

The background of the cover is a photograph of a desert landscape at sunset or sunrise. In the distance, several pyramids are visible against a hazy, golden sky. The foreground shows rolling sand dunes and shadows cast by the low sun.

Old Kingdom, New Perspectives

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Harold HAYS, "The Death of the democratization of the afterlife"

115 « So much has been written against the theory of the democratisation of the afterlife that it may be deemed obsolete. Even 2 encyclopedia entries have been prepared [UCLA] [...] definitively declaring that the events which it supposes did not take place [...] Challenges to the theory began appearing in earnest a decade and a half ago, spurred on in part by the discovery of religious texts from the Balat coffin of the official Medunefert, datable to the reign of Pepy II. As these have not been addressed by a proponent of the old theory, it should be safe to say that current scholarly opinion sees the theory as quite dead"

1. *the birth of the democratization theory*

116 "The description of Rosalie David should be perfectly familiar, for instance : 'Whereas during the Old Kingdom, only the king could expect to enjoy an individual immortality, in Dynasties 11 and 12, this was replaced with a democratization of beliefs'. Such accounts usually do not feel obliged to cite a reference in substantiation, so seemingly well understood is the theory"

116 "Mark Smith observes that the democratization theory had its advent as early as James Henry Breasted's *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*. published in 1912, four years after Kurt Sethe's synoptic presentation of the Pyramid Texts began to appear, his was the first study to make use of these texts in a comprehensive way [...] Breasted observed that in the Old Kingdom the Pyramid Texts 'were all intended for the king's exclusive use, and as a whole contain beliefs which apply only to the king'. The key reason for this assessment was the 'significant fact that the nobles of the age made practically no use of the Pyramid Texts in their own tombs'. But in the Middle Kingdom such texts were 'largely appropriated vby the middle and official class' in a situation Breasted described as 'the popularization of the mortuary customs of the upper classes'. To label the mortuary literature appearing in the Middle Kingdom, Breasted coined the term *Coffin texts* [...] the attested disparity of social distribution of mortuary literature between the Old and Middle Kingdom, a similar disparity in the use of the epithet 'Osiris' as a mark of spiritual attainment, and an assumed difference in appropriateness of content between Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts. This simple combination constitutes the core of the theory"

117 "Although Gardiner's presentation [three years later] is quite similar to Breasted's, he does not cite him. And although he couches his discussion in terms of ritual and display, he supports his exposition as follows : 'on the 'democratization' of the old funerary literature and the like, see especially Sethe, *Pyramidentexte*'"

117 Sethe : "At the place indicated, he asserts that together the texts of the 5 royal pyramids transcribed in his autographed volumes constitute 'eine enggeschlossene Gruppe'. And yet in the next breath he observes that texts from later monuments of a different kind were then being continually discovered, and that they contained precisely the same material as that of the 'tightly closed group' [...] Insofar as they each have an integral identity beyond their physical manifestations, the texts of the 'closed group', those of the five kingly pyramids, escape any boundary put around them. They pour out into the tombs of contemporaneous queens and flow on while maintaining their identities into the Middle Kingdom, no matter the artificial line one draws around them"

2. *The birth of the term Coffin Texts*

118 “Breasted once asserted that Pyramid Texts are to be ‘sharply distinguished’ from Coffin Texts, but how can they be, when they share a considerable body of material – over 400 texts – verbatim? the terms obscure an underlying continuum between mortuary literature from the 2 periods [...] **It is no accident that some of the same scholars who have challenged the democratization theory have done so while also challenging a conceptual division between Pyramid and Coffin Texts, as with Peter Jürgens and Bernard Mathieu. contributing to that discussion is the identification of 3 kinds of general continuities between Old and Middle Kingdom mortuary literature : the verbatim transmission of texts, the Middle Kingdom production of variants of Old Kingdom texts, and the Middle Kingdom construction of new texts out of the Old Kingdom material. Even when a text appears to belong to a strictly Middle Kingdom genre, points of contact with the Old Kingdom material can be found**”

Hays and Schenck, ‘*Intersection of Ritual Space and Ritual representation. Pyramid Texts in 18th dynasty Theban tombs*’, in P. Dorman & B. Bryan (eds.), *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes*.

3. *Pyramid Texts as manifestation of a wider body of literature*

119 Bernard Mathieu : “**que les particuliers de l’Ancien Empire ne possèdent pas de textes funéraires dans leurs sépultures ne signifie pas qu’ils n’en bénéficiaient pas. Après tout, nul n’imagine que les souverains du Moyen Empire, par exemple, ne bénéficiaient pas d’une destinée glorieuse dans l’au-delà, sous prétexte qu’il n’y a pas de textes gravés dans leurs pyramides** » : **« The absence of religious texts in royal tombs of the Middle Kingdom underscores the difference between textual display and religious action and belief. While the contents of displayed texts do offer a window into ritual and belief, the actual performances and thoughts they represent are lost in time**”

120 “**The permeable social boundaries of the total discursive body may be located by consideration of all the evidence, including statements in the Pyramid Texts themselves. The presence of such words as *mr* ‘pyramid’ would seem to indicate that some texts had been composed specifically for a royal beneficiary, since that architecture was distinctive to the highest stratum of society. But equally it may be inferred by content that some Pyramid Texts had not been composed for a royal beneficiary, as has been pointed out by Edward F. Wente. For example PT467 has the dead king declaring that he has not striven with... the king. In that text, as written, the *ni-sw.t* must be a person separate from the deceased. This also is the case with PT 486, in which the dead king declares that he is not taken away to the king and affirms that he is unpunished**”

4. *The nature of the desired afterlife : Osiris and Akh*

“But the social distinction supposed by the theory is again based on negative evidence – and doubly so, since the combination of epithet plus name is attested almost exclusively in the Pyramid Texts themselves. But it is noteworthy that, *outside* the royal sepulchers, the formula Osiris <name> is attested in the Old Kingdom only in application to *non-royal persons* [Nordh, *Aspects*], a detail that was apparently unknown to the 3 authors of the theory at the time of its crafting. Based

on a careful typological dating of non-royal burial chambers, Edward Brovarski has shown that non-royal persons employed the epithet Osiris as early as the middle part of the reign of Pepy II [Brovarski, "The Late Old Kingdom at South Saggara" in Pantalacci et Berger-el-Naggar eds., *Des Neferkarê aux Montouhotep*, Lyon, 2005] [...] Since the use as epithet continued to be rare in non-royal venues during the First Intermediate Period, one may suppose with Khaled Daoud that its display at that time might still have been thought provocative"

121 "The word *wsir* emerges some 50 years before it is found in the Pyramid Texts of Unas, and it does so, remarkably, in a non-royal tomb. As Mathieu observes, the first securely datable attestation is from the middle of the 5th dynasty during the reign of Niuserre, in the tomb of the non-royal personage Ptahshepses. There, it appears in the divine formula *Htp-di-Wsir*, 'the offering which Osiris gives'. But the god's entry to the divine formula is part of a wider phenomenon in the 5th dynasty. Whereas in the 4th dynasty only Anubis is featured in the divine formula, in the 5th multiple gods appear, including Osiris and Khentimentiu 'Foremost of Westerners'"

122 "Aspects of the treatment of Osiris, Anubis and Khentimentiu suggest that their roles were being refined in the 5th and 6th dynasties. Two attestations of the term *xnti-*imn*-*tiw** from the Archaic Period – at which time it shows its oldest writing, with *mn*-game-board sign and jackal determinative – were previously understood to represent an independent jackal deity, but Terence DuQuesne has recently asserted that the jackal sign in question should be read as *inpw*. This fits in with the historical attestations [...] First only *inpw* is found in [the offering formula] in the 4th dynasty, then *xnti-*imn*-*tiw** as an epithet of *inpw* in the early 5th dynasty, and then *xnti-*imn*-*tiw** independently in the mid- to late 5th dynasty. Thus Khentimentiu seems first to be an epithet or manifestation of the god Anubis before splitting off from him. The split seems to occur at about the time that the name of Osiris is first attested, and yet at about that same time, the newly attested god is already intimately associated with Khentimentiu. The term *xnti-*imn*-*tiw** begins to be appended to the name Osiris as an epithet in the late 5th dynasty or early 6th dynasty, and in the Middle Kingdom it serres regularly as such. Thus, *xnti-*imn*-*tiw** creates a kind of commutative bond between Osiris and Anubis. The transfer of the term is an indication of the close relations between Osiris and Anubis in this period. Another is their sharing of the designations 'Lord of the West', 'Lord of Abydos', and 'Lord of the Sacred Land'"

122 "The Pyramid Texts show a slightly different story. While the god Osiris is attributed anthropomorphic determinatives in non-royal 5th dynasty texts (beginning with his very first attestation), there is a Pyramid text which textually identifies him as a jackal, just as Anubis traditionally and Khentimentiu originally are [...] This suggests that, at least so far as these gods are concerned, elements of the body of literature from which the Pyramid Texts were drawn are older than our earliest attested appearances of Osiris"

123 "At the time when Osiris finally does enter the documentary record, so also do predicative statements in which the non-royal dead identify themselves as Akhs, divine beings [...] In the Pyramid Texts, the word *3x* is found in about 175 instances [dont par ex. PT 556 §1385c : 'for this father of mine Osiris-Pepy has truly become an Akh'] [...] and because akh-hood was a goal sought by non-royal persons as well, what is at hand is not a rupture between classes, but a commonality of aspiration"

5. Means of becoming an Akh; ritual and knowledge

a. Knowledge of that by which one becomes an Akh (*rḥ iḥ ny*)

*Ti*⁸¹ (fifth dynasty, second half; Saqqara)

I know everything by which an Akh becomes an Akh who is passed to the necropolis; [I know everything by which he is equipped with the great god]; I know everything by which he ascends to the great god.

*Hezi*⁸² (Teti; Saqqara)

I am an Akh more skilful than any Akh; I am an Akh more equipped than any Akh; I know everything skilful, by which an excellent Akh becomes skilful, and by which an Akh who is in the necropolis becomes an Akh.

*Merefnebef*⁸³ (Userkare/Pepy I; Saqqara)

And I know everything by which an Akh who is passed to the necropolis as one venerated of the great god by the king becomes an Akh. And I know everything by which he ascends to the great god.

*Nekbbu*⁸⁴ (Pepy I; Giza)

I am a skilful Akh; I know everything by which one is an Akh in the necropolis.

*Ibi*⁸⁵ (Pepy II; Deir el-Gabrawi)

I am a skilful equipped Akh; I know every secret magic of the Residence, every secret by [which] one becomes an Akh [in] the necropolis.

*Idu Seneni*⁸⁶ (Pepy II or later; El-Qasr wa es-Saiyad)

25; H. Junker, *Pyramidenzeit. Das Wesen der altägyptischen Religion* (Zurich 1949), 92; Englund, *Akh*, 128; E. Edel, 'Inscription des Jzj aus Saqqara', *ZAS* 106 (1979) 113; R. J. Demarée, *The iḥ iqr n R-stelae: On Ancestor Worship in Ancient Egypt* (Leiden 1983), 193 and 210; Baines, *JARCE* 26 (1990) 11–12; Silverman, in O'Connor and Silverman (eds), *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*, 81; Nordh, *Aspects*, 171;

I am a [skilful] and efficacious Akh; I know every secret of hieroglyphs by which one becomes an Akh in the necropolis.

*Tjetu I*⁸⁷ (late sixth dynasty; Giza)

[I am] a skilful lector priest who knows his utterance, and I know all the skilful magic by which he becomes an Akh in the necropolis.

*Shen'ay*⁸⁸ (late sixth dynasty; Abydos)

I know all the magic by which one becomes an Akh in the necropolis.

*Bebi*⁸⁹ (sixth dynasty or later; Giza)

I know everything by which one becomes an Akh in the necropolis.

b. Performance of ritual by which one becomes an Akh (*iri iḥt iḥt ny*)

Ti (fifth dynasty, second half; Saqqara)

Every worthy ritual by which one becomes an Akh has been performed for me, that which is to be done for a skilful one among the Akhs, by the service of the lector priest; I am initiated [to every worthy rite by which one becomes an Akh].

*Nima'atre*⁹⁰ (fifth dynasty, second half; Saqqara)

One whom the king loves is the lector priest who will enter this tomb of mine to perform ritual according to the secret writing of the craft of the lector priest.... The king commanded that every ritual (by) which one becomes an Akh be done for me.

*Kaikherptah*⁹¹ (Izezi or later; Giza)

One whom the king and Anubis loves is the lector priest who will perform for me the rite by which an Akh becomes an Akh according to that secret writing of the craft of the lector priest.

*Nihetepptah*⁹² (Izezi or later; Saqqara)

Every worthy ritual (by) which one becomes an Akh has been done for me.

*Ankhamhor*⁹³ (Teti; Saqqara)

[O lector priest] who will enter this tomb of mine in order to do the Akh ritual according to that secret writing of the craft of the lector priest, *lll lll lll* his name, and recite for me the equipped *siḥw*.

*Mereruka*⁹⁴ (Teti; Saqqara)

As reconstructed, this text matches that of *Ti* given above.

*Merefnebef*⁹⁵ (Userkare/Pepy I; Saqqara)

And all the Akh and worthy rituals have been performed for me—Wenis-ankh is his great name⁹⁶—[which are done for the one skilful among] the Akhs by the service of a skilful lector priest who really truly knows the rituals. And I am initiated to the secrets of the great god.

*Shen'ay*⁹⁷ (late sixth dynasty; Abydos)

Every ritual by which one becomes an Akh has been performed for me.

125 “Claims of being an Akh by knowledge and ritual begin to appear toward the end of the 5th dynasty and continue through the 6th”

125 “**Idu claims to be an Akh by ‘knowing every secret of hieroglyphs’ [...] [> ce qui ne veut pas forcément dire n’importe quelle écriture, comme on le voit souvent dans les interprétations réductrices écrit = magique, mais peut-être aussi par métonymie seulement les textes sacrés du type textes des pyramides ; il faudrait savoir ce que dit Idu et s’il utilise le terme *mdw-nTr* ?] [...] A palpable link to an inscription to which David P. Silverman and others have drawn attention. The owner of the inscription, Sabni, is an Akh because of his knowledge of a texts of ascending. He sayx, ‘I know the utterance of ascending to the great god, lord of the sky’ [...] As Mathieu has pointed out, the kind of text mentioned by Sabni is semantically parallel to one mentioned in the Pyramid Texts [...] ‘Neferkare knows it, the utterance of Re, with Neferkare performing this magic of Harakhti: Neferkare is one known of Re, and Neferkare is a companion of Harakhti [...]’”**

126 “The deceased is frequently informed that what is important is the ritualized, vocal performance of priests : *‘the land speaks: the doors of Aker open to you; the doors of Geb spread open to you, and you go forth at the voice of Anubis, when he as Thoth makes you an Akh’* (PT 437 §796). Because priests speak in the role of gods, they are able to make the deceased into an Akh [ndbp : H. Hays, ‘Between identity and agency in Ancient Egyptian Ritual’, in **R. Nyord & A. Kyolby, *Being in Ancient Egypt : Thoughts on Agency, Materiality and Cognition*, Oxford, 2009]**”

126 “**In the non-royal texts the knowledge and rituals by which one becomes an Akh are not given; they are only laid claim to. The Pyramid Texts, on the other hand, constitute these very things”**

6. *s3x.w, Pyramid Texts, and pictorial representations of mortuary service*

127 “**Laurent Coulon concludes that the secret writings and craft of the lector priest must constitute s3x.w, ‘Akh-makers’, recitations without structural difference with the inscriptions in the royal pyramides. The connection he makes is inevitable. Pictorial representations of mortuary service become stereotyped in the Old Kingdom, to include the royal and non-royal deceased at offering table, offering list, and priests performing rites. Normally, one of the papyrus-bearing priests will receive the caption s3x.t ‘making into an Akh’ or s3x.w aAS.w ‘(reciting) numerous s3x.w’**”

127 “Although Sethe may be deemed as one of the joint authors of the democratization theory, some 20 years after the publication of the first volume of his *Pyramidentexte* he asserted that, even though one does not find a proper body of non-royal mortuary texts for centuries, the existence of the same is indirectly attested by Old Kingdom pictorial representations of ritual performances in accessible cult chambers”

127 “**The conclusion is inevitable, because the term is applied to Pyramid and Coffin Texts with some regularity in the Middle Kingdom [...] Significantly, two texts to receive the tile are PT 77 and 81, for presenting cloth and oil. These two are from the offering ritual, and from the very same set of ritual actions and recitations that match the offering list”**