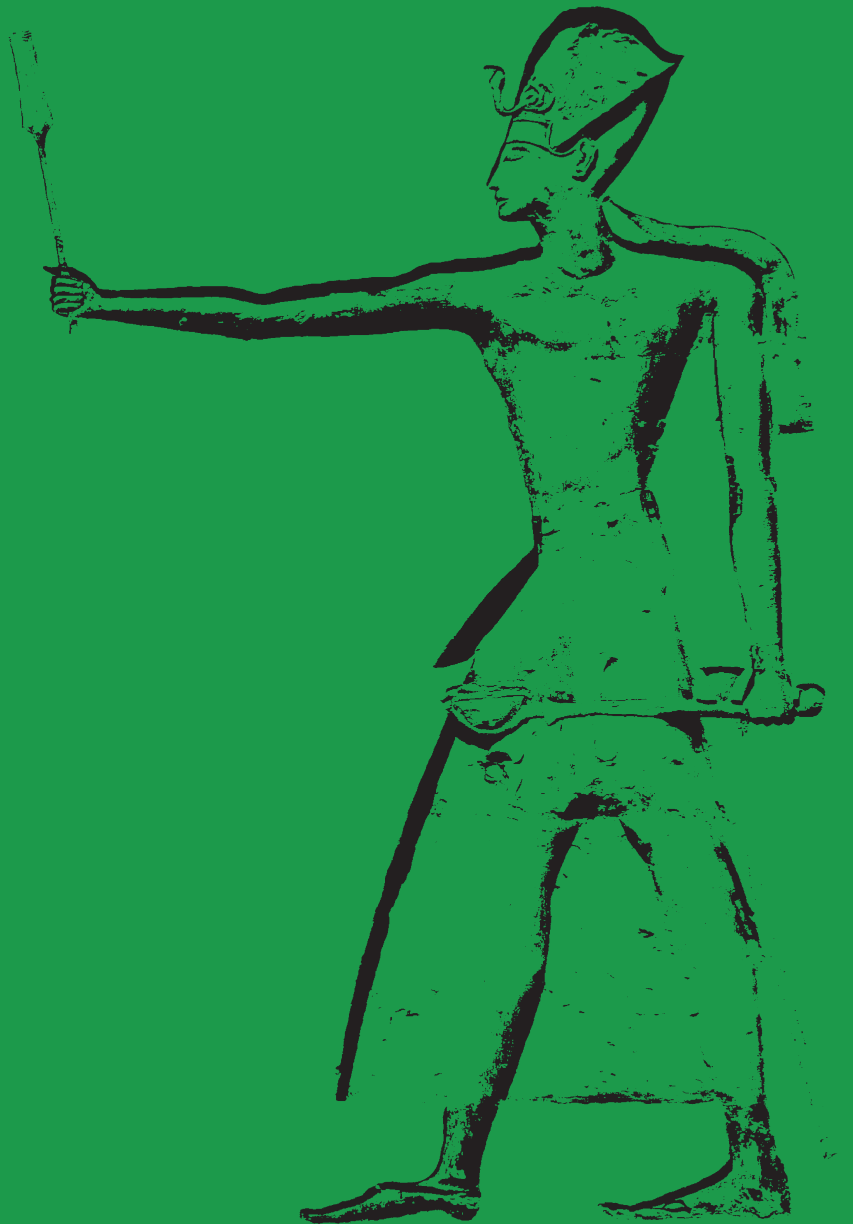
RAMESSIDE STUDIES IN HONOUR OF K. A. KITCHEN



EDITED BY
M. COLLIER
AND
S. SNAPE

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Ken Kitchen photographed during his first epigraphic mission to copy Ramesside texts in Luxor 1962/3

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EDITED BY
MARK COLLIER AND STEVEN SNAPE

WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF
GINA CRISCENZO-LAYCOCK AND CAMPBELL PRICE

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PREFACE

There can be few Egyptologists who are as closely associated with one academic institution and with one area of study as Ken Kitchen. Despite his many international forays (Rio de Janeiro comes to mind) and a long-standing interest in subjects as diverse as the location of Punt, the chronology of the Third Intermediate Period, Biblical studies and pre-Islamic Arabia, it is with Liverpool University and with the Ramesside Period that he is most identified. Indeed, to many he is virtually a synonym for both. At Liverpool he has trodden the entire *cursus honorum* from undergraduate to Emeritus Professor, while his contributions to our understanding of Egypt in Dynasties 19 and 20 (not least through his magisterial K*RI*, *RITA* and *RITANC*) are without equal.

This volume – a celebration of the deep regard in which Ken is held by his Liverpudlian colleagues and (ex-)students, and by the international scholarly community – would have run to several volumes were it not for the restriction which we imposed on potential contributors that their offerings should relate specifically to the Ramesside Period. This was not meant to be a vexing limitation but one which would produce a volume that would stand on its own merits as an overview of Ramesside studies at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century. Moreover, in defining this specific focus, we were mindful of another long-standing and often-articulated concern of Ken's – the practical utility of published works. Although the contributions offered here are a wide-ranging series of studies of Egypt in the Ramesside Period, in examining matters of language, archaeology and what might broadly be thought of as 'culture' they all – as their authors make clear – owe a significant debt to the scholar they honour.

We hope that there is much within these pages that Ken will enjoy, although we are sure he will not necessarily agree with everything he reads here! We know that he will take a particular pleasure and, we hope, justifiable satisfaction in reading those contributions from Liverpool graduates past and present who have greatly benefitted from Ken's teaching and friendship, some of whom represent the current crop of keen young scholars who are continuing a tradition of which Ken is himself such a shining example.

Mark Collier | Steven Snape

Piety, Change and Display in the New Kingdom

John Baines and Elizabeth Frood*

In the Ramesside period, sacred values and interests were much more a matter of display and record than at any earlier date in Egypt. At levels from the king to members of the lowest social strata who could afford monuments, overt religion is evident to a striking degree. Yet the dearth of surviving Ramesside votive offerings, in comparison with those of the Eighteenth Dynasty,[1] may suggest that religious practice or religiosity did not simply increase in all domains from one dynasty to the next. In this article we briefly summarise existing interpretations of piety and of religious change between the two periods, raise some problems relating to those interpretations, and suggest possible alternative approaches. We hope that some of these questions will strike a chord with Kenneth Kitchen, the grand master of Ramesside texts and history, and long-standing genial colleague.

How piety has been interpreted

The prominence of religious materials in the record of the Ramesside period, and especially the presence of texts with a confessional and strongly individual character, long ago prompted James Henry Breasted to coin the phrase 'Age of Personal Piety',[2] while Battiscombe Gunn wrote of the crucial group of stelae from Deir el-Medina as documenting the 'Religion of the Poor in Ancient Egypt'.[3] Subsequent studies of late New Kingdom religion continued to focus on the same group of texts, seeing them almost as a genre of their own and detaching them to some extent from a wider context of religious practice, or even of other texts. This tendency may have been influenced by Gerhard Fecht's magisterial study of the

* We are very grateful to Geraldine Pinch for comments on a draft of this article. The study of Enka Elvira Morgan, 'Einige Bemerkungen zur Thematik der persönlichen Frömmigkeit', *SAK* 34 (2006), 333–52, came to our attention after our first draft was composed; our argument is independent of hers. Her presentation, which in part reworks an earlier study (*Untersuchungen zu den Ohrenstelen aus Deir el Medine* (ÄAT 61; Wiesbaden, 2004), 55–63), is valuable for its coverage and critique of discussions. Her approach and ours differ. We have not yet seen the two articles of Maria Michela Luiselli and her doctoral thesis, *Gottesnähe: Die persönliche Teilnahme an der Religion in Ägypten im Mittleren und Neuen Reich*, doctoral thesis, Universität Basel (Basel, 2006), forthcoming in ÄAT; see nn. 15, 24, 33, 53 here for points where her research is relevant to our discussion. We thank her very much for information about her work, which is altogether fuller than ours; the reader will be able to compare the two.

[1] See the range of material included in G. Pinch, *Votive Offerings to Hathor* (Oxford, 1993).

[2] J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt: Lectures Delivered on the Morse Foundation at Union Theological Seminary* (New York, 1912), title of Lecture X: 'The Age of Personal Piety – Sacerdotalism and Final Decadence'. Morgan, *SAK* 34 (2006), 333, notes that Erman used the German form of the term in print the year before Breasted used the English one. Probably it had emerged in discussions while Breasted studied in Berlin in the 1890s, or in meetings of people working on the *Wörterbuch*.

[3] *JEA* 3 (1916), 81–94.

hymns and prayers included in the Late Egyptian miscellanies, which are literary works that exhibit a number of the same thematic features as the texts of the stelae in more highly wrought, poetic compositions.[4] Jan Assmann asserts that such texts, among which he focuses more on inscriptional than literary examples, constitute the prime evidence for 'personal piety' and that confusion is caused by associating that phenomenon, which he terms a 'new form of religiosity', with other manifestations of religion; we return to this matter below.[5]

Newly apparent features in Ramesside religion are also seen as being stimulated by the crisis of the Amarna period, during which, it is widely assumed, most people were deprived of the access to divine succour offered both by traditional temple cults and by less official and structured practices. (Something similar is stated explicitly in the restoration stela of Tutankhamun,[6] but it would be unwise simply to take this at face value.) The Amarna episode would have had a traumatic effect, and in its aftermath there would have been a breakthrough, in which access to the gods would have become much freer than before, in part in compensation for the sense of insecurity provoked by the crisis. People would have had less confidence in divine providence and in the king than previously; far more than before, they would have been at the mercy of the gods, their volitions, and their possible caprices.[7]

All of this would have occurred alongside changes in conceptions of the creator god, or more broadly of the supreme deity, a position in the pantheon mostly occupied by the sungod. The Amarna period is plausibly seen as a special case of these developments, but it did not necessarily mark an absolute turning point in them. More probably, the period produced an extreme manifestation of broader movements that happened before and after the crisis, as well as during it.[8] Moreover, developments in the understanding of the creator, a relatively well known area of New Kingdom religion, may or may not have affected people's everyday religious and related beliefs, to which modern access is extremely limited.

Major changes in core beliefs and practices that have remained within the overall parameters of their religions are known for many societies – the Reformation and Counter-Reformation are obvious examples – and comparable developments could have taken place in post-Amarna Egypt, but we question whether their occurrence is well established. While the Amarna period constituted a crisis, various strands of evidence and argument speak against the analysis of phenomena of personal religion that we have just summarised. Interpretations may also have been teleologically driven, in part by the conception that a

[4] *Literarische Zeugnisse zur "persönlichen Frömmigkeit" in Ägypten: Analyse der Beispiele in den ramessidischen Schulpapyri* (AHAW Jahrgang 1965: 1; Heidelberg, 1965).

[5] J. Assmann, *Ägypten: Eine Sinngeschichte* (Munich, 1996), 259–77, esp. 259 = *The Mind of Egypt: History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs*, trans. A. Jenkins (Cambridge MA, 2003), 229–46 (this chapter is largely the same as J. Assmann, 'Gottesbeherzigung: "Persönliche Frömmigkeit" als religiöse Strömung der Ramessidenzeit', in *L'impero ramesside: Convegno internazionale in onore di Sergio Donadoni* (Vicino Oriente, Quaderno 1; Rome, 1997), 17–43). For an older formulation of his views, more in relation to the structure of religion than to texts, see his *Ägypten: Theologie und Frömmigkeit einer frühen Hochkultur* (Stuttgart, 1984), 225–32, 258–72 = *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*, trans. D. Lorton (Ithaca NY, 2001), 192–8, 221–40. His earlier articles in this area are more nuanced, acknowledging the possibility of personal relations between human beings and deities as far back as the Middle Kingdom, as well as mutual influence between religious belief and literary texts: 'Weisheit, Loyalismus und Frömmigkeit', in E. Hornung and O. Keel (ed.), *Studien zu altägyptischen Lebenslehren* (OBO 28; Fribourg and Göttingen, 1979), 11–72; reprinted in Assmann, *Theologie und Weisheit im alten Ägypten* (Paderborn, 2005), 93–136; 'Die "Loyalistische Lehre" Echnatons', *SAK* 8 (1980), 1–32; reprinted in *Theologie und Weisheit im alten Ägypten*, 137–63. He returns to the same themes in *Herrschaft und Heil: Politische Theologie in Altägypten, Israel und Europa* (Munich, 2000), 112–26, where he attributes more significance to political factors in periods before the later Eighteenth Dynasty. See also n. 31.

[6] *Urk*. IV, 2027.15–18: 'If one prayed to a god to request something from him, he did not come at all. If one addressed a goddess likewise, she did not come at all.' Implications of this formulation need separate discussion. See now Addenda.

[7] These positions are developed in many works of Assmann, notably *Ägypten: Eine Sinngeschichte* = *The Mind of Egypt*. Evidence for such religious concerns is very widespread. The question at issue is whether they were new in the post-Amarna period.

[8] The most important study of these changes is J. Assmann, *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom: Re, Amun and the Crisis of Polytheism*, trans. A. Alcock (London, 1995 [1983]); original edition: *Re und Amun: Die Krise des polytheistischen Weltbilds im Ägypten der 18.–20. Dynastie* (OBO 51; Fribourg and Göttingen, 1983).

crisis will be a catalyst,[9] and in part because scholars have sought antecedents for the development of the monotheism of sections of the Hebrew Bible[10] in older cultures of the region. In the mid-twentieth century there was also a tendency to seek some kind of monotheism in Egypt as the belief of an elite that underlay the society's superficial polytheism.[11] These questions cannot be treated here.

Discussion of piety continues. Recent contributions, which also bring extensive bibliographies, include those of Pascal Vernus,[12] Faried Adrom,[13] Enka Elvira Morgan, and Maria Michela Luiselli (see n. *).

Defining piety; religion with gods but without piety?

We have alluded above to competing definitions of piety. This is not the place for a detailed discussion, but we must give some sense of what we have in mind.[14] In a religion that has many deities and many modes of approach to superhuman agency that are complementary to recourse to the gods, personal choice will be a major factor in configurations of thought and action. Piety relates to choice and can involve active selection between human beings and deities. The notion of 'my' or 'his' god – the grammatical person depends on context – is known from texts of all periods and is often related to local deities, as in the widespread formula 'beloved of his local/town god (*mrjj nṯr.f njwtj*)', which explicitly singles out an individual, however formulaically, and asserts a relationship, even if it is only from the god to the human being and not in the opposite direction.[15] People may decide to have recourse to a particular deity for specific concerns or needs while they sustain continuing relations with their principal chosen deity or, as they tend to see it (as in the formula just quoted), the deity who has chosen them. The religious subject experiences a deity's action upon him or her, feels bound to that deity, and responds with suitable action. The human devotee may also initiate such cycles of action, to which the deity responds. As Paul John Frandsen has argued, some aspects of human relations with deities can be compared with patterns of reciprocal exchange in which the entire being of the human partner is engaged;[16] piety partakes of these characteristics.

Thus, piety may be defined as the sense of selection and active involvement between a deity and a

[9] Compare the subtitle of the book of Assmann cited in the previous note.

[10] For these issues, the discussion of Stephen A. Geller, 'The God of the Covenant', in B. N. Porter (ed.), *One God or Many: Concepts of Divinity in the Ancient World* (n.p., 2000), 273–319, is very illuminating.

[11] See E. Hornung, *Der Eine und die Vielen: Altägyptische Götterwelt* (n.p., 2005), 18–25, revision of *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, trans. J. Baines (German *Der Eine und die Vielen*, 1971) (Ithaca NY, 1982), 24–9. See also J. Baines, 'Egyptian Deities in Context: Multiplicity, Unity, and the Problem of Change', in Porter (ed.), *One God or Many*, 9–78.

[12] P. Vernus, 'La grotte de la Vallée des Reines dans la piété personnelle des ouvriers de la Tombe (BM 278)', in R. J. Demarée and A. Egberts (eds), *Deir el-Medina in the Third Millennium AD: A Tribute to Jac J Janssen* (EU 14; Leiden, 2000), 331–36; id., 'La piété personnelle à Deir el-Médineh: La construction de l'idée de pardon', in G. Andreu (ed.), *Deir el-Médineh et la Vallée des Rois: La vie en Egypte au temps des pharaons du Nouvel Empire. Actes du colloque organisé par le musée du Louvre les 3 et 4 mai 2002* (Louvre Conférences et Colloques; Paris, 2003), 309–49.

[13] F. Adrom, 'Der Gipfel der Frömmigkeit (soziale und funktionale Überlegungen zu Kultstelen am Beispiel der Stele Turin CG 50058 des *Nfr-ʿbw*)', *SAK* 33 (2005), 1–28. His study is very valuable for its full collection of material and discussion of theoretical issues. We are not, however, persuaded by his rejection of the superficial content of the Deir el-Medina stelae and reinterpretation of them as more or less allegorical commemorations of rituals centering around pernoctation in the chapel of Meretseger to the south-west of Deir el-Medina. While this could fit some examples, it would be difficult to apply his interpretation to the Nebre stela (fig. 1).

[14] Parts of this discussion return to themes explored in J. Baines, 'Practical Religion and Piety', *JEA* 73 (1987), 79–98.

[15] Examples have not been collected in the published literature and cannot be given here. In many cases it is difficult to say whether the 'god' referred to is the king or a major deity. Maria Michela Luiselli discusses these questions in her forthcoming book (see n. 1). See also O. Perdu, 'Un monument d'originalité', *JEA* 84 (1998), 135–6 n.l.

[16] P. J. Frandsen, 'Trade and Cult', in G. Englund (ed.), *The Religion of the Ancient Egyptians: Cognitive Structures and Popular Expressions* (Boreas 20; Stockholm, 1989), 95–108.

human being or king.[17] Egyptian texts that are generally seen as manifesting piety are ones in which the human worshipper states that the deity acted in a particular way toward him or her (most texts are written by and about men[18]). In the group of stelae from Deir el-Medina, the deity's action is said to be in angry retaliation for a failure or transgression by the worshipper. The latter's action is then a response that admits the fault and in a sense turns the hostile divine intervention into a mark of selection: the deity cares strongly enough about the worshipper to chastise him individually. These are episodes of an interchange between the two parties that may continue over long periods. From more central elite spheres, allusions to perhaps comparable moments of selection and involvement can be found, for example, in narratives of initiation, dreams, or oracular action; we note some instances below. Whether or not the devotee experiences choice, and whether or not more than one deity is specifically at issue, interchange between human and divine occurs in a context in which there are many deities. Thus, the Ramesside period Anhurmose of el-Mashayikh says in his self-presentation: 'I was one who trusted in Shu, son of Re, without distancing myself from another god.'[19] The frequent usage of scholars who speak of god/God in discussing such relations, especially in the German language, tends to gloss over this fundamental feature of the ancient setting.[20] The Amarna period is not an exception here, because the relevant formulas speak of the god Aten by name, not by a generic word 'god' (which is relatively uncommon in Amarna texts).

Much religious action does not possess these characteristics of choice and personal human–divine relations, and so should not be designated as piety. Observance is not necessarily piety. The regular temple cult of deities may involve human sentiments of direct involvement, awe, and concern; yet, at least as reported in the sources, it does not generally focus around individuals and personal volition. For this reason, most of those who write on Egyptian religion see the temple cult as having as its core the maintenance of the world order and of relations between deities and humanity, especially through the king as the latter's protagonist. Even here, however, the deities had individual lives, personalities, and interests, and the structuring of the cult year and of festivals and processions made them involved in communities, whether on a collective or an individual basis. Just because personal and subjective feelings of attachment and reciprocity between deity and officiant are seldom attested in relevant texts, it does not follow that such sentiments were not present or that those who commissioned standardised and un-subjective self-presentations did not experience them. It is, indeed, more cautious to posit that such attitudes informed at least some religious practice in central temple cults, even if that was not their prime purpose, than to suppose that the cults' meaning resided almost entirely in the formalities of their correct and elaborate execution.

[17] There are points of comparison here with Jan Assmann's 'theology of will', which he has defined as a 'new and more personal conception of deity, of gods intervening in life and history, manifesting a personal will, intention and purpose', see 'State and Religion in the New Kingdom', in J. P. Allen (ed.), *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt* (YES 3; New Haven, 1989), 69. Our definition additionally encompasses human choice and agency. We would question whether gods, as beings possessing identity and intelligence, would have lacked the characteristics Assmann describes before relevant evidence becomes widespread in the New Kingdom.

[18] Bankes stela 6, which belongs to the group but has the woman Iyneferti as protagonist, was probably created by her son Anhotep, who is depicted behind her: A. Mahmoud, 'Ii-neferti, a poor woman [*jj-nfr.tj*]', *MDAIK* 55 (1999), 317–19, pl. 52. On a stela with a separate invocation mentioning 'sin (*bt3*)' in the name of the woman Takhat, the text is placed in the lower register, and the main presenter of offerings in the upper register is her husband, together with another figure of her: B. Bruyère, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh (années 1945–1946 et 1946–1947)* (FIFAO 21; Cairo, 1952), 58, pl. viii.

[19] E. Frood, *Biographical Texts from Ramessid Egypt* (WAW 26; Atlanta, 2007), no. 18 (l. 58 of original).

[20] Here, Assmann's assertion ('Gottesbilder – Menschenbilder: Anthropologische Konsequenzen des Monotheismus', in R. G. Kratz and H. Spieckermann (eds), *Götterbilder, Gottesbilder, Weltbilder: Polytheismus und Monotheismus in der Welt der Antike,* II: *Griechenland und Rom, Judentum, Christentum und Islam* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2. Reihe 18; Tübingen, 2006), 324) that choice and subjectivity of religious relations go together with monotheism – and hence would be outside ancient Egyptian experience – associates attitudes with specific societal types, and thus does not explore the material's complexity.

We therefore suggest that piety, as just characterised, was intrinsic to Egyptian religion for as long as there were multiple deities with personal characteristics, that is, since no later than the beginning of the dynastic period and possibly earlier. Only very rarely, however, did people display their personal piety in texts that survive. Piety is more elusive in images or in archaeologically attested practices than in texts, because the motivations underlying material finds are so difficult to establish.[21] The likelihood of finding unequivocal evidence for such attitudes and practices is not high. We suggest below that some Ramesside monuments display relevant features; comparable attitudes may underlie other styles of evidence.

Piety before Amarna

Assmann's focus on the expression of piety in religious texts could be understood more broadly as analysing the display more than the substance of religiosity. If, as seems likely, religion was generally seen as an unalloyed good in antiquity, people could be expected – against formidable constraints of concealment, decorum, and tradition – to maximise their personal display of religious access and action. Before the New Kingdom, the amount of such display was severely limited, and most available evidence concentrates in the funerary sphere. Nonetheless, celebratory mentions of priestly participation in biographical texts go back to the Old Kingdom.[22] Relationships with gods are evoked in a few Middle Kingdom sources,[23] while there is a strong play with such a possibility and with free divine volition in the *Tale of Sinuhe*.[24] Both these types of material constitute evidence for the existence of such concerns and support the hypothesis that their display was limited by convention; only literary works include extensive passages of strongly subjective cast.

Texts on mid-Eighteenth Dynasty ostraca, published and very briefly discussed by Georges Posener, have similar implications.[25] Assmann sees these pieces, which are stated in the Cairo Museum's Journal d'Entrée to be from Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, as the earliest evidence for his 'new religiosity', arguing on their basis that such piety originated in festival processions and suggesting that they were presented to Amun on those occasions.[26] This idea is problematic, because the group as a whole, which consists of very well preserved pieces showing no particular signs of wear, includes something like a draft for a shabti (Posener's notion that it was a cheap substitute for one seems unlikely) and a *ḥtp-dj-njswt* formula, neither of which would belong in such a context. Moreover, the very brief hymns or prayers that make up the majority of the group are much closer in character to the 'pious' texts in the Late Egyptian miscellanies than to the Deir el-Medina stelae or comparable individual monuments. It is therefore more likely that the ostraca derive from advanced student practice with religious and literary composition than from

[21] See Pinch, *Votive Offerings to Hathor*, 333–48.

[22] Notably the Sixth Dynasty self-presentation of Pepyankh the Middle at Meir: N. Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age* (WAW 16; Atlanta, 2005), 369, with refs.

[23] See e.g. P. Vernus, 'Etudes de philologie et de linguistique (II)', *RdE* 34 (1982–83), 115–17; H.-W. Fischer-Elfert and A. Grimm, 'Autobiographie und Apotheose: Die Statue des *Zš(š)n Zꜣ-ḥw.t-ḥrw* im Staatlichen Museum Ägyptischer Kunst in München', *ZÄS* 130 (2003), 60–80; A. D. Espinel, 'A Newly Identified Stela from Wadi el-Hudi (Cairo JE 86119)', *JEA* 91 (2005), 55–70, esp. 67–70, with refs in nn. 70–1. See also D. Franke, 'Middle Kingdom Hymns and Other Sundry Religious Texts: An Inventory', in S. Meyer (ed.), *Egypt, Temple of the Whole World: Studies in Honour of Jan Assmann* (SHR 97; Leiden, 2003), 95–135, esp. 134–5. Assmann, in *Religion and Philosophy* (n. 17 here), 69, cites some of these examples, but considers them 'exceptions' representing no more than an 'undercurrent'. He does not ask whether the surviving genres of source material are ones in which expressions of piety would be appropriate. This question needs to be explored through iconographic as well as textual materials (see also below and Addenda).

[24] E. Blumenthal, 'Sinuhes Persönliche Frömmigkeit', in I. Shirun-Grumach (ed.), *Jerusalem Studies in Egyptology* (ÄAT 40; Wiesbaden, 1998), 213–31; see also M. M. Luiselli, 'Literatur und Religion: Überlegungen zur Funktion der "persönlichen Frömmigkeit" in der Literatur des Mittleren und Neuen Reiches', *SAK* 35 (2007), 157–82.

[25] G. Posener, 'La piété personnelle avant l'âge amarnien', *RdE* 27 (1975), 195–210.

[26] Assmann, *Ägypten: Eine Sinngeschichte*, 260–1 = *The Mind of Egypt*, 231.

direct religious action. They should thus be grouped with other Eighteenth Dynasty literary ostraca, including one with a 'praise of the city' text, that were found associated with nearby tombs, not near a processional way.[27] Literary forms are likely to develop as variations on unmediated practice, not simple reflections of it, so that these texts should be understood as relating indirectly to existing forms of religiosity rather than providing direct evidence for a new development in it. This creation of autonomous literary hymns and prayers marks a significant change in attitudes to the sacred and divine and provides evidence for piety, but not for its anchoring in any particular social context or practice, beyond the fact that those composing and copying the hymns were literate and so in some sense members of the elite. The same probably applies to a short pious invocation in a mid Eighteenth Dynasty shrine at Gebel el-Silsila pointed out by Andrea Kucharek.[28] This is rather incongruous in its inscription above the musicians and diners in a banquet scene; a literary text may have been used a little arbitrarily in a context where others from similar genres would more normally be found.

Similarly, styles of letter formula that are first attested from the Amarna period and include expressions of religious concern and action are most easily interpreted as attesting to practices of personal writing that had developed over the previous decades – perhaps together with related religious actions – as against their being innovations of the period itself.[29]

Here, a study of Susanne Bickel[30] is important in showing that public display of religious participation before a deity – the Aten in the case in point – was significant in the Amarna period itself and that it did not necessarily pass through the king as the self-proclaimed prime intermediary and agent, but could be addressed directly to the god. Her principal evidence is in a captioned scene in the tomb of Mahu, who stands before the temple entrance with his subordinates while praying to the god to sustain the king. As Bickel remarks, the benefits that he might himself hope to receive from his prayer remain implicit. This does not mean that they did not exist, but perhaps that it was more correct to evoke the king, in partly traditional fashion, as the protagonist of humanity. While such modes of display and exhortation to subordinates could have been introduced during the Amarna period itself, it is more plausible that they existed earlier but that they had not been committed to permanent media that happen to survive. Such a discrepancy between the oral sphere and monuments would be an instance of how little we know about religious life, practice, and especially persuasion and exhortation, from before the later New Kingdom.

[27] W. C. Hayes, *Ostraka and Name Stones from the Tomb of Sen-Mūt (no. 71) at Thebes* (PMMA 15; New York, 1942), 17–30; H. Guksch, '„Sehnsucht nach der Heimatstadt": Ein ramessidisches Thema?' *MDAIK* 50 (1994), 101–6; see also U. Verhoeven, 'Literarische Ansichtskarten aus dem Norden versus Sehnsucht nach dem Süden', in G. Burkard, A. Grimm, S. Schoske and A. Verbousek (eds), *Kon-Texte: Akten des Symposions „Spurensuche – Altägypten im Spiegel seiner Texte", München 2. bis 4. Mai 2003* (ÄAT 60; Wiesbaden, 2004), 65–80. Compare further A. M. Gnirs, 'Der Tod des Selbst: Die Wandlung der Jenseitsvorstellungen in der Ramessidenzeit', in H. Guksch, E. Hofmann and M. Bommas (eds), *Grab und Totenkult im alten Ägypten* (Munich, 2003), 178–9 with n. 10. For the educational level of those who wrote the Deir el-Medina ostraca, see A. G. McDowell, 'Student Exercises from Deir el-Medina: The Dates', in P. der Manuelian (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson* (Boston, 1996), II, 601–8.

[28] A. Kucharek, 'Die frühe persönliche Frömmigket im Fest: Über ein Lied in Gebel es-Silsilah', *GM* 176 (2000), 77–80.

[29] J. Baines, 'Egyptian Letters of the New Kingdom as Evidence for Religious Practice', *JANER* 1 (2001), 1–31. For Twenty-First Dynasty examples, see M. Müller, 'Ägyptische Briefe vom Beginn der 21. Dynastie', in M. Lichtenstein (ed.), *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments, Neue Folge,* III: *Briefe* (Gütersloh, 2006), 330–9.

[30] S. Bickel, '„Ich spreche ständig zu Aton": Zur Mensch–Gott-Beziehung in der Amarna Religion', *JANER* 3 (2003), 23–45, esp. 34–7. A partly comparable, more discreet allusion to potential direct relationships between non-royal persons and the Aten is discussed by Rolf Krauss and Christian Loeben for the reward scene in the tomb of Ay: R. Krauss, C. E. Loeben and F. Joachim, 'Epigrafiker-Kopien eines Amarna-Reliefs im Vergleich mit seinem Gipsabguss', in N. Kloth, K. Martin and E. Pardey (eds), *Es werde niederlegt als Schriftstück: Festschrift für Hartwig Altenmüller zum 65. Geburtstag* (BSAK 9; Hamburg, 2003), 238, with new drawing in fig. 10: the line of an Aten ray continues beneath one of its hands, projecting toward Ay's face, and one uraeus in the frieze on the building shown turns toward him. The immediacy of this connection is tempered in part by the building facade, as it is in the scene of Mahu.

Bickel's conclusions for religious display fit well with a study of Assmann for another area of elite display,[31] in which he argues that Akhenaten promoted among his elite a loyalism, based on their declaration that they had absorbed his precepts, that looked back to Middle Kingdom literary models. Traditional display of loyalism focused around proper behaviour and the king, and might be instilled into the elite by exhortation or by instruction texts. While there are obvious discrepancies between Akhenaten's claims of sole knowledge and intermediary status, on the one hand, and the prayer of Mahu discussed by Bickel on the other, it is unlikely that the latter would have been subversive. The inscriptions of Akhenaten may have had an ideological value similar to many other royal assertions of sole agency; they need not have been taken quite so literally in antiquity as scholars have often done. Moreover, those who created Akhenaten's core formulae and epithets may have seen them as providing equivalents for the king's traditional religious role as intermediary to the gods, access to whom had never been confined to kings, despite their dominant position in texts and iconography.[32]

This increased focus on religious display from the mid Eighteenth Dynasty onward exemplifies how personal religious feeling and related cultural self-expression could be present for considerable periods without entering the accessible record. None of the categories of material cited so far is broadly attested; in such a context, absence of evidence provides even less of a secure basis for argument than is generally the case.

If this analysis is acceptable, it will follow that the Amarna period was one in which new rules and conventions came to govern styles of religious display on monuments, but it need not follow that the underlying religious attitudes and practices were new. The specific developments of Akhenaten were self-evidently new, but in some areas they may have imparted ideological and relatively public value to existing, perhaps long-established forms. Amarna was probably the catalyst for this display, but it remains uncertain how far it also brought change in basic religious conceptions or actions.

Ramesside developments: display in texts and on personal monuments

The character of the record for religious activity changes markedly after the Amarna period. We see no essential difference in religious attitudes of the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty and of the Nineteenth, but texts of the latter phase are far better attested and more loquacious. Three core aspects require discussion: new repertories of religious display and iconography (the latter little discussed so far in relation to piety[33]); the group of texts with pious themes; and the position of the king in relation to these changes. We consider these briefly in turn.

As is well known, the themes of non-royal tomb and stela decoration changed after Amarna; by the mid Twentieth Dynasty most non-sacred motifs had disappeared from tombs. Here, it is possible to make general statements about Theban tombs (of which many published examples are in the untypical group at Deir el-Medina), but more difficult for other regions, while tombs in the culturally dominant Memphite area are reasonably known only until the early Nineteenth Dynasty. Developments in decorative

[31] Assmann, *SAK* 8 (1980; see n. 5 here). For the stela text of the sculptor Bak, see further R. Krauss, 'Der Oberbildhauer Bak und sein Denkstein in Berlin', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 28 (1986), 30–8. For the broader context of instruction texts, loyalism, and their relation to piety, see Assmann, 'Weisheit, Loyalismus und Frömmigkeit' (see n. 5 here).

[32] Essentially the same point can be drawn from the large variety of religious material assembled by Barbara Begelsbacher-Fischer from non-royal monuments of the Fourth and Fifth Dynasties: *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt des Alten Reiches im Spiegel der Privatgräber der IV. und V. Dynastie* (OBO 37; Fribourg and Göttingen, 1981), esp. 259–70. This can be contrasted with the near-exclusive religious focus on the king in the period's monumental record.

[33] The focus on texts is noted by Jan Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil*, 111, but without reference to using material culture or works of art as evidence. Maria Michela Luiselli is doing research in this area; see 'Das Bild des Betens: Versuch einer bildtheoretischen Analyse der altägyptischen Anbetungsgestik', *Imago Aegypti* 2 (2007), 87–96.

programmes in upper areas of tombs went together with radical changes in layout, in which the burial apartments came increasingly to have pictorial decoration and were often more closely integrated with the chapels than in the Eighteenth Dynasty.[34] During the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Dynasties, the rest of the decoration gradually acquired the two main focuses of religious scenes – showing the owner before deities or having motifs parallel with mortuary compositions – and depictions of the owner with his family. Nonetheless, the tomb owner's official occupation continued to be shown in some tombs, perhaps more widely than before Amarna.[35] What largely disappeared was the representation of the traditional 'scenes of daily life'. Tomb spaces bearing religious themes include the 'confessional' biographical inscriptions of Simut and Djehutyemhab at Thebes.[36]

These developments brought into the decoration of tombs subjects that possessed greater prestige and personal significance than the 'scenes of daily life'. Since the core purpose of the tomb – among various others – was to secure a fitting afterlife for its owner, the increase in religious motifs was a self-evident benefit, because it made visible what had been in part implicit in the New Kingdom, and almost entirely implicit in the decoration of Old and Middle Kingdom tombs.

Among styles of monuments of individuals that were introduced in New Kingdom temples and evolved further after Amarna, some forms and iconographic treatments of statues that integrated distinctive textual material mobilised active and involving connections with deities and cult performance, as well as potential human audiences, more explicitly than before.[37] A number also assert functions as distinct agents in the temple context, for example by acting as an 'abode (*jnht*)' for, and the 'true body (*ḏt mꜣ*ᶜ*(t)*)' of, the owner.[38] Others from the pre-Amarna period onward offer to act as intermediaries with the deity for those who come to the temple and do not themselves have access to its interior. These imply that the statue owner has a relationship with the deity and that the person addressing the statue desires one. A revealing example is the sistrophorous statue of Amenemone from the temple of Thutmose III at Deir el-Bahri, from the reign of Ramesses II.[39] The top of its naos sistrum bears a relief of Ramesses II standing before an image of Hathor as a cow that evokes the cult statue of Hathor and a king which filled the Hathor sanctuary of the Hatshepsut temple.[40] Thus, Amenemone displayed the sacred space of the sanctuary in the outer area where his statue stood, as well as providing a concrete example of his claim to be an intimate of the deity and intermediary for her. The Twentieth Dynasty graffiti on the columns in

[34] J. Assmann, 'Das Grab mit gewundenem Abstieg: Zum Typenwandel des Privat-Felsgrabes im Neuen Reich', *MDAIK* 40 (1984), 277–90, id., 'The Ramesside Tomb and the Construction of Sacred Space', in N. Strudwick and J. H. Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis: Past, Present and Future* (London, 2003), 46–52, K. J. Seyfried, 'Bemerkungen zur Erweiterung der unterirdischen Anlagen einiger Gräber des Neuen Reiches in Theben – Versuch einer Deutung', *ASAE* 71 (1987), 229–49, id., 'Entwicklung in der Grabarchitektur des Neuen Reiches als eine weitere Quelle für theologische Konzeptionen der Ramessidenzeit', in W. V. Davies, J. Assmann and G. Burkard (eds), *Problems and Priorities in Egyptian Archaeology* (London, 1987), 219–53.

[35] See N. Strudwick, 'Change in Continuity at Thebes: The Private Tomb after Akhenaten', in C. J. Eyre, A. Leahy and L. M. Leahy (eds), *The Unbroken Reed: Studies in the Culture and Heritage of Ancient Egypt in Honour of A F Shore* (EES OP 11; London, 1994), 323–4. The tomb of Simut, which is known for its extensive evocation of his relation with the goddess Mut (see next note), is one instance where scenes relating to his official role, as cattle counter of Amun, are present: M. Negm, *The Tomb of Simut Called Kyky: Theban Tomb 409 at Qurnah* (Warminster, 1997), pls 18–19.

[36] Frood, *Biographical Texts*, nos 11 (TT 409), 12 (TT 194), with refs; J. Assmann, 'Eine Traumoffenbarung der Göttin Hathor', *RdE* 30 (1978), 22–50; P. Vernus, 'Littérature et autobiographie: Les inscriptions de *Sꜣ-Mwt* surnommé *Kyky*', *RdE* 30 (1978), 115–46.

[37] E.g. J. J. Clère, 'Une sculpture baroque de l'époque ramesside (Caire JE 35258)', in P. Posener-Kriéger (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal eddin Mokhtar* (BdE 97; Cairo, 1985), I, 155–65, id., *Les chauves d'Hathor* (OLA 63; Leuven, 1995); D. Franke, 'Die Hokkerstatue des Sonbso-mei in Leiden und Statuen mit nach oben gerichteten Handflächen', *OMRO* 68 (1988), 59–76; E. Frood, 'A Ramessid Statue from Abydos Bearing a Sacred Emblem', *JEA* 92 (2006), 250–5.

[38] Frood, *Biographical Texts*, no. 28.

[39] Frood, *Biographical Texts*, no. 36; see also Clère, *Les chauves d'Hathor*, 87–92.

[40] J. F. Romano, *The Luxor Museum of Ancient Egyptian Art: Catalogue* (Cairo, 1979), 149 (cat. no. 227).

the forecourt of Thutmose III attest to the later significance of the hypostyle as a zone of cultic activity, confirming the reality of individual religious action in the temple.[41]

The texts on two statuettes (*c.*16 cm high) studied by J. J. Clère provide another example.[42] Both use titles the owner did not hold during life to claim a role as doorkeeper for a cult statue and express intimacy with and access to the deity. The base of one statuette projects from its back, evoking the shape of a door-bolt or architectural element, asserting its function through its sculptural form. The statuettes bear funerary formulas and so were intended to function perpetually. Although it is not known where they were set up, pieces like these bring relations with deities to the fore and have similar implications to monuments of piety.

Most discussions of piety focus around a small group of texts on personal monuments from Deir el-Medina, some tomb biographies, and literary compositions included in the Late Egyptian miscellanies (all noted above). This material displays forcefully and imaginatively certain individuals' dedication to their gods, as well as spelling out how they reacted to episodes in which they experienced the action of deities upon them. The more literary pieces make play with the notion of choosing a deity or being chosen by one and with how a person's ethical or devotional qualities can render a deity accessible, or inaccessible in the absence of such qualities.[43]

Five stelae, all probably created in the early to middle years of Ramesses II and two belonging to the same person, develop this theme most fully,[44] while a larger group mobilises closely similar themes without using the structure of transgression and reconciliation.[45] Most of the stelae seem to have been set up in chapels in the village or its immediate area.[46] The stela of the draftsman Nebre (fig. 1), the largest of the group at 0.67 m high and 0.39 m wide and textually the most elaborate, was reused as a threshold in a brick building behind the Ramesseum, suggesting that it had been set up in a votive context near a major temple on the West Bank and so was part of a more than local practice.[47] Finds from this building included fragments of three votive stelae, at least one dedicated by another Deir el-Medina villager, as well as an architectural element belonging to the Twentieth Dynasty vizier To and a fragment of a royal stela. This material points toward an elite context, and the iconography of Nebre's stela is appropriate. The scene in the upper register shows him kneeling before Amun, who is seated before a temple pylon with a central sun-disk above and with the flagpoles and the feathers of Amun's crown breaking the frame-line.[48]

[41] M. Marciniak, *Deir el-Bahari,* I: *Les inscriptions hiératiques du temple de Thoutmosis III* (Warsaw, 1974).

[42] J. J. Clère, 'Deux statues "gardiennes de porte" d'époque Ramesside', *JEA* 54 (1968), 135–48.

[43] E.g. Vernus, in *Deir el-Médineh et la Vallée des Rois* (see n. 12); J. Assmann, *Ägyptische Hymnen und Gebete* (2nd rev. edn, OBO; Fribourg and Göttingen, 1999 [1975]), Part 3. The discussion of Fecht, *Literarische Zeugnisse*, remains fundamental.

[44] Frood, *Biographical Texts*, nos 45–8, to which Bankes Stela 6 of Iyneferti is closely related; see n. 18.

[45] For such examples, see J. F. Borghouts, 'Divine Intervention in Ancient Egypt and Its Manifestation (*b3w*)', in R. J. Demarée and J. J. Janssen (eds), *Gleanings from Deir el-Medina* (EU 1; Leiden, 1982), 1–70; J. M. Galán, 'Seeing Darkness', *CdE* 74 (1999), 18–30; Vernus, in *Deir el-Médineh et la Vallée des Rois* (see n. 12).

[46] E.g. stela of Qen from chapel B, Deir el-Medina, exc. no. 320: PM I.2², 694; B. Bruyère, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh (1935–1940),* II: *Trouvailles d'objets* (FIFAO 20/2; Cairo, 1952), 130–1 (fig. 215); stela of Penamun from structures east of the temple, Deir el-Medina, exc. no. 411: ibid., 148; stela of Takhat from chapel F: Bruyère, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh (années 1945–1946 et 1946–1947)*, 21 (see also n. 18 here). Carved in the rock near the rock shrine of Meretseger is a stela of the scribes Bai and Amennakht son of Ipuy whose text, while not 'confessional', includes strong statements about not being fearful or hearing 'terror (*ḥryt*)'. The context is basically mortuary, but the vocabulary relates to pious concerns: B. Bruyère, *Mert seger à Deir el Médineh* (MIFAO 58; Cairo, 1930), 9–10 with fig. 5.

[47] PM I.2², 683. Stela text: Frood, *Biographical Texts*, no. 45. See A. Erman, 'Denksteine aus der thebanischen Gräberstadt', *SPAW* 1911, 1087–8, for the context: the stela was bought on the market and the findspot indicated was excavated later. Rudolf Anthes, 'Die deutschen Grabungen auf der Westseite von Theben in den Jahren 1911 und 1913', *MDAIK* 12 (1943), 1–68, presented a brief report on the excavations on the basis of Möller's notes. Anthes believed that the finds mentioned here had been brought from elsewhere, but it is unlikely that they had been set up very far away.

[48] For this treatment, see D. Budde, '„Die den Himmel durchsticht und sich mit den Sternen vereint" – Zur Bedeutung und Funktion der Doppelfederkrone in der Götterikonographie', *SAK* 30 (2002), 75–102.

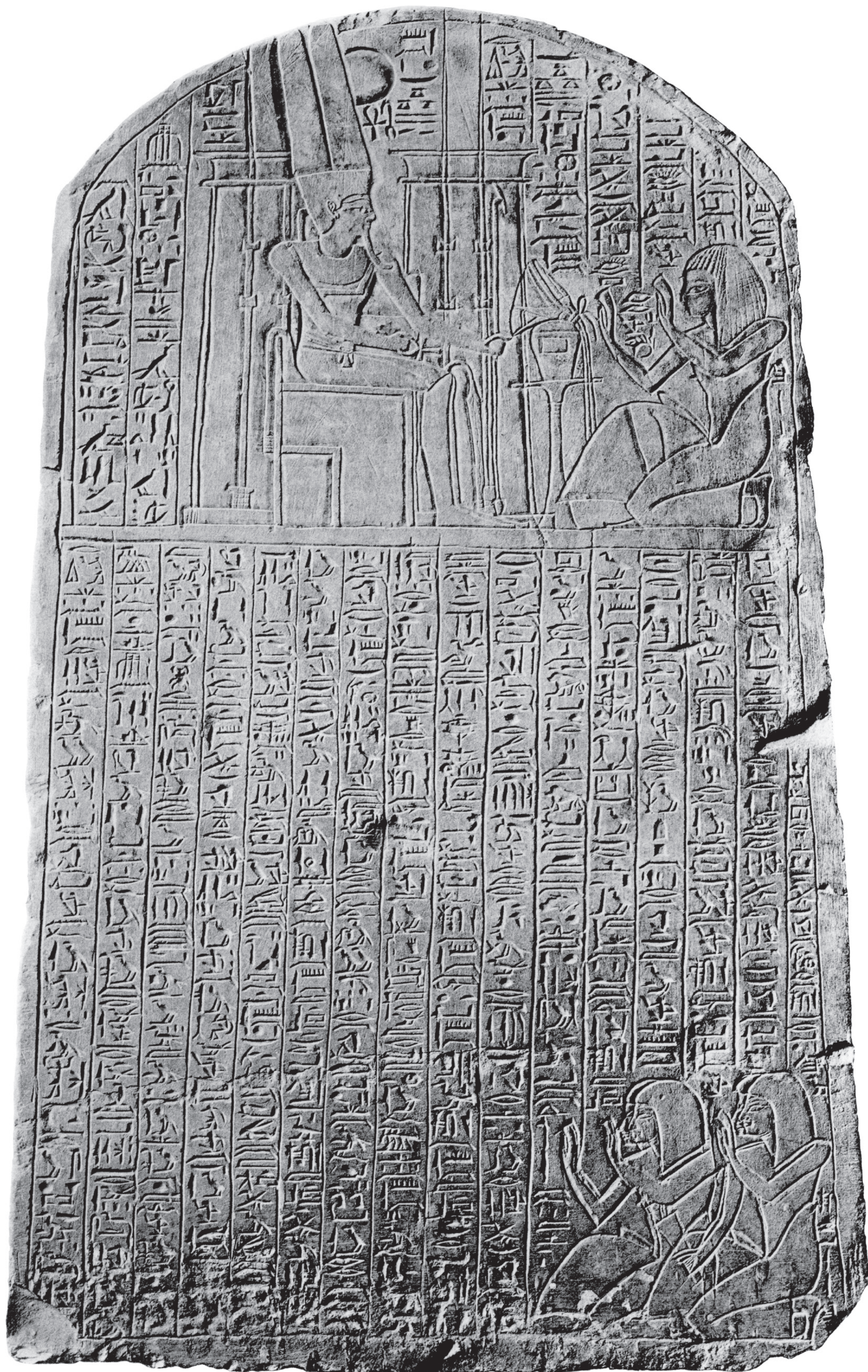

Fig. 1. Stela of Nebre, reused in a structure near the Ramesseum, Berlin 20377. Reign of Ramesses II. Limestone, 0.67 m high, 0.39 m wide. After A. Erman, 'Denksteine aus der thebanischen Gräberstadt', *SPAW* 1911, pl. xvi.

The location evoked is probably Karnak, since Amun bears the epithet 'foremost of Karnak'. Later in the text Amun is 'the lord of this court (*wbꜣ*)', further alluding to the temple setting without allowing us to say where it was.[49]

On some stelae the subjective character of the experience narrated in the text is paralleled by the object's physical form or iconography, in a manner comparable to the statues mentioned above. The stela Neferabu dedicated to Meretseger has a narrow horizontal shape mimicking the goddess's snake form, while undulating lines behind her figure evoke her manifestation as a rock-shrine (*dhnt*).[50] The stela of Qen shows him kneeling, holding on his shoulder an architectural element that is perhaps the object (*šdyt*), mentioned in the text, about which he swore falsely and was punished.[51] Nebre's text also presents its own creation as a pious act: 'I will make this stela in your name, and I will establish this hymn for you in writing upon its surface, for you rescued the draftsman Nakhtamun for me. I spoke to you and you listened to me. Now see, I have done what I said'. Such play with stela iconography and form is characteristic of monumental display at Deir el-Medina.[52] These integrations of text and monument give material form to aspects of the personal crises and divine interventions evoked. Connections between personal experience and physical realisation are developed in different ways in Simut's record of his donation of his self and property through the biography and religious compositions addressed to Mut carved in his tomb; these are rendered concrete and irrevocable in this world through the legal document and offering scene that fill the register beneath the texts.[53]

Members of the higher elite exploited the traditional focus on official role in biographical texts to present personal and transforming relationships with deities (see nn. 22, 23). This tendency is most evident in self-presentations of priests, which site singular, transcendent moments of divine selection and interaction in contexts of selection for and initiation to higher priestly office.[54] Such events have counterparts in the non-priestly sphere: the promotion of an individual to the office of chief of Medjay through an oracle of Isis includes a speech of the goddess to the protagonist[55] – a motif otherwise known from biographical texts only in the dream of Djehutyemhab.[56] The setting for these experiences is the formal world of temple performance, in which human–divine interaction is quite highly structured, as well as being elicited, in contrast to the Deir el-Medina texts, where it is an intervention of the deity, presumably in the daily life of the person affected. The two types of monument display a comparable intensity of experience in very different contexts. Another relevant instance is the late Nineteenth Dynasty biography of a high priest of Isis, Wenennefer, which includes a vivid yet allusive description of a celebratory event that may be an initiation, culminating in his assimilation to the divine child Horus-Ihy: 'The youths

[49] On *wbꜣ*, see also Vernus, in Demarée and Egberts (eds), *Deir el-Medina in the Third Millennium AD* (n. 12 here), 332–4, who renders 'parvis'. The term seems to refer to a general feature of temples of any size; it cannot help to locate where Nebre confronted Amun.

[50] M. Tosi and A. Roccati, *Stele e altre epigrafi di Deir el Medina: n. 50001–50262* (CMET 2 Collezioni 1; Turin, 1971), 286; G. Andreu (ed.), *Les artistes de pharaon: Deir el-Médineh et la Vallée des Rois*, Exhibition catalogue (Paris, 2002), 279 (no. 225). For this interpretation of *dhnt*, see F. Adrom, 'Der Gipfel der Frömmigkeit: Überlegungen zur Semantik und religiösen Semiotik von *tꜣ-dhn.t*', *LingAeg* 12 (2004), 1–20.

[51] Tosi and Roccati, *Stele e altre epigrafi*, 78, 279.

[52] See e.g. Andreu (ed.), *Les artistes de pharaon*, 233 (no. 189), 278 (no. 224).

[53] Frood, *Biographical Texts*, no. 11b, with refs.

[54] E.g. the biographies of two Nineteenth Dynasty high priests of Amun, Bakenkhons and Roma-Roy: Frood, *Biographical Texts*, nos 2a–b, 3b–c. The biographical stela of the sculptor Userhat presents a comparable transition of status, in his case from artist to priest, through his creation of cult statues: ibid., no. 19b; J.-M. Kruchten, 'Un sculpteur des images divines ramesside', in M. Broze and P. Talon (eds), *L'atelier de l'orfèvre: Mélanges offerts à Ph Derchain* (Leuven, 1992), 107–18.

[55] Frood, *Biographical Texts*, no. 37.

[56] See n. 36. For discussion of the speeches in the dream text, see M. M. Luiselli, 'Fiktionale Dialoge: Zur Interaktion zwischen Gott und Mensch in der altägyptischen Literatur', *GM* 206 (2005), 39–47 (does not include the oracle stela).

[played sistra] as (his) companions, the youngsters ⸢drew near⸣ to him, facing him in order to [perform (?)]. The self-created goddess [ordered] that his (Wenennefer's?) form (*jrw*) be revealed at once'.[57] Here the third-person narrative distances the experience from Wenennefer while presenting a complex, involving relationship between an individual and his god. The relationship sits within a defined priestly role, but it has a personal and subjective quality that goes far beyond what is formally relevant.

Most of this material can be seen as having parallels in the expression of divine intervention and interaction in the Hebrew Bible and in western devotional texts, often of a strongly literary character – although in this context the statues are outliers specific to Egyptian culture. The piety of the Egyptian monuments, especially those from Deir el-Medina with their focus on adversity and reconciliation between deity and worshipper, seems to speak directly to modern readers. These similarities should not obscure the exceptional character of the inscriptional texts. Strongly committed and salient religious behaviour and display is common in very many societies but, so far as it is possible to generalise about such matters, monuments that record relevant interior states and relationships are much less usual.[58] While brief statements of personal devotion to a deity can be found from various periods in Egypt, extensive narratives of the sort found in the Ramesside material are altogether rarer, both within and outside Egypt.

Some of the Egyptian narratives are assimilated to overtly literary forms. The biographical text of Simut starts as if it were a tale. This does not mean that the narrative is invented, but it demonstrates that aesthetic considerations shaped its presentation.[59] As Luiselli remarks, dialogues of deity and human being are confined to fiction;[60] the choice of a fictional mode might evoke that possibility without putting it into effect. In cases like this, the conspicuous display of piety has some of the character of a fictional performance that can be compared formally, but not in content, with such biographical self-presentations as those of Khnumhotep at Dahshur in the Twelfth Dynasty and of Amenemhab in the mid Eighteenth Dynasty, both of which appear to be modelled as fictional tales but nonetheless recount real events.[61] Khnumhotep's text is too fragmentary for easy analysis. The subjectivity of Amenemhab's narrative seems to expose its protagonist's internal state to an exceptional degree while distancing that exposure by framing it within an assumed role; in this respect it can be compared with the text of the high priest of Isis Wenennefer (discussed above).

The less complex Deir el-Medina texts may enact a comparable religious display in a more modest cultural context. As with the donation inscription of Simut, to read the stelae as using fictional forms and strategies is not to imply that the predicaments and events described did not occur but that they were filtered by genre in their presentation. A comparable interpersonal setting is mobilised on the verso of the stela of the workman Neferabu, where he tells the 'tale' of his experience of Ptah's wrath: 'Beginning of the account of the power (*ḥꜣt-ꜥ m sḏdwt bꜣw*) of Ptah, South of his Wall, by the servant in the place of Truth on the west of Thebes, Neferabu, true of voice'.[62] Several other texts in the group emphasise the spoken word as the occasion for divine anger as well as a central component of expiatory response, including speeches to divine and human audiences and so evoking a context of performance. Thus,

[57] Frood, *Biographical Texts*, no. 17.

[58] This question would require further research. Despite what we say here, it may be possible to make useful comparisons.

[59] Frood, *Biographical Texts*, no. 11a; Vernus, *RdE* 30 (1978), examples on pp. 141–2.

[60] Luiselli, *GM* 206 (2005). The text on the fragmentary stela of the chief of Medjay mentioned above (n. 55) alludes to a dialogue between the protagonist and Isis. Although Isis speaks, the response seems to be largely in the third person rather than made directly to the goddess, and so is more distanced than the literary examples Luiselli treats.

[61] Khnumhotep: J. P. Allen, 'The Historical Inscription of Khnumhotep at Dahshur: Preliminary Report', *BASOR* 352 (2008), 29–39; Amenemhab: *Urk*. IV, 890–7; study by John Baines in preparation.

[62] K*RI* III, 771.15–16; Frood, *Biographical Texts*, no. 46a.

Neferabu's stela dedicated to Meretseger is addressed to 'those great and small who are in the crew'.[63] José Galán remarks that a number of these monuments depict family groups, including children, in which one person is an intermediary to another in expounding the sufferer's predicament to the deity.[64] The four unnamed kneeling figures in the lower register of Nebre's stela may include his afflicted son Nakhtamun, for whom he dedicated the monument, and another son, Khay, who is mentioned as being involved in its creation. Thus, although the narrated experience is presented as exclusive to individual and deity, the setting evoked by the composition of such stelae, of which that of Neferrenpet is a clear example (fig. 2), is socially more inclusive and public. One aspect of that public presentation is probably the prestige in the community accruing from religious experience and the personal attention of a deity.

As noted earlier, the Deir el-Medina monuments date to the Nineteenth Dynasty. It is not clear why

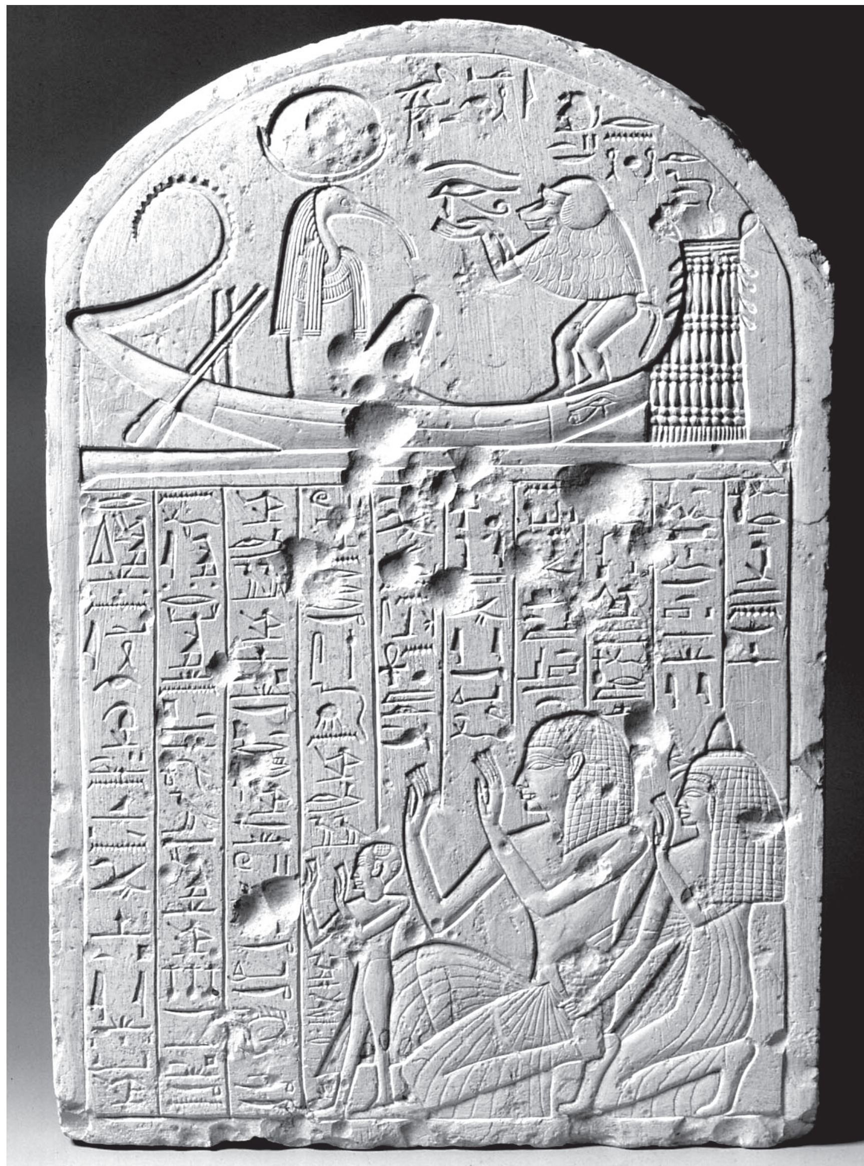

Fig. 2. Stela of Neferrenpet, probably from Deir el-Medina, Turin Inv. 1592, Cat. 50046. Reign of Ramesses II. Limestone, 0.48 m high, 0.33 m wide. Photo copyright Fondazione Museo delle Antichità Egizie di Torino.With thanks to Eleni Vassilika.

[63] K*RI* III, 773.2; Frood, *Biographical Texts*, no. 46b.

[64] Galán, *CdE* 74 (1999), 29.

similar later monuments are not extant. Comparable religious behaviour and involvement is likely to have continued. Thus, the evocation of religious action in New Kingdom letter formulas, first attested from the Amarna period, reaches a peak toward the end of the Ramesside period, only to disappear during the Twenty-First Dynasty (see nn. 29, 30). This approximate parallel speaks for the existence of a significant level of visible personal religion in practice as well as on monuments of this period. Since the letters come from wider areas of Egypt than Deir el-Medina, the stelae that cluster there probably constitute evidence for broader developments rather than representing a purely local phenomenon.

Here, it is worth setting the Ramesside material in relation to that from later periods. Although evidence for religious practice from the first millennium is overwhelming in quantity, it appears to include little that is similar in character to Ramesside pious display. As argued above for earlier times, so with the Third Intermediate and Late periods, it is unlikely that personal sentiments, actions, and choices in relation to specific deities did not occur. Although such matters may have been displayed as well as experienced, there was no practice of making them a focus on monuments. Radical change in the display of religious behaviour is evident in such developments of the Twenty-First Dynasty as oracular personal names. The use of oracular amuletic decrees, which were presumably intended to be worn on the person and in containers sometimes made of precious materials so that they would have been display objects, appears to have emerged rather later.[65] Religious display was not eschewed after the Ramesside period, but its focus shifted. One can also suggest that donation stelae, mainly a practice of the first millennium, as well as donations recorded on statues, should not be interpreted as having almost exclusively economic motivations, as is generally done, in an approach that is often too reductive.[66] The Ramesside instance of Simut was cited above. An example that is more striking in many ways is that of the Twentieth Dynasty steward Amenmose, who recorded on two statues, one found in a Theban temple and the other probably in the Delta, how he donated all his property to Amen-Re, king of the gods.[67] The activities donations supported, both in the mortuary cult of the donor and in the upkeep and cult of the recipient temple, were religious, and choice and religious motivation, conceivably including a sense of a direct relationship with the deity or deities, surely played some part in their foundation. The fact that most donation inscriptions say nothing of all this does not prove that such motivations did not exist. Since the inscriptions were generally set up by the recipient institutions, such expressions would in any case have been out of place.

Finally, the position of kings in relation to these developments should be considered. Geraldine Pinch has argued cogently that the Eighteenth Dynasty deposition of vast numbers of votive offerings around temples of Hathor received at the least official encouragement and quite probably direction.[68] The same is likely to hold for the very different patterns of the Ramesside period. As *Ramesside Inscriptions* more

[65] I. E. S. Edwards, *Oracular Amuletic Decrees of the Late New Kingdom* (HPBM 4; London, 1960); B. Bohleke, 'An Oracular Amuletic Decree of Khonsu in the Cleveland Museum of Art', *JEA* 83 (1997), 155–67; decree case: J. D. Ray, 'Two Further Decree-cases of *Šꜣḳ*', *JEA* 61 (1975), 257–8; partly analogous practice of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty: G. Burkard, 'Drei Amulette für Neugeborene aus Elephantine', in G. Moers, H. Behlmer, K. Demuss and K. Widmaier (eds), *Jn.t ḏr.w: Festschrift für Friedrich Junge* (Göttingen, 2006), I, 109–24.

[66] For a catalogue and interpretation, intended as preliminary to a corpus, see D. Meeks, 'Les donations aux temples dans l'Egypte du 1er millénaire avant J.C.', in E. Lipiński (ed.), *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the International Conference Organized by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven from the 10th to the 14th of April 1978* (OLA 6; Leuven, 1979), II, 605–87. For a statue of Neshor, a Twenty-Sixth Dynasty official from the Delta, relating to a large donation for Elephantine, see P. Vernus, 'Une statue de Neshor surnommé Psamétik-Menkhib', *RdE* 42 (1991), 241–9, and for the same man at Abydos, see O. Perdu, 'Socle d'une statue de Neshor à Abydos', *RdE* 42 (1992), 145–62. For an analogy in the Islamic world, see M. E. Bonine, 'Islam and Commerce: *Waqf* and the Bazaar of Yazd, Iran', *Erdkunde* 41 (1987), 182–96. We are very grateful to Anthony Leahy for discussion and references on this point.

[67] Frood, *Biographical Texts*, nos 35a, b.

[68] Pinch, *Votive Offerings to Hathor*, 342–6.

than amply demonstrates, kings of the time focused strongly on creating expansive textual records, in addition to the vast increase in temple construction commissioned during the century or so from Seti I to Ramesses III. For Ramesses II in particular, this increase in the intensity of works on behalf of the gods went together with a high level of personal display, as seen for example in the vast number of statues of him, especially colossal ones, that survive from a no doubt altogether larger original number.[69] These statues were also the focus of royal self-deification and of ceremonial and cult practices. Their implications are visible in the stela of the officer Mose from Qantir, which presents a condensed visual narrative of reward, beginning with Ramesses II's interaction with Ptah and the king's gift to Mose from a window of appearances, in the upper register. The scene in the lower register shows the king standing, without a baseline, above the knees of his own colossal statue named 'Re of the rulers', throwing a range of objects to the troops below.[70] Here Ramesses performs the cult for a figure of Ptah 'who hears prayers (*sḏm nḥw*)' – an aspect associated with personal religion and untypical of major cult temples – as well as actively leading a ceremonial event in an individual's biography through the mediation of his colossal statue, which is itself the object of a cult. The composition with his small figure casting the rewards as if from the statue's knees gives a probably misleading sense of verisimilitude to the scene.

The Qadesh compositions of Ramesses II form the most striking single set of Ramesside temple inscriptions and reliefs;[71] they also enjoyed a brief presence among 'literary' manuscripts.[72] The centrepiece of the narrative of the Battle of Qadesh is the crisis when the king invokes Amun. His prayer is heard in Thebes, and the relief troop appears, contributing to saving the day. The structure of this episode is generally similar to that of the Deir el-Medina texts.[73] At Qadesh, failures by subordinates lead to a misfortune that is averted by divine providence. As is characteristic of kings, Ramesses II hardly admits any fault of his own. Although the recording of the episode might have been seen as an implicit admission of some responsibility, the focus is on his being abandoned by much of his human support, his vulnerability, and his dependence on Amun. This turning away from humanity to a deity can be compared in a different context to Simut's donation of his property to Mut and his eschewal of the human sphere, through his assertion that he was 'without ⸢a son or daughter, brother or⸣ sister'.[74]

The human and fallible aspect of the king is perhaps expressed most explicitly in the two stelae dedicated by Ramesses IV at Abydos, parts of the texts of which have parallels in the negative confession of the Book of the Dead and in non-royal biography. Especially in the stela addressed to the gods, the statements are set in the context of ritual purity and correct cult performance for gods, showing how the king could be considered as being subject to the same processes that governed the performance of priestly office.[75]

[69] On the significance of this material, L. Habachi, *Features of the Deification of Ramses II* (ADAIK 5; Glückstadt, 1969), remains valuable; see also D. Wildung, 'Göttlichkeitsstufen des Pharao', *OLZ* 69 (1973), 549–65. For broader relevant aspects of the reign, the reader can do no better than to consult K. A. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant: The Life and Times of Ramesses II King of Egypt* (Warminster, 1982).

[70] Hildesheim 374: G. Roeder, 'Ramses II. als Gott', *ZÄS* 61 (1926), 57–67, esp. 65–6; Habachi, *Features of the Deification of Ramses II*, 29–31 (fig. 17); A. Eggebrecht (ed.), *Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim: Die ägyptische Sammlung* (Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie 12; Mainz, 1993), 72–3, fig. 67.

[71] K*RI* II, 2–101; *RITA* II, 2–14; *RITANC* II, 3–13; T. von der Way, *Die Textüberlieferung Ramses' II. zur Qadeš-Schlacht: Analyse und Struktur* (HÄB 22; Hildesheim, 1984); Assmann, *Ägypten: Eine Sinngeschichte*, 285–301; A. J. Spalinger, *The Transformation of an Ancient Egyptian Narrative: P. Sallier III and the Battle of Kadesh* (GOF IV/40; Wiesbaden, 2002).

[72] See Spalinger, ibid.

[73] This parallel is noted by Assmann, *Ägypten: Eine Sinngeschichte*, 271–4 = *The Mind of Egypt*, 241–4, and Enka Elvira Morgan, *SAK* 34 (2006), 343.

[74] K*RI* III, 340.2–3; see n. 36; Vernus, *RdE* 30 (1978), 135–7; P. Vernus, 'Derechef les inscriptions de *Sꜣ-Mwt* surnommé *Kyky*', *RdE* 30 (1980), 145–6.

[75] K*RI* VI, 22–5; see also F. Tiradritti, '"I Have Not Diverted my Inundation": Legitimacy and the Book of the Dead in a Stela of Ramesses IV from Abydos', in *L'impero ramesside*, 193–203.

While the theatrical quality of the Qadesh narration parallels the crises in several Deir el-Medina stela texts, inscriptions of members of the higher elite do not offer close analogies. That could be a matter of chance, not least because preservation is unusually good around the site of the village. Moreover, personal display of such episodes may have been outside the decorum of positive self-presentation that had dominated major elite monuments for nearly two millennia. The fragmentary inscription in which the late Ramesside high priest Amenhotep told of his banishment could be an exception showing that comparable things were possible for them too.[76]

It is difficult to suggest how the textual practices of Deir el-Medina (or hypothetical ones elsewhere) arose. The presence of literary manifestations of piety from the mid Eighteenth Dynasty onward, posited above, suggests that the pattern of development may have been complex. Perhaps in line with a general increase in the display of religious activity and allegiance to specific deities, cults, and cult places starting in the early Eighteenth Dynasty, the literary forms would have developed in written form (they could have had older oral counterparts), forming an indirect 'commentary' on the change. Nearly two hundred years later, when people set up small monuments commemorating crises in their relations with deities, they would then have drawn on suitable aspects of their education, in texts comparable with those included in the Late Egyptian miscellanies, to create new, single-purpose compositions in which these events were narrated. That innovation – if innovation it was – was broadly contemporary with the Qadesh texts of Ramesses II, which may have influenced the textual environment, in part through their short-lived presence in literary tradition. His use of a comparable narrative structure for his military narrative is also likely to have drawn on literary practice, and perhaps modes of personal display, of his time. Here, as in the development of royal narrative inscriptions in the Middle Kingdom,[77] the king could have followed a non-royal lead and not himself have been the main innovator.

Conclusion

The pattern of emergence just suggested for the Ramesside pious texts, either on stelae or in the inscriptions of Ramesses II, presupposes that they grew out of long-standing religious and literary practices for which very little direct indication survives. It could therefore be dismissed as an argument from silence. A generation ago, however, the group of mid Eighteenth Dynasty ostraca with the earliest attested literary formulations of piety – in Assmann's sense of a particular style of discourse – was unknown. This change in the configuration of the evidence, which has seldom been fully assimilated in subsequent discussions, is a reminder of the dangers of constructing interpretations that cleave close to available materials and chances of survival. Moreover, piety as known from monuments should be seen against a background of general religious practice, for which monuments are not likely to provide a close guide because the two domains are so different from each other.

Two phenomena that affect what enters the monumental record are display and decorum. It seems that in the Ramesside period crises in relations between individuals and deities became an object of display in a way that they had not been in earlier times. Like his non-royal contemporaries, the king could mobilise such a crisis for his purposes. Display of allegiance to deities in the less verbally eloquent but highly effective forms of statuary and biographical texts, together with associated lived practices, had been widespread for a millennium, but it had not focused around moments of initiation and crisis.

[76] Frood, *Biographical Texts*, no. 8.

[77] See e.g. J. Baines, 'The Stela of Khusobek: Private and Royal Military Narrative and Values', in J. Osing and G. Dreyer (eds), *Form und Mass: Beiträge zur Literatur, Sprache und Kunst des alten Ägypten Festschrift für Gerhard Fecht* (ÄAT 12; Wiesbaden, 1987), 43–61, C. J. Eyre, 'The Semna Stelae: Quotation, Genre and Functions of Literature', in S. Israelit-Groll (ed.), *Studies in Egyptology Presented to Miriam Lichtheim* (Jerusalem, 1990), I, 134–65.

We propose that Ramesside piety was, among other aspects, a newly introduced style of display, and thus of the legitimation of certain forms of self-expression in monuments. The display took existing, in all probability long-established religious practice and literary genres, making them visible in new ways. Since monuments were expensive and necessarily involved social distinctions and aesthetic choices, considerations of display and decorum were intrinsic to their introduction. These developments are broadly parallel with the presence of images of deities and other religious materials on non-royal monuments, which increased in an irregular pattern throughout the New Kingdom;[78] those changes too are in part matters of decorum.

To revert to a point we made at the beginning, if religion was an unalloyed benefit, display of it announced one's privilege in possessing that benefit. Nonetheless, the manner of doing so by showing a crisis in relations with a deity and creating a highly subjective permanent marker lies at the extreme of what is generally found among personal monuments, both in Egypt and cross-culturally. It is another matter how prevalent such personal display was in lived practice, where it might have been more widespread and readily appreciated. The rarity of these monuments, as well as the variability of tendencies in decorum, are demonstrated by the disappearance of 'pious' monuments and of comparable epistolary practices in the Third Intermediate Period. At that date different, equally subjective manifestations of religious practice became objects of display, notably in statuary, exhibiting a continuing desire to show religion and access to it through changing forms and practices and perhaps developing further modes that are seen on the earlier stela of Wenennefer.[79] While display and expenditure of wealth created the artefacts which provide evidence for the religious values we have discussed here and for those just evoked from later times, they throw only indirect light on people's beliefs and values. We hope to have suggested how the monuments can be set in relation to interpretive frameworks and configurations of the evidence that may be more revealing for the import of the material than those which have generally been used.

Addenda

This article has appeared in a Spanish translation by A. Gayubas and M. Campagno: 'Piedad, cambio y exhibición en el Reino Nuevo', *Revista del Instituto de Historia Antigua Oriental* 15 (2008), 75–106.

n. 6. For the restoration stela of Tutankhamun, see J. Baines, 'Presentando y discutiendo deidades en el Reino Nuevo y el Tercer Período Intermedio', in M. Campagno et al. (eds), *Política y religión en el Mediterráneo antiguo: actas del Primer Coloquio Internacional del PEFSCEA, Buenos Aires, 6 y 7 de Septiembre de 2007* (Buenos Aires, 2009), 103–56 (translated by A. Gayubas and M. Campagno), English version 'Presenting and Discussing Deities in New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period Egypt', in B. Pongratz-Leisten (ed.), *Reconsidering Revolutionary Monotheism* (Winona Lake IN, in press).

n. 23. See also J. Baines, 'The Stelae of Amenisonbe from Abydos and Middle Kingdom Display of Personal Religion', in D. Magee, J. Bourriau, and S. Quirke (eds), *Sitting beside Lepsius: Studies in Honour of Jaromir Malek at the Griffith Institute* (OLA 185; Leuven, 2009), 1–22.

78 For some arguments, see J. Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford, 2007), 20–9.

79 Discussed above. See also E. Frood, 'Sensuous Experience, Performance and Presence in Third Intermediate Period Biography', in R. Enmarch and V. M. Lepper (eds), *Ancient Egyptian Literature: Theory and Practice* (Proceedings of the British Academy; Oxford, in press); C. Knigge, *Das Lob der Schöpfungshymnen nach dem Neuen Reich* (OBO 219; Fribourg and Göttingen, 2006), esp. 185–97.