

THE SELF-PRESENTATION OF PEPYANKH THE MIDDLE AT MEIR: SCANDAL, RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND PARTICIPATION, THE NEXT WORLD

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Abstract. The setting of the longer inscriptions of Pepyankh the Middle at the back of the outer court of his tomb at Meir is discussed. Annotated metrical transcriptions and translations are presented for the lintel text, captions to figures, and the biographical inscriptions, which together form a unity. The titles on the lintel give a sense of the protagonist's official role. The main southern inscription, to be read first, deals with more public aspects of Pepyankh's life, during which he had been accused of improper action. It also asks the audience to perform a 'beatification of Hathor', perhaps at a festival or in a mortuary chapel in the city. The northern inscription is primarily about religious matters. Pepyankh claims merit for his performance of the cult of the ungendered deity Hathor and for other ethical actions. The text mobilizes the conception that a good life will benefit the deceased in the hereafter, and this would fit with a belief in judgment after death.

The two balancing biographical inscriptions of Pepyankh the Middle at Meir from the reign of Pepy II, published by Aylward M. Blackman in 1924, constitute one of the most extensive self-presentations known from the Old Kingdom. They do not appear to have been the subject of a study since Blackman's original publication, to which Kurt Sethe contributed a number of readings.¹ In this article I offer a treatment and

¹ Blackman, A.M., *The Rock Tombs of Meir IV: The Tomb-chapel of Pepi'onkh the Middle Son of Sebkhotepe and Pekhernefret* (D, no. 2) (=Archaeological Survey of Egypt 25), London 1924, pls iv, iva, v, xxiiia [general view], pp. 22-6, referred to below as Blackman; Sethe, K., *Urkunden des alten Reiches*, 2nd ed. (=Urk. I, 1), Leipzig 1933, pp. 221-4. Other translations: Roccati, A., *La littérature historique sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien* (=Littératures Anciennes du Proche-Orient), Paris 1982, pp. 234-6; Lichtheim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom: a Study and an Anthology* (=OBO 84), Fribourg and Göttingen 1988, pp. 18-20; Strudwick, N., *Texts from the Pyramid Age* (=Writings from the Ancient World 16), Atlanta 2005, pp. 368-71 no. 270. Kloth, N., *Die (auto-)biographischen Inschriften des ägyptischen Alten Reiches: Untersuchungen zu Phraseologie und Entwicklung* (=SAK Beihefte 8), Hamburg 2002,



Figure 1. View of the forecourt of the tomb of Pepyankh the Middle at Meir. The rock surfaces flanking the entrance that bear the biographical texts are just visible, as is the frieze above. After A.M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir IV: The Tomb-chapel of Pepi'onkh the Middle Son of Sebkhōtpe and Pekhernefret (D, no. 2)*, London 1924, pl. xxiiia.

discuss implications of the inscriptions for interpreting Old Kingdom religious institutions and religious participation. By coincidence, a new publication of the tomb by Naguib Kanawati and colleagues, with translation of the texts and treatment of related artefacts but without further discussion, appeared when my draft was nearly complete.² In addition, the Egyptian galleries in the Ashmolean Museum, redisplayed in late 2011, present the fine fragments of a wooden coffin of Pepyankh.³

mentions the texts at a number of points (see her index), but her purpose is not to provide a connected treatment.

I am very grateful to Violaine Chauvet for permitting me to cite a draft article of hers and for valuable remarks about the present text, to Anthony Leahy, Ilona Regulski, Julie Stauder-Porchet, and Ghislaine Widmer for references and access to publications, and to Elizabeth Froom and Richard Parkinson for comments on drafts.

² Kanawati, N., *The Cemetery of Meir I: The Tomb of Pepyankh the Middle* (=Australian Centre of Egyptology Report 31), Oxford 2012, cited below as Kanawati. The photographs there show the tomb in its current, consolidated state with a recent protective structure at the front. The biographical inscriptions appear to be in a similar condition to that of the 1920s, and Kanawati confirms this impression, but the weathered indentations in the rock have now been filled in.

³ One fragment: Kanawati, pl. 72a-b. Purchased in 1960, nos AN 1960.1287a-d. Liam McNamara most kindly gave me information on these fragments as well as copies of database photographs.

It is a special pleasure and a privilege to offer this article to Paul Frandsen, my longest-standing academic friend and colleague, with whom I shared classes in the vanished Griffith Institute wing of the Ashmolean Museum, more years ago than either of us may care to count.

THE CONTEXT

The narrative inscriptions of Pepyankh are carved on the original facade of his tomb, either side of the entrance at the back of the forecourt (see Figure 1 for the context as it was in 1914). Kanawati (p. 27), who also believes that this surface began as the tomb's porticoed facade, suggests that the area was later enclosed to extend the tomb. Whether or not this was done, the inscriptions would have been the tomb's most accessible element, and the area's function in the mortuary cult is confirmed by the presence of slightly later graffiti of priestly personnel on the side walls.⁴ Since the biographical texts are incised, they may have been intended, at least ideally, to take exterior light (the figures, however, are in raised relief).⁵ Flanking the inscriptions are figures of Pepyankh and his wife Iahhuty/Huty. Above is a narrow frieze or architrave running across the whole facade. The door lintel is inscribed: 'The sole companion, overseer of priests, Pepyankh the Middle'. This whole area should be analysed together, with the captioned images and frieze prefacing and complementing the texts.

The frieze bears a long offering formula and two lines of titles, with pictorial elements at either end. The whole is at a small scale and less prominent than the inscriptions and figures below.⁶ Although the two areas are complementary, they are not closely integrated. The composition throws the more individual narratives into relief. The openings to the two main inscriptions are not self-sufficient, being spoken by the figures of the tomb owner on either side, an arrangement paralleled, for example, on the facade of the roughly contemporary tomb of Sabni at Qubbet el-Hawa.⁷ In a sense, the absence of a speech marker invites the viewer to look at the figures, while the absence of a full

⁴ Blackman, 21-2; Kanawati, 31-2.

⁵ On this opposition, see Chauvet, V., 'Decoration and Architecture: the Definition of Private Tomb Environment', in: D'Auria, S. (ed.), *Servant of Mut: Studies in Honor of Richard A Fazzini* (=PÄ 28), Leiden 2008, pp. 44-52.

⁶ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies*, 18, noted that the frieze inscription is a necessary part of the whole.

⁷ Edel, E., Seyfried, K.J., and Vieler, G., *Die Felsgräbernekropole der Qubbet el-Hawa bei Assuan I: Die Architektur, Darstellungen, Texte, archäologischer Befund und Funde der Gräber QH 24 - QH 209*, Paderborn 2007, I, pp. 50-57, 243-4 figs 32-4, pl. ix.

titulary invites to look up at the frieze. This organization suggests that Pepyankh was familiar locally. Those who came to the tomb would know who it belonged to and might be interested in what was distinctive about Pepyankh, so that titles and speech markers would be of lesser value than the running texts. Such a ranking fits with the general emphasis on individuality in narrative inscriptions. The size of any audience, however, is almost impossible to estimate.

Of the two compositions of narrative inscription and images, the right-facing section to the south of the door should be read first for several reasons, most basically that right-facing comes before left-facing, as does south before north. The right-facing text deals with more 'public' matters, although that focus is balanced by the appeal to the living toward its end, which relates to this world as well as to the next. The two texts are both self-sufficient and complementary: priority is relative. The order I use is the opposite of that of Blackman and Sethe; probably neither scholar gave the matter any special thought. Kanawati's republication uses the same order as I do. I give selective notes on my translations, which in places are quite free.

The figures of Pepyankh and Iahhut/Huty have some priority, despite their position behind the inscriptions, because images have a higher status than texts and because of the absence of titles and speech markers: the inscriptions are pronounced by the flanking figures of Pepyankh. The texts are visually dominant, occupying well over half the decorated area, while their hieroglyphs are over-size in relation to the figures, which are captioned in smaller signs with selected titles and their names.

The figures are relatively conventional in type. Pepyankh wears a sash across his chest that displays his priestly role. Iahhut/Huty has the close-cropped hair characteristic of younger women in the Old Kingdom.⁸ This choice of hairstyle may relate to the local cult of Hathor and its likely associations with female sexuality.

THE TEXTS⁹

Frieze inscription and decoration

The frieze inscription includes the highest titles attributed to Pepyankh as well as claiming association with the king fairly prominently. As in them, Pepyankh's name is absent, but it is given twice in captions to the

⁸ E.g. Dunham, D. and Simpson, W.K., *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III, G 7530-7540* (=Giza Mastabas 1), Boston 1974, pls xvii, xx.

⁹ In the translations below, passages in *italics* within square brackets suggest likely content, not precise wording.

small figures of him and his wife at the left (south) end of the frieze, interrupted by large-scale hieroglyphic renderings of 1000 steers and five types of bird. He is ‘The sole companion Pepyankh the Middle’, and she is ‘His beloved wife Iahhut’.¹⁰ Their figures are on block thrones of a type normally reserved for royalty and deities.¹¹

¹*h̄tp-dj-njswt d̄j-jnpw*
tpj-dw.f h̄ntj-zh-ntr
jmjw̄t nb-b̄3-dsr

h̄tp-dj-wsjrj m̄3^c-h̄rw.f
r-jmnt m-rn.f
qrs.tj.f m-h̄rt-ntr

prj-[n.f] h̄rw
[m]-h̄3b-skr rk̄h
wpt-rnpt tpt-rnpt

w3g d̄hwtjt
m-h̄3b-(nb-)nfr h̄r-ntr-^{c3}

²*jrj-p^ct h̄3tj-^cj*
jmj-jz z3w-nhn h̄rj-tp-nhb

t3jtj-z3b-t3tj jmj-r3-zh-^cj-njswt
h̄tmtj-bjtj mdw(?)-h̄p r3-pj-nb(?)

jmj-r3-šnwtj jmj-r3-w^cbtj jmj-r3-gs-pr
z3b-^cnd-mr zh-^cj h̄ft-h̄r-njswt
h̄tmtj-ntr zh-qd

jmj-r3-h̄mw-ntr n-h̄wt-h̄rw nbt-qjs
³*h̄rj-h̄3bt h̄rj-tp*
sm smr-w^ctj h̄rj-h̄3bt

jmj-r3-šm^cw m-sp3wt(?) h̄r-jb
h̄rj-tp-njswt mdw-rh̄jt
jwn-knmwt h̄m-ntr-m3^ct

¹⁰ Blackman, pl. v; Kanawati, pls 3, 6, 7, 76.

¹¹ Kanawati, 33, pls 4, 75.

ḥrj-sšt3 n-wdt-mdw-nbt n-njswt
jmj-jb n-njswt m-st.f-nbt

¹A gift which the king gives and which Anubis gives,
upon his mountain, before the god's shrine,
Imiut, lord of the sacred land;

a gift which Osiris gives, that he should be justified
for the west through his renown,
that he should be buried in the necropolis,

that the voice should go forth [for him
at] the festival of Sokar, at the burning (festival),
the opening of the year, the first of the year,

the *wag* festival, the Thoth festival,
at (every) perfect festival before the great god:

²the member of the *pat*, count,
chamberlain, guardian(?) of Nekhen, chief of Nekheb,

vizier, overseer of royal document scribes,
royal seal-bearer, staff of the Apis Bull, mouth of all of Pe(?),

overseer of the dual granary, overseer of the two workshops(?), overseer of the
district,
administrator, document scribe in the presence of the king,
expedition leader, draftsman;

overseer of priests of Hathor, lady of Cusae,
³chief lector priest,
sem priest, sole companion, lector priest;

overseer of Upper Egypt in the central nomes,
royal subordinate, staff of the subjects,
jwn-knmwt,^a priest of Ma'at,

keeper of secrets of all commands of the king,
favourite of the king in all respects (lit. 'in all his places').

^a A title of uncertain meaning, also attested with the extension *m*^{3c} ‘true’: Jones, D., *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the Old Kingdom* (=BAR International Series 866), Oxford, 2000, I, p. 6 nos 22-3.

South (right-facing) side, captions to figures

(He:) ¹The sole companion, lector priest, keeper of secrets of the house of the morning, ²royal subordinate, staff of the subjects, *jwn-knmwt*, priest of Ma’at, overseer of [priests] of Hathor, lady of Cusae, Pepy[ankh the Middle]

(She:) ¹His beloved wife, royal dependant, priest(ess) of Hathor, lady of Cusae, Iahhuty, whose perfect name [is Huty]

North (left-facing) side, captions to figures

(He:) ¹The priest of Isis and Hathor, priest of Horus and Seth, priest of the Great Ennead, ²priest of Nut(?), ¹²Neferka, whose perfect name is Pepyankh the Middle, ³son of the royal subordinate, overseer of priests, Sebekhotep, son of the royal dependant, the musician Pekhernefret

(She:) ¹His beloved wife, royal dependant, musician ²of Hathor, lady of Cusae, Iahhuty, whose perfect name is Huty

Right-facing (south) inscription

¹*jrj.n.j ḥ^cw(j)-nb* I spent all the/my time
jrj.n.j ḥr-srt that I spent acting as an official
m-j3t-dḅt r-phwjj in a seal-bearing office until my end.^b

n-zp-[s]dr.j dḅt.j ḥrj.tj-r.j I never passed the night with my seal away from me
dr-rdj.tj.j ²m-sr after I was appointed as an official.

n-zp-z3.tj.j n-zp-ḥnr.tj.j I was never arrested, I was never detained.
jr-ḥt-nbt dddt-r.j As for anything said against me in the presence of
m-b3ḥ-srw the officials,

³*prj.n.j-ḥr.s m-ḥtp* I came out from it successfully,

sk-ḥr ḥr-ddw while it rebounded upon those who spoke,
dr-b3q.j-jm m-b3ḥ-srw since I was cleared in the matter before the officials,
⁴*dr-dd.sn-js-r.j m-sdwj* since they spoke slanderously against me.^c

¹² The writing, with three *nw*-pots and a male divine determinative, is strange, and might possibly be a corruption of *d3d3t* ‘council (of gods)’ (*Wb.* V, 529), which would fit appropriately after the previous priesthood of the Great Ennead.

j-rmtw-nbw šmw m-ḥd
jww m-ḥnt

O all people who go northward
or come southward:

⁵*ḥn-ḥn.tn njswt*
ḥn-ḥn.tn ntr ntj-tn-ḥr.f

as the king lives for you,
as the god before whom you are lives for you,^d

dd.tn-n.j tj ḥnqt
m-ntt m-ḥj.tn

so may you give to me bread and beer
from what is with you,

ḥ33.[tn] ⁶m-ḥwj.tn
wdn.tn m-r3.tn

may [you] elevate with your arms,
may you offer with your speech.

jr-jr.tj.sn-jm ḥft-ddt.n.j

As for those who will act therein according to
what I have said,

[
⁷*jw-jrj(w) ḥft-mrrt.sn*

[... *I shall act on behalf of* ...] them(?),
(and it) will be done(?) according to
what they wish;

jnk-3ḥ ḥpr r-3ḥ[-nb]
[
] *p3w-ḥpr*

(for) I am a spirit more equipped than [any] spirit [*a*
... *more effective than any* ...] who ever was.

⁸*jnk-jm3ḥw ḥr-njswt*
ḥr-[-ntr].f(?)
mnḥ.n-gr ḥt-nbt m-ḥj.j

I was one revered before the king and
before his god;^e
moreover, everything/every ritual was effective
through me

n-w^cb n-ḥwt-ḥrw nbt-qjs n-
stp.j-z3 r-ntr ⁹r-ḥzt.s-n.j

for the priestly service of Hathor, lady of Cusae,^f
through my standing guard over the god(dess)
so that she showed favour to me.

j-rmtw-nbw šmw m-ḥd
jww m-ḥnt

O all people who go north
and who come south:

ḥn-ḥn.tn njswt
ḥn-ḥn.tn ntr ¹⁰ntj.tn-ḥr.f

as the king lives for you,
as the god before whom you are lives for you,

dd.tn s3ḥ-ḥwt-ḥrw
nbt-qjs

may you say a beatification of Hathor,
lady of Cusae,^g

[
]

[*on behalf of(?) the owner of this tomb,*]
the overseer of priests, Pepyankh the Middle.

[*jmj*]-*r3-ḥmw-ntr*

pjpi-ḥnḥ ḥrj-jb

jr-rm[w-nbw dd].[tj.s[n?]] As for any people who will say (this?),
¹¹*jw-[hwt-hrw nbt-qjs]* [Hathor, lady of Cusae] will do what they desire.
r-jrt-mrrt.sn
[j]r []sn? [] ntr [As for those who will declaim ...?],
the god [will favour them?].^h

dd.j m-bw-m^c I say (it) as a true matter;
n-dd.j-js m-c³-r³ I do not speak with hyperbole.^j

^b Or ‘to the end (*r-phwj*)’. This could refer to Pepyankh’s death, which the opening of the other text implies by referring to ‘up to 100 years’. The latter’s conclusion refers more clearly to death, but still allusively. In the next couplet, appointment as a *sr* evidently relates to the right to bear a seal, probably both in delegated power and in a judicial role. It is difficult to express this range of meaning in translation.

^c My rendering of this passage is not precise. The idea of an accusation ‘falling’ upon those who made it might be compared with first millennium names that evoke the evil eye being against ‘them’ who project it, as in *jrt.w-r.w* ‘Their eye against them’ (Ranke, H., *Die ägyptischen Personennamen*, I, Glückstadt 1935, p. 42, 10; Lüdeckens, E., *Demotisches Namenbuch*, I, Wiesbaden 1980, p. 70). The core sense of *b3q* seems to be ‘clear’ or similar, which could in context mean ‘innocent’ in a legal sense: *Wb.* I, 424-5; Hannig, R., *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch I: Altes Reich und Erste Zwischenzeit* (Mainz, 2003), p. 411. The *js* in the last clause could be construed as subordinating what is said to the previous assertion introduced by *dr*, in accord with Gilula, M., *Miliyyot enklitiyyot be-mitsrayim klasit / Enclitic Particles in Middle Egyptian*, Jerusalem 1968, but that reading is problematic: see Oréal, E., *Les particules en Égyptien ancien: de l’Ancien Égyptien à l’Égyptien Classique* (=BdE 152), Cairo 2011, pp. 107-70, citing the present passage on p. 150. Oréal argues effectively against Gilula’s purely syntactic understanding of the particle.

^d The formula here, which occurs again a few columns later, appears to assert a more autonomous status for individuals in relation to the king and the gods than might be expected. The notion that the king or a deity would ‘live for’ people is contrary to generally attested patterns of dependence on higher beings. See also Discussion below.

The ‘god before whom you are’ seems not to be gendered; at Meir it may mean Hathor, as in the next two passages commented on (see also Discussion). It is less likely that ‘the god’ is a second way of referring to the king, producing parallel and synonymous clauses. Comparable usages to the one here occur in the Ramessid biographical texts of Samut and the high priest of Isis, Wenennefer: E. Frood, *Biographical Texts from Ramessid Egypt* (=Writings from the Ancient World 26), Atlanta 2007, pp. 85-6, 204-6 with 240 (notes).

^e The restored mention of the deity appears to be gender-neutral.

^f I suggest that *w^cb* at the beginning of this triplet is a condensed evocation of ‘priestly service’ rather than ‘purity’. Here again, *ntr* seems to refer to Hathor. For *stp-z³* in the next verse, see Discussion.

^g The *ddt* written at the beginning of the verse could mark an assimilation of *d* to *t* next to the unvoiced *t*. Another possible rendering is ‘May Hathor, lady of Cusae,

beatify ... (Pepyankh)'. Because the continuation is broken, it is unknown whether Pepyankh's titles were introduced with the preposition *n*, as my rendering requires.

^h Too broken for confident restoration. I suggest that the passage filled two verses, mentioning a benefit that the ungendered deity would give in response to uttering the requested formula, and thus forming a parallel for the previous – restored – promise from Hathor.

^j Literally 'from greatness-of-speech'. On such truth-claims, see Coulon, L., 'Véracité et rhétorique dans les autobiographies égyptiennes de la Première Période Intermédiaire', *BIFAO* 97 (1997), pp. 108-38, citing previous discussions. The present example is his no. 1. Valuable though his study is, I am not fully persuaded by his argument that written, as against oral, form favours the development of truth-claims. Written claims can be returned to and can be compared with one another over time, but both media are very prone to exaggeration.

Left-facing (north) inscription

¹*jw-jrj.n.j* ^c*h*^w.*j* I spent all of my lifetime up to 100 years^k
r-rnpt-100 among revered ones and living ones, the
*mm-jm*³*hww* ^c*nhw* *hrj-k*³ possessor of a *ka*.¹

jrj.n.j *bw-^c3* *n-^ch^w(.j?)*-*pn* I spent a great part of this lifetime (of mine?)
²*m-jmj-r*³-*hmw-ntr* *n-hwt* as overseer of priests of Hathor, lady of Cusae,
-hrw *nbt-qjs*

sk-wj-^cq.j *hr-hwt-hrw* while I would enter into Hathor, lady of Cusae(?s
nbt-qjs presence),
*hr-m*³.*s* *hr-jrt-n.s* seeing her and performing for her
ht *m-^c5*-*wj.j* ritual with my (own) arms.^m

³*jnk-jm*³*hw* *hr-njswt* I was one revered before the king;ⁿ
*jnk-jm*³*hw* *hr-ntr-^c3* I was one revered before the great god;
*jnk-jm*³*hw* *hr-rmtw* I was one revered before people.

jnk-mrjj *n-jtj.f* I was one beloved of his father,
⁴*hzjj* *n-mwt.f* favoured of his mother;
jnk-mrjj *n-snw.f* I was one beloved of his kin.

jrj.n.j ^c*h*^w.*j-nb* I spent all of my lifetime
jrj.n.j *m-wnwt-sr* that I spent in official service

sk-wj-⁵hr-jrt *bw-nfr* doing good and saying what is liked,
hr-^qdd-mrrwt
n-mrwt-zbt-^qd.j *hr-ntr* so that my reputation should proceed before the god,
*n-mrwt-j*³*wt* [] for the sake of an old age [*in a state of reverence?*].

<p>⁶<i>jw-wpj.n.j snsnpj(?)</i> <i>r-htp.sn[-jm?]</i> <i>n-rh.j mrrt-ntr-js</i></p>	<p>I adjudicated between two litigants to their satisfaction, because I know that it is what the god wishes.^o</p>
<p><i>n-zp-sdr.j špt.[kj]</i> <i>hn^c-rm[fw]</i> ⁷<i>hr-qd.sn ij-hr.j</i></p>	<p>I never spent the night angry [with people^p] because of their character as I encountered it.</p>
<p><i>rdj.n.j-hm-jr.tj-jšwt.j nt-sr</i> <i>m-jmnt m-w^crt-⁸nbt-m³ct</i></p>	<p>Now, I caused that my property^q of an official be constructed in the west, in the district of the Lady of Ma^aat,^r</p>
<p><i>m-bw-w^cb m-bw-nfr</i> <i>n-js-jr.tj-jm</i> <i>n-zp-p³-kjjw⁹tpjw-^cj.j</i> <i>jrt-jm</i></p>	<p>as a pure thing/place, as a good thing/in a good place where nothing had been done.^s No others (of) my predecessors had built there.</p>
<p><i>jnk-wpj w^crt-tn</i> <i>jw.s-r-sbt-hr.j m-hrt-ntr</i> <i>jw.s-r-jrt¹⁰mrrt.(j?)</i></p>	<p>I it was who opened up this area. It will be to my credit in the necropolis,^t it will do what is desired/what I wish.</p>
<p><i>w³h.n.j jb.j-r.s</i> <i>wrt mm-^cnhw</i></p>	<p>I set my heart upon it greatly among the living (i.e., while I was alive).</p>
<p><i>jj.n.j-r.s sk-wj-jj.kj</i> ¹¹<i>nfr wrt</i></p>	<p>I came to it when I had become old^u very perfectly,</p>
<p><i>sk-jrj.n.j ch^cw.j mm-^cnhw</i> <i>m-šw(t?)-jm³hw hr-njswt</i></p>	<p>when I had spent my lifetime among the living in an aura^v of reveredness before the king.</p>

^k The text emphasizes old age at more than one point, probably with the association that age confers personal and moral authority. The presumably ideal age of 100 is slightly more modest than the 110 typical of the Middle Kingdom: Janssen, J.M.A., ‘On the Ideal Lifetime of the Egyptians’, *OMRO* 31 (1950), pp. 33-9. One wonders whether the tradition of the 94-year reign length of Pepyankh’s contemporary Pepy II was influenced in some way by the same ideals.

^l Another possible rendering is ‘possessors of a *ka*’ in the plural, so that the term would be parallel to ‘living ones’. The personal determinative after *k* shows that ‘possessor of a *ka*’ is a unitary concept, perhaps attested only at Meir. The only relevant discussion known to me is A.M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir II: The Tomb-chapel of Senbi’s Son Ukh-hotp (B, no. 2)* (=Archaeological Survey of Egypt 23), London, 1915, p. 22 n. 2, written before he had treated the present example. His explanation there, that it designates the present or future deceased

person and is similar in meaning to *m^zc hrw*, does not work well for a plural reading of the present example, but it does fit the reading in the singular. I therefore render in the singular, although a plural reading would seem to suit the context better. If ‘possessors of a *ka*’ refers to Pepyankh’s peers, this notion has no clear parallel.

^m A triplet and a couplet in this inscription are rare cases where the metrical structure seems to require an enjambement. I have attempted to reproduce this feature in my renderings. The second example, in the last couplet but two (‘I set my heart upon it / greatly among the living’), is less pronounced than the present one.

ⁿ I render the timeless nominal-sentence constructions with a past tense. This seems required in the later passage describing the opening-up of the necropolis sector. In the current context a present-tense rendering would be equally appropriate.

^o Sethe (in Blackman, pl. iva, not in *Urk.* I, 222, 12), and, following, him Edel, E., *Altägyptische Grammatik* (=AnOr 34, 39), Rome 1955-64, §§ 824, 1017, restored a *p* between the two signs of *js*, so that the verse would read **n-rh.j mrrt-ntr-js-p(w)*. While this might seem to conform better to Old Egyptian grammar, it is a hyper-correction, and the spacing of the signs on the original does not favour it (Sethe also restored *js* in the gap after *.sn* in the previous verse, where *jm* might be a better supplement). Later work on the usage of *js* has uncovered rather variable patterns, and it is inappropriate to force the text into a grammatical mould. The present example was cited by Gilula, *Milyyot enklitiyyot be-mitsrayim klasit*, p. 144 no. 9, with a comment on Sethe’s emendation of *p(w)*. It belongs in category 6 of Oréal, *Les particules en Égyptien Ancien*, pp. 158-65 (she does not discuss this passage).

^p Sethe’s very plausible restoration.

^q A euphemism for a tomb complex. In the next verse, the use of *w^rrt* for an area of the necropolis containing rock tombs is paralleled in various Old Kingdom and later sources: Chauvet, V., ‘Between a Tomb and a Hard Place’ (in preparation).

^r Or: ‘the district “Lady of Ma’at”’.

^s In pre-New Kingdom Egyptian the primary meaning of *bw* appears to be more often ‘thing’ than ‘place’, as in *bw-c3* in the second couplet of the present text. A roughly contemporary example is in a legal papyrus from Elephantine: ... *jw^t zp jr sw jtj.f m bw nb* ‘...that his father had never done this in any way’: Sethe, K., ‘Ein Prozessurteil aus dem alten Reich’, *ZÄS* 61 (1926), p. 71, lines 3-4. Dictionaries, however, prefer ‘place’ (e.g. *Wb.* I, 450-2). Compounds with *bw* are mostly abstractions; see e.g. Hannig, R., *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch I: Altes Reich und Erste Zwischenzeit*, Mainz 2003, pp. 418-19. My rendering here gives two options: in context both are probably implied. The resumption with *jm*, ‘there’ or perhaps ‘in the matter’, does not narrow the range of possible meaning, because it may refer back to *w^rrt* in the previous couplet.

^t *sbt* is probably written for *zbt*, which occurs a little earlier—suggesting that the distinction between *s* and *z* was disappearing when the text was composed (whatever their relative phonetic realizations may have been). To say that the tomb will ‘rebel against (*sbj hr*)’ its owner would make no sense. The opening-up of the area will ‘enter on behalf of’ Pepyankh presumably because it is an act that will count in his favour in the hereafter.

^u I follow the reading of other translators and assume that there is a dittography between cols 10 and 11, with the determinative and word-ending written twice, but

not the phonograms of *jꜣjꜣ*. Violaine Chauvet (personal communication) agrees with Kloth in preferring to read a deliberate duplication.

^v *m-šw(t)-jmꜣḥw*, literally perhaps ‘in a shadow of reveredness’, where *šw(t)* might evoke the shade that is depicted around rulers in procession from dynasty 0 onward: de Morgan, J., et al., *Catalogue des monuments et inscriptions de l'Égypte antique I, 1: De la frontière de Nubie à Kom Ombo*, Vienna, n.d. [1894], 203; Hendrickx, S., et al., ‘A Lost Late Predynastic-Early Dynastic Royal Scene from Gharb Aswan’, *Archéo-Nil* 19 (2009), pp. 167-78. They are also evoked much later in an ironical passage in the Tale of Wenamun; see e.g. Baines, J., ‘On Wenamun as a Literary Text’, in Assmann, J., and Blumenthal, E., (eds.), *Literatur und Politik im pharaonischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten: Vorträge der Tagung zum Gedenken an Georges Posener 5.-10. September 1996 in Leipzig* (=BdE 127), Cairo 1999, p. 227 with refs. By implication, Pepyankh is within the shade of the king. Sunshades are common in Old Kingdom scenes where they protect tomb owners who are carried out to view their estates, but these are probably not relevant to this metaphor. See Fischer, H.G., ‘Sunshades of the Marketplace’, *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 6 (1972), pp. 151-56; references in Schäfer, H., *Principles of Egyptian Art*, Oxford 1986 [1974], 261-2, 364.

DISCUSSION

The narrative inscriptions of Pepyankh the Middle neither tell of extensive achievements nor give neat expositions of his beneficent social role. They are unusual in their organization and in the themes they cover, and they do not fall easily within the principal categories that scholars often recognize, of ‘career’ and ‘ideal biography’.¹³ Little is routine in character. In addition to the more elucidatory notes on specific passages above, I discuss several themes.

The first inscription focuses around Pepyankh’s correct conduct and status as an official, his having been vindicated in a scandal (see also below), interaction with those who might present offerings and say prayers for him, and allusions to the cult of Hathor – probably including festivals – concluding with assertions of his veracity. The second narrative begins by evoking his extreme old age, continuing with his privileged access to the goddess in his role as priest, idealized statements about his existence in his kin group and effectiveness as a mediator in disputes, and his opening up of a new area of the necropolis.

¹³ E.g. Gnirs, A., ‘Die ägyptische Autobiographie’, in Loprieno, A. (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms* (=PÄ 10), Leiden 1996, pp. 191-242, 203-4, with references; Gnirs, A., ‘Biographies’, in Redford, D.B. (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, I, New York 2001, pp. 184-9, with a more detailed breakdown of categories. See also Stauder-Porchet, J., ‘Les autobiographies événementielles de la Ve dynastie: premier ensemble de textes continus en Égypte’, in Bárta, M., Coppens, F., and Krejčí, J. (eds.), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2010*, Prague 2011, II, pp. 747-66.

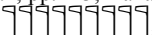
It concludes with a seemingly explicit statement that he has died and that his life ended ideally, mentioning his connection with the king.

Titles and activity for the king

Pepyankh's status is most fully expressed by the range of his titles, the majority of which occur in the frieze inscription, with additions and variant orthographies elsewhere in the tomb and on his coffin fragments.¹⁴ The titles suggest both a concentration relating to the topics occurring in the biographical texts and involvement with the court and central administration. The latter, which is hardly mentioned in the narrative texts, could be fictitious, but tombs may represent the range of their owners' activities in a distributed fashion, and this could have been the case for Pepyankh.¹⁵ The focuses of biographical texts are generally very selective. Pepyankh could therefore have exercised functions related to those titles, perhaps during specific phases of his career. The questions of what the functions might have been and where they might have been exercised are particularly complicated for the later 6th dynasty, because title inflation renders uncertain the reference of a designation such as 'vizier', which is present in the frieze inscription. Seemingly the most distinctive of Pepyankh's titles is 'overseer of Upper Egypt in the central nomes', which fits with the geographical location of el-Qusiya, for which Meir served as a necropolis. The title and/or function of 'overseer of Upper Egypt', which is first attested at a rather earlier date, might subsequently have been subdivided.¹⁶

The first narrative; official duties and scandal among officials

The right-facing narrative opens by saying that Pepyankh conducted his business properly day by day and always retained his seal overnight. Old Kingdom elite cylinder seals bear royal titularies and official titles, not personal names, and appear thus to represent delegated royal power and connection with an office.¹⁷ Taken together with the passage in the left-

¹⁴ Range: Blackman, pp. 1-3; Kanawati, pp. 11-13; the coffin fragments add a writing of *psdt* 'ennead' with , but no further titles.

¹⁵ A slightly earlier instance is the tomb of Harkhuf at Qubbet el-Hawa: Edel, Seyfried, and Vieler, *Die Felsgräbernekropole der Qubbet el-Hawa I*, I, pp. 617-36. The Theban tomb of Amenemhab (TT 85) is a clear 18th dynasty example, of which I plan to publish a discussion.

¹⁶ See e.g. Strudwick, N., *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom: the Highest Titles and Their Holders* (=Studies in Egyptology), London 1985, pp. 317-18, 325.

¹⁷ Kaplony, P., *Die Rollsiegel des Alten Reichs* (=Monumenta Aegyptiaca 2-3), Brussels 1977-81.

facing narrative which asserts that he had not spent the night angry with people, these statements present two aspects of proper conduct, in which delegated responsibilities must not be left to go by default, while a day's business must be settled by its end so that one can face the night and the next day with equanimity. Since the right-facing text follows this statement immediately with the claim that Pepyankh had not been detained and had defended himself successfully, it is tempting to link the two.

If the assertions are linked, the accusations against Pepyankh might have related to improper exercise of office, perhaps especially in granting the power of his seal to others and not requiring its return overnight. It is impossible to evaluate this point further, but the text would hardly have mentioned the issue if it had not arisen in reality. One should therefore assume that there had been court or public proceedings 'before the officials (*srw*)' about accusations against Pepyankh. It is also easier to believe that he had been detained than that he had not, because otherwise an allusion would have been counter-productive. The 'officials' were evidently a body – local or perhaps in Memphis – that would hear serious matters. The formulation does not show whether they were a permanent court or were constituted *ad hoc*.¹⁸

In antiquity as now, someone who was subject to accusations or slander probably had little chance of escaping social censure, whether or not the accusations were justified – something that we have no means of testing. However, a different measure of opinion among Pepyankh's circle at el-Qusiya consists in the tomb itself. This seems to show no signs of defacement, so that those in power in the generation or so after his death did not wish to attack his memory. It cannot, however, be known whether they had been involved or complicit in the alleged or real affairs or scandals to which the text alludes.

Public religion in the cult of Hathor

The text moves next to an address to the living, followed by another brief statement about Pepyankh's activities. This is succeeded in turn by a second address to the living with subsequent assertion that the protagonist indeed possesses the efficacy which he claims from the next world. This sequence, which makes up about two thirds of the text, alternates the mortuary concern of offering for the dead with

¹⁸ Compare e.g. Kruchten, J.-M., 'Law', in: Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, II, pp. 279-80. For a brief discussion of this passage, with a translation, see Eyre, C. 'Patronage, Power, and Corruption in Pharaonic Egypt', *International Journal of Public Administration* 34 (2011), p. 708.

descriptions of the cult that are more specific than those generally found. Pepyankh's statement that he attended to the service for his deity is coupled with the revered state that he attained. The *ht-nbt* 'everything/every ritual' here is perhaps deliberately ambiguous, referring both to the range of rituals and to the organization of the cult. In the following clause *stp-z3*, which I render 'standing guard', probably relates to public appearances of Hathor, because the verb and its noun counterpart also apply to the comparable practices of the king's ceremonial tours of duty and visits in procession.¹⁹ I interpret the wording as meaning that Pepyankh accompanied the cult image of the goddess – presumably concealed within a shrine – on these occasions, which might be at festivals outside the temple when people could address the deity. Images of festival processions are known from the New Kingdom onward, but references to festivals of deities are common in third millennium sources such as lists integrated into offering formulas, including Pepyankh's.²⁰

The following address to the living again relates to king and deity, in this case enjoining visitors to say a 'beatification of Hathor'. As indicated in n. *f* above, the broken passage may request them to make a ritual recitation (*s3h*) or it may give the incipit of such a recitation. Whichever is the case, the *s3h* is a transfiguration spell,²¹ of a type that one would not normally associate with Hathor or with the temple cult of a deity. The passage would make best sense if there was a link between the cult of Hathor and the spell. On analogy with a slightly later, intact papyrus with mortuary spells that must have been included in a burial,²² the visitor might present a spell as part of the tomb equipment. However, if the present passage is interpreted literally, that reading would have the disadvantage that such an action would be meaningful only around the time of the funeral. It is more likely that public processions of Hathor, for example at festivals, would be occasions for recitations on behalf of Pepyankh, so that after death he would continue to participate in the community's ritual life, and well-wishers could

¹⁹ Goelet, O., 'The Term *stp-s3* in the Old Kingdom and Its Later Development', *JARCE* 13 (1986), pp. 85-98. See also Shaw, G.J., 'The Meaning of the Phrase *m hm n stp-s3*', *JEA* 96 (2010), pp. 175-90.

²⁰ Spalinger, A.J., *The Private Feast Lists of Ancient Egypt* (=ÄgAbh 57), Wiesbaden, 1996, pp. 110-69.

²¹ E.g. Assmann, J. and Bommas, M., *Altägyptische Totenliturgien I: Totenliturgien in den Sargtexten des Mittleren Reiches* (=Supplemente zu den Schriften der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 14), Heidelberg 2002, 13-37.

²² Grapow, H., 'Über einen ägyptischen Totenpapyrus aus dem frühen mittleren Reich', *SPAW* 1915 (1915), pp. 376-84; the passage cited is on p. 378. Ilona Regulski plans to publish this papyrus (P Berlin 10482).

enhance this possibility, perhaps by addressing their wishes for him when they attended processions. The papyrus just mentioned would fit with such an idea, because it is termed *h3bt tn nt jmnjyt* ‘this festal roll of the regular cult’, with a subsequent passage referring to *s3hw*. These two designations seem to correspond to a large offering list – much wider than most continuous passages on a papyrus and perhaps intended for display before deposition²³ – inscribed above the dedication, and to a group of seven spells written on the other side. The setting I suggest for Pepyankh’s statement can also be compared with the desire to participate perpetually in festivals that is mentioned in many tomb texts. Aspects of mortuary religion would thus be linked to temple cult and its impact in the community – but only for the elite who possessed tombs and a mortuary cult.

Furthermore, a local leader such as Pepyankh may have had a mortuary chapel in the city, perhaps similar to the late Old Kingdom building faced with a fine wooden relief found in the townsite at Elephantine²⁴ and the chapels in the governors’ residence complex at Balat in Dakhla Oasis.²⁵ Middle Kingdom examples are the Elephantine shrine of Heqaib,²⁶ presumably descending from an Old Kingdom cult centre, and the chapels attested and alluded to in other sources, such as the colossal-statue transport composition of Djehutihotep at el-Bersha, which Harco Willems has studied.²⁷ In the compact settlements of earlier Egypt, these chapels could not have been far from temples of deities, while arrangements for reversion of offerings and other institutional ties would associate them, quite apart from the festival

²³ As I have argued for first millennium documents that are, however, still more generous in format: Baines, J., *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt*, Oxford, 2007, pp. 163-6.

²⁴ Junge, F., in Kaiser, W. et al., ‘Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine: sechster Grabungsbericht’, *MDAIK* 32 (1976), pp. 98-107.

²⁵ Ziermann, M. and Eder, C., ‘Zu den städtischen privaten Ka-Hausanlagen des späten Alten Reiches in ‘Ayn Asil’, *MDAIK* 57 (2001), pp. 309-56; Soukiassian, G., Wuttmann, M. and Pantalacci, L., *Balat 6: Le palais des gouverneurs de l’époque de Pépy II; les sanctuaires de ka et leurs dépendances* (=FIFAO 46), Cairo 2002, esp. pp. 37-95. The chapels were, however, probably not accessible to the general population.

²⁶ Habachi, L., *Elephantine IV: The Sanctuary of Heqaib*, 2 vols. (=AVDAIK 33), Mainz 1985; Franke, D., *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib auf Elephantine: Geschichte eines Provinzheiligtums im Mittleren Reich* (=SAGA 9), Heidelberg 1994.

²⁷ Willems, H., *Les Textes des Sarcophages et la démocratie: éléments d’une histoire culturelle du Moyen Empire égyptien, quatre conférences présentées à l’Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Section des Sciences religieuses, mai 2006*, Paris 2008, pp. 102-29, citing parallels from the Old and Middle Kingdoms; Willems, H., Peeters, C., and Verstraeten, G., ‘Where did Djehutihotep Erect His Colossal Statue?’ *ZÄS* 132 (2005), pp. 173-89.

processions which would traverse towns. In this perspective temple and mortuary religion come together, with the latter pervading the living context away from the necropolis more than has generally been appreciated. While such practices appear not to be attested for the following periods, a much later instance, perhaps suggesting that they could arise at any time, is the first millennium chapel of the deified local woman Udjarenes at Hiw.²⁸

Pepyankh's text makes much play with the ungendered deity Hathor, saying that he was revered before 'his god', as well as stating twice that others, like himself, can expect the king and the deity to live for them. While the first occurrence of this idea is in the context of rituals performed for Pepyankh in his tomb, the second is connected with his role as overseer of priests of Hathor. In all three examples the deity – presumably Hathor – is 'his god', in other words, is one among other deities and possesses a personal significance. Although the text is inscribed on the facade of his tomb, this connection appears to be this-worldly before it is next-worldly.

I suggest, therefore, that in more than one way the passages in this text that concern human relations with deities evoke the local religious environment and its public rituals. The local deity Hathor is the major figure not just for the temple cult and for the living but also for realm of the dead, in which she was important in some regions in later periods.²⁹ By contrast, neither Anubis nor Osiris, typical deities of the necropolis and the dead, is prominent in Pepyankh's inscriptions outside the formulaic material in the frieze text. For the following First Intermediate Period, similar points emerge more explicitly from the inscriptions of Ankhtify at Mo'alla with their focus on the local god Hemen, although there the concern is less with religious action as such.³⁰ These men who were local leaders, as well as others of their period, bore the title 'overseer of priests'.³¹ Someone like Harkhuf at Elephantine, who spent

²⁸ Collombert, P., 'Hout-Sekhem et le septième nome de Haute-Égypte I: La divine Oudjarenes', *RdE* 46 (1995), pp. 55-79.

²⁹ Allam, S., *Beiträge zum Hathorkult (bis zum Ende des Mittleren Reiches)* (=MÄS 4), Berlin 1963, esp. pp. 38-9.

³⁰ See Willems, H., 'Crime, Cult and Capital Punishment (Mo'alla Inscription 8)', *JEA* 76 (1990), pp. 27-54; Baines, J., 'Feuds or Vengeance? Rhetoric and Social Forms', in Teeter, E. and Larson, J.A. (eds.), *Gold of Praise: Studies in Ancient Egypt in Honor of Edward F. Wente* (=SAOC 58), Chicago 1999, pp. 14, with refs.

³¹ For the Meir region, see Allam, *Beiträge zum Hathorkult*, pp. 32-4.; range of related titles and examples: Jones, *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles*, I, pp. 171-6, nos 641-672. For the title as used by nomarchs, see Martinet, É. *Le nomarque sous l'Ancien Empire* (=Les Institutions dans l'Égypte Ancienne 6), Paris 2011, pp. 189-90, who emphasizes economic and administrative aspects rather than religious ones. Selve, V.,

years outside Egypt on trading and diplomatic expeditions, cannot have performed the temple and festival cult consistently, although he could have done so when at home.³² Pepyankh, who mentions no specific activities outside his local area but probably visited the residence from time to time, could have had the cult as a central component of his life. The text cannot show whether this was the case, but the prominent mentions of festivals and of the core statue cult provide good evidence that it meant much to him or to his heirs – most likely to both.

The text also emphasizes the human religious actor through its implication that people can hope to influence gods and the king to act for them, rather than the much more widespread opposite formulation. This slight variation in wording may not be very significant, but it is appropriate to Pepyankh's display of active engagement in cult, both outside and within the temple, the latter being a theme of the left-facing inscription.

The temple cult; ethical implications

The left-facing inscription offers something like thematic variations on its counterpart. Its opening emphasizes Pepyankh's ideal old age. The first couplet has a next-worldly tone, but the *ꜥnhw* 'living ones' of the second verse should probably be taken literally, and the whole fits with the integration of cults for deities and for the dead that I suggest above.

In a very compact passage, the text states next that Pepyankh performed the temple ritual for Hathor in person and had direct contact with the deity. This is a privilege that can be displayed to those who do not have it, but the themes of the continuation suggest that it is also a duty.³³

The following two triplets, which contain standard phrases connecting Pepyankh with human and divine society and with his family, lead to a statement about performance of official duties that is a

'Les titulatures religieuses des nomarques comme indices de l'évolution des relations entre pouvoir central et pouvoirs locaux avant et au-delà de la Première Période Intermédiaire', *Méditerranées* 24 (2000), pp. 69-80, reviews similar questions mainly from a political perspective while mentioning religious aspects, but without considering patterns of survival of evidence or of the development of written genres. (I have not seen her doctoral thesis, *Rôle et attributions des nomarques dans les cultes locaux de la cinquième à la douzième dynastie* [Lille, 1997], of which the article probably gives conclusions.) See further Bussmann, R., *Die Provinztempel Ägyptens von der 0. bis zur 11. Dynastie: Archäologie und Geschichte einer gesellschaftlichen Institution zwischen Residenz und Provinz* (=PÄ 30), Leiden and Boston 2010, pp. 504-6.

³² Translation e.g. Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, pp. 328-33, no. 241.

³³ On the privilege, see Baines, J., 'Restricted Knowledge, Hierarchy, and Decorum: Modern Perceptions and Ancient Institutions', *JARCE* 27 (1990), p. 8.

counterpart for what is said about seals in the other inscription. This passage mentions ‘the god’ twice, making the same point in different ways: Pepyankh acted as he did both for the sake of his reputation (*qd*, more literally ‘character’) before the deity and because he understood what the deity wanted.

The first of these statements is followed by an allusion to old age on earth and so could relate to his fortunes in this world. It is likely, however, that it also encompasses the hereafter, because tomb texts often couple old age with the prospect of the next world. The most economical reading is that good conduct in this life aids one’s passage to and status in the next. This fits with formulas, for example in the biographical inscriptions of the slightly earlier Harkhuf, that I have interpreted as Old Kingdom allusions to judgment after death, a conception which is not unambiguously attested until later periods.³⁴ The final section, discussed below, also links merit in this world with a good destiny in the next.

The qualities that Pepyankh celebrates in himself centre around reconciliation and calm. Mediation in an official role is a theme of many self-presentations, while the emphasis on calm is closer to instruction texts of later periods and does not have such clear parallels among Old Kingdom biographies. This difference may relate to the broader religious content of the two inscriptions, so that ethical, social, and religious themes would come together in meaning, or better would not be separable.³⁵ The mention of the deity in direct connection with reconciling litigants makes it explicit that it is a religious and not only a civic duty to further social harmony. Other self-presentations do not make this point overtly, in keeping with their broader reticence about religious matters apart from ones connected with the mortuary cult; these also normally form distinct sections of texts.

The necropolis and the next world

The interweaving of individual, social, and religious action takes on a different character in the last and longest section of the left-facing text, which deals with the new location that Pepyankh opened up for his tomb.³⁶ This achievement will affect directly only himself and other

³⁴ E.g. Baines, J., ‘Society, Morality, and Religious Practice’, in: Shafer, B.E. (ed.), *Religion in Ancient Egypt: Gods, Myths, and Personal Practice*, Ithaca and London, 1991, pp. 150-51, with refs.

³⁵ Compare the Middle Kingdom example presented by Diego Espinel, A., ‘A Newly Identified Stela from Wadi el-Hudi (Cairo JE 86119)’, *JEA* 91 (2005), pp. 55-70.

³⁶ See Chauvet, V., ‘Between a Tomb and a Hard Place’ (in preparation), who argues in detail that Pepyankh’s claims in this passage were valid.

members of the elite who may construct their tombs in the same area, but his claims are larger, notably in his assertion that what he did is ‘pure (*wʿb*)’ and in the explicit statement that his action ‘will be to my credit in the necropolis’. The latter probably means that it will contribute to a positive destiny in the hereafter, which I suggest again relates to judgment after death. Such a judgment would not be the same as the somewhat formalistic one implied by Chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead, which probably originated in a different, narrower context from the fundamental idea that one’s merits are assessed after death – as against being awarded a positive verdict in litigation.³⁷ At the same time, Pepyankh addresses visitors to the necropolis, who would be more numerous than tomb owners. Their knowledge of his deeds and reputation, which should encourage them to present offerings or utter offering formulas, might come from hearing about the content of the inscriptions, but dissemination from the funeral ceremony and from information about him in the wider society are perhaps more likely.

Two of the last three couplets balance Pepyankh’s concern with his work in the necropolis while he was alive against his ‘coming’ to ‘it’ – his tomb in the area – after death. The text does not say that he has died, but this must be understood. While mortuary texts and self-presentations, including this one, regularly say that someone is a ‘spirit (*ʒh*)’ and use the perspective of the next world, they seldom say in as many words that their protagonists have died. Such euphemistic approaches to mentioning death are nearly universal.

This section forms a culmination to the pair of texts and contributes potently to Pepyankh’s claim on posterity that they should remember him and perform his mortuary cult. Social memory relates not just to the monument and the area of the necropolis but also to his qualities, including religious ones. Because the inscriptions devote so much space to religious matters, it must have been valuable for him and his heirs to project that side of his life to the community. Nonetheless, the final couplet relates both to the ‘living’ – presumably various groups around Pepyankh – and to the king, whose formal designation *njswt* supplies the concluding word. The king is not much mentioned otherwise, but the composition as a whole, including Pepyankh’s more extended titles and heightened iconography on the frieze, strikes a balance between local concerns and the deity, on the one hand, and more obviously standard, centripetal ideology, on the other hand.

³⁷ See notably Grieshammer, R., ‘Zum “Sitz im Leben” des negativen Sündenbekenntnisses’, *ZDMG Suppl.* 2 (1974), pp. 19-25.

CONCLUSION: GENRE; RELIGIOUS AND MATERIAL CONTEXTS

If the south, right-facing inscription of Pepyankh is read as the first of the pair, an intricate and coherent pattern of meaning emerges for the two. The first text focuses on the protagonist's public social and religious life in this world, and the second on personal and concealed religious action and the passage to the next world. Both, however, contain passages that point in a different direction from their principal content. Scholars of an earlier generation who noted such irregularities might have argued that they showed poor composition and an inability to marshal topics in an ordered fashion. In keeping with the tendencies of my generation, I prefer to see an artful balance. That balance may also sideline the scandal that evidently affected Pepyankh: this is mentioned at the beginning of the first text, but nothing more is said about it, perhaps with the implication that it was necessary not to suppress the matter, yet there was no need to dwell on it.

The presentation of public and more personal religion invites further discussion. Pepyankh's public priestly role is displayed as a matter of prestige that also underpins his capacity to offer advantages from the next world to those who will perform ritual acts on his behalf. The private aspect relates more to his status as a local leader who acted ethically toward others in carrying out his role. He derived benefit from performing rituals in person on the cult image of the goddess, which the sequence of topics suggests made him into a better member of his kin group and mediator between disputants. The benefit might thus be termed spiritual. The rituals, together with the action on behalf of the next world of opening up a new area of the necropolis for himself and subsequently for others, prepare for a glorious passage through death and into the beyond.

Despite the specific mentions of Hathor, the texts appear to address cult, deities, and their significance for people in general, because they refer to Hathor as *ntr* 'deity/god' rather than 'goddess'. Similar assertions could presumably be made about the cult of other deities who were the principal cult focus in other places.

While Pepyankh's religious context is polytheistic, the interplay of this-worldly concerns and merit-related aspiration for the next world could be compared with some variants of Christianity. Such a comparison is culture-bound, but it is worth offering it, if only because similar comparisons have been made between New Kingdom 'personal

piety' and more recent religious practice and expression.³⁸ Pepyankh's texts lack the subjectivism of some Deir el-Medina evidence and they are more focused on standard rituals, but the religious commitment and practice that they evoke are not so very different, except that they come from the perspective of a local leader and priestly initiate. Moreover, as Elizabeth Froid and I have argued, subjectivism is not a necessary part of religious display, and one should accept that piety may be present whether or not it is overtly expressed.³⁹ The mention of 'his god', which is by no means restricted to Pepyankh and takes the form 'my god' in different contexts, is another aspect of religion as something that is personal and partly a matter of choice. The phrase is attested from the Old Kingdom onward, not just from periods that supply more copious evidence relating to personal piety.⁴⁰

It is desirable to compare these rich texts with archaeological evidence for religious practice in the Old Kingdom. While the extraordinary copper statues of Pepy I from Hierakonpolis,⁴¹ one of them lifesize, as well as the less grand stone one from Dendara,⁴² show that provincial religious centres were recipients of major royal patronage in the 6th dynasty, the architectural material is modest.⁴³ In Barry Kemp's interpretation of the Old Kingdom form of the temple of Satet at Elephantine, there was both a sanctuary among the granite boulders, in which the cult statue would presumably have been housed, and a small

³⁸ On the whole question, see especially Luiselli, M.M., *Die Suche nach Gottesnähe: Untersuchungen zur persönlichen Frömmigkeit in Ägypten von der 1. Zwischenzeit bis zum Ende des Neuen Reiches* (=ÄAT 73), Wiesbaden 2011. Luiselli presents the history of scholarship, her own interpretations, and a corpus of primary evidence.

³⁹ Baines, J. and Froid, E., 'Piety, Change and Display in the New Kingdom', in: Collier, M. and Snape, S. (eds.), *Ramesseid Studies in Honour of K. A. Kitchen*, Bolton 2011, pp. 1-17.

⁴⁰ For Middle Kingdom examples, see e.g. Blumenthal, E., 'Sinuhes persönliche Frömmigkeit', in Shirun-Grumach, I. (ed.), *Jerusalem Studies in Egyptology* (=ÄAT 40), Wiesbaden 1998, pp. 213-31; Baines, J., 'The Stelae of Amenisonbe from Abydos and Middle Kingdom Display of Personal Religion', in Bourriau, J., Magee, D. and Quirke, S. (eds.), *Sitting beside Lepsius: Studies in Honour of Jaromir Malek at the Griffith Institute* (=OLA 185), Leuven 2009, pp. 1-22. Here, I would argue against Jan Assmann's definition of 'personal piety' as a literary phenomenon of the New Kingdom; see Baines and Froid, 'Piety, Change and Display in the New Kingdom', in *Ramesseid Studies*, p. 2 with n. 5.

⁴¹ Eckmann, C. and Shafik, S., *"Leben dem Horus Pepi": Restaurierung und technologische Untersuchung der Metallskulpturen des Pharao Pepi I. aus Hierakonpolis* (=Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz, Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien 59), Mainz and Bonn 2005.

⁴² Daumas, F., 'Derechef Pépi Ier à Dendara', *RdE* 25 (1973), pp. 7-20.

⁴³ Magisterially collected by Bussmann, *Die Provinztempel Ägyptens von der 0. bis zur 11. Dynastie*.

open court that he terms the ‘domain of the revealed image’.⁴⁴ This, however, was set behind a thick brick wall and could not have been a public place for display of the deity. These two spaces together might be compared with Pepyankh’s personal access to Hathor, perhaps in a temple for which the relatively small but more geometrical structure known from Hierakonpolis could offer a model.⁴⁵ The processions in which he ‘stood guard (*stp-z3*)’ would presumably have traversed the settlement outside the temple precinct as well as the wider landscape. For the Old Kingdom, most such areas are inaccessible to archaeology, although the priests’ rock inscriptions in the desert east of Elkab are suggestive here,⁴⁶ as in a different way may be the small-scale setting of the early shrine at Tell Ibrahim Awad.⁴⁷

In another respect, sources from Dynasty 0 onward demonstrate the significance of processions. The scenes on the Scorpion and Narmer maceheads show women in carrying chairs as part of rituals and presentations, and remnants of a physical example survive from the cache of Hetepheres.⁴⁸ For reasons that would be worth investigating, kings are seldom shown being carried. For the elite, by contrast, images in Old Kingdom tombs as well as biographical texts accord great significance to carrying chairs and their use.⁴⁹ One of the earliest known statues of a deity shows the goddess Repit in a carrying chair, and such objects, without occupants, are found among the votive pieces from the Hierakonpolis Main Deposit.⁵⁰ Although none of this material is closely similar to later forms showing gods carried on barques and concealed within shrines, its volume is striking for a period from which little that relates directly to the cult of deities survives. What conveyed prestige for the elite is likely to have been all the more important for deities. The *stp-z3* processions evoked in Pepyankh’s first text should be seen against this background, and they add a sense of lived experience to the other evidence.

⁴⁴ Kemp, B.J., *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization*, London and New York 1989, p. 70 fig. 23 = 2nd ed., 2006, pp. 116-17 pl. 4, fig. 39.

⁴⁵ E.g. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, p. 76 fig. 25 = 2nd ed., 2006, p. 122 fig. 41, with refs in caption.

⁴⁶ Vandekerckhove, H. and Müller-Wollermann, R., *Die Felsinschriften des Wadi Hilâl*, 2 vols. (=Elkab 6), [Turnhout] 2001.

⁴⁷ Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, 2nd ed., 2006, p. 127 fig. 4, with refs in caption.

⁴⁸ Reisner, G.A. and Smith, W.S., *A History of the Giza Necropolis II: The Tomb of Hetep-heres the Mother of Cheops*, Cambridge, MA 1955, fig. 34, pls 27-9.

⁴⁹ Baud, M. and Farout, D., ‘Trois biographies de l’Ancien Empire revisitées’, *BIFAO* 101 (2001), pp. 147-8.

⁵⁰ See material assembled by Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, p. 93 fig. 33 = 2nd ed., 2006, p. 145 fig. 51.

The inscriptions of Pepyankh the Middle can thus be set in relation to archaeological and pictorial evidence from a long timespan. The religious practice and context in which they had their full meaning would have been routine for the actors. As more extensive biographical texts appeared in the late Old Kingdom, formal though most of them might be, the potential to narrate individual concerns and experiences, which had long been present, became greatly enhanced. The fact that we are better equipped to interpret those aspects from texts than from images may say rather more about modern methods than about the evidence itself. Be that as it may, Pepyankh's inscriptions bring practices and institutions of local elites to life more than most texts from their period, while indicating something of the importance of public and personal religion, as well as of its underlying ritual and conceptual structures. I hope that the discussion here has conveyed a little of their richness and will be of some interest to the master of the major religious category of *bwt*.