

ON THE NATURE OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN FUNERARY RITUALS*

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ABSTRACT

What are the possible roots of funerary texts beyond the well-known temple liturgies? Shouldn't we acknowledge the rites around the king as further sources? If the answer is 'yes', the varied and rich corpus of mortuary texts from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods could turn out to preserve fragments of rituals that have been otherwise lost. Looking at the tradition from that perspective, the question arises whether the dominant trend in Egyptology to interpret royal rituals from a funerary perspective reverses the reality. This is exemplified by the discussion of the *sed*-festival that has been understood as the king's ritual death, embalmment and rejuvenation, i.e. a mortuary ritual that the king had to undergo. However, there is only a limited set of expressions available in ritual language to communicate the basic idea of transfiguring a being. Because of this limitation, Egyptologists are continually reminded of a perceived sub-text, when in fact it is just the funerary bias in the evidence that has left its imprints on the Egyptologist's mind by making him or her more familiar with all those ideas in their funerary version.

During the past decade the relationship between funerary literature and temple liturgies has been discussed in a series of publications.¹ In some cases it is not a discussion, strictly speaking, but a question implicitly raised by some authors who gave their answers themselves.² I think most scholars agree about the basic lines, but to my mind ritual adaptations do not work just into one direction and here some fine tuning might be appropriate.³ Looking at the textual evidence and its character and accepting the exchange in both directions over the centuries, we have to admit that it is a discussion about the chicken and the egg to some extent. The detailed record of religious ideas starts with the Pyramid Texts, i.e. spells that have been preserved in a mortuary context, and Egyptologists are always thrown back to them. Even quite a few non-funerary compositions draw on the Pyramid Texts. Are there two parallel traditions or are the Pyramid Texts just an offshoot and a mortuary adaptation of a basic ritual corpus? The Hourly Vigils preserved in the temples of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, for example, go partly back to spells also found in the Pyramid Texts. They occur in an Osirian context, rather than the mortuary context proper.⁴ Although Osirian liturgical texts in particular are closely related to mortuary liturgies, they should be kept apart wherever this is possible.

By presenting two examples, the *Great Decree Issued to the Nome of the Silent Land* (*GD*) and the *Book of Traversing Eternity* (*BTE*), I want to extend the focus and remind us of a third area that might have been a source of inspiration for funerary rituals or even direct borrowing: the cult around the Egyptian king. In this light, I critically question the funerary or rather 'funerary' interpretation of the *sed*-festival.

The papyrus that preserves the most complete version of the *GD* (P. MMA 35.9.21) is a compilation of a series of compositions, some of which being much older than the manuscript itself, dating back at least to the Middle Kingdom, some having been copied in a reworked and adapted version.⁵ Although a funerary papyrus, some scholars already have noted a certain royal flavour, and I would complement this by adding a few quotes

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1 Chiefly von Lieven 2007, 167–186; von Lieven 2010, 91–111; von Lieven 2012, 249–267, citing the work of other authors.

Here I shall use the following abbreviations: *Great Decree Issued to the Nome of the Silent Land* = *GD*, *Book of Traversing Eternity* = *BTE*.

Quack (preliminary remark: Quack 2012, 227 n. 14) questions this title as being not the Ancient Egyptian title. Pragmatic reasons make me to keep this title that is well established in Egyptology. Many other Egyptian compositions bear pseudo-Egyptian names in Egyptology, and that nomenclature works quite well.

2 Smith 2009. See Stadler 2010–2011, 154–170. In addition, I wonder why the Second Document for Breathing went to the second part considering its roots that run via the Offering Ritual (see Stadler 2015).

3 Stadler 2010/2011, 154–170; Stadler 2012b, 383–397; Stadler 2013, 19–28.

4 Pries 2011.

5 Goyon 1999; Smith 2009, 67–75; Stadler 2009, 275.

that show a Memphite seasoning.⁶ The references to the king in the text as it has been preserved in the papyrus of Imuthes (P. MMA 35.9.21) are:

- (1) *šps-sw m šps.w nt=f wr-pw s3 nsw mtw.t nḥ n rsy inb=f* ‘Ennoble him among the noble ones (because) he is the great one, the king’s son, the living seed of him who is south of his wall.’ (pMMA 35.9.21 II 9f.),
- (2) *ks ʿ.wy=tn-n=f nt=f nsw-pw s3 nsw* ‘Bend your arms to him, (for) he is the king, the son of the king!’ (pMMA 35.9.21 II 11f.),
- (3) *pr-ʿ3 ʿ.w.s. tnw iw Wsir m wnw.wt* ‘Where is Pharaoh? Osiris is in the hours.’ (pMMA 35.9.21 VI 1 = pTamerit 1 x+IV 7)
- (4) *pr-ʿ3 ʿ.w.s. ḥʿi m 3tf k3-mw.t=f Nʿr.t/imn.t* ‘Pharaoh is appearing with the *atef*-crown, the bull of his mother of Naret/the West.’ (pMMA 35.9.21 VI 7 = pTamerit 1 x+IV 13)
- (5) *nsw st3=k-n=n* ‘King, return to us!’ (pMMA 35.9.21 VII 5 = pTamerit 1 x+V 17)
- (6) In the section of the lamentation, priestesses play the roles of Isis and Nephthys. Nephthys addresses the recipient of the ritual exclusively as *pr-ʿ3* (pMMA 35.9.21 XIV 15f. = pTamerit 1 x+XIII 11f.) and not as Osiris.

Of course, all this may refer to Osiris whom many religious texts call ‘king’, especially of the underworld,⁷ and in quote (4), which mentions the *atef*-crown, the king is in all likelihood Osiris, but in particular the phrase ‘he is the king, the son of the king’ does not fit an Osirian interpretation (nos. [1] and [2]). Apart from the *GD* there is no other attestation of such a phrase according to the *LGG*.⁸ The *Hourly Vigils* provide the only comparable predications. During the third hour of the day, Osiris is addressed in *tsi-tw s3 bit* ‘Raise yourself, son of the (Lower Egyptian) King!’⁹ Already during the first hour of the day, the exhortation to appear as the dual king (*ḥʿi m nsw-bit*) raises the suspicion that we are dealing with a relic that has survived the adaptation from a royal ritual in the *Hourly Vigils*.¹⁰ The *GD* and the *Hourly Vigils* have in common that they have been used for the treatment of Osiris figurines during the mysteries of the month Khoiak. In other words, both may have a common root and a common secondary usage.

What is the possible place of origin of that potentially royal ritual? Apart from references to Memphite mythology, the papyrus quite emphatically refers to the Memphite cult topography:

- (1) *Inb.w-ḥd* ‘White-Walls’ is
- (2) *r-gs ḥw.t Skr* ‘next to the House of Sokar’ (pMMA 35.9.21 I 17 and III 9), IV 5 as well as the *ḥw.t Skr* is mentioned together with *Inb.w-ḥd*.
- (3) Among the specifically Memphite regions *Rw.t-is.t* (pMMA 35.9.21 I 21 and III 13) and
- (4) *R3-st3w* (pMMA 35.9.21 I 20 und III 12) are to be cited.
- (5) The *st3.t ʿ3.t m Inb.w-ḥd* ‘the great crypt in White-Walls’ (pMMA 35.9.21 IV 5 = P. Tamerit 1 x+II 6) is another one of those Memphite holy places.
- (6) Finally in general, the cult is described as taking place in Memphis (pMMA 35.9.21 VII 1–15 = pTamerit 1 x+V 8–VI 14):
 - a. *nsw st3=k-n=n p3 3ms n nbw mi iṯi-tw r Inb.w-ḥd* ‘O king, hasten to us! Sceptre of gold, come and take yourself to White Walls!’,
 - b. *di-n=k rsy inb=f t3w n ʿnḥ ḥwi-tw=k Shm.t Nfr-tm wn-n=k sb3.w ʿ3.w m ḥw.t-k3-Pth* ‘He who is south of his wall will give you the breath of life. Sekhmet and Nefertem will protect you. The great doors will be opened for you in Hutkaptah.’ and

⁶ Stadler 2015.

⁷ Cf. *LGG* VIII 169–175.

⁸ *LGG* VI 84c.

⁹ Pries 2011, I 375, II 99.

¹⁰ Pries 2011, I 345, II 90f.

c. *iw=k r'Inb.w-ḥd iw iti.w=k im iry im wr im 'b.t im* 'You are bound for White Walls. Your fathers¹¹ are there, the creator is there, the great one is there, and offerings are there.'

Thus, the *GD* preserves a ritual with explicit references to the king, but appears to have been adapted to a burial. The original setting was somewhere in the Memphite necropoleis. This is not an obvious choice for a papyrus from the Middle Egyptian city of Kusae such as pMMA 35.9.21, and therefore I would take it as strong evidence that this is a text that was taken over from an archive in Memphis. Proceeding from the notion that certain texts were to be recited repeatedly at a series of *ip.wt* 'chambers', I suggest that those chambers are not to be taken as sections of a chorus, as some scholars have previously done, but that the word *ip.t* should be understood literally. In this sense, it would be a sort of note for the text's staging and refer to the architecture where a chorus might have recited the incantations. The festival court in Djoser's precinct in Saqqara could be a model of what such an architecture might have looked like.¹²

While the *GD* may contain excerpts of a royal funeral which enthroned the king as ruler of the hereafter, it is hard to determine whether such a ritual drew on the coronation ceremonies because those are almost entirely unknown, and in Egyptology the term coronation ritual is used in quite different meanings – the coronation as official introduction to the office of king or the coronation as a cyclically (annually to daily) repeated ritual.¹³ Even certain rites that symbolize, among other things, how the king takes possession of Egypt, the consecration of the four *meret*-chests with *t3 mr.t* 'the *meret*-chest' alluding to *T3-mri* 'Egypt', are part of a cult performance during feasts, i. e. executed during at least annually recurring occasions.¹⁴ Eaton has suggested that the ceremonies during the official accession to the throne were not too different from the rites that a king passed through daily or annually. According to her they just were more elaborate.¹⁵ This is quite possible, but still one might expect some liturgical tribute to the special occasion, and Eaton's hypothesis does not deal with the fact that in theory every temple could be the location of a coronation or the question of how the Egyptians coped with this problem. Where did a coronation take place? The wealth of Theban monuments biases our perception, and some authors too quickly assume that Karnak is the central place for Egyptian kingship (at least during the New Kingdom).¹⁶ From Memphis or, just to name another theologically outstanding city, Heliopolis almost nothing is known and, therefore, those two cities are underestimated, whereas Memphis is said to play a crucial role for the legitimation of Ptolemaic rule as the place of the coronation according to the Egyptian rite.¹⁷ However, historical sources indicate an itinerant kingship such as the Pithom-stela for Ptolemy II: *wn ḥm=f pḥr T3-mri ḥn' rpy.t wr.t ḥs.w nb<.t> im3 bnr<.t> mr.t ḥm.t nsw ḥnw.t n<.t> t3.wy Irsn3.t (...)* 'His Majesty traversed Egypt together with the princess great of praises, the mistress of grace, the sweet one of love, the king's wife, the mistress of the Two Lands Arsinoë (...).'¹⁸ That would yield sense, since in theory the king had to take possession of his country during a ceremonial journey as a sort of coronation ritual lasting for several weeks, and on that occasion he had to be introduced as high priest in every temple.¹⁹ Certainly, the Ptolemies did not invent those inaugural voyages through Egypt, and I interpret the Ramesside welcoming hymns to the arriving king²⁰ as relics of New Kingdom precursors. Obviously a king could not perform the ideal of his physical presence in one temple after the other during a coronation as one single event. Therefore, I assume a ritual which could replace that by a symbolic

11 Smith 2009, 83, erroneously renders this as a singular. The plural is clearly written in pMMA 35.9.21 VII 11 and – to my mind – this is significant. However, the parallel not known to Smith at the time of writing *Traversing Eternity* (2009) in pTamerit x+VI 10 has a singular.

12 For further details see Stadler 2015.

13 Cf. Stadler 2012a, 59–94. Bommas 2013, analyses a hymn as being performed during a daily ritual for the king which he calls 'investiture'. Whether this is true or not is not within the scope of this chapter. For a sloppy use of the word coronation ritual see, e. g. Graefe 2013, 57: pBrooklyn 47.218.50 clearly states that the rites are to be performed on the occasion of every feast.

14 Egberts 1995, 173–202.

15 Eaton 2013, 75.

16 Stadler 2015.

17 For a critical review of the evidence see Stadler 2012a, 59–94, in combination with Stadler 2015.

18 Line 15. Thiers 2007, 50. See also the Pi(ankh)y-stela: Kairo JdE 48862+47086–47089. Grimal 1981; Ritner 2009, 465–492; Clarysse 2000; Clarysse 2007; Laskowska-Kusztal 2010.

19 Clarysse 2000, 35–38.

20 Fischer-Elfert 1999.

act in one city. An accompanying recitation would reflect this by enumerating the visit of Egypt's most important cult centres and consequently very much resemble the *BTE* whose beneficiary visits the holiest places of the country. The *BTE*'s secularity has puzzled Egyptologists,²¹ while Guilmoit, an author with a Rosicrucian background, saw it as an initiation rite, albeit as a ritually enacted death and rebirth (and thus remaining in a 'funerary' interpretive model).²² In contrast to that I wonder whether the *BTE* is a funerary adaptation of a royal ritual to take over the power in Egypt. There are some indicators of which I only present a selection:

- (1) The deceased is addressed as 'your majesty' in *pri hm = k m b3 ʿnh* 'Your majesty will go forth as a living *ba*.' (pLeiden T 32 I 8)
- (2) On the other hand *pri = k m hrw hnm = k itn h3y hdd = fn hr = k* 'You will go forth by day and unite with the sun disc. The brightness, it²³ will illuminate your visage.' (I 5) is a statement that is very familiar from the funerary corpus of texts.²⁴ However, the ideas expressed in it resemble the mythical description of Thutmose's III divine election for the royal office. In this legend of Thutmose's youth Amun takes the young king on a journey to the sky where he meets the sun god.²⁵
- (3) In I 27f. the beneficiary explicitly receives life and dominion in the Mansion of the Beloved One, a sanctuary in the 5th Lower Egyptian nome, during a ritual: *rdi . t(w) - n = k ʿnh w3s m hw . t Mry ssm hs m ʿ . t sst3 . w*. 'Life and dominion will be given to you in the mansion of the] Beloved One, when the ritual is conducted in the chamber of the mysterious document.'
- (4) *hw i = k hfty . w = k m hw . t Wnty* 'You will smite your enemies in the mansion of Wenti.' (II 4) The destruction of enemies brings another political component to the *BTE*. Admittedly this motif is quite prominent in the funerary corpus,²⁶ but it is presumably again a borrowing from royal rituals.
- (5) In Memphis the beneficiary will be exalted at the portal of the mansion of Ptah. (*tni irw = kr sbh . t hw . t Pth*, II 5).
- (6) In the same city it is said that he will ascend the staircase of the mansions of the *sed*-festival (*ts = k hr hnty n hw . wt hb sd*, II 7) – a statement that recalls the podium in the jubilee court of the Djoser precinct.

All this has a distinct royal character, whereas the interspersed mortuary elements are quite general and unspecific. Among the latter, the affirmations of bodily fitness and physical integrity are also sensible in the context of an introduction to the office of pharaoh, for among his chief duties is the country's protection from aggressors, which required a strong man.

Evoking the *sed*-festival in the context of funerary rituals as the *BTE* does in saying 'You will ascend the staircase of the mansions of the jubilee' leads us into a minefield.²⁷ Rummel postulated that the occurrence and the use of incense, anointing oil and the specific *idmi*-linen of which the king's *sed*-coat was fabricated, indicate a ritual death and rejuvenation that was performed or enacted during the *sed*-festival. Those substances, she argues, were also used during the rites of embalming. She perceives utterances combining rejuvenation and regeneration with the wish for repeating *sed*-festivals as further evidence for her thesis, but she quotes just two out of 'several passages'. The second passage Rummel cites from an article by William J. Murnane, but I could not find it in the full publication of the Luxor colonnade at whose entrance it is supposed to be found.²⁸ The first one is from the temple of Seti I in Abydos, a speech of Seshat to the king:

- (1) *w hm = k m3w s3 ʿ = k 3h3h mi T ʿh m hrd rnpi = k (-tw) { -sw } m rnpi hr rnpi mi nww r dp nw = f m si . tw = k m w hm hb . w - sd* 'You shall repeat the renewal, you shall begin the verdancy like Iah as a child, you shall

21 Herbin 1994; Smith 2009, 395–436.

22 Guilmoit 1977, 91–174.

23 So, not 'Its brightness will ...' as in Smith 2009, 406.

24 Herbin 1994, 84–86.

25 *Urk.* IV 156–17; Hofmann 2004, 209–227.

26 Roeder 1996.

27 Rummel 2006 and Rummel 2010 (followed by Goebis 2011, 58f.) versus Lange 2013, 280f, 330 note 692, 332, 364–370.

28 Murnane 1981, 375, but there is a similar statement on the back pillar of the large dyad, see *The Epigraphic Survey* 1998, pl. 214E, which does not link the rejuvenation as directly with the *sed*-festival as it is done in Murnane's quote. Has he misquoted from his notes?

rejuvenate <yourself> in rejuvenation after rejuvenation like the Nun at the beginning of his time. You shall be born in the repetition of the *sed*-festivals.²⁹

The occurrence in a royal mansion of millions of years in Abydos raises the suspicion that the particular context might have prompted the funerary flavour. Apart from those two aforementioned ones (or rather that single one), one might consider the following:

- (2) Akhenaten decrees in his boundary stelae: *iri.tw-n=i hr m p3 dw b[... ..] iri[.t]w krs=i im=f m p3 hñ n hb-sd wd.n=i p3 itn [...] iti<=i>* ‘Let a tomb be made for me in the [orient] mountain [of Akhet-Aten], and let my burial be made in it, in the millions of *sed*-festivals which the Aten, [... ..] my father, decreed for me.’³⁰
- (3) Parennefer prays to Aten for his king and says: *mtnw=k-sw m [... ..] hb-sd st.wt=k m cñh w3s hr rnp i h^c.w[=f] r^c-nb* ‘You shall grant him with [... ..] *sed*-festival. Your rays consisting of life and dominion rejuvenate his limbs every day.’³¹
- (4) Singers recite a hymn to Amun-Re in the tomb of the vizier Paser and say: *ssnb.n=f nsw Mn-M3^c.t-R^c rH r[=n(?)] imy-n=f d.t m hb-sd nhñ m im.t-pr* ‘He has kept healthy the king Menma’atrê, [our (?)] Horus (?). Grant him everlastingness in a *sed*-festival, eternity in a testament!’³²
- (5) In the Great Dedicatory Inscription Ramesses II addresses his father, whom Ramesses perceives as a manifestation of Osiris, and describes, how he has completed Seti’s mansion of millions of years in Abydos: *dd=k n R^c [... .. di=f] cñh n s3=f W[n]n-nfr m ib mrr imi cñh w hr cñh w dm dw m hb.w-sd n Wsr-m3^c.t-R^c-stp.n-R^c di cñh* ‘You shall speak to Re [... ..] so that he may grant life to his son. Wenennefer with loving heart, grant lifetime after lifetime coupled with *sed*-festivals for Userma’atrêsetepenrê, given life!’³³
- (6) In a ritual scene of the Euergetes-gate in Karnak, Amaunet answers the king’s offering with the promise *di=i wñm=k hb.w-sd m hñ n rnp.wt hrd<=k> m-ht khkh* ‘I shall make you repeat the *sed*-festivals during a million of years. You will be a child after having grown old.’³⁴

Those are the six references which I could identify and which might associate the *sed*-festival – be it even in the remotest sense – with a burial context or with wishes that burial rites are also intended to fulfil, i.e. rejuvenation or an eternal life.³⁵ However, the textual evidence is rather unsatisfying because either the connection is very loose and based on the reader’s interpretation, or a lacuna prevents us from drawing secure conclusions. In quote (2) the *sed*-festival serves as a metaphor for long life as king after which he wants to be buried in the area of Akhetaten. In this vein, Akhenaten’s courtier hopes for his master’s endurance on the throne (cf. [3], similarly [4]). Moreover, a king’s long lasting life itself implies *sed*-festivals (see [5]). Only Amaunet directly links the idea of rejuvenation to the *sed*-festival in her answer to Ptolemy III Euergetes and thus provides a parallel to (1). However, is it surprising to find the wish for a long life or rather eternal youth expressed when thinking about a jubilee, i.e. having reached an advanced age? Certainly not, since the human desire to avoid old age and the fear of death condition both, but under those circumstances the notion of rejuvenation is surprisingly rarely attested for the *sed*-festival.

The ritual terminology and paraphernalia in the *sed*-festival may remind us of mortuary texts, but I doubt that the *sed*-festival underlies a mortuary sense of cultic death and rebirth and I think that it is the other way round: temple ritual or royal rituals or even adaptations thereof inspire mortuary ritual texts. Reflecting the surviving

29 Mariette 1869, 1880 I 51a, 32f.

30 Murnane and van Siclen 1993, 25; Murnane 1995, 77f, further references there on p. 248, no. 37.

31 de Garis Davies 1908, Taf. 3, 6f; Sandman 1938, 69; Murnane 1995, 177f.

32 *KRI* I 296, 11. Cf. the translation by Kitchen 1993, 242, from which I deviate. Kitchen translates ‘our lord’ instead of ‘our Horus’. However, Horus may be combined with a suffix pronoun, usually referring to Isis and ‘her Horus’: Stadler 2012c, 256. See also pBrooklyn 47.218.50 I 14: *Hr=t* ‘your Horus’.

33 *KRI* II 334, 4f; Spalinger 2009, 79. S. Grallert on *TLA* (<http://aew.bbaw.de/tla/index.html>, accessed 7 July 2014), also takes Wenennefer as vocative. Maderna-Sieben (2003b, 45; and 2003a, 278), however, translates it as an attribute to ‘his son’, but Wenennefer’s role is hardly that of a son.

34 *Urk.* VIII, Nr. 100d = Clère 1961, pl. 48.

35 The search is based on the *Digitales Zettelarchiv* published with the *TLA* and on the sources digitally assembled in *TLA*.

textual evidence and its overwhelmingly funerary character, Egyptologists traditionally enjoy during their training a solid series of reading classes in which they study *Pyramid Texts*, *Coffin Texts*, *Book of the Dead*. This leaves an imprint on our minds and, therefore, prejudices our funerary interpretation of a given text or textual fragment all too quickly, leading to what I would like to call ‘funerarism’, a sort of ideology that constrains thinking within certain funerary boundaries. However, if we consider what the basic function of a ritual is, one could say that it is the temporary or permanent transformation of an individual from one state of being to another – usually better – one. In Egypt, that is commonly a divine figure, and in general, rejuvenation plays an important role. At the same time, the identification of this aim that a given ritual is supposed to attain³⁶ is rather banal and hardly a surprising result. Scholars may superficially hide the banality by using the terms transfiguration, rejuvenation, glorification, and divinization. In essence, all of them convey the same meaning, the transformation to enjoying a somehow better existence. Such a transformation as a goal is true of the king when acceding to the throne or at any other time when entering the temple for performing the ritual there, but it is also true for the magician and the deceased. In the case of the *sed*-festival the particular aspect of rejuvenation would not be amazing, as I have tried to explain above, but is certainly implied in any transformation rite. Likewise, the very first spell to be uttered during the daily ritual for Amun in Karnak, which survived in a papyrus dating to the earlier first millennium BC, as well as its Roman parallel for Soknebtunis from Tebtunis thematizes the rejuvenation:

ii.tw sp-sn m htp ir.t-Hr 3h.ti wd3.tw rnpi.tw m htp psd=s mi R^c m 3h.ty ‘You shall come, you shall come in peace, Eye of Horus, being beneficial, sound, and rejuvenating in peace so that it shines like Re as the horizontal one.’³⁷

Rnpi recurs several times in this text,³⁸ not as often as in a mortuary composition but more often than in the context of a *sed*-festival. How shall those who are occupied with ritual design express the very same ideas in another wording for each sphere (royal, temple, and the tomb) respectively? The Egyptian scribes dealing with rituals in the broadest sense were even members of an institution that in earlier times was associated with the temple as well as the king, the House of Life.³⁹ That double association might have facilitated the mobility of concepts, themes, and wordings leading towards a modern confusion and the detection of a funerary sub-text in rituals that in fact are the sub-texts of funerary rituals. What goes for the wording also goes for the paraphernalia: the linen (even and particularly *idmi*-linen), the incense, and the anointing oil are certainly not exclusive to embalmment and burial rites, nor can it be proven that their use during mortuary rites is the original one. The *Daily Ritual* contains a spell for dressing the deity: in the Abydos-version the term used is *mnh.t 3.t* ‘great linen’, but in the Theban version of pBerlin P 3055 it is the *mnh.t idm.t idmi*-linen.⁴⁰ That variation illustrates the flexibility of the Egyptians in their terminology, and it should warn us not to take certain expressions too seriously: a *mnh.t* in some contexts may refer to the same kind of cloth which other scribes may call *idmi*. In some cases, one can even demonstrate that the primary use of linen cloths was in the temple cult from which it was handed over to be secondarily reused in mummification.⁴¹ A parallel phenomenon are the red leather tapes that originated in the temple cult, found their way into the tombs, and were deposited with mummies.⁴²

36 Goebs 1995, 154–181; Goebs 2008; Goebs 2011, 57–95.

37 pBerlin P 3055 I 2f. Contrary to Braun 2013, 97, I would not take *wd3.tw* and *rnpi.tw* as a stative in an optative sense but as a stative in the sense of a pseudo-participle. Consider the change of the personal pronoun to the third person in participial constructions in, e.g., autobiographies, such as: *ink hq hr n {n} n tw3=firi 3h.t n mi<.ty>=fink mtr m pr nb=frrh phr m sw n dd.t(w)* ‘I am generous to his client, one who usefully acts for his peer. I am correct in the house of his lord, one who knows the wallowing in honeyed words.’ (Stela of Antef, son of Sent, BM EA 581, col. 6f., Lichtheim 1988, 109–111, with further bibliography) Here we have the same change in *psd=s* to the suffix =s referring to the Eye of Horus which is addressed in the second person in the beginning. See the – to my mind correct version – by Rosati 1998, 109. For the text’s history going back to the *Pyramid Texts* see Franke 1994, 224–236.

38 pBerlin P 3055 XXI 6, XXIII 3, XXIX 4.

39 Eyre 2013, 311–315.

40 pBerlin P 3055 XXX 3–8; Calverley et al. 1935, pl. 8, 16; Braun 2013, 169–171.

41 Widmer 2013, 185–192. On linen and cult in general: Riggs 2014, 130–151.

42 Altenmüller 2001, 73–112.

The same spell from the *Daily Ritual* allows a further insight into the functioning of ritual design and the mobility of textual bits and pieces from which the Egyptians could build new rituals. Using the pun on *dmi* ‘to touch someone’ and the *idmi*-linen, the priest recites:

šsp Imn-Rc nb ns.wt t3.wy šdi=fm idmi.t hr ʿ.wy T3y.tr iw.f.w=f dmi ntr r ntr t3 ntr r ntr m rn=s-pwy n idmi.t ‘Amun-Re, lord of the thrones of the Two Lands, shall take the *idmi*-linen upon the arms. Taït shall be at his flesh. God shall touch god, god shall clothe god in this its name of *idmi*-linen.’

The identical pun is attested in the *Dramatic Ramesseum Papyrus* in scene no. 7 during which *idmi*-linen is to be presented:

Hr Wsir dd mdw dmi iti(=i) ir(=i) – Wsir – idmi ‘Horus to Osiris: “My father shall touch me.” – Osiris – *idmi*-linen’⁴³

That observation has a double significance because the *Dramatic Ramesseum Papyrus* has been interpreted as a funerary ritual for a deceased king, as the ritual for a *sed*-festival or – again approximating the text to an essentially funerary composition – as a record of the Khoiak festival.⁴⁴ Once more, some Egyptologists look at the evidence through their funerary glasses,⁴⁵ others are more exotic and look for what might have been said during the *sed*-festival. Both groups smooth the way for a mortuary interpretation of the *Dramatic Ramesseum Papyrus*,⁴⁶ and all might be wrong because this papyrus is neither to be associated with a royal funeral nor with a royal jubilee, but possibly with the son’s accession to the throne immediately after the death of his father.⁴⁷ ‘Funerarists’ want to rescue it for their teaching by stressing that the new king had to bury his predecessor.⁴⁸ Nevertheless the spheres of royal and funerary ritual again come close to one another.

Ironically, I have used the same sources on which also Rummel drew, but came to completely different conclusions. Why is that so? Why does Rummel’s thesis appear to me to be rather improbable on the level of the same explicit references in the textual sources? The reason is the methodology.⁴⁹ It is hardly possible to refute Rummel’s argument, for she has woven a web by citing scholarly theses, or better hypotheses, without critically reviewing them and sometimes with limited relevance for the subject.⁵⁰ She has never asked the question of the direction in which the ritual traditions of Ancient Egypt have developed,⁵¹ nor considered what it means to argue with the *Embalming Ritual*, about which we are best informed by papyri dating to the Roman period, for a ritual attested since the Early Dynastic Period. Thus, to explain much older phenomena, she uses a Roman manuscript that she couples with earlier evidence for the embalmment and that, though ancient in its core, has undergone a substantial editorial reworking.⁵² Susanne Töpfer, it is true, can demonstrate how even mummies of the Old Kingdom display features of a mummification practice that the *Embalming Ritual* describes.⁵³ But that does not say anything about an exclusive funerary connotation of the *idmi*-linen or linen in general. The ambiguity of Egyptian ritual speech and its manifold allusions to various sources of life can lead to a completely different interpretation: the *sed*-festival

43 pBerlin P 3055 XXX 3–5; *DRP* col. 107; Sethe 1928; ND 1964, 216, 219; Lorand 2009, 115.

44 See Eaton 2013, 70f, for a summary of research.

45 Another example for such an approach is, e.g., Eaton 2013, 53–55, 70–75.

46 Such as Rummel 2006, 396–398.

47 Wente 1969, 83–91; Quack 2006, 72–89; Gestermann 2008, 27–52, remains indecisive. Some proposals for correcting mis-readings: Schneider 2008, 231–25. Lorand 2009, who deems a secondary propagandist purpose possible.

48 Eaton 2013, 70–75.

49 See also the criticism by Lange 2013, 280f, 330 n. 692, 332, 364–370.

50 Altenmüller 1996, 1–17; Altenmüller 1997, 1–21; Altenmüller 2000, 305–316. Likewise (not cited by Rummel, but with the same tendency): Altenmüller 1999, 1–26. For a sceptical view of preconditions that underlie those propositions see Stadler 2009, 54–64.

51 The same is true of Roeder 1996, whom Rummel cites and who collects and analyses many funerary texts from a semantic point of view but is apparently not interested in potential textual historical reasons for the appearance of rulership in his chosen corpus of sources.

52 Töpfer 2014, 201–221; Töpfer 2015a; Töpfer 2015b.

53 This volume.

may stand much more within the framework of solar connotations and refer to regeneration by the king's transformation into a solar creator.⁵⁴ Although the solar creator is not absent from the funerary corpus of texts, I cannot imagine that this is his primary realm. Rather Egyptians drew on him because of his nature as the source of all life.

This chapter has substantially transgressed the chronological framework of the book because it did not exclude sources earlier than the Ptolemaic period nor did it give a particular prominence to sources from the Ptolemaic or Roman periods. It rather attempted to bring to attention a multi-faceted whole picture, the development from the Old Kingdom onwards. I have the impression that during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods the scribes could draw on a particularly rich variety of texts, and maybe even dared to use formerly royal texts in times of foreign rule when kings of non-Egyptian origin governed the land of the Nile. The reasons for that are not evident. Did some members of the indigenous élite regard the new lords of Egypt as being unworthy of the old royal rituals? Or did the kings themselves not care too much about it?

In the light of, e.g., spell 75 from the *Book of the Dead* which is entitled *r3 n šm. t r Twnw šsp s. t im* 'spell of going to Heliopolis and of receiving a seat there', I doubt that the borrowings are a novelty of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. In the case of *BD 75*, I wonder whether 'seat' refers to the throne. Then the spell would be a much earlier attestation for this phenomenon, since the Eighteenth Dynasty version goes back at least to the Middle Kingdom or even the late Old Kingdom.⁵⁵ In any case, I would advocate for another, a reversed approach to funerary rituals: let us view them in the wider context of Egyptian rituals, let us tear down the walls separating them, and let us accept that Egyptian ritual language allows for the mobility of unstandardized texts!⁵⁶ In this sense, rituals that seemingly have a mortuary character, although their *Sitz im Leben* is, e.g., in the cult of the king, may turn out to be the root of mortuary texts that were adapted from other ritual spheres. Looking at the textual mortuary evidence that way, we may discover a lot of rituals which are otherwise lost, and through this the mortuary corpus turns out to be a gold mine for Egyptian life beyond the hereafter.

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⁵⁴ LeBlanc 2011.

⁵⁵ CT 988 = P. Gardiner II and III; Gestermann 2000, 202–208.

⁵⁶ See also Pries 2013, 279–295.

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