostility to the dead are also frequently in evidence. Mead speaks of the hostility to the dead, the fear of an invasion of the reorganized lives of the survivors by the troublesome memory and presence of the dead.²¹ This commonly manifests itself as the desire to get the dead removed from the orbit of the living as quickly and with as much finality as possible, but this does not necessarily eradicate a sense of fear or of guilt, indeed it may powerfully reinforce it.

- (b) Grieving is not a short-term state but a long-term process which shows several clearly defined stages: numbness, pining, depression, and recovery.

- (c) Attempts at mitigation of the loss are frequently in evidence and are an important factor in helping people cope with grief. Simply defined, these attempts reflect the urge to nullify the fact of death itself.

- (d) An important consideration in reconciling the bereaved to the fact of death is the conviction that the dead have in some way been recovered.

On the basis of this analysis, we should expect to find, or at least we should be entitled to look for, the operation of psychological reactions to bereavement, which, at a positive level, revolved around a sense of loss and reconciliation or, if you prefer the terminology of the social anthropologist, separation and aggregation. It would not, however, be surprising if we were to identify negative responses to the dead such as fear and hostility.

The Egyptian Afterlife

The beliefs of the Ancient Egyptians on the nature of the Afterlife emerge from mortuary texts and various types of archaeological evidence.²² It is clear that they usually expected it to be essentially like life on earth. Their needs in life would be their needs beyond the grave, and the state of blessedness was the attainment of all these requirements for eternity. It is this hope which is reflected in the hundreds of tomb paintings and reliefs surviving from Ancient Egypt. One should not, however, allow oneself to succumb too readily to the very real charms of these scenes. The attainment of the state of blessedness was believed to be fraught with dangers which are graphically described in the *Book of the Dead* and cognate material where we

²¹ Mead, 1952, p. 414.

²² Loc. cit.

²³ For surveys see, e.g., Vandier, 1949, pp. 71 ff.; Kees, 1956 (1980); Hornung, 1968, id., 1972. However, the most effective way to get to grips with the subject is probably to read a translation of the *Book of the Dead*.

encounter a grim catalogue of the perils which the deceased must face before he can reach the Field of Reeds or the Field of Offerings, the sojourn of the Blessed. These perils could even include the dead themselves since the concept of the malevolent dead capable of preying upon both the inhabitants of the underworld as well as the living is clearly in evidence in surviving sources, e.g. in the well-known letter to the dead contained in P. Leiden 371 where a widower accuses his deceased wife, Ankhty of harming him after her death:

To the efficacious spirit 'Ankhty! What evil thing have I done to you that I should have come into this wretched state in which I am? What have I done to you? What you have done is lay hands on me, although I have done nothing, evil to you. Since I lived with you as husband up to today, what have I done to you that I must hide (it)? What <have I done> to you? What you(?) have done is that I must bring this accusation against you. What have I done to you? I will lay a complaint against you in the presence with words of my mouth, in the presence of the Divine Ennead of the West, and it shall be decided between you and me <by means of> this writing ...²⁴

This negative dimension in the Egyptian concept of post-mortem existence is easily explained as a series of typically concrete projections of the dread of death itself whilst the fear of the dead exemplifies the negative side of the ambivalence which we have already described in our discussion of the psychology of bereavement.

Let us now proceed to analyse the rituals of death as they appear in the early New Kingdom in order to determine whether the factors identified in our previous discussion are indeed in evidence in it, and, if so, how they affected it.

Briefly summarized, Egyptian funerary practices consisted of a period of mourning and preparation of the corpse, the interment, and the conduct of a regular cult of the deceased which was intended to last indefinitely. All this, of course, could be preceded by years of preparation in constructing and decorating the tomb and the establishment of a mortuary endowment,²⁵ but for our purposes this activity needs no detailed exposition. If we subject these Egyptian practices to analysis on the basis of our discussion of the phenomenon of bereavement, the psychological infrastructure immediately becomes clear. It is evident that the programme has three basic stages: the separation stage when the living are reacting to their sense of loss; the recovery stage where the living attempt to recover the deceased; and the maintenance stage when the living operate on the assumption that the dead have been recovered and affirm their continued relationship with them through rituals of maintenance.

²⁴ Gardiner, 1928, pp. 8 ff., 23 ff.; id., 1935, pp. 19 ff.; cf. Demarée, 1983, pp. 213 ff.

²⁵ Probably the most impressive extant demonstration of careful preparation for death is to be found in the well-known Twelfth Dynasty tomb-inscriptions of Hapwyjefu I at Sidi (Seltie, 1928, pp. 92 ff.; Porter and Moss, 1934, IV, p. 261 ff.), but they were far from unique.

1. The Separation Stage

The moment of death is almost never depicted in Egyptian art, a fact which, in itself, reflects the distaste with which the Ancient Egyptians regarded the phenomenon.²⁶ This is paralleled by their disinclination to speak of it using stark expressions such as *mw.t*, 'to die'. Instead, they have a marked tendency to employ euphemisms such as 'to moor' (*mnj*), 'to be at rest' (*hnp*), or 'to tread the ways of rejuvenation to the Western Land' (*hnp w3wt nfrwt nt jmnt*). This illustrates a world-wide psychological reaction to death, viz. the attempt to annihilate it, i.e. it is an example of the phenomenon of mitigation. The beginning of the period of mourning and preparation of the corpse is graphically described by the Greek historian Herodotus in the fifth century BC:

In the case of people in whose houses there perishes a man of some consequence, all the females from these houses smear their heads with dust, and sometimes also the face, and then they leave the corpse in the house and themselves wander through the town and beat their breasts, with garments girt up and revealing their breasts, and with them all his female relatives. And the males beat their breasts separately, these too with their garments girt up. And when they have done this, so do they carry forth the corpse to be mummified (II, 85).

This preparation phase could last as long as 70 days and clearly served a variety of important functions. In the first instance, it confronted the problem of the preservation of the body as part of the individual's personality; secondly, inasmuch as mummification was believed to have been practised first on the dismembered body of the god Osiris and the mummy was perceived as a potential Osiris, mummification assisted the transference of the deceased from one level of the hierarchy of being to another; in the third place, the activity was a ritual activity in which *heka* was mobilized to bring about a change in nature; finally, at a psychological and social level this lengthy process provided a hiatus between death and burial which facilitated the transition within the deceased's social grouping from the shock of the catastrophe of death through assimilation of that fact to a sense of the reintegration of the deceased within the consciousness of the group in a new form. Not surprisingly, as the Herodotus passage indicates with particular clarity, this entire process was something in which the immediate family was particularly closely concerned, but it is also clear that the situation was a matter of general social interest in which the entire local community was expected in some measure to participate.

²⁶ An exception is provided by a representation in the Fifth Dynasty tomb of Wasaphah I at Saqqara (Porter and Moss, 1978, III, 2, p. 456; Lloyd, 1976, p. 351).

2. The Recovery Stage

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In the next stage, the funeral, the process of transfiguration initiated by the rite of mummification was completed. It consisted, first of all, of a procession in which the mummy was taken to the tomb with much pomp and circumstance, accompanied by mourners, priests, and grave goods. It is described in the following terms in the Twelfth Dynasty *Story of Sinuhe*:

Think of the day of burial, the passing to the state of reverence, when a night funeral procession is made for you on the day of burial, the mummy case in the hearse, oxen drawing you and musicians being before you as you lie in state, the dance of the *mw* is performed at the door of your tomb, and the offering-list is read for you, and sacrifice is made at your offering-stone ...²⁷

This phase was followed by the rituals of transfiguration (*s3hm*) conducted at the tomb. Of these the most important was the *Wpr-r* or the Ritual of the Opening of the Mouth, in which the mummy, already potentially Osiris, was restored to the fullness of life. This took place outside the tomb door and was aimed at the resuscitation of the mummy by restoring all its bodily functions; thereby a crucial step was taken in converting the deceased into an *3h*. The mummy, supported by a priest functioning as Anubis, was placed upright on a red mound of sand symbolizing birth or rebirth,²⁸ and the ritual proper was then initiated by the *sm*-priest using special instruments and incantations, e.g. *wn.n(i) n.k rk wp.n(i) n.k rk m nw 3hpn wp(w) r n ntr nb im.f*, 'I open for you your mouth. I open for you your mouth with the *adze* of Anubis with which the mouths of every god are opened.' Throughout this ritual the intense involvement of the family is clear and is frequently expressed by assimilating the activities to the mythological prototype of the funeral of Osiris. The most striking illustration of this in these rituals is the role of the figure called *s3fmy*, 'his beloved son,' who is, for cult purposes, none other than Horus, son of Osiris. However, the successful transfiguration of the dead into a divine being was not in itself a guarantee of eternal life. His continued enjoyment of that life was dependent upon a further factor: his successful establishment and maintenance in the land of the dead — and that brings us to the third phase in the cult of the dead.

²⁷ *Sinuhe*, 190-6.

²⁸ For this ceremony see Budge, 1909; Gardiner, 1915, pp. 57 ff.; Otto, 1960; Goyon, 1972, pp. 85 ff.

3. The Maintenance Stage

The necessity of supporting the dead after interment emerges clearly in several contexts. Mortuary texts, e.g. the *Book of the Dead*, were evolved which the living could deposit with the dead themselves for this purpose and which enabled the latter to participate in their own process of maintenance. These compilations contained information on words of power and rituals (*hekā*) which the deceased could use to cope with the manifold problems which might impair his establishment and maintenance as an *3h ikr* in the Underworld. In such literature the problem of the maintenance of the personality by the maintenance of its essential constituents enjoys particular prominence: the *k3* frequently features, e.g. *BD* 105 is described as a *r n ship k3*, 'Spell for satisfying the *k3*,' the preservation of the *b3* is a recurrent concern, e.g. *BD* 61 is entitled *r n m rdti nhm. tw b3 s m-f m hrt-ntr*, 'Spell for preventing that a man's *b3* should be taken from him in the necropolis,' *BD* 89 begins *r n rdti dmi b3 h3t f m hrt-ntr*, 'Spell for causing that the *b3* should attach itself to its body in the necropolis,' and *BD* 130 bears the rubric *ky r n sikh 3h hrw mswr R' s'nh b3 r nhn*. 'Another spell for making an *3h* efficacious on the day of Rē's birthday and for causing a *b3* to live for ever'; the continued existence of the body is a matter of intense interest and is expressed in particularly compelling terms in *BD* 154 which is entitled *r n m rdti sy h3t*, 'Spell for preventing a corpse decomposing.' It concludes:

I am Khepri. My members shall endure for ever. I have not decayed. I have [not become bloated]. I have not decomposed. I have not become rotten. I have not gone to the eye of Shu. I exist, I exist, alive, enduring, enduring. I have awakened in peace. I have not become bloated. I, that is, my viscera, have not perished. I have not been mutilated, my eyes have not become inflamed, my skull has not [suffered], my ears have not become deaf, my head has not left my neck, my tongue has not been taken, my hair has not been cut off, my eyebrows have not fallen out. No evil hurt shall befall me; for my corpse abides. It has not passed away, it has not perished from this land for ever.

The concern with the fate of the *šwt* is also easily documented, often in association with the *b3*. Spell 92 is entitled *r n wn is n b3 n šwt f*, 'Spell for opening the tomb for his *b3* and for his *šwt*,' and the same association emerges in *BD* 188:

'You have transfigured (me) with soul and shadow, so that we may be seen yonder. May it (sc. my shadow) see him (my soul) when it is assigned wherever he is in my form ... <L.O.> (you have) let (my) soul and (my) shadow run about on foot wherever <that man> is. He who sees him, whether standing or seated, he can enter his bodily house ...'

Spell 25 of the *Book of the Dead* guarantees continuation of the name:
 Spell for causing N. to remember his name in the necropolis. To be said by N.:
 I have put my name in the Upper Egyptian shrine, I (have) made my name to
 be remembered in the Lower Egyptian shrine, on this night of counting the
 years and of numbering the months ...

Several spells in the *Book of the Dead* are concerned with the preservation of the
 heart, e.g. Spell 29A reads:

Spell for not seizing <N>'s heart in the necropolis. He says, 'My heart is with
 me; it shall not be seized. I am lord of hearts and slayer of breasts ... I am
 Horus who dwells in hearts and lodges in entrails ... My heart exists; it shall
 not be taken away.'

The triumphant reintegration of all these elements into an individual *akh* is guaranteed
 by the vivid words of the late spell BD 191:

Spell for bringing the soul to the body. To be said by (Osiris N.): O you who
 carry off the souls of the living. O you who cut off shadows, O all you gods
 who are over the living, come, bring Osiris N.'s soul (to him), that it may
 unite with his body, that his heart may be glad, that his soul may come to his
 body (and) to his heart. Bring his soul into his body (and) into his heart;
 provide his soul with his body (and) with (his) heart. Bring them to him, gods,
 in the *hwt*-temple in Heliopolis beside Shu, the son of Atum. He has his
 heart like *Rē*, he has his breast like *Khepri*. Twice pure (are the offerings) for
 your spirit, for your body, for your soul, (for your corpse), for your shadow,
 for your mummy, (O N.), in the nether world for ever.

This was far from being the only concern, however, and we find other incantations
 intended to preserve the deceased from obstacles and dangers, to guarantee
 beatification, to allow conversion into or association with a god, and to guarantee
 lay powerful emphasis on the assessment of the moral character of the deceased's life,
 and anyone who failed this judgement was condemned to annihilation.²⁹ In these texts
 we are clearly confronted with an example of the classic situation so often observed
 by students of religion, i.e. the moral system prevalent in a given society is often observed
 into the realm of the gods and related beings so that they too become its transposed
 and, *ipso facto*, its guarantors and validation.
 For the living, however, there were two contexts above all where continual
 participation in a cult of maintenance could be ensured: the tomb and the domestic

²⁹ On the judgement of the dead in Ancient Egypt see Spiegel, 1935; Maystre, 1937; Bonnet, 1952, pp.

334 ff.; Yoyotte, 1961, pp. 15 ff.; Seeber, 1976, id. in Helck *et alii*, 1975, III, 249 ff.

cult of the ancestors. The tomb must ultimately be seen as an installation for
 maintaining the deceased in life, a liminal area where the dead and the living could
 meet and the deceased could receive the support from the living which was necessary
 for their survival. Not only did it shelter the deceased's body, but in its most elaborate
 form it contained grave goods for use in the afterlife, statues and reliefs of the
 deceased to function as substitute bodies, and his name, usually repeated many times
 over — yet another illustration of the central importance of the maintenance of the
 basic constituents of the personality. The tomb also contained a mortuary chapel or at
 least an offering place where rituals of maintenance were performed on behalf of the
 deceased. These were designed to assist the deceased's survival by ensuring a regular
 stream of offerings and also by celebrating rituals of transfiguration (*s3jw*) which
 were intended by words and actions of power to reinforce the precarious immortality
 of the deceased beyond the grave. Tomb inscriptions insist with particular force on the
 requirement of performing the mortuary service on the major feast days of the
 Egyptian religious calendar. The theoretical basis of this offering ritual is clear: in the
 first place, it was a cult in which the relationship between the celebrant and the
 deceased was conceived of as familialistic; for, even when the celebrant was a paid
 professional priest, he was regarded as the son and the deceased as the father. As in
 earlier phases of the cult of the dead, this concept finds expression and validation by
 assimilating the relationship to that of Horus and Osiris, the mythic prototypes of the
 father-son relationship; the familialistic nature of the mortuary cult also emerges in the
 insistence that the deceased can continue to participate in major events in family life
 such as the major feast days. The second point to emphasize is the fact that the king
 also plays a theoretical role of major importance in that the formula of offerings insists
 that it is he who is the ultimate source of the offerings made to the dead; they are
 stated over and over again to be *hwp dj nsw*, 'A boon which the king gives ...'. In
 death, as in life, the dependence of the Egyptian on Pharaoh is absolute.

The tomb was not, however, the only liminal area where the living could confront
 and assist the dead and at the same time continue their relationship with them. It is
 clear that at least in some households rooms or chapels were set aside in which stelae
 or busts of recently dead ancestors were kept as a focal point of the cult of
 maintenance.³⁰ It cannot be doubted that such cults were a particularly important part
 of the day-to-day religious practices of the ordinary Egyptian and were based on the
 notions that the ancestors could be expected to preserve their interest in the affairs of
 their living descendants and continued to have obligations to them. We find, therefore,
 that they are expected to function in the role of champions or defenders of the living
 whenever the latter are threatened by danger, and, in return, they receive the offerings
 and incantations which they required for their proper functioning beyond the grave. If
 all these prerequisites were met, the deceased could be maintained as an *3h* beyond the
 grave in a state of triumph, power, and majesty vividly described in BD 137A:

³⁰ Demareé, 1983, pp. 277 ff.; Friedman, 1985, pp. 82 ff.

... he shall be in the retinue of the Imperishable Stars. His soul shall live for ever. He does not die again in the necropolis. He does not perish eternally. He makes his manifold manifestations. He enters by the gates of the secret portals. He is not repelled from the presence of Osiris, ruler of eternity. He is not held back from all the gates of the West. Kindle this flame for the *3h* in the necropolis in the presence of Osiris, the great god, that the gods and *3hw* may see him in the retinue of the Lord of the Westerners. There is no offence against him on the day of judgement, and his triumph shall endure for ever.

We must now conclude. The Egyptian cult of the dead is the product of the interaction of many factors which can be comprehended under two basic headings: fundamental human reactions to bereavement and culturally generated concepts which include the nature of the human personality, the individual's relationship to society and the cosmos, and beliefs on the nature of the afterlife. Ramifications of the psychology of bereavement are easily detected: the long preparation of the corpse for burial can be seen to respond to the long-term nature of the process of grief; the desire to mitigate or attenuate the fact of death shows itself in the unwillingness to contemplate the process of dying; the use of euphemistic language to refer to death, and the conviction that, by ritual activity, the dead can be restored to life; the urge to recover the dead appears in the rituals of the funeral and in the cult of the dead both in the tomb and in the cult of ancestors performed in domestic contexts; fear and hostility are also evident in the notion of the potential malevolence of the dead either to other inhabitants of the underworld or to the living. The effects of culturally determined ideas are even more obviously in evidence: the Egyptian conviction of the need to preserve the personality of the dead is a major theme and is dominated by the conviction that the personality was a complex psycho-physical entity consisting of several essential elements which all needed to be preserved in the post-mortem world. This and other processes which be achieved by the mobilization of *heka* which involved mastery of a system of control of the cosmos guaranteed by specialist knowledge of words and actions of power. With its help the individual could be reconstituted as an *3h* or spirit, but the terms and conditions of his existence clearly reflect typical Egyptian thinking about the nature of divine beings. Just as no god could enjoy immortality unaided by man, so the *3hw* were dependent upon continued support. Here again *heka* is important, and in domestic foci of the ancestor cult. In all this activity we can detect the pervasive influence of the notion that the needs and, *ipso facto*, the life of the deceased are very much like those of the living as well as the concept that the family was not simply an association of its living members but a corporation of the living and the dead. This crucially important familial dimension is given a mythical aspect and validation by assimilating the situation of all the dead to that of Osiris and that of the surviving family to Horus. The socio-political structure of Egyptian society also shows itself in the cultic role of the king, the central institution of the pharaonic world, in that he consistently features in the offering service as a source of offerings. In all

this we are presented with a sequence of rituals and a complex of beliefs which responded not only to individual needs but also locked together in an impressively integrated structure the salient features of the Egyptian world, both divine and human, both individual and societal, and this vision of death was cast in a form of such circumstantial and systematic detail that it almost compelled assent — almost, but not quite. Ch. 175 of the *Book of the Dead* contains the following words:

O Atum, what does it mean, that I proceed there, the Land of Silence, which has no water and no air and is very deep and dark, and where all is lacking and one lives in quietness of heart.

These words bear witness with striking clarity to the fact that the Ancient Egyptians could confront the prospect of the death with as much doubt, perplexity, and fear as other men. For all that, it remains one of the greatest of the many great achievements of their civilization that it was able to generate a corpus of mortuary belief and practice which enabled them to face the awesome and ultimately unfathomable mystery of death with some small measure of confidence.

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DEATH AND INITIATION IN THE FUNERARY RELIGION OF ANCIENT EGYPT*

Jan Assmann

1. Introduction

The idea of interpreting the ritual and conceptual structure of the funerary religion of Ancient Egypt in the light of the anthropological topic of initiation is certainly not new. Thirty years ago, in a fine study on the Egyptian background of the *Magic Flute*,¹ Siegfried Morenz expressed the view that a central aspect of Ancient Egyptian burial ceremonies lay in a sort of priestly initiation to the realm of the dead. Twenty years later, his former student R. Grieshammer was able to substantiate this general hypothesis by capitalizing on one crucial element, the "Negative Confession" in "The Judgement of the Dead",² thereby elevating it to the realm of fact. In 1956, in his article entitled "Zergliedern und Zusammenfügen",³ Alfred Hermann had drawn attention to numerous parallels from initiation rituals throughout comparative religious history which could be related to an archaic Egyptian, albeit only sporadically attested, burial custom, as well as to the admittedly much later documented myth-constituent known as "the dismembering of the body of Osiris." Yet again twenty years later, G.R.H. Wright arrived independently at the same conclusion, obviously without any knowledge of Hermann's work, though he was now able to draw extensively on the material which Mircea Eliade⁴ had since gathered and interpreted. In his opinion, the shamanistic initiation rites originated from a funerary context and were modeled after the pattern of ancient funerary ceremonies. This

* Translated by M. Grauer and R. Meyer. The German version appeared in H. P. Duerr (ed.), *Sehnsucht nach dem Ursprung. Zu Mircea Eliade*, Frankfurt 1983, 338-359.

1 See Morenz 1952.

2 Grieshammer 1974; cf. Merkelbach 1987.

3 Hermann 1956.

4 Wright 1979, cf. Eliade 1975, 470 s.v. "Initiationszerstückelung". For the motif of dismemberment in the Cretan Zagreus Myth see also B. Gallissl 1981, with references to the Egyptian embalming ritual. B. Gladigow 1976 traces the topic of dismemberment back to hunting rituals and places the theme in the broader context of ethics and immortality.

hypothesis combines prior contributions on this subject while following in the same vein. R. Grieshammer's conclusions, however, lead to the inversely formulated premise that the initiation rites, and not vice versa, furnished the prototypes of Egyptian funerary religion; a view which has so far been treated with great reserve.³

Our intention here is to examine, under the specific aspect of initiation, a number of ways in which the general idea of "the passage from this world into the next" was expressed in the Egyptian funerary literature. These funerary texts are primarily known as the Egyptian "Book of the Dead,"⁴ a late canonized corpus of spells which first appeared on papyrus-scrolls, in varying order and combination, in the tomb equipment of deceased persons at the beginning 16th century B.C. (New Kingdom). Quite a few of these spells can be found centuries earlier, in an older and usually better version, on Middle Kingdom coffins (2150-1750 B.C.). These and many others are known as the "Coffin Texts."⁵ Among them, a basic stock can be traced back even as far as the Old Kingdom, where, together with other spells subsequently omitted by funerary tradition, they were used to inscribe the walls of royal burial chambers from the end of the 5th dynasty on (ca. 2450 B.C.).⁶ These "Pyramid Texts" represent the oldest substantial corpus of religious texts known to mankind. Apart from this funerary literature, which was placed in the tomb of the deceased so that he might secure his existence in the next world through command of the appropriate knowledge and which should be qualified as "esoteric" in the sense that it was not meant to be seen by the eyes of mortals and therefore did not share in the process of literary communication, there exists yet another category of funerary literature which might be described as "exoteric." Such texts, the importance and extent of which gradually increased in the course of time, took the form of inscriptions, accompanied by representations, in those parts of the tomb accessible to visitors. We shall draw on texts from both these sources for the purpose of our analysis; from which source in particular need not, as a rule, concern us here, since both seem largely to concur in their respective treatment of "the passage from this world into the next."

The general idea of "transition" underlying all concrete formulations of this theme is of ontic nature: it is conceived as a transformation from one state of being to another which the deceased must undergo. The Egyptian language has a specific word for this "other" state of being: *3y* (akh), which is usually rendered as "spirit" and "brightness" and "radiance." The phonetic root (*j/3y*) conveys the basic meanings of "light" and "place" in the heavens where the sun rises and sets, but also the "land of the blessed" to

³ Besides the work of Morenz 1952, which is representative of the general attitude, cf. Bonnet 1952, 494-496; J.G. Griffiths, in: *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* IV (1980), 276. Especially careful is C.J.

⁴ Bleeker 1965, but he ignores or excludes the evidence on which this study is based.

⁵ The latest translations are due to R.O. Faulkner 1985.

⁶ de Buck 1935-1961, translations: R.O. Faulkner 1973-1978; P. Barquet 1986.

⁷ See 1935-1922, latest translation: R.O. Faulkner 1966.

which the deceased journey after death. "Radiant place," in the Old Kingdom, is also the name of the king's pyramid-tomb, an indication that his entombment is the prefiguration or the equivalent of his ascent to the heavens.⁷ The AKH-sphere is a world of "mythical"⁸ values and realities which, in the course of the Old Kingdom, gradually overlaid an even more ancient world of tangible cultic objects and rituals.⁹ The spoken word provides the ideal means of transposing the realities of "yonder" world into this world of symbolic objects and rituals, but also of transferring the deceased to the beyond, while enabling him to retain his earthly capacity. The Egyptian describes this function of the spoken word with the causative derivation of the phonetic root (*j/3y*), thus arriving at *s-3y* "to transfigure." It is this basic bipolar structure of Egyptian religious texts in general, but more specifically of the funerary literature, of the relationship between this world of visual realities and yonder world of mythical realities which shall concern us again and again in the following discourse. Within this ontic distance between the "here" and "yonder," between visual and mythical reality, lies the initiatory and mystical character of the Egyptian funerary religion. The world of mythical reality stands for a certain knowledge,¹⁰ to which the deceased is initiated, for a cosmic sphere, to which he is transferred, and for a state of being, which he must attain. Let us distinguish, for the sake of clarity, between two variants found in the formulations and illustrations of the "passage" from this world to the next: firstly, those concerned primarily with the spatial aspect ("transition") and secondly, those presenting a more biomorphic model ("rebirth"). That both variants in no way exclude one another, but actually stand in a complementary relationship and in many ways overlap, needs no explanation. Are we not, after all, dealing with metaphors of an ontic transformation which can neither be depicted nor formulated?

2. The "Biomorphic" Models of Transformation

2.1 Dismemberment and Rejoining

Dismemberment of the corpse is attested in Egypt both archeologically, i.e. in burial practices, and in funerary literature, where it represents a central aspect of religious thought. Archeological and literary evidence, however, are separated by a long span of time and are, for a number of further reasons, difficult to relate to each other. Evidence of the burial practice spans the time from the Early Dynastic Period to the beginning

⁹ Cf. the widespread paraphrase for the funerary procession: "to let the god ascend to his horizon" (Luddeckens 1943, 55ff., #21), probably of royal origin. This text is obviously quoted at the beginning of *Simule* (R 7) as a description of a royal funeral.

¹⁰ I am using here the term "mythical" in the sense of "referring to the divine world", cf. Assmann 1977a, 7-42, where I proposed to distinguish between this broad sense of the term, which is the usual one in Egyptology, and a more strict one restricted to myth as a kind of narrative.

¹¹ Schott 1945; Assmann 1984, 102-117.

of the 4th dynasty, though it always represents an exception to the rule and an exclusive prerogative of high standing individuals.¹² The custom disappears in the wake of the development and general adoption of embalment and mummification,¹³ and must rank as its predecessor. As a literary motif, the concept of dismemberment clearly appears in an exclusively negative context:¹⁴ it is either one of the dangers in the netherworld, which must be avoided at all cost,¹⁵ or a metaphorical illustration of the initial state of want, which the manifold resuscitation rites of the funerary cult take up in the sense of a *restitutio ad integrum*.¹⁶ The concept of dismemberment appears here solely as the logical prerequisite of ritual acts, which are conceived as a rejoining of the body.

In the context of the myth of Osiris, the dismemberment of the god's body has dual function and meaning, to which corresponds a dual tradition. Seth has not only killed his brother Osiris, but also, in a second act of violence, cut his corpse to pieces and thrown these into the water. So far, all versions of the myth agree. For the one tradition, however, this dismemberment represents nothing else but a catastrophic state of want, precisely as the funerary texts describe it. This state now becomes the starting point of restorative acts, the goal of which is to cure the condition of death. The rejoining of the limbs of Osiris, found only after a long search, became the prototype for the "overcoming" of death and furnished the mythical precedent¹⁷ for embalment. Embalment and mummification, in the light of the myth of Osiris, are equated with restoration of life to the body, which had by no means to be ritually dismembered beforehand, since its lifelessness alone was mythically interpreted as dismemberment. Dismemberment is thus a symbol for the disintegration of a living entity and a mythical image for the condition of death itself.¹⁸ In the other tradition, this same mythical episode becomes an etiologial myth explaining the spreading of the cult of Osiris throughout Egypt. The water has carried away the pieces of Osiris' body and washed them ashore in 14 different places in the country, where they were preserved as holy relics and formed the nucleus of the Osiris-cult.¹⁹

Only the first of these traditions shall concern us here. The embalming process, to which it refers, is related to the topic of initiation in manifold ways. It is conceived not so much as a preservation of the corpse, but rather as its transfiguration to a new body:

¹² See Hermann 1956 and G.R.H. Wright 1979.
¹³ For Egyptian mummification techniques, see David 1979. For the purpose of the present study, Sethe 1934 is still valid.

¹⁴ In this respect I agree completely with Griffiths 1980, 51ff.
¹⁵ Cf. Zandee 1960, esp. p.147ff.
¹⁶ Cf. Assmann 1973, 121-125.
¹⁷ For this term cf. van der Leeuw 1933, 161-180; Eliade 1954/58, 194-204.
¹⁸ Cf. Assmann 1973.
¹⁹ See Beinlich 1984.

one "filled with magic,"²⁰ the perishable substances of which have been replaced by everlasting ones,²¹ resting in the mummy-cover as if it were a kind of magic garment. The Egyptian word for mummy, *sḥ*, also means "nobility," "dignity" and denotes the elevated sphere of existence to which the deceased has been transferred and initiated in the course of the process of embalment. The mummy-case itself gradually evolved into increasingly lavishly decorated stucco-cartonnage and wooden anthropoid coffins, whereby the pictorial motifs and decoration patterns merely represent an iconographic formulation of the exact same AKH-sphere which is expressed in funerary literature by means of the spoken and written word.

2.2 Rebirth

2.2.1 Placement in the coffin as *regressus ad uterum*

In accordance with the principle of "transfiguration," as the correlation of this world's symbolic objects and actions with yonder world of values and realities, the coffin becomes the body of the sky- and mother-goddess, thus enabling the "placing of the body in the coffin" to be transfigured into the ascent of the deceased to the heavens and the return to the mother-goddess (*regressus ad uterum*).²² In Egypt, the sky is conceived as a female entity, which means that we are not dealing with "mother-earth," but with "mother-sky." The sky-goddess is the Egyptian manifestation of the Great Mother. A central aspect of this belief is the fact that the Egyptians imagined the deceased as being the children of this Mother-of-all-Beings. This mother-child relationship could be attained in death only, through absorption into the goddess:

"The mother of millions, who receives hundreds of thousands."²³

"She loves the entering, she loathes emerging;
 the entire land longs to be there."²⁴

"Their mother is she, who created them all:
 they enter her, all (of them)."²⁵

²⁰ For some exx. of this formula see Assmann 1969, p.196, n.22.

²¹ Cf. similar motifs in the context of the shamanistic initiatory dismemberment, see Eliade 1975.

²² Cf. Rusch 1972; Assmann 1972, 115ff.; id. in: *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* IV (1980), 266-271.

²³ Davies 1933, pl. 55.

²⁴ Pap. Dublin 4, ed. Pierret 1874, pp. 83 ff.

²⁵ Cairo. Sarcophagus of Haremhab (Late Period) ed. Fiehl III, 67ff.

O thou wetnurse, into whom it is good to enter,
 O thou, into whom each and everyone enters, day after day!
 O Great Mother, whose children are not delivered!"²⁶

The texts underline the indissolubility of this bond, or more precisely of the embrace into which the deceased, when laid in his coffin, enters with the sky-goddess, the goddess of the dead. The concept of rebirth, however, still plays an important role. "I shall bear thee anew, rejuvenated," exclaims the sky-goddess to the deceased in one of many such texts inscribed on or in nearly every coffin and tomb.²⁷ "I have spread myself over thee, I have born thee again as a god." Through this rebirth, the deceased becomes a star-god, a member of the AKH-sphere, a new entity. This rebirth, however, does not imply a delivery, a separation, but takes place inside the mother's womb, inside the coffin and sky.²⁸ The constellative relationship of the deceased and the mother-goddess, as shown in pictorial representations and texts, is interpreted and activated in the sense of affiliation and rebirth. It does not represent a transitional state, but the eternal, unalterable basis for a new and higher form of existence. By transfiguring the act of "laying the deceased in the coffin" to a *regressus ad uterum*, the path of life is given a cyclic orientation. The deceased thus gains access to a realm of existence inside her body and is allowed to take part in the cyclic eternity of the stars, the rising and setting of which the Egyptians interpreted as an eternally repeated entering and being born in the sky-goddess.²⁹

2.2.2 Coronation and Rebirth

The deceased, now reborn through the sky-goddess as a god himself, is subsequently breast-fed by divine nurses and elevated to the heavens. This "sacramental interpretation"³⁰ has its roots in a different set of rites than those surrounding the "laying of the deceased in the coffin," notably in the "burning of incense"³¹ (the rising fumes being a symbol of the ascent to the heavens) and in

26 Pap. Louvre 3148, XI. These and other quotes from *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* IV, 268ff.
 27 For a very incomplete compilation of these texts see Rusch 1922. About 70 different texts in among 1000 variants are known to me.
 28 In one of these texts the mother and sky-goddess asserts: "I shall never give birth to thee", see Schott 1965, 81-87. The Egyptian desired to "rejuvenate in the coffin" (cf. e.g. the tale of the *Shipwrecked Sailor*).

29 For the terminology of time and eternity see Assmann 1975.

30 "Sakramentale Ausdeutung," for this term see Assmann 1977a, 15-28.
 31 E.g. Otto 1960, scene 64.

libation³² (fluids being a symbol of divine milk). It should be noted that sacramental interpretations such as "rebirth through the sky-goddess" or "the rejoining of the limbs," in their capacity of events taking place in the divine or AKH-sphere, often enough belong to completely different sets of cultic actions than those connected with the "laying of the deceased in the coffin." A secondary application of one of the aforementioned sacramental interpretations, for example, may be found in the context of the rite of anointment, which might be accompanied by the words: "Thy mother Nut has born thee on this day."³³ Where the action is concerned with the rearing of the child-god, a conspicuous role is played by the two goddesses personifying the crowns of the Egyptian double Kingdom. On the basis of this function, the Greeks even identified one of them with Eleithyia, the Greek goddess responsible for helping women to give birth.³⁴ We can therefore hardly go wrong in assuming that the rites explained as the "nursing of the child-god" originated in the royal coronation ritual.³⁵ Seen under these aspects, the famous cycle of representations known as "the myth of the divine birth," which, in some New Kingdom temples, depicts the announcement, begetting, birth, nursing and circumcision of the royal child,³⁶ appears in a different light. Until now, it had always been interpreted as an elevation of the actual birth of the king to a mythical sphere.³⁷ It seems to me, however, that a reference to the coronation or, better yet, to an initiation to kingship preceding the coronation in the sense of a "naissance mystique"³⁸ would be much nearer to the mark.³⁹ It is admittedly not the sky-goddess, but the actual earthly mother of the child-king who appears as protagonist in the cycle of divine begetting and birth. In the nursing scene, however, the action is taken over by the cow-shaped manifestations of the sky-goddess, the exact same ones, in fact, from which the deceased wishes: "Oh, that I may again come into being under her udders."⁴⁰ It is precisely this mythical icon of the child-king suckling under the Hathor-cow which became the primary cult image in the Hathor temple of Hatshepsut in Der el-Bahri.

The concept of an "initiation to kingship" brings us, without any doubt, to the heart of the problem. If such an initiation truly existed and actually took the form of a

32 See e.g. *ibid.*, scene 63.

33 Otto, *op.cit.*, scene 55A. The following sentence seems to refer to the idea of initiation (the translation is not completely certain): "Thou art made into one who knoweth the unknown".

34 Heerma van Voss 1980, 366.

35 See Leclant 1951, 123-127.

36 See Brunner 1964.

37 Brunner 1964; for the interpretation as a ritual (of birth), see Barta 1975.

38 Eliade 1958.

39 This interpretation is explained in Assmann 1982.

40 Book of the Dead 148. Cf. es-Sayed 1980.

"naissance mystique" with subsequent nursing and elevation to the heavens,⁴¹ then, and only then, may we consider the initiation ceremony to be the source and the prototype of the corresponding funerary beliefs. In this case, the initiation ceremonies of living human beings could not possibly have originated from the rites surrounding initiation rites of "this" world had been transposed, on the contrary, seem more logical, if the sacramental interpretations, into the next world. Unfortunately, this happens to be a very disputed area of research, where evidence is not only sparse, but also extremely difficult to interpret. The aforementioned correlations can in no way be considered to be established fact. They are, however, far less bold than those formulated in another contribution to the topic of "rebirth." I mention it here — without going into detail — because it has begun to exert considerable influence in the field of Egyptology. It is the eighth chapter of Chr. Desroches-Noblecourt's book on Tutankhamun, in which the hardly disturbed findings of his tomb are interpreted with remarkable, if somewhat overstrained sensitivity as a complex of funerary equipment meant to insure the rebirth of the deceased king.⁴²

41 The idea of the ascent to heaven is not realized in the birth cycle, but expressed in a coronation text of Thutmose III, which has obvious initiatory associations:

He opened for me the door-leaves of heaven
and unfolded the gates of his horizon.
I rose to heaven as a divine falcon
and saw his secret image in heaven.
I worshipped His Majesty (...)
I beheld the transformations of *Akhti*
on his secret ways of heaven.
Re himself established me
by distinguishing me with the crowns on his head,
his Uraeus remaining at my forehead.
I was furnished with his *akh*-power
and acquainted with the wisdom of the gods like Horus,
when he counted his body (i.e. became mature)
in the house of his father Amun-Re (etc.)

Compare for the ascent to heaven also n.43.

42 Cf. Desroches Noblecourt 1963; cf. Westendorf 1967.

3. Transition as a "physical passage"

3.1 Knowledge

Those formulations of the transition to the next world where the idea of a "physical passage" predominates speak of a path, along which the deceased must proceed. Such texts describe the aspired higher sphere of existence principally as a "sojourn" in one specific far off place. The Pyramid Texts, our oldest corpus of funerary literature, locate this eternal abode in the northern sky. The path along which the deceased must travel in order to reach this place is almost entirely restricted to the idea of ascending the heavens and to the manifold ways of mastering both the ascent⁴³ and the crossing of the sky.⁴⁴ This relatively simple scheme was subsequently (at the time when the Coffin Texts become our representative source) enormously complicated by the fact that a conception of the netherworld, which had originally been the sole privilege of the king, suddenly becomes accessible to all. We now find an "underworld," centered around the god Osiris, standing in a complementary relationship to the sun-god Re. As a exclusively cosmic conception of a hereafter ruled by the sun-god Re. As a consequence of this veritable revolution of ideas, theological speculation on the hereafter undergoes a process of differentiation and development of hitherto unknown extent. The mastering of this complex and steadily growing body of knowledge on the next world now becomes the primary concern of the deceased. The main purpose of this new genre of funerary literature is to "equip" the dead with the necessary knowledge. The formulation of this knowledge gives the impression of being a science of its own and, curiously enough, it reflects the typical bureaucratic and systematic style of Egyptian daily life, transposed to the next world.⁴⁵ This mediative literary quality has the advantage of making the "eternal" dimension of the hereafter accessible to the earthly sphere of understanding. In other words, it allows for the possibility of describing it as a conceivable plurality of constituents, which may be carefully ordered and named: the 2 ways, the 7 gates, the 21 portals, the 7 heavenly cows and their bull, the 14 hills, the 12 crypts, the field of reeds, the offering-fields, the door-keepers and heralds, the councils and judges, the individual parts of the ferry and of the catching net, etc. etc.⁴⁶ The deceased must not only know the names of all these entities and every detail concerning their nature, he must also have full command of the words needed to face each and everyone of them. The topography of

43 See Assmann 1977c; Davis 1977; J.M. Paysas 1979.

44 Cf. Kees 1977, 67–97.

45 The most important study of this codification of knowledge is Kees, 1977. For the "scientific" character of the cosmographic branch of funerary literature see Hornung 1979b, 217–224; D. Mueller 1972, 100, speaks of "scientific systematization".

46 For early "scientific" codifications in respect to the field of offerings and the field of reeds see D. Mueller 1972; Lesko 1971–72. For BD 153 see Dino Bidoli 1976, pp. 81ff.

the hereafter described in these spells is so full of dangers because of the demonic creatures inhabiting it. The netherworld appears therein first and foremost as a social sphere, in which the deceased must move and, eventually, integrate himself by means of the spoken word: by appealing, conjuring, intimidating, beseeching, threatening, answering, etc... The accumulation of such an enormous body of knowledge based on pure speculation and meant to insure individual salvation (i.e. in the sense of overcoming death) reminds one of the Gnosis and must surely represent one of its roots. Purity, in the sense of deliverance from the burdens of earthly existence, may only be attained through knowledge. Purity and knowledge, these two concept are closely interwoven; does not the deceased assert: "I know the names ... I am pure?"

3.2 The path to eternal sustenance

In the many spells concerned with the sustenance of the dead, the destination of the deceased's voyage is defined again and again as "yonder shore, upon which the gods stand,"⁴⁷ "he who settles there shall not perish"⁴⁸ or "shall come forth as a god".⁴⁹ His wish is to settle there, "beneath yon sycamore ... in the midst of plenty; he who lands there, he grows not weary, he who tarries beneath her (i.e. the sycamore), he is as the Great God".⁵⁰ To reach this place "where Maat is,"⁵¹ this divine abode holding the promise of eternal life and god-like existence, the deceased must undergo a series of examinations: he must rouse the ferryman from his sleep and induce him to make the crossing, he must secure a ferryboat, avoid the catching-net stretched out between heaven and earth and convince the inhabitants of the heavenly world that he is one of them. The only way of successfully withstanding these examinations is through knowledge, for these take place in the form of interrogations. He is first interrogated by the ferryman following a pattern of examination which Dinko Bidoli interprets as an "initiation to the secrets of a profession." Its consists of a cross-examination with predetermined questions and answers, a typical craftsman's examination attested in the most varied ages and cultures and even found, until recently, in the guilds of modern Egypt.⁵² The deceased must not only proclaim his identity, prove his competence and give the destination of his voyage, he must, above all, know the secret names of the individual parts of the ferry and be able to put together a "mystical ship" by the sole means of this "mystical language." This language consists of nothing else but names, roles and events belonging to the divine AKH-sphere, the purpose of which is to transpose the individual parts of the ferry into the AKH-sphere by making use of the

47 CT IV, 38 i-l; similarly III 98 k-l; 145 a-e etc.
48 BD 98 and elsewhere.

49 CT III 145.

50 CT III spell 203.

51 CT III 143.

52 Bidoli 1976 p.30.

same type of sacramental explanation as that found in connection with cultic objects and rites. The deceased avoids the catching-net in precisely the same way: by successfully using the mystical language to apply specific names to the various parts of the net, he transposes the action into the AKH-sphere and projects his own dangerous situation onto a mythical plane, where it may be resolved in the context of an appropriate mythical precedent.⁵³ There are many more spells of this type which I should like to mention here, despite the fact that they do not strictly belong within the frame of this discussion. Before entering the hall of judgement (see also section 3.3), the deceased must again be able to transpose the individual parts of the gate onto a specific mythical plane;⁵⁴ similarly, in the so-called spells for the "deification of the limbs," his body is sacramentally interpreted by equating each part of his body with a deity.⁵⁵ Sacramental explanation is also the principle behind the glossed funerary texts, notably the well-known 17th chapter from the Book of the Dead. It thus seems justified to consider whether a dramatic initiatory interrogation, rather than the mere philological need for commentary, underlies these spells.⁵⁶ If we may generalize Bidoli's informative remarks on this matter, it seems reasonable to assume that these spells originated in the initiation rites of various professions, such as: net-makers, bird-catchers, fishermen, carpenters, embalmers (with respect to the "deification of the limbs") and priests.

At the term of his voyage through the hereafter, the deceased is subjected to an interrogation at the hands of those whom he wishes to join. Here, as in the Magic Flute, the interrogator remains anonymous.⁵⁷ Through his answers, the deceased must prove himself a god: one who sits where they sit, stands where they stand and eats from that which they eat.⁵⁸ The gods live in a redistributive community,⁵⁹ itself a projection of earthly society. Membership in this community is the only way for the deceased to partake of the sustenance of the gods; it is, on the other hand, the sharing in the divine nourishment which makes him a member of the community of gods. This specific motif appears repeatedly as a sacramental explanation in those spells concerned with the concrete action of eating and drinking, i.e. dealing with the

53 Bidoli 1976.

54 Book of the Dead 125, end.

55 Book of the Dead 42. For the origin of this topic in the ritual of embalmment see Altenmüller 1976, 624-627.

56 For a different interpretation of BD 17 see Rölliger-Köhler 1976. But in Egypt, even commentary may assume a ritual form, cf. Schott 1954, 13ff. see also pp.31 ff. for the form of interrogation.

57 Mozart/Schikaneder borrowed the character of an anonymous "interlocuteur" from Terrasson, *Setphon* (1731).

58 In Coffin Texts Spell 195 the gods address the candidate to the hereafter with the words: "He lives from what we live, he eats from what we eat, he drinks from what we drink".

59 "Versorgungsgemeinschaft." See for this term Assmann 1976, 16-20.

reception of funerary offerings.⁶⁰ The means and the end are fully interchangeable: eating and drinking (a social act of paradigmatic significance) are the ideal concretizations of the desired social integration, while social integration inversely represents the prerequisite for sustenance in the hereafter. This peculiar relationship between sustenance and community reflects the structure of Egyptian society, in which the officials not only received no (or little) salary, but were actually dependent on the household (the table) of their superior. The supply of earthly needs, especially of food, thus becomes the symbol of social integration: (a) in a group of fellow human beings depending on the same source and (b) in relation to the patron, from whom the nourishment issues. The exact same structure may be found in the funerary texts, where the deceased is described as living, together with the other gods, from the offering table of the sun-god. His meals come from the altar of Re in Heliopolis.⁶¹

3.3 The path to justification

"Justification" is the central concept of Egyptian funerary religion in which all aspects of the "overcoming of death" and of salvation in the next world come together.⁶² It is as important, as it is complex. We alone, who look upon the matter from a sufficiently detached point of view, might attempt to describe its complexity by means of a conceptual analysis. In the Egyptian mind, i.e. from the point of view of those living within this conceptual world, any such analytical approach would have been unthinkable. The structure of those funerary texts concerned with justification may be divided into a number of aspects. The deceased must justify himself with respect to *the* enemy (as the personification of death), (b) with respect to *an* enemy, who might face him in the next world and perhaps bring forth accusations against him in "yonder" court of justice and, finally, (c) with respect to the divine prosecutor and judge, in whose presence the deceased must answer for his conduct on earth and prove himself worthy of eternal salvation. Aspect (a) forms the basis of the myth of Osiris,⁶³ (b) is especially important in the Coffin Texts⁶⁴ and (c) appears in its purest form in

60 It would lead us too far astray to quote examples of this very common topic. Just to illustrate the point, let me quote the following passage from a funerary liturgy:

Thy bread is the bread of Re,
thy beer is the beer of Hathor.
Thou geist up and siteth down for thy meal
and joinest the gods who follow the god (Re).

61 See especially CT III, passim.
62 "justified" (*n3c-ḥrw*) is the usual epithet for a deceased person since the beginning of the second millennium. See R. Anthes 1954, 21ff.

63 See Griffiths 1970 id., 1980; see also BD (translation Hornung) 166, verses 3-5; 151, 36 ff. 169, 62-64.
64 See Grieshammer 1970.

conjunction with the general acceptance of a "judgement of the dead," which, though already recognizable towards the end of the 3rd millennium B.C.,⁶⁵ only becomes the overall dominant and obligatory trait of Egyptian funerary literature in the New Kingdom. Its canonical form, as found in Chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead,⁶⁶ has in any case no known predecessors in the older funerary literature. Our discourse shall be restricted to this one aspect of justification.

3.3.1 The gates

"May your soul (*bs*) know the paths of yonder world leading to the gate of 'he, who conceals the weary one'." Thus runs the particularly polite wish of a wise man to a prince in a late Middle Kingdom tale.⁶⁷ The gate is a most pregnant symbol of transition. In the 145th and 146th chapters of the Book of the Dead, this idea finds itself systematically elaborated into a sequence of 21 gates which the deceased must pass in order to reach the "one, whom they conceal," the "weary one," i.e. Osiris.⁶⁸ The gates are guarded by demons or better, as of late more correctly differentiated, by apotropaic gods. Their iconography, characterized by animal masks and knives, identifies them as dangerous and terrifying beings.⁶⁹ The deceased wards off their threat by calling them by name, but also by knowing the names of the gates; he secures unhindered passage by showing proof of his purity. He knows the mythical significance of the water, in which he has bathed, and wears the appropriate clothing. The nature of the doorkeepers (and of the "apotropaic gods" in general) is ambiguous: the terror they embody is meant to ward off evil, the conceptual manifestations of which are ignorance, impurity and violence. The gates and their keepers build a 21-,

65 Instruction for Merikare P 53-57, Fecht 1972, p.147 with postscripts p.222 and p.228f, Janssen-Winkeln 1988.

66 For the history of the idea of the Judgment of the Dead, see especially Grieshammer 1970, 46-70, cf. also the excellent study by Brandon 1967 and the contribution by J. Yoyotte 1961. See also the iconographical study by Seeber 1976.

67 pWestcar 7, 25-26, see A.M. Blackman (ed. W.V. Davies) 1988, 8. "The gates (*shḥwt*) of the underworld and the doors (*ššw*) of the field of reeds" are mentioned in the Inscription of king Neferhotep as objects of royal knowledge in connection with the theology of Osiris: W. Helck 1975, 26 line 23.

68 Especially impressive depictions of these gates are found in the tombs of queens Nefertari and Tausret. I have published a funerary text dealing with the knowledge and passage of these gates in Assmann 1973, 94-97. This text is frequently written at the entrance of the tomb which thereby becomes "transfigured," so that by entering the tomb the deceased symbolically effectuates the transition into the underworld.

69 te Velde, *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* I, 980-984; Altenmüller 1976, 635-640. See also Meeks 1971, 19-84.

70 For the apotropaic function of terror and the monstrous, see *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* II, 362-367, cf. also the contribution by H.G. Fischer in *Fs.E.Porada*.

14-(15) or 7-fold (the number as such not being all that important) protective enclosure around the "weary one," namely the dead Osiris, who lives on as a deceased god within the concealment of these walls. The wish of the deceased human being is to identify his fate with that of Osiris. Only within the innermost enclosure of this most secluded and therefore holiest⁷¹ of all cosmic spheres will he also live as Osiris. The terrifying creatures at the gates will then be his own guards, protecting him from all evil.⁷²

In the Egyptian conception of the hereafter, the underworld is not thought of as a realm of darkness where death, the "great leveller," causes all to sink indiscriminately into oblivion. It is, on the contrary, divided into three parts: a sphere of light, where the justified dead live in a divine community centered around the sun-god and Osiris, a sphere of chaotic darkness, where the damned suffer eternal punishment,⁷³ and a sphere not of purging — this idea seems to be fully absent from the Egyptian conception of the hereafter — but of "filtering," where the evil are caught in the catching-net or destroyed by the demons guarding the gates. The concept of a zone of transition is substantiated by the many formulations in which the idea of a qualifying passage is expressed in Egyptian funerary texts: in the "Book of the Two Ways,"⁷⁴ the spells of the seven gate-paths,⁷⁵ the chapter on the 14 "abodes" of the underworld⁷⁶ and the spell of the 12 crypts.⁷⁷ This idea was even adapted into a board game with the characteristic name "passage."⁷⁸ It requires two players. The object of the game is to find oneself a passage through 30 fields of salutary or evil nature until one arrives in the vicinity of the god, who then grants sustenance (bread and water) and

71 For the correlation between the concepts of "seclusion" and "holiness," see Hoffmeier 1985.

72 The double function of the guardians of the doors, to spread terror (averting the evil) and to provide protection ("covering the weary", eg. *hbs b'g*), may be expressed less in the text itself than by its location in tomb decoration. In a tomb of the Late Period, one version of this text (BD 145) is written on the walls of the staircase leading from the upper to the subterranean part of the tomb, i.e. from the "upperworld" to the "underworld." It enhances the apotropaic aspect of the gates and the meaning of their passage as a sort of qualifying examination. The guards face the people who enter or descend. In another version, located further inside the tomb, they face from outside in towards the owner of the tomb, who begs for their protection. See Assmann 1977b, 32-34, 59-64.

73 See Hornung 1968.

74 Lesko 1972.

75 For a very interesting though rather speculative interpretation of this text as "textes d'initiation" see Barguet 1969.

76 BD 144 with 147, see also CT spell 901 concerning the "7 chambers of the tomb" (equated with the underworld). The seven *cꜣjt* (porchways) are also understood as the way to the "field of reeds," the Elysian fields of the Egyptians, e.g. in chamber III of the Taitic tomb of Osorkon.

77 BD 149 with many precursors in the CT. See for individual references Hornung 1979a 506 ff.
78 BD 168, see A. Piankoff and H. Jacquet-Gordon 1974.

justification.⁷⁹ It was, without any doubt, also played in lifetime for the sole purpose of "enjoyment" (*šmḥ jb*, Egyptian for "enjoyment," lit.: "to cause the heart to forget"), but has almost exclusively come to us from a funerary context. Particularly informative in this matter is the evidence from the tomb of Sennedjem: here, the scene is found above a door, thus already imparting the sense of "passage" through its very location. Furthermore, near the game-board, a table covered with food offerings figuratively conveys the purpose and goal of the "passage": securing access to and availability of eternal sustenance.⁸⁰

In the demotic tale of Setne, Osiris sits enthroned in the seventh of seven halls which the deceased must cross in order to reach the place of justification. This sequence of seven gates also seems to have been an important principle in temple architecture, especially in the Late Period. It appears in a particularly straightforward manner on a late type of false door (funerary stelae), where up to seven interlocked gates, shown in superimposed *en face* relief, represent a corresponding sequence of rooms.⁸¹ According to this conception, the underworld is imagined as a temple, in the innermost and holiest part of which Osiris sits enthroned.⁸² The path of the deceased to Osiris corresponds to the path of the priest on his way to the innermost sanctuary of the god. The path of the priest is furthermore sacramentally explained as an ascent to the heavens. He "opens the door-wings of the sky in Karnak" and "sees the mysteries of the horizon."⁸³ If I mention these correlations, it is to demonstrate yet once more that Egyptian "funerary mythology" in no way represents an autonomous field of religious speculation, but is actually deeply interwoven with the ideas and concepts of the earthly cult of the gods. It therefore would not seem justified to accept the idea of an initiation for funerary religion (as *communis opinio* presently sees it) on the one hand, while categorically rejecting it for all other forms of Egyptian religion on the other.⁸⁴ The following paragraph should, in my opinion, furnish the decisive proof for this theory.

78 Pusch 1979. Timothy Kendall, *Passing Through the Netherworld* (Belmont, Mass.) has produced a modern reconstruction of the game.

79 Theban Tomb TT 1, see Pusch 1979, pl. 28. The last part of the game deals with nourishment ("bread in the house of breads, cool water in the house of cool water") and justification ("thou art justified! he says to me, namely Mehen").

80 Le Corsu 1968.

81 For the Setne narrative, see the translation of Lichtheim 1980, 125-151, esp. 139f. For the underworld of the temple, see Barguet 1969. According to its title, ch. 145 of the Book of the Dead describes the "gate of the field of reeds of the temple of Osiris" and localizes the field of reeds in the innermost part of the temple (the holy of holies).

82 For the title *wn cꜣwj pt*, see Brovarski 1977.

83 For this, see Assmann 1973, 19ff.

84 Cf. e.g. Hornung 1979b; Morenz 1952.

3.3.2 The Trial

The goal of the deceased's "passage" is to reach the "hall of twin truths," where the judgement of the dead takes place. Access to this hall is the last of the qualifying examinations he must undergo simply to gain admittance to the tribunal. It again takes the typical form of a cross-examination. He is first questioned on his identity, then on his competence:

- "Who art thou?" say they to me,
 "What is thy name?" say they to me.
 "I am the lower root of the papyrus-plant,
 'He in the olive-tree' is my name."
 "Where hast thou gone past?" say they to me.
 "I have gone past the place to the north of the thicket."
 "What hast thou seen there?"
 "It was a leg and a thigh."
 "What hast thou said to them?"
 "I have seen the jubilation in yon lands of the Phoenicians."
 "What have they given thee?"
 "It was a flaming fire and a fayence amulet."
 "What hast thou done therewith?"
 "I buried them on the shores of the Maati waters during evening sacrifice."
 Etc., etc...

That the questions put forward here refer to a mystical knowledge, and more precisely yet to knowledge from the Osiris mysteries, is obvious.⁸⁵ They are followed by the final summons:

"Come then and step through this gate of the twin truths, for thou knowest us!"

In the following examination, the candidate must name the individual parts of the door using the mystical language, i.e. he must be able to interpret them on the divine mythical plane. This process of sacramental interpretation has already been discussed.⁸⁶ The third and shortest examination is carried out by Thot, the psychopompos, who leads the deceased into the hall of justice. He asks only four questions: "Why hast thou come?" — To be announced. "What is thy condition?" — I am free of every sin. "Whom shall I announce thee to?" — To him, whose ceiling is fire, whose walls are living uraei, whose house-floor is the flood. "Who is that?" —

⁸⁵ Cf. Griffiths 1980, 30 ff., with further references.
⁸⁶ Cf. n.30.

Osiris. "Then betake thyself thither: behold, thou art announced!" The following verdict anticipates the tribunal's decision. We shall return to it later.

The actual trial, figuratively formulated by the weighing of the heart against a symbol of truth, and the "negative confession" of the candidate, who must enumerate 42 sins in the presence of 42 funerary judges while swearing not to have committed them, truly belong to the fundamentals of Egyptian religion. They have been the subject of extensive research.⁸⁷ We shall therefore be brief in our description. The negative form of the "confession" should not surprise us: it is merely the logical consequence of the negative structure of ethics (the "forbidden fruit"⁸⁸), first articulated in sentences such as "thou shalt not ...," whereupon follows the answer: "I have not" This type of formulation is inherent to the subject matter and does not necessarily point to its original "Sitz im Leben." R. Grieshammer, who brought up this question, therefore also bases his argumentation on the actual content of the "negative confession."⁸⁹ He divides the 42 sins into three approximately equally large categories: offenses of strictly cultic nature, violations within the temple administration, and infringements with regard to ethical principles of more general character. The same tripartite structure is also found in texts inscribed in the temple doorways used by the priests of the Late Egyptian Period.⁹⁰ To all appearances, they would seem to reflect 'admittance liturgies' which the priests had to recite upon entering the temple,⁹¹ but probably also had to swear by during priestly initiation ceremonies.⁹² "Just as the priest had to vow, during his first initiation and upon entering the temple, not to have committed certain actions, the deceased must, in the same way, give assurance of his purity upon entering the sacred sphere of the hereafter."⁹³ It would therefore appear that we are dealing here with a priestly initiation ritual, which only subsequently became part of the literary and conceptual vocabulary of funerary religion.

The outcome of the trial, however, has aspects other than simply gaining admittance to the divine sphere of existence. First of all, the survival of the deceased's individual personality depends on it. Personal identity is, for the Egyptian, a function of social integration and approval.⁹⁴ A human being is a person only within the limits of the image which the (significant) others hold of him. The justification brought forth in the judgement of the dead is itself a formulation of this social approval and is meant to ensure the eternal survival of his personality among the blessed spirits of the

⁸⁷ Cf. especially Yoyotte 1961; Brandon 1967; R. Grieshammer 1970 and Seeber 1976.

⁸⁸ Cf. Bergson 1932/1982, p.1.

⁸⁹ Ibid. (n.2).

⁹⁰ Grieshammer, 1974, p.22 ff., add Gutub 1973, 149ff.

⁹¹ The remarkable parallels in Biblical Texts have been pointed out by Koch 1961.

⁹² Such an oath in Greek is published by Merkelbach 1968, cf. also the recent article by Merkelbach 1987.

⁹³ Grieshammer 1974, p.25 cf. also Griffiths 1988.

⁹⁴ Cf. *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* IV (1982), 963–978 s.v. "Persönlichkeitsbegriff und -bewußtsein".

underworld. He is henceforth no longer an immaterial shadow, but, for instance, the high steward Amenemope who may now place his earthly offices and names between the new titles "Osiris" and "justified," both acquired in the judgement of the dead. The second aspect of the trial is the acceptance of the deceased into the 'redistributive community,' in which gods and spirits are thought to live in and which is modeled after the pattern of earthly society. Sustenance and social integration exist, in the Egyptian mind, as one indivisible whole: they merely represent two aspects of one and the same thing. The desired verdict of the funerary judge appropriately formulates it:

"A truly righteous one.
Let him be given the bread and beer,
which issues forth from Osiris.
He shall be forever amongst the followers of Horus."⁹⁵

The conception of the judgement of the dead is thus fitted into the more general context of ideas, which, as discussed in the previous section, see in sustenance and social integration the prerequisites of a blessed state of being in afterlife.

4. Death and Initiation in the Isis-Mysteries of Apuleius

Accessi confinium mortis
et calcato Proserpinae limine
per omnia vectus elementa remeavi,
nocte media vidi solem
candido coruscantem lumine
deos inferos et deos superos
accessi coram
et adoravi de proxumo.⁹⁶

I entered the boundary of death,
and as I stepped across Proserpina's threshold,
I was carried by all elements and returned;
At midnight, I caught sight of the sun,
dazzling in radiant light,
I approached the lower and upper gods
and prayed to them face to face.

⁹⁵ Pap. BM 10470 (Pap. Ani) col. 3-4 cf. Seeber 1976, p. 114. For the correlation of "jurisdiction" and "provision" in the Egyptian world, cf. Assmann 1970, 58-65.

⁹⁶ Apuleius of Madauros, *Metamorphoseon* XL, 285 cap. 23.

The Egyptian associations present in this description have often been emphasized.⁹⁷ We are dealing here with a *katabasis*, i.e. a ritual descent into the underworld, which, in this case, is visually and architectonically actualized by a descent into a crypt decorated with cosmographic representations. In the precise same way, the royal tombs of the New Kingdom are decorated with representations of the underworld, thereby equating the entombment of the king to a *descensus ad inferos*.⁹⁸ The wall-paintings of these tombs are cosmographies: they describe the path of the sun-god, sailing in his bark through the hourly regions of the underworld and of the sky. The mystical character of these "books," in the sense of a codification of an esoteric and secret knowledge, is clearly expressed in these representations, as are the clues that the origins of this literature are to be found not in funerary religion, but in the solar cult.⁹⁹ Admittedly, we cannot produce the decisive source material in support of our hypothesis. As a result of fortuitous circumstances, the tombs on the edge of the fertile Nile Valley have been preserved, while the temple-libraries in the valley itself have been lost in the wake of expanding agriculture and urbanization. The reservations of Egyptologists, who cannot conceive of "mystery" and "initiation" outside the context of funerary religion, appear, in the light of the manifold evidence brought together in this discourse, as an untenable argument *e silentio*.

In the cosmographic "books" of the royal tombs, both *dei inferi* and *dei superi* are found together. The *dei inferi* are the inhabitants of the underworld, to whom the sun-god, accompanied by his divine retainers, descends nightly in his bark. The deceased king sails along in the solar bark and prays to the gods "*de proxumo*." The conception that a human being, once dead, meets the gods face to face,¹⁰⁰ after having only worshiped them in their symbolic representations during his earthly existence, is an oft repeated motif in Egyptian funerary liturgies ("Verklärungen"):

"All the gods, whom thou hast worshiped since thou existeth,
thou shaltst enter face to face with them.
'They are ready to receive thy 'Ba'
and to protect thy mummy.'¹⁰¹

Even the "passage" of the deceased through the 21 gates, the 7 halls, the 15 places (BD 149), etc... of the underworld represents a *descensus ad inferos* which brings him at long last in the physical presence of Osiris and of his divine retainers:

⁹⁷ For details see Griffiths 1975, 296-308. Cf. especially Bergman 1982.

⁹⁸ Cf. Brunner 1980, 215-228.

⁹⁹ Pace Barta 1985 and Wente 1982. See Assmann 1970, and, for further substantiation, Assmann 1983, chapter 1.

¹⁰⁰ For *adoravi de proxumo* cf. the numerous parallels in Griffiths 1975, 303-308, but also Gardiner, in: *PSBA* 35 (1913), 169ff.

¹⁰¹ Theban Tomb TT 50, harper's song, see M. Lichtheim, in: *JNES* 4, 1945, 198.

To separate NN from all his sins,
to see the face of all gods

is the title of the "psychostasia" in the Book of the Dead.¹⁰² But by the same act the deceased enters also into the presence of the sun-god, who travels nightly through the underworld with his own divine retinue. "To look upon the sun, when it sets and is worshiped by the gods" is the professed goal of the funerary spells.¹⁰³

In the initiation of Laciús, the voyage through the underworld stands for a symbolic death, followed on the next morning by his resurrection as the sun-god: adorned with a palm wreath *ad instar solis*, he appears to the cheering crowd,¹⁰⁴ just as the justified deceased at the judgement of the dead. The following quote is taken from one of the oldest texts, in which this conception may be recognized:

"Trembling befalls the eastern horizon,
announced are the paths of its remoteness
to Osiris NN, who hath come forth as Re
and looms high above as Atum,
after Hathor hath anointed him
after she hath given him (eternal) life in the West
like Re, day by day.
O Osiris NN, there is neither god nor goddess,
who might bring forth a charge against thee
on the day of reckoning (=judgement of the dead)
before the Great One, the Lord of the West.

Thou eatest bread from the offering table of Re
in the company of the Great Ones at the gates.¹⁰⁵

No one doubts that the initiation rites of the Isis-mysteries, as Apuleius ventures to describe them, are deeply rooted in the uniquely elaborated rituals and conceptions of Egyptian funerary religion. The same holds true for other initiation rituals. Seen from this aspect, a relationship between death and initiation is not disputed. A number of clues listed in this survey, however, have given us reason to look in the opposite

¹⁰² pap. BM 10470 col. 3, see n. 95.

¹⁰³ Assmann 1969, 28 ff.; Griffiths 1975, 303–308. Magical spells have the power to make the sun-god and his circle of deities appear, even for one who is in the underworld.

¹⁰⁴ Concerning Apuleius, ch. 24, Griffiths correctly calls attention to the "wreath of justification", 1955, 225–287.

¹⁰⁵ CT spell 45.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Hornung 1979c und 1977; Assmann 1983 ch. 2.

direction. Let us attempt to formulate our results into a hypothesis: the funerary rites take the form of an "initiation into the mysteries of the underworld" (Hornung), because they reflect the corresponding rites and conceptions of cultic rituals in "this" world, of which, for obvious reasons, we know next to nothing.

The appearance of the deceased, resp. of the initiated as the sun-god, brings together both conceptual spheres which we had labelled — again: merely for demonstrative purposes — "biomorphic" and "transitional" models. The multiplicity of concepts, through which the nature of the sun is expressed in Egyptian mythical thought, combines the mystery of the passage with that of rebirth. The solar cycle, a mythical event of archetypal and fundamental significance, takes place not only in *illo tempore*, but throughout "present" eternity. During his nightly *descensus ad inferos*, the sun-god crosses the 12 gates and hourly regions of the underworld, only to be reborn every morning in his new appearance: having entered the tail of a snake as an old man, he emerges from its mouth as a youth; he is swallowed by the goddess of the heavens in the evening and reborn through her in the morning. Within this world of endless representational and conceptual possibilities for the solar cycle,¹⁰⁶ we find that all Egyptian contemplations of change, renewal, rebirth and eternal life have been paired with a corresponding world of mythical precedents and realities.

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