Chapter 1: Introduction

‘The Walking Dead’ in the title of the current study is of course a nod to the famous television series, but it also has a more serious meaning alluding to the fact that from an ancient Egyptian perspective, the deceased and other spiritual beings were actually part of the life of the living and interacted with them. A flowery description of this worldview has been provided by Thomas Mann in his famous Josephroman: “Nicht allein, daß Himmlisches und Irdisches sich ineinander wiedererkennen, sondern es wandelt sich auch, kraft der sphärischen Drehung, das Himmlische ins Irdische, das Irdische ins Himmlische, und daraus erhellt, daraus ergibt sich die Wahrheit, daß Göttter Menschen, Menschen dagegen wieder Göttler werden können.”¹ A distinction between ‘this world’ and ‘the next’ or the like is therefore to be rejected. If borders existed, they were highly permeable in the context of everyday life in New Kingdom Egypt at Saqqara, for which the current study seeks to conceptualise the various strategies of interaction.

1.1 Scope and motivation

The ‘past’ does not exist as such. Rather, it exists only as it is incarnated and reincarnated in memories, texts, objects, and our ongoing collective activity of reconstruction. Nor is the past that is embodied in an object a fixed quality. It comes to be transformed as its audience and the circumstances in which it is encountered are themselves transformed. The historical significance of an object may itself be reconstituted historically.²

The above quote stems from a study of Indian images but it is highly relevant for the ancient Egyptian context as well, especially if we seek to understand how religious traditions developed over time and how we can reconstruct them in the archaeological record, which reflects the mutual interaction between humans and their environment.³ The current study seeks to understand the lived

³ See e.g. Phillip Sarasin. Geschichtswissenschaft und Diskursanalyse, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 2003. For an Egyptologist’s perspective see e.g. Elisabeth Arend. ‘Von der Mimesis zur Konstruktion: zur Geschichte literarischer Vergangenheitsdarstellung,’ In: in.t Dr.w: Festschrift für Fried
religious traditions at Saqqara in Egypt, i.e. the cemetery of the ancient city of Memphis, around the time of the reigns of Amenhotep III and Ramesses IV (c. 1390–1129 BCE). To be precise, this study analyses the various strategies of socio-religious interaction of people in an interesting phase in the history of the site when the highest Egyptian officials built their monumental tombs in the shadow of the pyramids of Old Kingdom kings like Djoser, Unas, and Teti, which had already stood there for over 1000 years (Fig. 1).

The site also provides an excellent case study because of the great work of almost 50 years of excavations by the now Leiden-Turin Expedition to Saqqara, the Egyptian and Australian expeditions at Teti cemetery and South of Unas,

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Fig. 1: Map of Saqqara with thanks to Nico Staring. This map shows the structures with known location mentioned in this study.
and the French expedition to the Bubasteion.¹ These areas of what was in the past one large necropolis of about 12.5 km² preserved the choices people made regarding where to be buried, thereby integrating both their stories and monuments into the biography of the site.¹¹ It is therefore helpful to conceptualise Saqqara as ‘cultural geography’, i.e. the result of individuals and groups who continuously shaped their environment, and vice versa were shaped by it.¹² While the main interest is in tracing religious traditions, conceptualising the area as cultural geography should help to avoid the automatic presumption that all traces of practices in a cemetery are necessarily religiously motivated. The current study aims to capture the “mutual relationship between religion and [its] environment”,¹³ but also to detect the manifold ways “meaning and social under-
standings are constructed, contested and negotiated”.¹⁴ Hereby ‘cultural geography’ adds a spatial perspective to what Jörg Rüpke called *lived ancient religion*, i.e. variation, deviance, and invention of religious practices.¹⁵ This study thus seeks to understand how religious traditions at Saqqara were shaped and modified by means of practice in everyday life, but also to overcome the common misunderstanding that the ancient Egyptians were obsessed with death and immortality.¹⁶ Even though the evidence we have from ancient Egypt in general often stems from mortuary contexts, people’s lives did not centre around death. On the contrary, in the perception of the ancient Egyptians the deceased remained part of the world of the living. As Martin Fitzenreiter aptly described it:

> they come forth and sit at [offering] tables; they haunt the living, sowing discord and disease; they offer themselves as healers, saviours and mediators to the gods; and their fate – in the terms of myths of the Osiris – plays an eminent role in the interpretation and manipulation of the nexus of culture and nature.¹⁷

This continuing interaction between the living and the deceased in ancient Egypt is exemplified, for example, by the practice of writing letters to the dead.¹⁸ Only a few examples have been preserved, but the practice is historically widespread and a prominent Leiden example dates to Ramesside Saqqara,¹⁹ i.e. the later


¹⁸ Renata Schivavo has recently emphasised how these letters can also be interpreted positively as attempts to restore the role of ancestors as protectors of the household and thereby the household’s prosperity: Renata Schivavo. ‘Ghosts and Ancestors in a Gender Perspective.’ *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 25 (2020): 201–212.

¹⁹ Recently e.g. Michael O’Donoghue. ‘The “letters to the dead” and ancient Egyptian religion.’ *The Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* 10 (1999): 87–104 with references. On the
phase of the historical period that interests us here. The interest in studying lived religious practices at Saqqara, however, is also biographical: it stems from my previous work on the domestic religious practices at Deir el-Medina, a workmen’s village near the southern city of Thebes which demonstrated the numerous intersections between the worlds of the living and the deceased. Seeing these intersections also triggered changing the research perspective by 180 degrees as a logical next step, and hence to not study the deceased in the domestic, but the living in a cemetery. Religious practices at Deir el-Medina houses were strongly motivated by the desire of regeneration and to maintain the cycle of life. ‘Family religion’ centred around requests to the gods for everyday concerns, including fertility and ancestor cults, both in and beyond the house, such as in the chapels and tombs (Fig. 2). As W. Lloyd Warner put it: “today’s dead are yesterday’s living, and today’s living are tomorrow’s dead. Each is identified with the other’s fate. No one escapes”. For the ancient Egyptians family continuity was vital because an eternal afterlife depended on an ongoing stream of offerings, and indeed descendants to perform them.

The evidence from Saqqara, however, requires widening the scope of research: the textual and material remains aimed at a broader audience and constituted wider ‘extended families’ or ‘households’ (see also chapter 2). Susan Gillespie offered an apt definition for such households:

Saqqara example see Leiden inv. nos AH 114 and AMS 64, see Fitzenreiter, ‘Unsterblichkeit’, 20 – 21.


On regeneration as main aim of Egyptian religion see already Erik Hornung. ‘Zur Struktur des ägyptischen Jenseitsglaubens.’ Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde 119 (1992): 127–128. Note that in Egyptology benevolent deceased and deified ones are usually studied separately while of course the ancient Egyptians themselves shaped their understanding of the dead by the sum of their various experiences with the dead on all levels; see also Rune Nyord. ‘Experiencing the dead in ancient Egyptian healing texts.’ In: Systems of classification in premodern medical cultures: sickness, health, and local epistemologies edited by Ulrike Steinert, 86. London: Routledge, 2020.


Groups referred to by the term ‘house’ are corporate bodies, sometimes quite large, organized by their shared residence, subsistence, means of production, origin, ritual actions, or metaphysical essence, all of which entail a commitment to a corpus of house property, which in turn can be said to materialize the social group. Houses define and socially reproduce themselves by the actions involved with the preservation of their joint property, as a form of material reproduction that objectifies their existence as a group and serves to configure their status vis-à-vis other houses within the larger society.²⁴

While household archaeology typically refers to the study of the domestic,²⁵ we should not underestimate the household as a social category that extended beyond the limits of the house as a building²⁶ and indeed acknowledged simultaneous membership in various houses (or none).²⁷ Yet since the term ‘house’ is too

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strongly connected to “descent, property, and residence”, scholars sought to move to a full acknowledgement of the unstable character of those alliances. This is relevant certainly for ancient Egypt, where extended families included also various servants, colleagues, and friends. The importance of extended family, kin groups as well as patron–client relationships as a basis for the Egyptian society have also been stressed by Egyptologists like Mark Lehner, Christopher Eyre, Moreno García, and most recently by Leire Olabarria. In fact two perhaps less well-known studies had a few decades earlier already emphasised the importance of extended families and kin groups as motors of “agency of procreation and socialisation” as well as the importance of gift exchange to maintain these ties. We shall see in the following that these findings are crucial for the current study, but only when widening the scope to the local level.


36 Olabarria does indeed emphasise that, from a sociological point of view, kin groups do not only describe blood relatives, yet the strong terminological association of ‘the clan’ or ‘the kin’ with a family relationships should be avoided, see Olabarria, Kinship, 29, 69 and 93 and see also Fredrik Hagen. ‘Local identities.’ In: The Egyptian world edited by Toby Wilkinson, 243. London; New York: Routledge, 2007 stressing that every individual is simultaneously a member of different sort of groups on ‘national’, local, ethic, regional and/or professional levels which together shape his or her social identity. Note that the social construction of these ties has also been emphasised as a critic against too easy acceptance of the results of DNA studies: Joanna Brück. ‘An-
important to realise is that, in reality, social networks function on various temporal and spatial levels, and the Egyptian evidence can only provide us a snapshot of those interrelationships.

1.2 Hypothesis: Strategies of creating and maintaining ‘reminiscence clusters’

Matters of cultural memory and the wish of the Egyptians to remain have been studied in detail. A fan of bipolar models, Jan Assmann distinguishes between two types of memory: a communicative one, in terms of everyday life memories that are transmitted through orality, and cultural memory, in terms of an objectified and institutionalised memory that is stored, transmitted, and reinvented throughout generations and is basically a collective memory that allows people to understand their cultural practices. While cultural memory is the long-term collective memory of a culture, communicative memory is confined to the recent past of three to four generations. The latter is what I am interested in for this study, namely an in-depth study of the cultural practices people performed at a daily life level to keep the communicative memory alive.

A significant problem with Assmann’s concept of memory is that it is a normative category, presuming a given understanding of that very memory, whereas an analytic category should ask which memories are reproduced by whom, and in what situation. For a sharper conceptionalisation I therefore loosely borrow


the term “(informative) reminiscence” from psychological studies, where it is defined as a “recollection for the pleasure of reliving and retelling [...] to revive interest, self-esteem, and personal relationships”.40 This is interesting because we know that it was the Egyptian ideal to be being embedded into a group,41 but we need a clearer understanding of both 1) which relationships were evoked, where and for what reason (the aim), and 2) which strategies, in terms of long-term practices, we used to achieve that aim. For example, at Abydos it is argued that clusters of memorial chapels discovered along processional routes represented the social units of a head of a household and his relatives, dependents, and colleagues – as represented on the famous Abydos stelae.42 At Saqqara, we shall see a more diverse picture of very specific choices to commemorate a belonging to certain groups, sometimes emphasising blood relationships, but also other affiliations, with an overall high degree of flexibility.43 The conceptualisation of the evidence from Saqqara as reflecting ‘reminiscence clusters’ thus sharpens the lens of research and conceptionalises choices and strategies that people made. Thereby a distinction between communicative and collective memories becomes obsolete: small scale strategies and interaction constantly constitute, but also negotiate, amend, and even invent, the bigger picture.

42 Many of which have no archaeological context, see Olabarria, Kinship, 41. On votive stelae as evidence for social practices see e.g. Karen Exell. Soldiers, sailors and sandalmakers: a social reading of Ramesside period votive stelae. GHP Egyptology 10. London: Golden House, 2009, 131.
1.3 Introducing the praxeological approach

In spite of the seminal work on the research history of the individual interaction with the divine by Michela Luiselli,44 a good handbook of ancient Egyptian religious practices is still a desideratum. Not only in Egyptology but in any study of individuals and society, one encounters an abyss of theories of the question of how freely the individual can act with the constraints of what is expected behaviour in a given group, a discussion as old as the discipline of sociology itself.45 It therefore seems useful to briefly define the concepts used in this study before diving further into the material analysis.

1.3.1 What is agency?

Following a seminal article by Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische, agency is conceptualised here as:46

a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its ‘iterational’ or habitual aspect) but also oriented toward the future (as a ‘projective’ capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a ‘practical-evaluative’ capacity to contextualise past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment).47

What is important here is the fact that they view “structural contexts of action” as “temporal”, i.e. allowing for individual and group appropriation of action depending on context and situation. For the ancient Egyptian context, for example, we know of many cases in which the archaeological record we have differs from instructions known from Egyptian texts.⁴⁸ Instead of assuming error it is fruitful to think about these amendments in terms of innovation, which may at times even have improved the ‘original’ ritual.⁴⁹ How such appropriations influence individual and group practices on a larger scale is perhaps best understood in terms of the ‘role identity theory’.⁵⁰ This theory conceptualises society as “positions within the social structure” and identity as “internalized meanings and expectations associated with a role”.⁵¹ Each individual role is embedded into one or more groups providing the meanings and expectations associated with the role in question, but also with the potential possibility to modify these meanings and expectations. These ‘lived’ identities could evolve from group participation (‘social identity’), social roles (‘role identity’), or biological components (‘personal identity’),⁵² which can be activated and changed depending on context and situation (‘salience of an identity’). It is therefore important not to equate titles with roles as Martin Fitzenreiter did in his article about social practices of tomb building.⁵³ In his otherwise illuminating article Fitzenreiter discussed access to resources and increasing social stratification by means of growing access to resources by different groups and the development of what Fitzenreiter called “intermediary groups” between the elite and their dependents for residential areas (Memphis) in the Old Kingdom. His analysis of access to resources is relevant also for the New Kingdom and this study shows how different strategies of cre-

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⁴⁸ A very good example are magical bricks mentioned in the Egyptian mortuary literature, whose appearance and location in the tomb can differ considerably from the textual instruction: Isabelle Régen. ‘When the Book of the Dead does not match archaeology: the case of the protective magical bricks (BD 151).’ British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan 15 (2010): 267–278.

⁴⁹ See Régen, ‘Magical bricks’, 273


⁵¹ Stryker and Burke, ‘Identity Theory’, 289.

⁵² The remaining question is of course whether ostensibly biological characteristics are not culturally constructed, too.

ating and maintaining what I refer to coin as ‘reminiscence clusters’ demonstrate how individuals and groups accumulated multiple roles, different elements of which may dominate in different situations.\textsuperscript{54} Role identity theory and the added element of potential temporality thus help to understand individual and group agency within a constantly renegotiated social structure, not ignoring any “internalized meanings and expectations associated with a role”,\textsuperscript{55} but allowing them to variable. Where possible, object agency is considered as well in terms of the agency humans ascribed to statues or other objects.\textsuperscript{56}

1.3.2 What are practices?

The current praxeological perspective seeks to overcome traditional oppositions between ‘structure’ (the habitual aspect or negotiated common sense) and ‘agency’ (individual and group action), which is one of the key issues of any understanding of social interaction.\textsuperscript{57} To be precise, the debate centres around the question of how ‘free’ individuals and groups are to act and interact. Rather than with Bourdieu’s habitus, i.e. a “set of dispositions, created and reformulated through conjuncture of objective structure and personal history”,\textsuperscript{58} it is helpful to look at structure in terms of Anthony Giddens’ structuration, i.e. as a dual structure of a social consensus and the common acceptance of conventions con-

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{54} Stryker and Burke, ‘Identity Theory’, 286. \\
\textsuperscript{55} Stryker and Burke, ‘Identity Theory’, 289. \\
\textsuperscript{58} Harker and Mahar, Introduction, 10.
\end{flushleft}
stantly being reaffirmed in the process of structuration.59 Structuration thus allows us to view structure and agency as two sides of the same coin,60 and overcomes the problem that Bourdieu’s habitus is always created and reproduced unconsciously “without any deliberate pursuit of coherence [and] without any conscious concentration”.61 A “practice is a routinised type of behavior which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.”62 In view of several praxeological approaches, it should be noted that it is useful in the current study to start with practices and study them beyond the traditional binary patter of structure and agency, or individual and society, and to view them in relation to the field in which they are embedded.63 While individuals cannot randomly change practices, at least not when they should be accepted by others, practices can change over time. Hilmar Schäfer64 mentions the very fitting example of the marriage: nobody can hope to get married if the practice does not exist, and if he or she gets married it is legally effective only if the preceding ceremony follows a fixed set of rules. On the other hand, the practice changes over time (e.g. allowing same sex marriage, etc). It is therefore important to consider practices over a wider time period as a process.65 The focus of the present book is on everyday individual and group practices and their respective appropriations, a term borrowed from Michel de Certeau. De Certeau is important as being among the first to acknowledge that the way people do things is not just given in terms of a fixed structure, but that there exist a range of possibilities of how the individual can operate in ac-

65 Schäfer, Praxistheorie, 13.
cordance with the respective situation and space. However, following the current praxeological approach, Foucault’s “culturalist textualism” is being challenged, i.e. his idea that structure can be found “in chains of signs, in symbols, discourse, communication (in a specific sense) or ‘texts’” only. On the contrary, individuals and groups are understood here as “carrier[s] of patterns of bodily behaviour, but also of certain routinised ways of understanding, knowing how and desiring.” These conventionalised “activities of understanding, knowing how and desiring” are “necessary elements and qualities of a practice in which the single individual participates” and indeed, “not qualities of the individual.” This explains why this participation in practices can be temporary depending on context and situation or indeed depending on changing roles that are in themselves potentially fluid. The concept of appropriation as it is used here hence allows the grasping of the experiences and expressions of various individuals and groups, and their potential modification and challenge of practices, which bring us back to the agents. These agents, however, are no longer viewed as being confined by a structure, but rather as constantly constituting it. As Theodore Schatzki convincingly argued, structure is constituted by practices, and micro and macro level are in fact not sharply distinguishable levels.

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66 In Certeau’s terms, the so-called “‘ways of operating’ constitute the innumerable practices by means of which users reappropriate [emphasis mine] the space organised by techniques of sociocultural production”; see Michel de Certeau. The Practice of Everyday Life transl. by Steven F. Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, xiv and see also the discussion of Certeau’s approach by Michael E. Gardiner. Critiques of Everyday Life. London: Routledge, 2000, 167–168 and 177.


72 Compare Schatzki, ‘Praxistheorie’, 35.
1.3.3 What is religion?

In most simple terms religion can be described as a “set of knowledge produced in response to specific questions within the dialectical dynamics of the social construction of reality” of a given group. As an analytical category ‘religion’ can thus also exist in absence of an emic (i.e. based on ancient Egyptian sources) description. After all one should not limit research questions “within a linguistic ontology – ‘religion’”. That ancient Egyptian language had no word for religion is thus irrelevant for the study of the notion as both social reality and analytical category. Other scholars have argued that when “‘religion’ permeates the whole life [...] the concept has no distinct meaning, because nothing is picked out by it”. Since Egyptian religion “did not serve as a guide to living” and was “removed from the emotional and practical life of most Egyptians” the ancient Egyptian society could be considered as “largely secular”. The issue of the apparent ‘lack of religion’ is shared by other bygone cultures and has more or less recently triggered again the debate of whether religion should be an analytical category. At the same time, the terminology involves preconceptions of what we think religion is, i.e. pushing towards “Judeao-Christian monotheistic categories such as worship, God monasticism, salvation, and the meaning of history and tries to make the material fit these categories”. While caution is indeed required – as implicit protestant ideas of what religion ought to be (namely pure piety) have obscured an understanding of Egyptian religion – that the ancients did not conceptualise their practices as ‘religion’ does not mean that “religion cannot reasonably be taken to be a valid analytical cat-

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74 Dressler, ‘Construction’, 129.
80 Fitzgerald, Ideology, 9, see Barton, Imagine, 6.
This is illustrated well by recent studies in contemporary China facing comparable challenges of deeply rooted protestant views of religion which obscure a comprehensive understanding of daily-life religion. To be precise, Anna Sun has shown that while people do not feel committed to a religious denomination and say they would never to attend religious services, that study found many had still performed “ancestral rites to the gravesite of a deceased family member in the past year.” This shows very clearly in modern China that group membership to an institutionalised religion is not relevant in daily life practice, yet this does not mean that Chinese people do not perform what others consider religious practices. They perform a series of practices in which categories set by different religious traditions are highly fluid and overlap. It is thus important to consider not only religion as an analytical category, but also to study it in its material embodiment. As Manule Vasques pointed out: “[R]eality is always mediated by our practices and cognitive categories, but it is not totally reducible to them. There is a recalcitrant material (i.e. bodily and environmental) surplus that makes possible the emergence of the practices and cognitions with which we engage in the world.”

This situation is paralleled, for example, in ancient Egypt where various gods and ancestors were adored depending on context and situation. Much more interesting than speculations on ancient beliefs is the analysis of actual practices, i.e. not to define religion but to find it. A loose understanding of religion as being found in all material and textual evidence that relate to any practices and beliefs dealing with gods, deified individuals, spirits, demons, and ancestors is not self-contradictory but reflects our analytical tool-kit. If the in-

81 Barton, Imagine, 9, quoting Fitzgerald without reference.
83 Sun, ‘Monotheistic’, 51.
84 Sun, ‘Monotheistic’, 66.
clusion of intercultural conceptualisation of abstract terminology in the culture under study was a criterion, we could also not think about ancient Egyptian economy or art without confining it to exchange of goods or craftsmanship respectively. The discussion in favour of or against using ‘religion’ as a category has in fact another dimension that is usually not addressed by the critics of using the term religion: even the modern category of what religion is, is far more permeable than is often assumed. Recent research has shown that people do not simply follow a normative set of religious practices and beliefs configured by an institutionalised religion; rather, there exists a range of individual and group appropriations of practices.\textsuperscript{89} For example, although the Protestant Church “privilege[s] belief over practice”, many Protestants employ a variety of religious practices in their daily lives.\textsuperscript{90} If this applies to lived contemporary Christianity, i.e. to adherents of a highly institutionalised religion with a centuries-old tradition of dogmatic thought, an interesting question is how people dealt with religion in ancient Egypt where – as far as we know – no written set of normative rules even existed. To consider religion in terms of practices is also helpful to overcome another problem provided by our modern heritage of Western Enlightenment and Protestantism, and that is the idea that the individual needs to be freed from its constraints (such as church, family, etc.).\textsuperscript{91} Instead we should affirm “the idea of a relational self”.\textsuperscript{92} “Relational self” of course refers to ‘culture in interaction’, i.e. the understanding how important collective representations are for the understanding of how people make meaning.\textsuperscript{93} Religious practices are therefore understood here as a strategy of cultural communication creating meaning and community.\textsuperscript{94}

1.4 Finding religious practices at Saqqara

The monumental tombs of New Kingdom Saqqara all consist of two parts (Figs. 3 and 4).


\textsuperscript{90} McGuire, \textit{Lived Religion}, 20.


\textsuperscript{92} Neitz, ‘Gender’, 400.

\textsuperscript{93} Compare also Nina Eliasoph and Paul Lichterman. ‘Culture in Interaction,’ \textit{American Journal of Sociology} 108 (4) (January 2003): 735–794.

\textsuperscript{94} Compare also the seminal article by Fitzenreiter, ‘Beschreibung’, esp. chapter 3: “Aim”.
At ombs haft leads to one or several subterranean burial chambers that contain the actual burial and its burial assemblage (i.e. grave gifts) and was generally left undecorated.

This inaccessible part of the tomb was usually sealed.

A tomb shaft leads to one or several subterranean burial chambers that contained the actual burial and its burial assemblage (i.e. grave gifts) and was generally left undecorated.\(^95\) This inaccessible part of the tomb was usually\(^96\) sealed.

\(^{95}\) An exception are the eye-catching yellow wall paintings in the tomb of Maya, see Geoffrey T. Martin. *The tomb of Maya and Meryt I: the reliefs, inscriptions, and commentary. Egypt Exploration Society, Excavation Memoir 99.* London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2012, 17. On yellow as symbolising solar religion albeit on the Ramesside Thebes and hence not with reference to Maya see Eva Hofmann. ‘Viel Licht im Dunkel. Die Farbe gelb in der ramessidischen Grabdeko-
after the burial. A superstructure above ground or in the shape of a rock-cut chapel remained accessible to the living after the tomb owners’ deaths. This accessible part of the tombs could consist of a single tomb chapel or a more complex monument including also one or more forecourts and side chambers, and was usually decorated with images and texts.⁹⁷ This has led some scholars to argue for the social and mortuary as separate areas of a life,⁹⁸ an idea contested in this study. It is important to reconsider the consequences of the fact that the deceased remained part of the world of the living as is made explicit, for example, in an offering spell (rt n w3ḥ jḥ.t) asking for the deceased to gain freedom to move, i.e. to open for him heaven earth and the paths of the necropolis, and to go in and out with the sun god Re.⁹⁹ Nicely, there is some archaeological evidence for this spell on an offering receptacle from the 17th dynasty,¹⁰⁰ which one could perhaps understand as fixing as pelli nw writing, and hence one of the few attestations we have of what might have usually been recited. That the tomb owners at Saqqara also remained part of the spectrum of the living is clear, for example, from the tomb of Paser (i) in Saqqara:
The appearance of sḏb.w is somewhat off as it means ‘obstacle’, ‘evil’, or ‘impediment’, therefore Martin had suggested to read “(protective) obstacles” in the sense of “apotropaic gestures”, which seems convincing. Alternatively, Assmann suggested reading “burden (enemies)”, but that would require assuming a mistake on the part of the Egyptians which is less desirable. The text continues with ‘q=k pr=k ḫw mr.n=k n ḫmr.tw bǐ=k njs.tw=k jw=k ḫr.t pḥr=k pr=k ṭp tꜢ (may you leave and enter where you want, not shall your Ba be restrained, whenever you are called, you may come straightaway and you may run (to) your house on earth). Here, I would understand ‘house’ (pr) rather as a metaphor for the tomb of the deceased rather than his house, where he lived. Interestingly, a typical motif from Theban tombs seems to be virtually absent from the Saqqara sources, namely the visit to the town house. For example, in the tomb of Tjanuni (TT 74) a text says:

coming forth as living Ba, he will not be turned away by any gate of the underworld and will inspect his home of the living.

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2 TLA, lemma-no. 150450 sḏb ‘Schaden; Unheil; Böses’, see Wb IV, 381.7–382.15.


4 Assmann, Totenliturgien II, 267 and 549.

5 Another example of pr for tomb is, for example, the text translated by Assmann as NR 8.1.7., which seems to appear in different states of preservation in TT 106, TT 23, and TT 222, see Assmann, Totenliturgien II, 515. It is unfortunate that this traduction makes it virtually impossible to easily trace the original text. On pr as main temple building see also Patricia Spencer. The Egyptian Temple. A lexicographical study. London: Kegan Paul International, 1984, 20. In that way it could refer to the monumental part of the temple. On wider implications of ‘house’, see also Hubert Roeder. Mit dem Auge sehen: Studien zur Semantik der Herrschaft in den Toten- und Kulttexten. Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens 16, Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 1996, 174 with references.

6 pr.t m bꜢ n ‘nh y nn setWidth ḫr sbꜢ n dꜢ.t sjp.tꜢ prꜢꜢ n ‘nh.w, see Norman de Garis Davies. ‘The Town House in Ancient Egypt.’ Metropolitan Museum Studies 1 (2) (May, 1929): 233–255 and
Similarly another very interesting text attested in TT 82 says:¹⁰⁷

May you open the hills of the necropolis so that you may see your house of the living, May you hear the sound of singing and music in your rwy.t in this land. May you be a protection of your children forever and ever.¹⁰⁸

The term ‘rwy.t’ is not very clear, one may simply translate ‘outside’.¹⁰⁹ Assmann translates the word as “(private) house”¹¹⁰ apparently understanding the phrase as continuing logically with the previous one, i.e. that the deceased hears the songs and music in his house. However, consulting the Belegstellen, this translation is not very convincing. It could make good sense for PT 235 in which it says: jw nk.n=k jry.t r(wy).t ⫇ n.t jt=j jì (=You have slept with the two who belong to the lintel (?) / door leaf (?) of my adored (?) ruler (?)).¹¹¹ The best translation here might in fact be ‘door leaves of the palace’.¹¹² Returning to the phrase in TT 82, ‘palace’ makes no sense for a non-royal individual. The phrase might as well refer to the necropolis mentioned earlier in the text in TT 82 and then the common translation of rwy.t as a part of the tomb such as suggested in the digital Zettelarchiv would be far more convincing. For example, in the biography of Weni the term appears in a list of tomb equipment to be brought after a false door.¹¹³ In the New Kingdom the dualis rwt seems to refer mostly to the double doors of temples or tombs.¹¹⁴ Patricia Spencer has suggested “false door” for

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¹⁰⁷ See Assmann, Totenliturgien II, 265. Assmann translates sjp neutrally as ‘visit’, but the Belegstellen seem to clearly indicate a control function of this visit: Wb IV, 35.2–16.
¹⁰⁸ Compare Wb II, 404, 11 or even “office” (see Wb I, 407, 13 ‘Amtsgebäude’) which makes even less sense than “private house” here. Although to be fair “entrance to a building or an estate” is among the early meanings of the word: Spencer, Temple, 202. We shall see below, however, that in the New Kingdom rwt in terms of ‘outside’ means outside the temple or at its entrance (in front of the doors) Spencer, Temple, 199–201.
¹⁰⁹ See TLA, lemma no. 93590: rwy.t ‘Bauteil einer Scheintür (Architrav)’ (Wb II, 407.9–10; Spencer, Temple, 197.
¹¹⁰ Compare references in Spencer, Temple, 199 reflecting a Middle Kingdom use of the word for palace doors. The pyramid text quoted above would then even be an earlier reference for this use of the term.
¹¹¹ See Belegstellen of Wb II, 404,7–8.
nwy.t, in which case the text would be a good description of false door representations. The entrance to the tomb as place where the deceased dwells, appears also in the tomb of Horemheb (here r jswj). These texts very explicitly demonstrate that the deceased indeed remained part of the world of the living.

1.4.1 Funerary, post-funerary, mortuary, and other practices

Like Egyptian gods, ancestors depended on offerings left by humans for sustenance, the most basic benefactions being incense, libations, and other goods. As for approaching ancestors and deities, written speech acts, speech acts, and pictorial acts all enabled human contact with them. For example Meryneith is quite explicit in the description of the expected offering practice: beside a general request for an offering of bread and water, he requests offerings consisting of water and incense at the entrance of his tomb ([wdn=tw n=k] (… snt r r jsw js=k). The practice of providing libations at the entrance of a tomb is known from some Amarna tombs, and so perhaps Meryneith continued this tradition.

115 Spencer, Temple, 197.
117 Contra Harold M. Hays. The Organization of the Pyramid Texts: Typology and Disposition, vol. 1. Leiden: Peeters, 2012, 35 who demanded the beneficiary must be mentioned in the first person to demonstrate that texts clearly “involve public awareness and extended participation”.
120 Maarten J. Raven and René van Walsem. The tomb of Meryneith at Saqqara. Papers on Archaeology of the Leiden Museum of Antiquities 10. Turnhout: Brepols. 14, Fig. 2, Assmann, Totenliturgien II, 129. I take as a metaphor of a libation offering the reference to Hapi (i.e. the Nile flood) that quenches the deceased’s thirst (See also Assmann, Totenliturgien II, 195). ḥw ḫpj [m]-ḥnw ḫ.t-k k3 ḥm ḫb=k (May Hapy flow in your body then your heart will be refreshed). Since ḥm means quench or extinguish (see Wb I, 224.15–19) Assmann rightly takes the heart as a symbol of thirst in his translation. See also the “house of thirst” as a metaphor for tomb in Assmann, Totenliturgien II, 193.
121 E.g. Assmann, Totenliturgien II, 506 with reference to the Ramesside Statue BM EA 460, i.e. statue of Mehu and his wife published by Morris L. Bierbrier. Hieroglyphic texts from Egyptian
Like most ancient Egyptian monuments, the tombs at Saqqara were decorated with a complex program of images and texts.¹²² These monuments had three main aims, from which the practices follow that we can expect in the material, iconographical, and textual evidence: Firstly, the tombs already commemorated the tomb owners in their role as members of the elite during their lifetime when the tomb was built.¹²³ Little is known about how exactly the spot was chosen, but it is clear that the tombs reflect, at least to some degree, the choices of the tomb owner(s) in terms of location and architectural layout,¹²⁴ as well as decoration of his (seldomly her) tomb.¹²⁵ For example, some tombs seem to show a stelae, etc., part 12. London: British Museum, 1993, pl. 96 G, H and Amarna tombs of Ay see Assmann, Totenliturgien II, 403) and Merire (De Garis Davies, N., Amarna I, 53, pl. XXXIX and Sandman Texts from Amarna 20, see Assmann, Totenliturgien II, 404). Assmann therefore considers this “typical” but perhaps the relatively low numbers do not allow such quantification statements.


¹²⁴ This is the aim of the work of Nico Staring in the Walking Dead project. Note that Raven has checked the stellar constellations and found no pattern for the groups as a hole, and also his idea of the “orientation to sunrise at the day when construction started” is hard to prove: Maarten Raven. The Tombs of Ptahemwia and Sethnakht at Saqqara, Leiden: Sidestone, 2020, 30 and note 4. Practical concerns such as proximity to other tomb owners and a general Western orientation, where possible, seem to be more in line with the fluctuating evidence at Saqqara and elsewhere. For the interpretation stressing the given practicalities, see also Maarten Raven. ‘Egyptian concepts on the orientation of the human body.’ In: Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists: Grenoble, 6–12 septembre 2004 edited by Jean-Claude Goyon and Christine Cardin, 2, 1567–1573. Leuven: Peeters, 2007; and see for the tomb of Tia and Tia: Raven, Ptahemwia, 31. For recent considerations for Thebes, see Bács, Tamás A. ‘A Theban tomb-temple: the mortuary chapel of the high priest Hapuseneb (TT 67).’ In: 11. Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: the discourse between tomb and temple. Prague, May 24–27, 2017 edited by Filip Coppens and Hana Vymazalová, 16–17. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2020.

¹²⁵ For examples of remains of tools left by masons and painters see e.g. Raven, Ptahemwia, 156 and 180–181, cat. 81–84 and Raven and Van Walsum, Meryneith, 221 cat. 34–38 and cat. 95. A wooden model hoe from Horemheb’s inner columned courtyard could be the remains of a foundation deposit, but that is highly tentative, see Maarten Raven. ‘Objects.’ In: The Memphite tomb of Horemheb, commander-in-chief of Tutankhamun V: the forecourt and the area south of the tomb with some notes on the tomb of Tia edited by Maarten Raven, Vincent Verschoor, Marije Vugts, and René van Walsum, 88–89, cat. 48. Turnhout: Brepols, 2011. The find of a wooden whip handle in shape of a standing monkey is dubious, see Raven, ‘Objects’ (Horemheb), 90–91, cat. 53, with parallels. On the matters of artistic choice see also recently Rune Nyord. See-
certain affinity to gods related to the place of origin of the tomb owner. In addition, perhaps apart from the hottest summer months, the desert area to the west of the city of Memphis has to be imagined as a noisy construction site that was inhabited by architects, engineers, all sorts of artists and workmen who spoke to each other, shouted, and maybe sung. One would have heard their work: hacking out the shafts, removing the rubble, delivering the raw material for mudbricks formed at the site as well as the lime stones to cover the mudbrick walls, and then the chiselling when decorating them, perhaps even brush strokes of painting. In the tomb of Tia and Tia, for example, remains of unfinished statues (a dyad and a triad) were found that suggest that the

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128 The detailed study of these practices is part of Nico Staring’s work in the Walking Dead project. For an early yet still important summary see Georg Erbkam. Über den Graeber- und Tempelbau der alten Aegypter ein Vortrag, bearbeitet für die Versammlung deutscher Architekten in Braunschweig in Mai 1852. Berlin: Ernst & Korn, 1852. For remains of paint pots used by the artists decorating the tombs see e.g. Barbara G. Aston. ‘The Pottery.’ In: The Tombs of Ptahemwia and Sethnakht at Saqqara edited by Maarten Raven, 253, cat. 24. Leiden: Sidestone, 2020.
raw stone material was chiselled in situ,¹²⁹ perhaps to avoid damage during transportation. The same tomb is also built higher up than the neighbouring tombs by Horemheb and Maya, suggesting that the rubble in the latter shafts was piled up there and then flattened as fundament for the construction of the two Tia’s tomb.¹³⁰ Whereas the common workmen surely came by foot like modern Egyptian excavation assistants do, equipment and slightly higher-ranking staff would have arrived by donkeys or bullock carts, and the highest-ranking staff and the tomb owner at his inspections by palanquins or chariots.¹³¹

When the tomb owner died, the funeral was prepared. The second use of the tomb was to serve as a space the activities performed at the funeral and indeed to serve as protective shell for the deceased body. Representations in the 18th-dynasty Theban tomb of Rekhmire (TT 100) provide a relatively clear idea of the events, divided into seven phases by Hays:¹³²

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¹³⁰ In 2019, the volume of the rubble extracted from the two major 18th-dynasty tombs was kindly calculated by Prof. Corinna Rossi’s team of Politecnico di Milano who support the Leiden-Turin Expedition to Saqqara as surveyors. Horemheb’s subterranean structures measure about 400 cubic metres (c. 800 cubic cubits) and Maya’s c. 325 cubic metres (c. 650 cubic cubits) totalling at c. 725 cubic metres. The difference in height of the floor level between Tia and the two other adjacent tombs is 1.5 m: it is possible that the filling was the result of the digging operations carried out for Maya and Horemheb – with an average thickness of 1.5 m, that might have covered an area up to 22x22 square metres. For the levels of the tombs excavated by the then Anglo-Leiden, later Leiden-only expedition see Raven, Ptahemwia, 31.


¹³² To which Maria Cannata added potential rituals immediately after death and mourning see Maria Cannata. Three hundred Years of Death. The Egyptian Funerary Industry in the Ptolemaic
1. Journey and arrival at the necropolis
2. Procession to the embalming place somewhere on the west bank
3. Embalming and mummification
4. Post-embalming rituals
5. Procession to the tomb
6. Opening of the Mouth ritual in the tomb
7. Mortuary service

Some texts from Saqqara also provide information about the practices performed. For example an inscription in Maya’s tomb mentions a torch (tk3) that should be lit during the night until the sun comes up, which is paralleled in the tomb of Hayptah. Assmann suggested that this is a ritual of the hourly night watch before the burial, but it might have been repeated as a ritual for the deceased (several references for tk3 to ward off Seth). He seems also to hint at the fact that the change between torch- and sunlight represents the daily cycle of life of the deceased in his tomb and outside. Illustrative for the practices that can be expected in this respect are the tomb reliefs by Mery-mery (i) (temp. Amenhotep III) now in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden (Figs. 5 and 6).

Although the original location of the tomb has not yet been rediscovered, the style suggests Saqqara, and parallel decorations indicate that the two reliefs were placed on the southern and northern walls of the court leading to the main chapels. Although these representations cannot be viewed as exact sequence

133 See Assmann, Totenliturgien II, 263.
135 Assmann, Totenliturgien II, 264.
136 Leiden inv. nos AP 6-a and AP 6-b.
137 The funerary procession would be expected on the south wall (see Karl-J. Seyfried. ‘Bestat- tungsdarstellung und Begräbnisort in thebanischen Privat-Gräbern der Ramessidenzeit.’ Biblische Notizen 71 (1994): 13–14); the Opening of the Mouth in the north as known also from other parallels at Saqqara (e.g. Meryneith). A nice aside is that the relief blocks provided the topic of the master’s theses of Saqqara veterans Maarten Raven and René van Walsen, but their early work was never published: René Van Walsen. Een wandfragment afkomstig uit het graf van ‘de bewaker van het schathuis van Memphis, Mery-Mery’ (Leiden K 15). Leiden: Unpublished thesis, 1976; and Maarten Raven. Het Leidse Relief nummer K 14 van Schathuisbewaker
of action, they allow us an idea of which scenes were important to the ancient Egyptians.\textsuperscript{138} Important here is also the Opening of the Mouth ritual for Merymery (i)\textsuperscript{139} and the funerary procession, in the latter of which his wife Meritptah

\textit{Merymery}. Leiden: Unpublished thesis, 1976. The two former field directors had studied together in Leiden and are bond by a long friendly mutual competition. Their theses can be accessed in the archive of the \textit{Rijksmuseum van Oudheden} (RMO archive 14/3.2).


appears three times.\textsuperscript{140} What we do not see on the reliefs of Merymery (i) is the ritual of the Breaking of the Red Pots, frequently seen in the tomb reliefs at Saqqara,\textsuperscript{141} and occasionally in the archaeological evidence.\textsuperscript{142} Perhaps these were represented on other reliefs in his tombs not yet rediscovered. A good detail that does show on one of Merymery (i)’s Leiden reliefs is the song that the mourning ladies sing:\textsuperscript{143}

May your night be beautiful. The gods walk in front of you. Wennefer has received (ssp) you. Ennead of the Lords of Kheryaha (hry-ḥt\textsuperscript{144}), may you [i.e. the divine Ennead] place him [i.e. the deceased Merymery (i)] besides [the god] Re. I have wept (rmj\textsuperscript{145})! I have lamented (nh\textsuperscript{146})! All of you may you remember (sh\textsuperscript{147}) and become drunk (tḥ\textsuperscript{148}) with sweet Shede-

\textsuperscript{140} On Leiden inv. no. AP 6-b Meritptah is shown seated next to her husband receiving offerings in the central register, while in most other scenes Merymery (i) appears alone. The fact that Meritptah shows prominently among the mourning ladies and attending the funerary booth on Leiden inv. no. AP 6-a, suggests that her husband predeceased her. Erich Lüddecksens, ‘Untersuchungen über religiösen Gehalt, Sprache und Form der ägyptischen Totenklagen, Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo 11 (1943): 151, Fig. 52 missed one representation and wrongly dated the relief into the 19\textsuperscript{th} dynasty (pp. 147–153), and see Van Walsem, \textit{Wandfragment}, 132–134 (RMO archive 14/3.2).  

\textsuperscript{141} A comprehensive summary has recently been provided by Rehab Elsharnouby, ‘An Analytical Study of Breaking Red Pots Scenes in Private Tombs.’ Journal of Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hospitality 15 (1): 41–58 who did not know the references in the tombs of Ptahemwia (i) and Meryneith (Raven, \textit{Ptahemwia}, 129 and Raven and Van Walsem, \textit{Meryneith}, 181 with note 227 and 185 with note 266), but lists Horemheb, Ptahemhat-Ty, Maya, Ipvia (S.2739), Hormin, Kairi, Pay (i), Ptahnefer, Neferenpet, and Mose, as well as reliefs from unknown tomb owners (p. 42, Table 1); and see also Jacobus van Dijk. ‘Zerbrechen der roten Töpfe.’ \textit{Lexikon der Ägyptologie} VI (1986): 1389–1396. 

\textsuperscript{142} E.g. around the rim of the tomb shaft of Ptahemwia (i) (see Aston, B., ‘Pottery’ (\textit{Ptahemwia}), 231 and 259).


\textsuperscript{144} Wb II, 394.7; LÄ I, 592, see \textit{TLA}, lemma no. 124280. The Book of P. Nu in the British Museum knows this place in relation to offerings to the deceased and a place where the sun people are: Günther Lapp. \textit{The Papyrus of Nu} (BM EA 10477). \textit{Catalogue of Books of the Dead in the British Museum} I. London: The British Museum Press, 1997, pl. 81–86 and 104–105. It is sometimes translated as Old-Babylon, but since it is rather a mythical place, it has been left untranslated here.

\textsuperscript{145} Wb II, 416–417.10.

\textsuperscript{146} Wb II, 305.11–14.

\textsuperscript{147} Wb IV, 232.12–233.26.

\textsuperscript{148} Wb V, 323.13–324.17.
wine (šdh¹⁴⁹), while garlands (mḥy for mḥ³¹⁵⁰) and sweet oil (sgmn¹⁵¹) is on the top of your heads (wp.t¹⁵²).

Clearly, beside the mourning the song also reflects a festive sentiment with drinking good wine and being adorned with flowers and oils, as is visible in numerous tomb representations that usually show unguent cones and lotus flowers on people’s heads. The weeping, mourning, and lamentations of the deceased also relate the female actors to the goddesses Isis and Nephthys and their mourning of the god in the myth of Osiris.¹⁵³ Interestingly in this respect, Kheryaha (ḥry-ḥt) literally means place of the fight and was in the Pyramid Texts associated to the battlefield of Horus and Seth.¹⁵⁴ Hermann Kees suggested that the mourning ladies made rather jarring sounds, which was rejected by Meyer-Dietrich, who is in favour of a continuous rhythmical chanting.¹⁵⁵ Another New Kingdom funerary procession, albeit unfortunately unprovenanced, the 19th-dynasty papyrus of Paker shows not only the mourners, but also the arrival at the tomb and some tomb gifts such as amulets and potentially two shabti or sḥl-figurines.¹⁵⁶ Interestingly, there is a graffito in the tomb of Meryneith showing a mourning woman (perhaps the widow?) in front of a mumified figure,¹⁵⁷ perhaps suggesting that the mourning – as today – would continue during post-funeral visits, when potentially votives or other offerings were performed.

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¹⁴⁹ Wb IV, 568.12–17.
¹⁵⁰ Wb II, 31.1–5.
¹⁵¹ Wb IV, 322.17–323.3.
¹⁵² Wb I, 297.10–298.5.
¹⁵³ Meyer-Dietrich, Ḥörkultur, 257.
¹⁵⁴ PT 550 from the Pyramid of Pepi I has sbn m ḫḥ(y)-ḥt m bw pw sbn.n=sn jm = Stumble in the “battleground”, in the place where they (i.e. Horus and Seth) stumbled. However note that this is some 1000 years earlier and the New Kingdom references rather show an association to the sun people and Heliopolis.
¹⁵⁵ Herrmann Kees. Totenglauben und Jenseitsvorstellungen der alten Ägypter: Grundlagen und Entwicklung bis zum Ende des Mittleren Reiches, 2nd, revised ed. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1956, 177, see Meyer-Dietrich, Ḥörkultur, 257–261. Note how indeed such idea’s like Kees’s have influenced the translations of words related to mourning such as sbḥ as “screeching” proposed in the Berlin Wörterbuch (Wb IV, 91.1–7, see Meyer-Dietrich, Ḥörkultur, 257, n. 206), which then creates a circular argument.
¹⁵⁶ Leiden inv. no. AMS 14 vel 3, see Schneider, Shabtis I, 263 and more recently e.g. Petra Barthelmess. Der Übergang ins Jenseits in den thebanischen Beamtengräbern der Ramessidenzeit. Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altegyptens 2. Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 1992, 162, Fig. 39 and 166.
¹⁵⁷ Raven and Van Walsem, Meryneith, 80–81 [4].
These practices relate to the funeral of the deceased and are not considered in detail in the present study, but it is perhaps appropriate to mention in passing that the tomb assemblage of Maya shows physical evidence for gifts to Maya by named individuals (discussed in chapter 3) such as a (now broken) jar containing “water of the flood brought by Patiu(ef)”\(^{158}\) and another one “water of the h\(\text{s.t}\)-nome,\(^{159}\) brought from the h\(\text{s.t}\)-nome, from the western river”\(^{160}\). The ‘h\(\text{s.t}\)-nome’ was the sixth Lower Egyptian nome, and the western river a waterway north-west of Memphis near Leontopolis.\(^{161}\) Its water has been connected to the body of the god Osiris and may have played a role in the regeneration of the deceased, even though we do not know if donation sufficed, or whether it was used for purification or consumed.\(^{162}\) Indeed the importance of water for regen-

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\(^{160}\) Raven, ‘Objects’ (Tia), 72, cat. 52, pl. 106.

\(^{161}\) Maarten J. Raven. ‘New evidence on the Xoite nome.’ *Göttinger Missellen* 75 (1984): 27–30; Wolfgang Helck. *Die altägyptischen Gaue. Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Reihe B (Geisteswissenschaften)* 5. Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1974, 163–167. For the spelling see Pascal Vernus. ‘Le nom de Xois.’ *Bulletin de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale* 73 (1973): 32–33. A good parallel spelling is for example the Ostracon Michaelidis no. 15 with a list of fugitive boatsmen one of which from h\(\text{s.w}\), see Hans Goedicke and Edward F. Wente. *Ostraka Michaelides*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1962, pl. XLV. jtrw jm.t as is known from TT 109 (Urk IV, 981)) and the temple of Seti I in Abydos (Johannes Dümichen. *Geographische Inschriften altägyptischer Denkmäler* I. Leipzig 1865, pl. XCII (see https://digi.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/duemichen1865ga. Accessed on 29 March 2022.) and see Helck, *Gaue*, 134) and the Onomasticon of Amenemope (see Alan H. Gardiner. *Ancient Egyptian onomastica* II. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947, 153–170) is perhaps possible. See also the discussion of Manred Bietak. *Tell el-Dab’a II: der Fundort im Rahmen einer archäologisch-geographischen Untersuchung über das ägyptische Ostdelta. mit einem geodätischen Beitrag von Josef Dorner und Heinz König. Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts 1; Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Denkschriften der Gesamtaakademie* 4. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975, 118–119. Note that there is also a Water of Ptah, that could refer to two arms of the same main split (compare Bietak, *Tell el-Dab’a II*, 119). He solved the problem that the onomasticon mentions both the western and the Ptah waterways together with the hypothesis that both arms may have split at a later stage, see Bietak, *Tell el-Dab’a II*, 120 and Fig. 22 and 121, namely south of Kom Abu Billu (Egyptian market, Bietak, Tell el-Dab’a II, 124).

\(^{162}\) Jacobus van Dijk. ‘Hieratic inscriptions from the tomb of Maya at Saqqâra: a preliminary survey.’ *Göttinger Missellen* 127 (1992): 30. Van Dijk points at a pleasing possible connection to
eration is clear from various Egyptian texts,\textsuperscript{163} perhaps as a vehicle to reach the deceased,\textsuperscript{164} and by providing named gifts the donors wrote themselves into the memory of the tomb. Frequent tomb robberies have distorted a clear view, yet the remains of grave equipment, grave gifts,\textsuperscript{165} and offering assemblages still hint at choices of the tomb owners, but also the donation practices of the people attending the funeral. Along these lines of thought, the tombs served the honour and physical needs of the tomb owners, including not only their own prestige but also that of their community. After the burial, then, the subterranean part of the tomb served as a protective shell for the mummy, which needed to stay intact in its coffin for the afterlife.\textsuperscript{166}

Thirdly, the tombs provided the more or less delineated physical space for post-mortem and post-funeral commemoration and offering practices. Offerings were performed after the funeral – the question is how often and by whom. Some texts suggest that ideally libations and offerings should be performed for the deceased daily,\textsuperscript{167} which explains why hired staff were needed beside occasional visits by others. The best evidence for priests in charge of the cult of the deceased comes from the three large tombs clustered together: the tombs of Maya and Merit, Tia and Horemheb. Against the exterior south wall of the outer courtyard of Maya and Merit, the mudbrick chapel of a man called


\textsuperscript{164} Bommas, ‘Schrein’, 92–94.

\textsuperscript{165} For example, in the tomb of Maya Hieratic dockets mention honey, fresh sesame oil and sweet moringa oil, three types of \textit{mrḥ.t}-oil, wine, water, and fat that was donated to the tomb owner, see Van Dijk, ‘Hieratic inscriptions’, 25–26, 29 and 31. Van Dijk reads \textit{wḏb} as funerary procession apparently derived from the verb \textit{wḏb} ‘go in procession’ (Wb I, 403.2–19, see Van Dijk, ‘Hieratic inscriptions’, 25 and Figs. 1 and 2), but given the ‘house’ determinative ‘storehouse’ (Wb I, 402.10–15) as in of the tomb (i.e. tomb chamber) is more plausible. One of these labels is the famous one giving the date of Maya in year 9 of Horemheb (Van Dijk, ‘Hieratic inscriptions’, 31). The tomb of Ptahemwia (i) has a docket with good natron (Raven, \textit{Ptahemwia}, 190–191, cat. 128) and incense was found in the tomb of Meryneith (Raven and Van Walsem, \textit{Meryneith}, 101–102 and pl. 13, reading corrected by Rob Demarée, see Raven, \textit{Ptahemwia}, 190).

\textsuperscript{166} For example, Tia had a fancy granodiorite coffin of which only a few fragments remain, see Raven, ‘Objects’ (Tia), 66–67, cat. 7 and ÄIN 48 currently in the Glyptotek in Copenhagen, 96.

\textsuperscript{167} E.g. Jürgen von Beckerath. ‘Zur Geschichte von Chonsemhab und dem Geist.’ \textit{Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde} 119 (1992): 90–107, column II–II (p. 98–99) suggests a sack of emmer and unspecified libations. Although this is an early Ramesside (Von Beckerath, ‘Chonsemhab’, 107) literary texts, it may indicate what was considered an ideal situation.
Yamen has been preserved that shows him in function as lector priest of Maya and Merit.\textsuperscript{168} Interestingly, Martin also mentioned another stela that could perhaps suggest that Maya's employing institution – the treasury house – had their own staff in charge of the cult of deceased members, which somehow seems to be a very modern idea. A stela now in the National Museum of Warsaw shows the lector priest of the overseer of the treasury Mayiy, Paperaa(r)neheh, in front of the god Osiris.\textsuperscript{169} Behind him on the stela stands the priest of Amun, Pyanefer. In the register underneath, the servant Medjaria presents offerings to a lady of the house Tyia. Behind the servant the lady of the house Tamit (?) and her son (?) Ankh are depicted. It is of course difficult to tell whether Mayiy is a variant spelling for Maya, but clearly the lady Tia should be Maya's tomb neighbour. It seems at least a possibility that Paperaa(r)neheh was in charge of both tombs, and perhaps paid via funds from the treasury. What is even more interesting, perhaps in terms of accessibility of the tombs substructure, is the fact that five rock stelae were carved in shaft i.\textsuperscript{170} Two rock stelae (3 and 4) show only a lady, with rock stela 4 probably to be identified as Merit, without her husband.\textsuperscript{171} On rock stela 5, the name of the servant offering to both Maya and Merit has not been preserved unfortunately.\textsuperscript{172} This seems to indicate that Merit predeceased her husband. Perhaps she was buried in the innermost chamber O, whereas it is possible the other subterranean chambers stayed open to be finalised.\textsuperscript{173} Evidence for religious activities is, for example, also found in the tomb of Horemheb, the general who should become king. He used his tomb for the burial of his wife Mutnodjmet, but it is clear that Horemheb himself was also venerated in this monument.\textsuperscript{174}

Generally the practice of tomb services by (families of) priests is much better attested from later periods in which papyri show how revenues for the respective

\textsuperscript{168} Martin, Maya, 51 and pl. 57 and see Maarten J. Raven. The tomb of Maya and Meryt II: objects and skeletal remains. Egypt Exploration Society, Excavation Memoir 65. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2001, 9 and 28.
\textsuperscript{169} Stela Warsaw National Museum 142294, see Martin, Maya, 51 and pl. 57.
\textsuperscript{170} Martin, Maya, 51 and pl. 38.
\textsuperscript{171} The text says ‘One greatly praised by Hathor, [the lady (of the house) Mer]yt. An offering that the king gives to Osiris, that he may live, prosperity and health to Osiris, the lady of the house Meryt. The servant Ireferu’, see Martin, Maya, 51 and pl. 38. Rock stela 3 preserved no text.
\textsuperscript{172} Martin, Maya, 51 and pl. 38 and see 97, no. 2, 98, no. 2.
\textsuperscript{173} Note two graffiti of female ancestors on the east and south walls of that room, perhaps left in her adoration: Martin, Maya, 48–49 and pl. 60 14 and 15.
\textsuperscript{174} Martin, Tutankhamun’s regent, 55.
services were shared and even inherited.¹⁷⁵ That also in the New Kingdom offering pottery piled up and was from time to time cleared is suggested by offering deposits such as in the tomb of Tia and Tia.¹⁷⁶ In other cases, such as the tomb of Ptahemwia (i), the remains of offering pottery may still have covered the floors of the chapels when later burial activities took place. It was dug up and removed and subsequently “thrown back into the chapels”¹⁷⁷ to end up on top of later materials. For the tomb of Meryneith, it has been suggested that funerary banquets like those better attested from Theban tomb representations may have been performed.¹⁷⁸ From Thebes several tomb owners are known to have reported earlier visits for both commemoration and educational or artistic journeys,¹⁷⁹ and for

¹⁷⁵ A well-known reference is papyrus Leiden inv. no. AMS 22, see e.g. Cannata, Funerary Industry, 167. The profession of choaohniges (wḥ-mw) became popular mainly in the Late and Graeco-Roman period but there are a few attestations also in the New Kingdom such as the watersprinkler of the chapel of Thutmosis I in p. Abbot, 8 (London, BM EA 10221,1), see TLA DZA 22.081.660. The other title ‘god’s seal bearer’ (ḥtm.w-nṯr) is chronologically more widespread. See also Marina Escolano-Poveda. The Egyptian priests of the Graeco-Roman period: an analysis on the basis of the Egyptian and Graeco-Roman literary and paraliterary sources. Studien zur spät-ägyptischen Religion 29. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2020.

¹⁷⁶ David A. Aston. ‘The pottery.’ In: The tomb of Tia and Tia: a royal monument of the Ramesside period in the Memphite necropolis edited by Geoffrey T. Martin, 96. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1997 (interpreted as from the phase of secondary use by the excavators without explaining why). In fact not every pottery deposit has a religious function. Others were remains of ongoing building activities, e.g. Aston, Tia, 94.

¹⁷⁷ Aston, B., ‘Pottery’ (Ptahemwia), 262.

¹⁷⁸ Based on a representation on the south wall of the north-west chapel, see Raven and Van Walsem, Meryneith, 139 – 142 [43]. An intriguing case is a divine offering that a tomb owner made in favour of his workmen (dwš nṯr n ḫmmw) and that has been interpreted as a banquet by Strudwick, ‘Merymery’, 33 note 52 with reference to TT 82, De Garis Davies and Gardiner, Amenemhēt, 36 – 37, pl. VIII. See also E.g. recently John Baines. ‘Not only with the dead: banqueting in ancient Egypt.’ Studia Universitatis “Babeş-Bolyai,” Historia 59 (1) (2014): 1 – 35.

¹⁷⁹ E.g. Meyer-Dietrich, Hörkultur, with reference to Fredrik Hagen. An ancient Egyptian literary text in context: the instruction of Ptahhotep. Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 218. Leuven: Peeters; Department of Oriental Studies, 2012, 208 and see also e.g. the analysis of graffiti in Asyut by Ursula Verhoeven. ‘The New Kingdom graffiti in tomb N13:1: an overview.’ In: Seven seasons at Asyut: First results of the Egyptian-German cooperation in archaeological fieldwork. Proceedings of an international conference at the University of Sohag, 10th – 11th of October edited by Jochem Kahl, Mahmoud El-Khadragy, Ursula Verhoeven and Andrea Kilian, 47 – 58. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009 and Ursula Verhoeven. ‘Literatur im Grab – der Sonderfall Assiut.’ In: Dating Egyptian Literary Texts edited by Gerald Moers et. al, 139 – 158. Hamburg: Widmaier, 2013. The accumulation of texts in her Asyut tomb is, however, probably different than in cases like the tomb of Ptahemwia (i) in Saqqara where only the first phrase of the Kemyt is quoted that has a clear association to devotional act when it says “It is a servant who addresses his lord, whom he wishes to be prosperous and healthy”, see Paul W. van Pelt and Nico Staring. ‘The graffiti.’ In: The tombs
When speaking of ‘the living’ performing these tasks, what’s meant is usually the deceased’s family or hired personnel, who are also represented on the tomb walls. Foremost among the religious practices expected to have happened in and around the Saqqara tombs are offering practices such as those visible in wall decorations: for example, presentation of incense and libation offerings in front of the deceased who are usually seated behind an offering table full of food. Beside flowers, living animals such as geese and cattle as well as goods were transported into the tomb by long queues of offering bearers. Returning to the offering practices, apart from the items mentioned in the standard offering formulae such as mentioned above, “drinking water from the flood” or “breathing the sweet air of the north wind” were common desires for the time after the funeral. Some tombs attest donations of offers such as wine by specific individuals (see also chapter 3). In addition, the tomb decoration with hieroglyphic texts and images was not merely decorative. Chiselled in stone for eternity, they were perceived as actively perpetuating human and divine action by means of written speech acts and pictorial acts. The tomb decoration of Ptahemwia and Sethnakht at Saqqara edited by Maarten J. Raven, 146. Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2020. The authors note uncorrected spelling mistakes as evidence of the absence of a teacher, but seem indecisive of the interpretation as devotional act. Another example is a dated graffito in the tomb of Horemheb mentioning the scribe Amenemheb and the scribe Payemsaamun walking about (swtwt) the West of Memphis”, see Martin, Tutankhamun’s regent, 137 with references. A possible example is the note by the ‘scribe of the treasury’ Kanakht who visited the tomb of Meryneith, see Raven and Van Walsem, Meryneith, 130 with reference to Alexander J. Peden, The graffiti of pharaonic Egypt: scope and roles of informal writings (c. 3100 – 332 B.C.). Probleme der Ägyptologie 17. Leiden: Brill, 2001, 61 – 63 and 96 – 101. Raven, Ptahemwia, 70 – 71 [8]. Raven, Ptahemwia, 70 – 71 [9]. An amphora found in the north chapel under the floor level and partly on the pavement of the northeast quarter of the courtyard of the tomb of Ptahemwia (i) attests sweet wine donated by a chief vintner (ḥrw ḫn.w) Pa(…), who has tentatively been identified as Panehsy or Pay (iii) by Raven based on the mention of a year 7 probably of Tutankhamun: Raven, Ptahemwia, 190 – 191, cat. 129 and see Jaroslav Černý. Hieratic inscriptions from the tomb of Tut’ankhamun. Tut’ankhamun’s Tomb Series 2. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965, nos 7 and 18. Possibly this offering was donated for the funerary assemblage of Ptahemwia (i) and dislocated through tomb offerings, although the idea that it was a later post-funerary offering cannot be excluded either. In fact as the excavator aptly notes it might even have come from another tomb. Note that jar shape is not necessarily always indicative of content. In Ptahemwia (i)’s tomb a typical wine amphora is said to have contained natron in a Hieratic inscription c.f. Aston, B., ‘Pottery’ (Ptahemwia), 252, cat. 19. See, for example, Lara Weiss. ‘The Power of the Voice.’ In: Studies in Hieratic and the Documents of Deir el-Medina edited by Ben Haring, Olaf Kaper and René van Walsem, 291 – 303. Egyptologische Uitgaven 28. Leiden: Peeters, 2014 and Lara Weiss. ‘Perpetuated Action.’ In: A Compan-
can thus be understood as a kind of additional ‘backup’ for human offering practices in which the naming of individuals is highly relevant (see chapter 2). The tomb owners and others represented in their tombs formed reminiscence clusters, which remained part of the sphere of the living and frequently expressed the wish of participation in rituals before, but also after, death.\textsuperscript{185}

1.4.2 The problem of preservation of mortuary practices

Actually tracing physical remains of religious practices at Saqqara after the funeral is difficult for many reasons. One problem is the disturbed state of the area by subsequent human action such as tomb robberies, secondary burials and related activities, domestic use of the site during the Late Antique period, and the early treasure hunters of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{186} Another problem is that previous excavators were not always interested in meticulously documenting or publishing the material culture. The few existing publications of the Bubasteion and Teti cemetery tombs, for example, discuss the relief decoration only, but also the early Leiden publications often lack information.\textsuperscript{187} A further problem is that

\textit{ion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World} edited by Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke, 60 – 70. Malden: Wiley, 2015, vs. ideas that the tomb decoration shows the tomb owner in “a fossilized form”, see e.g. Rune Nyord. ‘Memory and succession in the City of the Dead: Temporality in the Ancient Egyptian Mortuary Cult.’ In: \textit{Taming Time, Timing Death: Social Technologies and Ritual} edited by Rane Willerslev and Dorthe R. Christensen, 203. Ashgate: Routledge, 2003.

\textsuperscript{185} A diachronic summary has been provided by David Klotz. ‘Participation in Religious Ceremonies, as Related in Egyptian Biographies.’ In: \textit{Ancient Egyptian Biographies Contexts, Forms, Functions} edited by Julie Stauder-Porcher, Elizabeth Froom, and Andrés Stauder, 232 – 235. Providence: Lockwoods, 2020. Note that Nyord also noted the importance of a wider understanding of this ‘back-up’, noting that these representations “were meant to establish and render permanent the connection between the owner of the tomb, the production of the mortuary estates, and the people performing the necessary labor (...), that this relationship was reciprocal, and the estates and trustees also benefited from the benevolent gaze and blessing (not to mention the initial funding) of the ancestor whose cult they maintained”, see Nyord, Rune. ‘Servant figurines from Egyptian tombs: whom did they depict, and how did they work?’ \textit{The Ancient Near East Today} 8 (2) (2020).

\textsuperscript{186} Raven and Van Walsem, \textit{Meryneith}, 180 and 325 and see Aston, B., ‘Pottery’ (Ptahemwia), 296, leading to (perhaps understandable) sampled publication only.

\textsuperscript{187} Although later field directors at ‘our’ Saqqara area seem to have had a stronger interest in small finds than their predecessors in the field it appears that “only those objects will be published (...) which distinguish themselves by their peculiar typology, epigraphy, relative completeness, or rarity in accordance with standards established in the field during previous field seasons”: see Raven, \textit{Ptahemwia}, 155.
other than funerary deposits, many of the religious performances to be expected from what we know from relief decorations and texts leave little trace in the archaeological record. This may be illustrated by the Instruction of Ani as found in the tomb of Horemheb (but dating to the Third Intermediate or Late Period), where people are instructed to “offer (\textit{wdn}) to your god”, “kiss the earth (\textit{snn t})”, provide incense [in other sources more concrete “as their daily food”]. Another attestation of the Instruction of Ani from Deir el-Medina has the phrase “offer water [to] your father and mother, who rest in the valley”, i.e. who are deceased and rest in their tombs in the necropolis on the west bank of the Nile. Offerings of incense, libations, ‘kissing the earth’, and also any sounds such as prayers, songs, or hymns do not leave any trace in the archaeological record. Finding religious practices is also difficult because tangible offerings such as those known from the offering formulae, i.e. foods, flowers, or jarred beer and wine, were probably immediately taken away after the initial performance, 

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188 See also Janine Bourriau. ‘Patterns of change in burial customs during the Middle Kingdom.’ In: _Middle Kingdom studies_ edited by Stephen Quirke, 4. New Malden: SIA, 1991. Compare also Malek, ‘Old and new’, 71 for the idea that only official religious practices would require “special cult arrangements” which should, however, be abandoned. Those practices are often as dubious as the so-called popular piety. For an example of traces of funerary ritual see, for example, the “resinous” remains in burial chamber F of the tomb of Horemheb, see Martin et. al, _Horemheb I_, 128.


190 Wb I, 391.1–16, _TLA_ lemma-no. 51690.


192 Wb IV, 154.8–24, _TLA_ lemma-no. 136560.

193 After pBoulaq IV (= Cairo, CG 58042), 20, 17: \textit{dd.tj sntr m k3y=s m-mnt}, see Twiston Davies, _Ani_, 95.

194 \textit{jwḥ jt=k mw.t=k nty htp m t` jn(t)}, see Twiston Davies, _Ani_, 360.

195 This practice is well-attested in the Demotic texts of the later periods in which ‘offerings’ (\textit{jḥy}) gained the very literal meaning of ‘revenues’ for the respective priests in service: Cary J.
and even if they were not, they were highly perishable and would not have survived the centuries. It is therefore the textual and pictorial evidence that provides the most reliable information of which religious practices can be expected to have taken place. An inscription of a man called Roma which is attested on the eighth pylon of the temple of Karnak provides a quite explicit description of what he expected visitors to do with his temple statue, a practice that may well have been paralleled for tomb statues.

Roma says:

Place offerings before my statue, overflowing onto the ground in my name, place bouquets before me when you enter. Say for me: ‘May he favour you’ with a loving heart for my god Amun, lord of the gods, so that others will [come (?)] (and) will offer to you (?). Cause the inscription to be read out [...] to act according to my speech which is before you. Place my good name in the mouths of [future] generations.

It is thus very clear that Roma wishes for a recitation or speech offering and for flower bouquets. Others, like the block statue of Didia also from Karnak temple, ask for a libation offering (“pour water for me, and give me offerings before me (this statue) when offerings are made”).

A nearchous statue of Hormin (temp. Ramesses II) exemplifies the wish of the deceased to receive offerings in their tombs. Hormin (Figs. 7 and 8) is shown kneeling in front of a small naos featuring the god Osiris. On the back of the statue an appeal to the living is written:


196 Compare also e.g. Theis, ‘Rituals’, 18. Ptolemaic texts suggests that libations were often provided with water, see Cannata, Funerary Industry, 274–275.


198 Elizabeth Frood. Biographical Texts from Ramessid Egypt. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007, 58, with reference to PM II 2, 177 (527b-d) and see KRI IV 210,1–16; 287,10–289,11.

199 Frood, Biographical Texts, 134 with reference to Cairo, CG 42122 and KRI VII, 24,7–26,3.

200 Leiden inv. no. AST 5.
Oh all people, all subjects of the king²⁰¹ and every scribe, who shall see this statue! May they say 1000 of bread and beer for the lord of this resting place, for the Ka of the royal scribe, the overseer of the royal apartments Hormin.²⁰²

The request to say “1000 of bread and beer” is of course a very abbreviated request to recite the ḥtp-dj-nsw, which is usually followed by 1000 of bread, beer, fowl, etc. – interestingly here without mentioning either the king or a god.²⁰³ The traditional ḥtp-dj-nsw in favour of the gods Osiris and Re-Horakhty is written on the frame of the naos and on both sides. As I have argued elsewhere, I believe [Further text and footnotes]

²⁰¹ For řḥȝt, see Wb II, 447.9–448.2.
²⁰² jrmṯ nb ṭḥȝw nb wṯ ss nb nṭj jw=sn r ṭṯ n ḫn.t pn jḥ ḡḏ=sn ḫḏ ṭ ḫnk.t ṭ nb jis pn n kš ss-nsw jmy-rṯ jpt-nsw ḫr-Mn.
²⁰³ Parallels listed by Steven Blake Shubert. Those who (still) live on earth: a study of the ancient Egyptian Appeal to the Living texts. Toronto; Ottawa: University of Toronto; Library and Archives Canada, 2007 382 are Statue of luny from Deir Durunka (MMA 33.2.1), statue of Paser (ii) from Deir el-Bahri (CG 561), statue of Pahemnetjer from Saqqara (Cairo JE 89046), two Theban statues of Didia (Louvre C50 and CG 42122), and a Karnak statue of Roma-Roy (CG 42186).
that this suggests a dual meaning of the *ḥtp-dj-nsw* as on the one hand marking the royal privilege on the tomb equipment (i.e. the naos, or in other cases the staff or the statue), and on the other hand symbolising an actual performance of the *ḥtp-dj-nsw*-offerings, which is done by reciting (*ḏd*) and/or physical placement of offerings (*jr*) to the statue.²⁰⁴ Other statues, such as the famous tomb statues of Maya and Merit, have a *prr.t* formula anticipating the *ḥtp-dj-nsw*’s eternal immanence in the sense of performance of privilege and action, but yet accomplished in perpetuation for eternity. The statues gained life and the ability to act by means of the same Opening of the Mouth ritual as the mummy of Merymery (i) above.²⁰⁵ When exactly this reviving happened is subject to debate: It could have been performed during the funeral, or perhaps earlier, when the statue was installed in the tomb, probably already during the lifetime of the tomb owner. The latter has been suggested for the Old Kingdom by Andrey Bolshakov,²⁰⁶ and would support once again the idea that by tomb-building owners always marked both privilege in this life and the eternal perpetuation of that in both this life and the next.²⁰⁷ That the audience is addressed at the back of the statue raises the question of where in the tomb the statue was placed. Usually the assumption would be that statues were set against walls,²⁰⁸ an idea also

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²⁰⁵ Here is not the place to engage into the discussion of ‘object agency’, for a brief state of the art, see e.g. David Lorton. ‘The theology of cult statues in ancient Egypt.’ In: *Born in heaven, made on earth: the making of the cult image in the ancient Near East* edited by Michael B. Dick, 123–210. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999, with references.


²⁰⁷ Curiously, on the back of the statue of Meryneith and Anuy, the standard offering formula appears in favour of Meryneith, whereas Anuy, receives a thousand of various offerings, without a preceding *ḥtp-dj-nsw*. Here the statue of Meryneith has his name and title written over his short, see Raven and Van Walsum, *Meryneith*, 188–193 Figs. V.1 and V.6–7.

supported by the find spots of other Saqqara tomb statues (e.g. Maya and Merit),
where parts of the statues – especially the back – would be invisible. In that
case, the offering request could be interpreted as religious perpetuation of a de-
sired action in the sense of a ‘backup’, rather than that it was meant to be actually
read and performed.²⁰⁹ Also performing offerings in front of statues in com-
memoration of the represented individual(s) was ‘what people did’ also
without an explicit request written in hieroglyphs. Unfortunately, whereas repre-
sentations of statues (e.g. in the tomb of Maya) show statues bearing flower gar-
lands, no traces of such perishable offerings remain in the archaeological record.
The same applies to offering tables from the Saqqara tombs, none of which show
traces of fat or the like.²¹⁰ Flowers, libations, and incense are standard wishes,²¹¹
but highly elusive in the material evidence. The same applies to the beer, sweet
ointment, and fresh garlands that Amenemone (i) requests on a statue at
Thebes.²¹² If there is no beer, he says, give me water. So there is a backup plan as well.

1.4.3 Eloquent buildings

The relative scarcity of evidence makes it all the more relevant to look for wider
material basis to study religious practices and indeed include the agency of
Egyptian art representations (chapter 2). The visual representations, i.e. the
texts and representations in the monumental decorated tombs, are most relevant
here as they form “part of an interlocking set of practices and discourses”.²¹³ It is
therefore important to consider the viewer and the social embedding of images (and texts). We learn about prayers by means of Egyptian body language, and should consider the possibility of images as focuses of veneration. The wall decorations of Egyptian tombs monumentalise the status of the deceased, in terms of first of all being able to afford a monumental tomb, but also demonstrating their knowledge of the right style as well as choice of texts and decoration. For the current project the religious practices that can be derived from the decoration programs are relevant, touching only in passing on practical issues of the actual process of decorating the tombs. Literature on the question of the artist–patron relationship is extensive, and Egyptology has hotly debated the question of whether the highly idealised tomb representations can deliver this information. In the following, two aspects are addressed, namely the issues of the use of texts and images, and its performers, beneficiaries, and recipients.


216 Such practices are of course better known for Christian icons, see e.g. Thomas Lentes. ‘An- dacht und Gebäude.’ In: Kulturelle Reformation. Sinnformationen im Umbruch, 1400 – 1600 edited by Bernhard Jussen, Craig Koslofsky, 29–67, esp. 45–54. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999. In Christianity such use of images only slowly develops into more text-based practices.

217 In the Walking Dead project, a comprehensive analysis of the tomb decoration and its transmission is the main focus of Huw Twiston Davies’ work.


1.4.3.1 The use of texts and images

Even though transmission of texts and images is not our concern here, some background information of how we should understand the tomb representations (i.e. both texts and images) has to be addressed because the question of how these should be termed and categorised has been the subject of hot debate, and we need to exemplify how we understand the meaning of texts (and images) in practice (namely as supporting actual performance, not as ‘library-in-stone’, but I get ahead of myself here). In order to understand the function of texts and images we need to address the matter of genre, i.e. the type of text typically defined by content, style, and form. When acknowledging the fluidity of ancient Egyptian genres, such a typology can be helpful when analysing certain patterns or developments in the ancient Egyptian literary discourse,²²⁰ but as we shall see, it is perhaps less useful for the contextualisation of texts in their everyday use (‘Sitzi mL eben’).²²¹ Therefore Jan Assmann argued that intended purpose (“Verwendungssituation”), not necessarily form, but would be the best indicator for genre determination,²²² i.e. whether a text was meant to be used only during the funeral, or also before or after. Assmann’s view is shared by Harold Hays, who divided mortuary texts into ‘personal’ (beneficial to the speaker) and ‘sacredotal’ (beneficial to the ritual/the deceased) texts, depending on who benefitted most from the reciting of a given text.²²³ While Hays applied formal criteria such as first voice vs. collective voice (see also below), Jan Assmann pointed at text-inherent, mainly content-based criteria: In his seminal anthology of hymns and prayers, for example, Assmann discussed only the orations (Egyptian: rdj.t jbw) and adorations (dw. w) confined to the ones directed to the creator god, sun hymns, and so-called prayers of personal piety, and argued that this selection would be a reflection of the unique hymnal record of the New Kingdom.²²⁴ In his later Totenliturgien this conceptional starting point was reinforced, although


²²¹ See also Parkinson, ‘Literature’, 300.


²²³ Hays, Pyramid Texts, 11.

²²⁴ Assmann, Hymnen und Gebete, XIII.
with acknowledgement of the difficulties of pinning certain texts to certain genres.\textsuperscript{225} Yet Assmann sub-divides tomb texts that are not hymnal texts into ‘liturgical texts’ (‘Totenliturgien’) and ‘literary texts’ (‘Totenliteratur’).\textsuperscript{226} For Assmann, liturgical texts belong to the sphere of cultic recitation and thus the world of the living (i.e. to the outside sphere). Literary texts, on the other hand, are the texts in the tomb, which he thought equip the deceased in their tombs through performative perpetuation of religious action. According to this categorisation, liturgical texts present in the burial chamber such as the Book of the Dead are understood as ‘literature’ rather than ‘liturgy’ since they were no longer accessible to the living and hence not part of their cultic activities.\textsuperscript{227} He considers them refunctioned (‘umfunktioniert’).\textsuperscript{228} Assmann thus confines “Totenliteratur” to “einen Wissensvorrat [...] der den Verstorbenen ins Grab mitgegeben wurde, um ihnen im Jenseits zur Verfügung zu stehen”.\textsuperscript{229} I have argued elsewhere, that texts for the deceased in tombs can often be interpreted as written speech act, in the sense that the content of a text as such can be considered as being performatively re-enacted.\textsuperscript{230} For example, an offering formula provide that offering for eternity even in absence of humans performing that very task of

\textsuperscript{225} Assmann, \textit{Totenliturgien} I, 9 and see also 18 on considering Wittgenstein’s family resemblance, as criterion for the genre definition. This means that all texts have a given number of elements of similarity between them but not all these similarities are shared by all texts.

\textsuperscript{226} Assmann, \textit{Totenliturgien} I, 13.

\textsuperscript{227} Assmann, \textit{Totenliturgien} I, 13, but see e.g. Yekatarina Barbash. ‘The ritual context of the Book of the Dead.’ In: \textit{Book of the Dead: becoming god in ancient Egypt} edited by Foy Scalf, 75–84. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2017 for a more apt description of the ritual context of these texts on various levels before, during and after the funeral and see Lieven, Alexandra von. ‘Book of the Dead, book of the living: BD spells as temple texts.’ \textit{Journal of Egyptian Archaeology} 98 (2012): 249–267.

\textsuperscript{228} Assmann, \textit{Totenliturgien} I, 13.

\textsuperscript{229} Assmann, \textit{Tod und Jenseits}, 504. While storage of knowledge was one function of the texts in tombs, it was not the only one. For a criticism see also Martin A. Stadler. \textit{Weiser und Wesir: Studien zu Vorkommen, Rolle und Wesen des Gottes Thot im ägyptischen Totenbuch. Orientalische Religionen in der Antike / Oriental religions in Antiquity} 1. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009. 42.


\textsuperscript{44} Chapter 1: Introduction
offering. Yet also beyond the acknowledgement of performative aspects,²³¹ Assmann’s idea of the refunctioning of texts depending on text location in a tomb makes little sense if we consider that at the Saqqara tombs (and in fact also in Thebes, Assmann’s main source of information) so-called liturgies and literatures are mixed depending on the tomb under study, making any division into liturgy and literature based on location highly arbitrary. Martin Stadler has suggested that as the prefix *Toten-* is quite vague in German, Assmann sought to differentiate between what English distinguishes as ‘mortuary’ texts (Assmann’s *Totenliteratur*) and ‘funerary’ texts (Assmann’s *Totenliturgien*).²³² Yet, since both alleged categories of texts appear in both alleged ‘areas’ of the tombs,²³³ text location cannot serve as functional criterion. For the same reason, the idea of ‘purpose of use’ as criterion for genre is highly questionable.²³⁴ Putting together similar themes is surely interesting, yet the fact that genre categories are frequently challenged in the Egyptian texts means such categorisations are easily defied.²³⁵

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²³² Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir*, 42 although I would then make the distinction opposite of what Stadler did, namely to see liturgies as related to funerary activities and literature as mortuary texts, i.e. following the actual practices whereas Stadler suggests liturgies are mortuary texts and literature are funerary texts. In fact, as Baines already noted a clear distinction between mortuary and funerary is difficult (John Baines. ‘Modelling sources, processes and locations of early mortuary texts.’ In: *D’un monde à l’autre: Textes des Pyramides & Textes des Sarcophages. Actes de la table ronde internationale, “Textes des Pyramides versus Textes des Sarcophages”, IFAO – 24-26 septembre 2001* edited by Susanne Bickel and Bernard Mathieu, 15, note 2. Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 2004 and see Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir*, 42). Stadler quotes Assmann stating that what remains is to make the distinction as an acknowledgement that *Totenliteratur* is difficult to understand entirely see Assmann, *Tod und Jenseits*, 322, and Stadler, *Weiser und Wesir*, 42. I did, however, not find the quote Stadler mentions in the edition by C.H. Beck available to me.


²³⁵ Assmann’s idea to collect literary genres that mix styles, content, and form as ‘functional literature’ (”*Gebrauchsliteratur*”) and folklore beside a high literary culture of texts that are situationally abstract (“*situationsabstrakt*”) is particularly unhelpful for the current questions of living textual traditions, a matter discussed in greater detail by Huw Twiston Davies in his project. For the theory see Jan Assmann. ‘Der Literarische Text im Alten Ägypten.’ *Orientalische Li-
In the words of Hans Ulbrich Gumbrecht: the isolation of certain literary texts from others texts “may run the risk of producing effects of homogenisation and impressions of homogeneity that are as problematic as the effects of isolating literature from its discursive environment”. Reconsidering that the different texts discussed above all came from the same carrier medium, namely the tomb, makes the thematic overlap perhaps less surprising. A comprehensive understanding of the religious practices as detectable from tomb decoration hence requires discussing the whole tomb decoration in context, irrespective of how a text may be known to have been used elsewhere. That Assmann and Hays view the “movement of a text” from one “setting” to the other as “recontextualization” is therefore unhelpful for the understanding of potential daily life practice. Indeed, as Hays admits, individual and group religious practices in tombs and temples as well as the royal cults were in fact closely linked. In the current study we shall see what the texts (and images) in the Saqqara tombs as well as the archaeological evidence can tell us about post-funeral, i.e. mortuary, tomb practices.


237 Surprise about the thematic overlap between sun hymns and the so-called liturgies for the deceased is for example noted e.g. in Assmann, Totenliturgien II, 187. Assmann’s acknowledgement of the meaning of the texts both in the in principle sealed tomb chambers and in the accessible parts of the tombs as having an important part in the deceased who entered the circle of life with the sun god make his artificial categorisation completely incomprehensible.


239 Hays, Pyramid Texts, 67.

240 Hays, Pyramid Texts, 64.

241 In this respect it is worth noting that Barbara Aston noted in the so-called “tomb of Sethnakht” a striking difference in the type of offering used for either the funeral or later offering practices: pottery for storing commodities for eternity in the tomb showed a ratio of 80% marls to 20% Nile clay fabrics versus the pottery from the superstructure which showed a ratio 3% marls to 97% Nile clays. Aston left this finding uncommented in her publication, but in personal communication she kindly elaborated as follows: “The pottery in the Sethnakht substructure was from secondary Ramesside burials and there’s no guarantee that it is connected with the offering pottery found in the courtyard and chapels, though the superstructure pot-
1.4.3.2 Literacy and the tomb as auditive space

The discussion of the *Sitz im Leben* of the texts preserved to us in mortuary contexts and their interpretation in the daily life practices for the living must consider who the recipients of the tomb texts and tomb representations were, which must touch upon the question of literacy. Returning to Hays’ categorisation in personal and sacerdotal texts, his main criterion was whether a text should be considered to be performed individually in private (“personal”) or by more than one person in public (“sacerdotal”). Discussing papyri only, Hays argued that while rituals performed at the funeral by priests (such as the Opening of the Mouth ritual) “were collectively performed by the living community for the dead”, the Book of the Dead should be considered a “guidebook [...] of service to the individual in his particular afterworld existence”. For example, the Book of the Dead spell 144 (BD 144) instructs the reader to “do this book without letting anyone see” (jr=k mdj.t ṭn nn rdj.t m33 jr.t nb.t), which Hays takes literally as an example for private or even secret recitation on behalf of the officiant, which is the papyrus owner. Interestingly Hays assumes that these performing practices were situated in the domestic context. This hypothesis pushes further the idea, for example by John Gee, to understand literally the use of the Book of the Dead on earth (tp t3). However, while the use of the Book of the Dead (BD) in temple contexts is well attested, Gee’s reasoning is unconvincing also dates to the Ramesside Period. Nile clay deposits were common in the Nile valley, whereas marl clay deposits were from the periphery of the valley or in the desert and were thus less readily available. Marl clay would therefore have been more expensive. Marl clay pottery is less porous than Nile clay pottery and is therefore better suited to long-term storage of food, particularly liquids. Nile clay would have been sufficient for offering pottery used to present food and drink in the tomb chapels, as the food and drink would have been consumed soon afterward.”

243 Hays, *Pyramid Texts*, 24–35. Note that the term ‘private’ is problematic in Antiquity in general and should be used with caution only; compare e.g. Joseph Rykwert. ‘Privacy in Antiquity.’ *Social Research*, vol. 68, no. 1 (2001): 29–40 not mentioning Egypt, but sketching a vivid image that would applicable to the Egyptian context as well.
244 Hays, *Pyramid Texts*, 36. This idea is in fact rooted in Egyptology since Carl Richard Lepsius published the first “*Todtenbuch*”: see Von Lieven, ‘Book of the Dead’, 265, with references and a critical discussion.
H. et rranslates a phrase from BD 1 that runs \( jr \ r h \ m d\i\.t \ t n \ tp \ t i \ m \ s s \ hr \ qrs.t \) with “one who knows this book on earth or [emphasis mine] in writing on the coffin” whereas “as in writing on the coffin” is more plausible for \( m. \) That the deceased “prospers on earth” (\( wdl\i\. \ pw \ tp \ t\i, \ BD \ 18 \)) is unsurprising since the deceased wants to come forth by day as a living \( Ba \) before he returns into his tomb again by night. The Book of the Dead does not only appear on papyri that were stored in burial chambers, but also on the monumental tombs’ walls at Saqqara, which were open to the public and hence could be read by the literate visitors. Whoever read those texts on the monumental tomb walls probably uttered them aloud, thus enabling potential illiterate visitors to hear the content of the texts as well. The practice of reciting texts in tombs is also suggested by the appeals of the living which mention the scribes visiting a tomb of temple and reciting the words (\( sdd \ m(w)dw=tn \)) although one may of course again also argue for an interpretation of those texts as written speech act, i.e. fossilising (eternalising in stone) the desired eternal performance of such visits. Hays’ grammatical approach takes too literal the question of in which person (first, second, third, or not mentioning the beneficiary). As he states himself, the exchange of texts between tombs and temples and “[t]heir monumentalization transformed them and opened up possibilities not available to papyrus and leather scroll” and demonstrate that “there was a permeable boundary between different domains of practice.” Considering the limited access of the ancient Egyptians to literacy, and the location of some of the texts, caused Christopher Eyre to recently stress once again the very limited group that actually read the inscriptions. However, what Eyre overlooks is the auditive coulisse of a tomb (see also chapter 2). Relief representations tell us about musicians, dancers, and mourners, and we may imagine also the sound of the ancients’ feelings.
of pain and loss. The Egyptians themselves were very well aware of the audience of their tombs as is clear from the so-called appeals to the living that address visitors directly. Whereas usually these texts appear on statues of stelae, very interestingly also an ostraca is known (now in the Royal Museum of Scotland), which makes the concept of addressing visitors portable in a way. The idea that people come, “divert themselves (‘bb) in the west and walk about the tomb (‘d3.t)” is expressed, for example, by Maya on the south wall of the gateway of his pylon. Clearly, Maya speaks here to elite visitors to the tomb who could read and understand the texts and representations. While he deliberately excludes illiterate members of the community from his exquisite circle, that does not mean that illiterate visitors did not also enter the tomb and potentially developed their own understanding and appropriation of the elite literate practices. It is therefore vital for a comprehensive understanding of the tombs to consider the wide range of “participants, audience, but also absent people”. Richard Chalfen aptly noted that “[d]esign and decoration of physical space in general [are] constructed appearances [...] meant to be looked at and appreciated in culturally specific terms”. This applies also to ancient Egyptian monumental tombs and so did the comprehension of the representational content. What is important is the “collateral knowledge and the cognitive skills necessary to understand the depicted scene”. For ancient Egypt, this is

258 Studied in detail by Shubert, Appeal.
259 This text does not ask for offerings but warns from using the tomb as a quarry by removing stones. Inv. no. 1956–316, see Shubert, Appeal, 203–204.
260 Martin, Maya, 20.
261 In fact also quoted by Eyre, ‘Material authority’, 10.
all the more true as a probably relatively low rate of literacy did not allow all
tomb visitors to actually read the texts surrounding the representations.²⁶⁷ Yet
they could potentially listen to others reading aloud,²⁶⁸ or have varying degrees
of understanding of the respective texts and representations in the way they were
meant to be read. Building and beholder interacted in dynamic relationship.²⁶⁹

1.5 Prospect

Returning to our hypothesis above (section 1.2.) that the evidence from Saqqara
reflects ‘reminiscence clusters’, the following demonstrates that this desire for
belonging was practiced by means of the strategies of representation (chapter 2)²⁷⁰ as well as gift-giving (chapter 3) in the Saqqara tombs, but also on a
wider level in the cultural geography of Saqqara (chapter 4).

²⁶⁷ See also Antony Eastmond. ‘Re-Viewing Inscriptions.’ In: Viewing Inscriptions in the Late
Antique and Medieval World edited by Antony Eastmond, 253 – 254. Cambridge: Cambridge Uni-
²⁶⁸ Surely silent reading was in theory possible, yet tomb inscriptions were rather meant to be
recited, compare the discussion of the research history on the matter by William A. Johnson.
Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire: A Study of Elite Communities Johnson.
²⁶⁹ Compare Amy Papalexandrou. ‘Text in context: eloquent monuments and the Byzantine
beholder.’ Word & Image 17.3 (2001): 260 and for the Egyptian context e.g. René van Walsem.
‘Sense and sensibility: on the analysis and interpretation of the iconography programmes in
four Old Kingdom elite tombs.’ In: Dekorierte Grabanlagen im Alten Reich: Methodik und Inter-
pretation edited by Martin Fitzenreiter and Michael Herb, 277 – 332. London: Golden House Pub-
lications, 2006.
²⁷⁰ Note that this study largely excludes graffiti. Although they provide another important tech-
nique of individuals and groups to write themselves into a certain space and indeed group, these
matters have extensively been studied by Nico Staring and there is no need for repetition here,
see e.g. Paul W. Van Pelt and Nico Staring. ‘Interpreting graffiti in the Saqqara New Kingdom
necropolis as expressions of popular customs and beliefs.’ Rivista del Museo Egiizio 3 (2019);
Nico Staring. ‘Products of the physical engagement with sacred space: the New Kingdom non-
textual tomb-graffiti at Saqqara.’ In: Decoding signs of identity: Egyptian workmen’s marks in ar-
chaeological, historical, comparative and theoretical perspective. Proceedings of a conference in
Leiden, 13 – 15 December 2013 edited by Ben J.J. Haring, Kyra V.J. van der Moezel, and Daniel